

**NB: The online application system was not accepting PDF files, hence this Word Version**Nations of Peace: Nuclear Disarmament and the Making of National Identity in Scotland and Wales

This article uses the Scottish and Welsh Councils for Nuclear Disarmament as windows into the relationship between peace and nationalism in Scotland and Wales in the late 1950s and early 60s. From one perspective, it challenges histories of peace movements in Britain, which have laboured under approaches and assumptions centred on London. From another, it demonstrates the role of movements for nuclear disarmament in the emergence of a ‘left of centre’ nationalism in Scotland and Wales. Although these movements were constituents of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), their nationalism evolved as the threat from nuclear weapons to Scotland and Wales came to be seen as distinctive and was interpreted through lenses of local culture and tradition. The movements contributed to ‘the making of national identity’ by providing a channel through activists could ‘nationalise’ and galvanise Scottish and Welsh Christianity, folk and socialism in particular. It was through the movements that activists articulated and promoted Scotland and Wales as sovereign nations of peace, with an international outlook separate from that of Britain.

Key Words: Nuclear Disarmament; Nationalism; Peace

The movements for nuclear disarmament in Scotland and Wales contributed to the ‘nationalisation’ of local forms of idealism and activism in those countries. As Scottish and Welsh activists drew upon local cultures and traditions to construct and imagine civil societies free from the threat of the Cold War and nuclear weapons, they brought them into a national context that was rich in potential for nationalist parties and politics.<sup>1</sup> The Scottish and Welsh movements were a means not only by which local cultures in Scotland and Wales could be homogenised and defined in favour of national sovereignty, but also by which they could be fortified and defined against Britain. Scottish and Welsh activists united against the machinery of a nuclear weapons programme that was commissioned in London and that infringed a common sense of constitutional and environmental sovereignty – especially after the location of Polaris missiles on the Holy Loch near Glasgow in 1960. It has been

---

<sup>1</sup> On locality and the nation, see: Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Los Angeles, 1990); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Durham, 1997); Oliver Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940* (Basingstoke, 2003), 45-48.

commonplace for Scottish and Welsh nationalists to equate the perceived evil of nuclear weapons with that of Westminster rule ever since; the most dramatic and recent example coming from Lord Wigley, a Welsh peer who drew comparisons between Trident and Auschwitz.<sup>2</sup> The cause of nuclear disarmament, informed by Scottish and Welsh cultures and traditions and set against the ‘tyranny’ of Westminster, was highly constructive for national identities. These identities were not pervasive, but specific to a stratum of activists that was central to the rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and *Plaid Cymru* in the 1960s.

The relationship between peace and nationalism, and its significance for the nationalism that emerged in Scotland and Wales in the 1960s, will be explored through the Scottish and Welsh Councils for Nuclear Disarmament, both of which were ‘regional’ branches of CND. Since CND was based in London and pre-occupied with the role of Britain, it is necessary to interrogate the (inter)nationalism of the Scottish and Welsh Councils in more detail. This will be achieved by examining their origins, their ability to coalesce and self-define across national territories and the social backgrounds and identities of their participants. How movements for nuclear disarmament in Scotland and Wales were ‘nationalised’ by local forms of idealism and activism, and in turn strengthened the nationalism of these local forms themselves, will then be examined through Scottish and Welsh Christianity, folk and socialism. The movements consisted of Christians intent on building communities and overcoming sectarianism; of artists intent on defending and furthering the national culture; and of nationalists and socialists intent on making decisions on defence and foreign policy accountable to the Scottish and Welsh people. They fostered a ‘left of centre’ nationalism among activists by exposing the shortcomings of the Labour Party; by promoting ecumenism in the churches and folk traditions in the arts; and by heightening awareness of the ‘national’ environment through demon-

---

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 28 January 2015.

strations against the nuclear complex. In the struggle against nuclear bases and weapons commissioned by London, ideological and activist networks were re-imagined and re-scaled in a manner more conducive to nationalism and the nationalist parties.

The creative and political possibilities that peace and nationalism offered one another in post-war Scotland and Wales have tended to be overlooked. The historiography of CND has been particularly neglectful of the importance of locality to the dynamics and perspectives of a movement that at its peak consisted of almost nine hundred groups across the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> What has most impressed historians is the influence that perceptions of the world role of Britain have seemed to exercise over discourses of peace and disarmament. As James Hinton has argued, peace movements in Britain ‘made assumptions about the role of Britain in the world which owed more to the unconscious legacy of nineteenth century imperialism than they did to any realistic assessment of the basis on which a country which has lost the power to run the world could contribute best to peace.’<sup>4</sup> CND, with its chief objective of unilateral disarmament, was based on an inflated view of British influence: that by renouncing its nuclear weapons Britain could give a moral lead to non-nuclear nations and set a precedent for disarmament by the U.S. and U.S.S.R.

The movement for nuclear disarmament provided opportunities for re-imagining the position not only of Britain within the world order, however, but also of the home nations within the U.K. As Hinton acknowledged, ‘in small and historically oppressed nations radicals find it possible to combine their nationalism with socialism and internationalism in positive ways: ones which are simply not available to the English because the sources of English nationalism have been poisoned by the legacy of British imperialism.’<sup>5</sup> Peace was significant for nationalism in Scotland and Wales because it allowed Scottish and Welsh citizens to idealise their nations as moral and righteous; nationalism

---

<sup>3</sup> On numbers of CND groups, see: Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), 117. On neglecting locality, see the main works on CND: Paul Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (London, 1988); Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb: The British Peace Movement, 1958-1965* (London, 1988); Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War* (Oxford, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in 20th Century Britain* (London, 1989), viii.

<sup>5</sup> Hinton, *Protests*, ix.

was significant for peace because it allowed them to idealise Scotland and Wales as sovereign communities of peace in an international order. The growing potency of this relationship in the 1950s and 60s represented a historic shift in the ideological make-up of Scottish and Welsh nationalism and internationalism. Whereas this had been informed by a socialism that fed into the Labour Party and the British Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it became increasingly informed after World War II by a pacifism that fed into nationalist parties and that seemed incompatible with a post-colonial and -industrial Britain.<sup>6</sup>

A more ambitious enquiry into the relationship between peace and nationalism in the historiography of CND has come from Holger Nehring, who has carried out comparative and transnational studies of British and West German movements for nuclear disarmament. On the one hand, this research has dismantled pre-conceptions about the universalism of nuclear disarmament and revealed its proponents to be ‘national internationalists’ with agendas and interests that were limited and culturally defined.<sup>7</sup> On the other, it has failed to expand on the complexity of ‘the nation’ within the local and regional structures of CND, a shortcoming that means that it does not add much to the account offered by Richard Taylor, the first historian of CND, in 1988.<sup>8</sup> As is common in the historiography of CND, ‘the nation’ tends to be based on and extrapolated from the politics of a group of intellectuals associated with the *New Statesman* in London.<sup>9</sup> By shifting the focus from London to Scotland and Wales, it is possible to tell a far more representative and textured history of CND and the competing nationalisms that gained expression within it. Scottish and Welsh CND cannot be

---

<sup>6</sup> On nationalism and socialism, see: Gerry Hassan, ‘The Auld Enemies: Scottish Nationalism and Scottish Labour’, in Gerry Hassan (ed), *The Modern SNP: From Protest to Power* (Edinburgh, 2009), 147-161; Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism* (Champaign 2015); Miles Taylor, ‘Patriotism, History and the Left in Twentieth Century Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (1990), 971-987. On nationalism and internationalism, see: Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Holger Nehring, ‘The National Internationalists: Transnational Relations and the British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons, 1957-64’, *Contemporary European History*, 14, no. 4 (2005), 559-582; Lawrence Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement* (Stanford, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> See Nehring, *Politics of Security*, chapter 5.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Randle. ‘Non-Violent Direct Action in the 1950s and 1960s’ in Richard Taylor and Nigel Young (eds) *Campaigns for Peace* (Manchester, 1987). pp. 131-161.

explained by the monolithic categories of ‘Britishness’ and nationhood on which historians of CND and post-war activism in general have depended.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike historians of CND, who have been closed off to the influence of Scottish and Welsh nationalism within peace movements, historians of Scotland and Wales have been open to the influence of peace movements within Scottish and Welsh nationalism. For the most part, however, Scottish and Welsh CND have been seen by historians of Scotland and Wales as by-products of nationalism and nationalist parties rather than active agents in their making.<sup>11</sup> This is not without justification, even when the negligible size and stature of the nationalist parties prior to the late 1960s is taken into account. Mairi Stewart, a lifelong supporter of the SNP and one of its predecessors, the National Party of Scotland, was instrumental in the establishment of the Scottish Council for Nuclear Disarmament (SCND). *Plaid Cymru*, which liaised with the Peace Pledge Union in the run up to World War II, was similarly instrumental in the establishment of the Welsh Council (WCND). In this context, it is tempting to view SCND and WCND as symptoms of a nationalism that was also manifest in campaigns against apartheid in South Africa and for national television. As much as SCND and WCND, it could be argued that these campaigns also contributed to what was earlier referred to as the ‘nationalisation’ of local cultures and traditions in Scotland and Wales.

