THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AGAINST AUSTERITY SCOTLAND

Campaigning Handbook

THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY SCOTLAND

The People's Assembly against Austerity was launched in Scotland in Glasgow on 25 January 2014 addressed by MSPs from Labour and SNP, by Grahame Smith of the STUC and community campaigners. It endorsed the following demands:

- A Fairer Economy
- More and Better Jobs
- High Standard Homes for All
- Protect and Improve Public Services
- For Fairness and Justice
- For a Secure and Sustainable Future.

The Scottish launch followed that of the all-British Assembly, attended by over 4,000 people, on 22 June 2013. Since then the British People's Assembly has adopted the People's Charter as its programme and established dozens of local organisations, mainly based on trade union councils, with the object of developing united campaigning between communities and trade unions.

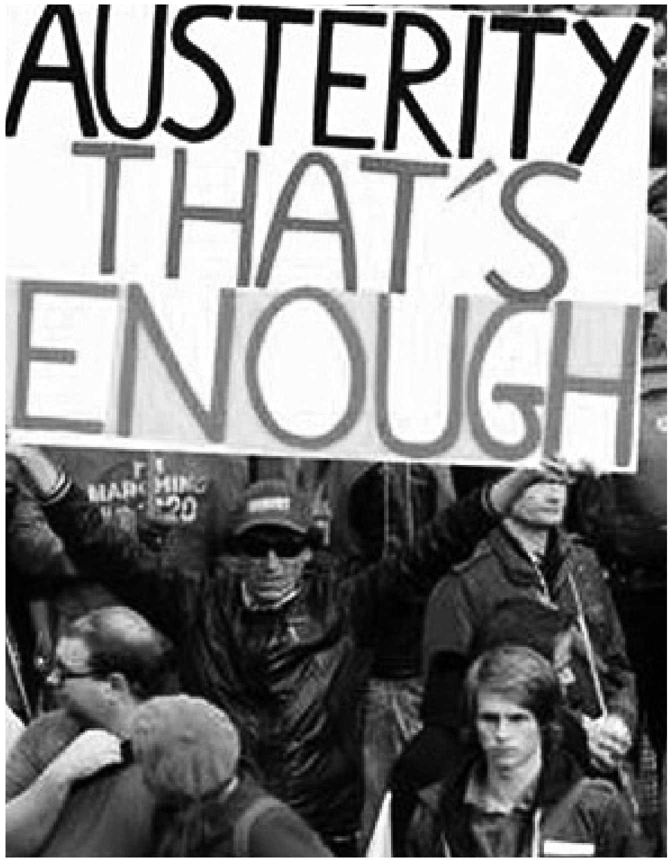
In Scotland the People's Assembly carries forward the work of the Scottish People's Charter and as such received the endorsement of the 2014 STUC Congress. Its recall meeting in Glasgow on 29 March 2014 established campaigning objectives and called for Trades Union Councils across Scotland to affiliate. So far support has come from Clydebank, Dundee, Fife, Glasgow, Kilmarnock and Loudon and North Ayrshire. The recall meeting stressed the importance of local campaigning and identified the need for a campaigning handbook.

This campaigning handbook is intended as an aid to local PA groups – providing information on the scale of austerity cuts and their impact on particular services as well information on the attack on workplace rights and the track record of privatisation. Where possible, details of campaigning organisations have been included. It is meant as a tool kit to be applied and adapted as appropriate to local circumstances.

AUSTERITY:

the worst is yet to come

The British government proposes to completely eliminate its budget deficit by 2018. To do so it will have to almost double the cuts already imposed across all areas of spending apart from the NHS, Education and Benefits.



This commitment is in line with the EU Reform Programme and the 2012 Fiscal Compact which will require balanced budgets across the EU by 2018. The terms for implementation are set out in the 2014 Budget. This protects the NHS and Education and 'caps' welfare spending at £119-£125 billion. If this is adhered to, the Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that across all other departments, including local government, emergency services and defence, only 36 per cent of the required cuts have been so far been secured. The remaining two thirds of the austerity cuts will have to be imposed over the next four years. These further cuts will amount to £96 billion: over one third of their current spending. These austerity cuts will apply, unless reversed, whether or not Scotland becomes independent in 2016. Scotland would still come within the terms of the same EU Reform Programme and also within those of the 2012 EU Stability Treaty. Today Scotland's current account deficit, after accounting for its full geographical share of oil revenues, is higher than that of the UK: 8.3 per cent of GDP as against 7.3 per cent. If continued, this would require even bigger cuts to meet EU balanced budget requirements. http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/GERS/GERS2014xls The UK budget deficit does NOT derive from any rise in public expenditure but from the bailout costs of the 2008 financial crisis of £141billion [National Audit Office http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/HMT-Accounts-2012-13.pdf], the consequent 5 per cent fall in GDP and five following years of no significant growth.

Europe 2020: UK National Reform Programme 2014

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/nrp2014_uk_en.pdf

3.9 The government has set out a plan to eliminate the deficit over the next 4 years, but further difficult decisions are required. High levels of public debt impose significant burdens now and in the future through higher interest rate payments, and increase the UK's vulnerability to future shocks. In light of the importance of fiscal discipline, Budget 2014 was fiscally neutral despite lower borrowing across the forecast period, with an overall reduction in tax funded by a reduction in spending, including:

- confirming that departments remain ahead of their consolidation targets: the OBR forecasts that departments will underspend by £7 billion in 2013-14, and will continue to underspend until the end of this Parliament
- reducing spending in the next Parliament by locking in spending reductions announced at Autumn Statement 2013 for future years
- ensuring that employers are meeting the costs of public service pension schemes, and confirming that pay awards for most public sector workers covered by the recent Pay Review Body recommendations will be limited to 1% in 2014-15, and that the intention is to limit awards to 1% in 2015-16.

