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# The British Homogeneity Thesis And Nationalism In Scotland And Wales

John Francis McGarry

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THE BRITISH HOMOGENEITY THESIS AND NATIONALISM  
IN SCOTLAND AND WALES

by

John F. McGarry

Department of Political Science

Submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario  
September 1986

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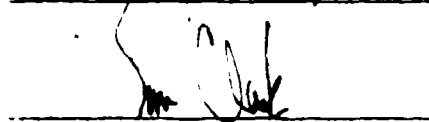
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The thesis by  
John F. McGarry

entitled  
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## ABSTRACT

In the mid-1960s, British political scientists claimed that their society was free of significant regional divisions. Their analysis was based on the theory of political and social diffusion originally put forward by Marx. However, electoral success for nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales in the late 1960s cast doubt on this theory. In response, two theories were put forward ascribing this nationalist phenomenon to economic causes. Michael Hechter argued that nationalism in Scotland and Wales was due to resentment caused by the existence of economic disparities between both countries and England. Tom Nairn, however, claimed that Scottish nationalism was a consequence of economic 'over-development', a situation created by the discovery of North Sea oil. In an attempt to explain nationalism in Scotland and Wales comprehensively, this thesis examines all three theories.

While, in keeping with diffusion theory, Scottish and Welsh regionalism did decline as a consequence of industrialization, this process was incomplete. In Wales, a strong Welsh national identity remained in rural Welsh-speaking areas. In Scotland, while British national sentiment became dominant, it did not completely erase an underlying Scottish identity. Together, these identities provided a basis for nationalist parties.

Contrary to Hechter's theory, this thesis shows that economic disparities did not contribute to demands for separatism. Rather, the weaknesses of the Scottish and Welsh economies bound both countries closer to England. While Nairn's explanation of the rise of Scottish nationalism is helpful, it fails to explain why the Scottish Nationalist Party was already powerful before oil was discovered.

Rejecting the 'economic determinism' of Hechter and Nairn, this thesis explains fluctuating support for nationalist parties in terms of how both they and the unionist parties reacted to political opportunities and socio-economic changes in the 1960s and 1970s. Nationalist party successes were due, partly at least, to their own efforts. The decline of Scottish nationalism in the 1970s resulted from the development of the Labour party as an effective 'broker' of different interests within Britain. This important role for political parties has been overlooked by sociological theories such as those of Nairn and Hechter.

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Most importantly, however, a very special mention goes to my wife, Margaret. Without her constant advice and support, this thesis would still be an abstract thought rather than a hard copy. She effortlessly put up with all the mood changes which affected me during the course of my studies. It is my earnest wish that I can help her in her own doctoral work in the same way that she has helped me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BMC	British Motor Company
BTUC	British Trade Union Congress
EEC	European Economic Community
IDC	Industrial Development Certificate
ILP	Independent Labour Party
ITUC	Irish Trade Union Congress
MEGB	Miners Federation of Great Britain
MORI	Market and Opinion Research International
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
SHRA	Scottish Home Rule Association
SNP	Scottish National Party
STUC	Scottish Trade Union Congress
SWMF	South Wales Miners Federation
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union



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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Until the mid-1960s, Britain was regarded by many social scientists as a model unitary state. The two-party political system reflected the only significant cleavage in British society: class. Many writers testified to the hypothesis that Britain, unlike Spain, Canada and many eastern European countries, was free of any significant racial, religious or regional cleavages. Eric Hobsbawm and Robert Alford put this thesis to the test by their examination of the two areas where one would most expect to find regional or ethnic cleavages, i.e., Scotland and Wales.<sup>1</sup> Neither found any evidence of such cleavages outside isolated rural areas and both insisted that the industrial structures of both countries made them particularly susceptible to the class politics operating elsewhere in Great Britain.

This 'homogeneity' thesis was severely shaken by the political events of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Previously fringe nationalist parties attracted significant support in Wales and, even moreso, in Scotland. These parties not only seemed to threaten the two-party system but also the stability of the political system itself. In the October 1974 general election, the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) became the second-largest party in Scotland in terms of votes cast. While the Welsh nationalist party,

Plaid Cymru, attracted much less support, it also made a considerable impact.

These events prompted Michael Hechter and Tom Nairn to challenge the basic assumptions underlying the homogeneity thesis. Hechter claimed that Welsh and Scottish nationalism had existed for some time, unnoticed by the authors of the homogeneity thesis and that this was fundamentally due to economic exploitation of the Celtic periphery (Ireland, Scotland and Wales) by the English core.<sup>2</sup> Hechter, however, could not adequately explain why nationalism was not a force in Scottish and Welsh politics before the 1960s.

Nairn's interpretation was different: Scottish nationalism, based on a powerful national identity, was caused by economic 'over-development' in relation to England, a situation caused by the decline of the British state and the discovery of North Sea oil in 'Scottish' waters. He felt the break-up of Britain was inevitable.<sup>3</sup> By 1979, however, the advance of Scottish nationalism was halted and the Scottish political scene thereafter looked only slightly different from its previous complexion in the mid-1960s. Similarly, Welsh nationalism no longer appeared to threaten the unity of the state.

This thesis examines the rise and fall of Scottish and Welsh nationalism in the light of the three approaches

described above. By assessing the strengths of these rival claims, the thesis aims at a comprehensive explanation not only of why nationalism was not a force before the late 1960s but also why it emerged at that time and why it seemed to dissipate thereafter.

Although much of the factual material on which the critical analysis of the thesis rests is found in government documents, newspapers, and various secondary sources, there is also extensive use of primary documents from the two nationalist parties and from the Scottish and Welsh branches of the main British parties.<sup>4</sup>

Theories of Political, Cultural and Economic Homogeneity

For over a century, social scientists have claimed that developments associated with industrialization and urbanization would cause an erosion of traditional political cleavages, such as those based on ethnicity. These theorists argued that increasing interaction among different ethnic groups led to regional identities being replaced by an overriding national identity. The increase in communications concomitant with industrialization promoted political centralization by strengthening the central state apparatus at the expense of local authorities. Localism survived only where adequate communications did not exist: The growth of national markets tended towards an equilibrium of economic development among regions. An intensification of contact

between cultures led to the assimilation of peripheral cultures and the emergence of a national culture. Whereas, in pre-industrial societies, politics was largely based on cultural factors such as language or religion, in the new industrialized societies, its base was class. National parties replaced local elites and contested elections on national issues, normally centred on economic questions. These developments, occurring simultaneously, reinforced each other. The trend in the modern world was towards political, cultural and economic homogeneity. Supporters of this thesis included Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Karl Deutsch.<sup>5</sup>

The starting point for this process was industrialization which caused rural-urban migration and the creation of an urban proletariat. Urbanization, in Deutsch's terms, created a "lift-pump" effect, attracting thousands and eventually millions into "patterns of intensive social intercourse".<sup>6</sup> It was this increase in communication, promoting interaction among previously isolated cultural groups, that provides the key to the establishment of national homogeneity. The industrial revolution, by improving roads and railways, brought groups into contact for the first time. This process was hastened by the growth of national newspapers and eventually by broadcasting.<sup>7</sup> The evolution of national school systems reinforced these developments.

The growth of communications among adjacent cultural groups normally led to the assimilation of the weaker group. In this way, divisive cleavages such as language were gradually effaced. Such a process promoted the creation of a cohesive political unit. In France, this process of cultural assimilation resulted in the language of the northern part of the country dominating and eventually eroding that of the south. In Canada, the French language has declined in the face of powerful anglicizing forces. In Britain the English language spread out into the Celtic periphery of Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

The process of assimilation of the Gaelic language in Scotland was described by Deutsch. As interaction between the 'mobilized' English-speaking group and the 'traditional' Gaelic-speaking group increased, the culture of the traditional group declined in direct proportion. At first this erosion was most noticeable where contact between the two cultures was greatest, i.e., in the industrialized built-up area of central Scotland. As industrialization proceeded, the lure of economic opportunity promoted migration from the rural areas of the periphery to the built-up areas. While these migrants maintained their language and culture for a time, they were gradually overwhelmed. Eventually, the forces of anglicization moved out into the rural areas, weakening the hold of the language. As the route to economic advancement

lay with the dominant language, the process was hastened by voluntary assimilation. The result was that, by the eighteenth-century, a separate Gaelic language was retained only in the very isolated areas on the rural fringe of Scotland.<sup>8</sup>

Acculturation was accompanied by economic interaction. As trade and intercourse expanded with the development of transportation, national markets replaced local markets. The supply of credit and currency organized on the basis of the nation created what Deutsch described as "monetary nationalism".<sup>9</sup> These new national markets were distinguishable by their internal unity and their separation from other markets as a result of currencies, tariffs, quotas, and exchange control measures. Internally, national markets led to the establishment of various types of national economic organizations, such as trade unions and business groups. In turn, these groups contributed towards solidifying the polity.

One important aspect of the decline of economic regionalism was considered to be the move toward economic equality. There was a narrowing of the differences in wages paid for the same kind of work from region to region. This was partly a result of economic forces and also a result of national collective bargaining. National trade unions were not prepared to tolerate pockets of low wages. National political organizations often insisted on

minimum wage levels and on uniformity of services throughout the state. This trend towards economic diffusion of services was described by Marx as follows:

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization...It compels all nations on pain of extinction to adopt the bourgeois means of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In other words, it creates a world after its own image.<sup>10</sup>

Another result of a national market was political centralization. Economic developments strengthened the national government at the expense of local ones. For example, the decline of economic regionalism was felt by some authors to be undermining the basis for federalism in the United States and Canada. Alford argued that these processes had undermined the basis for Quebec distinctiveness.<sup>11</sup> J. A. Corry felt that the evolution of a national market in Canada had destroyed the sociological basis for the meaningful survival of the provinces and had contributed to the growing centralization of authority in Ottawa.<sup>12</sup> Political centralization followed from economic centralization. One source noted in 1963 that there was a "universal tendency" in modernizing federal nations for power to move towards the centre.<sup>13</sup> Marx had noted these developments a century earlier. He wrote of the bourgeois revolution:

It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary



consequence of this was political centralization. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation became lumped together into one nation with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest and one customs tariff.

As politics became more economically and culturally homogeneous, cultural cleavages were replaced by class cleavages.<sup>15</sup> This was a central theme in Marx's theory of communism. Rather than being split along ethnic lines, Marx argued that industrialization would split states, and then the world, into "two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other, Bourgeoisie and Proletariat".<sup>16</sup> As industrialization develops, little workshops where a patriarchal relationship exists between employer and employee are transformed into large factories. This transformation erodes the close relationship between owner and worker and encourages the development of class consciousness as workers become more aware of their common exploitation. Class consciousness manifests itself in the growth of ever larger class organizations engaged in conflict with the owners of the means of production:

At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them".<sup>17</sup>

Small craft unions lead to industrial unions and eventually also to large general unions. Political

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organizations grow up to reflect this growing polarization. They reinforce the economic cleavage by helping to "crystallize and make explicit" the conflicting interests.<sup>18</sup>

A territorial cleavage where the citizen was committed to the locality and its dominant culture was replaced by a functional alignment whereby the citizen was instead committed to his economic class and its collective interests. The citizen allied with those in the same class position as himself, irrespective of where they lived and regardless of whether or not it brought him into conflict with his neighbours.<sup>19</sup> In this theory, a Welsh miner who had previously voted with his Welsh employer for some common cultural objective increasingly would vote with miners from other cultural areas for economic goals which were opposed to those of his erstwhile bourgeois allies. Rather than a social revolution as Marx had predicted, the outcome was more often what Lipset described as a "democratic translation of the class struggle", political parties vying for votes along class lines.<sup>20</sup>

Nowhere was this process thought to be more complete than in twentieth-century Britain. It was, after all, the oldest and most highly industrialized society in the world. The theories of diffusion outlined here are essential background for understanding a spate of books published in the 1950s and early 1960s, all of them

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proclaiming the homogeneity of British society and politics.

#### The British Homogeneity Thesis

The success of the two major parties, Labour and Conservative, throughout Britain was regarded by many social scientists as evidence that the Westminster regime was equally accepted in all parts of the state. The absence of any anti-regime activity based on religion or region seemed to confirm this view. John Bonham wrote in 1954 that there was no basis in British society for any kind of politics other than class politics:

...The simplicity of the British social structure, the high degree of national unity and the two-party system, have helped to concentrate attention on the division between classes. British politics are almost wholly innocent of those issues which cross the social lives in other lands; for example, race, religion, nationality, town and country interest, regional interest, or the conflict between authoritarian and parliamentary methods.<sup>21</sup>

In 1963 Jean Blondel declared that "Britain is probably the most homogeneous of all industrial countries".<sup>22</sup> Following the diffusion theories outlined earlier, he insisted that this was a result of Britain's advanced state of industrialization and relative absence of a peasant class. Unlike other countries in Europe and even North America, agriculture in Britain seemed on the point of disappearance. Communications in Britain were more elaborate than anywhere else, as indicated by the unique development of a national press:

11.

Nowhere except in Britain is it possible for the citizens of a country of 52 million inhabitants to go from one part of the country to another and find as a matter of course, their favourite newspaper on their breakfast table."<sup>23</sup>

Whereas profound regional differences existed in many other countries such as France, Germany, the U.S., Belgium and Switzerland, in Britain these were nowhere to be found, except perhaps in the isolated and insignificant "extremities of the country which are out of reach of this uniform culture".<sup>24</sup> As a result of this unique homogeneity, class divisions played a much greater part in British politics than in any other country.<sup>25</sup>

Richard Rose wrote in 1964 that politics in the United Kingdom was greatly simplified by the absence of "major cleavages along the lines of ethnic groups, language or religion."<sup>22</sup> While some economic issues did affect parts of the United Kingdom differently, the major parties did not divide along ethnic lines. Entitling his book Politics In England, Rose felt that "it is customary and correct to speak of British government in conjunction with English society".<sup>26</sup> The unimportance of any regional differences was demonstrated "by the failure of Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties to maintain representation in Parliament with their handful of candidates at general elections."<sup>27</sup>

In his British System of Government, published in 1967, Anthony Birch maintained the academic orthodoxy. Like Blondel, Birch drew attention to the effect of a national press on the political views of the British electorate. The great majority of British people read one of the great national daily newspapers. Provincial papers, when consulted, were read in addition to national papers rather than as alternatives:

People look to the national press for political news and to their local papers to find out what is on at the cinema and how their local football team is faring.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to newspapers, the homogenizing effect of the media was reinforced by the fact that the national radio network is owned by the government while the two television news programmes are produced by national agencies<sup>29</sup>.

Birch drew attention to the fact that the important interest groups in British politics were national in character and pointed out that, unlike the U.S., political parties in Britain were highly centralized.<sup>30</sup> He acknowledged that the inclusion of Ireland in the United Kingdom between 1800 and 1922 had imposed an "important qualification" on the generalization that British government ruled a united country. Ireland was clearly in a different category from Wales or Scotland where whatever differences existed did not have political consequences. The independence of Southern Ireland in 1922, however, made

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the qualification of homogeneity unnecessary.<sup>31</sup> Birch could thus conclude, in concurrence with Bonham, Blondel and Rose:

Most of the generalizations that can be made about politics in England and Wales apply with only minor qualification to Scotland, and for most practical purposes it is reasonable to treat the northern kingdom simply as part of a united political unit called Great Britain.<sup>32</sup>

The major weakness of these accounts is that they 'proved' homogeneity in Britain by an examination of British cleavages and institutions. Often, as in Rose's case, they did this by considering Britain as England writ large and then proceeded to limit themselves to a study of English society and politics. In order to show conclusively that there are no strong regional or ethnic cleavages in Great Britain, a study should examine areas where these cleavages are most likely to exist. There are, in fact, two examples of such studies, namely Eric Hobsbawm's "Celtic Parties of Great Britain: The Attitude of Popular Classes Towards National Movements for Independence" and Robert Alford's, Party and Society.<sup>33</sup> As with the other authors, both accounts were written in the early 1960's. Both studies deserve particular attention because they concentrate, albeit briefly, on the very areas where one would most expect regional politics to emerge, i.e., Scotland and Wales.

Hobsbawm's article is a Marxist attempt to explain why nationalism did not emerge in Scotland and Wales "in spite

of the obvious national sentiments of a large part of their population".<sup>34</sup> He concluded that the main reason why national solidarity had failed to rise in either area was because it was clearly subordinate to class conflict. In keeping with the theory of diffusion, Hobsbawm claimed that ethnic sentiment had become increasingly relegated to the isolated areas and was "irrelevant to the industrial masses". This explained the continuing appeal of Liberalism to non-industrial strata in thinly populated traditional regions, while class politics reigned supreme in the hearts of their countries' populations and economies.<sup>35</sup> In other words, Hobsbawm confirmed the hypothesis put forward by the other authors who had not closely examined Scotland and Wales.

Class had not been superseded by ethnicity, according to Hobsbawm; because the economic interests of the Scottish and Welsh working-class were identical to their English brethren. Hobsbawm supported the theory of economic diffusion. Scotland, Wales and England were all integral parts of an all-British economy, and all benefited from the relationship. Scotland and Wales were both centres of specialized heavy industry but so were several areas within England. It was the absence of similar economic interests that allowed nationalist movements to emerge elsewhere.

Ireland, for example, was a predominantly agrarian country whose economic problems were fundamentally

different from Britain's, whereas the Basque and Catalan areas of Spain suffered the opposite problem of being relatively industrialized areas in a non-industrial country dominated by an agricultural core. In these latter examples, economic interest reinforced nationalist sentiment and fuelled independence movements.

Scotland and Wales were both relatively poorer than England, according to Hobsbawm, but this disparity was insubstantial and primarily due to natural endowment. Certainly neither country could "be regarded in any realistic sense as subject to exploitation" by England.<sup>36</sup> If this had not been the case and if exploitation had taken place along national lines, such as was the case with Ireland, then nationalism would have been provided with a solid reinforced base. The fact that nationalism did not exist in any meaningful sense was a priori evidence of the lack of exploitation.

"The mere fact that both formed part of a single all-British industrial economy, which grew up simultaneously in all three countries meant that their economic problems were not fundamentally different from those of any other region of Britain, including several purely English ones."<sup>37</sup>

Whatever economic problems existed in Scotland and Wales were similar to those in many English areas. As Hobsbawm wrote in orthodox Marxist fashion:

The workers had plenty of causes of discontent as workers, but no, very obvious ones, as Scotsmen or Welshmen.<sup>38</sup>



Similarity of economic interest allowed both bourgeoisie and proletariat to polarise along British lines, rather than Scottish, Welsh or English. For most of the period, Scottish and Welsh industrialists had a clear vested interest in maintaining the union or at the very least, no obvious interest in putting an end to it.<sup>39</sup> Even during the inter-war depression, local industrialists were "too realistic" to expect any solution to their problems from "the utopian slogans of separatism or autonomy".<sup>40</sup>

The proletariat of both nations in similar fashion put their faith in the British working-class movement to the extent that they each became bastions of Labour party support. Labour thus became one of the major integrating forces in British politics. Foremost among its policies were regional measures designed to redistribute wealth from the relatively prosperous regions of the southeast to the other areas.

According to Hobsbawm, the most renowned Welshmen and Scotsmen of the twentieth-century associated themselves not with nationalism but with socialism. Keir Hardie, Ramsay Macdonald, Aneurin Bevan, James Maxton and Noah Ablett, key leaders of the British working-class movement, all came from Wales or Scotland. The direct predecessor of the Independent Labour Party was the Scottish Labour Party. It was the Scottish delegation to the first Labour government in 1924 (the 'Clydesiders') which had forced that

government to take a leftist stance. The Labour Party was an overwhelming force for centralization and further submerged feelings of regional identity.

In a summary of the problem of Celtic fringe nationalism, Hobsbawm concluded that Scotland and Wales

...provide one of the comparatively rare illustrations of what classical nineteenth-century socialist theory hoped for: proletarian nations whose working classes resisted the attractions of nationalist agitation preferring to organize under the banner of an international ideology based essentially on class interest.

In a study conducted in 1963, Robert Alford used survey evidence to test the prevailing orthodoxy that class was the most decisive factor influencing electoral behaviour in Britain.<sup>42</sup> Alford's study of both Canada and the United States had already revealed that regional sentiments could cut across class lines, providing disproportionate support for the Liberal party in Quebec and for the Democratic party in the southern states of the U.S.A. Alford therefore examined Scotland and Wales, the areas of Britain most likely to have a regional bias, to see if this phenomenon was also present there.

Instead of establishing the presence of voting across class lines, Alford discovered that, on the contrary, classes were even more polarized in Scotland and Wales than elsewhere:

The pattern of class voting in Wales and Scotland is indeed distinctive in Great Britain but the distinctiveness is exactly the

opposite of that to be shown in the one-party regions of the U.S. and Canada. In the regions with presumably the greater degree of regional identity, class voting is not lower but is usually higher.

Alford attributed the higher class voting in Scotland and Wales to the nature of the industrial structure in both countries. This had produced a dominant working-class culture where the overwhelming majority of manual labourers supported Labour. Elsewhere, Labour's dominance among the working class was not quite so marked.

For Alford, like Hobsbawm, class identity played a central part in cross-cutting ethnic identity; a result of the sharp status differentiation of British society:

A worker in Britain probably feels himself to be a worker before he feels himself to be a Welshman or a Scotsman.

As with the other homogeneity authors, for Alford, class politics was a direct result of increasing interaction, facilitated by the national press, movies and geographic mobility. This had blurred the national frontiers between Scotland, Wales and England:

In Scotland, as in Wales, the silent process of assimilation has steadily continued. It has become harder every year for an Englishman on his way to Scotland to be aware that he has crossed the border.

Alford concluded by reaffirming one of the major contentions of the homogeneity thesis, that "very little except class matters for politics in Great Britain."<sup>46</sup>

The remarkable consensus that existed among British political scientists on the issue of homogeneity rested on solid foundations. To take the 1951 general election as an example, 96.8% of the United Kingdom electorate supported either of the two class parties, Labour and the Conservatives. In Scotland, the Scottish National Party contested two of the seventy-one seats and gained 0.3% of the Scottish vote. In Wales, Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party, contested four of the thirty-six seats and gained only 0.7% of the total Welsh vote. By 1964, their situation had only marginally improved.<sup>47</sup> Scientifically conducted surveys indicated that voting throughout Britain took place mainly along class lines.<sup>48</sup>

In the period between 1966 and 1979 this situation was transformed dramatically and in a way that threw considerable doubt on the central premises of the homogeneity thesis. In Scotland in particular, the SNP made impressive gains at by-elections, local government elections and eventually general elections. At the local government elections of 1968, for example, the SNP polled more votes than any other party in Scotland. At the general election of October 1974 it became the second-largest party in terms of votes cast, pushing the Conservatives into third place and winning eleven seats in the process. The advance of Plaid Cymru was not so dramatic but was equally unprecedented. In the late 1960s the party seriously threatened some of the safest Labour

seats in Britain. At the election of October 1974, it won three of the thirty-six Welsh seats.<sup>49</sup>

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The homogeneity thesis withstood the early years of nationalist electoral victories. psephologists dismissed the spectacular increase in nationalist votes during the 1966-8 period as a mere aberration. Nationalism was regarded as a temporary protest against the unpopular economic policies of the Labour government. Hobsbawm, writing in 1966 before the nationalist upsurge, had indeed argued that this scenario could produce an increase in nationalist support.<sup>50</sup> Such conclusions were seemingly vindicated by the 1970 general election results, which, when viewed from a particular perspective, indicated a halt to the rise in nationalist popularity and a return to the conventional two-party system.

The main advocates of this view were J. Bocheil and D. Denver. They found that the bulk of SNP support in the 1966-8 period was recruited from temporary defectors from the Labour Party, disenchanted with the government's handling of the economy:

Most people who voted for the SNP were not 'nationalists'; they were Scots, it is true, but they were still 'Conservatives' or 'Labour'. It is as simple as that.<sup>51</sup>

In Wales also, the astounding nationalist successes in the 1966-68 period were attributed to the unpopularity of the government's economic policies.<sup>52</sup>

There is a flaw in this approach. It does not explain why the nationalists benefited from discontent with government rather than the main opposition party or the traditional third party, the Liberals. Moreover, the hypothesis was undermined by the continuing and increasing success of nationalism beyond 1970 when a protest vote no longer applied.

The continuing success of peripheral nationalism in Great Britain paved the way for two detailed critiques of the homogeneity thesis. The first of these was Michael Hechter's, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966, published in 1975. The second was Tom Nairn's The Break-Up of Britain, 1977.<sup>53</sup>

#### Michael Hechter's Theory of Internal Colonialism

In arriving at his model, Hechter was influenced by dependency theorist Andre Gunder Frank. Frank, examining capitalism on a world-scale, argued that the class conflict in the metropolitan (i.e. industrialized West) area was only one aspect of capitalist exploitation and not the most important. Instead, capitalism now took the relationship between metropole and periphery (i.e., third world) as its principal and most acute form. In Frank's thesis, the 'underdeveloped', dependent nature of the third-world economies is directly attributable to its relationship with the west. The expansion of western industrial nations took

place as a consequence of the extraction of raw materials and exploitation of labour from the third world.<sup>54</sup> Such a theory plausibly explained the persistence of resentment between third and first worlds which had manifested itself in many independence movements.

Hechter felt that the same exploitative relationship could exist between ethnic groups in industrialized nations, hence the term 'internal colonialism'. In this theory the situation of subordinate ethnic groups was analagous to colonies in the third world. Thus, the position of the Scots, Welsh and Irish in the British empire was similar to that of India, differing only in degree. All nations supplied raw materials to England, all had inferior per-capita incomes and all suffered from racial and ethnic stereotyping at the hands of the English.<sup>55</sup> This analogy allowed the followers of internal colonialism to draw links between the independence movements in the industrialized world with those in the third world. This gave them an important advantage over the supporters of diffusion who could offer no explanation for the resurgence of ethnicity in industrialized nations.

Because the relationship was based on exploitation, Hechter argued that the alienation of peripheral groups "can only be aggravated by a systematic increase in transactions" with the dominant group.<sup>56</sup> Contrary to the diffusion theory, where a peripheral culture could only

survive in isolated areas, in Hechter's theory peripheral culture was maintained and strengthened as a result of interaction. This explained the persistence of ethnic sentiments in industrial nations:

The obstacle to national development suggested by the internal colonial model analogy therefore relates not to a failure of peripheral integration with the core but to a malintegration [sic] established in terms increasingly regarded as unjust and illegitimate.

While the diffusion model predicted that regional economic inequalities would decrease, the internal-colonial model predicted that they would persist or increase. While diffusionism suggested the likelihood of cultural assimilation, internal colonialism suggested that the peripheral culture would not only be maintained but would react to core dominance. Finally, while the theories of diffusion indicated that a class cleavage would dominate political behaviour in industrialized societies, Hechter's theory claimed that political cleavages in poly-ethnic regimes would largely occur along cultural lines.

At the root of Hechter's theory was an unequal economic relationship between the core cultural group and the peripheral cultural group(s).<sup>58</sup> In his model, an initial "fortuitous advantage" establishes a division within states between advanced and less advanced ethnic groups. This advantage is prolonged and increased by a range of discriminatory policies. The result was that the core



tended to be characterized by a diversified industrial structure while the periphery normally had a highly specialized resource-based economy. Per-capita income in the periphery was significantly lower than in the core. Typically, the periphery had a declining population, an over-abundance of elderly people and a disproportionate number of females. This reflected the general lack of employment opportunity.<sup>59</sup> Hechter described the periphery's economic position:

Commerce and trade among members of the periphery tend to be monopolized by members of the core. Credit is similarly organized. Where commercial prospects emerge, bankers, managers and entrepreneurs tend to be recruited from the core. The peripheral economy is forced into complementary development to the core and thus becomes dependent on external markets. Generally, the economy rests on a single primary export, either agricultural or mineral. ...Economic dependence is reinforced through juridical, political and military measures...There is a relative lack of services, lower standard of living and higher level of frustration, measured by such indications as alcoholism among members of the peripheral groups...There is national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other cultural forms.

This uneven development was not purely a result of inadequate resources or physical disadvantages but was "causally linked" to the ethnic composition of the indigenous population.<sup>61</sup> The disadvantages of the Celtic regions in Britain could be traced to discriminatory policies adopted by a state dominated by the English group. Because the major financial institutions in the United Kingdom were English, investment decisions

concerning the Celtic lands were made in London by Englishmen "who may be expected to have little knowledge, sympathy or interest in the peripheral regions."<sup>62</sup>

Ethnic prejudice therefore accounted for the maintenance of regional economic inequalities:

Collectivities are ultimately denied opportunities for development on the basis of their ethnicity by the actions of exogenous controlling institutions...Ethnic status...would therefore [seem to] be responsible for Celtic economic backwardness.<sup>63</sup>

The result of these policies was a "cultural division of labour" whereby the dominant ethnic group allocated social roles so that those carrying high prestige were reserved for their members, individuals from the subordinate culture being denied access to them.<sup>64</sup>

Hechter's theory is in some ways similar to Gunnar Myrdal's analysis of how developed and underdeveloped regions existed beside each other in the same state.<sup>65</sup> Myrdal, like Hechter, rejected the diffusionist argument that market forces tended towards equilibrium, decreasing economic inequalities between adjoining regions. Instead, Myrdal argued that, if left to themselves, industry, commerce and banking, aided by a process of "cumulative causation", will tend to concentrate in certain localities, leaving the rest of the country in an economic backwater.<sup>66</sup> According to Myrdal, however, this vicious circle of development and under-development could be

mitigated and broken by state action. Such action would take the form of central government policies designed to remove the disparities.

Hechter's model did not view the state as benevolent. In internal colonialism, regional inequality was not a natural result of the play of market forces but was politically determined:

...National development has less to do with automatic social structural or economic processes and more with the exercise of control over government policies concerning the allocation of resources.<sup>67</sup>

In Hechter's theory, the dominant ethnic group controlled government policy. This control was straightforward in totalitarian societies. It was also the case even in the most "formally democratic polities", as the peripheral group was likely to lack resources. This weakness was compounded, when, as was often the case, the peripheral groups were also in a numerical minority. The Scottish and Welsh, comprising 15% of Britain's population, fell into this category. The minority had little hope of effecting the kind of redistribution of resources Myrdal's theory called for. There was little chance of the peripheral ethnic group affecting "changes in central government policies such as those which might provide a reallocation of income from the core groups."<sup>68</sup> In Britain, this situation resulted in the state not only refusing to redistribute resources to the periphery but also playing a

central role in maintaining and increasing regional inequality:

By lending its support to the interests of certain sectors of the society as against others, the state could largely determine the winners and losers in a given situation. It should not come as a surprise that whenever such disparities had regional overtones the state naturally tended to favour the claims of English rather than Celtic regions.<sup>69</sup>

Because of the state's role in internal colonialism, the only realistic way towards economic improvement for the periphery was some form of self-government. National development could only be brought about by strengthening the political position of the subordinate ethnic group so that it could change the distribution of resources to its advantage.<sup>70</sup>

The theory of internal colonialism was little different from the propaganda of the nationalist parties themselves. This explains both parties' whole-hearted endorsement of Hechter's theory and their rejection of the homogeneity thesis. The nationalists continuously stressed the presence of significant economic disparities between their nations and England and attributed these to the political link. Such arguments, as the Royal Commission on the Constitution noted, were a recurring theme in nationalist literature.<sup>71</sup> The SNP claimed that Scotland actually subsidized higher wages and greater wealth in England:

We look south to England where wages are so much higher and wealth so much more plentiful at our expense, for there is no doubt that...we help to keep London and Birmingham

rich and help to keep unemployment there to one quarter of the Scottish rates.<sup>72</sup>

D. J. Davies was a leading economic thinker of Plaid Cymru. He argued that the miracle of English industrialization was founded upon the exploitation of Wales. The latter country suffered as a result of a narrow and badly balanced economic structure. Writing during the Depression in the 1930s, Davies directly attributed high unemployment in Wales to "England's imperial policy, and our present and past subjection to English rule". He concluded that there could not be any improvement as long as Wales remained subject to England.<sup>73</sup>

In Hechter's cultural division of labour, the position of the subordinate ethnic group was analagous to that of the proletariat in classical Marxist theory. In both cases, an awareness of collective oppression, class consciousness in one case, ethnic consciousness in the other, reinforces group solidarity. Whereas in Marx's theory, the workers eventually demand the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (or at least vote along class lines), in Hechter's case the deprived cultural group demands self-government. This explained the failure of assimilation in Britain, a failure which had given rise to the recent emergence of political nationalism.

Tom Nairn's Theory of 'Over-Development'

The second attack on the homogeneity thesis is found in Tom Nairn's The Break-Up of Britain. Nairn's task as a Marxist was to restore some plausibility to economic determinism, which had been weakened by recent political events. As Marxist theory had developed, it concentrated upon class conflict within nations, on the development of classes rather than ethnic communities. This had led to a rigid economic determinism which allowed little autonomy to cultural or political factors. As nationalism arose in Britain, however, it was clear that classical Marxism was of little explanatory value. Contemporary conflicts could not be reduced to class conflict. Instead, in Scotland, members of the most militantly working-class groups allied with capitalists to separate from the English working class. In a statement which turned traditional Marxist theory on its head, Nairn wrote:

As capitalism spread, and smashed the ancient social formations surrounding it, these always tended to fall apart along the fault lines contained inside them. It is a matter of elementary truth that these lines of fissure were nearly always ones of nationality...They were never ones of class.<sup>4</sup>

Nairn set out, therefore, to establish the materialist basis to nationalism in Britain.

Unfortunately, Nairn, a Scot, refused to take Welsh nationalism seriously. Unlike Scotland, Wales lacked historic status. In Marxist parlance, Wales was a

"Geschichtloses Volk". It had never been a political unit in any real sense. It lacked a clearly recognized capital and, until the end of the nineteenth century, a large town and a native bourgeoisie. Nairn's treatment of Wales amounts to a restatement of the diffusion thesis. Only in the outlying areas of the country, beyond the reach of industrialization and anglicizing influences, did any basis for nationalism exist. This brand of nationalism exercised little appeal in the vastly more important industrial areas of the country, a fact justifying Nairn's scant treatment of it.<sup>75</sup>

Scottish nationalism was much more significant. Contrary to the findings of the homogeneity thesis, Nairn argued that Scotland retained much of the trappings of a separate nationality. It had only recently been a state and possessed undoubted "historic nation" status.<sup>76</sup> As a result of extremely favourable provisions in the Treaty of Union of 1707, Scotland maintained a separate Scottish church and separate educational and legal systems. This contributed to an "institutionally guaranteed" identity.<sup>77</sup> These provisions made Scotland almost "uniquely well-equipped" for nationalism even compared to other successful nationalist movements such as those in Greece and Ireland. Scotland had an overwhelming advantage over less distinct nations which had "to think away millennia of oblivion and invent almost entirely fictitious pasts".<sup>78</sup> These "institutional and popular differentiae"

of Scots life had persisted in the face of diffusionist pressures. They were, after all, guaranteed by the union.

This historic status, Nairn admitted, had been of relatively little political significance between 1707 and the 1960s.<sup>79</sup> The emergence of Scottish nationalism from its slumber of two centuries is due to a "relative over-development" between Scotland and the rest of Britain.<sup>80</sup> Two factors caused this situation; the post-war decline of the British state, exacerbated by the loss of empire, and the discovery of oil off the Scottish coast in 1970. These developments promoted a crisis of uneven development and gave a "sudden differential impetus" to the Scottish bourgeoisie to sever the link with England.<sup>81</sup>

The oil industry has collided with the country at a moment of extreme and growing debility in the traditional political apparatus...The novel conflict in Scotland has cut into the palsied corpus of unionism like a knife.<sup>82</sup>

For Nairn, the 'inevitability' of Britain's decline and the force of North Sea oil, had ensured the success of nationalism in Scotland, converting it into an "effective separatism", the vanguard of a process leading to the break-up of the British political system.<sup>83</sup>

Nairn supported this break-up as a progressive step, adopting Lenin's position that nationalism could be tactically exploited to advance socialism:



If the social revolution is on the agenda of the heartland at all, then it will be enormously advanced by the disintegration of the state.<sup>84</sup>

### Outline

Chapter Two discusses politics in Scotland and Wales in the period just before the processes associated with industrialisation broke down the isolation of these two countries from England. Both areas displayed considerable political distinctiveness during this time. In Scotland, this separate politics was rooted in that country's strong historic identity as well as in a separate religion. Wales was distinguished from England by the twin social pillars of a separate religion and language. The strength of both cultures was reflected in the political situation. All the important issues were profoundly cultural in basis. There was also a considerable desire for some degree of self-government in both places.

Chapter Three tests the homogeneity thesis by reviewing the effects of economic diffusion on Wales and Scotland. In both countries, industrialization led to class politics. This is reflected in electoral behaviour and in the type of issues which then became predominant. As class politics crosscut the national differences among Scots, Welsh and English, they performed an integrative function. Class politics led to the establishment of British-based organizations such as trade unions and political parties.

The separate cultures of the Celtic nations were relegated to isolated areas untouched by industrializing forces. Only in rural Wales, and to a much lesser extent in pockets of the Highlands region of Scotland, did the separate cultures continue to influence politics. This was indicated by the survival of the decentralist Liberal party in both areas long after it had given way to 'class' parties in the industrialised regions. It was in response to the continuing threat of economic diffusion to the Welsh language in rural Wales that Plaid Cymru was formed in 1925. The Highlands region of Scotland was too sparsely populated to give rise to a nationalist movement of any significance. The SNP, formed in 1934 as a reaction to increasing centralization in British politics, was not a culturally-based party and aimed at support throughout Scotland, with little success. These developments vindicate the analysis of the homogeneity thesis.

Chapter Four examines Hechter's contention that the economic exploitation of the Celtic periphery by the English core maintained an underlying nationalist resentment throughout Scotland and Wales which ultimately paved the way for the emergence of nationalism in the late 1960s. This involves an analysis of the economic relationship between the core and the periphery, the role of the state in this relationship and how the state's role was perceived by the Welsh and Scots. The chapter shows that regional disparities, while they undoubtedly existed,

were neither as significant as in many other industrial countries, nor did they occur along ethnic lines. Disparities also seem to have narrowed towards the 1960's.

Chapter Five assesses the worth of Nairn's thesis as an explanation of Scottish and Welsh nationalism. His most valuable contribution was to suggest the role played by North Sea oil in the rise of the SNP. Chapter Five shows that this did indeed lead to a dramatic increase in support for the SNP throughout Scotland between the discovery of oil in 1970 and the general elections of 1974. The concentration on oil, however, does not adequately explain why the SNP was already a considerable political force in the late 1960s. This earlier success was largely due to social changes which undermined partisanship to the two major British parties in Scotland. The catalyst which started a movement to the SNP was provided by the considerable political difficulties of the 1966-70 Labour government.

Despite Nairn's prediction that the discovery of oil had contributed to an "effective separatism", support for the SNP fizzled out by 1979. Support for Plaid Cymru, limited to the Welsh-speaking area remained resilient. Chapter Six explains this by showing how the Labour party co-opted much of the SNP's moderate support by their adoption of proposals for substantial devolution. They were able to undermine the SNP because of the continuing

undoubted relevance of British factors in Scottish life outside the Highlands area. Nairn exaggerated the potential of North Sea oil to break these influences. Welsh nationalism, unlike the Scottish variety, rooted in a separate, albeit declining, culture, was not susceptible to this form of co-optation.

<sup>1</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "The Attitude of Popular Classes Towards National Movements for Independence", Mouvements Nationaux D'Independance Et Classes Populaires (Paris: 1971) and R. R. Alford, Party and Society (London: Rand McNally, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Hechter, International Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> Tom Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain (London: New Left Books, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> All of Plaid Cymru's publications can be found in Archives of Plaid Cymru 1926-78 and Continuation (London: World Microfilm Publications). A large range of publications on Scottish nationalism, including many by the SNP, can be found in Pamphlets Relating to Scottish Nationalism, 1844-1973 (Wakefield, EP Microfilm Limited). The publications of the British parties in Scotland and Wales were ordered from their respective offices.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto (USSR Progress Publishers: 1977); Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1964) and Karl Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (London: M.I.T. Press, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> Deutsch, Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>7</sup> Weber wrote that newspapers "which certainly do not assemble what is most sublime in literary culture, cement the masses most strongly" in From Max Weber, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 178.

<sup>8</sup> Deutsch, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> Marx, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Alford, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>12</sup> J. A. Corry, cited in Alan Cairns, "Governments and Societies of Canadian Federalism", Canadian Journal of Political Science; 1977, p. 697.

<sup>13</sup> Alford, op. cit.; pp. 322-24.

<sup>14</sup> Marx, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>15</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments", Party Systems and Voter Alignments (New York: Free Press, 1967). Class politics emerged with "increasing interaction" across localities., p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Marx, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>18</sup> Lipset and Rokkan, op cit., p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> S. M. Lipset, Political Man (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963), p. 230.

<sup>21</sup> John Bonham, The Middle-Class Vote (London: Faber and Faber, 1954). I first found reference to the 'homogeneity thesis' in Ian Budge and David Urwin, Scottish Political Behaviour (London: Longmans, 1966). Also see Kellas, 1980, p. 366.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Blondel, Voters, Parties and Leaders (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Rose, Politics in England (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony H. Birch, The British System of Government (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 115, "In the United States, the real party managers operate at state and local level and the national parties are no more than loose alliances formed for electoral purposes...But in Britain the local party branches have little real power except over the nomination of candidates, and even in this they are subject to the veto of head office. Local branches are encouraged to discuss questions of policy and to send in resolutions for debate at the annual conference, but in practice their influence on national party policy is slight", p. 115.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, op. cit., and Robert Alford, op. cit.

34 "Both countries possess nationalist parties, though fairly recent ones, but neither enjoys any significant support among the electorate." Hobsbawm, op cit., p. 34.

35 "The basis for separatist nationalism was therefore reduced to the few (and untypical) areas whose problems really were quite different from any English ones (eg. the respective highlands with their specific agrarian, linguistic and other problems)", ibid., p. 44.

36 Ibid., p. 39.

37 Ibid., pp. 43-44.

38 Ibid., p. 39. Hobsbawm's sentiments here were shared by Richard Rose in a 1970 article. Rose denied the existence of significant economic divisions within the United Kingdom. Rose wrote: "Because class differences are found everywhere in Britain and are broadly similar in their incidence, the Conservative and Labour parties have successfully mobilized support in all parts of Great Britain; economic differences that divide Englishmen from each other, also divide Welshmen and Scots", in "The United Kingdom as a Multi-National State", R. Rose ed, Studies in British Politics (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1976), p. 139..

39 Ibid., p. 41.

40 Ibid., p. 39.

41 Ibid., p. 42.

42 Alford, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

43 Ibid., p. 144.

44 Ibid., p. 313.

45 Ibid., p. 322.

46 Ibid., p. 170.

47 F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), p. 37.

48 See David Butler and Donald E. Stokes, Political Change in Britain, Second Edition (London: Macmillan Press, 1974).

49 All election data comes from Craig, op. cit.

50 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 42.

51 J. M. Bocher and D. T. Denver, "The Decline of the SNP: An Alternative View", Political Studies, 20, 1972, p. 316.

52 See David McKie, "By-Elections of the Wilson Government", Chris Cook and John Ramsden eds, By-Elections in British Politics (London: Macmillan, 1973).

53 Michael Hechter, op cit., and Tom Nairn, op cit.

54 A. G. Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967).

55 See Hechter, op. cit. pp. 30-32 and the comments of his disciple, Bud Khilief in Language, Ethnicity and Education in Wales (The Hague: Mouton, 1980), p. 11.

56 Hechter, op.cit., p. 32.

57 Ibid., p. 34.

58 Ibid., p. 10.

59 Ibid., p. 43.

60 Ibid., p. 33.

61 Ibid., p. 34.

62 Ibid., p. 150.

63 Ibid., p. 323.

64 The cultural division of labour assigned "individuals to specific roles in the social structure on the basis of objective cultural distinctions." Ibid., p. 39.

65 Gunnar Myrdal, Economic Theory and Under-Developed Regions (London: Methuen and Co., 1957).

66 Ibid., p. 26.

67 Hechter, op. cit., p. 34.

68 Ibid., p. 40.

69 Ibid., p. 95.

70 Ibid., p. 34.

71 The Royal Commission on the Constitution (London: HMSO, 1973), CMND 5460, para. 336.

72 The SNP and You (SNP, 1966).



<sup>73</sup> D. J. Davies, "Why a Welsh Government is an Economic Necessity" in C. Thomas ed., Towards Welsh Freedom (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1957), p. 49.

<sup>74</sup> Nairn, op. cit., p. 354.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Chapter Four, "Culture and Politics in Wales".

