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The Scottish National Party, 1960 - 1974:  
An Investigation Into Its Organisation and Power Structure.

by

Robert MacKay Crawford

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Doctor of Philosophy at the  
University of Glasgow.

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Abbreviations

BRCs	Business Reply Cards.
CC	Conference Committee.
CA	Constituency Association.
Econ.C.	Economics Committee.
Educ.C.	Education Committee.
EC	Election Committee.
EPC	Electoral Planning Committee.
FAC	Foreign Affairs Committee.
FC	Finance Committee.
GBC	General Business Committee.
MP	Member of Parliament.
NA	National Assembly.
NC	National Council.
NEC	National Executive Committee.
OC	Organisation Committee.
PC	Publicity Committee.
SNP	Scottish National Party.

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Summary

Between 1960 and 1974, the Scottish National Party underwent a remarkable organisational expansion. Not only did the number of members, branches and constituency associations greatly increase, but by the end of 1974 the Party also succeeded in getting eleven parliamentary candidates elected to the House of Commons.

This thesis is concerned with the two major organisational elements of this growth. The actual mechanics of change, this is, the structural, administrative and personnel dimensions. Secondly, we examine the nature of the intra-party power relationships as they evolved in the years under study.

In essence, we argue that far from having a devolved power base, where decision on organisational matters such as publicity; Party finance; election strategy; and candidate selection etc., were taken only after consultation with the membership, the SNP had a highly centralised management structure.

This view is contrary to most of the prevailing thinking on the subject. We summarise all of the major writings on the SNP's organisation in Chapter Two.

We seek to show what factors in the growth of the SNP during this period, propelled it towards the centralisation of organisation decision-making. We utilise Party records to demonstrate that growth brought in its wake certain strains which could only be contained, and deflected, within a hierarchical management structure.

With this in mind, during the course of the thesis we draw upon studies in organisational management which have been undertaken in other fields. These, we contest, confirm our hypothesis regarding the inevitability of the need for centralisation in a rapidly expanding organisation.

In the specific context of political party management, we test the relevance of Robert Michels' view of the tendency towards 'oligarchy' even in parties with an ideological commitment to organisational democracy. We affirm the value and worth of Michels' views in so far as these can be applied to the SNP between 1960 and 1974.

Our study is largely empirical. Consequently, we examine and analyse such critical organisational areas as the SNP's internal communications; finances; management committee structure; and election organisation. We also look at certain administrative aspects of the Labour and Conservative parties, to see how these compared in terms of centralisation etc., with the SNP. In other words, was the SNP, in the period under study, more decentralised, than the two major British parties? Most researchers have answered that question in the affirmative.

We conclude by summarising the factors which, we believe, led to the centralisation of organisational power within the SNP between 1960 and 1974. Explain what elements complicated intra-party power relations after 1974. And, finally, outline what has happened to the leadership's control of the Party in recent years. We relate this to our hypothesis regarding the SNP's growth and consequent leadership domination.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Background

This thesis is concerned with two main subject areas. The first is a description of the organisational growth of the Scottish National Party (SNP) between 1960 and 1974. The second, the central hypothesis, focuses on the distribution of organisational power within the Party during this same period. The argument is that in organisational matters (note, not policy) a small group of individuals, the Party leaders, controlled the direction taken by the SNP.

Moreover, and contrary to prevailing thinking (see below), this power structure meant that the rank-and-file's role in administrative matters was largely confined to endorsing, and later implementing, the programmes devised by the leaders of the Party.

Our concern in this thesis is with organisational/administrative matters; Party finance and structure; publicity campaigns and election strategy; membership drives; and candidate selection. In other words, the management patterns which prevailed between 1960 and 1974. We have chosen this area rather than policy questions, because during the period under examination the SNP had to face the absolute need to develop **and** coordinate a coherent organisation with which to contest elections, or face the possibility of ultimate demise. In this sense then, management preoccupations were more important to the Nationalists than policy matters. It may be that after the election successes of 1974 this situation was reversed, that is, the pressures of parliamentary politics compelled the Party to turn its attention to policy questions

as the latter came up for debate, and subsequent voting, in the House of Commons. Moreover, the elections of 1974 might have been viewed as the culmination, and vindication, of the previous fourteen years organisational efforts. Therefore the Party, having resolved its organisational problems, had to confront broader policy concerns.

The centralisation of power in the hands of the leadership was an organisational imperative, something which had to be done if electoral success was to be achieved. It was vital for the efficient functioning of an organisation which previously had a virtually anarchic administrative structure where decision-making was typically devolved to the membership, and where the leaders had to refer back to the latter on even the most trivial of matters. Faced with an extremely small membership, little cash, and virtually no electoral impact, a few Party leaders, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, set about improving, indeed transforming, the structure of the Party. It was this approach that led to power centralisation. Because of the mess the SNP was in, the members were content to allow the leaders to institute and implement reforms designed to improve the fortunes of the Party. After all, as we shall see, the SNP was in a state of such disrepair that coherent organisational changes were unlikely to have made matters worse.

The reforms of the early 1960s had a centralising impact. Moreover, they were followed (although we are not implying a clear causal connection) by both improvements in organisation and electoral performance. As a result of this we are suggesting the membership were content to allow the leaders a clearly disproportionate role in the management of the Party, and for two main reasons. The first has

just been dealt with. The structural innovations corresponded to advances in terms of votes and Party organisation. The second reason is no less important. The many thousands of new members who joined the Party had little political experience and were not in a position to challenge the expertise of the existing management. Moreover, the very growth of the SNP gave rise to facets of administrative life which actually served to increase centralisation: executive decision-making, monitored information output, management financial skills, and a pyramid of power with senior figures at the top and extending down through paid officials to activists and non-activist members.

In summary then, we are suggesting that the failures of the 1950s encouraged leadership innovation in an attempt to combat decline. Having apparently succeeded, this same leadership group were trusted with power as the Party expanded in the 1960s. The membership was reconciled to leadership domination of organisational matters because of the latter's successes, and growing expertise in the management of an increasingly complex organisation.

In policy matters, that is, the socio-economic and political concerns which denote the ideology of a political party, the membership continued to have a significant voice. But in tactical and strategic management, the rank-and-file played a subsidiary role following the lead, on almost every occasion, of the leadership.

For most of the 1960s policy questions were less important to the SNP than the creation of a viable and healthy organisation. After all, unless the Party could actually elect a body of MPs then all the policy debates in the world would be of little practical value. But perhaps

even more important was the nature of the SNP itself. More than most it was a single issue Party, the issue being the attainment of independence for Scotland. In a survey<sup>(1)</sup> of activists taken by the Party in 1970, the following was discovered. When asked what the primary function of the Party should be 70 per cent replied 'self-government'. Only 24 per cent said 'reformist rule' and/or 'social reform'<sup>(2)</sup>. In terms of the usual perception of British politics as being dominated by 'class' it is worthwhile noting that 80 per cent of those surveyed did not identify with any class, and 78 per cent had never previously been members of any other political party.<sup>(3)</sup>

These figures may help, at least in part, to explain our contention about the primacy of organisational questions within the SNP. Clearly an overwhelming majority believed that efforts should be directed towards the primary goal of the Party. Moreover, there was no distinctive sense of 'class' within the SNP, and this is normally the touchstone of policy issues in British politics. This view is reinforced if we look at the 'previous political allegiance' of the activists, which was another question asked in the survey. Of those who had not actually supported the SNP or had been neutral, 11 per cent had been Liberals, 9 per cent Conservatives, 9 per cent 'Left/Socialist', 5 per cent Radical/libertarian (the exact recipients of their support are unspecified), and 5 per cent Labour.<sup>(4)</sup> The potential for disagreement and disarray among such a diverse activist base must have been great indeed. In such circumstances it is easier to understand why there should have been a concentration on organisation rather than policy.

In any event there already exists a theoretical base (albeit a

controversial one) on which to base arguments about the tendencies within mass political parties to elite domination. Robert Michels pointed<sup>(5)</sup> to what he believed to be the inevitability of such power concentration, even in avowedly democratic socialist parties, in his important study Political Parties. During the course of this thesis we shall find occasion to refer to, and utilise, certain aspects of Michels' work on oligarchy in European socialist parties.

Yet despite Michels' contentions, and more substantially the findings of researchers in other organisations, those writers who have examined the SNP have, for the most part, failed to note the disparity in power - at least in so far as administrative matters were concerned - within the SNP. Most have taken the view that the SNP was a thoroughly 'open' and democratic Party where the membership took a co-equal role with the nominal leaders in managing the Party. By 'open' we mean the following: the majority of the rank-and-file had easy access to those in leadership positions. Moreover, that ordinary members could significantly influence the formulation and implementation of important decisions taken by the leadership. Leadership is defined, in the first instance, as those who sat, either as officials or as elected members, on the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Party. Further, that the leadership made strenuous efforts<sup>(6)</sup> to solicit the opinions of the mass membership before the taking of such decisions.

We shall argue that this is not only at odds with the empirical data specific to the SNP, but it also largely ignores the findings of other organisational research. We believe that a majority of those who have investigated the SNP have tended to confuse, or at least

failed to distinguish conceptually, the role played by the members in policy-making from their function in the administration of the Party.

Another cause of failure has been the tendency among writers to accept the formal organisation-chart description of the SNP's power structure - which does appear to bestow the preponderance of power on the active members - rather than to analyse the source, flow, and outcomes of organisationally-orientated decisions. In this sense we shall place a heavy reliance upon establishing the source and decision-flow patterns of all the major decisions which impacted upon the Party's organisation and administration.

The period 1960 to 1974 has been selected for study because this is an era in which the SNP emerged from political obscurity, and went to the forefront of Scottish politics. After 1974 an alternative power bloc emerged within the Party, the Parliamentary group, which greatly complicated organisational relationships. It was also in this period that the major decisions were taken which prepared the Party for the electoral successes of 1974. The leadership was, for the most part, more concerned with building and strengthening the SNP's organisation and electoral muscle than with the broader policy questions which came to the fore after 1974.

#### Data Sources

The overwhelming bulk of our data comes from primary sources from within the SNP. These include Minutes of the following Party committees: National Executive Committee, Finance and General Business Committee (GBC), the Organisation Committee (OC), National Council (NC),



National Assembly, and annual conference reports.

We shall also be using the papers of a past Chairman of the Party, Arthur Donaldson. These are located in the National Library of Scotland, and cover a substantial part of the Party's history from around 1945 until the late 1960s. These documents also include private correspondence regarding individuals, and those of a formal kind about committees, and general Party matters.

To some extent also we shall be utilising interviews with the Party principals of the period in order to relate their experiences, and interpretations of events, to the data uncovered in the minutes.

Finally, during the course of the thesis we shall call upon work already undertaken in organisation theory, as well as empirical studies of organisational behaviour, in an attempt to relate such findings to events within the SNP. In other words, was the evolution of a power hierarchy predictable given what has happened in other organisations?

### Methodology

As noted above we shall be concerned primarily in tracing not only the organisational development of the SNP, but also the distribution of Party power, as it affected administration, between 1960 and 1974. We shall seek to prove our hypothesis via an analysis of the major organisational decisions of the period. This will be done by following their progress through the various administrative channels, such as committees and Party conferences, to their eventual implementation. The primary, and outstanding sources of such information are the

minutes of the committees, or the forums, which were responsible for debating, deciding, and/or implementing the ideas.

It will be noted that although interviews are used they are not given a prominent place. We believe that in a study of this kind, where we have complete and unrestricted access to the written documents, objectivity is best achieved, and the truth best served, through this medium. On the other hand, interviews can help to illuminate and extend our knowledge of events. But as Duverger<sup>(7)</sup> notes, interviews of political leaders are often disappointing in practice:

... they are more inclined through altruism or ideology, or in the interests of the Party or the doctrine which they support, or through a desire to appear in a favourable light, to distort the truth than other men. It must be remembered that for politicians prestige has greater importance than for ordinary men and their public appearance is part of the job.<sup>(8)</sup>

Nevertheless, as Duverger also reminds us<sup>(9)</sup>, such interviews can be vital. Consequently, we shall be using them wherever they can enhance our knowledge of particular events.

The use of minutes, memos, letters, and other primary sources, is not free from methodological weakness. As any organisational theorist will confirm, even the most direct access to information about the workings of, for example, a board of directors, may, in fact, divert one from the real source of decision-taking. Such matters can be resolved over a dinner-table, or the proverbial round of golf. Many

minutes of meetings can and do reflect only the most formal aspects of what goes on. While there need not be outright tampering with the minutes, sins of omission are common: Richard Crossman <sup>(10)</sup> was in little doubt that such occurred in Harold Wilson's Cabinets.

Any researcher who has spent time going through the minutes of some committee or other will be aware that on occasions there is more than an element of the Quixotic to the quest. The problems are legion: even the most rigorous of minutes take no account of the human element in decision-making. For example, Mr. A moves a particular course of action. Mr. B has a strong personal antipathy to Mr. A, and on that basis, although rationalising his opposition on other grounds, votes against A's proposition. Such personality clashes are rarely the stuff of minutes. Few like to concede such manifest human frailty, and therefore find some plausible explanation for their opposition.

Another problem concerns 'opinion-leaders'. In the course of an organisation's life-span certain individuals come to the fore, and their opinions are more valued than those of their peers. Such people need say very little in a meeting to dominate it. Unfortunately, minutes take no account of such informal dominance.

Other difficulties include cross-cutting cleavages, or the alliances which permeate most organisations and make some people allies on certain issues, but opponents on others. Care has to be taken to determine which is which.

These difficulties are not insoluble. One can, for example, use

interviews to determine whether or not certain decisions were taken because of personality clashes, or some other factors not accounted for in the minutes.

Another method is the analysis of memos and private correspondence of the principals involved in decision-taking. Such material often betrays deep personal antagonisms, and/or ideological differences. There is a wealth of such data in the Arthur Donaldson Collection in the National Library of Scotland. As Party Chairman, Donaldson was often used as confessor and confidant for warring individuals, or factions. Moreover, certain individuals, in the leadership of the 1960s, were incorrigible memo writers, and as such greatly facilitated a deeper understanding of the minutes.

With such caveats in mind our analysis will be based on the documentary evidence of minutes, etc., because we still believe that it remains the most accurate and reliable method of evidence-gathering, especially as we had unrestricted access to all documents.

### Chapter Outline

Chapter One will include a summary of the main writings on the Party's organisation and/or internal power relationships. In this chapter we shall also seek to place the SNP in the political party classification scheme outlined by Maurice Duverger <sup>(11)</sup>. Finally, since we are seeking to establish whether or not there was a small group of managers wielding disproportionate administrative power, that is, an oligarchy, it is important that we examine Michels' views on oligarchy, and whether or not these can be applied to the SNP.

The second chapter will attempt to explain and define the two central concepts of the thesis, power and leadership. We shall examine and analyse how these have been utilised in other organisational studies, and conclude with the probable reasons why the SNP of the late 1950s and 1960s was likely to see the emergence of a specific leadership group.

The subsequent chapters will be dominated by an analysis of the primary material, starting with the condition of the Party's organisation prior to the beginning of the 1960s. This is necessary for obvious comparative reasons; we have to know the condition of the SNP's organisation in this period in order to appreciate the extent of the changes it underwent thereafter.

The fourth chapter will trace, and analyse, the financing of the SNP between 1963 and 1974 (we shall have covered the period 1960 to 1963 in the previous chapter). How, and from what sources, a political party raises its income has profound implications for its ideology and power structure. Where did the drive and the ideas behind this revenue-raising originate? How was cash channelled throughout the Party? Was there evidence in all of this of leadership control?

The fifth chapter will focus on two reports, written in the early 1960s, which had important consequences for the management structure of the Party. Indeed, one of the reports completely altered the way in which the SNP was administered, and in so doing increased the power of the leadership.

The next chapter will be devoted to tracing the organisational

growth, and the nature of the internal power structure, of the Party from 1963 until the end of the decade. What condition was the Party machine in as it faced the 1970s? Where did organisational power lie?

In chapter seven we shall complete our description of the evolution of the SNP's organisation up to and including 1974, and highlight the single most important organisational event of this period, the 'It's Scotland's Oil' campaign. We are not concerned here with the policy implications of 'oil' as an issue, but only with the 'oil' campaign as a case study in organisational technique and implementation.

The 'oil' campaign is instructive not merely because of the publicity it has received, but also because it helps us to understand the part played by the leadership and the rank-and-file, respectively, in the formulation and design of the campaign. As an organisational exercise it represented the zenith of the SNP's campaigning achievements. In our view it also clearly demonstrates the extent of centralisation within the Party in the early 1970s.

The campaign itself was widely publicised within the Party and generated a great deal of discussion. Consequently, if the membership, or even a small minority of the latter, had a role to play in the organisational management and publicity formulation of the SNP, then one might have expected to find evidence of this role during the oil campaign. There were few, if any, better opportunities for the activists to contact, advise, or oppose the leaders on matters of administration and propaganda, in the history of the Party. A virtually uninterrupted flow of communications came from the centre on the subject, and the members could have been in little doubt as to

the implications of the proposed campaign. Here surely there would be evidence of an exchange of ideas, with the members contributing to the overall campaign. Particularly since the entire operation was funded by the branches.

On the other hand, if our argument about the nature of decision-making within the SNP is correct, then we would expect to find a campaign designed by the leadership, rather like architects, and carried out by the activists, rather in the manner of artisans.

Chapter eight will contain an analysis of the composition of the strategic management decision-making committees of the Party between the years 1964 and 1974 (we begin in 1964 because the whole committee structure of the SNP was reformulated in that year). The management committees will be analysed for evidence of over-lapping membership of more than one committee, and the stability, or otherwise, of their composition over time.

The intention is to seek to establish if a coterie of individuals was dominant on the committees, for if the Party was open, diffuse, devolved etc., then we would expect to find a large reservoir of people contributing to, and sitting on, its management committees. After all, these were critical forums for the initiation and review of the Party's activities, where decisions affecting the whole life of the SNP were taken. Given this state of affairs the more active sections of the rank-and-file might have sought to influence events at the core rather than being left on the periphery. And if the arguments of those who espouse the devolved view of the SNP's structure are correct, then membership participation on these committees would have been the norm.

This chapter will endeavour to look at power within the SNP from a 'positional' perspective and thereby to reinforce the overall thrust of our 'decisional' analysis.

Chapter nine will focus on the internal communication system of the Party. For it is through such a system that centre and periphery are kept in touch with one another. Unless there is effectiveness in this respect, some degree of peripheral anarchy will occur with the branches going their own way, and paying little heed to what is going on at the centre. If the leadership fail to communicate their ideas and programmes to the activists, then how can any coherent strategy be devised?

In chapter ten we will examine the conduct of the General Elections of 1974, the culmination of the SNP's organisational expansion of the preceding fourteen years. Were these planned and managed in a typically decentralised fashion? This is the view of most of the writers on the subject. In an effort to comprehend the overall direction of the campaigns we shall analyse the various strands of an election campaign. How were the candidates chosen? How much contact was there between the Party leaders and the constituencies? Who was responsible for the drawing up and distribution of election literature and propaganda? How much reliance did the candidates place on the centre for advice and guidance? Finally, how were the campaigns financed?

By 1974 most SNP activists were experienced campaigners, and the organisation as a whole had been through years of maturation. In such circumstances the need for central direction might easily have diminished to a point where the constituencies were their own masters



controlling their own affairs during the campaign, and where reliance on the centre was minimal.

In chapter eleven we shall attempt to place the SNP in a political party classification system vis-a-vis the two major British parties. How did the management structure of the Nationalists compare to the larger parties in the years under study? Was it as centralised, or more open or devolved?

If our analysis is correct then we would expect to find that the SNP's leadership had no less a grip on the organisation of the Party than their equivalents in the Labour and Conservative parties. In fact, their control, in the 1960s through to 1974, might even have proved to have been greater.

In the ~~Postscript~~ <sup>Postscript</sup>, we shall summarise and synthesise our observations about the SNP's organisation and its power structure between the years 1960 and 1974.

1. Activist Surveys: Descriptive Statistics, December 1970,  
(Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
2. Ibid., p.3.
3. Ibid., p.3.
4. Ibid., p.3.
5. Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958).
6. That the leadership saw itself as being highly democratic and controlled by the branches, is demonstrated in an extremely influential report on the Party's organisation written by Gordon Wilson in 1963, Report on Organisation to the National Executive Committee, 1963 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished). In the Introduction, Wilson, then Assistant National Secretary, wrote: 'When all is said and done, it is the branches who, in National Council or at Conference exercise control over the National Party', p.3. Later in the Report, he comments: 'It is therefore clear that there is no question of caucus control by the Executive since it is elected by and can be controlled by the votes of the delegates from the branches and other bodies entitled to representation', p.4. Again, on the same theme: '... the Executive is a committee of the National Council and can be called to account', p.5.  
  
Gordon Wilson returned to the matter of delegate power through National Council, in his Report to the 1963 Annual Conference (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished). Speaking as National Secretary, he wrote: '... this trend (i.e. growing attendance at National Council) is particularly valuable since much of the thrust and democratic spirit of the Party has come from the quarterly opportunity given to leading branch and Constituency Association members to put forward directives for action and put forward policy resolutions.'
7. Maurice Duverger, Introduction to the Social Sciences: With Special Reference to their Methods, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1964).
8. Ibid., p.181.
9. Ibid., p.181.
10. Richard Crossman, The Crossman Diaries: Selections from the Diaries of a Cabinet Minister 1964 - 1970 (ed.) Anthony Howard, (London, Methuen, 1979) pp 92-93.
11. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State, (Cambridge, Methuen, 1964) pp.63-71.

Chapter OneOrganisational Writings on the Scottish National Party

There are several predominant characteristics about the writings on the organisation of the SNP. First of all such studies are rather few in number. The SNP has interested many, but relatively few writers have bothered to devote much time to an analysis of the organisational aspects of the Party's growth. Secondly, among the few who have examined the structure of the Party there is almost unanimity that the SNP was, and remains, highly open and democratic, with a remarkably free flow of information from top to bottom, and bottom to top. Indeed it might be said that this was considered to be the hallmark of the Party. Finally, almost all the writers are in agreement that 'organisation' played a significant part in the successes of 1974. Only one writer, Richard Mansbach <sup>(1)</sup>, actually challenges the long-term effectiveness of the National Party's organisation, which he considered to be too much dominated by the localities or branches.

The following review of these writings catalogues them in relation to the amount of attention paid by the authors to the Party's organisation, rather than chronologically.

Among academics Jack Brand has most comprehensively examined the organisation and management structure of the SNP <sup>(2)</sup>. For him, the improvements implemented during the 1960s were one of the main reasons for the subsequent political breakthrough of the Party. And he highlights the most important decisions taken by the Party which affected the evolution of its organisation.

In common with most other writers on the subject, Brand does not believe that power was highly concentrated at the centre, that is, in the hands of the formal leadership. On the contrary, he points to the participatory nature of the SNP which distinguishes it from the other major British parties. An indication of Brand's attitude can be gauged from the following quotes:

... the organisation of the SNP is one which is particularly open and ready to take guidance from the grass roots ... What is noteworthy, is the extent to which the participation of the membership has been built into the structure. In this it is different, if only in degree, from the other major British parties. (3)

Later, he writes:

... one has to say that the development of the SNP into a mass party has made for more openness and participation in the structure rather than less. (4)

and,

... points of decision are more accessible to the SNP members than are the equivalent organisations in other parties as I hope I have shown.(5)

It is Brand's view that prior to the 1960s the Party was more centralised than in the period of its greatest growth, that is, from the middle 1960s to the early 1970s. Despite this, he also reports that there is no evidence of any recommendation coming from the National Executive Committee being rejected by either the National Council or Annual Conference. If the Party was the participatory body suggested, one might have expected to find a dispute which led to a rejection of an NEC recommendation on at least one of the many management issues presented to the delegates. The fact that he could not find one strongly suggests that whilst the delegates may have vigorously debated matters presented to them by the Executive, they had either enough confidence in, or so respected the leadership's management of the Party, that they were unwilling to reject such proposals. It is, of course, possible that the mass of the delegates

were so apathetic that it did not matter to them what the NEC did. However, given the fact that they bothered to attend Council and/or Conference, this seems an unlikely proposition.

By allowing the members to express themselves at Council and Conference, the leadership engendered a cathartic effect: the release of tension without diminishing the leadership's right to lead. Verba refers to 'pseudo-democracy' <sup>(6)</sup>; democratic leadership amounts to the membership being given a choice of alternatives for action. This gives the impression that the decision is actually made by the mass.

Brand makes much of the fact that the sheer size of the SNP's membership made for an open structure, the point being that supervision of a dozen or so branches was easier than the regulation of five hundred or so such units. At first sight this proposition is not difficult to accept. However, the opposite is suggested by studies in organisational theory: as an organisation grows the control system tends to become tighter, with more power concentrated in the hands of comparatively few people. Basically, if one fails to exert authority and exercise control then the organisation becomes less, and not more efficient. We shall call this tendency 'peripheral anarchy'. So much power is located at the periphery, the grass-roots, that nothing gets done at the centre. Efficient business practice is sacrificed in the name of democracy.

In most mass-based political parties the vast bulk of the membership are card-carrying non-activists. For the other members some degree of centralisation is important if goals are to be set and achieved. Constant reference back to all of the membership would

ensure that little would get done. Even soliciting the opinions of one thousand out of one hundred thousand members, whilst possible on some issues, would be impossible on others, especially given the limited resources of a political party.

In any event such was not the case. As we shall see, the most likely forum for change was National Council (see Appendix) since this embraced the most active members of the Party. Yet, as a matter of fact, even by the late 1960s it was attended by only a few hundred delegates at its quarterly meetings. We shall attempt to demonstrate that this forum, however democratic in appearance, did not act as a check on the leadership so far as organisational questions were concerned.

One might summarise Brand's position on the structure of the SNP in the following way. Between 1942 and the end of the 1950s, the SNP was marked by a concentration of power, and doctrinally the Party was pure. MacCormick was gone, the 'Home-rulers' had left, and those who remained were fundamentalists, that is, they were committed to full-scale independence for Scotland. It was during this period that the Party was dominated by an oligarchy of five people. This group controlled the affairs and outlook of the Party, they were its leadership faction. Thereafter the SNP became more decentralised and open, in the manner described above, and the oligarchy was replaced by a less centralised and more democratic leadership.

Before we go any further it is perhaps opportune to ask one fundamental question: is a political party dominated by an oligarchy when five people out of a membership of under one thousand take most of the important decisions, but not dominated by an oligarchy when

something like twenty people out of a membership of around one hundred thousand take most of the important decisions? This was the contrasting situation between 1959 and 1969.

We shall argue that in the first instance it was much easier for an ordinary member to contact one of the leadership about some aspect of Party activity. Furthermore, if one wished, it was comparatively easier to get elected to office prior to the early 1960s, than it would become later. Finally, communications were much easier, in terms of contacting the majority of the membership, when the latter numbered only a few hundred, as in the 1950s, than when they numbered tens of thousands, the situation for most of the 1960s. Logistically one can report to, and hear from, a body of less than one thousand people far more easily than from a body of one hundred thousand members.

The aspect of an increasingly democratic Party with the branches playing a formative role in decision-making is at the heart of Brand's analysis. However, we believe that there is a danger in considering that the independence of branches was somehow equal to the latter having a serious role in decision-making. In truth, there is no evidence to suggest that branches, either individually or collectively, interfered in any significant way with Executive decisions regarding the raising of cash, organisational structure, or even national publicity. Rather we shall endeavour to show that whilst the branches had a developed sense of autonomy, they nonetheless acted as agents for the NEC, and carried out decisions taken by the Executive and its sub-committees.

Another reason Brand gives for the diffusion of power concerns

the alternative power bloc in Parliament. So far as we are concerned this feature of Party power is irrelevant; the SNP only gained a significant parliamentary presence in 1974, the final year of our analysis. It would take some years for this new organisational development to impact upon the power structure.

Finally, Brand tells us of the fierce debates which took place at Conference and National Council, and how the leadership's statements and reports were questioned and argued over <sup>(7)</sup>. Certainly, policy changes did occur at Conference on socio-economic and political matters. But the membership rarely challenged the leaders on internal questions. We shall deal with National Council and Annual Conference decision-making in a later chapter, which we believe will emphasise the extent of leadership dominance of these forums.

Brand also has sections on internal financial procedures, and candidate selection. These, he believes, further endorse his views about the nature of the Party power structure. Candidates were selected by way of a procedure which involved both branches and the constituency party. Indeed both were given a central role in the selection process. Brand says of candidate selection:

... the method of selecting candidates still tells us a great deal about the distribution of power in a party and its attitude towards politics. Once again we see the openness of the Nationalists and the degree to which as many party activists as possible are brought into the process of selection. (8)

Later, Brand observes:

It seems clear from the description of this procedure that the SNP ... involves more of its members in the selection of parliamentary candidates than is true of the Labour and Conservative parties. (9)

Whilst not taking issue with Brand on the mechanics of the



candidate adoption procedure, we will nevertheless dispute in a later chapter the effect on Party power of these methods.

Likewise we shall also deal with the vitally important subject of finance, in a subsequent chapter, and present evidence which we believe strongly suggests that the branches acted much as tax-gatherers for the Party headquarters.

Brand's work is undoubtedly the most important and thorough investigation hitherto available. Moreover, he correctly points to a largely ignored area in his explanation of the SNP's successes of the 1960s and 1970s, the organisational strategy developed during this period.

Where we find cause to disagree with Brand is in his analysis about the nature of internal power which, we believe, fails to distinguish between a leading role for the membership in policy-making, and the utter dominance of the leadership in organisational/management concerns.

There are then, in our view, two models of power within the SNP between, approximately, 1960 and 1974.

The first, the one which interests us, relates to power concerning management and administrative matters. We have already explained our conception of how this was distributed.

The second model deals with substantive policy issues such as the national economy etc. This depicts a Party where the mass of the

membership, through their delegates, had a dominant role.

We would contest that policy issues were not of immediate interest to the leadership because they had first to build an organisational base which would enable the Party to gain independence for Scotland. Policy would become more important when the SNP had an established organisation throughout Scotland.

If the rank-and-file's energies were being expended in policy fields, then the leaders would have a virtually free hand in the management of the Party. As we shall see later, a forum specifically designed to debate policy, National Assembly, was created by the leadership to deflect activists' attention from a move to widen and extend the membership of NEC.

Ian McAllister <sup>(10)</sup> is another writer who has turned his attention to the organisational elements which lay behind the SNP's growth. Like Brand, but not in such great detail, McAllister examines the growth of the SNP. In fact, he offered it as a partial explanatory factor behind the Party's electoral successes of 1974.

He believes that political scientists have spent over much time on 'exogenous' factors in trying to account for the rise of the SNP. These include relative deprivation, and internal colonialism. But in themselves these are insufficient, and require to be topped up with an 'endogenous' account. What was the SNP doing to aid its own growth?

McAllister recognises that the SNP had no serious organisational base prior to the middle 1960s. But thereafter a formidable political

machine was developed. Like Brand, McAllister believes that internally generated organisational changes played a crucial role in this transformation (interestingly, he argues that it is difficult to place the SNP into Duverger's cadre/mass party scheme. A reservation which Brand does not share). Similarly, he also considers that there emerged a highly decentralised branch structure which was internally democratic, and it was the membership, meeting at Conference, which determined policy:

Although the structure is internally democratic, insofar as the mass membership meeting in conference determined party policy, the structure is also (unlike conventional mass parties) highly decentralised ... (11)

Both Brand and McAllister attach a great deal of importance to a report written by Gordon Wilson in 1963 (see Introduction) on the need to institute organisational reforms within the Party. It advocated, amongst other things, centralised direction as an aid to branch growth, and a transfer from Council to the NEC of responsibility for organisation and administration. These and other innovations had much to do with the SNP's transformation, between 1962 and 1970, into a mass party.

So for McAllister, good leadership, attention to grievance, and the resolution of potential conflict, were all essential for electoral success. All of this was in the context of an organisationally expanding, but thoroughly decentralised structure.

Keith Webb <sup>(12)</sup> likewise pays some attention to the Nationalists' organisation. He shares with Branch and McAllister the view that the SNP's expansion was, in part, due to its own efforts. However he comes much closer to a recognition of the inherently centralising tendencies of this growth. To be sure, he does state that:

between 1966 and 1970 the SNP successfully made the transition from being a small, loosely coordinated organisation to a mass political party, albeit with a very decentralised organisational structure. (13)

However, later in the book Webb appears to recognise the organisational outcome of rapid growth, that is, centralisation. He indicates the clear consequences for internal communication, party finance, and a party hierarchy (14), and the changes these institute for the membership in terms of the latter's participation in the organisation:

If at times the SNP in and out of conference appears more unruly than other parties, that is because the party devolves very much more power to the branches and constituency associations than is normally the case. This may, however be changing in practice if not in theory ... the necessity to coordinate the activities of so large a party, and the dissemination of information, has automatically meant greater centralisation. (15)

Webb deals with this organisational theme, in greater detail, in a paper written in cooperation with Eric Hall (16). In this piece the authors endeavour to explain the rise of Scottish nationalism via internal adjustments to pressures created by the British political system.

In the first instance they dispute that the growing SNP vote was a consequence of an increasing protest element in the vote. Nor are they much impressed by the internal colonial or relative deprivation explanations for the SNP's success. However, they do accept that the Scottish media did have a role to play in aiding the SNP's growth. And likewise inter-election opinion-polls tended to exaggerate the support for the SNP, and in so doing aided the Party.

But for Webb and Hall there was no 'mono-causal' explanation for the rise of the SNP. Rather two sets of elements came together to aid the Party's growth.

The first were the adjustments made by the Nationalists over the years as they attempted to become relevant to serious political debate in Scotland. These included the development of a policy programme beyond the single issue of Home Rule; the formation of the SNP itself in 1934, which in turn led to the 'right' and 'left' wings of the Party leaving, thus strengthening the 'centre'; thirdly, the debate over the SNP's stance on the issue of 'devolution' and 'independence' which was resolved in favour of the latter; finally, the old argument about whether or not the SNP should compete in the electoral arena was concluded when it was decided that the Party should contest elections.

The secondary contributory set of elements was the perceived failures of both Labour and Conservative policies towards Scotland. These can be viewed in a number of ways: the Labour and Conservative parties did not succeed in communicating what measures were taken on behalf of Scotland. Moreover, a visible sign of the weakness of central government policy was Scotland's consistently higher unemployment rate. These failures were matched by other shortcomings. These included promising Scotland devolved government as a response to increasing Nationalist support. There was an absence of consistency on the part of both Labour and Conservative parties. The former was badly split on the issue, whilst the Conservatives were opposed to extensive devolution, and may not have implemented proposals in any case.

Thus by a combination of resolving its own internal problems, and by the failures and weaknesses of the major parties, the SNP emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a major force in Scottish politics.

Richard Mansbach, on the other hand, challenges the viability of the emergent organisational structure of the SNP <sup>(17)</sup>. Rather he reinforces the general view that the Party was highly democratic with a preponderance of power at the 'grass-roots'. However, where Mansbach differs from the other writers is in his belief that this would prove to be a fatal weakness in the Party's bid for national power. He argues that this 'polyarchical' structure leads to a constant preoccupation with localist concerns at the expense of national questions.

Mansbach goes on to detail further problems; there was a bias towards the rural areas with the urban centres losing out as a consequence; there was a non-movement of funds within the Party; the vertical and horizontal communication systems were, in intra-Party terms, weak; and the Party conferences between 1967 and 1969 were dominated by the branches.

This catalogue of weaknesses grew out of the nature of the organisational structure: the branches were not effectively controlled by the centre, indeed they often responded to policies independently without reference to Party attitudes.

We believe that these assumptions are totally erroneous, and on the contrary we shall demonstrate a marked fluidity of both funds and personnel within the Party - especially during parliamentary by-elections - and that this was achieved because of the centralisation of the Party machine. Finally, that whilst there was inadequate horizontal communications, that is, between branches, and between branches and constituencies, there was nevertheless an extremely good vertically

downward information system. Moreover, this system served only to reinforce the centralised nature of the SNP between 1962 and 1974.

Christopher Harvie <sup>(18)</sup> in what is really an historical study of nationalism in Scotland, also finds time en passant to glance at the organisation of the SNP.

He believes that the SNP began to develop after the West-Lothian by-election, sometime in 1963. At around that time younger, 'leftist' elements joined the organisation, and in the process it became more centrally directed. But for Harvie the most remarkable thing about the SNP's growth until 1973, was that it was almost 'completely unaided by external circumstances'. <sup>(19)</sup>

James Kellas <sup>(20)</sup> devotes a chapter to Nationalism but does not much discuss the nature of the SNP's organisation. However, he appears to share the general view of a decentralised party, with basic power resting in the branches. He does discuss the socio-economic profile of the new men joining during this period, that is, the 1960s. This group was 'less romantic' and 'more practical' than the usual personnel, and it came together with a new found campaigning zeal which did much to aid the growth of the Party.

Nevertheless:

The SNP is essentially a decentralised party, and its strength is in the local branches (not constituency associations). <sup>(21)</sup>

S. E. Finer, in a more recent work <sup>(22)</sup>, asserts unequivocally:

The party is highly decentralised. Its basic unit is the branch ... Headquarters leaves them to themselves.

He actually fails to give any supporting evidence at all for this claim, and indeed goes on to make several factual errors <sup>(23)</sup>

concerning the actual structure of the organisation. It seems then that he simply relied upon the assessments of previous writers on the subject.

Roger Mullin <sup>(24)</sup> believes that the Party's branches are involved in all of the major Party activities, and that:

The noticeable lack of strong leadership and centralised control which is welcomed by many party activists at present ... may prove more of a handicap than help come independence or even devolution. <sup>(25)</sup>

Finally, Mullin, much like Webb, does recognise that the organisational growth of the 1960s was leading to the development of 'centralising tendencies'.

Victor Hanby <sup>(26)</sup> examined the changing campaign techniques of the SNP between the 1960s and the two elections of 1974, and the effect these had on the electoral fortunes of the Party. He too shares the general view of a decentralised Party which is, as we have seen, common to most writers on the subject:

While the SNP seems to have adopted some of the trappings of conventional parties, in one fundamental respect its structure differs quite considerably from the structure of its main opponents. Unlike them the primary organisational emphasis is one of decentralisation and branch autonomy. <sup>(27)</sup>

Like most of the other writers, Hanby believes that improvements in organisation contributed to the successes of the SNP in 1974, and he appears to affirm what McAllister calls the 'endogenous' factors:

The growth of the SNP denotes a prime example of the speed with which a party, combining the twin pillars of emotive appeal and campaign professionalism and efficiency, may impact on the political process in circumstances where its traditional guardians have grown apathetic and complacent. <sup>(28)</sup>

There are, of course, other writings on the SNP. But the above cover those which specifically highlight the organisational aspects of the Party. And of these we can see that there is near unanimity



concerning the beneficial effects that the Party's organisational improvements of the 1960s had in aiding its electoral growth. A clear majority of writers are also of the view that the Party was characterised by decentralisation and openness of structure; the members had a crucial role to play in the formulation of policy, had easy access to the leadership, and a profound sense of local autonomy.

Unfortunately, few, if any, bother to distinguish between management/administrative decisions and the broader policy questions such as agricultural, industrial or fishing matters. Therefore it is not hard to understand just why a confusion can arise as to the extent of membership participation in the running of the Party. We do not dispute that the members did have a significant voice in the formulation of policy questions. However, in management matters, as well as tactical and strategic concerns, the Party was controlled by a small and relatively stable group of leaders. It may be that the writers have simply failed (or deemed it unimportant) to distinguish between policy-making and organisation. In which case we believe, and will seek to prove, that they have missed a crucial dichotomy in Party power.

In the next section we shall seek to place the SNP in the typology of parties drawn up by Duverger <sup>(29)</sup>. Several writers we have just looked at referred to the SNP as a 'mass' party. But what exactly is a 'mass' party, and what are its predominant characteristics?

### Type of Party

One certainly cannot doubt the intention of the SNP's leaders of the 1950s to turn their Party into a full-blooded competitor to the

established parties on the Scottish political scene (one may, however, question the efficacy of their approach). Certainly by the late 1960s their intention had become realised in fact; they had indeed presided over the growth of an embryo into a state of political adulthood.

Duverger <sup>(30)</sup> describes a 'mass' party as having four main characteristics. It recruits members, and the latter act both as educators among the electorate at large, and as a source of funds; the 'mass' party should be based on the branches - a striking feature of the SNP throughout its history; it is centralised and held fairly tightly together (amazingly, most of the writers appear to have ignored this element altogether); finally, the new member will fill in some kind of membership form and pay dues.

Blondel <sup>(31)</sup> likewise has a typology of 'mass' party characteristics. Not surprisingly even by these categories the SNP qualifies, by the mid-1960s, as a 'mass' party. That is to say, it had voluntary help, either in cash or in kind; it had a permanent organisation at either the national or local level; its leadership was responsible to the electorate, and a section of the latter identified with the Party; its electoral appeal was in a party rather than on an individual context; the Party had access to, and utilised the mass-media; finally, the SNP had an image by which it could be identified.

By the middle of the 1960s then, the SNP, by Blondel's typology, was a 'mass' party. These did not exist in the 1950s, rather they evolved from around 1962 onwards. Had this not occurred it is entirely possible that the SNP would have fallen into utter obscurity, and indeed disappeared:

a mass party cannot survive for long without foreseeable success. Its final fate becomes a race against time. (32)

This was the dilemma which confronted the Party leaders around 1959 to 1960: unless some sort of breakthrough could be engineered the Party faced the prospect of disintegration as the remaining members drifted away.

The SNP had to expand its membership base, and increase general party effort, if it wished to have a serious role in electoral politics. But in the process, and out of necessity, power became concentrated in the hands of that group which was responsible for the transformation. Someone, or some group, had to take charge of executive decision-making, and in the process a Party elite was born.

Such an occurrence was forecast as inevitable by Robert Michels (33). For him even the best of democratic intentions are overwhelmed by the realities of party management. And it is to Michels' study of 'oligarchy' within political parties to which we now turn.

#### The 'Law of Oligarchy': Relevance to the SNP

It is our contention that as the SNP expanded, from around 1962/63 onwards, the imperatives of organisational life propelled the leadership of the Party (34) to adopt management techniques which led to a centralisation of control. If the Party was to grow and prosper electorally then it became vital to introduce a hierarchy of power, centralised communications, an efficient revenue-raising system, and a tight control of membership activity.

Thus faced with near political extinction the Party managers

responded with a series of internal adjustments (which we catalogue in a later chapter). As we shall see in the next chapter such an outcome was entirely consistent with what is already known empirically about the life history of organisations in general, even of the normative variety (that is, political parties, voluntary societies and religious organisations).

In our view the leadership stratum changed very little between 1960 and 1974, and it was from this group that the organisational innovations, which so distinguished the SNP of the period, came.

Michels believed that leadership dominance emerged for two sets of reasons: 'psychological' and 'technical'. Of these the latter are the most significant because 'technical' expertise is necessary if the whole structure is not to collapse.

First of all we shall list the 'psychological' factors <sup>(35)</sup>: one who holds office comes to acquire a moral right to that office, and is unchallenged on that basis; the masses feel a deep need to be led; they feel gratitude to those who work on their behalf. This feeling strengthens the hold the leaders have on them; the masses admire, indeed venerate the leaders, and in doing so they enhance the latter's power; oratorical talent separates the leadership from the rank-and-file; other qualities are strength of will and conviction, and in some cases, admittedly exceptional, a goodness of heart. A quality which may lead to a reawakening of religious sentiment among the masses. But, above all, being a celebrity is enough to convince the masses that they can put their affairs in the hands of the leader. Moreover, the leadership constitutes a more stable group, and they are superior in respect of age and experience.

So much for the 'psychological' factors. The 'technical' factors (36) are:

- a) The inability of the masses to come together (that is, meet in specific forums) to formulate resolutions. Now, whilst this is difficult for a membership numbering between 1,000 and 10,000, thereafter it becomes impossible. This is, quite simply, a reference to the difficulties of communication and contact, inherent in the spatial diversity of a large political party.
- b) As the party grows in size delegates become necessary. Initially they may be bound by the membership, but as the duties of the delegates become more arduous:

The more extended and the more ramified the official apparatus of the organisation, the greater the number of its members, the fuller its treasury, and the more widely circulated its press, the less official becomes the direct control exercised by the rank and file, and the more is this control replaced by the increasing power of committees. (37)

Increasingly more and more power is vested in the committees and decisions are taken in camera, and as the organisation grows in size any delegate control over the leadership becomes 'purely fictitious'.

- c) A hierarchy emerges as an outcome of technical conditions, and an executive division of labour comes about. To be an effective fighting organisation, and to gain respect, the modern political party must centralise its operations.

For our purposes we are concerned with the take-over of the management administration, although as Parry indicates:

Mass control conflicts with efficiency and is replaced by professional direction in both policy-making and in technical administration. (38)

Therefore, we can see how the party pyramid emerges, and how it

is composed. At the top there is the small group of 'influentials.' Next comes those who although they may nominally be in the leadership, are nevertheless not at the centre of things. For example, an executive member who loses his place after only a few years on the NEC, and who never held senior office. Beneath this group are the 'activists'. These are the people who attend National Council and conferences, and constitute the most committed elements of the mass-membership. Finally, there are card-carrying 'non-activists' who take no part at all in the affairs of the Party nationally, and who may not even be regular attenders at their branch. This latter group constitutes the overwhelming majority of the Party.

Thus, as Michels insisted, 'organisation becomes the vital essence of the party' <sup>(39)</sup>. As we indicated above, as more and more people joined the Party in the 1960s so also did the SNP continue what it began earlier in the decade: the improvement of administrative efficiency. This led to the development of expertise among the Party administrators (who were also the actual political leaders), and in the process their power was reinforced, and they came to be seen as virtually indispensable.

The debate about oligarchy in a democratic political party hinges upon what is meant by 'centralised control'. Thus whilst a developing hierarchy and the other attributes of professional management might be inevitable, does this necessarily mean that the majority of the membership are deprived of real power? Perhaps they are content to allow the leaders to take decisions on management matters because they are happy with the outcome, and/or because they can, if they wish, remove the leaders at election time. In such circumstances can one realistically talk of oligarchical control?

Before we attempt to answer this question, we believe that it will prove useful to examine briefly what one writer had to say about elites, and how one might recognise them:

Elites connote domination of the decisional process by a single group or a few men, limited rank-and-file access, little or no opposition, and a failure on the part of most of the adult community to use their political resources to influence decisions. (40)

That quote is taken from Presthus' important study Men At The Top. Although it examined power relationships within communities, its overall conclusions are of relevance for our work on the SNP, at least in so far as the 'participatory' element of pluralism is concerned. As Presthus reminds us, much of the case for pluralism 'rests on the supposed fact that the essential thing is competition and participation among organised groups, not amongst individuals' (41). Yet, of course, many such groups have themselves become oligarchic and restrictive of membership participation. Moreover, he does not assume

that those who have power can achieve their ends all the time, or that they constitute a single, impenetrable, monolithic entity, or that the locus of power does not change historically ... or that community power rests entirely upon the possession or control of economic resources. Such requirements, it seems, are a caricature of power relations, if not a mere straw man. (42)

However, Presthus does believe that an elite will be a small proportion of the community, and will not be socially representative but rather composed of the middle or upper-middle classes.

He concluded that citizen participation, direct or indirect, was low in the two communities he investigated. Moreover, organisations did not link the individual to the decision-making process.

To follow on from this one might say that although the elite

themselves do not attempt to exclude the rank-and-file from participation, rather this occurs simply because the latter do not regard themselves as competent enough to formulate ideas and/or assist in the taking of decisions. So that whilst one may join the party, or organisation out of a belief in its aims, one may nevertheless feel that one's commitment should be limited to working for it and contributing to its funds. However, when activists do seek to challenge the leadership, and initiate or reverse decisions, they are unsuccessful. In the case of a democratic party this would usually take the form of the leadership appealing to the members, by way of their delegates, against the dissident element. Moreover, the channels of communication are restricted and virtually always dominated by the leadership. In any case, on most occasions the members are content to allow the leaders to get on with the job.

Presthus' view of what constitutes an elite is helpful because he acknowledges that there may be occasions when its will does not prevail. Nor can it be said to be impenetrable; aspirants to an elite position can, on occasion, get elected. In fact, as we shall see in the case of the SNP, so far as administrative questions are concerned, the elite almost always got its own way, but over the fourteen years under study there was a steady trickle of new faces into the leadership (although its nucleus hardly altered).

If the SNP was as democratic, open and participatory as the writings given above suggest, then we would expect to find at least a section of the membership, or even numbers of individuals, proposing recommendations to the Party's delegates, on matters concerning management and administrative procedures. If, on the other hand,



all such changes were innovated and instituted by the leadership, and despite some opposition from the rank-and-file, were almost always successful then there are strong empirical grounds for believing that the leadership held most of the power within the Party. If it can be further shown that only a small percentage of the members even bothered to participate in the discussions which went on prior to the decisions being endorsed, then that further strengthens our case. A useful parallel is that of the British Cabinet and its relationship with its own backbenchers. It is a rare occurrence for the government to be rebuffed by its own members of parliament on some matter of legislation, even allowing for the fact that the Cabinet would always take into consideration the opinions of its supporters. Few would assert that the British system of government was characterised by the crucial role played by the back benchers in the formulation of government policy.

Elite power is surely related to the actuality of decision-making, that is, to the conception and implementation of organisational initiatives emanating from a small and distinctive group at the top of the Party. Merely giving the membership a formally delineated right to participate in decision-making is many times removed from the membership actually exercising that prerogative. If we construct a continuum of participation we would find that in a highly democratic organisation the more members that can be shown to have consented to a recommendation from the leadership, then the more democratic and participatory the body in question. If, on the other hand, few members say less than five percent, give their consent, can we still speak of a democratic party?

To suggest that the absence of opposition is tantamount to

acceptance, and therefore democracy, is to assert without giving supporting evidence. If members do not participate how can we continue to speak of participatory democracy?

This section has been concerned with the relevance of the concept of oligarchy to the SNP. We believe that so many of the 'technical' (and even some of the 'psychological') factors which Michels pointed as causing oligarchy, can be seen in the context of the experiences of the Scottish Nationalists. Although the SNP was not 'socialist' in its ideology, it was, nevertheless, thoroughly committed to membership participation and democratic decision-making, and yet, as we shall seek to demonstrate in the following chapters the SNP fell into the same methods of organisational behaviour which Michels claimed had occurred in the European socialist parties.

Herbert Simon observed <sup>(43)</sup> that if concepts are to be scientifically useful then they must be operationalised. It is no good simply adumbrating the allocation of functions and the formal structure of an organisation, one must go behind the facade to discover the substance:

Consider the term "centralisation". How is it determined whether the operations of a particular organisation are centralised? ... A realistic analysis of centralisation must include a study of the allocation of decisions in the organisation, and the methods of influence that are employed by the higher levels to affect the decisions at the lower levels. (44)

In this thesis we shall be examining not only the source of ideas of the managerial innovations, but also their outcomes, that is, how these were achieved, and their overall effect on the system. Such a decision-making analysis will, hopefully, allow us to meet the conditions laid down in the above quote, and to discover if the SNP

between 1960 and 1974 became highly centralised, elite-dominated, organisation.

In the next chapter we shall extend the discussion of party leadership into a more theoretical field, that is, why was it likely that as the SNP grew in size it was always probable that it would become dominated by a leadership group? Furthermore, what is empirically known about leadership in organisations in general?

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2. Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
3. Ibid., p.267.
4. Ibid., pp. 279-280.
5. Ibid., p.292.
6. Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behaviour (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1961), p.219.
7. Brand, op.cit., p.280.
8. Ibid., p.280.
9. Ibid., p.281.
10. Ian McAllister, 'Party Organisation and Minority Nationalism: A Comparative Study in the United Kingdom', Studies in Public Policy, (No. 43, University of Strathclyde, 1979).
11. Ibid., p.11.
12. Keith Webb, The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland, (London, Penguin Books, 1978).
13. Ibid., p.106.
14. Ibid., p.133.
15. Ibid., p.144.
16. Keith Webb & Eric Hall, Explanations of the Rise of Political Nationalism In Scotland, Studies In Public Policy, (No. 15, University of Strathclyde, 1978).
17. Mansbach, op.cit., p.189.
18. Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707 - 1977, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1977).
19. Ibid., p.270.
20. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975).
21. Ibid., p.127.
22. S.E. Finer, The Changing British System, 1945-1979, (Washington D.C., American Institute for Political Research, 1980), pp. 85-87.

23. He tells us that National Council meets twice a year, p.86. In fact, it meets four times annually. Instead of having fifteen 'elected members', p.86, it has thirty. Moreover, they are not elected to it by the National Assembly (see Appendix), but by the Council itself.  
The NEC is not headed by the National Secretary, p.86. It is headed by the Party Chairman who is elected by the Annual Conference, and not by the Assembly as Finer states on p.86.
24. W.A. Roger Mullin, 'The Scottish National Party', in, Multi-Party Britain, H.M. Drucker (ed), (London, Macmillan, 1979), pp. 109-130.
25. Ibid., p.116.
26. Victor Hanby, 'The Renaissance of the Scottish National Party: From Eccentric to Campaigning Crusader', in, Changing Campaign Techniques: Elections and Values in Contemporary Democracies, Louis Maisel (ed), (London, Sage Electoral Studies Yearbook, Vol. 11, 1976), pp. 217-241.
27. Ibid., p.233.
28. Ibid., p.237.
29. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State, (Cambridge, Methuen, 1964) pp. 63-71.
30. Ibid., pp. 63-71.
31. Jean Blondel, Political Parties, (London, Wildwood House, 1978) pp. 106-126.
32. Sigmund Neuman, 'Modern Political Parties', in, Approaches to Comparative Politics, Sigmund Neuman (ed), (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956) p.400.
33. Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958).
34. We define the Party leaders as being those within the SNP who held the highest elective offices of the Party. There is a second category composed of those who had more or less continuous membership of the NEC. The extent and membership of this group, together with its duration through time, is examined in Chapter Eight.
35. Michels, op.cit., pp. 50-85.
36. Ibid., pp. 27-49.
37. Ibid., p.38.
38. Robert Michels quoted in Political Elites, Geraint Parry, (London, Allen & Unwin) p.42.

39. Michels, op.cit., p.336.
40. Robert Presthus, Men at the Top : A Study in Community Power  
(New York, Oxford University Press, 1964) p.25.
41. Ibid., p.19.
42. Ibid., p.25.
43. Herbert Simon, 'Some Further Requirements of Bureaucratic Theory',  
in Reader in Bureaucracy, Robert K. Merton et.al. (eds),  
(Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1952) pp. 51-58.
44. Ibid., p.53.

## Chapter Two

### Organisational Leadership and Power

Our concern in this thesis is with trying to establish if there was a leadership group, within the SNP, which enjoyed disproportionate power over administrative/management matters between 1960 and 1974. In other words was there a recognisable leadership cadre, controlling the direction of the Party during those years?

For the moment we are not concerned with the size or the composition of this group. Rather our attention will be focused on defining what we mean by 'leadership' and 'power', since unless we understand what is meant by these concepts, it will prove fruitless to speak of leadership control, or centralised direction. At the heart of both of these notions lies the idea of a leadership group utilising power in what they believed to be in the best interests of the Party. It is these critical, but much misunderstood terms, which will now interest us.

