

# REPORT OF RIC NATIONAL FORUM, 9.12.19

Held in Perth

## Attendance (12)

### **Aberdeen (2)**

- Ross (*via Skype*)
- Doug Haywood (*via Skype*)

### **Dundee (3)**

- Connor Beaton
- Léodhas Massie
- Vanessa Stark

### **Edinburgh (7)**

- Allan Armstrong
- Pete Cannell

- Nick Gotts
- Bob Goupillot
- George Kerevan
- Scott Macdonald
- Donald MacPherson

### **Fife (1)**

- Grant Buttars

### **Paisley (2)**

- Paul Inglis (*via Skype*)
- Mike Picken

## Apologies (4+)

### **Angus & Mearns**

- *Sent apologies as a group*

### **Borders (1)**

- Norman Lockhart

### **Dumfries & Galloway (1)**

- James Foley

### **Glasgow (2)**

- Jane Logue
- Jonathon Shafi

## Business

### **1. Election of chair and minutes secretary:**

- **Pete C.** to chair and **Connor B.** to take minutes.

### **2. Local reports:**

- Verbal reports given by **Allan A.** for Edinburgh, **Connor B.** for Dundee, **Mike P.** for Paisley and **Grant B.** for Fife, and some brief details of recent Glasgow activity including a meeting with **George K.** speaking were discussed.

- **Action point:** Groups who gave verbal reports to be asked to submit written versions of their reports for circulation.

### **3. Report of All Under One Banner National Assembly (15/2/20):**

- **George K.** gave a report of the event, which was attended by 60-70 people and had lots of political discussion, particularly around AUOB participation in the

climate movement, which GK sees as evidence of growing politicisation of the independence movement. Significant support for an ‘alternative’ pro-indy list running in the 2021 Holyrood election, demonstrating frustration with the SNP leadership which ultimately remains haphazard so far.

- **Allan A.** also attended and raised suggestions including a Scottish mobilisation for the Welsh independence march in Wrexham, which was welcomed, and a possible self-determination march in London, which was not popular. AUOB is moving towards democratisation, having launched a membership scheme, and RIC could consider affiliating as an organisation.
- There were concerns raised the COP26 counter-mobilisation becoming divided between climate activists and AUOB if they mobilise separately. **Mike P.** highlighted that Friends of the Earth Scotland, which will likely play a leading role in the climate mobilisations, has reaffirmed a position in favour of Scottish independence in principle at its past two AGMs.

#### **4. Discussion on current political situation and strategy:**

- **George K.** opened the discussion, arguing that Boris Johnson is leading a ‘new kind of government’ which is more authoritarian and less susceptible to moral pressure. A section 30 order to allow a referendum to take place this year is unlikely and frustration in the independence movement is growing. GK has been speaking to various parts of the movement about establishing a new structure which can act as political leadership for the grassroots. Various models are on the table, with questions over a federal organisation vs. a unitary organisation, and big challenges around fundraising. RIC could be involved and would have to decide what politics the radical left should inject into it. GK agreed the process would have to be transparent and democratic and encouraged RIC groups to discuss the proposal discreetly.
- **Allan A.** argued that RIC should inject republican politics, including the idea of popular sovereignty and the legitimacy of extra-legal action, shifting the debate away from a dispute between rival wings of the SNP.

- **Pete C.** gave a report of two meetings he recently attended. The first meeting was in Craigmillar following racist attacks, which **Pat S.** also attended, and from which he drew a negative conclusion about where political discourse is six years after the referendum. The other meeting was in Lochgelly to discuss the situation at Mossmorran, which **Grant B.** also attended. This meeting was attended by 140 working class people impacted by Mossmorran and frustrated by a lack of action on climate change and transition and who were unhappy with the SNP and Labour on the matter, opening up a space for RIC. Lots of support for the proposed climate camp this summer.
- **Mike P.** speculated that the climate issue is fuelling frustration with the SNP among young people, and noted frustration among SNP ranks at a recent SNP public meeting on climate change in Greenock. MP also raised the possible impact of the Labour leadership election, with Rebecca Long Bailey being the only candidate to indicate support for a fresh independence referendum. The possible resignation of Derek Mackay as an MSP could lead to a by-election close to COP26. **Nick G.** flagged up the possibility of the summit being cancelled due to coronavirus.
- **Scott M.** raised the organisational and fundraising challenges for the Scottish independence movement, arguing that the Yes movement has become less self-sustaining without a clear end-goal as in 2014, and pointed out the Johnson government has responded to sharp pressure on some fronts, such as the U-turn on the Sabisky adviser appointment.
- **George K.** concluded by giving perspective that the independence movement is strong and the large proportion of the vote for centre-left parties such as the SNP and Labour in the December 2019 election indicated a good balance of power in favour of the working class in Scotland.

## **5. Motion from RIC Edinburgh:**

- **Allan A.** moved the motion from RIC Edinburgh on supporting Scottish mobilisations in Wrexham and London. **Pete C.** proposed an amendment from the floor that RIC should pressure AUOB to take part in the main COP26 counter-

mobilisation and not in a separate demo. **Grant B.** proposed an amendment from the floor to broaden the frame for self-determination in the motion from ‘Scotland, Wales and Ireland’ to include Catalonia and Euskadi, while also raising concerns about RIC’s capacity and resources in mobilising for marches in other parts of the UK. **Connor B.** expressed Dundee RIC’s support for the motion and the need to link up with progressive forces in Wales and London respectively. **Mike P.** and **Bob G.** suggested involving Sinn Féin in any London march as one of the largest left organisations in the city, if not the largest.

➤ **Motion carried with amendments from the floor, 8-0-0.**

## **6. Report of RIC National Constitution Working Group:**

- **Allan A.** introduced the conclusions from the working group established by the previous National Forum to examine the constitution. A new draft constitution has been circulated and will be debated at the AGM, with local groups welcome to submit amendments or alternative drafts.
- As the working group’s draft constitution proposes the election of national office-bearers at the RIC AGM, local groups will be invited to submit nominations for the proposed roles. If the AGM does not adopt a constitution including these elected offices, no election will take place.

## **7. Deciding the date of the RIC AGM:**

- AGM to take place in Glasgow on Saturday 25 April with **Doug H.** to chair. Plenty of time will be allocated to the discussion on the constitution.

## **8. AOCB:**

- Higher education strikes: **Mike P.** highlighted the start of strike action by UCU and the suspensions of 13 students at the University of Stirling following a student occupation in solidarity with a previous round of strikes. **Grant B.** announced a planned UCU march to Holyrood on Tuesday 25 February and plans for a fresh student occupation at the University of Edinburgh. **Paul I.** proposed that the petition in support of the Stirling students should be promoted by RIC on

social media. **Scott M.** appealed for offers of practical support for the students affected by the suspension.

- **Action point:** Stirling petition to be shared on RIC social media (Doug H.) and appeal for practical support to be circulated.
- Communications and GDPR: **Ross (Aberdeen)** raised concerns about communications within RIC and asked for the matter to be added to the agenda for the AGM. The Aberdeen delegates conveyed their concern that the current method of national communication is outside of the constitution and potentially limiting discussion of constitutional amendments.
- Oil and gas report: **Pete C.** flagged up a new report about oil and gas subsidies which has been launched with support from the PCS trade union and asked for [a link to the report](#) to be circulated within RIC.
- LGBT+ wing: Connor B. reiterated that the founding meeting of RIC's LGBT+ wing, as discussed at the previous National Forum, will take place in Dundee on Sunday 8 March. Details have already been circulated to local groups.