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 130-31.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-31.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 209. Hobsbawm also felt Wales was an "unhistoric nation", op. cit. 1971, p. 35.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

3      CHAPTER TWO: SCOTLAND AND WALES: THE HISTORICAL  
BACKGROUND 1867-1920

Introduction

In the period after the extension of the franchise in 1867 until around 1920, the political cultures of Scotland and Wales were markedly different from that of England. This was due mainly to the existence of a significant religious difference between both Celtic nations and England. While Wales was largely Non-conformist and Scotland Presbyterian, England was predominantly Anglican. In addition to this religious difference, certain historical factors enhanced Scotland's distinctiveness. The Treaty of Union between Scotland and England in 1707 had maintained intact the established Scottish church, Scottish law and the Scottish education system.

These cultural differences were manifested politically in a number of different ways. First, the Liberal party, which was sympathetic to the religious values of Scotland and Wales, enjoyed a significantly higher level of support in the two Celtic nations, especially in Wales, than in England. Secondly, the major political issues in Scotland and Wales during this period were peculiar to those areas and were largely shaped by their particular cultures. These distinctive political cultures, while not culminating in genuine separatist movements, did nonetheless give rise

to Home Rule movements which, most notably in Scotland, extracted significant concessions on self-government from the Westminster parliament. Class politics, with its tendency to unite different ethnic groups along socio-economic lines, were resisted in both Scotland and Wales. Class organizations were not only insignificant but reflected the importance of particular Welsh and Scottish values in their statements and policies. During this early period at least, Britain was clearly not homogeneous in either a social or a political sense. An examination of this background is essential for understanding later political developments in both Scotland and Wales.

#### Scotland 1870-1920

Scottish society in the late nineteenth century displayed a number of peculiar national characteristics. Scotland possessed many of the trappings of nationality, a separate flag, a patron saint, a national dress, a host of national emblems and a recognizable capital city in Edinburgh. It also had a proud military tradition, institutionalized in the Highland regiments. Nowhere perhaps, was a separate Scottish nationality more evident than on the football field, particularly in the international games against England. The decision to establish a separate Scottish football league in the late nineteenth-century was considered by one historian, to be of "profound" importance for Scottish national identity.<sup>1</sup>

Scotland had been a separate state less than 200 years before. The Scottish people had a common history, a condition of tremendous importance for the maintenance of a strong national identity. Certainly, Scotland was much more advanced on this point than other nations such as Ireland or Greece. In Tom Nairn's language, this condition made Scotland the envy of leaders of other "would-be nations" elsewhere in Europe who had to invent a "fictitious" past.<sup>2</sup> The psychological inheritance of this 'historic-nation' status enhanced Scots' awareness of their differences with the English.

Scotland's distinctive education system with its own particular curriculum helped to maintain social differences between Scots and English.<sup>3</sup> Most Scottish children were made aware of Scottish national heroes such as Bruce and Burns from an early age. History classes at the primary level related stories of epic battles against the English such as Bannockburn or Culloden.<sup>4</sup>

An act accompanying the Treaty of Union secured Presbyterianism as the established religion of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> In a time of limited government, the Church of Scotland played a central role in Scottish social life until at least the beginning of the twentieth century. Among other things, it administered the Scottish Poor Law. The General Assembly of the Church was like a surrogate parliament. In the opinion of at least one historian, the

maintenance of the Church of Scotland after the Union preserved continuity to such an extent that the event must have gone unnoticed by the ordinary Scot.<sup>6</sup>

The Scottish legal system, fundamentally different from the English, based on a mixture of Norman feudal law, Canon law and Roman law, was also protected by the Treaty of Union.<sup>7</sup> Article XIX maintained the existence of separate Scottish courts. Article XVIII, while giving the United Kingdom parliament the right to make public law, asserted that private law remained a Scottish prerogative.<sup>8</sup>

Scotland's national status helps to explain demands for more self-government towards the end of the nineteenth century. The independence of the legal and education systems created certain anomalies which made Scotland's administrative subordination to Whitehall unacceptable to some members of the Scottish political elite. Scottish lawyers were perturbed by the fact that they were often denied political careers because of the parliament's location at Westminster. As they could not practise in England, they were denied the opportunity to supplement their parliamentary salary by legal work in the capital.<sup>9</sup> Scottish lawyers also objected to the encroachment of the English legal system upon the Scottish, a process largely due to the role of the House of Lords as the final court of appeal in civil cases.<sup>10</sup>

Other members of the Scottish elite resented their minority position in the Westminster parliament, where Scotland possessed about one-eighth of the total seats. There was no chamber, like the U.S. Senate, to protect the interests of the permanent regional minority. Palatable while government was quite limited, this state of affairs became increasingly unacceptable with the marked increase in central government activity from the middle of the nineteenth century.

Resentment led to the establishment of a number of bodies demanding more control for Scotland over its own affairs. The Convention of Royal Burghs complained to Parliament in 1851 that Scottish affairs were being neglected. The Society for the Vindication of Scottish Rights was founded in 1853 because of the same grievance.<sup>11</sup> A letter to Gladstone in 1869, signed by a majority of Scottish MPs, demanded a Secretary for Scotland. A Commission reported in 1870 that most witnesses were profoundly dissatisfied with the present arrangements.<sup>12</sup> The result of this agitation was the creation of a Secretaryship of State and a Scottish office in 1885.<sup>13</sup> The concession was largely justified by Westminster on the grounds that Scotland's separate institutions, especially the legal and education systems, made continued administration along British lines impractical.

This concession did not stem Scottish agitation. In the following year, 1886, the Scottish Home Rule Association (SHRA) was formed, largely as a reaction to Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule for Ireland and his advocacy of "Home Rule all round".<sup>14</sup> Fourteen Scottish Home Rule bills were introduced between 1889 and 1927. Of the eight that reached a vote, all but one received the support of a majority of Scottish MPs.<sup>15</sup>

Demands for separate treatment of Scottish legislation due to the different legal system led to the formation of the Scottish Grand Committee in 1894.<sup>16</sup> The Committee is composed of all the Scottish MP's with ten to fifteen others added to approximate the party balance in the house. It considers all Scottish bills in principle. After the bill receives its second reading in the House it is referred to a Scottish Standing Committee for a detailed clause by clause examination.<sup>17</sup>

In 1892 the Secretary for Scotland was promoted to full cabinet rank and in 1926 became a Secretary of State. Further ministers were added as the responsibilities of the Scottish Office grew. A parliamentary under-secretary (for health) was established in 1919.<sup>18</sup> Other measures of administrative devolution during this early period included the establishment of the Scottish Insurance Commission in 1911, the Scottish Board of Agriculture in 1912 and the Scottish Board of Health in 1919.<sup>19</sup>

Such administrative concessions went some way toward fuelling demands for more of the same. In H. J. Hanham's view, the presence of the decentralised Scottish boards at the beginning of this century represented a half-way house to Home Rule.<sup>20</sup> Certainly, many of the Scottish Secretaries were quick to stress the 'national' cleavage in order to extract concessions from the central government. Failure to meet requests on Westminster's part were represented as a slight to the Scottish nation. As Secretary Adamson remarked in 1924:

We believe that government policy is to subordinate Scottish administration to Whitehall to a far greater extent than has been the case and to remove from Scotland, practically the last vestiges of independent government and nationhood.<sup>21</sup>

The bureaucrats of the Scottish office were accused by Whitehall of being "nationalistic" for the way in which they pleaded Scotland's case.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from these historical factors, Scotland's peculiar political behaviour vis-a-vis England in this period can be attributed to a significant religious cleavage between the two countries. The vast majority of Scots subscribed to Presbyterianism whereas the majority religion in England was Anglicanism.<sup>23</sup>

While both churches were Protestant, they differed substantially both in theology and in government. Anglicanism was introduced into England by Henry VIII



primarily for reasons of state rather than theological ones. Even after doctrinal differences were established between the Church of England and Rome by the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571, Anglicanism remained much closer to Roman Catholicism than did the continental Protestant sects responsible for the introduction of Presbyterianism into Scotland. The Anglican church, for example, remained episcopal in organization like the Roman church. Presbyterianism on the other hand, was introduced into Scotland by an evangelical reformation led by John Knox. It was democratic in government and Calvinist in theology. The Presbyterian church was vehemently anti-episcopal and was at least as far apart from Anglicanism as the latter was from Roman Catholicism.

The existence of a strong evangelical Presbyterianism in Scotland largely accounts for the strength of the Liberal party there. Most Scottish Presbyterians were antagonistic towards the Tory party because of its close association with the episcopal church. While quite popular among the followers of the established Church of Scotland, Liberalism was even more widely supported by the dissenters of the Free Church of Scotland. This body had split from the established church in 1843 and had almost as many adherents.<sup>24</sup> They were attracted to the Liberals because of that party's support for disestablishment.

The democratic nature of the Presbyterian church also spilled over into politics, harming the Scottish Tories because of their resistance to franchise reform throughout the nineteenth century. While Liberalism espoused a belief in democratic institutions and a career based on talents rather than privilege, Toryism was associated with "landowners, lawyers and churchmen, all of whom believed that they had a divine right to rule".<sup>25</sup> As Sir Reginald Coupland wrote of Liberalism in Scotland:--

It was a moral appeal and the response to it was due more than anything else, to the deep religious feeling nourished by the Kirk in Scotland.<sup>26</sup>

Pelling found that in a six election average between 1885 and 1910 the Conservative vote in Scotland was only 43.0% compared to 50.8% in England. Only in Wales did the Conservatives fare more poorly.<sup>27</sup> Nor could this discrepancy be explained on class grounds. Scotland was more loyal to Liberalism than the predominantly working-class constituencies of London.<sup>28</sup> The Liberals won more Scottish seats than the Conservatives at every election in the period between 1885 and 1910 except in 1900. In the election of January, 1910, for example, fifty-eight Liberals were elected compared to only nine Conservatives.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the extension of the franchise to the working class by the reform acts of 1867 and 1884, class politics made little headway in Scotland. This was primarily due to

the strength of cultural factors, especially the hold of the Kirk. Scottish miners, for example, were more unwilling than their English counterparts to embrace the new ideas of socialism. This maintained the national differences between them. One contemporary sociologist who worked among the Fife miners observed that the miners there did not "evince the same enthusiasm for fresh movements that many of his brother miners in other parts of the country do".<sup>30</sup> In 1900, only fourteen of thirty collieries even bothered to answer a Union questionnaire, "Are you in favour of a Labour candidate?". In 1906, the Fife miners voted against their leader's campaign for parliamentary Labour representation. This position was supported by other unions, including the Stirlingshire Miners' Union.<sup>31</sup> By 1910, while Labour had a total of 42 MPs in Parliament, only three came from Scotland, despite its large industrial working class.<sup>32</sup>

The Church of Scotland hindered the emergence of class consciousness in Scotland. A Presbyterian 'cultural nationalism' divided the Scottish working class along ethnic lines. A mythological belief in the "almost innate democratic intellect of the Scot" inspired feelings of cultural superiority by the Lowlanders over the Irish immigrants and Highlanders.<sup>33</sup> The latter two groups were blamed by other Scots for the social ills of a growing industrial society including crime and alcoholism. This belief was encouraged by the Kirk. The Glasgow Presbytery

attributed that city's notorious housing conditions to the ethnic composition of the workforce.<sup>34</sup> The immigrant elements were also unpopular in Scottish trade union circles as their presence helped to keep wages low.

Ethnic rivalry among the working class in Scotland was exacerbated by the salience of the Irish Home Rule issue. The sizeable working-class element of Irish Catholic extraction supported Home Rule for Ireland while the Scottish Presbyterians wholeheartedly opposed it. Feelings of anti-Irishness were reinforced by the widespread sympathy for the Presbyterian population of Ulster. This group had originated in Scotland and were very opposed to Home Rule. The feeling that trading relations between Glasgow and Belfast could well be damaged by Home Rule also caused opposition. Because the Liberal party was in favour of Irish Home Rule, it gained the support of practically all Irish workers in Scotland. This deprived the struggling socialist parties of much of the working-class vote. Priests opposed John Wheatley's attempt in 1900 to form a Catholic Socialist Society as it would weaken the Home Rule vote in Scotland.<sup>35</sup> The fact that the Irish Catholics were strongly Liberal encouraged many working-class Presbyterians to vote Unionist.<sup>36</sup>

The influence of religion in Scottish life during this period militated against socialism in more direct ways. Kirk ministers attacked the "atheistic materialism"

associated with socialism as "anti-God".<sup>37</sup> The Roman Catholic clergy opposed socialism for the same reasons. Priests opposed the worldliness of working-class politics. In 1906 a mob burned an effigy of John Wheatley who fought for a Roman Catholic's right to be a socialist without suffering excommunication.<sup>38</sup> Paradoxically, socialism was also held back in Scotland among Presbyterians precisely because it was reputed to be led by Catholics, including Wheatley and Compton MacKenzie.

The prevalence of "thrift" also restrained the evolution of class politics in Scotland. This too was intimately connected with the hold of Presbyterianism upon the majority of the working class. Poverty was attributed by the Kirk not to capitalism but to the sins of the workers. The Reverend John Clarke was typical:

Much of our poverty and misery is due to our sins and follies. This is overlooked by socialists. Unless the people can be made moral, sober, industrious and thrifty, they cannot be improved.

These views still dominated Scottish working-class minds throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1900, William Nairn, the militant leader of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation, ruefully admitted that the "virtue of thrift" was believed in by a "very large number of the very poor". James Maxton, one of Scotland's leading socialists, described the problem in 1913:

The Scottish worker is commonly depicted as a man dour, dogged, honest, hard-working and

superlatively thrifty. He is the ideal worker from the sweater's point of view. His eagerness and capacity for labour raises his productive powers to the maximum. His honesty renders the cost of supervision very low, while his thriftiness, frugality and simple way of life incline his wages to the lowest possible point.<sup>40</sup>

Even fledgling working class movements in Scotland reflected the importance of Presbyterianism and Scottish cultural values. The older leaders of the Scottish Labour movement fully subscribed to the value of 'thrift'. They helped to perpetuate the notion that the Scottish working class was docile, temperate and well-behaved, hardly an effective means of promoting class consciousness.<sup>41</sup> In 1906, in an open letter to Paisley workers, the Scottish Labour party commended them for their thrift.<sup>42</sup>

At the 1884 and 1886 conferences of the British Trade Union Congress (BTUC), all the Scottish delegates voted against and helped to defeat resolutions from London secularists calling for the Sunday opening of national museums and picture galleries.<sup>43</sup> Upon the formation of the Socialist League in the 1880s, Scottish delegates complained that the denunciation of religion would "create unnecessary bitterness against us in religious Scotland". They also expressed concern that the effect of organized Sunday meetings would be for them to suffer "family and social ostracism".<sup>44</sup>

An element of nationalism was also involved in the formation of the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) in 1896. Like many other Scottish pressure groups, it had been formed because of the sheer distance and expense of travelling to London for meetings.<sup>45</sup> One delegate's speech was reported on at the first conference:

They had many trades in Scotland carried on under conditions not known in England and they had many questions coming up which would not be of any interest to Englishmen or Irishmen. There was no reason why they in Scotland should not strike a line for themselves. They had dragged England behind them for a long time and he did not see why they should do so any longer.<sup>46</sup>

With Scotland as its territory, the organization could not help but become a 'spokesman' for the nation.

Members of the Scottish Labour movement at this time were keen supporters of more self-government for Scotland. Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald were both members of the SHRA. Compton MacKenzie's Scottish Labour Party also supported Scottish Home Rule.<sup>47</sup> When John Ogilvy and Keir Hardie represented the Scottish Labour Party at the Paris Conference of the Second International, they repeatedly interjected when they were referred to as "English delegates".<sup>48</sup>

The Independent Labour Party in Scotland (ILP) during this period also reflected the importance of Scottish culture. It was described by one source as "religious in

its outlook, staunchly non-conformist and rigidly teetotalist".<sup>49</sup> Even the revolutionary syndicalism which erupted in Clydeside in 1915-17, through John MacLean's Clyde Shopsteward's Committee, retained a strong sense of the Scottish community about it. MacLean himself was a Scottish nationalist.<sup>50</sup> The Scottish working class in the 1870-1920 period were more Scottish than they were British.

### Wales

Wales, like Scotland, has a national flag, an anthem and a patron saint. The Welsh also have separate representation in sport and, as in Scotland, the highlights of the sporting calendar are national games against England. The Welsh have their own abundant supply of legends, folk memories, songs and myths.<sup>51</sup>

Wales, however, was quite different from Scotland and in a way which had important consequences for its later political development. Welsh politics in the 1870-1920 period were not shaped by a secure historic past as in Scotland. Wales, in fact, had never been a distinct political entity. The Union between England and Wales took place in 1536, almost two hundred years before that between England and Scotland. Whereas Scotland retained all the trappings of a separate society, Wales was, for all intents and purposes, incorporated into England.



The union between England and Wales occurred during a period of increasing monarchical absolutism and was imposed upon Wales, not negotiated, as was the case in Scotland. Despite the fact that the reigning monarch, Henry VIII, was a Welshman, the Union, a response to the international situation, clearly put English interests to the forefront. Wales was a 'back door' to England and was annexed to protect England's western flank from continental enemies.<sup>52</sup>

The 1536 Act of Union was clearly assimilationist in intent. The preamble set the tone. It declared that the past discord between the King's English and Welsh subjects was caused by the fact that their respective laws and customs were different.<sup>53</sup> As a result many native Welsh institutions were replaced with English ones. The English legal, educational and local government system was extended to Wales as it developed in England. The established religion in Wales was Anglicanism, the 'Church of England'. Institutional assimilation was so complete that by 1746, when the British parliament declared that all legislation passed for England would now also include Wales, it was only recognizing the status quo.

...[I]n all cases where the kingdom of England or that part of Great Britain called England, hath been or shall be mentioned in any Act of Parliament, the same has been and shall from henceforth be deemed and taken to comprehend and include the Dominion of Wales.<sup>54</sup>

For all legislative and administrative purposes, the position of Wales was equivalent to that of Yorkshire or any other region within England. By the late nineteenth-century, Prime Minister Gladstone could write with some justification that the distinction between England and Wales was totally unknown to the constitution.<sup>55</sup> The 'Encyclopaedia Britannica's section on Wales was testimony to the union and the nature of the settlement that ensued from it. It read 'For Wales, see England'.<sup>56</sup>

In Marxist terms, Wales was clearly an 'unhistoric nation' and the Welsh a 'historyless people'. Hobsbawm pointed out that there was still some debate over which of the Welsh towns, none with any historic claim or long urban existence, should be its capital.<sup>57</sup> The relative lack of political identity acted as a constraint on the emergence of a successful nationalist movement. A Secretaryship for Wales was rejected in 1885 on the basis that Wales, unlike Scotland, did not possess a separate legal system. Similar demands were turned down in 1891, 1908, 1921 and 1955. Neville Chamberlain rejected demands for significant devolution from a Welsh delegation in 1938, employing similar arguments:

The analogy of Scotland has been advanced not only by the delegation but on other occasions. I think, however, that it must be recognised that the two cases are not parallel. For Scotland has always had different systems of law and administration from those in force in England...Wales on the

other hand, since Henry VIII's Act of 1535, has been closely incorporated with England and there has not been, and is not now, any distinct law or administrative system calling for the attention of a separate minister.<sup>58</sup>

The lack of a collective memory of statehood put any would-be Welsh nationalist at a distinct disadvantage vis-a-vis his Scottish counterpart.<sup>59</sup>

Wales, however, like Scotland, possessed a separate culture which continued to distinguish it clearly from England despite the institutional assimilation. This rested on the twin pillars of a separate language and the Non-conformist religion.

The 1891 Census was the first to report on the condition of the Welsh language in Wales. 508,036 persons (30.4%) were Welsh-speaking monoglots while a further 402,253 (24.1%) were bilingual in Welsh and English. A majority of the population thus spoke Welsh (54.5%).<sup>60</sup> Language constitutes one of the most important ingredients in one's awareness of territorial identity.<sup>61</sup> This cleavage can be extremely disruptive and centrifugal, eg., the francophones in Quebec. While the Welsh language was spoken by such a sizeable proportion of the Welsh people, Britain could hardly be described as socially homogeneous.

The separate Welsh language was reinforced by a clear religious difference. Wales, like Scotland, was

overwhelmingly non-conformist. Gladstone referred to it as a "nation of Non-conformists".<sup>62</sup> While Sir Reginald Coupland described it as the "power-house of dissent"<sup>63</sup> a religious census carried out in 1851 showed that over 80% of those at worship on Census Sunday were Non-conformists.<sup>64</sup> In 1905, Non-conformists outnumbered Anglicans in Wales by 550,280 to 193,081.<sup>65</sup>

As in Scotland, the strength of Non-conformism underlay the absolute dominance of the Liberal party in Wales during this period. In six elections between 1885 and 1910, the Conservative vote in Wales averaged 38.6% compared to 50.8% in England. This could not be explained by socio-economic differences between the English and Welsh.<sup>66</sup> During this period, the Liberals never won less than twenty-five of the thirty-four Welsh seats and 53.4% of the votes. The Conservatives, limited to the areas bordering England, never won more than nine seats and 46.1% of the votes. At the general election of 1906, the Conservatives failed to win one seat in Wales, the Liberals taking thirty-two of the thirty-four. Frequently the greatest Liberal majorities in all of Britain were achieved in Wales.<sup>67</sup>

There was little room for Toryism in such a staunchly Non-conformist nation. Whereas the issue of Irish Home Rule salvaged some votes for the Tories in Presbyterian Scotland, no such salutary factor emerged in Wales. The Tories were associated with the three most hated symbols in

Wales, the 'unholy Trinity' of the bishop, the brewer and the squire.<sup>68</sup>

The influence of the Non-conformist religion in Welsh politics can be seen in the dominance of religious issues during this period. Temperance and sabbatarianism were both strongly supported. One historian claimed that "taking the pledge became for chapel boys what the Bar Mitzvah was for Jews".<sup>69</sup> It was sustained protest on these two issues that led to the first specifically Welsh legislation ever passed in the Commons, the Welsh Sunday Closing Act of 1881.

By far the most important political issue, however, was disestablishment. This gave rise to a widely supported movement which aimed at ending the privileged position of the Church of England in Wales.<sup>70</sup> According to Coupland, "this issue transcended all others. It pervaded all Welsh life".<sup>71</sup>

Because of its nature, the struggle over disestablishment took on the characteristics of a national struggle against the English and their representatives in Wales. Where Anglicanism did exist it was the religion of an anglicized elite or that of newly arrived immigrants. Not one Anglican bishop in Wales between 1715 and 1870 was a Welsh-speaking Welshman.<sup>72</sup> According to Gladstone,

disestablishment was a national question gaining its ultimate validity

...because of the clear expression of opinion in Wales that the church was an alien one, anti-national in spirit and out of touch with the aspirations of the vast majority of the working population.<sup>73</sup>

More than anything else, as one historian noted, the issue of disestablishment "vivified the new consciousness of nationhood" and "awakened a sense of national antagonism".<sup>74</sup> The Liberals' espousal of disestablishment is a key to understanding their mass support in Wales after the extension of the franchise in 1867 and 1884.

Demands for church reform were associated with a call for self-government, the argument being that Non-conformist Wales should not have to wait on Anglican Britain for legislative changes. Wales had different cultural values and wanted its own legislature. An example of the problems associated with Wales' minority position in the British parliament was provided in 1886 when a Welsh Disestablishment bill was defeated even though twenty-eight of the thirty-four Welsh MPs voted for it.<sup>75</sup>

The strength of Non-conformism underlay the formation of a Welsh nationalist movement during this period. The movement, Cymru Fydd (Young Wales) was formed in 1877 with its chief aim being "to facilitate the attainment of a

National Legislature for Wales, with full control over all purely Welsh business".<sup>76</sup> In 1891, a National Institutions Bill proposed the setting up of a National Council and a Secretary for Wales. The bill was dropped by the House.

The importance of political nationalism can be seen in other aspects of Welsh politics during this period. The most extreme manifestation was the establishment of a Welsh colony at Patagonia around 1865, an attempt to preserve the language and national characteristics.<sup>77</sup> Unlike Scotland, Wales became even more supportive of the Liberals as a result of that party's position on Irish Home Rule.. Many Welsh drew a link between the national aspirations of Ireland and their own country.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, in the 1900 'Khaki election'; when the rest of Britain swung to the Conservatives, Wales remained solidly Liberal. Pelling claimed that this was because they sympathized "with those who they regarded as being (like themselves) the victims of English exploitation".<sup>79</sup>

While unsuccessful in obtaining a Welsh parliament, Welsh nationalists did have some success in achieving other concessions. In 1870, due to nationalist pressure, a Welsh-speaking Welshman was appointed to an Anglican See in Wales, the first since 1715.<sup>80</sup> In 1873, the first translation of an Act of Parliament into Welsh occurred.<sup>81</sup> A Chair of Celtic Studies was founded at

Oxford in 1877.<sup>82</sup> Also in education, the report of the Aberdare Committee led to the formation of three colleges which were amalgamated into a University of Wales in 1893. Of this University, a Welsh historian wrote:

Above all, it served as a powerful symbol of popular achievement and of national status. In no other area of Welsh life, transcending political and sectarian barriers, was national pride more genuinely manifested.<sup>83</sup>

The passage of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889 gave Wales a secondary system which was "notably in advance of that in England".<sup>84</sup> The Welsh language began to be used in many schools after the creation of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education in 1907. This body was the first department within central government to be formed specifically for administering the affairs of Wales alone.<sup>85</sup> Coupland reported that by 1914 "the battle for Welsh in the schools had been won, or nearly won".<sup>86</sup> In 1907, the government granted further recognition to Welsh national identity by granting charters to the National Library of Wales and the National Museum of Wales.<sup>87</sup> Gwynfor Evans, a later President of Plaid Cymru, looked back on this period as the high point of Welsh nationalism.<sup>88</sup> Lloyd George, British Prime Minister from 1916 to 1922, but also the leader of Welsh political opinion, was described in Dodd's Parliamentary Companion from 1890 to 1922, not as a Liberal but as a "Welsh Nationalist".<sup>89</sup>



As in Scotland, there was little room for the development of class politics in this atmosphere. The weakness of the class cleavage is illustrated by the failure of socialism to permeate what was a strongly working-class country. In the 1890's there was but one branch of the Fabian Society in Wales and that in anglicized Cardiff. The strength of Welsh cultural values prevented its spread outside this small enclave. Theories of class conflict had the unfortunate stigma of having 'English' attached to them.<sup>90</sup> The Bradford conference of January 1893, at which the Independent Labour Party was founded, had no delegate from Wales. By 1897, only four weak branches of that party existed in Wales.<sup>91</sup>

Class war between bourgeoisie and proleteriat was unlikely while Non-conformism was in the ascendancy. As one source explained:

It is difficult to accept the idea of class conflict and belong to a chapel in which your employer and other middle-class people take part.

As in Scotland, Non-conformist ministers in Wales shunned class politics. The Calvinistic Methodists who dominated south Wales decided as early as 1831 that trade unionists could not remain within the flock.<sup>93</sup> James Griffiths, a future deputy leader of the Labour Party, recollected in his autobiography how the church treated the new ideas:

We felt that we were unwanted at the chapel and many young men drifted away. At a by-election in 1910 a Non-conformist minister

exhorted listeners to choose 'Christ or Socialism'.<sup>94</sup>

A government report in 1917 into industrial unrest in the coalfield remarked that the "old fashioned collier's" preoccupation with religion caused him to hold aloof from active participation in "trade union politics".<sup>95</sup>

Non-conformism was in Marx's terms the 'opium of the people', encouraging them to put up with their privations in this world for reward in the next.

While disestablishment was the main issue in Welsh political life, Non-conformist workers allied with Non-conformist employers against anglicized, Anglican landowners. Over 60% of land in Wales in 1873 consisted of estates of over 1,000 acres. These estates were owned by 571 landlords, only 1% of those owning land.<sup>96</sup>

The class alliance between proletariat and bourgeoisie in industrial South Wales was also reinforced by economic factors. Wales had a strong mining industry dependent on the export trade. Owners and workers resented anglicized landlords for their extraction of mineral royalties. Owners, merchants and trade unions united in support of free trade and against Conservative protectionist policies. The peculiar bargaining agreement between miners and owners known as the 'sliding-scale' worked in an expanding market with wages increasing steadily.<sup>97</sup> This alliance was held together by the Liberal party. As one historian noted:

It was assumed that Liberalism...united all the productive classes against an anachronistic feudal order. The Liberal ethic presupposed the harmony of classes, a co-operative ethic to unite middle class enterprise and working class solidarity.<sup>98</sup>

In Wales, as in Scotland, Liberalism continued to dominate working-class areas for some time after it had ceded other mining areas of Britain to the Labour party.

The existence of the nationalist-religious alliance across class lines helps to explain the placidity of industrial relations in Wales during this period. Relations between unions and owners were characterized by compromise. The strike and lock-out weapons were strongly resisted by both sides. The most important characteristic of the mining unions was their desire to settle disputes peacefully. The Rhondda and Aberdare Associations, for example, were "specifically devoted to encouraging mutual understanding between employer and workmen" and "did not countenance any aggressive policy towards the coalowners".<sup>99</sup>

The personification of this type of outlook was found in William Abraham, 'Mabon', the leader of the South Wales miners. According to K. O. Morgan:

He believed that there was no essential conflict of interest between capital and labour and that mutual adjustment would secure an agreement satisfactory to both sides.<sup>100</sup>

Mabon was also a lay non-conformist preacher, a fluent speaker and writer in Welsh and a conductor of choirs at the National Eisteddfod. According to K. O. Morgan he could use his fine tenor voice to quieten unruly miners by striking up a hymn. He was committed to the cultural values which ensured the Liberal hegemony in Wales and he shunned any notion of class conflict.<sup>101</sup> Mabon's influence was dominant in Welsh society from the 1880s to the first decade of the twentieth century. A monthly holiday for Welsh miners, negotiated in 1888, was termed 'Mabon's Day'.<sup>102</sup>

Keir Hardie, the first Labour MP ever elected in Wales, also indicated, by his attitude, the importance of Welsh cultural values at this time. His paper, The Merthyr Pioneer, had a large Welsh language content. Hardie, a Scot, learned the Welsh 'national anthem' and regularly attended Welsh cultural events. He was forced to cloak his socialism in the language of non-conformism:

My cause is Labour's cause - the cause of humanity, the cause of God... I first learnt my socialism in the New Testament where I still find my chief inspiration.<sup>103</sup>

In one historian's words, Welsh Labour was "an essential product of the Sunday school, the village choir, the brass band, and all the rich panoply of village life".<sup>104</sup> To Labour leaders like Mabon, the call of community was more important than the call of class. As with the syndicalism that grew up in Scotland during the first world war, an

equally powerful syndicalism in the South Wales mining valleys retained a strong sense of the local community.

Conclusion

Between 1870 and 1920, Wales and Scotland were socially and politically distinctive. Both countries had marked cultural differences with England. In addition, Scotland enjoyed the advantage of a strong historic national identity. Despite the extension of the franchise to the working class, politics in both areas remained centred around cultural issues. In this atmosphere, support for some degree of self-government was quite widespread. Towards the end of this period, however, there were indications that the cultural particularism which separated the nations of Britain was weakening. It is to a discussion of these changes that this thesis now turns.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism, Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977), pp. 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> See G. E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and Her Universities in the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh: University Press, 1964) and G. Osborne, Scottish and English Schools (London: Longmans, 1966).

<sup>4</sup> In a 1963 survey of Glasgow school children, aged 10-11, Jahoda discovered that 88% recognised a picture of Robbie Burns and concluded: "Evidently, Burns constitutes one of the most potent Scottish national symbols, as early as childhood". G. Jahoda, "The Development of Children's Ideas About Country and Nationality" British Journal of Educational Psychology, February and June 1963, pp. 47-60 and 143-53.

<sup>5</sup> See J. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> H. J. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism (London: Faber, 1969), pp. 33-34.

<sup>7</sup> See David Walker, The Scottish Legal System (Edinburgh: W. Green, 1976), p. 161. Also T. B. Smith, British Justice: The Scottish Contribution (London: Stevens, 1961).

<sup>8</sup> G. S. Pryde, ed., The Treaty of Union of Scotland and England 1707 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> In 1974, for example, there were only seven Scottish lawyer MPs compared to 100 English ones, Kellas, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>10</sup> The English case was put in rather blunt fashion by Lord Chancellor Cranworth in an 1858 case: "But if such be the law of England, on what grounds can it be said not to be the law of Scotland? The law as established in England is founded on principles of universal application, not on any peculiarities of English jurisprudence". Cited J. P. Grant, Independence and Devolution (Edinburgh: W. Green, 1976), p. xvi.

<sup>11</sup> David Milne, The Scottish Office (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 13. See also Injustice to Scotland Exposed (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854).

<sup>12</sup> Milne, op. cit., p. 15. Also see On the Neglect of Scotland and Her Interests by the Imperial Parliament and the Necessity for Local Government (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Company, 1878).

<sup>13</sup> See Milne, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Its aim was "to promote the establishment of a Legislature sitting in Scotland, with responsible to it and the crown" - cited, Margu's of Bute, Parliament in Scotland (Edinburgh: Scottish Home Rule Association 1892), p. 20. See also Home Rule for Scotland (Edinburgh: Scottish Home Rule Association, 1894) and Charles Waddie, The Government and Scottish Home Rule (Edinburgh: Scottish Home Rule Association, 1894).

<sup>15</sup> Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Walker, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> See J. H. Burns, "The Scottish Committees in the House of Commons, 1945-59", Political Studies, V. 8, 1960, pp. 272-98 and G. E. Edwards, "The Scottish Grand Committee, 1958-70", Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. XXV, 1972, pp. 303-25. Also see Scottish Self-Government: The Views of the Scottish Liberal Party, 1970, Appendix 1 and p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> H. J. Hanham, "The Development of the Scottish Office", in J. N. Wolfe, ed., Government and Nationalism in Scotland (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969), p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-67.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> R. H. Campbell, "The Scottish Office and the Special Areas in the 1930s", Historical Journal, 1979, p. 175. For a discussion of the centrifugal tendencies inherent in regional bureaucracies in the Canadian context, see Alan Cairn's, "Governments and Societies of Canadian Federalism", Canadian Journal of Political Science, December, 1977, pp. 695-726.

<sup>23</sup> In 1950, 64% of the total church membership in Scotland were from the Church of Scotland. J. Highet, "The Churches", A. K. Cairncross, ed, The Scottish Economy. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), p. 299.

<sup>24</sup> Sir Reginald Coupland, Welsh and Scottish Nationalism. (London: Collins, 1954), p. 266.

<sup>25</sup> James Kellas, Modern Scotland (London: Pall Mall, 1980), p. 136.

- <sup>26</sup> Coupland, op. cit., p. 268.
- <sup>27</sup> Henry Pelling, The Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910 (London: MacMillan, 1967), p. 416.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), pp. 18-20.
- <sup>30</sup> Cited, James D. Young, The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 183.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Craig, op. cit., pp. 18-20.
- <sup>33</sup> Young, op. cit., p. 138.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 137.
- <sup>35</sup> Kellas, op. cit., p. 140.
- <sup>36</sup> The Irish Home Rule issue gave rise to a powerful Liberal Unionist party in Scotland which eventually amalgamated with the Tories. Pelling, op. cit., p. 403 and p. 411.
- <sup>37</sup> Young, op. cit., p. 179.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 183.
- <sup>39</sup> Cited, Ibid., p. 140.
- <sup>40</sup> Cited, Ibid., p. 166.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 165.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 160. "I am not flattering you Workers of the Paisley Thread Mills, when I say that you have a reputation for workmanlike ability and speed, general self-respect, habits of thrift, and contentment with your lot."
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 136.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 146.
- <sup>45</sup> Tom Johnston, Memories (London: Collins, 1952), p. 65.
- <sup>46</sup> Cited, Young, op. cit., p. 147. Also see Scottish Trade Union Congress Statement on Scottish Self-Government, 1969, p. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> For MacKenzie's views on nationalism, see Address by Compton MacKenzie (Glasgow: Jackson Wylie and Co., 1932).



<sup>48</sup> Young, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 283.

<sup>50</sup> See Nan MacLean Milton, John MacLean and Scottish Independence (Thurso: John MacLean Society, circa 1968).

<sup>51</sup> K. O. Morgan, Wales: The Rebirth of a Nation (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981), p. 92.

<sup>52</sup> Coupland, op. cit., pp. 46-50. Also David Williams, A History of Modern Wales (London: Murray, 1977), pp. 34-35.

<sup>53</sup> Coupland, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>54</sup> Cited, ibid., p. 55.

<sup>55</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, Devolution (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 119.

<sup>56</sup> Cited, Morgan, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "The Attitude of Popular Classes Towards National Movements for Independence", Mouvements Nationaux D'Independance et Classes Populaires (Paris: 1971), p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> Cited, James Griffiths, Pages from Memory (London: Dent, 1969), p. 159.

<sup>59</sup> Plaid Cymru's general secretary later acknowledged the SNP's advantage in this respect, in Denis Balsom, "Plaid Cymru" in H. M. Drucker, ed., Multi-Party Britain (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 140.

<sup>60</sup> Census of England and Wales 1891.

<sup>61</sup> See Ivo Duchacek, Comparative Federalism (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

<sup>62</sup> Cited, Morgan, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Stead, "Welshness and Welsh Nationalism", New Community, 1, 1972, pp. 393-94.

<sup>64</sup> Alan Buft-Philip, The Welsh Question (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), p. 322.

<sup>65</sup> Coupland, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>66</sup> Pelling, op. cit., p. 416.

<sup>67</sup> See F. W. S. Craig, op. cit., pp. 13-19.

<sup>68</sup> The association of the Tories with things that were 'un-Welsh' has persisted right through to the 1980s. See Peter Madgwick, The Politics of Rural Wales (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 139 and p. 303.

69 Morgan, op. cit., p. 36.

70 See K. O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics, 1867-1922 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980).

71 Coupland, op. cit., pp. 217-18.

72 Ibid., p. 217.

73 Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 16.

74 Coupland, op. cit., p. 218.

75 Williams, op. cit., p. 218.

76 Cited, Coupland, op. cit., p. 228.

77 Williams, op. cit., pp. 274-75.

78 Pelling, op. cit., p. 369.

79 Ibid., p. 417.

80 Williams, op. cit., p. 258.

81 Gerald Morgan, The Dragon's Tongue (Cardiff: Triskel Press, 1966), p. 54.

82 K. O. Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 4.

83 Ibid., p. 110.

84 Ibid., p. 37.

85 J. Carter, "Local Government and Administration in Wales 1536-1939", J. A. Andrews, ed., Studies in Welsh Public Law (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1970), p. 49.

86 Coupland, op. cit., p. 212.

87 Williams, op. cit., pp. 283-85.

88 Gwynfor Evans, "The Twentieth Century and Plaid Cymru", A. W. Wade Evans, ed., The Historical Basis of Welsh Nationalism (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1950), p. 132.

89 Cited, Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 12n.

90 Hechter, op. cit., p. 277.

91 Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 199. Apparently, a single Welsh delegate missed the train.

<sup>92</sup> Cited, K. R. Cox, "Geography, Social Contexts, and Voting Behaviour in Wales, 1861-1951", E. Allardt and S. Rokkan, eds., Mass Politics (New York: Free Press, 1970), p. 136.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>94</sup> Griffiths, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Cited, Cox, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>96</sup> K. O. Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>99</sup> Cited, Cox, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>100</sup> K. O. Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>103</sup> Cited, K. O. Morgan, "The Merthyr of Keir Hardie", Glamor Williams, ed., Merthyr Politics: The Making of a Working Class Tradition (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966), p. 67.

<sup>104</sup> K. O. Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 55.

CHAPTER THREE: THE HOMOGENEITY THESIS: CLASS POLITICS  
IN INDUSTRIAL SCOTLAND AND WALES  
BETWEEN THE 1920S AND THE 1960S

The transition from the politics of culture in Scotland and Wales to the politics of class took place during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Much of the cultural basis for the distinctive Scottish and Welsh political values faded during this period. A decline in the importance of religion, associated with industrialization, removed one of the main cleavages between the Celtic nations and England. Industrialization, by promoting large-scale English migration into Wales, also contributed to a substantial decline in the numbers of those speaking Welsh.

Within a few decades, the Non-conformist, Welsh-speaking population of Wales was restricted to a few rural counties in the north and west of that country. Likewise in Scotland, the forces which had been responsible for the Liberal dominance in the pre-1920 period became increasingly isolated in the peripheral Highlands area.

In the industrialized heartlands of Scotland and Wales, where the overwhelming majority of the population lived, the politics of culture was replaced by the politics of class. This manifested itself in growing trade union

activity and in the replacement of the Liberals by Labour as one of Britain's two major parties.

These developments helped to increase the cohesiveness of the British political system. A centrifugal cultural cleavage, pitting one nation against another, was replaced by a class cleavage which linked national groups together. It is this which explains the paucity of support for parties advocating self-government in Scotland and Wales, between the 1920s and 1960s. Throughout this period, however, cultural politics remained important in the non-industrial, isolated peripheries of Scotland and especially Wales. In these areas, a degree of support for self-government continued to exist, as indicated by the resilience of the Liberal Party. These findings are consistent with the Homogeneity thesis.

## I

### THE DECLINE OF CULTURAL PARTICULARISM IN SCOTLAND AND WALES

From around the period of the first world war, a decline in the intensity of religious worship occurred throughout Britain.<sup>1</sup> This development has been traditionally seen as a consequence of industrialization. Increasing affluence and the new secular faith of socialism led people to reject the stern sabbatarianism associated with Non-conformism and Presbyterianism. Workers sought

other recreational activities such as bingo, horse-racing, soccer, rugby and drinking. All of these combined to keep the young out of church. The clergy exacerbated the tendency by its wholesale condemnation of all such activities as "sinful".<sup>2</sup> Large segments of the new industrial working class no longer felt comfortable being harangued by middle-class deacons from the pulpit.

In Scotland, the Kirk General Assembly complained as early as 1914, that a full two-fifths of the young were not associated with any church at all.<sup>3</sup> Hight found that, while at least three-quarters of the total membership of the Church of Scotland attended church during Census Sunday in 1851, a "good deal less than half" attended in 1951.<sup>4</sup> In a 1963 survey, Butler and Stokes discovered that only 39% of Church of Scotland members attended church at least once a month.<sup>5</sup> In Wales, membership of the Non-conformist churches dropped from 550,280 in 1905 to 321,000 in 1968 and this despite an increase in the general population.<sup>6</sup> The decline in numbers attending church produced a vicious circle as the churches were increasingly deprived of able new leaders. The increase in secularisation is further supported by the virtual disappearance of religious issues from the political agenda. In the period after 1920, temperance and sabbatarianism were relegated to the fringes of Scottish and Welsh politics.

The removal of Welsh Non-conformism as an influence upon politics was further hastened by the settlement of the disestablishment issue in 1920. This removed the 'cause celebre' from Welsh politics. One prominent Swansea Liberal noted the increasing difficulty which his party had in keeping the allegiance of Non-conformists after that.<sup>7</sup> At one stroke, the achievement of disestablishment removed one of the fundamental causes of animosity between Wales and England. With increasing secularisation in the industrial heartlands of Scotland and Wales, religion retained its grip only upon the relatively isolated rural areas of each country.

Religious differences between England and Wales were also undermined by a massive influx of Anglicans into the latter country. This was a direct result of the industrialisation of south Wales, which occurred mainly between 1890 and 1910. During these years, south Wales became a centre of British heavy industry with coal, steel and tinplate being particularly important. The Welsh industrial performance in this period could be equalled elsewhere only by the Ruhr in Germany and by the eastern United States.<sup>8</sup>

As south Wales was contiguous with the English border and the already established English population centre at Bristol, it was inevitable that migration would take place from the latter. Unlike the border between England and

Scotland, that between England and Wales has no recognizable physical barriers. In Patricia Mayo's words, "Wales fades off slowly into the neighbouring English countries".<sup>9</sup> Whatever barriers distance imposed were broken down by the industrial revolution. Railways and roads built during this period connected south Wales with England, reflecting a growing economic interdependence between the two. Other railway lines traversed the coastline of south Wales linking England with the Irish trade. The result of these economic developments was the integration of south Wales with England.<sup>10</sup>

Proximity and accessibility encouraged large scale immigration into south Wales from nearby England. Census figures indicate that south Wales was much more receptive to immigration from England than the industrial areas of the other Celtic nations, Ireland or Scotland (see Table 3.1). The process of immigration into south Wales reached its peak in 1911 when a full 22% of the enumerated population there was of English birth. Whereas the south Wales counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire had accounted for only 19.8% of the Welsh population in 1801, by 1911 this had increased to 62.6%.<sup>11</sup>



TABLE 3.1: % OF ENGLISH BORN ENUMERATED IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED AREAS OF THE CELTIC PERIPHERY

YEAR	WALES	SCOTLAND	N. IRELAND (ANTRIM)	EIRE (DUBLIN)
1851	/	3	1	3
1861	11	3	1	4
1871	9	3	1	4
1881	15	2	2	5
1891	19	3	2	5
1901	18	3	3	5
1911	22	4	3	5
1921	15	4	3	3
1931	15	3	3	3
1951	13	4	3	2
1961	12	5	3	3

Source: Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 188.

