

independence. Devolution is designed to tie down the SNP in the administration of Scotland as a region of the U.K.”

The Neil camp believes that the issue of independence should not be marketed like a product by finding a popular consensus of opinion among voters on secondary issues, a strategy made infamous by the toe-sucking U.S. architect of “triangulation,” former adviser to both Democratic and Republican candidates Dick Morris. But rather, independence should be pursued as a vision that provides a universal idea of justice and the good for all people.

In an editorial statement that appeared in *The Scotsman* newspaper on Aug. 8, Neil attacked the notion that being a nationalist is equal to being an isolationist or chauvinist. Including an appeal to end the inhumane sanctions against the people of Iraq, he stated that, if elected, “One of my priorities will be to establish a foreign affairs forum. . . . Far from being the antithesis of internationalism, nationalism is an essential component for dialogue and cooperation between nations.” This is a far cry from the public apologists for the British oligarchy who, in their fawning acclamations for “globalism,” claim that nationalism is the root of modern fascism. Any competent historian knows that modern fascism is based on empire, ruled by an oligarchical elite, organized around the central belief that man is merely a beast.

Opposing Neil for the SNP leadership position is John Swinney, also a member of the Scottish Parliament and close to Salmond, a former Royal Bank of Scotland economist. Upon his announcement to stand for election, Swinney, in an interview with the *Sunday Herald* of Scotland, gave his view for SNP policy. In his attempts to pursue popular opinion, he said, “We’ve got to begin to formulate policy in a way that a government goes about forming policy — with a wide consultation.” One of Swinney’s aims is to win fiscal autonomy for Scotland within the confines of the devolved Scottish Parliament. “I’d want to be able to control all tax revenue raised in Scotland,” he stated. Though a desirable goal, the question remains: How do you achieve such ends when it is ultimately the British Parliament in Westminster that has the last say on such fundamental matters?

As a result of Swinney choosing to run for election as leader (National Convener) of the SNP, he had to step down from his position as deputy leader (Senior Vice-Convener). This has created a situation where both leadership positions are now up for election. Currently, three people have announced their intention to stand for that position: Kenny MacAskill MSP, Rosanna Cunningham MSP, and Peter Kearney, the current National Political Education and Training officer of the SNP.

When the membership of the Scottish National Party meets to elect new party leaders at their national conference, it would not be inappropriate for them to consider the words of their national poet, Robert Burns, in his poem “The Vision,” and to recall that worthy quote from the book of Proverbs: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

Interview: Peter Kearney

‘End the Union of 1707,’ Says Scottish Candidate

Peter Kearney is a candidate for the position of Senior Vice-Convener, or deputy leader, of the Scottish National Party (SNP). He lives in Glasgow, Scotland, and works as a surveyor. Kearney is the current National Political Education and Training Officer of the SNP and is the SNP Convener of Coatbridge and Chryston Constituency. The following interview with Mark Calney occurred on Aug. 8.

EIR: In July of last year, we had the formal opening of the Scottish Parliament, which had been dissolved almost 300 years ago with the Treaty of Union in 1707. Does this mean that Scotland is now independent?

Kearney: The short answer to that question really is no. Scotland is not independent. Independence, as most people in the world would understand it, means national self-determination. It means that the nation-state has its hands on all the levers of power. What that means is that you have complete fiscal autonomy, you have control over macro-economic policy, defense matters, foreign affairs, social security, and all the other domestic matters such as health, housing, and transport. The Scottish Parliament has simply created another level of administration — another authority within the British state. Scotland is still part of the United Kingdom. The Westminster Parliament in London is still the sovereign legislature, insofar as Scotland is concerned.

What happened last year, was that a number of powers that had been devolved or administered from London, were transferred to the Scottish Parliament. It is similar to, but far less, than some of the powers that a state legislature would have in the United States. For example, the Scottish Parliament can legislate on matters like health and service spending. It can also control the transport budget for roads, and the education budget for schooling. But, it cannot have any input or control over questions like energy policy, which is an enormous area for Scotland, because Scotland currently is the fifth-largest oil producer in the world and has the largest oil and gas reserve of any country in Europe. However, it is the



Westminster Parliament that taxes those reserves, gets the income from them, and determines where that money goes.

