Penn History Review

6-6-2019

"Winning Little Bannockburns": Memory, the Great War, and the Rise of Scottish Nationalism

Brooke Krancer
University of Pennsylvania

"Winning Little Bannockburns": Memory, the Great War, and the Rise of Scottish Nationalism

Brooke Krancer

On June 20, 1914, at the sexcentenary celebration of the Scottish defeat of the English at the Battle of Bannockburn, former British prime minister Lord Rosebery addressed the youth of Scotland:

> Do you children feel that you, too, might grow up to be heroes like them; to be ready, if necessary, to die for your country, your freedom, and your King; and if that chance do not come, as I hope it may not, to be heroes, as you may all be in your daily lives, winning little Bannock burns for yourselves over the forces of evil? Try.[1]

Mere weeks later, Britain was embroiled in the First World War. The sort of rhetoric used by the English Lord Rosebery was exceedingly common during the war, appropriating the memory of Bannockburn and Scotland's martial history of victory against England in the Wars of Independence to reinforce the idea of a British rather than Scottish identity and encourage Scottish people to die for a British king and country.[2] After the conflict, the Great War itself would be folded into this mythologized memory of Scotland's history and likewise used for ideological and political reasons by different groups with varying goals. However, as the realities of Scotland's dismal postwar position set in, popular memory of the recent war began to shift. The conflict was progressively perceived more as a tragic waste of Scottish lives and used by nationalists as a tool to further their causes, and rhetoric drawing on Scotland's longer martial history, particularly relating

to the Wars of Independence, was reapplied accordingly. With this adoption of the memory of Scotland's recent and early history in the interwar period, the roots of Scottish nationalism began to take hold and would culminate in the formation of the Scottish National Party in 1934. An examination of the context within which Scottish martial history underwent a reorientation from a unionist function toward a nationalist one reveals how the popular memory of this history was a significant factor that contributed to the rise of Scottish nationalism in the interwar period.

The Robert the Bruce monument at the site of Battle of Bannockburn

Scotland Before and During the War

At the outbreak of war, memory of Scotland's martial tradition was used largely to reinforce ideas of British identity among Scottish people and strengthen their commitment to the war effort. Far from a wartime invention, this idea of a Scot-

tish identity as belonging to a larger British sense of self shaped the dominant image of Scottish national identity in the Victorian period. In particular, the participation of Scottish people in the British Empire greatly influenced how Scottish people understood themselves.[3] The idea that Scotland was an equal partner to England in the creation of the "greatest empire the world had ever known" was fundamental to Scottish identity in the nineteenth century, and the idea of Scotland's martial tradition played no small part in that perception.[4] The image of the naturally militaristic Scottish soldier conquering and defending distant lands for the empire was a point of national pride.[5] This sense of Scottish patriotism fitting easily into a greater identity within the Union embodied what Graeme Morton has termed "Unionist-Nationalism," much of which was shaped through a reclamation of Scottish history to celebrate Scottishness while upholding the Union with England.[6] The popularity of historical novels in Victorian Scotland vividly illustrates unionist-nationalism at work. Jane Porter's 1810 book *The Scottish Chiefs*, a fictionalized account of William Wallace's life, was reprinted in 1831 and again in 1840.[7] Walter Scott, credited with creating the modern historical novel, also published wildly popular novels exemplifying pride in Scottish history; his 1814 novel *Waverley*, focusing on the Jacobite risings, sold over a thousand copies in the first two days after it was released.[8] The creation of numerous Scottish history societies, numbering approximately twenty-seven by 1909, also points to the coexistence of Scottish patriotism and unionism in the nineteenth century, as the trend took shape alongside a sense of satisfaction with Scotland's place in the Union.[9]

Unionist-nationalism was put to use during the Great War and focused particularly on the mythology of the Wars of Independence. The media employed popular perceptions of Scottish history in an effort to recruit Scottish soldiers. An illustration for a recruitment advertisement published in the widely read *People's Journal* in August 1914 uses the figure of Robert the

Bruce to frame an image of Britannia accepting volunteers—a quite literal manifestation of Scottish identity giving way to an overarching British identity.[10] The slogan at the bottom, "Shades of Bruce—The Same Spirit Still Lives!" demonstrates how the idea of the Scottish martial "spirit" was used for the expressly unionist purpose of encouraging Scottish men to volunteer for the British armed forces during the war.[11] The seemingly ironic use of a figure of the Wars of Independence such as Bruce to promote Scottish loyalty to Britain illustrates the extent to which the Union-minded British establishment had sanitized symbols of Scottish defiance of England by the beginning of the twentieth century. This evolution points to the malleable nature of public perceptions of Scotland's history: the symbol of Bruce, the king who was immortalized for resisting the English, could be effectively used to endorse Scotland's place alongside England in the United Kingdom.

