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**'Aspects of commerce, community and culture: Argyll
1730 - 1850'**

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Abbreviations

ABA	Argyll and Bute District Archives
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NSA	New Statistical Account
OSA	Old Statistical Account
PP	Parliamentary Papers
SHR	Scottish Historical Review
SRA	Strathclyde Regional Archives
SRO	Scottish Record Office
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness

Summary

During the period 1730 - 1850 traditional Highland society underwent wide ranging changes which effectively destroyed its social relations and subordinated the Highland economy to the market demands of the developing British capitalist economy. This transformation was generated by the latter's ascendancy which, in the Highlands, was evident in the growth of the black cattle trade and in the social assimilation of the Highland chiefs and gentry.

One aspect of this assimilation was the prevalence of the 'improvement' ethos amongst the landed elite. Their commitment to capitalist economic development was translated into attempts at 'improving' agriculture and developing industries. Within Argyll the clan chiefs and gentry were to be amongst the foremost exponents of the ascendant capitalist political economy and its vision of development. Their support for schemes to promote economic growth intensified in the aftermath of Culloden, particularly since economic development was regarded as vital to the destruction of Jacobitism and the 'civilizing' of the Highlands. This process also embraced a sweeping attack on the indigenous culture, language and on labour rhythms.

The evidence in Argyll, however, suggests that landlords encountered intense resistance from the 'commonalty' who opposed the break-up of the traditional townships, the new regimen of agriculture and many of the initiatives to develop industry. Resistance was greatest between 1760 and 1850 when landlords transformed the agrarian system and developed crofting. The 'commonalty's' opposition to this process, and their defence of the traditional system and its culture, were also reflected in the use of community sanctions against the Revenue patrols, grain exporters, the Press Gang and other individuals and agencies perceived to have overstepped the bounds of their recognised authority or violated the traditional 'moral economy'.

The economic depression following the cessation of hostilities with France in 1815 radically altered conditions in the Highlands. The concomitant collapse of kelping, and agricultural and

non-agricultural income led to the intensification of Clearance as landlords undertook the wholesale eviction of the very crofting communities, which they had encouraged to exploit the war-time price boom. The escalation of Clearance and the correlated massive increase in emigration directly affected patterns of resistance. The opposition to arable 'improvement' remained a factor, but resistance to the landlords' schemes was increasingly characterised by class divisions. In the mid nineteenth century this conflict was expressed in the religious rivalries associated with the 'Disruption'. These involved the landlords and 'Moderate' clergy, with a few notable exceptions, on one side with the 'commonalty' and 'Evangelicals' on the other. Such resistance was a recurring factor throughout the period under consideration and indicates that the 'commonalty', rather than passively acquiescing in the landlords' vision of economic development, actively defended their traditional way of life and its culture. This tradition of resistance was to contribute to, and was evident in, the Crofters' struggles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The permeation of capitalist influence had a profound impact on the agriculture, industry and social relations of the traditional Highland society. This process was evident in the role of English/Lowland capital and enterprise, and in the attempts of government, landlords and clergy to promote economic development and to instill the ethos and values of ascendant capitalist political economy. Against this background Argyll experienced the social dislocation and upheaval associated with the 'improvement' of agriculture, and the commercial re-orientation of estate management, general throughout the Highlands. To understand the nature of the changes within this socio-economic structure it is necessary to consider the patterns of traditional agriculture, and those forces underpinning attempts to transform this system. The character of these measures, and the extent to which they were successful, should also be determined. These issues can be put in perspective by analysing the evidence of contemporary estate correspondence, agricultural surveys and references in the Old and New Statistical Accounts, compiled in the 1790s and 1840s respectively.

Agriculture in Argyll shared many of the features common to the traditional agrarian system. Within this structure the clan chiefs leased out land to their kinsmen, the tacksmen, who served as officers in time of crises and managed the clan lands and in turn set parcels of this land to tenants and the 'commonalty' consisting of sub-tenants, cottars and farm servants. On the former MacLean of Duart lands on Mull, Coll and Tiree, and in Morvern the tacksmen had special responsibilities, and performed a wide range of duties for the Dukes of Argyll in the face of the indigenous population's undisguised hostility to the Campbell planters.

The agriculture practised depended largely on black cattle, which provided the 'commonalty' with their main, and often only, source of cash income. The arable land was divided into 'infield' and 'outfield' and worked in small strips known as 'run rig'. An example of this system, and the variegated methods of husbandry associated with it, are provided by a survey made in 1769 of the Breadalbane lands in

Netherlorn. The farms on this estate were:

'divided into Two great divisions. The one infield or wintertown as they called it and the other outfield or Teath ground. This outfield may be about Two thirds of the farm and divided into three divisions, one of these Divisions teathed all summer with the cattle and brock up the insuing spring for oatsthen take two or three crops of oats of this in a succession without any more manure and afterwards let it lye out in ley till they go over the rest in the same rotation. The infield which may be about one third of the farm Divided into three divisions in Barley, one in oats, one in rye and potatoes. This they follow in rotation, by giving all the dung in farm produce to this portion of land, of course the other two thirds must be in an impoverished state'.¹

The small clusters of farms which made up the traditional townships supported large numbers of sub tenants and cottars. This was outlined by J. Walker in An Economical history of the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland:

'A farm of thirty pounds a year, will have ten such sub tenants upon it. Each of these has a family. The tacksmen, besides his wife and children, has eight men servants, six women and two boys. The whole amounts to about seventy one persons. Such a number of people, living by agriculture, upon so small a property, is not to be found anywhere else'.

It is apparent from this and other sources that a great deal of the labour performed on these farms was communally undertaken:

'they all join in labouring the arable part of the farm, and according to their valuation receive a proportion of its produce. As in this situation their separate interests must frequently interfere, the harmony in which they live, and the good will

they bear to one another, is truly surprising'.²

The traditional mode of agriculture has been frequently condemned as 'inefficient', but any criticisms of its operations should take into account cultural and social, as well as economic conditions. Indeed economic historians' arguments, based on 'efficiency' models, tend to lose sight of the fact that Highland farmers were arguably attempting to pursue the most 'efficient' mode by concentrating on pastoral farming and utilizing the sale of black cattle which constituted the growth point of the Scottish economy in the early eighteenth century. Furthermore it has to be acknowledged that Highland agriculture was the product of a traditional system in which commercial considerations were still generally subordinate to social factors. Commercial criteria certainly began to receive increasing prominence, particularly on the Campbell lands in Argyll wherein by the 1730s they were rapidly becoming almost the sole consideration. This structure, however, still existed albeit in decline, as more palpably did its system of landholding and social relations, throughout many areas of the Highlands. Historically the clan lands were used to support a military unit, an aspect which retained a role despite the decline of clan warfare, and was accentuated in the first half of the eighteenth century as the Jacobite chiefs, in particular, relied upon this system to provide the manpower vital to any Rebellion against the Hanoverians.

In the light of these factors it is superficial and inadequate for economic historians to simply apply modern criteria of 'efficiency' to Highland agriculture, and subsequently condemn it outright. Such an approach fails to take into account the unique conditions within this country. The traditional agricultural system, however, was not designed to support the increasingly heavy expenditure of the chiefs or to finance their social and political ambitions. The growing divide between the land's yield and the expenses incurred by the chiefs' social and/or political assimilation was evident even before the 1745 Rebellion. In this period both Jacobite and Whig

chiefs had demanded a higher level of income from the clan lands. In response to these conditions landlords, most notably the Whigs, attempted to commercially develop their estates and encourage industry. This was most dramatically revealed in Argyll, where the Dukes of Argyll and members of the Campbell gentry implemented such measures to increase their revenue.

Indeed when landlords first began to make concerted efforts in the 1720s and 1730s to 'improve' their estates, ie put them on a commercial capitalist basis, the landed elite in Argyll were to be amongst the forerunners. Reflecting their interest in October 1735 articles for establishing a company designed to promote the 'improvement' of agriculture were drawn up. It was proposed that this company, with a capital of £3,000, should take leases of farms in Cowal, Kintyre, Lorn and Mull. It is uncertain whether this venture was ever undertaken, but the proposals nevertheless indicate the strength of commitment to agrarian change.³ Further evidence of this commitment is provided by the case of Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy, Deputy Lieutenant of Argyll, who developed droving on his Lochfyneside estate from 1728, improving his livestock and dealing extensively in cattle, and by introducing 'improvements' was reportedly able to raise rents four fold over the next sixty years.⁴

On February 2nd 1744 Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy wrote to Andrew Fletcher, the Lord Justice Clerk, explaining his views on 'improvement', suggesting that Argyll was suitable for English black cattle, enclosures and the scientific breeding of cattle in part through prohibiting the import of Irish cattle. He also recommended the manufacturing of wool and flax, Argyll being as 'fit' as any other part of Scotland. Its suitability, according to Campbell, lay in the existence of a large supply of cheap labour, his account of which provides a valuable insight into the prevalence of seasonal migration from the county during the first half of the eighteenth century:

'We have great numbers of poor in it, and consequently labour must be cheap, our people go in great shoals to

the low country for two or three months in the harvests to reap the corns there, and immediately return with what they have saved, commonly very little, to be a burden for the other nine or ten months of the year . . .'.⁵

Amongst other suggestions Campbell advocated 'employing' the gift from the Crown of the Bishop's rents to establish manufactures, expand the fisheries and promote the production of flax at Campbeltown and Inveraray, and potash also at Inveraray and along Lochfyneside.

In the same letter he set out the motives underpinning such proposals. These were supporting the poor, but more accurately enhancing the Duke of Argyll's fortune. It is of great significance and interest that Campbell also viewed 'improvements' as the means of curbing 'that spirit of this deserting this country', which 'had not the sickness cutt off so many of the adventurers in North Carolina I believe might have been left a desart'. This affords crucial evidence that even before 1745 the emigration of the tenantry in the face of oppression and poverty, and in response to agrarian change and the pressures of population growth, had been a major problem for the landlords. The scale of this emigration is reflected in the ^{attempted} settlement of four hundred and twenty-three people, from Islay, in New York State between 1737 and 1740.⁶

It was also Campbell's belief that such recommendations might rejuvenate the clan ethos and its unique responsibilities and obligations, something which suggests that the traditional social relations were already under serious threat:

'But a regard to our prosperity, a discreet exercise of power, giving liberty where it can be of no bad consequence, being accessible and otherwise impressing the people with a belief of a return of that old intercourse of duty and tenderness which subsisted 'twixt the heads of that family (the Campbells of Inveraray) and their friends in this

country, will make his Grace and thim happy in one another'.

Ironically it was suggestions such as Archibald Campbell's which, symptomatic of the growing commercialisation of agriculture, had contributed to the erosion of those conditions he wished to see restored.

The most significant attempts to 'improve' agriculture during this period were to be undertaken by John Campbell, second Duke of Argyll. Reflecting his commitment, as early as 1710, there appears to have been important tenurial change in Kintyre, with the tacksmen being succeeded in their holdings by tenants.⁷ In 1737 Duncan Forbes of Culloden, the Duke of Argyll's commissioner and a leading Whig ally, undertook to extend tenurial reorganisation to the former MacLean of Duart lands on Mull, Tiree and Coll, and in Morvern. Forbes introduced commercial bidding, undermined the tacksmen's traditional role and replaced them with tenants. It was believed that these changes could provide the framework for extensive agricultural 'improvements'.

Tenurial reorganisation stemmed from the Campbell gentry's assimilation to 'southern' values, and the large costs this entailed. Mounting debts forced the second Duke, in common with many other Highland landlords, to assign a considerable portion of rental, including the tack duties of Mull, Morvern and Tiree, to meet these arising demands. Consequently as early as 1703-12, £10,000 was being paid to creditors against a total revenue of £52,493. In the light of these factors the Duke sought to extract the maximum level of rents to support his southern lifestyle, and its correlated political and social obligations. The growing urgency for increased revenue is evident in a letter from the Duke's commissioner to the chamberlain of Argyll in 1705:

'His Grace's occassion for money is so pressing that there is a necessity to use the outmost diligence against those lyable in payment without exception'.⁸

The ascendancy of commercial considerations on the Argyll estate had profound social consequences, and transformed the relationship of the tacksmen and their tenants, as the former became single tenant farmers and mere 'rent collectors' for the Duke.

The eighth Duke of Argyll, writing in the late nineteenth century, was eulogistic in praise of his ancestor's achievements, singling out tenurial change as worthy of particular merit. He claimed that this innovation laid the 'foundations of indefinite improvement for the future'.⁹ This partisan apologia for the 'improvement' strategy of the landed elite, however, conveniently ignored the heavy burden placed upon the impoverished tenantry by ducal self-interest. This change took place against a back cloth of high rents, 1727-37, coinciding with falling demand and prices for black cattle in the period 1730-40. These factors, exacerbated by harvest failure and a cattle epidemic in the spring of 1736 reducing the 'commonalty's' ability to pay rent, led to a general decline in economic conditions throughout Argyll and precipitated considerable emigration.¹⁰

In the light of these circumstances the tenants were in no position to bear the brunt of substantial rent increases, which were pushed higher through competitive bidding and the impact of inter-clan rivalries. Under this form, rents were raised sixty per cent on Mull and Tiree, while there was an increase of forty per cent in the Argyll estate as a whole. Consequently rent arrears multiplied - in the period 1736-37 - when the rental of Mull and Tiree was £994, only £514 was collected; and in the years 1738-43, when the rental stood at £1,320, an average of £980 was paid despite a slight amelioration in the level of cattle prices in the 1740s.¹¹ The gulf between ducal fiscal expectation and the estate's ability to fund them was highlighted in a letter from an estate official in early 1738:

'The arrear now due from that country (Argyll) is very great. If exacted vigorously it's probable the country would be laid waste . . .'.¹²

Undaunted by this prospect the Duke increased the pressure on his chamberlains to exact rents to the extent that by April 1738 Campbell of Airds, factor for Morvern, threatened to resign rather than 'be the executioner of the people or disoblige his constituents'.¹³

Tenurial reorganisation failed to provide the Duke with the increased revenue he anticipated, and actually made it more difficult for tenants to pay their rents thus resulting in displacement and emigration. It also arguably retarded, rather than promoted, economic development by further impoverishing the tenantry and undermining the tacksmen.¹⁴ This left Clan Campbell seriously exposed in a period of growing Jacobite disaffection. These effects were so marked that Archibald Campbell, third Duke who succeeded in 1743, faced with the collapse of this system, even considered re-introducing the old structure of tenure. In fact the reforms introduced by Forbes of Culloden remained, but received modifications with some reductions in rent, the relaxation on the prohibition of sub-letting, and the replacement of competitive bidding for leases with a system of 'private proposals'. This latter measure, complemented by oaths of allegiance, enabled the third Duke to take some steps towards reinforcing his clan's military capacity in response to the developing political crises, which led to the 1745 Rebellion.

The defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden, and the subsequent concerted assault on the traditional society, its culture and way of life, severed the patriarchal bonds characterising the Chief's relationship with the clan, as the ties of kinship were replaced by a purely economic relation. Against this background many of the chiefs began to spend more time in the South, had their children educated there in greater numbers, and indulged themselves in the opulent lifestyle of the southern landed gentry. The result was that the traditional society's social relations were undermined. Samuel Johnson, writing in the 1770s, lamented the decline of the tacksmen, whom he regarded as central to the development of the Highlands by dint of their unique status, and found that the chiefs had

'already lost much of their influence and as they gradually degenerate from patriarchal rulers to rapacious landlords they will divest themselves of the little that remains'.¹⁵ By 1800 this process was at a very advanced stage and the Highland chiefs 'instead of being almost adored' were 'in general despised'.¹⁶

To support their new lifestyles the chiefs and members of the Highland gentry intensified the exploitation of the clan lands. The commitment to 'improve' agriculture in Argyll was unrivalled throughout the Highlands, and the landed elite of this county were to be amongst the most energetic and ruthless in imposing their vision of economic development on a recalcitrant tenantry who wished to defend their traditional way of life, its culture and values. This objective was favoured by rising demand, amongst the expanding urban population of the Lowlands and England, for agricultural produce such as meat and wool. Increased demand pushed up the level of prices and cattle, which selling for £1 or less in the 1740s were fetching £5 or £6 by the 1790s, and consequently presented a lucrative incentive for landlords to cash in on.¹⁷

The assimilation of the Highland chiefs and gentry, their mounting debts and the correlated attempts to 'improve' agriculture and promote industry, can be viewed in the context of an inferiority complex experienced by the Scottish landed elite and the bourgeoisie, in relation to the ascendant, dynamic and more affluent capitalist interest in England.¹⁸ These feelings, with respect to English agriculture, industry and trade permeated Scottish society, and were accentuated when social and economic contacts between the two countries grew in the eighteenth century. Such links highlighted Scotland's relative poverty and backwardness, and convinced the Scottish landed elite and bourgeois ideologues that their major problem was facilitating the quickest transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Indeed it has been argued that the clarity with which they saw the need to effect this transition was unique.¹⁹ The 'improvers'

gave their active support for what they believed to be a 'mission to civilize' the Highlands, and landlords justified their attempts to impose agrarian change as an attack on 'tribalism'/'feudalism'. This was evident in the early eighteenth century when for example Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, who bought Ardnamurchan in 1714, embarked upon a series of schemes to 'improve' agriculture and encourage industry, most notably lead mining. An important perspective into such attitudes is contained in the remarkable 'Letter from Alexander Murray to his Grace John Duke of Argyle' dated 1739. Within this letter Murray attacked heritable jurisdictions, and 'slavish feudal tenures', of which he believed the Duke was the principal beneficiary. Murray argued his 'improvements' could partly offer the means through which these 'tyrannical and overgrown feudal powers' could be abolished.²⁰ In the period after Culloden the determination to smash 'feudalism' and to 'civilize' the Highlands intensified, and landlords' attempts to transform the agrarian system were increasingly perceived in these terms. Reflecting this Duncan Campbell of Shawfield, a Glasgow merchant (whose grandfather had used the compensation obtained, when the people of Glasgow destroyed his house in protest at the support he gave to the Malt Tax in 1725, to acquire Islay), wrote to the Board of Commissioners for the annexed estates in February 1777 seeking assistance for his efforts to develop linen spinning on this island. It is revealing that one of the factors cited by Duncan Campbell, in support of his request, was the schemes implemented by his grandfather for the 'improvement' and 'civilizing' of this island.²¹

As part of this perceived 'civilizing' process considerable effort was made to develop capitalist agriculture. In the 1790s it was noted for example that Campbell of Shawfield's attempts, which included introducing improved breeds of horses, lime and marle, turnips, clover and rye grass, and the undertaking of drainage and crop rotation, seemed 'to promise the rapid improvement to the agriculture of Islay'.²²

Contemporaneously, the houses of Breadalbane and Argyll were to be amongst the foremost 'improvers' in Scotland. A contemporary survey of agriculture in the counties of Argyll and Inverness by James Robson in 1794 outlined the agricultural 'improvements' implemented by the fourth Duke of Argyll:

'every improvement in the implements of husbandry and modes of culture are tried, and pursued or rejected as they are found to answer or the contrary. Crops of different sorts are raised; fallowing is practised, also paving and burning; oxen are used, and everything done with a view of improving the stock, and bringing this part of the country to as perfect a state as the soil and climate will admit of . . .'.²³

The chiefs and gentry in Argyll also continued to introduce 'improving' farmers, particularly in Cowal and parts of Kintyre. These farmers, many of whom came from the Lowlands and England, were given generous leases to entice them to the Highlands.²⁴ This led to the removal of numerous small tenants, as farms were enclosed throughout this period, and tacksmen were deprived of their traditional status and replaced with commercial farmers. An indication of this trend was provided on November 17th 1768 when the Earl of Breadalbane ordered Duncan Campbell of Glenure to quit the tack of a farm he held because he had encouraged sub-tenancies, which were expressly forbidden, and failed to introduce 'improvements' to the Earl's satisfaction. The latter informed Campbell that:

'It was an advantage to an estate to have it tenanted by real, not nominal, farmers who will reside constantly upon the spot and give their whole attention to husbandry'.²⁵

Admittedly his removal was largely inspired by serious political differences with the Earl, which were to sour their future relations, but this letter still serves to illustrate prevailing attitudes to land development, and bear testimony to the ascendancy of commercial factors

in determining tenancies.

In most Highland areas the tacksmen were reputedly unable or unwilling to undertake competitive bidding and thereby make the transition to become professional, capitalist farmers, operating their estates exclusively along commercial lines and instituting the complete range of agricultural 'improvements'. This was so marked, according to J. MacDonald in his General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides published in 1811, that an estimated nine-tenths came into such a category.²⁶ A possible exception could, however, be made for Argyll, wherein many of the tacksmen appear to have made this change, albeit at the cost of their traditional role and its attendant functions. This can be attributed to the county's earlier and more intensive experiences of assimilation and the permeation of capitalist influence. The tacksmen appear therefore to have become active practitioners of 'improvement'. Reflecting this on Islay about thirty tacksmen were responsible for introducing the new methods of husbandry.²⁷ The ascendancy of capitalist farmers, marked by large single tenant holdings, grew in relation to the expansion of enclosures, and also the creation of large cattle and latterly sheep farms in the last quarter of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which were themselves symptoms of the new regimen of agriculture. These trends were particularly pronounced in the southern parts of Argyll, in Kintyre, along Lochfyne and in Cowal, and in certain areas of the North, such as districts of Morvern.²⁸

The implementation and progress of agricultural 'improvements' were recorded by the clergy in the Old Statistical Account compiled in the 1790s. The ministers, wishing to destroy all vestiges of what was termed 'feudalism', were active 'improvers' in their own right.²⁹ This was underpinned by the general awareness, amongst the Scottish landed elite and bourgeoisie, of the country's relative backwardness. Consequently reflecting their class interest, which was accentuated by obligations determined by the landlords' control of patronage, the ministers, most notably the 'moderates', were

indefatigable allies in the latter's fight to impose economic development on the Highlands. Evidence of this support is contained in the Old Statistical Account, which is permeated with glowing references to landlords 'improving' their estates. Furthermore the clergy presented an extensive catalogue of their own recommendations for promoting agrarian change. The opinions of the Rev. J. MacFarlane, minister for Kilbrandon and Kilchattan in Lorn, epitomise the ministers' commitment to, and analysis of, 'improvement'. He suggested that enclosures, the establishing of suitable markets, the adoption of 'Sir John Sinclair's plan of improvement', the growing of turnips and the development of sheep farming held the key to British economic growth. Some ministers also became directly involved in sheep farming. This is illustrated in a letter to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine, dated June 21st 1794, from a correspondent who mentioned that Mr MacColl, a local minister of his acquaintance, had been in contact with an English merchant, whom he wished to sell his wool to.³⁰

The development of commercial sheep farming was the most dramatic aspect of the 'improvements'. Up until about the last quarter of the eighteenth century black cattle had constituted the staple commodity of the Highlands, with sheep being of secondary importance. The droving trade in cattle had grown markedly after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 and through the expansion of London and increasing imperial demand for salted beef, its promoters and beneficiaries were to include members of the Argyllshire landed elite. A measure of their commitment was embodied in a memorial of 1737, proposing the formation of the 'Argyllshire Droving Co.', which it was suggested should exert a monopoly over cattle sales in the county. This, it was argued, would enable the company to exclude southern dealers and thereby regulate prices, but it is uncertain whether these goals were ever achieved. Similarly Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy and Duncan Campbell of Inverawe, subsequently killed at the battle of Ticonderoga in 1757, formed a droving co-partnership, which between May 1739 and March 20th 1740 bought three thousand, three hundred and twenty-three cattle for £5,482 17s 2½d, from areas of Argyll such as

Islay, Dunardary, Mull and Ardincaple. Of these cattle six hundred and sixty-six were sold in England by Inverawe, while one thousand, one hundred and twenty-seven were sold at Crieff by Knockbuy.³¹ The black cattle trade expanded in the aftermath of Culloden, as prices rose an estimated three hundred per cent between the 1740s and 1790s, but industrialisation based on textiles and the growth of the English and Lowland urban population, and the correlated massive increase in demand for wool and mutton, began to shift the balance in favour of sheep.

The growth of sheep stocks in Argyll during the 1760s made this county one of the first in Scotland to develop commercial sheep farming. Reflecting the involvement of the gentry, Robert Campbell of Craig took a 'great' sheep farm at Ederlin near Inveraray holding about four thousand sheep at a rent of £250 in 1779, and Donald Campbell of Dunstaffnage wrote to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine in 1787 requesting the tack of an island off Lismore for a 'mutton park', while in the 1790s MacDonald of Achtrichtan, for example, held the largest farm in Ardnamurchan which was 'almost altogether fed with sheep', the wool being sold to English manufacturers.³² In this latter period the evidence of the Old Statistical Account suggests that sheep farming, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the county, had taken over significant areas of land, replacing black cattle and displacing large numbers of tenants.³³

The landlords developed sheep farming as an inherent, and increasingly predominant, part of the general regimen of 'improvements'. The Earl of Breadalbane, Murdo MacLaine of Lochbuy, Duncan Campbell of Glenure, Donald Campbell of Balliveolan and other proprietors enclosed farms and leased them to sheep farmers, many of whom were English or came from the Lowlands.³⁴ Indicative of this trend, the landlords in the parish of Glassary, in mid Argyll, introduced 'a few low country men' to run sheep farms but, according to the minister, they were 'real adventurers'.³⁵ In addition to the enterprise of English and Lowland sheep farmers, drovers were also

active in Argyll buying up cattle and sheep stocks and purchasing wool and transporting it to the southern markets.³⁶

Initially the fifth Duke of Argyll prohibited sheep farming on his estate, unless with specific permission, as he viewed this activity as injurious to tree planting and arable farming. The large profits of sheep farming, and the financial pressures of mounting debts, caused principally by 'improvements' and building work at Inveraray costing £4,000 to £5,000 per year in the 1770s/1780s, facilitated his conversion to an active promoter of this mode of agriculture. In 1792 for example he instructed his factor on Morvern 'to invite some of the new settlers (sheep farmers) in Ardnamurchan to look at my farms and to offer for them', by which date there were already seventeen thousand sheep in this area.³⁷ The advance of sheep farming on the Argyll estate was so rapid that by 1805 the Duke was able to write to James Ferrier, his commissioner:

'The neighbourhood (viz. Inveraray) and my lands in Mull have more sheep upon them than any district in Scotland or perhaps in England of equal extent'; and in 1811 the county as a whole had a sheep stock of over 278,500, which ranked second only to that of Ayrshire.

The commercialisation of agriculture, and the displacement of the 'commonalty' occasioned by the union of farms and the expansion of sheep farming, intensified in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These factors underpinned the growth of crofting as the dispossessed were relocated, and demobilised servicemen accommodated, in croft holdings. These^{usually} consisted of arable patches of five acres or less, with access to common pasturage.³⁸ Within this system the crofters and cottars relied overwhelmingly on the potato for subsistence, and on income from kelping, fishing or quarrying.

In relation to kelping, which was the most important source of crofting on the western seaboard, during the period 1746-70 when

demand for this product used in the manufacture of soaps and glass was relatively small landlords leased kelp shores to individual entrepreneurs. In 1746 for example production on Tiree was controlled by an Irishman, and in 1754 Hector McLean of Coll leased a kelp shore, which annually produced twenty-five tons, to another Irishman.³⁹ The expansion of the chemical industry, however, and the outbreak of the Wars with America and subsequently France, which cut off foreign imports, created boom conditions and reversed the landlords' previous neglect of this commodity.

Against this background, annual production in the Hebrides alone rose from two thousand tons in the 1770s to fifteen to twenty thousand tons during the early years of the nineteenth century, and kelping became a lucrative source of income for the landlords.⁴⁰ The main centres of production were the Long Island, North and South Uist, Benbecula and Skye. Within Argyll kelping did not attain the same importance, although considerable quantities of kelp were produced in some areas. In Mull for example annual production stood at six hundred tons and sold for £6,000 (sterling), on Islay the total was two hundred tons, Colonsay and Oronsay manufactured one hundred and twenty to one hundred and sixty tons and Ulva one hundred and fifty tons.⁴¹ On the mainland significant quantities were also produced in Morvern, Ardnamurchan and Sunart, and along the shores of Loch Creran and Loch Melfort, but it was generally small amounts of up to thirty tons, which were gathered in parishes throughout the county.⁴²

To establish control over the industry, landlords arrogated the right of ownership over the kelp, escalated the assault on the traditional agrarian system and took steps to secure the labour of their tenants. To curb emigration, caused by clearance, the landed interest mobilised to introduce the Passenger Vessels Act, which became law in 1803 and temporarily prevented many tenants from emigrating. Furthermore, they raised rents, introduced croft holdings which were deliberately kept too small, thus underlining dependency on the potato, and encouraged sub-division. These measures maximised profit by

increasing the size and availability of the labour force.⁴³ On Tiree for example, where between 1800 and 1812 kelp income 'very often exceeded the whole agricultural rental', the tacksmen's holdings were reduced and the small tenants and crofters given occupation of five-sixths of the land.⁴⁴ A letter from the Duke of Argyll in 1799 to his factor confirms the extent to which this was motivated by a determination to cash in on the kelp boom:

'As you inform me that small tenants can afford to pay more rents for farms in Tiry, than gentlemen farmers, owing to the manufacture of kelp, this determines me to let the farms to small tenants which have been and are at present possessed by tacksmen who reside upon farms in Mull'.⁴⁵

A similar pattern emerged in other kelping areas within Argyll. In Morvern, as early as 1786, two farms were transferred from Drimin to small tenants, a process which gathered momentum in the 1790s with rising demand for kelp; and by 1806 the Mull tacksmen, who had previously leased two-thirds of the island, were reduced to sharing equally with the small tenants occupying the coastal farms. This led to marked increases of population in the major kelping areas, wherein tenants supported themselves on meagre holdings through reliance on the potato and non-agricultural income.⁴⁶

The landlords' efforts to establish a kelping monopoly were not unopposed, and on Mull tenants' resistance was temporarily successful. In 1795 the Duke of Argyll had instructed his Edinburgh agent to quantify the kelp sold in Mull and Morvern, and to identify potential markets, with a view to asserting total control over kelp sales. Reference to the factor's reports reveals the depth of opposition to this objective:

'my Lord Duke's agent was corresponded with in Spring last on this subject, and a mercantile house at Leith was employed by him to dispose of the Mull kelp, but the tenants having in general resisted this scheme, it was departed from for

the time and the sale of the kelp was left in their own hands as formerly'.⁴⁷

The Duke, angered by this opposition, determined to exploit his tenants' tenurial insecurity, and in 1796 stated he was:

'resolved to recover the property of my kelp shores, which have been allowed to fall into the hands of the tenants without any proper return to me. For this purpose you must immediately intimate to all the tenants who possess without leases that in future they are to deliver to my orders all the kelp which they make on their farms, not under a certain quantity each, on being allowed a certain sum for each ton'.

This measure, however, was 'ill received', and the factor had to delay its implementation and offered the opinion that it would be more advantageous and practical for the estate to raise rents, whilst allowing tenants to sell their own kelp, and the strength of opposition forced the Duke to acquiesce to this proposal.⁴⁸

Another facet of the tenants' desubordination and hostility to poor wages was the deliberate adulteration of the kelp, which infuriated the landlords who attempted to eradicate the threat to their incomes. This is evident in a letter from the Duke of Argyll to the factor of Tiree in 1792:

'Much discredit has fallen of late upon the Highland kelp from the quality being debased with sand, gravell and other improper mixtures. Mr Maxwell and you should consult with Boisdale (Colonel MacDonald who had acquired Ulva) and other gentlemen interested as to the best way of curing this evil and regaining the character which has been lost. Perhaps the kelp made on each farm can be stamped so as to distinguish it from all others and lead to a detection of any imposition made in future. This deserves

to be attended to and something should be agreed upon and published in the newspapers for the satisfaction of the public. It may be said from one that if any merchant or manufacturer will disclose any imposition practised by any tenant of mine, I shall endeavour to inflict the most exemplary punishment on the offender'.⁴⁹

The high level of exploitation inherent in kelping, reflected by the raising of rents and the payment of poor wages, created tensions amongst those tenants involved in its production. This is illustrated by a letter from John McNeil of Oronsay to Archibald Campbell of Jura in 1799:

'I was obliged to set out next day for Islay as understood there was a chance that my Ardnave kelpers would mutiny. Indeed I found them in somewhat a rebellious state when I got there but have now fixed them for the season'.

McNeil also provides an insight into the importance which kelp income was beginning to represent for many landlords, adding it was only the high price of kelp that induced him to take the shore 'one of the very worst and most precarious I ever saw'.⁵⁰

The landlords' control of kelping, and their failure to develop this source of income in terms of capital investment and accumulation, exacerbated the fragile economic balance within Argyll and throughout the Highlands as a whole. The effects of rack renting and subdivision forced the crofters and cottars to rely on the cultivation of the potato, seasonal migration and illicit distilling to support themselves in the congested coastal communities. These conditions, and the neglect of agriculture they entailed, were deliberately engineered by the landlords who wished to benefit from the kelp boom. The precariousness of this balance was exposed when the boom ended and kelp prices began to fall from £20 to £10 per ton between 1810 and 1811. This decline was accelerated in the period

after the Napoleonic Wars, when imports revived and the salt duties were abolished in 1825 and inorganic chemical substitutes were mass produced. The result was that kelp prices, standing at £10 per ton in the early 1820s, dropped to £3 by 1834.⁵¹ Production decreased rapidly during this period, and by the 1840s the evidence of the New Statistical Account suggests that only small quantities were being gathered in Argyll. On certain islands such as Tiree and Ulva larger amounts continued to be produced. In the latter case one hundred tons of high quality kelp were being sold annually, which only represented a drop of about fifty tons on the 1811 level.⁵²

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the main agricultural developments within Argyll were the growth of sheep farming and crofting. The character of agrarian change therefore can be generally defined as tenurial in nature affecting the pattern of land use. By contrast the evidence of the Old Statistical Account and contemporary agricultural surveys indicate that attempts to 'improve' arable farming were limited in effect, and geographically scattered. Reflecting these trends, Robert Heron noted in his report of 1798 that in parts of southern Argyll 'many improvements have been tried with encouraging success'.⁵³ In the parish of Glassary for example landlords had been 'active for the last 20 years in meliorating their property' and the 'improvements' within the parish of Kilmore and Kilbride, in Lorn, were 'almost equal to any used in the most improved parts of Scotland'.⁵⁴ In the same report, however, it is also shown that in the islands and the northern districts of the county these changes were implemented only 'here and there'.⁵⁵ Furthermore tenurial change had failed to facilitate the transformation of arable farming. This can be illustrated by considering that on Mull, in the parish of Kilfinichen and Kilviceuen it was observed 'improvements go slowly', whilst in Kilninian a similar pattern prevailed, agriculture being considered 'very backward'.⁵⁶

The prevalence of the traditional methods of agriculture throughout Argyll was illustrated by the Rev. Lachlan McLachlan in his

account of the parish of Craignish:

'In this parish, as in most Highland parishes, the people follow the old system of agriculture with little or no variation. They have neither skill nor encouragement to attempt any material change. They hold their farms, some of them, on short or no leases. They are subjected to servitudes which must be performed at whatever time they are exacted. Their fields are neither regularly formed, nor properly inclosed; and there is no lime, marl or shell sand which they can conveniently get to improve their land'.⁵⁷

In many respects the agriculture outlined in the New Statistical Account was to retain significant characteristics of the traditional mode of farming, embodied in the slow and uneven pace of 'improvements'. At Inveraray, viewed in the 1790s as an important centre of agrarian change and where successive Dukes of Argyll expended large sums on their estates, it was declared that agriculture 'has not made that progress which could be wished or might be expected'.⁵⁸ Indeed communal agriculture, in which run rig worked collectively rather than by individual tenants, was sufficiently extensive to merit bitter attack as an 'evil practice', which had to be 'banished'. Moreover even in those southern parts of Argyll, wherein 'improvements' were allegedly making advances in the late eighteenth century, little further progress appears to have been made. In Kilchoman, on Islay, 'improvements' were still 'in their infancy', and in the parish of Glassary most of the land remained in a 'state of nature',⁵⁹ and in those parishes where less time, money and effort had been expended, the strength of traditional agriculture was even more complete. Reflecting this, in Inverchaolain, Lorn, there had been 'little advancement' in arable farming.⁶⁰

During the mid-nineteenth century agriculture in Argyll was predominantly pastoral, with sheep farming advancing at the expense of

arable husbandry. The growth of sheep farming was accelerated in the post 1815 economic depression, when the end of the war with France plunged kelp and cattle prices into decline. This mode of agriculture had profound effects on the traditional society and economy of the Highlands. The most dramatic result was the escalation of clearance and depopulation. The Clearances, in which large numbers of people were evicted as landlords broke up the traditional townships and turned them into large sheep walks, represented what Karl Marx identified as the final stages of 'primitive accumulation'. This referred to the process in which the communal property belonging to traditional societies was undermined and supplanted first by feudal and then by capitalist modes of land holding and tenure, and social relations. The impact of 'primitive accumulation' provided the prerequisite capital and labour for industrialisation, through its separation of labour from the means of production, and the conversion of the latter into capital.⁶¹

In relation to the Highlands the chiefs' power of trusteeship over the clan lands was historically transformed into the right of private property. It was this 'right' which enabled the chiefs to try to develop a capitalist agrarian system, typified by the 'improvement' of estates, the development of commercial sheep farming and the accommodation of the landless/semi-landless population in congested crofting communities. Another aspect of this system was the concentration in patterns of land ownership and usage. The intensifying concentration of land ownership received early illustration in Argyll, wherein mounting debts caused the number of proprietors to fall from two hundred to one hundred and fifty-six between the mid and late eighteenth century, by which time it was observed 'no reproach is attached to the loss of an estate as the case is become so common'.⁶²

The decline of the landed gentry and their replacement by capitalist single tenant farmers, inherent to this process of concentration, was outlined in a letter of 1797 from

an anonymous agent to the fifth Duke of Argyll:

'The bankruptcy of so many of the old familys in Argyllshire whom your own goodness has led you to regard as so many parts of yourself - Dunstaffnage, Glenfeochan, Gallanoch, Inverliver, Ederline, are all intrievable, and this day I have had a meeting with the creditors of Comby, who by an injudicious interference with his credit for the support of the others had brought himself into very great pecuniary difficulties . . . In my last letter I noticed some good is to be expected from ill. Here your Grace is about to lose a number of hereditary captains, who were to attend you to the field . . . but in their place you are to expect persons of more placid dispositions whose aims will be to introduce industry and manufactures into the country and to convert it from a warlike into a rich one'.⁶³

Land concentration was a general trend and during the second half of the eighteenth century chiefs throughout the Highlands lost control over the lands, which they themselves had already removed large numbers of their kinsmen from. This process accelerated in the first half of the nineteenth century. In Reminiscences of my life in the Highlands, published in the 1880s, Joseph Mitchell calculated that two-thirds of all estates had changed hands since the 1820s.⁶⁴ Contemporaneously in Argyll the number of proprietors had fallen from one hundred and fifty-six to seventy-three between the late eighteenth century and 1851.⁶⁵ The growing concentration of land ownership, and the correlated commercialisation of agriculture, brought an attendant influx of lowland landlords and the growth of a rural middle class characterised by capitalist single tenant farmers which accentuated the severance of the traditional social relations. A symptom of this commercialisation was the proliferation of land speculation, which

apparently offended the social sensibilities of at least some of the remaining lairds. A letter from John Campbell, in Campbeltown, to Colin Campbell of Balliveolan in 1814 refers to this concern:

'I have heard the history of Mr Downie who is to become our neighbour. I could wish the property had fallen into the hands of some more respectable personage, but he will probably not keep it long, as he speculates in that way . . .'⁶⁶

The activities of land speculators, implied in this letter, highlights the extent to which capitalist influences were penetrating the Highlands, facilitated by the increasing level of bankruptcies amongst the gentry.

