The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere in Scotland: Print Culture, Class Conflict, and Opinion Formation, c.1850-1920s

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Abstract

As seen from the perspective of antagonistic Scottish print publics, how did the commercialisation of the press after the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' change the dynamics of class conflict, critical democratic deliberation, and opinion formation? The thesis reconsiders Habermas's narrative of public sphere transformation (examined in Chapter 1) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through a series of case studies of periodicals printed in Glasgow, including the daily *Glasgow Advertiser* (1783-), Thomas Johnston's ILP-aligned weekly *Forward* (1906-1959), and the Marxian monthly the *Socialist* (1902-1924). Through readings of the clashing post-bourgeois commercial and proletarian (earlier plebeian) print public spheres, the thesis contributes to comparative historical studies of distinct cultural formations, to Habermasian theory and public sphere studies, and to the history of education in Scotland. Chapter 2 analyses the *Glasgow Herald* (as the *Advertiser* became called) and its publishing company George Outram & Co., arguing that the proprietors resolved the dilemma of maintaining an organic community of readers for the mother-publication while pursuing the financial opportunities of an expanded reading public by segmenting the offering with the evening paper *Glasgow Evening Times*. I analyse the cultural fragmentation effects of commercial print culture, and the *Glasgow Herald*'s defensive strategies of containment via public opinion management, policing, and directed educational efforts by focussing on its mediation of the 1919 Battle of George Square and debates on post-war reconstruction. Chapter 3 analyses the *Socialist* which projected a socialist public sphere model, but actually constituted an intervention-driven proletarian counterpublic directed at the ideological and educational needs of the labour movement. I highlight continuities with plebeian radicalism in its educational praxis, and suggest that this formation became entangled in an ambiguous cultural politics which made it prone to isolation from wider working-class culture and legitimising constitutional discourses. Chapter 4 analyses the *Forward*'s distinctive cultural practices through advertisements, public notices, discussion- and legal-advice columns, showing a cross-class public approximating a deliberative Kantian public sphere model fusing morality with politics and political representation with enlightenment. Through debates on adult education in *Forward*, and following Raymond Williams, I argue that the labour movement contributed to cultural democratisation in Britain through hegemonic contestation. In the Conclusion, I propose further research into the emergence of critical populism.

Contents

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Abbreviations

CPGB – Communist Party of Great Britain

CWC – Clyde Workers' Committee

DORA – Defence of the Realm Act

ILP – Independent Labour Party

IWW – Industrial Workers of the World

SDF – Social Democratic Federation

SDUK – Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

SEL – Scottish Economic League

SLP – Socialist Labour Party

STUC – Scottish Trades' Union Congress

WEA – Workers' Educational Association

Introduction: ‘Red Clydeside’, Print Culture, and Class Conflict

This thesis contributes to the history of print culture, class consciousness, and political organisation in Scotland during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It does so by reconceptualising the industrial and political conflicts associated with ‘Red Clydeside’ through the lens of conflicting bourgeois and proletarian public spheres mediated by distinctive newspapers and periodicals. ‘Red Clydeside’ marks both a hotly contested memory or symbolic imaginary, as well as a richly researched historical period (c. 1910-1920) characterised by heightened class confrontation.[1] Key events of this period include the 1915 Rent Strikes and the 1919 Battle of George Square, both involving claims on social rights in addition to civil and political rights.[2] Despite extensive research on the

[1] Terry Brotherstone traces the ‘historiographical origins’ of the idea of Red Clydeside to contemporary commentators seeking to analyse the evolving situation of industrial conflict along the banks of the Clyde, and the earliest mention of the ‘Red Clyde’ he unearths is made by William Bolitho in 1924, see Terry Brotherstone, ‘Does Red Clydeside Really Matter Anymore?’, in *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-50: Essays in Honour of Harry McShane, 1891-1988,* ed. by Robert Duncan and Arthur McIvor (John Donald, 1992), pp. 52-80 (pp. 68-71). Successive waves of both popular writing and scholarship have struggled over interpretations of the period, events, and personalities involved. In the first wave of predominantly autobiographical accounts written by participants in the events, a heroic narrative of a failed revolution culminating at the Battle of George Square in 1919 was told, the primary example being William Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde: An Autobiography*, 4th edn (Lawrence and Wishart, 1978). A new left generation of scholarly contributions informed by the social history of E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm brought the events under greater empirical and critical scrutiny, while often retaining strong normative sympathies with the working-class actors involved, see James Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards’ Movement* (Allen and Unwin, 1973); Raymond Challinor, *The Origins of British Bolshevism* (Croom Helm, 1977); James Douglas Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (Croom Helm, 1979). A revisionist wave of research followed which sought to debunk what was regarded as an overly heroic and mythical account of Red Clydeside (See Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (John Donald, 1983); Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1900-2015*, 4th edn (Edinburgh University Press, 2016). The revisionists were critiqued in turn, but mostly on conceptual grounds, as argued in an excellent review by Terry Brotherstone, who called for greater attention to the international context in evaluating the events on Clydeside, see Brotherstone, ‘Does Red Clydeside Really Matter Anymore?’. The networking role of the local ILP in popular politics on Clydeside received some much overdue attention by the contributors to Alan MacKinlay and R. J. Morris, *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: From Foundation to Disintegration* (Manchester University Press, 1991). A further wave of research has sought to reconstruct the diversity of working-class experience on Clydeside in these years, including interrogation of: the racial politics on Clydeside with a focus on the Race Riots of 1919, Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Liverpool University Press, 2009); the difficult relationship between women munitions workers and the Clyde Workers Committee during the First World War, Gary Girod, ‘The Women Who Make the Guns: The Munitionettes in Glasgow and Paris and Their Lack of Interaction with the Far-Left Agitators’, *Labor History*, 61.2 (2020), pp. 203-12; and the central role played by women in what was the most successful working-class campaign of the period, the 1915 Rent Strikes, see the contributions to Neil Gray, *Rent and Its Discontents: A Century of Housing Struggle* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). The elevation of the 1915 Rent Strikes within this history has arguably also occurred in local popular memory, as marked by the erection of the Mary Barbour sculpture in Govan in 2018. At a Scottish national level, a wave of popular historical writing appeared in the wake of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, and a review of these recent contributions as well as the classical debates on Red Clydeside can be found in Seán Damer, ‘And If You Know the History’, *Scottish Affairs,* 28.1 (2019), pp. 112-15. The importance of ‘Red Clydeside’ as a symbolic imaginary in local popular memory is highlighted and explored in Ewan Gibbs, ‘Historical Tradition and Community Mobilisation: Narratives of Red Clydeside in Memories of the Anti-Poll Tax Movement in Scotland, 1988-1990’, *Labor History,* 57.4 (2016), pp. 439-62.

[2] For the Rent Strikes, see Gray. For the rise of the CWC, see Hinton.

period and place, little attention has been paid to the role of the press and clashing print cultures; whether in its dominant commercial form or its oppositional socialist form.[3] The case studies of this thesis contribute to filling that gap by reconstructing clashing commercial and proletarian public sphere formations as mediated by three different periodicals printed in Glasgow and mediating distinct cultural and ideological formations: George Outram & Co.'s *Glasgow Herald* (1783-present), a daily commercial newspaper mediating a mainly upper-middle-class readership, and dubbed the 'embodiment of Scottish commerce' in print by James Thompson;[4] the *Socialist* (1902-1924), the monthly periodical of the Marxist Socialist Labour Party which mediated a distinctly working-class readership and carried the slogan 'Socialism is the only hope of the workers. All else is illusion' under the masthead;[5] and Tom Johnston's Independent Labour Party-aligned weekly paper, *Forward* (1906-1959), animated by a combination of confrontational and deliberative intent, as signalled by an early leading article: 'Progressive thought is wide in its sweep and the Truth arises from the clash of opinions'.[6] While the focus lies on the period of heightened class conflict from the Great Unrest of the pre-war years to the early 1920s, I begin the analysis of the *Glasgow Herald* much earlier, in the 1850s. The reason for this extended view, from the short period of 'Red Clydeside' to the longer period stretching back into the mid-nineteenth century, is that the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' (advertising duty, duty on paper, and stamp duty for transmission) coupled with the increasing uptake of steam printing, fundamentally changed the cultural and material conditions of public opinion formation via the press, and heralded a dramatic expansion in newspaper production.[7] I consider the peculiar dynamics of this new commercial newspaper system further below, but for now I wish to locate the papers studied in this thesis within the wider press ecosystem. The *Glasgow Herald*, the *Socialist*, and *Forward* represent a limited but strategic sample of papers existing within a vast ecosystem of newspaper production in Glasgow, with linkages through production and

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[3] While historians have used the papers studied here extensively, the papers have seldom been subject to close readings as elements in a print culture, or as public sphere media. Griffin's doctoral thesis is an exception which considers the role of the CWC's publications in constructing international solidarities, see Paul Griffin, 'The Spatial Politics of Red Clydeside: Historical Labour Geographies and Radical Connections' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2015). I examine relevant research for each publication in their respective chapters, so it suffices to say here that no comparative study between the different publications has been attempted previously.

[4] James Thompson, 'Case Study 14: The *Glasgow Herald*', in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press: Expansion and Evolution*, ed. by David Finkelstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 545-548 (p. 548).

[5] 'Socialist Labour Party. – MANIFESTO TO THE WORKING CLASS', *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 5.

[6] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.

[7] James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, 8th edn (Routledge, 2018).

circulation across Scotland and the British Empire. In this period Glasgow was not only an important site of industrial class conflict linked to steel industries such as shipbuilding and locomotive manufacture; it was also an important centre of newspaper production and circulation, as Hamish Fraser's recent study of Scottish newspapers illustrates:

> Glasgow did indeed seem to be a hive of openings, closures and changing editors and owners. Despite high levels of poverty in parts, there clearly existed a growing reading public. By 1900, with its three evening papers and its morning dailies, together with a proliferation of weeklies, Glasgow was already surpassing Edinburgh as a lively place of opportunities for aspiring journalists.[8]

Indeed, it was in Glasgow that the first daily newspaper outside of London appeared, with the arrival of the *North British Daily Mail* in 1847 as a competitor to the older *Glasgow Herald*.[9] The evening papers referred to above are George Outram & Co.'s *Glasgow Evening Times* (considered briefly in Chapter 2), the *Glasgow Evening News*, and the *Evening Citizen*, while the morning dailies include the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Daily Record*, and the *North British Daily Mail* (soon bought up by the Harmsworth syndicate in 1901, and merged with the *Daily Record* into the *Daily Record & Mail*). Along with the plethora of Glasgow weeklies, to which both *Forward* and the *Socialist* would be added in due course, the papers of the industrial districts in the process of administrative absorption by the city included such papers as the *Pollokshaws News*, the *Baillieston, Tollcross and Shettleston Express*, the *Glasgow & Springburn Express*, and the local weeklies of the Cossar empire, including the *Govan & Partick Press*, to name but a few.[10] As the latter titles suggest, such weekly papers were generally aimed at local readerships, often more working-class in composition, and their proliferation can be explained by the availability of cast-off resources from the larger commercial establishments; the expanding newspaper market with its frequent updates of printing machinery produced second-hand machinery which could be acquired at a much lower cost than the newest technology, as Helen S. Williams has usefully demonstrated.[11] This dynamic of introducing ever more advanced

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[8] Hamish Fraser, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Newspapers, 1850-1950* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), p. 64.
[9] Ibid. p. 27.
[10] See Chapter 11 in Fraser. For the Cossar papers and the Govan Press, see case study in Helen S. Williams, 'Production', in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press: Expansion and Evolution 1800-1900*, ed. by David Finkelstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 65-85.
[11] Thus, Williams notes how provincial weeklies and local printers often relied on older designs: 'The smaller businesses did not have the capital to invest in the large-scale machines developed for the metropolitan daily newspaper producers, or the premises capable of housing them and the additional staff. The machines they used were unlikely to be made by the pioneering engineers, who built machines for the largest businesses, nor were they always new. Multiple moves of machinery down a chain of firms was common'. She provides the example of the *Liverpool Daily Post*'s 1860 rotary press, which was replaced in 1884 and moved to Wigan where it was used in printing the *Wigan Observer* for the next eighty years. See Williams, 'Production', p. 75.

printing machinery at the top end of the system (the *Glasgow Herald* frequently updated its printing machinery in attempts to meet or even outpace the competition, as I show in Chapter 2) also meant that older, slower machinery became available on a more financially accessible second-hand market. It was this second-hand market that socialist printers had to rely on (as seen through the *Socialist* which was printed using a collectively acquired press of older design, but also through *Forward* which was printed on inherited machinery used for niche titles and presumably no longer at the cutting edge of print technology, but nonetheless capable of printing a weekly sheet), and both *Forward* and the *Socialist* offer examples of the politically alternative second life of outmoded printing machinery characteristic of the post-repeal press environment.

These two publications are important examples taken from a distinctive sub-category within the overall press ecosystem; the range of socialist and autonomous working-class papers emerging in Britain between 1890 and 1910, a period described by Deian Hopkin as 'a climacteric in the history of socialist journalism' in a pioneering study of the socialist press in Britain.[12] Germany and the United States with their large circulation titles like *Vorwärts* and *Appeal to Reason* provided much inspiration for British socialist editors and publishers (detectable in the Glasgow *Forward*'s title too), and although the socialist press developed later in Britain and never matched the circulation figures of the German and American titles, the British titles nonetheless present what Hopkin describes as 'a rich and varied mosaic' consisting of almost 800 papers issued in the interest of labour, of which about half were explicitly socialist.[13] While some successful titles were produced by an independent charismatic individual or group unconnected with any political party (like Robert Blatchford and his very successful *Clarion*), the majority of socialist titles were formally attached to political parties or were issued as explicit party organs like the *Socialist*, while others were published 'by *ad hoc* groups representing several socialist and trade union branches in a particular town or village', much like the Glasgow *Forward* with its politically diverse group of financiers.[14] The largest group of party organs were the local and national ILP papers, and Hopkin records 68 such titles emerging between 1893 and 1910, ranging 'from the quarterly *Tong Pioneer* to the weekly *Keighley Labour News*, and while almost half expired after a few issues, seventeen survived for over two years, including several which were published

[12] Deian Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press in Britain, 1890-1910', in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. by D. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 294-306, p. 294.
[13] Ibid. p. 294-5.
[14] Ibid. p. 297.

continuously for over five years each'.[15] In contrast to the ILP, 'the Social Democratic Federation managed to produce only nine local papers in this period – far fewer than the anarchist movement, for example, which published 25 papers in these two decades'.[16] Hopkin remarks that 'many socialists were politically ubiquitous and this tended to blur the institutional identities of their papers', and as part of a collaborative print culture he points to the practice of borrowing news and other editorial contents across socialist publications.[17] Such co-operative practices signal the distinctive and not merely commercial imperative animating socialist print culture in this period, and one aim of this thesis is to reconstruct the socialist press imperative and its relation to the dominant commercial culture of newsprint in Scotland, by examining the *Socialist* and *Forward* as two significant examples marked by their resilience and longevity among the titles of this vast network of socialist papers in Britian.

As David Finkelstein argues, research on press history 'has wider intellectual implications than is sometimes realised': 'Media and press history,' he writes, 'are interdisciplinary areas of enquiry, encompassing research into literacy and reading practices, relations among publisher-proprietors, editors, contributors and readers, and analysis of new technology and evolving communication networks'.[18] In the studies that follow in this thesis, I seek to combine close analytical attention to cultural products with awareness of the wider, structural forces pushing and pulling writers at different levels of the print public sphere. I hope to retain a focus on cultural production with close reading of the finished product, by considering conditions of production, finance, distribution, and reading, alongside the communicative content (opinions, analyses, ideologies) of the finished, printed, product. Imaginative writing is often purposely designed to deny or mask its own process of production for aesthetic effect, but the stylistic strategies of much journalism in the period studied also exhibit a disavowal of material conditions and situatedness. The practice of editorial anonymity and the nebulous editorial 'we', but also the over-familiar address of some new journalists, all exhibit a distancing from the conditions of newspaper and public opinion production. The analysis of the three periodicals in this thesis brings into view the publishing ventures and its financial underpinnings, the printing and distribution, as well as the readers as projected publics. In

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[15] Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press', pp. 297-8. The Glasgow *Forward* is not included in the list of ILP papers compiled in Deian Hopkin, 'Local Newspapers of the Independent Labour Party, 1893-1906', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 28.4 (1974), pp. 28-37.
[16] Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press', p. 298.
[17] Ibid. pp. 298-9.
[18] David Finkelstein, 'Introduction', in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press: Expansion and Evolution*, ed. by David Finkelstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 1-32 (p. 4).

this way, it seeks to reconstruct a public sphere, comprised of both distinct and contending publics, in transformation. The questions it seeks to answer through the three case studies are: how did the commercialisation of the press after the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' change the dynamics of class conflict, critical democratic deliberation, and opinion formation? How did a newspaper with roots in the classical bourgeois public sphere respond to the commercially expanded market of readers (as newspaper buyers) and to oppositional claims for social rights? And what print cultures were developed by those writing for a working-class audience with oppositional and enlightening intent?

In posing such questions, the research is informed by the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas, whose pioneering study *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) sought to reconstruct a normative ideal of critical-rational public discourse emerging through the symbiotic relationship between Enlightenment-era periodicals and literature and its reception and production within the cultural milieu of coffeehouses and literary salons.[19] Habermas conceives the bourgeois public sphere as the sphere of private people joining together into a public with a view to engage the authorities 'in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour'; 'The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without precedent: people's public use of their reason'.[20] On this public sphere model, publicity 'was intended to change domination as such': 'The claim to power represented in rational-critical public debate […] would entail […] more than just an exchange of the basis of legitimation while domination was maintained in principle'.[21] Part of the normative ideal of the public sphere as conceived by Habermas via Kant was its enlightening function. Thus, publicity was not only representation before and against public authority, and the public sphere was also supposed to be 'the method of enlightenment'.[22] I return to Habermas's theory of the public sphere in more detail in Chapter 1, but for now it suffices to say that Habermas sketched a narrative of decline in the quality of public discourse over the course of the late nineteenth into the mid-twentieth century, as the press was increasingly subjected to commercialisation, a process that also made them 'manipulable'.[23] Thus, pointing to 'the history of the big daily papers in the second half of the nineteenth century', Habermas writes:

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[19] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1989).
[20] Ibid. p. 27.
[21] Ibid. p. 28.
[22] Ibid. p. 104.
[23] Ibid. p. 185.

> Ever since the marketing of the editorial section became interdependent with that of the advertising section, the press (until then an institution of private people insofar as they constituted a public) became an institution of certain participants in the public sphere in their capacity as private individuals; that is, it became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere.[24]

He registered signs of what he described as 'refeudalization', or the return, in a new context, of aspects of feudal modes of representation implying decision before the public without invitation to involvement in decision-making through critical-rational debate or deliberation.[25]

The *Glasgow Herald* transitioned from its roots in Scottish Enlightenment-era Glasgow and the city's mercantile coffeehouse milieu, to a large commercial newspaper-enterprise with a diversified print-portfolio including the *Glasgow Evening Times* within an early twentieth century Glasgow claiming the title of Second City of Empire. There, it mediated what might be thought of as a Scottish post-bourgeois print culture within a wider commercially segmented and fiercely competitive newspaper market. Meanwhile, one might mourn the passing of the soap-box orator, the heckler, and the hawker of political pamphlets in urban public spaces appearing in Malcolm Petrie's recent study of popular political culture in interwar Scotland as the figures of a more organic political community linked to a radical tradition, in sharp contrast to the private, atomised, and anomic form of capitalist mass democracy that followed.[26] A concern of the present thesis, however, is to recover a different, but related, aspect of the older radical political culture, namely its deliberative, critical-rational capacity to disturb and interrogate the common goal-orientations of society in a modality distinct from the classical bourgeois public sphere. Although both the *Socialist* and *Forward* were launched in the early twentieth century, I seek to trace the transmutations of older radical plebeian print culture and political expression into recognisably modern proletarian iterations of revolutionary and reformist socialism. Through such historical comparison, made on the basis of close engagements with rhetorical, stylistic, and formal aspects of the publications, I seek to show two interlinked and contending public sphere traditions.

The amalgamation of enlightenment and political representation in a distinctly working-class mode of publicity can be seen in what perhaps remains the most well-known statement in print by a Scottish socialist and working-class intellectual of 'Red Clydeside', John Maclean's *Speech from the Dock* (1918). The pamphlet provides a useful entry point

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[24] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 185.
[25] Ibid. p. 201.
[26] Malcolm Petrie, *Popular Politics and Political Culture: Urban Scotland, 1918-1939* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 186-87.

to some of the study's key themes and terms of analysis. In May 1918, Maclean stood accused of sedition and appeared in Edinburgh High Court to conduct his own defence. Aside from the judge and jury, a large audience comprised of journalists and sympathetic supporters (including miners and engineers) of Maclean was present when he sought to make a rhetorical role-reversal against the backdrop of the war: '*I am not here, then, as the accused; I am here as the accuser, of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot*'.[27] The class conflict Maclean sought to identify and encourage was not only in terms of opposing economic interests, but of clashing cultures, that is, systems of normative valorisation and language: 'My language is regarded as extravagant language […]', he asserted, a stylistic he sought to justify by contrasting his seditious speech to the 'robbery that goes on in all civilized countries'.[28] Furthermore, he added, '[t]here are two classes of morality […] What is moral for the one class is absolutely immoral for the other, and vice versa'.[29] While this understanding of class conflict was by no means universal within the proletarian public sphere, Maclean's statements highlight the cultural dimension of class conflict, which is a focus of this study into clashing of modes of representation, publicity, and rational-critical discourse in print. In the remainder of this introduction, I present some definitions useful for cultural historical comparison, discuss some different scholarly interpretations of working-class culture in the 1880-1920 period while noting the geographical unevenness of class conflict in Britain, before turning to a review of research on the commercial and oppositional press in Britain.

Historical Comparison and Sites of Working-Class Culture, 1880-1920

In tracing continuities between radical traditions, I have frequent recourse to the vocabulary of cultural analysis developed by Raymond Williams: dominant, residual, emergent, oppositional, and alternative. Williams's sense of the dominant owes much to Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which, in Williams's elucidation, is an active and practiced cultural process involving both incorporation and resistance: '[Hegemony] has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own'.[30] Furthermore, 'the

[27] John Maclean, *The Speech from the Dock*, ed. by Ewan Gibbs and Rory Scothorne (Scottish Labour History Society, n.d. [original pamphlet 1918]), p. 7.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid. p. 16.
[30] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 112. On the dynamic of 'containment' and 'resistance', see also Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing "the Popular"', in *Essential Essays: Foundations of Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley (Duke University Press, 2019), pp. 347-61 (p. 348).

dominant culture, so to say, at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture'.[31] The residual is often an important feature of counter-cultures, and Williams describes it as a cultural element that 'has been actively formed in the past, but […] is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present'.[32] The residual is thus distinct from the archaic which is recognised as belonging fully to the past. Residual meanings and cultural practices are often a source of opposition because 'they represent areas of human experience, aspiration, and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even cannot recognise'.[33] Maclean's form of opposition as considered above, of seeking a confrontation with the state through the courts, was a highly 'residual' cultural practice in this sense. The 'emergent', meanwhile, denotes those new meanings and values that are always in the process of creation, but especially those that are either alternative or oppositional rather than a merely novel iteration of the dominant.[34] 'Emergent in the strict sense', to Williams, carries a normative valence and he takes the radical press in nineteenth-century England as an example of how an emergent culture was effectively incorporated.[35] Certain institutions are central when considering the problem of incorporation or integration that Williams's cultural analysis is especially concerned with, and these include, besides the churches, the education system and the 'major communications systems' which 'materialize selected news and opinion, and a wide range of selected perceptions and attitudes'.[36] With a few notable exceptions, there has been something of lack of articulation between Frankfurt School Critical Theory and British Cultural Studies, despite many shared theoretical concerns and normative commitments between the two formations.[37] This study follows Alex Benchimol's example and contributes, in a modest way, to that articulation by applying Williams's terms in conjunction with Habermas's theories in a key historical period of public sphere transformation.[38]

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[31] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 114.
[32] Ibid. p. 122.
[33] Ibid. pp. 123-24.
[34] Ibid. p. 123.
[35] Ibid. p. 124.
[36] Ibid. p. 118.
[37] For discussions of the intellectual-historical relationship between the traditions, see Douglas Kellner, 'Critical Theory and Cultural Studies: The Lost Articulation', in *Cultural Methodologies*, ed. by Jim McGuigan (SAGE, 1997), pp. 12-41; Tom Steele, 'Critical Theory and British Cultural Studies', *Counterpoints,* 168 (2003), pp. 222-37. Jim McGuigan synthesises the traditions in his analyses of contemporary culture and cultural policy, see for example Jim McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (Routledge, 1996).
[38] In a study of rival public sphere formations Benchimol synthesises British Cultural Studies with the work of Habermas, see especially Chapter 1 in Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the*

Notably for my purposes, research on the radical public sphere has advanced the notion that the radicalism of the period c. 1790-1832, which covered the first wave of industrialisation and struggle against it, is better conceived of as 'plebeian' rather than working-class or proletarian in the strict Marxian sense as defined by the relationship to the means of production.[39] Thus, Kevin Gilmartin has situated his work on radical print culture in the same period covered by Thompson within the field of 'plebeian studies'.[40] Gilmartin's terminological shift from 'working-class' to 'plebeian' or 'popular' is partly a strategic elision of the difficult question of social class which enables him to focus on the cultural expressions of radicalism.[41] With a similar humble pragmatism, and in keeping with the Latin terminology, I use the term 'proletarian' to denote a public sphere formation exhibiting important continuities but also differences in ideology and cultural expression vis-à-vis the plebeian formation. It is intended as a working distinction for cultural analysis which is attentive to (but not primarily focussed on) social analysis.[42] The distinction between 'plebeian' and 'proletarian' publics highlights the shift in political and ideological emphasis, from contesting constitutionally inscribed political exclusion, to challenging economic exploitation and promoting social reform in a constitutional context of near-universal franchise. Gareth Stedman Jones's argument concerning the demise of Chartism helps clarify the rationale for this shift. He argues that the derivation of working-class hardship from political and legal oppression within Chartist ideology made the movement vulnerable, because modest social reforms could be delivered without alteration to the

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Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere (Ashgate, 2010).

[39] Habermas also mentions a 'plebeian' variant of the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. xviii.

[40] The term is borrowed from Anne Janowitz, see Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 2.

[41] Ibid. p. 8.

[42] This is not to claim that the socio-economic distinction between plebeian and proletarian is easily drawn with precision in concrete historical circumstances, but rather that 'plebeian' and 'proletarian' retains an analytically important attachment to the economic situation of the interlocutors forming a public. Socially, it is possible to point to the relative autonomy of artisans owning their own tools and perhaps a plot of land sufficient for some subsistence farming, in contrast to the urban industrial proletarian's more acute dependency on the wage for social reproduction (and subjection to distinctive repressive practices such as blacklisting and victimisation). Thus, 'real' and 'formal' subsumption of labour under capital, as posited by Marx in an intended seventh part of *Capital Vol. 1*, offer conceptual tools for drawing the distinction, see Karl Marx, *Capital Vol.1*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (Penguin, 1976), pp. 1019-38. However, as Richard Johnson suggests, these categories 'may not be adequately complex, as they stand, to describe the early nineteenth-century transitions', see Richard Johnson, '"Really Useful Knowledge": Radical Education and Working-Class Culture, 1790-1848', in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. by John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson (Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 75-102 (p. 267, n. 127). Furthermore, as Craig Calhoun notes in relation to Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's early rejoinder to Habermas which posited a proletarian public sphere: 'The terminological distinction of plebeian versus proletarian recognizes that those without property and political privilege in the eighteenth century were not necessarily constituted as a capitalist working class', see Craig Calhoun, 'The Public Sphere in the Field of Power', *Social Science History*, 34.3 (2010), pp. 301-35 (p. 330, n. 7). See also Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Verso, 2016).

franchise, in a context where '[e]conomics and politics were increasingly sundered and the embryonic features of mid-Victorian liberalism began to emerge'.[43] I return to Stedman Jones's argument in Chapter 3, where I use it to explain the epiphany that some readers within the proletarian public sphere experienced in their encounter with Marx's theory of exploitation.

Class conflict in the 1880-1920 period in Britain is characterised by geographical unevenness.[44] Urban Scotland marks one of the geographical hotspots where a working-class culture aligning with Tom Steele's definition can be found. Steele defines the culture of working people as made up of not just discrete traditions and rituals, but as comprising a 'complex of purposive activities designed to improve their individual and collective lot in the face of a clearly understood class oppression'.[45] Within this complex of purposive activities, educational praxis is directed not merely to 'useful knowledge', or utilitarian knowledge designed to make the knower useful to the political and economic systems, but to what Richard Johnson calls 'really useful knowledge' – forms of liberatory knowledge that would be useful to the knowers themselves.[46] The primary location of such knowledge within the pre-repeal radical plebeian culture studied by Johnson was the radical press, an attitude that was retained, I argue in Chapter 3 and 4, also in the post-repeal working-class culture of the 1880-1920 period in Scotland, but where it confronted a far more powerful obstacle in the form of the commercial press and an emergent consumer culture. Although the latter is less palpable in places like Glasgow as compared to London, it is worthwhile considering an alternative understanding of working-class culture in the period. In an important revision of the model of social history pioneered by E.P. Thompson's seminal work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), Stedman Jones posits a 'remaking' of the working-class in Britain in the 1870-1914 period with long-lasting reverberations.[47] Through a study of working-class culture in London, he highlights its defensive conservatism, neither politically combative (like the radical plebeians of Thompson's

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[43] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 178.
[44] For an illuminating discussion of the regional unevenness of industrial relations within Britain, see John Foster, 'Strike Action and Working-Class Politics on Clydeside 1914–1919', *International Review of Social History*, 35.1 (1990), pp. 33-70 (pp. 59-70).
[45] Tom Steele, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies: Adult Education, Cultural Politics and the 'English' Question* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1997), p. 33.
[46] Richard Johnson, '"Really Useful Knowledge": Radical Education and Working-Class Culture, 1790-1848', in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. by John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson (Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 75-102.
[47] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin, 2013); Stedman Jones. Stedman Jones's account also contrasts with E. J. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour: Further Studies in the History of Labour* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984).

study, or the Chartists), nor responsive to middle-class attempts at moral reform.[48] He highlights the key cultural features of this remade working-class culture:

> The consciousness of the working class in the period from 1900 to 1950 – summed up more by music-hall, cinema, sport, pubs, working-men's clubs and distinctions of accent, residence and dress than by chapel, trade unionism or labour politics – was the consciousness of the separateness of a caste rather than of the hegemonic potentialities of a particular position in production.[49]

In an assessment of Labour politics in the twentieth century, he remarks that class-consciousness 'has been a conservative rather than a revolutionary phenomenon'.[50] While Stedman Jones's account is overly reliant on English sources, and perhaps too pessimistic even within that remit, it highlights cultural developments that many of the writers within the Scottish proletarian public sphere considered in this thesis sought to confront. In Scotland, the socialist critique of the kind of working-class culture described by Stedman Jones was often informed by the ethos of temperance, a phenomenon that is central to W.W. Knox's analysis of working-class culture in Scotland from the 1880s into the interwar period.[51] To Knox, temperance holds the key to understanding both some of the organised labour movement's strengths in this period and some of its important limitations. Regarding its strengths, Knox notes how 'temperance played an important role in shaping the outlook of Labour and providing practical experience in pressure group politics'.[52] Thus, within socialist circles composed of Protestant lower middle-class and working-class men with an attachment to the tradition of skill, craft, and respectability, temperance was both a practical introduction to political campaigning, and a social adhesive or means of identification. But such inward identification also indicates the limitations of this culture; it fostered an elitist attitude, and many socialists 'sought to distance themselves from the lumpen' and, thus, while simultaneously ignoring the poor in the early 1900s, 'ILP candidates went out of their way to appeal to the petty bourgeoisie'.[53] Furthermore, Knox argues, temperance was part of a wider Christian influence on the labour movement which encouraged the subordination of women inside the movement and narrowed the economic

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[48] See Stedman Jones, p. 215. The chapter 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class' is based on an influential study previously published in 1974.
[49] Ibid. pp. 246-47.
[50] Ibid. p. 246. Less bleak is the assessment given by Hobsbawm, pp. 176-213. For an appreciative critique of Stedman Jones, see James Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 30.
[51] W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
[52] Knox, p. 168.
[53] Ibid. p. 171.

demands to the family wage without substantial challenge to the traditional role of women in society, which contributed to fragmenting the movement:

> The failure to address the issue of gender within the labour movement or to mobilise women beyond the social, because of the influence of the ideology of domesticity, therefore, fragmented and fatally weakened the political challenge of Labour in this period.[54]

Additionally, the culture of respectability centred on temperance that Knox associates with the ILP above all, contributed to producing tensions with the Irish Catholic community. Knox cites temperance-inflected inflammatory remarks vis-à-vis Irish Catholics made by leading figures of the ILP, including Keir Hardie, J.B. Glasier, and R.B. Cunninghame-Graham, and concludes: 'Temperance convictions among socialists also impaired the building of political alliances with the Scoto-Irish community'.[55] The sidelining of women in leading, public, roles of the labour movement is reflected in both *Forward* and the *Socialist*, where signed women writers are scarce indeed. Furthermore, in cases of interaction between the proletarian public sphere, on the one hand, and the Suffragette counter-public or the Irish Catholic public sphere formation, on the other hand, suggests more separateness than overlap between these different publics, as seen in the *Socialist*'s limited role as printers of the *Suffragette* (3.1) and in the Marxist response to John Wheatley's articles in *Forward* which illustrate the flow of sectarian undercurrents in overtly deliberative and rational debate (4.2).

Knox interprets temperance as perhaps the most central aspect of the ILPs radical political tradition; in the pre-war years it is seen to bind the movement together (although it is always limiting and elitist), but as the 'relevance of temperance to socialism […] became unclear' in the 1930s, Labour also shifted 'from a morally eclectic, idealistic and almost millenarian organisation into a bland, professional, electoral machine, incapable of infusing its members with the kind of emotional zeal to confront the evils of capitalism possessed by the old ILP'.[56] There were upsides to this shift in Knox's estimation: 'The decline of moral sentiment within the political wing of the Scottish labour movement allowed the party to represent a larger constituency of working-class people than simply the respectable' and it could expand electorally into what one contemporary called the 'poorer districts'.[57] But, Knox comments, 'in widening the social bases of party support a

[54] Knox, p. 173.
[55] Ibid. p. 174-5.
[56] Ibid. p. 247.
[57] Ibid. p. 248.

price was paid in respect of membership and political vision'.[58] While temperance is an important feature of the Scottish socialist way of life in the 1880-1920 period which usefully highlights the many intra-working-class tensions and contradictions, it was not the sole cultural adhesive for the labour movement. This study supplements Knox's analysis of temperance and respectability by focussing on the socialist press; the material medium for fusing politics and morality, and for cultivating the social and cultural cohesion of the labour movement conceived as proletarian public sphere.