It is important to note that the mythology of Scottish history was not exclusively used to enforce ideas of unionist-nationalism before and during the war. In anticipation of the sexcentenary of Bannockburn, in February 1914, the Glasgow Corporation held a discussion concerning celebrations of the anniversary in which the Galleries Convener insisted that a commemorative painting capture "undaunted determination to maintain Scotland's absolute freedom."[12] However, despite this push for a nationalist sentiment in the event's artistic tribute, the selection of an English artist fundamentally dealt a blow to any underlying suggestion of nationalism, and the English *Manchester Guardian* wrote that the Sexcentenary Committee "sent a loyal message to the King."[13] The reporting on this event as one that upheld the Union even as the Galleries Convener explicitly wanted it to encourage notions of Scottish freedom highlights how memory of an event such as Bannockburn could serve two opposing political functions simultaneously—and indeed often did in Scotland in this period. There were thus some evident traces of nationalist sentiment in commemorations of Scottish historical events such

as the sexcentenary. The fact that the Union flag was flown next to the Royal Banner of Scotland during the celebration and a gold medal in honor of the occasion was sent to King George V afterwards, however, indicates the extent to which Scotland's history was used to advance mostly unionist ideology immediately before and during the war.[14]

The memory of Scotland's martial past bled into the present during the war. Beyond the Wars of Independence, this mythology encompassed "the Covenanters, the Jacobites and the service of Scots in British units in the eighteenth century,"[15] with Scottish recruits during the Great War supposedly the next in a long line of natural Scottish warriors. However, this perception, too, was a myth. While Scottish soldiers made up a disproportionate part of the British army of the eighteenth century, this was no longer the case by the nineteenth.[16] Still, this popular perception of the Scottish martial identity served an important purpose during the war: keeping up morale among soldiers. Motivation was bolstered by the "highly positive self-image" that arose from the mythology surrounding the Scottish soldier.[17] Despite the view of Scottish troops as having distinctive identities in the British military, the Scottish experience of the war was largely consistent with that of the typical British soldier.[18]

Scottish soldiers during the First World War dressed in distinctive regional uniforms

At first examination, the use of mythologized Scottish history—especially that of the Wars of Independence—to reinforce British identity among Scots during and immediately before the war seems paradoxical. However, the cognitive dissonance that allowed Scottish people to take pride in the character and might of their forebears in the Wars of Independence while simultaneously ignoring their inherent association with conflict with England[19] is likely due to the secure place that Scotland felt in the Union up to the interwar period. As Victorian Scottish identity hinged largely on imperial success, and the Scottish saw themselves as equal partners in the Empire, they felt no need to question the status quo of the Union. Rather, they saw themselves as having progressed past these antipathies, with "those who were then [Scotland's] fiercest enemies […] now [its] closest friends and brothers."[20] This unionist-nationalist acceptance of Scottish popular history as contributing to the unionist identity therefore relied on the notion that England did not swallow up Scotland in the Union, but rather that "both remain unswallowed."[21] The postwar conditions of Scotland as compared to England, however, would call that perceived equality into question among Scottish people.

The Aftermath of the War and National Decline

Historian E.W. McFarland has noted the speed with which the war was "written into formal 'history.'"[22] Indeed, immediately after the end of the Great War, memory of the conflict was folded into the larger cultural memory of Scotland's history. Despite the fairly consistent war experience among British people, the greater visibility and relatively large number of Scottish volunteers gave rise to a mythologized Scottish experience of the war and, importantly, the notion of a "Scottish sacrifice."[23] This idea of a Scottish sacrifice was interpreted in different ways by groups of different political leanings. For their part, unionist establishment figures saw this as a noble sacrifice of the Scottish people in defense of Britain and the Empire. Nationalists, on the

other hand, felt that the soldiers who sacrificed their youth and their lives were betrayed by the deteriorating conditions in Scotland after the war.[24] While the former interpretation was more common immediately after the war, as the grim realities of life in postwar Scotland set in, the latter view would become increasingly dominant.