3.10 In addition, Budget 2014 also set the level of the welfare cap from 2015-16 to 2018-19 at the OBR's forecast of spending in scope.

Institute of Fiscal Studies '2014 Green Budget' assessment

'Virtually all of the tightening from tax increases has already been implemented: up to and including 2013–14, tax increases forecast to amount to 1.2% of national income have been put in place. (The largest remaining tax increase will come from the abolition of contracting-out for defined benefit pension schemes in April 2016.) By contrast, a large proportion of the cuts to planned spending is still to come: only 36% of the cuts to planned 'other current spending' (i.e. current spending excluding social security and debt interest payments, which therefore comprises mainly spending on public services) will be in place by the end of 2013–14. Of the cuts to benefits announced by the government, 58% of the forecast spending reduction will be delivered by the end of 2013–14.'

http://www.ifs.org.uk/budgets/gb2014/gb2014_ch1.pdf

The Handbook has the approval of the Scottish Peoples Assembly Steering Committee but on specific subjects does not necessarily reflect the individual policies of every supporting union.

BENEFIT CUTS

42% of cuts yet to come

The total welfare budget is currently £115 billion. Its biggest element is statutory state pensions: £67 billion and rising to £70 billion. Of the remaining £50 billion almost half (£21 billion) are tax credits and other benefits for the low paid: effectively subsidies to employers. This is why there is so much pressure on the remaining £29 billion which goes to those who are unemployed or unable to work.

1 Switch from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance

The French subcontractor ATOS was hired to carry out medical assessments. The switch was designed to secure savings of £1.2 billion as a result of more claimants being declared fit for work and losing ESA.

- ❑ Over half of those deprived of benefits were left destitute
- ❑ Over a third of ATOS decisions were overturned on appeal.

The Daily Record exposed the following cases in the Glasgow area: a man died of heart failure a day after being declared fit; a women died of a brain tumour month after being declared fit; a Royal Marine who lost his leg in Afganistan was left destitute after being declared fit; a man registered blind lost benefits after being declared fit; a man died of pneumonia day after attending interview for fear of losing benefits; a man died one day after losing benefits

The scheme had to be suspended in January 2014 when the subcontractor ATOS was unable to process enough repeat assessments. However, the tests are likely to be resumed.

Campaigning organisations: https://www.facebook.com/glasgowagainstatosofficial ; blacktrianglecampaign.org/category/atos/

2 Sanctioning Benefit Claimants

The new system is based on a ‘Claimant Commitment’ and was introduced in 2012 to 2013. Failure to comply with the new regulations results in the denial of benefit. The minimum sanction is the loss of benefits for a month – incurred, for instance, by missing an interview, At the maximum level, such as refusing to take a job offered or voluntarily leaving employment, all benefits are lost for a year.

‘£12 billion of further welfare cuts are needed in the first two years of next Parliament. That’s how to reduce the deficit without even faster cuts to government departments, or big tax rises on people.’

Speech by George Osborne 2014. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/new-year-economy-speech-by-the-chancellor-of-the-exchequer

Under the new system the number of people sanctioned is increasing rapidly. At UK level the numbers sanctioned in 2013 was three times the level before December 2010: 800,000 people in the course of the year. In the Glasgow area the reasons given for sanctioning, and reported by official advice agencies, include:

Claimant with Asperger’s sanctioned for being 12 minutes late for interview (Glasgow Money Matters); Claimant with learning disability sanctioned for being ten minutes late for interview (Glasgow Citizens Advice Bureau - CAB); Claimant sanctioned for being 5 minutes late for interview despite then showing advisor watch was slow (Clydebank Post)l; Claimant missed Job Centre interview because attending Work Programme interview at same time (Glasgow CAB); Claimant sanctioned for not carrying out job search on Christmas Day (Poverty Alliance); Dyslexic claimant sanctioned for having missed two days in writing up job search diary while moving house and not having access to internet; had been told by previous Job Centre a verbal report would be sufficient; new area Job Centre said not acceptable (Glasgow CAB).

In West Dunbartonshire 3070 claimants were sanctioned between October 2012 and June 2014. PCS, the trade union for Job Centre workers, reports ‘PCS has been aware for some time that members feel pressurised to sanction claimants’. The government has denied targets are enforced.

West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau, Unjust and Uncaring (February 2014); Govan Law Centre Report, April 2014.

3 The Bedroom Tax or Under Occupation Charge

The government claimed that the charge would produce savings of £0.5 billion a year by 2015 (www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn06272.pdf). Subsequent investigation revealed that in 96%

of cases there was no smaller-sized accommodation available in the social sector and that additional costs of up to £130m would be incurred if tenants were forced into the private sector where rents were higher.

On 3 May the Coalition government announced that it was transferring control of housing benefit to the Scottish Parliament – where both Labour and SNP are committed to scrapping the tax. However, the legislation will take months to complete. Meantime the Bedroom Tax will remain in force. The Scottish Parliament has voted sufficient funds to cover hardship payments for the coming financial year but these funds can only be accessed by affected tenants making individual applications for Discretionary Hardship Payments.

PA Founding Statement

The People's Assembly, meeting in Westminster Central Hall, declares:

We face a choice that will shape our society for decades to come. It is a choice faced by ordinary people in every part of the globe.

We can defend education, health and welfare provision funded from general taxation and available to all, or we can surrender the gains that have improved the lives of millions of people for over more than 50 years.

