

# TRADE UNIONISTS FOR INDEPENDENCE (EAST COAST) ON STUC DEMO IN GLASGOW, 18.10.14



The campaign for Scottish independence has been the largest movement for popular democracy seen in these islands since the Irish War of Independence. In terms of electoral participation it was unprecedented. Voter registration was 97% and voter turnout was 85%.

We faced the biggest ruling class offensive, backed by the UK state, since the Miners' Strike. Only this time it brought together a combined Tory/Lib-Dem/Labour Better Together 'No' alliance, UKIP, the Orange Order, other Loyalists, British fascists, the BBC, the Pope and the Free Presbyterian Church, and the USA and China!

Yet we still won 45% of the vote, and badly rattled the British ruling class in the last two weeks before September 18th. Cameron only conceded the referendum back in 2012 because he thought the prospect of any alternative to the 'Westminster way' would be trounced – "There is no alternative". We showed that 'Another Scotland is possible'. Since September 18<sup>th</sup> the mood of anger and defiance has continued.

So where was the official trade union movement during this popular struggle for democracy? Trade unions have been quite happy to have conference resolutions and stalls providing solidarity to the struggle for democracy in Apartheid South Africa, or against Israeli occupation of Palestine, and quite right too. But what about the need for real democracy in Scotland?

Most unions did not organise proper debates, although UNISON allowed some branches to invite speakers from both 'Yes' and 'No' camps without taking any decisions. Whilst too embarrassed to openly support a 'No' campaign led by the Tories, these unions, especially UNITE, still intend to give millions of pounds of members' money to a Labour Party pledged

to continue Cameron's war, Osborne's public spending cuts, and Duncan-Smith's welfare cap.

The CWU, nationally, shamefully placed a motion before their UK wide conference recommending a 'No' vote. They used statistics gathered a year before the referendum date to justify their stance. Nobody needs reminding that the gap between the 'Yes' and 'No' camp at that stage was anywhere between 25-27%. Their blind allegiance to UK Labour and their participation in 'Project Fear' saw many of their members in Scotland resign from membership and greatly damaged the reputation of a previously left of centre Union.

However, the GMBU and USDAW went even further and publicly signed up to the 'No' camp, without any pretence of consultation with their members. Their leaders took orders directly from a Labour Party that has attacked their members' jobs, pay and conditions and has not the slightest intention of restoring trade union rights.

Two unions did organise a proper debate where decisions were made. In the PCS there was virtually no support for 'No'. A majority, after a full conference discussion, opted for a neutral stance instead of the other contending option, which was for 'Yes'. The RMT left it to their Scottish members to make a decision and they backed a 'Yes' vote. There was no official debate in the EIS, which decided to remain neutral, but Annie McCrae, standing on a combined Scottish Federation of Socialist Teachers and Radical Independence Campaign ticket received 49% of the vote in the Vice-Presidential election. What the PCS, RMT and EIS have in common is they are not affiliated to the Labour Party.

The Labour Party does not represent our interests. This is why we need to democratise every trade union's political funds. This means disaffiliating from Labour and placing these funds under members' control. We need to be able to campaign over every issue that affects workers locally, nationally and internationally.

Furthermore, it has become very clear that the existing UK state represents a fundamental obstacle to working class interests. We need to ensure that the trade unions fully engage with the democratic struggle for Scottish self-determination. This was not defeated on September 18th, but merely deferred.

#### **WHAT TUFU (EAST COAST) STANDS FOR:-**

- \* DEMOCRATISE OUR TRADE UNIONS**
- \* SCOTTISH AUTONOMY OVER SCOTTISH ISSUES**
- \* FOR FULL DEBATE ON ALL POLITICAL ISSUES**
- \*BRING UNIONS' POLITICAL FUNDS UNDER THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF THE MEMBERS**
- \* BREAK THE UNION LINK WITH THE LABOUR PARTY**
- \* ALL OFFICIALS TO BE REGULARLY ELECTED**

**\* OFFICIALS TO BE PAID THE AVERAGE SKILLED WORKERS' PAY OR THE AVERAGE PAY OF THE MEMBERS THEY REPRESENT**

**\* ALL UNION SPENDING AND OFFICIALS' EXPENSES TO BE SUBJECT TO MEMBERSHIP SCRUTINY**

**\* SCRAP THE ANTI-UNION LAWS AND END BLACKLISTING**

**\* FOR GUARANTEED WORKERS' RIGHTS IN A NEW SCOTTISH REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION**

**\*FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY ACROSS THE UK, THESE ISLANDS, THE EU AND THE WIDER WORLD**