What distinguished SCND and WCND was the symbolic magnitude of the issue they confronted and the power of protest over it to re-ignite synergies between peace and nationalism that had

---

<sup>10</sup> An example of this tendency can be seen in the following: Jodi Burkett, ‘Re-defining British morality: ‘Britishness’ and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 1958-68’, *Twentieth Century British History*, (2010) 21 (2), 184-205; Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nicholas Crowson and Jean-François Mouhot, *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford, 2013). Brief insights into Scottish and Welsh CND can be glimpsed in: Martin Johnes, ‘Wales and the Cold War’, *Llafur*, 10, 4 (2011), 5-15; John Minnion & Philip Bolsover (eds), *The CND Story: The First 25 Years of CND in the Words of the People Involved* (London, 1983); Sandy Hobbs & Willie Thompson, *Out of the Burning House: Political Socialisation in the Age of Affluence* (Newcastle, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> This is particularly the case in older accounts of Scottish and Welsh nationalism. See: Philip Butt, *The Welsh Question* (Cardiff, 1975), 102. The recent literature is more appreciative of the complex ways in which social activism has defined, and been defined by, Scottish and Welsh nationalism. See: Tom M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: A Modern History*, (London, 2012), 574-590; Martin Johnes, *Wales since 1939* (Manchester, 2012), chapter 3. On the SNP and *Plaid* see: Peter Lynch, *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party* (Cardiff, 2013); Rhys Evans, *Gwynfor Evans: Portrait of a Patriot* (Y Lolfa, 2008); Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party* (Bridgend, 2001).

been dampened by World War II. To campaign for peace and disarmament as a Scottish or Welsh nationalist during or after World War II was to risk suspicions of pro-Nazism and encounter myths of a ‘people’s war’ that had widespread support in Scotland and Wales, including within the SNP and *Plaid*.<sup>12</sup> It has even been suggested that the consensus achieved by victories in the World Wars cemented the attachment of Scotland and Wales to Britain and obscured the need for constitutional reform.<sup>13</sup> While World War II also drew attention to the need for reform and hastened the introduction of legislation specific to Scotland and Wales, it is arguable that this was not drastic enough.<sup>14</sup> Lawrence Daly, a representative of miners in West Fife, described the unexpected success of the SNP coming second to the Labour Party in the 1962 West Lothian by-election as a result of the ‘dangers inherent in the centralisation of political or economic power, and of the need to counter-balance these by maximum practicable self-government.’ ‘Many [Scots] ...remember that the Party that once recognised all this was the Labour Party’, Daly claimed, and ‘that one of the greatest advocates of Scottish Home Rule was Keir Hardie; and that after 1945 the Labour Party ditched its own policy.’<sup>15</sup> An outmoded constitution may have been insulated by identities and myths forged in wartime. Scottish and Welsh CND provided the earliest and most meaningful challenges to those identities and myths. It was through them that the dislocation between the English and ‘Celtic’ interest in defence and foreign policy was laid bare.

It was also over nuclear disarmament that socialists converted to the nationalist parties and contributed to their ideological orientation. The possession of nuclear weapons by Britain, along with the expansion of the ‘military-industrial complex’ in Scotland and Wales, was regarded as a supreme

---

<sup>12</sup> On the ‘people’s war’, see: Angus Calder, *The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945* (London, 1969), p. 57; Sonya O. Rose, *Which People’s War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain* (Oxford, 2003), chapter 6. On Scotland and Wales in World War II, see: Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 565-573; Martin Johnes, ‘Welshness, Welsh soldiers and the Second World War’ in Wendy Ugolini & Juliette Pattinson (eds), *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain During the Second World War* (Oxford, 2015). On ‘pro-Nazism’, see the following file on Arthur Donaldson, who became leader of the SNP in 1960 and assisted the Scottish Neutrality League during World War II: The National Archives, HO 45/23801.

<sup>13</sup> Linda Colley, *Acts of Union and Disunion: What has held the UK together – and what is dividing it?* (London, 2014), part II.

<sup>14</sup> Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 568-570; Johnes, *Wales*, chapters 1 & 2.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence Daly, ‘Scotland on the Dole’, *New Left Review*, 1/17 Winter 1962, 1-17.

symbol of the subordination of the 'Celtic' nations to Westminster and a supreme test of the radical and socialist traditions they embodied. The reversal of Harold Wilson on his pledge to abort the construction of a Polaris base at Faslane was pivotal in prompting the defection of socialists from the Labour Party in Scotland in particular. Keith Bovey, chairman of SCND, became an SNP candidate; Chrissie MacWhirter, secretary of SCND, became national secretary of the SNP; and Isobel Lindsay and Tom McAlpine became office-bearers of the SNP after leaving the Labour Party due to its acceptance of atmospheric testing in the early sixties.<sup>16</sup> The conversion of socialists to nationalist parties over nuclear disarmament suggests that SCND and WCND were significant in the leftwards shift of the SNP and *Plaid* in this period. This shift was driven not only by economic and political factors, such as deindustrialisation and the failure of the Labour Party to treat it, but also by ethical and idealistic ones, of which nuclear disarmament was the most captivating and influential. The vision of Scotland and Wales as social democratic nations with their own set of trading relations ran parallel to the vision of them as peaceful ones with their own commitments to international order and progress. Scottish and Welsh CND provided a space in which these socialist and pacifistic futures were able to fuse and re-define Scottish and Welsh nationalism and internationalism as Britain became a post-colonial and -industrial power.

### National Movements

In order to comprehend SCND and WCND as national movements, it is necessary to begin with their origins and formation. The mobilisation of the movement in Scotland mirrored that of the one in England. Just as a National Campaign against Nuclear Weapons Testing (NCANWT) was established to channel opposition against tests on Christmas Island in London in February 1957, so too was an Edinburgh Council for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests (ECANWT) established in Scotland four months later. The transition of the Edinburgh Council into the Scottish Council on 22

---

<sup>16</sup> James Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government: The Campaigns for a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 208. Gerry Hassan has also pointed out that 'senior Labour politicians had in their younger selves been attracted to the SNP over the issue [of nuclear disarmament], including some who in later life became very right wing; George Robertson is one example.' Hassan, 'Auld Enemies', 156.