We do not accept that the government's austerity programme is necessary. The banks and the major corporations should be taxed at a rate which can provide the necessary resources. Austerity does not work: it is a failure in its own terms resulting in neither deficit reduction nor growth. It is not just: the government takes money from the pockets of those who did not cause the crisis and rewards those who did. It is immoral: our children face a bleaker future if our services and living standards are devastated. It is undemocratic: at the last election a majority voted against the return of a Tory government. The Con-Dem coalition has delivered us into the grip of the Tories' whose political project is the destruction of a universal welfare state.

We therefore choose to resist. We refuse to be divided against ourselves by stories of those on 'golden pensions', or of 'scroungers', or the 'undeserving poor'. We do not blame our neighbours, whatever race or religion they maybe. We are not joining the race to the bottom. We stand with the movement of resistance across Europe.

We are clear in our minds that our stand will require us to defend the people's right to protest, and so we support the right of unions and campaigns to organise and take such action as their members democratically decide is necessary.

We stand with all those who have made the case against the government so far: in the student movement, in the unions, in the many campaigns to defend services, the NHS, and in the Coalition of Resistance, the People's Charter, UK Uncut, the environmental movement and the Occupy movement.

We do not seek to replace any organisations fighting cuts. All are necessary. But we do believe that a single united national movement is required to challenge more effectively a nationally led government austerity programme.

We have a plain and simple goal: to make government abandon its austerity programme. If it will not it must be replaced with one that will.

We will concentrate on action not words. We aim to provide the maximum solidarity for unions and other organisations and others taking action. We support every and all effective forms action and aim to build a united national movement of resistance.

Our case is clear. The government's austerity programme does not work; it is unjust, immoral and undemocratic. Alternatives exist. Debts can be dropped. Privatisation can be reversed and common ownership embraced. A living wage can begin to combat poverty. Strong trade unions can help redistribute profit. The vast wealth held by corporations and the trillions held by the super rich in tax havens can be tapped. Green technology, alternatives to the arms industries, a rebuilt infrastructure including growth in manufacturing are all desperately needed. We are fighting for an alternative future for this generation and for those that come after us.

HOUSING CRISIS

Scottish government house building budget fell from £534m in 2008 to £378m in 2012

1. Housing Need

- The number of households in temporary accommodation in Scotland has increased from 4,000 to 10,000 between 2003 and 2013 (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2014)
- There are 184,000 households on local authority waiting lists (Shelter March 2013)
- 65,000 households are overcrowded and 349,000 homes in Scotland are affected by dampness or condensation (Scottish House Condition Survey Data 2012)

2. Housing Supply

Shelter Scotland says 30,000 new houses are needed each year. Audit Scotland says that for the council and housing association sectors 8,000 new houses are required each year – and that between 2006 and 2013 there was a shortfall of 14,000. Audit Scotland July 2013: 'In terms of council and RSL (housing association) homes, Scottish government research in 2005 suggested 8,000 new homes were needed each year...our analysis suggests a shortfall of 14,000 since then .. the number of new private houses built has halved'.

3. The Rise of the Private Sector

Rents in the private sector are 86 per cent higher than the average social rent. Of all households in poverty a disproportionate number, 25 per cent, rent in the private sector – although such households make up only 14 per cent of all households. Private renters pay 23 per cent of their income on rent. The number of households in the private sector relying on housing benefit in Scotland has increased from 60,000 in 2008 to 97,000 in 2013.
http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/referendum-briefing-housing-and-low-income-scotland

4. Rents in the Housing Association sector rising at 6 per cent a year

In their 2014 Report the Scottish Housing Regulator called on Housing Associations 'to ensure that rents remained affordable to tenants' at a time when real incomes were not increasing. 'In the year to 31 March 2013 the average rent increased by almost 6% over a period where the RPI rose by 3.2%'. This was after five years of increases of over 3 per cent a year when most incomes were frozen. Scottish Housing Regulator, Analysis of the Finance of Registered Social Landlords 2014
http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Original%20-20Financial%20Analysis%202013%20Final.pdf

5. 20% fall in numbers of employed building workers

In 2008 there were 210,000 construction workers employed in Scotland; by 2013 there were only 170,000 (Fraser of Allander Economic Quarterly, March 2014)

6. Campaigning Organisations:

Shelter
UCATT, the construction trade union.

Number and proportion of households in Scotland by tenure

Year	Owned outright	Owned with mortgage	Social rent	Private rent
1991	330,000(16%)	720,000(36%)	827,000(41%)	137,000(7%)
2001	514,000(23%)	858,000(39%)	645,000(29%)	175,000(8%)
2011	661,000(28%)	810,000(34%)	576,000(24%)	325,000(14%)

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The People's Assembly calls for the public ownership of banks and utilities

1 Scotland's Banks – re-privatised

Scotland's two big banks, the Royal Bank and the Bank of Scotland, were taken into public ownership in 2009. The Bank of Scotland received £45 billion from taxpayers and was absorbed into Lloyds – with a 40% public shareholding. RBS received a £46 billion bailout and 81% public shareholding. These two banks are now being re-privatised in line with EU 'state aid' provisions that prohibit forms of state aid or ownership that distort competition. EU provisions for the Bank of Scotland are available in EU document IP/09/1180 and for RBS in IP/09/1915. Major sections of both banks are the process of being sold off and tens of thousands of bank workers sacked. Lloyds has sacked 40,000 since 2009; RBS 40,000 between 2008 and 2013 with another 20,000 job losses announced February 2014 (Daily Telegraph 20 February 2014).

2 Privatisation of postal services

The Royal Mail was sold to private investors at the beginning of 2014. 16 hedge funds and financial institutions were given privileged access to the sale: the shares were sold for £1.7 billion; within one week the shares were worth £2.7 billion. In preparation for privatisation the price of postage has been more than doubled since 2002. Post Offices were separated into a separate commercial entity; many have been closed.

