Introduction

"We are now all Jacobites, thorough-bred Jacobites, in acknowledging George IV," proclaimed the *Edinburgh Observer* on the occasion of the monarch's state visit to the city in 1822.

The journal's comments were its verdict on Sir Walter Scott's stage-management of the royal visit.

Scott had taken the themes and imagery associated — rightly or wrongly — with the Jacobite movement of the previous century, stripped them of their political content, and welded them back together again to help create an image of Scotland which was to prevail almost unchallenged until well into the next century.

That image was one based on the historical reinvention and rewriting of a number of overlapping themes: the Highlands, tartan, the kilt, ancient clans, martial skills, bravery, virility, loyalty to the monarch (albeit sometimes the wrong one), and a centuries-long struggle for freedom which had fortuitously come to fruition under the reigning monarch:

"Hark! the pibroch's martial strain
Ca's the clans to Lothian plain:
Scotland's got her King again,
Welcome, Royal Geordie!"

The result of Scott's endeavours was a welcome for the monarch which amounted to an historical absurdity.

Most of the tartans were invented for the occasion. The kilt (not to be confused with the traditional belted plaid) was a relatively recent invention. The Highland "chiefs" who wore them were simply Highland landowners (albeit very wealthy ones).

The Edinburgh bourgeoisie who were obliged to wear the same apparel would have associated it with cattle-thieving rather than with the glories of Scottish history. And King George himself was the ruling British monarch — not, as he was proclaimed in the official toast, "the chief of the chiefs".

Scott's portrayal of Scotland as a repository for the romanticised memorabilia of Highland Jacobitism was a prime target of the writers of the Scottish Renaissance of the 1930s. "Sham bards for a sham nation" was how Edwin Muir summed up the phoniness of such imagery and its exponents.

Paradoxically, the contemporary version of Scott's approach to Scottish history is now the property, albeit not exclusively so, of sections of the Scottish left.

Mimicking Scott's approach, but lacking his literary talents, the pro-independence Scottish left has gutted the history of post-Union Scotland of its real historical content and replaced it with a mixture of recycled leftovers of Jacobite anti-Union propaganda and contemporary "anti-imperialist" verbiage.

But whereas Scott's enterprise in historical revisionism had been profoundly Unionist, the contemporary left version is obsessively anti-Union.

This approach to Scottish history might be on a par with the historical absurdities concocted by Scott. But for its exponents it has the merit of serving as an ideological justification for incorporating the demand for Scottish independence into the socialist programme — the sham bards for a sham nation have been replaced by a sham anti-imperialism for a sham socialism.

If this verdict seems overly harsh, one need look no further than the occasional forays into history to be found in the pages of the *Scottish Socialist Voice* (*SSV*), the paper of the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP).

The English nation, the reader discovers, "was forged following the Norman invasion of 1066. The Normans, incidentally, were a mere footnote in both French and European history, but within England this highly organised army of land-grabbing pirates — medieval fascists by any other name — created an imperialist warmongering society more sharply divided by social class than any other in Europe at the time." (*SSV*, 243).

Prince Charles Edward Stuart — Bonnie Price Charlie, the Young Pretender

A comparison of Magna Carta with the Declaration of Arbroath serves to illustrate the inner historical essences of Englishness/Britishness and Scottishness:

"The Magna Carta was a grovelling letter written in 1215 by fearty Anglo-Norman nobles addressed to a tyrannical Anglo-Norman monarch. You can't get much more English than that. This Magna Carta thing … couldn't wipe the historical arse of the Declaration of Independence that was signed in Arbroath in 1320. The two are like comparing a servile English whinge up against a Scottish clarion call for national freedom." (*SSV*, 270)

Echoing the Jacobite anti-Union propaganda of the early eighteenth century, the driving forces behind the events of 1707 are reduced to a matter of bribery and betrayal:

"The vote (by the Scottish Parliament in favour of the Treaty of Union) was won through epic bribery, military threat and the pursuit of venal self-interest. The Earl of Glasgow was supplied with the relatively colossal sum of £20,000 sterling, with which to buy votes, influence and spies. And while the Scots ruling elite seamlessly transformed themselves into the North British ruling

Playing card depicts Queen Anne as the enemy of Catholicism and France — the Pope and the French monarch are being trampled underfoot

elite, ordinary people across Scotland rioted in rage and burnt copies of the despised Treaty.” (*SSV*, 292)

In another echo of the same propaganda the economic impact of the Union is portrayed as a matter of national ruination:

“The 1707 Union created a democratic deficit that gave us a Thatcher government when we voted for a Labour one, crushed our industries, ruined our health, impoverished our citizens and saw our children slaughtered in one pointless unforgivable war after another.” (*SSV*, 292)

The “subjugation of Scotland into the Union” (*SSV*, 270) which occurred in 1707 was the mechanism through which the “imperialist warmongering society” of England was consolidated at the level of the post-1707 British state:

“Being British means being a mercenary for President Bush, dispatching our youth to colonial frontlines in Afghanistan and Iraq, and rendering ourselves the most dangerous and aggressive state in Europe today.” (*SSV*, 292)

The “infamous Treaty of Union” created “a British state which is a byword for imperial plunder, war, and double-dealing unsurpassed by its many rivals” (*SSV,* 276). “From Culloden Moor to the hills of Afghanistan” the British state “has a history of blood and aggression” (*SSV*, 276). The “British Day” holiday occasionally mooted by the Westminster government could therefore best be celebrated by “invading a country of our choice and raping it of all its assets on the Queen’s birthday” (*SSV*, 270).

And Scotland’s own role in all this “blood and aggression”, as an integral part of the metropolitan hub of the British Empire?

Insofar as it merits a mention at all, then only in the most delicate of terms (“… a turbulent and shameful period of our history …” (*SSV*, 276)) or in terms of a Scotland which was a victim rather than a beneficiary of the British Empire, with any alternative view portrayed as a propaganda ploy by pro-unionist historians:

“Pro-unionist history then suggests that, a few teething probs notwithstanding, the churlish Jocks soon settled down to enjoy the glory days of the British Empire.

Yes, while Glasgow hammered out the steam locomotives and warships that kept the imperial vision afloat, the nation’s young blood stained the map of the world pink.” (*SSV*, 292)

But although a few may have gained from the Union, the majority of the population lost out: “We are calling time on 300 years of a Union which has benefited only the empire-builders and the warmongers, while marginalising the people through the monopolising of power by Westminster.” (*SSV*, 303)

Scrapping the Union of 1707, when “a ‘parcel o’ rogues’ parcelled us up to form the UK, whether we liked it or not” (*SSV*, 276), will put an end to the imperialist British Behemoth: 2007 was “the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Union which set the imperial ball rolling. It provides a key opportunity at the Holyrood poll to begin the process of its liquidation. Now there’s an anti-imperialist act to get excited about!” (*SSV*, 280)

The inherently “anti-imperialist” nature of putting an end to the Union is sufficient justification for demanding independence for Scotland: “If there was only one argument for independence, surely it is this: we must disengage ourselves from the UK/US war machine, through breaking up the British state.” (*SSV*, 292)

This is more urgent than ever in the light of Britain’s subservience to unending US military aggression:

“We are now seeing a permanent state of war developing with no US military adventure too much for Blair. Nothing could more eloquently illustrate the case for breaking the power of the British state which is the most imperialist and militaristic in Europe. The Left can make a major contribution to weakening that state by supporting Scottish independence both as a democratic demand and an international necessity. Scotland out of Britain and Britain out of Bush’s pocket should be our urgent demands.” (*SSV*, 250)

Through achieving independence for Scotland “we can make of ourselves a new nation, … (independence) will deliver greater democracy and could pave the way for a people-led transformation of our society” (*SSV*, 292). “Real independence” is “the essential stepping stone towards socialism in Scotland.” (*SSV*, 276). Independence is “the first step” “to a Scottish socialist republic” (*SSV,* 270). It is “a necessary stepping stone” towards “a socialist republic” (*SSV*, 303).

This might not be serious history. But at least it has a happy ending. In contrast to the Walter Scott version, however, the happy ending lies in independence rather than in Union with England.

After 300 years of subjugation to the Union, brought about by the venal self-interest of a parcel of rogues, Scotland arises, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the British Empire, regains its independence, and thereby takes the first, necessary, essential step towards becoming a socialist republic: “Scottish independence is on the horizon. If we fight for it, socialism is there too.” (*SSV*, 276)

When Marx and Engels wrote that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle, they meant precisely that: history could not be divorced from class struggle because they were one and the same thing. And there was no caveat suggesting that this did not apply to Scottish history.

But in the pro-independence left’s version of Scottish history — and also in its vision of a future independent Scotland — the category of class and its corollary of class struggle are virtually invisible.

It is not class struggle — whether it be the consolidation of bourgeois rule in the eighteenth century, or the later rise of a mass workers’ movement — but Scotland’s subjugation into the Union which appears as the defining factor in post-1707 Scottish history. Similarly, it is not working-class struggle but ”a people-led transformation of our society” which has the role of bringing about the future socialist republic.

The writers of the Scottish Renaissance began the process of rescuing Scottish history from the Kailyard. Today, socialists who base themselves on class-struggle Marxism need to confront the version of Scottish history propagated by a section of the left itself — the Walter Scott socialists with the Walter Mitty fantasies about an independent Scotland.

Rescuing 1707 from nationalist shibboleths

By Jo Balliol

Just over three hundred years ago, on 16 January, 1707, the Scottish Parliament voted in favour of ratification of the Treaty of Union with England. On 28 April the Scottish Parliament was dissolved by proclamation. Three days later, with the opening of the first session of the new British Parliament, the state of Great Britain formally came into existence.

Earlier proposals for some form of closer union between England and Scotland — in the immediate aftermath of the Union of the Crowns in 1603, and again in 1667, 1670, 1688/89, and 1702/03 — had come to nothing. Not infrequently, the initiative for such proposals had come from factions within the Scottish ruling classes.

An address of 1688, for example, signed by "almost all of the gentlemen" of East Lothian, had called for Scotland and England to become "one body politic, one nation… represented in one parliament… united in a more strict and inseparable union." The peoples of Scotland and England, explained the address, lived in "the bowels of the same island" and had "the same friends and foes." A "full union" would be of benefit to Scotland, "an impoverished and sinking nation."

Another address of the same year, from "the nobility, gentry, magistrates and inhabitants of Glasgow with others now in arms in the west of Scotland", likewise advocated the creation of a single parliament, as too did the address presented to the monarch by the Scottish convention of estates the following year.

A major obstacle to possible union of the two kingdoms had been the unwillingness of the English bourgeoisie to allow Scottish merchants access to England's colonies in America. Although England and Scotland had been ruled by a common monarch since the Union of the Crowns in 1603, only English merchants had the right to trade with the American colonies.

Hostility towards Scottish Presbyterianism by English High Church Tories had been another obstacle to union. English politicians also saw Scotland as a poor country with little or nothing to contribute in the event of union. This attitude was summed up by the Leader of the House of Commons in 1700: Scotland was a beggar, and "whoever married a beggar could only expect a louse for her portion."

The last set of negotiations before those which resulted in the Union of 1707 lasted just ten weeks, from mid-November 1702 to the beginning of February 1703. Not infrequently, none of the English commissioners bothered to turn up for meetings. In January of 1703, after the English commissioners had failed to muster a quorum on five successive occasions, the quorum for each side was reduced from thirteen to seven.

The negotiations, such as they were, quickly descended into fruitless and unresolved arguments about trade, taxation, and compensation for shareholders in the ill-fated Company of Scotland, which had unsuccessfully attempted to establish a Scottish colony on the Isthmus of Panama.

The English commissioners were not willing to discuss Scottish access to trade with the colonies until all other matters had been resolved: "The plantations are the property of Englishmen and… this trade is of so great a consequence and so beneficial as not to be communicated as it is proposed till all other particulars which shall be thought necessary to this union be adjusted."

Taxation resulted in another stalemate. Levels of taxation in England were higher than in Scotland, and the collection of taxes was also significantly more efficient. Unsurprisingly, the Scottish commissioners did not want to see the English tax regime extended to Scotland.

The issue of compensation for shareholders in the Company of Scotland led to immediate stalemate: the English commissioners simply declared compensation to be out of the question and demanded that the company be wound up.

Despite the lacklustre approach of the English government to the negotiations of 1702/03, there were good reasons for the English ruling classes to pursue the issue of union with Scotland with a greater degree of vigour. The two overlapping reasons were the Spanish succession, and, closer to home, the Hanoverian succession.

Since 1701 England had been fighting France in the War of the Spanish Succession, a conflict over which dynasty would inherit the territorial possessions of the last Spanish Hapsburg king. A victory for France threatened England with the loss of its American colonies, the main source of the English bourgeoisie's mercantile wealth.

At the same time, the English government wanted to ensure that their own monarch — Queen Anne, who had no living heir to the throne — was succeeded by a member of the House of Hanover. This would prevent, or at least minimise, the danger of a Stuart restoration.

But in 1701 France had recognised the son of James II/VII as the rightful monarch of England, Scotland and Ireland. (James II/VII, the last Stuart to rule over England and Scotland, had been deposed by Queen Anne's predecessor in 1688 and had just died in exile in France.) The English government feared that French recognition of the "Old Pretender" could lead to a Jacobite uprising in Scotland, backed by French forces.

Such an uprising would not only imperil the Hanoverian succession but also undermine pursuit of the war against France on the continent. What was at stake, therefore, was the political and economic power of the English bourgeoisie. A Stuart restoration in conjunction with defeat by France could undo the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 and deprive England of her colonies.

The English government's fears were well-founded. As Nathaniel Hooke, subsequently sent to Scotland by the French government in order to assess the prospects for a joint French-Jacobite uprising, explained in a report to the French High Council: "There is one sure way for France to force English ministers to the conference table before this costly European war goes any further, and that is to bring Scotland into play."

Hooke's arrival in Scotland in 1703 coincided with a particularly low ebb in Anglo-Scottish relations.

Since the Union of the Crowns a century earlier England had undergone a bourgeois revolution. The English state was geared to the accumulation of capital. Agricultural output was increasing. So too was industrial output. And the foundations of a future empire had been established. Scotland's history over the same period, however, had been a very different one.

Early eighteenth-century Scotland still retained elements of a feudal society. Whereas in England the attempts of James II/VII to establish a form of absolutist rule had been opposed — and, in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, defeated — because they threatened the interests of a post-feudal bourgeoisie, in Scotland they had, in part, met the same fate because they had been a threat to the feudal rights and privileges still enjoyed by the Scottish nobility.

The Scottish nobles exercised their own jurisdictions: "regalities" in the case of the most important nobles, and "baronies" in the case of the lesser nobles. These courts were empowered to try most criminal offences and to administer their own sentences, ranging from fines to imprisonment and execution (the power of "pit and gallow"). They also enforced the feudal duties of service which ten-

ants owed to their lord.

As Daniel Defoe, the English writer and spy, wrote of such feudal powers, "they bound down Scotland to the private tyranny and oppression of the heritors and lairds." Another contemporary observer commented: "The barons have power not only in life and limb but in an absolute sense too… In fact, these lords of regality are sovereigns, not subjects."

The vassals of the feudal lords were required to carry out military service for their masters. The Duke of Argyll, for example, could raise more troops from his estates than there were regular soldiers in Scotland. Vassals were also obliged to carry out non-military services. Even craftsmen, such as weavers, shoemakers and millers, could be subject to the feudal privileges of the nobles on whose estates they laboured.

By the early eighteenth century many nobles had fallen into economic difficulties. But some combined political and social power with economic wealth, thereby adding further weight to their role in Scottish society. The estates of these nobles were the main source of the major Scottish exports: textiles, cattle, and, to a lesser extent, coal.

Linen was woven by tenants and paid to their feudal lords as a form of rent in kind. Black cattle were exported to England from estates in the Highlands and, much more so, from estates in the Lowlands. (In 1703 black cattle exports from the estates of just one Lowlands lord accounted for 40% of the value of all Scottish exports to England.) In Fife and the Lothians the estates of lesser nobles were the main sources of Scotland's exports of coal.

The role played in Scottish society by a nobility which continued to enjoy feudal privileges was reflected in the composition of the Scottish Parliament. This consisted of three Estates. The 'electorate' of the two Estates whose members were elected amounted to around just 4,000: one man in every thousand (compared with four men in every hundred in England).

One hundred and fifty members of the Parliament were feudal nobles. They were members by birthright. Ninety members represented the counties. They, and their "electorate", consisted in the main of lesser nobles who also exercised feudal rights. The size of these "electorates" varied from a maximum of 80 in Perthshire to a minimum of five in Cromarty. (The latter "electorate" had the job of electing two of its number as members of the Parliament.)

The other 67 members of the Parliament represented the royal burghs which, until the 1670s, had enjoyed a total monopoly over Scottish foreign trade. Their "electorates" varied from 33 (in Edinburgh) to nine (in the smaller burghs).

There were "parties" in the Scottish Parliament. But they bore no resemblance to parties today, or even to the Tory and Whig parties which had emerged in the English Parliament by this time.

The main parties — the Court party and the Country party — were unstable alliances between different nobles. Their members regularly switched their allegiances in pursuit of personal gain and advancement — "disobliged courtiers and self-conceited men who could relish nothing but what was of their own contrivance", as one contemporary writer described them.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century the Scottish Parliament had taken steps designed to promote Scottish trade, banking, manufacturing, and imperial expansion. A small minority of nobles had begun to promote mining and industrial production on their estates. There had also been some improvements in Scottish agriculture, and market relations had begun to penetrate agriculture in the south east in particular.

But despite such — modest — developments, late-seventeenth-century Scotland remained a poor country. Scotland consisted of a series of small local economies, rather than anything even beginning to approach an integrated national economy. Tax yields in Scotland were less than one thirty-sixth of what they were in England. Some English counties paid more in taxes than did all of Scotland.

For every ton of Scottish shipping, England had a hundred tons. Annual consumption of iron in Scotland was, per capita, only a quarter of that in England. Scotland's small manufacturing sector suffered from the absence of a skilled workforce and from low-quality production.

High labour turnover provoked by the irregular payment of wages, under-investment due to shortages of operating capital, and an inability to compete with foreign manufactures all held back the development of Scottish manufacturing. Of 47 joint-stock companies formed in the early 1690s, only twelve still existed in 1700.

Exports of coal and salt — previously two of Scotland's most important exports — had collapsed by the end of the century. The per capita value of Scottish exports was around four shillings — a third lower than even that of Ireland. Between 1698 and 1706 the value of Scottish exports fell by around 50%. By 1704 Scotland's trade deficit was estimated at £2 millions (Scots), with the value of imports running at double the value of exports.

Imports, rather than domestic manufactures, met the needs of Scottish consumers. Even basic household utensils such as pots and pans were imported. Since levels of consumption were determined by levels of wealth, luxuries for the wealthy made up a disproportionately large share of Scottish imports.

In 1704, for example, over 8% of the value of imports was accounted for solely by furniture, clocks and mirrors. Some contemporaries bemoaned this expenditure on imported luxuries: "old Scots manhood" was being replaced by "exotic effeminacy", thanks to the love of "pimping parasites" for "childish clothings and superfluous furniture".

Most money in circulation in Scotland was foreign. According to one contemporary political economist, only a sixth of the £2 millions (Scots) issued after a recoinage in 1686 was still in Scotland by the time of the Union. "The want of money has been gradually growing for some years past," commented one pamphleteer in 1704. In December of the same year this "want of money" forced the Bank of Scotland to suspend cash payments, bill discounting and lending. Two years later what gold and silver coin was still in circulation was withdrawn, lending on bonds was suspended, and contemporaries lamented that "money is daily scarcer here."

In the countryside the picture was equally bleak. In the half century preceding the Union up to one in four landed estates changed hands due to bankruptcy. Agriculture was largely subsistence-based. Harvest failures could, and did, result in mass starvation.

In the last decade of the seventeenth century between 5% and 15% of the Scottish population perished after a succession of harvest failures. "Everyone may see death in the face of the poor that abound everywhere, the thinness of their visage, their ghostly looks, their feebleness, their agues and their fluxes threaten them with sudden death. Some die in the wayside, some drop down in the street, the poor sucking babs are starving from want of milk," wrote one contemporary.

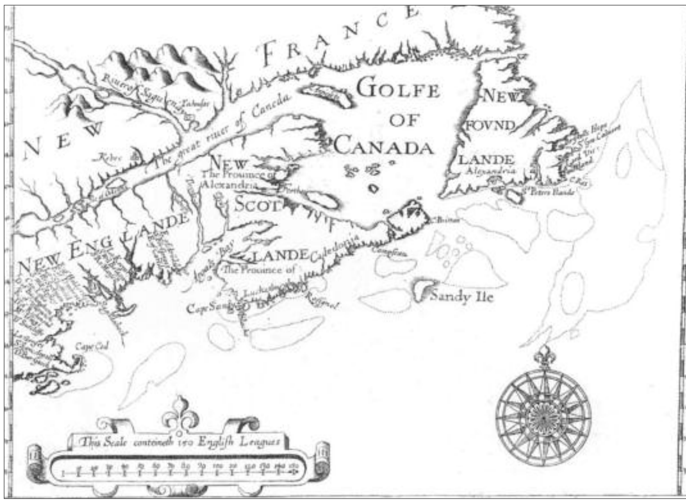
At the close of the seventeenth century something over 5% of the Scottish population lived in towns, compared with over 18% in England. Only two towns in Scotland had populations exceeding 10,000. In the first half of the century, when Scotland's population had numbered less than a million, around 100,000 Scots had migrated abroad. Around 40,000 had migrated to Poland alone. In the second half of the century emigration rates from Scotland were even higher than they had been in the first half.

In the early 1700s living standards for the bulk of the Scottish rural population were barely above subsistence level. Since the 1670s money wages for those who sold their labour had remained stagnant, save in those cases where they had actually fallen. In the words of one contemporary, Scotland was "the most neglected if not oppressed state in Europe".

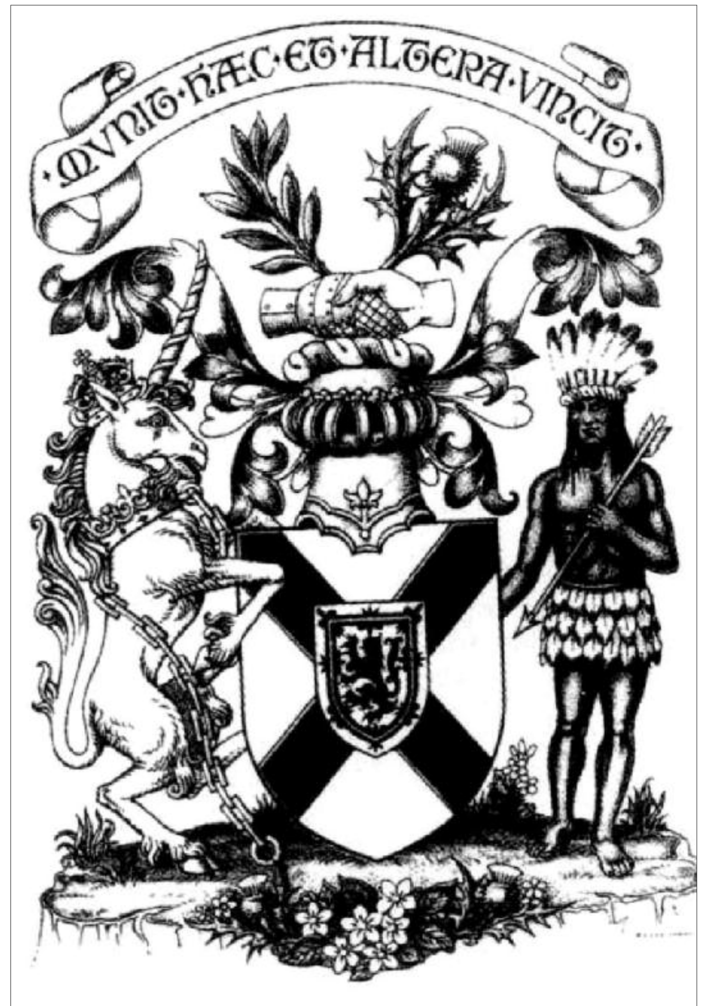
In their efforts to contrast a 'backward' pre-1707 Scotland with a 'civilised' post-Union one, later writers frequently exaggerated the extent of Scotland's economic weaknesses of the early eighteenth century. But those economic weaknesses were nonetheless real. And they were mirrored in — and reinforced by — the country's failure to emulate England in the sphere of imperial enterprise.

Settlers who claimed Cape Breton Island for Scotland in 1629 quickly surrendered to the French. An attempt to create a 'new Scotland' in Nova Scotia collapsed in 1632, when the territory was ceded to the French. The South Carolina settlement established in 1682 was overrun by the Spanish in 1686. The East New Jersey settlement founded three years later was more successful, but was absorbed into New Jersey in 1702.

In 1693 the Scottish Parliament created the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. It was authorised to establish colonies, to be held by the crown of Scotland, where there was no prior European settlement. Having raised £400,000 from Scottish investors, the Company of Scotland attempted to found a Scottish colony and free port at Darien on the Isthmus of Panama.



Nova Scotia — a pre-Union attempt to found a Scottish colony



Coat-of-arms of the failed Scottish colony of Nova Scotia

(Such capital, it is worth noting, was raised just at the time when up to 15% of the country's population was dying from famine and associated diseases.)

The underdeveloped state of Scottish shipbuilding meant that the vessels for the colonial project had to be built in the Netherlands and in Hamburg. Similarly, most of the weaponry for the ships had to be purchased abroad. The only Scottish-manufactured guns on the ships were eventually found to have too small a bore to be capable of use.

The general weakness of manufacturing in Scotland also meant that the would-be colonists had nothing to trade. "We cannot conceive for what end so much thin grey paper and so many little blue bonnets were sent here, being entirely useless and not worth their room on the ship," wrote one of the venture's participants.

No more tradable were the 4,000 periwigs and 1,500 Bibles which the vessels had carried across the ocean. On the other hand, basic tools needed for building a settlement — axes, saws and shovels — had either not been supplied at all, or in insufficient numbers.

The venture ended in disaster. Only three of the thirteen ships which had sailed from the Clyde returned. Most of the first expedition, in 1698, died of fever, while the second expedition a year later — in many ways even less well-equipped than its predecessor — was overrun by the Spanish.

Up to a quarter of Scotland's liquid assets — nearly two and a half times the value of Scotland's annual exports — had been lost in this attempt to lay the foundations of a Scottish Empire. The equivalent amount today would be around an estimated £103 billions.

Subsequent ventures by the Company of Scotland, involving the eastern trading route around the Cape of Good Hope, were equally unsuccessful. Its first vessel was shipwrecked in 1700 in the Straits of Malacca. The crews of the second and third vessels defected to piracy in 1701, taking their vessels with them.

A fourth vessel was seized by English revenue officers in the English Channel in 1704: its intention of retrieving the cargo of goods saved from the vessel shipwrecked in 1700 was deemed to constitute a breach of the monopoly of the East India Company.

Scotland lacked a navy which could provide protection to the country's merchant shipping and imperial adventures. The Scottish naval fleet consisted of three hulks which had been borrowed from England and fitted out in London. The weaponry for the ships was obtained by stripping canons from the Clyde merchant fleet, supplemented by ammunition found in the house of an Edinburgh Jacobite. By way of contrast, the English navy numbered some 400 warships.

When a new session of the Scottish Parliament assembled in May of 1703, it did so at a time of a virtual crisis in Anglo-Scottish relations: policies pursued by the English Parliament and successive monarchs were condemned for having benefited England at the expense of Scotland.

England imposed high customs duties on its principal imports from Scotland. The English Navigation Laws, which denied Scottish merchants access to England's American colonies, were being enforced with increasing vigour. England's wars with the Netherlands and France had damaged Scottish trade with continental Europe.

And the collapse of the Darien venture continued to be blamed on the now deceased William III, who had ordered all English colonies in the Americas to refuse assistance to the colony. (This had been in order to avoid alienating Spain, at a time of negotiations about the succession to the Spanish throne).

The response of the Scottish Parliament was to pass the Act of Security. Under the terms of the Act the Parliament would meet within twenty days of the death of Queen Anne and, in the absence of an heir apparent, choose a successor. That successor would also be the English monarch only if certain — unspecified — conditions were met. (In moving the relevant amendment to the Act, the Earl of Roxburghe had refrained for tactical reasons from stipulating the conditions.)

The same Act declared that the Union of the Crowns would be maintained only if "the freedom, frequency, and the power of parliament, and the religion, liberty and trade of the nation (free) from English or any foreign influence" were guaranteed in the course of the current monarch's rule.

A second Act, Anent (concerning) Peace and War, gave the Scottish Parliament the right to declare war and make peace even if Scotland and England continued to have a single monarch after the death of Queen Anne.

The Court party had unsuccessfully opposed the Acts. But support for the two Acts was not the result of a unified opposition. Rather, it was the product of different, and often contradictory, political interests. As George Ridpath, who recorded the parliamentary proceedings, commented on the vote on the Act of Security: "The majority of the House was for it, though upon different considerations."

The Jacobites, who numbered about 70 in the Parliament and were later to form the backbone of parliamentary opposition to the Treaty of Union, supported the Acts as a step towards blocking the Hanoverian succession and restoring the Stuarts. The first Act left

open the question of who would succeed Queen Anne, while the second Act might eventually allow Scotland to conclude a separate peace with pro-Jacobite France.

A group around the baronial laird Fletcher of Saltoun saw the Acts as an assertion of parliamentary rights against royal control. In fact, Fletcher had proposed his own, and far more radical, Act of Security. Under his version, the monarchy would have been virtually stripped of its powers. But this was too radical a proposal for the Estates of the Scottish Parliament, for so many members of which defence of hereditary privilege was understandably a matter of principle.

For the majority of the Country party the Acts were an attempt to secure more favourable terms for Scottish trade and commerce in exchange for support for the Hanoverian succession: if the Scottish Parliament was to agree to the Hanoverian succession, then it should be able to exact a high price for giving its agreement.

As one adherent of the Country party put it: "The longer we forbear, the better terms we will get." And those terms, although not spelt out in detail, should certainly include economic concessions by England.

The leader of the Country party, the Duke of Hamilton, also had reasons of his own for leaving open the question of who would succeed Queen Anne. He entertained ambitions of securing a crown for himself, even if he did not have the strongest of claims: two and a half centuries earlier one of his ancestors had married into the Stuart dynasty.

When the Scottish Parliament met again the following year, it reaffirmed the position taken in 1703. A composite motion declared that the Parliament would not "proceed to the nomination of a successor (to Queen Anne) until we have had a previous treaty with England in relation to our commerce and other concerns with that nation," and that the Parliament should also "rectify our constitution and vindicate and secure the sovereignty and independence of the kingdom."

The English Parliament saw the Acts in the same terms as the Jacobite members of the Scottish Parliament: a threat to the Hanoverian succession, and a threat to successful prosecution of the war against France. As Godolphin, the English Lord Treasurer, put it: "We are now in so critical a juncture with respect to other nations that all Europe must in some measure be affected by the good or ill-ending [i.e. outcome] of the Parliament of Scotland."

In 1704, in response to the Scottish Parliament's Acts, the English Parliament passed the Act for the Effectual Security of the Kingdom of England from the Apparent Dangers that May Arise from the Several Acts Lately Passed in the Parliament of Scotland, more commonly known as the Alien Act. The Act was given royal assent by Queen Anne in February of 1705.

The Act stated that unless the Scottish Parliament accepted the Hanoverian succession, then all Scots, apart from those already living in England, would be treated as aliens, all Scottish imports into England would be forbidden, and all estates held by Scots in England would be confiscated.

The Act also proposed the appointment of commissioners to conduct negotiations about "a nearer and more complete union" between the two kingdoms. A deadline of Christmas of 1705 was set for a response from the Scottish Parliament.

Having reconvened later the same year, the Scottish Parliament voted in favour of appointing commissioners to discuss a closer union with England. It then went on to support a motion from the Duke of Hamilton that the Scottish commissioners should be appointed by Queen Anne, not by the Parliament itself. (By this time Hamilton was leader of the opposition to the Court party in name only.)

Apart from a common desire to prevent implementation of the sanctions threatened by the Alien Act, the rationale behind the Parliament's decision to open negotiations differed from one party and faction to another. As had been the case in 1703, different factions had reached a common position for conflicting reasons.

For the Jacobites the appointment of commissioners continued to leave open the question of the succession to Queen Anne. For the Country party appointing commissioners allowed more time for the Scottish Parliament to bargain about the price for supporting a Hanoverian succession. For Fletcher's group, given that there had so far been no mention of a union of the Parliaments, the appointment of commissioners was not necessarily incompatible with their proposals for reform of the Scottish Parliament.

By late December, in response to the Scottish decision to open negotiations, both the Commons and the Lords had voted to repeal the sanctions threatened by the Alien Act. In February of the following year Queen Anne appointed the Scottish commissioners. In April the English commissioners were appointed.

With negotiations about a union back on the agenda, the Whigs, who now controlled the English Parliament, changed their position. Previously, their priority had been to secure the Hanoverian succession, while leaving the question of union to a later date. Now, however, they decided that union itself could resolve the question of the succession. But for that to be the case, the union would have to be a union of the two Parliaments.

Negotiations opened in April. Given that the Scottish commissioners had been appointed by Queen Anne, there was not a lot to negotiate about. The Scottish commissioners initially argued for a federal-type arrangement between Scotland and England, either because they supported this as an end in itself, or because they saw a federal relationship as a tactical step towards a later union of the Parliaments.

The English commissioners, however, were intent on a union of the Parliaments. As one of the Scottish commissioners later wrote: "After all the trouble we have given ourselves, we knew at the time that it was but losing our labour, for the English commissioners were positively resolved to treat of no kind of Union with us but what was to be incorporating and perpetual."

Three months later, in July of 1706, the English and Scottish commissioners reached agreement on the draft Articles of Union. In October of the same year the Scottish Parliament reconvened to discuss and vote on the Articles.

Apart from securing the Hanoverian succession, by validating the English Act of Settlement, the 25 Articles covered Scottish representation in a single British Parliament, the preservation of the powers of the Scottish nobility and of other Scottish institutions, and, at greatest length, economic issues.

Scotland was to have 45 Members of Parliament, and 16 peers in the House of Lords. This was unrepresentative in terms of the size of Scotland's population (one fifth of England's) but "over-representative" in terms of the assumed taxable capacity of Scotland (less than a fortieth of England's). It was also unfair, in that no such calculations applied to English representation in Parliament: Cornwall alone sent 44 MPs to the House of Commons.

The Scottish legal system, including the authority and privileges of all Scottish courts and all Scottish laws which were not inconsistent with the terms of the treaty, was to be preserved.

