THE IDEOLOGY OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY

by

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SUMMARY

Now that the S.N.P. is a large and important political party in Scottish politics, and with the probability that Scotland will, in the near future, have a devolved legislative Assembly which may increase in authority and become a 'sovereign' Parliament, a study of the ideological nature of the S.N.P. is necessary. This study is approached in three parts - the 'belief-systems' which Scottish nationalists have on Scotland's history, character and potential are looked at; the policies of the S.N.P. are examined; and the question is asked whether the S.N.P. has brought important new ideas into party politics. The 'belief-systems' of Scottish nationalists are compared with those of non-nationalists in Scotland. It is stated, though, that - with the exception of their evaluation of the desirability of independence - no acrimony divides nationalists and non-nationalists and that nationalists are not dogmatic in their beliefs. The policies of the S.N.P. are shown to be characterized by a reforming zeal and it is observed that some themes reappear in several of them; most notably the desire to decentralize government and to foster more participation in political processes. Although some members of the S.N.P. believe that it is a 'radical' party which brings forth a significantly fresh consideration of political problems, it is concluded that this is an exaggerated estimation. The S.N.P., although it is not a Conservative, Labour or Liberal Party in disguise, is not committed to taking advantage of the opportunities which independence would offer to pursue dynamic new initiatives, initiatives which would fundamentally alter the political, economic and social structure of

Scotland. It is content, instead, to seek to reform and improve on the present structure.

INTRODUCTION

Stands Scotland where it did?

Shakespeare.

My interest in the study of the Scottish National Party (S.N.P.) was aroused by the immense successes which the S.N.P. scored in the two General Elections in 1974. I became determined to find out why the S.N.P. was able to achieve these successes. Consequently, I prepared an undergraduate dissertation on that subject in lieu of one of my finals papers for my degree in Politics at Hull University.

While researching for this dissertation, I became aware that the S.N.P. was a respectable and responsible political party and that it was not, as it was often portrayed, a pressure group comprising individuals of assorted political persuasions whose sole objective was self-government for Scotland. Apart from its desire to break-up the existing political system and create an independent one in Scotland, the S.N.P. was a conventional political party desiring governmental power in order to implement a carefully prepared programme. This led me to believe that a study of the ideological nature of the S.N.P. was necessary. Furthermore, my study of political parties, both as an undergraduate and since, has led me to the opinion that the ideas which form the intellectual fuel which drive the engines of political parties are an understudied field of inquiry. It is often assumed that in a 'mass' democracy political parties lack any identifiable ideology. It is contended that, in order to win a majority of votes, political parties are prepared to jettison ideals and to confine their energies to building and maintaining an effective

vote winning machine and to bribing the electorate with the promise of material benefits or else criticising their opponents for failing to provide these. While it is true to say that, since the advent of 'mass' democracy, more mundane concerns play an increasingly important part in political debate, it is by no means true to say that ideas are of negligible significance. However, it must be said that in the contemporary liberal-democratic world political parties do not possess comprehensive philosophical thought systems which provide total explanations of reality and advance all-embracing solutions to the problems of society. As P.H. Partridge states:

> By and large, the ruling trend of contemporary theory has been reacting against the more optimistic philosophies or ideologies of the past two centuries; consciously or implicitly, it has set about deflating the larger ideas of human possibilities that recommended themselves to many thinkers in the past, and has engaged in the job of cutting down our notions of man's nature to size.[1]

These reasons, then, led me to make this study of the ideology of the S.N.P.

NOTES

1. Partridge, P.H., 'Politics, Philosophy, Ideology'. In Quinton, Anthony (ed.), Political Philosophy, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, p.40.

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND

> New opinions are always suspected, and
> usually opposed, without any other reason
> but because they are not already common.
>
> John Locke.

Despite what its political opponents may claim, the Scottish National Party (S.N.P.) is now an established force in the politics of Scotland. A recent study of the rise of political nationalism in Scotland concluded that the S.N.P. 'is now here to stay'. It correctly observed that 'Having maintained their support over several years, there seems little possibility of its withering away'.[1] Whether the S.N.P. will succeed in its goal of winning enough support to have sufficient political and moral authority to negotiate for the 'restoration of Scottish National Sovereignty'[2] is a moot point, although it must be recorded that few people in the 1960s envisaged that the S.N.P. would be as successful as it has been so far in the 1970s.[3] What is more certain, though, is that a devolved Assembly with legislative powers will be established in Edinburgh. The possibility exists that this Assembly will increase its stature and authority and will evolve into a federal or even a sovereign Parliament. Whatever type of legislature Scotland may possess in the future, it is probable that the S.N.P. will have an important role to play in it either as the governing party, or as part of the opposition.

In view of this potential importance of the S.N.P. in the future governance of Scotland, it is pertinent to examine the nature and content of that party's ideology. On the whole, those

studies of Scottish nationalism which have been published to date have not sought to do this; rather they have been concerned with documenting and explaining the rise of the S.N.P. and with analysing its significance.[4]

There have been relatively few studies on the ideologies of political parties.[5] The seminal works on political parties have focused primarily on the organization of political parties and on the structure of party systems; where they have referred to ideology it is only in relation to these concerns.[6] To devote a study exclusively to a party's ideology is, however, of relevance for it is of cardinal importance to know and understand the ideas which animate a political party. As Robert Putnam remarks in his study of the ideologies of Italian and British M.P.s, 'how men structure and analyse issues of public policy will affect the political process by which decisions on these issues are reached'.[7] In his work Ideology and Discontent, David Apter quotes from a book on Soviet politics to similar effect:

> Certainly a knowledge of their fundamental beliefs is hardly sufficient for the explanation of man's action in the real world. But insofar as these actions reflect a mutual adjustment between ideology and social realities, an understanding of ideology becomes a necessary condition for an understanding of the action.[8]

A great deal has been written on the concept of ideology, much of it dealing with its definition, which has been the subject of an unresolved controversy. It is not our concern, here, to engage in this debate. Rather we shall accept, for our purposes, the definition advanced by Martin Seliger:

> An ideology is a group of beliefs and disbeliefs (rejections) expressed in value sentences, appeal sentences and explanatory statements. These sentences refer to moral and technical norms and are related to descriptive and analytical statements of fact with which they are arranged and together interpreted as a doctrine bearing the imprint of the centrality of morally founded prescriptions. A doctrine, which is to say an ideology, presents a not entirely self-consistent, not fully verified and verifiable, but not merely distorted body of views. These views relate in the main to forms of human relationships and socio-political organization as they should and could be and refer from this perspective to the existing order and vice-versa. Ideologies share with others some morally and factually based views and thus attest ideological pluralism without thereby losing their distinctiveness.[9]

It must be made clear, at this point, that it is not proposed to use this definition as a tool of enquiry. Our objective in presenting this detailed and somewhat laboured definition is merely to prevent any ambiguity.

For a political party in a liberal-democracy an ideology serves three clear functions. It provides a means for the explanation of the development of society, it gives it a set of principles and ideals to inspire its activists to activity and to guide the formation of practical proposals for the governance of the country in which it operates and, from a more mundane standpoint, it helps to give it a recognisable, attractive and distinct identity around which it can attract supporters.

Although a political party's ideology contributes towards the shaping of the image which it presents to the electorate, this

is only at a most generalised level. Because the British Labour Party advocates government intervention to help the poorer sections of society and because it believes in restricting private enterprise it has the image, in the public eye, of being the party of the working class. Contrariwise, because the Conservative Party believes in such things as encouraging free enterprise and maintaining a non-interventionist state, this helps to give it the image as the party of the middle and upper classes. For the vast majority of the electorate in a liberal-democracy the content of political parties' ideologies is a matter about which they have little or no interest. This appears to be the conclusion which one must draw from the researches of Philip Converse in the United States. Converse found 'that large portions of an electorate do not have meaningful beliefs, even on issues that have formed the basis for intense political controversy among elites for substantial periods of time'.[10] In his book The Problem of Party Government, Richard Rose writes as follows on people's perceptions of what are two of the most widely used terms of ideological description in Britain, the terms Left and Right:

> Survey studies show that most voters do not think in left/right terms; only 21 per cent say that they sometimes think of parties in these terms, and 25 per cent that they sometimes think of their own political views in this way. When asked to place the parties on a left/right scale, less than half of all voters consistently place Labour on the left and Conservative on the right.[11]

It can thus be said that the vast majority of the electorate has little interest in or understanding of the content of political parties' ideologies.

It may seem odd that in this study of the ideology of a National Party we have not considered peoples' perceptions of such terms as 'national identity'. This is because nationalism, as popularly used and understood, is not an ideological concept, thus terms like nationalist and national identity cannot be considered terms of ideological description. Nationalism, as popularly used and understood, is rather a sentiment or prejudice; something emotional rather than intellectual. The word nationalist or any of its derivatives are no more ideological terms than 'Labour' as in Labour Party is.

Although the content of a political party's ideology plays little direct part in helping it attract voters, it is a subject deserving of study because, as we said above, it will give us an insight into its possible future actions; it will help us understand what motivates its members and what goals it seeks to achieve. It must be appreciated that our study of the ideology of the S.N.P. will not provide us with any conclusive evidence as to how the S.N.P. might use what legislative power it could achieve in either a sovereign Parliament or a devolved Assembly. Much will depend on the economic, social and political circumstances at the time, and it is not our task to predict them. More importantly - if it is a sovereign Parliament we are talking about - no one can predict the circumstances in which independence will come or what ramifications that event will have. If it comes about in an atmosphere of bitterness, then a climate of bigotry and reaction could enshroud Scotland as was the case when Eire won her independence from Britain; on the other hand, if an

amicable arrangement could be reached as was the case between Norway and Sweden in 1905, then a healthier climate could prevail in Scotland. An illustration of the difficulties involved in predicting the future is provided by the massive rise in the world price of oil which occurred in 1973. This event, which had traumatic repercussions throughout both the developed and developing world, was one no-one had foreseen.

This event also illustrates another important point, namely the economic and financial interdependence of countries in the contemporary world. A Scottish financial journalist has highlighted two major economic and financial constraints on state sovereignty:

> The inter-relationship of trade, technologies, productivity and wage rate is ... one ... major, limiting influence to national self-determination. Another one, less appreciated but equally significant is the cross-frontier flow of funds, investments, transfer payments and pricing by multinational companies, oil revenue surpluses, speculative money.[12]

It must be said, though, that the S.N.P. is aware that these and other restraints would limit the use it could make of Scottish sovereign power. In fact, S.N.P. intellectuals have initiated reasoned and informed discussion on this matter, and two books have been published, one Scotland 1980[13] which assesses the internal viability of an independent Scotland, and the other Power and Manoeuverability[14] which examines the possible 'international implications of an independent Scotland.'

In studying the ideology of the S.N.P. we face the problem that, being founded in 1934, it is a relatively young party and

that it only became a force of some size and significance in the 1960s. A more important difficulty, though, and one we have already hinted at, is that it has not yet had the opportunity to assume the reins of governmental power and it is not going to, at least until a Scottish Assembly has been set up. If we were studying, by contrast, the ideology of either the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Parties we could trace its historical development, how it has adapted to changing circumstances, how it has responded to various events, what the party's legislative achievements have been and how these have accorded with its declared aims. On the other hand, we have the advantage of being able to look at the ideology of a party untainted by having to adapt to and respond to the responsibilities which the possession of governmental power would place on it, but one which unlike many opposition parties believes, not without reason, that it will be called upon to assume the reins of government in the near future.

We shall approach our study as follows. In the next chapter, we shall ask why it is that the S.N.P. considers it desirable that Scotland achieves independence. This will involve examining the views S.N.P. activists have of Scotland, its history, its character and its potential. In chapter 3 we shall analyse the salient features of S.N.P. policies, assessing their import. In chapter 4 we shall ask the question whether the S.N.P. represents a new and significant philosophical force in party politics in Scotland, whether it has brought onto the Scottish political stage, not just a new face but also new ideas and a new approach to politics.

It is not our purpose to explain or even document the rise

of the S.N.P.; this has been done admirably elsewhere.[15] However, it is pertinent that we should give a brief resume of the history of the S.N.P. before the 1960s, in other words before its emergence as a major political force.

The demand for 'Home Rule' in Scotland is as old as the Treaty of Union of 1707. At various times since 1707, groups have been established to pressurize for the reestablishment of a Parliament in Scotland. It was not until 1928, however, that a political party was founded with that goal as its raison d'être. This party - the National Party of Scotland - had as its objective the achievement of 'self-government for Scotland with independent national status within the British group of nations, together with the reconstruction of Scottish national life'.[16] Containing as it did, a number of literary figures who were associated with the 'Scottish Renaissance', such as Hugh MacDiarmid, Lewis Spence, Cunninghame Graham and Compton MacKenzie, it seemed more interested in the ideal of the 'reconstruction of Scottish national life', than with the cause of 'securing 'self-government for Scotland'. Nevertheless, the party did make some notable electoral advances. In 1930, for example, the National Party's candidate in Glasgow-Shettleston won 10 per cent of the vote, and in East Renfrewshire 13 per cent. Moreover, by May 1931 the National Party was reckoned to have nearly 8,000 members.[17]

On 20 April 1934 the National Party merged with the Scottish Party and some 'Home Rule' groups to found the S.N.P. This merger was largely the work of John MacCormick, a Glasgow lawyer, a man who devoted his life to the cause of Scottish self-government, both within and without the S.N.P. The origins of the Scottish

Party lay with a group of dissident members of Glasgow-Cathcart's Conservative Association. These dissidents declared themselves to be in favour of an 'Imperial Federation and Scottish Home Rule'. It was a much smaller party than the National Party but it succeeded in attracting to its ranks such prestigous names as the Duke of Montrose and Sir Alexander MacEwen. Its policy differed from the National Party's in that the latter strove for independence, whilst the Scottish Party sought a form of Home Rule which stopped short of independence.

The S.N.P.'s objective as enunciated in its original programme was as follows:

> The object of the Party is Self-Government for Scotland on a basis which will enable Scotland as a partner in the British empire with the same status as England to develop its national life to the fullest advantage.[18]

The early history of the S.N.P. was not one to which the adjectives dynamic or successful could be applied. It decided against policy making on the grounds that it did not wish to bind a future Scottish Parliament to a specific course of action. On the electoral front it failed to establish itself as a serious or credible force, although in the 1935 General Election it did perform commendably. In Inverness-shire, for instance, it won 16 per cent of the vote, whilst in the Western Isles it won 28 per cent. The Scottish Labour Party (S.L.P.), which in some respects is in a position today similar to that which the S.N.P. was in then, would be delighted with such results. Nevertheless, many former members of the National Party left, disillusioned with the moderate stance taken by the S.N.P. on the question of

'self-government' and disappointed by its lack of success.[19]

In 1942 the S.N.P. suffered a major split. Many members of the Party were opposed to the war-time conscription on the grounds that the British Government, under the terms of the Treaty of Union, lacked the constitutional authority to call up Scotsmen. One such member, Douglas Young, in fact went to prison in 1942 for his refusal to be conscripted. Other members, led by John MacCormick, were in favour of a less intransigent attitude. At the 1942 Conference the former faction won the day with the result that the latter faction left the Party. This split was not just about the question of conscription, it was about the direction in which the Party should move in the future. The anti-conscription faction adopted a no-compromise stance on the question of self-government and their objective, like that of the former National Party, was to achieve sovereign independence for Scotland. The MacCormick group, on the other hand, would have been satisfied, like the former Scottish Party, with a measure of self-government which fell short of independence.[20] Despite the weakening affect which this split had on its organisation, the S.N.P., favoured by the wartime truce, to which it was not party, achieved some notable by-election results and in 1945 their candidate, Dr. Robert McIntyre, won the Motherwell by-election, a seat which he lost in the General Election of that year.

