THE SECULAR PULPIT:

PRESBYTERIAN DEMOCRACY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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In his inaugural lecture as Professor of Politics at Edinburgh University H.J. Hanham argued that a distinctively Scottish political culture, compounded of Scientific Whiggism and Presbyterianism, died with the nineteenth century. I wish to argue against Hanham that key elements of the Scottish Presbyterian tradition outlived Whiggism to exert an influence on Scottish - and British - political thinking in the twentieth century.(1)

Three Scots played an important part in shaping the British response to the biggest political issue of the inter-war decades - the prospects for the survival of democracy in mass industrial society. A.D. Lindsay (1879 - 1952), John Reith (1889 - 1971) and John Grierson (1889 - 1972) each devoted his main life's work to developing new institutions to equip democracy to defeat the totalitarian challenge which they, along with many of their contemporaries, believed was implicit in Western Society as it had developed by the 1920's. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, author of The Modern Democratic State and founder at Keele of Britain's first new university after the Second World War, developed the case for new forms of educational provision more relevant to the needs of the industrial working class electorate than the élitist system in which he spent the greater part of his own working life. John Reith, chief architect and first Director-General of the BBC, and John Grierson, founder of the documentary film movement, were among the first to grasp the political and social significance of new technologies of communication and to devise institutional means of putting them at the service of democracy. Behind the pioneering work of these three Scots lay a common inheritance of

themes and values.

The neglect of this Scottish contribution by political historians is not hard to explain. In the first place Lindsay, Reith and Grierson were all more interested in putting their ideas to work than they were in writing them down. As a result the most important part of their testament is in the institutions which they founded or helped to develop. Reith and Grierson in particular have left only fragmentary written accounts of their ideas - at least in published form - and these yield insights rather than systematic theory. Then the lack of a continuing Scottish tradition of political thought in the twentieth century has served to discourage students from seeking a common inspiration for the few Scottish contributions which have been made to British political thinking. Significantly, while Lindsay, Reith and Grierson each acknowledged an intellectual debt to his Scottish background none acknowledged the remarkable similarity between his own ideas and those of his two countrymen and near contemporaries, an omission repeated by their otherwise excellent biographers - Drusilla Scott (A.D. Lindsay)[2], Andrew Boyle in his biography of Reith (Only the Wind will Listen)[3], and Forsyth Hardy (Grierson: A Documentary Biography)[4]. Finally the three Scots' preoccupation with the moral and cultural problems of modern democracy has fitted uneasily into a British debate dominated for most of the post-war period by a restrictive, Fabian interpretation of 'social democracy'. The recent collapse of the social democratic consensus provides an opportunity to assess the strengths and limitations of this Scottish vision of mass democracy.

Lindsay, Reith and Grierson offered broadly similar diagnoses of the sickness of democracy in the twentieth century. The chief symptom was a loss of civic identity and purpose. Modern democracy had failed to create a system of communication and decision to replace the assembly of citizens which was the core of the classical ideal of civic democracy. The growing complexity of the economic and technological organisation of society and the parallel extension of the power of the state presented a formidable challenge to the understanding of the typically ill-educated citizen tied to a job which was sure to be mentally enervating if it was not physically exhausting. Isolated in mass society and bewildered

by the flood of specialised information, the citizen was increasingly susceptible to the appeal of the demagogue and the 'mass persuaders'. In these conditions the question of who controlled the new technologies of communication was vital to the survival of democracy.

Such fears were not peculiar to the three Scots. They derived from a tradition of criticism of popular democracy represented in the nineteenth century by de Tocqueville's classic De la démocratie en Amérique. That tradition had been powerfully restated for the inter-war generation by the American political writer Walter Lippmann in his reaction against the progressive liberal ideas which he and his colleagues on the journal New Republic had upheld during the First World War. In his book Public Opinion published in 1922 Lippmann contrasted the Jeffersonian ideal of the informed and rational citizen with the ignorance of public affairs which he had come to believe was endemic in mass society. The voter reacted not to reality as revealed by a process of rational public debate but to 'pictures in his head', images manipulated by the controllers of the mass media. As summarised by B. Forcey in his study of the 'New Republic' liberals The Crossroads of Liberalism, the problem facing modern democracy in Lippmann's assessment was "how to bring fact, understanding and action into some kind of viable relationship".[5] Lippmann's long retreat from progressive liberalism back to the classic American tradition of natural law and individual rights which he had so scornfully attacked in his youth reflected his despair at finding an answer.