This concentration was reflected in patterns of land use, and in the period 1730 - 1820 growing numbers of traditional townships were split up and enclosed. Against this background many members of the emerging rural working class, comprising small tenants, crofters and cottars, were forced to out migrate, particularly on the expiry of leases, or to scrape a subsistence from meagre croft holdings. This latter option, however, offered little long term security and in the post 1815 economic depression, as kelp income collapsed and black cattle prices fell, crofters and cottars experienced great hardship. Conditions were exacerbated by high rents which remained at the levels set during the wars with France, when prices, notably for kelp and black cattle, boomed. On Lismore for example the population were subjected to rack renting which in the early years of the nineteenth century pushed rents up as high as thirty shillings per acre from an average of about ten shillings per acre in 1790; while on Tiree their suffering was embodied in the saying 'Tir - iodh an da bharr, mar bhi, eagail an da mhail' (Tiree would bear the two crops, were it not for the fear of the two rents).⁶⁷

The effect of economic depression on rent payments was outlined in a letter of July 1823 from Colin Campbell of Balliveolan to Duncan Campbell of Barcaldine:

'I have not yet called in my poor bodies to pay their rents, which I am sorry to say need not be expected in full during the continuance of these times. Although the prices of Black cattle have risen a little in the south, the prices of wool and mutton continue unprecedently low especially when it is considered that the manufacturing part of the community are busily employed everywhere'.⁶⁸

Against the backcloth of depression, and exorbitant rent demands, arrears multiplied throughout the Highlands, particularly in the West and on the islands. Reflecting this, in one district of Mull little rent was paid in money for a considerable period before 1841 and only three or four of the tenants were not in arrears.⁶⁹ Moreover the landlords increased their commitment to sheep farming, and implemented the second major phases of Clearance in the 1820s and 1830s when the crofting communities were evicted.

The concentration of land ownership and the influence of speculation did nothing to ensure that the small tenants and crofters were any more secure in their meagre holdings, rather they served to heighten feelings of insecurity as land changed hands between impersonal landlords. This feeling was generated by the refusal of many proprietors to give leases, or such as would give their recipients a modicum of security. The landlords, involved in developing sheep farming, had an attitude towards leases of the 'shorter and better'.⁷⁰ The want of leases was widespread and served to oppress the crofting communities in particular. This was frequently commented upon by contemporaries: 'On many Isles no leases are given to the small tenants; and these people accordingly, as might be expected, are miserable slaves'.⁷¹

In the eighteenth century, when landlords were committed to 'improving' arable farming and to encouraging a large population which it was hoped would provide the prerequisite labour for kelping and

other industries, the provision of 'fair, balanced' leases was regarded as one of the best means of 'improving' the Highlands. Indeed their absence was viewed 'as the most fruitful source of emigration and distress'.⁷² The development of commercial sheep farming, and the impact of the post 1815 economic depression, undermined these perceptions. The congested crofting communities, initially encouraged by the landlords, were, in light of these factors, deemed 'redundant nuisances', which had to be cleared. Landlords therefore either refused to give leases, or made them as short as possible, in order to afford the greatest degree^{of} control over the management of their estates.

Another factor which came to exert a baneful influence on Highland agriculture was the increasing level of absenteeism amongst the majority of landlords. Its impact on the agriculture of Argyll had been identified in a survey of 1798:

'of all the obstacles to improvement none can be greater than the non residence of many of the heritors which deprives the ground of almost any part of the rent being spent on the premises. If a farmer should sell all the straw or dung which should manure his farm, it could not be more hurtful to improvement than the landlords spending all his rents elsewhere. Two thirds, at least, of the rents are spent out of the country'.⁷³

The author of this report, the Rev. John Smith, was minister of Campbeltown and his concern with the outflow of money from his and other parishes reflects the clergy's general criticism of absenteeism, on the basis of the strain it placed on relieving the poor. The effects of absenteeism on agriculture were also highlighted by J. MacDonald during the early nineteenth century:

'The non residence of many of the proprietors who drain the poor Hebrides of their wealth and too often residing in other parts of the empire pay

little attention to the improvement of their estates'.⁷⁴

This permeated the New Statistical Account. In South Knapdale for example absenteeism was 'a great bar to the improvement of this parish'.⁷⁵ It also encouraged the development of recreational capitalism. One aspect of this was the conversion of agricultural land in many areas of the Highlands, such as Jura and Morvern, into deer forests for the exclusive use of the landed elite.

A major development within pastoral farming was the unique growth of commercial dairy farming in Kintyre. In the 1840s the New Statistical Account recorded that Mr Stewart of Glenbuckie, the Duke of Argyll's chamberlain for Kintyre, set up a dairy which produced high quality cheese for the Glasgow market.⁷⁶ The predominance of pastoral farming was symptomatic of, and reflected, the concentration in patterns of both land ownership and usage. One significant result of these trends was that fewer members of the rural working class made a living exclusively from the working of their own holdings. Indeed some parts of Argyll, particularly southern and eastern areas such as Kintyre, were moving towards the lowland model characterised by the prevalence of farm servants. An insight into this can be provided by considering the number of direct tenancies, in relation to the total number of families in particular, and in comparison with sheep, cattle and single tenant arable farms. In the northwest districts of the Highlands direct tenancies in crofts or multiple farms could number as high as 70%, but in a series of four parishes in Argyll it was found that no more than 37% of all families rented land direct from proprietors, whilst taken as a whole the proportion was no greater than a quarter.⁷⁷

Agriculture in this respect was increasingly dominated by a small class of professional farmers and, in conformity to the development of a capitalist agrarian structure, the great majority of the population were landless/semi-landless. Within the parish of Kilmartin, mid Argyll, for example, there were forty-three servants and

fifty labourers working for fifty-two farmers in single tenant farms.⁷⁸ This trend was particularly marked amongst the crofting communities in the northern areas of Argyll, such as the island of Coll, where in 1848 there were one hundred and twenty-five cottars who held no land besides twelve tenants who had small plots, while on Mull, in at least one parish, there were more cottars than crofters. The reports of the Highland Relief Committees confirm, however, that it was also evident in mainland areas. In 1848 these recorded that:

'numbers also have been forced into the small towns and villages - have no land whatever to cultivate - no regular labour to resort to - and depend entirely on some chance employment, are in a very miserable condition'.

This was most apparent in towns like Campbeltown, Oban and Tobermory which were swollen with the dispossessed.⁷⁹

The decline of arable farming had catastrophic effects on the population and economy of the Highlands. As the landlords developed sheep and cattle farming, the rural working class became dangerously over reliant on the potato. Monoculture was evident in many areas of this country, such as the northern parts of Argyll. Reflecting this, in 1847 it was recorded that eight thousand out of ten thousand crofters and cottars on Mull lived entirely on potatoes, a dependency underpinned by the use of surplus corn in distilling as a means of paying exorbitant rents. Similarly in Ardnamurchan two to three thousand acres were sown with potatoes as compared to only one thousand with oats.⁸⁰ Indeed it was precisely such a dependency which enabled the rural working class to survive on their holdings. Survival became increasingly difficult in the face of economic depression, affecting cattle prices and non-agricultural income such as fishing. The hardship caused by falling cattle prices and inclement weather, resulting in the death of stock, was evident on the Breadalbane estate lands of the Braes of Lorn, Glenuchar and Kilninver, where the effect of these factors prompted the tenants to petition the Earl for rent reductions in 1843.⁸¹ The extent of this depression was also

highlighted by the rise in bankruptcies amongst farmers, and livestock and grain dealers in Argyll during the late 1830s and 1840s.

Typifying this trend John Stewart of Fasnacloich, a cattle dealer and wool merchant, was declared bankrupt in 1840 owing £175 to Sir John Campbell of Ardnamurchan, whilst in June 1841 it was reported that William Harvey jnr., a farmer in Campbeltown, had absconded to the 'United States of America or elsewhere abroad' leaving behind debts of £250.⁸²

The precariousness of this balance was to be tragically exposed in the devastating potato blight of 1845-50. During this period the contraction of arable agriculture was exacerbated by the failure of the potato, which had become so vital to the Highland economy. These factors, in conjunction with the exorbitant level of rents, created widespread destitution. The general response of the landlords was to execute the systematic clearance of their estates, and to remove the congested crofting communities, which had been created largely as a result of the intensified development of sheep farming. In Argyll the crofting communities of Lochawe, Luing, Mull, Morvern and Tiree for example were all cleared. Similarly in Glenorchy the Earl of Breadalbane's 'mania for evictions' reduced the population from one thousand eight hundred and sixty to eight hundred and thirty-one between the 1830s and 1840s, whilst in Morvern the Reverend Doctors MacLeod:

'had seen their parish almost emptied of its people. Glen after Glen had been turned into sheep walks . . . the torn walls and gables left standing like mourners beside the grave . . . At one stroke of the pen two hundred of the people were ordered off . . . and finer men and women never left the Highlands'.⁸³

These scenes were repeated throughout the Highlands, as landlords, conscious of their obligations under the 1845 Poor Law Amendment^{Act}, used 'clearance' indiscriminately to ensure that the 'redundant' population, which they themselves had encouraged, should not become an expensive burden on their poor rates. Reflecting this concern 'Amongst the

resident gentry (of the Highlands)', wrote Sir Edward Coffin in 1847, 'Emigration to the colonies seems to be the sole remedy for the impending evil (of famine)'.⁸⁴

In the period 1730 to 1850 the socio economic system of the Highlands underwent major changes. The principal force underpinning these developments was the permeation of capitalist influence. One aspect of this was evident in the landlords' attempts to 'improve' agriculture. Within Argyll 'improvement' was generally characterised by tenurial reorganisation, and the development of commercial sheep farming. Indeed references in the Old Statistical Account indicate that the extent of 'improvement' in arable farming was both limited and geographically scattered. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this trend became more pronounced. As sheep farming advanced the traditional multi-tenancy farms were split up and their occupants forced to emigrate/migrate or eke a bare subsistence from croft holdings. This mode of husbandry therefore developed at the expense of arable cultivation, a fact tragically exposed in the potato famine of 1846-47. By this period the concentration in patterns of land ownership and use, the prevalence of sheep farming and the magnitude^{of clearance}, which created a landless/semi-landless population, highlighted the existence of the capitalist agrarian structure that had developed in the Highlands. The emergence of this system, geared towards satisfying demand in the Lowlands and England for agricultural produce, has been analysed but is also necessary to consider the role of the 'commonalty' within this process, and in particular to assess their response to these changes.

Notes

- 1 Scottish Record Office [SRO], Surveys and Plans, RHP 9/2/5; see also J. Walker, An Economical History of the Hebrides and the Highlands of Scotland, 2 vol., (Edinburgh, 1808), i, 127; 51-56, 108.
- 2 Walker, Economical History, i, 55-56.
- 3 Ardchattan House, Argyll, Campbell of Ardchattan MSS, bundle 713.
- 4 E.R. Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 1771-1805, (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1964), xi; for John Earl of Breadalbane's issuing of 'improving' leases on his Perth estate as early as 1705, see SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD112/2/92/1, 4th January 1705; and for Patrick Campbell, Lord Monzie's attitudes to 'improvement' in relation to educating members of the gentry, in this case Colin Campbell, son of Patrick Campbell of Barcaldine, see SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/817/16, 9th May 1729.
- 5 SRO, Campbell of Stonefield MSS, GD 14/17.
- 6 GD 14/17; see for example Dr. G.F. Black 'Early Islay Emigration to America', Oban Times, 26th March 1927; SRO, Presbytery of Inveraray, CH 2/190/2, 372, 390-4; SRO, Presbytery of Kintyre, CH 2/1153/3, 14th January, 1748; A Fraser, North Knapdale in the 17th and 18th Centuries, (Oban, 1964), 68; National Library of Scotland [NLS], Culloden MS 2968, fo 117.
- 7 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 105.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 G.D. Campbell, Scotland as it was and as it is, 2 vol., (Edinburgh, 1887), i, 259.
- 10 SRO, Campbell of Stonefield MSS, GD 14/3/170.
- 11 E.R. Cregeen, 'The Tacksmen and their successors', Scottish Studies, xiii, (1969), 133-35.
- 12 NLS, Culloden Papers MS 2970, fo 173-77.
- 13 SRO, Campbell of Stonefield MSS, GD 14/3/246.
- 14 Cregeen, 'Tacksmen and their successors', Scottish Studies, xiii, 133.
- 15 S. Johnson, The tour to the Western Islands of Scotland, (Harmondsworth, 1984), 96, 81.

- 16 S. Hall, Travels in Scotland by an unusual route, 2 vol., (London, 1807), ii, 507; see also 'Agricola', 'On the improvement of the Highlands', Scots Magazine, 1774, 521-22; D.C. Thomson, An introduction to Gaelic Poetry, (London, 1974), passim; W. Matheson (ed), 'Songs of John MacCodrum', Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, (Edinburgh, 1938), 199-203.
- 17 M. Gray, The Highland Economy, (London, 1957), 142.
- 18 J.D Young, The rousing of the Scottish Working Class, (London, 1979), 11.
- 19 E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The Scottish Reformers and Capitalist Agriculture', in E.J. Hobsbawm (ed), Peasants in History, (Calcutta, 1980), 24.
- 20 NLS, 'Letter from Alexander Murray to his Grace John Duke of Argyle', MS 3532, 1739; Alexander Murray, The True Interest of Great Britain, 'An apology to the reader', (London, 1740).
- 21 SRO, Forfeited Estates Papers, E727/60/1, 24th Feb. 1777; see for example J. Knox, A view of the British Empire more especially Scotland, (London, 1785), 434.
- 22 R. Heron, General View of the natural circumstances of those isles adjacent to the North West coast of Scotland, which are distinguished by the common name of Hebudae or Hebrides, (London, 1794), 72.
- 23 J. Robson, General View of the agriculture in the county of Argyll and the Western part of Inverness-shire, (London, 1794), 58.
- 24 See for example Old Statistical Account, [OSA], Argyll, VIII, 343, 241; P. MacFarlane, A historical sketch of the United Presbyterian Church, Rothesay, (Rothesay, 1885), 20.
- 25 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1/39/4.
- 26 J. MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, (Edinburgh, 1811), 75-76.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 OSA, VIII, 99, 245, 304-05, 356; OSA, Western Isles, XX, 363-65.
- 29 OSA, VIII, 290, 65, 96-99, 189; XX, 309, 340.
- 30 OSA, VIII, 174; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2056/12-13.

- 31 Kilberry Castle, Campbell of Kilberry, MSS, bundle X; for the activities of Patrick Campbell of Ardchattan, P. Campbell of Barcaldine and P. Campbell of Clashgower in a droving company see Ardchattan MSS, bundle 660; for the increase in the level of cattle prices see T.C. Smout, A history of the Scottish People, 1560-1830, (London, 1969), 345-46.
- 32 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1108/7, 9th April 1779, GD 170/1640/4, 21st May 1787; J. Robson, General View of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 54.
- 33 OSA, VIII, 164; XX, 303.
- 34 It is impossible to accurately calculate the numbers of Lowland and English farmers, but for a general impression of this trend see SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS GD 170/1643/17/1; MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/877; Campbell of Balliveolan MSS, GD 13/465, 25th July 1807.
- 35 OSA, VIII, 94, 53, 64, 241, 343.
- 36 See for example SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1726/33, April 1786; GD 170/1864/1, 10th June 1793; GD 170/1003/7, 24th June 1797; MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1138/1-25, 1832-36.
- 37 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, xxxiv, 173.
- 38 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1726/20, 30th March 1784, GD 170/1726/23; R. Forsyth, The Beauties of Scotland, 5 vol., (London, 1889), V, 502.
- 39 Gray, Highland Economy, 130.
- 40 J. Hunter, The making of the Crofting Community, (Edinburgh, 1976), 16.
- 41 MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 622, 650, 674, 739, 745; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/973, 1799; /356; /608; /671; /1065; Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1281.
- 42 J. Leyden, Tour in the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland, (London, 1903), 78; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2378/1, 1830; /2029/7, 14th August 1793; /1281, 10th May 1784; /406; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1240,

- 7th Sept. 1753; OSA, VIII, 341, 280, 477.
- 43 Hunter, Making of Crofting Community, 19; J. McCulloch, The Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland, 4 vol., (London, 1824), i, 127; OSA, VIII, 306.
- 44 G.D. Campbell, Crofts and Farms in the Hebrides, (Edinburgh, 1883), 11.
- 45 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 48, 20-22.
- 46 Ibid; Gray, Highland Economy, 137; NLS, Delvine Papers, MS 241; OSA, VIII, 372; 'Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the condition of the Population of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and into the practicability of affording the People relief by means of Emigration', Parliamentary Papers, [PP], 1841, VI, 35, 439-440.
- 47 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 185.
- 48 Ibid, 185-87.
- 49 Ibid, 25, see also SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1769/3, 10th May 1785.
- 50 SRO, Campbell of Jura Papers, GD 64/1/367, 24th June 1799.
- 51 Gray, Highland Economy, 156.
- 52 New Statistical Account, [NSA], Argyll, VII, 309, 348.
- 53 Heron, General View of the Hebrides, 72.
- 54 OSA, VIII, 382, 271; Robson, General View of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 58.
- 55 Heron, General View of the Hebrides, 71.
- 56 OSA, VIII, 303, 170, 241; XX, 324; Robson, General View of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 57.
- 57 OSA, VIII, 77-78.
- 58 NSA, VII, 28.
- 59 NSA, VII, 653, 55, 64, 100, 210-13, 700, etc.
- 60 NSA, VII, 113.
- 61 K. Marx, Capital, 3 vol., (London, 1949), i, 737-752.
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- 63 E.R. Cregeen, 'The changing role of the house of Argyll', in N.T. Phillipson and R. Mitchison (ed), Scotland in the age of

- Improvement, (Edinburgh, 1970), 20.
- 64 J. Mitchell, Reminiscences of my life in the Highlands, 2 vol., (Newton Abbot, ¹⁸⁸³⁻⁴ 1971), i, 300; ii, 114.
- 65 Gray, Highland Economy, 194.
- 66 SRO, Campbell of Balliveolan MSS, GD 13/623.
- 67 I. Carmichael, Lismore in Alba, (Perth, 1946); OSA, XX, 352.
- 68 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2296/43, 13th July 1823.
- 69 Gray, Highland Economy, 184.
- 70 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2296/51, 7th April 1828.
- 71 MacDonald, General View of Agriculture of Hebrides, 129; NSA, VII, 30, 56, 77, 212, 291, 404, 491, 641, etc.
- 72 MacDonald, Ibid, 129-135.
- 73 Smith, General View of Agriculture of Argyll, 298, 13.
- 74 MacDonald, General View of Agriculture of the Hebrides, 5; see also A. Fullarton and C.R. Baird, Remarks on the evils at present affecting the Highlands, (Glasgow, 1838), 52-53.
- 75 NSA, VII, 276, 111, 617; see also A. Currie, A Description of the antiquities and scenery of the parish of North Knapdale, Argyllshire, (Glasgow, 1830), 11. For impact of deer farming in Argyll see, for example, D. Ross, The Russians of Ross-shire, or Massacre of the Rosses in Strathcarron, (Glasgow, 1854), 37; NSA, VII, 502.
- 76 NSA, VII, 432, 28.
- 77 Gray, Highland Economy, 224.
- 78 NSA, VII, 562.
- 79 Gray, Highland Economy, 202.
- 80 Ibid, 213; NSA, VII, 185.
- 81 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/11/10/8/33.
- 82 SRO, Petitions in Sequestrations, CS 279/2487; for period 1839-45 see /1026 and /428 etc; for 1846-50, /259, /1739 etc.
- 83 T. Johnston, History of the Working Class in Scotland, (Glasgow, 1921), 200-02. For accounts of the indiscriminate toll of clearance and the correlated upsurges in out migration see NLS, Sketch of a ramble through the Highlands of Scotland in the summer of 1818 by John Anderson, MS 2509, 32-33; 'Reports from the Select

Committee appointed to inquire into the expediency of encouraging Emigration from the United Kingdom; 1826 IV and 1826-27 V; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS GD 170/2538, 25th March 1826; John Anderson, 'Essay on the present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland', Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 1831, New Series, II; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1714, 1838; Glasgow Courier 30/6/1832 and 22/9/1832; Fullarton and Baird, Evils affecting the Highlands, 42-43; SRO, National Register of Archives NRA 653, Horsman Papers, 1837; A. Currie, Antiquities of North Knapdale, 13; Chartist Circular, May 30th 1840; Glasgow Courier, 17/7/1841; Rev. A. McLaren Young, Southern Kintyre in History, (Edinburgh, 1898), 32; P. McIntosh, History of Kintyre, (Campbeltown, 1870), 100; 'Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland', PP, Evidence, III, 2254, 3522.

The NSA reveals a general trend of clearance, caused by sheep farming and the enclosing of farms, and a correlated upsurge in out migration, see, for example, 93, 98, 185-86, 401, 450, 502, 562, etc. It is also a marked trend that the population of towns such as Oban and Tobermory rose considerably as they accommodated those displaced in their landward parishes where population declined in the face of clearance, see, for example 527-28, 688, 630, 664; N. McLeod, Reminiscences of a Highland Parish, (London, 1912), 393-96; W. MacKenzie, The Highland Clearances, (Glasgow, 1883), 226-27 contain graphic accounts of clearance and the abject conditions within the towns of Lochalin and Tobermory. For other accounts of clearance see Cuthbert Bede (Rev. E. Bradley), Glencreggan, 2 vol., (London, 1861), i, 65, 96-97; T. Mulock, The Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland Socially Considered, (Edinburgh, 1850), 42; W. MacCombie Smith, Men or Deer? In the Scottish Glens; or facts about the Deer Forests, (Inverness, 1893), 71; Rev. J. Kennedy Cameron, The Church in Arran, (Edinburgh, 1912), 109; J. Steill, 'Atrocious Despotism in the Highlands', North Briton, 7th Nov. 1860; R Buchanan, The Land of

Lorne, 2 vol., (London, 1871), i, 23-24; SRO, Campbell of Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/8/1/5, 1850; D. Turnock, Patterns of Highland Development, (London, 1970), 25-26; P. Gaskell, Morvern Transformed, (Cambridge, 1968), 31-32; Hunter, Making of Crofting Community, 84-85.

84 Gray, Highland Economy, 189.

In an article on eighteenth century Scottish agriculture E.J. Hobsbawm largely ignored the 'commonalty's' response to the development of capitalist agriculture, limiting his analysis to the unsubstantiated suggestion that they were passive throughout this process thereby allowing the landlords to facilitate a relatively smooth transition to capitalist agriculture.¹ In the light of this neglect Hobsbawm has weakened his overall analysis of agrarian change. By assessing the evidence for Argyll it might enhance both our understanding of the 'commonalty's' role in the face of this process, and also the whole nature of agrarian change and its impact on traditional society. These themes can be put in perspective by analysing the 'commonalty's' response to the agricultural 'improvements' undertaken during this period.

The reception given to the 'improvements' initiated during the first half of the eighteenth century, provides a clear and early indication that the 'commonalty' were resistant to the landlords' vision of economic development. This was dramatically revealed in Ardnamurchan, where Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope was active promoting lead mining and agrarian change. His efforts incurred the wrath of the local inhabitants who, convinced he was an "English spy", designing 'to transport all the Highlanders into the West Indies, to strengthen our colonies and to people the Highlands with industrious and laborious people from the southern parts of the island', tried to undermine them and drive Murray from the country. The hostility he faced, and the steps taken against plans to foster economic development, were outlined by Murray in the True Interest of Great Britain:

'my cattle have been hamstringed in my parks, and the Houses of my tenants wilfully set on fire in the night; a multitudes of my cattle stoll for years together; flocks of them purposely and maliciously gathered together in the night, and forced over precipes, so as 20 of them have been destroyed at one time: All this I cannot only

prove, but can make it appear, that there has been frequently plots and designs formed, and calumnies invented, purposely to stir up the populace to murder me; and thereby to frighten and force me my friends and servants, out of my freeholds and leaseholds in that country'.

It would appear that the York Building Company, which undertook lead mining at Strontian between 1730 and 1735, encountered the same opposition. This forced Francis Place, the manager, to request troops and firearms to keep 'troublesome neighbours at their due distance'.²

Contemporaneously Duncan Forbes of Culloden encountered resistance to tenurial reorganisation in the northern districts of the Argyll estate. In Morvern his attempts were opposed by the tacksmen, and by those tenants he had hoped to replace the latter with, and were hampered by overbidding underpinned by clan rivalries, thus forcing the second Duke to compromise. Consequently the new system in Morvern could only be imposed in the northern parts of this area, while even here the tacksmen remained. Indeed it was not until 1754 that half the leases were granted to Campbells, who continued to experience the implacable hostility of the native population.³ One aspect of tenurial reorganisation was the adoption of competitive bidding, a development entailing the introduction of professional farmers, often from the Lowlands and England. This was bitterly resented by the 'commonalty', who felt a deep reverence for the clan lands and their traditions, and it inflamed class as well as clan divisions. Reflecting these trends when the Beatons moved from Mull to Morvern in 1748, and received the tack of Mungastle, the local people vented their anger by consistently plundering the farm.⁴

Similarly the minutes for the Commissioners of Supply in 1751 provide a revealing insight into the resistance faced by such farmers in the district of Cowal:

'And whereas the meeting were informed that threatenings have been lately emitted by several persons who were legally removed from their possessions in the parishes of Dunoon and Inverchaolain against Strangers introduced in their stead for promoting industry in that part of the country and the meeting considering the dismal consequences which the like threatenings have of late been attended with in a neighbouring country Have unanimously Resolved to take all legal steps at the public expense of the Shire for discouraging and discountenancing all such practices and to support to the utmost of their power those strangers introduced for promoting industry and diligence so much hitherto neglected in Argyllshire. . . '.

To suppress this resistance the Commissioners offered £10 rewards to anyone who 'shall discover the authors or perpetrators of any injury or maltreatment which shall be committed against the said strangers'.⁵

This hostility was aggravated by the sale of land to proprietors who had no connection to the possessing clan or to the immediate area. Consequently the MacLeans of the Garvellach islands refused to pay rent to John McLauchlan of Kilbride, whose grandfather had been forced to assert his ownership by force in the early part of the eighteenth century. This failed to deter the MacLeans, and the intensity of their resistance was outlined in a petition from McLauchlan to the third Duke of Argyll in 1749:

'Although the MacLeans did for some time smother their resentment on account of my grandfather having thus dispossessed them, yet at length a band of them came fully armed under cloud of night and in a hostile manner and most riotously plundered and carried off the whole effects and bestial on these islands to the value of

3,000 merks, and after destroying the houses and byres, stript the possessors of their vivers and left their wives and children stript naked and exposed to the inclemency of the weather. . .'.⁶

In the second half of the eighteenth century the clash of interest between the landlords and the 'commonalty' intensified, and resistance to the agricultural 'improvements' escalated. The opposition of the Inverchaolain tenants, in Cowal, typifies this trend:

'Though the lands in this parish are better calculated for pasture than tillage, yet the few fields along the sea coast, might be turned to much better account. The people, however, are so prejudiced in favour of the ancient mode of farming, that they can hardly be persuaded to adopt any other, so that the same bad husbandry, that prevailed in this country 40 years ago still obtained'.

Similarly in other parishes such as Gigha and Cara the inhabitants remained committed to traditional methods and implements of husbandry:

'Though they (the Scots plough) neither pulverize the ground nor cover the grain, the people prefer them to iron pinned harrows, and maintain, that were they to use this latter kind, they could never raise a good crop. Such are the effects of ignorance and prejudice, two powerfull enemies to improvements in the Highlands of Scotland'.⁷

Even in areas of Argyll, such as Inveraray, where determined efforts were made by the Duke of Argyll to replace traditional agriculture, it was observed that the people did 'not seem to have any particular turn for improvement', whilst in 1794 the Earl of Breadalbane's factor, John Campbell of Lochend, reported that, typifying the general pattern of resistance, the Netherlorn tenants would oppose 'small' rent increase just 'as they do everything that is

new, or goes any way to lessen their possessions'.⁸ The hostility to 'improvement' is substantiated by contemporaneous agricultural surveys, such as R. Heron's account of the Hebrides in 1794:

'innumerable are the attempts at agricultural improvement which have failed of success because tried without the knowledge of their nature, or of the peculiar circumstances to which they were applied. How often have the intelligent views of a landlord been defeated by the prejudices of his tenants, which he chose to attack rather by authority, than by slow persuasion? Every farmer knows, how easily he may be disappointed in any new trial of anything relating to husbandry, by the forwardness, the awkwardness, or the ignorance of his tenants'.⁹

In the former MacLean of Duart lands in Tiree, Coll, Mull and Morvern, resistance to agricultural 'improvement' was underpinned by residual Jacobitism and traditional hatred of the Campbell planters, which remained a potent force during the second half of the eighteenth century. On Tiree 'improvements' were blocked by stiff opposition apparently directed by local Jacobite leaders. The MacLean followers adopted a strategy of sporadic sabotage and widespread non co-operation, which in 1754 Donald Campbell of Airds, the Duke of Argyll's factor, claimed were obstructing 'any instructions your Grace is pleased to give relating to the policie of that island'.¹⁰ Support for the Jacobites, and the correlated hatred of the Campbells, remained so great that nearly twenty years later in 1771 the fifth Duke was being warned against the issue of long leases, then widely regarded as crucial to the success of agricultural 'improvement':

'The small tenants of Tiry are disaffected to the family of Argyll. In this disposition its thought that long leases might render them too much independent of them, and encourage the people to that sort of insolence and outrage to which they

are naturally prone, and much incited by their chieftens of the MacLean gentry'.¹¹

Equally the 1776 census, aimed towards calculating the manpower available for military service, formally denoted those tenants thought loyal or disaffected to the Hanoverian monarchy.

On the neighbouring island of Coll the MacLean gentry, to keep the Campbells off the island, were willing to pay exorbitant rents. Consequently when the fourth Duke of Argyll raised the rents in 1769 and the MacLean chief refused to pay, two of his kinsmen, Hector MacLean of Muck and his brother Donald MacLean of Cornaig, resolved to 'go to the length of their tether rather than let a Campbell into Coll'. In the light of this determination the brothers paid the new rent of £105 for both ends of the island, instead of the old level of £45 6s 4d.¹²

A similar pattern of residual Jacobitism, and hatred of the Campbells, was evident in Mull. The factor of this island complained during the Seven Years War that the MacLean gentry obstructed military recruitment, and took oaths of loyalty from their followers. A report of 1771 confirms that resistance to the estate management remained a powerful and deep-rooted force:

'the present disaffection and independence of most of the Duke's small tenants in Mull would render it a matter of difficulty to his grace to obtain from them that sort of obedience that has been formerly found necessary for great men in circumstances where the command of well attached tenants and followers has been employed to support dignity and respect.'¹³

In Morvern Jacobite sympathies also contributed to the resistance to agricultural 'improvements'. Reflecting this, James Campbell, chamberlain of Argyll, reported in 1755 to Lord Milton that the:

'disaffected are like to turn quite idle with the

hopes of an invasion, and would surely be as foolish as ever if they got any encouragement or opportunity. . . They were greatly amazed in the middle of such rumours of war to see Airds come there with a parcell of low country masons and dykers, and coolly giving orders for quarrying the stone for his house stone dyke'¹⁴

The attempts of successive Dukes of Argyll to 'improve' agriculture on Tiree, Coll and Mull and in Morvern brought them into conflict not only with the indigenous population's customs, traditions and whole way of life, but also clashed against their political allegiances. The effects of the passive resistance adopted by the latter, in conjunction with more aggressive tactics such as intimidation and sabotage, retarded the transformation of the agrarian system. That this hatred of the Campbells survived during the late eighteenth century is confirmed by a poem dated 1789, written by an anonymous MacLean bard, which provides an insight into attitudes towards the Campbell planters:

'Our enemies have our places,
And they do not care for us,
though we are polite to them,
our hearts are cold'.¹⁵

Political factors therefore played a crucial part in the resistance to the agricultural 'improvements' in the northern parts of the Argyll estate. This underpinned and coalesced with the 'commonalty's' commitment to defend their traditional way of life and mode of agriculture.

A central element of the agricultural 'improvements' was the landlords' attempts to break up the traditional multi-tenant farms and to replace run-rig with croft holdings for the accommodation of those dispossessed. These objectives had to be undertaken in the face of stiff resistance. Reflecting this in 1784 the farm of Stromilchan in Glenorchy was converted into twenty-eight crofts, but only after the

Breadalbane estate was forced into giving the crofters seven to nine acres each. The factor hoped that by acquiescing to this 'prejudice' it would be possible to secure support for the new system. Subsequent estate correspondence reveals that this support was heavily qualified. In 1778 for example the factor's efforts to join the Stromilchan hill pasture and Tullich farm and to convert them into a sheep walk with adjacent crofts was opposed. The tenants organised a petition representing two hundred people in the Glenorchy area, which condemned these 'encroachments and hardships'. The petition undermined the factor, John Campbell or Ardmaddy's plans, and he wrote to the Earl of Breadalbane that he was 'at a loss'. The factor felt further aggrieved when the Earl's reply, giving notice of their postponement, was delivered by an 'insolent fellow of the crofters, who exulted not a little in what he thought a victory'.¹⁶

The level of this opposition is borne out by other sources, such as the Argyll estate correspondence of the early 1800s between Malcolm McLaurin, the factor of Tiree, and the fifth Duke of Argyll and James Ferrier, the latter's commissioner. On this island there was inveterate illicit distilling, and intense resistance to the efforts to transform the agrarian system by introducing crofting. This was sufficiently grave in 1803 for McLaurin to repeat an earlier request for troops to 'maintain the social order'.¹⁷ The major cause of this unrest was the decision to replace the traditional farms and run-rig with crofting, an innovation rejected by the 'commonalty' as a 'lowland innovation'. Indeed the circulation of the Earl of Selkirk's emigration plans around the island prompted the Barrapol and Kenovar tenants to declare their intention to emigrate to America rather than to acquiesce to these changes. Opposition gathered momentum in other parts of the island, and the factor grew resigned to the failure of his orders: 'nothing will prevail upon them to take up the 4 mail lands under the new system all at once'.¹⁸ This resistance temporarily forced the fifth Duke to abandon his plans to introduce crofting, and to be more cautious in his dealings with the tenants.

The opposition to abolish run-rig encountered opposition throughout Argyll, and this mode of arable husbandry remained operative in this and other Highland counties well into the nineteenth century. In an agricultural survey of 1811 J. MacDonald stressed that the abolition of run-rig, and the development of crofting, in a country 'not celebrated for the good police and regular conduct of its inhabitants' would require the landlords to 'join in perfecting the police and interior administration of their isles'.¹⁹ Indeed it was to require the full 'authority of ownership' to try and impose these 'unpopular' changes on the people of the Highlands.²⁰ On Islay for example W.F. Campbell experienced resistance to his scheme to establish two crofting villages in the mid 1820s. These were designed to alleviate 'redundancy' amongst the islanders, but Campbell's plans were obstructed, when those who held leases refused to give up their holdings and become crofters:

'Those tenants I endeavoured to persuade to give up their land, and to take just enough to provide them with potatoes and a cow grass, but those people, in some instances have refused to give up their portions of land. In those cases I should have been very glad to have got those people to emigrate'.²¹

The 'commonalty' also opposed landlords' attempts to expropriate common lands, an inherent feature in the development of capitalist agriculture, to which they held historical and customary rights. On Tiree for example the Duke of Argyll's plans to enclose three commons in 1771 were thwarted. The factor's report highlighted these were 'hurtful to my Lord Duke's interest and destructive of the good government of the island', and recommended their enclosure. It is significant that the opposition to their enclosure was imputed to the prevalence of 'a vulgar opinion prevailing among them (the cottars) that commonites belong to the King, and that my Lord Duke or his tenants have no right to hinder them'.²² The depth of opposition hindered the Duke's efforts to enclose the commons, with the result that the Reef, the largest of them, had to be left open. Similarly,

in 1799 the crofters of Salen in Mull wrote to Mrs MacLean of Lochbuy complaining that Dr MacLachlan, a local landlord, was trying to turn 'our own marches' into a sheep walk. Apparently his factor executed the writ on a Sunday morning and was initially allowed to proceed 'out of respect to the sabbath', but when he attempted to move his own cattle in, the crofters opposed him and kept the cattle out.²³

Resistance to such actions remained a potent force in the first half of the nineteenth century. The defence of common grazing rights continued to incur the implementation of community sanctions against those attempting to undermine customary rights and traditions. This is revealed by the successful defence of a common grazing in Dunoon against the designs of the Duke of Argyll, by the townspeople; a confrontation reported in detail by the Glasgow Courier during 1835:

'Last week great excitement prevailed at Dunoon, in consequence of an attempt to inclose the Castle Hill to which the villagers conceive themselves to possess the right of free access, on the understanding that it is the property belonging to the Crown. On Tuesday, the bellman went through the streets summoning the men, women and children, to meet upon the Castle Hill; and shortly afterwards a band of women assembled in the vicinity of the Hill and armed with pokers, tongs and shovels, marched to the spot at which the masons were at work, where they quickly demolished an arched gateway which had just been constructed, and filled up with earth and rubbish a trench which had been dug to lay the foundations of the intended wall. The masons offered no resistance'.

These same incidents were repeated no less than four times, with the presence of law officers failing to deter the women from further acts of demolition. This action was successful, with the workmen refusing

to continue work and the women preserving the common rights to their hill, but in general the 'commonalty' were unable to prevent the historical expropriation of the common land, which had underpinned earlier tribal society and was replaced first with feudal, and then capitalist, patterns of land ownership and social relations.²⁴

Notwithstanding this historical failure, the incidents at Dunoon, for example, indicate the extent to which the rural working class were still prepared to try to protect their customary rights.

The resistance to landlords' efforts to 'improve' arable farming was also still evident during this period. On Islay for example Campbell of Shawfield, having found little enthusiasm for his plans to introduce schemes such as land reclamation, writing in 1834, outlined those attitudes underpinning the opposition to the agrarian 'improvements':

'Improvements, executed at the sole expense of the proprietor, have not been found of any avail in stimulating the industry of the West Highland tenantry. "The Laird has the land for nothing, and if we were lairds, we would be improvers". Such is the constant answer given to all arguments in favour of improvement'.²⁵

His account can be substantiated by reference to the New Statistical Account and a parish such as Killean and Kilchenzie, in Kintyre, wherein the tenants were given nineteen year leases providing they followed a regular rotation of white and green crops. These conditions, however, were 'seldom adopted' by the tenants who continued to practise the traditional mode of arable husbandry. Indeed it would appear that communal run-rig [a vestigial feature of the ancient Celtic traditions of common ownership] continued to operate in parts of Argyll even in parishes such as Inveraray where pioneering efforts had been made to encourage economic development.²⁶ The pattern of the New Statistical Account suggests that the 'improvement' of arable farming was limited and geographically scattered. These trends can be attributed to the character of the 'improvements', which tended to be

dominated by tenurial re-organisation and the development of commercial sheep farming, and to the influence and effects of resistance to agrarian change.