The rights and privileges of the royal burghs were also to be preserved, as too were the "heritable offices, heritable jurisdictions, offices for life and jurisdictions for life" of the nobility, whose other privileges would also include exemption from civil actions for debt. (For the sake of clarity, "superiorities" were subsequently added to the list of feudal rights to be preserved.)

Scottish merchants and traders were to enjoy freedom of trade with England and equal access to the English colonies ("…freedom and intercourse of trade and navigation … for all the subjects of the United Kingdom of Great Britain"). The "East Indies", on the other hand, were to remain the preserve of English commercial enterprises.

Scotland's payment of a Land Tax was fixed at £48,000 per year, a figure which remained unchanged for the rest of the eighteenth century. Under the same tax, England was required to raise nearly £2 millions per year. For every £50 raised in Scotland, almost £2,000 was to be raised in England.

Although payment of a share of the national debt was to be raised in Scotland — £398,085 and 10 shillings — exactly the same sum, the so-called "Equivalent", was to be paid out as compensation for this. This figure included nearly £250,000 to cover the costs of adopting English coinage, to provide a "subsidy" to promote industry in Scotland, and as compensation for those who had lost money in the Darien venture.

The contents of the proposed treaty, published in October, triggered popular unrest in Scotland. Demonstrations were staged outside of Parliament House. Presbyterian ministers denounced the proposals as a threat to the Kirk. Riots broke out in Edinburgh and became a daily event. In early November rioting also spread to Glasgow. The number of anti-Union clubs, first established in 1702, increased to some 200.

In Kirkudbright, Dumfries, and Stirling the text of the treaty was

burnt at the town crosses. In Lanarkshire handbills were circulated calling on Presbyterians to prepare arms and provisions for a march on the Parliament in Edinburgh. Rumours circulated of an armed insurrection, involving a possible alliance of Lowland Covenanters and Highland Jacobites.

Ninety six anti-union petitions, predominantly from the West of Scotland, were submitted to the Scottish Parliament. In Scotland as a whole, 14 out of 34 counties, 19 out of 66 burghs, 60 out of 938 parishes, and three out of 68 presbyteries submitted such petitions.

Within the Scottish Parliament itself there was, according to one of its members, "a great backwardness for a union with England of any kind whatsoever." And yet, in January of 1707, the Parliament voted by 110 to 67 to ratify the Treaty of Union.

Three centuries later it is impossible to state with absolute certainty which factors led a majority of the Parliament's members to vote in favour of the Union. Disposing of nationalist shibboleths about the Union, on the other hand, is rather more straightforward.

Bribery was not a determining factor. Burns' portrayal of the Union as something "wrought by a coward few, for hireling traitors' wages… we're bought and sold for English gold — such a parcel of rogues in a nation" might make for good poetry. But it makes bad history.

The "English gold" referred to by Burns was the £20,000 sent to Scotland from the English Treasury in the autumn of 1706. The 32 recipients of the money, which was used to pay off debts to nobles on the Scottish civil list, were first listed in the "Memoirs" of Lockhart of Carnwath, published in 1714.

Although paying off the nobles' arrears was clearly intended to influence the outcome of the eventual vote on the Union, the payments changed the voting intentions of, at most, only a handful of members of the Parliament. In any case, not all recipients of a share of the £20,000 were even members of the Parliament.

The bulk of the money, £12,325, was paid to just one person — the Duke of Queensberry, the leader of the Court party. But he had always been a supporter of a union anyway. Other payments also went to long-standing supporters of a union. And, by the standards of the time, what today would count as bribery was then simply a commonplace practice.

If the Union could be explained in terms of bribery, why did it not occur on earlier occasions? Bribes were surely no less available, and Scottish nobles no less corrupt, in earlier years than in 1707. Nor does bribing a Scottish noble appear to have necessarily been a particularly expensive affair: five of the bribes paid out were less than the sum paid to the messenger who carried the treaty from Scotland to England.

If, for example, Lord Banff could have been influenced in his voting intentions by the princely sum of £11 and 2 shillings which he received, then it says much about the desperate economic straits of many members of the Scottish nobility. The fact that it was from England that the £20,000 had to be despatched is equally significant: there was simply no money in the Scottish Treasury.

And "English gold" was not the only currency of bribery in early eighteenth-century Scotland. When the Duke of Hamilton, who had looked to the French court to support his claim to the Scottish crown, met with the French spy Hooke in 1705, he asked for — and, according to contemporaries, obtained and used — money from France in an attempt to bribe members of the Parliament.

The risk of an English invasion was no more significant than bribery in determining the outcome of the Scottish Parliament's vote on the Treaty of Union. It is certainly the case that while the Scottish Parliament was discussing the draft Treaty of Union, England moved troops to the Border region and to the north of Ireland. How serious the intentions were behind these troop movements is a separate question.

War in Scotland would have undermined the all-important war on the continent. The Duke of Marlborough, the commander of the English forces, had consistently advocated a union rather than a war with Scotland — not least because of the potential impact of such a war on the 10,000 Scottish troops under his command. Nor was Marlborough's a lone voice in wanting to avoid the use of force. Queen Anne was of the same opinion.

Moreover, for the English ruling classes a driving force behind the Union was the goal of ensuring that Scotland did not become a 'second front' in the war against France, with troops having to be diverted from Europe to Scotland in order to deal with a French-Jacobite uprising. An English invasion of Scotland to enforce the Treaty of Union would therefore have resulted in precisely that which the Treaty of Union was meant to avoid.

In fact, what was uppermost in the minds of the supporters of the Union, both in Scotland and England, was not the possible need for an English invasion but the risk of a French invasion. "The Tyrant of France, that Grand Enemy of Christendom" represented everything to which the supporters of the Union were hostile: expansionary Catholicism, a Stuart restoration, Jacobite Episcopalianism, and monarchical absolutism free of parliamentary constraints.

The supporters of the Union were not in any way less "patriotic" than their adversaries. They simply calculated that the loss of a Parliament was a price worth paying in order to secure access to the English colonial enterprises. Scotland — or at least its ruling classes — had more to gain from colonial expansion than from preserving what they saw as an almost sham sovereignty.

"As to this sovereignty," wrote one pro-Union member of the Parliament, "I could never conceive of what it consisted." Independence was "at best a mere shadow and an empty name." In other words, while Scotland enjoyed both sovereignty and independence, they counted for little in a world already beginning to fall under the domination of competing European powers.

Supporters of the Union stressed — and, from their own point of view, genuinely so — their patriotic credentials. "I wish nothing more than the prosperity and welfare of my country, and know no better means to procure the same than by uniting (with England) on such honourable and patriotic terms," wrote Seton of Pitmidden.

Other members of the Parliament spoke in similar terms on the occasion of ratification of the Treaty of Union. The Union meant that "all Scotsmen may now at last pursue true honour and dignity and true freedom, freedom that is substantial, not a shifting shadow or an empty ghost." It was because agreement had been reached on the Union that "Scotland, guided by us, has been led from the political wilderness on to the only true road to happiness and prosperity."

Opponents of the Union, it is true, certainly made great play of their own patriotic credentials in an attempt to claim a monopoly on patriotism and damn their opponents as traitors. The 1320 Declaration of Arbroath, William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, and Scotland's martial traditions were all invoked in the name of opposition to the Union.

Echoing the Declaration of Arbroath, the Duke of Atholl declared that as long as one hundred Scots remained alive, "we will never enter into a treaty so dishonourable and entirely subversive as this one is." The Duke of Hamilton, on the other hand, invoked the example of Robert the Bruce and urged his followers to take their lead from Bruce's decision to declare null and void John Balliol's surrender of Scottish sovereignty to England.

Lockhart of Carnwath, who denounced the leader of the pro-Union faction in Parliament as "the Judas of his country", boasted that there was not a state in Europe which could not "furnish instances of heroic actions performed by Scotsmen," while an anonymous pamphleteer sought to mobilise opposition to the Union by publishing what purported to be Wallace's speech before the battle of Falkirk, together with an account of English fatalities.

That opponents of the Union cast themselves as the "true patriots" and defenders of Scotland's noble historic and martial traditions is readily explained: they had nothing else in common.

The main anti-Union forces — Jacobite Episcopalians and covenanting Presbyterians — represented mutually antagonistic political perspectives. Consequently, they opposed the Union for very different reasons. Only by creating a romanticised version of Scotland's past and opposing the Union in the name of that romanticised past could they maintain the illusion that their opposition to the Union united rather than divided them.

If bribery, troop movements, and a treacherous abandonment of patriotic values were not significant factors in deciding the outcome of the Scottish Parliament's vote on the Treaty of Union, the prospect of access to English colonies and the abolition of duties on Scottish exports to England certainly was a major influence, albeit not the sole influence, on voting in the Scottish Parliament.

Scotland's late attempt to establish its own colonies had not been tolerated by other European states — Spain and France as much

as England. The Scottish navy — consisting, as previously noted, of just three vessels — was no match for the navies of those states. And high tariff barriers — erected not just by England, but by all European states — stifled the market for the little which Scotland had to offer by way of exports.

Union with England offered a chance to escape from this dilemma. "The only popular topic produced for rendering it (the Union) palatable was the great advantage that must accrue to Scotland from the communication of trade," as Defoe put it.

The author of the pamphlet "Honey Lies in the Trade" likewise explained that the Union "may bring us into the way and knowledge of these places and things which they (the English) have laboured to conceal from us. And having once got a foot, we may possibly screw into the bowels of the hive."

The attraction of screwing into the bowels of the hive was also highlighted by supporters of the Union during debates in the Scottish Parliament: "This nation being poor and without force to protect it, its commerce cannot reap great advantages by it, till it partake of the trade and protection of some powerful neighbour nation, that can communicate both these. By this union we will have access to all the advantages in commerce the English enjoy."

It was Article IV of the Treaty of Union which provided for freedom of trade. When the Scottish Parliament voted on the Article — in its debates on the Treaty of Union the Parliament discussed and voted on each Article separately — it was passed by an overwhelming 156 votes to 19. The size of the majority underlined the extent to which "communication of trade" acted as an incentive to support the Treaty of Union.

No less important in securing assent to the Union were guarantees, or apparent guarantees, contained in other Articles that the class structure and institutions of Scottish society — with the obvious exception of the Scottish Parliament itself — would be preserved by the Union: the superiorities and privileges of the nobility, the rights and privileges of the royal burghs, and the existence of a separate Scottish legal system.

Given the domination of the Scottish Parliament by greater and lesser nobles, the preservation of the feudal superiorities which they enjoyed was a matter of no small significance. The stated guarantees undermined attempts by the Union's opponents to persuade members of the Parliament that the Union would result in the demise of Scotland's nobility.

It was to no avail, for example, that Lord Belhaven warned his peers in the Scottish Parliament of his vision of the fate awaiting them in the event of Union: "I see the noble and honourable peerage of Scotland divested of their followers and vassalages, and put upon such an equal foot with their vassals that I think I see a petty English exciseman receive more homage and respect than what was paid formerly to their quondam Macccallanmores."

Amendments to the draft Treaty of Union in the course of its passage through the Scottish Parliament — subsequently accepted by the English Parliament — neutralised, albeit not entirely, opposition to the Union based on fears of higher taxation.

Such fears had been one of the driving forces behind the popular unrest triggered by publication of the draft Treaty of Union: taxes in Scotland were lower, and less efficiently collected, than was the case in England.

Anti-Union petitions submitted to the Scottish Parliament warned that "the grant of freedom of trade will never counterbalance… the insupportable burden of taxation." Speaking of the threat of higher taxes on malt and salt, a doomladen Belhaven foresaw "the honest industrious tradesman… drinking water instead of ale, (and) eating his saltless pottage."

Some of the amendments concerning taxation and government subsidies emanated from a committee established by the Convention of Royal Burghs. Others reflected the influence of popular pamphleteering, such as "Some Considerations in Relation to Trade, Humbly Offered to His Grace Her Majesty's High Commissioner and the Estates of Parliament". The thrust of these amendments was to protect basic commodities from English levels of taxation.

English taxes on salt — an essential part of the Scottish diet — would not apply in Scotland for the first seven years of the Union. Thereafter the tax rate was to be less than a third of what it was in England. A lower rate of tax would apply to beer in Scotland, and the English tax on malt would not apply in Scotland for the duration of the war against France. On conclusion of the war the tax on beer would be no more than two shillings a barrel.

English duties on "coals, culm and cinders", on "windows and lights", and on "stamped paper, vellum and parchment" would likewise not be applied in Scotland, at least for varying periods of time.

Other amendments provided for subsidies to protect the competitiveness of Scottish manufacturing and trade. £2,000 a year was to be set aside to encourage woollen manufacturing, for example, and a bounty was to be paid on exports of oats and oatmeal if prices fell below fifteen shillings a quarter.

The latter provided a welcome remedy for landowners and merchants caught between the problem of low domestic prices (which resulted in low profits) and, on the other hand, the problem of finding buyers for grain overseas. In practice, it would mean that it was periodically more profitable to sell grain abroad than it was to provide for domestic demand.

Of arguably greater importance than the amendments made to the draft treaty in response to concerns about higher levels of taxation were the steps taken to defuse the far more militant and widespread opposition to the Union on religious grounds.

The Church of Scotland had been the first major institution in Scotland to declare its opposition to the draft treaty and its ministers had played a central role in the wave of unrest which had followed its publication.

The draft Treaty of Union guaranteed the Scottish legal system but made no mention of the position of the Church of Scotland. The Kirk feared that the Union would lead to the re-introduction of bishops into church government, the imposition of ministers on local congregations, and Scotsmen sitting in the House of Lords alongside of bishops.

Covenanting Presbyterians were even more outspoken in their opposition to the draft treaty. Anti-Union addresses which they despatched to the Parliament warned that the Union "may prove destructive to the present Church government," that the draft treaty was "inconsistent with the known Presbyterian principles of this Church and Covenants by which we are bound," and called on the Parliament not to support the proposed Union because "we are in fear to be exposed to new sufferings upon account of religion."

In the Scottish Parliament's opening debate on the draft treaty Lord Belhaven had been quick to pounce on the alleged threat to the Church of Scotland: "I see a national Church, founded upon a rock, secured by a Claim of Right, hedged and fenced about by the strictest and pointedest legal sanctions that sovereignty could contrive, voluntarily descending into a plain, upon an equal level with Jews, Papists, Socinians, Armenians, Anabaptists and other sectaries."

In negotiating the draft treaty the Scottish commissioners, as one of them later wrote, had wanted to "make the Presbyterian government and its security the basis of any Union between the two nations." But the final draft omitted any guarantee of the Presbyterian settlement at the insistence of the English commissioners: they feared, and not without good reason, a Tory backlash in the English Parliament in the event of such a guarantee.

Religious-based opposition to the draft treaty was serious enough to threaten its chances of acceptance by the Scottish Parliament. "One thing I must say for the Kirk, that if the Union fail it is owing to them," wrote one of the Union's supporters in the Parliament.

The response of the Scottish Parliament, in November of 1706, was to rush through the Act for Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government. The Act confirmed "the said true Protestant religion, and the worship, discipline and government of this Church (i.e. the Church of Scotland) to continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding generations."

(The Act received support from anti-Union Episcopalian peers in the Parliament. They believed that its confirmation of Presbyterian government would alienate Tories in the English Parliament and thereby lead to a collapse of the proposed union.

(Tories in the English Parliament and in the Lords certainly spoke out against the Union, on the basis that the Church of England and English liberties would be at risk if Scottish Presbyterians were to be allowed a say in English affairs. But they could muster

nowhere near enough support to prevent ratification of the Treaty.)

Thereafter, wrote Lockhart of Carnwath, “in the churches, by and large, the trumpets of sedition began to fall silent… No sooner did the Parliament pass an Act for the security of their kirk… than most of the brethren’s zeal cooled — thereby discovering that provided they could retain the possession of their benefices they cared not a farthing what became of the other concerns of the nation.”

This was an exaggeration. The Act of Security certainly secured support for, or at least acquiescence in, the Union from mainstream Presbyterianism. But conventiclers who stood by the 1638 Covenant, which committed them to preserve an independent Scotland in the true faith, continued to oppose the Union. So too did a number of presbyteries which considered the guarantees contained in the Act of Security to offer insufficient protection for “the defence and maintenance of the liberties and rights of the Church and nation.”

A further amendment to the draft treaty — albeit one of lesser significance — was an addendum to Article 24, by virtue of which “the Crown, Sceptre and Sword of State, the Records of Parliament, and all other Records, Rolls and Registers whatsoever, both public and private, general and particular, and Warrants thereof continue to be kept as they are within that part of the United Kingdom now called Scotland, and that they shall so remain in all time coming, notwithstanding of the Union.”

Consistent with their attempts to present themselves as the true defenders of Scottish soveignty, anti-Union pamphleteers warned that, in the event of Union, the crown and regalia were to be handed over to England and melted down. Such agitation struck a popular chord: even pro-government troops declared that they would desert should the regalia be removed from Scotland. But the addendum to Article 24 neutered the effectiveness of such campaigning.

Whatever the precise calculations in the minds of those members of the Scottish Parliament who voted to ratify the Treaty of Union, it is credible to assume that the combination of free trade, guarantees of feudal privileges, recognition of Presbyterian church government, concessions on tax issues and government subsidies, and the allocation of the “Equivalent” sufficed to bring about a majority.

It should also be born in mind that a substantial proportion of the Parliament had hardly been in need of being persuaded of the benefits of Union. From their own point of view, and in terms of their own class interests, Union with England — even an incorporating one — made sense.

Around one in four members of the Scottish Parliament in the early eighteenth century had fled to the Low Countries after the Restoration, in some cases after having suffered imprisonment, torture and the confiscation of their estates. They had already suffered under one Stuart restoration. Union with England was a guarantee against a second restoration, and most of them voted accordingly.

Members of the Scottish Parliament who had served, or were still serving, in the British army were predominantly in favour of the Union. (The army, and navy, had become “British” institutions even before the Treaty of Union.) They had already witnessed the benefits of Union, both in terms of the military victories achieved in continental Europe by a unified British army, and also in terms of career advancement and financial reward through service in that army.

A majority of those members of the Parliament most concerned with economic matters were also in favour of Union in 1707, and had been so in the preceding years.

Eight out of 14 members of the parliamentary commission set up in 1703 to investigate the Scottish economy backed the Union. Only one of them was an outright opponent of it. Fifteen of the 21 members of the Council of Trade set up in 1705 to examine Scotland’s balance of trade generally voted in support of the Articles of the Treaty of Union as they progressed through the Parliament.

Some of the most prominent advocates of the economic case for Union did not wait until 1706/07 to make clear their position. Seton of Pitmedden had argued for full incorporation as early as 1700, in his “The Interests of Scotland in Three Essays”. The Earl of Cromarty had argued for an incorporating union from 1702 onwards: it was “not only the best but the speediest if not the only remedy.” And John Clerk had implied support for Union in “The Circumstances of Scotland Considered”, published in 1705.

In the debates on the Treaty of Union the members of the Scottish Parliament were also confronted with the question of what, if any, was the alternative to acceptance of the Union.

Economically, the likely alternative was further economic stagnation. Scotland lacked the military power and economic development needed to break into European markets fenced off by the principles of mercantalism. Its recent attempt to become a colonial power had proved a disaster. And refusal of the Treaty of Union could trigger implementation of the sanctions previously threatened in the Alien Act.

Politically, given that the Treaty of Union incorporated confirmation of the Hanoverian succession, the likely alternative was a French-backed attempt by Jacobites to restore the Stuarts to the Scottish throne. This would mean civil war in Scotland. Inevitably, England would also be drawn into such a conflict.

A restored Stuart monarchy would take revenge on those sections of the Scottish nobility who had supported the ousting of James II/VII, and also attack Presbyterian church government in Scotland. Alternatively, a victory for England would result in a union anyway — but only after war in Scotland, and on far less favourable terms.

The prospect of an attempted Stuart restoration by French force of arms was not self-serving fear-mongering by supporters of the Union. Within a fortnight of the Union Scottish Jacobites had drawn up a memorial for presentation to the French monarch, appealing for money and troops for an invasion of Scotland to restore the Stuarts to the throne.

Domestic Jacobite anti-Union propaganda also sought to pave the way for a Stuart restoration by claiming that James had converted to Protestantism and would not only support Presbyterian church government but also the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.

(Pro-Union pamphleteers such as Daniel Defoe made great play of the risk of a French-backed Stuart restoration. Seeking to drive a wedge between anti-Union Presbyterians and Jacobites, Defoe wrote: “Men are known by their friends. All the Jacobites are in league with you (Presbyterian opponents of the Union), the Papists are on your right hand, the Prelatists on your left, and the French at your back. On what account do these people join with you? To your tents, o Israel, for shame abandon such a wretched cause!”)

Although a majority of the Scottish Parliament concluded that their class interests were best served by ratification of the Treaty of Union, some sections of the Scottish ruling classes, as well as other social forces in Scotland, drew a very different conclusion. But they did so on the basis of contradictory considerations.

Jacobites opposed the Union for obvious reasons. As one of the Scottish commissioners wrote of them: “They could not think of embracing a system for the Union of the two kingdoms wherein succession to the Crown was to be settled on the House of Hanover.”

Fletcher of Saltoun and his supporters opposed the Union because, by preserving the powers of the feudal nobility, it ran counter to the constitutional reforms which Fletcher had argued for in his proposed Act of Security in 1703.

Covenanters opposed the Union because they regarded it as a betrayal of the Solemn League and Covenant, which had called for the extension of Presbyterianism throughout England, Ireland and Scotland. But by guaranteeing the continuation of separate churches in England and Scotland, the Union would, as one Covenanter wrote, place “an eternal embargo upon all such endeavours.”

Even the “communication of trade” provided for by the Treaty of Union was a reason for some to oppose the Union. Free trade cut both ways: free trade for Scotland with England and its colonies also meant free trade for England with Scotland. Scotland was therefore at risk of being overrun by cheaper English commodities and raw materials.

Anti-Union pamphleteers pointed to the threat which free trade might pose to Scottish manufacturing: “Scotland may then bid farewell to the woollen, stuff, stocken, and many other manufactures, especially now in so hopeful a way of thriving among them. … All hope of erecting new manufacturies must be lost.”

Some royal burghs opposed the Union because they saw free trade as a threat to what remained of their monopoly over foreign

trade. Members of the Glasgow merchant elite were hostile to the Union for a different reason: free trade would lead to the stationing of customs officers in Glasgow, putting at risk the profits accumulated from illegally smuggling tobacco from the American colonies.

(This view was certainly not held by all Glasgow merchants. Some of them welcomed the Union as the means to "vast wealth by liberty of trading in the West Indies.")

A further strand of opposition to the Treaty of Union, and one not to be under-estimated, was not based on opposition to Union itself, but to the conditions attached to the Union.

Defoe, for example, observed that much of the opposition to the Union in Scotland would not have arisen had the proposed Union been federal rather than incorporating. Some of the petitions submitted to the Scottish Parliament after publication of the draft treaty similarly expressed support for Union in principle, but not in the proposed form.

Even leaders of the parliamentary opposition, such as Fletcher of Saltoun and Lockhart of Carnwath, had backed a union of one sort or another in earlier years. But they could not bring themselves to support the proposed Treaty of Union, notwithstanding the agreed amendments to it. The same applied to Belhaven and the Marquess of Annandale, both of whom had been staunch supporters of a Union — until the former had lost his treasury post in 1705, and the latter had suffered a snub by Queen Anne.

Individually, none of these strands of opposition carried enough social weight to frustrate the Union. Nor could they act together in an attempt to secure their common goal: their motivations for opposition to the Union, and their alternatives to the Union, were not only inconsistent but also often mutually exclusive.

The Treaty of Union formally came into effect on 1 May, 1707. According to Adam Smith, writing in later years, "the immediate effect (of the Union) was to hurt the interest of every single order of men in the country." This was not entirely accurate. Even in the short term, some nobles and merchants profited handsomely from the Union.

Grain and oatmeal exports doubled in the decade and a half following the Union. Commercially oriented cattle-rearing increased, in order to take advantage of easier access to an expanding English market. And by 1730 Glasgow merchants, having overcome the problem of having to pay duty on their imports, had trebled the volume of their tobacco imports from the Americas.

But while some "orders of men in the country" quickly profited from the Union, other, lesser, orders paid the price for those profits, as well as suffering under the imposition of higher taxes.

The doubling of grain exports to the new markets opened by the Union resulted in severe food shortages in the Lowlands: grain crops were being exported instead of being supplied to local markets. A wave of food riots broke out in 1720. The level of unrest in the Lowlands in this period was greater than in the whole of Scotland during any of the post-Union Jacobite uprisings.

In Galloway the spread of cattle-rearing had similar consequences: tenants were dispossessed in order to make way for enclosures. In 1724/25 the region was swept by the most serious rural unrest — the Levellers' Revolt — anywhere in Scotland in the entire century. Hundreds of armed men tore down the walls of cattle enclosures, mutilated cattle, and fought pitched battles with troops. The revolt lasted for some six months.

The imposition of new taxes and of higher levels of taxation — despite, or even in breach of, amendments to the Treaty of Union during debates in the Scottish Parliament — also provoked widespread unrest in the immediate post-Union years.

In 1711 and 1715 the British Parliament imposed duties on exported and printed Scottish linens. Paper-making and candle-making were hit by new excise duties, with paper production falling from 100,000 pounds to 40,000 pounds between 1712 and 1720. The cost of salt doubled when a salt tax was introduced in 1713, just six years after the Act of Union.

The same year Parliament voted to apply the malt tax to Scotland, again in breach of the Treaty of Union. Although the malt tax was withdrawn, a further attempt to introduce the tax in late 1724 provoked a particularly serious wave of rioting the following year. The introduction of more effective methods of collection added to popular grievances over increased taxation. Assaults on customs officers and attacks on customs warehouses were frequent and widespread.

In the aftermath of the malt tax riots of 1725, however, increased state assistance for Scottish manufacturing, reduced bounties on the export of grain (which reduced the profitability of such exports), and the first signs of growth in some sectors of the economy as a result of trade with England and the colonies resulted in a decline in the unrest provoked by the short-term economic impact of the Union.

From the point of view of the English ruling classes, the Treaty of Union was only partially successful. France failed to secure its aim of territorial expansion in the War of the Spanish Succession. And after Queen Anne's death in 1714 the crown was transferred to the House of Hanover. But the Union failed to eliminate the threat of Jacobitism.

On the contrary, there were attempted Jacobite uprisings of varying degrees of seriousness in 1708, 1715, 1719 and 1745. And it was the Treaty of Union itself which had helped make possible those uprisings.

The social basis of Jacobitism in Scotland was a section of the nobility based predominantly, but not exclusively, in the Highlands. The source of their power lay not in their wealth but in the feudal superiorities and privileges which had been preserved by the Treaty of Union.

As such, they represented both an anomaly and a threat. The former because they constituted a relic of feudalism in a state increasingly based on capitalist relations of production. And the latter because their exercise of feudal powers, together with the support which they continued to receive from France, allowed them to remain a significant social force.

Eradication of the continuing Jacobite threat was therefore inseparable from abolition of the feudal superiorities which the Treaty of Union itself had allowed to be carried over into the new British state. Only in 1747, however, were these superiorities abolished: following the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden, Parliament passed the Act for Taking Away and Abolishing the Heritable Jurisdictions in That Part of Great Britain Called Scotland …and for Rendering the Union of the Two Kingdoms More Complete.

From the point of view of the Scottish ruling classes, the results of the Union were more complex.

One faction of the nobility was able to benefit from the development of capitalist forms of production in Scotland which had been stimulated by the Treaty of Union. The remainder looked — unsuccessfully — to Jacobitism and France to preserve their privileges. Culloden and the legislation of 1747 sealed their fate. In that sense, Belhaven's warnings in the Scottish Parliament that Union would lead to the nobility being "divested of their followers and vassalages" was proved correct.

Paradoxically, the main beneficiary of the Union in Scotland was a social force which had played little role in bringing it about: the Scottish bourgeoisie.

Unlike in England, there had been no victorious bourgeois revolution in Scotland in the seventeenth century. In the opening years of the following century the embryonic Scottish bourgeoisie was economically and politically weak, and often sceptical about a union with England.

Its economic weakness was reflected in the overall weakness of the Scottish economy. Its political weakness was reflected in the powers still wielded by a semi-feudal nobility. And its scepticism about a union flowed out of fears that Scottish manufacturing would not survive a post-union flood of cheaper and better-quality English imports.

In the event, however, from the 1750s onwards the Union resulted in a rapid capitalist transformation of the Scottish economy: a process which, in England, had required nearly two centuries was concentrated into a period of decades in Scotland. Inevitably, the class which emerged as the dominant class from that capitalist transformation was the Scottish bourgeoisie.

The Scottish bourgeoisie did not rise to the level of a ruling class in an independent Scotland. Just as the Scottish economy was gradually integrated into a single British economy in the aftermath of 1707, so too the Scottish bourgeoisie became part of a single British ruling class. In later years the same historical forces which had created a single British ruling class would also lead to the emergence of a British-wide workers' movement.

What Scotland owes to slavery

By Michelle Boyle

Although some Scottish merchants had engaged in trading ventures with English colonies prior to 1707, Scottish involvement in what was then known as the English Empire was essentially that of an interloper.

In line with the principles of mercantilism, the English state had sought to restrict trade with its colonies to English merchants. Despite the Union of the Crowns in 1603, such restrictions were applied, if not always successfully, to Scottish merchants.

All such restrictions were abolished by Article IV of the Treaty of Union: "That all the subjects of the United Kingdom of Great Britain shall, from and after the Union, have full freedom and intercourse of trade and navigation, to and from any port or place within the said United Kingdom, and the dominions and plantations thereunto belonging."

Within half a century of the Union Scotland was well on the way towards becoming an integral part of the British state, the British economy, and the imperial centre of the British Empire. Its previous status of interloper was succeeded by a role more akin to that of pioneer. And the Scottish pioneers of the British Empire behaved little or no differently from other colonists and adventurers of their day.

In America they rallied to the crown when war broke out in 1775. In Canada they debauched the native population with alcohol and bought native women as sex slaves. In the West Indies they made fortunes on the back of slave labour. In India they defrauded the natives as much as they did their own employer. In China they relied on gunboat diplomacy to protect 'free trade' in the opium imports which were the source of their wealth. In Australia they massacred the Aborigines and stole their land. And in Latin America they proclaimed themselves the ruling dynasty.

Scottish settlers demonstrated their loyalty to the Empire in the American War of Independence by providing the backbone of the pro-crown forces. More "loyalists" were born in Scotland than in any other country outside of America. In the aftermath of the war it was Scottish settlers who lodged nearly two fifths of the claims for government compensation for losses arising from the American victory.

(The Scottish loyalists included the Jacobite heroine Flora MacDonald. After having helped the Young Pretender escape to a life of drunkenness, debauchery and wife-beating, she married a British army officer and emigrated with him to North Carolina. Both rallied to the crown when war began in 1775, and her husband immediately signed up for the Royal Highland Emigrants regiment.)

Scots were stigmatised by the American revolutionaries — who toasted "a free exportation to Scotchmen and Tories" — as the natural supporters of imperial oppression. According to one American contemporary, the Scots were "a lawless and unprincipled faction." The first draft of the American Declaration of Independence referred to "Scotch and other foreign mercenaries who were being sent by the British government to invade and destroy us."

In 1782 the Assembly of Georgia went a stage further, by banning immigration into the state by Scots:

"The people of Scotland have in general manifested a devoted inimicability to the civil liberties of America and have contributed principally to promote and continue a ruinous war, for the purpose of subjugating this and other confederated states. Be it therefore enacted … that no person a native of Scotland shall be permitted to emigrate into this state, … but every such person being a native of Scotland shall within three days after his arrival within this state be apprehended and committed to jail [pending deportation]."

Fearing retribution for their loyalism after the end of the war, thousands of Scots fled from the independent colonies to Canada, then called British North America. They were far from being the first Scots to arrive there.

Coat-of-arms of the short-lived Darien colony

As early as 1708, just a year after the Treaty of Union, Samuel Veitch, a survivor of the ill-fated Darien venture, had submitted a memorandum to the government of the newly created state urging that it take control of the Canadian territories. To do so would "infinitely advance the commerce of the British all over America, and particularly make them sole masters of the fur, fish and naval stores trade over all the continent."

An article published in the "Glasgow Journal" in 1760 was equally enthusiastic about the economic attractions of Canada: "An exclusive fishery! A boundless territory! The fur trade engrossed and innumerable tribes of savages contributing to the consumption of our staple! These are the sources of exhaustless wealth."

Canada was ruled by the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company as a commercial fiefdom. Both companies were dominated by Scots: 80% of the employees of the former were Orcadians, and over 60% of the employees of the latter were Gaels from the districts of Inverness, Banff and Aberdeen. And both companies employed the same commercial practices to maximise the supply of pelts and furs from the indigenous population.

Orcadians and Gaels alike worked to spread alcohol addiction amongst the native tribes: the greater their dependence on alcohol, the greater their supply of pelts and furs in order to obtain that alcohol. While the Orcadians traded in "English brandy" (a mixture of London gin and iodine), the Gaels traded in "Blackfoot Milk" (a mixture of rum and water).

Local women were another sought-after commodity in Canada. Prostitution soon became widespread. So too did nominal marriages, subsequently abandoned when the 'husbands' returned to Scotland. Indian women also found themselves sold for sex to the companies' employees, in exchange for meat, clothing and drink. The most sought-after women, who consequently fetched the highest prices, were sterile.

An alternative destination for Scots fleeing the American ex-colonies was the West Indies, where Scots already made up a disproportionately large number of the slaveowners, slave overseers, and colonial governors. Between 1750 and 1800 some 14,000 to 20,000 Scots in total emigrated to the West Indies.

In Jamaica — the most important of all the Caribbean colonies, where 40% of all slaves in the West Indies laboured — Scots were so numerous that the island's slaves were said to speak a "Negro Scotch" dialect. By the middle of the eighteenth century Scots owned around 20% of all landholdings in Jamaica, and nearly 30% by the end of the century. In the 1750s 45% of Jamaican death inventories with a value of over £1,000 were the legacies of Scots.

An early history of Jamaica, written in 1774, singled out Scotland's contribution to the colony: "Jamaica, indeed, is greatly indebted to North Britain, as nearly one third of the inhabitants are either natives of that country, or descendants from those who were. Many have come from the same quarter every year, less in quest of fame, than of fortunes." (For the writer, the island's slave population did not even count as inhabitants.)

On the island of St. Kitts Scots were the recipients of half the land grants of more than a hundred acres which were made after France had ceded the island to Britain in 1713. When the islands of Dominica, Saint Vincent, Grenada and Tobago were likewise ceded to Britain at the end of the Seven Years War, they were settled mainly by Scots. (On St. Vincent one in four of the new settlers was a Glaswegian.) The Leeward Islands and, even more so, Antigua were likewise dominated by Scots.