John Grierson met Lippmann in the United States in 1925 in the early stages of that retreat and later acknowledged the importance of Lippmann's ideas to the development of his own political thinking. But he did not share Lippmann's despair at the prospects for democracy. Like Lindsay and Reith he was able to draw on his Scottish inheritance for models of that all-important relationship between "fact, understanding and action" which were to prove more resilient and adaptable than Lippmann's individualistic liberalism.

At the heart of the Scottish tradition in which Lindsay, Reith and Grierson were bred was the concept of the self-governing religious community. As an academic political philosopher Lindsay

identified the self-governing Puritan congregations as the common source of English and American democracy. But as an educational reformer and a socialist he was no less influenced by the Scottish Presbyterian model of the self-governing religious community. The crucial difference between the two models lay in their accounts of church-state relations. Where the English Puritan model tended to the separation of church and state with the Puritan community taking its place in society as one voluntary organisation among many, the Scottish model presented a religious community which was at once independent in its polity and established in the sense of being recognised as the National Church.

This ideal of a Church at once independent and national was the inspiration of the Disruption of 1843. The Free Churchers believed that they were restoring to the Church in Scotland that freedom from state control for which the Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had struggled. Although it was they who were seceding from the officially recognised National Church they rejected voluntarism, insisting through their leader Thomas Chalmers: "Though we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle: we are advocates of a national recognition and national support for religion - and we are not Voluntaries". In their history of the Church in Victorian Scotland, Drummond and Bulloch sum up the peculiar status of the Church of Scotland: "It stands alone, a distinctively Scottish creation. If Protestant Churches elsewhere, and especially in America, have much in common with her they lack her authoritative stance, her claim to be the National Church, the arbiter of doctrine and morals".(6)

Lindsay and Reith both grew up in Free Church manses in Glasgow. In her biography of her father Drusilla Scott identifies the Free Church as the model for his view of the proper relationship between the Workers Educational Association and the state.(7) Lindsay believed that as part of its obligation to further the moral and political progress of society the state should fund a national scheme of adult education designed to equip the working class electorate to participate fully in political decisions. But notwithstanding the public funding, the direction and control of adult education should rest with the Educational Association itself as part of the wider self-governing democratic Labour move-

ment, and not with the state.

It was John Reith however who was to put the Free Church model to its most dramatic use, albeit modifying it in the process. Although Reith cannot claim to be the originator of the idea of the independent public board or corporation - surely one of the most insignificant developments in the field of British political institutions this century - the BBC's historian Asa Briggs acknowledges Reith as the "chief prompter" of those Labour MP's and others who were pressing the idea of a national, publicly funded but independent corporation on the Sykes Committee and the Crawford Committee as they deliberated the future of British broadcasting between 1923 and 1926.(8)

Reith's support for the idea of public service broadcasting derived from several sources. He had a visionary grasp of the role of broadcasting in mass democracy. In Broadcast over Britain (1924) he wrote of broadcasting carrying

> "direct information on a hundred subjects to innumerable men and women who thereby will be enabled not only to take more interest in events which were formerly outside their ken, but who will after a short time be in a position to make up their own minds on many matters of vital moment, matters which formerly they had either to receive according to the dictated and partial versions and opinions of others, or to ignore altogether. A new and mighty weight of opinion is being formed, an intelligent concern on many subjects will be manifested in quarters now overlooked..... The squire may suffer some embarrassment when he finds that his ploughman is better informed than he is on events of national significance."(9)

Looking back in 1949 on the development of his ideas in the early years of broadcasting Reith wrote in his autobiography Into the Wind

> "Now broadcasting had emerged: was it the tempering factor that would give democracy for the first time under modern conditions a real chance of operating as a living force throughout the extended community as long ago it operated in the city-state?"(10)

Inseparable in Reith's mind from his belief in the democratic potential of broadcasting was his conviction that broadcasting was called to provide spiritual leadership for a society which had grown away from the traditional sources of spiritual authority. He hoped that broadcasting would come to be regarded as a "guide, philosopher and friend", that it would be accepted in Briggs'

words as the "dependable keeper of the nation's conscience".(11) But broadcasting's potential for educational and spiritual leadership would be squandered if control was handed over either directly to the state or to commercial interests. To organise broadcasting as a mere department of state would be to subject it to the routine interference of soulless bureaucrats and self-seeking politicians. To hand it over to commercial interests would be to condemn it to the confusion in which broadcasting in the United States was floundering, or even worse, to the sensation-seeking exploitation to which in both the United States and the United Kingdom that other new medium of mass communication, the film, was being subjected.