The growth of commercial pastoral farming, with its correlated influx of professional farmers who dispossessed the 'commonalty', accentuated and exacerbated class divisions. Reflecting the hostility to sheep farmers in the parish of Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich, when John Campbell of Longwine in Ayrshire became the first to stock a sheep farm in 1756 and was followed by others, they were all viewed with an 'evil eye'. Similarly in the parish of Dunoon sheep farmers faced hostility and suspicion because they were 'of the Southland'.²⁷ In the light of these attitudes the 'commonalty' were opposed to the landlords' development of sheep farming. An example of this was the failure of MacLean of Coll to persuade his tenants to pursue this mode of husbandry:

'The proprietor attempted to introduce sheep instead of the black cattle and horses, to which the natives have been accustomed and they answered exceedingly well, but the prejudices of the inhabitants soon overcame their reason; and, as the landlord was not on the spot, or in a condition to superintend, and enforce the system of sheep farming, they soon returned to their former livestock and their ancient habits.'²⁸

In some cases, however, communities reacted to their dispossession, and accommodation in inferior arable holdings, by forming 'club' sheep farms run on a collective basis. The formation of such an enterprise in Kintyre was outlined by the Reverend John Smith, minister of Campbeltown, in his account of agriculture in the county during the 1790s:

'A few years ago, a large estate in the Highlands was, according to the rage of the times, converted into sheep pasture, and given in lease to a few

rich graziers at an advanced rent. So much humanity, however, was shewn to some of the poor people, who could still not provide for themselves elsewhere, that they were allowed one large farm among them, the rent of which was advanced, by degree to the general standard. There they sat down, to the number of about 30 families and, at considerable expence, built for themselves tolerable habitations. The arable part of the farm, with as much ground as could be improved by cultivation, they divided into shares, proportionate to their respective families'.

This farm employing communal agriculture, and collective ownership of the sheep stock, proved highly successful to the extent that it aroused the envy of a neighbouring landlord whose predatory instincts resulted in him gaining the farm's high ground, and thereby led to its collapse.²⁹

Such farms also operated in parts of Morvern, where clearance had created a predominantly landless/semi-landless population working as day labourers and relying on the potato for subsistence. The most well known of these farms was at Achadh nan Gamhna, where six tenants stocked eight hundred and forty sheep and forty-eight cows on two thousand, two hundred and sixty-five acres. This farm was established as early as 1823-4, about which time a similar concern commenced at Acharacle in Ardnamurchan. The latter collapsed, however, when Patrick Sellar bought Acharn in 1838 and evicted the inhabitants. Another club farm was founded in 1843 on Oronsay, which with six members supported over fifty people until 1868. The members and their dependents had been evicted from the Auliston part of the Drimin estate before forming this farm.³⁰

Despite these initiatives the development of commercial pastoral farming caused mass evictions, and provoked considerable resistance from the 'commonalty'. To assess this opposition it is

necessary to analyse the resistance to clearance, and the class divisions exacerbated by eviction. In an article 'How tame were the Highlanders during the Clearances', E. Richards outlined a 'recurrent pattern' between 1800 and 1855 of 'sporadic but repeated eruptions of spontaneous resistance to established authority'.³¹ Richards conclusively shows that the Highlanders opposed the Clearances, but fails to differentiate between the first and second phases of clearance, in which the traditional multi-tenant farms and the crofting communities respectively were broken up. It appears that resistance was strongest during the first phase in the period 1730 to 1820 when the landlords attempted to replace the traditional farms with croft holdings. Within Argyll the evidence of estate papers, and extant Sheriff court records, reveals the frequency with which tenants refused to remove, thereby forcing landlords to resort to the court. Reflecting this, tenants at Lagavuline, Syrnaig and Storkaig on Islay were 'oft and diverse times' told to remove, but despite this 'yet they wrongously refuse to do so unless compelled', forcing the relatives of Archibald Campbell, a minor, to appeal to the court at Inveraray to serve a summons of removal on them in 1761.³²

Cases concerning clearances were often protracted, a fact reflected in a letter dated April 1784 from William MacKenzie, an Inveraray lawyer, to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine, in which he wrote of being bogged down with 'removings that are disputed' while lamenting what he regarded as their slender profit.³³ This trend is substantiated in a letter from A.R. Bell, a lawyer, to his client, Donald Campbell of Balliveolan, concerning their lengthy efforts between 1798 and 1801 to evict tenants in Balliveolan and Balimakilichan in Cowal. To resist these moves the tenants had employed lawyers who emphasised that some of them held verbal tacks with another year to run, while others, having paid grassums, retained possession for another five years. The determined opposition of the tenants exasperated the landlord and his lawyer, who reported to the former that he was unable to evict two of the tenants, whilst another, who had been removed, re-entered his holding by 'underhand' means.

This resistance, and the demands of other landlords to remove their recalcitrant tenants, prompted Bell to neglect Balliveolan's business much to the latter's obvious displeasure.³⁴

It is impossible to calculate the level of physical resistance to clearance, although a letter from John Campbell of Lochend, the Earl of Breadalbane's factor, to another estate officer called MacAndrew, suggests that it was commonplace. In this letter of 1806 the former remarked that new tenants had 'to take their chance of their (the sitting tenants) removing pleasantly'.³⁵ Several well documented cases of such resistance do, however, survive. In September 1811 for example charges were brought against Allan McLean, John McLean, Lauchlan McLean and Alexander McLean, all of Achaphorsa in Morvern, for 'assualting, obstructing or deforcing' law officers sent to execute eviction orders. The court at Inveraray was told that on June 7th 1811 Duncan McLauchlan of Kinlochallan had send a Sheriff officer and escort to remove Allan McLean, but when they attempted to do so were 'violently and furiously assualted' and prevented from serving their orders. The outcome of the trial was that Donald McLean was declared fugitated for non-appearance, Allan McLean pled not guilty and charges against him were dropped, while John and Alexander McLean were found guilty and each sentenced to one month in jail.³⁶

Similarly when Malcolm of Potalloch attempted to evict the crofters of Arichonan in June 1848, during the famine, John Gillies, the Sheriff officer, the factor and other estate employees were violently resisted and failed to execute the writs. Following this, in July a party of thirty-eight, including a police escort, attempted once more to evict the tenants. Whilst forcing entry to one of the crofts, however, 'a mob of great number of evil disposed persons did then and there riotously and tumultuously assemble' with the 'common purpose' of opposing the eviction. The level and force of resistance led to the rout of the authorities who were also forced to release the prisoners they had taken. In these actions the crofters of Arichonan were assisted by their neighbours in adjacent parishes, and from

'different parts of the country'. Charges were subsequently brought against Catherine MacLachlan or Campbell, widow at Bellanoch, Neil MacMillan jnr., farm servant to John Kerr, inn keeper at Crinan, Duncan MacLellan and his son Dugald, Gallachelly, Mary Adams, servant to John MacLellan, Gallachelly, Duncan McLean, tenant at Arichonan in North Knapdale, Peter and Angus MacMillan, Kilmory and their mother Mary, Christian Campbell and her sister Catherine, Bellanoch, Allan McLean, cottar at Arichonan, and Sarah MacMillan, daughter of Neil, cottar at Kilmory, for 'mobbing and rioting, obstructing and deforcing and assuaiting' officers of the law. The court sentenced Duncan McLean to 'only' four months, despite his refusal to answer questions put to him, because he was not 'active' in these events, while all the others received eight months imprisonment.³⁷

A contemporary example of individual resistance to clearance was recorded on Coll. Within this island Neil MacDonald occupied a farm in recognition of his father's military service, and when the island was sold in the mid nineteenth century he resisted all attempts to remove him. The accounts of his resistance were handed down through folk culture. On one occasion he reportedly deforced the factor and wielding a sword or shinty, told him:

"Take one step over that march and your head
will be on one side, your body on the other
and God alone knows where your soul will be".

While in another incident, when the factor and his men actually took possession of the house, MacDonald used fire to smoke them out.³⁸

The bitterness caused by clearance is reflected in a translated poem written during the period 1805-10, when Malcolm of Poltalloch cleared eighteen families from Arichonan. It is significant to note that the dispossessed tenants regarded this landlord as a far greater and more immediate foe than the French, whose imminent invasion was equated with the chance to get even with him for the treatment they had received:

'A wicked man is Malcolm,

And I will ever say it
 when the French come
 across to rout him
 who will stand up for Malcolm?
 In the rabble round about him,
 Everyone will be wild
 Desiring to strike him
 And I myself will be there
 urging on the conflict'.³⁹

Clearance accelerated the decline of the traditional social relations between the Chiefs and the 'commonalty', which were reduced to the commercial nexus of landlord and tenant. The resentments amongst the 'commonalty', caused by agrarian change, are highlighted by other contemporary sources. This is reflected in a letter of 1807 from John Campbell of Lochend to the Earl of Breadalbane, in which he argued against the development of crofting on Lochaweside. John Campbell's opposition was based on the argument that such concentrations of tenants, and the attendant decline of 'gentlemen farmers', would constitute a threat to the social order:

'When the bulk of the population in these districts, so far from having any stake in the country, are in some degree desperate, thro' poverty and starvation, it may in such a situation be naturally expected, that in place of contributing to the strength of the state, they will embrace the first opportunity that offers, either from Domestic broils or foreign invasion of contributing their utmost towards anarchy and confusion, to take the chance of a better share of the comforts and necessities of life from a new order of things'.⁴⁰

This pervading sense of unease is borne out by existing evidence, which indicates that relations between the landlords and their tenants were often turbulent. In March 1806 for example the

tenants of Ardnamer, Netherlorn sought to oppose the division of Ardluing, by refusing to grant a horse grass to Archibald Campbell, an 'improving' tenant. This prompted the factor to advocate firmness in 'preserving' the sets. His experience of persistent resistance to many aspects of the every-day management of the estate highlighted the dangers of capitulation: 'when you give way in one instance it will produce 100 new complaints'.⁴¹ Similarly on the same estate a dispute during 1807 between two officials, MacAndrew and John Campbell of Craignure, undermined the former's authority with the tenants, who refused to introduce 'improvements'. In a subsequent letter of complaint to the Earl of Breadalbane, MacAndrew outlined the depth of opposition he was encountering, and the forms it assumed:

'To such a pitch are the minds of the people here irritated against me by designing men that (I) am insulted on the public highway and threatened by anonymous letters of very bad tendency being as they say the principal means of raising the rents of nether lorn . . .'.⁴²

This dispute led to the resignation of John Campbell, the tacksman with traditional clan ties, and his replacement with MacAndrew, the professional factor, a process undergone contemporaneously on the Argyll estate.

These officials were often the immediate target of tenants' resentments and hostility. This is further reflected in a satire on a Tیره estate factor, written by one of the Balephuill poets during the first half of the nineteenth century:

<p>'S o'n fhuair thu 'n deise philot Tha fiamh agad ri saighdear Le ios gaidean mar choinnleir 'S an fhoill ann am bun do mhuineil'.</p>	<p>[Since you got the suit of pilot cloth you bear a faint resemblance to a soldier your shanks are like candle sticks And treachery lurks at the back of your throat].⁴³</p>
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The decline of the traditional social relations, occasioned by the assimilation of the Chiefs, the development of commercial estate management and sheep farming, had therefore intensified class divisions. The conflict this gave rise to was evident on the estates where tenants opposed evictions, rent increases and other facets of estate management. According to David Stewart of Garth, who reflecting the ruling elite's intense anti-Jacobitism was shocked by the 'revolutionized' Highland character, these influences were 'generating a spirit of hatred and revenge on the higher orders of society' amongst the rural working class.⁴⁴

This cleavage grew in the first half of the nineteenth century with the dramatic escalation of clearance. In his account of the Highlands during the potato famine Robert Somers depicted the extent of class divisions:

'The Clearances laid the foundation of a bitter animosity between the sheep farmers and the cottars; and as these changes were executed by the authority of the Lairds, they also snapped the tie which had previously, amid all reverses, united the people and their chiefs'.⁴⁵

These divisions were exacerbated by the religious conflict existing between the 'moderates', who, bound by patronage to the landed interest, and actively supporting or at least giving 'tacit consent' to the latter's clearance policy, stayed in the Established Church, and the 'evangelicals' who were often bitterly opposed to the landlords both on account of their control of patronage and the effects of the Clearances. Robert Somers, himself a supporter of the Free Church, highlighted the religious dimension of class conflict in the Highlands:

'There is thus a double point of collision between the two ranks - an ecclesiastical as well as an agrarian enmity. The proprietor, the minister, the schoolmaster and the large tacksman - all who used to act as the leaders of the people, and to manage the public business of the parish - are

ranged together on one side and in one cause; while the people are as unanimously and determinedly united on another side and in an entirely opposite cause. It is consequently almost impossible to find an individual in the upper rank who has not a grudge against the people, either on the score of their Free Churchism or on the score of their hostility to the sheep walk system'.

He concluded that widespread class cleavage was a 'great barrier' to the economic development of the Highlands.⁴⁶

The prevalence of these divisions within the Highlands is confirmed by other sources. The Reverend Donald MacCalman, minister for the parish of Kilmartin in mid Argyll, imputed their intensity during 1844 to changes in the Highlands' social structure, in particular severance of the traditional social relations between the chiefs and their tenants, and the eclipse of the tacksmen's role as intermediaries and replacement with professional farmers:

'The absence of middlemen or gentlemen farmers, who would be admissable to the society of the landlords, and, at the same time, share in the sympathies of the people, is sensibly felt in this and the adjoining districts. Wherever this link between the upper and lower classes has been found wanting, throughout the Highlands, jealousy, distrust, and discontent are almost always found to prevail, whatever other means may be used to promote the well being of the people'.⁴⁷

The evidence in Argyll suggests that the 'commonalty', far from being simply passive figures in the face of developing capitalist agriculture established a tradition of resistance to the agricultural 'improvements'. The depth of resistance within this county, and throughout the Highlands in general, negated, delayed or forced the modification of landlords' efforts to transform the traditional

agrarian system. This was emphasised by the eighth Duke of Argyll in his historical account of Highland agriculture, published during the early 1880s:

'every single step towards improvement which has been taken during the last 130 years, has been taken by the proprietor and not by the people. And not only so, but every one of these steps, without exception, has been taken against the prevailing opinions and feelings of the people at the time. "All in this farm very poor and against any change". Such is the description repeated over and over again in a detailed report on each farm sent to my grandfather in 1803, when he was contemplating those changes which were then absolutely necessary'.⁴⁸

By the mid nineteenth century, when agriculture in Argyll had become predominantly characterised by large sheep walks and a largely landless/semi-landless population living as crofters, cottars and day labourers, this resistance underwent changes. Opposition to the 'improvement' of arable husbandry remained a feature of agriculture, as commitment to traditional methods still prevailed in many areas. The most striking development, however, was the widespread class cleavage emerging between the landlords and the rural working class which, expressed in desubordination to estate management and most dramatically in the religious rivalries associated with 'the Disruption', became a marked aspect of life in the Highlands.

Notes

- 1 Hobsbawm, 'Scottish Reformers', Peasants in History, 24.
- 2 Murray, True Interest of Great Britain, 3; D. Murray, The York Building Company, (Edinburgh, ¹⁷⁸²1973), 74-75; for opposition to tenurial reorganisation and clearance, tinged with Jacobitism, on Islay during the 1720s see G.G. Smith, The Book of Islay, (Edinburgh, 1895), 427.
- 3 NLS, Culloden Papers, MS 2970, fo 103; P.A. Dodgshon, Land and Society in early Scotland, (Oxford, 1981), 285.
- 4 NLS, Saltoun Collection, Box 408, August 1750.
- 5 Argyll and Bute Archives, [ABA], Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply, CO 6/1/1/1, 28th June 1751.
- 6 Cregeen, 'Changing role of House of Argyll', Scotland in the Age of Improvement, 8. Similarly, Sir James Riddle's grandfather had been able to purchase Ardnamurchan cheaply in 1759 precisely because its inhabitants 'were so barbrous' that they refused to pay rent to the previous owner or to anyone who was not their chief by blood. Details of this are in "Senex", Fragments concerning the Ancient History of the Hebrides, (Glasgow, 1850), 7; T. Johnston, History of the Working Class in Scotland, 162; see also "Oran-Di-mòlaidh do "Ruddle" Aird-na-murchan" (Song of displeasure to Riddle of Ardnamurchan) in MacDonald Collection of Gaelic Poetry. (Glasgow, 1911).
- 7 OSA, VIII, 161, 212, 241, 258, 337; XX, 425; Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 91; SR0, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1309, 1784.
- 8 Robson, General View of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 58; SR0, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/12/1/5/49x; for this estate's attempts to evict tenants who refused to 'improve' their holdings see GD 112/16/4/4/5/11, 8th March 1802; the refusal of Torosay, Oban and Seil tenants to 'improve' because they were not given leases, GD 112/16/4/6/3, 22nd Jan. 1807.
- 9 Heron, General View of the Hebrides, 83; W. Marshall, General View of the agriculture, (Edinburgh, 1794), passim.
- 10 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, xviii.
- 11 Ibid.

- 12 N. MacLean Bristol, Hebridean Decade, Mull, Coll and Tiree, 1761-1771, (Coll, 1982), 6.
- 13 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, xxiii.
- 14 Ibid, xviii.
- 15 MacLean Bristol, Hebridean Decade, 6. Unfortunately I was unable to locate the Gaelic text.
- 16 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/11/Box 2/bundle 42/14.
- 17 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 65, 54, 89, 91-92; MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 462.
- 18 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 65. The threat of emigration was a powerful bargaining force for tenants while landlords required their labour for kelping and the other industries they hoped to encourage, see for example SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/74/17 and Hunter, Making of the Crofting Community, 21-24. 4 Mail land was the minimum size for a small holding.
- 19 T. Pennant, Tour in Scotland and voyage to the Hebrides, (Warrington, 1774), 274; Walker, Economical History, i, 55-56; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1026, 1805; MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 462.
- 20 Campbell, Crofts and Farms, 75.
- 21 'Reports from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the expediency of encouraging Emigration from the United Kingdom', PP, 1826-27, V, 73-75.
- 22 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 8; SRO, Fullarton of Kilmichael MSS, GD 1/19/53; GD 1/19/54, 26th May 1766.
- 23 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/969, 3rd July 1799.
- 24 Glasgow Courier, 15/8/1835; see also Johnston, History of the Working Class, 154-181, and Our Noble Scots Families, (Glasgow, 1923), passim.
- 25 Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society, xiii, 1834, 232-35.
- 26 NSA, VII, 390, 28, 367; W.F. Skene, Celtic Scotland, 3 vol., (Edinburgh, 1880), iii, passim; P. Beresford Ellis, A history of the Irish Working Class, (London, 1972), 15-16.
- 27 OSA, VIII, 345.

- 28 MacDonal'd, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 741, 468.
- 29 OSA, VIII, 68; see also Smith, General View of the agriculture of Argyle, passim.
- 30 'Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland', PP, Evidence, III, 2280-5, 2301; for Bute see J. Headrick, General View of the Minerology, agriculture . . . of Bute, (Edinburgh, 1807), 338-39.
- 31 E. Richards, 'How Tame were the Highlanders during the clearances', Scottish Studies, 17, 1973, 36.
- 32 For this and other such cases in different parts of Argyll during the period 1761-79, see SRO, Sheriff Court Records, Inveraray, SC 54/22/71.
- 33 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1929/10.
- 34 SRO, Campbell of Balliveolan MSS, GD 13/173, May 1798: /184, 25th May 1799: /181, 12th December 1800: /192, 20th May 1801.
- 35 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/4/5/11, 21st March 1806; Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/3297, 1752; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1048, 2nd May 1819.
- 36 SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Small Papers, JC 26/351, 12th Sept. 1811.
- 37 SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Small Papers, JC 26/898; Judicial Declaration of Catherine MacLachlan, 9th August 1848; JC 13/92; see also SRO, Records of the Lord Advocate's Department, AD 14/48/319.
- 38 B. MacDougall, Folklore from Coll, (Coll, 1978), 23.
- 39 K.J. Logue, Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815, (Edinburgh, 1979), 216; see also Rev. W.A. Gillies, In Famed Breadalbane, (Perth, 1938), 211-212; for outline of trauma caused by clearance see "Oran nam Balgairian" (Song to the Foxes) and "Cead Deireanach nam Beann" (Final farewell to the Bens), in A. MacLeod (ed), 'The Songs of Duncan Ban MacIntyre', Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, (Edinburgh, 1952), 347, 391; songs of Dugald MacPhail in J.S. Blackie, Language and Literature of the

- Scottish Highlands, (Edinburgh, 1876), 286-292; I. Thornber, 'Some Morvern Song writers of the 19th Century', Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, [TGS], liii, 982-84, passim. For impact on folk lore see NLS, Rev. Neil Campbell's Collection of Gaelic Folklore, MS 14988-990, 2 vol., 1894-6, ii, 264, 931.
- 40 SR0, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/41/5, 15th July 1807.
- 41 SR0, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/4; GD 112/16/11, 16th March 1806.
- 42 SR0, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/4/6/53, 6th July 1807; 16/4/6/58, 31st Dec. 1807. For opposition to rent increases see SR0, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 179/1307, 19th March 1781; /1846, 17th Dec. 1799. For impact of rent increases in undermining ties to chiefs see J. Anderson, 'Present State of the Highlands', Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society, 22.
- 43 E.R. Cregeen and C.W. MacKenzie, Three Bards and their Bardachd. The poets in a Hebridean community, (Coll, 1978), 18.
- 44 D. Stewart, Sketches of the character, manners and present state of the Highlanders of Scotland, 2 vol., (Edinburgh, 1822), i, 217-18, 3-4, 13, 129, 441; MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 109-110.
- 45 R. Somers, Letters from the Highlands, on the Famine of 1847, (Inverness, ¹⁸⁴⁸1977), 66.
- 46 Ibid; see also Hunter, Making of the Crofting Community, 95; J.D. Young, Rousing of Scottish Working Class, 89-90; OSA, VIII, 344, 352.
- 47 NSA, VII, 567, 386; MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 109-110; D. Clerk, 'The agriculture of the County of Argyll', Transactions of the Highlands and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 1878, passim. For the religious aspect of the class divide see for example SR0, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2443/30/1, 25th Jan. 1834; SR0, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/51/4, 1844; Glasgow Courier, 6/1/1842; Hunter, Making of the Crofting Community, 102-05.
- 48 Campbell, Crofts and Farms, 74.

In the first half of the eighteenth century the British economy was a predominantly rural agrarian structure. Its framework, however, was not static and exhibited signs of capitalist economic development. This was reflected in the incipient growth of a national economy, the expansion of Britain's small manufacturing base and the attempts of the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie to 'improve' agriculture. Another crucial facet was successive Governments' expansionist foreign policies, which in effect used naval power to monopolise export markets at the expense of colonial rivals such as France, Holland and Spain.

The nascent capitalist development of the British economy, and the country's general role as an ascendant colonial power, highlighted the apparent anachronism of a feudal, semi-tribal society existing in the Highlands. This had wider implications, as support for Jacobitism held by many clans within the traditional society posed a threat to the insecure Hanoverian monarchy and to the progress of the evolving capitalist order. Against this background the removal of the Stewart claim, associated with 'feudalism' and 'barbarism', was regarded in Whig circles as a precondition to the social and political stability vital for intensive capitalist economic growth. The defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden therefore appeared both to secure the Hanoverian Crown and create the conditions in which economic development could proceed. Despite this residual Jacobitism remained a powerful force until relatively late in the eighteenth century, and in alliance with other aspects of the traditional society retarded the introduction of capitalist agriculture and the correlated attempts to promote industry.

In the period before Culloden the permeation of capitalist influence had only a limited impact in the Highlands. On mainland Argyll, however, a distinctive historical and political experience, and the assimilation of the Campbell gentry, ensured that this county underwent a comparatively higher degree of capitalist penetration than other Highland areas. Consequently there were greater attempts to

encourage trade and industry, and to foster closer economic links with the Lowlands and England. In the context of the Highlands these initiatives were exceptional and, although failing to affect many aspects of the traditional system, serve to illustrate the extent to which the transition of the Campbell gentry, from patriarchal chiefs to capitalist landlords and entrepreneurs, had advanced.

The most powerful clans in Argyll, the Campbells of Inveraray and Breadalbane, took the lead in efforts to promote economic development. Reflecting this John, second Duke of Argyll, who succeeded to the title in 1703, introduced tenurial reorganisation and provided the initial capital to develop coal mining in the Campbeltown area, and in 1742 was 'of the same mind' to give additional financial backing on the condition that the Town Council agreed to help encourage this industry.¹ His successor, Archibald, third Duke, anxious to increase ducal revenue intensified this commitment to fostering economic development. He became the Governor of the British Linen Company founded in 1746 and invested £3,000 in this venture, and in partnership with Lord Milton formed a whale fishing co-partnership at Campbeltown during the 1750s.²

Contemporaneously other members of the Campbell gentry established or gave their support to trading companies. The Campbells of Ardchattan were particularly active in this respect being involved in a bewildering array of such enterprises. The Inveresregan Trading Company established by Patrick Campbell of Ardchattan operated until the early 1760s. In the period 1720-31 it acted as agent for an Irish leather company and undertook the export of timber to Ireland. The Inveresregan Trading Company also supplied timber to the Glenkinglass iron works in which the Irish company had an article of co-partnership with Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell, who owned the site and had been active in timber production since 1727, and latterly Daniel Campbell of Shawfield, a Glasgow merchant who had used the compensation obtained when the Glasgow people destroyed his house, in protest at the support he gave to the Malt Tax in 1725, to acquire Islay. These works

supplied castings for the York Building Company's leadmines at Strontian, using charcoal produced from local timber and ore from England, Jura and Islay. It had ceased production by 1752 when its tack of woods held from Sir Duncan Campbell was conveyed to the Lorn Furnace Company.³

The Campbells of Ardchattan were also involved in droving and in the Lochgelly Company which, established in 1728 by Duncan Campbell, younger of Inverawe, John Campbell, younger of Barcaldine, John Campbell of Lossit, junior, and Colin Campbell of Inveresregan, specialised in general merchant goods until its dissolution and then replacement by the Lochetive Trading Company in 1733.⁴ Another co-partnery associated with this area of Argyll, and involving the Campbell of Ardchattan family, was the Lorn Meal Company formed in 1754. The partners were Donald Campbell of Airds, Donald Campbell, younger of Sonnachan, Colin Campbell of Carwhin and Patrick Campbell, younger of Ardchattan. This company established 'for buying meal and disposing of the same in the shire of Argyll or any other part where the mercat shall best offer' continued in operation until 1774.⁵

The gentry in Argyll were also active both as colonialists and as merchant traders in Britain's overseas colonial expansion which afforded an increasingly lucrative channel for their enterprise and capital. There was an exodus of Campbells from mid-Argyll to the West Indies in the early eighteenth century, which can be dated from the emigration of Colonel John Campbell of Knockbuy to Orange Bay, Jamaica, which allegedly stemmed from disgust at the failure of the Darien venture and his subsequent refusal to remain in Scotland after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707.⁶ The gentry's main contribution within this process during the first half of the eighteenth century, however, was their involvement in foreign trade. The Crinan Company, a mid Argyll co-partnery, was active before 1738 trading with the West Indies. Its members were Neill Campbell of Duntroon, James Campbell of Oib, Campbell of Inverliver, Campbell of Rudill, Campbell of Craignish and Campbell of Sannaig. When the company

became insolvent the tack of its lands in Crinan and Tilegir went to Archibald Campbell, an Edinburgh merchant.⁷ Another co-partnery, the General Tobacco Company, was based at Oban and participated in the tobacco trade between Virginia, Glasgow and the West Highlands during the 1730s. This company involved Neill Campbell of Achinard, Colin Campbell of Inveresregan, James Fisher, merchant and Provost of Inveraray and John Nicolson, merchant. In 1731 its partners were forced to bring an action against "tobacco debtors" in Oban, Bonawe, Appin and Lismore which illustrates the extent of the tobacco trade within Argyll.⁸

A less well known aspect of trade between the Highlands and the colonies was the enslaving of Highlanders who were sold to plantations in the Colonies where there were shortages of labour. The second Duke of Argyll suspected Sir James Campbell of Auchinbreck was an organiser of this sinister trade. In 1740 he wrote to Archibald Campbell of Stonefield, his Chamberlain, regarding Auchinbreck's 'mischievous project': 'What he tells poor ignorant people of their being to be transported to Jamaica and to have six months provision given them after they are there, is with a design to sell them when he has got them there and such tricks have actually been play'd with poor ignorant people who have been carried from hence upon the same pretences . . .'.⁹ This allegation may have originated out of the Duke's hostility to Sir James Campbell as a suspected Jacobite but this in no way detracts from the fact that such a trade did exist and that Argyll with its large remote coastlines, and proximity to the southern ports, would have been well suited for its purpose.

In general terms the level of career opportunities, and lure of fortunes to be made, in the Colonies by the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie grew in correlation to Britain's imperialist expansion during the second half of the eighteenth century. Their involvement is reflected in a letter of 1777 from Henry Galloway, a Stirlingshire merchant, to Duncan Campbell ^{of Glenure} regarding the death of his brother Robert. One of the schemes which 'destroyed' him was his support for the

'colonizing plan at St. Johns Island in the gulph of St. Lawrence' in which he had invested about £11,000.¹⁰ It is also evident in the number of applications made to patrons seeking colonial posts. Indicative of this trend the Campbeltown Burgh Council wrote to the fifth Duke of Argyll in 1783, and also to Sir George McCartney, their M.P., to help them obtain a post in America for Peter Stewart, a former provost of the town.¹¹

In the first half of the eighteenth century initiatives were undertaken by Lowland and English entrepreneurs to try and exploit the raw materials existing in the Highlands. These highlight the economic aspect of the colonial relationship that was emerging between the developing industrial centres and the primary producing Highlands. This is illustrated by the early history of lead mining in Argyll. In 1725 the Argyllshire and Peebles Mineral Company was established upon receipt of a lease from Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope. The principal partners in this concern were Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, General Wade and Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk. This tack gave them control over mines in Peebleshire and at Strontian in Morvern. Limited details remain about operations at Strontian, which appear to have been characterised by open cast mining, but it is clear that the company had little success and in 1730 the mines were placed in sub tack to the York Building Company. This speculative company invested £40,000 and employed about five hundred men in 1733, sunk deeper mine shafts and tried to extend production by using four 'air furnaces', an 'almond furnace' and an 'Ellay furnace' and a smelting miln. Despite these initiatives little ore was exported and returns did not even cover wages which fell into arrears. Consequently production had ceased by 1735 when Francis Grant took over the mines until this venture collapsed in 1740.¹²

Another facet of this relationship was the provision of credit facilities by southern merchants and traders to the Highland gentry and the small commercial class comprising tacksmen, merchants, change keepers, drovers and master tradesmen. The growth and extent

of credit can be illustrated by reference to the accounts of Roderick McLeod, a Glasgow merchant of Highland origin, who traded and lent money throughout the Highlands. These activities were to prove financially hazardous in a traditional society wherein the concept of debt repayment, especially to 'southerners', was often still alien. Consequently McLeod experienced a high level of 'bad debts'. In 1740 he was owed £368 14s on Colonsay with a further £246 10s in 'bad debts', on Mull the totals were £805 17s and £255 19s respectively while on mainland Argyll McLeod was owed £1,207 13s 6d with additional 'bad debts' of £589. It is significant that these debts stretched back to 1718 and were still outstanding when his son and heir died in 1767 after emigrating to America.¹³

Despite the growth in credit facilities the permeation of capitalist influence, although increasing, had only a limited impact on the traditional society during the first half of the eighteenth century. Similarly few of the industrial enterprises established or attempted in Argyll were to prove capable of fostering sustained economic growth. Industry in the county remained on a small, geographically scattered basis subordinate to the demands of Lowland and English markets. The local economy was overwhelmingly rural agrarian, and industry relied on traditional activities like fishing and quarrying geared towards the satisfying of local needs. In contrast to the developing Lowlands, Argyll and other Highland counties were perceived to be chronically backward. The correlated determination to impose capitalist economic development upon this country intensified in the aftermath of Culloden. In 1752 the Whig Government passed the Annexing Act which placed thirteen Jacobite estates under the jurisdiction of Commissioners, and enacted the sale of others. The aims set out in this act annexing the estates, two of which Ardsheal and Kinlochmoidart included lands in the parishes of Lismore and Appin and Ardnamurchan, were 'civilizing the inhabitants upon the said estates, and other parts of the Highlands and islands of Scotland, the promoting amongst them the Protestant religion, Good government, industry and manufactures, and the principles of Duty and

loyalty to his majesty, his heirs and successors and to no other use or purpose whatsoever'.¹⁴ The annexation of these estates therefore was part of a calculated process of social engineering designed to smash Jacobitism, bring the Highlands under effective control, destroy its traditional society and culture and thereby create the loyal, disciplined labour reserve army for the industries which were regarded as central to the overall success of this strategy.

The commissioners sought to achieve these goals by establishing schools on the estates. This compounded the activities of the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, which shared the same commitment to extirpating the Gaelic language and Highland culture. They also attempted to 'improve' agriculture, and encourage fishing and manufacturing. This built upon the previous initiatives of the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries founded in 1727. The commissioners first became involved in the latter's affairs during the 1750s when they offered assistance for the linen stations, and by 1762 had taken complete responsibility for their running, thus making them the sole body promoting manufactures in the Highlands until disannexing in 1784. One aspect of the commissioners' strategy was to give material backing to landlords who were undertaking the promotion of trade and industry. In 1769 Campbell of Airds, the younger, received £20 to provide people in Morvern with hemp and flax and other materials essential to linen production.¹⁵

Few direct initiatives to establish manufactures were implemented and those undertaken^{20th century} exposed the inability of the annexed estates to act as springboards of economic growth in the Highlands. The collapse of plans to establish a linen manufactory at New Tarbat during 1757, in the face of Government indifference, and the failure or slow progress of the other linen stations at Glenmoriston, Lochbroom and Lochcarron, caused a general decline in the commissioners' expenditure on manufactures by the 1770s. In consequence of these set-backs it became restricted to supplying grants and loans to landlords undertaking projects that satisfied strict

criteria . Financial stringency, however, ruled that even initiatives such as these found it increasingly difficult to get financial backing.¹⁶

The commissioners' failure to promote capitalist economic development provoked scathing criticism from contemporaries. In A Tour Through the Highlands of Scotland and the Hebride Isles, in 1786 J. Knox attacked their lack of success and the heavy costs incurred: 'no effectual permanent settlement or even the appearance of it has been established and many thousands of pounds have thereby been lost to the public'.¹⁷ Even Lord Kames, who was one of the commissioners, conceded that much of the money spent on the annexed estates had been laid out 'no better than water spilt on the ground'.¹⁸ This lack of success can be attributed to poor planning and insufficient capital, the Highland's remoteness and poor communications, the lack of suitable markets and the 'commonalty's' resistance to many of the commissioners' schemes and the very nature of this imposed stewardship.

The performance and apparent growth potential of linen within the Scottish economy gave this industry the pole position within the strategy of pacifying and 'civilizing' the Highlands. It had been boosted in the 1720s by legislation regulating its manufacture and establishing the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries. Against this background linen remained Scotland's premier industry undergoing considerable expansion.¹⁹ In one estimate production doubled every twenty to twenty-five years between 1730 and 1800, and in the period 1728 to 1815 the value of linen produced rose from £103,312 to £1,403,767.²⁰ Linen was a cottage industry closely associated with agriculture, and at least one or all its stages of production and ancillary activities - flax growing, spinning, weaving and bleaching - were undertaken on a domestic basis in parishes throughout Scotland.²¹ Production in the Highlands relied on the import of flax which was spun as 'factory yarn' for export to the Lowlands and England where it was finished. This further illustrates the subordination of Highland industry to the demands and market pressures of the British economy.

In some parts of Argyll linen spinning developed before the 1745 Rebellion. The tenants of Glendaruel in Cowal for example were paying rent in lint and yarn spun by 1746. This parish, however, was exceptional and the expansion of linen manufacturing during this period relied on Lowland entrepreneurs such as the Wrights of Glasgow operating through local agents. These merchants, facing rising yarn prices in the Lowlands, extended their operations in the Highlands, providing the raw materials and selling the intermediate product in foreign markets such as the West Indies and other parts of Britain's colonies.²² After Culloden the landed gentry within Argyll began to play a more active role in encouraging linen. As early as 1748 the third Duke of Argyll, the leading figure in the British Linen Company, established a linen manufactory at Inveraray and his successors, sharing his commitment, established it in other parts of the county.²³

The third Duke appears to have been persuaded that linen could provide work 'for all our idle hands in this shire' by David Campbell of Dunloskin. The latter commenced production at Dunoon in 1748, sending weavers and women to Edinburgh to learn the making of Osnaburgs and spinning before starting a spinning school in Cowal. He sent a memorial to the Commissioners of Supply urging them to give support to his linen co-partnery and to assist in the development of the industry elsewhere in the county. The Commissioners gave their backing believing the scheme to be 'highly tending to promote the industry, eradicate the poverty and idleness and reform the manners of the common people over this shire'. Despite failing to get sponsorship from the British Linen Company, which feared the emergence of other competitors, David Campbell and the Commissioners proceeded to try and develop linen.²⁴

Their decision was reported in the Scots Magazine during 1749 'At a meeting held of the Gentlemen of the shire of Argyle, it is said that no less than 12,000 l. st. was subscribed for carrying on the flaxen manufactures, chiefly those known by the name of Edinburghs'.²⁵ By 1753 linen manufacturing was, 'notwithstanding many difficulties,

losses and unforeseen expense', being undertaken in Dunoon, Kilmun and Inverchaolain.²⁶ These initiatives were copied by other landlords such as Lieutenant Murdoch MacLaine of Lochbuy who petitioned the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries in 1767 to assist in promoting a linen manufacture on Mull. Significantly MacLaine backed his petition by citing his apprenticeship with an 'eminent' Edinburgh manufacturer, and the formation of his own business which subsequently collapsed in a trade depression, as suitable qualifications to undertake the scheme.²⁷

On Islay Daniel Campbell of Shawfield established a linen manufactory which was intended to accommodate those dispossessed by agricultural 'improvement'. In 1792-3 it was recorded that the women on Islay, reflecting their predominant role in the industry, were 'always employed in spinning linen, excepting a few weeks during harvest'.²⁸ In general terms there was a definite anxiety in Argyll to facilitate the introduction of linen manufactures which in at least one case led to a clash of interests amongst the Campbell gentry. A letter of 1770 from Alexander Campbell, later of Barcaldine, to his father Duncan Campbell of Glenure reveals the intensity that competition could reach, 'Dunstaffnage and Combie are both soliciting for funds to build a lint mill on Lismore. I told them they need not as you had a premise since last year. Dunstaffnage says you have no water without his consent and you must halve the profits with him'.²⁹

Some of the landlords also tried to establish spinning schools to disseminate the skills vital to the successful expansion of the linen industry. Typifying this the third Duke of Argyll made a building available in 1751 to Mrs Elizabeth Campbell, wife of James Campbell, a local lawyer, who with the encouragement of the British Linen Company taught spinning until 1758 when the school was closed after she had run out of pupils.³⁰ In 1790 the fifth Duke ordered Maxwell, the factor of Mull, to 'consider of a proper stance and plan for a spinning school at Icolmkill and get one built there and correspond with Mr Ferrier about a spinning mistress to teach the girls

spinning on the wheels, which I understand are preparing for them at the expence of the Trustees for Fisherys and Manufactures'. By 1794 however, high costs notwithstanding, the payment of what Maxwell euphemistically termed 'moderate wages' led to the collapse of this experiment. The factor suggested that it would only be profitable if the tenants raised, prepared and manufactured the flax themselves, and with this in view he urged the Duke to send more flax seeds for trials.³¹ Contemporaneously the SSPCK in 1792 operated an estimated sixteen spinning schools, in which 'husbandry, Housewifery, Trades and Manufacture' were taught, throughout Argyll.³²

The bourgeoisie shared the landed gentry's commitment to developing linen. This is evident from the minutes of the Campbeltown town council. In 1774 the council sent a petition to their MP urging him to procure 'a law for the encouragement of the linen manufactory'. It also directly sponsored linen production by procuring a £300 loan in 1775 to complete the town's lint mills, while in 1785 it backed the construction of a spinning school to teach women 'sewing and other branches of female education'.³³ By the early 1790s the town was exporting two thousand pounds sterling worth of unwrought linen, which prompted the minister to suggest that this revenue could be increased by £500 if a bleachfield was established. This was duly set up by the fifth Duke of Argyll, and removed the necessity of sending cloth to Ireland to be finished.³⁴

Another action taken by the town council to foster conditions favourable to capitalist development was the outlawing of the nascent trade unions known as 'incorporations'. The Weavers Incorporation had been formed in 1703 for 'taking narrow inspectionin of all unfriemen workers of that trade' and regulating various aspects of the trade. Other trades organised and by the 1750s there were five incorporations. The burghal interest regarded these bodies as a growing threat and when the workmen began to set their own rates, a right jealously guarded by the town council which traditionally used it to try and control the incorporations, they acted ruthlessly to

preserve their business interests. On April 17th 1759 the Council laid out charges against the incorporations which 'under the pretext of maintaining their exclusive privileges' were accused of 'severall irregular, unlawful and oppressive things'. These were allegedly barring non-member tradesmen from work in the town, 'often distressing such stranger tradesmen by carrying off their work looms without any warrant or order of law', receiving unqualified 'turbulent and unruly persons' as members and even electing them as Burghers, deacons and boxmasters etc and raising wages to 'extravagant rates' without 'the consent or even knowledge of the magistrates or council'. With the Duke of Argyll's support the Burgh Council resolved to suppress the incorporations, and passed statutes limiting wages as part of the overall attempt to control the labour supply.³⁵

In general terms Argyll made a negligible contribution to the growth of linen, notwithstanding the various initiatives undertaken by the landlords and bourgeoisie to develop the industry. Possible exceptions could be made for Campbeltown, Islay, where £5,000 worth of linen was exported in the period 1797 to 1807 with Campbell of Shawfield encouraging the raising of flax and hemp, and some of the neighbouring islands such as Colonsay where linen manufacturing was carried on with 'considerable spirit'. Indeed within the Highlands as a whole it was only in Perthshire and possibly in the Highland districts of Aberdeenshire that the industry enjoyed significant success with output of linen rising from 650,224 to 2,680,960 yards between the mid and late eighteenth century.³⁶

The failure to successfully develop the linen industry in Argyll can be attributed to the concentration of production in the Lowlands, poor communications and the inability to attract sufficient investment. Another important factor retarding growth was the 'commonalty's' resistance, stemming from their commitment to the traditional system of agriculture, and its ancillary domestic industries, underpinned by a seasonally adjusted work system. This system, geared towards the achievement of certain seasonally adjusted

tasks such as sowing, reaping crops and gathering peat, afforded a degree of freedom and independence which was jealously guarded. It was, however, anathema to the 'improvers' who, wishing to impose the principles and values of the ascendent capitalist political economy, wished the 'commonalty' to work for wages rather than for subsistence and to conform to the concept of 'time thrift' which demanded the enforcement of a more constant, regulated work pattern.³⁷ To effect these goals the 'improvers' attacked Highland culture, its language and the 'commonalty's' morals. Their efforts in this direction brought them into a head on clash with the 'commonalty' whose commitment to the traditional system and its inherent labour rhythms was to frustrate or disrupt many of the schemes to 'improve' agriculture and develop industries such as linen.