The S.N.P. constituted itself as a fully fledged political party in 1946 when it made it unconstitutional for any of its members to be also a member of another political party, and when it adopted a comprehensive policy document. Throughout the late

1940s and 1950s the S.N.P. was a factor of negligible significance in Scottish politics. During this period pressure for self-government was monopolised by a political pressure group, the Scottish Convention, which was organised by John MacCormick. The failure of the Convention to achieve its objective has been cited as one of the reasons contributing to the rise of the S.N.P. in the 1960s.[21]

We said above that nationalism, as that term is popularly used and understood, is not an ideological concept. However, in the political science branch of academia, nationalism is generally taken to mean the desire to enhance the political status of a nation. Nationalism, then, as used by political scientists is an ideological term. Viewing nationalism from this angle, then, it must be stressed that the S.N.P. does not have a monopoly of nationalist ideology. In its 1945 General Election Manifesto the Labour Party promised, as one of its main priorities, to set up a Scottish Parliament. During the 1950s, as we have just seen, pressure for self-government came from a non-party group of people of all political persuasions. At the present time both the Labour and Liberal Parties are committed to creating a legislative Assembly in Scotland.

What was the ideological nature of the pre-1960s S.N.P. H.J. Hanham, for his book Scottish Nationalism, made a survey of Dr. McIntyre's political philosophy, using as his main source of information pamphlets which McIntyre wrote in the 1940s. It is worth quoting Hanham's conclusion at length, not merely for what it tells us about the kind of man McIntyre was, but as he remained a leading member of the S.N.P. following his by-election victory

in 1945 and today is its President, McIntyre's views can be taken as broadly representative of those of the members of the S.N.P. until the upsurge in its strength in the 1960s:

> Dr. McIntyre's ideas are very similar to those of the small-town democrats of the prairie provinces of Canada and parts of the U.S. He has a passionate belief in economic freedom which he believes can only be assured if all men possess some property (in this sense he is a neo-Lockean populist who believes in a property owning democracy). His ideal is to see property so widely distributed that even urban man has something to fall back on whether it is a work-shop in the backyard or a croft in the Highlands. Since the amount of land is limited, he is prepared to accept that there must be some limitation to the amount of property in land which any individual may own. He envisages the Scotland of the future as a body of autonomous self-dependent individuals regulated by a state which is a judge and lawyer rather than an overmighty centre of power. The state is to be the inspirer and developer of individual initiative ultimately through autonomous state agencies like the land bank. But the individual must be protected against the state. All individuals are to be regarded in terms of Reformation theology as equal in the eyes of God and to be enabled to achieve their potential. Privilege is to be gradually whittled away. The new democracy is to be a democracy of self-respecting factory workers, shopkeepers, farmers and providers of professional services. Above all it will be a new and literally spiritual experience.

Hanham quotes from an article McIntyre wrote in the Party newspaper the Scots Independent in May 1947:

> To the Scottish realist the issue is not between the material creeds of state socialism and private

> enterprise ...
> The S.N.P. policy shows that the Scottish radicals have transcended that now sterile and empty conflict ...
> The world wide struggle of the new age we are now entering is the human rights of man.[22]

Hanham also comments on the 1946 Policy Document:

> Anyone who reads the S.N.P. 1946 Policy statement will recognise that he is reading an unusual document, for it deliberately sets out to offer something quite different from the offerings of the other parties. The nearest parallels are with the social credit movement in Canada and New Zealand and with the populism of the U.S. and Scandinavia. There is much the same emphasis on the little man, and on building up small-town democracy, as in these parallel movements outside Scotland. And there is the same mixture at work - Henry George, Douglas Social Credit, Christian Socialism, anarchism, political radicalism - everything except a frank acceptance of the modern state and of modern bureaucratised industrial, political, trade union and commercial empires.[23]

Hanham is overstating his case, both in his assessment of McIntyre's ideas and in his evaluation of the S.N.P.'s 1946 Policy Document. Neither McIntyre's ideas nor the S.N.P.'s policies were as anachronistic or as naive as he makes out. The S.N.P. sought to protect the individual from the onslaught of anonymity endemic in an industrial society, but they were prepared to come to terms with that society and not pretend that it did not exist. Nevertheless, he did judge the pre-1960s S.N.P. fairly when he wrote that a Scotland governed by the S.N.P. would 'not be in any sense an intellectual force'.[24] In other words, an S.N.P. Government would not be expected to come forward with new or dynamic initiatives.

NOTES

1. Webb, Keith and Hall, Eric, 'Explanations of the Rise of Political Nationalism in Scotland'. Studies in Public Policy Paper, No. 15, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 1976, p.46.

2. S.N.P., Constitution and Rules, Edinburgh, 1977, p.1.

3. None of the articles which were written assessing the upsurge of support for the S.N.P. which occurred in the 1960s, suggested that it was other than a temporary aberration. In none of these articles was it indicated that this upsurge could be a prelude to greater successes. See, for example, McLean, Iain, 'The Rise and Fall of the Scottish National Party'. Political Studies, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1970.

4. For the best and most comprehensive studies of Scottish nationalism and the rise of the S.N.P. see - Birch, Anthony, Political Integration and Disintegration in the British Isles, Allen and Unwin, London, 1977; Brand, Jack, 'The Development of National Feeling in Scotland 1945 to 1977', paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association, Washington DC, September 1977; Coupland, Reginald, Welsh and Scottish Nationalism, Collins, London, 1954; Hanham, H.J., Scottish Nationalism, Faber and Faber, London, 1969; Harvie, Christopher, Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977, Allen and Unwin, London, 1977; Hechter, Michael, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975; Nairn, Tom, The Break-Up of Britain, New Left Books, London, 1977; Webb, Keith, The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland, Molendinar Press, Glasgow, 1977; Webb, Keith and Hall, Eric, op.cit.

5. The best study the author has come across is Helenius, Ralf, The Profile of Party Ideologies, University of Finland Press, Helsinki, 1969. The best book which has been written on the ideologies of British political parties is Beer, Samuel, Modern British Politics, Faber and Faber, London, 1969.

However, as Beer's objective in writing this book was to describe 'the principal political parties and interest groups and how they affected public policy', this book is not a direct or comprehensive study of the subject.

6. See, for example, Duverger, Maurice, Political Parties, Methuen, London, 1959; Michaels, Robert, Political Parties, Free Press, Illinois, 1915; and McKenzie, Robert, British Political Parties, Heinemann, London, 1964.

7. Putnam, Robert, 'Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of Ideology'. American Political Science Review, Vol. 65, No. 3, 1971, p.679.

8. Apter, David (ed.), Ideology and Discontent, Free Press, New York, 1964, p.17.

9. Seliger, Martin, Ideology and Politics, Allen and Unwin, London, 1976, pp.119-120.

10. Converse, Philip, 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics'. In Apter, David (ed.), op.cit., p.245.

11. Rose, Richard, The Problem of Party Government, Penguin, London, 1976, p.288.

12. Hargrave, Andrew, 'The Independence Illusion', The Scotsman, 4 April 1978.

13. Mackay, Donald (ed.), Scotland 1980 - The Economics of Self-Government, Q Press, Edinburgh, 1977.

14. Carty, Tony and McCall Smith, Alexander (eds), Power and Manoeuvrability - The International Implications of an Independent Scotland, Q Press, Edinburgh, 1978.

15. See note 4.

16. See Hanham, H.J., op.cit., pp.152-153.

17. Ibid., p.157.

18. Ibid., p.163.

19. Many members of the S.N.P. at that time, would have been satisfied with a limited measure of self-government, in other words with a

measure of self-government which stopped short of the Party's declared aim of seeking equal partnership with England in the British Empire.

20. For MacCormick's personal account of the split see MacCormick, J.M., The Flag in the Wind, Victor Gollancz, London, 1955, pp.102-107.

21. See Webb, Keith, op.cit., pp.72-73. If this is a reason then it suggests that many S.N.P. voters vote for that Party, not so much because they support its declared objectives and programme, but because they see a vote for the S.N.P. as the most effective way of achieving self-government for Scotland. Evidence exists to suggest that this is so. For example, only 50 per cent of S.N.P. voters actually want an independent Scotland. (See Opinion Research Centre O.R.C. Poll, The Scotsman, 16 December, 1975.) In other words, their reasons for voting S.N.P. are at most only indirectly related to support for that Party's ideology. Not too much should be drawn from this conclusion for, as we saw above, the bulk of the electorate take little interest in the content of any party's ideology. Moreover, survey evidence shows that most of the factors influencing a person's voting behaviour are not directly related to ideological concerns. (See Butler, David and Stokes, Donald, Political Change in Britain, Pelican, London, 1971.)

22. Hanham, H.J., op.cit., pp.173-174.

23. Ibid., p.175.

24. Ibid., p.180.

CHAPTER 2 THE 'BELIEF-SYSTEMS' OF SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS

> For so long as an hundred remain alive we are minded never a whit to bow beneath the yoke of English domination.
>
> Declaration of Arbroath, 1320.

> Seeing Scotland, Madam, is only seeing a worse England.
>
> Dr. Samuel Johnson.

> You've forgotten the grandest moral attribute of a Scotsman, Maggie, that he'll do nothing which might damage his career.
>
> J.M. Barrie.

The S.N.P. in pursuing its aim of restoring 'Scottish national sovereignty' seeks to deal a mortal blow to the constitutional unity of the United Kingdom. In this chapter, we shall ask why it is that Scottish nationalists view this goal as desirable. This involves examining the beliefs which they hold about Scotland and noting how they diverge from those of non-nationalists in Scotland.[1] We shall divide our study into three sections. Firstly, we shall look at the interpretations which nationalists and non-nationalists give of the history of Scotland; then at the views which they hold on the character of Scotland; and finally we shall consider their evaluations of Scotland's potential. Initially it must be recorded that as the S.N.P. is not a closely-knit sect but a movement which encompasses a wide variety of people who hold varying ideas and differing outlooks on life. It is not possible for us, then, to say that a belief is the Scottish nationalist view; the same stricture applies even more so with non-nationalist beliefs. Nevertheless, we are able to give a

reasonably accurate general picture, which highlights the main lines of division and illuminates the particularities of the beliefs of Scottish nationalists.

Before we examine the 'belief-systems' of Scottish nationalists with regard to Scotland, it is pertinent that we look at the opinions which they and their opponents hold on the concept of nationalism.[2]

'Nationalism died with Hitler' and similar charges - carrying the implication that nationalism is a dangerous and authoritarian force - are ones which, with polemical vehemence, are often hurled at the S.N.P. In response, nationalists argue that nationalism is a neutral concept and is what nationalists choose to make it. Whilst only a few would equate Scottish nationalism with Nazism, many non-nationalists still regard nationalist as an unnecessary even undesirable sentiment. Nationalists, however, accuse them of hypocisy and point out that nationalism, to borrow the words of the U.S. student of nationalism, Hans Kohn, 'underlies the cohesion of modern societies and legitimizes their claim to authority'.[3] This apart, most non-S.N.P. supporters in Scotland have no objection to - in fact positively encourage - Scottish nationalism provided it is confined to taking pride in Scotland and things Scottish, confined, for example, to such things as supporting Scottish rugby and football teams. In sum, they condone any national self-expression, within reasonable limits, which has no direct political element to it. Nationalists, however, go further and say that nationalism can only enrich the life of a nation and be the inspirer of new initiatives if that nation possesses political power; a nation without political power they contend is a nation without a soul.

During an era when the bitter and often bloody national rivalries of the past are fading away and the spirit of internationalism is in vogue, non-nationalists say that it is a retrograde move to seek to split up existing states. In response, nationalists contend that internationalism is the complement not the antithesis of nationalism; true internationalism lies in a world order of small and medium-sized states which mutually respect each other and which indulge in meaningful co-operation, not, as in the past, in a world order in which a few large, aggressive and powerful 'conglomerate' states could pursue their selfish ambitions.

Because it believes that knowledge of economic power and socio-economic divisions are fundamental to the understanding of society and that economic power must be redistributed in favour of the less powerful sections of society, the Labour Party rejects nationalism as obscuring these realities and this goal. A case could be made for seeing the Conservative Party as a British national party. However, although nationalism does form part of its appeal, creating conditions favourable to 'free enterprise' is its primary pursuit, for it believes that therewith lies the solution to society's problems. By seeking to blend individual freedom and social justice within a 'welfare society' the Liberal Party believes it will create a stimulating and happy society; an appeal to nation would fog this purpose and therefore is rejected. For the S.N.P., though, the solution to Scotland's problems lies in independence and the opportunities it will offer, hence its appeal to nation rather than class, individual or any other entity. We shall now see why it holds this conviction.

HISTORY

Nationalist historiography has been a notable feature of many nationalist movements; this was especially so in 19th century Europe. In Scotland, however, there have been no nationalist histories - as opposed to 'histories of Scotland' - of any significance. Certainly there have been historians and others who have interpreted past events through nationalist lenses and who have documented happenings with a nationalist slant, but no popularly recognised or acclaimed Scottish nationalist history can be said to exist.[4] This can mainly be attributed to the fact that, throughout the history of Scotland's relationship with England, the country with which it has had most contact and therefore which has influenced it most, there has not been any sustained period when Scotland has been unashamedly discriminated against or cruelly repressed by its southern neighbour. This being so, few hatreds or grudges and the memories of the events which would have borne them have been handed down from one generation to another and become embedded in Scottish folk-lore. This does not mean that there have not been bloody or unhappy periods in Anglo-Scottish relations which are remembered today - Flodden, Culloden, and the Highland Clearances, for example, are widely remembered. It only means that these events no longer arouse feelings of bitterness intense enough to influence people's behaviour today.