In the shape of the Scottish Church, Reith's Scottish inheritance offered a model for the organisation of broadcasting which promised to preserve the medium from both state control and commercial exploitation, so leaving it free to develop its vocation of spiritual leadership. But Reith's Scottish inheritance did more than provide an institutional model. It also endowed him with a Calvinist sense of exclusive righteousness which, combined with more mundane technical considerations, impelled him to claim a monopoly of the airwaves for the new public service. "Ethical policy", he declared ominously, "cannot stand competition".(12) If he had to accept a Governing Board nominated by the political authorities as part of the political price to be paid for the BBC's monopoly and its dependence on public funding, he made up for this lapse from Free Church principle by the zeal with which he insisted on the BBC's role as the "arbiter of doctrine and morals".

Reith's conception of the BBC as a secular pulpit is the most controversial aspect of his philosophy of public service broadcasting. In so far as it expressed Reith's conviction that the BBC had a duty to represent to the British public an ideal of informed and responsible public debate on the great issues of the day, it strengthened the defences of democracy against the crowding dangers of totalitarianism and commercialism. In so far as it expressed his compulsion to impose his personal - and highly idiosyncratic - views on the listening public, it represented at the least a missed opportunity for democracy, at worst an attempt to introduce Cal-

vinistic theocracy in public service clothing.

Asa Briggs claims that Reith was indeed ahead of his time in pressing the politicians to allow him to use broadcasting to encourage serious argument, even controversy, about Britain's political and industrial problems.(13) But the limitations which Reith imposed on his broadcasters cannot be attributed simply to political pressures or to ambiguities in the BBC's legal status. They reflected an ambivalence in his interpretation of the BBC's duty to democracy which was highlighted by the BBC's policy during the General Strike of 1926. Although Reith pressed the Government - in vain - for permission to put a Labour spokesman on the air and insisted subsequently that BBC news bulletins had fairly reported trade union statements along with Government statements, in an internal memorandum to the BBC staff shortly after the strike he wrote:

> ".... since the BBC was a national institution, and since the Government in this crisis were acting for the people, apart from any Emergency powers or clause in our Licence, the BBC was for the government too".(14)

He later told Asa Briggs:

> "Perhaps if I had thought or known more I would have tried to avoid the BBC becoming part of the establishment, but perhaps not. Establishment has a good deal to say for itself. And indeed such a charge was surely a considerable tribute to the BBC - that something of such recent appearance should have attained to such entitliture".(15)

In the most notorious example of censorship Reith used the BBC's 'established' status to exclude from the airwaves not only statements of humanist and Jewish belief but also of Christian Scientist, fundamentalist and other hetorodox Christian belief. Whatever rationalisations he employed, there is no doubt that he felt a deep distaste for the idea of sharing his pulpit with the profane and the spiritually deluded. Reith's democratic vision was deeply flawed by his Calvinist conviction that moral leadership was ultimately as much a matter of authority as of persuasion.

Where Lindsay and Reith came from prominent Free Church families John Grierson's background was the more conservative Church of Scotland. But his plans for the documentary film move-

ment reflected the same ambition to establish a new source of intellectual and spiritual leadership for a confused and demoralised society. And he shared both Reith's insight into the democratic potential of the new technologies of communication and his ambivalence about the political obligations of the communicators.