One result of this English migration was a relative decline in the proportion of Non-conformists in Wales. Whereas the 1851 religious census had indicated that over 80% of the Welsh population were Non-conformists<sup>12</sup>, a 1968 survey revealed that the Protestant religion in Wales was equally split between Non-conformism and Anglicanism, 45% adhering to each.<sup>13</sup>

This same process of anglicization also undermined the other pillar of Welsh cultural distinctiveness; the language.<sup>14</sup> Much of the heavy immigration from England into south Wales might have been assimilated had it not been for the fact that the language of commerce and industry was also English. This stemmed partly from the relatively feeble position of the Welsh-speaking entrepreneurial class. Investment, and hence direction of

industry, came from England, not Wales. The four major iron works of south Wales which enabled that region to become the foremost iron-producing region in Britain by 1920 all owed their existence to English entrepreneurs. Many of these achieved their early dominance in the industrial life of the region largely because they were able to fully exploit their English commercial links.<sup>15</sup> Hobsbawm noted that a Welsh bourgeoisie comparable to the Scottish one hardly existed until the mid-nineteenth-century. Anyone above the peasant working classes was English, or at least anglicized.<sup>16</sup> While many Welsh mine-owners and iron-masters also made fortunes during this period, the industrial revolution was largely financed from London.<sup>17</sup> One contemporary Welshman commented upon the lack of an indigenous bourgeoisie:

...it was rather curious to observe how few of the inhabitants of south Wales have benefitted from the extraordinary wealth that their country contains and that the Saxon race of men should have been almost the sole adventurers which have in latter times brought this wealth into action, and by their ingenuity, perseverance and adventurous spirit have raised many a noble fortune, and laid the foundation of many more.<sup>18</sup>

The location of the ownership of the means of production outside Wales helps to explain the decline of the language. Inability to speak English presented an insurmountable obstacle to promotion in the workplace. Acquisition of the new language on the other hand opened up horizons, not only in Wales but throughout the far-flung British empire. Ability to speak English became an

indication of social status in a very practical way. The Welsh language, on the other hand, had little relevance for social mobility.<sup>19</sup> This explains why acquisition of the English language was often pursued on a 'voluntary' basis, rather than being imposed on the Welsh in the way some defenders of the language suggest.<sup>20</sup> Sir Reginald Coupland described how this process of anglicization worked in practice:

Incoming English managers and businessmen did not learn Welsh. Their dependents or customers learnt English if they did not know it already. And many of them did know it; for it had long been taken for granted that a Welshman must learn English if he wanted to get on in life. The children of poor families were sent to school mainly, if not solely, to learn English.<sup>21</sup>

State education policies also facilitated the decline of the language. These went hand in hand with the introduction of English investment into Wales. It was felt in official circles that the Welsh language was an obstacle to the progress of a mature, developed economy. A report on the state of education in Wales, conducted in 1846, was a damning indictment of the Welsh language. The English Commissioners who conducted the inquiry found that:

The Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and material prosperity of the people.<sup>22</sup>

The findings were accompanied by reports in the London newspapers that the habits of the Welsh were 'those of animals and would not bear description'.<sup>23</sup> The editor of The Times wrote in 1886 that the Welsh language was 'the

curse of Wales, an obstacle to the march of intellect, prosperity and progress'.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the introduction of compulsory education by the 1870 Education Act imposed English as the sole medium of education. When it was not learnt voluntarily, speaking English in schools was enforced by harsh disciplinary measures. The introduction of secondary education by the Intermediate Education Act of 1889 confirmed the use of English at the secondary level. The state cooperated with the English-speaking bourgeoisie in preparing a world which would not pose any barriers to economic progress. Although education policy in Wales in this century has been increasingly sympathetic to the Welsh language, this was not the case in the earlier period. As broadcasting developed in Britain, it further contributed to an erosion of the Welsh language.

The decline of the Welsh language in industrialized south Wales occurred in stages. The first area to be anglicized was that closest to England. During the early stages of industrialization, Welshmen migrating to this area from the interior of the country largely kept their language intact and even succeeded in assimilating many of the English immigrants. Brinley Thomas described this stage:

The young men and women who left the farms and flocked into the mining townships carried the Welsh way of life with them and brought up their children to speak the mother-tongue. Indeed, many of these closely packed and isolated communities acted as melting pots; they were so intensely Welsh that a number of the English immigrants, not to mention the Italian shopkeepers, were quickly assimilated and picked up the language.<sup>25</sup>

This was just a transitional stage, however. As English immigration increased, Welsh-speaking continued to decline. The major turning point in the fortunes of the two languages, according to a government report in 1917, occurred around the year 1900:

Until some fifteen to twenty years ago, the native inhabitants had, in many respects, shown a remarkable capacity for stamping their impression on all newcomers and communicating to them a large measure of their own characteristics. In more recent years, the process of assimilation has been unable to keep up with the continuing influx of immigrants.<sup>26</sup>

After the English language became dominant in the industrial area, it gradually spread out into the surrounding countryside, further eroding the Welsh language. Between 1891 and 1971, the percentage of people speaking Welsh in Wales declined from 51.3% to 20.9%.<sup>27</sup> The decline was, understandably, much more serious in the industrial counties than in the rural counties (See Table 3.2). While in 1911, 36% of the population in the industrial counties spoke Welsh, by 1971 this had plummeted to 14.1%, only 38% of its 1911 level. In the rural counties, Welsh speaking also declined but at a slower rate, remaining relatively stronger. Whereas, in 1911, 62% in this area spoke Welsh, by 1971 this had declined to 45.6%, 72% of the 1911 figure.<sup>28</sup>

TABLE 3.2: PERCENTAGE SPEAKING WELSH: INDUSTRIAL AND NON-INDUSTRIAL COUNTIES 1911-71

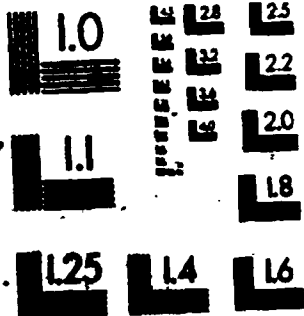
	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961	1971
<u>WALES</u>	43.5	37.1	36.8	28.9	26.0	20.9
<u>RURAL COUNTIES</u>						
ANGLESEY	88.7	84.9	87.4	79.8	75.5	65.7
BRECONSHIRE	41.5	37.2	37.3	30.3	28.1	22.9
CAERNARVONSHIRE	85.6	75.0	79.2	71.7	68.3	61.9
CARDIGANSHIRE	89.6	82.1	87.1	79.5	74.9	67.6
CARMARTHENSHIRE	84.9	82.4	82.3	77.3	75.1	66.5
MERIONETHSHIRE	90.3	82.1	86.1	75.4	75.9	73.5
MONTGOMERYSHIRE	44.8	42.3	40.7	35.1	32.3	28.1
PEMBROKESHIRE	32.4	30.3	31.6	26.9	24.5	20.7
RADNORSHIRE	5.4	6.3	4.7	4.5	4.5	3.8
<u>INDUSTRIAL COUNTIES</u>						
DENBIGHSHIRE	56.7	48.4	48.5	38.5	34.8	28.1
FLINTSHIRE	42.2	32.7	31.7	21.1	19.1	14.6
GLAMORGANSHIRE	38.1	31.6	30.5	20.3	17.2	11.7
MONMOUTHSHIRE	9.6	6.8	6.0	3.5	3.5	2.3

Source: Compiled from 1971 Census.

The decline of the Welsh language fits conventional theories of diffusion. Karl Deutsch, in fact, described an identical transition from Gaelic to English speaking in Scotland, a transition more or less completed about one hundred years earlier. According to his study, economic forces compelled Gaelic-speakers from the Highlands area of Scotland to come into the lowland industrial centres which were already becoming anglicized. After a short period when the Gaelic-speakers maintained their separate identity in the towns, their language was eventually extinguished.<sup>29</sup> English was the sole language of the Scottish industrial areas long before the end of the nineteenth century. A second stage involved the same economic forces moving out into the Gaelic-speaking areas of the Highlands, largely wiping out the last remnants of the Gaelic language.<sup>30</sup>

2

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NBS 1010a  
ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2



In Scotland, the separate Gaelic language, as Deutsch discovered, has virtually disappeared. By 1981, it was spoken by only 1.6% of the total population. The speaking of Gaelic is completely insignificant everywhere in Scotland with the exception of the Western Isles where it is spoken by 80% of the population.<sup>31</sup>

Industrialization and anglicization helped to remove some of the cultural barriers to British homogeneity. Only in the peripheral areas of Scotland and Wales, especially in the latter, did a basis for cultural distinctiveness remain.

## II

### THE EMERGENCE OF CLASS DIVISIONS IN INDUSTRIAL WALES AND SCOTLAND

As the cultural politics declined in Wales and Scotland, class politics emerged in their place. There were a number of reasons for this. The class alliance which had existed in pre-1900 Wales between Non-conformist workers and employers was somewhat dependent on economic cooperation between the two sides. Co-operation was facilitated by continuous economic expansion. The 'sliding-scale' bargaining agreement between miners and mineowners, worked as long as prices and consequently wages rose, which they did in the 1880-1894 period. After this,



however, growing international competition caused prices to fall. South Wales miners, facing extreme hardship by 1898, demanded a 10% increase in wages plus a minimum wage. This request was denied by the owners who proceeded to lock out 100,000 miners for six months.<sup>32</sup>

This shock to industrial relations in south Wales played a major part in shattering the class harmony of preceding decades. One historian described the 1898 lock-out as "a powerful divide in the industrial, social and eventually political history of south Wales and the nation generally".<sup>33</sup> The end of class collaboration and the destruction of the value system upon which Liberalism in Wales was based, was symbolized by the decline of Mabon, the 'apostle of industrial peace'. His position as leader of the miners came increasingly under attack from more militant factions. The holiday which bore his name was abolished as a result of the owners' pyrrhic victory in the 1898 lock-out. K. O. Morgan described this as an error on the part of the owners of "monumental, if characteristic, stupidity". He added:

...it marked the end of an era on the coalfield on which the values of Welshness, of non-conformity, of class harmony and the valley community would be rapidly eroded by new imperatives of class struggle and conflict.<sup>34</sup>

International competition and industrial conflict in south Wales led to combination and centralization among mine-owners.<sup>35</sup> These amalgamations destroyed the paternal

relationship which had previously existed between owner and worker.<sup>36</sup> They also provoked a reaction among workers. In the 1890s in south Wales, miners were organized into eight small unions of which only three possessed their own funds, the remainder being essentially company unions. Only 45,000 out of 120,000 miners in south Wales in the early 1890s were organized at all.<sup>37</sup> This situation changed dramatically when, as a reaction to their weakness during the 1898 lock-out, the small unions were consolidated into the South Wales Miner's Federation (SWMF). The membership of the 'Fed' in 1913 was 153,813.<sup>38</sup>

South Wales rapidly became a centre of the class struggle. In 1906, while the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) as a whole voted against affiliation to the Labour party, south Wales voted strongly in favour by 41,843 to 31,527.<sup>39</sup> A year-long strike there in 1910-11 resulted in near anarchy with the government being forced to use troops at Tonypany to maintain order. The parochial values on which Liberalism was based were further eroded by the effects of the 1914-18 war, when a whole generation of Welshmen left home for the first time.

South Wales was regarded in 1917 as a centre of extreme syndicalism. A government enquiry of that year noted the popularity of this radical theory:

In no part of the country is this creed so widely held and constantly preached as among the miners of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire.<sup>40</sup>

The report found that there was a "conviction that Capital and Labour are necessarily hostile", remarked that unrest had become a "permanent" condition in south Wales and expressed fears of social revolution.<sup>41</sup> Classes conducted by the Central Labour College on the class struggle were held responsible for the "revolution which has taken place in the minds of the workers".<sup>42</sup> A secret report prepared for the government in 1919 on the extent of 'direct action' movements described south Wales as a "hotbed of theoretical Bolshevism".<sup>43</sup>

Class militancy in south Wales was exacerbated by the decline of the heavy industries in the 1920s. Miners' wages were cut to increase competitiveness in international markets. The Rhondda miners were led at this time by Arthur Cook, a founding-member of the British Communist Party who described himself as a "humble follower of Lenin". In all the industrial confrontations of the 1920s and 1930s, the Welsh working-class took the most 'advanced' line. Welsh workers voted consistently in favour of national strikes. In September 1920, for example, the majority in favour of striking in south Wales was 141,721 to 40,047. The General Strike of 1926 started in south Wales. The leader of the British miners at the time was a Welshman. Workers' solidarity there was stronger than

anywhere else in Britain. In the T.U.C.'s categories, Wales was a "Class One Region". Ninety percent of the workers requested to stop work by the T.U.C. did so. The decision by the T.U.C. to call off the strike on the twelfth of May, "caused an enormous revulsion in South Wales".<sup>44</sup> Miners and Railwaymen there made it clear that they wanted the strike to continue.

Hechter discovered a dramatic increase in class consciousness in Britain during the depression but noted that it was higher in Wales than anywhere else. He attributed this to the effectiveness of the South Wales Miners' Federation, "the most left-wing branch of the British Miners' Federation, itself the most radical of all the large national unions".<sup>45</sup> South Wales became a centre of British communism. Arthur Horner, a Communist, stood against the official Labour candidate in Rhondda East in 1929 and polled 30% of the votes. In 1936, he became President of the S.W.M.F.<sup>46</sup> South Wales was for long regarded as the best electoral hope for the (English) leader of the British Communist Party, Harry Pollitt.<sup>47</sup>

The strength of class consciousness in south Wales was further demonstrated by the participation of 170 Welsh volunteers on the side of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. More than anything, these volunteers demonstrated the international character of the class struggle.<sup>48</sup> Class militancy continues to be relatively

strong in south Wales in the 1970s and 1980s. In the miners' strikes of 1972, 1974 and 1984-85, class solidarity was more noticeable there than in many other regions.

In Scotland, the development of class politics was facilitated by the settlement of the Irish question in 1921. While religious sectarianism continues to have some influence upon politics in Scotland in the 1980s, this is much less than before. The large Catholic working class, no longer distracted by the issue of self-government for Ireland, was free to concentrate on economic questions.<sup>49</sup>

As in Wales, economic problems in Scotland contributed to trade union organization. The Fife Miner's Union increased its membership from 5,396 in 1900 to 13,570 in 1910. The Scottish Farmservants' Union, founded in 1912, had 8,000 members and 130 branches by 1914.<sup>50</sup> The 'New Unionism', whereby unskilled workers were organized on a massive scale throughout Britain during the 1890s and early 1900s, was also felt in Scotland.<sup>51</sup>

The appearance of significant class conflict in Scotland mainly dates from the period of the first world war. Industrial Scotland was one of the main centres for shipbuilding and the production of munitions. Workers were subjected to continuous pressure to increase production. Housing conditions deteriorated as a result of a massive influx of new workers. Landlords increased rents while

soldiers were at the front. Publication of huge dividends by corporations coupled with a provocative ostentation by the wealthy during a time of scarcity increased class consciousness.<sup>52</sup>

In this atmosphere, the semi-revolutionary Clyde Workers' Committee of Shop-Stewards was formed. Its aim was to

...organize the workers upon a class basis and to maintain the class struggle until the overthrow of the wages system, the freedom of the workers and establishment of democracy has been obtained.<sup>53</sup>

Many in the cabinet felt Clydeside to be on the brink of full scale revolution, a belief shared by the new Bolshevik regime in Russia. John Maclean, the leader of the Clyde workers, was appointed Soviet Consul to Scotland. Other evidence of increasing class divisions abounded. A May Day rally in Glasgow in 1915 attracted 50,000 people.<sup>54</sup> In 1917, 10,000 people were left outside a packed meeting in St. Andrew's Hall in support of the Russian revolution. The government Director of Intelligence in Scotland, in a report entitled 'Revolutionary Feeling During the Year 1919' felt "class hatred" to be one of the leading causes of unrest.<sup>55</sup>

The subsequent decline of the heavy industries of steel, coal and shipbuilding in the 1920s also contributed to a hardening of class division in Scotland. Like Wales,

Scotland became a relative bastion of communist support. Communists stood in every general election in Scotland after 1918. They even had two candidates elected, one in Motherwell in 1922-23 and one in West Fife from 1935 to 1950.<sup>56</sup> This represents half the total of communists who have been returned to Parliament in Britain. In the 1970s, 7,500 of the British Communist Party's 25,000 came from Scotland. This represented 33% of the membership from only 10% of the population.<sup>57</sup>

### III

#### THE TRANSITION FROM LIBERAL TO LABOUR IN WALES AND SCOTLAND

In this transformed society, both the Church and their political allies in the Liberal party lost their traditional leadership role. A short-sighted attitude to social problems hastened their demise. Socialists were expelled from congregations. One prophetic Non-conformist minister warned the chapels that unless they

...found a new mission in the application of their principles to the social problems of the age, they would lose contact with the people and lose their hold upon the democratic forces which were emerging in the Labour and Socialist movements.

The church, however, failed to respond. As the leading lay-members were also frequently the leading employers, there was an element of self-interest in their position.

The Welsh Liberals, as the political voice of Non-conformism and Presbyterianism, could not satisfactorily meet the aspirations of the working class. While prepared to speak out on behalf of Welsh-speaking quarrymen in rural Wales, they remained silent in the face of the growing and far more serious industrial class conflict in the south. The comments of one disheartened Liberal candidate from a working-class seat in south Wales in 1918 show that the issues of importance were not ones embraced by his party at that time. He declared that:

The mind of the miner was impervious to any national question. The only subject that interested him was more pay, shorter hours of work, no income tax for wage-earners, more facilities for drinking.

The Liberals in Scotland were in an even weaker position to lead the working class. They were the most right-wing branch of the British Liberal Party. The Scottish Liberals had condemned as too socialist the social welfare policies of the Liberal Government in the first decade of the century. Unlike their English and Welsh counterparts, they had been unable to arrive at the electoral understanding with Labour (the Lib-Lab pact) whereby members from each party did not oppose each other.<sup>60</sup>

As the party of government during this period, the Liberals were held responsible for government activity against the unions. This included Churchill's use of



troops against Welsh miners at Tonypany in 1911. This incident alone had such a powerful impact upon the working-class psyche that one respondent to a survey fifty-nine years later in 1970 gave it as his reason for not liking the Liberals.<sup>61</sup>

Even more important was Lloyd George's refusal to implement the recommendation of the Sankey Commission to nationalize the mines. This was considered as betrayal by the miners in both Scotland and Wales. One moderate miner's leader, Vernon Hartshorn, claimed that the Welsh miners felt "deceived, betrayed, duped" by the government's decision on Sankey.<sup>62</sup> This decision played a large part in the demise of Liberalism among the working-class. The political vacuum caused by the increase in class-consciousness was filled by the Labour party.

Labour's growth in Wales as in Scotland is directly linked to the increase in trade-union activity. A government commission of enquiry into industrial unrest on the coalfield in 1917 noted that the unions were centres of political activity. The younger generation of miners were no longer content to have Liberal spokesmen to represent them, as their fathers had been:

The younger generation, fed upon the writings of the Fabian Society [and] the ILP...demands that its representatives in Parliament shall be first and foremost representatives of Labour, not Labour as a portion of communal life but Labour as the majority in the country.<sup>63</sup>

It was directly after the foundation of the SWMP in 1889 that organizers for the ILP "swarmed" into the mining valleys. Keir Hardie became the first official Labour MP in 1900 when elected for the mining seat of Merthyr Tydfil. By 1905, the party had 27 branches in South Wales. At Merthyr, in the municipal elections of 1905, all twelve Labour candidates were returned, eleven of them miners.<sup>64</sup>

The transition from Liberal to Labour was facilitated by the extension of the franchise and the reallocation of seats in the 1918 Representation of the People Act. These changes were first felt at the general election of 1922. At that point Labour took over from the Liberals as the main alternative to the Conservatives throughout Britain. Wales became a Labour stronghold. According to one historian, virtually every industrial seat in Wales

...was a seemingly impregnable Labour stronghold, with Labour candidates of almost any complexion and drawn from any wing of the party assured of the almost automatic loyalty of a large and growing majority of the elections, male and female.

From winning five of the thirty-six Welsh seats in January 1910, Labour won eighteen in 1922. It was an indication of Labour's strength here that the first Labour Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald, took a safe seat there in Aberavon, to avoid a repeat of his 1918 defeat at Woolwich. Like Keir Hardie before him, MacDonald "now bade fair to use Wales as the springboard for a limitless

political ascent".<sup>66</sup> During the catastrophe of 1931, when the number of Labour-held seats in the United Kingdom fell from 287 to fifty-two, their seats in Wales fell only from twenty-five to sixteen. Labour's share of the nationwide vote fell from 37.1% to 30.8% but actually increased in Wales from 43.9% to 44.1%.<sup>67</sup> This transition from a politics based on culture to one based on class is shown in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3: Welsh Parliamentary Election Results 1885-1966

Election	Liberal	Labour	Conservative
1885	30	/	4
1900	27	1	6
1910 (Jan)	27	5	2
1922	10	18	6
1924	10	16	9
1929	9	25	1
1935	6	18	11
1945	6	25	4
1955	3	27	6
1966	1	31	3

Source: F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980, pp. 13-41.

Labour's hold on Wales remained strong right up until the 1980s, reaching its peak in 1966 when the party won thirty-one of the thirty-six Welsh seats. Liberal representation fell in an inverse relationship to Labour's success. From twenty-seven of the thirty-four Welsh seats in 1910, that party's representation fell to ten in 1922, declining steadily until by 1966 it held only one Welsh seat.

Many of the new Labour voters in Wales retained their Liberal sympathies. These did not die overnight. Certainly Labour's position as an opponent of the unpopular Conservatives added to its advantage in south Wales. Class did not completely remove culture as an important political factor but it did replace it as the primary cleavage. The transition from Liberal to Labour could not have taken place otherwise.

A transition from Liberal to Labour also occurred in Scotland. The Scottish working class gradually transferred their loyalty to working-class organizations, beginning with the formation of the Scottish Labour Party in 1888. That party was incorporated into the national Labour Party. Two Labour MPs were elected in Scotland in 1906 despite the absence of a Lib-Lab pact. ILP membership in Scotland increased by 300% and the number of branches by 50% between 1914 and 1917 alone.<sup>68</sup> As in Wales, the Labour breakthrough came in 1922. Labour increased its number of Scottish seats from two in 1910 to twenty-nine in 1922 and thirty-six in 1929. Labour won a majority of the Scottish seats in 1929, 1945, 1950 and at every election after 1955. Liberal strength in Scotland declined from fifty-eight in 1910 to eight in 1924. Apart from a brief resurgence in 1929 when it won thirteen, it never held more than five Scottish seats after 1924. (See table below.)

TABLE 3.4: Scottish Parliamentary Election Results  
1885-1966

Election	Liberal	Labour	Conservative
1885	51	/	8
1900	34	/	36
1910 (Jan)	58	2	9
1922	27	29	13
1924	8	26	36
1929	13	36	20
1935	3	24	43
1945	0	37	27
1955	1	34	36
1966	5	46	20

Source: F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts 1832-1980, pp. 1-26.

Just as working-class Liberal supporters switched their allegiance to Labour, so did middle-class Liberals now opt for the Conservatives. That party was transformed from one largely based on Anglicanism and the landed classes to one encompassing the urban middle class throughout Britain. The Conservatives ties with the middle class are not as formal as those between the Labour and the working class. Labour's finances, organization and even members are formally linked to the trade union movement. Nonetheless, the Conservative party draws the overwhelming majority of its MPs from the business sector. As Lloyd George described the two parties in 1918, he felt he had the TUC in front of him and the Association of Chambers of Commerce at his back.<sup>69</sup>

IVTHE CENTRIPETAL EFFECT OF CLASS ON SCOTTISH AND WELSH  
POLITICS

The growth of class-consciousness throughout Britain broke down parochialism and eroded the basis for nationalism in Scotland and Wales. As British class organizations developed, industrial action was taken throughout the country. These powerful institutions played a centripetal role in British politics, helping to concentrate power at the centre of the polity. Nationalism was attacked on ideological, as well as practical, grounds.

The growth of class politics in Scotland and Wales was in itself evidence of the ability of class ideas to disseminate across cultural boundaries. Thus English socialists played a crucial role in organizing the Labour movement in Scotland and Wales. This was largely because of their proximity and the fact that the industrial structure of Scotland and Wales was much the same as in many areas of England. Many of the leading Welsh militants had English-sounding names and were either from England or of English extraction. Vernon Hartshorn, George Barker and Frank Hodges are a few examples.<sup>70</sup> The young Ernest Bevin organized the dockers' union at Swansea<sup>71</sup>, helped by other English Socialist missionaries like Ben Tillett, Tom Mann, and Havelock Wilson.<sup>72</sup> The attack on Mabon's advocacy of industrial peace was led from England and it

was the "English influence" which led to the eventual undermining of his authority.<sup>73</sup> The very Welsh word for Socialism, Sosialleeth, has an imposing ring about it.<sup>74</sup>

In Scotland, it was the infusion of English ideas which enabled the working class to discard the mythology of thrift.<sup>75</sup> Even the Scottish socialists had promulgated the virtues of thrift thus preventing the emergence of class consciousness. The Dyers' strike at Paisley in 1912 was blamed by the employers on the activities of an "English trade-union organizer".<sup>76</sup> James Maxton described the Scottish Labour movement as an "offshoot" of the English one.<sup>77</sup> The cross-cultural mobility of class worked in both directions. Keir Hardie, a Scot born in Lanarkshire, became the first Labour MP, sitting for a seat in east London. He spent the last fifteen years of his parliamentary career sitting for the Welsh seat of Merthyr Tydfil.<sup>78</sup> Ramsey MacDonald, another Scot, became the first socialist prime minister, also sitting for a variety of English and Welsh seats,

The efforts of the socialist missionaries were greatly facilitated by economic developments. As industrial problems became national in scope, they gave rise to class solidarity across ethnic boundaries. Whereas 'national' strikes and 'national' collective bargaining were unknown before the 1890s, they both became increasingly common after that time. By 1910 the shipbuilding and steel

workers in Scotland and Wales had negotiated national settlements in collaboration with their English co-workers.<sup>79</sup> As unions co-ordinated their activities, employers also drew together. Whereas before 1890 strikes were purely local in nature, by 1911 all the major industrial disputes were conducted at a national level. Many of the concessions fought for, such as the eight hour day, were by definition national questions.<sup>80</sup>

As owners amalgamated, unions were forced to do likewise. The disappearance of the independent Scottish Railwaymen's Union in 1923 followed from the demise of the Scottish Railway Companies.<sup>81</sup> The South Wales Miners' Federation affiliated with the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, partly as a reaction to combination on the part of the owners.<sup>82</sup> This process was hastened by the Taff Vale case of 1900 which made Unions responsible for financial losses due to strikes.

Dockers in Cardiff, Swansea and Glasgow became members of the National Dockers' Union and eventually of Ernest Bevin's giant Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). Local railway unions were replaced by the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR). Several Welsh and Scots rose to the top of the British trade union movement. J. H. Thames of Newport became Secretary of the NUR in 1913. Arthur Cook was General Secretary of the MFGB during the General Strike.<sup>83</sup>



Although Scotland continued to have a separate Scottish Trade Union Congress throughout this period, its importance declined as the vast majority of its members enrolled in national organizations. Although there are still some separate Scottish negotiations, e.g. for teachers, these have become increasingly rare as Scottish workers demand equality of treatment with their English and Welsh counterparts. By the 1930s, the tradition of Clydeside independence in the trade-union movement had largely disappeared.<sup>84</sup> By 1971, the last major Scottish industrial union, the Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union, merged with the TGWU.<sup>85</sup> Of the 1,033,896 members of the STUC in 1978, all but 62,957 were also members of the British Trade Union Congress (BTUC).<sup>86</sup> Wales did not have a separate Trade Union Congress until 1973.

The growth of these national working-class organizations had their business counterparts in the Federation of British Industry. By drawing Scotland and Wales into a national communications network, they served to further diminish the basis for regional politics. These national organizations were naturally dominated by Englishmen who had little interest in Home Rule for Scotland or Wales.

While the STUC had supported Home Rule for Scotland until 1931, this support dissolved as more and more of its members also became affiliated with the BTUC. STUC

conferences during the 1920s produced a number of attacks on the organization's support for Home Rule. Around the same time as the National Party of Scotland was formed as a reaction to Labour's abandonment of Home Rule, motions were put forward at the STUC calling for it to abolish itself and to merge with the BTUC. The new generation of Scottish trade union leaders were not nearly as supportive of Home Rule as their predecessors had been.<sup>87</sup>

In 1931, the STUC abandoned its support for Home Rule altogether. Its opposition was based on economic and organizational interest as well as, in some cases, ideological concerns. The debate on the 1931 motion reveals the centripetal nature of the British unions vis-a-vis the centrifugal tendencies of the unions organized on a Scottish basis.

The motion to support Home Rule came from a Scottish Union, the Scottish Horse and Motormen. It, like the other Scottish unions, had an obvious organizational interest in an administration devolved along Scottish lines. The expense of sending representatives to lobby at Edinburgh was much less than the cost of sending them to London.

For the same organizational reasons, the British unions pointed to the administrative and practical difficulties that would follow from Home Rule for them. Devolved parliaments and separate legislation posed obvious problems

for the national unions. One spokesman for a national union related the difficulties that had ensued in the building trade in Ireland since the Free State had been established in 1921.<sup>88</sup> A NUR spokesman claimed that conditions for Scottish railway-workers had only improved since they had left the old locally-based unions and organized on a national basis. He condemned the motion as a "parish-pump outlook" and argued that it was

significant that it emanated from an organization which could only think in terms of the parish-pump. Workers should look upon themselves as workers, and not as Scotsmen or Englishmen.<sup>89</sup>

Home Rule sentiment was practically non-existent among Welsh trade-unionists. Even after the establishment of the Welsh Office in 1964 and the first Welsh nationalist parliamentary election victory in 1966, no nationalist could be found in a senior trade-union post. The trade union movement in Wales remained a bastion of the Labour Party.<sup>90</sup>

Apart from concerns about organizational inconvenience, Scottish and Welsh members of the national unions were especially fearful that Home Rule of any kind would lead to decentralized bargaining. This would allow employers to lower wages in Scotland and Wales, which were less prosperous than other areas of the country. In its special report on Scottish government in 1958, the Scottish Council of the Labour party pointed out that the national trade

unions would "vigorously resist" any proposals to return to district settlements.<sup>91</sup> At a 1968 debate on devolution at the STUC, a member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers attacked nationalism, claiming that Scotland's viability could only be ensured if national parity of wages and conditions were negotiated through national negotiating machinery.<sup>92</sup>

The spread of the national trade union movement in Britain was accompanied by the emergence of a national working-class party, Labour. It and its business counterpart, the Conservative party, also acted as centripetal forces in British politics. The fact of contesting elections on a national basis made both of them conscious lest they be seen to be supporting a particular territorial interest. The Labour Party, for example, while strong in Scotland and Wales, also depended on English support to form a government. The use of the party whip effectively stifled regional discontent in both parties. When Scottish and Welsh MPs spoke, they spoke mostly as representatives of Labour or the Conservatives rather than as spokesmen for Scotland and Wales.<sup>93</sup> In addition, Labour, like its trade-union wing, now felt that the interests of its supporters lay in greater centralisation.<sup>95</sup>

It was in reaction to the Labour movement's declining enthusiasm for Home Rule in the late 1920s that John

MacCormick formed the National Party of Scotland in 1928. In 1934, it became the Scottish National Party.<sup>94</sup> The centripetal forces in British politics were so strong at this time that the SNP failed to get any more than 1.3% of the vote at any general election between 1929 and 1964.<sup>95</sup>

As class politics developed, many Welsh and Scottish leaders also attacked nationalism from an ideological perspective. This flowed from Marx's view that workers have no country. In Wales, the leader of Welsh Labour between the 1930s and 1950s, Aneurin Bevan, was ardently opposed to nationalism. His colleague, James Griffiths, recalled that Bevan was

...impatient with nationalism which divided peoples and enslaved nations within their narrow geographical and spiritual frontiers.<sup>96</sup>

Scottish socialists also attacked nationalism on ideological grounds. When nationalists persuaded the Scottish Education department to institute the teaching of Scottish history in 1910, the ILP criticized their attempts to "raise the ghost of Scottish nationality".<sup>97</sup> In the Scottish school boards, socialists challenged the prevailing interpretation of Scottish heroes such as Robert the Bruce and demanded a socialist interpretation of history. Joey Westwood told one school board that Bruce was a "murderer" while John Maclean depicted the Scots' much celebrated national victory over the English at

Bannockburn in 1314 as a battle "by serfs for the benefit of a few barons".<sup>98</sup>

The fundamental reason for the development of national trade union organizations and a class cleavage cutting across cultural frontiers lay in the nature of the British economy. The vast majority of the population of Scotland and Wales, as in England, were employed in industries which permitted the growth of class consciousness. This effect can be more clearly illustrated by an examination of an area in which these conditions did not exist, the twenty-six counties of Ireland. The class organizations which helped to integrate the British polity after the extension of the franchise had no basis in the Irish agricultural economy. The contrasting economic structures of Scotland and Wales on the one hand, and Ireland on the other, help to explain the failure of nationalism in the former areas and its success in the latter.

Irish Labour associations, before the 1890s, had little representation at the annual British Trade Union Congresses. As the Irish constituted such a small proportion of the BTUC and because their problems were of a different nature from those on the mainland, the BTUC was not interested in Irish affairs. This became evident in 1880 when the BTUC met in Dublin. English delegates present revealed their complete ignorance of Irish economic problems. According to Andrew Boyd:

...it seemed judging from the tone of their speeches that those stout English trade unionists were surprised to find that their Irish brethren had not brought their pigs and shillelaghs to the conference.

The predominance of Irish agrarian problems irritated the English who were more interested in industrial matters.<sup>100</sup> Resolutions dealing with Irish issues were left at the bottom of the BTUC agenda and were debated on the last afternoon of the conference or not at all.<sup>101</sup> According to both Hechter and Boyd, the British movement was interested in Irish labour only to the extent that they could prevent Irish immigration from lowering wages on the mainland.<sup>102</sup>

A mixture of British neglect and the expense of sending delegates to fruitless British Congresses led to the formation of the Irish Trade Unions Congress (ITUC) in 1894. This body was a visible manifestation of the contrasting interests between Ireland and the other two Celtic nations. In a speech in 1894, the President of the ITUC related the importance of these differences. He explained that it was understandable that the representatives of England and Scotland should dominate the BTUC as their industries "being almost entirely of a mining and manufacturing character were the same". He added:

I cannot, of course, find fault with my English and Scottish friends in pressing forward their own claims first - that is quite natural seeing that their interests are in the main identical...they cannot be expected to understand the wants of a community largely agricultural.<sup>103</sup>

The absence of an industrial proletariat also explains why Ireland failed to develop class politics to the same extent as the other two Celtic nations. This prevented the growth of a national (i.e., United Kingdom) political party just as it had prevented a national trade-union movement. Irish representation was, in fact excluded from the Labour Party's National and Administrative Council in 1893. The reason was straightforward:

The committee did not wish it to be inferred that they wished to do any injustice to Ireland, but their party had no existence in that country.<sup>104</sup>

The absence of class politics in Ireland helps to explain its secession from the United Kingdom in 1921.

## V

### CLASS AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR IN SCOTLAND AND WALES IN THE POST-1945 PERIOD

Class continued to dominate Scottish and Welsh politics until the late 1960s. The existence of surveys and other data in the post-1945 period reinforced this impression.

The two major parties, the Conservatives and Labour, were absolutely dominant in British politics until the 1960s. In the general election of 1951, for example, these two parties received 96.8% of the votes polled throughout the United Kingdom. In 1955, they received 96.1% and in



1959, 93.2%.<sup>105</sup> This vote was also extremely stable, creating a textbook model of a two-party system with both main parties alternating in government. Each major party's share of the vote fell within the narrow six-point range of 43% to 49%. Elections were decided by tiny fluctuations of Conservative and Labour support.<sup>106</sup> This vote, however, was not produced evenly throughout the country. In 1959 Labour received 56.5% of the poll in Wales, 46.7% in Scotland but only 43.6% in England. The variation in Labour's strength was even more marked in terms of seats. The party won 75% of the Welsh seats and over 50% of the Scottish seats but less than 40% of the English seats. Labour seemed very much a party of the periphery while the Conservatives seemed to be based on the core area of England.

This variation in party support led some authors to argue that the strength of Labour in the periphery was an expression of regional protest. Michael Hechter argued that both the Labour and Liberal parties had "consistently catered...to voters in the Celtic regions and have successfully co-opted regional dissent into their formally national parties." The traditional role of the Conservative party, on the other hand, has been to uphold "the political leadership of London and the Home Counties", while representing "the core against any possibility of regional devolution or autonomy".<sup>107</sup> Iain McLean, extending the periphery to include the north-east of

England, also argued that anti-core sentiment was a significant factor in explaining Labour strength in the periphery.<sup>108</sup>

While there may be some validity to these arguments, especially in Wales, much of the regional variation in the Labour vote can be explained on class grounds. This is a conclusion consistent with the findings of the homogeneity thesis. On both subjective and objective tests, Wales is more working class than England. This is as one would expect from a class analysis of the above voting patterns. A 1968 survey of subjective class assessment in the United Kingdom found that 63% of the Welsh and 57% of the Scottish considered themselves to be working-class. Only 48% of the English put themselves in this category.<sup>109</sup> Using objective class measurements, the 1966 Census revealed that 62.2% of the Welsh and 61.9% of the Scottish, were employed in manual occupations, compared to 57.6% of the English.<sup>110</sup>

Table 3.5 indicates the importance of class on the vote in all three areas.

TABLE 3.5: LABOUR'S SHARE (%) OF ENGLISH, SCOTTISH AND WELSH CONSTITUENCIES BY % OF MALES IN NON-MANUAL OCCUPATIONS, 1970

% IN NON-MANUAL OCCUPATIONS		ENGLAND %	# SEATS	SCOTLAND %	# SEATS	WALES %	# SEATS
Strongly	10 - 19.9	100	46	100	8	100	7
Working	20 - 24.9	89	72	100	12	100	11
Class	25 - 29.9	58	103	67	21	66	6
Middle-Range	30 - 34.9	28	83	50	16	70	7
Seats	35 - 39.9	19	85	43	7	33	3
Strongly	40 -	6	122	0	7	0	2
Middle-Class							
TOTAL		42.2	511	61.9	71	75	18

SOURCE: Adapted from Kellas and Fotheringham, "The Political Behaviour of the Working Class", p. 154 and from data in D. Butler and Michael Pinto-Duchinsky, The British General Election of 1970, pp. 374-5.

This table reveals that, in 1970, Labour was stronger in Wales and Scotland than in England. Labour won 75% of the Welsh seats and 61.9% of the Scottish, compared to only 42.2% of the English seats. However, Labour is dominant in the strongly working-class seats (i.e., those with less than 30 % in non-manual occupations) in all three countries. There is also a decline in Labour's support in all three countries as the working-class element declines, although there does seem to be a tendency for Labour to do

better in the middle-range seats in Scotland and Wales. This finding can be partly explained by the greater class polarization in the latter areas. The table also reveals that Labour performs dismally in the strongly middle-class seats (i.e., those with over 40% in non-manual occupations) in all three countries.

Table 3.5 shows that Labour's dominance in Wales and Scotland can largely be explained by the very high proportion of strongly working-class seats in both areas. 58% of Scottish constituencies and 66% of Welsh constituencies fall into this bracket, compared to only 43% of English constituencies.<sup>111</sup> Labour won these working-class constituencies in England as it did in Scotland and Wales. Twenty-four of the Welsh seats fall into this category and all but two of them are won by Labour. Conversely, Labour's weakness in England can be largely attributed to the very large number of strongly middle-class constituencies there. Twenty-five percent, or 122 of the 511 English constituencies, fell into this category compared to only 10% in Scotland and 6% in Wales. In 1970, Labour won only six of these 122 constituencies. There were a total of only nine constituencies of the strongly middle-class type in Scotland and Wales. Not surprisingly these were all won by the Conservatives. Of the seven strongly middle-class constituencies in Scotland, the Conservatives won six of them in every election between

1945 and October 1974, losing the seventh at one election in 1966.<sup>112</sup>

Rose and McAllister confirmed in their analysis of the 1983 British general election that socio-economic structure was more important than regional cultural sentiment in determining party preferences. Examining the social structure of British constituencies, they found that Labour won ninety-one of the 100 constituencies ranking lowest in socio-economic status. Of the 100 constituencies ranking highest in socio-economic status, the Conservatives won all 100. Thus, the largely agricultural counties of Scotland returned resounding Conservative majorities, as did English constituencies of a similar type. The decaying inner-city region of London was identical in its voting habits with similar areas in Cardiff and Glasgow.<sup>113</sup>

The fact that Labour does better in the Celtic nations than in England can also be explained by the greater class polarization in the former areas. A number of surveys conducted in the 1957-1962 period support this hypothesis. Using these surveys, Robert Alford constructed an index of class voting based on the difference between the percentage of manual and non-manual workers voting Labour. (See table below)

TABLE 3.6: CLASS POLARIZATION IN SCOTLAND,  
WALES AND BRITAIN, 1957-62

	1957	1958	February 1959	May 1959	1962
Wales	7	53	66	45	37
Scotland	51	38	46	18	37
G. Britain	43	42	44	36	35

R. Alford, Party and Society, p. 146-7.

Wales had the highest index of class voting of any British region in three out of the five surveys, although in one it had the lowest level of class voting. Scotland is more polarized than the British average in three out of five surveys. These findings enabled Alford to argue that "in the regions with presumably the greatest degree of regional identity (i.e., Scotland and Wales), class voting is not lower but is usually higher."<sup>114</sup> In these terms, the strength of Labour in the periphery is reinforced by the relative absence of 'working-class Tories'. This analysis fits the historic tradition of these two areas as centres of the class conflict in Britain.<sup>115</sup>

Class polarization in Scotland has been attributed to the high proportion of council tenancy there vis-a-vis England. It is a widely supported hypothesis that working-class individuals who live in council housing are more likely to vote Labour than those who live in private housing or even in privately rented accommodation.<sup>116</sup> Almost 50% of people in England in 1966 owned or were buying their own homes; in Scotland, the proportion was

28%. Conversely, 47% of Scottish householders were living in council housing compared to 27% in England. Kellas and Fotheringham used this to explain the Conservative weakness in Scottish burghs with less than 40% employed in non-manual occupations. In 1970 the Conservatives won only one of this type in Scotland compared to 52 in England.<sup>117</sup> As the large council building programmes began in the 1950s, the council tenancy argument has the additional advantage of explaining the Conservatives' decline in Scotland after 1955.<sup>118</sup> Their share of the poll decreased from 50.1% in 1955 to 37.7% in 1966. This hypothesis was supported by Budge and Urwin's findings in their analysis of Glasgow politics in 1964:

In Glasgow the housing issue assumes a particularly bitter intensity. Indeed, Glasgow politics are often interpreted as a clash of interests between owner-occupiers who pay high rates and corporation tenants who benefit from subsidized low rents.<sup>119</sup>

In Wales, fourteen of the thirty-six Welsh seats were located in mining-valleys. As Butler and Stokes demonstrate, constituencies of this type, throughout Britain, have a particularly strong working-class culture. An absence of working-class Toryism in these areas is understandable. While Labour received 51.6% of the votes in Wales at the 1970 election, in six seats its tally exceeded 70%. These six were all mining seats.<sup>120</sup> It is also clear, however, that a lingering cultural antipathy to the Conservatives has added to Labour's advantage in south Wales. Labour's majorities there have often been greater

than can be explained exclusively on class grounds. A number of surveys have indicated a higher level of middle-class support for Labour here than can be found elsewhere, even in other mining areas in Britain.<sup>121</sup> This, however, would seem to be little more than an embellishment on the politics of class.

The salience of class divisions in Scotland and Wales is also indicated by the overwhelming importance of socio-economic issues in the minds of both electorates. In 1964, Budge and Urwin compared their Scottish survey with a contemporary English survey and found that, in both cases, the most important issues were the same, i.e., housing and pensions.<sup>122</sup> If politics were divided along regional or religious lines, one would expect regional or religious issues to be also considered important. In 1964, at any rate, this was not the case.

## VI

### THE CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON POLITICS IN THE RURAL PERIPHERIES OF WALES AND SCOTLAND

While class dominated politics in the industrialized areas of Scotland and Wales, cultural politics continued to show resilience in the rural areas of both countries. This contributed to ongoing demands for safeguards for the



culture, including calls for various degrees of self-government.