### Leadership and Power

Though they are widely used throughout the social sciences, it is not at all uncommon to find these concepts left without a definition. It would seem that an assumption is made that the reader will know exactly what is meant by each. This failure to outline a definition is not perhaps, surprising, for they are notoriously difficult to tie down to a generally agreed meaning. In truth, the latter appear to shift depending upon the discipline and the context in which they are used. Nor can it be said that there is widespread agreement within

political science about the use of what Dahl calls 'influence terms'. (1)

Of the two concepts, perhaps 'leadership' is the least confusing and easiest to specify. Even so, as Blondel has noted (2), controversies still rage around the use of the word. One can say of 'leadership' that it involves a relationship beyond the individual. Moreover, the followers must recognise and accept, that a number of their group, party etc., actually constitutes the 'leadership'. What is critical is that leaders should be recognised by their followers as being leaders, regardless of the origins or causes of this recognition. It is clear that followers have to view themselves as followers for the power relationship to be also one of 'leadership'. (3)

But by itself even this does not take us very far. After all it could simply mean that in one particular instance the leaders should be followed. Leadership in a normative organisation is more complicated still. Compliance with directives is not normally a consequence of utilitarian considerations such as job dismissal. But more likely because one is idealistically committed to the philosophy of the body concerned. We shall return to the specific theme of political leadership presently.

Perhaps one of the principal difficulties in defining leadership lies in the fact that it has been studied from starkly different methodological perspectives. Of these approaches the two most common are the 'trait' approach and, secondly, the attributes which flow from 'position'.

The former amounts to enquiries into, and the listing of, those



personality traits most commonly found amongst organisational leaders. The second method, the 'positional', examines the social and physical nature of the environment in which the leaders operate, the nature of their task, as well as the personality traits of the leaders (4).

Within certain limits this is the approach we shall be adopting.

However, we will not utilise the listing of traits, since we consider this requires an expertise in psychological analysis (which we do not have), and is open to the intrusion of too many subjective factors in the absence of the latter.

We shall use the 'positional' (see Chapter Eight for an empirically based analysis of the 'positional') perspective which has the merit of simplifying the quest for a suitable definition, since if someone holds a position, officially defined as being part of the leadership, then it increases the likelihood that he/she will be treated as such. But we must go even beyond this in our search for a definition.

In a normative organisation leaders should have legitimacy, that is to say, the membership should believe that the leadership should have the right to issue directives and speak on behalf of the organisation as a whole. This means, if they are to be effective, they must have authority; in fact, Dahl calls legitimate 'power' or 'influence', authority (5). As Welsh says:

An authoritative leader is one whose actions in organising, mobilising, and allocating resources are accepted by the persons for whom these sections are relevant ... If the followers attach legitimacy to the acts of a leader, we may speak of the relationship between leaders and followers as one of the authority. (6)

Therefore, for our purposes a 'leader' is one who holds a specific and senior position within the organisation (see previous chapter for

the exact posts within the SNP delineated as composing the leadership), and who is regarded as having the right to hold that position by the membership:

Political leadership rests on a moral basis when leaders command authority among their followers in the absence of any legal sanctions. (7)

Dion (8) believes that the essence of political leadership is not the 'leader-mass' relationship but the amount of influence that the leaders have on the core of the party's faithful, as well as the former's control of the party. This is a reference to the prevailing relationship between the leadership and the activists of the party, and the degree to which the former actually manage the affairs of the organisation. The leaders must convince the activists that they have the good of the organisation at heart. In this way the leadership can gain control of the party. Thus whilst apparently adhering to political norms they will usually seek to accumulate power for the centre. In this way control becomes easier and less subject to the ever changing whims of the membership; the minimisation of membership caprice is essential for sound management.

Leadership within a political party is a delicate balance between ensuring that legitimacy is retained, and trying to effect increasing power for the centre, the latter being a vital component of good management. We shall return to what elements are likely to assist in the exercise of leadership (and concomitant legitimacy) below. However, before that we must now seek to define an equally popular, though much misunderstood concept, power.

### Power

This thesis, in common with most other studies in politics, is

centrally concerned with the idea of 'power distribution'. Too often, however, it is taken as a given and consequently left without a definition, for example, in the preceding paragraph we referred to 'increasing power for the centre', without actually specifying what we meant by 'power'.

In the first instance we see that 'power' is related to action in the sense that Group A motivates Group B to behave in accordance with A's wishes. This distinguishes it from the mere coincidental, that is, B behaved in a fashion that A desired, although B had no way of knowing that such was A's wish.

Yet, of course, power goes beyond even this. It can be 'coercive', as in a prison, where the inmates do as they are told for fear of retribution; or it can be exercised on a 'reward' basis, as on the shop-floor, where action occurs on the basis of wage reward. Such power is different in degree and type from a 'coercive' application.

French and Raven identify five types of power:

Reward power. One actor believes that the other can mediate wage rewards for him, that is, the latter has resources from which the former will benefit.

Referent power. This is power based on a liking, or identification, with another person, and from that affection, or empathy, flows the source of the other's power.

Coercive power. A believes that B can mediate punishment for him.

Legitimate power. A believes that B has the right to influence A, and that A has an obligation to accept that influence. In formal organisations such power is usually attached to an office. One method

of gaining such legitimate power is through winning elections.

Expert power. A believes that B has some specialist knowledge in a certain area, and such is the basis of B's power. However, the exercise of influencing must be restricted to his sphere of expertise because any attempt to go beyond it can reduce his power by undermining A's confidence. (9)

Now, it is obvious that these categories need not be mutually exclusive; it is quite possible for a party's 'general secretary' to exert all five. Nor need we accept this typology as being definitive. For example, Janda's concept of 'power' <sup>(10)</sup> excludes 'reward', 'referent', 'expert' and 'coercive' power as a basis for understanding, or describing, the nature of organisational 'power'. He believes that leadership:

does not occur unless the power-wielder secures the desired behaviour from the power recipient on the basis of legitimate power. (11)

He goes on to outline what he considers to be 'legitimate power', and gives a threefold typology thereof: 'cultural values', by which he means that the predominant cultural orientation gives to the leader(s) the right to prescribe behaviour; 'social structure' works in the following way. If A accepts a hierarchy as right then he will accept legitimate power within his group; finally, designation by a 'legitimising agent', for example, election to office.

Janda does not consider 'cultural values' as being to be of great significance, but the other two are very important for the acquisition of legitimate power. Thus it would seem that he believes that a 'power' relationship exists whenever group members believe that another within the group has the right to prescribe behaviour patterns.

The distinctions between Janda's view and that taken by French and Raven are typical of the many difficulties which proliferate in this area; there is no general agreement, and indeed much confusion over the concept and even less consensus over its operationalisation. The important thing would appear to be that whenever one discusses 'power' one defines it clearly so that quantification and measurement may begin from a basis which all can understand - if not exactly agree upon.

Yet there are elements of political power which make it easier to analyse than is the case in other power studies, as Blondel has noted,

One element of the distinction between power involving leadership and other forms of power is the fact that leaders and led have to belong to the same group while this is not necessarily true of other forms of power. (12)

For our purpose we define 'power' within the democratic political party as the right to command exercised by those in senior positions within the organisation, even if such powers are not formally elucidated. This means that the leaders are exercising powers in given areas, even although in constitutional terms they should not. However, this state of affairs is allowed to persist either because that section of the membership which opposes it is unable to muster enough support to prevent the leaders from so increasing their powers, or the leaders have the tacit agreement, and/or acquiescence, of a majority of the membership in this power extension. There is also the possibility that the great bulk of the members, or at least a significant minority, simply do not know that the leadership is using powers that have not been formally given to them.

This allows for the possibility of the leadership increasing their

share of organisational power either with or without the consent of the rank-and-file. This also means that we can actually know whether or not the leadership group has increased their share of power through time, in what areas, and how this was achieved, for example, did they ask Conference for more powers, or did they simply assume such powers without reference to the membership? If there was consent from the members on what basis was this given, for example, did the membership believe in the expertness of the leaders, or was it related to some perception of coercive power which the leadership group had at its disposal?

In the next section we shall examine what elements are most likely to assist in increasing the powers of the leadership, and thereby aid in the centralisation of party management.

### Organisational Leadership and Internal Party Power

In this section we shall be concerned with what elements are likely to advance the status and power of leadership within organisations, so that when we come to analyse the specific case of the SNP we will be in a position to relate events within the Party to organisations in general. To do this we will refer to work already undertaken in the field of organisational analysis.

Katz and Kahn have suggested that three basic types of leadership behaviour occur within organisations:

- (1) the introduction of structural change, or policy formulation,
- (2) the interpolation of structure, that is, piecing out the

incompleteness of existing formal structure, or improvisation,  
and

- (3) the use of structure formally provided to keep the  
organisation in motion and in effective operation. (13)

Whilst they consider number one to be the most challenging, they nonetheless believe it to occur as a consequence of external pressures. Number two involves structural improvisation and is important in avoiding the breakdown of the system. The third behavioural type means that the use of structure as it exists in response to potential disruption.

On the face of it, it is difficult to distinguish between these three types, nonetheless they do represent recognisable leadership strategies. In the case of the SNP we can immediately understand the pressures which were placed on the SNP leadership of the late 1950s and early 1960s to innovate or face the virtual extinction of the Party. However, whilst some utterly new elements appeared there was also the 'piecing out' that Katz and Kahn describe. In the end however, it is difficult to separate the various threads. We can certainly understand from the above typology what organisational leaders do in general, but we must look at the specific decisions taken by the Nationalist leaders between 1960 and 1974 to grasp the type of leadership strategy adopted by them. That strategy, especially in the early years, was directly related to the then external and internal crises that confronted them. Since the SNP was so ineffective, risk-taking was better than a prolongation of the torpor.

Therefore, it follows that if a group is now at some low point in effectiveness, if it faces a difficult problem, or many obstacles block the path to its goals, a great deal of leadership must occur before maximum need satisfaction or maximum effectiveness is attained by the group ... the further a group is from maximum effectiveness, the more leadership is possible and required ... (14).

Bass gives further examples from work by Baxter and Cassidy, Frank, Hemphill and Gibbs <sup>(15)</sup>, all of which confirms the view that groups are more likely to accept leadership and command when they are in a state of ineffectiveness and lacking clear direction. Whether this is true in every case seems open to question, for example, the current disputes within the Labour Party. However, it certainly is borne out by the experiences of the SNP in the late 1950s and early 1960s. We shall give supporting evidence in later chapters.

If groups low in morale and success are more amenable to the exercise of control we must also ask what sort of individuals are most likely to emerge, and be accepted, by the rank-and-file, as organisational leaders?

In the case of a political party this questions of 'who leads?' is to some extent resolved by the adoption of a 'positional' approach: if the individuals composing the leadership have won or retained office at an election, then we may assume it is because the membership, or at least a section of it, is happy with them in that position. To begin with, therefore, leadership means adherence to group norms; the rank-and-file like to believe that their leaders are of the same stock as themselves with the interests of the organisation, as a whole, at heart <sup>(16)</sup>. Thereafter, and once their legitimacy has been established, the leaders begin to react upon and change the group structure.

Their control over the means of dominance puts them in position to convert the group norms into an ideology which sanction their preferred style of command. <sup>(17)</sup>

Having established themselves in the leadership via the electoral process, they must then seek to reinforce their position by means of a strategy which brings success to the organisation. As Dion has argued <sup>(18)</sup>,



the prevailing style of leadership in politics will be similar to that which one finds in business, education and voluntary organisations. But as Tannenbaum and Schmidt argue <sup>(19)</sup>, the actual exercise of authority can vary between, on the one extreme, the manager simply taking a decision and announcing it, and on the other, where the subordinates suggest the solution and the manager's initial role simply involves the identification of the problem.

But in terms of increasing their power the leaders will find that nothing succeeds like success:

The proportion of successes compared to attempts to lead will increase among those whose previous leadership acts have been effective ... (20).

As successes increase; rapidly growing membership, election victories or an increasing share of the poll, and publicity for the party etc., then the leadership will find that their intra-organisational power is likewise advancing.

On a continuum of events we can illustrate the progress which results in increasing the power of the leadership. In the beginning the organisation is struggling for survival. Strong leaders institute the necessary adjustments to end the decline and begin the expansion. Given the fact that the members acknowledge the need for innovation, increased leadership power is accepted, and perhaps welcomed.

If success, in the form of organisational expansion, is effected, then this further strengthens the position of those who were responsible for the advance. They are seen to be skilled and capable people who were worthy of the confidence which the membership had in them.

Moreover, once they are in power other factors begin to lend security to their position. When individuals gather together voluntarily to achieve a certain goal, if it so happens that their interaction potential is low because of, for example, a large membership, then they tend to vest control in a few executive positions. Once ensconced in such positions, the office-holders come to gain additional knowledge, control of communications, expertise in the mechanics of the organisation, and decision-making authority, so that in the end:

Status differentiation may reach a high degree in what began as a voluntary collection of individuals of equal status. (21)

This expertise of office, Michels' 'technical factors', gives the leadership considerable advantages when debates about, or arguments over, internal power arise. According to Linz, Michels' analysis emphasised:

... the constraints derived from organisational needs, the growth of the organisation, the need to make rapid decisions, the difficulties in communicating with the members, the growth and complexity of the tasks, the division of labour, the need for full-time activity and from the consequent processes of selection of leadership and development of knowledge and skills. These processes, in turn, lead to the emergence of stable leaders, whose professionalisation, combined with consciousness of their own worth leads to oligarchy. The important point is that the leaders' deviation from norms that they themselves accept is not the result of their motivation. (My italics) (22)

We included this lengthy quote because we believe that it adequately summarises what we believe to have occurred within the SNP between 1960 and 1974. Linz is pointing to the fact that Michels recognised that the party leaders had a commitment to democracy but were forced to act in ways which damaged the democratic process as a direct result of organisational imperatives.

The rise of bureaucracy which is attendant upon membership expansion of a political party is somewhat complicated in the case of the SNP. This complexity is born of the nature of the SNP's staffing arrangements.

For most of the 1960s, whilst the SNP had a bureaucracy, defined as paid, full-time officials, much, indeed most of the administrative management burden was carried by the senior-elected officers <sup>(23)</sup> of the Party. These bureaucrats did not meet all the criteria normally associated with the Weberian view of bureaucratic authority <sup>(24)</sup>: administrative activities are normally carried out on a regular basis; officials have clearly specified duties; there is a hierarchical demarcation of offices; recruitment is on the basis of specialist competence and is effected through examinations, and the staff's conduct is governed by written procedures.

Now, in fact, several of these criteria were not met by the majority of the Party's bureaucracy. They did not have a fixed and regular salary - indeed they were not even employees, consequently did not have tenured positions. However, need we take Weber's 'ideal-type' as our guide when we come to analyse bureaucracy in the real world?

Whatever aspects of criteria a working concept of bureaucracy which should be settled, not by an intuitional typology, but by comparison of relevant historical documents. <sup>(25)</sup>

The SNP, as we shall discover, went through many of the changes normally associated with bureaucratic growth, but rather than identifying the ideal-typical attributes established by Weber, we consider Friedrich's view <sup>(26)</sup> of what is normally found in a nascent bureaucracy, as most helpful: centralisation of control and supervision, differentiation of functions, qualifications for office, precision and continuity, secrecy and discretion. These are potentially quasi-quantitative, allowing, as they do, for the judgement "more or less". Indeed, Friedrich suggests that further research could lead to the extension or reduction of the list. In any event, of Friedrich's group the only elements which one could not apply to the unpaid bureaucracy of the SNP are; objectivity and qualification for office.

It is this latter element which is at the heart of the problems surrounding the question whether or not we can describe the SNP's part-time administration as bureaucratic?

What were the group's qualification for office? During the course of the thesis we shall argue that, effectively, they were two-fold: they were often seen by the membership as having technical skills, for example, as being good at book-keeping, or as administrators, or as communicators. Such skills would be particularly true of those who filled the posts of National Secretary, or Vice-Chairman (Organisation), or Treasurer. But once elected, these established skills were reinforced by the more overtly political attributes of party leadership, and of the status and prestige that such a position bestowed. Therefore the SNP's leaders were in the strange position of being held accountable for all of the administrative aspects of the Party's work, and also the projection of the SNP politically.

Yet leadership power to be effective must have a control element, for there are occasions in the life of a party when such control will be vital for optimising the possibilities of electoral success. Indeed according to Etzioni <sup>(27)</sup> organisational success largely depends upon the leaders' ability to control the membership, and he lists three types of control normally employed - depending upon the type of organisation: 'physical', which is coercive; 'material', which is based upon the utilisation of goods and services; and 'symbolic', this is based upon normative considerations such as the leadership urging the members to greater efforts.

Most of the time organisations utilise more than one type of

control. In the case of the SNP, whilst there was no coercive element to speak of (although the leadership could, on occasions, suspend or expel individuals or branches) there were certainly many instances in which symbolic control was effected. Indeed, in virtually every communication from headquarters, whether oral or written, such control methods were employed. On the other hand, it is hard to see how 'material' control could have been used.

In applying 'symbolic' control the SNP's leadership had the advantage of being able to claim that, as the Party's administrators, they knew what was best for the Party in straight management terms. And beyond this, as its political leadership, they were likely to be followed anyway especially in the circumstances of growth (which they had done so much to achieve) which applied for most of the 1960s. Control for the SNP's leadership, was facilitated by the structural conditions of the Party between 1960 and 1974 (though we do not deny that there were also helpful external circumstances). Thereafter the intrusion of a parliamentary contingent changed the power structure and control mechanisms.

In this chapter we have looked at the central concepts which affect any study in organisation: 'leadership' and 'power'. We have attempted to define these terms for use in this thesis, and to specify what conditions are liable to facilitate, and optimise, successful organisational leadership.

In the chapters which follow we shall seek to plot the series of circumstances which led to an increase in power for the central leadership, at the expense of the members, and to relate these events

to other studies in organisational analysis.

In the next chapter we shall be looking at the organisation and power structure of the SNP in the 1950s and early 1960s; how effective was the organisation of those years, and what was the internal distribution of power? Such an analysis is vital in order to highlight the degree to which the Party changed after 1962, and it will allow us to implement a more rigorous comparison between the two, very distinct, periods.

1. Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.15.
2. Jean Blondel, 'World Leaders : Heads of Government in the Postwar Period', in Political Executives in Comparative Perspective : A Cross-National Empirical Study, (London, Sage Publications, 1980.)
3. Ibid., p.14.
4. Kenneth F. Janda, 'Towards the Explication of the Concept of Leadership in Terms of the Concept of Power', in Political Leadership : Readings for An Emerging Field, Glenn D. Paige (ed), (New York, The Free Press, 1972).
5. Dahl, op.cit., p.53.
6. William A. Welsh, Leaders and Elites, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p.18.
7. Ibid., p.19.
8. Leon Dion, 'Concept of Political Leadership', Canadian Journal of Political Science, (1, 1968, pp. 3-17), p.5
9. John R.P. French, and Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power", in, Group Dynamics, (eds), Dorwin, Cartwright & A.F. Zander, (Evanston, Ill., Row, Paterson & Co., 1960) pp. 607-23.
10. Janda, op.cit.
11. Ibid., p.59.
12. Blondel, op.cit., pp. 12-13.
13. Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organisations, (New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1978), p. 536.
14. Bernard M. Bass, Leadership, Psychology and Organisational Behaviour, (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 134.
15. Ibid., p. 135.
16. Dion, op.cit., p.4.
17. Ibid., p. 8.
18. Ibid., p. 16.
19. Robert Tannenbaum & Warren E. Schmidt, 'How to Choose a Leadership Pattern', in Management : A Book of Readings, Harold Koontz & Cyril O'Donnell (eds), (New York, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1976), pp. 499-508.
20. Bass, op.cit., p. 138.
21. Ibid., p. 402.

22. Juan Linz, Robert Michels, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 10, David L. Sills (ed) (New York, Macmillan & The Free Press, 1968), pp. 266-267.
23. The Chairman, the National Secretary, the two (later four) Executive Vice-Chairman, and the Party Treasurer. The specific administrative structure is outlined later in the thesis.
24. Robert K. Merton et. al. (eds) Reader in Bureaucracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1952), pp. 18-27.
25. Carl J. Friedrich, Some Observations on Weber's Analysis of Bureaucracy, in Merton et.al., op.cit., p. 29.
26. Ibid., p. 29.
27. Amitai Etzioni, Modern Organisations, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964), p.59.



### Chapter Three

#### The Organisation and Power Structure of the SNP, 1948-1962

This chapter will examine the SNP in the years between 1948 and 1962. This specific period is chosen because it represents a demarcation between an era of virtually uninterrupted growth, starting around 1962, and an earlier period in which the SNP was on the periphery of Scottish politics, with an exceedingly small membership, and an almost total absence of political or organisational success (organisational success is defined as membership and branch growth, as well as considerable improvements in Party finances, and the amount of attention given to the SNP by the national media).

This chapter is necessary so that we may better appreciate the remarkable developments which occurred within the SNP after 1962, and in this respect it should be instructive in both organisational and power analysis terms. Nothing is so illustrative of the changes which overtook the SNP in the 1960s, than an understanding of the condition of the Party as it was in the 1950s.

The first section will look at the organisational evolution in the fourteen years between 1948 and 1962. These years do not represent a complete whole, in so far as there were no variations in the Party's fortunes. However, it is true to say that the SNP was not doing well, organisationally or electorally, until the last few years, that is, 1961 and 1962. This section will plot the organisational path of the Nationalists through an era best seen as the SNP's nadir.

The second section will concentrate on the internal power structure of the SNP between 1948 and 1962. Our view is that during this period the SNP was more devolved, and much less oligarchic, than in the years after 1962. That is to say, as the demands placed upon the leadership from organisational expansion (see previous chapter) intensified, so there occurred, as we would expect, an increasing tendency to centralise power in the hands of a comparatively small group at the apex of the Party.

However, throughout the 1950s the Party was so weak and unstructured that there was an absence of direction and control. As a result of these weaknesses, and lack of leadership personnel, the existing Party principals would have welcomed qualitative additions to their ranks - if only to carry some of the burden - had only such people been available.

Besides from supplying evidence in support of this case, we shall also engage in some theorising as to why an oligarchy was unlikely to have existed within the SNP in the 1950s.

One final, and general point. We are not suggesting a crisp, clean break between these periods. Rarely, if at all, could one reasonably expect to find such a division. Rather, we believe, that there occurred a slow but marked improvement in the condition of the SNP's organisation starting around 1958-59, with a more spectacular spurt between 1963-64. Nor are we suggesting that power was wholly devolved to the membership in the 1950s, with the leaders merely following their instructions. What we are describing was a climate of opinion which favoured a much greater role for the membership in

decision-making than subsequently became the case as the Party grew in size. In other words, the exigencies of growth, which propelled organisational leaders towards centralisation, had not yet begun to bear in upon the SNP's managers. The suggestion is that consultation with the membership on organisational matters, was much more common in the 1950s (and the Party was less centralised), than in the 1960s and 1970s.

### Organisational Structure

1948 was an important year for the SNP. It was in that year that the Party took the second of two decisions which left control of the organisation in the hands of fundamentalist Nationalists, those who believed in full-scale independence and nothing less, and who also believed that the SNP should have no truck with any other party.

The first such influential decision was taken at the Party's 1942 Conference, when the delegates voted for Douglas Young as Chairman, in preference to the candidate of the Home Rule faction led by John MacCormick. Although, as Jack Brand makes clear <sup>(1)</sup>, Young was by no means a hard-line Nationalist, nevertheless this vote led to the devolutionists leaving the Party and forming the Scottish Convention.

The next step towards ideological purity (as the 'Independence, nothing less' faction saw it) was the decision of the 1948 Conference to make membership of any other party incompatible with continued membership of the SNP. Previously, dual membership was permissible (the decision was not unanimous, indeed it caused Douglas Young to leave the party). On the face of it this decision was hardly surprising, or unfair; the SNP could not hope to be a credible electoral force if

sections of its membership, perhaps even the leadership, had their loyalty divided between two parties. After all, how could the Nationalists have been certain that confidential decisions were not, even inadvertently, being leaked? Equally important, how could a political party reasonably ask for the support of electors in preference to another party, if some of their own members, perhaps even candidates, were themselves members of that other Party?

In any case, the 1948 decision was the final act in a drama which saw the SNP being transformed from a mere movement into the form, if not the substance, of a mass political party.

By the end of the 1940s the SNP had some reason to feel pleased with its progress: it was free of its dissident elements, it had, albeit briefly, elected its first member to Parliament, and of its 1949 Conference, the Party newspaper the Scots Independent, claimed that it had proved that the Party had 'come of age' (2). In the 1949 local elections the SNP contested an unprecedented number of seats, and, finally, the Party had adopted a new Constitution which reflected its new found ideological predilections.

At a policy conference held in November 1949, the SNP laid, once and for all (or so it was thought), the Home Rule ghost: the delegates voted by 57 votes to 9 to reject a resolution which called for a plebiscite to be held on Home Rule. And just to endorse this stance the same conference voted overwhelmingly against a proposal to form a congress of representatives from the trade unions, MPs and local authorities to secure a measure of Home Rule (3). (As a matter of interest that same conference also recorded more delegates from more

branches than had ever before been seen at such an affair).

In the previous month, October, the Party Chairman, Dr. Robert McIntyre, claimed at a press conference <sup>(4)</sup> that over 40 candidates were available to contest elections, providing that £40,000 could be raised by appeal, a not inconsequential caveat. Furthermore, he asserted that membership had multiplied four or five times since 1945, and as an example he reported that four new branches had been formed in one Dundee constituency alone.

Whilst one must treat such claims, in the absence of documentary proof, with some scepticism, there is some reason to believe that if the SNP was not exactly prospering, then neither was it in the state of disrepair that it would later fall into. At the Conference of 1949, the Publications Committee reported <sup>(5)</sup> that by the year ending March 1949 a total of 73,000 new leaflets had been sold. These covered issues as diverse as housing, emigration, local government, and another leaflet which set out the Party's aims and objectives. By the standards of the more established parties these figures were modest, but, as we shall see, they were very impressive when compared to what was achieved in the 1950s.

Other evidence also suggests that the Party was much stronger in the late 1940s than in later years: it had a full-time office manager who had one full-time and one part-time assistant; the Party's monthly newsletter to the branches had a section which was devoted to organisational matters; and although finances were in decline, they were nonetheless in a better state than they would be again for many years.

But all was not well with the SNP even then. There is sufficient data to suggest that the health of the Party was beginning to wane. We have already mentioned falling finances. At the beginning of the 1949 Conference, the Party Treasurer resigned because he felt that the low return in branch quotas <sup>(6)</sup> was tantamount to a vote of 'no confidence' in him. He also reported that £1,000 in bequests had to be realised to finance the running of the organisation. Something called the Party Upkeep Fund (an appeal to supporters which was used to pay for running costs) achieved £1,600 out of a target of £2,000, and of this figure only £600 came from the branches. It was also reported that affiliation fees, paid by the branches to headquarters, had not risen in the same proportion as the number of new branches.

In retrospect we can see that 1949 represented a turning-point in what came to be a critical downward cycle. However, in such matters as organisational and/or electoral decline one can never be certain as to the exact reason, or reasons, for the deterioration. They are usually many and complicated, embracing internal and external events. It is likely that some mistakes could have been avoided. But, given the fallibility of human beings, errors will occur, often with harsh consequences.

Perhaps the SNP's recession was a result of general societal changes which occurred in the late 1940s, such as a sharpening of social tensions which polarised the electorate between the two major parties. Even if this was the case, we must also remember that the SNP had never been a serious electoral force, and therefore it is hardly surprising if the strain of failure at the ballot-box affected the organisational capacities to function effectively. Presumably lack of success must

have dented morale, as well as public confidence in the electoral vitality of the SNP. Why waste a vote, or cash, on a Party which was obviously never going to succeed electorally?

For the most part these factors can be classified as 'exogenous' that is, they were events going on at a social level rather than organisational matters. But the line which divides these from the 'endogenous' can be very fine indeed. A good example of this is the ambiguity which surrounds the decline in the Party's finances between the late 1940s and the early 1950s. Did the organisational difficulties cause a fall-off in financial support, or was it that financial problems led to an inability to carry on an efficient organisation? Either way these appear to be 'endogenous' problems, soluble within the context of the Party. The reality probably was that the problems were symbiotic, and in feeding off each other worsened the situation. Moreover, both could equally have been caused by external factors too complex to understand.

In any event the SNP was beset by financial problems which prevented the Party from carrying on the sort of propaganda activities vital for electoral success. This included everything from the ability to pay office staff, to the capacity to print leaflets.

The estimated income of the SNP centrally in 1948 was £2,650. Of this £150 came from branch affiliation fees, £100 was in membership subscriptions (individuals who joined the Party directly at headquarters, rather than through a branch), £1,000 came from the Party's Upkeep Fund, and £150 was in the form of bequests. Significantly, in the light of what was to occur in the 1950s, the total expenditure on

organisation, propaganda and publications was £1,350, and a further £1,300 was spent on financing the running of Party headquarters. The deficit between income and expenditure was to be raised via a levy on the branches in proportion to their total members. (7)

In his report to the 1951 Annual Conference, the Party Treasurer proclaimed that:

A FINANCIAL CRISIS OF UNUSUAL MAGNITUDE FACES THE NEW NATIONAL COUNCIL BEFORE THE END OF SEPTEMBER. (8)

The reason for the SNP fielding only four and two candidates, respectively, at the General Elections of 1950 and 1951, was quite simply a lack of cash both locally and nationally. The Scots Independent, in its November 1951 edition noted that:

The decision of the Scottish National Party to contest only two constituencies in the 1951 General Election was based on reasons of policy and finance.

The latter needs little explanation. Not enough people in Scotland are yet sufficiently convinced of the need for Scottish National candidates to provide money to finance them. (9)

If we compare the figures given above for 1948 with those for 1953, we can see the extent of the Party's financial plight. Income was £623, and of this, £172 came from branch affiliation fees. Donations amounted to £161, the letting of Party headquarters realised £145, and a further £52 came from membership fees. The Party Upkeep Fund, mentioned above, appears to have totally disappeared.

In the following year, 1954, the Publications Committee was bound over by National Council not to exceed a subsidy of £100 in the production of publications. Furthermore, at no time were they to pledge the Party to a sum greater than £200 without specific authority.

By 1956 the income situation had improved (it is not clear why)



so that in that year the Party received £1,884 from branch dues, donations, the letting of premises, and a legacy. But despite this the overall figure was still below that for 1948.

The deepening organisational crisis of the 1950s can be seen in other ways: membership in 1950 appears to have been well under 1,000. An advertisement in the Scots Independent of August 1950 announced that a weekend school would be held at Stirling, and there would be no limit to the number of branch members entitled to attend. The advertisement also indicated that the venue had a maximum capacity of six hundred.

When the office manager resigned in 1951, he was replaced by a part-time, unpaid volunteer. In the same year a summer school failed through lack of support. After the 1952 Conference, the Scots Independent of May 1952 proclaimed:

Quite frankly and quite obviously, the SNP is not getting anything like adequate financial support. (10)

In a reference to the Party's dependence on its branches, the paper noted:

The branches of the SNP have done a magnificent job ... for many years ... Undoubtedly they would be in a stronger position locally if they had not had to carry such a big share of the national job as well. (11)

In 1954, National Council had decided that the Party was not in a position to contest by-elections in East Edinburgh and Motherwell. And in the same year the Organisation Committee reported that a mere six candidates had stood for the Party in the local elections of that year.

Thus it would seem that by 1955 the SNP had well and truly lost

direction, and its leadership had utterly failed to devise any methods to rescue the Party from the impasse into which it had become stuck.

Such a sense of hopelessness gave rise, among certain members to frustration and in turn this bred rebellion - rather a common sequence of events. These rebels called themselves the '1955 Group', and they strenuously asserted that the Party had fallen into a state of administrative chaos. They claimed that the NEC, amongst a catalogue of other crimes, had run up an overdraft of £1,140, no small matter to a party with the limited means of the SNP. They also attacked the leadership for setting up eleven branches in an attempt to ensure their own re-election (this, of course indicates, if true, just how small the SNP membership must have been. If eleven new branches were enough to guarantee the re-election of the leaders then that could denote a branch list of under thirty). The '1955 Group' propaganda went on to claim that:

Certain Party Officials have Been Abusing Official Positions By

canvassing Party members and branches and spreading lies in a smear campaign designed to show:

- (a) there is a conspiracy in the Party.
- (b) fascism is prevalent in the Party.
- (c) unauthorised statements have been made to the press.
- (d) there has been a sabotage of the Party's electoral effort. (12)

At the National Council meeting of June 1955, the Party Treasurer, David Rollo, announced his resignation. This was a direct result of the foregoing claims, which he dismissed as pure fabrication. He produced evidence to show that the overdraft was in fact £408. In the end the Group neither retracted nor apologised, yet Rollo withdrew his resignation.

Aside from any internal problems, it is likely that the dissidents,

who numbered many young Party members in their ranks, were angered by the SNP's continuing failure to make any headway electorally, and for the pathetic apologia which followed the Election of 1955. In the General Election of that year the Nationalists fielded only two candidates, who between them achieved a mere 12,112 votes <sup>(13)</sup>. Despite this lacklustre performance the Scots Independent managed to persuade itself that, 'The Election was no SNP Failure' <sup>(14)</sup>. It is fair to say that it is doubtful if this view was widely shared within the Party, or elsewhere. Nonetheless, undaunted, the paper continued in the same vein in its inside pages where it proclaimed that 'Nationalism Proudly Advances'.

Large sections of the membership did, in all probability, treat such claims with a measure of incredulity. Nevertheless, the members stayed loyal. At the June meeting of National Council (which, interestingly enough, was attended by fifty-eight delegates and observers, whereas the normal attendance was around thirty - a measure of its importance) there were several resolutions dealing with the '1955 Group! One concerned itself with the accusations listed above, and the Group was asked to withdraw them <sup>(15)</sup>. The vote went twenty-seven to eighteen for the resolution. Next, Dr. Robert McIntyre moved that the '1955 Group' publication, The Free Scotsman, and a Group Information sheet, cease evulgation forthwith. This was also carried by a substantial majority. The leadership had asserted itself, and the rebels were consigned to the wilderness.

The '1955 Group', which included James Glendinning, an ex-editor of the Scots Independent and a member of the NEC, as well as Douglas Henderson, a future SNP M.P., was composed, in the main, of younger

members unhappy with the moderate, staid image of the Party. In the end they formed their own Party. And, according to The Scotsman newspaper <sup>(16)</sup>, the new Party, The Nationalist Party of Scotland, had over 400 members. James Glendinning was chosen as its first President.

It was now quite obvious that the SNP was in a state of organisational and electoral paralysis. Indeed, it largely existed in name only: membership was probably under 500, press releases, themselves infrequent, were rarely, if ever, carried in the national media, and the Party did little in the way of doorstep propagandising.

Yet in retrospect one might mark the years 1956/57 as the point at which the Nationalists began to take hold of themselves, and institute the beginnings of a recovery.

National Council, at its December 1958 meeting, gave its approval to a suggestion made by the Organisation Committee, to copy Aberdeen Branch's Reply Card Scheme (BRC). This card had a section on it which allowed for it to be returned post-paid to the sender if the receiver wished to either join or have more information about the SNP. The response rate was approximately 18 per 1,000 distributed. <sup>(17)</sup>

The BRC scheme signified a commitment to innovation and the recognition that the SNP had to haul itself up by its own efforts. The small membership, moreover, were unlikely to have opposed the leaders in a suggestion that was at least an attempt at reversing the decline.

Although according to one senior Party figure of the time, James Halliday <sup>(18)</sup>, it was the changing political climate of the late 1950s

which stimulated interest in the SNP. One must also remember that besides the BRC scheme the SNP was implementing other organisational novelties in an attempt to improve Party fortunes.

In 1959 the Annual Conference <sup>(19)</sup> was presented with a series of recommendations from Malcolm Shaw <sup>(20)</sup>, Convener of the Organisation Committee. These included the formation of a Publicity Committee to handle all aspects of public relations, a clearer definition of the responsibilities of committees, and a more intensive effort amongst branches to plan all activities towards contesting parliamentary elections.

Nor did the innovations end there. Arthur Donaldson <sup>(21)</sup> proposed altering the style of the Party's leaflets in an effort to make them more eye-catching. Moreover, they were to be distributed free of charge to the branches in an effort to ensure that the latter actually delivered them to the electorate. National Council accepted these suggestions.

It is unlikely that these changes in themselves had any real and immediate impact upon the fortunes of the SNP. But cumulatively they represented a change towards organisational action and innovation, and the realisation that improved organisation was an essential ingredient of electoral success. It is also noteworthy that the ideas were coming from the leadership group, a pattern that would become more firmly established in the 1960s.

The 1959 General Election was a modest success for the SNP given the previously low standards of the Party. There were five National Party candidates, and the SNP vote increased in every seat which had

previously been fought. In this way, therefore, we can see that organisational changes did appear to have some impact at the electoral level. Even so, this was against a background of static membership for the preceding four years <sup>(22)</sup>. James Halliday has estimated that nationwide membership of the Party at this time was only around 200 <sup>(23)</sup>.

It was to the question of how to increase membership that Malcolm Shaw addressed himself at the 1960 Conference. As the shape of things to come, Shaw presented to that Conference <sup>(24)</sup> a 'Five-Year Plan' to increase membership. The minimum objective was to increase membership and have ten well-organised constituencies. He also revealed that a detailed review of all 71 Scottish constituencies was under way, with the intention of highlighting areas of weakness and strength, etc. Finally, he announced that there were eight constituencies ready to fight an election should this prove necessary, and that regular bulletins were going out to the branches.

But it was Donaldson's report as Convener of the Publications Committee which truly emphasised the importance of 1959/1960. In excess of 300,000 leaflets had been distributed over the preceding twelve months. This statistic appears to have vindicated his recommendation to allocate, gratis, leaflets to the branches.

To recapitulate: whilst external forces may have aided the Party in the late 1950s, there is also reason to believe that by its own efforts the SNP assisted whatever 'exogenous' factors which may have been working in its favour. For example, Gordon Wilson gives the following reasons in explanation for the revival of Party fortunes <sup>(25)</sup>:

The first reason would be that in 1959 the Party started a recruitment campaign ... which showed, I think, that

there was a greater determination within the National Party to achieve change, or to achieve a more effective political campaigning method. And that was exemplified in 1961, when, over a long summer, a small group of people did a systematic canvass.

The SNP was beginning to take the sort of managerial decisions which were vital in the climb from obscurity. Individuals, including new members like Ian Macdonald and Alan Niven had begun to realise that the only alternative to advance was disintegration.

Over the years the personalities comprising the Executive had changed little: Dr. Robert McIntyre, James Halliday, Arthur Donaldson, David Rollo, George Leask, Malcolm Shaw, John Smart, Mrs. Gibson, T.H. Gibson, W.S. Orr and Bruce Cockie. Together they comprised well over half the NEC, and they had served on the Executive for years. Of the few newer members it is interesting to note that two, Alan Niven and Ian Macdonald, were extremely interested in organisational matters. This committee began the advances which were to continue for most of the 1960s. Moreover, five of the above remained at the centre of the decision-making process for most of the next fourteen years. Gordon Wilson confirms this view <sup>(26)</sup>:

From about 1961 onwards the composition of people (i.e., on the NEC) began to change, and you got different personalities come up, who, in fact, shared power with some of the 1950s people.

During 1960 and 1961 such devices as weekend schools to train activists were begun, and unlike previous attempts, these appeared to have been well attended.

An important, if revised, edition of a pamphlet, Starting a Branch, was published, and six parliamentary candidates were adopted.

These events, together with those of the late 1950s, put the SNP

in a stronger organisational position than had been the case for the preceding twelve years. By coincidence the Party was soon to have an opportunity to test its newly developed muscle. A by-election was called in the safe Labour seat of Bridgeton, in Glasgow.

Bridgeton had neither an SNP branch, nor constituency association, and as a consequence it was left to the Organisation Committee to decide on the viability of contesting the seat. The Committee's minutes record:

From an organisational point of view the constituency can be contested. As the Glasgow branches cannot finance the by-election a financial report will have to come from the Finance Committee. (27)

Since Bridgeton did not even have the rudiments of an organisation, people had to be drafted in from other parts of the city. By September 1961, National Council was being told <sup>(28)</sup> that 7,000 BRCs had been distributed throughout the constituency, leaflets were to go out during the last week of October, and a special edition of the Scots Independent would be published.

By previous Nationalist standards this was a superlative effort, far surpassing any other election activity. Yet the entire operation cost a mere £255, only 10 per cent of the constituency was canvassed, the total number of canvassers was sixty, and the most in one night was twelve.

The candidate Ian Macdonald, received just under 19 per cent of the vote, but was so enthused by the possibilities of effective organisation that he offered himself as full-time National Organiser with the proviso that he kept a percentage of the increase in earnings he achieved for the Party. His offer was accepted.



When one considers how the SNP had previously desisted from even contesting by-elections, then Bridgeton was, to be sure, an organisational triumph, and the Party had turned an electoral corner. Soon, thereafter, fortune would smile on the Nationalists in the form of a by-election in West-Lothian.

Unlike Bridgeton, West Lothian had a good organisational base (in relative terms). The candidate, William Wolfe, was young, interested in organisation, and was known in the community as a local employer and Church elder. Moreover, the Labour candidate, Tam Dalyell, was something of an aristocrat, in a constituency with a sizable mining population, and where the closure of local shale works was high on the political agenda.

It was a vigorous and intensely fought battle, with particular emphasis on socio-economic issues - at Wolfe's insistence. The SNP slogan was Put Scotland First, and some 23 per cent of the electorate responded. The Nationalists had achieved an electoral breakthrough which had a thoroughly beneficial effect on morale, membership and public credibility.

Both Bridgeton and West Lothian can be seen as points of take-off for the next stage in the history of the SNP. The Party appeared now to have the organisational muscle to challenge the established political parties of Scotland. Yet despite these successes at least some members of the Party were still unhappy with the course of events within the organisation.

Gordon Boyd, a member of Perth and East Perthshire constituency

association, complained in a letter to Donaldson that less than £200 had been taken in branch dues in 1961, and he charged that there was a lack of direction from the leadership. Moreover, if there was to be an increase in the number of constituencies fought at the next election there must also, he claimed, be more centralisation.<sup>(29)</sup>

Boyd's complaints were prophetic. By the end of 1962 the SNP had suffered a setback. This time it was in the constituency of Woodside in Glasgow.

A by-election was to be held in the seat, and once again the SNP had little or no organisation in the constituency. But unlike Bridgeton there was to be no happy ending. The Nationalists achieved only 12 per cent of the vote, lost their deposit, and ran up an alarming deficit of £709. This compared to deficits of £131 and £51 for West Lothian and Bridgeton respectively. The exact reasons for the defeat are not known. It might have been certain inadequacies in organisation. The Party does not appear to have carried out an investigation into the causes of defeat.

Yet, despite the defeat, by the end of 1962 the SNP was making considerable organisational progress. The Party had a full-time National Organiser, and a rapidly growing branch base.<sup>(30)</sup> It had achieved nationwide publicity following the West Lothian election, and it was evolving new organisational techniques in its drive for members. The latter would radically alter the face of Scottish politics.

In the next section we will examine the nature of power relations within the Party between 1948 and 1962. Our view is that during this

period the SNP had a fairly devolved structure, where the membership had easy access to the leaders, and where most of the important decisions were taken in genuine consultation with the membership at National Council.

### Power Structure

Jack Brand believes <sup>(31)</sup> that after the departure of MacCormick et.al. in 1942, control of the Party was no longer held so tightly by a small group of people, so typical of the time when the former was the leader of the Nationalists. According to Brand:

It might be small and weak but the SNP was not run by a clique meeting daily in a Glasgow coffee-room as had been the case before 1939. <sup>(32)</sup>

This was a direct reference to the contrasting power of MacCormick, and the group, described by Brand, as the oligarchy <sup>(33)</sup> of the 1950s. In so saying he appears to contradict himself, thus:

from 1942 until the end of the 1950s power was still fairly concentrated. <sup>(34)</sup>

His position seems to be one whereby he sees power becoming more and more devolved as the years passed, so that by the 1960s the SNP was the highly devolved Party described by so many writers in the first chapter.

Our first point of criticism of this that it is difficult to measure just how much difference in power there actually was between MacCormick and a few others taking decisions, and the oligarchy, which was apparently composed of five people, taking most of the important decisions in a later period. In fact, at least one member of the supposed oligarchy, James Halliday, disputes Brand's view that a few members in the leadership were taking most of the important decisions which governed the Party in the 1950s. In a reference to the leadership

of the period, Halliday recalls <sup>(35)</sup>:

We did not keep anybody out. On the contrary we were pathetically anxious to bring strangers in ... Our role was to find any sympathisers and enlist him (sic). Thereafter he was relied upon to work his area. I suppose that made for devolution.

In Halliday's view there was never any deliberate attempt to foster either a centralised or a devolved approach, whatever there was, simply evolved.

Yet another supposed oligarch, Tom Gibson <sup>(36)</sup>, to some extent confirms the view that the SNP suffered from a lack of direction during the 1950s. In a memo to Dr. Robert McIntyre, James Halliday, and John Smart, Gibson claimed <sup>(37)</sup> that one of the Party's weaknesses was caused by:

Ignorance of the essentials of the set-up and organisation of the National Party, by branches, by members, by area councils and even office-bearers.

This tends to suggest a somewhat uncoordinated approach which left branches free to work away in comparative ignorance of the Party structure.

One other feature of the period which points to an openness in decision-making is the distribution of executive minutes to National Council delegates. Throughout the 1950s attendance at Council was around 30 delegates and observers out of a total membership of under 1,000. This meant that Executive minutes could easily have found their way into the hands of the majority of Party members. As such it must have represented a disincentive to any would-be oligarch, since it allowed the rank-and-file to allocate responsibility to any NEC member who attempted to usurp the constitutional guidelines of the Party.

Robert Michels' view of oligarchy, in respect of the size of a political party's membership and the latter's relationship to democracy, is instructive when it comes to analysing the SNP of the 1950s. He suggests <sup>(38)</sup> that the likelihood of oligarchy increases somewhere in the interval of 1,000 to 10,000 of the number of members in a political party. This is because:

The regular holding of deliberative assemblies of a thousand members encounters the gravest difficulties in respect of room and distance; while from a topographical point of view such an assembly would become altogether impossible if the members numbered ten thousand. <sup>(39)</sup>

To some extent Michels' reservations about the potential for democracy among such a number are rendered null and void by advances in technology in the years since he wrote Political Parties. However, if we are right in our estimation that the SNP's membership in the 1950s was under 1,000, then by Michels' standards Brand's view of the SNP in the 1950s, as being dominated by an oligarchy, is suspect. In fact, throughout the 1950s the membership could have turned up at any, or virtually any, Party gathering if they had so wished. Indeed the practice of non-delegate observers continues to this day at both Council and Conference.

We believe that from the point of view of numbers the SNP of the 1950s does not qualify as being oligarchical in type, and other evidence supports this view. As early as 1949 the Scots Independent highlighted <sup>(40)</sup> the degree of autonomy within the SNP. In 1949 the paper reported a meeting held at Stirling in February 1949, of SNP councillors and prospective councillors:

Although elected as Scottish Nationalists each member would be free to vote and to act according to his own judgement.

Later in the year Annual Conference re-affirmed this autonomy,

when a proposal to make the SNP's local councillors' act as a political party' was rejected in favour of continuing with conscience of the individual.<sup>(41)</sup> Later in its life, as the SNP grew in size, such individual discretion was not only discouraged, but councillors were supposed to adhere to Party policy wherever possible, and to obey the whip.

This same Conference is worth noting for another reason. In contrast to the initiatives taken on financial matters by the leadership in the 1960s, the 1949 Conference passed a resolution from Motherwell branch which altered the way branch levies were collected. Alterations in the levy system would, in later years, almost always come from the leadership. Even trivial decisions, which later would be taken by the NEC, for most of the 1950s, placed before the National Council for affirmation or rejection. In fact, the constitutional mechanisms used in the 1950s were legitimate. Whilst the practice of the 1960s was, for the most part, outwith the parameters laid down in the Party's Constitution.

An example of the constitutional formality of the 1950s occurred in 1952. Dundee East Branch asked to be released from payment of their quota in 1952, because of extra expenditure incurred fighting the by-election. The NEC only agreed to recommend acceptance to Council. The sum involved was £15.

There is other evidence which strongly suggests that the centre not only did not control events within the Party, but also had little contact with the relatively few branches which existed. An example of such appeared in the Scots Independent of August 1952. That edition

carried a notice of a meeting of all members interested in local elections, it included the following paragraph:

Branches, groups, and individual members are asked to attend, or to supply information concerning local conditions. (42)

This is hardly reflective of a leadership with its finger on the pulse of local activities. Rather it would seem that information about the condition of what, after all, was a Party of less than 1,000 members, and 20 branches, was scant, with planning uncoordinated and haphazard.

National Council's determination to be informed about all aspects of Party life can be seen from a resolution contained in Council minutes of February 1954 <sup>(43)</sup>. This called for all reports of committees to be sent to the Council members in writing, together with the agenda of the next Council. Another illustration of the power of the membership to take decisions on some of the most amazingly insignificant matters includes the time when Arthur Donaldson asked Council's permission to publish a booklet on the state of the Union after 250 years. The entire cost was to be £200.

Council was the obvious forum through which the leadership could have been expected to dominate the membership. It met quarterly, and theoretically could comprise the entire membership of the Party if one includes observers as well as delegates. When one examines Council minutes for the 1950s, one finds attendances averaging around thirty, and it is to be supposed that this caucus comprised that most active elements of the Party. In fact one finds that throughout the 1950s, and on into the early 1960s, National Council attenders comprised 10 per cent of the entire membership. In that sense it was much more democratic and representative than it would later become in the mid-

1960s and beyond, when Council attendance would be roughly 0.3 per cent of the entire membership.

Even as late as April 1963, when centralisation was increasing, the Convener of the Organisation Committee was attempting to assess the condition and size of the Party's membership. In his Report to the Annual Conference, he wrote:

Only a minority of branches remitted membership lists as required, which makes it very difficult to assess Party membership. (44)

During the 1950s, and on until the Party expanded and professionalised, communications between the centre and peripheral areas were just not good enough to allow any significant centralisation. This is reflected in an observation made by the then National Secretary, Gordon Wilson, in his important report on the state of the Party's organisation (45) of 1963. He noted that:

There is a long history of conflict between headquarters and the branches of the National Party. The exact causes of this are lost in the frustrations of past years when the Party stagnated and achieved little ... The old branches nurse a distrust of Headquarters interference and mismanagement. The new branches feel that they have not received adequate advice and direction. (46)

This would appear to indicate that the Party leaders were unable or unwilling to exert their authority in the period before the Wilson Report. This view would appear to be confirmed later in the Report. In an extremely instructive comment Wilson went on:

If headquarters or central direction are inadequate, it can be for two reasons.

The first was bad organisation and leadership. The second was that the branches preferred that state of affairs (he seems here to ignore the wishes of the new branches). He leaves the first as understood and concentrates on the second. It was born of hostility by the



branches to central control, because of it:

the executive cannot give directions requiring positive action by branches with any assurance that they will be carried out. Even innocent enquiries for information are ignored. (47)

We shall discuss Wilson's report in greater detail later in the thesis. In the meantime it is worth noting that after taking evidence from throughout the Party he was in little doubt that hitherto there was not centralised control. But for that matter neither was control effectively exercised by Council, rather it was this absence of direction which plagued the SNP in the post-war period. The formal leadership was prevented by the Council from being too assertive, but the Council itself was unwilling, or unable, to direct events, and the result was organisational ineffectiveness. Wilson's report was instrumental in instituting the necessary centralisation.

As we shall argue later, the centralisation which, we believe, became the norm in the 1960s and 1970s was missing in the 1950s because the Party did not have anything which resembled a national organisational structure. The centre had the gravest difficulties in eliciting information about the branches, their numbers, financial strength, and organisational status. Given this situation it seems, as Halliday stated (48), the tendency was for local branches to beaver away on their own unaided by the centre.

Theoretically at least, a rational organisational structure tends to become ever more hierarchical as the organisation expands (49). The SNP in the 1950s had no need to develop such an elaborate mechanism simply because there was no growth. It was only the realisation among certain leaders of the Party, in the late 1950s, that the SNP had either to initiate change of face possible disintegration that gave rise to

greater sophistication in the Party structure. Later as expansion began, came the need to develop a structured hierarchy to cope with this expansion. William Wolfe concedes that out of this growth came a group which directed the affairs of the Party:

Gordon (Wilson) was concerned with management as a principle ... In the Executive we decided things, we put forward to be done (sic), and then the four of us (Wolfe, Douglas Drysdale, Gordon Wilson and Ian Macdonald) more than anybody else - I guess - actually saw that the Executive decisions were carried out. (50)

In the 1950s had there been a desire on the part of the members to contact one of the leaders, it would have been easy to do so. The latter were not high powered politicians divorced from the masses. But rather people who would gratefully have received any requests for information, of help. This is evident from the Arthur Donaldson Papers in the National Library of Scotland. The collection is full of handwritten letters from, and to, Party members and others, discussing everything from macro-economics to fetes.

On the other hand, downwardly vertical communication was difficult. This was because the leaders had only scant information on branches, and this made communication troublesome; they might not even have known the branch secretary's name. A central communication system was one of the hallmarks of the SNP in the 1960s.

Finally, a comment on the potential impact of media coverage on intra-party relations.

In the 1950s, Nationalist leaders were considered eccentric, or at least fringe characters, by the media. Consequently the SNP's case was rarely, if ever, presented on the radio, television, or the

press. Instead they had to rely upon the pages of the Scots Independent. Yet even there the ordinary members could also find a space. Therefore, they did not become the media personalities which some would become in the 1970s. Since the media, particularly television, very often bestows charisma on people, it can also have the effect of increasing their power within the party as a result of regular appearances. Duverger points to something similar when he wrote:

Modern techniques of propaganda make it possible to invest him (the leader) with extraordinary ubiquity. (51)

We believe that as the amount of media coverage on the SNP increased, and as the SNP leaders made more regular appearances, so was their individual and collective power increasing. In such circumstances ordinary Party members would perceive the organisation, of which they were a part, to be becoming more important in proportion to the amount of time the devoted to coverage of it. It seems likely then that they would have a growing respect for the leaders who were apparently responsible for making this possible.

In this section we have sought to demonstrate that the SNP between 1948 and 1962 was typified by a devolved decision-making system. One where the formal leadership did not exert much authority, and where members, if they had so chosen, could have had access to the leadership group. In this sense the Party, of the period, could be described as "open". It was the events of these years which were responsible for the most popular view about the SNP's organisational structure (see Chapter One).

Organisationally the SNP existed in little more than name only over the fourteen years between 1948 and 1962. However, towards the end of

the 1950s more attention was paid to organisational concerns, and from this grew the advances of the 1960s.

Finally, that whilst a part may have been played by 'exogenous' factors, 'endogenous' elements also helped fashion the changes within the SNP. That is to say, the Party had some part to play in shaping its own destiny. As we noted in the previous chapter, if the SNP were to survive the electoral failures of the 1950s, then it had to find sources of support through a programme of expansion. Once the latter was under way then management specialisation, a hierarchy and power centralisation, became inevitable.