March 1958 was facilitated by the same events that led to the transition of NCANWT into CND: the rejection of unilateral disarmament by the Labour Party at its annual conference in November 1957 and the intervention of high-profile intellectuals who were connected to the *New Statesman*. It was on the back of J.B. Priestley's celebrated article on 'Britain and the Nuclear Bombs' that Mairi Stewart, the secretary of the Edinburgh Council, wrote a letter to the *New Statesman* appealing for support: she found correspondence to be 'large and widespread', ranging from Nethy Bridge in Inverness-shire to Ayton in Berwickshire.<sup>17</sup> Despite the similarities to English CND, the Edinburgh Council appealed to Scottish figures and institutions. Its members wrote to 'known or suspected sympathisers throughout Scotland; provided speakers or speaking panels at meetings of Edinburgh societies of one sort or another; kept an eye on the local and national Scottish press with the object of finding "pegs" on which to hang letters to the editor and circularised the Scottish daily and weekly press with notes on doings at [their] meetings.'<sup>18</sup>

The centrality of *Plaid* to the movement for nuclear disarmament in Wales made it more nationalistic from the outset. According to Elwyn Roberts, a leading figure in WCND in North Wales and general secretary of *Plaid* between 1965 and 1971, the party took the initiative on nuclear disarmament 'simply because no-one else seemed to take much interest in getting the Campaign started in Wales.'<sup>19</sup> After the party passed a resolution in favour of nuclear disarmament at its annual conference, it launched an 'All-Wales Campaign' in March 1958 and held meetings in Pwllheli, Wrexham and Colwyn Bay in May. The significance of nuclear disarmament for Wales and Welsh nationalism was made far more explicit than in Scotland. Gwynfor Evans, the leader of *Plaid*, described at Colwyn Bay how 'the English government has never consulted or respected Welsh opinion on an issue which involves the physical existence of our people. This intolerable situation is the inevitable

---

<sup>17</sup> *New Statesman*, 21 December 1957; The Mitchell Library (ML), Glasgow, Papers of the Scottish Council for Nuclear Disarmament (SCND), Dep. 215/352, ML. Mairi Stewart to Mrs Currie, 2 February 1958.

<sup>18</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/296/1, Mairi Stewart to Miss McGilvry, 24 December 1957.

<sup>19</sup> The National Library of Wales (NLW), Papers of *Plaid Cymru*, M331, Elwyn Roberts to Mervyn Jones, 9 October 1958.



result of the complete absence of Welsh self-government.<sup>20</sup> It was not until the headquarters of CND suggested that the Cardiff branch organise a Welsh conference, however, that the ‘All-Wales Campaign’ became formalised into the Welsh Council.<sup>21</sup>

An initial obstacle to the framing of nuclear disarmament as a ‘national’ cause was the inability of SCND and WCND to organise and function across national territories. The expansion of SCND, which went from representing two branches at its inception to at least eight by 1960, was far from smooth. Aberdeen CND were particularly reluctant to cede autonomy to an organisation from the central belt, where they would have difficulties in attending national events.<sup>22</sup> The Welsh Council was even more beset by logistical problems between North and South. These were deemed so insurmountable that it became routine for WCND to operate out of separate organisational centres associated with the infrastructure of *Plaid*: a centre led by Elwyn Roberts in Bangor and another led by Emrys Roberts in Cardiff. As Elwyn Roberts explained to Peggy Duff, the general secretary of CND, ahead of the inaugural conference of WCND in October 1958: ‘If the representatives from North Wales ... are few in number, do not be disheartened. It will be because of the extremely bad communications between North and South.’<sup>23</sup> The division of the movement in Wales into two regional spheres, however, was not to detract from national aspirations. When informing Duff of the meetings in North Wales in May 1958, Elwyn was swift to refer to the ones ‘being organised from Cardiff – I mention this to show that we mean to cover the whole of Wales.’<sup>24</sup> By March 1959, the Council comprised of fifteen branches, spanning from Anglesey to Swansea.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> NLW, M331, transcript of a speech by Gwynfor Evans, no date.

<sup>21</sup> The Provisional Welsh Council was established from two representatives from six branches at a meeting in Aberdare on 20 September and confirmed at a conference in Cardiff on 18 October.

<sup>22</sup> ML, SCND Dep. 215/52/5, Ian Hamnet to R. H. Macintosh, no date; Ian Hamnet to Norma Couper, 20 March 1959; Norma Couper to Ian Hamnet, 26 July 1959.

<sup>23</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M331, Elwyn Roberts to Peggy Duff, 7 October 1958.

<sup>24</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M331, Elwyn Roberts to Professor Harland, 16 April 1958.

<sup>25</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M330, Minutes, 21 March 1959.

The formation and growth of SCND and WCND was shaped by the political as well as the physical geography of Scotland and Wales. Both emerged out of localities and communities in which middle- rather than working-class traditions of radicalism were prevalent.<sup>26</sup> The roots of SCND stemmed from the decision of parents and teachers at Rudolf Steiner, a local independent school in Edinburgh, to embark on collective action against nuclear tests; those of WCND stemmed not so much from the socialism of the South as the Christian Nonconformism of the North.<sup>27</sup> As described by a historian of Welsh nationalism, nuclear disarmament was an issue that, not unlike opening hours on a Sunday, offered a means by which ‘Nonconformist consciences could be exercised.’<sup>28</sup> The radicalism of SCND and WCND was manifest in the artists, churchmen, housewives, intellectuals and students who made up their membership and support bases. Mairi Stewart described SCND as comprising ‘a cross-section of responsible, thinking Scots’, ranging ‘from university staff and professional people to housewives and trade unionists.’<sup>29</sup> Roderick MacFarquhar, the secretary of the Highland Fund and chairman of SCND, was the only member of the national committee who could claim to be working class.<sup>30</sup> The chairman of WCND, Dr. Frank Jarman, worked for the Mass Radiography Service of the Welsh Regional Hospital Board in Bangor. The Scottish and Welsh Councils were the product of a class of activists that had a historic concern for the cultural and social well-being of the Scottish and Welsh nation.

The dominance of the middle classes in SCND and WCND can be explained in part by the activism of the working classes, which tended to take place outside of the organisational framework

---

<sup>26</sup> On class and CND, see: Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester, 1966); Colin Pritchard & Richard Taylor, *The Protest Makers: The British Nuclear Disarmament Movement of 1958–1965, Twenty Years On*, (Oxford, 1980); John Mattausch, *A Commitment to Campaign. A Sociological Study of CND*, (Manchester, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/296/1, Mairi Stewart to Miss McGilvry, 24 December 1957; ‘Obituary: Mairi Stewart’, *The Scotsman*, 13 October 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Butt, *The Welsh Question*, 101.

<sup>29</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/352, Mairi Stewart to Mrs Currie, 2 February 1958; Dep. 215/365, Mairi Stewart to Mr Taylor, no date.

<sup>30</sup> He grew up as the son of a clothier’s assistant in Inverness-shire, participated in the General Strike and joined the International Brigades in the fight against Franco.

of CND and has been poorly documented in comparison. The history of working-class campaigns against nuclear weapons in Scotland and Wales has in fact a longer lineage than that of middle-class ones. Scottish and Welsh workers were among the most active in Britain when campaigning for unilateral disarmament on behalf of the Communist Party (CP) in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>31</sup> The commitment of Scottish and Welsh workers to peace and disarmament may have become more complicated as the politics of the CP evolved in the 1950s, but it did gain expression through CND and the Labour Movement. The Scottish and Welsh Councils included groups with socialist origins, such as Aberdare in Wales, which was founded by the Divisional Labour Party, and West Fife in Scotland, which was founded by the Fife Socialist League (FSL). When the Westminster government sought to install missile bases in Aberdeenshire in 1958, it was the Labour Movement that prevented it from doing so by ‘blacklisting’ work on construction.<sup>32</sup>

If SCND and WCND were to be effective, then they needed to utilise the middle-class networks on which they were based and tap into the working-class ones that remained distinctive and separate. Scottish and Welsh churches, including those that disestablished from the Church of England after World War I as well as those that were Nonconformist, were particularly important in connecting rural and working-class communities to SCND and WCND and in providing fora in which nuclear disarmament could be grasped as a pre-eminent national and moral cause. As described by a report on 28 April 1958 from Inverurie, a small town in Aberdeenshire to the north west of the Granite City: ‘Movement springs entirely from the Presbyterian Church at present.’<sup>33</sup> Reverends Cochrane and Trotter, along with their wives in the Federation of Women’s Guilds, were able to summon three hundred people to a public meeting in Inverurie on 30 April, where they screened the film *Shadow of*

---

<sup>31</sup> Angela Tuckett, *The Scottish Trades Union Congress: The First 80 Years, 1897-1977* (Edinburgh, 1986), 334-335.

<sup>32</sup> Rocket Bases, *House of Commons Debates*, 10 December 1958, vol 597 cc476-80.

<sup>33</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/340, Report from Inverurie, 23 April 1958.

