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# The Radical Left and the Scottish Nation

## Print-Cultures of Left-Wing Nationalism, 1967-1983

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the origins of the discourse of 'Radical Scotland', which presumes a significant link between radicalism and Scottish nationhood. It identifies the origins of this discourse in the period 1967-1983, emphasising the 'opening' of a 'Scottish radical imagination' in the aftermath of Winnie Ewing's Hamilton by-election victory for the SNP in 1967; and the 'closure' of this imagination in 1983, as radical intellectuals responded to the Conservative dominance of British politics by abandoning the horizon of social and cultural revolution in favour of constitutional reform. It focuses on the development of a distinctively Scottish radical left tradition through a wide range of political and cultural magazines, as well as historical societies, political parties and campaigns. Its three chapters are organised around the themes of the 'territorial imagination', the 'social imagination' and the 'political imagination'.

Chapter one explores the territorial imagination. The radical left began the period covered here concerned by their marginalisation within a transnational renewal of left wing politics, and sought to embed the cosmopolitan and revolutionary energies of the "long 1968" in their distinctive Scottish context. This chapter focuses on the emergence of a radical intelligentsia in Scotland, oriented towards universities and print-culture, which was separate from a labour movement left that was culturally Scottish but politically British. The new intelligentsia was culturally internationalist and politically unaligned, and this chapter shows how these contradictory territorial imaginaries were combined into a new focus on Scotland as the default territorial focus of the radical left.

Chapter two explores the social imagination. It examines the ways in which Scotland's radical intelligentsia interpreted their alienation from wider society, leaving behind ideas of both the "organic intellectual" and political vanguardism and opting instead to identify the figure of the 'outsider within' – reflecting their own self-image – as a radical force who they believed could tie together a divided nation.

Chapter three explores the political imagination. The radical left's growing self-confidence in claiming the nation for itself led them to support a series of political projects which emphasised their continued alienation from the wider public, from the

“breakaway” Scottish Labour Party, the referendum on devolution in 1979 and the SNP 79 Group. It explores how they sought to close the gap between intellectual utopianism and political reality by taking up a subordinate role within the campaign for national self-government, providing utopian energy and intellectual support to more compromised political strategies. In doing so, they allowed their more critical vision of Scottish nationhood to solidify into a more self-affirming myth, celebrating Scotland’s political difference from England.

## Lay Summary

The idea that Scotland is an especially 'radical' country is often criticised as a "myth". Yet there have been very few efforts to understand how the idea emerged. This thesis addresses this by studying debates over the role of radicalism in Scottish society and culture during the period 1967-1983, focusing in particular on radical writing in political and cultural magazines. It argues that during this period, the radical left became especially interested in Scottish national identity. This was not, initially, a positive relationship, for the radical left often portrayed Scotland in negative terms. They were influenced to do this by an international transformation in left-wing ideas and activity, which encouraged intellectuals to criticise their own societies and their traditions. Yet in Scotland, this process of criticising the nation made radical intellectuals more interested in what it really was.

Chapter one of this thesis looks at radical ideas about Scotland's relationship to Britain and the wider world. It focuses on the different ways of looking at this relationship within the radical left. Some radicals wanted smaller communities to have more power, while others wanted to use the state to transform the country from the centre, while engaging with broader territorial units like Europe or the world as a whole. Yet increasingly, the radical left agreed that it was a Scottish state, rather than a British state, that was the focus of their concern. This was a fundamental change from previous radical understandings of Scottish nationhood, which had thought of Scotland as a strong cultural community within a wider British state.

Chapter two explores radical ideas about radicalism's relationship to society, and especially the role of radical intellectuals. It shows that during this period, radical intellectuals became less likely to view themselves as closely connected to the working class, or indeed the nation or 'the people'. Yet they were also sceptical of the idea that intellectuals could lead a revolution by themselves, bypassing mass democracy. This posed a problem for radicalism's political relevance, and these intellectuals reinterpreted their role to emphasise the importance of various 'misfit' identities to the nation. These outsiders, they believed, could offer the kind of critical, detached outlook that others could not, and they could therefore help to link together different causes and concerns from outside of particular interests or conflicts.

Chapter three explores the political ideas that emerged from the changes studied in chapters one and two. Scotland mattered more to intellectuals, and they had a new self-confidence about their social role. They pursued this confidence through a series of political projects such as the Scottish Labour Party, which split from Labour, and the '79 Group' faction inside the SNP. These did not succeed, and intellectuals were also disappointed when proposals for a devolved Scottish Assembly failed in 1979. They responded to these disappointments by adopting a more nationalist outlook, providing more positive support to Scottish national identity in order to rebuild their legitimacy and oppose the dominance of the Conservative Party. In doing so, they helped to turn their own radical identity into a national myth.

## Acknowledgements

If the Scottish radical imagination has certain conditions of possibility, so does this thesis. It would not have been possible without public support for humanities scholarship, chiefly in the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Scottish Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities. The staff and students of the University of Edinburgh provided a community, more than simply an institution, in which to work, and I am especially grateful to the staff of Edinburgh University Library's Special Collections for their interest and attentiveness. The same goes for Carole McCallum at Glasgow Caledonian archives and the other archivists across the country whose work also went into this research. I have also depended upon the wisdom and generosity of academics across Scotland. The expertise, encouragement and patience of my supervisor, Ewen Cameron, has been invaluable. James Mitchell and Gordon Pentland helped to dispel much conceptual fog in the early stages of research and planning. I have also been blessed with the practical support as well as encouragement of several natives of the radical nation this thesis describes. I am deeply grateful to Ray Burnett, Lindsay Paterson, Esther Breitenbach, Ann Henderson, Terry Brotherstone, Neal Ascherson, Norman Easton, Trevor Royle, Ken MacLeod and the late Bob Tait for their generous supply of primary sources and personal recollections. Thanks are also due to a younger radical, Liam Turbett, for his last-minute aid, and to David Torrance for advice and access to his own well-stocked library. In both scholarly and personal terms, I have been supported beyond all justification by two colleagues and dear friends, Scott Hames and Ewan Gibbs. This thesis has a lot to say about "emotional fuel," and I have been blessed with a sturdy network of pipelines that brought the stuff to me when reserves were desperately low. My thanks go to all the workers and citizens of The Dagda, a twenty-first century Sandy Bell's, for providing a warm, bright, kind place to retreat, but especially Calum Barnes. Other friends, scattered here and there, also held together a world that tends towards disorder, for which I can never thank Rupert Radley, Hailey Maxwell, Andrew Reubens, Dominic Hinde, Maddie Haynes, Sam Wiszniewski, Emily Rose Hay and Nick Batho enough. This thesis is for them, but above all it is for the people who put up with the most, and who mean everything: Sarah Gledhill, Richard and Cat Scothorne, and Kate Whitaker. Though this thesis reflects a certain pessimism of the intellect, their optimism of the will is the most radical thing I've ever known.

*"*The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying 'This is mine', and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, 1755

"Britain is for the rich – Scotland can be ours"

'Radical Independence Campaign', Campaign leaflet, 2014

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ACGB | Arts Council of Great Britain |
| *BRS* | *British Road to Socialism* |
| CEMA | Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts |
| CND | Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament |
| CPGB | Communist Party of Great Britain |
| CSA | Campaign for a Scottish Assembly |
| CYC | Celtic Youth Congress |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EUSPB | Edinburgh University Student Publications Board |
| FSL | Fife Socialist League |
| FSN | Federation of Student Nationalists |
| HIDB | Highlands and Islands Development Board |
| ICPD | Interim Committee for Political Discussion |
| ILP | Independent Labour Party |
| IS | International Socialists |
| IMG | International Marxist Group |
| *NLR* | *New Left Review* |
| NUM | National Union of Mineworkers |
| PCI | Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party) |
| SAC | Scottish Arts Council |
| SED | Scottish Education Department |
| SLHS | Scottish Labour History Society |
| SLP | Scottish Labour Party |
| SMG | Scottish Minorities Group |
| SNP | Scottish National Party |
| SRSC | Scottish Republican Socialist Clubs |
| STUC | Scottish Trades Union Congress |
| *SWLJ* | *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal* |
| SWP | Socialist Workers Party |
| SWRP | Scottish Workers Republican Party |
| UCS | Upper Clyde Shipbuilders |
| *WHFP* | *West Highland Free Press* |
| WPS(ML) | Workers Party of Scotland (Marxist-Leninist) |
| WRP | Workers Revolutionary Party |

## Introduction: The "Radical Current"

In 1998, summarising decades of campaigns for the Scottish Parliament which had been endorsed in a referendum a year earlier, Lindsay Paterson wrote: "at its most rational, the debate has been about good and effective government, how best to manage the affairs of Scotland and, more widely, the UK or Europe."[1] Devolution, he argued, "would have got nowhere" had it simply been about good government: "the emotional fuel on all sides has come from some version of politicised national identity."[2] This "emotional fuel," he suggested, came largely from the left:

> Developing alongside [Thatcherism's] debacle was something quite different and recently unprecedented - an association of radicalism and home rule that, by the late 1980s, was to embrace most of the Scottish left… One of the reasons why this radical current could survive was that it kept its distance from Labour's devolution proposals, even though supporting it in the referendum as the only scheme on offer… The radical position gained its sustenance, not from the Labour movement, but from a wholesale shift towards nationalism in Scottish intellectual culture.[3]

This thesis supports much of Paterson's analysis. Nevertheless, this cosy image of radicalism's contribution to Scotland's constitutional development suggests a remarkably limited role for such an adventurous tradition. Radicalism did not get to provide its own vision of "good governance," settling for the subordinate role of

[1] Lindsay Paterson, *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p.2.
[2] *Ibid*, p.4.
[3] *Ibid*, pp.76-77.

"emotional" support for "the only scheme on offer." The question remains of what the radical left expected, or received, from this division of labour.

This association of the left – specifically some formulation of the *radical* left – with the "emotive" or "utopian" aspects of campaigns for Scottish self-government is a common, if consistently underexplored, theme in scholarship and broader commentary on devolution and Scottish nationalism.[4] There is a growing body of work both within and outside academia which engages with this wider discourse of 'radical Scotland.' This can be understood as a particular way of framing arguments and claims about the relationships between radical left politics and Scotland's national identity, political culture, 'cultural politics' and history. This discourse privileges 'Scotland' as an object of knowledge, power and political identity and assesses the relevance and utility of 'radicalism' in relation to it. Amongst the various ways in which radical and Scottish identities are yoked together, the most common is to present their relationship as a powerful myth. James Mitchell argues that "Scotland's collective self-image, at least among many commentators, has long been that of a radical leftist polity."[5] Gerry Hassan suggests that "our radical sentiment about ourselves tells us that we scrutinise, challenge and cajole power and authority, but modern day Scotland offers a very different story."[6] Gregor Gall notes that "what makes the myth not only 'mythical' but also so persuasive and forceful is the fusion of some tangible evidence of worker radicalism with that of Scottish identity, and, writ large, the association of radicalism with the Scottish people and Scotland."[7]

[4] Lindsay Paterson, 'Scottish Democracy and Scottish Utopias: The First Year of the Scottish Parliament', *Scottish Affairs* 33 (Autumn 2000), pp.45-61.
[5] James Mitchell, *The Scottish Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.281.
[6] Gerry Hassan, *Caledonian Dreaming: The Quest for a Different Scotland* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2014), pp.34-35.
[7] Gregor Gall, *The Political Economy of Scotland: Red Scotland? Radical Scotland?* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2005), p.6.

This idea of "tangible evidence" being distorted into myth echoes Roland Barthes' suggestion that

> Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact.[8]

For Barthes, myth "transforms history into nature."[9] Yet while several accounts which discuss 'radical Scotland' seek to find some real historical phenomena hidden within the myth, the complex cultural and political processes by which particular historical experiences and actors have been reified into a national myth have not yet been adequately explored.

This has had consequences for our understanding of the radical left's role in the history of Scottish nationalism and devolution. In Paterson's discussion of devolution, the "rationality" of "good government" is counterposed to – and augmented by – the "emotion," "myth" and "utopianism" of the radical left. This does not explain how the radical left's relationship to the politics of Scottish nationhood – and thus its apparent influence – has been shaped by the radical left's own, distinctive tension between the emotive and the rational, the utopian and the pragmatic, and between its particular Scottish circumstances and more universal or transnational utopias and challenges. It also downplays the extent to which many of the concepts and theories with which

[8] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Penguin, 2009), p.142.
[9] *ibid*, p.127.

Scottish society has been understood since the 1960s, and through which campaigns for self-government "rationalised" their politics, have been produced, developed or refined within or in close dialogue with the Scottish radical left.

This thesis addresses this gap in our understanding of the discourse of 'Radical Scotland' by focusing on the development of a 'Scottish radical imagination'. If Radical Scotland is a 'myth', then it has emerged from the collective imaginative processes by which myth – as a "necessary fiction" of society – is made.[10] As Alex Khasnabish and Max Haiven suggest, the concept of 'radical imagination' conceives of the imagination not as a static object but a "collective process," encompassing "our capacity to think about those things we do not or cannot directly experience" as well as "the filter or frame through which we interpret our own experiences."[11] It is "a conscious creative force of the individual mind", but is also expressed in "shared 'imaginaries': broad sets or landscapes of shared understandings and narratives that make living together possible."[12] The radical imagination also invokes historical consciousness and collective memory. In his history of the 'Black radical imagination', Robin D. G. Kelley describes the radical imagination as an "effort to see the future in the present."[13] As Khasnabish and Haiven argue, it also entails "drawing on the past, telling different stories about how the world came to be the way it is, and remembering the power and importance of past struggles and the way their spirits live on in the present."[14]

[10] Andrew Von Hendy, *The Modern Construction of Myth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p.xiv
[11] Alex Khasnabish, Max Haiven, *The Radical Imagination: Social Movement Research in the Age of Austerity* (London: Zed Books, 2014), p.4.
[12] *Ibid*, pp.4-5.
[13] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), p.16
[14] Khasnabish, Haiven, *Imagination*, p.3.

As a shared, creative and speculative process, the concept of a Scottish radical imagination helps us to explain the real ambitions, obstacles and structures of feeling underpinning the kinds of extensive disagreements, uncertainties, misrepresentations and contradictions which the 'myth' of 'Radical Scotland' – and its representation as such – struggles to explain. As this thesis argues, the Scottish radical imagination which developed from the 1960s to the 1980s is preserved, albeit in 'closed', ossified form, in its own mythic representation. This thesis begins from a desire to contextualise the question that normally motivates the discourse of 'Radical Scotland': whether Scotland is radical, or what the Scottish sources (and resources) of radicalism are. It asks instead: how, and why, have collective understandings of radicalism and Scottish nationhood been placed into dialogue with each other, specifically by the radical left itself? This means exploring not just the ways in which the radical imagination has been influenced by Scottish nationhood, but also the ways in which the radical imagination has been made, and made itself, Scottish. This latter focus derives from a refusal to take for granted the national identity of the radical left in Scotland, exploring how other territorial or non-territorial means of identification were incorporated into a national radical imagination.

## Alienation, Imagination, Incorporation

Framing the thesis in this way helps to clarify another process of incorporation, in which the expanding ideological and political diversity of the radical imagination in the 1960s and 1970s was simplified in the 1980s into a reductive, but politically convenient, association of Scottish nationhood, the working class, the Scottish

'people', and political radicalism.[15] This process, framed as the 'opening' and 'closure' of the radical imagination between 1967 and 1983, encapsulates Scottish radicalism's reification into the 'Radical Scotland' myth. Explaining that process, however, requires understanding the factors which 'opened' the radical imagination and those which 'closed' it, looking beyond the radical imagination itself to its conditions of possibility. While the body of the thesis is overwhelmingly empirical, the conceptual framework that has been used to arrange and present this research first needs to be explained. If, as Barthes argues, myth naturalises things which have not occurred naturally, then a degree of abstraction is needed before its real underpinnings can be explored.

One of the central assumptions of this thesis is that the radical imagination is shaped by shifting conditions of possibility which are largely out of its control; that this subordinate relationship to reality cannot be openly acknowledged within the radical imagination; and that one of the constitutive preoccupations of the radical imagination is thus the creative *misrepresentation* of this relationship, investing radicalism's conditions of possibility with meanings that allow the ideal of radical agency to be preserved. In other words, one of the conditions of possibility of the radical imagination is its *alienation* from reality, and its need for legitimacy in the face of this alienation. It does this in two ways: first, it imagines reality to contain a latent radical potential, holding out the promise of reconciliation; second, justified by this potential, it negates reality through critique, illustrating the necessity of transformation.[16]

[15] Scott Hames, *The Literary Politics of Scottish Devolution: Voice, Class, Nation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); John Foster, 'A Proletarian Nation? Occupation and Class Since 1914', in A. Dickson, J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland, Volume III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992), pp.201-240.
[16] Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1991), pp.2-3.

Again, this is key to understanding how the radical imagination solidifies into myth. It does so by attempting to disavow, rather than legitimise, its particular alienation from the society it seeks to transform. In 1968 radicals began to confidently and critically articulate their own alienation from Scottish nationhood, leveraging it to produce both lacerating critique and hopeful, self-mobilising prophecy. Over the subsequent decade and a half, these critiques and prophecies were often tested against reality. Whether through sudden deflation or slow disenchantment, this regularly meant disappointment and defeat. Over time, the scar tissue of these experiences built up in the shape of new critiques and new prophecies, yet it also provoked a growing angst over the alienation which kept radicalism critical, creative and independent. Disavowing its social distance, the Scottish radical imagination ultimately sought a more supportive and pragmatic relationship to Scottish nationhood, allowing its own ideas to be conscripted into a propagandist form of national service as Scotland's ideological 'difference' from Thatcherism was emphasised. The myth of 'Radical Scotland' came into being when the radical imagination was no longer perceived – by itself or others – to be the source of society's latent radicalism, independent of Scottish nationhood. By 1983 it was the Scottish nation, alienated from itself by the British state and awaiting devolved representation, which was seen to carry the radical future. Subordinating itself to the nation, the radical left thus became dominated by the immobilised products of its own hitherto fluid imagination, capable of relating to Scottish nationhood only by way of affirmation.

This broad understanding of radicalism's distinctive alienation is derived from Reinhart Koselleck's critique of Enlightenment "utopianism", a "progressive philosophy of history which promised victory to the intellectual elite, but one gained without struggle

and civil war."[17] For Koselleck, the Absolutist state gave its bourgeoisie the freedom to "perfect themselves morally," but denied them access to the political processes which would allow them to impose this morality on the world. In doing so, it also withheld from them an experiential awareness of the profound limits of politics, allowing an embryonic and de-politicised rationalism to "skip the political aporia" that makes the total rationalisation of society impossible.[18] The result was a pathological utopianism that permanently alienated Enlightenment political thought from the limits of political possibility, encouraging its proponents to not only envision but pursue a society wholly without contradiction.[19] The radical imagination, in its desire to resolve social contradictions at the "root", reflects this utopianism, yet its rationalism requires it to be able to justify and explain the continued disappointments of its political projects. This provides a perpetual source of imaginative work which largely sustains the radical tradition.

Khasnabish and Haiven are therefore overly sanguine in their portrayal of the radical imagination as "the courage and the intelligence to recognize that the world can and should be changed."[20] It can also be a means of escaping, re-enchanting and negotiating with that world, in order to defer, deny or manage defeat and disappointment. These two are not incompatible, but if the imaginative products of the latter are allowed too much influence over actions, their encounter with reality can be unhelpfully jarring. Koselleck's critique of the "bourgeois intelligentsia" was that in their refusal to accept that "politics is fate," they developed a political utopianism which

[17] Reinhard Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Boston, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), p.1.
[18] *Ibid*, p.11.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Khasnabish, Haiven, *Imagination*, p.3.

"foundered on the rocks of the concrete challenges that arose."[21] In their case, the result was "Terror and dictatorship" in the French Revolution.[22] In the case of the Scottish radical imagination, the consequence of its reification into myth is near-total dissolution into Scottish nationalist politics, which at the time of writing is suspended in a constitutional stalemate between the Scottish and UK Governments, disintegrating into competing factions, none of which is capable of disentangling radicalism from nationalism.

## Print-Culture as Politics

This emphasis on imagination, a primarily intellectual rather than political activity, distinct from practices like civil disobedience, strikes, protests and electioneering, illustrates another central contention of this thesis. The discourse of radical Scotland did not emerge primarily from the practical activities of the working class or social movements, but developed instead through the distinctive concerns and modes of organisation of the radical intelligentsia: chiefly print-culture, but also voluntary associations like historical commemoration societies and political factions. This distinguishes this analysis from accounts of 'Radical Scotland' which emphasise the working class or social movements.[23] While these accounts tend to emphasise a

[21] Koselleck, *Critique*, pp.2, 11.
[22] *Ibid*, p.2.
[23] Alongside Gall and Hassan, see: William Kenefick, *Red Scotland! The rise and fall of the Radical Left, c.1872-1932* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); William Hamish Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics: From Radicalism to Labour* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2000); W.W. Knox, 'Whatever Happened to Radical Scotland?: the Economic and Social Origins of the Mid-Victorian Political Consensus in Scotland', in Roger A. Mason, Norman Macdougall, T.C. Smout (eds.), *People and Power in Scotland: Essays in Honour of T.C. Smout* pp.305-334; T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950* (London: Fontana Press, 1987), ch.10.; Catriona M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland – Paisley Politics, 1885-1924* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000); James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (London: Croom Helm, 1979); James D. Young, *The Very Bastards of Creation: Scottish International Radicalism – A Biographical Study, 1707-1995* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1996); Terry Brotherstone (ed.), *Covenant, Charter and Party: Traditions of Revolt and Protest in Modern Scottish History* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989).

Scottish 'radical tradition' of popular agitation in the 19th and early 20th centuries, they largely do so from within a discourse linking national and radical identities that was formed within the period and milieu studied by this thesis. The idea of a radical 'tradition' itself indicates a fundamentally *cultural* activity, based on the combined representation of diverse practices, in which those who draw those practices together and represent them *as* tradition hold unique power.[24] Intellectuals are at the centre of the radical tradition because they control this process of 'articulation', both naming and linking together particular practices, actors and ideas into something called 'radicalism'.[25] As Zygmunt Bauman argues, "there is one feature common to all classes and strata of modern society. Their collective portraits are always painted by the same artists: the intellectuals."[26]

This idea of the intellectuals as portrait-painters, both invisible and everywhere in the product of their work, illustrates the difficulty of treating 'intellectuals' as a social group. Their power to constitute and define radicalism relies in part on their concealment within the things they describe, disguised within larger, more legitimate forces like 'class,' 'movement,' 'people' and 'nation'.[27] Returning them to the historical stage – an intellectual task in itself – risks descending into conceptual shadow-puppetry. There is a substantial literature on the sociology of intellectuals, rich with debates over what type of social category they inhabit.[28] Are they "class-bound," in the sense of Antonio

[24] Dorothy Noyes, 'Tradition: Three Traditions', *Journal of Folklore Research* 46:3 (September/December 2009), pp.233-268; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.1-14.
[25] Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001), p.65.
[26] Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-modernity and Intellectuals* (Chicester: Polity Press, 1991), p.6.
[27] Dick Pels, *The Intellectual as Stranger: Studies in Spokespersonship* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.x.
[28] Charles Kurzman, Lynn Owens, 'The Sociology of the Intellectuals', *Annual Review of Sociology* (2002), pp.63-90.

Gramsci's "organic intellectuals"?[29] Or "class-less", as in Karl Mannheim's contention that intellectuals are liberated from social attachment by education, and thus able to represent a universal interest?[30] Or, finally, are they a "class-in-themselves," as in Alvin Gouldner's identification of the "intellectuals and technical intelligentsia" as a "New Class," replacing Marx's proletariat as the carriers of a distinctly universal particularity?[31] This effort to pin down the social position of the intelligentsia is, as Bauman implies, bedevilled by narcissism, for intellectuals can only ever be described by themselves. "In any place and at any time," Bauman argues, "'the intellectuals' are constituted as a combined effect of mobilization and self-recruitment."[32] Because of this self-selecting quality, intellectuals in any time and place can only be understood by attending to the ways in which they understood themselves; more than E.P. Thompson's "English working class," every intelligentsia has "made itself as much as it was made."[33]

This thesis therefore pays close attention to the ways in which Scottish intellectuals talked about intellectuals, building on Stefan Collini's application of the same method to Britain.[34] In doing so, it demonstrates that a distinctively Scottish discourse about intellectuals emerged during the period studied, one which was more closely aligned with the radical imagination than its equivalent in England. It confirms Craig Stewart's thesis that a "discourse community" emerged in Scotland between 1967 and 1979 which was defined not just by a dialogue between socialism and nationalism, but also

[29] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (trans. Quentin Hoare, Geoffrey Nowell Smith), (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp.10-15.
[30] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985).
[31] Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.1.
[32] Bauman, *Legislators*, p.2.
[33] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963), p.194.
[34] Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

by the rhetorical exclusion of Conservatism.[35] The structure of this "discourse community" also provides us with a means of identifying the concrete forms taken by intellectual life in Scotland, and thus the primary means of expression of the radical imagination in print-culture: the wide range of magazines, books and pamphlets which emerged after 1967, described by Christopher Harvie as an "apparatus of criticism."[36]

The intellectuals who mobilised and identified themselves through this apparatus "rationalised their position," writes Harvie, with radical ideas influenced by an international "new left".[37] This thesis focuses on the period 1967-1983 because it was only after 1967 that print-culture in Scotland began to display the consistent combination of political radicalism and national identity which constitutes the Scottish radical imagination. That year, Winnie Ewing's momentous win in the Hamilton by-election prompted the Scottish radical left to begin taking Scottish nationalism politically seriously; this was combined to significant effect by a broader, transnational 'opening' of the radical imagination inspired by the revolutionary dreams of the "long 1968." 1979 would make a plausible end point for this study, for it represented a closure of radical horizons in two ways: the defeat of proposals for a Scottish Assembly, and the triumph of a radically right-wing Conservative government. Yet the years 1979-83 offer particular insights into how the radical left coped with these defeats, including the establishment of the magazine *Radical Scotland* itself. In 1983, however, Margaret Thatcher was returned for a second term with an overwhelming

[35] Craig Stewart, Development of a discourse community: the Scottish constitutional debate 1967-1979, PhD thesis. University of Edinburgh (2005).
[36] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.161.
[37] *Ibid*, p.164.

majority, and those already closed horizons were, perhaps for the foreseeable future, locked shut.

## Sources

This thesis takes as its main source base the products of this print-culture, particularly Scottish political and cultural magazines. Recent studies have begun to address the absence of these magazines from the historiography of contemporary Scottish politics and culture. In cultural history, Eleanor Bell has emphasised the importance of literary magazines like *Jabberwock*, *Lines Review* and *Scottish International* to cultural debates over Scottish nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s.[38] In the history of political thought, Ben Jackson's *The Case for Scottish Independence* draws on a wide range of 1970s political magazines to explore the "intense debates about politics and culture" amongst the intelligentsia which fed into more popular arguments for independence.[39] Finally, Scott Hames' *The Literary Politics of Scottish Devolution* – a study which overlaps with this thesis in several areas, thanks in part to years of collaboration with the author – draws on both cultural and political magazines to explore how artists and writers constituted Scottish political identity, and were also constituted by it.[40] To these groundbreaking studies, this thesis adds an unprecedented depth of analysis of these magazines, exploring not just their origins and self-image, but also how they related to each other, as well as how they were viewed and portrayed by their readers and contributors, who were often the same people. It thus helps us to understand how the

[38] Eleanor Bell, 'Rejecting the Knitted Claymore: The Challenge to Cultural Nationalism in Scottish Literary Magazines of the 1960s and 1970s', in Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *British Literature in Transition, 1960-1980: Flower Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.263-274.
[39] Ben Jackson, *The Case for Scottish Independence: A History of Nationalist Political Thought in Modern Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p.10.
[40] Hames, *Literary Politics.*

magazines themselves, and the experience of participating in them, shaped the arguments being made within them. It demonstrates the intimate links between these magazines and the books and pamphlets which also constituted Scotland's radical imagination, as well as the close relationship of print-culture to the other associations and political organisations in which the Scottish intelligentsia took a particular interest. Most importantly, this thesis demonstrates the central importance of the radical imagination to the creation and maintenance of this print-culture, and the consequent transformation of the Scottish radical left by its print-cultural preoccupations.

With the exception of *Scottish Socialist*, none of the Scottish magazines explored in this thesis are available online, and this thesis is built on the work of locating, surveying and contextualising them in the few archives that hold full or almost full sets. Though not all of these have ultimately been cited, this thesis draws on magazines with both a cultural and political emphasis. The cultural reviews which strayed into or outright invaded politics are *Gambit* (1956-1965), *New Saltire* (1961-64), *Feedback* (1966-67), *Scottish International* (1968-1974), *New Edinburgh Review/Edinburgh Review* (1969-), *Chapman* (1970-) and *Cencrastus* (1979-2006). The more political magazines, venturing towards culture, are *Scottish Marxist* (1973-84), *Calgacus* (1975-76), *Q* (1975-77), *Scottish Socialist* (1976-77), *7 Days* (1977-78), the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal* (1977-78), *Crann-Tàra* (1978-82), *MsPrint* (1978-81), *The Bulletin of Scottish Politics* (1981-82) and *Radical Scotland* (1982, 1983-89). These are all available, in complete or near-complete form, in the National Library of Scotland, while the University of Edinburgh Library is well-stocked with *Gambit*, *Feedback*, *Scottish International*, *Chapman, New Edinburgh Review/Edinburgh Review*, *Cencrastus* and *Radical Scotland*.

Alongside these published sources, this thesis also draws on a wide range of unpublished sources to understand the wider contexts and motives behind this upsurge of radical publishing. The records of the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) at the National Records of Scotland provide an insight into the development of one of the most significant magazines of the period, the SAC-funded *Scottish International*, as do the records of *Scottish International* at the University of Edinburgh. The letters of Hamish Henderson, also at Edinburgh, provide a powerful insight into the thinking of leading Scottish intellectuals – including Henderson himself – at key moments in the development of the radical imagination. These include invaluable reflections by *Scottish International*'s editor Bob Tait and Tom Nairn on the publication of the *Red Paper on Scotland* and the rise and fall of Jim Sillars' Scottish Labour Party (SLP), with which all three were closely involved. The papers of John McEwen, a left-wing expert on land ownership, at Perth and Kinross Library provide further insights into the development of the *Red Paper on Scotland*, to which he also contributed. Glasgow Caledonian University holds substantial collections on the Communist Party of Great Britain's activities and thinking in relation to Scotland, with the papers of Willie Thompson – the editor of the CPGB's magazine *Scottish Marxist* – providing a vital source of information on the CPGB's approach to Scottish nationhood. The papers of the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish Labour Party, held at the National Library of Scotland (NLS), offer an insight into the SLP's development, as well as the development of its most intellectual branch, whose members included several key figures of the radical intelligentsia. The NLS also holds the papers of the left-wing SNP member and academic Gavin Kennedy, which offer a window into the development of the SNP's radical '79 Group' faction. These, alongside the papers of the Federation of

Student Nationalists and the SNP Chairman Robert McIntyre also at the NLS, provide insights into the relationship between radicalism and nationalism inside the SNP.

This thesis also makes some, albeit limited, use of interviews conducted with some of the participants in the Scottish intellectual field: the journalist Neal Ascherson, the SAC's Assistant Director in the 1970s Trevor Royle, the editor of *Calgacus* magazine Ray Burnett, and the historian Terry Brotherstone, a former member of the Workers' Revolutionary Party. These were conducted as life-story interviews, and along with others which do not feature in this thesis due to limitations of space, recordings and transcripts of these will be deposited in the archives of the Strathclyde Oral History Centre. The four interviews above are used sparingly here to illuminate gaps in the published and archival evidence or to better illustrate key arguments.

## Structure and Argument

The argument of this thesis is reflected in its structure. The discourse of 'Radical Scotland' emerged within three constitutive 'gaps' in the radical imagination, the 'opening' of which created the conditions for both the development of a distinctly *Scottish* radical imagination, and the 'closure' of which entailed its reification into myth. These 'gaps' can be understood as inescapable, *structural* problems for radicalism in Scotland, which thus had to be solved imaginatively rather than practically; attempts to translate these imaginative solutions into political practice began the 'closure' of the imagination, revealing the true limits of radical action and persuading radicals to narrow their horizons.

The first such gap was territorial, and is examined in the first chapter. In November 1967, Winnie Ewing's victory for the SNP in the Hamilton by-election emphasised a growing divergence in electoral behaviour between Scotland and England, and gave this divergence an overtly nationalist twist. While this promised the sudden politicisation of Scottish nationhood, the radical left in Scotland had few means of engaging with this prospect on their own national terms. Over the previous decade, radical intellectuals in Scotland had participated in a British and transnational radical imagination, but the rise of Scottish nationalism heightened their awareness of their peripheral status within this, posing distinctively Scottish problems of strategy and identity for radicals which the existing intellectual field was ill-equipped to answer. The radical left thus sought to address this through the development of a self-consciously national intellectual field, organised through a series of publications, events and societies. Through this, they began to articulate a distinctively Scottish radical imagination. This was, at first, performatively open-minded and diverse, incorporating competing tendencies between centralisation and de-centralisation, cosmopolitanism and nativism, but it was chiefly driven by a pluralistic, critical vision of nationhood and a desire to 'map out' the distinctive opportunity structures which Scotland offered to the radical left. Yet this ostensibly national imagination concealed the real particularity of its infrastructure and personnel, which were largely concentrated in Edinburgh, amongst a University-based or adjacent intelligentsia. These limitations, alienating radicalism from national reality, also encouraged an imaginative relationship to it: an urban, Edinburgh-centric radical left legitimised itself by incorporating creative visions – both critical and affirmative – of Scotland's territorial diversity into a diverse, open-ended conception of national radicalism. This structural tendency towards misrepresentation allowed the territorial unit of 'Scotland' to be invested with a radical

potential which it did not necessarily justify, tacitly 'closing' the territorial imagination of the radical left around the Scottish nation, and quietly cutting it off from alternative forms of territorial identification.

The second 'gap' is social, between the intellectuals and the people, and is examined in the second chapter. The alienation of the radical left from any particular social base – chiefly the working class – posed a political problem in a democratic system. The radical left of the 1960s and 1970s was dominated by "new left' intellectuals who rejected, on principle, the vanguardism and elitism which they identified with an earlier generation of radicals; they also recognised the futility of vanguardist politics in a society governed by mass democracy, and represented by a mass media. Yet these previous ways of framing radical agency had at least been able to legitimise the distance between the intellectual and the people. Re-legitimising this distance provided further imaginative work for the Scottish radical left, who sought to frame their own 'outsider' status as a condition of critical insight into Scottish society. The radical social imagination which developed from this portrayed Scotland as divided along class, regional, religious and ethnic lines, in need of radical intervention to draw together its competing identities and thus realise its full national potential. The source of this radical intervention could only be the 'outsider' intelligentsia, sufficiently detached from Scotland's myriad particularisms to mediate between them; the radical social imagination thus sought to 'close' its constitutive gap by rearticulating an alienated radicalism as a precondition of unified Scottish nationhood. This post-vanguardist radical imagination ultimately envisioned the same vanguardist political role for itself that it had sought to leave behind; in doing so, it only re-stated the

problem of its alienation from the Scottish public, on whose support any direct political intervention would rely.

The third and final chapter, then, concerns the radical political imagination. Again, the 'opening' of this imagination was created by conditions beyond radicalism's reach: the rise of the SNP and the prospect of a Scottish Assembly, the discovery of North Sea oil, British entry into the European Economic Community, and conflict in Northern Ireland. Taken together, these stimulated a wave of new thinking about the radical left's relationship to Scottish nationhood. The constitutive 'gap' of this thinking was, ostensibly, between socialism and nationalism; yet beneath a preoccupation with resolving this tension, the radical imagination also sought to navigate between more practical political challenges. How could radicalism retain its imaginative, utopian potential while also engaging more directly with the compromised politics of party-building and constitutional change? How could the reformist nature of a devolved Scottish Assembly contribute to an authentically revolutionary politics? These were problems for the radical imagination because they were posed by the radical left's transition from the discursive, speculative realm of print into the practical activity of politics: the world of managing political parties, orchestrating factional conference votes and mobilising for civil disobedience, all of which required a faster, more compromising and indeed coercive mentality than was encouraged by the sedate periodical rhythms of print-culture. The formation and spectacular disintegration of the SLP in 1976, which attracted much of the radical intelligentsia into its ranks, was followed by the defeat of devolution in the referendum of 1979 and the election of a transformative Conservative Government. Radicals reacted to this with a mixture of despair and intensified political action, manifested in the emergence of the left-wing

’79 Group’ within the SNP. The Group’s expulsion from the SNP, after an attempted civil disobedience campaign failed to amass public support, occurred alongside a turn towards more cautious, cross-party campaigning through the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. The prospect of a Scottish Assembly had originally provided a means by which the radical left could foretell Scotland’s political and cultural transformation; the eventual subordination of the radical imagination to the achievement of this goal reflected the final, defeated ‘closure’ by which it converted itself into myth.

Taken together, these chapters argue that between 1967 and 1983, a Scottish radical imagination took shape as part of a transnational project to renew the left. Radicals sought to ‘nationalise’ this project in response to the SNP’s rise and the prospect of devolution or independence, yet radicalism initially articulated its nationality in terms of critical estrangement, attacking the myths and delusions which obscured self-knowledge. It did this through a range of publications, societies and conferences, propagating a distinctly intellectual radicalism which encouraged speculative, pluralistic and cosmopolitan visions of Scotland’s radical potential. Gaining in self-confidence and cohesion, this radical intelligentsia sought to move into more directly political activity by the mid-1970s. Yet the precarity of radical print-culture and the failure of their political projects made it increasingly hard to justify such a critical relationship to Scottish nationhood, and after 1979 the radical left adopted a different approach that is better described as left-wing nationalism. This sought to protect and signal Scottish ‘difference’, not as an object of distinctive critique but as a source of ready-made radicalism, which could only be realised through constitutional change. The radical tradition, which began by offering powerful critiques of Scottish society and

dreams of revolution, was thus a participant in its own absorption into a more self-affirming and reformist myth of ‘Radical Scotland.’

# Chapter One. Limited Infinities: Radical Scotland and the Territorial Imagination

## Introduction: Small Piers and Harbours

In its editorial on the eve of the October 1974 General Election, the left-wing *West Highland Free Press* criticised the Labour Party's vision of nationalisation, which threatened the "small piers and harbours" of Scotland's islands with control by "some remote agency." The editorial also condemned Labour's "pathetic pursuit of a Scottish Assembly, a policy decision based on pure fear instead of political principle."[41] Brian Wilson, the *WHFP*'s editor, went on to chair the 'Labour Vote No' campaign in the 1979 referendum on a Scottish Assembly. Ewen Cameron notes that the *WHFP* argued for a 'No' vote on the basis that "the highlands would suffer just as much from Edinburgh government as they had allegedly done at the hands of Whitehall."[42] Wilson, arguing in defence of locality against national de-centralisation, can be sharply contrasted with a defence of centralisation from the pro-devolution side of the constitutional divide. In 1975, Neal Ascherson argued in *Q* that Scotland's "lack of a political centre" had produced "inward-looking regionalisation" and a "mutual ignorance of conurbations and districts only a few miles separated […] A dose of Jacobin centralisation, perhaps with appointed prefects replacing elected regional councils, could clear the occluded arteries and restore a national circulation of energy."[43]

[41] 'Editorial', *West Highland Free Press* (October 11th, 1974), p.2.
[42] Ewen Cameron, *Impaled Upon A Thistle: Scotland Since 1880* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p.313.
[43] Neal Ascherson, 'Return Journey', *Q* 1 (October 1975), p.5.

These tensions between centralisation and de-centralisation, between local participation and large-scale transformation, have been a recurring element of radical thought and politics, and cannot be mapped easily onto Scottish constitutional politics. Yet Wilson and Ascherson's contrary perspectives demonstrate how debates over Scottish constitutional politics teased out the complex territoriality of Scottish radicalism, providing radical intellectuals with both the threat and the opportunity of a new political centre to organise within and against.

To restate the overall argument of this thesis: the Scottish radical imagination was transformed between the 1960s and 1980s, as radical intellectuals and activists generated a left-wing print-culture to construct and contest a distinctive national political system, rearticulating their own utopian priorities at a Scottish scale. This tradition emerged within three distinct 'gaps' in the radical imagination, lacunae which posed existential problems for the radical left: a territorial gap, between an emerging Scottish polity and the predominant territorial fields of radicalism, be they local, British or cosmopolitan; a social gap, between the relatively avant-garde intellectual activity which defined the radical left tradition and the everyday life of their hoped-for political base, be it the 'working class' or 'the people'; and an ideological gap, between a 'utopian', revolutionary socialism and a more 'pragmatic', reformist nationalism.

These binaries were themselves constructed through the radical imagination, but it was in the ambiguous open spaces between them that Scottish nationhood could be invested with a potential that outstripped its reality. By rearticulating Scottish politics as a site where some of its deep existential problems could be debated and resolved, the radical left was able to use wider political developments – particularly the rise of

Scottish nationalism and devolution – to sustain itself through a period of uncertainty and defeat for left-wing radicalism across the world. Ironically, the success of this effort – the national 'resolution' of radical problems and the 'closure' of the territorial, social and ideological openings through which Scottish radicalism had been remade – entailed the gradual abandonment of the critical, avant-garde and 'world-making' utopianism that gave the radical left tradition its living, adaptable autonomy, hardening its engagement with Scottish identity into an instrumentalised 'myth' of 'Radical Scotland.'

This chapter explores the territorial gap facing Scottish radicalism between 1967 and 1983. The radical left's engagement with the 'Scottish question' was transformed by the emergence of Scottish nationalism as a major political force after Winnie Ewing's by-election win for the Scottish National Party (SNP) in Hamilton in November 1967. The growing divergence between Scottish and English electoral politics, visible since the 1959 General Election, intensified into the 1970s as Scottish politics became dominated by a contest between Labour and the SNP. Labour's growing interest in devolution as a solution to the challenge of the SNP raised the prospect of a distinctive national legislature, further raising the stakes of Scottish political discourse. Yet for Scotland's radical intellectuals, the growing importance of Scotland as a polity in its own right was not sufficiently reflected in the existing media and political infrastructure of the left. Rather than fighting for space in the intellectual field of the British left, Scottish radicals sought to generate their own national version, pursuing a dual autonomy from both the British left and Scotland's more traditional public sphere.

This ‘nationalisation’ of the radical left also renewed older territorial questions at a different scale. This chapter will focus on changing ‘logics of transcendence,’ adapting a term used by Alon Confino and Ajay Skaria to describe the ways in which locality is understood in relation to a ‘higher’ territorial level, such as the nation, but also the wider world.[44] The radical left’s changing engagement with Scottish nationhood can be understood through the terms of such logics, as new discourses were produced about Scotland’s relationship to the world beyond it and localities within it. Rather than the ‘locality’ of Scotland being subsumed into a ‘transcendent’ Britishness, radical intellectuals increasingly adopted a new logic of transcendence in which Scotland – rather than Britain – incorporated its own localities, seen clearly in Ascherson’s call for “Jacobin centralisation.” At a ‘higher’ level of transcendence, Scotland – reimagined as a “misfit” in the world order – became the primary site of political and intellectual agitation for a nationalist internationalism that skipped ‘over’ Britain and fashioned a national-cosmopolitan identification between Scotland, Europe, and the wider world.[45]

Yet the radical left tradition was also remade through attempts to challenge, or even invert, these logics of transcendence. Brian Wilson’s prioritisation of local over national control, and his rejection of Scottish devolution, was one permutation of a wider critique or refusal of transcendence amongst some radicals. This replaced the abstract, imagined community of nationhood with an idealised vision of face-to-face community based on genuine mutual familiarity. This vision of what Confino and Skaria call the ‘other local,’ based on politicised identification with cities, neighbourhoods, islands and towns, directly challenged the new ‘centre’ of Scottish politics, and offered

[44] Alan Confino and Ajay Skaria, ‘The Local Life of Nationhood’, *National Identities* 4:1 (2002), p.8.
[45] Tom Nairn, ‘Scotland the Misfit’, *Q* 13 (October 1976), p.8.

an alternative site, resisting transcendence, for the territorial emplacement of the radical left tradition.[46]

The challenge this 'other local' posed to a 'national' radicalism stimulated, however, a more subtle logic of transcendence. 'Other locals' based on civic and rural communities were rearticulated as 'internal others' which, by challenging the unity of nationhood, allowed a radical vision of pluralistic, self-critical nationhood to emerge.[47] In the identification of Glasgow with working-class populism, or the Highlands and Islands with 'the land struggle' and *Gàidhealtachd* ethnicity, or Edinburgh with a polarity of repressive Calvinism and cosmopolitan enlightenment, the local became a highly partial and politicised metaphor for distinctive components of a radicalised Scottish nationhood.

Through its territorial imagination, the radical left articulated a vision of Scottish nationhood defined by self-limiting instability and diversity, and thus ostensibly exempt from traditional critiques of nationalism as essentialising or centralising. Blending visions of community and cosmopolis, the radical left found in the idea of 'Radical Scotland' the most politically resonant territorial boundary for its ambitions: a "limited infinity," in Hugh MacDiarmid's words, which drew imagined and authentic communities together.[48] The "small piers and harbours" of Wilson's Skye, however much they were counterposed to the centres of Edinburgh and London, ultimately

[46] Confino, Skaria, 'Local Life' (2002), p.9.

[47] Corey Johnson, Amanda Coleman, 'The Internal Other: Exploring the Dialectical Relationship Between Regional Exclusion and the Construction of National Identity', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102:4 (July 2012), pp.863-880.

[48] Margery Palmer McCulloch, Kirsten Matthews, 'Transcending the Thistle in *A Drunk Man* and *Cencrastus*', in Scott Lyall (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Hugh MacDiarmid* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p.64.

dissolved into the printed docking- and launching-points of a revived Scottish radical left tradition which had, at its 'Jacobin' centre, the urban, 'civic' intelligentsia of Edinburgh.

This chapter begins by examining the claim that the left in Scotland was insufficiently engaged with its own national circumstances, which proved vital to the expansion of the Scottish radical imagination after 1967. This is contrasted with evidence of considerable interest in Scottish nationhood prior to this within both the Labour Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). To understand this divide in the self-image of the Scottish left, this chapter outlines a distinctive conceptual approach to understanding territorial identity within the 'first' and 'second' new lefts understood as different 'logics of transcendence.' This is demonstrated through a close, contextualised comparison of essays in the *New Left Review* by Lawrence Daly and Tom Nairn, prominent figures within the 'first' and 'second' new lefts respectively. Daly's territorial imagination was shared by both the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Labour left, embracing and affirming a vision of Scottish nationhood as a source of local democratic dissent alongside a unified and 'transcendent' British class identity.[49] Nairn, on the other hand, reflected the more cosmopolitan politics of the 'second' new left, expressing an estranged and disenchanting concern with Scottish nationhood.[50] This 'critical' nationalism sought to address a perceived lack of organised *intellectual* radicalism in Scotland, framing the nation as an intellectual problem more than a political opportunity for the radical left.

[49] Lawrence Daly, 'Scotland on the Dole', *New Left Review* 1:17 (Winter 1962), pp.17-23.
[50] Tom Nairn, 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', *New Left Review* 1:49 (May-June 1968), pp.3-18.

This chapter emphasises Scotland's peripheral position within the "long 1968", a moment of transnational cultural and political upheaval which affected the Scottish left more gradually, in a less politicised way. Yet the triumph of the SNP's Winnie Ewing at the Hamilton by-election provided a focal point for radical intellectuals to attempt to change this, and this chapter goes on to examine the efforts of *Scottish International* magazine to radicalise the Scottish intellectual field in precisely the way called for by Nairn. This is demonstrated through studies of two events with which *Scottish International* was involved: the radical 'teach-in' at Aberdeen University on Scottish culture in 1970, and the 'What Kind of Scotland?' conference at Edinburgh University in 1973. Each of these illustrated the development of a distinctively Scottish radical imagination, and this chapter goes on to explain the cosmopolitan 'logics of transcendence' involved in this, which differed from previous radical attitudes to Scottish nationhood.

This chapter goes on to explore the limits of this new radical intelligentsia, emphasising their concentration in Edinburgh as a focal point for both intellectual and social life. These limits were identified and debated at the time, and this chapter uses a debate over *Scottish International*'s move to Glasgow in 1974 to show how the radical imagination was nationalised further by debates over Glasgow and Edinburgh's distinctive symbolic roles within Scottish culture. Other de-centralising pressures are identified with studies of the *West Highland Free Press* and the Federation of Student Nationalists. These both articulated radical visions of the Highlands and Islands that had a more complicated relationship with Scottish nationhood. Finally, this chapter analyses *The Radical Approach*, a collection of essays published in 1976 by left-wingers in the SNP, which began the 'closure' of radicalism's territorial imagination:

the ‘logics of transcendence’ expressed by *The Radical Approach* were closer to the ‘first’ new left than the ‘second’, yet unlike the CPGB and the Labour left these prioritised Scotland over Britain as the ‘transcendent’ national unit. With Scotland increasingly established as the default territorial identity of the radical imagination, nationalism began to lose its disorienting, vitalising function as an *intellectual* problem and became a more practical political one.

## Scotland and the New Left

The post-Second World War era in Britain saw a “new left” emerge, characterised by a particular emphasis on intellectual and political experimentation. This new radicalism prompted complaints from Scottish radicals that Scotland was absent from this new radical imagination, which became a powerful justification not only for closer engagement with Scottish nationhood, but also for a nationalist disavowal of the “British Left”. This section contextualises this complaint by exploring the distinctive ‘first’ and ‘second’ iterations of the new left, which had distinctive ways of relating to territorial identity.

Between 1975 and 1976, the *WHFP*’s publishers – also called the West Highland Free Press – published a left-wing nationalist magazine called *Calgacus*. The magazine’s first editorial, authored by its editor and *WHFP* contributor Ray Burnett, was a statement of clear territorial intent. While it noted that “the present crisis of capitalism is neither a peculiarly Scottish problem nor even particularly British,” it nevertheless claimed that this “universal” crisis was “related to a specific reality”; this was “in our case an economic, political and social prism both definable and recognisable as Scotland.” Then, shifting register from theory to polemic, the point was hammered

home: "*Calgacus* is guilty of that most heinous sin in the catalogues of the British Left – we admit that Scotland exists."[51]

Burnett's argument – emphasising the universality of the "present crisis of capitalism", the "specific reality" of Scotland, and the exclusionary "catalogues of the British left" – identifies the territorial gap in which Scottish radicalism was remade between 1967 and 1983. One way of understanding this gap is through Alon Confino and Ajay Skaria's concept of the "logic of transcendence" in nationalist thought. In their usage, the logic of transcendence "assumes that as the scale of observation grows larger, so does the explanatory significance," so that local phenomena can only be understood via higher levels of "generality and abstraction."[52] As Confino and Skaria argue, this is crucial to the "cosmopolitan" element of nationalist thought, something that will be explored further in both this chapter and the next. Yet in Scotland, "transcendence" poses distinctive problems. On one hand, British visions of "transcendence" relegate Scottish questions to local status, best explained as 'regional' manifestations of British problems – prompting Burnett's frustrated insistence on Scotland's "existence". On the other, those spatial levels 'above' the nation – the "universal" but relatively abstract structures of capitalism, for instance – prompt questions about which "specific reality" should be taken as their "national" manifestation: Britain, Scotland, or a relationship between the two?

Until the late 1960s, Britain was at the centre of the Scottish left's territorial imagination. Yet Burnett overstated the denial of Scotland's "existence" by the "British

[51] Ray Burnett, 'Editorial', *Calgacus* 1 (February 1975), p.2.
[52] Confino, Skaria, 'Local Life', p.8.

Left," a rhetorical tactic he shared with many of his peers. In 1968, Tom Nairn described the Labour and Communist Parties in Scotland as "spiritless provincial simulacra," but Scottish members of both had engaged with Scottish nationhood for decades.[53] This engagement was often cultural or administrative rather than explicitly political – sometimes going no further than "admitting Scotland exists" – but nevertheless extended to regular support for some form of national political representation. The critique of the "British Left" as outdated and aloof drew less on an in-depth analysis of its Scottish expressions, and more on a spirit of irreverence popular amongst radicals whose politics were formed or transformed during the "long 1968."[54] In this period, spanning approximately a decade from the late 1960s into the 1970s, the cultural, political and social trajectory of the radical left was transformed across a wide range of territorial, social and political contexts. This had common features identified by Alinder *et al*:

> A pervasive search for new forms of social organization and political action, as well as new ways of thinking about them; an impatience, sometimes to the point of violence, with existing authority; an eagerness to find it in other parts of the world, the more remote and exotic the better, the means of combating that authority and creating an alternative to it; disillusionment, but in some places the continued hope as alternatives were increasingly foreclosed.[55]

[53] Tom Nairn, 'Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', *New Left Review* 1:49 (May-June 1968), p.17.
[54] Daniel J. Sherman, Ruud van Dijk, Jasmine Alinder, A. Aneesh (eds.), *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
[55] Jasmine Alinder, A. Aneesh, Daniel J. Sherman, Ruud van Dijk, 'Introduction', in Sherman *et al*, *The Long 1968* (2013), p.1.

In 1979, the Scottish Trotskyist Neil Williamson argued that the long 1968 had made little impact in Scotland, where "any undue concern for home-grown life … has always seemed drab and parochial" compared to cultural and political upheavals occurring elsewhere.[56] Yet Williamson was one of several radical intellectuals, shaped by those upheavals, who had spent much of previous decade trying to articulate a Scottish iteration of the new international radicalism. We can only establish the significance of the long 1968 as a turning point in Scottish radical thought, however, through comparison with the preceding era. Doing so can also help to cast light on the role of the 'new left' in the development of a distinctly Scottish left politics, which has been emphasised by several scholars.[57]

The idea of a Scottish new left has functioned as a useful shorthand for historians seeking to capture the distinctive radicalism of those on the left who broke with a more British, class-focused and state-oriented politics in favour of a closer engagement with Scottish national identity.[58] One key element of this apparent 'break' was its disengagement from the 'old' left, embedded in the traditional institutions of the Labour and Communist Parties and the trade unions. Yet in understanding the territorial politics of the radical left, this approach risks overstating the commonalities across the 'new left,' a tradition which was characterised by considerable divisions, especially when it came to the 'logics of transcendence' explored in this chapter. Conventional –

[56] Neil Williamson, 'Ten Years After – The Revolutionary Left in Scotland', in Henry Drucker (ed.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1979* (Edinburgh: Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland, 1979), p.61.
[57] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.164-168; Rory Scothorne, Ewan Gibbs, ''Origins of the Present Crisis'?: The Origins and Development of 'Left-wing' Nationalism, 1956-1979', in Evan Smith, Matthew Worley (eds.), *Waiting for the Revolution: The British far left from 1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp.168-171; Ben Jackson, *The Case for Scottish Independence: A History of Nationalist Political Thought in Modern Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p.14.
[58] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism* (1994), p.164.

albeit contested – scholarly distinctions between a 'first' and 'second' new left, broadly aligned with the foundation-years of 1956 and 1968 respectively, are rarely explored in their Scottish iterations.[59]

Yet in Scotland, these distinctions did matter. The engagement of each with Scottish identity adopted distinctive logics of transcendence, with significant consequences for the forms of Scottish political identification they encouraged. The 'first' new left emerged in what Stuart Hall describes as "a conjuncture - not just a year - bounded on one side by the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by Soviet tanks and on the other by the British and French invasion of the Suez Canal zone."[60] Hall's 'conjunctural' framing of the first new left's origins emphasises its internationalism, focusing on disillusionment with both the Communist Party of Great Britain's Soviet alignment and the Labour Party's 'Atlanticist' foreign policy.[61] This reflected the movement's transnational origins: the term *nouvelle gauche* had been adopted from a renewed French radicalism, and many of its leading activists and intellectuals 'could look back on transnational biographies,' such as the commonwealth backgrounds of Stuart Hall (Jamaica) and Charles Taylor (Canada).[62]

Yet as Wade Matthews argues, one key distinction between the 'first' and 'second' new lefts revolved around the relationship to nationalism. Leading figures in the first

[59] Stuart Hall, 'Life and Times of the First New Left', *New Left Review* 61 (January-February 2010), pp.177-196; Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals After Stalin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995); one exception to this lacuna is Wade Matthews, *The New Left, National Identity, and the Break-up of Britain* (London: Brill, 2013).
[60] Hall, 'Life' (2010), p.177.
[61] *Ibid*, p.179.
[62] Holger Nehring, ' "Out of Apathy": Genealogies of the British "New Left" in a Transnational Context, 1956-1962', in M. Klimke, J. Pekelder, J. Scharloth (eds.), *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960-1980* (Berlin: Berghahn Books, 2011), p.15.

new left, such as E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, sought to embed their internationalism in domestic radical traditions which, Paul Gilroy argues, "fortified rather than torpedoed regnant imperial and racial conceptions of the national inheritance."[63] In 1961, amidst financial troubles and political divisions, control of the original *New Left Review* passed from Stuart Hall and the first new left to a group around Perry Anderson (which included Tom Nairn). These intellectuals were hostile to the promotion of indigenous radical traditions and sought to impose a 'more rigorous de-nationalised Marxist terminology' onto the left.[64]

In this sense this 'second' new left represented a clearer break with the 'old' left. The preoccupation with national and local heritage that characterised the 'first' new left was itself an inheritance from the interwar appropriation of community symbols by radicals – from the CPGB to the Independent Labour Party (ILP) – seeking to mobilise 'tradition' and extra-parliamentary movements against a centralised status quo.[65] Malcolm Petrie argues that the radicalism of the interwar period identified politics as "at root a contest between two irreconcilable sections of society": one of these, put forward by the radicals of the CPGB and the ILP, "demanded fidelity to a constituency constructed in terms of class and locality," while the other offered "a conciliatory vision of politics, one that accorded priority to the [British] national electoral prospects of the Labour Party."[66] Petrie shows how this local, confrontational radicalism was gradually submerged into a more conciliatory national electoral politics as a consequence of the expansion of the franchise in 1918 as well as the growing centralisation of state

[63] Paul Gilroy, quoted in Matthews, *New Left*, pp.24-25.
[64] Matthews, *New Left*, p.15.
[65] Hall, 'Life', p.182; Malcolm Petrie, *Popular Politics and Political Culture: Urban Scotland, 1918-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.67.
[66] Petrie, *Popular Politics*, p.2.

functions.[67] We can understand the 'first' new left as an attempt to reassert this tradition of interwar radicalism, this time outside of the party forms which had contained it. Hall argues that it rejected "Leninist and democratic-centralist forms" in favour of "self-organization and participatory politics," a change that was reflected in the organisational structures and activism of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Committee of 100 with which the first new left was closely engaged.[68] Yet as James Hinton suggests, CND's "first wave" from 1957-1963 also reflected the unconstitutional politics of interwar protest, in which radical activists sought to wield political power directly, unmediated by elected representation and rooted in their local contexts.[69]

The incorporation of radical working-class politics into the Labour Party before and after the Second World War, and the constitutionalism of the CPGB's *British Road to Socialism*, represented a new logic of transcendence for the left. The British nation came to transcend and determine local initiative, providing the essential mediating point between locality – including the 'other' nations of the United Kingdom – and the transcendence of the wider world. Against this logic of transcendence, the first new left sought to articulate a vision of what Confino and Skaria call the "other local": this is a "set of practices which emerges in intimate relationship to nationalism, which in some ways even sustains nationalism, even though the places it produces cannot be understood within the same logic of transcendence." This form of local identification emerges "not so much outside the national, but beyond and alongside it."[70] Locality is

[67] *Ibid*, pp.93-94.
[68] Hall, 'Life', p.190.
[69] James Hinton, *Protests & Visions: Peace Politics in 20th Century Britain* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), p.154.
[70] Confino, Skaria, 'Local Life', p.10.

thus made to express something – for instance, values like community, democracy or authenticity – which both transcends and undergirds nationality, through which the nation must legitimate itself.

The 'second' new left, however, opposed the logic of transcendence espoused by Labour and the CPGB from an entirely different direction. Rather than seeking to reconstitute the radical traditions of Britain's 'other locals', the second new left adopted a logic of transcendence in which Britain itself was just another local component of the "world system".[71] Its founding texts came to be known as the "Nairn-Anderson thesis", a series of essays authored by Tom Nairn and Perry Anderson which sought to contextualise Britain's constitutional structures, political economy, culture and political traditions in terms of their relationship to the development of global capitalism. Their intellectual reference points were not English socialist thinkers like G.D.H. Cole and the 'humanism' of Karl Marx's early work – key influences on the first new left – but heterodox Marxists from across the western world like Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, Nicolas Poulantzas and Immanuel Wallerstein. The "polemical motive" of the Nairn-Anderson thesis, argues Matthews, was the "root and branch repudiation of the national culture associated equally with conservatism and (New Left) socialism."[72]

Much of this conflict played out in the pages of the *New Left Review,* and we can understand its Scottish implications by comparing the *NLR*'s two engagements with Scottish nationhood during the 1960s. The first was a 1962 essay titled 'Scotland on the Dole' by Lawrence Daly, a miners' leader and unambiguous member of the 'first'

[71] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
[72] Matthews, *New Left,* p.201.

new left.[73] The second was Tom Nairn's 1968 essay 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism'.[74] These essays will first be introduced and compared within the conceptual framework outlined above. The subsequent two sections will then explore in more depth how the two wider traditions, represented by Daly and Nairn, engaged with Scottish nationhood. These two traditions are the labour movement left, politically represented in the CPGB and the Labour Party; and a predominantly literary intelligentsia rooted in the Universities and print-culture.

Daly's argument for a left-wing Scottish nationalism, and a Scottish Parliament, prefigures many of the arguments which would be developed by others in subsequent decades. He advocates an ambiguous goal of "maximum practicable self-government" – devolved within Britain, but independent on the world stage – as a means of resisting economic and political centralisation and capitalism's disruption of local communities.[75] Crucially, he embeds these arguments within a detailed index of diverse forms of working-class deprivation, protest and disenfranchisement which draws on his intimate knowledge of labour movement politics, framing Scottish nationalism as an organic expression of working-class democratic demands in a way that reflects his engagement with both the CPGB and the 'first' new left. Scotland, in his argument, is distinctively ill-served by the centralised nature of Britain's state and economy, and requires self-government to overcome this.

Nairn's essay, published in the aftermath of Winnie Ewing's surprise by-election success in Hamilton in 1967, takes a markedly different approach. It is historically and

[73] Daly, 'Scotland'.
[74] Nairn, 'Dreams'.
[75] Daly, 'Scotland', p.23.

conceptually grander in its scope, applying the language of Freudian psychoanalysis and Gramscian Marxism to the broad sweep of Scottish history from the sixteenth-century Reformation to the present. In stark contrast to Daly, Nairn's engagement privileges the economic, political and intellectual development of Scottish elites, which is framed as largely interchangeable with the "dreaming" of the "Scottish people."[76] Where Daly locates a distinct Scottish economic interest that is nevertheless entangled with communitarian and political concerns, Nairn's preoccupation is with the quality and potential of Scottish cultural life. His support for some form of Scottish self-government – framed as supporting "the claims of Nationalism" and "its demand for more power" – is mentioned almost in passing, to achieve the "transfer of power to a smaller arena."[77] What really matters to him is the challenge presented to the left by the SNP's rise, forcing Scottish socialists to pursue "cultural liberation" from Scotland's "pervasive myths" and construct a "Socialist Nationalism" which appropriates Scottish identity in the name of revolutionary cultural modernisation.[78]

Both essays are firmly in tune with their authors' respective connections to the first and second new lefts, and indicate the different logics of transcendence implicit in each. Daly frames Scotland as an 'other local' that is more 'alongside' Britain than against it, with self-government proposed as a means of extending local participation and resisting the centralising tendencies of capital and the state alike. For Nairn, Scottish culture must be overthrown, not defended, and rising nationalist demands are portrayed as an instrument for the revolutionary left to exploit to that end. His is a more detached and cosmopolitan logic of transcendence, applying the ruthlessly critical

[76] Nairn, 'Dreams', p.5.
[77] *Ibid*, p.16.
[78] *Ibid*, p.17.

theoretical dispositions of European Marxism to a Scottish culture understood as backwards, reactionary and anti-socialist. Yet Nairn's polemical rejection of really-existing Scottish nationalism comes with a glaring utopian caveat, insisting on the kind of alternative nationalism that his 'second' new left colleagues explicitly rejected at the English or British levels. This was not, however, a vision of Scotland as an 'other local' ranged in-and-against British centralisation. For this 'second' new left, there was *no* territorial 'other local'; as we will see in the next chapter, the resistant 'others' adopted by the radicals of the 'long 1968' were often deterritorialised outsiders, their radicalism rooted in uprootedness and the disruption of tradition. The second new left adopted a harder logic of cosmopolitan, anti-nationalist transcendence, which contained within it a somewhat paradoxical leniency towards Scottish nationalism. In his rejection of British nationhood, Nairn fell back on Scottish nationhood as a means of disrupting the former, and a "Socialist Nationalism" as a means of revolutionising Scottish culture.

By exploring the wider contexts and influences of Daly and Nairn's arguments we can see a subtle but significant and formative divide between two forms of radical engagement with Scottish nationhood. The first, which dissolves firm distinctions between the 'old' left and the 'first' new left, articulated Scottish nationalism as a means of defending a distinctive working-class culture within a multicultural vision of Britishness that can be understood as a left-wing, pro-devolution 'small-n' nationalism compatible with unionism. This vision of Scottish nationalism had an enduring influence on left-wing nationalism, not only through the pro-devolution arguments of the labour movement, the CPGB and the Labour Party, but also through the new left's influence on the pro-independence arguments of the SNP's left wing. This latter element, however, followed the nationalist thread of those arguments out of unionism,

thanks in part to the influence of the second tendency represented in Nairn's essay: a more overtly cosmopolitan and modernising nationalism, opposed to – or simply aloof from – what it perceived as the Scottish 'myths' and conservative traditions which the 'first' new left sought to mobilise. While the first thread, represented in Daly's argument, became central to the *rhetoric* of Scottish nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s, it was the vision articulated by Nairn which embedded itself most deeply in the *ideology* of an emergent nationalist intelligentsia from the 1970s onwards.

## The Scottish Road to British Socialism: the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Labour Left

Daly's argument in 'Scotland on the Dole' reflected a wider tradition of sensitivity towards Scottish nationhood across the labour movement, which – despite Ray Burnett's dismissive critique of the "British Left" – was common in the arguments of both the CPGB and the Labour left. Daly spent large periods of his life (1924-2009) in both of these parties, and he was an experienced member of both 'old' and 'new' lefts by the time 'Scotland on the Dole' appeared. His father, Jimmy Daly, was a miner and a founding member of the CPGB, and Daly followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a member of the Young Communist League alongside his work at Glencraig colliery in Fife from the age of fourteen. He moved up the ranks of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to become local branch secretary in 1946.[79] He left the CPGB in 1956, criticising the 'blind loyalty' of the Party's leaders to the Soviet Union, and formed close ties with E.P. Thompson and John Saville, editors of the dissident Communist journal *Reasoner*, a formative influence on the 'first' new left. New left ideas were

[79] Madeleine Davis, ''Among the Ordinary People': New left Involvement in Working-Class Political Mobilization 1956-68', *History Workshop Journal* 86 (2018), p.140.

essential to Daly's decision to form a new party, the Fife Socialist League (FSL), in February 1957, which was met with considerable enthusiasm from Thompson and Saville.[80] Daly was elected as the FSL's candidate for the mining village of Ballingry in the Fife county council elections of 1958, which he followed up by coming third in the West Fife constituency for the 1959 General Election.[81] Beating the Communist Party's candidate Bill Lauchlan into fourth place was a considerable symbolic victory for Daly and his party, as well as the new left. As Madeleine Davis argues, "Daly's platform was distinctly New Leftish, especially in its linkage of the local to the national and global," including support for decolonization, cuts in military spending, unilateral nuclear disarmament and support for a Scottish Parliament.[82] By 1962, however, the failure of the FSL to make further breakthroughs – and the League's precarious financial position – focused Daly's attention on the Labour Party, into which the FSL was effectively dissolved by 1964.[83]

'Scotland on the Dole' makes no mention of the FSL, and ends with a call for Labour to endorse a Scottish Parliament.[84] The stated political stimulus for the article was elsewhere, in the West Lothian constituency, where a by-election in 1962 had seen the Scottish National Party surge into second place behind Labour, causing both the Conservatives and the Liberals to lose their deposits.[85] The SNP's candidate William Wolfe would be a significant influence on the party's move towards a 'social democratic' position over the subsequent two decades, and supported a localised, participatory and 'radical' nationalism that had much in common with the first New

[80] *Ibid.*
[81] *Ibid,* p.142.
[82] *Ibid,* p.143.
[83] *Ibid,* p.146.
[84] Daly, 'Scotland', p.23.
[85] *ibid,* p.17.

Left.[86] Though Wolfe's result pales into insignificance in both electoral and symbolic terms next to Winnie Ewing's by-election success at Hamilton five years later, it served a similar function for Daly as the latter did for Nairn in 'Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism'. It was a means of stressing the importance of Scottish nationhood to a British left which responded best to electoral, rather than merely ideological, challenge.

