**The way forward must be radical**

**Tom Morrison**

**The following motion has been submitted to the STUC Congress to be held in Dundee in April by Clydebank Trade Union Council.**

*Congress welcomes statements by our General Secretary that consideration should be given to a third option in any referendum on Scotland’s constitutional future.*

*In connection with such a Third Option Congress notes the report of the Labour Party Commission on the Future of the United Kingdom and welcomes its call for the replacement of the House of Lords by an elected Assembly of the Nations and Regions, for its proposal that constitutional status be given to the Sewell Convention (which provided the Scottish Parliament, among other things, with control over our country’s economic and industrial policies) and additionally that the Scottish Parliament be accorded greater borrowing powers.  Congress also notes the explicit constitutional requirement to rebalance the UK’s economy so that prosperity and investment can be spread more equally between different parts of the United Kingdom.*

*However, Congress views with great concern the document’s failure to make any explicit reference to the role of the public sector in securing this equality and its apparent assumption that this will be achieved in liaison with the private sector – despite all the evidence demonstrating that it has been the financialised ownership across the private sector that has been responsible for the lack of investment, de-industrialisation and uneven development.  Correspondingly, Congress deplores that failure of the Labour Party Commission to undertake consultation with the Trade Union movement or the STUC.*

*Congress therefore calls on General Council to make representations to the Labour Party to ensure that its policies on the role of the public sector and of renationalisation of basic services and utilities be incorporated and made explicit in any policy statements along with the active role of trade unions in all aspects of the management of economic assets.*

The discussion at Clydebank trade’s council meeting gave an opportunity to hear the voice of rank and file activists which we don’t often hear as its usually the ‘great and the good’ that get their voices heard.

There was a welcome for a proposal which offered a way out of the impasse between those who support independence and those who don’t, but don’t support the status quo either.

Was there a way to heal the breach on the left between forces that had previously worked together?

There was a recognition even among delegates who were sympathetic to the nationalist cause of a number of arguments made for greater devolution. Big corporations operate at British level with the support of **their** state; much of Scotland is controlled outwith its borders by transnational corporations finance capital; redistribution of wealth and power from especially London and the South East would be nigh on impossible under an independent Scotland, though radical federalism could assist that redistribution; constitutional change is needed to give economic and legislative powers to the Scottish Parliament to be able to intervene in the economy to shift the balance of wealth and power in favour of the working class.

Problems were identified with the Brown report. While there was unanimous support for the abolition of the House of Lords there was deep scepticism that a Keir Starmer led Labour Party would carry it out.

While Gordon Brown may be held in high regard in Labour Party circles, that is not a view shared by our delegates. The role of the private sector in the document fitted well with Brown’s misguided faith in the private sector. Some of us have not forgotten his support for PFI.

Comments on his support for the Iraq war could not be repeated here.

Brown’s lack of credibility was unanimous.

The lack of consultation with the STUC is noted in the motion and is deplorable. We understand that even Labour MSPs were not consulted which was felt to show the contempt of the Labour Party leadership has for the labour and trade union movement.

To conclude delegates felt only mass pressure from organised labour would make a reality of the constitutional change required to benefit working people.

*Tom Morrison is Secretary Clydebank TUC*