All governors appointed to the newly acquired Caribbean colonial possessions in 1763 were Scots. In others tiers of the colonial slave-owning societies Scots were similarly disproportionately represented. In particular, Scots predominated amongst slave overseers throughout the West Indies.

As one early nineteenth-century writer noted: "Of the overseers of the slave plantations in the West Indies, three out of four are Scotsmen, … and on the American continent the whippers-in and neger-bishops are either Scotchmen or the Americanised descendants of Scotchmen."

Scots were also over-represented amongst the employees of the East India Company (EIC). (Article IV of the Treaty of Union allowed Scots direct access to the "dominions and plantations" of the new British state. Trade with India, however, remained a monopoly of the EIC.)

Although Scots accounted for only a tenth of the total British population in the eighteenth century, they accounted for up to 50% of various categories of EIC employees in Bengal, and figured equally prominently amongst the EIC's employees in Madras.

Between the 1760s and 1780s 60% of the recipients of the EIC's "residence permits" (which allowed their holders to trade in their own right, with the proviso that no goods should be exported to Britain) were Scots. By the 1790s the dozen most powerful agency houses (licensed by the EIC to engage in local trading) in Bengal and Bombay were also dominated by Scots. By 1813 37% of private merchant houses in Calcutta were run by Scots.

Even after the demise of the EIC Scots continued to play an equally prominent role. When the Liberal MP Charles Dilke visited India in the 1860s, he wrote:

"Englishmen could not long survive the work, but the Bombay merchants are all Scotch. … For every Englishman who has worked himself up to wealth from small beginnings without external aid, you find ten Scotsmen. It is strange, indeed, that Scotland has not become the popular name for the United Kingdom."

While Scots serving in the military in India made fortunes from straightforward plunder, more enterprising Scots profited from their business acumen. They used the EIC's funds for their own personal business ventures, and added on their own commission charges when conducting business on behalf of the EIC. Taking bribes from Indian princes was another particularly profitable business venture.

Between 1720 and 1780, 37 Scots are calculated to have returned from India with fortunes of over £40,000. These included John Farquhar, who accumulated a fortune in India amounting to £1.5 millions (but who allowed his servant to spend only two annas a day on food for him), and John Johnstone, who returned from India £300,000 the better off.

In the same period 65 Scots returned from India with medium fortunes (£20,000 to £40,000), and 21 with small to middling fortunes (£10,000 to £20,000). Overall, in the first three decades of the second half of the century, up to £500,000 was 'repatriated' to Scotland each year by Scots employed by the EIC.

India also attracted the attention of Scottish clergymen, who frequently displayed a less than Christian attitude towards the indigenous population. "Their general character is imbecility. Their moral powers are and have been for ages in a profound stupor," explained the vice-provost of Fort William College on his return from India.

Another Scottish missionary, Alexander Duff, was even more scathing in his opinions of the country and its people: "In that vast realm is the most stupendous fortress and citadel of ancient error and idolatry now in the world. … Within are congregated a hundred and fifty millions of human captives, the willing victims of the most egregious falsities and lies that have ever been hatched by the Prince of Darkness."

Such dismissive attitudes were shared by Scottish army officers. As the commanding officer of the Sutherland Highlanders told his troops before launching an attack on Secunderabagh — under the battle-cry of "Bring on the tartan!" — in order to lift the siege of Lucknow:

"When we make an attack, you must come to close quarters as quickly as possible. Keep well together and use the bayonet. Remember that the cowardly sepoys, who are eager to murder women and children, cannot look a European soldier in the face when it is accompanied by cold steel."

From India the most enterprising of the Scottish EIC employees, epitomised by William Jardine and James Matheson, branched out into the Chinese opium trade. By the end of the 1830s the Jardine-Matheson partnership handled most of the 2,500 tons of opium which was annually exported from India to China, and which had transformed 90% of the Chinese coastal population into drug addicts.

On each of the 6,000 chests of opium annually imported into China Jardine and Matheson made a profit of 100,000 silver dollars.

According to Jardine, the opium trade was "the safest and most gentlemanlike speculation I am aware of." Matheson marvelled at "the snug way" in which the opium trade allowed "income (to) come to you without asking." Chinese opposition to the trade was attributed by latter to their "marvellous degree of imbecility and avarice, conceit and obstinacy."

When the Chinese authorities finally cracked down on the trade, seizing and burning some £2 millions worth of opium stored by the Jardine-Matheson partnership in Canton, Jardine successfully appealed to the British crown to go to war: "Nor indeed should our valuable commerce and revenue … be permitted to remain subject to a caprice which a few gunboats laid alongside this city would overrule by the discharge of a few mortars.... The results of a war with China could not be doubted."

Enriched by his opium dealings to the tune of over a billion pounds at today's values, Matheson subsequently became an MP, a baron, a governor of the Bank of England, the chair of the P&O shipping company, and the second largest landowner in Britain. Jardine, however, died too early to enjoy the fruits of his labours (or, more accurately, the fruits of the labour of others).

Later years saw the beginnings of mass emigration from Scotland to Australia, mainly to New South Wales and Tasmania, where Scots constituted one third of the settlers. In his "Two Years in New South Wales" the Scottish explorer Peter Cunningham summed up the country's attractions for the benefit of his compatriots: huge grants of free land — Cunningham himself had benefited from these to the tune of over 3,500 acres — and free convict labour to work the land.

As for the indigenous population, Cunningham rhetorically asked whether they should be placed "at the very zero of civilisation, constituting in a measure the connecting link between man and the monkey tribe? For really some of the old women only seem to require a tail to complete the identity."

Even before the publication of Cunningham's book, Scots had already begun to make their mark on Australia. Three of the first six governors of New South Wales were Scots, as were three of the four Deputy Commissaries-General who held office in the early nineteenth century. The most famous of New South Wales' Scottish governors was Lachlan Macquarie, who ran the state as a military dictatorship and went down in history as the "Father of Australia".

Successive seizures of land enabled the more successful Scottish settlers to amass sheep-farming estates of over 20,000 acres. Aborigines who sought to defend their lands from annexation were massacred. The appropriately named "Highland Brigade" of Scot-

tish settlers alone carried out 14 separate massacres in the Port Albert district of Victoria, including the Warrigal Creek massacre of between 150 and 300 unarmed men, women and children.

Even Latin America played host to Scots imbued with the spirit of imperial expansion. On the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua, site of an English colony until 1788, Gregor MacGregor from Breadalbane declared himself His Serene Highness Gregor I, Sovereign Prince of Poyais and Cacique of the Poyer Nation, on his arrival in 1822.

But an attempt at recolonisation by Scots failed after two thirds of the settlers recruited in Scotland by MacGregor died from diseases shortly after their arrival on the Mosquito Coast. (The venture had also involved MacGregor having 70,000 "Bank of Poyais" banknotes, decorated with green saltires, printed while in Scotland, although the bank existed no more than did his kingdom.)

In terms of post-1707 Scottish economic development, however, the role played by Scots in expanding and consolidating British colonial rule and British economic interests abroad was of less significance than the impact of Scotland's trade with those colonies.

It was the imports of tobacco, sugar, and cotton from these colonies which served as the motor of economic growth in the West of Scotland in particular. And all three commodities were the product of slave labour.

On the American tobacco plantations of the eighteenth century slaves worked up to 18 hours a day, seven days a week. This working week was imposed on slaves from the age of twelve onwards. Pregnant women were allowed a lighter workload only in the eighth and ninth months of pregnancy. In some colonies slaves were deemed to be slaves for life, and children born to slaves were considered to be slaves by birth.

On the West Indian sugar and cotton plantations slavery was more widespread and more brutal than in the American colonies. By the mid-eighteenth century 85% of the population of the Caribbean colonies were slaves, outnumbering whites by six to one. A quarter of all slaves died within three years of arrival. On some estates over 40% of slaves died within three years of arrival. Raping slaves did not exist as a legal offence — chattel slavery meant that the slave's body belonged to her owner as much as her labour.

On the American cotton plantations of the nineteenth century the conditions of slavery were defined by the Slave Codes adopted by the different states. The Codes defined slaves as property rather than persons. Their testimony was inadmissible in court in cases involving whites. They could not assemble unless a white was present. They were forbidden to learn how to read or write. Penalties for transgressions of the Codes included whipping, branding, imprisonment and death.

Tobacco was the first of the slave-produced commodities which helped set in motion Scotland's economic transformation. By 1738 tobacco imports into Scotland had already increased nearly fourfold compared with pre-Union levels of importation: from a pre-Union annual average of 1.5 million pounds to an annual average of 5.6 millions pounds.

Scotland's share of total British tobacco imports steadily increased: from 10% in 1738 to 20% in 1744, to 30% in 1758, to 40% in 1765, and to 52% in 1769. By the 1760s tobacco accounted for just under half of Scotland's total imports and just over half of its total exports. (Over 90% of the tobacco was re-exported to continental Europe.)

By the end of the same decade Glasgow had achieved a virtual monopoly in tobacco imports to Scotland: 98% of all Scottish tobacco imports were controlled by Glasgow merchants, many of whom also traded in sugar from the West Indies. And in Glasgow itself more than half of all tobacco imports were controlled by just three syndicates.

With the outbreak of the American War of Independence, however, Scottish tobacco imports from the American colonies rapidly collapsed: from 46 million pounds in 1775 to seven million pounds in 1776, and to just 210,000 pounds the following year. Reflecting this collapse in tobacco imports, the total value of imports from the American colonies between 1775 and 1777 collapsed from over £500,000 to just over £11,000.

(American tobacco's importance for the Scottish economy explains the strength of opposition in Scotland to the American Revolution: Scottish counties and burghs submitted over seventy "loyal addresses" opposing the American rebellion to Parliament. England, with a population over five times greater than that of Scotland, sent the same number.)

The end of the American War of Independence did not see a resumption of tobacco exports to Scotland for re-export to Europe. Instead, American tobacco was exported direct to Europe. Slave-produced sugar now quickly took over from slave-produced tobacco as Scotland's most significant import. As one nineteenth century writer put it:

"The Virginian innings ended abruptly in 1775 on the revolt of the colonies, and with the ruin of her chief trade, it seemed as if Glasgow must be ruined too… (But) the people of Glasgow set themselves at once to replace the lost market. Sugar first took the place of tobacco, and the ships that had been built for the James or the Potomac made their way to St. Kitts or Jamaica."

Before the end of the "Virginian innings" four times as many ships arrived in Glasgow and Greenock from the American colonies as from the West Indies. But by 1791 the number of arrivals from the West Indies more or less equalled the number of arrivals from the American ex-colonies. Over the same period the value of imports to Scotland from the West Indies more than doubled, reaching over £371,000 by 1790.

By 1800 around 50 ships a year were setting sail for Jamaica and the other Caribbean colonies from Greenock and Port Glasgow, compared with just three sailings a year from those ports to the former American colonies. Even as late as 1814 the West Indies were the destination of nearly half the ships which sailed from the Clyde.

Ports on Scotland's east coast were also extensively involved in trade with the British Caribbean colonies. In 1790, for example, sixteen ships sailed from Edinburgh to Jamaica, and another twelve ships sailed to other West Indian colonies.

Initially, it was sugar imports which dominated the west of Scotland's growing volume of imports from the Caribbean. In 1775 sugar imports from the West Indies to the west of Scotland amounted to 4,621 hogsheads and 691 tierces. But four decades later imports of sugar had increased to 540,198 hundredweight.

The growing importance of sugar imports from the Caribbean slave-cultivated plantations was reflected in the growth of a Scottish sugar refining industry. The first "sugar houses" had been built in the 1660s, and by the end of the century four Scottish companies — three based in Glasgow and one in Leith — were refining sugar and distilling rum.

But it was only in the decades following the Union that sugar refining emerged as a significant industry. By the 1770s there were already a total of ten refineries in operation in Glasgow, Port Glasgow, and Greenock, although, in later years, the industry came to be concentrated in Port Glasgow and Greenock.

By the end of the eighteenth century slave-produced sugar had already been overtaken by slave-produced cotton as Scotland's most important import — at first mainly from the slave-cultivated plantations of the West Indies, and then in later years predominantly from the slave-cultivated plantations of the southern states of America.

Raw cotton imports into Scotland increased more than sevenfold between 1778 and 1788. Between 1788 and 1798 they nearly doubled in volume again, increasing from 1,500,000 pounds to 2,800,000 pounds. Over the next three years raw cotton imports jumped by over 250%.

In 1801, when cotton accounted for around a quarter of Scottish overseas trade, nearly 7,550,000 pounds of cotton were imported, compared with just over 200,000 pounds 23 years earlier. Imports increased by nearly another million pounds in the following four years, reaching some 8,500,000 pounds in 1805.

Well before cotton had become Scotland's most important import, a process of industrialisation had already begun which would later lead Glasgow to lay claim to the titles of "second city of the Empire" and "workshop of the world". Although Glasgow's wealth, as Adam Smith noted, had originally been commercial rather than industrial in origin, by 1791 the *Glasgow Courier* could write: "We have become a manufacturing instead of a mercantile town."

That transition from mercantile to industrial capital was achieved through the investment of the profits made from the imports of American and Caribbean slave-produced commodities, and further stimulated by the demand of the slave-owning colonies for manufactured goods.

The "tobacco lords" and the "West Indies princes", as Glasgow's

eighteenth-century transatlantic traders were known, accumulated unprecedented wealth from their trade in the produce of slavery. That wealth provided the 'initial accumulation of capital' needed to launch the process of industrialisation which began around the middle of the eighteenth century.

(The slave trade itself did not attract investments from Glasgow traders. Scottish involvement in the slave trade was small-scale and mostly confined to the smaller ports such as Dumfries and Kirkudbright, or to Scots who migrated to Liverpool, Bristol or London. The latter included Alexander Grant from Dalvey and Richard Oswald from Caithness, both of whom made their fortunes from the slave trade.

Some Glasgow traders did, however, invest a share of their profits in the plantations themselves: £500,000 in the early 1760s, increasing to nearly £1.5 millions by 1775. But such investments, which were mainly used to purchase slaves for the plantations, were of lesser long-term significance than investments in manufacturing in Scotland itself.)

In the years immediately following the Union the tobacco trade had not generated sufficient profits to begin the process of industrialisation. As one student who attended Glasgow University in the 1740s wrote of the preceding decade: "There were not manufacturers sufficient either there (in Glasgow) or at Paisley to supply an outward-bound cargo for Virginia. For this purpose they were obliged to have recourse to Manchester. Manufacturers were in their infancy."

The initially slow growth of manufacturing in Glasgow was also noted by Gibson, one of the city's first historians. Writing in the latter part of the eighteenth century Gibson lamented Glasgow's initial "inattention to manufactories" and estimated that "the effect which the commerce of Glasgow has upon the wealth of South Britain, in comparison with what it has upon the wealth of North Britain, is nearly in the direct ratio as three is to one."

Another historian of the period similarly noted: "For long the growth (of manufacturing) was slow. With the old appliances, manufactures were bound to be slow growers. And when the Virginian trade was at its height the manufactures of Glasgow of all sorts were valued at less than half a million a year, and the manufactures of Scotland of all sorts supplied only one-fourth of the 'sortable cargoes' shipped from the Clyde."

From the 1740s onwards, however, tobacco imports, and the profits accumulated from these imports, rapidly increased. With more profits available from their trading ventures, the tobacco lords and, in later years, the West Indies princes began to invest more heavily in local industry.

Glasgow's transatlantic merchants funded seven manufactories between 1730 and 1740, and another eleven manufactories between 1740 and 1750. This represented double the number of manufactories funded during the preceding seven decades. Another seven manufactories were financed by colonial traders in the 1750s, and a further 21 were financed from the same source between 1780 and 1795.

At least 78 out of the 160 Glasgow merchants who traded with the slave-owning colonies in America and the Caribbean invested a share of their profits in these manufacturing ventures: 28 of them in just one venture, 19 in two ventures, and 11 in three ventures. One of the most prominent tobacco lords, James Dunlop, invested in 17 different manufacturing concerns. All but five of those ventures were based in or around Glasgow.

Textiles production accounted for over 50% of these investments, with merchants investing in the finishing processes in particular. These were capital-intensive processes, and the profits accumulated from the colonial trade provided a source of investment not otherwise available. By the end of the century transatlantic traders had invested capital in between a third and a half of the thirty printfields in and around Glasgow.

Mining accounted for another 20% of the investments by colonial merchants. In the later years of the century profits from the transatlantic trade also played an important role in the development of the Scottish iron industry: after investments by already established Scottish iron merchants, investments by colonial traders were the biggest single source of capital for the nine pig iron complexes established in Scotland between 1779 and 1801.

Manufacturing sectors whose output was in demand in the colonies, particularly leather and footwear, soon came to be dominated by Glasgow's colonial traders. Investments by the same merchants also played a major role in the establishment and expansion of ropeworks, soapworks, glassworks and sugar houses.

The Glasgow Tanwork Company, for example, was set up in 1738 by eight tobacco merchants. The Pollokshaws Printfield Company, the Dalnottar Iron Company, the Glasgow Bottlework Company, the Greenock Bottlework Company, and the Dumbarton Glassworks Company were likewise financed almost entirely by colonial merchants. Ten of the fifteen partners in the Glasgow rope manufacturing company of Corbett and Co. in the 1770s traded with the American colonies. And 75% of the shares in Greenock's rope-manufactory were owned by just two colonial traders.

Irrespective of the particular branch of industry, profits from the trade in slave-produced goods were overwhelmingly invested in factories with large (for the late eighteenth century) workforces and levels of output, and large (for the eighteenth century) capital stocks: £40,000, for example, in the case of the Greenock Ropework Company, £20,000 in the case of the Dumbarton Glasswork Company, and £12,000 in the case of the Dalnottar Iron Company.

Land purchases and the subsequent financing of agricultural improvements by the tobacco lords and West Indies princes also played a significant role in the rapid emergence of a capitalist economy in Scotland, albeit one of lesser significance than the impact of their investments in manufacturing itself,

The explosive growth of Scottish towns from the mid-eighteenth century onwards — between 1750 and 1850 the rate of urbanisation in Scotland was the highest in Europe — demanded an equally rapid increase in food production. Colonial profits helped finance the agricultural reforms needed to meet that increased demand for food from a growing urban population.

Between 1770 and 1815 nearly half the Glaswegian merchants who traded with the American and West Indian colonies bought at least one estate in or around Glasgow: 22 in Lanarkshire, 19 in Renfrewshire, 11 in Dumbartonshire, eight in Ayrshire, and six in Stirlingshire. The wealthier merchants bought estates spread across several counties.

Alexander Speirs, for example, purchased estates in Renfrewshire and Stirlingshire worth more than £174,000. William McDowall bought landed assets worth over £250,000. James Dunlop owned £130,000 worth of property. Alexander Houston used part of his fortune of £630,000 to buy estates in Renfrewshire. And Richard Oswald bought up over 100,000 acres of land in Ayrshire.

While some merchants regarded such land purchases as a status symbol, others saw their estates as another asset from which to extract the maximum profit. A share of the wealth accumulated from trading in the produce of slave labour was therefore invested by the latter in new methods of cultivation.

As Adam Smith noted in *The Wealth of Nations*, merchants who had bought land were "generally the best of all improvers" as they were "not afraid to lay out at once a large capital upon the improvement of land." Other contemporary writers noted that a successful merchant would "purchase a piece of land … and improve his property at the dearest rates," and that "(by) employing part of their capital in the purchase of land and improvement of the soil, (merchants) became most spirited cultivators."

It was this sudden influx of capital investments into agriculture by tobacco lords and West Indies princes which helped make possible the rapid increase in food production without which the convulsive spread of urbanisation between 1750 and 1850 would have been unsustainable.

Profits from the colonial trade financed the development of capitalist forms of manufacturing in Scotland and contributed to the transformation of Scottish agriculture. By providing a market for the output of Scottish industry, the colonies also acted as a substitute for the absence of a significant domestic market in Scotland itself.

Pre-Union Scotland had been one of the poorest kingdoms in Europe. Its poverty, and the consequent weakness of the domestic market, had been a primary factor in holding back capitalist development. In the immediate post-Union decades Scotland remained poor: in the 1750s Scottish rates of pay were still often only half those in England. And post-Union population growth also initially remained stagnant.

By contrast, the annual rate of growth of the population of the American colonies throughout the eighteenth century was 3%. In

the West Indian colonies the annual rate of growth in the same period was 2%. By 1770 the population of the American colonies numbered over two millions, whereas the population of Scotland was less than a million and a half.

The colonies thus provided a market for the output of the Scottish manufactories which themselves had often been largely financed by the profits generated by imports of slave-produced goods from the same colonies.

According to Gibson, for example, by 1771 manufactured goods of Glaswegian origin which were being shipped to the colonies included ale, books, candles, cordage, glass, gunpowder, hats, linen handkerchiefs, refined sugar, wrought iron, tanned leather, sailcloth, snuff, soap, stockings, writing paper and woollens.

By 1755 Scottish domestic exports (i.e. excluding the re-export of tobacco and other commodities) to the American and West Indian colonies amounted to 42% of total domestic Scottish exports. The importance of the Caribbean colonies gradually eclipsed that of the American colonies: by 1775 Glasgow's exports to the West Indies were worth twice as much as its exports to the American colonies.

In the aftermath of the American War of Independence Britain's Caribbean possessions quickly emerged as the single most important destination for Scottish exports: between 1785 and 1790 exports from Glasgow to the Caribbean islands jumped by 60%. By 1810 the destination of nearly 50% of Scottish exports was the West Indies. The total value of exports to Jamaica alone in that year was £646,227.

Scottish exports to the Caribbean also increased as a proportion of total British exports to the islands. In 1781 21% of British goods exported to the West Indies came from Scotland. By the end of the century 42% of West Indian imports from Britain came from Scotland. By 1813 the proportion had increased to 65%. Moreover, whereas Scottish exports to the American ex-colonies were predominantly re-exports, Scottish exports to the West Indies were primarily of domestic origin: linen, haberdashery and fish.

In terms of the stimulus it gave to the development of the Scottish economy, and also as a proportion of total Scottish exports, linen was the single most important export to the colonies.

In the course of the eighteenth century linen emerged as Scotland's largest manufacturing industry and biggest industrial employer. Between the early 1730s and the early 1770s the value of linen manufactured in Scotland increased fourfold. Between 1760 and 1780 linen output increased from 11.5 million yards to 13.5 million yards. Between the middle and the end of the century linen output more than doubled in volume and trebled in value: by 1800 annual Scottish linen output stood at 24 million yards.

By the 1760s the linen trade employed a workforce of around 20,000 handloom weavers. Two decades later 40,000 weavers worked in the industry, and over 150,000 women were employed in the spinning of linen yarn. By the 1790s the linen industry had become Scotland's biggest employer.

Exports of this linen to the colonies had initially encountered problems in competing with foreign output re-exported through London. But the introduction of a government linen bounty in 1742 allowed Scottish linen to overcome this competition. As one representative of the Scottish linen industry had prophesised shortly before its introduction: "With such an encouragement, how soon should we outdo other nations in coarse linens … to the British plantations."

Linen exports from Scotland increased fourfold between the 1740s and the early 1770s, by which time they accounted for around a third of total Scottish exports. In the second half of the century 90% of all Scottish linen exports went to the North American and West Indies colonies.

After the American victory of 1783, however, the slave plantations of the West Indies became the all-important destination for exports of Scottish linen. Their share of Scottish linen exports increased from just under 25% in 1765 to nearly 80% in 1810. And the bulk of those exports was made up of coarse linen — for clothing the nearly half-a-million strong population of slaves themselves.

Indicative of the importance of the colonies, especially those in the Caribbean, as a market for the manufacturing output of Glasgow was a petition to the king adopted by the city "in common council assembled" in 1801. The petition called for greater protection for the vessels which transported Glasgow's manufactured goods to the colonies:

"For many years past a great quantity of different kinds of goods have been manufactured in this city and its neighbourhood for the West India markets… This trade has been carried on with great advantage, but of late is has been greatly interrupted owing to the seizure of many vessels by the ships of war stationed in those seas.

"Your Majesty's petitioners beg humbly to mention that this interruption of the trade has been attended with very bad effects to the manufacturers in this city and its neighbourhood, and to the numerous body of people employed by them.

"They therefore pray your Majesty to take such measures as to you in your wisdom shall seem proper… for restoring the trade to its former channel, which will not only add to the prosperity of the manufactures at home but also to that of your Majesty's colonies abroad."

The importance of slave produce for the Scottish economy continued into the nineteenth century. By the early 1800s cotton had already overtaken linen as Scotland's most important industry. In the 1820s 60% of the workforce in textiles — amounting to around 50% of the total manufacturing workforce in Scotland — were employed in the cotton industry. And the raw cotton with which they worked was imported from the slave-cultivated plantations of the southern states of America.

The initial industrialisation of the Scottish economy, concentrated in and around Glasgow, which had been made possible by the profits of the transatlantic trade with the slave-owning colonies, provided the basis upon which there later emerged the Scottish industrial colossus of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

In the years preceding the First World War, for example, the biggest shipyards in the world, the biggest locomotive-manufacturer in Europe, the biggest jute complex in the world, 80% of all thread-making capacity in the world, the largest sewing-machine factory in the world, and the largest chemical works in Europe were all to be found in Scotland.

In addition to exporting its industrial output, Scotland exported capital. During the 1880s around three quarters of all British companies set up for overseas investment were Scottish in origin. "If not actually located in Scotland, they have been hatched by Scotchmen and work on Scottish models," explained *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1884.

Scottish overseas investments increased from £60 millions in 1870 to £500 millions in 1914, most of which was invested in the imperial possessions. In this period capital exports from Scotland amounted to about 10% of the net national product. By 1914 Scotland was home to 853 foreign investment companies, with the bulk of the investments being ploughed into mining, plantations and ranches.

The same year it was calculated that overseas investment amounted to an average of £110 per Scot, compared with an average of £90 per person for Britain as a whole. Per head of population, Scottish investment in the colonies of the British Empire was 60% higher then the British average.

This export of capital — a constituent element of the classic Leninist definition of imperialism — merely underlined the fact of Scotland's integration into the imperial centre of the British Empire.

The British Empire was just that: the Empire of the state brought about by the Union of 1707, a state of which Scotland had been a constituent part ever since its creation. Not for nothing did the flag of that state, the "Butcher's Apron", which eventually flew over a quarter of the world's population and a quarter of the world's surface, contain within itself the Scottish saltire.

Indeed, in Victorian Scotland it was a conventional political orthodoxy to boast — and not inaccurately — that the decisive growth of the British Empire had taken place after the Union with England. Far from being presented as a junior partner of English or British imperialism, Scotland was portrayed as at least an equal partner. As Andrew Dewar Gibb, author of "Scottish Empire", put it in later years:

"England and Scotland occupy a unique position as the begetters and defenders of the Empire. They alone of all the Aryan peoples in it have never been otherwise sovereign and independent. Ireland and Wales, mere satraps of England, can claim no comparable place. Scotsmen today are occupying places both eminent and humble throughout the Empire, and Scottish interests are bound up with every colony in it."

From the rapids of revolution – to the backwaters of reformism

By Stan Crooke

"The most radical elements in the modern British labour movement are most often natives of Ireland or Scotland. … Scotland entered on the capitalist path later than England: a sharper turn in the life of the masses of the people gave rise to a sharper political reaction," wrote Trotsky in 1925.

Scotland "entered on the capitalist path" not only later than England, but also much more rapidly.

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards Scotland underwent in a matter of decades an economic transformation which, in England, had stretched over nearly two centuries. Around the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries the rate of capitalist development in Scotland intensified still further.

By the late eighteenth century the textiles industry had emerged as the motor of economic transformation. Between 1740 and 1780 linen output increased fourfold. Between 1778 and 1810 the number of cotton mills increased from two to 110. Between 1790 and 1830 investment in wool spinning mills increased from £3,000 to £170,000. By the 1820s the textiles industry employed almost 90% of the total manufacturing workforce in Scotland.

There was rapid growth in other areas of the Scottish economy as well. Between 1740 and 1800 the number of paper mills trebled, with the bulk of the growth taking place in the 1780s. Iron-making capacity increased from 4,000 tons in 1780 to 32,000 tons in the early 1800s. By 1800 over 13% of British coal was mined in Scotland.

Between 1785 and 1835 Scottish exports increased ninefold. By around 1850 Scotland had become more industrialised than the rest of Britain: over 43% of the Scottish workforce was employed in manufacturing, compared with 41% of the workforce in England.

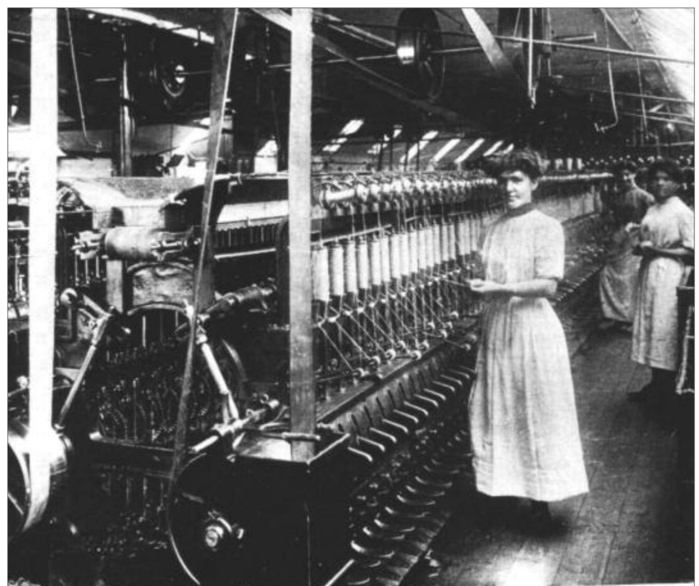
Over the same period Scotland experienced the most rapid rate of urbanisation in Europe. Between 1750 and 1820 the population of the five largest towns in Scotland increased by 300% or more. Glasgow's population increased by more than 400%. By the end of the eighteenth century Scotland had become the fourth most urbanised region in Europe. By 1850 it had become the second most urbanised region.

The majority of workers employed in manufacturing were women and children. In the early 1800s nearly two thirds of manufacturing workers were women, youths, and children as young as six. Children accounted for 84% of the workforce in Renfrewshire's cotton mills in 1809, and for 36% of the workforce in Glasgow's cotton mills in 1833.

Rapid economic growth was accompanied, and made possible, by the imposition of new working patters in the workplace. By the 1830s millworkers typically worked twelve hours a day, six days a week, 306 days a year. Labour discipline was imposed by way of fines, productivity-based rates of pay, detailed contracts of employment, and even physical punishment.

This frenetic expansion of capitalist production in Scotland resulted in the breakdown of traditional craft corporations, and in increasingly frequent clashes between journeymen and masters over pay, working hours and changing workplace practices.

In the early decades of the eighteenth century journeymen began to form their own organisations, albeit mainly in the form of mutual aid societies for welfare and benefits payments. But combinations for other purposes, mainly to act in defence of rates of pay and working practices, also began to emerge.



Scottish capitalist development. Top: engineering managers and foremen at a Glasgow railway works. Below: women workes in a Dundee jute mill

These new combinations represented a transitional form of labour organisation: they combined pre-industrial traditions, such as membership oaths and rituals, with what later became the more typical forms of trade union organisation and struggle. Even as late as the 1830s, for example, the United Joiners of Glasgow and other unions still had their own initiation ceremonies and passwords.

Timescales varied from one trade to another. And the early combinations frequently collapsed in periods of economic slump or were broken by employers' opposition. But even allowing for

such qualifications, an early form of trade unionism and trade union struggle began to establish itself in Scotland in the course of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Woolcombers' combinations, for example, existed in the north-east of Scotland from the 1740s onwards. "Caballs or societys" were condemned by Aberdeen woollen manufacturers in 1762 for pushing up rates of pay and for encouraging their members to become "lazy and indolent and indifferent about their work."

As had been the case in England, Scottish tailors were amongst the first trades to organise combinations. Edinburgh tailors were involved in a series of disputes between 1757 and 1761. A more significant tailors' strike, in 1767, triggered strikes by shoemakers and workers employed in the building trades.

Wrights and masons were also amongst the first trades to organise in combinations. In 1746 Glasgow wrights and masons went on strike to demand a reduction of an hour in their fourteen-hour working day. Employers described their demand as "a species of oppression."

Handloom weavers in the West of Scotland took strike action in defence of rates of pay in the 1750s and 1760s. In 1787 Glasgow weavers responded to falling wages and higher food prices with a city-wide strike, a 7,000 strong rally, and attempts to form a region-wide combination.

By the beginning of the 1800s Scottish cotton spinners were being accused by employers of having formed combinations in order to "raise the prices of labour, and in other respects to bring the masters under the control of the leaders of the combinations in the prosecution of their business."

The spinners, complained the employers, had "formed a union for the protection of their trade and … from time to time have annoyed their employers with vexatious interferences and restrictions, which have induced a great desire on the part of the masters to be able to dispense with their employment."

The first decade of the nineteenth century also saw a Scottish-wide strike by paper workers, a series of strikes by calico-printers in defence of working conditions, and, in 1808, the founding of the General Association of Operative Weavers in Scotland. Strike action by the latter in 1812 marked the beginning of more than a decade of intense class struggle in Scotland.

Confronted by employers' attempts to cut pay by scrapping the agreed formulae for calculating piece-rate payments, the weavers appealed to local Justices of the Peace under a statute of 1661. This empowered Justices of the Peace to set wages and determine the length of the working day and conditions of employment.

The weavers submitted their own table of wages to the Justices of the Peace, one which would allow a weaver "with fair hours and proper application, to feed, clothe and accommodate himself and his family." The Justices of the Peace, and subsequently the Court of Session as well, found in favour of the weavers.

In response to the employers' refusal to implement these verdicts, up to 40,000 weavers took part in strikes over a period of three months. Their aim was to achieve implementation of their wages table, in line with the favourable legal judgements. Although the strike's centre was in the west, where the Glasgow weavers' strike lasted seven weeks, the strike spread throughout Scotland.

The strike leaders were arrested, and, under a novel interpretation of Scots common law, the courts banned the General Association as an illegal combination.

(In the eighteenth century English statutes against combination had been deemed by the Scottish courts not to apply in Scotland. This was because Scottish law recognised the legal identity of such associations. One additional consequence of this was that even the status of the Combination Acts of 1800 was unclear in Scotland.)

Fourteen of the strike leaders were subsequently imprisoned for the 'crime' of combination. And, in the hope of preventing similar disputes in the future, the statute of 1661 was repealed by Parliament.