The privatisation was under the terms of EU Directive 2008/6/EC which set a deadline for the full market opening by 31 December 2010 for the majority of Member States (95 % of the EU postal market in terms of volume) and by 31 December 2012 for the remaining Member States. Earlier EU directive, 97/67/EC, as amended by Directive 2002/39/EC, had opened the market for parcel and letter post to competition.

3 Rail Privatisation

The 2012 McNulty Report found that fares in Britain were 30 per cent higher than those charged by four publicly owned rail services elsewhere in Europe all of which operated with lower subsidies. By 2010 the annual government subsidy was four times higher in real terms than during the last year of public ownership.

In 2009 the East Coast Main Line franchise had to be taken back into public ownership after the franchise holder, National Express, defaulted. Under public ownership it has operated with a lower subsidy than any private line, paid £200m a year to the Treasury, offered lower fares and increased turnover. The government plans to re-privatise the service this year.

Britain's Railways were privatised in 1993-4 following the first EU Rail Directive 91/440/EC which required ownership of the track to be separated from the operation of services and for competitive bidding for services. The further Rail directives were published in 2001, 2004 and 2007. The EU's 4th Railway Package specifies that all services will require compulsory competitive tendering together with the liberalisation of all other domestic rail passenger services.

Scotland's Railways (ScotRail) have been franchised to FirstGroup since 2004. They are currently out to tender for the new ten year franchise from April 2015. Bidders include FirstGroup, Arriva, National Express, Abellio and MTR. In 2014 the Caledonian Sleeper service was split off and franchised separately to SERCO (this company was banned from 'prisoner tagging' after falsifying figures and failed its contract for security at the London Olympics).

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The People's Assembly calls for the public ownership of energy

1 Fuel Poverty

The latest Scottish government figures issued December 2013 show 647,000 households in fuel poverty in 2012. This means 27 per cent of all households in Scotland spent over 10 per cent of their income on heating their homes. The proportion in England and Wales was 10.7 per cent. Since 2012 domestic heating costs have risen by over 10 per cent – while most incomes have risen by less than 3 per cent. Fuel poverty is therefore now likely to be above 30 per cent (UK Energy Statistics: 27 March 2014 and USwitch for 2014).

2 Profits of Big Six energy companies

Latest figures, released December 2013 show combined profits for big six power companies as £1.2 billion: £53 a household and five times that in 2009. British Gas's profit margin for household supply was 11 per cent. On 27 March 2014 the energy regulator Ofgen launched an enquiry to establish how far there was "possible tacit coordination" of prices rises between the energy companies: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem-publications/86807/consultationpublish.pdf

3 Winter Deaths

In Scotland in 2012-13 2,000 deaths were deemed attributable to winter conditions – 600 more than in 2011-12 (Winter Mortality in Scotland, National Statistics, November 2013).

4 Energy privatisation: a disaster for pricing, sustainable supply and research and development

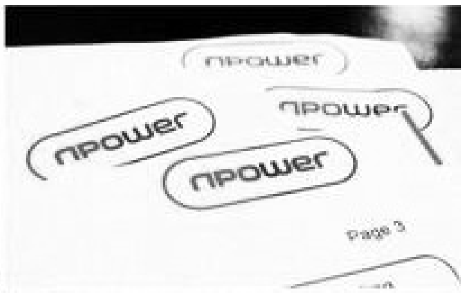
The initial sell-off of assets, according to a DTI investigation in 2000, was pitched far too cheaply and involved a considerable loss to the public (Department of Trade and Industry, The Utilities Act 2000 and Major Policy Developments. Energy Report 2000, pp. 4-9). The principal academic study describes the profits made as 'massive' (M. Florio, The Great Divestiture: Evaluating the Welfare Impact of the British Privatizations 1979-1997, MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2004). The regulation of the industry through the 1990s and 2000s enabled it to generate excess profits while allowing the industry's infrastructure and skills pool to deteriorate very seriously. In electricity the workforce was slashed by half (DTI Quarterly Energy Report 2005; House of Commons Select Committee on Trade and Industry, Third report Session 2003-04, The Resilience of the National Electricity Network, 2 March 2004). Excess profits were then used for speculative investments overseas – leading to financial crisis, take-over and effective monopolisation. Today just six companies dominate the energy market – four are owned from outside Britain. In 2013 Ofgem warned of growing threats to the security of supply of electricity over the next four winters (https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/electricity/wholesale-market/electricity-security-supply)

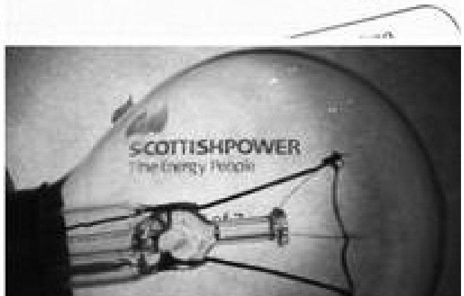
5 Public support for nationalisation

A YouGov poll (4 November 2013) showed 66 per cent support for energy to be taken back into public ownership (including 52 per cent of Conservative voters).

6 EU energy directives

The initial directive for the liberalisation of energy markets was passed in 1996 (96/92/EC). This has now been superseded by 2003/54/EC and 2009/72/EC for electricity and 2003/55/EC for gas. These stipulate the separation of transmission networks from supply and the creation of competitive markets for supply and transmission.





THE NHS CRISIS

The centre-left consensus in Scotland has protected our NHS from the worst of the privatisation ravages. But that doesn't mean it has escaped the attacks of austerity. The protection of the NHS is skin deep. All health boards must make recurring 3% efficiency savings – cuts to you and I.