Industrialization in south Wales relegated the language and Non-conformism to the rural areas. Religious issues like temperance remained important here. In the 1920s, drink was seen as "at the root of social reform", and also of industrial recovery, an answer to the depression which had enveloped Wales.<sup>123</sup> One rural Welsh newspaper declared that "Prohibition would put Britain back on its feet industrially within 12 months".<sup>124</sup>

While under continuous attack from the forces of anglicization, these values remained relatively stronger in Welsh-speaking Wales as late as the 1960s and 1970s. In a referendum on Sunday opening in 1968, 34.8% of the Cardiganshire electorate voted against, with only 19.2% in favour. Only four other counties, Merioneth, Caernarvon, Anglesey and Carmarthen, voted against Sunday opening. These were all in rural Welsh-speaking Wales.<sup>125</sup>

The strength of temperance was closely linked to Non-conformism. Non-conformists tended to remain more devoted to their church than the other Protestant religions. Butler and Stokes found, in 1963, that 45% of Non-conformists attended church at least once a month, compared to 16% of Anglicans.<sup>126</sup> The political behaviour of Non-conformists was, therefore, more likely to be

influenced by their religious affiliation. Madgwick, studying Cardiganshire in 1970, found that the minister was still a dominant figure in society. He discovered that people expected leadership from a minister on a whole range of issues, not merely religious ones:

...advice was sought of ministers, on social and personal matters, council housing, home help, social security, testimonials, family problems, mental illness, assistance with forms and help of all kinds for the elderly."<sup>127</sup>

Naturally, this influence stretched into politics. The ministry in rural Wales was politically active and strongly Welsh in its values. About three-quarters of the Non-conformist ministers in Cardiganshire spoke Welsh as their first language and were deeply concerned about its continuing decline. Twenty-nine out of thirty-seven respondents to a 1970 survey feared for its survival. As late as the 1950s in some rural villages it was reported that the minister virtually presided over open voting. Non-conformist congregations sometimes complained about demands for self-government being preached from the pulpit.<sup>128</sup>

Class politics was largely absent in rural Wales. This can readily be explained by the absence of large classes of workers and employers. The isolated nature of the society ensured that there were none of the divisive patterns of employment and residence to be found in urban areas.

Without intimate contact and a noticeable division of labour, class conflict is unlikely.

Councillors in Welsh-speaking Wales, interviewed in 1970, did not see any class divisions existing. One councillor even required a long explanation of the meaning of class in Welsh.<sup>129</sup> Survey evidence supports this. Only 21% of Cardiganshire people assigned themselves to a social class compared to 50% in Britain as a whole.<sup>130</sup> A 1960 voting survey, based on subjective class assessment, found Welsh-speaking rural Wales much less polarized along class lines than industrial Wales. Two-thirds of lower-class males voted Labour, but so did half the upper-class males. This represents a class polarization index of around 16%. In industrial Wales, 84.7% of lower-class males voted Labour, but only 31.8% of upper-class males, a polarization index of 52.9%. Objective class indicators indicated an even greater disparity, producing a polarization index of 13% in the rural areas and one of 63% in the industrial areas.<sup>131</sup>

What little class-consciousness existed could be found in towns, but these were few in number.<sup>132</sup> Trade unions, where they did exist in rural Wales, succeeded in raising class consciousness among their members.<sup>133</sup> This was confirmed by Madgwick:

Among community leaders and participants interviewed, trade unionists seemed more convinced about social inequalities and class feelings.<sup>134</sup>

Such findings suggest that industrialization of these areas would produce class divisions, a hypothesis in keeping with theories of diffusion.

The continuing importance of culture in rural Wales had various political manifestations. It explains the continuing resilience of the Liberal party after it had virtually disappeared elsewhere in Britain, it produced a peculiar kind of Labour MP dedicated to culture as much as class and, finally, it underlay the establishment of a Welsh Nationalist Party in 1925, dedicated to the defence of the Welsh language.

The Liberal party in Wales remained tied to the same issues which had ensured its hegemony throughout the country in the pre-1920 period. They continued to support Home Rule, temperance, sabbatarianism and displayed a marked aversion to class politics. At the annual meeting of the Liberal Party in Wales in 1948, two of four resolutions carried concerned the subject of drink. One called upon the government to "introduce legislation prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in clubs in Wales and Monmouthshire".<sup>135</sup>

TABLE 3.7: PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS IN RURAL AND INDUSTRIAL WALES, 1910-70

	NORTH AND WEST WALES			GLAMORGAN AND MONMOUTHSHIRE		
	LIB	LAB	CONS	LIB	LAB	CONS
1910	18		2	9	5	
1924	9	1	3	1	15	6
1929	9	4		/	21	1
1935	6	3	4	/	15	7
1945	6	4	3	/	21	1
1955	3	8	3	/	19	3
1956	1	10	2	/	21	1
1970	1	9	4	/	18	3

SOURCE: Alan Butt-Phillip, The Welsh Question, p. 9.

These attitudes explain why the transition to a Labour hegemony was somewhat uneven in Wales. Table 3.7 shows that this was much more apparent in the Glamorgan-Monmouthshire area than in the northwest region. While the Liberals were completely eclipsed in the industrial area, falling from nine seats in 1910 to none after 1929, they remained the strongest party in the rural periphery until 1955. While they lost ground to Labour after that date, they still remained relatively stronger there than elsewhere.

Especially after 1955, Labour showed an ability to win the type of agricultural seat in Wales which it stood

little chance of winning in England.<sup>136</sup> In 1970, these seats included Anglesey, Brecon and Radnorshire, Caernarvon, Cardigan, Carmarthen and Merioneth. While Labour's increasing strength in these Welsh-speaking seats partly reflected growing anglicization, it also depended on that party's inheritance of the mantle of radicalism from the Liberals. As the main opponent of the Conservatives, it naturally benefitted from the latter party's reputation as an 'English party'. The transition from Liberal to Labour, which took place in the Welsh-speaking areas in the 1950s and 1960s (see Table 3.7) did not remove Welsh culture as an important determinant of political behaviour. This can clearly be seen in the type of Labour candidate who stood in these areas.

In 1922, when Labour made their breakthrough in industrial Wales, they also won two seats in the rural areas. In Caernarvonshire, the successful candidate was R. J. Jones, the Secretary of the Quarrymen's union. More significantly, perhaps, he was also an advocate of temperance, Home Rule and the cause of the Welsh language.<sup>137</sup> The Labour victory in 1957 was in a similar mould. It had been won by the Liberals at almost every election since 1885. The Labour candidate in 1957, however, Lady Megan Lloyd George, had better Liberal credentials than her Liberal rival. She was the daughter of ex-Liberal Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, had been a Liberal MP and apparently won the election by presenting

herself in a "Liberal guise".<sup>138</sup> Cledwyn Hughes, the Labour MP for Anglesey in northwest Wales, who became the second Welsh Secretary of State in 1966, was a fluent Welsh speaker who had started his political career as a Liberal.<sup>139</sup>

Cardiganshire had been a Liberal stronghold for eighty years before 1966, but fell to Labour at the election of that year. The successful Labour candidate was, however, a former vice-president and parliamentary candidate for Plaid Cymru. His victory was widely attributed to the Labour government's concession of a Welsh Secretary in 1964. While the seat had changed hands, in Madgwick's words, "it had not moved far from its traditions of radicalism and nationalism".<sup>140</sup> The victor, Elystan Morgan, remained fully committed to Welsh cultural values and still accepted the policies of Plaid Cymru, though not their priorities. The President of the Cardiganshire Labour Association was also sympathetic to Welsh nationalism.<sup>141</sup>

While Labour in Wales officially condemned the 'Parliament for Wales' campaign in the strongest terms<sup>142</sup> many of its MPs from Welsh-speaking areas supported it.<sup>143</sup> The deputy leader of the Labour party, Jim Griffiths, himself a Welsh-speaker, was in the vanguard of the struggle for a Secretaryship of State for Wales.<sup>144</sup> He became the first incumbent of the office when it was created in 1964. It was Labour's ability to present itself

as a party defending Welsh cultural values that explains its support in the Welsh-speaking agricultural areas.

Finally, the importance of culture in the politics of rural Wales was manifested in the existence of a Welsh Nationalist Party, Plaid Cymru. This had been formed in 1925. It was essentially a defensive cultural linguistic movement with the primary aim of preventing erosion of the Welsh language. All its early objectives concerned the protection of the language. It demanded, in 1926, that Welsh be made the only official language, that the government should conduct its business in Welsh and that Welsh should be a medium of education from primary school to university.<sup>145</sup> It was not until 1930 that Plaid Cymru adopted self-government as a party aim.<sup>146</sup> This was a result of party president Saunders Lewis's claim that self-government was the only way to save the culture.<sup>147</sup>

The nationalist party was determined not only to resist anglicization but, if possible, to reverse it. Its first pamphlet, The Principles of Nationalism, set the tone for the next forty years by rejecting even a bilingual Wales. It stated instead that Wales should be primarily Welsh-speaking.

Welsh should be accorded a position of primacy, not merely equality in Welsh education and life; it should become the sole official language of the country and the exclusive medium of all means of mass-communication such as a broadcasting service which should be used to reinforce and promote the idea of Welshness.<sup>148</sup>



The pamphlet stated that it should be disadvantageous to be unable to speak Welsh in Wales just as it was to know no English in England. Plaid Cymru was so antagonistic towards the use of English that it refused to use it even for propaganda purposes in south Wales.<sup>149</sup>

Such policies effectively limited any appeal which Plaid Cymru had to Welsh-speaking areas. This fact was recognized by the nationalists. In an important speech in 1962, Saunders Lewis claimed that the main enemies of the Welsh language were not the English themselves, but the English-speaking Welshmen. He argued that if self-government was achieved before the language was made secure, its demise would be quicker than under continued rule from England.<sup>150</sup>

While, in fact, many English-speaking Welshmen were disturbed by the continuing decline of the language, very few felt strongly enough about it to support Plaid Cymru. Surveys indicated that English-speakers were concerned about the social costs involved in the maintenance of the language.<sup>151</sup> They were also hostile to demands for bilingualism in broadcasting, public administration and education.<sup>152</sup> This, it was felt, would create a Welsh-speaking elite. Even Welsh-speakers preferred the more moderate nationalism of the cultural wings of the Labour and Liberal parties than Plaid Cymru. This was largely a

result of the latter party's lack of a coherent program and its extremist activities.

From the late 1920s to the early 1960s, Plaid Cymru was successfully and correctly labelled by the other parties as "teachers, preachers, and poets", a bunch of cultural fanatics obsessed with the decline of the language and concerned with little else in Welsh life. Their lack of attention to economic problems was particularly damaging.<sup>153</sup> In 1937, a leader of the party, J. F. Daniel, had rejected the government's efforts to revitalize the Welsh economy by regional policy measures, arguing that the "salvation" of Wales lay in the rediscovery of Welsh poetry.<sup>154</sup> Saunders Lewis was known to have favoured a return of the Glamorgan industrial area to its pre-industrial state of nature as a way of solving its economic problems.<sup>155</sup> Many Welsh-speakers were too concerned about jobs and prices to vote for a party that had little to say about these issues.

Moderate Welsh-speakers also shunned the political extremism associated with Plaid Cymru.<sup>156</sup> The first and most famous of the extremist acts perpetrated by party members was the burning of a Royal Air Force training school in 1936.<sup>157</sup> Lewis and two other leading members of Plaid Cymru set fire to the camp, claiming afterwards that they did it to protect the language. A bomb explosion at the Clywedog reservoir a week before the 1966 general

election was widely believed to have destroyed Plaid Cymru's chances. Gwynfor Evans, the party president, claimed that the explosion was sabotage against his party.<sup>158</sup>

These failings explain why Plaid Cymru performed abysmally even when contesting seats in the Welsh-speaking area. Between its foundation in 1925 and 1955, the party never received any more than 1.2% of the Welsh vote in any general election.<sup>159</sup>

A similar but much less important cultural redoubt existed in the Highlands area of Scotland. While not powerful enough to produce its own nationalist movement, it revealed some of the same characteristics as the Welsh-speaking areas. For example, it remained a relative Liberal stronghold even after 1918. The Non-conformist Presbyterian church in Scotland, with 40,000 members, was concentrated in this area. The 1981 Census also revealed that this was the last area in which the Gaelic language survived.<sup>160</sup> The language is much weaker than in Wales except for the Western Isles, where over 80% spoke Gaelic. With little or no industry and a preponderance of smallholdings in the Highlands, class consciousness was low. As in northwest Wales, there was also a history of anti-Conservative sentiment. Like rural Wales, this was an ideal setting for the non-class appeal of the Liberals and nationalists. At the general election of 1966 for example,

the Conservatives won only eleven of nineteen rural constituencies in this area. The Liberals won five and Labour three. In England seats of a similar socio-economic nature would all have been expected to go Conservative.<sup>161</sup>

Of the five British counties where, in 1885-1966, the Conservative performance was weakest in relation to the socio-economic structure, three were in Welsh-speaking Wales and two in the Scottish Highlands.<sup>162</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The dominance of class politics in Scotland and Wales between the 1920s and 1960s is illustrated by the dismal failure of both nationalist parties at the polls. Between 1929 and 1964, the SNP contested only seventy-three seats and lost their deposits on fifty of these occasions. Its only respectable performances occurred during the wartime electoral truce between the two parties. The SNP received 37.2% of the vote at Argyll in 1940, 41.3% at Kirkcaldy Burghs in 1944 and won Motherwell in 1945 with 51.4%.<sup>163</sup> These results confirmed rather than denied the class basis of Scottish politics. Opponents of the incumbent party voted nationalist rather than cross the class line to vote for the other major party. It also indicates, however, that Scots were prepared to vote for a nationalist candidate when their class identity was not compromised.

This point provides an important clue to the emergence of nationalism in the late 1960s.

Plaid Cymru contested eighty-nine seats in the same period, failed to win any and lost sixty-seven deposits. The party achieved over 25% of the poll in only one seat at one election. Plaid Cymru was strongest in the areas where the culture remained important. These were the rural areas of the northwest and, to a lesser extent, some of the mining valleys.<sup>164</sup>

Political developments in Wales between the 1920s and 1960s were consistent with the arguments of the homogeneity thesis. After the extension of the franchise in 1867 and 1884, territorial politics did become important. In retrospect, however, this was only a transitional period. With the decline of religion and the onset of industrial strife, a class cleavage emerged. To the extent that this class cleavage was dominant, the prospects for a popular nationalism were remote. Rather than producing a reactive nationalism, economic problems in Scotland and Wales produced a particularly intense version of the class struggle. Because class divisions existed throughout Britain, they performed an integrative function, cross-cutting more divisive cleavages based on culture.

There is some proof of culture continuing to have an effect on outlying peripheral areas in Scotland and Wales.

These were the Welsh-speaking areas of rural Wales and the smaller Gaelic-speaking area of the Highlands. Such a finding would not surprise the theorists of political and economic diffusion.

Rather, this examination of cleavages in Scotland and Wales largely upholds the homogeneity thesis. The primacy of the class cleavage throughout this period explains the marked weakness of the nationalist parties. Only in the rural periphery did culture remain of primary importance and even here it was expressed in support for the Liberal Home-rulers rather than for the more extreme nationalists.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See David Butler and Donald Stokes, Political Change in Britain, Second Edition (London: MacMillan, 1974), pp. 155-71.
- <sup>2</sup> Alan Butt-Philip, The Welsh Question (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), p. 10.
- <sup>3</sup> Sir Reginald Coupland, Welsh and Scottish Nationalism (London: Collins, 1954), p. 383.
- <sup>4</sup> J. Hight, "The Churches", A. K. Cairncross, ed, The Scottish Economy (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1954), p. 308.
- <sup>5</sup> Butler and Stokes, op. cit., p. 157.
- <sup>6</sup> Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 4n, p. 51.
- <sup>7</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, Wales: Rebirth of a Nation (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981), p. 193.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 59.
- <sup>9</sup> Patricia Elton Mayo, The Roots of Identity (London: Allenlane, 1974), p. 67.
- <sup>10</sup> G. L. Rees, Survey of the Welsh Economy (London: HMSO, 1973), pp. 78-79.
- <sup>11</sup> Census 1971: Report on the Welsh Language.
- <sup>12</sup> Morgan, op. cit., p. 14. For a discussion of the non-conformists' influence on Welsh politics, see David Williams, A History of Modern Wales (London: Murray, 1977), pp. 246-68.
- <sup>13</sup> Richard Rose, "The United Kingdom as a Multi-National State", Richard Rose, ed., Studies in British Politics (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1976), p. 130.
- <sup>14</sup> Glamor Williams argued that this was probably the most important explanation for the decline in the numbers of those speaking Welsh, "Wales - The Cultural Bases of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Nationalism", R. Mitchison, ed., Roots of Nationalism (Edinburgh: Donald, 1980), p. 125.
- <sup>15</sup> Colin Baber, "The Economic Background to the Historical Development of Welsh Nationalism", Mitchison, op. cit., p. 109.
- <sup>16</sup> E. Hobsbawm, "The Attitude of Popular Classes Towards National Movements for Independence", Mouvements Nationaux

D'Independance et Classes Populaires (Paris, 1971), p. 35.

"Wales was a nation whose social hierarchy reached no further up than the petty bourgeoisie, for anything higher was by function, and often by definition, (e.g., membership of the Church of England) not Welsh, but English".

<sup>17</sup> A. H. John, The Industrial Development of South Wales 1750-1850 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950), pp. 23-27.

<sup>18</sup> Cited, Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> Glyn Williams, "Industrialisation, Inequality and Deprivation in Rural Wales", G. and T. L. Rees, ed., Poverty and Social Inequality in Wales (London: Croomhelm, 1980), p. 181.

<sup>20</sup> Some Welsh-speakers continue to hold ambivalent views towards the language because of the subordinate social status associated with it, Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Coupland, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>22</sup> Cited, Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Cited, Williams, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>24</sup> Cited, Morgan, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Brinley Thomas, The Welsh Economy: Studies in Expansion (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962), p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest, Division No. 7, South Wales, CD 8668, 1917, p. 15. Also see Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 203-04.

<sup>27</sup> 1971 Census (Wales): Report on the Welsh Language.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Karl Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (London: M.I.T. Press, 1966), p. 111.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>31</sup> Census, 1981 (Scotland): Gaelic Report.

<sup>32</sup> K. O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), p. 204.

<sup>33</sup> Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 73.



<sup>35</sup>CD 8668, op. cit., p. 6. The most powerful of the mine-owners' combinations was the Cambrian Combine headed by Lord Rhondda. The United National Collieries and Burnyeat, Brown and Co. were also of a substantial size. Tinplate manufacturers in Wales formed themselves into the Welsh Plate and Steel Manufacturers in 1899. They controlled 97% of the whole trade. In response, 99% of the workforce joined unions.

<sup>36</sup>K. R. Cox, "Geography, Social Contexts, and Voting Behaviour in Wales, 1861-1951", E. Allardt and S. Rokkan, eds., Mass Politics (New York: Free Press, 1970), p. 148. Cox traces the transition from culture to class in Wales but adds little to K. O. Morgan's work, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup>Morgan, op. cit., 1981, p. 74.

<sup>38</sup>CD 8668, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Mrs. Snowden remarked that Wales, "A hotbed of Liberalism and Non-conformity in the past would become a hot-bed of socialism and real religion in the future". Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>40</sup>CD 8668, op. cit., p. 17. The Report discussed workers' views in South Wales. "Believing that the final and root causes of the conflict between employer and employees be in the relation between Capital and Labour, they see in the strengthening of the union a means of forging a firmly-wielded weapon which will ultimately be sufficiently powerful to overcome and reorganize the capitalist forces ranged against them". Noah Ablett's famous syndicalist pamphlet, The Miners' Next Step, was published here in 1913.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>43</sup>Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>45</sup>Hechter, op. cit., p. 295.

<sup>46</sup>Morgan, 1981, op. cit., pp. 289-90.

<sup>47</sup>Hobsbawm, op. cit., pp. 42.

<sup>48</sup>Hywel Francis, Miners Against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1984).

<sup>49</sup>The Catholic working class in Scotland were further encouraged to vote for a socialist party because Labour were considerably more willing than the Conservatives or Liberals to provide public funding for Catholic education in Scotland. James Kellas and Alan Fotheringham, "The

Political Behaviour of the Working Class", A. McLaren, ed., Social Class in Scotland (Edinburgh: Donald, 1976), pp. 145-46.

<sup>50</sup> James D. Young, The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 160.

<sup>51</sup> See E. Hobsbawm, "The 'New Unionism' in Perspective", pp. 152-175, Worlds of Labour (London: Weidensfield and Nicolson, 1984).

<sup>52</sup> Commission of Enquiry Into Industrial Unrest: No. 8 Division, Scotland, CD 8669, 1917, para. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Cited, James Kellas, Modern Scotland (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), p. 141.

<sup>54</sup> Young, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>55</sup> Cited, James Cronin, Labour and Society in Britain, 1918-79 (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1974), p. 21.

<sup>56</sup> F.W.S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), p. 103.

<sup>57</sup> Kellas, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>58</sup> Cited; James Griffiths, Pages from Memory (London: Dent, 1969), p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Cited, Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>60</sup> Kellas, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>61</sup> P. Madgwick, The Politics of Rural Wales (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 207.

<sup>62</sup> Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>63</sup> CD 8668, 1917, p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Morgan, Wales in British Politics, p. 208.

<sup>65</sup> Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>67</sup> F. W. S. Craig, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> Young, op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>69</sup> Bo Sarvlik and Ivor Crewe, The Decade of Dealignment (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 75.

<sup>70</sup> Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>72</sup> Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>75</sup> K. O. Morgan, "The Merthyr of Keir Hardie", G. Williams, ed., Merthyr Politics: The Making of a Working-Class Tradition (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966), p. 89.

<sup>76</sup> Young, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>79</sup> See K. O. Morgan, Keir Hardie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>80</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, Worlds of Labour (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), p. 198.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 161-62.

<sup>82</sup> H. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 116.

<sup>83</sup> See CD 8668, op. cit. This was also due to its defeat in the 1898 lock-out. See Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 208. With Labour's nationalization of the coal industry in 1945, the MFCB was replaced by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, 1980, op. cit., p. 285.

<sup>85</sup> Hanham, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>86</sup> J. Kellas, Scottish Political System (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 270.

<sup>87</sup> Hanham, op. cit., pp. 115-16.

<sup>88</sup> Hanham, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>90</sup> Cited, Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Only 40 members of the 40,000 strong South Wales region of the NUM contracted out of affiliating to the Labour party in 1970. This was despite the Labour government's

responsibility for the closing of many mines in the area in the 1960s. Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 271.

92 Special Report on Scottish Government, The Labour Party, Scottish Council, 1958, p. 3.

93 Michael Keating and David Bleiman, Labour and Scottish Nationalism (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1979), p. 157.

94 The centripetal effect of national parties has been noted in other politics. Lipset and Rokkan observed that the first national parties in the USA, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, played a crucial role in the national polity. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments", S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan eds, Party Systems and Voter Alignments, (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 4. For the same argument in Canada, see Alan Cairns, "Government and Societies of Canadian Federalism", Canadian Journal of Political Science, 1977:

95 E.G. See Labour's Policy for Wales (Cardiff: Welsh Regional Council of Labour, 1954), pp. 3-4.

96 Griffiths, op. cit., p. 162.

97 Young, op. cit., p. 175.

98 Ibid., pp. 176-77.

99 Andrew Boyd, The Rise of the Irish Trade Unions (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1985), p. 54.

100 Ibid., p. 73.

101 Ibid., p. 55.

102 Ibid., p. 73 and Hechter, op. cit., p. 284.

103 Cited, Hechter, op. cit., p. 285. The last underlined section was in italics in original. The rest is my own underlining.

104 Cited, Ibid., Hechter, op. cit., p. 287:

105 F. W. S. Craig, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

106 Crewe and Sarvlik, op. cit., p. 30.

107 Hechter, op. cit., p. 221.

108 McLean, "The Politics of Nationalism and Devolution", Political Studies, 25, 1977, p. 425.

109 Rose, op. cit., p. 138.

- 110 J. Kellas and Fotheringham, op. cit., p. 153.
- 111 Ibid., p. 154. I have relied on Kellas and Fotheringham for the Scottish and English calculations here. The Welsh calculations are based on data from David Butler and Michael Pinto-Duchinsky, The British General Election of 1970 (London: MacMillan, 1971), pp. 374-75.
- 112 Kellas and Fotheringham, op. cit., p. 154.
- 113 I. McAllister and R. Rose, The Nationwide Competition for Votes (London: Pinter, 1984), p. 178.
- 114 See R. Alford, Party and Society (London, 1963), pp. 144-47.
- 115 As Drucker and Brown commented: "Scotland (and the same is true of Wales) is a more class-divided society than England...The Conservative party in Scotland is more Tory and the Labour party more socialist than elsewhere. There is less middle ground between them and party preference has rarely, therefore, been a matter of choice or decision. More often it is a matter of tribal loyalty.", Politics of Nationalism and Devolution (London: Longman, 1980).
- 116 Kellas and Fotheringham, op. cit., p. 158.
- 117 Ibid., p. 156.
- 118 Ibid., p. 147.
- 119 I. Budge and D. Urwin, Scottish Political Behaviour (London: Longmans, 1966), p. 64.
- 120 Butler and Pinto-Duchinsky, op. cit., pp. 374-75.
- 121 For example, see Butler and Stokes, op. cit. Also, Rhodie Morgan, "Is Wales a Region?", Parliamentary Affairs, 1964, pp. 458-59. While Alford claimed class was more important than culture in Wales, one of his five surveys indicates the opposite, op. cit., p. 146. Balsom et al also produced evidence from 1979 survey material which showed a lingering cultural effect on politics in south Wales, "The Red and the Green: Patterns of Partisan Choice in Wales.", British Journal of Political Science, 1983, pp. 293-325.
- 122 Drucker and Brown, op. cit., p. 99.
- 123 Cited, Madgwick, op. cit., p. 75.
- 124 Ibid., p. 49.
- 125 Ibid., p. 74.

- 126 Butler and Stokes, op. cit., p. 157.
- 127 Madgwick, op. cit., p. 42.
- 128 Ibid., p. 70.
- 129 Ibid., p. 39.
- 130 Ibid., p. 145.
- 131 Cox, op. cit., pp. 151-52.
- 132 Madgwick, op. cit., p. 139 and p. 143.
- 133 Cox, op. cit., p. 152.
- 134 Madgwick, op. cit., p. 39.
- 135 Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 305.
- 136 Of the 40 most agricultural seats in Britain, Labour, in 1970, won four of the Welsh seats in this category but none of the twenty-nine English seats. Data from David Butler and Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, The British General Election of 1970 (London: MacMillan, 1971), p. 381.
- 137 Morgan, 1980 P, op. cit., p. 192.
- 138 John Osmond, Creative Conflict (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 123.
- 139 Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 304.
- 140 Madgwick, op. cit., p. 65.
- 141 Ibid., p. 213.
- 142 See Labour's Policy For Wales (Cardiff, 1954), especially pp. 2-8.
- 143 See John Osmond, op. cit., p. 123.
- 144 James Griffiths, op. cit., p. 164.
- 145 Chris Rees, "The Politics of Language", Meic Stephens, ed., The Welsh Language Today (Llandysul: Gomer, 1973), p. 237.
- 146 Welsh Nationalist Party: Aims (Plaid Cymru, 1931).
- 147 The Banned Wireless Talk on Welsh Nationalism (Plaid Cymru, 1931). "If they [the Welsh people] decide that the literary revival shall not broaden out into political life, then inevitably Welsh literature in our generation will cease to be living and valuable."

148 The Principles of Nationalism (Plaid Cymru, 1926).

149 The Welsh Nationalist, an English-language paper, was launched in 1932. However, in order to forestall criticism from his own party ranks, the editor pointed out that this was merely a short-term tactic to be used to restore Welsh as the official language. The Czechs, he claimed, had made their language the official one after using the German language in the short-run. Welsh Nationalist, January, 1932, pp. 4-5.

150 S. Lewis, The Fate of the Language (Plaid Cymru, 1962). The Welsh word for English-speaking Welshmen, 'Sais O Gymro' means "An Englishman of a Welshman".

151 A. Giles and Taylor, "National Identity in South Wales", Glyn Williams, ed., Social and Cultural Change in Contemporary Wales (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 140-41.

152 This was particularly true of broadcasting. Opponents of Welsh language television have continuously attacked it as an unjustified subsidy. See Philip Rawkins, "Living in the House of Power", unpublished manuscript, p. 21.

153 A list of Plaid Cymru's publications between 1926 and 1939 reveals only four of (twenty-four on economic problems and this in the midst of a serious depression. Many of the nationalist pamphlets on the depression were, in fact, written in retrospect. These are reprinted in Ceinwen Thomas, ed., Towards Welsh Freedom (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1957).

154 Cited, Drucker and Brown, op. cit., p. 11.

155 Butt-Philip, op. cit., pp. 178-79.

156 For a survey indicating that many voters disliked Plaid Cymru's extremism, see Madgwick, op. cit., p. 209-10.

157 Times, September 9, 1936, p. 11.

158 Western Mail, March 8, 1966.

159 Craig, op. cit., p. 104.

160 1981 Census, Scotland: Gaelic Report.

161 The anti-Conservative bias of the Highlands was also noted by Peter Pulzer, Political Representation and Elections (New York: Praeger, 1967), pp. 111-12.

162 Hechter, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>163</sup>F. W. S. Craig, Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections, 1885-1974 (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1975), p. 90.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid.



CHAPTER FOUR: INTERNAL COLONIES? THE SCOTTISH AND  
WELSH ECONOMIES IN THE BRITISH CONTEXT

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, nationalist parties in both Scotland and Wales attracted an unprecedented degree of support. The SNP, from being a party of the 'lunatic fringe' in 1966, became the second largest party in Scotland, in terms of votes cast. Plaid Cymru did not do as well, but doubled its share of the Welsh poll between 1966 and 1970 and won three of the thirty-six Welsh seats in October 1974.<sup>1</sup> The homogeneity thesis, a plausible explanation of the weakness of political nationalism in the period between the 1920s and the 1960s, could not easily account for this phenomenon. Michael Hechter, on the other hand, did suggest an explanation in his theory of 'internal colonialism'.<sup>2</sup>

According to Hechter, the root cause of Celtic nationalism lay in the economic exploitation of the Celtic ethnic groups by the dominant English ethnic group. He pointed to the fact that the Celtic nations were worse off than England on a wide range of economic indices and attributed this to the deliberate actions of an oppressive state dominated by the English. Awareness of this exploitation, Hechter argued, maintained a resentment among the exploited. This had already resulted in the breakaway of the greater part of Ireland in 1921.

In the mainland Celtic nations of Scotland and Wales, Hechter claimed, ethnic resentment expressed itself through support for Labour, the normal party of opposition in Britain. When Labour in government between 1964 and 1970 failed to alter significantly the disadvantaged positions of Scotland and Wales, the electorates of both countries switched quite easily to supporting nationalist parties.<sup>3</sup> This chapter tests the internal colonialism thesis by examining the effect of the economic union of the United Kingdom on the political union. This includes an analysis of the role of the central state in the regional economy.

## I

### THE ECONOMIES OF THE THREE CELTIC NATIONS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONALISM IN THE PRE-1920 PERIOD:

#### Scotland

The economic advantages of union to Scotland were evident from shortly after 1707. Scotland benefitted from its increased trade with England and its admission to the latter country's world-wide colonies, the American possessions in particular. Scottish farmers' prosperity grew as they sold cattle to the growing English market. Glasgow developed on the tobacco trade, something which would have been inconceivable had Scotland not been in the

same empire as Virginia and Maryland. In 1760, one Scottish family in four derived income from the linen industry, a large percentage of which was likewise directed to the North American colonies and to England.<sup>4</sup>

Scotland's access to trade with the colonies led to a development of mercantile contacts in the New World. Importantly, this was often reflected in the return of successful adventurers to Scottish commercial and industrial life. This, along with savings from the prosperous agricultural sector provided the necessary capital for later indigenous industrialization. Rather than being forced into a situation of dependency by English capital, Scottish entrepreneurs largely financed their own industrial revolution.

To native capital was added the fortuitous advantage of rich natural resources, primarily coal and iron ore. These combinations of factors led to the development of a prosperous economy based on textiles, engineering, coalmining, steel-making and shipbuilding. In 1901, 41% of Scotland's industrial employment was contained in these industries.<sup>5</sup> Scotland's industrial structure was quite similar to that of a relatively prosperous English region, the Northeast.<sup>6</sup>

Rather than being peripheral, Scotland was a central region of the British economy during this period, a "boom

area". In the thirty years between 1881 and 1911, the mining workforce more than doubled its size in Scotland, employment reaching 167,000. Employment in metal manufacturing increased by 50% while employment in shipbuilding almost tripled.<sup>7</sup> This unprecedented expansion produced large-scale migration into the industrial areas. R. H. Campbell described the buoyant state of Glasgow in this period:

Few cities have probably been so aggressively proud of their industrial achievements as Glasgow before the first world war. It staged international exhibitions in 1888 and, even more ostentatiously, in 1901 to proclaim itself as the second city of the Empire and that Empire's workshop. Though Glasgow was not Scotland, it could rightly regard itself as the centre, and its industrial experience as typical of the whole.

Scotland's economic performance was similar to England's and both of them were in advance of any other nation in the world. In 1911, with a population about one-eighth of Great Britain, Scotland's share of the industrial output was the same proportion. Productivity per worker in Scotland at £18 was exactly the same as that in England. Scotland's economic advance during the 19th century is clearly shown by a measurement of its wealth per capita. Whereas Scottish wealth was only 47% of England's in 1803, it had increased to 79% in 1871 and was 100% at the end of this period in 1921.<sup>9</sup> Here was clear evidence that Scotland had benefitted from its political link with England. If anything, the union seemed to work disproportionately in Scotland's favour. In terms of

income at the turn of the century, central Scotland, where most of the population lived, was ranked one of the four highest out of thirteen wage regions in Britain. In 1913-14, when net unemployment averaged 3.8% in Britain, the Scottish figure was 2.3%.<sup>10</sup>

The political consequences of this prosperity were clear. The Union was unquestioned. No representative group would dare risk this advantage. As Professor Smout commented:

It is little wonder that the connection with England was cherished by some and tolerated by all. There has never been a period in which there is so little doubt that it worked strongly to the material advantage of Scotland.

Rather than being exploited by England, Smout remarked that it was the "quite extraordinary success of the west of Scotland" that exempted it from the signs of depression that had begun to appear in "many other parts of Britain."<sup>12</sup>

The debates that took place over Scottish Home Rule in the pre-1914 period were requests for more elite involvement in policy-making, certainly not demands for separatism. The debate was contained quite easily within the confines of the British Liberal Party and probably would not have taken place at all had it not been for the virulent nationalism raging simultaneously in Ireland.

Support for the Scottish Home Rule Association, formed in 1886, was based in the petty bourgeoisie, a group unlikely to seek a break in the economic link with England.<sup>13</sup> The various Scottish Home Rule bills promoted in this period were only half-hearted gestures, their defeat meeting with no protests. At the mass level the faith in empire and the union was reflected by the return, in Scotland, of a Conservative majority at the 'Khaki' election in 1900, the only time this happened between 1885 and 1910.<sup>14</sup>

In comparative terms, the economic benefits associated with union help to explain why Scotland was absent from the list of European nations struggling for independence against oppressive regimes in the 19th century. This was despite the fact that it was "exceptionally well-equipped" for nationhood as a result of its strong national identity and historic nation status. In Nairn's terms, Scotland's development was a "sui generis" development to his general rule of dominant nations economically exploiting weaker ones.<sup>15</sup>

The new bourgeois classes inherited a socio-economic position in history vastly more favourable than that of any other fringe or backward nationality. They were neither being ground down into industrial modernity nor excluded from it. Hence, they did not perceive it as alien, as a foreign threat, or a withheld promise. Consequently, they were not forced to turn to nationalism to redress the situation.<sup>16</sup>

While bourgeois groups elsewhere in Europe invoked national sentiment for their own ends, the Scottish bourgeoisie, on the contrary, had an obvious interest in suppressing it.

Wales:

South Wales, like central Scotland situated on rich raw materials, became a centre of the British industrial revolution. In the early 19th century, Wales was a centre of Britain's iron industry. This was controlled by indigenous Welsh entrepreneurs.<sup>17</sup> Massive industrialization, however, did not take place until the latter part of the 19th century. As Wales, unlike Scotland, did not possess the capital or the labour necessary to exploit its natural advantages, this came mostly from England. The result of industrialization in Wales, therefore, was the anglicization of the industrial area. The economic advantages of the link with England served to further dilute any desire for self-government which may have existed among the inhabitants of south Wales, of English or Welsh cultural background.

Wales' industrial structure, with the noticeable absence of shipbuilding, was otherwise similar to that of Scotland and northeast England. In 1901, a full 37% of its workforce were employed in mining and steel-making alone. Between 1881 and 1911, the mining workforce increased by 150%, reaching 258,000. Employment in metal manufacturing increased from 46,000 to 59,000 in the same

period.<sup>18</sup> Much of the produce from these industries went to markets all over Britain. Much of the steel used for British railways was made in south Wales. The two Celtic nations of Scotland and Wales between them possessed 33.9% of Britain's coal-mining workforce and 23.7% of its steelmaking workforce.<sup>19</sup>

Welsh historian Kenneth Morgan, commenting on this period, wrote that Wales was swept along by "almost uncontrolled expansion" and was "central to the performance of the British economy".<sup>20</sup> The Welsh coal industry in particular, on the eve of the first world war, "presented an extraordinary pattern of prolonged success."<sup>21</sup>

While income in Wales remained substantially lower than England, the gap between the two was reduced. In absolute terms, Welsh per capita income rose two-fold between 1803 and 1921. Relatively Welsh income moved from 59% of England's figure to 66%.<sup>22</sup> In 1913-14, Welsh unemployment was lower than the British average at 2.3%.<sup>23</sup>

While Welsh industry was predominantly based on raw materials, these gains were not transitory, as for example, with the Yukon gold rush. The huge movement of people from rural to industrial Wales at the end of the 19th century provided the wealth and consumer base for later diversification.<sup>24</sup> Had industrialization not



materialized in Wales, these people would have been forced to emigrate. Whereas the population of Ireland was cut in half between 1845 and 1931, Wales' population increased by 125% between 1851 and 1921. Overseas emigration was negligible and there was even a net immigration in the 1901-11 decade.<sup>25</sup> Whereas 1,430,000 people emigrated from Ireland to the USA between 1880 and 1910, only 41,000 went from Wales to this destination.<sup>26</sup>

As a consequence of this rapid economic improvement, there was little desire for nationalism in the heavily populated south Wales area. What desire for self-government did exist was strongest in the rural areas and was based on cultural grievances such as church disestablishment rather than on economic grievances. The rift that occurred in Cymru Fydd in 1896 was largely a result of the south Wales industrial classes recognizing that their interests diverged significantly from the rest of Wales.<sup>27</sup> In Morgan's words:

The great economic complex of the south was an indissoluble link, a constant reminder of common interests with England.<sup>28</sup>

The regional division in Wales manifested itself again in attitudes to the Boer War, an acid test of support or opposition to empire. Many Welshmen, especially in the industrial complex of south Wales supported the war effort. Tom Ellis, a leader of Welsh opinion was an admirer of Cecil Rhodes. On a crucial vote to reduce the

Colonial Secretary's salary in 1900, in protest against the war, only three Welsh MP's voted for the motion. These included the leader of Welsh rural opinion, Lloyd George. Heroes of the war were made freemen of the southern commercial centre of Cardiff. English-language newspapers reverberated with accounts of Welsh contributions to the war effort. Many Welsh-language newspapers from the rural areas, on the other hand, were strongly hostile to the war.<sup>29</sup>

Even in the Welsh-speaking areas, whatever desire for self-government existed was easily sated by concessions on cultural issues such as disestablishment of the Anglican church in 1914. The three leaders of the Cymru Fydd movement, Tom Ellis, Lloyd George and D. A. Thomas, were all happy to remain within the British Liberal party and accept office under the crown.

Ireland

The politically centripetal effects of economic development in Scotland and Wales can best be illustrated by an examination of an area where this development did not take place, i.e., Ireland. Ireland's situation during this same period was drastically different from that of Scotland and Wales.

It is illuminating to compare Ireland's economic fortunes under union with England with those of Scotland.

In the period before Ireland was united with England, its economy was as strong as the Scottish, if not stronger. Total Irish exports in the period around 1700 had a per capita value of 6 shillings compared to an equivalent Scottish figure of 4 shillings. This caused Cullen and Smout to claim that all the indications showed that Ireland held more promise of a "bright economic future" than Scotland at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup> In the eighteenth century, no one migrated from one country to the other, a rough indication that their economic fortunes were equal.

However, Ireland had several underlying problems not present in Scotland. In the crucial eighteenth century, when mainland Britain began to industrialize on the basis of colonial trade, Ireland was denied direct access. An archaic land system where tenure was insecure prevented the savings necessary for the accumulation of capital. This build-up of capital from trade on the agricultural sector has often been seen as a necessary stage for indigenously-led industrialization. Penal legislation against Catholics exacerbated this problem by preventing them from making substantial profits. Transport costs to England were greater in Ireland than in Scotland.

What little capital existed in Ireland was not invested in manufacturing. The Irish did not share the entrepreneurial skills of the Scots. According to F. S. L.

Lyons, it was an unwillingness to take minimal risks that, in the last resort, "lay at the heart of the problem".<sup>31</sup> Frequent political unrest discouraged investment. Perhaps most damaging of all was the complete absence of raw materials such as coal or iron, which seemed essential for industrialization. What chance existed for a successful build-up of manufacturing industries behind protective tariffs was destroyed when the Union of 1800 opened Ireland to the formidable rivalry of already highly developed industries in Scotland and England. Ireland's fledgeling cotton industry was completely overwhelmed by much more cheaply manufactured British goods.<sup>32</sup> Ireland's trade with Britain in the nineteenth century was mostly restricted to the export of foodstuffs and the import of manufactured products. Ireland's economic relationship with Britain fitted the term 'internal colony' in a way that Scotland's relationship with England never did.

This pattern of development had disastrous consequences for the Irish people. This is best indicated by demographic changes and by migration trends. Whereas Ireland's population in the wake of famine and emigration dropped from eight million to four million in the second half of the nineteenth century, Scotland's population doubled from two to four million. From a point where Scotland had only one-quarter of Ireland's population, by the end of this short period the two countries were of equal size. Their contrasting economic fortunes were

reflected in large-scale migration from Ireland to Scotland. In 1851, 7.2% of the Scottish population were Irish-born. The proportion did not drop much below that figure for the remainder of the century.<sup>33</sup>

After a century of Union in 1900, Ireland's economy compared very unfavourably with Scotland's. In the textile industry, for example, Ireland had 74,000 workers to Scotland's 144,000, yet textiles were a much more important part of the Irish economy, accounting for 24% of gross output in 1907 compared to 14% in Scotland. Ireland with one-seventh of the population of England and Wales, had a net industrial output of one-thirtieth. Output per inhabitant in Ireland was £5 compared to £18 in Scotland. Scotland's foreign trade in 1907 was eighteen times higher in value than in Ireland. In 1900, bank deposits in Ireland averaged £9 compared to £24 in Scotland.<sup>34</sup>

The most telling figures of all refer to national per-capita income. Whereas Scottish per-capita income, as a proportion of England's, increased from 72% in 1851 to 100% in 1921, Ireland's decreased from 27% to 20%.<sup>35</sup> The average Scot was five times better off than the average Irishman (the average Welshman was three times better off). This drastic divergence in the fortunes of the two economies should be seen in the light of Hechter's statement that both nations were in a similar situation of dependency to England:

The significant differentiating factor [between Ireland on the one hand and Scotland and Wales on the other] is not the great poverty of Ireland relative to England because Wales [and] Scotland were likewise materially disadvantaged.

In this way, the absence of industrialization which produced massive depopulation from Ireland and made the effects of famine so disastrous were equated with the conditions which made Scotland and South Wales among the most prosperous regions of the British economy.

Not all Ireland stagnated in the nineteenth century. The major exception was the industrialized area of the north-east, also marked off from the rest of the country by ethnic and religious divisions. Belfast grew remarkably in the nineteenth century. Its wealth was based on a flourishing domestic linen industry. This helped provide the necessary capital to turn Belfast into an industrial city.

The farming communities in the north, unlike the south, were exceptionally prosperous. This was partly a result of the "Ulster custom", different tenant laws which gave much greater security. Ulster also had fewer 'absentee' landlords than the rest of Ireland. These factors contributed to savings which in turn provided additional capital for industry. The linen industry gave rise to a flourishing engineering industry which gained a world-wide reputation. The most important development of all was the

development of shipbuilding in Belfast, despite the absence of nearby deposits of coal and iron. F. S. L. Lyons put it down to the "triumph of human ingenuity".<sup>37</sup> These yards, which were at the heart of the British industry, launched the Titanic in 1912, and by 1914 employed over 22,000 men.