*Hiroshima*.<sup>34</sup> Scottish and Welsh churches also acted as centres of social reform in urban communities and as a source of inspiration for a younger generation of activists. Dundee CND, for example, was established following a meeting of the Iona Youth Associates, a by-product of the religious community established by Reverend George MacLeod in 1938.<sup>35</sup> The churches are only one example of a set of national institutions that SCND and WCND emerged from and drew upon in order to mobilise support: universities and women's organisations were also integral to these social networks.<sup>36</sup> In utilising these networks, SCND and WCND contributed to the making of civil societies that were embedded in national institutions, distinctive from their English counterparts and suspicious of London-rule.

The division between middle- and working-class activism over nuclear disarmament did not prevent the Scottish and Welsh Councils from seeking common ground with the Labour Movement. The tradition of middle-class radicalism to which SCND and WCND belonged was charged with the mission of forming cross-class coalitions that could empower social democratic politics.<sup>37</sup> Such 'cross-class coalitions' were slow to develop in and around the Scottish and Welsh Councils until 1960, when debates over unilateral disarmament erupted in the Labour Party and Polaris missiles were located on the Holy Loch.<sup>38</sup> The initial lack of middle- and working-class co-operation over nuclear disarmament was demonstrated by the candidature of Lawrence Daly for MP of West Fife in 1959. Daly was a miner and delegate of Glenraig, a pit that employed over 1000 miners. He left

---

<sup>34</sup> ML, SCND Dep. 214/343, Reverend Trotter to Mr Macintosh, 30 April 1958; Dep. 215/298/1, Mr Cochrane to Mairi Stewart, 21 June 1957. Reverend Cochrane claimed that he had been attempting to arouse interest over nuclear testing for two years prior to the formation of the Edinburgh Council in June 1957. Nonconformist churches in Wales were just as important to the Welsh campaign as Presbyterian churches were to the Scottish one: committees were established in Aberystwyth and Llanelli in 1958 as a result of the efforts of churches in those areas; NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M330, Minutes, 20 September 1958.

<sup>35</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/338, Ken Meekison to Ian Hamnet, 6 May 1958.

<sup>36</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M330, Minutes, 21 March 1959. The Welsh Council invited delegates from almost two thousand organisations at its inaugural conference in October 1958.

<sup>37</sup> Holger Nehring. 'The meanings of "social democracy": the British and West German protests against nuclear weapons, 1957-64' in John Callaghan and Ilaria Favretto (eds), *Transitions in Social Democracy* (Manchester, 2007), 194-207.

<sup>38</sup> Alex Moffat, President of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, could only become a sponsor of SCND in an 'individual capacity; WCND only received sponsorship from the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers and the Socialist Medical Association.

the CP after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956; co-founded the FSL in 1957 and sought to move the National Union of Miners (NUM) to a policy of unilateral disarmament at their 1959 conference.<sup>39</sup> Despite his view that unilateralism was an ‘overriding issue’, Daly appears to have been unaware of SCND until August 1959, when Peggy Duff put him in touch with its secretary, Ian Hamnet.<sup>40</sup> The worlds of middle- and working-class activism began to collide with one another over nuclear disarmament, even though they remained for the most part discrete and alien. As E.P. Thompson explained to middle-class activists from England who intended to travel up to Fife to support Daly, they would ‘find themselves in rather bewildering circumstances’.<sup>41</sup>

### National Outlooks

To situate SCND and WCND in the national geographies and social networks of Scotland and Wales is insufficient; it is also necessary to consider how far these translated into national outlooks and perspectives on peace and disarmament. The Scottish and Welsh Councils struggled to reconcile their nationalism with their position as regional branches of CND and the aim of unilateral disarmament by Britain.<sup>42</sup> Since the renunciation of nuclear weapons could only take place in Westminster, the Scottish and Welsh Councils had to be administered from and directed towards London. In the same way that English nationalism fed into the idea that Britain could set an example for world disarmament, however, so too did Scottish and Welsh nationalism feed into the idea that the Scottish and Welsh nations could do the same. ‘I think *Plaid* is currently doing more than any other party in the world to wake up the conscience not only of our nation’, wrote Cyril Jones from Wrexham in May 1958, ‘but also of other nations throughout the world.’<sup>43</sup> While visions such as this did not represent a realistic basis on which to run a campaign, they did represent a romantic ideal that SCND and WCND often drew upon and evoked. The strategies of SCND and WCND may have been linked

---

<sup>39</sup> Modern Records Centre (MRC), University of Warwick, Papers of Lawrence Daly, MSS. 302/3/13, Bertrand Russell to Peggy Duff, 29 July 1959.

<sup>40</sup> MRC, Papers of Lawrence Daly, MSS.302/3/13, Peggy Duff to Lawrence Daly, 7 August 1959.

<sup>41</sup> MRC, Papers of Lawrence Daly, MSS.302/3/13, E.P. Thompson to Alan Lovell, 2 September 1959.

<sup>42</sup> James N. McCrorie, *The Highland Cause: The Life and Times of Roderick MacFarquhar* (Edinburgh, 2001), 166-167.

<sup>43</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M332, Cyril Jones to Elwyn Roberts, 13 May 1958.

to London and Britain, but their ideals were also linked to a utopian nationalism that they helped to reinforce. They offered a powerful filter through which Scotland and Wales could be envisaged as national communities and international actors.

The conceptualisation of nuclear disarmament as a national rather than British cause occurred through manipulation and growing awareness of the dangers that nuclear weapons posed Scotland and Wales in particular. The Scottish and Welsh Councils sought from their inception to highlight the uniqueness of these dangers for their respective nations, even in the standardised exhibitions, films and literature they received from London. In doing so, they appealed to and brought out the distinctiveness of the Scottish and Welsh landscapes – not only in the sense of physical terrains and sceneries, but also in the sense of sites where ‘social and subjective identities are formed’ and inscribed.<sup>44</sup> A report by *Herald Cymraeg*, in which it was claimed that Snowdon is particularly susceptible to radioactive fallout because of its height and weather conditions, serves to illustrate this argument.<sup>45</sup> It prompts the reader to frame the threat of nuclear weapons in the context of what Snowdon means to them. These meanings have the potential to resonate with local and national identities and form wellsprings for nationalist politics. The relationship between the landscape and local and national identities would have been brought further into conceptual unison by the advent of Scottish and Welsh anti-nuclear marches. As the location of Polaris missiles on the Holy Loch demonstrated, the intensification of the nuclear threat also correlated with the intensification of local and national interpretations. The SNP, which converted to unilateral disarmament in 1961, could easily politicise the treatment of Scottish land by English rulers. ‘There are no Polaris bases or depots in England’, claimed its manifesto in 1967. ‘We are kept in greater danger than the rest of the U.K. and the danger is immediate.’<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> William J.T. Mitchell in David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (Guildford, 1998), 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Herald Cymraeg*, 11 May 1959.

<sup>46</sup> Glasgow Caledonian University Archives (GCUA), Papers of Sandy Hobbs, GB1847, ‘SNP & You’ pamphlet, no date, SNP and Scottish Nationalism.

The evocation of Scottish and Welsh landscapes and the juxtaposition of Scottish and Welsh ‘peace’ with English belligerence was habitual among nationalists. After World War II, for example, Welsh nationalists ran a successful campaign to overturn plans by the War Office to occupy the Preseli Hills in Pembrokeshire.<sup>47</sup> The Scottish National Liberation Army (SNLA), a terrorist group formed following the referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979, has also been accused of harvesting soil from the Hebridean isle of Gruinard, where the British government had carried out weapons experiments with anthrax in World War II.<sup>48</sup> The soil was deposited outside of Porton Down, a biological and chemical weapons research centre, and in Blackpool, host to the Conservative Party conference in 1981. Despite the stark contrast between the Pembrokeshire campaign and ‘Operation Dark Harvest’, as the SNLA protest was known, both sought to capture the disregard that the British government had for Scottish and Welsh land and ways of life. As the military infrastructures of the Cold War were ‘quite literally dug into the landscape and the environment’, to cite Holger Nehring, the connection between landscape and nationhood would have seemed especially striking.<sup>49</sup> The emotive pull of the landscape, however, was often tempered or superseded by the economic opportunities that military infrastructures had to offer: cultural and economic components of the national interest in Scotland and Wales tended to conflict. RAF Brawdy in Pembrokeshire, for example, was contributing £1.8 million to the local economy in the early 1990s and consequently ‘enjoyed excellent relations with the surrounding community.’<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Hefin Wyn, *Battle of the Preselau: The Campaign to Safeguard the 'Sacred' Pembrokeshire Hills 1946-1948* (Maenclochog, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> David Leslie, *Inside a Terrorist Group: The Story of the SNLA* (Saor Alba, 2006), chapter 2. It has since been suggested that these accusations were a ruse. See: Robert Lewis, *Dark Actors: The Life and Death of Dr David Kelly* (London 2013), chapter 4.

