

# COMMUNIST PARTY ELECTION MANIFESTO 2011



## THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CAN HELP TO DEFEAT THE CUTS

Communists say that the key issue in this election is how to defeat the Tory Coalition cuts and to secure policies that will rebuild Scotland's economy, provide jobs and redevelop the welfare state. The Scottish Parliament has to become part of this campaign.



### WHY THE CUTS ARE SO SERIOUS

The ConDem government is cutting:

- ❑ The direct grant to the Scottish parliament by over 25% in real terms over 4 years
- ❑ Benefits payments to people in Scotland by £1.8 billion annually.

Overall this will take up to 2 per cent growth out of the economy each year at a time when renewed recession is likely and the economy itself is increasingly vulnerable:

- ❑ A quarter of all manufacturing jobs have gone since 2006
- ❑ A quarter of all construction jobs have gone since 2006
- ❑ A fifth of those aged 16-24 are without employment.

All this is **before** the cuts have been imposed. The cuts themselves will destroy up to 50,000 public sector jobs and as many again in the private sector, particularly in smaller firms, shops and service providers who rely on the Scottish market

### THE CONDEM GOVERNMENT PLANS TO END THE WELFARE STATE

The previous Conservative government privatised gas, electricity, rail and bus transport and telecommunications – basic utilities on which people rely and which are today using their monopoly power to enforce sky-high pricing. Now the Condem government plans to privatise the Welfare State. Profit-hungry companies, using cheap, exploited labour, will enter every part of the welfare provision – into schools, colleges and universities, into the national health service and social care. The effect will be to force down standards and increasingly limit access to services to those able to pay. In Scotland the process will be less direct but lethal nonetheless. Although the Scottish Parliament has legal responsibility for education, the NHS and local government, central government funding is being cut so drastically that by 2014 only basic services will be available and the rest will have to be bought from the private sector.

### THE DEFICIT HOAX

The ConDems say it was public spending that caused the deficit and that the country faces bankruptcy unless it is cut. This is a lie. The deficit is the direct result of the banking crisis. The bail-out cost £120 billion and the crisis cost Britain 10 per cent of its growth. Even so Britain does not face bankruptcy. Britain still has a lower debt than the US, Japan and a number of other advanced countries. The ConDems are using the deficit as an excuse to privatise the welfare state and cut benefits – and in doing so risking still deeper recession and thereby increasing the deficit.



### ROLE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

We cannot magic away the cuts. Rolling them forward simply makes them worse later. Making the councils do the cutting evades responsibility. Enforcing a pay freeze still takes the money out of the Scottish economy and workers' pockets. The scale of the cuts must fully acknowledged, exposed and fought.

The Scottish Parliament's ability to resist will depend on the scale of the wider mass movement. But parliament has a responsibility to help build that movement. One small first step was taken in 2010 with the joint declaration of the three devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland denouncing the scale of the cuts. Such action must be escalated. The Scottish Parliament has the power to organise a referendum on the cuts – as Strathclyde Region did against water privatisation in 1992. It has the resources to bring together councils, service users and trade unions in a Scottish Convention of opposition. Action in Scotland can help build resistance in unity with the movements of opposition developing in Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

## WHO CONTROLS OUR WEALTH?



Scotland's wealth is created by its people: the care workers, scientists, engineers, teachers, transport workers whose labour creates value. But this wealth is controlled by a minute number of financial institutions. They use the savings of ordinary people to lever up the speculative profits of the super rich – the 0.1 per cent of the population who alone have the minimum £3 million to operate through investment banks.

These investment banks buy and sell companies. They shift capital to wherever the profit is highest. Their speculations led to the 2008 crisis. They mainly operate from the City of London, with a minor offshoot in Edinburgh, and they dominate governments - ultimately determining policy both in Westminster and Holyrood. They are directly responsible for the run down of our productive economy. Like the sheiks of the Middle East, they only retreat when faced by organised mass opposition. This is why Communists set a premium on the strength of the trade union movement in Scotland and its unity across Britain. Trade unions represent the biggest democratically organised force in the country. They have the organisation to give cohesion to all the smaller campaigns across local communities.