Previous Research on Commercial and Oppositional Print Cultures

Frustration with Press Barons like Harmsworth and their large popular-commercial dailies is a common theme among socialist journalists of the period, and one that Maclean also voiced during his 1918 sedition trial. Among the accusations making up the grounds for the sedition charge was Maclean's alleged encouragement before a working-class audience to seize the *Glasgow Herald*'s offices and to break up its printing plant, to which Maclean responded:

> […] when it came to the question of seizing the press, I suggested that when the *Daily Record* was seized, the plant should be broken up. I did not say that in connection with the *Glasgow Herald*. I said so in connection with the *Record*, not that it is a good thing to break up printing plant, but in order to draw attention to the Harmsworth family and to the Rothermeres and so on, and their vile press, which seems to be an index of the culture of Britain. I mention that particularly here, that I said the *Record* plant should be broken up, in order to emphasise the disgust of the organised workers with regard to that particular family of newspapers.[59]

The *Daily Record* has a fascinating origin story which vividly captures the difficulties of launching and maintaining a working-class paper under the late nineteenth century conditions of newspaper production and exchange. As Fraser recounts it, the *Glasgow Echo* was founded in 1892 by members of the Scottish Typographical Society who had suffered lock-out by their former employers at the *Evening Citizen*, who had decided on a non-union policy.[60] The *Glasgow Echo* evolved from the news-sheet initially published by the striking printers to communicate their position during the strike, the campaigning trade union paper did rather well for a time reaching a circulation of some 40,000. However, financial trouble and legal disputes forced the proprietors to sell the *Glasgow Echo* in 1895. As Fraser relates: 'The plant and offices of the company were bought over by the

[58] Knox, p. 248.
[59] John Maclean, *The Speech from the Dock*, p. 9.
[60] Fraser, p. 46.

Harmsworth syndicate' and thus out of the ruins of the trade union-backed *Glasgow Echo* emerged the Press Baron's *Daily Record*, the largest half-penny daily paper in the world until the launch of the *Daily Mail* by the same company a few months later.[61] In what follows, I review some of the key scholarly discussions on the commercial press.

Mark Hampton has recently reviewed the uptake of Habermasian themes in research on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century press in Britain with a focus on the 'New Journalism', and notes that although the public sphere is an important reference point it is 'surprising that the public sphere hasn't been even *more* central in the scholarship'.[62] Hampton's own work is closely aligned with Habermas's public sphere model, and traces what he calls the 'educational ideal' of the mid-nineteenth century press, and its receding dominance in favour of a more representative (in the sense of 'reflective') vision of the press:

> The educational ideal of the press derived from a belief in the desirability of popular self-government through rational public discussion. […] For the truth or common good to emerge from a politics by public discussion, multiple voices had to contend.[63]

Hampton relies mainly on elite accounts to reconstruct the educational vision of the press, and to trace a shift from the educational ideal to a 'representative ideal' in the late nineteenth century, when the press was understood primarily to reflect already formed opinions, rather than to educate opinion in some way.[64] Hampton thus offers much useful empirical substance to the shift traced by Habermas, at least in so far as that shift was understood from the perspective of elites. Like Habermas, he perhaps underestimates the extent to which the shift in ideals was also the outcome of shifting elite strategies of containment of rival public sphere formations, a dynamic that this thesis seeks to elucidate through the kind of localised case studies of the press that historians have recently called for.[65]

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[61] Fraser, pp. 46-7.
[62] Mark Hampton, 'Representing the Public Sphere: The New Journalism and Its Historians', in *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms,* ed. by Ann L. Ardis and Patrick Collier (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 15-29 (p. 16).
[63] Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 8, 57, 61.
[64] Ibid. p. 9.
[65] Thus, in his introduction to a recent edited volume on the British and Irish press in the nineteenth century, Finkelstein states that the volume is animated by a desire to 'move discussions beyond a general focus on metropolitan news and information circuits', see Finkelstein, p. 3. Similarly, Hamish Fraser's recent study of Scottish newspapers has sought to highlight the role of local newspapers (and weeklies in particular) in shaping attitudes and identities grounded in locality, see W. Hamish Fraser, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Newspapers, 1850-1950* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), pp. 18-19.

Closest to Habermas's account of the structural decline of the public sphere is the work of media sociologist Jean K. Chalaby.[66] Chalaby defines journalism as 'an autonomous field of discursive production which increasingly followed its own immanent economic laws' and argues that journalism in this sense emerged only in the post-repeal period, when it supplanted the 'publicity' that Chalaby associates with the radical unstamped press of the 1830s and understands as an amalgamation of ideological and practical-organisational imperatives.[67] Chalaby describes the commercial press as 'a magic mirror journalists hold to society, with the effect of keeping the popular classes, in particular, in a state of ecstasy and to deny them knowledge about the world and knowledge about their position in the world'.[68] This theoretically rigorous study aligns with other accounts of press commercialisation and its censorious effects on the working-class press. Thus, media sociologists James Curran and Jane Seaton have analysed the commercialisation of the press from the mid-nineteenth century repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' in a way that also echoes Habermas.[69] They argue that the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' in the mid-nineteenth century inaugurated 'not a new era of press freedom but a system of censorship more effective than anything that had gone before. Market forces succeeded where legal repression had failed in conscripting the press to the social order in mid-Victorian Britain'.[70] Their argument is well known and can be summarised as follows. The 'Taxes on Knowledge' had originally been introduced in large part to quell the highly successful radical plebeian press of the early nineteenth century. This clash between the authorities and the bourgeois public, on the one hand, and the plebeian publics on the other, was carried out under the relative equality of the handpress, or as E.P. Thompson describes it: 'the plebeian Radical group had as easy access to the hand-press as Church or King'.[71] By contrast, in the second half of the nineteenth century, steam printing was widely adopted by commercial newspaper proprietors. This placed a high financial bar on launching newspapers; loans and credit was often required, which placed power in the hands of creditors, and as price-per-issue was driven down, newspapers had to rely on

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[66] Chalaby explicitly states that he is not engaging in a defence of the Habermasian public sphere, see Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (Macmillan, 1998), p. 2. Although not explicitly Habermasian, different iterations of the Frankfurt School model of 'mass culture' have been taken up, including: James Curran, 'The Press as an Agency of Social Control: An Historical Perspective', in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day,* ed. by D. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (Acton Society, 1978), pp. 51-75; Virginia Berridge, 'Popular Sunday Papers and Mid-Victorian Society', in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day,* ed. by D. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (Acton Society, 1978), pp. 247-64.
[67] Chalaby, pp. 7, 33.
[68] Ibid. p. 5.
[69] Curran and Seaton.
[70] Ibid. p. 4.
[71] Thompson, *The Making*, p. 739.

advertisement revenue. This in turn affected the editorial contents of newspapers, because to attract advertising, they had to adopt a relative political neutrality to remain palatable to both advertisers and a wide and sufficiently affluent readership. Even erstwhile politically radical papers gradually dropped their political contents, while retaining some of the stylistics developed in the early nineteenth century, as Virginia Berridge argues.[72] Similarly, Hampton explicitly relates Stedman Jones's thesis of a 'remade' working-class to the new commercial press and the New Journalism, which 'contributed to this depoliticized culture by advertising wares and simply by its presence as an alternative to politics'.[73] Curran and Seaton's argument is directed primarily against both old and new Whig narratives, which tend to view the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' as part of a narrative of improvement towards greater press freedom (and quality, at least when considering the metropolitan daily Victorian press).[74] Recent cultural-historical research focussing on the twentieth century 'popular' press, in the 1880-1920 period primarily the national dailies of Northcliffe and Rothermere, tend to downplay the teleological improvement arch, but often retain a celebratory note in emphasising the commercial newspapers' role in successfully meeting the demands of readers and providing satisfaction for active consumers.[75] Critical research by media sociologists like Curran, Seaton, and Chalaby is primarily concerned with structural conditions and long-term discursive tendencies, but is less attentive to the agency of ordinary readers, historical specificity, and local variations. However, overly celebratory evaluations of the 'popular' commercial press risk merely reiterating the libertarian populism of the original Press Barons themselves.[76] There are both empirical and methodological issues at stake here.

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[72] Berridge.
[73] Hampton, *Visions of the Press*, p. 119.
[74] Curran and Seaton, p. 4. Among the old and new 'Whig' histories of the press, they include: Alexander Andrews, *The History of British Journalism* (Richard Bentley, 1859); Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols (Hamilton, 1981 and 1984); Martin Hewitt, *The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', 1849-1869* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).
[75] Thus, Martin Conboy suggests that the *Daily Mail* was primarily responding to innate consumer desires (rather than playing an important role in constituting and organising such desires), writing that it 'chose to follow the inclinations of the masses and with enormous success', see Martin Conboy, *The Press and Popular Culture* (SAGE, 2002), p. 95. Similarly, Christopher Shoop-Worrall argues in a recent study that newspapers like the *Daily Mail*, *Express*, and *Mirror* 'were keenly aware and able to articulate content that resonated with large numbers of British people' during the 1900 'khaki' election, and that by 'sensationalising' election news on the model of human interest stories, the popular-commercial papers 'made politics engaging, accessible, and entertaining for people historically excluded from the traditional approaches which the British newspaper industry took towards the reporting of political news', see Christopher Shoop-Worrall, *Election Politics and the Mass Press in Long Edwardian Britain* (Routledge, 2022), pp. 15-18.
[76] As Hampton suggests, a version of the representative or reflective vision of the press was the perspective of the Press Barons: '[A] libertarian view in which any state intervention in the affairs of the press was inherently tyrannical and a violation of centuries of hard-won press reform. […] True, some aspects of the popular press were regrettable, but after all, the people got the press they wanted, in true democratic fashion'. Hampton, *Visions of the Press*, p. 132.

Firstly, a useful *empirical* study that complicates and helps refine assumptions about popular taste is Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2002); thus, for example, on the basis of first-hand documents (diaries and autobiographies) he posits a working-class 'conservative canon' centred on classical works of literature.[77] Secondly, Jim McGuigan indicates the possibility of mediating between critical attention to structural forces and the active negotiation and resistance by working-class people with his *methodological* call for 'critical populism' within cultural studies, which would seek to 'account for *both* ordinary people's everyday culture *and* its material construction by powerful forces beyond the immediate comprehension and control of ordinary people'.[78] I want to propose an extension of 'critical populism' beyond such a methodological programme to include a feature of working-class culture in the post-repeal period, because, as indicated by Maclean's statement above, frustration with the style, contents, and manipulative power of the commercial press was an important theme within the proletarian public sphere (and not only among the more elite commentators surveyed by Hampton). In the local case studies that follow, I seek to recover and compare some of the cultural critiques articulated by contemporaries who confronted the commercial press from different ends of the social hierarchy (and from contending print public spheres).

Previous research on the oppositional (radical and socialist) press of the period highlights the difficulties of retaining radical political content while remaining financially viable under the post-repeal market conditions.[79] Less attention has been paid to the rhetorical, stylistic, and discursive aspects of the socialist press in this period, which is partly why I make use of studies of radical plebeian print culture for analytical support.[80] One exception is Elizabeth Carolyn Miller's *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture* (2013), a fascinating study of culturally and politically oppositional print culture in the period which I want to consider more closely. Miller focusses on 'anticapitalist print and literary countercultures' directed at 'a small-scale audience, a political and aesthetic counterculture, a public that defined itself against a mass-oriented, mainstream print culture'.[81] Her focus is on more niche radical cultures and on specifically

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[77] Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edn (Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 116-45.
[78] Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism* (Routledge, 1992), p. 5.
[79] Berridge; Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press'; Chalaby, pp. 71-74.
[80] Particularly useful studies include: Benchimol; Gilmartin; James Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1994); Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Clarendon, 2002).
[81] Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 2-3.

literary-aesthetic production published in or around radical periodicals, with chapters dedicated to William Morris's *Commonweal* and the Kelmscott Press, the serialised novels of George Bernard Shaw, radical or socialist theatre, and the poetry published in socialist and radical periodicals. Arguably, Miller's focus tends more towards the alternative, whereas the *Socialist* and *Forward* were more oppositional in their ambition to seek direct confrontation with the dominant or mainstream (Williams' categories of alternative and oppositional should not be treated too rigidly however, and are best understood as points on a spectrum). While the working-class papers studied here differ somewhat in orientation by prioritising politics over aesthetics, there are commonalities between Miller's study and the present. Thus, the theme of temporality is shared, or of the proletarian press's different relationship to time compared to the dominant commercial press (slowness in Miller's study, crisis-intervention in this study). The temporality of the commercial daily contrasts with such conceptions of time, especially in its regimented appearance reinforcing what Walter Benjamin called 'homogenous, empty time' as a temporal framework necessary for the production of abstract surplus-value, which is painfully imposed through the temporal regimentation of the clock and factory, as E.P. Thompson adds.[82] Furthermore, my study of the *Socialist* especially overlaps with Miller's interest in anti-commercial print culture's valorisation of physical as well as intellectual durability, in contrast to the disposable commodity status of the modern newspaper.

Importantly for present purposes, Miller argues in her conclusion that attention to the radical press offers an alternative 'genealogy to aspects of modernist literary culture that have long been viewed as elitist – specifically, its oppositional stance toward the culture of mass production'.[83] Her study, which incorporates working-class print cultures and critiques of mass culture, offers 'a reminder of how easily resistance to capitalism can transmute – or be transmuted – into antipopulism and how part of capitalism's strength is to render the anticommercial as the antidemocratic'.[84] Indeed, what is most interesting and acute today may not be a defence of the popular as against elite valorisations (in a sense, we are all populists now), but the possibilities for a critical populism in a context where the popular is so easily incorporated to the functional demands of economic and bureaucratic systems. Through the proletarian public sphere I seek to anatomise the problems and difficulties confronting a critical populist project in opposition to the first commercialised

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[82] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader,* ed. by Steven Eric Bronner and Douglas Kellner (Routledge, 1989), pp. 255-63 (p. 260.); E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past & Present,* 38.38 (1967), pp. 56-97.
[83] Miller, p. 301.
[84] Ibid.

mass medium, the press, and the print culture it helped foster including privatised forms of reception and fragmented, reified worldviews.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is structured in the following way. Chapter 1 examines Habermas's original study of the public sphere and its transformation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, alongside some key interlocutors including Craig Calhoun, Geoff Eley, and Nancy Fraser. It highlights how Habermas's original study projected a too narrow, and too harmonious, model of the classical bourgeois public sphere, which risked exaggerating its claims to inclusivity while occluding the dynamic of conflict between the bourgeois public sphere and its excluded rival formations, characterised by different modes of sociality and constitutive interests. As Habermas's interlocutors have argued, the dynamic of conflict had a constituting effect on the bourgeois public sphere itself, which took not only an antagonistic stance versus feudal authorities, but also a defensive posture against excluded others like the radical plebeian formation, and the public sphere thus needs to be supplemented with the notion of hegemony; it is this dynamic of opposition and attempts at containment that helps explain the late nineteenth century transformations. Chapter 1 also introduces some key concepts from Habermas's later work deployed throughout the thesis, including system, lifeworld, and strategic and communicative action.

Chapter 2 begins the empirical investigation of periodicals and publics by turning first to the *Glasgow Herald* and its publishing company George Outram & Co. I consider how the new market conditions for newspaper print inaugurated by the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' affected the relationship between readers and writers of this publication with roots in Enlightenment-era Glasgow. The integrity of the organic community of middle-class readers and writers, constituted by shared commercial interests and aesthetic values and tastes, was threatened by the emergence of new prospective readers. Simultaneously, the new market conditions presented the proprietors with tantalising financial prospects in the form of new buyers, or reader-consumers. I argue that George Outram & Co. sought to resolve the dilemma of maintaining a culturally cohesive readership of the *Glasgow Herald* while pursuing the new financial opportunities by expanding its print offerings with the *Glasgow Evening Times*, marketed for a distinct and separate mid-segment of projected readers. In doing so, George Outram & Co. contributed to the formation of a commercially segmented public sphere with effects of fragmentation on the formation of worldviews and ideologies. The *Glasgow Herald*'s role in

ideologically and practically mediating a middle-class reading public confronting a re-emerging working-class public sphere is explored through leading- and special- articles on themes of education, policing, and industrial politics. By concentrating on the newspaper's role in mediating the response of local authorities and employers during the 1919 Battle of George Square, the chapter highlights the defensive posture and role of an inheritor of the classical bourgeois public sphere, by considering strategies of working-class containment via public opinion management, policing, and directed educational efforts inside factories on Clydeside within self-styled industrial 'welfare' departments.

In the two chapters that follow, I seek to reconstruct the proletarian public sphere on Clydeside via two key periodicals mediating distinct ideological perspectives and working-class political projects but with overlapping readerships. Thus, in Chapter 3 I turn to the Marxian monthly (later weekly) periodical the *Socialist*, the party-organ of the Socialist Labour Party, a largely Scottish breakaway from the Social Democratic Federation led by Henry Hyndman. Leading figures of the SLP, such as Arthur McManus and Tom Bell, contributed much to the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1920, and both James Connolly and John Maclean were involved with the paper, albeit at different ends of its print run. The SLP, the paper, and the press were instrumental to the formation of the Clyde Workers' Committee which organised unofficial strike action on Clydeside, including the 40-hours strike culminating in the 1919 Battle of George Square. The self-avowedly revolutionary SLP operated an important printing and publishing business which issued books, pamphlets, and periodicals designed for use in factory-centred study circles. I consider the periodical's projected socialist public sphere model, and argue that it actually constituted a proletarian counterpublic animated by an intervention-driven journalism directed at the ideological and educational needs of the labour movement. Through considerable personal effort by often anonymous writer-readers, this local press was maintained for over two decades, and contributed to the formation of a highly politicised working-class culture displaying strong continuities with earlier plebeian radical cultural formations and radical enlightenment. I analyse the periodical's cultural politics through the educational and agitational praxis it mediated, as well as through its construction of an alternative socialist literary canon. I propose that through its investment in modes of instrumental reason, this formation became entangled in an ambiguous cultural politics which made it prone to isolation from wider working-class culture and legitimising constitutional discourses.

In Chapter 4, I turn to Tom Johnston's *Forward*, an editorially independent weekly paper aligned with the politics of the Independent Labour Party. I analyse the paper's

distinctive cultural practice through advertisements and public notices and show how the paper helped constitute a more cross-class readership than the *Socialist*, while remaining within the proletarian public sphere. *Forward* also mediated an intervention-driven journalism combined with highly deliberative print-features (including discussion-columns) and via this publication I argue that the public sphere in its normative, Kantian, formulation did not so much disappear as make a partial reappearance at a moment of social and political crisis within a public with a greater interest in the proposition that the force of the better argument ought to prevail over commercial or physical domination, than the post-bourgeois public sphere formations. In doing so, the paper conceived of publicity as the bridging principle between politics and morality. I consider the dynamic cultural politics of the paper by analysing its distinctive democratic-populist stylistics mobilised with a combination of educational or enlightening intent and representation in print before and against political authorities and local employers. Cultural and social critiques of the commercial press and manufactured public opinion were advanced through the paper, and I analyse the difficulties of autonomous working-class politics in the context of an expanding franchise. I pay special attention to debates on the Workers' Educational Association as mediated by *Forward*, which presents questions of working-class opposition and systemic incorporation or integration via educational institutions. In the concluding chapter I recapitulate the central arguments made in the case studies and offer some pointers for further research on the emergence of critical populism.

Chapter 1: The Public Sphere, Habermas, and his Interlocutors

Previous attempts to bridge Cultural Studies with Frankfurt School Critical Theory were noted in the introduction, and Douglas Kellner motivates the bridging of the traditions by arguing that 'we need perspectives that articulate the intersection of technology, culture and everyday life', especially under the highly mediated conditions of cultural modernity.[1] Kellner proceeds to make the case for a multiperspectival cultural studies that seeks to interrogate cultural artefacts from three perspectives: '(1) the production and political economy of culture; (2) textual analysis and critique of its artefacts; and (3) study of audience reception and the uses of media/cultural products'.[2] In the case studies centred on the *Glasgow Herald*, *Socialist*, and *Forward* that follow, I seek to adopt such a combined approach, and in doing so rely on Habermas's theory of the public sphere which offers both conceptual tools and a historical-methodological example for multiperspectival cultural studies. In this chapter I account for his original theorisation of the bourgeois public sphere and its disintegration, before moving on to consider contributions made by friendly critics who turn attention to alternative public sphere formations alongside the classical bourgeois one. I conclude by defining some key terms developed in Habermas's later theoretical writings that the study uses, including lifeworld, system, and communicative action.

1.1 The Original Blueprint and Structural Transformation

Habermas's influential theorisation of the public sphere as first put forward in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) pursues an inquiry on two levels simultaneously.[3] Empirically, it offers an account of historical shifts in bourgeois culture from the seventeenth century to the introduction of the welfare-state, while normatively, it seeks to draw out a stylised, ideal-typical model of critical-rational discourse. The work can be read as a narrative in two parts. In the first part (sections I-IV) Habermas describes and characterises the rise of a bourgeois culture of sociality situated in the coffeehouses, literary salons, and *Tischgesellschaften* of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, France, and Germany. In the second part (sections V-VII) his focus is to analyse the disintegration of this public sphere through the stipulated merging of state and society in

[1] Douglas Kellner, 'Critical Theory and Cultural Studies: The Lost Articulation', in *Cultural Methodologies,* ed. by Jim McGuigan (SAGE, 1997), pp. 12-41 (pp. 12-13).
[2] Ibid. p. 34.
[3] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1989).

the late nineteenth century, culminating in the corporatist and interventionist welfare-state. I treat each part in turn.

Habermas conceives the novel bourgeois culture as constituted between the 'private realm' of market exchange and the family, on one hand, and the 'sphere of public authority' in the form of state and church, on the other.[4] The bourgeois public sphere came to form a specialised part of civil society, and through its positioning between the authorities of the state and church and the private realm of market exchange and intimate family relations, it facilitated a new and politically consequential culture of rational-critical deliberation:

> The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason.[5]

Habermas outlines three common institutional criteria for the new cultural milieus of the coffeehouses and salons making up the bourgeois public sphere. Firstly, participants 'preserved a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether'.[6] What marks the difference for Habermas is the modality of interaction characteristic of the culture of the feudal court, where a display of social status was central as registered in the intricate cultures of decorum and the mode of ceremonial representation before the people. He qualifies the principle of status suspension by noting that rank and status remained palpable (indeed, within the new bourgeois culture an emphasis on tact and taste arguably emerged to supplant the earlier forms of decorum), but he insists that because it was 'stated as an objective claim' it was 'at least consequential'.[7] Secondly, 'discussion within such a public presupposed the problematization of areas that until then had not been questioned'.[8] The 'common concern' about which state and church authorities had until then exercised a 'monopoly of interpretation' became profaned in the sense that private people began to subject philosophy, literature, and art to autonomous critical discussion:[9]

> The private people for whom the cultural product became available as a commodity profaned it in as much as they had to determine its meaning on their own (by way

[4] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 30.
[5] Ibid. p. 27.
[6] Ibid. p. 36.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

> of rational communication with one another), verbalize it, and thus state explicitly what precisely in its implicitness for so long could assert its authority.[10]

The commodification of cultural products (periodicals, newssheets, books, works of art, etc.) challenged the feudal system of cultural production through patronage by producing cultural products for a market where it was freely available, but dependent on purchasing ability. Thus, and thirdly, the public sphere was made universally inclusive, or, in his own words 'the same process that converted culture into a commodity (and in this fashion constituted it as a culture that could become an object of discussion to begin with) established the public as in principle inclusive'.[11] While acknowledging the exclusivity of the bourgeois public sphere 'in any given instance' he insists that it 'could never close itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique'.[12] This stipulated inclusivity was marked by a new form of representation:

> Wherever the public established itself institutionally as a stable group of discussants, it did not equate itself with *the* public but at most claimed to act as its mouthpiece, in its name, perhaps even as its educator – the new form of bourgeois representation.[13]

In his effort to preserve the normative sense of self-transformation as learning (a recurring theme in his later thought) Habermas is prone to underestimate the double-sidedness of education.[14] The self-styled educator of the public, whom Habermas associates with bourgeois representation and publicness, can step forth as both an agent of tutelage and of enlightenment.[15]

In tracing the origins of bourgeois critical publicity as different from aristocratic representative publicity, he notes how the press in the form of official gazettes (by which official decrees of the state were issued beginning in the seventeenth century when mercantilist policy required closer regulation of consumer goods) was addressed to the public.[16] The public that the press addressed included in practice mainly the burghers of the towns, and the male heads of households at that, and was constituted as the counterpart of public authority which had the unintended consequence of provoking the public 'into an

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[10] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 37.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Thus, on learning-processes, Habermas writes: 'I can imagine the attempt to arrange a society democratically only as a self-controlled learning process'. Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1979), p. 186. See also Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, trans. by William Rehg (Polity, 2011), pp. 4-5; Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Heinemann, 1976), p. 15.
[15] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 37.
[16] Ibid. p. 22.

awareness of itself as the latter's opponent'.[17] Thus the bourgeois public sphere was constituted within 'that zone of continuous administrative contact [which] provoked the critical judgment of a public making use of its reason'.[18] But furthermore, the press which had mediated the formation of the public sphere and constituted it in opposition to public authority was an instrument which could be turned to other uses, and alongside the official journals there emerged periodicals containing 'not primarily information but pedagogical instructions and even criticism and reviews'.[19] Turning to Addison and Steele's *Tatler* and *Spectator* of the early eighteenth century, Habermas develops the symbiotic and enlightening print culture characteristic of the public sphere:

> [T]he new periodical was so intimately interwoven with the life of the coffee houses that the individual issues were indeed sufficient basis for its reconstruction. The periodical articles were not only made the object of discussion by the public of the coffee houses but were viewed as integral parts of this discussion; this was demonstrated by the flood of letters from which the editor each week published a selection. The dialogue form too, employed by many of the articles, attested to their proximity to the spoken word. One and the same discussion transposed into a different medium was continued in order to reenter, via reading, the original conversational medium. A number of the later weeklies of this genre even appeared without dates in order to emphasize the trans-temporal continuity, as it were, of the process of mutual enlightenment.[20]

In a similar vein, Habermas seeks to distinguish the purpose of reading within the aristocratic courtly culture, characterised as 'a kind of conspicuous consumption' distinct from bourgeois 'serious reading by an interested public'.[21] Habermas argues that 'the public sphere in the political realm evolved from the public sphere in the world of letters'.[22] Through the reading of romance novels like Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), a new form of subjectivity arose within the bourgeois intimate sphere of the conjugal family, conceived as the 'domain of pure humanity' free from the instrumentalities characterising the economic basis of this form of life.[23] Gradually, this public sphere assumed constitutionally defined political functions: 'The constitutional state as a bourgeois state established the public sphere in the political realm as an organ of the state so as to ensure institutionally the connection between law and public opinion'.[24] This link is marked by such basic civil rights including freedom of speech, assembly,

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[17] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 23.
[18] Ibid. p. 24.
[19] Ibid. pp. 24-25.
[20] Ibid. p. 42.
[21] Ibid. p. 38.
[22] Ibid. pp. 30-31.
[23] Ibid. pp. 43, 46.
[24] Ibid. p. 81.

association, and the press, as well as equality before the law, equality of vote, and personal freedom, etc, which are meant to protect the institutions of the public sphere and the functions of citizens.[25] One of the greatest flaws of this model, and a primary object of social struggle in the nineteenth century, of course concerned the extent of the franchise, or who was to be included among the citizenry comprised at once of private persons and the sort of 'pure humanity' envisioned within the private/intimate realm. The bourgeois reading public of the eighteenth century 'remained rooted in the world of letters even as it assumed political functions; education was the one criterion for admission – property ownership the other'.[26] What made this limitation justifiable was the conception of civil society and economy as articulated most famously by Adam Smith which stipulated, in Habermas's summary, 'a society of petty commodity owners' comprised of individuals making rational calculations on a market of free competition and where the value of the commodities exchanged was measured by the labour they contained.[27] From this point of view, any person with 'luck' or 'skill' could acquire the necessary property and education to be admitted into the public sphere.[28] This was of course ideological fiction, but it enabled an important promise, namely that domination could be dissolved 'into that easygoing constraint that prevailed on no other ground than the compelling insight of a public opinion'.[29] Furthermore, it is in the conflation between 'property owner' and 'human being as such' that Habermas sees the origins of ideology in the Hegelian-Marxist sense, that is, in the sense not simply of false consciousness but as false consciousness that contains an aspect that 'can lay a claim to truth inasmuch as it transcends the status quo in utopian fashion, even if only for purposes of justification'.[30] Among the philosophical writings on the public sphere by contemporaries, Habermas finds the strongest articulation in Kant which although restrained by the ideological fictions noted above, retains such a 'utopian' or normative claim. On this public sphere model, 'public opinion aimed at rationalizing politics in the name of morality'.[31] It is especially Kant's conception of publicity as a linkage between politics and morality, and of political representation with an educational process of enlightenment, that interests Habermas (and which I take up in Chapter 4 on *Forward*): 'Kant's publicity held good as the one principle that could guarantee the convergence of politics and morality. He conceived of "the public sphere" at

[25] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 83.
[26] Ibid. p. 85.
[27] Ibid. p. 86.
[28] Ibid. p. 87.
[29] Ibid. p. 88.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid. p. 102.

one and the same time as the principle of the legal order and as the method of enlightenment'.[32]

In the second part of the book, Habermas seeks the causes for the disintegration of the bourgeois public sphere in what he perceives as the dissolution of the boundaries between public and private as a result of a stipulated merging of state and society, which he argues had originally allowed the public sphere to be constituted. The structural cause of these tendencies he conceived in the following way: 'The downfall of the public sphere […] had its source in the structural transformation of the relationship between the public sphere and the private realm in general'.[33] He refers to this process as a mutual infiltration of the public and private spheres which became decisive with the rise of the social welfare state by the mid-twentieth century, and describes it as a dialectical process whereby 'a progressive "societalization" of the state simultaneously with an increasing "stateification" of society gradually destroyed the basis of the bourgeois public sphere – the separation of state and society'.[34] He argues that the breakdown of the public sphere was indicated by two tendencies: 'While it penetrated more *spheres* of society, it simultaneously lost its political *function*, namely: that of subjecting the affairs that it had made public to the control of a critical public'.[35] In conditions of greater purchasing power on the part of wage-earners, the intimate sphere is thus reconstituted as a sphere of leisure and culture-consumption rather than the socialising grounds for critical cultural discussion:

> What today, as the domain of leisure, is set off from an occupational sphere that has become autonomous, has the tendency to take the place of that kind of public sphere in the world of letters that at one time was the point of reference for a subjectivity shaped in the bourgeois family's intimate sphere.[36]

This picture of the intimate sphere as the basis for autonomy in the public sphere is complicated when considering public spheres other than the bourgeois, as will be seen below. Here, I only want to indicate that I push back against this description on the basis of the proletarian public sphere explored in Chapter 3 and 4, where the public sphere itself seemed a sufficient basis for autonomy. Furthermore, the idea that the strict separation of state and society is a structural condition for the public sphere is one of the more problematic aspects of Habermas's work, and one which he has since retracted.[37] Although

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[32] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 104.
[33] Ibid. pp. 142-43.
[34] Ibid. p. 142.
[35] Ibid. p. 140.
[36] Ibid. p. 159.
[37] See Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Polity, 2023), pp. 51-52.

he got the structural causation of this shift wrong, his critique of what appears as superstructural tendencies manifested in the commercialised public sphere remains useful. Importantly for present purposes, Habermas traces the transformation of the public sphere in the nineteenth century in part by surveying changes in the press.

Thus, he suggests that the radical press, exemplified by Cobbett's *Political Register* which had become the first periodical with a mass-circulation of over 50,000 in the early nineteenth century, gave way to the new commercial penny press.[38] He describes the new journalism that emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century as 'designed to give the masses in general access to the public sphere' but, because it was based on commercial motives, it 'lost its political character to the extent that the means of "psychological facilitation" could become an end in itself for a commercially fostered consumer attitude'.[39] While the transition from Cobbett's *Political Register* to the commercial 'Yellow Press' is too rapidly traversed, the observation that the new commercial press of the late nineteenth century (aimed at a wide popular readership primarily for commercial purposes) became depoliticised is compelling: 'Editorial opinions recede behind the information from press agencies and reports from correspondents; critical debate disappears behind the veil of internal decisions concerning the selection and presentation of the material'.[40] The kind of print culture linking enlightenment with representation which arose in the excitable atmosphere of political revolution (such as the French Revolution with its reverberations across Europe) is contrasted with the rationale of the daily papers emerging in the much altered conditions of what I would call the post-repeal press in the British context:

> Only with the establishment of the bourgeois constitutional state and the legalization of a political public sphere was the press as a forum of rational-critical debate released from the pressure to take sides ideologically; now it could abandon its polemical stance and concentrate on the profit opportunities for a commercial business.[41]

Now, the press 'became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere'.[42] The switch to competition via advertising rather than via issue-price gave rise to confusingly distorted publics structured around a projected consumer-interest, while

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[38] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 168.
[39] Ibid. p. 169.
[40] Ibid. As noted in the introduction, later media sociologists confirm a similar picture, see James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, 8th edn (Routledge, 2018).
[41] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 184.
[42] Ibid. p. 185.

also enabling the rise of commercial public relations and 'opinion management' strategies.[43] In this new commercialised print culture milieu, he argues that publicity changed in meaning from 'the exposure of political domination before the public use of reason' to an imitation of 'the kind of aura proper to the personal prestige and supernatural authority' of feudal authorities representing themselves before an audience whose response is limited to acclamation.[44] I return to this in the next section, where I suggest that while the inheritors of the bourgeois press indeed lost much of the rationale for contesting authority, they remained interested in containing its outsiders, but to see this properly alternative public spheres need to be considered. Before moving on, however, I want to consider the shifting political functions of the public sphere that Habermas identifies in tandem with its commercialisation.