Further working-class unrest was triggered by the increase in unemployment caused by demobilisations after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and by higher food prices as a result of the introduction of the Corn Laws in 1815. The imposition of higher taxes on basic commodities after the abolition of wartime income tax also led to higher prices, which, in turn, added to the causes of working-class discontent.

Economic slumps in 1816/17 and 1819/20 made the situation even worse. In some areas of Scotland unemployment rose to 50%. In one trade after another employers imposed wage cuts. Between 1815 and 1819 real wages in Glasgow fell by an average of 10%, while the wages of Glasgow weavers fell by 50% between 1815 and 1818.

Working-class industrial unrest, such as the strikes of 1817/18 against pay cuts in the West of Scotland coalfields, was combined with increasingly radical political demands: one of the lessons drawn from the weavers' defeat of 1812 was the need to challenge state authorities as well as employers.

Speakers at protest rallies in Glasgow, attended by up to 40,000 people, demanded annual parliaments, universal suffrage, funding for emigration, implementation of the Poor Law, the abolition of pensions and sinecures, and an end to the Corn Laws, high taxes, and the outlawing of combinations.

Violent disturbances became increasingly common in the major towns. Merchants' shops and houses were attacked and looted. Initially peaceful meetings resulted in riots, sometimes lasting several days. Mills in particular were attacked and set on fire.

The various forces of law and order — troops, yeomanry and special constables — were abused and attacked as soon as they appeared. Orders by magistrates banning demonstrations and the carrying of banners and placards were ignored.

Oath-bound secret societies, organised along the lines of the United Scotsmen of the 1790s, were founded in the weaving districts of Glasgow. Links were established with secret societies in other towns in the Lowlands. The societies stockpiled weapons and organised military drilling for their members.

"Union societies" were founded. Their initial goal was to organise a boycott of goods on which high duties were levied. This, it was calculated, would bring down government revenue and, thereby, the government itself.

But increased government repression after the Manchester Peterloo Massacre of 1819 resulted in the transformation of these "union societies" into underground cells committed to overthrowing the government.

The climax of this unrest came with the "Radical War" in the first week of April 1820.

Posters appeared in Ayr, Dumbarton, Glasgow and Renfrew proclaiming the creation of a Scottish provisional government. The "Address to the Inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland" called on the army to transfer their loyalties from despotism to freedom, and on workers to strike until their rights as free men had been recovered. The address also proclaimed an imminent armed uprising in Scotland and England.

60,000 workers — mainly weavers and cotton spinners, but also coalminers, machine-makers and foundry workers — struck in and around Glasgow in the first general strike in history. "Almost the whole population of the working classes have obeyed the orders contained in the treasonable proclamation by striking work," wrote the Lord Provost of Glasgow to the Home Office.

Participation in the planned armed uprising, however, involved no more than about 150 weavers and was easily put down. Eighty of the participants were arrested, three were executed, and sixteen were sentenced to transportation.

The Radical War and the preceding social unrest marked the emergence of the working class as an organised social force in Scotland, and one which, in however a rudimentary form, had already employed the highest forms of class struggle: a general strike and an attempt at armed insurrection.

As Trotsky was to write a century later: "A sharper turn in the life of the masses of the people (had given) rise to a sharper political reaction."

In the face of a continuing employers' offensive over pay and workplace discipline, industrial unrest continued into the 1820s and early 1830s. As the "Glasgow Courier" reported in 1824: "A spirit of opposition to the authority of their masters has sprung up amongst our manufacturing population."

Throughout the 1820s cotton spinners struck for higher pay and in opposition to new forms of labour discipline. Weavers staged a series of strikes over pay in the first half of the 1820s. In the mid-1820s tailors, building workers and calico-printers took part in strike action for higher pay.

Strikes by coalminers in 1824-26 against new working practices were likened by contemporaries to "the worst days of the French Revolution". A further succession of strikes in the early 1830s involved engineers, calico-printers and flax-hecklers.

Backed up by a series of hostile court rulings, employers victimised strikers and used scab labour to break strikes. Strike leaders suffered arrest, imprisonment and transportation. Some of the most powerful unions were effectively destroyed.

After the defeat of their strike in 1824 tailors remained unorganised for the next four decades. The building workers' strikes of the 1820s were likewise defeated. By 1830 rates of pay in the building trade were lower than they had been in 1790.

The weavers' union collapsed in 1829, following the arrest of its leaders after an unsuccessful strike in 1825. It re-emerged again in 1832, but in a much weakened form. The miners' strikes of 1824-26 were also defeated. Although the Scottish-wide General Union of Operative Colliers was re-established in 1835, it had already collapsed again by 1837.

Most seriously of all, the cotton spinners were defeated in a major confrontation with employers in 1837. The dispute was a violent one, and the spinners' leaders were arrested and stood trial for murder and conspiracy. Five of them were sentenced to transportation after having been found guilty of lesser charges.

As one unsympathetic contemporary described the situation of unions in the late 1830s: "Of late trade unions have been much in vogue, many of them having rules and practices surpassing the closest corporations, and outvieing the fiercest tyranny of the darkest ages. And it is strange that although these unions have in most of the trades been successively overthrown, still new unions urge the hopeless combat."

Despite the level of militancy displayed in such industrial struggles, working-class campaigning in the opening years of the 1830s in support of an extension of the franchise was marked by a much greater readiness to collaborate with middle-class liberalism than was the case in many other parts of Britain.

Factory operatives established their own committee, with representation from individual trade unions and workplaces. But membership of this committee overlapped with that of the lower middle-class Political Union, and even with that of the solidly middle-class Reform Association.

All three bodies also shared a common outlook, in which parliamentary reform was bound up with the middle-class values of self-help and moral elevation. These values had come to be adopted by sections of the working class — and would continue to remain a powerful ideological influence in subsequent decades.

By the mid-thirties, however, a schism had begun to open up between the middle-class and working-class wings of the reform movement. The two newly elected Whig MPs for Glasgow were criticised for failing to take up working-class grievances, especially the demand for factory reform. And, more generally, the middle-class reformers were attacked for failing to support the demand for a further extension of the franchise.

It was in the wake of this succession of industrial defeats for the working class, at a time of a partial collapse of trade union organisation, and coinciding with a disillusionment with the mainstream middle-class reform movement, that the Chartist campaign for democratic reform emerged.

Chartism was certainly a powerful movement in Scotland. 100,000 attended a Chartist rally in Glasgow in May of 1838. 130 Chartist associations had been set up in Scotland by the following year. And the movement's demands were further popularised by a Scottish-wide Chartist newspaper and four local Chartist journals.

Apart from a brief period in 1838/39, when the bulk of its leadership came from Edinburgh, the Chartist movement in Scotland was based in Glasgow: in 1839 all but one of the 15 members of the Scottish Central Committee came from the city.

But Chartism in Scotland did not mark a return to the political radicalism which had culminated in the Radical War of 1820. Especially at a leadership level, the core of Scottish Chartism consisted of skilled artisans and those sections of the middle class who had not been enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1832.

In Glasgow, for example, early Chartist leaders included Moir (a Gallowgate tea dealer) and Ross (a shoe shop owner), both of whom had previously been prominent members of the Political Union.

Scottish Chartism was characterised by a strong moral and religious ethos. "Study the New Testament. It contains the elements of Chartism," explained the "Chartist Circular". Chartist Churches were founded, and by 1841 the movement claimed that "a Chartist place of worship is now to be found on the Lord's Day in almost every town of note from Aberdeen to Ayr."

Temperance also loomed large in Chartist agitation. A favourite song at Chartist gatherings was "Farewell to Whisky". Membership of Total Abstinence Societies overlapped strongly with that of the Chartist movement. The 3,000 members of the Society in Aberdeen, for example, were virtually all Chartists.

The moral dimension of Scottish Chartism found expression in an emphasis on "moral force" rather than "physical force". The memory of the Radical War also pushed the movement in the same direction. At a Chartist conference of 1838 speakers pointed to the failure of the 1820 uprising as evidence of the futility and counter-productive nature of "physical force".

The local Chartist leader in Paisley, the Reverend Patrick Brewster, even went so far as advocating the creation of "New Moral Force Associations" which would reject violence under all circumstances. But although such associations were set up in Paisley, Perth, Edinburgh and some other smaller towns, they proved to be short-lived.

For most Scottish Chartist leaders, electoral reform was not so much a demand to be imposed on the government as a reward for respectable behaviour, exemplified by a commitment to religion, temperance, thrift and self-help. It was the raising of the moral and intellectual level of the working class which would make it fit for the franchise.

Peaceful protests, petitions, mass meetings, education and moral improvement were therefore the chosen weapons of Scottish Chartism.

Not all Chartist associations shared such an outlook. Some local associations, mainly in the north-east, advocated a national strike, backed by the arming of the people. Smaller associations in Renfrew, Forfar, Elderslie and the Vale of Leven considered it a right for citizens to bear arms and use them if necessary in the defence of liberty.

Following a split in 1841/42 the Glasgow association also adopted a "physical force" position, although by this time it was past its peak. Chartist rallies in Dundee in 1842 and in Edinburgh in 1848 took a similar position.

But the more militant element in Scottish Chartism was always a minority current, notwithstanding the Chartist-inspired unrest of 1848. However militant the motions passed by some Chartist local associations and rallies, the existing political structures were accepted by Scottish Chartism as the mechanism through which to achieve reform of the British state.

Paradoxically, the legacy of Chartism in Scotland was to encourage divisions within the working class and to push sections of the working class towards Liberalism.

Scottish Chartism, as it manifested itself as a political movement, proved to be a divisive force in that its emphasis on respectability was inherently antagonistic to co-operation between the 'more respectable' and the 'less respectable' sections of the working class.

At the same time, it pushed the 'more respectable' towards Liberalism because the latter was the natural political home of those who shared the moral values promoted by the Chartist movement in Scotland.

The post-Chartist decades saw a series of often lengthy industrial disputes. In 1856, for example, 15,000 miners struck for fourteen weeks against pay cuts. In 1870 joiners went on strike for fourteen weeks in support of the demand for a nine-hour day. Prolonged strikes also occurred in shipbuilding, especially the 1866 strike for a nine-hour day.

According to a lecture, "The Strikes of the Last Ten Years", delivered to the Statistical Society in London in January of 1870, 473 out of the 2,352 strikes which had taken place in Britain in the preceding decade had occurred in Scotland. When cities were ranked according to incidence of strikes, Glasgow occupied first position, Edinburgh and Leith fourth position, and Dundee eighth position.

90% of strikes during that decade had been concerned with the

issue of wages. But, the lecturer continued: "Scotland had an extraordinary preponderance in strikes, and especially in her collieries and mines. And this seemed to be due to the constant spirit of opposition fostered in them by those claiming to be their leaders."

But, despite such disputes, the post-Chartist period was one of continuing trade union weakness. At the beginning of the 1890s just under 150,000 workers in Scotland were unionised. This amounted to around 3.7% of the population, compared with 4.9% in England and Wales.

Although levels of union density increased sharply from the mid-1890s onwards, following the emergence of the "new unionism", union density in Scotland in the latter years of the nineteenth century was only half that of South Wales, and a quarter of that of the north-east of England.

In the late 1860s the Boilermakers Society had just 156 members in the whole of Scotland. Its largest branch, in Glasgow, had 41 members. Its smallest branch, in Paisley, had two members. Only 10% of Clyde shipyard workers were unionised. Even the Amalgamated Society of Engineers could muster only 500 members and three branches in Glasgow in the 1860s.

On the railways trade unionism maintained no more than a foothold: less than 5% of the workforce was unionised. In the iron industry effective trade union organisation was non-existent for two decades after the defeat of a major strike in the 1860s. In the coalfields mining unions were significantly weaker than in England in the 1860s, and lost ground again in the 1870s after a series of unsuccessful strikes against pay cuts.

One reason for the weakness of trade union organisation was the disappearance of the traditionally most militant sections of the working class — handloom weavers and cotton spinners. This was partly the result of technological change, and partly the result of workplace closures due to the greater competitiveness of the Lancashire textiles industry.

Another obstacle to effective trade unionism was the small size of most workplaces. Half the firms in urban areas employed less than five workers, and three quarters employed less than nine. In Scotland as a whole, only a tenth of firms employed more than 20 workers. And even in the larger workplaces the growth of trade unionism was an uphill struggle, in the face of lock-outs and other anti-union tactics by the employers.

Trade union militancy was also undermined by the readiness of some unions to pursue a policy of collaboration with employers. New recruits to the Boilermakers Society, for example, were informed: "We are not united to set class against class, but to teach one another that men are all brothers." The same sentiment was expressed in the Boilermakers' song of 1872: "… So 'tis just and meet; Labour should co-operate; And help with all their might; Masters to compete."

More fundamentally, trade union organisation was weak in these years as a result of the consolidation of a union culture which excluded entire layers of the working class. Unions were predominantly geared to express and represent the interests of skilled, respectable, male, Protestant workers.

Unskilled workers, even if unions had been prepared in principle to admit them into membership, were too low paid to be able to afford the dues set by many unions. 27% of the workforce in Glasgow was paid a wage of just a pound a week. But union dues in the Boilermakers Society, for example, were four shillings a month.

Temperance and thrift were promoted by trade unions as a demonstration of their members' respectability. According to the president of the Scottish TUC (STUC) at its first congress: "Trade unions have no better confederate than that of temperance." For the Ironfounders Society, non-unionists were not only "drunkards and idlers" but also "very often improvident men".

The concern for respectability exhibited by some sections of organised labour was so deep-rooted that the 1867 extension of the franchise was supported on the basis that it would enfranchise the respectable working man but not the "scum" element of the working class. According to the then secretary of Glasgow Trades Council:

"I am not aware that any body has proposed enfranchisement without a residential qualification. With this proviso, no scum would be entitled (to vote) at any time. They do not live in one house long enough to qualify, so there need be no anxiety about them."

A Chartist plate dating from 1838-48

Although women suffered multiple forms of discrimination — the average woman's wage was just 42% of the average male wage in the latter part of the nineteenth century — unions showed little interest in recruiting them.

Just two of the 73 delegates attending the founding congress of the STUC in 1897 were female. The fact that one of them, Margaret Irwin, was secretary of the new organisation was hardly compensation for this under-representation. Irwin also felt it inappropriate to take on the role of STUC chairperson on the grounds that it would be "premature" for the STUC to have a female chairperson.

Only one woman attended the 1904 STUC congress, while the 1905 congress was an all-male affair. This under-representation of women was not confined to the STUC. Only seven out of the 288 accredited delegates to Glasgow Trades Council in 1910, for example, were women.

Even as late as 1918 a delegate to that year's STUC congress could argue that allowing women into the workplace had "a depressing effect upon public morality" and that "a woman's natural sphere is the home."

Discrimination against Catholics was largely accepted, if not promoted, by unions. In shipbuilding and engineering there was no challenge to reserving skilled jobs for Irish Protestants. In mining the situation was worse. Some miners' organisations modelled themselves on Freemasonry and excluded Catholics. In Airdrie colliers went on strike to demand that "all the Roman Catholics should be expelled" from the pits.

Union leaders and union members alike predominantly looked to the Liberal Party for political representation. For the former, the Liberal Party's domination of Scottish politics made it the natural focus for their political and careerist aspirations. For the latter, the Liberal Party embodied their values of respectability, temperance, thrift, and self-improvement.

Although large sections of the working class (especially the female working class) remained disenfranchised until after the First World War, it was working-class support for the Liberal Party in Scotland which helped guarantee its electoral dominance from the middle of the nineteenth century until the early 1920s.

Between 1850 and 1922 the Liberals won a majority, and sometimes an overwhelming majority, of Scottish seats in all general elections bar one. The big cities, which had the larger concentrations of working-class voters, were especially loyal to the Liberal

NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT
SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY
I hereby oblige myself to conform to the principles and programme of the SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY, whereof I have this day been admitted a member
Signed
This day of 189
NO MONOPOLY
NO PRIVELEGE
J. KEIR HARDIE
R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM
NO NOBLE TASK WAS EVER EASY

Scottish Labour Party membership certificate

Party: between 1832 and 1886 a Conservative MP was elected on just one occasion for any of the seats in Glasgow.

Such was the strength of the ongoing reliance on the Liberal Party that even as late as 1885, after an unsuccessful attempt to put forward a labour candidate to contest a local seat in that year's general election, Glasgow Trades Council concluded: "It would not be unfair to infer that a mistake has been made in thinking that there was any great desire among the working classes to send one of their own to Parliament."

But there were limits to the readiness of trade unions to rely on the Liberals. Some trade unionists were vocal in their criticisms of the party and its MPs, many of whom were also employers, for their condemnation of strikes and their failure to support labour legislation.

Hostility by leading Liberals to so-called "restrictive practices" in the workplace also provoked conflict with trade unionists, as too did the refusal of the Liberals to stand "Lib-Lab" candidates in Scotland.

Growing dissatisfaction with the Liberal Party led to Keir Hardie standing as an independent labour candidate in the mid-Lanark by-election of 1888, following the refusal of the local Liberal association to short-list him. Although Hardie stood as a Labour and Home Rule candidate, he did so on the basis of a radical-liberal programme and under the slogan: "A vote for Hardie is a vote for Gladstone".

Later the same year Hardie founded the Scottish Labour Party (SLP). But the new party had little success.

It failed to build a solid base of support in the trade unions and performed badly in elections — the four SLP candidates who stood in the 1892 general election were all heavily defeated. It also failed to make a clean break with Scottish Liberalism, with some SLP candidates contesting the 1892 elections as "True Liberals".

The SLP's political programme advocated abolition of the House of Lords and all hereditary office, free education, an eight-hour working day, Home Rule for every country in the British Empire, disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, prohibition of the sale of alcohol, universal adult suffrage, and nationalisation of land, minerals, rail and banking.

(By way of comparison, the programme adopted by the Scottish Liberal Association at virtually the same time called for an eight-hour working day, universal adult suffrage and abolition of the House of Lords. Disestablishment was already Liberal policy, as too was Home Rule for Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. The Liberals had also long supported sweeping land reform.)

The ambivalent attitude of the SLP towards the Liberal Party was exemplified by John Ferguson, an Irish-nationalist leader in Glasgow. He had backed Hardie's candidacy in 1888 and was an SLP honorary vice-president until 1892, when he was expelled for calling for a Liberal vote in seats where the SLP was standing.

Given Ferguson's advice to Hardie at the time of the founding of the SLP, it was surprising that four years passed before he came to be expelled:

"My opinion is still it (i.e. the SLP) should enter the Liberal Association and work through it. There is certainly an element of danger in two political organisations holding the same principles coming into collision. … If you cannot induce the Labourers to join the Liberal Association and push their claims through it, by all means organise Labour by itself. Better than nothing. I'll try all I can in the Liberal Association to support Labour claims."

In 1894 the remnants of the SLP were subsumed into the all-British Independent Labour Party (ILP), which went on to play a central role in the creation of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) and the founding of the Labour Party.

In Scotland the ILP helped found the Scottish Workers Representation Committee (SWRC), in advance of the LRC, and on a broader basis than that of the LRC. Its founding conference in January of 1900 brought together delegates from trade unions, Trades Councils, Co-operative Societies, the ILP and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF).

Despite its lack of achievement and short life-span — in 1909, under pressure from the Labour Party in London, the SWRC voted to dissolve itself — the SWRC represented a further stage in the emergence of labour as an organisationally independent political force in Scotland.

The ILP followed in the footsteps of the SLP and combined the political baggage which it had inherited second-hand from the Liberals, through the intermediary of the SLP, with the values of the respectable working class.

For Hardie, socialism was "not a system of economics" but a system of moral values. And those values had to be exemplified by the elected representatives of labour: as long as Hardie was leader, no Labour MP was allowed to enter the bar in the House of Commons.

ILPers criticised Marx for "emphasising the necessity of class war". Their conception of socialism as a moral crusade — the vanguard of which was not the organised working class but the respectable working man — was fundamentally at odds with the politics of class-struggle socialism. As fellow-ILPer Bruce Glasier wrote of Hardie:

"I doubt if he ever read Marx or any scientific exposition of socialist theory. … So far as he was influenced towards socialism by the writings of others, it was, as he himself stated, by the Bible, the songs of Burns, the writings of Carlyle, Ruskin and Mill, and the democratic traditions in working-class homes in Scotland in his early days."

According to Hardie, it was "the intelligent fairly well-off artisan who responds most readily to the socialist appeal". On the other hand, it was "the slum vote which the socialist candidate fears most".

The ILP's Scottish newspaper boasted: "The classes that read *Forward* are not ignorant people, but intelligent people, the well-read, thinking, reflecting and clean-living decent people. Neither the bar-tender's pest nor the Sauchiehall Street dude ever spend a penny on *Forward*. In the slum areas few socialist periodicals are purchased."

(*Forward* was launched by ILP members in Glasgow in 1906. Although nominally a general socialist paper, in its earliest years of publication it was effectively an ILP publication. In later years, as divisions began to open up within the ILP, the paper was less closely aligned with the ILP. When the ILP split from the Labour Party in 1932, *Forward* stayed with the Labour Party, albeit far from uncritically.)

The gradual emergence of the ILP as a political force in Scotland — even if one which remained vastly overshadowed by the Liberals' ongoing political hegemony until after the First World War — coincided with a resurgence of class struggle and escalating industrial conflict in Scotland.

The pre-war years saw a growth in union membership in Scotland, and also the extension of trade unionism to unskilled workers, including women workers. At the same time, an employers' offensive triggered by the beginnings of the long-term decline of Scottish heavy industry provoked a wave of strikes.

Between 1900 and 1914 the Lanarkshire miners' union grew from 30,000 to 40,000. During the first decade of the century membership of the Scottish Miners Federation increased from 130,000 to nearly 170,000, membership of the Scottish Typographical Association increased from 38,000 to 45,000, and membership of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants increased from less

than 4,000 to nearly 5,000.

Agricultural workers were recruited to the Scottish Farm Servants Union, founded in 1912. The National Federation of Women Workers established a base among textile workers in the west of Scotland. The Workers Union, the most successful of the 'new unions', also recruited heavily amongst women workers. Shortly after the outbreak of war, it had a branch of 5,000 in Glasgow alone.

Overall, between 1898 and 1914 union membership affiliated to the STUC increased from 100,000 to 225,158, the number of Trades Councils in Scotland increased from 16 to 38, and the union membership affiliated to those Trades Councils increased from 107,297 to 223,000.

The growth in the number of Trades Councils and in the size of their affiliations was particularly significant. Compared with England, trade unionism in Scotland was more decentralised and federal in structure, with Trades Councils drawing together into a single campaigning body the local trade union branches.

Trades Councils therefore played a more significant role in Scotland than they did in England. As Margaret Irwin, speaking at the 1896 Falkirk conference which led to the founding of the STUC the following year, explained:

"In many places they (Trades Councils) formed the only centre for information regarding labour affairs. There were many parts where the Trades Council was a really important body, and the benefits of many trades unions would be considerably curtailed had they not these centres of information."

This focus on local-level organisation resulted in a greater ability to reach out to the unskilled and unorganised, and a greater degree of rank-and-file control than that which existed in the increasingly bureaucratised national unions.

This growth in union membership in the opening years of the last century coincided with an employers' offensive over workplace control and organisation. Confronted by increasing foreign competition, Scottish employers sought to reverse declining rates of profitability and overcome stagnant levels of productivity. At the same time, economic recession pushed up levels of unemployment.

The end of the recession in 1909/1910 marked the beginning of the "Great Unrest", a period of intense industrial struggles which swept through Scotland and the rest of Britain. "It is no exaggeration," wrote George Carson, secretary of Glasgow Trades Council, "to say that in number and magnitude the labour disputes (of 1911/12) have largely exceeded that of any previous year, and never in the history of the movement has such an upheaval taken place."

Echoing Carson's words, the President of the 1912 STUC congress described the preceding twelve months as having been "marked by industrial warfare — warfare which has demonstrated with outstanding clearness a splendid spirit of solidarity amongst the workers. The spirit of revolt amongst the so-called unskilled workers against degrading and brutalising conditions indicate great possibilities of future progress."

The "Great Unrest" also brought to the fore a growing conflict between rank-and-file militancy and the conciliationist attitude of many trade union leaders. Industrial action — both in Scotland and elsewhere — was frequently spontaneous, local and unofficial. So too was the trade union solidarity action organised with those on strike.

Commenting on the situation in Glasgow in August of 1911, the *Glasgow Herald* reported: "The restraints imposed by the older and more respectable type of trade unionism are flouted by workers who have come under the spell of incendiary advisers like those who made the Confederation of Labour a menace to the structure of French society. … The present situation is the gravest that has been known for a century."

Major conflicts in the immediate pre-war years included the shipbuilding employers' lock-out of September 1910, the Clydebank Singer strike of 1911, and national strikes involving railwaymen, seamen and dockers in the course of the same year. 1912 saw a strike by 30,000 millworkers in Dundee, a Scottish miners' strike, a Scotland-wide strike by 5,000 shipbuilding and engineering apprentices, and a strike by 3,000 Rosyth dockyard workers.

The unrest was not purely industrial. In 1911, for example, a wave of strikes by school students swept through Scotland and the rest of the country. In Dundee a crowd of over 1,500 attacked local schools. The following year an attempt by Dundee landlords to increase rents by 10% — at a time of large-scale strikes and lock-outs — triggered a rent strike which resulted in the increase being limited to 2.75%.

Backed up by the government, employers responded to the strike wave with the use of scab labour, lockouts, evictions from tied accommodation, blacklisting of union militants, a refusal to accept arbitration, and use of the Conspiracy Act to initiate legal proceedings against pickets.

Troops were also brought out onto the streets to contain the threat of working-class unrest. As one speaker at a strike rally in Leith in July of 1912 pointed out, the army had been used by employers in twenty different industrial disputes in recent years — but only once had it been used during a war.

This upsurge in the level of industrial struggle did not, however, spill over into the political sphere. As John Maclean put it in 1913, Scottish workers were "still seething like lions industrially, but lying like lambs politically."

The outbreak of war in 1914 saw a sudden collapse in the level of industrial struggle and a — time-limited — upsurge of pro-war fervour throughout Scotland. The STUC leadership was firmly in the pro-war camp. "I am an internationalist because I believe in nationalism. Therefore the (German) outrage on Belgium and the invasion of France were to me a violation of international principles," as one of them later explained.

The STUC promised "all possible help" to encourage recruitment to the armed forces. It cancelled its 1915 congress, although, under rank-and-file pressure, it did agree to hold a special congress in order to discuss what were delicately referred to as "certain questions on present conditions".

The STUC president at the 1917 congress similarly warned delegates of "a danger of the labour movement being dragged into a quagmire of pacifist impossibilism." At the following year's congress the STUC president declared that "those (i.e. the Bolsheviks) who authorised the demobilisation of Russia were either simple fools or German tools."

Union leaders' hostility to strike action, coupled with an agreement with the government by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers that strikes would be banned for the duration of the war, meant that any initiative for strike action had to come from rank-and-file organisation.

Wartime strike action also had a political dimension which distinguished it from the pre-war industrial struggles, given that it necessarily constituted a challenge to the government's wartime emergency powers and the state which they protected.

In February of 1915 workers at Weir's factory in Glasgow struck in a dispute over pay and the employment of higher-paid American engineers. Up to 10,000 engineering workers in another 25 Glasgow plants joined the strike. But the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, locally and nationally, refused to recognise the strike.

Nine months later, in the midst of a rent strike against bad housing and rent increases, shipyard and engineering workers in Glasgow went on strike in support of tenants who had been taken to court so that the wages of the head of the household could be arrested.

Up to 15,000 strikers demonstrated outside the court. A subsequent meeting of the strike leaders threatened the government with a general strike unless legislation was introduced to freeze rents for the duration of the war. The government quickly ceded to their demand.

In July and August of 1915 workers at the Fairfield shipyards in Glasgow went on strike in disputes over demarcation and dismissals. In February of the following year engineers at the Lang's factory in Johnstone struck in a dispute over dilution (i.e. the introduction of unskilled labour, especially female, into engineering and shipyards).

The same month workers in six of Glasgow's biggest engineering plants staged strike action in protest at the arrest of three of the leading local union militants (William Gallacher, Tom Bell and John Muir). This strike was followed up in March by a series of strikes in Glasgow over dilution.

The initiative for most of these strikes lay with the Clyde Work-

ers Committee (CWC). This was a rank-and-file trade union network set by the union activists who had organised the strike wave of February 1915. Although the syndicalist Socialist Labour Party (SocLP) played a leading role in the CWC, prominent figures in the leadership of the CWC included ILPers such as James Messer.

The CWC attracted delegates from around 30 Clydeside engineering works. It defined its relationship to the union bureaucracy as: "We will support the officials just so long as they represent the workers, but we will act independently immediately they misrepresent them."

According to the government, it was the CWC which was responsible for the fact that "from February 1915 onwards the unrest and discontent on the Clyde were, both in degree and in kind, exceptional." Confronted with such defiance, the government reported to repression and victimisation.

Forward, and Maclean's *Vanguard* were shut down, as too was the CWC's paper, *The Worker*, after having carried an article in February of 1916 entitled "Should the Workers Arm?" (The article answered the question in the negative.) Although strike action had secured the release of Gallacher, Muir and Bell after their arrests the same month, further strikes failed to prevent the later deportation to Edinburgh of nine shop stewards from the Beardmore plant in Glasgow.

The defeat of these strikes was quickly followed by the imposition of a sentence of three years hard labour on John Maclean, one-year prison sentences on Gallacher, Muir and Bell, and prison sentences of the same length on Maclean's ally James MacDougall and ILP leader James Maxton after they had been found guilty of sedition.

The shop stewards who had been involved in the CWC also took the lead in the "40 Hours Strike" of January 1919. Essentially a continuation of the wartime militancy, the strike aimed at the achievement of a 40-hour working week in order to protect full employment from the impact of military demobilisation and the ending (or at least reduction) of munitions production.

40,000 Glasgow workers joined the strike on its first day. The next day the number of strikers increased to 70,000. Although support for the strike was weaker outside of Glasgow, the strike quickly spread to Lanarkshire, Edinburgh and Stirling, At its height, around 100,000 workers were on strike, with another 40,000 simultaneously on strike in Belfast in a similar dispute in support of the demand for a shorter working week.

Mass picketing was used to build support for the strike and shut down key workplaces such as power stations. After police attacked a crowd of 35,000 in Glasgow's George Square on "Bloody Friday" (31st January), 10,000 troops arrived in Glasgow the following day to ensure that any further unrest could be physically crushed.

Denied official support from their own unions, however, strikers began a gradual drift back to work, and the strike was eventually called off on 12th February.

Almost all union leaderships had refused to support the strike. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers in particular issued a statement "strongly deprecating the continuance of unofficial action by their members" and stressing that "in the interests of the trade union movement, a firm stand [against the strike leaders] has got to be taken."

The strike was an embarrassment for the STUC. At a meeting in mid-January the STUC president, Hugh Lyon, had persuaded the strike organisers that they should demand a 40 hour week, rather than the originally proposed 30 hour week. Although Lyon spoke against strike action in support of this demand, the meeting elected him to the "Ways and Means Committee" (WMC) which was to run the strike.

Lyon wanted to resign from the WMC. But by a single vote the STUC Parliamentary Committee instructed him to remain a member.

When the STUC was criticised at its 1919 congress for not having distanced itself from the strike, the STUC General Secretary explained: "He agreed the strike was the outcome of hasty and unwise action, but the Parliamentary Committee could not ignore it. If they could not control the forces behind the strike, they at least attempted to guide them along proper lines."

(Lyon's own role in the strike was to order the members of his union, the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Union, back to work after three days, following a secret deal he had struck with transport employers for a 48 hour week.)

That strikes occurred at all during the war was a demonstration of militancy and an assertion of rank-and-file initiative. They defied government legislation and were met with repression, imprisonment and local deportations.

But many of the wartime strikes were narrowly sectional and concerned with defending the status of skilled craftsmen. And none of them were in opposition to the war itself, as opposed to the impact of the war on workplace practices and housing conditions.

The strikes, as one CWC member subsequently wrote, "were frequently led by men such as myself who wanted to stop the war, but that was not the actual motive. Had the question of stopping the war been put before any strikers' meeting, it would have been overwhelmingly defeated."

Similarly, the Glasgow anarchist Guy Aldred later wrote of Gallacher, the CWC's chairperson, that he "made munitions during the war, and atoned for his conduct by delivering socialist lectures in the dinner hour."

The main political force in the strikes was the SocLP. But the SocLP was narrowly sectarian and opposed to any form of political action. Formed in Glasgow in 1903, its members had initially boycotted trade unions because of their lack of militancy and class consciousness, and the control exercised over them by "fakirs".

New SocLP members had to pass an exam in the party's version of Marxism in order to gain admission. In 1909 the SocLP had even expelled its own secretary for having taking part in a deputation on unemployment to Edinburgh Town Council.

Only after 1911, under the impact of the "Great Unrest" did the SocLP abandon its previous principles and engage in trade union work. This turn to the unions laid the basis for theSocLP's role in the wartime conflicts on Clydeside.

Despite the involvement of some of its members in the CWC, and the prison sentences imposed on others, including for sedition, the ILP's role in Scotland during the war years was less than consistent.

At both local and national level there were few ILPers who took an uncompromising anti-war position. Keir Hardie himself, for example, responded to the outbreak of war by writing the article, "We Must see the War Through, But Denounce Secret Diplomacy".

According to Maxton, speaking shortly after the outbreak of war, socialists should not become "swallowed up in war or peace propaganda, but (should) continue to conduct the business of socialist manufacturing." Opposition to the war, in other words, was a diversion from the day-to-day grind of the socialist crusade.

Harry McShane, at that time a member of the British Socialist Party, later recalled in his memoirs that after the outbreak of war ILP members "didn't know where they were, and concentrated on the issue of secret diplomacy until conscription gave them something they could really fight on."

Davie Kirkwood, an ILPer who was convenor at the Beardmore plant and an eventual Labour MP, likewise claimed to have found himself on the horns of a dilemma:

"I hated war. I believed that the peoples of the world hated war. … Yet I was working in an arsenal, making guns and shells for one purpose — to kill men in order to keep them from killing men. What a confusion! What was I to do? … I resolved that my skill as an engineer must be devoted to my country. I was too proud of the battles of the past to stand aside and see Scotland conquered."

When engineering workers struck in early 1915, the ILP's paper explained to its readers that "we took no part in urging the engineers in the West of Scotland either to strike, or, when once they had struck, to persist in striking."

Although some ILP members, were involved in the CWC, they certainly did not necessarily constitute the most militant elements of the CWS.

