

The Queen Keeps the Scots in Her Realm

by Mary Burdman and Nancy Bradeen

Sept. 24—Despite a vigorous mobilization by pro-independence forces for the Sept. 18 Scottish independence referendum, bringing hundreds of thousands to the street, 55% of the electorate voted to stay in the United Kingdom. We are pleased to present below a commentary on the vote by Alan Clayton, an advocate of independence and member of the Scottish National Party.

The issues that fed into the fervor are not going to go away, and have implications for the whole U.K. They include the miserable economic reality facing most U.K. residents, which has stoked resentment against incumbents from all parties. This resentment particularly has hit the Labour Party, for which Scotland is a critical base. Vigorous campaigning by high-profile Labour politicians did not stop, and maybe contributed to, many Labour districts voting for independence.

As the support for the “Yes” vote steadily grew in the run-up to the election, from 30% to 45%, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in Westminster grew increasingly hysterical. Prime Minister David Cameron saw himself politically obligated to promise a significant widening of “devolution,” the granting of more powers on taxation and other issues to the Scottish parliament.

This “carrot” was accompanied by the stick. Two days before the vote, two of Scotland’s biggest financial institutions, the Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds, announced they would defect to London, if the pro-independence forces prevailed. While these banks, particularly RBS, are hardly popular institutions, they have powerful backers who could threaten an independent Scotland.

Cameron’s “devolution” promises to Scotland are going to create significant problems for him with other constituencies. One London observer recently told *EIR* that fulfillment of the promises could lead to significant constitutional changes in the U.K.

Before the recent devolution process, there used to be a Scottish Grand Committee in the Parliament which decided on Scottish issues, he said. Now, the Parliament could form an English Grand Committee on which only English MPs could serve and vote on

English issues. What this would really mean, is that the British Parliament would really only govern foreign policy and defense matters, and could lead to turbulence within the country, at a time of massive economic, financial, and political turmoil throughout the world.

Republic versus Empire

During the heated campaign, many advocates of independence cut to the quick, raising the question of the fundamental conflict between republic, and empire, especially the British Empire.

For example, Craig Murray, a former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, who was campaigning, as an Englishman, for Scottish independence, told RIA Novosti on Aug. 28, that the United Kingdom is a rogue state and a danger to the world.

“The British Government is deeply, deeply immoral. They don’t care how many people they kill abroad if it advances them. Anybody who votes ‘No’ [to Scottish independence on Sept. 18] is voting to support a pathological state which is a danger in the world; a rogue state and a state prepared to go to war to make a few people wealthy,” Murray said in a speech at St. Andrews in Scotland.

Surely, others in the struggle called to mind the Scottish “Poet of Freedom,” Robert Burns, a contemporary and supporter of the American Revolution. Burns’ poetry and song brim with trenchant republican polemics, of which the following poem condemning the original Act of Union between Scotland and Great Britain is exemplary.

“What force or guile could not subdue,
“Thro’ many warlike ages,
“Is wrought now by a coward few,
“For hireling traitor’s wages.



Courtesy of Alan Clayton

Hundreds of thousands of Scottish republicans rallied in the days leading up to the Sept. 18 vote on independence from the perfidious empire. Here, a huge “Yes” demonstration in Glasgow.

“The English st^{ell} [still] we could disdain,

“Secure in valour’s station;

“But English gold has been our bane—

“Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!”

So he says,

“We are bought and sold for English gold,

“Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!”