With the expansion of the franchise, political parties had to address the expanded electorate in new ways which emulated the relationship between the commercial press and its culture-consuming audience. Significantly, he points to the new form of political campaigning, the caucus system, introduced by William Gladstone during the Midlothian campaign, as an indicative development of public sphere transformation: 'Now for the first time there emerged something like modern propaganda, from the very start with the Janus face of enlightenment and control; of information and advertising; of pedagogy and manipulation'.[45] The influence of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's writings on the culture industry is palpable in such sentences.[46] The political public sphere (in both print and political culture) becomes 'refeudalized' in the sense that public authority once again engages in representation before the people, rather than being subjected to the authority of the public's critical-rational deliberation: 'The public sphere become the court *before* whose public prestige can be displayed – rather than *in* which public critical debate is carried on'.[47] In this context, democratic participation is reduced to acclamatory gestures via the ballot, and more intensive deliberation on policy is undertaken in increasingly specialised settings. The picture that emerges from the structural disintegration of the public sphere is one where '[t]he sounding board of an educated stratum tutored in the public use of reason has been shattered; the public is split apart into minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose

[43] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 193.
[44] Ibid. p. 195.
[45] Ibid. p. 203.
[46] See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception', in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. by John Cumming (Verso, 1997), pp. 120-67.
[47] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 201.

receptiveness is public but uncritical'.[48] Simultaneously, the concept of public opinion undergoes a shift in meaning from denoting the outcome of a process of critical discussion, to instead be conceived merely as static 'attitudes' to be registered in opinion research and polling.[49] Having thus summarised Habermas's original account of the classical bourgeois public sphere and its decline, I now turn to some key revisions of his account.

1.2 Habermas's Interlocutors and Alternative Public Spheres

Habermas originally located a plebeian public sphere led by English radicals like William Cobbett and the Chartists but considered it merely a 'variant' that was 'supressed in the historical process'.[50] It was partly for lack of secondary literature that he did not consider the plebeian public sphere further, since both E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) and Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (1968), works that subsequently changed Habermas's estimation of the bourgeoisie's cultural others, were either unavailable to him or not yet published.[51] In the German-speaking context, this empirical oversight was pointed out first by students of Habermas, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, and then in a more historically sustained way by Günter Lottes.[52] Negt and Kluge's book is an intellectual product of the socio-cultural ferment of the 1960s student revolts, and they proposed a rather abstract notion of the proletarian public sphere focussed on the production of autonomous experience based on material circumstances and aimed at detachment from the mediations of the culture industry.[53] Here already is an emphasis on the internal differences of alternative public sphere formations which has remained a hallmark of Habermasian revisions. As Bruce Robbins writes, the many alternative public sphere formations that have been located historically have prompted revisions seeking to 'pluralize and multiply' the public sphere concept: 'Thus we now speak routinely of *alternative* public spheres and *counterpublics*'.[54] In the anglophone

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[48] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 175.
[49] Ibid. p. 241.
[50] Ibid. p. xviii.
[51] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin, 2013); Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Indiana University Press, 1984). For Habermas's self-reflections, see Jürgen Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', trans. by Thomas Burger, in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 421-61 (pp. 425-27).
[52] Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. by Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel and Assenka Oksiloff (Verso, 2016); Günter Lottes, *Politische Aufklärung und plebejisches Publikum: Zur Theorie und Praxis des englischen Radikalismus im späten 18. Jahrhundert* (Oldenbourg, 1979).
[53] See especially Chapter 1 in Negt and Kluge.
[54] Bruce Robbins, 'Introduction: The Public as Phantom', in *The Phantom Public Sphere,* ed. by Bruce Robbins (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. vii-xxvi (p. xvii).

context, several important Habermasian interlocutors are included in a volume edited by Craig Calhoun which collects the contributions made at a North American conference held shortly after the belated English-language publication of Habermas's first major work.[55] Many of the contributions to *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (1992) illustrate Habermas's empirical oversight of contending publics with references to plebeian and feminist public spheres in particular.

Nancy Fraser's contribution is perhaps the clearest expression of the revisionist case that I make use of in the case studies that follow.[56] She sets out by elaborating on some of the weaknesses of Habermas's original model, in particular his omission of informal discursive practices within public debate that serve to exclude subordinated groups, and the relative absence of alternative public sphere formations in his account. Thus, she argues that the assumed bracketing of social status in public deliberation, a prominent principle in Habermas's original model of the public sphere, tends to have the actual effect of masking and perpetuating relationships of domination. These issues stem from the effect produced within stratified societies whereby 'unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles', which are always already present when participants enter into deliberations.[57] There is in this regard, as Fraser writes, a significant irony at play in Habermas's original model of the public sphere, whereby a 'discourse of publicity touting accessibility, rationality, and the suspension of status hierarchies is itself deployed as a strategy of distinction'.[58] I read this rejoinder as a call for closer consideration of the actual discursive practices in public sphere argumentation, which I seek to heed by engaging in close readings of more ordinary public print discourses. Such close engagements need to be attentive to subtle aspects of stylistics, layout, and the projected relationships between readers and writers.

Fraser proposes the term 'subaltern counterpublics' to describe 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs'.[59] In addition to her own experience within late twentieth century American feminism when highlighting alternative sites of rational discourse, Fraser draws on the findings of social history and especially the work of Joan B. Landes and Mary P. Ryan focusing on gender dynamics, but also on Geoff Eley's work focused on the class

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[55] *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, 1992).
[56] Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 109-42.
[57] Ibid. p. 120.
[58] Ibid. p. 115.
[59] Ibid. p. 123.

dynamics of the public sphere which I consider below.[60] On the basis of such examples, Fraser argues that 'counterpublics contested the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative styles of political behaviour and alternative norms of public speech'.[61] Furthermore, in describing counterpublics as 'bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics', she highlights their double function as spaces for enlightenment internally, but oriented to more strategic interventions externally.[62] This is a particularly useful description that serves to highlight the combination of enlightening and oppositional imperatives animating the excluded outsiders of dominant public sphere formations. I draw on Fraser's notion of subaltern counterpublics when reconstructing the actual practices characterising Glasgow's proletarian public sphere (as distinct from its ideologies) especially in describing its print interventions as counterpublicity in Chapter 3.

Calhoun's introduction to the 1992 volume also draws attention to alternative publics in the form of social movements, and highlights the culturally constructive function of the public sphere. He writes that the public sphere 'cannot be about everything all at once. Some structuring of attention, imposed by dominant ideology, hegemonic powers, or social movements must always exist'.[63] This contrasts with the early Habermas, who tends to seek a pre-formed, even ideal, notion of the common interest which can then be presented in the public sphere. Calhoun writes:

> Throughout the modern era, social movements have been in part occasions for the legitimation of new voices (by which I mean not just the inclusion of persons previously excluded but also changes in the identities from which they speak). The absence of social movements from Habermas's account thus also reflects an inattention to agency, to the struggles by which [both the] public sphere and its participants are actively made and remade.[64]

It is not merely the private sphere that is generative of meanings and interests, because the public sphere has its own culturally generative capacity in addition to its political problem-solving function: 'the public sphere plays a "world-disclosing" role alongside of, and possibly independent of, its problem solving one'.[65] The world-disclosing role of the public sphere plays into political struggles too, which involve 'crucial redefinitions of the

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[60] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cornell University Press, 1988); Mary P. Ryan, 'Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1994), pp. 259-88.
[61] Fraser, p. 116.
[62] Ibid. p. 124.
[63] Craig Calhoun, 'Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 1-48 (p. 37).
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid. p. 34.

issues and identities involved in political struggles'.[66] Here, Calhoun seeks to underscore how common interests are also constituted within the public sphere through deliberation and contestation, and are not merely pre-formed in the private sphere (be it in the market or the intimate sphere) only to be announced publicly. This is an important revision for understanding the pedagogical role of the proletarian public sphere investigated in Chapters 3 and 4, wherein a central function of print and public discourse was to construct shared working-class interests.

Eley's entry focusses on the early nineteenth century and argues for the historical coexistence of a multitude of public spheres. His revision is an important statement on the mutually determining effect that plebeian public sphere historically had on the bourgeois public sphere, and he makes two fundamental points about the restrictive definition Habermas originally gave it; firstly regarding the denial of any serious expression of critical rationality to groups outside elite bourgeois circles, and secondly, that the public sphere is always constituted by conflict. On the first point, Eley shows that Habermas's original description remains too closely wedded to the elite bourgeois model of the public sphere, thus occluding the possibility of rational-critical deliberative culture emerging in other social contexts. With reference to the work of social historians, Eley argues that there is ample evidence to conclude that the 'virtue of publicness could materialize other than by the intellectual transactions of a polite and literate bourgeois milieu'.[67] Secondly, Eley argues that Habermas's original model is too restrictive in social and cultural scope:

> [He] *both* idealizes its bourgeois character (by neglecting the ways in which its elitism blocked and consciously repressed possibilities of broader participation/emancipation) *and* ignores alternative sources of an emancipatory impulse in popular radical traditions (such as the dissenting traditions studied by Edward Thompson and Christopher Hill).[68]

This leads Eley to conclude that in Habermas's original model it is not just the diversity of expressions of rationality that is missed but, additionally, that the liberal model was always 'constituted by conflict' and oriented to 'the problem of popular containment'.[69] What Eley calls 'the ambiguities of the liberal departure' and 'the fragility of the liberal commitments' in the period between 1760 and 1850 is due to this element of conflict, since 'participants in the bourgeois public always faced two ways […]: forward in confrontation with the old

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[66] Calhoun, 'Introduction', p. 34.
[67] Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 289-339 (p. 304).
[68] Ibid. p. 306.
[69] Ibid.

aristocratic and royal authorities, but also backward against the popular/plebeian elements already in pursuit'.[70]

At this point Habermas's own response to the revisions of the public sphere should be considered. In light of studies showing the existence of alternative public sphere formations, Habermas admits against his original account of the bourgeois public sphere that 'a different picture emerges if *from the very beginning* one admits the coexistence of competing public spheres and takes account of the dynamics of those processes of communication that are excluded from the dominant public sphere'.[71] With reference to Bakhtin's work in particular, he offers the following interpretation of the dynamics between popular and dominant public spheres:

> This culture of the common people apparently was by no means only a backdrop, that is, a passive echo of the dominant culture; it was also the periodically recurring violent revolt of a counterproject to the hierarchical world of domination, with its official celebrations and everyday disciplines.[72]

While it is a welcome admission of the more prominent role of alternative and popular culture in the public sphere, it remains problematic. As Alex Benchimol remarks, it is revealing that Habermas 'associates this plebeian cultural tradition with violent social revolt against an oppressive order, in contrast with his original bourgeois model of a liberally organized – and above all nonviolent – communicative praxis'.[73] Furthermore, in Habermas's attempt to reassert what he conceives as the historically modern 'universalistic discourses' and their 'potential for self-transformation', he seems to revert back to a defence of the specifically bourgeois modality: 'Bourgeois publicness […] is articulated in discourses that provided areas of common ground not only for the labour movement but also for the excluded other, that is, the feminist movement'.[74] Contacts with the labour movement, he suggests, 'in turn transformed these discourses and the structures of the public sphere itself from within'.[75] As Benchimol argues, this 'reassertion of the redemptive rational potential of his original model reveals its greatest flaw' namely an adherence to 'a form of transcendental public rationality that disavows any substantive role for […] competing public spheres'.[76]

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[70] Eley, p. 321.
[71] Habermas, 'Further Reflections', p. 425.
[72] Ibid. p. 427.
[73] Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Ashgate, 2010), p. 20.
[74] Habermas, 'Further Reflections', p. 429.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Benchimol, p. 21.

As indicated by the Habermasian interlocutors considered here, the theory of the public sphere is in need of conceptual supplementation to better account for the struggle between dominant and popular or subaltern publics within the historical process, and the formative effect of such struggles on the makeup of the public sphere itself. Eley proposes to supplement Habermas's public sphere concept with Gramsci's notion of hegemony as developed by cultural studies practitioners including Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, and which I outlined briefly in the introduction as a process of resistance, opposition, and attempted incorporation.[77] This cue of linking the Habermasian public sphere to concerns over hegemony in cultural studies is also taken up and developed by Benchimol, who notes that Williams had sought to identify two discreet bourgeois and working-class cultural traditions already in *Culture and Society* (1958).[78] Benchimol pursues this project further by tracing the English radical plebeian and the Scottish bourgeois Whig traditions in the romantic period back to the seventeenth century, and his tracing of these 'two cultural traditions' and their respective institutional structures and practices inform the present thesis, which seeks to continue the work of mapping the dialectical relationship between distinct but intertwined public sphere traditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the pressures of commercialisation became more palpable.[79] Thus, I seek to illustrate in Chapter 2 on the *Glasgow Herald* how the post-bourgeois public sphere's contacts with the labour movement not only engendered the kind of democratic improvements in the structure of the public sphere that Habermas hints at in his response above, but instead provoked what he originally conceived as refeudalized forms of publicness, at least in the short term. The reason for this is that the same imperative to moderate, counter, and contain the earlier plebeian public sphere continued to animate the post-bourgeois commercial public sphere in its encounter with the proletarian publics. It is not merely, I argue, that the press lost its campaigning rationale with the mid-nineteenth century legalisation of publicity (as Habermas argued above), but that it also retained its imperative of popular containment. Meanwhile, the proletarian public sphere in Scotland which I analyse in Chapters 3 and 4 drew on cultural resources and practices of an older radical plebeian tradition in its efforts to improve working-class conditions of life, and to claim democratic influence on local and national political and economic affairs.

I turn now to the later developments in Habermas's thinking. Calhoun offers a useful summary of Habermas's work which seeks to show how the concerns of the first

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[77] Eley, pp. 321-25.
[78] Benchimol, p. 35. See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Penguin, 1963), p. 313.
[79] Benchimol, p. 38.

book remain palpable also in his later writings on communicative action, system, and lifeworld. He argues that with the turn to communicative action based on universal pragmatics, Habermas 'turns away from historically specific grounding for democracy (though the public sphere remains the institutional locus for democratic political practice) toward reliance on a transhistorical capacity of human communication'.[80] Calhoun draws attention to the methodological merits of Habermas's first major work: 'the historical specificity and grasp of concrete social-institutional foundations give *Structural Transformation* some advantages over Habermas's later theory'.[81] Although it has arguably brought with it a lack of concreteness in Habermas's later writings, the concept of communicative action and the two-level view of society as system and lifeworld is useful also for cultural historical research, and because I have recourse to this terminology in the case studies that follow I conclude this chapter with a clarification of the key terms.

Communicative action is characterised by the participants' orientation to reaching mutual understanding, and occurs 'whenever the actions of the agents involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding'.[82] Communicative action might involve a wide range of aspects of rationality, including moral-practical and aesthetic-expressive reason.[83] Regarding *strategic action*, by contrast, he writes: 'We call an action oriented to success *strategic* when we consider it under the aspect of following rules of rational choice and assess the efficacy of influencing the decisions of a rational opponent'.[84] In such action the opponent is not involved in defining the ends of action. Strategic action thus relies primarily on the instrumental aspect of reason, which can give rise to reifying effects when relied on one-sidedly to understand the socio-cultural world, a problem I return to in analysing the socialist culture mediated by the *Socialist* in Chapter 3.[85]

The *lifeworld* denotes the shared symbolic background knowledge which participants in communication oriented to mutual understanding rely on to make sense of the objective world, the social world, and the world of subjective experience that they seek to communicate to one another. Or as Habermas puts it, the lifeworld is 'the horizon within which communicative actions are "always already" moving'.[86] Within the social systems

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[80] Calhoun, 'Introduction', p. 31.
[81] Ibid. p. 33.
[82] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1984), pp. 287-86.
[83] Ibid. pp. 237-39.
[84] Ibid. p. 285.
[85] Ibid. pp. 237-39.
[86] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System, the Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1987), p. 119.

of the market economy and state administration, meanwhile, action is predominantly strategic and is coordinated non-linguistically by the 'steering media' of money and power. *Lifeworld colonisation* by systems-media, on this version, occurs when the symbolic interaction oriented to mutual understanding between participants is disrupted by narrowly success-oriented imperatives mediated by money and power. This is how Habermas dramatizes the process:

> [T]he imperatives of autonomous subsystems make their way into the lifeworld from the outside – like colonial masters coming into a tribal society – and force a process of assimilation upon it. The diffused perspectives of the local culture cannot be sufficiently coordinated to permit the play of the metropolis and the world market to be grasped from the periphery.[87]

Terry Eagleton offers a succinct summary of Habermas's lifeworld colonisation thesis which highlights its affinity with an older tradition of cultural critique. In a cultural history of the (bourgeois) aesthetic, he relates the critical resources of the aesthetic to Habermas's notion of the lifeworld:

> The aesthetic began with Baumgarten as a modest assertion of the claims of the *Lebenswelt* upon an abstract reason; and it is just this project, now inflected as a radical critique of capitalist society, which Jürgen Habermas takes up in our own time. What has come about in the later development of capitalist society, so Habermas argues, is a progressive conflict between "system" and "life-world", as the former penetrates more and more deeply into the latter, reorganizing its own rationalizing, bureaucratizing logic. As these anonymous political and economic structures invade and colonize the life-world, they begin to instrumentalize forms of human activity which require for their effective operation a rationality of a quite different kind: a "communicative rationality" which involves practical and moral agencies, democratic and participatory processes, and the resources of cultural tradition. Such a rationality, bound up as it is with subjectivity, cultural know-how and the sphere of the affective, will never submit without a struggle to such remorseless systematization; and in imposing its own alien logic upon it, late capitalism risks eroding some of the very cultural resources essential to its own legitimation.[88]

In the social arrangement of welfare states, the rationalising and bureaucratising logics of the economy and state administration have become anchored in the lifeworld (and sufficiently accepted for legitimation) through the social roles of employee, consumer, client, and citizen, through an often difficult process, as Habermas writes: 'Viewed historically, the monetarization and bureaucratization of labor power and government performance is by no means a painless process; its price is the destruction of traditional

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[87] Ibid. p. 355.
[88] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Blackwell, 1990), p. 401.

forms of life'.[89] Habermas draws a line between acceptable 'mediatization' marked historically by the welfare state settlement, and subsequent colonisation with pathological consequences.[90] I return to Habermas's formulation of this conflict between system and lifeworld, particularly in Chapter 4, where I propose that it may be extended backwards historically to include aspects of the labour movement's struggles also in the early twentieth century, because socialist politics was not concerned solely with distributional questions, or questions of social rights, but included cultural politics concerning the 'grammar of forms of life'.[91] With these theoretical preliminaries in place, it is time to consider the actual contending print cultures and public spheres affected structurally by the commercialisation of the press inaugurated by the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', and I begin by turning to the *Glasgow Herald* in the next chapter.

[89] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System, the Critique of Functionalist Reason*, pp. 319-21.
[90] Ibid. p. 196.
[91] Ibid. p. 392.

Chapter 2: The *Glasgow Herald* (c.1850-1920)

As seen in the previous chapter, Habermas painted a bleak picture of the deterioration of the press and the public sphere in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century in his original account of the structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere. In a process he termed refeudalization, he saw the return of central features of representation and sociality within the feudal courts in the commercialised public sphere. Key features of this cultural shift included the transformation of *publicity* into the mere display of nonpublicly deliberated positions, *representation* into presentation before the public rather than against authorities, and the emergence of a public *opinion* more akin to common sense attitudes rather than as the outcome of rational-critical and enlightening discussion. He saw the structural cause of this disintegration of the public sphere as the increasing integration of state and society, culminating in the mid-twentieth century welfare state. In this chapter I analyse the *Glasgow Herald*, a newspaper with roots in the classical liberal-bourgeois public sphere, as it confronted problems of both commercialisation and class conflict from the 1850s to the 1920s. I seek to show how cultural dynamics immanent to the liberal-bourgeois public, centred on aesthetic preoccupations with taste and sensibility to maintain a community of readers when combined with mounting commercial pressures, contributed to the formation of a more private, compartmentalised subjectivity not conducive to communicative action in public. Furthermore, I show how central features of refeudalization were more the defensive response of a socially limited print public sphere seeking to contain and counteract its rival popular and working-class publics through a combination of education and policing, than being caused by a shift in the relationship between state and society.

Due to its continuous publication from 1783 to the present day, the *Glasgow Herald* offers an unusually rich case for investigating the structural transformations of the public sphere from the Enlightenment-era to the digital transformation.[1] While the focus here lies

[1] The archives used for this study include Google News Archives, which holds a near-complete run of the *Glasgow Herald* from 1806-1990, and the British Newspaper Archives, which includes a *Glasgow Herald* run from 1820-1900 with few gaps. Despite its unusual longevity, there is relatively little previous research on the *Glasgow Advertiser* and *Glasgow Herald*. Phillips's official history is aimed at a general public, see Alastair Phillips, *Glasgow's Herald 1783-1983* (Richard Drew, 1982). Hamish Fraser's recent general history of Scottish newspapers includes frequent references to the *Glasgow Herald*, particularly Chapter 2 on Glasgow dailies, see W. Hamish Fraser, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Newspapers, 1850-1950*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2023). James Thompson includes an excellent but brief case study of the *Glasgow Herald*, without closer textual engagement however, in James Thompson, 'Case Study 14: The *Glasgow Herald*', in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press: Expansion and Evolution*, ed. by David Finkelstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 545-548. By far the most sustained analyses are provided by Alex Benchimol, who focuses on the *Glasgow Advertiser* and the early *Glasgow Herald*, see in particular Alex Benchimol, 'Policing the Industrial Order in the West of Scotland: The Radical War and Its

on the period after 1850, it is worthwhile briefly considering previous research on key moments in the newspaper's history from its founding to the Radical War of 1820, because of the cultural and ideological precedent set by the early editors.

The *Glasgow Herald* was founded as the *Glasgow Advertiser* in 1783 by the entrepreneurial printer John Mennons and was designed to cater to the interests of a propertied and mercantile-bourgeois readership. As Alex Benchimol puts it in a recent study linking the early *Glasgow Advertiser* to the developing commercial public sphere centred on the Tontine Tavern and Coffeeroom at Glasgow's Trongate: 'Mennons's *Advertiser* stood as the workaday vehicle for a commercially driven late Enlightenment project rooted in the city's thriving trading culture'.[2] Elsewhere, Benchimol notes how the editor-founder Mennons was an associate of Patrick Colquhoun (Lord Provost of Glasgow and an intellectual participant in the Scottish Enlightenment) and edited the paper from the Tontine, described as 'the busy Trongate hub of the city's emerging bourgeois public sphere, listed as the de facto editorial address for Mennons's newspaper during the 1789–94 period'.[3] Using reports by contemporary visitors to the Tontine coffee house, Benchimol detects how the physical coffee house is reflected in the *Advertiser*, writing that the 'spatial layout informed the format and key features of the *Glasgow Advertiser*, with its "Tontine Lists" of shipping arrivals and departures, cargo content summaries, commercial and transportation advertisements, postal reports and digest of the London papers'.[4] Furthermore, the early editorial principle and practice of the *Glasgow Advertiser* comes out powerfully in Benchimol's study of debates on parliamentary reform in the crisis years of 1792-4, when demands for constitutional reform were raised by radicals like Thomas Muir of Huntershill and an emergent working-class against the backdrop of the revolution in France. Benchimol argues that the *Glasgow Advertiser* played a mediating role between the demands of two distinct class publics. The paper included notices and letters advocating parliamentary reform as a means to 'meet a new demand for constitutional information

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Aftermath in the Glasgow Herald, 1819-1820', in *1820 Scottish Rebellion: Essays on a Nineteenth-Century Insurrection,* ed. by Gerard Carruthers, Kevin Thomas Gallagher, Craig Lamont and George Smith (John Donald, 2022), pp. 54-63; Alex Benchimol, 'Let Scotland Flourish by the Printing of the Word: Commerce, Civic Enlightenment and National Improvement in the *Glasgow Advertiser*, 1783-1800', in *Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism, 1707-1840*, ed. by Alex Benchimol and Gerard Lee McKeever (Routledge, 2018), pp. 51-73; Alex Benchimol, 'The 'Spirit of Liberal Reform': Representation, Slavery and Constitutional Liberty in the Glasgow Advertiser, 1789–1794', *Scottish Historical Review*, 119.1 (2020), pp. 51-84.

[2] Benchimol, 'Let Scotland Flourish by the Printing of the Word', p. 53.

[3] Benchimol, 'Spirit of Liberal Reform', p. 57. Nigel Leask also notes, in dialogue with Jürgen Habermas's work, how the 'bourgeois public sphere' is 'aptly represented by the Tontine' in Glasgow, see Nigel Leask, '"The Pith o' Sense, and Pride o' Worth": Robert Burns and the *Glasgow Magazine* (1795)', in *Before* Blackwood's*: Scottish Journalism in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. by Alex Benchimol, Rhona Brown and David Shuttleton (Routledge, 2015), pp. 75-89 (p. 75).

[4] Benchimol, 'Let Scotland Flourish by the Printing of the Word', p. 54.

amongst the west of Scotland's labouring classes' while also maintaining its pages 'as a platform for the ideological concerns (and manifest anxieties) of the region's propertied readers'.[5] What is significant about the *Glasgow Advertiser* among non-radical Scottish newspapers in this period is it principled editorial stance; when Mennons was indicted for publishing a seditious notice placed by James Smith, a Gorbals gunsmith, on behalf of the Sons of Liberty in Partick, he made an editorial announcement before his appearance in court, ensuring the readers that he would continue to 'adhere to that principle of impartiality which should be the characteristic of the Editor of a newspaper'.[6] This principled liberal editorial stance stands in marked contrast to the paper's later role in policing the industrial order during and after the 1820 Radical War when under the editorship of Samuel Hunter, as Benchimol summarises his argument:

> The propagandising role of the *Glasgow Herald* and its magistrate-editor Samuel Hunter was crucial to establishing a consensus among the civic and commercial elite for policing the urban region's volatile industrial order, reflected in the distinctive features of the 1821 iteration of the Glasgow Police Act, with its emphasis on new methods of ideological surveillance and the suppression of political unrest in the aftermath of the Radical War.[7]

The *Glasgow Herald* maintained its status as the vehicle of Scottish commercial opinion even into the twentieth century, and as James Thompson argues for the late nineteenth century iteration of the *Glasgow Herald*, its 'self-image as the embodiment of Scottish commerce was widely accepted by its peers'.[8] When both the financial interests of its core readership and the ideological legitimacy of the liberal modernisation discourse that the paper was invested in came under sustained challenge from plebeian and working-class publics, the paper and its public reached for both cultural and material defensive measures, a dynamic that would repeat itself starkly in the *Glasgow Herald*'s pages during the 1919 Battle of George Square considered later in this chapter. The early mediations and conflicts, however, occurred under relatively egalitarian conditions of newspaper production, as E.P. Thompson noted while discussing the events of Peterloo in 1819: 'the plebeian Radical group had as easy access to the hand-press as Church or King'.[9] As discussed in the Introduction, the period from 1850 was characterised by intensive commercialisation and industrialisation of the newspaper press after the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', a series of taxes on transmission (the stamp duty), paper, and

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[5] Benchimol, 'Spirit of Liberal Reform', p. 54.
[6] Ibid. p. 73.
[7] Benchimol, 'Policing the Industrial Order in the West of Scotland', p. 54.
[8] Thompson, 'The *Glasgow Herald*', p. 548.
[9] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin, 2013), p. 739.

advertisements. These legal changes of the 1850s and -60s, alongside innovations in printing technology (the steam press, while first introduced by *The Times* in 1814, was only widely implemented decades later), created the conditions for a highly competitive and capital-intensive market for newspapers.

The structural transformation of the public sphere in Britain wrought by repeal marked the beginning of a process of differentiation and segmentation of the reading publics that went on behind the backs of its participants. As Habermas argues, '[t]he history of the big daily papers in the second half of the nineteenth century proves that the press became manipulable to the extent that it became commercialized'.[10] The reliance on advertisements and external financing to meet the high entry bar to production (purchase and update of printing plant, for example) meant that the press 'became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere'.[11] The model of advertising-finance had the indirect effect, working behind the backs of newspaper proprietors and editors as it were, of forcing them to write up or down to audiences with enough purchasing power to attract advertisers.[12] I will show how this dynamic affected the *Glasgow Herald* in the aftermath of repeal and when its proprietors launched a sister-publication in the form of an evening paper, the *Glasgow Evening Times*, written for a somewhat different audience. The ambiguous, even reluctant, feelings expressed by editorial leader-writers shows how this process of lifeworld colonisation, of functional systems-requirements imposed on linguistic communication, was experienced as a crisis not just for working-class publics, but for middle-class editors seeking to maintain a community of readers through their newspaper.

2.1 A Community of Readers

In focusing on the quality of the relationship between readers and writers, Raymond Williams distinguishes between organic and more mediated relationships maintained by different kinds of periodicals, that is, between papers which 'assume a kind of community' and papers which relate more instrumentally to their readers, approaching readers 'as consumers, as a market or potential market'.[13] In the 'quality' newspaper, of which the

[10] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1989), p. 185.
[11] Ibid.
[12] See also James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, Eighth edn (Routledge, 2018).
[13] Raymond Williams, 'Radical and/or Respectable', in *The Press We Deserve,* ed. by Richard Boston (Routledge, 2016), pp. 14-25 (p. 15).

Glasgow Herald is exemplary, this distinction takes the form a live dilemma. On the one hand, a readership is assumed and taken for granted with 'a known set of subjects and interests, based for the most part on a roughly common level of education'.[14] On this basis, the quality newspaper mediates a community similar to Habermas's original model of the liberal bourgeois public sphere, in which critical-rational discourse can be pursued under a shared modality. But on the other hand, the quality newspaper is a commercial product, and is forced by the dynamics of market competition to continually seek to expand its public, viewed as consumers. Because the readership as a community of similarly educated readers with similar interests and needs is necessarily restricted, the quality newspaper runs into difficulties when seeking to satisfy both goals; the cultivation and mediation of a community of readers, and the commercial success following from expanding this community as a market of reader-consumers. On Williams's account, this inherent tension in the project of a quality newspaper means that it is 'often tempted past its realities to that kind of promotion which is the conscious suggestion of fashion and trends. "The sort of people who…" extends from a reasonable description to an advertising manager's hope or trick'.[15] The education necessary for a specific mode of rational-critical discourse is thus subverted from a set of communicative capacities and background knowledge into far more instrumental practices of cultural distinction on the model of display advertisement. An issue of the *Glasgow Herald* from 1851, just before the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, shows how this tension was materialised in the newspaper even before the dynamics of an unregulated market for print was set loose more fully.

In the early 1850s, according to Phillips, the *Glasgow Herald* had an average circulation of 4500 per issue, a circulation small enough for a close relationship between writers and readers.[16] That the *Glasgow Herald* stood in an organic relationship to its readers is quite clearly seen in an 1851 issue, which announced some significant alterations to the form of the newspaper as a result of acquiring a new printing press:

> On commencing a new issue of the "Herald" – increased in size, and altered in form – at the beginning of a new year, and after the close of the first half of a century – we can only venture to express a hope that the alteration will be as agreeable to our readers, as the pleasant associations of the season would induce us to anticipate. The paper, seemingly growing with the growth of Glasgow, is now nearly twice the size it was ten years ago, and certainly much more than twice the size of its ancestor of 1835. We can only say, in grateful acknowledgement of the patronage which has been bestowed upon us, that it shall be our endeavour to render the improvements in the internal arrangement of the paper commensurate

[14] Ibid. p. 14.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Phillips, p. 53.

> with the enlarged space and additional facilities placed at our disposal. We would not profess too much; but we think we may appeal with confidence to the judgement of the public, in regard to the manner in which our present promise shall, in future, be fulfilled.[17]

The courteous and rather intimate tone in which the readers are addressed by the editor implies a community that has not drastically changed in composition since the days of Samuel Hunter's editorship. The primary mark of this type of public opinion discourse is its anonymity and use of the abstract editorial 'we', a convention which harks back to the journalism of the *Spectator* where it supported the idea of public opinion as an expression of transcendental reason denying its own material basis, or as Michael Warner argues in an engagement with Habermas's public sphere theory: 'What you say will carry force not because of who you are but despite who you are. Implicit in this principle is a Utopian universality that would allow people to transcend the given realities of their bodies and their status'.[18] However, as Richard Salmon argues on the basis of Victorian debates on journalistic anonymity and the emergence of the 'New Journalism', from the 1860s 'this rhetorical convention of anonymity, and the principle of self-abstraction to which it gave support, came under sustained and systematic attack'.[19] The *Glasgow Herald* would retain this journalistic practice throughout the period studied in this thesis, which speaks to its self-conscious posture as an authoritative medium of transcendental public opinion. In the passage cited above, it is the voice of a speaker at a banquet, as the reference to the 'pleasant associations of the season' suggests, and the reader finds a detailed account of these associations on the same page, thus materialising the integration of writer and reader into an organic community on the printed page. This is further reinforced by the series of symbolic consolidations made by inserting the newspaper into a shared history of improvement, and by identifying to the point of merging the growing newspaper with the growing city. By virtue of its regular appearance the *Glasgow Herald* mediated an imagined community in Benedict Anderson's sense; its reception involved a 'mass ceremony', 'a substitute for morning prayers' in line with Hegel's observation, and contributed to the clocking of time into the abstract 'homogeneous, empty time' identified by Walter Benjamin.[20]

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[17] *Glasgow Herald*, 3 January 1851, p. 4.
[18] Michael Warner, 'The Mass Public and the Mass Subject', in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. by Bruce Robbins (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 234-56 (p. 239).
[19] Richard Salmon, '"A Simulacrum of Power": Intimacy and Abstraction in the Rhetoric of the New Journalism', *Victorian Periodicals Review,* 30.1 (1997), pp. 41-52 (p. 46). For a brief summary of Victorian perspectives on anonymity, see also Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 65-69.
[20] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1991), pp. 24, 35.

As yet, the paper does not distinguish amongst its readers, and the notice above may be equally addressed to the reader of an issue purchased at a newsstand ready to board a train, the reader with a subscription enjoying the service of home delivery, who unfolds the paper in the private comfort of a study, or the reader seated in a city office in search of effective advertising space for commercial products and services. After the repeal of the taxes on knowledge such notices would frequently single out the reader-advertiser, as advertising revenue became a vital concern to maintain competitiveness over the following decades.[21] If few distinctions were made within the community of readers, its organic status depended on carefully drawn boundaries. This project is seen in the tightly set column to the right on the same page reporting on the seasonal 'associations'. Here, the intended readers could read both about themselves, and about those decidedly outside the confines of the public: the report simultaneously offers instruction in respectability and surveillance of the urban poor.