Central to the problems confronting the SNP was the dearth of money to finance its projects and campaigns. And it is how this difficulty was solved that we devote the next chapter.

1. Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.241.
2. Scots Independent, July 1949.
3. Scots Independent, November 1949.
4. Ibid.,
5. National Library of Scotland (NLS) Accession (Acc) 6038, Box No. 1, Report of the 1949 Annual Conference.
6. Branches pay quarterly dues (quotas) to Headquarters. This, of course, is essential for the proper maintenance of Party services. Failure to pay can, and does, lead to withdrawal of Conference credentials and voting rights.
7. NLS, Acc, 6038, Box No. 1, Minutes of the NEC, 25/6/49.
8. NLS, Acc, 3721, Box No. 1, Report of the 1951 Annual Conference.
9. Scots Independent, November 1951.
10. Scots Independent, May 1952.
11. Ibid.,
12. NLS, Acc. 3721, Box No. 1, 1955 Group Information Mimeo.
13. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.126.
14. Scots Independent, June 1955.
15. NLS, Acc. 3721, Box No. 1, Minutes of the National Council, 15/6/55.
16. The Scotsman, 21/10/55.
17. Aberdeen branch's expertise was not all that surprising. For several years a number of senior Party figures were also members of that branch. These included Dr. Bruce Watson, W.A. Milne, Bruce Cockie and Tom Howe, who were all at some point members of the NEC.
18. James Halliday, Letter to the author, 6/6/80.
19. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Report of the 1959 Annual Conference
20. Malcolm Shaw was a partner in a car-sales firm. Like so many others in the leadership, he had never been a member of any other party.
21. Arthur Donaldson was a journalist who had lived in the USA for fourteen years. When he returned to Scotland in the 1930s, he became active in the SNP. He later spent a short time in jail for his refusal to join the British Army. He became Chairman in 1960.

22. 1959 Conference Report, op.cit.
23. Halliday, op.cit.
24. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Report of the 1960 Annual Conference.
25. Gordon Wilson, Interview with the author, 29/3/81.
26. Ibid.,
27. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Report of the Organisation Committee 19/7/61.
28. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Minutes of the National Council, September 1961.
29. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Letter from Gordon Boyd to Arthur Donaldson, June 1962.
30. William Wolfe attributes a great deal of importance to the efforts of Ian Macdonald in promoting this branch expansion: 'In 1962, Ian Macdonald, as National Organiser, was the ideal man for the job ... Whatever and whenever he heard of interest in the Party - especially in areas without any previous record of SNP interest - he arranged for the distribution of literature and the holdings of meetings and the formation of branches. During his seven years as National Organiser the Party practically doubled its strength each year.' (Interview with the author, 19/3/81).
31. Brand, op.cit.
32. Ibid., p.253.
33. Ibid., p.278.
34. Ibid., p.277.
35. Halliday, op.cit.
36. Tom Gibson was a Party veteran considered to be on the 'right' politically. He was employed as a legal clerk with a firm of solicitors.
37. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Memo from Tom Gibson to Dr. Robert McIntyre, James Halliday, Arthur Donaldson and John Smart.
38. Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958).
39. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
40. Scots Independent, March 1949.
41. Scots Independent, July 1949.
42. Scots Independent, August 1952.

43. NLS, Acc. 3721, Box No. 1, Minutes of the National Council, 6/2/54.
44. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Report of the 1963 Annual Conference.
45. Gordon Wilson, Report on Organisation to the National Executive Committee, (Edinburgh, SNP, 1963, unpublished).
46. Ibid., p.3.
47. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
48. Halliday, op.cit.
49. Rosemary Stewart, The Reality of Management, (London, Pan Books Ltd., 1970), pp. 16-22.
50. William Wolfe Interview, op.cit.
51. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State, (Cambridge, Methuen, 1967), p.182.

## Chapter Four

### The Financing of the SNP, 1963-1974

As we have already observed in the previous chapter, one of the most seriously inhibiting factors for the SNP up until 1962 was the lack of money necessary for the financing of Party activities. The shortage of cash prevented the SNP from establishing an aggressive political marketing strategy. This meant that essential features of political life in a pluralist system such as posters, literature, pamphlets, advertising, and even election deposits, were often beyond the Nationalists' ability to pay. Again and again, internal Party memos and minutes blamed financial scarcity for the SNP's failure to make an electoral breakthrough.

This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first will concentrate on the theoretical issues behind the funding of a political party, and how the latter can influence the policy output of a party.

The second section will record the financial history of the SNP between 1963 and 1974, and the final section will return to our hypothesis concerning the nature of decision-making within the Party. In the context of the chapter, it will focus on the sources of financial innovation and direction, in this same period.

### The Implications for Political Parties of the Sources of their Funds

At the most obvious level, political parties in any type of polity could not endure without some form of financial base. In an advanced



pluralist democracy, financial support, whilst not perhaps at the heart of a party, nonetheless represents a crucial element in its life.

We would contest that financial support is even more important for a small party endeavouring to establish itself as a natural part of the political landscape <sup>(1)</sup>. For the larger parties there is the usual flow of free publicity via the media. And in most constituencies a party label is enough to get a candidate elected, almost irrespective of the propaganda and the campaign in general. But for a party such as the SNP as it was in the 1950s there is no such good fortune. In its early stages of development there is practically no free publicity for a minor party, nor can it rely upon traditional support. Rather it must pay for advertising, and go without the benefits of projection on television. Money is a crucial variable in this battle to establish the political legitimacy of a rising party.

With this in mind, what do we know about the financing of political parties, and how might this knowledge increase our understanding of the SNP?

Maurice Duverger is the most obvious and important starting-point in any discussion on this subject. In Political Parties <sup>(2)</sup> he distinguishes between 'cadre' and 'mass' parties, in one respect according to the methods of financing the party. The 'mass' party spreads the burden of financing the party over a large section of the electorate. Whilst the 'cadre' party depends upon a grouping of notables for money. It is interesting to note that, according to Duverger:

Cadre parties correspond to the caucus parties, decentralised and weakly knit; mass parties to parties based on branches, more centralised and more firmly knit. <sup>(3)</sup>

Richard Rose in his book, The Problem of Party Government (4), devotes an entire chapter to the funding of the Labour and Conservative parties. He writes:

Money does not have the same significance in politics as in profit-making organisations. It is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Unlike business firms, parties are not expected to raise funds by selling goods and services. (5)

He then goes on to describe the SNP as exceptional because in an advertisement placed after the February 1974 General Election it actually offered a return of £9 in tax reductions after independence, in return for £1 given to the Party now (it might be argued that all parties offer some material inducement to the electorate in exchange for their votes. The SNP advertisement was merely a novel way of seeking to influence the voters).

Rose correctly points out that the source and method of raising money are as important as the amount. He goes on:

The process of transferring funds within a party reflects power relationships as well as assumptions about economic effectiveness. (6)

Rose believes that the methods by which the Labour and Conservative parties raise their income is typical of 'the limited organisational cohesion of British Parties' (7). We shall seek to demonstrate that this was not true of the SNP. On the contrary, the SNP's approach to party finance demonstrates how it sought, and achieved, a cohesive response to what was (and remains) a perennial problem.

However, two writers who have both examined the SNP finances, Mansbach (8), and Brand (9), believe that even in this sphere we can see clear evidence of decentralisation.

Richard Mansbach <sup>(10)</sup>, in line with his general views about the polyarchical structure of the SNP, argued that its branches are:

financially independent and tend to promote policies and employ tactics which exploit local concerns and conditions but which are fundamentally parochial. (11)

In a further reference to their independence, Mansbach writes:

The local organisations are responsible for their own financing. The party had three major sources of income - membership dues, branch social activities and the Alba Pools (established in 1965) - all of which were controlled at the branch level. (12)

He reinforces this view a little later in his article:

Branch leaders saw an advantage in reserving a major proportion of their income at the branch level. Indeed, there was little movement of financial resources either horizontally, that is, from branch to branch or constituency association to constituency association, or vertically, between the local organisations and the central organs. (13)

Jack Brand's view of the SNP as a devolved, decentralised, party, is confirmed, in his view, by the methods in which the Party raises money. These illustrate the 'importance of grass-roots organisations in the SNP' <sup>(14)</sup>. He draws several important conclusions from the distribution of financial power within the Party:

One of the most striking is the unwillingness of the branches to commit money to build up party headquarters. (15)

and,

Another indication is that, if there is a need for money, the party leaders must carry along the branches by persuading them that it is necessary. (16)

Mansbach appears to share a broadly similar view of the SNP's financial base which is indicative of a party leadership dependent upon the membership for revenue, and therefore a party in which the rank-and-file carry considerable weight in the formation of decisions by virtue of their pivotal economic role. We shall question these assumptions later in the chapter. In the meantime it is important to discuss more generally the theoretical implications for internal party

power of the methods of financing the organisation.

As we indicated at the outset, all political parties need cash to operate. Even the Conservative and Labour parties, with their big sectional backers, must raise additional cash from amongst the membership. According to Finer <sup>(17)</sup> one-third of Tory headquarters' funds come from the constituencies. But for the Labour Party, in 1977, only around 11 per cent of its total central income came from the constituencies <sup>(18)</sup>. The major parties are obviously heavily reliant upon interest groups for financial survival. But for the SNP survival depended (much more) on their own internal resources since no interest groups supported the Party. On the face of it this should have given the branches great power within the organisation. However, the problem for them was that for most of the post-war years their very autonomy was sufficient to prevent either the centre from getting money out of the branches, through effective revenue-raising schemes, or the branches coming together to devise schemes for themselves. In the end a financial stalemate came about. This was recognised by Gordon Wilson in his 1963 report on organisation, when he observed:

With relations between the branches and H.Q. as they are at present it is difficult to see the branches voluntarily renouncing their financial independence and to remit much of their hard earned funds to the central account. (19)

This view confirms the branch autonomy we pointed out as being typical of the SNP prior to 1963.

The problem for the leadership stemmed from the fact that the Party had a firm tradition of branch domination. It could not impose from above schemes which would raise the overall amount of cash available without diminishing branch power as a by-product. Yet the

branches themselves were unwilling, or incapable, of taking united action in the pursuit of increased cash flow.

In the end, it was the imposition of a coordinated approach which improved the financial health of the Party. And transformed the branches into agents of revenue collection, not only for their own purposes but also for the centre as well.

It is axiomatic that if the centre mushroomed in the 1960s (defined by staffing, office-space, literature production, etc.), then the money to pay for this expansion had to come from somewhere. Since, in the main, there were no outside agencies responsible for the increase in income, the latter had to come from within the Party itself. Unless it can be shown that the branches themselves devised schemes whereby greater cash was raised and passed on to headquarters, then we must conclude that in fact the branches were responding to centrally directed schemes. This was indeed the case; coordination replaced the haphazard approach typical of the 1940s and 1950s.

Although one might be able to demonstrate that the centre directed the financial schemes within the SNP, nevertheless it was still the branches which implemented them, and whence the money came. What implications for Party power might we draw from this fact?

There seems little doubt that this should have led to an increase in the power of the branches. After all, if headquarters depended upon them for funding then the branches should have been able to dictate to the centre what they would or would not accept, especially regarding the spending of their cash. In fact, this did not occur. Why? The

main reason follows from the organisational structure, branch dispersal.

Unlike the Labour Party, the focal unit of the Nationalists is not the constituency, but the branch. By the late 1960s there were over 400 of these throughout Scotland, but their geographical spread meant that they had to be held together by the centre. Information about Party activity came from a variety of sources: constituency meetings, National Councils, the Scots Independent. But for the most part intelligence input came from the monthly communiques from headquarters. The periphery was then reliant upon the centre for information reports. The power that this data control gave the centre was reinforced by the sheer effectiveness of the revenue-raising schemes, particularly the Alba Pools (see below).

In short, interventionism in branch affairs was seen to work. It also made it more likely that the branches would be willing to accept direction in other aspects of their lives. Moreover, the branches by themselves could not hope to develop a programmatic approach, either as innovators, or as critics of the centre, by virtue of their comparative isolation from one another. And because many of them were composed of political novices for whom direction was essential.

Theoretically, one can draw rather obvious conclusions from the type of sources funding upon which a political party is dependent. Obviously, a party would be unlikely to pursue policies which will so alienate its main benefactors that it endangers the flow of contributions. Furthermore, wherever politically possible one is likely to find a policy portfolio which is, at least in part, sympathetic to the paymaster(s).

Was this true of the SNP between 1963 and 1974? Whilst the SNP's policies, taken as a whole, might arguably have been described as vaguely left of centre, there is one consistent thread running through them all: decentralisation of government functions, and the suspicion of central bureaucracy. One might summarise this approach as 'community politics'.

There seems little doubt that there was a connection between Party policy and the funding of the SNP, in so far as policy was orientated towards community power and, formally, the Party was based upon the branches. The latter were certainly the principal revenue sources. There was also an absence of any bias towards either the trade unions or business.

One can only speculate as to the consequences for membership loyalty, if the leadership of the Party had attempted to take an overtly pro-union or pro-business stance. It seems likely that this would have damaged the SNP with sections of its activists—depending upon their ideological outlook. Since Party policy (as distinct from organisational considerations) was formulated by delegates from the branches and associations, it is not surprising that this reflected the ideological pre-dispositions of the mass base (as we saw in the Introduction, there is substantial evidence to show that the activists were drawn from across the political spectrum. But the majority were not previously Labour or Conservative identifiers, nor were they class-conscious). Recognising this, the leadership would also have had to devise revenue schemes which reflected these tendencies, and/or made a virtue out of necessity, that is, funding the centre from the branches.

Given all of this, it might be assumed that the membership had much greater powers than our hypothesis supposes. In fact, as we shall illustrate in the final section of this chapter, the leadership had little difficulty in extracting cash from the members. Even so, policy output was, and remains, a reflection of the main sources of Party funds. The leadership of the SNP did not have to look over its shoulder to ensure that what the members decided at Conference was not giving offence to unions, the Church, business, etc. - save for the political impact. This left the leaders free to run the Party unencumbered by external forces. In this sense then, the source of the SNP's funds may actually have maximised Party autonomy, and allowed it to aim for the widest possible political audience. If this was the case it is at least also possible that the leadership had a vested interest in restricting funding to the membership, rather than extending it to include groupings which might have led to policies being tailored to suit the new paymasters. Therefore political centrism, as developed in the SNP, probably grew out of leadership preference, membership ideological orientation, <sup>(20)</sup> and financial realities.

Given the source of its funding between 1963 and 1974, the SNP qualifies as a classic mass membership party. Moreover, the leadership did not encounter a growing unwillingness, at least in the 1960s, on the part of the membership to part with cash, which Heidenheimer suggests <sup>(21)</sup> was typical of the period. He also gives what he admits to be a rather strict way of identifying a party as mass membership based, in terms of its financial foundations. He restricts the label to those which:

are able to cover at least two-thirds of their normal non-election year expenses from membership dues. <sup>(22)</sup>

He examined eight countries and found that only the SPD in West



Germany met this criterion. However, if one extends this to include membership contributions as well as dues, then the SNP also qualified in this period as a true mass membership party.

Thus prior to the February election of 1974 the SNP, although a major Scottish party, was without funding from the state (to be sure neither did the other British parties, but it does occur in some European countries), unions, business, or contributions from a parliamentary group. The vast bulk of the SNP's money came from the membership as a whole. However, there were, on occasions, very large contributions from individual businessmen sympathetic to the Party. (See p115).

Given much of the above discussion it is not hard to understand why Brand and Mansbach concluded that the SNP's financial position led to branch domination of the machine. In fact, it did not. But before we attempt to prove this assertion, we shall first trace the development of the financing of the SNP from 1963 to 1974.

#### Party Income, 1963 to 1974

The income of the Scottish National Party in this period was, for the most part, dominated by a fund-raising scheme known as Alba Pools. This highlighted both the enthusiasm of the membership and the Nationalists' dependence upon their own resources for funding. It would be neither unfair nor hyperbolic to suggest that Alba was the single most important financial innovation to occur within the SNP, and it allowed the Party to develop a competitive organisational base from which to launch a challenge to the other parties in Scotland.

Prior to 1963 internal Party reports frequently made reference to the supposed fact that inadequate financing was retarding the SNP's growth. It prevented the launching of membership drives, increasing the number of constituencies fought during general elections, and had an overall depressing effect upon activity. In retrospect, 1963 may be seen as the cut-off point between financial scarcity and, if not abundance, then certainly adequate capital-creating programmes.

At the beginning of 1963 a survey of branches undertaken by the Party <sup>(23)</sup> showed that finances were still low, and it was reported that a dearth of cash was impeding the Party's progress. At the year's end the Party Treasurer reported to National Council <sup>(24)</sup> that in order to finance forthcoming parliamentary by-elections, the Party would have to realise £2,500 from its financial assets (British Assets Trust, Scottish Investment Trust and the British Investment Trust).

At around the same time the National Organiser was, in line with his job remit, endeavouring to stimulate revenue-raising activity among the branches by circulating a memo among them which went to considerable lengths in detailing how cash could be obtained from door-to-door canvassing for donations. This included how much they could expect to raise: 15/- per hour!

Ian Macdonald's job as National Organiser went beyond merely encouraging the formation of branches and thereby a growth in membership, it was also to raise money for the Party. It seems, however, that although the SNP was to get an increasing proportion of its revenue from membership dues as the 1960s wore on, by themselves these would have been inadequate to meet the ambitious plans of the leadership.

This can be seen quite clearly if one considers that between 1962 and 1964 the SNP's membership grew from 2,000 to 8,000 and yet in the Chairman's Report to National Council in November 1964 <sup>(25)</sup>, Arthur Donaldson noted that, yet again, lack of finance was limiting the Party's growth. Moreover, throughout 1964 regular monthly newsletters replete with suggestions on fund-raising, were sent to branches, and yet there was no appreciable impact on the financial condition of the Party.

It is against this background that we must consider the arrival of Alba Pools. This scheme was a mixture of bingo and lucky numbers, and was featured on cards which were then sold throughout Scotland. It was the idea of the Party's printer, Angus McGillvery. He had considerable experience as a fund-raiser, although not always on the behalf of the SNP. As William Wolfe observed <sup>(26)</sup>, he brought to the task of Alba Pools promotion skills gained in other fields (he had raised money for local organisations). The idea for the pools was endorsed by a unanimous resolution of the Executive, and details of it were sent to the branches in November 1964.

The overwhelming acceptance of the proposals was made more likely by the fact that the SNP was in a serious financial crisis. It was in excess of its allowable overdraft by £200, and this threatened to go over by £700. For an organisation with the limited means of the SNP this was considered a great deal of money.

The scheme operated through the branches, with members taking a number of Pool tickets. It seems likely that a large number of non-Party members were also purchasing them. However, it is a striking

testimony to the enthusiasm of the members that they sold tickets in such large numbers, with the concomitantly beneficial spin-off on finances:

Table 1

ALBA POOLS RECORD (£) 1965-1968

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Branches</u>	<u>H.Q.</u>
1965	21,867	10,933	3,751
1966	47,804	23,902	6,353
1967	87,250	43,625	8,125
1968	118,195	55,474	18,700

(27)

To put these figures in perspective one need only compare them to the income for 1962. In total this amounted to £6,219, of which £2,500 came from the realisation of assets. Thus, in fact, in 1965 Alba in its first full year of operation, brought in virtually the same amount as was available to Headquarters from all sources, excluding assets, in 1962. Recognition of the invaluable contribution of Alba to the Party came from the Treasurer in his Report to the 1966 Annual Conference:

Undoubtedly the most important single factor in the growth of our resources has been the successful promotion of Angus McGillvery (sic.) (28)

Enthusiasm for the Pools continued until the end of the decade.

William Wolfe, then Party Chairman, had the following to say to the December 1969 National Council:

There is a close correlation between intelligent use of Alba Pools, and political success in getting people elected for the Scottish National Party. That is a fact. (29)

Whether or not it was a fact seems a debatable proposition, yet it was one which was widely believed within the SNP itself.

By June 1972, it was calculated that from the beginning of its operation in January 1965, Alba brought in £65,000 to headquarters, and a very great deal more, probably around £120,000, to the branches.

Quite simply, Alba transformed the SNP, and for a number of years it demonstrated that it was possible for a political party to finance a political and organisational expansion without sectional backing. It was also ample evidence of the sheer enthusiasm of SNP members. In 1968 individual sales of Alba amounted to one-third of the total membership of the SNP. Gordon Wilson remarked of the Alba Pools scheme, that it was probably just as important from the point of view of Party morale:

When income rises the morale of the Executive rises, and also it feels it can spend. One of the problems of the SNP over the years is that it has been very impoverished ... It (Alba) allowed us to upgrade the salary of the National Organiser ... it allowed us to appoint a Press Officer - which was probably the first major breakthrough. Then there was the Research Officer which was even more important. (30)

Nevertheless, by the early 1970s sales were very clearly in decline. Evidence of this decline was apparent even in 1969, and the fall-off corresponded to a general retardation in Nationalist support in Scotland - more of this below.

The other vital area of financial support was the sale of membership cards. This corresponded to what Duverger called the 'subscription system' (31), that is to say, the money was collected annually in a single amount. However, given the commitment to Alba Pools, there seems to be no reason to suppose that this method of collecting funds

represented a degree of commitment to the Party any less than one might expect to find in working-class parties. After all, although it was a gamble, it still required volunteer agents to collect the ticket money. This would be done out of commitment to the Party.

Duverger distinguished between the annual collection of funds, and another method where there is both annual and monthly contribution systems <sup>(32)</sup>. This latter system is the one used by the Communists, and involved financial sacrifice. The SNP used the annual method primarily for logistical reasons - it was a more reliable method than going to doors every month, with the ever present possibility that the volunteer might forget to call. In any case, the SNP got money from the membership in other ways: raffles, collections, dances, etc. But, most important of all, the membership was expected to fund the running of their branch, and in its turn the branch paid quarterly dues to both Headquarters and its constituency association. Moreover, branches had to buy the membership card from H.Q. (the cards cost 50 per cent of their face value).

The amount taken by the Party as a whole in membership fees kept growing right up until 1968. Thereafter, there was a steady decline in the overall membership of the SNP (as a matter of interest, the membership fees of the Party had not increased since 1951, and a decision to raise them was not taken until National Council, September 1971). Although we can legitimately question the official membership figures (they were often inflated, or inaccurately assessed), nevertheless, it was probably the case that the membership of the SNP in 1965 was around 18,000 <sup>(33)</sup>. Commenting on the increased activity of the Party during that year, the Chairman, Arthur Donaldson, reported

to National Council that a most notable gain had been made in the Party's position <sup>(34)</sup>.

There was a clear correlation between increasing funds through membership growth, and the expansion of Alba Pools: the SNP was in a state of enlargement, morale was high and there was a great deal of branch activism. The signing of new members and the selling of Pools tickets appear to have been related to each other. Thus when membership began to decline in 1969, so also did the sales of Alba Pools.

Individual personalities had an important part to play in this new found financial self-confidence. We have already mentioned Angus McGillvery. Another influential figure was Douglas Drysdale, who was a small businessman (he owned an engineering works) and was extremely interested in the organisational aspects of the Party's work. When he became Finance Convener in 1964 he set about a re-ordering of the Party's financial structure. And it was he who highlighted the extent of the financial crisis facing the Party in 1964. His commitment to financial innovation, and testimony to the SNP's willingness to experiment with organisational change, can be ascertained from approaches made by him to a team of professional fund-raisers.

In the United States it is very common for politicians to finance their campaigns partly with the aid of professional fund-raisers. In Britain this rarely happens (although the Social Democratic Party may make greater use of this technique). In fact, it might be looked upon with suspicion by the electorate. Drysdale proposed that the Party commission a feasibility study by the Wells Organisation, an American company, to test the potential for raising £50,000. In the end the

NEC rejected the move. This is in itself interesting since, as far as we can establish, the proposal was never discussed by Council which is indicative of the amount of power the Executive was now exerting within the Party.

However, Drysdale's efforts on behalf of the Party were acknowledged by the Party Treasurer, who noted, in his Report to the 1965 Conference:

The large increase in donations in 1964 is due mainly to the enthusiasm and drive of Mr. Drysdale. (35)

Drysdale's middle-class status was shared by the great majority of the NEC, and it is not surprising that this should manifest itself in approaches to financing.

The SNP always appears to have had investments, however small, in capitalist enterprises, but this tendency became more marked in the 1960s. As we have already shown the Party Report <sup>(36)</sup>, given to the National Council in February 1964, they still had £3,500 worth of securities lodged with the Royal Bank of Scotland. They added to this portfolio in December 1965 by purchasing 350 units of stock in the Investors Company Ltd. for £498. A year later they spent another £500 when they bought share in Portland Cement.

This external interest in shares had its internal equivalent, which also appears to reflect a leadership with a business orientation. In March 1968 the National Treasurer, George Gibson, made a plea for money to help finance the running of Headquarters - made necessary by the pressure of business following the by-election success of Winifred Ewing. Gibson had the following to say:

Loans to Headquarters from Branches and Constituency Associations are increasing in numbers and are welcome by us. It is a safe way of investing your excess funds



(devaluation notwithstanding). We have now been able to reinvest sums lent to us (the amounts were unspecified) in the best securities available in the Market, and the rate of interest we receive aids us to cover the amount of interest due by H.Q. to leaders. The scheme operated by H.Q. accepting sums large and small (sic) the loans can be interest free or not. Interest can be calculated at 5% per annum. (37)

We would argue that the ethos implicit in this quote goes beyond merely good financial housekeeping; it reflects a middle-class bias, or at least a business orientation, amongst the leadership of the SNP of this period, which had profound implications for the nature of both leadership and political strategy.

This interest in shareholding continued, and very often the sums invested were quite substantial indeed. On other occasions there were profound moral dilemmas, with more than an undercurrent of irony. The February 1968 meeting of the National Executive was advised by the Treasurer that the Party had been recommended to buy £2,450 in short term 6½ year Exchequer stock. It was, upon reflection, decided that the SNP would not invest in British government stock.

Some years later, in February 1972, the General Business Committee resolved to invest up to £2,000 in each of the following: Lyle Shipping Ltd., Glasgow; British Bank of Commerce Ltd.; Thomson T-Line Caravans. But the investments did not stop there. In June of the same year they invested £829 in I.C.I., £1,059 in Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, and £1,000 in Burmah Oil. The National Treasurer, Michael Murgatroyd, an accountant, also bought £500 worth of Grangemouth Town Council stock, and a further £12,000 was invested in the same council in the middle of 1974. (38)

Two things stand out from this examination of the Nationalists' activities in the stock market. The first is that in some cases the sums involved were quite large, as in the case of Grangemouth which was almost double Headquarters' income for 1962 which emphasises the progress made over the years. The second element we have already mentioned. The fact is that the leadership appeared not to consider any political embarrassment which might have occurred as a consequence of investing in capitalist enterprises. This would appear to be indicative of an attitude whereby such investments were seen as normal practice and in no way harmful. It would also appear to lend some credence to suggestions that the SNP was a bourgeois Party.

The history of the SNP's finances is not one of unending success. Towards the end of the 1960s cash-flow began to dry up and indeed it seemed to parallel a decline in the electoral fortunes of the Party.

In 1967 the SNP's Headquarters' income was £23,455, an astonishing amount compared to the experience prior to the early 1960s (we believe that this sum was greater in total than the entire income for H.Q. for the decade of the 1950s)<sup>(39)</sup>.

1968 was an even greater success in income terms. £31,901 was realised in that year in Headquarters' income, and it is interesting to note where this money came from. Alba was worth £8,125 in 1967, but £18,700 in 1968; branch dues rose from £1,408 in 1967 to £2,438 in 1968, whilst the sale of publications climbed from £1,602 in 1967 to £2,202 in 1968<sup>(40)</sup>. The remainder was divided between the sale of membership cards, donations, investment income, St. Andrews Day Draw appeals.

But 1968 was the zenith of the fund-raising effort. The Party was inundated with membership requests following upon Winifred Ewing's by-election triumph at Hamilton in 1967, and branches grew throughout Scotland. In April 1968, Dr. James Lees (Vice-Chairman for Organisation), insisted that it was essential for the Party to have paid regional organisers. By the end of the year three had been appointed.

In 1968 the SNP made 103 gains at the Municipal Elections <sup>(41)</sup>. But in the following year the Party made only 20 gains, and its vote fell from 30 per cent in 1968 to 22 per cent in 1969 <sup>(42)</sup>. The years between 1970 and 1972 continued to be tough for the SNP electorally. However, it must be said that there was no great reversal but rather a slowing up, or in some cases a retreat, from the advances of the late 1960s. These years were also, significantly, bad years financially.

After the 1970 General Elections two field organisers were made redundant, and the third followed shortly thereafter. William Wolfe reported to National Council in 1970, that:

One of the most serious aspects of the H.Q. financial situation is that of unevenness of support by branches and constituency associations. <sup>(43)</sup>

Unpaid branch dues for 1970 totalled £3,000, 23 constituency associations had not paid a by-election levy for South Ayrshire (held prior to the 1970 General Election), and there had been a decline in Alba Pools sales as well.

In order to compensate for this loss of income, Winifred Ewing organised a covenant of approximately 1,000 members. This saved the Party financially in 1970, when it raised £6,000. But symptoms of disease remained evident. In early 1971, the Press Officer, Douglas

Crawford, recognising the Party's difficult financial position, recommended to the Executive to hire him on a consultancy basis (he had recently set up his own company), and this was accepted. In the same year the Glasgow office was closed, and contributions from Alba continued to decline - they were down by one-third on 1970s takings. This fall-off accelerated. By early 1972, it was yielding only £100 per month in income to Headquarters. Towards the end of the year, James Lees, in a memo to the NEC, August 1972 <sup>(44)</sup>, calculated that Headquarters' income was declining steadily at a rate of between 10 to 20 per cent per annum.

Given what we have said about the relationships between membership and income/Alba Pools sales, we should not be surprised to find a rapidly declining membership. Remembering the caveats we mentioned about membership returns there still appears to have been a haemorrhage of members in the late 1960s: in 1968 official membership was 120,000, yet at a General Business Committee meeting of March 1971 it was reported <sup>(45)</sup> that at the end of 1970 membership was down to 30,250.

Branches were going defunct at such an alarming rate that Scotland was sub-divided into regions, each of which had an NEC member assigned to it in order to establish the precise number of branches that had actually ceased to operate.

By the end of 1972 things appeared to have bottomed out: by April 1973, it was reported to the GBC that Alba Pools sales were once again increasing <sup>(46)</sup> and in the same year the SNP's electoral fortunes also improved - they took 35 per cent of the vote in Dundee East, and won Govan, in respective by-elections.

By the beginning of 1974 there was a financial recovery of sorts. So much so that the GBC was budgeting for the employment of an assistant to the National Organiser, and the banking of £6,000 to be used in elections. (47)

The cost of fighting elections in 1974 (there were two General Elections) was greatly aided by a very substantial donation from an anonymous source (the sum involved was £10,000). Other external sources of income came from 'a trust of businessmen, merchant bankers and PR firms who had offered assistance to the Party' (48). This group was headed by Sir Hugh Fraser, a well known Scots financier. This latter source was, perhaps, the major factor in the increased income flow for that year. Income at the end of April 1974 amounted to £2,240 (49). It was just after the end of April that the £10,000 was received, and it seems likely that the money came from a member of the group.

But there were other reasons for the improving financial status of the Party. For example, National Council was told in 1973 (50), that the sale of membership cards 'was now a very significant source of income for H.Q.'. Though the amount is unspecified, there was also an increased flow of donations coming from both members and sympathisers following upon the two elections of 1974.

Why membership should have recovered in this way is probably related directly to the Party's standing in the country. Within the SNP it was believed that it was a by-product of the 'oil campaign' when over one million leaflets were distributed throughout Scotland, a subject we shall return to in a later chapter.

In the next section we shall analyse the impact of financial management upon internal Party power.

### Party Financial Operations and Internal Power Relations

At the beginning of this chapter we quoted from Brand and Mansbach. These writers had little doubt that the financial importance of the branches within the Party gave them considerable power within the organisation. Brand's and Mansbach's views coincide in so far as they outline a Party not only concentrated at the grass-roots, but one in which it appeared difficult for the leadership to tap branch financial resources.

In line with our hypothesis we shall contest these views, and present evidence which, we believe, is indicative of a Party tightly controlled by the centre, and one where movement of capital in a vertically upward direction was the norm.

Our methodology follows closely upon that of the other chapters. We detail the most important elements in the financial history of the Party during the period under observation. Such elements are defined by their impact upon the financial status of the Party. Next, we locate the source(s) of these changes (who or what was responsible for the idea in the first place). Finally, how much resistance and/or change was there to these suggestions, and from where did this come?

If our hypothesis is correct we should expect to find the great bulk of innovations emanating from a group within the leadership, with very little resistance from the rank-and-file.

The financial management of any organisation is usually a highly complex business involving particular skills which are restricted to a comparatively few individuals. When an organisation is small, as was the SNP prior to the 1960s, it is easier for the mass to both monitor and advise the guardians of finance. But as it expands the potential for overview declines, and there is a tendency for decision-making to move beyond the ability of the members to exercise serious influence. In terms of financial management this means that whilst the membership was consulted on macro-economic questions, such as the setting of membership fees, micro-economic matters, such as investments, were decided without any reference to the mass membership, or to be more precise, the delegates to Council or Conference. As such this represented a breach of the Constitution (see below).

However, at the beginning of the period which interests us, the traditions of branch autonomy were sufficiently strong for the membership to oppose a wholesale break with past practice as recommended in the crucial Wilson Report of 1963 <sup>(51)</sup>.

Wilson tried to go too quickly towards wholesale financial centralisation. A proposal on financial change represented a sea-shift towards total central control, with the absolute extraction of all cash from the branches:

Ultimately to build up a reserve at H.Q. sufficient to guarantee all branch (approved) expenditure, and reverse the existing situation whereby branches are responsible for their own finances; thus branches and individuals would have the single idea that all finances raised should go to H.Q., i.e. the Party as a whole. (52)

This was really quite an extraordinary idea since, if implemented, it would have meant that the centre collected all branch cash, a complete

break with tradition, and in a stroke would have eliminated any pretensions branches might have had to autonomy. But it does seem to be indicative of the firm intention Wilson had to improve Party management efficiency through centralisation. National Council rejected this part of the report.

However, another idea which came from the leadership had greater success: Angus McGillvery's <sup>(53)</sup> Alba Pools. Apart from the fact that this was not an attempt to deprive the membership of financial autonomy, it also had the virtue of supplying an answer to the question of cash shortage. But again the initiative came from one person on the Executive, and although the branches sold the tickets, indeed did almost all the leg work, they still handed over around one-third of their takings to Headquarters. This does not signify a Party in which movement of capital was sluggish, or one where the leadership had difficulty in convincing the members of the virtues of a new scheme.

At around the same time as Alba was being introduced, Douglas Drysdale took over as Finance Convener. The manner of his accession to that post is illuminating in so far as it tells us about the developing nature of Party power.

Gordon Wilson, then National Secretary, sent a letter to the Party Chairman, Arthur Donaldson, indicating to him that he (Wilson) had managed to persuade Drysdale to take over the vacant post of Finance Convener. Now, in terms of the Constitution, Drysdale should have first been elected onto the NEC, which he was not. In the letter Wilson asked Donaldson, 'How to (sic) we go about getting him elected' <sup>(53)</sup>. Donaldson replied that the best way was first to coopt him on to the Executive, thereafter, presumably, election would have followed at a



convenient time.

Perhaps of even greater significance than this incident was the manner in which the leadership appeared to invest capital in companies without reference to the membership. This seems particularly striking since it involved potentially damaging, or embarrassing, political consequences, for example, investing in a company that was a major contributor to the Conservative Party, or one which closed a factory in Scotland.

One can accept that, having decided to commit capital in this way there were only a few people competent enough to advise as to the best location of such investment. Even so, one finds it more difficult to believe that the decisions themselves were typical of a Party with a marked degree of decision-making decentralisation, the more so when one remembers that the Party Constitution made National Council as a whole responsible for investments (see below).

However, perhaps the best example of the Executive's power lies in a series of decisions which increased the amounts paid by the branches in dues and membership fees.

Brand tells us that the branches were unwilling to 'commit money to build up party headquarters' <sup>(54)</sup>. Mansbach does not disagree.

In order to finance the Hamilton by-election the NEC decided to place a levy on the branches and the constituencies. This was in accord with past practice <sup>(55)</sup>. What is of interest is the way it was introduced to the membership. At the September 1967 National Council meeting <sup>(56)</sup>

Arthur Donaldson announced that a £5 levy per branch, and £25 for constituencies with five or more branches, would be placed to finance the by-election. This, he claimed, was in accordance with a previous agreement between Council and the Executive. He then went on to state that failure to meet the levy would affect the branch's right to representation at Conference.

In 1971 the NEC decided that it was time for branch dues and membership fees to be increased. When proposals were presented to the National Council the parts of the resolution concerning branch dues and publicity levies were overwhelmingly carried. An NEC proposal concerning the period in which subscriptions should cover, was narrowly carried. Finally, the Executive's recommendation to raise membership fees, though slightly reduced by amendment, was likewise carried <sup>(57)</sup>.

In 1972, National Council agreed to an NEC resolution which gave the Executive total discretion as to which year the levy for the Dundee East by-election would be payable in <sup>(58)</sup>. Though not a matter of great importance it was typical of the relationship between the leadership and membership in matters of finance.

In 1973, NEC resolutions to raise branch dues and publicity levies were overwhelmingly carried, despite the fact that there was a note from the Treasurer to the effect that these rises did not represent an overall increase <sup>(59)</sup>. This same Council endorsed an NEC recommendation to take £1,000 from the Party's General Election Publicity Fund and spend it on the 'oil campaign'.

As the National Treasurer reported to the December meeting of Council in 1973:

As already stated 1973 was a year in which branches have been requested to pay two extra levies (£10 total) over and above the normal dues and publicity fund levy (£18 total). (60)

There is no evidence that the centre had any difficulty in extracting this cash from the branches.

Finally, in 1974, in line with yet another NEC recommendation, Council agreed to raise Branch dues from £18 to £24. Moreover, the purchase price of membership cards from Headquarters by branches was to be raised by 25 pence per card to 50 pence.

One of Mansbach's central criticisms was the absence of capital movement, either vertically or horizontally, within the Party (61). To some extent we have already demonstrated just how much cash the centre managed to extract from the branches. If the latter had objected to the amount taken by Headquarters from, for example, Alba - which was roughly 30 per cent in 1968 - they could have moved a resolution reducing the amount. This never happened, and, as we have just seen attempts to prevent increased levies were also unsuccessful. The point is that Headquarters did very little work for their share of the income. They issued instructions and collected the cash.

But there is an even more striking piece of evidence to be found in the minutes of the General Business Committee (62). It was estimated that in 1972 branch income would amount to £11,850. Headquarters' share of this was to be £7,500, leaving the branches with £3,000. <sup>The balance went to the consequences.</sup> Now, whilst it is true to say that in a bad year, given that branch dues do not alter in relation to falling branch membership, one would expect the centre to take proportionately more out of the branches than in a good year. Nevertheless, the evidence does not point to an absence of

capital flow. On the contrary, the centre appeared to be very adept in extracting cash from the branches during the period 1963 to 1974.

The Constitution of the Party also gave the centre formal powers which enabled it to exert a degree to financial control of the periphery. According to the Constitution, branches and constituency associations are supposed to send to Headquarters, every year, a list of their members and a summary of their financial situation <sup>(64)</sup>. In fact, it would appear that only around 20 per cent ever sent completed lists of members and finances to the centre <sup>(65)</sup>. Clause 51 of the Constitution of the Party gives further de jure power to the leadership:

No money shall be collected in the name of any Branch of the Party, nor shall the name of the Party be used for the collection of money, and no payments shall be made from the funds of any Branch, except for purposes covered by the Constitution. <sup>(66)</sup>

These formal controls did not mean all that much in practice, although under certain circumstances the centre was not slow to disenfranchise branches which had not paid their levies. The point is that the Constitution could have been used by the leadership if it had been found necessary to extract information and/or money from the periphery. In this sense it was a 'fail-safe' device. The fact that the Constitution <sup>(67)</sup> was rarely activated was probably because the centre, for the most part, got the finances it requested, or found necessary. After all, for so long as Headquarters' received enough money for running expenses and to pay for its schemes why should the centre have needed to know how much cash the branches actually had? Finally, estimates of the size of branch membership were made by Headquarters on the basis of the sale of membership cards, which was a reasonable indication as to the strength of the branches.

Aside from the decisions themselves, one also needs to know just who were taking the decisions which had so much impact on the Party's finances.

In December 1967, the General Business Committee of the Party was established and given a mandate to cover administration, finance, fund-raising and staffing, indeed every non-political aspect of the Party's work. It was composed of the Senior Vice-Chairman, the four Executive Vice-Chairmen, the National Secretary, the National Treasurer and any others the NEC might have considered useful. The Committee was, in Party terms, extremely elitist (it embraced two committees previously responsible for staffing and Party administration, the General Business Committee, and the Finance Committee). The coming together of these committees served only to accentuate the power of their members. But in any case prior to amalgamation they were powerful bodies, for example, the Finance Committee had a Vice-Chairman of the Party as its Convener, as did the Administration Committee.

A committee of this power presents a formidable phalanx for either individuals or even groups within the Party who might seek to oppose it. Apart from the expertise of its members, they also had the prestige derived from their undoubtedly high status (they were, after all, the most senior elected members of the Party). The Committee's power was further enhanced since when it went to the NEC, for endorsement of its recommendations, it was likely to get it by virtue of the fact that the GBC's members were also members of the NEC. In this respect the GBC might be compared to an 'inner-cabinet', at least so far as financial policy-making is concerned.

The fact that the powers assumed by the Executive and its financial sub-committees went well beyond those envisaged in the Constitution is not hard to establish. The SNP devotes ten paragraphs of its Constitution <sup>(68)</sup> to the topic of finance. As we have shown, the SNP's finances were controlled by a comparatively small group of people who sat on the sub-committees of the Executive. Not only did they formulate recommendations for alteration of the fees, and in some cases the financial structure of the Party, but they also controlled investment decisions concerning the size and source of such purchases. They did this in spite of clearly laid down procedures as set out in the Party's Constitution. Paragraph 20 gives to National Council (except under certain circumstances where Conference might have the power) the right of:

control over all monies, funds, property, investments and securities of whatever kind and description belonging to the Party. (69)

But through circumstances prevailing in the mid to late 1960s, financial control came to rest in the hands of a comparatively small group of people on the NEC. We could find no evidence to suggest that National Council seriously questioned (and certainly did not instruct) the GBC on matters connected with Party finance (the extent of the GBC's power was, or so it seems, taken as a given). Moreover, as we have shown, it was not Council but the NEC (acting upon its financial sub-committee's recommendations) which proposed innovations in matters relating to the economic status of the Party, despite the fact that Paragraph 21 of the Constitution, gives Council the:

power to invest monies and funds of the Party in stocks and shares of public companies, bank deposit receipts, Savings or Deposit Accounts, bonds and debentures with or without security, heritable property or otherwise in any manner or way as it in its uncontrolled discretion thinks fit. (70)

Council never asserted itself in this way. That is, it never took control of the investment decisions of the Party. In any case the idea of its having 'uncontrolled discretion' was unrealistic since it ignored the power, influence and orientation of the NEC. Council was dependent upon the Finance Committee, and later the GBC, for advice and guidance. It was unlikely that these bodies would have allowed ultimate financial control to rest in the inexperienced hands of National Council without a struggle. In fact, this proved unnecessary.

The reason for the opposition of the NEC, or its representatives stems not only from the potential weakness they might have perceived in allowing a body as large as National Council to control such decisions, but also as a consequence of the legal ramifications of the Constitution:

No member of National Council shall be personally liable in respect of the depreciation of any investments made on behalf of the Party. (71)

and, later:

The title to any heritable property or real estate belonging to the Party shall be taken in the name of the Chairman, the National Secretary and the National Treasurer ... or their successors in office as Trustees for behoof of the Party. (72)

Thus, although National Council delegates have considerable formal powers, they are, nonetheless, without financial liabilities in so far as these powers are concerned. In such circumstances it is not surprising that the officers of the Party who do have legal liability are extremely vigilant in ensuring that the delegates' use of such powers is severely circumscribed.

The parts of the Constitution which deal with financial matters gives to Council the right to decide the amount of affiliation fees paid by the branches, constituency associations and affiliated

organisations. Furthermore, it was Council which was to determine the standard rate of membership subscription <sup>(73)</sup>. In fact, as we have seen for the most part Council merely endorsed, or in a very few cases amended, recommendations emanating from the NEC, in respect of membership fees, etc. Its role here, as in other matters of finance, was reactive.

The Constitutional provisions for finance describe an 'ideal-type' situation in which formal power rests with Council delegates, whilst actual power was, and is, in the hands of the NEC, or its sub-committees.

All of the evidence presented in this section, we believe, strongly suggests that in the vital area of finance the SNP was dominated by comparatively few people. The most important innovations of this period came from a small number of people on the Finance and/or the General Business committees. We could find no evidence of successful (or even marked) resistance to those schemes, and in the main there appeared to be enthusiastic responses. Far from there being a sluggish movement of cash from the branches, there appears to have been a great deal of fluidity with the centre successful in extracting cash from the periphery. Finally, the fact that by-elections were funded by a levy on branches suggests that there was cash flow horizontally as well. That is, branches and constituencies were asked to finance parliamentary elections elsewhere in the country.



1. Richard Rose, 'Money and Election Law', Political Studies, (9, 1961, pp. 1-15).
2. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State, (Cambridge, Methuen, 1964).
3. Ibid., p.67.
4. Richard Rose, The Problem of Party Government, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex Penguin Books, 1976).
5. Ibid., p.213.
6. Ibid., p.214.
7. Ibid., p.214.
8. Richard Mansbach, 'The Scottish National Party: A Revised Political Profile', Comparative Politics, (Vol. 5, No. 2, 1973, pp. 195-210).
9. Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
10. Mansbach, op.cit.
11. Ibid., p.203.
12. Ibid., p.207.
13. Ibid., p.209.
14. Brand, op.cit., p.208.
15. Ibid., p.283.
16. Ibid., p.283.
17. S.E. Finer, The Changing British Party System, 1945-1979, (Washington, American Enterprise Institute, 1980), p.106.
18. Ibid., p.106.
19. Gordon Wilson, Report on Organisation to the National Executive Committee, (Edinburgh, SNP, 1962, unpublished) p.12.
20. That the majority of the members, or at least of the activists, were centrist, can be gauged from the Activist Survey mentioned in the Introduction, Activist Surveys: Descriptive Statistics, December 1970 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished) p.4. No less than 79 per cent of the activists agreed that both management and unions were equally to blame for industrial unrest. A further 56 per cent gave their agreement (or qualified agreement) to the contention that extremism in the cause of liberty is a vice. Similarly, J.J. Ray, 'ARE SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS AUTHORITARIAN AND CONSERVATIVE?', European Journal of Political Research, (6, 1978, pp. 411-418), found that SNP

voters were' in the middle in all things. The SNP, as it itself says, is neither Left nor Right but Scottish'. Save on the single issue of Scottish Independence 'they are the perfect centre party'.

21. Arnold J. Heidenheimer, 'Comparative Party Finances: Notes on Practices and Toward a Theory', Journal of Politics, (25, 1963, pp. 790-811).
22. Ibid., p.792.
23. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Report of the Organisation Committee, April 1963.
24. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Report of the National Treasurer to National Council, September 1963.
25. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Report of Chairman to National Council, November 1964.
26. William Wolfe, Interview with the author, 29/3/81.
27. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 9, Alba Pools Record, Memo to Organisation Committee, April 1969.
28. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 6, Report of the 1966 Annual Conference.
29. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 9, Report of Chairman to National Council, December 1969.
30. Gordon Wilson, Interview with the author, 19/3/81.
31. Duverger, op.cit., p.73.
32. Ibid., p.73.
33. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.128.
34. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Report of the Chairman to National Council, September 1965.
35. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Report of the 1965 Annual Conference.
36. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Report of the National Treasurer to Special National Council, February 1964.
37. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 6, Report to National Treasurer to National Council, March 1968. Branches and constituencies were asked to lodge unused capital with H.Q. (to be recalled when necessity demanded). This allowed H.Q. to invest comparatively larger sums of money with banks, and in the markets, than they would otherwise have been able to do in the absence of such loans.
38. Minutes of the General Business Committee (GBC) May 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).

39. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 1, Report of Party Treasurer(s) to Annual Conferences.
40. Consolidated Balance Sheet, December 1968, (Edinburgh, SNP).
41. Brand, op.cit., p.262.
42. Kellas, op.cit., p.125.
43. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 10, Report of Chairman to National Council, June 1970.
44. Memo from Dr. James Lees to NEC, 4/8/72, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
45. Minutes of the GBC, March 1971, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
46. Minutes of the GBC, April 1973, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
47. Minutes of the GBC, January 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
48. Minutes of the GBC, April 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
49. Minutes of the NEC, May 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
50. Minutes of the National Council, September 1973, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
51. Wilson, op.cit.
52. Ibid., p.12.
53. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Letter from Gordon Wilson to Arthur Donaldson, February 1964.
54. Brand, op.cit., p.283.
55. In 1964 the NEC asked, and received from, National Council authority to set up a by-election fund, and to raise a levy of £5 on every branch whenever the Executive decided to contest a by-election.
56. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 5, Report to Chairman to National Council, September 1967.
57. Minutes of the National Council, September 1971, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
58. Minutes of the National Council, December 1972, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
59. Minutes of the National Council, December 1973 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
60. Ibid.
61. Mansbach, op.cit., p.209.

62. Minutes of the GBC, March 1971, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
64. Constitution and Rules of the Scottish National Party, (Edinburgh, SNP, Edinburgh, June 1968), p.10.
65. Alan McKinney (National Organiser), Interview with the author, 25/11/80.
66. Constitution, op.cit., p.11.
67. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
68. Ibid., pp. 5-7.
69. Ibid., p.5.
70. Ibid., 5-6.
71. Ibid., p.6.
72. Ibid., p.6.
73. Ibid., p.7.

## Chapter Five

### The Wilson and Niven Reports

This chapter will deal with two reports which led to the reform of the organisational power structure of the SNP. In the case of the Wilson Report this amounted to the single most important change in the management history of the Party. Indeed, the Wilson Report can be seen as a formal recognition that the SNP's organisational mechanisms were utterly unsuited to the tasks confronting it, which may go a long way to explaining why, despite the radical nature of the Report, it was accepted, practically without alteration, by the delegates to National Council.

#### The Wilson Report

In 1963 the SNP was confronted by a classic management conundrum: the Party was, in relative terms, growing very rapidly and much of the change this growth brought in its wake was outwith the control of the leadership. Whilst the latter welcomed this expansion, they could not have allowed it to go on undirected or unstructured since, in the end, peripheral anarchy would have ensued and there would have been a potential for damaging political spin-offs. The author of the Report, Gordon Wilson recognised this:

The motive behind the Report lay in the fact that the Party itself was changing. That you had, into what had been a moribund structure, the appearance of new people, new ideas. And a certain degree of optimism and hope that the Party had a chance of gaining more political support ... The existing institutions were obviously failing. (1)

Management theorists recognise the problems that a rapidly

changing organisation can lead to;

The greatest of all problems for the manager is rapid change .... (2)

And, later:

Change, to be successful, must be carefully planned. Such planning must also include the likely human effects of the change and what can be done to ease adjustment to them. (3)

Thus, whilst organisational self-realisation, that is, growth leading to greater political viability and credibility, was intended, there remained the potential for membership-leadership interaction problems unless the leaders took hold and directed the growth.

Growth brings new members into the organisation. They come in at all levels and with a variety of experience, expertise, motivations and desires for the organisation and themselves. An immediate consequence of their arrival is that they upset the existing patterns of interaction communication ... For the veteran members of the organisation is somewhat threatening, since the former power arrangements are now distorted and new alignments emerge. (4)

As we shall now see there was cognisance in both reports of this growth, and a recognition that it would have to be taken in hand. This realisation led the centre to conclude that the Party would have to be more closely directed if the leadership was to have any meaningful role to play; hence the Wilson and Niven reports.

Thus whilst the ostensible cause of the Wilson Report was a by-election disaster at Kinross and West Perthshire (the Party Chairman, Arthur Donaldson, managed only 7.3 per cent of the vote in November 1963; this was down from 15 per cent on the 1959 General Election <sup>(5)</sup>), the essential reason was a growing agitation in the Executive about superstructural problems within the Party as a consequence of its growth.

The Wilson Report is, including its appendices, some 14,000 words long. It was an unprecedented attempt by the leadership of the SNP to

address itself to the dilemmas we have just discussed, As a report it is both concise and clear, and it set in train a variety of profound changes which still affect the SNP to this day. Wilson was commissioned to write it at a meeting of the Party's NEC in November 1963 <sup>(6)</sup>. He was to investigate the overall organisation of the Party. He did this with a vengeance.

Arthur Donaldson was so disturbed about the state of the organisation that he wrote a memo to Gordon Wilson prior to the writing of the Report, expressing his concern. He wanted a clarification of the respective roles of the NEC and Council. More significantly he suggested that perhaps there was a need to allow the Chairman to act on behalf of either of these bodies. He went on to express 'no confidence' in aspects of the Party's financial record, and declared that the Headquarters office was inefficient <sup>(7)</sup>. In a supplementary memo on organisation <sup>(8)</sup> Donaldson suggested that the existing Vice-Chairmanship posts were 'largely ornaments and it is only by good luck we get anyone in these jobs who proves really useful'. By this he meant that the office-holders failed to fulfil management functions. The posts, therefore, were merely honorific. In their stead Donaldson suggested a Senior Vice-Chairman, with two Vice-Chairmen in charge of Organisation and Publicity/Development (prior to the Report there were two Vice-Chairmen, but the two posts carried little functional responsibility. In fact, all their occupants did was to Chair meetings in the absence of the Party Chairman).

These recommendations were included in the Report, and were eventually implemented. They represented significant centralising factors, and helped in the creation of a distinctive and prescribed

management hierarchy within the SNP. Of his remit, Wilson said the following:

The Report at the end of the day took a much more substantial shape than I think the Executive had intended when it asked me to carry out the survey.

I was first of all concerned that the major organisational apparatus of the Party had not been working. That is, a lot of the committees had failed to meet, and there didn't seem to be any kind of overall coordination or supervision. The second thing I noticed was that the role of the Executive was limited by the fact that it was treated as a sub-committee of National Council. The Executive Committee had, in fact, to submit its minutes to the National Council for approval, and that meant that any decision - in practical terms - which was taken over a three month period could be capable (sic) of being overturned. To my mind this was a piece of nonsense. And, of course, as the Party was developing it also meant news of the Executive's work, and all the organisational disputes which occur, would be made available to other people, not just members of the Party, perhaps, but to other political parties.

So one of the changes I suggested in the Report was to upgrade the position of the National Executive, *vis a vis* the National Council, to give it authority to take decisions - subject to a system of reports which would replace the production of the minutes.