Kirkwood, for example, broke ranks with the CWC by putting forward his own proposals for dilution to his employers: "You (management) want shells to blow the Germans across the Rhine. Then we will do all in our power to meet your requirements. We will produce the guns, the shells, and all other munitions. In 24

hours we will submit a scheme that will satisfy both sides."

(Such inconsistencies in the ILP's approach to the war were lost on the Scottish press. The *Dundee Courier* dismissed the Scottish ILP's 1915 conference as "a gathering of cranks". The *Edinburgh Evening News* described the conference delegates as "enemies of their country". For the "Aberdeen Free Press" the conference was "one jarring hole in the unexampled display of national unity".

And according to the *Sutherland Echo*, it was regrettable that, "there (were) no legal powers for seizing such men, putting them under the grimmest of drill sergeants for severe and rapid training, and hurrying them to the hottest place at the front. This would probably have been done in Germany, and very properly too.")

Only John Maclean attempted to link up the wartime industrial unrest and the campaigning against rent increases with opposition to the war itself. But Maclean was isolated from both the shop steward militants and also, eventually, from the broader labour movement.

Maclean was banned from attending CWC meetings in 1915 for having argued that the CWC should address political issues. Imprisonment, poor health, hostility to the idea of "united fronts", sweeping denunciations of his political opponents on the Left as state agents, and an increasingly sectarian political trajectory all added to his isolation.

Foreshadowing a certain brand of revolutionary politics that was to become dominant on sections of the Left (and not just in Scotland) in later years, Maclean lapsed into propagandistic denunciations of Labour Party leaders and issued abstract calls for workers to break from the 'Pinks'. In fact, argued Maclean, workers were already increasingly 'seeing through' the Labour Party.

In February of 1923, following his resignation from the SocLP, Maclean entered the final stage of his drift into sectarianism by founding the Scottish Workers Republican Party.

McShane was scathing about the quality of the new party's membership: "(The SWRP) had some queer people that I didn't like — they had never been to John's economics classes, they knew nothing about socialism or revolutionary work. Even if I had not joined the Communist Party I could never have joined with that crowd."

While the SocLP, as one of its members wrote, "gained 350 members and lost 350" during the war, it was the ILP which grew dramatically and benefited the most from the wartime unrest on Clydeside and in other parts of Scotland.

Between 1914 and 1918 the ILP's Scottish membership tripled. Between June and September of 1918 alone its membership increased from 5,656 to 8,904, amounting to one third of the party's total British membership. By 1920 it had around 2,600 members in Glasgow alone. There were 22 ILP branches in Scotland in 1900, 125 branches in 1910, and 201 in 1918.

According to the 1919 Executive Report of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party, members of affiliated unions were responsible for 10% of propaganda work and 25% of electoral work in Scotland, whereas ILP members were responsible for 90% of propaganda work and 75% of electoral work.

In the 1922 general election ILPers won ten out of Glasgow's 15 parliamentary seats for the Labour Party. "The atmosphere of the Clyde," promised Maxton, as he and the other "Red Clydesiders" left Glasgow for Westminster, would "get the better of the House of Commons." On their way to take the train to London, Maxton had told the crowds: "Don't hurry for the train — it'll all belong to the people when we come back."

On their departure from Glasgow the victorious MPs publicly pledged that they would "abjure vanity and self-aggrandisement", for "their only righteous purpose was to promote the welfare of their fellow-citizens and the well-being of mankind." As Kirkwood later wrote: "We were all Puritans. We were all abstainers. Most of us did not smoke. We were the stuff of which reform is made."

By 1924 the ILP in Glasgow was boasting: "The Glasgow ILP is now the 'People's Party'. Its influence and usefulness predominate in every phase of public life of the city. We are stronger numerically than ever we have been." By the following year the number of ILP branches in Scotland had increased to 307 — almost a third of all ILP branches in Britain.

But within a decade the STUC was firmly under right-wing control, the ILP had split from the Labour Party, and right-wing control in the Labour Party had become as entrenched as it was in the STUC.

The 1920s were a period of mass unemployment and economic stagnation. Throughout the decade unemployment in Scotland was never less than 10%. By 1932 unemployment was running at 27%. At the height of the Great Depression the Scottish economy was contracting at a rate of 2% per year. Scottish industrial output in 1931 was lower than it had been in 1913.

Unemployment and economic stagnation resulted in a slump in union membership. In 1920 there were 550,000 trade unionists affiliated to the STUC, more than double the figure of a decade earlier. But by 1922 affiliated membership had collapsed to 213,500. Affiliated membership increased to reach a 1920s peak of 330,000 in 1926, only to fall again to 230,000 in 1932. The 1926 level of membership was not achieved again until 1938.

Despite the ILP's electoral successes and the growth in its network of branches in Scotland, the growth in unemployment had a similar impact on the level of ILP membership.

From a peak membership of 2,600 in 1920, ILP membership in Glasgow had slumped by early 1922 to around 1,400. Those who dropped out included many of the young workers and women workers who had joined the ILP under the impetus of the wartime and post-war industrial conflicts.

(The decline in ILP membership was also due to factors unconnected with the growth of unemployment. In 1918 the Labour Party had introduced individual membership. Whereas previously individual membership of the Labour Party had effectively meant individual membership of the ILP, it was now possible to be a Labour Party member without being an ILP member.)

The 1920s were also a decade of a sustained employers' offensive. Wage cuts and other attacks on working conditions were carried out by employers throughout industry, especially in mining, engineering, and the railways.

Post-war governments backed the employers, setting up the Industrial Unrest Committee and the Supply and Transport Organisation in order to combat strikes in major industries, and also passing new legislation, such as the Emergency Powers Act and the Police Act, which served the same purpose.

Reaching a climax in 1926, the opening years of the decade included years of intense class struggle. In Britain as a whole, there were over 11 million strike days in 1918, nearly 35 million the following year, 87 million in 1921 and then, despite the intervening end of the post-war boom and onset of economic slump, 162 million days in 1926.

Defeat in such confrontations further pushed down levels of unionisation. After a lock-out in 1921, the number of union members in the Lanarkshire coalfield collapsed from 50,000 to 15,000. After the national engineering lock-out of 1922 membership of the Amalgamated Engineering Union in Scotland fell by over 50% within a year, and continued to decline until the early 1930s.

Confronted by the joint employers-government offensive of the 1920s, the STUC failed to give any kind of effective leadership. Despite occasional spasms of anti-capitalist rhetoric at STUC congresses, the STUC's overall strategy was a mixture of electoralism, social partnership, and witch-hunts of the Left

As one member of its Parliamentary Committee explained to the 1921 congress: "I have never been in favour of a general strike to enforce demands which have a political solution. … The road of progress lies through organisation and education. The ballot box is the finest weapon the working class possesses, and it is only by an intelligent use of that weapon that they will be able to secure emancipation from the conditions under which they are labouring today."

Speaking at the 1923 STUC congress, another member of the Parliamentary Committee explained that a strike was "a cruel and barbarous weapon, especially as often happens in our mining villages, where the strikers are evicted from their houses. … We have a weapon which causes no evictions, no starvation, no long weary years of debt to be paid up. … Many present-day problems can only be solved by municipal and political action."

In the run-up to the General Strike of 1926 the role played by the STUC scarcely differed from that of the TUC. Elger, the STUC General Secretary, emphasised the TUC line that "Councils of Action are totally unnecessary and should not be formed", and that

"affiliations with the National Minority Movement [a national rank-and-file organisation initiated by the Communist Party] are not approved of."

At the 1926 STUC congress, held shortly before the General Strike itself, the STUC president derided what he called "the theorists at work": "What they lack in clarity of exposition they make up for in wealth of phrases. The 'United Front', 'Mass Action', 'General Staff', 'Shock Tactics', and so on are being recommended to us." Dismissing as "Falstaffian armies" the various bodies set up by the government to crush the General Strike, he suggested the government intervene as mediator.

The congress went on to vote down motions advocating that the General Council, as the Parliamentary Committee was now called, should assist in establishing Workers' Defence Corps throughout Scotland, and that the General Council should be empowered to call a strike by all affiliates "to assist a union defending a vital trade union principle".

(The latter motion, however, was passed after having been amended: by the substitution of the word "conference" for the proposed wording of "strike".)

At the start of the strike itself the General Council dissuaded Glasgow Trades Council from holding a public demonstration in support of the strike, on the grounds that such a demonstration was "undesirable". Instead, a meeting should be organised for "trade union officials (full-time and other) with admission being given only to accredited persons."

The General Council also refused offers from *Forward* and the National Minority Movement's *Worker* for their publications to be used as strike bulletins: "It was undesirable for the *Worker* to be published during the General Strike, and the General Council requests that immediate consideration should be given to the publication being stopped."

Unless and until the TUC instructed otherwise, the General Council also opposed production of a strike bulletin of its own. It agreed "on the motion of JF Duncan and M o'Hagan that no news-sheet intended for the general public be printed."

The defeat of the General Strike ushered in the period of "Mondism", when trade union leaders collaborated with employers and the state to "increase the competitive power of British industries in the world's markets." (Mond was the founder of Imperial Chemicals Industries. His discussions with the TUC General Secretary had marked the beginnings of "Mondism".)

The 1927 congress of the STUC had voted to "condemn the propaganda of industrial peace". What was needed instead was "the elimination of the capitalist system." Union leaders who preached "industrial peace" were condemned for "undermining the movement financially, numerically, morally and intellectually."

Although the motion had been passed with only one vote against, the STUC did nothing about securing "the elimination of the capitalist system". Instead, it quickly embraced the philosophy and practice of "Mondism".

By the early 1930s the STUC was represented on the Scottish Development Council, the Scottish Council for Community Service During Unemployment, the Joint Industrial Council for Local Government Service, the Board of Arbitration and Conciliation for Scotland, the Scottish Council of the Playing Fields Association, the National Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment, the Clyde Navigation Trust, and the Queen's Institute of District Nursing.

In later years the STUC added still further to this already impressive portfolio.

Even before the turn to "Mondism" a full-scale offensive had begun in the STUC and some of its affiliates against the Communist Party, against Communist Party initiatives such as the National Minority Movement (NMM) and the National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM), and, to a lesser extent, against local Trades Councils.

(Unlike the TUC, STUC congresses accepted delegations and motions from Trades Councils. The latter were generally well to the left of the STUC General Council.)

The 1923 STUC congress voted not to allow affiliation by the NUWM to the STUC. The 1924 congress ruled out of order a proposal to amend STUC Standing Orders to allow affiliation by the NUWM. The 1925 congress voted to set up "County Trade Union Committees" in an attempt to undermine the role of Trades Councils.

The 1928 congress instructed the General Secretary to write to all Trades Councils urging them to refuse affiliations from any body "affiliated to or connected in any way with the NMM." The latter organisation, speakers explained, was "the number two branch of the Communist Party" and "damaging to the trade unions generally."

The 1931 congress endorsed the "Model Rules for Unemployed Associations" which the General Council wanted Trades Council to establish as an alternative to the NUWM. The main role of such associations was to be the provision of "educational and recreational activities."

Only four of the 63 Trades Councils in Scotland set up Unemployed Associations, and none of them with any degree of success. Even so, Elger claimed in 1936 that there existed "no scheme for organising more effectively unemployed persons" than "Unemployed Associations under the auspices of Trades Councils."

The 1935 and 1936 congresses endorsed the issuing of the so-called "Black Circular", under the terms of which any motion to a Trades Council for joint work with "an unrecognised body" was to be automatically declared incompetent.

The "Black Circular" also required Trades Councils to refuse affiliation from any union branch which supported "an unrecognised body" and to "report that branch to the relevant union's Executive Committee. The same action should be taken against individual delegates."

The 1938 congress voted to separate the industrial and political roles played by Trades Councils: many Trades Councils had hitherto functioned as trade union and Labour councils, and were able to make a decisive input into local Labour Parties. But the STUC and the Labour Party in Scotland, explained Elger, "each have a responsibility of safeguarding the prestige of both our respective organisations."

The evolution of the Labour Party in Scotland in the 1920s and 1930s mirrored developments within the STUC. Its leadership chose to "safeguard the prestige" of the party in the same way that Elger and his predecessors had chosen to "safeguard the prestige" of the STUC. And the Left of the Labour Party failed to offer effective opposition.

The ILP of the early 1920s maintained its traditional adherence to a semi-religious version of socialism. As John MacCormick, an ILP organiser who later became the leading Scottish nationalist of mid-twentieth-century Scotland, later recalled in his autobiography:

"Socialism in those days (the early 1920s) was not the doctrine of the state-planned economy which it has since become. … For the most part as a street-corner missionary I was expected not to expound the theories of Karl Marx but merely to give expression to the general sense of injustice and aspiration for a better way of life which were very natural feelings among the workers of Clydeside. … I thoroughly enjoyed the almost religious atmosphere of enthusiasm in which we all worked."

The ILP also continued its support for socially conservative policies. It denounced jazz as "jungle music" and dance halls as latter-day "opium dens". It continued to campaign for the outlawing of the sale of alcohol. And it stressed that "atheism, avowed or otherwise, has no place in the ILP policy or programme".

But the ILP increasingly found itself without an audience for its hallmark brand of moralising socialism. The respectable working class of the middle and late nineteenth century was being destroyed by the dual impact of technological change in the workplace and the mass unemployment of the post-war years. The ILP was also unable to respond to the emergence of new forms of popular culture — other than to denounce them.

Divisions began to emerge in the ILP in the aftermath of the 1923/24 Labour government. Scottish ILP leaders such as Emmanuel Shinwell and Patrick Dollan defended the government's record. "No man has worked harder for any cause than (Ramsay) MacDonald has worked for the socialism of the ILP," claimed Dollan, despite having criticised MacDonald's decision to take office in 1924 as "the biggest mistake" he had ever made.

Maxton, on the other hand, is reported to have said of the same government: "The sooner they are out of office the better, as every

Top: John Maclean (centre with Homburg hat) during 1919 strike. Below: start of march by Dundee unemployed 1930s

day they were in led us further from socialism."

Divisions also opened up around the issue of Communist Party branches being allowed to send delegates to Trades Councils which, until 1938, frequently doubled up as local Labour Party committees. At the 1925 Scottish ILP conference Maxton's motion in support of Communist Party affiliation attracted 86 votes, whereas Dollan's motion against affiliation by what he termed "left-wing disrupters" attracted 127 votes.

The defeat of the General Strike deepened divisions within the ILP still further. Whereas MacDonald claimed that the defeat demonstrated that "the weapon of the General Strike is no good — even less now than ever," Maxton argued that government attacks on the working class in the aftermath of the strike "made revolution inevitable."

The ILPers despatched to the House of Commons after the general election of 1922 initially made an impact through their denunciations of Tory policies. With the exception of Maxton (and Wheatley, who died in 1930), however, they ultimately either opted for "vanity and self-aggrandisement" or ended their political odyssey in obscurity.

Davie Kirkwood became Baron Bearsden, Tom Johnston joined Churchill's wartime Cabinet as Secretary of State for Scotland, and George Buchanan became a Minister for Pensions.

How far the "Red Clydesiders" succeeded in ensuring that "the atmosphere of the Clyde would get the better of the House of Commons" can be judged by the foreword to Davie Kirkwood's autobiography which Winston Churchill wrote in 1935 (and by the very fact that Kirkwood saw nothing incongruous in Churchill writing the foreword to his autobiography):

"David Kirkwood has so many friends of all parties in the House of Commons and at large in the country that this engaging account of his pugnacious career will receive a warm welcome. Everyone thinks him a grand fellow, if handled the right way."

Reflecting on the sad fate of the "Red Clydesiders", Emrys Hughes, the editor of *Forward* from 1924 to 1946, lamented in later years:

"What had happened to the revolutionaries, the intransigents, the intractables, the incorruptibles, the rebels of Clydeside? Certainly we would all have laughed incredulously in 1924 if someone had dared to forecast that David Kirkwood, the turbulent engineer, would end up as Lord Kirkwood of Bearsden and passionately declare to a not too enthusiastic House of Lords: 'I am proud to be a peer.'"

And who would have dreamt that Tom Johnston of *Forward* [Johnston had helped launch the paper in 1906] who had so scornfully derided the Lloyd George coalition would become Secretary of State for Scotland in a coalition government headed by Winston Churchill?"

The decline of industrial militancy under the dual impact of economic recession and the defeat of the General Strike reinforced the Scottish ILP's focus on an electoralist strategy.

But whereas in the past that strategy had been linked to campaigning (such as the wartime rents strike) and, however imperfectly, to industrial struggles (through, for example, the involvement of ILP members in the CWC), from around the mid-1920s the pursuit of electoral success largely became an end in itself, pursued in isolation from any other campaigns and struggles.

Involvement in grassroots campaigning would have meant co-operation by the ILP with the Communist Party. But the ILP in Scotland was generally hostile not only to Communist Party affiliations to Trades Councils but also to any kind of joint work with the Communist Party. In 1927, for example, three ILP branches in Glasgow which had supported Communist Party nominees as local Labour candidates were expelled from the ILP.

Divisions within the ILP — in Scotland and nationally — were intensified still further by the record of the 1929-31 Labour government, which ended with cuts in unemployment benefits and MacDonald's formation of a "National Government" in alliance with the Tories and the Liberals.

Dollan defended the government's record, at least to the extent of arguing that a minority government had no electoral mandate to introduce radical reforms. Rejecting such an argument, Maxton led the ILP out of the Labour Party in 1932.

But in Scotland only a minority, albeit a substantial one, of the ILP membership supported disaffiliation. The 1931 Scottish ILP conference had voted against disaffiliation by 112 votes to 35. The following year's conference likewise rejected disaffiliation by 88 votes to 49.

This was despite the fact that all four of the MPs left in the post-split ILP parliamentary group represented Scottish constituencies — Maxton, McGovern and Buchanan represented Glasgow seats, while Kirkwood represented Dumbarton.

The disaffiliated ILP remained ideologically inchoate. It failed to put down roots in the trade unions, and it failed to build united fronts with Labour Party supporters. Instead, it was drawn into an ever closer alliance with Stalinism. This applied to the ILP in Scotland as much as to the ILP nationally.

Nor did disaffiliation from the Labour Party put an end to the leaking away of ILP members. By the end of the 1930s the ILP in Scotland had dwindled to a shadow of its former strength.

In response to the ILP national conference's decision to pull out of the Labour Party, the anti-disaffiliation faction in the ILP in Scotland, led by Dollan, set up the short-lived Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), which claimed to have support from 107 ILP branches in Scotland and from half the individual Scottish membership.

The purpose of creating the SSP was not to prepare the ground for a further breakaway but to fill the gap inside the Labour Party left by the departure of the ILP. It also served as Dollan's power-base in the Labour Party. By now a time-served and calculating machine politician, Dollan quickly emerged as the powerbroker of the Labour Party not just in Glasgow but in Scotland as a whole.

Dollan's own political evolution was emblematic of the politi-

cal direction taken by the labour movement in Scotland in the 1920s and 1930s, once the wartime "rapids of revolution" had begun to ebb away after the defeat of the "40 Hours Strike".

Dollan was a former *Forward* journalist and had campaigned against the wartime government's emergency powers. In 1917 he had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector. After the end of the war he edited the strikers' "Bulletin" during the "40 Hour Strike" of 1919, and went on to write a history of the Glasgow wartime rent strikes the following year.

Increasingly immersing himself in Glaswegian municipal politics, he quickly shifted to the right. By the time of the Second World War his pacifism was no more than a distant memory. Having been elected Lord Provost of Glasgow in 1938, he campaigned vigorously to mobilise support in Glasgow for the British war effort and was duly knighted for his war services in 1941.

His wife, Agnes Dollan, a political activist in her own right, followed a similar political evolution.

In the First World War she played a prominent role in anti-war campaigning and the 1915 rent strike, suffering imprisonment as a result. Elected a Glasgow City councillor in 1921, the focus of her political activities quickly shifted from the streets to the Council Chamber. She backed the war effort after the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, was awarded an MBE in 1946, and subsequently went on to be an activist in the "Moral Rearmament" movement.

The same year that the ILP disaffiliated from the Labour Party Arthur Woodburn was appointed secretary of the Labour Party in Scotland. Like the Dollans, Woodburn personified the post-war political degeneration of the Scottish labour movement.

Woodburn had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector during the First World War. By the time of the Second World War, however, there was nothing remotely pacifist about his politics. He was elected MP for Clackmannan and East Stirlingshire in 1939, a position which he held for the next 31 years, and was made a Privy Councillor in 1947.

The essentially conservative nature of Woodburn's politics was captured by the songwriter Hamish Henderson in "The Men of Knoydart": the landowner warns the men who have seized his land: "I'll write to Arthur Woodburn, boys; And he'll soon let you know; That the Sacred Rights of Property; Will never be laid low."

The contrast with the founding fathers of the Labour Party could hardly have been sharper. Hardie's Scottish Labour Party had originated in part in the forerunners of the Men of Knoydart who had taken part in the Crofters Wars of the 1880s. But by the middle of the next century the leadership of the Labour Party in Scotland could be relied on as a bulwark against threats to private property.

Woodburn claimed that at the time of his appointment to the post of Secretary: "There was practically no Labour Party in Scotland (after the ILP's disaffiliation). … The real drive was in the ILP. My job was practically to build from scratch."

How far Woodburn's description of the state of the Scottish Labour Party was accurate, and how far it was a self-serving exaggeration by Woodburn, given the number of ex-ILPers who remained in the Labour Party in Scotland, is another question.

What Woodburn certainly did, however, was to take the opportunity of the ILP's departure to work closely with Elger, who was also a Labour Party member, in order to refashion the Labour Party in much the same way that Elger had refashioned the STUC.

Party activists engaged in joint campaigning with the Communist Party were expelled. All council and parliamentary candidates had to give prior agreement to abide by the party constitution. Candidates were imposed on constituencies (just as Woodburn himself had been imposed as secretary on the Scottish Labour Party). And, with the assistance of Elger, Trades Councils were excluded from playing any role in the Labour Party.

Scottish Labour Party membership began to grow again after the ILP's departure. From the mid-1930s onwards, however, it stagnated. Its 1939 membership of 29,159 was slightly less than its membership of 29,510 in 1935. No other region in Britain had a lower level of Labour Party membership than Scotland.

By the mid-1930s the organisational structures and political strategy of the labour movement in Scotland as they were to exist for virtually the rest of the century had been decisively shaped.

The Scottish labour movement was part of a British-wide labour movement. The Labour Party Scottish Executive was no more than the subordinate local agent of the Party's NEC. Around 75% of the STUC's affiliated membership were in all-British unions. (By the beginning of the following century the proportion had fallen to less than 10%, almost entirely accounted for by Scottish education unions.)

This integration into a British-wide labour movement was not an absolute one. The existence of the STUC itself was evidence of that. And in the 1970s in particular there were to be sharp clashes between the leaders of the Labour Party in Scotland and the national leadership in London: the latter supported devolution, the former opposed it.

The Scottish labour movement also shared the political strategy of the broader British-wide movement. The integration of the former into the latter was not simply an organisational one. It was also a political one.

At the core of that strategy was the idea that socialism — or, more exactly, a programme of economic and social reform — was to be achieved through centralised state planning and economic intervention by the state. When Woodburn visited the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, for example, he described it as "a land of hope".

Although his own political outlook inevitably coloured his opinion of the Labour Party, the thumbnail sketch of the Labour Party in Scotland in the early 1940s given by John MacCormick summed up the change which had occurred over the two preceding decades:

"The Labour Party was by now a very different thing from the old free and easy ILP. It had already become a strictly disciplined machine and its leading thinkers seemed to be more and more fascinated by the idea of a rigidly planned economy in a centralised state."

"They had begun by looking with somewhat uncritical awe at the boasted five-year plans of the Soviet Union, and now their experience of wartime controls, when the state was effectively the only customer of industry, had confirmed them in the notion that Utopia could be constructed from a blueprint."

The adoption of a strategic orientation towards securing change at the level of the British state dovetailed into the stifling of rank-and-file dissent by the leaderships of the STUC and the Labour Party in Scotland. But this was no different from the bureaucratisation of the labour movement at an all-British level.

The Labour Party was to be an electoral machine. The trade unions were to deliver money and votes (although, in the 1930s, the STUC was singularly unsuccessful at delivering either). In neither wing of the Scottish labour movement did democratic debate and rank-and-file campaigning have any role to play in such a strategy.

(In the years following the Second World War the Communist Party was to become increasingly influential in the Scottish trade unions. But, other than putting a 'left face' on the STUC, this did nothing to change its bureaucratic nature. Similarly, the post-1979 partial democratisation of the Labour Party had little impact on the Labour Party in Scotland: despite the introduction of automatic re-selection, not a single sitting MP in Scotland was de-selected.)

The inter-war years marked the victory of the bureaucracy over the rank-and-file, of centralisation over grass-roots democracy, and of parliamentarianism over class struggle. 'Socialism' was equated with intervention by the capitalist state, as opposed to the break-up of that state by working-class struggle.

By the mid-1930s Elger and Woodburn had come to preside over a labour movement whose history included such episodes as the Radical War of 1820, the mid-Lanark by-election of 1888, the "Great Unrest", "Red Clydeside", the electoral breakthrough of 1922, and the General Strike of 1926.

Those episodes embodied a tradition of militant working-class struggle in Scotland (and, given that there was nothing uniquely Scottish about many of these episodes, in Britain as a whole). But they were only episodes in the history of the Scottish labour movement — not the history itself.

In his memoirs Harry McShane wrote of the old ILP of the 1910s and 1920s that there had been ""a dream of freedom in their socialism." In the Scottish labour movement as it had taken shape by the mid-1930s, however, there was no dream, no freedom, and no socialism.

Emrys Hughes: in defence of Trotsky

By Dale Street

In 1929 the newly elected Labour government refused Trotsky, who had been exiled from the Soviet Union in January of the same year, permission to come and live in Britain. Writing in the pages of the Glasgow socialist newspaper *Forward*, Emrys Hughes condemned the decision as "pettifogging obtuseness and cowardice, of which every decent-minded socialist will be thoroughly ashamed."

Hughes was born in Tonypandy in Wales in 1894. After a spell in prison as a conscientious objector during the First World War, he took up teaching. By 1920 he had already resigned — partly in disgust at the disciplinarian methods of teaching which he was expected to employ, and partly in order to devote more time to political activity. In 1923 he stood unsuccessfully for Labour in the Bosworth constituency. The following year he moved to Glasgow in the expectation of being given a job as a journalist with *Forward*. In the event, he was immediately appointed acting editor. Hughes continued to hold the post of editor of *Forward* for the next 22 years, until his election in 1946 as MP for South Ayrshire. He was still a sitting MP at the time of his death in 1969, when he was succeeded by Jim Sillars.

Hughes' condemnation of the government's decision to refuse entry to Trotsky did not flow out of any sympathy for Trotsky's politics. Neither in 1929 nor in later years could Hughes have been described as a political supporter of Trotsky or as any kind of revolutionary socialist. Hughes sympathised with Trotsky as a victim of injustice, not as a Marxist and a revolutionary.

As Hughes put it in later years, in the draft of his unfinished and unpublished autobiography: "Trotsky had few friends. He must have made more enemies in his time than anyone on earth. From the 'Daily Mail' to the Communist press they were all against him being allowed to set foot on British soil. I certainly could not be accused of being one of Trotsky's disciples. (I had only the vaguest idea of what his quarrel with Stalin was about.). But if Denikin could live in Great Britain, why not Trotsky?"

In his article supporting Trotsky's admission to Britain, Hughes challenged the arguments advanced against his admission in a manner which cast Trotsky in a less than positive light.

Trotsky had blood on his hands? True — but so did British generals. Trotsky had been responsible for the murder of the Tsar and his family? True — but regicide had been committed during the English Civil War as well. Trotsky had written articles attacking members of the then Labour government? True — but there had been so many inaccuracies in those articles that the source of Trotsky's information must have been the British Communist Party.

If the Labour government were to admit Trotsky, Hughes continued, then it could lead the Russian revolutionary not only to revise his low opinion of members of the government but also to moderate his own politics:

"If Trotsky comes and settles down in an English health resort, he will soon shed any illusions about the heavy civil war and the successful revolution in Britain. Let him be sent for treatment to Bath or Brighton or Bournemouth or Harrogate, and see Britain not through long-distance spectacles but at first hand. Trotsky is a realist. He would soon be applying for membership of the Fabian Society."

In his review of Trotsky's autobiography *My Life*, published in *Forward* in June of 1930, Hughes returned to the theme of how a first-hand acquaintance with Britain would transform Trotsky's political outlook. If the Labour government had granted Trotsky asylum, explained Hughes:

"It might have taught Trotsky that the overthrow of the British capitalist system and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in Buckingham Palace is not quite as simple a thing as it looks from Constantinople or Moscow. And if Trotsky had been allowed to settle down in England, he would not be long before realising that the British proletariat cannot afford to spend 30 shillings on even his autobiography and that no respectable Library Committee will approve of it."

(In a much shorter piece, published in April of 1934, Hughes again wrote that Trotsky should be granted refuge in Britain, suggesting that he might be allowed to live on a Scottish island such as Rothesay, Bute or Mull, where he "could be left in peace.")

However sympathetic Hughes might have been — and clearly was — to Trotsky's plight as an exile, this did not prevent him holding views about Stalinist Russia which were far removed from those of Trotsky. Nor did it prevent him from publishing articles about Russia in *Forward* in the early 1930s which were diametrically opposed to Trotsky's analysis of the Stalinist regime. Although Hughes and *Forward* were fiercely critical of the British Communist Party, at that time this did not extend to hostility towards the Stalinist system in Russia itself.

In the autumn 1930, for example, *Forward* carried a series of articles by Hughes, under the headline "A Socialist's View of Russia", covering his own visit to Russia earlier that year. The articles were scarcely critical. On the contrary, they leaned in the direction of defending Russia against criticism from the right.

In late 1932 *Forward* again carried a series of articles supportive of Stalinist Russia: "What Russia is Doing — The Socialist Plan" by Sydney Webb, "Is Russia So Bad? Hardships But Not Failures — How They Run the Factories" by GR Mitchison, and "British Press Attacks on Russia — The Case of the *Daily Telegraph*" by WP Coates (Secretary of the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee).

The articles culminated in a lengthy piece by Denis Nowell Pritt KC — who later achieved notoriety for his defence of the Moscow show-trials — in January of 1933 entitled "In an OGPU Prison Camp — How Russia Deals With its Thieves — Tackling the Crime Problem". According to Pritt:

"In accordance with the almost universal practice in Soviet Russia, practically the whole management of the colony [i.e. the penal labour camp of Bolshevo] is in the hands of the inhabitants, who form a 'collective' (or general meeting). … Once an entrant is in Bolshevo, he leads as nearly as possible the ordinary life of a Russian worker." (That life in a Russian prison camp scarcely differed from the life of an ordinary Russian worker was certainly true. But not in the sense that Pritt meant it.)

This series of articles was sandwiched between Hughes' review of volume one of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* (July, 1932) and his review of the second volume of the book (January, 1933). Hughes expressed admiration more for Trotsky's skills as a writer than for the sharpness of his political analysis, and lamented the inability of Trotsky and Stalin to work together (a view which could have been expressed only by someone who failed to grasp the irreconcilable contradiction between Trotsky's and Stalin's politics):

"One very able writer on Russia has described the clash of Trotsky and Stalin as the clash of the man of flame with the man of steel. Those who are far enough away not to be followers of either personality cannot but feel regret that these two evidently incompatible temperaments could not have worked together in a common cause. …"

"In a less gifted man this cocksuredness and dogmatism would irritate, and one cannot wonder that Trotsky with his caustic tongue

and egoism has made many bitter enemies. Many of his conclusions and generalisations are open to challenge, but still it cannot be denied that he is a writer of genius."

A later book review — that of Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed*, published in the *Forward* of 26 June, 1937 — indicated that Hughes adopted a far more hostile to the Stalinist regime in the course of the thirties: the review endorsed the analysis of the Soviet Union contained in the pages of *Revolution Betrayed*.

At the same time, however, Hughes clearly saw Stalin as a product of the October Revolution of 1917, in which the book's author had himself played such a prominent part: "Reading Trotsky's indictment of the Soviet state twenty years after its birth, the Menshevik Socialists will murmur: 'We told you so.' If the dead were able to write, what a review Martov would have written about Trotsky's book."

Hughes was dismissive of Trotsky's revolutionary socialism in general, and of its relevance for the native land of Fabianism in particular. And, like many of his contemporaries in the labour movement, Hughes had illusions in the alleged economic 'achievements' of what passed for planning in Stalinist Russia (although, over time, he adopted a more rigorously anti-Stalinist position).

But neither of these factors prevented Hughes from rallying to Trotsky's defence in the face of the calumnies hurled against him in the Stalinist show-trials of 1936-38.

The show-trials of 1936 were reported and criticised by Hughes in the pages of *Forward*, leading Pritt to break off relations with Hughes (at least for the time being). Later the same year the pages of the paper were opened up to a debate, which continued into the early months of 1937, between Hughes and Zelda Coates (a leading figure in the Anglo-Russian Friendship Committee, and wife of WP Coates), in which the latter defended the trials and the accusations levelled against Trotsky.

Hughes also backed the call for an international commission of investigation to which Trotsky could present his refutation of the allegations raised against him. In the *Forward* of 3 April, 1937, Hughes published a letter from Hilary Sumner-Boyd — secretary of the British Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky, and also a prominent member of the Trotskyist Marxist League — appealing for funds to help cover the costs of the commission of investigation, and for affidavits concerning Trotsky's movements in the preceding seven years (in order to rebut Stalinists falsehoods concerning Trotsky's alleged meetings with fascist agents).

When a commission of investigation — the Dewey Commission — was eventually set up later that month, its proceedings and conclusions were covered by Hughes in *Forward* in articles such as "Trotsky and His Accusers — Inquiry into the Moscow Trials — The Proceedings in Mexico" (November, 1937), "Dewey Commission Findings — Trotsky Found Not Guilty" (January, 1938), and "Why These Moscow Executions — Trotsky Answers on Some Questions" (January, 1938).

Hughes' readiness to defend Trotsky was manifested not just in the pages of *Forward*. In May of 1937, in a letter to be read out at a meeting in defence of Trotsky in Essex Hall in London, Hughes declared: "It is the duty of all socialists, whether Right or Left, to stand fearlessly by the truth always. That is why in this particular controversy I am on the side of Comrade Trotsky."

By late 1937 Hughes had also begun to publish articles in *Forward* written by Trotsky, now living in Coyoacan in Mexico, and to engage in direct correspondence with him. The link with Trotsky had been established through Sumner-Boyd, who, in his capacity as secretary of the British Defence Committee, had circulated statements by Trotsky to the press in Britain and had encountered a positive response from Hughes.