Film recommended itself to Grierson as the medium best equipped to rescue the citizen in mass society from the impotence to which he had been condemned in Walter Lippmann's pessimistic analysis. By dramatising the facts of social experience and by illuminating the social and economic forces shaping men's lives, film could recreate a will for collective action. It could restore that sense of the public dimension of experience which modern society had lost. "Film can bring the outside world alive to the growing citizen. It really can extend his experience. It really can serve an interpretative function ..... it can, if it's mastered and organised, provide this necessary umbilical to the community outside", he argued in an address to the National Union of Teachers in 1936.(16)

If John Reith's bigotry serves to highlight his conception of broadcasting as a secular pulpit, it was John Grierson who in his claims for the documentary movement was the more explicit. In an article in Sight and Sound in 1934 he declared boldly: "I look on cinema as a pulpit and use it as a propagandist".(17) And in an equally revealing declaration in an article in 1938 in World Film News he criticised the Churches for their failure to provide the nation with spiritual leadership:

> "They have the halls in thousands and the audiences in tens of thousands: people to be talked to with bright and lovely arts. They have, even if they have gone lazy and lost their sense of privilege, a basic contact with the life of Britain. Back of them is the commission to tell where the spirit gets off at /sic/ and speak of the deepest things that men may know".(18)

If only, he seems to be saying, the documentary movement was endowed with the status and facilities of the Church to help project its social gospel!

Grierson's conception of the social role of the documentary film pointed as clearly as did Reith's conception of the role of broadcasting to the public corporation as the ideal institutional

vehicle. Grierson's ambition was to use film to give society an image of its own condition as a necessary step to restoring its will for action. In an era of economic depression and social deprivation nothing less than the status of a public corporation could secure for the documentary movement the freedom it needed if it was to serve in this way as the mirror of the nation's conscience.

Yet Grierson appears never to have endorsed the public corporation as the institutional ideal for the documentary movement, not even when he was preparing blueprints for national film organisations for Canada and other Dominions. Perhaps he believed that the public corporation represented an unattainable ideal for a medium which could never hope to attract an audience of the size immediately accessible to radio and which in the cinema was in competition with well established and popular commercial rivals. Or perhaps he simply judged that no government would be willing to concede the principle of institutional independence to a movement with a radical potential such as he himself proclaimed from the roof tops.

In any event the main sponsors of Grierson's work - the Empire Marketing Board and the GPO in Britain and the National Film Board in Canada - were government agencies run by officials and politicians. Lacking the degree of institutional protection for the independence of his film-makers which Reith had secured for broadcasting, Grierson had to rely on his political skills and the support of key individuals - Stephen Tallents in the formative years of the movement at the Empire Marketing Board and later at the GPO, and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King at the National Film Board of Canada - to secure editorial independence in his film-making.

Grierson once declared that he always positioned himself one inch to the Left of whichever party was in power. To his biographer Forsyth Hardy this is evidence of Grierson's canniness in steering the documentary movement around the political shoals which surrounded it.(19) But perhaps it reveals something more about Grierson. If he shared Reith's arrogance in the claims for moral leadership he made on behalf of the documentary movement he also shared Reith's ambivalent attitude to authority.

He saw documentary as an instrument, if not of the state itself, then of a public purpose approved by the state.
Even the Films of Scotland Committee created in 1938, the exception to the rule of direct state sponsorship, Grierson described as a "deliberate attempt to use the film for national purposes .... to maintain the national will and benefit the national economy", and declared: "After twelve years spent preaching and teaching the power of the cinema to national authorities, I found it very satisfactory that my own country should set this example".(20) At the National Film Board of Canada he was to be engaged on a task of state sponsored nation-building on a vaster scale.

Certainly Grierson wanted the documentary movement to act as the nation's conscience, but like Reith in the case of broadcasting, he wanted it to be heard not as a voice in the wilderness but as an authoritative 'established' conscience. To be more than an inch to the Left might have jeopardised the movement's claim to that established status along with its public funding.

It must be acknowledged that the documentary film movement as developed by Grierson was a more convenient instrument of authoritative moral leadership even than broadcasting. Where the broadcaster could at least be challenged to concede the right of reply, to give air time to the dissident, the maker of documentaries in the Grierson style was secure in his pulpit from interruption or contradiction. 'Talking heads' debating the pros and cons of housing or health reform had no place in a Grierson documentary. While the documentary was certainly educative in the sense that it brought the public face to face with previously disregarded areas of social experience, the most important dimension of its impact was inspirational. Grierson liked to boast that the first occasion on which a public audience had been moved to spontaneous applause at the image of industrial workers was the screening of one of his films. Among the characteristics of film which attracted him he listed its capacity for "direct description, simple analysis and commanding conclusion", the fact that by "its tempo'd and imagistic powers it could be made easily persuasive", that it lent itself to "rhetoric" and that a "single say-so can be repeated a thousand times a night to a million eyes".(21)

It took Grierson's sister Ruby to suggest a more radical perspective on the democratic potential of film when during the making of "Housing Problems" she handed the camera over to the slum-dwellers with the words: "The camera is yours. The microphone is yours. Now tell the bastards what it's like to live in slums".(22) Grierson briefly commended his sister's innovation but neither in his work nor his writing did he seriously explore its possibilities. To Grierson documentary remained essentially a vehicle for the film-maker's sense of social drama, not an instrument through which ordinary men and women might speak to society about their own hopes and fears.

