



**Jim Murphy Talks the Talk.** The leader of Labour in Scotland was interviewed for the *Holyrood Magazine* on March 3rd by Mandy Rhodes. With confidence he sets out his thoughts on how the party has changed since its successive Scottish election defeats and what he's personally learned from these losses and the referendum campaign. His desire to re-establish what Labour in Scotland stands for is evident and how they see their values as being enshrined in equality; aspiration and the championing of the causes of the working class were all clear. Sound vaguely familiar? Sounds like, on the surface at least, the label on the tin matches the contents. He proudly explains, "so what do we stand for?" My politics (he says) will always stand for the right of working-class parents to have the chance of having middle-class kids and (whilst) .. an awful lot of .. people spend their time debating these things .. I say, of course it is.

So he's a man of the people then and Labour in Scotland are a party of the people?

Well this is clearly something that he feels the need to re-emphasise. He goes on to point out that "*you don't need to be poor to be against poverty*". Empathy is important but authenticity (I think) in politics is really crucial. So representing the people's interests and particularly so in relation to understanding poverty and the needs of the poor are the cornerstone of Labour in Scotland's values? The only problem is, when you scratch under the veneer, the rhetoric doesn't match the reality. These words of wisdom may suggest morality; insight and vision, but how do they stack up against his actions or that of his party? Poorly, is the polite reply! With abysmally being the honest answer!

It's difficult, if not impossible to see how to any meaningful extent, working class parents can raise children who will be financially better off than themselves, when one fifth of all children in Scotland are living in poverty and Labour actively **prevented** the Scottish Government from getting the powers to tackle it within the Smith Commission. It's equally difficult to envisage how his vision can become a reality for the many when more and more Scottish families are trapped within *in-work poverty* and are reliant on foodbanks to put food on the table - and you guessed it, Labour **did not support** the full transfer of powers over welfare to the Scottish Government within the Commission.

Furthermore, it would require the imagination of Walt Disney alongside the type of magical powers that Derren Brown would be proud of. To be able to visualise how these noble aspirations could ever be delivered (for people in Scotland) is difficult when Labour have already **committed** themselves to the current **austerity** spending plans of the coalition Government - a further £30 billion additional cuts to services and welfare. Furthermore how could what he describes ever be delivered when Labour has already set out its stall by targeting the £1.2 billion to be saved from benefit fraud ahead of the £70 billion to be saved from tackling tax evasion (HMRC, 2012).

Clearly there is a distinction to be made between talking the talk and walking the walk, but when you have Murphy's chief of staff John McTernan describing Scotland as "narrow, racist and Presbyterian", I'm not even sure Labour like the Scottish people, let alone truly empathise with their needs. Furthermore, some critics are likely to think that Labour offering Scotland the **least powers out of the four parties** as they began the Smith Commission negotiations, is clear evidence of Labour's desire to put politics before the needs of the people. So this hardly demonstrates the authenticity he proclaimed in his interview.

So how can Labour generate the respect they need and re-energise their political fortunes when despite their best efforts, the majority of people know that '**the vow**' wasn't delivered. The '**near federal state**' isn't even close to being delivered and that the lies or half truths permanently emanating from their propaganda falls way short of what the Scottish people said they wanted before the Smith Commission delivered its proposals.

In a panel base survey between 29 September and 1 October 2014, 71% of people wanted full control over taxation and 75% wanted full powers over welfare. With Labour's support, the Commission proposes Scotland gets control over 30% of taxation and 15% of welfare, yet they claimed the 'vow' is being delivered in full, not in a million years is it.

So for all the monologue; all the rhetoric; all the propaganda; and all the narrative about what Labour say they are, they fail to see that actions speak louder than words in the eyes of the people they desperately want to impress. It's no wonder their fortunes appear to suggest a terminal decline, as evident from the latest polls.

by **Raibeart MacPhàrlain**

### Voter registration ends on April 20th.

Over the past few weeks it has come to light that thousands of people who have been registered at the same address for many years, 40 years in one case, found out that they were no longer registered. Because of the changes to the voter registration system, lots of us previously on the electoral register are no longer on it, I myself had to re-register having been at the same address for 8 years.

To register online go to [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) if unable to do it online contact your local electoral office (usually local council HQ) and arrange to register by post, or ask the person who delivered the bulletin if they can help, but be quick there is not much time left. Please **SHARE** this information with everyone you know.

Like our Facebook page at [facebook.com/truescotnews?fref=nf](https://facebook.com/truescotnews?fref=nf)  
download previous issues from our new website [www.freedomofinformation.scot](http://www.freedomofinformation.scot) (*functional but under construction*)

**21 reasons not to trust Labours John McTernan.** A British Labour Party political adviser, political strategist and commentator. He was the director of communications for the Australian prime minister, Julia Gillard, from September 2011 to June 2013, where he encouraged Labour staff to mobilise "*Twitter armies*" to ridicule the opposition and *attack* MPs, which he would point out to journalists as *proof of public opinion*. He is now Chief of Staff at the Labour Scotland Branch office. After Jim Murphy's appointment as head of the Labour Scotland Branch 96 days ago he set to hand picking the team he felt could help him win Scotland back. An essential job after siding with the Tories in an all out fear and lie attack against Scotland. Keeping that in mind any sane person would have thought that Murphy would be looking to well respected and likable Scottish Politicians with at least a modicum of liking and respect for the Scottish people. Not Mr Murphy, he picks a team that includes Blair McDougall, the self appointed mastermind behind "Project Fear" and of course John McTernan.