Daly's argument in 'Scotland on the Dole' blends a largely "banal" and common-sense Scottish nationalism with more clearly materialist emphasis.[87] Rejecting a British logic of transcendence which would reduce Scotland to a region, Daly writes:

> it is no use telling the Scots that their economic problems are similar to those of Lancashire or Durham. They will agree, but will add that if the English can't run their own affairs properly that is no reason why they should continue to mismanage those of Scotland.[88]

This "feeling," he argues, should not be dismissed as "an amusing piece of quaint, Celtic revivalism. Its economic and psychological roots are deep and its relevance to the problem of democratic government and social planning is immediate and significant."[89] Key to this new "feeling" is, in part, four decades of economic decline that has led to "a disproportionate share of Britain's unemployment."[90] Daly's critique of Scotland's structural position goes even further into the past, emphasising the long-

[86] Ben Jackson, *Case*, pp.92-93.
[87] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE, 1995).
[88] Daly, 'Scotland', p.17.
[89] *Ibid*, p.17.
[90] *Ibid.*

term concentration of Scotland's labour force in the "coal-producing Forth-Clyde valley […] depopulating the Highlands and Islands in the process, and devitalizing her folk culture."[91]

The overt nationalism of this language was not uncommon within the labour movement left during this period, and shared much with the particular logics of transcendence within which both the CPGB and the Labour Party situated their Scottish identity. The CPGB had been engaging positively with Scottish identity since the 1930s 'Popular Front' era, when the Comintern encouraged national parties to embed themselves in their national cultures and traditions as part of a coalition against fascism.[92] Until the 1960s, however, this embrace of Scottish nationhood had been largely contained within the cultural realm. The party's programme, *The British Road to Socialism* (*BRS*), consistently advocated the "recognition" of Scottish and Welsh "national claims" throughout several versions after its genesis in 1951, becoming more specific over time. The 1951 version called for "full recognition of the national claims of the Scottish and Welsh peoples, to be settled according to the wishes of these peoples," a vague and brief statement of support which reflected both the labour movement's overwhelmingly British focus of the immediate post-war era, but also nodded to the CPGB's participation in the pro-Home Rule Scottish Covenant movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s.[93] The 1958 version of the *BRS* was more specific, arguing that "Scotland and Wales need to have their own Parliaments, with powers to ensure

[91] *Ibid*, pp.17-18.
[92] John Foster, 'The Twentieth Century, 1914-1979', in R.A. Houston, W.W.J. Knox (eds.), *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Penguin, 2001), p.445.
[93] Communist Party of Great Britain, *The British Road to Socialism*, Marxists.org (1951, accessed online September 2020), https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/brs/1951/51.htm#5.

the balanced development of their economies within the general plan for Britain, as well as to satisfy the wider national aspirations of their peoples."[94]

The party's support for Scottish "national feeling" was, however, more pronounced in the realm of cultural politics. In 1950, Hamish Henderson began a debate in the *Daily Worker* over the role of the Scots and Gaelic languages in Scottish literature, defending Hugh MacDiarmid as an heir to Robert Burns. Hugh McBride's response criticised Scots language poets for appropriating something better suited to "bucolic" feudalism than industrial capitalism, prompting an angry reply from Henderson under the title "A Scot defends his language."[95] The CPGB engaged closely with commemorations of Robert Burns, and such events provided a platform for Scottish nationalist rhetoric which exceeded the official position of the Party. At a Burns' Night event in Glasgow in 1959, the *Daily Worker*'s editor J.R. Campbell made a passionately nationalistic speech to the audience, arguing:

> I don't suppose the bicentenary will cure us of our schizophrenia that we are not quite sure what we are… Are we England's province or an independent nation claiming national institutions? We must proclaim the fact that we are a nation and claim the rights of a nation. Let us have none of this half-hearted, time-serving, pussy-footing as in recent Labour documents on Scotland and let us demand our full national rights.[96]

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[94] Communist Party of Great Britain, *The British Road to Socialism*, Marxists.org (1958, accessed online September 2020), https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/brs/1958/58.htm#sd.

[95] Hugh McBride, 'What language for Scots poets?'. *Daily Worker* (March 31st, 1950), p.2; Hamish Henderson, 'A Scot defends his language', *Daily Worker* (April 18th, 1950), p.2.

[96] Philip Stein, 'Biggest Burns Nicht', *Daily Worker* (January 27th, 1959), p.3.

For the CPGB, Scottish identity was inextricable from the identity of the respectable, dignified and independent working class. This was also the Communist framing of working-class identity from the interwar era, but as Malcolm Petrie argues this had been part of a more localised conception of territorial identity, something that weakened the Party's appeal as the nation became an increasingly popular form of political identification.[97] Its continuation within a more overtly national frame was made clear throughout the Party's keen support for mass protests at Holy Loch against the arrival of American 'Polaris' nuclear weapons. Throughout the post-war period, the CPGB had sought to use the language of 'patriotism' – British and Scottish – against what it viewed as a cosmopolitan, "monopoly capitalist" establishment.[98] Its editorial for the 1959 election asked "Who is for Britain?" and claimed that Communists were the "true patriots."[99] This left-wing British nationalism peacefully coexisted with a Scottish equivalent north of the border, in which the 'Scottish people' could be both a component of the 'British working class' and a distinct but complementary force.

A key feature of the Party's left-wing nationalism was its anti-Americanism, and Holy Loch provided a prominent platform for this. The *Daily Worker* excitedly reported a 10,000 strong demonstration at Holy Loch in February 1961, featuring protesters shouting "Go home, Yank!" at off-duty Americans.[100] Americans were portrayed as alien occupiers and a corrupting influence. *Daily Worker* articles attacked relationships between American soldiers and local women, condemning the fondness of "Yank

[97] Petrie, 'Popular Politics' (2018), p.51.
[98] David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (London: Penguin, 2019), pp.163-164.
[99] 'Who is for Britain?', *Daily Worker* (October 7th, 1959), p.1.
[100] Philip Stein, '10,000 on march say: we dinna want Polaris', *Daily Worker* (February 20th, 1961), pp.1, 3.

sailors" for "teenage girlfriends" and arguing that these "US sailor-local girl romances" showed that

> The natural deep-rooted friendliness of the Scots is being richly exploited. But the fears, and resentments, and opposition, are simmering in this political backwater. They are being made articulate by the marchers from the cities and industrial towns.[101]

This passage encapsulates some of the contradictions of Communist involvement in the anti-Polaris campaign. The foreign immorality of the "Yank sailors" is contrasted with the decency of locals, yet these locals are nevertheless themselves portrayed as backwards, inarticulate and reliant on urban interlopers for adequate political representation. Local identities were thus rhetorically empowered and disempowered simultaneously, part of an effort to combine a British logic of transcendence with 'other locals' – either Scottish, or more local – that could re-embed a transcendent class unity in a more 'democratic' local experience.

A similarly opportunistic fudge was pursued in the Party's position on the 'national question' itself, which sought to balance an opaque rhetoric of Scottish empowerment with the continued unity of the British working class and state. In 1967, the Party produced a substantially revised new version of the *BRS*, but by the time of its 30th National Congress in November – the month of Winnie Ewing's victory for the SNP at the Hamilton by-election – its position on Scottish devolution had acquired only a little more detail than a decade earlier. The draft that went to Congress read:

[101] Philip Stein, 'Mass Murder in a 'Shopping Basket'', *Daily Worker* (March 10th, 1961), p.2.

> The people of Scotland and Wales must have their own Parliaments as a matter of urgency. These should be single-chamber elected assemblies, with power to exercise their democratic rights in the planning and economic, social and cultural development of their countries.[102]

This draft went to Congress, however, alongside a resolution which noted the inadequacy of this statement to "the resurgence of nationalism and the nationalist parties" in Scotland and Wales, which "pose very special problems" for "comrades living and working" in those countries. The "lack of clear policy" threatened to "increase these problems."[103] By the time of the final draft, the section on Scotland and Wales had been substantially expanded. The assemblies should be elected directly by proportional representation, and should have "adequate powers and finances" over trade, industry, agricultural planning and social security; but the success of this plan still required "a consistent fight against monopoly with the full backing of all the socialist and democratic forces of Britain."[104]

Much of this only created further questions, such as the extent and scope of "adequate powers and finances," but what mattered was the impression given that some further thought had been given to the question since 1959, in light of recent nationalist successes. In a speech on behalf of the CPGB Executive Committee introducing the

[102] Communist Party of Great Britain, Draft of The British Road to Socialism for 30th National Congress (November 1967). Glasgow Caledonian University Archives Centre. Willie Thompson papers, uncatalogued.
[103] Insert to Communist Party of Great Britain, Draft of The British Road to Socialism for 30th National Congress (November 1967). Glasgow Caledonian University Archives Centre. Willie Thompson papers, uncatalogued.
[104] Communist Party of Great Britain, *The British Road to Socialism* (1967), p.21. Glasgow Caledonian University Archives Centre. Willie Thompson papers, uncatalogued.

re-draft of the *BRS*, Jimmy Reid argued that "our Party in Britain has not done enough to popularise and make known its position on the national question in these isles," but that "as to the socialist future and the relations between the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales, these the peoples will decide. Federation or some other form of relationship."[105] By affording greater space to Scottish and Welsh assemblies in the new *BRS*, the CPGB hoped to signal its association with and support for the politics of Scottish and Welsh national identity, rather than offer any substantive proposals.

This attempt to balance an integrated vision of British socialism with a democratic, populist Scottish nationalism struggled under scrutiny. In May 1970, the Royal Commission on the Constitution took evidence from representatives of the CPGB's Scottish Committee at the University of Glasgow. Lord Crowther – then chair of the Commission – took evidence from Alex Murray, Hugh Wyper, Jimmy Reid and William Lauchlan from the CPGB.[106] This featured a lengthy discussion on where ultimate power should lie within a devolved settlement, with the CPGB representatives arguing for negotiation between UK and Scottish Parliaments, and Crowther insisting that one must have the final say. The Communists made analogies with workplace relations: "I do not know whose voice is decisive," argued Murray, "and that will depend on the relationship of the force at the given time. If workers can exert greater pressure on the management than the management can exert on the workers, the workers will get the shilling."[107] This image of Scotland as a worker, and the UK as manager, curiously

[105] Jimmy Reid, 'Speech by James Reid Introducing on Behalf of the Executive Committee the re-draft of the British Road to Socialism' (November 1967), p.5. Glasgow Caledonian University Archives Centre. Willie Thompson papers, uncatalogued.
[106] 'Commission on the constitution; note of a meeting held in the University of Glasgow on Monday, 4th May 1970'. Glasgow Caledonian University Archives Centre. Records of the Scottish Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, uncatalogued.
[107] *Ibid*, p.10.

overlooked Communist ideas about the basis of working-class power: their ability to withdraw their labour in a strike, or perhaps even call on the state for support. There was little sense here of what "pressure" Scotland might exert on UK "management" in such cases – direct action against Polaris had, of course, failed – and Murray ultimately fell back on a romantic, revolutionary voluntarism: "we are not unaware of these difficulties, but the difficulties are there to be overcome. We have a saying, "There is nothing impossible to a Bolshevik.""[108]

Crowther went on to note another contradiction, between the Communists' belief that an Assembly should have substantial tax-raising powers and the freedom to spend as it likes, and their emphasis on UK-wide industrial planning. For Murray, this was a question of "the sense of responsibility which goes with authority, and that is responsibility to other nations."[109] Once again, questions of power were avoided in favour of a naively moralistic vision of voluntary interdependence, as if both Scotland and the rest of the UK were already socialist. Reid argued that "you cannot have independence in the government – and I am not talking about separatism – any autonomy even, if for everything it wants to do it has to go cap in hand to some other national government."[110] This was, on the one hand, a fair critique of the logic of devolution as a form of national self-determination, but one which clashed directly with Reid's attempt to both support and oppose independence. Crowther, noticing this, accused Reid of "almost complete separatism," to which Reid responded that a Scottish government would only raise revenues to fund "additional" initiatives on top

[108] *Ibid,* pp.11-12.
[109] *Ibid,* p.12.
[110] *Ibid.*

of UK Government ones.[111] In an attempt to distil some clarity from the CPGB's position, Crowther summarised thus:

> What you are saying is monopoly capitalism and international companies is a thing which very much needs control, and this is why you are arguing for a separate Scottish parliament, or separate Scottish self-government to help in doing this?[112]

Lauchlan's response only muddied the waters further:

> No, we want unity. This is why we want unity in the whole United Kingdom, so as to have a government centrally that will tackle monopolies and make it possible for Welsh and Scottish parliaments to function effectively.[113]

The implication of this was that so long as the British state did not tackle the power of monopoly capitalism, Welsh and Scottish parliaments would be unable to "function effectively," an argument that could be used against devolution as easily as for it. The CPGB's position was ultimately an attempt to take up a form of leadership on the national question that was more cultural than political, trying to embed itself in a nationalist movement which it viewed as primarily organised around "feelings" and cultural politics which could be nudged in a socialist direction.

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[111] *Ibid.*
[112] *Ibid,* p.15.
[113] *Ibid.*

Despite these weaknesses, there was a more substantive analysis behind the CPGB's support for nations' "democratic rights." This was, however, only loosely connected to the more instrumental logic of 'rights'. Writing in the Party's theoretical journal *Marxism Today* in 1967, Bert Pearce – a member of the Party's Executive Committee as well as Secretary of the Welsh District Committee – argued that there was an "additional dimension" to the otherwise universal problem of "capitalist exploitation" in Scotland and Wales. "There social decay threatens a distinct national heritage and culture; young people driven away to find work, are leaving their own country, cutting their roots in its characteristic way of life."[114] This echoed Daly's own argument about the deep economic changes that had "devitalized" Scotland's "folk culture".[115] As a way of integrating the Communist Party's critique of "monopoly capitalism" and the British state with the national question, this was a potentially powerful way of connecting political and economic radicalism to small-c cultural conservatism, which would be deployed to great effect by Party members during the Upper Clyde Shipbuilder's work-in, discussed in the next chapter.

The CPGB aimed to use this line of argument to give leadership to a "broad, all-embracing national movement."[116] Yet its logic could just as easily lead to a restatement of left-wing unionism, something the CPGB attempted to incorporate with the mixed results seen in their evidence to the Crowther commission. Writing in the essay collection *Whither Scotland?* in 1971, the Labour MP for Renfrewshire West, Norman Buchan, argued that:

[114] Bert Pearce, 'The National Future of Scotland and Wales', *Marxism Today* 11:11 (November 1967), p.345.
[115] Daly, 'Scotland' (1962), p.18.
[116] Pearce, 'National', p.348.

> If Scotland suffers from the uneven development of capitalism in common with other areas then it is right that the entire U.K. resources should be used to restore the imbalance […] if we remove all Scottish political control and influence over what all accept is a single economic entity within the United Kingdom, then we are left inevitably to be controlled by that total economy. Consequently we would have less say than we have now over our own fate.[117]

This argument is at once democratic, Scottish nationalist and unionist, founded on a clear logic of transcendence which sees "uneven development" as a feature of a UK-wide economy which would exist even in the absence of a UK state. Buchan, like Daly, left the CPGB after the events of 1956, but had been a member of the Glasgow Communist Party's Culture Committee, and his influential role within the Scottish folk revival gave him an easy literacy in the language of Scottish cultural difference.[118] Reflecting on the politics of the folk revival in 1980, Buchan wrote that the songs of Scotland's CND marches were noticeably difference from those at Aldermaston in England. Unlike the "hymn-like" and "noble" singing of the English marches, Scotland's songs were more "irreverent": "The difference was that in Scotland we had always been closer to the basic folk material. The revival came truer in Scotland, and less precious than in England, and so too with our songs of protest."[119]

[117] Norman Buchan, 'Politics', in Duncan Glen (ed.), *Whither Scotland?: A Prejudiced Look at the Future of a Nation* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1971), p.90.
[118] Hamish Henderson, 'Norman Buchan, 1922-1990', *Folk Music Journal* 6:2 (1991), p.270; Donald Dewar, 'A left Scot, no softie', *The Guardian* (October 24th 1990), p.39.
[119] Norman Buchan, 'Folk and Protest' in Edward J. Cowan (ed,), *The People's Past: Scottish Folk, Scottish History* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1980), p.187.

Yet Buchan proposed a harder divide between this cultural nationalism and political unionism than the CPGB, focusing his arguments on opposing independence rather than incorporating it into a vision of home rule. During debates over proposals for a Scottish Assembly in 1975, Buchan repeatedly sought to distinguish between Scotland's nationhood and the "apparatus of statehood," arguing that while he was a "devolutionist" he did not want an Assembly which threatened to lead to Scottish independence.[120] He sought a referendum on devolution which included a third option on independence, ensuring that an Assembly would be achieved as a rejection of independence as much as the status quo.[121] While fervently asserting Scottish nationhood – and his identification with it – at every opportunity, as far as political power was concerned Buchan saw Scotland as just another territorial unit: "I believe in devolving power from those who have to the ordinary people whether they are in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cornwall or Cardiff."[122] Buchan's ambiguity on the question was such that in 1975, Jim Sillars, a left-wing former opponent turned evangelist of a Scottish Assembly, supported the pro-devolution right-winger Dickson Mabon for chair of the Scottish group of Labour MPs over Buchan's candidacy.[123] For Buchan, cultural nationalism was to be kept as far away as possible from questions of statehood and indeed politics in general.

The CPGB's relative ease with crossing that boundary was at least partly rooted in the logic of political competition on the left. As Petrie shows, the Labour Party's determination to embrace a British national and constitutional politics in the interwar

[120] HC Deb 4 February 1975 Vol 885 col 1257.
[121] Jim Naughtie, 'The Scotland Bill in the House of Commons' in H.M. Drucker, N.L. Drucker (eds.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1979* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1979), p.24.
[122] HC Deb 4 February 1975 Vol 885 Col 1257.
[123] Michael Keating, David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.182.

period gave them an advantage over the localism of more radical parties like the CPGB and the ILP.[124] Without the levels of popular legitimacy which Labour could secure through the UK's electoral system, the electorally unsuccessful CPGB sought to associate itself with extra-constitutional ways of identifying with 'the people', and their growing adoption of patriotic rhetoric from the 1930s onwards reflected this.

There were nevertheless clear similarities between the two parties' engagements with Scottish nationhood, as well as practical overlaps. In 1951, both Labour and the CPGB participated – alongside the Scottish Trades Union Congress and other labour movement and left-wing groups – in the establishment of the Edinburgh People's Festival, a radical counterpart of the Edinburgh International Festival. The People's Festival was an unambiguous expression of a left-wing Scottish cultural nationalism, welcomed by Hugh MacDiarmid as a "re-assertion" of Scottish tradition against "all the cultural enemies that are besetting us".[125] For MacDiarmid, these enemies included the International Festival itself, which he had condemned as an Anglicising influence on Scottish culture.[126] While the People's Festival organisers disagreed with MacDiarmid's opposition to the International Festival, they nevertheless invited him to be "People's Festival Chairman," and saw the People's Festival as a chance to correct the absence of Scottish culture from the International Festival's programme.[127] Rising anti-Communism within the Labour Party and the STUC, however, prompted both

[124] Petrie, *Popular Politics* (2018), p.67.
[125] Hugh MacDiarmid, quoted in Hamish Henderson, 'The Edinburgh People's Festival', in Andy Croft (ed.), *A Weapon in the Struggle: The Cultural History of the Communist Party of Great Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1980), p.169.
[126] *Ibid*, p.164.
[127] *Ibid*, pp.163, 168.

organisations to withdraw their vital financial support in late 1952, and the Festival did not continue beyond 1954.[128]

Both Labour and the CPGB nevertheless continued to share a belief that Scottish national interests, be they cultural or economic, were best met through the British state, and the continued unity of the British working class. As we see from a comparison of the positions of Lawrence Daly, the CPGB and Norman Buchan, there was also a high degree of similarity between the positions of the 'old' left and the 'first' new left. This similarity can be understood as a shared logic of transcendence, in which the Scottish nation was articulated as an 'other local', constituting a pole of predominantly cultural dissent *alongside* the economic protest of a unified British working class, *against* a centralised British political and economic order that could nevertheless be reformed.

Scottish identity could thus support a united British working class to overcome the country's territorial inequalities and its economic problems. At the centre of this vision of class, especially in the Scottish labour movement, were heavy industries like coal, steel and shipbuilding.[129] Jim Phillips argues that as these industries struggled through the 1960s and 1970s, influential figures such as the Communist Mick McGahey pushed the labour movement into support for a Scottish Parliament as a means of challenging Britain's centralised economic management.[130] As argued above, for all the modernising rhetoric around decentralisation, the nationalist rhetoric deployed to

[128] *Ibid*, p.115.
[129] Jim Phillips, *Scottish Coal Miners in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), p.172; Jim Phillips, *The Industrial Politics of Devolution: Scotland in the 1960s and 1970s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p.1; Ewan Gibbs, *Coal Country: The Meaning and Memory of Deindustrialization in Postwar Scotland* (London: University of London Press, 2021), p.185.
[130] Phillips, *Industrial Politics* (2008), p.15.

support these aims was clearly conservative in its framing. It emphasised the threat posed by deindustrialisation to a Scottish culture whose democratic, collectivist character was largely assumed. As chapter three shows, this approach would ultimately predominate in left-wing rhetoric around both devolution and Scottish independence, and thus previewed the 'Radical Scotland' myth. In the 1960s and 1970s however, this tradition largely sought to preserve Scottish nationhood within a transcendent British unity. It did not, as Ray Burnett argued in 1975, refuse to "admit that Scotland exists." Yet Burnett's criticism was not just polemical hyperbole; it was part of a different approach to Scottish nationhood adopted by those elements of the radical left more influenced by the 'second' new left.

## Critical Nationalism: the 'Second' New Left in Scotland

After 1967, a new milieu of intellectuals and activists in Scotland – largely disconnected from both the labour movement and party politics – began to articulate a more critical vision of Scottish identity which was nevertheless still either subtly or overtly nationalist in its political implications. This *critical nationalism* adopted a logic of transcendence which was at odds with previous left-wing articulations of Scottish nationhood. Its 'other locals' were not territorial but sociological, emphasising 'misfit' political and cultural affinities which carried the potential to subvert and disrupt settled Scottish identities. Its 'transcendence' bypassed Britishness entirely to place Scotland in direct dialogue with a world order in upheaval, inspired by the cosmopolitan radical imagination of the 'long 1968.'

We can identify all of these features in Tom Nairn's 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', published just six years after Daly's 'Scotland on the Dole.' While Daly's

intervention was inspired more by economic protest than political upheaval, he did note William Wolfe's strong performance for the SNP in the 1962 West Lothian by-election as a signal of nationalist potential. Nairn's article, however, was more obviously inspired by SNP electoral success. On November 2nd, 1967, a by-election in the Hamilton constituency was won by the Scottish National Party's Winnie Ewing, in what had been one of the Labour Party's heartlands. In James Mitchell's analysis of the by-election he shows how in the following decades interpretations of this result fluctuated dramatically, alternating between a reading of it as a short-term protest vote within a British political framework, and as a "harbinger of major change" towards a more prominent place for the SNP within a distinctly Scottish party system. Yet as he suggests, "such interpretations can themselves create change." Regardless of its true causes, Hamilton was "thought to be significant" by both the Labour Government and the Conservative opposition, both of whom treated it as an expression of rising nationalist feeling which demanded a devolutionary response.[131] The long-term impact of such interpretations was not exclusive to the realm of high politics, but affected a broad range of political actors in Scottish society. In 1968, the STUC effectively endorsed the establishment of a Scottish Parliament by remitting a motion in favour, a reflection of the deeper nationalist influences outlined above as much as a reaction to Ewing's victory.[132] Yet outside of the Scottish political control room which was at that time shared by politicians and trade unionists, Nairn was one of several Scottish intellectuals scrambling to understand and react to this new development. The day after the by-election, the London-based poet David M. Black wrote to his friend Robert

[131] James Mitchell, *Hamilton 1967: The by-election that transformed Scotland* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2017), p.21.
[132] Phillips, *Industrial Politics*, p.39.

Tait in Edinburgh: “Well, I says to myself, if the Nationalists win at Hamilton, I’ll come North to live in Scotland. My God, they have. Did I mean it? Who knows.”[133]

Black’s optimism was qualified by an admission of intellectual alienation from this new nationalist constituency. The “real danger,’ he suggested, was that an apparent upsurge in nationalism might become outright ethnic atavism, in which “the tartan-and-Lallans clan will begin to advertise themselves as the only true Scots, & the traditional good-humoured contempt for such claims, by the populace at large, may get swept away in the current of fanaticism.”[134] Black feared that “a quiet, unimaginative but frustrated people, as the Scots have been since 1745, is not going to have much discretion if it’s imaginatively aroused. A main cultural duty may become the mere assertion of the *badness* of most of Scotland’s cultural contributions.”[135]

Black’s letter captures the central problem which the SNP’s success posed for the small handful of radical intellectuals who took an interest in the result. On the one hand, they were excited by new developments in Scotland, and spotted a glimmer of potential for a route out of what they saw as political and cultural stasis. Yet they were also unsure about how they might direct this potential in the right direction, faced with a double problem: Scotland’s more adventurous and politically engaged radicals remained largely incorporated into a British intellectual field, focused upon London, or were further abroad; and those intellectuals who remained in Scotland often cleaved to a cultural-nationalist tradition (“the Tartan-and-Lallans clan”) which had become conservative in nature, despite its origins in the radicalism of the 1920s Scottish literary

[133] Letter from David M. Black to Robert Tait (November 3rd 1967), CRC Gen.2159/3.
[134] *Ibid.*
[135] *Ibid.*

renaissance. This tradition was loosely connected to the cultural nationalism of the 'British' parties, partly thanks to Hugh MacDiarmid's membership of the CPGB. Yet MacDiarmid's CPGB membership clashed with the 'new left' rejection of Stalinism that was popular amongst Scotland's younger radical intellectuals, which only reinforced the appearance of conservatism. While the new left had been busy exiting the CPGB in response to the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, MacDiarmid expressed his approval of the Hungarian debacle by rejoining the Party.[136]

In the months before Hamilton, little political dynamism appeared to be forthcoming from Scottish cultural life. Writing in the *New Statesman* in September, Nairn gave a scathing review of the 21st Edinburgh International Festival – titled 'Festival of the Dead' – in which he placed the blame at the door of the host nation: "The soil Scotland offers to this fragile festive culture is mildewed religiosity a mile deep, and what could thrive in this?" The Festival had become just another "constituent of the Great Scottish Dream," a "function of the Scottish Neurosis" in which the "partial suppression" of Scottish nationhood within the Union had led to a "fantasy solution" of "escape" – either via emigration or romantic nostalgia.[137] "Scotland," Nairn wrote, "has no voice, and no present." He concluded apocalyptically that "for Scotland, reality and speech obviously lie somewhere on the other side of rejection… Hope, as that well-known Scotsman R. D. Laing might well have put it, can only be beyond absolute despair."[138]

[136] Carole Thornton, Willie Thompson, 'Scottish Communists, 1956-57', *Science & Society* 61:1 (Spring 1997), p.87.
[137] Tom Nairn, 'Festival of the Dead', *New Statesman* (September 1st, 1967), p.265.
[138] *Ibid*, p.266.

Some observers interpreted Hamilton with a more unconditional optimism, situating it within a (largely hypothetical) tradition of pan-Celtic radicalism. In the American radical left periodical *Monthly Review*, Keith Buchanan – a Scottish geography professor in New Zealand – placed it alongside the growing popularity of Welsh nationalists Plaid Cymru, as part of a left-wing nationalist "revolt against satellization."[139] Other interpretations from outside Scotland shared this spirit, with the journalist Claud Cockburn describing the result in the *New Statesman* as "the renewal of a great tradition: the potentially formidable alliance of Scottish socialism and nationalism," and comparing it with the socialist Irish nationalism of James Connolly.[140]

Nairn's own analysis in 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism' engaged critically with Buchanan and Cockburn's analyses. Cockburn, he suggested, had fallen for "the common myth of Scottish Left-ness," arguing that while Scotland was "certainly a more egalitarian country than England," this did not make it "more revolutionary." On the contrary, "Scotland's gritty sense of equality derives from the old Theocracy, not from Jacobinism or Bolshevism." It was a passive egalitarianism, committed to "the democracy of souls before the All Mighty, rather than an explosive, popular effort to *do* anything." Instead, "Scottish Nationalism is not in the very least inherently 'Left',' but classically 'bourgeois'."[141] He also noted Buchanan's "interesting" emphasis upon "regional distortions of development,"[142] and agreed that "Socialism must identify itself" with the "transfer of power to a smaller arena, closer to the grasp of those subject

[139] Keith Buchanan, 'The Revolt against Satellization in Scotland and Wales', *Monthly Review* (March 1968), pp.36-48; Buchanan (1919-1997) was of Scottish parentage – one biographical essay lauds him as 'a Scottish Montaigne' – but appears to have spent little time in Scotland. See Ray Watters, 'The geographer as radical humanist: an appreciation of Keith Buchanan', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 39:1 (April 1999), pp.1-28.
[140] Claud Cockburn, 'The Bagpipes of Socialism', *New Statesman* (February 23rd, 1968), p.233.
[141] Nairn, 'Dreams', pp.11-12.
[142] *Ibid*, p.14.

to it."[143] However, he dismissed Buchanan's tacit endorsement of the SNP as the motor of this process:

> This would not be lunacy, if there was an independent and combative Scottish Left capable of striking such bargains, instead of those spiritless provincial simulacra of the Labour and Communist Parties that actually exist. As things are, complicity in the pretence that the Nationalist movement and the obtaining of autonomy are 'neutral', a-political events is merely suicide.[144]

The central "contradiction" facing Scottish socialists was, Nairn argued, between Scottish Nationalism's "externally positive effects" and its "internally reactionary nature." His solution was for socialists to "build up their own Nationalism to oppose the SNP and - beyond immediate politics - to come to terms with Scotland's complex cultural inheritance."[145] This would be

> a Socialist Nationalism, whose dream has dimensions which really correspond to those of the stubborn visionary drive towards identity we have been considering - and which is a part of living contemporary history and of an arising future - not a stale memory of bourgeois nationality, to enshrine all the other stale memories the country has lived off for so long. It goes without saying that such a Nationalism must exist by sharply combatting the overpowering past which conventional

[143] *Ibid,* p.16.
[144] *Ibid,* p.17.
[145] *Ibid,* p.16.

> Nationalism drools over, that it must see cultural liberation from Scotland's pervasive myths as a precondition of political action, and that it must utterly condemn the kind of garrulous, narcissistic windbaggery to which the intelligentsia has so often resorted - in the absence of anything better - as its special contribution to the problem.[146]

Four features of Nairn's analysis stand out here, which outline a comprehensive programme for the following decade of intellectual activity: first, the idea that Scotland has a "complex cultural inheritance" of its own, which required the construction of a distinctive analysis of Scottish society and an autonomous political strategy of the Scottish left. Second, that this autonomy must not only be from the British left, but from the hegemonic forces of Scottish politics too – a 'double' autonomy, resisting the incorporating crosscurrents of both British and Scottish society; third, the need for a critique of "myth" and its replacement with a "living" and "contemporary" articulation of Scottish identity which was more amenable to socialist appropriation; and finally, a clear emphasis upon the cultural nature of this task, with a co-ordinated intellectual endeavour outlined as "a precondition of political action." These were all tasks that could only be accomplished by a more developed intellectual infrastructure than had hitherto existed. This formative contribution to the Scottish radical imagination that 'opened' into the 1970s thus explicitly positioned the intellectual field as a *precondition* of radical politics, thus placing intellectuals – rather than, for instance, workers – at the heart of the radical left.

[146] *Ibid,* pp.17-18.

Until the late 1960s, the Scottish radical left tradition had little in the way of an autonomous intellectual infrastructure. The resources and spaces for the construction and development of a Scottish radical public which did exist were either subordinate parts of the British intellectual field, or – like the Edinburgh People's Festival and Daly's Fife Socialist League – short-lived in their autonomy. The most intellectually-orientated elements of the 'first' new left in Scotland were the New Left Clubs which began to emerge on university campuses across Britain in 1959, but Willie Thompson argues that these "evaporated entirely" after 1962.[147] This period nevertheless saw, in 1961, the publication of two influential, book-length studies concerned with Scottish national identity by George Elder Davie and David Craig which illustrate the different ways in which left-wing intellectual priorities of the period manifested in Scotland and England. Davie's *The Democratic Intellect* was an attempt to defend Scotland's "democratic" and "general" educational tradition from what he portrayed as the elitism and over-specialisation threatened by Anglicisation.[148] Davie – who described himself as a Scottish "patriot"[149] – proposed an analysis of Scotland's enduring distinctiveness from England which focused upon the precarious and hard-fought autonomy of the former's education system during the nineteenth century. Positing the "formula" of "unification in politics, separation in ethics" between Scotland and England, he argued that Scotland's schools and universities were central to the reproduction of a "democratic intellect" in Scottish intellectual life.[150] This, he suggested, served an egalitarian

[147] Willie Thompson, 'The New Left in Scotland', in Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Essays in Scottish Labour History* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), p.218.
[148] George Elder Davie, *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964; first published 1961); Lindsay Paterson, 'George Davie and the Democratic Intellect', in George Graham (ed.), *Scottish Philosophy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.236-269.
[149] Robert Calder, 'Davie, George Elder', *The Continuum Encyclopedia of British Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2006), p.792.
[150] Davie, *Intellect*, pp.xv-xvi.

function in wider Scottish society and – via its "metaphysical" affinities with continental Europe – represented a tradition at once more organic and internationalist than its southern equivalent, and thus worth defending from the encroachment of English influence. Explicitly comparing "threats of imminent Scottish surrender" in the 1870s with educational developments in the 1950s,[151] he stressed the contemporary relevance of such questions, arguing in the second edition (1964) that Scottish "arts" faculties were showing "welcome signs of awakening to the contemporary relevance of the historic Scottish experience."[152]

Yet for the left, the academic world was populated with considerable obstacles to progress towards a more autonomously Scottish expression of socialist thought. The Scottish Labour History Society (SLHS) was established in 1966, having existed informally for the previous five years as the Scottish committee of the UK-wide Society for the Study of Labour History. Robert Duncan suggests that "at the outset around 1960, the concept and practice of labour history in and of Scotland was still in its infancy and scarcely recognized as an academic subject."[153] It was characterised by an "obstructive mentality," which Duncan argues was

> dominated by the longstanding and somewhat narrow orthodox approach which focused on the institutions, formal organizations and movements of the working class… [and] an Anglo-centric or English chauvinist standpoint which relegated Scotland, and its labour

[151] *Ibid*, p.xviii.
[152] *Ibid*, p.xx.
[153] Robert Duncan, 'Scottish Labour History Society: A Retrospect', *Labour History Review* 75:1 (2010), p.119.

movement, to the status of a regional case study or part of a peripheral 'Celtic Fringe.'[154]

Overcoming this mentality became especially pressing with the publication of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* in 1963, in which Thompson's "history from below" approach embedded class experience in a broader, culturally rich social context with clear consequences for Scottish historians. Thompson's introduction explained his "neglect" of Scottish working class history as emerging "not out of chauvinism, but out of respect," for "the Scottish story is significantly different."[155] Coming to terms with this difference was all the more challenging, given the lack of documented archives of working class history in Scotland. The SLHS's early efforts were therefore dedicated to the mapping of records, supported by Universities, the STUC, the Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society and the Labour Party. These produced the *Interim Bibliography of the Scottish Working Class Movement* in 1965, cataloguing 1500 archival items, and *A Catalogue of Some Labour Records in Scotland* in 1978.[156] In 1967, William H. Marwick published his *Short History of Labour in Scotland*, yet this lacked Thompson's radicalism, reproducing many of the 'official history' characteristics criticised by Duncan.[157]

Where England's new left historians rediscovered a national radical heritage through the development of 'popular' and localised social organisation and protest, Scottish radical academics were drawn instead towards literature. David Craig's *Scottish*

[154] *Ibid.*
[155] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Classic, 2013), p.13.
[156] Duncan, 'Scottish Labour History', pp.120-121.
[157] *ibid*, p.119.

*Literature and the Scottish People* was a Marxist reading of Scottish literary history between 1680 and 1830 which sought 'to find the particular facts and particular passages of poetry or fiction in which the life of the people seems to reveal itself most genuinely.'[158] His account was more pessimistic than Davie's, identifying 1830 as 'the point at which Scotland was all but emptied of native talents' due to the Industrial Revolution and emigration.[159] He suggested that "sheer social forces – centralisation, emigration, the widespread wasting away of the regional and vernacular – were against the sustained output of anything like a *separate* literature for Scotland."[160] For both Davie and Craig, philosophy and literature were essential to Scottish identity, but their "native" autonomy was threatened – or perhaps even crushed almost entirely – by the erosion of its wider social, economic and political conditions of possibility.

Both Davie and Craig thus injected a degree of specificity into the vague cultural nationalism of the 'old' left and 'first' new left. But they offered little analysis of the conditions which were developing for a revival of Scottish intellectual life. One condition was the example being set to the south, and the growing awareness of a territorial gap between a London-centric British intellectual field and the need for greater understanding of Scotland's distinctive circumstances. Intellectual activity and passionate ideological conflict were central to the new left in general, whether it be 'first' or 'second'.[161] Its preferred political infrastructure was not the party, nor movements like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, but a new wave of radical publishing aided by developments in printing technology and the growing popularity

[158] David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People, 1680-1830* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), p.11.
[159] *Ibid*, p.12.
[160] *Ibid*, p.14.
[161] Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp.384-385.

and availability of paperback books.[162] Disputing the right of the mainstream print media to dictate the shape and direction of public controversy, the new left established an ecosystem of overlapping "counterpublics." These are defined by Nancy Fraser as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs."[163] Periodical publishing was vital to this. Stefan Collini argues that

> Periodical journalism, in the broadest sense, is not just the intellectual's natural habitat, it is also the noise made by a culture speaking to itself. It is the medium in which the question of intellectuals has been most frequently put.[164]

For Collini, such publications can be defined together by a shared aspiration towards "a discourse of general ideas."[165] By the late 1960s, a substantial "underground" of such counterpublics – and some more overtly public excursions – had emerged in London, with magazines such as *Ink*, *International Times*, *Black Dwarf* and *New Left Review* providing a basis from which new left intellectuals and ideas could make inroads into more established titles like *Tribune*, the *New Statesman*, *New Society* and *Marxism Today*.

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[162] Ben Mercer, 'The Paperback Revolution: Mass-circulation Books and the Cultural Origins of 1968 in Western Europe', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 72:4 (October 2011), p.617.
[163] Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy'. *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), p.67.
[164] Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.435.
[165] *Ibid.*

These titles benefited not just from new printing technology, but also from a significantly enlarged audience in the aftermath of the Robbins Report of 1963, which recommended a substantial expansion in university education across the UK.[166] Ben Mercer writes that "scientific and intellectual production appeared to be reaching the masses, at a moment in which the masses seemed to be entering the university."[167] Mercer questions whether this was truly "the masses," suggesting that relatively few left-wing texts made their way into the hands of "workers."[168] The politicised intellectualism of the 1960s is better understood as "middle-class radicalism," focused upon an expanded stratum of young people being trained for intellectual rather than manual labour.[169] It thus challenged the centrality of the labour movement and the industrial working class to the left's political and social imaginaries. While the industrial working class had been increasingly incorporated into existing political and economic structures since the interwar years, thanks to the expansion of the franchise and relatively widely distributed post-war growth, student life proved conducive to political radicalisation. Until 1970, people under the age of 21 in the UK could not vote, and had to find other forms of political agency; Geoff Eley suggests that

> youth straddled childhood dependence and adult "responsibility," creating a new category of young people with time, knowledge, money, and growing self-consciousness, targeted as a market and concentrated in distinctive institutions but juridically excluded from citizenship.[170]

[166] Robert Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present* (London: Hambledon Continuum), p.153.
[167] Mercer, 'Paperback' (2011), p.617.
[168] *Ibid*, p.624.
[169] Sassoon, *Socialism*, pp.383-384; see also Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968).
[170] Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.355.

The transnational character of these developments also encouraged a shift in left-wing logics of transcendence. Eric Hobsbawm writes that 'the same books appeared […] in the student bookshops in Buenos Aires, Rome and Hamburg.'[171]

These conditions were present to some extent in Scotland too.[172] The number of students at university more than doubled in Scotland between 1960 and 1970, from 15,061 to 32,714, while postgraduate numbers expanded from 3,762 to 8,836.[173] Christopher Harvie argues that a "student bohemia" emerged in Edinburgh in the early 1960s, and this had clear transnational influences. In their work on Edinburgh's cultural avant-garde in the 1960s, Eleanor Bell and Angela Bartie stress the contributions of Jim Haynes, who was a key figure in Edinburgh's cultural scene during the period after being stationed in Scotland in 1956 while undertaking national service with the US military. Haynes established the Howff folk pub and Paperback Books, Britain's first paperback-only bookshop, and helped to co-found the Traverse Theatre.[174] He teamed up with another North American in Edinburgh – the publisher John Calder, originally from Montreal – to organise the International Writers' Conference in the city in 1962. At the conference, a high-profile and bad-tempered debate between Hugh MacDiarmid and the novelist Alexander Trocchi became a flashpoint for the tension between 'native' and 'cosmopolitan' culture which bubbled away throughout the decade and into the next.[175] Small, radical literary journals in Edinburgh, such as *Jabberwock* and *Sidewalk*, situated Scottish writing in a transnational, contemporary

[171] Eric Hobsbawm, quoted in Eley, *Forging*, p.342.
[172] Angela Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Postwar Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
[173] Lindsay Paterson, *Scottish Education in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p.156.
[174] Angela Bartie and Eleanor Bell (eds.), *The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962* (Edinburgh: Cargo, 2012), p.9.
[175] *Ibid*, p.11.

context, seeking escape from what Bell describes as "the Calvinist, morally conservative culture of Edinburgh of the early 1960s."[176] By the end of the decade this had developed into a small but sturdy counterculture at the university.[177] Yet Edinburgh's student radicals were a small minority. Responding to a wave of student unrest at the London School of Economics in 1967, one editorial identified 'a picture of a university and a student way of life which is about as far away from the life we lead here as the moon is.'[178] Another article unfavourably compared Edinburgh to the intellectual radicalism of Sussex University:

> One is forced to admit that Edinburgh and Sussex are not fit material for comparison. The Baronial spires of Edinburgh are a constant reminder and indicator of the history and tradition which has become so firmly impaled upon them. In contrast, the simple, unadorned bricks and white paint of Sussex speak unashamedly of academic revolution.[179]

Nairn's call for a revival of intellectual radicalism was thus well-timed, not just due to Ewing's victory at Hamilton. Scottish cultural life was not isolated from a transnational transformation in both the conditions and the content of the radical imagination, yet these cosmopolitan influences were flowing into country gradually, building up slowly without producing a clear breakthrough. This sense of untapped potential was vital to the expansion of the Scottish radical imagination, which began with the establishment of *Scottish International* magazine in 1968.

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[176] Eleanor Bell, 'Rejecting the Knitted Claymore: The Challenge to Cultural Nationalism in Scottish Literary Magazines of the 1960s and 1970s', in Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *British Literature in Transition, 1960-1980: Flower Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.263-274.
[177] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism* (2004), p.155.
[178] 'Student comment', *Student* (4th May, 1967), p.3.
[179] 'Sussex seen by an outsider', *Student* (4th May, 1967), p.2.

## "To Look for What is Really There": *Scottish International*

The breakthrough came from a combination of this new student milieu with the older networks and controversies of Scottish literary culture, catalysed by the intervention of the Scottish Arts Council (SAC). In 1966 Robert Tait, writing a PhD on Wittgenstein at Edinburgh University, established a magazine called *Feedback* with Jack Regan, a history undergraduate, and with the assistance of Father Anthony Ross, the University's Catholic Chaplain. This magazine provides an insight into the specific vision of intellectual activity which also shaped *Scottish International*, and was thus a formative influence on the Scottish radical imagination as a whole. *Feedback* was rarely overtly left-leaning nor particularly political, publishing extensive comment on a general range of subjects like child psychiatry, the interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the theory of evolution.[180] Its most political or radical content remained firmly within the realm of literary debate. Tait's essay on the Scottish Renaissance criticised Hugh MacDiarmid's fondness for "adopting new slogans and new leading ideas' without 'a radical questioning of what poetry is about."[181] This reflected the broader turn amongst Tait's generation of radicals towards a critique of form alongside content: the media theorist Marshall McLuhan argued that the "medium" of communication could itself contain "the message,"[182] while the situationist philosopher Guy Debord explored the ways in which workers could be dominated by their own "representatives," criticising the "spectacle" of representation itself as a form of exploitation.[183] Nigel Lawrie's essay on Vietnam in *Feedback* 2 was titled "Prisoners of Their Own Semantics," a critical survey of *Time* magazine's "normalisation" of the

[180] Anne McDermott, 'Child Guidance in Scotland: A Survey', *Feedback* 1:1 (May 1966), pp.7-12; E.N.K. Clarkson, 'The Origins of Man', pp.23-32; Anthony Ross, 'Interpreting the Dead Sea Scrolls', pp.47-52.
[181] Robert Tait, 'The "Renaissance" in Scottish Poetry', *Feedback* 1:1 (May 1966), p.14.
[182] Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (London: Penguin, 1967).
[183] Guy Debord, trans. Freddy Perlman, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1970).

Vietnam War through language.[184] Christopher Harvie contributed an essay on W.B. Yeats and Irish nationalism, questioning Yeats' move from critical engagement with Irish nationalist cultural politics towards a more overtly "popular," sloganising nationalism that no longer "stimulated, even in defiance, thought and action."[185]

The common thread throughout these articles was an ideal of the critically reflexive intellectual, sensitive to the nuances and dangers of how their own symbolic power could be deployed and received. As Harvie's essay implies, this vision of the intellectual also entailed that nationalism must be held at arm's length, if not rejected completely. This did not mean an outright rejection of political commitment, but a sense of what constituted the distinctive contribution of intellectuals to political and social change. Dick Pels argues that intellectuals claim social status through their ability to "mobilize the performative force of a specifically estranged, 'undecided' and 'unhastened' perspective in order to counterbalance other powers that speak a different ('faster') truth."[186] This makes the periodical – a relatively slow and discursive form of media – crucial to such claims. *Feedback* stressed the value of an 'unhastened' and 'undecided' mode of thought with which intellectuals could counterbalance the ''faster' truth' of the political realm and its representations in daily print journalism.

The magazine also explicitly pursued a self-organising and rigorous intellectual community. Alvin Gouldner suggests that the intellectual community (or "class") is distinguished by a "Culture of Critical Discourse", emphasising the importance of collective intellectual labour that enables intellectuals to reflexively situate and account

[184] Nigel Lawrie, 'Prisoners of their own Semantics', *Feedback* 1:2 (1967), pp.8-11.
[185] Christopher Harvie, *Feedback* 1:1 (May 1966), p.45.
[186] Dick Pels, *The Intellectual as Stranger: Studies in Spokespersonship* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.xii.

for their own position within the production of ideas.[187] We find all of these features in *Feedback*'s first editorial, a mission statement which stresses that "magazine publishing should be self-critical" by means of "checks and counter-checks" before publication: an article would be discussed "from conception to completion" by the editorial board and contributors, alongside "a set of "shadow" referees" with field-specific expertise.[188] This time-consuming activity was unhastened in a literal sense, and such a deliberative and collaborative writing process was incompatible with the 'faster' truths emanating from daily or weekly newspaper production. The implication was that only the periodical review, with months - or in the case of *Feedback*, a year - between issues, could properly sustain an intellectual community. The magazine became a noteworthy, if not always popular, presence in its home university. While the *Student* suggested that its first issue sold well and its second "will be everywhere to be seen," reviewers complained about the "pretentious screech of the editorial statement of intent," and that "in meandering along this middle line [between 'specialist' coverage and 'the general educated reader'] it also manages to suppress any vestige of imaginative or interesting material."[189]

*Feedback* provided a staging-post, however, for Tait to move on to greater things. In 1967, committee members of the SAC began communicating informally with Professors Peter Butter and John MacQueen, of the English departments of Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities respectively, and Father Anthony Ross, with a view to establishing a quarterly review of Scottish culture. They decided – possibly based on

[187] Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp.1-4.
[188] 'Combined Responsibility', *Feedback* 1:1 (May 1966), p.5.
[189] 'Feedback', *The Student* (2 February, 1967), p.1; Paul Robinson and Robin Mann, 'Feedback Magazine', *The Student* (19 May 1966), p.7.

Ross' pre-existing connections – to adopt *Feedback* magazine and its editor Robert Tait, and expand this small, University-based and esoteric publication into something more clearly national. The magazine which emerged was called *Scottish International* and lasted for seven years, publishing its first issue in January 1968, shifting to monthly publication in August 1971, and folding amidst considerable public acrimony in March 1974. Throughout its existence, as well as its considerable afterlife in the collective memory of Scottish intellectuals, *Scottish International* played a formative role in the emergence of a new Scottish intellectual field that blended a cosmopolitan and often avant-garde internationalism with a growing interest in the particularities of Scottish politics, history and culture. This field was characterised by the fusion of left-wing radicalism and what Tom Nairn calls "nationality politics" which sustained the Scottish radical imagination.[190]

Between 1967 and 1975, the predominant character of this response remained only vaguely political, concerned more with 'mapping' Scottish politics, culture and society. Its primary concern was to restate in general terms the role that intellectual activity could play in Scottish society, carrying on the discourse of unhastened intellectual interrogation of faster social developments that *Feedback* had emphasised. In the discussions which produced *Scottish International*, Butter, MacQueen and Ross' application for SAC funds suggested that the magazine should cover the usual requirements of a Scottish literary review, with a focus on creative writing "mainly, but not exclusively, by Scottish writers." yet it was more expansive, including "a survey of the arts in Scotland, including reviews of books, plays, concerts, exhibitions, etc," as well as "critical articles on literary, artistic and relevant topics." Crucially, their

[190] Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997), p.48.

application proposed that while "the centre of interest would be the arts… it is impossible to separate these from the environment in which artistic works are created; so discussion, relevant to the purposes of the periodical, of political, social and other matters would be welcomed.'[191] This broad, 'context'-heavy approach to literature ultimately enabled the magazine to take a much more political approach than the SAC intended, providing considerable space for radical discussion of Scottish society.

The SNP's victory at Hamilton provided an ideal basis from which to engage with the national question in a way that could rearticulate the role of Scottish intellectuals in a more clearly political context. In his editorial for the first issue of *Scottish International* in January 1968, Tait diagnosed the by-election result as a symptom of "unease" with the "consequences" for Scotland of "sharing with the rest of Britain a Government, a media, and much of the available Press and publishing – among many other things."[192] The SNP's success was thus identified with a degree of marginalisation for Scots within a British public sphere. He wrote that "independence from a large centre of power and influence is necessary for any people who have their own ways and want to communicate among themselves and to the outside world their particular image and likeness."[193]

Tait was at pains to avoid outright nationalism, however, stressing that the desire for independence "can be a problem for those north of Hampstead as for the people north of the Tweed."[194] Thus *Scottish International* could be framed as a pragmatically

[191] Letter from Peter Butter, John MacQueen and Anthony Ross to Ronald Mavor, 3rd July 1967. NRS SAC1/9/10.
[192] Robert Tait, 'Editorial', *Scottish International* 1 (January 1968), p.1.
[193] *ibid*, pp.1-3.
[194] *ibid*, p.3.

national manifestation of a broader project to decentralise the public sphere: “people need their own publications through which they can create a presence for themselves and, perhaps, some influence too.”[195] At the heart of the editorial was a desire for critical publicity of the diverse phenomena of which the SNP were portrayed as a symptom: “In order to see which issues are really alive, there must be an atmosphere of lively, perceptive and informed debate.”[196] The editorial is notable for how little it focuses upon literature, suggesting briefly that “the regular appearance of a substantial and well-publicised amount of comment and ideas per quarter can do much to give people a sense that there really are things happening in the arts hereabouts.”[197] Yet once again, it shifts the focus back to a wider context, in which the position of *Scottish International* in relation to the national question is clarified:

> And not only in the arts. For these are perhaps best seen against the sociological and economic background which determines to such an extent what kind of culture we can have. Nor should one forget that the Scottish arts don’t exist in a Scottish world of their own. A colourless or promiscuous internationalism is to nobody’s advantage. But a self-conscious cultural nationalism can lead to bad habits of stereotyped thinking and unwillingness to look at the situation as it really is. Our policy will be to look for what is really there, and to call people’s attention to it.[198]

[195] *Ibid.*
[196] *Ibid.*
[197] *Ibid.*
[198] *Ibid.*

Just as *Scottish International* had to 'invent' its own public, it also claimed not yet to have worked out what that public might need to know. Its mission was from the start framed as one of abstract enlightenment, a basic quest for self-knowledge without a clear sense of which self, or which knowledge, was being questioned. Warning against the consequences of "self-conscious cultural nationalism" and "colourless or promiscuous internationalism" alike, it sought to place Scottish culture in an international context and set international cultural trends – such as 'concrete' poetry – in a Scottish one. It was clearly *national*, and represented an effort to create a distinctly national public for an intelligentsia whose cosmopolitan interests were already assumed. An increasingly radical, cosmopolitan intelligentsia, rooted in the universities, were thus identifying with the Scottish nation, and claiming it for themselves. Yet there was still little clarity about what that nation really was, beyond an abstract and contested social unit, and what such specificity might entail.

This ambiguity lent itself towards a self-consciously inclusive and critical articulation of Scottish identity. Launching *Scottish International*'s new monthly format in May 1971, Tait wrote that "we pay attention to the study of the Scottish environment, its social history, its racial, class and religious divisions, its intellectual achievements and its art… all these things are Scottish when they are found to function in Scotland."[199] Tait stresses that "certainly much of contemporary Scottish art is Scottish simply because it is found here."[200] This sense of an all-encompassing Scottish identity, full of contradiction and division, is contrasted with efforts to compress it into ideology: "At their worst, Scots have always been defensive, exclusive and inward-looking

[199] Robert Tait, 'Scottish International: Culture in a Scottish mirror in 10 issues a year', *Scottish International* 14 (May 1971), p.2.
[200] *Ibid.*

mythologisers in their cultural life."[201] In opposition to this, Tait reaffirms the magazine's cosmopolitan nationalism: "At their best, [Scots] have experienced and expressed affinities with other Europeans or recognised in North America, for example, variations on their own energies and aspirations."[202] He suggests Scotland is a "sick society," dominated by systematic divisions within "the things the Scots tend to pride themselves in most – education, law and religion."[203] Significantly, Tait agrees with Anthony Ross' argument in the same issue that "writers must… play a vanguard role" in overcoming these divisions, through the creation of critical publicity. "Before any more general movement for change in this country can get under way, it must have an adequate basis in more precise knowledge of the terrain. And there must be a frequent and regular forum for reports, comment and public debate."[204] This is accompanied by a particularly explicit statement of the magazine's political alignment: "To us, culture should be for the ending of antagonisms between man and nature and man and man. This is a fundamentally socialist and humanist ideal."[205] The Scottish left, however, "too often… indulges in shadow-boxing and its own mystique," and was in need of new ideas: "It is in the context of a culture whose present ethos is largely conservative in tendency that radical alternatives *must* be hammered out."[206]

*Scottish International*'s approach to Scottish nationhood was self-consciously radical, but worlds apart from the spirit of previous engagements between the radical left and the nation. In place of the 'first' new left's communitarian, folksy fidelity to an organic and cohesive national culture, threatened by bureaucratic modernisation, *Scottish*

[201] *Ibid.*
[202] *Ibid.*
[203] *ibid,* p.3.
[204] *Ibid.*
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] *Ibid.*

*International* offered a bracing, sceptical uncertainty about what Scotland actually was. Sweeping away common-sense ways of relating to the nation, it thus wedged open the territorial crack which had begun to show in the radical imagination, allowing – over time – a wide range of novel, often competing, and often negative visions of nationhood to flood in. Crucially, it insisted that the project of radicalising Scottish nationhood was a job not for the labour movement, but for intellectuals.

## Against "Myth-pedlars": the 1970 'Debater' Teach-in

This sense of detached but radical curiosity was not exclusive to Edinburgh's intellectuals. From 1968, a group of left-wing students in Aberdeen began seeking election to the committee of the University's 'Debater' society in order to divert its substantial funds and facilities towards a series of radical 'teach-ins'.[207] One such teach-in in February 1970 was titled 'The Culture of Scotland, past, present, future,' and brought together much of the radical literary intelligentsia which had been developing around *Scottish International*. This teach-in was one of two formative *Scottish International* events – the second is examined below – which allowed the radical imagination to move beyond the distanced collective encounters of print and on to face to face engagement, consolidating the imaginative literary world into particular spaces and more intimate connections. Events like these were vital in converting the objectified formality of magazines into a real, living community, and their significance was registered in the pages of *Scottish International* at the time and in the later reflections of their contributors. The teach-in also demonstrates the close relationship between *Scottish International*'s cultural and intellectual project and the

[207] Ray Burnett, '*Viva la Gillie More*: Hamish Henderson, Gramsci and Subaltern Scotland', in Eberhard Bort (ed.), *Anent Hamish Henderson: Essays, Poems, Interviews* (Edinburgh: Grace Note Publications, 2015), p.221.

radical politics of those involved. Ray Burnett, one of the student organisers of the event, later suggested that its "broad purpose was to explore Scotland's history, culture and traditions and to discuss present-day cultural activity in relation to the furtherance of a Scottish left, organically rooted in Scotland, as opposed to a left in Scotland."[208] In his own report, however, Tait suggested that the teach-in was motivated more by "sheer puzzlement about how to define or even to get a tangible fistful of contemporary Scottish culture."[209]

Burnett suggests that the theme was in large part inspired by Nairn's 'Three Dreams,' which "had thrown up a myriad of challenges and questions as to how all of us, regardless of our professed political alignment, would benefit from a rigorous re-examination of our intellectual and cultural past."[210] The students worked with Tait to "put together a programme that reasonably related to all of Scotland."[211] This programme, a series of panels about key 'ruptures' and themes in Scottish history and culture, reflected the periodisation provided by T.C. Smout in *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830*, published a year earlier, and Smout was a member of *Scottish International*'s editorial board.[212] Amongst the 40 speakers who attended were Tait, Smout, Hamish Henderson, SNP Vice-chairman (and Hugh MacDiarmid's son) Michael Grieve and the party's research officer Donald Bain, alongside literary figures like Alexander Scott, Sorley Maclean and Iain Crichton Smith.[213]

[208] *Ibid.*
[209] Robert Tait, 'Commentary: Seeking Fundamental Change', *Scottish International* 10 (May 1970), p.7.
[210] Burnett, '*Viva*', p.222.
[211] *ibid*, pp.222-223.
[212] T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830* (London: William Collins Sons.& Co, 1969).
[213] *ibid*; Robert Tait, 'Commentary', pp.7-9.

The ideal public of the radical intelligentsia remained limited: in his report of the event for *Scottish International*, Tait wrote that "this was *not* a writers' conference. But the participants were almost all of them writers, as it turned out." To the writers were added a "netful" of "film-men, TV-men, theatre, music [and] art men."[214] Tait and Burnett's expressions of uncertainty about what 'Scotland' might mean thus contrasted with a more clearly delineated set of participants: the range of attendees implied considerable agreement on the importance of a national community of cultural intellectuals, organised around a project to radicalise their understanding of the nation, with a possible view to radicalising the nation itself.

The teach-in's sessions, held in the 'Debater' Chamber of Aberdeen's Marischal College over the course of the weekend, asked sweeping questions about the Scottish past, but not before more overtly political matters had been dealt with. In the opening 'debate' on Friday evening, the writer Alan Bold moved that "This House condemns the SNP as a pedlar of myths," seconded by Burnett.[215] It was opposed by Grieve and Bain, but settled against the SNP thanks to a speech from Anthony Ross, who accused the SNP "of seeking a vote-catching consensus in preference to searching for the roots of real community problems that grow out of ethnic, class, cultural divisions still with us."[216]

This anxiety about the cohesiveness of Scottish society was reflected in the rest of the conference programme. The Saturday morning session titled "Celtic and Medieval

[214] Tait, 'Commentary', p.7.
[215] Aberdeen University Debater, 'Open Conference on the Culture of Scotland' (February 20-22nd, 1970). I am grateful to Ray Burnett for providing me with a scanned copy of the programme.
[216] Tait, 'Commentary', p.8.

Scotland" had, as its 'theme': "Has there at any point in the past been an artistic and intellectual totality which can be meaningfully termed "Scottish Culture"?" The following session, "Scotland in Turmoil 1560-1830," asked: "Has there been a qualitative break between the past and the present so that it is no longer accurate to refer to a Scottish cultural tradition?" The sessions on Sunday asked: "What is the merit of present day artistic and intellectual activity in Scotland, if it is unrelated to the Scottish people?" This was followed by a final session on "the communication of art to people."[217]

Regardless of whether or not Scotland could be understood as a totality, with or without a continuous cultural tradition, Sunday's sessions illuminated a deeper concern about how exactly an intelligentsia might respond to the conclusions. Even if the 'people' could be defined, could it actually reach them? The shock of Hamilton and the SNP's "myth-pedlars" haunted proceedings in Aberdeen, as a room full of radical students, writers and academics considered the stubborn gulf between themselves and 'the people' who had unexpectedly elected Winnie Ewing in 1967, and whose support would be needed for any radical political agenda to work. In February's *Scottish International*, Tait wrote that "the populist nationalist movement here provides the nearest thing to an active ideology with which Scottish artists have to reckon."[218]

These questions all bore the influence not just of contemporaries like Nairn and Smout, but of Antonio Gramsci, subject of a substantial *Scottish International* essay by Burnett in 1972 titled 'Scotland and Antonio Gramsci.' In it, he writes that:

[217] Aberdeen University Debater, 'Open Conference'.
[218] Robert Tait, 'This is Festival Time Here is The New', *Scottish International* 7 (February 1970), p.3.

> the left *must* uphold and expound the merits of past achievements and the richness of our inheritance…we must cherish the diverse contributions of the flowering Makar and the rantin' ploughboy, the radical weaver, the passionate Gael, and the rovin' tinker. If we do not, then what price "the revolution"?[219]

This theme of cultural wanderers, imperilled by history, spoke more to the priorities of Scottish intellectuals than the Scottish people as a whole. Burnett, clearly influenced by Hamish Henderson, conjured up a national tradition of marginal intellectuals, a diverse, articulate and fragile current of Scottish cultural radicalism endangered by the popular, populist forces of Scottish nationalism and British socialism alike. Lying beneath this heavily ethnicised radical imaginary is its polar opposite: an awareness that Scottish intellectuals weren't concerned enough with their particular heritage. Burnett criticised *Scottish International* for too easily adopting "global critiques of contemporary society," focused upon abstract concerns about alienation and the mass media, without relating them "to our own specific situation."[220] Again, we find Scottish intellectuals observing their own country as if from the outside, trying to plant a cosmopolitan political discourse in Scottish soil.

## "What Kind of Scotland?": the Impact of *Scottish International*

In April 1973, *Scottish International* hosted a three-day conference at the University of Edinburgh titled "What Kind of Scotland?" The conference focused on five main areas: "What kind of society?"; "What kind of culture?"; "What kind of economy and

[219] Ray Burnett, 'Scotland and Antonio Gramsci', *Scottish International* 5:9 (November 1972), p.15.
[220] *Ibid*, p.13.

environment?"; "What kind of democracy?"; and "What action now?"[221] This, like the Aberdeen "teach-in", marked a significant departure from older radical approaches to Scottish nationhood, which tended to take Scottish identity for granted and avoided this kind of politicised questioning of the nation's internal divisions. Those divisions were hard to avoid at the events themselves. At "What Kind of Scotland?", sessions descended into ill-tempered debates between Labour and SNP members.[222] In John Herdman's report of the event, "the tensions of a small, cramped national society" loomed large, and he suggested that "the achievement of the kind of Scotland most of those present seemed to want was going to depend upon a lot of people making some quite considerable leaps of consciousness."[223]

There was nevertheless a clear note of optimism. Attendees were treated to the first staging by the 7:84 theatre group of John McGrath's play *The Cheviot, the Stag, and the Black, Black Oil*. This satirical tour through Scottish history, drawing comparisons between the highland clearances and the arrival of American oil corporations, was socialist and ostensibly anti-nationalist in its politics: McGrath blamed a ruling class which was both Scottish and international for the exploitation of Scottish people, land and resources.[224] Yet its emphasis upon a distinctly *Scottish* experience of exploitation also implied a certain intellectual nationalism with which the whole audience could identify. Herdman reflected that it "elicit[ed] a unity of attitude which was often far from apparent at other stages of the Conference," while Burnett argues that "all of us present and involved that night still retain that enduring sense of a Scotland united –

[221] 'What Kind of Scotland?' *Scottish International* 6:3 (March 1973), p.3.
[222] Bob Tait, 'What Kind of Conclusions?', *Scottish International* 6:3 (May-June-July, 1973), p.15.
[223] John Herdman, 'What kind of Scotland? A view of the conference', *Scottish International* 6:3 (May-June-July, 1973), p.11.
[224] Graeme MacDonald, 'Commentary', in John McGrath, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp.17-67.

a radical Scotland united."[225] Tait wrote that "all the recognitions came together like a series of flashes in the long night. There they all were, the problems, the needs, the people, the treacheries, the latent radicalism, the vision of possibilities."[226] By situating the *Cheviot* in this wider context, we can better understand its vitalising force: the narrative clarity of the *Cheviot*'s political and historical vision offered Scotland's radical intellectuals a way out of mere critique, and into a more self-confident national identity of their own that did not mean giving up ground to the SNP.

In a similar vein, some agreement was also emerging on devolution, which was framed specifically in terms of a critique of *Scottish* forms of governance rather than of the British state, as Herdman notes:

> Everyone agreed that the democratisation of politics and of bureaucratic processes in Scotland was a development that had scarcely begun, and that this was a matter of how political power could be put back into the hands of the people.[227]

This common ground became all the more important by November 1973, when nationalism returned emphatically to the centre of political consciousness. Margo MacDonald's by-election win for the SNP in Govan was, like Hamilton, another surprise in another Labour heartland, occurred eight days after the Royal Commission on the Constitution had reported. The Commission presented a range of options, and its main recommendations were challenged by a minority report, but it outlined a clear

[225] Herdman, 'Scotland?', p.11; Burnett, '*Viva*', p.233.
[226] Tait, 'Conclusions?', p.15.
[227] Herdman, 'Scotland?', p.11.

emphasis upon the need for the UK Government to manage rising "national feeling" through "territorial forms of recognition."[228] For *Scottish International* and the growing circle of radical intellectuals around it, responsibility for producing these territorial forms lay with the Scots themselves.

However, as the self-government debate moved into its next phase, with further triumphs for the SNP in 1974's two general elections and the Labour's Party's official commitment to devolution that year, *Scottish International* could no longer contribute. Tait resigned as editor in mid-1973, seemingly exhausted from trying to bridge the considerable gap between the magazine's ambitions and the reality of its limited finances and audience.[229] His replacement, Tom Buchan, was a respected and well-travelled poet heavily influenced by America's 'beat' scene. By the 1970s, however, he was becoming increasingly erratic, experimenting with psychedelic drugs and developing an interest in mysticism and UFOs.[230] Buchan's personal unpredictability, coupled with his determination as editor to steer the magazine away from an Edinburgh-based cultural elite towards what he believed to be a larger market in Glasgow's youth counterculture led to considerable tension with the boards of both the SAC and *Scottish International* itself, as well as the wider Scottish media.[231] The SAC eventually placed considerable pressure on *Scottish International*'s board to

[228] Scott Hames, *The Literary Politics of Scottish Devolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp.86-89.
[229] Scottish International Review Ltd., Minutes of the 20th Directors' Meeting, 11th December 1972. CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159-1; 'Scottish International to Have a New Editor', *Scottish International* 6:3 (May-June-July 1973), p.7.
[230] Richie McCaffery, 'Tom Buchan (1931-1995)', Scottish Poetry Library website (2016: Accessed August 2018), http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poets/tom-buchan.
[231] Scottish International Review Ltd., Minutes of the 24th Directors' Meeting, 6th September 1973. CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159-1, p.1.

change direction or close the magazine, and the magazine's board – exhausted after their own sustained conflict with Buchan – decided to wind up by March 1974.[232]

The legacy of *Scottish International* was a transformation in the character of radical intellectual engagement with Scottish identity. It provided a distinctive Scottish platform and source of stimulation for left-wing intellectuals which was independent from the more traditional left publics of the labour movement, the Labour Party and the CPGB. It published work by writers and activists sympathetic to the SNP, such as Stephen Maxwell and William Wolfe, as well as Labour supporters like Christopher Harvie and Andrew Hargrave.[233] It attracted Scottish historians such as James D. Young and T.C. Smout, who was on the editorial board and provided a regular summary of developments in Scottish social history.[234] It published articles on gay rights in Scotland by Ian Dunn, a founder of the Scottish Minorities Group, and surveys of London's countercultural press by the journalist John Lloyd.[235] These political and historical engagements were carefully combined with an avant-garde artistic temperament, and essays, prose and poetry by creative writers like Archie Hind, Edwin Morgan and Iain Crichton Smith.[236] It became the convergence point for the broader "apparatus of criticism" which Christopher Harvie identifies as emerging in the late

[232] Scottish International Review Ltd. Minutes of the 27th Meeting of the Board, 22nd February 1974. CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159-3.

[233] Stephen Maxwell, 'Treason of the Clerks', *Scottish International* 5:6 (August 1972), pp.18-20; William Wolfe, 'The SNP and the arts', *Scottish International* 2 (April 1968), pp.5-6; Christopher Harvie, 'The Democrat Game', *Scottish International* 8 (November 1969), pp.3-5; Andrew Hargrave, 'A New Form of Struggle', *Scottish International* 16 (September 1971), p.8.

[234] James D., Young, 'Belt, Book and Blackboard', *Scottish International* 5:7 (September 1972), pp.10-13; T.C. Smout, 'Building a Social History', *Scottish International* 16 (September 1971), p.17.

[235] Ian Dunn, 'Gay Liberation in Scotland', *Scottish International* 5:3 (March 1972), pp.20-22; John Lloyd, 'The Pursuit of Alternatives', *Scottish International* 5:5 (May 1972), pp.16-18.

[236] Archie Hind, 'Men of the Clyde', *Scottish International* 16 (September 1971), pp.10-14; Edwin Morgan, 'The Flowers of Scotland', *Scottish International* 2 (April 1968), p.3; Iain Crichton Smith, 'Scotland', *Scottish International* 3 (August 1968), p.22.

1960s, which could ensure that "the [intellectual] treatment of Scotland moved away from myth, recollected grievance and the romanticism which had penetrated earlier accounts."[237]

The void left by *Scottish International*'s departure was soon filled by other publishing efforts that sought the same critical focus on Scottish society, and largely mirrored *Scottish International*'s pluralist, non-party approach. The main periodicals in this vein are detailed in the 'sources' section of the thesis introduction. Several books also sought to integrate the politics of the radical left and Scottish nationality: *The Red Paper on Scotland* (1975) edited by Gordon Brown, *The Radical Approach* (1976) edited by Gavin Kennedy, Tom Nairn's *The Break-up of Britain* (1977), *Scottish Woman's Place* (1978) by Eveline Hunter, and *Scotland, Multinationals and the Third World* (1982) by Stephen Maxwell can all be read as relatively programmatic expressions of varying strands of a distinctively Scottish radical intellectual tradition. These were complemented and informed by several book-length works of radical history, shorter pamphlets and discussion papers, campaign and party newsletters and bulletins, as well as chapters in more ideologically diverse collective publications. While a handful of these were party-political – *Scottish Marxist* was a product of the CPGB, *Scottish Socialist* was linked to both the International Marxist Group and the Scottish Labour Party, and *The Radical Approach* was linked to the SNP – even these self-consciously positioned themselves within a Scottish intellectual field that was fundamentally defined by the spirit of critique and pluralism which *Scottish International* pioneered.

