

# RIC AGM. 2.7.16 AND RIC-EDINBURGH REPORT

## The AGM was held in Edinburgh

Hi all,

The AGM a week on Saturday past was a great meeting involving well represented local groups. I include a short report and action points to allow us to move quickly into the concrete actions we agreed.

We broke into groups to discuss RIC strategy and tactics going forward. These were excellent discussions in which the following came out as important areas of consensus:

- 1) RIC would move forward as if the campaign for Independence has begun, rather than 'calling for' a second referendum. This would be deployed if and when the Tory government attempt to prevent a referendum from taking place. It was also felt the best way to get a referendum is to increase support for independence in the polls.
- 2) There was an understanding that this time round the forces involved would be different, and that the radical left would have to differentiate itself by promoting a left, alternative vision for independence based on class, power, radical democracy, internationalism and anti-imperialism.
- 3) RIC could play a role in winning sections of the labour movement who did not come out for independence last time round.
- 4) There was agreement that RIC should be broadened and deepened as a political force, and that our resources would articulate messages such as 'another Scotland is possible - another Europe is possible'. People felt work had to be done on slogans that would fit the new situation.

## ACTIONS

- 1) We agreed there should be a national tour to open RIC groups to new activists and supporters. This would have national theme, but local groups would decide the speakers, format and so on. We need all local groups to set up organising meetings to get these going ASAP. Cat Boyd was the named person regarding setting up a working group the remit of which would not be to organise the whole tour, but to identify a national theme/title for the tour.
- 2) We agreed the need for a clearly articulated vision for independence. This would be done in a grassroots way combined with expert analysis. James McIntyre is the named person for setting up a working group to take this forward. This should also be raised in upcoming local RIC organising meetings.
- 3) We agreed to host a conference to ensure we - and the social weight of the Scottish and international left - are part of the scene in the aftermath of Brexit, the crisis of the British State and the new situation. We have substantial donations to cover costs. Jonathon Shafi will

bring together a working group to deliver this. Venues will be identified to see what dates are possible.

4) We agreed to co-sponsor a conference on democracy and corporate power with Global Justice Now. Graeme Arnott and Eric will liaise with Liz from GJN. This event is planned to take place in November.

5) We agreed to set up a Democracy in Europe working group to explore links with DiEM and other international movement. Kevin from Aberdeen was the named person to set this up.

We have a lot to do! Please volunteer for any of these groups by emailing:  
ricsecc@list.riseup.net

Best,

Jonathon

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## **EDINBURGH REPORT TO RIC AGM, EDINBURGH ON JULY 2nd**

### **General**

We now have over a 100 card-carrying members. However, most people have been involved in party activities either in RISE/SSP, Greens or SNP, or if from a movementist background, in specific campaigns like Living Rent.

Following this new political situation RIC-Edinburgh had dropped its earlier fortnightly meetings and had concentrated on less frequent specific events.

**1) RIC-Edinburgh hosted the RIC Conference in the Assembly Rooms on 20.2.16**

**2) RIC-Edinburgh hosted the 2nd Scotland's Radical History Conference in the Methodist Halls on 18.6.16.**

The topic was *Scotland and the Easter Rising*. Although only 34 people attended this year, it was felt by the participants that the level of discussion and debate was higher than in the first event, since more people could participate in the discussion.

Three of the speakers were contributors to the book *Scotland and the Easter Rising*, and Kirsty Lusk, another contributor, had given her apologies for not being able to speak on *Women and the 1916 Rising* because she was working that day. Ray Burnett spoke on the *Edinburgh Dimension to Connolly and 1916*; Maria-Daniella Dick on *The Behans and the Scottish Connection*. Pat Smith chaired. In the afternoon session Allan Armstrong (RCN) spoke on *From the British Road to the Break up of the UK Road to Socialism* and Chris Bambery (Counterfire) spoke on *James Connolly and John Maclean*. Marilyn Tweedie chaired. Ray Burnett also introduced the RTE film, *The Names of the Provisional Government*, produced for the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising, with interviews with Connolly's family and several participants.

**3) A series of 3 debates on the EU referendum.**

Since RIC includes people who supported Remain, Leave and Abstain, it was felt that as in the case of the 2015 Holyrood elections, the most appropriate thing was for RIC to promote debate.

The first meeting was held on 4.2.16 with Alistair Black (RISE) for, Donny Gluckstein (SWP) and Myrto Tsakatika (RISE). Here the general arguments for Remain and Leave were heard and debated in the break-out sessions. 50 people attended.

The second meeting was held on 24.3.16 on Economic Fundamentals, led off by Andy Anderson (author of *The Skye Bridge Story* and *Moving On: An economic case for Scottish independence*) and followed by discussion in the break-out sessions. 22 people attended.

The third meeting (co-sponsored by Edinburgh Stop The War Campaign and the Womens International League of Peace and Freedom) was held on 26.5.16 and examined the Foreign Policy aspects of the EU. The speakers were Frances Guy (former ambassador to Yemen), Heidi Mansholt from WILPF-Germany and Lindsay German (Stop the War Campaign). Jonathon Shafi (RIC) had to give his apologies. After the 4 contributions there was discussion in the break-out groups. 35 people attended.

4) A meeting is planned in the autumn in conjunction with Upstart, which is campaigning for nursery education to be extended to age 7.

5) RIC-Edinburgh continued to act as a clearing house for campaigns in Edinburgh. There had been a good RIC-Edinburgh presence on the Migrants Solidarity Network demo on 24.6.16, straight after the result of the EU referendum had been announced