The Treaty of Union of 1707, the events surrounding it and its ramifications are the subjects of sharp disagreements between nationalists and non-nationalists. Nationalists say that the Treaty was forced through a reluctant Scottish Parliament with the aid of English bribery. Non-nationalists while agreeing that bribery

did take place say that this was not the most important factor influencing the deliberations of the members of Parliament; rather they voted for the Union out of the conviction that it was in the best interests of Scotland to do so. They contend that in 1707, in comparison with England, Scotland was a poor and backward country and that the Union with the economic benefits it brought, such as the opening of English colonial markets to Scottish trade, generated prosperity which would not otherwise have taken place. Nationalists dispute this reasoning and say that many of the beneficial developments which occurred in the Scottish economy after the Union, were the culmination of processes already in operation before the Union, and that if Scotland had 'gone-it-alone' in 1707 indigenous efforts and enterprise would have ensured prosperity. Nationalists further point out that the British Government has violated many of the provisions of the Treaty, most notably in relation to the position of law in Scotland. Non-nationalists while not disputing the technicalities of the violations believe that the terms of the Treaty have been overtaken by events and that Scotland has, on the whole, acquiesced and accepted the infringements.

Although nationalists concede that the history of Scotland since the Union has not been a period in which it has been mercilessly exploited by England, they do contend that Scotland's 'essence' has been 'diluted and near destroyed' by 'a kindly English imperialism'.[5] The removal of political power from Edinburgh, they reason, caused a dissipation of the lifeblood of the Scottish nation, which has had detrimental consequences for Scottish cultural and intellectual life. Despite occasional

flourishes, they say, Scotland became a backwater of European civilization, whereas formerly it had been in the forefront of it. However, the full vehemence of nationalist attack on the record of Scotland under the Union is reserved for the post First World War epoch; the period of overincreasing government intervention. Westminster Government, they contend, has deliberately neglected the Scottish economy in favour of that of the south-east of England; in other words, it has treated Scotland as a subject nation whose interests can be neglected in favour of those of England. This, they explain, has caused the high unemployment, the low wages, the bad housing and the other economic and social diseases which have afflicted Scotland. Moreover, they continue, the bureaucracy has taken decisions suitable to conditions in England, but patently inappropriate for the different circumstances of Scotland. In fact, they accuse the bureaucracy of having a misunderstanding of and even a lack of adequate knowledge of Scottish conditions.

Non-nationalists, on the other hand, reason that after the Union Scotsmen had a wider and larger stage on which to display their talents, and that they took full advantage of this opportunity. Scots, they point out, were at the forefront of many major advances and achievements in scientific, business, political, administrative and intellectual life. Many of the bad decisions taken with regard to Scotland have, they say, in fact been taken by Scotsmen, not as nationalists believe by malevolent Englishmen. These Scotsmen believed they were acting in the best interests of Scotland and not as lackeys of English imperialism. Furthermore, they contend that much of Scotland's economic troubles are a consequence of the

operation of incontrollable economic forces and not the result of ineptitute or deliberate discrimination on the part of Westminster. Non-nationalists lay great stress on the statistics which indicate that the financial arrangements of the Union were favourable to Scotland and that at many periods, especially since 1918, the Government has spent more money in Scotland than it collected from it in revenue. Nationalists, of course, dispute the validity of these statistics, or at least the interpretations placed on them; on occasions they even go so far as to suggest that Scotland subsidises England. Even if Scotland were subsidised by England, nationalists contend, Scotland should still strive for independence, the implication being that it is better to be 'poor but free' than 'rich but subject'.

CHARACTER

Both nationalists and non-nationalists agree that Scotland is one of the oldest nations in Europe, its original temperament having been shaped by centuries of independent and civilised existence prior to 1707. A vociferous critic of the S.N.P., Jimmy Reid - leader of the Upper Clyde Shipyards (U.C.S.) work-in in 1971-72 - can write:

> Scotland is a nation, and its history and traditions conform to any definition of nationhood that I've heard.[6]

Moreover, both groups are in substantial agreement on the objective characteristics of Scotland. They agree, for instance, that Scotland is an industrialised country, with a large working class facing industrial decline, unemployment and other related problems. When it comes to discussing the less concrete attributes

of Scottish character, however, the consensus breaks down.

The Treaty of Union preserved the institutions which formed the main pillars of Scottish society viz. the law, the Church and the education system. Increasing intercommunication between Scotland and England has caused a dilution of their flavour. Nevertheless, today, they still possess a distinctively Scottish identity, and their practices and ethos have inevitably contributed to the shaping of the psychological composition of the Scottish people. A distinctively Scottish colouring pervades the activities of much of Scottish society. This emphasis received a boost with the rise of the S.N.P. and in 1973 the political scientist James Kellas observed that 'The whole fabric of Scottish society is now geared to stressing Scottish nationality and the separateness of Scotland from the rest of the U.K.'.[7] However, while in a variety of matters people in Scotland may be involved in uniquely Scottish concerns, they also have a multiplicity of links with British affairs. This state of affairs led Professor J.P. Mackintosh to describe Scotland as possessing a 'dual consciousness'.[8] Nationalists tend to argue that the British link has had a stultifying influence on Scotland, stunting the growth of the Scottish personality. Non-nationalists, on the other hand, say that the link has formed a synthesis of two great civilizing forces, tapping the best qualities in both and quelling the worst excesses in each. This partnership, they explain, has been beneficial to both the Scottish and English nations, the ferment of ideas which it has produced, contributing to a flowering of genius on both sides of the border. Some are willing to admit that this partnership has caused the loss of

many characteristics which had given Scotland a distinctive national identity. They contend, though, that it has left intact the core attributes of Scottish nationhood.

Nationalists often give an airing to the view that Scotland is inherently an egalitarian and radical country - the myths of 'Scottish democracy' and 'Scottish radicalism'. Various events, traits and habits are cited to establish the validity of these myths. It has to be said that most of the illustrations lie embedded in past history. Many non-nationalists share belief in one or both of these myths,[9] although the more sceptical of them proclaim that they have very little foundation in contemporary Scotland. Some non-nationalists are prone to take a pessimistic view of Scottish character. It is sometimes argued, for instance, that a spirit of black Calvinistic reaction haunts Scottish society; this, it is said, has a debilitating effect on it, restricting moves towards a more free, open and spontaneous societal climate. A few nationalists accept that this accusation has more than an element of truth, but argue that such a state of affairs is the inevitable consequence of a parochial mentality caused by the absence of responsibility which the possession of political power brings.

In summing up this section it has to be said, taking a broad overview of the matter, that despite various national dissimilarities between Scotland and England, the fundamental similarities between the two nations, far outweigh these national differences. Christopher Smout, Professor of Economic History at Edinburgh University, tartly points out:

> To live in Scotland with the consciousness of being Scottish does not imply the same spiritual

> and material goals as the followers of Robert I or of Prince Charles Edward Stewart. Scotland is part of the modern, agnostic, consumer, capitalist society, facing problems of resource shortage and potential nuclear extinction. That society is the West.[10]

As few of them harbour excessively romantic notions of Scotland's character, most nationalists would accept this evaluation. Quite simply, then, nationalists want the opportunity to govern Scotland as they see fit, within the confines permitted by the modern Western democratic world.

POTENTIAL

A person's view of Scottish character inevitably has ramifications for his outlook on Scotland's potential. Christopher Smout, because he believes that 'Scotland ... has a seriously damaged social fabric',[11] caused primarily by the 'unhappy' experiences of the Scottish working class under capitalism, fears for the consequences if Scotland became independent. He compares Scotland's social fabric unfavourably to that of Scandinavia. This is significant since nationalists often compare Scotland to Scandinavia, arguing that if Scotland became independent she would come to resemble her Nordic neighbours across the North Sea.

An opposing view is voiced by the poet and literary critic, George Bruce, who observes hope-inspiring tendencies in present day Scotland:

> It seems ... that despite the threat to human identity (in the modern world) this small nation is now better equipped to conserve and to develop character than it has been previously in this century. There is an increasing awareness of a great need for the practical imagination, for the

> sense of community, for the recognition of performance of merit in whatever fields they occur.[12]

Nationalists believe that independence will stimulate a sense of national purpose sufficiently powerful to face and solve the many problems facing Scotland. Andrew Hargrave, a financial and industrial journalist, emphasises that one must appreciate the 'psychological impact of self-government' and he counters the argument that self-government by itself would be no different from any other change, by saying that 'What could make it different is a resurgence of the spirit which accompanies such a fundamental change'.[13]

Non-nationalists hold the conviction that government can be made more responsive to Scotland's needs and more able to cater for her special interests, with an improvement in the efficiency of the administration, or by devolution of some legislative power, or through the establishment of a Federal Britain. Nationalists reject all these proposals as being inadequate and argue that full sovereign power is required for the economic, social and cultural regeneration of Scotland - as we saw in the last paragraph, it is not just for the naked power that nationalists desire independence, but also for the stimulative effect it will have on Scottish life. Scotland must not, they argue, be tied to the decaying core of the once 'Great' British Empire. British institutions, they explain, have failed to perform satisfactorily, with the consequence that Britain lurches from one crisis to another. The nub, though, of nationalist logic is that Scotland is a nation, and as, in their view, all nations should be

self-governing, it should be an independent country.

The discovery of oil under the North Sea gave credibility to the S.N.P.'s claim that Scotland is financially strong enough to become independent, and this has enhanced its electoral appeal. Non-nationalists agree that great potential wealth lies in the exploitation of North Sea oil, but they say that Scotland has a moral duty to share the benefits with the rest of Britain. Nationalists retort with the slogan 'Rich Scots or Poor Britons'; North Sea oil can be used to build a stable and prosperous Scotland, or it can be used to keep a slowly sinking British ship of state afloat a little longer - but it cannot do both. Non-nationalists, furthermore, dispute the S.N.P.'s claims with regard to what oil fields would fall under Scottish jurisdiction following independence. They say a more realistic interpretation of international law than that given by the S.N.P. would give considerably more of the oil fields to England than the S.N.P. reckons on. Also, if Shetland opted to remain united with the rest of Britain, this would remove even more oil fields from Scotland's ambit.

Mention of Shetland leads us directly onto another matter. Non-nationalists contend that far from being a nation united by a sense of national purpose, Scotland in fact is divided by class and regional differences. Jimmy Reid writes:

> 'Scotland First', is a neat slogan, but it begs the question which Scotland? As a product of the Scottish working class, I am more kith and kin with a London docker or a black African miner than with the Countess of Sutherland or Sir Alec Douglas-Home.[14]

Shetland and possibly Orkney might choose to opt out of an independent Scotland, rejecting the offers of autonomous status offered by the S.N.P.; an oil rich North-East might object to its wealth being squandered on the declining industrial belt in West-Central Scotland; to name two of the possible lines of division. Nationalists are convinced, as we have already hinted at, that the actual act of independence will give birth to a uniting national consciousness.

Nationalists pronounce that independence will have no serious detrimental or disruptive effects - they say an amicable arrangement will be reached with the rest of Britain, an independent Scotland will be accepted with brotherly love by other states, foreign interests with commercial concerns in Scotland will acknowledge the constitutional change with equanimity, and so forth.[15] Contrariwise, non-nationalists suggest that the nationalists' optimism is perhaps naive. Oil wealth could have a disruptive effect on the Scottish economy, English goodwill might not be forthcoming, foreign investment in Scotland might be reversed; these and other gloomy forecasts are expressed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it must be said that many of the nationalist beliefs referred to in this chapter are not rigidly held. Nationalists are willing to submit them to reasoned discussion and moderate them as a result of such discussion. Nationalists do not dwell on memories of historical injustices, nor do they, generally speaking, feed on visions of a Scottish utopia to come. A fervour such as that which can be the breeding ground of acts of mindless passion is absent from nationalists' 'belief-systems'.

Non-nationalists, however obnoxious they may find the S.N.P.'s desire to constitutionally separate Scotland from the rest of the U.K., do not find anything inherently dangerous or unpleasant about non-nationalists' 'belief-systems'. Here we have sought to highlight the points of divergence between the 'belief-systems' of nationalists and non-nationalists, but over many themes, most notably the conviction that Scotland is a nation with many national characteristics which must be preserved, they are in substantial accord.

NOTES

1. The term nationalist is used, in this chapter, to refer to someone who is a member of the S.N.P. and who supports that Party's goal of winning independence for Scotland. The term non-nationalist is used to describe all those who do not support the S.N.P. and its objectives; it includes those who regard themselves as being first and foremost Scottish and who wish to see the flourishing of distinctly Scottish activities, but do not desire independence for Scotland.

2. The information used, in this chapter, comes from a large number of sources, not all of which can be found in the bibliography. The author has acquired much of the information from discussion with political activists in Scotland and from his observations, over the years, of Scottish political life.

3. Kohn, Hans, The Idea of Nationalism, Macmillan, New York, 1946, p.17.

4. A nationalist history is an interpretation of the history of a nation which is, by and large, unique to the members of the nation concerned. Often it is a history written with the express purpose of forging a sense of national identity, where this does not exist or to renew and reinforce a sense of national identity in order to animate a nation to strive for some goal.

5. Wolfe, Billy, Scotland Lives, Reprographia, Edinburgh, 1973, p.10.

6. Reid, Jimmy, Reflections of a Clyde-Built Man, Souvenir Press, London, 1976, p.119.

7. Kellas, James, The Scottish Political System, Cambridge University Press, 1973, p.126.

8. See Mackintosh, J.P., 'The Trouble with Stephen Maxwell', Question, No. 26, 15 April, 1977, p.5.

9. In this chapter we have set out to highlight the points of divergence between the beliefs of nationalists and non-nationalists.

However, it must be stressed that they share a lot of beliefs in common. For a discussion of this matter see Brand, Jack, 'The Ideology of Scottish Nationalism'. European Consortium of Political Research (E.C.P.R.) Workshop on Political Behaviour, Dissatisfaction and Protest, Louvain-la-Neuve, 8-14 April 1976.

10. Smout, Christopher, 'The Scottish Identity'. In Underwood, Robert (ed.), The Future of Scotland, Croom Helm, London, 1977, p.11.

11. Ibid., p.18.

12. Bruce, George, 'The Arts in Scotland'. In Underwood, Robert (ed.) op.cit., p.31.

13. Hargrave, Andrew, 'Scotland 1980 - a critique'. Question, No. 32, 8 July, 1977, p.5.

14. Reid, Jimmy, op.cit., p.15.

15. In Power and Manoeuvrability, though, certain contributors suggest that an independent Scotland could face severe, although not insurmountable, problems in its quest for acceptance by the international community.

CHAPTER 3 THE POLICIES OF THE S.N.P.

> Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom.
>
> Edmund Burke.

> The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
> Gang aft-a-gley.
>
> Robert Burns.