EIR: The fact that the Scottish Parliament has been reconvened, even with its limited powers, reflects the outcome of the referendum that occurred prior to that.

Kearney: The referendum that brought the Parliament into being was voted on in September 1997, under [British Prime Minister] Tony Blair. The Labour Party won the general election in 1997. The reason they had devolution and the transfer of some limited powers back to Scotland, and the reason they had that in the Labour Party manifesto, was primarily because of pressure from the Scottish National Party and the Scottish electors, who wanted more control over their own affairs. The Parliament is extremely limited in what it can ultimately deliver. And although it is still an important platform that the Scottish National Party has to use, of itself it will not lead to independence.

EIR: I've heard you describe "devolution" as a "constitutional cul-de-sac" for the SNP and Scotland. What is "devolution" exactly?

Kearney: An example of "devolution" might be the German Landtag, in various German states, that has powers to legislate on certain subjects and administer certain areas of policy. Catalonia, in Spain, is another example.

In the case of Scotland there are things like health, housing, transport, and education that have been "devolved," or removed [from Westminster] to the Scottish Parliament, which can now legislate on them. But the big powers, as I would describe them, the real levers of authority, such as defense, foreign affairs, taxation, macro-economics, and energy, are firmly left in the grip of the national government in Westminster. Another point to keep in mind, is that having the ability to legislate on these powers in the Scottish Parliament is only part of the picture. For a government to be truly autonomous, it needs to have the independence that comes with being able to raise taxes. The Scottish Parliament has only a very limited power in that respect. The legislation that created the Parliament allows it to vary the basic rate of income tax by plus or minus three pence in every pound. Theoretically, the Scottish Parliament could levy an extra tax in Scotland that could raise a couple of hundred million pounds a year in revenue. But, that is all. It can't get access to, for example, the petroleum revenue tax from oil. Scotland has to work within a budget that is given from Westminster. Every year, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, carves up the British public spending cake and allocates an amount of that to Scotland. Once that has been allocated, then the Scottish Parliament can decide how they want to slice up their own cake. But, they only have a piece of the British cake. They don't have a cake of their own, which is what independence means, and what the SNP would argue for.

EIR: With the resignation of Alex Salmond as head of the SNP, an election campaign has begun for the leadership positions of the party that will be determined at the end of September. Can you give our readers an idea of what the distinctions are between the different factions of the SNP, which are vying for election?

Kearney: Alex Salmond had been the leader of the Scottish National Party for ten years, having been elected by the party in 1990. He surprised everyone when he announced last month that he intended to step down as party leader. Many people didn't expect this, because the party is now in a position where we expect to be fighting a general Westminster election in the U.K. probably next year. Tony Blair will have been in power for four years. Although, unlike the United States, we don't have fixed parliamentary terms, the British Prime Minister can call a general election to suit himself or herself. But it's normally called within five years of the last one, and the smart money is on May or June of next year.

With that in mind, the Scottish National Party has been planning and preparing for that campaign, and it is unusual for the leader to step down at this point. But, it happened, and what it means is, we now have another contest inside the SNP for the post of leader, as well as the position of deputy leader. This is because the current deputy leader, John Swinney, will be standing for the leadership, and he will be contesting that position with Alex Neil.

As far as the deputy leader position of the party is concerned, my two opponents are Rosanna Cunningham and Kenny MacAskill. Both are members of the Scottish Parliament, and I am not. Though I stood for election to the Parliament last year, I was not elected.

One of the main platforms I'm standing on is that I believe that it is very important for the SNP at this time not to concentrate all our abilities and all our resources inside our Scottish Parliamentary group. I think that that would be a mistake. Although the Scottish Parliament is an important development in Scottish politics, it's not the end of the story. It can't give us independence. We still need to win on other levels. We still need to fight strong campaigns to increase our share of the vote at Westminster. We also need to fight campaigns to increase our seats in the European Parliament. The Scottish National Party now has three parliaments that we fight elections to, and to say that the members of the Scottish Parliament are the most important people in the party would be fundamentally wrong. First of all, our members are the most important people in the party, and we need to make sure that we keep our link with the members. There is concern within the party that that may be eroding at the moment—that the Scottish Parliamentary group is focussing too closely on devolution and on the Unionist plan to keep Scotland as part of the United Kingdom. What we need to remind ourselves of is, that there is a bigger picture out there. We must not take our eye off the prize of independence. But, if we keep squabbling and arguing over how best to slice up Scotland's share

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of the British cake, we'll forget the fact that what we should be arguing for is a Scottish cake — our own independent parliament.