[237] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism* (2004), p.161.

These publications are not only significant as a sign of renewed engagement with Scottish nationhood amongst elements of the radical left from the late 1960s onwards; they also constitute the vast bulk of writing about Scottish society and politics outside of academia and the daily print media during the 1970s. As such, they provide a crucial means of understanding the distinctive ways in which intellectuals in Scotland voiced the political, cultural and national questions of the day on their own terms, articulating a more overtly Scottish intellectual identity in the process. The accumulated printed matter of this effort formed the bridge across which radical intellectuals were able to reach a secure sense of their place and role in a newly politicised Scottish nation.

## "A Most Cosmopolitan People": Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Anti-imperialism

As the motor of left-wing engagement with Scottish identity shifted from the labour movement and the 'British' left parties to this new, university-based intelligentsia, so too did its logics of transcendence. *Scottish International* did not create a national intellectual field out of thin air, but inherited elements of a territorial imagination specific to the lifeworld of the university and the urban, non-aligned intelligentsia. As argued above, this territorial imagination was cosmopolitan, characterised by a logic of transcendence that prioritised transnational ideas and identities over local or national ones. It had no territorial 'other local', opting instead to articulate local identities as more unproblematically subordinate to transnational ones. This approach was challenged, however, by intellectuals who sought to articulate a more distinctively Scottish form of cosmopolitanism in light of their own nationalist beliefs, or in response to the rising political significance of Scottish identity. This section explores two attempts to 'nationalise' transcendence in the early 1960s: the poet Tom Scott's

editorship of the Edinburgh University-based *Gambit* magazine, and the Saltire Society's magazine *New Saltire*. As this section shows, however, it was Tom Nairn in the early 1970s who provided the clearest effort to identify Scottish nationhood with a more radical cosmopolitanism, in a context of growing interest in Scotland's role within anti-imperialist politics across the Scottish left.

*Gambit* magazine was founded in 1956 by two medical students at Edinburgh University, Fereydoun Ala and Geoffrey Peter McMullin.[238] Both Ala and McMullin's biographies are impeccably cosmopolitan in themselves: Ala was born in Paris in 1931, where his father, Hossein Ala, was an Iranian diplomat. After being educated in Iran, England and the United States as his father's career developed, Fereydoun Ala enrolled at the Medical School in Edinburgh.[239] Here he met McMullin, a mature medical student who had previously studied German and French at University College London before going into business.[240] While Ala and McMullin's editorship of *Gambit* was brief, their later careers further demonstrate a shared dedication to international public service, but little specific interest in Scotland. Ala became the first Iranian member and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and went on to found the Iranian National Blood Transfusion Service in 1974.[241] McMullin carried medical equipment in an ambulance across Europe to supporters of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, before pursuing further medical training in the United States and spending two years in Tehran before the Iranian revolution in 1979.[242]

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[238] *Gambit* 1 (Summer 1956), p.1.
[239] Mohammad Hossein Azizi, Touraj Nayernouri and Moslem Bahadori, 'The History of the Foundation of the Iranian National Blood Transfusion Service in 1974 and the Biography of its Founder, Professor Fereydoun Ala', *Archives of Iranian Medicine* 18:6 (2015), pp.396-397.
[240] Tony Watson, 'Geoffrey Peter McMullin', *British Medical Journal* 348 (2014, accessed online January 2019), https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3473.
[241] Azizi *et al*, 'History', pp.396-397.
[242] Watson, 'McMullin'.

*Gambit*'s first three issues, edited by Ala and McMullin, expressed a clear desire for a 'general review'-style periodical that could transcend both its academic and national context. The first editorial complained that there were too many attempts within the student body to achieve just this, and called for a consolidation of efforts that might transcend the "notoriously schismatic" habits of "the Scots." The editors aimed several jibes at Scottish nationalism, claiming that "there are Scots today who would cut off Scotland's nose, or even more vital organs, to spite England's face."[243] *Gambit* also differentiated itself from the priorities of the new left, opting for a pro-Western geopolitical stance over the latter's move towards non-alignment. Responding to the Suez crisis and the Hungarian uprising in 1956, the editorial of issue 2 called for the West to "close its ranks" and regain some solidarity against the Soviet Union.[244]

In 1959, however, the editorship of *Gambit* changed hands from Peter Froestrup, who had taken over from Ala and McMullin in 1958, to Tom Scott. Scott, the son of a Clydeside boilermaker and a determined Scottish nationalist and socialist, spent much of his career deriding the "anti-Scottishness" of what he perceived as an Anglophile cultural elite in Edinburgh.[245] Duncan Glen argues that Scott's poetry was "disgracefully deprived" of attention and support in Scotland, particularly the capital. Scott's own palpable sense of unjust deprivation was perhaps the source of the persistent tone of indignation found throughout much of his work, which his obituary in *The Times* noted was "often untempered by humour or moderation."[246] This often spilled into outright Anglophobia in his letters. In correspondence with Glen in 1967,

[243] 'Editorial', *Gambit* 1 (Summer 1956), pp.1-2.
[244] 'Editorial', *Gambit* 2 (Autumn 1956), p.2.
[245] Letter from Tom Scott to Robert Tait, 11th October 1967. CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159-2.
[246] 'Tom Scott', *The Times* (August 23rd, 1995), p.19.

Scott wrote that "in some ways a Scot is never more exiled than when at 'home', for home is in the enemy's hands. The English, likeable enough in their own country, are sheer hell anywhere else, for the most part."[247] The arrival of Scott at the helm of *Gambit* in 1959 was previewed with trepidation by its outgoing editor, who sought to reassert the magazine's early mission to "establish itself as… a general review, non-political and with a literary bias… we must also guard against regional – or national – bigotry. We live in the supposed capital of Scotland, yes, but we are also studying at one of the most cosmopolitan Universities in the United Kingdom."[248]

Scott's first editorial took issue with the insertion of "supposed" before "capital," denouncing "the general conspiracy to dissolve Edinburgh into a provincial city, and reduce its university to another "red-brick" one." He insisted upon a clearly Scottish purpose for *Gambit*. The university, he wrote, should be "a place where a community educates its intelligentsia to take responsibility for the intellectual and ideological side of its affairs," and left little doubt as to which "community" he was discussing. He argued that *Gambit* existed to express "the interests of the University intelligentsia of the capital of Scotland," and hit back at his predecessors' claims to a special cosmopolitanism, declaring that "as in most capitals, and universities, this intelligentsia is of course cosmopolitan – and is the more Scottish for that, for the Scots are a most cosmopolitan people."[249] Scott's attempt here to triangulate between 'cosmopolitan' and 'Scottish' priorities, targeted at a readership which tended towards the former, found an inverted echo in later years from those seeking to more effectively embed their cosmopolitanism in national political and cultural life, especially through *Scottish*

[247] Quoted in Duncan Glen, *Selected Scottish and other essays* (Kirkcaldy: Akros Publications, 1999), p.95.
[248] 'Editorial', *Gambit* 5 (Summer 1959), p.2.
[249] Tom Scott, 'Editorial', *Gambit* 6 (Autumn 1959), p.4.

*International*, though Scott was hostile to the magazine. Throughout Scott's editorship until 1961, *Gambit* maintained a more Scottish focus than before, leading to his successor, Mike Shea, complaining about student objections "that *Gambit* was sinking on the rocks of Rose Street parochialism."[250]

The Cold War allegiances of *Gambit*'s founding editors indicated the entanglement of cosmopolitanism with international politics, and as the global political situation changed, so too did the tenor of Scottish logics of transcendence. One short-lived publication which sought to rearticulate a distinctly Scottish cosmopolitan identity in dialogue with these changes was *New Saltire*, a literary magazine funded by the Saltire Society that ran for 11 issues between 1961 and 1964. *New Saltire*'s first editorial focused on the prospect of British entry into the European Economic Community (EEC).[251] The main attraction of the EEC was not the "practical", economic side of things but its institutionalisation of European cultural identity. While England may "slide reluctantly" into Europe, as a country whose "greatest days" were as a "unique world power," Scotland was a "truly European country."[252] Returning to Scotland's "Continental roots" thus provided a "dramatic chance of national revival" by providing "a much freer movement of men and women and ideas" as well as "goods and money" between Scotland and Europe.[253] This argument shared the constitutional ambiguity of much nationalist argument of this era, emphasising how Scotland could make itself useful within the newly Europeanised United Kingdom. This was premised on an argument that Scots were less racist than the English:

[250] 'Editorial', *Gambit* (Autumn 1961), p.3.
[251] 'Comment: Into Europe', *New Saltire* 1 (Summer 1961), p.1.
[252] *Ibid*, p.3.
[253] *Ibid*, p.4.

> In the European Community - and also in a Commonwealth where there are so many dark faces at Prime Minister's Conferences - it might be decidedly helpful to London politicians if there were Scottish spokesmen who got on rather more easily than they did with both the Continental and the coloured, but also understood the British point of view. Scots have seldom been narrowly national.[254]

The second issue of *New Saltire* took a similar approach to the United Nations, reflecting on the death of UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld in a plane crash in September 1961. Its editorial praised Hammarskjöld's transformation of the UN into "the one means by which the newly independent states that have sprung from European decolonisation could take a convincing place of their own in international affairs."[255] This "building of new nations" was, the editorial argued, a type of "nationalism" which was "the one possible basis for an international community held together by something better than mere fear." This was "Europe's, and particularly Scotland's, greatest gift to the world."[256] Though it is unclear what is meant by this crediting of Scotland for the invention of nation-building (perhaps the Declaration of Arbroath), it represented another attempt to articulate Scottish identity as innately cosmopolitan, making a distinctively 'internationalist' contribution to the world.

International organisations remained central to intellectuals' engagement with national identity into the 1970s, particularly the EEC. In 1973, Tom Nairn wrote a letter to Robert Tait apologising that he would not be able to attend the 'What Kind of

[254] *Ibid.*
[255] 'Comment', *New Saltire* (November 1961), p.5.
[256] *Ibid*, p.5.

Scotland?' conference, and offered a sustained analysis of *Scottish International*'s role in revitalising Scottish cultural politics. In the letter, published in the magazine under the title 'Culture and Nationalism', Nairn argues that *Scottish International* represented "the one way in which Scottish culture is at present *potentially* in advance of English," but not because of its more nationalist moments:

> The nationalists have always enjoyed imagining that we were superior to the southern neighbours in virtue of some inherited *Geist*, a romantic-national concept. In fact, the only "superiority" we have ever enjoyed – either in the eighteenth century or now – has consisted in our critical ability to rise above a relatively weak national inheritance in a manner at once intellectual and universal in its aim. The strength of the latter has always been of the former's feebleness and ambiguity.[257]

For Nairn, Scots' "chief advantage in life, at least during modern times," has been "*not* having "roots" of the requisite kind." This "cultural talent" for taking the "shortcut" to universality, sidestepping the "long winding road" of nationalist development, could "regain some genuine significance in the period that is now beginning – in the age which is succeeding that of nationalism in Western Europe."[258]

The *strength* of Scottish culture, in Nairn's view, was thus the very borderlessness of its intellectual life. The intelligentsia's failure to properly valorise the nation made it perfectly suited to a post-national age. This perspective 'nationalises' Nairn's analysis,

[257] Tom Nairn, 'Culture and Nationalism: An open letter from Tom Nairn', *Scottish International* 6:4 (April 1973), p.7.
[258] *Ibid.*

produced a year earlier for the *New Left Review*, of the debate over the European Economic Community amongst the British left. His essay 'The Left Against Europe' asked why the Conservative Party and British capital appeared so enthusiastic about Europe, while the supposedly 'internationalist' left so resistant. He suggested that it was down to the left's long defeat at the hands of nationalism, forcing them to compromise and root themselves in the state and its myths, rather than the prospect of an internationalist future; they could not, as a result, come to terms with the weakening of their nation-state crutch in the face of a new internationalist age, leaving the initiative with the ruling class.[259] In 'Culture and Nationalism,' he extended this to Scotland, which is not mentioned in 'The Left Against Europe.' The problem with the EEC was that it lacked a unifying democratic ideal, forced "out of the abyss of its age of nationalism" by "its own disasters and the combined power of America and Russia."[260] This was compounded by a lack of any clear internal resources from which such an ideal might be generated:

> Formerly there was in Europe one great "non-national" nation, one people of no country, and they acted for over a century as the leaven of European culture: the Jews. In cultural terms, we of the left owe virtually everything to them. But in the philistine and bourgeois Europe centred upon Brussels this leaven has gone… The Common Market's problem can be put very simply, and materially: in losing the Jews it has lost its former natural power to overcome the paralysis of all its different nationalisms and provincial cultures.[261]

[259] Tom Nairn, 'The Left Against Europe', *New Left Review* 1:75 (September-October 1972).
[260] Nairn, 'Culture', p.8.
[261] *Ibid.*

Thus Nairn suggested a fundamentally *ethnic* basis for radical cosmopolitanism, clearly drawing on Isaac Deutscher's 1958 essay 'Message of the Non-Jewish Jew,' which is cited throughout 'The Left Against Europe.' Deutscher identified a tradition of *lived* internationalism amongst Jewish radical intellectuals:

> Having watched many societies and studied many "ways of life" at close quarters, they grasp the basic regularities of life. Their manner of thinking is dialectical, because, living on the borderlines of nations and religion, they see society in a state of flux. They conceive reality as being dynamic, not static. Those who are shut within one society, one nation, or one religion, tend to imagine that their way of life and their way of thought have absolute and unchangeable validity and that all that contradicts their standards is somehow "unnatural," inferior, or evil. Those, on the other hand, who live on the borderlines of various civilizations comprehend more clearly the great movement and the great contradictoriness of nature and society.[262]

For Nairn, following Gramsci, it is a similar problem of the 'formation of the intellectual classes' which faces the new, seemingly post-national Europe, and he seeks to restate an ethnic basis for this:

> In the past, it is clear that the cultural importance of marginal and relatively backward areas of Europe, like Scotland, the Italian

[262] Isaac Deutscher, 'Message of the Non-Jewish Jew', Marxists.org (1958: accessed August 2018), https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/amersocialist/deutscher01.htm.

> *Mezzogiorno*, Ireland, or (in the nineteenth century) Russia, always depended upon a complicated inter-relationship of province and metropolitan centres… Europe's new "Jews" are far more likely to be such delinquents from the outer edge: cultural nomads from the barrens, so to speak, rather than products of the old nation-state moulds in Oxford, the Paris *grandes écoles*, or the *Scuola Normale*. Is it absurd to foresee some real future for our countrymen in this new, still embryonic, international scene? A future perhaps more really consonant with our nature and possibilities than the wilful nostalgia of our would-be nationalists?[263]

Nairn's letter offered a solution to the tension identified in *Scottish International*'s first editorial between "promiscuous internationalism" and the "bad habits" of "self-conscious cultural nationalism." The former's "colourless" ethnic emptiness was reframed as a colourfully empty *ethnicity*, and the "international" aspirations of its intellectuals became a product rather than a rejection of their nationality. This inverted the real trajectory of *Scottish International*'s emergent cosmopolitan nationalism, which had been constructed through the struggle of a peripheral intelligentsia for a 'national' infrastructure of their own.

Rather than the genuinely cosmopolitan social and cultural milieu of the urban university *producing* a cosmopolitan radicalism, which is then drawn towards nationalism by a need to 'nationalise' its agenda and focus, Nairn suggested that

[263] Nairn, 'Culture', p.9.

*Scottish International* had been conditioned into its cosmopolitanism by the distinctive characteristics of Scotland as a nation. These characteristics were seemingly inaccessible to the English, or even Parisian, intelligentsia. Rather than the intelligentsia imposing cosmopolitanism on the nation, the nation imposed its cosmopolitanism on the intellectuals. Through these ideological acrobatics, Nairn reified the nation as a fundamentally cosmopolitan one, with the intelligentsia not at the margins, but as the bearers of its true potential. In framing the Scots as a particularly cosmopolitan people, he was also echoing arguments made in 1959 by Tom Scott, an unrepentant opponent – as we will see below – of almost everything Nairn and *Scottish International* represented. The pressure of politics had drawn Scotland's cosmopolitan intellectuals into a more intimate relationship with their national 'roots,' forcing them to adapt their cosmopolitanism to meet the nationalist terrain rising up to meet them.

Alongside Europe and the UN, the other key international stimuli for the new logic of transcendence were anti-imperialism and Third-Worldism. Both the rhetoric and often the analysis of Scottish nationalist politics has framed Scottish historical experience in post-colonial terms, but Jimmi Østegaard Nielsen and Stuart Ward argue that "it was not until the [British] empire was widely referred to in the past tense that it became possible to render Scottish politics in post-colonial language."[264] While Nielsen and Ward argue that these themes were "low key" in the SNP's rhetoric during the 1960s and 1970s, this was not the case on the radical left. One influence was the growing

[264] Jimmy Østegaard Nielsen, Stuart Ward, 'Three referenda and a by-election: the shadow of empire in devolutionary politics', in John MacKenzie and Bryan S. Glass., *Scotland, Empire and Decolonisation in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p.200; Liam Connell, 'Modes of Marginality: Scottish Literature and the Uses of Postcolonial Theory', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 23:1/2 (2003), pp.41-53.

international appeal of Maoism, as a "Maoist fever" gripped intellectuals and activists across a wide range of Western social movements during the Chinese cultural revolution between 1966 and 1976.[265] In Scotland, this primarily manifested itself in the Workers Party of Scotland (Marxist-Leninist) (WPS(ML)), which emerged (and split) in 1966 from a pro-China split from the CPGB after a breakdown in relations between the Soviet Union and China.[266] The WPS(ML) shared many of the features of Western Maoism identified by Julia Lovell, including a frantic overproduction of literature and an emphasis on violent revolution.[267] Its multiple, densely-typed publications, such as *Scottish Vanguard*, *Forth Valley Vanguard* and *Red Clydesider*, carried enthusiastic endorsements of Communist governments in China, Albania, Vietnam and North Korea, and called for Scottish workers to "throw off the yoke of the British Imperial State."[268]

The WPS(ML) also passionately memorialised the socialist anti-war activist John Maclean, who supported Scottish independence in the final years of his life. The party achieved no electoral success, but was instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of the John Maclean Society in 1968, which attracted prominent figures from across the Scottish left: its inaugural meeting, held in Glasgow, was addressed by left luminaries like George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona Community, Hugh MacDiarmid and the prominent 'Red Clydeside' veteran Harry McShane. Its 'sponsors' included the Labour MP Emrys Hughes, the historian Ian MacDougall and the SNP's William Wolfe.[269]

[265] Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (London: Vintage, 2019), p.271.
[266] Robert J. Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), pp.90-92.
[267] Lovell, *Maoism*, pp.269-273.
[268] 'The Workers' Party of Scotland – Its Aims', *Scottish Vanguard* 1 (1967), p.24.
[269] John Maclean Society, Announcements of Inaugural Meeting (1968), National Library of Scotland.

Yet the WPS(ML)'s militant approach to Scottish nationalism drifted too far from critical self-awareness into myth to fit the tastes of the new intellectual left. Writing in *Scottish International*, Ray Burnett identified the WPS(ML) as "the only left political tendency to take the question of Scotland seriously", but suggested that this was "in inverse proportion to its ability to take history seriously." Burnett rejected the designation of Scotland as an English colony, arguing instead that Scotland was marginalised within Britain due the presence of an independent "civil society" in the absence of a matching "political" society, indicating the influence of Gramsci's distinction between the two.[270]

Nairn, agreeing with Burnett, criticised the "Manichaean simplicity" of Third-Worldist visions of international politics, which saw development as a "struggle between the privileged and the under-privileged nations."[271] This model, argued Nairn, ignored what he called "the 'middle class' of the world order", a group of geopolitical "trouble-makers" and "non-belongers" with the potential to disrupt the international system.[272] As historical examples, Nairn identified "middling" nations like nineteenth-century Belgium and early twentieth-century Czechoslovakia, and situated Scotland alongside more contemporary "world misfits": the Ibo in Nigeria, the Kurds, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, "White South Africa", Singapore and Israel.[273] For Nairn, Scotland's "difficult" status in the world order was likely to create "a particular and pressing necessity to look towards other countries and other national movements," and thus produce an "especially outward-looking" nationalism.[274] Scottish nationalism thus promised to

[270] Burnett, 'Gramsci', pp.13-14.
[271] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism 2nd ed.* (London: Verso, 1983), pp.182-183.
[272] *Ibid*, p.183.
[273] *ibid,* pp.186-188.
[274] *ibid*, p.194.

reinforce the logic of transcendence favoured by the 'second' new left, which he was determined to propagate throughout Scottish intellectual life.

Far from positing a contradiction between nationhood and cosmopolitanism, then, the Scottish radical imagination could comfortably make room for a creative combination of the two. This native cosmopolitanism, in which Scotland was a source of cosmopolitan identification rather than an obstacle to it, nevertheless profoundly challenged the logic of transcendence common to the labour movement left. Scotland's radical potential would not spring from working-class resistance to the uprooting of ethnicised communities, as Lawrence Daly and Bert Pearce had suggested; on the contrary, it lay in Scotland's distinctive rootlessness, which allowed its intelligentsia to fulfil a critical role on both the national and the global stage. Thus the shifting logics of transcendence of the radical imagination preserved the identification of radicalism with Scottish nationhood, while transforming the political subject of the radical nation.

## "A Convivial Community": Edinburgh-centrism and its Critics

In 1975, Christopher Harvie wrote in the *New Statesman* of a "devolution of the intellectuals":

> Political nationalism is no more prepossessing as an ideology than it was, but there is no longer a British or imperial alternative. The

> intelligentsia can only now create a tolerable, convivial community in its own country.[275]

The intelligentsia which developed out of the 'long 1968' sought to blend nationhood and cosmopolitanism together, but its territorial reality did not match its territorial imagination. As Craig Calhoun argues,

> cosmopolitan liberals often fail to recognize the social conditions of their own discourse, presenting it as freedom from social belonging rather than a special sort of belonging, a view from nowhere or everywhere rather than from particular social spaces.[276]

In Scotland, the "particular social space" of the new left-wing intelligentsia was neither Scotland nor the world, but Edinburgh. The capital's dominance of Scottish intellectual life was sustained and reinforced by its own indigenous version of a continental café culture, focused upon the city's pub scene. The flagship publications of the Edinburgh University Student Publications Board (jokingly nicknamed the 'Pubs' Board') were the *New Edinburgh Review*, the *Red Paper on Scotland*, and the *Complete Edinburgh Pub Guide*, which was filled with knowing in-jokes and thinly veiled political innuendo.[277] A key haunt was the Abbotsford pub on Rose Street, which was "visited by students with almost religious devotion" and a site for heated encounters between several strands of the city's intellectual life.[278] *Scotsman* journalists, venturing beyond their own

[275] Christopher Harvie, 'The Devolution of the Intellectuals', in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p.91.
[276] Craig Calhoun, ''Belonging' in the cosmopolitan imaginary', *Ethnicities* 3:4 (December 2003), p.531.
[277] Allan Peden, Arthur J.A. Bell, *The Complete Edinburgh Pub Guide* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1971).
[278] *ibid,* p.26.

territory at the Jinglin' Geordie on Fleshmarket Close, mingled with the writers of the Times Educational Supplement based on Hanover Street and BBC journalists based on Queen Street.[279] Gordon Brown and his circle of pro-devolution Labour members were also regulars, alongside the traditional Rose Street coterie of nationalist poets.[280]

Beyond the pubs, intellectuals could more carefully curate the company they kept at flat parties. Neal Ascherson recalls that Brown's own parties at his Marchmont Street flat would see "wild dancing in a dark room with flashing lights, but in another room there would be – just like the Abbotsford actually – Gordon standing with his male friends talking gravely about Labour Party affairs."[281] Popular parties were also held at 28 East Preston Street, where Tom Nairn and Neal Ascherson lived from 1975 to 1979 alongside the novelist Ellen Galford, Lynda Miles – director of the Edinburgh International Film Festival – and the journalist Isabel Hilton. Nairn and Ascherson were also involved with the 'Scottish International Institute,' a research centre based on Queen Street whose own parties attracted a range of Scottish and international intellectuals.[282]

An earlier hub for the community around *Scottish International* was the Edinburgh University Catholic Chaplaincy, where its offices – and Father Anthony Ross – were based. This brought *Scottish International* into close proximity with the Scottish Minorities Group, Scotland's main gay rights advocacy group, who were given use of the Chaplaincy's premises after their formation in 1969. *Scottish International* became

[279] Interview with Trevor Royle, March 13th 2019. Royle was Assistant Director (Literature) of the Scottish Arts Council and finally Literature Director from 1971-79.
[280] Interview with Neal Ascherson, January 24th 2019.
[281] *Ibid.*
[282] *Ibid.*

a significant platform for the SMG, publishing several articles about the group and the experiences of gay men in Scotland and further afield.[283] In these offices, parties and pubs, a distinctly intellectual and often self-consciously radical nation was constantly being argued into being; and, increasingly, such arguments were being written down and published. While an expanding realm of print provided the means by which this new intelligentsia articulated and publicised its increasingly national status, it was in a more localised spatial realm of pubs, parties, flat-shares and offices that the solid ground of a "convivial community" could be found from which to imagine their own place at the centre of not just the city, but the nation. This was a truly 'civic' nation both imagined and lived at the intersection of poet and politico, and constructed out of the raw materials of both high-political tumult and creative unrest.

The veiled particularity of this new intelligentsia provoked accusations of insularity and elitism from several critics. One of the most prominent challenges to intellectual Edinburgh-centrism came from Tom Buchan, who was appointed editor of *Scottish International* after Bob Tait's resignation in 1973. Buchan's decision to radically alter the magazine's direction, and to turn towards a psychedelic, expletive-laden aesthetic targeted at Glaswegian youth counterculture, rapidly alienated him from both the *Scottish International* board and the SAC, but it also reflected an alternative territorial imagination to the one being elaborated in the pubs of Edinburgh. As part of this, Buchan moved the magazine's headquarters to Glasgow, operating initially out of the SAC's Glasgow Centre in Blythswood Square, where the playwright Tom McGrath was SAC Glasgow director.

[283] Ian Dunn, 'Gay Liberation in Scotland', *Scottish International* 5:3 (March 1972), pp.20-22.

Buchan was not alone in hoping to steer the magazine this direction. One of his competitors for the editorial role had been the poet Alan Bold, who provided a "critique and a programme" for the magazine with his application which described it as "a plant reared in a glasshouse" that "must in future thrive in the robust climate of the Scottish outdoors."[284] Buchan shared this desire to break *Scottish International* out of its comfort zone, criticising the high number of academics on the magazine's board and promising "radical changes" along with "new modes and standards of political and literary journalism."[285] This was framed as modernisation, rejecting Tait's attempt to model the magazine on the *New Statesman* and *Spectator* which, according to Buchan, were "losing circulation and influence." It was also pitched in youthful, populist terms, with Buchan stating in his first editorial meeting that his aim was "to attract especially younger readers, the people at whom *Scottish International* should aim primarily."[286] Buchan told the *Scotsman* in August 1973 that "he thought Glasgow was in a sense a "realer" city than Edinburgh. The magazine had to break out from the university-based audience to a wider one, and this would be easier in Glasgow."[287]

The announcement of the move fed into a long-running culture war, shot through with class and sectarian connotations, between Scotland's two urban centres. In an early mission statement for *Scottish International,* Anthony Ross had lamented the divisions of class, religion, region, ethnicity and language that prevented Scotland from establishing a "real identity," and suggested that

[284] Alan Bold, 'Scottish International: A Critique and a Programme'. April 1973. CRC Gen.2159/3.
[285] Tom Buchan, Application for position of *Scottish International* editor, 12 May 1973, CRC Gen.2159/3.
[286] Minutes of 23rd Directors' Meeting, 29th June 1973 CRC Gen.2159/3.
[287] Harry Reid, 'Literary magazine moving to Glasgow', *The Scotsman* (August 3rd, 1973), p.1.

> The key to all our problems must be found in Glasgow probably. The future of Scotland depends on that great conurbation on the Clyde where the Gaelic stream from the Highlands and Ireland mingles with the more British people of the Lowlands, and with others from every part of Scotland. It is in Glasgow that the chief divisive elements confront each other most dramatically.[288]

But Ross argued that Glasgow could only revive Scotland's identity if it could

> turn outwards more. The insecurity that Scots in general show to the rest of the world Glaswegians sometimes display to the rest of Scotland in the form of a prickly parochialism that resents opposition and withdraws into sulks when it cannot have its own way.[289]

Buchan's move to Glasgow provoked a lengthy debate on the *Scotsman*'s letters page. These letters provide an indication of the broader implications which Buchan and the SAC knew were associated with *Scottish International*'s shifting territorial identity. Donald Campbell suggested the migration indicated an endorsement of an early *Scottish International* piece by Tom McGrath, in which McGrath argued that

> The Scotch people have their own much despised and derided culture based on football, fighting, drinking, fornicating, which seems to me to

[288] Anthony Ross, 'Resurrection', *Scottish International* 14 (May 1971), p.11.
[289] *Ibid.*

> be much more vital, honest and productive of what a man needs… than anything I have seen in the Scotch 'culture' circuits.[290]

While Campbell, an erstwhile *Scottish International* reader, was "not prepared to support this," H. Mellon wrote to suggest that he agreed with McGrath's "description of Scottish culture."[291] Endorsing Buchan as well, he suggested that "Edinburgh is certainly much less real than Glasgow," and that those who "propagate and sustain the myth of Edinburgh's superiority" were

> those who (a) do not live there, (b) reside within the city limits but dare not cross their threshold for fear of mugging, (c) are drunk, (d) are on the lam from the law, or (e) drink tea with their pinkies raised nicely… I have often pondered to myself while riding a bus along Princes Street whether or not Edinburgh has such a thing as the man in the street. Most of the men in Princes Street seem to be tourists – do they qualify?[292]

Edinburgh – a self-styled "genteel capital cum Festival beer-cellar," according to Mellon – was not only a symbol of false, "anti-Scottish" "internationalism" in the eyes of cultural nationalists like Tom Scott, but also the home to a parochial, bourgeois nationalist elite in the eyes of people like Buchan. Glasgow's supposedly more demotic popular culture was easily compatible, according to McGrath and Buchan, with the jazz nights and avant-garde tendencies with which they were also engaged.[293] The

[290] Tom McGrath, quoted in Donald Campbell, Letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (August 7th, 1973), p.8.
[291] Donald Campbell, Letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (August 7th, 1973), p.8; H. Mellon, Letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (August 10th, 1973), p.10.
[292] Mellon, Letter (August 10th, 1973), p.10.
[293] Angela Bartie, 'Explorer: Into the Sixties with Tom McGrath', in Eleanor Bell, Linda Gunn (eds.), *The Scottish Sixties: Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?* (New York: Rodopi, 2013), pp.47-67.

capital's stuffy condescension towards this culture demanded a kind of provocative, decentralised cultural guerrilla warfare in response, captured in Buchan's 1969 poem 'Letter from a Partisan':

> In our mountain command post
> our synapses are in full spasm suffused
> with invisible telepathic
> vibrations as we plan the lib-
> eration of Scotland
> from the puritanical conformist unionist hordes.[294]

Yet the "mountain command post" from which the Scottish radical left imagined its liberation struggle was still, ultimately, Edinburgh. As this thesis argues throughout, the new Scottish radical imagination was founded on its alienation from the nation it took as its focal point. There could not have been a truly face-to-face 'national' left because, as Benedict Anderson argues, nations are "imagined" in terms of bonds – not quite "invisible telepathic vibrations" – between people too numerous and diverse to ever know and encounter each other personally.[295] That imagination is facilitated through collective representation, and the work of representation is done by certain people, in certain places, organised into more particular communities in which people do encounter each other directly. As Nicholas Xenos argues, "the city exists as a physical marker of a created space that is experienced both intellectually and

[294] Tom Buchan, 'Letter from a Partisan' (1969), in Ross Birrell, Alec Findlay (eds.), *Justified Sinners: an archaeology of Scottish counter-culture (1960-2000)*, (Edinburgh: Morning Star Publications, 2002), unpaginated.
[295] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), p.6.

sensually [...] There is a concreteness to the urban experience that has no counterpart in the experience of the nation."[296]

That disjuncture between an inclusive territorial imagination and its more exclusionary conditions of possibility produced new narratives of intra-national conflict, as seen between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Yet these narratives only reinforced the national frame, by prompting diverse interlocutors to compete over who was more authentically Scottish, identifying their respective civic loyalties with distinctively negative or positive features of an imagined national psyche. Even where its real conditions provoked criticism and disavowal, the Scottish radical imagination was able to incorporate that criticism into itself thanks to the intoxicating appeal – outlined in Buchan's 'Letter from a Partisan' – of the national frame.

## Decentralising the Media: the *West Highland Free Press*

Regional cultural divisions like this nevertheless prompted intense frustration amongst the more political members of the radical intelligentsia. Writing in *Q* in 1975, Neal Ascherson offered a condemnation and a radical solution:

> It is not just a joke to say that, in spite of a motorway, Edinburgh and Glasgow are far apart. The inward-looking regionalisation, the mutual ignorance of conurbations and districts only a few miles separated, is remarkable - the consequence of geology in the first place, reinforced and perpetuated by the way in which Scotland has been administered

[296] Nicholas Xenos, 'Civic Nationalism: Oxymoron?', *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society* 10:2 (1996), p.221.

> rather than governed, and by the lack of a political centre. This is not picturesque, but dangerous. A dose of Jacobin centralisation, perhaps with appointed prefects replacing elected regional councils, could clear the occluded arteries and restore a national circulation of energy.[297]

This "Jacobin" approach was shared by Jim Sillars, who wrote in his autobiography of his "uncritical support" for Mao's "great leap forward" when on national service with the navy in Hong Kong.[298] To the young Sillars, Mao was an "immensely strong man" who, along with the Communist Party, was "essential to real economic and social advancement for the Chinese people."[299] Though Sillars claimed that "Bertrand Russell stopped me from becoming a communist," he continued to admire Mao, and "the attraction of strong centralist action as a means of tackling great problems remained undiminished."[300] For Sillars and Ascherson, sturdy local identities were potential obstacles to national transformation.

This centralising, nationalist logic of transcendence was firmly resisted, however, by another radical publishing endeavour. The *West Highland Free Press* was founded on Skye in April 1972. Its founding editor, Brian Wilson, had first developed the idea for an island-based radical newspaper while working for Bob Cuddihy's short-lived *Islander* in 1968.[301] This fortnightly newspaper, managed from Edinburgh University where Cuddihy was a student, was targeted at Islay, Arran and Kintyre but, as Wilson reflected, "the format, the area and the economic basis were probably wrong," and he

[297] Ascherson, 'Journey', p.5.
[298] Jim Sillars, *The Case for Optimism* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1986), p.15.
[299] *Ibid.*
[300] *Ibid.*
[301] Brian Wilson, 'Free Press', *West Highland Free Press* (April, 1972), p.10.

paper collapsed after four months. However, Wilson believed that "the concept was good […] because it had life and soul it is still remembered wherever it was read."[302] This effort to embed left-wing radical politics in the everyday life of a local, marginalised community was central to the *West Highland Free Press*. After working on the *Islander* and graduating from the University of Dundee, Wilson enrolled in the UK's first postgraduate journalism course at Cardiff University, where his ideas for an island paper were further encouraged by the course director Tom Hopkinson. Finally in 1972, Wilson and three other Dundee students – Dave Scott, Jim Innes and Jim Wilkie – established the newspaper in the village of Kyleakin on Skye, using money raised from organising folk concerts or otherwise borrowed to purchase second-hand printing and typesetting equipment. After six weeks, this "inefficient" (according to Wilson) equipment was abandoned in favour of an arrangement with Eccleslitho, a printing company in Inverness. After two years, the paper received support from the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) to set up its own printing press in a disused school in the village of Breakish on Skye, while battling continuing and serious financial problems.[303]

The constellation of factors underpinning the newspaper's emergence was, in some ways, typical of Scotland's emerging alternative media. An expanded student population was happy to live on "only pocket money and subsistence" in order to produce new, radical literature, be it *Scottish International,* Cuddihy's *Islander* or the *West Highland Free Press*.[304] Yet more community-based, geographically peripheral

[302] *Ibid.*
[303] Brian Wilson, 'Skye Scraping', *The Guardian* (April 4th, 1977), p.10; 'A Progress Report To Our 4,400 Share Holders', *West Highland Free Press* (September 1st, 1972), p.1.
[304] Wilson, 'Scraping', p.10

publications offered something unique. Its student supporters – blurring into a broader, bohemian, "nonstudent left" of curious young radicals playing on the edges of the education system[305] – were attracted to "one of Britain's most scenically desirable spots," and a vision of radicalism relevant to the lives of people far beyond campus.[306] Wilson, reflecting on the early base in Kyleakin, wrote that "the lodgers and callers grew in direct proportion to the paper's prominence. Television crews expecting to find a hub of high-powered journalism were greeted by sleepy itinerants."[307] The *Guardian* journalist Lindsay Mackie noted that when it began,

> lots of people, though few Highlanders, talked about how exciting it was that a Left-wing community paper should take the ideals of the underground press to an historically neglected Celtic area, and how this proved that left politics were relevant among lairds and lambs.[308]

But Mackie also suggested that Wilson and his fellow founders "never talked like this," and insisted on "reflect[ing] the nature of the community [they] served." Neil Munro and Alan Campbell, the paper's Hebridean and Skye editors respectively, had local backgrounds, something "done consciously to continue the process of genuinely involving and reflecting the community."[309]

The newspaper quickly gained a national reputation for its political radicalism, which underpinned a crusading, investigative approach. It adopted a staunchly populist

[305] Hunter S. Thompson, 'The Nonstudent Left', in *The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales for a Strange Time* (London: Picador, 1979), pp.421-429.
[306] Wilson, 'Scraping', p.10.
[307] *Ibid.*
[308] Lindsay Mackie, 'Where Skye's the limit', *The Guardian* (May 12th, 1975), p.13.
[309] *Ibid.*

juxtaposition of dignified, democratic and downtrodden "islanders", locals and crofters, against landlords, bureaucrats, industry, the military and "alien" interlopers from England. Yet for Wilson, its success was based on the fact that it was "first and foremost a local newspaper doing the jobs that all local newspapers should: providing a marketplace for buying and selling, reporting the weekend's shinty matches and covering the council meetings."[310] Only by embedding themselves in the local community, and treating local news as a mundane but necessary social service, could any further political agenda become legitimate and accepted. Yet putting forward a political agenda was still part of the plan. Wilson wrote that

> Originally, it was not the intention to introduce any overt political views for the first couple of years until the paper should be well established. But events overtook us. Within months of the first issue stories were flying about that demand a political response: the establishment of a torpedo range in the Sound of Raasay, the advent of the oil-platform industry in remote sites, the various misdeeds of local landlords.[311]

By its second issue, the paper was already leading with the headline "Democracy trampled, say Applecross petitioners," outlining a "bitter clash between the local people and officialdom" over timetable changes for the Kyle-Toscaig Ferry.[312] Another front-page article on the same day described a conflict between "the islanders' of Raasay and the 'absentee landlord" Dr. John W. R. Green, then in negotiations with

[310] Wilson, 'Scraping', p.10.
[311] *Ibid.*
[312] 'Democracy trampled, say Applecross petitioners', *West Highland Free Press* (April 12th, 1972), p.1.

the Highlands and Islands Development Board to sell the island.[313] As a profile of the paper in *New Society* noted, a "Labour Party bias [was] discreetly threaded through" its news coverage, and Wilson soon stood as the Labour candidate for Ross and Cromarty in the October 1974 General Election.[314] Yet its partisan allegiance was by no means uncritical; in its editorial for the October election, the paper was vaguely positive about Labour but offered criticisms of the party which bore a clear new left influence: nationalised industries were too centralised and bureaucratic, a particular risk in the islands "if our small piers and harbours are consigned to some remote agency"; education remained "elitist"; the party was "still infested with Oxbridge outlooks" and the NHS was "a home for profiteering." In foreign policy, Labour was too willing to compromise, and its continued acceptance of "Polaris bases in Scotland" was unacceptable. The angriest criticism was saved, however, for the party's growing support for political devolution in Scotland: "the power-seeking mentality is very much present in the Party still – witness the pathetic pursuit of a Scottish Assembly, a policy decision based on pure electoral fear instead of political principle."[315] The paper was also anti-nationalist, insofar as nationalism meant independence and the SNP: "Labour supporters… should beware of arguments that an independent Scotland will be a socialist Scotland," argued the editorial; "Socialism is not amongst the primary canons of a nationalist party."[316]

Readers could nevertheless find plenty of nationalist argument in the *WHFP*'s pages. Alongside local news and campaigns, the paper published essay-length pieces on the

[313] 'Raasay scepticism prevails', *West Highland Free Press* (April 12th, 1972), p.1.
[314] Valerie Miner, 'Scottish home news', *New Society* (May 8th, 1975), p.353.
[315] 'Editorial', *West Highland Free Press* (October 11th, 1974), p.2.
[316] *Ibid.*

culture and history of the highlands and islands. One such essay by Angus Martin – on the Gaelic poet Sorley Maclean's nationalism – argued that while nationalism is "to be suspected" for its tendency towards imperialism,

> Scotland doesn't satisfy the conditions, having always been too poor and underpopulated to engage in grand-scale imperialism. Therefore, this country's nationalism - like that of the Welsh, Irish, Bretons and even smaller cultural minorities of Celtic origin - is a defensive rather than an offensive nationalism.[317]

This vision of community, rooted in a politics of local cultural self-defence against an external aggressor, blurred national, local and ethnic signifiers. One column by "Calum Garbh" attacked a planned torpedo testing range in the Kyle area in terms of an "Alien elite without responsibility" who would be drawn to the community by new, state-directed projects:

> Alien they will be. They will be 90% English, urban and suburban, harbouring popular British misconceptions of the misty Highlands, canny Scots, haggis, whisky and bag-pipes - people who will probably have never set foot in the Highlands before. They may start their sojourn in the area by a nominal enjoyment of the scenery but will soon descend to arrogant condemnation of the weather, local manners and customs, Sunday observance and lack of their usual sub-urban facilities such as tennis, cricket, bowling, cinema, bingo, clubs, strip, and colour TV. They

[317] Angus Martin, 'Literature and Nationalism', *West Highland Free Press* (May 26th, 1972), p.5.

> will not be impressed with our dances, ceilidhs, pub-talk, meetings, sales and sermons.[318]

This, wrote "Garbh," was "nothing new," given the area's experience of "beer barons, whisky maidens, shipping magnates, retired officers and stockbrokers," which was now "being augmented by the new White Settlers - an inferior breed of second class interpreters, premature retireds and the like, trying to get away from the rat-race."[319]

*WHFP*'s effort to embed radicalism in local concerns, even in its nationalist moments, contrasted starkly with *Scottish International*'s national cosmopolitanism, reflecting logics of transcendence which had more in common with the 'first' new left. This was thanks to its location in a very different kind of community from Edinburgh, but also Wilson's roots in the labour movement. Yet it had nevertheless been brought into that community from the outside, and Wilson was still a member of Scotland's university-educated intelligentsia. His vision of radicalised locality could, ultimately, be incorporated into a more national vision of radicalism, and this was particularly obvious amongst the Federation of Student Nationalists.

## Nationalising Locality: the Federation of Student Nationalists

The highly ethnicised, anti-colonial language of radical protest that could be found in *WHFP* was promoted with particular enthusiasm by the Federation of Student Nationalists, who had established a "Skye Crofting Scheme" in 1964 to help elderly crofters with labour-intensive tasks, contribute to larger community projects and,

[318] Calum Garbh, 'Alien elite without responsibility', *West Highland Free Press* (September 22nd, 1972), p.7.
[319] *Ibid.*

crucially, publicise issues faced by crofters by "bring[ing] to bear the type of direct political activity in which students have long specialised and become expert."[320] This meant the organisation of demonstrations, the production and distribution of radical leaflets, and catching the attention of the national press.[321] After a 1971 campaign against Scottish Transport Group fare increases for Skye ferry passengers generated considerable attention, the FSN produced a leaflet titled "Resist" in 1972. In it, they suggested that the Crofters' Commission's applications for crofts were coming "mainly from the south of England," and that "little is done to stop this inflow of wealthy town dwellers who can always outbid the local buyers." Scheme "workers" were themselves concerned about appearing as cosmopolitan interlopers, bringing their own foreign radicalism into a community of mostly elderly crofters, and compensated by doubling-down on a nativist opposition to precisely this phenomenon:

> Little wonder that the incomers are becoming known as the White Settlers - you can see why, they bring an alien culture despite trying to opt out of society - as they put it - their opting out is at the expense of a living society, with its own ancient culture and language which is not equipped to combat this economic and social pressure of unsympathetic incomers.[322]

The following year, the FSN deployed even more provocative language in a bilingual leaflet titled "Do you have Reservations?" This argued that

[320] Federation of Student Nationalists, 'A Report on the "Skye Crofting Scheme"' (1974), NLS Acc.7295/21.
[321] FSN, 'Report' (1974), p.5.
[322] FSN, 'Resist' (1972), NLS Acc.7295/21.

> Just as the U.S. Government made treaties to give the Red Indians reservations to live on so the British Government through the Crofters Acts gave Highlanders a few rights just as long as it suited the London Masters.[323]

"Now their priorities have changed," the leaflet continued, suggesting that the Highlands were being used as a "playground" for "crowded city dwellers," its people recruited as "waiters, navvies and skivvies" for tourism, its housing used as holiday homes for "managerial classes" from the "asphalt jungle", the land exploited as "space for industry" and the lochs repurposed as sites for oil rig platform construction and torpedo testing. It ended with the question "ARE YOU A RED INDIAN OR A WHITE SETTLER?" and called for help to "sever the tentacles of centralist manipulation."[324]

The *WHFP* and the FSN, while taking different positions on Scottish independence, nevertheless shared a fervent commitment to localised popular empowerment and resistance against a centralising, "alien" elite. This, ironically, originated in the same urban and university environments from which the *WHFP* and FSN had come. Their rhetorical politicisation of the Isle of Skye, often as a proxy for the Highlands and Islands in general, occurred alongside the concomitant politicisation of the civic cultures of Edinburgh and Glasgow by intellectuals based in those places. To some extent the force of these local identities in shaping discourse, and the conflicts between them, demonstrate the territorial and cultural divisions that made an integrated Scottish radicalism difficult to achieve in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

[323] FSN, 'Do you have Reservations?' (1973), NLS Acc.7295/21.
[324] *Ibid.*

Yet discourse around these identities was ultimately not local but inter-local, founded on relationships between localities as much as distinct localities themselves.

Furthermore, they were subjects of debate for a University-educated intelligentsia that was already debated on shared ground, investing specific parts of Scotland with components of a national radical tradition that could be placed into constructive, agonistic conflict. Edinburgh – as Nairn showed in 'Festival of the Dead' – could represent both Enlightenment and Calvinist repression, encompassing both the success of the Scottish intellect and a diagnosis of its failure. Glasgow – as seen in the debates over *Scottish International*'s move – represented an authentic, working-class Scotland, struggling for novelty in spite of its apparent conservatism. The Highlands and Islands came to embody a threatened vision of 'community' and rooted culture that was lacking in the proletarian and bourgeois metropoles of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and threatened above all by English and Anglophone "White Settlers." The radical intelligentsia was thus making its intellectual priorities manifest in the geography of the nation, and attempting to bring its own strange, imagined community down to earth.

## Conclusion: Scotland the Default

This consolidation of a national territorial imagination rested on a growing synthesis of the 'first' and 'second' new lefts' logics of transcendence, encouraged in particular by the left wing of the SNP. For Isobel Lindsay, a leading SNP activist from the 1960s onwards, Scottish nationalism provided a potential antidote to the "demoralisation, disorientation [and] loss of personal identity" which she saw as endemic to "highly developed industrialised societies." In an essay for *The Radical Approach*, a 1976

collection of articles by left-wing intellectuals within the SNP, edited by the Strathclyde University economics lecturer Gavin Kennedy, Lindsay wrote that "political units should where possible reflect community identification and this may be determined by historical experience, by cultural differences, by differing interests." Scotland, she believed, offered a "meaningful aggregate" of such shared differences and experiences, and provided a means of "reducing the size of the political units" that offered "the best hope of social and political democratisation."[325]

This decentralising vision of nationalism was shared by several contributors to *The Radical Approach* including Stephen Maxwell, who called in his essay for an independent Scotland based on "economic decentralisation," and an attempt to "limit the growth of state power." For Maxwell, this could help to foster "a new sense of community and democratic responsibility" amongst all parts of Scottish society. This included, in a break from traditional class-politics socialism, the responsibility of the "labour force."[326] *The Radical Approach* displayed the influence of the 'first' new left more than the 'second', but was different from its unionist-nationalist predecessors in a crucial respect. Where the foremost Scottish exemplars of this localist, communitarian vision of Scottish radicalism had previously been embedded within the labour movement and the 'British' left, the tradition was now being espoused most clearly by supporters of independence and the SNP. The diminished emphasis placed on class was key to this. The need for 'community' was no longer distinct to working-class communities, as Lawrence Daly and his former comrades in the CPGB argued. Lindsay directly criticised the "one-dimensional" focus on class conflict, and sought to

[325] Isobel Lindsay, 'Nationalism, Community and Democracy', in Gavin Kennedy (ed.), *The Radical Approach: Papers on an Independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: Palingenesis Press, 1976), pp.24-26.
[326] Stephen Maxwell, 'Beyond Social Democracy', in Kennedy (ed.), *Radical Approach* (1976), pp.14-15.

restate the equal importance of "real conflicts about the pace of change, about differentials, about the right of some people to tell others what to do irrespective of whether the industry is publicly or privately owned."[327]

This approach was no less rife with contradictions than its labour-movement predecessors' version. It drew both criticism and praise from Scotland's primary representative of the 'second' new left. Reviewing *The Radical Approach* in *Q* magazine, Nairn argued that it represented a "recognisable ideology of independence" amongst Scottish nationalists, which he characterised as "anti-centralising, anti-statist, and anti-bureaucratic; its watch-words tend to be local power, employee or tenant participation and consumer sovereignty." It was influenced, Nairn noted, by wider, new non-Marxist left currents of thought emphasising the "beauty" of "smallness" (drawing on E.F. Schumacher's 1973 text *Small Is Beautiful*) and an "anti-Leviathan," "mini-community" emphasis. Yet for Nairn, the *Radical Approach* betrayed a fundamental naivety amongst "radical" nationalists about the likely trajectory of an independent state. He argued that while nationalists in Scotland and Wales had benefited thus far from the "relative tolerance" of the British state, further progress towards – and into – independence would be less "conflict-free", demanding more consolidation of state power in the face of internal and external challenges than *The Radical Approach* allowed. "Only a strong state is likely to be able to promote and sustain such a big alteration in the social order" as *The Radical Approach* proposed, and "radicals and socialists alike should be anxiously concerned to get a state capable of working towards the sort of society they are blue-printing."[328]

[327] Lindsay, 'Nationalism', p.24.
[328] Tom Nairn, 'The Radical Approach', *Q* 9 (July 1976), pp.8-11.

Nairn's critique, however, partly missed the point. While his emphasis on the necessity of state power was relatively free of wishful thinking, it also sidestepped the questions of citizens' "social and emotional needs" – encapsulated in the notion of "community", and threatened by the central state – raised by Isobel Lindsay. The SNP's 'radicals' – which both they and Nairn distinguished from the 'socialists' on the rest of the Scottish left – were proposing not just an alternative state, but an alternative and more utopian relationship between state and society, extending the idea of 'self-determination' from statehood to ideas of cultural and community integrity. Where Nairn called for a "strong democratic state," Lindsay and Maxwell questioned whether a state could be both strong and meaningfully democratic. For Lindsay, "it is not moving power sideways that matters most; it is in reducing the size of the political units that the best hope of social and political democratisation now lies."[329] Nairn could only agree with this, and indeed had done already in 1968, recognising that socialists should support "some transfer of power to a smaller arena, closer to the grasp of those subject to it."[330]

Lindsay's unanswerable argument, as far as the new Scottish intelligentsia was concerned, was that "political units should where possible reflect community identifications."[331] Scotland's left-wing intellectuals had spent much of the previous decade constructing a formidable apparatus, in terms of both discourse and infrastructure, by which their particular "convivial community" could identify with Scotland rather than Britain. While this apparatus was, in reality, overwhelmingly concentrated in more specific and directly lived communities than the nation, the debates it sustained were articulated more than ever before in terms of reimagined

[329] Lindsay, 'Nationalism', p.25.
[330] Nairn, 'Dreams', p.16.
[331] Lindsay, 'Nationalism', p.26.

Scottish nationhood. Through the new, expanding radical print-culture, the 'Scottish question' could be connected to questions of international cooperation as easily as it could be linked to issues of local empowerment. By mediating the local and the global, the cosmopolitan and the native, Scotland had become the default territorial focus of the radical imagination.

# Chapter Two. Outsiders Within: Radical Scotland and the Social Imagination

## Introduction: Lost in Clydebank

Just two years into *Scottish International*'s existence, the nascent and uncertain radical intelligentsia organised around the magazine was confronted with a clear opportunity to prove its radicalism. In July 1971, approximately 8,000 shipyard workers on the upper Clyde took control of their yards in an attempt to reverse the Conservative Government's decision to end state credits to the publicly owned Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS). By October 1972, accompanied by a mass public campaign incorporating a wide spectrum of Scottish society and the support of the wider British left, the 'work-in' had forced the government into a comprehensive U-turn, drastically reversing its industrial policy to support a recapitalisation of the Clyde yards.[332]

[332] John Foster, Charles Woolfson, 'How workers on the Clyde gained the capacity for class struggle: the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' Work-in, 1971-2', in John McIlroy, Nina Fishman, Alan Campbell (eds.), *British Trade Unions and Industrial Politics: Volume Two: The High Tide of Trade Unionism, 1964-1979* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), pp.297-325; John Foster, Charles Woolfson, *The Politics of the UCS work-in* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1986); Jim Phillips, *The Industrial Politics of Devolution: Scotland in the 1960s and 1970s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

This was not just an opportunity for Scotland's new radical intellectuals, but also a problem. The leaders of the work-in, Jimmy Reid, Jimmy Airlie and Sammy Barr, were organised within more traditional 'publics' of the left which the intellectuals around *Scottish International* had until then showed little interest in penetrating: heavy industry, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and the labour movement, rather than university life and literary debates. *Scottish International* had hitherto represented a form of life and labour focused upon the immaterial realm of knowledge and enabled by arts subsidies, its radicalism preoccupied with the control and content of discourse rather than material resources. Bob Tait led a *Scottish International* fact-finding trip to the shipyards which, upon arriving in Clydebank, immediately got lost. Reflecting sheepishly on the visit, Tait identified not with the workers, but with "other fantasists in the yards looking for realities or realisations. Maybe we could be accepted as watchers and listeners… Maybe on that basis we could get in."[333]

Tait's uneasy and estranged relationship to an outburst of creative working-class dissent on the west coast epitomises the second constitutive 'gap' through which Scottish radicalism was reimagined during the 1970s and 1980s. Where the last chapter explored the territorialisation of the Scottish radical imagination, this chapter explores its socialisation: that is, the growing awareness of a disjuncture between radical intellectuals and the imagined social base of radicalism, be it the 'working class', 'the people' or the 'nation'; and the efforts, imaginative and practical, which those intellectuals made to close that gap and justify their own 'representative' legitimacy.

[333] Robert Tait, 'Who Goes There?', *Scottish International* 16 (September 1971), p.9.

The argument of this chapter reflects that of the whole thesis, returning to and expanding on the previous chapter's discussion of the relationship between cosmopolitanism, community and nationhood. Each chapter explores, this time from a social rather than territorial perspective, the same set of developments: the 'Radical Scotland' myth emerged from a process of 'opening' and 'closure' of the Scottish radical imagination, stimulated by new challenges facing the left across the world, and the efforts of radical intellectuals to meet these challenges in a way that both adapted to and exploited a newly politicised Scottish terrain.

As in the previous chapter, this chapter studies the cultural politics of *incorporation*. The previous chapter focused on the territorial incorporation of local, transnational and British visions of radicalism into a distinctive tradition of Scottish radicalism, with its own 'logics of transcendence'. This chapter explores the incorporation of contesting social phenomena, from working class militancy and 'middle class radicalism' to the women's and gay liberation movements, into a coherent social imaginary of Scottish radicalism. The cultural politics of *misrepresentation* are also stressed. The previous chapter explored the local particularisms concealed within the 'national' radicalism of an urban, university-based intelligentsia; this chapter explores the changing ways in which that radicalism reimagined the structure of Scottish society. Radicalism was initially identified with efforts to question the radical potential of Scottish nationhood and the status of its intellectuals, but as these arguments developed, they began to naturalise the specific and relatively privileged social position of the radical intelligentsia, within a logic of representation that profited from both the absence and the prospect of a Scottish Assembly.

This chapter begins by outlining a fundamental structural problem facing the radical left in Scotland: the disjuncture between its revolutionary political ambitions and the overwhelming ideological power of representative democracy. In the absence of a Scottish Parliament, however, the prospect of a directly elected representative body in Scotland provided radical intellectuals with opportunities to speculate upon the Scottish society and politics that was yet to be represented. This allows us to trace the evolving understanding of class politics amongst Scottish intellectuals towards the end of the 1970s, a period in which Scottish radicalism moved away from a conflictual vision of Scottish society towards a consensus-based approach to politics. This shift was underpinned by a changing understanding of the intellectual's relationship to politics and society, leaving behind both political vanguardism and the idea of the 'organic intellectual'. This departure is explored through the commemoration of the Scottish Bolshevik John Maclean and the frustrated political ambitions of one of the UCS work-in's leaders, Jimmy Reid. The first half of the chapter concludes with a study of the militant '1320 Club', whose nationalist vanguardism – publicly criticised by Hamish Henderson – provided a clear contrast to the ambitions of a new, cosmopolitan vision of intellectual radicalism.

The second half of this chapter begins by exploring the broader context to Henderson's critique of the 1320 Club, demonstrating the conflict between 'native' intellectuals like Hugh MacDiarmid and their 'cosmopolitan' critics, in which a new intellectual identity was developed. This new identity was based on a critical and uncertain attitude towards Scottish society which sought to 'map out' its coordinates rather than politically intervene. The most significant and influential exponent of this approach is the magazine *Scottish International* which lasted from 1968 to 1974, and this chapter

illustrates the formative role of Bob Tait, the magazine's first editor, on this new vision of the intellectual's social role. *Scottish International* attracted a milieu of intellectuals who identified with the figure of the 'outsider within,' for a range of reasons: this chapter explores Tom Nairn and Neal Ascherson's experiences of international work and travel, Trevor Royle and T.C. Smout's Anglo-Scottish identities, Ray Burnett and Bob Tait's Catholicism, and the role of sexuality for Hamish Henderson, Edwin Morgan and Ian Dunn. It then outlines *Scottish International*'s efforts to articulate a coherent social constituency for itself at the 'What Kind of Scotland?' conference, interpreting the political logic of this new social imaginary through Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's concept of 'articulation'. The enduring influence of *Scottish International* is then studied in the magazines *Q* and *Crann-Tàra*, before exploring the significant absence of Scottish women from this new social imagination and the development of the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal*. Finally, this chapter explores the financial basis of the new intelligentsia, demonstrating *Scottish International*'s reliance on the support of the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and the difficulties faced by the radical magazines which followed it, in the absence of SAC support. The chapter concludes by exploring the development of the new intelligentsia's political logic of articulation through *Crann-Tàra* and into *Radical Scotland*, which became a vital component of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly.

## Parliamentarism and its Critics: Consensus, Class, "Civil War"

In 1979, the Trotskyist Neil Williamson reflected on the past decade of "revolutionary left" politics in Scotland in a new journal integrating academic and journalistic writing, the *Scottish Government Yearbook*. "There is still no such animal as the "Scottish left"," he wrote, "only a series of groups which are, to some extent or other, the

functioning branches of organisations based mainly south of the border."[334] The previous chapter offered a different analysis, arguing that a distinctive Scottish radical left tradition was forged during the period described by Williamson; yet as far as his chosen emphasis on the *revolutionary* left goes, he was correct. By this he meant those groups critical of the CPGB and Labour Party's reformist approach to the British state, which were mostly Trotskyist organisations. He estimated that the Socialist Workers' Party, the International Marxist Group, the Workers' Revolutionary Party, the Militant Tendency and the Socialist Party of Great Britain, along with some smaller sects, boasted approximately 900 members across Scotland between them.[335] He argued that these organisations had failed to build upon the considerable working-class militancy of the decade, in a country which leaned electorally to the left, largely due to "theoretical" and "predictive" failures.[336] Despite the fact that "nowhere did the [Labour Party] appear more vulnerable to a political challenge from the left than in Scotland" the phenomenon of working-class "Labourism" had displayed "hidden strengths." Worryingly for the left, recent Labour victories over the SNP, for example Donald Dewar's 1978 by-election win in Glasgow Garscadden and George Robertson's in Hamilton, had "all been achieved under the firm direction of the right wing of the party."[337] The other major intellectual failure of the revolutionary left had been in its relationship to Scottish nationalism, which "baffled revolutionaries trained to react to the most direct and unmediated questions of class politics."[338]

[334] Neil Williamson, 'Ten Years After – The Revolutionary Left in Scotland', in Henry Drucker, Nan Drucker (eds.), *Scottish Government Yearbook 1979* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), p.61.
[335] *Ibid*, p.62.
[336] *Ibid*, p.66.
[337] *Ibid*, pp.68-69.
[338] *Ibid*, p.69.

The next chapter will engage more closely with the relationship of these smaller left parties to Scottish nationalism, but the crucial point for the purposes of this chapter is this problem of "mediation." For Williamson, these failures in Scotland were

> only part of a much wider political problem: nowhere has the left managed to produce anything resembling an adequate theory or analysis of representative democracy, a form of political rule whose resilience has so confounded all their certainties of a few years ago.[339]

Williamson noted that the "electoral arena" required a "much broader and more popular style of work […] than is the norm for left groups."[340] This was – and is – not so much an intellectual failure as a structural political crisis for the revolutionary left, as noted by Perry Anderson in an essay published a few years before Williamson's, titled 'Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci.'[341] Anderson's analysis of representative democracy, and the challenge it poses for revolutionary politics, underpins much of the argument of this chapter and the next. The Gramscian political strategy which he criticises was a powerful influence on the Scottish radical intelligentsia studied here, who pursued a gradual route to their political objectives through culture and civil society but underestimated the difficulties of electoral politics. Yet his critique of representative democracy outlines the insurmountable problems for the 'revolutionary' and vanguardist tradition which that new intelligentsia sought to supplant.

[339] *Ibid*, p.73.
[340] *Ibid*, p.74.
[341] Perry Anderson, 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', *New Left Review* I/100 (November-December 1976), pp.5-78.

In his influential survey and critique of Antonio Gramsci's thought and influence on the Anglophone left, Anderson re-stated the basic problematic of Gramscian thought: the different prospects for socialist revolution in the "West" and the "East". Where the Bolshevik revolution in Russia (the "East") had confronted and conquered the state as mostly a "violent machine of police repression," revolutionaries in "the West" sought to mobilise "masses [who] have access to it through regular democratic elections, which formally permit the possibility of socialist government."[342] Why, then, had the Western masses not achieved a socialist government? For Gramscians, Anderson noted, the explanation "must lie in the *prior* ideological conditioning of the proletariat *before* the electoral moment as such." This conditioning took place in "civil society," particularly in the mass media and capitalist social relations, allowing capitalist governments to rule largely by consent. "The main task of socialist militants is not combat with an armed state, but ideological conversion of the working class," according to this reading of Gramsci.[343] Anderson, however, questioned this theory of "neutralisation" of the otherwise "democratic potential of the representative State." Instead he suggested that it was in the "electoral moment" itself that "ideological conditioning" occurred:

> the general form of the representative State—bourgeois democracy—is itself the principal ideological lynchpin of Western capitalism, whose very existence deprives the working class of the idea of socialism as *a different type of State,* and the means of communication and other mechanisms of cultural control thereafter clinch this central ideological 'effect'.[344]

[342] *Ibid,* p.27.
[343] *Ibid,* pp.27-28.
[344] *Ibid,* p.28.

Representative democracy does this, Anderson argues, by obfuscating the real division of society into social classes, and instead

> presents to men and women their unequal positions in civil society as if they were equal in the State. Parliament, elected every four or five years as the sovereign expression of popular will, reflects the fictive unity of the nation back to the masses as if it were their own self-government.[345]

This argument can be viewed as a theoretical equivalent of Malcolm Petrie's historical analysis of interwar radicalism's fate, discussed in the previous chapter. As Petrie argues, the localised extra-parliamentary militancy of the radical left after World War I was sapped of its popular legitimacy and appeal by the expansion of the franchise and the accompanying (British) nationalisation of politics, allowing the constitutionalist Labour Party to absorb much of the working-class social base of the radical left.[346] Though Anderson emphasises the "fictive" aspect of parliamentary "unity," he nevertheless acknowledges its political reality, and even – up to a point – its necessity:

> The code is all the more powerful because the juridical rights of citizenship are not a mere mirage: on the contrary, the civic freedoms and suffrages of bourgeois democracy are a tangible reality, whose completion was historically in part the work of the labour movement

[345] *Ibid*.
[346] Malcolm Petrie, *Popular Politics and Political Culture: Urban Scotland, 1918-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.2.

itself, and whose loss would be a momentous defeat for the working class.[347]

The application of this analysis to Scotland poses an interesting problem, which helps to illustrate the context in which Scotland's radical left were being forced to reevaluate their role in Scottish society. In the year Williamson criticised the Scottish revolutionary left's failure to theorise representative democracy, a referendum on the establishment of a Scottish Assembly failed to produce one. On the face of things, this "principal ideological lynchpin of Western capitalism," in Anderson's words, did not have a distinctive Scottish form, and it is ironic that much of the Scottish radical left spent the subsequent decades campaigning to close this 'democratic deficit' through the establishment of a Scottish Assembly or Parliament. The lack of a single elected representative body for the Scottish nation allowed unelected elements of society to make representative claims upon it, providing considerable cultural opportunities for the radical left to associate themselves with an intangible essence of Scottish political identity.[348] Yet this was in constant tension with more tangible measures of political nationhood that did exist, with the cohort of MPs sent to Westminster from Scottish constituencies enabling the nation to be framed in electoral terms nonetheless; as politically distinct from England *within* the British electoral system, especially where election results diverged noticeably in Scotland and England.[349] In this context the *idea* of a Scottish Assembly, which became an increasingly serious political prospect from 1967 onwards, opened a gap between Scotland's existing political representation

[347] Anderson, 'Antinomies', p.28.
[348] Jonathan Hearn, *Claiming Scotland: National Identity and Liberal Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.10-11.
[349] Scott Hames, *The Literary Politics of Scottish Devolution: Voice, Class, Nation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), p.148.

and its future representation which radicals could fill: as a *speculative* electoral expression of nationhood, in which several hitherto suppressed political forces could be envisioned coming to the surface.

This nationalising imaginary allowed Tom Nairn to prophesy, in 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', a "junta of corporal-punishers and Kirk-going cheese-parers" for Winnie Ewing to "preside over in Edinburgh"; yet it also allowed James Jack, the General Secretary of the STUC, to argue that "there is not the slightest doubt that it will be a workers' parliament" during a 'Scottish Assembly' convened by the STUC in 1971.[350] The mere prospect of a Scottish Assembly implied an absence of adequate national representation, permitting radicals to insist on a Scottish political character that was soon to be revealed, and make strategic recommendations and analyses on these speculative grounds – a means of imaginative liberation from the existing political *status quo*.

The next chapter will explore this political imagination in detail, yet it cannot be easily extricated from the concern of this chapter: radicalism's reimagining of the structure of Scottish society, with significant implications for the role of radicalism and its intellectuals. The 1979 referendum itself, Nairn argued, functioned as a "curtain-raiser," illuminating the real divisions within Scottish society:

[350] Tom Nairn, 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', *New Left Review* 1:49 (May-June 1968), p.16 John Foster, 'The Twentieth Century, 1914-1979', in R.A. Houston, W.W.J. Knox (eds.), *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Penguin, 2001), 478; Phillips, *Industrial Politics*, pp.103-106.

> People were made to line up in some sort of vague battle-order, and Scotland was made to see more clearly that the growth of *real* national consciousness is a difficult conflict, a civil war within the nation as much as a struggle between it and the metropolis.[351]

Despite Nairn's argument in *The Break-up of Britain* (1977) that "nation triumphs over class," he suggested that this "civil war" – not intended literally – would occur along class lines.[352] "The specific division aroused in Scotland by the referendum," he argued, had a "blatantly class nature." While the bourgeoisie and landowners had voted 'no,' and the lower middle class "was stampeded into general desertion of the self-government cause," Scotland's "sociological and geographical heartland" – the predominantly working-class central belt – had "acquitted itself quite well."[353] It was the SNP's fault, he continued, that this working-class support had not been sufficient to swing the result, with many "having looked at the present leadership of the national movement and – mostly by abstaining – said they did not trust it."[354] The prospects for future success for nationalism, then, depended on the national movement acquiring "an honest republican cut and a Red Clydeside tie." Implicit within this was the assumption that the Scottish working class wanted radicalism:

> It is only by the utmost radicalisation, on the level of social and cultural content, that we could hope to contain and contest the wrong kind of pseudo-radicalism on the level of "Statehood-or-bust," the replay of

[351] Tom Nairn, 'After the Referendum', *New Edinburgh Review* 46 (May 1979), p.8.
[352] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism* (London: Verso, 1981), p.350.
[353] Nairn, 'After', p.8.
[354] *Ibid.*

> 1314, and all those other ghouls which enemies have always insisted were the soul of nationalism.[355]

As Scott Hames notes, however, "the drawn-bayonets conflict Nairn had welcomed would never arrive."[356] Instead, the following decade saw Scottish nationalism – in its devolutionary mode – develop into "urbane constitutionalism, keen to parade its suspension of intra-nation hostilities as a model for civic renewal."[357] Radical intellectuals like Nairn, far from throwing further critical spanners in the works, largely settled for the role of cogs in this consensus-machine.[358] The left-nationalist magazine *Crann-Tàra*, which was published from 1978 until changing its name to *Radical Scotland* in 1982, provides a good example of the rhetorical sleights of hand by which conflict was dissolved into co-operation. When George Robertson held Hamilton for Labour in a 1978 by-election, *Crann-Tàra*'s editorial took it as a worrying omen for the national movement, and a sign that the SNP could not be trusted to deliver.