Before examining the S.N.P. and its policies it is worth looking, by way of comparison, at the matter of policy-making as far as the Labour and Conservative Parties are concerned. The most significant point to note is that the Labour Party places far more emphasis on policy-making than does the Conservative Party. This is reflected in their Constitutions:

> (The Constitution) of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations contains no statement of policy objectives. Instead it stipulates a series of functions; all of the functions concern organizational matters. By contrast, the constitution adopted by the Labour Party in 1918 expatiates at length about the policy objectives of the Party.[1]

Generally speaking, policy-making in the Conservative Party is controlled by the leader. The Conservative leader appoints the Director of the Party's Headquarters and the head of the Party's research department, whilst resolutions at the Annual Conference are only of an advisory nature. Moreover, in accordance with their adherence to the leadership principle, Conservatives are willing to let, indeed expect, their leader to take the initiative and define their position on the major issues of the day. The situation is markedly different in the Labour Party. In the Labour Party,

decisions on policy are democratically controlled by the Annual Conference and, between Conference, by the National Executive Council (N.E.C.).

In reality, though, the situation is not so clear cut. In the Labour Party the Parliamentary Party, especially its leader, and the (Shadow) Cabinet often pay scant regard to the views of Conference and the N.E.C., and, on occasions, pursue policy initiatives which are in direct opposition to their wishes. In the 1960s, for instance, the Shadow Cabinet failed to adopt the 1960 Conference decision on the question of nuclear disarmament, whilst in the 1970s the Cabinet has ignored Conference's repeated demands for nationalisation.[2] Moreover, in both Parties there exists pressure groups such as the Bow Group in the Conservative Party and the Tribune Group in the Labour Party which periodically produce statements on policy. Both the Labour and Conservative leaders have to listen and, on occasions, bend to their demands, especially if they have the active support of a substantial sector of their Parliamentary Party.

It is interesting to observe that at different times, the Conservative and Labour Parties have placed varying emphasis on the importance of policy. The Labour Party, as we have seen, tends to see the making of policy as an important function, whilst the Conservative Party does not share this view and prefers to devote its energies to cultivating its image with the electorate. However, following its defeat in the 1945 General Election, the Conservative Party decided that it was necessary to define the policies which they would use to tackle the problems presented by the post-war world. Similarly, after a Labour victory in 1964

had brought thirteen years of Tory rule to an end, the Conservative Party indulged in another spate of policy-making and entered Government in 1970 with a programme of policy commitments. The Labour Party, for its part, has on occasions been none too explicit with regards to policy. Prior to the 1964 General Election, intense disagreement between different factions as to what policies it should adopt, prevented the drafting of a comprehensive statement of policies. That being so, energies formerly devoted to the formation of policies were used to expound criticisms of the record of the Conservative administration.

Three further points need to be made about the two major parties and their policies. Firstly, the exigencies of government often force a party to abandon or even reverse a policy commitment made in the election campaign and enshrined in its Manifesto.[3] A striking example of such an occurrence was when the Conservative Government in 1972 adopted a 'Prices and Incomes Policy', despite having avowed in their Manifesto not to do so. Secondly, details of policy play only a very minor part in election campaigns; attention is rather focused almost entirely to general themes, such as the cultivation of the party's image, and assessment of the Government's record. Richard Rose has commented that during campaigns 'party leaders are ... more concerned with invoking positive symbols than with getting down to the specifics of policy'.[4] This apart, a populist stance on certain controversial issues such as immigration may well win a party a substantial number of votes. Finally, a party's stance on many issues may well be at odds with the position which the majority of its supporters favours. Richard Rose made a survey of supporters' views on their party's policies as outlined in their 1970 Election Manifesto. His findings were as follows:

> In twelve of the fifteen instances in which comparison can be made between voters' opinions and the party's manifesto, a manifesto declaration is in agreement with the views of the majority of Conservative voters, commercial radio was the only issue with a manifesto pledge aligned with a minority of the party's voters. By contrast, the Labour manifesto contained statements consistent with a majority of its partisans on four issues, foreign affairs, comprehensive schools, farm incomes and pensions. The manifesto's policies were inconsistent with the preference of a majority of Labour voters on seven issues, including economic affairs, welfare measures and 'tough' versus humanitarian policies.[5]

Turning now to the S.N.P. - 1962 saw the S.N.P.'s candidate in the West Lothian by-election gain 23 per cent of the votes. This result can be seen as marking the beginning of the rise of the S.N.P. That by-election brought Billy Wolfe, the S.N.P.'s candidate, into prominence. Wolfe soon became an important figure in the S.N.P. hierarchy and in 1969 was elected Chairman, a position he still holds. Under Wolfe's inspiration the S.N.P. has devoted much thought and energy to formulating policies both for a pre- and post-independence Scotland. Wolfe sees the policy-making role of the S.N.P. as being an important one:

> I am in favour of the party examining the fabric of life in Scotland and drafting policies with a view to making proposals for improving that fabric.[6]

With the increase in the strength of the S.N.P. this task, as a leading member has pointed out, became of increasing importance:

> As the S.N.P.'s electoral support and its prospect of governmental responsibility have grown the Party has felt impelled to define more closely its position on a wide range of social and economic issues.[7]

In so doing it has explicitly acknowledged that it is more than a vehicle for the winning of independence for Scotland - a function to which some members especially in the Party's early days felt it should confine itself - it also sees itself as having an important role to play in the governing of a post-independence Scotland.[8]

Policies in the S.N.P. must be approved either by the Annual National Conference, 'the supreme governing body of the Party'[9] or by the quarterly meeting National Council, 'the governing body of the Party between Conference'.[10] In addition, the National Assembly, which meets twice yearly, has power to 'evolve and review policies',[11] and the National Executive Committee may be delegated the task of considering certain policies or aspects of policy by the National Council. One of the four Executive Vice-Chairmen has responsibility for policy. Currently this position is held by Isobel Lindsay, a lecturer in Sociology at Strathclyde University. Following the S.N.P.'s successes in the 1974 General Elections the number of committees which the Party had set up to formulate policy was increased, and at regular intervals Policy Documents on a variety of matters have been published, discussed, amended and adopted by the Party.

In addition to policies emanating from official S.N.P. channels, there has been much independent extemporizing on policies for an independent Scotland by both nationalists and non-nationalists. This has taken place in the columns of the Scots Independent; on the pages of Question, a political review periodical which was in existence from October 1975 to August 1977 and was edited by an editorial board

consisting entirely of S.N.P. members; within the 'Andrew Fletcher Society', the S.N.P.'s equivalent of the 'Fabian Society' which holds monthly meetings and which publishes 'occasional discussion papers on policy issues regarding an independent Scotland'; and in The Radical Approach, a book in which several prominent S.N.P. members, under the editorship of Gavin Kennedy, a lecturer in Economics at Strathclyde University, published 'papers on an independent Scotland'. Furthermore, as was recorded in Chapter 1 two academic books - Scotland 1980 and Power and Manoeuvrability - have been published which discuss the viability of an independent Scotland.

Although at times there is an undercurrent of discontent regarding the actions of the M.P.s at Westminster amongst Party members in Scotland, no noteworthy splits over questions of policy have manifested themselves.[12] More significantly, despite the claim of some commentators that the S.N.P. is a motley collection of individuals who hold widely different even contradictory political viewpoints, there have been no bitter or divisive debates over the contents of the Party's Policy Documents, much to the consternation of its political opponents. It must be appreciated, though, that to some extent policy-making in the S.N.P. takes place within a power vacuum; it is not going to be called upon to implement their policies in the immediate future - devolution or independence has to be won first. Moreover, when the public thinks about the S.N.P. it does not think so much about its plans for governing Scotland as about its demand for a Parliament for Scotland. It may even be simpler than this; it may merely see the S.N.P. as being the best party for Scotland's interests.[13] Thus S.N.P. policies even more so than those of the Labour and

Conservative Parties are not subject to public scrutiny. The public's concern with the more symbolic aspects of its appeal has not made the S.N.P. apprehensive, like the Conservative Party, about evolving policies. This apart, the possibility that if Scotland became independent, with the S.N.P. as the governing party, different views as to what policies it should pursue would threaten to blow the Party asunder, is one that must not be dismissed. Nevertheless, here we shall assume that there exists a broad consensus within the S.N.P. in support of most of its policies. Also let it be remembered that we have seen that Labour Party supporters still voted Labour in the 1970 General Election, despite being opposed to many of its policies. Moreover, although the Labour Party often looks like a coalition of unlike minded people, it has shown no signs of breaking-up.

We are now in a position to study the policies of the S.N.P. themselves. It is not our aim to give a complete summary of them or to record the many platitudes they contain; rather we shall note some of their salient features. We shall examine the S.N.P.'s policies under the following five headings,

1. Constitution and Government.
2. Economics - Industry and Finance.
3. Economics - Primary Industry.
4. Foreign Affairs and Defence.
5. Environment, Social and Cultural.

We shall confine our attention, in this discussion, exclusively to the Policy Documents which have been produced since 1974.[14] It must be stressed that 1974 did not mark any major change of direction in the thinking behind the S.N.P.'s policies. Rather

one can see the post 1974 Policy Documents as part of an evolutionary process which, to all intents and purposes, began in the mid-1960s. Although, generally speaking, the concerns and themes have remained constant, a study of resolutions presented for debate at the Party's Annual National Conference reveal that resolutions in the 1970s are less naive and show a greater understanding of reality than those of the mid-1960s. For instance, where a resolution in the mid-1960s might attack an existing practice and call for a change, in the 1970s a well thought out alternative would be outlined. It must further be noted that resolutions debated at the Party's Conference cover a wide ambit, few areas of Scottish life being ignored.

1. Constitution and Government

The British system of Government is frequently criticised for the veil of secrecy which surrounds much of its operations. The S.N.P. does not want this situation to be repeated in an independent Scotland:

> The S.N.P. reaffirms its commitment to setting up in Scotland a system of government which maximises the open character of public decision making and the democratic accountability of public decision makers, and which secures respect for the rights of individuals and minorities.

The S.N.P. believes that their Draft Articles for a Scottish Constitution 'establishes a secure framework for a just, open and democratic system of Government'. The Constitution provides for, amongst other things, a single chamber Parliament, the use of referenda including initiative referenda, a Bill of Rights and election by proportional representation. In this written

Constitution the functions and powers of the legislature, executive and judiciary are clearly defined.

The S.N.P. recognises, however, that 'a framework alone is not enough'. It proclaims that 'there must be a commitment in practice to restoring real power to the elected representatives of the people in Parliament, to decentralizing the exercise of power within Scotland itself and to giving every person and community in Scotland the opportunity to influence 'government at all levels'. Executive power will be exercised by a Cabinet, with Parliamentary Committees having the resources and right of access to adequately scrutinize the working of the executive. A neat illustration of the S.N.P.'s commitment to open up the machinery of executive power to public inspection is provided by their pledge to abolish the Official Secrets Act, an act which has caused much controversy at Westminster, and replace it by a Freedom of Information Act. Administrative law will be simplified in order to make it more comprehensible to the average citizen and his right to challenge the decisions of public authorities will be facilitated. It is hoped that a 'well working system of Parliamentary control of government' will 'make redundant the function of an ombudsman'. However, until this is proved, the office will remain and certain restrictions on its activities will be removed.

The reform of local government in Scotland which occurred in the mid-1970s has been repeatedly attacked and of all the political parties, the S.N.P. has been the most forthright in its criticism of this change:

> The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, which set up the present two-tier structure of local government was a mistake. The monster regions are fundamentally

> out of sympathy with the new found concern in Scotland to create democratic structures of government at all levels and Scotland no longer has local government in any sense of the word "local".

Consequently, the 'S.N.P. believe that decision making must be brought back to local communities'. This is to be achieved, not by returning to the anachronistic system of local government which existed pre-1974, but by abolishing the Regions and handing some of their functions to 'most-purpose District Councils' and others to the Assembly, while certain services at present provided by the Region could be managed jointly by several District Councils. The Island Councils which, to all intents and purposes, have functioned satisfactorily, are to be retained. As with central government the S.N.P. wish to ensure the ethos of openness. This is to be achieved through such devices as open council meetings which would be held in the evening, but more importantly, by encouraging Community Councils to play a vigorous part in community life:

> The S.N.P. sees the role of Community Councils as an evolving one and an opportunity to shift the axis of political issues nearer to the real concrete concerns of ordinary people, to humanise politics at a local level and to encourage participation in decision making.

The domestic rating system would be abolished and replaced by a local income tax.

2. Economics - Industry and Finance

The S.N.P. wishes to establish a dynamic, advanced and diverse industrial structure, which will guarantee full employment, in

Scotland. They are convinced that North Sea oil revenues, deployed through such institutions as a Development Bank, will provide the means for achieving this. However, it accepts that it cannot sweep away or ignore the present structure:

> The S.N.P. accepts without hesitation that the existing economic structure in Scotland, including both traditional and more recent industries will have to be maintained and encouraged until it has been replaced by a thriving new industrial economy more appropriate to the needs and opportunities of a self-governing Scotland.

Industry must benefit the whole nation and 'not merely conflicting sectional interests of particular groups'.

> The S.N.P. therefore has no objection in principle to either private or public enterprise but believes that all contributions to the success of an enterprise including capital, expertise and labour should receive a fair reward and have an effective voice in policy making.

The thinking which lies behind this statement is the desire to prevent what the S.N.P. sees as a sterile and largely outdated debate over the ownership of industry. The S.N.P. has drafted schemes for industrial democracy and profit sharing; it seeks, in other words, to give workers a stake in industry and decrease the feelings of alienation they may experience. In so doing, it reflects much current thinking on this matter. The S.N.P., however, does not see private and public enterprise as being the only two forms of ownership available; there is 'co-operative enterprise' an alternative which it believes 'has not been adequately encouraged'.

The S.N.P. aims to place a great deal of responsibility for

fostering industrial development with Area Development Officers. This proposal stems from the belief that 'Centrally administered and rigid industrial development incentives have proved ineffective to meet Scotland's needs'. Central authorities, though, will have responsibility for such matters as taking measures to reduce the dumping of cheap imports and ensuring the development of skills necessary for industrial growth. Perhaps the most important function the central authorities will be called upon to perform will be to monitor and control the level of foreign investment in Scotland, with the objective of ending the branch factory syndrome from which Scotland suffers at the present time.

Concern over the plight of small businesses is one frequently heard and the S.N.P. is obviously impressed by the arguments of those who stress the important part which they play in the economy:

> The long-term health of the Scottish economy depends on the development of a climate within which small enterprise can prosper and regenerate a Scottish owned industrial sector. To assist small concerns, government agencies and nationalised concerns shall be required to accept a proportion of their purchase from small concerns ... Area Development Officers will be encouraged to accept a proportion of relatively high risk ventures amongst small endeavours being assisted.

Although the S.N.P. recognises 'free collective bargaining' as a right, they wish to establish an incomes policy as a regular feature of the economy. The incomes policy would be formulated each year by a Tripartite Economic Council, consisting of government, employers and employees representatives. It is recognised, though, that in some years this body might choose to leave incomes to the sway of 'open market forces'. If a 'National Pay Bargain'

is arrived at it is envisaged that the 'government would encourage compliance ... through the control of allowances and direct taxation'.