The first of Trotsky's articles was published in the *Forward* of 11 December, 1937: "Cain in the Kremlin — Stalin Can Kill — But He Cannot Stop the Truth", in which Trotsky denounced Stalin's crimes against the working class not just in Russia but also in Spain, at that time in the throes of a civil war, and other European countries.

Three days later, albeit obviously unaware of the recent publication of one of his articles, Trotsky wrote to Hughes to thank him for material already published in *Forward* in his defence, and to offer him further articles despite the obvious differences between his politics and those of *Forward*:

"Thank you for your friendly letter of November 29 and for your review on 'The Cause of Leon Trotsky'. I have had the possibility in the past of reading the *Forward* only episodically. I believe that we agree on some questions but disagree on many others. This cannot prevent me from writing in your weekly.

My friend Sumner sent me your letter to him where you raise the question of royalties. It is true that I publish from time to time articles in the bourgeois press and that my literary agent tries to secure a corresponding payment: that is the only possibility for assuring our sustenance.

But nine tenths of my time is devoted to articles, pamphlets, and letters for the revolutionary publications and for individual comrades, and the revolutionary papers are so poverty-stricken that there can be no question of royalties.

I will send you all the articles I send to the other working-class papers in different countries. You can use everything you find of interest to you. If your paper is capable of paying some modest royalties, you can send them to my son in Paris. His address is *Bulletin of the Opposition*, Libraire du Travail, 17 Rue de Sambre et Meuse, Paris 10e, France. But it is not a condition on my part for the publication of articles. Today I am sending you an article concerning a conversation with journalists on the verdict of the Commission on Inquiry.

If sometimes you should want an exclusive article for the *Forward*, you should indicate to me the topic presenting a special political interest for your readers at the time. With best greetings, yours sincerely, Leon Trotsky."

The subsequent issue of *Forward* (18 December, 1937) printed a response to Trotsky's article from William Gallacher, the one-time chair of the Clyde Workers Committee who had gone on to be a founder-member of the British Communist Party and had been elected as a Communist Party MP for West Fife in 1935.

In his letter Gallacher claimed that he had never read such "unbalanced raving" as that to be found in Trotsky's article. In Trotsky's "disordered mind", continued Gallacher, "there is the one central driving thought: 'Destroy Stalin'" — the same Stalin, claimed Gallacher, who had "proved the correctness of Lenin's teaching that socialism could be built in one country." The "vile stuff" of "the poisonous Goebbels" and "the paranoic Streicher" was surpassed only by Trotsky's "spewing out uncontrolled truths."

"Can anyone reading the articles in your columns," asked Gallacher rhetorically, "doubt that this man (Trotsky) would hesitate at espionage, wrecking or assassination to satisfy his hatred of Stalin and all that Stalin represents?" (The omission of the word "not" after "would" is the least of the sentence's defects.) Concluding with an attack on Trotsky's criticisms of the counter-revolutionary role played by Stalinism in the Spanish civil war, Gallacher denounced Trotsky for "coming out full blast as an ally of the Fascists against the People's Government of Spain."

The *Forward* of 25 December carried another letter by Gallacher, this time in response to an article entitled "Communists in Spain — Mr. John McGovern Accuses Them of Brutality Equal to Fascism". (McGovern was an Independent Labour Party MP. The article in question had been published in Forward the previous week.)

Under the headline "Gallacher Replies to McGovern — Cheka in Barcelona — Is the ILP Helping Franco?", Gallacher's letter defended the Stalinist repression of the POUM in Spain on the grounds that it was a front for fascists: "However honest certain members of the POUM might be, the directing agency was controlled by friends of Franco." (The POUM was a Spanish socialist organisation whose members were being imprisoned and murdered by the Stalinists in Spain.)

For a few weeks the controversy triggered by Hughes' publication of an article by Trotsky was pushed into the background by the controversy triggered by the article by McGovern. As subsequent correspondence from Trotsky to Hughes indicated, the controversy had been followed by Trotsky himself.

In its first issue of 1938 (1 January) *Forward* carried a letter from the then Communist Party full-timer Harry McShane, attacking McGovern's criticisms of the role of the Communist Party in Spain and also defending the repression of the POUM.

"The POUM opposed every measure designed to strengthen the anti-fascist forces," explained McShane. Consequently, "the Communist Party rightly demanded the consolidation of the front and the cleaning-up of the rear." ("Cleaning up" was, of course, a euphemism for the arrest, torture and murder of socialists by the

NKVD agents operating in Spain.) Imitating Gallacher's penchant for rhetorical questions, McShane asked: "Does McGovern not see that he is saying the same as Hitler, Mussolini and Franco?"

The *Forward* of 15 January carried another letter by McShane, written in response to a letter from Ethel MacDonald ("More Allegations Against Communists — The Cheka in Spain") which had been published in the *Forward* of 8 January. MacDonald was a former member of the Independent Labour Party who had turned to anarchism (initially the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation, and then the United Socialist Movement). She had recently visited Spain with another local anarchist, Jenny Patrick, and had been arrested and imprisoned by the fascists.

McShane dismissed what MacDonald had to say about Spain: "No person having got beyond believing in Santa Claus will be led away by that kind of stuff." The Spanish Communist Party's line was to "carry to its conclusion the people's democratic revolution." It therefore fully supported the Spanish government taking "more stern measures to prevent treachery and betrayal behind the scenes." Any attempt to "defend these criminals (i.e. the POUM) is to help Franco."

McShane concluded with a personal attack on MacDonald: "She has never tried to understand Communist policy. I suspect that her thinking is done for her." In response, MacDonald gave McShane short shrift. In a letter published in *Forward* a fortnight later (29 January) she wrote:

"Mr McShane says that I have an anti-Stalin obsession. That may be true. This only means that I have an understanding of revolution and an impulse towards liberty. I confess to my hatred of Stalinists. I hate the Communist Party from A to Z. From Stalin to Harry McShane. …"

"He (McShane) says I have never tried to understand Communist policy," continued MacDonald, "let me say it is very hard for me to understand brutal calculated murder. Personally, I do not think tyranny calls for understanding. It demands overthrow or destruction."

(In what is commonly referred to as McShane's autobiography, *No Mean Fighter*, the role of the Communist Party in building support for Spanish Republicans is described as "probably the best thing the Communist Party did in that period … (and) very important in Scotland because of the strength of the Catholic Church."

At the same time, reference is made in the book to the fact that "there were many bad incidents in Spain. It became obvious that the communists were labelling the anarchists and other socialists as 'Trotskyists' and shooting some of them. … The ILP circulated all these stories, of course, but we dismissed them as ILP propaganda."

McShane's own role in disseminating Stalinist lies is not mentioned in *No Mean Fighter*. Whether this omission can be blamed on McShane himself is another question. After the book's publication McShane wrote:

"Over a long period Joan Smith brought a tape-recorder every Tuesday. … It was later that I discovered that the material was to be used by Pluto Press for an autobiography. I have opposed this but have suggested that Joan Smith use it for a biography under her own name. I have not written a word. I did not even see the proofs of the book before it was finished. … The decision to put it out in its present form and with my name as joint author was not mine.")

On 17 January Trotsky wrote to Hughes, sending him further material for publication, as well as turning down Hughes' suggestion that he respond to Gallacher's letter which had been published in the *Forward* of 18 December:

"I am sending you the article which you can use exclusively in England (sic). You can, if you find it advisable, make an introductory note in the sense that the question which forms the title was posed to me by you and that the article is in answer to this question.

You ask me whether I care to answer to Mr Gallagher (sic). I do not have the slightest inclination to do so. The Stalinist bureaucracy and thus the Comintern are mortally wounded. The Gallaghers are too simple-minded to notice it in time, but they also cannot avoid the approaching agony. Really, the Gallaghers don't deserve an answer. With best greetings, yours sincerely, Leon Trotsky."

Five days later Trotsky again wrote to Hughes, requesting that he publish an article, or at least excerpts from an article, which he had written about Kronstadt ("The Hue and Cry About Kronstadt"), in response to comments made by MacDonald in one of her letters about the role of the Stalinists in Spain:

"Thanks for your letter of January 7 with the interesting clippings and your correspondence with Mr Pritt. I enjoyed your answer very much. In this connection I will mention a visit I received last summer from the editor of *Nation and New Statesman*. I asked this gentleman if Mr. Pritt was bought by Moscow. He replied that Pritt is an honest man but very 'simple-minded'.

I cannot help mentioning that the honourable editor came to me after lunch very 'high'. He tried to express very inarticulately his doubts about my public statements. I told him that he had the right to doubt but I could not see the reason for his coming to express his doubts in my home. Then this gentleman wrote in his weekly that after his visit he became more doubtful than ever.

Really, it is very difficult to have a very high estimation for some of these leaders of public opinion. The more precious are people who build for themselves their own opinion and have the courage to defend it. That was the case with you on the Moscow Trials.

I am sending you with pleasure two photographs, one with my wife, and one a close-up. My friend and collaborator, Hansen, sent you an article about Kronstadt. I doubted that you could use it, but in your issue of January 8 (no. 2, vol. 32) page 9, column 4, I find this sentence by Mrs (sic) Ethel MacDonald: '… as at Kronstadt the Moscow gang murdered the flower of the Russian revolution.'

I see from these lines that Mrs Ethel MacDonald does not have the slightest idea of the matter about which she speaks. The legend about Kronstadt was created by Anarchists. I do not know whether Ethel MacDonald is an anarchist but she displays solidarity with them in ignorance. If you cannot publish my article as a whole, you can possibly give some of the more important excerpts with a reference to the declaration of Ethel MacDonald.

Yes, I remember that Mr Gallacher was made immortal in 'Infantile Sickness of the Left'. Times have changed, however, and now he should be mentioned in the 'Senile Sickness of the Right'. Sincerely yours, Leon Trotsky."

Hughes did not publish "The Hue and Cry About Kronstadt", nor any excerpts from it. And it is not difficult to see why. Defending Trotsky against the Stalinist slander campaign was one thing. Publicising Trotsky's politics — save where they concerned his criticisms of the Stalinist regime — was quite another.

Just as Hughes had defended Trotsky in 1929 as the victim of an unjust decision by the British Labour government, so too in the late thirties Hughes readily defended Trotsky as the victim of a grotesquely unjust Stalinist frame-up. Given that broad layers of the labour movement in Britain looked to the Soviet Union as a bulwark against fascism, and as proof of the superiority of socialist planning, Hughes' decision to defend Trotsky required some degree of courage.

But neither Hughes' sympathy with Trotsky the underdog nor the mutual personal sympathy evident to some degree in the correspondence between Hughes and Trotsky should be confused with actual political sympathies on Hughes' part for Trotsky's revolutionary socialism.

By the late thirties *Forward* was essentially a mainstream, but far from uncritical, Labour-left paper. It attacked the Independent Labour Party, which had split from the Labour Party in 1932, from the right, and the Communist Party from both the right and the left. It had also begun to develop a morbid fascination with the internal machinations of the various factions on Glasgow City Council, especially after Labour had taken control of the council in 1933.

Trotsky's politics were therefore inevitably alien to the politics which permeated the pages of *Forward* — and equally alien to the politics of the newspaper's editor.

Nor was "The Hue and Cry About Kronstadt" the only article forwarded from Coyoacan to Hughes which the latter chose not to publish. But the fact that these other articles went unpublished was more likely a result of editorial judgement than political judgement. Whilst being prepared to defend Trotsky, Hughes presumably chose to impose limits on the amount of space he thought appropriate to devote to Trotsky's defence. Despite the eventual appearance of a London edition of Forward, the paper was, after all, largely concerned with Clydeside politics.

Other articles received by Hughes but not published included: "A Forced Declaration" (Trotsky's response to a series of slanderous attacks on him by Stalinist trade union leaders in Mexico); "On the Fate of Rudolf Klement" (dealing with the murder of Trotsky's former secretary); "Leon Sedoff — Son, Friend, Fighter" (a tribute to

Willie Gallacher

Trotsky's murdered son); "The Defendants Zelensky and Ivanov", "The Million Dollars", "To the Attention of Thinking People", and "Anachronisms" (all of which dealt with the Moscow trials).

An untitled piece about the third Moscow show-trial and Trotsky's lengthy statement on the shortcomings of the investigation by the French authorities into his son's death likewise went unpublished, as too did a collection of press releases about the trial of Bukharin which were sent to Hughes by Trotsky's secretary, Joseph Hansen, in March of 1938.

As his first letter to Hughes had made clear, Trotsky was well aware of the basic political differences between himself and Hughes. While recognising that not all articles sent to Glasgow were likely to end up in the pages of *Forward*, he hoped that Hughes would publish whatever he considered appropriate. In the covering letter sent to Hughes with "A Forced Declaration", for example, Hansen wrote that Hughes was welcome to use the article and the other press releases sent to him. But:

"Let me again repeat, you are under no obligation to use them at all, unless you feel that they are in line with publicity requirements of your paper. Comrade Trotsky wanted me to emphasise that you are to use only those that are timely for your public. … Thanks for the copies of the *Forward*. We read it with keen interest."

Following the publication of "Cain in the Kremlin" in December of 1937, the next article by Trotsky to be published by *Forward* was "What is Happening in Russia?". This had been sent to Hughes with Trotsky's letter of 17 January, 1938, and was published in *Forward* in two parts, in the issues of 12 February and 19 February. Publication of the article coincided with, and added further stimulus to, a spirited defence of Stalin by William Gallacher in the letters page of the newspaper.

In a letter published in the issue of 22 January — provoked by the article "Why These Moscow Executions — Trotsky Answers on Some Questions" — Gallacher argued that the fascists were working for an uprising in the Soviet Union, the "Trotskyites" were working for an uprising in Soviet Union, and any uprising in the Soviet Union would be a signal for a fascist invasion of the country. "Who would dare to say that these criminals are not working in an alliance, either organised or ideological?" asked Gallacher. After all, "however mental Trotsky may be, he isn't a fool."

Following a further letter, in the issue of 12 February, in which he described Stalin as someone "whom I look on as a genius in line with Marx, Engels and Lenin, as the greatest leader of the working class in the present period," Gallacher responded to Trotsky's "What is Happening in Russia?" in a letter published in the *Forward* of 5 March. Gallacher began by dismissing Trotsky's argument that the Stalinist purges involved the liquidation of his political opponents:

"All of these men, years before, were expelled from the Party. They were down and out politically. They counted for nothing. If Stalin had wanted to be rid of them, he was rid of them. They were finished. However, they begged to be taken back and given another chance. They were taken back and given responsible posts. … Did that show a desire to get rid of them? No, the whole desire was to save them, but their own treacheries had put them beyond saving."

Returning to theme of the uprising which Trotsky was allegedly planning and the consequent threat of a fascist invasion, Gallacher wrote such an invasion could not occur, "unless those who were planning the 'uprising' had already 'bought off' the fascist states with territorial and economic concessions. That's what Trotsky and his colleagues, all of whom were plotting an 'uprising', were trying to work out with Germany and Japan."

"That's why," Gallacher concluded, "all the executions took place in Moscow. Those who were executed were not 'Stalin's opponents'. They were colleagues of Trotsky and, as such, traitors to the Soviet Union."

The issue of *Forward* which contained Gallacher's diatribe also carried another article by Trotsky: "The Death of Sedoff", a much shorter piece than the article entitled "Leon Sedoff — Son, Friend, Fighter" which Hughes chose not to publish. In the following three months *Forward* published "A Key to the Russian Trials" (16 April), "Fair Play for Mexico — An Appeal to British Labour" (7 May), and "Chamberlain and Mexico" (25 June).

Thereafter *Forward* published articles by Trotsky less frequently. "Soviet Diplomats as Stalin's Scapegoats — Will There Be More Trials?" was published in the issue of 20 August, "Russia and Japan — Why There Has Been No War" in the issue of 3 September, and the final article by Trotsky, "Is World War Inevitable?", in the issue of 27 May, 1939.

Just as articles by Trotsky appeared less frequently in the pages of *Forward*, so too the correspondence between Hughes and Trotsky became more intermittent (although a comparison of the correspondence in Hughes' papers with the catalogue of the Harvard archive of Trotsky's writings indicates that Hughes' papers are far from being a full file of the correspondence between them).

In a letter dated 1 December, 1938, Trotsky wrote to thank Hughes for having sent a book about Churchill, and referred to a recent meeting between Hughes and the leading American Trotskyist, James P Cannon:

"I have just received your letter of November 15th, in which you write that you are sending a copy of Churchill's book. I take this occasion to tell you that my close friend, Jim Cannon, wrote me about you with sincere admiration, in spite of profound divergence of political conception.

From your letter to Hansen I see with pleasure that you also had a good impression of Cannon. My thanks and best wishes to you. Comradely yours, Leon Trotsky.

P.S. When I receive the book I shall consider what I can do with the 'new leader of Western democracy'."

On 3 April, 1939, Hughes wrote to confirm that he had received a copy of Trotsky's interview with Sybil Vincent, a journalist working for the *Daily Herald*, and undertook to publish at least part of it if the *Daily Herald* failed to do so, due to "the tendency in the *Herald* and the London popular press to print only short articles."

Turning to the question of the looming war and its likely consequences, Hughes wrote: "I agree with most of your analysis that the 'new world war will provoke with absolute inevitability the world revolution and the collapse of the capitalist system'." Indeed, wrote Hughes, "our ruling classes are incapable of running a war." (The latter was a theme which Hughes would return to after war had broken out.)

But the outbreak of war, continued Hughes, would see socialists "isolated for a time". During that period it was only those socialists "who have not been confused by the war catchwords and phrases (who) will remain as loyal to the fundamental principles of International Socialism as you have done for so long." Trotksy replied to Hughes' letter on 22 April:

"Thank you sincerely for your letter of April 3rd. Undoubtedly

there are thousands upon thousands of British workers and honest and revolutionary intellectuals who think as you do. They are simply stifled; but not so much by the state machine as by the machine of the official workers' organisations. The war they are preparing will break both these machines.

In the catastrophe of war the most disoriented, confused and cowardly will be the present magnificent leaders of the workers' organisations, of the Second and Third Internationals. The masses will look for a new orientation, a new direction, and will find them.

You are right that the first chapter of the war will be a chapter of nationalistic madness. But the more terrible the war and the war hysteria, the more crushing will be the mass reaction. Not to lose one's head and to look forward to the future — the next future — with open eyes, is the highest revolutionary duty. With fraternal greetings, Leon Trotsky."

Four months later, following the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact on 23 August, Nazi Germany invaded Poland on 1 September. Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September, and Russia invaded Poland on 17 September. A week later, in the *Forward* of 23 September, Hughes quoted Trotsky at length, and cited him as the source of the most incisive analysis of this sequence of events:

"The clearest and truest statement on the Russian situation that appeared in the world press on Monday came not from Moscow but from Mexico. … I do not agree with everything Trotsky says or writes — far from it. But socialists the world over would be wise to get out of their heads all the rubbish about Trotsky which has been broadcast by the Stalinist propaganda machine and to realise that in his analysis of the Russian and the international situation Trotsky has not been so very far wrong."

The last article by Hughes about Trotsky which appeared in *Forward* was his obituary for him, published in the *Forward* of 31 August, 1940. It summed up the themes which had run through Hughes' earlier articles about Trotsky and his writings: a careful distancing of Hughes from Trotsky's politics, and a view of Trotsky as responsible, at least in part, for the emergence of the Stalinist regime, coupled with admiration for Trotsky as a writer and a socialist who remained unbending in his commitment to socialism.

"I was never a Trotskyite," explained Hughes, quoting Trotsky's letter of December 1937 ("… I believe that we agree on some questions but disagree on many others. …") as evidence of this. It was on the basis of "recognising his brilliance as a journalist (that) we published articles from his pen," continued Hughes.

Trotsky had been "bitterly disappointed" that he had not succeeded to the "mantle of Lenin". He had "found himself thrust aside by a rival who was just as anxious as he was to fill Lenin's shoes, and who was more skilful in manipulating the party machine." But Trotsky's quarrel with Stalin was "not just a personal feud". For Trotsky had "remained the world revolutionary, the student of history, thinking always in terms of international change, always looking forward to the collapse and disintegration of the old imperialisms and striving impatiently and restlessly for the new world."

But, continued Hughes, "there has been no greater irony in modern history than the fate of Trotsky, the advocate of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Russia, the apologist for revolutionary ruthlessness and violence — the leader of the Red Army — being destroyed by the methods of political terrorism which he had defended in the belief that they would preserve revolutionary socialism. … (Trotsky was) the most illustrious victim of the dictatorship he had done so much to create. That was how the Dictatorship of the Proletariat worked out in practice."

Trotsky was someone about whom "more romantic nonsense has probably been written than about any contemporary personality." But, indisputably, "he remained the Ishmael of international politics — 'his hand against every man's, and every man's against his' — and to the end supremely confident that the World Revolution was inevitable, and that his theories and prophecies and ideas would prevail." Although "the assassin was always at the door", he "remained undaunted to the end".

Trotsky's life had been "the Odyssey of an outstanding and courageous revolutionary socialist who made many mistakes, suffered for them, and yet retained his indomitable courage to the end." He had been among those who were "in the vanguard of his day and led the way to a world in which International Socialism will triumph over war."

If Hughes' undoubted admiration for Trotsky on a personal level is apparent from his obituary, the distance which Hughes had always sought to place between his own politics and those of Trotsky was even more apparent from the eclectic political contents of *Forward* at this time.

In line with Hughes' long-standing editorial practice of opening the pages of *Forward* to articles with which he was in fundamental disagreement, the paper carried articles and letters defending the Stalin-Hitler pact and the Soviet invasion of Poland (even if such contributions were in a distinct minority).

Rather more space was given over to the official Labour Party line, which, as Hughes put it, "of course, strongly supports Mr. Churchill's government and its war policy," with the result that *Forward* carried articles condemning wartime strikes ("Cast Out These Strikes!").

While lengthy articles explaining and defending Labour Party policy were relegated to the inside pages, the front pages carried lead-articles by Hughes himself, in which he advocated "a socialist peace with Germany".

Hitler, explained Hughes, was a product of the Versailles Treaty. The war against Germany only strengthened his position, by allowing him to appear as the defender of Germany against imperialism. The task of overthrowing Hitler was the task of the German people, not that of the Western powers at war with Germany. The conclusion of a "socialist peace" with Germany would therefore facilitate the overthrow of fascism by the German people, and such a peace should be concluded as quickly as possible.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941, Hughes also adopted a distinctly conciliatory tone towards the Soviet Union. In an article published in the *Forward* of 20 September, 1941, Hughes wrote:

"Long may this new admiration for the Russians, this spirit of fraternal solidarity continue. It is long past time that we tried to understand Russia. We owe Russia a debt, not only for taking the fire off us but also for our hostility and hatred in the years that have gone by when we might have helped Russia in the task of building up her industries and helped her when millions knew famine and hunger."

All this — the Communist Party line, the Labour Party line, and Hughes' own contributions — was far removed from Trotsky's concept of a "Proletarian Military Policy": an attempt to break down capitalist control of the armed forces and link the revolutionary struggle for control over the armed forces to the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

And the Proletarian Military Policy certainly had nothing in common with pleas to the ruling classes for a "socialist peace" with Nazi Germany.

Hughes' rediscovered admiration for the Soviet Union continued into the post-war years. As a Member of Parliament from 1946 onwards he belonged to an informal grouping of MPs which brought together Communist Party MPs with fellow-traveller Labour and ex-Labour MPs. The former included William Gallacher (who remained MP for West Fife until 1950). The latter included DN Pritt (Independent Labour MP for Hammersmith from 1945 until 1950).

These were the same Gallacher and Pritt with whom, less than a decade earlier, Hughes had clashed in his defence of Trotsky.

"For a long time *Forward* was the only newspaper in Britain that dared to publish articles from Trotsky," wrote Hughes shortly after the outbreak of war (*Forward*, 23 September, 1939). This was no idle boast. Stalinism was nowhere near as powerful in Britain as it was in other European countries. But it was certainly influential enough, especially on Clydeside, to stifle most of the few voices on the left which were raised in Trotsky's defence.

Notwithstanding the correspondence between Hughes and Trotsky, however, Hughes' sympathies always lay with Trotsky's plight, not his politics. As Hughes openly and repeatedly acknowledged, he was "never a Trotskyite". He saw Stalin as a direct product of the October Revolution, and Trotsky as a victim of the terror which he himself had brought into being.

But neither that nor Hughes' subsequent political evolution should detract from acknowledging his courage in being prepared to take a public stand — in the epicentre of British Stalinism — against the Stalinist witch-hunt of Trotsky and other victims of the Stalinist terror.

Home Rule: New Labour's Liberal heritage

Home Rule for Scotland was first advocated by the Liberal Party leader Gladstone in the course of the 1870s. In 1871 he argued that if Ireland were to be granted Home Rule, then so too should Scotland. By 1879 he was claiming that the man who achieved Home Rule for Scotland would "confer a blessing on his country."

While the supremacy of the "Imperial Parliament" was to be maintained, Home Rule for Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England would allow "questions of local and special interest to themselves to be dealt with more efficiently." Home Rule would also constitute "the attainment of a great national good" for Britain as a whole.

Having adopted Home Rule as their official policy in the early 1880s, the Scottish Liberals founded the Scottish Home Rule Association in 1886. Home Rule was to be the mechanism through which the great Liberal causes of disestablishmentarianism, temperance, and, above all, land reform would be taken forward.

Liberal MPs subsequently moved a succession of Home Rule motions and bills in Parliament. Between 1889 and 1914 four different bills were introduced, and Home Rule was debated on a total of fifteen occasions. The fourth bill had already achieved its second reading when the outbreak of war resulted in its abandonment.

The Liberals' commitment to Home Rule had been taken up by the Scottish Labour Party (SLP), founded by Keir Hardie in 1888 after he had contested the mid-Lanark by-election as a Labour and Home Rule candidate.

Hardie himself came from a radical-Liberal political background. He had been a member of the Liberal Party in Lanarkshire until his candidature of 1888. He was the secretary of his local branch of the pro-temperance Independent Order of Good Templars and a vice-president of the Scottish Home Rule Association.

Hardie was not the only founding member of the SLP to come from a radical-Liberal background. Robert Cunninghame Graham, for example, was still a sitting Liberal MP when he became SLP President in 1888. He remained a member of the Liberal Party until the general election of 1892, which he contested, unsuccessfully, as an SLP candidate.

The involvement of land reformers in the SLP – Hardie's electoral intervention of 1888 had won more support from land reformers than from trade unionists – reinforced the party's commitment to Home Rule. In the radical-Liberal tradition land reform was inseparable from Home Rule: partly because of a perceived analogy with Ireland, and partly because Westminster was seen as the bastion of the Tory champions of landlordism.

After a particularly poor showing in the 1892 general election, when several of its candidates had stood as "True Liberals", the SLP was quickly absorbed into the Independent Labour Party (ILP). The SLP's commitment to Home Rule was likewise absorbed.

As John MacCormick, the ex-ILPer who went on to found the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish National Party, later wrote: "The ILP had inherited much of the old Radical (i.e. Liberal) tradition of Scotland. … Home Rule was inherited along with other items of the Radical faith."

Despite the party's support for Home Rule, the ILP's Scottish paper initially carried only infrequent articles on the issue – often written by radical Liberals, whom the ILP continued to regard as political allies. Occasional Home Rule articles also appeared in sporadic attempts to revive the earlier alliance with land reformers which had helped bring about the SLP.

In the early years of the twentieth century other labour organisations in Scotland showed even less enthusiasm for Home Rule than did the ILP.

No Home Rule campaigning was conducted by the various bodies set up to promote the cause of labour representation – the Scottish United Trades Councils' Labour Party, the Scottish Workers Parliamentary Elections Committee, or the Scottish Workers Representation Committee. The Scottish TUC (STUC) itself had no policy on Home Rule for the first seventeen years of its existence.

The unanimous adoption of a Home Rule motion by the STUC congress of 1914, however, marked the beginning of a decade-long upsurge of support for Home Rule in the labour movement in Scotland.

In 1916 the STUC again passed a Home Rule motion, although only after "a negative had been moved and seconded". Its 1918 congress called for the inauguration of a Scottish Parliament "at the earliest possible moment" due to the "neglect of Scottish interests and the growing congestion of public business in the Imperial Parliament." The same motion called for "Scotland as a nation to be directly represented at the (post-war) Peace Conference (in Paris)."

Speaking at the 1919 TUC congress, the STUC's vice-chairman linked the case for Home Rule to the rationale for the STUC's existence: "The Scottish trade union movement generally exercises the function of a Home Rule body. … We believe that the time has come when Home Rule for Scotland, Wales, Ireland and England is necessary, in order to relieve the pressure upon the Imperial Parliament at Westminster."

He continued: "As a matter of fact, the Imperial Parliament would be enormously strengthened by the establishment of Home Rule in the different countries of the United Kingdom. I would apply that illustration to the Scottish Congress in relation to the parent body (the TUC). You represent 5,250,000 people this week, at this Congress, and that is an unwieldy membership for one body to control."

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party, established in 1915, passed motions in support of Home Rule at each of its annual conferences in the following eight years. In 1918, mirroring the position adopted by the STUC, its conference passed a motion in favour of separate Scottish representation at the Paris Peace Conference, albeit in the form of separate Scottish labour movement representation.

At its 1919 conference a draft Home Rule Bill for a future Labour government was circulated by the Executive Council. Its preamble stated: "Whereas Scotland, though temporarily deprived, without the consent of her people, and by corrupt means, in 1707, of the exercise of her right to self-determination, is at present, as anciently, entitled to legislate for the governance of her national affairs in a Parliament of her own, the full exercise of that right is hereby restored."

Home Rule was also backed at this time by the Scottish co-operative movement. This was reflected in its domination of the General Council of the Scottish Home Rule Association (re-launched in 1918 by ILP member Roland Muirhead): its General Council consisted of 31 delegates from co-operative bodies, compared with 11 delegates from trade union bodies, five from Trades Councils, and three from ILP branches.

In the immediate post-war years the Scottish ILP pursued the demand for Home Rule with particular vigour. Its 1919 conference voted in favour of Home Rule, but against a motion advocating "a Scottish socialist government". Its 1922 conference went a step further and passed a motion advocating the creation of a Scottish constituent assembly to decide on the form of government for Scotland.

ILP members elected as Labour MPs campaigned inside and out-

side of Parliament for implementation of the ILP's pro-Home-Rule policy.

At a 35,000 strong rally held in Glasgow in 1924, James Maxton told the crowd: "We mean to tell them (Westminster MPs) they can do what they like about English children, but that they are not going to suffer Scottish children to die." At another rally the following year Maxton declared that he could "ask for no greater pleasure in life (than to make) the English-ridden, capitalist-ridden, landlord-ridden Scotland into a Scottish socialist commonwealth."

The same year George Buchanan, another ILP/Labour MP, moved a Home Rule Bill in Parliament: decision-making on most domestic issues would be devolved to a Scottish Parliament, which would have limited tax-raising powers and an annual subsidy of £500,000 from the British Exchequer. Such a parliament, explained Buchanan, would end the parliamentary delays in dealing with purely Scottish matters.

Buchanan further explained: "Our historical and cultural traditions are different; our racial characteristics are different. The Celt has long memories, the Englishman forgets quickly. There are members on these benches who fight their electoral battles upon, say, the Battle of the Boyne. We have members on these benches who fight them on the Battle of Bannockburn. … We can never obliterate these national characteristics."

In 1927 a further Home Rule Bill was moved by James Barr, also an ILP/Labour MP. This involved the transfer of virtually all government functions from London to Scotland, the withdrawal of Scottish MPs from Westminster, and, mirroring the status of the Irish Free State, conferring independent dominion status on Scotland.

This wave of support for Home Rule reflected a continuing adherence by the labour movement in Scotland to political values inherited from Liberalism, and from the radical Liberals in particular. It was hardly a coincidence that this post-war upsurge of labour movement support for Home Rule had been preceded by the defection of a number of former radical Liberals to the Labour Party.

In moving his 1927 Bill James Barr, himself a former radical Liberal, highlighted the link between the demand for Home Rule and the values of radical Liberalism. According to Barr, the question of Home Rule involved "matters of temperance, matters of religious equality, and the great principles of moral and social advance."

Temperance had been adopted "amid cheers and counter-cheers" as STUC policy in 1920: "This Congress reaffirms its opinion that the total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors will be a great advantage to the workers of this country." By 47 votes to 15, temperance had also been adopted as Labour Party policy in Scotland the same year.

(When the Dundee Prohibitionist MP Edwin Scrymgeour moved his Liquor Traffic Bill in Parliament in 1923 – proposing a five year jail sentence for trading in alcohol – most of the fourteen votes he secured came from Scottish ILP/Labour MPs.)

"Matters of religious equality" had been another labour movement concern. When the revised Anglican Prayer Book, a purely English matter, was debated in Parliament in 1927, the votes of Scottish Labour MPs helped secure its rejection: its contents were anathema to the principles of Presbyterianism. As one ILP/Labour MP subsequently put it: "I couldna look my forefolks in the face if I didna vote the nicht."

Referring to the proposed union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, Buchanan had likewise stressed the importance of religious questions in proposing his Bill of 1924: "On a question of dealing with the religious feelings and aspirations of the Scottish people, members (of Parliament) largely alien to our views should not be called upon in the main to decide a question of which they have no knowledge or thoughts."

Apart from its importance for "matters of temperance and matters of religious equality", Home Rule had found support in the STUC and the Scottish co-operative movement in the immediate post-war years as it coincided with their own particular concerns about the failure of the state authorities and the labour movement at an all-British level to accord them the recognition which they merited.

The Scottish co-operative movement had been angered by attempts by the leadership of the movement in London to undermine its autonomy, and by the manner in which the state authorities had by-passed it during the wartime distribution of foodstuffs.

The STUC had likewise been angered by the government's failure to accord it representation on the various local and national tripartite committees set up during the war. It had been equally angered by the Labour Party's rejection of its demand that the STUC, as the official representative of Scottish trade unionists, should be accorded an automatic presence on all Labour Party bodies.

Low-level Scottish nationalism was another factor contributing to the post-war upsurge of Home Rule agitation: if the Great War had been fought over "the rights of small nations", it was only logical that the small nation of Scotland should be able to exercise its rights. Such nationalist sentiments had found expression in the preamble to the Labour Party draft Bill of 1919 and in Buchanan's motivation of his 1924 Bill.

But even before Barr tabled his Home Rule Bill of 1927 – opposed by the STUC and most Labour MPs because of its sweeping proposals – support for Home Rule had already begun to wane in the labour movement in Scotland.

A sustained employers' offensive – exemplified by the miners' lock-out of 1921, the engineers' lock-out of 1922, the Dundee jute workers' lock-out of 1923, and the attack on miners' pay which resulted in the General Strike of 1926 – and a consequent collapse in trade union membership resulted in calls for a more integrated all-British labour movement. In the slump conditions of the 1920s it was employers, not the unions, who favoured devolved pay bargaining.