The war memorial in Paisley, erected in 1924, clearly illustrates the integration of the First World War into Scotland's mythologized past. Titled "The Spirit of the Crusaders," the image of a medieval knight surrounded by four soldiers from the recent conflict is a physical manifestation of the belief that the war followed a long-established Scottish martial tradition.[25] In a nation suffering losses estimated to fall somewhere between 74,000 and 147,000 dead, the desire to transform immense personal loss into something more meaningful by infusing it with a greater Scottish historical significance makes sense.[26] This perception of the war as meaningful in the immediate aftermath of the conflict is revealed by the monuments that were built in what Lord Rosebery referred to as the "hurricane season of memorials" in 1919–22.[27] These monuments presented two themes that reinforced the perception that the Great War was a continuation of a deeper Scottish history: sorrow and a "sober pride in Scotland's military achievements […] grounded in a unique 'national character.'"[28] Like the memory of the Wars of Independence before and during the conflict, the historical grounding of the war in its immediate aftermath affirmed unionist-nationalist ideas of Scottish identity. The Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle, proposed in 1917 and completed a decade later, serves as the most significant intersection of this early popular perception of the Great War as both fitting into Scotland's broader history and upholding its place in the Union and the Empire. The monument's historical references, from statues of Wallace and Bruce to details of the origins of the regiments to whose fallen members it pays tribute, affirm the incorporation of the war into the memory of Scottish history.[29] In the wide interpretation of

the Scottish community that it includes—with inscriptions to the "Scottish" of London, Ireland, and South Africa—and visual symbolism including the "Tree of Empire," it asserts Scotland's place in Britain and the Empire.[30] However, by the time the memorial was unveiled in 1927, Scotland's postwar situation had already begun to turn the memory of the war in a different direction.

The interwar period in Scotland was a time of acute struggle. This was most evident in the decline of Scotland's economic situation brought on by the Great Depression, coinciding with downturns in countries around the world. As a country with a largely industrial economy, Scotland felt the effects of the Depression with particular severity. By 1933, over 25 percent of the insured workforce was unemployed, compared to just 1.8 percent in 1908.[31] Only three new factories opened in Scotland, compared to 467 in the rest of the United Kingdom in 1933; industrial production was lower in 1931 than it had been in 1913. Even fishing and farming were in decline.[32] Significantly, these economic issues were not shared by England. Unemployment in Scotland was about 50 percent higher than in England, and control of the country's economy was falling into English hands; management of the country's railroads moved to London, and four of Scotland's main banks experienced London takeovers.[33] Scottish people in the 1920s viewed this with suspicion, with the nationalist George Malcolm Thomson writing in 1927, "The capture by English capital of banks and railways are only two instances of a general process of removing the control of Scottish administration, commerce, and industry four hundred miles further South."[34] In addition to economic hardship, social and political challenges emerged in Scotland after the war. By the mid-1930s, skilled workers were emigrating in large numbers, and the country's infant mortality rate, linked to such indicators of poverty as overcrowding and low income, was higher than that of almost any other western European country.[35] Increasing attention was paid to how little time was devoted to Scottish

issues in Parliament, and English bills were regularly applied to Scotland despite its different legal system.[36] Seeing their nation in decline, the Scottish people began to experience a crisis of national self-confidence, perceiving their once proud nation to be relegated to simply "an annex […] of English civilization."[37]

Shipyards like this one in Glasgow that saw heavy use during the war would decline steeply in production in its aftermath

With the reality of Scotland's national decay becoming clear throughout the 1920s, memory of the war began to shift from a noble cause worthy of sacrifice to a tragic waste of life. Veterans who fought through the horrors of the war only to come home and fight for employment "[struggled] to reconcile the magnitude of the conflict with the shrinking hopes of the postwar decades."[38] The change in perception of the war can be detected in the disparity between narratives from war diaries and the popular view of Scottish battalions that emerged in the interwar period. While accounts written during the war tell of survival and perseverance, the narrative that developed in the years following the war was one of "doomed battalions of high-spirited youth" who marched into battle only to be slaughtered in minutes.[39] A particularly poignant example of this shifting memory

may be found in the difference between the 17th Highland Light Infantry's regimental history, published in 1920, and that of the 15th Highland Light Infantry, published in 1934. While the former is a straightforward account of the regiment's service in the war, the latter, written after survivors had realized the bleak postwar reality of their home country and felt the perceived betrayal of the Union for which they fought, is a more deliberate affair. Titled *An Epic of Glasgow*, it presents the regiment's experience as a tragic journey, fitting into the newly developed popular memory of the war as such.[40] Tellingly, the author speaks of "the Great Disillusion" of Scotland's postwar society with its mythologized past.[41] A reference to "the greatness and grandeur of ordinary men" is also notable.[42] This scaling down of the public view of the war—from a necessary conflict for the defense of the Union and the Empire to a testament to the greatness of individual Scottish men—reflects the transition of the identity of Scottish people from Imperial or British to a more localized frame of reference. As a result of this shifting perception of the war and of Scottish identity, the previously dominant unionist-nationalism began to give way to nationalism.