The S.N.P. advocates a fundamental restructuring of the system of income taxes:

> We favour a thorough going simplification of the system with a much closer integration between it and a rationalised social security system. This simplification and integration should be achieved by replacing most tax allowances by a system of guaranteed minimum income.

In drafting this new system of income taxes the 'need to provide incentives to work and to encourage home ownership and other socially desirable forms of saving must be taken into account'. It is not envisaged that a wealth tax will become a permanent feature of the taxation system; rather a wealth tax may be imposed when an undesirable amount of wealth accumulates in the hands of a small number of people.

After independence a Central Bank would be established and Scotland would seek to play her part in the regulation of international finance by joining such organizations as the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) and the World Bank. She would also seek to play a constructive role in world trade by operating through such bodies as General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (G.A.T.T.). In both financial and trading matters the S.N.P. say that special consideration will be given to the close links which Scotland will inevitably have with England. It has, for example, said that an independent Scotland would accept responsibility for a share of the U.K. National Debt and that a portion of the oil revenues would be made available for investment in industry in England.

3. Economics - Primary Industry

Revelations of the misuse of land and of its purchase by people and organizations who have no intention of exploiting it to its full potential has focused much attention on the question of land ownership and use in Scotland. Of all the political parties the S.N.P. has considered this issue most fully and has brought forward comprehensive proposals to ameliorate the situation. The objectives which the S.N.P. wishes to achieve are to 'stop land speculation', 'to break up the concentrations of power vested presently in a few hands', distribute 'land ownership as widely as possible among the people', and to ensure the efficient use of land.

These objectives are largely to be achieved through the operation of the 'Land Commission'. This body will be set up 'to initiate and pursue with all possible speed a land capability survey throughout Scotland. It will have as a priority the duty of identifying land not in its opinion being used in ways most appropriate for the benefit of the community. All land so identified will become the subject of taxation, avowedly intended to compel its owner either to put land to a use approved by the Land Commission, or to sell it to the Land Commission at its existing value'. Rigorous regulations will be laid down to ensure that people not resident in Scotland, foreign companies and corporate bodies who do not derive the bulk of their income from agricultural or forestry pursuits will be unable to purchase land.

It is envisaged that, although the Land Commission will ultimately be responsible to central government, much of its work will be done through decentralised local committees. This

commitment to decentralisation stems from the S.N.P.'s belief that 'it is essential that local communities through bodies elected at community level should participate in decisions concerning the pattern of land use in their locality'.

Their land policy, the S.N.P. believes, will create a stable and healthy climate in which both agriculture and forestry can flourish. More efficient use of land coupled with the 'creation of a system of long-term pricing' will enable Scotland to become 'largely self-sufficient' in food. An increase in the number of hectacres of afforestation from the 1977 figure of 800,000 to 2.4 million will transform forestry into a thriving industry. The tourist industry is recognised as a major one, but in order to preserve the fabric of local communities restrictions will be placed on the development of holiday homes.

A much-emphasised feature of the agriculture policy is the desire to foster the 'traditional Scottish concept of the family farm'. The desire to create a fraternal society is also evident in the policy's attitude to co-operative enterprises:

> Encouragement will be given to all those within a community to work together in the development of co-operative enterprises in land holding, land use, associated industrial activities and marketing.

The expansion of the agriculture and forestry industries will radically reverse the process of rural depopulation and, the S.N.P. hopes, bring a large number of young people back to the countryside. This will naturally result in a radical social regeneration of rural Scotland. Amenities, such as transport and health, will have to be developed to meet this change. In

order that rural Scotland undergoes a balanced development the S.N.P. sees it desirable that small industry be widely dispersed rather than be confined to a few major growth points.

The S.N.P. are extremely critical of the fishing policy of European Economic Community (E.E.C.), which they see as devastating the Scottish fishing industry. The S.N.P. wish measures to be taken to ensure the conservation of fishing stocks. Moreover, they demand a 200 mile fishing limit, the first 100 miles being exclusively for Scottish boats and the next 100 will be open for the negotiation of bilateral agreements with other countries.

4. Foreign Affairs and Defence

The S.N.P. believes that her strategic position demands that an independent Scotland becomes a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (N.A.T.O.). One important change, though, would be made on the present situation:

> On Scotland regaining her independence all governments responsible for Nuclear Warfare Bases and nuclear weapons on Scottish land, waters and airspace, will be required to remove these.

Thus Scotland, like the Scandinavian members of N.A.T.O., would become a nuclear-free zone.

An independent Scotland would play her full part in international affairs, becoming members of the relevant political, trade, economic and monetary organizations. However, the S.N.P. is decidedly unenthusiastic about the E.E.C. and 'is opposed to the development of the E.E.C. into an economic and monetary union and/or a political and defence union'. Whether Scotland should remain a member of the E.E.C. would be decided in a referendum held shortly

after independence. As we have already seen the S.N.P. acknowledges Scotland's 'special relationship with England'. Consequently, it proposes an 'Association of British States' to provide 'a forum for consultation and co-operation between the Parliaments and Governments of the member states on matters of common interest'. Believing that Scotland 'shares specific strategic and economic interests' with the Nordic Council, the S.N.P. wish to foster 'close Scottish-Nordic co-operation' and will consider the possibility of applying for membership of the Nordic council.

An independent Scotland, the S.N.P. are convinced, will generate much wealth. It estimates that by the year 2000 per capita income will be $16,000 (1977 $5,000):

> The possession of such wealth imposes on Scotland an inescapable moral obligation to aid the development of the Third World countries. In addition to the moral obligation, Scotland will share the collective responsibility of the rich countries in encouraging Third World development as a means of securing a stable international environment.

Scotland, therefore, would work for a 'New International Economic Order' which would stop such things as the exploitation of the Third World by multi-national companies. Similarly:

> Scotland would accept as an immediate target for the value of her development aid contribution the U.N. figure of 0.7 per cent of G.N.P., but would aim at 1 per cent by the fifth year after independence.

In addition to direct aid to the developing world, the S.N.P. claim that Scotland would negotiate favourable trading agreements with it.

5. Environment, Social and Cultural

> With the exception of the S.N.P. all political parties in the U.K. are committed to a materialistic view of social progress even although it is becoming increasingly obvious that this course cannot be sustained and that it must eventually lead to social economic collapse. The S.N.P. is exceptional in the emphasis which it places on the concept of the quality of life, on its long-standing recognition of the desirability of national self-sufficiency (a concept now being recognised as desirable throughout the developed world, be it Europe, Japan or North America) and in its belief that Scotland's future prosperity depends on avoiding becoming over-populated as a result of overindustrialization or for any other reason. These convictions are associated with the belief in the value of small communities with which individuals can identify and in the principle of decentralization of government.

Thus reads the introduction to the Policy Document on the 'Environment'. Rigid control over population growth is not envisaged, but 'Control of the rate of immigration will ... be essential in order to preserve the size and age structure of the population'. High economic growth will the S.N.P. believes eliminate such social diseases as poverty, squalor and urban deprivation. Priority will be given to the development of renewable sources of energy. On the question of nuclear energy, the S.N.P. is equivocal, whilst proposing to maintain the existing nuclear power stations in Scotland, it refuses to commit itself either to a further development of nuclear energy or to a ban on its exploitation. An 'Environment Protection Agency' with substantial powers will be set up. Other measures which will be taken to preserve the environment include, placing emphasis on

recycling and curbing the development of conurbations.

The wording of the S.N.P. Housing Policy Document manifests a desire to transcend the existing situation:

> Short-term planning, construction and management of housing should be protected from the fluctuations of the political and economic arena, and it should be recognised that the criteria on which a housing policy for Scotland should be judged is whether or not it will supply enough dwellings of a high standard in pleasant settings with adequate community facilities, fulfilling the social as well as the physical needs of the community. Housing should not be used to further any ideological end, to punish or bribe particular groups, nor as a weapon in the Treasury's armoury of demand management. Scotland needs more, far more homes, and not only to improve and preserve the best of those she has, but to maintain in long and satisfactory life all those which will be built.

The S.N.P. will, in an independent Scotland, 'Encourage and facilitate home-ownership', 'Establish the principle of a home buying scheme for present tenants' and 'Immediately introduce democratic tenant co-management schemes for suitable groups of property'. Particular attention will be paid to special housing such as Shelter Housing for the Elderly.

Scotland's advantageous position in medical education, the S.N.P. recognise, is not matched by good national health. 'Major improvements in Scotland's health' will only come with a 'sustained attack on social deprivation'. As far as the management of the health service goes, the S.N.P. emphasises the need for creating and maintaining an atmosphere of stability. It advocates

'adequate participation by those with expert knowledge of the service and for a clear allocation of responsibility which both public and employees can understand'. To this end it would establish a Scottish Health Commission comprising representatives of the medical and other health professions and nominees of the Minister of Health. The Health Service would be organized on the basis of District Health Boards, which would be directly accountable to the Health Commission. Moreover, a Scottish Academy of Medicine consisting of representatives from 'all sides of the health service' would be established as a central coordinating body to liaise with the government on professional matters. On the delicate subject of private medicine the S.N.P. say that within the Scottish Health Service 'pay beds will be phased out', although a 'separate private sector, serviced by part-time Scottish Health Service consultants and having minimum standards of staffing and facilities is envisaged'.

At one time Scotland could claim to have one of the best education systems in the world. The S.N.P. accepts that today one can no longer make such a claim, but it is committed 'to providing the means whereby the Scottish people may again achieve their traditional excellence of education'. Education it believes 'should be seen as a continuing process of which the years of compulsory schooling are but a part'. The S.N.P. 'is committed to the comprehensive ideal'. It declares that 'All public schools should be regarded as an integral part of community life'. The operation of 'schools councils' is the main method by which this goal is to be achieved. As 'large secondary schools have had a detrimental effect on educational standards' the maximum

size of schools should be around 800. On the question of Denominational Schools, an emotionally charged subject in central-west Scotland, the S.N.P. proclaims that they will take no measures to force desegregation. More attention should be paid throughout the whole education system to the teaching of Scottish subjects, especially Gaelic. The autonomy of the Universities will be preserved and a Highland University organized on a collegial basis will be established.

CONCLUSIONS

In the following chapter we shall discuss the philosophical foundations to the S.N.P.'s policies, here we shall confine ourselves to some elementary observations on them. Initially the following comments must be made. As is the case with the policies of all political parties, the policies of the S.N.P. are in some respects vague, contain ambiguities and reveal naivity of thought.[15] Moreover, as is to be expected, the S.N.P. has not tackled every issue, although in certain instances they have possibly not done so in order to avoid ugly and damaging controversies. The Education Policy Document, for instance, ignores the important question of private schools.

The S.N.P.'s policies resemble those of the Liberal Party more than they resemble the policies of the other two major political parties in Britain. Like the Liberals, the S.N.P. call for a written Constitution, a Bill of Rights, the use of proportional representation, aid for small businessmen, the replacement of the domestic rating system with a local income tax and the establishment of a national minimum wage; to quote the most obvious similarities in their policies. To a large extent the similarities stem from

the fact that both the S.N.P. and the Liberal Party are 'opposition' parties, parties which have never or only a long time ago, held onto the reins of power. That being so, it is inevitable that they will seek reforms which will alter established practices and processes and open the door to new initiatives. For example, as the paymasters of the Labour Party are affiliated trade unions and the paymaster of the Conservative Party is Big Business, it is not surprising to find the S.N.P. and the Liberal Party championing the cause of small businessmen - although in neither case do they have formal links with small business organisations or is their prime purpose to expound the cause and philosophy of small businessmen. In sum, neither the S.N.P.nor the Liberal Party can be described as the ideological brother of the Poujadists in France. The S.N.P., however, must not be regarded as Liberals sporting tartan rosettes. As we shall see in the next chapter, the S.N.P. does have a distinctive philosophical identity.

Two general comments can be made about the orientation of S.N.P. policies. Firstly, they are progressive and forward looking. The S.N.P. obviously wish to use the sovereign power which will be inherited if Scotland gains independence to regenerate Scotland, by remedying past failures, neglect and inefficiencies. Secondly, they are responsible. Ignoring the polemical excesses of certain policies, no wild claims are made of the possibility of building a tartan utopia. Violent and anti-English sentiments are absent and in advocating membership of N.A.T.O. and in seeking a special relationship with England, the S.N.P. accepts reality and harbours no illusions of grandeur.[16]

As far as the contents of the policies go, three main features are noticeable. One, the laissez-faire theory of government is explicitly rejected in that an active and interventionist role is envisaged for the state. Gavin Kennedy records 'No modern economy can operate or indeed benefit from laissez-faire capitalism' and states the necessity for 'some element of planning'.[17] Secondly, to prevent an excessive accumulation of state power at the centre, a great deal of decision-making power will be decentralised. The 1974 Manifesto calls for 'the greatest possible diffusion of democratic power and responsibility, to reverse the harmful effects of the centralising forces'.[18] Thirdly, in order to prevent the development of a bureaucratic Leviathan, participation will be encouraged in as many areas of political life as possible. A contributer to the Radical Approach correctly wrote that 'the attack on bureaucracy is a theme running through the S.N.P. manifesto',[19] whilst another prominent member of the S.N.P. has stated that 'Participation must be deliberately and energetically fostered in national political processes'.[20]

The detailed policies of a political party are the processes by which it proposes to put into effect the principles to which it adheres. Principles, however, do not specify any specific course of action - rather they lay down guidelines to be abided by and boundaries not to be transgressed. Thus a political party can produce several different policies to cope with the same problem without violating its basic principles. The attitudes and approach a political party has to political problems are thus more important than the programmes it produces. From our survey of its policies in this chapter we obtained a glimpse of the

principles to which the S.N.P. subscribes. In the next chapter, we shall consider this matter more fully. Indeed, it will be questioned whether the S.N.P. adheres to any coherent set of principles.

NOTES

1. Rose, Richard, op.cit., p.283.

2. The Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet, of course, are not referred to in the Labour Party's Constitution, thus there is no constitutional obligation for them to adopt the position of Conference. However, as they consist of members of the Labour Party who, technically at least, subscribe to the Party's Constitution, and who were elected members of Parliament on the Labour ticket with the support of Labour Party activists, logically one would expect them to adhere to Conference wishes.

3. A Government, in theory at least, has no place in a political party's structure. However, as a government consists of members of a political party and as the purpose of all major political parties is to elect a government of their members, a rigid distinction between party and government is not valid.