The third Duke of Argyll discovered this when, heartened by the success of a linen manufactory at Dundee owned by Donald Campbell, his chamberlain for Tiree and Campbell of Dunloskin, he sought to establish manufactures on this island and in Morvern. To effect this goal the Duke demanded that part of the Tiree rental should be received in yarn spun. The tenants, however, were against this measure and did not share his enthusiasm for introducing the manufactory, thereby forcing the administration to rely on coercion. This is reflected in an instruction to the factor in 1756, 'I will fall on some proper way of showing my displeasure to such as are refractory and to encourage those who do as I direct. I'm resolved to keep no tenants but such as will be peaceable and apply to industry. You'll cause intimate this some sabbath after sermon'.³⁸

By 1792 this opposition remained a problem as the fifth Duke's instructions, aimed at taking advantage of rising home demand created by the war with France which cut off foreign imports, indicate that the organisation and development of linen on Tiree was no further advanced, 'On an average there are 5 females on each 4 mail land. These shall spin a great number of linen yarn yearly, and many masters would expect a considerable profit from this article but I will insist

nevertheless that for their own sakes they will employ themselves in spinning in place of continuing in idleness, and to encourage them I will send to Scarnish a person to receive the yarn from them as it is spun and to pay them for it in ready money as it is delivered and I will take the risque of selling it'.³⁹ That the Duke should offer cash for the yarn, where previously he demanded it as rent, implies that the 'commonalty' exhibited little enthusiasm for his attempts to promote the industry.

Attempts were also made to develop woollen manufactures in different parts of Argyll but these generally met with little success. In the early 1780s the Lorn Furnace Company tried to establish such an operation at Bonawe but the advance of factory production in the Lowland/English industrial centres, and the concomitant decline of the 'putting out' system, made it unprofitable and the venture was abandoned 'with some loss'. The British Fisheries Society, undeterred by the collapse of production at Bonawe and the chequered progress of the woollen manufactory at Clunary, Inveraray, attempted to establish a similar operation at Tobermory during the early 1790s. To achieve this end subscriptions were raised to teach women and children spinning. This project, however, encountered resistance and in October 1798 the Duke of Argyll received a letter from his factor on Mull explaining that it was failing because the settlers refused to work the wool notwithstanding being offered higher wages. A clue to their refusal is probably contained in the complaints of one of the managers at Clunary, which will be considered in more detail.⁴⁰

The enterprise was a notable exception to the general pattern of failure, staying in production for nearly forty years in spite of a fluctuating history. As early as 1771 the fifth Duke of Argyll established woollen production at Factory Land which, taking advantage of local wool supply, proved sufficiently successful for production to be switched to larger premises at Clunary by 1776. The first manager of this factory was William Inglis, a Lanark manufacturer, and subscriptions of £700 were raised by the Duke of Argyll and other

backers. When David Loch visited the plant in 1778 he found business booming, with over one hundred girls spinning flax alone, and conditions appearing to 'augur a prosperous and valuable future to the factory - a valuable and permanent acquisition to the internal commerce of this kingdom'.⁴¹

The factory continued to make progress in the early 1780s and it apparently came as something of a surprise when Inglis became insolvent in 1785 and production was resumed by John Wood and John Parker, two Glasgow manufacturers, before they too failed as subsequently did a partnership of Kilmarnock entrepreneurs. After these setbacks the workers maintained independent production for an unknown period up until 1791 when Archibald McNab, a Campbeltown dyer, took over the management. A description of the factory in 1792 reveals that it was fighting for survival. This reference provides further evidence of the clash between the landlords' vision of economic development and the 'commonalty's' commitment to the labour rhythms of the traditional society. The manager complained that the main factor undermining the enterprise was a chronic shortage of labour and spun yarn. He attributed this to 'the aversion of the women of the country to the spinning part of the business'. The latter's commitment to agriculture, and the correlated necessity of fulfilling certain tasks such as fuel gathering made his workforce unwilling to become full time operatives controlled by factory discipline, 'In preparing them (peats) females are chiefly employed, and they are often the principal work to be attended to for several months. This unavoidably interferes with, and retards the business of the whole year, and is, in fact, a very great obstacle to all improvement in this country, the best part of the season being thus consumed in providing fuel'.⁴² The landlords' inability to provide labour for woollen manufacturing was one of the factors determining that this industry remained on a domestic basis subordinate to the exigencies of agriculture. Within this mode of operation production, notably fulling the wool, was communally undertaken on a collectively owned frame. Fulling was an important social occasion with the work being accompanied by 'pairing songs', and

the social concourse promoted gave it a significant role within communities.⁴³

To overcome the shortage of spun yarn McNab, the manager at Clunary, attempted to introduce spinning jennies, and asked Donald Campbell of Sonnachan, the Duke of Argyll's chamberlain, to force tenants to spin wool to be finished at the factory. The tenants of Kenmore and Auchintibert, however, refused to comply and the manager's problems mounted, as his employees charged that he was unreliable with wages and the wool supply, while a Manchester partner accused him of corruption. Compounding this, he failed to gauge the market, producing unviable 'carpeting and coarse hunters cloth' rather than the more profitable 'Blanketing, Negro clothing and sailor jacketing'. His inability to fit out a Volunteer Corps that was being raised provoked an exodus of weavers from the plant, and in 1795 depression halted production. It is unclear whether production resumed between 1795 and 1803 after which date Alexander Campbell, an Inveraray merchant, attempted to run the plant with a manager. This initiative proved unsuccessful and at some point during the period 1803-09 Patrick and Alexander MacFarlane, from Perth, undertook production before a decline in wool prices and the 'stagnation in the market for woollen goods' brought production to a final halt.⁴⁴

In the second half of the eighteenth century the growth of emigration, fuelled by agrarian change and clearance, heightened the landlords' commitment to establishing manufactures. This consideration underpinned the industrialist David Dale's efforts to set up cotton manufacturing in Argyll. In a letter of 1791 to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine, his wife's brother-in-law, he urged the latter to settle weavers on his estate, and referred both to the concern with emigration and the interest shown in promoting cotton in Argyll:

'I understand that it will be agreeable to the noblemen and Gentlemen proprietors of lands in Argyllshire to have a branch of the cotton

manufacture in that county and I hope that this first attempt will be only an introduction to greater and more extensive manufactures in the Highlands which will give employment to all who are willing to remain in their native country and put a stop to emigrations, which are equally hurtful to the country and to the poor people who foolishly imagine that they are to be better in America . . .'.⁴⁵

By 1791 Dale had already distributed webs to weavers in Netherlorn and established a cotton manufactory in the parish of Kilmore and Kilbride. The progress of this latter concern, of which few details remain, was retarded by fuel shortages, probably of coal, that had halted production before 1794. Another small cotton manufactory existed at Campbeltown, where in 1791 young girls produced muslins for the Glasgow market, while fifty weavers worked cotton yarn.⁴⁶ The extent of cotton manufacturing in Argyll was therefore of a limited scale, and did not compare with the Rothesay cotton mills in neighbouring Bute which enjoyed some success in the 1770s.

The main contribution of Argyll to the growth of cotton, and to Lowland industry in general, was the provision of labour. The development of the cotton industry provides an indication of the magnitude of labour leaving the Highlands to become part of the industrial labour reserve army. In the Old Statistical Account the minister of Strachur and Stralachlan, in Cowal, for example wrote that one of the main reasons why wages were so high in his area was that 'Cotton manufactures, the printing and bleaching fields in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, have drained this parish of a number of workmen'. This pattern of migration was evident throughout Argyll. It is clear that many went to work in these industries with deep reluctance. Their misgivings can be attributed to the social dislocation, occasioned by even seasonal migration, and to the nature of the work which, according to the minister of Kilmartin, was not

popular, 'Three families, this year (1791) have gone to the cotton work, and some others speak of following them, though it seems to be with reluctance, as they consider the employment to be rather unfavourable to health, having formerly led an active life'. This provides a rare and valuable insight into the lives of the migrant workers, and their perceptions of the factory system and its harsh conditions. The scale of ^{out-}migration rose steadily and by 1851 it was calculated that at least thirty-seven per cent of those born in Argyll lived in the Lowlands, mainly in South West areas such as Lanark, Renfrew, Dumbarton and Ayr.⁴⁷

A significant barrier to capitalist economic development within the Highlands was perceived to be the lack of suitable markets. This view was outlined by J. Anderson in the Third Report on the British Fisheries wherein he suggested the Highlanders were 'hurt chiefly because of the want of an open market, to which the commodities they stand in need of could be sent by merchants from a distance; and in which the articles they have to dispose of could be freely sold, where a competition of merchants could take place'.⁴⁸ The landlords attempted to overcome these problems, foster economic growth and thereby curb emigration by establishing villages. On Islay Daniel Campbell of Shawfield built Bowmore in 1768 to accommodate linen spinning. He also constructed a Church, schools and a jail to 'civilize' the inhabitants 'whom he found still to retain a bias to the clannish manner of their ancestors, averse to industry and intercourse'.⁴⁹ Villages were subsequently built during the 1820s and 1830s at Port Ellen, Port Charlotte, Port Wemyss and Kiells. These were to house tenants evicted by W.F. Campbell, and those working in neighbouring distilleries.

In 1792 the Earl of Breadalbane expressed interest in constructing a weaving village on a site between Lochfyne and Loch Tarbert.⁵⁰ The collapse of earlier schemes, however, made landlords wary of such enterprises. This is illustrated in a letter of 1804 from John Campbell of Lochend, the Earl of Breadalbane's

chamberlain for Argyll, to a Mr Robertson who was surveying the estate. The factor recommended that a village should be constructed at Clachan but only 'under proper regulations', adding the further cautionary stipulation that substantial tenants should be found as the poorer people, he alleged, did 'nothing but fish, drink and smuggle and harass the neighbours'.⁵¹ The 'commonalty's' desubordination was therefore a powerful force retarding the development of these villages. Indeed they sometimes opposed construction in cases where the community interest was endangered. This is revealed by a letter in 1805 to Campbell of Balliveolan from a correspondent advancing the case for a village at Ardsheloch, which was being opposed by the tenants who stood to lose land in accommodating the new village, rather than 'Oban-Seil', 'It does not at all surprise me that the tenants of Achnaiasal and Barnayarny do not see this matter in the same point of view; because grass for the settlers, and as the town increases as also the fuel, must be taken from either, or both these farms, as may be found most convenient'.⁵²

The majority of the schemes to encourage villages in Argyll were associated with fishing. This industry was widely regarded as being of considerable growth potential both in terms of profit and in the provision of 'impressed' manpower for the navy.⁵³ These considerations underpinned the founding in 1786 of the British Fisheries Society, which purchased land to establish fishing villages and gave grants to individual landlords who regarded fishing as the means of supporting demobbed servicemen and those dispossessed by agricultural 'improvements'. Reflecting this in the 1760s the Earl of Breadalbane approached the Board of Commissioners for the Annexed Estates to assist ex-servicemen undertake fishing at Easdale, while others were being settled in villages and crofts in Bute and different parts of Argyll.⁵⁴ These men, however, were, according to the Provost of Campbeltown in 1763, 'indifferent fishermen' whom he wished to deprive of the herring bounty, and it appears that the settlers' 'unruly' lifestyles were a source of frequent complaint with the commissioners.⁵⁵ Similarly about 1771 a small fishing village was

built at Kenmore, Lochfyne, to settle fishermen evicted from the old town of Inveraray.⁵⁶

The success of settlements, and the position fishing occupied within communities, was subject to marked geographical variation. On the West coast and the islands in particular attempts to develop this industry were retarded or undermined by the resistance of the 'commonalty' who refused to give up farming. This phenomenon was outlined by McLean of Coll in 1787. He predicted that the British Fisheries Society would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the 'commonalty' to enter the new fishing villages/crofting communities they hoped to establish because Argyll lacked 'any distinct body of men who live solely by the fishing' it being regarded as a 'mere temporary object or casualty', and in the light of the deep rooted commitment to the land. In his letter McLean stressed that this factor could not be underestimated, 'Their sole attention is in a manner fix'd to the produce of the earth their sole object of pursuit is to get a farm, and a patch of ground however small in infinitely preferred to every other mode of gaining a livelihood'. Consequently he noted that many Highlanders were emigrating rather than be forced into fishing and other industries which would sever or undermine their ties with the land.⁵⁷

This is corroborated by evidence for the parish of Strachur and Stralachlan in Cowal wherein tenants, cleared to make way for sheep, preferred to emigrate or migrate to the Lowlands rather than settle in the fishing villages constructed by the landlords to curb 'this evil'. The minister observed that this scheme struggled because it ignored the 'commonalty's' ties with the land and their 'strong local attachments', 'If a Highlander is forced or induced to leave the small circle which occupied his first affections, he cares not how far he goes from home. Going to another parish, or to the district of another clan, is to him entire banishment; and when he has resolved to set out, whether from necessity or choice, he would as soon cross the Atlantic as he would cross an arm of the sea. It is only an immediate

and a very clear advantage that would induce him to stop. The fishing villages have not this to offer . . .'.⁵⁸

Similarly on Tiree the fifth Duke of Argyll had gone to elaborate lengths to encourage fishing only to witness the collapse of his efforts in the face of opposition which was described in the Old Statistical Account: 'Notwithstanding such a promising prospect of their having with a great number of fishing yawls, 10 boats in the parish, partly decked, which carry from 3 to 14 tons, of their lying so conveniently upon the spot, and of having many hardy seamen amongst them, they do not in this district pursue the fishing with spirit. The reasons are obvious they are mostly farmers having a small portion of land, in common with many, which requires daily attendance'.⁵⁹

This pattern prevailed on other islands such as Mull where the British Fisheries Society, with the support of its Governor, the Duke of Argyll, established a fishing station at Tobermory. In 1788 the Duke made land available and his factor, James Maxwell, became the agent. The society was to find that the settlers were preoccupied with obtaining land to farm rather than with fishing. Few fishermen could be persuaded to settle and Tobermory, distant from the more lucrative northerly waters, came to depend on trade rather than fishing. In 1792, of thirty-three ships using the customs house, only fourteen were involved in fishing, and this dependency grew when the volume of trade increased after 1801 with the opening of the Crinan canal.⁶⁰

At Creich, the Duke's efforts were also opposed and an Argyll estate instruction of 1788 reveals that the tenants had resisted the introduction of crofting, 'When the crofters of Creich are fairly settled in their different crofts and better reconciled to their situation the factor will endeavour to introduce the spinning of yarn and manufacturing of nets amongst them'.⁶¹ A letter from the Duke to his factor in the same year provides an insight into the depth of resistance to fishing, and the methods employed by the estate

management to overcome it: 'The late commencement of the fishery at Creich and the aversion of the natives to the business have made it impossible to form any opinion this season of what may hereafter be expected from our undertaking, but we must by no means be discouraged with these circumstances. If the natives continue refractory we must introduce a new colony of stranger from other parts, and at any rate you must persevere in the plan of operations laid down last year. I approve entirely of your having removed three of the tenants by way of example'. Despite these measures resistance retarded the development of Creich as a fishing community and the tenants had largely given fishing up by the early 1790s, preferring to concentrate on farming. This was also true of Colonel John Campbell, tacksman of Fidden's, efforts to encourage this industry in other parts of the Ross of Mull. The Old Statistical Account records that his tenants 'although as successful as the other boats' were more 'committed to the land and dropped the fishing'.⁶²

Within these areas fishing remained on a rod and line basis, generally for subsistence and to satisfy local demand. In the absence of mercantile capital the industry was controlled by landlords and tacksmen who organised the sale of fish to the Lowland and English fish merchants who operated in the Highlands. In 1797 there were five hundred and thirty-one such vessels, most of which sailed from the Clyde, while six traded from Campbeltown and thirteen out of Tobermory. During this year these boats carried 31,000 out of a total of 42,344 barrels of herring landed at Greenock.⁶³ In other parts of Argyll, notably along Lochfyne and in the eastern lochs of Cowal and Lochgoil, fishing commanded a higher degree of participation amongst the 'commonalty' than on the West coast. In the parish of Saddell and Skipness and at Tarbert for example it was recorded in the early 1790s that the people 'lived principally by fishing'.⁶⁴

Fishing was also traditionally better organised and more profitable in these locales. This was most evident at Campbeltown, which became one of the major centres for herring busses. In the

period 1771-87, when Scotland exported 441,145 barrels of white herring to the West Indies, Ireland and Northern Europe, 381,067 barrels were shipped from the Clyde, and of this Greenock had provided 226,458 barrels while Campbeltown had shipped about half the total. This town also undertook a significant export trade with Ireland. In 1774 for example it shipped 10,240 out of the total 22,793 barrels of herring transported, while in 1794 these figures were 5,224 and 14,014 barrels respectively.⁶⁵

The absence of rival buyers gave the Campbeltown fish merchants great control over the fishing industry in Kintyre. This, and the fact that by the early 1790s the master of each ship was the only crew member retaining a share in catches landed by Campbeltown boats, gave them large profits. Indeed these enabled the merchants to provide the capital which underpinned the development of fishing in Lochfyne.⁶⁶ The fish merchants were a powerful pressure group within Argyll, and their cohesion was never greater than when their self interest was threatened in the mid 1780s by proposals to revise the herring bounties and to link them to the quantity of herring landed. The bounties, which fluctuated between thirty and fifty shillings per ton in the period 1750-1786 were paid to merchants, landlords and tacksmen fitting out busses of twenty and eighty tons. The Campbeltown merchants argued that this revision would 'at once ruin the fishings', and in 1785 the Burgh council sent a protest to Lord Frederick Campbell, the local MP, and sent representatives to Rothesay and Greenock 'in order to co-operate with the fishing adventures in the firth of Clyde as to the propiarest mode of securing a continuation of the present bounty'. These attempts, however, proved ineffectual and when the British Fisheries Society was established in 1786 the bounty was revised to payments of twenty shillings per ton of vessel and four shillings per barrel of herring caught. Despite this change, and the merchants' anxiety, bounties remained crucial to the undertaking of fishing, and in Campbeltown they ensured wages of between £1 5s and £1 16s per month, which attracted an average of six hundred and seventy-four men for the season, many of whom were

weavers or cobblers from Dunoon, in the 1780s and 1790s.⁶⁷

In the traditional centres of fishing, resistance to capitalist economic development took the form of 'desubordination', and opposition to the imposition of its work discipline. Contemporaries found the fishing crews 'in general disposed to be disorderly', and there was often violent rivalry between the buss crews and the native fishermen. Reflecting this in the 1780s it was reported that on Coll the 'disturbances' between them had been 'so great' that the herring were driven away after these parties failed to reach agreement on when to commence fishing.⁶⁸ The often anarchic conditions at the fishing grounds, and the fishermen's fierce independence, were to plague efforts to regulate the industry. Moreover their lifestyle was to be the bane of landlords and ministers seeking to impose moral, as well as economic, 'improvement'. This was embodied in complaints from the presbyteries of Dunoon and Inveraray to the Synod of Argyll in 1761 about the conduct of the herring fishermen who were allegedly 'guilty of prophanation of the Lord's day, excessive drunkenness, with sundry other immoralities'. The Synod recognised that imposing authority on the fishermen was 'a matter of great importance for the interest of religion' and formed a committee to canvass the Duke of Argyll to appoint a magistrate.⁶⁹ This determination to reform the fishermen goes beyond concern with upholding religion, and is explicable in terms of the wider attempt of the landlords and clergy to inculcate a capitalist work discipline and ethic by destroying many aspects of the traditional system and the lifestyle associated with it.

Their efforts, however, seem to have had a limited impact on the fishermen, as the evidence of the New Statistical Account suggests that their lifestyle and manners remained a lasting affront to the 'improvers'' vision of capitalist economic development. In certain areas of Argyll the fishermen were so 'disorderly' that the clergy and the landlords actually questioned the advantage of encouraging the fishing industry. Typifying this sentiment the Rev. Dugald Campbell,

minister of Glassary, quoted Sir John Orde, a local landlord, to substantiate his own fundamental misgivings about the effects of drink and fishing on the morals of his parishioners: 'The almost universal connection between herring fishing and whisky drinking makes it rather a curse than a boon to the people, and the pursuit is so uncertain, and partakes so much of the nature of gambling, that it is believed, in most instances, the money is not more 'hardly got' than 'hardly gone''.⁷⁰ It was not only their whisky drinking, but also the lack of deference amongst the 'rude' fishermen which scandalised the minister. This casts further light on the class tensions existing between the landlords and the clergy on one side and the 'commonalty' on the other.

The fishermen also retained those work patterns associated with the traditional system. This was reflected in the commitment to agriculture and sporadic, seasonal fishing. Even in the established fishing centres, wherein the industry was comparatively well organised and commanded a higher degree of participation, these labour rhythms prevailed. Indeed, according to the minister of Lochgoilhead the very nature of fishing militated against the implementation of a more regulated work discipline: 'So much depends upon chance and good luck, as it is called, that the pursuit is calculated to unsettle the minds of the young, and to give them a distaste to regular every-day employment'.⁷¹

In the first half of the nineteenth century Scottish fishermen caught progressively larger quantities, and by the middle decades of this century it has been estimated that up to half a million barrels of herring were being caught each year. The profits this generated, however, were concentrated in those areas north of Aberdeen where the industry was well organised and commanded higher levels of capital investment and better equipped boats. They also benefited from the opening of the Caledonian canal in the early 1800s, which linked the west coast with the eastern ports, and from the migration of herring shoals to the northern waters. In Argyll fishing on Lochfyne had gone into decline in the 1820s, and the industry, operating in

confined waters, did not share in these rewards. Consequently, in parishes such as Inveraray and Kilfinan, wherein herring fishing was a vital addition to income from agriculture, depression caused considerable distress amongst the 'commonalty' and seasonal deep sea fishing, rather than inshore operations, predominated. The decline of fishing intensified dependency on agriculture at a time when landlords' commitment to clearance grew in the face of falling agricultural income and mounting rent arrears. Indicative of the landlords' determination there is evidence in mid Argyll that they deliberately established fishing villages, such as the township of Achnaba above Port Ann, ^{considerable distances from} the nearest shores in order to maximise the quantity of land available for their own use.⁷² This in turn made it difficult to attract native crews, another factor militating against the success of fishing. Overall, the decline of fishing, and its inability to foster economic growth, contributed to the escalation of Clearance and emigration.

Similarly the iron industry also failed to effect economic 'take off' in the Highlands. During the period under consideration four iron foundries, the first of which at Glenkinglass has already been considered, operated in Argyll. In 1752 the Newland Company, a firm of Lancashire iron manufactures comprising of Richard Ford and his son William and James Backhouse, all of Lancashire, and Micha Knott of Ryedale in Westmoreland, signed a contract worth £1,500 over ten years with Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell for his woods. The company hoped that by establishing a furnace at Bonawe, and exploiting this supply of cheap timber, they could overcome competition within Furness.⁷³ The supply of ore came from this latter district, and the pig iron was exported to the North West of England, the Severn estuary and South Wales.⁷⁴ The supply of local timber, and the superior quality of the charcoal produced enabled the Newland Company, which came to control the iron industry in Furness, to maintain production until 1877 while it had been forced to close plants nearer its major markets.

The 'Argyle Furnace' built at Inverleckan/Furnace was

founded by another English firm, the Duddon Company at Furness, in 1754 on a site provided by the third Duke of Argyll. Details about its history are scarce but it appears that the company relied on ore from the west of England and produced pig iron 'of very superior quality'. The plant also employed a forge as well as a casting works. Uncertainty surrounds the reasons for its closure in 1813, but it has been suggested that production ceased after the company failed when the timber contracts with the Argyll estate were not renewed.⁷⁵ Despite their durability these iron foundries made a minor contribution to the industry as a whole. They did, however, leave some invaluable records which illuminate aspects of Argyll's social history.

In this respect the development of Bonawe foundry is relatively well documented. It is clear for example that work at this plant was not popular with the local people. One of the factors underpinning this hostility was the poorer wages paid to them in comparison to their English counterparts. The poverty experienced by this section of the workforce, who were prone to fever and other fatal disease, was outlined by a company agent in the early 1780s, '... they are in a wretched condition, and if you had half the number in the company's lands think it would be much better that the number you have half starving with hunger, although they get meal at 2s 6d a stone when all the country people pay 3s'.⁷⁶ Notwithstanding the company's offers of land, which appear rather hollow against this background of chronic overcrowding within the crofting community, this inducement failed to provide a sufficient quantity of local labour, and the furnace relied on English workmen. Many of these workers found it very difficult to adapt to life in the Highlands and returned home. This is confirmed by another letter from the agent, 'He and family are on board coming home and in the company's debt, and I believe very poor from every appearance - Englishmen do not thrive here'.⁷⁷

One of the effects which the Lorn Furnace Company had on the local economy was its purchase of large quantities of grain, which placed pressure on food supplies. Meal bought at Carlisle was

preferred to that from Ireland and Inverness. Indeed in one case the quality of the latter inspired an ironic prayer from the local inhabitants which was documented by the agent: 'Here are fervent prayers offered up by the poor that Richardson's meal (if no better than formerly) may sink before it arrives at Lorn Quay'. The company's wholesale purchases also produced price fluctuations which received comment in a letter of 1757 from Alexander Campbell of Ardsheal to Duncan Campbell of Glenure: 'Argyllshire in general has not been in my memory so scarce of meal as it is just now. The English Company at Bunaw has done a great deal of hurt to this country, as they were buying . . . all the bear and meal they could get at any price in this country, before any meal came in which is very little as yet'. It is evident that the Lorn Furnace Company, and Alexander Campbell's nephews who had a cargo of 600 bolls of meal, took advantage of this crisis and undertook profiteering. In the 1780s and 1790s the company continued to exert a destabilising influence on the local meal supply. The situation was exacerbated, according to the minister for Ardchattan and Muckairn, by its leasing of farms for tree planting and the grazing of work horses which deprived the area of vital arable land and necessitated the increased importation of meal.⁷⁸

The introduction of the iron industry had an impact on the county in other respects. The undertaking of this enterprise presented the Lorn Furnace Company with the major problem of trying to enforce a regulated capitalist work discipline, and maintaining order amongst its employees. The correspondence of the company during the 1780s suggests that they were fighting a losing battle in the face of widespread desubordination amongst the workforce. One of the Company's directors, George Knott, believed Bonawe was a 'drunken hole' unrivalled throughout Britain. A manager, Mr James Longmire, who subsequently resigned after disputes with his assistants, wrote to Mathew Harrison that he would rather 'choose to serve his majesty at 6d a day as a common soldier' than continue in this 'troublesome and disagreeable office', and another commentator claimed of one disturbance that it afforded the opportunity to 'see who is well

disposed to the company' of whom he concluded 'I believe them to be of the fewest numbers.⁷⁹

The evidence of the New Statistical Account indicates that the problems provoking these opinions still prevailed in the 1840s. Reflecting this the Rev Lachlan McKenzie, minister for Muckairn, outlined deep reservations about the effects of his parishioners' participation in the labour process inherent to such schemes: '... the employment of a great proportion of the population during a considerable portion of the year at the smelting furnace, and, in the case of both sexes, in the woods, is the reverse of favourable to the observance of the Sabbath, to purity of morals, or to due attendance, to religious instruction and religious duties'.⁸⁰ The minister's doubts were sufficiently grave for him to write of his relief that no other manufactures existed in the parish, adding the opinion that the 'moral price' of any such enterprise was too great to pay. His account provides a perspective into the alienation caused by the work.

The iron foundries created significant demand for timber. The minister for Kilchrenan and Dalavich outlined the importance this assumed in terms of employment: 'Inclosing, cutting, barking or peeling, and coating the extensive woods in this parish, employ many hands'. The main beneficiaries were the landlords who sold timber to the Lorn and Argyle Furnace Companies. During 1774 for example Donald Campbell of Balliveolan sold wood from Colliviack, Drimvick and Tarafuchan to the Lorn Furnace, while in 1780 Duncan Campbell of Glenure received £4,200 for all his woods over a seven year period.⁸¹ The profits from timber contracts heightened the landlords' determination to increase proprietorial control over their estates, which was also crucial to the transformation of the agrarian system.

This, however, brought the landlords into conflict with the 'commonalty' who regarded it as customary to remove wood for their own use. Belief in this ancient right coalesced with hostility to tree planting, which was deemed prejudicial to crops. On Tیره it

symbolised resistance to the agricultural 'improvements'. This was highlighted in a factor's report of 1803 to the Duke of Argyll: 'The planting attempt promised well, and the plants were thriving and promising, but like every new improvement, it excited the jealousy of the natives, who have pull'd up mostly every one of them excepting the quicks, which are healthy and thriving. Could the perpetrators of this action be discovered, they would justly become the objects of exemplary punishment'.⁸² Against this background landlords became increasingly desperate, and attempted to strengthen estate administration by stringently regulating the use of timber.

One aspect of the latter trend was the growing use of armed guards and gamekeepers. These failed, however, to inhibit the 'unruly' people as a letter of May 1811 to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine from his factor, complaining of renewed 'atrocities' committed upon his woods, suggests: 'I was alarmed to find the unaccountable evil persisted in, and I thought I should instantly make known that two men under arms to guard the place by night . . .'. Despite the implementation of this measure, and the use of eviction, wood cutting remained a serious problem on the Barcaldine estate and on others throughout the Highlands.⁸³

Indeed one of the striking features of estate correspondence in Argyll, referring to wood cutting, was the deep rooted defiance of authority. This is reflected in a letter of 1784 from Donald McLean of Coinoch to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine, in which the former stated that whilst he did not dispute Barcaldine's rights to certain woods, he insisted that the terms of servitude with respect to the removal of woods by Alexander Campbell's tenants had to be more strictly observed 'as their so frequent depredations are become intolerable and their insolence on these occasions is such as I am fully persuaded a Gentleman of your disposition would by no means countenance'. In numerous cases different communities co-operated in the removal of their landlords' timber. This was often highly organised as is revealed on the Breadalbane estate wherein the tenants

went to the lengths of passing 'mutilated copies' of orders, sanctioning wood cutting, around the whole estate during the period 1806-7. To counter the impact of these forgeries the Earl of Breadalbane was forced to recall the original orders.⁸⁴

During the eighteenth century various efforts were made to mine iron ore and copper in Kilmartin, South Knapdale, Appin, along Lochfyne and in some of the islands. Most of these, however, ended in failure and only a few enjoyed any degree of success. On Islay for example it was observed in 1769 that ore was being smelted at a furnace near Freeport, while the rest was sold as pig iron. Details of this furnace's operations are scarce, but it is clear that by 1808 forty miners were employed. The overseer was optimistic with respect to its prospects, adducing that the supply of ore could be 'inexhaustible' if 'a competent capital and a man of science and influence were engaged in their management'. The proprietor of Islay, Campbell of Shawfield, neglected to fulfil this role, being immersed in the attempts to 'improve' agriculture. This, however, does not appear to have radically affected the performance of the mine, which yielded £12,000 between 1761 and 1808. Contemporaneously, some time before 1799 the Craiggerrine copper mine, above Brenachoil on Lochfyne, began production, with the support of the Duke of Argyll, until its demise in 1841.⁸⁵

The main centre of leadmining in Argyll was Ardnamurchan, which in the 1780s gave the appearance of offering great potential: 'At Strontian in Sunart, there is an extensive lead work, carried on by an English Company, Mr Warrin, the acting partner, gives employment at present to about 200 men and expects soon to have occasion for 100 more from the lead ores turning out beyond expectation'. Leadmining, in common with the other extractive industries, was boosted by the growing demand created during the wars with France. In the aftermath of this conflict, however, demand slumped and the mines at Sunart went into depression. The market for lead never recovered and by the 1830s Strontian only engaged workers

periodically 'with a view to their own subsistence'. In 1836 these mines were leased again but a lack of capital, and their 'unproductiveness' halted production.⁸⁶ Consequently by the mid-nineteenth century there was little operative leadmining in Argyll, and that undertaken at Ardnamurchan was of a sporadic and limited nature.