The centrepiece of the article is an account, at times promotional, of the various indoor events of the season, including the 'Oratorio in our venerable Cathedral [which] drew together a large body of the most respectable classes in the city of both sexes', a crowded exhibition at Springthorpe's Wax Works, a model of ancient Jerusalem by Brunetti, the Exhibition Rooms of the Western Academy, and a pantomime in Prince's Theatre.[22] An antique bible was on display in the Arcade, and all proceeds from this exhibition, organised by 'our benevolent townsman, Mr. Allan Clarke', are reported to go towards charitable purposes, and the reporter is careful to add 'that the inmates of many of our charitable institutions are regaled with substantial fare, by their respective directors'.[23] The moral example of such philanthropists is counterpoised by scenes from the streets. Thus, the writer comments on the popular custom of assembling for the midnight bells and welcoming the new year with 'joyous shouts' and first-footing:

> The company, however, was of a rather *seedy* character, and it is evident that this custom of awaiting the new year in the streets, and the kindred one of first-footing, is now almost entirely confined to the lower orders, and only to the more thoughtless of that class.[24]

Further in, the writer takes meticulous note of the behaviour of the popular classes, in the manner of the police report: 'Some fighting took place here and there; but, on the whole, nothing like aggravated disorder or outrage occurred' while the amount of 'intemperance

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[21] Curran and Seaton.
[22] *Glasgow Herald*, 3 January 1851, p. 4.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

among the lower classes was much as usual', 'No fewer than 93 men were trundled to the Central Police Office alone'.[25]

Appearing in close proximity to the announcement of a new format, powered by a new steam press, the article provides an amalgamation of the improvement project in which the *Glasgow Herald* was engaged: to maintain the internal coherence of its organic reading public by instructing it in good taste, to provide a platform for commercial advertising, and to survey the behaviour and customs of the working class before this readership. As Geoff Eley notes of the earlier nineteenth century phase of the bourgeois public sphere, in addition to its challenge to traditional privilege, 'it necessarily addressed the problem of popular containment as well'.[26] I return to the theme of popular containment below, but first I want to consider the *Glasgow Herald*'s literary pages as a significant site within the newspaper for the maintenance of the community of readers through the fostering of shared aesthetic tastes with political implications.

The literature page, often a full eight columns, contained reviews of a wide range of genres, from novels, poetry, and drama to travel writing and historical, social, and technical-scientific literature. The reviews often covered literature in other European languages, either in the original or in translation, which gives an indication of a multilingual and highly educated core readership.[27] Thus, in a review of a French edition (excerpts quoted in the paper appear in French) of Victor Hugo's poetry collection *La Légende des Siècles* (1859), the mid-century fusion of literary and cultural criticism of the *Glasgow Herald* comes through:

> We have heard a good deal lately of what is styled the "decadence of French literature," as of every other kind of moral and material "decadence" in France. No doubt this, like all other *ex parte* statements, has a semblance of truth in it, though we believe even that semblance to be very greatly exaggerated. Notwithstanding those arbitrary trammels which fetter the *political* expression of the French intellect, all the great branches of literature have their gifted apostles and exponents now as ever. If the term "decadence" be applied to a lessened public taste for the noble in literature, and the growing inclination for that which is merely exciting and frivolous, even then we are not sure so sure that its appropriate.[28]

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 289-339 (p. 306).
[27] A German example is Hermann Sudermann's *Das Hohe Lied* (1908), 'THE SONG OF SONGS', *Glasgow Herald*, 25 February 1909, p. 4. Scandinavian literature, including August Strindberg, the Danish critic Georg Brandes, Knut Hamsun and Sigrid Undset, was covered in cultural essays, reviews, and in advertisements: 'FREDERICK NIETSCHE [sic]', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 March 1893, p. 4; Gyldendal's Books, *Glasgow Herald*, 8 April 1920, p. 4.
[28] 'LITERATURE', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 November 1859, p. 3.

Whether the 'decadence' gestured towards is imaginative literature, like Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), or the subject of treatises on criminal psychology and degeneracy theory, like Bénédict Morel's *Traité des Dégénérescences* (1857), is not clear from the review. But the reviewer finds a target somewhere between the two, a 'decadent' aesthetic form defined with the tools of something approaching degeneracy theory. Thus, writing of the 'neat little volumes of 1859', the reviewer states:

> The appearance of such a mass of little books of this class is, however, a sure index of the national taste; and their popularity is a tacit acknowledgement that the queer state of society and questionable (?) morality depicted in these works, are really and truly those of the France of 1859. This is the true "decadence," if not from former times, at least from the eternal principles of right and morality.[29]

The attempt to portray the 'penny dreadfuls' as a singularly French product and import rather than a homegrown phenomenon is a defensive argumentative strategy familiar from the earlier casting of political radicalism and republicanism as a French, and more broadly foreign, import. The seminal example of this argumentative strategy is found in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). After warning the readership of this morally dangerous aesthetic product, the reviewer draws attention to literary products befitting of intelligent readers:

> But even in the higher branches of literature France, we conceive, is not by any means in a state of "decadence." So long as such men as Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Guizot […] live and write, and so long as their lives and writings are loved and appreciated by the mass of true intelligence in France there is *no* "decadence." You may as well speak of "decadence" of English literature in the face of Macaulay, Tennyson, Bulwer.[30]

Over three decades later, when literary decadence was culminating as a formation (encompassing Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé in French, and Oscar Wilde and Swinburne in English), a leader-writer mobilised the same moral anxieties and critical vocabulary against a rather different target; the bohemian aesthetic. French literature, like English literature, 'has been grievously afflicted with manifestations of decadence […] In France, as well as here, it is recognised by many persons of intelligence that all these developments are not over healthy […]'.[31] A central concern of literary criticism in the *Glasgow Herald* was to police and cultivate literary tastes with a view to the moral improvement of its readership, and the distinction of that readership from other sections of

[29] Ibid.
[30] 'LITERATURE', *Glasgow Herald*, 18 November 1859, p. 3.
[31] Leading article, *Glasgow Herald*, 6 June 1895, p. 6.

the reading public. There was also an effort to encourage production of elevated literary representations of middle-class character, based on a view of the literary marketplace as an unproblematic system for expressing aesthetic demands.

Thus, a literary essay from 1894 passionately demands a literature for the middle-class man, and displays a consumer populism where supply-and-demand economics and issues of representation meet.

> The middle-class man who pauses in the midst of his avocations and tries to consider his position in relation to literature may well feel a little hurt […] He has been the butt of the superfine critics of two types and two successive generations. The Arnoldians have made his name and "Philistine" synonymous; they dub him "Issachar," and congratulate him on the fact that undoubtedly he is a "strong ass." The Stevensionians prefer a picturesque scoundrel to him any day […] There is a grim truth in all this. Literature – outside of that which is given to the world in general in the form of snippety newspapers and cheap sensational fiction – looks and must look to him more particularly in what Mr John Murray and the bookselling fraternity evidently regard as its Dark Age. It is undoubtedly the middle class that constitutes the clubs and supports the libraries, which, between them, keep literature going. […] And what goes out the middle class man for to see, or what does he sit in his drawing-room to read? Simply that he finds himself ignored – or worse – by the writers of fashionable novels and plays.[32]

The writer rhetorically draws on the origins of British bourgeois parliamentary representation to support the case for middle-class representation: 'Milton, who inspired Cromwell, was a middle class product'.[33] Here, literary and political representation are closely fused, much like the literary and the political public spheres are seen as dialectically co-original in Habermas's account. Mrs Oliphant counts among the few writers who successfully meet the essay-writer's demand for a literature that reflects the moral qualities of the middle-class man (the real-life ideal type offered is James Nasmyth, the Scottish industrialist and engineer). Mrs Oliphant's work was lauded by the *Glasgow Herald*'s literary reviewers for its depictions of this class, and her links to the House of Blackwood offer an indication of the *Glasgow Herald*'s late Victorian literary interests and sensibilities.[34] Indeed, *Blackwood's Magazine* was frequently advertised in the paper, and

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[32] 'LITERATURE AND THE MIDDLE CLASS', *Glasgow Herald*, 21 April 1894, p. 7.
[33] Ibid.
[34] A review of Mrs Oliphant's *Who was Lost and is Found* (1894) concurs with the idea that she represents the middle-class in an appropriately elevated way and recommends her works strongly: 'There is no one among the younger (or elder) writers of Scotland who can compare with Mrs Oliphant when she is depicting domestic life of the fairly comfortable, but not rich, classes of Scotland'. 'LITERATURE', *Glasgow Herald*, 3 November 1894, p. 7. *Agnes* (1866) is also reviewed favourably: 'LITERATURE', *Glasgow Herald*, 15 January 1868, p. 3. Mrs Oliphant's work of introducing and promoting European classics like Cervantes and Dante was also welcomed by the *Glasgow Herald*, and her biographical study *Cervantes* (1880) received a detailed full column review, providing the newspaper readers with enough material for educated conversation: 'LITERATURE', *Glasgow Herald*, 17 December 1880, p. 5.

its publishing house identity chimes with the cultural tastes promoted by the *Glasgow Herald*.[35] As David Finkelstein records in his study of Blackwood's publishing house, aside from ensuring maximum profitability, the magazine sought to hold aloft 'the twin banners of sound criticism and Tory politics'.[36] The firm consciously sought to produce texts by and for 'a specific network of readers and opinion-makers in upper-middle-class, military, colonial and political circles'.[37] The *Glasgow Herald*'s editorial staff were included within the projected literary public sphere of *Blackwood's*.

As Hamish Fraser notes in a recent study of newspapers in Scotland, there is a considerable dearth of biographical material on Scottish journalists in the 1850-1950 period.[38] Despite the role played by the editorial staff of the *Glasgow Herald*, not just in political life, but in the cultural life of the Scottish intellectuals of the interwar period, only two left behind published autobiographies: William Power and the novelist Catherine Carswell. Power's autobiography provides the most detailed account of life as a member of the editorial staff at the newspaper in the early twentieth century.[39] Brought up in Glasgow's West End, he came from a middle-class background and was employed as a bank clerk with the Royal Bank of Scotland for some twenty years before joining the editorial staff in 1907, where he worked alongside Catherine and Donald Carswell before they both settled in London. Power served as an editor for some twenty years and left in 1926 shortly after the General Strike. He would go on to play an instrumental role in the literary Scottish Renaissance, described as a key 'enabler' by Palmer McCulloch, and was later an influential figure in Scottish politics and modern Scottish nationalism, assuming the leadership of the Scottish National Party between 1940 and 1942.[40]

Power's autobiography shows the key contours of Glasgow's associational life from the turn of the twentieth century, and highlights the enduring linkage between literary and political public spheres within the liberal-bourgeois formation even into the early twentieth century. Before joining the *Glasgow Herald*, he spent considerable time and

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[35] See for example advertisements in *Glasgow Herald*, 25 February 1909, p. 4; *Glasgow Herald*, 11 March 1909, p. 9; *Glasgow Herald*, 17 April 1919, p. 4; *Glasgow Herald*, 22 April 1920, p. 4; both the magazine and the publishing house is advertised in *Glasgow Herald*, 29 April 1920, p. 4; *Glasgow Herald*, 1 June 1922, p. 4. The latter also carries advertisements for *Chambers's Journal*.
[36] David Finkelstein, *The House of Blackwood: Author-Publisher Relations in the Victorian Era* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), p. 96.
[37] Ibid. p. 99.
[38] Fraser, *Scottish Newspapers*, p. 261.
[39] Catherine Carswell spent much of her time as a reviewer for the *Glasgow Herald* in London, and she has little to say about her experiences of working for the newspaper in her experimental autobiography, see Catherine MacFarlane Carswell, *Lying Awake: An Unfinished Autobiography and Other Posthumous Papers*, ed. by John Carswell, 2nd edn (Canongate, 1997).
[40] Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and Its Contexts, 1918-1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 6.

effort on educating himself in his spare time (compensating for his lack of university education) while working as a bank clerk for the Royal Bank of Scotland in the old city centre of Glasgow. During this time he was a member of several literary societies – thus boasting in his autobiography how '[n]ot all the people in Glasgow who really counted were members of the Holyrood! Some were members of the Thirteen. I was a member of both' – and it was the cultivation and contacts he received there that paved the way for his employment at the *Glasgow Herald*.[41] Of his experience in the Holyrood literary club, Power recalled: 'Our copious quotations accustomed us to the "tune" of good writing. We learned to organize our ideas, finish our sentences, and argue without heat'.[42] He describes one of the regular attendants as having 'perfect taste, scholarly accuracy, and incisive style'.[43] Through intense literary cultivation, a modality of public communication was developed, often to the material benefit of participants. Many of the members of this literary society rose to high positions: in the colonial administration in India, in banking, in academia, and in journalism and the world of art. The 'perpetual president' was Sir John Samuel, ceremonial secretary to the Glasgow Corporation.[44] Through the literary society Power received the first money 'earned by my pen' from Angus Robertson, editor of *St Mungo*.[45] In 1904, Power began writing reviews for the *Glasgow Herald*, then under the editorship of Charles Russell, and in 1907 Power asked William Wallace, who had succeeded Russell as editor of the *Glasgow Herald*, for a permanent position.[46] Alongside this literary milieu, Power traversed unionist circles: his morning meetings with the YMCA took place in an old villa in Finnieston, 'frequented during the week by Unionists' where he recalls singing the hymn 'O'er those Gloomy Hills of Darkness', and he met 'the famous orator […] handsome and genial' Harry Alfred Long, an Orangeman and anti-Catholic agitator.[47] Power joined the 1st Lanark Rifle Volunteers, and devotes a chapter of his autobiography to this experience.[48] Over the course of his life, his political outlook shifted somewhat, and he attaches a note of remorse to the following summary of his ideological outlook as it was in 1907 when he first joined the *Glasgow Herald*:

> I was a Tory Imperialist, opposed to Home Rule, Irish or Scots, to land leagues, franchise extension, trade unions, and everything that menaced the privileges of rank and property. My principles were a jumble of Hobbes, Malthus, "Sir Walter,"

[41] William Power, *Should Auld Acquaintance...* (George G. Harrap, 1937), p. 84.
[42] Ibid. p. 72.
[43] Power, *Should Auld Acquaintance…*, p. 72.
[44] Ibid. p. 73.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid. p. 75.
[47] Ibid. pp. 39-40.
[48] Ibid. pp. 65-69.

> Aytoun, and Carlyle. I feared the "mob," the enemy of everything beautiful and romantic. I feared over-population, which I thought could be averted by giving landlords power to put people off the land, and employers power to cut down wages.[49]

This self-critical assessment written in the late 1930s highlights the close connections between literary tastes, developed within and constitutive of the associational life of Glasgow's literary public sphere, and ideological commitments relevant within the political print public sphere mediated by the *Glasgow Herald*. So long as the 'Taxes on Knowledge' remained in place the paper could maintain a comparably high price per issue and was somewhat protected from market competition by virtue of its near monopoly status as a local advertising outlet.[50] A public sphere thus cleaved in half (and supported by a modern police force) could also be maintained, and the integrity of this organic readership was not considerably threatened.[51] Repeal of the various taxes on newspapers unleashed the forces of market competition which would activate the dilemma of the quality newspaper described by Williams. How was this public sphere of inherently limited participation, centred on distinctions of taste and oriented to monitoring those outside its boundaries, nonetheless maintained into the twentieth century under the new commercial conditions unleashed after the repeal of 'Taxes on Knowledge'?

2.2 The Problem of Repeal and Public Sphere Segmentation

The first daily issue of the *Glasgow Herald* materialises the dilemma of the quality press. The leading article comments on the movement for Parliamentary Reform, with an appeal to a simultaneous moral reform. It decries the emergent popular-commercial press explicitly for the low cultural taste it promotes, here with reference to *Reynold's*:[52]

> It is a miserable mission to pander to a depraved taste; and we are ashamed to notice that some periodicals, usurping the title of newspaper, have made a trade of serving up trash in the style of the mysteries of London or Paris, for the special use of those who have not information or strength of mind enough to resist the pestiferous influences which such writings communicate.[53]

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[49] Ibid. p. 68.
[50] For the tendency of the older respectable papers, such as *The Times* in London, to develop monopolies on advertisements, see Martin Hewitt, *The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', 1849-1869* (Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 6.
[51] For the development of modern policing in Scotland, see David G. Barrie, *Police in the Age of Improvement: Police Development and the Civic Tradition in Scotland, 1775-1865* (Willan, 2008).
[52] *Glasgow Herald*, 3 January 1859, p. 4.
[53] Ibid.

As Virginia Berridge notes in her pioneering study of *Reynold's*, in the late 1850s it could still be recognised as among the inheritors of the old Radical plebeian press, and it still carried radical politics in its distinct style, a style which was soon to be partially co-opted for commercial purposes.[54] But while the *Glasgow Herald* writer may have the spectre of Chartism in mind, it is on grounds of taste that the popular press is resented, and particularly the prospect of writing down to such tastes – an exercise which would threaten the community of the *Glasgow Herald*'s readers from within. And yet, the opportunities presented by the free market to a newspaper empowered by new industrial technology were simultaneously celebrated in the form of a reprint from the *Illustrated London News* of Charles Mackay's poem 'Old King Coal', the final stanza of which reads:

> Old King Coal was merry old soul,
> A merry old soul is he;
> May he never fail in the land we love,
> Who has made us great and free.
> While his miners mine, and his engines work,
> Through all our happy land,
> We shall flourish fair in the morning light,
> And our name and our fame, and our might and our right,
> In the front of the world shall stand.[55]

Appearing on the first page of editorial content in the same issue, the poem marks the optimism with which the paper entered into a fiercely competitive Glasgow market for newspaper print. The shift to daily publication was carried through in January 1859, when the main rival to the *Glasgow Herald* was the *North British Daily Mail* – one of the newspapers to quickly adapt to the new expanded market conditions created by repeal. The *North British Daily Mail* was outperforming the *Glasgow Herald* in circulation, and the proprietors of both newspapers had made a gentlemen's agreement for the *Glasgow Herald* to meet the *North British Daily Mail*'s price of 3d per issue. However, on the morning when the first daily issue of the *Glasgow Herald* was set to appear, its competitor had drastically lowered its price to 1d, thus forcing a panicked response from the *Glasgow Herald* to meet the competition.[56] Over the following years, the *Glasgow Herald* succeeded in transitioning to a more fully industrialised and commercial enterprise, and by pursuing the commercial imperative the proprietors benefited greatly. By 1867, circulation

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[54] Virginia Berridge, 'Popular Sunday Papers and Mid-Victorian Society', in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. by D. George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (Acton Society, 1978), pp. 247-64.
[55] *Glasgow Herald*, 3 January 1859, p. 3.
[56] Phillips, pp. 57-59.

had risen beyond 25,000.[57] On 9 November 1868, the first issue printed at the new Buchanan Street address on two newly acquired Hoe eight-feeder printing presses appeared, carrying content transmitted by way of electric telegraph directly to the editorial offices.[58] In 1875, two rotary presses were ordered with the capacity to print, cut, and fold 12,000 copies per hour.[59] But as the anxiety of the 1859 leading article suggests, it pursued this commercial imperative at the risk of disintegrating its hitherto organic readership.

The challenge faced by the *Glasgow Herald* was how to maintain a relatively organic relationship to its readers, under pressures of competition set loose by the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, and it would do so in part by dividing its print enterprise into two distinct newspapers, the respectable *Glasgow Herald*, and the more popular *Glasgow Evening Times*. The latter was launched to compete in the emerging evening news market, and carried the editorial content in the popular-commercial style, 'jocose and newsy' as Phillips describes it, so lamented under the previous editor James Pagan less than two decades earlier.[60] The first issue appeared on June 5th, 1876, and the *Glasgow Herald* announced its arrival above its own masthead: '*THE EVENING TIMES* will be independent in politics, and will pay constant attention to Local, Scottish, and Imperial subjects – criticising them frankly upon grounds of principle alone'.[61] The emphasis of the new publication was to be on the '*Latest News*' and the resources of the *Glasgow Herald* would be drawn on to provide 'an ample digest of the Occurrences of the Day *up until the hour of publication*', including London commercial news, and news of markets and stock exchanges.[62] Furthermore, the London newspapers 'will be carefully sub-edited' for inclusion, and arrangements for 'a full report of *Sporting Intelligence*; for reporting the proceedings of the *Law Courts* in Edinburgh &c., the *Sheriff* and *Police Courts* in Glasgow and elsewhere' had been made.[63] 'With the aid of the powerful machinery belonging to the proprietors, *THE EVENING TIMES* will be printed at the rate of 60,000 an hour, a speed which will allow the collection of News up until a few minutes of the time of publication'.[64] The evening paper proved an instant commercial success as the *Glasgow Herald* reported already on the following day (the evening paper had sold over 50,000 copies) and simultaneously announced a considerable new investment:

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[57] Ibid. p. 70.
[58] Ibid. pp. 70-72.
[59] Ibid. p. 84.
[60] Phillips, p. 84.
[61] *Glasgow Herald*, 5 June 1876, p. 4.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

> NEW WEB PRINTING AND FOLDING MACHINES, the first of the kind, and manufactured by Messrs Hoe, have been ordered by the *Herald* and *Evening Times* Proprietors, and are now on their way across the Atlantic. They will Print and Fold simultaneously […] *at a speed hitherto unattained* by any other Printing Machine. […] Advertisers will greatly oblige by sending in their orders for *The Evening Times this morning as early as possible*.[65]

Despite the advertising effort on display at the top of the page as well as over the masthead of the *Glasgow Herald* in the days leading up to the publication of the evening paper, its appearance went unnoticed by the leading articles of these issues, which maintained the usual grave concern for foreign affairs (as though the pandering to a 'depraved taste' at home forced the editors to look far beyond domestic shores). Phillips remarked of the launch of the evening paper that it was an 'instant, and satisfactorily embarrassing, success'.[66] The proprietors of the two titles were conscious that their reading public was to a very large extent split rather than overlapping (that is, with an affluent middle-class public for the *Glasgow Herald*, and a combined lower-middle and working-class readership for the *Glasgow Evening Times*). This can be seen from an advertisement in the *Glasgow Herald*, where the editor addressed a special section of the mother-publication's reading public, the potential advertisers:

> *The Evening Times* has the largest circulation of any evening newspaper in Scotland, and – excepting the *Herald* – greater than the *combined Circulations* of the Glasgow Morning Papers and of one of the other Evening Papers. It is also important for advertisers to know that the readers of the *Evening Times* are distinct in a greater degree from the readers of the *Herald* than those of any other Glasgow Evening Paper. At the same time, the joint Circulation of the two papers is very much larger *than those of all the other Glasgow Morning and Evening Papers combined*, and is therefore much more comprehensive of all classes and interests.[67]

What this notice suggests is that George Outram & Co. resolved the dilemma of maintaining a respectable and narrowly construed reading public for the *Glasgow Herald*, under commercial pressures, by dividing the publishing venture in two, thereby maintaining a more restricted reading public in the mother publication. In the process, however, a commercially fragmented, or segmented, print public sphere was fashioned. But it simultaneously shows the emergence of a privileged segment within the original community of readers itself, in the shape of advertisers. There was as yet no great distinction in style and layout between display advertisements and classifieds, and both were confined to specially allocated pages at the front or back of each issue, rather than

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Phillips, p. 84.
[67] *Glasgow Herald*, 1 July 1880, p. 4.

interspersed with editorial contents throughout the pages of a single issue. And '*our Advertising Friends*', as the *Glasgow Herald* addressed this segment of the public in 1853, had been a key part of the community of readers ever since its founding as the *Glasgow Advertiser* in 1783, but the relationship between readers and writers, mediated by a newspaper in which a reader-advertiser could submit an advertisement or announcement to be published in plain font in the allocated section of the newspaper against a small fee, can still be plausibly characterised as 'organic' in Williams's sense.[68] The shift to a more 'mediated' relationship between readers and writers would occur gradually over the coming decades on the basis of this specialised segment of the public which had become increasingly important for the competitiveness of the newspaper as a commercial enterprise. After the First World War, the stylistic contrast between display advertisements and classifieds would widen considerably, as post-war issues of the *Glasgow Herald* show, and as Williams argues more generally:

> Slowly, after the war, advertising turned from the simple proclamation and reiteration, with simple associations, of the earlier respectable trade, and prepared to develop, for all kinds of product, the old methods of the quack and the new methods of psychological warfare.[69]

If evening papers sought to cultivate habits of consumption, to create markets internal to the Imperial metropolis through advertising, the general model was drawn from the older dailies and the models of consumerism developing there. Indeed, in the half-century from 1850, techniques for guiding and enticing conspicuous consumption developed in the *Glasgow Herald*. The developing techniques of cultivating and instructing its readers can be seen in the increasingly fragmented layout of the issues in this period, changes which suggest a shift away from the organically integrated reporting-instruction seen in the 1851 issue discussed above, to a more functionally mediated technique relying more on layout than discursive commentary. Thus, in 1868 the paper advertised a new feature above the masthead, a special hotels and restaurants column in the advertisement pages framed explicitly as a consumer guide:

> With the view of affording information regarding HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, &c., to Tourists, Family Parties, and general Travellers, we now publish at Reduced Rates, *in each Saturday's Daily Herald, under a special heading, the* ANNOUNCEMENTS OF HOTEL PROPRIETORS, &c. The particulars thus supplied will be found useful in guiding the Travelling Public to comfortable quarters, or in selecting a particular route. […] Readers are referred to the First

[68] *Glasgow Herald*, 8 August 1853, p. 5.
[69] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism* (Verso, 2005), p. 180.

> Page, right-hand column, of this day's *Herald*, for the Hotel and Restaurant Guide.[70]

The number of advertisements for luxury goods and services multiplied drastically in the late nineteenth century and came to be ordered under increasingly specialised columns in the advertising pages. From the organic cultivation of taste as a form of sociality necessary to maintain a community, the cultivation of readers-as-consumers went beyond a reluctant admittance of advertisements for revenue purposes to become an explicit editorial concern. In its promotion of an emergent consumer role for a widening middle-class public, the *Glasgow Herald* fostered what Habermas calls 'civil privatism', which provided the cultural basis for shifting the priority of freedom from the public sphere to the private 'familial-vocational' realm.[71] Civil privatism denotes a functionalist interest in public affairs, 'an interest in the steering and maintenance […] performances of the administrative system but little participation in the legitimizing process', a depoliticised orientation complemented by familial-vocational privatism which consists in a 'family orientation with developed interests in consumption and leisure on the one hand, and in a career orientation suitable to status competition on the other'.[72] The layout of modern newspapers contributed to the formation of fragmented and compartmentalised worldviews to match such forms of privatism.

As Fraser argues, in the late nineteenth century the sub-editor, whose task 'was to calculate what space was left after the advertisements', assumed a more prominent role within the production process of Scottish newspapers.[73] The *Glasgow Evening Times* in particular can be seen as a collage of fragments drawn from across already printed sources and fitted into an editorial space left over after the advertisements had staked their claim, and was more a sub-editor's paper than that of a respectable editor with a penchant for literary creation. Richard Terdiman's analysis of the French nineteenth-century newspaper provides a useful illumination of how the layout of modern newspapers helped shape subjectivities and cultural practices in a functionalist mould, as the relationship between readers and writers became decidedly more mediated.[74] Terdiman describes the modern newspaper as 'built by addition of discrete, theoretically disconnected elements which juxtapose themselves only in response to the abstract requirements of "layout"'.[75] As

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[70] *Glasgow Herald*, 9 May 1868, p. 4. Immediately below this announcement, the leading article opens up by noting the death of Lord Brougham: 'A great lawyer, social reformer, statesman, philosopher, and critic, who formed a link between two different ages, has thus passed away'.
[71] Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Heinemann, 1976), pp. 37, 75-78.
[72] Ibid. p. 75.
[73] Fraser, *Scottish Newspapers*, p. 283.
[74] Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 122.
[75] Ibid.

Terdiman argues, it is thereby distinct from organicist forms of writing which seek to reharmonise conflicting or dissonant social experiences through imaginative representation; instead of coming before the reader as an organic work of imaginative literature 'the newspaper trained their readers in the apprehension of detached, independent, reified, decontextualized "articles"'.[76] Through the abstract demands of layout impinging on newspapers like the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Glasgow Evening Times*, the public was presented with a more fragmented worldview, and a more 'inconsecutive' and 'inattentive' kind of reading was encouraged, as Gilmartin suggests.[77] Thus, the commercial reports have their section, foreign and domestic news reinforce a geographical order, and parliamentary reports have its designated section, while a special zone is allocated to culture, often a whole page appearing immediately after the advertising pages (beginning on the first page, and extending to some two or three pages) of reviews of recent imaginative literature and art, as glossed above. The emphasis on opinion-formation lessened in this layout-context, as Habermas argues: 'Editorial opinions recede behind information from press agencies and reports from correspondents; critical debate disappears behind the veil of internal decisions concerning the selection and presentation the material'.[78] Functional spheres of social action were symbolically separated through the repetition of daily representation, and became moulded to the background knowledge of the readers' lifeworld in a manner not conducive for discursive retrieval and problematisation.

Not only through layout but in the editorial mode of communicating, too, did the new kind of paper contribute to fragmented and compartmentalised worldviews. A few examples from the late nineteenth century *Glasgow Evening Times* will illustrate this point. The journalistic style of the new publication comes forth in an 1879 leading article, which reports and analyses the death of a poor woman shortly after leaving a maternity hospital in Glasgow after the manner of a murder-mystery narrative (it is suggested that poor and inhumane management at the hospital was responsible): 'But facts are like human beings, and have a character which gives them all their significance'.[79] The use of narrative and literary devices of suspense in journalism, and of combining moral judgement with assessment of facts rather than seeking to separate them to create a veneer of neutrality, should not be understood in itself as a sign of waning criticality. Indeed, the report cited is

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 89.
[78] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 169.
[79] Leading article, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 1 January 1879, p. 2. Consulted digitally through the British Newspaper Archive.

a form of critical publicity seeking to hold public authorities to account, which might appear in earlier radical or contemporary socialist papers too, and elements of the style were borrowed from the earlier radical press (examples of which are considered in chapters 3 and 4). However, a different political content could be inserted into the style. See the following report from the 'POLITICAL NOTES AND GOSSIP'-column in an 1894 issue reporting on Keir Hardie's refusal to endorse a congratulatory address to the Queen:

> The ceremonial business of the two Houses connected with the voting of an address to the Queen on the birth of a son to the Duke and Duchess of York was only slightly marred last night by the perverse intrusion of Mr Keir Hardie. The speeches of the leaders were dignified and graceful. Sir William Harcourt again read his speech from largely written notes; Mr Balfour spoke his with more elegant care. When Mr Keir Hardie rose he was received with a murmur of disapprobation; he had for the next ten minutes to struggle with an impatient and, indeed, a disgusted audience. He got not a whisper of support, except a single "hear, hear," which seemed to come from an Irish member. […] The hon. member outraged all decency of debate in his first sentence. "I owe," he said, "no allegiance to any hereditary ruler."[80]

Stylistically, this passage blends two modalities: the modern neutral news-reporting style and a more discursive and judgemental journalism. Brief, matter-of-fact sentences combine with a highly valorising vocabulary, while the last two sentences carefully manage expectations and direct emotional response. Furthermore, a clear moral, aesthetic, and political hierarchy is established, downwards from the Conservative Balfour ('elegant'), to the Liberal Harcourt (dreary but respectable), to the deplorable Hardie ('perverse' and offensive). The opportunistic detachment of communicative style, a style which the *Glasgow Herald*'s own editor deplored, from political content enabled the new newspaper to speak to numerous constituencies at once, as an 1894 *Glasgow Evening Times* issue shows.

Here, two leading articles appear side-by-side, one on the topic of crime and policing, the other on football. In the first one, the leader-writer reports on attempts in Austria to quell vagrancy, which presents moral reform as the solution to social problems: 'An effort is made to saddle each commune with the duty of supporting its own degenerate offspring […] But simple as the process seems, it is beset with considerable difficulty through the carelessness and ignorance of the people'.[81] Meanwhile, ahead of an upcoming football game between Scotland and England, the other editorial wrestles with the question: 'Where are the best men to be found?'.[82] The division of editorial topics reflects

[80] 'POLITICAL NOTES AND GOSSIP', *Glasgow Evening Times*, 29 June 1894, p. 3.
[81] Leading article, *Glasgow Evening Times*, 13 January 1894, p. 2.
[82] Ibid.

both an editorial catering to diverse readership interests, and perhaps to a real division within the evening-paper readership. Aspirational new middle-class readers (clerks and similar lower professions, recently migrated from the city centre to Glasgow's new suburbs) may have found editorials and reports with a conservative political slant appealing, while working-class readers (to the extent that they bothered with the editorials at all before skipping to the more interesting football results) could opt for the second article to avoid familiar accusations of ignorance and carelessness. Such pragmatic-commercial reasoning is only part of the explanation however, because the *Glasgow Evening Times* was not issued in a commercially neutralised print public sphere context. There were cultural-political stakes involved too, because the oppositional popular-radical journalistic style of counterpublicity, of publicity as a fusion of enlightenment with working-class political representation, had by no means disappeared as I show in Chapter 3 and 4. Seen in this context, the *Glasgow Evening Times*' strategic deployment of journalistic style and diversified offering of content should be understood also as an attempt to culturally incorporate its intended audience into the moral and political valorisations of the *Glasgow Herald*'s reading public. Attempts at popular incorporation, which form one side of the hegemonic process described by Stuart Hall as the 'double movement of containment and resistance', are thus captured in passages like the ones just cited from the *Glasgow Evening Times*.[83]

Caught in the dilemma of the quality newspaper, to maintain a culturally elevated and necessarily restricted community of readers, and to make the newspaper as an enterprise a commercial success, George Outram & Co. had split its expanding public in two, one for the *Glasgow Herald*, and another for the *Glasgow Evening Times*. This episode in the history of George Outram & Co. highlights the commercial segmentation of the print public sphere into distinct publics of reader-as-consumers. It also shows the fragmentation of worldviews encouraged by the commercial press through its layout and commercially strategic use of stylistic codes. Through these developments the concept of public opinion risked losing its attachment to processes of enlightenment through critical deliberation, and to political representation by means of publicity. Habermas criticised what he termed the social-psychological liquidation of the concept of public opinion achieved in positivistic research, wherein public opinion is reduced to abstract 'attitudes' belonging to 'groups', and he notes that 'attitudes' within this framework bears close resemblance to the 'prejudices' that public opinion was called on to dispel in the classical

[83] Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing "the Popular"', in *Essential Essays: Foundations of Cultural Studies,* ed. by David Morley (Duke University Press, 2019), pp. 347-61 (p. 348).

Enlightenment phase via critical-rational discussion.[84] He takes note of the pessimistic tone of liberal commentators in the late nineteenth century when, as he puts it, 'the normative spell cast by constitutional theory over the concept' was broken, but he glosses over this crisis in liberalism too quickly to shift his focus to the emergence of social-psychological research on 'mass opinion'.[85] However, a closer look at the *Glasgow Herald*'s late nineteenth century editorial perspective on the expanding public sphere reveals a concern with counteracting and neutralising challengers to the interests of the core readership.