The third thing that I felt was necessary was to make the office-bearers more effective by giving them Executive responsibility, and making them more personally responsible and democratically accountable for functions. This led to a definition of the various office-bearers. (9)

We have given such a lengthy quote because it is important to recognise that Wilson himself perceived his task as being extremely radical and far reaching. He was doing nothing less than completely altering established organisational relationships. It is also clear that Wilson was firmly resolved to inject a serious managerial element into the Party's formal structure.

His methodology, given the limited time in which he had to write the Report, was quite simple: he isolated the major aspects of the remit, for example, the NEC, National Council, office-bearers, etc., and subjected them to a functional analysis <sup>(10)</sup> in order to understand their responsibilities and authority. These were then related to actual



practice and their intra-organisational status. He did this through the medium of interviews, written or oral, with the organisational principals. By the end of his investigation he had spoken to everyone of authority within the Party machine.

In the Introduction to the Report, Wilson observed that in the past the Party had been controlled by the branches <sup>(11)</sup>; the frustration which the centre felt at this state of affairs can be gauged from the following:

Until it can be assumed that the branches will accept guidance and direction from the centre, then it may be difficult to dislodge the sense of futility that comes with continual juggling with scanty resources, recalcitrant members, and paper organisation. (12)

Even in the Introduction the leadership's yearning for organisational control is evident. Wilson wrote of the need for 'bold' and 'wise' leadership, and that the leaders recognised the direction in which the Party should be led. In the pages following upon the Introduction there is the cumulative effect of recommendations contributing to the moulding of an organisational apparatus which was to become thoroughly centralised.

National Council. This met quarterly (the Report did not change the frequency of its meetings), and it was composed of branch and constituency delegates. It was the inter-Conference, formal decision-making body of the Party. Wilson accepted the organisation-chart definition of its powers in the Party:

... there is no question of caucus control by the Executive since it is elected by and can be controlled by the votes of delegates from the branches and other bodies entitled to representation. (13)

Despite giving a de jure description of its powers and responsibilities, Wilson was not blind to the reality behind the constitutional mask. An effective organisation cannot have all the major management decisions

taken by a body as large as National Council. This led him to his first major recommendation; the transfer of all organisational administration to the National Executive.

This represented a comprehensive change in the formal set-up of the Party. Even so, Wilson was still concerned to assure the delegates that they were not being stripped of their rightful powers:

But it should not be looked upon as a plan to concentrate and centralise powers in the hands of the few. (14)

Yet such a striking loss in management power had to be recompensed in some way or other. After all, National Council was being deprived of a pivotal role in the running of the Party. If this did not exactly amount to emasculation, it was at least a perceptible loss of the administrative powers of the delegates. Wilson devised an ingenious compromise: in compensation for this loss, National Council was to become the forum for policy discussion. This change was depicted as being of net benefit to the Council since it would allow it to concentrate its collective attention on the broad areas of policy-making, rather than waste time and energy on the mundane tasks of administrative nitty-gritty. The logic behind this analysis led Wilson to recommend another major structural change which would add one more brick to the wall of power being erected by the centre: the creation of the Executive Vice-Chairmen. These would be 'part-time' (see below for the amount of time devoted to their tasks) and unpaid. They would be elected by National Council and also serve on the NEC.

As we have already seen, this was a recommendation made initially by Donaldson whose obvious concern was to create more effective central control. Wilson argued, reasonably enough, that even the Executive could not be expected to be responsible for the day-to-day running of

an expanding political party. Therefore, someone had to take executive control of organisation and publicity/development, hence the two Vice-Chairmen. En passant, Wilson noted that the distribution of Executive Committee minutes to National Council might give a less than comprehensive picture of the proceedings of that body; thus the recommendation that this practice should cease and be replaced with written reports by the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen.

The effect of these two changes cannot be over exaggerated. The creation of two specialist posts, each of which would carry per diem control of the most important areas of Party life, in one stroke vastly increased the power of the centre. The cessation of the distribution of Executive minutes had an equally important effect; it meant that potential centralisers would be freer to speak openly and propose their views at the Party's de facto power centre. On top of this it closed off from the investigative gaze of the membership the deliberations of the Party's Cabinet.

There were other changes recommended regarding the status and functions of National Council, but those listed above were the most important. We contend that they represented a major shift in emphasis towards greater centralisation, and also a change in the climate of the Party towards a recognition that devolved, open structures, however desirable, may not be the most efficient way of doing business or achieving goals. The creation of the two Executive posts highlighted an acknowledgement of the need for a specialist management style in order to increase organisational effectiveness.

National Executive Committee. Wilson next turned his attention

to the Party's Cabinet, in its power centre, the National Executive Committee. In an illuminating passage he argues that even the NEC should not have its time wasted on matters of administrative control, and he foresaw the task of administration being carried out by the new Vice-Chairmen (and also the National Secretary):

It seems quite obvious to me that far too much time at the executive meetings is directed to administrative control. This may be caused by the breakdown of the committee system. But there is certainly no justification for bringing busy members of the Party from all over the country to discuss things which could and should be undertaken and decided by one or two persons.' (15)

He perceived the NEC as having several important functions: the coordinating centre, that is, overseeing, of committee work and deciding which recommendations from the Publicity/Development Committee should go forward to Council. Finally, it should be staffed by those regarded as the leaders of the Party, and be concerned with future strategy and tactics. (16)

For Wilson, hitherto the Party 'had drifted along, waiting and hoping for something to turn up' (17). He was concerned to turn the Executive into a grand decision-making forum - so far as organisational questions were concerned. That is, it would give the 'yea' or 'nay' to recommendations of its sub-committees on the most important organisational aspects of Party life. Its most senior members, Chairman, National Secretary, and the two Vice-Chairmen, would be its most important members since they would also be responsible for the control of the minutiae of the Party's administrative activities, aside from their role as executive members. Therefore, it is likely that their opinions, at least in so far as internal Party matters were concerned, would be very influential.

Wilson's proposals would give rise to a Party controlled by the most senior elected officials, with an Executive/Cabinet monitoring their activities, and affirming or rejecting their actions. Branch delegates, for their part, would debate but leave the conception and implementation of broad administrative matters to the NEC, or its most senior members.

This view of Party life appears to be confirmed when we examine Wilson's description of the role of the Party Chairman and the other senior office-bearers.

The President. This was seen as primarily a dignified, or formal, post awarded to the most illustrious servant of the Party. Wilson suggested little change in this regard. It was open to annual election.

Chairman. This figure (elected annually) was the accepted political head of the Party. Again, there was to be very little change in the functions of the Chairman save in two respects. He was to be delegated the right to suspend individuals or branches if he considered their activities were inimical to the interests of the Party. This power was given, pending a meeting of the NEC. This was not an insignificant weapon. The individual or branch might have their case prejudiced if they had been suspended by the Chairman prior to an NEC meeting. The latter would be under pressure to endorse the Chairman's decision, since any reversal could easily have been interpreted as a vote of "no confidence" in the Chairman. To be sure, it would also depend upon the Chairman not abusing the power. Even so, it was another step along the road to central control.

The other major recommendation gave the Chairman the right to

define a political party for the purposes of suspension. That is, if a person was a member of another organisation, then the Chairman could determine whether or not it was a political party, and therefore incompatible with membership of the SNP (National Council now has the right to decide which organisations can be described as political parties).

Executive Vice-Chairmen. The creation of these annually elected posts truly represented the major advance towards a centralised structure. One was to be in charge of Development and Publicity. This placed him in control (he was formally responsible to the National Council) of policy, publications and public relations, as well as demonstrations and campaigns. The holder of the post was to have a public relations officer as his assistant. In the first instance, this was unsalaried (although a full-time P.R.O. would be appointed in later years).

The other Vice-Chairman (Organisation) was to have a remit which would cover branch formation and operation, the supervision of parliamentary and local elections, the organisation of meetings, elections, and the formation of tactics. There were to be sub-committees, responsible to the Vice-Chairman, to cover these very broad areas with conveners appointed by him. These bodies would undertake work in fields designated by the Vice-Chairman, and function in a manner determined by him.

These new posts represented a step towards real administrative expertise within the SNP. They gave considerable power to the holder and started the bureaucratisation of the machine. Although the Vice-Chairmen were not salaried, they nonetheless gave considerable amounts

of time and energy to the task, and were widely perceived as having a great deal of expertise in their respective fields.

The first two Vice-Chairmen were William Wolfe and Douglas Drysdale.

Wolfe has said of their relationship and tasks:

... we used to meet nearly every day and discuss things of immediate importance, also things concerned with planning and constitutional matters ... we worked very closely together. (18)

In reference to the amount of time the Vice-Chairmanship took up, Wolfe noted:

I gave up my job (he was self-employed) in April 1964, and I worked full-time for the Party from the middle of April 1964 until the Election which was at the end of October. In 1964/65, it (the Party position) took up a great deal of my time ... it would have been taking at least forty hours a week, put it that way. (19)

Gordon Wilson, who became National Secretary in 1964, also gave a great deal of time to the job. In fact, he acted very much like a full-time bureaucrat:

I virtually didn't do any public meetings (that is, speak at meetings held for the general public)... I considered my job as trying to create some order amongst the chaos, and trying to provide some degree of political coordination as well as administrative discipline. (20)

National Secretary. Wilson who held down a full-time job outside the SNP, recognised what a potentially powerful figure the Secretary could become if he had the will to do so:

it is the Secretary who by dint of normal secretarial duties is the pivot on which the organisation turns. (21)

The job specification (it was an annually elected post) points to the extent of these powers: the investigation of inefficiency and dereliction of duty by other office-bearers, the reception and management of complaints from the public and members of the Party, and ensuring that instructions from Council, Conference and the NEC were implemented. He was also responsible for office administration.

This extensive functional range could, if the office-holder desired it, place the Secretary in a position of enormous political influence and power. It was also in step with the overall trend of the Report. What is perhaps more surprising is that it was accepted without amendment by the delegates to Council.

National Treasurer. Wilson took a fiscally conservative view of the duties of the Party's Treasurer:

Unless we have better budgeting control and fast,  
we shall join the Gadarene swine in a headlong  
rush to liquidation. (22)

He listed six recommendations in respect of this post, but almost all of them are of an administratively specific type with no appreciable effect upon internal power relations. This was an annually elected post.

He next goes on to discuss the committee system which, according to informants was not working. He proposed that the new Vice-Chairmen should be left to divide their functions amongst committees as they saw fit (these committees serviced the Vice-Chairmen, see above). In this respect a certain amount of latitude was to be left to them until the new system had time to run in.

The rest of the Report was concerned with proposals for a well-functioning administration, replete with suggestions for better financial control within the Headquarters, correcting spelling errors, and even the necessity of a reasonable desk for the National Organiser.

The very detail of the Report might have been enough to persuade even the most sceptical that it was a serious attempt to rationalise



and improve the organisational structure of the Party. It was well-planned and careful to cover every area of interest. As such, even if members had suspected that it would lead to marked centralisation, they might have hesitated before rejecting it. As it was there was not even the most desultory attempt to veto it. At National Council of August, 1964, <sup>(23)</sup> the Report was presented and discussed. Despite its sheer size and its potential impact, only two alterations were effected by the delegates.

The first covered a paragraph headed 'Additional Minor Recommendations affecting National Council'. This embraced the timing of Council meetings, the filling of vacancies amongst senior-office bearers resulting from resignation or death, and several other lesser matters. These proposals were not agreed to.

The other alteration was covered in the last chapter, it was the rejection of the move to totally centralise the Party's finances.

Thus, out of a total of 115 paragraphs only one paragraph and one sub-paragraph were not agreed to.

Four months later Wilson reported <sup>(24)</sup> to Council that:

although the election of the new Executive Vice-Chairmen would signal the beginning of the new administrative structure it was proposed to elect Conveners of Committees as to keep the existing system working until the Vice-Chairman felt able to make innovations. The tenure of the Committee conveners would be at the pleasure of the Vice-Chairmen.

The previous practice was for National Council to elect Committee Conveners. The first two Vice-Chairmen were Douglas Drysdale, Public Relations/Policy, and William Wolfe for Organisation.

The Party which emerged from these changes was quite different in structure from that which predated the innovations. The precepts which governed the alterations were doubtless, as suggested, measured by the need to improve organisation, which they certainly did, but the end result was a triumph for centralisation. National Council retained its formally defined constitutional roles. But in fact, it became a forum for vociferous enquiry and suggestion and was now thoroughly reactive. Even the National Executive had its role sufficiently delineated so as to ensure that whilst it remained the power source of the Party, it was still dependent upon a sub-group of its own membership for guidance and direction.

As we shall see in our section on the theory of organisational growth, whilst it was always likely that change would overtake the SNP as it grew. The type of change, the administrative detail, was largely the responsibility of one man, Gordon Wilson. He was the avant-courier, the herald of innovation. He put together an impressive package of proposals; but what is even more striking is the fact that he did this after speaking to just 20 people from the top most echelons of the Party. The Report was written without any attempt to canvass the opinions of the mass of the membership, only senior Party figures were interviewed. The fact is that Wilson recognised the necessity of functional responsibility. As William Wolfe says of Wilson's efforts:

What Gordon Wilson saw very closely ... was that there was nobody elected or appointed to carry out as an executive, decisions made by the National Executive Committee or National Council. (25)

Moreover, Wilson clearly believes that however radical a departure the new system was it has been vindicated:

... the changes that were introduced in 'sixty-three', 'sixty-four', anticipated some of the organisational pressures which came with growth, and latterly with retrenchment because the basic structure has lasted eighteen years ... During the 'sixties' and 'seventies' the structure which was envisaged, of having persons responsible for administration of certain functions, (functional responsibility vested in persons rather than in committees), I think was the major change, and that system by and large worked. (26)

The publication of the Report was quickly followed by the General Election of 1964. The SNP had 15 candidates standing compared with five in 1959. They gained a total of 64,044 votes, or 2.4 per cent of Scottish poll <sup>(27)</sup>. Party membership was between 6,000 to 8,000 and the number of branches was around 80 <sup>(28)</sup>.

#### The Niven Report

It was against this encouraging background that the Niven Report on the Review of the Constituencies <sup>(29)</sup> was presented to the November 1964 National Council. The Review was by no means as influential, and certainly not as important, as the Wilson Report (in fact, it was largely created by the latter since the Organisation Committee, which was responsible for the Review, was reconstituted in January 1964 as a consequence of the Wilson Report). Even so, we include an analysis of it because it contained important suggestions for change which were also centralising in their orientation.

Niven observed that much of the expansion of the Party had been unplanned, but it was now time for the Organisation Committee 'with the aid of the local branches, to take a more active part in the formation of branches' <sup>(30)</sup>. He analyses the condition of each constituency, and what is immediately evident was the lamentable state of the Party in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The former was without organisation in ten seats. In Edinburgh

there was only one branch, Edinburgh North, and this had responsibility for seven constituencies. As for Scotland as a whole. The Party was strongest in the north, and parts of east Scotland, in the Dundee area, and parts of the central belt.

Niven recommended a specific approach in the cause of remedying these deficiencies. He considered it vital for the Organisation Committee to take a more active part in the formation of branches; this led to a suggestion that any burgh with a population in excess of 5,000 should be able to support a branch. Forty burghs were included in that category. Next followed an exhaustive account as to how best to organise the towns. The Review tried to introduce a concept which apart from being unquestionably centralising was also alien to the traditions of the SNP. The constituency association was to be the basic unit of the Party:

We feel that the basic organisational unit of the Party should be the constituency association. (31)

In the end, however, this did not become the basic unit. Nevertheless, their development did occur and, in fact, for parliamentary purposes, at least, the association was elevated to the status of principal organisational component.

The most salient thing about Niven's Review was the particular detail he gave to all aspects of the organisation of branches in the areas highlighted as growth points. Costing for the distribution of business reply cards was undertaken, as well as estimates for advertising and other incidentals. There was also an analysis of the situation in each constituency under discussion.

In contrast to the circumstances existing prior to this, the

SNP leadership now had at its disposal the most rigorous account of the nationwide strength and weaknesses of the organisation. In this way the Review acted as an aid to centralisation since it gave the leadership something which is critical to any organisational managers, a monopoly of intelligence concerning the institution.

However, the growth of the constituency associations was, without doubt, slow. By September 1966 there were still only 14 in the whole of Scotland:

A constituency association is a sign of intent that a serious effort will be made to fight the next parliamentary election, and it is the first and necessary move to that end. Branches should not wait till they are sure that they can put forward a candidate in their constituency before getting together with other branches - and every constituency in Scotland should intend to fight the next election. (32)

In the next chapter we shall cover in detail in full the growth of the Party which followed in the wake of these reports. In the meantime, what can we learn about the SNP from these internal documents?

To put them into proper perspective one must recognise that whilst the Wilson Report was almost immediately influential, the Niven Review, though much less significant, nevertheless was following upon a new growth in awareness about the need to coordinate and centralise operations. Thus whilst they differed greatly in size and weight, they were still branches of the same tree.

Prior to the Wilson Report, the SNP, even during the growth of 1962 and 1963, was organisationally non-complex: there were the branches and the delegates to Council/Conference, and the NEC which tended to examine all organisational concerns, both great and small.

In the post-Wilson era, specialisation was introduced with individuals having specific responsibilities, a functioning specialist committee system was resurrected and organisational control was twice removed, that is, from Council to the Executive and from there to a few individuals who performed the managerial roles.

Such developments are in accordance with certain empirical studies undertaken on organisations:

The argument 'in favour' of size are quite compelling. Marshall Meyer found that size is positively correlated with both number of levels (hierarchical differentiation) and number of divisions (horizontal or functional differentiation). Large organisations are thus more structurally complex than small ones. (33)

Need this greater complexity be related to leadership domination as in our hypothesis? Is it not possible that, differentiation notwithstanding, the membership still had a vital role to play in decision-making?

We believe that the evidence presented in this chapter is strongly suggestive of a crucial leadership role, both as an innovative source and as a central decision-maker. Although there is not much evidence about the effect top leaders have on an organisation <sup>(34)</sup>, what data does exist suggests that:

... Given the important leadership functions, there is real potential for leadership to affect the organisations ... One source of the variation in the effect is undoubtedly in the degree to which the organisation is already structured and the extent to which this structure is subject to modification. (35)

The point is that if the membership can be quite quickly brought to accept a new mode of organisation (which in the case of the SNP, they certainly were), the leadership can have a vital role to play in decision-making. This was, of course, precisely what occurred within

the SNP during the short period between the conception and implementation of the Wilson Plan. The local activists who were the people most likely to oppose the innovations did not. In itself this is both a compliment to the quality of the reforms, and the recognition among the members of the need for improved management.

In the next chapter we will examine the organisational growth of the SNP in the years following upon the Wilson Report.

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4. Richard H. Hall, Organisations: Structure and Process, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1972), p.135.
5. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, Cambridge, (Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.123.
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8. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Supplementary Memo on Organisation from Arthur Donaldson
9. Wilson Interview op.cit.
10. Gordon Wilson, Report on Organisation to the National Executive Committee, 1963, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
11. Ibid., p.3.
12. Ibid., p.4.
13. Ibid., p.4.
14. Ibid., p.5.
15. Ibid., p.7.
16. Ibid., p.8.
17. Ibid., p.8.
18. William Wolfe, Interview with the author, 29/3/81.
19. Ibid.,
20. Wilson Interview, op.cit.
21. Wilson, (Organisation Report), op.cit., p.9.
22. Ibid., p.10.
23. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Minutes of the National Council, 8/2/64.
24. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Minutes of the National Council, 6/6/64.



25. Wolfe Interview, op.cit.
26. Wilson Interview, op.cit.
27. Kellas, op.cit., p.126.
28. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Memo to all Branch Secretaries from Douglas Drysdale, 25/11/64.
29. Alan Niven, Review of the Constituencies, 1964 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
30. Ibid., Part Two.
31. Ibid., Part Four.
32. NLS, ACC. 6038, Box No. 4, Report of Vice-Chairman (Organisation) to National Council, 3/9/66.
33. Hall, op.cit., p.113.
34. Ibid., p.248.
35. Ibid., p.260.

## Chapter Six

### Organisational Growth and Party Power, 1963-1970

As we saw in the last chapter, the effect of the Wilson Report was to lead to a centralisation of the SNP's organisational and decision-making structure. Its medium-term impact upon the Party's attitudes was one whereby centralisation was perceived by the managers as either beneficial and/or inevitable.

The seven years between 1963 and 1970 were the high-water mark of the SNP's organisational strength as measured by the sheer numbers of members and branches. However, its electoral health, especially between 1967-68, failed to match the robustness of the Party's organisation.

We shall now examine both of these factors. Given the fact that the effect of the Wilson Report was to greatly increase the centre's power within the SNP, we would expect evidence of this new found power to emerge in the years following 1963. How true is this hypothesis?

### Organisational Growth, 1963-1970

Between 1963 and December 1966 the SNP's membership grew from 4,000 to 42,000. The National Organiser claimed that by the end of 1966 approximately one person in every 300 in the cities was an SNP member, and one in every 60 or 70 in the counties held a membership card <sup>(1)</sup>. At this point the Party had over 190 branches. In other

words the SNP's organisational strength was increasing rapidly, and thousands of new members were being sucked into the machine.

In the 1964 General Election the SNP gained 64,044 votes with 15 candidates. Although this was an advance on 1959 <sup>(2)</sup> it was modest enough bearing in mind the great strides the Party was beginning to make in organisational growth.

However, the 1966 General Election was a happier event. Because even though the number of candidates increased by only eight, the number of votes achieved doubled to 128,474, five per cent of the Scottish poll <sup>(3)</sup>. More significantly, perhaps, was the fact that 16 of the candidates saved their deposits, and the average share of the vote in each seat was 14.5 per cent. Here at last was evidence that the electoral fortunes of the Party were beginning to match its organisational strength.

In a report to the NEC, the Convener of the Organisation Committee, J. Russell Thomson <sup>(4)</sup>, commented:

The achievement of over 120,000 votes was in itself a very good result, but with better organisation it could have been improved. <sup>(5)</sup>

It is fair to say that Thomson presented little evidence in support of his claim. But it was, in all probability, widely believed within the Party because constituency reports to him suggested that the SNP did better where they had active groups and branches, and badly where they had no such base.

The above begs a fairly obvious question. Which came first, the good organisation leading to an increase of sympathy for the

Party in an area, or the existing sympathy giving rise to an organisation? Thomson did not address himself to the point.

In any event, following upon the experiences of 1966, several changes were recommended by Thomson in anticipation of the next General Election <sup>(6)</sup>. These included the proposition that all constituency associations must be self-supporting with no outside help, and that all burgh/constituency branches should increase their membership and thereafter divide, so that each municipal ward had a branch.

Interestingly, the 1966 Election illustrated the dominance of the middle-class within the SNP, not only in the leadership, but also as candidates. Of the 23 parliamentary candidates, 18 had middle-class occupational status, including four schoolteachers, two doctors, one veterinary surgeon, one lawyer and two chartered accountants <sup>(7)</sup>. This might be reflective of middle-class expertise in an organisation not yet fully matured and with little organisational experience. On the other hand, it might have been nothing more significant than the fact that only this group of people could afford the time off work.

The next important electoral event for the SNP was a by-election held in the Glasgow constituency of Pollok.

Glasgow had never been a fertile field for the SNP as measured by the number of votes gained, or the strength of the Party's organisation. However, spurred on by the new found self-confidence and the successes of the 1966 Election, the Party had little choice but to contest Pollok.

To begin with, a by-election committee was set up by the NEC <sup>(8)</sup>.

Like so much else the committee was dominated by a few leading Party figures. Its members were George Leslie, the candidate; Ian Macdonald, the National Organiser; and Gordon Wilson, the National Secretary.

The election was to be funded, in the main, by the usual method of a levy on the constituencies and branches of the Party. By the middle of April 1966 no less than 116 branches, out of a possible 214, had met this financial commitment, and by the end of the campaign all of the expenditure incurred had been paid for by this method.

The SNP fought the election on a highly structured format: the constituency was divided into seven areas. Each area was allocated an organiser, and it was the latter's job to ensure his district was properly canvassed and leafleted. There were workers in the field prior to the issuing of the writ, so that by the time it had been moved the constituency had been almost completely canvassed. In the end 60 per cent of the Pollok electorate had been canvassed twice.

The net result was considered a success. The SNP achieved 28.2 per cent of the vote, a sufficiently large enough share to give the seat to the Conservatives (it had previously been a Labour-held seat). In total the SNP picked up 10,064 votes <sup>(9)</sup>, and although the Party came third it greatly reduced the Labour Party's share of the vote. The contest was considered a great organisational achievement for the SNP.

The campaign was the most professional ever mounted by the Nationalists. It was this election in which the Party perfected its

famous razzamatazz approach of songs, car cavalcades, flags and colourful lapel stickers, etc. In a post-election analysis, it was observed that:

as West Lothian in 1962 marks the renaissance (sic) of the SNP, Pollok in 1967 marks our graduation to a new professionalism. (10)

One piece of evidence in support of this claim was that on polling day itself all the 'FOR' voters (as marked on canvass cards) were contacted, and all claimed to have voted.

The next test of Nationalist strength came in the local elections held in May 1967. In these the SNP took 16 per cent of the national vote, and won 7 seats in the burghs, and 42 in the counties, collecting a total of 200,000 votes, only 20,000 fewer than the Labour Party (11).

Given this background, it is understandable that the SNP approached the by-election in Hamilton in November 1967 with considerable confidence. Electoral success was paralleled by organisational advance as evidenced by the growth in constituency associations - a long-held aim of the leadership. In a report on the state of the constituency associations, written in 1967 (12), it was discovered that there were four main categories of constituency: Poor ; those with a small active membership; Moderate - a number of good people, but with an inactive membership and an incomplete coverage of the constituency; Good - a fairly large number of good people, with membership over 500 and the constituency virtually covered by branches; Excellent - membership over 1,000, with many activists and near complete coverage by branches.

The numbers included in each category were as follows:

<u>Number of Constituencies</u>	
Poor	10
Moderate	36
Good	22
Excellent	3
	<hr/>
	71

Bearing in mind the constituency strength outlined in the Niven Review, one can see the remarkable advance in the Party's constituency coverage in the three years since that report was written.

The degree of advance achieved under the leadership since 1963 led to a leadership-mass consonance. There is no evidence (see next section) to suggest that there was any disquiet among the members in respect of the direction in which they were being led. At this stage in the Party's development the very success of the leadership in "delivering the goods" was having the effect of increasing their power vis-a-vis the rank-and-file. In any case opposition from the latter would have been pointless. For despite the increasing evidence of leadership control of the machine, there was insufficient grounds for seeking to end this trend since it was so manifestly successful in terms of organisational and electoral results.

The stunning SNP by-election victory at Hamilton was just one more piece of evidence that the leadership really were taking the Party towards the goal of independence. Such a success must have boosted the overall standing of the leadership, and may even have aided centralisation.

The SNP won Hamilton in November 1967 with 46 per cent of the vote. Labour's share fell from 71.2 per cent in the 1966 General Election, to 41.5 per cent in the by-election <sup>(13)</sup>.

The SNP candidate, Mrs. Winifred Ewing, was a Glasgow lawyer and an aggressive campaigner. Even so, her victory was still a considerable achievement for the SNP, and it led to a flood of new members for the Nationalists. Moreover, there was a flurry of media attention and the demands on the centre grew alarmingly.

By January 1968 the SNP had 90,000 members (some estimates put it higher) and new branches were increasing in numbers all the time. This growth led the Vice-Chairman (Organisation), Dr. James Lees, to send a memo <sup>(14)</sup> to the NEC, calling for the appointment of paid regional organisers to coordinate activities and expansion.

The momentum was carried on through the local elections of May 1968, when the SNP gained some 30 per cent of the national vote <sup>(15)</sup> and in net terms gained 100 seats. They even managed to win 13 seats in normally hostile Glasgow.

Minutes of the Organisation Committee of the period record <sup>(16)</sup> that the Party had, by October 1968, 483 branches and 22 parliamentary candidates. Two months later three regional organisers were appointed and were based in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh respectively. Another leadership idea, not for the first or last time, was implemented. The force of management reality continued to bear in on the Party.

However, organisational change did not end there. Ian Macdonald



resigned as National Organiser (ostensibly because he wanted to become a parliamentary candidate. But in reality he was unhappy with an internal organisational change, which, he believed, demoted him in the staff hierarchy). He was replaced by Winifred Ewing's Election Agent, John McAteer.

In 1968 it must have seemed to many activists that the SNP could only continue to go from strength to strength. However, in the following year the first signs of decline became evident. There is no evidence to suggest which came first, organisational or electoral, and it seems more than probable that they were mutually reinforcing.

The first obvious indication of regress came in the local government elections of May. The SNP's national share of the vote fell to 22 per cent, down 8 per cent on the previous year.

Upon examination of their performance, the Party's Organisation Committee concluded <sup>(17)</sup> that there were four main reasons for the setback: too much detailed policy, and not enough emphasis on the basic aim of independence; not enough canvassing; a bad national image; and, the overall quality of the Party's candidates was poor.

Whilst the first two seem highly impressionistic, and may reflect personal bias, the fourth reason may have some merit: the expansion of the SNP in the late 1960s led to many people joining who were without much political experience. I.S. McLean <sup>(18)</sup> outlines a study undertaken at the University of Strathclyde in 1968 of 81 SNP candidates standing in the local elections of that year. This found that 83 per cent had joined the Party within the preceding five years, 38 per cent had

joined sometime in the previous twelve months. Only 13.5 per cent had ever been in one of the other parties, and of these the vast majority were non-activists in those parties.

Political inexperience and the sheer numbers standing, led to a lack of direction and coordination (evidence here of peripheral anarchy?). The end result appears to have damaged the credibility of the SNP, a view endorsed by Brand (19).

Another election set-back occurred in Glasgow, Gorbals, in October 1969. The SNP had established a committee to coordinate the campaign as early as June. This was dominated by a majority of notables, and was typical of the approach taken by the leadership to such elections. No question here of a management role for activists, that is to say, the activists merely carried out the programme and direction of the Committee. The latter's members were: Dr. Robert McIntyre (Party President), Winifred Ewing<sup>M.P.</sup>, David Rollo (past Party Treasurer), William Wolfe (Senior Vice-President), Alex Ewing, a cartoonist, and Gordon Baird.

The candidate was a Glasgow councillor, Tom Brady. He was a Roman Catholic, and this was not a coincidence in a constituency with a large Catholic vote. The SNP had a history of difficulties in attracting Catholic voters, although the exact reason(s) have never fully been explained.

In the end the SNP achieved a disappointing 26 per cent of the vote. This occurred despite the fact that the Party claimed to have had five times the number of canvassers of each of the other parties (20).

Also an opinion poll was undertaken by the Party's Research Department <sup>(21)</sup>, and no less than five leaflets (one of which dealt with the local issue of rat infestation) were distributed during the course of the campaign.

In other words this was a well-fought and coordinated campaign. Yet the SNP did not do well. This would seem to suggest that the SNP was in trouble nationally. There is other evidence which confirms this view.

Two further electoral failures followed upon the Gorbals' result. The Party managed to achieve only 20 per cent of the poll at a by-election held in South Ayrshire in 1970 and in the May local elections of the same year the SNP's share of the national vote was a mere 12.6 per cent <sup>(22)</sup>. It was against this extremely disappointing background that the Party entered the 1970 General Election.

Despite almost trebling the number of candidates as compared to 1966, 65 as compared to 23, the SNP managed to increase its share of the vote by only 6.5 per cent; from 5 per cent to 11.4 per cent (the overall vote rose from 128,474 to 306,802). And although a seat was gained in the Western Isles, Hamilton was lost <sup>(23)</sup>.

The 1970 Election might in retrospect be seen as a partial recovery after the reverses of 1969; compared to the 1966 General Election the Party had, after all, increased its share of the vote, and at least it did retain a presence in Parliament.

Actual organisational decline continued for another year or so with both finances and membership falling off. But by the end of

1971 the situation had begun to stabilise. We shall return to these developments in the next chapter. In the meantime we shall seek to analyse the internal power structure of the SNP for the period just looked at.

#### The Internal Power Structure, 1963 to 1970

This period was the most organisationally climactic in the entire history of the SNP. The advance from political inconsequence to political significance was so fast, we contend, it encouraged and/or led to the leadership in a direction of oligarchy. The seven years or so separating the SNP from its position in the wings of politics to centre-stage, also demarcated the Party of the 1950s from the centralised machine of the mid to late 1960s.

However, many within the SNP's leadership were still ideologically attached to a concept of the Party as a decentralised organisation, which is suggestive of the fact that circumstances drove the Party towards centralism against the predispositions of some of its leaders who had a tradition of belief in the value of membership participation. Dr. James Lees was one of the best examples of this approach among the leadership group. Yet one can also detect the ambivalent attitude towards centralised command in the observations made by William Wolfe, upon returning from a Convention of Welsh, Scottish and Breton nationalist students in March 1965:

Effective political leadership cannot be trammelled with having to consult too many people before taking action, yet elected representatives cannot be given an unrestricted free hand without obligations to consult others. (24)

As we argue in our hypothesis, Wolfe was finding that the demands

of organisation were sufficient to push the Party towards centripetalism; they had to adjust or face organisational anarchy.

What Wolfe was discovering as an individual was typical of the leadership as a whole. On this theme Gordon Wilson observed that organisational alterations to coordinate Party activities were inevitable as new members joined in the early 1960s:

Some other changes would have taken place. They would have been created by the requirements of changing activity. As the Party continued to grow then the institutions would have been forced to change. If they hadn't been changed they would break-down and then would have to be reconstituted. (25)

Even in 1963 the demands of central leadership, and the need to assert control over a growing Party were illustrated in a dispute between Dundee West constituency and Headquarters. The constituency was on the lookout for a candidate for a forthcoming parliamentary by-election to be held in November 1963. Headquarters suggested that Dr. James Lees should be the candidate. However, Dundee rejected him on the grounds that he was soft on the central issue of 'independence'. The Party Chairman informed the constituency that the NEC would not impose a candidate on them against their wishes. In the end that is exactly what happened, and Lees fought the by-election for the SNP.

This was not sheer autocracy, but rather indicative of a growing sense of the need to assert command among the leaders. This gave rise to Donaldson's Memo on Organisation (which we describe in the last chapter) and the subsequent Wilson Report.

The specialisation which came in the wake of the Report encouraged the growth of a distinct hierarchy, a usual end-product of organisational expansion. The leadership soon recognised the net benefits of

organisational expertise and specialism. And, as the Party grew so the need for even more hierarchical division of labour emerged. Thus in March 1966 National Council was told by the Party Chairman <sup>(26)</sup> that a proposal would soon be placed before the forthcoming Party Conference to increase the number of Vice-Chairmen to four. This increasing bureaucratic division of labour is a common feature of expanding organisations.

If the logic of circumstances was driving the leadership towards even more centralisation, then as we have just seen it was not a whole-hearted commitment on the part of the NEC. We have already looked at some of Wolfe's reservations. Yet even Gordon Wilson, who initiated many of the changes which led to this increasing centralisation, had reservations on occasions about the unrestricted use of power by the Executive. His concern can be seen in a dispute between himself and Douglas Drysdale. The latter wanted an even firmer grip on the Party's operations with more central control. Thus in a memo to the NEC on the subject of 'Reorganisation; written at the end of 1965, Drysdale argued <sup>(27)</sup> that National Council was:

virtually the embryonic Parliament of Scotland and must be in command of the conducting of its own affairs and, except under the most unusual circumstances, completely under the control of the Executive, just in the same way as Parliament is under the control of the Cabinet.

He went on:

Matters must not be chucked out of the Executive to National Council because they are awkward and difficult to solve and under almost no circumstances should the Council be placed in the position where it can censure the Executive. This could well have happened at the last Council.

(The last point was a reference to the National Council of December 1965, when attempts were made to get Major F.A.C. Boothby and Oliver

Brown readmitted to the Party after years of expulsion. The Chairman, A. Donaldson, opposed this move, and recommended that the expulsion stand. This view was endorsed. In fact, it was overwhelmingly carried).

Drysdale's designs went even further. He insisted that the NEC should organise itself so that it dealt completely with problems presented to it. Moreover, it should do so in a way that precluded the possibility of these being overturned by Council.

However, Drysdale's views were quickly opposed by Wilson. In a memo to Drysdale <sup>(28)</sup> he argued along the following lines:

Why should the Council not criticise or censure the Executive? ... I prefer to have the safeguard of the right to fight wrong decisions all the way to Conference. Cabinet responsibility is an English Constitutional doctrine for which I for one have very little sympathy.

Wilson thought that National Council was dull because committee conveners worked too slowly. Moreover, he considered that Drysdale chose conveners who involved him in public wrangles. (Note Wilson's apparent concern to have conveners who would not argue with the leaders publically). He did, however, agree with a suggestion from Drysdale regarding the need for senior office-bearers to meet informally more often:

Needless to say these should not trespass on the role of the Executive. Nor (sic) lead to the elitism which has caused so much trouble in England and Plaid Cymru. (29)

It is of some interest to note that even in the midst of his defence of democracy and protestations about centralisation, Wilson still was not suggesting that the Council replace the legislative functions of the Executive. On the contrary it should criticise and/or censure the NEC (which it never did). Finally, note that he is concerned not to usurp the role of the Executive, with no mention of

Council, this despite the fact that the formal custodian of legislative power, between Conferences, was National Council, not NEC (see Appendix).

However, the force of Drysdale's arguments regarding the weight of business and the need to expedite decision-making seems to have borne in on the NEC. In the Chairman's Report to Council <sup>(30)</sup> a few months after the exchange between Wilson and Drysdale, Donaldson said that:

the Executive will require to take further steps to bring its business into manageable compass and this, it would seem, must involve delegation of its ordinary administrative functions to the National Office bearers, individually or as a sub-committee.

Again and again one finds organisational realities importuning themselves upon the Party leadership. This management specialisation is a typical feature of the trend towards a dominant organisational form in which hierarchy and power centralisation are typical.

According to one writer, Herbert Kaufman <sup>(31)</sup>, organisational upheaval does tend to lead to centralisation of power. Moreover, subsequent periods of tranquility tend to diffuse it. The only time in recent history in which the SNP could be said to have enjoyed a period of prolonged tranquility - though not by choice - was in the 1950s. We have already illustrated what this meant in power terms. But in the 1960s the Party was undergoing rapid growth and change. Therefore the organisational response was entirely predictable.

Time and again, throughout the period 1963 to 1970, the SNP's leadership was forced to readjust itself, even abandon centrally held tenets, as it confronted management realities.



The four Executive Vice-Chairmen were elected at the June 1966 meeting of National Council <sup>(32)</sup>. Douglas Drysdale, Dr. James Lees, John Gair and James Braid, were the successful candidates out of the nine that stood. But whilst Council elected them, it left to the discretion of the NEC the right to divide up the functions between the new Vice-Chairmen.

The latter began their informal meetings towards the end of the year (though Braid and Lees were not enthusiastic about the idea).

The organisational momentum which was carrying the SNP towards even more specialisation and centralisation continued. In the Chairman's Report to Council <sup>(33)</sup> in February 1967, Donaldson reported on the need to streamline the administration due to the expansion of the Party:

The steps which we have taken so far are in the direction of making the various sub-committees more responsible within the terms of their remit. Written minutes of their discussions are now distributed with the Executive agendas but are discussed only where new decisions require to be taken or where a member of the Executive believes it necessary to challenge or have elaborated the proceedings of the sub-committees.

This represented an advance on the existing situation where any matter could be discussed at the NEC meetings regardless of sub-committee discussions. Thus even the Executive committee was becoming more remote from the actual taking of certain decisions concerning the life of the Party. Even someone like Dr. James Lees, who was committed to a thorough-going democracy, noted the needs of efficient administration. In a memo to the NEC, written in early 1967 <sup>(34)</sup>, he reflected on the needs of Party organisation:

We are now telling one another that the Party Organisation must "professionalise". By this is meant "become more efficient". The essence of professionalism is specialisation.

He goes on to outline the current organisational structure of the SNP. Next he writes of the need for an Electoral Planning Committee which would be in charge of all by-elections, as well as the planning for the next General Election. Discussing the need for other committees as well, he notes:

These committees will have to be interlocked and overlapped, many of us will be on the National Executive Committee. (35)

Lees was very prescient when he noted the likelihood of overlapping committees (we shall return to this theme in a later chapter). He was merely coming to terms with organisational realities, specifically to the demands of professionalism and leadership.

By July 1967 <sup>(36)</sup> it was recognised that the Executive Vice-Chairmen should be meeting not less than once a month, and they were given full responsibility for the submission of minutes to the NEC, all routine administration, coordination of Party activity and Party discipline. Moreover, in cases of emergency (to be determined by the Chairman or National Secretary), the Vice-Chairman could act on behalf of the NEC. Finally, they were also to be given the duty of preparing and editing all constitutional amendments on behalf of the NEC.

This growing centralisation led to a certain disquiet among sections of the membership. This is not surprising since not all of the members could not have been expected to rest content whilst their role was relegated to that of an utterly supportive one. This sense of unease led to a move which attempted to make the NEC more representative of the rank-and-file.

At the 1967 Annual Conference it was decided <sup>(37)</sup> to enlarge the NEC so that it was composed of 100 members drawn territorially from across Scotland. This was certainly a massive reassertion of Party democracy and is testimony to the belief that the SNP had become too dominated by the leadership in the 1960s.

A committee was set up by the NEC with the remit of finding the best mechanism for instituting Council's directive and enlarging the NEC. The committee was composed of Wolfe, Wilson and Archie Young. In a memo written by Young to the NEC, he noted that a number of:

the present members of the Executive feel that the proposal for the 100 strong executive is a grave error in the post-Hamilton era ...  
The proposed 100 strong executive simply will not be an executive: it will be more like National Council as it was a few years ago and of similar efficiency. (38)

Before the year was out doubts as to the efficiency of the proposed body gave rise to yet another report, this time from Wolfe and Wilson <sup>(39)</sup>. After having implemented some proposals for changing the NEC, they decided that it was time to reverse the alterations. Hence the second report. This latter document stated that:

The size of the new Executive, the frequency of its meetings and the tremendous volume of political and administrative work now borne with difficulty by the smaller Executive Committee all point to the need for a rational reappraisal and redistribution of Executive work ...  
We have, therefore, decided to recommend that the new Executive be treated as a representative and consultative assembly responsible for policy work, that it be termed the National Executive Assembly ... and that there also be a National Executive Committee responsible for administration, finance, organisation and immediate work rising between meetings of the National Executive Assembly.

First of all the Council's intention to democratise the NEC had been completely ignored. Secondly, the 'Assembly' was limited to the discussion of policy, not organisational, questions. Surely here is

further evidence of what the leadership considered to be the most crucial area of Party life. Finally, the Assembly could recommend policies to Conference or Council (National Council was to continue to meet quarterly. It continued to receive reports from the office-bearers, but increasingly its time would be taken up in debating, accepting or rejecting, the policy matters sent to it by the new Assembly, or with 'policy' resolutions from branches or C.A.s). But it had no formal powers. That is, it could not pass policy, only debate it <sup>(40)</sup>. That the leadership saw the Assembly as a way of protecting their power in matters of management, and that the Assembly was little more than a convenience for them, may be ascertained from the following revelation from Gordon Wilson:

We had to find some kind of way of protecting the NEC, so we created the National Executive Assembly. The aim of that (the Assembly) was not really to deal with policies, but to deal with others, to steer away some of the regionalist pressure. That decision was taken by a small sub-committee meeting in my house. (41)

It is difficult to envisage a clearer declaration of elite power broking, or evidence that in crucial areas of Party life a relatively small group of individuals were controlling the Party.

The full-time paid bureaucracy was increased in size during 1968, and even in this one sees the power of the central leadership.

William Wolfe had long been lobbying for a full-time Research Officer. During the course of 1968 the NEC decided to appoint one. To begin with Wolfe took on the task, found it too much, and thereafter Donald Bain took over on a full-time basis.

The next development in the growth of bureaucracy came with the appointment of the three regional organisers we mentioned in the first

section of this chapter. The hiring of these people was not without significance for Party power.

The organiser for the North East of Scotland had his appointment opposed by the Chairman of Moray and Nairn, and South Angus constituencies, as well as the senior office-bearers of North and South Aberdeen. Thus there was a considerable degree of opposition from within the very constituencies the gentleman was supposed to service. Yet despite this antipathy the NEC decided that it could not be seen to reverse a decision in the face of popular disquiet, and the appointment was confirmed!

During the course of the 1960s there was a continuing increase in the amount of power exercised by the centre. Again and again we have seen evidence of the willingness of the leadership to use it, sometimes surreptitiously, as in the creation of the Assembly. On other occasions more openly, as in the confirmation of the organiser for the north-east of Scotland. But whatever the circumstances applying at a moment in time, the overall direction taken was towards centralisation. The pressures engendered by change and growth led, almost inevitably, to increased leadership power.

In the final section we shall explore the theoretical background to change in organisations, and discover that occurred within the SNP during the 1960s was not at all surprising.

#### Intra-Organisational Change

Although pressures were bearing in on the Party in the early 1960s,

the changes which came in their wake had to be instituted by individuals acting in response to these pressures.

One writer, Herbert Kaufman, lists <sup>(42)</sup> several ways change can be implemented in practical terms: (1) Importing Resources from other organisations; (2) Concentrating Resources in one area rather than another, this, of course, is a classic dilemma; (3) Avoid Sunk Costs, this can occur if resources are limited by being committed to other areas. These 'sunk costs', therefore, inhibit, freedom of action; (4) Lifting Official Constraints, the most limiting factor to change are the rules and regulations which govern action and behaviour. One important way in which to by-pass systematic obstacles to change is, of course, to (5) Reorganise. This involves the redistribution of influence and the emphasis of different values. This serves to break-down old established lines of access and conduct. Reorganisation, then, is a way in which the proponents of change:

who run up against the deep-rooted, customary modes of behaviour can overcome them. (43)

Kaufman also notes:

After an organisation has been changed even a little, it begins to freeze into its new pattern almost at once ... All the tendencies which inhibited change in the prior configuration promptly make themselves felt in the new one. (44)

We shall discuss these ideas further below. However, it is worth bearing in mind that only one of the change factors listed could be reasonably applied to the SNP of the period: reorganisation. In the meantime let us concentrate on what elements can prevent change. What is it that encourages stasis? Once again we can turn to Kaufman for guidance. At the outset there is the momentum of conservatism: if someone wants to institute some new method of behaving within the organisation then they will have to demonstrate the necessity of it.

Why gamble with the unknown? Certain people will resist change if they derive benefits, of one kind or another, from the old order. Others may believe that the methods may lead to an erosion of standards, etc.

Obstacles such as these, Kaufman refers to as 'Mental Blinders'. By their very nature they tend to operate internally, that is, within the organisation. But there are also external obstacles such as 'Resource Limitation':

Some organisations would eagerly change their structure and behaviour but for the fact that change of this kind demands resources they are unable to mobilise. (45)

Of the categories which stimulate and restrict change, there are really only two which are of direct relevance to the experience of the SNP in the 1960s.

The first, and most obvious, is the internal stimulant referred to as Reorganisation. This was precisely the course of action undertaken in the Wilson Report. When it became manifestly obvious that the existing parameters for Executive action were too narrow they were expanded so as to allow the leadership greater freedom of manoeuvre. This served to redistribute influence in the direction of the NEC, and, as the Kaufman quote given above argues, thereafter the new realities quickly took over to prevent reversion to the old pattern.

However, a major obstacle, as we saw in the chapter on Finance, was Resource Limitation. The lack of an adequate income was a major factor in preventing the SNP, in the early 1960s, from undertaking planned organisational growth. Now, whilst it is true to say that the Wilson Report preceded the improvements in the National Party's finances, it was ultimately concerned with internal changes and how

these could be achieved. The alteration in the SNP's financial position liberated the Party externally, and thereby not only encouraged, but was, in large part, responsible for system growth.

Growth and change within the organisation usually embrace both internal and external elements if they are to be successful. Yet it has been the former which we have been dealing with thus far (we shall be examining the 'external' elements, primarily the SNP's approach to campaigning, later in the thesis). The changes which the Wilson Report and the other alterations in the management structure of the Party set in train were essential to the achievement of the organisational self-realisation of the Party. Without them it is likely that the SNP could not have properly adapted to a growth in membership.

But change itself might not be in the direction desired by its formulators; if so, then it is not successful change, and it is likely it will not achieve its major goals. There is, then, a difference between Organisational Change and Planned Organisational Change. The latter can be defined as:

any planned program that results in significant alterations of the behaviour of individuals or groups within the organisation in a direction desired by management. Typically, planned organisational change programs and directed towards increasing some element of organisational effectiveness. (46)

In our judgement, by this definition, the Wilson Report, and the subsequent organisational alterations, can be viewed as being successful. Certainly, the SNP, post-1963, can be said to have been organisationally effective as measured by growth and electoral performance. On top of this, since the role of the members in decision-making declined, there was also the effect of behaviour pattern alteration albeit on a minor level.



These changes towards organisational self-realisation can be termed an Intervention Strategy <sup>(47)</sup> along a Structural Approach Continuum, that is, the introduction of change via 'the manipulation of organisation structural elements ...',<sup>(48)</sup> This would include the modification of organisational rules and procedures (this is the functional equivalent of Kaufman's Reorganisation).

The Wilson Report etc., can be collectively termed Structural Modifications since they involved the re-definition of organisational relationships. According to Short <sup>(49)</sup> tactics such as centralisation or decentralisation, altering spans of control, relocating decision-making authority and communication channels, occur when current structural arrangements within the organisation are detrimental to goal achievement. In other words there is no alternative if the organisation is to prosper.

The 'intervention strategy' used by the SNP management of the 1960s was structural, it did not involve the removal of personnel, the introduction of new technology or even - to any great extent - significant changes in the human relations element. The strategy implicitly recognised that the SNP could not effectively change the nature of the membership, even if it wished to do so, that it would make no difference to the organisational goal if new technologies were introduced, and that therefore what was required were alterations in hierarchical relationships, that is, structural modification.

Finally, was this 'intervention strategy' introduced democratically or not? Did the membership have an important role to play in the structural alterations?

Short <sup>(50)</sup> believes that authority usage can be conceptualised along a power distribution continuum. On one end there is a unilateral authority usage, this amounts to a one-way announcement of change, for example, the modification of organisational structure. At the other end of the continuum there are 'delegated power methods which include such tactics as data presentation, and discussion and sensitivity training <sup>(51)</sup>. In the middle of the continuum one finds 'shared power methods' which utilise group decisions.

The SNP's leadership had to have, in most cases, the endorsement of the delegates (note, not the entire membership) for its decisions. But, in fact, there was a pronounced tendency to simply endorse the vast bulk of leadership inspired structural modifications. Therefore, on the authority continuum whilst not at the 'unilateral' end, neither could it be said that the decision-making methods allow us to place the SNP in the middle. Rather it would seem that one must place the SNP mid-way between application of unilateral authority and shared power.

The SNP of the 1960s grew at an astonishing rate. In the course of this growth participatory ideals had to be sacrificed as the forces of change bore in on a system still geared to the easy-going methods of the 1950s when the SNP still languished in obscurity. The price to be paid for this efficiency, however, was an ever increasing centralisation of administrative power.

1. Minutes of the National Council, December 1966, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
2. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975).
3. Ibid., p.126.
4. Thomson was not to become a force in organisation or the leadership of the Party. Especially if one compares him to someone of the importance of Ian Macdonald.
5. Minutes of the NEC, April 1966, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
6. Ibid
7. 1966 General Election Material (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
8. Minutes of the NEC, January 1967, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
9. Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 261
10. Minutes of the NEC, June 1967, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
11. Scots Independent, 13/5/67.
12. Report on the State of Constituency Associations, August 1967, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished). The names of the constituencies are not specified.
13. Kellas, op.cit., p.125.
14. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Accession (Acc) 6038, Box No. 6, Memo from Dr. James Lees to NEC, 31/4/68.
15. Kellas, op.cit., p.125.
16. Minutes of the Organisation Committee, October 1968, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
17. Minutes of the Organisation Committee, August 1969, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
18. Ian S. McLean, Scottish Nationalism: Its Growth and Development with Particular Reference to the Period Since 1961, B. Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1969.
19. Ibid, p. 263
20. Minutes of the NEC, October 1969, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
21. Minutes of the NEC, November 1969, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).  
The survey found that political sympathies did not change greatly in the final weeks of the campaign. At most the 'tremendous' effort during the final stages increased the Party's vote by only 5 per cent. It also discovered that the SNP appealed less

to women than men, and not surprisingly, the Party continued to have trouble with the Catholic vote.

22. Kellas, op.cit., p.125.
23. Ibid., pp. 125-126.
24. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Memo to Arthur Donaldson, March 1965.
25. Gordon Wilson, Interview with the author, 19/3/81.
26. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Minutes of the National Council, March 1966.
27. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Memo to the NEC from D. Drysdale, 10/12/65.
28. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Memo from G. Wilson to D. Drysdale, 15/12/65.
29. Ibid.
30. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 3, Minutes of the National Council, March 1966.
31. Herbert Kaufman, The Limits of Organisational Change, (Alabama, The University of Alabama Press), pp. 109-110.
32. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 4, Minutes of the National Council, June 1966.
33. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 5, Minutes of the National Council, February 1967.
34. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 5, Memo from Dr. J. Lees to NEC, April 1967.
35. Ibid
36. Minutes of the NEC, July 1967, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
37. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 5, Report of the 1967 Annual Conference,
38. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 6, Memo from A. Young to NEC, November 1967.
39. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 6, Report on Executive Structure, December 1967.
40. It was composed of two delegates from each constituency, plus the prospective parliamentary candidate. It was to meet at least twice a year.
41. Wilson (interview) op.cit., 19/3/81.
42. Kaufman, op.cit., p.53.

43. Ibid., p.56.
44. Ibid., p.68.
45. Ibid., p.23.
46. Larry E. Short, Planned Organisational Change, in Organisational Behaviour: Readings and Cases, Theodore H. Herbert (ed), (New York, Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1970) p.348.
47. Ibid., p.352.
48. Ibid., p.354.
49. Ibid., p.356.
50. Ibid., p.350.
51. Ibid., p.350.

## Chapter Seven

### Organisational Growth and Party Power, 1970-1974

This chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first will continue from our departure point in the previous chapter, that is, the growth of Party organisation between 1970 and October 1974, looking at this growth both historically and in power terms. The second section will be a case study of the most famous campaign ever fought by the SNP, and arguably, the most influential ever launched by a Scottish political party. The 'Scotland's Oil' campaign. We chose this particular 'crusade' because it is demonstrative of both the principal innovation source of the Party, and the campaigning zeal and skill of the Nationalists in the early 1970s.

### Organisational Growth and Internal Power, 1970-1974

The four years between 1970 and 1974 were even more spectacular for SNP than the preceding seven years: three General Elections occurred, and the Party's parliamentary representation grew from one to eleven: a further, and important, by-election victory was achieved in what had hitherto been a barren field for the SNP, Glasgow Govan. And in organisational terms, new and younger faces were introduced into the leadership. On the negative side, membership declined, and would never again reach the sort of levels enjoyed in the 1960s.

1970 was the first full year of the Chairmanship of William Wolfe. He had been elected in preference to Arthur Donaldson, at

the Annual Conference in 1969. As Wolfe indicates in his political biography <sup>(1)</sup>, there was no lobbying or even serious debate, and even after losing, Donaldson continued to serve on the National Executive Committee.