4. Rose, Richard, op.cit., p.303.

5. Ibid., p.308.

6. Wolfe, Billy, op.cit., p.131.

7. Maxwell, Stephen, 'Beyond Social Democracy'. In Kennedy, Gavin (ed.), op.cit., p.7.

8. The following resolution was passed by a 'vast majority' at the S.N.P. Annual National Conference in 1968:

> Recognising that the achievement of Self-Government will only be the beginning of the task of rebuilding the new Scotland, this Conference re-affirms the decision that the S.N.P. will continue as a political party after the achievement of Self-Government, and accept the responsibility as the Government, so long as it has the majority support of the Scottish electorate.

9. S.N.P., Constitution and Rules, op.cit., p.3.

10. Ibid., p.4.

11. Ibid., p.5.

12. There is a feeling amongst some members of the Party in Scotland that the M.P.s should be delegates of the Party at Westminster. That being so, they believe that no pronouncements should be made or action taken, by them, on controversial matters, without first consulting the Party organization in Scotland.
The main divisions of opinion within the S.N.P., at the present time, are over what strategy it should adopt, e.g. what should be its attitude towards the European Parliament and what should be its strategy in the election for that Parliament; whether it should campaign for immediate Self-Government or whether it should adopt a gradualist approach and work for the evolution of a devolved Assembly into a sovereign Parliament.

13. In a survey conducted by the British Election Study after the October 1974 General Election, it was found that a large majority of supporters of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Parties believed that the S.N.P. had been good for Scotland.

> Whether or not you have ever voted for the S.N.P. do you think its existence and election successes have been good for Scotland?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Amongst Conservative Voters	68	18	14
Amongst Liberal Voters	74	16	10
Amongst Labour Voters	70	20	10
Amongst S.N.P. Voters	97	2	2

See Miller, Bill, "Three Main Parties Find S.N.P. 'good for Scotland'", The Scotsman, 14 October 1975.
Some people, of course, will view the S.N.P. in terms of its personalities, i.e. on the merits of its M.P.s and other leading Party figures. A few people may judge the S.N.P. on its record in Parliament. It must be recorded, though, that where the S.N.P. has established itself in Local Government, it has not

created an impression distinctive and favourable enough to enhance its national reputation.
See Aschernon, Neal, 'Party in Search of a Strategy'. The Scotsman, 7 June 1978.

14. References will not be given for quotes from the Policy Documents. A list of these can be found in the bibliography.

15. For a critical evaluation of the S.N.P.'s Housing Policy, see Gibson, Peter, 'The S.N.P. and Housing', Question, No. 9, June 1976. And for a reply to that critic see Bell, Colin, 'The S.N.P. and Housing' letter in Question, No. 10, June 1976.

16. Many of the policies of the S.N.P. depend, for their implementation, on the spending of the revenue from North Sea oil. Some people state that the S.N.P. is over optimistic in its estimation of the amount of revenue which will accrue from the Scottish sector of the North Sea oil field. If these people are correct, then those S.N.P. policies which are based on the assumption that vast revenue will be forthcoming from North Sea oil, i.e. those demanding large government spending, are unrealistic.

17. Kennedy, Gavin 'Scotland's Economy' in Kennedy, Gavin (ed.) op.cit., pp.54-55.

18. S.N.P. Scotland's Future - Manifesto of the S.N.P., Edinburgh, 1974, p.3.

19. Hamilton, David, 'Health' in Kennedy, Gavin, (ed.), op.cit., p.70.

20. Currie, Andrew, 'The S.N.P. and Participation', Question, No. 7, April, 1976, p.10.

CHAPTER 4 S.N.P. - A NEW PHILOSOPHY IN PARTY POLITICS?

Party is organized opinion.

Benjamin Disraeli.

Does the S.N.P. represent a way of looking at politics which is radically distinguishable from that which we have been used to in party politics in Britain? Our question can best be answered not by attempting to characterize the approach of the other main political parties to politics and focusing on the differences between their approaches and those of the S.N.P. - there will obviously be many superficial differences and similarities - but, rather by looking at the S.N.P.'s approach to politics and asking if this delineates a significant new dimension.

Some members of the S.N.P. proclaim that their Party is a 'Social Democratic' one. Stephen Maxwell - the Party's Vice-Chairman in charge of publicity - in his perceptive article 'Beyond Social Democracy' in The Radical Approach, states that it is fashionable to use the term 'social democracy' because ' it carries a public relations gloss of moderation even of conservatism which is convenient to a Party which is proposing a major constitutional upheaval'. He adds, 'It also sounds Scandinavian and S.N.P. opinion is agreed on the merits of things Scandinavian'.[1]

Maxwell goes on to analyse the concept and practice of social democracy and then, in the light of this analysis, look at the position of the S.N.P. According to him:

> Contemporary social democracy rests ... on five tenets, political liberalism, the mixed economy, the welfare state, Keynesian economics and a belief in equality.[2]

The rise of corporatism, however, has forced the 'social democratic state' away from the principle of caring for 'the welfare of the individual' and has thrust upon it the role of umpire in 'a society of competing sectional interest groups'.[3] This has resulted in the 'social democratic state' failing to fulfil the objectives embodied in the five tenets:

> The assumptions and techniques of centralised Keynesian economic management are proving incapable of reconciling full employment with price stability ... The social democratic state has ... failed to eliminate poverty ...
> Social democracy is nowhere more ambivalent than in the way it interprets its much advertised commitment to equality ... 14 years of social democracy has left the U.K. a notable unequal and class ridden society ...
> In most social democracies the balance between the public sector and the private sector in the economy has been eroded by the continuing expansion of the public sector employment and by the increasing proportion of national income going on public expenditure ...
> Although social democracy officially endorses the claims of political liberalism, it has not been conspicuously fertile in ideas for curtailing the growth in state power or for protecting the citizen against its misuse.[4]

From this analysis of the practice of social democracy Maxwell concludes:

> An examination of the problems which will face an independent Scotland confirms that social democracy, at least as conventionally practised and preached in the U.K. will prove an unreliable and even dangerous guide for Scottish legislators.[5]

The alternative which Maxwell believes the S.N.P. should adopt is described, after the title of the book in which he was writing,

as 'radical'. Maxwell sees the kernel of 'radicalism' as follows:

> The radical alternative is a mix between state corporations on the existing model and a combination of public ownership and decentralized social or employee control and ownership.[6]

He then goes on to outline measures by which 'radicalism' would be implemented in Scotland. All of the measures are in accordance with the S.N.P. policies which we examined in the last chapter. Maxwell appreciates that it is one thing to outline a philosophy of government, but quite another to be able to implement it. Nevertheless, he is optimistic about the prospect for 'radicalism':

> The dogmatic political realist will discount this vision of a radical alternative to social democracy against its lack of any interest group support. In so doing he runs the risk of underestimating the extent to which nationalism - by publicizing old ideas and proclaiming new standards, by accelerating the rate of social and economic change and by uniting different sectional groups behind a common aim - can open up new political perspectives.[7]

How do other S.N.P. activists view the S.N.P.'s approach to politics? Isobel Lindsay emphasises that one must appreciate the full significance of the rise of the S.N.P. She contends that:

> The development of the nationalist movements in Scotland and Wales is not a quaint aberration or a simple campaign for economic betterment, it is concerned with how modern society can fulfil the social, emotional and material needs of its citizens.[8]

She goes on to say that the problem with 'contemporary politics' is that it does not ask 'the right questions', thus it has not stimulated the public 'into awareness of the different directions

in which society might develop'.[9] The emergence of the S.N.P., however, has fundamentally changed this situation and has introduced 'a new dimension' into politics. The S.N.P. she argues, poses not just an electoral threat, but also a threat to 'fixed' ideas, to long established certainties'.[10] Exactly what Lindsay means by this is made clear in an article she wrote in the Glasgow Herald in 1970:

> The S.N.P. and Plaid Cymru in Wales have tried to change the agenda of politics away from issues which were rightly relevant in the first half of this century towards issues which will become of even greater fundamental importance in the second half. It is a movement closely concerned with the key problems which have for long concerned sociologists but which have been ignored by the conventional politicians who prefer to fight on old and safe territory.
>
> Problems of bureaucracy, of community, of the changing basis of class, of the difficulty of reconciling democracy with the highly centralised modern state - all of these have been problems of long-standing academic concern in the social sciences, but they are issues which appear to demand political thinking of too profound and fundamental a nature for the Conservative and Labour Parties.[11]

In his M.Sc. dissertation at Strathclyde University, Donald Bain - who was subsequently to become a research officer with the S.N.P. - drew the following conclusions from Lindsay's analysis:

> Far from being a negative reaction to the forces of technological and societal change the nationalist movements are arguably the political actors most advanced in their preparations for accommodating such changes within a suitable political framework.

> To the extent that this is the case Miss Lindsay can claim that 'far from being a movement 250 years behind the times (Scottish and Welsh nationalism) is a movement 10-20 years ahead of the major parties; an 'avant-garde' rather than a rearguard movement.

Thus, Bain concludes:

> By making a reasonably credible claim to be a standard-bearer of modern trends in political thought the S.N.P. can present itself as representative of a philosophy extending far beyond the basic claim for self-government.[12]

Malcolm Slesser, a prominent S.N.P. member, in his book The Politics of Environment subtitled 'a guide to Scottish thought and action', sees in the S.N.P. the answer to the environmental and spiritual crisis brought on by the 'rapid growth of technology'. The future of mankind, in Slesser's view, lies in 'new forms of government', based on 'national communities'.[13] 'Survival in the world', proclaims Slesser at the end of his book, 'is clearly demanding new political and economic systems and these can only be practically developed in small balanced, modern communities'.[14] Scotland is one such community, and has the advantage of possessing in the S.N.P. 'a radical ... political action group ... which can give Scotland a lead in the race for survival'.[15]

The sentiments and ideas expressed by Maxwell, Lindsay and Slesser are reminiscent of those of the 'New Left' school of thought which arose in the late 1950s. One of the major platforms of the New Left movement in Britain was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.) and it is significant that several prominent S.N.P. members were involved in that campaign.[16] The revolutionary fervour associated with the New Left in the sixties has now faded out. However, remedies for many of the concerns which animated that

movement are now being sought through more conventional channels. Ecology parties are now performing credibly in elections in France and West Germany; the Swedish Social Democratic Party's endorsement of the use of nuclear power is reckoned to have contributed to its defeat in the 1976 General Election, while on a less sophisticated level the extraordinary successes of the anti-tax party - the Progressive Party - in Denmark indicates the extent of the political challenge which 'anti-establishment' resentment, operating through electoral processes, can mount in 'stable' Western liberal-democracies.

The S.N.P. can be seen as representing a reaction to the impersonality of post-industrial 'mass' society and a quest for the fostering of a communitarian spirit and for the reestablishment of man's roots in society. These aspirations were, as we saw in Chapter 1, the trademarks of the pre-1960s S.N.P., yet Hanham described it as a quasi-Poujadist force. What could be seen as distinctly New Left about the S.N.P. today is the processes by which it seeks to achieve the above-mentioned aspirations. Whereas Poujadists respond to 'mass' society by seeking to maintain the fabric of traditional society, New Left adherents articulate a more progressive response and have a vision of an alternative organization of society. In the last Chapter, we saw that emphasis on decentralisation and participation were recurring themes in the S.N.P.'s policies; the concepts of decentralisation and participation are two hallmarks of New Left philosophy. One S.N.P. activist advocates decentralisation and participation because he believes that:

> The currency of today's privilege is no longer capital per se, it is political and organisational power and it is largely irrelevant whether this power is developed within a capitalist society, a mixed economy or a socialist state.[17]

Decentralisation and participation are called for then, in an attempt to break up monopolies of power and return it to the people. Perhaps the S.N.P. represents the institutionalisation of New Left concepts, ideas and aspirations - or to put it another way it has modified and adapted them in such a way so as to enable them to attract mass support.

The New Left was a radical movement in the 1960s and many S.N.P. members often describe their Party as 'radical'. We must now ask whether the S.N.P. is a genuine radical party or are the similarities between it and the New Left superficial? Christopher Harvie in his book Scotland and Nationalism wrote a stinging attack on the self-proclaimed radicalism of the S.N.P.:

> Despite its claims the policy-making dynamic within the S.N.P. is corporate rather than radical, directed by middle-class activists in the interests of their professions. Doctors prescribe for medicine, teachers for education, economic consultants for industry. This represents an enfeebled projection of old civil society, purged of the wide social and governmental claims of its institutions. There is no radical questioning of the role of 'doctors' or 'teachers'.[18]

S.N.P. activists do indeed prescribe policies for the professions they are members of, but there is nothing inherently unradical about that since they are the people who have the most knowledge and experience and therefore the most interest in the subject. More important, though, very few leading members of the professions are members of the S.N.P., thus what Harvie describes as 'corporate' policy-making cannot be seen as an attempt by the professions to enhance their established positions in society.[19]

It could, however, be argued that middle-class members of professions who are activists in the S.N.P. form a reforming counter-elite to the conservatism of the present hierarchy.[20] Harvie is correct, though, in stating that middle class activists direct policy-making in the S.N.P. and that there is no real radical questioning of, for example, the role of doctors in society. However, it is probable that if the S.N.P. was not controlled by middle class activists and did radically question, in a way not done by the other political parties, the foundations of society, they would not be as strong as they are today. Keith Webb in his book The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland points towards this hypothesis when he comments that the present leaders of the S.N.P. are 'sufficiently close to the public image of what respectable politicians ought to be, that the equanimity of the voting-public' is not disturbed.[21]

Harvie makes a more powerful criticism of the S.N.P. later in his book. He suggests that far from the S.N.P. representing a 'move forward from social democracy', it in fact adheres to 'the old politics of welfarism, centralisation and corporatism - of the amelioration of inequality and alienation through economic growth'. He explains that the S.N.P.'s appeal rests on the claim that 'the certainties of social democracy can still be obtained north of the border when they are impossible in the south'.[22] There is a great deal of truth in Harvie's analysis. The greater part of the S.N.P.'s campaign energies are devoted to proclaiming the pecuniary benefits which an independent Scotland would bring. This emphasis is summed up in the much advertised S.N.P. slogan 'Rich Scots or Poor Britons'.