> What we need is a non-partisan front for Home Rule, a new Home Rule Association for the 80s. A MOVEMENT old-style, for Scottish Self-Government that embraces OPEN FACTIONS of Tories, Liberals, Labourites. No more isolated SNP horses for courses - what we need now is whole squadrons, with their own pennants, banners, slogans, programmes… regiments tailored for the specific political terrain they will encounter in the fight for Independence.[359]

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[355] *Ibid.*
[356] Hames, *Literary Politics*, p.124.
[357] *Ibid.*
[358] Tom Nairn, 'The Timeless Girn', in Owen Dudley Edwards (ed.), *A Claim of Right for Scotland* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), pp.163-178.
[359] 'Editorial', *Crann-Tàra* 3 (Summer 1978), p.2.

This resonated with an older tradition of pluralistic nationalist organisation, best represented in John McCormick's Scottish Covenant Association of the early 1950s, which sought a broad non-party movement for an Assembly.[360] Yet this "non-partisan front" would, *Crann-Tàra*'s editorial argued, best function through internal conflict. In order to win round "West Central Scotland, and places like it" to Home Rule, there should be "an organised and declared working-class-oriented radical and socialist faction within the SNP." This pre-empted Nairn's call for "utmost radicalisation," and indeed advocated plenty of intra-national division: "this faction *must be seen* to denounce – oh, yes – and oppose the SNP Right. It *must be seen* to have an independent will, direction, control [italics my own]."[361] This emphasis upon internal conflict for appearance's sake – "the SNP has to prove to voters that it has a Left Wing … BLOW THE SPLITS WIDE OPEN!" – may have been underpinned by a sincere commitment to one side of those divisions, but it nevertheless represented an incorporation of that commitment into a more pluralistic and compromised politics than the fiery rhetoric implied.

In re-framing radical factionalism as part of a broader coalition, with Scottish radicalism specifically tasked with proving to the working class that nationalism could be left-wing, *Crann-Tàra* quietly admitted a fundamental transformation in that radicalism's character. The radical intelligentsia was no longer representing radical social forces within – and against – the nation, but was now tasked with representing nationalism to social forces, chiefly the working class, that had failed to manifest their assumed radicalism in a sufficiently nationalist direction. This argument will be recapitulated in

[360] Malcolm Petrie, 'John MacCormick', in Gerry Hassan, James Mitchell (eds.), *Scottish National Party Leaders* (London, Biteback, 2016), pp.55-61.
[361] *Ibid*, p.3.

more detail in the next chapter, yet it is useful here to emphasise the intimate connection between the ways in which the radical left reimagined the structures of Scottish politics and society. Most importantly, it illuminates the vital role of national electoral politics in alienating the radical left from the working class. This alienation, as this thesis argues throughout, was a source of intellectual renewal for the radical imagination precisely because it posed an existential problem to it. After the working-class militancy of UCS, what exactly was the value of a radicalism that wasn't rooted in the working class?

The radical left's social imagination changed subtly over the 1970s, allowing the working class to remain, ostensibly, at the heart of radical politics, and this was, if anything, intensified in the 1980s in opposition to Thatcherism. In England, the radical left had increasingly come to dispute the centrality of the working class to the left's political prospects, influenced in particular by Eric Hobsbawm's 1978 essay for *Marxism Today* 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?'[362] This argued that the Labour Party had stalled, and begun to reverse, due to the declining coherence and size of its traditional social base in the working class. This decline was, Hobsbawm argued, the result of long-term structural transformations in the British labour force, whose distinctive culture and consciousness was being dissolved by stratification and industrial change.[363]

Hobsbawm's argument caused widespread controversy amongst the English left, yet in Scotland his analysis was received largely as an English problem. Writing in *Radical*

[362] Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?', *Marxism Today* (September 1978), pp.279-286.
[363] Martin Jacques, Francis Mulhern (eds.), *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (London: New Left Books, 1981).

*Scotland* in 1985, Jim Smyth responded directly to Hobsbawm's article and the ensuing debate, suggesting that Hobsbawm had been vindicated in England since the article's publication.[364] Yet he noted that there had been no specific reference to the Labour Party's fortunes and social base in Scotland, where the party continued to win elections handsomely.[365] What is most noteworthy about this rare Scottish engagement with Hobsbawm is that it makes no mention of the sociological basis of the decline of working-class political influence outlined by Hobsbawm in his essay, focusing entirely on the political prospects of the Labour Party. Indeed, it downplayed the extent to which Labour's working-class vote was being more clearly threatened by the SNP at the time Hobsbawm wrote his essay, a threat that had been analysed in similar structural terms to Hobsbawm by Scottish CPGB intellectuals in 1980.[366] It was politics, Smyth argued, which made Scotland different from England, more than any sociological differences – namely that "the defining feature of the Scottish political scene is anti-Toryism," which manifested as a more stable Labour vote than in England.[367]

This reflected a broader tendency in Scottish political discourse during this period outlined by Scott Hames, in which working class identity came to be understood during the 1980s as a primarily representational phenomenon, increasingly unmoored from its social reality. During this decade, he writes,

[364] Smyth, now a Senior Lecturer in history at Stirling University, began his academic career studying labour politics, especially in Glasgow, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
[365] Jim Smyth, 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?', *Radical Scotland* 13 (February-March 1985), pp.7-10.
[366] Tony Dickson (ed.), *Scottish Capitalism: Class, State and Nation from before the Union to the Present* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1980).
[367] Smyth, 'Forward', p.7.

> the specific cultural signifiers – above all, the vocal signature – of the Scottish working class emerged as privileged emblems of national difference and autonomy […] they were borne aloft like a vernacular talisman, as proof of the culturally grounded and inclusive nature of an elite political project centred on representation rather than sovereignty, emphasising national difference and deformation rather than deep historic continuities.[368]

The *idea* of a left-wing, democratic, even 'radical' Scottish working class remained central to the radical left's conception of Scottish politics, society and culture into the 1990s.[369] Yet by the end of the 1970s, the connection between Scotland's radical intellectuals and the working class was becoming increasingly abstract, expressed more in rhetoric than organisation. As the previous chapter showed, the new intelligentsia which emerged during the 1970s consciously broke with the main political parties of the organised working class, Labour and the CPGB, to pursue a more independent role in national life.

## The John Maclean Myth: Organic Intellectuals and Vanguardism

In accepting – and even justifying – this independence from its historic political base, the Scottish radical left also departed from the idea of the intellectual that had underpinned left-wing ideas about the appropriate relationship between intellectuals and society. Antonio Gramsci, whom Neil Davidson identifies as a vital influence on

[368] Hames, *Literary Politics*, p.88.
[369] John Foster, 'A Proletarian Nation? Occupation and Class Since 1914', in A. Dickson, J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland Vol.III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992), pp.201-240; Gregor Gall, *The Political Economy of Scotland: Red Scotland? Radical Scotland?* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005).

the Scottish left during this period, distinguishes between "organic" and "traditional" categories of intellectual: the "traditional" denotes the functionaries of an established social order, while the "organic" denotes those who perform "the intellectual function" for a particular social group.[370] Until the mid-1960s, the prevailing ideal of a politically committed socialist intellectual matched Gramsci's "organic" category, even in the absence of the direct influence of Gramsci: that intellectuals should be embedded within the organisations and communities of the working class, and should ideally grow from that class while seeking to lead it.

This ideal was expressed through a widespread interest in the biography and writing of John Maclean, the Marxist educator and activist who was imprisoned for anti-war agitation in 1918. Maclean was an avowed supporter of the Bolshevik revolution, and engaged closely with international Bolshevism. He advocated a Bolshevik-style revolution in Britain and – towards the end of his life – established the Scottish Workers' Republican Party rather than joining the Communist Party, arguing for an independent Scotland based on the principles of "Celtic Communism."[371] In 1973, Scottish socialists commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Maclean's death, coordinated by a 'John Maclean Commemoration Committee' who advertised the commemoration thus:

> The tributes to be paid at the Pollokshaws ceremonies will symbolise the sense of debt which Scotland's Socialists feel for Maclean who

[370] Neil Davidson, 'Gramsci's Reception in Scotland', *Scottish Labour History* 45 (2010), pp.37-58; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (trans. Quentin Hoare, Geoffrey Nowell Smith), (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp.10-15.

[371] Ewan Gibbs, Rory Scothorne, 'Accusers of capitalism: masculinity and populism on the Scottish radical left in the late twentieth century', *Social History* 45:2 (2020), pp.218-245; David Howell, *A Lost Left: Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

> abandoned school teaching to become not only the nation's foremost Marxist agitator but a legend in his own lifetime.[372]

Maclean was not only a radical icon but a national one, and 1973 saw several public commemorations: the BBC and STV both ran television programmes about Maclean, while BBC Radio Scotland broadcast a programme titled "Krassivy, Krassivy" (the title of a Hugh MacDiarmid poem) about Maclean's life, featuring dramatic reconstructions and interviews with MacDiarmid and Harry McShane.[373] In 1979, another wave of commemorations occurred for the centenary of Maclean's birth. A play by the Glasgow writer Freddy Anderson, also titled *Krassivy*, was performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe by a cast of actors from the working-class Glasgow suburb of Easterhouse to considerable acclaim, winning the Fringe First award.[374] Glasgow City Chambers hosted a "civic reception in his honour," attended by "four hundred representatives of the arts, culture and politics in Scotland," many of whom – noted a report in *New Society* – "would have spent an extremely uncomfortable time in the man's demanding presence."[375]

Maclean's emphasis upon popular education helped to give a native, revolutionary credibility to a growing awareness of Gramsci's conception of organic intellectualism as well as other intellectual tributaries to this tendency. In 1973 Maclean's daughter Nan Milton published a biography of her father, in which she emphasised that Maclean's "unique contribution to the Scottish movement" was his involvement with

[372] John Maclean Commemoration Committee, 'Scotland Honours John Maclean on Fiftieth Anniversary of his Death in Glasgow', CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159/2.
[373] *Ibid*; BBC Radio Programme transcript, "Krassivy, Krassivy: Portrait of John Maclean", NLS Acc.6006.
[374] Joey Simons, in Freddy Anderson and Joey Simons (ed.), *Let Us Act For Ourselves: Selected Works of Freddy Anderson* (Glasgow: Platform Arts, 2020), p.52.
[375] 'Observations', *New Society* (30th August 1979), p.440.

the Social Democratic Federation's "educational programme" for workers.[376] From 1906, Maclean taught classes in (Marxist) "Advanced Economics", Economics and Industrial History, with students including Arthur McManus, Tom Bell and William Gallagher, all of whom would become leading figures in the CPGB in Scotland.[377] James MacDougall, a close ally of Maclean, told Milton that for his otherwise "self-educated," "limited" and "insecure" working-class students, "the advent of Maclean was an absolute godsend."[378]

This particular focus upon socialist popular education had a clear appeal to the left of the 1970s. Maclean was mentioned by Gordon Brown as one of Scotland's "socialist pioneers," alongside citations of Gramsci and the Brazilian popular educator Paolo Friere, in his introduction to *The Red Paper on Scotland*. Brown argued that Scottish socialism needed a "concerted programme of political education," and a revival in its didactic institutions:

> Today in Scotland we have no daily or weekly specifically Scottish political newspapers, no socialist book club, no socialist labour college, no workers' university, and only a handful of socialist magazines and pamphlets. We need all of these now.[379]

Yet Brown's essay also featured a rejection of the vanguardist style of revolutionary politics favoured by Maclean. His plea for a new culture of popular education was

[376] Nan Milton, *John Maclean* (London: Pluto Press, 1973), p.34.
[377] Henry Bell, *John Maclean: Hero of Red Clydeside* (London: Pluto Press, 2019), pp.21-22.
[378] Milton, *Maclean*, p.34.
[379] Gordon Brown, 'Introduction: The Socialist Challenge', in Gordon Brown (ed.), *The Red Paper on Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1975), p.18.

inextricable from his reading of Gramsci, in which the "Jacobin notion of a vanguard making revolution on behalf of working people relates to a backward society (and prefigures an authoritarian and bureaucratic state)." Instead, he argued, Scotland's "mature and complex" society required that "the transition to socialism must be made by the majority of people themselves and a socialist society must be created within the womb of existing society and prefigured in movements for democracy at the grass roots."[380] Here Brown reflected less the influence of Maclean the Bolshevik, and more that of Maclean's democratic socialist contemporaries in the Labour Party, on whom Brown completed a PhD thesis in 1981.[381]

Brown's dismissal of vanguardism reflected some of the tensions concealed within Maclean's enthusiastic absorption into a Scottish radical pantheon during the 1970s, when the influence of the new left was ostensibly turning radicals away from the politics of centralisation and control. This side of Maclean's legacy is unavoidable in his literary memorialisation, which was sustained by a range of tributes beginning shortly after his death. In 1934, MacDiarmid wrote his poem – though it was unpublished until 1956 – "John Maclean (1879-1923)", a furious comparison of Maclean with Jesus Christ that condemned the rest of the country:

> As Pilate and the Roman soldiers to Christ
> Were Law and Order to the finest Scot of his day,
> One of the few true men in our sordid breed,

[380] *Ibid.*
[381] Gordon Brown, *The Labour Party and Political Change in Scotland, 1918-1929: The Politics of Five Elections*, unpublished PhD thesis, the University of Edinburgh (1981).

A flash of sun in a country all prison-grey.[382]

This emphasis upon Maclean as martyr, redeeming Scotland's sins – inspired by his confinement in prison, which fatally broke his health – was echoed throughout further celebrations of his example. MacDiarmid's 1943 poem "Krassivy, Krassivy" compared Maclean to Lenin, with the Russian word "krassivy" – "both beautiful and red" – fitting Maclean as "a description no other Scot has deserved."[383] Hamish Henderson's "John Maclean March", written in 1948, portrayed Maclean's return to Glasgow from prison in similarly Messianic terms:

The red will be worn, ma lauds, an Scotlan will merch again
Nou great John Maclean has come hame tae the Clyde.[384]

In 1979's *Krassivy*, Anderson also compared Maclean to Christ in a conversation between him and his wife Agnes:

AGNES: When you get out of here, John, is there… is there any other way of managing? I don't want… I don't want to see my husband crucified. I don't want it John…
JOHN: Listen, Nan… every night in this wee cell, I see upon the white washed ceiling, I see the crucified of Europe… This cell becomes a battlefield… There's nothing I wouldn't do to save the working class from

[382] Hugh MacDiarmid, 'John Maclean (1879-1923)', in Hugh MacDiarmid, *Selected Poetry* (eds. Alan Riach, Michael Grieve), (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), p.161.
[383] Hugh MacDiarmid, *Complete Poems Vol. 1* (Edinburgh: Carcanet Press, 1996), p.604.
[384] Hamish Henderson, 'John Maclean March', in Hamish Henderson, Corey Gibson (ed.), *Collected Poems* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2019), p.271.

> the dreadful consequence of their masters' greed. I can't escape my mission, Nan.[385]

In each of these examples, the Scottish people themselves are either barely deserving of Maclean's heroic example or pitifully reliant on his intervention. The most perceptive (and indeed prophetic) analysis of Maclean's Messianic potential came from one of his contemporaries, the future Labour MP and Secretary of State for Scotland Thomas Johnston. Writing in his journal *Forward* while Maclean was still in prison, Johnston reflected that

> He is paying the price. He advocated a Social Revolution by Bolshevist methods, and, alas, the bulk of the workers do not want a Social Revolution by any method, but go on in rivet-hammering competition and scrambling for overtime, and regard the John Macleans as 'decent enough but a bit off'. The blood of the martyrs is said to have been the seed of the Church, and John MacLean's dramatic sacrifice may do more to shake up the brains of the working class than did John MacLean's years of educative propaganda for socialism, but it is only upon such a presumption that the sacrifice can in socialist tactics, be justified.[386]

Here, Johnston directly identifies the paradox of Maclean's relationship to the wider social constituency with which he was identified: his status as an *outsider*. This is at

[385] Freddy Anderson in Anderson, Simons (ed.), *Let Us Act* (2020), p.63.
[386] Thomas Johnston, quoted in Graham Walker, *Thomas Johnston* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp.56-57.

least implicit in all the Messianic literature on Maclean, and helps us to understand the profound tension between the ideal of the "organic intellectual" embedded in and representing their class, and that of the vanguardist intellectual seeking to lead it. Pierre Bourdieu criticises the theory of the organic intellectual for this reason, arguing that it relies on unsustainable "homologies of position" between the relatively powerful but still socially subordinate (or "dominant-dominated") figure of the intellectual and the "dominated" they seek to represent. This association of the intellectual with their class or movement is "always more uncertain, more fragile, than solidarities based on an identity of position and, thereby, of condition and habitus."[387] Bourdieu argues that the intellectual field cannot be understood as a field "above the strategies, interests and struggles of everyday life," suggesting that it can be at least closely related to the class or movement of which an intellectual is a part; yet it also cannot be understood by "reducing these strategies, interests or these struggles to those which take place in the political field or in ordinary existence."[388] The special legitimacy which accrues to the figure of the organic intellectual risks becoming an exceptional justification for vanguardism: as the authentic representative of their class, they can invest their own radical priorities with an imagined popular basis that often fails to survive the encounter with political reality.

For those elements of the Scottish radical left who sought to maintain a close link to the working class throughout the post-war era, this tension made itself felt in ways that offered no easy resolution. In her 1973 biography of Maclean, Nan Milton hoped for a day "when ordinary people are no longer dazzled by bourgeois standards and values,"

[387] Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Matthew Adamson, 'The intellectual field: a world apart', in Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Matthew Adamson, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexibe Sociology* (London: Polity, 1990), p.146.
[388] *Ibid*, p.142.

and “the parliamentarians and trade union leaders” are “revealed as nothing but insignificant bureaucrats.”[389] The “real heroes” of socialism were, she argued, “the despised ‘tub-thumpers’,” defending Maclean as a populist rabble-rouser. Her emphasis on the importance of “flamboyant” appeals to the working class on “the street corner” during Maclean’s time are confirmed in Petrie’s analysis of “electoral rowdyism,” which became “the preserve of those excluded from mainstream political debate.”[390] Yet as Petrie notes, this tradition fell into a steep decline during the interwar period, as “the popular traditions of electioneering came to be associated with a dangerous extremism.”[391] The endurance of this decline was reflected in Milton’s pessimism about the class-consciousness of her contemporaries: “It is no doubt difficult for the younger generation, accustomed to a house-bound, television-watching proletariat, to realize just how important this kind of propaganda was in the early days of the socialist movement.”[392]

The diverse forms taken by the Maclean myth thus illustrate the Scottish radical left’s contradictory view of its social position, torn between a desire to root radicalism in a politically viable social base, and a sense that this base – the working class – had been captured by more powerful forms of national representation. This crisis ultimately demanded a profound rethinking of both the model of the “organic intellectual” and the vanguardist vision of intellectual agency, inspiring radical intellectuals to reframe their alienated, ‘outsider’ status as a valuable source of critical insight that could legitimise more minoritarian forms of resistance. This sense of minority resistance was ultimately

[389] Milton, *John Maclean*, p.32.
[390] *ibid*; Petrie, *Popular Politics*, p.154.
[391] *Ibid.*
[392] Milton, *John Maclean*, p.32.

highly compatible with a nationalist politics that emphasised Scotland's own marginalised, 'outsider' status within the United Kingdom.

## Jimmy Reid's Limits: From Legislators to Interpreters

While Nan Milton suggested that the "television-watching proletariat" had lost their revolutionary spark, one possible heir to Maclean seemed well-equipped to navigate the television age: Jimmy Reid, one of the leaders of the UCS work-in. John Foster and Charles Woolfson argue that Reid's speeches to the UCS workers and the public, which featured prominently in media coverage, demonstrated the renewal of radical intellectual authority in a transformed context.[393] Reid's carefully planned rhetoric stressed solidarity and working-class power over potentially divisive issues such as Communist Party involvement and sectional interests within the workforce. In the deployment of vague but emotive themes like the "right to work," "dignity" "responsibility" and "discipline," Reid demonstrated

> The acquired skills which themselves derived largely from CP practice as it evolved during the 1930s and 1940s: its stress in working *within* the existing organizations of working people on their own terms.[394]

In Foster and Woolfson's analysis, Reid's success in mobilising the UCS workforce thus vindicated the careful balance of organic intellectualism and vanguardism that characterised the CPGB's political practice, avoiding the pitfalls of both organic

[393] Foster & Woolfson, 'workers on the Clyde', pp.309-311.
[394] *Ibid*, p.311.

spontaneity and explicitly revolutionary adventurism. Cairns Craig also emphasises Reid's media skills, arguing that UCS

> Stirred into life the fundamental and traditional self-perception of the urban Scots […] and integrated it with a media consciousness which was entirely modern. For the fact was that the UCS event was a media event: Jimmy Reid's famous "no-bevvying" speech [in which he said "there'll be no vandalism. There'll be no bevvying."] was a director's instruction to the actors, who were not actually working in the yard building ships but performing the role for the international gathering of cameras that had come to see them building ships.[395]

Far from being a modern form of "rabble-rousing" class empowerment, Craig suggests that the symbolic triumph of UCS functioned better as a means of accepting class defeat:

> Those artists [visiting the yards] found […] a new commonality of purpose in the reassertion of values, the values of Scottish socialism and of the Scottish proletariat, that seemed to have been made redundant by the 'never-had-it-so-good' era of the '50s. Of course, the fact was that those images *were* redundant – but their redundancy could only be accepted once they had been fully realised and lived through again.[396]

[395] Cairns Craig, 'Scotland 10 Years On (The Changes That Took Place While Rip Mac Winkle Slept)', *Radical Scotland* (February/March 1989), p.9.
[396] *Ibid.*

Christopher Harvie concurs with Craig that UCS represented little more than a "publicity coup"; while the UCS yards were rescued, the nationwide "industrial reorganisation" required to revive the Communist Party's social base was not forthcoming, and the process of deindustrialisation accelerated into the 1980s.[397] The new forces shaping political consciousness were not work-based solidarities but mass, cross-class political and media institutions: Stephen Kendrick argues that the emphasis of television news on Scotland as a political unit encouraged a new "Scottish frame of reference," offering a clear collective subjectivity to replace those being broken down by the dispersal of old industrial communities across the country.[398]

Reid's growing engagement with this massified and heavily mediated political culture further demonstrated its incompatibility with the old model of radical intellectualism. Reid's success in the UCS work-in transformed his status from "a prominent local trade unionist into a national figure whom everyone from television producers, to journalists, to politicians and inevitably hangers-on seemingly wanted a piece of."[399] He appeared on the popular chat show *Parkinson* three times as a guest, helping him to become a "poster boy of the Communist Party."[400] Yet as William Knox and Alan McKinlay argue, his efforts to transform this personal popularity into electoral success were hindered by his continued association with the CPGB. Anti-Communist campaigns by Labour and the Catholic Church contributed to his defeat as the CPGB candidate for Central

[397] Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland Since 1914 (New Edition)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p.159.
[398] Stephen Kendrick, 'Scotland, Social Change and Politics', in David McCrone, Stephen Kendrick and Pat Straw (eds.), *The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), pp.71-90.
[399] W.W.J. Knox & A. McKinlay, *Jimmy Reid: A Clyde-Built Man* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), p.139.
[400] *Ibid*, p.148.

Dunbartonshire in both general elections of 1974.[401] "It was clear," Knox and McKinlay suggest, "that he had no political future as a communist candidate."[402] Of several reasons for Reid's subsequent decision to leave the CPGB, they argue that this was one; his decision to join the Labour Party in 1977, however, did not bring better fortunes, and he abandoned electoral politics for a media career after losing to the SNP's Gordon Wilson as Labour's candidate for Dundee East in 1979.[403]

Reid's combination of media success and political failure was part of a deeper transformation occurring in the role of intellectuals across societies on the precipice of "post-modernity," which Zygmunt Bauman describes as a transition from "legislators" to "interpreters".[404] Bauman identifies the "modern" intellectual as working in the role of "legislator": by appeal to their special resource – knowledge – these intellectuals have the "authority to arbitrate" within "controversies of opinions" and can have the results of their arbitration accepted as "correct and binding." The "postmodern" intellectual, however, is tasked with "translating" between distinct traditions and participants, none of whom can be finally determined to be correct but who must be helped to coexist; it is the interpreter's role to "prevent distortion" and "facilitate communication" in interactions between these "autonomous (sovereign) participants."[405] Reid's advocacy of the UCS workers granted him public acclaim, but not the kind of public authority that would grant him access to actual legislative power; his popularity derived from his ability to translate the struggle of the UCS workers into the cause of the nation, and to secure a new role for the Clydebank workers at the

[401] *Ibid*, pp.150-156.
[402] *Ibid*, p.158.
[403] *Ibid*, p.189.
[404] Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-modernity and Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), pp.4-5.
[405] *Ibid*, p.5.

centre of the national imaginary – compensation for their declining role at the heart of the economy.

The ability of left intellectuals to *represent* the public was, paradoxically, losing its correlation with the power to act on their behalf. That symbolic power was contained within more established systems of representation – the massified media and politics of parliamentary democracy – that separated intellectuals from their publics without offering them direct access to power. The class-based elements of the Scottish radical left had not yet grasped the political significance of these systems of mass representation which, as Anderson argues, placed the "fictive unity" of nationhood at the centre of the popular social imaginary.

## The 1320 Club: Nationalist Vanguardism

If vanguardism offered few opportunities to socialists under these circumstances, could the rise of the SNP stimulate a more overtly nationalist assertion of intellectual leadership? This was the fear of the poet D.M. Black, who – as the previous chapter also noted – wrote to Robert Tait after the SNP's 1967 Hamilton victory of the prospect that

> the tartan-and-Lallans clan will begin to advertise themselves as the only true Scots, & the traditional good-humoured contempt for such claims, by the populace at large, may get swept away in the current of fanaticism.[406]

[406] Letter from David M. Black to Robert Tait (3rd November 1967), CRC Gen.2159/3.

By the "tartan-and-Lallans" clan, Black meant the milieu of intellectuals around Hugh MacDiarmid, who had established an organisation called the '1320 Club' in June 1967. The Club's members included – along with MacDiarmid – several other prominent nationalists, such as Oliver Brown, Ronald McDonald Douglas, Nigel Tranter and Wendy Wood. The Club was militantly nationalist, styling itself as the provisional government in waiting of an independent Scotland.[407] Its executive was structured like a shadow cabinet, and its 100 'members' could only be invited to join by members of this inner elite. Broader support was facilitated through subscription to the Club's journal *Catalyst*, which was launched in December 1967 under the editorship of the writer John Herdman.[408] Its 'organiser', Major FAC Boothby, was a particular enthusiast for the establishment of a paramilitary wing of the Club, and convened an 'Armed Forces Committee' with the purpose of planning the defence of a Provisional Government against the British state.[409] Upon learning of the paramilitary ambitions of the 1320 Club, the SNP's National Council proscribed them from the party in March 1968.[410]

Black was not the only intellectual concerned about the 1320 Club. In early 1968, Hamish Henderson and Hugh MacDiarmid conducted the '1320 Club flyting' on the *Scotsman*'s letters page. This was the third 'flyting' between Henderson and MacDiarmid, in which the two left-wing cultural nationalists clashed over "literature,

[407] John Herdman, *Another Country: An Era in Scottish Politics and Letters* (Glendaruel: Thirsty Books, 2013), pp.30-36.
[408] Andrew Murray Scott, Iain Macleay, *Britain's Secret War: Tartan Terrorism and the Anglo-American State* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1990), pp.28-29; Herdman, *Another Country*, pp.30-32.
[409] Scott, Macleay, *Secret*, pp.28-29.
[410] *Ibid*, p.31.

folk culture and the politics of Scottish nationalism."[411] Corey Gibson describes the third flyting as "a brief scuffle by comparison" to the previous two, which concerned Scottish poetry and folksong, yet it offers a particular insight into fundamental disagreements over democracy, nationalism and the role of intellectuals within Scottish radicalism.[412] Henderson condemned the 1320 Club's "self-elected Elect," a tendency which he argued had "always been the bane of Scottish Home Rule politics." They would only "arouse a healthy public mistrust as regards the intentions, capabilities and motives of the national movement as a whole." He insisted that Scottish nationalism "should not only be democratic but be seen to be democratic."[413] As with *Crann-Tàra*'s approach to the SNP a decade later, the importance of nationalism's *public image* in Henderson's critique hints at the relative powerless of intellectuals within his understanding of Scottish society.

MacDiarmid's reply not only dismissed Henderson's concern for public opinion, but condemned it.

> It is natural that Mr Henderson should inveigh against intellectuals and dub them 'self-elected'. His conception of 'democracy' is what concurs with majority opinion. Minorities are consequently to be vilified, and stigmatized as 'trouble makers', 'agents provocateurs' and all the rest of it […] People do vary in intellectual status. Why deny this in favour of the

[411] David Featherstone, '"Gramsci in Action": Space, Politics, and the Making of Solidarities', in Michael Ekers, Gillian Hart, Stefan Kipfer, Alex Loftus (eds.), *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), p.78.
[412] Corey Gibson, *The Voice of the People: Hamish Henderson and Scottish Cultural Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p.13.
[413] Hamish Henderson, Letter to the *Scotsman* (21st February 1968), in Alec Finlay (ed.), *The Armstrong Nose: Selected Letters of Hamish Henderson* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p.164.

> undifferentiated mass, or accede to the demand of the letter that superior brains should acquiesce in the delimitation of the political and other objectives to conciliate the mass who cannot see beyond their noses?[414]

MacDiarmid's elitism reflected a scepticism amongst more traditionalist nationalist militants about modern democracy and its attendant public life. Captain Jock Hay, a friend of Boothby, had written to Boothby in June 1963 to propose the restoration of Scotland's pre-Union 'Estates' system of government as a replacement for "the miserable English system of General Elections."[415] Hay argued that Scotland's system was superior to the English by virtue of the checks it placed on opportunism. In England, "a soap box orator or T.V. glamour boy with no administrative experience whatever could be elected direct into the English Parliament, but in Scotland they had to work their way up through one of the Estates."[416] In reality, the estates were more oligarchical than meritocratic, at times offering a way of recognising corporate "status groups" within a more complex monarchical system of government.[417] Indeed, Hay's idea of Estates was more analogous to the corporatist politics of "social harmony" idealised by Italian fascism.[418] Boothby wrote several letters to Robert McIntyre, then President of the SNP, with similar proposals for political restoration, clearly prefiguring the 1320 Club's own structures, that were quickly rebuffed:

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[414] Hugh MacDiarmid, Letter to the *Scotsman* (26th February 1968), in Finlay (ed.), *Armstrong Nose*, p.165.
[415] Unsigned letter posted from Delgatie Castle [Hay's residence] to FAC Boothby (4th June 1963), Papers of Dr Robert Douglas McIntyre, NLS Acc.10090/106.
[416] *Ibid.*
[417] Julian Goodare, 'The Estates in the Scottish Parliament, 1286-1707', *Parliamentary History* 15:1 (February 1996), pp.11-32.
[418] Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp.28-29.

> I think it might very well boomerang and cause some amusement, rather than serious discussion [...] We cannot say how the Scottish form would have developed had the country remained politically independent, but we can embody the Scottish democratic spirit in modern forms, some of which may be widespread.[419]

The intellectuals who formed the backbone of the 1320 Club had forged their own political consciousness in the interwar period, and were influenced by both military experience and forms of politics relatively unused – or indeed hostile – to mass suffrage. MacDiarmid (1892-1978), Oliver Brown (1903-1976) and Ronald MacDonald Douglas (1896-1984) were all born in the 19th century or at the very start of the 20th. In 1964, Boothby (1909-1978) outlined these formative years in a talk on "Direct Action" to a meeting of the Federation of Student Nationalists:

> The world was in the middle of the Great Slump and Britain was rotten through and through with unemployment, with wealth and with corruption. Everyone was talking and the only people who were up and doing were the Communists and the Fascists. Great was the botheration at how to stop them - particularly the Fascists. The Conservatives held balls, bunfights and whist-drives. The Socialists held whist-drives, bunfights and balls. And while they were fighting the Fascist menace in this way, the Fascists were out on the streets handing out literature and selling their newspaper. They did this from 7.30 in the evenings until the

[419] Robert McIntyre, Letter to FAC Boothby (25th June 1963), Papers of Dr Robert Douglas McIntyre, NLS Acc.10090/106.

> pubs and cinemas closed. Then out came the brushes and the paint, and up went the slogans. By 1936 they could march 3000 young men and women through any major city and rally 10,000 of fighting age in Hyde Park. All done by hard work and Phase 1 of Direct Action.[420]

What Boothby did not mention was that he himself had established a branch of the British Union of Fascists in Horsham in late 1933, which proved to be one of the country's chief hotbeds of fascist activity.[421] Boothby and the other intellectuals involved with the 1320 Club often slipped easily between far-left and far-right politics – especially MacDiarmid, whose early sympathies with Italian Fascism were easily transfigured into adulation of John Maclean and membership of the CPGB.[422] They inhabited what Dick Pels describes as "political bohemia," a "refuge of declassed and 'free-floating intellectuals, artists and militants, who felt sufficiently estranged from established political ideas and institutions in order to sustain a generic state of 'anti-political' revolt and to engage in unexpected swings of allegiance."[423] Their vanguardism was rooted not in an "organic" relationship to any particular class, but a combination of Nietzschean emphasis on bootstrapping individual will and a claim to represent the authentic national spirit. In his reply to Henderson's initial critique of the 1320 Club, MacDiarmid argued that "even Mr Henderson cannot deny that little groups of the 'self-styled intellectuals' he affects to despise have been the spearhead of all political movements. It will not be otherwise in Scotland…"[424]

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[420] FAC Boothby, 'Notes for a talk to be given on 19th November 1964 to Queen's College Scottish National Club', Sgian Dubh Papers, NLS Y.106 PER.
[421] *West Sussex County Times* (19th January, 1934), p.6; I am grateful to Eddy Greenfield for providing me with this reference. See also Eddy Greenfield, *A-Z of Horsham: Places People History* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2019).
[422] Bob Purdie, *Hugh MacDiarmid: Black, Green, Red and Tartan* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2012).
[423] Dick Pels, *The Intellectual as Stranger: Studies in Spokespersonship* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.xi.
[424] MacDiarmid, Letter to the *Scotsman* (26th February 1968), in Finlay (ed.), *Armstrong Nose*, p.165.

Henderson noted MacDiarmid's sympathy for Italian Fascism in the next instalment of their flyting, writing on 29th February that an "authoritarian strain" was the only consistent element of his thought.[425] He then introduced Gramsci into the debate, noting his opposition to Mussolini and his ability to find "fruitful differences among the undifferentiated mass […] If there are three words which epitomize all that Gramsci was not, they are 'by invitation only'."[426] MacDiarmid took up the challenge in his reply, emphasising his agreement with what he took to be Gramsci's focus upon cultural "superstructure" over the "economic foundation," though regretting Gramsci's retention of "too many elements of materialism, determinism and economism."[427] He defended his own elitism on Gramscian grounds, noting Gramsci's own support for vanguardist politics in his writings before imprisonment.[428] For Henderson, concluding the flyting, this was a drastic misuse of Gramsci's explicitly class-based revolutionary politics: "Gramsci's vanguard was based on the organized working-class movement, on its most intelligent and self-sacrificing cadres, on its known and trusted leaders. If Mr MacDiarmid thinks this has anything in common with the 1320 Club, he is living in a dream world."[429]

Henderson thus deployed Gramsci to defend his own vision of intellectual vanguardism from the same anti-democratic charges he levelled at MacDiarmid. Yet for all that the 1320 Club appeared outdated and isolated to the point of farce, their rejection of democracy also reflected a pessimism about popular radicalism that was not without justification. Henderson, MacDiarmid noted, could be accused of what was

[425] Henderson, Letter to the *Scotsman* (29th February 1968), in Finlay (ed.), *Armstrong Nose*, p.166.
[426] *Ibid*, p.167.
[427] MacDiarmid, Letter to the *Scotsman* (4th March 1968), in Finlay (ed.), *Armstrong Nose*, p.167.
[428] *Ibid*, p.168.
[429] Hamish Henderson, Letter to the *Scotsman* (9th March 1968), in Finlay (ed.), *Armstrong Nose*, p.169.

in effect a more subtle, less honest vanguardism, conjuring the phantom of an "organised working-class movement" as cover for his own elitist model of cultural engagement. As David Featherstone notes, "Henderson himself was open to the charge of operating something of his own rather exclusive circle, albeit a rather rambunctious one, from Sandy Bell's bar on Forest Road in Edinburgh."[430] Henderson was a guiding influence on the establishment of *Scottish International* and the new, anti-traditionalist intelligentsia which flourished around it in Edinburgh, and as the previous chapter argued, these intellectuals nurtured their own forms of particularism and insularity.

The controversy over the 1320 Club speaks to some of the fundamental tensions of radical intellectual life in Scotland at a vital moment in its development. The SNP were breaking into the political mainstream, and the ranks of the intelligentsia were being expanded by new waves of university students, graduates and faculty, as well as an expansion of state arts funding; the social and political structures of feeling of a previous generation of intellectuals were being disrupted not only by these new developments, but also by a growing awareness of their limits in an age dominated by the politics and culture of mass representation. This placed pressure on radical intellectuals to confront, head on, what Dick Pels calls the "metonymic fallacy of the intellectuals":

> Intellectuals, in identifying with those larger interests [of class, nation, society, reason, justice, and so on], have often silenced other voices and appropriated their subjects' (and objects') interests and desires as their

[430] Featherstone, '"Gramsci in Action"', p.79.

> own. In this way they have succumbed to the universal danger that resides in the very logic of speaking for others: which is to disregard the inevitable hiatus between representers and represented, or the specific sociological 'strangeness' which separates spokespersons from the subjects or objects which they claim to speak for.[431]

Grappling with this problem openly and honestly became the task of the new intelligentsia around *Scottish International*, and provided the vital "opening" in which Scottish radicalism was reimagined in the 1970s.

## "Go Home Weirdies": Cosmopolitanism and Social Change

The 1320 Club flyting was just part of a running battle between two wings of the Scottish intelligentsia which we can understand as 'cosmopolitans' and 'natives', a distinction within the territorial imagination that was introduced in the previous chapter. This was a significant component of the radical left's changing attitude to Scottish nationhood, for both these wings shared a self-conscious detachment from wider society. Yet while MacDiarmid and his allies on the 'native' wing produced an overtly anti- or even pre-democratic and romantic justification for their detachment, the 'cosmopolitans' sought to justify theirs on more modernised, rationalistic grounds. This articulated intellectuals' alienation as a means of better perceiving the totality of a rapidly changing society, allowing them to better serve wider society as "interpreters".

Christopher Harvie argues that the Scottish intelligentsia, at least until the 1970s, were "divided between two loyalties," namely the "Red" and the "Black" – a distinction

[431] Pels, *The Intellectual as Stranger,* p.x.

derived from Gwyn Alf Williams' work on Spanish resistance to Napoleon.[432] The "Red" Scots were "cosmopolitan, self-avowedly enlightened and, given a chance, authoritarian, expanding into and exploiting bigger and more bountiful fields than their own country could provide." Harvie contrasts these with the "Black" Scots, who were "demotic, parochial, sensitive about community to the point of reaction, but keeping the ladder of social promotion open, resisting the encroachments of the English governing class."[433] This division only began to make itself clear to Scottish radicals (including Harvie himself) in the late 1950s, and Harvie's binary is useful in capturing both the complaints of each side about the other, and what they believed to be their particular contribution to Scottish public life.

Eleanor Bell identifies a new wave of Scottish writing and literary magazines in the late 1950s, in publications like *Gambit*, *Sidewalk* and *Cleft*, in which writers like Alex Neish and Alan Jackson articulated "postnationalist" complaints against the predominance of "tradition" in Scottish culture.[434] These complaints expressed "a deep frustration with the legacy of the Scottish Renaissance movement, and what many, mainly younger, critics perceived as its anachronistic dominance from the late 1950s onwards."[435] In 1962, Jim Haynes and John Calder – two North Americans based in Edinburgh, who sympathised with this more cosmopolitan side of Scottish literature – organised the International Writers' Conference in the city; here, a high-profile and bad-tempered debate between Hugh MacDiarmid and the novelist Alexander Trocchi

[432] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.4; Gwyn Alf Williams, *Goya and the Impossible Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).
[433] Harvie, *Scotland*, p.4.
[434] Eleanor Bell, 'Rejecting the Knitted Claymore: the challenge to cultural nationalism in Scottish literary magazines of the 1960s and 1970s', in Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *Flower/Power: British Literature in Transition, 1960-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.263-274.
[435] *Ibid*, p.264.

became a flashpoint for the wider conflict between native and cosmopolitan Scottish culture.[436] MacDiarmid attacked Trocchi as "cosmopolitan scum," expressing what Roderick Watson generously describes as "a deeper anxiety that the aims and achievements of the Scottish literary renaissance might be under attack, or at the very least under-appreciated by the next generation."[437]

Harvie's identification of "Red" Scots with authoritarianism suggests that his binary was already breaking down, for – as shown above – by the 1960s the more nativist MacDiarmid and his followers could be as easily accused of authoritarian tendencies as their opponents. Yet as the previous chapter noted, the 'new left' intellectuals had their own 'Jacobin' tendencies, however submerged they might be in the rhetoric of decentralisation. MacDiarmid had also been vital to a previous wave of internationalisation of Scottish culture: as Watson argues, the interwar renaissance also sought to integrate Scotland into a wider European modernist tradition, escaping from the nativist "Kailyardism" that preceded it.[438] MacDiarmid himself had railed against tradition, with the slogan "Not Traditions – Precedents!" adorning the banner of his journal *Scottish Chapbook*.[439] MacDiarmid's own interwar work arguably offered a vital precedent for new moves to disrupt what had become a tradition in its own right.

[436] Angela Bartie and Eleanor Bell (eds.), *The International Writers' Conference Revisited: Edinburgh, 1962* (Edinburgh: Cargo, 2012), pp.9-11.
[437] Roderick Watson, 'Scottish Poetry: The Scene and the Sixties', in Eleanor Bell, Linda Gunn (eds.), *The Scottish Sixties: Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?* (New York: Rodopi, 2013), p.74; Brian Hogg, *Cosmopolitan Scum!: Edinburgh, The Arts & The Counterculture* (Edinburgh: Nova Mob (Ink) Publishing, 2019).
[438] Watson, 'Scottish Poetry', p.74; Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918-1959: literature, national identity and cultural exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p.1.
[439] Alan Riach, 'After MacDiarmid: Creative Writers, the Canon, and the Academy', *Studies in Scottish Literature* 40 (2014), p.15.

MacDiarmid's cosmopolitan literary opponents sought a re-statement of Scottish literature's contemporary relevance. In 1962, the poet Edwin Morgan contributed an essay titled 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard' to *New Saltire*, in which he criticised Scotland's "prevailing intellectual mood of indifferentism and conservatism" and called for Scottish writers "to move out into the world," away from both the apolitical romanticism of "Kailyardism" and the defensive insularity of the Renaissance tradition. [440] For Morgan, the modernist spirit of the Scottish Renaissance was in need of a revival, in line with radical transformations occurring in the everyday life of the Scottish people. The world into which he believed writers now had to move was one

> with which every Scottish child at school is becoming familiar – the world of television and sputniks, automation and LPs, electronic music and multistorey flats, rebuilt city centres and new towns, coffee bars and bookable cinemas, air travel and transistor radios, colour photography and open-plan houses, paperbacks and water-skiing, early marriage and larger families: a world that will be more fast, more clean, more "cool" than the one it leaves behind.[441]

This attempt to resituate the intellectual in a changed social context displays a social imagination that was not specifically Scottish. At the same time, intellectuals in England were seeking to understand these same inchoate transformations, which were increasingly being described as a transition to 'post-capitalism' or a 'classless society'. Stuart Hall, who edited the first few issues of the *New Left Review* from its

[440] Edwin Morgan, 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard', *New Saltire* 3 (Spring 1962), p.73.
[441] Morgan, 'Beatnik', p.73.

inception in 1960, reflected in 2010 that the new left, while diverse in origin, coalesced around a desire for "a new conception of socialism and a radically new analysis of the social relations, dynamics and culture of post-war capitalism."[442]

Both Morgan and Hall were following in the footsteps of American analyses of post-war society. Sociological studies of an expanding, affluent middle class by writers like David Riesman, C. Wright Mills and Russel K. Galbraith provided inspiration for British writers seeking to understand a new transnational wave of modernisation.[443] Carried upon this wave were the flotsam and jetsam of new modernist political cultures and cultural politics, from the 'angry young men' of 1950s British theatre and the development of rock n' roll into punk, to the 'new social movements' of nuclear disarmament, women's liberation, gay liberation and environmentalism. These were the more radical, counter-cultural means by which, as Marshall Berman writes, "modern men and women" sought "to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves at home in it."[444] This "dialectic of modernisation and modernism," however, appeared in the early 1960s to be passing Scotland by. I.G.C. Hutchison offers an alternative to Morgan's vision of a new, "cool" Scotland, arguing that Scotland experienced these transformations more gradually than England. The heavy industrial sector was fading, but new industries based on consumer goods were not taking its place as quickly. Homeownership, too, remained far lower in Scotland.[445]

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[442] Stuart Hall, 'Life', p.185.
[443] David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951); C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: the American Middle Classes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951); John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1958).
[444] Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Penguin, 1988), p.5.
[445] I.G.C. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.117.

> The trappings of affluence penetrated Scotland later and less thoroughly than England: holidays abroad, car ownership, consumer durables – all these touchstones of the newer working class, with their concomitant implications for voting behaviour, were less prominent.[446]

Hutchison suggests that this sociological divergence underpins the electoral divergence between Scotland and England in 1959, when the general election produced a 1.4% swing to the Conservatives in England and an identical swing to Labour in Scotland. In Scotland's stagnating economy, Harold Macmillan's election slogan of "you've never had it so good" had a 'degree of crass insensitivity.'[447]

Transnational social and economic changes were thus manifesting themselves in distinctively political ways in Scotland and England. Morgan wanted Scottish artists to stress the role of the world beyond Scotland in shaping Scottish life, and tune into those everyday modern experiences which were as accessible to Scottish schoolchildren as they should be to intellectuals. "Postwar Scotland has not produced its John Osborne," he wrote, referring to England's archetypal 'angry young man' playwright.[448] Morgan's overstatement of the pace of Scottish social change exposed, however, a more general problem with Scottish intellectual life: while Scotland was clearly changing, it was not clear *how*. The radical literary internationalism of small magazines like *Jabberwock* and *Sidewalk* remained somewhat aloof from Scottish society itself, while university-based 'general' reviews such as *Gambit* and *Feedback*, which did emerge during the 1950s and early 1960s, made few advances on this.

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[446] *Ibid.*
[447] *Ibid*, p.104.
[448] Morgan, 'Beatnik', p.73.

Until the 1970s, then, the new cosmopolitan intelligentsia could not claim a particularly 'organic' relationship to Scottish society. A degree of nativism remained the prevailing cultural disposition within the Scottish left, evident not just in Lawrence Daly's lament for the erosion of local cultures but also in the political sensitivities of the CPGB. During demonstrations against the siting of American 'Polaris' nuclear weapons at Holy Loch in 1961 and 1962, the Communist Party's *Daily Worker* sought to downplay the presence of "so-called "weirdies"" – bohemian student radicals caricatured in the wider media and treated with suspicion by locals as English carpet-baggers.[449] They stressed instead that the protesters were "ordinary men and women from the factories, housewives with their children, a liberal sprinkling from the professions and hundreds of young, patriotic Scots who love their country."[450] Giovanni Giarchi argues that to the local community in Dunoon, "most marchers were strangers, and… even the banks of the Loch and Cowal shore had been appropriated by outsiders."[451] Many of the key events focused upon by the *Daily Worker* – such as regular attempts by canoeists to board or block American vessels – were indeed led by radical English students, and Dunoon locals had staged small counter-protests with placards reading "go home weirdies."[452] Such outsiders were not role-models for those elements of the left who sought an 'organic' link to the 'people' or working class. In 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard', Morgan was forced to beg that "if we see a beatnik in the kailyard, he is as well being studied as shot down. Better still, if he will come forward and tell us his story."[453]

[449] G.G. Giarchi, *Between McAlpine and* Polaris (London: Routledge, 1984), p.51.
[450] Philip Stein, 'Fight Until Bases Go', *Daily Worker* (May 15th 1961), p.1.
[451] Giarchi, *Between*, p.51.
[452] 'HQ for fight v Polaris?', *Daily Worker* (March 11th 1961), p.3; Giarchi, *Between*, p.115.
[453] Morgan, 'Beatnik', p.74.

## *Scottish International*: the Critical Origins of "Cultural Devolution"

The previous chapter demonstrated the territorial imagination at play in the section above, where Scotland's cosmopolitan intellectuals dreamt of sharing in a new world that was arriving faster elsewhere. For this chapter, however, it is the social imagination that is most significant, for the new world promised to carry with it a new social function for the intelligentsia. That function was characterised not only by distance, but also by *negativity*, and Scotland's perceived failure to keep pace with England was part of this. The idea of an absent or unrealised intellectual radicalism inspired Tom Nairn's lament, in 1967's 'Festival of the Dead', that Scotland had "no voice, and no present."[454] Instead of a more critical and discursive intellectual life, Scotland's intelligentsia had settled for poetry, "the intellectuals' special form of dope."

> Poetry, which ought to arise out of a prose culture, instead has to be a *substitute* for it… Poetry has to conjure up the national culture, as well as the nation itself, through an impossible, encyclopedic lyricism. Devoted to this false task, the poets actually fail to disturb the real, terrible silence of Scotland.[455]

The only thing Nairn believed could effectively disturb this silence was prose, which could achieve "a dialectical exploration of appearance and reality in society."[456] Yet even in dismissing Scotland's intelligentsia *en masse*, Nairn was also quietly offering a way forward: not only through his own poetic and polemical prose, but through the encouragement of a new structure of feeling that would characterise Scotland's

[454] Tom Nairn, 'Festival of the Dead', *New Statesman* (September 1st, 1967), p.265.
[455] *ibid*, pp.265-266.
[456] *Ibid.*

intellectual revival into the 1970s. The negativity of Nairn's analysis was radically expanded in 1968's 'Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', which attacked Scotland's "overpowering past" and called for a "Socialist Nationalism" which "must utterly condemn the kind of garrulous, narcissistic windbaggery" that Scotland's intelligentsia had offered "as its special contribution to the problem."[457] Nairn thus reinforced a new milieu of intellectuals for whom, in D.M. Black's words, "A main cultural duty may become the mere assertion of the *badness* of most of Scotland's cultural contributions."[458]

Through a closer analysis of this critical nationalism and its place in the radical left's social imagination, we can complicate the account of this period in Scottish intellectual history offered by Cairns Craig, whose critique of pre-1980s Scottish intellectuals has become influential in Scottish cultural and literary historiography.[459] Craig argues that the socialist intellectuals of the 1970s were too negative about Scotland's past and present, a symptom of their "historical egotism": radical intellectuals, he argues, "did not want to carry the burden of the Scottish past; they did not want to negotiate with the actualities of Scottish culture: they wanted to abolish it and create it anew in their own image."[460] In this highly moralistic reading of intellectual history, the efforts of Scottish intellectuals in the 1960s and '70s to dismiss, deconstruct and lament the backwardness of Scottish culture produced a vacuous, *deracinée* nationalism, oriented towards technocratic questions of administrative 'modernisation' with little of the cultural depth and self-confidence required to make self-government meaningful.

[457] Tom Nairn, 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', *New Left Review* 1:49 (May-June 1968), pp.17-18.
[458] Letter from David M. Black to Robert Tait (November 3rd 1967), CRC Gen.2159/3.
[459] Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996); Hames, *Literary Politics*, p.x.
[460] Craig, *History*, p.107.

The result was a crushing national failure in the 1979 referendum on devolution. However, Craig argues that the 1980s saw the rise of an "entirely different kind of cultural nationalism, one that is founded not on the erasure of the past, but of its incorporation."[461] He suggests that this development was in large part a response to the defeat in 1979: in the absence of political devolution, Scotland's writers, artists and historians "declared *cultural* devolution," producing "a new sense of the richness and autonomy of Scotland's past cultural achievements."[462]

But for Scotland's intellectuals to 'declare' cultural devolution, a Scottish intellectual community had to exist in the first place. The intellectual field, as Pierre Bourdieu calls it, does not exist unproblematically – not only does it require a rolling stock of periodicals, publishing houses, think tanks, meeting places and so on, whose production and maintenance is no mean feat in itself; it also requires a sort of mobilising spirit, a self-justifying ideology that gives intellectuals the energy and desire to reproduce and engage in the field.[463] Stefan Collini has shown how different cultural and institutional contexts produce different discourses not only amongst but *about* intellectuals, and that these specific cultural representations of the intellectual are key elements of the reproduction of intellectual life.[464] What we find from 1967 onwards is a concerted effort, particularly by intellectuals aligned with the radical left in Scotland, to generate these basic conditions of an independent, collective intellectual life on a newly politicised national terrain. Writing in the *New Statesman* in 1975, Christopher Harvie described a "devolution of the intellectuals," motivated by an "almost totally

[461] *Ibid.*
[462] Cairns Craig, 'Scotland: Culture After Devolution', in E. Longley, E. Hughes, and D. O'Rawe (eds.), *Ireland (Ulster) Scotland: Concepts, Contexts, Comparisons* (Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2003), p.39.
[463] Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Matthew Adamson, 'The intellectual field: a world apart', in Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Matthew Adamson, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (London: Polity, 1990), pp.140-149.
[464] Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.1-10.

new" phenomenon of "intellectual Zionism." Harvie argues that for the first time, "specifically Scottish concerns … [were] not only being articulated by the traditional upholders of nationalism but by the intelligentsia as a whole."[465]

Yet the paradox of this development is that such 'devolution' did not come about via the *closure* of the distance between intellectuals and the realities of Scottish life; on the contrary, it was a growing consciousness of the *value* of this distance – of the potential status afforded to the 'outsider within' – that drew intellectuals towards the Scottish nation as the primary object of discourse. The motive force behind much of the intellectual 'devolution' Harvie discusses did not come from overtly nationalist literary intellectuals (the likes of Hugh MacDiarmid and Tom Scott), nor from the more explicitly 'political' intellectuals already established within the Labour and Communist Parties (such as Norman Buchan or John Foster). As Nairn suggests, it came from those radical intellectuals who were seeking to distance themselves both from outright Scottish nationalism and the conventional ideologies of the British left, and attempting to radicalise and internationalise Scottish culture and politics while simultaneously embedding their radicalism and internationalism in a more clearly Scottish context.

This tendency is clearest of all in Bob Tait's editorials for *Scottish International*, which sought to articulate a new role for the intelligentsia in Scottish society. Again, where the previous chapter examined these for their insights into a changing territorial imagination, this chapter examines what they can tell us about radicalism's social imagination. Vital to this new role – and in stark opposition to the vanguardism of

[465] Christopher Harvie, 'The Devolution of the Intellectuals', in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p.90; originally published in the *New Statesman* (28 November 1975).

MacDiarmid *et al* – was an emphasis on documentation over the politically mobilising deployment of myth. In an "appreciation" of Tait after his resignation, Edwin Morgan noted that "mapping out" was "one of Bob's favourite phrases": "the sociological aspect [of arts and culture] was felt to be important because so much of modern Scotland was encrusted with myth that it seemed high time some attempt at mapping out the reality was made." This was not "documentary for documentary's sake, but material to give teeth to dialogue and discussion, as part of what he called "a radical critique of culture and society"."[466]

While this implied a clear embrace of intellectual *uncertainty* – and thus a stepping-back from the vanguardist image of the intellectual "legislator" – Tait's project of radical "mapping" expressed a clear confidence in the intellectual's special ability to "interpret' social change. In August 1968, Tait responded to an article by Peter Nettl in the London magazine *The Listener*, in which Nettl outlined three "distinct requirements" for an intellectual: a "socio-political role," a "universal conscience" that strove to see society in its interrelated totality, and a "cultural ground in that he is concerned with the quality of life." This final point was vital, for it "makes him legitimate, someone entitled to speak."[467] Tait took issue with this legitimacy test, however, arguing that it implied an unnecessary fear of being dismissed by the mainstream. In Scotland, he argued, such fears had

> created an atmosphere in which there can be little *effective* intellectual freedom… These are not conditions in which much disinterested effort

[466] Edwin Morgan, 'Bob Tait: an appreciation', *Scottish International* 6:7 (September 1973), p.28.
[467] Peter Nettl, quoted in Bob Tait, 'Comment', *Scottish International* 3 (August 1968), p.4.

> is going to be made to understand anything more demanding than cliché. Issues and ideas -- even when they have specifically "intellectual" content -- are barbarically simplified to suit someone's conception of a semi-moronic audience. There is no real attempt to push back the limits of comprehension. Thus the range of what is said is very quickly restricted and real freedom severely qualified.[468]

This emphasis on "pushing back the limits of comprehension" differed from MacDiarmid's own vanguardist imagination in its rejection of "someone's conception of a semi-moronic audience." Yet it also expressed a genuine comfort with a degree of intellectual estrangement from wider society, envisioning this estrangement as a condition of the "mapping" that was necessary before any more direct engagement could be made.

Yet the limits of this estrangement were dictated by an idea of its social usefulness. In an article in the next issue, 'Artists and Political Change,' Tait engaged with MacDiarmid's place in Scottish culture directly. He argued that intellectuals could not avoid some direct engagement with Scotland's "future," which demanded "concentration on massive intakes of contemporary experience and, at last, an assumption of some responsibility for the ideas and politics that shape this country." This had not been the case thus far:

> In Scotland [the intellectual] has for a long time been cast as a figure on the bylines, or in a sideshow – as the Edinburgh Festival certainly is in

[468] Tait, 'Comment' (August 1968), p.4.

> Scottish life, a pious irrelevance. He does his thing on the side, being marginally useful as, say, an academic or entertaining when people want a bit of noise.[469]

The real subject of this claim was not disguised. This position, Tait argued, drove Scottish intellectuals like MacDiarmid into useless eccentricity, allowing him to "make whatever intellectual claims he likes without much fear of being challenged." This meant that the "extraordinary insights embedded in his works" received "precious little attention," with no study of "how they tie up and what they amount to." This also meant that his political commitments received insufficient critique. MacDiarmid's reported support, as a member of the CPGB, for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 made his differences from Tait's own new left sympathies clear: "what is interesting," argued Tait, "is not so much the reported remarks themselves as the fact that no one has questioned them, *e.g.* by asking if he would approve a similar invasion of Scotland." In this way, MacDiarmid's "magic and works are kept at a safe distance from life; the relation between the artist and his society is trivialised because of the lack of adequate critical reaction."[470] For Tait, the controversies around MacDiarmid revealed a fundamental unseriousness in Scottish intellectual life that it was *Scottish International*'s job to sweep away through a revival of informed critique.

The 'opening' of the Scottish radical imagination, which began in the pages of *Scottish International*, was thus based not on the affirmation of Scottish cultural autonomy but on the affirmation of *intellectual* autonomy within – and often against – wider Scottish

[469] *Ibid,* p.4.
[470] *Ibid.*

society. Craig's celebration of the intellectual activity of the 1980s, in which Scotland's historical identity is valorised and "recuperated," reflects the closure of this radicalism into a form subordinated to its Scottishness. In the 1960s and 1970s, radical intellectuals in Scotland could only engage with their distinctive national conditions by stepping outside of them, alienating themselves from the common-sense "myths" of Scottish identity and generating a distinctive space for intellectual radicalism that could resist the threat of incorporation into a new, rising nationalism.

## Ambiguous Identities: From Organic Intellectuals to Outsiders Within

This sense of the national usefulness of outsiders was inextricable from a more existential commitment to the ideal of estrangement. Many of the intellectuals involved in this milieu not only agreed with the importance of a more critical vision of an insular, exclusionary Scottish society, but personally and collectively identified with the excluded and ostracised. This combination of estrangement and illumination, of 'distance' and insight, is a typical characterisation of 'new left' intellectuals, particularly those who formed their politics both within and against the university system. Donald Sassoon emphasises the centrality of this new, dissident intelligentsia to the new left that developed across Western Europe and the United States between 1956 and the 1970s, fusing an avant-garde counterculture with a revival in heterodox Marxist and socialist thought.[471] Stuart Hall suggests that the new left which emerged at Oxford University in the 1950s sprang from what he calls its "rebel enclaves": "demobbed young veterans and national servicemen, Ruskin College trade unionists, 'scholarship boys' and girls from home and abroad. Although they were unable to redefine its

[471] Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp.384-386.

dominant culture, these outsiders did come to constitute an alternative - not to say beleaguered - intellectual minority culture."[472]

The importance of such outsiders to the new left is clear: new left ideology was self-consciously unaligned and unorthodox, rejecting the binaries of Communist and Social Democrat, Washington and Moscow – or, as we will see, socialist and nationalist. The paradoxical figure of the 'outsider' puts this disalignment and unorthodoxy on a footing that is at once objective and subjective, rooting new left ideology in experiences that are simultaneously individual and social; but it also, crucially, gives this disalignment and unorthodoxy a sort of *universal* epistemological claim, not in spite of but because of its minoritarian status.[473]

The sociologist Dick Pels argues that "such outsidership, while breeding resentment and anxiety, has also been a source of considerable epistemic pride, in so far as intellectuals have often presumed the existence of a structural relationship between their generic distanciation and their chances of attaining a broader, less distorted, more objective or just view of the social world."[474] Through this distanciation, self-styled "marginal intellectuals have often offered themselves as organic spokespersons for political causes of left, right, and centre, simultaneously magnifying and concealing their own existential condition and their will to intellectual power behind larger interests and constituencies such as those of History, Society, the Working Class, the Nation, Culture, Science, Reason, or Justice."[475] Pels suggests that those who aspire to the

[472] Stuart Hall, 'Life and Times of the First New Left', *New Left Review* 61 (Jan-Feb 2010), p.181.
[473] Alfred Schuetz, 'The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology', *American Journal of Sociology* 49:6 (May 1944).
[474] Dick Pels, *The Intellectual as Stranger: Studies in Spokespersonship* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.ix.
[475] *Ibid*, p.x.

identity of the 'outsider within' can manage to achieve a degree of "double distanciation from established *and* outsiders in a particular historical locale." While he is critical of the extent to which this intellectual identity really does offer a privileged perspective on society, the status of the 'outsider within' nevertheless offers a powerful means of self-legitimation for intellectuals without a mass social constituency.[476]

These themes can be found throughout written autobiographies and my own interviews with many of the intellectuals who became prominent in the 1970s. These self-descriptions were also encouraged, reinforced, or sometimes imposed by similar descriptions by others, indicating a growing place for the figure of the 'outsider within' in the social imagination of the radical left. This identification could be shaped by a range of factors, from migration and nationality to sexuality and religion, but the linkage of political radicalism with social estrangement allowed for the vague status of 'outsider within' to become a shared identity of Scotland's radical intellectuals, bonding them together and facilitating the elaboration of a collective national project.

One form which this alienated identity took was that of the cosmopolitan intellectual themselves. Tom Nairn is, again, exemplary in this case. Reflecting on Nairn's 'Three Dreams' essay in 2015, Ray Burnett suggested that "at that time its author was a strange, distant figure on the metropolitan and chic European left… It never occurred to anyone that he actually might be Scottish."[477] This identity was embraced by Nairn both in public and in private letters to Hamish Henderson. It also reflected his

[476] *Ibid*, p.xii.
[477] Ray Burnett, '*Viva la Gillie more*: Hamish Henderson, Gramsci and Subaltern Scotland' in Eberhard Bort (ed.), *Anent Hamish Henderson: Essays, Poems, Interviews* (Edinburgh: Grace Note Publications, 2015), pp.222-223.

genuinely cosmopolitan biography. Nairn was born in Freuchie, Fife, in 1932, and began the first phase of a prodigious higher education career at Edinburgh College of Art.[478] After transferring to the University of Edinburgh to focus on philosophy and aesthetics, he graduated in 1956 and continued his studies at Oxford. In the late 1950s he won a British Council Scholarship to the Scuola Normale in Pisa, where he encountered and became closely involved with the heterodox, anti-Stalinist Marxism of the Italian Communist Party (PCI).[479] In the early 1960s he was a researcher at Dijon University, before a fellowship at Birmingham University brought him back to England. In England, he continued the work he had been doing for PCI publications, and began contributing the *New Left Review*. In the *NLR*, while moving between London and Birmingham, he began developing his own Gramscian analysis of the British state and civil society – first outlined in the PCI journal *Il Contemporaneo* in 1963[480] – into part of the influential 'Nairn-Anderson thesis' on British history.[481] After his encounter with Gramscian Marxism in Italy, his second formative intellectual experience came while lecturing at Hornsey College of Art in 1968, when he was sacked for his participation in a lengthy sit-in which demanded a radical transformation of arts education.[482] Nairn's excitement at the outbreak of unrest across the world's universities in 1968 is documented in a book he wrote with Angelo Quattrocchi, *The Beginning of the End*, while in occupation at Hornsey.[483] At the start of the 1970s Nairn

[478] Willie Thompson, 'Tom Nairn and the Crisis of the British State', *Contemporary Record* 6 (1992), p.324.
[479] *Ibid.*
[480] Tom Nairn, 'La nemesi borghese', *Il Contemporaneo* 6:63/64 (1963), cited in Neil Davidson, 'Gramsci's Reception in Scotland', *Scottish Labour History* 45 (2010), pp.37-58.
[481] For a sample of the articles that best express this thesis, see Tom Nairn, 'The British Political Elite', *New Left Review* 1:23 (January-February 1964) pp.19-25, Perry Anderson, 'Origins of the Present Crisis', *New Left Review* (January-February 1964), pp.26-53; Tom Nairn, 'The English Working Class', *New Left Review* 1:24 (March-April 1964), pp.43-57; Tom Nairn, 'The Nature of the Labour Party (Part I)', *New Left Review* 1:27 (September-October 1964), pp.38-65; Tom Nairn, 'The Nature of the Labour Party (Part II)', *New Left Review* 1:28 (November-December 1964), pp.33-62; Perry Anderson, 'Components of the National Culture', *New Left Review* 1:50 (July-August 1968), pp.3-57.
[482] Thompson, 'Tom Nairn', p.312.
[483] Angelo Quattrocchi, Tom Nairn, *The Beginning of the End* (London: Panther Books, 1968).

found new employment with the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam, a European outgrowth of the Washington-based Institute of Policy Studies, where he researched European integration and the politics of NATO, and flitted between London and Amsterdam for much of the first half of the decade.[484]

It was at this point – between his time at Hornsey and a more permanent return to Edinburgh in 1975 – that Nairn began engaging closely with Scottish nationalism. It was not until 1967, with 'Festival of the Dead', that he began writing – at least for public consumption – about Scotland. This intellectual absence was not, however, due to an earlier lack of interest. In his correspondence with Hamish Henderson throughout the early 1960s, Nairn demonstrated an enduring concern for Scottish cultural life. He enquired about new books on Scotland,[485] the fate of the popular 'Howff' folk pub,[486] and planned as early as 1961 – while briefly studying in Dijon – to produce a thesis on the development of historical materialism within the Scottish philosophical tradition, as a contribution to a distinctively Scottish vision of Marxism.[487] These aspirations were frustrated by his difficulty finding employment in Scotland, despite persistent attempts. He expressed pessimism about being appointed to Edinburgh's department of moral philosophy due to unspecified but substantial differences with Professor W.H.F. Barnes, a leading figure in the department.[488] His contemporaneous efforts to find employment in or near Edinburgh via the National Council of Labour Colleges were also fruitless.[489]

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[484] Tom Nairn (ed.), *Atlantic Europe?: The Radical View* (Amsterdam: The Transnational Institute, 1976), p.2.
[485] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson, 22nd April 1961. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[486] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson regarding Pete Seeger's planned visit to Scotland, probably from 1961. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[487] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson, 18th January 1961. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[488] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson, 22nd April 1961. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19. Winston Herbert Fraser Barnes was Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, 1959-1963
[489] *Ibid*

Nairn was not only in a kind of exile from Scotland, but felt – and seemed to enjoy feeling – equally estranged from the London intelligentsia. In another letter to Henderson in 1971, Nairn suspected that he might soon be cast out of what he saw as a public-schooled and overwhelmingly English intellectual scene. He fantasised about an intellectual exile in continental Europe in terms that drew explicit comparison between himself and Jewish intellectuals, stressing that his pursuit of this status was self-conscious and deliberate.[490]

This self-conscious embrace of a cosmopolitan identity (framed in remarkably ethnic terms) is evident throughout Nairn's work during this period, particularly his argument in 1973 that

> Europe's new "Jews" are far more likely to be such delinquents from the outer edge: cultural nomads from the barrens, so to speak, rather than products of the old nation-state moulds in Oxford, the Paris *grandes écoles*, or the *Scuola Normale*. Is it absurd to foresee some real future for our countrymen in this new, still embryonic, international scene? A future perhaps more really consonant with our nature and possibilities than the wilful nostalgia of our would-be nationalists?[491]

Nairn's narrative of both classed and territorialised estrangement is similar to that of Neal Ascherson. Ascherson was also born in 1932, in Edinburgh, and his father's

[490] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson, 22nd January 1971. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[491] Nairn, 'Culture and Nationalism' (1973), p.9.

employment as a naval officer caused his family to move around regularly during his childhood. He won a scholarship to Eton, and in an interview he recalled that

> it was a strange experience because if you were in what they call a college, one of these seventy poor scholars, you were rather segregated from the great mass of Eton boys who- we lived in the old historic buildings and we had to wear special gowns and all this sort of thing, and- so there was a considerable animosity between us. I mean, we thought that they were privileged louts, a lot of prejudice. We thought they were privileged, idiotic louts, you know, and they thought we were unwashed swots who were too brainy and probably suspected of being Jewish, you know, and left-wing, so [laughing] we didn't care for each other very much.[492]

In the years after graduating from Eton, Ascherson developed a left-wing internationalist disposition through a series of transnational experiences and acquaintances. He spent his national service fighting Communist guerrillas in the Malayan "Emergency," where "after a month or two doing that I realised that on the whole my sympathies- I wasn't at all sure about the rightness of what we were doing."[493] He returned from Malaya to study history at Cambridge University, briefly volunteering on the Yugoslavian "youth railway" helping to rebuild war-damaged Yugoslav infrastructure.[494] While at Cambridge he made several friends who were active in the Ugandan nationalist movement, and after graduating he followed them to

[492] Interview with Neal Ascherson, 24th January 2019.
[493] *Ibid.*
[494] *Ibid.*

Uganda where he worked as a "propaganda secretary" for the Uganda National Congress.[495] After returning to England to report on the north-west as well as Scotland for the *Guardian*, Ascherson began a career as a foreign correspondent that took him to Poland, Paris, Germany and Chile, returning to live in Scotland in 1975 to write for the *Scotsman*.[496] Reflecting upon his return to Scotland in the new, Edinburgh-based *Q* magazine in 1975, Ascherson wrote that

> the returnee encounters the curious, faintly hostile glances of fans who see a man elbowing his way towards the stadium as they are pouring out after the last whistle,' and described 'the suspicion that he may be a mere tartan carpet-bagger, or a sharp metropolitan nose which has detected the scent of gravy in the expanding candidate-list of the S.N.P.[497]

Arriving back in Edinburgh in the same year, Nairn and Ascherson lived together at a flat on West Preston Street, establishing the 'Scottish International Institute' in 1976 "with the aim of farthering research, publication, and other activities relating to the culture and politics of self-government."[498] The return of intellectuals with international experience to Scotland was itself a low-level media spectacle, with one report explaining that

[495] *Ibid.*
[496] Nicholas Wroe, 'Romantic Nationalist', *The Guardian* (12th April 2003, accessed online December 2018), https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/apr/12/history.politics.
[497] Neal Ascherson, 'Return Journey', Q 1 (October 1975), p.4.
[498] *Bulletin of Scottish Politics* 1:1 (Autumn 1980), back page.