Over the course of this budget this will mean cuts of £50m in Greater Glasgow & Clyde. In smaller Boards like Dumfries and Galloway it will mean cuts of around £7.7m. Across the NHS the result has been a fluctuating workforce with many vacancies. In some boards there has been a massively expanded use of nurse banks – in effect zero hour contracts.

Hospital Services

Nursing: a RCN study in December 2013 found that 54 per cent of nurses said they working beyond their contracted hours to meet demands, with 58 per cent saying they are under too much pressure. Across Scotland the number of nursing and midwifery staff had fallen by 225 over the previous four years (https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Workforce/Publications/2014-05-27/2014-05-27-Workforce-Summary.pdf?46473330260).

Hospital Beds: between 2007 and 2014 the number of hospital beds fell by 1,282 – a decline of 7.3 per cent: https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Hospital-Care/Publications/2014-03-25/2014-03-25-AcuteActivity-Report.pdf?55312746764

Accident and Emergency: Audit Scotland found that between 2008 and 2013 the number of patients waiting for more than four hours in accident and emergency rose from 36,000 to 104,000. In May 2014 the College of Emergency Medicine Scotland called for an urgent increase in resources. http://secure.collemergencymed.ac.uk/Public/Latest%20News/CEM%20Statements

Consultants: a May 2014 survey found a record 385 unfilled vacancies for consultants across Scotland (Herald 28 May) – over 6 per cent of the total.

Other health services

Speech Therapy: Scottish Parliament Health Committee March 2014 reports 8.8 per cent average cut in speech therapists – and 22 per cent cut in worst affected areas.

Mental Health: a June 2014 survey by SAMH found that 85 per cent of GPs found local mental health facilities inadequate http://www.samh.org.uk/news-resources/latest/samh-backs-scottish-doctors-plea-for-more-mental-health-training.aspx

Increasing use of private sector

Between 2011 and 2013 spending on agency nurses and midwives increased by 62 per cent: http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/health/2013/nr_131010_nhs_finances.pdf. page 31

Social Care

A survey by Unison Scotland, *It's Time to Care*, February 2014, found that 44 per cent of home care workers had time limits placed on their time with clients and 50 per cent were not paid for travel time between clients. 57 per cent were employed in the voluntary/private sector; 40 per cent by local government and 3 per cent by the NHS. http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/socialwork/timetocare.pdf

Health Inequalities

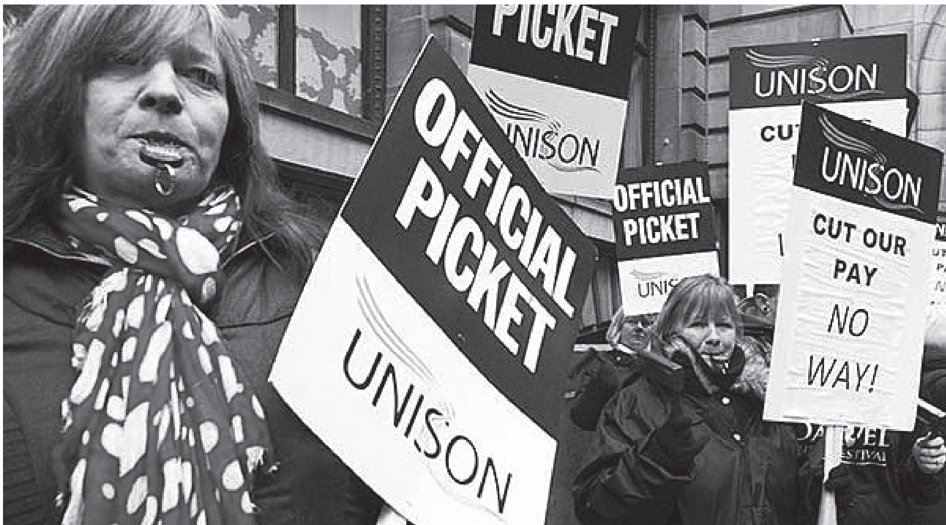
'Healthy Life expectancy' for the poorest tenth of the Scottish population is 57 years for men and 61 for women – compared to 76 years for men and 78 for women in the most affluent tenth. The poorest tenth of men spent 22.7 years 'not in good health' compared to 11.9 per cent among the least deprived. http://www.scotpho.org.uk/population-dynamics/healthy-life-expectancy/data/deprivation-deciles.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

'Whole services will disappear'

Austerity has slashed an astonishing 39,000 jobs from Scottish local government. Those who remain in work have had their pay largely frozen, dropping in value by 13% in the last four years. Because most council jobs provide a direct service, it means services to the public have been badly hit.

The Westminster Government has imposed budget cuts on the Scottish Government. In turn the Scottish Government has passed the vast bulk of these cuts to local government – and at the same time prevented councils from raising Council Tax to offset the cuts. Services have been badly hit – and councils have introduced, or massively increased, charges to make up their declining budgets. This is an even more regressive way of raising money than the Council Tax and is made even worse because incomes have been frozen or reduced in real terms.