The evolution of Scottish perceptions of the Great War over the course of the 1920s transformed popular memory of the conflict from heroic to tragic. As it was seen as a British conflict—recall the image of Bruce framing the image of Britannia, as if asking the Scottish people to lend their military prowess to the Union—the view of England as swallowing up Scotland in the aftermath of the war proved problematic to the initial Scottish sense of pride in the war effort. Viewed instead as a waste of Scottish life by the late 1920s and 1930s, the recent conflict could no longer be used effectively to advance unionist-nationalism; in fact, the originator of the term argued that, by 1920s, the conditions that allowed for unionist-nationalism were no longer in place.[43] With this reorientation away from the previously dominant view of Scottish identity, Scottish people began to rethink what it meant to be "worthy of those men, of Bruce

and his fellows,"[44] turning the use of Scotland's martial history increasingly towards a separatist nationalist cause.

<u>Mythologized History and the Roots of Scottish Nationalism</u>

As Richard J. Finlay argues, the pessimism that arose out of the grim conditions in interwar Scotland caused increasing numbers of Scottish people to turn to nationalism by the 1930s.[45] With the increasing desire for greater control of Scottish affairs, Scotland's history began to be used by nationalists to further their political cause. Since the memory of the Great War had been incorporated into the country's longer history, the recent conflict increasingly became a tool for the nationalist cause as well. As this shift in the use of Scotland's cultural memory unfolded in the 1920s and 1930s, Scottish people formed nationalist political organizations in increasing numbers, culminating in the creation of the Scottish National Party in 1934. The mythologization of both Scotland's recent history and distant past therefore played an essential role in the rise of the Scottish nationalist movement.

While Scotland's medieval history primarily served to affirm ideas of a Scottish identity within the Union before and during the war, this was no longer feasible in the conflict's aftermath. If the Victorian-era satisfaction with their place as equal partners in the Union was what allowed Scottish people paradoxically to take pride in their forebears' military might in the Wars of Independence while being content in a union with England, then the postwar turn only makes sense. With their English neighbors seeming to prosper despite their country's postwar decline,[46] Scots' satisfaction was gone, replaced by suspicion and resentment. Scottish nationalist groups thus started to reframe popular memory, especially that of the Wars of Independence, to promote their own ideology.

One manifestation of the changing use of the memory of the Wars of Independence in particular is the shift of focus from Bruce to Wallace. Whereas Wallace was perceived as a freedom-

loving Scottish patriot, Bruce was increasingly seen as a more compromised figure: he owned land in both England and Scotland and even fought against the Scots at the famous battles of Stirling Bridge and Falkirk before ultimately joining the Scottish cause.[47] It is no coincidence then that during the war it was Bruce who was "employed as a model of patriotic solidity," with Bannockburn "used as a means of recruiting patriotic Scots to the allied war effort."[48] While Wallace was also invoked frequently by unionists in the years leading up to and during the war, with Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs*, for instance, referring to both figures,[49] Bruce held a significant place in national memory prior to the 1920s. By the interwar period, however, Bruce was cast aside in favor of Wallace, and Wallace was employed specifically by nationalists starting immediately after the war. Future National Party of Scotland founder Lewis Spence, for example, wrote a children's book in 1919 about Wallace as a mythologized hero figure in which he emphasizes mistrust of kings and nobility such as Bruce.[50] Only eight years later, George Malcolm Thomson would write of the "wicked and heartless persons of title" who drove out tenants in the Highland Clearances,[51] indicating that Spence was not alone in his idea of a corrupt nobility historically leading the Scottish people astray. In the wake of a war fought for the British king that left thousands of Scots dead, his meaning could not be clearer. Spence was not the only future Scottish nationalist leader to point to Wallace immediately after the war. R.B. Cunninghame Graham, another future founder of the National Party of Scotland, spoke about Wallace at the 1920 Wallace Monument celebration, saying that he paved the way for Scottish home rule.[52] Tom Johnston, who would go on to become the Labour Party's Scottish affairs spokesman and who supported home rule, also focused on the proletarian soldier of the Wars of Independence in lieu of the nobility, writing in 1920 that it was "unthinkable that when Bannockburn was fought and won they would go back to the old settled slavery."[53]