This differential economic development in Ireland is the key to understanding political developments there in the early twentieth century. Unlike the industrial classes in Scotland, Wales and Ulster, the largely subsistent peasant classes of the south of Ireland had little interest in maintaining the economic link with England. Some, in fact, felt that link to be responsible for the country's economic woes. Furthermore, the development of refrigeration ships at the turn of the century and increased competition from Argentina, New Zealand and Denmark for the English livestock market reduced the attraction of the union for the commercial class.<sup>38</sup> The only pro-Union supporters in the South of Ireland were those few owning large-scale industrial enterprises who continued to derive some economic benefits from the political link. These included Guinness's brewery, Jameson's whiskey distillery and Jacobs, the biscuit manufacturers.<sup>39</sup>

While divided from the southern Catholics on ethnic and religious grounds, the antipathy of the northern unionists for Home Rule was reinforced by a glaring economic

interest. Independence was considered by this group to be a "recipe for economic death".<sup>40</sup> They were engaged in a lucrative trade with Glasgow and Liverpool and feared that the protectionism inevitably following independence would kill their trade. F. S. L. Lyons explained their fears:

...directly dependent as they were upon external markets and sources of raw material, membership in the great British free-trade area was considered vital. For them, the nationalist emphasis on tariff autonomy under Home Rule spelt ruin, since it would condemn them, so they believed, to a protectionist regime that would expose them to retaliatory discrimination in the world outside offering them as recompense only the impoverished Irish hinterland.<sup>41</sup>

It seems clear that the only national group with no obvious economic interest in maintaining the political link with England were the southern Irish. This helps to explain why they alone demanded independence during this period. Scotland and Wales remained in the union, satisfied with the many economic advantages which accrued from it.

## II

### COLLAPSE OF THE PERIPHERAL ECONOMY 1920-45

The 'boom' period before 1920 was followed by a collapse of the heavy industries on which the economies of Wales, Scotland and northeast England were largely based. Even this collapse, however, did not result in an increase



in demands for separatism. On the contrary, and paradoxically, the relative decline of the peripheral economies bound the union even tighter together than in the earlier period.

Underlying problems included depletion of natural resources. The heavy industries of these areas tended to be over-reliant on fickle defence contracts and on exports. They were thus vulnerable to a growth in foreign competition. A failure to innovate in technology was accompanied by an unwillingness on the part of indigenous entrepreneurs to invest in these areas.

Scotland's Lanarkshire coalfield had begun to deplete by the 1870s.<sup>42</sup> Scottish iron-ore was showing signs of exhaustion as early as the 1880s and new supplies had to be imported from Spain.<sup>43</sup> Production of ore in Scotland dropped from an average annual output of 2.2 million tons in the 1870s to just 591,000 tons in 1913.<sup>44</sup> It was this decline that caused the huge steel firm of Stewart and Lloyds in 1934 to lift its entire works in Scotland and move it south to Northamptonshire in England.<sup>45</sup> In both the northeast of England and in parts of the south Wales coalfield, resources also dwindled. The situation was exacerbated in the former area as cessation of pumping in depleted pits ruined good ones by flooding.<sup>46</sup>

The heavy industries were also dependent on exports. British iron and steel as a whole relied on overseas markets for selling about 40% of its production.<sup>47</sup> In 1929, 44% of Welsh coal was also exported.<sup>48</sup> Regarded as a sign of strength when Britain was the world's leading industrial power, this dependence came to be viewed as a weakness with the growth of foreign competition. As early as the 1890s, both Germany and the U.S.A. had passed Britain in the production of steel, "the crucial commodity of industrialization".<sup>49</sup>

There were various reasons for the growth of foreign competition. Shortage of supply during the first world war forced America and Japan, erstwhile customers of Britain, to develop their own shipbuilding industry. Poland, given access to the Silesian coalfield by the treaty of Versailles, became a serious competitor of south Wales, taking over the lucrative Italian market.<sup>50</sup> Bitter industrial relations on the coalfield, culminating in a nine-month stoppage in 1926, led to a further loss of foreign customers.<sup>51</sup> The growth of foreign competition increased remarkably during the inter-war period. The Balfour Committee on Industry and Trade reported on this problem:

Taking the world as a whole, the widespread development of home manufacturers to meet needs formerly supplied by imported goods...is perhaps the most important permanent factor tending to limit the volume or to modify the character of the British export trade.<sup>52</sup>

The Barlow Report discussed a "world trend towards national self-sufficiency" as one of the most important developments in the world economy since World War One.<sup>53</sup>

The experience of the shipbuilding industry illustrates the nature of the problem. A decline in British shipping's share of world tonnage from 41% in 1914 to 27% in 1934 was accompanied by an increase in the USA's share from 4% to 15% and Japan's from 3% to 6%.<sup>54</sup> In an era of economic nationalism, this produced a corresponding decline in the shipbuilding industry. The Nazi regime in Germany, for example, only allowed credits held there by overseas shipping interests to be realized by buying a German ship. British financial concerns were forced to purchase German ships "with a view to speculative resale".<sup>55</sup> This created additional problems in an already overstocked market. In July of 1936, 57 vessels, ranging from 340 to 20,000 tons were under construction in German yards for British owners.<sup>56</sup> United Kingdom shipbuilders captured only 15% of foreign orders between the wars compared with 24% in the equivalent period before World War One.<sup>57</sup> Output on the Clyde dropped from 646,000 tons in 1919 to a mere 30,000 tons in 1934 at the height of the depression.<sup>58</sup>

The heavy industries' reliance on exports was accompanied by a similar reliance on defence contracts. The Welsh coal industry, in particular, was damaged by a

navy switch from coal to oil. In shipbuilding, the situation was worse. R. H. Campbell examined one large Clyde shipyard, Browns, and found that the Admiralty was the leading customer for the twenty-five years before 1914. Admiralty orders accounted for 47% of the total for the whole decade of the 1890s.<sup>59</sup> The danger of reliance on the fickleness of public policy was clearly demonstrated in the 1920s. The Admiralty did not lay a single order at Browns between 1919 and 1929.<sup>60</sup> In 1934, an inter-departmental committee of the Scottish Office, investigating the problems of shipbuilding concluded that "the root cause of the difficulty was naval disarmament".<sup>61</sup>

Technological changes exacerbated the problems of heavy industry. New developments made ships larger and faster. Fewer ships were capable of carrying more goods during a period of sinking trade. Mechanization in coal-mining reduced its labour intensiveness. While employment in Great Britain fell by 34.2% between 1923 and 1937; output only fell by 12.9%. Commenting on these figures, the Barlow Report stated that:

It is clear that changes in the manner of producing coal were even more important factors than trade depression (in producing unemployment).<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps more serious in the long term, however, was the failure to develop innovative technology in other fields. Hobsbawm attributed the British failure in this respect to

the fact that she had been the first to industrialize. British industrialists were unwilling to invest in expensive new equipment while the old still yielded good profits: foreign competitors had no choice.<sup>63</sup>

Scotland's experience was indicative of these problems. Her technological contribution to the industrial revolution in the nineteenth-century had been outstanding. She had contributed Telford and MacAdam, road builders; Bell, the first European steamship builder; Maxwell and Kelvin, pioneer scientists of electricity; Watt, inventor of the steam engine; James 'Paraffin' Young and Samuel Neilson, whose 'hot blast' had led to the foundation of the iron industry. This should be compared with the situation in 1926 when G. M. Thomson wrote of Scotland:

It is a land of second hand thoughts and second-rate minds, inept to improvise or experiment, an addict to the queue habit in the world of ideas.<sup>64</sup>

This was not only a Scottish problem but a British one. In 1913, Britain had only 9,000 University students while Germany had 60,000. Germany produced 3,000 graduate engineers annually compared to 350 in Britain in all branches of science, technology and mathematics.<sup>65</sup>

Accompanying the failure to invest in new technology was a more general unwillingness to invest in manufacturing industry as a whole. The decline of the heavy industries would not have been as disastrous if diversification had

taken place into other sectors. That it did not, seems to have been the fault of indigenous entrepreneurs, in Scotland at least, rather than an 'exploiting' state. Despite Hechter's assertion that "bankers, managers and entrepreneurs tend to be recruited from the core", this was not the case in Scotland.<sup>66</sup> Scotland had a rich entrepreneurial tradition and Scotsmen had played an important part in financing the industrial revolution there. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, Scottish capital was attracted to more lucrative investments abroad or to finance capital in London. Seventy-five percent of the foreign investment in ranching in the U.S.A. in the 1870s and the 1880s was Scottish.<sup>67</sup> In October 1884, one Scottish writer commented on the exodus of Scottish capital:

Whether this vast exportation of our surplus wealth be wise or unwise, Scotland is to a large extent responsible for it. In proportion to her size and the number of her population, she furnishes far more of it than either of her sister kingdoms. England gives sparingly and Ireland hardly any, but Scotland revels in foreign investment.

By 1914, the United Kingdom had £4,000 million invested abroad, or about £90 per capita. Scots investors accounted for £500 million or an average of £110 per capita. Harvie wrote:

You could not...talk to any reasonably well-off man in the streets of Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Dundee without railroads and prairies coming up. At precisely the time when the myth of the bawbee-minding Scot was becoming a stock turn on the boards of music halls north and south of the border, the Scots

investor was throwing his money about with a flamboyance the Scots aristocracy had never managed.

This was not a peculiar Scottish problem. Carney explained that in the northeast of England, capital necessary for diversification there was diverted instead to the growing consumption-goods industries and into finance.<sup>70</sup> This mainly benefitted London and the south-east. The growing popularity of the consumption-goods sector for investment purposes was directly correlated with the difficulties of heavy industry. As early as the 1870s, Britain's financial investments abroad began to exceed her net capital formation at home. In the 'great boom' of 1911-13, for example, twice as much was invested abroad as at home. Hobsbawm maintained that the amount of domestic capital formation in the twenty-five years before 1914, so far from being adequate for the modernization of Britain's productive apparatus, was not even enough to prevent it from running down.

In south Wales, where the business class was mainly English in origin, appeals for investment also fell on deaf ears. Hilary Marquand, a contemporary, blamed this on a lack of public spirit "characteristic of an immigrant business class".<sup>72</sup> Such an argument was in line with the theory of internal-colonialism. However, as evidence from Scotland and the northeast of England indicates, lack of investment occurred no matter what the origins of the

business class. It was maximization of profit rather than any kind of ethnic bias which motivated capitalist investors, be they from England, Scotland or Wales. Attempts to attribute this to some kind of ethnic colonialism are misleading. The development of a core-periphery can be explained without reference to ethnic factors.

The failure of the entrepreneurial class throughout England and Wales is illustrated by the 1934 appeal of the Commissioner for the Special Areas for new investment. A total of 5,829 letters were sent to leading entrepreneurs inviting investment in heavy industry; 4,066 did not bother to reply. Of the 1,763 who replied, only twelve indicated an interest in considering investment. Understandably, the Commissioner concluded that there was little prospect of these areas being assisted by spontaneous entrepreneurial action.<sup>73</sup>

The inter-war recession in Britain fell mainly on the heavy industries. Consumer industries, reliant on the more secure market of domestic demand, did considerably better. As Table 4.1 indicates, there was a disproportionate concentration of the heavy industries in Scotland, Wales and northeast England. This meant that these areas suffered more.



In Scotland, northeast England and south Wales, 22.2%, 49.1% and 59.0% of the population respectively were employed in the three main declining industries. This compares with the British total of 15.5% and the London and Home Counties total of 1.0%. The latter area, in particular, was completely untouched by the decline of the heavy industries. An examination of the main growth industries reveals an opposite trend. These were much stronger in the southeast of the country than elsewhere. This is shown in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.1: NUMBERS EMPLOYED IN THREE IMPORTANT DECLINING INDUSTRIES AS % OF TOTAL NUMBERS INSURED IN EACH AREA, JULY 1923

	GREAT BRITAIN	LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES	SCOTLAND	NORTH-EAST (NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM)	S. WALES (GLAMORGAN AND MONMOUTHSHIRE)
COAL	11.2	0.1	10.7	37.6	51.2
SHIPBUILDING	2.2	0.9	8.9	8.9	2.2
STEEL	2.1	0.05	2.6	2.6	5.6

SOURCE: Appendix 11, CMD 6151, Royal Commission on the Location of the Industrial Population (1940)

Insured for purposes of employment. These numbers are not perfect as many did not register for unemployment. However, as there is no noticeable regional bias to this, these figures have been deemed acceptable.

TABLE 4.2: ANALYSIS OF 23 INDUSTRIES WHERE THE RATE OF EXPANSION BETWEEN 1923 AND 1937 WAS GREATER THAN THE AVERAGE FOR ALL INDUSTRIES

	LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES	CENTRAL SCOTLAND	SOUTH WALES	NORTH-EAST ENGLAND
TOTAL INSURED POPULATION IN 1923	1,342,270	255,220	81,460	119,100
% IN 23 INDUSTRIES AS % OF TOTAL INSURED POPULATION IN 1923	55.5%	12.2%	18.1%	22.2%
TOTAL INSURED POPULATION IN 23 AS % OF TOTAL INSURED IN SAME INDUSTRIES IN GREAT BRITAIN	12.9%	5.7%	2.3%	3.7%

SOURCE: CMD 6151, Royal Commission on the Location of the Industrial Population 1940, Table 19.

Almost a third of the employees in the 23 fastest growing industries were located in the London and Home Counties area alone. This compared to 5.7% in central Scotland, 2.3% in south Wales and 3.7% in northeast England. More

than 1.3 million were employed in these growth industries in the London area, compared to just under half a million in the other three areas combined. These growth industries included cars, appliances and aircraft. Of a total of twenty-five aircraft manufacturing firms in Great Britain, twelve were in or near London, another five in the rest of the southeast area.<sup>74</sup>

London prospered for other reasons too. As one of the greatest seaports in Britain, in close proximity to Europe, London had always been a centre of commerce. As the initiative of the commercial classes in Britain had traditionally been oriented outwards, its location contributed to its development as a financial centre. Above all, it enjoyed considerable prestige and affluence as the administrative capital of an empire, which also helps explain the dominant position which Lisbon, Athens, Istanbul and Paris exercised in their respective economies. With a population in the Greater London area approaching eight million, it provided the obvious location for the growing consumption-goods industries. The Royal Commission on the Location of Industry pointed out in 1940 that proximity to market had been one of the most decisive factors weighing in London's favour.<sup>75</sup> Costs of transport and distribution were minimized, while punctual and frequent deliveries could be relied upon.

Psychological factors also played an important part in the growth of London. In a market economy in which confidence plays such an important part, growing and prosperous London seemed like a better place to invest than stagnating, depressed Scotland. As the Third Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas pointed out in 1936:

There is a considerable volume of opinion which associates industrial prosperity with this visible growth...Nothing succeeds like success. Manufacturers instinctively follow in the footsteps of those whose success is obviously demonstrated.

London's growth did not occur in a vacuum, however. Often what was a gain to the southeast was a loss to the peripheral areas. Gunnar Myrdal argued that growth areas actually assisted in the 'underdevelopment' of areas next to them. The area of growth draws on the resources of the declining area thus further increasing the gap between the two.<sup>77</sup> As the areas of heavy industry declined, high unemployment produced low income levels, removing the base for diversification into consumer-type industries. An air of despondency prevented new investment. Special Areas Commissioner Malcolm Stewart felt that this despondency was central to the problem of the 'depressed' areas.<sup>78</sup> Despondency in turn causes selective migration which worsens the situation. In London, on the other hand, higher employment and wage levels provided the necessary base to sustain consumer industries. Higher local government rate yields led to more attractive infrastructure.

The growth of the London area vis-a-vis the periphery during this period is reflected clearly in population statistics. Between 1921 and 1937, the population of London and the Home Counties increased by 18%. In central Scotland, the increase was 4% and in northeast England, 1%, while south Wales actually experienced a decrease of 9%. While London and the Home counties contained only slightly more than 25% of the total population, they included almost 55% of the population added between 1921 and 1937. London and the Midlands together accounted for 35% of the population and 70% of the increase.<sup>79</sup>

The existence of a core-periphery is clearly shown by unemployment statistics.

TABLE 4.3: UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE 'CORE-PERIPHERY'  
1929 AND 1934

	1929	1934
<b>CORE</b>		
LONDON	5.6%	9.2%
SOUTH-EAST	5.6%	8.7%
MIDLANDS	9.3%	12.9%
<b>PERIPHERY</b>		
NORTH-EAST ENGLAND	13.7%	22.1%
SCOTLAND	12.1%	23.1%
WALES	19.3%	32.3%
UNITED KINGDOM	10.4%	16.7%

Source: Adapted from figures in Gavin McCrone, Regional Policy in Britain, p. 100. (North-east England here includes Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland and Durham).

Unemployment in all three centres of heavy industry was consistently above the United Kingdom average both before and during the depression. In the 'core' areas, on the other hand, unemployment was consistently below that average. These figures, revealing the presence of high unemployment in northeast England, should be seen in the light of Hechter's statement that "throughout this period", Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland "had markedly the highest levels of unemployment of all British regions".<sup>80</sup> The figures reveal how the attempt to claim that uneven development occurs along national boundaries is misleading. It is true that, in 1934, both Scotland and Wales, with 23.1% and 32.3% unemployed respectively, were significantly above the United Kingdom average of 16.7% but so also was northeast England with 22.1% unemployed. These figures reveal a core-periphery but it is a core based on the southeast and Midlands, not on England as a whole. The common factor in the peripheral regions is not Celtic ethnicity but a stagnant industrial structure. This structure had declined due to various economic factors including the failure of indigenous entrepreneurs to invest when the economy was still prosperous. Blaming the state for these problems exaggerates its role in the market economy during this period. These facts pose serious problems for Hechter's analysis.

By the late 1930s, the depression was at an end and unemployment levels fell dramatically. This was

overwhelmingly due to rearmament. This rise in demand for the products of heavy industry was by its nature only temporary. It may also have caused some harm in the long term by postponing the need for diversification. The case of the shipbuilding industry illustrates the nature of the problem. Between 1931 and 1933, average output on the Clyde for the navy had been 1,500 displacement tons. Between 1934 and 1938, average annual production increased to 28,000 tons.<sup>81</sup> Navy work made up half of the total construction at John Browns of Clydebank during the 1930s. Had it not been for Admiralty orders, Fairfield's yard would have made a loss of 100,000 in the eight years 1930-38. Instead, it made a profit of 378,000.<sup>82</sup> Demand was so high by 1937 that delivery dates had to be relaxed.<sup>83</sup> This flurry of activity masked worrying trends elsewhere. There was, for example, no increase at all in foreign orders during the 1930s. By 1938, the shipbuilding industry in Scotland was fully aware of impending collapse once naval orders declined, only the onset of war prevented it from coming when expected. The situation was similar in steel and coal. While 16% of Scotland's insured population was employed in the heavy industries in 1939, this had increased to 25% by 1945.<sup>84</sup>

The difficulties of Scotland, Wales and northeast England in this period lay in the nature of their industrial structures and on the lack of diversification, rather than on state action.

IIITHE ROLE OF THE STATE IN MITIGATING REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Why did this growth of a core-periphery relationship not give rise to a nationalism in Scotland and Wales which was founded on a sense of economic grievance? The nationalist parties were almost non-existent in the 1930s, contesting few seats and performing abysmally in those they did contest. Instead, support for British parties remained strong throughout this period. Part of the answer lies in the fact that substantial economic interests in both Scotland and Wales continued to derive considerable benefit from the union and were just as dependent on English markets as they had been in the boom period. Both business groups and unions were unwilling to use a stagnant economy as a launching pad for independence. Another part of the answer lies in the mitigating role which the British state played in reducing the disparities and their effects. State policy in this period, involving a regional redistribution of industry, local government transfers and maintenance of parity of social services throughout Great Britain, helped to cement the union in a most tangible fashion. This role for the central state is quite different from that posited in the theory of internal colonialism.

Rather than acting as the instrument of an English core in economically exploiting the Celtic periphery, the state

in the pre-1930s interfered little in economic matters, leaving these to market forces. Its growing intervention in the economy, beginning in the 1930s, cannot be equated with a desire to exploit the periphery.

Direct state involvement in the regional economy began in 1934. Reacting to the severity of the depression, the government launched an inquiry into conditions in four particularly deprived areas (two areas of northern England, south Wales and central Scotland).<sup>85</sup> This led directly to the Special Areas Act of 1934, the appointment of Commissioners and a further Special Areas Act in 1937.<sup>86</sup> A Royal Commission on the Location of the Industrial Population met in 1939-40 and was followed by the Distribution of Industry Act in 1945.<sup>87</sup> Further acts affecting the distribution of industry were passed by governments of both major parties in 1947, 1950, 1958, 1960 and 1963. Building on each other, this legislation introduced a range of measures designed to redistribute industry from the congested areas of the southeast and Midlands to the peripheral areas.

A wide array of incentives to invest in the periphery was offered, including loans, grants, building grants, provision of factories, tax allowances and infrastructure improvements. These incentives were reinforced by a stiff policy of constraint on industrial expansion in the core area. The Labour government of the immediate post-war



period used emergency building controls still in effect to redirect industry to the periphery. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 introduced Industrial Development Certificates (IDCs) for the first time. Government permission was now needed for expansion in the southeast and Midlands. Application for planning of industrial buildings in excess of 5,000 square feet had now to be accompanied by a Board of Trade certificate stating that the development in question "can be carried out with the proper distribution of industry in mind".<sup>88</sup> Such steps were considered quite drastic at the time. They constituted a radical departure from the days of laissez-faire and aroused considerable opposition from the southeast and Conservative backbenches.<sup>89</sup>

The rationale behind regional policy involved the interests of the whole economy, not just the periphery. Both Commissioner Malcolm Stewart in 1936 and the Royal Commission on the Location of the Industrial Population in 1940 had stressed the disadvantages for the national economy of industrial congestion in the southeast.<sup>90</sup> In the interests of national efficiency, it was considered important that this congestion be dispersed and labour surpluses in the periphery brought into action. The influential Tothill Report on the Scottish economy repeated the national advantages of regional policy:

The...pressures of international competition requires the country to make the optimum use of all her resources, not merely the intensive

use of those in the most flourishing areas."<sup>91</sup>

These arguments became stronger in the 1960s. It seemed that Keynesian demand policies, pursued since 1945, had been successful in creating full employment. The result, however, had been alternating inflation and credit squeezes, the so-called 'stop-go' policies pursued by Conservative governments during the 1950s. This caused a desire for promoting growth without producing inflation. Bipartisan views in the late 1950s moved towards the efficiency of national and regional planning. If the unemployment disparities between the core and the periphery, and the differences in the industrial structure, could be removed, it was felt that the national economy would be more amenable to control from the centre. Deflationary policies pursued to reduce demand in the south-east would not produce an increase in unemployment in the periphery while premature reflationary measures to ease unemployment in the periphery would not cause inflation in the more prosperous areas.<sup>92</sup>

The result of this thinking was the Labour Government's 'National Plan' of 1965. This had various regional equivalents including a Scottish plan in 1966 and a Welsh plan in 1967.<sup>93</sup> It was the intention of both the latter plans to reduce reliance on heavy industries in Scotland and Wales as these did not react to the same stimuli as consumer goods industries elsewhere.<sup>94</sup> They included a

number of expensive measures to improve the economies of Scotland and Wales. One Scottish nationalist, H. J. Paton, was even led to write that the Scottish Plan "may be thought to dispose at long last of the charge that this is what can never be done under the present system".<sup>95</sup>

James Griffiths, Secretary of State for Wales, claimed that the National Plan was "a bold and imaginative effort to set Britain on the road to solvency" and one which "recognized the paramount importance of the underdeveloped areas of the country."<sup>96</sup>

In April 1967 a further innovative measure, the Regional Employment Premium, was introduced to help the periphery. Its effect was to subsidize wages in manufacturing industries in the development areas by 8%, producing another powerful incentive to locate there.<sup>97</sup>

Regional policies to help the periphery were carried through despite considerable opposition. Alternative policies were proposed which would have had catastrophic consequences for the economies of Scotland and Wales. A report presented by Political and Economic Planning (a conservative lobby group) on Merthyr Tydfil, for example, was typical of this alternative view. It concluded that the resources needed to rehabilitate that society were so large that the "balance of economic advantage" lay in abandoning the community's present site. This report concluded that:

The people of the [uneconomic] places must, in the long run, be prepared and encouraged to

work elsewhere, not to demand that work should be brought to the places where they now are."<sup>98</sup>

This policy was also frequently put forward by the Times' editorials. The Times argued that regional policy was damaging and that the country's interests would be better served if the London and Midlands areas were allowed to grow unabated. Attacking Welsh nationalists' claims of exploitation, the Times in 1963 claimed that the government ...may have erred rather on the side of favours to Wales than of neglect, a privilege Wales has shared with other formerly distressed industrial areas.<sup>99</sup>

By inhibiting the growth of the dynamic Midlands and southeast, the paper claimed, the government had decreased national efficiency in the face of international competition.<sup>100</sup> The Royal Commission on the Constitution meeting between 1969 and 1973 also noted that the use of IDCs had harmed the economy of the core area.<sup>101</sup>

The sagacity of a policy which seemed to detract from export efficiency was questioned by others and blamed for Britain's mounting balance of payment difficulties in the late 1960s. Professor Birch pointed out that the use of government controls to prevent firms from locating in areas they chose on economic grounds was bound to reduce the rate of economic growth. The division of Chrysler's plants between its headquarters in the Midlands and Linwood in Scotland, a result of regional policy, is reported to have

increased the costs of the vehicles produced as components had to be transported over 200 miles. Indeed there were grounds for believing that the subsequent collapse of the car industry in the Midlands, which was then forced to rely on government subsidies, was closely related to these problems.

Birch claimed that, as a result of government regional policy, London's population had declined from eight million to seven million between 1946 and 1976. He commented:

This makes Britain the only industrial country in the world which is deliberately reducing the size of what could be its leading centre of economic growth. Carried to this extreme, British regional policies are slowly but surely throttling the geese that lay the golden eggs.<sup>102</sup>

Despite these powerful economic arguments against directing industry to Scotland and Wales, the government persisted, albeit with a fluctuating level of intensity. While many groups, including nationalists, argued that regional policies had little effect, there can be little doubt that they did serve to mitigate the effects of economic forces.<sup>103</sup> While unemployment disparities between core and periphery remained constant (at a low level), with the much greater proportion of workers in the periphery in declining industries, they should have increased significantly.

There are several visible examples of the government directing important private ventures to Scotland and Wales. Under government direction, about half of all the post-war American investment in Britain went to Scotland. The huge steel factory built at Ravenscraig in Scotland in 1963 was a result of government intervention, as was the decision of the Wiggins Teape group to build a pulp mill at Fort William in Scotland. In 1963, the important car industry came to Scotland when the British Motor Company (BMC) and Rootes opened plants at Bathgate and Linwood, respectively, both promising a total of 11,000 jobs. These decisions were widely felt to have been influenced by government.<sup>104</sup>

Trading estates built by the government in Wales and Scotland, especially those at Treforest and Hillington, constructed in the late 1930s, housed numerous private concerns. The car industry was also introduced into Wales for the first time in the early 1960s. A BMC plant was built at Llanelli by the Board of Trade under the 1960 Local Employment Act.<sup>105</sup>

In an even more direct sense, the government in the 1960s decentralized some of its departments, establishing major offices in Wales and Scotland. A Land Registry Office was established at Swansea, an Inland Revenue department in Cardiff, a Passport office at Newport and a new Royal Mint at Llantrisant.<sup>106</sup>

R.H.S. Crossman commented in his diary on April 18, 1967:

Recently all the dispersal decisions have favoured Wales. Barbara Castle [Transport Minister] has put a great new section of her ministry in Swansea and the Defence department is moving a lot to south Wales.<sup>107</sup>

In Scotland, a new Post Office Savings Bank headquarters was established in Glasgow.<sup>108</sup>

The effects of regional policy were most noticeable during its two periods of greatest intensity, 1945-48, and in the 1960s. In the former period, new industrial building in London was limited to 5.3% of the United Kingdom total compared to its 22% share of the working population.<sup>109</sup> Table 4.4 shows that between 1960 and 1967, the Development Areas (northern England, central Scotland and south Wales) consistently received a much greater share of newly created employment than their share of the population. This reached a peak in 1965-6 when the Development Areas received 52% of newly created jobs even though they included only about 16% of the total population.

TABLE 4.4: ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS 1960-67

YEAR	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67
POPULATION OF DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS/AREAS AS A % OF U.K. TOTAL	12.5	7.2	12.5	14.8	15.0	16.5	21.0
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT AS % OF G.B.	30.0	24.5	20.7	43.4	41.1	52.5	51.0

SOURCE: Kevin McKeone, Regional Policy in Britain, p. 147.

Much of this additional employment was due solely to the effects of regional policy. Arguments that these represented a movement of market forces to exploit the labour surpluses in the periphery in a period of full employment elsewhere, carried less weight in the 1960s than in the late 1940s. A labour surplus existed in the core in the 1960s.

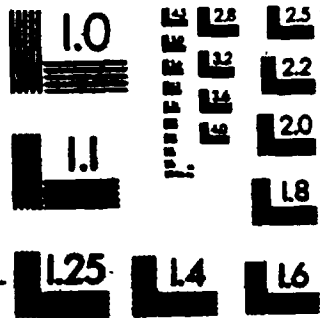
Moore and Rhodes estimated that between 1963 and 1970 alone, regional policy measures were responsible for the creation of 200-250,000 manufacturing jobs in the Development Areas.<sup>111</sup> 70-80,000 of these manufacturing jobs were created in Scotland.<sup>112</sup> Professor K. J. W. Alexander estimated that between 1956 and 1967, regional policy accounted for a total of 166,000 jobs in Scotland.<sup>113</sup>

The consensus of informed opinion in Scotland and Wales was that regional policy had been very beneficial. The Toothill report on the Scottish economy stated as early as 1961 that the policy had brought "considerable benefits" and was "largely" responsible for the introduction of modern manufacturing facilities in which Scotland had been severely under-represented in the past.<sup>114</sup> Scottish economist, Professor Gavin McCrone, also felt that regional policy had significantly improved the economies of Scotland and Wales. Taking into account their high proportion of declining industries, he argued that the British regional



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economic imbalance would be "substantially worse" in the 1960s than it actually was.<sup>115</sup> Government policy, for McCrone, accounted for a "significant proportion" of new developments in Scotland.<sup>116</sup>

Department of Industry figures showed that 51% of all firms locating in the Development Areas claimed that regional policy had influenced their decision.<sup>117</sup> In Wales, Professor Brinley Thomas noted that government-sponsored investment had played an important part in the post-1945 resurgence of the Welsh economy.<sup>118</sup> Even Plaid Cymru acknowledged the success of regional policy in Wales. Discussing regional policies in 1968, Plaid Cymru spokesman Emrys Roberts drew attention to the fact that manufacturing in Wales now employed as many as steel and coal together and wrote:

Policies of this nature have been adopted since the war and it is unlikely that we should have seen much increase in the manufacturing industries in Wales without them.<sup>119</sup>

A Welsh historian, giving a lecture in Merthyr Tydfil in 1966, commented upon the remarkable decline of unemployment in the town from 9,000 in 1938 to 900 in 1963. He felt that this had come about solely as a result of the government's regional policies. If Merthyr had had to rely on private enterprise, he claimed, no new industries would have emerged.<sup>120</sup> Christopher Harvie, discussing a similar transformation in his native Motherwell in

industrial Scotland, also gave credit to state intervention. What was happening in Motherwell, Harvie claimed, was true of industrial Scotland as a whole.<sup>121</sup>

Northern Ireland, without the effects of regional policy, experienced consistently worse unemployment than Scotland or Wales throughout this period. Between 1967 and 1971, Northern Ireland's unemployment rate was almost twice that of Scotland and Wales.<sup>122</sup> Economists surveying the Northern Ireland economy in 1955 noted that its performance compared unsatisfactorily with that of Scotland, primarily in the area of job openings. Isles and Cuthbert noted that the success of the provincial government in getting rid of unemployment had not been impressive "in comparison with the central government's corresponding achievements in the Developing Areas".<sup>123</sup> During the Second Reading of the Devolution Bill in December 1976, Douglas Jay, a former President of the Board of Trade, explained that Northern Ireland's higher unemployment was a direct result of its having a separate administration:

When major English and American firms asked for advice from the Board of Trade on location, they were more often steered to Scotland and Wales than to Northern Ireland. Perhaps it was wrong but that is how administration works."<sup>124</sup>

Public expenditure per capita in Northern Ireland remained below the level of Scotland and Wales despite the fact that Northern Ireland was worse off on every socio-economic indices available. This situation was only

corrected after 1970 when the British government was forced to take a renewed interest in Northern Ireland's affairs.<sup>125</sup>

Regional policy was only one method which the central state used to mitigate the effects of regional economic disparities in Britain. The general growth of public expenditure in the post-war period combined with a policy of promoting equal services throughout Great Britain brought additional benefits to the peripheral economy.

Local government transfer payments also lessened the effects of disparities. Serious inequalities in local authority revenue were remedied through the payment of an Exchequer Equalization Grant whenever local government revenue from rates fell below the national average. All thirteen Welsh counties and three of the four Welsh County Boroughs received this Grant in 1952-53.<sup>126</sup> The Grant accounted for between 27% and 66% of the Welsh counties' local expenditure.<sup>127</sup> In 1951-52, the total Equalization Grant paid to the Welsh counties was over £8 million.<sup>128</sup> This amounted to a subsidy from more prosperous areas of the country to less prosperous ones.

This transfer of public revenues took place throughout the whole range of social services. In a unitary state such as Great Britain, parity of social services was maintained independently of the tax revenue of a certain

area. Because Scotland and Wales were in general more impoverished than England, this necessarily involved a transfer of government revenues to the Celtic nations.

The report of the Royal Commission on the Constitution plausibly argued that a geographical breakdown of revenue and expenditure would show large surpluses of revenue over expenditure in the relatively prosperous 'core' regions of the southeast and Midlands, alongside deficits in Scotland, Wales and all of the other English regions.<sup>129</sup> Some of these deficits would be substantial as the areas with the lowest revenue often required the highest public expenditures. Under major devolution, the report concluded, all of these subsidized regions would be in need of central government funds if they were to maintain their present level of services.<sup>130</sup>

The following table shows that Scotland and Wales received significantly higher public expenditure per capita than did England. In the 1963-70 period, public expenditure in Wales and Scotland ranged between 113% and 131% of that in England.

TABLE 4.5: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER HEAD BY COUNTY  
EXPRESSED AS A % OF EXPENDITURE IN  
ENGLAND, 1963-70

YEAR	ENGLAND	WALES	SCOTLAND
1963-4	100	116	118
1964-65	100	117	116
1965-6	100	114	114
1966-7	100	116	115
1967-8	100	113	121
1968-9	100	117	128
1969-70	100	116	131

SOURCE: The Royal Commission on the Constitution, CMND 5460, Research Paper 10, Table 22.

The hypothesis that relatively prosperous areas with high tax receipts subsidize relatively deprived areas with lower tax receipts is supported by the evidence in the following table. In only two regions, the southeast and west Midlands, is GDP higher than the United Kingdom average, 113% and 109% respectively. These are also the only two regions which suffer a net loss in public expenditure over tax receipts. All other areas, including Scotland and Wales, received more by way of public expenditure than they produced by way of revenue. It was this state of affairs which reinforced the argument of the unionist parties that parity of services after independence could only be maintained with major tax increases.

TABLE 4.6: GDP + TAX RECEIPTS MINUS BENEFICIAL PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE BY REGION IN 1964

REGION	GDP PER HEAD (% OF UK)	TAX RECEIPTS: BENEFICIAL EXPENDITURE: E PER HEAD
NORTH	85	+31
NORTH-WEST	98	+ 5
YORKS AND HUMBERSIDE	99	+13
W. MIDLANDS	109	-22
E. MIDLANDS	98	+14
E. ANGLIA	87	+37
S. WEST	88	+25
S. EAST	113	-39
WALES	88	+45
SCOTLAND	86	+32
UNITED KINGDOM	100	0

SOURCE: The Royal Commission on the Constitution, CMND 5460, Research Paper 10, Table 35.

It is not surprising in this context that research for the Royal Commission on the Constitution found the Scottish and Welsh to be better satisfied with many of their public services than any of the English regions.<sup>131</sup>

Hechter's incorrect interpretation of the state's role in the economy of the periphery flows in part from his view that the Scottish and Welsh had little or no political influence in a legislature dominated by the English ethnic group. It is certainly the case that the Scottish and Welsh MPs constituted only a small minority of the total. The evidence suggests, however, that, especially with regard to public expenditure, Scottish and Welsh members were more successful in directing resources to their areas than members from many of the English regions. In this case, the ability of a 'national' group to act in

solidarity gave an advantage to Scotland and Wales which the northeast of England did not possess.

There are many examples of members for the Celtic periphery occupying the highest offices in the British state. This poses some problems for the view that the state was an instrument of the English core. Of the eighteen British Prime Ministers since the 1890s, five have been Scots or of Scottish origin, one has been Welsh while another sat for a Welsh constituency for all of his parliamentary career.<sup>132</sup> During Lloyd George's premiership in particular, there were so many Welshmen in the cabinet that K. O. Morgan wrote about "the emergence of a veritable Welsh mafia in the councils of central government".<sup>133</sup> Gwynfor Evans, President of Plaid Cymru, complained that the struggling Welsh nationalist movement of this period had been "overwhelmed by an avalanche of offices and honours".<sup>134</sup> The 'architect' of the welfare state in the Attlee government of 1945-51 was also a Welshman, Aneurin Bevan. The last three leaders of the British Labour party have all represented Welsh constituencies. Plaid Cymru, in 1970, reviewing the "dismal" economic performance of the 1964-70 Labour government argued that it had occurred despite the presence of "Welshmen of ability and influence so numerous in the corridors of power".<sup>135</sup> This situation stands in stark contrast to the position of the Irish elite in the pre-1921



parliament. Not one of them held an important position in British government. Indeed, the administration in Ireland itself was a preserve of Englishmen.

Scotland and Wales were also well represented in the higher echelons of the Civil Service. With about 15% of the total population of the United Kingdom, in the 1970s they had 21% of the Permanent Secretaries.<sup>136</sup> A. H. Birch pointed out that, when appointing advisory committees, the British government "leaned over backwards" to ensure representation from Wales and Scotland.<sup>137</sup>

While in a minority in terms of parliamentary representation, Scotland and Wales in fact had more MPs than their populations merited. In terms of population in 1973, Scotland should have had fifty-seven seats, Wales thirty-one and England 525, compared to the actual figures of seventy-one, thirty-six and 511 respectively.<sup>138</sup>

While Welsh and Scottish members were just a small minority of the total parliament, they could often occupy strategic positions in one of the main parties. Scottish and Welsh MPs have traditionally formed a strong lobby within both Liberal and Labour governments. Of the eight times this century that Labour has formed a government, on only two occasions, 1945 and 1966, did it have a majority of seats within England.<sup>139</sup> It was often, therefore, dependent on support from its Scottish and Welsh members.

The presence of Secretaries of State for Scotland (from 1885) and Wales (from 1964) in cabinet secured many advantages for those areas and put their countries in a privileged position vis-a-vis the English region. Tom Johnston, for example, secured many concessions for Scotland in the 1940s through exploiting Scotland's special position within Great Britain.<sup>140</sup>

The Royal Commission on the Constitution noted that many important decisions had been made in favour of Scotland and Wales. These were based largely on political reasons rather than on need. The Commission reported:

...they [the Scots and Welsh] have benefitted not because, compared with parts of England, they necessarily had the best case, but because they had the most effective voice.<sup>141</sup>

In the 1970s, the Labour Government proposed a further extension of Wales' and Scotland's preferential treatment by offering substantial devolution to both areas. A legislative assembly was proposed for Scotland and an executive one for Wales. These were to have control over a wide range of domestic affairs and would be set up without any decrease in Scotland's and Wales' already inflated parliamentary representation. The proposals were extremely anomalous in that English MPs would have no say in devolved matters to Scotland and Wales while Scottish and Welsh MPs could still vote on all English measures.<sup>142</sup> A Liberal party publication of the time declared:

United Kingdom citizens resident in England, already second class in terms of representation are to be third class since they will have no assemblies. Why should any English person be expected to support such treatment.<sup>143</sup>

Most importantly, these political advantages seem to have had significant practical consequences, as far as public expenditure throughout the United Kingdom was concerned. As early as the 1930s, government departments complained about preferential treatment to Scotland in unemployment grants, something which they attributed to the existence of the Scottish Office.<sup>144</sup> In the 1960s and 1970's too, despite the fact that on practically every socio-economic indices northern England was as badly off as Scotland and Wales, the latter areas did better in terms of public expenditure. The Royal Commission on the Constitution, examining expenditure on subjects "suitable for devolution", found that Scotland and Wales, with 129% and 119% of per capita expenditure in England, were better off than northern England, which had 114%. (See Table 4.7)

TABLE 4.7: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE PER HEAD IN 1968/9 ON SERVICES POTENTIALLY SUITABLE FOR DEVOLUTION EXPRESSED AS A % OF EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND

NORTH	114	SOUTH WEST	97
NORTH WEST	102	SOUTH EAST	100
YORKS + HUMBERSIDE	102	ENGLAND	100
W. MIDLANDS	94	WALES	119
E. MIDLANDS	94	SCOTLAND	129
E. ANGLIA	99		

The Royal Commission on the Constitution, CMND 5460, para. 446.

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It is probable that roughly similar ratios applied to all public expenditure. These facts understandably led the Royal Commission to conclude that, of all the United Kingdom regions, Scotland stood to gain most by retention of the status quo. Refuting nationalist allegations of state-aided exploitation, the Commission reported that, on the contrary, government had, at least in recent years, shown a concern for Scotland and Wales "which might almost be regarded as disproportionately great".<sup>145</sup>

It is not surprising that among the foremost opponents of preferential treatment for Scotland and Wales were the various elites of the deprived northern England region. These felt that Scottish and Welsh bargaining power at the central government level was already stronger than theirs and were reluctant to see it enhanced. The Northern Region TUC claimed that the devolution proposals would inevitably leave the north economically disadvantaged.<sup>146</sup> The Northern Region Secretary of the Confederation of British Industry complained that "the bestowal of discretionary fiscal powers to Scotland would distort market forces and therefore resource allocation to the detriment of the North".<sup>147</sup> This view was shared by the chairmen of Tyneside and Merseyside county councils.<sup>148</sup> The North of England Development Council spent most of this time seeking parity with Scotland and Wales in regional policy. The northeastern group of Labour MPs formed the nucleus of those who revolted by abstaining on the government's

Scotland and Wales bill in 1977.<sup>149</sup> An article on the northeast in New Society, November, 1976 related this discontent:

Many people in the Industrial Development Associations in the north feel the future is uncertain. Devolution is to blame. The Scottish Development Association, they argue, has the power and money to stimulate industrial regeneration in Scotland. With a Scottish Assembly, the Scots will have a control over their future which northerners do not have.<sup>150</sup>

One MP warned ominously that English MPs would no longer be willing to tolerate higher expenditure in Scotland and Wales at the expense of English regions if devolution was passed.<sup>151</sup>

Rather than being responsible for maintaining disparities, the state in this period assumed an explicit responsibility for removing them. This was a role which could not have been envisaged before the 1930s when the state took little part in the economy. By the 1960s, however, the government's responsibility for economic welfare was universally accepted. Government interference and economic planning with accompanying claims of omniscience reached a peak under the Wilson Labour government of 1964-70. Wilson won the general election of 1964 on policies favouring planning and growth. Economic Development Committees were established and a new powerful Department of Economic Affairs was set up. This process culminated in the ambitious National Plan in 1965.<sup>152</sup>

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The government planned to induce the extra investment necessary for growth by raising expectations and reducing uncertainty. Such a policy was fraught with danger. The Labour Government could be held to account for the existence of a perceived economic gap between Wales, Scotland and the rest of Great Britain in a way that earlier governments could not. Whereas in the 1920s and before governments had not claimed to be able to deal with economic problems, by the 1960s elections were often decided on precisely these matters.

In the post-war period, the heavy industries of coal mining, metal manufacturing and shipbuilding continued to decline. Together with agriculture, they accounted for huge numbers of job losses. Between 1951 and 1971, employment in Scottish agriculture, mining, steel-making, shipbuilding and textiles fell by a total of 249,988. In Wales, employment in agriculture and mining fell by 118,470 while in northeast England, employment in agriculture, mining and shipbuilding fell by 143,885.<sup>153</sup> To a large extent, however, the effects of this structural decline were offset by the growth of employment in other sectors. Regional policy played a part in bringing about this conversion.

In Scotland, reliance on heavy industries declined while light manufacturing and the white collar sector grew. Numbers employed in Insurance, Banking, Professional

and Scientific Services and Public Administration, for example, increased from 14.7% of the total workforce in 1951 to 22.8% in 1971.<sup>154</sup> This alone added a total of 169,089 jobs largely offsetting the decline in heavy industry.