In the period 1730 to 1800 coal was discovered in Mull, Bute, Lochalin and Loch Sunart in Ardnamurchan, and on Canna but attempts to work these seams proved unsuccessful and had to be abandoned. On Mull a determined effort was made to extract the coal but the venture came to a halt after a series of 'unfortunate accidents'. Indeed throughout the county, Campbeltown was the only place where coal was mined with any success. At Drumlennan, where there were also salt panning operations in the township of "Na Cofreachan Salainn" (Salt Pans) and at Coal Hill near Ballygroggan farm, a canal designed by James Watt, existed to transport coal to the town. This mine continued to function into the 1840s but its coal was regarded as inferior to that of the Lowlands and local business, as with the county in general, relied on imports. Coal mining failed to become a major industry in Argyll and the workable quantities of this resource were negligible. Indeed the shortage of coal throughout the Highlands was to pose a 'serious obstacle' to economic development. Undeterred by these shortages landlords in Argyll retained a certain optimism with regards to new coal finds. Reflecting this the Duke of Argyll wrote to John Lorne Stewart of Coll, Chamberlain for Kintyre, in 1844 about the discovery of coal on the farm of Ardtun which he hoped 'would be of great use to the poor inhabitants of Tyrie'.⁸⁷

The undertaking of slate quarrying at Easdale and Ballachulish, dating from the seventeenth century, made Argyll 'the chief slate county of Scotland'. The history of Ballachulish slate quarrying is poorly documented in comparison to Easdale which, existing records confirm, was already the major source of slate by the 1720s/30s. In 1744 the Nether Lorn Marble Company was formed to develop the

slate industry at Easdale. This company comprised of Colin Campbell of Carwhin, the former owner of the quarries and his son, John, fourth Earl of Breadalbane, Charles Campbell, advocate, John Campbell, cashier of the Royal Bank of Scotland, and John Wilson, merchant and late provost of Edinburgh, and his son Robert. The quarries, unsold slates, tools and machinery were purchased for £826 18s 8d, and the partners each contributed £100 to the new company.⁸⁸

The major markets for Easdale slate were along the East coast of Scotland, and in 1745 seventy-six thousand slates were shipped to Aberdeen, 102,000 to Arbroath and 150,000, 86,000 and 126,000 to Queensferry, Leith and Berwick respectively.⁸⁹ By the 1790s, however, the main markets had shifted to Glasgow and the West coast. The work at Easdale and Ballachulish was performed by 'crews'. In 1744 seven crews of four to five men produced 660,500 slates at Easdale, and in 1750 increased output to over 1.1 million slates for which they received 9s 6d per one thousand slates, while production grew to 1,674,400 during 1751 with the opening of new quarries at Ellanabeich, on Seil, Blackharbour, Cullipol and 'Inniedow' on Luing. During the period 1751 to 1766 sales fluctuated and between 1763 and 1765 the management was forced, probably by labour unrest, to introduce the payment of day wages. A new agreement, under which the quarriers received no wages but were paid for slates sold to the company, was introduced in 1769-70. Against this background the number of crews rose to thirty-three, and production stood at 2.7 million slates. It is unclear how long this agreement underpinned production, and in 1799 the quarries were once more receiving payments from the company per one thousand slates produced.⁹⁰

The slate industry was affected by the general trade depression supervening the end of war with France. This was exacerbated by the impact of excessive coastline shipping duties which, imposed during the Napoleonic Wars, were not relaxed until the 1820s. Consequently the price of small slates at Easdale fell from 17s per one thousand in 1825 to 15s in 1827, while the Ballachulish company

reputedly accepted 12s 6d from a Glasgow slate dealer. The Easdale management found it increasingly difficult to make profits, and receipts, which rose from £6,200 to over £8,100 between 1842 and 1845, declined steadily to just £25 in 1848. During this period the quarries at Easdale faced mounting competition from their Ballachulish counterparts, and by 1845 this was translated into a narrow lead which established the foundations for the latter's predominance in the 1860s.⁹¹

At Easdale surviving records indicate that industrial relations within the quarries were often turbulent. The quarriers' position was ironically strengthened by terms of employment which ruled the company could not evict them until payment had been made for the value of their houses. The fifth Earl of Breadalbane believed this 'right' served 'only to hamper the management' and in 1828 outlined the character which the quarriers' resistance could assume: . . . it is often the interest of the quarriers to ruin it (the quarry) if the manager is not qualified to detect them'. The undermining of these terms were regarded as central to the restoration of order at the turbulent quarries otherwise, the Earl warned, they would 'be most troublesome to defeat a few years hence'. He also argued strongly against reducing the manager's powers, underlining the potential dangers it would incur: 'Might not the quarriers combine against a tradesman whom they disliked and harass him and the company excessively'.⁹²

The Earl's prediction came to prove correct in the period 1829-30 when the manager, Alexander Campbell, received instructions to impose a more rigorous capitalist work discipline, demanding the crews undertake regulated and supervised work, and thereby break the quarriers, who were accused of being 'accustomed to much idleness', from their 'bad habits'. One aspect of this was the attempt in 1829 to introduce the system of laying the workforce off during periods of slack demand for slates, which operated at Ballachulish. The Easdale quarriers, however, resisted this measure, and the directors dropped it

when they began to fear their workforce would become a 'burden' on the poor rates.⁹³

The management, to try to stem the increase of industrial unrest, took steps to suppress meetings amongst the quarriers and attempted to evict the 'ring leaders'. Tension mounted when these men refused to remove a decision which, according to Laurence Davidson, son of the Earl's agent, lay more 'in defiance of our authority than from any other motive'. In a letter of 1831 the same correspondent outlined the Earl's disillusionment and his wish to withdraw from the Company: 'If the quarries pass into the hands of a tenant it will make a very great difference on the comfort of the quarriers. But they have themselves to blame for I have no doubt that it is their perpetual harassing applications which have made his Lordship so weary of the concern'. The long running conflict at the quarries, caused by the attempts to change work practices, 'impeded production' and paralysed their management. Consequently the Earl found support amongst his fellow directors for leasing the quarries or other 'radical alterations' designed to 'reduce the expence of working and also to bring the workmen more under their manager's control'. Indicative of the atmosphere within the quarries Laurence Davidson urged caution suggesting that sacking men would 'raise an opposition among the workmen which might impede our future labours'.⁹⁴

Undeterred, the Company proceeded with its efforts to evict the 'ring leaders', but faced a court action brought by the quarriers. The Company viewed this action as the means to re-establish their 'right to manage' the quarries, and to finally crush industrial unrest: 'This case is one of the greatest importance not only as regulating the terms of the quarriers' service at Easdale. But also in the disturbed state of mind at Easdale and at many other public works a judgement in the quarriers' favour even if subsequently reversed by the Court of Session, would be attended with the worst consequences'.⁹⁵ The significance of this action led the Earl of Breadalbane to seek the backing of the Sheriff to overcome the resistance of the 'troublesome

and litigious' quarriers. This mobilisation of the landed interest to manipulate the legal system undermined the quarriers case in this instance. It is unclear how successful the Company was in restoring discipline at the quarries but evidence, which exists in relation to the prevalence of whisky drinking and 'riot' amongst the quarriers, suggests that desubordination remained a major problem for management.⁹⁶

In many areas of Argyll there were resources of limestone worked to satisfy local demand, but efforts to undertake commercial lime quarrying on an export basis were beset with difficulties. A major problem was the detrimental impact of coal duties, which made it very expensive to burn lime and thereby retarded exploitation of this resource. On Lismore for example they undermined an initiative to quarry and sell lime in the early 1790s: '. . . this undertaking might turn out to advantage, not only to the adventurers but to the public at large, as an encouragement to building, husbandry & C. were it not for the check given to it by the coal duty'. Despite this setback Lismore lime was subsequently used in the construction of the Caledonian Canal. The influence of coal duties was exacerbated by poor transport. Reflecting this, in the parish of Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich the minister recorded 'There are several quarries of limestone; but owing to the badness of the road, and the difficulties of communication between the different parts of the parish, they are of no service, except to the people who live, in the immediate neighbourhood'. Consequently the local people found it cheaper to purchase imported Irish lime. On the Islands the dangers and vagaries of sea transport further handicapped the development of lime quarrying.⁹⁷

The limitations of communications in the Highlands plagued marketing and retarded economic development. The most important form of communications in the Highlands were provided by the two hundred and fifty miles of road built by General Wade after the 1715 Rebellion. Construction, however, had been determined by military expediency

rather than the need to promote trade and industry. This was highlighted by Thomas Telford in his Report on the Coasts and Central Highlands of Scotland which concluded they were 'generally in such directions, and so conveniently steep, as to be unfit for the purposes of Civil life; and in those parts where they are tolerably accessible, or where roads have since been formed by the inhabitants, the use of them is very much circumscribed from the want of bridges over some of the principal rivers'.⁹⁸ The Commissioners for the Annexed Estates also attempted to improve communications in the Highlands. Their operations, however, were limited to bridge building in Perth and constructing roads on the forfeited estates, although in the late 1770s a grant of £300 was made available to assist in the construction of a seventy-five mile road between Inveraray and Campbeltown. Similarly in 1780-82 £250 was provided for an adjoining district road in North Knapdale.⁹⁹

In the last decade of the eighteenth century the standard of road within Argyll was, according to the minister for Glenorchy and Inishail, enviable: '... in no country has more been done, during the last 20 years in constructing bridges, and forming useful lines of road, than in the shire of Argyll within that period, besides what has been effected by the statute labour' and this opinion was re-echoed by J. Robson who wrote in the General View of the Agriculture of Argyll that the major roads were 'generally good'.¹⁰⁰ It would appear, however, that road standards were subject to marked geographical differences. In the southern Hebrides for example roads were mere 'footpaths', in Morvern they remained 'as nature left them' and in Kilchrenan and Dalavich and many other parishes, particularly on the Islands and in the northern districts of the county, the roads were 'very bad'.¹⁰¹ The evidence of the New Statistical Account published in the 1840s reveals the same trend, with roads in the latter areas continuing to be very poor or insufficient.¹⁰²

Statute labour, directed by the local gentry, was central to the construction and maintenance of these roads. The provision of

labour for this service created resentment amongst the 'commonalty' and the minute books of the Commissioners for Supply contain incidents which highlight its unpopularity. Reflecting this, in 1772, at Kilfinan in Cowal, Duncan Campbell refused to work on the roads and threatened to beat up the constable sent to receive payment of the resulting fine. The Commissioners, fearing the 'pernicious consequences' of this action, resolved to make an example of Munn. Such resolutions appear to have failed to inhibit similar acts of defiance. Indeed in the same year twenty-one men in the area of Inverchaolain alone refused to work on the roads or pay any fines.¹⁰³

The construction of the Crinan canal in the late eighteenth century was an important attempt to try to develop trade and fishing on the West coast of Argyll and in Lochfyne. The Duke of Argyll and the Earl of Breadalbane were the canal's main supporters. They financed a survey by John Rennie, which led to the formation of the Crinan Canal Company in 1793. English capital dominated the flotation, with one thousand, three hundred and seventy-eight of the £50 shares being taken up in England as opposed to only four hundred and seventy-three in Scotland. The Scottish shareholders included the City of Glasgow, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and over forty Campbells.¹⁰⁴ The pressures of mounting debts and the failure of many of the original shareholders to invest in the project, shortfalls in the initial estimates and the need for major reconstructions by Telford necessitated government assistance of £50,000. In the face of these growing problems control of the canal subsequently passed to the Commissioners for the Caledonian Canal and the Barons of Exchequer. The Crinan canal stimulated the growth of Ardrishaig, and boosted the slate industry through providing safer access to Lowland markets, but failed to provide the benefits envisaged by its promoters. This is largely attributable to the canal's shallowness which restricted the size of vessel able to use the canal, thereby depriving it of vital traffic. Undeterred by the problems encountered in the construction of the Crinan canal, Telford made a proposal in 1801 arguing for the construction of a canal in Loch Linnhe linking the East and West coasts

which subsequently materialised as the Caledonian Canal.¹⁰⁵

In the period 1730 to 1850 many areas of Argyll relied on the coastal trade, and local ferries, but these were both limited and erratic. The advent of the steamship helped to improve communications, as well as providing more regular local services and to the Lowlands. Campbeltown, traditionally an important sea port, welcomed its first steamship, the *Britannia*, owned by McLellan and Laird, in 1816. This firm operated regular services between Glasgow and Campbeltown, and from 1817, Campbeltown to Derry. The success of these operations encouraged local businessmen to contribute to the formation of the Campbeltown and Glasgow Steam Packet Joint Stock Company in 1826. In other towns such as Oban, Inveraray, Lochgilphead and Dunoon similar services operated. The steamship's capacity for transporting livestock became apparent to at least some of the landlords in Argyll. In 1830 for example Duncan Campbell of Barcaldine and others bought the "*Henry Bell*" from Alexander Laird of Greenock to be used for carrying cattle to Liverpool, and this mode of carrying became more widely used.¹⁰⁶

It also appears that in the first half of the nineteenth century people in Argyll shared the widespread interest in the development of railways. This translated into support for a railway to Inveraray and Oban. The seventh Duke of Argyll, sceptical of its benefits and practicality, was hostile to the idea and the proposed railway failed to achieve fruition. The Duke's position and his arguments against any such scheme are outlined in a letter dated July 1845: 'I am quite confounded at the Mania of the people of Inveraray and Oban, proposing a plan of a Rail Road by Inveraray and Oban to all the World, to carry a few Black cattle and salt herring to the southern provinces of the Empire over the tops of our mountains and over the ferrys and through our mountains by tunnells . . . pray assure them of my unqualified opposition in and out of Parliament to such a wild goose plan'.¹⁰⁷ Despite this speculation it was not until the second part of the nineteenth century that Argyll was linked to the

Lowlands by rail.

In the period after Culloden the landed gentry in Argyll intensified efforts to promote economic development. The encouragement of industry was regarded as central to the overall strategy of pacifying and 'civilizing' the Highlands. Within this framework it was calculated that the introduction of new, and the development of existing, industries would provide employment for those dispossessed by the correlated attempts to transform the traditional agrarian system. These industries largely failed, however, to generate their anticipated wealth and employment opportunities. This can be imputed against economic conditions inherent in the Highlands and to extraneous factors which militated against significant industrial development. These are identifiable as a poor transport and communications network, the lack of suitable markets, exacerbated by a series of trade depressions, and the pressures of unequal competition with the Lowland and English industrial centres. Another crucial factor was the 'commonalty's' deep rooted hostility to participation in many of these industries. This stemmed from their commitment to agriculture, and to a traditional way of life inimical to the new work discipline and ethics intrinsic in such industries. In view of these various circumstances the local economy of Argyll remained overwhelmingly rural agrarian during the mid nineteenth century. Moreover, this county, in conjunction with the Highlands in general, was a supplier of raw materials and labour to the industrial centres. This highlights the colonial relationship existing between the Highlands and these markets.

Notes

- 1 ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/2; for the Earl of Breadalbane's attempts to establish a woollen manufactory at Killin, see SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/12/Box 1/4/5.
- 2 I.G. Lindsay and M. Cosh, Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll, (Edinburgh, 1973), 373.
- 3 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/40/9/4/48, 1728; SRO, Argyll Sheriff Court Records, Registrations of Deeds, SC 54/12/71, 24th June 1725 and 30th July 1726; J.M. Lindsay, 'The Iron industry in the Highlands', Scottish Historical Review, [SHR], 56, 1977, 56-57; D. Bremner, The Industries of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1869), 435-36.
- 4 Ardchattan House Argyll, Campbell of Ardchattan MSS, bundle 660.
- 5 Campbell of Ardchattan MSS, bundle 665.
- 6 Strathclyde Regional Archives, [SRA], Letters from members of the Campbell of Knockbuy family in Jamaica, 1728-1826, AGN/321; A. Fraser, Tayvallich and North Knapdale, (Glasgow, 1962), 68.
- 7 Fraser, Tayvallich and North Knapdale, 72.
- 8 D.C. MacTavish, Inveraray Papers, (Oban, 1939), 25-26.
- 9 SRO, Campbell of Stonefield MSS, GD 14/12, 22nd March 1740; Chambers Edinburgh Journal, 29th June 1839; Stewart, Sketches of the Highlanders, i, 147, n.
- 10 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1220, 31st Jan. 1777; for the activities of the Malcolms of Poltalloch in the West Indies see ABA, DR 2/16, /18, etc.
- 11 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1901, 19th March 1783; /1895, 12th April 1784; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1300, 18th Dec. 1774; Fraser, Tayvallich and North Knapdale, 83; McIntosh, History of Kintyre, 168.
- 12 'An account of the lead mines of Strontian', The Literary Rambler, (Glasgow, 1832), 209-211; Murray, York Building Company, 76.
- 13 SRA, Accounts of Roderick McLeod 1724-40, T-MJ/377.
- 14 Statutes at Large, PP, vol. 7, Cap.XLI, 455. Ardsheal, Kinlochmoidart, Callart and Locheil were all within the factory of Campbell of Glenure, but were imperfectly annexed as a result.

- of litigation brought against the Crown.
- 15 A. Smith, Jacobite Estates of the '45, (Edinburgh, 1982), 122; see also SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 728/19/1-18, 1764-65.
 - 16 SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 730/15.
 - 17 J. Knox, A tour through the Highlands of Scotland and the Hebridean Isles in 1786, (London, 1787), cxx.
 - 18 A. Allardyce (ed), Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century, 2 vol., (Edinburgh and London, 1888), i, 198.
 - 19 H. Hamilton, The Industrial Revolution in Scotland, (Oxford, 1932), 76.
 - 20 A.J. Durie, The Scottish Linen Industry in the 18th Century, (Edinburgh, 1979), 22-23.
 - 21 Hamilton, Industrial Revolution, 76.
 - 22 Durie, Scottish Linen Industry, 38.
 - 23 OSA, VIII, 147, 62-63; Robson, General View of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 56.
 - 24 ABA, Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply, CO 6/1/1/1.
 - 25 Scots Magazine, 1749, 301.
 - 26 ABA, Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply, CO 6/1/1/1.
 - 27 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/776, 1767; see also SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1354/67, 10th Feb. 1780 and Campbell of Balliveolan MSS, GD 13/153, 26th Aug. 1799.
 - 28 SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 728/47/1, 1766. For role of women see OSA, XX, 288; SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 727/16/1 and Walker, Economical History, ii, 351.
 - 29 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 70/1062/38.
 - 30 Linday and Cosh, Inveraray, 172.
 - 31 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 166, 180.
 - 32 C.W.J. Withers, 'Education and Anglicisation: the policy of the SSPCK toward the education of the Highlander, 1709-1825', Scottish Studies, 26, 1982, 44.
 - 33 ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/3.
 - 34 OSA, VIII, 62; Robson, General view of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 56.
 - 35 SRA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, T-THS/33/16, which also refers to

- research undertaken in this field by Father J. Webb, a local historian of Campbeltown; ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/2, 17th April, 8th May, 7th Sept. 1759.
- 36 MacDonald, General view of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 531-32; Gray, Highland Economy, 140-41.
- 37 S. Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the industrial revolution' Economic History Review, second series, XVI, 1963, 257-270; E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', Past and Present, 38, 1967, 84-95; MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 78; Rev. A. Whyte and Rev. Duncan MacFarlan, General view of the agriculture of Dumbarton, (Glasgow, 1811), 201; SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 727/60/2, 24th Feb. 1777; NSA, VII, 658-59; Durie, Scottish Linen industry, 76.
- 38 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, xix.
- 39 Ibid, 24.
- 40 For attempts to establish woollen manufactories on Mull see SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1956, 1792 and /1478/1, 10th July 1792; for the difficulties encountered at Tobermory see SRO, British Fisheries Society Papers, GD 9, Letter Bk. III, 5; 'Argyll', I, 302, 391-93.
- 41 Lindsay and Cosh, Inveraray, 274.
- 42 OSA, VIII, 147-48.
- 43 Mrs. K.W. Grant, 'Peasant Life in Argyllshire in the end of the 18th Century', SHR, 16, 1919, 148-49.
- 44 Lindsay and Cosh, Inveraray, 275.
- 45 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1743/13, 10th Aug. 1791; see also SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1400/1-6, 19th Aug. 1791.
- 46 Robson, General view of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 23; OSA, VIII, 280, 62.
- 47 OSA, VIII, 413, 73, 91, 95-96, 167-68, 267, 350, 365, 407; V, 583; XX, 382, 307; Gray, Highland Economy, 66.
- 48 'Third Report on the British Fisheries', PP, X, 1785, 48-49; see also Heron, General view of the Hebrides, 79-80;

- 'Proposed regulations for the Highland Society of Edinburgh',
Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society, i, 1799;
 ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/2, 23rd Oct. 1762, 120.
- 49 SR0, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 727/60; E 728/47.
- 50 SR0, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/12/Box 1/4/19.
- 51 Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/41/5, 65.
- 52 SR0, Campbell of Balliveolan MSS, GD 13/124/6.
- 53 James Fea, Considerations on the fisheries of the Scotch Islands,
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- 54 SR0, Forfeited Estate Papers, E 728/46/1, 15th Dec. 1763;
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- 57 OSA, VIII, 74-75, 257; XX, 653; Heron, General View of the
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- 59 OSA, XX, 269-70.
- 60 J. Dunlop, The British Fisheries Society, 1786-1893, (Edinburgh,
 1978), 85.
- 61 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 151.
- 62 SR0, British Fisheries Society Papers, GD 9/4; OSA, XX, 289.
- 63 Gray, Highland Economy, 108-113.
- 64 Robson, General view of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-
 shire, 30; OSA, VIII, 381-83, 33, 368.
- 65 Dunlop, British Fisheries Society, 24; L.E. Cochran, Scottish
 Trade with Ireland in the 18th Century, (Edinburgh, 1985), 51-52.
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Highland Economy, 118.

- 67 ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/3, 1st March 1785; OSA, VIII, 51, 90; SRO, Forfeited Estates Papers, E 727/19/2/1.
- 68 Knox, Tour through the Highlands, 94.
- 69 SRO, Synod of Argyll Papers, CH 2/557/7, 55-56.
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- 74 Lindsay, 'Iron industry in the Highlands', SHR, 392-96; A. Fell, The early iron industry of Furness, (Ulverston, 1908), 392-448.
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- 77 Ibid, 404.
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- 79 Fell, Iron Industry of Furness, 403-7.
- 80 NSA, VII, 519.
- 81 OSA, VIII, 199; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/438; see also SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1737, 29th Sept. 1756; /878, 2nd June 1789.
- 82 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 83; see also for example SRO, Campbell of Balliveolan MSS, GD 13/128, 1760; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2892/1, 30th Jan. 1805, /2702/6, 25th March 1825; MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1011/1-24, 1801.
- 83 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 17; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2741/11/1, 27th April 1819; /2702/6, 6th May 1811; /564/10a, 9th April 1822; /2296/5, 21st March 1811; MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/733, 9th May 1752.
- 84 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1941, 18th March 1784;

- and /2892/1, 30th Jan. 1805; MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1485, 10th March 1790; Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/4/6/34, 6th July 1807; /16/4/5/22, August 1806.
- 85 OSA, VIII, 254, 321; XX, 262; Pennant, Tour of Scotland, 278; MacDonal'd, General view of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 30; A. Fraser, Lochfyneside, (Edinburgh, 1971), 31-32; for details of the Craigerrine mine see SRO, Campbell of Argyll MSS, bundles 613, 615, etc.
- 86 Robson, General view of Argyll and the Western parts of Inverness-shire, 18; NSA, VII, 154; see also 'Lead mines of Strontian', Literary Rambler, 209-210.
- 87 'Third Report on the British Fisheries' (1785), app 2, 67; MacDonal'd, General view of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 30; N. Douglas, Journal of a mission to the Highlands, 1797, (Edinburgh, 1799), 62; J. McNeill, A meander round South Kintyre and tales of old times, (Keith, 1976), 7-27; OSA, VIII, 55-56; SRO, Stewart of Coll MSS, GD 1/580/14/3, 25th Jan. 1844.
- 88 OSA, VIII, 174; XX, 262, 362, 376; Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 120; Forsyth, Beauties of Scotland, V, 511; Anon., Sketch of a tour in the Highlands, (London, 1819), 222; W. McKay (ed), Letter book of Bailie John Steuart of Inverness, 1715-52, (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1915), second series, ix, 356-59; G.D. Tucker, 'The Slate islands of Scotland: the history of the Scottish slate industry', Business History, XIX, 1977, 19-22.
- 89 Tucker, 'Slate islands of Scotland', Business History, 23.
- 90 Tucker cites production figures for Easdale as follows:
- | | | | |
|------|---|-----------|--------|
| 1751 | - | 1,674,400 | slates |
| 1755 | - | 1,530,700 | " |
| 1756 | - | 1,604,400 | " |
| 1757 | - | 1,072,700 | " |
| 1758 | - | 899,800 | " |
| 1759 | - | 920,300 | " |
| 1760 | - | 968,000 | " |
| 1761 | - | 1,487,500 | " |

- Tucker, 'Slate islands of Scotland', Business history, 23-24.
- 91 Ibid, 25-26; Bremner, Industries of Scotland, 429-432. For the impact of slate duties on the industry see British Sessional Papers, House of Commons, vol. X, 1830-31.
- 92 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/18/64.
- 93 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/18/59, 22nd March 1830; for desubordination in Creggan's quarry near Inveraray see Lindsay and Cosh, Inveraray, 57-73.
- 94 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/18/64, 1831.
- 95 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/18/64, 1819.
- 96 SRO, Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2925/2, 24th Feb. 1808; Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/11/10/1/14, 14th May 1833; /11/10/1/16, 10th May 1833; /16/8/1/5, 1850.
- 97 OSA, XX, 412, 295, 325, 363; VIII, 190, 242, 271, 321-22, 415; Lindsay and Cosh, Inveraray, 154.
- 98 T. Telford, Life of Thomas Telford, (London, 1938), 291.
- 99 Smith, Jacobite Estates, 178.
- 100 OSA, VIII, 119, 7, 176-77, 242, 310; XX, 359, 392; Robson, General view of Argyll and Western parts of Inverness-shire, 33.
- 101 Heron, General view of the Hebrides, 72; OSA, VIII, 77, 200, 219, 320, 331; XX, 387, 322-26.
- 102 NSA, VII, 114, 36, 124, 155, 189, 251, 358.
- 103 ABA, Minute book of the Commissioners of Supply, CO 6/1/1/1.
- 104 J. Lindsay, The canals of Scotland, (Plymouth, 1968), 115-17.
- 105 'Mr Telford's Survey and Report on the coasts and Central Highlands of Scotland'; PP, V, 1802-3, 15.
- 106 Heron, General view of the Hebrides, 73; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2366; NSA, VII, 37.
- 107 SRO, Campbell of Argyll MSS, bundle 1556.

Chapter IV Smuggling and Illicit Distilling

During the eighteenth century the smuggling of unregistered foreign goods and merchandise made a significant contribution to the Highland economy. This trade was often associated with supporters of Jacobitism, who combined commercial enterprise with an ideological and nationalistic refusal to enrich the Whig State by paying taxes.¹ The inherent secretiveness of smuggling, and the resulting paucity of non official documental evidence, however, obscures this and many other aspects of an activity which plagued government throughout the period. The volume of smuggled tea, salt, spirits, tobacco etc increased to an 'alarming degree' in the aftermath of the American Revolution.² This reflected the high level of duties imposed on a variety of staple goods. Tax on the cheapest tea, for example, stood at over one hundred per cent of export price with seventy-five per cent being paid on the better quality teas. Similarly duties of nine shillings per gallon were levied on Brandy and spirits, when smugglers on the coast were selling them for only three to four shillings per gallon.³ The impact of these duties pushed prices up, and enabled the smugglers to undercut legal traders. Consequently seven million tons of tea, and up to thirteen million gallons of brandy and spirits, were smuggled into Britain between 1780 and 1783 alone.⁴

The geographical situation of Argyll, which afforded significant trade with Ireland and Lowland ports, most notably Greenock, and its long, isolated coastline created ideal conditions. This was reflected in many areas of the county, such as Kintyre, Skipness, Cowal, Lochfyne, Lochcreran, Lochetive and the islands, which became thriving and well established smuggling centres, and the revenue and employment generated must have been significant. The prevalence of smuggling on Lochfyne for example is confirmed in a memorial dated October 20th 1752 from Angus Fisher, 'late tacksman of the assize fishing', to the Duke of Argyll. The memorialist asked for one of the 'condemned smuggling wherrys' to be used in keeping the peace amongst the fishermen, and also:

'to suppress the practice of smuggling in foreign spirits and Irish unentered salt amongst the fishers

under whose protection such attempts are frequently made to the sensible prejudice of the Revenue and fair trader '.

Equally, in Lorn, the managers of Bonawe Furnace lamented in 1782 that their quay was the 'principal smuggling harbour in the district'.⁵

The shortage of many staple goods, and the high duties placed on others, created large scale demand in the Highlands for a variety of smuggled commodities. An illustration of this was the widespread demand for smuggled Irish salt which, underpinned by the unsuitability of indigenous salt for fish curing, exploded when government ruled fishermen could only purchase salt at the few, isolated customs posts existing in the Highlands. This entailed considerable expense and inconvenience for the fishermen, and thereby intensified demand for smuggled salt.⁶ The trade in contraband goods relied on a disparate network of routes, linking distant areas of Britain with each other, Europe and the overseas colonies. Reflecting this, in 1793, the minister of Kilfinan, Cowal, blamed the high level of premature death amongst his parishioners as 'owing to their having carried on a ruinous contraband trade with the Isle of Man'; and Joseph Mitchell wrote in Reminiscences of my life in the Highlands that the 'last' cargo from the 'Holland run' to the Moray Firth, during 1825, was undertaken by one Donald McKay with the assistance of the Campbeltown fishermen who, in common with many fishermen, combined the two activities.⁷

The trafficking of unregistered goods played a major role in the Highland economy, but the main type of smuggling undertaken was the illicit distillation of whisky for local demand, and sale to the Lowlands and England. This became one of the most important industries in the Highlands, and the production of whisky in Scotland, for the greater part of the period 1730 to 1850, depended largely on the illegal operation of small, domestic stills. Illicit distilling received a 'vast stimulus', according to T.M. Devine in 'The rise and fall of illicit whisky making in Northern Scotland, c. 1780-1840', from the legislative constraints, placed by government, on distilling. Up

until 1785 the tax on distilling was directly related to the quantity of wash produced. This system demanded large scale production and was difficult to enforce.⁸ To rectify these conditions an act was passed in 1786 which, by prohibiting the operation of stills below 40 gallons, outlawed the prevailing mode of production in the Highlands. The result was the proliferation of smuggling on a massive scale, especially since high licence fees excluded the small scale producers from the legal market. Moreover, the Highlands and Lowlands were split into separate production zones, still duties of twenty and thirty shillings per gallon being set respectively, with Highland whisky exports to the Lowlands being prohibited. The effects of this act, exacerbated by the disruption caused by the periodic bans on distilling during the wars with France, the increase of licence duty to £9 per gallon in 1797 and subsequent rises in taxes on whisky and malt, at a time of growing demand and consumption in the Lowland industrial centres where whisky drinking reached the same endemic levels as gin did in England, and the increase in licence fees from £40 in 1786, for a forty gallon still, to £100 in the 1790s, were further damaging blows to the licensed distillers.⁹

The extent of illicit distilling, and the problems faced by government in attempting to suppress it, were outlined in the Report on Distilleries of 1798:

'Notwithstanding all the care and provisions of the legislature to prohibit the private making of spirit, and our most unremitting attention and strictest injunctions to our officers to carry the same into execution, it is an unquestionable truth that throughout Scotland, and particularly in the remote Highlands and Northern counties, a great deal of spirits are distilled both for sale and for private use. The injury the revenue thereby sustain is considerable . . . '.

The sheer magnitude of illicit distilling in the Highlands was reflected in the number of still seizures made. In 1782, for example,

over a thousand were made, and when it is considered that during this period the ratio of stills operating to those seized was, in one official estimate, as high as twenty to one, the universal nature of illicit distilling in the Highlands begins to become apparent.¹⁰

The smugglers provided the bulk of whisky consumed in the Highlands, and put many licensed distillers out of business in the Lowlands. The impact of illicit distilling was outlined by John Stein of Kilbagie, a leading distiller, in his evidence to a House of Commons Select Committee during 1798. Stein stated that 'owing to the interference of Highland spirits we have been unable to find sales', and claimed over half the spirits consumed in Scotland were illicitly produced in the Highlands. These claims were substantiated by a committee of the Highland Society in 1816, which found licensed distilling to have been totally undermined by smugglers:

'interfering in the market of the Lowlands, in consequence of producing a more palatable beverage, and being able to sell it at a lower rate than he (the smuggler) could afford to do if he paid duty'.¹¹

The pressure of this competition heightened in the early nineteenth century, with additional legislative restraints placed on distilling and successive increases in excise duties. To offset these burdens licensed distillers increased output, and used large quantities of unmalted grain. This, however, only further weakened their position - quality declined and thus gave the illicit distillers, in light of their access to large quantities of malted grain, even more opportunity to expand production of licensed distillers. Against this background legal production in many areas such as Argyll, Perth, Sutherland and Aberdeen simply ceased, and illicit operations rapidly expanded. In Kintyre, an important area of grain production and distilling, a large number of licensed distillers converted to illegal production and between 1797 and 1817 there were no licensed distilleries. This can be put in perspective by considering that in Campbeltown alone there had been thirty-two stills in 1795, annually

producing 25,150 gallons of whisky, which, if projected to Kintyre as a whole, suggests that the number of licensed stills making the change to illicit trade must have been considerable. Consequently by 1823 there was only one licensed distillery, at Lochgilhead, operative throughout Argyll.¹²

To counter the effects of illicit distilling and smuggling, government reacted by passing further legislation. In 1814, against a background mood of despair in official circles, an act was passed prohibiting the operation of stills under five hundred gallons. This measure, however, simply fueled these activities, and the County authorities impressed this upon the government representatives at their meetings in 1814 and 1815 when they lobbied for its repeal. Government tried to overcome the problem in 1816, by abolishing the distinction between the Highland and Lowland zones and lifting the restrictions on the operation of small stills, but this again proved ineffectual. The failure of such initiatives created conditions, depicted by MacDonalld of Staffa, Sheriff Depute of Stirling and principal secretary of the Highland Society, in which the very problems they were ostensibly designed to eradicate reached 'unprecedented levels', and the Highlands remained the 'Great theatre of this extensive mischief'.¹³

In many parts of this country whisky was often the, or one of the, most important staple commodities. This was evident in Argyll, wherein it assumed great significance with respect to the employment and revenue created. In Kintyre, illicit distilling ranked second only to agriculture and fishing, with which it was intimately linked in terms of these opportunities, on islands such as Islay, the absence of revenue officers, and the failure to suppress smuggling, afforded 'a liberty of brewing whisky' which was produced in great quantities. The 'commonalty' exhibited a complete and fundamental defiance of authority and a 'common feeling against the law'.¹⁴ On Islay for example in 1795 over ninety stills were seized only to be quickly replaced by tinkers invited over from Ireland. The subsequent refusal

of the Revenue to renew the local exciseman's lease enraged, and increased the determination of, the people who:

'finding they were not to take out licences for a trifling sum, as before, were most displeased, and resolved not to take out licences, but they made no resolution not to distill. Mr Ross (the revenue officer) says, they are distilling perhaps to a greater extent than ever, sending their spirits to Argyllshire, Inverness-shire, Mull, and even to Lewis, to Galloway and Ireland; but there has not been a licence taken out for distilling spirits nor has a shilling of excise revenue been paid in Islay since the prohibition'.¹⁵

Another insight into the prevalence of illicit distilling and smuggling is provided in a memorial of 1813 from Dr McKeay, Oban, to Colonel Alexander Campbell of Ardchattan who, as an Excise Commissioner, was a determined opponent of these activities. In McKeay's estimation there were over five hundred 'tipple' houses in Argyll, and many villages were allegedly supported by the sale of whisky, to the extent that in only one out of forty-five parishes, stills were not 'constantly at work' producing a quantity of whisky so 'enormous' as to 'almost exceed(s) credibility'. The substance of this account is corroborated by the Twelfth Report of the Revenue Commissioners, which detailed that throughout Argyll in the period 1822-24 alone, against the background of intensifying measures being taken against smugglers, there were no less than a staggering 9,756 prosecutions for, or intelligence received of, offences in violation of the excise laws before magistrates.¹⁶

In this county there was a definite, and significant, connection between seasonal migration and illicit distilling and smuggling, which was outlined in the Fifth Report on the Revenue, published in 1823:

'Sons of the small farmers will go during the summer

and harvest months, to the Low country, and earn by their industry and sober and frugal habits of living, a few pounds, with which they come back and purchase an illegal still, about which two or more join. Then they bargain with the local farmers, "If you will give me a given number of bolls of barley I will give you so much money".¹⁷

Seasonal migration to the Lowlands, both for industrial and agricultural work, was increasingly large in the period 1730 to 1850, and could therefore have constituted an important source of capital for those setting up as illicit distillers, which in turn could have offset the need for seasonal migration amongst the older generation.

The basis upon which illicit distilling and smuggling were undertaken reflected, and was the natural extension of, the communal agriculture and social intercourse within the traditional system of the Highlands. Consequently the costs and risks of illicit distilling were shared amongst small groups of operators. An aspect of their highly integrated co-operation was the collective payment of any fines arising from convictions. In the 1820s, as part of the intensifying efforts to root out smuggling, steps were taken to undermine illicit production by prohibiting the communal payment of fines. Reflecting this trend, a Justice of the Peace Court in January 1826, fined four Skipness tenants a total of £70 for allowing illicit distilling on their muir, and, wishing then to 'smart', refused to allow the tenants to pay collectively.¹⁸

The prevalence of this mode of production is illustrated by the still books of Robert Armour, a Campbeltown plumber. In two hundred transactions between May 1811 and September 1817, involving the sale of stills and equipment, only twenty per cent were to individuals, who tended to be the better off elements in the community, such as farmers and self-employed artisans, and the majority of sales were to small groups of small tenants and cottars. This latter group also included older members of the community who were without other means

of support. One of the most important features of the still books was the extensive involvement of women in illicit distilling - one hundred transactions were with men, in groups or as individuals, while fifty-eight involved women, in groups or individually, and forty-two were with mixed groups.¹⁹ It is insufficient to suggest that women's participation in smuggling can simply be attributed to their acting as 'fronts' for tenant farmers.²⁰ Admittedly this was a factor, but it should not be exaggerated. Women's active, and arguably predominant, role in all levels of illicit distilling and smuggling has to be understood in the light of the 'primitive detritus' existing within the traditional society, which afforded women a relatively higher status, and measure of independence, than within capitalist society.²¹ This was most dramatically evident in women's resistance to the clearances.

The prevalence of illicit distilling and smuggling was to be a major problem for government, and the landlords and clergy expected to confront them on a local level. In some instances these groups gave tacit support to such activities, but in Argyll it would appear that the great majority of proprietors, led by the successive dukes of Argyll, took 'great pains in discouraging the pernicious practice of illicit distilling'. An example of this resolve was evident at a meeting of the heritors of Islay in 1796, which 'unanimously resolve(d) individually and collectively to exert themselves in putting a total stop to the said illegal practices'. Similarly in 1801, Malcolm of Poltalloch ordered his estate officials to destroy the smuggling bothies on his estate, and to evict any tenants who refused to stop illicitly distilling.²²

Landlords wrote clauses into leases or estate regulations prohibiting illicit distilling and smuggling. They weakened this sanction, however, by the refusal to provide leases, or only such as would, in effect, permanently keep their tenants in a position of insecurity. Consequently, large numbers of small tenants and cottars were prepared to risk eviction by committing themselves to these practices. Reflecting this, Malcolm McLaurin, chamberlain of Tiree,

informed the Duke of Argyll in 1803:

'Notwithstanding of the excise fines last year, one of the tenants under summons of removal has been bold enough to commence distilling of late, and two others who were not followed the example'.²³

The landed interest made widespread use of eviction to try to stop illicit distilling and smuggling. The minister for Gigha and Cara wrote approvingly, in the 1840s, of the reliance on this expedient, which he recommended as the best means of suppression.²⁴ Despite such efforts, illicit distilling and smuggling remained a grave problem for government and local authority figures/agencies during the greater part of this period. The situation was exacerbated by legislation which in effect demoralised the landlords responsible for its enforcement. The 1816 Act, for example, led to an explosion of smuggling, which, it was reported, defeated the landlords:

'the Gentlemen (of Argyll and Inverness) felt their efforts defeated in the first operation of the Small Stills Act that after having made some remonstrances, they gave up the point'.

A memorial of 1816 from the Commissioners of supply to the Duke of Argyll, urging sterner measures against smugglers, manifests the growing desperation felt by the landlords, as the 'commonalty' resisted attempts to stamp out illicit distilling and smuggling.²⁵

Landlords also tried to dictate changes in the 'commonalty's' drinking tastes and preferences. This was one of the factors underpinning their efforts to develop beer *brewing*. Such initiatives, however, failed or had limited success in the face of the 'commonalty's' resistance and refusal to co-operate with the landlords' schemes. A letter of 1801 from the chamberlain of Tiree to the Duke of Argyll illustrates the level of opposition encountered:

'None could be found in the island willing to undertake the distilling in a legal way and it is submitted to your Grace whither in future any such

could be encouraged, as it may produce too great facility of procuring spirits, to which the natives are much addicted'.²⁶

The landlords' opposition to illicit distilling and smuggling has to be viewed in the light of their commitment to transforming traditional agriculture and developing industry. These activities were alleged to reinforce irregular labour rhythms, and to create widespread desubordination to authority and 'lawlessness', which the landlords regarded as major stumbling blocks to their efforts to effect economic development in the Highlands.

These views, and the concerns underpinning them, are encapsulated in a report, compiled by the Highland Society in 1816, with reference to the distillery laws:

'That illicit distillation prevails to a great extent in the Highland district of the country; and that of late years, it has been gradually extending its baneful influence into the Lowlands, and has found its way so far even as the border counties of Scotland. That this practice, and the traffic to which it gives rise, are gradually changing the character of the people, and undermining their morals; converting those engaged in it from being a sober, a moral, and well disposed people, obedient to the laws, and useful members of the state, into a people habitually living in breach of the law; many of them outlaws, continually practising fraud, deceit, and violence; holding in contempt the sanctity of an oath, living in fear of their neighbours becoming informers, and therefore obliged to corrupt them by bribes or terrify them by threats, into silence; and withdrawing themselves from the more sober pursuits of regular industry, and devoting

themselves to this most pernicious means of livelihood'.²⁷

The nature of illicit distilling and smuggling were perfectly suited to the domestic economy of the Highlands, which centred on agriculture and a series of seasonally adjusted tasks. Their relationship with agriculture was depicted in a Board of Excise report of 1781:

'The people depend wholly upon the plough and on cattle for support, both of which were greatly promoted by the use of private stills. First, by encouraging the growth of Barley, which the tenants either distilled or sold to his neighbours for that use, and was thereby enabled to pay his rent to the landlord. Secondly the straw and grain fed the cattle in the winter season, when no forage could be had'.²⁸

The landlords argued that this connection served only to retard efforts to 'improve' agriculture. Indeed in some areas such as Tiree for example illicit distilling was a major factor behind resistance to the 'improvements'. In 1771 the Duke of Argyll attempted to suppress this influence by ordering the closure of all 'tippling houses' and the construction of an inn, and the appointment of a minister to try to maintain 'order' amongst the fishermen settled at Scarnish. Despite such initiatives many landlords complained that tenants neglected agriculture to concentrate on smuggling.²⁹

It was also alleged by the landlords and clergy that these illicit practices grew at the expense of other industries. This received comment, with respect to fishing, from the minister of Craignish in 1791:

'The want of stores judiciously disposed through the country - the bonds and provisos that stand in the way render it impossible to make a general provision for a herring fishing which, in many

parts of the coast, is transitory and precarious. Thus smuggling is encouraged, nay, made necessary; and thus the fishing in general is discouraged - and thus many opportunities of contributing less or more to the wealth and prosperity of the nation are for ever lost'.³⁰

The Duke of Argyll, and other landlords, wanted tenants to undertake fishing on a full time basis, as crucial to the success of their policy of clearing the population of large areas to accommodate larger farms and sheep. The uncertainty of fishing, the 'commonalty's' commitment to the land, and the relatively lucrative returns of illicit distilling led to the combination of these activities. Consequently the fishermen in many districts of Argyll, such as Kintyre, Cowal and the islands, provided transport for smuggled goods and spirits, thereby incurring the anger of the landed elite.