The other reason that I am standing for deputy leader, is that within days of the other two candidates declaring, they had both stated publicly that they were in agreement with one another on the substantive policy areas. They also both back the same candidate for the leadership, which is John Swinney. And they both agreed with one another on the strategy and the tactics that the party is currently employing. It certainly struck me that that hardly made for a proper election contest. I think the members of this party need to be offered a choice, and they won't be offered a choice by two candidates saying they more or less stand for exactly the same thing.

EIR: I've noticed in the British press, and in particular in the Scottish press, that the faction of the SNP which you represent, which wants to make the primary issue of the SNP independence, is constantly portrayed as being "radicals." It reminds me of how the British press used to characterize the Founding Fathers of America, such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin.

Kearney: If I'm in the company of Benjamin Franklin, being called a "radical" or a "fundamentalist," then I'm very proud to be in that sort of company.

Yes, the SNP is a political party, and we do fight elections within the British state, which means we need a manifesto with a whole range of fiscal, social, and economic policies. But, beyond that, the Scottish National Party is a movement. It's also a national liberation movement. We have a unique selling point which no other party in Scotland has, and that is that we want to free Scotland from its current position within the British Union. We want to achieve sovereign independence for our country. That means we have a higher moral purpose, literally, than any of our opponents. And, if we get too bogged down in the detail of manifestos, line by line, and economic policies, line by line, we will lose sight of that vision. Then, we will also lose the ability to invigorate the Scottish public and remind them that they get a very raw deal from being part of the British state. They would be far better off managing their own state.

EIR: Far too often we hear in the media, and also from politicians themselves, the idea that "politics is the art of compro-

mise," as opposed to politics being guided by principle. I was struck by what you stated in your press release: "But from the start I'd like to make it clear that I believe the pursuit of social justice and independence are indivisible."

Kearney: I think that that is a sad reflection on politics, not only in Scotland or the United Kingdom, but also in Europe, and across the world. In many places around the world, compromise has come to replace principle. I think the end result of trends like that is that people disengage from the political process. People become de-motivated and de-politicized, and that cannot be good. We all have to make hard choices in politics, at whatever level. It doesn't do the voters any justice or any service to somehow pretend that with a few warm words and sound bites, we can paper over those hard choices. In reality, we can't. The danger for all parties, but particularly my own party, is that we fall into the trap of the focus group mentality, where we listen to the lowest common denominator view of society's wants and desires, and then try to package ourselves to appeal to those opinions. We must not be reactive. We must be proactive. Political parties shouldn't follow. They should lead. We should set an example. Our vision may not currently be shared by the majority of people in this country; therefore, it's up to us to make sure that it is. We don't change depending on what's in or out of fashion at the moment.

EIR: I'd like you to address the economic situation facing the Scottish people. You and a few of the other leaders in the SNP have pointed out some paradoxes in this area. The mass media on both sides of the pond, continue to tell us that we are in an unparalleled economic boom in human history, that we have entered the so-called "New Economy." Scotland is situated in the North Sea, surrounded by the largest oil deposit in western Europe, yet you have some of the highest gasoline prices in the world. I just read a report by Fergus Ewing, an SNP Member of the Scottish Parliament, which examined the bankruptcies occurring in the Highlands because of the skyrocketing price of gasoline.

Kearney: Not too long ago, I spent several weeks in Florida, and I found the cost of filling up a car to be insignificant compared to what we are used to paying in Scotland. For example, to fill up an average family car in Scotland will cost in the region of £40, which is \$60 to \$65 to fill the tank. Of course, this has a direct effect on the cost of every single commodity, and has an impact on every business in the coun-

try. That is something that independence, and Scotland being in control of its oil reserves and deciding how it uses income from them, would be able to address immediately.