<sup>49</sup> Holger Nehring, ‘The forgotten impact of a war that didn't happen’, *Open Security* (March 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Johnes, ‘Wales and the Cold War’, 5-15; Charlie Witham, ‘Sheep, subs and showcases: the American military in Brawdy, 1974-1995’, *Welsh History Review*, 24, 4 (2009), 168-86. On ‘ways of life’, a failed campaign to prevent the flooding of a Welsh valley in order to create a reservoir for Liverpool is particularly useful: Johnes, *Wales*, chapter 8.

It was through traditions of pacifism and socialism, as well as concerns about the landscape, that nuclear disarmament was conceptualised as a national rather than British cause. These traditions were a powerful resource through which national communities could be articulated against nuclear weapons. Wilfred Wellock, a pacifist and ex-Labour MP, linked the struggle in Wales to an anti-materialist socialism rooted in the Welsh way of life: the ‘rich and powerful nations’ could learn from the ‘rare’ qualities and ‘creative culture’ of the Welsh.<sup>51</sup> Frank Jarman viewed the prospect of radioactive fallout over Wales as the latest step in a process of industrialisation that served Britain and afflicted the Welsh. His research ranged from measuring rates of tuberculosis in Welsh miners to measuring rates of Strontium 90 fallout in Wales.<sup>52</sup> The articulation of Scottish and Welsh pacifist and socialist communities against nuclear weapons was not merely rhetorical; it was located in the fabric and history of those communities. The founding demonstration and meeting of Cardiganshire CND, for example, was held in Tregaron, the birthplace of Henry Richard, ‘Cardiganshire’s Apostle of Peace’.<sup>53</sup> In a speech by Labour MP Leo Abse in Cory Hall in Cardiff in September 1962, he captured the function of radical tradition as a both a rhetorical device and a living constituent of the community: ‘This drab down at heel hall; for here all the battles for the enlargement of life in Wales have been joined.’

Here, my mother listened to the heroes and heroines, oft like today endowed with great visions and much human frailty, to Annie Besant and Ramsay Macdonald, all fumbling towards the creation of a society where men and women could live in dignity, peace and security. ... But all from this hall that has been demanded and achieved; all that is good that has been done or half done ... now face utter annihilation.<sup>54</sup>

The possession of nuclear weapons by Britain was interpreted as endangering pacifist and socialist communities that embodied a version of ‘the nation’ and that would have to come to its aid.

---

<sup>51</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M331, transcript of a speech by Wilfred Wellock, no date.

<sup>52</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M330, minutes, 10 January 1959; M329, minutes, 30 May 1959.

<sup>53</sup> The organisers intended it to be ‘Cardiganshire’s own Aldermaston Rally’. NLW, Papers of CND Cymru, A5, report of the Cardiganshire Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, no date.

<sup>54</sup> NLW, Papers of Leo Abse, F/b/1, transcript of a speech at Cory Hall, 27 September 1962.



The version of 'the nation' on which WCND and SCND were based tended to derive from and appeal to a small and influential section of the middle class in Scotland and Wales. As the election campaign of Lawrence Daly demonstrated, the cross-class coalitions that formed around nuclear disarmament often struggled to turn unilateralism into a key issue for electoral politics or popular nationalism. E.P. Thompson stressed in his advice to activists from England that the campaign in West Fife was 'very much a local fight':

I do not mean that the issues involved are parochial, but that it is a 'do-it-yourself' political campaign which arises out of local circumstances and personalities. ... I have seen the Scottish and local press cuttings ... not one of them mentions the opening unilateralist points in Lawrence's press statement; but all of them feature the 'local West Fife working miner' angle.

The election was far more likely to turn on 'backyard' issues rather than ones to do with peace and disarmament, according to Thompson: 'rents, housing and educational needs - and the vital bread-and-butter-issues of the future of the mining industry and pit closures'. Even though 'many of the miners and their wives will want to vote for "peace" ... they will be confused by the rival claims of the Labour Party and CP to be the "peace" candidates.'<sup>55</sup> The utopian idealism of nuclear disarmament did not necessarily fit with the everyday materialism of working-class life: Daly received only ten percent of the vote.<sup>56</sup> As industrial communities and working-class ideas about the nation became increasingly imperilled, however, the potential for cross-class co-operation was enhanced. The middle-class radicals who turned away from the Labour Party over ethical issues could forge alliances with working-class ones who turned away from it over material ones.

---

<sup>55</sup> MRC, Papers of Lawrence Daly, MSS.302/3/13, E.P. Thompson to Alan Lovell, 2 September, 1959.

<sup>56</sup> Lawrence Daly, 'Fife Socialist League', *New Left Review*, 1/4 July-August 1960.

To distinguish too boldly between middle- and working-class radicalism on the basis of post-material and material politics is to risk doing relations between them a disservice. It has already been demonstrated that the emergence of the nuclear complex had material ramifications for Scottish and Welsh landscapes and workforces that served to ground the idealism of the anti-nuclear cause. Both middle- and working-class radicals attempted to demonstrate the material and idealistic implications of their struggles. The material manifestations of nuclear disarmament were evident in 'Factories for Peace', an attempt to link production for peaceful purposes with industrial democracy. The first factory was established from £6000 in small donations in Glasgow in 1963 by Tom McAlpine, who as well as being a convert from Labour to the SNP was also a member of the Iona Community.<sup>57</sup> The name of his factory, Rowen Engineering, pointed towards traditions of co-operative enterprise in Scotland that can be re-traced to Robert Owen's textile mill in Lanarkshire in the early nineteenth century. A second factory was established in Onllwyn in Wales in 1965 by Quakers and the Welsh NUM, reiterating co-operation between middle- and working-class radicals. Just as the factory in Scotland had a wider role in the community by providing support to mothers and children, so too did the one in Wales by providing employment opportunities for disabled ex-miners who suffered from pneumoconiosis.<sup>58</sup> The factories in Glasgow and Onllwyn demonstrated how ideals relating to peace and disarmament and material realities relating to social justice can influence one another and culminate in a radical perspective of community and nation.

### Nationalising Activism

The Scottish and Welsh Councils may have been defined by geographical, ideological and social factors that were important for nationalism, but it remains to be seen how they contributed to what was earlier referred to as the 'nationalisation' of local forms of idealism and activism. They contributed to this nationalisation by building on community cultures of Christianity, folk and socialism and

---

<sup>57</sup> Tom McAlpine, 'Factories for Peace. 1. Rowen Engineering Ltd., Glasgow.' in Paul Derrick & J.F. Phipps (eds), *Co-ownership, co-operation and control* (London, 1969), 104-106.