A statue of William Wallace in Aberdeen

While the foundations of these postwar nationalist ideas were laid by leaders such as Spence, Cunninghame Graham, and Johnston immediately after the war, nationalist views were not widespread at the beginning of the interwar period. Nationalist feeling had largely been led by the left in the early 1920s, placing it on the fringes of Scottish politics.[54] The famed "Red Clydeside," or radical political leftism that occured in Glasgow during the war, raised class consciousness among the average Scottish worker and resulted in numerous strikes during and immediately after the war.[55] However, with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Scottish middle class began to fear a leftist revolution in their own country.[56] Thus, the association of Scottish nationalist sentiment with the political left helped to discredit nationalism to the average middle-class Scottish citizen. This also helps to explain the use of the memory of both the recent conflict and Scotland's longer martial history by unionists into the 1920s; as they presented an opposing force to the corrupting left, their grip on the Scottish public was still strong, and Scottish people

therefore still accepted their narrative of unionist-nationalism. However, following the same trajectory of the use of this popular memory, the reality of interwar conditions made the middle class grow increasingly disgruntled with the political establishment and with their place in the Union.[57] By the end of the 1920s, nationalism was growing increasingly mainstream, and nationalist rhetoric like that of Spence, Cunninghame Graham, and Johnston that was once considered radical was becoming increasingly accepted. As such, nationalist interpretations of the Wars of Independence began entering into mainstream popular memory. By the 1930s, for instance, nationalists had secured the famous Bannockburn battlefield—the same site where the Union flag was flown next to the Royal Banner of Scotland during the 1914 sexcentenary celebration only weeks before the outbreak of war.[58]

Like the memory of Scotland's medieval past, the memory of the Great War and the perception by the late 1920s that it had been wasteful would be used for the nationalist cause. Here the notion of the Scottish sacrifice takes on particular significance.[59] The idea that Scotland's casualties were disproportionate compared to those of the rest of the Union caused resentment and was even used by nationalists to represent exploitation of Scottish manpower during the conflict.[60] What was once viewed as Scottish troops' inheriting the martial tradition of their country was now seen as British elites' putting Scottish youth in the line of fire. This perception in turn gave rise to the myth that the country's war losses were partially to blame for the postwar economic decline, as the deaths of the nation's young university students supposedly robbed Scotland of the men who would have gone on to become leaders. This assertion had no basis in truth, as graduates of Scottish universities actually increased after the war,[61] but it exemplifies how, after only a few years had passed, the war had already become mythologized. Much like the stories of the Wars of Independence, such as Bruce taking inspiration from the perseverance of the spider in the cave,[62] narratives of

the Great War began to develop in the years after the war. Also like the legends of the Wars of Independence, the mythology of the recent war was being used by the end of the 1920s to further the Scottish nationalist cause.

Returning to the Scottish National War Monument, the memorial's opening in 1927 points to the development of popular Scottish perceptions of the war throughout the decade. The committee was comprised of elites who were largely Conservative and therefore unionist, and in many ways it upheld the aforementioned ideas of unionist-nationalism.[63] However, even this structure that was undeniably created with unionist ideology in mind—one needs to look no further than the inclusion of Scottish people from the furthest reaches of the empire to see the inherent unionism—has been interpreted as containing nationalist symbolism. The historian Angus Calder, for instance, interpreted the inclusion of the Royal Arms of Scotland in the monument's "Tree of Empire" along with shields of New Zealand, Canada, and other dominions of the British Empire as a call for Scotland to have dominion status.[64] That even this unquestionably unionist structure could, in its finished state in 1927, be interpreted later as having nationalist attributes speaks to the extent to which the First World War was associated with nationalist feelings by the end the decade. The Scottish National War memorial is just one example of many monuments that were created to commemorate the war; indeed, Great War memorials remain Scotland's most widespread public monument even today.[65] The importance that the war held in Scottish cultural memory—and therefore the importance that it held in the nationalist cause that used it—cannot be overstated.