To get on to the point you made about the wider economic issues and the pretense that there is some global boom, and how people say that we live in a global market place: Ultimately, these are vacuous sound bites. The perception that people are trying to promote there, is that somehow the concept of national sovereignty doesn't exist anymore and we are just one big market. People talk a lot about multinational corporations that straddle the world. I think that that is a misnomer. The more accurate description would be "trans-national" corporations. Those trans-national corporations, whether they be Sony, McDonald's, or Coca-Cola, all have a locus in a particular state, and at the end of the day their global income will return in large measure to that state.

It's too easy for most people to think of these global empires as face-less, but they do have a base. I believe that the concept of national sovereignty is as alive today as it was 300 years ago. Take a look at one example: In Malaysia, Prime Minister Mahathir showed last year that you can stand up to the global currency speculators and you can exert your own economic sovereignty in the world. The financiers told them that the sky would fall in and Malaysia couldn't withdraw their currency from the global marketplace. But they were wrong. Mahathir did it, and their economy has prospered as a result.

EIR: In the recent months, we have seen actions taken by nations in various regions of the world to protect their own populations against that type of economic speculation and savagery. There has been an international fight to address that issue, and to create a new financial system that is based on national sovereignty and physical economic production rather than speculation. We have seen hundreds of parliamentarians, legislators, and other leaders who have signed on to the Ad Hoc Committee for a New Bretton Woods, a policy to reestablish a sound monetary system based on those principles which have been advocated internationally by Lyndon LaRouche. We've also seen the Italian government take the first concrete step toward that new system, when it recently implemented Jubilee 2000, and wrote off the debts owed by the underdeveloped nations. How do you view these developments?

Kearney: As far as the push for a New Bretton Woods, I have endorsed that policy. Ultimately, the economies of the world must be anchored in tangible assets and physical production. The fictitious dot.com bubble is beginning to burst. There have been a couple of major bubble bursts in the U.K. with some of these dot.com start-ups, which were grossly overinflated by the stock market. As far as I'm aware, there isn't a single dot.com company that has made a pound of profit. So, what they're basing their value on, is some sort of future potential, not in anything tangible that they have produced and would qualify as a real profit. This is something

we must get away from, because it is not anchored in reality — the hard reality of human labor and production.

Also, the point you made about global capital and debt reduction; you're right that the Italian government did write off a number of loans to developing countries. That is certainly welcome and a good step. The problem with debt reduction at the moment, and the goals that have been achieved by Jubilee 2000, is that all these arrangements have been bilateral. The British government has reduced or wiped out some of its loans, but they weren't particularly huge. What really needs to happen to change the position of developing economies is for the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and the World Bank to agree to multilateral deals, where the real debt owed to those institutions is removed or radically restructured without some of the almost suicidal conditions that are attached to those loans.

EIR: The United Nations UNICEF organization released a report in June which revealed that some of the worst child poverty conditions in the world are in Great Britain. I was astounded to read that one-third of the children in Scotland, that is, almost 330,000 children, live on the breadline. This is below the levels of child poverty found in such nations as Turkey, Hungary, and Poland. This, again, appears to be one of those economic paradoxes occurring in a country which is thought to be one of the most advanced and economically developed nations of the world.

Kearney: We are very much a nation of haves and have nots. When 30% of the children in Scotland are living at or below the poverty level, we are beginning to see the reemergence of things like tuberculosis, which supposedly had been eradicated 30 or 40 years ago. The prospects for so many of these people is absolutely bleak. This gets back to the point I made originally about de-politicizing people and getting them out of the political system. When people get to that level, they tend to switch off from the political system entirely, because they feel it can do nothing for them. So, we end up with an underclass, and that serves the purposes of those politicians who created it, because they are no longer answerable, because they [the underclass] don't vote. It's a vicious cycle.

EIR: Given what you've said about national sovereignty, how do you view the debate over the euro?