The Scottish inheritance which gave Lindsay, Reith and Grierson the model of a national institution at once independent and 'established' as a source of moral leadership for society, embraced other values qualified to inspire a positive response to the problems of mass democracy. In a secular context the Presbyterian concept of an educated laity capable of playing a responsible part in Church government and of making its own judgements on theological and spiritual issues, endowed the mass public of modern society with a moral dignity denied it in some of the more fashionable sociologically oriented analyses. Reith, for example, rejected the whole terminology of 'mass communications' and 'mass society' preferring to speak of a series of 'publics' which together made up the 'great audience'. He even resisted the use of audience surveys on the grounds that they implied a view of the listener as a passive consumer of broadcasting incapable either of exercising discrimination in his listening or communicating his reactions to the BBC on his own account.

The Presbyterian idea of an educated laity also served to reinforce the Scots' faith in the educability of the new mass public. Although neither Reith nor Grierson was a professionally trained educator it was part of their Scottish inheritance that they should consider themselves to be teachers and moral guides rather than any sort of mere professional communicator. Emphatically the message was more than the medium.

However as teachers neither Reith, Grierson nor Lindsay bore the slightest resemblance to Charles Dickens' M'Choakumchild in Hard Times. Had they been content to use the new instruments of

communication simply to drive more facts into the public they would have contributed nothing to the solution of the problems of mass democracy. The citizen in Lippmann's analysis did not lack facts: if anything he had rather too many of them. What he did lack was a sense of their political and social significance.

The three Scots brought to their consideration of this aspect of the challenge facing modern democracy a belief that all experience was subject to assessment in the light of a higher purpose. Grierson even suggested that this Calvinist sense of a moral hierarchy among facts might be one of the sources of the documentary idea itself, postulating "some odd relation between the Knoxist background and a theory of the cinema which throws overboard the meretricious trappings of the studio".(23) A similar spirit is evident in Reith's declaration in Broadcast over Britain: "I think it will be admitted by all that to have exploited so great a scientific invention for the purpose of"entertainment"alone would have been a prostitution of its powers"(24): and in Lindsay's pronouncements on the educational and political opportunities opened up by the new technologies.(25) The ethos is recognisably that of Kipling's "MacAndrew's Hymn":

> From coupler-flange to spindle guide I see Thy Hand O God
> Predestination in the stride of 'yon connectin rod.
> John Calvin might ha' forged the same - enormous, certain slow,
> Ay, wrought it in the furnace flame - my 'Institutio'.

Reinforcing this Calvinist impulse to seek the God-given pattern in experience was the generalist tradition in Scottish education expressed in the broad curriculum at school level and in the central role given to philosophy at the university. Lindsay, Reith and Grierson were united in their belief that democracy's capacity and will for responsible action was endangered by the fragmentation and specialisation of knowledge. The culminating achievement of Lindsay's life - the foundation of Keele University in 1950 - was inspired by an ambition to combine the natural and social sciences with the humanities in an education which would produce a generation with a renewed sense of social and civic responsibility. To Reith the challenge facing modern democracy was not one of "sub-division, but of integration, for there was no

unity of the nervous system of the body politic".(26) He believed that given the right leadership radio could stimulate the disciplined specialist to the broader outlook which was essential. And Grierson's hope was that the documentary, by dramatising the facts of industrial as of other specialised areas of social experience, would recreate a shared public consciousness as a prelude to public action.

Grierson indeed criticised Lindsay's philosophy of adult education on the grounds that it stood in danger of leading to "the dreary impotence of discussion for discussion's sake".(27) Although he was right to sense an antagonism between Lindsay's conception of education on the one hand and that of Reith and himself on the other, his criticism was misdirected. Lindsay shared with Reith and Grierson a conviction that education in a democracy had to be education in the standards and duties of political life. Like them he believed that society depended on the existence of common values and that in the Western democracies those standards were ultimately Christian. He had as little patience as they did for relativist or subjectivist theories of ethics. Moral values and standards were as real as the facts of the natural sciences and the teaching of ethics was central to education.