When looking at the rise of the nationalist political movement in this period, it is important to take a step back to look at what was occurring in mainstream politics in Scotland at the time. Historian Ewen A. Cameron captures the political processes of the period succinctly: "Liberal demise, Labour breakthrough, Unionist consolidation."[66] While Liberals had dominated Scot-

tish politics in the years before the war,[67] Liberal MPs elected by Scottish constituencies did not exceed 28.4 percent of Scottish MPs at any point during the interwar period and dropped as low as 6.7 percent in 1935.[68] By the 1930s, the Liberal Party was eclipsed by the Labour Party and the Unionist Party (the Scottish branch of the Conservative Party) and Scotland had settled into a two-party structure.[69] Between the Unionist and Labour Parties, the Unionists generally pulled ahead. Middle class fears of a socialist revolution contributed to the preeminence that the Unionist Party enjoyed over the Labour Party during the interwar period. On its own, the fact that Unionists were the dominant political party in Scotland in the interwar period appears to indicate that nationalist sentiment had not yet begun to take hold. Several aspects of Unionist politics during this time indicate that this is not actually the case. It must first be noted that Unionist success in Scotland at the time was less than Conservative success in England,[70] indicating that Unionist strength in Scotland was less significant than it appears without taking the rest of the United Kingdom into account. More important is that even Unionists began to turn to nationalist ideas in the wake of Scotland's economic crisis.[71] Similar to nationalists, Unionists felt that Scottish affairs did not get enough time in Parliament,[72] and even felt that England was taking control of Scotland's industry and economy.[73] The conditions in Scotland were therefore so dire that by the 1930s even many Unionists had resorted to nationalist ideology.

The reason that even members of the Unionist Party began to accept aspects of nationalism can be traced back to Scottish identity being rooted in imperialism. Unionist ideas of Scotland as a nation were exemplary of the views of the Victorian period of Scotland as a nation taking pride in its place in the world's greatest Empire. This manifested itself in several ways. For example, Unionists took pride in Scotland's industrial prowess, especially with Glasgow as the "second city of the Empire."[74] The emigration of Scottish people worldwide helped to spread Scottish ways

of life all around the globe. This imperial identity, however, was shattered by Scotland's perceived postwar decline and, with it, the Unionist sense of self-confidence began to falter. The decay of Scotland's industry stripped Glasgow of its place as the industrial heart of Britain.[75] Emigration was no longer offset by immigration as it was in the Victorian period and was increasingly viewed as Scotland hemorrhaging its best people, since primarily skilled workers were leaving.[76] With the pillars of their identity falling one by one, even Unionists questioned Scotland's place in the Empire and therefore in the Union. Their turn towards nationalism thus came from the same crisis of self-confidence that caused Scottish people of all political alignments to turn to nationalist ideology.

Scotland's economic decline, political realignment, and the new narratives of both the First World War and Scotland's longer history formed the backdrop for the creation of several nationalist organizations. The first of these was the Scottish Home Rule Association, which was originally founded in 1886 but dissolved with the start of the war. Reformed in September of 1918 by Roland Eugene Muirhead, its political goal was simple: Scottish home rule.[77] Another of the earliest nationalist political groups after the war was the Scots National League, formed in 1920. Shaped in part by Tom Gibson,[78] this organization became the first nationalist group to break away from larger British political parties due to their English majorities, advocate for a new party focused solely on achieving Scottish self-government, and run a candidate in an election.[79] By 1928, the SNL's idea of a new, nationalist party had caught on and the National Party of Scotland was formed, taking Muirhead with it and leaving the less organized SHRA as a casualty.[80] In 1930, George Malcolm Thomson and Andrew Dewar Gibb set in motion the creation of the Scottish Party as a right-wing alternative to left-leaning nationalist groups,[81] and in 1934 the NPS and the Scottish Party merged to form the Scottish National Party.[82] Today the SNP is one of the largest parties in Scotland, although it saw little

mainstream success until the second half of the 20th century.[83] Indeed, none of these nationalist parties were particularly successful in the interwar period.[84] The sheer number of parties and organizations advocating for Scottish nationalism in various forms, however, shows that the seeds of nationalism had been firmly planted in Scottish soil and were beginning to put down roots.