- **Libraries** across Scotland have had their opening hours reduced and in many Council areas smaller libraries have been replaced with mobile library services.
- **School meals:** While those who qualify for free school meals are at least protected, lunch for the rest is going up by a third in some areas. Since 2007 meals in Argyll and Bute have gone from £1.60 to £2.10. An extra 50p per day per child soon adds up for families. A family with two children is paying £5 extra per week £200 for a school year. The average council tax bill in Argyll and Bute in £1037. In Orkney charges rose from £1.50 to £2.00, another £200 rise for working parents to find. Meals in Edinburgh were £2.15 in 2007 when the freeze started, they are now £2.25 with a possible rise to £2.30. This 15p rise works out at £60 per year for a family with two children.
- **Day Centres:** Councils are introducing charges for attendance at day centres for elderly and disabled residents where many used to provide places at no cost : East Dunbartonshire is charging £10 a week (no matter how often you go), that is £500 a year. Falkirk has introduced a charge of £23.50 per visit for people with learning difficulties. Fife used to charge £2.80 per day; it increased to £3.13 with a further rise awaiting approval this year. That is an increase again of almost £60 a year. Scottish Borders have introduced a £2 per day charge. Even a weekly visit means an extra £100. Western Isles is planning to add £1.00 to their lunch charges for day centre attendees. £260 per year for five visits a week.
- **Swimming:** Falkirk council now charge £3.50 per session, £1.20 more than in 2007. A weekly swim now costs an extra £60 per year. Making it harder for people keep fit and lose weight completely contradicts the policy of increasing investment in preventative spending.
- **Charges.** In addition to this charges have been introduced in differing areas because bulk uplift of rubbish, resident's parking permits and meals for housebound residents. There have been other cuts – in school uniform grants, reductions in free school transport.
- **Outsourcing** of services like elderly care with consequent deceases in quality (See UNISON's Time to Care report).

On current planned budgets, cuts at just nine councils of £115m are planned, with more than £600m projected for next 2-5yrs. Job losses of 1,500, with projections of a further 1,900 in the next 2-5 yrs. Edinburgh alone faces cuts of £400m in the next four years. The days of 'salami-slicing' are over and whole services will disappear.

Campaigning organisations: Unison, GMB, Defend Glasgow Services

EXPLOITATION AT WORK

Zero Hours Contracts rising sharply

The government statistical service ONS assessed that there were 1.4m people working on contracts without guaranteed hours in April 2014 – up from 100,000 in 2004. In many cases these were workers without formal contracts or employment rights. http://www.statisticsviews.com/details/news/6137101/ONS-reveals-1_4-million-on-zero-hour-contracts.html

Unfair dismissal made easier

In summer 2013 the government introduced fees for taking cases for unfair dismissal to the Employment Tribunal: £250 to lodge a claim and £950 for a hearing. It also capped the maximum payment. They did so to make 'it easier for firms to dismiss underperforming staff'. Between summer 2013 and December 2013 claims lodged fell by 55 per cent.

Real wages falling

National Institute of Economic and Social Research reported in May 2014 that the fall in real weekly wages since 2008 amounted to 8 percent: a fall in annual earnings of about £2000 for the average UK worker. http://niesr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/NIESR%20Press%20Release%20-%20May%20Review%20Research%20Articles.pdf

Younger workers faring worse

For workers aged 18-25 the NIESR reported that the fall in real wages has been so extreme that, in real terms, wages are back to levels not seen since 1998: a14 per cent fall since 2008.

Nearly half UK workforce not on full time payroll

6.7 million workers in 2013 were working part-time; 1.6 million were on temporary contracts; over 1 million were on apprenticeships or unpaid work placements and 1.4 million on zero hour contracts http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/577bf00e-84f1-11e3-a793-00144feab7de.html#axzz33qU8rilc

State pays £21billion a year to top up low wages and boost company profits

According to Social Market Foundation research published in April 2014 £21 billion is paid out annually in tax credits - with 20 per cent of the workforce now earning below two-thirds of median wage. In 2012 Inside Housing calculated from DWP statistics that 90 per cent of NEW claims for housing benefit over the previous two years came from households in work – increasing the total of in-work claimants to 17 per cent (Inside Housing 30 March 2012). Excluding £67 billion pension payments, the state pays out roughly £48 billion in benefit payments. Of this almost half is spent subsidising low wages and boosting corporate profits. Social Market Foundation, Boosting the Skills and Prospects of the Low Paid, April 2014 http://www.smf.co.uk/files/9913/9842/5534/Making_Progress_WEB_version.pdf

Low pay employers often pay little or no tax

Some of the employers with the worst record for employing workers on minimum wages or zero hours contracts are also those which pay little or no tax on their profits. The minimum estimate given by HMRC to the Public Accounts Committee in 2012 is £8billion a year (http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmpubacc/716/71605.htm). Tax Justice Network puts the figure at £69 billion. Firms listed include Starbucks, Amazon, Boots, Vodaphone, Topshop and Greene King. All find ways of re-locating their taxable profits to other jurisdictions with very low levels of corporate tax.

Poverty and Inequality in Scotland increasing mainly due to labour market conditions

Poverty and inequality is similar to England and is increasing as a result of more casual, part-time working.

David Bell and David Eiser, Inequality in Scotland, Nov 2013 http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Inequality%20paper%2013%20Nov%20Final_tcm8-29182.pdf
Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Scotland, 2013 http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-scotland-2013

Campaigns: STUC, trade unions, Campaign for TU Freedom, Tax Justice Network

PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

Emergency services

Five out of 10 police emergency control rooms and five out of eight fire centres are closing in 2014. Large areas of Scotland will have no staff locally providing police or fire emergency 999 cover.
Both Dumfries control room – who responded to the Lockerbie bombing in 1988 – and Aberdeen have been left without a service.

Pensions and retirement age: damaging staff and services

The 2013 Public Service Pensions Act increases the normal pension age to 67 by 2028 and to 68 thereafter for all those working in public services. For police and fire-fighters it increases the age from 55 to 60 – despite these services requiring high levels of physical fitness and quick response times in emergencies. Two-thirds of fire-fighters have been assessed as lacking the very high levels of physical strength required by 55. Together with pressure on staff numbers, this means that emergency services will increasingly find it difficult to respond effectively. To add insult to injury, prison officers, despite the challenging and sometimes dangerous character of the work, are not even exempt from the 68 retirement age. In addition, pension contributions are being increased from 8 to 13 per cent of pay and real pay cut annually by up to 1 per cent to 2017.