Kearney: This is a very important debate, particularly for Scotland. Unfortunately, because of the fact that we are part of the British state at the moment, we have no say. We have no input into the decisions that Tony Blair and his government may or may not make. Like the debt reduction issue, I'm convinced that an independent Scotland would have a very different view on assistance to developing countries.

The case for a common currency within Europe has not been proved without doubt. For every argument in favor of a common currency, such as stability of exchange rates, there are counter-arguments that work against it. One of them

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would be, that you no longer have the ability to make changes in your interest rates as part of your government policy. The Republic of Ireland, as an example, with its 3 million people, as compared to Scotland's 5 million, is a member of the European Union and the common currency. Ireland is currently experiencing an increase in inflation, but cannot adjust its interest rate as a means to cope with this problem, since Ireland's interest rate is set in Frankfurt. So, the jury is still out on the issue of the euro in Scotland, until we achieve independence and have our own currency.

EIR: Scotland used to be one of the world's leaders in shipbuilding. Now the shipyards and other industries in the country are shut down. How do you see the problem that Scotland is losing its skilled labor force?

Kearney: The onset of the loss of these industries came about with the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979. They had a profoundly anti-trade union mentality, and they were also very much against state subsidy to any industry, which had an effect on railways, steel, coal, and shipbuilding—all traditional heavy industries. That was exacerbated right through the Thatcher regime, but was then picked up by the Blair government in 1997 and carried on. So, the end result has been that that heavy manufacturing base, which I definitely believe any economy requires—because a steel industry, for example, once you lose it, is exceptionally difficult to create it again. And a steel industry is the basis of so many other industries. That has largely gone in Scotland, to be replaced by service industries. . . . What we have to do, is encourage indigenous companies to invest in technology at our own national level and build up our own industrial base. The answer is not to have global corporations setting up in this country and becoming the major employer.

EIR: I've noticed, at least in the British press, that there appears to be a resurgence of the Tories in the U.K., led by William Hague. In fact, I saw a comment in the Scottish press describing an election race between Blair and Hague as "Tweedledum versus Tweedledumber." I have to say that it is strikingly similar to the U.S. Presidential race between Al Gore and George W. Bush.

Kearney: I would make that comparison. In many respects, New Labour, as they now style themselves, has basically inherited the Thatcher and Major mantle. When Tony Blair

was elected in 1997, Gordon Brown, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, pledged that they would carry on the Conservative's public spending plans for the next two years. So, we really didn't have a change in government. The policies of Margaret Thatcher and John Major were continued by Tony Blair. . . . There is very little distinction between the current New Labour Party and their so-called opponents in the Conservative Party. . . . In the case of New Labour, they are losing their connection to the base that previously supported them. In Scottish terms, it is fertile ground for the SNP, and it's up to the Scottish National Party to offer a social justice agenda that promises infrastructure and equality to the Scottish people. It is up to us to pick up those soft votes Labour has effectively discarded.

EIR: I'd like to go back to the opening of the Scottish Parliament last year, when the republican song by Robert Burns, "A Man's a Man for a' That," was sung in the presence of (and much to their dismay) Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, and Prince Charles. This brings up the question of the royal family in politics and in Scotland. I'd like you to comment on that, especially since Charles's sister, Princess Ann, has taken a higher profile role in Scotland, and there has been talk of the possibility of restoring the Stuart mantle upon her to continue the royal lineage of the present House of Windsor in Scotland.

Kearney: It's interesting. I think that the national and international view of the United Kingdom would probably be that of a royalist state, with the population firmly behind and in support of the British monarchy. That support does not run as deep as people think it does. When opinion polls have been carried out in the past, which include all parts of the United Kingdom, on their view of the monarchy, Scotland gets the highest percentage of people who are against an unelected head of state and against the present British royal family. Commonly, it will be above 50% against.