<sup>58</sup> Rod Prince, 'Factories for Peace. 2. Onllwyn, South Wales' in Paul Derrick & J.F. Phipps (eds), *Co-ownership*, 106-108.

bringing them together through channels that were non-political and -sectarian, positioned against Britain and in favour of Scottish and Welsh nationalism and internationalism: nuclear weapons provided the prime symbol by which this process took place. The non-sectarianism of CND was particularly important to Christian-inspired nationalism in Scotland, where tensions between Presbyterians and Anglicans and Catholics and Protestants could be obstructive. Stuart Christie, an anarchist and anti-nuclear activist, recalls canvassing for ‘the more left wing’ of two candidates for the executive committee of the Labour Party in Glasgow, who happened to be a Protestant: ‘the well-oiled pro-Orange faction gave us a list of Protestants on the selection committee and told us to go around knocking on their doors to prevent the “papists” getting in. ... we were each given a Rangers scarf to wear.’<sup>59</sup> Through anti-nuclear activism such divisions could be challenged and set against a perceived evil that was common and external to the nation.<sup>60</sup> In a Moderatorial Address to the Church of Scotland in May 1957, George Macleod likened Presbyterian prejudice against Anglicanism and Catholicism to the problem of ‘Fusion and Fission or, if you like, Church Unity and the Bomb.’ ‘Had we appreciated our most substantial Faith is it conceivable that Christians would have allowed a [H-bomb] test to take place at Christmas Island – without a protest? ... nothing will happen but fission, atomisation, submergence – ecclesiastical and nuclear – till we recover our most substantial Faith.’<sup>61</sup>

The potential of SCND to overcome class and religious barriers to nationalism was heightened by the support it received from ecumenical societies such as the Iona Community and the Gorbals Group. The Iona Community, founded as a collaborative effort between ministers and workers to restore the medieval ruins of Iona Abbey, often hosted and sponsored SCND meetings.<sup>62</sup> It provided members with training on Iona, from where they would be sent to urban parishes and expected to

---

<sup>59</sup> Stuart Christie, *My Granny Made Me An Anarchist* (London, 2004), 132-134. He also recalled how a friend in the Young Socialists had thrown ‘her stool at the Dean of St Giles Cathedral when he attempted to read the Stuart-imposed liturgy, the device of English prelacy for the reform of Scottish Presbyterianism.’

<sup>60</sup> ML, SCND Dep. 215/6, Ian Hamnet to Gordon Gray, 23 May 1959; Dep. 215/405, Gordon Gray to Ian Hamnet, no date.

<sup>61</sup> George F. MacLeod, *Bombs and Bishops* (Glasgow, 1957), 2 and 12.

<sup>62</sup> ML, SCND Dep. MS 215/103, Campbell Wilkie to unknown recipient, 21 August 1959; Dep. 215/30, minutes, 8 May 1958.

share in a common discipline of daily prayer and work. The Gorbals Group was established in October 1957 by Church of Scotland ministers, Walter Fyfe, John Jardine and Geoffrey Shaw. Fyfe and Shaw had been influenced by their experiences of social deprivation in New York, where they attended Union Seminary and took part in the East Harlem Protestant Parish experiment. As part of their commitment to the Group, Fyfe, Jardine and Shaw took up residence in the Gorbals. Shaw's biographer described one of his greatest and most disturbing gifts as 'the haunting symbol of a battered, ever open door at 74 Cleland Street.' He 'reminds us of long-forgotten strands in the Scottish Reformed tradition', standing for 'imagination and risk-taking over and against ecclesiastical bagpipes, kailyard theology and "survival without error."' <sup>63</sup> The ministers connected community and material problems such as housing and juvenile delinquency with international and ethical ones such as apartheid, nuclear disarmament and the oppression of the African Congress in Nyasaland. <sup>64</sup> Their activities were described by Shaw as being 'deliberately open', an important point given that the Gorbals was pre-dominantly a Catholic area. <sup>65</sup> The Christian activism and idealism of SCND, especially when focused on a cause antagonistic to Westminster and Britain, was ideologically and socially constructive for Scottish nationalism.

It was also through SCND and WCND that folk musicians in Scotland and Wales were able to sharpen the nationalist sensibilities of their genre. On the one hand, the struggle against nuclear weapons from England became synonymous with the struggle against Anglicised culture and language. On the other, the struggle for peace and disarmament in Scotland and Wales became synonymous with the struggle for cultural and linguistic distinction and harmony. As Isobel Lindsay recalled, folk musicians 'disliked the hymn-based songs' performed on the marches to and from Aldermaston Weapons Establishment in Berkshire. 'They strongly believed that the music in Scotland had to be Scottish in language; that it had to be defiant and cheeky.' <sup>66</sup> The Welsh Council in particular

---

<sup>63</sup> Ron Ferguson, *Geoff: The Life of Geoffrey M. Shaw* (Ellon, 1979), 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> Ferguson, *Geoff*, 115.

<sup>65</sup> Ferguson, *Geoff*, 115.

<sup>66</sup> Isobel Lindsay in correspondence with the author.

was dominated by prominent figures in the Welsh arts and universities. Elwyn Roberts, for example, was chief organiser of the National *Eisteddfod*, a Welsh festival of literature and music with an international counterpart that begins with a message of peace. Roberts wrote to Duff in 1958 requesting a speaker for a meeting during the *Eisteddfod* on 6 August. He expected ‘anything up to 30,000 visitors in Ebbw Vale every day that week.’<sup>67</sup> The Edinburgh Festival acted as a similar outlet for cultural dissent in Scotland. In 1962, the ‘Scottish Day’ of the Writers’ Conference climaxed in a chorus of songs about the removal of Polaris missiles.<sup>68</sup>

The ‘nationalisation’ of folk in Scotland preceded SCND and the installation of Polaris missiles on the Holy Loch. An attempt by Scottish students to return the Stone of Destiny from Westminster to Scotland in 1950 has been regarded as particularly influential.<sup>69</sup> The Stone, which originated from Scone in Perthshire, was taken to Westminster by Edward I after invading Scotland in 1296. It resided in London until three years prior to devolution in 1999, when it was transported to Edinburgh Castle on St Andrew’s Day. The episode in 1950 served to awaken folk as a genre and as a vehicle for cultural politics. The following year, the folk musician Hamish Henderson set up the Edinburgh People’s Festival as a rival to the Edinburgh International Festival established by the Labour government in 1947. He was dismayed that the Festival made no provision for ceilidh and radical traditions. At the People’s Festival, Henderson performed a song glorifying John Maclean, the Communist and nationalist hero, to the tune of Scotland the Brave.<sup>70</sup> The importance of folk for nationalism was not only that it promoted a Scottish identity, but also that it appropriated disparate

---

<sup>67</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M331, Elwyn Roberts to Peggy Duff, 25 June 1958; M329, minutes, 5 September 1959.

<sup>68</sup> Angela Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Post-war Britain* (Edinburgh, 2013), 91.

<sup>69</sup> The four students who took the Stone were joined by John Josselyn, who helped them get it over the Scottish border. In an ironic twist, it was later claimed that Josselyn, an Englishman who considered himself a Scottish nationalist, was the twenty-first great grandson of Edward I. On folk in Britain and Scotland, see: Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester, 1993); Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival: 1944-2002* (Aldershot, 2003); Corey Gibson, ‘The Folkniks in the Kailyard: Hamish Henderson and the ‘Folk-song Flying’ in Eleanor Bell and Linda Gunn (eds), *The Scottish Sixties: Reading, Rebellion, Revolution?* (New York, 2013), 209-226; George McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* (London, 2005).

<sup>70</sup> ‘Obituary: Hamish Henderson’, *The Scotsman*, 10 March 2002.

sectarian identities that were inimical to nation-building. Scottish songs were adapted from sectarian ones. John McEvoy's 'The Wee Magic Stane', for example, was set to the tune of 'The Ould Orange Flute.' As Gordon McCulloch has explained: 'Everything was thrown into the pot. ... army ballads from World War II, football songs, Orange songs, Fenian songs, child ballads, street songs ... and as a result of this genial eclecticism, we finished up with a banquet.'<sup>71</sup> Perhaps musicians also finished up with a repertoire that was national rather than parochial in scope.

When SNCD did emerge in the late fifties, it furnished musicians not only with audiences and venues around Scotland, but also a loaded cause that they could integrate into their music and performances: a cause that allowed them to elevate local conceptions of the nation and denigrate Britain.<sup>72</sup> The establishment of the CND Late Club in Glasgow highlights the closeness of the relationship that folk and anti-nuclear activism shared.<sup>73</sup> The band most representative of this relationship was arguably *The Glasgow Eskimos*, whose name was inspired by the response of the captain of USS Proteus to an attempt by protestors to board the ship. 'They don't bother us', he scoffed: 'They're just a bunch of goddamn Eskimos.'<sup>74</sup> The songs of the *Eskimos* demonstrate the utility of nuclear weapons as a symbol against which Scottish identity could be articulated and local sovereignty affirmed. *Ding Dong Dollar* echoed and 'Scotticised' George Macleod's warning that 'ye canny spend a dollar when ye're deid'; *We Dinnae Want Polaris* told the Yanks to drop the missiles 'doon the stank'; and *NAB for Royalty* lampooned the Royal Family as prime beneficiaries of the National Assistance Board, referring to 'free milk for wee Prince Andy'.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Gordon McCulloch, 'Thurso Berwick: Doon Amang the Eskimos', *The Bottle Imp*, No. 9. May 2011.