Cuts in services and privatisation

Prisons

20 per cent of prison places in Scotland are now in private sector prisons – the highest proportion in Europe. Both private prisons, Kilmarnock and Addiewell, have a history of violence – with Addiewell singled out by the Chief Inspector of Prisons in 2011 as the most violent in Scotland

DWP

In October 2010 there were c. 11,800 DWP staff in Scotland. By 30 April 2014 there were 9,366. Offices have been closed in Aberdeen; Edinburgh City; Gellatly St, Dundee; Glasgow Shawlands; Glasgow City; and Glasgow Hillington

HMCR

Government statistics for June 2014 show a 5.1 per cent fall in one year in the numbers employed in Scotland to 9,000. Across Britain 2,000 more jobs are threatened by the proposed closure of tax enquiry offices. PCS undertook strike action in summer 2014 to oppose the closures.

Court Services

Sheriff courts are listed for closure in Dornoch, Duns, Kirkcudbright, Peebles, Rothesay, Cupar, Dingwall, Arbroath, Haddington and Stonehaven have been marked for closure. Justice of the peace courts in Annan, Irvine, Motherwell, Cumbernauld, Portree, Stornoway and Wick are also to shut

Passport Offices

Jobs have been cut in Glasgow's passport office and local interview offices closed in Aberdeen, Oban Dumfries and Stirling.

DVLA offices

All have now been closed.

WASTE & GREED

1. Waste: Trident

The Government claims not to have any money, but it is committed to spending 100 billion pounds on a new nuclear weapons system. At the present time the Government spends £6.6m a day on the existing Trident system which is due to wear out in the 2020s .

This is an appalling waste. In terms of national security, nuclear weapons are irrelevant. Britain currently faces no nuclear threat and Trident is useless in addressing the real threats we face such as terrorism, cyber warfare and climate change. Additionally it would be illegal under international law to use nuclear weapons as massive civilian casualties would be unavoidable.

2. Greed

Income Inequality

"Income inequality among working-age persons has risen faster in the United Kingdom than in any other OECD country since 1975. From a peak in 2000 and subsequent fall, it has been rising again since 2005 and is now well above the OECD average."

OECD December 2011 http://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/49170234.pdf

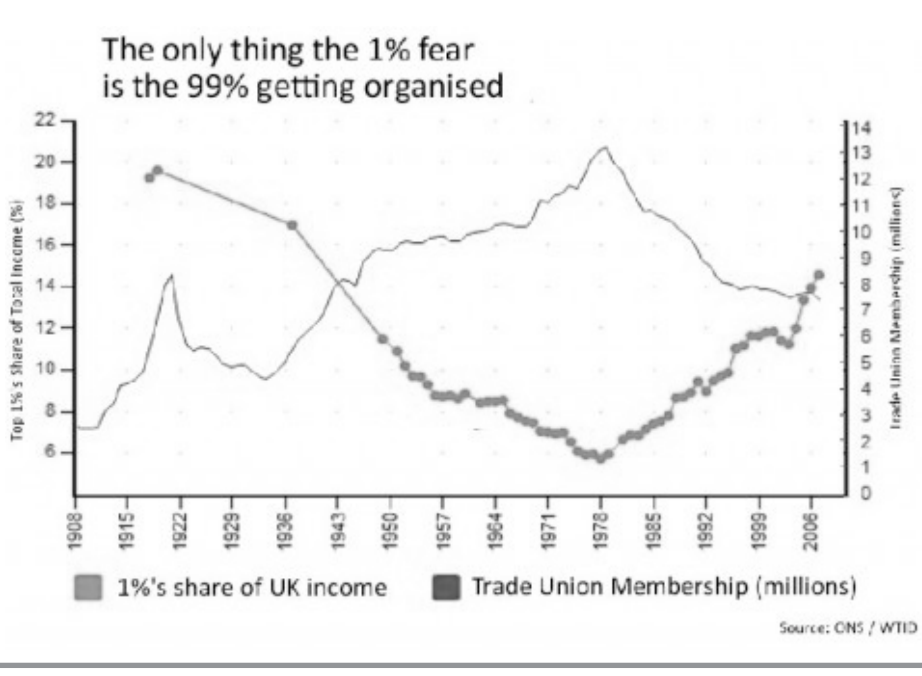
Income Inequality - the super-rich

The super-rich – the top one per cent of earners – pocketed 10p of every pound of income earned in the UK in 2010 -11, up from 7p in 1994-5. Meanwhile, the poorest 50 per cent of the population took home between them only 18p in every pound, down from 19p.