Ongoing economic stagnation and decline undermined the credibility of the demand for Home Rule. By 1932 around 400,000 Scots, over a quarter of the working population, were unemployed. In individual industries the unemployment rate was even higher: 58% in shipbuilding and repair, 30% in metal processing, and 30% in jute and flax. Between 1931 and 1935 the number of people in receipt of poor relief in Scotland more than doubled, from 206,000 to 437,000.

Whereas in 1913 the Clyde had launched some 750,000 tons of shipping, in 1933 it launched just 56,000 tons. Between 1929 and 1931 coal production fell by a quarter, steel by a half, and iron by three quarters. The number of new factories being opened in Scotland in the early 1930s was outstripped by the number being closed. Between 1932 and 1935 72 factories were opened in Scotland, but 123 were shut down.

The impact of the economic crisis – even worse in Scotland than in England – destroyed the mood of optimism which had helped sustain the demand for Home Rule in the immediate post-war years.

The crisis, as even ILP members who had previously been enthusiasts for Home Rule now argued, could be ended only by mobilising greater resources than those that could be mustered in Scotland alone. Advancing the interests of the Scottish working class required a focus on securing change at the level of the British state.

(This involved more than a change in attitude to Home Rule. It also involved, and much more fundamentally, a change in attitude to the relationship between Scotland and England. In the heyday of the British Empire Scotland had paraded as the equal partner of England. By the 1930s, however, Scotland had come to be seen as England's impoverished neighbour, dependent on subsidies from Westminster for its survival.)

Changes in the composition of trade union membership in Scotland added further impetus to the abandonment of calls for Home Rule. Although the STUC remained independent of the TUC, only a minority of its affiliated membership were in Scottish-only unions: by the mid-1920s 60% of trade unionists in Scotland were members of British unions, and many of the remaining Scottish unions had close links with English unions.

In contrast to the immediate post-war years, by the end of the 1920s nationalist sentiments were seen by the labour movement as a hostile force. They no longer evoked the right of peoples to self-determination. Instead, they evoked the rise to power of extreme right-wing and fascist movements in continental Europe.

Nationalist sentiments were increasingly difficult to distinguish from a crude racism and xenophobia which the labour movement was committed to opposing. As John MacCormick, writing from the standpoint of Scottish nationalism, put it:

"Hitler had come to power in Germany in 1933 and the excesses of his propaganda gave to the very word 'nationalism' a new and highly distasteful meaning. It was in vain for us to point out that nationalism in Scotland had a very different meaning from the nationalism of the Nazi Party. The ordinary man in the street found it difficult to draw any such distinction."

The "ordinary man in the street" could not necessarily be blamed for finding it "difficult to draw any such distinction" – and not simply because of Hugh McDiarmid's occasional admiration of Mussolini and advocacy of "a Scottish fascism". A narrow anti-Englishness and a bigoted scapegoating of the Irish in Scotland were hallmarks of the some of the leading Scottish nationalists of the day.

Lewis Spence, the occultist who helped found the National Party of Scotland (NPS), for example, argued: "To detail the facts plainly and beyond peradventure, the land of Scotland is more surely in the grip of its hereditary enemy than ever. … Its people are banished in thousands, their places taken by English and the policy which dictates this is most assuredly the fruit of a definite English conspiracy to destroy the Scottish race."

And according to Andrew Dewar Gibb, the one-time Unionist politician who became a founding member of the Scottish National Party (SNP): "They (the Irish) … breed as they do not merely unchecked, but actually encouraged by their own medicinemen. … Wheresoever knives and razors are used, wheresoever sneak thefts and mean pilfering are easy and safe, wheresoever dirty acts of sexual baseness are committed, there you will find the Irishman in Scotland with all but a monopoly of the business."

The fact that mainstream 'establishment' right-wingers also rallied to the cause of Home Rule in this period reinforced the hostility of the labour movement. When the Scottish edition of the "Daily Express" organised its own unofficial 'referendum' on Home Rule, its owner, Lord Beaverbrook, explained the case for a 'yes' vote:

"As for Scottish nationalism, I am of course strongly in favour of that movement. Scottish nationalism would give Scotland control of her domestic policies while securing her in her present share of Imperial concerns. That is a splendid project. It would bind the Empire more closely together."

The overshadowing of "great principles of moral and social advance" by economic concerns, the identification of demands for Home Rule with the forces of nationalist reaction, and the ongoing emergence of an all-British labour movement – not just in terms of its structures but also in terms of its industrial and political strategies – soon put an end to the post-war enthusiasm of the labour movement in Scotland for Home Rule.

In 1923 the STUC congress had still been firmly in favour of Home Rule. The motion passed at that year's congress called for dominion status for Scotland. But even the mover of the motion stressed that "Scotland could not exist as an economic unit." Thereafter, Home Rule fell off the STUC agenda until the early 1930s.

A motion backing "the principle of dominion self-government for Scotland" was debated by the STUC congress of 1931. Again, even the motion's supporters stressed that they did not want to "cut the Scottish people off from England or to erect a barrier between them," and that "no-one suggested it (Home Rule) would make any difference to the workers' lives."

The congress voted down the motion. Home Rule supporters were summarily dismissed by the congress president as "a few doctrinaire people who still lived in the dead pages of Scottish history."

The STUC's about-turn on Home Rule was epitomised by Joseph Duncan of the Scottish Union of Farmworkers. At the 1915 congress he had argued that "the Scottish people have a distinct sentiment, and need a distinct political programme." By 1931, however, he was arguing against Home Rule because "the interests of Scottish and English workers are now identical." The following year, as if to underline the point, his union merged with the all-British TGWU.

Proposals at STUC congresses in the late 1920s that the STUC should be subsumed into the TUC likewise reflected the decline in support for Home Rule in the Scottish labour movement. And it was the left, especially the Communist Party, who were the most enthusiastic advocates of the STUC's dissolution.

A motion at the 1927 congress proposed that the STUC become "an Advisory Council of the British TUC, on similar lines to those operating in the National Labour Party of Scotland." The mover argued that the STUC "had done good work in the past but had outlived its usefulness."

In the General Strike, the mover continued, the STUC had "proved that it could not act in a time of crisis, it should (therefore) pack up and make way for a body that could. … It was better to go out than to die out." Speakers also condemned the STUC for perpetuating "the large number of Scottish unions" which would be better off merging with English unions.

The following year's congress returned to the same question. A motion called for the opening of negotiations with the TUC in order to "definitely establish the STUC as an integral part of the TUC": the combination of capitalist forces "required a corresponding concentration of working-class forces." It was "no use preaching one big trade union amalgamation (while) at the same time insisting on two congresses."

At the same time, and for similar reasons, the Labour Party and the ILP in Scotland, abandoned their earlier enthusiasm for Home Rule.

In 1927 a meeting of the Labour Party Scottish Council passed a motion calling for "an adequate measure of self-government for Scotland." But the eight votes cast against the motion at the meeting signalled the existence of growing divisions over the issue of Home Rule.

By the early 1930s, after the debacle of the 1929-31 Labour government and MacDonald's formation of a "National Government", the leadership of the Labour Party in Scotland had its eyes firmly set on achieving a majority Labour government in Westminster. Home Rule was increasingly seen as an irrelevance at best, and a damaging distraction at worst.

As the Scottish Labour Party Secretary explained in 1932: "The mere separation of governments gives no power under capitalism to prevent industry growing in England instead of Scotland. … National socialist planning of Britain would (do so), by co-ordinating industrial production and social need."

Between 1930 and 1937 no Labour Party conference in Scotland discussed Home Rule. Although subsequent party conferences might occasionally still vote in favour of Home Rule – the 1937 conference, for example, voted in favour of "an adequate measure of self-government" for Scotland, and against an amendment condemning "self-government under capitalism" – Home Rule had fallen away as a significant campaigning issue.

When some Labour MPs who continued to promote Home Rule complained about the Party's loss of interest in the issue, Hugh Dalton, the future Chancellor of the Exchequer, informed them that the next Labour government would be "too busy bringing the Socialist Commonwealth into existence to spare time to give Home Rule to Scotland."

The ILP, which split from the Labour Prty in 1932, showed the same decline in enthusiasm for Home Rule as did the Labour Party. Although the ILP's Scottish conference of 1929 had re-affirmed support for Home Rule, opposing speakers had condemned it as contrary to socialist internationalism and a large number of delegates had abstained from voting.

Even Maxton, while continuing to support a Scottish Parliament in principle, was to become increasingly critical of the demand for Home Rule. By the mid-1930s Maxton equated nationalism with fascism and concluded that "the time had gone past for purely nationalist struggles. … A struggle these days for mere political liberty is out-of-date, whether it takes place in India, Ireland or Scotland."

John Wheatley likewise lost his earlier enthusiasm for Home Rule. By the time of his death in 1930 he had come to the view that a remedy to the economic and social crisis afflicting Scotland required greater resources than could be found in Scotland itself. Only the planned application of the resources of the British state, as part of a process of the socialist transformation of Britain and its Empire, could provide a solution.

While the STUC, the Labour Party and the ILP were distancing themselves from Home Rule, the Communist Party (CP), albeit for its own peculiar reasons, was moving in the opposite direction.

In the early 1930s Scottish CP leaders had talked of "the fascist demagogy of the Scottish Nationalists" and "the potential basis of a fascist movement" which was provided by the Scottish nationalists.

But once the CP had made the Kremlin-ordered turn to popular frontism (i.e. allying with non-working-class political forces), it

1929 election leaflet for John MacCormick, a founding member of the National Party of Scotland, the SNP and the Scottish Convention movement

backed Home Rule as a way of carrying out its 1937 congress decision to "get contact and influence among the middle classes." As the then Communist Party Glasgow organiser Harry McShane later recalled:

"The development of the idea of a Popular Front led to a change in the communist position towards Scotland. Once it was accepted that communists should work for the unity of all classes, the next step was to start arguing for self-government for the Scottish people. …"

"Before long the line on Scottish nationalism itself changed … The Communist Party attitude to Scottish nationalism had remained unchanged since they derided John Maclean for 'socialism in kilts'. In 1937 and 1938 this was completely reversed."

Although labour movement support for Home Rule certainly declined drastically from the mid-1920s onwards, it was not entirely eclipsed.

Of the hundred or so delegates who attended a National Convention organised by the Scottish Home Rule Association in 1927, for example, the vast majority were from trade unions. Half a dozen Labour MPs, headed by James Barr, who had recently failed in his attempt to move another Home Rule Bill in Parliament, also attended.

But the arguments of those Labour Party and trade union members who continued to promote the cause of Home Rule into and during the 1930s and 1940s differed sharply from the pro-Home-Rule arguments advanced in the years immediately following the First World War.

In earlier years Home Rule agitation had focused on the need to transfer power from Westminster to a Scottish Parliament in order to implement what amounted to a nineteenth-century radical-Liberal agenda. Labour movement advocates of Home Rule, at that time, had seen little or no need to differentiate themselves from more nationalist advocates of Home Rule.

By the middle to late 1930s, however, labour movement supporters of Home Rule were demanding a devolution of power in order to carry out economic (rather than primarily social) reforms. And such reforms, it was envisaged, would be carried out within the framework of a Britain ruled by a radical Labour government committed to public ownership and centrally directed planning.

Labour movement Home Rulers of the 1930s were also careful to distinguish themselves from the Scottish nationalists, now organised in the SNP. The SNP of the 1930s was a right-wing party which vacillated between advocating Home Rule and full independence. As an electoral opponent of Labour, the SNP was an enemy, rather than a potential ally, in the campaign for Home Rule.

The labour movement case for Home Rule was kept alive by the London Scots Self-Government Committee (LSSGC, founded in 1936), the Labour Council for Scottish Self-Government (LCSSG, founded in 1938), and the Scottish Reconstruction Committee (SRC, founded in1943 as a merger of the two pre-war campaigns).

Given the general hostility to anything which smacked of nationalism in this period, labour movement Home Rulers sought to emphasise, and justifiably so, that their demand belonged to the traditions of the Scottish labour movement. According to Oliver Brown, a former prominent member of the NPS who joined the Labour Party in 1938:

"The Labour Party is not merely a Scottish product made in Glasgow, but it had two Scottish nationalists as its principle founders — Keir Hardie and Cunninghame Graham. It is therefore not unnatural that a Scottish nationalist should wish to revive that early association and make it more effective, to the advantage of both socialism and Scotland."

But self-government, it was emphasised, was something very different from independence.

Thus, the LSSGC looked forward to "the absolute inevitability of a reasonable measure of self-government for Scotland on federal lines, with Scottish representation at Westminster for foreign defence and imperial affairs, and a legislature for Edinburgh for internal Scottish affairs." At the same time, however, the LSSGC was "opposed to anything savouring of separation."

In their campaigning material the various Committees sought to reconcile the demand for Home Rule with the envisaged post-war UK-wide planning by a Labour government in Westminster. Their solution was a federal system of government, with trade union involvement in planning at the all-British level in order to prevent a fracturing of the labour movement along national lines.

Scotland's economic transformation, which would be facilitated and assisted by Home Rule, would also require an attack on the indigenous ruling class: "Scotland has indeed been ruthlessly exploited and bled white, not by England, but by her own industrialists." In the absence of workers' power, explained the same SRC pamphlet, "the mere setting up of a bourgeois Parliament in Edinburgh" would only "make new jobs for Edinburgh lawyers and Glasgow businessmen."

The proposed organ of workers' power was the Parish Council: "The best remedy would be to recreate the Parish Councils. … Making the Parish the basic unit of Scottish democratic self-government and handing over the control of the factories, industries, agriculture and fisheries to the adult workers of the Parish would mean the complete end of big business and monopoly capitalism. They simply could not exist side-by-side with People's Parish self-government."

These labour-movement campaigns in support of Home Rule enjoyed some backing from Constituency Labour Parties and individual MPs. The widely-read Glasgow socialist newspaper *Forward* newspaper also provided coverage of their meetings, as well as continuing to carry the occasional article by the Home-Rule-veteran Roland Muirhead.

The efforts of such campaigns achieved a brief resurgence of support for Home Rule in the closing years of the Second World War, albeit one which stood no comparison with the post-1918 upsurge of labour movement support for Home Rule.

But the Scottish Labour Party leadership, firmly committed to the Westminster 'road to socialism', was hostile to the pro-Home-Rule campaigns. And Scottish trade unions were likewise largely unsympathetic to them. As a consequence, Labour Party and STUC indifference to Home Rule continued into the post-war years.

An occasional surge in electoral support for the SNP — such as the Kirkaldy by-election of 1944, or the following year's Motherwell by-election — resulted in occasional nods by the Scottish Labour Party in the direction of Home Rule.

More fundamentally, however, the experiences of the war, which

demonstrated the merits of planning and distribution by the British state, were regarded as proof of the irrelevance of the demand for Home Rule.

In 1944 the Scottish Labour Party conference voted to set up a committee of inquiry into the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. But no such committee was ever set up. The following year's conference again voted in favour of setting up a committee to consider the creation of a Scottish legislative assembly. Again the resolution was not implemented.

In the 1945 general election the Labour Party manifesto made no mention of Home Rule. Labour Party candidates in Scotland, however, were issued with speakers' notes by the party's Scottish Council, listing a Scottish Parliament as Labour's second priority, after the defeat of Japan in the Pacific.

At the Scottish Labour Party conference of 1947 a motion condemning the failure of the Executive Committee to set up the committee promised in 1944 and 1945 was passed by 111 votes to 82. But at the 1949 conference a similar motion condemning the ongoing failure to set up a committee was overwhelmingly defeated. In the following year's general election the party's manifesto again made no mention of Home Rule.

The Tories' return to power in the 1951 general election did nothing to resurrect Labour's earlier support for Home Rule. On the contrary, in the course of the 1950s the party sharpened its attacks on demands for Home Rule.

In 1958 a Scottish Labour Party report entitled "Let Scotland Prosper" explicitly rejected Home Rule on the grounds that "the Labour Party in Scotland today realises that Scotland's problems can best be solved by socialist planning on a United Kingdom scale."

The following year the Labour Party in Scotland completed its abandonment of Home Rule. Its conference voted against referral back of those sections of an Executive Committee statement, issued with the "Let Scotland Prosper" report, which had rejected the creation of a Scottish Parliament.

Just as there had been a political logic to the pro-Home Rule enthusiasm of the Scottish labour movement in the years following the First World War, so too in the years following the Second World War there were logical reasons for Scottish labour's hostility to the demand for Home Rule.

On the one hand, the long-awaited Labour government now had its hands on the levers of power in Westminster, allowing it to set about what it saw as the social and economic reconstruction of Britain as a whole. Any devolution of power and decision-making to Scotland was seen as cutting across the government's programme of driving through change on the basis of reforms adopted at an all-British level.

On the other hand, agitation around the demand for Home Rule was seen, not without justification, as part of a right-wing attempt to undermine the authority of the newly elected Labour government.

In the immediate post-war years it was the Tories who played the Scottish card. Scotland, they explained, possessed a "national character and distinctive traditions." These were threatened by the "new despotism" of the Labour government and its "socialist creed".

The Labour government's centralisation of power created an "unnatural state of affairs" which, according to Winston Churchill, had "not been hitherto experienced or contemplated in the Act of Union." If England "became an absolute socialist state", argued Churchill, then Scotland would not be "bound to accept such a dispensation."

The political evolution of the founder of the Scottish Convention – a cross-party pressure group launched by the ex-SNP member John MacCormick in 1949 which boasted of having collected some two million signatures in support of Home Rule –further strengthened the perception that the demand for Home Rule was part of a right-wing plot.

MacCormick had migrated from the ILP to the SNP via the NPS, and then from the SNP to the Liberals. During his days as a member of the NPS MacCormick had not only enjoyed the political and financial patronage of Lord Beaverbrook and the Scottish edition of the "Daily Express" but had also concluded an electoral 'non-aggression' pact with the Scottish Liberals.

There was certainly nothing socialist about MacCormick's political philosophy. In his autobiography MacCormick lamented how Scotland in the inter-war years had been characterised by "a sterile class rancour wholly alien to the tradition of Scotland."

And when MacCormick was adopted to stand as a Liberal candidate in the 1948 Paisley by-election, he welcomed the Tories' decision not to stand a candidate in order to allow him a free run against Labour.

Labour's post-war hostility towards Home Rule was reinforced by the fact that it saw no need to make any concessions to Scottish nationalism. Despite the impact of the Scottish Convention, as a party-political force Scottish nationalism was stagnant in the post-war years. The SNP had split in 1942 and lost many of its more capable members, including MacCormick himself.

Episodes such as the seizure of the Stone of Destiny from Westminster Abbey, a legal challenge in the Court of Session to the new Queen terming herself Elizabeth II, and the blowing up of post-boxes which carried the insignia of Elizabeth II ensured that Scottish nationalism remained in the public eye, but contributed nothing to making it a popular political force.

(The controversy about the designation "Elizabeth II" arose out of the fact Scotland had never had an Elizabeth I.)

In the post-war years the STUC followed a similar path to that pursued by the Labour Party in Scotland. Insofar as the STUC differed from the latter, it was only in the greater emphasis which it placed on administrative devolution, and in the greater speed with which it adopted a stance of explicit opposition to legislative devolution.

The 1947 STUC congress passed a vaguely worded motion calling on the government to consider setting up "a Scottish body with special powers" so that Scotland could enjoy "a wider measure of autonomy".

The STUC, explained one of the motion's supporters, "should not leave the question of Scottish autonomy to our opponents in Westminster" – a reference to Tory calls for greater autonomy for Scotland after the election of a Labour government two years earlier.

The following year's congress advocated "immediate administrative reforms", including the creation of a Scottish Planning Commission, new Departments of Trade and Labour with their own Scottish Under-Secretaries, and a Scottish "Cabinet" made up of various civil servants and Secretaries and Under-Secretaries of State.

The same congress passed a motion condemning Scottish nationalism: "Recognising that socialism is international, (congress) deplores the trend towards Scottish nationalism which is revealing itself in the Scottish trade union movement, and driving us to support uneconomic projects. Congress believes that Scottish culture and traditions will be preserved by their own strength and virility without the need for exploiting nationalistic sentiments."

At the 1949 congress an attempt to refer back a General Council report for failing to support the creation of a Scottish Parliament was defeated. The following year saw the overwhelming defeat of a motion from the miners' union advocating the establishment of a Scottish Parliament, and the equally decisive defeat of a motion from Glasgow Trades Council vaguely calling for "a greater measure of self-government."

The 1950 STUC congress endorsed a General Council motion entitled "The Future of Scotland". This summed up the STUC's attitude to Home Rule for almost the next two decades. The motion emphasised economic considerations as the decisive criterion:

"The trade union movement is not insensitive to the influences created by the cultural heritage and deep-seated traditions of Scotland, but submits that economic security remains the primary factor for the Scottish people, and this cannot be divorced from the economic prospects of the country as a whole. Scotland's economic prosperity, it should be obvious, is inseparable from that of England and Wales and it cannot be imagined as a self-supporting entity."

In its submission to the 1951 Royal Commission on Scottish Affairs the STUC argued for administrative, not legislative, devolution. In its submission to a second Royal Commission, set up the following year, the STUC adopted the same position: "Congress was very strongly in favour of the maximum administrative devolution, but not legislative devolution."

The fiscal and trade policies which needed to be implemented

not just in England or Scotland but in Britain as a whole, the STUC further explained, made separation from England impracticable.

By the late 1960s, however, the STUC had completed an about-turn on the question of legislative devolution. Its change in line was rooted in the increasingly apparent structural decline of the economy in Scotland.

In the immediate post-war years the Scottish economy appeared to have escaped from its earlier decades of decline. Between 1948 and 1954 vehicles output increased by over 50%. Engineering, shipbuilding and electrical goods increased output by nearly 40% over the same period, while textiles output increased by 25%. Overall, the output of the Scottish economy increased by a quarter in the years 1948-54.

But this economic growth was more apparent than real. The Scottish economy remained heavily dependent on manufactured exports and heavy industry. In 1958 coal, steel, shipbuilding and heavy engineering accounted for a larger proportion of the economy than they had in the 1930s.

Although output had been increasing, at least temporarily, rates of productivity had gone into decline. There was a downturn in domestic food production. Wages remained some 10% lower than in the rest of Britain. And emigration began to rise again from the early 1950s onwards.

The signs of ongoing economic decline soon became unmistakable. Between 1960 and 1975 an average of 10,000 manufacturing jobs a year were lost in Scotland. More skilled jobs were lost in the 1960s alone than in the entire preceding half century.

In mining the workforce fell from 90,000 in 1939 to 48,000 in 1965, and to 20,000 by the end of the 1970s. In shipbuilding the workforce fell from 77,000 in 1950 to 50,000 in 1970, and to 41,000 in 1978. In textiles the workforce collapsed from 165,000 in 1950 to 98,000 in 1965, and to 55,000 in 1978.

Successive governments, both Labour and Tory, had continued to pump public money into Scotland: between 1964 and 1973 public expenditure in Scotland increased by 900%, and the subsidy paid on Scottish coal production exceeded the amount paid out for family allowances in Scotland. By the early 1970s the whole of Scotland, apart from Edinburgh, had been classified as a development area.

But this had proved insufficient to reverse the decline. That ongoing economic decline did not undermine the STUC's traditional reliance on intervention by a Westminster government. What it did begin to undermine was the STUC's traditional counterposing of reliance on action at a Westminster level to any meaningful devolution of decision-making to Scotland.

The STUC sought a solution in the form of legislative devolution: a parliament 'closer' to the Scottish people, it was argued, would be more responsive to the needs of the Scottish economy. By the mid-1970s the STUC was arguing for the decentralisation of economic powers, with the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board being made accountable to a Scottish Parliament.

Support for legislative devolution was also seen by the STUC as a way to halt the rise of the SNP. According to one speaker at the 1968 STUC congress, the correct response to the growing support for the SNP was "for the STUC and the Scottish labour movement to take up the question of nationalism, challenge the chauvinists, and deal with the issues concerned in a proper working-class manner."

The driving force behind the STUC's change in line was the Communist Party (CP). After a period of intense witch-hunting in the early 1950s, the CP had used it base in and around Glasgow (where a quarter of the party's entire British membership lived) to gradually increase its influence in the STUC.

The growing influence of the CP in the STUC was reflected not just in the election of CP member Jimmy Milne as STUC General Secretary in 1975 but also, and rather more so, in the increasing frequency with which the STUC passed adulatory motions in praise of the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

(None of those motions, of course, ever suggested that the republics of the Soviet Union might benefit from decentralisation and legislative devolution. Scotland was entitled to Home Rule, but not Estonia.)

At the 1968 STUC congress the miners' union moved a motion in support of a Scottish Parliament, "the ultimate form and powers of which should be determined by the Scottish electorate." Socialism, the mover of the motion explained, meant "decentralisation of power in order to involve the people of a country in the operation of power at every possible level."

(Fortunately for the Communist Party member who moved the motion, the congress was being held in Aberdeen rather than in Moscow.)

The SNP were condemned for not being "the true custodians of Scottish nationalism". In fact, the "best nationalists in Scotland" were to be found "in the STUC and the Scottish labour movement." The latter organisations represented "healthy" nationalism: "love of one's own country, love of one's own people, and pride in their traditional militancy and progressiveness."

A second motion, moved by the foundry workers' union, opposed "any attempt to secure total devolution" as it would "lead directly to a lowering of the living standards of the Scottish people."

A "viable and socially secure Scotland", the mover of the motion explained, could be achieved only "within the economic framework of Great Britain", with pay and working conditions "secured by national joint machinery covering Scotland, England and Wales."

The General Council asked for both motions to be remitted for further consideration: the former because it lacked precision, and the latter because it was "completely out of sympathy with the present trend of public opinion in Scotland." At the 1969 congress the General Council presented a report on its deliberations, supporting a devolved parliament with legislative powers. The report was accepted, without even being voted on.

The following year the STUC briefly reverted to supporting purely administrative devolution (in the form of a deliberative assembly). That episode apart, from 1969 onwards the STUC nailed its colours firmly to the mast of legislative devolution. But it was only after Labour's election victory in 1974, following four years of Tory rule, that the STUC began to campaign, in its own particular style, in support of its new policy.

The Labour Party in Scotland carried out a similar change in line on Home Rule, albeit with a far greater degree of internal disagreement, and over a longer period of time.

The Labour Party's evidence to a 1968 Royal Commission on the Constitution condemned "any form of assembly with substantive legislative devolution" as the start of "a slippery slope towards total separation, or at least a form of separation which would set up divisions within the UK. " The Scottish Labour Party "had never been in any doubt that the enormous problems which we face can only be tackled by firm government from Westminster."

In 1973, just before the Royal Commission of 1968 finally published its findings, the Labour Party's Scottish Council issued a document of its own which opposed any devolution of legislative powers. This position was re-affirmed in the Scottish Council's condemnation of the Royal Commission's conclusions in favour of a Scottish Parliament with legislative powers.

In June of the following year the Labour Party's Scottish Executive further emphasised its opposition to devolution by voting down all options for devolution contained in a consultative paper which had been issued by the government the previous month.

But the Labour Party in Scotland was under intense pressure from the Party's national leaders to change tack. The latter regarded a policy of support for the creation of an Assembly as the way to neutralise the growth in support for the SNP.

As the then Home Secretary later wrote: "The fundamental trouble was that the Labour Party leadership … saw the need for some declaration to avoid losing by-elections to the nationalists, and not to produce a good constitutional settlement for Scotland and the UK."

The party's national leadership ordered the Scottish Executive to convene a special conference on the sole issue of devolution. Held in August of 1974, the conference voted overwhelmingly in favour of devolution. As a consequence, two months later the Scottish Labour Party's general election manifesto included a commitment to devolution.

But, despite the stated commitment to devolution, the Scottish Labour Party remained deeply divided over the issue.

The left was divided over the question of whether devolution was a form of democratic decentralisation or an obstacle to pro-

moting socialist policies at a national level. The right was divided over the question of whether devolution paved the way for the break-up of the UK or prevented the break-up of the UK. And both left and right were divided over the question of whether any concessions should be made to the SNP.

After a series of parliamentary wrangles, a referendum on the creation of a Scottish Assembly was held in March of 1979. Reflecting the ongoing divisions in the ranks of the Labour Party, there were three 'Yes' campaigns and two 'No' campaigns.

By a majority of just 78,000, the referendum backed the creation of an Assembly. But only 33% of the overall electorate had voted in favour of devolution. The result thereby fell victim to a wrecking amendment successfully moved by opponents of devolution during the legislation's passage through Parliament: a pro-Assembly majority in the referendum would be valid only if at least 40% of the registered electorate were to vote in favour of devolution.

Two months later the Tories were back in government. The monetarist policies pursued by the Tories and their commitment to "roll back the frontiers of the state" had a devastating effect in Scotland: major sectors of the Scottish economy were heavily dependent on precisely the state subsidies which the Tories were intent on axing.

In the first two years of Tory rule manufacturing output in Scotland fell by 11% and employment in manufacturing fell by 20%. Between 1979 and 1986 the employed labour force in Scotland fell by 8%, compared with 3% for Britain as a whole. In the course of the 1980s some 400,000 jobs were lost in manufacturing in Scotland.

By 1983 unemployment in Scotland had jumped to 300,000 and continued to increase until the middle of the decade, when it reached more than 15%.

Between 1979 and 1989 the importance of manufacturing for the Scottish economy slumped by some 25%. By the 1990s steel-making had disappeared completely, only one working coalmine had escaped closure, and the workforce in the remaining handful of Clyde shipyards had slumped to 14,000.

Other policies pursued by the Tories also impacted more severely in Scotland than in England (or at least in certain regions in England).

The higher proportion of council housing in Scotland gave Tory attacks on council housing a greater significance in Scotland than elsewhere. Higher unemployment rates and higher levels of pensioners living in poverty likewise made the Tories' attacks on welfare benefits and pensions even more significant in Scotland than in other parts of Britain.

The general elections of 1979, 1983, 1987, and 1992 all resulted in the return of a Tory government to Parliament. But in Scotland the Tories had become increasingly unpopular. In the course of the 1980s Tory parliamentary representation from Scotland collapsed into a residual rump. Repeatedly, the Tories won at the all-British level but were decisively rejected by the electorate in Scotland.

For the first half of the 1980s the question of devolution was largely off the political agenda, pushed aside by the pro-democracy campaign in the Labour Party, the Falklands War, campaigns against Tory attacks on local government, and the miners' strike.

The debacle of the 1979 referendum, the SNP's motion of no confidence in the Labour government, and the collapse of the SNP vote in the subsequent general election – when its share of the popular vote slumped from 30% to 17%, and its number of seats fell from eleven to two – also contributed to a decline in interest in devolution.

But in the latter half of the 1980s, particularly after the Tories' third election victory in 1987, the demand for legislative devolution rapidly resurfaced as a major issue in Scottish politics. The Tories lacked "a Scottish mandate", their policies took no account of Scotland's needs, and only a devolved assembly with legislative powers – argued pro-devolution enthusiasts – could provide protection from the Tories' "elective dictatorship".

By this time a form of popular frontism had become an established way of life for the STUC. Rather than act specifically as the collective leadership of the working class in Scotland, the STUC posed as the leader of a broad democratic alliance which represented the people of Scotland in general.

As the STUC's court historian put it on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the STUC:

"The STUC were well on the way to becoming the acknowledged centre for all Scottish people's problems. … (It was) represented on no less than 90 government and other committees, ranging from the Standing Conference on North Sea oil to the Open University."

"From henceforward there was no question but that the STUC was to be seen as able to give a voice to the vast majority of Scottish people, and capable itself of calling an all-embracing Assembly whenever some specific issue made it necessary."

As the Tories' monetarist policies began to take effect, the STUC was confronted by one workplace closure after another. Its response was to call a succession of conventions which brought together not just trade unionists, but also representatives from all political parties, representatives of employers' organisations, delegates from local authorities, the churches, the voluntary sector and development agencies, and assorted lords, industrialists, and media celebrities.

(Although it was no consolation for the victims of unemployment, more people in Scotland lost their jobs as a result of a generalised drive to increase profits by getting fewer workers to work harder than as a result of workplace closures, especially those occurring in the traditional Scottish industries. But it was the latter which attracted the bulk of the media coverage.)

None of the STUC's 'single-issue coalitions' were successful, but they did foreshadow, and provide a model for, how the STUC would respond to the resurgent demand for devolution.

In the Labour Party in Scotland, the impact of the Tory onslaught led to support for devolution becoming a matter of political orthodoxy. Opponents of devolution in the 1979 referendum were soon to be found amongst its most enthusiastic advocates. But different, and not necessarily consistent, reasons accounted for this consolidation of support for devolution.

The issue of devolution was no longer posed in terms of whether it was a help or a hindrance to the implementation of socialist policies by a Labour government. There was no Labour government in power. It was a Tory government. And one which, unlike previous Tory governments, was ideologically hostile to nationalised industries and a welfare state.

The traditional anti-devolution argument that a strong centralised state was needed to implement socialist policies carried ever less weight. Under Thatcher the state had become increasingly strong, and increasingly centralised. But the policies it implemented were anything but socialist. The notion of a centralised state therefore increasingly came to be associated with Tory reaction rather than with socialist progress.

Support for devolution was 'reconceptualised' as a defence of the policies and institutions to which the Labour Party had traditionally been attached: full employment, council housing, and the welfare state. Devolution came to be seen as a potential mechanism to defend the post-war welfare state in the face of a Westminster-based Tory government committed to its destruction.

Defeat and demoralisation also played a major role in anchoring devolution as a bedrock Labour Party policy. The early eighties had seen the imposition of increasingly restrictive anti-union laws and a series of working-class defeats, culminating in the miners' strike of 1984/85. The affiliated membership of the STUC was in the process of collapsing from over a million to just over 600,000.

When the Tories won a third successive election victory, in 1987, the prospect of another five years of Tory rule, following on from a succession of working-class defeats, made devolution palatable for many previously hostile Labour Party members – especially when another five years of Tory rule subsequently turned out to be another ten years.

For the Labour Party leadership, in Scotland as much as in Britain, the added attraction of demanding devolution was that it functioned as an alternative to organised defiance of the Tories, and as a supposed surrogate for a working-class mobilisation against not just Tory policies but also against the existence of the Tory government itself.

Given that there was no prospect of devolution until the election of a Labour government, the call for a Scottish Parliament was simply the Scottish version of the more general argument that only the return of a Labour government could stop the Tory onslaught.