Wolfe's attitude to the question of leadership style appears to have been always ambivalent (see last chapter). He was pulled towards the need for central control and direction, but philosophically he favoured an important role for the membership in decision-taking. This dualism can be detected in the Chairman's Report to National Council at the end of 1971 <sup>(2)</sup>. In the Report he deals with the question of 'leadership'. In it he reveals that the nature of leadership at the national level had, not unnaturally, been on his mind for some time, Therefore, he had submitted proposals to a Party Committee on the Constitution, dealing with the subject. He had no doubts that the members wanted 'vigorous leadership' at the national level. However, in his view, this had often been difficult because the elected leadership was sometimes subject to control (he gave no examples). Whilst claiming to have no quarrel with the concept of control, he does, nevertheless conceive that there were types of control which could not have worked in the context of the SNP: first, the 'military model,' which was typified by the unquestioned authority of the leaders by the led; secondly, the 'business model.' In this the NEC operated as a board of management but was too big to exercise effective control. Moreover, in an efficient business organisation, people with executive responsibility have to carry it out or face exposure as incompetents. In Wolfe's view such a paradigm did not always operate within the SNP.

But, democratic motives notwithstanding, he still considered leadership vital and attacked the existing set-up on two counts: the NEC was too large to be effective (interesting that even this rather small body was considered too large), and there was an insufficiency of full-time officials. He was leading up to an appeal for a full-scale bureaucratisation of the Party in the name of efficiency, which was, in many ways, the logical outcome of the pattern of the Party's evolution since the Wilson Report:

The administration of all departments of the Party should be in the hands of full-time officials if the Party can afford it. This does not mean that there need not be appointed committees and conveners, or, in some cases, perhaps a convener alone to which or to whom the full-time staff member is responsible. I believe that it would be preferable to have such appointments made by the NEC, rather than by Conference, on the recommendation of the Chairman, possibly after prior consultation with office-bearers; such appointments being reported for approval at the first opportunity by National Council.

Just over two years after his succession to the Chairmanship, Wolfe was assuming a mantle, albeit reluctantly, which Robert Michels forecast, party leaders were driven to wear:

Like every centralising system, bureaucracy finds its justification in the fact that a certain administrative unity is essential to the rapid and efficient conduct of affairs. (4)

The more Wolfe was confronted by the tasks and demands of leadership, the more it seemed he came to believe in the inefficiency of the existing system; this despite the creation, in earlier years, of executive responsibility through the Vice-Chairmen. Later in the Report he advocated a reduction in the size of the NEC. On top of this he suggested the abolition of the posts of the National Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Vice-Chairmen, and their replacement by full-time staff. He concluded with an appeal for a full-time Chairman:

My experience as Chairman has strengthened my belief in that need (that is, for a full-time Chairman) ...



The calls for decision-making and leadership are now so consistent, so pressing that the need for the Chairman to spend time trying to earn a living means that self-government is probably being delayed ...

He lamented that he could not give more time to Party business (he was spending over twenty hours per week as it was), and suggested a salary and expense sheet equal to that of an M.P. would be sufficient for the task. He went on:

Streamlining the NEC and giving more responsibility to the NEC and the Chairman in making appointments to some of the key posts in the team would certainly help to provide more effective leadership, but I believe that a further logical step towards being a more effective political movement would be to have a full-time Chairman. (5)

These recommendations were not pursued further, but they are a striking piece of evidence in support of our view that the SNP had grown into an organisation where demands for efficiency and good business management were of paramount importance. It is virtually inconceivable that the Chairman of the Party in 1962 could have recommended to Council that it abolish the National Secretary and Treasurer's posts, and indeed half of the NEC, only to be replaced by a thorough-going bureaucracy. It would seem that as much as with Wilson and Donaldson, Wolfe's exposure to the exigencies of leadership led him to put a premium on efficiency, a leitmotiv of bureaucratisation:

In order to increase the organisation's efficiency, the mandator usually appoints an administrative cadre, i.e., an executive which is entrusted with the responsibility of working for the goals and interests of the mandator. (6)

The essential thing to bear in mind is that the organisation, in other words the membership as a whole, did not resist the leadership as the latter's power increased. Despite this, it could not be said that the membership lost their commitment to the prevailing myth of the Party: openness of decision-making with full-scale participation

in the formulation and implementation of decisions. In other words, the members, through their delegates, formed an executive-legislative forum. The actual loss of this function was caused through a series of compromises beginning, most obviously with the Wilson Report, although the appointment of Ian Macdonald as a full-time official might be also said to have been the start of a sequence of concessions made in the name of efficiency. With each succeeding step a process of erosion was under way, although the presumptions about Party democracy remained:

When the power to give orders in the organisation is transferred to the administrative system, the mandator loses the possibility of exerting direct, continuous control over the organisation. (7)

This was precisely the occurrence within the SNP. Upon delegation the administrative system (8) does not operate as a pliant instrument under the control of the members who have bestowed power. On the contrary, it may pursue lines of action which suit its purposes rather than those of the mandator. Moreover, unless there is continuous control, that is, constant monitoring and virtually every decisions of the administration examined, then the administration gradually strengthens its position until it becomes the organisation's ruling group, the holder of power - at least in the administrative context.

We saw previously how in the 1960s the Party came to be dominated by the Executive's concern for administrative efficiency. This pattern is repeated at the beginning of the 1970s when Wolfe was concerned to transform the Party machine into one which was dominated by 'full-time' officials - again in the cause of efficiency (evidently he believed that the amount of time given over to Party tasks by the Executive members was inadequate).

This concentration of power at the apex was being duplicated at a more humble level of the Party, the branch. In a report by the National Organiser [redacted] to the National Organisation Committee in mid-1970 <sup>(9)</sup>, he deals with the subject of branch executives. In many cases these had all but eliminated participation in branch decision-making by ordinary members. Instead executive meetings were being substituted for full branch gatherings. Moreover, these executives tended to attract, amongst others:

the dogmatic and the power hungry with the result that some committees have come to regard themselves as masters of, rather than servants to the branches ...

The National Organiser, John McAteer, did not quantify the number of branches involved, but we can take it (since he saw fit to raise the matter at a national committee) that the practice must have been fairly widespread.

However, the period between 1970 to 1974 was not as dramatic in terms of organisational growth, or power concentration, as in the years between 1963 to 1969. The drama was restricted to the electoral arena, and organisational developments tended to be about consolidation. It was rather the oil campaign which best typifies power and organisational abilities of the centre during this four-year period, and once again it was Gordon Wilson who initiated, and largely directed, the whole operation.

Before we examine the campaign in detail we shall delineate the other aspects of organisational progress between 1970 and 1974.

The period between 1970 and 1972 was unspectacular - at least by the standards of the 1960s. Rather it was dominated by attempts to halt the membership decline and the overall organisational malaise.

1972 itself was the year in which the Party committed itself to one of the most adventurous and innovative campaigns in post-war Scottish politics. There is little doubt that this stimulated a great deal of activity within the Party and in that sense alone justified the importance attached to it by activists.

Certainly by the end of 1972 membership had begun to rise once again - albeit from an extremely low level. In 1970 membership was approximately 30,000. By the middle of 1972 it had fallen to 20,000 (as measured by the sale of membership cards).

In a memo to the NEC <sup>(10)</sup> in late 1972, Wolfe lists three points which Gordon Wilson, in an earlier letter to Wolfe, thought helped to explain the decline in the SNP's organisational fortunes: (1) the irresponsible behaviour of councillors, who involved the Party in damaging disputes (the latter were unspecified); (2) too much attention was focused on policy questions, with inadequate heed being given to maintaining and re-establishing the Nationalists' base (there is no evidence to support this contention); (3) there were too few activists to maintain the momentum of organisational development. (This latter one, of course, begs the question; why were there so few activists?)

Nevertheless, by the end of 1972, there were signs of growth. Since the beginning of the membership drive (see next section), launched in October 1972, 200,000 business reply cards had been sold to the branches. Moreover, in the first ten weeks of the campaign 1,400 replies had been received by Headquarters alone <sup>(11)</sup> (the 'oil campaign' was officially inaugurated at the National Council of

September 1972). Another indication of the increased activity of the Party was that the sale of membership cards for 1972 was running at twice the rate for 1971.

Throughout 1973 the SNP's recovery became manifestly apparent. The NEC minutes of May 1973 <sup>(12)</sup> record that the SNP's own estimates of the Party's performance in the local elections of May 1973, together with a comparison for 1972, were as follows:

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>
National %	14	21
Cities %	9	13.8
Non-Cities %	25	32.7

Whilst the bulk of branch, constituency and national Party effort in 1973 was directed towards the 'oil campaign', there were other organisational distractions in the shape of three by-elections. The first such contest occurred in the Dundee-East constituency in March 1973.

Gordon Wilson was the candidate and he took 30.2 per cent of the vote, coming within 1,141 votes of winning the seat <sup>(13)</sup>. The SNP fought a vigorous campaign with a formidable array of manpower, literature and posters. For example, the average number of workers attending during weekdays was 60, rising to over 300 at the weekend. There was a complete canvass of the constituency, a prominent window campaign, a 60-car cavalcade, and on polling day there were over 300 workers in the field <sup>(14)</sup>. Moreover, the election was timeous in that it coincided with the national campaign being fought on the issue

of 'Scotland's Oil'.

The Govan and North Edinburgh by-elections were held on the same day in November 1973. Whilst North Edinburgh was a superbly organised Constituency, Govan did not even have a constituency association. Nevertheless, the candidate, Margo MacDonald fought an aggressive campaign along class (the SNP would do more for the working class of Govan) and nationalist lines. And despite scanty resources she won the election with 41.9 per cent of the vote <sup>(15)</sup>.

As Govan was an electoral success so was Edinburgh North a disaster <sup>(16)</sup>. The candidate was Party Chairman, William Wolfe, but his stature within the SNP was not enough to convince the electorate to vote SNP. Wolfe achieved a mere 18.9 per cent of the vote (in 1970 the SNP did not contest the seat).

In fairness however, it has to be said that North Edinburgh was considered to be one of the safest Conservative seats in Scotland, and in any case the disappointment was drowned by the euphoria surrounding the Govan victory.

William Miller has argued <sup>(17)</sup> that the North Sea Oil campaign was not a cause of the SNP's electoral successes of 1974. Even so there was a strong feeling within the Party <sup>(18)</sup> that it had a serious part to play in the triumph of that year - although there is little evidence to support this, and an equally crucial role to play in the organisational successes as well.

Following upon the Party's highly successful February 1974 General

Election campaign (see chapter 10), when the SNP won seven parliamentary seats and collected 683,180 votes, or 21.9 per cent of the vote <sup>(19)</sup>, there was a flood of applicants to join the SNP. Ian Macdonald, Vice-Chairman (Organisation) reported to the April 1974 National Council that Headquarters had difficulty in meeting the demand for membership cards, and that two extra secretaries would have to be taken on to assist with the growing demands on the staff.

Hanby believes <sup>(20)</sup> that following upon the February General Election, the SNP was:

devoted to the continuing strengthening of the Party machine at all levels, activity which, as it turned out, seemed to be rather a fortuitous choice from the viewpoint of October 1974.

In October 1974 a massive publicity campaign on oil (see below) was launched, together with an equally impressive leaflet and poster drive.

Hanby gives a quote from John McAteer:

It had been non-stop action since the February election. We assumed that there would be a quick election again this year and we mounted a campaign throughout the constituencies to make sure we were not caught out. <sup>(21)</sup>

Hanby accepts that by October 1974 the SNP had the necessary organisational base to fight effective campaigns. However, it was not the numerically large membership of the late 1960s, but rather a smaller but battle hardened, and expert, body of committed supporters numbering around 60,000.

By 1970 Party power patterns had, to all intents and purposes, become set, with the leadership firmly in the driving seat of the Party machine. William Wolfe's attempts to extend this power through a thoroughgoing bureaucratisation were not followed through. They were never specifically rejected by any forum of the Party. *Mr Wolfe*

does not remember why they were dropped.

Yet there was still recognition that the NEC, or its representatives, must take charge of the ongoing management decisions so that efficiency maximisation could be achieved. Reflecting this reality, in his report to the September 1970 National Council, Wolfe announced as a matter of course that:

With regard to all future by-election campaigns, the National Executive Committee has resolved that it will assume full responsibility. (22)

This was merely a re-statement of the de facto situation. This power had been assumed by the NEC for years. However, it had never been spelt out to the membership, and this decision did not ask for Council's sanction. Rather it boldly asserted that this would occur. This action would appear to have been unconstitutional.

Earlier in the year April 1970 William Wolfe in another report (23) to Council, indicated that, in line with the NEC decision of March, 1970, constituency associations who had not paid their levy for the Gorbals by-election by late February 1970 would be disenfranchised so far as the 1970 Annual Conference was concerned (this was merely a restatement of the existing situation). Eleven associations were so affected, including six from Glasgow. Such suspension, or the threat thereof, from participation at the premier forum (to say nothing of it as a social occasion) of the Party, was not an inconsequential censure. As such it must have acted as a spur to activists to make sure that their constituencies met the prescribed obligations.

The continuing development of Wolfe into a believer in strong leadership (whether he was a forceful practitioner was another matter) can be seen again in late 1971, when he announced to the 1971 National



Council that he had appointed Dr. Robert MacIntyre as the Party Spokesman on Oil. He did this despite the opposition of the Science and Technology Committee (none of whom were of the leadership cadre), which believed this task should have been assigned to a technologist. The NEC endorsed Wolfe's course of action.

This expansion in Executive power was, as we outlined above, virtually an inevitable outgrowth of the need for organisational efficiency in the pursuit of achieving the party's goal. Thus it should not be viewed as surprising or unusual. But what is rather curious was the progression of leadership power to a condition where it could be stated (as opposed to informally understood) as being pre-eminent within the Party.

In a memo <sup>(24)</sup> from William Wolfe to office-bearers and staff in mid-1973, he outlined the responsibilities of the former. The main responsibility for Executive action lay with the Vice-Chairmen and the other office-bearers. In itself this was merely a reaffirmation of the status-quo. However, it is when Wolfe moves on to state the responsibilities of the NEC that he clearly debunks the prevailing constitutional myths.

The NEC was to be responsible for initiating action and approving proposals and plans to be carried out by individuals and committees, and for guiding and directing the Party. Yet according to Para. 15(a) of the Constitution, Council was to Inter-Conference governing body of the Party. <sup>(25)</sup>

Moreover, the NEC was supposed to be dependent upon council for the delegation of its duties and powers <sup>(26)</sup>. Thus the approval of

proposals and the initiation of plans should have rested with Council unless and until it delegated such powers to the NEC.

Despite this, over the years, legislative and executive power (in organisational matters) had been combined in the NEC without former delegation and the delegates to Conference and Council were in the main, restricted to policy debate and questioning the leadership.

In an earlier chapter we highlighted the fact that it was the custom in the 1950s, and early in the 1960s, for NEC minutes to be circulated to delegates to the National Council. This practice ceased in 1964, and by June 1974 a note was sent to all NEC members to the effect that all minutes, agendas and other papers relating to the NEC, discussions at NEC meetings, were confidential. Moreover, members wishing to raise points on the written material circulated prior to the meeting, could only do so by writing to the National Secretary stating their intention to discuss a specific point. The Executive Committee was itself, by now restricted by the bureaucratic growth of the Party; unexpected and/or unanticipated questions by executive members could embarrass office-holders and/or obstruct the efficient flow the NEC's business, consequently such variable conduct had to be minimised in the cause of rational and efficient procedure.

By 1974 the NEC, or more specifically its senior members, had consolidated their power within the Party. This was achieved through a variety of processes, some of which were planned like the Wilson Report, others which evolved through organisational practice, like the writing of the Party's election manifesto in February 1974 by two people (Wolfe and Donald Bain, the Research Officer). There had been

no set rules for this, that is, the Constitution has nothing to say on the matter.

However, both paths to centralisation grew out of the demands placed upon the organisation by its growth and the need to effect efficiency. The pursuit of efficiency will almost invariably overturn the most democratically committed of individuals and organisations: the SNP was no exception.

In the final section of this chapter we shall use the 'oil campaign' as a case study to demonstrate both the innovatory source(s) within the SNP, as well as the nature of power relationships as between leaders and the led.

#### The Oil Campaign: A Case Study in Power and Organisation

We are examining this particular campaign primarily because it is demonstrative of both the organisational capacities of the SNP, and the fact that it was entirely directed and planned by a group within the Party leadership. Moreover, since a great deal of publicity was given, both within the SNP, and externally, one might expect to find a significant input from the membership to this campaign, and in this way it could be viewed as illustrative of the 'openness' and participatory nature of the SNP, so often commented upon by other writers. However, we believe that the evidence refutes this assumption.

As early as August 1971 Douglas Crawford, then Press Officer, reported to the National Executive Committee:

I consider oil to be such an important issue that I did some of my own research here. (27)

Ten days later Gordon Wilson was presenting detailed proposals to the NEC <sup>(28)</sup> for a campaign on the oil issue. Wilson perceived the clear potential of oil to boost the fortunes of the SNP, not only in straight political terms, but also as a factor in strengthening the flagging organisational muscle of the Party:

I reckoned that the emergence of oil was a new factor in Scottish politics, and covered a multitude of dimensions, not just political; economic, psychological and so forth. And the question then was whether the Party would just kick the ball about the park, or whether we would try and build up team-play on it.

The important point about the 'oil campaign' was that it started in nineteen seventy-one, seventy-two, and got the SNP moving along structured lines, and it built up the Party's campaigning capability. The momentum it generated was to the Party's advantage in a General Election. The second thing is ... that the media saw it as an important issue, and it gave us relevance during the General Election campaign.

The campaign included the organisation, via the branches, of local publicity highlighting the value of oil reserves; a sample letter was sent to the branches which in turn was to be forwarded to their local authorities, calling upon the latter to support the SNP - controlled Cumbernauld Town Council's resolution to the Convention of Royal Burghs, regarding the importance of North Sea Oil to the economy of Scotland. This was a consciousness-raising exercise. A notice was to be sent to all the oil companies reminding them that contracts for North Sea Oil might have to be renegotiated after Scotland achieved independence. Donald Stewart M.P., was to introduce a Bill in the House of Commons for the establishment of a Scottish Industrial Development Corporation, and following upon this, a letter was to be sent to all Scottish M.P.s asking them for support for the measure. If they did not, they were to be asked the reasons why. A joint statement was to be released from the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' Joint Shop Stewards (the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' workforce were in the midst of a widely publicised sit-in at this point) and the Association of Scottish

Nationalist Trade Unionists, calling for oil revenues to be used to guarantee the future of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders.

Other aspects of the campaign included the appointment of an 'oil spokesman', and extensive production runs of poster and leaflets on the oil issue. Finally, a poster campaign was to be launched throughout Scotland.

Wilson's extensive range of proposals were accepted in their entirety by the NEC.

Harvie gives March 1973 <sup>(29)</sup> as the launching date for the 'oil campaign'. In fact, campaigning on the issue began, as we have seen, in 1971, and 1973 was simply a continuation of the previous years. Not surprisingly, in view of his previous prominence, once again we find Gordon Wilson playing a vital role in the formulation and organisation of the SNP's 'oil campaign'.

In January 1972 Wilson once again presented plans to the NEC <sup>(30)</sup> which proposed the formation of a committee to generate ideas and coordinate an 'oil campaign'. He also argued that there was a need for a full-scale poster campaign on oil, and reinforced his contention that the local branches should be encouraged to write to their local press on the subject of oil. By February 1972 the National Secretary had reported to the NEC <sup>(31)</sup> that in line with the agreement of the previous year she had written to 37 oil companies, and the Prime Minister, requesting the appointment of a Minister of Industry for Scotland. This proposal was rejected by the Government.

By mid-1972 oil was on the agenda of every NEC meeting. However, so far as we can establish, this attention was due to the efforts of a few people, particularly Gordon Wilson and the Research Officer, Donald Bain. It would seem that, at first, there were still those on the NEC who did not quite appreciate the importance of oil as a political issue.

By June 1972 Wilson had put together an extremely detailed document <sup>(32)</sup> on a Projected Oil Campaign, 1972. This was presented to the NEC (and marked 'Private and Confidential') and it was divided into four sections: Explanatory Notes, Campaign Schedule, Expanded Statement on Literature and Expanded Statement on Posters. It was typically Wilsonian, thorough and detailed. At the outset he observed that this was to be the first shot in the General Election campaign - so specific were the proposals that he even asked NEC's approval to purchase a photo-litho machine for use in the campaign. Each phase was carefully plotted with individual speakers listed and dates given when they should give speeches or write to the press. Demonstrations and literature dispersal were planned; there was even to be a petition sent to the United Nations. The constituencies were to check points within their areas which were most appropriate for posters (this was about as much decentralised decision-making as there was), and a fund was established to pay for this massive effort, its principal source of revenue was a levy on the branches.

By September 1972, 250,000 leaflets had been sold, 'oil press-action packs', had been sent to the branches to be used in the local press, etc., and the first national press conference had been held, with another planned. The NEC minutes of November 1972 <sup>(33)</sup> record

that campaign activity was high everywhere, and that there was a great deal of press coverage; sales of the 'oil' leaflet had climbed to 710,000; 144,000 lapel stickers had also been sold, and there had been 1,356 requests for press action packs.

The sheer momentum of the oil effort was spilling over into other areas. For example, membership had received a considerable boost from all this activity, and by the end of the year 200,000 business reply cards had been sold to the branches since the beginning of October.

Gordon Wilson reported the following formidable array of facts to the March 1973 National Council: as at December 1972, 800,000 leaflets had been produced, and only 13,000 were left; 200 posters had been printed, with only four left; 2,500 Double Crown posters had been run off, with 678 left over; 210,300 lapel stickers along with 2,000 car banners and 2,000 window posters were available <sup>(34)</sup>.

This amazing outpouring of visual propaganda had, not surprisingly, a political spin-off. Wilson reported that a National Opinion Poll survey <sup>(35)</sup> had shown that since the beginning of the campaign, support for the SNP had trebled (this contention may be supported by the SNP's performance at the Dundee East by-election). But, Wilson argued, there was 'still a lot of running to be made on the oil issue - over half the households in Scotland have yet to receive the leaflet "To London with Love"'.

In the same month, April 1973, a second oil action pack was sent to the branches, and a booklet, The Reality of Scotland's Oil, was published and had been sent to all the Scottish local authorities and

other public bodies.

The campaign continued throughout 1973, and in July of that year Wilson brought proposals for Autumn and Spring campaigns before the NEC. These were, once again, highly detailed and elaborate, and followed the pattern established in the first schedule. They also contained proposals for a programme in advance of an expected General Election.

The pre-eminence of Wilson in the 'oil campaign' continued, it was he who coordinated and planned the activities. The branches had a very important role to play in so far as the vast distribution network was based on them. But the great bulk of the ideas, and certainly the drive, came from the top. We could find little evidence that branch delegates, and certainly not the mass membership, played any significant role in devising the campaign, or suggesting new schemes (save for Cumbernauld's Resolution), or publicity ploys. Yet the branches themselves were inundated with material concerning the oil issue. There was, therefore, no more opportune time for a serious input from the rank-and-file. National Councils during this period were presented with a series of reports and recommendations from Wilson, and others on the NEC, yet no Council rejected, suggested or inspired, major alternatives to the leadership's courses of action.

By December 1973 Wilson was well pleased with the turn of events this far. He reported to National Council that:

The Party's oil campaign is beginning to bite. This has been the grudging conclusion of the media in recent weeks. (36)

Even so, he demanded that even more action and effort be forthcoming from the branches, and he listed eight action-points:



1. Seek countrywide distribution of the leaflet "England Expects ... Scotland's Oil" (remarkably standing (sic) the success of To London with Love?, this leaflet has produced a higher percentage of returns).
2. Obtain countrywide identification of Scotland's Oil through use of the new Crown foolscap posters which are in production.
3. Issue to each member with a car, a copy of the car banner.
4. Detail work parties to issue oil stickers to children as they leave school.
5. Take out at branch and constituency level billboard posters using the poster "England Expects ... Scotland's Oil".
6. Use "Scotland's Oil" rubber stamp.
7. Supply support to selective demonstrations outside meetings or conferences where oil is being discussed.
8. Use the action packs for press publicity.

What immediately strikes one about these instructions is their specificity, they left the branches with little or no excuse for lack of action. It might even be said that they assume a staggering lack of imagination on the part of the activists; did branch secretaries really need to be told to stamp envelopes with the rubber stamp provided? But this thoroughness was typical of Wilson the manager, it was direct and detailed, and the members were expected to follow the lead of the centre.

The latter point begs the question: why were the members so sequacious, so amenable to leadership command?

We believe that the answer lies in the same area as that for the acquiescence we discovered over the Alba Pools management. That is, the membership needed some guidance in the early 1970s (just as they did in the mid-1960s) to reverse the downward cycle into which the Party had fallen. Just as in the past the members were dependent

upon the centre for ideas and coordination. In the 1960s financial solvency and membership expansion had been engineered by the leadership group. They had been extremely successful in both respects. The sheer detail of the 'oil campaign', and its relatively instant success, further encouraged belief in the competence of the Party leadership, and thereby made membership cooperation more likely.

The 'oil campaign' was a perfect launching platform for the General Elections of 1974. It greased the wheels of the machine, boosted Party confidence, brought the SNP much needed national (and international) publicity, and put the other parties on the defensive:

No party had any strategy about what could come after oil, but at least the SNP could promise that it could retain the revenue for industrial reconstruction. (37)

Moreover, the campaign also demonstrated, as we have endeavoured to show, the degree to which an issue as potentially complex as oil will almost inevitably have to be handled by a few 'specialists' in directing the efforts of others. We mean this not in the policy sense (though that was complex enough), but rather as a logistical exercise: the planning of the poster campaign, the coordination of demonstrations, the use and type of advertising, and, of course, the slogans themselves. All of this was put together by a few people in Headquarters. As we have found in other areas of Party life the key to success lay in the centralisation of management.

1. William Wolfe, Scotland Lives, (Edinburgh, Reprographia, 1973), p.129.
2. Minutes of the National Council, December 1971, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
3. Ibid.
4. Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1958) p.201.
5. Council Minutes, December 1971, op.cit.
6. Bengt Abrahamsson, Bureaucracy or Participation: The Logic of Organisation, (Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1977) p.23.
7. Ibid., p.23.
8. Abrahamson defines "administrative system" in the following way:  
'By administrative system' I mean those persons who compose the executive group of the organisation, the means of production which they have at their disposal, and their formal and informal inter-relationships which are to a substantial degree, determined by particular rules and norms.' p.26.
9. Minutes of the Organisation Committee, July 1970, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
10. Memo to the NEC from William Wolfe, October 1972 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
11. Minutes of the NEC, December 1972 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
12. Minutes of the NEC, May 1973 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
13. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.125.
14. Minutes of the Electoral Planning Committee, March 1973, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
15. Kellas, op.cit., p.126.
16. Ibid., p.126.
17. William Miller, 'The Connection Between SNP Voting and the Demand for Scottish Self-Government', European Journal for Political Research, (5, 1973, pp. 83-102).
18. A memo from D.G. Smart (a former NEC member) in March 1974, on the February Election had the following to say on the Election:  
'May I venture criticism that the image presented tended to be somewhat materialistic, and in some ways almost selfsh, 'Memo from D.G. Smart, 9/3/74, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished). Another memo, this time unattributed, was sent to the NEC in March 1974, the author noted: 'The Scottish National Party enjoyed wider coverage, both in newspapers and on television, than in any previous election. This was due to the impact made by the SNP's oil campaign', (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).

19. Kellas, op.cit., p.126.
20. Victor Hanby, 'The Renaissance of the Scottish National Party: From Eccentric to Campaigning Crusader', in Louis Maisel (ed), Changing Campaign Techniques: Elections and Values in Contemporary Democracies, (London, Sage Publications, 1976) pp. 217-241.
21. Ibid., p.230, quote from The Guardian, 1/8/74, p.8.
22. Minutes of the National Council, September 1970 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
23. Minutes of the National Council, April 1970, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
24. Memo from William Wolfe to Office-bearers, June 1973 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
25. Constitution and Rules of the Scottish National Party, (Edinburgh, SNP, 1978) p.4.
26. Ibid., p.5.
27. Minutes of the NEC, August 1971, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
28. Minutes of the NEC, August 1971 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
29. Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1977), p.256.
30. Minutes of the NEC, January 1972, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
31. Minutes of the NEC, February 1972, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
32. Minutes of the NEC, June 1972, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
33. Minutes of the NEC, November 1972, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
34. Minutes of the National Council, March 1973, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
35. Ibid.
36. Minutes of the National Council, December 1973, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
37. Harvie, op.cit., pp. 259-260.

## Chapter Eight

### Management Committees and Party Power, 1963-1974

In this chapter we will analyse the composition of the strategic management decision-making committees of the SNP between 1964 and 1974. The committees under scrutiny have been chosen on two main criteria: they were not concerned with the broader questions of policy-making, for example, industrial, agricultural or economic matters, but rather with internal organisational tasks - indeed they were the most important such committees in the Party; the second criterion was, quite simply, that we had access to a significant range of data concerning these committees. We were, therefore, better able to judge the validity of our arguments concerning the stability and critical position of certain leaders during years between 1963 and 1974 (1964 is the starting-point since this was the first year for which we had complete data for the NEC).

#### Some Theoretical Considerations

Our hypothesis is that throughout the period under investigations organisational power became centralised within the SNP. In the preceding chapters we endeavoured to demonstrate how the most critical decisions concerning the internal management of the Party were taken at the apex of the Party pyramid. Since most of these decisions emanated from the committees we are about to investigate, it is obviously important to establish the composition of the latter between 1963 and 1974. If we discover that the same people are constantly reappearing on the same committees, and are also found on the other strategic committees,

then we would have reason to believe that power might well indeed have been highly concentrated. That is to say, taken in concert with other data, given in previous chapters, concerning the formation and implementation of management decisions, the discovery of overlapping and inter-locking committee membership, which was also stable over time, would be vitally important in the understanding of the Party power system.

This, of course, brings us into confrontation with the critique of the elitist model of power. Dahl <sup>(1)</sup> was concerned with how one recognised a ruling group, and he outlined the following definition of it:

(it) is a controlling group less than a majority in size that is not a pure artifact of democratic rules. It is a minority of individuals whose preferences regularly prevail in cases of differences in preferences on key issues. If we are to avoid an infinite regress of explanations, the composition of the ruling elite must be more or less definitely specified. <sup>(2)</sup>

In delineating his approach to the establishment of a ruling elite, Dahl lists several criteria. However, before we come to these a word about the type of decision-making we shall be examining, would now be appropriate.

Hitherto, we have been looking at decisions from the perspective of their functional origin together with the outcome. This is the perspective taken by the pluralists, and is known as the decisional approach (the participatory element is also part of this method). It is through this avenue that we have sought to arrive at an understanding of 'a series of concrete cases' <sup>(3)</sup> which Dahl demands of us.

But there is also a need for at least a look at a variant of

another method known as the positional approach. This examines the presence of certain people on the most important Party committees as defined by the committee's role in the internal management of the Party. Were such people by virtue of their position in the Party, tenure in office and place on important committees, in a powerful position to influence the planning and implementation of certain decisions? It is by examining the structure and continuity of pivotal management committees that we can best achieve an understanding of those people who were most likely to be in a position to form a ruling group within the Party.

We hope, therefore, by the adoption of a positional method to understand better the overall power structure of the SNP, and to reinforce our hypothesis. Therefore, whilst we accept, in large part, Dahl's demand for empirical back-up in establishing claims about elite domination, nonetheless we also believe that there is also a place for the positional approach. After all, even if it is discovered that the most important decisions were being taken, for example, every year by the Executive, this need not mean that the latter constituted an elite. If the membership make-up of the NEC, and its management sub-committees was constantly changing, with new members continually being brought onto the committees, and more established members leaving, then we might conclude that such membership fluidity was indicative of a highly open structure. Such turnover is hardly the basis from which elites are made.

This brings us back to Dahl's criteria which, he believes, must be present if the argument in favour of the existence of a ruling elite is to be confirmed: 1. the ruling elite should be a well defined group; 2. a fair sample of cases involving differences in preference

between the ruling group and the rest should be presented; 3. in such cases the elite's preferences habitually triumph (4).

These criteria immediately bring us face to face with a problem. The second criterion is troublesome in that many of the recommendations of the leadership were accepted without serious comment by the membership. Rather the latter were content to follow the lead of the NEC (it is true that in other cases, such as the proposals to raise subscriptions, noted in the chapter on finance, there was some opposition. But the latter almost always resulted in the NEC's preferences prevailing). Dahl actually deals with this dilemma when he distinguishes between

a system in which a small group dominates over another that is opposed to it, and one in which a group dominates over an indifferent mass. (5)

He suggests that the test for the second, weaker, system of elite rule should be a modification of the first case:

It would again require an examination of a series of cases showing uniformly that when the 'word' was authoritatively passed down from the designated elite, the hitherto indifferent majority fell into ready compliance with an alternative that had nothing else to recommend it intrinsically. (6)

However, one could not accurately describe the delegates to Council or Conference as 'indifferent', their very presence at these gatherings suggests that they did care about the Party and its operations.

Rather than indifference we would suggest that their acquiescence was born of a widely held belief among delegates that the leadership knew what it was doing and they were prepared to follow the leaders. William Wolfe explained the delegates' attitude in the following way:

I would say it was because a very large number of activists in the Party, and people who were becoming active, were totally new. (7)

In other words, faith in the leadership was related to their own sense of inexperience, as well as trust that the leaders had the necessary



experience.

However, there were instances when significant opposition did exist on the floor of Council; the best example being the outright rejection of the proposals, contained in the Wilson Report, to totally centralise Party finances at a stroke. But this was the only example, which we could find (albeit an important one), of a key issue in which leadership preference failed to prevail in the face of opposition from elements from the rank-and-file.

Whatever system one cares to choose, the weaker or stronger, the empirical evidence still points clearly towards elite rule within the SNP, in that the leadership repeatedly saw their preferences triumph. This leaves us with the first of Dahl's criteria: that of the well-defined group.

It is in order to establish the presence or absence of such a group that we now turn to an examination of the committee system. This chapter may be said, therefore, to be concerned with the presence or absence of a well-defined ruling group within the SNP during the years 1963 to 1974.

Decision-making in most organisations is achieved through committees or groups of one kind or another. There is a growth in the necessity for specialists in particular fields as the organisation itself expands. This phenomenon grows out of the sheer complexity of organisational problems <sup>(8)</sup>. But specialists gather on committees not only out of some democratic motive, but also because this facilitates rational decision-making. This would appear to be for five main reasons <sup>(9)</sup>:

1. In establishing objectives groups are preferable to individuals because of the greater amount of knowledge available.
2. In identifying alternatives individual efforts of group members are necessary to ensure a broad search in the various functional areas of the organisation.
3. In evaluating alternatives the collective judgement of the group, with its wider range of viewpoints, seems superior to that of the individual decision-maker.
4. In choosing an alternative it has been shown that group interaction and achievement of consensus usually results in groups accepting more uncertainty (risk) than an individual decision-maker. In any event, the decision is more likely to be accepted as a result of the participation of those affected by its consequences.
5. Implementation of a decision, whether or not it is made by a group, usually is accomplished by individual managers. Thus since a group cannot be held responsible, responsibility necessarily rests with the individual manager.

Committees exist because they maximise the individual skills and expertise which may exist within the organisation. Their creation in the SNP followed this general direction. They can also increase democratic decision-making by removing it from an individual, or they can decrease democracy by removing decision-making from larger forums, like National Council.

The committees we shall be examining embrace the most important management councils of the Party: the NEC, the Finance Committee (FC), the General Business Committee (GBC), the Electoral Planning Committee

(EPC), the Election Committee (EC) and the Organisation Committee (OC). Our concern will be to establish the membership of these bodies, the number of years individuals sat on them, and, finally, if overlapping, interlocking membership was uncommon or the norm. In short, was there a well defined group which was clearly dominant in these forums? We shall look at each committee in turn for evidence of regularity of individual representation across committees and through time.

#### Management Committee Structure, 1963-1974

The National Executive Committee. This was (and remains) the principal committee of National Council with responsibility for inter-Council decision-making. Its members, who are elected annually, are considered to be the leaders of the Party by virtue of their mass-based election. As we have tried to show, it is in de facto terms the actual governing body of the Party, even allowing for the fact that normally it requires Council's assent for its programmes.

At the Annual Conference of 1963, the following were elected to the most senior offices of the Party (Note. The senior elected figures are elected at the annual Conference which immediately precedes the Council from which the other members of the NEC are elected) <sup>(10)</sup>:  
 President, Dr. Robert McIntyre; Vice-President, James Halliday;  
 Chairman, Arthur Donaldson; Vice-Chairmen, W.A. Milne and William Wolfe; Treasurer, David Rollo; National Secretary, Malcolm Shaw.  
 As we shall shortly see, most of these names were to become a regular feature of the senior offices in the years ahead.

The first full NEC list which we were able to locate was for 1964.

This was also the first election following upon the crucial Wilson Report. The line-up was as follows: Dr. Robert McIntyre, Arthur Donaldson, W.A. Milne, William Wolfe, James Halliday, Ian Macdonald, Bruce Cockie, Douglas Drysdale, David Rollo, Gordon Wilson, Alan Niven, Dr. James Lees, R. Reid-Patrick, M. Cathcart, Anthony J.C. Kerr, David Stevenston, Angus MacGillvery, Angus MacIntosh, R. Foggie, W. Gilchrist, George Leask, W.S. Orr and J. Gair <sup>(11)</sup>.

From this list we are now going to draw up a continuity-table. In this each member of the NEC for 1964 is marked for the number of years he/she continued to serve over the following ten years until 1974. Each is given an Table Score, the maximum being 100 - that is, 10 for every year served on the Committee.

Table 2      NEC, Membership Continuity Table, 1964-1974

Dr.R.McIntyre - 100	D.Rollo - 100	M.Cathcart - 10
J.Halliday - 100	G.Wilson - 100	A.J.C.Kerr - 10
G.Leask - 20	A.Niven - 20	D.Stevenston - 10
A.Donaldson - 100	Dr.J.Lees - 80	A.MacGillvery - 100
W.A.Milne - 50	W.S.Orr - 10	A.MacIntosh - 10
W.Wolfe - 100	J.Gair - 40	R.Foggie - 10
D.Drysdale - 40	R.Reid-Patrick - 40	W.Gilchrist - 10
B.Cockie - 30 (approx)		
I.Macdonald - 100		

Of the 23 names listed as NEC members (Ian Macdonald was, for part of the time, an employee of the Party, and Angus MacGillvery was, for the entire period, a paid Party worker) for 1964, no less than eight

had uninterrupted Executive status right through until 1974. Ten had Executive status for at least half of the period. Seven were executive members for only one year, and a further six had four years or less, of NEC membership. However, of the latter category, many had been Executive members prior to 1964, thus if we take a later period the figures become a little more striking:

Table 3      NEC, Membership Continuity Table, 1967-1974  
(1967 was chosen because from 1968 onwards the figures become even more biased in favour of a 50+ score).

Dr.McIntyre	- 100	H.Henderson	- 10	D.Henderson	- 100
A.Donaldson	- 100	G.Wilson	- 100	R.Reid-Patrick	- 10
E.Gibson	- 10	Dr.J.Lees	- 50	W.Ewing	- 100
J.Halliday	- 100	J.Gair	- 10	A.H.Young	- 10
W.A.Milne	- 10	J.Braid	- 50	H.MacDonald	- 50
W.Wolfe	- 100	D.Drysdale	- 10	D.Rollo	- 100
A.Lees	- 20	G.Murray	- 40	W.Lindsay	- 30
B.Cockie	- 20	H.Rankin	- 50	H.Davidson	- 60
G.Leslie	- 50	R.Campbell	- 10	I.Macdonald	- 100
A.MacGillvery	- 100	A.MacDonald	- 10	J.Picken	- 10

Of the 30 members of the NEC listed for 1967, 10 had continuous membership through until 1974, and of these eight had been Executive members since at least 1964. A further six had NEC membership for at least 50 per cent of the period between 1967 to 1974. Of the remaining 14 members who had a score of 40 or less, two had NEC membership for at least four years up to and including 1967.

Table 4      Continuity Table

<u>Table Score: 1964-1974</u>	<u>Table Score: 1967-1974</u>
100                      34.7	100                      33.3
50+                      43.5	50+                      53.3
40-                      56.5	40-                      46.7

These figures reveal one striking factor: that the nucleus of the SNP, the Party leadership, remained firm throughout time, with approximately 33 per cent of the NEC having continuous membership in the two periods looked at. Thus although around 50 per cent of the NEC members in both periods, could not be said to have been a very permanent feature of the Executive, its most senior members were: McIntyre, Donaldson, Wolfe, Wilson, Halliday and Rollo (Angus McGillvery was a special case in that although he was not an elected member, he retained a permanent seat on the NEC on an ex officio basis, by virtue of his status as a paid Party employee); and then later Douglas Henderson and Winifred Ewing, all were permanent Executive members, as well as holding the most senior elected offices in the Party. Others like Milne, Drysdale and especially Dr. James Lees, had significant spells in leadership posts and extended membership of the NEC as well. This feature we shall describe as Core Persistence, and it should be seen as a vital link in the management chain bestowing upon the Core members considerable power, born of experience, as well as the status which must have been awarded to senior Party members constantly re-elected to the NEC, was reinforced by membership of the important Executive sub-committees upon which so much power was delegated. It was in these committees that many of the schemes, later adopted by the NEC, first saw the light of day.

The Wilson Report recommended that the committee conveners should be appointed by the Executive Vice-Chairmen responsible for the area of concern dealt with by the committee. The Organisation, Finance (which existed prior to the creation of the GBC), and Election Committees were all reconstituted (see below for origin and functions) following upon recommendations contained in the Wilson Report. We shall now be examining these committees together with two others which were created later; the GBC and the EPC.

Principal Organisational Sub-Committees of the NEC

National Executive Committee

FC    GBC    EPC    EC    OC

The Election Committee. When Wilson investigated the EC in 1963, he discovered that it was not working well. In fact, although its function was to organise the fighting of elections it had long since been failing to operate effectively in that regard. He recommended <sup>(12)</sup> that it seek suitable candidates for constituencies, make proposals for the raising and spending of cash for elections, and generally advise on the running of the latter. Finally, remembering that in those days the SNP fought only in specific constituencies, to offer guidance regarding the constituencies thought essential for contesting.

These proposals were adopted, and the EC evolved into an important and prestigious forum composed of the most senior members of the Party.

The first full set of data we found for this committee was for 1965. Its membership then was: Dr. Robert McIntyre, Dr. James Lees, Douglas Drysdale, Ian Macdonald, Gordon Wilson, William Wolfe, Alan

Niven, Arthur Donaldson, and R. Reid-Patrick.

Thus the Committee was highly elitist, at least in so far as it was dominated not only by NEC members, but even more circumscribed than that; by the Party's most senior elected members. Its Convener was chosen by the NEC and in his turn he chose the members of the Committee. This right of the convener to choose the membership of the Committee was common to all of the committees we shall be looking at. It clearly gave to the conveners very considerable power. It may even have served to reinforce the elitist nature of the administrative committee of the Party. Certainly if one looks at the make-up of the committees such a conclusion seems justified.

The EC membership was small in number and rarely varied through the years: Dr. R. McIntyre, William Wolfe, David Rollo, and from 1970 onwards, Winifred Ewing, were its most regular members and/or attenders. These names, of course, largely correspond to those having received the highest score on the NEC Continuity Table.

The Committee developed into a forum which appeared to take some of the most critical decisions about the contesting and conduct of elections, as well as the endorsement of candidates for constituencies.

In order to demonstrate not only the exclusiveness but also the regularity of the names appearing on the EC, we have chosen a selection of its meetings from 1967 to 1974, the period for which we have the most complete data, to determine the regular constituent profile of the group; the names of the committee's members, together with the dates of its meetings, are listed down and along two axes.



Table 5      Election Committee, Membership Make-Up. 1967-1974

	Jan'67	Dec'67	Jul'68	Oct'68	Apr'69	Dec'69	Feb'70	Jan'71	Dec'71	Mar'72	Jun'73	Jun'74
A. Donaldson	X	X	X	X	X		X					
D.Drysdale	X	X										
Dr.J.Lees	X	X	X	X	X							
Dr.R.McIntyre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
W.Wolfe				X		X		X	X			X
G.Wilson			X				X					
G.Leslie			X									
W. Ewing								X	X	X	X	
H.Watt								X	X	X		
J.Halliday												X
M.Bain												X
M. Gibson												X
I.Macdonald										X		
H.Davidson											X	
R.Hall										X		
D.Rollo			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

At the outset one observation must be made regarding the above table. It must be borne in mind that this is a random (data is available for 15 meetings. Thus, the dates listed represent over two-thirds of extant material) selection of the EC's meetings over a seven year period. Therefore individuals who were members of this committee may have been absent from a particular meeting although their membership remained intact. With this caveat in mind what conclusions might we draw from this table?

The Core Persistence we pointed to as being a feature of the NEC throughout the period, 1964 to 1974, is reinforced when we examine the EC. Secondly, several of the people given as pre-eminent on the NEC, in terms of representation through time, continue to be found on the EC. Third, over the eight years looked at, only 16 names are listed as being on the committee with continued membership and/or attendance effectively restricted to David Rollo, William Wolfe and Dr. Robert McIntyre. Finally, although the latter group endured over the eight years, one can really divide the period in two; 1967-1970, and 1971-1974. Dr. James Lees and Arthur Donaldson would join David Rollo, William Wolfe and Dr. McIntyre in the first period, but drop in the second to be replaced by Hamish Watt and Winifred Ewing. But in every case membership of the Committee was paralleled by membership of the NEC. Moreover, and this is striking, in 81.1 per cent of the cases, membership of the Committee corresponded to officially-held posts within the Party. Only H. Watt, H. Davidson and M. Bain did not hold senior elected posts within the Party whilst being members of the EC.

One can see immediately the power and prestige of this forum. Not only were most of its members long servers, but they were also

senior figures within the Party. When it brought recommendations along to the National Executive they would have added weight and influence as a consequence of their source. Furthermore, around 20 per cent of the NEC, at any one time, were also members of the EC, thus they had already had a sizeable voting bloc on their side.

The next committee to be analysed is the Electoral Planning Committee (we shall outline the distinctions between the EPC and the EC presently). This Committee was of a more recent vintage, being set-up in April 1967. Whilst it was less elitist than the EC (the conveners still selected the membership) nonetheless even it remained a fairly exclusive gathering.

The Electoral Planning Committee. Established in 1967, the purposes of the Committee were set out in a memo from Dr. J. Lees, then Vice-Chairman for Organisation, in April 1967 (13):

It will deal only with the mechanics of elections, but will expect guidance on policy, finance etc. from the National Executive Committee.

In fact, its remit was to plan for General Elections. It differed from the EC in that the latter became more and more preoccupied with the vetting of candidates for placement on the Party's list of prospective parliamentary candidates, and the adjudication of disputes between candidates and constituencies. Whereas the EPC was interested in the logistics of fighting General Elections, for example, the raising of cash and the printing of manifestos, etc.

The initial members of the Committee were: Dr. James Lees, Douglas Henderson, George Leslie, W. Lindsay, Dr. R. McIntyre, James McGinley, A. Niven, H. Skinner, Gordon Wilson, W. Valentine, A.H.

Young. Of this group six of the 11 (or 54.5 per cent) were NEC members in 1967 (the actual numbers on the committee varied from time to time as the convener invited individuals to attend).

Whilst this still appears to be rather exclusive, nonetheless at that stage of its life it was still more 'open' than the EC. However, through time it also came to be a thoroughly elitist body. Here again the convener chose the membership as he thought fit.

Another feature of it in this germinal stage was that it did not register a marked degree of interlocking membership with the EC; only two of its 11 members (18.1 per cent) were, in 1977, also members of that other Committee.

By July 1974 the EPC was made up of Ian Macdonald, Douglas Crawford, Rosemary Hall, Chrissie McWhirter, Stephen Maxwell and Muriel Gibson, all of whom were NEC members.

The following Table contains the names of the members and the dates of the meetings for the period between December 1967 and July 1974.

Table 6 (14)

The Electoral Planning Committee, Membership Make-Up, 1967-1974.\*

(\*The data available did not allow us to include accounts of either names or dates for the period between August 1969 and January 1971).

Membership	Dec '67	Aug '68	Dec '68	Mar '69	Aug '69	Jan '71	Apr '72	Oct '73	Apr '74	Jul '74
T.McAlpine								X		
Dr.J.Lees	X	X	X	X	X					
J.McAteer			X		X				X	X
Dr.R.McIntyre	X									
R.Hall				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
D.Henderson	X	X	X				X	X		
I.Murray								X		
I.Macdonald	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
K.Bovey								X		
A.Niven	X									
A.McKinney								X		
W.Lindsay								X		
M.Gibson		X	X					X	X	
F.McMaster								X		
G.Wilson		X		X	X	X				
Mrs. Barnton								X		
A.Ewing		X	X			X				
S.Maxwell										X

Membership	Dec '67	Aug '68	Dec '68	Mar '69	Aug '69	Jan '71	Apr '72	Oct '73	Apr '74	Jul '74
C. McWhirter										X
A. Young		X								X
D. Rollo			X		X					
P. Craigie			X							
H. McDonald				X		X				
S. MacIntosh		X	X	X	X					

At first glance through their numbers are small - one notices that the EPC had more non-NEC members than the EC. However, of the 24 names listed only seven were not NEC members, and of these, five appear to have attended only one meeting of the Committee. They were: I. Murray, K. Bovey, A. Niven, Mrs. Barnton and F. McMaster.

If the Table is at all representative of the usual attendance (and we have no reason to believe otherwise), then we can fairly conclude that the NEC members were much in the majority numerically - and more than likely dominant in influence terms - for example, at the best attended meeting, October 1973 <sup>(15)</sup>, five of the 11 were Party office-holders, and a further three were NEC members. 54.5 per cent of the meetings actually had a majority of senior office-holders in attendance.

This Committee did not rival in influence the EC. After all, the latter had a very considerable voice in the endorsement and placement of prospective candidates. This state of affairs seems to be reflected in the more sporadic attendance of members at its meetings.

However, the EPC appears to share with the EC a tendency to divide into two distinct periods: 1967 to 1969, and 1971 to 1974.

Between 1967 and 1969 the most regular attenders were: Dr. J. Lees, Gordon Wilson, D. Henderson, Ian Macdonald and Sheila MacIntosh (a non-Executive member). But in the second period one finds that Rosemary Hall, Ian Macdonald, and to a lesser extent, Muriel Gibson and John McAteer (the National Organiser), were the most prolific attenders.

Thus in both periods for which we have data the most senior members of the Party had a considerable presence on this Committee. And indeed, in terms of numbers related to regular attendance, could be said to have been dominant. Here then is some evidence of Core Persistence through time: Lees, Wilson, Henderson, Hall, Macdonald,

Gibson, and McAteer were all members of the NEC as well as regular attenders at the EPC.

The next committee to be analysed will be the General Business Committee.

The General Business Committee. The establishment of a GBC was first recommended in a memo <sup>(16)</sup> from Gordon Wilson to the NEC in 1967 (see the Chapter on Finance for the origins and motives behind the creation of this Committee). He suggested that the GBC embrace two existing committees, Finance and Administration.

The first meeting of the GBC was December 1967. Its remit was broad, covering, as it did, administration, investment and staffing, etc. The Finance Committee continued to operate but its functions were relegated to devising schemes for fund-raising. Consequently it was a Committee of little strategic importance.

Gordon Wilson noted in his Report on Organisation <sup>(17)</sup> in 1963, that the Finance Committee

which should be the cornerstone of our finances is moribund. It has no convener and no members.

However, he was in no doubt as to the potential value and worth of the Committee:

... I believe it to be a real and vital necessity for the Committee to be rekindled with enthusiastic personnel. <sup>(18)</sup>

In the end the GBC was to evolve into the real management committee of the Party. It became a body which boasted the most senior personnel of the SNP as its members. It dealt with every area of business central to the efficient functioning of the Party (its convener was chosen by



the NEC, and he chose the other Committee members).

At its first meeting held on December 1967, the following people attended: Gordon Wilson, Dr. Robert McIntyre, Arthur Donaldson, Muriel Gibson, Douglas Drysdale, George Gibson, Angus McGillvery (an ex officio member), David Rollo and A. Lees. They were invited to attend by the Committee's Convener, Douglas Drysdale.

Once again we shall construct a Table listing the dates and attenders at GBC meetings. These will be placed along horizontal and vertical axes, in order to establish composition and evidence of Core Persistence.

The caveat given for Table 4 also applies to the following Table. That is, there were people who were members of this Committee during the six years between 1968 and 1974 whose names are missing from the list given above. This is simply because the dates given are the only ones for which we could locate complete minutes. However, as with the above, we have no reason to suppose that this has, in any way, diminished the representativeness of the data.

Table 7      The General Business Committee Membership Make-Up, 1967-1974

	Jan '68	Nov '69	Dec '70	Mar '71	June '71	Mar '72	Jul '72	Apr '73	Nov '73	Aug '74
D.Drysdale	X									
M.Gibson	X	X	X		X	X				
G.Gibson	X									
D.Rollo	X		X	X	X		X	X		X
G.Wilson		X		X						
J.Cloag		X								
D.Henderson		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
I.Macdonald		X	X	X	X	X			X	X
A.MacGillvery		X								
H.Davidson			X	X	X					X
M.Murgatroyd			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B.Cheetham						X				
Dr.J.Lees						X	X	X		
R.Hall									X	X
C.McWhirter								X		
T.McAlpine									X	X
K.Bovey									X	
W.McRae										X
M.Grieve		X								

Of the 19 names appearing on this Table, 18 were NEC members, and 10 were senior Party figures (they held senior elected office). The most regular attenders were D. Rollo, D. Henderson, M. Murgatroyd, M. Gibson, H. Davidson and Dr. J. Lees. Therefore, features of Core Persistence are once again in evidence: R. Hall, D. Rollo, D. Henderson, I. Macdonald, M. Gibson and Dr. J. Lees have all figured prominently at one or both of the Committees we have previously looked at, and all held senior Party office.

The importance of the GBC cannot be overemphasised. It was from this forum that the ideas for investment and the approaches to businessmen, etc., were made, and it was this Committee which originated proposals for the raising of subscriptions and branch dues. Many of the resolutions which subsequently went forward to Council concerning financial and administrative matters, first saw the light of day in the GBC. For example, the series of increases in dues which went through in 1972 were a consequence of recommendations made in the GBC. Similarly, when measures for financial stringency were required it was the GBC which was responsible for their implementation.

The GBC had the advantage over other committees, even including quasi-administrative committees like the EPC and EC, in that it was almost utterly non-political, being a management and administrative forum. Therefore, its recommendations were likely to be treated by the NEC as a whole as a management concern rather than merely positioning. Moreover, its members were regarded as having certain skills in matters of administration. Such a view is reinforced when one looks at the composition of the Committee. For example, at the August meeting of 1974, six of the seven attenders had experience

directly relevant to membership of the Committee: D. Rollo had been a long-serving Treasurer of the Party; Ian Macdonald had been the Party's National Organiser for seven years; Michael Murgatroyd was a Chartered Accountant, and was the then serving Party Treasurer; Rosemary Hall, then National Secretary, had been the Party's office manager for several years; finally, William McRae was the Party's lawyer.