Another factor underlying this opposition was the effect which illicit distilling and smuggling had on preventing the landed elite profiteering from inflated grain and barley prices during the Napoleonic War period. To exploit this situation the landlords demanded rent payments in kind. The tenants, however, preferred to pay cash, which they earned by distilling their barley into whisky. The result was a major clash of interest. Reflecting this, on Tiree it was reported in 1800, a staggering one hundred and fifty-seven people having 'lately been convicted before the Justices for illicit distilling' were under the threat of eviction because the Duke of Argyll had 'timeously signified his desire to have these rents paid him in Barley, and they have chosen to break the law, and to refuse his request by making it into whisky'.³¹ In the period after 1815 tenants still remained unwilling to give up their barley for rent payments. Consequently the landlords' attempts to establish a monopoly over grain supply and marketing brought them into further conflict with the 'commonalty'. The difficulties faced by the landlords were depicted in a letter of 1826 to John Campbell of Drumnamucklach from his factor who warned that his tenants should not be allowed to 'go hunting for

Kintyre smugglers until we try to deal with the Lochgilphead Company', which was a local concern probably active in purchasing grain.³²

The landlords and clergy shared a common opposition to illicit distilling and smuggling, based on economic considerations underpinned by a generally defined aim of destroying all vestiges of 'Feudalism'/'tribalism', and an avowed concern with the effects the illicit trade was having on the 'commonalty's' sobriety and morals. The clergy's stance was set out in the Statistical Accounts, compiled in the 1790s and 1840s. A marked feature of the Old Statistical Account was the ministers' recurrent pleas for the 'rigorous suppression' of illicit distilling and smuggling, and the dram shops they encouraged. Typifying this theme in 1791 the Reverend John Smith, minister for the parish of Campbeltown, made a vociferous and wide ranging attack on these practices, the tone of which was re-echoed in other parishes:

'This business is undoubtedly gainful to a few individuals but extremely ruinous to the community. It consumes their means, hurts their morals, and destroys both their understandings and their health. Were it not for preventing the temptation of smuggling a duty next to a prohibition would be mercy'.³³

In some parishes the excessive drinking habits of women appeared to merit special censure from despairing ministers:

'Too lavish use of spirits has been often complained of, amongst the inferior ranks. Dram drinking, however, though still too much practised, particularly by females of the lowest class, is happily less prevalent than at any former periods; and it were to be wished, that so hurtful a practice could be completely abolished'.

Another complaint frequently heard before Kirk sessions was that of illicit distilling and smuggling on a Sunday, which resulted in the guilty parties being disciplined.³⁴

The deep rooted, and prevalent, nature of illicit distilling and smuggling forced the clergy to devote considerable time and effort to root them out. The minister of Kilchrenan and Dalavich, however, was, writing in the 1840s, not the only minister in the Highlands to find that no amount of Kirk discipline and moral pressure was effectual in the face of the 'commonalty's' deep commitment to these activities:

'The practice of illicit distilling prevailed at one time to a very great extent. The present incumbent used every endeavour to put a stop to it both by private and public remonstrance, and by the exercise of Church discipline; but all his efforts proving fruitless, he had no alternative but to represent the matter to the Board of Excise, who effectually put it down in 1829. It has however of late (but to a very slight extent) been resumed. He has always found it not merely to have a most demoralizing effect upon the parishioners being the fruitful source of drunkenness, sabbath desecration, and other vices, but to be most ruinous to the temporal interests of those engaged in it . . .'.³⁵

Such efforts to suppress the illicit trade brought the landlords and clergy into conflict with the 'commonalty'. The nature, and extent, of this clash of attitudes and values becomes apparent when its role, within the Highlands, is considered. In the period 1730 to 1850 this trade was to be an important source of rent, particularly since the people, living in congested crofting communities, faced increasing rent demands despite the economic depression, which followed the end of the Wars with France in 1815. To an impoverished tenantry, therefore, smuggling represented an important addition to income from agriculture and fishing. In Kintyre, for example, the ten shillings per week, which tenants could earn, enabled them to keep extra stock. It also allowed tenants to marry younger, and to have larger families. This, in turn, perpetuated the need for illicit

cash income.³⁶

The comparatively large gains from illicit distilling and smuggling secured the active involvement of whole communities, both directly in the processes of production and defence against seizures, and in ancillary activities such as grain growing, peat cutting, transportation and supplying coal. Smuggling was regarded as a legitimate and profitable enterprise, it not being 'considered a crime to defraud the Government of any article obtained in this way for family use'.³⁷ This aspect of the cultural conflict existing between the 'commonalty' and the landlords and clergy was outlined by Stewart of Garth in Sketches of the Character, manners and present state of the Highlanders of Scotland:

'They (the 'commonalty') are the more readily betrayed into it, as, though acute and ingenious in regard to all that comes within the scope of their observation, they do not comprehend the nature or purpose of imposts levied on the produce of the soil, nor have they any distinct idea that the produce of smuggling is attended with disgrace or turpitude. Their excuse for engaging in such a traffic is, that its aid is necessary to enable them to pay their rents and taxes; - an allegation which supposes that, these demands require the open violation of the law, by practice at once destructive of health and good morals, and affords a lamentable instance of the state to which they find themselves reduced'.³⁸

The refusal to recognise Government's right to levy taxes on a natural product also highlighted the residual strength of cultural Jacobitism in the nineteenth century. In Reminiscences and Reflections of an Octogenerian Highlander, D. Campbell referred to the Glenlyon clergy's efforts, during the 1830s and 1840s, to smash the widespread opposition against paying taxes to an 'English' government:

'"Render to Caesar" preaching did more than excisemen and cuttersmen to convince Glen farmers that smuggling was sinful and should be discontinued. It was not easy to convince any Highland growers of Bere and Barley that the English Parliament had not done them gross injustice in the whisky business, and that they had not a perfect moral right to convert their grain into malt and whisky, which found a ready market in the Lowlands, and made it easy for them to pay their rents'.³⁹

The strength of popular support for, and involvement in, illicit distilling and smuggling made it both difficult and dangerous for extraneous forces to interfere with their operation. Government attempts to suppress the illicit trade brought its agents into conflict with whole communities, acting upon the belief that their rights, livelihoods and way of life were all under threat. The 'commonalty's' commitment can be viewed as a defence of the local economy and traditional industries in the face of capitalist penetration, one aspect of which was the use of taxes to create monopolies. The significance, and effects, of this phenomenon were not lost on contemporaries. In the General View of the Agriculture of Bute, William Aiton blamed such developments for the prevalence and proliferation of illicit distilling and smuggling:

'The late Mr Pitt seemed to be fond of establishing monopolies in every department of manufacture and commerce that fell under taxation, and of driving the small dealer from the market. None of his monopolies could be more pernicious to the health and morals of mankind, than that which deprived the people of Scotland of ale brewed by themselves; made all their whisky to come from large distillers; and changed the duty according to time'.⁴⁰

The extent of popular participation in the illicit trade, determined that smugglers were never regarded as 'criminals' amongst the 'commonalty'. Indeed those imprisoned were often treated with leniency, and even indulgently within local jails. Reflecting this trend a group caught in North Knapdale, during the mid eighteenth century, sent to Inveraray were 'out in the street every day having the time of their life' because their cousin was the jailor. This story, however, had a less than happy ending, tradition telling that they were seized by the Press Gang on the way home.⁴¹ The strength of the 'commonalty's' commitment also made it impossible to suppress illicit distilling and smuggling through the use of informers. The Sheriff Depute of Perth, John H Forbes, outlined the futility of using such expedients:

'In regard to informers, I believe there is no possibility of getting people to inform. I do not mean to say that it is from intimidation but it is from a fellow feeling; they are all engaged in the same sort of traffic; it is the only market they can have for their barley, and they get a much higher price for it'.

This evidence provides a revealing insight into the unity of purpose these activities generated amongst the 'commonalty', and, where in certain cases this 'fellow feeling' did not extend, would-be informers faced the threat of social ostracisation, arson, assault or even death. Consequently, initiatives, such as that undertaken in 1785 by the Lorn District meeting of the Commissioners of Supply recommending 'every encouragement and countenance' be given to informers, had little impact.⁴²

With respect to the smuggling of contraband goods the conflict between the agents of authority and the 'commonalty' reached a critical stage in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the nature and implications of which were outlined by the revenue commissioners in the First Report on Smuggling of 1783:

' . . . the enormities of such violence and extent

amounts to a partial state of Anarchy and Rebellion; and have a tendency to weaken and impair every idea of a regular government, and all due submission to the laws of the land'.

The magnitude of deforcements received comment from the Board of Customs and Excise in their correspondence with the Treasury. In a letter dated February 23rd 1791 the Board noted the upsurge in the smuggling of Tobacco, Spirits and tea, and urgently demanded more troops to combat the increase, since revenue patrols were being 'assaulted, beat and severely wounded to the danger of their lives, and we are sorry to find that there prevails such a lawless disposition in many parts of the Kingdom that it is with difficulty and risque that our officers execute even the ordinary parts of their duty and carry the laws of the Revenue into moderate execution'.⁴³

The difficulties encountered by the Revenue, in trying to enforce these laws, can be illustrated by reference to the island of Sanda in Kintyre. This island was an important smuggling depot, where goods were transported throughout the county by fishing boats and coastal traders. Sanda and other parts of Kintyre, most notably Peninver and Tonrioch, were frequently the scenes of violent conflicts between the smugglers and the revenue patrols. Customs house records reveal that, in the face of this resistance, the smugglers often out-gunned the revenue. In 1790, for example, the collector wrote to the Board that he had proceeded with a party of soldiers to Sanda, where a lugger loaded with smuggled goods had arrived. It proved impossible, however, to seize the cargo as the ship 'was of too superior force, to encounter with her, she having 40 or 50 men aboard', and so remained, unmolested, in the harbour. The collector requested swivel guns on the basis that the smugglers tended to be superiorly armed: '. . . we understand that even small smuggling vessels have swivels or guns to keep off boats unarmed'.⁴⁴

Against this background, the revenue commissioners believed that a military solution was required:

'Of themselves, or with the slender and casual assistance of the civil power, our officers are totally inadequate, to suppress the lawless and violent proceedings which at present so much prevail. Even the aid of the military is often defeated, or insufficient; but, upon the whole, in the present formidable state of smuggling, we apprehend nothing will tend to check its progress by land, than having the coasts guarded in some degree by a few regiments of light dragoons, which are the terror of smugglers'.

The authors of this report, however, were apparently resigned to the fact that troops alone could not provide a 'radical and complete revenue', and would have to be backed by even more stringent penal laws and higher salaries for revenue officers. It was to be a combination of these factors, accentuated by the escalation of clearance, which helped to turn the tide against smuggling in the late 1820s and 1830s, when the contraband trade, although still widespread, involved a decreasing volume of goods, to the extent that by the mid nineteenth century it was only undertaken on a small scale.⁴⁵

Contemporaneously, the 'commonalty' resisted the seizure of stills and equipment by revenue officers. Resistance was generally characterised by the intrusion of the 'universally detested' revenue officers and their escorts into communities, wherein illicit distilling was being undertaken, an action which provoked the rapid and mass mobilisation of the inhabitants to deforce the Revenue. The highly integrated defence system this gave rise to was described by Dr McKeay in his correspondence of 1813 with Colonel Campbell of Ardchattan, in which he also described popular attitudes towards smuggling:

'So regular is this manufacture carried on, that the moment an officer appears, the alarm is given by proper spies appointed in every farm where the trade is conducted, who communicate information by

fixed telegraphic signs, so that the distillers, who is always on the look out from his hidden retreat, has an opportunity of removing everything before the officer can get near him. In fact the whole country people will go any length to protect and conceal the infamy of their neighbours in this business, and to aid any imposition of which they may be guilty: and to give information against an illicit distiller is considered the most base and inexcusable of all crimes such are their rooted habits of deceit in whatever relates to the revenue'.⁴⁶

The intensity of resistance made the deforcement and assault of revenue parties commonplace. In North Knapdale, for example, 'the fierce and daring encounters of the Skipness men with the officers of the excise were long proverbial. It was no uncommon exploit with them to overpower a whole crew of cuttersmen, then to carry off their oars and tackle and coolly set them adrift in their own boats'.⁴⁷ Deforcements frequently resulted in gun battles in which combatants on both sides were occasionally killed. Consequently large areas of the Highlands became no go areas into which the revenue parties dared not enter, or did so in the knowledge that they would invariably encounter physical resistance. This was admitted in official reports:

' . . . it is supposed that there are unlicensed stills there (Kintyre) though none have been as yet detected; but it was said the officers there durst not do their duty'.

The existence of such conditions, with respect to Kintyre, were substantiated by Neil Douglas, the missionary's, account of Drumlennan, near Campbeltown, in his Journal of a Mission to the Highlands 1797:

'The people are thought very rude in their manners, so that no excisemen dare invade their borders; whence the place is usually termed the Black quarter'.

Another factor making life difficult for the local revenue men stationed at Campbeltown was the 'commonalty's' decision to boycott them, something which must have intensified existing feelings of vulnerability created by the incidence of physical resistance to their work.⁴⁸ The use of this tactic against the hated revenue patrols was probably universal.

These mobilisations, in which women played an important and often predominant role, were perceived by their participants to be for the express purpose of obtaining 'restitution'.⁴⁹ Restitution could involve preventing the seizure of stills and deforcing the revenue, and/or exacting revenge on them for their intrusions and even extorting compensation for damage done. On January 3rd 1817, for example, the people of Kilmun told the revenue officers and their escort, whom they were beseiging in a house after the latter had destroyed some stills, that 'they wanted the officers to turn out; and that, by God, they would tear their livers, unless they paid £5 for the damage they had done'. This money was duly obtained when the people stormed the house. Another fairly typical incident occurred on October 3rd 1820 when a revenue patrol, learning of widespread illicit distilling, proceeded to Lochaweside. The party of thirty split into two groups with the first going to Shillachan farm, in the parish of Innishail, but it had to retire because the local people were well armed. A 'great number' of people then attacked, and shot at, the patrol. The second party, upon coming to their assistance, also came under fierce attack.⁵⁰

These struggles reveal the 'commonalty's' commitment to defending their communities and rights. A large number of revenue officers and their escorts were, therefore, in the words of the defence council at the trial of soldiers accused of murdering a man during a deforcement in Cowal, used by the people in 'a most barbrous manner more like the savage cruelty of Indians, than the brave spirit of Scots Highlanders'. Reflecting this, Reverend C Lesingham Smith observed in Excursions through the Highlands and Islands of Scotland

in 1835 and 1836 that at Taynuilt, in Lorn, there was the 'Exciseman's Cairn' where 'it seems a collision took place here between this officer and the peasants, who used him with great cruelty, cutting off his ears and nose'. It was the intensity of resistance which required revenue patrols to load arms whenever beginning a search and for Government to rely on a military solution to counter smuggling and illicit distilling for the greater part of this period.⁵¹

This collective defiance should be seen as an integral part of the much wider fight to defend the traditional culture, way of life and industries in the face of capitalist penetration. The arising cultural conflict was an expression of the class struggle, existing in the Highlands, between the interests of the landed elite and the 'commonalty' on the other side. Another aspect of the contemptuous disregard for the law and authority was the ritualistic humiliation of revenue officers and their escorts, who were often assaulted and stripped by the women, or by men dressed as women, and set adrift in boats. Resistance was also embodied in the readiness to confront local militia units sent to assist revenue patrols, and the total disregard for the efforts of local authority figures, such as tacksmen, magistrates and justices of the peace.⁵² The latter's writs did not extend to forcing their authority on whole communities deforcing the revenue or, for example, besieging its officers who, having taken refuge in a house or barn, found themselves at the tender mercies of the local people. Indeed efforts to do so merely inflamed class tensions:

' . . . the severity and intricacy of the excise laws, which render them equally difficult to be understood or obeyed conjoined with the conduct of individual proprietors, form the theme of their (the tenants) complaints. The delicate situation in which landlords are placed, when sitting as magistrates on Excise Courts, and inflicting penalties for smuggling, was a strong influence on the minds of their tenants, who

complain that they cannot dispose of their produce, or pay their rents, without the aid of this forbidden traffic; and it is difficult to persuade them that gentlemen are sincere in their attempts to suppress a practice without which as it is asserted, their incomes could not be paid, in a country where legal distillation is in a manner prohibited. How powerfully this appearance of inconsistency contributes to effect the esteem and respects of tenants for their landlords, must be sufficiently clear'.⁵³

The deterioration of class relations was the inevitable result when external authority agencies were perceived to have overstepped the legitimate bounds of their effective jurisdiction and control. Such resistance also manifested itself in hostility to law officers who were deforced while trying to serve summons, writs and indictments for debts, rent arrears and poindings, and in the defence of wrecks, called 'God sends', which were regarded as falling to the possession of local communities rather than to the landlords as the law required.⁵⁴ With reference to the deforcement of revenue officers these events, and the attitudes precipitating them, reveal the coherence of opposition towards the encroachment of authority, and the strength of support for illicit distilling. They embody the determination to defend community rights, and to exert sanctions against the authors of such intrusions. Close physical proximity, and shared experiences and traditions, within tight knit communities, created a potent social defence system released when the Community Interest was thought to be under threat.

Illicit distilling and smuggling reinforced each community's pool of shared experience and sense of solidarity, enhanced the folk culture, and, therefore, became a focal point of resistance to attacks on the traditional society and its customs. Against this background, the smuggler became a heroic figure, outwitting, or beating up, the

gawger. The Laird of Coll, for example, strongly opposed smuggling but he was defied by his tenants, most notably Alexander MacLean, 'An Cupair Collach' (The Coll Cooper), who was a particularly skilled and active smuggler. Folklore tells that on one excursion near Skerryvore he caught a mermaid, and before releasing her demanded 'a device and the skill with which I can detect the revenue cutters, they are forever hunting me'. The mermaid gave him two sea nuts one of which produced a fog and the other, if placed in the ear, gave intelligence of where the patrols were. This tale reflects the 'commonalty's' concern at the intensification of attempts to suppress smuggling in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In other tales, such as 'How Grannie beat the Gawger', the 'commonalty's' fear, and hatred, of the revenue patrols were expressed in ridicule.⁵⁵

A critical stage in the history of illicit distilling within the Highlands was reached in the 1820s and 1830s. Against a background of profound socio-economic dislocation, new legislation began to have an impact in conjunction with intensifying efforts to suppress the illicit trade. The 1822 Illicit Distillation Act raised fines, sanctioned the destruction of seized equipment, and made landlords culpable for any stills found on their property. This measure hardened attitudes amongst the landed elite, at a time when landlords were undertaking the whole scale clearance of the crofting communities.

Another measure implemented was the 1823 Excise Duty Act, which reduced duties by fifty per cent to 2s 4½d per gallon and introduced a general licence of £10. This gave a major boost to licenced distilling, which became a leading industry in Argyll. Reflecting the involvement of the landlords - a significant factor underpinning this group's hostility to illicit distilling - W.F. Campbell of Shawfield helped establish the Port Ellen distillery in 1825, while, contemporaneously, the Duke of Argyll gave support to several distilleries in Campbeltown.⁵⁶

The main centres of distilling were Kintyre and the adjacent islands, most notably Islay and Jura. In Campbeltown there were twenty-five distilleries in the 1840s, and whisky was the town's staple commodity. In 1842 these distilleries consumed an estimated 303,711 bushels of barley and 79,508 of bear. The distilleries, therefore, provided a vital market for local farmers, in what was a traditional grain growing area. During the same year, they produced 747,502 gallons of whisky, which were sold by Glasgow wholesalers in the Lowlands and overseas. On Islay there were ten distilleries, three of which at Lossit, Talant and Bowmore annually produced 60,000 gallons of whisky.⁵⁷

In the light of these schemes to counter illicit distilling a number of ministers felt confident enough, in the 1840s, to claim that this trade had been completely suppressed in their parishes. Such conclusions, however, appear optimistic and even illusory, when placed in a wider context, as the adoption of these exigencies escalated the conflict between the agents of authority and the 'commonalty' during the 1830s. Moreover, when the effects of this strategy, and the depopulation of the Highlands, began to weaken the 'commonalty's' resistance to the disintegration of the traditional society, strong evidence suggests that the 'commonalty' adapted to this growing threat by making production even more clandestine and harder to detect. Reflecting this trend, the Reverend D. MacLachlan maintained in 1845 that the 'degrading and demoralizing practice of smuggling is totally unknown in the parish of North Knapdale', but local tradition has established that there were in fact numerous stills, and a considerable traffic in contraband goods, operative after their alleged 'suppression'. The heightened secretiveness of illicit distilling accounts for the ambivalent tone of many references to it in the New Statistical Account, which are epitomised by the comments of the minister for Glassary who wrote 'illicit distillation scarcely exists in this parish; least it is not brought to light'.⁵⁸

The weight of evidence indicates that illicit distilling,

although much reduced, never ceased and by the mid nineteenth century was showing signs of revival. This was outlined by the Inverness Courier in 1843:

'The fact is undeniable that smuggling has increased rapidly in the Highlands within the last 6 or 10 months. Men and women traverse the country offering whisky for sale, and the small still is again mingling its smoke with the spray of our solitary burns and rivers. The circumstance is much to be regreted and vigorous measures should be adopted for its suppression . . .'.

This can be substantiated by other newspaper reports. The Glasgow Courier, for example, carried a story on July 22nd 1848 of a revenue cutter raiding Jura and seizing a still at Kenuachan, which 'from its appearance must have been some considerable time used for smuggling operations'. The smugglers warned, however, by 'some telegraphic means', were able to make their escape. Evidence is also provided by analysis of deforcement trials at Inveraray, estate papers and the records of the Board of Customs and Excise, which prove that Kintyre, Islay and Cowal, in particular, remained inveterate centres of illicit distilling.⁵⁹

Further testimony to the extent of illicit distilling during this period is reflected in the proliferation of bothies and unlicensed 'tipple houses'. On Tiree, for example, they increased in response to new markets created by labour concentrations:

'There are two licensed inns in Tiree, and one in Coll; but it is to be observed, that several low illicit tippling houses, which have a very pernicious effect on the morals of the people, have been springing up of late in this island, especially on the farms contiguous to the light house work, as if intended chiefly for the persons there employed, who have generally some money at command and might be expected to be profitable customers.'⁶⁰

The bothies became important meeting places, and dynamic, robust centres of the folk culture and its traditions. This role embodied, and embraced, resistance to the moral codes and values which the British government and local authority figures were trying to impose as part of the general drive to 'civilize' the Highlands. Indeed, they manifested the 'commonalty's' determination to retain and preserve their own culture in which illicit distilling and smuggling were accorded an important role. The bothies' clandestine existence was, therefore, fiercely condemned by landlords, clergy and moralists, who had fought long and hard to enforce their vision of 'improvement' on the 'commonalty'.

The latter's commitment to illicit distilling and smuggling was also reflected in the cultural conflict, which remained a significant force despite the impact of efforts to suppress the illicit trade. The experience of the minister of Kilchoman, on Islay, outlined in 1844, illustrates how even in parishes where smuggling had allegedly been stamped out, the 'commonalty' retained a deep rooted support for it, and were still at loggerheads with the landlords and clergy:

'The alteration in the habits of the people has arisen, it is to be feared, more from the compulsory suppression of smuggling, than from their own conviction of its evil effects for were the restraints which are imposed by law removed, it would in all probability become as prevalent as at any former period'.⁶¹

In the light of this prevailing mood it is obvious that illicit distilling and smuggling continued in Kilchoman, as it did in other parishes despite ministers' avowals of suppression.

Notes

- 1 McKay, Letter book of John Steuart, xxxiii-xxxviii; D. Fraser, The Smugglers, (Montrose, 1978), passim.
- 2 'First Report on Smuggling', PP, VI, 1783, 25.
- 3 Ibid, 231.
- 4 Ibid, 15.
- 5 McTavish, Inveraray Papers, 88-89; Fell, Iron Industry of Furness, 397. For smuggling in other districts such as Kintyre and the islands, see SRO, Records of the board of customs and excise, CE 82/1/1.
- 6 J.Anderson, An account of the present state of the Hebrides and the western coast of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1785), cliii; OSA, VIII, 75; XX, 292, n.
- 7 OSA, VIII, 210; Mitchell, Reminiscences, ii, 62.
- 8 T.M. Devine, 'The rise and fall of illicit whisky making in northern Scotland, c. 1780-1840', SHR, 54, 1975, 159.
- 9 'Report on the Scottish Distilleries', PP, XXI, 1798, 144, 319, 684; see also Farmer's Magazine, 3, 1802, 511.
- 10 'Report on Scottish Distilleries', (1798), app 36, 461.
- 11 Ibid, app 36; 'Report of the committee of the highland society of Scotland on the Distillery laws', Prize essays and transactions of the Highland Society, IV, 1816, 635-35.
- 12 'Report on the Scottish Distilleries', (1798), 144; OSA, VIII, 64; 'Fifth Report of the committee of inquiry into the revenue arising in Ireland', PP, VII, 1823, app 87, 284; hereafter referred to as 'Fifth Report of Revenue Commissioners'.
- 13 Ibid, app 65, 178; 'Two reports of Woodbine Parish, chairman of the Board of Commissioners, on the subject of illicit distilling in Scotland, 25th April and 24th May', PP, VIII, 405. For the effects of clearance on smuggling and illicit distilling see OSA, VIII, 227; XX, 406; NSA, VII, 385-86; Forsyth, Beauties of Scotland, V, 502-03; Bede, Glencreggan, ii, 75.
- 14 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners', (1823), app 61, 159.
- 15 'Report on the Scottish Distilleries', (1798), app M, 439-10.
- 16 Ardchattan House, Argyll, Campbell of Ardchattan MSS, bundle 56; '12th Report of the Commission appointed for inquiring into the

- collection and management of the public revenue arising in Ireland'; PP, XIV, 1825, app 89, 531-33; hereafter referred to as '12th Report of the Revenue Commissioners'; see also SRO, Justice of the Peace Records, Bute Division, JP 36/5/1, 1741; JP 36/5/1, 1796; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2702/6, 25th March 1825; Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/11/8/4/19, 9th March 1808.
- 17 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners'; (1823), 432.
- 18 Kilberry Castle Argyll, Campbell of Kilberry MSS, 21st Jan. 1826; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2898, 13th Aug 1804; MacDonald, General View of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 309.
- 19 I.A. Glen, 'A maker of illicitstills', Scottish Studies, 14, 1970, passim.
- 20 Devine, 'Illicit whisky making', SHR, passim.
- 21 J.D. Young, Women and popular struggles, (Edinburgh, 1985), 47-48.
- 22 Pennant, Tour in Scotland, 221; L. Ramsay, The Stent book of Islay, (privately published, Kildalton, 1890), 145; ABA, Malcolm of Poltalloch Papers, DR 2/15/1; ABA, Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply, CO 6/1/1/1; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2045/14, 1786.
- 23 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 64-69.
- 24 NSA, VII, 402; see also 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners', (1823), app 68; Cregeen, Ibid, 53-54.
- 25 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners', (1823), app 65, 183; ABA, Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply, CO 6/1/1/2.
- 26 Cregeen, Ibid, 61; 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners', (1823), app 68, 184.
- 27 Prize Essays and transactions of the Highland Society, iv, 1816, 634; see also MacCulloch, Highlands and islands of Scotland, IV, 373; Farmer's Magazine, XI, 1810, 397.
- 28 'Report on the Scottish Distilleries'; (1798), 372; SRO, Forfeited Estate Papers, E729, 7; Thompson, 'Time, work discipline and industrial capitalism', Past and Present, passim; 'The English Crowd in the 18th Century', Past and Present, 5-53, 1971, 5.
- 29 SRO, Campbell of Argyll MSS, bundle 1209, 'Remarks on the island of Tiry, 1771'; 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners', (1823),

- app 68, 170.
- 30 OSA, VIII, 75; W. Aiton, General view of the agriculture of Bute, (London, 1811), 363.
- 31 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 50-54.
- 32 Kilberry Castle, Campbell of Kilberry MSS, Drumnamucklach Papers. It is a possibility that the 'Lochgilphead Co.' was in fact a covert smuggling operation. The lack of extant archives, however, makes it impossible to establish the exact nature of this company.
- 33 OSA, VIII, 61-71; SRO, Church of Scotland Presbytery and Kirk session records, CH 2/4/1/1, 1839.
- 34 OSA, VIII, 197-98; SRO, Rothesay Kirk Session Papers, CH 2/890/3, 2nd June 1771; Kilmorie (Arran) Kirk Session Papers, CH 2/214/1, 27th April 1801; Tiree Kirk Session Papers, CH 2/482/1, 21st July.
- 35 NSA, VII, 375; J. MacDonald, 'Smuggling in the Highlands', Celtic Magazine, XI, 1885-86, 459.
- 36 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/2324, 17th July 1808; NSA, VII, 385-86, 410.
- 37 Ardchattan House, Argyll, Campbell of Ardchattan MSS, bundle 56, 3rd Sept. 1813, 5.
- 38 Stewart, Sketches of the Highlanders, i, 193.
- 39 D. Campbell, Reminiscences and Reflections of an Octogenerian Highlander, (Inverness, 1910), 81-82.
- 40 C. Winslow, 'Sussex Smugglers', in D. Hay (ed), Albion's Fatal Tree, (London, 1975), 152; Aiton, General view of the agriculture of Bute, 387-88.
- 41 A. Fraser, Inveraray, (Edinburgh, 1977), 113.
- 42 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners'; (1823), app 61, 159; app 60, 157; SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/473/2.
- 43 'First Report on Smuggling'; (1783), 58-60, 6; see also SRO, Records of the Board of Customs and Excise, CE 8/1, 3rd Nov. 1783, CE 8/3, CE 73/1/1.
- 44 Col. C. MacTaggart, A Ramble through the old Kilkerran Graveyard, (Campbeltown, 1922), 4-5; SRO, Records of the Board of Customs and Excise, CE 82/1/10, 13th Feb. 1760; CE 73/1/1, 3rd Sept. 1765.

- 45 'Report on the Scottish Distilleries', (1798), app 28; see also SRO, Records of the Board of Customs and Excise, CE 82/1/1, 13th Feb. 1757, CE 82/1/46, CE 74/2/12, 1828, CE 73/1/5-6.
- 46 Ardchattan House, Argyll, Campbell of Ardchattan MSS, bundle 86; see also A. Brown, A history of Cowal, (Greenock, 1908), 176; McNeill, Meander round South Kintyre, 22-23.
- 47 NSA, VII, 450; SRO, Records of the Justiciary Court, Western Circuit, JC13, JC26, various; SRO, Records of the Board of Customs and Excise, various; Scots Magazine, Dec. 1814, 953-54; 1816, 794, 1817, 316; T. Dunlop, Notes on Dunoon and Neighbourhood, (Rutherglen, 1886), passim; MacCulloch, Highlands and Western Islands, IV, 368-89; A. MacDougall, Island of Kerrera, (privately printed, 1977), passim; Fraser, North Knapdale, (Oban, 1964), passim.
- 48 'Fifth Report of the Revenue Commissioners', (1823), app M, 438; Douglas, Journal of a Mission, 62; MacTaggart, Ramble through Kilkerran Graveyard, 8.
- 49 SRO, Records of the Justiciary Court, Western Circuit, JC 13/45, Statement of Lachlan Thomson, 6th May 1802.
- 50 SRO, Records of the Justiciary Court, Small Papers, JC 26/385, JC 26/410.
- 51 SRO, Records of the Justiciary Court, Western Circuit, JC 13/14; C. Lesingham Smith, Excursions through the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in 1835 and 1836, (London, 1838), 10.
- 52 SRO, Records of the Justiciary Court, Western Circuit, JC 13/57; Small Papers, JC 26/470.
- 53 Stewart, Sketches of the Highlanders, i, 194.
- 54 SRO, Records of the Justiciary Court, Western Circuit, JC 13/80, JC 13/54; MacDonald, General view of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 353-54.
- 55 MacDougall, Folklore from Coll, passim; NLS, Rev. Neil Campbell's (Kilchrenan), collection of Gaelic Folklore, MS 14990, ii, 4, 93.
- 56 Devine, 'Illicit whisky making', SHR, 173-74; M.S. Moss and J.R. Hume, The making of Scotch whisky, (Edinburgh, 1981), 74.
- 57 NSA, VII, 464, 69, 541, 689, 665, 671.

- 58 NSA, VII, 639, 689; Fraser, Tayvallich and North Knapdale, 19.
- 59 Glasgow Courier, 15/4/1843, 22/7/1843; for raids in Cowal see 30/5/1850 and for Arran, 3/12/1850. Similar accounts are also contained in SRO, Records of the Justicia Court, Western Circuit, JC 13/78, JC 13/80, JC 13/88; SRO, Records of the Board of Customs and Excise, CE 82/6/1-2; SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/8/1/5, 1850; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/156/12, 23rd Nov. 1839; NSA, VII, 410-11, 402, 665.
- 60 NSA, VII, 219, 402, 598, etc.
- 61 NSA, VII, 658.

Within the traditional society the 'commonalty's' shared customs, traditions and life experience, and the tight knit nature of their communities, gave rise to the evolution of a well defined system of communal law and a highly developed sense of the collective interest. An aspect of this phenomenon was the execution of measures against those deemed guilty of anti-social behaviour or activities considered prejudicial to these wider interests. This was most striking in the remoter parts of the Highlands wherein judicial facilities were often lacking. In Morvern for example it was recorded that during 1786 thirty people were expelled for theft 'not by the sentence of a magistrate, but by the united efforts of the better sort of the inhabitants'. Apparently the establishment of a Sheriff Court 'in a great measure obviated' the 'necessity of such violent exertions'.¹

Despite the expansion of such facilities the 'commonalty' still used community sanctions when situations warranted their application. These operated alongside, and often came into conflict with, the laws of the State. The resultant clash of interests overspilled when the 'commonalty' perceived agents/agencies of authority to have overstepped the legitimate and recognised boundaries of their powers. Such incidents led to the implementation of community sanctions, and outbursts of civil disobedience, against these contraventions with the 'commonalty' rallying to defend the wider collective interest. This was most dramatically revealed in the resistance to the State's attempts to suppress smuggling and illicit distilling. To put the role and nature of community sanctions, and civil disobedience in perspective it is necessary to analyse other aspects of life in the traditional society. This will extend our understanding of the clash of interest between the 'commonalty', with their own distinctive customs and traditions, and the British State which was involved in the historical process of attempting to assimilate this society and its inhabitants. Areas that should be considered in this respect are deforcements, meal riots, the plunder of wrecks, poaching and resistance to military and naval recruitment.

The strength of common interest within these communities, and their remoteness, created serious difficulties for State agencies and agents, and local authority figures such as landlords and tacksmen, to uphold State law. In many cases the 'common feeling' against the law, embodied in the prevalence of smuggling and illicit distilling and the deforcement of revenue patrols, extended to thwarting other aspects of its working. An example of this was the deforcement of law officers issuing warrants, actions etc against members of the community. The ensuing confrontations involved whole communities, galvanised by a collective determination, in opposition to these resented intrusions. Typifying this trend, in 1780, charges were brought against some of the inhabitants of the Kilmun district of Cowal for sheep stealing. When the constable, Alexander McKinley, and his party proceeded along Loch Eck to serve the warrants they were attacked by a large number of the local inhabitants, most notably the women, who threw stones at, and successfully deforced, them. As a result of this action a man was banished for seven years and ten women were imprisoned for a few weeks, and disciplined in front of the Church congregation 'for rescuing sheep stealers'.² Similarly when Hugh MacDonald, at Achahaw in the parish of Ardchattan and Muckairn, and his sister were being arrested at the instance of Alexander McIllriach for debts of £29 on July 29th 1823 he threatened the law officers with a gun and then with the help of his neighbours deforced them. In this case MacDonald chose not to stand trial and was declared a fugitive for non-appearance.³

Another mode of popular direct action was the incidence of meal and food riots, particularly during times of dearth and scarcity. In an article 'The English Crowd in the 18th Century' E.P. Thompson outlined the general character which these 'Risings of the people', notably in 1740, 1756, 1766, 1795 and 1800-01, assumed, and S.G.E Lythe, K.J. Logue and E. Richards, amongst others, have assessed their role in Scotland. The riots, typified by the seizure of grain and meal, often accompanied by popular price setting, were precipitated by food shortages but also significantly from the

collective conviction that activities violating the traditional 'moral economy' of the 'commonalty', ie, the popular consensus with respect to the 'fair' trading and marketing practices, were being exploited. Against this background the 'commonalty' resisted the undermining of these traditional trading modes by the advent of capitalist marketing, which necessitated produce being exported for profit regardless of local socio-economic conditions and the hardship this would entail amongst the 'commonalty'.⁴ The defence of the 'moral economy' was most pronounced in urban areas.

With respect to the Highlands it has been suggested by Eric Richards in 'The Last Scottish Food Riots' that, despite the recurrence of famine conditions, such examples of popular direct action were effectively unknown in the Highlands. Indeed according to Richards there was only one such disturbance which occurred in Ross-shire during 1783.⁵ Existing evidence indicates, however, that this assessment grossly underestimates the level of food riots in the Highlands. In Argyll for example the consensus of 'moral economy' also produced opposition to the new trading practices and this created resentments which triggered off food riots. At Oban the efforts of John Campbell of Tawns to ship barley on board the "Friends Goodwill" and the "Margaret" during March 1796 resulted in such actions. On March 21st of this year the local people raided these ships, carried off their sails to prevent them leaving the port, and placed the grain in a giral and subsequently distributed it amongst the local population. An Inveraray lawyer, William MacKenzie, wrote to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine on April 4th 1796 describing the seizures and supervening deforcement of law officers sent to repossess the grain and serve summons on the participants whom he roundly condemned:

'Asknish (Ardnish) Captain Grahame, and several members of the court are just setting off for Oban, to take a precognition about the seizure of the Bear by the mob there - a warrant was formerly issued by the sheriff for that purpose and as they were

proceeding in the execution of the warrant at Oban, last week, the mob broke in upon them, forced the warrant and precognition from them, tore the whole to pieces, and threw it in the fire. This was worse than the seizure of the vessels and the bear. The whole was represented to the Lord Advocate, who applied to the commander in chief, and obtained an order from him to the Colonel of the Regiment quartered at Glasgow to obey such orders as he might receive from the Sheriff of Argyllshire with respect to marching troops into this county. It would appear that they are determined to make examples of the Ringleaders at least - trampling upon the Authority of the civil Magistrate should not be passed with impunity. It is probable no troops will be called, if the Oban mob will submit calmly'.⁶

In the face of this determination amongst the local members of the landed elite Alexander Omev, weaver, Duncan McArthur, wood cutter, Archibald MacMillan, cobbler, and James McPhail, dyke builder, all of Oban, were later charged with Riot, boarding vessels, carrying away their sails and cargoes of grain.

In Campbeltown the burgh council appeared more sensitive to the 'commonalty's' perceptions of 'moral economy', and placed traditional social responsibilities, obligations and class relations above the pressures of impersonal market forces. Reflecting this the council passed a measure in 1783 to alleviate such conditions: 'The council having had under consideration the present scarcity of meall in the country, and that some encouragement is necessary for inducing the farmers to make their barley into meal and bring it to the publick mercatt of the burgh, have unanimously resolved to give a deduction of multure upon all barley that is made into meall at the miln of Campbeltown'. It also introduced a charge of one-twentieth rather than one-thirteenth per peck and banned the sale of meal at the mill.

The council adopted a similar interventionist role in January 1796, prior to the riots at Oban. Its members recognised the great scarcity of grain and implemented measures to try to secure supplies. As a means of forcing farmers to bring the meal they were with-holding to the town a weekly market was established, and duties increased to inhibit exports which were subsequently prohibited. Illustrative of the council's ban sixty bolls of bear, due to be shipped to Blair and Martin, a Greenock distilling company, were impounded much to the anger of the latter.⁷

The mounting food shortages, occasioned by the French Wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and fears of domestic unrest lay behind the meeting of the Kintyre Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Supply and Heritors in November 29th 1799, which placed a total prohibition on the export of all meal, potatoes and other foodstuffs. Customs officers, constables and schoolmasters were ordered to report any vessels breaking this embargo, which was accompanied by a ban on distilling. Despite these efforts, and the hardship caused through shortages, farmers continued to export food stuffs during 1800 to Greenock and Paisley where the level of prices was much higher. This placed the council under the 'painful necessity' of raising prices, but indicative of the rising anger amongst the 'commonalty' the farmers were prevented from coming to town 'by the abuse they receive from a number of idlers that constantly frequent the market place'. The council resolved to punish those responsible, but as crowds were gathering throughout January and February 1801, to prevent any attempts at exporting grain, such initiatives if undertaken would most probably have merely inflamed existing tensions rather than undermining the 'commonalty's' determination. Indeed the bitterness caused by these exports exploded during the latter month, when the local inhabitants of Campbeltown took direct action to prevent the shipment of grain where the council's efforts had failed.