This can be seen in a leading article appearing shortly after the Mid-Lanarkshire byelection of 1888 when Keir Hardie first contested a parliamentary election. The leader-writer begins by describing the dizzying proliferation of public discourse: 'in these times of abounding eloquence two or three Parliaments are going on at once, our most eminent statesmen [are] not unfrequently electing to speak from the Parliament of the platform rather than to address the Lords or Commons', and the writer enumerates the diverse array of public spaces: 'there is not only the Parliament of the platform but the Parliament of the press, the Parliament of the social circle, the Parliament of the workshop, the Parliament – neither last nor least – of the study'.[86] The writer goes on:

> This is no visionary fancy, but a fact involving the gravest responsibility, for we are all members of the Greater Parliament of Britain, and bound to take our part in the elaboration of that body of public opinion whose decrees are ultimately registered at Westminster. The efficiency of the Westminster Parliament depends upon the efficiency of the general Parliament.[87]

To the anxious leader-writer, the problem appears as one of how to mitigate or moderate excitement for social reform in an expanding public sphere: decidedly expanding in terms of an enlarged electorate or what Nancy Fraser calls a 'strong public', but seemingly also expanding as a sphere of public deliberation without immediate decision-making powers, or as 'weak publics'.[88] The writer recommends that men of a certain 'level' (the example provided is John Morley) must step forward into the 'general Parliament' so that questions concerning 'legislation for the practical benefit of the population', is not 'left to men of a quite secondary order' prone to advance solutions based on 'inadequate grasp of principle and from general logical confusion, either of the subject or of the British Parliament'.[89]

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[84] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 241.
[85] Ibid. p. 240.
[86] Leading article, *Glasgow Herald*, 21 May 1888, p. 8.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 109-42 (pp. 132-34).
[89] Leading article, *Glasgow Herald*, 21 May 1888, p. 8.

What the leader-writer alludes to here is the distinctive place of Scotland within the British constitutional configuration, a situation which was uniquely exploited by Scottish capital. As John Foster argues, the distinctive national situation of Scottish capital in the period of heavy industry meant that, to remain competitive vis-à-vis English capital, the typical response of Scottish firms 'was to minimise capital overheads and to rely on the one major "national" advantage remaining to Scottish capital: its much more direct control over the local institutions of civil society, the kirk, the school and parish relief'.[90] While Foster frames this as a macro-level disadvantage, it was a constitutional configuration that the *Glasgow Herald*'s key constituency, Scottish capitalists and managers, had learnt to exploit and the business plans of individual firms likely depended on its maintenance at least in the short term. Constitutional reform proposals, notably for franchise extension and for both Irish and Scottish Home Rule, presented threats to the stability of this investment environment, and the *Glasgow Herald* sought to stabilise the situation by rhetorically containing rival constitutional demands through its preferred modality of public sphere deliberation. As the challenges to the liberal public sphere model grew in the early twentieth century, the liberal culture still recognisable in the 1888 editorial gave way to more authoritarian attitudes within the middle-class public sphere.

2.3 Coping with Conflict

A clash of proletarian and middle-class publics occurred within the central cultural site of the *Glasgow Herald*'s public sphere, the University of Glasgow. In 1908, Keir Hardie had been placed on the ticket in the rectorial elections to contend with Lloyd George and Lord Curzon. Led by Tom Johnston, the editor of the newly launched weekly *Forward* (which I consider in depth in Chapter 4), the small number of socialist students could not muster enough votes for a Hardie victory, but the episode caused considerable consternation among the university's professors and the editorial staff at the *Glasgow Herald*. Set against the wider backdrop of the Great Unrest and the Liberal government's attempt to meet working-class demands with modest social reform, the episode offers an ideologically potent microcosm of symbolic class conflict and liberal-imperialist attempts at class harmonisation. Furthermore, the clash illustrates how aspects of the public sphere's refeudalization can be explained as a direct response to political challenges from rival publics rather than by the structural integration and indistinction of state and civil society,

[90] John Foster, 'Strike Action and Working-Class Politics on Clydeside 1914–1919', *International Review of Social History*, 35.1 (1990), pp. 33-70 (p. 61).

as Habermas originally thought: 'The downfall of the public sphere […] had its source in the structural transformation of the relationship between the public sphere and the private realm in general'.[91]

Johnston enrolled at the University of Glasgow because he felt himself 'in need of the higher culture in moral philosophy and political economy' and attended classes by Professor Sir Henry Jones (as did John Maclean) and Professor William Smart. Henry Jones had begun as a cobbler in Wales but had become a 'disciple and friend of Edward Caird' and later took up the chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, where, 'discoursing upon the Hegelian Dialectic' in his lectures, he exercised a 'tremendous influence over his students'.[92] Jones was greatly disturbed when his favoured candidate, Lloyd George, was challenged by Keir Hardie in the 1908 rectorial election. Johnston, as chairman of the University Socialist Society, played an instrumental role in Hardie's unsuccessful bid. Interestingly, this symbolic challenge from the socialist students disturbed and influenced pedagogical practice within the university: 'as the election day drew nearer, Sir Henry could the less disguise his irritation, and would interlard his lectures with what he considered conclusive swipes at Socialist doctrine'.[93]

The ideological project of Caird and his disciples, which alongside Jones included Richard Haldane (later Lord), was articulated in a leading article in the *Glasgow Herald* published after the rectorial elections. A leader-writer reflected on the university's role in promoting citizenship and lauded Caird for his past efforts to 'draw the various classes of society more closely together, and to inspire young men with an enthusiasm for the service of the State and of their fellows'.[94] The more precise content of the British Hegelian theory of citizenship as promoted within a middle-class public sphere stretching from the printed page of the *Glasgow Herald* to the lecture halls of the University of Glasgow where Haldane addressed students (including marginal dissidents such as Johnston, James Maxton, and Maclean), was summarised in the paper's leader-columns. In the words of the leader-writer, Caird held that a 'true philosophy of life […] teaches us that we must renounce an isolated and selfish existence', and thus Haldane, addressing students at the University of Glasgow,

> […] was only making an adroit though very natural application of the principles of Edward Caird's teaching as to the relation between philosophy and life, between the atmosphere of a university and the world of citizenship, when he appealed

[91] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 142-43.
[92] Thomas Johnston, *Memories* (Collins, 1952), p. 41.
[93] Ibid. pp. 41-42.
[94] 'Universities and Citizenship', *Glasgow Herald*, 16 November 1908, p. 6.

> before the Glasgow students to the Hegelian philosophy in support of that soldier spirit which makes a young man feel that it is a sweet and seemly thing to die for one's country.[95]

This passage contains a truncated symbolic history of the bourgeois public sphere – swiftly transitioning from the Kantian register of a 'world of citizenship' to the high imperial exhortation of 'soldier spirit' and duty to state and country – which effectively displays the reframing and revision of its normative ideals to suit the material needs of a post-bourgeois audience. As Robert Anderson and Stuart Wallace note, '[i]mperial awareness was strong among [Scottish] students, not least for career reasons', opportunities that also required ideological motivation, which Haldane's militaristic public service ethos sought to supply.[96] But the emphasis on a hardened soldier spirit also suggests a defensive posture formed in response to both external and internal challengers to the capitalist project of empire.[97] The dialectical relationship between this late bourgeois public sphere and its rival publics is shown concretely in an account of Jones's lectures by the young editor of *Forward*. During the rectorial elections at Glasgow, a fierce discursive struggle swung from the lecture theatre to the printed page, and back again, as Johnston later recalled:

> When [Jones] would make (as I thought) particularly controversial or questionable assertions I would go away back to the Students' Settlement […] and indite long argumentative epistolary retorts, which I always knew he had read from the way his eye would smoulder as it rested upon me next morning. Then he would start out his lecture, and after a few moments, perhaps on Plato, would suddenly go on: "And if I may make an observation upon this subject, with Mr. Johnston's very kind permission…"[98]

At stake in this internal clash within a key institution of the old bourgeois public sphere, was the training and formation of a character type ready and willing to defend the boundaries of a limited and transforming public sphere. Notably, the university was as much preoccupied with this defensive project of ultimately limiting and moderating deliberation on matters of common concern, as with the education of critical rationality or the pursuit of enlightenment.

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Robert Anderson and Stuart Wallace, 'The Universities and National Identity in the Long Nineteenth Century, C. 1830-1914', in *The Edinburgh History of Education in Scotland,* ed. by Robert Anderson, Mark Freeman, and Lindsay Paterson (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 265-85 (p. 281).
[97] For a recent account of both the frequent insurgencies against colonial rule and how 'resistance to empire and the crises it generated shaped dissent around the imperial project within Britain', see Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (Verso, 2019), p. 448.
[98] Johnston, p. 42. I have not been able to find these writings in *Forward*, so they could have been written for a different publication.

In his revision of Habermas's original public sphere model, Eley stresses the 'ambiguities' of the liberal departure and the 'fragility' of its commitments to public contestation on matters of common concern.[99] Focussing on the period between 1760 and 1850 when the classical public sphere was consolidated, he writes that 'the participants in the bourgeois public always faced two ways […]: forward in confrontation with the old aristocratic and royal authorities, but also backward against the popular/plebeian elements already in pursuit'.[100] During the industrial strife of the Great Unrest, the Liberal government of 1906 attempted to meet demands for social reform by trade unions and the emerging Labour Party with moderate social-welfare reforms (including old age pensions, labour exchanges meant to reduce unemployment, national health insurance, and some child protection legislation, particularly via the 1908 Scottish Education Act). To the *Glasgow Herald*, this development presented a considerable threat which it urged and mobilised its readership to contain in another leading article in the 1908 post-rectorial election issue. Appearing immediately next to the article advocating Haldane's project of citizenship based on a 'soldier spirit', the anonymous, authoritative editorial voice of public opinion thunders:

> A defeat of Socialism [at the polls] must be followed by a crusade against the Socialist ideal on the part of those to whom individualism is as the breath of existence. […] The most dangerous heresy that is afloat in the public mind and on the public tongue is that a certain measure, or at least a tincture, of Socialism is necessary if the power of the country is to be carried on so as to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number.[101]

The 'heresy' must be 'coped with or destroyed', and the leader writer implores the readers (employers and managers, officials and high-ranking police and military figures) to pursue a vigorous surveillance-effort to discover 'the exact extent of the revolutionary excitement in our midst, the more so that the word revolution is being more carefully kept in the background than it used to be'.[102] In the same November 1908 issue, a report features the newly formed Anti-Socialist Union of Great Britain, which seeks the 'disintegration' of the socialist movement through 'economic and political education' and has established a school for the training of 'a special brigade of anti-Socialist speakers' alongside a publication department and an 'intelligence department'.[103] Surveillance and education are

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[99] Eley, p. 321.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Leading article, 'Socialists and the Socialist Ideal', *Glasgow Herald*, 16 November 1908, p. 6.
[102] Ibid.
[103] 'THE FIGHT AGAINST SOCIALISM. – SCHEME OF PROPAGANDA', *Glasgow Herald*, 16 November 1908, p. 12.

closely fused in this employer-led effort which points backwards historically to privately funded moral improvement projects like Lord Brougham's Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and forward to the Scottish Economic League's educational interventions in the 1920s, which I consider below. It was in this tense context that R.H. Tawney, while researching the problem of juvenile delinquency in Glasgow circa 1908, wrote leading articles for the *Glasgow Herald*. As J.M. Winter writes with reference to a letter by Tawney to William Beveridge, Tawney wrote 'radical leaders' for the *Glasgow Herald* 'until the public response forced the paper, in Tawney's words, to hold up "its hands at my depravity" and to restrict his contributions to signed articles'.[104] Judging from this anecdote, public opinion at the *Glasgow Herald* was not formed one-directionally by ideologically severe editors or proprietors (who, after all, allowed Tawney to take on the mantle of the editorial 'we'), but was shaped through feedback from its core readership.[105]

In what follows, I turn to the *Glasgow Herald*'s role in mediating the response of local authorities and employers to the strike movement demanding a 40-hour working week, which culminated tragically in the 1919 Battle of George Square. The response mediated by the *Glasgow Herlad* was threefold: first, a strategy of policing centred on surveillance and law and order which first took shape in the wake of the Radical War of 1820 reemerged on the public agenda; second, mediated forms of representation and political leadership were promoted as a route of integration into the economic and administrative systems; thirdly, and connected to the model of policing, strategies for intervention in the proletarian public centred on education were formulated and promoted in the commercial press. I treat each aspect in turn.

2.4 Policing the Public Sphere

State-administered policing of working-class protest was an interest with a long tradition at the editorial office of the *Glasgow Herald*. As Benchimol has shown in a recent essay on the role of the *Glasgow Herald* in policing the urban industrial order in the West of Scotland in the aftermath of the 'Radical War' of 1820, the relationship between the newspaper and the civil authorities was not so much confrontational as symbiotic.[106] This symbiotic relationship is best seen through the then chief editor, Samuel Hunter, who in

[104] F. M. Winter, 'R.H. Tawney's Early Political Thought', *Past & Present*, 47.1 (1970), pp. 71-96 (pp. 73-74).
[105] Despite having trawled the years 1907-1908 in attempts to locate Tawney's contributions (signed or unsigned), or conspicuous letters to editor complaining about the editorial line, I have not been able to find any solid candidates.
[106] Benchimol, 'Policing the Industrial Order in the West of Scotland'.

addition to his position at the *Glasgow Herald* was also a magistrate, and personally appeared before Glasgow Town Council with the offer of recruiting a citizen militia called the Glasgow Volunteer Sharpshooters, with himself as colonel commander.[107] Hunter first drew on reports of the Peterloo clash in Manchester in 1819 to advocate 'a militarised response to ensure public safety' in the event of similar unrest in Glasgow in a manner that echoed the views of Henry Monteith, the Lord Provost of Glasgow.[108] Then, in the aftermath of the Radical War, Hunter used the *Glasgow Herald* as a public print platform to promote a model of intelligence-led and preventative policing focussed on surveillance of political activities among working-class radical groups, a model that the 1821 Glasgow Police Act would later enshrine.[109] In a modernisation project headed by local civil authorities which prioritised the maintenance of industrial order by means of preventative and surveillance-focussed policing, the *Glasgow Herald* 'materialised the voice of this civil authority' as Benchimol puts it.[110] A century after the Radical War the *Glasgow Herald* and the local authorities in Glasgow were again faced by a working-class challenge in the form of strike action and protests of considerable magnitude, culminating in the 1919 Battle of George Square. As I seek to show, the *Glasgow Herald*'s intervention in directing critical public opinion to the local authorities' police response in the aftermath of the Battle of George Square was a continuation of the role of the newspaper as the voice of civil authority in moments of industrial crisis.

The Clyde Workers' Committee was formed in 1915 as a body of shop-stewards directly representing workers within factories across Clydeside, and was originally focussed on contesting a number of war-time restrictions on customary worker's rights (primarily the leaving-certificates introduced by the Munitions Act of 1915 which restricted the workers' right to freely leave employment, but the introduction of both new machinery circumventing the need for more skilled labour and the introduction of female labour on lower rates also played a role in the grievances grouped under the headline of 'dilution').[111] The Clyde Workers' Committee reappeared in force in 1919 when it organised strike action across industries to demand a 40-hour working week. As John Foster argues, what was significant about this strike was both its scale and political character, with the aim of 'a radical reduction of hours to forty in order, quite explicitly, to stop the re-emergence of an unemployed reserve and maintain the bargaining strength of

[107] Ibid. p. 56.
[108] Ibid. pp. 57-58.
[109] Benchimol, 'Policing the Industrial Order in the West of Scotland', pp. 61-63.
[110] Ibid. p. 63.
[111] For a good summary of the scholarly debates and the key events, see Joseph Melling, 'Whatever Happened to Red Clydeside?', *International Review of Social History*, 35.1 (1990), pp. 3-32.

labour against capital' but also 'to ensure that discharged soldiers were found jobs in industry'.[112] The *Glasgow Herald* reported that a 'crowd of huge dimensions' assembled on George Square on January 31st.[113] There, according to the report, 'an altercation occurred with the police through the stoppage of the tramcar service […] As a result the police drew their batons and made several charges'.[114] A riotous mood followed, and many of the shop stewards were arrested and eventually deported.[115] To quell unrest the military was called in and on the following day, as Keith Aitken observes, 'the military presence in Glasgow had escalated to 12,000 troops, 100 troop lorries and six tanks, and the city was under virtual martial law'.[116] When police with the backing of military forces had succeeded in dispersing the strikers, the *Glasgow Herald* carried triumphant reports of 'Order Restored' on February 3rd.[117] What interests me at present is how this event can be understood as a physical clash of public sphere models, constituted ideologically on the basis of conflicting interests, and how the *Glasgow Herald* mediated public opinion throughout the clash.

On January 31st, the *Glasgow Herald*'s editorial attention was focussed particularly on what had been a strategic retreat by the Lord Provost two days prior to the baton charge to buy time for military reinforcements to arrive before attempting a violent confrontation. The key issue was this: 'The Lord Provost was waited upon on Wednesday [January 29th, 1919] by a deputation which demanded under threats that he should communicate with the Government, and – to but it bluntly – invite intervention'.[118] The Lord Provost's error, from the perspective of the *Glasgow Herald*, was to accept receipt of a letter of demands from the strikers addressed to the government, rather than taking up a more resolute position focussing on 'the maintenance of law and order [which] is the primary duty of the authorities, and the one which at all costs they must see is vigilantly and adequately discharged'.[119] The interventions proposed by the strikers were put in vague terms, and as recorded in the telegram sent by the Lord Provost to the War Cabinet, the delegation

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[112] Foster, p. 54.
[113] 'GLASGOW STREET FIGHTING', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 5. According to eyewitness accounts, some 60,000 protestors assembled on George Square, see Foster. p. 55.
[114] 'GLASGOW STREET FIGHTING', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 5.
[115] Foster, p. 55.
[116] Keith Aitken, *The Bairns O' Adam: The Story of the STUC* (Polygon, 1997), p. 81.
[117] 'THE STRIKE POSITION', *Glasgow Herald*, 3 February 1919, p. 7.
[118] 'The Lord Provost and the Strike', *Glasgow Herald*, 31 January 1919, p. 6.
[119] 'The Strike and its Sequel', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 4. Iain McLean discusses the disagreement between the Lord Provost and the editors of the *Glasgow Herald*: the Lord Provost clarified his strategic reasons for receiving the strikers' letter before the Town Council where he directly addressed the *Glasgow Herald*'s complaints, seemingly to the satisfaction of the editors because the leading articles carry no further complaints after the 6th of February when the Lord Provost made his address. See Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (John Donald, 1983), p. 173.

'wished the Government to intervene with the employers in order to secure a reduction of the working hours to forty […] so as to provide for those who had been demobilised and are without employment'.[120] The ideological conflict of interest thus centred on what forms of state intervention in private economic affairs were legitimate. Both the public represented by the *Glasgow Herald* and the proletarian public sphere as represented by the CWC seem to have regarded state intervention into private economic affairs as legitimate to the extent that interventions aligned with the interests of their respective publics. The *Glasgow Herald* favoured the interventions made by the Ministry of Munitions in industrial affairs in war time (including the controversial leaving certificates mentioned above), but not intervention for the purposes of averting working-class hardship after the war, while the CWC took the opposite view on both counts. The January 1919 iteration of this ideological conflict was not resolved through deliberation, but expressed itself in the physical confrontation between protestors and a militarised system of policing. As much as it was a conflict of reasoned interests, it was a clash of public sphere models.

After the restoration of order, a leader-writer offered the following concluding commentary on the events which sets out the requirements for deliberation on the *Glasgow Herald*'s public sphere model:

> Trade unionism has to set itself right with the community before even discussion of its grievances can be considered. Such has been the legitimate view of the employers and of the Government, and this attitude has been universally endorsed by the public. […] Reason will prevail where mere force without the backing of principle must fail.[121]

From the *Glasgow Herald*'s perspective, public deliberation must be deferred until all parties conform, under threat of police intervention, to its preferred model of discourse. This is the 'principle' separating legitimate from illegitimate use of force alluded to in the last sentence, which is burdened by irony given its communication within the context of a city placed under military curfew. The project of setting trade unionism 'right with the community' had already commenced in the pages of the paper through a combination of critical commentary on the cultural forms of working-class protest and a careful publicity-curation of working-class representation. A main line of criticism turned against the cultural mode of representation favoured within the proletarian public sphere of a direct and embodied representation concretely occupying public spaces like George Square:

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[120] The National Archives of the UK, London, CO 5/690, War Cabinet no. 522, 30 January 1919, CAB 23/9/9, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk> [accessed 20 October 2024].
[121] 'A Defined Issue', *Glasgow Herald*, 3 February 1919, p. 6.

> […] it is sufficient for our purpose to point out that by a display of overwhelming numbers the ingenious authors of the strike have managed to bring out from the various works large numbers of men who have no sympathy with the movement and only asked to be left alone.[122]

This is an attempt to render embodied representation suspect by projecting, in print, privatistic motivations onto a section of the workers. The editorials sought to demarcate the leadership of the strike movement as not just an unrepresentative minority (despite many of them being trusted and known stewards elected by workers on the shopfloor) but also as violent, as the following passage illustrates:

> One of the strike leaders audaciously asserted yesterday that the men who for nearly a week have been holding a lethal weapon at the throats of the citizens "wanted to conduct their agitation peaceably." […] No breach of the peace would be intended; the unhappy member of the majority who believed that rational argument, or it may be the law itself, might have something to say on behalf of the odd million of orderly citizens, would simply run his head against a brick wall and come off with damage of his own creation.[123]

At play in the argumentative strategy is a contrast between the silent, anonymous, disapproving majority enabled by figuring the subject of public opinion as a large number of anonymous readers (the 'odd million of orderly citizens'), and the physically present, embodied representation of the protesting workers ('a display of overwhelming numbers'). The conflict was thus, in part, a clash of political cultures and modes of representation, and an attempt on the part of the part of the *Glasgow Herald* to encourage its own readership to reshape the culture of its rival working-class public. I return to this project in more detail in the next section where I discuss educational interventions mediated by the *Glasgow Herald*. For now, I want to consider some tactics of publicity as display which the paper engaged in.

As part of his refeudalization-thesis, Habermas argues that the concept of public opinion rooted in the 'critical authority' of a communicating public was 'liquidated' and instead took on the meaning of a 'staged display' on the model of advertising of not just capital's commodities, but of political representatives as well.[124] In the immediate aftermath of the clash between police and protestors on George Square in January 1919, the *Glasgow Herald* was set up as the stage for such political display. The leader-writer deplores how 'under the present conditions, authority is two-voiced' within the labour movement, as the 'moderate trade unionists are somewhat inarticulate, and are apt to be

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[122] 'The Strike and its Sequel', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 4.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 236.

apathetic unless definitely stimulated', and asserts that '[n]ever had a man of character and strength such an opportunity: the following is ready; public opinion will add its unanimous support'.[125] It is worth noting that this reified usage of 'public opinion' as an entity providing ready acclamation rests on a partial denial of an embodied process of discussion. In the following day's issue, the voice of an engineer dissenting with the strike movement had been selected for inclusion among the letters to the editor, to which the leading article made a conscious gesture: 'In our correspondence columns to-day will be found a letter from an engineer making the melancholy confession that a contract worth three-quarters of a million sterling has been lost to Glasgow owing to the malevolent activities of its Bolshevists'.[126] A model worker-representative was thus produced in an effort to deny any material conflict of interests between employers and employed, much like the opposition between the 'producers' and the 'idle' had facilitated class harmonisation between industrialists and workers within the ideology of an older radicalism. Of even greater significance, J.R. Clynes answered the call to attach himself to the acclamation-ready public opinion prepared in the *Glasgow Herald*. Then a minister in the wartime cabinet who would soon become the leader of the Labour Party, he submitted an article which appeared on the *Glasgow Herald*'s leader page. There, he aligned himself with a nebulous print public opinion by dismissing the rationality of 'massed meetings […] dominated by men who fail to see wither they are going' and passing a 'shock of resolutions', while offering a promise to the readers of the *Glasgow Herald*: 'No Labour Government, if one were in power, could yield to demands made in this way from any class which might present them'.[127] There is evidence to suggest that this opinion management was a concerted effort between local employers and the press. Foster records that a joint emergency conference between two major employers' associations was held on January 31st, where plans for a press response to the strike were elaborated:

> The editors of the Scottish press were to be called in and told to effect a "judicious cutting down of statements concerning the unofficial strike and eliminating from reports the names of the strike leaders". Those official trade-union leaders not implicated in the strike had been interviewed and told to issue statements indicating

[125] 'A Call for Leadership', *Glasgow Herald*, 31 January 1919 p. 6.
[126] 'The Strike and its Sequel', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 4.
[127] 'SPIRIT OF REVOLT – BARGAINS MADE TO BE KEPT', *Glasgow Herald*, 5 February 1919 p. 6. Clyne's proposed solution for moderating the demands was for the Trade Union Congress, which he deems the most representative body of the workers in Britain on nominal grounds with a membership of some five million trade unionists, to convene 'in order that a well-thought-out policy can be submitted on behalf of labour to the Government and to employers, backed up by the guarantee of the rank and file who are capable of conforming to plans formulated in their interests and requiring their loyalty to advance.'

> that unless the strike was called off all agreements entered into since 1914 would be scrapped.[128]

Delegates from the employers' conference had reprimanded the Lord Provost on much the same lines as the *Glasgow Herald*'s leader-writer cited above.[129] Furthermore, against the position of the strike leaders, George Outram & Co.'s mass circulation *Glasgow Evening Times* was used to announce an early end to the strike.[130] Such techniques of opinion management as opposed to critical deliberation among dissenting interlocutors was enabled by a capital-intensive and technologically advanced system of print media, and would emerge as an important feature of twentieth-century politics. While its effectiveness in securing legitimacy in the ways hoped for by some newspaper proprietors and politicians should not be overestimated, it presented a considerable challenge for oppositional newspapers and altered the conditions for oppositional publics. The difficulties presented by the strategic deployment of the newspapers prompted theorisations of the manufacture of public opinion, a theme I return to in Chapter 4.

To conclude this section, the *Glasgow Herald*'s mediating role in the aftermath of the Battle of George Square in 1919 (a repetition of the precedent set in 1820) presents a useful corrective to Habermas's conceptual account of the liberal-bourgeois public sphere's transformation from its Enlightenment-era normative ideal to its refeudalized twentieth-century reality. In a key passage, Habermas describes the transition thusly:

> Originally publicity guaranteed the connection between rational-critical public debate and the legislative foundation of domination, including the critical supervision of its exercise. Now it makes possible the peculiar ambivalence of a domination exercised through the domination of nonpublic opinion: it serves the manipulation *of* the public as much as legitimation *before* it. Critical publicity is supplanted by manipulative publicity.[131]

In the events of 1919 just considered, the *Glasgow Herald* indeed turned critical publicity to the authorities, but it did so to mobilise public opinion for stricter policing of the articulation of working-class grievances and ultimately to disrupt and defer public deliberations. The form of opinion mobilised by the *Glasgow Herald* in both the leading articles' references to a spectral and silent majority of orderly citizens constituting the common interest, and the paper's publicity-curation and display of working-class

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[128] Foster, p. 56.
[129] Ibid.
[130] McLean, p. 174.
[131] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 177-78.

representation, are important examples of what Habermas terms 'nonpublic opinion' and regards as hallmarks of a refeudalized public sphere.

2.5 Educational Debates and Cultural Intervention

Central to the project of policing the public sphere in Scotland was also the education of working-class people. The intense educational interest within the *Glasgow Herald*'s public is highlighted in post-war reconstruction debates, which also illustrate the paper's compartmentalised educational vision for the nation.

In 1918 the leading page of the *Glasgow Herald* was taken up by discussions on post-war reconstruction, a significant theme in the public sphere which actualised matters of broad common concern, including social-welfare protections and educational provision, and which set questions regarding the future direction of travel for British society on the public agenda. To a newspaper like the *Glasgow Herald*, which sought to mediate and moderate public discourse, the topic was especially important given the wide horizon of possibilities it opened up. Thus, a leading article commented on a report on reconstruction recently issued by the Labour Party, from which it selected proposals including '[t]he universal enforcement of the national minimum', 'the democratic control of industry', and 'surplus wealth for the common good'.[132] These were alarming suggestions coming from the Labour Party, and the leader writer began by entertaining the concerns of the report, while carefully seeking to slide the proposals away from concrete policy to the realm of utopian fantasy, permissible on paper and in private thought:

> Re-creation rather than re-construction appears to have been the object of the authors; the ground plan of a new earth on millennial lines is their achievement – on paper. One does not make these comments derisively. Politics without idealism is a body without a soul. There can be very few who are so content with things as they are as to be immune from that kind of day-dreaming which peoples the future with graceful fantasies […] Even the millionaire, one suspects, midst pleasures and palaces though he may roam, has a little cottage in Utopia in which he occasionally dwells.[133]

Though unsigned the article may have been written by William Power, a regular leader-writer in the period, who recorded the romantic dreams he harboured of such pastoral idyll in his autobiography, fantasises which he sought to partially realise privately through

[132] 'A New Earth', *Glasgow Herald*, 4 January 1918, p. 4.
[133] Ibid.

country rambles and by cultivating his garden on the outskirts of Glasgow.[134] The writer used the leader-page as a platform for reinforcing the boundary between an intimate private sphere of cultivation, and a public sphere of discussion with a restricted agenda:

> Yet we confess to being staggered by the vastness of the schemes submitted on behalf of the New Social Order, for what is aimed at appears to go much further than the mere structure of society. It is society itself which is to be cast in the melting pot.[135]

The writer mobilises a tradition of conservative responses to both movements for reform (in the manner of Burke) and to capitalist modernity (in the manner of Carlyle), and casts the reconstruction programme proposed by the Labour Party as a mechanical apparatus incompatible with organic humanity:[136] 'the doubt cannot be repressed that if human nature goes into the melting pot it will come out of it not purged and refined, but the same mixture of dross and good metal that went in'.[137] Meanwhile, the leader writer seeks to press the programme for social reconstruction designed for collective application into a seriously distorting individual mould: 'The individual capitalist is to be wiped out of existence in order that the individual labourer may benefit'.[138] The final verdict of the leading article is two-pronged: 'We doubt the expediency of this programme, and we more than doubt its morality'.[139] What kind of public sphere intervention is made via the *Glasgow Herald* here?

One suggestion was given by a contemporary reader. In a close critique of the quality daily newspaper typical of the socialist press, a commentator in the British Socialist Party's weekly journal *The Call* argued that the leader-writer engaged in an ideological conflation of purposive rationality and normative validity: 'the doubting "WE" is the capitalist, to whom morality and expediency are synonymous'.[140] But to understand the role played by the *Glasgow Herald* in a segmented and ruptured Scottish public sphere, it

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[134] Describing his winter commute from East Kilbride to Buchanan Street sometime after 1909, Power writes: 'From a Christmas-card landscape of sparkling snow and blue sky I would descend into a cold inferno of black pungent fog, from which, at night, I would come up into a glory of constellations. I was reading Dante, and as I came off the train I would murmur, "*E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle*"'. Power, p. 82.
[135] 'A New Earth', *Glasgow Herald*, 4 January 1918, p. 4.
[136] Consider Burke's (in)famous line directed against revolutionaries in France and at home: 'Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude', Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 79. For Carlyle's thoughts on the 'Age of Machinery', wherein 'Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand', see Thomas Carlyle, 'Signs of the Times', *Edinburgh Review*, 49.98 (1829), pp. 439-459 (pp. 442-444).
[137] 'A New Earth', *Glasgow Herald*, 4 January 1918, p. 4.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Caledun, 'Topical Pars from Scotland', *The Call*, 10 January 1918, p. 4. Consulted at <https://www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk> [accessed 28 October 2024].

is important to consider the audience primarily exposed to the leading page of this quality newspaper. While the one-sided utilitarianism, described in *The Call* as a conflation of functional with moral validity, may well have been commonly experienced by participants in the proletarian public sphere confronted by the ordinary readers of the *Glasgow Herald* in their professional roles (I consider the factory welfare supervisor in detail below) what the *Glasgow Herald* leader-writer is more directly engaged in is the construction of a scheme of compensation between a private, intimate sphere protected from the reifying effects experienced by participants in the economic and bureaucratic subsystems. That is, the *Glasgow Herald* addresses a community of readers in need of a model of subjectivity capable of reconciling functional demands with a lifeworld comprising a wider range of validity spheres, including normative ones.

One such model, which resembles that advanced in the *Glasgow Herald* above which insists on a separation, however weak, between 'morality' and 'expediency', was put forward by the German liberal-conservative philosopher Joachim Ritter. In addressing the works of Ritter, Habermas offers an illuminating presentation of the compensatory ideological model, here rooted in historicism:

> [The] subjective freedom that arises in the mode of diremption can only be shielded against the risks of total socialization and bureaucratization if the devalued forces of tradition take on a compensatory role. […] The continuity of history *outwardly* interrupted is to be preserved in the sphere of *inward* freedom.[141]

By ceding ground to the importance of future-oriented fantasies the *Glasgow Herald* leader-writer acknowledges needs constitutive of the lifeworld, and by displacing these into an individualised inward realm the reader of the *Glasgow Herald* is provided with a model of subjectivity capable of compensating for shortfalls in bureaucratised or systematised areas of life. Within the *Glasgow Herald*'s own cultural canon, Carlyle had developed an influential ideological programme of Romantic *Bildung* before the British public which continued to resonate with upper-middle-class audiences into the twentieth century, which, as Benchimol argues in a close reading of Carlyle's 1827 review essay 'State of German Literature' in the *Edinburgh Review*, posed self-cultivation 'as a morally attractive surrogate for political or material transformation'.[142] But in the process of surrogating private self-cultivation for material reform, the agenda of the public sphere becomes restricted, and its critical-rational function weakened. Furthermore, the form of

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[141] Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. by Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1990), p. 72.
[142] Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Ashgate, 2010), p. 134.

exalted cultural education for a limited elite seen in the *Glasgow Herald*'s literary pages and in its editorial ideology had, as Benchimol argues, a flip side in the educational programmes designed for working-class audiences by Lord Brougham which concentrated on 'popular cultural regulation' through middle-class directed initiatives like the SDUK.[143]

The weakening of the print public sphere's critical function is visible in the issue of the following day, where the leading article commented on a congress held in Glasgow devoted to discussing the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act. As Lindsay Paterson suggests, the 1918 Act has been the object of much subsequent celebration (for including Catholic schools in the national system, for requiring schools to pay attention to Gaelic language, and for explicitly acknowledging women's electoral eligibility), to which Paterson adds rather triumphantly:

> The Act represented Scottish education's – and therefore Scotland's – firm choice of liberal universalism as its preferred way of entering the age of the welfare state. It was not laissez-faire liberalism but it was also not socialism or even, in a sense, social democracy. It was a Scottish predilection for common but individual rights, for freedom that was constrained by conformity to social norms. It was Adam Smith and David Hume for a modern age.[144]

The gesture towards the Scottish Enlightenment heritage is not misplaced, and as seen from its reception in the *Glasgow Herald* below, the Act can be understood as the belated passing into law of Lord Brougham's utilitarian programme of popular education, including the key features of cultural regulation that Francis Jeffrey had worked out ideologically in the *Edinburgh Review*, as argued by Benchimol.[145] The proposed legislation aimed to raise the school leaving age, to increase the number of qualified teachers, to improve teacher-training, to reduce average class-sizes, and to expand provision of continuation classes for adults. The *Glasgow Herald* leader-writer was comfortable to convey with approval the key features of the proposed legislation, while simply stating the overarching goal towards which the legislation was purposely directed:

> This is part of a great reconstruction scheme for enabling the nation to face the tasks that peace will bring. To delay taking steps now […] would be to court defeat in the contests that mark peaceful international rivalry and to undermine the prosperity and influence of the British Empire.[146]

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[143] Ibid. p. 130.
[144] Lindsay Paterson, 'The Significance of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918', *Scottish Affairs,* 27.4 (2018), pp. 401-24 (p. 404).
[145] See Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics*, pp. 118-30.
[146] 'Education Reform', *Glasgow Herald*, 5 January 1918, p. 4.