The combined weight of this full-time and part-time administrative experience gave to the GBC a profile which encouraged belief in its purely functional role, and meant that the NEC would be more willing to accept its conclusions and recommendations.

This Committee bears evidence, yet again, to the domination of certain strategic committees by senior Party figures, and more specifically by particular members of that body. We shall analyse this phenomenon, at greater length, below.

The Organisation Committee. Like so many other committees within the SNP the OC was found to be moribund when Wilson examined the Party's organisation in 1963. Of this Committee he wrote:

It should go without saying that this committee should be re-activated without delay. I see no clash with the Election Committee, and the National Organiser should be the servant of both. (19)

He went on to summarise the remit of the Committee in a typically succinct fashion:

...it should be concerned with the organisation of old and new branches from the viewpoint of efficient running. (20)

Its other duties were to include the promotion of membership drives, the keeping of records regarding branches and their members,

the selection of constituencies where conditions were suitable for the SNP to create new branches and contest elections, and the periodic reporting to the NEC about the state of health of the Party at large. (21)

Members of the OC like the other committees, were chosen by the Convener of the Committee. But this committee had many fewer Party notables as members than the other committees looked at.

There are several reasons for this: the existence of a full-time National Organiser meant that much of the actual day-to-day decision-taking could be made by him (there was no other equivalent bureaucrat serving the other committees). Secondly, for many years membership of the Committee was partly on an area basis with members being invited from throughout Scotland. This had the effect of making membership not only large but also diverse; it was very uncommon to have the same group in attendance at each month's meeting. There was no limit to the size of the Committee, and it varied at every meeting. All of this served to depress the Committee as an important innovation and decision-making source (see below for remarks about important of size).

Whatever the precise reason, the OC was by no means as influential within the Party machine as the other Committees we have examined. However, we include it in this analysis for two main reasons: it was, after all, a management committee, and secondly, because we still deem it important to determine if there was any evidence of Core Persistence, even on this Committee. In order to facilitate this, the method of analysis was as follows. 24 Committee meetings, starting in May 1965, and running through until April 1974, were looked

at with three objectives in mind: (1) to establish the size of NEC representation on the Committee; (2) the number of Party office-holders who were members of it; and (3) to find evidence of Core Persistence.

Only two NEC members appear to have had consistent representation on the OC on a permanent basis: Dr. J. Lees, who was a member from 1966 until 1972, and Ian Macdonald, first an an employee and then as an elected office-bearer, from 1965 until 1974. (22)

Given this data there is no justification for claiming that there is evidence of substantial Core Persistence of NEC members.

Table 8 % NEC Representation on Organisation Committee, 1965-1974\*

<u>1965</u>	May 29.4	Aug 42.6	Nov 54.6		
<u>1966</u>	Feb 66.6	Oct 55.5			
<u>1967</u>	Feb 40	Apr 40	Dec 10		
<u>1968</u>	Jan 23.1	Aug 30	Oct 22.2		
<u>1969</u>	Jan 25				
<u>1970</u>	Jan 13.4	Mar 13.4	Apr 22.2	July 28.4	Aug 25
<u>1971</u>	Aug 50	Nov 40			
<u>1972</u>	Feb 33.3	Nov 25			
<u>1973</u>	Apr 33.3	June 37.4			
<u>1974</u>	Apr 20				

\* The two years for which we have only one date is a result of the unavailability of data.

As we can see, NEC representation was exceedingly erratic (there was no obvious reason for this), varying from 66.6 per cent in February 1966, to 10 per cent in December 1967. What is equally apparent is that the NEC dominance - so obvious in other committees - is not nearly so marked on the OC. Only in 1966 would it appear that NEC members were in a majority on the Committee (and that may only be a consequence of the data available to us). Nor is there any discernable pattern of peaks and troughs, although 1970 and 1974 were, for some reason, particularly bad years for NEC representation.

Nevertheless, whilst the NEC did not have anything like the numerical dominance on this committee that it had on the other management committees, neither was its representation insignificant. If we take an average of NEC representation from the years given in Table 7, then we can see that the Executive's presence was not insubstantial.

Table 9    % Annual Average Representation of NEC Members, Organisation Comm.\*

1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
42.2	61.05	30	25.1	25	20.5	45	29.1	35.3	20

\* The months used do not represent the entire spectrim of Committee meetings, rather they were selected on the basis of available data.

As we can see, 1970 and 1974 appear to have been the worst years for NEC representation, and yet even in the worst year there was still an Executive presence of some 20 per cent, an average 2 people out of around 9. Further, the Committee Chairman was on every occasion but one, a member of the NEC.

The final element to analyse was the size of the representation of the Party's office-bearers on the OC. This can be quickly dealt with. Only Dr. J. Lees, Ian Macdonald and James Braid of the office-bearers had anything like regular attendance on the Committee, that is, were present at two or more of the meetings we examined.

The composition of the OC is certainly not testimony to NEC dominance, personnel Core Persistence, nor significant senior office-bearer presence. This Committee, therefore, cannot be said to contribute to the overall hypothesis of specific elite domination of the management committees. There were certainly too few senior Party figures on this Committee to allow us to speak of Core Persistence.

The number of NEC representatives on any committee is, of course, no guarantee that the Executive members will dominate the proceedings of the committee in question. This caveat applies equally to the presence of senior elected members. However, at least some management theory leads one to believe that the NEC representatives, and especially the office-bearers, would have been in a strong position to influence decision-making - as well as other facets of the committee's work. This flows from the fact that the leaders in an organisation are usually attributed with possessing certain skills and qualities which set them above the mass:

Increases in authority have been found in a number of investigations to increase with status as measured by rank or echelon. (23)

or, again:

Much related data and empirical evidence can be cited supporting the proposition that the higher status of a member the more successful will be his attempts to lead others of low status. (24)



The non-leaders defer to the leadership because the latter have qualities and talents which are necessary for the perceived achievement of the organisational goal. As we have seen, senior Party figures were dominant on the management committees. This dominance was based on institutional deference - the feeling among members that the leaders sat on management committees by virtue of skills and services to the Party, etc. This may explain why there was no objection to the manner in which the committees were formed, that is, by invitation of the convener. It would be interesting to know whether or not this acceptance of elite dominance was also a feature of the 'policy' committees.

If we were to detect continuing NEC, and more specifically senior-officer, dominance on the Party's 'policy-making' committees, then this would fortify our contention that senior party figures were in a strong position to dominate the management committees. Because if the membership was prepared to have a strong leadership presence on the 'policy' committees - where their knowledge and interests might equal those of the leadership, then it is much easier to understand their willingness to have such dominance on the management committees, where specialist skills and service to the Party counted for much more.

Our data covers one full year, 1967-1968, and it is broadly representative of the overall pattern of policy committee membership (25) throughout the period we are examining. The information is taken from lists of members submitted to the NEC in November 1967 (26). The committees scrutinised are as follows: the Economics and Information Department (as it was so grandly entitled), the Foreign

Affairs Committee, the Publicity Committee, the Education Committee, and, finally, the Conference Committee.

The Economics and Information Department (General Committee). This had 35 members, and of these some 20 per cent were on the NEC, with 17.5 per cent senior office-bearers. William Wolfe was the Convener.

This Committee appears to have been responsible for a great deal of the information flow concerning the relative economic position of Scotland within the Union. As such it was rather influential within the Party's 'policy-making' circles, but the NEC members did not seem to display any particular expertise, rather they would appear to share a general interest with the other members.

The Foreign Affairs Committee. This had 15 members, and of these 73.5 per cent were NEC members, with 40 per cent senior-office holders. Its 'Director' was John Picken, and he was also a member of the NEC.

The Publicity Committee. 24 members, of whom only one, James Braid, who was also its Convener, was on the NEC.

The Education Committee. Out of 16 members, four, or 25 per cent, also sat on the Executive. John Gair, an Executive Vice-Chairman, was the Convener.

The Conference Committee. This was responsible for setting the Agenda for annual Conference, and in this sense it might be regarded as potentially quite influential since it could determine which resolutions did, or did not, come up for debate. Of seven members, three were

on the NEC. Another was a full-time employee of the Party, and two others were Party office-bearers. Therefore, only one member was not then currently on the NEC. Finally, its Convener was Gordon Wilson.

Of the five committees looked at, two were completely dominated by NEC members, a further two had a sizeable Executive representation (20 per cent or more), and the fifth, the Publicity Committee, had only one NEC representative.

Senior office-bearers ranged from none on the Publicity Committee to 40 per cent on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

With the possible exception of the Conference Committee these bodies had practically no management significance and this would appear to be reflected in (a) the presence of NEC members, and (b) senior Party figures. Even so we discovered a not insignificant penetration of these two groups on the 'policy' committees.

We can best illustrate the extent of NEC dominance on both types of committees by using a continuum of representation with, at one end, 100 per cent presence and, at the other, 0 per cent membership.

Table 10

Continuum of NEC Representation on Policy and Management Committees

	GBC	CC	FAC	EPC			OC	EXUC	Econ.C	PC	
EC	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

(Key overleaf)

Key to Table 9

EC, Election Committee	OC, Organisation Committee
GBC, General Business Committee	Econ, Economics Committee
CC, Conference Committee	Educ, Education Committee
FAC, Foreign Affairs Committee	PC, Publicity Committee
EPC, Electoral Planning Committee	

(Table 9 is only intended as being broadly illustrative of the extent of the NEC's presence on the various committees we have looked at in this chapter. The percentages arrived at are for different years, and in the case of the 'policy' committees are for one year only. Therefore, we do not claim that the Table is a precise statistical statement).

The table indicates the dominance of the NEC (a) on the management committees, and (b) a not insubstantial presence on most of the 'policy' committees. Only one management committee fell into the bottom half of the continuum. In fact, five of the nine committees had memberships of which at least 60 per cent were also on the NEC. Two of the five 'policy' committees had NEC representation in excess of 60 per cent, and yet another had one-third Executive membership.

There is little doubt that the Party's leaders spread their influence well beyond the management committees, and the fact that they had such a pronounced presence on 'policy' committees only served to reinforce their hold on the management forums since the members were less likely to be deferential about NEC members on 'policy' bodies than on their management equivalents.

The next aspect of NEC dominance to be examined concerns the

turnover of personnel in the most senior posts of the Party. This is important for two reasons: if the SNP was an 'open-ended' structure then one might expect to find a fairly regular change of leaders as new people climbed the Party pyramid, and, secondly, Michels pointed to the dangers for party democracy of leaders who retain party posts for too long (27). The force of tradition is powerful indeed, at least when it comes to voting out of office long-serving members, and replacing them with younger people:

The failure to re-elect a comrade who has assisted in the birth of the party, who has suffered with it many adversities, and had rendered it a thousand services, would be regarded as a cruelty and an action to be condemned. (28)

One suspects that Michels may have been overstating his case, but he may be closer to the mark when he later comments:

But wherever division of labour prevails, there is necessarily specialisation, and the specialists become indispensable. (29)

He continues in the same vein later, when he writes:

...it is indispensable that the official should remain in office for a considerable time, so that he may familiarise himself with the work he has to do, may gain practical experience, for he cannot become a useful official until he has been given time to work himself into his new office. (30)

Of course, long tenure in office need not endanger a democracy: if someone is continually re-elected to a post (as in the senior Party posts) presumably it is because people are satisfied with his performance. However, continual re-election can give the incumbent prestige and a concomitant power spin-off. Michels described it in the following way:

There arises in the leaders a tendency to isolate themselves, to form a sort of cartel, and to surround themselves, as it were, with a wall, within which they will admit those only who are of their own way of thinking. (31)

In our view this overstates the case. The leaders of the SNP did not consciously seek to exclude from the leadership those who disagreed with them on certain organisational matters. For example, Dr. James Lees was an unequivocal decentraliser. Rather it was the force of circumstances which created centralising sympathies within the overwhelming majority of the leadership. - But even this need not have led to the leadership actually choosing their successors - in the case of the SNP it certainly did not. However, it can lead to a certain divorce occurring between leaders and led. The former's detachment encourages them in a belief that their duration in office, coupled with their expertise, elevates them well above the rank-and-file and consequently entitled them to take decisions without mass consultation. In short there evolves a leadership class.

In this section we shall analyse the length of tenure, starting in 1963 (full data begins then) and running through until 1974, of the senior officers of the Party. These are elected annually at the Party's Conference.

President only one incumbent, Dr. Robert McIntyre.

Chairman. Arthur Donaldson, and then William Wolfe, held this post during the years which interest us. Wolfe replaced Donaldson in 1969.

<u>Senior Vice-Chairmen.</u>	1964 W.A. Milne	1970 Douglas Henderson
	1965 " "	1971 " "
	1966 William Wolfe	1972 " "
	1967 " "	1973 Gordon Wilson
	1968 " "	1974 Margo MacDonald
	1969 George Leslie	

On the face of it there seems to have been a regular turnover of incumbents in this post, six in 11 years. However, this must be seen against the entire backcloth of personnel turnover in senior office-

bearer positions, that is, a great deal of job interchange was going on during this period with large numbers of (the same) people giving up one job and replacing it with another job in the leadership.

Executive Vice-Chairmen. Following upon the Wilson Report these posts carried real management responsibility. The reference to job interchange given above becomes clearer when we look at these posts: D. Henderson, William Wolfe, George Leslie, W.A. Milne, Gordon Wilson, and Margo MacDonald all held Executive Vice-Chairmanship posts as well as, on other occasions, holding different senior Party offices (each delegate to Conference is allowed the same number of votes as there are offices to fill).

1963	William Wolfe, W.A. Milne
1964	" " , Douglas Drysdale
1965	" " , " "
1966	Dr. J. Lees, " " , John Gair, James Braid
1967	" " " " " " " "
1968	" " , G. Leslie, Douglas Henderson, " "
1969	" " , M. Grieve, " " , Hugh MacDonald
1970	G. Murray, " " , Ian Macdonald, " "
1971	" " " " " " " "
1972	Isobel Lindsay, " " , Gordon Wilson, Margo MacDonald
1973	" " " " , Tom McAlpine, " "
1974	A. Donaldson, " " " " , Douglas Crawford

Eighteen different individuals filled the post of Executive Vice-Chairmen in the 12 full years between 1963 and 1974, this was out of a possible 42 (theoretical) places.

National Secretary. As we have seen, this was an important management post, and a potentially critical one in terms of internal Party power. The main feature of the 12 years in question, so far as this office was concerned, was the lengthy tenure of Gordon Wilson. The incumbents for the period 1963 to 1974 were as follows:

1963 Malcolm Shaw  
 1964-1970 Gordon Wilson  
 1971 Muriel Gibson  
 1972-1974 Rosemary Hall

In the twelve full years between 1963 and 1974, four people filled the office of National Secretary. But for 59 per cent of the time, one man, Gordon Wilson, held the post. Moreover, he held it during the most climactic years - terms of organisational growth - in the Party's history. This gave to Wilson quite enormous personal prestige, respect and, one suspects, power. What is clear is that he used the office to institute some very important management innovations.

National Treasurer. The following persons held the post of National Treasurer between 1963 and 1974:

1963-1965 David Rollo  
 1966 James Cook  
 1967 George Gibson  
 1968-1969 Joseph Cloag  
 1970- Michael Murgatroyd

Over the 12 full years between 1963 to 1974, five people held this post. But for 42 per cent of the time, one man, Michael Murgatroyd was



the incumbent.

Out of all of the senior Party offices analysed here <sup>(32)</sup> there was a possible personnel turnover of 102, that is, the potential number of people who could have held these posts if there had been a 100 per cent change in incumbents every year. However, only 27 different individuals actually held office. This represented 26 per cent of the total.

We consider this figure to be remarkably low. But in order to put it into some kind of perspective, we shall compare the Labour Party's NEC with that of the SNP in terms of a Continuity Index. The Executive of the Labour Party is chosen because of the difficulties implicit in establishing suitable parallels between so called 'party leaders'. For example, the Leader of the Labour Party is the Parliamentary Leader, whilst the 'leader' of the SNP is the Party Chairman. Moreover, both are elected by different constituencies and face different pressures as a consequence.

However, the Chairmanship of the Labour Party must change annually, and its significance is both politically and administratively less consequential than that of the Chairmanship of the SNP. The latter is open to election annually but need not change, indeed rarely does.

Other leadership positions within the Labour Party likewise tend to be concentrated within the Parliamentary Party rather than in Transport House. Given the absence, within the SNP, of such a grouping (that is, between 1963 and 1974) we must seek to establish a more

legitimate forum for comparison. Now, since we are concerned with administrative power, that is, the power utilised in internal organisational matters, it seems more reasonable that we compare the major management bodies of both parties; their respective Executive Committees (both Executives are elected annually by party delegates). The more so since all organisational topics within the Labour Party come under the remit of the NEC.

It is with these distinctions in mind that we now undertake this brief comparison of Core Persistence among the Executive Committees of the Labour and Scottish National parties.

According to McKenzie <sup>(33)</sup> the Labour Executive has two broad functions; supervising the Party's work outside Parliament and reporting on its activities to Conference. This also involves ensuring that all officers and members of the Party conform to the Constitution and Standing Orders. In the extreme this can mean expulsion or disaffiliation of an organisation and/or individuals. In the context of this thesis it is interesting to note that:

Perhaps the most striking feature of the whole history of NEC disciplinary action ... has been this: in almost every case the action of the NEC has been overwhelmingly approved by the subsequent annual conference ... The NEC can almost invariably depend upon the Conference to sustain its action. (34)

It would appear that the experience of the SNP's NEC was duplicated elsewhere. But of even greater significance for our purposes, are the observations made by McKenzie regarding the duration of membership by certain individuals on the Labour NEC <sup>(35)</sup>. He believes that any discussion of the Labour NEC must 'include some reference to the striking continuity (my italics) of its membership'.

He goes on to give figures for the NEC elections for the period between 1900 and 1953, noting that 1,125 places had to be filled, he found that 199 people filled these places, and of these, 21 per cent were on the Executive for ten years or longer. Whilst observing that these figures do not necessarily mean that this led to oligarchical control of the Executive, nevertheless:

there was never in the course of NEC elections a sudden or dramatic transformation in the membership of the Executive. A hard core of members who enjoyed the confidence of the Party retained office for long periods and thereby helped to ensure continuity of policy. (36)

There is clear evidence therefore, that the Labour NEC displayed striking Core Continuity over the period McKenzie analysed. In order to compare this continuity with the SNP over the period 1964 to 1974, we examined the composition of the Labour Executive over these same years.

We discovered <sup>(37)</sup> that whilst it remained 'striking' it did not equal that of the SNP's Executive: 17.8 per cent of those who sat on the Labour Executive between 1964 and 1974, served for ten years or longer. This compared with 34.7 per cent for the SNP. Over the other period examined for the SNP, 1967 to 1974, we found that 33.3 per cent of the SNP NEC served continuously, whilst 27.5 per cent of the Labour Executive did so.

These figures suggest that the power of the SNP Executive, as measured by the duration in office of certain individuals, is considerable. Unlike the Labour Party there was no alternative power centre. William Wolfe was quite clear about this when he said:

Until we had the seven MPs elected there was just one leadership. There was no division within the leadership.  
(My italics) (38)

And whilst there was considerable continuity in both Party Executives, it is important to remember that with the SNP the continuity was amongst those very clearly identified as the Party leaders. This was just as true in the political as much as in the administrative sense. Only Harold Wilson, James Callaghan and Tony Benn, of those who were members of the NEC for the full period, were obvious Party leaders. This compares with seven out of eight on the SNP NEC, over the same number of years, who were all obviously identified as Party leaders in that they all held senior elected office. In percentage terms this was 10.3 per cent in the case of the Labour Party, and 29 per cent for the SNP.

Senior office-bearers are, as we indicated above, much more difficult to compare. In the years between 1964 and 1974, the Labour Party had one Leader, 10 Chairmen and three Treasurers. The SNP had two Chairmen (who also functioned as Party leaders) and five Treasurers.

Therefore both parties appeared to show considerable continuity in this regard. But it is really in the dominance of crucial management sub-committees that we see the strength of the leadership group within the SNP:

Many committees exercise power beyond the limits implied to their legitimate organisational role. Even when they are supposed to be only advisory groups, they initiate action in other organisational units by virtue of their expertise, their control of communication, and perhaps merely by default. (39)

Examples of this abound within the SNP: the creation of the National Assembly, the EPC and GBC, the many instances when the decisions taken to increase branch dues and exact penalties for those not meeting the increased payment, the hiring, placement and subsequent firing of the 'regional organisers', or the co-option of Douglas Drysdale onto the

NEC, and the investment policies of the Party, etc., were all initiated by senior members of the NEC.

As we have said above, the NEC, for the most part, was dealing with matters which had already been discussed in sub-committees, and as we have already seen, the most important of these were dominated by the most senior figures of the Party. The most critical management committees were likewise dominated by this group, for example, the GBC, the EPC and the EC. These committees also had one other predominant feature; smallness of size.

It is interesting to note that the problem of committee size is overcome in government, and probably business as well, by the use of sub-committees and executive committees. The larger committees seem to be more collection of sub-groups than truly integrated operating units. In such cases, the size of the sub-committees is probably a more significant statistic. (40)

Filley and House (41) suggest that classical organisation theory argues that the typical committee is, and should be, small; for example, around five or six members. Moreover, surveys tend to suggest that this is borne out in practice. It was in the case of the SNP Executive's sub-committees: attendance at the EPC averaged around seven members, attendance at the EC was approximately four, at the GBC usually six, whilst average attendance at the less important OC was nine.

The Labour Party's sub-committee on Organisation had around 17 members, and although this Committee always included very senior Party figures (defined as Ministers and ex-Ministers) they usually did not form a majority: the composition of the Organisation Committee, in common with the other sub-committees reflected:

the same preponderance of MPs (and of Ministers and ex-Ministers) as has the NEC itself. (42)

Therefore, Ministers, or ex-Ministers, whilst a crucial part of this forum were not as dominant, in terms of representation, as were the senior elected members of the SNP on its management sub-committees. For example, in McKenzie's analysis of the Finance and General Purposes Committee <sup>(43)</sup> he found only one occasion when Ministers or ex-Ministers formed a majority on that body over a nine year period. In fact, on six occasions non-MPs formed a majority.

The equivalent committee in the SNP was the GBC, and it contrasts markedly with its Labour Party opposite number in that it was totally composed of the most senior members of the Party.

A comparison with the Labour Party and SNP NECs suggests a profile of strong Core Persistence of senior party figures in both. This was something McKenzie had previously noted to be a striking characteristic of the Labour Party. Yet the fact is that it was a feature more evident in the SNP than in the Labour Party.

### Conclusion

This chapter on management committees within the SNP points very firmly to two directions:

- (a) the NEC dominated three out of four management sub-committees and its presence was marked on a fourth. But more than this, we discovered that on two of the committees there was a majority of senior office-bearers, whilst on another, 41 per cent of the committee members were senior office-holders.
- (b) there is very clear evidence of Core Persistence, with certain individuals having not only interlocking membership and

holding senior office, but also fulfilling both of these roles through time. These individuals were: Dr. Robert McIntyre, Gordon Wilson, William Wolfe, Ian Macdonald and David Rollo. This group was joined around 1970 by Douglas Henderson, Michael Murgatroyd, Rosemary Hall, Winifred Ewing and John McAteer (an official), as senior office-holders and members of one or more management sub-committees, as well as constant NEC members. On top of this there were others who not only held senior office, but had interlocking membership of several committees as well. For example, between 1964 and 1969, Dr. James Lees, Douglas Drysdale and James Braid. There were several others who came to the fore a little later, around 1971-1972, these included Margo MacDonald, Tom McAlpine and Isobel Lindsay.

Although there is an element of arbitrariness in using round figures in an attempt to quantify the dominant group, it is still worth doing if we are to meet the definition given by Dahl. Therefore, we would suggest that somewhere around 15 persons were in dominant management positions for all, or a large part, of the period under investigation, and this is reflected in the fact that almost 35 per cent of the NEC in 1974 had been continuous members since 1964 (or longer), and of this group 62.5 per cent had held senior office for the duration. The 15 (17 if we include Donaldson, who lost the Chairmanship in 1969 - though he did serve for one year as Vice-Chairman in 1974, and John McAteer, who was paid official) can be said to be representative of Dahl's ruling elite.

We believe the evidence presented in this chapter is sufficiently strong to allow us to give an affirmative response to Dahl in his demands

for a 'well-defined group'. We do not suggest that they always agreed in sub-committee, or in the full NEC. However, whatever disagreements there may have been they do not appear to have been sufficiently powerful enough to elicit a resignation from amongst the group. Bearing in mind the data given in previous chapters concerning the source of innovation of management proposals - and their acceptance by the mass - we consider that this chapter adds further weight to our contention that a comparatively small group, which remained remarkably stable over time, was responsible for the guidance and control of the SNP's organisational direction, and, moreover, it can, retrospectively, be specifically delineated.



1. Robert E. Dahl, 'A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model', American Political Science Review, (Vol. 52, No.2, June 1958), pp. 463-469.
2. Ibid., p.464.
3. Ibid., p.469.
4. Ibid., p.466.
5. Ibid., p.467.
6. Ibid., p.467.
7. William Wolfe, Interview with the author, 29/3/81.
8. James H. Gibson, John M. Ivancevich, James H. Donnely, Organisations: Behaviour, Structure, Processes (Dallas, Business Publications Inc., 1976), p.536.
9. Ibid., pp. 357-358.
10. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Accession (Acc.) 6038, Box No. 2, Minutes of the 1963 Annual Conference.
11. Scots Independent, 20/6/64.
12. Gordon Wilson, Report on Organisation to the National Executive Committee, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished), p.24.
13. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 5, Memo from Dr. James Lees to NEC, 11/4/67.
14. Minutes of the Electoral Planning Committee, December 1967 to July 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
15. Ibid., October 1973.
16. Gordon Wilson, Interview with the author, 29/3/81.
17. Wilson Report on Organisation, op.cit., p.12.
18. Ibid., p.12.
19. Ibid., p.13.
20. Ibid., p.13.
21. Ibid., p.24.
22. Minutes of the Organisation Committee, May 1965 to April 1974.
23. Bernard M. Bass, Leadership, Psychology, and Organisational Behaviour, (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1960), p.265.
24. Ibid., p.269.
25. The NEC representatives sat on these committees as full members, that is, they were not ex-officio. The committees are

composed of individuals who have been invited to serve on them by the respective conveners. The invitation is usually based upon an expectation of expertise, and/or interest in the committee's subject, on the part of the invited party. But the decision to proffer an invitation rests entirely with the convenue. He/she is appointed by the National Assembly. Although this mandate should be renewed annually, it is frequently carried on without annual renewal.

26. Minutes of the NEC, November 1967, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
27. Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958), p.108.
28. Ibid., p.108.
29. Ibid., p.108.
30. Ibid., p.108.
31. Ibid., p.111.
32. Reports of the Annual Conferences, 1963-1974, NLS, Acc. 6038, Boxes 2 - 10, and Edinburgh, SNP.
33. Robert T. McKenzie, British Political Parties: The Distribution of Power within the Conservative and Labour Parties, (London, Heinemann, 1963), p.521.
34. Ibid., p.522.
35. Ibid., p.520.
36. Ibid., pp. 520-521.
37. Reports of the Annual Conferences of the Labour Party, 1964-1974, London, Transport House.
38. Interview with William Wolfe, 29/3/81.
39. Alan C. Filley & Robert J. House, Managerial Process and Organisational Behaviour, (Glenview, Illinois, Scott, Foresman & Co., 1969), p.325.
40. Ibid., p.326.
41. Ibid.
42. McKenzie, op.cit., p.526.
43. Ibid., p.424.

## Chapter Nine

### Party Communication Channels and Internal Power

In terms of information theory, unrestricted communication produces noise in the system. Without patterning, without pauses, without precision, there is sound but there is no music. Without structure, without spacing, without specifications, there is a Babel of tongues but there is no meaning. (1)

This chapter deals with a process central to the meaningful functioning of any organisation, regardless of type: its communication system. But as the above quote suggests, the structural form which information flow takes is critical; without well-defined channels through which knowledge can flow, it is more than likely that chaos and system breakdown will ensue. It is in pursuit of an understanding of how these channels functioned within the SNP that we now concern ourselves.

How were the advances in organisation between 1960 and 1974 achieved? We have tried to demonstrate the structural/management techniques employed, the financial innovations and the Wilson Report, etc. But such changes had to be passed on to the activists in the field, and this could not have been easy. After all, the SNP was spatially diverse, spread unevenly across the country, its members did not meet in one, or even a handful of locations. But rather were found in hundreds of branches. These branches did not meet at the same time every month, indeed some did not meet at all. Even those which did meet monthly may have had irregular attendance. Despite this, the leadership managed to maintain, for the most part, a sufficient degree of system stability, in the sense of coordinating action and ensuring all parts and regions of the Party were kept in

touch with what was going in the Party as a whole. This stability helped the Party in its organisational and electoral growth.

What can this tell us about the SNP's internal communications, and beyond that, what role did the leadership play in information coordination and dispersal? Were Party communications predominantly two-way, with equal degrees of data and instruction flowing from the branches to the centre and vice versa? Or did the leadership dominate in this sphere as in others?

Given the generally-held view of the SNP as being 'open-ended', one would expect to find a communication system which was typified by a free flow of information both vertically and horizontally <sup>(2)</sup> and one in which branch activists used every structural means at their disposal to question, and/or advise the leadership of their feelings. Thus, although the centre would dominate the periphery in the sheer quantity of data it sent out, nevertheless, there would be a considerable flow in the opposite direction.

We shall attempt to quantify these assumptions in the following chapter, but to begin with we shall outline what is known empirically about communications within organisations, and how best to relate this to our investigation into the operation of the information network within the SNP.

### Organisational Communications

In the previous chapters we have observed how, as the organisation increased in size (as defined by membership growth) a structural

response based on increasing specialisation and a hierarchy of power occurred. This began with the employment of a full-time official, was accelerated by the Wilson Report, and continued throughout the 1960s. Such developments could have been forecast given what is already known about organisational growth and the knock-on effects which follow in the wake of the latter. Communications theory also leads one to expect a consequential growth in a formal communications network as the organisation expands:

It seems that the necessity for a formalised communication network increases as the organisational membership increases (i.e. as sociological size increases). (3)

and,

As the organisational membership grows and the tasks performed become increasingly diversified and specialised communication is necessary to coordinate these various tasks with one another. (4)

But why, one might ask, is it necessary to devise or evolve a highly structured communication system? The answer, of course, is to improve organisational effectiveness (perhaps even control by the leaders). Moreover, since this is closely tied to goal realisation it also improves the chances of the achievement of organisational goals (5). How else would one's members know what was expected of them?

Communications are central to the proper functioning of the organisation, without them 'peripheral anarchy' would occur; people would be isolated and uncoordinated in their behaviour:

... formal communication networks are necessary for several reasons. Attainment of goals, interdepartmental coordination of work activities ... Ideally, adhering to the formal communication network prescribed by organisational leaders will have predictably favourable consequences for effectiveness. (6)

Such a planned, coordinated, strategy whilst vital in all large organisations is even more needful in a national political party; the latter is territorially polymorphic, and unlike even large corporations is not located in one, or several centres, but spread across the entire nation in multitudinous units. In such circumstances a coordinated approach to intelligence gathering regarding what is happening to the organisation, and the distribution of information from the centre, is of paramount necessity if goal realisation is to be achieved.

What are the consequences for the organisation of such a formal communications network?

For our purposes perhaps one of the most interesting is the support a communication network gives to the existing organisational structure and power hierarchy:

The transmission of information to all points in an organisation is generally characterised as vertical and downward. The typical pattern is for persons in superior positions to dispense information to subordinate personnel, usually under their direct control in the hierarchy of power. (7)

Formal communication and power hierarchy are intimately related; unrestricted and uncoordinated information flow would have a negative impact upon the organisation, rumour would replace fact, random communication could easily distort the intention of leaders and led, and give rise to uncertainty - as the quote given at the start of this chapter argues. There is then the necessity of system constraint and direction:

To move from an unorganised state to an organised state requires the introduction of constraints and restrictions to reduce diffuse and random communication to channels appropriate for the accomplishment of organisational objectives. (8)

It is only through a communication network that managers can operationalise basic organisational programmes. According to Blau and Scott <sup>(9)</sup> research by Leavitt showed that a centralised communication network <sup>(10)</sup> contributes to effective coordination. Experimental evidence strengthens this view:

... hierarchical organisation serves important functions for achieving coordination and that it does so specifically by restricting the free flow of communication. <sup>(11)</sup>

It is because a hierarchy restricts the free flow of communication that it improves coordination. Moreover, if a hierarchy did not exist it would appear that informal communication would create one:

even if there were no formal hierarchy in the organisation, communication among peers would be likely to give rise to informal differentiation of status, which also creates obstacles to communication. <sup>(12)</sup>

A coordinated communications' network is an integral part of the managerial structure, without one an organisation would find it impossible to properly function. However, communication is, by definition, a plural process, it involves a network of individuals. Moreover, to be effective it must carry cultural meaning so that each individual can understand the context and the intention of the message, in order that there will be a probability of a predictable response - though this need not be a positive one:

Communication experts tell us that effective communication is the result of a common understanding between the communicator and the receiver. <sup>(13)</sup>

In all organisations communication may be seen to occur vertically (in both directions), and horizontally (across institutional and/or specialist divisions). Yet this need not mean either an equal and balanced flow, and/or an acceptance of the need for a two-way response. However, there seems little doubt that the predominant form of intra-organisational communication is of a vertically downward type. At least one investigation <sup>(14)</sup> has shown that the necessity for upward

communication is high only when superior and subordinate roles are differentiated so that the superior is divorced from the day-to-day operating problems of the subordinates.

We shall return to the relevance of this for the SNP later; in the meantime we will continue to examine the important subject of vertical information flow.

Downward vertical communication is generally of five types: <sup>(15)</sup>

1. Task directives. These amount to job instructions.
2. Information designed to produce an understanding of the task and its relationship to other organisational tasks.
3. Information about organisational procedures and practices.
4. Feedback to subordinates about their performance.
5. Information of an ideological character to inculcate a sense of mission.

Numbers 1, 3, 4 and 5 have an immediate relevance for our study, and we shall return to these categories in the conclusion of this section <sup>(16)</sup>.

As we shall see, most of the information flow within the SNP was characterised by a vertically downward pattern. However, this should not be seen as surprising; on the contrary, it is in line with the evidence of other studies. Central to this downward flow is trust; the receiver believes that those higher in the organisational pyramid are motivated by a desire to improve the effectiveness of the organisation, and the issuance of orders is in line with this drive.

According to communication experts, effective, viable communication is the result of 'a common understanding between the communicator and



the receiver' (17). One cannot overestimate the importance of empathy (Weber's Verstehen) and trust for an effective flow of communications within an organisation. Information networks are greatly aided by a common bond between leaders and led:

Source credibility is the trust, confidence and faith the receiver has in the words and actions of the communicator. The level of credibility that the receiver assigns to the communicator in turn directly affects how the receiver views and reacts to words, ideas, and action of the communicator. (18)

Such is the importance of 'trust' that, in itself, it can be sufficient to overcome problems of comprehension and/or relevance, which the members/workforce may have with a particular directive. Downward vertical flow is thus facilitated by such confidence:

A partial substitute for translation is the ability of some leaders to develop confidence and liking for themselves as personalities among the rank-and-file. Their position on a policy issue will be accepted not because it is understood, but because people trust them and love them. This is more characteristic of political leadership than leadership in non-political organisations. (19)

In order to understand the operation of the communication system within the SNP we shall now illustrate the basic models of information flow.

The first, and theoretical, model is called the All Channel Network. Theoretically, the NEC/senior officers could have written to the entire membership, but for obvious financial and logistical reasons this never happened. Therefore, direct leader/led communication is an ideal-type situation never instituted in reality.

#### Model 1

NEC (Senior Officers/Staff)



Party Members

In practice, communication was effected through the medium of branch secretaries whose duty it was to circulate information and instructions, etc., to the activists and ordinary members.

Model 2

NEC (Senior Officers/Staff)



Branch Secretaries

NEC (Senior Officer/Staff)



Constituency Assoc.

Secretaries

Model 2 was the most common form of downward information flow. Strictly speaking, it was the Executive Vice-Chairmen, National Secretary and staff who, in communication with the local secretaries, dominated the information network.

Model 3

Senior Officers/Staff



Conference Delegates

Model 4

Senior Officer/Staff



Council Delegates

Model 3 was the communication form which occurred at the Party's annual conference (N.B. we are concerned here with organisational meetings of the Party's National Council.) Both types took a written form but with considerable additional verbal information. Each officer was given approximately ten minutes to speak to his report. This contrasted with the two minutes allocated to the individual delegates. However, given the fact that the delegates could, within distinct time limits and depending upon the number of delegates who wanted to ask a question, interrogate the Officers/staff, there is some grounds for suggesting that Models 3 and 4 were two-way networks.

Two other forms of downward communication were the Party's

newspaper (although this was not the official voice of the leadership), the Scots Independent, and media appearances. Yet neither of these should be regarded as major conduits for the dissemination of information about the organisation. However, it seems likely that regular media appearances would have boosted the personal standing of senior Party figures.

If downward vertical flow was the most common form of intra-organisational communication, it was not the only one. There must have been some degree of upward contact. Yet this is difficult to achieve.

An effective organisation needs upward communication as much as it needs downward communication ... effective upward communication is difficult to achieve, especially in larger organisations. However, successful upward communication is often necessary for sound decision-making. (10)

Effective communication, in whatever direction, is more likely if there are not too many intervening channels between communicator and receiver. Moreover, achievement of goals is eased if the number of links in the network are minimised.

A related aspect of communication systems: is the efficiency which can be measured in terms of the number of communication links in a given network ... Experimental work has generally supported the hypothesis that the smaller number of communication links in a group, the greater the efficiency in task performance. (21)

Certainly the SNP could not be said to have had a plethora of 'links' separating the communicator from the receiver, but those that existed - though few in number - were quite formidable. We can look at these, in the first instance, from the viewpoint of upward communication.

#### Model 5

NEC/Senior Officers (Staff)

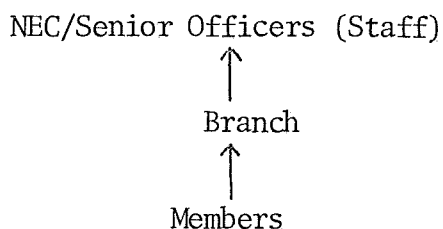


Members

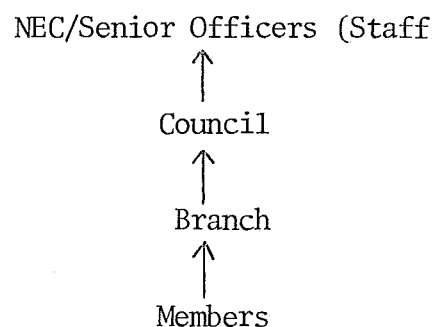
An ordinary Party member who might have wished an alteration in the manner in which a certain organisational function was carried out by the centre could, of course, simply have written, phoned, or otherwise contacted the Party official <sup>(22)</sup> responsible - although if all the members had exercised that right then system overload would have occurred (see above for comments on the need for restrictions on the flow of upward communication). The fact is that the great majority of members did not choose to contact the leadership directly. Therefore Model 5 was neither a common, nor encouraged, communication link.

Model 6 was an altogether more manageable proposition. In this the member could have urged his branch to write to the NEC commenting on some matter of Party business. If the branch agreed then a letter would have been sent via the secretary directly to the Executive. However, if their suggestion required constitutional change, or an alteration in procedure, then the matter would have to have gone before the quarterly Council or annual Conference as in Models 7 and 8.

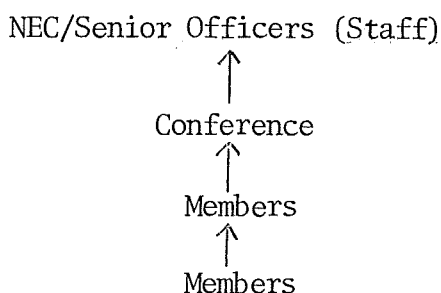
Model 6



Model 7

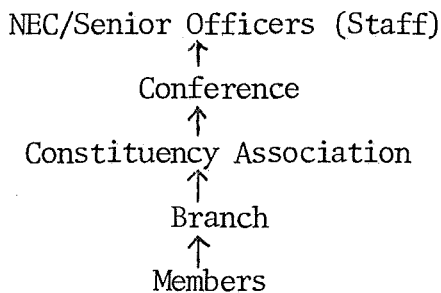


Model 8

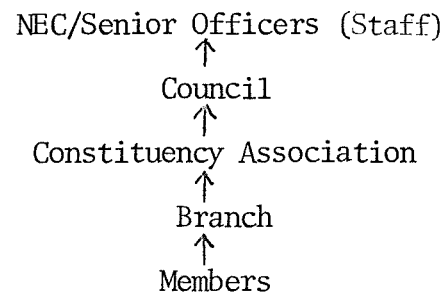


Models 9 and 10 are really variants of 8 and 9, except in this instance the matter in question is channelled through the constituency association rather than the branch. Nevertheless, in terms of links in the network, Models 9 and 10 present quite significant barriers; the individual in the branch must persuade the latter that the matter is worth raising at the constituency association, and the same feat must be accomplished at the associations's meeting. Neither outcome could be taken for granted; and the same caveat regarding the distinction between a suggestion and an alteration in procedures, applies.

Model 9



Model 10



Therefore we can see that if any constitutional change, or organisational alteration was required, then the fastest route to implementation was Model 7. Yet even that required persuading one's branch, and then Council itself, of the wisdom of the suggestion. Even then one was still dependent upon the Executive officer, for example, Vice-Chairman (Organisation) for its implementation. We shall quantify the success rate of this approach in the next section.

If a member of the NEC, or more commonly one of its senior members, wished to propose a change he could go immediately to Council with it, or get the NEC's backing for a resolution. We shall also examine the success rate of NEC-inspired resolutions in the next section.

Upward communication flow need not be as formalised as resolution formation, it could simply take the form of questioning, or even, in extreme cases, the rejection of a report given by the senior officers of the Party. The next section will also deal with the number and outcome of such rejections.

To summarise: the members could communicate with the leadership (on organisational matters) most regularly at National Council, but they also had annual access at Conference. Both of these forums were filled on a delegate basis and this had the potential effect of removing the vast bulk of the members from direct access. This need not have crippled attempts by them to advise or question the leaders; after all, they could still write or phone etc., on an individual basis, but these were unlikely to result in any alteration in prevailing organisational techniques. Rather it would have required a mass approach, and perhaps even a coordinated lobby. There is no evidence that this ever occurred.

The leaders, for their part, had to report to both Council and Conference. Beyond that they could use monthly branch 'outputs', sent by headquarters to the secretaries of the branches, for action or money etc., as well as inform them about Party activities (these outputs became regularised in the early 1960s). NEC members were often also invited to branch and constituency meetings, as well as the many social functions which were held throughout the country. It was also much easier for them to contact each other than is horizontal communication given the small numbers involved and the regularity of contact, than for members of branches to meet to coordinate activities. In fact it was headquarters' practice not to circulate the names and addresses of

branch and constituency secretaries to other branches and constituency associations. Moreover, the sheer number of members and branches involved made such lateral contact difficult anyway.

Yet both leaders and led had a similar problem. In a normative organisation, such as a political party, and unlike a large company, the leaders are dealing with people who need not take any part in the functioning of the organisation - other than to hold a membership card. The members are disparate and geographically dispersed, so that even with a communications network which seeks to minimise the distance between leaders and led, and optimise points of contact, major obstacles remain in the path of information dispersal. A related difficulty stems from the fact that whilst a company may have an 'open-door' policy which allows the cleaner to take a grievance to the factory manager, in a political party this could involve contact over a distance of several hundreds of miles.

Balanced against these difficulties there are several advantages a political party has over the industrial corporation: membership commitment and, for the most part, confidence and trust in the leadership. We have already seen that trust in the leadership is an essential component for an effective communications system, and may indeed overcome difficulties in the understanding and interpretation of directives. Membership commitment, generally speaking, will be greater for those who are motivated enough to join a political party, than for those who fulfil a purely instrumental role working on the factory floor or some other form of occupation. This in itself facilitates communication, indeed members may even inconvenience themselves to get news of the party's activities.

Vertical flow did exist, and was really quite effective. Indeed it had to be if the SNP was to survive organisationally and electorally. Therefore before we conclude this section we shall briefly look at the five main types of downward communication and assess their relevance for a political party.

1. Task Directives, or job instructions. Obviously the National Organiser and Vice-Chairman (Organisation), had to explain to activists (23) what was expected of them. As we saw in the chapter on Finance, these instructions could go the extremes of specificity, so that party workers would be in no doubt as to the nature of the task. Such communication is vital to a political party, the more so if a majority of its workers are neophytes.
2. Information about the task and its relationship to other tasks within the organisation. Basically this is the communication that is designed to show the worker how his job contributes to the overall achievement of the company's goals.
3. Information about organisational procedures and practices. This is absolutely vital for the active member, especially if he aspires to office, or seeks to influence the decision-making of the Party.
4. Feedback to subordinates about their performance. On an individual level this is a concept more associated with a factory than a political party. But on the collective level it also occurs within a political party, for example, the injunctions frequently made by the Treasurer for more cash from the branches, or by the National Organiser to sign up new members.
5. Inculcation of a sense of mission. Clearly this is vital for a political party, in fact, it may be the most critical element in the entire organisational efforts of a party.



Downward flow is vital for management efficiency, and the party leadership enjoys enormous structural and psychological advantages which facilitate control over the communication network. This, at least, is the finding of much of the research on the role of the managers in the information net.

In the next section we shall recount, and then quantify, the role of the SNP's leadership in the Party's communication network to determine if that was also centralised and dominated by the senior officers of the Party. National Council and Annual Conference reports of the period will be analysed to determine the extent to which branch delegates used these forums to question and/or chastise the leadership, and recommend organisational innovations, and the extent to which the leadership used them as an important communications link. That is, what was the dominant flow pattern of Council and Conference?

#### National Council As A Communications Link

This section will be in two parts. The first will describe the most relevant episodes which best illustrate how aspects of communication were handled. For example, how Council was used by officers and delegates to inform each other of their respective problems. The second part of the section will be quantitative, in that it will list the number of reports, given by Party officers, which were accepted, rejected or remitted back by the delegates. The number of resolutions formulated by delegates, or branches, which were passed by Council. And the number proposed by the NEC which were endorsed or rejected by the membership by way of their Council delegates. Finally, the number of questions put by the delegates to the Party's officers.

As we indicated above, National Council, which meets quarterly and is composed of delegates from branches and constituency parties was the most likely forum for communication between activists and Party managers, especially for the former. It was at Council that the members could most easily question or advise, formulate resolutions or reject proposals. Council was the central link in the network of Party communication. From the following analysis we hope to be able to assess the degree of fit between the typology of downward communication, looked at above, and the experiences of the SNP between 1960 and 1974.

The typical format of Council meetings was, and is, for the senior officers to give a report of their activities on behalf of the Party since the last meeting of Council. They may also propose changes or make some recommendation or other regarding organisational practice. On top of this there is almost always an exhortation for greater effort from the members. One should also bear in mind that it was only the delegates to Council who were sent the minutes of its meetings, together with the agenda and officer reports, for the next meeting.

Therefore, the extent to which ordinary members had access to information about the proceedings of Council largely depended upon the assiduousness of the delegates in disseminating information to their fellow members, and the degree to which both delegates and members actually understood what was being said. Thus although Council was at the centre of the network it was by no means a fail-safe method of keeping the members in touch with events.

Even so, in the early 1960s Council delegates had several advantages over their equivalents of a later period (from the mid-1960s on): at that stage NEC minutes were actually circulated to the delegates, and many of those who attended Council in the early years also sat on the organisation committees of the Party, and could have had their enquiries dealt with there. For example, at the Council meeting of June 1961, 13 of the 24 delegates attending were NEC members. Obviously when Council attendances swelled to several hundred as a consequence of the growing number of branches, then such inter-delegate contact became much more difficult.

The Council in the early years of the 1960s spent a great deal of time discussing publicity matters with little direct reference to organisational questions. Indeed the first direct reference to internal communications that we could find, occurred at the December 1962 Council:

It was pointed out that Conveners of Committees are expected to submit their written reports to Headquarters not less than two weeks before a National Council meeting in order that they may be duplicated and circulated. (24)

It is difficult to estimate what this meant for the general level of communications in those years. It could either mean that committees which normally circulated reports were failing to do so, or that one or two defaulters were damaging the overall level of information flow. However, one incident from April 1963 suggests that the leadership was unwilling to circulate too much data to the membership, and that the downward flow was being carefully channelled. A report by the Party's Organisation Committee was presented to the Annual Conference<sup>(25)</sup> of that year. Part of the document was marked 'Private and Confidential' and was not available to the delegates. It makes interesting reading:

This part of the Organisation Committee Report, prepared by the Convener without discussion by the Committee, has been circulated to the following people only: (Dr. R.D. McIntyre, Messrs. Arthur Donaldson, M.B. Shaw, W.A. Milne, Wm. Wolfe, D.R. Rollo, Robert Campbell, Murdo Young, Ian Macdonald and Mrs. Unity Miller: and must NOT be discussed with, or shown to, any other person. There will be NO discussion of this information at the Private Session of Conference as many new members will be present. With the circulation list as above, there can be no leakage of information. (26)

The implication to be drawn from this is quite clear: there were certain subjects which were permissible for internal communication purposes, that is, to be relayed to the delegates/members and other matters which had to be censored - depending upon the judgement of the leadership (five of the names on the list were found to be part of the persistent core of the leadership cadre examined in the last chapter). One wonders how many other subjects likewise removed from the agendas of Council and Conference. Obviously one cannot draw conclusions from this one example about agenda setting. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that even a close examination of Council and Conference minutes is no guarantee that we are tapping all the issues which the leadership discussed and the decisions taken by them regarding information diffusion.

However, it may be that individual members felt a general unhappiness with the amount of communication they were receiving from the centre. In a communique from Ian Macdonald, National Organiser, to the branches in mid-1963, it was noted that:

Vague grumbles are heard from time to time that things happen without the knowledge of the branches. We would like to draw the attention of such grumblers to the fact that all branches are continually urged to send a delegate to the National Council meetings and that also that a report back to the branch should be made by that member. The delegate receives the minutes of both Council and Executive meetings and these, if read, give a clear picture of what is happening in the Party ... (27)

Macdonald is pointing to the theoretical position, that is, delegates should keep the membership informed. Yet as we have just seen not even the delegates were told everything, and to rely that they, in their turn, recounted everything they they knew to even the active members who bothered to turn up at branch meetings was something of a pious hope. In any case, somewhere between one-third and one-half of the accredited delegates failed to attend Council.

The 'newsletters' which were sent out by Headquarters on a monthly basis to branch secretaries and were supposed to be read out to the members at branch meetings. They were replete with important dates, action expected of the branch members, forthcoming social events, and reminders by committee conveners, of cooperation desired of the membership in some field or other. In other words the 'newsletters' exhorted rather than informed.

The next occasion when a serious question of communication was raised was at the September 1966 Council meeting. The Vice-Chairman (Organiser), Dr. James Lees, was recorded as having:

spoke of the communications problem between H.Q. and Branches and between H.Q. and constituency associations.

He would like to have seen:

(a) Vertical organisation - 10-15 Area Councils with an office and a Chairman, who would act as H.Q. and National Council representative in the area. Area councils should be able to support - aid staff and organiser.

(b) Horizontal organisation - voluntary bodies of people engaged in aspects of Scottish social life to act as a body of expert opinion available to the Party. (28)

It would appear that no further action was taken in either regard.

Lees had always been an avid proponent of more membership participation, but his concern does not appear to have been shared by the rank-and-file, and on those rare occasions that matters of communication were

raised at Council it was usually the leadership that was responsible. At the Council meeting of September 1968, the Vice-Chairman (Organisation) expressed concern about the inadequate level of communications between the centre and the branches. The Organisation Committee

was composed of a Member from most of the areas in Scotland ... It is hoped that branches or members who have a grievance will take it in the first instance to the Organisation Committee Member for their area so that it may be considered by the Committee and perhaps a remedy given, or, if not, report made to higher authority. (29)

What strikes one immediately about this is that it introduced, if it was adhered to, a barrier to direct upward vertical communication: the discontented members were asked to go through the Committee rather than go straight to the top. Moreover, it was hoped that this would improve communication between the centre and the branches, the obvious implication being that there already existed an inadequate dialogue between the two, or at least the centre did not have much input from the periphery. The suggestion made by the Organisation Committee had an inbuilt structural weakness in that it erected, or at least recommended, that another obstacle be placed in the path of the activists in the latter's attempts to communicate with the leadership.

We shall presently quantify the flow pattern of National Councils over the years. However, it is already evident that the membership appeared not to be overly concerned with a situation which, to all intents and purposes, relegated them to a position whereby they were almost continually the recipients of information, and very rarely the communicators.

A curious resolution from the March 1969 Council appears to confirm this view. Dr. James Lees, perennially concerned with the slippage in membership power, felt moved to oppose the following resolution

put by an ordinary delegate to Council:

This Council resolves that Executive Vice-Chairmen giving written reports should be available to answer questions on their reports and should not give a verbal report in addition to their written reports. (30)

The resolution was carried by 104 votes to 97. In a word, the result was to reduce even further the flow of information made available to the delegates. Lees appeared to have recognised the dangers to Party communications inherent in the resolution, hence his opposition.

His concern about the erosion of Council's power in matters of Party administration, was again manifest at the December 1971 National Council. He proposed a lengthy resolution which sought to reassert Council's authority over the leadership. It also included a section which called for the re-introduction of verbal reports. The first demanded that Council

resume its constitutional function as the senior administrative body of the Party.

The second section continued in the same vein. Council should

reassert the immediate responsibility to it of all National Office-Bearers and of the National Executive Committee.

Section 3 called for national office-bearers to give a verbal report of their activities to each Council meeting. The final section asked for the National Secretary to prepare the Council agenda on the basis that the foregoing demands represented the main purposes of National Council (31).

Despite his obviously strong feelings about 'verbal' reports, Lees accepted an amendment which substituted 'written' for verbal. Yet even this concession was not enough to bring success to the resolution. The whole thing was remitted back to a Committee on

the Constitution.

The delegates' lack of enthusiasm and/or concern about the necessity to enlarge the potential audience which received communiques from Headquarters, was demonstrated at a Council meeting two years before this.

A resolution <sup>(32)</sup> which called for the agenda and minutes of Council to be sent to branch secretaries, as well as delegates, and this to be done three weeks prior to the Council meeting was rejected, although they did agree that the agenda be sent out to the delegates three weeks before Council.

It seem remarkable that such an obvious improvement in communications which might have had the effect of involving more members in the affairs of the Party, should not have been accepted by the activists of a Party which prided itself on the level of membership involvement. The minutes do not record the debate itself so that reasons why this resolution fell are not known.