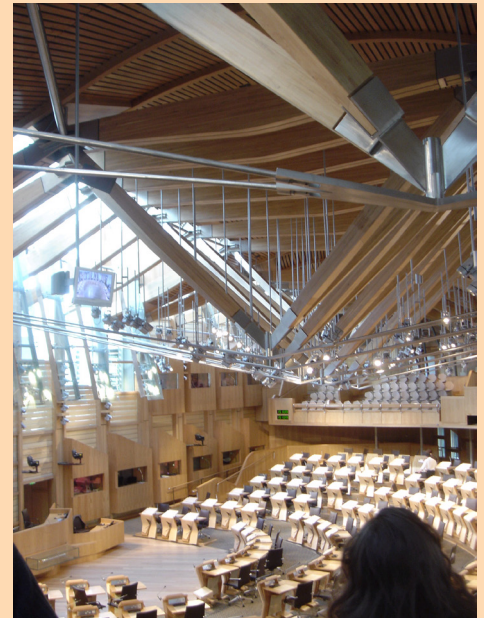
Promoted by John Foster, election agent for Marc Livingstone, Communist Candidate for Glasgow Anniesland constituency. CPB office, 72 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 7DA  
Printed by Clydeside Press Ltd, 37 High Street, Glasgow G1 1LX

## THE SCOTTISH ECONOMY: IT'S POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

Scotland's productive economy is today dangerously vulnerable. Investment in research and development is the lowest in Europe. Our big companies are almost all controlled by externally based finance companies – who buy and sell them for short-term profit. Manufacturing jobs are being lost so fast there will be none left in fifteen years. The private sector is failing Scotland. Only public sector intervention can ensure that Scotland's remaining skills in high quality engineering, IT, biosciences, energy, chemicals and food production are safeguarded and that we seize the potential that exists for developing technologies in renewal energy.

## POWERS A SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE

To do its job on behalf of working people, Scotland's parliament needs greater powers. Above all it needs the power and resources to intervene in the Scottish economy. At present its power is limited by the way funds are centrally allocated by the British government. And its limited tax raising powers (up to 3p in the pound) have never been used by any Scottish government.



The new Scotland Bill - based on the Calman Commission report - is currently going through Westminster. This would allow the Scottish Parliament to raise up to 50 per cent of its income through a direct tax in Scotland. It would also give powers to borrow. However, the total borrowing limit, set at £2.2bn, is totally insufficient - less than the amount the Tories have cut from Scotland's capital budget for the two years 2010-2012. At least £10 billion is needed if Scotland is to offer an alternative to the wasteful and hated Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or even to weather the storms of a recession where tax revenues would be markedly reduced. Moreover, if the power of big business is to be rolled back by a growing mass movement, new powers to levy taxes and borrow money would be needed to bring back into public ownership energy, transport and the privatised utility companies. Such a move would, of course, be vigorously challenged by the current UK government. It would also be challenged by the EU. Any attempt to subsidise industry or services or take them into public ownership would be contrary to EU competition law and a series of EU directives which rule that privatisation is the only game in town. Only people's power can confront such a challenge.

## HOUSING, FUEL POVERTY, CONSTRUCTION



A quarter of a million households languish on council and housing association waiting lists. In the past year, 60,000 have applied because they are homeless. The young face the prospect of living with their parents or digs into their thirties before they can think of buying their first house.

House-building has slumped to less than half the SNP government's long abandoned target of 35,000 new houses a year. 30,000 building workers have joined the dole queue since the slump, a figure which ignores those in construction-related manufacturing who have also been paid off. The same number of jobs is under threat with the planned cuts in affordable house building. The SNP claims not to be following Westminster's strategy of higher rents and ending security of tenure. Yet its government wants both existing and new tenants to compensate for slashed budgets through higher rents, poorer services and, for many new tenants, no long-term security. For first time buyers too, they mirror Con-Dem policies by being keener to shore up house builder profits than deliver genuine affordability.

We say

- Double affordable housing starts to more than 10,000 a year – with the Councils in the lead.
- Promote innovation in construction with a focus on high quality and secure jobs.
- End the shame of Scotland's 200,000 damp dwellings as the first target of a strategy to improve the quality and energy efficiency of our existing houses.
- Transfer the £1 billion Housing Benefit budget to Scotland and re-invest it in new and improved housing at affordable rents.  Couple this with rent controls and effective tenants' rights in the private rent sector.
- Tax property speculators to bring housing-designated land into use for more affordable housing.

## THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

The People's Charter puts forward the progressive alternative to the Tory cuts and has now been endorsed by both the Trades Union Congress and the Scottish Trades Union Congress. The Charter demands the public ownership of the banks and insurance companies that manage our savings, investment by the government in the productive economy, the taking of utilities back into public ownership and a massive housing programme. It calls for a fair deal for pensioners, the restoration of trade union rights and a drive against all forms of discrimination. For Scotland the Scottish Trade Union Congress's Better Way campaign outlines parallel demands. Communists support these demands as providing immediate programmes around which unity can be built.