<sup>72</sup> J.P. Bean even argues that the folk scene was 'driven' by CND and 'left-wing activists'. J.P. Bean, *Singing from the Floor: A History of British Folk Clubs* (London, 2014).

<sup>73</sup> Bartie, *The Edinburgh Festivals*, 16.

<sup>74</sup> McCulloch, *The Bottle Imp*.

<sup>75</sup> *The Glasgow Eskimos*, 'Ding Dong Dollar: Anti-Polaris and Scottish Republican Songs', (Glasgow, 1962).

The failure of SCND and WCND to achieve their aims through the Labour Movement tended to push their leaders and supporters towards nationalist parties and politics. Only the Scottish unions had a Trades Union Congress (STUC), but it was often torn over issues of peace and disarmament and occupied a subordinate position in the Labour Movement as a whole. In 1951, the STUC went so far as to disaffiliate the Glasgow and District Trades Council (GDTC) for its ratification of an amendment by the NUM to a motion on ‘The United Nations and the Preservation of Peace.’ The amendment, which included a call for a ceasefire in Korea ‘on terms of equality of all participants’ and the banning of atomic weapons, was derided by opponents as Communist-inspired.<sup>76</sup> Both SCND and WCND began to focus more closely on the Labour Movement when unions across Britain converted to unilateral disarmament in the summer of 1959. In September 1959, for example, WCND and the South Wales Area of the NUM co-sponsored a series of trades union conferences on the subject of disarmament.<sup>77</sup> The efforts of SCND and WCND to work through the unions also intensified following the adoption of two motions on unilateral disarmament by the Labour Party at its Annual Conference in October 1960. As Ian Hamnet explained to group secretaries, ‘in the coming months we in the Scottish Council [must] do all we can to show the leaders of the political parties, and of the Parliamentary Labour Party in particular, that nuclear disarmament is a policy which will bring victory, not defeat, at the polls.’<sup>78</sup>

While the reversal of the motions on unilateral disarmament in 1961 had implications for CND and the left across Britain, the failure of the Scottish Labour Movement to prevent the installation of Polaris missiles on the Clyde had ones that were unique to Scottish socialism and politics. The Labour Movement in Scotland began to mobilise against the decision to install Polaris missiles on the Holy

---

<sup>76</sup> Tuckett, *The Scottish Trades Union Congress*, 334-335.

<sup>77</sup> NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M329, 5 September 1959.

<sup>78</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/428, Ian Hamnet to group secretaries, October 1960.

Loch as soon as it was made public by Harold Macmillan on 1 November, 1960.<sup>79</sup> Roderick MacFarquhar, who went on to embrace nationalism out of his frustration with the Labour Party, convened in November a Delegate Conference that had the backing of the GDTC and its secretary, John Johnston. The Conference was to refuse ‘on behalf of the Scottish nation to be an instrument of further tension and possible war by supporting a Polaris base on the Clyde or anywhere in Britain.’ It set out to ‘petition the Secretary General of the UN on behalf of Scottish people to call an immediate conference of uncommitted nations of which Scotland regards herself one’, as well as ‘to insist that the nuclear powers agree to a plenary session in which final agreement will be reached on the banning of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a control system under the UN.’<sup>80</sup> Since the campaign provided an outlet for national indignation and enshrined the idea of a sovereign and international Scotland, it appealed to nationalists. Keith Bovey made note of developments in the Scottish National Congress (SNC), a direct action group that split from the SNP after World War II. The SNC had ‘started an anti-Polaris campaign [in November]. All but one of their fifty members supports it. They are prepared, and anxious, to run a CND group [near the missile base] in Gourock.’<sup>81</sup> According to one activist from the SNC, the use of militant action against Polaris was supported by ‘Scottish nationalists more generally.’<sup>82</sup>

Direct action, the opposition of citizens and workers to policies of the state through unconstitutional means, was a familiar practice among nationalists in Scotland and Wales. Its usefulness to nationalists can be ascribed not only to their lack of access to constitutional channels - which explains their turn towards pirate broadcasting in the 1950s - but also their desire to symbolise the infringement of Britain on the liberties and rights of the Scottish and Welsh nations. When Saunders Lewis, Lewis

---

<sup>79</sup> J.B. Priestley Library (JBPL), Bradford University (BU), Archives of the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War (DAC) 3/16/1, Working Group of the Committee of 100: Report on Visit to Glasgow, 4-6 November 1960. A resolution condemning the decision was passed the following day by the GDTC.

<sup>80</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/452, Roderick MacFarquhar to Ian Hamnet, 7 November 1960.

<sup>81</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/479, Keith Bovey to Roderick MacFarquhar, 7 December 1960.

<sup>82</sup> JBPL, BU, DAC/3/16/1, Working Group of the Committee of 100: Report on Visit to Glasgow, 4-6 November 1960.



Valentine and David Williams set fire to an RAF bombing school in Llŷn in 1936, for example, the value of the action was symbolic. Their imprisonment and subsequent release from a nine month sentence in Wormwood Scrubs was portrayed as indicative of national oppression and the three were greeted as heroes by a crowd of 15,000 in Caernarfon upon their return to Wales.<sup>83</sup> The SNP and *Plaid* may have started to shun the sort of tactics employed at Llŷn by the 1950s and 60s, but direct action continued to have a significant influence over national identities and ideologies.<sup>84</sup> The use of direct action for nuclear disarmament heightened awareness of the encroachment of the ‘military-industrial complex’ of Britain upon Wales and Scotland. It defined peace and disarmament against a menace imposed upon Scotland and Wales by London and in defence of the landscapes that oriented the outlooks of Scottish and Welsh communities.

The installation of Polaris missiles on the Holy Loch posed problems for the form of direct action Scottish citizens and workers could undertake. In contrast to the Thor missiles that were supposed to be located in Aberdeenshire and ended up in East Anglia in 1958, the Polaris missiles required only minor building work, most of which was carried out by Americans.<sup>85</sup> Scottish unions were therefore not in a position to blacklist work as they had done in Aberdeenshire, an obstacle that the government sidestepped in East Anglia by hiring non-unionised Irish labour.<sup>86</sup> The unions would have to down tools in unrelated areas of industry, a prospect that was not out of the question given the strength of feeling against Polaris. As John Johnston confided to activists from England, however, this would have to be initiated by ‘the STUC on the one side, and the shop stewards and local secretaries on the other.’ He was ‘not optimistic about the chances of token stoppages or other industrial action; the loss of a day’s pay was a lot to a working man.’<sup>87</sup> Despite the STUC co-organising with

---

<sup>83</sup> John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London, 1990), 592.

<sup>84</sup> Johnes, *Wales*, chapter 8.

<sup>85</sup> ML, SCND, Dep. 215/386, April Carter to Ian Hamnet, 4 November 1960.

<sup>86</sup> JBPL, BU, DAC/3/16/1, ‘Report on Rocket Bases in East Anglia’, 31 October 1958.

<sup>87</sup> JBPL, BU, DAC/3/16/1, Working Group of the Committee of 100: Report on Visit to Glasgow, 4-6 November 1960.