> Scottish oil has not only brought the banks and finance houses flocking up Princes Street, it has also tempted back to Edinburgh a few of those thinkers and academics who have enriched London life since James VI and I came south with a train of magicians, scholars and theologians. Nationalism is a heady air, and the return of the natives has sparked the beginnings of what some people have called a cultural renaissance.[499]

Tom Nairn, the report continued, "has a Continental look; he lives the life of a "free-floating" scholarly intellectual more common, perhaps, in Europe." In easy concordance with the new, 'outsider' intelligentsia's self-image, the report suggested that "non-academic intellectuals are strange birds of the Scottish landscape and Mr Nairn's years of absence from his native country […] have made him a terse observer of the scene."[500]

Alongside this media-friendly form of outsider status were other, more home-grown experiences of marginality. Amongst the key figures around *Scottish International* were two migrants from England, Trevor Royle and Christopher Smout, and Englishness came to play a public role in the engagements of both with Scottish identity. Royle was born in India in 1945, spending much of his childhood in Malaya before returning to the UK, during which time his family moved frequently around England and Wales until the break-up of his parents' marriage. By the middle of the 1950s, he had moved with his mother and younger brother to St. Andrews, where he "had to understand very quickly that English people were not liked at all by many

[499] David Walker, 'Intellectual native returns to plug nationalist gap', *Times Higher Education Supplement* (28th October 1977), p.10.
[500] *Ibid.*

Scots."[501] In an essay on his childhood in 1977, Royle similarly recalled being beaten up by another child because he "was English, lad-di-dah, useless, toffee-nosed, had spoken out of turn."[502] Yet this feeling of ostracization is framed as part of journey of discovering his own Scottish identity: "If the beginnings of my self-knowledge had their roots in my opening my mouth once too often then final acceptance was reached by learning a new tongue."[503] His difficulties "in saying "loch"" are described as the beginning of a wider discovery of the cultural language of Scottishness that could only properly begin upon leaving St. Andrews to study English literature at Aberdeen. Here, he recalled, "I quickly became more Scottish than the Scots. I immersed myself in Scottish literature and Scottish history, and by choice of career I committed myself to Scotland."[504]

This choice of career was initially in publishing, working on the production of *Blackwood's Magazine*, before he was employed by the Scottish Arts Council in 1971 to oversee and implement the Council's literature policy, firstly as Literature and Drama Assistant from 1971-72 and then as Assistant Director (Literature) following an internal administrative reorganisation. In this role he became a vital go-between for the SAC and *Scottish International*, forming close ties with Tait while attempting to defend the magazine to the rest of the SAC amidst several controversies over its content and direction.[505] Royle's own vision of Scottish identity was more in tune with *Scottish International*'s than that of nativist writers like MacDiarmid and Tom Scott,

[501] Interview with Trevor Royle, 13th March 2019.
[502] Trevor Royle, 'The Children in the Apple Tree', in Trevor Royle (ed.), *Jock Tamson's Bairns: Essays on a Scots Childhood* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), p.127.
[503] *Ibid.*
[504] Interview with Trevor Royle.
[505] *Ibid.*

who criticised both the magazine and SAC. In his 1977 essay on his childhood, he concluded:

> From my present vantage point, I can see that, in a sense, you can choose your own nationality. It is not a matter of blood, despite the grim nationalism of many Scots of my generation who keep alive a selfish feeling for the country for its emotional impact alone. It is too easy to summon up the half-true, half-phoney romantic spirit of long lost battles, or football matches, the two blending together so easily, against the Auld Enemy. By learning about the real past and the political conditions of their own country it may be that Scots at school today will have a greater compassion for the dispossessions and political imbalances in other further flung parts of the world. Scotland can become another country and, like the past, a different one from the place I knew as a child.[506]

Royle's conscious articulation of his own identity as an outsider within, gradually "choosing" his Scottishness through the study of literature and history, was a clear expression and personalisation of *Scottish International*'s institutional identity, and the group identity of the intelligentsia which developed around it. In 1971, Tait had written in *Scottish International* that "we pay attention to the study of the Scottish environment, its social history, its racial, class and religious divisions, its intellectual achievements and its art […] all these things are Scottish when they are found to function in Scotland [...] much of contemporary Scottish art is Scottish simply because it is found here.''[507]

[506] Royle, 'Children', p.135.
[507] Robert Tait, 'Scottish International: Culture in a Scottish mirror in 10 issues a year', *Scottish International* 14 (May 1971), p.2.

Royle, too, "found" himself in Scotland, and nationalised himself through the kind of critical, literary engagement with Scottish distinctiveness that was *Scottish International*'s mission.

It was not only in schools that English migrants faced 'native' hostility. In August and September 1972, *Scottish International* carried a two-part essay from Stephen Maxwell titled 'Treason of the Clerks', in which he argued "against the presence of any substantial numbers" of both "English students" and "English-educated lecturers" at Scottish universities. Maxwell listed several reasons for the reduction of English students: Scots started university younger, had a less specialised school curriculum, and suffered from "cultural and social factors to make them less articulate and confident."[508] The presence of too many English students would thus "discourage rather than encourage Scottish students to overcome their inhibitions," and lead to their growing dominance of university classrooms. These problems, he argued, were "reinforced by the presence of English-educated university lecturers" who were not properly adjusted to Scottish students or interested in Scottish society. The size of the English university population risked endangering public support for Scottish universities, and an overreliance on English admissions threatened to break the "dialogue" between Scottish universities and schools.[509] As a solution, he proposed restricting the intake of English students to ten per cent at St. Andrews, Edinburgh and Dundee.[510]

[508] Stephen Maxwell, 'Treason of the Clerks', *Scottish International* 5:6 (August 1972), p.19.
[509] *Ibid*, p.20.
[510] Stephen Maxwell, 'Treason of the Clerks II', *Scottish International* 5:7 (September 1972), p.17.

Maxwell's essay prompted a firm response from Birmingham-born T.C. Smout, a member of the *Scottish International* board and a professor in Edinburgh University's Department of Economic History. Smout's letter, titled 'Letter from a Treasonable Englishman,' described Maxwell's proposals as "a racist quota policy in the recruitment of staff," emphasising the range of nationalities – including himself – engaged in the study of Scottish history and culture at Edinburgh.[511] He lamented "the white settler mentality of many of my fellow-countrymen, who show an insensitivity to the society in which they live only equalled by that of most of their Scottish colleagues."[512] Yet he suggested that "when I look around at the departments concerned I cannot honestly say that Scottish members of staff are better equipped or more inclined to study Scotland than anyone else."[513] He argued that "what we need is a higher proportion of brilliant scholars […] who are sensitive to the characteristics of the society they live in and who care deeply for its requirements."[514] His conclusion, warning against nativism, was in tune with *Scottish International*'s support for a Scottish intellectual identity that was interested in itself, but not exclusionary:

> Do we want, in Scotland, to create the best, the most sensitive, the most just society – or just the most nationalist? To presume that it is the second it is bound to become also the first is to follow General Amin and Dr Vorster down their well-blazed trail.[515]

[511] T.C. Smout, 'Letter from a Treasonable Englishman', *Scottish International* 5:8 (October 1972), p.8.
[512] *Ibid.*
[513] *Ibid.*
[514] *Ibid.*
[515] *Ibid.*

Smout, like Royle, represented a key element of what made *Scottish International* a novel element of Scottish cultural life: a firm belief that a degree of identification with – or at least concern for – Scotland was vital, but that any kind of national essential*ism* had to be avoided. This voluntaristic framing of national identity was thus self-consciously open to outsiders, but placed a particular emphasis upon the value of the outsider *within*, blending their own cosmopolitan experience with native familiarity.

Another source of this new misfit identification with Scotland was religion. The prominence in *Scottish International* of intellectuals from Catholic backgrounds – as well as its offices in the University's Catholic Chaplaincy – drew suspicion from elements of the nativist intelligentsia. In interviews both Royle and Ray Burnett recalled a sense that anti-Catholic attitudes underpinned some of the hostility to the magazine. Royle suggested that

> some of the correspondence I had to field from outraged members of the public was to do with a perceived Catholic bias of Scottish International. Now there was no Catholic bias, perceived or otherwise, there just simply wasn't one. That two of the leading personalities [Bob Tait and Anthony Ross] involved with Scottish International were Catholics is neither here nor there.[516]

Burnett remembered becoming aware of this phenomenon

[516] Interview with Trevor Royle.

> one early evening in the summer leaving Sandy Bell's and headin down Middle Meadow Walk with Stuart MacGregor who was a medic, songwriter, novelist, an important figure on the cultural left at the time.[517] Stuart must have assumed from my name Burnett, and that primarily that I was not a Catholic, because as we walked down Middle Meadow Walk and I'd mentioned about nippin in to see Bob at *Scottish International*, there was a lot of tension with *Scottish International* when it first came out with some members of the Scottish poets and so on, Tom Scott I think and Duncan Glen, people like- not all of them but quite a few of them were not happy with it at all. Chris Grieve wasn't happy with it. And Stuart made reference to that quote-unquote "that fucking Dominican den in George Square" [laughing] to which I said "I presume you're talking about Father Anthony" and he looked at me and thought oh-oh, have I made a mistake here [laughing].

Burnett, who grew up in a working class Catholic community in Edinburgh's Cowgate, recalled his own early experiences of Catholicism in terms that blend a positive cosmopolitan identity with a more complex relationship to Scotland.

[517] Stuart MacGregor (1935-1973) was a shopkeeper's son from Edinburgh, who spent his youth at George Heriot's School – a minute's walk away from Sandy Bell's – before beginning his medical career across the road at the University of Edinburgh. After serving his National Service in Europe between 1959 and 1963, he continued practicing medicine, and specialised in the epidemiology of alcoholism. After securing a visiting lecturer's role at the University of the West Indies he was killed in a car crash in Jamaica in 1973. He was a respected poet and his two published novels, *The Myrtle and Ivy* (1967) and *The Sinner* (1973, posthumously) are rich, occasionally scandalous accounts of Edinburgh life that often mirrored his own life and social circle. He was close to Hamish Henderson, with whom he founded the Edinburgh University Folksong Society in 1958, and a participant in the 'Heretics' literary and performance group. John Herdman, another 'Heretic', offers a vivid characterisation of him as an "incurable romantic" who "emanated currents of nervous energy" in *Another Country* (pp.36-37). See Ian Olson, 'Stuart MacGregor', Scottish Poetry Library (2013, accessed online April 2021), https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poet/stuart-macgregor/.

> you grew up as a Catholic very aware, through the Latin Mass, through what you knew of the church, that it was small-c catholic, and you were very linked into Europe, you were aware of all of that, and you knew that when you went away you could go to mass anywhere in Germ- which I did – anywhere in Germany and Italy, and it was the same mass, cos it was all Latin then you know?[518]

Burnett's framing of religion, however, exhibited the same kind of flexible, voluntaristic approach to identification – filtered through nationhood and locality – as Royle and Smout did with Scottishness.

> But at the same time, because you were in Edinburgh, Catholic population was what one in ten, not like Glasgow, Glasgow's very big Catholic Irish population, Edinburgh was different. So in Edinburgh, and Edinburgh is the capital of Presbyterianism, so all the great qualities of this Presbyterian tradition of democracy and all the rest of it, anti-prelacy, no bishops, none of this, you grew up conscious of that and aware of that, and you could quite happily register- log in to it. See that's me as well [laughing]. I suppose what I'm trying to say is you got the best of both worlds, at least it seemed to me you did.[519]

Religion also provided Burnett with a link to Ireland, where he would become closely involved with the Catholic civil rights struggle and Irish republican socialism, travelling

[518] Interview with Ray Burnett, 4th February 2019.
[519] *Ibid.*

to the North in the late 1960s and 1970s to participate in demonstrations, including what became the 'Battle of the Bogside' in Derry in 1969. This link also instilled a strong dislike of the British state, and a negative association between the state and national identity.

> as the troubles began to inch their way forward with Paisley, really from about '64 onwards, at the back of the church when you went to Mass, and all the churches, all the papers were out for you to buy the papers, the Scottish Catholic Observer, the Universe, the Scottish edition of the Irish Weekly, or was it the Irish Weekly or the Irish Examiner? One or the other. So you were readin' up. You were gettin' the news from the Six Counties, about how bad things were getting, you know and those early killings which were Paisleyite killings, mind the Catholic barmen that were shot dead. And you knew it was getting bad over there. And I remember reading a book by a man, was it O'Halloran?, Ireland's Indivisible Island[520], and it charted from the beginning of partition, and just how, as Michael Farrell did later with the Orange State[521], just how – what a rotten bloody wretched place it was, built by the Brits, not built to overcome sectarianism but to use sectarianism to keep a hold on a partition province of the island of Ireland. And obviously with yer Catholic background you were, you felt orientated towards it.[522]

[520] Frank Gallagher, *The Indivisible Island: The History of the Partition of Ireland* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957).
[521] Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto, 1990).
[522] Interview with Ray Burnett.

These sympathies prompted a particularly critical emphasis on the role of Scots in the Troubles. Burnett recalled one experience before the Battle of the Bogside:

> as I went through Butcher's Gate there were a couple o' Nuns, goin down in, I've no idea what they, but they were in the religious habit. And RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] guys were up on the wall. Cops. And they threw pennies down. "Away buy a pill for yourself, ya fenian hoor ye!" This was at the sisters walkin through the gate. This was the police. This was the crown, you know? If there is disorder, report it to the crown, you know? And you could hear the bands givin it laldy, drummin up, getting ready for the, the orange bands. And the most noisiest, most bullish, proud bands of the lot were all from Scotland. They were all Scottish bands, you know with Scottish names, and – Lanarkshire and all this. And I felt like greetin. As a Scot, it was so depressin, I mean it really really was depressin, you know?[523]

Other accounts of Catholicism shared this articulation of religion as just part of a more general experience of personal dislocation, fluidity and adaptation. Bob Tait, in an essay on his childhood in 1977, articulated his own identity as one of endemic rootlessness, part of 'a story about arrivals and departures, [and] people who only half fit in anywhere and who leave only half knowing each other.'[524] Afflicted by a series of illnesses and mishaps in his early youth, bad at football – 'a terrible social disability' –

[523] *Ibid.*
[524] Bob Tait, 'Take me to the Station', in Trevor Royle (ed.), *Jock Tamson's Bairns: Essays on a Scots Childhood* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), p.56.

and interested in music, writing and art, he 'didn't typically fit into the life other kids led in the neighbourhood.'[525] He dismissed the impulse to remain 'part of the community' as one which 'meant living a life entirely innocent of any intellectual curiosity or excitement,' and describes his desire to leave Kilmarnock as a reaction

> to one of the fifty-seven varieties of drab, de-sexualising, defensive and yet complacent-looking cans of respectable good living which you can lift off the shelves of middle-class city suburbs and work-class conurbations alike.[526]

Tait was also raised and schooled as a Catholic, and on his daily commute to Glasgow University he remembers encountering unfamiliar faces his own age, from his own town:

> Looking around the compartment, I see what happened. A majority of us had been at Kilmarnock Academy all those years: the rest of us were Catholics. It had hardly struck us: that the difference meant there were so many of about the same age and similar kinds of interests in a small town whom you didn't get to know at all until eventually you met on the road out of it.[527]

[525] *Ibid*, p.60.
[526] *Ibid*, p.59.
[527] *Ibid*, p.56.

Tait's narrative complicates Lindsay Paterson's suggestion that the social mobility enabled by university education helped to 'nationalise' Scottish students.[528] For Tait, university took him out of locally-sustained 'community' and faith-based identities and exposed him to a set of influences that he interpreted as more strictly cosmopolitan than national. Tait writes that

> when we got to Glasgow, we'd usually go our very different ways and only meet back on the train at night. There were so many people, new possibilities in life… We had no idea what kind of distances there were in the world we were moving into so quickly. The word deracination wasn't one of our words.[529]

For Burnett and Tait, identification with a religious minority was part of personal narratives of opening-up and interconnection, in which their status as outsiders within the nation provided them with specific insights into its character. Crucially, the ease with which they identified with the Scottish nation did not imply affirmation. It was through close-quarters *critique* of the national culture, shaped by the lived experience of marginalisation within it, that their identification with it acquired a degree of analytic depth, and a hostility to flattering national myths.

Sexuality was another way in which the new intelligentsia articulated its misfit status in Scottish society. Hamish Henderson, whom Corey Gibson suggests was "widely known to have been bisexual," found himself at the centre of a cultural divide between

[528] Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p.170.
[529] Tait, 'Take me to the Station', p.58.

cosmopolitan and native intellectuals in 1959 during the *Honour'd Shade* controversy.[530] *Honour'd Shade* was the title of a collection of contemporary Scottish verse edited by Norman MacCaig, which – one *Scotsman* review noted – excluded several poets, including Henderson, who were not part of the coterie who frequented pubs on Rose Street.[531] In the ensuing controversy, Henderson's rumoured homosexuality or bisexuality was subjected to "public mockery" by MacCaig.[532] Greg Thomas argues that this helped to forge a particular bond "in adversity" between Henderson and Edwin Morgan, who later "described his own suspicions of MacCaig's homophobia as one factor in determining his decision not to come out [as gay] until his old age."[533] Henderson became an outspoken supporter of gay rights in the 1970s, when homosexuality was still illegal in Scotland.[534] In a speech to the International Gay Rights Congress in Edinburgh in 1974, Henderson declared that

> sexual revolution – as Norman Mailer has said – 'is the most meaningful and natural revolution of our time', and must be kept going […] Bisexuality is much more common than some gay activists and a great deal of 'straight' society seems to think. Anyone who has been in an army overseas, for years – as I have – can testify to that…[535]

[530] Gibson, *Voice*, p.7.
[531] *ibid*, p.12.
[532] Greg Thomas, ''Turning Their Fey Shoulders to the Wheel': Edwin Morgan's Letters to Hamish Henderson', in Steve Byrne (ed.), *The Hamish Henderson Papers: A Commemorative Collection of Essays* (Edinburgh: Hamish Henderson Archive Trust, 2013), p.12.
[533] *Ibid*, p.13.
[534] Timothy Neat, *Hamish Henderson: A Biography. Volume 2: Poetry Becomes People (1952-2002)* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), pp.240-243.
[535] Hamish Henderson, quoted in Timothy Neat, *Henderson*, p.242.

Morgan and Henderson were both involved with *Scottish International*, which shared offices in the Catholic Chaplaincy with the Scottish Minorities Group, a gay rights organisation established in 1969.[536] Ian Dunn, a central figure in the SMG, published several articles in the magazine and was profiled in an early issue.[537] This profile emphasised the particular social power and utility of Dunn's marginalised status. Dunn's emphasis on 'the homosexual's struggle for freedom,' it argued,

> reflects his view of the special contribution that a "homosexual viewpoint" can make to spreading a more sensitive and active awareness of how the alliance of complacency, apathy and subtle authoritarianism diminishes people's personality and potentials.[538]

Dunn's own articles for *Scottish International* participated in the magazine's general mission of unsparing documentation, arguing that "until quite recently the homosexual had no means of expressing his own needs for social equality in Scotland."[539] One article provided "an account of some kinds of homosexual life in Scotland," explaining in detail the diversity of sexual and social practices of gay men from a range of backgrounds, in a context of both legal and social repression.[540] In this way, the ostensibly banal and politically neutral practice of 'mapping' Scottish society took on an unambiguously transgressive and liberatory edge. By centring the marginalised

[536] Jeffrey Meek, *Queer Voices in Post-war Scotland: Male Homosexuality, Religion and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.110.
[537] Ian Dunn, 'Gay Liberation in Scotland', Scottish International 5:3 (March 1972), pp.20-22.
[538] Ian Dunn, '"Homosexuals are the enemies of all authoritarian regimes"', Scottish International 5:3 (March 1972), p.22.
[539] Dunn, 'Gay Liberation', p.20; the most comprehensive account of the politics and governance of sexuality in Scotland is Roger Davidson, Gayle Davis, *The Sexual State: Sexuality and Scottish Governance, 1950-1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).
[540] 'Gay and Hard Times', Scottish International 5:4 (April 1972), pp.9-10.

and alienated, the faithful, inclusive 'documentation' of Scottish society could double up as emancipation.

The milieu around *Scottish International* was thus fundamentally shaped by people who, whether by choice or not, could plausibly claim some kind of misfit status in Scottish society. This experience of alienation was, however, rarely perceived or expressed as a wholly negative personal experience; instead, these distanced identities were often framed as opportunities for an intermingled process of self- and national discovery, providing their bearers with distinctive, potentially radicalising insights into Scottish culture and society. These fed into *Scottish International*'s cosmopolitan identity, providing a more complex and diverse social grounding for its project of critical documentation.

## "The Missing Constituency": Articulating Scottish radicalism

*Scottish International*'s 1973 conference on 'What Kind of Scotland?' offered an opportunity to draw these tributaries together into a coherent social imaginary. Tait's overview of a new, "missing constituency," ready to emerge as "a radical leavening" in Scottish politics is worth quoting in full:

> "deracinated working-class" people, educated, professional or dropped out, possibly Labour-voting but aware of alternative leftward positions in the world; disillusioned middle-class people, who might include liberals of various degrees – white men, so to say, angry at what is being done to blacks, the environment, the poor, the young, the old and the sick; nationalists who recognise the enemy in the international corporation,

> the dollar, and military-industrial alliances and their servants, rather than in one race or nation (England, of course); students who know the difference between Marx and Marcuse, Hitler and Amin – and their teachers who would like to see at least some of what they teach have practical consequences for *Scottish* society.[541]

This was the clearest definition yet of what *Scottish International*'s ideal "constituency" looked like: a Scottish new left, united by collective alienation, crossing classes, ages and party allegiances. The "problems" which it was expected could draw such a movement together were given a distinctive Scottish twist: "the problems of the cities,' 'the question of the despoliation of the Highlands," and the "despoliation of the new wealth from North-Sea oil and gas."[542] This marked a significant departure from older understandings of what Scottish radicalism might entail. Edwin Morgan's 'Beatnik in the Kailyard' was at last being encouraged to speak out, and Scotland's own myriad 'weirdies' were being portrayed not just as part of Scottish life, but the most likely source of national revival.

'What Kind of Scotland?' represented a clear shift in *Scottish International*'s approach to wider society, incorporating its 'mapping' efforts into a more directly political project of *articulation*. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, also drawing on Gramsci, use the concept of "articulation" to mean the linkage of "diverse subject positions" into a collective "hegemonic" or "counterhegemonic formation."[543] This, they argue, is

[541] Robert Tait, 'What Kind of Scotland?', *Scottish International* 33 (February 1973), p.10.
[542] *ibid*, p.11.
[543] Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001), p.65.

distinct from a traditional Marxist emphasis on class as the "ontologically privileged agent," and thus forms a valuable way of expressing the shift within the Scottish radical left from class politics towards a more pluralistic emphasis on what Laclau and Mouffe call "radical democracy."[544] "Radical democracy," for Laclau and Mouffe, forms the discursive umbrella under which multiple diverse identities and demands can be articulated together, for it is both empty enough of determinate *social* content and sufficiently *politically* specific to support a broad political movement. Laclau and Mouffe's own argument emerged, notes Ellen Meiksins Wood, as a "theorization" of the "Eurocommunist" political strategy pursued by several west European Communist Parties from the late 1960s onwards.[545] This strategy sought to broaden the social base of Communism beyond the working class, including new social movements as well as new 'middle class' social strata, and proposed working through and expanding existing representative democratic institutions rather than seeking to overthrow them.[546]

Understanding the political strategy of Scotland's radical intelligentsia on these terms does not mean that it was consciously influenced by either Eurocommunism or the work of Laclau and Mouffe, especially not at this relatively early point in the development of both. There are, however, clear commonalities of influence, especially that of Antonio Gramsci as well as a particular emphasis on culture and discourse. The emphasis here is on the strategy of *articulation*, which carries a productive double meaning of both 'speech' and 'linkage', and which stresses the inherently political nature of both: in reimagining and describing Scottish society in a certain way, the

[544] Laclau & Mouffe, *Hegemony*, p.xvii.
[545] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Retreat from Class: The New 'True' Socialism* (London: Verso, 1986), p.13.
[546] *Ibid*, pp.19-22.

radical intellectual tradition described here also made certain connections possible between different demands and identities that had not previously existed.

However, we can only fully understand the politics of this rearticulation by attending to Wood's critique of Laclau and Mouffe, in which she stresses the centrality of intellectuals to their own social imagination. "It is not just the working class that is rendered impotent as a political force by Laclau and Mouffe," she writes; by making discourse – and thus politics – independent of any particular social conditions, "there are no historical conditions and no social interests conducive to the development of socialism." She argues that "in the final analysis, everything depends on the success of intellectuals in conducting 'a complex set of discursive-hegemonic operations'." The "ultimate subject" of Laclau and Mouffe's theory is therefore themselves as intellectuals.[547]

The fundamental *narcissism* of this social imagination is crucial to our understanding of the Scottish radical left during the 1970s. In its reimagination of Scottish society, and its rearticulation of Scottish radical subjectivities, the new intelligentsia espoused a vision of social change which depended above all on the agency of intellectuals. This occurred above all in an emphasis on the political and social necessity of 'documenting' Scottish radicalism into existence. In an early mission-statement for *Scottish International*, Anthony Ross wrote that

> if there to be a hopeful future we must first establish our identity […] we must recognise the evils of the past, abandon the romantic myths and

[547] *Ibid,* p.74.

> legends which cover them up and which perpetuate divisions. We must give priority to the creation of a true unity and purpose among the people who live in this country.[548]

"Those on whom the future of Scotland depends most of all," he continued, are "the writers who can present and interpret her image to herself."[549] This explicit commitment to the emerging intellectual role of "interpreter" (rather than "legislator") is telling, hinting at a scepticism about popular attitudes – as twisted by "myths and legends" – which was not dissimilar to *Scottish International*'s rivals in the 1320 Club. The difference was *Scottish International*'s belief that these myths and legends, far from being necessarily constitutive of national identity, could be swept away by critique and replaced with a sober consciousness of Scotland's reality. Ross identified the collective articulation – and facilitation – of Scotland's diverse identities as the fundamental "social responsibility" of intellectuals, who "can introduce most effectively to one another the various human groups who make up Scotland, contributing to the growth of a keener sensitivity and a more general recognition of the diversity of the Scottish scene."[550] Bob Tait endorsed Ross' argument that "writers must […] play a vanguard role" in overcoming Scotland's divisions, for "before any more general movement for change in this country can get under way, it must have an adequate basis in more precise knowledge of the terrain."[551]

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[548] Anthony Ross, 'Resurrection', *Scottish International* 14 (May 1971), p.7.
[549] *Ibid.*
[550] *Ibid*, p.8.
[551] Robert Tait, 'Scottish International: Culture in a Scottish mirror in 10 issues a year', *Scottish International* 14 (May 1971), p.2.

The radical left thus found a solution to its crisis of social legitimation in the very alienation from wider society which caused that crisis. The rise of systems of mass representation had broken the direct, local link between radicalism and the working class, relegating 'organic' intellectuals to a purely representative role and rendering vanguardism anachronistic. Yet new opportunities for re-stating Scottish intellectual radicalism were emerging. One vital element of *Scottish International*'s self-confidently critical, cosmopolitan identity was the growing self-assertion of new, historically marginalised subjectivities in Scotland, from homosexuality to Catholicism, combined with other 'outsider' identities – like English immigrants and globe-trotting Scots – who were all able to use print-culture to explore and often assert their right to identify on their own terms with the nation. In doing so, they were also reshaping what that nation meant, stripping out its old, 'native' content and filling it with a more pluralist adaptability. This allowed radical intellectuals to adopt a new, more political role of articulation, using their estrangement from wider society to draw together its multiple strands from the 'outside'. This made the relationship between radicalism and nationhood subtly contingent on the renewed agency of radical intellectuals.

## After *Scottish International*: *Crann-Tàra* and *Q*

Over the course of the decade, this perspective would be refined and made more explicitly political, but it remained the lynchpin of the Scottish radical tradition. It was given particular impetus by the production of *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* at 'What Kind of Scotland?', discussed in the previous chapter. Tait, reflecting on the performance after the event, wrote of its articulating power: 'all the recognitions came together like a series of flashes in the long night. There they all were, the problems, the needs, the people, the treacheries, the latent radicalism, the vision of

possibilities.'[552] The *Cheviot* injected more positive content into the hitherto largely negative social imaginary of the radical intelligentsia, providing the "strong image of Scotland" which Anthony Ross had hoped for in 1971, "to inspire a struggle with the economic and social problems which oppress people here today."[553] This sense of the value of radical Scottish history was echoed in the first issue of *Crann-Tàra*, published at the end of 1977, whose title expressed the familiar goal of articulation:

> The crann-tara of old was the symbol of gathering ([literally] gathering stick), a piece of wood carried round a district by a permanent system of relay runners to alert the people and summon them to the traditional place of assembly in time of danger […] Crann-Tara, then, is the focus of kinship, of gathering together for mutual assistance.[554]

The title itself served the same function as "radical democracy" does for Laclau and Mouffe, simultaneously broad and specific enough to draw together a range of identities – specifically "Nationalism and Socialism" – under an "archaic banner" into which new ideas could be invested.

This "reawakening of common roots" was not as ethnically particularistic as the Gaelic title and emphasis on "roots" implied. The magazine's "language policy" denounced "the ideal of One Culture, One Language, One Nation, One State," aiming instead to be "a bi-lingual magazine with an imbalance in favour of English," producing two pages

[552] Tait, 'What Kind of Conclusions?' (1973), p.15.
[553] Ross, 'Resurrection', p.7.
[554] 'Editorial', *Crann-Tàra* 1 (Winter 1977), p.2.

of Gaelic each issue.[555] Building on the example of *The Cheviot*, *Crann-Tàra* sought to use Scotland's radical history to rearticulate the Scottish radical tradition in a way that synthesised socialism with nationalism. Its first few front covers carried images of figures like Gavin Brown Clark, the president of the late-nineteenth century Highland Land League (issue 1), Thomas Johnston (2), R.B. Cunninghame Graham (3), Keir Hardie (4) and Hugh MacDiarmid (5). It reprinted historic articles from the same figures alongside contemporary political and social commentary from members of both the SNP and the 'breakaway' Scottish Labour Party. Much of its trajectory in the early issues was driven by its editor Norman Easton, a particularly militant left-nationalist who had previously been involved with the short-lived Scottish Workers' Revolutionary Party.[556] Bob Tait, reviewing the first issue for *The Scotsman*, suggested that Easton "has more trust in the immediate appeal of history and extracts more from radical Scottish writings of the past than I have."[557]

If *Crann-Tàra* strayed a little too close to the revival of radical myth-making for Tait's tastes, *Q* magazine (short for 'Question'), established in 1975, was closer to *Scottish International*'s sceptical orientation. But where *Scottish International*'s commitment to myth-busting and sociologically-informed critique often held party politics at arm's length, *Q* tended to be overtly political. Stephen Maxwell, in an article asking 'Can Scotland's Political Myths be Broken?', surveyed the ways in which Scotland's political traditions deployed myth: left-wing unionists fantasised about a "black, Calvinist Scotland," kept in check by enlightened England; other left-wingers maintained "that the Scottish working class has an instinct for radical if not revolutionary socialism

[555] *Ibid.*
[556] Henry Drucker, *Breakaway: The Scottish Labour Party* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1977), p.84.
[557] Bob Tait, 'Radical Outlets', *The Scotsman* (28th January, 1978), p.10.

lacking in its Sassenach counterpart."[558] Nationalists, meanwhile, had a range of myths about "Scottish Democracy", educational egalitarianism and a natural tendency to decentralisation, all of which "condone the facile assumption that independence will automatically release a flood of reforming energy to wash away Scotland's social ills."[559] He countered these myths by noting Scotland's pronounced and "stagnant" class inequalities, its educational weaknesses and the likelihood of centralisation in the aftermath of independence. This was nevertheless balanced out by the unsubstantiated claim that such myths "reflect real, though partial, elements in Scottish society – which in the past probably has been more democratic than English society and which even today has a more democratic ethos."[560] Independence, he concluded, had to "be built on a more substantial base" than the "dream of Scottish Democracy."[561] *Scottish International*'s emphasis on Scotland's social divisions and governing complacencies was thus carried over into a more direct critique of Scottish political culture.

There remained a clear sense, however, that the problems identified by *Scottish International* had not remotely improved. In another issue of *Q*, Maxwell argued that Scottish writers had failed to catch up with Scotland's "political revival" over the previous fifteen years, resulting in a continuing lack of "a sense of community" from this new politics.[562] Maxwell lamented the lack of creative writing on Scotland's distinctive social problems,

[558] Stephen Maxwell, 'Can Scotland's Political Myths be Broken?', *Q* 16 (19th November 1976), p.5.
[559] *Ibid.*
[560] *Ibid.*
[561] *Ibid.*
[562] Stephen Maxwell, 'Politics and Culture', *Q* 25 (1st April 1977), p.4.

> for example the continuing poverty in Glasgow and the West, the distinctive political developments and social problems of the New Towns and of East Coast communities feeling the impact of oil developments, or the vulnerability of Scottish jobs to remote decisions.[563]

The most glaring absence, however, was of "Scottish middle-class experience," an "inarticulacy" which he partially blamed – returning to a previous theme – on the "destruction" of Scottish education by "middle-class immigrants."[564] This failure of Scottish culture, argued Maxwell, provided a "cultural" argument for independence: "the political institutions of independence […] by reinforcing a sense of identity […] can take part of the burden of national assertion from the shoulders of Scottish writers." This, he suggested, would free them up "to breed that critical public, schooled in a sense of irony, whose absence has been one of the major weaknesses of Scottish culture."[565]

Within *Q*, the politicisation of *Scottish International*'s characteristic questions went alongside a greater willingness to entertain more directly political solutions, beyond the cultural 'mapping' favoured by Tait. In an essay for *Q* titled simply 'Intellectuals', Tom Nairn also identified the potential of independent statehood for Scottish intellectual life.[566] Yet where Maxwell saw Scottish culture being damaged by the encroachment of England, Nairn argued the reverse: that Scottish intellectuals had been too successful in the south. Through easy entry to a powerful Anglo-British

[563] *Ibid*, p.5.
[564] *Ibid.*
[565] *Ibid.*
[566] Tom Nairn, 'Intellectuals', *Q* 18 (17th December 1976), p.5.

intelligentsia, Scottish intellectuals had developed a sturdy and self-interested "anti-nationalism" which left them incapable of adjusting to Britain's decline and Scotland's political revival. He suggested that British politics was especially appealing to Scottish intellectuals, because the intelligentsia had an especially prominent and well-rewarded role in maintaining the legitimacy of the British state. An independent Scotland, he argued, would be a "more normal social formation, where the state will very likely loom larger, and the intellectuals be divided more sharply between its servants and its ("alienated") enemies." This alienated *distance* from the state, Nairn argued, offered a "degree of sanity" that was denied to Scottish intellectuals within the union, relieving them from – as Maxwell put it – "the burden of national assertion."[567] For Nairn, "this is the direction in which [intellectuals] will have to move, and ought now to try and move more consciously, with less hysteria and anti-nationalist *Sturm and Drang*."[568] This fatalistic conclusion only reinforced the particular role which Scotland's radical intellectuals were now adopting: abandoning their "legislative" authority to *make* change, they pivoted to a politics of "interpretation," deploying their symbolic power to articulate a future for Scotland that re-legitimised their role within it.

## A "Particular Constellation": Scottish Radicalism and Women's Liberation

One challenge to the legitimacy of the new radical intelligentsia came from a constituency of Scottish society which they had left embarrassingly unmapped: women. Women barely featured at all as either authors or subjects of Scotland's new political and cultural magazines in the early 1970s. The *West Highland Free Press* did, however, carry a regular "West Highland Pressonality" feature, where pictures of

[567] *Ibid.*
[568] *Ibid.*

miniskirted local women – including one "16 year-old schoolgirl" – were profiled under labels like "single" and "Girl 1".[569] Women were largely absent from the radical social imagination that had developed through *Scottish International* and beyond, pursuing instead their own independent institutions and identity through an emerging Scottish women's liberation movement.[570] Sarah Browne identifies a range of women's involvement in left-wing political groups throughout the late 1960s and '70s, but it was not until the emergence of *Radical Scotland* magazine in the 1980s that women began claiming a substantial share of space in publications seeking to articulate a collective Scottish radical identity.[571] For much of the 1970s, there was also no unifying publication for the Scottish women's liberation movement, with communication taking place through smaller local newsletters and British publications like *Spare Rib*.[572] Scottish feminists focused instead on consciousness-raising groups, conferences and the development of mutual-aid institutions like Rape Crisis, Legal and Financial Independence groups and Women's Aid.[573]

The clearest challenge to the gendered lopsidedness of Scotland's intelligentsia came in 1977, with the publication of the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal*. Much of the content in the *SWLJ* was devoted to the same kind of documentation of women's experiences and challenges in Scotland as *Scottish International* had attempted with, for instance, gay men. Its first editorial argued that

[569] 'West Highland Pressonality', *West Highland Free Press* (September 22nd), p.8.
[570] Although there was an 'Open Session' on "Women's Lib" at 'What Kind of Scotland?', featuring Margo Galloway and Marion Blythman. John Schofield, 'What Kind of Scotland?', *Scottish International* 6:5 (May/June/July 1973), p.19.
[571] Sarah Browne, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp.29-40.
[572] *Ibid*, p.164.
[573] *Ibid*, *passim.*

> so far our [movement's] development has been unselfconscious and unanalysed. This lack of analysis is partly due to reluctance to air differences within the movement. It seems to us that the movement needs to become conscious of itself, and that the ideas and theories of women's liberation need to be fully articulated and logically followed through.[574]

This emphasis on the utility of intellectual activity – its ability to provide 'unhastened' examination of the movement – was similar to the function which magazines dominated by men sought to perform for the Scottish intelligentsia at large. Not only had these magazines failed to support the movement in clarifying its own identity; they also offered little help with 'mapping' wider Scottish society on behalf of women. The editorial went on to identify the journal as:

> an instrument by which we can research and analyse the specific situation of women in Scotland. We can discover the particular areas of oppression that exist in conjunction with those that are general under capitalism. We can elucidate the role that a women's movement can play within the particular constellation of Scottish politics.[575]

The social imagination which emerged within the *SWLJ* nevertheless shared an often scathingly critical approach to Scotland with *Scottish International* and its descendants. In an essay for *Q* in May 1977, Stephen Maxwell questioned the grip of

[574] 'Editorial', *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal* 1 (Spring 1977), p.1.
[575] *Ibid*, p.2.

the “black myth” of Scottish Calvinism on elements of the “women’s movement”, arguing that “in fact Scottish attitudes to women have been rather more complex than the unreformed myth of Calvinist Scotland allows.”[576] After a brief survey of the historical treatment of women, Maxwell lamented “the absence of a more assertive movement for women’s rights in Scotland today,” which “remains a mystery.”[577] This drew a furious reply from Esther Breitenbach, a leading contributor to the *SWLJ*, in which she argued that “it is abundantly clear he knows nothing about” the movement.[578] Outlining a bleakly Scottish social imagination, she wrote that

> In failing to perceive how little removed we are from the barbaric and backward times of the tyrannical kirk sessions - hunting out adultery, fornication, gay clothes, dancing, and other human pleasures - he fails to perceive the level of women’s oppression in Scotland. Sexual liberation is central to women’s liberation, and in Scotland we have a heritage that remains a massive obstacle to the achievement of that liberation.[579]

She went on to list the number of studies of Scottish society by the Scottish women’s liberation movement, questioning Maxwell’s suggestion that it had produced little distinctly national analysis. Yet the thrust of Maxwell’s argument was that there had been little in the way of theory and social critique, whereas the publications cited by Breitenbach were overwhelmingly practical. Only the *Scottish Women’s Liberation*

[576] Stephen Maxwell, ‘Women in Scotland’, *Q* 29 (27th May 1977), p.4.
[577] *Ibid*, p.5.
[578] Esther Breitenbach, ‘‘Q’ on Women in Scotland’, *Scottish Women’s Liberation Journal* 2 (Winter 1977), p.27.
[579] *Ibid*, p.28.

*Journal* was beginning to articulate a distinctly feminist critique of Scottish society in general.

This critical project provoked divisions, however, within the movement. In 1978, the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal*'s editorial collective split amid tensions over the movement's orientation to distinct tendencies within the movement. The "socialist feminist" wing, who sought a close articulation of women's liberation with class politics and wider Scottish political struggles, broke away to form *MsPrint*; the "radical feminist" wing, who were focused more directly on sex as the fundamental social divide, abandoned the *SWLJ*, producing only a single-issue retrospective on the split.[580] The activists behind *MsPrint* were considerably more comfortable working alongside male activists and intellectuals than the radical feminist wing it had split from, with the result that its specifically socialist brand of feminism, closely engaged with mainstream political questions including nationalism and devolution, became increasingly prominent within *Radical Scotland*, the foremost magazine of the Scottish radical tradition during the 1980s.[581] Despite the wider intelligentsia's belated acknowledgement of the Scottish women's liberation movement, then, the overarching trajectory of Scottish radicalism in the 1970s was still towards the incorporation of multiple identities and demands under a collective identity both radical and national. The same process of social 'opening' which generated *Scottish International* also underpinned the development of an intellectual wing of Scottish women's liberation: a yawning gulf between the cosmopolitan, radical ambitions of an expanded

[580] Browne, *Women's Liberation*, p.90.
[581] See, for example, Esther Breitenbach, '*Not* the Women's Review', *Radical Scotland* 15 (June-July 1985), pp.12-13; Esther Breitenbach, 'Can Scotland Provide Independence for Women?', *Radical Scotland* 17 (October-November 1985), pp.10-11.

intelligentsia, and the conservatism and disinterest – whether real or perceived – of the Scottish public; this was combined with the territorial gap, between British-wide or international developments, and the distinctive structures of Scottish politics, society and culture.

## Arts Class Radicalism: How was *Scottish International* Possible?

One vital element of this 'opening' has not yet been explored. While the neglect of Scottish women amongst the radical intelligentsia set clear limits on their otherwise expansive social imaginary, there was another, more practical limit on their ambitions: finance. *Scottish International* had been an invaluable and radical stimulus for Scottish intellectual activity, but also – by its exceptional nature – exposed the *economic* deficiencies of the national intellectual field. The fate of this short-lived radical experiment in state-funded cultural politics would have been impossible were it not for the distinctive nature – and brief, radical intervention – of the Scottish Arts Council. This can help us to conceptualise the social character of Scotland's radical intelligentsia. Jon Mattausch, in his critique of Frank Parkin's account of CND's 'middle class radicalism', argues that the British new left was characterised by a "state class radicalism," reflecting the priorities of "non-productive workers" who wished to politicise the "rent in the state" between "welfare" and "warfare."[582] The role of the SAC in fostering a distinctly Scottish new left radicalism allows us to expand this analysis to include territorialised features of the welfare state which, as Lindsay Paterson has suggested, contributed to the growth of a left-wing strain of Scottish devolutionary opinion from the 1980s onwards.[583]

[582] Jon Mattausch, *A Commitment to Campaign: A Sociological Study of CND* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989).
[583] Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p.169.

The UK's arts bureaucracy was characterised by a form of highly autonomous national devolution which provided a set of opportunities to Scottish intellectuals for both political radicalism and a growth in national feeling. However, these opportunities came with their own obstacles, politicising other 'rents' in the state: between centre and periphery, and between a devolved elite and their own distinctly national public. The increasingly nationalist 'new left' which several historians identify in Scotland from the 1970s onwards was characterised by what we might call an 'arts class radicalism'; there were many radical Scottish intellectuals who depended on other areas of the state for economic sustenance, such as secondary and higher education, but the vanguard of intellectual engagement with the national question came from the realm of Scottish cultural politics, as it had throughout the twentieth century. The difference, from the 1960s onwards, was that the resources provided by the state to Scottish culture were radically expanded, providing Scottish radicalism with a greater public platform – and greater public scrutiny – than before.

Until 1967, the SAC had been the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB), but had enjoyed a high degree of autonomy which exceeded that of the Welsh Committee. Euan MacArthur argues that this distinction was due to effective lobbying on Scotland's behalf by Tom Johnston as Secretary of State for Scotland – against a reluctant John Maynard Keynes, Chair of the ACGB's predecessor CEMA – during debates in advance of the Royal Charter which established the ACGB in 1946.[584] The SAC's powers extended to: control over public expenditure on the arts in Scotland; a notionally fixed 'backstop' share of ACGB funding according to the

[584] Euan McArthur, *Scotland, CEMA and the Arts Council, 1919-1967: background, politics and visual art policy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p.4.

'Goschen formula' of 12.08 per cent, below which Scottish funding should not fall (though this was not actually met after 1946 until the mid-1970s); and an additional degree of formal decision-making autonomy from the Scottish Education Department (SED), the department of the Scottish Office responsible for the arts.[585]

The Scottish Committee's formal autonomy was limited by the ACGB's power to dismiss its Scottish and Welsh Committees, and the SED could appoint an Assessor who advised the Council and reported to the Secretary of State for Scotland.[586] Galloway and Jones suggest that the Scottish Committee's "double arm's-length" status "insulated the SAC from direct political pressures, a fact that mattered increasingly as political interest and government intervention in the arts developed."[587] This status was reinforced by the Royal Charter of 1967, which re-named both the Scottish and Welsh Committees as the Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils, and removed the authority of the ACGB to dismiss the committees.[588]

Equally significant in the practical – rather than merely formal – autonomy of the Scottish Committee/SAC was its financial status, which had been allowed to decline substantially below the 12.08 per cent 'backstop' since 1946 to a low of 6.6 per cent in 1962/63, with the Goschen formula having been suspended from 1953.[589] While its official decision-making power remained unchanged, without sufficient funds the practical benefits of such autonomy were limited. To counter anxieties about this fall, and helped by government revenues from a rise in consumer spending in the late

[585] Susan Galloway, Huw David Jones, 'The Scottish dimension of British arts government: a historical perspective', *Cultural Trends* 19:1/2 (2010), p.30.
[586] McArthur, *Scotland*, p.4; Galloway & Jones, 'Scottish dimension' (2010), p.30.
[587] Galloway, Jones, 'Scottish dimension', p.30.
[588] McArthur, *Scotland*, pp.4, 123.
[589] Galloway, Jones, 'Scottish dimension', p.31.

1950s along with a more interventionist Labour Government after 1964, funding rose again from that point as the Scottish Committee sought to restate the Goschen formula as a target, if no longer a backstop.[590] Between 1964 and 1970 Scotland's allocation rose to 11.4 per cent.[591]

The change of name put a symbolic gloss on deeper changes to the character of arts funding in Scotland. Under the new title, a substantial increase in funding and a further devolution of authority allowed the SAC's "double arm's-length" status to be explored to an unprecedented extent. These changes also occurred, not by coincidence, at a moment when the idea of 'devolution' resonated beyond the arts. Galloway and Jones suggest that the inauguration of the SAC might have been 'a pragmatic response to the revival of nationalism in Scotland' after the Scottish National Party took the Hamilton constituency from Labour in November 1967.[592] McArthur, however, shows that the decision to change the names of both the Scottish and Welsh Committees was taken earlier, prompted instead by Plaid Cymru's victory over Labour in the Carmarthen by-election on the 14th July 1966. He does suggest, though, that "the Scottish Office was amenable because it too was looking over its shoulder at a nationalist advance."[593]

One consequence of the SAC's supercharged autonomy and finances was a transformation of Scottish intellectual capacity. Christopher Harvie suggests that with SAC support, "for the first time, political magazines had some financial stability, and

[590] *Ibid*, p.30.
[591] Harvie, C., *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.163.
[592] Galloway, Jones, 'Scottish dimension', p.31.
[593] McArthur, *Scotland,* p.125; Ewen Cameron confirms the Scottish Office's concerns about Plaid Cymru and the SNP in *Impaled*, pp.281-286.

were even able (occasionally) to pay contributors, while bursaries to writers went some way to stemming the drift south."[594] Yet this stability should not be overstated: as *Scottish International* proved, the opening up of new opportunities for political debate also created a new site for political conflict over those opportunities, which became a source of controversy for radical intellectuals and the 'establishment' (including the SAC) alike. *Scottish International* was the first and only magazine to benefit from the SAC's full potential for cultural 'entrepreneurship,' for the SAC was generally anxious about not being seen to take too interventionist a role in Scottish culture: a meeting of the 'Chairman's Committee', tasked with discussing the general structures of the SAC, recommended in January 1968 – the month of *Scottish International*'s launch – that "in the future expansion of artistic activities in Scotland the Council should, wherever possible, avoid taking on the role of impresario or entrepreneur… and should always seek for some other body to exercise such functions." It should, they continued, "always explore methods of achieving its ends through the agency of outside persons or bodies."[595]

This aspiration was in stark contrast to how the SAC's flagship literary project operated. According to Trevor Royle, who was the key go-between for the SAC and *Scottish International* boards, *Scottish International*

> was a creature of the Scottish Arts Council. It had no natural growth, like *Lines Review*, which was sturdily independent, being published by Callum McDonald who had his own printing works out at Loanhead, and

[594] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism* (2004) p.163.
[595] Minutes of meeting of the Chairman's Committee to discuss the Structure and Staffing of the Scottish Arts Council's Office, 18th January 1968. NRS SAC1/2/6.

> was so careful about, and so protective of his own independence, that […] it took all our time to get him to […] publish with the assistance of the Scottish Arts Council. 'No, it's mine!' You know, he thought it was his, it was his. Whereas *Akros* and *Lines Review* were organic, and even *Scotia Review* […], *Scottish International* wasn't, it was completely artificial. And that was a problem. And it never managed […] to overcome that feeling that there was this umbilical connection with the Scottish Arts Council. And that was a problem.[596]

This "umbilical connection" may have been a problem, but it was also one of the vital conditions of possibility which permitted the Scottish radical imagination to retain its own "double-autonomy" from both the British left and wider Scottish society, pursuing a remarkably radical and avant-garde trajectory against the grain of both Scottish mass culture and "tartan-and-Lallans" literary nationalism.

This reliance on the SAC was compounded by a further dependence on the initiative and intellect of Bob Tait as managing editor. Royle suggested that "Scottish International was basically Bob Tait," albeit with the support of his paid assistant Dave Morgan.[597] As a respected poet and diligent editor and administrator, Tait was ideal for the job, and this ensured that his own 'new left' political sympathies could play a pivotal role in determining the magazine's radical trajectory. But while the SAC subsidy allowed for the production of a high-quality magazine, Tait still struggled to organise distribution and promotion by himself. One letter in the *Scotsman* shortly after the

[596] Interview with Trevor Royle.
[597] *Ibid.*

magazine's first issue was published complained of magazine shops in Aberdeen not having heard of it, arguing that "it is outrageous that the producers… who are assured of financial security because of a public subsidy should sit back smugly and wait for orders to come in instead of selling their magazine in the normal trade manner."[598] Tait responded a week later, explaining that he faced "considerable difficulties" in organising distribution for a cultural magazine, as shops were reluctant to carry large stocks of such a niche product, and noting that this substantial task had fallen almost entirely on "one man."[599]

The SAC's support for *Scottish International* was focused on directing funds and opportunities to the artists and writers promoted in its pages, but did little to bridge the gap between these intellectuals and the general public. This gap became the focus of considerable public criticism concerning the magazine's public expense and lack of transparency. As costs rose, there were growing demands for journalists to be able to sit in on board meetings, leading to a failed attempt by members of the press to enter one meeting, after which one board member leaving early had to run a gauntlet of hostile questions.[600] This intensification of media scrutiny accompanied the appointment of Tom Buchan as editor, which disrupted the delicate balance that Bob Tait had maintained during his stewardship of the magazine. Even if Scotland was becoming more politically coherent – voting increasingly for centre-left parties, and expressing itself through distinctively national political demands – its cultural field

[598] David Ian Reid, letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (8th February 1968), p.8.
[599] Robert Tait, letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (14th February, 1968), p.14.
[600] Scottish International Review Ltd., Minutes of the 24th Directors' Meeting, 6th September 1973. CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159-1, p.1.

remained divided. To sustain an intellectual community in this context was a highly delicate and difficult task. Ross wrote in 1971 that Scotland's writers

> have their share of the national virtues and vices; often bitchy and given to jealous vendettas in which truth of any kind vanishes in bile. The long list of defunct literary periodicals witnesses to their tribal wars and their failure to get through to a sufficiently large section of the people.[601]

Buchan's turn towards a fusion of the populist and the experimental, focused upon Glaswegian working-class and youth culture, was particularly dangerous due to the overt partisanship with which Buchan pursued the agenda, explicitly presenting it as a blow against the same Edinburgh-based intelligentsia that had created and supported the magazine. He brought the old "bile" rushing back to the surface, upsetting the careful balance of the renewed intellectual field emerging around *Scottish International*. The magazine had represented a degree of cautious intellectual convergence around a project of radical, national cultural renewal; Buchan's change in direction made the magazine considerably less appealing to the intellectual community that had developed around it.

Tom Nairn was at that point a fellow at the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam, and was working on a paper called 'Scotland and Europe', which updated and extended his analysis of Scottish nationalism from 'Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism' and would eventually be published under that title in the *New Left Review* in February 1974. In September 1973, having expressed his 'awe' at *Scottish International* under

[601] Ross, 'Resurrection', p.11.

Bob Tait's editorship, he had written to Hamish Henderson about his plans to send the paper to Tait for publication in the magazine.[602] However, by early January – with Buchan having taken over – he wrote again to Henderson, suggesting that he saw little prospect for publication under the magazine's new editor. More importantly, he was dismissive of *Scottish International*'s countercultural turn as both faddish and outdated, and an abandonment of the high standards that had prevailed under Tait. He resolved instead to send the piece to *New Left Review*; 'Culture and Nationalism' would remain his only appearance in *Scottish International*.[603]

Nairn's concerns were shared by the *Scottish International* Board and the SAC. Neil Paterson, Chair of the SAC's Literature Committee, met with *Scottish International*'s chairman Douglas Grant in February 1974 to make several "suggestions" about how the *Scottish International* board should proceed, including "that the magazine should set out to try and lead and encourage the young and not pander to their immaturities."[604] So long as *Scottish International* had kept to a certain standard and style, its political radicalism had been uncomfortably tolerated by the SAC. Tait's departure and replacement by Buchan had upset this delicate balance, with Buchan alienating both cultural patrons and radical intellectuals alike in a way that fatally exacerbated the magazine's precarious financial integrity and reputation. The magazine's board, exhausted by media pressure and internal squabbling, declined the SAC's largely unworkable 'conditions' for further support and closed the magazine in March 1974.[605]

[602] Tom Nairn, Letter to Hamish Henderson, September 30th 1973. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[603] Tom Nairn, letter to Hamish Henderson, January 8th 1974. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[604] Letter from Douglas Grant to Board, 11th February 1974., p.1 CRC Coll.232 Gen.2159-1.
[605] Colm Brogan, 'How 'Scottish International' killed itself', *Glasgow Herald* (12 March 1974).

*Scottish International*'s growth and eventual failure exposed the extent to which the 'organic' resources of intellectual radicalism lauded by Royle were in fact insufficient to sustain a radical, national intellectual field in Scotland in the early 1970s. For all their self-sufficiency, the less state-dependent publications of Scottish culture had not been able to gain the kind of following and engagement from the Scottish intelligentsia as a whole as *Scottish International* did. State support allowed *Scottish International* to style itself as not just another poetry magazine, but a serious national review of culture and politics. From this basis, *Scottish International* could exploit opportunities – such as the Hamilton by-election – for the politicisation of culture through public controversy which 'little magazines' like *Akros* could not, converting an eccentric, sub-cultural nationalism into a significant question of national culture. Scotland's 'outsider' intellectuals needed not just the material crutch of the SAC, but also the political stimulus of events like the Hamilton by-election and the UCS work-in to provide live, 'social' questions through which they could contextualise, radicalise and transcend their long-running literary disputes.

The end of *Scottish International* was not the end of publicly-subsidised radical publishing in Scotland: the SAC continued to provide small grants to several magazines which carried radical political content, such as *New Edinburgh Review* and *Radical Scotland*. However, it did bring to an end the possibility of such a close association between the SAC and a radical magazine as *Scottish International* had enjoyed, as these later publications only received funding for publishing pieces of creative writing and criticism. In the second half of the 1970s, memories of *Scottish International* became a gold standard for Scottish radical publishing as other magazines struggled to survive, and struggled further to match its quality. These

struggles also illuminate the ways in which the 'gap' between radical intellectuals and the public, vital to the opening-up of the Scottish radical imagination, could quickly become a source of bitterness and resignation in the absence of proper support. This became the case in the debate over the closure of *Q* magazine in 1977.

## After *Q*: the road to *Radical Scotland*

*Q* was established by Peter Chiene, an SNP supporter and well-connected Edinburgh lawyer, in 1975. It was founded on the assumption that a Scottish Assembly was on its way, providing an expanded market for critical analysis of Scottish social, political and cultural questions, and on these grounds Chiene put £2000 of his own savings into the magazine.[606] In September 1977, after 34 issues, the magazine closed down. This prompted a debate in the *Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald* which carried on for several months over Scotland's persistent failure to support a general review magazine. The rejection of an application to the Scottish Arts Council for £11,000 to support a new arts supplement was cited by many as the main factor in *Q*'s failure, with memories of *Scottish International* discouraging the SAC from returning to any sort of godfatherly role towards Scottish magazines.[607] Lamenting *Q*'s failure in *The Scotsman*, Neal Ascherson wrote: "A telephone ringing in an empty room, a dead zebra without a lion to eat it, a monstrous salmon in a pool and no hook to catch it, peaches rotting on the grass of a locked garden -- this is the present state of Scotland with no political magazine."[608] Again, the impending possibility of devolution was

[606] Peter Hetherington, 'The Question Q Failed To Answer', *The Guardian* (Sep. 12, 1977), p.3.
[607] Trevor Royle, Letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (September 12th, 1977), p.8.
[608] Neal Ascherson, 'Lament for our lost reviews', *The Scotsman* (December 28th, 1977), p.7.

noted: “Reviews and periodicals are the blood-vessels to the brain in a changing society with fresh political prospects.”[609]

Much of Ascherson’s blame lay with the SAC, but also with the reading, or rather non-reading, public: *Q*’s circulation never stretched beyond 1,500, and Ascherson registered his agreement with the *Scotsman* columnist Archie Birt, a Labour Party supporter and opponent of devolution, that the ultimate failure was of Scottish demand.[610] “A population which spends as much on tobacco and alcohol,” Birt wrote, “can hardly baulk at 20p for a magazine that adds a dimension to the national consciousness.”[611] Joy Hendry, the editor of *Chapman* magazine, was similarly forceful about the Scottish people’s own failure, writing that “if it’s true that the public only gets what the public deserves, then the Scottish public are, at least as far as literature is concerned, getting far more than they deserve.”[612] Much of Scotland’s intelligentsia had now returned itself to the perceived vanguard of Scottish national consciousness, waiting for a docile public to catch up and buy its periodicals. In reality, much of this unsold printed matter was itself the product of a determined effort by intellectuals to understand and rearticulate, on their own marginalised terms, a form of popular nationalism that had largely taken them by surprise.

For Norman Easton, however, *Q*’s main problem was precisely its similarity to *Scottish International*, overemphasising detached, critical discourse at the expense of a more specific and affirmative identity. He argued that the magazine’s struggle to reach

[609] *Ibid.*
[610] *Ibid.*
[611] Archie Birt, ‘After ‘Q’, a question’, *The Scotsman* (September 14th, 1977), p.8.
[612] Joy Hendry, Letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (12th January, 1978), p.8.

beyond a purely intellectual public was compounded by its Edinburgh-centrism: 'Edinburgh is the home of the provincial intelligentsia,' he wrote, 'and a publication by and for these limited cognoscenti appeals to no-one else.'[613] Easton duly established *Crann-Tàra* in Aberdeen, where it was printed by the libertarian socialist publishing house Aberdeen People's Press. Yet by its tenth issue, driven partly by financial collapse, the magazine announced that it would be taken over by "supporters" who subscribed for "a minimum of £5."[614] This new management quickly "agreed to rehash the masthead of the magazine, getting rid of 'celtic' lettering, playing down Gaelic name, boosting sub-title 'Scotland's Radical Quarterly'."[615] This was more a question of expanding the paying audience than better meeting the magazine's pluralistic objectives, framed as a "way of tackling the financial problems of the magazine."[616] As the magazine's finances declined, its centre of gravity moved towards Edinburgh, where its supporters' meetings took place in the 'First of May' radical bookshop at 43 Candlemaker Row. The bookshop was run by a collective, but one of its more prominent members was a veteran of *Scottish International*, Ian Dunn of the SMG (by this point called the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group). Dunn soon became the news editor of *Crann-Tàra*, which carried semi-regular coverage of the Scottish gay rights movement.[617]

If an ideological commitment to greater diversity on the radical left drove *Crann-Tàra* to adopt a Gaelic name and a location outside of Edinburgh, the financial and political limits of Scotland's intellectual field drew things back towards the centre. In Autumn

[613] Norman Easton, Letter to the editor, *The Scotsman* (September 19th, 1977), p.8.
[614] 'Supporters take over Crann-Tara', *Crann-Tàra* 10 (Spring 1980), p.7.
[615] 'Supporters' Meeting', *Crann-Tàra* 11 (Autumn 1980), p.6.
[616] Ian Dunn, 'Opening the 1st of May', *Crann-Tàra* 11 (Autumn 1980), pp.4-5.
[617] See issues 7 (Summer 1979), 10 (Spring 1980), 13 (Spring 1981) and 15 (Autumn 1981).

1981, *Crann-Tàra* announced it would be dropping a name which "drives away potential readership." "To potential readers," admitted an editorial, "we seem like a) a Gaelic magazine […] or b) an extreme pretend-gael outfit."[618] The re-emergence of a nativist, extremist Scottish nationalism in the form of Siol nan Gaidheal (Seed of the Gael), into which the 1320 Club dissolved itself in June 1981, had presented *Crann-Tàra* with a stark choice between the native and cosmopolitan visions it had initially sought to transcend.[619] In early 1982, the magazine's supporters' group announced a new editor and name: Ian Dunn would take the reins of *Radical Scotland: A Socialist Quarterly*, with Easton providing £2000 to underwrite the magazine's costs for its first year.[620]

The first issue of the new magazine, which appeared in Summer 1982, offered little editorial indication of its new identity; the second, however, declared a pessimism informed by a decade of experience. "Relaunching a political magazine in Scotland is a melancholy business," opened its editorial. Rather than "brave naivete," it suggested, "a more brutally honest course would be to typeset the latest bank statement and allow the seasoned reader to guess at the tragic life-span."[621] Mentioning *Scottish International*, the editorial continued with an "article of faith":

> surely an intellectually developed nation like Scotland can support a political magazine. Surely the radical left needs a forum to draw upon its

[618] 'Editorial', *Crann-Tàra* 15 (Autumn 1981), p.3.
[619] Peter Hetherington, 'SNP set to expel fringe group', *The Guardian* (June 3rd, 1981), p.3.
[620] 'Supporters' Meeting Report', *Crann-Tàra* 16 (New Year 1982), p.2.
[621] 'Editorial', *Radical Scotland* 2 (February-March 1983), p.1.

> collective memory, to allow the earnest advocacy of tactics for co-existence, and, at times, to allow snarling dogfights of principle.[622]

The declared purpose of *Radical Scotland* was an explicit reaffirmation of the project of radical rearticulation begun by *Scottish International* in 1968: "*Radical Scotland* should appeal to devolutionists in the Labour Party, left-wing nationalists, and other elements of the radical left." Yet this was a more overtly party-political vision of Scottish radicalism than had been outlined over a decade earlier. Missing from *Radical Scotland'*s declaration of intent was a distinctive vision of Scottish society as a whole to match *Scottish International*'s opening lines: "Scotland 1968: Mainly urban population, sharing with the rest of Britain a Government, a mass media, and much of the available Press and publishing – among many other things…"[623] There was nevertheless an indication of the same documentary effort that *Scottish International* had undertaken:

> we are charged with developing in this group an awareness of shared experiences and ambitions. We should provide a source of information and stimulus (political, historical and cultural) which reflects this, often uneasy, awareness; an uneasiness which can trigger a retreat to more comfortable, sectarian publications.[624]

What had changed, over the previous 15 years, to leave this documentary, alliance-building spirit intact, while diminishing its obsessive reimagination of Scottish society

[622] *Ibid.*
[623] 'Editorial', *Scottish International* 1:1 (January 1968), p.1.
[624] 'Editorial', *Radical Scotland* 2 (February-March 1983), p.1.

and culture? In part, the cultural imagination had been effectively occupied: new magazines, particularly *Cencrastus* and the *New Edinburgh Review,* were already ably continuing *Scottish International*'s cultural legacy.[625] But *Scottish International* had sought to move beyond culture, into the social imagination. The transformation reflected in *Radical Scotland* was a profound shift in emphasis amongst the Scottish radical intelligentsia from society to politics as the source of change: a shift rooted in a reconceptualization of the role of the intelligentsia, which had its origins in *Scottish International*.

## Conclusion: from *Scottish International* to *Radical Scotland*

*Scottish International* began by admitting the isolation of Scottish intellectuals from the assumed social base of radicalism, the working class. This was, in part, an immediate response to the unexpected success of Scottish nationalism in a Labour Party heartland. Yet it was also a response to the new significance of subjectivities that could no longer be reduced to class, from the nation to sexuality and education. It was a rejection of an older model of intellectualism, which had been founded on a refusal to adapt to the structures of mass representation and an occasionally frightening nativism. In this context, *Scottish International* instigated a reimagination of Scottish society in which radical intellectuals could play a new role: as catalysts in the renewal of Scottish identity, centred no longer on the industrial working class who charmed the intellectuals at UCS, but instead on the figure of the 'outsider within,' willing to absorb and critically interpret the full range of "contemporary experience" to which radicalism had to adjust. This rearticulation of Scottish radicalism was a belated adjustment, in

[625] Linda Gunn, Alistair McCleery, 'Wasps in a Jam Jar: Scottish literary magazines and political culture 1979-1999', in A. McNair, J. Ryder (eds.), *Further From the Frontiers: Crosscurrents in Irish and Scottish Studies* (Aberdeen: AHRC Centre for Scottish and Irish Studies, 2008), unpaginated.

part, to the legitimacy that representative democracy had accrued since the interwar period, combined with the capacity of the mass media to reconstitute political identities. It was also the product of the personal experiences of estrangement and marginalisation which had helped to form the social identities of the intellectuals involved.

In rejecting class-based vanguardism, however, Scotland's radical intelligentsia replaced it with another, more subtle kind of elitism: within this new social imagination, intellectuals no longer represented a particular social group but articulated – through 'mapping' – the entire national frame in which those social groups moved. In constructing a distinctly Scottish intelligentsia, the Scottish radical tradition also generated a vision of the nation from which it was self-consciously alienated. This growing belief in the social *independence* of the Scottish intelligentsia is the most vital ingredient in its move from a social to a political emphasis between 1968 and 1975. Having constituted itself as an independent social force, 'free-floating' from – and through – the divisions of class, religion, gender, nation or sexuality, the intelligentsia could then *act* as this force, on its own behalf. Its function was, as *Radical Scotland* announced, to facilitate a new coalition of "devolutionists in the Labour Party" and "left-wing nationalists" behind a specific constitutional project: devolution. Over the following decade, *Radical Scotland* "effectively became the house journal" of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, functioning as a factory of strategy, tactics and rhetoric for the national movement.[626] It could do this because of its ability to draw together the broadest possible range of identities and demands under a collective

[626] James Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government: The Campaigns for a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p.104.

identity which had been gradually stripped of any determinate, and thus divisive, social and political content: ‘Radical Scotland.’