• Diversification was even more broad ranging in Wales. It experienced employment increases in a wide range of manufacturing industries, including mechanical and electrical engineering. Wales also experienced an increase in white collar and non-manual jobs.<sup>155</sup> Manufacturing in Wales in 1961 accounted for 23% of employment as against only 11% before the war.<sup>156</sup> Growth in the Welsh economy was higher than in the British economy as a whole between 1948 and 1964.<sup>157</sup>

Diversification helped to make both the Scottish and Welsh economies more resilient in coping with cyclical fluctuations in trade. In 1966 one economist measuring regional industrial specialization concluded that Wales was only slightly more specialized than the average United Kingdom region, whereas Scotland was less specialized than any other region.<sup>158</sup> Whereas in 1951, 21% of the Welsh workforce was employed in agriculture and mining, by 1971 this had been reduced to 9.1%. In Scotland, employment in agriculture, mining and shipbuilding fell from 15.1% of the total workforce in 1951 to 7.4% in 1971.<sup>159</sup>

Whereas unemployment in the periphery remained higher than that in the core throughout this period, in absolute terms the disparity was negligible. Between 1962 and 1968, unemployment in Britain varied between 1.5% and 3.5%, in Scotland between 3.2% and 5.8% and in Wales between 2.8% and 5.5%.<sup>160</sup> Fluctuations at such high levels of employment are hardly likely to cause a demand for separatism, although they may explain shifts in voting between the major parties.<sup>161</sup>

A system of national collective bargaining between unions and employers has helped to ensure that income disparities are relatively insignificant in the United Kingdom. If the earnings of male manufacturing workers are considered, the figures show that Welshmen in 1965 earned 103% of the UK average, while Scotsmen earned 94%. The high Welsh figure is primarily due to high wages in the steel industry. Figures for income per capita, however, put Wales and Scotland at 84% and 88% of the UK average for the same year.<sup>162</sup> The difference can partly be explained by larger families and higher unemployment in the periphery. It is doubtful if these disparities provided a basis for separatism, especially as absolute standards were rising everywhere in the post-war period. Certainly, regional differences were not as great as in most other European countries where no separatist movements existed, eg. between North and South Italy or between the Paris region and the Midi in France. McCrone claimed that a



"remarkable" degree of conformity existed across Britain, with a much smaller amount of variation in income levels than is common for most countries.<sup>163</sup> Within Britain the differences in national income per head are in England's favour to the extent of 9:8 in the case of Scotland and 8:7 in the case of Wales. These ratios compare favourably with ratios of approximately 2:1 between the richest and poorest states of the U.S.A.; 3:2 in the Federal Republic of Germany and 5:1 in Yugoslavia.<sup>164</sup> Economic disparities in Britain cannot be considered a fundamental cause of nationalism in the way suggested by Hechter's theory of internal colonialism.

#### IV

#### THE CORE-PERIPHERY ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR THE UNION IN SCOTLAND AND WALES

The weakness of the peripheral economy after the 1920s helped to consolidate the union rather than cause an increase in demands for separatism. Business and labour elites in both Scotland and Wales were unanimous and consistent in their denunciation of nationalism. The political spokesmen of both classes stressed the economic advantages of union throughout this period. Two main arguments were employed. First, the Scottish and Welsh economies were considered dependent on continued access to English markets, which self-government might well jeopardize. Second, as deprived economies, Scotland and Wales benefitted from and were reliant upon the ability of

the central government to redistribute resources from the more prosperous regions of the southeast and Midlands. A self-governing Scotland and Wales, both parties claimed, not only risked isolation from English markets and a loss of subsidies, they also faced the distinct possibility of increased competition from England.

At no time was this economic dependence more clear than during the depression of the 1930s when the disparities between core and periphery were at their most stark. As unemployment soared and the major industries faced decline, Scottish and Welsh trade unions, business groups and politicians from both parties looked to the English link for protection. In the economic context of this period, Home Rule became irrelevant to the needs of Scotland and Wales or in Hanham's words, "a romantic absurdity, far removed from the day-to-day problems of bread and butter."<sup>165</sup>

Working-class groups were in the vanguard of support for the union. Economic self-interest strongly reinforced ideologically motivated class solidarity across national boundaries. Local labour unions in both Scotland and Wales required aid from the wealthier branches of the labour movement still enjoying high employment in southeast England. Unemployed workers drew their unemployment benefits from English sources.<sup>166</sup> After the defeat of a Home Rule resolution in 1931, the President of the Scottish

Trade Union Congress (STUC) emphasized Scotland's economic dependence on England:

Surely no person engaged in industry believed that Scotland could survive as a separate economic unit...We are part of a great Commonwealth, and all that we desire is that we should be allowed without handicap to take our full share in the industrial life of the Commonwealth. <sup>167</sup>

Scottish labour groups continued to oppose nationalism into the post-war era. Living in a relatively depressed economy, the Scots enjoyed parity of wages with more prosperous regions as a result of national collective bargaining. They realized that this situation would be jeopardized under Home Rule. In 1950 the STUC noted that the future of British industry as a competitive force depended on a unified policy accompanied by centralized planning and control. Faced with mounting international competition, they had no wish to adopt a divided approach. The Congress passed a resolution stating that:

Scotland's economic prosperity, it should be obvious, is inseparable from that of England and Wales and it cannot be imagined as a self-supporting entity. <sup>168</sup>

In 1958 the STUC claimed that any attempt to disentangle the two economies would "undoubtedly lead to grievous economic losses". <sup>169</sup> This remained STUC policy throughout the 1960s. In a 1969 statement on self-government, the STUC concluded that complete political and economic sovereignty would represent a "retrograde step

which would set back substantially the hopes and expectations of the Scottish people".<sup>170</sup>

STUC insecurity about Scotland's future after independence was closely linked to the state of the heavy industries in Scotland. The only way to proceed, it claimed, was through a continuation and extension of the centrally organized regional policies which had already brought considerable improvements. The self-imposed role of the STUC therefore lay in resisting any attempt to erode regional policies. The future of the Scottish economy depended substantially upon their "un-impaired maintenance" and upon "the continuing identification of Scotland with the United Kingdom economy".<sup>171</sup>

The most dramatic evidence of the role regional redistribution played in cementing the union can be seen in the actions of the political wing of the Labour movement, the Labour party. Many of the early Labour leaders who inherited the Liberal tradition with its concentration on Scottish and Welsh values had continued to support Home Rule after the First World War.

By the 1930s, however, the Labour party was firmly opposed to Home Rule for Wales or Scotland. While there were sound electoral and ideological reasons for the transformation, these were reinforced by the state of the peripheral economy. Labour's electoral ascent in Scotland

and Wales coincided with the onset of the decline of the heavy industries which were disproportionately located there. The working-class representatives from these areas, rather than seek devolution and leave them to their own devices, sought control of the political centre in order to play a redistributionist role. Even supporters of Home Rule, like Labour's war-time Secretary of State for Scotland, Tom Johnston, argued that the economy must be secured first:

What purpose would there be in our getting a Scots Parliament in Edinburgh if it has to administer an emigration system, a glorified Poor law and a graveyard.<sup>172</sup>

As a result, Scottish labour representatives dropped their interest in Home Rule. Labour policy from the 1930s onwards put its emphasis on the need for centralized measures to combat peripheral problems. This remained the case in the late 1960s. In a 1968 pamphlet two Scottish Labour members drew attention to the fact that an independent Scotland would lose the benefits of regional policy. Rather than being a specially-favoured development area, Scotland's position vis-a-vis England would be akin to that of a foreign country, dependent entirely upon her own resources for attracting new investment:

Scotland would not be competing on anything like the present favourable terms. There would be no "direction" of industry to an independent Scotland as takes place now.<sup>173</sup>

On the contrary, the pamphlet pointed out a breakaway by Scotland and Wales would in all probability provoke a

nationalist reaction in England. The present and growing redistribution of industry from the southeast to Scotland and Wales would instead be concentrated solely on declining areas within England. The pamphlet indicated that nothing would please English industrialists more than an independent Scotland as they had only settled there under "severe government pressures".<sup>174</sup>

This view resembled the official view of the Labour party in Scotland in its written evidence to the Royal Commission on the Constitution in 1970. Drawing attention to the panoply of regional policy achievements in Scotland during the 1960s, Labour claimed that these could only continue if the economic link with the United Kingdom was maintained:

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party has never been in doubt that the enormous problems which we face can only be tackled by firm government from Westminster, and by devising policies which can rebuild the social and industrial infrastructure."<sup>175</sup>

Business groups were as opposed to Home Rule as Labour groups and for much the same reasons. In the autumn of 1932, 400 leading Scottish industrialists published a manifesto warning the people of Scotland against Home Rule. They argued essentially that Scotland was a poor country which depended on subventions from England and also that Home Rule would lead to damaging restrictions on trade between the two countries.<sup>176</sup>

The Scottish Council of the Federation of British Industries indicated their support for unionism in their written evidence to the Royal Commission on Scottish Affairs in 1954. They argued that industry in Scotland was closely interlinked with that in England, drawing its components from it and selling its products in English markets. Most of Scottish firms (55.7%) also had establishments in Scotland and Wales. They pointed out that Glasgow as a port did not serve only Scotland and that if it did, its future would be "bleak".<sup>177</sup> They concluded, therefore, that:

All the evidence supports the conclusion that the economy of Scotland is, and must continue to be, intimately bound up with the economy of the United Kingdom and an integral part of it.<sup>178</sup>

This was also the view of the various Scottish Chambers of Commerce, and the banks.<sup>179</sup>

Important industrialists in Scotland, including Scottish and Newcastle Breweries and Christian Salvasen pointed out that if separatism involved higher taxes or trading restrictions of any kind, they would have no choice but to move south to where their markets lay.<sup>180</sup>

The opposition of the bourgeoisie to devolution was echoed by their political wing, the Conservative party in Scotland. In a 1967 pamphlet, the Scottish Young Conservatives stressed the fact that Scotland depended on

the British state for redistribution of resources, taking credit in the process:

It is the case that much capital investment in Scotland is not attracted without some Whitehall pushing - the motor car industry had to be forced to come to Scotland and by a Conservative government.<sup>181</sup>

A committee set up by Conservative party leader Edward Heath in 1968 to look into Scottish devolution was overwhelmed by evidence protesting against the weakening of Scotland's economic ties with England. The committee report argued that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the economic links between the two countries. Reluctant to use the term 'subsidies', the report claimed that the recent economic relationship was clearly "advantageous" to Scotland.<sup>182</sup> United Kingdom regional policy had resulted in "massive benefits" in the way of capital and public investment deriving to the economy of Scotland. The increase in government regional policy during the 1960s had been "nothing short of remarkable".<sup>183</sup> Nor, the report concluded, would alternative incentives from a self-governing Scotland be sufficient. The "critical factor" in successfully steering industry to Scotland had been the restriction of industrial development in the congested areas and this was clearly beyond the power of an independent Scottish government.<sup>184</sup>



The main economic interest groups in Wales were also opposed to self-government for that country. Here economic interest reinforced the cultural similarities between England and the English-speaking areas of industrialized Wales. Many of the larger firms in Wales had their headquarters outside that country. This was the case for forty-two of the forty-nine firms employing over 1,000 employees.<sup>185</sup> The Royal Commission on the Constitution noted that most of these industries relied very little on Wales for supplies or markets.<sup>196</sup> These industrialists therefore were just as reluctant as their Scottish counterparts to do anything that would jeopardize access to English markets. It was feared that self-government would have such a result.

The Welsh Conservative and business view was expressed by the Conservative Minister for Welsh Affairs in the late 1950s, Mr. Henry Brooke:

The Welsh nationalist policy spells economic ruin for Wales. If they had their way in cutting the ties with England, that would drive the Welsh standard of living down like the Gadarene swine, not into the Sea of Galilee, but into the Dead Sea of dire poverty.<sup>187</sup>

Given the unpopularity of the Conservatives in Wales, their opposition to nationalism did not mean much. Their views on maintaining the economic links between England and Wales were, however, fully shared by the dominant Labour Party.

Welsh Labour's most comprehensive statement against nationalism was presented in the 1954 policy document, Labour's Policy for Wales. Here, the party attempted to answer the arguments of the supporters of the contemporary "Parliament for Wales" campaign. Welsh Labour, like its Scottish counterpart, claimed that much of the industry that had come to Wales since the war, creating a situation of almost full employment, had been driven there by the Labour government under the 1945 Distribution of Industry Act. A Welsh Parliament would not be able to exercise these statutory powers over British firms in South-east England. As a result, it would have to rely solely on its own resources.<sup>189</sup>

Labour also pointed out that the Welsh coal area was not only rapidly declining but was also the least profitable of those operated by the National Coal Board. This situation could only be rectified from "profits made elsewhere".<sup>189</sup> Separate administration of Welsh coal would lead to higher prices and lower wages. It would also lead to a weakening of trade-union organization and a return to the principle of district agreements against which the South Wales miners "struggled so valiantly over the years".<sup>190</sup> Apart from the loss of subsidies from the prosperous South-east, a separate parliament would entail the creation of a costly new administration. Parity of services with the rest of Great Britain could only be maintained if taxation was raised "substantially".<sup>191</sup>

This remained the Welsh Labour line. In 1959, the party declared that it was "undesirable as well as impracticable" to separate the Welsh economy from that of England.<sup>192</sup> In 1964, the Welsh Labour manifesto reiterated its contention that Wales' economic problems could not be solved in isolation.<sup>193</sup>

V

CONCLUSION

Hechter's theory of internal colonialism is seriously flawed. While it is true that economic disparities existed between the Celtic periphery and the southeast of England for much of this century, these were much less marked than in most other European countries. Furthermore, there is evidence that, in the 1960s when nationalism first became popular, the regional gap within Britain was less serious than it had been earlier.

In addition, regional disparities within Britain cannot be considered as "causally linked to cultural differences". Northern England was at least as badly off as Scotland and Wales on all the important socio-economic indices. Rather than ethnicity, the common factor among these three peripheral areas was a relatively specialized but declining industrial structure.

The role of the state in the relationship between core and periphery is quite different from that predicted by internal colonialism. By regional policies, local government transfers and a general insistence on parity of social services throughout the regime, the state struggled continuously to mitigate the effect of regional disparities.

Rather than provoking an ethnic reaction, as the internal-colonialism model suggests, the economic relationship between core and periphery enhanced support for the union. At no point between the 1870s and 1960s was it in the economic interest of either major class in Scotland or Wales to put an end to the political union with England. Every important statement from the major interest groups and elected political representatives of the periphery indicate their recognition of this fact. As unionist parties continuously received the overwhelming majority of votes in Scotland and Wales, it is reasonable to suggest that the Scottish and Welsh electorates were in general agreement. Only in southern Ireland in the pre-1921 period was there within the United Kingdom a strong economic case for nationalism.<sup>194</sup>

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>F. W. S. Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1980 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), p. 104.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>4</sup>T. C. Smout, "The Historical Separateness of the Scots", New Society, 1 July, 1976, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>L. M. Cullen and T. C. Smout, Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History 1600-1900 (Edinburgh: Donald, 1977), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>See C. H. Lee, p. 12. Scotland with a large textile industry was if anything, more diverse than the northeast of England which concentrated on coal, steel and shipbuilding alone. British Regional Employment Statistics 1841-1971 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Metal manufacturing increased from 68,557 to 94,015 and Shipbuilding from 18,492 to 51,135.

<sup>8</sup>R. H. Campbell, "The Economic Case for Nationalism" in R. Mitchison ed., The Roots of Nationalism (Edinburgh: Donald, 1980), pp. 144-45.

<sup>9</sup>Richard Rose, "The United Kingdom as a Multi-National State", Richard Rose, ed., Studies in British Politics (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1976), p. 136.

<sup>10</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, "The Attitude of Popular Classes Towards National Movements For Independence", Mouvements Nationaux D'Independance et Classes Populaires (Paris, 1971), p. 39.

<sup>11</sup>T. C. Smout, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Tony Dickson, "Class and Nationalism in Scotland", Scottish Journal of Sociology, 1978, p. 151.

<sup>14</sup>F. W. S. Craig, op. cit., pp. 13-20.

<sup>15</sup>Tom Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain (London: New Left Books, 1977), "There was not...any situation like Scotland's within the enormously accelerated drive of nineteenth century development...We know, at any rate, that the success story was never repeated quite like this anywhere else", p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>17</sup> A. H. John, The Industrial Development of South Wales, 1750-1850 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950), pp. 23-57.

<sup>18</sup> C. H. Lee, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> K. O. Morgan, Wales: Rebirth of a Nation (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981), p. 59.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> Rose, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>23</sup> Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> Brinley Thomas, The Welsh Economy: Studies in Expansion (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962), p. v.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> K. O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), p. 161.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>30</sup> Cullen and Smout, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> F. S. L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (London: Weidensfield and Nicholson, 1971), p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> Cullen and Smout, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>35</sup> Rose, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Hechter, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>37</sup> Lyons, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>38</sup> Hechter, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>39</sup> Lyons, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>40</sup> Nairn, op. cit., p. 234.

- <sup>41</sup>Lyons, op. cit., p. 288 (Also cited in Hechter, op. cit., p. 289).
- <sup>42</sup>A. Slaven, The Development of the West of Scotland, 1750-1960 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 180-1.
- <sup>43</sup>W. Ferguson, Scotland: 1689 to the Present (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 331.
- <sup>44</sup>Slaven, op. cit., p. 169.
- <sup>45</sup>B. Lenman, Economic History of Modern Scotland 1660-1976 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), p. 222.
- <sup>46</sup>J. G. Carney et al, "Regional Under-Development in Late Capitalism: A Study of the North-east of England", I. Masser, ed., Theory and Practice in Regional Science (London: Arrowsmith, 1978), p. 19.
- <sup>47</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (London: Weidensfield and Nicolson, 1968), p. 112.
- <sup>48</sup>Third Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas, CMD 5303, 1936, p. 26.
- <sup>49</sup>Lenman, op. cit., p. 212-3.
- <sup>50</sup>Morgan, 1981, op. cit., p. 213. Also see Hansard, 1933-4 (V 292), 956.
- <sup>51</sup>Times, June 27, 1939.
- <sup>52</sup>Cited, Royal Commission on the Location of the Industrial Population, CMD 6153, para. 308.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid, para. 308.
- <sup>54</sup>Times, July 24, 1935, p. 9.
- <sup>55</sup>Times, February 4, 1936, p. 9.
- <sup>56</sup>Times, July 29, 1936, p. 14.
- <sup>57</sup>Neil Buxton, "The Scottish Shipbuilding Industry Between the Wars", Business History, XX, p. 103.
- <sup>58</sup>Investigation into the Industrial Conditions in Certain Depressed Areas, CMD 4728, 1934, para. 210.
- <sup>59</sup>R. H. Campbell, The Rise and Fall of Scottish Industry, 1707-1939 (Edinburgh: Donald, 1980 B), p. 61.
- <sup>60</sup>Slaven, op. cit., p. 197.

- 61 R. H. Campbell, "The Scottish Office and the Special Areas in the 1930's", Historical Journal, 22, 1979, p. 171.
- 62 CMD 6153, op. cit., para. 88.
- 63 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 107.
- 64 Cited, Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707-1977 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977), p. 113.
- 65 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 153.
- 66 Hechter, op. cit., p. 33.
- 67 Ian Carter, "The Highlands of Scotland as an Underdeveloped Region", E. De Kadt ed., Sociology and Development (London: Tavistock, 1974), p. 306, fn 22.
- 68 Cited, op. cit., p. 149.
- 69 Harvie, op. cit., p. 108.
- 70 Carney et al, op. cit., p. 19.
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- 72 Hilary Marquand, South Wales Needs a Plan, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1936), p. 84.
- 73 First Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas, 1935, CMD 4957, p. 15; and Second Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas, 1936, CMD 5090, p. 5.
- 74 CMD 6153, op. cit., para. 215.
- 75 Ibid, para. 76.
- 76 CMD 5303, op. cit., para. 21.
- 77 Gunnar Myrdal, Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions, (London: Methuen and Co., 1957).
- 78 Stewart wrote, "While it is true that 'trade brings trade', the converse unfortunately is also true...Unemployment undermines business confidence and reduces purchasing power, a vicious circle is set up". CMD 4957, op. cit., p. 16. It was to offset this psychological handicap that the Government changed the title of its 1934 legislation from 'Depressed Areas' to 'Special Areas'.
- 79 CMD 6153, op. cit.
- 80 Hechter, op. cit., p. 294.
- 81 Slaven, op. cit., p. 202.



- <sup>82</sup> R. H. Campbell, op. cit., 1980 B, p. 39.
- <sup>83</sup> Times, December 31, 1937, p. 9.
- <sup>84</sup> Lenman, op. cit., p. 232.
- <sup>85</sup> CMD 4728, op. cit.
- <sup>86</sup> See the various Special Area Reports, especially CMD 5303, op. cit. Also see D. Pitfield, "The Quest for an Effective Regional Policy 1934-37", Regional Studies, 1978.
- <sup>87</sup> CMD 6153, op. cit.
- <sup>88</sup> The Distribution of Industry, CMD 7540, 1948, para. 32.
- <sup>89</sup> For a summary of measures employed in the various acts, see Gavin McCrone, Regional Policy in Britain (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968).
- <sup>90</sup> CMD 5303, op. cit., Appendix One, and CMD 6153, op. cit. (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 182.
- <sup>91</sup> Scottish Council, Inquiry into the Scottish Economy, (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 182.
- <sup>92</sup> Times, April 5, 1967, p. 11.
- <sup>93</sup> The Scottish Economy: Plan for Expansion, CMND 2864 (1966) and Wales: The Way Ahead, CMND 3334 (1967).
- <sup>94</sup> CMND 2864, op. cit., para. 1.
- <sup>95</sup> H. J. Paton, The Claim of Scotland (London: Dent, 1969), p. 150.
- <sup>96</sup> James Griffiths, Pages From Memory (London: Dent, 1969), p. 172.
- <sup>97</sup> McCrone, pp. 136-37. See also Malcolm MacLellan, "New Life with a Labour Bonus", Times, April 27, 1967, p. 27.
- <sup>98</sup> Times, October 23, 1948, "Developed Areas".
- <sup>99</sup> Times, January 22, 1963, p. 7, "The Year in Wales".
- <sup>100</sup> Times, February 26, 1953, p. 9, "Productive Development"
- <sup>101</sup> The Royal Commission on the Constitution, CMND 5460 (1973), para. 451.
- <sup>102</sup> A. H. Birch, Integration and Disintegration in the British Isles (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977A), p. 46.

- 103 For the nationalists' position, see the SNP's, David Simpson in Neil MacCormick ed. The Scottish Debate (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 148. Others felt that the financial incentives were little more than cash subsidies with "only a limited effect on the locational decision of firms". G. L. Rees, A Survey of the Welsh Economy (London: HMSO, 1973), p. 203.
- 104 Industry and Employment in Scotland 1960-61, CMND 1391, 1961, para. 157.
- 105 Western Mail, January 23, 1962, Industrial Review. For a list of firms which went to Wales in 1965-70 and for whom advance factories were provided, see Appendix 4, Evidence of the Labour Party in Wales to the Commission on the Constitution (Cardiff: 1970)
- 106 CMND 3334, op. cit., para. 175.
- 107 R.H.S. Crossman, Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Vol. III (London: Cape, 1975), p. 317.
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- 122 The Royal Commission on the Constitution, CMND 5460, para. 450.
- 123 K. C. Isles and N. Cuthbert, "Economic Policy" in T. Wilson ed., Ulster Under Home Rule, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 163.
- 124 Cited in Tam Dalyell, The End of Britain (London: Pall Mall, 1977), p. 184.
- 125 CMND 5460, op. cit., para. 450.
- 126 Labour's Policy for Wales 1954, p. 6.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Ibid.
- 129 CMND 5460, op. cit., para. 594.
- 130 Ibid.
- 131 Research Paper 7, Devolution and Other Aspects of Government: An Attitudes Survey (London: H. M. S. O., 1973), Table 38.
- 132 Rosebery, Campbell Bannerman, Ramsay MacDonald, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Bonar Law, Lloyd George and James Callaghan.
- 133 See Morgan for details, 1981, op. cit., p. 167.
- 134 G. Evans, "The Twentieth Century and Plaid Cymru", A. W. Wade Evans, ed., The Historical Basis of Welsh Nationalism (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1950), p. 144.
- 135 Plaid Cymru, The Economic Plan for Wales (Cardiff, Plaid Cymru, 1970), p. 286.
- 136 A. H. Birch, "Minority Nationalist Movements and Theories of Political Integration", World Politics, V. 30, 1977B, p. 328.
- 137 Ibid. Birch's example of the Royal Commission on the constitution to emphasize his point is hardly a good one. Given the nature of its terms of reference, one would have expected relatively large numbers of Scots and Welshmen on it.
- 138 CMND 5460, op. cit., para. 99 fn.
- 139 See F. W. S. Craig, op. cit.
- 140 See Tom Johnston, Memories (London: Collins, 1952). Even those, like John Osmond, who felt present devolution

to be insufficient recognized that "the position of the Secretary of State for Wales in the Cabinet has given the country a formidable weapon in fighting for scarce resources and protesting Welsh interests only from the standpoint of "political expediency", Osmond, p. 105.

141 CMND 5460, op. cit., para. 446.

142 See Tam Dalyell's criticism of these arrangements op. cit.

143 Cited Vernon Bogdanor, Devolution (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 209.

144 R. H. Campbell, "The Economic Case for Nationalism", op. cit., p. 150.

145 CMND 5460, op. cit., para. 446.

146 Alan Guthrie and Iain McLean, "Another Part of the Periphery", Parliamentary Affairs, 31, 1978, p. 195.

147 Ibid.

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152 David Sinclair, "The Economy - A Study in Failure" in D. McKie ed., The Decade of Disillusion (London: MacMillan, 1972), p. 103.

153 Figures from Census Tables in C. H. Lee, op. cit.

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156 Brinley Thomas, op. cit., p. 192.

157 See E. T. Nevin et al, The Structure of the Welsh Economy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1957)

158 Birch, op. cit., 1977A, p. 34.

159 C. H. Lee, op. cit.

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161 Rose, op. cit., p. 137.

- 162 Abstract of Regional Statistics 1969, and Gavin McCrone, op. cit., p. 163.
- 163 McCrone, op. cit., p. 164.
- 164 Anthony Birch, "The Celtic Fringe in Historical Perspective", Parliamentary Affairs, V 29, 1976, p. 230.
- 165 H. J. Hanham, op. cit., p. 198.
- 166 Even Hechter could write of this period: "Unemployment benefits no matter how meagre came ultimately from the connection with England. Programs of regional development...which were clearly necessary to alter the vicious circle of poverty, unemployment and declining industry could come only from continued association with England. The fact that the Celtic economies were in a collapsed state meant that separatism from England could not be easily countenanced", op. cit., pp. 197-98. This statement is somewhat at odds with Hechter's view of the English state in the Celtic economy.
- 167 Cited, James D. Young, The Rousing of the Scottish Working-Class (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 222.
- 168 Cited, Statement on Scottish Self-Government (STUC, 1969), p. 5.
- 169 Labour Party, Scottish Council: Special Report on Scottish Self-Government 1958, p. 3.
- 170 S.T.U.C. Statement on Scottish Self-Government 1969, para. 26.
- 171 Ibid., p. 3.
- 172 Tom Johnston, op. cit., p. 66.
- 173 Jim Sillars and Alex Eadie, Don't Butcher Scotland's Future, 1968, p. 2.
- 174 Ibid., p. 3.
- 175 The Government of Scotland: Evidence of the Labour Party in Scotland to the Commission on the Constitution, March, 1970, p. 2.
- 176 J. M. MacCormick, The Flag in the Wind (London: Gollancz, 1955), p. 73.
- 177 Royal Commission on Scottish Affairs: Evidence Submitted by the Federation of British Industries (Scottish Council), para. 12-13.
- 178 Ibid., para. 12.

179 The Labour Party, Scottish Council: Special Report on Scottish Government 1958, p. 2.

180 See Tam Dalyell, op. cit., p. 178-80.

181 Scotland: The Political Choice: Scottish Young Conservatives, 1967, p. 6.

182 Scotland's Government: The Report of the Scottish Constitutional Committee 1970. (Home Report), para. 25.

183 Ibid., para. 42.

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185 C. Tomkins and J. Lovering, Location, Size, Ownership, and Control Tables for Welsh Industry, (Welsh Council, 1973), Appendix A.

186 CMND 5460, op. cit., para. 125.

187 Cited, G. Evans, Self-Government for Wales and a Common Market for the Nations of Britain, p. 3, (Plaid Cymru, 1960). Also see The Conservative Policy for Wales and Monmouthshire (London: Conservative and Unionist Central Office, 1949), pp. 1-2.

188 Labour's Policy for Wales, 1954, p. 4.

189 Ibid., p. 5.

190 Ibid., p. 6.

191 Ibid., p. 6-7.

192 Forward with Labour: Labour's Plan for Wales, 1959, p. 1.

193 Labour: Signposts to the New Wales 1964, p. 6.

194 Several other authors have criticised Hechter's thesis of internal colonialism. Birch also feels that it is weaker than the diffusion model which it seeks to replace. op. cit., 1977, pp. 33-34. Writing during the heyday of the SNP, Birch argues that Scotland and Wales did indeed benefit from English subventions but he did not think that these subventions had produced significant loyalty towards the union, pp. 42-46. I argue that Scots awareness of their country's economic dependence on England played a crucial role in preventing the advance of separatist politics. Jim Bulpitt also analyzes Hechter's study in Territory and Power in the United Kingdom (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), pp. 42-44. Bulpitt is primarily concerned with pointing out that Hechter's work is not an 'internal colonialism thesis' because it neglects

any systematic study of "the colonisers and their state machine", p. 44. According to Bulpitt, colonial exploitation in Britain is not proven by Hechter but merely inferred from his description of regional economic dependency, see p. 43. Finally, Edward Page finds fault with Hechter's study on many counts in "Michael Hechter's Internal Colonial Thesis: Some Theoretical and Methodological Problems", European Journal of Political Research, 1978, pp. 295-317. Page notes that Hechter's thesis could not explain why nationalism only became an effective political force in the 1960s, p.308. This is a question I address in the following chapter. Page also shows that Hechter's statistical methodology was biased towards a conclusion that supports his thesis, pp. 304-05.

CHAPTER FIVE: TOM NAIRN'S THEORY OF UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE RISE OF SCOTTISH AND WELSH  
NATIONALISM

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the nationalist parties in both Wales and Scotland significantly increased their electoral support. Whereas Plaid Cymru had received only 4.3% of the Welsh vote at the general election of 1966, its fortunes improved shortly afterwards. At a by-election in Carmarthenshire in July 1966, the party won its first seat, gaining 39% of the poll. This was followed by two more good by-election performances, Rhondda West in March 1967 (40%) and Caerphilly in July 1968 (40%). These successes were followed by the general election of 1970 at which the party increased its share of the Welsh poll to 11.5%, almost tripling the number of votes gained in 1966.<sup>1</sup> This poll held quite steady throughout the 1970's, dropping slightly at the 1979 general election.

Predictably, Plaid Cymru's support was concentrated in the Welsh-speaking area. This is indicated by Table 5.1. At any general election in the 1970s, the party's support increased in correlation with the proportion of Welsh-speakers in each constituency. A Harlech Television poll, conducted in May 1983, found that 24% of the Welsh-speakers supported Plaid Cymru whereas only 2% of non Welsh-speakers did so.<sup>2</sup>



TABLE 5.1: WELSH-SPEAKERS AND PLAID CYMRU VOTE  
1970-79

% OF WELSH SPEAKERS 1961	# OF SEATS	MEAN % PLAID CYMRU VOTE		
		1970	1974	1979
over 70%	6	24.4	27.6	27.4
25 - 60%	8	13.7	12.3	8.7
10 - 25%	12 (11 after 1970)	10.8	10.3	5.5
under 10%	10 (11 after 1970)	6.0	4.3	4.1

Table compiled from C. H. Williams, National Separatism, p. 177; A. Butt-Philip, The Welsh Question (Appendix A), and D. Butler and A. King, British General Election of 1970, p. 402. (1974 is an average of two elections in that year.)

The SNP, winning 5% of the Scottish poll in 1966, also did much better thereafter. At a by-election in Hamilton in November 1967, it won the seat with 46% of the poll. This was followed by noticeable local government victories in 1968, especially in the Scottish New Towns of Cumbernauld and East Kilbride. At the subsequent general election of 1970, the party increased its share of the Scottish poll to 11.4%, more than doubling its number of votes in the process. After 1970, SNP fortunes improved even more dramatically. At the general election of October 1974, the party received 30.4% of the Scottish votes, winning eleven seats and becoming the second largest party in Scotland in terms of votes cast.<sup>3</sup> It is in the light of these events that Tom Nairn's explanation of the phenomenon of Welsh and Scottish nationalism should be considered.

Unfortunately, Nairn, a Scot, devotes scant attention to Wales. What he does say amounts simply to a re-affirmation of the homogeneity thesis. Industrialization and anglicization, according to Nairn, had forced the Welsh culture out into the rural periphery where it was now fighting for its survival. This fact explained the nature of Welsh nationalism:

...a battle for the defence and revival of rural-based community and traditional identity, an identity...having as its mainspring the language question.<sup>4</sup>

For Nairn, this cultural nationalism had little appeal in English-speaking densely populated south Wales.<sup>5</sup> This had led to Welsh-speakers distrusting English-speakers and to Plaid Cymru redrawing the boundaries of the nation at the edge of the Welsh-speaking area.

Writing in 1977, after the emergence of Plaid Cymru as a political force, Nairn had an opportunity to explain the party's rise. This, however, he explicitly chose to ignore.<sup>6</sup> The key question, therefore, of why Welsh-speaking voters transferred their allegiance from Liberal and Labour to Plaid Cymru is left unanswered.

Nairn viewed Scottish nationalism as much more important. This was probably based on the much greater electoral support enjoyed by the SNP vis-a-vis Plaid Cymru in the 1970s. Compared to the relative insignificance of nationalism in Wales, according to Nairn, Scottish

nationalism "incontestably leads the way and currently dominates the devolutionary attack on the British system".<sup>7</sup>

The success of Scottish nationalism rested on two pillars. The first of these was Scotland's "quasi-national legacy".<sup>8</sup> As a result of the Act of Union and subsequent developments, Scotland remained "easily the most intact of the historic nations".<sup>9</sup> The separate legal, church and education systems which contributed to Scotland's "strong, institutionally guaranteed identity"<sup>10</sup> had since been reinforced by a number of other interest group organizations based on the Scottish nation.<sup>11</sup> Nairn was in essential agreement with the homogeneity thesis that this quasi-national legacy had been of little importance before the late 1960s. Scotland during this period was "an unclassifiable marginal aberration, an ex-nation turned province...more suitable for jokes than serious political analysis".<sup>12</sup>

The second pillar, North Sea oil, discovered off the coast of Scotland in 1970, rapidly transformed this situation. It contributed to Scotland's over-development vis-a-vis England. For the first time since the Treaty of Union, it became in Scotland's economic interest to separate from England, a fact which led to increased bourgeois support for the SNP. Oil was the decisive catalyst, providing the "material circumstances" for

political mobilization based on the Scottish national identity. In Nairn's words, while "MacFinnegan had slumbered through the age of national revivals, with no more than a twitch or two", the discovery of oil brought him "staggering to his feet, demanding the restitution of his lost political kingdom".<sup>13</sup>

The problem, however, with putting so much weight on the discovery of oil is that it does not explain why Scottish nationalism was already a force before the discovery of oil in 1970 and certainly before the OPEC crisis of 1973 greatly increased the value of this national asset.

This chapter examines the role of North Sea oil in the rise of the SNP but first attempts to address two questions which Nairn did not: 1) why did Plaid Cymru's political fortunes significantly improve in the late 1960s? and 2) what factors contributed to the SNP's success before the discovery of oil?

#### THE RISE OF PLAID CYMRU

In the late 1960s concern for the future of the Welsh language grew. This was largely a result of television which brought a powerful anglicizing influence to the Welsh-speaking areas for the first time. While many had been complacent and prepared to allow the language to die in the long term, the real possibility of seeing its

extinction within one generation sprung many Welsh-speakers into action.<sup>14</sup> In response to the new threat, Plaid Cymru established its own independent Welsh-language television company, but this soon failed.<sup>15</sup>

The growth of concern for the future of the language stems in major part from Saunders Lewis's lecture on The Fate of the Language, delivered in 1962. Lewis pointed out that Welsh as a living language was about to die out unless action was taken immediately.<sup>16</sup> Lewis's speech led directly to the formation of the Welsh Language Society in 1962, an organization which did much to raise the consciousness of Welsh-speakers.<sup>17</sup>

The British political parties in Wales failed to address the concerns of the Welsh-speakers in a satisfactory manner. This was most obvious in the case of the Conservatives. In government between 1951 and 1964, they were chiefly remembered for their failure to treat a chronic depopulation problem in rural Wales,<sup>18</sup> and their flooding of a Welsh-speaking valley to serve as a reservoir for Liverpool.<sup>19</sup> The Conservatives were still regarded as the 'English' party in Welsh-speaking Wales, the party of the union and 'alien' church. So weak was the party's support there, that they could often not find Welsh-speaking candidates at election time.<sup>20</sup> With no following in the Welsh-speaking areas and little prospect of developing one, there was relatively little incentive to

develop a comprehensive language policy as a priority. While some minor concessions were granted by the 1951-64 Tory government, these were somewhat meagre in nature.<sup>21</sup> The sole reference to the language in the Welsh Conservatives' 1966 general election manifesto was one sentence promising a "realistic balance" between cultural activities in each language in Wales.<sup>22</sup>

While Labour's spokesman in rural Wales did protest treatment of the Welsh language, as their party drew the vast majority of its support from the English-speaking industrial south, its stance on the language was ambivalent. Labour's policy statements for Wales could not help but concentrate on industrial and social policies of questionable relevance to the Welsh-speaking areas.<sup>23</sup> Labour could only make concessions to Welsh-speakers insofar as those concessions would not alienate their much more numerous English-speaking support. Labour's representatives from south Wales were quick to point out when the line was overstepped.<sup>24</sup> The sole concession on the language in Labour's 1959 policy statement for Wales was the offer of a subsidy for Welsh language textbooks.<sup>25</sup>

Organizational weaknesses compounded Labour's problems in Wales during the 1960s. The Welsh Regional Council of Labour reported in 1970 that local parties were "giving very little attention to the recruitment of new members and

to the collection of contributions from existing members".<sup>26</sup> Rumours of corruption in Welsh Labour circles led to certain elements being nicknamed the "Taffia". The party also seemed to have lost some of its ideological vigour, a result of power which had been unchallenged for too long. Critics noted the conspicuous absence of Young Socialist groups at party conferences.<sup>27</sup>

The political vacuum created in the Welsh-speaking areas by the failure of the major parties to address adequately local concerns was not taken up by the Liberal party. It had been declining in Wales for forty years and had shown a complete inability to adequately protect Welsh interests at the British level.<sup>28</sup> There was therefore an opportunity for a dynamic new party to win support in the Welsh-speaking areas.

Before the 1960s, Plaid Cymru had failed to exercise a leadership role in the Welsh-speaking areas. The party was perceived, as Chapter Three has indicated, as a group of cultural fanatics, offering few realistic policy alternatives. In particular, while the party had addressed the cultural problems of the periphery, it had excluded any significant treatment of the area's economic concerns. This was a considerable handicap considering the fact that the two most important issues in rural Wales in the late 1960s were not the plight of the language and self-government but unemployment and rising prices.<sup>29</sup>

A growing awareness of this failing contributed to various changes in the 1960s whereby Plaid Cymru developed comprehensive programmes dealing with all aspects of rural existence, including the economic ones. Ironically, it seems that this new modern approach was inspired by a desire among new members to increase the party's appeal, primarily in English-speaking Wales.

An influx of new members from South Wales in the 1960s, contributed to various positive organization changes in Plaid Cymru. These transformed it from a cultural movement into a political party proper. According to one official, the change represented "a degree of organizational sophistication" previously unheard of in the party.<sup>30</sup> Another commented that the "transformation" in the party branches was a "marvel".<sup>31</sup> The party engaged in extensive election campaigning with canvasses, jingles and motorcades, described by one source as "by-election Blitzkrieg".<sup>32</sup> Between 1959 and 1970, Plaid Cymru was transformed from a cultural movement contesting twenty of the thirty-six Welsh seats, to a political party contesting them all.<sup>33</sup>

Organizational improvements created the basis for increased policy sophistication. The new approach began in 1960 with the publication of Gwynfor Evans' pamphlet, Self-Government for Wales and a Common Market for the Nations of Britain. Here, Evans sought to address the



fears of those Welsh who were concerned about the economic consequences of self-government. He dismissed the British parties' claims that Wales would be economically isolated and proposed a customs union between the "four nations" of the British Isles as the best way of "removing all hindrances to economic intercourse between them and securing the fullest measure of cooperation".<sup>34</sup>

Although the initial attempt to modernize Plaid Cymru petered out by 1964, it was revitalized by the formation of a Research Group in 1966. This group developed a range of economic policies for both industrial and rural Wales. Its influence could be seen during the successful by-election campaigns of the late 1960s. Cultural issues were played down while economic problems were stressed.<sup>35</sup> Plaid Cymru attacked the Labour government's 'mishandling' of the Welsh economy. The party's successful candidate at Carmarthen in 1966, Gwynfor Evans, attacked the closing of railways, the inadequate road system, depopulation and unemployment.<sup>36</sup>

By skillful questioning in the House of Commons, Evans exposed the slow progress of the Labour government's economic programme in Wales. These 'revelations' were published in a pamphlet entitled, Black Paper on Wales.<sup>37</sup> A range of alternative policies were put forward for industrial Wales. Plaid Cymru promised to maintain coal production at fifteen million tons per

annum, proposed massive improvements in infrastructure and advocated a Welsh Water Board to sell water to English local authorities.<sup>38</sup> The party also proposed a transfer of the relatively mobile service sector from the prosperous southern coastal area to the mining valley.<sup>39</sup> A 1969 pamphlet claimed that the "first priority" of a Welsh government under Plaid Cymru would be full employment.<sup>40</sup>

Plaid Cymru's most comprehensive statement on economic policy, The Economic Plan for Wales, was published in 1970. The plan employed the language of regional policy and proposed a strategy of "growth areas". It aimed at reducing unemployment to 1.6% and at providing "secure employment for all the people of Wales within about twenty miles of their homes".<sup>41</sup> This substantial document was well-received and obtained praise from none other than Lord Crowther, chairman of the Royal Commission on the Constitution.<sup>42</sup> In the conclusion to the plan, the party indicated how far it had come from its earlier preoccupation with culture.

We do not apologize in any way for concentrating our attention on the need to provide work for the people of Wales. Employment is fundamental to the very survival of the towns and communities of our country. Without employment, we have the familiar features of depopulation, the aging of the residual population and the gradual decay of the fabric of that community.<sup>43</sup>

The development of a modern economic approach produced the greatest rewards in the Welsh-speaking rural areas.

These had a number of peculiar economic problems which were not satisfactorily addressed by the overstretched British parties. The number of farms in Cardiganshire had, for example, been reduced by 11% in the 1957-67 period. The imposition of Selective Employment Tax by the Labour government in 1966 had led to a decline in the number of milk producers. The prospect of increased competition after entry to the Common market had further unsettled the farmers.<sup>44</sup> Depopulation was another serious problem. This primarily affected young people and resulted from the lack of economic opportunity in rural Wales.

As the traditional answers to these problems by the British parties did not sufficiently consider the Welsh-speakers interests in preserving their culture, they were rejected as inappropriate. British parties had over-relied on introducing large-scale economic developments to offset depopulation. Labour, for example, planned a new town in mid-Wales that would attract overspill from Birmingham.<sup>45</sup> The Conservatives introduced a large Ferodo factory into rural Caernarvonshire in 1961.<sup>46</sup> While Welsh-speakers wanted to prevent depopulation, they also wanted to preserve the countryside much as it was. Madgwick discovered an almost Luddite disdain for large industry and a pre-occupation with home-based industries.<sup>47</sup>

Plaid Cymru's policies, on the other hand, suited the mood in rural Wales perfectly. Unlike the British parties, its new economic policies were combined with an acute sensitivity to the plight of the culture.<sup>48</sup> In the late 1960s, Plaid Cymru bitterly attacked the Welsh Rural Development Board which it believed was attempting to reduce the number of small farms in Wales.<sup>49</sup> This was a popular position, given that the Agricultural Act of 1967 had defined 83% of Welsh farms as too small to be commercial. In its February 1974 election manifesto, Plaid Cymru promised a halt to "ranch-farming". A Plaid Cymru government, it declared, would restrict land to those genuinely interested in farming and would establish a Land Development Bank to assist young farmers. Price-rises of feeding stuffs would be offset by subsidies.<sup>50</sup> The party political broadcast for February 1974 concentrated on industrial and agricultural dereliction, prices and the EEC.<sup>51</sup> The October 1974 manifesto condemned the lack of "adequate incentives" for hill-farmers "the backbone of the Welsh industrial and rural life".<sup>52</sup>

It is the new-found combination of economic competence with cultural sensitivity that largely explains Plaid Cymru's success in rural Wales.