This concentration on 'bread and butter' economics has drawn criticism from independent-minded sympathisers with the cause of the S.N.P. John Herdman states that S.N.P. 'proposals have in common' a 'determination to appeal to everything that is basest and most inert and complacent in the public mind'.[23] He satirizes what he sees as the S.N.P.'s vision of an independent Scotland as:

> a cloudless paradise of deep-sea ports, millions of areas of forestry, limitless tourist facilities, of business schools turning out thousands of thrusting dynamic executives capable of generating imaginative concepts by the minute, of happy and healthy youth growing up protected from the lawless and surrounded by amenities in a country restored once more to 'her rightful place in the councils of the world.'[24]

Herdman's views are similar to those which were held by Hugh MacDiarmid. The latter wrote that the S.N.P. limits 'its propaganda to matters that will appeal to this pragmatic of a world'.[25]

What Herdman and MacDiarmid - both literary figures - find most obnoxious about the S.N.P. is its apparent lack of concern with and divorce from Scotland's cultural life. This appears to be what Herdman is suggesting when he affirms that 'the S.N.P. is for most part a crassly philistine body whose worship of economics is only a little less nauseating than that of the Unionist Parties'.[26] MacDiarmid, for his part, believing that it was 'impossible to be a Scottish Nationalist in politics but not in all aspects of life',[27] criticised the 'shallowness of the literature and the content of the speeches of its leaders of the S.N.P.'.[28] MacDiarmid, in fact, went so far as to state that 'Art and culture mean everything to Scotland. Practical politics as everyone knows are rubbish'.[29]

It is valid to see the S.N.P. as a 'philistine body' as far as Scottish culture is concerned. Its manifestos contain only short sections on cultural affairs and these are largely filled with sweet-sounding platitudes. Moreover, outwith the contours of everyday politics, the S.N.P. has not been the patron or the inspirer of new initiatives in Scottish cultural life. This situation is no different from that which exists with regard to any of the other political parties in Scotland. Yet as the S.N.P. is a nationalist party which talks about restoring Scotland's self-respect and self-confidence, one would expect that it would concern itself deeply with cultural affairs, or at least that a cultural revival would accompany its electoral successes. Paradoxically, during the 1930s, at a time when political nationalism failed to break into the established political processes, cultural nationalism flourished. Stephen Maxwell has postulated that perhaps one should not read too serious implications into Scotland's barrenness in the field of cultural nationalism at the present time:

> The reason may be that Scotland's cultural energies are, for the moment, engrossed in political and historical debate. Or it may lie deep in Scotland's cultural and psychological formation and thus be immune in the short term to constitutional change.

Nevertheless he does admit:

> Wherever the reason lies a cultural case for independence which owes nothing to traditional cultural materialism remains to be made. It rests on the claim that the political institutions of independence are an essential part of a nation's cultural equipment.[30]

Although Herdman and MacDiarmid were primarily concerned with the S.N.P.'s lack of cultural consciousness, they believed that this was symbolic of a lack of coherent philosophy and an excessive adherence to the expediency of pragmatism. We have seen Herdman's satirical comment on, and MacDiarmid's impatient and arrogant dismissal of, the S.N.P.'s programme. Peter Craigie, one of the authors of The Radical Approach describes the S.N.P. as essentially a pragmatic party and he favourably quotes from Pragmatism by William James:

> A pragmatist turns away from fixed principles, closed systems and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action.[31]

Many S.N.P. activists would agree with Craigie's evaluation. For such people a pragmatic approach to politics is the antithesis of a doctrinaire and sectarian approach. They would see the importance placed on nationalisation and the reluctance to sell council houses by the Labour Party, and the emphasis placed on private education and on the granting of tax and other concessions to middle and upper income groups by the Conservative Party as doctrinaire and sectarian policies. In other words, they see the Labour and Conservative Parties advocating such measures not because they would result in better government but because the principles to which they rigidly adhere demands that such measures be implemented - instead of action being taken which is based on an objective evaluation of reality, action is taken which accords with the dictates of rigidly held principles in an attempt to mould reality into an image of society which that party holds and which underlies the principles.

Strictly speaking, a purely pragmatic approach to politics would mean that there would be no consistency in action, no long or even medium term objectives would be pursued, and little attempt would be made to anticipate events; rather action would be formulated in response to events. While such an approach might be appropriate in certain fields of policy, e.g. foreign policy, it is inadequate as a philosophy of government. It must be said that when S.N.P. activists proclaim the S.N.P.'s approach to politics to be pragmatic they do so mainly for polemical purposes. They are of the opinion that to attribute past failures and mistakes in government to adherence to dogma on the part of governing parties and to state that this is a fault which they will not repeat if elected, will prove to be electorally advantageous. We have seen that certain clear principles can be detected in several of the S.N.P.'s policies, most notably the commitment to decentralisation and participation. Peter Craigie, himself, in the paragraph after that in which he praises pragmatism advocates to objectives which scarcely accord with the guidelines of pragmatism, viz. the 'elimination of the exploitation of one class by another' and ensuring that 'the wealth of our society is distributed on an equitable basis'.[32]

That being said it could still be argued that a comprehensive philosophy of government is lacking. Our examination of the S.N.P.'s policies in the last Chapter revealed a desire to reform existing practices. We also saw that the spirit of reformism pervades most of its policies. In its bid to convince the electorate that an S.N.P. triumph would result in more efficient

and effective government, it is possible that the S.N.P. takes up most of the reforms which are suggested by the pundits and adopts them as party policy. If this is so, it suggests that the S.N.P. is committed to no firm principles except a refusal to accept the status quo and a belief that government action can change this for the better. An example which illustrates this hypothesis is the policy which seeks to regularize pay-bargaining in a Tripartite Council. This would merely formalize existing pay-bargaining policy and would certainly not represent a radical new departure. No attempt, for instance, is made to challenge the corporate power of the Trade Unions or Big Business. It could be argued, following this train of thought, that the fact that the themes of decentralisation and participation constantly reappear in S.N.P. policies is a consequence of the fact that such concerns have been lacking in the legislation emanating from Labour and Conservative Governments. In sum, this line of argument suggests that far from the S.N.P. having a coherent and distinct philosophy of government it merely forms one through responding to existing practices. Such a philosophy would be a patently inadequate guide for S.N.P. legislators in an independent Scotland, for, once all the major reforms had been enacted, an S.N.P. Government would be without direction and would be tossed about, like a piece of driftwood, on the turbulent sea of public affairs.

Thus far we have not mentioned the obvious point that the rise of the S.N.P. has challenged many of the long-held assumptions about political behaviour in Britain, most notably

that Britain was a homogeneous entity and that voting was determined by socio-economic class. Thus, in challenging these assumptions and heralding new patterns of behaviour, the S.N.P. obviously represents a new form of politics. Detailed discussion of that matter would lead us into an analysis of the reasons for the rise of the S.N.P. and that is not our concern. Rather we seek to discern whether, in the context of political ideas, the S.N.P. represents a new form in party politics.[33]

In discussing this matter, one is struck by the lack of S.N.P. theorists. Few of the intellectuals who are associated with the S.N.P. have attempted to stand back from the hot-house environment of everyday politics and analyse the issues raised and tackled by the S.N.P. in a philosophical fashion. Where they have attempted to do this, they have not done so in a comprehensive manner and in consequence their results have not won the popular acclaim within the Party which the writings of theorists within other parties have achieved.[34] This contrasts with the situation which obtains in Wales. There the ideas of Saunders Lewis about the importance of preserving the Welsh language and maintaining the non-conformist and communitarian traditions in the Welsh way of life have been influential and a source of inspiration within Plaid Cymru since its formation in 1925. More recently, the Welsh Affairs Correspondent on the Western Mail in Cardiff, John Osmond, has written a book on Welsh devolution in which, besides analysing the devolution proposals advanced by the Labour Government in 1976 and suggesting 'constructive ways they might be developed in the future', he attempts to 'set devolution in a philosophical context of political

ideas'.[35] The flyleaf summarises his argument as follows:

> The main ideas brought forward by the author are that the politics of devolution are a response to the ideal of bringing power and responsibility together and resting them on a community basis. He argues that they are also a reaction to a corporate economic system growing up within the British state, a system he believes is inimical to community and democracy, which he shows as the mainspring of Welsh tradition.

Does the lack of theorists within the S.N.P. suggest that the S.N.P., as one commentator believes, is merely an 'opportunist party' structuring 'its appeal around issues which it can exploit'.[36] Certainly the S.N.P. is an opportunist party, but then all parties, of any significance, in a liberal-democracy are to a great extent opportunist. However, because the S.N.P. is an 'opposition' party which wishes to break up the existing system it has been far more ruthless in exploiting, for polemical purposes, such things as unfavourable rises in the rate of inflation, the level of unemployment and the cost of living index.

At this juncture it must be recorded that when electors are asked what they see as the most important problems the Government should do something about they refer to matters such as the price of food and the standard and cost of housing; in other words to matters which immediately affect the economics of everyday life. Despite the fact that Opinion Polls show that an overwhelming majority of people desire devolution and despite the fact that the rise of the S.N.P. has made it a much discussed subject on the media, only about 1 in 10 people cite it as one of the most important problems demanding Government action.[37]

Accordingly, in concentrating its propaganda around matters of everyday economics, the S.N.P. is merely taking cognisance of the electors' concerns and acting accordingly. This goes some way to answering the criticisms of Herdman and MacDiarmid which we considered above.

This still does not explain the absence of theorists in the S.N.P. It could be argued that the energies of potential theorists are, at the present time, being spent on arguing the case for devolution and independence, on analysing the Scottish economy to prove the viability of independence and so forth. It could also be argued that although Scotland possesses her own historical, political, cultural and institutional traditions, these are very much harmoniously intertwined with those of the rest of Britain. This being so, potential S.N.P. theorists lack a distinctive base on which to formulate a coherent Scottish Nationalist philosophy; if they wish to expound a philosophy which is new and imaginative then one must be developed which owes little to established or traditional Scottish ways of thinking. One nationalist intellectual has stated that he is a Scottish Nationalist because he wants 'to take the cringe out of Scottish attitudes'.[38] By this he means that Scotland must cease looking south of the border to England for her standards but must establish standards of her own. This, it can be contended, can only be done after Scotland has regained power and responsibility with independence. In sum, the arguments outlined in this paragraph suggest that a coherent widely respected philosophy will not be developed by the S.N.P. until independence is a historical fact. This does not mean, though, that contemporary S.N.P. writing about political and

governmental problems will give us no clue as to what to expect, only that they must not be taken as the conclusive product of, or the sum total of, S.N.P. thinking. This is the point Isobel Lindsay seemed to be making when she wrote that 'Scottish nationalism is open-ended; it is a beginning not a conclusion'.[39]

In conclusion then, it is premature for us to judge whether or not the S.N.P. represents a new form of politics. In the first Chapter we said that we could not give any conclusive opinions as to what to expect from the S.N.P. in an independent Scotland. Much, we said, would depend on the circumstances at the time of independence and the manner in which it was won. We have seen, in this Chapter, that the S.N.P. is not firmly committed to any coherent set of principles. Certain members, though, believe that it is a 'radical' party committed to a philosophy of government which brings forward fresh and imaginative solutions to the problems of an industrial society in the latter half of the 20th century. Enough ambiguities exist to suggest that this philosophy is not the prime motivating force behind the S.N.P. After independence, however, this philosophy might well form the cement which will bind the Party together as a campaigning force. (It must be recorded that no other group of individuals within the S.N.P. has advanced a coherent alternative philosophy.) However, as the evidence indicates that this 'radical' philosophy does not, at the moment, have deep roots in the S.N.P. it would not take much to deflect the Party in a different direction.

NOTES

1. Maxwell, Stephen, 'Beyond Social Democracy' in Kennedy, Gavin (ed.) op.cit., pp.7-8.
2. Ibid., p.9.
3. Ibid., p.10.
4. Ibid., pp.10-11.
5. Ibid., p.12.
6. Ibid., p.14.
7. Ibid., p.14.
8. Lindsay, Isobel, 'Nationalism, Community and Democracy', in Kennedy, Gavin (ed.) op.cit., p.21.
9. Ibid., p.21.
10. Ibid., p.21.
11. Lindsay, Isobel, 'S.N.P. ahead of their time in advocating a redistribution of political power', Glasgow Herald, 22 June 1970. Cited in Bain, Donald, 'The Scottish National Party from 1966 to the 1970 General Election: A Study in Electoral Polarisation in British General Elections'. Unpublished M.Sc. Disseration, University of Strathclyde, 1972, p.24.
12. Bain, Donald, op.cit., pp.25-26.
13. Slesser, Malcolm, The Politics of Environment, Allen and Unwin, London, 1972, p.11.
14. Ibid., p.173.
15. Ibid., p.172.
16. Most notably the Party's present Chairman, William Wolfe. See Wolfe, Billy, op.cit., pp.33-34.
17. Currie, Andrew, op.cit., p.9.
18. Harvie, Christopher, op.cit., p.279.
19. Evidence of this lies in the fact that most interest groups in Scotland are opposed to, or at least extremely

sceptical of, devolution and all are opposed to independence. For a summary of their views see Dalyell, Tam, Devolution: The End of Britain? Jonathan Cape, London, 1977, Chapters 9 and 10.

20. Stephen Maxwell hints at this hypothesis in an article 'Anglo-Saxon Attitudes', Question, No. 14, 22 October 1976.

21. Webb, Keith, op.cit., p.102.

22. Harvie, Christopher, op.cit., p.285.

23. Herdman, John, 'Politics'. In Glen, Duncan (ed.) Whither Scotland?, Victor Gollancz, London, 1971, p.108.

24. Ibid., p.110.

25. MacDiarmid, Hugh, 'Scotland'. In Edwards, O.D. (ed.) Celtic Nationalism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1968, p.356.

26. Herdman, John. In Glen, Duncan (ed.) op.cit., p.104.

27. MacDiarmid, Hugh, 'Scotland Full Circle'. In Glen, Duncan op.cit., p.247.

28. Ibid., p.245.

29. Daily Telegraph Magazine, 9 February 1968, p.12; cited in McLean, Iain, op.cit., p.357.

30. Maxwell, Stephen, 'Politics and Culture', Question No. 25, 1 April 1977, p.5.

31. Cited in Craigie, Peter, 'Industrial Relations'. In Kennedy, Gavin (ed.) op.cit., p.95.

32. Ibid., p.95.

33. It is, of course, impossible to draw a clearcut distinction between the political behavioural patterns associated with the S.N.P. and the political ideas to which that Party subscribes. The extremely democratic and decentralised nature of the S.N.P.'s organization (see Mansbach , Richard, 'The Scottish National Party; A Revised Political Profile',

Comparative Politics, Vol.5, No.3, 1973, and McAllister, Ian 'Nationalist Ideology and Party Organization: Scottish, Welsh and Irish Evidence', a paper prepared for the E.C.P.R. Workshop on Mass Political Organization, Grenoble, 6-12 April 1978) finds parallels in many of its policies. Similarly, the fact that the S.N.P. wins support in almost equal proportions from all socio-economic classes (see Miller, Bill, 'Nationalists Cut Across Class Division', The Scotsman, 15 October 1975) partly explains why it eschews all rhetoric of class conflict and adopts policies which attempt not to be offensive to either side of industry - management or workforce. Although it would be an exaggeration to say that in its propaganda the S.N.P. seeks to be all things to all men, it at least does attempt to be most things to most men. This is facilitated by the fact that the S.N.P. is an 'out-group', in other words, it is not and has not been in possession of governmental power, thus has not been in a position where it has had to make decisions which would favour one section of society or antagonize another.