# Chapter Three. Constitutional Capture: Radical Scotland and the Political Imagination

## Introduction: Utopian Pragmatism

In 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism,' Tom Nairn responded to the SNP's victory at Hamilton with a mixture of apprehension and ambition: "Is it really impossible," he asked, "that Scotland, which has dwelt so long and so hopelessly on the idea of a nation, should produce a liberated and revolutionary Nationalism worthy of the name and times?"[627] Two years later, encouraged by the radicalism of the 'long '68' abroad, Nairn ventured further into utopia in a redrafted version of 'Three Dreams' for Karl Miller's *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland* collection:

> I for one am enough of a nationalist, and have enough faith in the students and young workers of Glasgow and Edinburgh, to believe that these forces are also present in them. I will not admit that the great dreams of May 1968 are foreign to us, that the great words on the Sorbonne walls would not be at home on the walls of Aberdeen or St Andrews, or that Linwood and Dundee could not be Flins and Nantes. Nor will I admit that, faced with a choice between the Mouvement du 22 mars and Mrs Ewing, we owe it to 'Scotland' to choose the latter.[628]

Over the following decade, however, Nairn's own political and geographical journey took him from these revolutionary aspirations – sketched out in London, at a critical

[627] Tom Nairn, 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', *New Left Review* 1;49 (May-June 1968), p.18.
[628] Tom Nairn, 'The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism', in Karl Miller (ed.), *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), pp.53-54.

distance from Scottish developments – into a more pragmatic political logic formed through direct engagement with Scottish political life. After moving to Edinburgh in 1975, Nairn soon joined the 'breakaway' Scottish Labour Party (SLP) formed in 1976 by the Labour MP Jim Sillars, and encouraged by prominent left-wing journalists and activists.[629] The SLP was plunged into an early crisis by its leadership's efforts to expel activists from the International Marxist Group (IMG), a Trotskyist organisation, prompting Nairn to side with the "centrist" wing against the IMG's "revolutionaries." Nairn criticised attempts to adopt a more radical socialist programme for the SLP at its 1976 Stirling Congress, and argued that the socialists should instead be adapting to Scotland's new reality:

> for an indefinite period of the future, political life here will be dominated by the problems of forging a new state […] The social democrats, the revolutionaries, and everybody else in between, ought to be concerned with getting the sort of political system most favourable to their aims.[630]

This system should be an "advanced social constitution, and a democratic politics whose spirit and functioning is the inverse of the old English model." This, he argued, would "not be "socialism". However, it will be the precondition of whatever "socialism" can be made in this nation." Thus a "tactic of ultra-constitutionalism and pro-nationalism would be far more effective" than the revolutionary orthodoxies of the IMG.[631]

[629] Henry Drucker, *Breakaway: The Scottish Labour Party* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1977).
[630] Tom Nairn, 'Revolutionaries versus Parliamentarists', *Q* 16 (19th November 1976), p.3.
[631] *Ibid*, p.4.

Was Nairn's "ultra-constitutionalism" a turn away from his earlier "liberated and revolutionary Nationalism"? The same trajectory occurred throughout the Scottish radical tradition during this period. "By the 1970s," writes Christopher Harvie, "utopia had vanished to infinity," replaced by a textual "apparatus of criticism" which served a more grounded national radicalism.[632] Lindsay Paterson argues that the "revolutionary iconoclasm" of the 1960s was replaced by an "acceptance of the immense complexity of politics and society […] imposed revolutions of the type favoured historically by modernist socialism would not work."[633]

Nairn's critique of the IMG's revolutionary aspirations reflected not a turn away from radicalism itself, but a developing synthesis within the Scottish radical tradition between hitherto competing visions of socialism and nationalism, utopianism and pragmatism, internationalism and nationalism, and revolution and reform. Departing from the critical, distanced passivity of the late 1960s and early '70s, Scotland's radical intellectuals adopted a more assertive political identity, inspired by the growing prospect of a Scottish Assembly, and potentially even an independent Scottish state. The potential of this "political revolution," as Nairn called it, provided a new horizon for the Scottish radical imagination, and prompted new and ambitious thinking about the structure and possibilities of Scottish politics.

Both Harvie and Paterson overstate the extent to which Scottish radicals moved away from utopian visions of Scotland. What changed was the location of that utopianism from society to politics. As Scotland's social and political structures received greater

[632] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.161.
[633] Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p.8.

scrutiny, fantasies of Scotland as an infinitely malleable "republic of the mind" – as Neal Ascherson described it in 1975[634] – gave way to the acceptance and even affirmation of Scotland's social and cultural reality; alongside this, however, was a growing tendency to glamorise the political means by which that reality could be defended from new threats. Instead of the unfair, undemocratic and backwards-looking nation that had been denounced during the 'long 68', Scotland was reframed as a nation on the verge of socialism, waiting for a Scottish Assembly to liberate its radical instincts from Westminster's straitjacket.

This utopianism was, paradoxically, increasingly connected to markedly non-radical political objectives, from the defence of traditional industry to the achievement of a devolved Scottish Parliament. As Paterson suggests, one consequence of more direct engagement with the details of the party system, political strategy and constitutional change was a growing awareness of radicalism's limits. Aspirations for the transformation of Scottish society and the world beyond it gave way to a radicalism that served as little more than a means of achieving a modest "Scottish democracy" within the UK.[635] The Scottish radical left thus retreated through the 1980s into a more settled, self-limiting view of its political opportunities and limitations. This new realism was only partly chosen; it was also imposed upon the radical left by 1979's twin defeats, first in the referendum on a Scottish Assembly, and then in the victory of Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives in a general election. It also resulted from the limitations or outright failure, throughout the 1970s and early '80s, of several efforts to resuscitate a truly independent Scottish socialist tradition, from publications like the

[634] Neal Ascherson, 'Return Journey', *Q* 1 (October 1975), p.5.
[635] Lindsay Paterson, 'Scottish Democracy and Scottish Utopias: The First Year of the Scottish Parliament', *Scottish Affairs* 33 (Autumn 2000), pp.45-61.

*Red Paper on Scotland* to the SLP and the '79 Group. This third 'closure' – along with the territorial and social ones detailed in previous chapters – entailed a loss of much of the lively intransigence and critical autonomy which had helped to revive the Scottish radical tradition in the previous decade.

Even where it retained considerable emphasis on extra-parliamentary means, from working-class militancy to civil disobedience, Scottish radicalism became identified with practical ends that increasingly resembled those of Scotland's moderate political elite. By investing their 'utopian' radicalism in these moderate ends, Scottish radicals facilitated their own absorption into the wider myth of 'Radical Scotland', in which Scotland's radicalism was always nationally latent, but never required proof: the affirmation and institutionalisation of Scottish political identity became, by the end of the 1980s, intrinsically radical.

This chapter begins with an outline of the wider political events that helped to 'open' the political imagination of the radical left, pointing to illustrative radical responses in each case: the rise of the SNP in Labour's heartlands, Labour's attempts to legislate for a Scottish Assembly in response, the coming on-stream of North Sea oil, Britain's contested entry to the European Economic Community, and the intensification of conflict in Northern Ireland. It then explores the idea of a deep political and intellectual divide between socialism and nationalism, to which this wider context granted a new significance as well as new means of potential resolution. This was a vital problematic around which the Scottish radical left could converge and develop a shared political imagination. Nevertheless, this convergence still involved certain forms of inclusion and exclusion, and this two-sided process is explored in three studies: first, of the

marginalisation of Trotskyism within the Scottish radical imagination, including an analysis of the contrasting approaches of Trotskyist organisations to the national question in Scotland; second, of the marginalisation of a 'Celticist' and revolutionary 'Scottish republican socialism'; and finally, of the embrace of a gradualist 'liberal republicanism', authenticated through radical history but reaching out to more moderate political traditions.

The second half of the chapter is devoted to an examination of Scottish radicalism's transition from print-culture into more directly political activity. This begins with a study of the *Red Paper on Scotland*, edited by Gordon Brown in 1975, which represents the consolidation of the new intellectual radicalism into an especially politicised – albeit still print-cultural – expression. This is followed by an examination of the move from print into party politics, captured in the formation of the SLP in 1976. The SLP's demise is followed with a study of radical intellectuals' involvement with its main party-political successor, the 79 Group faction of the SNP. Finally, the effects on Scottish radicalism of 1979's twin defeats – in a referendum on devolution and the subsequent General Election – are examined through an analysis of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly and the magazine *Radical Scotland*. This emphasises the 'closure' of the radical political imagination between 1979 and 1983, expressed in the prevailing conviction that a Labour government and constitutional change had become preconditions of radical progress.

## "A Moment of Possibility": the Opening of the Political Imagination

By the middle of the 1970s, political developments were dragging Scotland's radical intelligentsia from the literary field of identity-construction and discursive 'mapping'

onto the harder ground of direct, practical intervention. David Edgerton, countering perceptions of Britain's 1970s as a period of "collapse," argues that the decade was in fact "a moment of revolt, of possibility."[636] The first Conservative government since 1964 was humiliated by the labour movement at the 1971-2 UCS work-in and the 1972 miners' strike, and in response to a fresh wave of miners' action Heath called an election for February 1974 on the question of 'Who Governs?'[637] This, Edgerton notes, "was a silly question, and the response of the electorate was: you don't."[638] Voters were barely more enthusiastic about Labour, whose vote share declined (from 42.6 per cent per cent to 37.2 per cent) from their 1970 defeat, but Wilson formed a minority Government with 301 seats to the Conservatives' 297. A second election in October handed him a precarious majority of 3 seats.

Both 1974's elections were transformative in Scotland, however. The resurgence of the SNP after the post-Hamilton bubble appeared to have burst at the 1970 election. Labour had regained Hamilton, and the SNP barely compensated by taking the Western Isles from Labour. In February 1974, the SNP won 7 seats, almost doubling their 1970 vote share to 21.9 per cent, and gained a further 4 seats on 30.4 per cent of the vote in October. The party had performed well in by-elections the previous year. Gordon Wilson came a close second in Dundee East in March 1973 and Margo MacDonald registered a spectacular win in Glasgow Govan in November.[639] MacDonald's win, like Hamilton in a Labour heartland, was especially significant as far

[636] David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-century History* (London: Penguin, 2018), p.403.
[637] Ewen Cameron, *Impaled Upon A Thistle: Scotland Since 1880* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p.294.
[638] Edgerton, *British*, p.408.
[639] Thomas A.W. Stewart, 'By-elections and Political Change in a Local Context: The Case of the 1973 Dundee east By-Election and the SNP', *Parliamentary History* 38:2 (2019), pp.262-277.

as the Scottish left was concerned. In the aftermath, the *Glasgow Herald* described the SNP as "a peculiar mixture of extremists of Right or Left";[640] MacDonald, hardly an "extremist," was nevertheless – unlike Wilson – firmly on the party's left. She would go on to provide the foreword to *The Radical Approach* in 1976, and her success in 1973 appeared to vindicate the approach being cultivated by the party's National Convener William Wolfe to make a centre-left, "social democratic" appeal towards Labour seats. Wolfe himself only managed to come third, with 19 per cent, in an Edinburgh North by-election won comfortably by the Conservatives on the same day.[641] One significant difference with the Hamilton result was, as the *Glasgow Herald* noted, that MacDonald had "overturned the theory that the SNP can thrive only from affecting voters when a Labour Government is in office."[642] MacDonald had triumphed on the doorstep of UCS against Harry Selby, a candidate from Labour's left, in the midst of a wave of industrial conflict under a Conservative Government. Lamenting the result in the Labour left's *Tribune*, Michael Wylie conceded that "Labour can only grab back the people of Scotland if they campaign on radical socialist policies with a strong emphasis on a large slice of home rule."[643]

Labour's February 1974 manifesto was relatively left-wing, but devolution was not promised.[644] The SNP gained four Conservative seats and only two from Labour, who regained Govan from MacDonald, and the bulk of the SNP's new influx of MPs came from the party's more traditionalist wing. But with Labour back in government its

[640] 'Unlikely Partners', *Glasgow Herald* (November 12th, 1973), p.8.
[641] Peter Lynch, *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002), pp.132-135.
[642] 'S.N.P. shock for Labour at Govan', *Glasgow Herald* (November 9th, 1973), p.31.
[643] Michael Wylie, 'Paternalism and muddle will lose us a lot more seats in Scotland', *Tribune* (November 16th, 1973), p.5.
[644] Cameron, *Impaled*, p.297.

leaders became acutely aware of their vulnerability to nationalist protest votes on top of the SNP's evidently deep and broad appeal.[645] By October it had established itself as Labour's main electoral competition, taking second place in thirty-six of Labour's forty-one seats.[646]

After years of internal squabbling, the leadership – aided by trade union strong-arming – imposed support for a Scottish Assembly on the party's recalcitrant Scottish apparatus at a special conference in August 1974.[647] In October the party manifesto promised a legislative assembly, and Labour managed to avoid further losses to the SNP (the Conservatives lost another four).[648] The consequences of these manoeuvres for Scottish politics were profound. In just seven years the national question had been transformed from a largely sub-political concern – malleable and relevant in culture and civil society but absent from the future development of the state – into a fundamental component of party politics, policy and statecraft. The issue dominated the 1974-79 Parliament, with Scotland taking up more parliamentary time than ever before.[649] With Labour pledged to establish an Assembly, the Scottish nation seemed set to become the foundation of an entirely new level of political life. Between 1967 and 1974, nationalism had changed from a question of utopian dreaming to an area of serious enquiry, as intellectuals 'mapped' the sources of change and its possible trajectories. After 1974, however, Scotland's direction of travel – towards an Assembly, and perhaps then on to independence – appeared to the bulk of the Scottish intelligentsia to be as good as set in stone.

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[645] Michael Keating, David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.165.
[646] James Mitchell, *The Scottish Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.156.
[647] Keating, Bleiman, *Labour*, p.167.
[648] *Ibid*, p.174.
[649] Cameron, *Impaled*, p.300.

Three other developments, also outwith the control of the Scottish radical left, were forcing new political prospects into their heads or reviving older ones. The first was the arrival on-shore of North Sea oil in the 1970s, discovered in the late 1960s, which transformed Scotland's economic potential and the structure of its economy, especially in the north-east. The SNP's 'It's Scotland's Oil' campaign, launched in 1972, "allowed the SNP to provide for the first time an effective counter to one of the most difficult accusations thrown at them: Scotland was too poor to be independent."[650] The party flipped the arguments against independence on their head, in the midst of industrial strife and economic unease across the UK. Responding to MacDonald's win in Govan, Winnie Ewing told *The Spectator* that "Labour lost the election because the voters of Govan responded to the question, "Rich Scots or Poor British?" by electing Mrs MacDonald."[651]

*Scottish international* covered the arrival of the oil industry in the north-east in detail, making "Scotland & North Sea Oil" the theme of its December 1972 issue. This featured a lengthy "photo feature" by Bob Tait and Bob Anderson, detailing the transformations wrought on local life by the arrival of multinational capitalism.[652] An essay in the following month's issue by Brian Smith offered a Marxist analysis of the oil industry's impact on Shetland, observing po-facedly that "in the last analysis, of course, Shetland County Council can never lead… an onslaught against capital."[653] In its very title, John McGrath's *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* articulated a tradition of Scottish radical history linking the Highland clearances to the

[650] *ibid*, p.294.
[651] Winifred M. Ewing, 'Govan's Significance', Letter to the editor, *The Spectator* (December 1st, 1973), p.692.
[652] Bob Anderson, Bob Tait, 'Aberdeen and the north-east', *Scottish International* 5:10 (December 1972), pp.8-17.
[653] Brian Smith, 'Scotland and North Sea Oil 2: Shetland and Oil', *Scottish International* 6:1 (January 1973), pp.7-8; Smith is now the archivist at Shetland Museum and Archives.

arrival of petro-capitalism. Writing in the *Red Paper on Scotland* in 1975, Tom Nairn identified oil as the "persuading programme which made the difference" in the breakthrough of Scotland's new nationalism.[654] As "the largest, richest, most aggressive, and most international form of capitalism in the world," it brought with it "an apocalyptic bundle of promises and menaces," providing "a new material basis for political life in Scotland."[655]

Another significant development was Britain's entry to the European Economic Community in January 1973, followed by a referendum that confirmed Britain's membership in June 1975. In Scotland, voters said 'Yes' to stay in the EEC by 58.4 per cent to 41.6 per cent, soothing fears – and hopes – that Scotland could vote 'No' and be overruled by a UK-wide 'Yes,' playing into the SNP's hands. This risk was especially pronounced due to the novel subdivision of vote-counting by regions and nations, which threatened to reinforce Scotland's newly assertive sense of political difference. Robert Saunders argues that Labour's divisions over the question in 1975's referendum allowed the SNP "to seize the leadership of the Scottish No campaign, mobilising traditional Labour voters in parts of the country that had previously been resistant to its charms."[656] The SNP's opposition to the EEC was a mixture of 'tactical' and more existential opposition. The party's traditionally cosmopolitan vision of Scotland's place on the world stage was in conflict with its newfound strength in constituencies sceptical of the EEC's common fisheries and agricultural policies, and this was articulated as opposition to membership "on London's terms," rather than in

[654] Tom Nairn, 'Old Nationalism and New Nationalism', in Gordon Brown (ed.), *The Red Paper on Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUSPB), p.22.
[655] *Ibid*, pp.22, 25.
[656] Robert Saunders, *Yes to Europe!: The 1975 referendum and seventies Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p.347.

principle. The party's left, especially figures like Stephen Maxwell and Isobel Lindsay, were more generally opposed to the EEC, seeing it as an example of the overbearing and monopolistic capitalist bureaucracies which they later criticised in *The Radical Approach*.[657]

Like devolution and oil, the politics of the EEC helped to burst open the political horizons of the Scottish radical left. Tom Nairn identified European integration as a means of forcing nationalism into a cosmopolitan form, excusing it from typical Marxist fears of bourgeois nationalism degenerating into insularity and chauvinism.[658] For *Scottish International* it provided opportunities to prove the intelligentsia's especially cosmopolitan contribution to national debate, and its coverage indicated that Europe was opening the radical political imagination in two directions: where Nairn's essay 'Culture and Nationalism' embraced Scotland's potential role within the EEC, Maxwell's intervention in the January 1973 issue was opposed. In a front-page article, he identified the EEC "as a catalyst of political change [which] promises to have no rival except the oil discoveries."[659]

> To be a junior member in the political partnership of imperial Britain, territorially and economically supreme and enjoying great political prestige, is one thing: to be a junior member in a partnership petitioning for membership of the EEC is psychologically quite another.[660]

[657] *Ibid*, pp.351-352; Andrew D. Devenny, 'Regional Resistance to European Integration: The Case of the Scottish National Party, 1961-1972', *Historical Social Research* 33:125 (2008), pp.319-45; Andrew D. Devenny, 'Joining Europe: Ireland, Scotland, and the Celtic Response to European Integration, 1961-1975', *Journal of British Studies* 49:1 (2010), pp.97-116.
[658] Ben Jackson, *The Case for Scottish Independence: A History of Nationalist Political Thought in Modern Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp.74-75.
[659] Stephen Maxwell, 'Scotland: Europe's Hard Case', *Scottish International* 6:1 (January 1973), p.12.
[660] *Ibid.*

Maxwell argued that Scottish scepticism about the EEC reflected a popular fear of being reduced from a distinctive nation within Britain to a mere 'region' within Europe, bolstered by recent experiences of "formal democracy divorced from national freedom." By intensifying Scotland's sense of national marginalisation, the Common Market "reinforces a mood of impatience and restlessness that has other causes. The confluence of pressures may prove enough to break the apathy."[661] Maxwell and Nairn thus found, in both opposition to and support for the EEC, a geopolitical foundation for prophecies of British break-up.

The fourth set of events which shaped the Scottish radical left's political imagination during the 1970s took place across the Irish sea. Britain's deployment of the army to police a civil rights campaign by Northern Ireland's Catholic minority in 1969 caused a violent escalation, with the formation of Nationalist and Unionist paramilitary organisations alongside further military deployment, spiralling into more than two decades of violence that frequently crossed to mainland Britain.[662] Scotland had a large population of Irish Catholic descent, especially amongst the working class, and Irish Republicanism intermingled nationalism with left-wing politics, all of which led Scottish radicals to take a particular interest in its development. *Scottish International*'s March 1972 issue gave prominent coverage to the events of 'Bloody Sunday', in which soldiers in the Bogside area of Derry shot upon protesters against the UK Government's policy of internment without trial, killing thirteen civilians (a fourteenth died of his injuries months later). Its front page featured photos of the thirteen killed

[661] *Ibid*, p.14.
[662] Edgerton, *British*, p.427.

civilians, with the banner "Derry's 13 Dead," against a green background, and carried articles by Archie Hind and Ray Burnett on the massacre.[663] The following issue carried further articles exploring both Unionist and Nationalist sides of the conflict in more depth.[664] Some Scottish radicals saw Northern Ireland as a harbinger of Scottish conflict, while others found a negative inspiration for a more moderate, determinedly pacifist, gradualist and bridge-building vision of constitutional politics.[665]

These transformations in British politics allowed the Scottish radical imagination to develop from a broadly cultural project, including historical and sociological investigation of the left's national terrain, towards something more political in its priorities and its practice. The SNP's electoral success in Labour heartlands prompted an urgent focus on the relationship between socialism and nationalism, and related questions of nation and class. Labour's devolutionary turn helped to cultivate certainty about the prospect of a new Scottish politics that could lead to independence. North Sea oil transformed the economic debate around independence, and raised questions of Scotland's relationship to multinational capitalism. Britain's entry into the EEC situated the national question in a more clearly international context, giving a degree of political and institutional substance to the new radical cosmopolitanism. Finally, conflict in Northern Ireland gave a sense of urgency and proximity to questions of

[663] Archie Hind, 'From Belfast to Derry and Back', pp.10-15; Ray Burnett, 'The Killing of James Wray', pp.16-18, *Scottish International* 5:2 (March 1972).
[664] 'N. Ireland: Culture as Politics and Politics as a Culture', p.11; 'Interview with Rev. W. Martin Smyth of the Ulster Vanguard', p.12; John Lloyd, 'Interview with William Craig', p.13; Archie Hind, 'The Protestant Ethic and the Orange Order', pp.14-15; Ray Burnett, 'The Politics of the Resisting Minority', pp.16-18, *Scottish International* 5:4 (April 1972).
[665] Ray Burnett, 'Politics & The Law: Introduction', *Calgacus* 1 (February 1975), p.23; Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Socialism or Nationalism?', in Gavin Kennedy (ed.), *The Radical Approach: Papers on an Independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: Palingenesis Press, 1976), p.103.

political violence, republicanism and constitutional politics which forced the radical left to think more carefully about its approach to these issues.

## Beyond "Communism or Kailyard": Socialism and Nationalism

The SNP's growing challenge to Labour provoked considerable angst about what intellectuals perceived as an underlying ideological conflict between nationalism and socialism. The previous chapter showed that *Radical Scotland* was established on a pledge to bring together "devolutionists in the Labour Party, left-wing nationalists, and other elements of the radical left."[666] This was a party-oriented version of its predecessor *Crann-Tàra*'s ambition to "pull together Nationalism and Socialism."[667] The idea of this divide was essential to the Scottish radical tradition's self-image. It was used to justify a succession of intellectual and political projects, which identified it as a hindrance on Scotland's political imagination. In 1968, Nairn argued that "a Socialist Nationalism" was necessary to escape the "dilemma" presented to the Scottish left by the SNP's explosion onto the scene at Hamilton.[668] Bob Tait, reflecting on the divisions at *Scottish International*'s 'What Kind of Scotland?' conference in 1973, raised

> the question of how "nationalism" and "socialism" can be re-defined in the Scottish context, taking account of the constitutional, economic, cultural and social changes that are already upon us, so that these words

[666] 'Editorial', *Radical Scotland* 2 (February-March 1983), p.1.
[667] 'Editorial', *Crann-Tàra* 1 (Winter 1977), p.2.
[668] Nairn, 'Dreams' (1968), p.17.

> do not forever represent two mutually exclusive concepts […] the road is now wide open for a debate on that level.[669]

Gordon Brown, introducing the *Red Paper on Scotland* in 1975, declared the book's aim to carve out an independent space for socialism above "that false and sterile antithesis which has been manufactured between the nationalism of the SNP and the anti-nationalism of the Unionist parties."[670] The sense that the Labour Party was especially constrained by this "sterile antithesis" was a common element of its rhetorical deployment, as was frustration with the absence of socialism from the SNP. The following year, commenting on the 'Great Debate' over European Economic Community membership, Ray Burnett argued in *Calgacus* that "Labourism's self-appointed role as the champions and defenders of British sovereignty quickly resulted in any socialist dimension being totally eclipsed while in the nationalist campaign on Scottish sovereignty there never even was a socialist dimension to be eclipsed."[671]

The idea of transcending this binary was inextricable from a desire to escape its partisan expression in bitter feuds between Labour and the SNP. The most significant attempt at this was the formation of the Scottish Labour Party in 1976, which Henry Drucker suggests was intended "to be more Scottish than the Labour Party and more Socialist than either that party or the National Party."[672] As discussed below, this partisan effort to transcend partisanship collapsed amidst internal divisions, despite (or perhaps as a result of) attracting most of Scotland's radical intelligentsia. The

[669] Bob Tait, 'What Kind of Conclusions?', *Scottish International* 6:3 (May-June-July 1973), p.16.
[670] Gordon Brown, 'Introduction: The Socialist Challenge', in Gordon Brown (ed.), *The Red Paper on Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1975), p.8.
[671] Ray Burnett, 'Editorial', *Calgacus* 2 (Summer 1976), p.2.
[672] Henry Drucker, *Breakaway: The Scottish Labour Party* (Edinburgh: EUSPB, 1977), p.59.

experience of the SLP was vital in consolidating and politicising the "discourse community" which Craig Stewart argues was created through the widely debated polarity of socialism and nationalism.[673]

Yet the SLP's effort to be "more Socialist" than Labour was somewhat extraneous to the binary-busting project. "Socialism" took on a broad meaning within that binary precisely so Labour could be included, allowing intellectual concerns over abstract ideological coherence to be justified in terms of immediate political relevance. The reformist, moderate and "ethical" vision of "socialism" of the Labour mainstream – largely interchangeable with social democracy – was indeed more compatible with nationalism than the emphasis on intra-national class conflict which Trotskyist groups tended to counterpose to nationalism. Labour's popularity amongst the working class, and its historic grip upon the political imagination of the British left, allowed those elements of the radical left who sought a closer relationship to Scottish nationalism to demonstrate – in the face of Trotskyist critiques – "socialism" and "nationalism" coming together on the terrain of home rule.

The emergence of a substantial socialist left in the SNP was equally vital. While socialists had participated in the SNP since its foundation, a more independent party-based left was given the requisite literary articulation – a condition of recognition by the intelligentsia – in *The Radical Approach*, a collection of essays by left-wing SNP members edited by Gavin Kennedy in 1976.[674] In one essay, titled 'Socialism or

[673] Craig Stewart, Development of a discourse community: the Scottish constitutional debate 1967-1979, PhD thesis. University of Edinburgh (2005).
[674] Gavin Kennedy (ed.), *The Radical Approach: Papers on an Independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: Palingenesis Press, 1976).

Nationalism?', Owen Dudley Edwards questioned the potential of the SLP and emphasised instead the SNP's potential to offer a new kind of socialism rooted more in patriotic idealism than class solidarity.[675] Declaring his scepticism of socialists who talk in "class terms," he wrote: "if we believe in Scotland as a nation, we must insist that its resources cannot be squandered to the injury of the country and the community in the interests of a selfish few."[676]

In his 1976 review of *The Radical Approach* for *Q*, Nairn suggested that this new SNP left was finally allowing the wider radical left to escape "the oldest quarrel" between "socialists and nationalists":

> The nationalists were supposed to want independence for its own sake, regardless of the quality of society after self-determination. Socialists told them that the whole business could only be justified if a startlingly new quality of society was made possible; otherwise it would be mere "bourgeois nationalism" – and, in fact, probably a large step backwards instead of forwards. Kailyard or Communism: such were the stark emblems that dominated the old debate.[677]

This debate was "now becoming mercifully outdated," Nairn wrote, thanks to the shifting ideological balance within the SNP. The party could no longer be denounced as "mere sovereignty-fetishists without positive policies," and had developed a "very recognisable ideology of independence." The first chapter of this thesis outlined

[675] Edwards, 'Socialism or Nationalism?'.
[676] *Ibid*, pp.101-102.
[677] Tom Nairn, 'The Radical Approach', *Q* 9 (July 1976), p.8.

Nairn's critique of this new ideology of "radicalism," which he suggested failed to take the state seriously enough. For Nairn, with independence no longer an "abstraction," socialists and nationalists "will have to redefine their quarrels in the new Scottish context. And this presupposes a context capable of supporting them meaningfully: that is, a strong democratic state able to cope with a sea of troubles externally and regulate internal conflicts."[678] This emphasis on a "strong state" was targeted at the decentralising ambitions of *The Radical Approach*, but underlying it was an effort to incorporate both decentralising and centralising visions of independence into a "powerful common interest" for the radical left: securing a constitution more amenable to radical consciousness-raising than that of the UK.

> Radicals and socialists alike should be anxiously concerned to get a state capable of working towards the sort of society they are blue-printing […] the chances are that the kind of state we shall end up with will be different from the old English model, and will stand in a substantially different relationship to society. If so, then we also need a new political-philosophy – again, a non-British philosophy – to try and chart our movement in this direction.[679]

This "ultra-constitutionalist" effort to escape the socialist-nationalist binary demonstrates the limits of that binary for understanding the development of the Scottish radical tradition during this period. In identifying a new common ground for socialists and "radical" nationalists, it also quietly imposed new boundaries on the

[678] *Ibid.*
[679] *Ibid.*

radical left concerning its relationship to politics and society. If socialism and nationalism were opening up to each other on common ground, there was also a more subtle process of re-enclosure occurring, in which certain traditions were consigned to the fringes of the radical imagination. The "new political-philosophy" being developed was framed as a kind of "radicalism," but it was nevertheless a particularly *liberal* radicalism, at odds with several elements of the wider radical tradition. This will be explored further in subsequent sections of this chapter, but first it is necessary to turn to the variants of radicalism from which this liberal radicalism distinguished itself.

## "Cadre fodder for the Home Counties class struggle": Trotskyism and Scottish Nationalism

As Nairn's criticisms of the IMG suggest, one of these variants was Trotskyism. This tradition's emphasis on "internationalist" class politics provided a sparring partner against which "socialist nationalism" developed its most complex intellectual manoeuvres, but it also supplied several recruits to the Republican Socialist tradition discussed below. Nevertheless, when elements of the latter – such as Ray Burnett and Norman Easton – denounced 'The British Left' as an Anglicising influence on Scottish radicalism, it was often Trotskyists who bore the brunt of this criticism from their former comrades.[680] Three of the largest Trotskyist organisations operating in Scotland during the 1970s were the International Socialists (IS, renamed the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1977), the IMG and the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP).[681] These were all run from London with varying strictness, but their members, sometimes with the endorsement of their leaderships, made interventions in the

[680] Burnett had been an International Socialists member, Easton a former IMG member.
[681] Neil Williamson, 'Ten Years After – The Revolutionary Left in Scotland', in Henry Drucker (ed.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1979* (Edinburgh: Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland, 1979), p.61.

debate over devolution in the final third of the 1970s, eliciting public responses from the more self-consciously 'national' radical left in Scotland. The arguments made in these debates, and the subsequent development of the Scottish radical left tradition, demonstrate the shifting intellectual priorities – away from class and social revolution, towards nationhood and constitutional change – which underpinned the integration of socialism and nationalism during this period.

British Trotskyism is an intricately complex tradition, the nuances of which are beyond the scope of this thesis.[682] The three groups discussed here shared a scepticism towards the "parliamentary" road to socialism, and an emphasis on independent working-class organisation, although the WRP was more "orthodox" and sectarian in its Trotskyism – believing itself to be the only legitimate revolutionary party – than both the IS/SWP and the IMG. The IS/SWP was especially oriented towards "rank and file" trade unionism, while the IMG had made its reputation since 1968 organising in universities and the anti-Vietnam War movement. These differences were reflected in their respective positions on Scottish nationalism and devolution.

The question of independent working-class power – opposed to both nationalism and constitutionalism – was especially important to the IS/SWP, who in 1965 had abandoned "entrist" activity in the Labour Party for a focus on "rank and file" industrial organising.[683] At the start of 1977, the newly renamed SWP published a pamphlet by Allan Armstrong titled *Nationalism or Socialism: The SNP and SLP exposed*.[684]

[682] John Kelly, *Contemporary Trotskyism: Parties, Sects and Social Movements in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2018); see also John Callaghan, *The Far Left in British Politics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).
[683] Callaghan, *Far Left*, pp.96-97. The terms "Entrist" and "entryist" are both in use.
[684] Allan Armstrong, *Nationalism or Socialism: The SNP and SLP exposed* (London: Socialist Worker, 1977).

Armstrong's argument was framed as a historical analysis of Scottish nationalism, offering a class-based explanation for why it had "taken off" in the 1960s and '70s rather than in earlier international "waves" of nationalism. In the "first" wave, at the time of the American and French Revolutions, the Scottish ruling class had opposed themselves to a UK-wide "radical republicanism" due to their success within the British *status quo*.[685] In the "second" wave in the late nineteenth century, he argued that the cause of Home Rule had been central only to the crofters' movement, a "rapidly declining class"; while it was also taken up by the Independent Labour Party, it was subordinated to their wider British programme, and the emergence of the Irish Free State neutralised much of the impetus for Home Rule across the UK.[686]

Armstrong argued that it was only in the "third wave" of global nationalist politics, during the post-war era, that nationalism was able to draw "effective class backing". This backing, however, was not socialist but capitalist. "Scottish financiers and industrialists" were interested in the potential of North Sea oil and Edinburgh's expanding finance sector, joined by small businessmen frustrated by industrial decline, and professionals in search of higher status.[687] The SLP, Armstrong argued, was merely "a belated response of a particularly exposed section of the Labour Party to the SNP," whose reformist vision of socialism offered little improvement on the SNP's appeasement of Scottish and multinational capital.[688]

[685] *Ibid,* p.3.
[686] *Ibid.*
[687] *Ibid,* p.4.
[688] *Ibid,* pp.5-6.

Armstrong also challenged the idea that Scotland was "innately more radical than England," pointing to England's relatively progressive legislation "covering divorce and homosexuality," efforts to "turn back the clock" on abortion from MPs in Labour and the SNP, and the capacity of religious sectarianism to "divide Scottish workers." Most importantly, he argued, even "a genuine left wing majority in a Scottish Assembly" would "leave the real centres of power untouched."[689] The influence of multinational capital demanded a correspondingly deep-rooted and internationalised form of political power, rooted in rank and file workers' organisation, workers' councils and international combine committees, organised by a revolutionary party.[690]

A more extreme version of Armstrong's argument was made by the WRP, a party with little time for distractions from revolutionary class politics, run with an especially sectarian and authoritarian fervour by its leader Gerry Healy. On the eve of the referendum on devolution, the WRP's daily newspaper *News Line* published a highly ambivalent endorsement of a 'Yes' vote. Their argument for devolution reads as a passionate critique, "without the slightest illusion that Assemblies… will solve a single problem facing Scottish and Welsh workers," which condemned "the many reactionary features of the Scotland and Wales Acts." It attacked the "counter-revolutionary illusion" of the CPGB's argument that devolution offered democratic progress, and suggested that "corporatist measures such as regular referenda and proportional representation … could be used by a Bonapartist dictatorship in Britain." Unlike much of the rest of the left, the WRP welcomed the absence of economic powers from the Assembly. An emphasis on "administrative devolution" would help to counteract the

[689] *Ibid,* p.7.
[690] *Ibid,* p.8.

centralisation of power that was leading to "political dictatorship" in the UK, without risking the break-up of the "historically progressive" union.[691]

Terry Brotherstone, who wrote the WRP's position as the only Scottish representative on its central committee, explained in an interview that the party had not considered its line on devolution until the final days of the referendum campaign, frustrating members who did not know which way to vote. "It hadn't been discussed in the central committee, or anything like that. Things didn't work like that … Healy suddenly decided, I think turned his attention to it for the first time really, and decided it would be wrong to come out against it." Brotherstone, who was a historian at Aberdeen University at the time, suggested that "the historical stuff I'd been writing didn't really determine you one way or the other – you could actually have changed the last paragraph [backing devolution] without completely creating a logical mishmash." He argued that the WRP's insistence that "we were living in a pre-revolutionary situation" on a global scale made them view devolution as a "distraction" rather than a valuable focus of political agitation.[692]

The IMG, however, were especially engaged with the question. They were less focused on class politics than the IS/SWP, appealing to libertarian socialists, supporters of Third World nationalism and student radicalism, giving "*de facto* support to the view that the European working class was no longer [at least by itself] a revolutionary force."[693] This political heterodoxy gave it space to interact more sympathetically with Scottish nationalism and devolution. Neil Williamson, the IMG's

[691] 'Yes to devolution – No to unemployment', *The News Line* (February 28th, 1979), p.4.
[692] Interview with Terry Brotherstone, 25th February 2019.
[693] Callaghan, *Far Left*, p.126.

Scottish organiser, produced the most astute essay of the Trotskyist tradition on the question during this period. 'Socialists and the New Rise of Scottish Nationalism' was published in February 1977, in the IMG's *Red Weekly: Battle of Ideas* newspaper supplement.[694] This came shortly after Williamson and several Scottish comrades had joined – and been expelled from – the SLP. Williamson offered a more detailed discussion than Armstrong of the tensions within Scottish capitalism. Scotland's struggling heavy industry, had led to overreliance on timid "regional policy," which gave subsidies to multinationals who could not be relied on to remain in Scotland. Indigenously owned industry was being further marginalised by the oil sector, except for finance, which "shows a dynamism and political aggression conspicuous by its absence in the rest of British capital." This did not, however, mean that Scottish nationalism was being driven by capitalist self-interest, for "the political situation is too fraught with dangers and uncertainty for much unanimity to emerge." Instead, where devolution received business support it was to avoid the "pressure of the Scottish masses" spilling over into something more radical. Capital's interests thus lay with a hamstrung Assembly, without control of the Scottish Development Agency or a "future Scottish banking system."[695]

Williamson's explanation of Scottish nationalism's popularity also demonstrated greater theoretical nuance and a closer engagement with left-wing nationalist argument than Armstrong. He was particularly critical of efforts to compare Scottish nationalism with Catalan, Basque or Breton nationalism, a form of analogy which "hides more than it illuminates." Scotland lacked the "political discrimination" and

[694] Neil Williamson, 'Socialists and the New Rise of Scottish Nationalism', *Red Weekly: Battle of Ideas 5* (February 1977), pp.1-4.
[695] *Ibid*, p.1.

"political oppression" of those examples, where "the essence of the national question, that of political democracy, is written in the blood of workers on the streets of Vitoria or Pamplona." In Scotland, the deep-rooted "constitutionalism of the nationalist movement" reflected specific political circumstances. Due to the uniquely undisturbed longevity of the British constitutional order, "the experience of bourgeois democracy has left an indelible imprint on the consciousness of the British working class." The "frustration" felt by the working class in Scotland after "decades of urban deprivation, of unemployment and of political and financial corruption of the Labour Party" was finding its outlet "in terms of an innovation, an extension, of bourgeois democracy itself."[696]

Williamson thus identified Scottish nationalism as a bourgeois assimilation of working-class protest, but argued that socialists should engage with the working class "at their present level of consciousness, not at some arbitrary point which socialists would prefer."[697] This was a clear critique of Armstrong. While Williamson noted that the SWP "explain correctly the futility of the Assembly as a vehicle for socialism," he saw their class-struggle fundamentalism as "absurd posturing of the most infantile kind."[698] Instead, socialists should test and expose the limits of "constitutionalism and electoralism," by "throwing the active strength of organised working people in trade unions, tenants committees, local action committees or political parties against the restrictions and legal boundaries of the Assembly, and the conservatism of the reformists who sit there, demanding that they base themselves on this active strength." This could extend to demanding "that the Assembly's executive sabotage the

[696] *Ibid,* p.3.
[697] *Ibid.*
[698] *Ibid,* p.4.

spending cuts or wages policy of Westminster," and mobilising workers "as they did during the UCS struggle" to defend the Assembly in the ensuing conflict.[699]

Williamson also critically engaged with Nairn's arguments, noting the value of Nairn's attention to "questions long ignored by the workers movement." However, he argued that Nairn had evacuated the "masses" from his political vision, and criticised Nairn's emphasis on the "deft manipulation of national boundaries and state structures" as incompatible with deepening class struggle within those boundaries.[700] Williamson viewed Nairn's socialism as "a moral crusade, a sort of left over from the best values of Enlightenment," which ignored "the brute, material struggle for class power." This overstated Nairn's political naivety and understated the extent of his nationalism, which by the middle of the 1970s had largely moved the centre of "brute, material struggle" from class conflict to national conflict. For Nairn, Scotland was "a country moving into developmental conflict with the backward state controlling it, impelled by a thrusting, middle-class nationalism," and this would be radicalised by "a uniquely large inheritance of working-class depression, urban squalor, and assorted 'social problems'."[701] These problems – closer to Northern Ireland, he argued, than any of the other "new nationalisms" – threatened to make Scottish nationalism an especially disruptive force, both nationally and internationally.[702]

These Trotskyist engagements with Scottish nationalism prompted a polemical response from the SNP left, via Gavin Kennedy in *Q* magazine. Kennedy, who had

[699] *Ibid*, p.3.
[700] *Ibid,* p.4.
[701] Tom Nairn, 'Scotland the Misfit', in Jamie Maxwell, Pete Ramand (eds.), *Old Nations, Auld Enemies, New Times* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2014), p.175. First published in *Q* 13 (October 1976).
[702] *Ibid.*

been a member of the Socialist Labour League (a predecessor to the WRP) while living in England in the 1950s and early 1960s, was by the 1970s described in *The Times* as being on the "moderate left," having joined the SNP after moving to Scotland.[703] Kennedy's critique of Armstrong's pamphlet questioned the emphasis on capitalist support for Scottish nationalism, arguing that the SNP's membership or leadership contained few capitalists.[704] This rather simplistic view of class agency was not supplemented with any alternative class analysis. instead, Kennedy argued that "nationalism as a political force is far deeper in its tap roots than class consciousness. Even the most powerful, class-based governments have had to adopt nationalist positions to survive."[705] Kennedy offered little constructive engagement with the positions of either Armstrong or Williamson, pathologising Trotskyism's resistance to Scottish nationalism as a symptom of London-centrism. "Events are forcing the Labour Party towards a Scottish dimension (the Scottish Assembly) and the Far Left towards a reappraisal. Both responses have the same objective: to hold on to Scotland for either lobby fodder at Westminster or cadre fodder for the Home Counties class struggle."[706] Insofar as there was a deeper critique, Kennedy criticised the "programmes of social engineering" of both Labourism and Trotskyism, in keeping with the broadly decentralising, participatory agenda of *The Radical Approach*.

Yet this criticism on the grounds of means and ends made little headway in terms of analysis. Kennedy was optimistic about the "events" that were forcing this new

[703] Lindsay Brydon, 'Obituary: Gavin Kennedy, academic and influential figure in the SNP', heraldscotland.com (3rd May 2019, accessed February 2021), https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/17615925.obituary-gavin-kennedy-academic-influential-figure-snp/; George Kerevan, 'Remembering Gavin Kennedy (1940-2019)', bellacaledonia.org.uk (9th May 2019, accessed February 2021), https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2019/05/09/remembering-gavin-kennedy-1940-2019/.
[704] Gavin Kennedy, 'The Far Left and nationalism', *Q* (March 1977), p.12.
[705] Gavin Kennedy, 'Nationalism and Class', *Q* (May 1977), p.4.
[706] Kennedy, 'Far Left'.

engagement: “a vote for the SNP that returns a majority of nationalist MPs,” he argued, “will at the very least alter the rules by which the component parts of the United Kingdom are governed.”[707] Replying to Kennedy, Williamson wrote in *Q* that Trotskyist critics were “entitled to be just a little sceptical of the ability of the nationalist radicals to pursue such a course of action” due to their “conservative” scepticism towards deploying state power for socialist ends.[708] Williamson, shifting from scepticism to utopianism, argued that socialists had to link together the “disparate strands” of “the demand for constitutional change” expressed at the ballot box, and the “natural and stifled creativity … of working people” seen in “the demonstrations, strikes and meetings around the cuts, unemployment and social conditions.” These had to be united “into a perspective of *self-determination* in its most literal sense – in the sense of an ability to shape and transform every facet of social existence in a collective and democratic manner.”[709]

For Williamson, the class and revolutionary basis of socialist politics could not be put on hold while a “constitutional” or national diversion was resolved; for Nairn and the SNP left, however, nationalism and constitutional politics were not so much a diversion as a replacement for the revolutionary class politics they were leaving behind. Both sides, unlike Armstrong and the WRP, sought to unify “socialism and nationalism” in some way. Yet they were divided along other lines, not just by the questions of class and strategy, but also in terms of prophecy and pragmatism. Differing expectations of the future, filtered through different forms of political pragmatism, distinguished “radicals” like Nairn *et al* from revolutionary socialists like Williamson. For the latter,

[707] Kennedy, ‘Far Left’, p.4.
[708] Neil Williamson, ‘The Far Left and nationalism – a reply’, *Q* (15th April 1977), p.3.
[709] *Ibid.*

the arrival of a Scottish Assembly was entirely plausible in the absence of political radicalisation, and likely to occur on the most favourable terms to the ruling class. A degree of militant agitation amongst the working class therefore had to continue, regardless of whether an Assembly had potential, due to the ongoing centrality of class conflict to political developments. For the "radical" nationalists on the other hand, the territorial question was likely *by itself* to produce a radicalisation of British politics. Class politics thus *followed* territorial politics, rather than vice versa or – as Williamson argued – moving in tandem with it.

The experience of Scottish Trotskyists in the 1970s thus provides an insight into two formative developments in the Scottish radical imagination. Firstly, where Labour's vision of class politics could be easily attacked by radicals as reformist, incorporating the working class into the British state, Trotskyism's more revolutionary alternative could not. Its marginalisation by leading intellectuals of the Scottish radical left indicated their growing determination to downplay both class-based and revolutionary politics in favour of a more gradualist, nationalist road to radical change. This was rooted in the departure from the model of the organic and vanguardist intellectual outlined in the previous chapter, as well as over-optimistic prophecies about Scotland's direction of political travel (and negative ones about Britain's).

Secondly, Trotskyism's London-centrism made it easier for intellectuals to push it to the margins of a Scottish radical imagination that was being formed around self-conscious differentiation from the 'British left'. In some cases, this dismissive approach to a London-based tradition was at least partially justified, for Trotskyist groups like the WRP could be equally dismissive of the Scottish left's concerns. This was not the

case, however, when it came to members of the IMG, who had themselves cultivated a degree of open-mindedness about their potential social base. Yet the IMG's role within the breakdown of the SLP, discussed below, was a sign of their own marginalisation. There was, however, a more determinedly 'native' vision of revolutionary class politics with which Scotland's liberal radicals also had to contend, represented in the Scottish Republican Socialist tradition.

## 'Scottish Republican Socialism': Celticism, Connollyism and Clandestine Clubs

We can understand the ascendancy of an "ultra-constitutional" liberalism within the Scottish radical imagination by looking at republicanism, whose role as a thoroughfare between socialism and nationalism was crucial. Republicanism had already been a significant component of radical left engagement with Scottish nationhood for much of the twentieth century. John Maclean, discussed in the previous chapter, formed the Scottish Workers' Republican Party in 1923 to support an independent 'Scottish Workers' Republic' rather than join the Communist Party of Great Britain.[710] Jackson identifies a clear strand of thought about a distinctive Scottish tradition of "popular sovereignty" in the writing of early nationalist thinkers like Robert McIntyre and Douglas Young in the 1940s and 1950s.[711] Republican themes also appeared in popular songs of the Scottish folk revival like Thurso Berwick's 'Coronation Coronach'. This was sung with characteristic subversion to the tune of loyalist anthem 'The Sash', and declared that 'We'll mak oor land republican/In a Scottish breakaway.'[712]

[710] Henry Bell, *John Maclean: Hero of Red Clydeside* (London: Pluto, 2018), p.183; Gerard Cairns, *John Maclean and Scottish Republicanism* (Glasgow: Scottish Republican Socialist Movement, 2021).
[711] Jackson, *Scottish Independence*, pp.27-32.
[712] Thurso Berwick (the performing name of Morris Blythman), cited in Ewan McVicar, *The Eskimo Republic: Scots Political Song in Action, 1951-1999* (Linlithgow: Gallus Publishing, 2010), p.57.

However, James Mitchell argues that overt, anti-monarchist republicanism has largely occupied the "fringe of SNP politics," and that "unlike in Ireland, modern Scottish nationalism has been peaceful with limited trace of republicanism."[713] As the following sections indicate, however, a broader idea of republicanism – beyond mere anti-monarchism – was vital to efforts to legitimise Scottish nationalism on the radical left.

Radical republicans in Scotland could not avoid the difficult question of Ireland, especially at the onset of the Troubles. But if the more liberal, constitutionalist variant of radicalism sought to distance itself from associations with Irish Republicanism, others sought to articulate those links in positive terms as part of a wider Celtic identity, feeding into a more romantic, revolutionary and ethnicised 'Scottish Republican Socialist' tradition. The most influential vehicle for Celticist ideology was the "Celtic League," established in 1961 by the Breton nationalist Alan Heusaff, who had collaborated with the Nazis against the French resistance during the Second World War before successfully seeking refuge in Ireland.[714] One of the league's original Vice Presidents (there were several from different Celtic nations) between 1961 and 1971 was Robert McIntyre, the SNP's first MP and the party's chairman from 1947 to 1956. The most prominent advocates of Celticism within Scottish nationalism, however, were Hugh MacDiarmid and Peter Berresford Ellis. Berresford Ellis (1943-) was one of the authors of the influential *Scottish Insurrection of 1820* (to which MacDiarmid provided the foreword). He was a prolific advocate of cultural and linguistic "re-Celticisation" and "the unity of the six Celtic countries [Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, Wales, Brittany

[713] James Mitchell, 'Sovereigns, Sovereignties and the Scottish Question: Identities and Constitutional Change', in H. Kumarasingham (ed.), *Viceregalism: The Crown as Head of State in Political Crises in the Postwar Commonwealth* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp.69, 83.
[714] David Leach, 'Bezen Perrot: The Breton nationalist unit of the SS, 1943-5', *e-Keltoi: Journal of Interdisciplinary Celtic Studies* 4:1 (2008), p.27.

and the Isle of Man] into Celtica" as "socialist democratic republics."[715] His first book, *Wales – A Nation Again* (1968), carried a foreword by Gwynfor Evans, the Celtic League's first President, who had just been elected as Plaid Cymru's first MP; *The Scottish Insurrection* was his second (earning him the honorary presidency of the 1820 Society in 1988), and further work on Irish, Cornish and pan-Celtic culture and politics followed.[716]

Celticism was not reserved to the literary scene, and also took political forms which mingled visions of ethnic self-determination with support for extra-legal and even violent tactics. In the years leading up to the escalation of violence in Northern Ireland in 1969, there had been growing collaboration between Celtic nationalists on both sides of the Irish sea. In 1965, the first 'Celtic Youth Congress' (CYC) brought together the Scottish Federation of Student Nationalists (FSN) with young nationalists from Wales and Ireland as well as Brittany, and was addressed by the SNP's William Wolfe and Major FAC Boothby. The CYC's first chair, a young doctor from Dundee called Ian Taylor, would shortly thereafter become the Vice President of the 1320 Club, in which Boothby, as "organiser", sought to develop a paramilitary wing of Scottish nationalism.[717]

The following year's CYC in Dublin was more clearly militant in its politics, arranged to coincide with the fiftieth celebrations of the 1916 Easter Rising. It began with a visit to

[715] Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Creed of the Celtic Revolution* (London: Medusa press, 1969), p.39.
[716] Early examples from a prolific writing career include: Peter Berresford Ellis, *Wales – A Nation Again: The Nationalist Struggle for Freedom* (London, Library 33, 1968); Peter Berresford Ellis, *A History of the Irish Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972); Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Cornish Language and its Literature* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974); Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Celtic Revolution: A Study in Anti-imperialism* (Ceredigion: Y Lolfa Cyf, 1985).
[717] Federation of Student Nationalists, *FSN Bulletin* 3 (May 1965). NLS Acc.7295/21.

the General Post Office that was seized during the Rising, and delegates passed resolutions showing "approval" for "the blowing up of the Clywedog Dam and [Dublin's] Nelson Pillar" earlier that year. Delegates elected Boothby as CYC President. Already in his late fifties, Boothby had spent much of the 1960s propagating his own eccentric brand of nationalist militancy amongst young activists, organising a "summer camp" focused on hard labour at Kyle of Lochalsh near Skye and boasting to Robert McIntyre of his ability to "form several score young people into a militant youth section" as a party organiser.[718] The FSN's bulletin was enthusiastic about Boothby's involvement in a "weekend school" on "the formation of a Scottish Government" held in Edinburgh on the 25th and 26th February 1966, at which Boothby detailed his "Three Estaits" model of Scottish Government, the "political, economic and social measures" of "the first Scottish Government," and other questions grouped under the ominous title of "Contingency Planning."[719]

The enduring influence of Celticism can be seen in several radical magazines from the following decade, particularly *Calgacus* and *Crann-Tàra*, edited by Ray Burnett and Norman Easton, both of whom identified strongly with elements of Celticist ideology. *Calgacus*' first issue in 1975 featured several sympathetic articles on Irish Republicanism, Breton nationalism, and the imprisonment of Matt Lygate of the WPS(ML) for armed bank robbery, suggesting that the British state's repressive tactics in Northern Ireland could soon be translated to a Scottish context.[720] Yet as *Crann-Tàra*'s name change to *Radical Scotland* showed, the romantic attraction of Celticism

[718] Scottish National Party Edinburgh Branch Members Newsletter, 2nd May 1962. NLS Acc.10090/106; Letter from FAC Boothby to Robert McIntyre, 26th December 1962. NLS Acc.10090/106.
[719] Federation of Student Nationalists, *FSN Bulletin* 2:3 (May 1966), NLS Acc.7295/21.
[720] *Calgacus* 1 (February 1975), pp.2-13, 23-35.

for some on the radical left made it hard to appeal to a wider audience that was largely unfamiliar with Celtic culture. As discussed in chapter 2, this was an issue with both the use of Gaelic and the more generally ethnicised character of Celticist ideology. In 1979, a reader of *Crann-Tàra,* Jack Macleod, questioned the magazine's masthead that read 'Liberty for the individual – Independence for the nation – Brotherhood for the race'. "Surely you don't subscribe to a racial view of politics?," asked Macleod; Ian O. Bayne provided the "editor's reply", noting that the slogan was first used by Willie Stewart, the secretary of the Independent Labour Party, and had been endorsed by the Edinburgh-born Irish Marxist, nationalist and revolutionary leader James Connolly in 1911 as "the rallying cry under which all Irish Socialists should unite."[721]

Connolly, who had established the Irish Socialist Republican Party (1896-1904) and was executed for his leading role in the 1916 Easter Rising, provided a useful precedent for tying together nationalism, socialism and Celticism under a "republican" banner.[722] Alongside John Maclean, the 1820 'Rising' and the 'martyrs' of the 1790s, he featured in the fever for radical memorialisation with which the Scottish radical left restated its historical identity during the 1960s and 1970s. To mark the centenary of Connolly's birth on June 8th 1968, Edinburgh and District Trades Council organised a commemoration ceremony and unveiled a plaque in the Cowgate, Connolly's birthplace. This "most memorable ceremony," which filled the Cowgate with "patriotic music" from the Irish Trades Union band and a Scottish piper, was attended by

[721] 'Letters', *Crann-Tàra* 6 (Spring 1979), p.13.
[722] David Howell, *A Lost Left: Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), pp.17-140; Kirsty Lusk, Willy Maley (eds.), *Scotland and the Easter Rising: Fresh Perspectives on 1916* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2016); Bernard Campbell Ransom, James Connolly and the Scottish Left, 1890-1916, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975.

representatives of the Irish Embassy, the Irish and Scottish Trades Union Congresses, as well as members of the WPS(ML) alongside other left-wing activists.[723]

In 1973, Berresford Ellis edited the Penguin edition of Connolly's *Selected Writings*, arguing in the introduction for the enduring relevance of Connolly's arguments. In particular, Connolly's insistence on the inextricability of socialism and national self-determination offered Scottish radicals a position independent of both the SNP and British unionism, embedded in the heritage of resistance to the British state.[724] For Ray Burnett, Connolly was "Gramsci before Gramsci," having emphasised the importance of connecting national folk culture – especially popular song – to socialist politics.[725] Burnett's attachment to Connolly was also personal, for they had grown up in the same parish in the Cowgate. Burnett celebrated Connolly's legacy as a way of expressing an alternative, working-class and radical Edinburgh identity from that found in the world of bourgeois literature:

> I'm not aware of any literature about old working-class Edinburgh, like there is about Glasgow. I'm not aware of it […] I mean Robert Louis Stevenson's got wonderful descriptions of comin over the bridges and lookin down into the chasm of the Coogate, which is great stuff but then you think 'he's lookin down on my ma, he lookin down on us,' you know. And that's why you had this tremendous attachment to Connolly. It wasn't just that what he wrote, and of course what he did with his life, what he died for, how he died, the event he died in. It wasn't just that. It

[723] Leslie Eddleston, 'James Connolly – Centenary Year', *Scottish Vanguard* 2:7 (July 1968), p.13.
[724] James Connolly, *Selected Writings,* ed. Peter Berresford Ellis, (London: Penguin, 1973), pp.33-35.
[725] Interview with Ray Burnett, 4th February 2019.

> was the fact that he came fae the Coogate. My granda's generation, those old timers, they were the ones that all said, you know there's one thing about big Jim Connolly – and he wasnae big at all, but he was big, he was big in their eyes, you know, he was a bit like sort of John Maclean, from the way I hear it over on the west was a legendary sort of figure, you know? I'm not sure what height John Maclean was but Connolly certainly was a wee man relatively speaking, you know? But there was one thing about big James Connolly, big Jim Connolly, Jim, it was always Jim… He went to his death with a good Embra accent [Laughs].[726]

Connolly, like John Maclean, offered an authentically Scottish and working-class intellectual heritage for revolutionary republicanism. In 1973, a network of "Scottish Republican Socialist Clubs" (SRSC) emerged, with key supporters drawn from the IMG and the John Maclean Society.[727] Advertising the SRSC in the Autumn 1978 edition of *Carn*, the Celtic League's magazine, the Clubs' organiser Donald Anderson noted that the Clubs' emphasis on Maclean and Connolly allowed them to avoid "divisive" questions of "the merits and demerits of the latter-day socialist saints such as Trotsky, Stalin, Moa-Tse Tung [sic] etc."[728] This desire for radical unity also underpinned *Crann-Tàra*'s focus on shared Scottish "roots," and its editor Easton had been an early member of the SRSC. Yet it also meant the exclusion of the "British left,"

[726] *Ibid.*
[727] Donald Anderson, 'The Scottish Republican Socialist Clubs', *Spàirn* 1 (Winter 2011, accessed online March 2021), http://spairn.weebly.com/scottish-republican-socialist-clubs.html; Andrew Murray Scott, Iain Macleay, *Britain's Secret War: Tartan Terrorism and the Anglo-American State* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1990), pp.82-90.
[728] Donald Anderson, 'Scottish Republican Socialist Clubs', *Carn* 23 (Autumn 1978), p.5.

whose overly "internationalist" influence on the John Maclean Society was, Anderson argues, part of what justified the SRSC's establishment.[729]

The SRSC's clandestine and fractious development, wracked by paranoia about state infiltration, is given its fullest account in Andrew Murray Scott and Iain Macleay's *Britain's Secret War: Tartan Terrorism and the Anglo-American State*, a non-academic history of Scottish nationalist militancy whose rigour and veracity have been (at times polemically) questioned, including by individuals featured in the book.[730] One leading SRSC member, the 'organiser' Donald Anderson, published in 2012 a lengthy "errata" of corrections that he had sent to Macleay after the book's publication, which offers one way of sifting out some of the more contentious elements of Scott and Macleay's work.[731] Scott and Macleay suggest that the SRSC developed out of a mixture of student radicalism and established Glasgow republicanism, in the latter case amongst an historically Irish Catholic community familiar with Republican Bands and Irish solidarity groups.[732] For students, the Queen's visit to Stirling University in 1972 provided a particular stimulus for action.[733] The royal visit came in the midst of a wave of protest about poor conditions in student residences and social spaces, and the chaotic mixture of protest and inebriated celebration during the visit itself drew outrage from national media, local residents, Stirling Town Council and the university administration. The administration disciplined some of the students it deemed

[729] Anderson, 'The Scottish Republican Socialist Clubs' (2011).
[730] Nicholas Brooke, The dogs that didn't bark: political violence and nationalism in Scotland, Wales and England. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of St. Andrews (2016), p.21.
[731] Donald Anderson, 'Britain's Secret War: Tartan Terrorism and the Anglo American State – Errata by Donald Anderson', scottishrepublicansocialistmovement.org (10th June 2012, archived version accessed via Wayback Machine March 2021), https://web.archive.org/web/20160417200604/https://scottishrepublicansocialistmovement.org/Pages/SRSMArticlesBritainsSecretWar.aspx.
[732] Scott, Macleay, *Secret*, p.83.
[733] Scott, Macleay, *Secret*, p.84.

responsible, prompting further protests, and in the aftermath the first Scottish Republican Club was established in Stirling.[734] Another was established shortly after at Strathclyde University. There had been a 'Scottish Workers' Republican Club' in Glasgow prior to the Strathclyde Scottish Republican Club, and once this fused with the new Clubs, Glasgow became the nexus of a growing, de-centralised national network of Clubs across urban Scotland.[735]

The SRSC became a petri dish for the growth of paramilitary fantasies and criminal intrigue, replicating on the west coast the insular nationalist extremism of the more ideologically ambiguous 1320 Club and Boothby's 'Army of the Provisional Government'. Splits emerged over a 'Scottish Citizens' Army of the Republic' committed to political violence, as well as over the general form of Republican Socialist politics. The short-lived Scottish Workers' Republican Party (SWRP) was formed in 1974 by Trotskyist SRSC members, and further splits and reorganisations at the end of the decade and into the 1980s produced a "League", a "Party" and a "Movement", all prefixed by "Scottish Republican Socialist".[736] By the end of the 1970s, however, the Clubs' internal dynamics were warped by paranoia about police infiltration and their reputation indelibly associated with violent adventurism, after the armed robbery of a sub-post office and an unsuccessful attempt on an off-license led to the trial in June 1979 of several (Anderson suggests eight, including himself) leading members;

[734] Holger Nehring, 'Challenging the Myths of the Scottish Sixties: Student Protests in the Wake of '1968' at the University of Stirling', *Moving the Social: Journal of Social History and the History of Social Movements* 64 (2020), pp.70-71.
[735] Scott, Macleay, *Secret*, p.84.
[736] *Ibid;* Anderson, 'Clubs'. The SRSM still exists, having entered and departed from the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) over what its members perceived as the latter's insufficient support for Scottish independence. It continues to organise a regular John Maclean memorial march, at which Donald Anderson continues to speak.

one of whom, Stanley Green, was charged with resetting postal orders and possessing guns and ammunition with intent to endanger life.[737]

While the SRSC themselves remained a largely insular and self-marginalising element of the wider radical tradition, they could coexist comfortably with other, more moderate elements (and indeed each other) as long as their ideas were constrained to the discursive realm of print-culture. These ideas featured a clear Celticist bent, an analysis of Scottish nationalism as an anti-imperial struggle and a passionate hostility to the 'British left'. Norman Easton, the future *Crann-Tàra* editor who formed the SWRP with other SRSC members in 1974, published a pamphlet for the SWRP titled *Socialism, Nationalism, Scotland and independence* in 1975, in which he argued that Scottish history could be explained ultimately by "the clash between two culture groups, Celt and Saxon."[738] "If we want to understand the national question," Easton wrote, "we must appreciate the Saxon conquest from which it (and the current occupation of the Six Counties in the north of Ireland) stems in an unbroken line of descent."[739] Continued English conquest ultimately "transplanted" a bourgeoisie onto Scotland, which met resistance from the distinctive "Scots radicalism" that Easton would later promote in the pages of *Crann-Tàra*.[740]

Distinguishing this "North British bourgeoisie" from the "oppressed" Scottish people, Easton blamed "SCOTS SOCIALISTS, EMBARRASSED AT THEIR SCOTS ORIGIN [the capitalisation is Easton's]" for failing to side fully with the people, and indeed for

[737] Anderson, 'Errata'; Scott, Macleay, *Secret,* pp.87-88.
[738] Norman Easton, *Socialism, Nationalism, Scotland and Independence* (Glasgow: Scottish Workers Republican Party, 1975), p.6.
[739] *Ibid.*
[740] *Ibid*, pp.12-13.

the rise of the SNP.[741] He criticised the SNP's "bourgeois" character, arguing that they "cannot achieve true independence. In a capitalist world no one can achieve independence." As a result, "Communism is already within" the "nationalist movement," and the "profits" sought by bourgeois nationalists "will be snatched from their hands by the stirrings from below which their efforts will only hasten." This revolutionary fatalism, certain that the SNP's nationalism was incubating a more radical variant, concluded with a prophecy of "the coming of the Workers Republic of Scotland."[742] Full of eccentric historical and political contortions, Easton's fusion of Celticism, republicanism and radicalism allowed for a relatively simple integration of revolutionary socialism and fundamentalist nationalism. By framing Scotland in intermingled ethnic and class terms, Easton was able to argue that Scottish nationalism was anti-imperialist, democratic and on a socialist trajectory, placing it squarely within the mainstream of national liberation struggles which could be justified within Marxist (and specifically Leninist) thinking.[743]

Beyond the dark corners of Glasgow pubs and densely typeset pamphlets and newsletters, the Celticist wing of Scottish republicanism could also find intellectual support in the more scholarly, albeit still controversial, work of Michael Hechter and James D. Young. Hechter's 1975 book *Internal Colonialism* applied its titular concept to the 'Celtic' peoples – including Scotland – of Britain and Ireland.[744] Hechter, an American, argued that he "had no particular emotional commitment to the peoples of these lands, and in fact, had never set foot in the British Isles."[745] Yet his choice of

[741] *Ibid*, pp.15-16.
[742] *Ibid*, pp.16-17.
[743] Michael Lowy, 'Marxists and the National Question', *New Left Review* 1:96 (March/April 1976), p.98
[744] Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).
[745] *Ibid,* p.xiii.

subject – for "intellectual, rather than … personal reasons" – had a clear political resonance in the mid-1970s, especially for the Scottish radical left.[746] Variants of the concept had previously been deployed by both Lenin and Gramsci to describe elements of Russian and Italian society, and during the 1960s it became "almost fashionable" in academic sociology as a way of framing the relationship between black and white Americans in the context of the civil rights struggle.[747] Hechter argued that the uneven development of capitalism within Britain created a situation of permanent inequality between England and its Celtic "fringe", in which a "cultural division of labour" emerged that kept the latter structurally subordinate to the former. Hechter rejected a "diffusion" model of economic development, which would see development spread from core to periphery; instead he described the relationship between England and the Celtic nations as exploitative, in a way that reinforced and reproduced distinctive and potentially conflicting national identities within a modern, integrated capitalist state.[748]

While Hechter argued that this had produced economic "stagnation" in Scotland, he also noted that Scotland was the least compatible nation with the broader theory, and later revised his analysis of Scottish nationalism in light of several empirical and theoretical criticisms.[749] In the original work, however, Scottish nationalism was given not just a degree of "materialist" grounding, but a potentially radical justification that linked it by the "colonial" analogy to a new wave of anti-colonial struggle across the world. Hechter's political conclusion – that "the absence of sovereignty had deleterious

[746] *Ibid*, p.xxvi.
[747] Robert J. Hind, 'The Internal Colonial Concept', *Comparative Studies in Society and history* 26:3 (1984), pp.544-547.
[748] Hechter, *Internal*, pp.32-38.
[749] *Ibid*, pp.xviii-xx.

effects in the periphery" – was a clear intellectual justification for Scottish nationalism.[750] So, too, was his suggestion that internal colonialism created a situation in which individuals were structurally encouraged to identify "primarily on the basis of their ethnicity rather than their social class."[751] The implication for socialists was that only by resolving the "ethnic" question through sovereignty could class make a more effective entry into politics.

James D. Young's *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class*, published in 1979, also began as doctoral research in 1968. It directly adopted Hechter's own argument, opening with the claim that "Scotland became an English cultural colony after the Reformation."[752] Young emphasised – like Norman Easton – the working-class character of Scottish nationhood, and the betrayal of that composite nation-class identity by Scotland's bourgeoisie: "Of all the Celtic nations within Britain, Scotland was the only one in which the English possessing classes had local allies who were willing to undertake the process of 'cultural pacification'."[753] Drawing heavily on Hechter's 'internal colonialism' model, Young's *Rousing* aimed to replicate E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* for Scotland, offering an explanation for the failure of the Scottish working class to develop a successful, independent radical politics of its own. This analysis of failure grated against Young's attempt to emphasise working-class agency and self-fashioning, resulting in a muddled combination of utopian optimism about working-class potential and fatalism about Anglicised Scottish culture.

[750] *Ibid*, p.xiv.
[751] *Ibid*, p.xv.
[752] James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p.11.
[753] *Ibid.*

The "making of the Scottish working class," Young argued, was shaped by three crucial elements. First, "Scots linguistic insecurity" and a "cultural vacuum," cultivated in the aftermath of the Scottish Reformation by "the Presbyterian contempt for the arts."[754] This reflected the particular influence of Edwin Muir, Young's Scottish literature tutor at Newbattle Abbey in Dalkeith, who saw the Reformation as a disaster for Scottish cultural identity, producing "desolation" where there had once been "a tribe, a family, a people."[755] Second, and relatedly, the "sexual repression" of Calvinist culture demonised the "natural" behaviours of working-class Scots, helping to justify the third element: the special authoritarianism of Scotland's ruling class, whose celebrated "Scottish Enlightenment" actually "articulated an obsessive awareness of its own provincial inferiority and backwardness."[756] This "total culture" – here, Young adopted a Gramscian emphasis on a hegemonised cultural totality – imprinted itself on the working class, whose development was thus stunted by "inarticulacy" and deference to a more modern, progressive England.[757] Though Young's title stressed the "rousing" of working-class radicalism, his argument was largely focused on explaining its failure into the twentieth century, placing the blame at the foot of the union with England and its supporters in Scotland, including the Labour Party, the CPGB and trade unions.[758] Where hope could be found, it was in "the customs and remnants" of "pre-industrial" Scotland, which had "survived the onslaught of the modernising and civilising mission of English metropolitan capitalism." This ensured

[754] *Ibid*, p.21.
[755] James D. Young, *Making Trouble: Autobiographical Explorations and Socialism* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1987), p.32; Douglas Gifford, 'Sham Bards of a Sham Nation: Edwin Muir and the Failures of Scottish Literature', *Studies in Scottish Literature* 35:1 (2007), p.340.
[756] Young, *Rousing*, p.21.
[757] *Ibid*, p.35.
[758] *Ibid*, pp.165, 222.

that “in comparative European terms this working class was unusually well-educated, literate, politically aware, sympathetic to republicanism and a ‘primitive’ socialist belief in the need for the equality of property.”[759] Again, Scottish radicals seeking to combine revolutionary socialism with nationalism were forced back in time, to pre-union, pre-industrial Scotland, to find a future for their own beliefs.