(In fact, support for devolution need not necessarily have been an alternative to defiance. The logic of the argument that the Tories had no "Scottish mandate" and Robin Cook's description of Scot-

land as “an occupied country in which the ruling power depends for its support on a power-base which is outside the country” was that defiance, by Labour-controlled local authorities for example, was a legitimate course of action.

But the same constitutional fetishes which provided a rationale for setting up a Scottish Parliament also precluded defiance of the Westminster Parliament: opposition to the will of an elected government could be conducted only through parliamentary channels. And since there was no Scottish Parliament, there was no mechanism through which to express opposition.)

Although the Labour Party in Scotland had adopted a pro-devolution policy – on paper – in 1974, it was only in the mid-eighties that the Labour Party began to take seriously its support for devolution. And the pro-devolution campaign of the 1980s to which it lent its support was the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (CSA).

The CSA had been launched in 1980, with the STUC playing a leading role in its creation. As a cross-party campaign with the usual quota of clerics, celebrities and dissident Tories, the CSA sought to ‘stand above’ the profanities of everyday politics. When the then Labour MP Dennis Canavan had attacked the Tories’ spending cuts at the CSA’s founding rally, he had been shouted down for making a political speech.

In the early 1980s the CSA failed to make any political impact. But the third successive Tory election victory in 1987, together with the decision of the Labour Party in Scotland to support the campaign, put the CSA on a firmer footing. It appointed a steering committee consisting of various notables from higher education, the churches, business, and trade unions, with the remit of considering the case for a Scottish Constitutional Convention.

The following year their labours produced “A Claim of Right for Scotland”. The document, the language of which was as archaic as its title, proposed the creation of a 210-strong Convention to take forward the case for a Scottish Parliament.

In March of 1989 the Scottish Constitutional Convention held its inaugural meeting. Like the CSA which had given rise to it, the Convention was an ultra-broad cross-party campaign. From the outset it was agreed that there would be no votes in the Convention. Agreement was to be reached only through a process of negotiation and consensus.

The following year the Convention published the document “Towards Scotland’s Parliament”. Five years later, after a further Tory election victory in 1992, the Convention published yet another document: “Scotland’s Parliament, Scotland’s Right”. This contained specific proposals for a devolved parliament which were subsequently endorsed by the Labour Party.

After another four years, following Labour’s election victory in May of 1997 and a referendum later the same year, a Scottish Parliament with legislative and (limited) tax-varying powers began sitting in Edinburgh in 1999.

There was nothing radical about Labour’s eventual implementation of what had by this time become its long-standing policy of support for devolution. On the contrary, it was entirely compatible with the overall Blairite political programme.

In 1945 Labour had been elected to power on the basis of a pledge to build a “New Britain”. That “New Britain” would be one in which a Labour-controlled Westminster government would build a welfare state, nationalise key sectors of the economy, and generally use its powers to promote social and economic security for the working class.

The slogan of a “New Britain” was also raised at the 1994 Labour Party conference, the first conference after Blair’s election as party leader. But this time “New Britain” was coupled with the slogan “New Labour”.

The “New Labour” version of a “New Britain” was essentially Thatcherite: further destruction and commercialisation of the welfare state, another round of privatisations (even if the term itself was avoided), and the promotion of ‘consumer choice’ in health and education (even if the extent of choice was determined, in reality, by a person’s wealth, or lack of it).

Post-1945 Labourism had generally been anti-devolution and pro-centralisation because, in however limited a fashion, it had sought to use the central state machinery to impose limitations on the unfettered workings of the ‘free market’.

“New Labour”, on the other hand, had had no need of a strong central state apparatus in order to implement economic and social policies. Its goal was to open up the public sector to the private sector, not to extend the public sector at the expense of the private sector. Consequently, there was no contradiction between devolution and the “New Labour” political agenda.

Nor was there any danger that the Labour Party in Scotland would use a Scottish Parliament to implement pre-Blairite Labour policies. Macro-economic policy (including powers of nationalisation) remained a responsibility of the Westminster government. And the vetting of Labour candidates for the Scottish Parliament excluded most potential dissidents.

(The vetting process was carried out by five members of the Labour Party Scottish Executive, five members nominated by the Labour Party NEC, five ‘independent’ advisors, and five others, described as “experienced party members”. Less than a third of the initial applicants were included on the approved list of candidates. Unsuccessful applicants included a number of sitting Westminster MPs.)

In another respect, the creation of a Scottish Parliament was not only compatible with “New Labour” politics but also exemplary of them.

According to Blair, speaking at the 1997 Labour Party conference, “division among radicals almost a hundred years ago resulted in a twentieth century dominated by Conservatives.” The Blairite remedy for this turn-of the-century split between Labour and the Liberals, which allegedly opened the door to Conservative political hegemony, was a rapprochement with the forces of Liberalism.

In the 1990s Blair had engaged in discussions with the then Liberal Democrat leader Ashdown about a possible national Liberal Democrat-Labour alliance, or even an eventual Westminster coalition government. But the overwhelming majority secured by Labour in the 1997 election, and Ashdown’s later replacement by Kennedy as Liberal Democrat leader, killed off such discussions.

In Scotland, however, it was a different story. The non-adversarial and pro-consensus nature of the CSA and the Scottish Constitutional Convention effectively locked Labour into an alliance with the Liberal Democrats. This Labour-Liberal Democrat alliance subsequently found further expression, after the 1999 and 2003 Scottish parliamentary elections, in Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition governments at Holyrood.

Home Rule for Scotland, one and a quarter centuries after Gladstone had first proposed it, was not brought about by a self-confident labour movement such as that which had existed in the years immediately following the First World War – one whose elected representatives had promised that “the spirit of Red Clydeside” would get the better of Westminster.

Nor did its achievement owe anything to labour movement Home Rulers in the tradition of those of the late 1930s and early 1940s who had seen Home Rule as an integral part of national economic planning and workers’ control of industry – those for whom Scotland had been “ruthlessly exploited and bled white, not by England, but by her own industrialists.”

A Scottish Parliament was finally brought about by a labour movement in ideological and political disarray.

Battered by eighteen years of Tory rule, the trade unions in Scotland had lost over 40% of their membership. And the movement’s parliamentary wing – insofar as the Labour Party still counted as such – was led by a man who believed that the creation of the Labour Party had been a mistake of epochal proportions.

An STUC which had opened the century by championing the cause of independent working-class political representation ended the century by priding itself on its lack of party-political affiliations and on its self-appointed role as the tireless builder of cross-party alliances.

A Labour Party which had emerged from the Liberals in the opening years of the century ended it in Scotland in a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats, pursuing policies of Thatcherite political lineage which succeeded only in alienating its core working-class support.

Such was the state of the labour movement which, having largely dissolved itself into Scottish “civic society” for the purpose, finally helped realise what Gladstone over a century earlier had termed “the attainment of a great national good”: Home Rule for Scotland.

For a Democratic Federal Republic!

By Martin Thomas

Blink once, and the momentum for Scottish independence looks like a steamroller travelling faster and faster downhill. Blink a second time, and it looks quite different. In 1969-71 large oil and gas reserves were discovered offshore from Scotland. The Scottish National Party boomed rapidly, reaching 30.4% of Scottish votes in the October 1974 general election. Its vote has bounced up and down since then, but since 1988 it has been almost always above or close to 20% in UK general elections.

In by-elections the SNP has continued to achieve particularly dramatic results. In the 2008 Glasgow East by-election a 22% swing to the SNP saw the party win the second-safest Labour seat in Scotland, and the 26th-safest Labour seat in the UK. Although the SNP failed to win the subsequent Glenrothes by-election, it did succeed in increasing its vote by over 13%.

In 1979 Scotland voted 51.6% to 48.4% for creating an elected Scottish Assembly, but the British government of the time had said that the Assembly would not go ahead unless the vote for it was 40% of the whole electorate, as well as a majority of those voting. By 1997, when a second referendum was held, the majority was 74.3% to 25.7% for a Scottish Parliament — and one with vastly greater powers than the Assembly on offer in the 1979 referendum.

In 2007 the SNP won 32.9% of the vote in the Scottish Parliamentary election. As the biggest single party at Holyrood, the SNP went on to form a minority Scottish government committed to independence. The SNP has pledged to hold a referendum on independence in 2010, following the conclusion of what it terms the "National Conversation" about Scotland's constitutional future, and talks of Scotland being independent by 2017.

By 2005, 68% of people in Scotland identified themselves as "predominantly Scottish", 21% as "equally Scottish and British", and only 9% as "predominantly British". Some opinion polls have also shown a majority for independence.

Now blink again.

The growth in electoral support for the SNP is not as impressive as it appears at first sight. The 18% of the vote secured by the SNP in the 2005 Westminster general election was just 3% higher than their vote in 1955 in constituencies where they stood candidates. Extending the comparison over a longer period of time, since the inter-war years support for the SNP has increased by an average of 1% per decade: 7% over 70 years.

The SNP's victory in Glasgow East was certainly spectacular — but the party took a conscious decision to put the demand for independence "on a back burner" for the duration of the by-election campaign. Similarly, in the subsequent Glenrothes by-election it decided to "park" the issue of independence.

A vote for the SNP is not necessarily a vote for independence. A survey of SNP voters in the 1997 general election found that 23% supported Scottish independence and withdrawal from the European Union (the SNP's official policy in the 1960s and 1970s), 37% backed Scottish independence within the European Union, and 34% backed "independence within the UK" (i.e. Donald Dewar's description of Labour's devolution policy).

Ten years later, in the Scottish Parliament elections which saw the SNP emerge as the largest party in Holyrood, it was a similar story: nearly one in four of those who voted SNP supported some form of devolution rather than full independence.

Over the last three and a half decades support for independence has increased by just 6%. 21% backed independence in 1974, when the first data were collected. Support declined after the 1979 referendum, and then began to grow again under Thatcher, reaching a peak of 37% in 1997. Since then, support has stabilised at around 27%. Over the same period of time support for devolution

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has increased by around 11%.

Of people questioned on the issue each year from 1997 to 2001, 49% had supported independence at least once, but only 5% had supported it at every asking. It is possible, by phrasing the question the right way, to get a poll majority for independence; but, given the option of a Scottish parliament with increased powers as an alternative to independence, in surveys between 1998 and 2001 between 54% and 62% went for that, with only 20% to 23% choosing independence instead.

Trends in the strength of Scottish identity have paralleled trends in support for independence. In 1974, when the question was first asked, some 66% of Scots defined themselves as Scottish rather than British (not to be confused with: only Scottish, not British). This fell to around 55% after the 1979 referendum, increased again under Thatcher, reached a peak of 80% after the opening of the Scottish Parliament, and then fell again to 70% by 2003 — an increase of 4% over three decades.

In the run-up to the SNP victory in the 2007 Scottish parliamentary election, which was widely expected, "Independence First" organised two demonstrations calling for a referendum on independence. The point of the marches was to allow people to show themselves more vigorously for independence than just to the extent of saying yes in an opinion poll or voting for the SNP.

(The referendum demand was just a convenient hook on which to hang the explanation for calling the demonstrations. There is little doubt that the SNP's decision to postpone a referendum to a more convenient time — i.e. following a possible Tory victory in the next Westminster general election — is rational from the point of view of attempting to achieve independence.)

The marches were supported by the SNP, the Scottish Socialist Party, Sheridan's breakway "Solidarity", and by the Greens.

The organisers claimed just 1000 people on the first march, on 30 September 2006. They gave no figures for the second, on 31 March 2007. The suggestion that it was smaller is confirmed by the pictures of it they have published. They also organised an electronic petition. It drew only 1300 names.

The tepidity of pro-independence opinion and the lack of enthusiasm for taking to the streets to demonstrate in support of independence is unsurprising given the tepidity of what the SNP presents as the gains of independence:

"With the right policies in place, we could make Scotland a much more competitive place to do business [i.e. cheaper for multinationals]. Policies such as cutting corporation tax to 20% [so, cutting public services, or raising taxes on workers?], reducing business red tape [i.e. regulations to protect workers and consumers], and implementing a distinctive immigration policy to target migrants with the skills we need [i.e. shutting out poor migrants and letting in only the well-off or well-qualified]".

There is in SNP publicity no talk of throwing off the yoke of foreign rule, or enabling the Scottish people to breath freely after ages under the boot of the conqueror. Nor, given the history of Scotland as a more or less equal partner in the British Empire and British capitalism, could there plausibly be, although it took the SNP nearly half a century to recognise this.

The SNP would keep Scotland within the EU, retain the House of Windsor as the monarchy, and keep the pound (although possibly only in the short-term). Many of the big-business people who support the SNP do so explicitly on the grounds that at present Scotland, with higher public spending per head than the rest of the UK but a lower tax take, suffers from a "dependency culture", and independence would bring a bracing shock of neo-liberal austerity.

Unless they are right, the difference in everyday life in an independent Scotland would be small. In fact, given New Labour's policies of battering the unemployed and creating ever higher hurdles to claiming welfare benefits, even if those business people were right, everyday life in an independent Scotland would not be substantially different from now.

"Scotland's oil" has been the SNP's main economic hope. "It's ours, all ours", they have cried, emulating Grampa Joad in the film version of John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath". But now they probably need to add Joad's preface: "It's no good, but it's mine, all mine".

According to British government figures, about 81% of "probable" workable North Sea oil reserves, and 77% of gas, have now been extracted. The oil companies give a similar picture. The SNP insists that "half of the oil is yet to come", but with manifestly diminishing confidence.

These days, to calm worries about the obvious "start-up" economic costs of independence, the SNP plays more on the supposed competitive advantages of small countries in the EU (or half-in it, via the EEA).

Unfortunately, one of the prize success stories it has cited is Iceland, now in chaos following the collapse of its banks. Scottish banking has also lost its lustre. Before 2008, Edinburgh was headquarters for two of Britain's five largest banks, RBS and HBOS. Both have now had to be bailed out by London, HBOS via an assisted takeover by Lloyds TSB, and RBS via de facto nationalisation.

It is certainly true that other countries in what the SNP traditionally referred to as the "arc of prosperity" have not suffered the economic meltdown experienced by Iceland. Even so, the example of Iceland has sufficed to dent the image of small states banding together in a Northern version of the Golden Triangle.

Why, then, the first-blink picture? Granted that the flow towards independence is tepid and slow, why does it nonetheless appear to be so copious?

The immediate answer to that question is rooted in the changing nature of the relationship between Scottish nationalism (more accurately: Scottish identity and Scottish national consciousness) and Unionism, and in the more recent changes in the nature of Scottish nationalism itself.

Scottish nationalism was a non-existent political force throughout the nineteenth century and into the early years of the last century. This was because the British state and the British Empire — not independence — were regarded as the best medium through which to advance Scottish national interests. In that sense, as numerous historians have commented, Unionism was a historic form of Scottish nationalism.

Concerns about the preservation of Scottish identity or about the relationship between Scotland and England did not manifest themselves in a Scottish-nationalist project. Exemplified by the short-lived National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights of the early 1850s and the Scottish Home Rule Association founded in 1886, those who questioned the Unionist status quo wanted reform and improvement, not repeal.

That Scottish-nationalist Unionism has been in decline since around the time of the First World War. The economic benefits of the British Empire inevitably disappeared along with the British Empire itself. And the various institutions around which a British identity had gelled — such as the monarchy, the armed forces, and the Westminster Parliament — lost the status which they had once enjoyed at the high noon of the British Empire.

The most serious single blow to the tradition of Scottish-nationalist Unionism was delivered by Thatcher. This was not simply because her policies had an even greater socially regressive impact on Scotland than on England. More fundamentally, it was because she redefined Unionism in opposition to Scottish nationalism (and all forms of devolution) and then identified defence of the Union with her own brand of political reaction.

Thus, the 'glue' which had previously bonded together Scottish identity and Scottish national consciousness with Unionism gradually dissolved — not consistently, but in a succession of fits and spurts — throughout the twentieth century. This helped pave the way for the emergence of a modern Scottish nationalist movement.

And that nationalist movement itself has evolved over time. In its earliest versions — the National Party of Scotland, and the early years of the SNP — it was a mixture of pro-independence 'hardliners' and supporters of Home Rule, unclear as to whether it was an actual political party or simply a pressure group (directed in the main towards the Labour Party).

By the 1960s the SNP had consolidated into a political party, based on the demand for Scottish withdrawal from the UK and opposition to membership of the Common Market. It was a right-wing, narrowly nationalist party, easily dismissed by the Labour Party as "Tartan Tories".

The SNP of today is arguably less nationalist than it was in even recent decades (which must count as a factor in explaining the increased electoral support which is has been able to muster). Its earlier inward- and backward-looking bog-standard nationalism has given way to a more inclusive and "civic" kind of nationalism (which is not to deny that it could easily regress to an earlier version).

Rather than being a response to an increasingly aggressive British nationalism, the rise of Scottish nationalism and the SNP — a real enough phenomenon, albeit one which should not be exaggerated — can therefore be seen as a product of the decline of British nationalism.

Far from being horrified at the prospect of Scottish independence leading to the break-up of Britain, for example, opinion polls in England produce a bigger majority in favour of Scottish independence than opinion polls in Scotland ever do.

Scottish separation would certainly weaken Britain militarily (though only by a fraction: Scotland is 8% of the UK's population), and probably the British government of the day would not like it. But as long ago as 1995, John Major, as Tory Prime Minister, said that if Scots voted for independence, a London government "could not stop them."

No-one in mainstream British politics gainsays the right of Scotland to separate if a Scottish majority wishes it. A Tory government may even see electoral advantage from separation. And individual Tory politicians certainly do (though not ones based in Scotland).

The more general answer to the question of why the flow towards independence appears to be so copious is that it is not just British nationalism which has declined but also — notwithstanding the growth in electoral support garnered by parties of the far Right — nationalism in Western Europe in general.

People in the USA, or China, or India, may feel a strong identity as American, or Chinese, or Indian, because they feel they are part of an "imagined community" mighty enough to shape the whole world. People in countries which have within living memory won their independence from a foreign yoke are "nationalist" in cherishing that achievement. There are other reasons why nationalism may run hot.

But in Western Europe, since the decline of the old colonial empires between the 1940s and the 1970s, nationalism has run tepid. No nation in Western Europe can hope to be a world-shaping power; none sees any risk of foreign conquest.

The European Union, with its bureaucratic ways, and a speed of progress glacial as measured by the ordinary pace of human life-events (though maybe not as measured against the broad sweep of European history), is not likely any time soon to create a warm "European" identity. As the ponderous manoeuvres around the draft European constitution and the subsequent Treaty of Lisbon show, it commands nothing more than grudging acceptance from its citizens, and sometimes not even that.

But for those citizens it satisfies the need to be part of an "imagined community" strong enough to hold its own in a difficult world. They no longer need to feel themselves part of a relatively big or powerful nation to get that security.

(Thus the desperation and ridiculousness in Gordon Brown's attempts to talk up "Britishness". People cannot feel warm about being British because Britain plays such a big part in the world (it doesn't), nor because they feel that Britain's autonomy is hard-won or under threat (it isn't).)

Broadly speaking, this is progress. It lowers one of the barriers to international working-class unity (though there are others: it does not exorcise racism or xenophobia). But for international working-class unity to stride over that lower barrier, it needs legs.

For several decades now, since the rise of Stalinism, the legs of the active advocates of working-class internationalism have been short. The collapse of Stalinism at the hands of triumphant global world-market capitalism had the short-term (but already decades-long) effect of making those legs shorter still.

That "releases" the desire for "imagined community" to flow — usually tepidly, but to flow nonetheless — into more local identities which in another era might be thought too flimsy either to protect or to project. It is not special to Scotland. Wales, Catalonia, the Basque country, Brittany, Flanders, Wallonia… all show the same pattern.

Belgian Marxists, commenting on the rise of Flemish and Walloon nationalism in their country, identify another factor in the increasing bureaucratisation, mediatisation, and neo-liberal consensus of mainstream politics:

"At present, communitarian demands are not put forward under the pressure of the masses. Quite the contrary. The communitarian terrain is the playing field par excellence for politicians in agreement on the neo-liberal austerity policy to pursue who wish to colour that policy with their own regional tint."

They report that at a hot point of the most recent conflict agitating the Flemish and Walloon nationalists — about the division or otherwise of Belgium's only officially-bilingual parliamentary constituency, BHV — a big majority told pollsters that they had no opinion one way or another on the matter.

There is a sort of analogy here with what happened in Yugoslavia from the 1970s, when the Titoist regime became more liberal. Basic social and political questions could still not be raised in official politics; but quarrels could be vented in terms of Croatia, or Slovenia, etc., getting a fair share.

It is not law that prevents mainstream political parties in Belgium or Britain from contesting the neo-liberal consensus; but, for now, the imperative of making each country "a competitive place to do business" (as the SNP puts it) works almost as well. So "to colour the neo-liberal policy with their own regional tint" is a safe and attractive ploy for politicians.

Will the rise of "safe", tepid, smaller-unit nationalism inevitably roll on and on to separation, in Scotland anyway? It may not, at least not in the assayable future. It may roll on to a greater and more complicated devolution of powers, without ever, on current trends, reaching the endpoint of separation. And the parallel slow trend to European unification may outpace it.

In Wales, for example, the Plaid Cymru vote has slid since 1999, and there is no strong pressure for more than minor modifications of the devolution already agreed. Yet Wales has arguably had more "national oppression" than Scotland, with the Welsh language — still spoken by about 80% of the population in 1800, and 54% of the population at the time of the 1891 census — discriminated against for centuries.

Official London encouragement for the Welsh language, which has set Welsh-speaking on the rise again since 1991, seems to have cooled down Welsh nationalism almost to stasis.

Wales is too trivial an example, and anyway has had more English immigration over the centuries than Scotland — only 75% of its population were born in Wales, as against 87% in Scotland? Its

population is more Anglicised, not having had the "reminder" of distinct law, education, and banknotes which Scotland has had?

Then consider Québec and Flanders, both "further on" than Scotland in separatist impulses. For centuries the French-speaking majority of Québec suffered real oppression from the English-speaking majority of Canada, and glumly submitted to what 1960s Québecois agitators called a "conquered-people complex".

The Parti Québecois, committed to independence for Québec, won government for the first time in 1976-85. It was also in government from 1994-2003, and has won a bigger percentage of the vote than the SNP did in Scotland in 2007 in eight out of nine provincial elections since 1976. It has passed laws to make French the only official language in Québec, prompting considerable emigration of English-speakers from the area (the English-speaking minority declined from 13% in 1971 to 8% in 2001).

Yet today the PQ does not even mention independence in its platform, talking instead of expanding "sovereignty" while implicitly accepting for now that it will be within the framework of Canada. (Two referendums, in 1980 and 1995, have rejected independence, PQ leader Jacques Parizeau complaining in 1995 that the defeat was due to "ethnic votes").

Or Belgium. The state was created in 1830 with little to define its identity other than that it roughly corresponded to the part of the Netherlands which remained under Spanish (later Austrian) rule after the northern Netherlands won independence in the 16th century. That Belgium's Dutch-speaking north might be united with the Netherlands, or its French-speaking south with France, has never been implausible.

Until World War One the state, the aristocracy, and the high bourgeoisie were solidly French-speaking, disdainful of the mostly peasant Dutch-speakers. Flemish (Dutch-speaking) nationalism rose in the early 20th century and especially in World War 1. Between the world wars, Flanders and Wallonia became recognised as distinct regions with distinct official languages, though no political federalism was established.

After World War Two, Walloon (French-speaking) nationalism took the initiative in pushing for political federalism. In 1963, the "linguistic frontier" between the Dutch-speaking north and the French-speaking south was permanently "frozen" by law, in response to Flemish protests that this frontier was constantly edging north.

From 1964 economic output per head in Flanders moved ahead of previously-dominant Wallonia. Now it is 26% higher, with development centred round Antwerp, which is Europe's busiest port after Rotterdam. (The disparity is much greater than between Scotland and England; household income per head is on average lower in Scotland than in England, but only by 9%, which is also much less than the disparity between regions in England. North-east England is 8% below Scotland).

Flemish demands again started to set the pace. A series of constitutional revisions since 1970 have established political federalism of increasing complexity. The country of ten million people now has six parliaments and five governments. Since the late 1960s, all the mainstream political parties, conservative, liberal, social-democratic, and Green, have split into separate Flemish and Walloon parties, and several new Flemish-only or Walloon-only parties have risen up.

It has become increasingly difficult to form federal governments (which must, by law, include equal numbers of French-speakers and Dutch-speakers), and in recent years there have been long periods of no federal government at all. Quarrels about detailed revision of the federal structures continue.

It is all a long way further down the line than Scotland. Surely this must come to a split? Some newspapers report a split as inevitable soon; The *Economist* recommends it. Yet even now Belgian Marxists consider a split only a "long-term" possibility.

There is no majority for a split in Flanders, and a strong majority against in Wallonia. No big party advocates a split other than the fascistic Vlaams Belang. The Belgian bourgeoisie does not want a split (the VBO-FEB, the bosses' organisation, is, like the Belgian revolutionary left, among the few structures in Belgium which remains unitary).

There is no visible peaceful compromise about Brussels (officially the only bilingual area; 80% French-speaking, but inside the Dutch-speaking north). And meanwhile the Benelux union — the confederation of Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg, dating from the 1940s, which has its own committee of ministers, parliament, court of justice, etc. — rolls on. A new treaty to strengthen it was adopted in June 2008, without trouble.

The Benelux governments were able to act swiftly in concert in September 2008 to nationalise (in part) Fortis, their biggest bank and a successor to the giant Société Générale which once dominated the Belgian economy, when it faced collapse.

Scotland could probably go as far as Québec or Flanders without fully separating. But there are other complications and possibilities.

Belgian Marxists comment: "Because of the institutional labyrinth that Belgium has become under the blows of successive compromises which, besides, have only led to new problems, confusion reigns as to who is responsible for what. De facto, Belgium is run in a very opaque and anti-democratic way."

Centralised government over relatively large areas is often criticised as "remote". It has a democratic advantage, though: everyone knows who is responsible for the decisions. The diffusion of political pressure into intricately layered structures tends to make it more difficult to mobilise across-the-board movements for change.

The logic of particularism also has a harmful effect on the labour movement. The Belgian Socialist Party has never been radical, but it had a sometimes lively left wing into the 1970s. Its division into two parties, Walloon and Flemish, in 1978, has helped consolidate its neo-liberalism.

The unions have resisted better, but the FGTB (secular) metalworkers' federation split into three communal federations in 2006, and the CSC (Catholic) teachers are also split into separate Flemish and Walloon organisations.

Québec workers staged North America's biggest-ever and most radical general strike in 1972. Yet, partly because of the pressure of nationalism, Québec trade unionists are divided into three federations — FTQ, CSN, CSQ — with only FTQ affiliated to the all-Canadian union confederation, and all three more or less tied to nationalist rather than any sort of independent working-class politics.

Finally, all the scenarios above are for conditions of relative capitalist stability. But capitalism is, of necessity, sometimes not even relatively stable. The case of Yugoslavia shows what can happen in crisis.

It is difficult to know how much grip the official Yugoslav talk of "brotherhood and unity" of the different south-Slav nations ever had, since under the Titoist regime it was illegal to decry it, but probably some. When the old regime disintegrated at the end of the 1980s, chauvinists on the different sides — maybe smallish minorities at the start — were quickly able to set the tone, and reciprocally to boost each others' hegemony. What was previous tepid nationalism can quickly heat up.

In Flanders the Vlaams Belang is already consistently the biggest party in Antwerp. It is not inconceivable that a big crisis could boost it to majority status in Flanders, or at least to the level of forcing other parties to court its support or to adopt large parts of its policy in order to fend it off.

The Vlaams Belang is not just jockeying for electoral advantage when it raises Flemish-nationalist demands. It would see the disruption for Belgian capitalism from Flemish separation as a secondary consideration.

It really wants and needs Flemish independence in order to achieve its aims: stopping federal welfare funds going to Wallonia; Flemishing Brussels; reducing French-speakers in Brussels and its surrounds to second-class citizens; deporting many of the Moroccan and other immigrant workers in Belgium (mainly in Brussels, and mainly speaking French as their second language), and depriving those who remain of the vote.

The SNP is not like the Vlaams Belang, or Milosevic's Serbian chauvinists. The point is that gradual easing-apart, until one day Scotland becomes independent with scarcely a jolt, as recommended by the SNP today, is not the only way to Scottish independence. It may not even be the most probable one.

Without the impulse of a crisis the solid majority of Scotland's big-business which, despite the best efforts of the SNP to woo its support, continue to oppose independence, and the relative majority of its population which is against or sceptical about inde-

pendence, may prove unbudgeable.

And in crises politics can change radically. Despite Parizeau's jibe about "ethnic votes", the Parti Québecois calls itself "social democratic" and in social policy is similar to European social democracies; but before its rise in 1968 the biggest Québecois-nationalist party, the Ralliement National (which then merged into the PQ), was markedly right-wing. The opposite evolution can happen.

Not all nationalist parties are right-wing; but nationalism, especially the nationalism of nations which are not oppressed and face no early risk of oppression, is fertile ground for right-wing politics. A right-wing split from the SNP which might win hegemony in a crisis would have real, urgent reasons for getting Scottish independence in order to pursue its politics.

The independentist left in Scotland lives in hope of the inverse scenario: that Scottish independence will come from a crisis, but a crisis that tips Scotland to the left — so that the independent Scotland will look like Cuba or Venezuela, rather than like the SNP's Iceland (in pre-credit-crunch times) or Norway or "Celtic Tiger" Ireland, let alone like a Vlaams Belang Flanders or Tudjman's Croatia.

Even apart from the illusions here as regards Cuba or Venezuela, there is a fundamental misperception.

Capitalist crises can indeed tip politics to the left. Our hope of socialist revolution is based on that fact. But in the integrated Europe of today, let alone centuries-integrated Britain, there is no way that a dramatic left-wing radicalisation could be limited in scope and aims to one country, or one small nation within a multinational country.

If it was true 160 years ago, in the *Communist Manifesto*, that "united action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat", it is ten times more true today.

A sharp shift to the left by Scottish workers would go together with a sharp shift to the left by other European workers too — an increase in cross-border unity, a turn away from the petty grab-your-own politics of "it's our oil" or "no more French-speaking spongers here"… Or it would quickly peter out.

A sharp shift to the nationalist right on one side of the "linguistic frontier" in Belgium, similarly, would tend to trigger a shift to the nationalist right on the other side. A generalised shift to the right will tend to increase self-reinforcing communal/national division, rather than cross-border unity. It works in the opposite direction.

Thus, Scottish independence is likely to arise from a crisis, if it does, through a process in which right-wing nationalist politics gain weight both in England and Scotland. English nationalist politicians would cry to be rid of Scottish "spongers".

Already in Scotland research has found that "over a quarter of the English and over half the Pakistanis have experienced ethnic harassment " and "individuals who are relatively Islamophobic are likely to be relatively Anglophobic as well."

The harassment felt by English people in Scotland was much milder than that suffered by Pakistanis; self-defining Scots or Scottish nationalists were not on average more Islamophobic than other people in Scotland (and certainly much less so than Tory voters); and harassment of Pakistanis is worse in England than in Scotland.

But it is not hard to see how a right-wing Scottish nationalism burgeoning in crisis, and stimulated by right-wing English nationalism to its south, could combine Anglophobia and Islamophobia (notwithstanding the overwhelming shift by Muslim voters from Labour to the SNP following the 2003 invasion of Iraq). And it is certainly the case, as the same research shows, that SNP voters are more Anglophobic than those of any other party.

Without any great crisis prompting it, Wales saw over 200 houses burned out by nationalists between 1979 and 1990s on the grounds that they had been bought by English people; it cannot be inconceivable that something similar could happen in a Scotland shifting right in a crisis.

In short: Scottish nationalism is not an awakening against oppression, but a decomposition-product of the older, bigger European nationalisms. Its present trajectory points to nothing much more than a "minimal" independence or a slow increase in devolutionary autonomy. That has side-dangers of obscurity in politics and division in the labour movement. It also sets up tracks for a much more dangerous development in crisis conditions.

In one sense, however, this is all beside the point. The role of Marxism is not to be the Inspector General of history, nor are we the Gypsy Rose Lee of the future.

The task which Marxists set themselves is to intervene in the class struggle and to give political shape and direction to the elementary working-class struggle generated by capitalism. Spinning fantasies about the SNP's demand for Scottish independence is no part of the Marxist programme.

In its own way, the demand for independence raised by sections of the Scottish left is only the domestic — and rather mundane — expression of a far more widespread malaise on the left.

Independence for Scotland is a "good thing"? It is for those on the Left who have reduced socialism to a matter of inflicting real or imaginary blows on "imperialism", with little or no concern about the politics of the agencies of this "anti-imperialist" struggle, or about the consequences for the working class of their victory.

And what could be more "anti-imperialist" than breaking up the state which once formed the hub of the British Empire?

Compared with the readiness of sections of the left to ignore, excuse and apologise for murderously anti-working-class organisations — such as Hamas, Hizbollah, or the Iraqi sectarian militias — cheering on the prospect of independence for Scotland is small beer. But it is the same political logic which underpins the one and the other.

As a standard, Marxists strive to counter the diversion of plebeian discontent into nationalist narrowness by advocating consistent democracy, by fighting for full national rights, by working to clear all genuine grievances of a "national" character out of the way so that workers can unite without rancour across national lines to combat the common capitalist enemy.

In the case of Scotland, this means upholding the right of the Scottish people to self-determination and to separation if they wish it. But to uphold the right to separation is not necessarily to advocate it. In Scotland, Marxists can make themselves positive advocates of separation only by painting up the SNP's "more competitive place to do business" model with supposed socialistic virtues, or by subscribing to the SSP's scheme that independence must mean, or will probably mean, independence in a crisis as a European fantasy-Cuba.

In other words, they can do it only by feeding nationalist illusions. But a first essential of a coherent socialist policy is to tell the truth.

As the Belgian Marxists note, we have an interest in clean, clear, straightforward political structures. In that respect, the creation of a Scottish Parliament, a sort of unofficial federalism, is a step forward from the strange previous regime where Scotland had different laws from England and Wales, but made by the same Westminster legislature.

The structure is still obscure and messy. The best way forward would be to advocate a democratic federal republic in Britain within a democratic federal Europe.

As Engels put it: "In my view, the proletariat [in general] can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States, the federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side."

Scotland, England, and Wales have a common labour movement, very similar social and legal conditions, a large crossover of populations (of the people now living in Britain who were born in Scotland, 15% live in England or Wales; of the people living in Scotland, 15% were born outside, most in England), and a common language, so it should be possible to achieve a "closer" federalism quicker within this small area than in wider Europe.

The socialists' aim, however, will always be to "level up" between the federal units and move to closer unity as fast as that can be done compatible with the wishes of the populations.

Above all, our aim is to unite the working class and the labour movement across national lines. Everything else is subordinate to that.