Here, the role of the *Glasgow Herald* is no longer that of a forum for discussion, but that of a platform for conveying conclusions already reached by experts out of public sight. Within this reconstruction scheme designed to further the prosperity and influence of the empire, the function of elementary education was to meet a two-fold demand, one 'of industry, trade, and commerce for better equipped and trained and more intelligent workers' and another of 'the nation for citizens of a higher physical, moral, and intellectual development', both of which 'makes it imperative that the school should have undisturbed possession of the child and the youth for a longer period'.[147] The purpose of adult education was similarly framed around the worker and citizen roles. Thus, continuation classes aim at two things:

> […] first at making workers more efficient; training competent foremen and other subordinate supervisors; and discovering those that for various reasons have not realised till a comparatively late period their fitness for advanced instruction; and secondly, at enabling men and women to become more helpful citizens and better fitted to employ their leisure in a rational way.[148]

Compared to the clash over reconstruction enacted in the leading article of the previous day, where the intervention of the Labour Party had put the aims of reconstruction into question, a query which the leader-writer sought more to displace than to argue with before its readers, this piece on educational reconstruction is strikingly presented as an announcement more than an invitation to debate. An important point of potential contention was the transference of school-governance responsibility from the school boards to the counties. The school boards had permitted a degree of not just local autonomy over educational matters, but also of working-class representation which socialist critics worried the counties would not permit. Thus, while the labour movement had not launched a significant campaign against the legislation (introduced in war-time), *Forward* assiduously speculated on the reasons for removing the school boards: 'the chief reason assuredly is to curb the growing tendency of the working classes to use the School Boards and their powers for the economic well-being of the people'.[149] The advantages of the local school boards to the working-class seemed clear to the *Forward*'s editor, who underscored that whereas the new county boards would convene during daytime, the school boards 'could meet at night [so that] members did not lose a day's work in attending'.[150] No such concerns feature in the *Glasgow Herald*'s pages. Instead, the reform

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[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] 'SOCIALIST WAR POINTS', *Forward*, 8 March 1919, p. 1.
[150] Ibid. The editor stressed further potential advantages of the old, local democratic system: 'The feeding of the school children (consider its effect during strikes!); the introduction of such "readers" as Messrs. Collins'

is advocated on two grounds. The first reason for condoning these centralising reforms to educational administration 'is to be found in the modern views of national responsibility for child, youth, and adult welfare'.[151] Secondly, the old school boards have not 'initiated the numerous changes and amendments that have been found to be necessary'.[152] In other words, the educational reform is understood in apolitical terms as a national efficiency reform. The complaint regarding the previous day's leading article issued in the *Call*, to wit, that it conflates efficiency with normative validity, is more clearly on display in this commentary which reads like an acclamatory report represented before the public: 'The more the bill is pondered in its entirety the more convincing does the case for it become'.[153] The monophony of this commentary on the education Act suggests a difficulty in maintaining the critical element of rational discourse peculiar to the liberal public sphere model.

The failure to treat the act critically has to do with the specific relationship assumed between education and the public sphere in a context where education emerged as the last remaining institutional prerequisite for public sphere participation. With the ownership of private property significantly weakened as a criterion of participation, and exclusion on the basis of male gender considerably challenged by the Suffragette counterpublic, a print public sphere originally constituted by educated private men saw itself left with only one basis on which to construct a community of readers oriented to deliberation on matters of common concern. The importance of education to the integrity of this public sphere thus intensified to the point where it could not easily be admitted as a topic of critique within the quality press, and to the point where education would again be construed as a strategy of popular containment in a similar fashion to the SDUK's educational interventions in the radical plebeian phase. The strategic form of education-as-containment reemerged in stark form after the war, and after a key confrontation with the proletarian public on Clydeside. Reflecting on the aftermath of the unrest in January 1919, a leader-writer in the *Glasgow Herald* proposed the following:

> Would that strikers and all disaffected everywhere in these islands were compelled to sit down and study the bulletins and the lists of casualties for a day without a distracting thought. They would rise thrilled with new impulses and new visions – with an entirely new perspective in which farthings would be no bigger than the size of the minted coin and as light.[154]

"From Serf to Ruler"; the spending of public money upon baths; the growth of the refusal to appoint teachers because of their church membership or political opinions – these things do not please the governing classes'.

[151] 'Education Reform', *Glasgow Herald*, 5 January 1918, p. 4.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

[154] *Glasgow Herald*, 4 March 1915, p. 6.

The educational response mediated by the *Glasgow Herald* to the strikes and protests illustrate some of the key ways in which education was shaped into a set of techniques for pacifying integration of a threateningly autonomous working-class public. The role of the *Glasgow Herald* as public print platform for this project of ideological integration was that of a mediator between West of Scotland employers and a wider middle-class public. In the aftermath of the Battle of George Square, the *Glasgow Herald* received several letters to the editor from concerned citizens with proposals for how to best counteract the protests, some of which proposed educational remedies.[155] Thus, the signatory Harmony refers to a letter in *The Times* by Lynden Macassey, who asked 'Is there no one to teach labour?', to which the letter-writer responds:

> […] let me suggest that the Government, the Federation of Employers, and the trade union leaders appoint a band of able lecturers to talk out direct to workmen in every part of the country the principle of true economic welfare, the conservation of our world-wide trade, and how best to maintain and extend it. Action of this kind would tend to promote and inspire an atmosphere of harmony and confidence on every side, and at once counteract and eradicate from the minds of our workmen the false and evil teachings of Messrs Shinwell, Gallacher, Kirkwood and Co.[156]

On the same page as the leading article dealing with the events on George Square, an unsigned special article on the progress of welfare work on the Clyde appears, which begins by citing William Beardmore, owner of the Parkhead Forge and chairman of the Boys' Welfare Association, who recommends the employment of welfare officers in the factories:

> [The officer] must be a man of upright character, patient, tactful, a man of good temper, capable of acting sympathetically as friend and adviser: above all, he must be a man who can command the respect and entire confidence of the boys. He should organise their games, recreations, sports, and attend them, and should visit the boys in their homes occasionally, taking a part also in their private life. The result will be a better understanding between capital and labour.[157]

Problems had arisen with the large-scale factories, where master and employed gradually 'drifted into opposite camps, antagonistic to some extent'.[158] Welfare work had been taken

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[155] See 'Labour Unrest', *Glasgow Herald*, 11 February 1919, p. 3. Here, William G. Traquair writes in support of the letter writer Harmony. What the workman lacks is not loyalty, but 'means of acquiring the broader outlook commensurate with his responsibilities as a citizen' including, besides the lecturing advocated by Harmony, 'newspapers or weekly magazines' modelled on the success of wartime 'broadcast propaganda'. Another letter writer on the same page suggests that the churches could aid in this educational project by teaching 'brotherly love instead of class hatred'.
[156] 'Labour Unrest', *Glasgow Herald*, 8 February 1919, p. 3.
[157] 'WELFARE WORK – PROGRESS ON THE CLYDE', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 4.
[158] Ibid.

up first in Scotstoun by the shipbuilders Barclay, Curle and Co. in 1916, and subsequently welfare departments had been opened at Fairfield; Alexander Stephen and Sons, Linthouse; Napier and Miller's, Old Kilpatrick; Denny's, Dumbarton; Scotis', Greenock; and Beardmore's, Dalmuir.[159] The activities of these employer-controlled welfare departments mirror the reproductive activities autonomously controlled by the labour movement, including organised weekend trips to the countryside and provision of clubrooms. The provisions of the welfare department at Barclay's are listed in detail:

> (1) A recreation-room for the use of boys and apprentices. The room is well supplied with daily newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines, and also of a library consisting of technical books, fiction, books of travel, etc. The boys' supervisor, however, is always grateful to receive further additions – magazines and current literature – of a bright and wholesome nature and suitable reading for growing lads. (2) A lecture room, where lectures are given to a number of apprentices by the supervisor, dealing with their work in the yard and also with their duties as good citizens. The course consists of about 40 lessons on citizenship, industrial history, simple economics, and is carried on during the day in the company's time and at the company's expense. The apprentices not only receive payment for the time spent in the classroom, but are also eligible for special bonuses, and prizes for good timekeeping and special merit at their work and in the classroom. (3) A supervisor's office, where boys seeking employment are interviewed, and also where boys and apprentices may come with their troubles and grievances at any time, but preferably during the dinner hour, when the supervisor makes a point of always being in the recreation room to have a chat with his boys.[160]

To speculate on the provided reading matter, it could be that George Outram & Co. provided the newspaper readings (the daily *Glasgow Evening Times*, and the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*) while publishers focused on popular self-improvement literature like Chambers' supplied the books. The reference to travel literature is significant, given the genre's combined offering of temporary escape from the realities of a constricted life in the factory to imaginary worlds of adventure in the colonies. The Boy's Welfare Association published its own journal, *The Boy's Welfare Journal*, and the article-writer cites a supervisor writing for the journal. The surveillance role of the welfare supervisor can be seen in how he conducts interviews with the boys seeking employment: 'I find out all I can about himself, his school teacher, and his last employer'.[161] The article was perhaps originally conceived as a manual for other welfare supervisors reading *The Boy's Welfare Journal*, but displayed in the *Glasgow Herald* in the wake of the recent protests it takes on the role of an advertisement for employers and prospective supervisors. After submitting a

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[159] Ibid.
[160] 'WELFARE WORK – PROGRESS ON THE CLYDE', *Glasgow Herald*, 1 February 1919, p. 4.
[161] Ibid.

long list of the situations in which the welfare supervisor meets the boys within the factory, the writer seeks to reassure the readers: 'I meet the boys always and everywhere'.[162] Through the welfare department, the large modern factory and Bentham's panopticon merge.

The appearance of this special article in the *Glasgow Herald* on the day following the events on George Square, and its position in the column next to one of the leading articles agitating for stricter policing of working-class protest, reinforces the close ideological connection between policing and education. Furthermore, employer initiatives for industrial welfare here appear oriented at least as much to concerns over industrial order as to concerns over health and welfare.[163] The infrastructure set up by employers inside their factories served to keep close watch on not just the young workers, but came to be used as a carefully policed public sphere for the adult workers too. Thus, the highly targeted educational activities of the Scottish Economic League in the early 1920s made use of the 'welfare' infrastructures built up inside the factories during the war.

The West of Scotland branch of the Economic League was formed in 1921 by representatives of employers' associations for the purpose of making public interventions, in addition to facilitating the more covert types of control already exercised by employers' associations in the form of blacklisting, selective rehiring, vetting procedures, and through the welfare programmes inside factories.[164] In its overtly public interventionism, the Economic League can be understood as a successor to Lord Brougham's SDUK, albeit with a more narrow focus. McIvor and Paterson summarise the aims in the following words: 'to disseminate knowledge and understanding of classical, orthodox economics, commend individual enterprise and efficiency, defend and champion private ownership and diminish industrial unrest. The collectivist approach was castigated whilst individualism was praised.'[165] The educational methods adopted by the West of Scotland Economic League in the 1920s 'directly duplicated those of the left':

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[162] Ibid.

[163] For a study which views initiatives like the Boy's Welfare Association in the context of an emerging welfare state, with improved healthcare provision, see Vicky Long, *The Rise and Fall of the Healthy Factory: The Politics of Industrial Health in Britain, 1914-60* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[164] For an account of the wider role of employers' associations on Clydeside in the period, including the Scottish Economic League, see Arthur McIvor and Hugh Paterson, 'Combating the Left: Victimisation and Anti-Labour Activities on Clydeside, 1900-1939', in *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-50: Essays in Honour of Harry McShane, 1891-1988*, ed. by Robert Duncan and Arthur McIvor (John Donald, 1992), pp. 129-54. For a comprehensive history of the Economic League in the twentieth century with a national focus, including an account of the complex of smaller anti-Labour groups from whence it emerged, see Mike Hughes, *Spies at Work* (1in12 Publications, 2012). The most recent academic work on these rather shady (and difficult to research due to limited access to archives) organisations, see Christopher W. Miller, 'Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Economic League, Business Networks, and Organised Labour in War Planning and Rearmament', *Scottish Labour History*, 52.1 (2017), pp. 120-151.

[165] McIvor and Paterson, p. 143.

> Public meetings were arranged wherever a platform could be obtained; in halls, clubs, at street corners, factory gates, market places, parks and outside employment exchanges […] On occasions, employers brought in the League to provide a series of lectures for their workplace as part of the company "welfare" programme. Moreover, by the 1930s [the West of Scotland Economic League] were also organising special touring campaigns using motorised "flying squads" (apeing the clarion vans) and several speakers to saturate a particular town or region with propaganda.[166]

Via the infrastructure provided by the 'welfare programmes', they even mimicked the factory study-groups. These attempts, like those of the SDUK, were not entirely successful, and Economic League lecturers would sometimes suffer fierce intellectual challenge and ridicule from socialists.[167] While lecturers like C.H. Temple of the Scottish Economic League were thus engaged on the frontline of the clash of publics, the *Glasgow Herald* provided reinforcements behind the lines by playing a key advertising role for the League before its own more homogenous audience. The *Glasgow Herald* acted as a platform for announcing the arrival of the West of Scotland branch in October 1921. The announcement shows the close integration of the newspaper with large-scale industrial employers in the West of Scotland – key sources of advertising revenue for a newspaper which itself had become a major employer and commercial enterprise. But it also clarifies the importance of the relationship between the liberal public sphere and education of a specific integrative orientation (as seen above in the discussion on post-war reconstruction above), a relationship laid bare through the conflict enacted between the liberal public sphere model and a differently constituted proletarian public. I treat each aspect in turn.

The close relationship between the industrial employers and the *Glasgow Herald* is signalled by the ceremonial style of the announcement, as though made before a homogenous community of readers: 'The West of Scotland Economic League, the formation of which we announce today, has as the object of its existence the education of the community in sound political economy'.[168] The announcement is made not in the advertisement or public announcements section of the newspaper, but via the leading article. The pressure exerted in the advertising section in the first few pages of the paper, and on which it had come to increasingly depend after the repeal of the taxes on knowledge and the market dynamics this unleashed, was clearly making its way onto the leader-page, a site previously reserved for the representation of discursive public opinion. The

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[166] Ibid. p. 145.
[167] See 'Is the Worker Robbed? – Heckling an Anti-Sosh Lecturer – Challenge to Debate' in *Forward*, 26 March 1921, p. 3.
[168] 'Sound Economic Teaching', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 October 1921, p. 10.

consequence is a transition from critical to manipulative publicity, and a concept of public opinion severed from a communicative process of legitimation.

The overt challenge from the proletarian public to the capitalist economic system within which the *Glasgow Herald* was so deeply integrated actualised a conflict over interests. Against the backdrop of increased interest taken in economics among the working-class public the leader writer seeks to mobilise its own reading public for an educational confrontation. The study of economics, the writer argues, is no longer to be regarded 'as an abstruse science of little importance, fit to occupy the attention of the dilettante, but without practical interest for the businessman and of no vital concern to the community at large'.[169] The emergence of a separate and antagonistic public, however, means that 'the discovery and study of these [economic] principles has become the concern of everyone privileged to exercise the rights of citizenship'.[170] The writer devotes a considerable amount of column-space to describe the troubling rise of independent socialist study-circles:

> Unfortunately the first to appreciate the value for propaganda purposes of economic matters were those subversive elements which aim at a violent change in the constitution of society, and the effect of their activities has been to create in the minds of at least a large section of the working classes of the country an entirely false attitude to all problems of an economic nature. These extremists, as disciples of Karl Marx, have elevated his teaching to the rank of a dogma; […] anyone who denies the Marxian canon [is regarded as] deliberately sinning against the light, and that to maintain or even examine sympathetically any other economic thesis is to label oneself a "lackey of capitalism."[171]

Against the perceived dogmatic extremism of these subversive elements, the leader-writer recommends the inculcation of more enlightened qualities, 'the open mind, the absence of prejudice, and the faculty for discussion and patient investigation of facts', which every citizen should develop, because '[w]ithout them he cannot be called fit to exercise the rights conferred on him'.[172] From the perspective of the *Glasgow Herald*, the conflict lies between a public originally conceived as community of readers, here encompassing 'the businessman' and the 'community at large', but which in spite of its universal gesture is confronted by a wider public comprising 'everyone privileged to exercise the rights of citizenship'.[173] Caught within its own ideological limitations, it cannot permit a search for remedy in economic reform, and an open debate on the general interest, including what it

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[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] 'Sound Economic Teaching', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 October 1921, p. 10.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.

might be understood to be, is foreclosed. But caught within a liberal public sphere model, the *Glasgow Herald* is forced to frame the problem manifested by a ruptured public sphere as a problem of the constitution or make-up of the dissenting public and its interests. Hence the remedy to this clash of publics is sought in education; if the public sphere is the arena of debate on interests already formed, and if a conflict of interests opens up, then the solution must be to reshape these interests by education if possible, by policing if necessary. Real, material conflict is very difficult to fully admit on this public sphere model, a point of critique which has often been raised against Habermas's theory of the public sphere.[174] In this situation, the work assigned to the lecturers of the Economic League, and to the readers of *Glasgow Herald* employed in workplace management, is thus to engage the distant proletarian public directly in discussions modelled after the debating clubs and literary societies attended by the newspaper editors themselves, and while acknowledging that they may be met with 'suspicion', the leader-writer leaves the reader on an optimistic note: 'But with accuracy and moderation of statement and a readiness to invite and reply to discussion the difficulties should be triumphally surmounted'.[175] This emphasis on maintaining an open mind (and the assumption, here explicit, but elsewhere perhaps more implicit, of endemic narrow-mindedness and predilection for dogma among working-class learners) when promulgated by the Scottish Economic League may have had an adverse effect on more earnest attempts at adult education as practiced within the confines of the Workers' Educational Association. I return to this difficulty in a discussion of adult education debates in Chapter 4.

To conclude this chapter, important aspects of Habermas's refeudalization-thesis are reflected in the print culture of the *Glasgow Herald*. However, an important cause of the decay of the liberal-bourgeois public sphere formation was the confrontation with rival publics and their political claims and modes of representation, a dynamic underplayed by Habermas. The interrogation of the *Glasgow Herald*'s response to the strike of 1919, perhaps the greatest industrial crisis since the Radical War of 1820, illustrates how this public sphere formation's reaction to social crisis and working-class confrontation led it to take up a defensive posture and print practice exhibiting key traits of refeudalization. As seen through the post-bourgeois *Glasgow Herald*, Habermas's pessimistic narrative of bourgeois public sphere decline does not seem misplaced (even if he missed the full

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[174] The latest iteration of this critique comes from Chantal Mouffe who advances a rival concept of 'agonal public spheres', to which Habermas obliquely responds in Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Polity, 2023), pp. 16-17.

[175] 'Sound Economic Teaching', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 October 1921, p. 10.

structural dynamics of this development), a contrast that is further reinforced by the picture drawn by Benchimol of its Enlightenment-era predecessor, the *Glasgow Advertiser*, as a principled liberal publication confronting authority by the promotion of constitutional reform.[176] A confrontational enlightenment spirit was, however, continued by a different public sphere formation in the early twentieth century, and in the following chapters, I consider how proletarian publics responded to and sought to direct crisis through distinct intervention-driven print practises.

[176] Benchimol, 'Spirit of Liberal Reform'.

Chapter 3: *Socialist* (1902-1924)

In the previous chapter, I argued that the *Glasgow Herald* and the segmented commercial print public sphere it helped constitute was animated by a defensive stance towards the outsider publics it sought at once to incorporate as consumers, to educate or reshape into responsible citizens and loyal workers, and, should that fail, contain them by means of policing. I also argued that this response from the post-bourgeois public sphere is a more credible culprit for the disintegration of the public sphere than the merger of state and society assumed by Habermas to be the cause of public sphere decline. In this chapter, I turn to a publication (and a publisher) which aimed at constituting a proletarian public in the early decades of the twentieth century in Scotland, where it found most success in Glasgow. I argue that, unlike commercially motivated publishers like George Outram & Co., which sought to contain, moderate, and police public discourse, the *Socialist* was issued to stimulate and articulate working-class grievances. In doing so, it constituted an intervention-driven and crisis-oriented print culture, with a distinct mode of political representation and praxis of enlightenment. The archival material consulted for this chapter includes the physical holdings of the complete run of the *Socialist* in the National Library of Scotland, and the digital form of the same material available through the British Newspaper Archives.[1] As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the rich archives of Red Clydeside's periodical print have generally not been subject to the kind of print culture study afforded to the earlier plebeian public sphere in Britain.[2]

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[1] The *Socialist* has been frequently referenced by historians of the period seeking to elucidate the attitudes and opinions held by actors and eyewitnesses in the events of Red Clydeside, see for example James Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards' Movement* (Allen and Unwin, 1973); Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, (John Donald, 1983). It has also been used to reconstruct the early institutional history of a political party of consequence for the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain: Raymond Challinor, *The Origins of British Bolshevism* (Croom Helm, 1977); Walter Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900-21: The Origins of British Communism* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969); James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1968). Similarly, the outsized role played by former SLP members in the newly formed Communist Party of Great Britain has recently been investigated in John McIlroy and Alan Campbell, 'The Socialist Labour Party and the Leadership of Early British Communism', *Critique (Glasgow)*, 48.4 (2020), pp. 609-59. Intellectual historians of early Marxist thought in Britain also has frequent recourse to these archives, see: Stuart Macintyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain, 1917-1933* (Cambridge University Press, 1980); Edwin A. Roberts, *The Anglo-Marxists: A Study in Ideology and Culture* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1997); Jonathan Rée, *Proletarian Philosophers: Problems in Socialist Culture in Britain, 1900-1940* (Clarendon Press, 1984).

[2] A notable exception is Paul Griffin, who used the Socialist Labour Press's *Strike Bulletin* and *Worker* to argue for a spatially interconnected internationalist imaginary of solidarity on Clydeside in his doctoral thesis, see Paul Griffin, 'The Spatial Politics of Red Clydeside: Historical Labour Geographies and Radical Connections' (unpublished doctroal thesis, University of Glasgow, 2015). Studies which have considered the role of periodical print in the formation of the plebeian public sphere, though often focussed on the English context, include: Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Ashgate, 2010); Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Gareth Stedman Jones made an influential argument regarding the decline of Chartism. He posited that within the constitutionally oriented language of Chartism, working-class oppression and hardship was understood first and foremost as the result of political exclusion rather than a rigorous conception of economic exploitation at the point of production. This made Chartism vulnerable to strategic concessions from a state and parliament still based on a narrow franchise. Radicalism, Stedman Jones writes, 'was first and foremost a vocabulary of political exclusion whatever the social character of those excluded'.[3] Furthermore,

> […] the success of radicalism as the ideology of a mass movement would depend upon specific conditions, those in which the state and the propertied classes in their *political and legal capacity* could be perceived as the source of all oppression.[4]

After 1842, he argues, political power 'remained as concentrated as it had been before; bishops, lords and placemen were scarcely less entrenched':[5]

> But the tight link forged between the oppression of the working classes and the monopoly of political power exercised through the medium of "class legislation" – the essence of Chartist rhetoric – began to loosen. […] The labour market and the fate of the producer could no longer be presented simply as politically determined phenomena. Economics and politics were increasingly sundered and the embryonic features of mid-Victorian liberalism began to emerge.[6]

Those features included a relatively prosperous economy, reduction of taxes on consumption (especially the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846), and the distancing of the state from specific economic interests (Stedman Jones gives the examples of the Mines Act of 1842 and the Joint Stock Company and the Bank Charter Acts of 1844).[7] Stedman Jones's broader argument for a linguistic turn in British social history has been hotly debated, but as James Epstein suggests in an excellent review of Stedman Jones's work and the wider debate, *Languages of Class* (1983) 'offers an extremely plausible explanation for the eclipse of Chartism'.[8] For present purposes, Stedman Jones's account helps explain why Marx's writings, which give 'exploitation' a precise meaning within a highly systematic theory of surplus-value production, were received with much enthusiasm among groups of working-class readers towards the end of the nineteenth century. The

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[3] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 104.
[4] Ibid. p. 106.
[5] Ibid. p. 178.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid. p. 177.
[8] James Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 17.

temporal gap between Marx's writing and working-class reception was rather wide, and due primarily to popularisers in print, like Daniel De Leon, or popularisers by speech, like the Scottish autodidact Willie Nairn who passed away in 1902, or indeed figures like John Maclean.[9] A sense of the epiphany experienced by those working-class socialists who read Marx can be got from the outburst of a writer in the *Socialist* who discusses the different outlooks on working-class education in University-connected adult education and the independent, Marxian, movement: 'Exploitation! This fascinating word expresses the root cause of the difference between, and of necessity colours, our respective outlooks […]'.[10] The Marxian iteration of class conflict rooted in the opposed material interests of capital and labour intermingle with the residual culture of older plebeian radicalism in the *Socialist*, as I will show through two formative issues. The wider proletarian print public sphere was more ideologically diverse than this, as the next chapter on the *Forward* illustrates; there, the discursive style of a residual plebeian radicalism combines with an electoral strategy focussed on the new constitutional context of an expanded franchise.

The formative issues of the *Socialist* include the first issue, which arrived from the press in Dublin in August 1902 as an intervention amidst the spectacle of the coronation of Edward VII the same month, and a 1903 issue announcing the launch of the Socialist Labour Party as breakaway faction from the Social Democratic Federation. In 1902, a rift within the SDF was brewing because of Henry Hyndman's display of loyalty and deference to the British monarchy (William Morris, Eleanor Marx, and Edward Aveling had all left the SDF in the 1880s due to similar disagreements with the antisemitic and authoritarian Hyndman). The second formative issue arrived with the formation of the SLP in 1903, when the largely Scottish defection from the SDF occurred, and this issue fleshes out the distinctive ideological position of this Marxist formation within the Scottish print public sphere more fully. I discuss each issue in turn.

The first issue of the *Socialist* led with an article by the Falkirk schoolteacher John Carstairs Mathieson (cautiously signing the front-page article on 'Monarchy and the Revolution' only with his initials). Appearing on the front-page of the three-column paper, adorned with a prominent masthead in the arts-and-crafts style of William Morris, Carstairs Mathieson's first sentences read:

> If proof were required for such an obvious fact as the hollowness and decadence of modern capitalist society, it has certainly been thrust upon the people with overwhelming cogency in the absolute loathsome servility and crawling adulation,

[9] Hugh Savage and Leslie Foster, *All for the Cause: Willie Nairn, 1856-1902, Stonebreaker, Philosopher, Marxist* (Clydeside Press, 1993).
[10] 'Sir Quiller Couch and Working-Class Education', *Socialist*, 18 November 1920, p. 369.

> which have emanated from the bourgeoisie, and those sections of society where bourgeois opinion is dominant, towards the little corpulent man who is the regal head of the capitalist state of Great Britain. The class which entered upon its conquering career with the defiant boast of its champion, the regicide Danton: "The Kings threaten us, we hurl at their feet as gage of battle the head of a King"; which has dethroned and done to death more than one monarch in the days of youth and revolutionary energy, now in the days of its old age and dotage when the tramp of the militant proletariat is borne upon their ears, creep for shelter upon the steps of the throne and cover their faces with the skirts of the royal robe to hide from view the ugly phantoms of approaching doom.[11]

Cast as counter-discourse to 'bourgeois opinion' and, importantly, to those segments of the public which are not bourgeois but which have been culturally integrated into its remit, this is a style of grand historical narrative, bold symbolism, and heavy syntax. The literary-rhetorical flourish is that of an enthusiastic radical with some classical education (whether self-acquired or through intermittently attending lectures at one of the Scottish universities). Indeed, the overextended sentences recall the lengthy subheading of Thomas Spence's 1795 radical-plebeian journal *Pig's Meat*.[12] The spectacle of coronation and royal succession is made into an occasion for a grand projection of the historical succession of struggling classes. While the long sentences are structured with a rhythm amenable to oral reading, the bombastic imagery is interspersed with a vocabulary that suggests a dual appeal: on the one hand, the self-educated and politicising worker, on the other the audience of dominant 'bourgeois opinion' itself. The imagery conjured up by the writer is an exercise in diametrical contradiction, as when he encourages the class-conscious workers facing the pomp and spectacle of coronation to stand 'erect beneath the folds of the red flag, with head covered and neck unbowed, with revolutionary dignity, proudly, defiantly, disloyal'.[13] In terms of the politics of representation, the proletarian public sphere sought to both contest the abstract, phantom-like public opinion of the commercial press, while also using phantom representation to amplify, subvert, and unsettle its rival publics. Like the radical plebeian public of the early nineteenth century investigated by Kevin Gilmartin, this formation 'was both representation and practice, elusive phantom and material body'.[14] A counterweight to the syntactically complex rhetoric of the front-page article appears in the leading article. The leader-writer, a less talented (or more time-

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[11] J.C.M., 'MONARCHY and the REVOLUTION', *Socialist*, August 1902, p. 1.
[12] *Pig's Meat; or, lessons for the swinish multitude: Published in weekly penny numbers, collected by the poor man's advocate (an old veteran in the cause of freedom) in the course of his reading for more than twenty years. Intended to promote among the labouring part of mankind proper ideas of their situation, of their importance, and of their rights. And to convince them that their forlorn condition has not been entirely overlooked and forgotten, nor their just cause unpleaded, neither by their maker not by the best and most enlightened of men in all ages.*
[13] J.C.M., 'MONARCHY and the REVOLUTION', *Socialist*, August 1902, p. 1.
[14] Gilmartin, p. 5.

constrained) wordsmith than Carstairs Mathieson, appealed in a rhetorical borrowing from Marx to 'the men and women who have nothing to lose but their chains' and who hold 'clearness of expression' in high regard to support the venture.[15] The projected purpose of the journal is to scatter 'the seeds of Socialist truth', and on page seven an excerpt from Daniel De Leon's pamphlet *What Means this Strike?* (1898) appears, which illustrates another prominent feature of the periodical.[16] Across its twenty-odd year run, the *Socialist* often featured reprints drawn from books and pamphlets within an emerging canon of Marxian intellectual writing.[17] This print practice was partly due to the periodical's function as a publisher's journal, since the Socialist Labour Press printed and distributed books and pamphlets, but it was also, and inextricably, an aspect of the periodical as an educational medium to which I return below.

The second formative issue appeared in 1903 and announces the launch of the Socialist Labour Party with a manifesto. A short piece occupying about two columns, the manifesto consciously situates itself within a context of political dealignment and a wave of industrial conflict. The Taff Vale dispute and the subsequent court judgement (which ruled that a union could be sued for damages caused to the company where industrial action had been taken) together with a growing recognition among workers of the need for independent working-class political representation leads the writer to conclude: 'Class feeling in short is becoming increasingly manifest'.[18] But what is missing, the writer argues in lines very similar to those argued by De Leon in an American context, is recognition of the necessity for 'such a party having a clear, definite and practical basis, and an intelligent conception of its position, method, and goal', thus leaving the working-class vulnerable to 'unscrupulous politicians and self-styled Labour Leaders'.[19] The manifesto goes on to explain how the 'useless, obsolete and parasitical capitalist class' uses its 'political supremacy' to 'bring all the powers of the state, police and military, to bear upon those workers who strive to decrease their master's spoils by increasing their miserable wages'.[20] From this state of affairs it follows that:

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[15] Leading article, *Socialist*, August 1902, p. 5.
[16] Daniel De Leon, 'The Class Struggle', *Socialist*, August 1902, p. 7.
[17] Examples of reprints include: Daniel De Leon, 'MONEY', *Socialist*, November 1906, p. 6; Paul Lafargue, 'The Woman Question', November 1906, p. 6; William Hazlitt, 'What is the People?', *Socialist*, February 1909, p. 2; Klara Zetkin, 'THROUGH DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY', *Socialist*, 30 January 1919, p. 1; N. Lenin, 'SOCIALISM OR JINGOISM', *Socialist*, June 1917, p. 69: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'The Communist Manifesto', *Socialist*, August 1908, p. 2.
[18] 'Socialist Labour Party. – MANIFESTO TO THE WORKING CLASS.' *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 5.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

> [A]ll efforts of the workers to better their conditions must be centred in the task of overthrowing the supremacy of the master class in the state, and of using the power so gained to seize the means of life to be used by the workers for themselves and their dependants, in short, to obliterate the capitalist class as a social and political entity.[21]

In a rhetorical strategy mirroring Chapter 3 of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), the revolutionary position of the SLP is contrasted with that of its rivals in the SDF, ILP, Labour Party, and the Fabian Society, with their various proposals for '"State Socialism," "Public Ownership," or "Municipalism"', all described as the 'ownership of certain public utilities by a community in which capitalism is still dominant. A worker is as much exploited by a capitalist state or corporation as by a private capitalist employer – as post-office or municipal employees can testify'.[22] Similarly, in a front-page article in the same issue, a writer criticises the statement by Keir Hardie at a recent Labour Representation Conference held in Newcastle, where Hardie is quoted as arguing that ILP candidates must know 'neither Liberalism, nor Toryism, nor Socialism, the only "ism" for them must be Labourism'.[23] The writer for the *Socialist* translates Hardie's and the Labour Representation Committee's effort at mediation between rival political tendencies in the labour movement thus, emphasised in italics: 'The movement […] *does not demand the expropriation of the Capitalist class*, all it desires is to limit the power of that class'.[24] The differentiation process begun by Keir Hardie in the 1880s whereby a political Labour formation had separated itself from both Liberals and Conservatives and opted for independent representation of the working-class, can here be seen to develop a further rift within the labour movement itself between reformists and revolutionaries. It was, however, only an emergent rift which would evolve over the next two or three decades before finally crystallising in the two distinct organisations for working-class representation, the Labour Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain, which SLP members played a significant role in forming.[25]

In what follows, I begin by considering questions of ownership and editorial control, financing, and transmission. I then turn to questions of political intervention and the distinctive counterpublic sphere model that the *Socialist* helped mediate. From there, I move on to consider the critique of the commercial press, provided education, and

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid. See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. by Samuel Moore (Penguin, 2002).
[23] N.M.M., 'THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION RED HERRING', *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 1.
[24] Ibid.
[25] See John McIlroy and Alan Campbell, 'The Socialist Labour Party and the Leadership of Early British Communism', *Critique (Glasgow)*, 48.4 (2020), pp. 609-59.

elements of imperialist popular culture that motivated efforts at counterpublicity and educational praxis within the *Socialist*'s public. A closer examination of educational praxis follows, before I conclude with a discussion of the political culture of the SLP and the *Socialist*, drawing on its treatment of imaginative literature.