Another, and quite similar attempt, to improve the speed of communications by having abbreviated minutes of Council and Assembly sent two weeks after the meeting of each, was overwhelmingly defeated at the April Council meeting of 1974. <sup>(33)</sup>

The most probable reason for the reluctance of the members to assert themselves, may be gauged from an unpublished opinion poll taken from amongst 'key activists' in 1970 <sup>(34)</sup>. It discovered that 74 per cent found the existing distribution of power within the Party



satisfactory, 57 per cent found headquarters' service satisfactory (only 30 per cent were dissatisfied), and, more significantly, 75 per cent believed that a political movement should have a strong leader.

What is interesting is that this poll was taken after the 1970 General Election when one might have expected to find rumblings of discontent with the prevailing state of affairs. Gordon Wilson has observed that

when things are going well there is probably an exaggerated reception of the work you do. When things are going badly it is the converse. (35)

Evidently the activists thought, even after the 1970 Election, that the SNP was in good hands.

As we have attempted to show in this section the delegates' concern with internal communications appears to have negligible; the majority were content to allow the NEC, or at least some of its members, to dominate the information network of the Party. This seems strange in view of the fact that Council was the major link in the formally delineated system. However, upward communications need not have taken the form of structured resolutions regarding organisational innovation (we have already seen that this did not occur), but rather a critique of the management of the Party. Brand saw Council as very important from this perspective:

The very fact that there is such a regular means of consulting the membership is significant as compared with the infrequent and often ritualised meetings of other parties. (36)

And, perhaps more significantly:

At Conference and National Council the reports of the Chairman, the parliamentary leader and other offices are often fiercely debated and are not

regarded as statements to be accepted automatically with acclamation. (37)

Thus if Council should not exactly be viewed as a forum for Party law making in the true sense, it should, nevertheless, be seen as a serious investigative body closely scrutinising the work of the NEC, and, presumably, on occasions rejecting the actions of 'Cabinet'. It was here, after all, that communication to the leadership was likely to have had the widest and most influential audience, composed, as it was, of the most active members of the Party.

In order to quantify these assumptions about National Council we analysed the minutes (all we could locate) of 49 Council meetings held between 1960 and 1974, to determine: (a) the number of resolutions on matters of organisation which came from the delegates; (b) the number which were accepted; (c) the number of questions which were put to senior officers - also on matters of organisation; (d) the number of times parts, or all, of the reports were remitted back for further consideration; and (e) the number of resolutions put forward by the NEC, and the number which were successful.

Table 11      Resolutions from Council Delegates, 1960-1974 (38)

	<u>Resolutions</u>	<u>Unsuccessful</u>	<u>Successful</u>	<u>Remitted</u>
5/6/65	3	2	1	
11/12/66	3		2	1
15/6/68	2	2		
1/3/69	1		1	
6/12/69	1*	.5	.5	
6/3/71	1	1		
6/12/71	1			1
20/4/74	1	1		
Total	13	6.5	4.5	2

(\*The resolution was divided in two, with one half successful and the other rejected.)

Therefore out of 49 Council meetings which we examined, only 13 resolutions relating to organisational questions emerged from the branch or constituency delegates. And of this number only 4.5 (34.6%) were successful. 6.5 (50%) were unsuccessful, and 2 (15.4%) were remitted back for further consideration.

The number of successes would appear to be extraordinary few - as were the overall number of resolutions - but we shall be in a better position to judge the quantity and direction of the communication flow when we come to analyse the number of resolutions coming down from the NEC. However, if the actual number of resolutions on organisation coming from the delegates appears to be small, perhaps there was a compensatory element in the questioning of senior officers, and the number of times their Reports were rejected or remitted back by the members. In fact, this may have been the most effective method of communicating one's feelings to the leadership. Indeed, S.E. Finer in referring to the SNP, has noted that

The "centre", as it is called, plays a purely administrative role. The decentralisation of the party creates a heavy administrative load. It fosters a certain self-sufficiency in the branches, which indeed sometimes leads them to react against the party centre. (39)

Council was the most obvious forum for such reaction against the centre since it was at Council that the most active members of the Party met on a regular basis, and where the leaders gave a quarterly account of their stewardship.

Table 12Interrogation of NEC Office Bearers By Council Delegates, 1960-1974 (40)

	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Reports Rejected</u>
11/12/66	4	
30/11/68	2	
1/3/69	3	
11/4/70	4	
Total	13	0

On 7/7/62 an amendment to an NEC recommendation was defeated.

On 6/6/64 an Organisation Committee report was remitted to the NEC.

On 7/3/64 " " " " " not adopted.

On 6/13/69 three paragraphs of the Chairman's Report were not adopted.

On 4/12/71 there were two amendments to the Chairman's Report.

On 10/6/72 there was an attempt to have the Executive Vice-Chairman (Organisation) report rejected. This was defeated.

On 14/4/73 one paragraph of the Chairman's Report was deleted.

Out of the 49 Council meetings covered by this analysis, we could find only 13 questions put to the leadership on organisational matters, and we could find no evidence of a Report being rejected - despite one attempt. Only one committee Report was remitted back to the NEC, and another was not adopted. On three other occasions there were small alterations to the Chairman's reports.

There is no evidence here of any serious critique or interrogation of the leadership by the membership. As an upwardly vertical communication channel Council did not appear to have been very effective, and there is little reason to conclude that it, even on

an infrequent basis, reacted against the centre.

The following Table lists the number of NEC and/or senior officer inspired resolutions on organisational questions, which were put before Council between 1960 and 1974.

Table 13

NEC/Office Bearer Resolutions to National Council, 1960-1974 (41)

	<u>Source</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
3/3/62	Dr. R. McIntyre	Remitted to NEC
7/7/62	NEC	Carried
8/2/64	A. Donaldson	"
6/3/65	W. Wolfe	"
5/6/65	D. Drysdale	"
4/12/65	A. Donaldson	"
5/3/66	NEC	"
11/3/67	"	"
"	"	"
"	"	"
"	"	"
1/3/69	"	"
6/9/69	"	"
"	"	"
12/6/71	"	"
1/9/73	"	"
Total	16	15

Out of 16 resolutions, 15 were carried and one was remitted. Not only were there three more organisational propositions put to Council by the leaders than came from the delegates, but there was a 94 per cent success rate compared to 34.6 per cent for the delegates. We could not find one example of an NEC-inspired resolution which was rejected by the

membership at Council.

The implication to be drawn from this analysis of organisation matters is quite clear: National Council as a communications link was dominated by the Party leadership; this despite the fact that it should have been the locus of the members' attempts to communicate upwardly to the Party managers. However vigorous it may have been there is little evidence to support the view that delegates used Council as a means to institute changes in the way the Party was governed or administered. Neither does it give the impression of having closely monitored the leadership. William Wolfe seemed to confirm this view of a leadership not much inhibited or constrained by Council, when he observed,

I had no feeling of having being checked. I felt that I was responsible to National Council, but I didn't feel in any way restricted by National Council. (42)

Nevertheless, it might have been the case that Annual Conference filled this role, and it is to Conference that we now turn our attention.

#### Annual Conference as a Communications Link

Annual Conference is composed not only of the most active elements of the Party, but also of those who regard it as an occasion to renew acquaintances, make new friends, find out about the Party activities in other parts of Scotland, and enjoy the cut and thrust of debate. Beyond this, and despite its overloaded agenda, it is the functional equivalent of a company's annual general meeting, where the Board (the NEC) is called to account for its management, and where new ideas for the improvement of the latter can be presented. It is then potentially a very important communications links, and, in organisational matters, second only to Council itself - though, of

course, in strict constitutional terms it takes precedence over all.

The same basic approach used for the analysis of Council resolutions will be employed here. We will quantify the number of resolutions on organisational matters coming from, in this case, branches and constituency associations, and then from the NEC. Finally, we shall assess the success rate of these propositions. The tables below contain the extent of this data. Unfortunately, the material at our disposal does not allow us to quantify the number and type of questions put to the Party's officers on organisation. Thus our conclusions are based upon an analysis of resolutions only. The material used comes from agendas and reports of conferences, and the organisational matters are dealt with in a section known as Internal Business.

We have applied a certain discretion in the selection of data in that we have limited it to those questions which dealt strictly with organisational and management matters and not with policy-related questions. This is necessary because not all of the 'internal questions' relate directly to organisational concerns - not even indirectly. However, we estimate that the resolutions examined represent in excess of 80 per cent of all those which appear under 'internal matters' in the agendas. Finally, the period covered starts in 1963 since this was the first year for which we were able to obtain data.

Table 14

Annual Conference: Internal Resolutions, 1963-1974 (43)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>Unsuccessful*</u>
1963	4	Unattributed		4
1964	6	Branches	3	3
1965	3	"		3
1966	3	"		3
1967	6	"		6
1968	4	2 branches 2 Council	1	3
1969	8	5 branches 3 C.A.s		8
1970	2	?		2
1971	5	3 C.A.s 2 branches	2	3
1972	7	6 branches 1 C.A.	1	6
1973	5	1 C.A. 4 branches		5
1974	2	1 C.A. 1 branch		2
Total	55		7	48

(\*This means that they were either defeated, remitted or were not debated through lack of time).

Out of the 55 examined, only seven (12.7%) were successful. Forty-eight (87.3%) were unsuccessful. All of the resolutions, save for two which came from National Council, emanated from either constituency associations or the branches, with the great preponderance coming from the latter. We included in the category 'unsuccessful' those which fell through lack of time. After all, if Conference was a meaningful link in the communications chain the delegates should have been able to express their views. If they were unable to do so,



for whatever reason, then the value of Conference was consequently diminished.

We can draw several conclusions from the figures. Firstly, Conference was apparently viewed by the branches and constituency associations as a more important forum for organisational resolutions than Council. This might have been because the former was a more glamorous occasion, especially in view of the fact that the attendance was much bigger. It may also have been because branches regarded Conference in its constitutionally defined role. Therefore there was a greater incentive to participate. Whatever the reason, one cannot, nevertheless, avoid the conclusion that Conference was not nearly as effective as Council (or, more accurately, even more ineffective) as a forum for the successful presentation of organisational resolutions: branches had a 34.6 per cent success rate as Council, compared to a 12.7 per cent branch constituency association success rate at Conference.

All of this assumes that for communication to be successful it has to be translated into action. It might be said merely getting one's resolution onto the agenda was in itself a meaningful communicative act. However, in the context of legislation governing the Party's organisation, the mere appearance of a resolution, whilst perhaps carrying symbolic significance, did not amount to an expression of branch/constituency association power. In this sense we view communications as being part of a 'decisional' process. That is, we are attempting to quantify power within the Party by means of a decision-making analysis; we consider that such an aggregate approach avoids mere theoretical conjecture, and as such 'communication' is

central to decision-making.

Communication may be formally defined as any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of an organisation to another. (44)

The most effective method the delegate from, or the member of, the branch had of influencing the SNP's organisational management, in its mass-membership stage, was seeing his/her resolution being accepted by Conference or Council. Both forums almost invariably disappointed in that regard. Yet even if a resolution managed to complete the tortuous path from branch to acceptance, there was no guarantee - constitutional provisions notwithstanding - that action would thereafter be taken by the NEC. Consider this resolution, and amendment, from the 1964 Conference:

This Conference deplores the lack of positive action on the part of the National Council in regard to the implementation of resolution passed at previous Conferences. (45)

An amendment from Edinburgh Branch countered thus:

Delete "deplores" and substitute "accepts".

The amendment was carried.

This episode, heavy as it is with irony, nevertheless would appear to reflect a basic reality: Conference was essentially a debating forum where communication from the delegates was rarely formally translated into action.

The NEC apparently accepted that Conference should be regarded as a venue where more heat than light was generated - in so far as organisational questions are concerned, an occasion where the members be allowed full expression. An indication of this may lie in the fact that the NEC does not itself put forward policy resolutions (except for 'emergency' resolutions dealing with some crisis or other

which arises after the publication of the agenda). The NEC did not put forward resolutions on organisation to annual Conference. The fact was that Conference was too busy, too big, and too uninformed to debate serious questions of Party management for the NEC to waste time in proposing organisational innovations. They recognised, even if the members failed to, that in terms of optimum communication flow and effective management techniques, Council was superior to Conference.

### Conclusion

The SNP is a spatially diverse organisation. This territorial diversity presents very special kinds of problem for the Party managers, and the burden of effort to overcome this difficulty lay largely on the Party's communications network. But in the period up to and around the late 1960s, this spatial problem was compounded by the sheer inexperience of its workforce, that is, the activists. One cannot overestimate the importance for the leadership in properly harnessing the untrained energies of these members towards constructive political and organisational channels. Until this was achieved no serious campaigning was possible, hence the importance of downward communication, and the almost ludicrous lengths these instructions sometimes went to in explaining what was expected (see the chapters on Finance and Organisation) of the activists <sup>(46)</sup>.

The leaders then had to ensure that the communications network was so constructed as to ensure that whilst they did not overload the activists with data and instructions, they were, nonetheless, enough to achieve set targets like membership growth, distribution of leaflets and payment of dues to headquarters. Several features of the SNP came

together to aid this operation, not least of which was the position of the senior officers in the network.

As we have shown, the only viable way the branches could really communicate with one another, on a widespread basis, was through the centre, that meant Council or Conference, or by asking headquarters to circulate information to other branches on their behalf. Over and above this, the centre publicised, through 'newsletters', senior-officer Reports and the Scots Independent what was going on in the Party. This pivotal role placed the leadership in an extremely strong position, a point confirmed by experiment. This power has a self-reinforcing effect; just as the leader is in a central position to communicate, thereby increasing his leadership role, so does this make him a central communication figure (48).

We could find no evidence that the membership used the channels open to them to innovate organisationally, or seriously question the management of the Party leaders, on anything approaching a regular basis, and when this did occur it was usually unsuccessful. Thus the material which we have examined would tend to support the experimental, experiential and theoretical studies on the subject of communications and leadership.

The SNP between 1960 and 1974 had a communications network which was thoroughly dominated, for structural and psychological reasons, by the leadership group. This situation was not only accepted by the mass membership, but, from what evidence we have examined, they actually appeared to endorse this state of affairs. This may have been because the members recognised that too much input into the network would

instigate an overload of the system and make it nearly impossible for the leaders to direct branch activity. Alternatively - and more realistically - it may simply have been indifference, or lack of knowledge as to how to go about having an impact on the network. Whatever the cause, the membership were almost always the recipients and not the source of internal communication, and the delegates to Council and Conference did not play a significant role in an all-system communications network.

1. Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organisations, (New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1978) p.430.
2. By 'horizontal' communications we mean contact between branches and branches, branches and constituencies, and from constituency to constituency.
3. Dean J. Champion, 'The Sociology of Organisations', (New York McGraw-Hill, 1975), p.176.
4. Ibid., p.176.
5. Ibid., p.176.
6. Ibid., p.177.
7. Ibid., p.177.
8. Katz & Kahn, op.cit., p.430.
9. Peter M. Blau & Richard W. Scott, Formal Organisations: A Comparative Approach, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 125-126.
10. Champion has outlined the need for formal communication networks in the following way: 'Within the framework of the traditional orientation toward organisational structure (usually depicted by Weber's bureaucratic model) formal communication networks are necessary for several reasons: attainment of goals, interdepartmental coordination of work activities and a general reinforcement of the formal authority arrangement are several positive 'outcomes' of the formalised flow of information through specific communication 'terminals'. The ultimate objective and the underlying theme of this entire discussion seems to focus on organisational effectiveness. Ideally, adhering to the formal communication network prescribed by organisational leaders will have predictably favourable consequences for effectiveness'. Champion, op.cit., p.180.
11. Blau & Scott, op.cit., pp.127-128.
12. Ibid., p.139.
13. James L. Gibson, John M. Ivancevich, John M. Donnelly, Organisations: Behaviour, Structure, Processes, (Dallas, Texas, Business Publications Inc., 1976), p.319.
14. Champion, op.cit., p.179.
15. Katz & Kahn, op.cit., pp. 440-442.
16. Number 2 would be more appropriate for someone working in a factory, or some other business enterprise, where it is thought important that workers can relate to the aims and goals of the organisation. In a political party the goals are, or should be more obvious, and the activists should know the relevance of what they are doing, for example, canvassing, leafletting etc.

17. Gibson, op.cit., p.319.
18. Ibid., p.325.
19. Katz & Kahn, op.cit., p.445.
20. Gibson, op.cit., p.322.
21. Katz & Kahn, op.cit., p.435.
22. By a party official we mean either a paid full-time employee, for example, the National Organiser, or a senior elected officer, for example, the Executive Vice-Chairman (Organisation).
23. The 'activists' are those who deliver Party literature, work during elections, and raise money for the Party.
24. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Accession (Acc) 6038, Box No. 1, Minutes of the National Council, December 1962.
25. Report of the 1963 Annual Conference.
26. Ibid. The Report dealt with the prevailing state of branches and constituencies in Scotland. Its findings were rather pessimistic. There was no constitutional reason why only these people should have seen the Report. Rather it was a choice arrived at by the Convener himself.
27. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 2, Newsletter, November 1963.
28. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 4, Minutes of the National Council, September 1966.
29. NLS, Acc. 6038, Box No. 6, Minutes of the National Council, September 1966.
30. Minutes of the National Council, March 1969, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
31. Minutes of the National Council, December 1971, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished.) Council is second only to Conference as the formally prescribed governing body of the Party, as such it is constitutionally entitled to quarterly reports from the officers of the Party, and from the committees.
32. Minutes of the National Council, December 1969, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
33. Minutes of the National Council, April 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
34. Activist Surveys: Descriptive Statistics, December 1970, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
35. Gordon Wilson, Interview with the author, 29/3/81.
36. Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul p.272.

37. Ibid., p.280.
38. NLC, Acc. 6038, Boxes 1-6, and (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished), Minutes of the National Councils, 1960-1974.
39. S.E. Finer, The Changing British Party System, 1945-1979, (Washington D.C., American Enterprise Institute, 1980), p.86.
40. Minutes of the National Councils, 1960-1974, op.cit.
41. Ibid.
42. William Wolfe, Interview with the author, 19/3/81.
43. Reports of the Annual Conferences, 1963-1974.
44. Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behaviour: A Study of Decision Processes in Administrative Organisations, (New York, Macmillan 1957), p.154.
45. Report of the 1964 Annual Conference.
46. Herbert Kaufman, The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behaviour, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1960), p.25. This book is fascinating (and very relevant) in that it demonstrates how it is possible for a spatially diverse organisation with a decentralist ideology, to effect central direction and unity and thereby avoid centrifugalism.
47. W.J.M. Mackenzie, Politics and Social Science, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1969), p.178.
48. Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behaviour, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press), p.136.



## Chapter Ten

### The SNP's Approach to Election Organisation

If the SNP had a decentralised organisational structure it seems likely that we would find evidence of it in the approach the Party adopted to the fighting of General Elections. After all, it is extremely difficult for the 'centre' to monitor, far less control, the activities of 71 constituency associations during the hustle and bustle of a three- or four-week election campaign. Yet this tendency to shed workload need not lead to administrative decentralisation:

It is important, however, to recognise that decentralisation of workload is not identical to the decentralisation of administrative and political power. It may be both efficient and convenient to move workload out of the capital, but it may not involve any decentralisation of administrative or political initiative. Indeed the desire to shed workload while retaining administrative initiative at the centre has been a general characteristic of centre-local relations in Britain. (1)

However, it must be admitted that it is exceedingly difficult to exercise effective control over the constituencies during a General Election: the centre has enough to do organising press conferences, effecting leaflet distribution, and damping down organisational brush-fires that invariably break out in diverse parts of the country. Such problems and preoccupations are true of all parties. But if the traditional view of the SNP is accurate then we would expect to find administrative decentralisation during general election campaigns as an institutionalised part of the Nationalists' structure, and in line with its supposed organisational democracy.

This chapter will focus on the approach taken by the SNP to the two elections of 1974 to determine the degree of centralised control over the constituency association during the course of the campaigns.

The data will come from hitherto unpublished sources (held in the Party's headquarters) on the February and October elections of 1974.

To begin with, however, we shall detail the process whereby the SNP selects its parliamentary candidates (who later represent the Party in the parliamentary constituencies) since in this primary process one might expect to find an exemplar of the decentralised motive.

### Candidate Selection

Activists in the constituency parties often find their greatest fulfilment in the selection of their candidate ... The local parties operate broadly under procedural rules drawn up by party headquarters. The headquarters make available lists of candidates and they have the right to approve the eventual nominee ... It is a myth that the party leaders can plant a candidate. (2)

This quote, though about the major British parties, can also, within limits, summarise the process as it operated within the SNP. And as far as Jack Brand is concerned, the Nationalists' candidate selection method is further evidence of the decentralised nature of the Party, and confirms his view that it is much more devolved in its management structure than either the Labour or Conservative parties:

Once again we can see the openness of the Nationalists and the degree to which as many party activists as possible are brought into the process of selection. (3)

Later, he observes:

It seems clear ... that the SNP ... involves more of its members in the selection of parliamentary candidates than is true of the Labour or Conservative parties. (4)

In fact, as we shall see, there are similarities between all three parties when it comes to selecting parliamentary candidates, but that, if anything, the balance of central control more heavily favours the SNP than the Labour or Conservative parties.

Anyone who wishes to become a parliamentary candidate must get the agreement and sponsorship of two branches or of a constituency association. Thereafter he attends a weekend conference, organised by the influential Election Committee, to determine his suitability, or otherwise, to go on to the list of prospective parliamentary candidates. He is then interviewed, examined for his knowledge on political and economic questions, and subjected to a critique of his public speaking skills. Only when this process is completed does the Election Committee make a recommendation to the NEC to have the candidate's name placed on the aforementioned list (as we noted in a previous chapter the Election Committee was highly elitist and potentially powerful, and its recommendations were invariably accepted).

Once the name is placed on the list, branches then nominate individuals to go before the entire branch membership (or at least every member is entitled to attend) for vetting. The individual branches, after discussion, then select their preferred candidate from the total nominated. The branch delegates then meet at the constituency association to elect someone from the list nominated by the branches (the branches have as many votes as they have delegates at the constituency association). After the election the delegates are then asked to unanimously endorse the winning candidate. Finally, the latter must be endorsed by the NEC.

The decision of the National Executive Committee on contesting any election and the selection of a candidate shall be final and binding. (5)

In the case of a by-election the NEC can remove the sitting candidate and replace him with a person they deem more suitable.

Now, whilst the foregoing procedure is now in operation and theoretically allows for the participation of all the members, such was not always the case. In September 1973, Ian Macdonald, Vice-Chairman (Organisation), circulated a guide to the constituencies outlining the then current procedure for selecting candidates. In the document <sup>(6)</sup> he clearly specified that delegates to the constituency association could elect a prospective candidate without reference back to their full branch membership (this meant that the prospective candidates could be invited along to the C.A. directly, thereby cutting out the first stage interview with the branches).

Brand writes of the Labour and Conservative parties:

In the other parties the actual selection of the candidates is done by the constituency party without any general consultation of the general membership except in so far as they are represented by their delegates to the constituency party. <sup>(7)</sup>

As we have seen this was precisely the procedure used by the SNP prior to the elections of 1974.

What other similarities, or differences, exist in the selection procedures of the SNP, Labour and Conservative parties? According to Pulzer <sup>(8)</sup>, the Conservatives have a 'List of Approved Candidates', from which local associations are urged to select prospective candidates, but there is no compulsion. And, in fact, Beloff and Peel~~s~~ have noted that Central Office cannot compel the constituency associations to accept a candidate against their wishes:

the list is large, and local associations have proved so determined to maintain their freedom of action concerning candidate selection that such attempts as Edward Heath's efforts to ensure a greater social mix by tightening the vetting procedure have been unsuccessful. <sup>(9)</sup>

The Labour Party makes available two sets of lists to the constituencies: list A contains the names of those sponsored by a

trade-union, and approved by the Party's National Executive Committee. List B includes the names of those, who although unsponsored, also wish to be considered. The Constituency Labour parties need not, however, consult either list. At the actual selection itself, however, a Party official is present (as with the SNP) to ensure that the constitutional procedures have been observed. Finally, the candidate must be approved by the National Executive Committee of the Party.

Now, in fact this means that in so far as selection is concerned the SNP is (and, more especially, was) more centralised than the other two parties. However, in the case of all three parties it would only be in rather extreme circumstances that the leadership would ignore the preferences of a constituency party. The evidence appears to indicate that, so far as candidate selection is concerned, the SNP does have a marginally more centralised approach than either the Labour or Conservative parties.

#### The 1974 General Elections: Central Planning

Victor Hanby has said of the SNP:

... the primary organisational emphasis is one of decentralisation and branch autonomy, a fact which seems to have clear implications for the tone and type of campaign that the SNP mounts at any given election and may contain a germ of an explanation detailing the reasons for their meteoric success in particular constituencies in 1974. (10)

Hanby believes that both the February and October election campaigns were typically decentralised, although October was less so in that the newly elected parliamentary contingent had a greater role to play in the national campaign (11).

Writing before 1974, Mansbach <sup>(12)</sup> as critical as ever of the 'decentralised' structure, noted that:

The independence of the local organisations and lack of cooperation among them casts doubt on the efficiency of the Party's machinery at parliamentary elections, particularly to organise and finance a Scotland-wide campaign. (13)

How representative of the SNP's approach to the 1974 campaigns are these criticisms and observations? Was there an absence of central planning and control, and did the SNP's leadership leave the constituencies to their own devices during those critical weeks?

The SNP actually began planning for the elections which eventually came in 1974 in the middle of 1973. Moreover, as we have already noted in a previous chapter, the Nationalists were running an expensive and widely publicised series of campaigns on the theme of 'Scotland's Oil' throughout 1973 and 1974. Therefore they were off to a flying start when the February election date was announced. Bearing in mind the degree of detail and central planning which went into these campaigns, the election preparations were all the more remarkable since they went close to rivalling the former in their explicitness.

In August 1973, the NEC was presented with a highly detailed 'Pre-Election Campaign (Autumn) Schedule' <sup>(14)</sup>. It ranged over the entire spectrum of conceivable election activity: demonstrations, press conferences, finance, manifesto, general publicity and election rallies. Drawn up by Gordon Wilson, it closely resembled, in type, the package of proposals we highlighted in our chapter on the 'oil campaign'.

Indeed the programme was to be as vigorous locally as it was to prove nationally: a pro-forma election address was drawn up; pre-election leaflets prepared; the logistical strength of the constituencies

analysed; candidate 'action-packs' made available (set speeches, facts, etc.). A national letter campaign was planned; local advertising was to include the supply of texts and design; the strategic and tactical problems raised by the local demonstrations were to be raised by a certain date (September 1973). The dates of these, and many other, events were clearly specified, as were the names of the individuals with responsibility for their implementation. The document was the quintessential forward planner, and highlights the extent to which the SNP leadership was involved in ensuring that the election machine was geared to fight an effective campaign both at local and national level.

The Party had the advantage of not only having the rank-and-file actively engaged in the 'oil campaign', there was also the considerable boost to morale, and national standing, which came in the wake of Margo MacDonald's by-election victory at Govan in November 1973.

The absence of any organisational base in the constituency did not prevent the SNP from waging an aggressive campaign. As Ian Macdonald, Vice-Chairman (Organisation), noted ten days before the poll:

The Party as a whole rallied round very rapidly, unlike the usual slow start at previous by-elections - an indication of the high state of morale now existing. (15)

Macdonald said of Govan and Edinburgh North (a by election held on the same day in which the SNP achieved only 18.9 per cent of the vote (16) - it was a safe Conservative seat):

... the Organisation Committee had already put the activists Team into these constituencies to distribute leaflets and B.R.C.'s ...  
I believe the Party is stronger and better organised than it has ever been. (17)

The remarkable success at Govan greatly strengthened the leadership's hand; they were seen to be organisationally expert and politically astute.

This meant that the job of rallying the activists for the forthcoming electoral battle was greatly aided.

Yet still the communiques poured out of headquarters. For example, in January 1974 the constituencies were sent samples of headquarters' inspired 'election addresses' which they could use, mutatis mutandis, in their particular constituencies <sup>(18)</sup>.

Also in January, agents and candidates were sent a form which explained in great detail what candidates should say in the event of them having to phone headquarters during the campaign:

1. Ask for General Election Room.
2. State your name, position (Election Agent etc.) to ... (Candidate) in ... constituency.
3. State your telephone number.
4. Organisational Review. <sup>(19)</sup>

The document then went on to list four topic headings considered essential by headquarters, such as events in the constituency, and publicity ideas. The document not only left little to chance, but, in fact, was intent in minimising extraneous data. It denotes a centre closely in touch with the periphery, and making every effort to influence constituency events.

Early in 1974, Rosemary Hall was appointed Campaign Director. She had previously been a Party official, and then was later the Party's National Secretary. She had, therefore, very considerable administrative experience within the SNP, and was also in the happy position of knowing that the General Election preparations, begun in August 1973, were well under way <sup>(20)</sup>. The draft election manifesto <sup>(21)</sup>



was available at the beginning of January 1974. Throughout the month of February 1974, the campaign team in headquarters was in constant touch with the constituencies, answering queries, sending out information, and generally guiding the agents and candidates. Not only this, but clear attempts were made to instil a sense of purpose into the potentially isolated constituency workers. The General Election Campaign Bulletin, number four <sup>(22)</sup>, detailed the overall electoral approach:

This election is about self-government and the prosperity in Scotland's Oil...

Keep your campaign to Scottish issues. Don't get sidetracked ... from now on get in among

shoppers

queues

clubs and institutes

crowd scenes generally

Bingo fans

factories and industrial plants

markets

The document continues in the same vein: candidates were advised as to how best to get an introduction to a club or factory, they were given advice on how to answer questionnaires and circulars:

Candidates should use their own judgement as to whether or not to reply, but, if you are in doubt about any of the issues and would like further guidance, please let me know. (23)

A special edition of the Scots Independent <sup>(24)</sup> carried on its front page a map showing Scotland's oil-fields, and proclaiming that this was what the Election was all about.

The Nationalists' campaign was the most visually effective of all the parties in Scotland. It relied heavily on spectacle, and the techniques which the SNP had been developing throughout the 1960s: cavalcades, musical jingles, and saturation window posterings.

Large areas in the seats which the SNP fought seriously were blanketed with their bill-posters stressing the themes 'Its Scotland's Oil' and 'Its Time for Self-Government', and it was backed by the largest and most enthusiastic group of workers. (25)

Of the February campaign, Rosemary Hall wrote:

... thank you to all of you - candidates and election agents - for your active help to me in my efforts to coordinate many aspects of the campaigns at national and at constituency level.. (26)

Following upon the election, <sup>in which the SNP won seven seats and 21.9 per cent of the vote,</sup> William Wolfe wrote to each candidate and election agent asking for a report on the campaign 'with a view to obtaining information and opinions which would be useful for future campaigns' (27). He received 56 replies from the 70 constituencies fought. The most common response was on the need for 'better organisation' at the constituency and branch level. Although the reports ranged over a wide variety of concerns there was no mention or criticism of inadequate central direction or coordination.

From what we have already seen there is no reason to suppose that there was any lack of overall coordination or planning by the centre. Indeed the issue of 'Scotland's Oil', which played no small part in the campaign, had been at the heart of the SNP's electoral strategy for well over one year prior to the election. This coupled with the Party's arguments about 'self-government', were instituted and managed by the Party leadership. All that was left for the constituencies to do was to utilise both of these themes and the material so regularly sent out by headquarters.

But it is really in the October campaign that we see the full extent of central planning. There can be little doubt that at both local and constituency level the SNP was in a state of almost continual election preparedness between February and October 1974.

Hanby (28) writes that in June 1974 a massive publicity campaign on oil was launched, and it followed the usual lines: first of all there

was a saturation leaflet campaign, this was followed by an extensive poster effort. He quotes John McAteer, the Party's National Organiser:

It has been non-stop action since the February election. We assumed that there would be a quick election again this year and we mounted a campaign throughout the constituencies to make sure we were not caught out. (29)

Despite this, as we have seen, Hanby believes that the campaign remained decentralised. In fact, the evidence suggests that, on the contrary, an intensive central effort began long before even the February campaign. Ian Macdonald wrote to all candidates, constituency organisers and secretaries in the middle of 1973, cataloging a series of 'do's' and 'don'ts' in preparing for a future election. Macdonald went to very considerable lengths to emphasise what he considered lengths to emphasise what he considered vital. Indeed he left little room for doubt or misunderstanding.

We are now approaching the General Election. It must come within two years ... (30)

He went on to list the need to elect a candidate, an agent, a constituency election committee the purchasing and addressing of election envelopes, planning local advertising 'gimmicks', canvassing cards drawn up, and the location of election headquarters:

Further circulars will be sent to you as the Election approaches ... try to ensure that your Election Agent or Constituency Organiser and your candidate attend the Conference to be held in Stirling ... (31)

A pro-forma 'election address' was planned as early as August 1974, and distributed to the branches before September. Poster sites throughout Scotland had been chosen for a campaign which was to start in September, and election meetings were scheduled for Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee <sup>(32)</sup>. A 'campaign team' was set up at the end of August 1974 (it was composed of Donald Bain, John McAteer, Stephen Maxwell and Angus MacGillvery - all employees of the Party). Rosemary Hall was, once again, Campaign Director.

During the election proper, daily releases were sent out by the 'campaign team' to the candidates. These included research bulletins, press releases and general guidance. On top of this, phone calls to the agents, or constituency headquarters, to keep the centre in touch, were regularly made by the Edinburgh team.

The major themes of the campaign were, in the circumstances, inevitable; 'oil' and 'self-government'.

At a special National Council meeting held in Dundee in September (33), Gordon Wilson announced that 'oil' was to be the major subject of the General Election campaign (the formal announcement of the date of the Election did not come until 18 September). At this same Council meeting a 'confidential report' from Margo MacDonald, highlighted that the overall tone of the campaign would be 'We're Winning', and there would be a 'throwaway' leaflet on the SNP's record of having doubled its vote at every General election. Following upon this, press statements and speeches would take the line that there was no reason why the SNP should not double its vote again. Further, there were to be 'special interest' broadsheets on nursing, farming and defence. Speeches should also make reference to the fact that the Labour or the Conservative parties could not afford to pay for their election promises. Moreover, economic stability and the end of inflation could only be achieved through self-government.

There could be no doubt, therefore, that the Party leadership had a firm grip on the direction of the campaign, not only during but prior to the election itself. This was as true in thematic terms as it was in the direct organisational sense. Butler and Kavanagh observed that:

Voters in Scotland were as concerned with rising prices as voters elsewhere; but the SNP had thrust devolution and oil development into the forefront of the campaign. (34)

Labour responded with a poster which proclaimed: 'Make Sure Its Your Oil, Vote Labour' (35). The irony could not have been lost on the Nationalists.

As to the campaign organisation itself, Butler and Kavanagh recognised the importance of the senior Party figures in devising strategy:

There was a campaign committee in Edinburgh ... the committee dealt largely with queries from the Press and broadcasting media and sifted the reports from the constituencies. But initiative in campaign strategy were left to the Party's senior candidates. (36)

Despite the recognition of the role played by the leadership, the writers go on to report that:

the Nationalist campaign was essentially left to the candidates who could tie the two main themes to local interests. (37)

We shall return to this view in a later section, however, it is worth noting that such an approach need not have diminished the overall control that the leadership had on the campaign, and in any case it was inevitable that the candidates and the constituencies would shape national issues to suit local circumstances.

We examined the reports of agents and candidates who responded to Headquarters' requests for information about their assessment of how the October campaign had gone organisationally. Forty-one replies were received. Only seven reports expressed dissatisfaction with Headquarters' performance:

... little evidence of national campaign. Very little seemed to be coming from the centre, (Pentlands).  
... generally dissatisfied. (Ross and Cromarty).

National campaign did not impinge much on Constituency ...  
 Research material late in arriving. (Hillhead).  
 National campaign little impact on Constituency. (Queen's Park).  
 Lack of coordination between H.Q. and Constituency during actual  
 campaign, with particular reference to press releases and public  
 statements made by public spokesman. (Coatbridge and Airdrie).  
 Poster campaign effective, but little else seen from H.Q.  
 (South Angus).  
 No definite national policy to which all candidates could adhere  
 to. (Kinross and West Perth). (38)

Balanced against these complaints was a clear majority who  
 considered that headquarters' coordination and supervision was, at  
 least, satisfactory. These totalled twenty-two in all:

... you were shaping campaign very well ... (Roxburgh, Selkirk  
 and Peebles).  
 Overall, the effect of the national effort and campaign has  
 been good ... (Central Ayrshire).  
 Satisfied. (Bute and North Ayrshire).  
 Very good. (Kilmarnock).  
 National Campaign was carried out in a responsible fashion ...  
 (East Renfrew).  
 Generally considered extremely good ... We are mindful of all  
 assistance given by H.Q. (Bothwell).  
 National campaign reasonably effective. (Rutherglen).  
 I have absolutely no complaints about the service provided  
 by H.Q. (Edinburgh Central).  
 Generally satisfied. (Edinburgh East).  
 Quite satisfied. (Midlothian).  
 Very good. (Hamilton).  
 ... generally satisfied. (West Stirling).  
 Generally I think we had good value for money ... (Dundee West).  
 Candidates' services could not be improved on without the  
 involvement of a greater number of experienced people. (Kirkcaldy).  
 The daily information services from Party Headquarters proved  
 invaluable in keeping up to date (sic) and was sufficiently  
 concise to permit enough time to read. (Central Fife).  
 Good. (South Aberdeen).  
 Excellent. (Lanark).  
 National campaign seemed very encouraging. (Orkney Branch).  
 National campaign very good, appreciated releases and election  
 specials. (Shetland).  
 National campaign excellent. (Springburn).  
 Campaign material very effective. (Central Glasgow).  
 National campaign very good. (Shettleston).

By a margin of over three-to-one the constituency reports supported  
 the view that the national campaign, and the part played by headquarters,  
 was, at least satisfactory - if not better. The other twelve reports  
 either made no reference to Headquarters or suggested some improvements  
 for next time round.

In the circumstances it is difficult to understand Pentlands' complaints about 'little coming from the centre'. As we have already seen, daily bulletins were sent from Headquarters, and regular phone-calls were made by the latter in an effort to ensure communication with the constituency campaigns. Beyond this were the posters, leaflets, election addresses, and media reported speeches, which were all centrally inspired and organised.

In the next section we shall turn our attention to the question of campaign financing.

#### Financing the Election Campaign

Mansbach asserts that:

The independence of the local organisations and lack of cooperation among them casts doubt on the efficiency of the Party's machinery at parliamentary elections, particularly to organise and finance a Scotland-wide campaign. (39)

As we have already attempted to demonstrate in a previous chapter, there was no lack of assistance from the centre to constituencies which found themselves fighting by-elections. Nor were the branches sluggish in channelling cash back towards headquarters. All-in-all there was considerable movement of capital within the Party, even if the dominant pattern was upwards from the branches to the centre.

This section will dispute the assertion made in the above quote by Mansbach. In doing so we shall seek to show that the SNP's approach to the financing of elections typified a party which was not only efficient in the harnessing of scarce resources, but also one in which the leadership played a formative role in the determination of how much of this cash was spent.

Even before the General Elections of 1974, the National Treasurer, Michael Murgatroyd, reported to National Council, at the end of 1973, that:

1973 is unique in the history of the Party in that we have fought three by-elections in one year. The financial responsibility for these campaigns rests with Headquarters and consequently H.Q. levies each Branch. As H.Q. had already levied for the Dundee East by-election and the second oil campaign this year it was decided that the levies for the Edinburgh North and Glasgow Govan (sic) be held over until 1974. (40)

In the end, totals of £1,447 and £1,360 were received for Edinburgh North and Govan respectively. These sums were composed entirely of donations and levies (41). Bearing in mind the other, very considerable, demands on branch resources, these were very substantial amounts indeed.

Headquarters' concern for cash transfer from wealthier to poorer constituencies was evident in a discussion which occurred at the NEC meeting held early in 1974 (42). This meeting recognised that there were constituencies which, for financial reasons, would not be in a position to contest the forthcoming Election. Thus, money was either to be given or lent to these constituencies - at least to the extent of paying for the deposit. It was agreed that other constituency associations would be asked to donate cash to a fighting fund to aid their penurious colleagues. Moreover, it was overwhelmingly agreed to make available £4,000 from Headquarters' funds in aid to the poorer constituencies.

In the 'appeal letter', which was sent out from Headquarters' (43) to the constituency associations, it was noted that a similar appeal mounted in 1970 had enabled six constituencies to fight in the General Election of that year, who would otherwise have been unable to do so. By the end of February 1974, the appeal had realised £2,524. (44)



In the end, Headquarters spent some £3,000 in grants and loans to constituency associations during the February campaign, and on top of this the centre spent around £1,800 on publicity.

By the October General Election the levels of Headquarters' expenditure had climbed - though not, interestingly, in terms of grants to constituencies. Overall expenditure by Headquarters during the October Election was as follows:

Table 15

<u>Headquarters' Expenditure for October 1974 General Election (£)</u>		
H.Q. Grant to Govan	-	500
Phone-In campaign	-	700
Press Adverts/Publicity	-	3,971
Poster Campaign	-	1,843
Election Campaign	-	639
Additional Accounts	-	<u>3,865</u>
	Total	<u>11,518</u> (45)

This cash, although small by the standards of the major parties <sup>(46)</sup>, was still a significant amount of money when one considers (a) the fact that the SNP was entirely dependent on branch and individual donations, and (b) the small size of Scotland. Moreover, in terms of average expenditure per candidate the SNP compared favourably with the Labour and Conservative parties in Scotland:

Table 16

<u>Average Expenditure per Candidate (£) in Scotland (October 1974)</u>			
<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>SNP</u>
1,161	1,137	550	822

Of the expenditure incurred during the 1974 Elections, the Treasurer, Michael Murgatroyd, said:

Headquarters have struggled through financially because of the substantial increase in the level of donations throughout the year and particularly at each election and additionally the increased income from the sale of membership cards. (48)

The SNP financed its 1974 electoral efforts in its usual fashion: a combination of donations and branch levies. The leadership of the Party instituted and coordinated the efforts necessary to raise this income. Moreover, as we have seen, there was considerable movement of income horizontally and vertically - enough to keep the individual and national campaigns solvent.

In the next section we shall look at the amount of the direction the constituencies appeared to have taken from the centre in the formation of the content of their election literature and propaganda. This would be an aspect of the election campaign most amenable to local initiative since it is the most common point of contact between activists and the voters. Therefore, the constituency association and the candidate might have been expected to have availed themselves of the opportunity of emphasise issues they deemed to be most consequential. This would be especially true, if, as some of the quotes given above suggest, the SNP's campaign was decentralised with an emphasis on local initiative and issue setting.

### Campaign Themes

Of the February 1974 Election, Butler and Kavanagh, wrote:

The Nationalists candidates in Wales and Scotland were left to emphasise the themes of national independence and oil (in Scotland) without proddings from headquarters. (49)

Of the same campaign, they later observed:

The minute research staffs of the nationalist parties meant that candidates for these parties were largely left to their own devices. (50)

As was noted above, these same writers argued that during the October Election, candidates adjusted national themes to suit local circumstances. They correctly point to the twin issues of 'oil' and 'self-government' as dominating the national campaign of the SNP during October <sup>(51)</sup>. During the pre-election period the Nationalists' election slogan was, 'Now SNP - This Time Self-Government' <sup>(52)</sup>. This was more or less a continuation of the February campaign, and like so much else was centrally inspired. We can confirm this by analysing the minutes of the NEC meetings of the period <sup>(53)</sup>. We also analysed the election material (mainly election addresses) of fifty-three candidates from the two elections of 1974 <sup>(54)</sup>. We paid particular attention to two main areas: the slogan utilised by the constituency associations and the main themes emphasised in local literature.

If there was a locally orientated campaign then we might have expected to find a slogan extolling the virtues of the individual candidate and/or some other non-centrally devised rallying cry. Secondly, the literature - if the SNP was more decentralised than the major parties - should have had a significant, if not dominant emphasis on non-national issues. The Nuffield study analysed the election addresses of the constituency candidates, and observed:

Many election addresses were little more than compilations from the party manifestos, together with a biographical and political statement from the candidate. <sup>(55)</sup>

### Findings

So far as the slogans were concerned 27 of the 53 had 'Its Time for Self-Government', or a variant thereof. A further 16 were locally orientated, and made reference either to the candidate by name or some

constituency matter. Another nine had national-type slogans but were not directly related to the 'Its Time...' theme. For example, 'Rich Scots, Poor British' (which was also centrally inspired). The remaining one had no obvious slogan.

Therefore 36 of the 53 had nationally orientated slogans, with the great majority following the centre's lead.

There was an almost totally consistent commitment to national, leadership devised, themes in the constituency literature. The usual source of such propaganda being the manifesto. Oil, self-government, and the benefits which would flow from both, dominated. Subsidiary themes were the 'English malaise', and, by the October election, what the SNP parliamentary group had achieved for Scotland. To some extent also a wholesale critique of the 'Common Market' had a place in some of the literature.

There was evidence that in 'special interest' constituencies (farming and fishing) considerable efforts were made in expounding what advantages would be derived from 'Independence' for these constituencies. But even this tended to be in a national context.

Only in the following constituencies was there a detectable bias towards the candidate or localist concerns: Western Isles, Inverness, Govan, Ross and Cromarty, Orkney and Shetland, Perth and East Perthshire, Pollok and East Aberdeen. One can see that of these eight constituencies, six were rural with farming and/or fishing interests.

The following selection is typical of the content of the literature

from the 1974 elections. The leaflets were chosen on the basis of geographical spread; industrial and agricultural constituencies; those with well organised associations and those with poor organisations.

South Angus. (October 1974). Fishing, prices, pensions, education, Common Market, SNP in Westminster, and biography of the candidate.

Garscadden. (October). Poverty, removal of nuclear bases, declining value of the Pound Sterling, oil, Independence not devolution.

Kirkcaldy. (October 1974). Land, energy policy, education, poverty, SNP achievements in Parliament, and a biography of the candidate.

Rutherglen. (October 1974). Declining value of the Pound Sterling, 'self-government', and oil.

Coatbridge and Airdrie. (October 1974). Wealth and poverty in Scotland, prices, 'self-government', natural resources and education.

Aberdeen North. (February 1974). English economic crisis, Scotland's potential wealth.

Central Fife. (October 1974). Wealth and poverty, prices, Scottish government, biography of candidate.

West Stirling. (October 1974). Scottish government, land resources, industry, agriculture, social services, trade-unions, education, the 'common market', the future.

Edinburgh Central. (October 1974). Wealth and poverty, prices, 'self-government', democracy.

Banff. (October 1974). The achievements of the sitting M.P., Hamish Watt, since the Election of February 1974.

Clydebank. (October 1974). Pensions, employment and wages, poverty and oil.

West Lothian. (October 1974). Oil, SNP in local government and Parliament, national resources, housing, 'common market', education,

land etc., and a profile of the candidate.

Aberdeen South. (October 1974). Strong Scottish Pound, 'common market', new industries, mortgages, and Scotland's sufferings as part of the U.K.

Hillhead. (October 1974). Oil, the benefits of 'Independence', falling value of Pound Sterling, and the improving quality of life in Scotland.

Edinburgh South. (October 1974). English economic crisis, Scotland's oil, biography of the candidate.

Provan. (October 1974). Westminster's failure, falling value of Pound Sterling, agriculture, education, housing industry, employment, pensions, and biography of the candidate.

Ross and Cromarty. (February 1974). Oil, Independence not devolution, the 'common market', and biography of the candidate.

Berwick and East Lothian. (1974). Poverty, social policies of the SNP, education, housing, agriculture, fishing, the SNP's policies for the fishing and farming communities, oil, and the constitutional position of an Independent Scotland.

Bothwell. (October 1974). Housing, education, land, the 'common market', the Scottish constitutional position, and the candidate's biography.

West Renfrew. (1974). Scotland's resources, poverty, higher costs of food and utilities in Scotland than in England, and a biography of the candidate.

Dunfermline. (October 1974). Self-government, oil and Scotland's economic potential.

Pollok. (October 1974). Heavy emphasis on the candidate (Don Paul MacQuarrie), plus the potential of oil, poverty, education and social problems.

Orkney and Shetland. (October 1974). Farming, fishing, oil, Scotland's resources, comments by the candidate to the electorate.

Motherwell. (1974). Land, external affairs, Scotland's resources, poverty, housing, agriculture, education, and comments on the quality of the candidate.

The characteristics pointed to by Butler and Kavanagh apply with equal force to the SNP: national issues dominated election propaganda. The daily research bulletins together with national leaflets - which were heavily utilised - were reinforced by the campaigns which the Nationalists had embarked upon prior to the February General Election. On top of this, candidates, agents and activists had several opportunities to meet together between the elections and be informed of campaign themes. There is no evidence, which we could find, that any but a small number of constituencies fought the campaigns on local issues as opposed to centrally determined concerns.

In the concluding section we shall attempt to explain why certain writers believe the SNP's electoral organisation of 1974 to have been typically decentralist.

### Conclusion

The view of the campaign from a local party headquarters may contrast sharply with that from Smith Square. (56)

Control by the centre during an election campaign will always be difficult. However, as we have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, the SNP's leadership worked within parameters which gave them considerable powers of initiation and coordination in the management of elections. In matters as diverse as candidate selection, where the NEC was the arbiter of candidate suitability, and the

determination of campaign themes, the Party's leadership played a crucial role.

As the foregoing quote indicates, it is impossible to monitor every aspect of a candidate's schedule, or political behaviour pattern. But, in the absence of a full-time agent reporting back to the leadership about a candidate's performance, the SNP achieved considerable contact with the constituency organisations. Certainly from the examination of constituency reports (see above), there is every reason to suppose that the SNP was in no wise worse off, in terms of centre-periphery contact, than the major parties. As Butler and Kavanagh say:

Candidates, as local representatives of a national party faced the problem of keeping in touch with what their party headquarters were doing. All parties emphasised the need for coordinating the central and local campaigns. We asked candidates if they had followed the national campaign closely through the mass-media, the speeches of party leaders, the opinion polls, or communication from party headquarters ... It is surprising therefore that only a third of the candidates responding to our questionnaire claimed to follow the national campaign closely. (57)

Yet, unlike the other parties, the SNP did not get as much media attention, which, on the face of it, one might suppose would keep the rank-and-file in touch with the leadership and the national campaign. Rather they had to rely upon the communiques from headquarters, the telephone, and perhaps a constituency visit. Despite this, there is reason to believe, given the evidence of the reports, that many more Nationalist candidates were aware of the national campaign than their equivalents in the other parties.

We believe that it was limited media access which gave rise to the view that the SNP's electoral efforts had, by necessity, to be



decentralised, with a limited leadership role. According to Pulzer:

The growing centralisation of campaigning means that it is the national, not the local propaganda which matters. Radio and television, advertising and newspaper reports have largely displaced the more traditional forms of electioneering. It is the slogans, quips and faux-pas of the party leaders, not the individual candidate, that set the tone of the debate. (58)

But, as we have seen, the SNP leaders compensated for this exclusion by ensuring that every other feature of the campaign, over which it had control, was well organised and coordinated. The election campaign began long before February, and continued right through 1974. In other words, the Party was in a state of almost continual election preparedness.

Another feature of the SNP which encouraged this decentralist view, was the almost total absence of dynamic, charismatic, political leaders. It is not merely media attention which tends to centralise campaigns, but also the focusing on a small group of political notables as the epitome of what their particular party stands for.

This is reflected in opinion polls where it is not uncommon to find a part of the questionnaire given over to a popularity index of party leaders. The SNP's leaders were more anonymous (with a few exceptions) and very often, as we have seen, spent much of their time preoccupied with management matters. In such circumstances one can understand why observers might have considered it probable that activists would be forced back on their own resources to compensate for an absence of national leadership.

However, the SNP had other strengths, and these were largely the responsibility of the leadership; the campaigning momentum of 1973, the enthusiasm of the activists <sup>(59)</sup>, the issue of 'self-government'

and 'oil', the novelty of the campaigning techniques, and the quality of research and propaganda coming daily from Headquarters. These factors must be seen against a background of the leadership inspired organisational and electoral advances of 1973 which readied the Party for 1974. The SNP's electoral efforts in 1974 were planned and coordinated by the centre. It was only after the themes, the literature, the research, the finance and the candidate selection procedures had been planned, that the constituency workers were left to complete the process through canvassing, leaflet distribution and car cavalcades, etc. Essentially these tasks, vital though they were, were about as much initiative as could be found at the constituency level. Decentralisation of workload was NOT the equivalent of decentralisation of administrative power.

1. David J. Wilson, Power and Party Bureaucracy in Britain: Regional Organisation in the Conservative and Labour Parties, (Westmead, Hants., Saxon Heath, D.C. Heath Ltd., 1975), p.6. This study is worth noting because the author's hypothesis is that whilst the Conservative and Labour parties have centralised control over regional bodies and officials, their relationship with the constituency associations is typified by decentralisation. It seems likely that their control over the officials flows from the fact that they employ the latter.
2. David Butler and Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of October 1974, (London, Macmillan, 1975), p.219.
3. Jack Brand, The National Movement in Scotland, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.280.
4. Ibid., p.281.
5. Constitution and Rules of the Scottish National Party, (Edinburgh, SNP, 1978) Clause 123, p.23.
6. Ian Macdonald, Guide to Adoption of Parliamentary Candidate, (Edinburgh, SNP, 1973, unpublished).
7. Brand, op.cit., p.281.
8. Peter J. Pulzer, Political Representation and Elections in Britain, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1975), p.66.
9. Max Beloff and Gillian Peele, The Government of the United Kingdom: Political Authority in a Changing Society, (London, Weidenfeld, & Nicolson, 1980), p.191.
10. Victor J. Hanby, 'The Renaissance of the Scottish National Party: from Eccentric to Campaigning Crusader', in Changing Campaign Techniques: Elections and Values in Contemporary Democracies (ed.), Louis Maisei, (London, Sage Publications, 1973, Vol. 11), p.233.
11. Hanby wrote the following of the February campaign: 'In terms of headquarters participation the tone of the SNP's February campaign was clearly in line with the basic party tent of decentralisation and local initiative. The contribution of national headquarters was limited to the provision of abundant supplies of posters and window stickers proclaiming the twin themes of the campaign, and a handful of position papers were little more than priming, material for local candidates and bore little resemblance to the more orchestrated campaigns of the major parties'. (Ibid., p.224). Of the October campaign, Hanby observed: 'While the decentralised nature of the campaign did not deviate over much from the model of February in one important respect there was greater central organisation. The October election saw the Party's M.P.'s play a much larger and more directing role in the overall functioning of the campaign'. (Ibid., p.231).
12. Richard W. Mansbach, 'The Scottish National Party: A Revised Political Profile', Comparative Politics, Vol. 5, 2, January 1973, pp. 185-210.