The critical difference between Reith and Grierson on the one hand, and Lindsay on the other, lay in their views of the methods and priorities of education. Reith and Grierson never escaped the influence of the Calvinist belief that the moral and inspirational elements in education were paramount. Characteristically Grierson was the more explicit. Rejecting the liberal ideal of education held by his schoolteacher father, he wrote in Education and the New Order: "Education is activist or it is nothing...It will express itself not as thought or debate but as positive action within the community of organized youth groups, women's groups and men's groups".(28) And he offered an unblushing Calvinist justification of the political implications of this philosophy: "You can be totalitarian for evil and you can be totalitarian for good".(29)

Reith's philosophy allowed more room for education as an end in itself. His belief that given proper institutional support the desire for knowledge could become a social force capable of chall-

enging the vested interests of commercialised mass entertainment, echoes an older individualist creed of educational self-improvement. And yet the high hopes which some champions of adult education - including Lindsay - placed in the BBC were to be disappointed. The reasons were complex but one cannot but suspect that Reith's conviction that the first duty of the BBC was to prevent 'scandal of the weak',to protect the listener from permicious doctrine and fashionable scepticism,was among them.

Lindsay's legacy of Calvinism by comparison was permeated by the liberal values of free debate and criticism. While insisting that the individual had a duty to bear public witness to his own judgement of where society's duty lay, he believed that the answer could most reliably be discovered through a process of free inquiry in much the way that the self-governing Puritan communities of seventeenth century America had, in his account, arrived at the 'sense of the meeting' through debate and discussion.

In practice Lindsay was called on to defend his liberal ideals as much against criticisms from his fellow socialists as from fellow Presbyterians. The adult education work he undertook on Clydeside during his tenure of the Chair of Philosophy at Glasgow University between 1922 and 1924 provoked criticism on class grounds from the champions of an older Clydeside tradition of independent working-class education inspired by John Maclean. In response Lindsay defended the university ideal of a scientific and impartial pursuit of the truth as a vital part of that common culture which in a truly democratic society would be accessible to all, reminding his critics for good measure of the debt Marx himself owed to his university studies of jurisprudence and philosophy.(30)

W.B. Gallie, one of Lindsay's pioneer Professors at Keele, has summed up Lindsay's credo: "In the language of his Calvinistic forefathers he had a sense - albeit in the least oppressive form - of being one of the 'elect'. But secondly, his whole personal tendency was to find for this sense of 'election' (or incomparable personal privilege) a form as nearly completely secular, non-sectarian and universal as was compatible with what he took to be essential Christian belief. Hence the shading of his Christianity into his belief in democracy and into his own entirely unsnobbish version of 'noblesse oblige'".(31)

The Scottish inheritance of Lindsay, Reith and Grierson helped to equip them to make a positive response to the crisis of modern democracy as analysed by Lippmann and other pessimistic liberals. It sustained their belief in the moral dignity and educability of the mass public. It inspired their search for the principles by which the confusion of specialised information available to modern society might be organised. It alerted them to the potential of the new technologies of communication, specifically to the opportunities they offered of recreating a sense of civic community and of making a knowledge of the moral basis of democracy part of the common culture of society. And it provided them with the model of an institution independent of the state yet charged with a national vocation of moral and intellectual leadership, to guide their own institutional innovations in education and communications.

The dominant element in this inheritance was, of course, Presbyterian. In their different circumstances and with varying degrees of success, the three Scots translated the constitutional claims of the Scottish Church into secular forms adapted to the needs of twentieth century democracy. In their response to the new technologies of communication, Reith and Grierson demonstrated a visionary appreciation of the future of mass democracy. But they blunted the democratic impact of the institutions they created by burdening them with some of the more oppressive and authoritarian of Calvinist values. Reith's B.B.C. and Grierson's documentary movement reflected the theocratic rather than the democratic strain in Presbyterianism both in their relationship with the public and in their internal organisation and 'modus operandi'. As interpreted by Reith and Grierson, Presbyterianism served, somewhat unexpectedly, as an ally of the contemporary trend towards state corporatism.