3.1 Ownership, Editors, Financing, and Transmission

In an early study of socialist newspapers, Hopkin distinguishes two ownership models current within this print culture: papers were owned either by a campaigning individual such as Robert Blatchford of the *Clarion* or Keir Hardie with his *Labour Leader*, or by a political party.[26] Tom Johnston's *Forward*, which I turn to in the next chapter, is an example of the first type, while the *Socialist* falls into the second category. Indeed, through the *Socialist* an attempt to organise the public sphere on the basis of common ownership was made in earnest. The SLP did not have an elected leader, but the national committee maintained a strict party discipline.[27] The printing press was owned by the party, which appointed and held the editor accountable: 'The editor and all officials connected with the "Socialist" are directly and annually appointed by the party, subject to party discipline and, in the event of improper or treacherous conduct, to suspension, dismissal and expulsion'.[28] The relative lack of editorial autonomy from proprietorial control (however democratically elected by a membership including the editor) helps explain the rapid succession of editors. Resignations were due both to disagreements over party policy and the precarious conditions of life of socialist agitators. The first editor was James Connolly (famous for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland), who soon left for America and was replaced by George Yates, who resigned already in 1903 because he was relocating for work.[29] Carstairs Mathieson took over after Yates, but resigned in spring 1909 over a dispute on the party's position vis-à-vis the newly formed IWW in Britain.[30] George Harvey appears as

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[26] Deian Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press in Britain, 1890-1910', in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day,* ed. by D. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (Constable, 1978), pp. 294-306 (pp. 296-97).

[27] An SLP conference where the party's policy to not elect an official leadership had received derisive coverage in both the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Glasgow Evening Times*, but also from the *Labour Leader* and *Clarion*, with excerpts reprinted in 'Socialist Speeches and Capitalist Comments', *Socialist*, May 1910, p. 37. To the ridicule directed at the SLP as a party with no leaders, the leading article retorted that the SLP 'enjoys that distinction [because] any other Socialist party in Great Britain might accurately be described as "A Party Without Principles." […] Come then, ye workers, to whom principles are more than men, be true to principle. Join the S.L.P. and leave the leaders to stew in their own juice'. 'Socialism and Leadership,' *The Socialist*, May 1910, p. 36.

[28] 'Party Printing Press', *Socialist*, May 1906, p. 4.

[29] 'G.S. Yates', *Socialist*, September 1903, p. 6. He was expelled two year later for not paying dues, see 'PARTY NOTES', *Socialist*, March 1905, p. 1.

[30] 'Report of the N.E.C.', *Socialist*, May 1909, p. 8.

editor in 1911 issues, but seems to have resigned due to a libel case.[31] John Muir (a key member of the CWC, who led the discursive charge against Lloyd George in St Andrew's Hall in 1915) was then editor for some time but resigned in 1914 because of his pro-war position, when John S. Clarke (a political educator and entertainer with a circus background who later joined the ILP and took up a seat in parliament) took over briefly only to be replaced by Arthur MacManus (the first chairman of the CPGB) who edited the paper alone at first, then jointly with Tom Bell in 1919, until James Clunie took over in 1920.[32] Clunie took over because of Bell's and MacManus's defection to the new CPGB. There is a tension between the rigid stipulation of party control over editors and the lively diversity in editorial characters, each with rapidly shifting and evolving ideological opinions; it may well be that the close fusing of strategic-purposive executive functions (the party executive committee) with communicative and deliberative functions (the press) hampered the development of both.

There was a similarly rapid succession of printers, which might point to discomfort among commercial printers to be associated with a self-avowedly revolutionary journal like the *Socialist.* When the *Socialist* was launched in August 1902, it was edited and published from Edinburgh, but printed by the Workers' Publishing Co. in Dublin on arrangement by James Connolly.[33] This arrangement only lasted until the March 1903 issue, when McLaren & Co. at St Giles Street, Edinburgh, were appointed to print the periodical.[34] Already with the following issue, another printer had been found, and the SLP's foundational issue of May 1903, discussed above, was printed by David Short & Son at 29 Elder Street, Edinburgh, while the publisher's address is an Old Town tenement at 6 Drummond Street, Edinburgh.[35] The frequent change of printer perhaps indicates either an unwillingness among printing companies to print too controversial material, or the difficulty of finding a printer willing to do the job for the right price. David Short & Son's remained the printer for the SLP until the party acquired its own printing press in 1906, chiefly because it sought to expand its printing activities with books and pamphlets:[36]

> As stated in the May issue, the N.E.C., acting upon the mandate of the members, have purchased a Printing Plant capable of printing the "Socialist" and all our

[31] 'A Statement and Appeal from GEORGE HARVEY, SOCIALIST DEFENDANT IN LIBEL ACTION', *Socialist*, October 1912, p. 13.
[32] Challinor, pp. 274-75.
[33] Ibid. p. 20.
[34] *Socialist*, March 1903, p. 8.
[35] *Socialist*, April 1903, p. 8; *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 8.
[36] 'Party Printing Press', *Socialist*, May 1906, p. 4.

> literature, pamphlets, and leaflets. The outfit consists of a Wharfedale printing machine, by Miller & Richard, Edinburgh, driven by electric motor, and all type suitable for a wide range of book and pamphlet work, in addition to that necessary for the paper.[37]

The Socialist Labour Press's offices at 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, (where the press would remain from 1912 to its demise a decade later) developed into an important cultural site of the working-class public sphere in Glasgow.[38] The three-storey building served as the headquarters of the SLP, and housed, aside from offices and the print works, a bookshop with large street-facing windows used to advertise the many pamphlets and books printed by the press (as seen from a photograph of the premises appearing in the *Socialist*), and meeting rooms used for branch meetings, adult education study circles, and Socialist Sunday School-sessions led by Tom Anderson.[39] The press was a source of great pride, and to amplify its symbolic significance it was inserted into a grand historical narrative:

> When the historian writes the story of the critical times of the Socialist movement in its effort to keep unsullied the red flag of International Labour during the present war, then will it be known to what extent the Press of the S.L.P. helped to strengthen the fight and to keep the working-class issue clear of treacherous alliances destined to bind the wage-earners to their masters.[40]

This statement came shortly after the press had been subjected to a police raid in the wake of Lloyd George's visit to Glasgow in the winter of 1915. As outlined in the previous chapter, the Minister of Munitions had come to Glasgow with the aim of calming the industrial mood by addressing shop stewards and members of the Clyde Workers' Committee during the first skirmish over 'dilution', only to be severely heckled. John Muir, the erstwhile editor of the *Socialist*, had played a leading role in countering the minister at the meeting, and the suppression of the *Socialist* motivated a principled editorial statement on the freedom of the press:

> The Government wields despotic sway of the Press through the institution of the censor and the Press bureau. On very important matters the Press dare only publish the specially "cooked" reports which are provided of it. In this way public opinion becomes the opinion of the Government and the class whose interests it serves. This point was demonstrated beyond all doubt by the ferocious suppression of the *Forward* for daring to publish the truth regarding Lloyd George's visit to the Clyde in preference to the prevaricating report specially prepared by that gentleman himself. We of the S.L.P. have refused to bow our heads to the Press bureaucrats.

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[37] 'The Party's Printing Press Fund', *Socialist*, October 1906, p. 5.
[38] *Socialist*, August 1912, p. 8.
[39] *Socialist*, December 1917, p. 25.
[40] Leading article, *Socialist*, March 1916, p. 4.

> […] When the *Forward* was raided we published the two articles which undoubtedly incurred the wrath of His all Highness. […] When the Clyde Workers' Committee desired to publish their weekly organ, *The Worker*, the first issue which was a bold challenge to the Government, we upheld the liberty of the Press by publishing it. […] We adopted this attitude on the Press, not because we agree with the above papers, *but because we recognise that before Labour can overthrow the present system the right of free discussion in public and in the press must be won*.[41]

The statement shows how elements of a classical public sphere ideal held sway also within proletarian publics, and the libertarian gesturing against despotism echoes an earlier radical plebian discourse. But furthermore, it highlights how the autonomous press constituted a material link in a wider subaltern, and not solely proletarian, counter-public sphere. As indicated by the leader-writer, it printed the Clyde Workers' Committee paper *The Worker* (published intermittently 1916-1931, but by the Socialist Labour Press until 1920) and the organ of the forty-hours movement, the *Strike Bulletin* (published daily, 29 January – 12 February, 1919).[42] The press was also used for what might be called 'solidarity printing' of journals that faced difficulties or outright suppression; a special announcement in the August 1903 issue of the *Socialist* informs its readers that subscribers to the Irish Socialist Republican Party's organ, the *Irish Worker*, both in Ireland and in the United States, will receive the *Socialist* instead due to what is described as 'compelling circumstances'.[43] By taking over the *Irish Worker*, the *Socialist* increased its circulation by 500 copies.[44] There is also evidence that the Socialist Labour Press played a role in disseminating De Leonist literature in South Africa, via the small band of syndicalists organising workers there in the first two decades of the 20th century, some of whom had migrated from Scotland. Thus, Baruch Hirson writes that in 'early 1914 David Ivon Jones […] had been writing to the Socialist Labour Party in Scotland for literature. Among the pamphlets readily available were those of De Leon'.[45] When Connolly's *Irish Worker* and the journal of the Irish Transport Union led by James Larkin faced difficulties in 1915 (this time due to suppression by British authorities) the Socialist Labour Press was again sought out for assistance.[46] When the offices and printer of the *Suffragette* (the organ of the Women's

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[41] 'UNDAUNTED AND UNBOWED', *Socialist*, March 1916, p. 44.
[42] Thus, a 'Social Science Series' is advertised which includes works on politics, industrial history, political economy, and philosophy by Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Liebknecht, Lafargue, Bebel, Dietzgen, Rogers, Meyer, De Gibbins, and, somewhat surprisingly, Nietzsche. See advertisements, *Socialist*, August 1917, p. 87.
[43] *Socialist*, August 1903, p. 7.
[44] See report from the SLP's Executive Committee, *Socialist*, September 1903, p. 3.
[45] Hirson, *A History of the Left in South Africa* (Bloomsbury, 2005), p. 7. For a more detailed account of the work of these Scottish syndicalists, see William Kenefick, 'Confronting White Labourism: Socialism, Syndicalism, and the Role of the Scottish Radical Left in South Africa before 1914', *International Review of Social History*, 55.1 (2010), pp. 29-62.
[46] Bell, *Pioneering Days*, p. 49. For an account that balances some of Bell's autobiographical, and perhaps too self-flattering, claims, see James D. Young, 'James Connolly, James Larkin and John Maclean: The

Social and Political Union) were raided by police in May 1914, the Socialist Labour Press was one of a number of principled printers used to ensure the *Suffragette's* continued publication.[47] Such interactions between the proletarian public sphere mediated by the *Socialist*, the Suffragette counterpublic, and the radical Irish public sphere were, however, quite limited, and may be more illustrative of autonomy rather than intersection between different public sphere formations.

Who were the readers of the *Socialist*? First, it should be noted that the distinction between letters to the editor and signed articles was not very sharp, and much of the content seem to have been written by ordinary readers rather than paid writers in a manner that mirrors Habermas's depiction of the *Tatler*'s print practice.[48] This practice distinguishes the *Socialist* from the more professionalised *Forward*, which also mediated a more cross-class public as I show in the next chapter. A print public of persons of roughly equal social status appears to have encouraged lively deliberations, as a 1908 issue of the *Socialist* illustrates. There, two pages of five columns are filled solely with correspondence and editorial responses concerning the finer points of the party manifesto, the positions taken by other parties, or the actions of trade unions.[49] This relative indistinction between readers and writers means that much can be inferred about the social character of the public from the practices of the writers themselves. As I show below, the distinctive signing practices in the *Socialist* indicates a comparatively homogenous proletarian public.

The late Victorian debate on anonymous journalism, which I touched on in the previous chapter, maps poorly onto the signing practices in the proletarian press. Anonymity was common in the *Socialist*, and although articles and letters were sometimes signed, more often initials or pseudonyms were used.[50] These signing practices had little to do with ideas about the best way of presenting public opinion in print. The anonymous or pseudonymous articles in the *Socialist* were not aimed at obfuscating the person behind the argument in order to stage detachment, moderation, and gentlemanly comportment in the

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Easter Rising and Clydeside Socialism', in *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-50: Essays in Honour of Harry McShane, 1891-1988*, ed. by Robert Duncan and Arthur McIvor (John Donald, 1992), pp. 155-75 (pp. 165-66).

[47] See *Suffragette*, 29 May 1914, p. 124. A succession of printers used appear in *Suffragette*, 2 January 1914, p. 275. Consulted digitally through the British Newspaper Archive.

[48] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 42.

[49] Five long letters and three equally long editorial responses take up the pages in *Socialist*, August 1908, pp. 5-6.

[50] Pseudonyms include: 'HÆCÆ' (*Socialist*, August 1908, p. 5); 'SLAVEY' (*Socialist*, February 1910, p. 2); 'K. Ompass' (*Socialist*, October 1914, p. 16); 'VERAX' (*Socialist*, February 1915, p. 41); 'Proletarius' and 'SYL' (*Socialist*, October 1915, p. 6); 'D. RAPER' (*Socialist*, August 1917, p. 82); A letter-writer signs off with 'Rebel', while another asks about the real name behind the pseudonym 'Romany Rye', a poet and writer in the *Socialist* in the pre-war days (*Socialist*, July 1923, p. 15). 'Romany Rye' in gypsy language means 'Gypsy Gentleman' and is the titular character of George Borrow's novel *Romany Rye* (1857), see 'Romany Rye', Oxford Reference Online, n.d. <https://www.oxfordreference.com> [accessed 15 October 2024].

advancement of public opinion, but was likely motivated by fear of repression from employers and local authorities.[51] Harry McShane recalled how in the factory where he worked before the war, the 'socialists were always the first to be paid off', and McIvor and Paterson further substantiates the pattern of victimisation on Clydeside, which would provide ample motivation for public print anonymity.[52] In this case, anonymity indicates a public of readers and writers of similar social status, equally beholden to the power of local employers.

Why then were not all articles anonymous? The appearance of signed articles (frequent enough in the *Socialist*) cannot be fully explained by the usual commercial argument in favour of signed articles, that 'in the absence of a signature, it was impossible for journalists to ensure adequate compensation for their intellectual labour', as Mark Hampton summarises it, because very little money could be made from writing for it.[53] It is true that through a combination of journalism and public speaking, some proletarian publicists or agitators could make a modest living, in addition to receiving prestige, fame, and recognition for their work (as both Connolly and Maclean did). But the signed articles may also indicate a contrasting ideal of political representation compared to the abstract, anonymous public opinion of the *Glasgow Herald*'s editorial 'we', namely one that valorised concrete, direct, and less mediated forms of representation, which is consonant also with the embodied practice of representation through street protest as discussed in the previous chapter.

The class composition of the *Socialist*'s public thus differed markedly from those of both the classical bourgeoisie organising itself as a public of private persons, and the earlier radical plebeian public sphere, the leaders of which could often rely on modest property ownership for autonomy. The Edinburgh Zetetics of the 1820s, described by Gordon Pentland as largely 'petit bourgeois', are a case in point, as is Tom Johnston of the *Forward* who I discuss in the next chapter.[54]

The finance-model of the *Socialist* relied heavily on this readership. Advertisements were actively refused by the editors, at least until 1919 when attempts were first made to transition into a weekly format. Despite the policy reversal and the

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[51] For a brief discussion on the gentlemanly defence of anonymous journalism, see Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 66-69.
[52]Arthur McIvor and Hugh Paterson, 'Combating the Left: Victimisation and Anti-Labour Activities on Clydeside, 1900-1939', in *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-50: Essays in Honour of Harry Mcshane, 1891-1988,* ed. by Robert Duncan and Arthur McIvor (John Donald, 1992), pp. 129-54 (p. 130).
[53] Hampton, p. 66.
[54] Gordon Pentland, 'The Freethinkers' Zetetic Society: An Edinburgh Radical Underworld in the Eighteen-Twenties', *Historical Research*, 91.252 (2018), pp. 314-32 (p. 320).

relatively strong circulation figures of some 30,000 at its peak, the paper did not attract any advertisements, which points to both an assumed readership of meagre means and perhaps a political stance in relation to which advertisers were reluctant to have their wares associated.[55] Without advertisements and without wealthy financiers, the paper had to rely solely on income from sales and on the personal sacrifices made by working-class party members to keep publishing. Indeed, in direct response to the *Glasgow Evening Times*'s snipe at the frequent calls for financial support from members issued in the *Socialist* (and that these calls effectively made the SLP 'socialist capitalists') the editor responded:

> To those who have any idea of the sacrifices which the publication of the *Socialist*, month by month, entails upon the members of the S.L.P., the references [in the *Glasgow Evening Times*] to "a penny a week," "a single glass of beer," and "the stinginess on the part of the rank and file," will be amusing.[56]

The *Socialist*'s readers were highly involved in disseminating and distributing the paper, and a communal sharing practice was often encouraged: 'When you have finished with this paper pass it on to a friend', 'Pass this paper on to a mate'.[57] The practice is further shown in a letter to the editor from a conscientious objector set for imprisonment, who 'will not be in a position to keep up the subs' but because he is anxious not to miss either the *Socialist* or the American De Leonist *The People*, he 'asks if any comrade would be good enough to forward their copies on to his wife after they have read them'.[58] Frequent calls were issued in the paper for its readers to always carry a few current or back issues in case the opportunity for a sale presents itself:

> Let all comrades remember that every new reader need not necessarily be a personal friend. The person who speaks to you in the train, tram-cars, etc, are all working-men who require to read the "Socialist." The man who asks you for a light on the street requires to read the "Socialist." So also does the man who wants to punch your silly Socialist head. Also the man who attends the labour misleaders' meetings.[59]

The appeal also shows how each such sale could be exponentially influential given working-class reading practices, in which a penny-paper like the *Socialist* would be kept for future reference (hence the advice to the literature-seller to also keep back-copies

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[55] An editorial notice claimed a circulation of 30,000 copies before the switch to a weekly format (*Socialist*, 20 November 1919, p. 411). Earlier circulation figures were considerably more modest. In 1909 the editor expected to reach a circulation of 5,000 before the end of summer (*Socialist*, June 1909, p. 5), while Challinor gives a 1902 circulation of 1,400 (Challinor, p. 28).
[56] *Socialist*, June 1909, p. 5.
[57] *Socialist*, December 1915, p. 19; *Socialist*, 18 September 1919, p. 345.
[58] 'S.L.P. Roll of Honour', *Socialist*, August 1917, p. 5.
[59] James Thomson, 'Spread the Literature of the Revolution', *Socialist*, April 1908, p. 7.

available) and shared among many readers in the individual reader's immediate social sphere: 'in every *single new* reader they get they not only get a new reader but they also thereby advertise the paper, not once, but a dozen times'.[60] The writer continues by issuing advice to other branches, based on the Glasgow branch's experience in appointing a special literature agent whose sole task is to increase the periodical's circulation by visiting shops and public libraries.[61]

The *Socialist* thus mediated a public sphere where print and oral culture were closely fused. One writer describes how the *Socialist* is 'kept handy for future reference' by its reader-orators: 'our readers carry the "Socialist" about in their pocket from one month's end to another, ready at the first opportunity to flatten out' opponents in discussion.[62] In counterposing collective radical plebeian reading habits with the observations made by Benedict Anderson and Walter Benjamin in reference to the privatised reading of the commercial daily newspaper, Gilmartin writes:

> The radical pattern of collective reading about public matters, with an eye towards political intervention, suggests at least the rudiments of an alternative phenomenology of the newspaper, one that is active, communal, and synthetic.[63]

The *Socialist* indicates how such an alternative phenomenology of the newspaper remained into the twentieth century. In the next section I consider the relationship between the interventionist ambitions of the *Socialist* and its public sphere model.

3.2 Deliberation, Conflict, and Crisis: A Counterpublic Model?

It is in attempts at entering into a more direct deliberative confrontation with class opponents that the public sphere model of the *Socialist* comes through most clearly. Such attempts were frustrated by the actions of editors or sub-editors of the commercial press. Thus, a letter writer to the *Socialist* had attempted to answer arguments against socialism put forward by the editor of the *Edinburgh Evening News*, the prolific writer and ardent Liberal Hector C. Macpherson, but his arguments had not been met, nor been allowed publicity in the evening paper. Denied a direct confrontation in the evening paper, the letter writer, C. Swan, turned to the *Socialist*. The argument put forward by Macpherson was that, under socialism, all machinery would be forbidden in the supposed interests of labour

[60] James Thomson, 'Spread the Literature of the Revolution', *Socialist*, April 1908, p. 7.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, p. 104.

(perhaps with reference to the Luddite movement), and he had asked whether workers would encourage technological inventions in the 'Socialist State'. In the style of an orator seeking to capture and hold his audience's attention by not allowing the syntactic flow the break off, the letter-writer fulminated:

> Viewed in the light of modern scientific socialist teaching, the above questions are, of course, alike ridiculous and absurd, and scarcely deserve the serious attention of an S.L.Peer, but when we consider that this redoubtable champion of moribund Liberalism; This famous apostle of the economic doctrines of Adam Smith (with certain mental reservations); this guide, philosopher, and friend of the Young Scots; this modern Belshazzar, who, forsooth has weighed the economics of Karl Marx in his wavering ill-adjusted class-shaken balance, and found them wanting, has with characteristic prudence, repeatedly and consistently ignored all replies sent in to his articles, which bore the stamp of Socialist Labour Party scientific reasoning, and which would have had the disastrous effect of exposing the utter fallaciousness of his arguments, carefully confirming himself to the publication only of replies sent in by pure and simple political "socialists," and other irresponsibles of the I.L.P. order, whose arguments he knew he could easily demolish, if he cared to, and, furthermore, in view of the fact that this same befogged editor is considered in many quarters to be one of the ablest critics of socialism in the country, in proof of which they refer you his famous pamphlet, "The Gospel of Socialism," it seems to me it would not be amiss, with a view to dispelling this illusion, to give the aforementioned article that consideration in the columns of the *Socialist* which, considered from the point of view of clear and intelligent statements and questions in relation to socialism, it certainly does not merit.[64]

The appeal to reason and argument, the aim of dispelling illusions, and the sense of unjust exclusion from enlightened public deliberation, highlights how the normative kernel of the classical public sphere, that matters of common concern be decided by the force of the better argument alone, held normative sway within proletarian publics. There is a keen sense in this passage of the contemporary moment as a historical blockage, with 'moribund Liberalism' unable to provide a chart for continuing the project of modernity announced by the Enlightenment (as suggested by the ambivalent reference to Adam Smith, whom the writer is reluctant to completely dismiss), indeed actively blocking the path for the socialist continuation of that project. As to the content of the argument, Swan cites Marx and Engels in support of the view that machinery and technological innovation is not an evil in itself, but that under capitalism it is the 'most powerful weapon of capital against the working class', and that, with the socialisation of the means of production material 'progress and advancement' will flourish more fully.[65] Indeed, Swan makes an interesting choice of words when he speaks of the socialisation of the means of production as the conversion of

[64] C. Swan, 'The Editor that is still Befogged.' *Socialist*, April 1908, p. 5.
[65] Ibid.

'the instruments of production into public property', which suggests that the public sphere itself offered a promise, however unfulfilled, of democratic influence extending to the industrial, economic sphere.[66] Indeed, Habermas reconstructs such a socialist public sphere model from the writings of Marx. In an anticipatory note, Marx wrote that '*electoral reform* in the *abstract political state* is equivalent to a demand for its *dissolution* and this in turn implies the *dissolution of civil society*'.[67] Habermas continues:

> When *they* [the non-property owners], as an enlarged public, came to the fore as the subject of the public sphere in place of the bourgeoisie, the structure of this sphere would have to be transformed from the ground up. […] The democratically revolutionized public sphere […] thus became in principle a sphere of public deliberation and resolution concerning the direction and administration of every process necessary for the reproduction of society.[68]

In this way, a socialisation of the means of production via the public sphere was projected, and the public sphere was 'presumed to be able to realize in earnest what it had promised from the start – the subjection of political domination, as a domination of human beings over human beings, to reason'.[69] Habermas continues: 'With the dissolution of "political" power into "public" power, the liberal idea of a political public sphere found its socialist formulation'.[70] Autonomy on this socialist 'counter-model' would be rooted in the public sphere itself rather than in private property ownership, and the intimate sphere would be set free from economic determination. Furthermore, I can add an evocative turn of phrase from Marx not cited by Habermas but which resonates with the latter's emphasis on a communicatively structured lifeworld as against non-linguistic systems, just as the promise of publicity was to replace political authority and coercion with the force of the better argument, the mute or 'silent compulsion' of capital was to be replaced by the compulsion of communicated reason alone.[71]

As Habermas argues, this counter-model remained a faint ideal, because it proved possible to combine universal franchise extension in the political sphere, while maintaining class society through the economic sphere.[72] A deep frustration, and a disappointment with the constitutional route to realising the socialist public sphere model, became prevalent among writers for the *Socialist* during the pre-war period of the Great Unrest, and

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[66] C. Swan, 'The Editor that is still Befogged.' *Socialist*, April 1908, p. 5.
[67] Marx, 'Critique of Hegel's Doctrine', cited in Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1989), p. 127.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid. pp. 127-28.
[70] Ibid. p. 128.
[71] Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. 1* (Penguin, 1976), p. 899.
[72] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 129-30.

heightened further during the war. Thus, in a 1910 issue, a front-page article is devoted to the constitutional crisis provoked by the rejection of the Liberal government's budget by the House of Lords, and the writer asserts:

> The crisis through which we are passing is not by any means the first with which the people of this country have had to deal […]. It is not the first, and we hope it will not be the last. We ourselves hope to produce a crisis some day in the not very distant future compared with which the present affair will be child's play.[73]

The constitutional crisis of 1910 was dismissed merely as 'a quarrel between the landed and the manufacturing sections of the propertied class as to who shall bear the heaviest burden of taxation', and the *Socialist* urged a public far wider than its readership ('the voters of the country – the working class') to refuse the appeal for arbitration made by the two competing capitalist factions by refusing to vote for *any* party, even Labour.[74] The writer is practicing a form of crisis-intervention journalism, which aimed at whittling away the relatively strong constitutional legitimacy enjoyed by the British state:

> King, Lords, Commons, – all must go, and it is not by supporting the Budget or educating the workers to regard breaches of the Constitution as the most heinous of crimes, that their overthrow will be accomplished.[75]

In the context of an expanded franchise, the anti-constitutional strategy requires some explanation. How was it that many organised Scottish workers eschewed both the parliamentary strategy and the popular constitutionalist idiom attached to it? It can partly be explained with reference to the distinctive conditions of capital and civil society in Scotland at the time. John Foster argues that Scottish employers remained more anti-union than their English counterparts (to the extent that the *Glasgow Herald* reflected the attitudes of employers, my own study in the previous chapter seems to confirm this), because they relied on a wage differential for competitiveness with England, underpinned by an industrial wage reserve and employer-loyalist elements in the workforce.[76] This had consequences for the culture of the organised labour movement in Scotland:

> […] these specifically Scottish features were rooted in the material weakness of Scottish business. Its leaders could not afford to treat trade unionists with the same easy familiarity as their English counterparts, and *organised* labour, as against often

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[73] 'THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS: Should the Workers Support the House of Lords and Tariff Reform, the House of Commons and the Budget, or Socialism?', *Socialist*, January 1910, p. 1.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] John Foster, 'Strike Action and Working-Class Politics on Clydeside 1914–1919', *International Review of Social History*, 35.1 (1990), pp. 33-70 (p. 61).

> loyalist individual workers, remained in an oppositional position within the structures of local government and civil society.[77]

However, the revolutionary rhetoric and the anti-constitutionalist idiom that the *Socialist* promoted meant that it isolated itself from legitimising discourses that remained current within much of working-class culture (as seen through the *Forward*, considered in the next chapter), and this had broader ramifications for the political culture of this formation and its relation to working-class people, a point I return to at the end of this chapter. For now, I want to consider the form of public sphere that the *Socialist* and its press actually helped cultivate (alongside other parties and actors on Clydeside, to be sure) during the peak of its influence at the end of the war in 1919 during the 40-hours strike.

In anticipation of crisis conditions more amenable than those of 1910, a crisis theory of the press was developed – per the editorial: 'An examination of the history of the Press proves that its greatest activity has always taken place during a period of crisis'[78] – which motivated the increased activity of the Socialist Labour Press. The *Socialist* itself achieved peak circulation when it switched from the monthly format it had maintained since the launch to a weekly format in January 1919 in the midst of the 40-hours strike, when the *Strike Bulletin* of the movement was being printed on the same press.[79] Judging from an editorial in the January 2nd issue announcing the switch to weekly, the purpose of the increased publishing effort was to stimulate revolutionary action, and to switch from the long-term ideological education projected associated with the monthly format, to an agitational journalism oriented to immediate intervention: 'The value of educational work lies in its attempt to prepare the workers' mental outlook so that they may know how to act in the event of a revolutionary crisis overtaking them'.[80] While the precise goals formulated within the *Socialist* (to initiate a social revolution in Britain in order to support the ongoing revolution in Russia, and, as it then seemed, in Germany) were not widely shared, it was part of an oppositional mood that animated the proletarian public sphere on Clydeside as it erupted in January 1919.[81] An illuminating image which highlights both its oppositional and deliberative qualities appeared shortly after the 1919 Battle of George Square in the commercial *Daily News*. The erstwhile head of the War Propaganda Bureau and Liberal MP of a liberal-radical persuasion, Charles Masterman, provided the following

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[77] Ibid. p. 64.
[78] 'Capital and the Press', *Socialist*, July 1918, p. 92.
[79] The weekly format was maintained until October 1922 when the *Socialist* reverted back to its monthly format until its demise in 1924. See announcement, *Socialist*, 5 October 1922, p. 296.
[80] '1919', *Socialist*, 2 January 1919, p. 122.
[81] Ibid.

assessment with a mixture of fascination and alarm of the working-class movement in Glasgow:

> They are mostly skilled men, with the power of earning high wages; and they are talking – on the Clyde – to the most intelligent working-class audience in the world. They are talking continually, day and night, in a seven-day week, in meetings held outside the works gates, before breakfast, in the dinner-hour, or in surrounding halls in the evening. They are preaching, and with enormous energy, something in the nature of a crusade. […] It is scarcely "Bolshevism" […] But it is a creed denouncing "capitalism" and all "idle wealth"; a belief […] that by the reduction or elimination of the profits and interests of capital, and a direct attack on the great landlord and millionaire, the working people may found a new society, and get rid of their present disabilities. It is at present a "revolutionary demand," and Glasgow is the storm centre of Britain. One can judge by their bulletins, their vigorous combined action, their replacement of leaders when arrested by other leaders, how completely this creed has mastered the upper guiding group of the strikes organisation.[82]

Masterman captures some defining elements of the proletarian public sphere, including its sites of discourse, its animating ideology and purpose, and the close linkage between print and political praxis. Neither a classical liberal public sphere model, nor the socialist counter-model proposed by Habermas via Marx, it comes closer to what Nancy Fraser calls subaltern counterpublics, that is '[…] parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs'.[83] The proletarian public sphere, in contrast to the ideal socialist model, was in reality constituted as a counterpublic to the commercially segmented public sphere, the state bureaucracy, and the employers. This public sphere formation was inwardly deliberative and enlightening, but outwardly combative and oppositional. In what follows, I consider first some of the ways that an oppositional form of rhetoric and communication was mobilised against external publics, before turning to the cultivation of a combative communication culture through a distinctive print-mediated educational praxis.