SCND one of the first major demonstrations against the Polaris decision in December, calls for industrial action remained limited to individual unions.<sup>88</sup>

If working-class direct action against Polaris through strikes seemed increasingly unlikely, so too did constitutional action against it through the Labour Movement. At the Scottish Labour Party Conference in North Berwick on 24 March, the National Executive caused outrage among a sizeable minority of delegates by ruling that motions on Polaris could not be discussed because they did not fall within its constitutional remit: the motions did not relate to an issue that was exclusively Scottish. In a motion demanding more self-determination for the Scottish Labour Party, Mrs J. Davidson argued that ‘the National Executive do not realise how strongly Scottish we are and, in such a circumstance as Polaris, we want our Executive to have the authority to say, “We are speaking for the Scottish people: do what you can for us.”’ Another delegate, Mr G. Aitken, claimed that instructions on how the National Executive should treat motions on Polaris had come from Transport House, the headquarters of the Labour Party in London.<sup>89</sup> This was a reasonable suspicion given that the Labour Party had in the past two years almost been split asunder by the disarmament issue and its leader Hugh Gaitskell had been manoeuvring to suppress it.<sup>90</sup>

The inability of Scottish citizens and workers to oppose Polaris through the Labour Movement encouraged them to adopt forms of non-violent direct action (NVDA) that had been pioneered by groups in England. A field report by the Committee of 100, an organisation established by Bertrand Russell in September 1960 and in favour of civil disobedience, provides an insight into the novelty of the concept of non-violence in Scotland: ‘we have been afraid that the lads from the Gorbals might

---

<sup>88</sup> Keith Aitken, *The Bairns of Adam: Story of the STUC* (Edinburgh, 1997), 202-203.

<sup>89</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1961.

<sup>90</sup> Before the Conference, for example, the whip was withdrawn from Emrys Hughes and William Baxter, opponents of Polaris and MPs for South Ayrshire and West Stirling, for voting against heavy air force and defence estimates. *Glasgow Herald*, 24 March 1961.

not understand non-violence', it claimed.<sup>91</sup> The group responsible for introducing methods of NVDA into Scotland was the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War (DAC), which organised a land and sea action against the Polaris base in May. The involvement of an English group that espoused pacifist tactics in an anti-Polaris movement that for the most part espoused socialist ones brought its own difficulties. Wilkie Campbell, the secretary of Glasgow CND, 'warned against a sudden influx of "foreigners" from England except in support of the Scottish initiative.'<sup>92</sup> The Labour Movement could also be wary of its independence. Harry McShane informed the secretary of DAC that the Joint Executive of organisations in Glasgow had decided to concentrate on their own demonstration, adding that speakers at the demonstration on 14 May would have to be 'confined to the organised Labour Movement.'<sup>93</sup>

The practice of NVDA against the base, in which participants attempted to disrupt operations by sitting down and going limp, was also problematic. One field report claimed that a number of Scots were unwilling 'to sit down: not so much from the fear of arrest, as from the fear of repercussions in the Labour Movement.'<sup>94</sup> The fear of arrest remained a major deterrent. Unlike in England, where bail could be paid at a later date, in Scotland it had to be paid upon release. A worker taking part in NVDA against Polaris ran the risk not only of jeopardising their employment, but also of having to pay between one and five pounds to secure bail from police courts and Justice of the Peace Courts.<sup>95</sup> Non-violent direct action may not have been so compatible with the nationalism and socialism of the Labour Movement, but it was highly compatible with that of the SNP. It enabled nationalists to stress the symbolic elements of their protests while avoiding the stigma of violence that had hitherto plagued their earlier actions against the state. The role of NVDA as a pacifist witness

---

<sup>91</sup> JBPL, BU, Papers of the Committee of 100 (C100) collected by Derry Hannam, HC/1/3, Field Report, September 1961,

<sup>92</sup> JBPL, BU, DAC/3/16/1, Working Group of the Committee of 100: Report on Visit to Glasgow 4-6 November 1960.

<sup>93</sup> JBPL, BU, DAC/3/16/1, Harry McShane to Wendy Butlin, 24 April 1961.

<sup>94</sup> JBPL, BU, C100 HC/1/3, Field Report, September 1961.

<sup>95</sup> JBPL, BU, DAC/3/16/1, Legal briefing, no date.

designed to expose the horrors of militarism and warfare shifted to one of a national witness designed to expose the degradation of the land by London rule. Nationalism and a nascent environmentalism converged through nuclear disarmament.<sup>96</sup>

### Conclusion

Even in the late 1950s and early 60s, when the SNP and *Plaid* were minor parties and ideas about Britain were fundamental to SCND and WCND, the potential of nuclear disarmament for national identity was clear. That it had become as much of a national issue for Scotland and Wales as a British one for the U.K was exemplified by the decision in 1968 to start the Easter March not from Aldermaston, but from the Polaris base in the Holy Loch and a NATO base in Caerwent.<sup>97</sup> ‘When young Scots are politically enthusiastic today’, wrote Lawrence Daly after the West-Lothian by-election in 1962, ‘they are to be seen sporting ban-the-bomb badges or “Free Scotland” badges, or both at the same time.’<sup>98</sup> William Wolfe, the SNP candidate for the West Lothian by-election and leader of the SNP from 1969, later explained how the CND symbol on those badges inspired the modern symbol of the SNP, a combination of the St Andrew’s Cross and thistle.<sup>99</sup> It was also at West Lothian that an insight can be had into the changing sociology of what Tom Devine refers to as the ‘activist group’ that supported the SNP. ‘They were now mainly drawn from the skilled working class and lower middle class and differed radically from the SNP old guard of professionals, writers, academics and upper-class lawyers.’<sup>100</sup> A similar trend is identifiable in SCND, where evidence suggests that the

---

<sup>96</sup> The Scottish and Welsh Councils monitored closely the acquisition of land for military bases and the locations and functions of nuclear power stations. For example, the Welsh Council explored rumours that plans were afoot to install missile bases in Manorbier and enquired whether a nuclear power station at Trwsfynydd was used for military purposes. NLW, *Plaid Cymru*, M330, minutes, 21 March 1959; M330, minutes, 10 January 1959. See: Carwyn Fowler and Rhys Jones, ‘Environmentalism and Nationalism in the UK’, *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (2005), 541-545; ‘Can Environmentalism and Nationalism Be Reconciled? The *Plaid Cymru* / Green Party Alliance, 1991-95’, *Regional & Federal Studies*, 16:3 (2006), 315-331.

<sup>97</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 18 December 1968.

<sup>98</sup> Daly, ‘Scotland on the Dole’, 1-17.

<sup>99</sup> William Wolfe, *Scotland Lives: The Quest for Independence* (Edinburgh, 1973), 46-47.

<sup>100</sup> Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 572.

movement became more diverse and youthful and continued to grow in places despite the decline of CND in England.<sup>101</sup>

It would be misleading to conclude that the relationship between peace and nationalism in Scotland and Wales has been characterised by complete symbiosis. The SNP and *Plaid* have not monopolised the cause of nuclear disarmament and nationalist politicians have been divided over whether an independent Scotland and Wales would remain members of NATO; nationalist resentment at the perceived spoliation of the landscape by military infrastructures has been held in check by economic arguments and realities; and cultural and folk traditions, particularly in Wales, have been occasionally resistant to peace campaigns when they appear imposed or the product of English ‘in-migrants’.<sup>102</sup> A clearer understanding of the relationship between peace and nationalism can only be achieved through further research, particularly into Scottish and Welsh opposition to nuclear weapons in the 1980s. The importance of peace for nationalism in the late 1950s and early 60s remains in spite of these qualifications. Scottish and Welsh CND served as channels not only through which local cultures and traditions of activism could cohere and resolve against Britain, but also through which international nations of peace could be imagined. The ‘peace’ that these movements envisioned facilitated links between the local, the national and the international that competed and interacted with those facilitated by imperialism and socialism. As imperial and industrial Britain declined and pacifist idealism became entangled with socialist materialism, Scottish and Welsh nationalisms re-aligned and pre-figured an independent Scotland and Wales.

Word Count: 11,615

---

<sup>101</sup> Leo Baxendale, organiser of Dundee CND and contributor to *The Beano* comic, described how there had been 80 new and paid-up members to the group between September 1962 and March 1963. GCUA, Papers of Sandy Hobbs, GB1847, Leo Baxendale membership letter, 6 March 1963.

<sup>102</sup> On NATO, see: The Scottish Government, *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2013); *The Herald*, 23 October 2012. On ‘in-migrants’ and peace, see: Martin Johnes, ‘Wales and the Cold War’, 5-15