34. The major theoretical work written by S.N.P. supporters is one which has been much quoted from in this thesis, viz. The Radical Approach. However, the articles in it are short and do not consist of profound theoretical analysis. Anthony Crosland's The Future of Socialism (Jonathan Cape, London, 1956) is certainly the most influential theoretical work to be written within the Labour Party in the post-war era, whilst Sir Ian Gilmour's Inside Right: A Study of Conservatism (Hutchinson, London, 1978) is probably the best-known such work to be written by a Conservative in recent years.

35. Osmond, John, Creative Conflict, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977.

36. Harvie, Christopher, op.cit., p.255.

37. See O.R.C. Polls, The Scotsman, 28 and 29 October 1976.

38. Edwards, O.D., 'The English in Southern Ireland'. In 'The English Nation', New Edinburgh Review, No. 37, Spring, 1977, p.40.

39. Lindsay, Isobol, in Kennedy, Gavin (ed.) op.cit., p.26.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

> To conceive extravagant hopes for the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind.
>
> Edmund Burke.

Neither startling nor dramatic conclusions can be derived from this study. The ideology of the S.N.P. contains nothing that is exceptional; it is within the mainstream of the liberal-democratic tradition of Western democracies. At this juncture, it is pertinent to reiterate a point made in the Introduction, viz. that political parties in the present era, certainly ones which are deeply embroiled in electoral competition, do not possess clear-cut comprehensive philosophical thought systems. Their ideologies, instead tend to be catholic and eclectic rather than narrowly based and exclusive.

In Chapter 2 where we looked at the 'belief-systems' of nationalists with regard to Scotland's history, character and potential, we saw that these were not dominated by romantic notions. They were not, for instance, tinged with the concept of historic inevitability. Likewise, there was no aggressive talk of liberation from the shackles of foreign domination, English or otherwise. Many of the points of divergence between the beliefs of nationalists and non-nationalists - those not directly concerned with the viability and desirability of independence - are not the subject of intense public debate. It was recorded that nationalists and non-nationalists share much in common in their evaluations of Scotland. Thus, at the present time at least, the main boundaries of division between them, in their

estimation of Scotland, lies in a policy difference over a fundamental issue - whether Scotland should be independent or not - but not in a fundamental divergence between their 'belief-systems'. Even this policy difference is not as extreme as is often suggested. Many non-nationalists support the devolution of extensive measures of legislative power to Scotland. Thus, it is extremely unlikely that Scottish nationalists will ever find themselves separated by a divide as great or as acrimonious as that which has separated Roman Catholics from Protestants in Ireland.

The policies which the S.N.P. expound are designed to achieve good, efficient and equitable government, not to achieve any revolutionary changes in the structure of society. They are a conscious attempt to make an improvement on the Westminster system of Government. That is why many of its policies, viz. the support for a Bill of Rights, a written Constitution, more scrutiny of the operation of the bureaucracy, more decentralization of, and the encouragement of more participation in, the processes of government, are ones which have been advocated by 'liberal' critics of the Westminster system. Reform is the watchword of S.N.P. policies. On occasions, though, they do go beyond reform and seek a more fundamental alteration - the Land Policy being the prime example of such a policy. The S.N.P.'s policies, in sum then, are a conscious attempt to strive for a happy, ordered and prosperous society, one which will be much like the present society but which will have its warts removed.

The S.N.P. is not a force crusading for any grand ideals. Malcolm Slesser who, as we noted in the last Chapter, sees in the S.N.P. an answer to the environmental and spiritual crises

caused by the rapid growth of technology, also says that the S.N.P. is not always aware of this task. Isobel Lindsay's evaluation of the rise of the S.N.P. is more of a polemical tract than an objective evaluation of the situation. There have been no detailed or revealing studies written by S.N.P. supporters of Scottish traits and traditions with a view to finding paths to new initiatives. There has been little philosophical discussion by S.N.P. intellectuals, of such matters as individual rights, national rights and the implications of excessive state control of the economy.

Although the S.N.P. has devised many policies aimed at preserving and enhancing individual liberty, passionate defence of the concept of individual liberty, such as one hears from Liberal Party spokesmen, is absent. The S.N.P. calls repeatedly for vast government spending to alleviate Scotland's economic and social problems, and in this one is reminded of those in the Labour Party who call for increased social service spending. Labour Party members who call for increased social service spending do so partly because they see it as a means by which society's wealth can be redistributed in favour of the poorer sections of the community. Whilst the S.N.P. calls for government spending in order to eradicate such social ills as poverty and squalor, it does not seek to use it to fundamentally alter the structure of society. The commitment to decentralize and encourage participation in governmental and political processes are themes running through S.N.P. thinking. Yet the S.N.P. has not given these themes much theoretical consideration or placed them within a philosophical framework. Furthermore, detailed consideration as to how they

could be practically implemented has not been forthcoming.

H.J. Hanham said of the pre-1960s S.N.P., that a Scotland governed by it would 'not be in any sense an intellectual force'.[1] A Scotland governed by today's S.N.P. would not be an intellectual trailblazer, but it would be receptive to new ideas. It would be prepared to adopt and implement them, but only after a cautious study had been made of their implications. An independent Scotland under S.N.P. custodianship would not be a 'cosy society content with its Kailyard, but it would not be over-ready to leave its Kailyard in the name of some abstract ideal. A neat illustration of this mentality is shown by the fact that the S.N.P. has repeatedly refused to join the Committee of Unrepresented Nations. To do so would identify them with other European nations fighting for their national rights against the authority of large centralised states. However, some of the groups who are members of this Committee have violent fringes and the S.N.P. feels that to identify, however remotely, with them might tarnish their democratic image, and possibly cause them loss of support.

Claims like those that the S.N.P. is a Tartan Tory Party or a 'Scottish' Labour Party are ghosts which must be laid to rest. Unlike the Conservative Party, the S.N.P. is not sceptical of the benefits of government intervention. It does not believe in the organic evolution of society and that the country should be governed by a 'natural' hierarchy. The Labour Party in large measure is the political wing of the Trade Union movement, something the S.N.P. does not seek to be. Absent from the S.N.P.'s propaganda are rhetoric of class conflict and mention of the desire

to expand state control of the economy in an attempt to build a socialist society. As we noted at the end of Chapter 3 there are many similarities between the policies of the Liberal Party and the S.N.P. The fundamental division between the Liberal Party and the S.N.P. is that the former is committed to the withering away of 'sovereign' states in Europe and to the working for the evolution of the E.E.C. into a federated United States of Europe. To the S.N.P. this aim is an anathema as they seek to preserve the 'sovereign' independence of action of Scotland. The differences highlighted in this paragraph between the S.N.P. and the other political parties are fundamental enough to indicate that the S.N.P. is not a Conservative, Labour or Liberal Party in Scottish dress.

It is worth pointing out that there is a strong Scottish socialist tradition; John Maclean and the Red Clydesiders having been its most notable manifestation. This has led some groups and people on the 'fringe' Left in Scotland to see the S.N.P. as a national liberation force, a force with the potential of freeing Scotland from the tentacles of foreign capitalist imperialism and setting it on the road to a true socialist society.[2] The S.N.P., it must be emphasised, does not see itself in this light.

At the end of the last Chapter we said that the S.N.P. might be deflected from the 'radical' direction in which some of its members saw it travelling in. It is the author's opinion that while the S.N.P. contains many sincere radicals, there also exists a strong core of people who might be labelled Kailyard conservatives. Such people rarely articulate their views mainly because they do not

form a coherent system but are formed as a reaction to events. They live primarily in rural Scotland and would be loath to see too great a social upheaval. Moreover, they are mainly concerned with fostering the interests of their locality and have little interest in wider issues. Donald Stewart M.P., Leader of the S.N.P. Parliamentary Group is the supreme representative of this group. In 1975, for instance, he opposed a 'liberal' reform of the Scottish Divorce Law in Parliament. Such people could be expected to oppose much reforming legislation in a Scottish Parliament.

After independence most of the reforms which the S.N.P. calls for are likely to be implemented - even the Land Reform which could substantially reduce the number and size of the grouse moors and deer forests.[3] However, the S.N.P. is perhaps naive with regard to the consequences of many of its reforms. It believes that the introduction of industrial democracy will produce a harmonious relatively strike-free industrial climate - it has not considered that class divisions are perhaps too deeply ingrained in Scotland for this to happen. Likewise, on the one hand it calls for the decentralisation of power within Scotland, whilst on the other hand, it sees an active interventionist role for central government. There is no evidence to suggest that it has considered the possible conflict of interest this might produce.

The S.N.P. has an unresolved division of opinion over an independent Scotland's relationship with the E.E.C. Some members like George Reid M.P. and Professor Neil MacCormick envisage

Scotland retaining formal links with the Community, whilst others such as Donald Stewart M.P., are committed to complete withdrawal from the E.E.C. structure.[4] A fight between these factions could have detrimental consequences after independence.

If the oil revenues which accrue to the Treasury of an independent Scotland are not vast, the danger exists that they might be whittled away in excessive social spending, rather than invested purposely for the future. It is doubtful if an S.N.P. Government, immediately following independence, would have the courage to face a period of austerity, even if mild compared with that which might exist south of the border.

However, it is not our task to predict various scenarios for the future. It must be said, though, that an independent Scotland is unlikely, in its essential features, to be a mirror image of the British system of government to which we have been used in recent decades. If people in Scotland had been satisfied with that governmental system the S.N.P. would not have achieved such electoral successes as it has. This being so, the S.N.P. is determined not to repeat the faults made by U.K. Governments in the past, on a Scottish scale - we have seen that this desire is reflected in its policies. Furthermore, a party's ideology is inevitably influenced by the structure, the values and the problems of the society in which it operates.[5] An independent Scotland would be different from the U.K. of the past not just because it would have different legal, Church and educational traditions, but because it would face different problems and be confronted with different values and established processes. The problems of urban-decay in Central-West Scotland would assume far greater importance for a

government in a country of 5 million people than in a country of 56 million people. The development of the Highlands would assume greater priority in a country where the Highlands made up 47 per cent of its area, than in a country where it made up only 16 per cent of the area. The Roman Catholic Church in a country where 16 per cent of the population is Catholic, would be a far more important pressure group than in a country where 8 per cent of the population is Catholic. The traditional channels of influence built up over the centuries by the civil servants in Whitehall and by the City of London and which have affected U.K. Governments' decision making would, of course, not exist in an independent Scotland; new lines of communication would have to be laid. In foreign affairs, an independent Scotland is unlikely to carry a voice as powerful as that of the U.K. in the past but, on the other hand, it would probably lack the stigma associated with a former imperial power. These are just some of the most obvious features which would differentiate an independent Scotland from the U.K. of the past.

The opportunities which an independent Scotland would offer are exciting and would present the first governments of that state with the chance to build new roads in fresh directions. The S.N.P. is opposed and feared by the main pillars of the present 'establishment', which have a 'vested' interest in the U.K. as presently constituted - Big Business, T.U.C., the financial institutions and the two main political parties - for this very reason. We have seen, though, that while the S.N.P. is committed to making many changes - some superficial e.g. the reform of

the taxation system and of the Local Government structure, and the regularization of pay bargaining in a Tripartite Council, some significant, e.g. the Land Policy, and the call for a written Constitution with a Bill of Rights - in Scottish government and society, it is not committed to making fundamental alterations.[6] It does not propose to leave N.A.T.O. and pursue a policy of neutrality, it is not committed to nationalising the assets of foreign corporations operating in the North Sea oil industry, it does not seek to smash the power of the Trade Unions, it has no unequivocal commitment to the preservation of the environment in that it is not totally anti-nuclear and it does not seek to radically limit industrial growth, and it is not committed to an extreme Scottishization of the curriculum in the schools.

The threats posed by the S.N.P. to the existing order and established interests comes not so much from its ideology as from the ramifications which may occur in the event of the S.N.P. succeeding in its aim of winning independence for Scotland. The S.N.P. holds many coherent and systematic views on Scotland and the shape of its future. It has not, however, evolved a comprehensive S.N.P. philosophy. Thus, at the present time, the S.N.P.'s ideology is shallow rather than fallow. Independence and the power and responsibility which it would bring may stimulate the S.N.P. into more profound thinking. Of course, if independence resulted in the S.N.P. becoming the party of government, then it may confine its attention to administrative detail and pragmatic problems arising from the exercise of executive power.

Philosophical analysis may not be the stuff that wins elections, but it can be the seed-bed of new initiatives in government and

politics. If the S.N.P. wishes sincerely to change fundamentally not just the seat and geographical boundaries of government, but also the political processes, then it will require to devote a great deal more attention to ideology.

NOTES

1. Hanham, H.J., op.cit., p.180.

2. See, for instance, Tait, Bob, 'The Left, the S.N.P. and Oil'. In Brown, Gordon (ed.), The Red Paper on Scotland, E.U.S.P.B., 1975.

3. Douglas Henderson M.P. is on record as saying that if Scottish nationalism means anything at all, it means the end of grouse moors. See Edwards, O.D. 'Socialism or Nationalism' in Kennedy, Gavin (ed.) op.cit., p.102.

4. See MacCormick, Neil, 'Independence and Federalism after the Referendum'. Fletcher Paper No. 4, Andrew Fletcher Society, 1976, and reports of speeches by George Reid M.P. and Donald Stewart M.P. in the debate on Europe at the 1977 Annual National Conference, in The Scotsman, 28 May 1977.

5. This, of course, does not mean that all parties are influenced in the same way and to the same extent. Different parties, according to their political persuasions will be more amenable to some pressures more than others. A party advocating a non-interventionist role for the Government in the economy will be less inclined to rescue 'lame-duck' industries than will a party which favours state intervention in the economy. However, as the Conservative Party discovered in 1972 with Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, pressures may be such as to force them to take a course of action they would not normally favour. An important point to note, though, is that in 1970 the Conservative Party entered government committed to a policy of non-intervention in the economy, but left government in 1974 firmly committed to an interventionist role.
One other example is worth mentioning, to illustrate the point that a party's ideology is influenced by the circumstances of the environment in which it functions. Sweden's history and its geographical position permits all its political parties to support a policy of neutrality.

6. It is a generally held assumption amongst S.N.P. members that Scotland will gain its independence from the rest of the U.K. without a severe struggle. A few members think that this assumption is naive. However, some members believe that it would be no bad thing if Scotland had to struggle hard in order to win independence. In so doing it might force the S.N.P. to rethink and reassess its attitudes to government and politics, and as a consequence devise ones which are significantly different from those which prevail in Britain at present, and which are, in part, responsible for the U.K.'s troubles. In sum, they would seek alternative practices rather than modifications on existing ones. (See Slesser, Malcolm, 'Mr MacMutt M.P. and the Feedback System', Question No. 23, 4 March 1977.) The danger, of course, is that the struggle for independence could become not only hard but bitter, and that this would breed bigoted and less than constructive attitudes, as was the case when the Republic of Ireland won its independence.

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