From the centenary of Connolly’s birth in 1968 to Young’s *Rousing* in 1979, the 1970s thus saw a symbolically potent combination of Celticism and revolutionary socialism sustain an especially militant wing of Scottish republican thought. This ‘Scottish Republican Socialism’ spanned print-culture, public commemoration and – however clumsy and clandestine – practical politics, and was remarkably consistent in its concerns: a common ‘Celtic’ ethnic experience, Scotland’s ‘colonised’ condition, working-class self-determination through revolutionary and extra-legal (even violent) political action, and the rediscovery of Scotland’s distinctive radical heritage. So long as it was confined to print-culture and public commemoration, Republican Socialism could coexist productively alongside more liberal, less ethnicised variants of republicanism, socialism and nationalism, embedding the compromises of the wider radical tradition within a utopian, heroic *mythos*.

Yet its recruits were too preoccupied with violence and clandestine activity to break through to the mainstream of the intelligentsia, never mind the general public. It developed away from the heart of the new intellectual radicalism in Edinburgh, and in a largely Anglophone culture it was too enthusiastic about historical fantasies of English colonisation and ‘pan-Celtic’ ethnicity to appeal beyond sympathisers of Irish

[759] *Ibid,* p.25.

republicanism. The future it promised – of a culturally revanchist "Scottish Workers' Republic" – was too dependent on an eccentric and moralistic 'recovery' of Scotland's past that implicitly patronised the Scottish working class as having been brainwashed by English culture. While it may have been an appealing source of "emotional fuel," as Lindsay Paterson describes Scottish radicalism's contribution to Scottish constitutional politics, it was a recipe for political self-marginalisation.[760] It was when the new Scottish radicalism sought to move from print-culture into politics that liberal republicanism overwhelmed its more revolutionary sibling.

## Jacobins or Girondins?: Liberal Republicanism

In 1989, Neal Ascherson appeared to resign himself to the passing of the republican tradition in the Scottish edition of *The Observer*, writing "I don't think, now, that there will ever be a Scottish Republic."[761] By "a Scottish Republic," Ascherson really meant revolutionary socialism, reflecting the entanglement of the republican and socialist traditions over the previous decades. His pessimism also reflected the scepticism about working-class radicalism discussed in the previous chapter. Recalling a conversation with "a senior figure in the Labour movement," Ascherson explained that

> After listening patiently to me, the senior figure observed that my picture of the scene was a wee bit exaggerated. 'I wouldn't put too much trust in how revolutionary and proletarian the Scottish workers are. When it comes down to it, most people are just social democrats really.'[762]

[760] Lindsay Paterson, *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p.2.
[761] Neal Ascherson, 'Clype by any other name', *The Observer* (August 27th, 1989), p.8.
[762] *Ibid.*

The vague "democratic socialism" of the Labour Party had, Ascherson suggested, conclusively outlived "Leninism: the dictatorship of the proletariat, the war on the class enemy, the Socialist Republic of the old dream." Ascherson's disillusionment – though he was never fully "Leninist" – with this old dream stemmed in part from familiarity with Eastern and Central Europe (especially Poland) acquired during his time as a foreign correspondent. There, the failures of Leninism were becoming even more pronounced as 'Communist' governments faced new waves of popular protest:

> Seeing more evidence of how badly the old dream went wrong there, I begin to admit that Scotland may have been spared something. Specifically, spared a drive into the desert with its own worst nature at the wheel ... The vision of a Scottish Socialist Republic – John Maclean's country – is the vision of a nation cleansed of pettiness, swinging the hammer of justice. And rather than let the vision be poisoned by the clypers, desk-bullies, and agents of Stalinism, most Scottish revolutionaries would prefer to die. I am relieved that they never were offered the choice.[763]

While this suggests a conclusive abandonment of the socialism of "Jacobin centralisation" Ascherson proposed in 1975, the departure from republicanism itself was more rhetorical than real. Responding to Ascherson on the *Observer*'s letters page, Ian O. Bayne – a former FSN member and SNP candidate, and a kenspeckle figure amongst the nationalist left – wrote that he "agreed with much of substance" of Ascherson's piece, but was "surprised that he seems to equate a narrowly Socialist

[763] *Ibid.*

Republicanism with the wider, and more 'liberal', Republican tradition."[764] There was, Bayne argued, "a lot more covert sympathy for the broad Republican tradition in Scotland than is superficially apparent." Arguing that republicanism was "an invention of the bourgeoisie and not of 'the peasantry' and still less of 'the workers'," he stressed the gradualist character of the Scottish tradition:

> Scotland's peculiarly moderate breed of Jacobins, or rather Girondins, are not dead yet – as distinct from our Jacobins; though most of us realise, as we wait for the Promised Land, the prior necessity of achieving a modicum of even 'monarchical' self-government as an essential basis for further political advance.[765]

Over the previous decades, Bayne had himself played a role in articulating this "liberal republican tradition" as a distinctly Scottish one. While he did not enjoy the status of Nairn or Ascherson, he is significant here as one of the most consistent advocates of a form of Scottish republicanism that came to predominate within the radical left. He was also more comfortable spelling out its liberal and reformist political implications than other radicals. This republicanism was not defined by mere opposition to monarchy, but by a demand for popular sovereignty as an alternative relationship between state and people.[766] This distinguished it from the British republican tradition which, Antony Taylor argues,

[764] Ian O. Bayne, letter to the editor, *The Observer* (September 3rd, 1989). p.14.
[765] *Ibid.*
[766] Jackson, *Case*, p.85.

> differed from republicanism proper as it existed in France, by its failure to create an actual blue-print for non-monarchical forms of government, and relied instead upon lampoons and squibs to de-mystify monarchy and ridicule its pretensions to the political and moral leadership of the nation.[767]

The Scottish republicanism outlined by Bayne, both tacitly and overtly, was more 'constitutionalist' than this British tradition, and found authentication in the (often mythologised) rediscovery of social movements and political ideas from Scottish history. Yet the more militant, 'Jacobin' components of this republicanism were largely confined to a memorialised past, supplying a heroic and at times melodramatic pedigree for a more compromising and "gradualist" present. In 1969, Bayne was a founding member and the first secretary of the 1820 Commemoration Committee, which became the 1820 Society. This aimed "to create a new awareness of the radical current in Scottish politics, which, tracing its ancestry to the movements inspired by the French and American Revolutions of the 18th Century, still forms a vital element in Scottish life today."[768]

The 'rising' of 1820, in which a week of strikes and protests culminated in a small, poorly-coordinated attempt at armed insurrection that was swiftly crushed, became a significant historical reference point for the radical left's engagement with Scottish nationhood from the 1960s onward.[769] It was the subject of a pamphlet by the SNP

[767] Antony Taylor, '*Reynold's Newspaper*, opposition to monarchy and the radical anti-jubilee: Britain's anti-monarchist tradition reconsidered,' *Historical Research* 68 (1995), p.319.
[768] 1820 Society advert, *Crann-Tàra* 5 (Winter 1978), p.19.
[769] Gordon Pentland, ''Betrayed by Infamous Spies'? The Commemoration of Scotland's 'Radical War' of 1820', *Past & Present* 201 (2008), pp.169-170.

member and lawyer Frank Sherry in 1968, *The Rising of 1820*, with a foreword by Winnie Ewing, and received a fuller historical study the following year by Peter Berresford Ellis and Seumas Mac a'Ghobhainn in *The Scottish Insurrection of 1820*.[770] Both publications were politically nationalist, and tailored their accounts of the 'rising' accordingly. Gordon Pentland has questioned nationalist readings of 1820, emphasising the implied "unionism" of the rising's aim to "reform … British political institutions."[771] He argues that the political "usability of 1820 was enhanced by its leaving, like William Wallace, precious little in the way of documentary information on actions and intentions."[772]

The radical left also reached further back to the 1790s for inspiration, celebrating the 'Jacobin' United Scotsmen and 'martyrs' of a suppressed protest wave in 1793-4: in August 1968, a commemoration at the 'martyrs' monument' at Calton Cemetery in Edinburgh attracted the veteran left-nationalist Douglas Young (also a key figure in the Scottish Arts Council); the CND activist and SNP parliamentary candidate Keith Bovey; Labour Party councillor (and future Edinburgh Lord Provost) Jack Kane; and Matt Lygate of the WPS(ML).[773] As with nationalist appropriations of the 1820 rising, there was a strong element of myth-construction, as John D. Brims notes: "The links between some of these modern day radicals and the 'Jacobins' are tenuous to say the least. Nationalism was the political creed of only a small minority of 'Jacobins', while socialist ideas attracted minimal support."[774] Nevertheless, Brims continues, "there is

[770] Frank Andrew Sherry, *The rising of 1820* (Glasgow: Maclellan, 1968); Peter Berresford Ellis, Seumas Mac a'Ghobhainn, *The Scottish insurrection of 1820* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1970).
[771] Gordon Pentland, *The Spirit of the Union: Popular Politics in Scotland, 1815-1820* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), p.3.
[772] *Ibid*, p.144.
[773] John D. Brims, 'The Scottish democratic movement in the age of the French Revolution', PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh (1983), p.591.
[774] *Ibid.*

a strong political tradition linking modern working class radicalism with the 'Jacobins'," emphasising anti-imperialism, national self-determination, internationalism, democracy and individual rights, anti-corruption and secularism, anti-landlordism and an "emphasis upon the value of political education and organisation."[775]

This outline of the 'republican' and radically *liberal* continuities of "working class radicalism" has been echoed by Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid in relation to British Chartism and its continuities with later labour movement activism. They argue that in the Victorian era, "popular radicals and intellectual liberals alike stressed that individual liberty had a meaning only within the collective identity provided by local self-governing units."[776] This same principle can be found throughout the radical left's engagements with Scottish nationhood. So, too, can the conflict which Reid and Biagini identify between this liberal radical tradition and a more "materialist," class-based vision of history.[777]

Bayne's republicanism provides a clear example of this. In 1975, Bayne contributed a critique of the playwright John McGrath and his theatre company, 7:84, to *Q* magazine, praising *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* for opening "a dialogue…between the Scottish Left on the one hand and the inveterately bourgeois-democratic S.N.P. on the other."[778] Bayne's focus, however, was on McGrath's latest production, "The Game's a Bogey," which dramatised the life of John Maclean. It was, on the one hand, "a stirring tribute to one of the most incorruptible spirits ever to grace

[775] *Ibid.*
[776] Eugenio F. Biagini, Alastair J. Reid, 'Currents of radicalism, 1850-1914', in Biagini and Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.9.
[777] *Ibid*, pp.3-4.
[778] Ian Bayne, 'Ideology and 7:84', *Q* 3 (December 1975), p.17.

to Scottish political scene"; yet "its political impact was minimal for the simple reason that it failed to take account of the changes that have taken place in Scottish – and indeed in British – society since the heyday of Red Clydeside."[779] By this he meant the relative security of the working class, protected by the welfare state and the rights of the labour movement, which he believed had taken some of the revolutionary pressure out of politics since the interwar era. This, he continued, justified the broad, pragmatic and less class-based appeal for which McGrath regularly condemned the SNP. "Gradualism may not always be inevitable," Bayne wrote, "but the canny Scottish electors are much more likely to follow the S.N.P.'s social – or bourgeois – democratic route to self-government than to plunge down the blind alley of pseudo-revolutionary orthodoxy."[780] Bayne sought to defend "bourgeois democratic" constitutionalism on "radical" grounds; the republican tradition – implicit in the promise of "self-government" – was the means by which Scottish radicals could cling to their radicalism in spite of this divergence from "pseudo-revolutionary orthodoxy."

Thanks to its historical precedence, liberal republicanism permitted a more expansive framework for political radicalism than either socialism or nationalism alone, a common root for both traditions to coalesce around. Bayne was a prominent contributor to *Crann-Tàra*, whose emphasis on shared "roots" he was able to reinforce with various tradition-building efforts in its pages, and both he and the magazine's editor Norman Easton were involved with the 1820 Society. In an article spread over two issues, Bayne sought to incorporate the early Labour Party into this tradition, countering the arguments of other nationalists that Labour's early support for Scottish

[779] *Ibid.*
[780] *Ibid,* p.18.

home rule was motivated by electoral expediency. They were, he argued, inspired by figures like Keir Hardie, Gavin Brown Clark and Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, who saw a Scottish Parliament as vital for Scottish social reform.[781] He praised the ILP MP George Buchanan's 1924 Home Rule bill as "the most radical measure of Scottish Home Rule amounting in fact to "Dominion status" ever proposed in the House of Commons." This was perhaps another hint of Bayne's gradualist sympathies, for Buchanan had comfortably defeated John Maclean in the Glasgow Gorbals seat at the 1922 General Election.[782] Bayne's liberal republicanism was pluralist enough to include more moderate constitutional reformers too: amongst his own contemporaries in the Labour Party, he singled out only John P. Mackintosh, a figure on the right of the party, as a "brave devolutionary spirit."[783]

Mackintosh had died in office months before Bayne's article was published, and after his death an annual memorial lecture was established in his name. Seven years later, just three years before his pessimism about a "Scottish Republic," Ascherson delivered the Mackintosh memorial lecture himself, titled 'Ancient Britons and the Republican Dream.' The lecture was printed in full in *Radical Scotland*, which introduced it as "one of the most important political statements to have been made in Scotland in recent years."[784] Ascherson celebrated Mackintosh as "an enlightenment man, certain that the power of rebellious reason could overcome."[785] He linked Scottish nationalism with a gradualist road to socialism through liberal republicanism,

[781] Ian Bayne, 'English-ridden, capitalist-ridden, landlord-ridden Scotland', *Crann-Tàra* 4 (Autumn 1978), p.14.
[782] David Howell, *A Lost Left: Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), p.221.
[783] Ian Bayne, 'English-ridden, capitalist-ridden, landlord-ridden Scotland' pt.II *Crann-Tàra* 5 (Winter 1978), pp.18-19.
[784] Neal Ascherson, 'Ancient Britons and the Republican Dream', *Radical Scotland* 18 (December-January 1986), p.36.
[785] *Ibid.*

celebrating Scotland's "militant individualism" and criticising the British "ancien regime" which rendered "the subject…almost helpless before the huge extension of state power" since 1945.[786] This "archaic political society" was not challenged by Labour's "debased economic Jacobinism," which put centralised economic transformation ahead of individual citizenship, founded on an outdated fidelity to class politics.[787] Labour had found no new, mass political subject to challenge the myth-bound popular conformism which he saw underpinning Thatcherism's hegemony. The left, he argued, should begin to speak "in the name of the people," in pursuit of

> a genuine revolution into modernity whose mission is not to reproduce the Jacobin state but to overcome and break down the Ancient British state, to liberate the nations of the United Kingdom, to construct coherent institutions in the name of popular sovereignty which guarantee the rights of the citizen against the executive, to clear the ground for economic and social progress.[788]

This vision of republicanism as "clear[ing] the ground" is significant, for it reflected a turn towards constitutional change as a precondition of radicalism within the Scottish radical imagination that was also present in Bayne's argument for the "prior necessity" of "monarchical" independence. The formerly 'Jacobin' Ascherson's gradualist turn was nevertheless given a degree of radical legitimation by its "revolutionary" framing. This took it away from the spirit of Mackintosh's own thinking on devolution however, which had been comfortable with slow, improvisational and uneven constitutional

[786] *Ibid*, p.37.
[787] *Ibid*, p.39.
[788] *Ibid*, p.40.

reform. Mackintosh had preferred the centrifugal dynamics of benevolent devolution and de-centralisation to the more ruptural, populist "liberation" of the UK's nations outlined by Ascherson.[789]

Ben Jackson suggests that Ascherson and Mackintosh, as well as Nairn and many other left-wing nationalists, can nevertheless be understood as part of a British-wide tradition of "republican social democracy" outlined by David Marquand and embodied in the 'Charter 88' movement for British constitutional reform established in 1988.[790] This was heavily influenced, as Jackson notes, by the Scottish Constitutional Convention and the wider Scottish debate over devolution.[791] The attempt to generate a more modern and progressive *British* constitutional identity was met at the border, however, by a stubbornly Scottish framing of a very similar politics. The Scottish radical imagination articulated its own nationalist republicanism, drawing equally on native historical narratives of subaltern republicanism, prophecies of British break-up and a critique of Britain's own "helpless", class-bound political subjectivities. In doing so, it also provided a radical, romantic authentication to the disappearance of social revolution from its horizons. This closure of Scottish radicalism's political horizons was not, however, a purely intellectual development; it was driven by events beyond the reach of pens and printing presses, in a more coercive realm of life where the imaginative pluralism generated between pamphlets, books and magazines was harder to sustain. Moving from print into politics, the rest of this chapter will explore

[789] Graham Walker, 'John P. Mackintosh, devolution and the union', *Parliamentary Affairs* 66:3 (2013), pp.557-578.
[790] Ben Jackson, 'A union of hearts? Republican social democracy and Scottish nationalism', in Hans Schattle and Jeremy Nuttall, *Making Social Democrats: Citizens, Mindsets, Realities: Essays for David Marquand* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp.161-174.
[791] *Ibid*, p.165.

the more direct political engagements that gave liberal republicanism its appeal as the most plausible resolution of the radical left's imaginative dilemmas.

## From Print to Politics: *The Red Paper on Scotland*

Scottish radicalism's transition from print into politics began with *The Red Paper on Scotland*, edited by Gordon Brown and published by Edinburgh University Student Publications Board in 1975. This drew together Scotland's left-wing intelligentsia like no other publication of the decade, albeit – largely reflecting that intelligentsia – with the glaring absence of any women. Brown had begun his studies at Edinburgh in October 1967, when students were discovering a new, politicised identity for themselves and demanding greater involvement in university governance. By 1970, he was part of a radical challenge to the university administration, whose investments in apartheid South Africa were exposed by *The Student,* of which Brown was news editor. Brown became chair of the EUSPB and the Labour Club, while campaigning for greater student representation on the university court and a student rector. Brown's predecessor at EUSPB, Jonathan Wills, became Edinburgh's first student rector in 1971 with Brown's backing. After beginning a PhD on interwar socialism in Scotland, Brown himself stood for – and overwhelmingly won – the rectorship in 1972. Paul Routledge suggests that Brown was not as excitably radical as many of his peers, taking a cautious approach to tactics like sit-ins and questioning the potential of the UCS work-in when reporting on it for *The Student*.[792]

The *Red Paper* is now seen as little more than a historical curiosity. Ewen Cameron argues that it was important not in terms of public influence, which he suggests was

[792] Paul Routledge, *Gordon Brown: The Biography* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1998), pp.42-63.

minimal, but in its presentation of "a view which was not prominent in the debate over devolution; it stands as a potential starting point… for a more wide-ranging discussion of Scottish politics and society which never took place."[793] Yet while this discussion may have been absent from the "extensive Parliamentary debates and acres of newsprint devoted to devolution,"[794] the *Red Paper* built upon a discourse which was already emerging in an important space outside of the daily print media and Parliament, through which Scottish intellectuals were forging an identity around their ability to provide the "more wide-ranging" discussion of Scotland's past, present and future that was missing elsewhere.

Under Brown's stewardship the *Red Paper* became not just a clear public expression of this intelligentsia, but the point at which it turned its gaze away from its own conditions of possibility and towards formal politics and policy detail.[795] Brown was crucial to this shift. He was a cautious, strategically-minded student radical, preoccupied with problems of governance over revolution, with one foot at the centre of the new radical publishing scene and the other in Labour politics. He had been involved with party activism since Robin Cook's 1970 campaign in Edinburgh Central, and was briefly touted as a candidate for Edinburgh South in the October 1974 election.[796] In an early list of proposed *Red Paper* contributors, members of the *Scottish International* scene like Bob Tait, Ray Burnett, David Gow and Colin Kirkwood mingled with Labour Party operators like Cook, Jim Sillars and Brian Wilson, as well as Communists Jimmy Reid and John Foster (though Reid had by this point just left

[793] Cameron, *Impaled,* pp.316-317.
[794] *Ibid.*
[795] Jackson, *Case*, pp.98-100.
[796] Routledge, *Brown*, p.67.

the Communist Party and would join Labour a year later). A strong sense of the 'Scottish Radical Cultural Tradition' was supposed to be expressed in articles from MacDiarmid, David Craig, John McGrath and Hamish Henderson.[797] However, the finished product was missing some of these key names, with Reid, Wilson, MacDiarmid and Henderson all absent. Most of the articles were focused not on cultural politics but on a mixture of policy, party politics and the detailed 'mapping' of Scottish society from a socialist perspective.

In his introduction, Brown lamented that "the great debate on Scotland's future … has hardly been a debate at all."[798] He staked out a strikingly instrumental attitude towards the constitutional question, intended to assert some independence for the left within the debate:

> Scottish socialists can not support a strategy for independence which postpones the question of meeting urgent social and economic needs until the day after independence - but nor can they give unconditional support to maintaining the integrity of the United Kingdom - and all that that entails - without any guarantee of radical social change; the question is not one of structures not of territorial influence, but of democracy - how working people in Scotland can increase the control they have over the decisions which shape their lives and the wealth they alone produce - and in doing so aid the struggle for a shift of power to working people elsewhere.[799]

[797] Letter from Gordon Brown to John McEwen, 29th October 1974. Perth & Kinross Archive MS164/5/437.
[798] Gordon Brown, 'Introduction: The Socialist Challenge', in Brown (ed.), *Red* Paper, p.7.
[799] *Ibid*, p.8.

Brown sought to draw attention away from national identity itself, which he portrayed as an expression of deeper questions, chiefly "the uneven and uncontrolled development of capitalism and the failure of successive governments to challenge and transform it."[800] He nevertheless acknowledged that Scotland faced distinctive territorial problems, arguing that "the Scottish economy is perhaps more subject to the influence of multinationals than any other similar industrial country."[801] This view reflected the influential argument of John Firn elsewhere in the *Red Paper* that Scotland was becoming a "branch-plant" economy, posing particular problems for the relationship between democracy and economic control.[802] Yet Brown nevertheless disputed the "pessimism" of Nairn's *Red Paper* contribution for its suggestion that "nationalism may now be unstoppable."[803] This he argued, reflected a failure of governments to extend democracy into wider society. This failure could be reversed through political struggle, rather than constituting an inevitable historical development. While Brown's introduction sang, at times, with a socialist-humanist emphasis on agency, it also hinted at the easy interchangeability of intellectual radicalism with top-down paternalism. "The Scottish Labour movement is uniquely placed today to convert the present discontent into a demand for socialism," he concluded, suggesting that a Scottish Assembly combined with UK-wide socialist policies would more directly meet the needs of the people than independence.[804] Brown's pluralist curation of Scotland's radical intelligentsia was subtly founded on a political imagination with Labour party politics and gradual constitutional adaptation at its centre.

[800] *Ibid.*
[801] *Ibid*, p.13.
[802] John Firn, 'External Control and Regional Policy', in Brown (ed.), *Red Paper*, pp.153-169.
[803] *Ibid*, p.17.
[804] *Ibid*, p.19.

This was distinct from the rest of the *Red Paper*'s contributions, many of which erred towards a more ambitious, even utopian political radicalism. David Gow's chapter stressed the importance of an internationalist perspective, articulating a vision of socialist world-government with power arranged confederally, flowing up through local, regional and national democracies. This drew some of its optimism from European integration, and suggested that Scottish nationalism could also contribute, but not if it remained preoccupied with simply adding another bourgeois state to a disorganised global order.[805] Tom Nairn's chapter was characteristically critical of Scottish identity, but also suggested that Scottish nationalism could be redeemed within a more integrated Europe, whose "interdependence" would allow it to avoid the defensiveness against "enemies and competitors in the development jungle" that threatened to "force it in upon itself."[806] These high-flying contributions, self-consciously occupying a radically cosmopolitan political imaginary, coexisted with more down to earth, analytical chapters from more practically-minded experts like John Firn and John McEwen. The latter's detailed study of land ownership in Scotland inspired further reporting on BBC Scotland's 'Current Account' current affairs television programme and a feature on land ownership in the *Sunday Mail*.[807]

Party politics was the focus of chapters by Ray Burnett and Bob Tait, but while Burnett polemicised against the SNP, Tait provided a more positive assessment of the party.[808] Tait was, alongside Owen Dudley Edwards, one of only two SNP members to contribute to the *Red Paper*, having joined earlier in the decade. Tait's argument is

[805] David Gow, 'Devolution and democracy', in Brown (ed.), *Red Paper*, pp.7-21.
[806] Tom Nairn, 'Old Nationalism and New Nationalism', in Brown (ed.), *Red Paper*, p.51.
[807] Letter from Gordon Brown to John McEwen, July 18th 1975, Perth & Kinross Archive MS164/5/437.
[808] Ray Burnett, 'Socialists and the SNP', in Brown (ed.), *Red Paper*, pp.108-124; John McGrath, 'Scotland: Up Against It', in Brown (ed.), *Red Paper*, pp.149-163; Bob Tait, 'The Left, the SNP and Oil', in Brown (ed.), *Red Paper*, pp.125-133.

especially significant as a clear foreshadowing – heavily influenced by Nairn – of the direction of travel of Scottish radicalism over the following decade, arguing for Scottish nationalism not on the grounds of its intrinsic socialist potential but as a means of creating the "preconditions" under which socialism could be pursued.[809] The SNP's electoral success, he argued, was "a constant reminder of theoretical and practical problems that stare the Scottish Left in the face," especially the self-imposed "dilemma" between socialism and nationalism. For Tait, "neo-nationalism" represented a protest against "people's desperate sense of vulnerability to the concentration of economic power … backed up by increasingly centralised and harmonised political power." The SNP, in demanding the break-up of this power, offered a form of "disturbance" of the "nexus of state machines that give [international monopoly finance capital] maximum scope for operation." Released from this "nexus," socialists would be able to fight for greater democratic control of the economy again.[810]

This potential had been reinforced, according to Tait, by several developments in Scotland: oil had transformed the economic feasibility of independence; European integration had allowed new international prospects for "socialist devolutionary policies" to emerge; and the growing imbalance between Scottish and English voting behaviour – Scotland moving to Labour, England moving to the Conservatives – had left an especially left-wing Scottish labour movement without adequate representation in the state.[811] While Nairn's influence on Tait is clear, Tait was in fact seeking to articulate a distinct position from Nairn, with whom he had recently struck up a friendship. In a letter to Hamish Henderson in May 1974, Tait reported that Brown had

[809] Tait, 'Left', p.125.
[810] *Ibid.*
[811] *Ibid*, pp.127-133.

requested a chapter from him on the media in Scotland. Feeling that he had no time to properly research it, Tait proposed instead

> an alternative position to the one [Nairn] takes as regards the left & Scottish Nationalism … so far as I can see from the list of contributors he sent me, no one is quite going to grasp the thistle I have in mind: viz. The problem of how the left in Scotland can struggle out from under the dead weight of the Labour Party and develop an *effective* socialist-devolutionary programme inside *or* outside the SNP.[812]

The difference from Nairn here, whose views on nationalism were undergoing a rapid evolution, was overstated; both were increasingly in agreement that some kind of Scottish nationalism was a necessary "precondition" of further socialist politics. But unlike Nairn, who remained largely aloof from party politics, Tait was pursuing this through the SNP. The "dilemma" of how to politically *organise* the Scottish radical left, beyond books, magazines and conferences, was moving to the centre of its intellectual development. Tait and Nairn, along with several other *Red Paper* contributors, soon attempting to resolve this dilemma in the SLP.

In 2000, Fraser MacDonald and Andy Cumbers – lecturers in cultural geography at Edinburgh University and economic geography at Glasgow University respectively – organised a conference remembering the *Red Paper* at Aberdeen University. Papers from the conference by Nairn and Ascherson were published in *Scottish Affairs*, and

[812] Letter from Bob Tait to Hamish Henderson, 23rd May 1974. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/24/5.

another by MacDonald and Cumbers in *Soundings* journal.[813] All three offered tragic narratives of the *Red Paper*, emphasising above all the trajectory of its editor, who was by then the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer, seemingly happy – in Nairn's words – to be "the worthy side-kick" of the USA's "Neo-liberal economism."[814] For Ascherson the *Red Paper*'s authors, hoping for socialism via devolution and European regionalism, had picked "the wrong vehicle for the job."[815] MacDonald and Cumbers, praising the book's radically democratic policy agenda, concluded that "the socialism of Brown's youth has not so much lost the argument but been dropped from the political question."[816]

The emphasis of these essays on the *Red Paper*'s wider context, stressing international and domestic politics, nevertheless overlooked the more personal, particular concern that drove its production. This was the consolidation of Scotland's radical intelligentsia into some kind of form that could intervene directly, collectively, in the debate over socialism, nationalism, and the constitutional future. The existence of such an intelligentsia, and its ability to intervene on its own terms, was itself a sign of the remarkable success of the project that began with *Scottish International*. The new Scottish radical imagination had based itself on the idea that Scotland required a more coherent *intellectual* radicalism before any further change could happen. In both content and form, the *Red Paper* was a sign that things could move to a new, more openly political stage.

[813] Tom Nairn, 'Deserted by History: in Memory of the Red Paper on Scotland, 1975', *Scottish Affairs* 44 (Summer 2003), pp.18-30; Neal Ascherson, 'The Outward Impact of Devolution', *Scottish Affairs* 44 (Summer 2003), pp.7-17; Fraser MacDonald, Andy Cumbers, 'When Brown was Red', *Soundings* 20 (Summer 2002), pp.64-78.
[814] Nairn, 'Deserted', p.20.
[815] Ascherson, 'Outward', p.17.
[816] MacDonald, Cumbers, 'Brown', p.78.

## A Party of Print: The Scottish Labour Party

In her review of the *Red Paper* for the *Scots Independent* in June 1975, the left-leaning SNP National Executive member Isobel Lindsay criticised the "blinkered vision" of Brown and other authors who portrayed the SNP as "bourgeois and conservative." She defended her own party as a "reforming democratic" force in Scottish politics which could also claim credit for stimulating Brown *et al*'s acceptance of "the inevitability – even the desirability – of a Scottish Parliament."[817] For Lindsay, only the SNP could genuinely claim to represent this turn towards a distinctly Scottish radicalism:

> If Ray Burnett and others of like mind manage to produce a party reflecting their political ideals which succeeds in getting the support of the Scottish public, we will follow its fortunes with interest. As yet this party exists only in print.[818]

Radicals in the SNP sought to emphasise this point the following year with the publication of *The Radical Approach*. Yet this was overshadowed by a more significant development, inadvertently prophesied by Lindsay. In December 1975, the Scottish Labour Party (SLP) was formed under the leadership of Jim Sillars, the Labour MP for South Ayrshire, in protest at the lack of powers for the Scottish Assembly proposed by the government's White Paper on devolution, *Our Changing Democracy*.[819] Aiming, in Henry Drucker's words, "to seize 'Socialism' from Labour and 'Scotland' from the

[817] Isobel Lindsay, 'Red-rimmed eyes on Scotland and the SNP', *Scots Independent* (June 1975), p.5.
[818] *Ibid.*
[819] John Kerr, 'New Scottish Labour Party will strive for economic control', *The Guardian* (December 23rd, 1975), p.4.

SNP," the SLP generated considerable excitement amongst the writers and activists of the new, increasingly nationalist intellectual left in Scotland.[820] While the party disappeared by the early 1980s, the membership list of the Edinburgh branch alone now reads as a well-populated who's-who of Scottish intellectual life in that decade and beyond: Tom Nairn, Hamish Henderson, Rory Watson, Ronnie Turnbull, Craig Beveridge, Alan Spence, Neal Ascherson, George Kerevan, Carol Craig and Lindsay Paterson all passed through the party's increasingly fractious ranks.[821] Outside Edinburgh, other figures of the print-cultural left were members, from Bob Tait and Ray Burnett to Norman Easton and James D. Young.

Why did so many intellectuals join the SLP? As this thesis has argued, by the middle of the 1970s the Scottish radical imagination was characterised by a growing self-confidence about intellectuals' capacity to understand and intervene in Scottish politics. They had reimagined their role not as organic representatives of the working class, but as 'outsiders within' capable of articulating together the diverse components of a "missing constituency" in Scottish politics that could break out of its stultifying myths and binaries. These ideas developed through the publications and events of a radical print-culture, but radical intellectuals were also aware of the limits of this form of organisation when it came to direct political influence. The SLP offered a means of addressing these limits.

[820] Drucker, *Breakaway*, p.59.
[821] Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Membership List (No Date), National Library of Scotland Manuscripts Collection Acc.7472/4; Letter from Alan Spence to Colin Boyd [secretary of SLP Edinburgh Branch], 25th January 1978, NLS Acc.7472/4.

First, it promised the convergence of socialism and Scottish nationhood – into a distinctive "Scottish Socialism" – that dominated the radical left's political horizon. At its opening meeting in Glasgow in January 1976, Sillars argued that the party would be "the natural inheritors of the principles and philosophy of Keir Hardie, James Maxton, and Tom Johnston, who had once made Scotland a shining example of what socialism should be."[822] For the radical intelligentsia, sensitive at all times to the threat of myth and self-delusion, the key ingredient to this was plausible authenticity. Sillars could, at one point, have been an unlikely candidate to lead such a party, having made his name in the Labour Party as the "hammer of the nats." He had argued forcefully against Scottish nationalism and devolution after Winnie Ewing's victory in Hamilton, and produced a pamphlet with the Midlothian MP Alex Eadie titled *Don't Butcher Scotland's Future*.[823] Yet he also had deep symbolic links to the Scottish socialist tradition he claimed to represent. Crucially, he claimed the kind of 'organic' connection to working class Scotland which the radical left had drifted away from, writing in his 1985 autobiography that "I don't claim to speak for the Scottish working class. I speak for myself as one of them."[824]

Sillars' links to his party, nation, region and class were all especially resonant. He won his South Ayrshire seat in a by-election in 1970 after the death of Emrys Hughes, the son-in-law of Keir Hardie and editor from 1924 to 1948 of the legendary 'Red Clydeside' journal *Forward*, which had been founded by Tom Johnston.[825] Sillars had worked for the STUC, and quickly turned towards a more nationalist stance upon

[822] John Kerr, 'Scots queue for new party', *The Guardian* (January 19th, 1976), p.1.
[823] Drucker, *Breakaway*, pp.13-15.
[824] Jim Sillars, *Scotland: The Case for Optimism* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1986), p.80.
[825] Sillars, *Scotland*, p.32; William Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-1939: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1984), pp.144-158.

entering parliament, becoming "appalled at the indifference shown to Scottish affairs." This led to regular discussions with an informal group known as the "Watchdog Committee," which monitored – and increasingly sought to influence – Labour's growing interest in devolution.[826] The other members were the MPs Alex Eadie, John Robertson and Harry Ewing, all of whom were – unlike another Labour devolutionist, John P. Mackintosh – from working class backgrounds. There was also Alex Neil, Labour's senior Scottish researcher and another Ayrshire native, and several prominent Scottish journalists.[827] Two of the most influential figures in this circle were Bob Brown and Hamish MacKinven, who had spent much of their lives in the space between journalism and Labour Party politics, where they had become well-acquainted with Tom Johnston. MacKinven had worked with Johnston at the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, and had been a regular contributor to *Forward* under Hughes' editorship.[828] Brown and MacKinven provided Sillars with a particular connection to what he viewed as a more principled and authentic Scottish Labour tradition; the party shared its name with the Scottish Labour Party formed in 1888, led by Hardie and R.B. Cunninghame Graham, and its internal journal was named *Forward*.

Sillars' break from Labour was inspired by his desire for an authenticity that was both class-based and national, which he felt had been especially betrayed by Labour with the White Paper on devolution. He had collaborated with John P. Mackintosh on a Scottish election broadcast for Labour in the final week of the October 1974 election,

[826] Bob Brown, in Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Voices of Scottish Journalists: Recollections by 22 veteran Scottish journalists of their life and work* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2013), p.213.
[827] Drucker, *Breakaway*, pp.21-22; Brown, in MacDougall (ed.), *Voices*, p.213; Sillars, *Scotland*, pp.36-45.
[828] Hamish MacKinven, in Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Voices From Work and Home: Personal Recollections of Working Life and Labour Struggles in the Twentieth Century by Scots Men and Women* (Edinburgh, Mercat Press, 2000), pp.465-568.

in which they promised substantial economic powers for a prospective Assembly.[829] Brown and MacKinven had produced a Scottish "general election sheet" for the party, featuring a centre page spread that promised a "Powerhouse for Scotland."[830] When the White Paper was launched offering minimal economic powers, Sillars not only had his remaining expectations dashed, but risked the appearance of having betrayed a promise to his class. Explaining his resignation to his election agent Jim Tanner, Sillars emphasised the importance of "idealism and integrity" to his politics, and his disgust at "the twisting and turning" of an "insincere" Labour Party.[831] It was this need to maintain the authenticity of his class-based representative status that drove him out of Labour and into the SLP, in "a rush downhill with all the blood flooding the head".[832] Robertson joined him a month later.[833]

At the SLP's founding meeting, *The Guardian* reported Sillars declaring that "the Scottish Labour Party was necessary because the old Labour Party, once a magnificent institution, had been debauched by careerism. Its idealism had been quenched by "Wilsonian pragmatism" and the politics of defeat practised on the people of Scotland."[834] Despite his praise for "the old Labour," Sillars' critique of "British Labour" echoed the attacks of more localised interwar radicals on the party, described by Malcolm Petrie as "moralistic denunciations of the corrupt nature of national politics."[835] As the previous chapter argued, this pursuit of a more authentic

[829] Sillars, *Scotland*, pp.46-48.
[830] Brown, in MacDougall (ed.), *Journalists*, p.213.
[831] *Ibid*, p.55.
[832] *Ibid*, p.57.
[833] 'Another MP joins Labour rebels', *The Guardian* (January 16th, 1976), p.1.
[834] John Kerr, 'Scots queue for new party', *The Guardian* (January 19th, 1976), p.1.
[835] Malcolm Petrie, ''Contests of Vital Importance': by-elections, the Labour Party, and the re-shaping of British radicalism, 1924-1929', *The Historical Journal* 60:1 (March 2017), p.145.

relationship between class, nation, radicalism and party was increasingly at odds with the changing nature of politics, culture and society.

Indeed, the party quietly acknowledged this when it helped to differentiate them from British Labour. Alex Neil, a close ally of Sillars in Ayrshire who had also left Labour to become the SLP's national secretary, argued in June 1976 that Labour were ignoring Scotland's ongoing social transformation. In an article for the long-standing English periodical *Contemporary Review*, he suggested that as people moved into New Towns, and drifted from the west coast to the east coast, they were also acquiring new tastes – homeownership, for instance – and making "independent political decisions for themselves rather than simply continuing to vote as their parents did."[836] Nationalism was not thriving, as British Labour believed, amidst poverty, unemployment and deprivation, but from "those sections of Scottish society which are relatively better off than the average family, but whose aspirations and expectations have outpaced the increase in their standard of living."[837] While this could explain the rise of support for the SNP, however, there was little analysis of how it connected to the SLP's socialism, beyond a hint that the SNP's "politics of prosperity" could explain their failure to "crack" Clydeside and Glasgow.[838]

Sillars' belief in his own representative authority would have profound consequences for the future of the SLP, especially given the prominent involvement of the radical intelligentsia. The latter were middle-class, university-educated, and largely from the east coast, with a lifeworld at odds with what Neil meant by Clydeside and Glasgow.

[836] Alex Neil, 'British Labour's Scottish dilemma', *Contemporary Review* (June 1st, 1976), p.289.
[837] *Ibid*, p.289.
[838] *Ibid.*

That belief was nevertheless forged in close dialogue with the intelligentsia. Sillars' image as an exceptional, almost messianic political force – an organic working-class intellectual *par excellence* – was inextricable from the growing prominence of middle-class radicals on the new Scottish left. His belief in the need for the SLP was primarily formed and encouraged throughout years of discussion with left-wing Scottish journalists rather than pressure from his working-class constituents.[839] He was seen to exemplify a social base that still seemed charged with "regional and working-class exceptionalism," redolent of "a separate working-class political sphere, incompatible with and antagonistic to Westminster politics" which Petrie suggests declined in the interwar era.[840] In 1977, Tait recalled campaigning "up among mining folk in Ayrshire":

> There, unlike in Kilmarnock, they managed to create conditions from which they brought understanding and patience and tirelessness together to weld the historic unity that sustained and perhaps ultimately explains Keir Hardie and others who have voiced the values of Scottish socialism. Kilmarnock has still to get it together, its labourism never nourished by that kind of human content and contact.[841]

The excitement stirred by Sillars amongst many members of the intelligentsia was an instant source of scepticism amongst others. *Q* magazine, whose editor Peter Chiene was an SNP supporter, followed the SLP's development closely, and several articles in January 1976 noted that the party was too dependent on the exceptional social

[839] Drucker, *Breakaway*, p.20-22.
[840] Petrie, 'Contests', p.145.
[841] Bob Tait, 'Take me to the station', in Trevor Royle (ed.), *Jock Tamson's Bairns: Essays on a Scots Childhood* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), p.65.

constituencies of the Ayrshire working class and the intelligentsia.[842] Owen Dudley Edwards wrote that "one wonders if the journalists have now decided to found the Scottish Labour Party in order to give themselves something to write about which they know about."[843]

Alongside Sillars' apparent authenticity, there were other reasons the intelligentsia were so enthusiastic about the SLP. One was that it promised to be a new type of party. Tom Nairn argued that it "set out to be a different kind of socialism: more radical than the old Labour Party in both programme and organizational structure."[844] This aspiring organisational radicalism was influenced by Sillars' bitter memories of trade union block votes being used to force through policies at Labour Party conference.[845] In an interview with the IMG's Red Weekly magazine, Neil argued that the key difference from Labour was "the structure of the party," with individual membership making it "very difficult for any cabal, right-wing or left-wing, to run it," and its emphasis on branches as "focal points of activity and policy making."[846] Nairn emphasised the SLP's potential as a "new mass movement" rather than simply a party, linking together a wide and "delicate" alliance of new social forces: "a large part of them, inevitably, "middle class", assorted intellectuals, marxists of diverse species, "new working class" elements different from the Ayrshire miners, and so on."[847] This was a snug fit with the radical intelligentsia's new vision of its role in "articulating" diverse groups together.

[842] Anonymous, 'Coming, coming, came', *Q* 4 (January 1976), p.6.
[843] Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Who's Sillars Now?', *Q* 4 (January 1976), p.2.
[844] Tom Nairn, 'The S.L.P.: Report on the First Year of a New Party', *Planet* 37/38 (May 1977), p.14.
[845] Drucker, *Breakaway*, p.28.
[846] 'Which Way For Scottish Labour?', *Red Weekly* (February 1976), p.6.
[847] Nairn, 'S.L.P', p.16.

With Sillars' organic charisma providing the glue, the intelligentsia could thus focus on Neil's "policy making" promise. The democratic, decentralised party-movement promised by the SLP's leadership provided an opportunity to manifest some of the products of the Scottish radical imagination in political reality. Scotland's constitutional future was at the heart of this, yet the radical left encountered problems in attempting to practically explore what had been a usefully vague prophecy. The position of the SLP's leadership, concentrated in the hands of Sillars, was for Scotland to have direct representation in the major policymaking areas of the EEC, not just in the European Parliament but on the Commission and the Council of Ministers.[848] Having campaigned against the EEC in 1975, Sillars had responded to the result by calling for independent Scottish representation, identifying Europe as a more important economic unit than the UK which risked marginalising the distinctive concerns of Scotland's labour movement.[849]

Yet this posed obvious problems for the SLP's position on independence. In its early messaging, the leadership sought to oppose "separation". Alex Neil argued that the party would be "keenly nationalistic without being forced into an SNP-type … out and out separatist position," and at the party's founding meeting Sillars insisted he "did not seek the break-up of the United Kingdom."[850] Yet there were obvious contradictions here. In an early memo, Colin Boyd – a future Lord Advocate in the Scottish Government – noted that it was impossible for Scotland to have separate representation under the Treaty of Rome unless it was a sovereign state; "we must

[848] 'SLP seeks role in EEC', *The Guardian* (July 18th, 1976), p.1.
[849] John Warden, Hugh Cochrane, 'Labour split on Scots role in the Market', *Glasgow Herald* (June 10th, 1975), p.2.
[850] Neil, 'Dilemma', p.290; Kerr, 'Scots queue', p.1.

either compromise and accept some status within the British delegation or we must advocate independence."[851] Furthermore, Sillars' goal of "full control" of Scotland's economy was at odds with devolution, for Westminster would require economic sovereignty in the event of pressure from the IMF to stabilise the currency. A "devolutionary framework," Boyd argued, "has been constructed to ensure that Scotland remains an economic subsidiary of the UK," and this would mean Scotland "suffers first" when "times are hard."[852]

The meaning of independence remained both complex and vague, however. In a meeting of the Edinburgh Branch in April 1976, members worried about the "distinct possibility that the Westminster Government will decide to hold a referendum" rather than legislate directly.[853] They discussed an analysis of the situation by Alex Neil, in which the prospect of a three-option referendum offered an opportunity to identify with the option of "independence," provided the wording did not clarify "separation". "A 'yes' to a suitable third option," argued Neil, "would give the Scottish people a strong bargaining position without it necessarily leading to complete independence."[854] Unanimously passing a resolution tabled by Ascherson, the branch "utterly condemned" the prospect of a binary choice between devolution and independence as "fraudulent," "anti-democratic" and "an attempt to stunt the historical process," which would lead to "the probable distortion of public opinion by the questions on the ballot paper."[855] The risk was that, in achieving devolution as an overt *rejection* of

[851] Colin Boyd, 'The Scottish Labour Party and Independence' (undated). Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Papers. NLS Acc.7472/4.
[852] *Ibid.*
[853] SLP Edinburgh Branch Newsletter, April 1976. Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Papers. NLS Acc,7472/5.
[854] *Ibid.*
[855] *Ibid.*

independence, the intended purpose of devolution for many on the radical left – as a stepping-stone to independence – would be undermined. Less than a year earlier, Ascherson had written in *Q* that "the Assembly is the hole under the fence of the British system, which can only get wider as first the S.N.P., and then the bolder Scottish socialists, and finally a whole people thrust their way through it."[856]

The position on independence continued to evolve, and by 1977 Sillars was openly calling for "independence in Europe" as the SLP's "distinctive position."[857] This, he argued, was not the SNP's "independence without qualification," because it recognised trade links with England and that Scotland's "branch factory economy" demanded direct political engagement with international institutions.[858] In 1978, a Congress Report by Lindsay Paterson emphasised the SLP's "distinctive policies on Scotland's constitutional development," which entailed "moving through the Assembly to Scottish independence in the EEC."[859] This was an overt policy formulation of precisely the type of constitutional gradualism later embraced by the SNP, shifting the focus of the radical left's constitutional thinking from imaginative prophecy to a practical programme. He also emphasised, however, "our type of de-centralised, community-based Socialism," which was "radically different from the policies of the British Labour Party." This "basic philosophy: that Socialism and Home Rule are inseparable," would also be found throughout the pages of *Radical Scotland* in the following decade.[860]

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[856] Neal Ascherson, 'Return Journey', *Q* 1 (October 1975), p.5.
[857] Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Bulletin, January 1977. Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Papers. NLS Acc,7472/5.
[858] Jim Sillars, 'Why I'm Not in the SNP', *Crann-Tàra* 1 (Winter 1977), p.4.
[859] Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Newsletter, December 1978. Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Papers. NLS Acc,7472/5.
[860] *Ibid.*

Yet this attempt to practically implement its ambitions had also brought the radical imagination into an emotionally jarring encounter with the realities of politics. At the party's first Congress in Stirling, the party leadership lost control of the proceedings only to reassert themselves with a sweeping purge of branches who dissented from the leadership's heavy-handed approach to debates and policy-making. Efforts by some members to commit the party to an anti-NATO, anti-EEC, anti-capitalist and republican stance had been dismissed by Sillars in the press before the Congress, and the mass expulsion of suspected IMG members added to a sense that the party was not living up to its democratic, participatory and deliberative promises.[861] Some retreated to a different venue, the Station Hotel, to establish an alternative, "democratic" SLP.[862] The experience of the Congress itself was traumatising, and completely at odds with the hopes the radical left had invested in the party. Maria Fyfe, the future Labour MP and chair of the expelled Cumbernauld branch, described "wild applause, bays of 'Get them out – out – out!'" at the expulsion vote. She described the Congress descending into something approaching anarchy:

> When I spoke to one party officer in an attempt to restore democratic forms before this unjust action was taken – and the papers were going into the ballot box even as I spoke – I was roughly pushed aside and refused a hearing. I then looked around me at an incredible scene. One of my own branch, a man who had made a number of valuable contributions to the congress, had reached the delegates' microphone,

[861] Drucker, *Breakaway*, pp.98-119; Peter Chiene, 'Problems for the S.L.P.', *Q* 14 (October 22nd, 1976), p.2; Jim MacKechnie, 'The SLP Split: Blow for Blow', *Scottish Socialist* 2 (December-January 1977), p.16; John Nairn, 'Where is Sillars Going?', *Scottish Socialist* 3 (February-March 1977), p.11.
[862] Peter Chiene, 'Slimming Session at Stirling', *Q* 15 (November 5th, 1976), p.12.

> but was surrounded by four men who looked likely to assault him if he attempted to use it … In the rest of the hall some were debating hotly in small groups, but others were stamping around, yelling their hatred for all to hear. In all my years in politics, incidentally almost wholly in the Labour Party, I have never witnessed such a disgusting sight.[863]

Sillars later referred to activists like Fyfe as "innocent casualties of war."[864] Here, the radical intelligentsia experienced first-hand the chasm between the slow, discursive vision of left-wing politics cultivated in the magazines and the practical experience of it. This was reinforced by layers of class and regional symbolism that only reminded them of their detachment from the labour movement tradition with which they hoped to reconnect. In this midst of the purge, Sillars declared that "at times of crisis, working class organisations expel without discussion," and another member of the Party's National Organising Committee suggested that "we should get our fucking pit boots on and wade into them."[865] As Neal Ascherson recalled in an interview,

> One of the fracture lines of course in the SLP when it really came under strain was between Edinburgh liberal intellectuals, you see, and people whose experience was of working class politics in South Ayrshire or wherever it might be. And the whole ethic of what was tolerable and what you should do in a situation like that eventually when it really came to it was quite irreconcilable. The Edinburgh intellectual liberals proved from

[863] Maria Fyfe, Letter to the editor, *Glasgow Herald* (8th November, 1976), p.8.
[864] *Ibid.*
[865] Drucker, 'Breakaway', p.103.

> the South Ayrshire point of view to be completely lily-livered and unrealistic. You know, if you're up against the enemy you have to kill.[866]

For the "Edinburgh intellectual liberals", the SLP was a painful reminder of the profound tension between pragmatism and utopianism which could be speculatively resolved in print-culture but not in more practical and immediate political activity.

In the aftermath of the Stirling Congress they sought to understand, and even justify, what had happened. For Hamish Henderson, the correct response to the SLP's crisis was a more hopeful pursuit of reconciliation and understanding. In a letter to the *Scotsman* on the 2nd November, he denounced the "witch-hunt" at Stirling as a "ghastly business" and "unnecessary."[867] The IMG, he argued, had posed little real threat, and represented something more like "the 'primitive rebels' of early days," whose "revolutionary politics" ought to be celebrated rather than expunged.[868] He emphasised the personal tragedy of what had occurred, declaring his admiration for the new comrades he had encountered as chairman of the Edinburgh branch. One was the son of a man with whom Henderson recalled marching against Hitler: "I respect him now as I respected his father then, and I know him to be a sincere and devoted man, willing to sacrifice much for what he believes in."[869]

Henderson received a reply from Nairn the next day, who praised his letter for its humanistic open-mindedness, but suggested that this admirable faith in people's

[866] Interview with Neal Ascherson, 24th January 2019.
[867] Hamish Henderson, Letter to the *Scotsman,* November 2nd 1976, in Hamish Henderson, Alec Finlay (ed.), *The Armstrong Nose: Selected Letters of Hamish Henderson* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p.227.
[868] *Ibid.*
[869] *Ibid*, pp.226-227.

radicalism could also be a hindrance.[870] He argued that the sincerity and devotion of IMG supporters as individuals could not excuse the destructive political sectarianism and dogmatic self-certainty which he believed their organisation inculcated in them.[871] Furthermore, the small size of the IMG contingent should not be mistaken for limited influence, for their levels of practical organisation, dedication and ideological clarity gave them a decisive advantage in the otherwise inchoate and vague SLP apparatus. Nairn feared that with this, the IMG had the capacity to impose their own political form and habits on the SLP, and thus undermine its chances of developing a broader appeal.[872]

Thus Nairn endorsed the purge, while declining to justify the means by which the leadership had done it.[873] He suggested that the leadership, having little experience of sects themselves, clumsily overreacted to the IMG, and had since realised the damage caused by these excesses.[874] He argued that the SLP remained unambiguously centre-left and socialist, and that its movementist potential could be rescued as long as people like himself and Henderson held fast to the project.[875] His prescription was to stay aligned with Sillars and his allies, and use the familiar and deliberative terrain of public reason – rather than Sillars' more cynical methods – to fend off attacks from the left on their own position.[876] This meant avoiding the splitters so as to convince the leadership of their continued trustworthiness, and to avoid being thrown off course by criticism from their left.[877]

[870] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson, November 3rd 1976, p.1. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[871] *Ibid*, pp.1-2
[872] *Ibid*, p.3
[873] *Ibid*, p.4
[874] *ibid*
[875] *Ibid*, pp.4-5
[876] *Ibid*, p.6
[877] *Ibid*

This conclusion, however rhetorically pragmatic, nevertheless remained firmly rooted in a more utopian prophecy: that Scotland was on the brink of a revolutionary political change in which the IMG and their supporters would become an irrelevance.[878] Nairn followed this up in the mid-November issue of *Q* with his 'Revolutionaries versus Parliamentarists' article. Here, his emphasis shifted from a critique of the IMG's organisational form to his defence of "ultra-constitutionalism and pro-nationalism" as the future of Scottish political radicalism. This was, Nairn recognised, the only form of politics in which intellectuals could find breathing room between "revolutionary" fundamentalism and a "parliamentarist" backlash; not by coincidence, this strategy matched the slow, deliberative pace of the print-culture in which those intellectuals were most comfortable.

Days later, Bob Tait wrote to Henderson: "This is just to say that although we don't see the events of that hideous weekend in exactly the same light, there's no way I could stop regarding *you* as a good comrade."[879] Tait's letter was especially fraught with the lingering emotion of the Congress, declaring the Friday night's discussion of the expulsions to be "a complete fuck-up on all sides" which "no one more bitterly regrets than myself." He expressed a hope that "given time and clearer air, and given recognition of the need to be clear about the nature of entrism in our kind of Party, some, all, of the unnecessary polarities can be sanely resolved."[880] Yet these polarities would not be resolved. At a "recall congress" held by the expelled branches in mid-November, "the dominating desire seemed to be one of reconciliation," and Henderson moved a resolution "calling for an approach to the section of the party association with

[878] *Ibid,* p.3
[879] Letter from Bob Tait to Hamish Henderson, November 5th 1976, p.1. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19.
[880] *Ibid.*

Mr Sillars to bring about an amicable and democratic resolution of the difficulties." Sillars' response was a curt "no chance."[881]

Responding to the Stirling Congress, *Q*'s editorial declared it "heartening" that the SLP had "declared itself in favour of democratic socialism and the pluralism that this entails."[882] Chiene, writing elsewhere in the issue under his own name, allowed his enthusiasm for Sillars' crackdown to get the better of him:

> All future members of the Scottish Labour Party, like the Roman slaves, will only be able to approach the party by the Via Appia, a road flanked with the crucified branches of Cumbernauld, Kelvin, Stirling and Stirling University, not to mention various individuals. And a good thing too.[883]

His main criticism, like Nairn, concerned the inexpert nature of this "political butchery," for "the platform failed to isolate the far left as a single group with which they could quickly and painlessly deal."[884] The resulting exodus of activists posed serious problems: "it no doubt is a good thing to have a strong force of intellectuals and poets in a party, but it might be that not all of them are cut out for canvassing on windy, Monday nights in those insults to their residents' humanity, large council estates."[885] The SLP had exposed a contradiction in the radical imagination between its slow, imaginative and discursive aspirations, and the forms of work and activity – from knocking doors to maintaining party discipline – which went into mass politics.

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[881] John Kerr, 'Scots Labour Party rejects outcasts' plea', *The Guardian* (November 15th, 1976), p.6.
[882] 'Editorial', *Q* 15 (November 5th, 1976), p.6.
[883] Peter Chiene, 'Slimming Session at Stirling', *Q* 15 (November 5th, 1976), p.12.
[884] *Ibid.*
[885] *Ibid.*

Determined to re-root itself in wider Scottish society, radical intellectuals had outsourced the task to Sillars, whose failure to deliver was increasingly blamed for their continued detachment from the public.

As it became clear that Sillars would not change his position, Chiene and others began to change theirs. In December, Nairn wrote to Henderson again, suggesting a compromise to redress the injustice of those non-IMG members who had been caught up in the purge.[886] However, he emphasised that if Sillars could not be moved this time, the situation would be less tolerable. If a well-organised request for reconciliation was rejected, he suggested that like-minded members should leave *en masse*, and publish a statement outlining their position.[887] Nairn's efforts to remain optimistic were repeatedly hitting the limits of public reason in the political sphere, returning compulsively to a political strategy of published self-justification. In January, Chiene confessed in *Q* that "a reconciliation would be desirable," for "even those who supported the founder of the party through the trials and tribulations of Stirling are beginning to see justice in the claims of many of the outcasts."[888]

Bob Tait, however, adopted a bracingly instrumental attitude to the question. Criticising Chiene's newfound distaste for Sillars' methods, he asked "why should there be [reconciliations]? Injured feelings and other temperamental considerations apart, all-embracingness isn't the first priority upon which political comradeship is founded."[889] The SLP, he argued, had managed to "articulate a perspective and a set

[886] Letter from Tom Nairn to Hamish Henderson, December 14th 1976. CRC Coll-1438/E2013.07/19
[887] *ibid*
[888] Peter Chiene, 'The Last Chance', *Q* 19 (January 7th, 1977), p.5.
[889] Bob Tait, letter to the editor, *Q* 20 (January 21st, 1977), p.6.

of tasks for socialists in Scotland, [and] define a crucial vacuum in Scottish politics and history and some of the essential elements to fill it."[890] Dismissing critiques of the leadership, he wrote: "no one is exactly "wronged" if it turns out they don't know, or don't like, the proper procedures for getting on with the job."[891]

This framing of the SLP's achievements in terms of "definition" and "articulation," rather than growing its membership, winning elections and shaping policy, suggests that what Scotland's radical intellectuals expected from the party was not so different from what they had expected from their magazines. For Tait, Sillars was doing a job he recognised: he was the SLP's managing editor. A working-class tribune like Sillars, legitimised by the electoral system itself, promised to reach an audience for radical ideas that *Scottish International*, *Calgacus* or *Q* could only dream of. Yet as the previous chapters indicated, that alienation from Scottish society was itself crucial to the opening-up of the Scottish radical imagination, allowing them to reconceptualise radicalism and nationhood without having to test that imagination against national realities. The experience of the SLP brought them at least partially back to earth.

The consequence of this was, for some, a crisis of confidence that preceded the more notorious setback of the 1979 referendum. In his final assessment of the SLP, for the Welsh magazine *Planet* in 1977, Nairn's typically self-assured fatalism dissolved into profound uncertainty upon contact with day-to-day political action:

[890] *Ibid.*
[891] *Ibid.*

> The formation of a new political party depends upon a complicated set of human and social factors distinct from its programme, formal structure, and historical *raison d'etre*. These factors are by no means "accidents" - on the contrary, they are the reality out of which such a new movement must be forged. *Yet this reality is largely unknown*. Until the break is made, it remains largely obscured by the conservative rituals and apathy of the old order. The latter may be breaking down into evident decay and demoralization; no-one really knows what will emerge and - as the SLP case shows - the most intelligent guess can be wide of the mark.[892]

The trouble for the SLP, its intellectuals, and indeed the entire identity of the new Scottish radicalism, was that they were all invested in imaginative forecasts which rarely matched up to political developments. This was especially true where devolution was concerned. In November 1978, the Government announced that a referendum on a Scottish Assembly would be held the following March. In its newsletter, the Edinburgh branch of the SLP declared that

> It is up to the SLP as the only Party united and enthusiastic in its determination for a 'Yes' vote to put the positive case for the Assembly. The Scottish people must not be conned into thinking that they have a straight choice between the status quo and Callaghan's version of

[892] Nairn, 'The S.L.P', p.14.

> devolution. The new Scotland is not to be found in the Scotland Act but in the possibilities that the Assembly opens up.[893]

On March 1st, Scotland voted 'Yes' by 51.6 per cent to 48.4 per cent, but the 'Yes' vote failed to exceed the '40 per cent' amendment inserted by an anti-devolution Labour backbencher, George Cunningham.[894] This required 40 per cent of the registered electorate to vote 'Yes', rather than a simple majority of voters, otherwise Parliament would be invited to repeal the Scotland Act.[895] Only 33 per cent of the registered electorate backed an Assembly, but a divided Labour Party held back from tabling a politically risky repeal motion; the SNP, who had been propping up Labour's majority, duly backed a Conservative motion of no confidence, and James Callaghan's Government fell.[896] The resulting election ushered in a Conservative government that quickly repealed the Scotland Act and began radically restructuring the British economy.[897] By 1983, beginning its second term of an eighteen-year period in office, the Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher had transformed the horizons of British politics, securing a landslide victory over a Labour Party that had veered to the left and been undermined by the breakaway of the Social Democratic Party.[898] Equally significantly in Scotland, the SNP vote collapsed: in 1979 the party lost all but 2 seats with 17.3 per cent of the vote, and held those seats with 11.7 per cent in 1983.[899] Having been denied the "possibilities" that a Scottish Assembly promised to "open up",

[893] SLP Edinburgh Branch Newsletter, November 1978. Scottish Labour Party Edinburgh Branch Papers. Acc.7472/5.
[894] Cameron, *Impaled*, p.306.
[895] *Ibid.*
[896] *Ibid*, p.317.
[897] *Ibid*; Edgerton, *British Nation*, pp.453-456.
[898] Edgerton, *British Nation*, p.446.
[899] Cameron, *Impaled*, p.321.

the Scottish radical left had to spend the years 1979-1983 coming to terms with the further defeat of the forces on which it had based all its visions of the future.

## Performing Socialism: The 79 Group

The events of 1979 produced a mixed response amongst the radical intelligentsia. Tom Nairn, discussing the referendum in the *New Edinburgh Review*, was upbeat. The result had "dissipated a good deal of Scotch middle-class mist," demonstrating that the core of support for self-government was amongst "Scotland's sociological and geographic heartland" in the working class.[900] This could only be good for the radical left, encouraging the SNP to adopt "an honest republican cut and a red Clydeside tie," rather than the "cringing Home Rule" that had been offered.[901] Thus the "new landscape of politics looks very like that hopefully imagined by the Scottish Labour Party three year ago," and "the question of radicalising the Scottish national movement … assumes great urgency, as well as great desirability."[902] For Nairn, the referendum had been the ultimate 'mapping out' exercise, giving a social grounding to the "socialist nationalism" he had imagined in 1968. At best, this was a creative interpretation of a more ambiguous result; one reason for such a slim pro-Assembly majority had been the deep partisan divisions within the 'Yes' campaign, and – as campaigners soon noted – pursuing even greater conflict and "radicalisation" within the self-government movement seemed unlikely to resolve this.[903]

[900] Tom Nairn, 'After the Referendum', *New Edinburgh Review* 46 (May 1979), p.8.
[901] *Ibid*, p.9.
[902] *Ibid*.
[903] Ray Perman, 'The devolution referendum campaign of 1979' in H.M. Drucker, N.L. Drucker (eds.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook* 1980 (Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1980), pp.53-63; John Bochel, David Denver, Alan McCartney (eds.), *The Referendum Experience: Scotland 1979* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1981).

Nairn's confidence was reflected in a project with which he was closely involved, *The Bulletin of Scottish Politics*, a short-lived (1980-81) but prestigious outgrowth of the intellectual infrastructure of the 1970s. It was produced by the Scottish International Institute, which had been established in 1976 to study and encourage "the culture and politics of self-government." It benefited from the support of the wealthy arts publisher and architecture lecturer Michael Spens, who had been a patron of *Q* magazine as well as an SNP candidate for Orkney and Shetland in 1979.[904] Other patrons included Hugh MacDiarmid, George MacLeod of the Iona Community, Lynda Myles of the Edinburgh Film Festival, Hamish Henderson, the merchant banker and Gaelic language activist Iain Noble, Ben Whitaker of the Scottish Minority Rights Group and the filmmaker Murray Grigor. Nairn had been a "voluntary worker" for the Institute, and Ascherson was given a research grant for a "writing project" between 1977 and 1980. It ran several events, from a birthday conference and concert for Hugh MacDiarmid co-organised with the STUC, to "schools", film showings and conferences on themes like "the problems of independent periodical publishing in small countries", "the Nordic countries" and "the future of Scottish politics.". The *Bulletin*'s editorial board was equally diversely stocked: alongside Nairn, Ascherson and Christopher Harvie were the political scientists Jack Brand and Bernard Crick, the Shetland-based Nordic scholar Roy Grønneberg, as well as Lindsay Paterson, Danus Skene and George Kerevan, the three of whom had all been involved with the SLP.[905]

[904] Richard DeMarco, 'Obituary: Michael Spens, architect, diplomat, art patron, critic and teacher', *The Scotsman* (May 7th, 2014; accessed online March 2021), https://www.scotsman.com/news/obituaries/obituary-michael-spens-architect-diplomat-art-patron-critic-and-teacher-1537758.

[905] *The Bulletin of Scottish Politics* 1 (Autumn 1980), p.2 and back cover.

The *Bulletin*'s first editorial was optimistic about the referendum result. It had been "the first separate, collective and democratic action in [Scotland's] national history," and the people "said 'yes'." Despite the turnout, "the fact [of 'yes'] must be insisted on," with the consequence that "political Scotland exists by the will of the people alone."[906] The "political world" of Scotland – on which so much 1970s intellectual work had been premised – had come "into a real though (as yet) unofficial existence."[907] This merited the intensification of the previous decade's intellectual project, for

> after centuries of depoliticization a people was jostled to the brink of a vital decision, still divided in its basic allegiance and still lacking an adequate sense of its contemporary (as opposed to past) reality. Here, the least that can be said is that there is a lot of catching up to do. The *Bulletin*'s ambition is to contribute to this by continuing the work begun so well by *Red Paper* and *Radical Approach*.[908]

Others, however, were less upbeat. "Another Ice Age. At least, that's the way it feels," began the regular, anonymous 'I Spy' column of *Crann-Tàra* in the magazine's Summer 1979 issue.[909] The previous issue, published on the eve of the referendum vote, had nailed its gradualist colours to the mast with an editorial anticipating devolution as the "first slice" of a strategy to "win our independence soberly and surely piece by piece."[910] The reverse had happened. "What is different about this particular Ice Age is that it is brought about by more than the Tory Party. In Scotland, we have

[906] 'Editorial', *The Bulletin of Scottish Politics* 1:1 (Autumn 1980), pp.i-ii.
[907] *Ibid*, p.ii.
[908] *Ibid*, p.iii.
[909] 'I Spy', *Crann-Tàra* 7 (Summer 1979), p.2.
[910] 'Editorial: Towards Democracy', *Crann-Tàra* 6 (Spring 1979), p.12.

lost twice over, from the installation of a Tory Government and from the recovery of the Labour Leviathan."[911] This provided yet another illustration of the intelligentsia's isolation from the people, who – 'I Spy' argued – did not justify Nairn's optimism: "The really depressing aspect of the General Election is that the centre of gravity of our electorate seems to have voted against the very notion of politics." Scotland's "frightened" voters had returned to Labour from the SNP, opting for "the static security" of the "natural party of government … that puts the particular self-interest ["jobs"] first."[912]

This enduring sense of alienation was also emphasised by Christopher Harvie in *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, a survey of twentieth-century Scottish history published in 1981: "The motor of industrial change seems to have worn out, leaving a talented intelligentsia, footloose and ambitious, and otherwise a politics constricted by class-barriers and persistent economic and political failure."[913] This was not, for Harvie, an excuse to abandon their critical distance, and they should "not flinch from Thomas Hardy's injunction: 'if way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worse.'"[914] Where the *Bulletin* claimed "the will of the people" as legitimation for its intellectual project, Harvie and *Crann-Tàra* saw their enduring distanciation in pessimistic terms familiar from *Scottish International*. *Crann-Tàra* proposed a more practical turn, shifting away from the utopian prophecies and critical self-assertion that had motivated Scottish radicalism over the previous decade. Such was the depth of defeat that the Labour Party, the subject of so much radical scorn, "cannot be ignored"

[911] 'I Spy', p.2.
[912] *Ibid.*
[913] Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1914-1980* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p.ix.
[914] *Ibid.*

as a future site of action. Escaping the new ice age demanded nothing less than the "repoliticisation of Scotland," overcoming "Party pride" in the name of cooperation: "the next reformation, of the spirit of politics, is in our hands."[915] Despite their different emotional tone, there were clear commonalities between *Crann-Tàra* and the *Bulletin*: Scotland was still insufficiently politicised, and it was the responsibility of intellectuals to change this.