The evident rise of nationalism in the interwar period cannot be separated from nationalist use of memory of the Great War and appropriation of Scottish history. In fact, the nationalist organizations that formed at the time expressly sought to reshape Scottish history to push nationalist rhetoric. The SNL, which laid the ideological foundation for the SNP, attempted to change contemporary Scottish historical interpretations to create "the necessary cultural base upon which [the Scottish people] could build their national aspirations."[85] Like NPS founders Spence and Cunninghame Graham, SNL historians used the image of Wallace to promote ideas of Scottish freedom. They also invoked the Wars of Independence more generally to point to England's immoral, imperial nature in its attempted conquests of Scotland.[86] Like British recruiters during the war, the SNL used their own interpretations of Scotland's martial history to fit their own needs. From nationalist leaders like Spence and Cunninghame Graham using the memory of medieval history to promote nationalism to home-rule advocates like Johnston directly linking the First World War to the Wars of Independence through comparisons to Bannockburn, these groups show how popular memory was deliberately used for the nationalist cause after the war. And they did so successfully—even with the threat of another impending war in the late 1930s, interest in nationalism continued throughout the end of the interwar period.[87]

Scotland's cultural memory of its martial history—from the medieval wars of independence to the First World War—was vitally important to the creation of the Scottish nationalist movement. While popular memory was used before and during

the war by unionists to affirm unionist-nationalist ideas of Scottish identity, the same history was appropriated by nationalists for their own means after the war ended. This use of memory cannot be separated from the foundations of the movement that created one of the main parties in Scotland which, 100 years after the start of the war, would eventually hold a referendum in which 45 percent of voters chose Scottish independence. One hundred years after Lord Rosebery asked the youth of Scotland if they would be willing to die for their country—to him meaning empire—and their freedom like their forebears at Bannockburn, nearly half of the country voted for independence from the Union which he supported. The Great War and the use of cultural memory in its aftermath changed the way in which the Scottish people thought about their country, their history, and themselves. One hundred years after Lord Rosebery's address, the First World War had fundamentally changed what it meant to the Scottish to be "winning little Bannockburns."[88]

Supporters of Scottish independence in the 2014 referendum, or "Yes" voters, marching at Bannockburn in 2018

Notes

[1] "The Bannockburn Celebration: Lord Rosebery's Message to the Children of Scotland," *Scotsman*, June 20, 1914, 9, quoted in Graeme Morton, "Bruce, Wallace, and the Diminished Present, 1800–1964," in *Scotland and the First World War: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Bannockburn*, ed. Gill Plain (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017), 38.

David Goldie, "Shades of Bruce: Independence and Union in First World War Scottish Literature," in *Scotland and the First World War: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Bannockburn*, ed. Gill Plain (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017), 208, notes the significance of the occasion on which Lord Rosebery spoke.

For an in-depth treatment of the Battle of Bannockburn, see Michael Brown, *Bannockburn: The Scottish War and the British Isles, 1307–1323* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

For biographical information on Lord Rosebery, see John Davis, "Primrose, Archibald Philip, Fifth Earl of Rosebery and First Earl of Midlothian (1847–1929), Prime Minister and Author," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, last modified December 13, 2018, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35612.

[2] For background on the Wars of Independence and their significance to the relationship between Scotland and England in the medieval period, see Michael Brown, *The Wars of Scotland, 1214–1371* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

[3] Esther Breitenbach, "The Impact of the Victorian Empire," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, eds. T.M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 549.

[4] Richard J. Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis: Politicians, Intellectuals and the 'End of Scotland,' 1920–1939," *History* 79, no. 256 (1994): 255.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 209.

[7] Morton, "Diminished Presence," 30–31.

[8] Ibid. For a history of the Jacobite Rising of 1745 and its influence on the British Empire, see Geoffrey Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[9] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 209–10.

[10] Ibid., 206.

[11] Ibid., 205.

[12] *Irish Times*, February 20, 1914, 8, quoted in Fran Brearton, "Missing Dates and Magic Numbers: Reflections on 1914," in *Scotland and the First World War: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Bannockburn*, ed. Gill Plain (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017), 3.

[13] *Manchester Guardian*, February 18, 1915, 5, quoted in Brearton, "Missing Dates," 6.

[14] Morton, "Diminished Presence," 37–38.

[15] Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland Since 1880* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 103.

[16] Ibid.

[17] E.W. McFarland, "The Great War," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, eds. T.M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 558.

[18] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 104.

[19] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 209.

[20] "Lord Rosebery's Message," *Scotsman*, June 20, 1914, quoted in Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 208.

[21] Ibid.

[22] E.W. McFarland, "Introduction: 'A Coronach in Stone,'" in *Scotland and the Great War*, eds. Catriona M.M. Macdonald and E.W. McFarland (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 3.