## ORGANISATION DETERMINES EVERYTHING

Communists believe that it will only be after working people as a whole have taken control of the country's productive resources out of the hands of the banks and the super rich that it will be truly possible for ordinary people to decide the future of their country. But Communists also believe that in the meantime the organised power of working people, of trade unions and local communities, can secure advances that lead towards that goal. This happened in the 1910s, the 1940s and in the 1970s. Old age pensions, unemployment benefits, the welfare state, council housing, free access to all levels of education and the public ownership of basic utilities were all won through the organisation of working people in the past. Each gain provided the confidence and security to struggle for more – although it also meant that the super rich set themselves the objective of removing those advances. The first stage of this counter offensive began under Thatcher. Cameron seeks to complete the task.

I wish to join/have more information about the Communist Party of Britain

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Return to CPB, 72 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 7DA. [www.scottishcommunists.org.uk](http://www.scottishcommunists.org.uk)



## GREEN ENERGY OR TRIDENT

Scotland continues to play reluctant host to all Britain's nuclear weapons. Trident is opposed by a majority of Scots MPs, the trade unions and the churches. Opinion polls show three out of four Scots don't want it. These weapons do not simply threaten



Armageddon to people in other lands. They and the convoys carrying nuclear warheads on Scotland's busiest roads threaten everyone in Scotland. There is a litany of accidents, radiation leaks and safety lapses in and around Scotland's nuclear industry which is already threatening our public health and safety. Defence may be a reserved issue but the Scottish Parliament has already voted overwhelmingly against the replacement of Trident. It should now do much more to publicise these dangers to public health and give expression to the growing anti-Trident majority by calling on the UK government to scrap these weapons.

Trident is useless, dangerous and enormously expensive. We are now spending over £2 billion a year on Trident - money that could be invested to create jobs, homes and services. And there would be plenty left over to convert Scotland's struggling shipyards away from building platforms for war into building turbines to harness wave and tidal power around our



shores - a technology in which Scotland leads the world. Such an investment in green energy could create tens of thousands of jobs and put Scotland's scientific and engineering skills to better use.

## RESTORING THE POWER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local councils have lost control of most local services and have virtually no powers to raise finance of their own. Yet for over a century working people fought for local democracy so that they could exercise control over housing, schools and other local services and to raise funds to pay for them as they saw fit. If the tide of privatisation and big business control is to be rolled back, we need local elected representatives who are truly responsible for delivering these services to the people. Communists believe that local government should be funded locally, giving power to local councils, on the basis people's ability to pay. A local income tax, with higher levels for the wealthy, should be combined with a redrawing of council boundaries to create districts with roughly equal levels of wealth - ending the injustice of wealthy suburbs with their own separate councils paying less tax.

## THE ATTACK ON BENEFITS

The Government's Welfare Reform Bill 2011 is claimed to (a) improve work incentives, (b) simplify the benefits system and (c) make it less costly to administer. Yet it was the last Tory government that created the current complicated mess by shifting from supplementary benefit to income support. The Bill's real objective is to force people into low paid, insecure work. We are told that a 'life on benefits will no longer be an option' as if that was a life choice and there were millions of well-paid jobs. 'Make it less costly' is indeed a fundamental aim - together with making the benefit system much tougher. The Tories aim to slash £18 billion a year in benefits across Britain including £1bn from the disabled living allowance. At the same time they have provided big business with a gift of £24 billion by reducing Corporation Tax.

Amongst the changes set out in the Bill are:

- the introduction the universal credit
- introduction of a 'claimant commitment'
- the introduction of increased lone parent conditionality
- limiting awards of contributory ESA to a maximum period of 365 days for those in the work related activity group (despite paying for this through National Insurance contributions)
- provision for a new benefit, 'personal independence payment' in place of the existing disability living allowance
- provision for the capping of the total amount of welfare benefits a claimant or a couple receives
- housing benefit reforms, including a provision that appropriate maximum housing benefit could be calculated by the Secretary of State
- abolition of community care grants and crisis loans.

## THE NEED FOR UNITY AND THE DANGERS OF RACISM

The people of Scotland must continue to reject the racism of the BNP, and resist any attempt to divide the working class on the basis of skin colour or religion. This is particularly important at a time of unemployment and growing hardship when, as we know from historical experience, racism and other divisions are more likely to come to the fore and provide a breeding ground for fascism. The divisions fostered by the BNP, EDL/SDL and other fascist and racist organisations serve the interests of big business. Apart from the hurt and violence they inflict on individuals and communities, they divert attention from the real enemy of workers: capitalism.