They seized grain from on board the "Favourite" which was

scheduled to carry this cargo to James Watt and Company, Brewers of Greenock. This action appears to have been highly organised as the ship was sailed from the Old Quay to Dalintober beach, where the people proceeded to strip its sails and cut the masts before systematically removing the grain. It was only the 'timely arrival' of the Volunteers, which allegedly saved the Captain and the mate from death. The Volunteers' entrance gave rise to a pitched battle, as the women, who had gathered stones, 'prepared for making a furious attack on the armed soldiers'. In the ensuing clash one woman lost her nose, as a result of injuries sustained, whilst another was seriously injured by a falling mast.⁸

The riot led to charges being brought against Duncan Sellars, weaver, John Beith, carter, Hugh Lamont, labourer and Mary Darroch, all of Campbeltown. The Sheriff at Inveraray declared Sellars a fugitive for non-appearance and gave Beith, Lamont and Darroch sentences of two months, six weeks and one month respectively. It also caused Watt & Company to bring an action against the ^{Town} Council, whom the firm considered had been 'most blameably remiss' in failing to prevent the loss of the ship and its cargo.⁹ It is quite possible the ^{Town} Council did in fact sympathise with the 'commonalty's' sense of outrage, particularly since Watt & Company, along with other firms, were attempting to break the ^{Town} Council's statutes by profiteering at a time of grave crisis. This empathy was fully consistent with the model of 'moral economy' since this structure was in itself the selective reconstruction of a paternalist model with its implicit balance of responsibilities and obligations between local authority and the 'commonalty'. The major point of divergence, however, was the latter's use of direct action which forced Authority to quell any riots or disturbances.¹⁰

In his article on 'moral economy' E.P. Thompson suggests that this structure was undermined by the development of capitalist socio-economic forms. These subordinated all capital, human and natural resources to profit and the laws of supply and demand. The

permeation of this force produced a series of confrontations with the 'commonalty' who wished to retain the traditional patterns of marketing and trade, which recognised moral as well as economic factors. Thompson identified the watershed of this model as the ascendancy of the new political economy, and the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars, which shattered the old paternalist structure as the gentry's intense anti-Jacobinism created a deep hostility to any manifestations of popular direct action.¹¹ These factors consolidated the class alliance of the gentry and the capitalist interest against the 'commonalty'.

Within the Highlands these forces were accentuated by the impact of Clearance. Vestiges of the traditional paternalist structure did nevertheless survive, and in the case of Campbeltown, Richards argues that the council's decision to subsidise oatmeal and barley, and preserve them for local consumption, prevented the outbreak of food riots at a time of extensive disturbances, during the potato famine, in Easter Ross, the Moray Firth, along the Aberdeenshire coast and in Caithness. The common feature linking these areas was their participation in a developed grain export trade, organised by capitalist farmers who dominated local farming, and sold produce to Lowland and English markets thereby creating, and exacerbating existing, scarcities.¹²

In the northern Highlands this aspect of community sanctions continued to have an impact during the mid nineteenth century. Within Argyll the measures taken at Campbeltown would suggest that in Kintyre at least the survival of aspects of the paternalist model, and the principles of 'moral economy', prevented any similar outbreaks. Admittedly the lack of existing evidence makes it almost impossible to accurately assess the role of this phenomenon, but a reference in the Argyll estate papers to the seizure of meal at a time of famine by the people of Tiree during the period 1846-47 would indicate that it was probably more widespread than has previously been considered.¹³ This reference also suggests that food riots and the seizure of food

supplies were not exclusively urban based.

Another facet of community sanctions, which brought the 'commonalty' into direct conflict with the landlords and agents of authority, was the customary plundering of wrecks. This practice is relatively well documented, although the lack of existing evidence makes it impossible to estimate the extent of deliberate wrecking. A unique insight into popular attitudes to wrecks, which were called 'Godsends', is manifested in a prayer recited by a native of Barra, 'If ships must at all events perish, do thou, O Lord, guide their timber, with their tacking and rigging, to the strand of Borve and the sound of Watersay', where the timbers could be conveniently salvaged.¹⁴ The 'commonalty' held the deeprooted belief that any wreck befell to the ownership of the nearest communities whereas the landlords equally passionately attempted to assert salvage rights over shipwrecks. The plunder of wrecks was enshrined in the traditional folk culture and in community life, and the prevalence of this practice gave rise to a large number of confrontations between the landlords and their tenants over the ownership of wrecks. Reflecting this in 1763 MacLaine of Lochbuie received a letter from Alexander Orme, his Edinburgh legal agent, advising him of his right to casks of wine which his Mull tenants had salvaged and were claiming for their own.¹⁵

During the second half of the eighteenth century when landlords were involved in the process of reinforcing proprietorial control by undermining traditional rights and customs, as part of the overall attempt to foster economic development, steps were taken to try to suppress plundering. This resolve was outlined by the fifth Duke of Argyll in an instruction of October 1771 to the chamberlain of Tiree, whom he wished to assert control over any wrecks by virtue of hereditary proprietorial rights, 'You may signify to Mr Campbell of Stonefield that it will be convenient to furnish you with a commission of Admiralty over my estates of Tiry and Coll. When you are provided with them you are to take charge of the wrecked vessell and cargo that has been lately thrown ashore on the island of Gunna, and to prosecute

the plunderers of the wrecked goods for restitution and damages'.¹⁶

The attempts to suppress plundering became therefore a central aspect of estate management. A further illustration of this is contained in the correspondence of Hugh McGilvra, of Pennigail at Carsaig, to Murdoch MacLain of Lochbuy in 1792. On January 3rd 1792, McGilvra, who was probably the latter's factor, described how he had met the people of Glenbar (Glenbyre) and Carneron (Cameron) going 'in a body' to visit a wreck and that, despite temporarily persuading them to stop, they 'rallied' in his absence and later removed the timbers assisted by the Rossall tenants. The following month the "Charlotte and Marie" was shipwrecked and the factor bitterly attacked the tenants who had beaten him to the wreck, and his tone suggests that they may have deliberately wrecked the ship, '. . . the inhabitants of Ross and Brolass are at the latest plunder night and day and would be god they were made to repent of it. In my opinion they exceed the Black Irish or any nation you can mention for cruelty . . .'.¹⁷ It is evident that the plunder of wrecks was a highly organised affair, involving the co-operation of many different communities. Reflecting this in 1796 when a Liverpool ship was wrecked at Lochspelve on Mull, the local inhabitants were joined in the plunder by people from as far as Easdale and other areas of Netherlorn. This prompted MacDougall of Dunollie to comment sardonically upon the involvement of his own tenants, 'my Kerrera ladies will be so decked wt (with) muslin I'll not know them . . .'.¹⁸

Contemporaneously, efforts were made by the heritors of Islay, which was a notorious area for shipwrecks and their concomitant plunder:

'The meeting (in 1798), with every feeling of humanity for the distressed sufferers, who have the misfortune to be shipwrecked on the coast of this island, have to regret that numbers of the country people, shaking of all fear of god, or regard to the laws, are in the constant practice against

every rule of Christian charity or hospitality, of resorting in numbers to the shores where strangers have the misfortune of being shipwrecked, and that for the sole purpose of plunder; which practice the meeting hold in the greatest abhorrence . . .'.¹⁹

Despite the landlords' efforts to stamp out this practice, the plunder of wrecks remained common throughout the Highlands in the period 1730 to 1850. Indeed it would appear that by the mid-nineteenth century Islay was still an inveterate centre of wrecking. In May 1859 for example, a year after the Islay people received official recognition for their temperance, the "Mary Ann" was wrecked with a cargo of spirits, and the ensuing plunder was the cause of much drunkenness.²⁰

Another area where custom and proprietorial rights clashed was poaching. The 'commonalty' regarded it as traditional that they should be able to hunt and fish for game wherever it was found, a belief held to be inimical by the landlords who were attempting to impose a more commercially orientated form of agriculture and estate management on their tenants. Indicative of the practice Duncan Campbell of Glenure wrote to his son Alexander in the 1780s informing him that Donald Dow McLulich in Glandaw, and others around Dalechelish and Inveresregan were poaching deer, and ordered they be threatened with the law.²¹ To counter the prevalence of this practice the landlords used eviction. On March 12th 1792 for example John Harriman wrote to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine referring to the clearance of tenants at Ardesky, one of whom named Sinclair was 'a great destroyer of game'.²² The lack of extant Justice of the Peace records makes it impossible to quantify the exact level of poaching undertaken in Argyll. Estate papers suggest, however, that it remained a major problem in the mid nineteenth century. Reflecting this in 1849 MacIntyre, the Earl of Breadalbane's factor, reported that Carmichael, a poacher, had made 'great depredations' amongst the salmon in Lochetive, and then when challenged chased the gamekeepers away. The factor stressed that it was necessary to make an example of him and other Oban poachers,²³ which suggests this group may have been highly

organised.

Within the Highland community sanctions were also exerted against agents and agencies of authority recruiting for the army and navy. In the eighteenth century the Highlanders became Britain's first 'colonial levies', used first to enforce order in their own country and then shipped abroad to fight for Britain's imperialist interests. These troops played a vastly disproportionate role in the British military machine, an imbalance which allegedly was only redressed in the wars of the twentieth century. Reflecting this involvement it has been calculated that in the period 1757 to 1804, thirty line and twenty-six fencible battalions were raised in the Highlands alone.²⁴

Despite the extensive use of Highland troops it is evident that there was a general hostility to serving in the army or navy, and the fear of being impressed or 'recruited' is widely corroborated. A perspective into some of the factors prompting enlistment, and the disillusionment experienced by many recruits is manifested in 'A song by William MacMurchy, a man of the people of Kintyre, on his enlisting in the army through need, and becoming aware of the difference between the soldier's life and that of the farmer', which probably dates from the Seven Years War, 1756-63:

'S tim, tuirseach mo dhusagadh,
 'S cha bu sugaidh mo shuain domh;
 Mar fhear air ur theachd a meisg mi,
 Lan de bhreisleach, 's de bhuaireadh;
 Le m'ath-shealladh de m' hgoraich
 Lan de bhron, a's de uamhann;
 Gun do reic mi mo shaorsadh,
 Mo theaghlach, 's mo shuaimhneas'.

['Spiritless and sad is my
 awakening,
 And not refreshing was my
 slumber;
 Like a man newly coming out
 of a spree I am,
 Full of confusion, and of
 annoyance;
 with looking back on my
 folly;
 That I sold my freedom,
 My family, and my peace']²⁵

Another insight into army life is contained in a petition from some Mull recruits in May 1794 to Major Murdoch MacLaine of Lochbuie. These men had been enlisted by the Major to serve in Duncan Campbell of Lochnell's regiment, but had been rejected by a Captain MacDougall, who told them they were 'unfit to serve' in this unit and ordered them to join the Scots Brigade. When the men refused to comply they related how the Captain flew into a 'violent rage and threatened us with the Blackhole whipping and being put on Board of a man of war. By this and other forcible measures used against us were we compelled actually to enlist in the Scots Brigade'.²⁶ In the light of this experience the men wished MacLaine to help them transfer to Duncan Campbell of Lochnell's regiment. This arbitrary and brutal treatment of recruits, which underpinned the whole system of military discipline, precipitated a whole series of mutinies by Highland regiments to which Argyllshire regiments were not immune.

When Neil Douglas, the missionary, made his tour of the Highlands in 1797 during the French Wars he encountered a strong anti-militarism amongst the 'commonalty'. One example of this was the belief, held by the people of Killeen in Kintyre, that their minister's palsy was a 'judicial visitation of providence' provoked by his attempts to recruit men for the army. Such efforts proved totally useless, something which undoubtedly stemmed from hostility to military service as much as from Christian sensibilities, 'The people were struck with the contrast of his officiating a little before in the name of the King of heaven, and now acting, as some of them expressed it the part of a recruiting sergeant to an earthly King'. His behaviour in this respect prompted a backlash against patronage and the inhabitants of Barr petitioned the fifth Duke of Argyll for the right to choose their own minister, a wish subsequently granted. At Dale, Douglas met some people who were going to Inveraray to petition the Duke about their sons who were to be taken for the Militia. The concerns which they expressed provide a revealing insight into the hostility to military service, particularly outside Scotland, the methods of recruitment and the exacerbation of class divisions which

such actions occasioned:

'They much dreaded their sons would be sent abroad when raised, and would not believe either clergy, or Gentlemen, asserting the contrary; having been so often deceived by fair promises when levies were formerly made. I persuaded several, that they had no cause of alarm, that there was no such thing intended in the present case. It is an unhappy state of society, when the lower orders lose all confidence in the word of their superiors and are apt to suspect every measure which they recommend. The many levies of young men from the Highlands in all our wars, few of whom return; and the usual mode of raising them, have made impressions that will ^{not} soon or readily be forgotten'.²⁷

Further evidence of the hostility to military service is provided by James MacDonald in his General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides published in 1811. This writer had tried to add a section on population to his agricultural survey but encountered insurmountable opposition. His work, MacDonald explained, was 'rendered more difficult and disagreeable by the prejudices of the natives, and their notion that lists of population are made chiefly with a view to military arrangements or fiscal taxation'.²⁸

In the period before Culloden clan chiefs used clan loyalties to raise men for military service and where tenants proved refractory they found themselves prey to the prospect of eviction, and a similar pattern prevailed amongst both Jacobite and Whig clans during the 1745 Rebellion. In the aftermath of this conflict the Highland chiefs were offered lucrative bounties to recruit Regiments, which included the valued right of nominating officers. The demand for troops grew with the outbreak of the Seven Years War, the American Revolution and the wars with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, and the growing need for Britain to protect and extend its developing Empire. This demand intensified recruitment in the Highlands, as the chiefs and clan gentry

rushed to take full advantage of the rewards of cash and status offered by the State, which offered some compensation for the prestige they had lost in the aftermath of Culloden. Consequently the traditional methods of recruitment became systematically more brutal. It is also apparent that the demand for troops was a key factor underpinning the growth of crofting. This correlation was highlighted by R. Forsyth in The Beauties of Scotland during the first decade of the nineteenth century:

'The common people are prevented from deserting this miserable sort of existence (on the island of Mull) by an attachment to their native soil; and some proprietors, and even great tacksmen who have long leases, are induced to persevere in the old unprofitable mode of overstocking their lands with people, in consequence of the wars in which the British Empire has recently been engaged, which enables those persons, who can easily raise considerable bodies of troops, to recommend themselves greatly to Government, and to derive considerable benefit from the recruiting service'.²⁹

Against this background, eviction, actual and threatened, was used extensively to raise reluctant recruits. In 1794, for example, Donald Carmichael, a soldier in the second battalion of Fencibles was given the mill and croft at Barrichrel near Kilninver on the Breadalbane estate in place of one Peter MacIntyre 'who absolutely refused to go to the Fencibles'. It is apparent that the gentry in Cowal, and other districts of the Highlands, would go to the lengths of kidnapping tenants to supply the quotas necessary to secure their own commissions.³⁰ That this was a common practice is confirmed in an extraordinary letter from George Knott, manager of the Lorn Furnace at Taynuilt, to an agent in August 1782, arranging for the latter to have one of their workers impressed when the Company's boat approached the Clyde.³¹ In the light of these expedients it is not surprising that the demands of recruitment gave rise to a climate of fear and

oppression. This is substantiated by a letter to Lachlan MacLaine of Lochbuie dated May 5th 1759 from Robert Campbell on behalf of his relation John Campbell who was 'much troubled by Alan McQuarry who threatens by strong hand to force him to be a soldier'.³² Apparently these 'irregular proceedings' were causing concern amongst the gentry, who feared they would hamper the progress of further recruitment. Evidence of such feelings is contained in a letter of February 17th 1762 to Duncan Campbell of Glenure from his brother Alan, who tried to dissuade him from 'recruing' one Peter Ferral 'seized' for wearing a blanket. Alan Campbell wrote that this article 'was never deem'd a party couloured Highland dress, or tartan', arguing that if it was to be regarded as contravening the ban on Highland dress then 'many in the South and North countries may be taken up every day'. He finished the letter by urging restraint, adding the recruiting methods in Argyll 'had(s) made rather too much noise for some time past'.³³

The magnitude of, and methods employed in, recruitment provoked considerable bitterness and anger amongst the 'commonalty'. The extent of their hostility to military service is reflected in contemporary estate correspondence. On Lismore, Alexander Campbell of Ardsheal wrote to Duncan Campbell of Glenure on January 2nd 1759 that the tenants not only opposed the introduction of enclosures, 'parks', but were also resisting attempts to recruit them:

'I spoke to Donald Ban Oig about getting a recruit to be given to the Fencibles in place of one of his sons but he will give neither and says that his sons will not be advised by him and for getting another man it is not to be done by any person in that country but if you take money for your stented men that he and all the rest of the tennants will give in the proportion as other tennants in the shire is doing. Balevolan has taken money for one man from his people'.

Donald Ban Oig's sons stayed in the hills and Campbell went to elaborate lengths to 'hunt' them down. When he eventually seized

another recruit the distraught family, a 'most pitiful' sight, plaintively entreated him not to take their son. By the end of this abortive round up, Alexander Campbell was sick of the whole business, imploring Duncan Campbell to 'give no more men to the Fencibles. This is certainly the damndest work that ever man took in hand if I see but little more of this work I believe for peace' sake I shall list in the Fencibles myself, in order to be quite of their crake'. In December 1761 Alexander Campbell, by now having suppressed whatever qualms he had had, was once more recruiting and experiencing the by now customary lack of success: 'I have not at present the least thought where I could get one single recruit were I to go myself'.³⁴

On the opposite mainland similar difficulties were experienced in the Appin area, where residual Jacobitism and hatred of the Campbells remained a potent force retarding recruitment. The failure of the recruiting parties in this area was outlined by Duncan McNichol in a letter dated October 2nd 1759 to Campbell of Glenure: 'I understand there is nothing to be done in this country by fair words they seem determined to a man not to be volunteers'. Despite this entrenched opposition McNicholl remained optimistic that strong arm tactics could succeed, adding 'I am hopeful if two or three of them were taken by the necks it would change their stubborn resolutions'.³⁵ Even in the Campbell heartlands of Argyll, however, there existed the same universal hostility to joining the services, and this was sufficient to ensure that recruiting parties faced the additional obstacle of having community sanctions exerted against them by the 'commonalty' who repelled their intrusions. An example of this was outlined by a correspondent of the Earl of Breadalbane in 1760, who related that Campbell of Achalader had written to his kinsman Carwhin 'scolding him, for permitting such riots as were committed in Glenorchy, where they picked and forced whom they pleased. Achalader is now removing those tenants that refused their sons'.³⁶

Similarly during the American Revolution the Duke of Hamilton wrote to his mother, the Duchess of Argyll, in 1788 of his intention to

try to raise troops amongst his 'reluctant' tenants^{in Arrian.} One of the most remarkable insights into this prevalent hostility is provided in the story of "Conall Gulban", which was told to John MacNair and John Dewar of Clachaig by Duncan Livingston, a cobbler from Glendaruel. The story illustrates the desperate measures taken by one individual to avoid being 'Recruited':

'In the time of the American War, the laird was pressing the tenants to go, and this old man seemed not willing; so they pursued him through a deep river, or burn, as we call it; and when he saw he could not escape, he placed his leg between two stones and snapped it in two, so they had to carry him home'.³⁷

The level of opposition to recruitment escalated with the outbreak of the wars with France in the latter part of the eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. It was this widespread hostility which forced the Government to abandon its attempts to establish a militia in 1793, and underpinned the resistance to the decision to try to recruit men for voluntary service in Fencible regiments. This opposition was evident for example on Mull where on May 25th 1795 Murdoch MacLaine of Lochbuie received a letter from Robert Stewart, his lawyer based at Achadeshenaig, stating that recruits would not 'pleasantly go' to the army, with the result MacLaine's attempts to recruit tenants to join the Dumbarton Fencibles proved futile. Indeed the opposition on Mull was so deep rooted that a petition was sent to MacLaine in 1795, signed by seventy-two tenants indicating their determination to remove from their holdings rather than surrender themselves or their sons to army life:

'We will not give our consent or advice to our sons or connections to enter or serve with him (MacLaine of Lochbuie) in the said Regt. but we hereby bind and oblige ourselves severally to pay all the balances due by us on per sign'd accts. or notes and that before the term of Whitsunday and also

oblige ourselves to remove from our possessions at Whit. 1795'.³⁸

The growing demand for troops and sailors brought the recruiting parties and the Press Gangs into frequent conflict with the communities they descended upon. At Campbeltown for example the press gang from HMS "Hazard" was completely routed in 1795 by the local inhabitants, particularly the women, who had been alerted and rallied by the use of the town drum. The press gang were attacked, had their muskets and swords seized and had to take shelter in the town jail. The town council minutes record that the officer in charge, Lieutenant Hunt, had 'set the mob againg (agang)', and 'enraged the women so much' that his party were lucky to escape much worse treatment.³⁹

In an article 'Peasant life in Argyllshire at the end of the 18th century', Mrs K W Grant gave a vivid account of a community's collective response to the intrusion of the hated press gang, which dates from the French Wars:

'The good wives of Barichreil (Barrachreil near Kilninver) were not in the habit of over stepping the bounds of modest conventional womanhood, but on this occasion they took the law into their own hands. The husbands, with all the sons and brothers old enough to be impressed, were ordered off to make peats, and forbidden to return until sent for. Boy scouts were stationed here and there to keep us women informed of the appearance of the enemy, and report his movements. Meanwhile a supply of ammunition was prepared in the shape of clod and turf. At length the press gang arrived, and looked greatly astonished on finding a village composed of women and children only. Before they had time to ask "Where are the men?" the wives attacked them with such a volley of clods and turf

that they wheeled right about and marched off, the officer saying he "wasn't going to fight with women", and there was no time to go about the hills searching for the men'.⁴⁰

The deterioration of the war situation, and the attendant threat of invasion, prompted the Government in 1797 to try once more to raise a militia. Despite these background conditions the opposition to this proposal was so great that attempts to enforce it led to a 'full blooded insurrection'.⁴¹ The routing of the recruiting party on Iona in 1799 provides an insight into the fierce nature of this opposition, as well as illustrating the gentry's reaction to this resistance. This incident infuriated the Duke of Argyll who resolved to take stern measures against his tenants:

'Whilst almost every person able to bear arms is turning out in one shape or other in the service of the country, I cannot but greatly blame the people of Icolmkill (Iona) for refusing to allow their sons to go into the militia, a service so mild and at the same time so necessary for the protection of ourselves and our property; and as a mark of my displeasure I desire that Archibald McInnes and his son, Hugh McDonald and Donald McKillop, all of that island, who were concerned in beating and abusing Hector McPhail employed to take up the lists of young men for the militia, be removed from their possessions at Whitsunday next, as I will suffer no persons to remain upon my property who does not respect and obey the laws, and let it be understood that whoever harbours any of these persons in the island after that time will be served in the same way'.

In the face of such intense and universal resistance the Militia Act of 1797 only yielded a small proportion of its troop requirements.⁴²

The impact of clearance hardened opposition to military service. This phenomenon undermined the traditional social relations, raised class tensions and multiplied the problems of recruitment. In the parish of Strachur and Stralachlan, and other areas characterised by sweeping clearance, these factors retarded the raising of troops. The minister for this parish contrasted conditions in 1745, when the men allegedly flocked to Loudon's Regiment, with those prevailing during the American Revolution. He wrote that during this latter conflict the 'commonalty' refused to follow the local gentry to War, and to serve outwith Scotland:

'How different the sentiments of the people in 1778. When it was proposed to raise a Western Fencible Regiment the gentlemen of Argyllshire engaged to furnish a certain number of men; but though the men had an express promise from Government, that they should not be called out of the Kingdom, nor even into England, excepting in case of an invasion, the heritors were obliged to bribe them high'.

This opposition was to require similar payments being made in Campbeltown and different parts of Argyll.⁴³

By the mid-nineteenth century these trends had become even more pronounced. This was highlighted by the Reverend Norman McLeod, minister of Morvern, who compared the 'most loyal and martial spirit in the Highlands', reputedly prevailing during the wars with France, with the 'present feeling as regards the army' which produced few recruits for the services. The minister attributed this to the impact of clearance, and to the emergence of alternative sources of employment, for the dispossessed, in the Lowlands:

'I fear, however, that the clearances which for years past, have most extensively taken place in these countries, has contributed in some degree to bring about this state of things; but also as likely the outlets afforded by commerce to young

men, and the improved education of the country'.

The effects of clearance, in terms both of intensifying hostility to joining the services and reducing the numbers available for recruitment, were dramatically exposed with the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 when the Government faced chronic problems trying to raise troops in the Highlands.⁴⁴

The 'commonalty's' hostility to recruitment was projected into military life. Consequently the assimilation of the Highland levies into the British war machine was a far from smooth process. The Highlanders' traditions, their intense code of honour and fear of being shipped abroad and their services sold to the East India Company were to precipitate a series of mutinies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Troops raised in Argyll were to play a part in these actions. During 1763 for example the 88th Campbell Highlanders, recruited by John Campbell of Dunoon, mutinied while awaiting their demobilisation at Linlithgow, owing to what David Stewart of Garth delicately described as 'an unfortunate collision of opinion' over wages and equipment. The inevitable broken promises, with respect to these articles, resulted in 'some indications of violence very opposite to their previous exemplary conduct'. Other mutinies followed as the pressures on the Highlands to provide troops grew. Reflecting this trend in October 1779 the West Argyllshire Fencibles mutinied over wage arrears and dissatisfaction with their equipment, and temporarily took control of Edinburgh castle; and in March 1794 the Gordon Fencibles, the Sutherland, Breadalbane and Argyllshire Battalions and the Grant Fencibles all refused to embark upon transports, which they feared would take them overseas.⁴⁵

The analysis of community sanctions highlights the extent to which the 'commonalty' were willing to defend the wider Community interest. The evidence illustrating this form of collective action, based on the defence of custom and traditions and opposition to naval and military recruitment, reveals a coherency of both purpose and execution. Such action was affected when agents/agencies of

authority were perceived in some way to be overstepping the bounds of legitimate and recognised power, and constituted an important aspect of life and traditions within the Highlands.

Notes

- 1 OSA, VIII, 373.
- 2 Dunlop, Notes on Dunoon, 23. Another illustration of community sanctions was the tradition of "Riding the Steng" or "Rough Music", in which those who had transgressed the community's moral code, in particular wife beaters, adulterers and slanderers were forced on to a pole and carried through the community in a humiliating procession. Within Argyll it is difficult to assess the extent of this custom although existing evidence confirms its existence in other parts of the Highlands, see for example Glasgow Courier, 30/4/1832 for an account in Maryborough. Community sanctions were also invoked against those found guilty of infanticide, see SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Western Circuit, JC 13/79, JC 26/740; SRO, Presbytery of Mull Papers, CH 2/273/1, 1737, 84-85.
Communities also went to considerable lengths to ensure that suicides were buried out of sight of either sea or cultivated land, believing that otherwise there would be 'famine on sea and land'. For accounts of this, see A. Ross, 'Notes on superstitions as to burying suicides in the Highlands', Celtic Magazine, XII, 1886-87, 349-352; Campbell, Reminiscences and Reflections, 5.
- 3 SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Western Circuit, JC 13/54, JC 26/466; see also JC 13/66, 15th May 1820; Glasgow Courier, 15/11/1842.
- 4 Thompson, 'The English Crowd', Past and Present, 79; see also G. Rude, The Crowd in History, (New York, 1964), passim; Ideology and Popular Protest, (London, 1980), passim; S.G.E. Lythe, 'The Tayside meal mobs of 1772-3', SHR, 46, 1967, passim; K.J. Logue, Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815, (Edinburgh, 1979), 1-53.
- 5 E. Richards, 'The last Scottish Food Riots', Past and Present, supplement no. 6, 1982, 4.
- 6 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1929/48/1; for food riots in other parts of the Highlands see H. Miller, Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland or the traditional History of Cromarty,

- (London, 1857), 305-18; SRO, John MacGregor Collection, GD 50/22/2/28; for riots in Perth during 1798 see SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Northern Circuit, JC 11/32, JC 11/34.
- 7 ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/3, DC 1/1/4, 23rd Jan. 1797.
- 8 McIntosh, History of Kintyre, 145-46.
- 9 Scots Magazine, Oct. 1801; SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Western Circuit, Small Papers, JC 26/309, Sept. 1801; ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/4, 10th Oct. 1800.
- 10 Thompson, 'The English Crowd', Past and Present, 100.
- 11 Ibid, 129.
- 12 Richards, 'Last Scottish Food Riots', Past and Present, 25; Glasgow Courier, 14/2/1846, 11/2/1847, 23/2/1847, 13/3/1847.
- 13 SRO, Campbell of Argyll MSS, bundle 917.
- 14 MacDonald, General view of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 353-4.
- 15 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/134.
- 16 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 3. Gunna is a small island ^{between Tiree and} _{coll.}
- 17 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1372/13-17, 1792.
- 18 MacDougall, Island of Kerrera, 140; SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/74/17.
- 19 Ramsay, Stent Book of Islay, 152-53; SRO, Lord Advocate's Papers, AD 14/16/67, AD 14/17/86.
- 20 Margaret Earl, Tales of Islay, (Port Charlotte, 1979); SRO, Justiciary Court Records, Western Circuit, Small Papers, JC 26/638, JC 13/74, 17th April 1835; for the plunder of a wreck by the people of South Ronaldsay see Glasgow Courier, 23/3/1848. The 'commonalty's' attitudes towards lighthouses, in the sense of reducing windfalls from wrecks, remains to be investigated.
- 21 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1643/38, 1763-83, /2363/5, 28th Aug. 1829 for poaching on Lochcreran. See also SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/16/8/1/5, n.d; SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/917, 12th July 1794.
- 22 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1803/1.
- 23 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/74/4. The limited evidence of the New Statistical Account published in the 1840s acknowledges the

- existence of poaching, but tends to minimise its importance, see for example, NSA, VII, 614, 639, 402. Estate papers, however, suggest that the prevention of poaching remained an important area of estate management, see for example SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1156/2, 24th Nov. 1836; SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/74/6, 23rd Jan. 1846; /74/31, 12th July 1846; /74/36, 1844.
- 24 James Browne, A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans, 4 vol., (Glasgow, 1838), IV, 243-384; see also J. Prebble, Mutiny, (London, 1975), 271.
- 25 A. Martin, Kintyre the Hidden Past, (Edinburgh, 1986), 9.
- 26 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/2219.
- 27 Douglas, Mission to the Highlands, 102-03.
- 28 MacDonald, General view of the agriculture of the Hebrides, 543-522; for this hostility in folklore see D. MacInnes and A. Nutt, Folk and hero tales from Argyllshire, (London, 1889), 127.
- 29 Forsyth, Beauties of Scotland, iv, 502.
- 30 SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/74/33; A. Brown, A history of Cowal, (Greenock, 1908), 153.
- 31 Fell, Iron Industry of Furness, 398.
- 32 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1248.
- 33 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1076/2, /1076/17/2.
- 34 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1061.
- 35 SRO, Campbell of Barcaldine MSS, GD 170/1534.
- 36 SRO, John MacGregor Collection, GD 50/11/1/25.
- 37 SRO, Campbell of Argyll MSS, bundle 166; J.F. Campbell, Popular tales of the West Highlands, 4 vol., (London, 1890), III, 200.
- 38 SRO, MacLaine of Lochbuie MSS, GD 174/1481, /9261, 1795.
- 39 McIntosh, History of Kintyre, 143; ABA, Campbeltown Burgh Records, DC 1/1/4, 7th Feb. 1795.
- 40 Mrs. K.W. Grant, 'Peasant life in Argyllshire at the end of the 18th Century', SHR, 16, 1919, 147.
- 41 J.R. Western, 'The formation of the Scottish militia in 1797', SHR, 34-35, 1955-56, 2; SRO, Breadalbane MSS, GD 112/40/11/2(1), 9th and 15th Sept. 1797; Logue, Popular Disturbances, 75-116.

- 42 Cregeen, Argyll Estate Instructions, 195; Western, 'Raising of the Scottish militia', SHR, 2.
- 43 OSA, VIII, 487; Stewart, Sketches of the Highlanders, i, 59-60.
- 44 N. McLeod, Reminiscences of the parish, (London, 1912); Ross, The Russians of Ross-shire, (London, 1854), 27-28.
- 45 Prebble, Mutiny, 500-01. Another aspect of resistance to military discipline was the killing of unpopular ^{officers}, but the very nature of this phenomenon makes it difficult to produce statistical evidence of any sort.

The phenomenon of cultural oppression has been generally characterised by the attempts of one culture or society to impose its own customs, values and language etc on another. The historical efforts to pacify and assimilate the Highlands of Scotland conforms to this pattern, and can be identified with the 'internal colonialization' underpinning the development of the British State. The main goal of this process was to bring peripheral societies under effective central control.¹ This gave rise to a systematic regimen of cultural oppression, which marked the subsequent history of the Highlands.

In the period after Culloden the Whigs and their supporters implemented measures aimed at smashing Jacobitism and subjugating the Highlands, which had been a frequent source of rebellion. This entailed a wideranging attack on the traditional society, its language and culture, which were perceived to be formidable barriers to the Highland's political assimilation and correlated economic development. The unleashing of this strategy, through the enactment of punitive legislation, the administration of the annexed estates, and the role of schools and churches, supported by a formidable army of occupation, had profound consequences. It was accompanied by a sustained assault on the 'commonalty's' morals, and a fierce determination to impose a capitalist work discipline and ethos upon the Highlanders who resisted these objectives. The Whigs hoped their policies would create the cheap, disciplined and loyal labour reserve army to supply the industries and transformed agrarian system, viewed as central to the success of the overall commitment to 'civilizing' and assimilating the Highlands.

Within Argyll the main centres of Jacobite sympathy during the 1745 Rebellion existed on the former MacLean of Duart lands in Mull, Tiree and Coll and Morvern. The strength of backing in these and other areas such as Ardnamurchan, Lismore and Appin were recorded in the official correspondence of the period. Reflecting this on February 26th 1746 Archibald Campbell of Stonefield, Sheriff of Argyll, wrote to the third Duke about those disaffected areas of his estate

where 'there is not a shilling of rents recover'd since the rebellion broke out'. While on the MacLean lands in Mull only two men could be persuaded to join the Government forces, and an estimated sixty men were 'out' prompting General John Campbell of Mamore to order the Mull loyalists to 'repair home (from Inveraray) forthwith to protect their families'. On the island of Tiree Jacobite sympathies came to the fore when attempts were made to recruit men for the Argyllshire Militia. The inhabitants, wrote Archibald Campbell of Stonefield, 'threatn'd to sacrifice the factor, in such manner that he had reason to make the best of his way from hence. None of them have join'd the Militia, and there are but four gone to the Rebellion, but they have constantly been upon the flutter'.² In Morvern and Ardnamurchan the tenants were kinsmen of Cameron of Lochiel or McLean of Drimnin, and rose en masse for the Jacobite cause. The level of Jacobite support in these areas resulted in the Duke of Cumberland issuing a commission of 'fire and sword' with as many as four hundred houses being destroyed, and marked their inhabitants as prime targets of the oppression which supervened Culloden.³

The process of 'civilizing' the Highlands left few aspects of life in the traditional society unscathed. To undermine the distinctiveness of its culture the 1726 Disarming Act was reaffirmed, and a measure passed prohibiting the wearing of Highland dress. This contume was perceived to be an intrinsic component of life in this hostile society, and in the post Rebellion hysteria was equated with Jacobitism. Whig fears, and perceptions of Highland dress, were outlined by Captain Burt in his Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland, which also expressed the 'improvers'' deeply held conviction that the Highland lifestyle was a bar to this country's political assimilation and economic development:

'It is urged against it (Highland Dress) that it distinguishes the natives as a body of people distinct and separate from the rest of the subjects of Great Britain, and thereby is one cause of their narrow adherence among themselves

to the exclusion of all the rest of the Kingdom; but the part of the habit chiefly objected to is the plaid (or mantle), which, they say, is calculated for the encouragement of an idle life, in lying about on the heath in the daytime, instead of following some lawful employment; that it serves to cover them in the night when they lie in wait among the mountains to commit their robberies and depredations; and is composed of such colours as altogether, in the mass, so nearly resemble the heath on which they lie, that it is hardly to be distinguished from it, until one is so near them as to be within their power, if they have any evil intention; that it renders them ready at a moment's notice to join in any rebellion . . .'.⁴

Admittedly this observation dates from the 1730s, but there is no evidence to suggest that, against the background of Culloden, Whig perceptions became more sophisticated, rather the contrary as they determined to smash the culture, which was regarded to be a fertile breeding ground of disaffection.

The attack on Highland dress was bitterly resented and fanned discontent, particularly since it affected all Highlanders regardless of their allegiance. This was manifested in the reluctance amongst elements of the Highland gentry to enforce the prohibition. Reflecting this John Royden Hughes wrote to his subordinate officer Duncan Campbell of Glenure in 1749 complaining of the latter's 'opposition' to the enforcement of the law against Highland dress in the Loch Rannoch area:

'you dont only tolerate and encourage those dresses which by your office you ought to suppress; but you threaten to confine horse soldiers who are active in the King's service and force their prisoners from them in a manner I much doubt if you can justify and also give them to understand if they continue to do

their duty, they are to expect whatever usage the resentment of the inhabitants may suggest'.