Bearing that in mind, the political developments in Scotland over the last year have left the royal family, and royalists generally, very concerned. If it's in the interest of the British state to hold on to Scotland, for pretty self-evident reasons (primarily as an enormous source of funds), then it's obviously in the interest of the monarchy and the royal family, as the pinnacle of the British state. They play a role in maintaining British rule in Scotland. I think they've been very con-

cerned about the changes in Scottish politics and Scottish society, to the point that they've appointed special advisers to look at the Scottish situation and see if they can somehow increase their relevance in this country. There is nothing that they could do that would make the British royal family more relevant or more appealing to the people in this country. There will always be a small, aging minority of people, that generation which lived through the Second World War, who fondly view the Queen, her husband, and the rest of the family. But, that's changing. If you look to the younger voters, the population below age 25, they do not have those old attachments and fond memories. They see them for what they are, and what the current generations of royals have proved themselves to be: a parasitical family, who have no real role to play in a modern, European, forward-looking society. They're an historical anachronism.

I can't say that there would be a majority of Scots who tomorrow would vote for a republic, but I believe those who would man the barricades to defend the royal family are very much in the minority. Perhaps that's another area that the SNP needs to lead on. We don't have a conclusive policy on that. The current policy of the Scottish National Party is that the issue of the monarchy would be put to the people in a referendum. Meanwhile, we would not support or oppose them. Perhaps that is something that needs to be reassessed.

EIR: We've run into another paradox again. Tony Blair, with all his chest beating on the issue of making the world safe for "democracy," nominally presides over one house of Parliament, the House of Lords, which no one in the U.K. cast a ballot to elect. Additionally, I don't believe anyone voted for the royal family.

Kearney: Given the opportunity, they never would, either. My personal view here is that the monarchy and the unelected heads of state are utterly unjustifiable. They are anti-democratic in every respect, and can never be legitimate for any country. People make the point that the Queen is nothing more than a figurehead. But that really belies the reality. Just looking at the pomp and circumstance and pageantry you could say, "Yes, she's a figurehead." But, beneath the surface is a person who has real constitutional powers. They are real executive powers that can be used. We should not forget that the head of the British state is an unelected monarch, and that person does control an enormous amount of patronage and power, which gives them huge influence.

In conclusion, permit me to say that it's an exciting time for Scotland and an exciting time for the Scottish National Party. The leadership and deputy leadership election has got to be something that we use as an opportunity to re-focus our energies. If we focus on the big picture, which is to end the Union of 1707 and set Scotland up to take its place in the world among the community of nations, then we will have made the right decision and we will have served the people of Scotland. That's the challenge that we face.

Egyptian-U.S. Relations 'in the Hand of a Goblin'

by Hussein Al-Nadeem

As the Egyptian saying goes, Egyptian-American relations have recently been "in the palm of the hand of an *Afrit* (goblin)," due to provocations against Egypt and its leadership by the Anglo-American and Wall Street media and elites. Egypt, which many consecutive U.S. administrations have considered an ally, looks upon the United States, in turn, as a friend and ally, and not a regional asset.

First of all, Egypt was heavily attacked when the Camp David peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians collapsed in late July. The government was blamed for not backing the Israeli-American pressure on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to make concessions on Jerusalem. A July 31 *New York Times* article by Thomas Friedman hurled insults over Egypt's "ingratitude" for American aid, which provoked a storm of condemnation from all strata of Egyptian society. (Friedman wrote this article after his visit to Egypt some weeks earlier, to advocate "globalization," had failed.)

The conflict was further aggravated when Egypt arrested the American-Egyptian head of the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, for "spying on Egypt and undermining its national security and unity," on behalf of the United States and specifically of the Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon-linked institutions, as the Egyptian Prosecutor General put it.

EgyptAir Flight 900

For the Egyptians, the drop that filled the bucket was the release on Aug. 11 of a "factual report" by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), on the crash of EgyptAir's Flight 900 in the Atlantic on Oct. 31, 1999. What enraged the Egyptian public, as well as the official institutions, was the hyped-up false theory that the co-pilot, Gameel Al-Battouti, had committed suicide, taking all 217 passengers and crew to their doom. This "suicide" story was first leaked to the U.S. press through the FBI in the days following the crash, in order to shape the whole investigation around this preposterous theory. Coming when Egypt's relations with both Israel and the United States were already tense, the NTSB report was extreme psychological, cultural warfare against Egyptians. Furthermore, Flight 900 carried more than 30 high-ranking Egyptian military officers, a fact