If Lindsay's vision was less penetrating it was also more balanced. The influence of the Scottish Church model on his conception of the constitutional status for which the adult education movement should aim was balanced by the influence of the Puritan model of democratic church government on his view of the internal structure of the movement. And while his personality bore as clear a Calvinist imprint as did the personalities of Reith and Grierson, his autocratic instincts were firmly subordinated

to the liberal values which he held to be the source-springs of democratic culture.

In retrospect the inter-war decades in which Reith, Grierson and Lindsay were at their most creative, mark the final flowering of the Presbyterian tradition of thought about the relations between the state and the sources of moral and spiritual leadership in society. Indeed the Scottish middle class which was its vehicle was already under economic threat from external capital and its own failure to adapt to new conditions when Lindsay, Reith and Grierson were born into it in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. But it retained a remarkable degree of social cohesion and self-confidence through the inter-war period when its economic base was visibly crumbling under the shock-waves of the Depression. The careers of such figures as Viscount Weir (born 1877, Glasgow educated, head of family engineering firm, Director of Aircraft Production and Secretary of State for Air 1918, chairman of the 1925 committee which recommended a state monopoly of electricity, President of the National Employers' Federation 1930), Sir James Lithgow (born 1883, Glasgow educated, President of Shipbuilding Employers Federation 1920, member of the first Central Electricity Generating Board 1927, chairman of the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd 1930, first chairman of the Scottish National Development Council 1931), Sir Godfrey Collins (fourth generation of Glasgow publishing firm, Scottish Secretary 1932-36), Sir John Colville (grandson of founder of steel firm, Scottish Secretary 1938-40), Sir Andrew Rae Duncan (first chairman of CEGB 1927, President of the Board of Trade 1940, Minister of Supply 1940-42), demonstrated that the business and industrial leaders of the Scottish middle class moved easily into the new public roles created as a result of the dramatic extension in the powers of the state which began with the First World War. The Weirs, Lithgows and other families which supplied Scotland's economic leadership were linked by education, religious affiliation, business interests and frequently politics to a wider Scottish middle class which produced, in addition to Lindsay, Reith and Grierson, such figures as John Boyd Orr (born 1880, Glasgow graduate, nutritionist, founder of the Rowett Institute, first Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), Osborne Mavor ('James

Bridie', born 1888, dramatist, leading member of the Scots National Theatre Society between the wars and founder in 1943 of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre), Walter Elliot (born 1888, Glasgow graduate Minister of Agriculture 1932-36, Scottish Secretary 1936-38, friend of Bridie and champion of Grierson and Boyd Orr) and Tom Johnston (born 1881, Glasgow graduate, Labour MP from 1922, Scottish Secretary 1940-45, first Chairman of the North of Scotland Hydro-electric Board).(32)

The extent to which the varied public initiatives of this Scottish middle class were influenced by the same Presbyterian tradition which inspired the work of Lindsay, Reith and Grierson remains largely unexplored. What is clear is that the Scottish middle class culture which articulated that tradition lost its confidence after the Second World War as its economic base finally succumbed to a combination of state intervention and the further inroads of external capital. But if Professor Hanham is correct in his characterisation of the Scottish nineteenth century political tradition, the careers of Lindsay, Reith and Grierson alone demonstrate that the Presbyterian elements of that tradition survived the nineteenth century to make a distinctive contribution to Britain's response to the challenge of mass democracy in the twentieth.

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24. J.C.W. Reith, Broadcast Over Britain, op. cit. p.17.

25. See The Essentials of Democracy, Oxford University Press 1929 p.26, and The Modern Democratic State, Oxford University Press 1943, p.175.

26. J.C.W. Reith, Into the Wind, op. cit. p.136.

27. J. Grierson, Propaganda and Education, An Address before the Winnipegg Canadian Club, October 1943, Reprinted in Grierson on Documentary.

28. J. Grierson, Education and the New Order, Democracy and Citizenship series pamphlet No.7, Canadian Association for Adult Education 1941. Reprinted in Grierson on Documentary.

29. J. Grierson, ibid.

30. D. Scott, op. cit. p.101

31. W.B. Gallie, A New University: A.D. Lindsay and the Keele Experiment, Chatto and Windus, 1960, p.145.

32. A discussion of the political attitudes of the Scottish middle class in the inter-war years can be found in Has the Scottish Private Sector a Future?, SNP '79 Group Papers No. 5, pp.4-10.