How would they change it? Scott Hames argues that the "Assembly-shaped hole in post-79 Scotland" moved the "disputatious energies of the literati … from the guerrilla 'underground' to the mainstream of electoral politics, with the defiant assertion of national difference gradually incorporated into the rhetoric of Scotland's increasingly dominant party [Labour]."[916] In the 1970s, the radical left had experimented with a political imagination largely opposed to both the SNP and Labour. This drove it to seek out its own independent representation in the SLP, which promised an authentic combination of socialism and nationalism harking back to the ILP. As the SLP failed to break through, attention turned back towards Scotland's existing political options, prompting SLP members to rejoin Labour or move into the SNP (Danus Skene, who had left Labour's Scottish Executive for the SLP's equivalent, followed his enthusiasm for land reform into the Liberal Party[917]). Alongside this, however, was a new assertiveness in ideas of political *practice*. In the "Assembly-shaped hole", Scotland's "repoliticisation" would have to be pursued by extra-parliamentary means. According to what Hames calls the "Dream" narrative of Scottish cultural politics, these means

[915] 'I Spy', p.2.
[916] Hames, *Literary Politics*, p.79.
[917] Phil Davison, 'Obituary – Danus Skene, SNP Shetland candidate and chief of Clan Skene', *The Herald*, (September 5th 2016), https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/14722715.obituary---danus-skene-snp-shetland-candidate-chief-clan-skene/.

were chiefly pursued through culture and the arts, as writers and artists spoke "for" Scotland.[918] Yet amongst many of the intellectuals and activists who gravitated towards *Radical Scotland*, another more overtly political "dream" also became central to the radical imagination: civil disobedience.

While ideas of civil disobedience appeared at the radical edge of the Labour Party's thinking about devolution in the early 1980s, it was the intellectual left of the SNP who gave it a foothold in the constitution debate in the shape of the '79 Group' faction.[919] The Group's interest in civil disobedience was founded on a particular interpretation of the referendum result and its consequences for Scottish politics, heavily influenced by intellectuals like Nairn and Ascherson, as well as SNP left-wingers like Stephen Maxwell, Margo MacDonald and William Wolfe. This identified the demand for self-government with the working class, who were identified with left-wing radicalism. The morning after the devolution referendum, Ascherson wrote in *The Scotsman* that "it is the SNP of 1979 which lies at the root of the trouble … Great masses of ordinary Scots may one day give their vote to a national party of self-government, but it will have to be a force standing far more boldly for radical democracy and for the interests of the working class."[920] On the Saturday after the referendum, Margo MacDonald argued at the SNP's National Council that the working class had voted 'Yes' while the middle class had voted 'No', and that the SNP needed a more "leftist" image.[921] The next day,

[918] Hames, *Literary Politics.*
[919] Nicolas John Baxter-Moore, *Exit, Voice and Sub-Party Politics: Ideology, Strategy and Factionalism in the Scottish National Party*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa. 1989; David Torrance, 'The Journey from the 79 Group to the Modern SNP', in Gerry Hassan (ed.), *The Modern SNP: From Protest to Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp.162-176; Peter Lynch, 'From Social Democracy back to No Ideology? – The Scottish National Party and Ideological Change in a Multi-level Electoral Setting', *Regional and Federal Studies* 19:4 (2009), pp.616-637; Stephen Maxwell, 'The '79 Group: A Critical Retrospect', in Stephen Maxwell, ed. Jamie Maxwell, *The Case for Left-wing Nationalism* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2013).
[920] Neal Ascherson, quoted in Nairn, 'Referendum', p.9.
[921] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.459.

seven SNP activists held a "referendum wake" at Gavin Kennedy's home. They accepted MacDonald's analysis, and began gathering for regular informal discussions during the General Election campaign. In the aftermath of the election result, they met formally to establish the Interim Committee for Political Discussion on 31st May in Edinburgh. A week later, another meeting adopted a statement agreeing to the principles of independence, socialism and republicanism.[922] In an early August meeting at Strathclyde University, the ICPD's "rather cumbersome" name – sometimes abbreviated to "Icepick," to the displeasure of those who understood its Stalinist connotations – was replaced with "SNP 79 Group."[923]

The Group gained encouragement from William Wolfe's leaked "memorandum" announcing his plan to step down as party chairman, which blamed the 1979 General Election defeat on the loss of the SNP's social democratic image.[924] While Wolfe was not as left-wing as the Group's platform, his explanation for the reversal of party fortunes was shared by the Group. They particularly blamed the party's cohort of MPs, a majority of whom after 1974 had been from the "fundamentalist" wing. They criticised "fundamentalism" for its refusal of ideological clarity in favour of a vague 'Scottish' interest.[925] This led to actions which alienated the Scottish labour movement: when SNP MPs voted against the pro-nationalisation Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill in 1976, some of them ripped up telegrams from the STUC requesting their support.[926] Labour's Dennis Canavan was able to denounce their "sham patriotism" in the House of Commons, outflanking the "party of quislings" on economic nationalism after they

[922] *Ibid*, pp.459-460.
[923] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.463.
[924] *Ibid*, p.461.
[925] SNP 79 Group Committee, Political Report, Annual General Meeting (August 1980). NLS Acc.11565/23.
[926] Mark V. Kauppi, 'The decline of the Scottish National Party, 1977-81: political and organizational factors', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5:3 (July 1982), p.332.

ignored the appeals of shop stewards from Scottish shipyards. Margaret Bain, SNP MP for East Dunbartonshire, was forced to defend her decision on the grounds that "London-based management" would lead to "decimation of industry."[927]

The prominence of class conflict in the 79 Group's self-image appears, at first, to challenge the argument made in this chapter that it was fading from the political imagination of the Scottish radical left. One ICPD discussion paper written after the General Election by Robert Crawford, who had recently resigned as an SNP research officer, criticised the SNP's focus on "the National Interest," arguing that "there was no 'national interest'. There are a series of interests; regional, urban/rural, but above all, class. It was on this rock that the good ship SNP was bound to founder."[928] "The working class of the industrial belt", argued Crawford, embodied the real national interest: "Instead of turning to the base appeal avarice of the Tories, [they] put a community of interest before the atomistic appeal of Thatcherism." The devolution referendum had revealed that class to be "the most constitutionally ambitious section of the country."[929]

In another post-election discussion paper, Tom Nairn – a fellow-traveller, rather than a member – argued that "the culprit is certainly the SNP's peculiarly bland, all-purpose nationalist ideology. Trying to appeal a little bit to everyone, it convinced almost no-one; the party of all the people ignored the actual, class-bound folk of Scotland's industrial heartland." The "west-central working class" were, he argued, "Scotland's

[927] HC Deb 28th June 1976 vol.914 cc9-11.
[928] Robert Crawford, 'In Pursuit of a Consensus', in 'Extracts from the papers discussed by the SNP 79 Group from its inception (as the Interim Committee for Political Discussion) on 31 May 1979', p.4. NLS Acc.11565/23.
[929] Crawford, 'Consensus', p.5.

essential constituency," and had to be appealed to with a "stronger, more definite radicalism."[930] Introducing the 79 Group to the wider left in *Crann-Tàra*'s Autumn 1979 issue, Roseanna Cunningham argued that the party had lost credibility with "the young working-class," due in part to "the increasingly conservative image of the SNP's leaders – an image which always was, and still is, at variance with the general trend of party policy." The SNP had "moved away from its earlier 'radical' stance and is now on the point of returning to a 'fundamentalist' position."[931] It was within a newly electoralist political imagination, fired-up by the "political nation" hinted at by the referendum, that class was restored to prominence as something to be "appealed" to. A new, post-SLP and post-79 vision of the radical intellectual can be seen emerging here, swapping the role of cultural and social critic for that of electoral strategist.

In this new role, intellectuals began to adopt a more sloganizing approach to political ideas, leaving behind the more sceptical disposition of the previous decade. In its 'Political Report' to the 79 Group's August 1980 AGM, the Group committee called for a new party strategy, focused on the idea that the Conservatives had "no Scottish mandate," with only 22 seats to Labour's 44.[932] Summarising the "Mandate issue," Crawford wrote: "Scotland always votes anti-Tory but may get a Tory Government at any time depending on what England does."[933] As a slogan this was attractive and enduring, but it was a more affirmative and self-congratulatory conception of Scottish political identity than the radical left had previously sought to develop.

[930] Tom Nairn, 'Scotland After The Elections', in 'Extracts', p.6.
[931] Roseanna Cunningham, 'The SNP '79 Group', *Crann-Tàra* 8 (Autumn 1979), p.5.
[932] *Ibid.*
[933] Crawford, 'Consensus', p.6.

"No mandate" was not a 79 Group innovation: both Donald Dewar and Bruce Millan of Labour had made the same point during the parliamentary debate on the Scotland Act's repeal in June 1979.[934] Jim Sillars recalls being "haunted" by a similar point made in the concession speech of Sam Purdie, his SNP opponent in the 1970 General Election, and he began using the argument himself against the Conservatives in Parliament.[935] David Torrance notes that it had even been "anticipated" by Winston Churchill's argument in 1950 that Scotland risked being "forced into the serfdom of Socialism as a result of a vote in the House of Commons."[936] Turning Churchill upside-down, the 79 Group sought to use the "no mandate" argument to combine class-based resistance to Conservative economic policy with national protest against Conservative intransigence over devolution. According to the 79 Group committee, the party leadership were resisting such an argument due to their belief that it "conceals from the Scottish voter the Labour Party's responsibility, as a unionist party, for Scotland's present plight."[937] The leadership were right to fear that such an argument tacitly legitimised Labour's status as Scotland's true "national party", but – as 'I Spy' had noted in *Crann-Tàra* – the left could not ignore Labour's electoral dominance.

The 79 Group's approach was to "undermine" Labour's claim to speak for the nation by elaborating the political logic of "no mandate". The SNP, they argued, "should be to the van in urging a concerted campaign of Scottish resistance to the policies of the right-wing Government elected by the voters of the south of England." This meant

[934] Cameron, *Impaled*, p.331.
[935] Sillars, *Scotland*, p.34.
[936] David Torrance, *Standing up for Scotland: Nationalist Unionism and Scottish Party Politics, 1884-2014* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), p.67; Matthew Cragoe, ''We Like Local Patriotism': The Conservative Party and the Discourse of Decentralisation, 1947-51', *English Historical Review* 122:498 (September 2007), pp.965-985.
[937] SNP 79 Group Committee, Political Report.

"declaring our willingness to work with the trade union movement, the Labour Party and indeed with any other democratic organisation, to undermine the legitimacy of the Thatcher Government in Scotland."[938] Instead of denying Labour's claim to represent the nation, the 79 Group sought to expose their reluctance to live up to it:

> If … approaches were made under the slogan "No Scottish mandate", Labour and trade union refusals to co-operate would undermine the basis of their own appeal to the Labour voter and at the same time bolster [the] SNP's claims to be the natural defender of the people of Scotland against Mrs. Thatcher and her policies of economic genocide.[939]

The Group's planned resolutions to the SNP's 1981 conference included a condemnation of the Labour Party for failing to enact its "mandate for radical change," drafted by Stephen Maxwell.[940] That year's 'Political Report' denounced Labour's "failure to protect Scotland," arguing that

> the one development which can force a U-turn by Mrs. Thatcher is the revival of a militant, nationalist movement ultimately threatening London's monopoly control of Scotland's oil wealth. By refusing to campaign on a "No Scottish Mandate" platform, the Labour Party in

[938] *Ibid.*
[939] *Ibid.*
[940] SNP 79 Group, Suggested Conference Resolutions, 1981. NLS Acc.11565/23.

> Scotland has rejected the one weapon available to the Scottish people which has a real cutting edge.[941]

Working-class support for an Assembly and the Labour Party – both of which had been framed as, at best, "preconditions" of radicalism in the previous decade – was thus reinterpreted by the 79 Group as a "radical mandate" in itself.

What would a "militant, nationalist movement" actually look like? Demonstrating this was the task of the 79 Group's main resolution to the 1981 SNP Conference: a proposal for a "Scottish Industrial Resistance" campaign of civil disobedience to "end British misrule."[942] This was drafted by Sillars, who had joined in early 1980. The 1981 Conference was the 79 Group's high point, winning several key policy votes and seizing control of large swathes of the party's governing apparatus.[943] Most significantly, the party passed the "Scottish Industrial Resistance" resolution, and Sillars was placed in charge of a special sub-committee to take the civil disobedience strategy forward. The sub-committee organised a series of actions which continued the 79 Group's efforts to build links with the labour movement: members demonstrated against unemployment at Job Centres in industrial towns, marched and picketed in solidarity with workers occupying the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock, and the party provided legal and financial help to workers occupying the Plessey Capacitors plant in Bathgate.[944]

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[941] SNP 79 Group, Political Report – Session 1980/81, September 1981. NLS Acc.11565/23.
[942] SNP 79 Group, Suggested Conference Resolutions.
[943] Torrance, 'Journey', p.166.
[944] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, pp.612-613.

In October 1981, the SNP asked the Government to allow a debate on unemployment to be held in the Old Royal High School building on Calton Hill, which had been earmarked – and even fitted out – as the site of the Scottish Assembly. The proposed debate was intended to echo the 'National Assemblies' held by the STUC during the UCS work-in, and the Government's refusal provided sufficient ammunition for an attempt at the escalation of "Scottish Resistance".[945] On the evening of October 16th, Sillars and four other Group members climbed the walls of the building and broke a window to enter.[946] Once inside, Sillars read out a 'Calton Hill Declaration' that was ostentatiously laced with Scottish radicalism's reinvigorated historical identity:

> This occupation is a demonstration of the Scottish National Party's determination to provide the kind of vigorous leadership which we Scots must have if we are to resist effectively and then banish the presence and the policies of an English Tory Government without mandate or legitimacy in our country… we are engaging in a symbolic assertion of Scotland's right to full self-government and the right of the Scottish people to full employment … We call upon our people to make progress towards an independent sovereign Parliament before the alternative forecast by the working-class martyrs of 1820 becomes a reality: "Scotland Free or a Desert!"[947]

The intention had been to occupy the building "until it could be opened for a representative debate on unemployment on Saturday 24th October," but Sillars *et al*

[945] Graeme Purves, 'Calton Hill Break-in', *Radical Scotland* 1:1 (Summer 1982), p.12.
[946] *Ibid.*
[947] *Ibid*, p.13.

were quickly arrested and charged with vandalism at the nearby police station. A week later, "about 2,000" SNP supporters held a demonstration outside the building; three were arrested for chaining themselves to its railings, another 71 "staged a symbolic sit-in outside the front gates," and the Declaration was read out to the crowd.[948] The break-in activists sought to use the court case to emphasise the "no mandate" argument, choosing to defend themselves "on moral and political rather than legal grounds." Sillars was ultimately fined £100 and the other four fined £50.[949]

Despite the attempts at public and courtroom spectacle, the break-in was widely seen as a failure, which "confirmed the old guard's suspicion of both the 79 Group and the policy of civil disobedience."[950] On the left's own terms, the fines doled out to Sillars *et al* had not lived up to his claim, while moving the 'Scottish Resistance' motion at the 1981 Conference, that the party had to prepare "for the jails to be filled with Nationalists"[951] In the absence of John Maclean-style martyrdom, the SNP left had given their internal opponents another means of demonising them.[952]

The SLP's former leader soon found himself on the receiving end of his previous arguments and tactics. The 79 Group's opponents denounced them as a threat to the party's credibility, turning away the "moderate third-party voters" they had won round in seats like Dundee East and the Western Isles in the 1970s.[953] This critique was

[948] *Ibid*, p.12; Peter Lynch describes, however, the "cancellation by Sillars of a mass demonstration" on this weekend. Lynch, *SNP*, p.168. This discrepancy might be explained by Stephen Maxwell's suggestion that while the demonstration did happen, Sillars had the "moral authority" to "control them" in some unspecified way but decided against it, hinting at a more radical plan that never came to fruition. Maxwell, '79 Group', p.129.
[949] Purves, 'Calton', p.12.
[950] Torrance, 'Journey', p.168.
[951] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.612.
[952] Lynch, *SNP*, p.168; Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.614.
[953] Stewart, 'Disguised', p.367.

often regionalised, with Donald Stewart describing the Group as too focused on "the central belt, where the population and foolishness are."[954] Other opposing SNP activists described them as "nothing but a lot of Edinburgh armchair socialists," and "essentially an Edinburgh-based creation [which did] not understand the psychology of the people whose support they are trying to get, especially in the west of Scotland."[955] At the June 1982 Conference, fundamentalists launched a 'Campaign for Nationalism' to oppose the 79 Group, giving Gordon Wilson an opportunity to call for the proscription of all organised groups within the party.[956] The 79 Group disbanded on the 30th August 1982, with those who wanted to stay and fight compromising on the establishment of the Scottish Socialist Society to expand their efforts across parties. This, however, was deemed by the SNP leadership to be too similar to the 79 Group, and several leading 79 Group members were expelled from the party.[957]

The failure of the 'Scottish Industrial Resistance' campaign was just the latest in a string of dismal attempts by the Scottish radical left at political action to claim the nation for themselves. These terms, grown and energised in the exotic "glass-house" of print-culture, consistently struggled to endure the rougher climate of practical politics. Maxwell argues that the 79 Group initially intended to build slowly through the party, focusing on the careful, didactic injection of more overtly 'political' ideas and debate without "alienat[ing] moderate opinion within the Party." The arrival of Sillars, however, accelerated the Group's timetable, forcing a confrontation with the 'old guard' for which the Group was unprepared.[958] Tactical questions aside, the Group's approach has

[954] *Ibid*, p.368.
[955] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, pp.689-690.
[956] Torrance, 'Journey', p.170.
[957] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.764.
[958] Maxwell, '79 Group', p.127.

prompted a broader critique that it overestimated not just the SNP's appetite for left-wing radicalism but that of the Scottish public. For Ian O. Bayne, its founding arguments were mistaken: "the notion that Labour voters were motivated by socialist passion rather than essentially conservative sectional interests was … misplaced"[959] I.G.C. Hutchison suggests that it was doubly unwise, given Labour's move to the left at the same time: "as Labour's left also discovered, it was unclear how far the working class were crying out for more committed socialism. Apathy and lethargy seemed to characterise the response by many in Scotland to the profound economic and social challenges of the 1980s."[960]

This arguably overstates the 79 Group's faith in their own popular appeal. In fact, there was a dose of pragmatism mixed in with the apparent utopianism of the 79 Group's approach, which recognised radicalism's limits. In his retrospective on the Group, Maxwell argued that while there was a principled commitment to "democratic socialism," it was nevertheless realistic about "the difficulties of winning public support for socialism." More instrumentally, Maxwell argued that if the SNP positioned itself in the political centre, whatever the electoral arguments for it, "it would be obliged to underplay the growing divergence between English and Scottish politics." Thus it would lose its ability to "undermine the credibility of Scottish Labour's claim to be Scotland's defence against hard times." If the centre-ground of Scottish politics was not so different from the centre-ground of English politics, the "no mandate" argument would lose its justification.[961]

[959] Quoted in Torrance, 'Journey', p.163.
[960] Hutchison, *Scottish Politics*, pp.145-146.
[961] Maxwell, '79 Group, pp.124-125.

In fact, the 79 Group were as concerned with the *appearance* of radicalism as they were with radicalism itself: gently criticising the SNP in an early discussion paper, Andrew Currie – who had joined the party in the sixties – argued that while the party boasted "extremely radical political principles," they hadn't generated sufficient excitement due to a focus on technicalities rather than broader principle. Addressing this demanded "a new style" of politics, focusing on more "principled" appeals to Labour heartlands: "Until the principles for which we stand are spelled out with the utmost clarity we will never get the credit we deserve, and we will continue to be misrepresented and misinterpreted with ease by our political opponents."[962]

This echoed *Crann-Tàra*'s own emphasis – discussed in the previous chapter – on the importance of a more assertively radical nationalism in 1978, calling for "an organised and declared working-class-oriented radical and socialist faction within the SNP … [which] must be seen to denounce – oh, yes – and oppose the SNP Right."[963] The 79 Group's radicalism was sincere, but it was also tactically intended as a performative disavowal of the SNP's late-seventies MP cohort, in an effort to prove that the SNP offered a potential berth for free-floating left-wingers disillusioned – or never illusioned - with Labour. The 79 Group's core principles were carefully framed in the idiom of instrumental left-nationalism that had been generated during the previous decade by radicals who were sympathetic to nationality politics but hostile to the SNP. Elaborating the support for "full independence," an outline of the Group's 'basic principles' stated that "modern nationalism in general and the European and North American separatist movements in particular" are "the means by which the dominance of the centralised

[962] Andrew Currie, 'Which Way Forward?', in 'Extracts', p.2.
[963] 'Editorial', *Crann-Tàra* 3 (Summer 1978), p.2.

and bureaucratic states can be broken and which will lead to a new world order based on the equality of peoples."[964] Full independence was framed as "the pre-requisite for the fundamental change in society which would lead to the social and economic restructuring of Scotland."[965]

Nationalism was thus framed as a progressive historical process with potentially radical consequences that could help sceptics to rationalise any dalliance with its "myth-peddling" pitfalls. In a more detailed paper on this principle, Currie argued that "for many nationalists, independence … is an end in itself; to many others, however, independence as a means to an end is equally important." This, he suggested, was in the tradition of the "home rule wing" of Labour, for whom "a Scottish Parliament [was] a route to social change which they feared the Westminster system was incapable of achieving." This vision of independence was "still important to the most politicised elements of the SNP": it was "a means by which an egalitarian and emancipated, democratic society can be achieved within a Scottish state."[966]

This emphasis on generating a socialist image for the SNP represents the 79 Group's most distinctive contribution to Scottish nationalism. The party had already been successfully repositioned as a home for radical liberals and social democrats by figures like Wolfe, Margo MacDonald and George Reid, but the 79 Group opened this out further to members of the radical left who sought class politics, socialism and extra-parliamentary militancy. Jim Sillars argued that in deciding to join the SNP, "the existence of this group was crucial for me. The SNP leadership might not like it but

[964] 'The Basic Principles of the 79 Group', in 'Extracts', p.7.
[965] *Ibid.*
[966] Andrew Currie, 'Independence', in 'Extracts', p.9.

they had allowed the Group to settle and expand and so there was no longer a serious barrier to a socialist joining the party and doing so openly as a socialist."[967] The same reasoning was given by Kenny MacAskill, a young lawyer who followed Sillars into the SNP from the SLP in 1981 and became another prominent figure on the SNP left.[968] MacAskill later reflected that the Group had made the SNP "respectable in left-wing circles."[969]

As with the SLP, the "left-wing circles" most interested in the 79 Group were not the archetypal Labour-voting heartlands they aimed to court electorally. Using surveys conducted by himself and *Radical Scotland*, Baxter-Moore notes that like the SLP, the Group's social composition was "predominantly professional and middle class, with very few manual workers," distinguishing them from the wider SNP membership.[970] The 79 Group's real appeal was not to the working class but the radical intelligentsia, seeking through print, public meetings and extra-parliamentary spectacle to draw them into the SNP with a strong emphasis on intellectual work. The Group's 'Political Report' in 1980 suggested that, amongst the SNP's various organisational failures, "most seriously of all, there has been no major initiative to establish a structure of political education… Critical and informed debate on political issues must become an 'institutionalised' part of the Party's activities."[971] Currie's early paper on the party's prospects lamented that "we must be the only political party whose annual conference is not an occasion for a multiplicity of fringe meetings … Debate is the life blood of a political party; the SNP is getting anaemic for lack of debate."[972]

[967] Sillars, *Scotland*, p.78.
[968] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.612.
[969] Torrance, 'Journey', p.163.
[970] Baxter-Moore, *Exit*, p.580.
[971] SNP 79 Group Committee, Political Report (1980), p.3.
[972] Currie, 'Consensus', p.3.

As early as *Scottish International*, Scotland's radical intelligentsia had sought to legitimise its newfound interest in nationalism through public reason and instrumental, left-wing and cosmopolitan framings. The expansion of radical print-culture had allowed an intellectual nationalism to be made palatable in this way, though the SLP had exposed the void between neat theory and messy practice. That radical nationalism had opposed itself to SNP "populism", arguing that a "socialist nationalism" was required to combat it. While the intellectuals involved with *The Radical Approach*, building on Wolfe and others' work, had sought to emphasise the party's radical credentials earlier in the 1970s, the 79 Group expanded this to a more overtly socialist appeal. They did so by rhetorically embracing the same militant class politics which the radical left had begun to intellectually deprioritise, aided by a class-based interpretation of the Assembly's failure and Labour's electoral recovery.

The SNP's electoral breakthrough was a vital element of this shift, with the SNP's Westminster cohort illustrating the dangers of the ostensibly classless approach to social and economic questions which the SNP's own social democrats had emphasised in *The Radical Approach*. The vision of combined territorial, social and political radicalism assembled by the radical intelligentsia during the 1970s could not be easily combined with the world of party organisation and electoral politics, for it was founded on the idea of a generative gap between ambitious intellectuals and a "frightened" voting public. By 1983, the 'closure' of the radical imagination was beginning to find expression in an unpleasant realisation: that the ambitions and agency of the Scottish radical left tradition were ultimately dependent on those of the Scottish public and their political representatives in the Labour Party.

## "Circumspect, Moderate and Restrained": *Radical Scotland* and the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly

By 1983, the political horizons of the radical left for the rest of the decade were largely established. It was characterised by political utopianism on the one hand, in which radicals articulated expansive and defiant visions of Scotland's political agency with the idea of civil disobedience and the promise of a radical realignment after devolution; and a more pragmatic political practice on the other, openly acknowledging the limits of radicalism's popular appeal in the pursuit of a broad national consensus behind constitutional change.[973] Thus radical left identities began to take a secondary role to a national one, confirming the incorporation of the radical left tradition into a predominantly pro-devolution Scottish nationalist tradition. This change can be traced through the pages of *Radical Scotland*, which carried a lengthy debate on the future of the Scottish left across several issues in 1983.[974] This culminated in a conference titled 'Where Now For The Scottish Left?' held at the Mitchell Theatre in Glasgow on July 2nd, co-organised by *Radical Scotland*, the Scottish Socialist Society and – in a telling admission of the radical left's convergence around gradualism – the Glasgow Fabian Society.[975]

*Radical Scotland* was "relaunched" in 1983's February-March issue under the editorship of Kevin Dunion. His predecessor in the first iteration of *Radical Scotland*, Ian Dunn, was a strongly pro-devolution Labour member; the arrival of Dunion, a 79

[973] Lindsay Paterson, 'Scottish Democracy and Scottish Utopias: The First Year of the Scottish Parliament', *Scottish Affairs* 33 (Autumn 2000), pp.60-61.
[974] Stephen Maxwell, 'Scotland's Cruel Paradox', *Radical Scotland* 2:1 (February-March 1983), pp.12-14; Christopher Harvie, 'Tasks for Self-Governing Socialists', *Radical Scotland* 2:2 (April-May 1983), p.16; Bob Tait, 'Doubts and Fears About Socialism', *Radical Scotland* 2:3 (June-July 1983), pp.14-16.
[975] 'In the Red Corner', *Radical Scotland* 2:4 (August-September 1983), pp.7-8; Doug Bain, 'Where Now For The Scottish Left?', *Radical Scotland* 2:4 (August-September 1983), pp.14-16.

Group member who had publicly torn up his SNP membership card after the Group's proscription, reflected the growing intellectual compatibility of the two traditions which the magazine aimed to consolidate.[976] Indeed, with debates around nationalism and constitutional politics increasingly settled within the radical imagination, Labour's strength supplanted the rise of the SNP as the central problematic of radical thought. The first issue of the relaunched magazine carried an essay by Stephen Maxwell titled 'Scotland's cruel paradox', in which Maxwell barely mentioned the SNP, and recognised the importance of the Labour Party to the future development of Scottish radicalism.[977] This was founded on a new consciousness of radicalism's limits. Despite the appearance of "capitalism in crisis," the system's resilience had "confounded" the "millennialist hopes of earlier generations of socialists," with the latter's most successful efforts leading to "one-party states" mired in "blood and persecution." This historical disillusionment was exacerbated by "new issues cutting across the traditional lines of socialist politics – the environment, equality of the sexes, the approach of the post-industrial society," which all "increase the socialist's sense of intellectual disorientation."[978]

Maxwell argued that this crisis was particularly bad in Scotland: "no section of the socialist movement is so exposed to the charge of intellectual failure as Scottish socialists." By "Scottish socialists," however, Maxwell claimed to mean the Labour movement, which he argued had failed to create a "socialist culture in Scotland," and had "failed to make any noticeable contribution to those attempts which have been

[976] Anne Johnstone, 'Crossing the great divide', *The Herald* (April 24th, 2003), https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/11989554.crossing-the-great-divide-after-decades-as-a-professional-placard-waver-kevin-dunion-is-scotlands-first-information-commissioner-so-asks-anne-johnstone-has-the-poacher-now-turned-gamekeeper/.
[977] Maxwell, 'Paradox', p.12.
[978] *Ibid.*

made to rethink socialism."[979] This made for an unflattering comparison with England, where

> the ideas behind the Alternative Economic Strategy, the campaign for labour democracy, the debate about the relationship between feminism and socialism, the elaboration of new strategies for European nuclear disarmament, have come from the established sources of intellectual dissent in Britain.

These sources of dissent were "a southern radical middle class which, as it loses any substantial base of electoral support among the English working class, has to look increasingly to the Labour loyalties of Scotland and Wales to salvage its hopes of political power."[980]

This was an unfair analysis of the previous decade and a half of Scottish intellectual dissent, which had – as this thesis has demonstrated – transformed the worldview and self-understanding of the Scottish radical tradition, forced to play catch-up with an English radicalism that was already pushing further ahead. It was also a startlingly un-reflexive projection onto England of Scottish radicalism's own reliance on the "Labour loyalties of Scotland." Indeed, those enduring loyalties had underpinned Maxwell's dubious claim for a "radical mandate" in Scotland after the 1979 General Election. Maxwell also expected from the Scottish labour movement an equivalent to ideas

[979] *Ibid.*
[980] *Ibid.*

which, by his own admission, came from the “southern radical middle class,” rather than the southern labour movement.

This suggests that Maxwell’s real concern was that England’s “radical middle class” was connected to – and influential on – the labour movement, while Scotland’s radical middle class was not. Maxwell did not note that this dealignment was largely by choice: since the 1960s, radicals who emphasised a need for intellectual renewal had actively avoided or abandoned the Labour Party, opting for parties like the SLP and SNP which had tried and failed to break Labour’s political connection to the Scottish working class. The “cruel paradox” of Maxwell’s title was that despite the relative strength of English socialist ideas, “radical socialism has little future in the United Kingdom,” whereas in Scotland there were still grounds for optimism due to Labour’s electoral strength. “Of course,” he conceded, “the mass of Labour voters are not socialist in any positive sense,” but this could be remedied by the “educational and inspirational” efforts of “Scottish socialists,” by which he meant intellectuals.

These grounds for optimism ranged from the decline in the Conservative vote and Scotland’s indigenous capitalist class, to “the absence of a large coloured population.” This ensured that “the race issue is less likely to divide, or divert, Scottish energies,” a point which extended the ethnic pessimism Maxwell had deployed against English employees of Scottish universities a decade earlier. Scots, he argued, were less jingoistic than the English, and Scotland’s oil potential could be used “to challenge defeatism and fuel a revolution of rising expectations.” This was related to Maxwell’s scepticism about economic immiseration as a radicalising force: “high unemployment does not radicalise the working class: rather it makes them timid and conservative,

deflecting them from radical solutions towards whatever is familiar and established." That "familiar and established" force was the Labour Party, who had reclaimed support from the SNP "as a party of the local status quo, as the representative of the provincial establishment, not as a Bennite crusade." The future of Scottish radicalism ultimately depended "like so much else in Scotland on Labour's willingness to lift its veto on change by mobilising its Scottish majority in pursuit of Scottish ends."[981] Maxwell's vision of politics was therefore one in which he, as a left-wing supporter of the SNP, was largely helpless beyond the realm of printed persuasion.

Maxwell's reflective, pessimistic mood was partially shared by Bob Tait, who contributed an article on his 'Doubts and Fears About Socialism' to *Radical Scotland* a few months later.[982] Tait was, however, more positive about the development of Scottish intellectual life and the radical tradition. Reflecting on several *Radical Scotland* articles about the Scottish left, he noted that "socialists of a variety of stamps … gravitating somewhat towards each other as they try to redefine socialist theory and practice."[983] Yet again, the detachment of the intelligentsia from the people was the chief concern: "what if the majority of the Scottish people simply don't want to know – again? How can we account for the fact that so many Scots find the idea of socialism vaguely or even deeply unattractive?" Like Maxwell, he argued that Labour voters were "essentially defensive," seeking "protection … whether from old-style Toryism or new." There was little evidence of a "latent hankering after any version of socialist reconstruction of Scotland or the UK that would be meaningful to most of *Radical Scotland*'s readers or contributors." This was down to the "bad name" given to

[981] *Ibid*, p.13.
[982] Tait, 'Doubts'.
[983] *Ibid*, p.14.

socialism by “unremitting hostile propaganda” and the “undeniable calamities” of self-styled ‘socialist’ countries.

Yet even if Scottish voters were motivated by a welcome “fear of totalitarianism,” they were also “culpably failing to recognise just how much power has already accrued to fewer and fewer crucial centres of power in their own society.” Tait outlined a distinctively Scottish set of ideological obstacles facing socialists, chiefly the “ambivalence of Scots as regards corporate authority.” Scotland was organised around “a relationship between people and authority, client and provider, in which Labour sought to fill the latter role in Scotland as long as the voters were prepared to fill the former.” Voters could thus tolerate “a lot of imperfections” in exchange for delivery of “the basics.” Scots were, in other words, insufficiently interested in the kind of engaged, deliberative vision of politics that kept intellectuals occupied; “some way will have to be found to introduce people to new structures for managing their affairs that will involve real social devolution of responsibility and power.”[984] If Labourism was the problem, then “real social devolution” was the solution; yet as both Maxwell and Tait acknowledged, the prospects for any form of devolution were still ultimately contingent on the predominant agency of the Labour Party.

The closure of radicalism’s partisan horizon was entangled with the closure of its constitutional horizon, a process equally driven by a defeated political realism. In the 1970s, devolution had been entertained as a stepping-stone to independence, wedging open the cracks in the British state and exposing Scottish politics to further transformation. After 1979, despite Nairn’s optimism about the defeat of “cringing

[984] Tait, ‘Doubts’, p.16.

Home Rule", devolution became an end in itself, into which all prior concerns and caveats were dissolved. This was the opposite of its public presentation, which sought to demonstrate the value of devolution as a means to a diverse ends. Yet the Assembly's growing status on the radical left as an essential precondition of further change was only consolidated in the aftermath of 1979. The creation of a more effective movement and public demand for national "self-government" supplanted the idea of radicalism's intellectual and political independence as the convergence point for Scottish radicals. In 1983, writing on the 'Prospects for a Scottish Assembly' in *Radical Scotland,* the Vice-chair of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly Hugh Miller announced that "the creation of a Scottish Assembly, a radical event in itself, will open the way to fundamental change in the political, social and economic life of Scotland." It would be "the necessary foundation for action to improve living and working conditions, to secure prospects of a decent future and to allow Scotland to make a direct contribution to the welfare of the peoples of the rest of the world."[985]

Figures from across the Scottish radical tradition played a formative role in the CSA, the leading pro-devolution campaign organisation. Its first office bearers were Jack Brand, a 79 Group member, historian of the SNP and *Bulletin of Scottish Politics* editorial committee member, as interim convener; Duncan Toms, the secretary of the Workers' Party of Scotland (Marxist-Leninist), as interim secretary; and Alan Wylie, "a Glasgow lawyer and a Liberal", as interim treasurer. Others prominently involved included Hugh Miller and the folk-singer Morris Blythman, both of the John Maclean Society, the CPGB's Glasgow District Secretary Doug Bain, Alan Lawson of the 79 Group and later *Radical Scotland* editor, the SNP's Isobel Lindsay, Labour members

[985] Hugh Miller, 'Prospects for a Scottish Assembly', *Radical Scotland* 2:2 (April-May 1983), p.18.

and academics Jim Boyack and Nigel Grant, the Labour MPs Dennis Canavan and George Foulkes, and Joe Farrell, Colin Boyd and Jim Sillars of (or formerly of) the SLP.[986]

The approach of these radicals to the CSA was marked by their experience of the past decade: it gave solid, organisational expression to a retreat from distanciated intellectual experimentation, anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic revolt and intra-Scottish conflict, advocating instead the cautious development of a deep and lasting consensus behind constitutional reform across Scottish society and politics. "Of all contemporary liberation movements," wrote Mary Cowan in 1982, "the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly may fairly be considered as among the most circumspect, moderate and restrained, in its present stage."[987] It

> obliges the Scots for once to put by their passionately held individual convictions, and to tone down their predilection for polemic, in an attempt to merge with other Scots in a loose and wide confederation, with few and simple demands in order to get what they want as soon as possible.[988]

In its founding declaration, the CSA called for "A National Convention representative of Scottish life and society to consider detailed proposals for the constitution and powers of a Scottish Assembly."[989] The purpose of this Convention, declared Isobel

[986] Bob Maclean, *Getting It Together: The History of the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly/Parliament 1980-1999* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2005), p.46.
[987] Mary Cowan, 'Respectable Liberation', *Radical Scotland* 1:1 (Summer 1982), p.14.
[988] *Ibid.*
[989] Maclean, *Together*, p.48.

Lindsay to the founding meeting, would be to "work out what the Scots really wanted."[990] *Scottish International* had aimed to 'map out' what Scotland really was, so that avant-garde radicals could better traverse their newly politicised national terrain; Lindsay's mission statement for the CSA reflected the long-gestating discovery that radicals would ultimately have to come to some kind of compromise with the other, less adventurous inhabitants of that terrain.

This soon expressed itself in efforts at direct popular engagement, such as the organisation by Miller and Boyd of a 'Festival of the People' on Calton Hill on 28th June 1980. This was inspired, according to Maclean, by "the fetes and fiestas associated with the democratic socialist and euro-communist parties of Western Europe," and "attempted to emulate the Continental flavour" with a decorated float, a ceilidh, a sample performance of 7:84's play *Joe's Drum* and the first 'Seven Hills' race across Edinburgh. It also produced the CSA's defining symbol, a gigantic key held up by activists outside the Old Royal High School building to "open the gates locked against home rule."[991] Yet with only 500 aspiring Scottish citizens in attendance, the Festival of the People could not match the public reach offered by more indirect modes of influence. This latter was pursued with a particular and formative determination by Jack Brand, who argued in *Crann-Tàra* that "building a mass demand for an Assembly" had to go alongside "persuading the Labour and Liberal parties to keep an Assembly at the top of their political agendas. If we have to make allies in or around the British Establishment then we must never miss an opportunity."[992]

[990] *Ibid.*
[991] *Ibid*, pp.52-53.
[992] Jack Brand, 'A National Assembly', *Crann-Tàra* 13 (Spring 1981), p.15.

There was some dissent from this coalition-building emphasis, ironically from one of the chief late-1970s advocates of coalition-building. In his editorial for the same issue of *Crann-Tàra*, Norman Easton wrote that "so far the Assembly campaigners have utterly failed to exploit the anti-Tory emotion of an anti-Tory nation … by not latching on to Anti-Tory 'nationalism' the Assembly-ites are missing the boat, condemning themselves to the isolation suffered by the SNP." What was needed was "a socialist campaign for self-government that can encompass socialists – and only socialists – in all parties where socialists exist. We need a campaign to run the Tory hounds back to their London kennel."[993] This underestimated the extent to which the CSA's approach was itself shaped by the priorities of socialists chastened by recent experience. The editorial of *Radical Scotland*'s August-September 1983 issue warned against any complacency about Labour's control of Scottish politics: "the Labour vote," Dunion argued, was "maintained" by the fact that "as yet the Scottish people do not share a common identity with Thatcher." Yet "it would only require a slight change in public perception for that distinction to be lost."[994] The importance of *appearance* was, again, vital, reflecting the transition from "legislator" to "interpreter" in the self-image of Scottish intellectuals identified in the previous chapter. Scotland was "not a bastion for the Left," but could made one "as the effects of Tory policy in education, the health service and jobs bite further. This can only be done if at the same time Scottish consciousness of self is developed and encouraged." This meant "a positive identity and alternative" to Thatcher. For this, "a self-government campaign is our best bet."[995]

[993] 'Editorial', *Crann-Tàra* 13 (Spring 1981), p.2.
[994] 'Editorial', *Radical Scotland* 2:4 (August-September 1983), p.2.
[995] *Ibid.*

In an article for *Radical Scotland* in spring 1983, Christopher Harvie sought to explain and justify the radical intelligentsia's new role. If it strayed too close to the "commanding heights," such as those elements of the "British establishment" to which Jack Brand sought to appeal, radicals risked being "digested." To guard against this, Harvie argued for the importance of "encourag[ing] the grass roots."[996] This meant "identify[ing] those who are vaguely sympathetic to the aims of the self-government movement" and converting them "first into financial contributors and then into activists – in short, to double or treble the 2,000 or so who sustain our parties, political magazines and pressure groups." The prominence of "political magazines" indicated the enduring significance of the intelligentsia, who should "analyse the existing readership of our various political and literary magazines, to establish target groups for propaganda, appeals for funds, and for the further extension of the readership of these magazines." Models for expanding the intelligentsia's popular appeal were also sought, to address the failures – explicitly identified as the SLP and "the '79 cock-up" – of the 1970s, such as separatist movements in Spain and Corsica, CND and the Indian National Congress. It also required "a central information-gathering agency … which would not only maintain an index of activist groups and individuals (that mighty tribe of letter-writers to the papers), but could promote advertising and relations outside Scotland."[997]

This strategy was itself a kind of intellectual utopianism, clinging to the dreams of political primacy which radical intellectuals were in the process of overtly abandoning. But it was combined with a more serious electoral approach which illustrated the real

[996] Christopher Harvie, 'Tasks for Self-Governing Socialists', *Radical Scotland* 2:2 (April-May 1983), p.16.
[997] *Ibid.*

value of radical intellectuals to the wider movement. Noting that "co-operation within the Scottish devolutionist left has increased," Harvie argued for "co-operation to be continued … with the goal of eliminating the Conservatives as a credible force in Scottish parliamentary politics." This approach would ensure that "the image of Scots Toryism is as right-wing, Thatcherite and English nationalist as possible," producing "a Scottish politics so dislocated from Westminster's norms that Scottish representatives are forced into a national role … Westminster will then be faced with the alternatives of repression or concessions in the direction of self-government."[998]

Harvie's implication was that the value of the radical intelligentsia lay in their ability to network and mediate between different groups, a consequence of their relative distanciation from any group in particular. By facilitating co-operation and co-ordination across the left to "eliminate the Conservatives," they could leverage their social position to produce a profound symbolic shift in the structure of Scottish politics, forcing "Scottish representatives" – chiefly Labour – to adopt a more assertively national role or face losing their representative credibility. While this can be viewed as a more subtle version of Norman Easton's proposal to "run the Tory hounds back to their London kennel," it was really a means of keeping up pressure on Labour, again tacitly accepting the party's overwhelming importance to the radical left's new constitutional *telos*.

Frustrations with Labourism were to the fore in the 'Where Now For The Scottish Left?' conference, held in the bleak aftermath of the 1983 election. John Maxton, Labour's MP for Glasgow Cathcart and a member of the Tribune group, provoked the irritation

[998] *Ibid.*

of attendees and *Radical Scotland* when he "declared that the task of securing an Assembly could only be done through the Labour Party and the Labour Party alone."[999] Furthermore, he refused to countenance "any action which sought to displace Parliament as the sovereign legislature," rejecting the increasingly popular idea of a representative National Convention. This, argued *Radical Scotland*'s report, demonstrated that Labour could not "take a principled stance on devolution without having to give consideration to what it is to be Scottish." By this they meant that Scotland had a tradition of popular rather than parliamentary sovereignty, a point made at the conference by Alex Salmond, who argued that "acceptance of Scottish nationality makes irresistible the demand for self-government maintained by the recognition that sovereignty remains with the people."[1000]

Another Labour MP in attendance, Robin Cook, argued that emphasising the "no mandate" argument could be used against Labour should they return to power at Westminster without a majority in England. Nevertheless, he declared himself a convert to the campaign for self-government on wholly pragmatic grounds: "I don't give a bugger if Thatcher has a mandate or not – I will simply do whatever I can to stop her."[1001] *Radical Scotland* described this stance as "essentially a parasitic one in that it feeds off a campaign that will undoubtedly be founded on principle, a principle which he is still unable to accept, but whose effect he wishes to employ." They claimed this "not to condemn his position, but to welcome him to the broader campaign which is made up of a variety of interests." It was Labour's "duty," they insisted, "to provide the

[999] 'In the Red Corner', *Radical Scotland* 2:4 (August-September 1983), p.7.
[1000] *Ibid.*
[1001] *Ibid.*

lead in a national campaign, not an alternative to it."[1002] Yet this final point undermined the rest. *Radical Scotland* was, by its own admission, in no position to dictate what Labour should or shouldn't do. Labour could, after all, boast a "mandate" from the Scottish people which *Radical Scotland* could not. The fact that a majority of the Scottish electorate had voted for pro-devolution parties in 1979 and 1983, and no devolution had been forthcoming, was indicative of the purely hypothetical status of "popular sovereignty." The only vision of Scotland's political aspirations which *Radical Scotland* could counterpose to the nation's electoral expression had been fabricated by the intelligentsia, on their own terms, in magazines, books and organisations which they ran. *Radical Scotland*'s description of Cook as "parasitic" was an outburst against a hierarchical division of labour which that intelligentsia had largely invented for itself, in pursuit of an Assembly conceived as a means of rectifying the Scottish public's continued lack of interest in its ideas.

If the full extent of radical ambitions for Scotland would have to wait until after a Scottish Assembly was in place, radicals nevertheless sought to keep the utopian flame alive in the interim by continuing the 79 Group's emphasis on civil disobedience. As with the 79 Group, this was conceptualised as a way of expressing Scottish political demands beyond parliamentary politics, allowing the radical left to envision some kind of agency that was not reliant on Labour's initiative. In his own reflections on 'Where Now For The Scottish Left?', the CPGB's Doug Bain argued that in the aftermath of the 1983 election, the only prospect for devolution was "the downfall of the Government and probably a major constitutional crisis."[1003] For "any other issue," Bain

[1002] *Ibid.*
[1003] Doug Bain, 'Where Now For The Scottish Left?', *Radical Scotland* 2:4 (August-September 1983), pp.14-16.

argued, “the line would probably be to keep punting away but be resigned to a wait of five years and maybe even longer.” In the case of the Assembly, however, “such a prospect is unacceptable and … extraordinary things must now be set in motion.” This would require “a level of national unity not so far achieved,” in “a confrontation between Scotland and Westminster.”[1004]

The prospects for such a “battle,’ Bain noted, were “frankly, not very good.” Devolution had not been prominent in the General Election, and support for it was “generally passive.” Ways had to be found of “generating some action, arousing some anger, finding targets, provoking confrontation.” Bain’s vision of popular initiative was openly vanguardist: “if we can get just 2 per cent … actually doing something the situation would be transformed.” This could take several forms: a “mass lobby of Westminster and/or some kind of Day of Action here in Scotland”; a “disruption” of the political process, with supportive Scottish MPs abstaining from Scottish debates in the House of Commons to hold counter-debates in Edinburgh’s Assembly Rooms; a nationwide refusal “to implement a decision of the Westminster Parliament” which would force the government “to do something about it”; Scottish Conventions organising “national delegate gatherings’ mirroring the STUC’s Scottish Assemblies of the 1970s; or, finally, “an elected People’s Convention which could confront Westminster with the threat of disruption of the Union unless the right of self-determination is acknowledged by Westminster.”[1005]

[1004] *Ibid*, p.14.
[1005] *Ibid*, p.14.

The same August-September issue of *Radical Scotland* carried a similar proposal emanating from within the Labour Party itself, prepared by George Foulkes for Labour's Scottish post-election meeting and leaked to the press.[1006] The 'Foulkes Memorandum', as *Radical Scotland* described it, argued for an escalating wave of disruption to "provoke the constitutional crisis necessary to get change." The first stage included minor inconveniences like filibustering Scottish measures and overloading civil servants with questions. The second included the Scottish Grand Committee of MPs claiming powers for itself from the Scottish Office and inviting recognition from Scottish local authorities as a "rival source of authority." The third included Labour mandating its councillors to pursue non-cooperation with the Scottish Office in "controversial areas," exploiting areas of weakness in existing legislation for maximum disruption, and encouraging "selective union action." Finally, "more drastic measures" included "tax revenue disruption" and "token strikes", following by "linking action to local government resistance in England and Wales, other industrial resistance and CND action," and a "Nationwide Plebiscite on Devolution/Home Rule organised by the Labour Movement."[1007]

Foulkes had established the Labour Campaign for a Scottish Assembly in 1980, and Hames shows that he was in close dialogue with radical intellectuals like Jack Brand and Neal Ascherson in the development of his strategy. Yet the advice of these intellectuals was notably pragmatic. Ascherson urged Foulkes to take every opportunity to "heighten the profile of Scottish politics," emphasising the importance of "the sheer publicity level" to building support for devolution; Brand, true to his article

[1006] 'The Foulkes Memorandum', *Radical Scotland* 2:4 (August-September 1983), pp.18-19.
[1007] *Ibid*, p.19.

in *Crann-Tàra*, emphasised the importance of appealing to 'elites' – including "leaders of industry" – on the grounds of their own self-interest.[1008] Foulkes' proposals were drastically watered-down for the benefit of his party colleagues, and ultimately Labour pursued only "limited parliamentary disruption," such as forcing the extensions of Scottish debates and disrupting lines of communication with Conservative parliamentary managers.[1009]

Jack Geekie and Roger Levy identify Foulkes, along with others like John Maxton, Dennis Canavan and George Galloway, as part of a group driving the "tartanisation" of Labour, encouraging a "nationalist" solution to Thatcher's electoral success and Scotland's economic and social crises.[1010] Where this did influence more senior members of the party, however, it was framed in terms that were more defensive than radical, such as Donald Dewar's claim in 1985 that an Assembly would have protected Scots "from much damaging legislation which does not reflect Scottish priorities."[1011]

This vision of "Scottish priorities," opposed to Thatcher, allowed Scotland's intellectuals to overlook a new and inadmissible twist in their alienation from the people. It was not intellectuals who were being engulfed by mass unemployment and the decline of industrial communities, but the working class. The celebratory historiography of "cultural devolution" rightly identifies the growing self-confidence of Scottish intellectual life over the 1980s, but it did so in the void of political influence at the British level left by the collapse of the labour movement and the defeat of the

[1008] Hames, *Literary Politics*, pp.125-127.
[1009] Mitchell, *Scottish Question*, p.225.
[1010] Jack Geekie, Roger Levy, 'Devolution and the tartanisation of the Labour Party', *Parliamentary Affairs* 42:3 (1989), p.401.
[1011] *Ibid.*

Labour Party as much as the lack of a Scottish Assembly. By 1983 the radical left had discovered that their power to speak for the Scottish nation was not, after all, contingent on the achievement of a Scottish Assembly, for the mere hint of an Assembly had provoked a transformation in radicalism's relationship to Scottish nationhood. Thanks to a searching, imaginative reassessment of Scotland's national and constitutional prospects pursued over a decade and a half, radicals had managed to lodge themselves deep in the infrastructure and ideas of the self-government movement and the SNP. This had not, however, done anything for their political strength. It was Scottish civil society, not political society or industrial power, that radicalism had sought to develop and colonise.

Dreams of civil disobedience were thus an escape from the reality of political and economic helplessness, in a nation whose political strength was still contingent on the very forces from which the radical left had spent over a decade trying to justify its detachment: the Labour Party and the organised working class. It took Labour's return to power, in 1997, for a Scottish Parliament to finally be implemented. They did so on a 'New Labour' platform that performatively abandoned – for the benefit of both a sceptical electorate and Jack Brand's "leaders of industry" – the party's old 'Clause IV' commitment to common ownership of the means of production. Socialism had given way to liberalism.

## Conclusion: "The Sky Was The Limit"

Writing in 1994, Anthony Giddens, a formative influence on the New Labour project, argued that "radicalism, taking things by the roots, meant not just bringing about change but controlling such change so as to drive history onwards. And it is this project

which now seems to have lapsed."[1012] By 1983, Scottish radicalism had not abandoned its desire to control change and "drive history onwards," but it had largely stopped attempting to do so as an autonomous, self-determining political tradition in its own right. Utopian dreams of disobedience, republican popular sovereignty and the socialist potential of an Assembly ultimately allowed intellectuals to keep one foot in the radical tradition while pursuing a more pragmatic and compromised form of politics. The purpose of that politics was to re-embed intellectual agency in a public which radicals felt held more socialist potential than could be realised under existing constitutional arrangements.

This demonstrates the transformation in the radical left's understanding of its relationship to Scottish identity which runs through this thesis. Between 1968 and 1979, Scottish radicals sought to sweep away the Scottish nation they already knew and replace it with a new, more imaginative and more experimental vision of Scottish politics, society and culture, placing themselves at its centre in the process. Between 1979 and 1983, reeling from the sudden closure of the political horizons on which that project was predicated, this endeavour went into reverse. As Jack Brand put it in 1981:

> In the early Seventies Scotland had lots of problems and lots of hope. We are now left with the problems. Then we had hope because it seemed that new things were happening. It wasn't just the oil. There was a great deal of new artistic life. Young people, socialists and liberals and conservatives as well as nationalists were on the move, full of ideas and energy. This was the kind of Scotland for new industries to grow. For

[1012] Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), p.1.

> many Scots then the sky was the limit. There is not much sign of that now.[1013]

After 1979, instead of transforming, subverting, or even just dispassionately 'mapping' Scotland's sense of itself, the country's radical intellectuals sought to reify and weaponise it. They attempted to reconnect with a public that had stubbornly refused to abandon the loyalties – to Britain, to Labour, and to Scotland's corporatist version of capitalism – from which radicalism had found various imaginative escape-routes. In the eyes of the radical intelligentsia, the whirlwind of Thatcherism changed the apparent conservatism of the Scottish people from a drag on their potential to an anchor which saved the left from being blown away entirely. In this context, the radical left performed its terminal imaginative pivot, focusing its political efforts on the achievement of a constitutional order that would better represent the very people from which radicals had once consciously alienated themselves. Radicalism was no longer something to be thrust into Scottish life from the outside, but a quality that inhered in the Scottish nation, displacing the Scottish radical left from the centre of its own tradition. This conscious act of defeated self-abnegation transformed the Scottish radical left from a living tradition, capable of independent and often viciously critical engagement with Scottish identity on its own terms, into the myth of 'Radical Scotland': an image of Scottish nationhood where radicalism is always already inherent in the people and their representative institutions; in other words, a nation that does not actually require an active, critical, self-consciously distanciated radical left at all.

[1013] Brand, 'Assembly', p.15.

# Conclusion: From Parliamentary Socialism to Parliamentary Nationalism

While the discourse of 'Radical Scotland' is now an established feature of historiography and commentary, this thesis has provided the first dedicated study of its origins in the Scottish radical left. Declining to treat 'Radical Scotland' as simply a myth to be debunked, it has shown that this discourse emerged from a particular set of problems facing the radical left in Scotland in the period 1967-1983. Highlighting the combination of transnational influences and national circumstances which shaped the rise of Scottish nationalism and devolution in the 1960s and 1970s, it has shown how this conjunction formed a shared national reference point for a broader discourse of left-wing renewal. It did so in a period of structural crisis for the radical left. This crisis lay in the contradiction between an established tradition of localised, extra-parliamentary radicalism focused on the working class, and the conditions of an expanded state, mass democracy and mass culture that prevailed in Britain during the post-war era. This thesis adds considerable empirical substance to Lindsay Paterson's argument that radicalism in Scotland was given a more self-consciously national form by the experience of the post-war state.[1014] It contributes a distinctive emphasis to the especially significant, complex and often contradictory role of parliamentary democracy within this process. In the shadow of such a powerful means of popular representation, the radical left sought a new role for itself, reimagining Scotland's territorial, social and political possibilities. Yet it was inspired above all by the prospect of parliamentary democracy's arrival in a distinctly Scottish form.

[1014] Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp.8-9.

In attempting to reclaim left-wing politics from domestication by these conditions, a transnational 'new left' emerged which contained competing ways of relating to territorial identities. This thesis confirms existing accounts that a distinctively Scottish 'new left' had a significant influence on the development of a left-wing Scottish nationalism.[1015] However, it also complicates this influence, demonstrating that these tensions within the new left expressed themselves in Scotland in distinctive ways. It demonstrates that 'new left' ideas also sustained a left-wing *unionism*, in which Scotland's distinctive culture, rooted in local working-class communities, was best defended against economic and bureaucratic centralisation through the united struggle of the British working class. By excavating these differences within the Scottish new left, this thesis adds valuable political context to the conflict over 'native' and 'cosmopolitan' culture within Scottish literary debates, and it helps to explain divisions between the more communitarian left wing of the SNP and the radicalism of a more cosmopolitan 'free-floating' intelligentsia. Yet this thesis also demonstrates how these different 'logics of transcendence' were both contained and concealed in the discourse of 'Radical Scotland', as the Scottish nation became the primary territorial frame for debate between radicals over these questions.

An emphasis on these processes of containment and obfuscation is itself one of the major contributions of this thesis to the study of Scottish radicalism. Its central

[1015] William Thompson, 'The New Left in Scotland', in I. MacDougall (ed.), *Essays in Scottish Labour History* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979); Christopher Hill, 'Nations of Peace: Nuclear Disarmament and the Making of National Identity in Scotland and Wales', *Twentieth Century British History* 27:1 (2016), pp.26-50; Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism; Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994* (London: Routledge, 1994); Ben Jackson, *The Case for Scottish Independence: A History of Nationalist Political Thought in Modern Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Ewan Gibbs, Rory Scothorne, 'Origins of the present crisis? The emergence of 'left-wing' Scottish nationalism, 1956-1981', in Evan Smith, Matthew Worley (eds.), *Waiting for the Revolution: The British Far Left from 1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp.163-179.

contention is that in order to investigate the history of radicalism in Scotland, we have to understand the process by which the relationship between radicalism and Scottish nationhood became a distinctive and increasingly popular subject of enquiry and debate, superseding other ways of understanding radicalism in Scotland. The assumption that the nation is the best frame with which to understand – or indeed practice – radical politics is neither wholly supported nor entirely rejected by this thesis. But it has been demonstrated here that 'Radical Scotland' was invested with its contemporary meaning in particular circumstances, for particular objectives, none of which were unproblematically national. To take Scotland and radicalism at face value as an appropriate analytical pairing tends to elide the conditions and strategies through which they became associated, misrepresenting the political significance of that association.

This thesis has also provided a sustained analysis of the strange, inchoate group which underpinned the development of the 'Radical Scotland' discourse: intellectuals. It has shown that despite the prominence usually given to social movements and working-class militancy in the literature on 'Radical Scotland', the Scottish radical left – and 'Radical Scotland' – cannot be understood without attending to the shared infrastructures and self-justifications of the intellectuals who articulated it. If we are to approach the radical left as a self-conscious national tradition, rather than myriad local or transnational struggles, we cannot avoid the formative role of the intelligentsia in articulating a radical vision of nationhood that transcends the administrative and banal. This vision necessarily deals with imaginative and unverifiable speculations on national "character," and in doing so must draw its creative raw materials from the more immediate circumstances and concerns of its architects.

This thesis has therefore shown that contemporary visions of 'Radical Scotland' have their origins not in the working-class militancy of 'Red Clydeside' or the radical weavers of 1820, but in the social, cultural and intellectual world of the 1960s and 1970s intelligentsia, based largely in Edinburgh. Their consciousness of their own marginalisation as Scots within an Anglo-British intellectual field informed a vision of Scottish cultural "silence" that was dismissive of more popular sources of culture beyond the intelligentsia.[1016] It also inspired the invention of a more 'separatist' tradition of national radicalism to historically authenticate intellectuals' own pursuit of independence from the British left, and this thesis demonstrates the wide-ranging reinvention of Scottish radical history during this period through a range of public memorialisations and historical societies alongside published work. Intellectuals' deep sense of alienation from the working class also encouraged a self-legitimating vision of the intelligentsia as a distinctively radical force within Scottish life. It sought to articulate diverse causes together within a vision of national self-determination which reflected the distinctive concern of the intelligentsia for coherent, rationalistic enlightenment, liberated from conservative myths and traditions.

This thesis has therefore offered some support to Cairns Craig's critique of the "historical egotism" of the 1970s intellectuals.[1017] Yet it has done so only to offer a qualified endorsement of that egotism, for it was by imagining itself apart from Scottish society that the radical left could re-engage with it on terms that injected a more critical, cosmopolitan radicalism into the ideological bloodstream, forging a 'native cosmopolitanism' that stressed the vitalising role of national 'misfits'. These misfits

[1016] Tom Nairn, 'Festival of the Dead', *New Statesman* (September 1st, 1967), pp.265-266.
[1017] Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p.107.

could be social or cultural, from the gay rights activists of the Scottish Minorities Group to English migrants and Catholics; or they could be geopolitical, as in Tom Nairn's fantasy *internationale* of "trouble-maker" and "non-belonger" nationalities.[1018] While Scottish women's liberation was markedly absent from the mainstream of this tradition, its own independent intellectual expression towards the end of the 1970s exhibited a similarly critical disposition towards Scottish society, with radicalism positioned on the outside of national identity looking in. The incorporation of these identities into a more pluralistic vision of Scottish radicalism continued into the 1980s, but a disposition towards the contestation and unsettling of Scottish identity was replaced by a more optimistic and self-affirming vision of the "settled will."[1019] This was accompanied by a defensive re-centring of the industrial working class in the Scottish social and political imagination, even as its real political authority continued to fade. This thesis has thus demonstrated the overlooked importance of the radical left to the idea of a "civic" or "liberal" nationalism in Scotland. Radicals articulated a cosmopolitan vision of nationhood defined by openness to the figure of the 'outsider within,' who was seen to play a special role in the reflexive modernisation of society.[1020] The original outsiders of this vision were, however, intellectuals themselves.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this thesis is to study this intellectual world through a broad and deep contextual reading of the political and cultural magazines

[1018] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism 2nd ed.* (London: Verso, 1983), p.183.
[1019] John Smith, quoted in James Mitchell, *Devolution in the UK* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p.111.
[1020] James Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms: Empire, State and Civil Society in Scotland and Quebec* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013); Jonathan Hearn, *Claiming Scotland: National Identity and Liberal Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p.92; Richard Finlay, 'Thatcherism, Civil Society and the Road to Home Rule: Scotland 1980-1997', in Alexander Murdoch (ed.), *The Scottish Nation: Identity and History* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), p.143; Alfred Schuetz, 'The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology', *American Journal of Sociology* 49:6 (May 1944), pp.499-507.

of the period, offering a substantial overview of those areas of public life that have been largely overlooked by a political historiography focused on parliamentary debates and newspapers. It has demonstrated the importance of the hitherto understudied *Scottish International* to the transformation of Scottish political and cultural life in the 1970s, as well as the enduring and indeed pioneering influence of its first editor, Bob Tait. While recent work on these magazines by Scott Hames, Ben Jackson and Eleanor Bell is beginning to transform our understanding of them, this thesis makes a distinctive contribution by charting in close detail the emergence and development of a radically enlarged Scottish intellectual *infrastructure*.[1021] It focuses not only on the content of print-culture but its internal networks and relationships, its conditions of possibility and its self-image, tracing debates and ideas not just within key publications but also about them. This approach has illustrated the formative role of both publicly- and privately-funded institutions like the Scottish Arts Council, the Edinburgh University Student Publications Board and the Scottish International Institute to the maintenance of a Scottish intellectual radicalism, as well as the value of small, struggling periodicals like *Q* and *Crann-Tàra* to the development and publicisation of radical ideas and networks. The cross-pollination of both ideas and individuals between these publications has been emphasised, confirming Craig Stewart's analysis of a "discourse community" developing during this period.[1022]

[1021] Scott Hames, *The Literary Politics of Scottish Devolution: Voice, Class, Nation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); Ben Jackson, *The Case for Scottish Independence: A History of Nationalist Political Thought in Modern Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Eleanor Bell, 'Rejecting the Knitted Claymore: The Challenge to Cultural Nationalism in Scottish Literary Magazines of the 1960s and 1970s', in Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *British Literature in Transition, 1960-1980: Flower Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.263-274.

[1022] Craig Stewart, Development of a discourse community: the Scottish constitutional debate 1967-1979, PhD thesis. University of Edinburgh (2005).

By supplementing this public writing with archival research into party papers and letters as well as interviews, this thesis has demonstrated the shared social lives and collective identities beyond published discourse which linked together various political projects with which the radical left was engaged in the 1970s and early 1980s, particularly in the SLP, 79 Group and CSA. Yet it has also demonstrated the forms of exclusion, control and misrepresentation that were equally vital to the transformation of the radical imagination, as more revolutionary, class-based and anti-nationalist visions were not just argumentatively dismissed but practically expelled from political organisations.

Finally, this thesis has illustrated the ideological consequences of a radicalism rooted in print-culture, whose form, if not always its content, encouraged a vision of slow, pluralistic and deliberative progress. Even as it dismissed more fundamentalist ideas of social revolution or class warfare, this print-radicalism cultivated its own utopia of politics without power, offering dreams of anti-Thatcherite resistance in the discursive space of *Radical Scotland* while conceding the task of defeating Thatcherism and implementing devolution to the Labour Party. While print allowed the radical left to detach itself imaginatively from the British left, it was the overwhelming success of Thatcherism in a resolutely British political world that drove the Scottish radical imagination to reify itself into the defensive myth of 'Radical Scotland'. Despite its visions of independence, this myth ultimately reflected Scotland's enduring Britishness, and its Labourism: after 15 years spent criticising Scotland's deep-rooted conservatism, 'Scotland' could only be seen as 'Radical' because it voted Labour, and 'England' voted Conservative. While the Scottish radical imagination initially sought to escape the trap of parliamentary socialism and define itself against nationalist

simplification, the practical difficulties of doing so ultimately drew it into a simplified parliamentary nationalism. Escaping that trap will require more than imagination.

# Appendix I. Interview Participant Information Sheet (Plain Language)

## Participant Information Sheet

**Ph.D thesis: Nationalism and the Radical Left in Scotland, 1968-1992**

Investigating the relationship between the radical left and Scottish nationalism from the 1960s until the 1990s.

Researcher: Mr Rory Scothorne

Supervisor: Professor Ewen Cameron

Course: Ph.D Scottish History

You are being invited to take part in a research project into the relationship between the radical left and Scottish nationalism between the 1960s and the 1990s, based in part on interviews with individuals who were involved in Scottish politics and/or culture during that period.

Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the information on this page carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

**What the project will involve**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the radical left and the politics of Scottish self-government – meaning both devolution and independence – between 1968 and 1992. I am defining the Scottish radical left as a broad tradition, encompassing all those who sought to identify and challenge structures of power at their roots in order to create a more equal society. I hope to find out how the Scottish radical left was formed and understood by those engaged with it, and how this understanding was affected by the politics of Scottish self-government and Scottish national identity; I also hope to find out how far the Scottish radical left influenced the politics of Scottish self-government and ideas about Scottish national identity, and how and why the extent of this influence changed over the period studied. I hope to have completed by primary research by the end of December 2018.

You are being asked to take part because you have been identified as having been either involved or engaged with some aspect of the Scottish radical left tradition during the period studied, either through your engagement with a relevant organisation, event or publication being studied, or through your own interest in the subject of the research during the period being studied. If you decide to take part, the interview would occur at a time and place convenient to you and last between 1 and 2 hours, with breaks if needed. The interview will feature a mixture of pre-prepared questions about your life story and experience of the topic, and a more free-flowing discussion building on your answers. I will audio-record the interview.

Taking part in this project is entirely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw at any time before the completion of the research, without giving a reason.

**Keeping information confidential**

On the attached consent form, you are given the option to anonymise your contribution, in which case a made-up name will be used. Until publication, all data will be stored in a locked cabinet or in a locked file on my computer and will be dealt with confidentially. It will only be

seen by myself and my supervisors. All anonymised data will be kept permanently anonymous, with the non-anonymous version stored confidentially for a period of up to 10 years after the completion of the research, at which point it will be destroyed.

**The results of this study**

I will present my findings in the thesis I am writing for the degree of Ph.D in Scottish History. I may also present these at academic conferences and in journal articles. You may request a copy of the published thesis.

Upon completion of this research and with your consent regarding your own interview, recordings and transcripts of interviews (anonymised by request) will be donated to an archive deemed appropriate by the researcher, where they can be accessed by other researchers. Examples of these archives are the Scottish Oral History Centre at Strathclyde University or the Scottish Political Archive at Stirling University.

**Review of the study**

This study has been reviewed and agreed by the School of History, Classics and Archaeology Ethics Board, University of Edinburgh.

**Contact for further Information**

If you have any questions about this study, you can ask me, Mr Rory Scothorne (s0938929@sms.ed.ac.uk) or my supervisor, Professor Ewen Cameron (e.cameron@ed.ac.uk) or the Ethics board for the School of History, Classics and Archaeology (hca-research@ed.ac.uk)

Thank you for reading this.

# Appendix II. Interview Consent Form

## Consent Form

**Title of Project: Nationalism and the Radical Left in Scotland, 1968-1992**

**Name of Researcher: Rory Scothorne (s0938929@sms.ed.ac.uk)**

Please tick each question or delete text and tick at each question as appropriate:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to the interview being audio recorded and the use of quotes in publication.

4. I do/do not consent for my name to be used in publication.

5. Where I do not consent for my name to be used I do consent for quotations to be used under a pseudonym in publication.

6. I agree to take part in this interview.

7. I do/do not consent for the interview transcript to be stored at an institutional archive chosen by the researcher, such as the Scottish Oral History Centre at Strathclyde University or the Scottish Political Archive at Stirling University

If you do not consent to this:

8 I do/do not consent for this interview transcript to be maintained in the same secure conditions as during the Ph.D research period for a period of up to ten years after the interview.

Name/Signature of participant Date

_____ _____

Researcher Date

_____ _____

Version 2: September 2012

# Bibliography

## Unpublished Primary Sources

### *Glasgow Caledonian University Archives Centre*


Willie Thompson Papers (uncatalogued)

Papers of Professor Willie Thompson, professor, historian and Communist Party Activist, Glasgow, Scotland. GB 1867 WT


### *National Library of Scotland*


Scottish National Party Papers

Federation of Student Nationalists, report on the Skye Crofting Scheme, 1974, and other printed literature relating to the FNS, 1965-73. Acc.7295/21

Gavin Kennedy: SNP Papers

Minutes, discussion and other papers and newsletters of the 79 Group of SNP members. Acc.11565/23

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### *Carn*


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## PhD Theses

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## Interviews

Neal Ascherson interviewed by Rory Scothorne on January 24th, 2019

Ray Burnett interviewed by Rory Scothorne on February 4th, 2019

Terry Brotherstone interviewed by Rory Scothorne on February 25th, 2019

Trevor Royle interviewed by Rory Scothorne on March 13th, 2019