None of these factors fully explain the timing and dramatic nature of Plaid Cymru's increase in support after the general election of 1966. The catalyst which

transformed the party from a fringe movement to a political force in these years was provided by the difficulties and subsequent unpopularity of the 1966-70 Labour government.

Labour's problems were rooted in its failure to deal with a serious balance of payments problem. A package of deflationary measures in July 1966 created a temporary surplus but then the deficit worsened again until it prompted a devaluation of the pound in November of 1967.<sup>53</sup>

As an economic indicator, the balance of payments is not normally associated with electoral behaviour in the ways that unemployment or inflation are. However, a number of associated factors increased its significance. Labour leader Harold Wilson had contested and won the elections of 1964 and 1966 on the key theme of planning the economy to produce economic growth. He had successfully ridiculed the "stop-go" policies of the 1951-64 Tory government, i.e., deflationary policies rapidly followed by inflationary policies. According to a contemporary journalist, Wilson had "brilliantly" conveyed to the 1964 electorate that Tory amateurism was all that had deprived Britain of rapid growth in the 1950s and early 1960s. This was what had caused Britain to fall behind all the leading industrial nations. All that was needed to correct the problem, Wilson claimed, was a Labour government in charge of the "commanding heights" of the economy.<sup>54</sup> According to

economists Peter Sinclair, "a credulous public was led to expect El Dorado".<sup>55</sup> In this atmosphere, the deflationary policies which shortly followed the 1966 general election and lasted until 1970 created extreme disillusionment throughout Britain. The main difference from the 'stop-go' policies of the preceding Tory government was that the 'go' phase was discontinued.<sup>56</sup>

The balance of payments problem was a highly visible issue, receiving extensive coverage and discussion in the mass media. The nature of the party debate in parliament also moved the balance of payments problem to the centre of the political stage. Wilson invited the country to judge his government by its ability to overcome Britain's trade deficit, a position which both the Conservative opposition and the electorate seemed to accept. Wilson fought the 1970 general election on the central theme of having got Britain "out of the red".<sup>57</sup>

The effects of the measures used to correct the trading imbalance further contributed to the government's nationwide unpopularity. Unemployment, while much lower than in the later 1970s or 1930s, did nonetheless increase from 1.5% in the 1964-66 period to 2.5% between 1966-70. Inflation increased from an average of 3.5% in the 1952-65 period to between 6% and 8% in the 1968-70 period. This was felt to be a result of the devaluation of November 1967 as well as some high wage settlements.<sup>58</sup>

The consequence of the balance of payments problem was that the Labour government became unpopular throughout Britain. The loss of by-elections by the government became the rule, rather than the exception, in this period. In the ten months between September 1967 and June 1968, Labour lost as many seats as the Conservatives did between 1951 and 1964 and as many as Labour itself lost in its entire history, 1900-1964. Of the twenty-six Labour-held seats contested at by-elections between 1966 and 1970, fourteen were lost, two to nationalists, one to the Liberals and eleven to the Conservatives. In the remaining twelve, the government's majorities were drastically reduced.<sup>59</sup>

Whereas many disillusioned voters in England abstained, producing a substantial decline in turnout in all thirty by-elections contested there, in Wales, a nationalist alternative existed. In all three by-elections held there, turnout was up or down only very slightly.<sup>60</sup>

It is in this British context that the rise of Plaid Cymru after 1966 should be examined. The Carmarthen by-election of July 1966, won by Plaid Cymru, was typical. A major issue was the imposition of Selective Employment Tax, imposed in January 1966 to correct the trading imbalance by taxing services and channeling investment into new manufacturing industries. The Plaid Cymru candidate was a market-gardener from the constituency and was well-placed to exploit the issue.<sup>61</sup> The by-election took place on the eve of the announcement of the July 1966

deflationary measures. The bank rate went up on the day of the poll. Prime Minister Harold Wilson wrote of the contest:

I doubt if recent electoral history could produce another example of a Government increasing the bank rate and foreshadowing of a grim statement on a whole range of economic issues at the moment of maximum electoral impact.<sup>62</sup>

The threshold of electoral victory, achieved at Carmarthen, produced a bandwagon effect which was of tremendous importance for the party's continuing success. No longer was a vote for Plaid Cymru necessarily wasted. A number of activists abandoned the major parties to join Plaid Cymru. One in six of the party's candidates in the 1970 general election had joined the party since 1966.<sup>63</sup>

#### The Rise of the SNP

The basic preconditions for the rise of a nationalist party in Scotland were a strong national identity combined with a desire among Scots for more control over their own affairs. Both had existed before the emergence of the SNP as a political force. In a 1963 survey, Bridge and Urwin found evidence of a strong national identity in Glasgow.<sup>64</sup> Before this, in 1951 a reputed two million people, about 40% of the Scottish population, had signed a Covenant calling for a Scottish parliament with "adequate legislative authority over Scottish affairs within the framework of the United Kingdom".<sup>65</sup> Polls conducted in the 1950s by nationalist elements, and therefore to be



treated with some circumspection, found between 82% and 92% of respondents in favour of a Scottish parliament.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the presence of these sentiments, however, ethnicity in Scotland, as pointed out in Chapter Three, remained subordinate to the pan-British cleavage of class.

Given the existence of a strong national identity and something of a desire for more self-government throughout the earlier period, why did it manifest itself in increased support for the SNP only from the late 1960s? A satisfactory answer requires analysis of a combination of factors. These include social changes in Scottish society in the post-war period, the lethargy of the British parties vis-a-vis the dynamism of the re-modelled SNP and the opportunity created by the failure of the Labour government between 1966 and 1970. By the latter date, a relatively strong nationalist party existed, ready to take advantage of the discovery of North Sea oil.

A noticeable weakening in the class alignment occurred throughout industrial Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. Not only was there a marked decline in the class-party nexus which had dominated British politics since 1945 but both major 'class' parties, Labour and Conservatives, experienced significant losses in support.<sup>67</sup> Butler and Stokes claimed that the phenomenon of weakening class divisions was one of the "most important aspects of political change in the 1960s".<sup>68</sup>

These political changes can at least partly be connected to a number of important social changes. While heavy industries declined, there was a marked increase in the white collar workforce throughout Britain. Between 1964 and 1983, the manual working class as a percentage of the Scottish workforce declined by fifteen percentage points.<sup>69</sup> Accompanying this increased social mobility was an increasing consumer affluence caused by extremely low unemployment and steadily rising wages.<sup>70</sup> The proportion of homes that were privately owned increased significantly.<sup>71</sup> The provisions of the 1944 Education Act gradually led to a significantly higher number of people gaining access to further education.<sup>72</sup> These social changes contributed to an easing of previously rigid class divisions. As class loyalties diminished, they became less important as a basis for electoral behaviour.<sup>73</sup>

Many of the older industrial areas of Scotland were transformed during this period. Old mining seats like West Lothian and Hamilton experienced radical change. Hanham described the latter in the late 1960s as "typical" of the Scottish industrial experience:

It is no longer what it was...all mining has ceased. The town of Hamilton was being modernized...it is an area which is visibly in course of transition from the 19th century cottage life of the coalfield to the 20th century life of working-class suburbia.

The most striking example of social and industrial change in Scotland, however, took place in the New Towns of East Kilbride, Glenrothes, Livingston and Cumbernauld. These had been singled out by the New Towns Act of 1946 as centres for new light industries and model housing developments. A 1966 white paper claimed that they had made "outstanding" contributions to the Scottish post-war urban environment and had a "tone and quality comparable with the best anywhere in Great Britain".<sup>75</sup> They stood in stark contrast to the older class-conscious industrial areas which had dominated central Scotland.

Social changes in these areas diluted the basis for class politics. One observer noted in Hamilton in 1968:

Inevitably, the old loyalties are slackening...the old mining communities no longer vote Labour as a matter of course now that the mines have closed. Hamilton is still the sort of place that requires a jolt before it will cease to vote Labour...but it is no longer the sort of place it was in the old days.<sup>76</sup>

In the new towns, class voting was even less automatic. Those who moved out of the traditional heavy industries and also out of the strongly working class neighbourhoods that surrounded them often left the political values of their former environment behind them.<sup>77</sup> Slackened class loyalties created an increasingly volatile electorate. A party such as the SNP, classless in appeal and in support, was well placed to benefit from this changing mood.<sup>78</sup>

The increase in SNP support can be partly explained in light of these social changes. Hamilton, won by the SNP in November 1967, is one example. Labour, which had held the seat, picked a miner 'carpet-bagger' as its candidate. This was despite the fact that only 4.5% of the workforce in Hamilton were now involved in mining. A journalist observer noted that this seemed like a "backward-looking choice" which did not reflect the social changes taking place in Scottish society. He noted significantly:

There was a new breed of bright ambitious middle class voter in the constituency that would not be attracted by this appeal to tradition.

It is also not surprising in this context that the SNP's 1968 local government successes were most pronounced in the New Towns.

The SNP's two least successful by-election contests in the 1966-70 period were Gorbals, October 1969, and South Ayrshire, March 1970. Given the nature of these constituencies, the SNP's relative failure can be readily explained. Both areas were very depressed and had not shared in the general affluence of the 1960s. Gorbals in particular, was one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow and had one of the worst housing problems in Europe. In his autobiography, SNP chairman Billy Wolfe noted perceptively that his party tended to do better in an atmosphere of hope and worse in areas of deprivation.

Discussing the results in Gorbals and South Ayrshire, he wrote:

{T}hose with generations of hopelessness behind them regarded us as too new, too inexperienced and too bright and shiny to have any real concern for them...{These constituencies} made a better battle ground for the traditional class war than for the radical reforms of a party seeking what seemed to be such a distant thing as a Parliament for Scotland.<sup>80</sup>

On top of the social changes undermining their class bases, the major parties in Scotland suffered from various other weaknesses. Thus at a time in the early 1970s when their vote in Scotland was declining, the Tory party reacted by reducing its staff there.<sup>81</sup> The national party tended to conduct its election campaigns with a curious insensitivity to its Scottish wing. Manifestoes were promoted which were of questionable relevance to Scotland.<sup>82</sup> The Conservatives perceived reluctance to enforce fully regional policies, preferring a more laissez-faire approach, also worked to their disadvantage in Scotland.

Scottish Labour suffered from complacency. Although it had consistently won a majority of Scottish seats at the general elections of 1959, 1964 and 1966, its organization, according to a Nuffield study, was "in a "sorry state".<sup>83</sup> Michael Keating noted that success was so taken for granted in Glasgow that the Labour party machine there had been allowed to "atrophy".<sup>84</sup> With forty-four Scottish MPs in

1970, the party had only six full-time agents. With a nominal membership of 74,000, party headquarters estimated its real membership at about 25,000. Labour itself admitted that many of its 400 branches in Scotland were "relatively inactive".<sup>85</sup>

The loss of seats to the SNP at by-elections was widely attributed to this organizational disarray. Thus, for example, the Labour campaign at Hamilton, its second safest Scottish seat, was a non-starter. Internal squabbles resulted in many local activists failing to turn out. The Labour candidate was a union man, whom many thought was being rewarded for service to the party by receiving a comfortable parliamentary seat. The local newspaper asked scathingly, "Has anyone seen Alex Wilson?" (the Labour candidate), a reaction to Labour's failure to canvass adequately.<sup>86</sup> One Labour supporter remarked in the light of Labour's loss to the SNP in Hamilton that Labour's election strategy and organization had been "pitiful".<sup>87</sup> The loss of the Glasgow seat of Govan to the SNP in November 1973 was also put down to the appalling state of the Glasgow city party.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from its weak organization, Labour in Scotland also lacked the ideological dynamism inspired by the struggle of earlier years. Fewer young people joined the party, many of them opting for the nationalist alternative. According to Labour MP and Politics professor

John Mackintosh, the Labour party in Scotland had been "dying on its feet for years". Mackintosh complained that with the demise of the ILP in the 1950s, all ideological spark had gone out of Labour, all that remained was a machine trying to hold onto power. He wrote, sarcastically, that even the massive patronage available to any Secretary of State had not been used to introduce lively people. The party was especially unable to appeal to the new type of affluent worker produced by the socio-economic changes of the 1960s. Mackintosh correctly pointed out that Labour's association with the old Clydeside heavy industrial base had given the party an increasingly old-fashioned working-class image "at a time when affluence has tended to blur class images a little".<sup>89</sup>

Opposition to Liberal causes such as divorce law reform and free contraceptives on the National Health Service, a result of its close association with the Catholic church in Scotland, meant that the party had little appeal for an increasingly liberated younger generation. When Labour MP Jim Sillars left Labour to form the Scottish Labour Party in 1975, he claimed that his former party was demoralized and had lost its sense of purpose.<sup>90</sup> Sillars later joined the SNP.

Like the Conservatives, the Labour party in Scotland was firmly controlled from the centre in London. Mackintosh described it as a "fief of the London leadership, its leaders holding their positions from London rather than because of any popularity".<sup>91</sup> Until October 1974, Labour's regional organizer in Glasgow depended on English-oriented material from the London headquarters.<sup>92</sup>

The Liberals should have expected to benefit from dealignment from the major parties. In Scotland, however, they were so weak that, in the general elections of 1964, 1966 and 1970, they only contested twenty-four, twenty-four and twenty-seven of the seventy-one Scottish seats.<sup>93</sup> The Liberals had an extremely low profile among Scottish voters. Budge and Urwin found in 1964 that the vast majority of Scots did not even know that the Liberals supported Home Rule.<sup>94</sup>

The lethargy of the British parties in Scotland contrasted with the existence of a growing and relatively dynamic alternative, the SNP. By 1960, this party had overcome the internecine struggles that had plagued its first thirty years. This was symbolized by the collapse of John MacCormick's Covenant Association and the consequent acceptance by nationalists that the only way to achieve self-government was by contesting elections. A united movement coincidentally faced the electoral opportunity which presented itself.



As recruitment to the major parties declined, the SNP grew. Although the party had existed since 1934, by 1962 it had only two active branches, claiming 2,000 members.<sup>95</sup> In 1962 a full-time organizer was appointed for the first time.<sup>96</sup> An expansion campaign between 1962 and 1966, according to party sources, increased the number of branches from twenty to 200.<sup>97</sup> By 1969, it had increased to 500 branches and 120,000 members, making it by far the largest political party in Scotland. On the day of the Hamilton victory in 1967, a full-time Public Relations Officer was appointed, followed by a full-time Research Officer in August 1968.<sup>98</sup>

The SNP expansion was accompanied by an enthusiasm which compared favourably with the lackadaisical approach of the British parties. As a result, the SNP appeared increasingly active in the 1966-70 period when the major parties were in what one study described as their "customary inter-election doldrums".<sup>99</sup> This enthusiasm was most noticeable during the election campaigns. In the Pollok by-election campaign of 1967 for example, the SNP imported American-style motorcades and majorettes.<sup>100</sup> Journalist David McKie described the SNP's Hamilton campaign as "full of the gimmickry which became the hallmark of nationalist politics".<sup>101</sup> The vivacious nationalist candidate contrasted favourably with her opponents. Saturation fly-posting and canvassing were typical of SNP tactics. The Nuffield study of the February

1974 election, where the SNP made a breakthrough, winning seven seats and 21.9% of the votes, noted that the seats won by the nationalists were blanketed with their bill-posters. The study commented that the SNP campaign was backed by the "largest and most enthusiastic group of supporters".<sup>102</sup>

The expansion and reorganization of the party was accompanied by a prolific outpouring of publications on matters of policy. A new, educated and vigorous elite brought a professional approach to bear on nationalism. Continuity from the earlier era of the party was contained in the name only.

Billy Wolfe had contested the 1962 by-election at West Lothian on a policy document that had been drawn up in 1947. It was immediately up-dated and republished in 1963. Also in 1963, in cooperation with others, the nationalists established the Social and Economic Inquiry Society of Scotland to perform research on matters of interest to nationalists.<sup>103</sup> A policy statement was drawn up on coal in 1963 and followed by a policy for civil aviation in 1964, the latter to address the question of Prestwick International Airport.<sup>104</sup> A policy for roads was published in December 1966<sup>105</sup>, along with one for the Highlands and Islands.<sup>106</sup> A number of pamphlets dealing with other Scottish regions were also produced.<sup>107</sup> These pamphlets together condemned the rundown of the Scottish

coal industry, the handling of Scottish airports, emigration from the Highlands and the provisions of the Labour government's Transport Bill which were unattractive to Scotland.

One of the SNP's most successful pamphlets, The SNP and You was first published in 1964 and regularly updated thereafter. This became the election manifesto of the party. It was well presented and clearly argued, with different sections on aims, employment, agriculture, housing, education and social services.<sup>108</sup> Research Officer Donald McBain produced the influential Scotland: Facts and Comparisons in 1969, a lengthy handbook of statistics, essential reading for every nationalist candidate.<sup>109</sup> The SNP MP elected at Hamilton used the parliamentary question period to good effect to produce further "evidence" of England's exploitation of Scotland in Scotland vs. Whitehall: Winnie Ewings Black Book, published in 1969.<sup>110</sup>

Many SNP policies were shrewdly targeted directly at influential Scottish interest groups. Thus their education policy promised an end to the "anglicization" of the education system.<sup>111</sup> In a 1973 publication, the party declared that:

It is not in the interests of the community of Scots for Scots to be outnumbered on staffs and in student bodies of Universities, as the identity of Scotland is thereby endangered.<sup>112</sup>

The Scottish legal hierarchy was no doubt attracted to the policy that legal jurisdiction should be exercised exclusively by Scottish courts.<sup>113</sup>

The party also appealed to the strong fishing industry by continuously promising that foreign fishing catches would be controlled and Scottish territorial waters would be protected and extended. They also promised extensive state aid for rebuilding the industry. Nationalist opposition to Selective Employment Tax and the EEC was popular with the agricultural sector while its wholesale condemnation of the rundown of heavy industries aimed at winning support from this area. The SNP condemned pit closures and argued that it would stabilize coal output and put

...an end to destroying whole communities, forced flittings [sic], and unreasonable travel distances until such time as there were alternative new industries to employ the miners.<sup>114</sup>

Nor were the old and unemployed left out of the list of campaign promises. In 1966 the SNP promised an increase in social security payments including unemployment benefits and pensions from four pounds to seven pounds and four pounds to six pounds respectively.<sup>115</sup> Without the immediate prospect of government, the SNP could afford to display a largesse neither of the major parties could match.

As with Plaid Cymru, the timing of the SNP's emergence as a political force is ultimately connected with the failure and unpopularity of the 1966-70 Labour government. The SNP's breakthrough at Hamilton took place a few days before the government was forced to devalue the pound, a move resulting from the recognition that its other measures had failed. The vast majority of nationalist voters in the period were ex-Labour supporters disillusioned with their party but reluctant to take the more radical step of voting Conservative. Of the nationalist supporters in May 1968, a full 39% had voted Labour in 1966 compared to 13% who had voted Conservative and 13% who had voted nationalist.<sup>116</sup>

The success of the SNP in the 1966-68 period produced a bandwagon effect encouraging activists to abandon the Labour and Conservative parties in the hope of quicker promotion through nationalist ranks. Once the SNP had made self-government an issue, various Scottish institutions began lending their support. The enormously important fact of a separate Scottish press was demonstrated when the new SNP MP for Hamilton was given a weekly column in the Glasgow-based Daily Record and had one written about her in the Scottish Daily Express. Together these two newspapers had a circulation of over one million, about two-thirds of the total Scottish readership.<sup>117</sup> In addition, the most prestigious Scottish daily, The Scotsman, came out in favour of substantial devolution in 1968. It supported a confederal Britain with Scotland as a sovereign state within

the confederation. After the SNP victory at Hamilton, The Scotsman commented:

We hope that the SNP will continue to make gains at the expense of parties and candidates opposed to the devolution of political power from London.<sup>118</sup>

Similarly the Church of Scotland in 1968 declared its support for SNP policy in relation to the EEC, arguing that Scotland should have its own representation. It also claimed that minor measures of further devolution would not be enough to satisfy the Scots.<sup>119</sup> A unionist motion at the 1968 Church of Scotland General Assembly, reaffirming the loyalty of the General Assembly to the Crown and noting with approval what British governments had done for the welfare of Scotland was "not well-received" and was overwhelmingly rejected. By an equally large majority, the General Assembly called for a Royal Commission to make recommendations to

...enable the people of Scotland to choose the forms of self-government best suited to the nation's well-being.<sup>120</sup>

The Law Society of Scotland also voiced its support for a legislative assembly<sup>121</sup>, while the STUC's general council in a 1969 statement on self-government called for the establishment of a legislative assembly within the context of the United Kingdom.<sup>122</sup> In this tangible fashion, Scotland's institutions, a result of what Nairn called the country's 'quasi-national legacy' created an atmosphere conducive to further SNP success.

NORTH SEA OIL AND THE ADVANCE OF THE SNP (1970-74)

Nationalist successes in the late 1960s prompted a debate on the economic advantages and disadvantages of independence for Scotland and Wales. It was crucial to the cause of both nationalist parties that they demonstrate the economic viability of their respective countries under self-government. Only a few diehards were willing to accept separatism if it meant a decline in their living standards. Research for the Royal Commission on the Constitution discovered that in Scotland, this group amounted to only 12% of the electorate.<sup>123</sup> Similarly, a 1977 Gallup poll conducted in Scotland showed that, while 50% of Scots would support full independence if there were material advantages, only 12% would do so as a recognition of Scotland's national identity.<sup>124</sup>

A large proportion of the nationalist literature of this period was devoted to demonstrating that Scotland and Wales were economically viable. The arguments of Plaid Cymru and the SNP were remarkably similar, both no doubt benefitting from the other's material. Both pointed out that their nations were victims of economic mismanagement by London,<sup>125</sup> and that under present arrangements they actually subsidized England's greater prosperity.<sup>126</sup> While Britain was in decline, they alleged<sup>127</sup>, their nations were rich in resources and quite capable of 'going it alone'.<sup>128</sup> Those who remained skeptical were asked to look at the relative prosperity of other small nations such as the Scandinavian and Benelux countries.<sup>129</sup> Both

parties responded to fears of economic isolation by arguing that they were groundless. Supranational organizations such as the EEC removed the need to be tied to England.<sup>130</sup> Self-government in this situation would improve the bargaining power of Scotland and Wales as it would give them separate representation. To enter the EEC as part of the United Kingdom, on the other hand, could well mean further isolation on the 'periphery of the periphery'.

These arguments provoked a response from the unionist side. In 1968, two leading members of the Labour Party in Scotland published Don't Butcher Scotland's Future. This was essentially a restatement of what had for long been economic orthodoxy. The authors pointed to the visible decline of Scotland's heavy industries and argued that the rejuvenation of the Scotland economy was dependent on Westminster-led regional policies. Comparisons with Scandinavian countries were rejected as superficial. Unlike Scotland, these nations had "no archaic sections of industry requiring urgent modernization" and no serious urban housing problems such as that faced by Glasgow.<sup>131</sup>

Significantly, in light of future events, the authors argued that Scotland's lack of natural resources was a serious debilitating factor. In fact, the discovery of offshore gas in English waters made the need to remain tied to England more obvious than ever. Unfortunately for



Scotland, the authors pointed out, offshore gas was unlikely to be found in their waters. These were facts which the SNP had overlooked. They concluded therefore

Without its own source of this power, Scotland would have to import gas if fuel supplies are to keep pace with expanding demands.<sup>132</sup>

This argument was reinforced by treasury statements. In an attempt to clarify the arguments and counter-arguments about who subsidized whom, they produced a "Scottish budget" in 1969 showing that Scotland's share of central government expenditures in 1967-68 exceeded the revenue it produced in U.K. taxation by £466 million.<sup>133</sup> A similar "Welsh budget" produced in 1971 showed that in 1968-69, Wales incurred a deficit of £182 million, nearly 22% of Welsh expenditure.<sup>134</sup> Although these figures were challenged by the nationalists, it was the general view of independent economists that expenditure in both Scotland and Wales exceeded revenue by a "very substantial margin".<sup>135</sup>

In its written evidence to the Royal Commission in 1970, the Labour Party in Scotland officially endorsed the orthodox position in the strongest terms. Labour pointed out that Scotland, with a population of only five million and more than its fair share of decaying industries and social problems, did not possess a healthy economic base for independence. In the event of independence, Westminster, rather than taking action to send industries

to Scotland, would instead favour English regions. Scotland could not hope to compete with England for attracting foreign investment.<sup>136</sup> The Scottish economy, it was pointed out, was too small even to hold some of the large industries it now possessed, such as cars and steel. Labour concluded in unequivocal terms:

...the idea that a Scottish economy alone is strong enough to solve our social problems in the foreseeable future is quite absurd.<sup>137</sup>

An independent Scotland would only be possible if people were willing to accept a dramatic fall in living standards.<sup>138</sup> Quite clearly they were not.

The nationalists were on the difficult ground of having to stress higher unemployment and lower standards of living vis-a-vis England on the one hand, and their nations' potential prosperity on the other. It seemed easier to accept the arguments of the British parties. These were somewhat less subtle. Operating from the same premises of relative deprivation, they argued that Scotland and Wales needed subsidies and redistribution of industries from their more prosperous neighbour and would suffer without these. Independence was at best a step into the unknown, which only those sure of future prosperity as well as those preoccupied with culture could support.

At the 1970 general election, the vast majority of the Scottish and Welsh electorates seemed to accept the

orthodox view. Only 11.5% of the Welsh and 11.4% of the Scots voted nationalist. This latter figure coincidentally almost exactly equates with the proportion of people who said they would support independence even if it meant a decline in living standards.

The general consensus after the 1970 general election, to use a phrase from Scots law, was that the Nationalists' case was 'unproven'. In an article on the SNP published in 1971, Begg and Stewart saw this as the major weakness of the SNP, a fact explaining their 'decline':

They had been unable to muster strong arguments, let alone convincing proof, that an independent Scotland would be economically strong.

This situation was radically transformed by the discovery of large resources of oil off the coast of Scotland in 1970. The discovery of this new 'national' resource turned the arguments of the British parties around and lent immediate plausibility to the arguments the SNP had already developed. Before the OPEC crisis of late 1973 made oil even more valuable, the SNP claimed that the lowest estimate of revenue from the North Sea was £825 million. In terms which voters could grasp, they explained that this figure was equivalent to the total expenditure of all local authorities in Scotland.<sup>140</sup>

After OPEC raised its prices and the nature of the find became better known, estimates of revenue increased. In

1974, the Minister of State for Energy estimated the annual revenue from North Sea oil at £4 billion. A leading oil economist put the figure in excess of £5 billion.<sup>141</sup> To put these figures in perspective, the total identifiable public expenditure in Scotland in 1971-72 was £2,091 million.<sup>142</sup>

The discovery of oil made the disadvantages of maintaining the Union more salient than they had ever been. In simple terms, independence would give at least a considerable proportion of these revenues to a Scottish government; maintenance of the status quo would mean that they would go to the central exchequer in London. The SNP expressed this crisply:

The issues relating to the oil wealth are simple and they are clear: If Scotland had sovereignty similar to that of Norway, the oil in the Scottish sector of the North Sea would belong by international law to Scotland. Without self-government, the oil is 90% English, under English control from London.<sup>143</sup>

Under British control, oil would mean only limited benefits for Scotland. The oil industry is capital intensive, requiring a large labour force only in the initial stages of construction but subsequently employing only a small number of highly-skilled and supervisory personnel. Control over the lucrative royalty payments was needed if Scotland was to really benefit.

It was felt by many Scots that Britain would rapidly exploit the oil resource to pay off its mounting debts to the International Monetary Fund, to ease its growing social problems and to correct its trading imbalance. After the OPEC crisis of 1973, three quarters of this balance of payments deficit was due to importation of oil. A policy of rapid exploitation, however, was not in Scotland's interest. The risk of environmental damage to the natural beauty areas of North-east Scotland was great. There was already evidence of this. The 'dispersal' policy of the Heath Government put rapid exploitation ahead of environmental concerns. Compulsory purchase orders were used to overcome local objections. Planning permission, in Fulton's words

only reflected the profit parameters of oil exploration and production decisions of boardrooms.<sup>143</sup>

The same need for rapid exploitation led to extremely favourable terms for multinational oil corporations. The British royalty rate in 1973 was 12.5% compared to the U.S. rate of 16-2/3%. One nationalist source estimated that £ 2 billion had already been lost by 1973 because of this.<sup>145</sup>

The northeast of Scotland was particularly susceptible to uncontrolled extraction. It was still predominantly agricultural and the surplus of labour was small. The local economy could not respond to the stimulus offered by oil.<sup>146</sup> Apart from environmental damage, oil

developments led to housing and service price increases as well as an influx of labour from elsewhere.

As it seemed in 1974 that oil prices were likely to increase in the future, there were other benefits to be derived from slowing down the rate of extraction. Nationalists argued that 'Scotland's' resource was going to be wasted on the incurable British disease.<sup>147</sup>

British control of 'Scottish oil' in these conditions provided the classic confrontation between foreign control and indigenous peoples that Tom Nairn considered to be the key to 19th century nationalism. North Sea oil made the problems associated with external control, something previously lurking in books and in the minds of Marxist theorists, a salient issue visible to the whole Scottish electorate. Scots witnessed the ruthless exploitation of their precious national resource with little regard for the Scottish environment and with relatively little benefit to the Scottish people.<sup>148</sup> Thanks to SNP propaganda, foreign control, hitherto a vague abstraction, was now posed in graphic terms. The Economist pointed out that communities in the northeast especially, had discovered by 1974 how little control they had over developments which threatened to destroy their communities.<sup>149</sup>

Under Scottish control, the SNP pointed out, this situation would be transformed. An independent Scotland

would take its place alongside Norway as one of the wealthiest nations in Europe.<sup>150</sup> Fulton claimed that Scotland had the potential to become the "California of Europe".<sup>151</sup> A Scottish government would have a greater interest in stretching the lifetime of the oil resource as well as paying greater attention to conservation. Revenue from oil would allow a Scottish government to reverse the decay of the central industrial region by modernizing its industrial structure, financing new ventures, and repairing decaying infrastructure. Provision for the old and needy could be improved and Scotland's chronic housing problem resolved at last. It would also enable greater investment in education

...sufficient to guarantee Scotland's future well beyond the oil era and to provide the community with a wider appreciation of the better things in life.<sup>152</sup>

As a major oil exporting country, Scotland would have the healthiest balance of payments position in Europe.<sup>153</sup>

SNP propaganda promised Scots all kinds of attractive measures, from a new university at Inverness to an indemnity fund to protect against environmental damage. Their "It's Scotland's Oil" campaign translated the oil revenues into pounds per week for every Scot. In a section entitled "What's in it for you" they predicted a minimum of 20,000 new and 30,000 modernized houses per year and a reduction in the price of petrol to 25 pence a gallon.<sup>154</sup>

A well-planned 'oil' campaign was orchestrated by the SNP. By coincidence the nationalists had already planned February 1974 as a "National Oil Month" even before the general election was called for that time.<sup>155</sup> The SNP television broadcast before that election insisted that continuing Westminster rule would mean continuing inflation, while self-government would buy "prosperity stabilized prices, improved pensions, more housing and cheaper mortgages".<sup>156</sup>

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the existence of oil increased support for the SNP. In certain quarters of the business elite, fears of independence were dispelled. Business people who had previously shunned nationalism now threw their weight behind the SNP, the financier Hugh Fraser being the best known example. Financial institutions such as Noble Grossart backed the Nationalists. The joint directors of Polecon, the successful consulting group, became members, one of them standing as a SNP candidate in February 1974. John Donachy, the author of much of the influential Toothill Report on the Scottish economy, was also a nationalist.<sup>157</sup> For Marxists like Tony Dickson and Tom Nairn, this provided the vital ingredient of bourgeois support necessary for converting a sub-nationalism into an "effective separatism". Nairn wrote that North Sea oil

...awakened the Scottish bourgeoisie to a new consciousness of its historic separateness, and fostered a frank, restless discontent with the expiring British world.<sup>158</sup>



Certainly Fraser's conversion had a tangible effect. His paper, the Glasgow Herald, hitherto critical of the SNP, became much more sympathetic in its tone.<sup>159</sup> The acquisition of this section of the business elite added to the 'respectability' of the SNP. As Drucker and Brown commented: "Anyone could see that they could run an establishment."<sup>160</sup>

At the mass level too, the SNP won converts. A May 1974 poll showed that 66% of Scots supported its argument that Scotland would get very little benefit from oil because revenues would be swallowed up by the treasury.<sup>161</sup> The first by-election held on the oil issue occurred in Dundee East in March 1973, a constituency on the northwest coast in the centre of the oil developments. The seat was contested by the SNP's spokesman on oil, Gordon Wilson. The SNP vote was triple that of the 1970 general election, rising from 8.9% to 30.2%. Wilson finished a close second to Labour in what had been a relatively marginal seat for Conservatives and Labour. The main topic of Wilson's campaign in Dundee was "the inescapable relationship between self-government and Scotland's North Sea oil wealth".<sup>162</sup> Wilson won the seat in February 1974. It is one of the two seats retained by the SNP in 1979 and 1983.

Oil dominated the election of February 1974 both north and south of the border.<sup>163</sup> The salience of the oil

issue at the general election of February 1974 was increased by the effects of the recent Yom Kippur War of October 1973. The SNP share of the Scottish poll increased from 11.4% to 21.9%. At the next general election of October 1974, the SNP vote further increased to 30.4% making it the second largest party in Scotland. Of the seven seats won in February 1974, five were on the "oil side" of Scotland. Of the eleven seats won in October 1974, nine were in this area.

The oil issue and the increase in support for the SNP caused the British parties to react by making concessions to Scotland. This process of 'pork-barrel' politics reached its peak between the elections of February and October, 1974. The Conservative manifesto for October 1974 promised a Scottish Development Fund to "ensure that every part of Scotland derives the fullest benefit from oil".<sup>164</sup> The party also promised an end to tolls on Scottish bridges. Labour's manifesto claimed to have doubled the Regional Employment Premium, and extended the need for IDC's in the southeast of England. If re-elected, they promised to place the British National Oil Corporation in Scotland, move 7,000 civil servants from London to Scotland, spend £12 million on Glasgow's underground railway and establish a Scottish Development Agency with an unspecified share of oil revenues allocated to it. Labour even promised a special grant to the Glasgow Art Museum to purchase a Van Gogh.<sup>165</sup> All this helped the SNP... It is

hardly surprising that after the October election, 76% of Scots felt that the SNP had been "good for Scotland".<sup>166</sup> Commenting on the concessions before the October election,

The Economist declared:

If that is what Scotland gets with seven Nationalists there will be many Scots wondering what it will get with fifteen, and willing to use their votes to find out.<sup>167</sup>

One must also bear in mind the fact that the Liberal vote also increased significantly in England (and South Wales) between 1970 and February 1974, from 7.9% to 21.3%.<sup>168</sup> This suggests that the pan-British factors behind major party dealignment reinforced the effect of oil in Scotland. The oil-boom areas where the SNP was successful in winning seats were exactly where one would expect a non-class party to break through. They were areas of rapid social change with high numbers of migrant workers and a high level of 'increased expectations'. Incomes were higher and class divisions were less important than in other areas of Scotland. It is not surprising that these areas, like the New Towns at the local government level, should have so rapidly abandoned their allegiance to the class parties. In the more static communities of working-class Glasgow or middle-class Edinburgh, the SNP could not make inroads despite the presence of North Sea oil. The SNP failed to win a seat in either city at a general election throughout this period. These areas remained loyal to Labour and the Conservatives.

Oil, combined with the relative absence of cultural divisions in Scotland, helped to explain the greater electoral success of the SNP in relation to Plaid Cymru. While fewer people doubted the economic viability of an independent Scotland, many continued to be sceptical of Wales' prosperity after independence. The orthodox argument that an independent Wales would suffer a severe decline in living standards had never been successfully overcome by Plaid Cymru propaganda. The Welsh Liberal leader pointed out at the 1970 general election that not a single economist of any standing had come out in favour of an independent Wales.<sup>169</sup> The viability of a self-governing Wales was more doubtful than ever, given the coal rundown in the 1960s followed by the eclipse of steel in the 1970s, evidence of decline which Plaid Cymru, ironically, was the first to draw attention to. The discovery of 'Welsh oil' could well have helped Plaid Cymru to overcome the cultural barriers it faced in South Wales or even given rise to an alternative nationalist movement based on anglicized Wales.

Plaid Cymru was aware of the SNP's advantage and attempted to copy their arguments, producing in 1974 the pamphlets, Rich Welsh or Poor British and Welsh and Wealthy or British and Broke. Plaid Cymru even went so far as to claim during its February 1974 election campaign that an oil find off the Welsh coast, similar to that in the North Sea, was imminent:

Prospects are excellent for a rich oil field off the Welsh coast. This could make Wales one of the most prosperous countries in Europe. 170

At the October 1974 election, they repeated their claim with greater emphasis:

With the London government's proposal to set up an advisory Welsh oil panel, it is now certain that substantial strikes will be made in the Welsh sector of the Celtic sea before 1980.

This was very much a case, however, of a 'bird in the hand being worth two in the bush'. These claims may even have gone some way towards undermining the credibility of Plaid Cymru. The oil finds did not materialize and the argument did not help the Plaid Cymru vote in south Wales.

#### CONCLUSION

Nairn's thesis of 'over-development' is useful for explaining the increase in SNP support between 1970 and 1974. It does not, however, explain the popularity of that party before 1970. His work also fails to address the question of why Plaid Cymru emerged as a force in Welsh nationalism. A complete answer to these questions requires a treatment of both social and political factors. Social changes such as an increase in the rate of anglicization in rural Wales and a changing occupational structure in industrial Scotland played a part in the emergence of the respective nationalist parties. In addition, their success is, at least partly, due to their own efforts. This is

particularly true of Plaid Cymru. Both parties were also helped by the inability of the British parties to address adequately peripheral problems, a result of organizational weakness and policy failings.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), p. 64 and p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> I would like to thank Denis Balsom for giving me this poll during a trip to Western in 1984.

<sup>3</sup> Craig, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 210-11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 212-13.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>11</sup> See Ibid., pp. 207-08.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>14</sup> Gwynfor Evans, President of Plaid Cymru, gave the party's view on the new medium: "The box in the corner has replaced the family hearth...with unobtrusive efficiency it kills off the indigenous language and culture with a minimum of fuss and bother", Gwynfor Evans, Life or Death: The Struggle for the Language and a Welsh T.V. Channel (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, Circa 1980), p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Welsh T.V. channels broadcast one hundred minutes of Welsh language programming compared to 2,200 minutes of English language programmes. In addition Welsh people could receive English channels with no Welsh-language programmes.

<sup>16</sup> Saunders Lewis, The Fate of the Language (London: B.B.C. Publications, 1962).

<sup>17</sup> For the activities of the Welsh Language Society, see Peter Madgwick, The Politics of Rural Wales (London: Hutchinson, 1973) pp. 114-17.

<sup>18</sup> See the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire, Second Memorandum by the Council on its Activities, CMD 8844, 1953, for a treatment of the problems of rural Wales.

<sup>19</sup> See We Learn From Tryweryn (Plaid Cymru, 1957).

<sup>20</sup> At the 1966 general election, the Conservative candidate's election address had to be translated into Welsh by the Plaid Cymru candidate, Madgwick, op. cit., p. 303.

<sup>21</sup> See Wales With the Conservatives (Cardiff: Conservative and Unionist Central Office, 1964).

<sup>22</sup> Action Not Words For Wales (Cardiff: Wales and Marmouthshire Conservative and Unionist Council, 1966).

<sup>23</sup> Labour's 1959 policy statement for Wales had six pages on industry, five on social services, and a third of a page on the language, Forward With Labour: Labour's Plan For Wales (London: Labour Party, 1959). A twenty-three page policy statement in 1963, similarly devoted less than half a page to linguistic concerns, Signposts to the New Wales (London: Labour Party, 1963), p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> The MPs for Pontypool and Bedwelty, Leo Abse and Neil Kinnock, were particularly vocal in this respect. See John Osmond, "The Referendum and the English-Language Press", The Welsh Veto (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), p. 161.

<sup>25</sup> Forward With Labour, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Cited Alan Butt-Philip, The Welsh Question (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), p. 293.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> See Madgwick, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>30</sup> Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Denis Balsom, "Plaid Cymru", H. M. Drucker, ed., Multi-Party Britain (London: MacMillan, 1979), p. 136.

<sup>33</sup> Rawkins described "a campaign of attrition by a growing band of Modernists to bring the party into the world of modern Wales, to drag the movement away from total pre-occupation with the cultural strongholds of the North and West", Philip M. Rawkins, Minority Nationalism and the Advanced Industrial State: A Case Study of Contemporary Wales, Ph.D. Thesis; University of Toronto, 1975, p. 368.



- <sup>34</sup> Gwynfor Evans, Self-Government For Wales and a Common Market for the Nations of Britain (Plaid Cymru, 1960), p. 8.
- <sup>35</sup> Butt-Philip, op. cit., p. 111.
- <sup>36</sup> Western Mail, July 12, 1966, "Can Labour Hold the Lady Megan Vote?".
- <sup>37</sup> Gwynfor Evans, Black Paper on Wales (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1968).
- <sup>38</sup> 20 Questions and Answers (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, Circa 1969), p. 8.
- <sup>39</sup> Ewrys Roberts, "Economic Trends in South Wales", Welsh Dominion, December, 1968, pp. 15-17.
- <sup>40</sup> 20 Questions and Answers, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
- <sup>41</sup> The Economic Plan for Wales (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1970), pp. 283-84.
- <sup>42</sup> See Rich Welsh or Poor British (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1974), para. 1.6.
- <sup>43</sup> The Economic Plan For Wales, op. cit., p. 285.
- <sup>44</sup> Madgwick, op. cit., pp. 169-70.
- <sup>45</sup> James Griffiths, Pages From Memory (London: Dent, 1969), p. 177.
- <sup>46</sup> Western Mail, March 30, 1962, p. 2.
- <sup>47</sup> See Madgwick, op. cit., pp. 176-77.
- <sup>48</sup> I would like to thank Denis Balsom for his helpful comments on this point during a visit to Western in 1984. Philip Cooke reaches a similar conclusion in a recent paper. According to him, the party was more successful in northwest Wales "because Plaid Cymru could offer the technical managerial efficiency which was then seen as essential to state-induced regional development, but importantly with the sensitivity to seek to ensure the maintenance and viability of traditional Welsh-speaking communities", "Recent Theories of Political Regionalism: A Critique and an Alternative Proposal", International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, VIII, 1984, p. 563. Also see Rawkins's impressive study, op. cit.
- <sup>49</sup> Black Paper on Wales, op. cit., pp. 25-26.
- <sup>50</sup> Rich Welsh or Poor British, op. cit., pp. 1-7.

- <sup>51</sup> David Butler and Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of February, 1974 (London: MacMillan, 1974), p. 164.
- <sup>52</sup> Power For Wales (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1974).
- <sup>53</sup> David Butler and Donald Stokes, Political Change in Britain, Second Edition (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1974), Chapter 18.
- <sup>54</sup> David McKie, The Decade of Disillusion (London: MacMillan, 1972), pp. 1-5.
- <sup>55</sup> Peter Sinclair, "The Economy, A Study in Failure", D. McKie, Ibid., p. 94.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 3.
- <sup>57</sup> Butler and Stokes, op. cit., p. 197.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Craig, op. cit., pp. 64-66.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Western Mail, "Can Labour Hold the Lady Megan Vote?", July 12, 1966.
- <sup>62</sup> Cited, Rawkins, op. cit., p. 705.
- <sup>63</sup> Butt-Philip, op. cit., pp. 156-57.
- <sup>64</sup> David Budge and Ian Urwin, Scottish Political Behaviour (London: Longmans, 1966), p. 119.
- <sup>65</sup> The Case For Scottish Devolution: Memorandum of Evidence Submitted by the Scottish Covenant Association to the Royal Commission on Scottish Affairs, 1953, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>66</sup> Sandy McIntosh, 100 Home Rule Questions (SNP, 1966), p. 46.
- <sup>67</sup> It also explains, incidentally, the simultaneous emergence of a strong Liberal presence in England which ultimately gave way to the SDP/Liberal Alliance. There are a spate of books describing the social changes in British society during this period and their effect on the weakening of the class/party nexus. The most important is Butler and Stokes, op. cit. This deals with the 1963-74 period. Bo Sarvlik and Ivor Crewe, The Decade of Dealignment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) deals with the 1974-79 period while A. Heath, R. Jowell and J. Curtice, How Britain Votes (London: Pergamon Press, 1985) discusses the 1983 general election.

<sup>68</sup> Butler and Stokes, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>69</sup> Heath et al, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>70</sup> For increase in consumption and wages in Scotland see Abstract of Regional Statistics, 1963 and 1974.