[23] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 104–05.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Stefan Goebel, "'The Spirit of the Crusaders': Scottish Peculiarities, British Commonalities, and European Convergences in the Memorialization of the Great War," in *Scotland and the First World War: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Bannockburn*, ed. Gill Plain (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017), 125.

[26] Cameron, *Impaled Upon A Thistle*, 121–22; Goebel, "'The Spirit of the Crusaders," 125–26.

[27] *Scotsman*, February 20, 1919, quoted in McFarland, "The Great War," 564.

[28] McFarland, "The Great War," 564.

[29] Jenny Macleod, "'By Scottish Hands, with Scottish Money, on Scottish Soil': The Scottish National War Memorial and National Identity," *Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010): 85–87.

[30] Ibid., 88–89.

[31] *Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1998), 73.

[32] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 246.

[33] Ibid., 245.

[34] George Malcolm Thomson, *Caledonia, or the Future of the Scots* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1927), 43.

[35] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 125–27.

[36] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 250.

[37] McFarland, "The Great War," 567; Thomson, *Caledonia*, 45.

[38] McFarland, "The Great War," 567.

[39] Ibid., 558.

[40] Ibid., 567–68.

[41] T. Chalmers, *An Epic of Glasgow: History of the 15th Battalion HLI* (Glasgow, 1934), quoted in McFarland, "The Great War," 568.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Macleod, "'By Scottish Hands,'" 75.

[44] "Lord Rosebery's Message," *Scotsman*, June 20, 1914, quoted in Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 209.

[45] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 259.

[46] Ibid., 246.

[47] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 214.

[48] Ibid., 215.

[49] Morton, "Diminished Presence," 30.

[50] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 219.

[51] Thomson, *Caledonia*, 24.

[52] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 219.

[53] Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1900-2015* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 107–08; Thomas Johnston, *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (Glasgow: Unity Publishing, 1920), 16, quoted in Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 220.

[54] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 246.

[55] McFarland, "The Great War," 554.

[56] Richard J. Finlay, *Modern Scotland* (London: Profile Books, 2004), 28–30.

[57] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 246.

[58] Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 219.

[59] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 104–05.

[60] McFarland, "The Great War," 567.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Morton, "Diminished Presence," 30.

[63] Jenny Macleod, "'By Scottish Hands,'" 79.

[64] Ibid., 89.

[65] McFarland, "The Great War," 565.

[66] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 150.

[67] Finlay, *Modern Scotland*, 24.

[68] Harvie, *No Gods*, 96.

[69] Ibid., 105.

[70] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 164.

[71] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 247.

[72] Ibid., 250.

[73] Ibid., 247–48.

[74] Ibid., 255.

[75] Finlay, "National Identity in Crisis," 255.

[76] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 125.

[77] Richard J. Finlay, *Independent and Free: Scottish Politics and the Origins of the Scottish National Party, 1918-1945* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1994), 1.

[78] Ibid., 48.

[79] Ibid., 29.

[80] Ibid., 23–24.

[81] Finlay, *Independent and Free*, 36.

[82] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 168.

[83] Harvie, *No Gods*, 96.

[84] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 169–70.

[85] Finlay, *Independent and Free*, 36.

[86] Ibid., 37–38.

[87] Harvie, *No Gods*, 108.

[88] "Lord Rosebery's Message," *Scotsman*, June 20, 1914, quoted in Goldie, "Shades of Bruce," 208.

Images

Page 51: "Robert Bruce statue, Bannockburn," originally uploaded to Wikipedia by Kim Traynor on March 30, 2011, accessed May 4, 2019 via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Robert_Bruce_statue,_Bannockburn.jpg.

Page 54: "The London Scottish during the First World War," originally uploaded to Wikipedia on April 25, 2015, accessed May 4, 2019 via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_London_Scottish_during_the_First_World_War_Q53391.jpg.

Page 58: "Glasgow Shipyard- Shipbuilding in Wartime, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, UK, 1944," originally uploaded to Wikipedia on January 30, 2013, accessed May 4, 2019 via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Glasgow_Shipyard-_Shipbuilding_in_Wartime,_Glasgow,_Lanarkshire,_Scotland,_UK,_1944_D20847.jpg.

Page 62: "William Wallace Statue," originally uploaded to Wikipedia on September 10, 2007, accessed May 4, 2019 via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_Wallace_Statue_,_Aberdeen2.jpg.

Page 68: "Yes March," originally uploaded to Flickr, accessed May 4, 2019 via Flickr, https://c1.staticflickr.com/1/888/42979530311_c4750f0902_b.jpg.