Mr McTernan openly criticises Scotland and her people, he is an avid supporter of Margaret Thatcher, at last year's **TORY** conference, yes Tory Conference, he stated "*It's a good thing [Margaret Thatcher] did what she did*" to the UK economy, and that "*There's a far wider range of assets that are currently owned by the government which I would privatise*", and him a supposed Socialist?

Here is a list of McTernan political wants and beliefs; **1:***Wants to send British troops back to Iraq* **2:***Thinks Scotland is a "mendicant (beggar) nation"* **3:***Scots are "narrow, Presbyterian and racist"* **4:***Said "a Tory revival would be good for Scotland"* **5:***that "Labour is not a socialist party"* **6:***Insists that "privatisation is good for the NHS"* **7:***that Margaret Thatcher privatising the railways was a "triumph" which must be "protected" from trade unions* **8:***"liberal whingers are wrong – we should shut our libraries"* **9:***the living wage would be "a disaster for jobs"* **10:***Wants to sell off Scottish Water and the Forestry Commission* **11:***reintroduce bridge tolls* **12:***end free personal care for the elderly* **14:***charging students tuition fees is "a no-brainer"* **15:***Reckons "Labour didn't go nearly far enough" when courting the markets and big companies like Tesco* **16:***UK subsidises Scotland by £10-20bn a year* **17:***"nuclear deterrence is socialist"* **18:***Labour would have done "much better" if it "had never flirted with pacifism/unilateralism"* **19:***"we need to listen to Theresa May" and surrender lots more civil liberties to the security services* **20:***rUK should confiscate an independent Scotland's oil if it didn't accept a share of UK debt* **21:***thinks MPs are underpaid*

Three months before the 2011 Holyrood elections he predicted "*a convincing victory*" for Labour and said just two weeks before it that Labour could still win, so long as it campaigned "*much more negatively*". It is common sense to assume that Jim Murphy shares the views of McTernan, why else would he have appointed him? A vote for Labour in Scotland is a vote for these beliefs, Scotland doesn't share these beliefs and we need to show Labour Scotland Branch and London HQ we don't. A vote for the SNP is a vote for Scotland, a **vote for the SNP** is a vote for fairness, social justice and an end to austerity.

**This year's General Election will be the closest since 1974** – and the nastiest, writes ALLAN MASSIE.

Let's be clear. Allan Massie is a British nationalist. Not quite in the spittle-flecked, purple-faced, ranting style of Alan Cochrane. (Although he appears to be competing with Poor Old Cocks in this diatribe.) But a British nationalist nonetheless. As such, he portrays the SNP, not as they are, but as British nationalists would like them to be seen by the public.

The same applies to Scotlands politics and what we might term the "**mood of the nation**". Either Mr Massie is so completely detached from the political scene in Scotland that it is invisible to him, or he is deliberately trying to mislead when he describes that mood as "*ugly*". In fact, the mood is very upbeat and hopeful. One might almost say exited at the prospect of putting a democratic dent in the armour of a British state that has hitherto been deaf to the voice of the people and impervious to meaningful reform. There is ugliness, of course. But it comes, not from the ranks of the SNP and other progressive parties in Scotland, but from the relatively small band of British nationalist fanatics engaged in an increasingly shrill and vitriolic campaign in defence of the ruling elites of the British state.

Massie also claims that the SNP is still fighting the referendum. Again, he is either tragically ill-informed or dishonest. Certainly, independence remains the long-term goal. But the SNP is fighting this election on a policy platform that is progressive and so clear that even a blinkered British nationalist such as Alan Massie can't avoid acknowledging at least some of it.

That policy platform includes such things as, **1.**an end to austerity economics **2.**no renewal of Trident **3.**real Home Rule for Scotland, as promised in the lead up to the referendum vote **4.**abolition of the House of Lords **5.**introduction of a living wage. While these sort of policies are evidently an anathema to right-wing ideologues like Allan Massie, to most people they appear no more than the kind of considered alternatives to the stultifying orthodoxies of the British state which, in a properly functioning democracy, would be on offer from any party seeking to oust the Tories.

Massie opines that Middle England would be "*furious*" if the British political system fails to ensure that hegemonic two-party duopoly is maintained. His view is that, if any party other than those which are approved by the British establishment gains political power while playing by the British state's own rules, then those rules must be ignored.

His reasoning is that the rules must be ignored so as to avoid a turmoil of public outrage that he himself is doing his level best to whip up. Not because the SNP has broken any rules, but precisely because they are working within those rules.

Massie and his fellow British nationalists are playing a dangerous game with their hate-mongering. Compare the language deployed by the British nationalist propaganda machine with the reasoned rhetoric of Nicola Sturgeon and other Scottish progressives such as Patrick Harvie. There may well be a whirlwind to reap from the seeds of anti-Scottish animus that they are sowing.

Massie is mightily concerned about a backlash in England to any SNP involvement in the government of the UK. His British nationalist bigotry prevents him giving so much as a moment's thought to the reaction of the people of Scotland if their democratically elected representatives are excluded in a storm of spitting, contemptuous vilification such as Massie gives us a glimpse of.  
by **Peter A Bell**