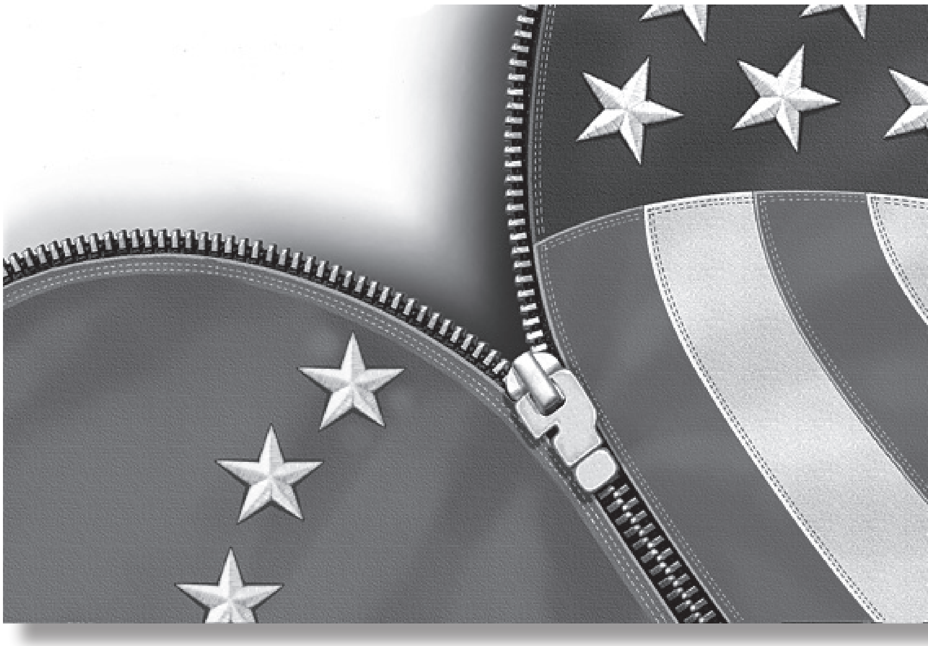
Oxfam, The True Cost of Austerity and Inequality in the UK, 2013 based on research by the Resolution Foundation (2013) 'Squeezed Britain', http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/media/media/downloads/Resolution-Foundation-Squeezed-Britain-2013_1.pdf

Wealth

The total wealth of the richest 1,000 increased in real terms from £297 billion in 2009 to £520 billion in 2014: Sunday Times Rich assuming a 15.5 per cent rate of inflation: a 75 per cent increase. The wealth of the top 1,000 is equivalent to almost half the National Debt.



THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP



The Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and the EU derives from an initiative launched by President Obama in February 2013. Preliminary work was undertaken by the Trans-Atlantic Economic Council formed in 2007 by multi-national companies based in both the EU and the US. The current negotiations are taking place in a series of closed-door meetings which began in 2013. They are likely to continue till the end of 2015. Corporate lobbies have direct access to negotiators.

The general objective is to eliminate any remaining forms of state intervention in the market and to enable companies to take legal action, in a closed supranational court, if they are prevented from providing goods or services in any market on a free and equal basis. It is a sequel to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) initiated in 2009 as part of Obama's 'pivot to Asia'.

An editorial in the *Financial Times* described the objectives of TTIP in the following terms:

> 'The shift to Asia of the centre of gravity cannot be stopped but a Grand Deal would be likely to delay the impact on the Atlantic's region's influence. By integrating markets now, the US and the EU, through their combined magnetic power, would secure their ability to set market standards through the rest of the world' (FT, 18 June 2013).

A key part of this 'setting of market standards' would be to ban the types of public ownership, subsidy and strategic direction that has helped a number of developing and emerging economies grow their economies. The EU and US currently control 46 per cent of world trade.

Concerns from the Trade Union Movement have been:

- ❑ Driving down of wages and conditions on both sides of the Atlantic
- ❑ removal of any remaining state support to producers
- ❑ erosion of health standards (GM crops: less stringent US health standards such as chickens washed in chlorine)
- ❑ opening public services to competition under the terms of the Investor State Dispute Settlement Clause – allowing companies to sue governments in a supranational court for denying them equal access to markets, including markets for public services such as health and education. The British Medical Association has expressed its concern on the impact of the ISDS on the NHS. This clause would also prevent governments from intervening to stop the external takeover of key national firms.

Current campaigns against TTIP include:
http://www.waronwant.org/campaigns/trade-justice/ttip;
World Development Movement www.wdm.org.uk/...campaign/transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership; Unite's June Policy Conference adopted outright opposition to TTIP
Unison has an anti-TTIP campaign.

CAMPAIGNING ORGANISATIONS

Benefits
Citizens Advice Bureaux www.cas.org.uk/
Child Poverty Action Group Scotland www.cpag.org.uk/scotland

Housing
Shelter (Scotland) www.scotland.shelter.org.uk/
UCATT, the construction trade union www.ucatt.org.uk/scotland

Public Ownership
Banks: Unite http://www.unitetheunion.org/how-we-help/list-of-sectors/finance-and-legal/
Rails: RMT http://www.rmt.org.uk/campaigns/
Rails: Aslef: http://www.aslef.org.uk/information/125678/action_for_rail/
Energy: Unison www.unison-scotland.org.uk/energy/
Postal services: CWU http://www.cwu.org/11975/campaigns.html

NHS
Unison http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/healthcare/
BMA Scotland http://bma.org.uk/news-views-analysis/news/tag/scotland

Exploitation at Work
STUC http://www.thereisabetterway.org/
Campaign for a Living Wage http://slw.povertyalliance.org/
Campaign for TU Freedom www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk/
Tax Justice Network www.taxjustice.net/

Local Government
Unison http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/news/2014/janfeb/0213.htm
Unite http://unitescotland.wordpress.com/
GMB http://www.gmbscotland.org.uk/index.php/site/subpage/campaigns
POA adminscot@poauk.org.uk
Defend Glasgow Services http://falseeconomy.org.uk/campaigns/item/defend-glasgow-services

Trident
Scottish CND www.banthebomb.org

EU and Austerity
Scottish Campaign against Eurofederalism
www.scaef.org

PEOPLES ASSEMBLIES IN SCOTLAND

PA Scotland
www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/scotland
email: peoplesassyscot@gmail.com
Facebook The Peoples Assembly Scotland
Twitter - @Peoplesassyscot

Clydebank TUC
www.clydebanktuc.org/

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Web: www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/dundee
Facebook: Dundee People's Assembly
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PEOPLE'S
SCOTLAND