13. Ibid., p.204.
14. Pre-Election Campaign (Autumn), 1973 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
15. Minutes of the National Council, December 1973 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
16. James G. Kellas, The Scottish Political System, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.126.
17. National Council December 1973, op.cit.
18. Minutes of the National Executive Committee, January 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
19. Notice to Prospective Candidates, Election Agents and Others, January 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
20. Minutes of the NEC, December 1973 (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
21. The Manifesto was written by W. Wolfe and Donald Bain (Research Officer). It was then endorsed by the NEC.
22. General Election Campaign Bulletin No. 4, February 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
23. Ibid.
24. Scots Independent, February-March 1974.
25. David Butler and Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of February 1974, (London, Macmillan, 1974), p.247.
26. Rosemary Hall, March 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
27. Minutes of the National Council, June 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
28. Hanby, op.cit.
29. Ibid., (interview with John McAteer, 'The Nats Bite Harder', The Guardian, Manchester, August 1, 1974), p.230.
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45. General Election (October 1974) Expenditure, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
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47. Ibid., p.243.
48. Minutes of the National Council, December 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
49. Butler & Kavanagh, op.cit., (February), pp. 232-233.
50. Ibid., p.235.
51. Ibid., p.92.
52. General Election Campaign, op.cit.
53. Minutes of the National Executive Committee, 1974, (Edinburgh, SNP, unpublished).
54. This was the complete collection of election literature held by the Party in its Edinburgh Headquarters.
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56. Ibid., p.221.
57. Ibid., pp. 229-230.
58. Pulzer, op.cit., p.91.
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## Chapter Eleven

### Observations on the Organisation of the Labour and Conservative Parties

In the previous chapters we have been looking at the organisation of the SNP in isolation. The essential element of comparison with other parties has been largely absent; just how centralised was it when compared to both the Labour and Conservative parties. We have seen how many writers on the SNP have taken the view that the SNP was more 'open' and 'devolved' than its major rivals in British politics. Is this true?

Although we spent some little time examining candidate selection in the Labour and Conservative parties, and compared these to the SNP's methods, we have not as yet undertaken a similar exercise for the other, essential, elements of party organisation; finance, publicity, and campaign management. Therefore this chapter will focus on these three areas as they operate within the British Labour and Conservative parties. The intention is to enable us to make a judgement as to the extent of centralisation within these organisations, and then to compare it with our findings on the SNP. In other words, was the degree of centralisation discovered in the SNP also prevalent in the two major parties?

The Scottish National Party differs from the 'big two' in several respects. The Labour and Conservative parties have very substantial representation in Westminster, so much so that we may justifiably speak of parliamentary parties which are a core element in the power structure of both organisations. Both parties have substantial bureaucracies which

must also be seen as potentially a part of the organisational power system. Then of course there are the activists in the constituencies who come together at, and between, the respective conferences of their parties. They too clearly constitute an important component in the power hierarchy. Indeed, it is really the rank-and-file's place in the scheme of things which interests us; are they subject to the same kind of organisational control which we found to be typical of the activists of the SNP?

Besides not having either a parliamentary grouping or a large, salaried, bureaucracy, the SNP did not have competing ideological groupings which could function as alternative power blocs. Both the Labour and the Conservative parties do have the presence of such groupings within their ranks. Tribune and Manifesto in the former, the Bow Group and the Monday Club in the case of the Conservatives (a coherent left wing grouping does now exist within the SNP; the '79 group).

The importance for the SNP in not having such groupings lay in the fact that the leadership was not faced with a potentially permanent opposition on a structured basis. Although in the cases mentioned the divisions - so far as they exist - are on a policy as distinct from an organisational level. Nevertheless the absence of such bodies (between 1960 and 1974) made it easier for the leadership to direct the affairs of the Party.

In common with the SNP, the major parties must raise income to finance their electoral and propagandising activities. How, and from where, this income was derived will, just as for the SNP, tell us much

about the nature of organisational control within the two major parties. The next section will concentrate on the sources of party finance.

### Finance in the Labour and Conservative Parties

According to Richard Rose:

The autonomy of the different parts of the two major parties is most clearly demonstrated by an analysis of party finance. Of all commodities money is in principle among the easiest to transfer. Yet neither the Conservative nor the Labour Party has any institutional mechanism by which money can be centrally located. (1)

We have observed how, in the SNP, the Party leaders were able to institute programmes and mechanisms whereby the branches would raise the vast bulk of the Party's income, and transfer a substantial proportion of it to the centre. This state of affairs was necessitated by the absence of any other major locus of funds for the Party.

How then do the major parties finance their activities?

So far as the Labour Party is concerned the overwhelming preponderance of its funds comes from the trade-unions. Rose has calculated <sup>(2)</sup> that between 1967 and 1970 57 per cent of total Labour Party income came from the trade unions. By 1972 the figure had risen to 60 per cent. Yet according to Finer <sup>(3)</sup> between 1975-1977 constituency Labour parties raised 59 per cent of total party income. However, whenever the Labour Party is in desperate need of cash, for example, at elections, it is the trade-unions which meet the bill. This represents a critical element in party finance.

The Conservatives, for their part, show a much greater reliance



upon the efforts of the membership. Something like two-thirds of total Conservative Party income comes from the constituencies <sup>(4)</sup>. More recently Finer <sup>(5)</sup> has estimated that for the period 1975-1977, Conservative constituency associations raised 80 per cent of total Party revenue. This is a view which is shared by Norton and Aughey <sup>(6)</sup>.

In the case of the Labour Party, it can be argued that whilst this dependence on the trade-unions decreases the degree of autonomy the leadership has vis-a-vis the latter, it has the concomitant effect of liberating them in their dealings with the constituency activists (members of 'Militant' may have similar autonomy from Transport House in that they appear to raise income independently of the Party leadership).

Superficially, one might feel free to assert that the very large amount raised by the Conservative associations would give to them a very significant voice in the management of the Party:

The financial self-sufficiency of the local associations together with the personal independence of the party workers greatly reduces the ability of Central Office to impose its will. <sup>(7)</sup>

This latter view of a fairly devolved financial structure existing within the Conservative Party appears, at first, to contradict the traditional view of the Party as being overtly leadership-dominated. Moreover, if it is true that this financial dependence on the associations increases the latter's autonomy within the Conservative Party, how can this be equated with our argument about leadership dominance of the SNP where there was an even greater reliance upon the branches for funding?

The main reason stems from the fact that within the Conservative

Party the associations had existed as organisations for decades. They had considerable experience as fund-raisers, campaigners, and in many cases, had their own agent and Member of Parliament. They were not novitiates, but rather time-served activists who knew a great deal about organisational practices. Even so, there is evidence from the recent past that whenever the constituencies fell into organisational torpor, the Party leadership was capable of instituting programmes to raise incomes, and to have such proposals accepted by the rank-and-file in the constituencies. Under the leadership of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, a major re-examination of the organisational structure of the Conservative Party was initiated in 1965. This followed upon the Party's election defeat of 1964, and subsequent demoralisation. The re-organisation of Party structure:

... represented one of the most ambitious efforts at internal reform ever undertaken by a British party and deserves to rank with the modernising era of the Conservative Party after 1945. (8)

On the specific question of finance it was felt that lack of funds may have prevented the Party from instituting an effective advertising campaign. Thus, Robert Allen, one of the Party's Treasurers, recommended:

... the doubling of constituency contributions to Central Office, a rise in the annual subscription and the setting up in each constituency of a special fund-raising committee. (9)

Such a frontal attack on the matter of declining finance was, as we have frequently noted, a recurring feature of the approach taken by the SNP's leadership to solving, what was for them, an endemic problem.

In the case of the Conservative Party, the rank-and-file, which had a tradition of autonomy in financial matters, had just seen their Party lose a General Election. The defeat was, in part, explained by

inadequate organisation, and, therefore this had to be remedied. In such circumstances acceptance of central direction was not hard to understand.

The SNP branches were content to follow their Party leadership in such matters as Alba Pools, increasing quotas, publicity levies, and by-election dues, because it was felt that such contributions were vital to the organisational health of the Party. Moreover, they recognised that there were no other major sources of income available to headquarters. Finally, unlike the Conservative associations, there was no tradition of effective fund-raising; for most of the 1960s the SNP activists were new to the business of political campaigning and organisation, and therefore needed guidance and direction.

The Labour Party has, over the years, been unable to extract sufficient cash from the local parties to finance their activities:

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Party's attitude to its head office throughout its history has been its evident reluctance to provide funds for staff and facilities to enable head office adequately to fulfil its task. (10)

When Rose looked at the total income of the Labour Party between 1967 and 1970 <sup>(11)</sup> he found that the trade-unions contributed 57 per cent to the total, the constituency parties some 19 per cent, and the cooperative societies 11 per cent, the other four per cent came from Transport House itself. It is obvious from these figures that although the constituencies are important, if the Party relied upon them for most of its income then the overall level of Party activity would, by financial necessity, diminish.

There can be little doubt that the constituency Labour parties -

at least in so far as raising revenue for the centre is concerned - appear to have been highly autonomous. That is to say, they were left largely on their own so far as the business of raising income was concerned. Certainly compared to the SNP, where well over 90 per cent of the Party's income, prior to 1974, was coming from branch and individual members, and where the leadership was almost continually calling for greater sacrifices in the cause of improving Party finances.

A possible explanation for this flabbiness in Labour Party internal fund-raising may have lain in the fact that the associations knew that the trade-unions would always provide the wherewithal for Labour's organisational necessities. Moreover, as Rose has commented:

At the constituency level, the maintenance of small, poorly financed party, dependent upon the loyalty of a few volunteers, maximises the influence of individual volunteers. (12)

Contrasting with the experience of the SNP, and even the Conservative Party, attempts to institute new fund-raising schemes, and initiatives have foundered:

The institutionalised resistance to change of those in charge of the status-quo was most firmly demonstrated from 1966 to 1970 when Oliver Stutchbury (1971), a City financier, became the Party's honorary and active financial adviser. Stutchbury's various schemes to raise money gave him by his own admission, four frustrating years of failure. (13)

What conclusions can we draw about the income sources of the major parties in so far as they affect power relationships between the respective leaderships and local associations?

Clearly, in the case of the Labour Party, there appears to have been little direction of the local bodies by the central leadership, and when this did occur the response was disappointing. Finer's figure <sup>(14)</sup> of 59 per cent of total Party income coming from the

constituencies still includes donations made by trade-unions to the local branches and associations (in any case his estimate appears to be very high). Transport House may complain, but apparently it does little else: Rose discovered <sup>(15)</sup> that in 1969, at least one-third of the associations failed to pay the required affiliation fee to headquarters (in 1969 the minimum fee was £50 per association or 5p per member). Association autonomy, or, perhaps more accurately, isolation, is the predominant organisational pattern so far as financial matter, in the Labour Party, is concerned. Indeed since local associations also receive donations from the Unions they are actually the chief beneficiaries of the internal flow of funds within the Party <sup>(16)</sup>.

The Conservative Party has a very much greater reliance upon their local associations for Party income. However, the very strength of these bodies, together with their traditions, has meant that they too have considerable autonomy in financial matters. But whenever organisational difficulties emerge, as in 1965-1966, they have accepted guidance and direction from headquarters.

Finally, one should also remember that the major parties draw financial support from a diverse series of interest groups which tends to increase organisational centrifugalism in respect of finance:

The methods used to finance political activity illustrate the limited organisational cohesion of British parties ... if the activities of 'para-political' pressure groups, business firms intermittently or incidentally concerned with nationalisation, and trade unions and Co-operative societies are included, electoral finance appears even more disjointed and disorganised. (17)

Campaign Management in the Labour and Conservative Parties

The basic problem which confronts would-be campaign managers in the two major parties stems from the fact that the structures of both are not vertically uniform. Instead there are the parliamentary parties, as well as the bureaucracies in London and the regions. But the bureaucracies, unlike the SNP, do not function as part of an identifiable political leadership. Rather, they are almost anonymous with largely administrative roles.

The Conservative Party has a dual organisational structure. Central Office inspires and coordinates the work of the Party in the country <sup>(18)</sup>. The National Union brings together all the constituency associations (there is a separate structure in Scotland, but all Scottish constituency associations are affiliated to the National Union <sup>(19)</sup>). The Official Ulster Unionist Party is associated with the Conservative Party, and is represented on the Central Council <sup>(20)</sup>. The Union's principal role is the raising of cash and the fighting of elections. However, according to McKenzie <sup>(21)</sup>, the National Union is cumbersome and unwieldy, and not really all that effective in coordinating the work of the affiliated constituency associations. The latter are 'tight-knit and efficient' organisations, but their autonomy is sufficient to prevent the National Union from imposing overall control over them. In fact, its national role seems restricted to:

Serving as a two-way channel of communication which keeps the Leader and his colleagues in Parliament informed of the mood of their followers in the country and which enables the leaders, in turn, to explain their policies to their supporters in the country. <sup>(22)</sup>

The job of the professionals in Central Office is to ensure that the associations are, in fact, doing their job of fund-raising, etc. Indeed, Central Office fulfils the management functions which one might have expected the National Union to perform:

The members of the National Union have grumbled from time to time but they have made no concerted effort to win control of the management of the affairs of the Party. (23)

This de facto control of organisational matters by the professionals, together with the inability of the Union to manage the constituency associations appears to have left the latter with a great deal of organisational autonomy. According to Pinto-Duschinsky,

Conservative Politics is best<sup>seen</sup> as a continuing series of feints and manoeuvres between various sections of the party, each seeking to push forward its opinions, each realising, however, the immense costs of disunity. (24)

Thus campaign management within the Conservative Party was (and is) likely to be more complicated than in the SNP, where coordination was effected quickly by the leadership. This is not to say that the Conservative Party organisation was typically decentralised. But rather if we compare it to the SNP of the 1960s, then, in fact, the local associations did manifest greater self-management than was true of their equivalents in the SNP.

The constituency associations of the Labour Party do not rival in organisational strength their equivalents in the Conservative Party. Over the years they have grown progressively weaker in both membership and financial terms ('Militant', appears to have grown stronger as the associations have become weaker). This organisational weakness must also be seen against a background of greater control by the leadership than is found in the Conservative Party. McKenzie asserts that:

If anything, however, the Labour constituency parties are subject to rather more detailed control by the central organs

of the party than are the Conservative associations. (25)

and, later:

It is evident ... that the activities of the mass organisation of the Labour Party ... loom much larger in the affairs of the party as a whole than do the activities of the National Union on the Conservative side. (26)

As we saw in the first section of this chapter, there is little evidence that the centre had any great success in instituting programmes for improving Labour's financial position. We shall now turn to the campaign management of the Party (and the Conservative Party) to try to ascertain if Transport House and Central Office were any more successful in instituting, and effecting, campaigns which were later carried out by the constituency parties. If they were not, would this not mean that the supposed control exercised by the centre over the constituencies was more apparent than real, or at least was much less centralised than the SNP?

As we observed on the previous chapter, the SNP's constituency associations functioned during the election campaigns as representatives of the centre. The latter planned the campaigns, determined the main themes, purchased advertising space, and agreed upon the slogans. The leadership also devised the literature and manifesto, and even made available a standard election address. We also noted that the overwhelming majority of constituencies and candidates based their local campaigns on these centrally-devised election issues. Moreover, they also had regular contact with the centre during the course of the campaign itself.

All of this, in effect, meant that the constituency workers carried on the sorts of activities which only they as activists at the local level were capable of fulfilling: canvassing, leaflet distribution,



car cavalcades, and public meetings. How does this compare with the Labour and Conservative parties?

In describing and analysing campaigns there is a grave risk of intellectualising the process and attributing too much initiative to the campaigner; the manoeuvres of candidates are too often limited by pressures resulting from scarcity of resources, expectations of voters, pre-arranged strategy, and previous policy commitments. (27)

There is much wisdom in the above quote, yet evidence from the elections of 1974 suggests that the major parties may have had slightly greater difficulties with their local associations than was the case for the leadership of the SNP. For example, Finer has argued:

In both major parties only policy making, research, and publicity are centralised; campaigning, finance and the selection of the candidate are highly decentralised. (28)

We have seen that prior to the February campaign of 1974, the Scottish Nationalists had already begun an expensive publicity campaign, and also instituted central strategic planning which involved the constituencies as well. There was, then, a coordinated national effort. Butler and Kavanagh found (29) that this was not the case for the major parties:

In many constituencies the campaign was strikingly remote from that at party headquarters ... On this occasion the inevitable dissociation of the two campaigns was heightened by the rush which made it even more difficult for many hard pressed candidates, agents and party workers to follow the national campaign. (30)

This same study found that many local campaigns were hardly influenced by national matters, indeed their tactics remained unaltered after the campaign had started (31). However, it was discovered that more Labour candidates than Conservative followed the national campaign. In fact, a majority of Tory candidates claimed that they did pay close attention to the overall national contest. (32)

One outstanding advantage the SNP had over the other parties was that communication between the grass-roots and the centre was direct, and not filtered through regional offices. The Nuffield study found that in the February campaign this was one of the predominant characteristics of centre-periphery liaison:

The party headquarters continued to rely largely on the reports of the regional and area organisers for information on the mood of the voters, expecting them to act as filters for the reports from the constituencies. (33)

After the February 1974 Election the Conservative campaign had, by the usual standards, failed. As we have seen, the majority of SNP candidates were satisfied with the conduct of the centre during the same campaign, and by the standards of seats gained the Nationalists had done well.

Unlike the Tories, the Labour Party had reason to be happier with the planning and execution of its electoral strategy; they had won the Election. But more than this, the Labour Party did, in fact, greatly improve its organisational back-up; it had, for the first time, a daily polling service, the Campaign Committee at Transport House had video facilities to monitor the performance of Party leaders on television, there was a telex link with regional organisers, and:

In their post-election analysis Labour organisers claimed that there was little scope for improvement of their campaign management. (34)

This is reflected in the amount of attention that the candidates paid to the national manifesto. Butler and Kavanagh found that over four-fifths of Labour candidates paid close attention to the Party's manifesto, whilst less than two-thirds of Conservatives made the same claim (35). As we indicated in the previous chapter something like 84 per cent of SNP candidates utilised the Party manifesto (that is to say, they drew upon it when making speeches and writing letters

to the press, etc.) for their constituency campaigns over the two elections of 1974.

By the October General Election it was discovered that the amount of attention paid by the Labour candidates to the 'manifesto' had fallen by 20 per cent, whilst the figure for the Conservatives had increased, by eight per cent, to 73 per cent <sup>(36)</sup>. Both figures are considerably below that for the SNP over the two campaigns.

In both elections the major parties did many of the things which, as we have seen, the SNP had sought to do: daily bulletins to the candidates, regular communication with the constituencies, making available leaflets and newspapers, and pro-forma election addresses. Yet unlike the SNP's election planners who knew that they had no alternative but to utilise these methods, since media access was severely limited <sup>(37)</sup>, the leadership of the major parties believed that the campaign would be won via the national media. Of the Conservatives, Butler and Kavanagh noted:

The party leadership had clearly decided well in advance of 1974 that the news media and advertising were more important than constituency organisation for communicating with the mass electorate. <sup>(38)</sup>

There is little reason to believe that matters differed much in the Labour Party.

A consequence of such media-dominated campaigns was that the constituencies were likely to work away on their own. Moreover, since there was such a vast concentration on the national campaigns of the major parties it was entirely possible that the sort of coordination, and centralised direction, typical of the SNP, would have seemed unnecessary. Thematic appeals could be launched via television with

the constituency activists merely following along. The SNP's share of television time was extremely small by comparison (see above). Therefore, the Party had to compensate by ensuring that all parts of the Party machine worked in unison. This may also explain why the SNP appeared to be the most visible and active of the parties <sup>(31)</sup>.

Another essential part of a party's organisation is publicity. This, of course, is not restricted to election campaigns. It is, therefore, to the publicity mechanisms of the major parties to which we now turn.

#### Publicity and Organisation

The widest, or at least most spectacular, use of publicity tends to come during election campaigns, but as we discovered, and as the Finer quote given above testifies, publicity tends to be a centralised function. It is not surprising, therefore, that major parties have parts of their bureaucracies specifically given over to publicity matters.

In the Labour Party there is the Information Department <sup>(40)</sup> which disseminates, as its title suggests, information concerning the Party's policies and programmes, etc. It circulates to the candidates and the local parties position papers and policy documents which, in turn, are utilised for local press releases and/or campaigning. Finally, it controls campaign advertising, the drawing up of pro-forma election addresses, campaign literature and posters.

Conservative Central Office has three deputy directors of publicity

each responsible for press, broadcasting, and publications respectively (41). It is fairly obvious that they cover the same areas as their equivalents in Transport House.

It has long been recognised that the centralisation of publicity/propaganda is essential in an age of almost instant communication between centre and periphery. But, as we have seen, even when there is limited access to the national media, as in the case of the SNP, there is still a premium placed on centralisation. The reason is simple: the need to ensure a thematic campaign, one in which a party's programme and image are viewed in a similar way in diverse parts of the country. This also has the advantage of minimising potentially embarrassing local campaigns which ignore the themes devised by the leadership. Finally, there are sound management reasons as well; a centralised campaign is easier to control and monitor. It also goes some way to ensuring that each part of the country is getting some coverage by the party. Rose offers yet another explanation for centralised propaganda, and in doing so certainly touches upon a raw nerve of organisational management:

Within the ranks of the party, propaganda can be used to sustain morale by providing tangible evidence to partisans that their leaders are doing something to get the party's message to the electorate. (42)

Both the elections of 1974 offer sufficient evidence to suggest that publicity centralisation, albeit of varying degrees, was the norm for both major parties. During the February campaign, for example, Conservative Central Office prepared leaflets for distribution to specific target groups like immigrants, young voters, and Jews (43). In fact, the Tories also had three 'regional' publicity officers who assisted local agents and candidates in exploiting opportunities offered by the local media. However, the Nuffield study found a certain variability among Conservative candidates in the emphasis each placed

upon the national campaign <sup>(44)</sup>. This was a problem which apparently did not affect the Labour campaign to the same degree.

Labour candidates paid close attention to the themes of the national campaign <sup>(45)</sup>. Yet as we highlighted in the last chapter, the Labour campaign, which was supposed to be 'synchronised' <sup>(46)</sup> was certainly no more so, in publicity terms, than that devised, and fought, by the SNP.

The October campaigns of both parties appear to have been marginally more centralised - probably because of the impact of two elections in one year. Centrally-produced leaflets were widely circulated, indeed the Conservatives had twenty offset lithograph machines in the vicinity of critical seats with the purpose of producing high quality leaflets at short notice <sup>(47)</sup>. Election addresses, local speeches, and press-releases emphasised national themes. In fact, just as we have found for the SNP, there were few references of any kind to local matters <sup>(48)</sup>. Whether candidates, agents or activists paid close attention to the actual speeches of the national leadership is doubtful. What is not is that the great bulk of publicity themes was determined by the respective party headquarters.

Yet publicity is not merely limited to election campaigns, although this is certainly when it becomes most tangible. The major parties' publicity machines are motivated by a concern to ensure that the national media report the speeches of the notables, relate policy statements, and otherwise inform the electorate of the positive aspects of the party in question. For most of the time the constituencies are not much affected - in publicity terms - by headquarters. The activists

can merely pick up a national newspaper, or switch on their televisions or radios to hear the latest news about the party.

Such luxuries were not afforded to the SNP before 1974. Thus they compensated for this deficiency by centralising even non-election publicity. More importantly, and more specifically, by the late 1960s, and certainly throughout the 'oil campaign', the SNP became a campaigning party. This meant that the overall publicity strategy had to be devised and coordinated by the centre. It meant that the branches had to utilise the material provided by the leadership, and that the latter knew the amount of coverage each part of the country was enjoying. Centralisation of publicity themes, together with the strategic aspects of campaigns such as 'oil' or 'Its Time - For Self Government', was the norm.

Of the three areas examined, finance campaign-management, and publicity, only publicity could be said to be distinguished by any degree of marked centralisation so far as the two major parties are concerned mainly due to literature, posters and campaign themes. The other two areas, albeit in varying degrees, were much less centralised in the Labour and Conservative parties than in the SNP.

In matters of finance the Labour Party's leadership had little control over, and even less reliance on, the constituencies <sup>(49)</sup>. The Conservatives did depend, to a much greater degree, on the local associations for cash, but because of their very strength, expertise and tradition, they were typically autonomous. However, they did respond positively when called upon by the leadership, to participate in raising more revenue for the overall national effort.

In campaign management the degree of centralisation varied as between the two parties. But what is clear is that neither, at least in 1974, came close to rivalling the coordinated approach adopted by the SNP, this was most especially true of the February campaign. The major difference, certainly in 1974, was that the SNP had been in a state of almost constant mobilisation - as a consequence of the 'oil campaign', - whilst the other parties were taken somewhat by surprise by the first election of the year.

Finally, the SNP had the advantage of organisational momentum built up behind it in 1973/74. It had been accumulating both membership and finances, and planning a series of campaigns which served to raise Party morale. The Labour and Conservative parties, on the other hand, were faced with bureaucratic staleness, a feature of organisational life not uncommon in older, more established institutions.

Only in publicity do we have clear indication of centralisation and headquarters' dominance in the major parties. Yet even in this sphere the SNP was at least as centralised as the other two. In fact, if we go beyond election publicity into overall publicity effort, for example, in the planning and execution of inter-election campaigns, then the SNP was without doubt a far more centralised organisation in the management of publicity.

The structure of the major parties encourages this less centralist approach. The unions, the parliamentary party, the NEC, the Transport House bureaucracy, and the ideological groupings in the Labour Party are reflective of a diverse organisational power structure. And in the Conservative Party, the division between the National Union and



Central Office, the traditional strength of the constituencies, the parliamentary party, 'big-business', the regional divisions of the Party, and the dependence on the local areas for financing the work of the machine as a whole, all have a decentralist impact upon the Conservatives.

As we have argued above, between 1960 and 1974 the SNP was preoccupied with the erection, and then the solidification, of its organisational structure. Centralisation followed inevitably in the wake. For most of the time, policy considerations, and ideological distinctiveness, took a back-seat. Such concerns would become more pressing as the SNP became more established and as its procedures were formalised; organisational centralisation was the key to success electorally.

The SNP's electoral defeat of 1979 gave rise to demands within the Party for a more vigorous ideological debate. Some members began to argue that one of the supposed strengths of the Party, that is, a non-class based ideology, prevented it from breaking into the Labour Party's heartland in West Central Scotland.

Such critics argue that, by itself, good organisation will never be sufficient to capture the working-class voter, and that 'left-wing' socio-economic policies should be adopted in a bid to change both the image and the power structure (by replacing some of the older personnel in the leadership) of the Party. Since 1979 these arguments have indeed led to considerable changes in both the 'ideology', and among leading personnel within the SNP. We shall endeavour to explain the significance of these developments, within the context of this thesis, in the

*Postscript.*

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3. S.E. Finer, The Changing British Party System, 1945-1979, (Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute, 1980), p.97.
4. Rose, op.cit., p.221.
5. Finer, op.cit., p.97.
6. Philip Norton & Arthur Aughey, Conservatives and Conservatism, (London, Temple Smith, 1981), p.216.
7. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, 'Central Office and 'Power' In the Conservative Party', Political Studies, (Vol. No. 1, 1970 pp. 1-16), p.9.
8. D.E. Butler & A. King, The British General Election of 1964, (London, Macmillan, 1965), p.53.
9. Ibid., p.57. Cash is raised from the constituency associations of the Conservative Party via a quota contribution set by Central Office for each constituency, in relation to the number of votes obtained by individual constituencies at the preceding General election. The exact figure is agreed between the Area Treasurer and the local party. According to Rose (op.cit., pp. 224-225) a majority of associations approach or exceed the quota. Central Office appears to receive about 80 per cent of quota assessments.
10. R.T. McKenzie, British Political Parties: The Distribution of Power Within the Conservative and Labour Parties, (London, Heinemann, 1963), p.561.
11. Rose, op.cit., p.230.
12. Ibid., p.242.
13. Ibid., pp. 242-243.
14. Finer, op.cit., p.97.
15. Rose, op.cit., p.233.
16. Ibid., p.231.
17. Ibid., p.214.
18. McKenzie, op.cit., p.272.
19. The Scottish Conservative Party headquarters maintains a list of accredited candidates for Scottish seats, and is the channel of central Party funds to the constituencies. Literature etc., is printed in a Scottish format.

20. Norton & Aughey, op.cit., p.209.
21. McKenzie, op.cit., pp. 46-259.
22. Ibid., p.258.
23. Ibid., p.291.
24. Pinto-Duschinsky, op.cit., p.13.
25. McKenzie, op.cit., p.539.
26. Ibid., p.557.
27. D.E. Butler & Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of February 1974, (London, Macmillan, 1974), p.35.
28. Finer, op.cit., p.97.
29. Butler & Kavanagh, op.cit., pp. 217-218.
30. Ibid., pp. 219-220.
31. Ibid., p.229.
32. Ibid., p.232.
33. Ibid., p.237.
34. Ibid., pp. 127-128.
35. Ibid., p.232.
36. D.E. Butler & Denis Kavanagh, The British General Election of October 1974, (London, macmillan, 1975), p.230.
37. Richard Rose, Politics in England: An Interpretation for the 1980s (London, Faber & Faber, 1980), p.208.
38. Butler & Kavanagh, (October), op.cit., p.205.
39. Ibid., pp. 246-147.
40. Rose, 'Party Government', op.cit., p.186.
41. Ibid., p.187.
42. Ibid., p.88.
43. Butler & Kavanagh (February) op.cit., p.230.
44. Ibid., p.231.
45. Ibid., p.231.
46. Ibid., p.232.

47. Butler & Kavanagh (October), op.cit., p.231.
48. Ibid., p.235.
49. It might be argued that Labour's dependence on the trade-unions for Party funding is tantamount to control of the Party by the unions. But whatever the merits or otherwise of this thesis is not our concern. Rather, the fact remains that the financial link which binds the branches and constituencies to the centre in the Labour Party is, according to the evidence which we have examined, more tenuous than is the case in the SNP.

### Postscript.

As we have attempted to show in this thesis, the leadership of the SNP during the 1950s faced the potential extinction of the Party as a functioning organisation. This crisis led to a fundamental re-appraisal of the organisational structure and overall direction of the SNP.

Out of crisis was born innovation. A comparatively small number of individuals innovated and instituted new approaches to the problems of electioneering, the raising of finance, and the apportionment of managerial responsibility. Some of these individuals had been active both in the Party and in the leadership for a considerable time, for example, Arthur Donaldson and Dr. Robert McIntyre. Others like Gordon Wilson and Ian Macdonald were comparatively new.

The leadership of the late 1950s and early 1960s recognised that there existed in Scotland a substantial body of support for 'Home Rule'. With this in mind they set about restructuring the SNP along lines which would mobilise this support.

By the early 1960s the plans and programmes of the leadership group had begun to bear fruit; membership was growing rapidly and electoral advances were occurring, for example, at Bridgeton.

As we have demonstrated the great majority of the new members were political novices. Consequently, they were more than usually reliant upon their leaders for guidance and direction. Secondly, the leadership group was manifestly successful in improving the standing of the Party. Next, as we have seen from our analysis of organisational theory, a

rapidly expanding organisation does tend to give rise to a centralised and hierarchical management structure. Finally, in any case, certain of the programmes and mechanisms introduced by the leadership, for example, the Wilson Report, consciously sought to introduce centralisation.

As Michels' pointed out <sup>(1)</sup> such oligarchical tendencies need not carry any ideological commitment on the part of the leaders. On the contrary, they may retain a formal attachment to decentralisation and organisational democracy. Such was the case for many of the SNP's leaders. Rather the events and realities of rapid growth pushed the Party towards administrative centralisation.

What mattered to the majority of SNP members and their leaders, was that the Party should prosper and continue to grow organisationally. For so long as these aims looked as if they were being achieved, then the rank-and-file's impotence on organisational matters was a small price to pay.

That the leadership was more concerned with administrative/organisational questions than with policy, can be gauged from the amount of attention given by the leaders to the two areas at NEC meetings, National Council and Conference.

Moreover, as we have seen, the National Assembly was specifically created to deal with policy, and to deflect the membership, or their delegates, from taking a hand in the administration of the Party through participation on the NEC.

Policy was a luxury which would only become affordable after the

SNP had achieved significant electoral success and a strong parliamentary presence.

The emergence of an eleven strong parliamentary group in 1974, created another centre of power outwith the NEC. Moreover, the very fact that the SNP had such a prominent parliamentary presence inevitably increased the importance of policy questions. As the SNP MPs were faced with voting on a whole range of socio-economic and political matters, the likelihood of conflict within the group and within the Party increased.

Between 1974 and 1979 relations between the NEC and the Party's MPs deteriorated. Neither group was willing to concede organisational pre-eminence to the other. Some individuals such as Gordon Wilson, Douglas Henderson and Winifred Ewing were, as we have seen, previously members of the leadership group. Yet after the parliamentary elections of 1974 they became detached from the interests of the NEC, whilst members of the latter, such as William Wolfe and Margo MacDonald, insisted that the NEC was still the superior forum. Their personal interests lay in Scotland and not at Westminster.

In such a climate, organisational questions receded in importance to be replaced by policy matters such as devolution or independence, nationalisation or the continuation of private ownership, 'constituents' interests versus Party interests. Gradually these and other issues resolved themselves into 'left' and 'right' ideological questions. To some extent these divisions were kept in check through the recognition that open Party splits would damage the SNP's electoral chances. This factor disappeared after the 1979 Election.

After the 1979 General Election when the SNP lost all but two of its seats in Westminster, a coherent left-wing grouping, the '79 Group' emerged. By 1981 members of this group, including the former Labour MP Jim Sillars, had gained a very significant presence on the NEC, and had seen many of their policies adopted by the Party Conferences of 1980 and 1981.

Both of these factors, the strong parliamentary presence (which divided the then existing leadership into those who had been successful candidates and those who had not), and the disastrous results of the 1979 Election, changed the SNP utterly.

In the years between 1960 and 1974 the Party concentrated all of its energies on organisational growth. Unity prevailed through necessity. But it was also reinforced through success. In the main, the leaders had presided over growth. They were certainly temporary set-backs. But the overall direction was onward and upward. And it seems likely that this expansion kept the lid on whatever internal dissent that might have existed.

However, after the 1974 Elections the leadership was divided between London and Edinburgh. From this grew personality and policy clashes. Policy debates became inevitable when the Party came face-to-face with the issues which were the staple diet of Westminster politics. The more the SNP MPs disagreed with the NEC on policy questions, the more likely it became that the rank-and-file would also take sides.

These divisions were exacerbated by electoral defeat. Those who believed in full scale independence blamed the devolutionists (the latter



had, after all, failed to secure a Scottish Assembly). The 'left' blamed the 'right', the argument being that the SNP had not sufficiently identified with the Scottish working-class, and therefore, lost the biggest single group of electoral support. The SNP turned in on itself and organisation was no longer to the forefront of the leadership's attention.

Prior to 1974, leadership unity was preserved in the cause of growth and electoral success. It was facilitated by virtue of the fact that there was only one power base, that is, the NEC. This united leadership was crucial to effective control over the machine.

When compared to the Labour Party, for example, certain obvious features strike one immediately. The Labour Party has a fully established organisational base. Until recently there was less interest in organisational matters within the Labour Party - which may partially explain the rise of 'Militant'. Moreover, the Labour Party has at least two major sources of organisational power; the NEC and the Parliamentary Party. This often gives rise to internal conflict. These were aspects of party life which began to afflict the SNP after 1974.

Finally, after its electoral defeat in 1979 the Labour Party, like the SNP, became wracked by organisational conflict. Electoral loss tends to initiate such debates in most political parties.

During the course of this thesis we have attempted to demonstrate how certain organisational realities steered the SNP leadership towards centralisation in the years between 1960 and 1974. Centralisation was aided by the unified leadership structure and an absence of rancour on

policy matters. This was, of course, changed after 1974. Not only was that leadership split between Edinburgh and London, but in its turn this led to policy matters overtaking organisation in priority. Moreover, the very fact that the Party had secured 30 per cent of the Scottish vote must have seemed to many members as if the SNP's organisational problems were at an end. And as a consequence they could switch the bulk of their attention to policy.

Electoral success brought its own rewards. However, it also brought to an end the very considerable concentration that the SNP leadership had given to the mundane but vital factor of organisation.

As we have sought to show, the SNP between 1960 and 1974 was at least as centralised as the Labour and Conservative parties. The major parties had a number of major power centres. The SNP did not. Tradition and the experience of the Labour and Conservative activists had given to them more power over administrative matters than was enjoyed by the relatively inexperienced SNP workers.

Moreover, policy was more critical to parties with an already strong parliamentary presence, indeed parties which regularly formed the government of the country, than to a party which prior to 1974 had only one MP in the House of Commons.

Political parties which seriously aspire to achieving goal-realisation, for example, the government of their country, or as in the case of the SNP, the restoration of sovereignty to Scotland, must tackle and solve the basic problems examined in this thesis. They must secure a source of funding sufficient to sustain their propagandising and electoral

effort. They must establish an organisational structure which minimises internal dissent, or at least manages to contain it. Failure to do so can lead to the party splitting and/or the electorate refusing to support it on the grounds that it lacks confidence and unity.

One of the most important characteristics of the emerging party has to be stable leadership group which can guarantee continuity in the first five to ten years of the party's life. In this way the new members can be guided and educated as to the needs of the organisation and encouraged to play their part in its expansion. Moreover, it allows for expertise to filter down to the grass-roots.

For all of these reasons we would argue that not only do emerging political parties need to be highly centralised in their initial years of growth, but also that organisational factors will be far more important than policy concerns. Furthermore, if the leaders of such a party fail to keep a tight rein on membership activity and do not attend to the development of the organisation, then they must face the ever present prospect of party disintegration.

Before the early 1960s the SNP did not have a stable and sufficient source of income. It did not have a coherent managerial view of how best to run the Party. The members in those few branches which existed were not instructed as to the most effective method of achieving growth. Nor did the leadership have a tight grip on branch activity and effort. The Party drifted along and was, as we have argued, only a shadow of an organisation. It was only when Wilson, Macdonald, Donaldson et.al. got down to thinking seriously about what makes an organisation work and what transforms the shadow into substance, that the SNP could realistically

be described as a political party. Thereafter, through a combination of organisational imperative and planned action, the SNP became one of the most significant forces in post-war British politics.

1. Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958).

AppendixExtracts from the Constitution and Rules of the Scottish  
National Party, (Edinburgh 1978).Clause 14

- (a) The Annual National Conference of the Party shall be the supreme governing body of the Party.
- (b) The Annual National Conference and Special Conferences shall consist of -
  - (1) the delegates from Branches, Constituency Associations and Affiliated Organisations, in accordance with the provisions laid down in PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules;
  - (2) the National Office-Bearers as defined in PART TWO 110 of the Constitution and Rules, and the members of National Council elected in accordance with PART TWO 97 (e) of the Constitution and Rules;
  - (3) the Scottish National Party Member or Members of Parliament as the case may be during his or their period as such.
- (c) The procedure, including voting powers shall be as provided in PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules.
- (d) An Annual National Conference shall be held, and Special Conferences shall be held when necessary, in accordance with the provisions of PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules.
- (e) The National Conferences may delegate such powers and directions as they may think fit to National Council, or to Committees or other bodies of the Party.

Clause 15 National Council

- (a) Subject to the over-riding authority of the National Conferences, National Council shall be the governing body of the Party between conferences, and its decisions binding on the Party and all members unless and until rescinded or modified by a National Conference.
- (b) National Council shall be constituted in accordance with the provisions of PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules.
- (c) It shall be competent for National Council to amend PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules in accordance with PART ONE 33 - 36 inclusive of the Constitution and Rules.

Clause 16 National Assembly

The National Assembly shall be constituted in accordance with the provisions of PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules. It shall -

- (a) provide a forum among representatives of the Party from every part of Scotland for the exchange of constructive ideas on the attaining of the aims of the Party, with particular reference to discussion of the current political situation in Scotland, and to the actions and attitudes of the London-based parties, and provide the Party's Headquarters departments with regular opportunities for discussing proposals for the improvement of the quality of Party activity in the Constituencies;
- (b) evolve and review policies;
- (c) Provide opportunities for inviting speakers from outwith the party to address the National Assembly on important subjects of special interest to members;
- (d) provide opportunities additional to those of National Conference for public debates on important topics;
- (e) conduct additional business which National Conference or National Council may delegate to it.

Clause 17 National Executive Committee

The National Executive Committee shall be constituted in accordance with the provisions of PART TWO of the Constitution and Rules. It shall be concerned with administration, finance, organisation, publicity, training, membership and other matters relevant thereto, but National Council may delegate to it such powers and duties as National Council considers necessary.

Clause 18 Affiliated Organisations

Affiliated Organisations shall be organisations which support the Aims of the Party, and whose membership does not include members of other political parties active in Scotland, and which, having paid to the Headquarters of the Party Affiliation fees as determined by National Council, have applied for and been granted the status of Affiliated Organisations of the Party by National Council.

Clause 18A Scottish National Party Association

A Scottish National Party Association may be established, and if so established shall be organised by the National Secretary (who may with the agreement of the National Executive Committee delegate the duties involved) for persons outwith the United Kingdom ineligible for membership of the Party but who wish to support the Aims of the Party, and who are not members of any other political party active in Scotland and who accept the Constitution and Rules of the Scottish National Party Association, which Constitution and Rules shall be subject to the

approval of National Council. Subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee, Councils of the Scottish National Party Association may be established covering the whole of any nation outwith the United Kingdom, and within each such Council there may be individual territorial branches groups.

#### BRANCHES AND GROUPS

##### Clause 37

All applications for membership of a duly constituted Branch shall be submitted to a meeting of the Branch and, provided the applicants appear to be eligible and have paid the appropriate subscriptions, their membership will be provisionally approved. Branches shall submit to the Headquarters the names and addresses of their members, and, should any of these be found to be ineligible, the Branch concerned shall be informed and the membership shall be invalid.

##### Clause 38

All applicants for membership of a Group shall be provisionally approved as members provided they appear to be eligible and have paid the appropriate subscriptions. Groups shall submit lists of their members to the Headquarters at least once a year, and, should any of these be found to be ineligible, the Group concerned shall be informed and the membership shall be invalid. Each Group within the constituency shall be approved by the Constituency Association.

##### Clause 39

Should a Branch consider it necessary to suspend or expel a member from the Branch the decision to do so must be taken at a full Branch Meeting of which fourteen days' written notice has been sent to the members of the Branch, including the member whom it is proposed to suspend or expel, and the proposal to suspend or expel must be included in the agenda sent to members with the notice of the meeting. The member concerned must be given an opportunity to submit a statement of explanation or defence. Branches shall notify the Headquarters of all suspensions and expulsions immediately they take effect. A member suspended or expelled from a Branch may appeal to the National Executive Committee and thereafter to National Council.

##### Clause 40

Each Branch shall elect a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and may elect such other office-bearers as it considers necessary.

##### Clause 41

Each Branch shall elect an Executive Committee and may appoint such other Committees as it considers necessary.



Clause 42

All Office-Bearers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Branch, of which meeting fourteen days' written notice must have been given to the members of the Branch, except in the case of a new Branch, where the office-bearers may be appointed a pro tempore until the first Annual General Meeting.

Clause 43

Office-bearers shall not be changed except through resignations, or by default, or at a meeting of the Branch of which fourteen days' written notice had been sent to the members of the Branch, including notification of the intention to change office-bearers or by direction of National Council.

Clause 44

The responsibilities of the office-bearers, Executive Committee and the members of the Branch shall include ensuring that -

- (a) adequate notice of all meetings is given, meetings are properly conducted, full records are kept (including Minutes of meetings, register of names and receipts into and payments made from the funds of the Branch), and all correspondence is dealt with promptly.
- (b) proper and adequate steps are taken to promote the cause of Scottish Nationalism and the interests of the Party, within the area covered by the Branch, including the holding of meetings, canvassing, literature distribution and sales, and periodical reports of all activities are made to the Headquarters of the Party.
- (c) in particular every endeavour is made to carry out the policy and direction of the Party as may be laid down from time to time by Conferences and National Council, and that nothing is done to modify or prejudice the aims, policy, or general activities of the party; and
- (d) every endeavour is made in the mutual interests of Branches and the Party as a whole to co-operate closely with other Branches, with the Regional and District Associations for its area, with the Constituency Association and with the Headquarters of the Party.

Clause 45

It shall be the duty of every Branch to send to the Headquarters by 28th February each year a summary of the Branch's annual audited statement of accounts for the year ended 31st December of the preceding year and a statement of its assets and liabilities.

Clause 46

Each Branch shall pay to the Headquarters such affiliation fees, levies and other dues and in such instalments as National Council may decide.

Clause 47

All affiliation fees, levies and other dues to the Headquarters in respect of the financial year to 31st December shall be paid on or before that date.

Clause 48

Any Branch which has not paid in full the levies and other dues to the Headquarters by 31st December shall be entitled to representation at National Conferences as provided in PART TWO 71 of the Constitution and Rules.

Clause 49

The National Executive Committee may, however, decide in exceptional circumstances that if a Branch has paid in full all affiliation fees, levies and other dues at a date later than 31st December, the Branch may be represented on a basis to be determined by the National Executive Committee but not to exceed the representation provided for in PART TWO 69 of the Constitution and Rules.

Clause 50

Each Branch shall by 28th February each year lodge at the Headquarters a list of the names and addresses of all its members as at 31st December of the preceding year.

Clause 51

No money shall be collected in the name of any Branch of the Party, nor shall the name of the Party be used for the collection of money, and no payments shall be made from the funds of any Branch, except for the purposes covered by the Constitution and Rules of the Party unless however, the approval of National Council shall previously have been obtained.

Clause 52

Should any Branch for any reason whatsoever go out of existence, be disbanded by National Council or National Conference, or secede from the Party, all funds and properties pertaining to the Branch shall, at the option of National Council, become the property of the Party as of represented by the National Council and the Chairman, the National Secretary and the National Treasurer for the time being.

Clause 53

All resolutions, amendemnts and nominations by a Branch, sent to the Headquarters shall be certified in writing by the Chairman and the Secretary as having been properly passed at a meeting of the Branch, of which proper notice had been given in writing to the members of the Branch.

Clause 54

Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Rules, Branches shall have full authority to conduct their own affairs but each Branch shall have a constitution approved by the National Executive Committee, and all proposed changes thereto and any proposed new Constitution of a Branch shall be submitted to and be confirmed by the National Executive Committee before adoption by the Branch.

CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONClause 55

Each Branch within the Constituency shall be a member of the Constituency Association and decisions taken by the Association shall be binding on all Branches and Groups within the Constituency in relation to internal organisation within the Constituency, including financial support for the Constituency Association. A Branch which fails to cooperate with its Constituency Association may be reported to the National Executive Committee for disciplinary action.

Clause 56

Each Constituency Association shall have a constitution approved by the National Executive Committee, and all proposed changes thereto and any proposed new constitution of a Constituency Association shall be submitted to, and be confirmed by the National Executive Committee before adoption by the Constituency Association. Representation shall, unless otherwise agreed, consist of an equal number of delegates from each Branch in the Constituency. Each group may be represented by one delegate. The prospective parliamentary candidate and his election agent shall be members of the Association.

Clause 57

Each Constituency Association shall elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer and an Organiser, and may elect other office-bearers and committees as it considers necessary.

Clause 58

All office-bearers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Constituency Association, of which meeting one month's written notice must have been given to the members of the Constituency Association and to the Secretaries of all Branches within the Constituency, except in the case of a new Constituency Association, where the office-bearers may be appointed pro tempore until the first Annual General Meeting.

Clause 59

Office-bearers shall not be changed except through resignation, or by default, or at a meeting of the Constituency Association of which one month's written notice had been sent to the members of the Association, including notification of the intention to change office-bearers, or by direction of National Council.

Clause 60

Each Constituency Association shall pay to the Headquarters such levies and other dues and in such instalments as National Council may decide.

Clause 61

All levies and other dues to the Headquarters in respect of the financial year to 31st December shall be paid on or before that date.

Clause 62

The expenses of the Association shall be met either by levy on the Branches or by such other means as may be decided upon by the Association. The funds of Constituency Associations shall be used only for purposes covered by the Constitution and Rules of the Party, and an annual audited statement of accounts must be rendered for the Associations's Annual General Meeting and be sent to the Headquarters.

Clause 63

It shall be the duty of every Constituency Association to send an annual report to the Headquarters by 30th April each year.

Clause 64

Should any Constituency Association for any reason whatsoever go out of existence, be disbanded by National Council or National Conference, or secede from the Party, all funds and properties pertaining to the Constituency Association shall, at the option of National Council, become the property of the Party as represented by the National Council and the Chairman, the National Secretary and the National Treasurer for the time being.

Clause 65

All resolutions, amendements and nominations by a Constituency Association sent to the Headquarters shall be certified in writing by the Chairman and the Secretary as having been properly passed at a Meeting of the Constituency Association of which proper notice had been given in writing to the members of the Constituency Association.

PARTY DISCIPLINEClause 66

It shall be within the power of the National Executive Committee to admonish, suspend or expel any Branch, Constituency Association, or other organisation or any member (either as a member or as an office-Bearer) of the Party in consequence of any contravention of the Constitution and Rules, of any decision made thereunder or of conduct inimical to the interests of the Party. This power may be exercised in the name of the National Executive Committee by the Chairman or the National Secretary but only in emergency and between meeting of the National Executive Committee, to which a report in writing shall be submitted. The National Executive Committee shall report all such admonitions, suspensions and expulsions to National Council.

Clause 67

Any such admonished, suspended or expelled Branch, Constituency Association, other organisation or member shall have the right of appeal to the first meeting of National Council, whose decision shall be final and binding.

Clause 68

Suspensions shall be for a specified period, at the end of which the National Executive Committee shall decide whether it will be continued or whether some other action is necessary, and it will report its decision to National Council.

Clause 69

The representation at Annual National Conference shall be

- (a) two delegates from each Branch whose membership does not exceed fifty and one additional delegate for every additional fifty members or part thereof, provided that affiliation fees, levies and other dues to the Headquarters have been paid in full and provided always that no Branch shall be entitled to more than ten delegates.
- (b) one delegate from each Constituency Association, and
- (c) delegate or delegates from each affiliated organisation, the number to be determined annually in December by the National Council following recommendations by the National Executive Committee.

Clause 70

Branches which have paid affiliation fees but have failed to pay in full levies and other dues to the Headquarters shall be entitled to representation in proportion to the amounts of levies and other dues paid, representation to be decided as follows -

The total levies and other dues due by each Branch shall be divided by the number of delegates qualified for by membership, and a Branch shall be entitled to one delegate for each proportion paid.

Clause 71

Each Branch granted recognition by the National Executive Committee between 31st December of the preceding year and Annual National Conference shall be entitled to two delegates.

Clause 72

The National Treasurer shall be responsible for assessing Branch entitlement on the above basis and shall give adequate notice to Branches.

Clause 73

The representation from each Branch to a Special Conference shall remain at the same number as fixed for the previous Annual National Conference and each new Branch recognised since the previous Annual National Conference shall be entitled to two delegates provided affiliation fees, levies and other dues to the Headquarters are paid not later than fourteen days prior to the Special Conference.

Clause 74

The representation from each Constituency Association and from each Affiliated Organisation to a Special Conference shall be one delegate.

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Clause 96

National Council shall consist of -

- (a) one delegate from each Branch, to be nominated by the Branch.
- (b) one delegate from each Constituency Association, to be nominated by the Constituency Association.
- (c) delegate or delegates from each affiliated organisation, the member to be determined annually in December by the National Council following recommendations by the National Executive Committee.
- (d) the National Office-Bearers as defined in PART TWO 110 of the Constitution and Rules; and
- (e) Thirty members elected by Annual National Conference (referred to herein as the "Elected Members of National Council").

- (f) the Scottish National Party Member or Members of Parliament as the case may be during his or their period as such.

No member of National Council shall be entitled to more than one deliberative vote by virtue of his membership of it under (d), (e) and (f) hereof.

#### Clause 97

The names and addresses of the delegates nominated by Branches, Constituency Associations and Affiliated Organisations shall be notified in writing to the National Secretary of the Party within twenty-one days from the date of Annual National Conference.

#### Clause 98

Each new Branch, Constituency Association and Affiliated Organisation recognised between Annual National Conferences shall be entitled to nominate a delegate within twenty-one days from its official recognition.

#### Clause 99

If a delegate resigns as such, intimation thereof in writing shall immediately be made to the National Secretary, together with notification of the name and address of the new delegate.

#### Clause 100

Ordinary meetings of National Council shall be held at least four times a year.

#### Clause 101

A quorum of National Council shall consist of 100 of its members.

#### Clause 102

The procedure regarding notice of meetings, matters concerning the agenda, conduct of business etc. shall be adopted from time to time by the Council, except that the procedure adopted in regard to the Annual National Conference as laid down in PART TWO 85 of the Constitution and Rules shall apply.

#### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

#### Clause 103

The National Assembly shall consist of -

- (a) Two representatives from each parliamentary constituency in Scotland, to be elected by the Constituency Association

in accordance with procedure and arrangements approved by National Council.

- (b) the Member of Parliament for each constituency, of the prospective parliamentary candidate for the constituency from the date of approval by the National Executive Committee of his adoption.
- (c) one delegate from each Affiliated Organisation.
- (d) the National Office-Bearers as defined in PART ONE 110 of the Constitution and Rules; and
- (e) the thirty Elected Members of National Council.

Clause 104

At least two meetings of National Assembly shall be held each year.

Clause 105

A quorum of National Assembly shall consist of one quarter of its membership.

Clause 106

The procedure regarding notice of meetings, matters concerning the agenda, conduct of business etc., shall be as adopted from time to time by the Assembly.

Clause 107

A National Office-Bearer appointed for the purpose by National Council shall be Convener of the National Assembly, and he shall in person or by depute conduct the proceedings at its meetings.

Clause 108

Notwithstanding PART TWO, Clause 108, the Chairman of the Party shall be empowered to convene and to chair meetings of the National Assembly.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Clause 109

The National Executive Committee shall consist of -

- (a) The National Office-Bearers as defined in PART TWO 112 of the Constitution and Rules; and
- (b) ten members elected by National Council.



- (c) up to seven of the Scottish National Party Members of Parliament during their period as such to be appointed annually by the SNP Members of Parliament.

No member of the National Executive Committee shall be entitled to more than one deliberative vote in that Committee.

#### Clause 110

The members elected by National Council as in 109 (b) above shall continue to serve on the National Executive Committee after Annual National Conference until replaced by nominees elected at the first meeting thereafter of National Council.

#### Clause 111

National Council shall have power to regulate procedure for filling casual vacancies on the National Executive Committee.

#### NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS

#### Clause 112

The National Office-Bearers who shall always be members resident in Scotland shall be -

- (a) a President
- (b) three Vice-Presidents
- (c) a Chairman
- (d) a Senior Vice-Chairman
- (e) an Executive Vice-Chairman for Administration
- (f) an Executive Vice-Chairman for Organisation
- (g) an Executive Vice-Chairman for Policy
- (h) an Executive Vice-Chairman for Publicity
- (i) a National Secretary
- (j) a National Treasurer; and
- (k) an Assistant National Secretary and an Assistant National Treasurer, each appointed by the National Executive Committee at its discretion, who shall, however, have no voting powers in the National Executive Committee, National Council, National Assembly or National Conferences.

#### Clause 113

The National Office-Bearers, with the exception of the Assistant National Secretary and the Assistant National Treasurer, shall be elected by the Annual National Conference in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Rules provided always that if no valid nomination is received or no election is made by the Annual National Conference for any particular office, or in the event of resignation or death of a National Office-Bearer, National Council shall have power to fill the vacancy.

#### Clause 114

No publications or official communications to the publicity media shall

be issued in the name of the Party except with the authority of the National Executive Committee.

Clause 115

Branches and Constituency Associations may, however, issue statements pass resolutions and make announcements in their own name provided such are in accordance with the policy and Direction of the Party and do not deal with internal affairs of the Party.

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