<sup>71</sup> See Abstract of Scottish Statistics, 1980.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> The link between the growth of the white-collar workforce and the decline of class consciousness has been thoroughly explored in J. H. Goldthorpe and J. Lockwood, The Affluent Worker (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 45-72. Also, see J. H. Lumley, White Collar Unionism In Britain (London: Methuen, 1973) for a discussion of how these unions differed from the more traditional blue-collar ones. For the effect of growing affluence, including private ownership of houses, on class voting, see Richard Rose, "Simple Abstractions and Complex Realities" in Richard Rose, ed., Electoral Behaviour: A Comparative Handbook (New York: Free Press, 1973); Also see Butler and Stokes, op. cit., Chapter 9. For the effect of increasing access to further education on the weakening of the class alignment, see Heath et al, op. cit., p. 65 and Anthony Richmond, "The United Kingdom" in Arnold Rose, ed., The Institutions of Advanced Societies (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 54-65 and C.A.R. Crosland, The Future of Socialism (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961), pp. 185-89. Butler and Stokes felt that class division weakened as memories of the depression faded, op. cit., p. 194, while Eric Hobsbawm felt that working class solidarity was seriously damaged by 'economistic' strikers in the increasing public sector, in "Forward March of Labour Halted?", Marxism Today, 1978, p. 284. Accompanying these social changes was a narrowing in the class image of the major parties. See Barry Hindess, The Decline of Working Class Politics (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971) and David McKie, op. cit., pp. 2-4.

<sup>74</sup> H. J. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 186.

<sup>75</sup> The Scottish Economy: Plan For Expansion, 1966, CMND 2864, para 151.

<sup>76</sup> Hanham, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>77</sup> See Goldthorpe and Lockwood's discussion of Luton, a town with a similar environment to that of the Scottish new towns, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

<sup>78</sup> In 1968, 27% of the Scottish middle class and 30% of the working class supported the SNP. This compared with

50%-26% for the Conservatives and 13%-33% for Labour, Richard Rose, op. cit., p. 516.

<sup>79</sup> David McKie, "By-Elections of the Wilson Government" in John Ramsden and C. Cook, eds., By-Elections in British Politics (London: MacMillan, 1973), p. 240.

<sup>80</sup> Billy Wolfe, Scotland Lives (Edinburgh: MacDonald, 1973), p. 135.

<sup>81</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>82</sup> Housing Minister Margaret Thatcher campaigned on major new incentives for home-owners. This was an unpopular policy in Scotland where the majority of people lived in heavily subsidized public housing. David Butler and Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of October 1974 (London: MacMillan, 1975), p. 24.

<sup>83</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, 1974, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Keating and Denis Bleiman, Labour and Scottish Nationalism (London: MacMillan, 1979), p. 154.

<sup>85</sup> John Ramsden and Chris Cook, Trends in British Politics (London: MacMillan, 1978), p. 147.

<sup>86</sup> McKie, in Ramsden and Cook, eds., op. cit., pp. 240-41.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, 1974, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>89</sup> John Mackintosh, "Labour and Scotland", New Statesman, 16 January, 1976, p. 55. My underlining.

<sup>90</sup> Ramsden and Cook, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>91</sup> Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>92</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, 1974, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>93</sup> Craig, op. cit., pp. 40-42.

<sup>94</sup> Budge and Urwin, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

<sup>95</sup> The founder of the SNP, John MacCormick, remarked upon the amateurish nature of the early SNP in his autobiography: "Ours was, of course, an organization of amateurs...we all had a hatred and a distrust of a 'political machine' and for that very reason we failed to appreciate the very formidable power of the professionally organized parties...we failed to realize that the advent of universal suffrage, unleashing the power of the vote of thousands of politically illiterate electors, had made the

evolution of the party machine inevitable", The Flag in the Wind (London: Gollancz, 1955), p. 61.

<sup>96</sup> Wolfe, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>97</sup> SNP and You (SNP, 1966), p. 27.

<sup>98</sup> Wolfe, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>99</sup> David Butler and Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, The British General Election of 1970 (London: MacMillan Press, 1971), p. 447.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 450.

<sup>101</sup> McKie, in Ramsden and Cook, eds., op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>102</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>103</sup> Wolfe, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>104</sup> Opportunity in the Air: A Policy for Civil Aviation in Scotland (SNP, 1964).

<sup>105</sup> Clear Ahead for Scottish Roads: The SNP Road Plan for Scotland (SNP, 1966).

<sup>106</sup> SNP and the Highland and Islands (SNP, 1966).

<sup>107</sup> eg. Blueprints for Argyll; Glasgow; South Angus.

<sup>108</sup> SNP and You (SNP, 1964).

<sup>109</sup> Scotland: Facts and Comparisons (SNP, 1969).

<sup>110</sup> Scotland vs. Whitehall: Winnie Ewings Black Book (SNP, 1969).

<sup>111</sup> SNP and You (SNP, 1966), p. 16.

<sup>112</sup> The Scotland We Seek (SNP, 1973), p. 13.

<sup>113</sup> Aims and Policy of SNP (SNP, 1963), p. 5.

<sup>114</sup> Action Now: Coal and Power (SNP, 1968).

<sup>115</sup> SNP and You (SNP, 1966).

<sup>116</sup> J. M. Bocher and D. T. Denver, "The Decline of the SNP - An Alternative View", Political Studies, 30, p. 312.

<sup>117</sup> 1,021,000 out of a total Scottish readership of 1,709,000 (1976 figures) David Hutchison, "Ownership, Finance and Control of the Media", D. Hutchison, ed.,

Headlines: The Media in Scotland (Edinburgh: E.U.S.P.B., 1978), pp. 78-79.

118 How Scotland Should be Governed: The Scotsman States Its Policy on Self-Government, February 3, 5, 6, 7, 1968, p. 3.

119 Adult Christian Education Committee, Scottish Nationhood (Edinburgh: St. Andrew's Press, 1968), p. 10.

120 Ibid., p. 14.

121 John Mercer, Scotland: The Devolution of Power (London: John Calder, 1978), p. 219.

122 Scottish Trade Union Congress, Statement on Scottish Self-Government, 1969, para. 21.

123 CMND 5460, The Royal Commission on the Constitution, Vol. 1, 1973, para. 374.

124 H. M. Drucker and G. Brown, The Politics of Nationalism and Devolution (London: Longman, 1980), p. 49.

125 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 24; and G. Evans, Black Paper on Wales, op. cit.

126 SNP and You, 1966, p. 3; G. Evans, Self-Government for Wales and a Common Market for the Nations of Britain, op. cit., p. 6.

127 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 159; Rich Welsh or Poor British, op. cit., para. 3.22.

128 David Simpson, Independent Scotland: An Economic Analysis (SNP, 1969), p. 23; Twenty Questions and Answers, op. cit., p. 2.

129 W. Ewing, Scotland vs Whitehall, Winnie Ewing's Black Book (SNP, 1969), p. 23; Twenty Questions and Answers, op. cit., p. 2.

130 Simpson, op. cit., p. 9; 20 Home Rule Questions (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1966), p. 28.

131 Jim Sillars and Alex Eadie, Don't Butcher Scotland's Future (1968), p. 5.

132 Ibid., p. 4.

133 The Royal Commission on the Constitution, CMND 5460, (HMSO, 1973), para. 459.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid., para. 461.

136 The Government of Scotland: Evidence of the Labour Party in Scotland to the Commission on the Constitution, March, 1970.

137 Ibid., p. 1.

138 Ibid., p. 7.

139 H. M. Begg and J. A. Stewart, "The National Movement in Scotland", Journal of Contemporary History, V. 6, 1971, p. 151.

140 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 60.

141 One billion here equals 1,000,000,000. In Britain it used to mean 1,000,000,000,000 but is now commonly used to indicate the smaller figure.

142 Ian Fulton, "Scottish Oil", Political Quarterly, 1974, pp. 310-11.

143 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 159.

144 Fulton, op. cit., p. 315.

145 Nicholas Dekker, Reality of Scotland's Oil (Edinburgh: circa 1973).

146 See C. Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism, 1707-1977 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977), pp. 256-59.

147 As Nairn wrote: "The Scots know quite well that the North Sea will be sucked dry to keep this Model T Leviathan going", op. cit., p. 191.

148 See Victor Kiernan, "A Scottish Road to Socialism", New Left Review, 93, 1975, p. 194.

149 The Economist, "The Nats push on", May 18, 1974.

150 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 164.

151 Fulton, op. cit., p. 322.

152 Dekker, op. cit., p. 3.

153 Ibid., p. 9.

154 Butler and Kavanagh, 1974, op. cit., p. 89.

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid., p. 165.

157 Economist, "Scottish Elections: As you were", May 18, 1974.

- 158 Nairn, op. cit., p. 172. Also see Tony Dickson, "Class and Nationalism in Scotland", Scottish Journal of Sociology, 1978, pp. 143-162. Dickson wrote, "After 1970 the elements of bourgeois support began to colonise the movement, seeing the possibility of recreating a native bourgeoisie based on exploitation of the surplus from North Sea oil", p. 157.
- 159 Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 142-43.
- 160 Drucker and Brown, op. cit., p. 44.
- 161 Economist, May 18, 1974, p. 27.
- 162 Wolfe, op. cit., p. 159.
- 163 See "Scottish Eyes on North Sea Oil", Manchester Guardian Weekly, February 23, 1974, pp. 5-7.
- 164 Cited W. L. Miller, The End of British Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 70.
- 165 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
- 166 Ibid., pp. 100.
- 167 Cited, Power for Wales, Plaid Cymru Election Manifesto, October, 1974 (Plaid Cymru, 1974).
- 168 Craig, op. cit., pp. 42-43.
- 169 Butt-Philip, op. cit.
- 170 Rich Welsh or Poor British (Plaid Cymru, 1974).
- 171 Power for Wales, op. cit.



## CHAPTER SIX: SCOTTISH AND WELSH NATIONALISM AFTER 1974

The electoral breakthrough of the SNP in 1974 was so substantial that Tom Nairn, writing in 1977, regarded the 'break-up of Britain' as inevitable. The erstwhile dominant class cleavage, which had performed a centripetal role in British politics, had been replaced in Scotland by an ethnic cleavage which was on the verge of ripping the polity asunder. Oil, in Nairn's words, had converted a Scottish "sub nationalism" into an "effective separatism".<sup>1</sup> In the period since oil was discovered, nationalism in Scotland had made "rapid, apparently irresistible strides".<sup>2</sup> Other authors concurred. Brand and McCrone also felt that the increasing support for the SNP pointed towards Scotland's eventual separation from the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Both Ivor Crewe and Keith Webb wrote in terms of a permanent realignment in Scottish politics, with ethnicity now of primary importance.<sup>4</sup>

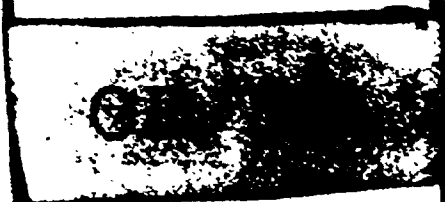
The results of the 1979 general election, however, revealed that the conclusions of Nairn and the others were somewhat precipitate. Support for the SNP plummeted from 30% of the Scottish vote in October 1974 to 17% in 1979 and 11% in 1983.<sup>5</sup> In the latter election, it was pushed into a distant fourth place. The most significant fact about Scottish politics in this later period was not a rising support for separatism, but rather the increasing dominance

of the Labour party there at a time when its fortunes in the rest of Britain were on the wane.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the SNP's support, that of Plaid Cymru in Welsh-speaking Wales, remained resilient throughout this period. This chapter will explain these developments.

Nairn's weakness can be explained by his misunderstanding of the nature of the SNP's support. Rather than being united on a desire for separatism, the party's supporters ranged from those who demanded national independence to those who would be satisfied with only a moderate degree of devolution. Survey evidence from May 1974, for example, found that only 55% of SNP supporters wanted independence.<sup>7</sup> Those SNP supporters who were not ideologically committed to their party's goal of independence, were more weakly attached to the party than those who were. Survey evidence revealed that, of the SNP voters in 1974, only 32% of those wanting a moderate devolution identified with the party compared to 96% of those wanting independence.<sup>8</sup> Even at its height in 1974, a substantial portion of the SNP's support was volatile.

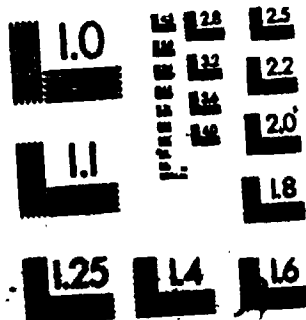
Furthermore, while the ethnic cleavage may well have been more important than the class cleavage to SNP voters, it was not the case that the former had completely eradicated the latter. In 1976, for example, one study found that the SNP, rather than a cohesive unit united by national identity, was in fact a relatively unstable

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coalition of people who still nursed some class feelings.<sup>9</sup> Others discovered that class consciousness was not noticeably lower among SNP followers than among those of the Labour and Conservative party.<sup>10</sup> This heterogeneity raised the possibility of much of the SNP support being co-opted by one of the major parties offering a progressive policy on self-government.

The Labour party had indeed greeted the initial SNP victories in 1967-68 with some concessions on the devolution question. The government half-heartedly gave in to Richard Crossman's request for an examination of the devolution question by the establishment of a royal commission under Lord Crowther to examine the constitution.<sup>11</sup> It was widely felt, however, that the purpose of the commission was to sidetrack devolution rather than promote it, a view supported by the fact that two royal commission's working on local government reform were asked to continue despite the establishment of the Crowther Commission.

Scottish Labour was, in fact, opposed to any concession on self-government, putting forward its view in unequivocal terms in evidence to the Crowther Commission in 1970.

We have considered long and carefully the possibility of a separate Parliament, Assembly, Council, or some other elected authority, with executive or legislative powers, covering the whole of Scotland and we feel strongly that any such body would be divisive and would inevitably create an

unfavourable environment for the methods of government which we require.<sup>12</sup>

Instead Labour offered the concession of the Scottish Grand Committee meeting in Edinburgh, but did not even wholeheartedly support this, fearing it might contribute to a widening breach between the Scots and English.<sup>13</sup> In its oral evidence, Scottish Labour declared that a United Kingdom Conservative government would be preferable to any sort of devolved assembly.<sup>14</sup> Scottish Labour's opposition to devolution was further indicated by the Scottish Labour MPs overwhelming endorsement of the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1973, before the Royal Commission on the Constitution even reported. A few isolated figures, such as Professor John Mackintosh MP, complained that they could hardly be taking devolution seriously.<sup>15</sup> In October 1973, with the Royal Commission report imminent and a by-election in the Labour seat of Govan pending, the Scottish executive of the Labour party again flatly rejected an assembly.<sup>16</sup>

The rejection of legislative devolution was followed by the loss of Govan to the SNP, and this while Labour was in opposition. At the general election of February 1974, the Labour vote in Scotland declined from its 1970 total of 44% to 36% while the SNP's increased from 11% to 21%. With a minority Labour government elected in February, another election was expected. A 'secret poll' conducted by MORI for Labour showed that the party would lose a further

thirteen seats if it did not take action on devolution.<sup>17</sup> Labour's weakness in Scotland as in the United Kingdom generally, was a reflection of its crumbling base. Its past electoral dominance based on solid working-class support had allowed Labour to effectively suppress the 'national' question in Scotland. As partisanship weakened, however, the party was forced to buttress its receding class base with a progressive attitude towards self-government.

This helps to explain why, shortly after the opening of the February 1974 parliament, Prime Minister Wilson promised a White paper and a bill on devolution.<sup>18</sup> Lord Crowther-Hunt, a pro-devolution member of the Royal Commission on the Constitution, was brought into the government as constitutional advisor. Less concerned with electoral expediency than Transport House, the Scottish Executive of the Labour party complicated matters by again completely rejecting devolution in June 1974. The National Executive Committee (NEC), regarding this as tantamount to political suicide, put pressure on their Scottish counterparts to recall the Scottish Conference in August 1974. The result was a resolution which reconciled self-government with the economic unity of the United Kingdom. It called for

...the setting up of a directly elected Assembly with legislative powers within the context of the political and economic unity of the United Kingdom.<sup>19</sup>

The day before the October 1974 election was announced and three weeks before polling, Labour produced a White paper on devolution entitled Democracy and Devolution: Proposals for Scotland and Wales.<sup>20</sup> This proposed a legislative assembly for Scotland with an executive controlling most of the Scottish Office powers. It was to be financed by a block grant and was subject to a veto by the Secretary of State. Wales was to receive an elected Assembly with executive powers.

Labour issued a separate Scottish manifesto for the first time in October 1974. This pledged a Scottish Assembly if elected. This pragmatic shift in policy helps to explain why the Labour vote in Scotland in October 1974 held steady while the 'oil-fired' SNP continued to make substantial inroads at the expense of the Conservatives. One study found that Labour would have lost fifteen of the forty-one seats it won in October to the SNP, had it not made concessions on devolution.<sup>21</sup> As it was, Labour's share of the Scottish poll remained at 36%. The SNP increased from 21% to 30%, taking four Conservative seats. The Conservatives vote declined from 32% to 24%.<sup>22</sup> Labour might have done even better in October 1974 had it not been for the ease with which the SNP succeeded in portraying them as "belated converts".<sup>23</sup>

In November 1975, the Labour government presented its second White paper: Our Changing Democracy: Devolution to

Scotland and Wales.<sup>24</sup> Most significantly this contained the provision enabling the Secretary of State to veto Assembly bills not only on the grounds of 'ultra vires' but also if the proposed matter was "unacceptable on policy grounds". This aroused much opposition in Scotland and played into the SNP's hands. The powerful legal establishment in Scotland argued that the concept of a legislative body being subordinate to a member of the executive was "offensive" to the principles of the British political tradition.<sup>25</sup> One nationalist MP claimed that the Scots "expected to be disappointed. They had not expected to be insulted".<sup>26</sup> Also in the wake of the White paper, a separate Scottish Labour Party was established by Labour MP Jim Sillars. Within a month of November, opinion polls indicated that support for Labour had fallen from around 10% ahead of the SNP to about 3% behind.<sup>27</sup>

The reaction to the offending White paper prompted a third to be published in August 1976, Devolution to Scotland and Wales: Supplementary Statement.<sup>28</sup> This abandoned the Secretary of State's power to overrule an Assembly bill on policy grounds and removed jurisdiction over the Assembly's 'vires' to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Scotland received wider powers in the field of Scotland's private law. Importantly, Scotland also received responsibility for the recently established Scottish Development Association.



These proposals formed the basis of Labour's Scotland Act of 1978. Further doubts about Labour's commitment to devolution were diluted in 1976 by the adoption of devolution as official policy by both the Labour party annual conference and the Trade Union Congress.<sup>29</sup> As the devolution legislation went through parliament in 1978 support swung back to Labour from the SNP. In the second half of 1978, following the passage of the legislation, Labour's support in Scotland remained steady at around 50% in the monthly polls, the SNP around 20% and the Conservatives at 26%. This was Labour's best showing in Scotland ever, in either polls or general elections. The SNP, on the other hand, had lost a third of its October 1974 support.<sup>30</sup> At a key by-election in 1978 in Hamilton, Labour in government, increased its share of the poll from 47% to 51% while the SNP slipped in what was a favourable seat from 39% to 33%.<sup>31</sup>

By 1979, much of the SNP's 'soft' support had moved to Labour. Of those who had considered Scottish government to be the most important issue in 1974, 63% had supported the SNP and 17% Labour. In 1979, the respective figures were 30% and 30%.<sup>32</sup> Labour's support was much stronger in those groups wanting substantial devolution than with those favouring the status quo. In 1974 the reverse had been the case. Whereas in 1974, the SNP had monopolized the politics of devolution, by 1979, its natural support had to be shared with Labour. In a 1979 memo, SNP chairman, Billy

Wolfe, admitted that Labour's increasing credibility on devolution had undermined his party's support.<sup>33</sup>

Labour's success in winning over the SNP's moderate support by 1979, thereby defusing the nationalist momentum, was not considered possible by Nairn. Writing in 1977, he had claimed Labour's devolution proposals were more likely to increase support for the SNP:

Unable to contemplate radical reform of the centre, London government has blundered empirically into the usual tactic of graduated response. One commentary after another has explored the self-contradictory nature of the proposals, their liability to generate conflict and escalation of nationalist sentiment and demands.<sup>34</sup>

The appeal of Labour to working-class sympathisers among the SNP's supporters was intensified by a shift to the right on the part of the SNP parliamentary leadership. The nationalists had traditionally prided themselves on their ability to remain neutral on class politics. This lay at the core of their appeal to those disillusioned with both the major parties. In his autobiography in 1973, Billy Wolfe, the SNP chairman, had proclaimed the findings of a survey indicating the lack of interest in class politics in the SNP executive.<sup>35</sup> In 1979, however, Wolfe could criticize his parliamentary group for abandoning 'social democracy'.<sup>36</sup>

The majority of SNP MPs sat for seats formerly held by Conservatives. The shift to the right was partly an

attempt to consolidate their base and partly a reaction to their feeling that the Conservative support was on the verge of collapse in Scotland. In 1979, Wolfe related how the SNP MPs had publicly torn up telegrams from the STUC and other unions regarding the Shipbuilding and Aircraft Industries bill which was felt to adversely affect the interests of Scottish workers.<sup>37</sup> The rightward swing led to the SNP being dubbed as 'Tartan Tories' by Labour sympathizers.

Other internal squabbles helped to dull the shiny image the nationalists had in 1974. Traditionally, they had prided themselves on being more democratic than the conventional parties, reserving considerable power and influence for the party membership. The election of eleven MPs in October 1974 caused major problems. During the 1974-79 parliament, the SNP continuously insisted on more autonomy than the parliamentary party was willing to grant.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, oil was no longer the central issue in 1979 that it was in 1974. This was the case for a number of reasons. As the question of who owned the oil was debated by the parties, it became clear that the benefits were more questionable than at first assumed. Legal experts pointed out that only a portion of the North Sea oil would fall under the jurisdiction of an independent Scotland. A considerable share would remain under

England's control.<sup>39</sup> The Shetland islands also laid claim to some of the oil and strongly expressed its unwillingness to be ruled from Edinburgh.<sup>40</sup> Academic studies emerged which threw doubt on the oil as a panacea for Scotland's economic and social problems. These warned of inflation, a fall in the price of oil, and of its limited life-span.

Even more important perhaps, was the growing realization that the very dependence on the oil revenues which nationalists often referred to meant that a 'declining' Britain could not afford to give them up. Oil was Britain's life belt, debts borrowed on the strength of it were predicted to reach 21 billion by 1980.<sup>41</sup> There was talk of a possibility of Westminster demanding repayment of subsidies if the demand for separatism grew.<sup>42</sup> As Tom Nairn himself realized:

If the Scots had come upon a national resource which offended no one else - like Norwegian water-power at the beginning of this century - things might be better. As it is, they are laying claim to a resource which is bound to draw them into an external conflict with a powerful neighbour.<sup>43</sup>

One author, writing in 1975, even pointed out that in "extreme circumstances", the British government could be expected to resort to "rough confrontational tactics" and might even feel compelled to resort to "military intervention to maintain the territorial integrity of Britain and access to North Sea oil".<sup>44</sup>

The SNP's poor performance at the general election of May 1979 was also partly a result of the fact that a referendum had been held on the question of a Scottish Assembly two months earlier. While 51% of the poll in Scotland voted for an assembly, they did not constitute the 40% of the electorate required by the Scotland Act.<sup>45</sup> The referendum campaign exhausted the self-government issue. In addition, support for independence dropped sharply between 1978 and 1979. While for most of the 1970s the proportion of Scots wanting independence had remained steady at around 18%, by 1979 this had slipped to 12%.<sup>46</sup> It would seem that many Scots drew back when faced with the reality of self-government.

Furthermore, the nature of the 1979 election weakened the position of the SNP even more. Scots, no longer confident of a secure oil-based future, were faced with a contest at the British level between a Conservative party committed to 'free enterprise' policies and a Labour government intent on continuing its policy of redistributing regional resources.

As with its policy on devolution, the Labour party's regional policies appealed to the Scottish mood with great success. Their position was certainly more acceptable than the Conservatives' plan to allow the 'market' to distribute resources within the United Kingdom. Labour proposed that the oil revenues should benefit all of Britain with some

going to the Scottish Development Association. These oil revenues would be used primarily to boost industry, housing and education in the depressed areas of the United Kingdom. One of the largest recipients of these policies would be the Strathclyde area of Scotland, where 75% of Scots lived. This compromise had the advantage of being consistent with socialist principles while benefitting the bastion of Labour strength in Scotland.<sup>47</sup>

Whereas Labour's support in the United Kingdom dropped from 39% in 1974 to 36% in 1979, its support in Scotland increased from 36% to 41%. The SNP vote declined from 30% to 17%. Scotland opted for Labour against the British trend partly because Scots of all classes found Labour's regional policies more attractive than the monetarist alternative of Thatcherism. Other peripheral areas in northern England also swung to Labour against the national trend, though not to the same extent as in Scotland where the self-government issue reinforced Labour's position.<sup>48</sup> Conversely, the Conservatives won support from all classes in the south of England where free enterprise was a better deal than regional distribution. A north-south cleavage was established in British politics. In this conflict between two starkly opposing policies advocated by the parties of government, the SNP were merely onlookers.

In the 1979-1983 period, the SNP vote declined further from 17% to 11%. In an atmosphere of declining expectations and increasing unemployment, nationalism once again seemed irrelevant, just as it had done during the depression of the 1930s. Furthermore, Labour, in opposition, was more free to support Scottish rights than in government, where it had to balance the sometimes conflicting claims of its various regional groups. The party in Scotland usurped even more of the SNP's support by taking a more radical line on devolution. After 1979, Scottish Labour committed itself to a devolution policy which included taxation and economic powers greater than those included in the Scotland Act.<sup>49</sup>

As Labour became increasingly a party of the periphery at the 1979 and 1983 elections, elements within it began to question the 'mandate' of the Conservatives to govern Scotland, where it had won only a minority of seats. Some Labour MPs threatened obstructive tactics in Parliament. They pointed to the continuing decline of the 'Scottish' economy, exacerbated by the non-interventionist policies of Thatcher's Conservatives.<sup>50</sup> In 1984, the Scottish Labour executive urged all its local constituency parties, trade unions and party members to join the all-party "Campaign for a Scottish Assembly".<sup>51</sup>

The SNP's demise was hastened by the appearance of a powerful new 'middle of the road' force in Scottish

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politics; the SDP/Liberal Alliance. This grouping also supported self-government and challenged the nationalists for the allegiance of those votes disillusioned with the two major parties. In its first attempt at the general election of 1983, the Alliance achieved 24% of the Scottish poll, up from the Liberal's tally of 9% in 1979.<sup>52</sup>

In this atmosphere, the SNP, disillusioned and no longer challenging for power, reacted by becoming more extreme. The party abandoned support for devolution as a 'half-way house' and decided to advocate independence only. The party even flirted with civil disobedience.<sup>53</sup> This hastened its demise and led to the party being once more relegated to the fringe of British politics.

In Wales, while Plaid Cymru's share of the Welsh poll declined slightly from 10% in 1974 to 8% in 1979, all of this 'decline' took place in south Wales where the party's support had always been meagre. Its position in the Welsh-speaking areas remained consistent despite some concessions from Welsh Labour on the self-government issue (See Table 5.1).

In its evidence to the Crowther commission, Welsh Labour called for "an All-Wales Council built into the structure of re-organized local government".<sup>54</sup> Eventually, in the Wales Act of 1978, the Labour government provided for an elected administrative assembly for



Wales.<sup>55</sup> These concessions, however, did not succeed in promoting a mass exodus from Plaid Cymru to Labour. Labour's proposals were not substantive enough to satisfy the Welsh-speaking minority. The proposed Welsh assembly was a pale reflection of its Scottish counterpart. It lacked any legislative powers, the justification being that Wales, unlike Scotland, did not possess a separate legal system. Even more importantly the legislation did not incorporate much sought after concessions on the language question. There was no provision, for example, for a Welsh language television channel or a bilingual civil service.

Labour was incapable of conceding more. Not only had it been deprived, paradoxically, of much of its Welsh-speaking membership by the Plaid Cymru victories of 1974, but it also had to consider opposition to self-government in the much more electorally important industrial south. To vocal Labour spokesmen there, the party had already conceded far too much to the Welsh-speaking minority. South Wales' Labour MPs conducted a strong anti-assembly campaign on the referendum on the grounds that Welsh-speakers would benefit at the expense of English-speakers. Pontypool Labour MP, Leo Abse, warned of the potential creation of a Welsh-speaking elite.<sup>56</sup> The campaign of Labour spokesmen in the south and their success in defeating the proposal for an assembly created much bitterness in the Welsh-speaking areas<sup>57</sup>, and further helped to prevent movement to Labour among Plaid Cymru

supporters at the subsequent general election in May 1979. The results of the referendum itself, whereby only 20% of the poll supported the creation of an assembly, largely removed any incentive Labour had to pander to those demanding self-government.<sup>58</sup> It also effectively destroyed self-government as a major issue in Welsh politics.

### Conclusion

Plaid Cymru's isolation in the rural Welsh-speaking areas is at once a manifestation of its weakness and its resilience. It is not surprising that the two Plaid Cymru MPs from Welsh-speaking constituencies should comfortably retain their seats in 1979 and again in 1983.

The SNP's support, on the other hand, was not connected to anything so tangible as a declining language. Based instead on the need for more self-government and economic improvement without basic cultural content, the SNP's support was open to cooptation by the Labour party. The aims it pursued were more bargainable than the issues surrounding the Welsh language. Labour could make major concessions on the issue of Scottish self-government without alienating any substantial segment of its support. This was not the case with the demands of Plaid Cymru.

When the 'moderate' part of the SNP's programme was adopted by Labour and the SDP/Liberal Alliance, the party's

support plummeted. Their number of seats fell from eleven to two in 1979. One of these two was in the Gaelic-speaking stronghold of the Western Isles, the Scottish constituency most like the two which returned Plaid Cymru MPs in Wales. There too, the SNP support is resilient. Its future prospects outside this area depend on the ability of the British parties, Labour in particular, to accommodate Scottish national interests within the context of the United Kingdom.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Tom Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 176.
- 2 Ibid., p. 131.
- 3 Ivor Crewe, Bo Sarvlik and James Alt, "Partisan Dealignment in Britain, 1964-74", British Journal of Political Science, 7, 1977, p. 186.
- 4 Keith Webb, The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland (Glasgow: Molendinar Press, 1977), p. 89.
- 5 F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980, (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), p. 104.
- 6 Labour increased its share of the poll in Scotland between October 1974 and 1979 from 35% to 41% while at the U.K. level declining from 39% to 37%, ibid., pp. 44-46.
- 7 The Economist, May 18, 1974, "The Nats Push On".
- 8 Jack Brand, Duncan McLean and William Miller, "The Birth and Death of a Three-Party System: Scotland in the Seventies", British Journal of Political Science, 13, 1983, p. 474.
- 9 S. White and J. Dickson, "The Future of the SNP", New Society, 23 September, 1986, p. 663.
- 10 Brand et al, op. cit., p. 479.
- 11 Richard Crossman, Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Vol. 3 (London: Cape, 1975), p. 82. The Conservatives also made some half-hearted concessions on the devolution issue. They established a committee under Lord Home to examine the question of self-government. The committee recommended a Scottish Convention meeting in Edinburgh to discuss some stages of Scottish legislation then taken at Westminster, Scotland's Government: The Report of the Scottish Constitutional Committee, paras. 252-69. The Conservative government of 1970-74, however, refused to implement these proposals and the party resumed its traditional defence of the union thereafter.
- 12 The Government of Scotland: Evidence of the Labour Party in Scotland to the Commission on the Constitution, p. 1. My underlining.
- 13 Ibid., p. 19.
- 14 Michael Keating and Denis Bleiman, Labour and Scottish Nationalism (London: MacMillan, 1979), p. 157.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>18</sup> Hansard, Vol. 958, 12 March 1974, Col. 83.

<sup>19</sup> Cited, Keating and Bleiman, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>20</sup> Democracy and Devolution: Proposals for Scotland and Wales, 1974, CMND 5732.

<sup>21</sup> W. L. Miller, "What Was the Profit in Following the Crowd: The Effectiveness of Party Strategies on Immigration and Devolution", British Journal of Political Science, 10, 1980, p. 35. This article was very useful for tracing the connection between Labour's development of a devolution policy and its increased support.

<sup>22</sup> Craig, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

<sup>23</sup> David Butler and Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of October 1974 (London: MacMillan, 1975), p. 92. Also see SNP MP Donald Stewart comments at the June 1974 SNP party conference, "Nats set the Heather Alight", Manchester Guardian Weekly, June 8, 1974.

<sup>24</sup> Our Changing Democracy: Devolution to Scotland and Wales, 1975, CMND 6348.

<sup>25</sup> Cited, V. Bogdanor, Devolution (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 153.

<sup>26</sup> Cited, Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Miller, 1980, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>28</sup> Devolution to Scotland and Wales: Supplementary Statement, 1976, CMND 6585.

<sup>29</sup> Keating and Bleiman, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>30</sup> Miller, 1980, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> Craig, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> Brand et al, op. cit., p. 487 and pp. 468-69.

<sup>33</sup> H. M. Drucker, "Crying Wolfe: Recent Divisions in the SNP", Political Quarterly, 50, 1979, p. 505.

<sup>34</sup> Nairn, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>35</sup> Billy Wolfe, Scotland Lives (Edinburgh: MacDonald, 1973).

<sup>36</sup> Cited, Drucker, op. cit., p. 506.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Wolfe felt that this "had a bad effect on a large measure of our support".

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 505-06.

<sup>39</sup> See J. P. Grant, Independence and Devolution (Edinburgh: W. Green, 1976) p. 86.

<sup>40</sup> See The Shetland Way of Oil: Reactions of a Small Community to Big Business (Sandwick: Thuleprint, 1976). Also see: "Shetland unhappy over government by Scots", Times, January 8, 1977, p. 2; "Maintaining Sturdy Independence of Orkney and Shetland Islanders", Times, January 20, 1977, p. 9; "Shetlands - Separate State", New Society, January 27, 1977, pp. 169-71.

<sup>41</sup> G. W. Lee, "North Sea Oil and Scottish Nationalism", Political Quarterly, V. 47, 1976, p. 316.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>43</sup> Nairn, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>44</sup> M. J. Esman, "North Sea Oil, Scottish Nationalism, and the British Response", M. J. Esman, ed., Ethnic Conflict in the Western World (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

<sup>45</sup> J. Bochel, D. Denver and A. McCartney, eds., The Referendum Experience: Scotland 1979 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1981), p. 141. Turnout was only 63% of the eligible electorate. 32.4% of electorate voted yes.

<sup>46</sup> Brand et al, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>47</sup> G. W. Lee, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>48</sup> W. L. Miller, The End of British Politics? Scots and English Political Behaviour in the Seventies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 232-33.

<sup>49</sup> James Kellas, The Scottish Political System, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 159.

<sup>50</sup> It is feared that the policies of Thatcher's Conservatives, including the "Chunnel" discriminate against Scotland in favour of the southeast. Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 26, 1986, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> The Economist, "Scottish Labour Re-aroused", February 18, 1984, pp. 57-58.

<sup>52</sup> A. Heath, R. Jowell and J. Curtice, How Britain Votes (London: Pergamon Press, 1985), p. 75.

<sup>53</sup> Kellas, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>54</sup> Evidence of Labour Party in Wales to the Commission on the Constitution, 1970, p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> See D. Foulkes, J. Barry Jones and R. Wilford, The Welsh Veto (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), pp. 62-109.

<sup>56</sup> See Abse's comments, ibid., p. 161.

<sup>57</sup> See Gwynfor Evan's comments in, Gwynfor Evans, Life or Death? The Struggle for the Language and a Welsh T.V. Channel (Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1979), p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> D. L. Foulkes et al, op. cit., p. 138. Only 12% of the Welsh electorate supported an assembly. The turnout was a low 58%. Support for the assembly grew with the proportion of Welsh-speakers in each county.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Some of the authors who supported the homogeneity thesis did so without paying any attention to the periphery of Scotland and Wales. These considered Britain to be England writ large. They conducted their research in an English setting and applied their findings to the whole of Britain.<sup>1</sup> Other accounts, without examining Scotland and Wales, accepted that the potential for regional politics could exist in the isolated areas of both countries, where industrialization had not taken place.<sup>2</sup> Even those who did examine Scotland and Wales in arriving at their conclusions, did so only briefly.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis has subjected Scotland and Wales to detailed analysis and has found that the theory of political and social diffusion, associated with the homogeneity thesis, describes the situation in both countries with a fair degree of accuracy. With the spread of communications concomitant with industrialization, cultural differences between the various national groups in Great Britain were largely eroded, surviving only in outlying areas. The evolution of class politics provided a centripetal force in British politics and largely undermined any cultural basis for separatism. It gave rise to cross-national class organizations such as trade unions and political parties. Nationalist parties in Scotland and



Wales were formed in reaction to the growing centripetal influences in British politics, a development consistent with theories of diffusion. In Wales, in 1925, Plaid Cymru was formed as an attempt to prevent ongoing processes of anglicization in the Welsh-speaking fringe. Until the 1960s, it competed unsuccessfully with the Liberal party for the vote of Welsh-speakers. In industrial Wales, support for it was practically non-existent.

In Scotland, in 1934, the SNP was established as a result of the major parties and the Scottish electorate accepting the primacy of the British dimension to Scottish politics. Like Plaid Cymru, it too failed to receive any significant support. Class divisions in Scotland left no room for a party stressing ethnicity.

Despite the success of social and political diffusion, however, it should be remembered that Scots did retain a strong sense of national identity throughout this period. This was based upon its historic position as a separate state and was bolstered by the existence of several powerful institutions, including a separate church, a partly devolved administrative system, and legal and education systems. This national identity, while not detracting from the primacy of the British influence in Scottish politics, did not allow a complete assimilation to take place. Given additional conditions in the 1960s and 1970s, this national identity provided a basis for the

temporary success of the SNP but by 1979, British forces had re-asserted their dominance in Scottish politics.

Hechter's thesis was a reaction to the perceived failure of the homogeneity thesis to predict the emergence of the SNP and Plaid Cymru in the late 1960s. In contrast to the homogeneity authors, he stressed the existence of an underlying nationalist resentment in Scotland and Wales against the English. According to Hechter, this was fundamentally the result of an economic exploitation of the Celtic periphery by the English core. This resentment provided the essential precondition for the emergence of political nationalism in the 1960s. National liberation, in these circumstances, carried with it the promise of greater prosperity in the future.

This thesis has shown, however, that the Scots and Welsh believed (correctly) that considerable economic benefits flowed from their link with England. During the 'boom' years at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, a period coinciding with the peak of British imperialist fortunes, the advantages of the link were obvious. During the depression and the subsequent decline of the peripheral industrial base, the nature of the economic advantages of union were no less clear. A declining economy dependent on subventions from a more prosperous southeast England was not considered by Scots and Welsh to be a stable base for

launching independence. This explains why business and working-class groups in both Scotland and Wales, rather than harbouring resentment against English exploitation, were careful throughout this period to avoid putting the economic link in jeopardy. The economic relationship between the mainland Celtic nations and England had centripetal effects which reinforced political and social diffusion. Hechter's weakness in this respect derives from his description of the relationship between the whole Celtic periphery and England in terms which are really only appropriate to the exceptional Irish case. Only there did no significant group exist with an interest in maintaining the economic link with England. It is enlightening to learn that Hechter's preface indicates that he first became interested in British history after studying the Irish predicament.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis similarly indicates that Hechter was wrong to suggest that greater economic prosperity awaited an independent Scotland and Wales. Hechter's argument here flows from his contention that the regional economic disparities which existed between the Celtic periphery and English core were mainly due to ethnic discrimination which created a "cultural division of labour". As both nationalist parties also argued, self-determination was a logical solution to this predicament. As we have seen, however, the heavily populated area of northeast England is just as badly off as Scotland and Wales on many indices.

This suggests that the regional disparities are caused by market forces rather than ethnic discrimination. In these circumstances, independence would take away the mitigating effect of the state's redistribution of resources, leaving intact the capitalist forces which produced the disparities in the first place. What, in Hechter's scheme, looks quite attractive, could well be economically disastrous.

In a more general context, it is questionable that economic deprivation is a spur to successful separatism. While it is reasonable to suggest that some demand for separatism will result if one ethnic group feels both that its serious economic backwardness is due to its political relationship with another group and that self-determination will dramatically improve this state of affairs, this has happened only in exceptional cases. On the contrary, this thesis suggests that a strong economic position would seem to provide a more fertile ground for nationalism than a weak one.

Economic strength, not backwardness, would seem to explain the popularity of separatist sentiment in the Basque and Catalan areas of Spain and the Slovenia and Croatia provinces of Yugoslavia, all of which are stronger economically than the political core regions. Bohemia, the centre of Czech nationalism, was the richest of the Hapsburg's possessions, while Belgium was the most industrialized part of the European continent when it

separated from the Netherlands in the 1830s. The Biafran region of Nigeria and the Katanga region of the Congo, both areas in which separatist sentiment has thrived, are relatively economically advanced.<sup>5</sup> These examples indicate the inadequacy of internal colonialism as a general explanation of nationalism.

Nairn's concentration on the 'over-development' of the Scottish economy, caused by North Sea oil, helps to explain the increase in SNP support between 1970 and 1974. The SNP, however, was already a large mass party before the discovery of oil. The thesis has indicated that the rise of the SNP was also due to social changes which undermined major party partisanship throughout Britain. This explanation has the additional advantage of explaining the simultaneous upsurge of Liberal 'third party' support in England.

Nairn was mistaken in his view that oil had created a force strong enough to outweigh centripetal influences in British politics. This results from his misunderstanding of the nature of the SNP's support and his underestimation of Labour's flexibility. SNP voters were not all ardent supporters of separatism, nor had they dropped all interest in class issues. This left much of the SNP's support open to co-optation by a British Labour party with attractive policies on devolution and economic matters.

Nairn's support for Scottish nationalism as a progressive force poses some problems for his Marxism. Following Lenin, Marxists can only support nationalism if it will advance socialism. There are reasons for doubting that an SNP victory would achieve this objective. The SNP became a mass party in the 1960s at the expense of the Labour party partly as a result of the latter's weakening base. Its success was based on its ability to minimize the class conflict. It seems doubtful if victory for such a party would benefit the Scottish working class. Nairn, in fact, may well be repeating the mistake of James Connolly, a Marxist who supported the cause of nationalism in Ireland in order to convert that country into a socialist republic. The result of Connolly's endeavours was that Ireland became cut-off from the British working-class movement, the Irish working-class was split along sectarian lines and a petty-bourgeois republic was established in southern Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

Even if socialism was advanced in Scotland upon independence, it would be at the expense of the British working-class movement. Given the Conservative inclinations of the populous southeast of England, Labour would find it extremely difficult to achieve a majority in Westminster without its Scottish representatives.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from critically analysing the above theories, the thesis underlines the importance of examining political

factors when discussing the rise and fall of the nationalist parties. Both nationalist parties played a role in their own success. Plaid Cymru, in particular, successfully mobilized support from Welsh-speakers as a result of its development of a more professional approach to their problems. Improvements in the SNP organization also helped it to take advantage of the opportunities presented to it in the late 1960s.

Political factors played a role in the decline of the SNP. Its support was susceptible to Labour's devolution initiatives in the 1970s. Just as government regional policy had performed an important integrative function from the 1930s onwards, devolution policy successfully prevented the emergence of more radical discontent in the 1970s.

Fluctuations in support for the SNP and Plaid Cymru cannot, therefore, be understood solely in terms of the social and economic background. A complete explanation of these fluctuations has to consider how the political parties themselves, nationalist and unionist, react to the opportunities presented to them. Political parties possess an autonomy to shape events much greater than that attributed to them by many sociological theories, including those put forward by Hechter and Nairn.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>For example, John Bonham, The Middle-Class Vote (London: Faber and Faber, 1954).

<sup>2</sup>For example, Jean Blondel, Voters, Parties and Leaders (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Alford, Party and Society (London: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 141-51. Also Eric Hobsbawm, "The Attitude of Popular Classes Towards National Movements For Independence", Movements Nationaux D'Independance et Classes Populaires (Paris, 1971).

<sup>4</sup>Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. xiii.

<sup>5</sup>See A. W. Orridge, "Uneven Development and Nationalism: 2", Political Studies, 19, pp. 181-90, and Eric Hobsbawm, "Some Reflections on 'The Break-up of Britain'", New Left Review, 1977, pp. 10-16.

<sup>6</sup>See Hobsbawm, Ibid., and V. G. Kiernan, "A Scottish Road to Socialism?", New Left Review, 93, 1975, pp. 93-104; and O. D. Edwards, "Socialism or Nationalism" in Gavin Kennedy, ed., The Radical Approach (Edinburgh: Palingenesis Press, 1976), pp. 98-109.

<sup>7</sup>Only twice this century, in 1945 and 1966, has Labour won a majority of the English seats, F. W. S. Craig, British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1981), pp. 17-45.



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