Duncan Campbell's conduct had been prompted by the brutality of the soldiers enforcing this law, and their failure to make distinctions between the different types of Highland garb. The defence of his actions brought a furious rejoinder from Hughes, who threatened to inform General Churchill:

'It is a poor evasion of the laws to make any distinction between a philabeg and hose trousers where in the great differences you cannot but know the true intent and meaning of the law is to oblige the Highlanders to conform in their dress with his majesty's other subjects and everything peculiar to themselves is contrary to that act'.⁵

One of the angriest denunciations of the Disarming Act, and the ban on Highland dress was elicited from Duncan Ban MacIntyre, the Glenorchy poet, who had served in and later deserted the Argyllshire militia. In his Song 'Oran Do' Bhriogais' (Song to the Breeches) he gave vent to the bitterness felt by Highlanders, at having an alien garb forced upon them, adding that many would be willing to fight for Jacobitism if the tartan could be restored to its honoured place in a society valued by its inhabitants for its social and cultural distinctiveness:

'S ann a nis tha fios again
An t-ìochd a rinn Diuc Uilleam
ruinn,
'N uair a dh' fhage sinn mar
phriosanaich,
Gun bhiodagan gun ghunnachan,
Gun chlaidheamh, gun chrios-
tarsain oirnn,
Chan fhaigh sinn pris nan
dagachan;
Tha command aig Sasainn oirnn,

['Tis now we have experienced
the sympathy Duke William
showed us,
when he has left us captive
like,
without dirks and without
guns,
without a sword or shoulder
belt,
not even pistols can we get;
for England has control of us,

O smachdaich iad gu buileach sinn.
 Tha angar is duilichinn,
 'San am seo air iomadh fear,
 Bha'n campa Dhuic Uilleam
 Is nach fheairrdd' iad gun
 bhuidhiun e.
 Nan tigeadh oirne Tearlach,
 'S gun eireamaid na champa
 Gheibhte breacain charnaid . . .
 'S bhiodh aird na gunnachan'.

since they subdued us utterly.
 Now wrath and vexed are many
 men,
 who have been in Duke
 William's camp
 and are none the better of the
 fact that he achieved victory.
 If Charles were to descend on
 us,
 and they rose to take the
 field with him
 red tinted tartans could be
 got and the guns would be
 forthcoming'.⁶

The prohibition on Highland dress was widely resisted by the 'commonalty'. In Isle of Seil, Nether Lorn, those returning from journeys outwith the area would change from trousers back into the kilt at a house which became immortalised as 'Tigh nan Truish' (House of the Trousers); and in Kinloch Rannoch, bordering Argyll, one Duncan MacGregor, a 'disorderly fellow', was regarded as a 'champion' amongst his clan for wearing the kilt, from its prohibition until his arrest in 1757. Similarly the minister for the parish of Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich in Cowal recalled in the 1790s the defiant loyalty of his parishioners to their native costume:

'The inhabitants in general, except those who carry on the fishing, continue to wear the Highland dress, the bonnet, the philabeg, and tartan hose, even the authority of an act of Parliament, was not sufficient to make them relinquish their ancient garb'.⁷

The Whigs' determination to root out Jacobitism rapidly assumed the character of a 'witch hunt', searching to expose the least sign of disaffection, notably in official posts. One aspect of this trend was the attempt to remove all Jacobites from Commissions of the Peace. Such efforts created serious difficulties in upholding the law

in certain areas of the Highlands. In Inverness-shire for example a quarter of the justices of the peace had been active in the Jacobite cause, and their removal in 1751 necessitated the appointment of military magistrates and the rule of martial law in Inverness-shire, Ross-shire and other eastern counties. The 'with hunting' influence also spread to Argyll, where in 1752 the Board of Customs and Excise wrote to the collector at Campbeltown demanding that he ascertain the political loyalties of all the Board's officers and men to ensure they were 'well affected' to King George and the Whig interest.⁸

The commitment to smash Jacobitism, and the hostility to Highland culture, was institutionalised in the administration of the annexed estates. One facet of their management was the steps taken to remove Jacobite tenants, exemplified in an order of 1751 to the factors: 'You are to make it your business to inquire which of the tenants have been in rebellion . . . if any of the tenants behave in a way not agreeable to you, you are to turn them out so soon as leases expire'. That this was put into practice is reflected in orders given to John Campbell of Barcaldine, a member of the Argyll gentry who in 1755 was taking action against tenants on the Perth estate for rent arrears, to institute proceedings against suspected Jacobites first. Moreover in the same year, a full decade after the Rebellion, the 'Instructions given to the different factors on the Forfeited Estates' reaffirmed the previous ban, prohibiting friends and relatives of attainted Jacobites from holding leases or acting as factors on these estates. They were also accompanied by the stipulation that all tenants take oaths of loyalty to the Crown before Justices of the Peace.⁹

The annexed estates also undertook measures to undermine the Gaelic language, which complemented the activities of other interventionist agencies, most notably the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. During the 1750s the Commissioners canvassed their factors to recommend the 'best method' to 'bring' the inhabitants to understand English. The factors'

commitment to imposing English was typified by the comments of Captain John Forbes, factor on the estates of Lovat and Cromarty, who wrote in 1755 that its introduction was of the 'greatest consequence' in the struggle to 'improve and civilize' the Highlands. Forbes urged the Board to construct more schools, use leases to keep children at school, on pain of their parents' removal, and to instill a commercial ethos. He also called for vacant farms to be leased only to those who could understand English, although it is doubtful whether the Commissioners ever implemented this proposal: 'No person should get a farm who cannot speak English, unless he is already in possession, which will raise an emulation to learn the language among young servants, who are past the time of going to school'.¹⁰

The Commissioners' stewardship, and the presence of troops to pacify the Highlands, were widely resented. On the annexed estates they provoked significant levels of physical and passive resistance. Indeed it was reported by David Bruce, chief surveyor and author of The Highlands in 1750 who with others received commissions to survey the estates in 1747, that these men performed their duties 'at considerable risque of personal injury and danger'. Indeed the non-co-operation of the tenants undermined the surveys. On the Cluny estate for example it was only in 1754-55 that the factor discovered the tenants were paying reduced rents, with the principal rents being channeled to their exiled chief.¹¹

The level of resistance grew when factors tried to impose the Commissioners' authority, and to undertake the management of the estates. In his reports of 1767-68 Archibald Menzies, younger of Culdaraes, the Board's General Inspector, outlined the deep rooted opposition to the 'improvement' of agriculture:

'The factors upon these estates have been at great pains to divide the farms . . . and have tried to carry out a number of other articles for improving the police of the estates but they have been very much discouraged from pushing those articles by the

licentious dispositions of the tenants'.

Menzies proceeded to explain how tenants were sabotaging these measures by lodging complaints against the factors:

'things are suspended until factors are further examined and after all, tho the tenant is found in the wrong no further notice is taken. Things are come to such a pass upon these estates that no order of the Board if in the least disagreeable can be executed without going through all the different courts'.

Factors also found it an exhausting, and time consuming, process to attempt evicting tenants, who would apply to all available law courts to defend their occupancies.¹²

The tenants' hostility made it difficult, and often impossible, for the factors to extract rents. Embodying this in 1748 John Campbell of Barcaldine advised the Barons of Exchequer that it would require force of arms to undertake rent collection on the Perth estate and was accordingly granted licence for eighteen stacks of arms. A similar pattern emerged on other estates such as Kinlochmoidart where in the period 1748-49 John Cameron of Fassifern, brother of the attainted Donald Campbell of Locheil, told the tenants in the presence of Patrick Campbell, the under factor, that they would pay rent to the commissioners 'at their peral'. The tenants being staunch Jacobites needed little prompting, proving as 'backward' as the Locheil tenants in paying rent and threatened to shoot the bailies if they tried to uplift payments. The result was that Patrick Campbell was forced to request military assistance to support him in his dealings with the inhabitants of Kinlochmoidart and Lochaber, whose resistance was directed by the Jacobite gentry who organised rent collections for the exiled proprietors.¹³

On the estates of Kinlochmoidart, Locheil and Ardsheal, incorporating the parishes of Appin and Lismore, Colin Campbell of Glenure, the factor, encountered similar opposition and in

November 1749 wrote to Baron Maule complaining that the inhabitants would do nothing he ordered without the use of 'compulsion'. The resentment and hatred targeted against the forces of occupation resulted in Colin Campbell's assassination on May 14th 1752. The problems he faced before his death were outlined in a memorial of 1771 from Lt. Patrick Campbell, his nephew. The evictions attempted by Colin Campbell, it was recorded:

'met with numberless, and almost insurmountable obstacles particularly from their disputing inch by inch, the orders of his constituencies in the most litigious and refractory manner; and when they found that that plan of procedure failed them, they had recourse to the less eligible plans of threatening the lives of any who should be found hardy enough to attempt succeeding them in their possessions, in both which lawless schemes of opposition they were strongly supported by a certain party at that time very powerful and whose resentment was much dreaded in the country'.

Colin Campbell was succeeded by his brother who 'continued at the risk of his own life' to farm until 1763 when the latter's son Patrick came into possession.¹⁴ This memorial provides a valuable insight into the vulnerability of the Campbell planters amongst a hostile population united in their opposition to the Whig interest.

Campbell of Glenure's death led to an immediate clamp down on this opposition. The most dramatic action was taken against James Stewart of Aucharn who, as a local leader of Stewart resistance, found himself charged with being an accessory before the crime. Campbell determination to exact revenge, extirpate residual Jacobitism and thereby consolidate their foothold in the Appin area, culminated in a political 'show trial' at Inveraray. Inevitably this travesty resulted in the judicial murder of James Stewart. His execution, however, rather than cowing the local population into submission, served only to heighten their hatred of the Whig forces. This is

corroborated in a letter of December 1752 from James Stewart, aide de camp of General Churchill, to David Moncreiff, secretary to the Barons of Exchequer, which casts further light on the attitudes of the local people. Stewart explained it was difficult to find accommodation for his troops, and that the people had offered to build them a hut near the gibbet upon which James Stewart of Acharn had been hanged for the murder of Colin Campbell. It might have been expected that the location of the proposed hut might have aroused Stewart's suspicion with respect to the sincerity of the offer which he reported was no nearer being honoured by the local inhabitants:

'but it seems from time to time (they) have staved off the performance with fair promises to the officer, who by that means delayed representing his situation. The motive for so gross a neglect in them must be owing, to their hoping from the advanced season that the troops would be withdrawn'.¹⁵

The determination to 'civilize' the Highlands intensified in the 1750s and 1760s, with the recurrent fear of Jacobite rebellion gaining currency in Government and military circles. An anonymous report sent to the Duke of Newcastle in 1750 reflects this anxiety. The correspondent referred to the steps being taken by 'some disaffected persons', who were organising a rebellion to be launched 'whenever a convenient opportunity presents itself'. The report added that these 'dangerous emissaries' were active recruiting for the French army, telling the people 'they are enslaved, and entirely Governed by a military power'. To end this occupation, and to 'recover the use of the Highland dress', the Highlanders were exhorted to 'rise', and make use of an estimated six thousand hidden arms. It concluded that the activities of Jacobite agents and priests had 'raised the rebellious spirits of the common Highlanders to such a pitch that they seem more inclined to a rebellion than ever'. It is evident that Whig fears were not without foundation, and that Jacobitism remained an active force during the period. Further illustration of this is provided by a letter from Donald Campbell of

Airds, the Duke of Argyll's factor on Morvern, to Erskine Murray dated 1754 in which he wrote that the 'Disaffected party were in great expectations', and eagerly awaited another Rebellion. Campbell was sufficiently alarmed to send spies to corroborate these reports.¹⁶

The fear of rebellion heightened during the Seven Years War, 1756-63, where there were a series of invasion scares, with the Whigs anticipating that the Jacobite clans would rise in support of a French landing. On March 2nd 1756 for example the third Earl of Breadalbane wrote to Erskine Murray expressing this fear. By May the threat, according to John Campbell of Barcaldine, had passed and the Highlands were 'now very quiet' because the people began to 'dispair' of a landing. This anxiety again grew in the period 1758-59 when a French invasion was expected daily. The prospects of such an event caused great excitement amongst the Jacobite supporters in the Highlands, a fact confirmed in a letter from Lord George Beauclerk, the commander in chief of the British army, to the Earl of Holderness, the Secretary of State, on May 22nd 1759:

'By letters of information I have received there appears a sort of flutter and sprightliness among some of the disaffected in the Northern parts of this country, as if they were in expectation of something happening agreeable to them; probably from no other foundation than the publick accounts of the great preparations making in France to invade some part of the British Dominions; the spirits of those people having been frequently elated upon the slightest rumour'.

Beauclerk gave orders to search for 'strangers and suspected persons', and for news to be sent of the 'least appearance of turbulence and caballing' as fears of an imminent invasion spread throughout the summer of 1759. Reflecting this on July 13th 1759 John Campbell of Barcaldine again wrote to Erskine Murray reporting the invasion with which news of a possible French invasion was received, and urging the latter to use spies to recruit those opposed to the Jacobite cause.

Campbell wrote that the tenants on the MacDonald estates told a government spy 'every ship they see on the coast they believe them French ships', and their excitement rose with the arrival of five or six ships whose conduct was 'suspicious'. By November the threat of invasion had apparently ebbed, but Campbell nevertheless urged caution and advised spies be recruited on the annexed estates to provide intelligence.¹⁷

The official correspondence of the 1750s, and the resistance on the annexed estates, illustrates the extent to which Jacobitism continued to play a significant role in the Highlands. This extended into the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when it was channelled into the opposition to the agricultural 'improvements'. Within Argyll this has been documented with respect to the former McLean of Duart lands on Mull, Tiree and Coll, and in Morvern, wherein Jacobitism coalesced with, and underpinned, the commitment to preserve the traditional society. Jacobitism also made a large contribution to the indigenous folk culture. This went beyond the numerous number of songs and poems extolling the Jacobites' political cause, significant as these are. Some surviving aspects of Highland folk lore reflect Jacobite sympathies but also provide evidence, in very intimate and human terms, which casts light on the traditional society's attempts to come to terms with military defeat, a hostile force of occupation and the wideranging attacks on the native culture. In Myth, Tradition and Story from Western Argyll K.W. Grant recorded a story about a young woman who was kidnapped and taken to America, which illustrates these themes. Upon the woman's return she sails to Inveraray, on a boat carrying soldiers, in search of her family who had long thought she was dead. Her unsuspecting mother's reception reveals the sense of bitterness and hostility still felt, during the American Revolution from when the story dates, towards the 'English' army. The mother initially refuses her daughter hospitality before the latter's true identity becomes known:

"I will not on any account harbour you within my house", exclaimed her mother with rising wrath,

"How should I know who or what you might turn out to be - you who have come over the ferry with a boatful of redcoats".¹⁸

Similarly the Reverend Alexander Stewart in 'Twixt Ben Nevis and Glencoe outlined a folk tale which, embodying the same proto nationalism, was 'more or less believed in everywhere'. Stewart was told by an old woman that a man's success, as a drover and farmer, was due to his uncle giving him a "Srian Eich Uisge" (water horse bridle) found on his way back from the Pitlochry tryst and hung in the crook of a Rowan tree. Upon receiving this information Stewart and his friend continued to quize the 'very respectable old lady':

"But how", we asked, "do water horses happen to have bridles? Who could ride or drive them? and if they can neither be driven or ridden, why should they have bridles?" "Thomas the Rhymer", the old lady replied, "or some other magician and prophet of the olden times now detained in Fairyland, is destined yet to reappear upon the earth with some companions almost as powerful as himself; then shall the water horses be bridled and saddled by a brave company of Scottish men from fairyland, some Highlands, some Lowlands, bridled and saddled, and fearlessly mounted; a great battle will be fought; all Englishmen and other foreigners will be driven out of the country; the Crown will again revert to the rightful heirs, and Scotland once again become a free, independent and happy kingdom".¹⁹

A major part of the cultural oppression evident in the Highlands was the steps taken against the Gaelic language. The resolve to undermine this language was evident as early as the 1600s with the enactment of the Statutes of Iona (1608-09), and in the orders of the Privy Council. An order of 1616 provides a perspective into official thinking, outlining the underlying ideological aim:

"that the vulgar Inglish tongue be universallie plantit, and the Irishe, which is one of the chief and principall causis of the continuance of barbaritie and incivilities amongis the inhabitants of the Ilis and the Heylandis, be abolishit and removeit".²⁰

The attack on Gaelic and the traditional culture, directed through the education system, gathered momentum in the latter part of the seventeenth century with the advent of Jacobitism. Indicative of this trend, in 1688 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland agreed that the rents from the Bishoprics of Argyll and Dunkeld should be used for the 'erecting of English schools for rooting out the Irish language and other pious uses'. The determination to undermine Gaelic intensified in the early eighteenth century with the formation of the SSPCK in 1709. This organisation assumed the burden of educational provision in the Highlands, although in practice it only provided schools in areas where parish schools already existed. Within Argyll the SSPCK operated seven schools during 1731, twenty in 1755, thirty-seven in 1792 and twenty-four in 1825. The number of pupils taught in Argyllshire schools, for which figures are available, were five hundred and forty-one pupils in nineteen schools in 1755; 1,560 pupils in twenty-eight schools, of whom two hundred and one were girls, in 1792; and 1,708 in twenty-three schools during 1825.²¹

The SSPCK's special responsibilities for education in the Highlands gave it a pole position in the battle to 'civilize' this country, a role it also adopted in America with respect to the Indians. Its commitment to this goal, in which it tended to be predominantly supported by the 'moderate' elements within the General Assembly, was outlined in 1716:

'Nothing can be more effectual for reducing these countries to order and making them usefull to the Commonwealth than teaching them their duty to God, their King and countrey and rooting out their Irish

language, and this has been the case of the Society so far as they could, for all the scholars are taught in English'.²²

It was also widely believed that Gaelic had to be undermined because its use retarded the economic development, central to the 'civilizing' of the Highlands. This connection was drawn by Drs Hyndman and Dick in a report of 1760 on the Highlands:

'The common people can carry on no Transactions with the more southern parts of Great Britain without the intervention of their superiors, who know the English language and are thereby kept in that undue dependence and unacquaintance with the Arts of life which have long been the misery of these country's'.

The speaking of Gaelic was therefore equated with the 'tribalism' which the landlords and the clergy sought to smash. This conception spanned the entire breadth of the period under consideration. During the 1840s for example it was recorded by the minister of Kilchoman, Islay, that Gaelic had 'decidedly' lost ground 'in proportion' as the people became 'more enlightened by education' which contemporaneously in the parish of Kilcalmonell the minister coldly observed Gaelic remained the 'vernacular' language, although English was displacing it, adding 'the sooner it overmasters it the better'.²³

The prevalence of these attitudes towards Gaelic, and the Highland culture, were used to justify the path of cultural destruction pursued by interventionist agencies, most notably the SSPCK and the Board of Commissioners for the annexed estates. The relationship between the 'improvements', and the attack on the indigenous Highland culture, was highlighted in 1822 by Stewart of Garth in Sketches of the character, manners and present state of the Highlanders of Scotland:

'but the system of modern improvements, marked by an aversion, inveterate as it seems unaccountable to the ancient inhabitants, their customs, language, and manners, is now extending to the most distant

corrie and glen, and will probably root out the language of the country, along with a great proportion of the people who speak it'.²⁴

Within the SSPCK schools pupils, for much of the period under consideration, were forbidden to use Gaelic except to facilitate the translation of English, a prohibition which denied them the right to speak their native language. The harsh and oppressive regimen of teaching relied on rote learning, and the use of 'censors' to intimidate and punish pupils speaking Gaelic. During 1751, in the aftermath of the Rebellion when attitudes to Gaelic hardened even further, the SSPCK reaffirmed its support for the use of 'censors':

'hereafter the scholars attending the Charity schools after they have in some measure learned to speak English, be discharged either in the schoolhouse, or when playing about the doors, thereof to speak Earse, on pain of being chastised. And that the school masters appoint censures to note down and report to the schoolmaster such as transgress this rule'.

The nature of SSPCK schooling and its institutionalising of 'cultural intimidation' proved a traumatic experience for many of the pupils. This is evident from the account of Peter McIntosh, a Campbeltown school teacher, of his own schooldays and of those school children in the mid-nineteenth century encountering the same prejudice against their native language:

'having been sent to school to learn to read English, and tortured with tasks and tawse, without understanding the meaning of what they learn or read, they contract a dislike to that language'.²⁵

The commitment to rote learning, however, had counter productive effects which, causing unease within the SSPCK as early as the 1700s, necessitated a major change of course in the 1760s. In 1766 the General Committee, acknowledging that the pupils often had no

understanding of the English they were being taught, agreed to allow the qualified reading of Gaelic, and undertook the publication of the New Testament in 1767 and a Gaelic Bible in 1801. It should be stressed that these measures did not constitute a change of heart by the society, but rather represented an attempt to increase the efficiency of its overall policy. Furthermore there is no evidence to suggest there was any attendant liberalisation of the regimen within these schools.

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the performance of Highland troops in Britain's imperialist ventures, and the desanitisation of Highland culture by such bodies as the Highland Society, radically changed the role of Gaelic in education. In the light of these background conditions, which occasioned the 'imperial rehabilitation' of the Gael, it became 'safe' to promote the Gaelic language. Consequently education in the Highlands was supplemented by the Gaelic School societies of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness founded in 1811, 1812 and 1818 respectively. These organisations considered the encouragement of Gaelic as central to the evangelisation of the Highlands. Towards this objective the Edinburgh society concentrated directly on Gaelic through scripture readings in this language, whilst those of Glasgow and Inverness employed a bi-lingual approach.

Contemporaneously the SSPCK recognised Gaelic as an educational language in 1825. This decision, however, fails to prove the society was 'more in favour of Gaelic education than were the Gaels'.²⁶ The 'encouragement' of children to read Gaelic is attributable to the difficulties faced by the SSPCK, and was recognition that its anti-Gaelic stance was out of step with the rehabilitation of the Gael. Moreover where in fact the society met a 'general prejudice' to Gaelic amongst Highlanders this has to be understood in the light of the historic cultural oppression and the identification of English as the language of 'progress', which succeeded in turning many people against their native tongue. The impact of these factors was depicted by D. Stewart: 'many of the

common people begin to despise their native language, as they see gentlemen endeavouring to prevent their children from acquiring the knowledge of the Gaelic . . .'.²⁷

Other factors which weakened Gaelic were seasonal migration, and the growth of trade, most notably droving, between the Highlands and the Lowlands. It was the young, in particular, who adopted English when they undertook seasonal work in the latter area. This connection was outlined by the minister of South Knapdale in 1796:

'The Gaelic is the prevailing language spoken in the parish. The English has of late spread considerably, owing, in a great measure to young people travelling to the low country, and returning home after they acquired the language'.

One effect of this greater contact was the adulteration of Gaelic. This received comment as early as 1760 from J. Walker, who observed of the inhabitants of Oban: 'they adulterate their native forcible language with Anglicisms, which produce a disagreeable Medley'. The evidence of the Old Statistical Account indicates that this phenomenon was most pronounced in those areas of Argyll, such as Kintyre and Cowal, nearest the Lowlands. In the parish of Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich for example the speaking of Gaelic was, 'owing to the frequent communication with the low country', being 'corrupted with a mixture of English words and phrases, and is not so pure, not so correct, as that which is spoken in the more remote parts of the Highlands'.²⁸

This source also indicates that Gaelic, despite remaining the predominant 'fireside' language, was being eroded. The advance of English was underpinned by the activities of the interventionist agencies, the influence of seasonal migration and increased trade, and the impact of clearance and the concomitant mass migration/emigration of native Gaelic speakers and their replacement in many instances with English speaking sheep farmers and tenants. Consequently by the 1790s a large number of people in Argyll could understand at least some

English. It was only, however, in the burghs of Campbeltown and Inveraray that English was the dominant language. This can be attributed to their distinctive historical experience, both towns being planted with Lowland protestants during the seventeenth century. It is significant that important differences existed between the town and country areas of these parishes. In Inveraray for example the minister observed that English was the 'prevailing language' in the town whereas Gaelic predominated 'in the country parts of the parish'. The process of linguistic 'assimilation', and the growth of bi-lingualism, accelerated over the next fifty years, and is substantiated by the New Statistical Account. Reflecting this in the parish of Kilmartin Gaelic was 'spoken, and preferred by all the natives as the medium of communication; but from their intermixture with strangers, and the facility of intercourse with the low country, it is fast losing ground, particularly among the young people'. Similarly in Strachur and Stralachlan although Gaelic was 'generally spoken' it was noted 'almost the whole of the rising generation speak English'; while in Tobermory, on the island of Mull, the former was still 'commonly spoken' but 'almost all understand or speak the English'.²⁹

The growth of English created new, and exacerbated existing, tensions within the Church, the schools and the wider community, especially in the southern parts of Argyll where linguistic 'assimilation' was more pronounced. This was revealed in the process of appointing a new teacher at the Campbeltown grammar school in 1748. There were two candidates for this post - Maxwell, who could speak "the Irish tongue", and Knibloe, who taught English "after the new method" of fashionable post Union pronunciation. In this case the Gaelic supporters on the burgh council were able to secure Maxwell's appointment. The minority, however, complained that two councillors who had not been present voted for him, and that the Duke of Argyll was not consulted. This provoked a blistering riposte from Provost McNeill, who declared 'that he did not value all the Dukes in Scotland' and refused to sanction any suggestion that he should be.

The controversy over this appointment highlights the extent of linguistic tensions, which subsequently contributed to the formation of separate Highland and Lowland Church congregations in the parishes of Campbeltown and Southend during the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁰

The process of 'civilising', and assimilating, the Highlands also embraced other parts of the traditional folk culture, such as rites and customs, games and pastimes, superstitions and the belief in paranormal forces. One aspect of this was manifested in the 'improvers'' commitment to try to transform the behaviour of the 'commonalty' at the traditional Scottish weddings which were notoriously riotous. Their characteristics were outlined by William McKay in his article Life in the Highlands in Olden Times:

'There was as a rule excessive conviviality at marriages, the rejoicings extending sometimes over a week. Until comparatively recently a wedding that did not last three days was a poor wedding indeed. Among the humbler classes the guests subscribed towards the cost of the entertainment hence the name "Penny Wedding". The marriage usually took place on a Thursday and the festivities lasted until the Bride was kirked on the following Sunday'.³¹

The scenes and revelries at funerals were just as intense. Lord Teignmouth in Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland cited the example, related to him by an 'enthusiastic Highlander' during the mid 1830s, concerning the funeral of a distinguished officer to highlight 'the perpetuation of a remnant of a rude custom, of showing respect to the dead and hospitality to the mourners':

"Oh Sir it was a grand entertainment there were five thousand Highlanders present; We were so jolly. Some did not quit the spot till next morning, some not till the following day, they

lay drinking on the ground, it was like a field of battle".

The 'commonalty's' own funerals, although less grand, were nevertheless characterised by the same degree of revelry:

'Even death could not suppress the native mirth of the old Highlander. During the late wake the chamber in which the body lay was filled day after day and night after night with the coronach, and with jests, songs and tales, the music of the fiddle and the pipe, and the shout and clatter of the Highland reel'.³²

The prevalence of traditional weddings and wakes drew sustained attacks from the clergy who, committed to 'moral' as well as economic 'improvements', deemed the drunkenness and fighting, associated with these customs, highly immoral. Their hostility is reflected in the decision, taken by the Kirk session of Kilbrandon and Kilchattan in 1754, refusing to pay for Effy MacLean's coffin after her friends and relatives had 'spent riotously at her funeral of her own effects which should have paid her coffin'; and in the complaints of John MacLean, publican at Ardfern in 1808, that the local minister's ban preventing baptism and marriage parties from drinking at his inn on Sundays was having an adverse effect on his trade.³³

By the nineteenth century the clergy's opposition, and the impact of depopulation, brought some alteration in the nature of weddings and wakes. In Kilchoman on Islay for example the minister wrote during the 1840s that:

'The custom which obtained of assembling neighbours and kindred to attend at funerals, marriages and baptisms, led to many, and grievous irregularities. This of late years has been giving place to a more orderly, and decorous mode of conducting funerals. At marriages, it is nearly discontinued, and at christenings entirely so'.

It should be stressed, however, that this change was resisted, and by no means universally successful, as the testimony of the Reverend MacLean, minister for Tiree and Coll, would suggest:

'There is one custom still prevalent, which calls loudly for a reformation, a custom now happily confined to a few remote parts of the country: drinking of ardent spirits at funerals. It is quite melancholy to consider what sums are worse than thrown away in this manner. There are instances of poor families parting with their last horse or cow to furnish an establishment of this kind. They reckon it a point of honour to do so; and thus what might have contributed to their support for a twelvemonths is wasted in a day, to keep up a savage and disgusting custom'.³⁴

Indeed weddings and wakes, celebrated in the traditional manner, continued to be attended in rural Scotland throughout the second part of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries, just as the weight of evidence in the New Statistical Account confirms that drunkenness, a symptom of the profound cultural alienation affecting the Highlands, remained an inveterate social problem, despite the clergy's spirited efforts to uphold sobriety. Indicative of this trend the ministers at Inveraray recorded that '19 out of 20 committals (to the jail) have arisen during the last two years, from indulgence in intoxicating liquors', while in Dunoon the eighteen places licensed to sell drink were allegedly 'altogether out of proportion to the population of the parish'. Similarly in the parish of Glassary there were thirty inns and alehouses. The minister commented that these numbers were 'mischievously great' but conceded it was 'an improvement' on former times when of ninety-two houses in Lochgilphead, a total of thirty-two to thirty-four were licensed to sell spirits. By 1844 this had been reduced to twenty-three but it was noted 'the number selling without licence is considerable'.³⁵

The sports and pastimes of the Highlands also came under attack from elements amongst the clergy, notably the 'evangelicals'. This was part of their efforts to redefine Highland culture, in relation to the destruction of the traditional social relations, and thereby remove the 'spiritual destitution' permeating this society. One aspect of the subsequent growth of 'Highland puritanism' was the determination to secure strict Sabbath observation, the effect of which was depicted by the Reverend N. MacDonald:

'Sunday became so associated in the popular mind with gloomy depression, that its consequences were reflected in the general life of the country for many a day. And even as late as the nineteenth century, one could not but remark how many who had given up all other observances, still clung to a cheerless Sunday. Throughout the day each window blind remained withdrawn, save those proceeding to Church, few ventured forth upon the highways and any found conversing thereupon were classed with the profane and styled "Sabbath breakers"'.³⁷

The fact that shinty and other games were played on a Sunday marked them out for particular censure from the ministers. The impact of this opposition was outlined by Dr MacBain, quoted in the Reverend N. MacDonald's book Shinty, a short History of the Ancient Highland Game:

'Till late in the 18th century it used to be played to and from the Church, but the wave of puritan piety that rolled over the Highlands about 1750 put an end to Sunday shinty, and, indeed, did much to destroy not only shinty, but all manners of Highland sports, both outdoor and indoor . . .'

By the 1840s the game allegedly faced 'extinction', and in some parishes was only played during holidays, when even then 'the weight of care seems to impede activity'. Shinty was certainly in a decline

during this period, but the major factor behind this, in view of the 'commonalty's' deep rooted commitment to the sport, was the impact of clearance, which drastically reduced the numbers playing. It was this factor which contemporaries, such as John MacLachlan of Rahoy and Dr. Norman MacLeod of Morvern, blamed for the decline of the Highlander's traditional games and sports.³⁸ Despite the hostility to these activities, and the cultural devastation wreaked by clearance, many of the Highland sports, in particular shinty, 'still held on'. With respect to the latter, the regulation of the sport by the Gaelic Church of Glasgow laid the foundations for its notable revival in the 1880s and 1890s, stimulated by the growth of Celtic nationalism, and the attendant interest in the traditional Highland culture.

The extensive Highland folklore drew heavily from the paganistic past, and customs and rights associated with the pre Reformation Catholic church. By concentrating on the nature of certain phenomena and beliefs it is possible to illustrate the 'improvers'' attitudes to the traditional folk culture. Within the Highlands the power of 'Second Sight', the intuitive art of premonition, was widely documented. In 1774 Thomas Pennant encountered a number of people who told him about its reputed power, but he dismissed their accounts as tales 'founded on impudence and nurtured by folly'. Other contemporaries were less sceptical, and James Fea, for example, recorded that the inhabitants of Jura were recipients of this power, which he also gave credence to: 'observation teaches you to judge of those visions; and they are scarcely ever known to fail'.³⁹ Similarly during the mid nineteenth century the Reverend N. MacLeod described the phenomenon in Morvern:

'It is still a very common belief among the peasantry that shadowy funeral processions precede the real ones, and that "warnings" are given of a common death by the crowing of cocks, the ticking of the death watch, the howling of dogs, voices heard by night, the sudden appearance of undefined forms of human beings passing to and fro etc.'

In many instances it would appear that ministers gave credence to the 'second sight', something which can be attributed to the quasi religious nature of the phenomenon. Typifying this, the Reverend Dugald MacEachern wrote that he had been minister on Coll where, as on the neighbouring island of Tiree, the inhabitants 'had long had second sighted men', and gave credulity to his own experience of the 'second sight'. Ministers would also use their 'circle drawing act' to prevent the deceased coming back to haunt their family and friends.⁴¹ In general, however, the Protestant churches appear to have created a 'guilt complex' amongst those believing in paranormal phenomena. This is confirmed by the difficulties faced by the Celtic Romanticists attempting to conduct research into this area in the 1880s and 1890s:

'in those parts where Presbyterianism is strong, with all its essential modernness, its imprimatur of reform, its association with political feeling, there is, among the people, an attitude of apology for their interest in psychical experience which one does not find where Church teaching, either Anglican or Roman, with its more picturesque representation of sacred truths, its historic buildings, its manifold associations, has never been interrupted. The presbyterians more especially showed a reluctance to commit their experience to writing, though entirely courteous and willing when personally approached'.⁴²

The clergy's hostility to many aspects of the traditional folk culture reflected the 'improvers'' drive to undertake economic development in the Highlands, a task which regarded these beliefs as 'tribal' superstitions to be swept away. This opposition was also underpinned by conceptions of the new, ascendent 'time thrift' work discipline, which demanded regulated labour from an orderly workforce. Against this background storytelling, celebrating the traditional culture, and adherence to its rites and customs were perceived by the

'improvers' to encourage 'time wasting' and reinforce the alleged 'laziness' of the 'commonalty', and thereby created further obstacles to the imposition of this work discipline. These considerations were outlined by the minister for the parish of Glenorchy and Inishail in 1792:

'Formerly, indeed, much of that time, which is now spent on useful industry, or in acquiring mental improvement, was passed in indolence, in the favourite chase, or in listening to the captivating "tales of other times"'.⁴³

In the 1880s/90s J.F. Campbell, a major Islay landlord, described the impact which the efforts to eradicate significant areas of the folk culture had had. Campbell discovered when collating folk lore in the late 1850s, as a leading proponent of the antiquarianism which had 'desanitised' the traditional folk culture, that the Highland's 'old spirit of popular romance' had been 'exorcised' as the 'improvers'' hostility began to take effect:

'Elsewhere I had been told, that 30 or 40 years ago, men used to congregate and tell stories; here, I was told, that they now spend whole winter nights about the fire listening to these old World tales. The clergy in some places, had condemned the practice and there it had fallen into disuse; stories seemed to be almost exterminated in some islands, though I believe they were only buried alive; but in other places this harmless amusement is not forbidden, and there in every cluster of houses is some one man famed as "good at sgialachdan" whose house is a winter's evening resort'.⁴⁴

The widespread belief in supernatural beings, such as ghosts and fairies, was also confronted by the clergy and the 'improvers'. The credence given to the existence of fairies was put in perspective by the Reverend A. MacGregor, who also outlined some of the accredited

characteristics of these beings:

'The origin of the fairy superstition is ascribed to the Celtic race; hence in Ireland, the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and Wales, the fairies are even to this day believed by some to exist. They were usually called "Good neighbours", "Daoinesithe", men of peace, and yet, if offended, they became very inveterate in their spite. They readily kidnapped unbaptised children, and even adult men and women, particularly young married females, to become nurses to the fairy children. They lived underground, or in little green hills, where the royal fairies held their courts'.⁴⁵

To safeguard against the influence of fairies elaborate ceremonies evolved, for example, in the north west mainland of Argyll. These involved opening all house locks, and it was common practice for mothers to fill their sons' pockets, and for old people to sprinkle themselves, with meal when undertaking night journeys. It was also customary to prevent the kidnapping of newly born children by having them baptised as quickly as possible. The clergy found this an inveterate practice, and the difficulties of undermining it were outlined by the minister for Kilfinan, Cowal, in 1793:

'Superstition is losing ground in this parish pretty fast, although not in the same proportion, perhaps, as it has done on the Northern side of Lochfine. We cannot ascribe this to a more likely cause than that formerly it may have prevailed more in these parts, and that the Clergy have on that account thought it necessary to be at great pains in rooting it out'.⁴⁶

Despite such efforts the minister revealed that local people persisted in this practice:

'Many of them although they had it in their option to have their children baptised in their own houses, by waiting one day, prefer carrying them 7 or 8 miles

to Church, in the worst weather in December or January by which folly they too often sacrifice the lives of their infants to the phantom of superstition'.

In other parishes the efforts of the school masters and the clergy had largely undermined these beliefs by the mid nineteenth century. This is evident from an example cited by Malcolm Ferguson in Rambles in North Knapdale which, published in 1885, illustrates this historical process:

'If all the frightful, eerie tales that one hears related (enough to make a timid mother's hair stand on end) could be relied on, it would appear that the bosky chaps and deep dells of Ardnackaig where there are numerous deep hollow sounding eerie caverns, and cunningly cosie dens and caves, were for long a favourite haunt of a band of Gruagaches, a species of the old brownie tribes; but I believe the most of them have gradually disappeared from the district. One day I met a pawky shrewd old man, and after a chat, I asked him if there were many fairies or Brownies to be seen lurking about that part of the country. "Na Na", quo' he, "the schuilmaister has banished them a' awa'".⁴⁷

The efforts of the clergy, landlords and the 'improvers' to undermine the traditional folk culture were compounded by the impact of clearance. This influence was outlined in the Old Statistical Account:

'The Highlanders of old did not live either in plenty or in elegance, yet they were happy. They picqued themselves on their capacity of enduring hunger and fatigue. They were passionately fond of music and poetry. The song and the dance soon made them forget their toils. The sound of the bag pipe is now seldom heard. With the mode of

life that nourished it, the vein of poetry has also disappeared'.⁴⁸

The magnitude of clearance was particularly marked in the 1840s, when famine, and the concomitant collapse of the fragile socio-economic balance within Highland society, resulted in the dramatic increase of depopulation. The effects of these developments on the traditional folk culture were outlined by James MacDiarmid in an article 'Fragments of Breadalbane Folklore', which illustrates what was a general pattern throughout the Highlands. MacDiarmid described how belief in ghosts, witches, fairies and various other aspects of the folk culture were lost when the Breadalbane estate was cleared:

'During the Breadalbane clearances in 1839 and in the forties of last century scores of families were expelled from their holdings, and with their expulsion doubtless many weird tales and traditions associated with certain parts of Breadalbane were irretrievably lost'.⁴⁹

The influence of cultural oppression, exacerbated by the influence of clearance, weakened significant aspects of the indigenous folk culture. Despite this, however, the Highlanders retained a large number of their traditions and customs, and these constituted a cultural base that Celtic nationalists were able to adopt and preserve in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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Conclusion

The 'improvement' of agriculture and the landlords' attempts to promote capitalist economic development had a profound effect on the Highlands. The changes these brought undermined the traditional society and destroyed its social relations. This process resulted in mass clearance in two broadly identifiable phases. In the first between 1760 and 1815 the traditional townships, comprising of multi-tenant farms, were replaced by individual croft holdings. The second phase, occurring during the post 1815 economic depression, represented a major escalation of clearance as the crofting communities, initially encouraged by the landlords to take advantage of the war time price boom in kelp and other products, were systematically cleared of their inhabitants. The indiscriminate nature of this action left an indelible impression on the subsequent history of the Highlands.

Within the county of Argyll extant sources provide valuable insights into the character of social change and the dislocation it created inside the traditional society. This evidence highlights the landed interests' intense commitment to 'improvement'. Their support for this ethos makes analysis of Argyll central to any understanding of the far reaching changes sweeping the Highlands during this period. These sources also cast light on the role of the 'commonalty' with respect to the process of social change. They establish that the 'commonalty', rather than being passive victims in the face of such traumatic developments, actively resisted attempts to 'improve' agriculture. This reflected the deep rooted determination to defend their traditional way of life and its culture.

Against the background of the post 1815 economic depression, marked by mass clearance and out migration, class divisions intensified. These were inflamed by the religious rivalries precipitating the 'Disruption'. In this context the 'commonalty's' support for the 'Evangelicals' ^{although perhaps less evident in Argyll than elsewhere in the Highlands} was an extension of the resistance to the transformation of the agrarian system. This backing embodied the widespread hostility to the established church on account of the

latter's association with the landed interest and its failure to oppose the Clearances. The religious conflict associated with the 'Disruption' attained a significance therefore which transcended purely religious issues. Indeed it provided the 'commonalty' with an unprecedented degree of class unity in the struggle against oppressive landlordism which pervaded the Highlands. The significance of this development cannot be underestimated, as previously the 'commonalty's' resistance to landlordism, whether in the form of opposition to 'improvements' or the deforcement of revenue patrols, tended to be localised. The mass support for the Free Church in the Highlands, however, embraced a hostility to landlordism which overcame local boundaries and heightened class consciousness amongst the 'commonalty'. This unity developed and subsequently underpinned the crofters' struggles of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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CH 4

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