3.3 Critique and Counterpublicity

In anatomising earlier radical plebeian print formations, Gilmartin suggests that '[n]otions of counter-publics and counter-publicity help account for the oppositional imperative

[82] C.F.G. Masterman, 'Labour Unrest', *Daily News*, 11 February 1919, p. 4. Consulted digitally through the British Newspaper Archive.
[83] Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 109-42 (p. 123).

behind a reform movement that undertook above all else to write, speak, organize and act against dominant institutions'.[84] How was the commercially segmented public sphere understood within the pages of the *Socialist*, and what strategies of counterpublicity were developed there? Like its predecessors in the plebeian public sphere of the 1790s-1830s period, the proletarian publicists pursued a 'running critique' of provided education.[85] In this critical project, the link between provided education and the commercial press was frequently highlighted:

> It was often said that the introduction of free education to the working class would result in the great uplifting of that class. The people would be educated, they would read books – that would be grand! Every working man would be so learned and so wise, that it would be quite natural for all to become foremen, or, perhaps, even bosses. But with the growth of education came also an increase in the production of literature, literature that was not always good or elevating. The Daily Press also increased, and it continued to increase, until it has now become a social danger.[86]

The satirical critique of state provided education effectively targets the curricular ideology of moral improvement, and of the contradictory meritocratic proposal of education as simultaneously a means of individual advancement and of social equality. Meanwhile, the writer pursues a critique of the available reading matter, and cautions against naiveté in accepting the press offerings: 'A pernicious superstition has wound itself to our newspapers until they are now accepted as the infallible teachers of the people, as bearers of the truth and nothing but the truth'.[87] But, the writer argues, the newspapers actively select what to include (or exclude) in their 'neutral' reporting, a practice that enables them to assemble their projected worldview according to unspoken interests: 'they cannot be reckoned as mere purveyors of news, but become propagandist papers seeking to educate their readers in some particular manner'.[88] However, the writer is particularly concerned not with the 'Tory', 'Radical' or 'Church' papers, but with the '"People's"' papers' and focusses attention on two representative cases, *Reynolds Weekly Newspaper* and the *Weekly Scotsman*. Aside from expressing discontent with the quality of their reporting on labour issues, the writer draws attention to the 'sensational' features included in these papers 'simply […] because there is money to made by so doing' and asks:

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[84] Kevin Gilmartin, 'Popular Radicalism and the Public Sphere', *Studies in Romanticism,* 33.4 (1994), pp. 549-57 (p. 553).
[85] Richard Johnson, '"Really Useful Knowledge": Radical Education and Working-Class Culture, 1790-1848', in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory,* ed. by John Clarke, Chas Critcher, and Richard Johnson (Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 75-102 (p. 76).
[86] 'A Working Class Paper', *Socialist*, February 1911, p. 44.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

> Why should a journal, seriously seeking to advance the working class, encumber its pages with sensational police court news and all the filth of the divorce courts? […] it is foolishness to think that such matter can assist the working class in its efforts of emancipation.[89]

Interestingly, with the important difference of emphasising working-class 'emancipation', this critique comes close to agreeing with the cultural anxieties articulated in the upper-middle-class *Glasgow Herald* with regards to the post-repeal commercial press. The shared element is a commitment to a form of 'rational recreation'; a residual notion that socialist critics of an emergent culture industry adopted from liberal utilitarian discourse in the Victorian era, as Chris Waters argues.[90] This borrowing from a middle-class discourse of social utility and individual responsibility for self-improvement meant, as Waters argues, that 'most socialists seemed unable to focus in depth on the actual mechanics of the leisure industry as a part of a shifting ensemble of capitalist social relations and they merely invoked the old moral discourse of rational recreation'.[91] Relatedly, the articulation of the critique of the commercial press in the *Socialist* could come very close to the *Glasgow Herald*'s concerns over taste:

> What is the Yellow Press? It is a Press which appeals to the lowest passions and instincts of the masses; poisons the mind of the people with anti-social ideas; diverts their attention from things that matter to things that are inane; corrupts their taste with vulgarity, and makes them incapable of thinking for themselves; […] its chief aim is to sap, disunite and disrupt the forces of Labour.[92]

Of course, the aim of cultural critique differed between the *Socialist* and the *Glasgow Herald*. Where the latter sought to contain, manage, and moderate working-class publics all the way down to their favoured modes of cultural expression (as a means of avoiding or postponing demands for social reform), the former pursues an analysis of the commercial press as constituting both a material and an ideological blockage to working-class enlightenment and emancipation; materially by depleting, or 'sapping', the precious energy of working-class readers with irrelevancies, and ideologically by disrupting efforts at identifying shared working-class interests. The anti-commercial critique is also reflected in the formal organisation of the *Socialist*. As seen from the references to the *Socialist* in this chapter, the pagination of the periodical is somewhat inconsistent. In the early issues pagination is per issue, like most newspapers, whereas an older system of pagination

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[89] Ibid.
[90] See Chapter 1 in Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Manchester University Press, 1990).
[91] Ibid. p. 42.
[92] 'THE YELLOW PRESS', *Socialist*, January 1917, p. 6.

across volume was adopted in later issues (hence the high page numbers in some references). While the inconsistency may be put down to the rapid churn of editors and a somewhat bureaucratic control of the periodical, the maintenance of pagination across volume rather than issue may be significant, in that it points to an intention to have issues bound into volumes. There is a logic of durability in this practice which runs counter to the status of the modern newspaper as a commodity with a very limited shelf-life. Readers were encouraged to carry 'one or two current or back numbers' at all times, which speaks to both the physical and intellectual durability of the paper.[93] As such, the *Socialist* represents an important continuation of older radical print culture, because as Gilmartin argues, in contradistinction to the disposable consumer commodity that the newspaper was, radical editors in the plebeian print public sphere produced 'a durable weekly pamphlet, meant to be read and read again, passed from hand to hand, and even bound in volumes and preserved'.[94] Moreover, 'the absence of advertising in these papers removed them further from the cycles of commodity exchange, and prevented market forces from governing print layout'.[95] However, with express concern over popular-commercial appeals to the 'lowest passions and instincts of the masses', the corruption of taste, and of excessive 'vulgarity' , the *Socialist* adopted an idiom difficult to distinguish from elitist cultural critiques as voiced in the 'quality' dailies (considered in the previous chapter), and this may have hampered the paper's appeal to prospective working-class readers with limited patience for what could be perceived as personal chastisement.[96] The commitment to rational and useful leisure may have been difficult to promote, but the pessimism and disdain were not wholly without reason, especially against the backdrop of popular imperialism.

Writers for the *Socialist* found themselves confronted with a working-class audience influenced by a commercially directed popular culture, which often promoted jingoism and various forms of racial and religious prejudice. What was conceived of as a ruling-class tactic of divide and conquer was a recurrent theme in the *Socialist*. Indeed, part of the reason for the split away from the SDF was the antisemitism of not just Hyndman

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[93] James Thomson, 'Spread the Literature of the Revolution', *Socialist*, April 1908, p. 7.
[94] Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, p. 106.
[95] Ibid.
[96] The class tension in the meaning of the term 'vulgar' is indicative of this implication. From c. 1400, it meant '[o]f or relating to common practice or general use; widely occurring, prevalent', including an interesting obsolete meaning of 'generally intelligible' (a. 1450-1680), with a slightly later meaning of '[l]acking in sophistication, refinement, or good taste; not considered fitting or appropriate in educated or polite circles', see 'Vulgar', Oxford English Dictionary, n.d. <https://oed.com> [accessed 15 October 2024].

but also the party-paper, *Justice*.[97] The point was stressed by James Connolly shortly after the launch of the SLP in an article for the *Socialist* where he criticised *Justice* for 'directly appealing to racial antipathies and religious prejudices'.[98] The mechanism by which working-class people were influenced was understood in simple, reflective terms. In the midst of the wave of race riots in 1919, the *Socialist* sought to intervene with a combination of theories of ideological transmission through the press and appeals to working-class internationalism.[99] Thus, John S. Clarke asserted that the press 'is the instrument by which balanced minds are unbalanced, and unbalanced minds are lashed into frenzied neurotics (such as race, labour and religious antagonisms)'.[100] Meanwhile, the traditional educational method of remedy was pursued in a full-page article by William Paul, who argued before the readers that the riots were ultimately the result of divide and conquer tactics deployed by the ruling class, who conspired by means of 'jingo history' and the press to highlight, exaggerate, and demonise racial and national differences: 'This form of hallucination, by means of which every race or nation that happens to trespass on the economic interests if the British ruling class becomes murderers and thieves, is what is called "thinking imperially"'.[101] But Paul simultaneously faulted the established trade unions for failing to adopt policies of unlimited membership:

> Real industrial organisation must aim at protecting the international working class against the capitalist class. If it, on the other hand, only seeks to protect a certain clique of alleged skilled "aristocratic" artisans it becomes a mere close corporation of reactionaries whose organisation becomes an inglorious bulwark of capitalism. The function of a *bona fide* industrial organisation is not to antagonise either coloured or unskilled labourers. It must pull everyone, who offers to sell labour power to the capitalist class, into its ranks and fight for the highest possible wages for that worker.[102]

The strategy for combating such 'imperialist thinking' was trade union organisation on industrial unionist lines, coupled with an increased circulation of the socialist press, and an expansion of independent educational activity. Another iteration of this largely educational strategy appears in a 1920 issue which discusses the ruling-class method of 'divide and conquer' with examples drawn from British rule in India, but for the purpose of dissuading

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[97] For a discussion of Hyndman, earlier expressions of antisemitism, and challenges to it within the socialist movement in Britain, see Satnam Virdee, 'Socialist Antisemitism and Its Discontents in England, 1884-98', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 51:3-4 (2017), pp. 356-73.
[98] James Connolly, 'The Socialist Labour Party of America, and the London S.D.F.', *Socialist*, June 1903, p. 2.
[99] For an excellent recent study of the race riots, see Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Liverpool University Press, 2009).
[100] John S. Clarke, 'MINE SWEEPINGS', *Socialist*, 25 September 1919, p. 355.
[101] William Paul, 'RACE RIOTS & REVOLUTION', *Socialist*, 10 July 1919, p. 264.
[102] Ibid.

Protestant workers in Ulster and Scotland to join the Orange marches.[103] After a potted history of the Battle of the Boyne (celebrated in annual marches on July 12th) which points to the presence of Catholics and Protestants on both the side of William of Orange ('Billy') and on King James's side in the battle, the writer pointedly concludes:

> Yet in spite of these facts the average person in Ulster solemnly believes the fable that "Billy" of glorious, pious and immortal memory delivered them from the "**Papishes**" and holy water. It is to the interest of the British Government and the Capitalists to exploit this yarn, and **it is** exploited so well that it is nearly impossible to effect any unity between both sections to the present day.[104]

While the pessimistic and somewhat condescending tone is still palpable here, it is mixed with an egalitarian populist idiom designed to reduce the symbolic distance between the writer animated with educational intent and the reader in need of enlightenment. It is a creative counterdiscursive effort to both tap into and problematise elements of a symbolic working-class lifeworld. As seen in two recurring editorial features, the 'Roll of Honour' and 'Short Lengths', this populist idiom also took the form of counterpublicity directed outwards against dominant institutions and personalities.

The latter was introduced during the war to offer stinging commentary on the current headlines of the commercial press and the activities of the labour movement. As a monthly (and later weekly) periodical, this feature was adopted in lieu of providing its own news-reports, but it also offered a satirical corrective of public opinion and its staged manufacture on the model of advertising. Thus, the March 1916 issue's Short Lengths was particularly preoccupied with a critique of the promotional form of publicity practiced by the commercial press. The *Socialist*'s offices were raided after Lloyd George's visit to Glasgow, where he addressed munition workers (and several CWC and SLP members, including Muir) at a notorious meeting in St Andrew's Hall, and in March the paper was making up for lost time by continuing the project of belittling the Minister in print:

> In the gloom of Glasgow the other afternoon the Minister of Munitions was quite affable to the camera experts, and posed obligingly, surrounded by his henchmen. But one photographer, doubtful if the dull light would yield a good picture, requested George Lloyd's [sic] permission to take a flashlight photograph. "Not a flashlight! Not a flashlight!" answered the Minister emphatically. "It makes one look so like a startled hare!" – *London Opinion*, January 15.
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> It is only necessary to add that after the Clyde workers were finished with him he looked like a pulverised *Welsh rabbit*![105]

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[103] 'The "Orange" Fraud in Ulster', *Socialist*, 8 July 1920, p. 217. Bold in original.
[104] 'The "Orange" Fraud in Ulster', *Socialist*, 8 July 1920, p. 217.
[105] D. Raper, 'Short Lengths', *Socialist*, March 1916, p. 41.

In the *Socialist*, like in the zetetic print culture investigated by Epstein, 'irreverent ridicule', like the symbolic transmogrification of Lloyd George above, mixed and contrasted with articles written in a 'more serious turn of mind'.[106]

The counterpublicity of the *Socialist* was organised according to a logic of binary opposition, as seen in some of the symbolic mirroring print practices it deployed. Thus, the commercial press's recruitment efforts are ridiculed by the signatory 'Proletarius' in a 1915 issue, where the 'Roll of Honour' is contrasted with the 'Registration of Paupers, the Roll of Dishonour in this snobacratic [sic] Empire'.[107] Despite the proletarian's precarious condition ('our wages generally inadequate for even a small family, our facilities for a literal or technical education do not compare with the cultural opportunities of the master class') '"the gentlemen of England" expect the precariously placed man of "the masses," […] to feel about the Teuton menace as keenly as themselves who study the war problems in the genial quietude of their ample domains!'.[108] Mirroring and parodying the commercial press's habit of publishing rolls of honour for valiance in battle, the *Socialist* issued a regular 'Roll of Honour' which sought to turn the format to its own ideological purposes.[109] It was often conscientious objectors who made it onto the roll of honour, and it was used to publicise both individual acts of working-class heroism, while self-thematising the periodical's role within the oppositional culture. Thus, Laurence Smith made it onto the roll after sending a letter to the editor informing of his situation in Pontefract Barracks, where he was awaiting court martial and sentencing for refusing to obey military orders: 'He tells us that a friend managed to smuggle into the barracks a copy of "The Socialist," and he converted the walls of his cell into a picture gallery and a library of education with the cartoons and articles taken from our paper'.[110]

The critiques and print practices illustrated and discussed in this section offer examples of 'critical populism' in the extended sense I proposed in the Introduction drawing on Jim McGuigan's work.[111] Writers in the *Socialist* retain a 'populist sentiment' or a commitment to the experiences and struggles of ordinary people (among whom they are included of course, and whose discursive idioms they rely on) while at the same time

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[106] James Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850*, (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 131.
[107] Proletarius, 'To the Secretary of State for War and His Numerous Assistants', *Socialist*, October 1915, p. 6.
[108] Ibid.
[109] The first to appear included John Muir, David Kirkwood, Arthur McManus, Thomas Clark and others who had 'fought valiantly for the working class and conducted themselves in a manner revealing heroism and determination. The S.L.P. is proud that Comrades of such sterling merit were drilled and disciplined beneath its banner', see 'S.L.P. ROLL OF HONOUR', *Socialist*, May 1916, p. 60.
[110] 'S.L.P. Roll of Honour', *Socialist*, August 1917, p. 5.
[111] Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism* (Routledge, 1992), p. 5.

seeking to understand and communicate the structural forces shaping their experiences.[112] There is an orientation to radical enlightenment in this cultural practice, and in what follows I consider how the paper was designed to counteract specifically proletarian ideological blockages to enlightenment.

3.4 Proletarian Enlightenment

A specifically proletarian blockage to enlightenment, generated by the working conditions in large-scale and increasingly automated factories, is articulated in a 1922 leading article. The writer glosses over an article entitled 'The Mind of the Modern Worker' in an American 'industrial management' publication, where the following questions are pondered:

> What is on the modern worker's mind? What are his thoughts as he works at the forge or in the forest, at the bench or in the bank, in the store or shop? If there is anything wrong with the trend of his thoughts, what are the causes which bring this unfortunate result about, and what remedies should be applied to make him more contented and more efficient?[113]

On the front page of the same issue of the *Socialist*, readers are warned of the ideological propaganda work done by the British Empire Union, an organisation similar to the Scottish Economic League discussed in the previous chapter.[114] The immediate concern of the leader-writer, however, is to analyse how the increasingly rationalised production process in modern large-scale industry, characterised by automation and fine subdivision of labour, is itself creating blockages for political class consciousness. The writer argues that 'automatic processes, production at large scale and at high speed' enable the increasing employment of unskilled labourers, and the key valence of 'unskilled' here is not the artisanal skill of a trade, but unskilled in the sense of 'uneducated' and 'inexperienced'.[115] Meanwhile, more experienced workers with an 'active mind' who might 'agitate, harangue, and disturb his fellow-workers' are fewer and further between in the factories.[116] In other words, the writer calls attention to the risk of dilution of political consciousness in a workforce that is young or lacks experience of industrial relations. Furthermore, the way in which tasks are 'subdivided into a number of minute processes' has produced 'a very curious result: often the worker does not know the nature, construction, or function of what

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[112] Ibid. p. 14.
[113] 'THE MIND OF THE MODERN WORKER', *Socialist*, 5 October 1922, p. 294.
[114] 'OUR GLORIOUS HERITAGE', *Socialist*, 5 October 1922, p. 293.
[115] 'THE MIND OF THE MODERN WORKER', *Socialist*, 5 October 1922, p. 294.
[116] Ibid.

he is making; neither does he know the place it occupies in the finished article, nor the value of his own work'.[117] In this context, the writer suggests, the worker has become 'a **faithful watchdog** […] a part of the machine itself' wherein the 'mind of the modern worker is occupied with dull, stupefying, monotonous routine'.[118] A theory of reification thus emerged in the *Socialist*. The critical interrogation of the mental effects of material working conditions pursued in the *Socialist* produces a rudimentary critique of what Douglas Held calls 'fragmentation of culture' in an essay on Habermas's legitimation crisis theory.[119] As Held argues, '[f]ragmentation acts as a barrier to a coherent conception of the social totality – the structure of social practices and possibilities'.[120] He draws attention to the 'atomisation' and 'pragmatic adaptation' generated via precisely those processes described in the *Socialist*, the technical division of labour and the organisation of work relations.[121] As can be sensed from the *Socialist* too, Held argues that '[w]ith the fragmentation of tasks and knowledge, the identity of social classes is threatened. The social relations which condition these processes are reified: they become ever harder to grasp'.[122] Held's analysis, and indeed that of the *Socialist* written from a proletarian point of view with direct experience of these processes, offers a supplement to Habermas's diagnosis of lifeworld colonisation, described as a process whereby everyday consciousness is 'robbed of its power to synthesise' and becomes instead 'a "fragmented consciousness" that blocks enlightenment by the mechanism of reification'.[123] The proletarian public sphere developed under the ambition to overcome such blockages to enlightenment. Within this sphere, education was largely sought directly in public, rather than in a previous moment of socialisation in the private sphere as on Habermas's classical bourgeois public sphere model, which posited two essential conditions of entry: education and property ownership.[124] By contrast, the *Socialist* and the public sphere it mediated cultivated strategies for overcoming such blockages through a distinctive educational and agitational practices centred on factory discussions, public meetings, and study circles (aside from the journal itself). I argue that the public mediated by the *Socialist* became embroiled in discursive practices which leaned heavily into instrumental reason over more

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[117] Ibid.
[118] 'THE MIND OF THE MODERN WORKER', *Socialist*, 5 October 1922, p. 294.
[119] David Held, 'Crisis Tendencies, Legitimation and the State', in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. by John B. Thompson and David Held (Macmillan, 1982), pp. 181-95 (p. 190).
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid. p. 191.
[123] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System, a Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1987), p. 355.
[124] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 85.

communicative forms of deliberation oriented to mutual understanding. This was due in no small part to the limiting material conditions for educational practice that these proletarian intellectuals were facing, but, as I seek to show in the remainder of this chapter, the attempt to overcome reification and its effects primarily via instrumental reason (and action) led to an ambiguous, contradictory, cultural practice.

Richard Johnson describes the earlier radical plebeian newspaper as an 'educational medium', and this description also captures the *Socialist* well.[125] Indeed, a progression in political education is projected through the formal layout of the paper. The elementary stage of proletarian political awakening in the milieu of soapbox oratory is reflected in the large front-page illustrations of most issues. One front-page depicts an emaciated worker (marked 'LABOUR' at the belt) fettered to the spokes (carrying the words 'PROFITS', 'EXPLOITATION', 'HUNGER') of a war machine, with the artillery barrel emblazoned with 'CAPITALISM'.[126] On the front page of another issue an illustration with the caption 'CAPITALIST PATRIOT TO STRIKERS – "CURSED BE THOSE WHO USE THE NATION'S DANGER FOR THEIR PRIVATE GAIN"' depicts a financier, distinguished by his corpulence and banker's bowler hat, sitting atop a sky-high pile of sacks marked 'FOOD PROFIT' and 'COAL PROFIT', holding a flag that reads 'NATIONAL SERVICE' while pointing the finger to a group of workers marked by their flat caps.[127] Images like these are not designed for subtlety, but for boldly communicating class antagonism before a live audience with both informational and agitational intent. The column space afforded them, often the entire page of a folded broadsheet, would be visible from some distance, and points to their use in oratory, or as posters to be put up. Inside the periodical, shorter articles drawn from public speeches (or written with a view to be read aloud?), and literary dialogues appear, instructing readers on how to argue convincingly with co-workers on the factory floor.[128] A shift from spoken discourse to reading in a less boisterous and antagonistic atmosphere is indicated by the appearance of more advanced reprinted texts used in study groups, from serialised pamphlets, to Marxist keywords with brief explanations to be studied and memorised.[129] Recommendations for further reading were

[125] Johnson, 'Really Useful Knowledge', p. 84.
[126] *Socialist*, January 1917, p. 25.
[127] *Socialist*, November 1915, p. 9.
[128] A series of 'Meal-Hour Talks' was published in the 1909 issues, written by Rebel Tom, founder of the SLP-affiliated Proletarian Schools. See in particular Rebel Tom, 'Meal-Hour Talks: A Job-Hunter's Experiences', *Socialist*, June 1909, p. 7.
[129] A series of definitions offering 'elementary explanations of economic terms to facilitate the study of Marxian Economics' appear in another issue, with short entries like the following: 'SURPLUS VALUE – The difference between what Labour *receives* (wages) and what Labour actually *produces*. This unpaid portion is Surplus Value, and determines ratio of Labour's exploitation' (*Socialist*, February 1917, p. 39). An even more systematic study guide, *First Principles of Working-Class Education* (1920) was written by a later editor of

sometimes issued at the end of longer articles.[130] On the last page, or the backmatter, the readers would receive instructions for joining study groups, what literature to read (and the order in which to read it, from beginner-level, to more advanced readings), and how to get it for cheap from the Socialist Labour Press.[131]

The *Glasgow Evening Times* described the *Socialist* as 'a clever paper, [but] a little addicted perhaps to operations with the sledge-hammer, when a lighter weapon would do as well'.[132] While the small circulation and the relative isolation of the SLP from the wider labour movement in the pre-war years meant that the *Glasgow Evening Times*-writer was confident enough to offer compliments to the *Socialist*, the object of its condescension – the combative tone and a bold form of argumentation suggested by the image of the sledgehammer – is significant. It raises the question of whether the *Socialist*'s preferred idiom of opposition and declamation qualifies as a deliberative form of what Habermas calls 'communicative action', or discussion between interlocutors assuming mutual learning through argumentation oriented to social, moral and aesthetic values, or whether it points to the cultivation of a more calculating, strategic, and instrumental aspect of reason oriented to success in relation to a world of objects.[133] In the previous chapter, I argued that the *Glasgow Herald*'s representation of public opinion through an anonymous editorial 'we' suggests less an invitation to deliberative debate, and more an air of decision before a readership offering only acclamation (by purchase) or silence. Furthermore, one aim of the

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the *Socialist*, the house-painter James Clunie from Fife. The book was printed by the Socialist Labour Press, and includes folded visual aids, diagrams, and definitions for the study of Marxian political economy. A first-page review includes an illustration aimed at explaining the terms 'labour', 'commodity', and 'capital', appears in *Socialist*, 12 August 1920, p. 257.

[130] Thus, at the end of a longer essay on 'Scientific Socialism' published over two issues, the writer provides a paragraph under the sub-heading 'What to Read on Social Science' where the reader is recommended 'two pamphlets that are absolutely indispensable. "Socialism and Evolution," by H.S. Aley, M.D.; and "The Communist Manifesto," by Marx and Engels. Price 1 1/2d. each, from the S.L. Press, Glasgow. Quite the best introduction to the study of Evolution is a careful reading of "Evolution: From Nebula to Man," and "Pre-historic Man" by J.M. Cable, price 1/2d. each and obtainable through the S.L. Press'. ('Scientific Socialism', *Socialist*, August 1917, p. 82). Similarly, a printed lecture on industrial history includes references for further reading ('INDUSTRIAL HISTORY. – FOURTH LECTURE OF A SERIES DELIVERED TO GLASGOW ECONOMIC CLASS', *Socialist*, January 1910, p. 7).

[131] One example (*Socialist*, 20 November 1919, p. 414) carries an advertisement which divides 'TEXT BOOKS FOR CLASSES – BOOKS FOR STUDENTS' from 'JACK LONDON'S NOVELS' (no fewer than twenty-six titles) and 'CHEAP REPRINTS' of classics including Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791) and *The Age of Reason* (1794-1807). Another issue (*Socialist*, September 1904, p. 8) advises its readers on 'WHAT TO READ AND THE ORDER IN WHICH TO READ THEM' and separates introductory pamphlets into a lot 'For Beginners', which includes De Leon's *What Means this Strike?* (1898) and *Reform or Revolution?* (1896), from a lot of books 'For Students', which includes the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880).

[132] Reprinted in *Socialist*, June 1909, p. 5. The *Glasgow Evening Times* is especially pleased with the *Socialist*'s frequent attacks on its rivals within the labour movement, in this case the *Clarion*, which points to both the middle-class strategy of divide-and-conquer, and to a weakness in the SLP's strategy of ideological puritanism.

[133] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1984), pp. 15, 286.

Glasgow Herald's discursive strategy was to contain and moderate (even police) its outside publics. By contrast, the *Socialist* was designed to rouse and stimulate working-class readers, and especially listeners, as the following examination of the sites of oral discourse implicated in the *Socialist* will show. To uncover the goal-orientation of the *Socialist*'s communicative praxis, I begin by considering the central role of the intensive study-group, before turning to modes of outdoor propaganda.

Brian Simon draws an explicit parallel between the forms of Marxist studies in the proletarian public sphere and those pursued by the earlier plebeian Jacobins. It is particularly the practice of intensive study of Marxist political economy in what Tom Bell calls the 'parent groups' organised by the SLP, which produced tutors who would then lead classes inside the factories. Simon observes: 'As [Bell] outlines it, the procedure bears a remarkable resemblance to that used in the classes organised by the Corresponding Societies in the 1790s'.[134] The more formalised aspects of independent working-class education in the period have been described in several autobiographical accounts which historians have drawn on to reconstruct a general picture of the Marxist study-circles and lectures conducted in the period, most famously under the auspices of the Scottish Labour Colleges.[135] Perhaps the most commemorated of these forms is the public lectures on Marxist economics conducted by John Maclean, who was a member of the British Socialist Party at the height of his activity, but who became a member of the SLP briefly after the formation of the CPGB in 1920.[136] Robert Duncan gives priority to Maclean's lectures, while the SLP receives an honourable mention:

> On Sunday afternoons during 1915, in the crucible of wartime Glasgow – second city of the British Empire and key centre of munitions production – the schoolteacher and revolutionary John Maclean conducted the largest Marxist education class in Europe. […] Indoors and out-of-doors, the Socialist Labour Party had also been consistently active in the Glasgow area since 1903, running Marxist classes for its members and propagating revolutionary theory to the wider public.[137]

However, the core of educational activity in Glasgow was arguably the intensive study-circle, which SLP members were the most active organisers of, particularly in the years

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[134] Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), p. 300.
[135] For autobiographical accounts, see Thomas Bell, *Pioneering Days* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1941) and T.A. Jackson, *Solo Trumpet* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1953). Academic works include: Challinor; Anthony Cooke, *From Popular Enlightenment to Lifelong Learning: A History of Adult Education in Scotland 1707-2005*, (NIACE, 2006); Robert Duncan, 'Independent Working-Class Education and the Formation of the Labour College Movement in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, 1915-1922', in *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-50: Essays in Honour of Harry McShane, 1891-1988*, ed. by Robert Duncan and Arthur McIvor (John Donald, 1992), pp. 106-28; Simon, pp. 296-303.
[136] Maclean eventually joined the SLP in 1921 after the formation of the CPGB. See Henry Bell, *John Maclean: Hero of Red Clydeside*, (Pluto, 2018), p. 167.
[137] Duncan, p. 106.

leading up to the war. Hence, when enthusiasm for this type of independent education peaked in Glasgow, from about 1917-1922, the tutors were drawn primarily from those who had received their own education in the SLP classes.[138] A 1908 issue of the *Socialist* exemplifies how the periodical mediated this type of educational praxis in Glasgow. It advertises the classes in economics and industrial history organised in Glasgow and carries a list of literature available from the Socialist Labour Press.[139] But the same issue also carries an instructive piece of correspondence signed 'Calton Rebel', a student of the class conducted in an industrial district at 63 Adelphi Street, Glasgow, which outlines how these classes were carried out.[140] The writer frames the classes as a way of continuing the summer propaganda season into the winter months:

> While many branches and party members will spend a whole summer working hard carrying on open-air propaganda, there are branches and party members who make no great effort to carry on winter propaganda outside of the sale of our paper and pamphlets […] but there are other avenues of propaganda […] namely, the organisation of economic and industrial history classes.[141]

The passage highlights the close linkage between the study groups and outdoor propaganda. In recommending this type of cultural praxis the writer attributes their success in Glasgow not to the existence of 'better men' in there than elsewhere – 'Far from it' – but because 'we have a good system at hand for the carrying out of such work'.[142] The pedagogical system described is the same as that outlined from memory by Bell, and the method followed in these classes was to begin with a survey of the material to be covered in the upcoming sessions, after which each student 'was given a series of definitions of terms used by Marx' which had to be studied, memorised, and discussed 'for perhaps the first four weeks'.[143] Pride of place was given to Marx's *Wage Labour and Capital* (1847) which was studied at home before being studied collectively in the following way:

> At the class we would read it over paragraph by paragraph, round the class. This practice aimed at helping the students to speak fluently and grammatically. At the

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[138] Bell describes the classes he conducted in the following way: 'These S.L.P. classes, apart from the economic and social conditions, played an important role in gaining the Clydeside its reputation for being "Red." Every year produced new worker-tutors. Classes sprang up in a number of the shipyards and engineering shops. In the great majority of these classes the tutors had come through the S.L.P. parent groups'. Bell, p. 55.

[139] The Glasgow Branch organised classes at the party club rooms at 63 Adelphi Street, Glasgow, but also in Airdrie, Clydebank, and Govan (*Socialist*, September 1908, p 5). Among the pamphlets advertised are *Wage Labour and Capital* by Marx (1d), as well as a cloth-bound issue of 'THE FIRST NINE CHAPTERS OF "DAS CAPITAL [sic]"' by Marx (2 1/2d). *Socialist*, September 1908, p. 8.

[140] Calton Rebel, 'Economic Classes,' *Socialist*, September 1908, p. 5.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

[143] According to Bell, the textbooks used included '*Wage Labour and Capital*; *Value, Price and Profit*; *Capital*; and H. de B. Gibbins' *Industry in England* and Buckle's *History of Civilisation*'. Bell, p. 56.

> following class meeting questions would be put and answered, and the points raised thoroughly understood by everyone, the result of each lesson being summarised by the leader. This method was applied in the same way to industrial history. Later on, simple lessons on historical materialism and formal logic were added. So that, after six months of this, every worker who went through the entire session came out a potential tutor for other classes.[144]

The practice of collective reading, and of allocating a chair empowered to ask questions and expect responses as well as steering discussion, was a conscious deviation away from what the Calton Rebel refers to as the 'old form of so-called democratic discussion classes'.[145] The new 'system' was beneficial for the majority of students, since the liberal democratic discussion classes had a practical tendency to allow only two or three participants, 'who could wag their chins a little faster than the rest' to carry on the discussion, with the result that 'there was never much progress made'.[146] While the aim of the pedagogical system was not to foreclose free discussion altogether ('If anyone – member or otherwise – wanted discussion, they could have their fill of it after the class') it was aimed at directed forms of knowledge to meet the propagandistic needs of the movement.[147] The pedagogical system was in part designed to meet young learners with very little prior education, and a scarcity of energy and time. Thus, the Calton Rebel remarks that while many SLP members had acquired the necessary knowledge to conduct a class from 'studying […] privately […], being workers, they have not had the opportunity of acquiring a system whereby they could concentrate that knowledge in order to carry on a class for, say, six months'.[148] The scarcity of resources that Johnson highlights for the earlier radical plebeian enlightenment praxis holds for this formation too, with the caveat that elementary literacy was more prevalent after the turn of the twentieth century: 'lack of schools, lack of books, lack of energy, lack of time'.[149] In this context, pedagogical structures provided much needed scaffolding for both the teacher and the student who stepped onto the public stage imperfectly formed and as equals in more than principle. But these conditions meant that a rather narrow, highly purposive curriculum was pursued, as seen through discussions on the place of humanistic studies within working-class education.

Generally, the attitude was to defer preoccupation with art and literature until after the revolution, and 'literature' in the pages of the periodical refers mostly to socialist

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[144] Bell, p. 57.
[145] Calton Rebel, 'Economic Classes,' *Socialist*, September 1908, p. 5.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Johnson, 'Really Useful Knowledge', p. 77.

literature for political education. The rationale for neglecting cultural education was expressed clearly in a front-page essay in 1920. The writer, D. J. Williams of the Labour College in Kew, attacks Sir A. T. Quiller Couch, who had lectured on the subject of working-class education at Cambridge: 'In a lecture he lately gave at that "home of learning," he deprecates the fact that the study of economics is looked upon with such importance, and of its tendency to oust literature'.[150] Williams continues:

> This movement for educating the working class does not forget the value of studying Shakespeare, Burns, Shelley, etc. As a matter of fact, we draw a great deal of inspiration from them. Does not Burns tell us of the place "Where hundreds labour to support / A haughty lordling's pride." And of him "Who begs a brother of the earth / To give him leave to toil?"[151]

However, 'in order to immediately realise the task in hand we must sacrifice some of the most pleasurable sides of study […] it is the fault of capitalism that makes this education necessary'.[152] As Johnson is careful to point out in his account of 'really useful knowledge', in spite of the radical plebeian educational aspiration to combine general enlightenment with practical utility, the limiting conditions within which radical education was pursued demanded prioritisation in the form of what he terms 'spearhead knowledge':[153]

> While a really full or human education, embracing a knowledge of man and nature, would certainly be achieved once the Charter had been won or the New Moral World ushered in, some substantive understandings had a special priority, here and now. Certain truths had a pressing immediacy. They were indispensable means to emancipation. […] Once these truths were understood, the old world could indeed be shaken.[154]

I return to the question of cultural education as mediated by the *Socialist* in more detail in the next section. For now, it suffices to note that the pedagogical method was effective, for it not only produced potential tutors but also equipped ordinary workers for everyday proselytising:

> We seized every opportunity for discussion. During meal hours we would sit in a group and argue […] By dint of perseverance in discussion, and by means of pamphlets and books, I won over a goodly number to my side.[155]

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[150] 'Sir Quiller Couch and Working-Class Education', *Socialist*, 18 November 1920, p. 369.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Johnson, 'Really Useful Knowledge', p. 86.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Bell, p. 63.

Bell suggests that, as a result of such discussions, a study circle was formed in the Parkhead forge where he worked, which suggests a pedagogical trajectory from shop-floor discussion, where previously hidden aspects of the lifeworld could be brought out for initial problematisation, to the introduction of print as a means of furthering understanding by structuring discussion, to the organisation of a more formal study-circle that would produce new propagandists. I now consider this agitational mode of public discourse.

The method for effectively carrying out 'outdoor propaganda' was outlined in an early issue of the *Socialist*.[156] First, it required careful preparation by allocating the necessary roles in advance (chairman, speakers, literature-sellers), by locating the necessary equipment (including a 'little wooden platform of about 18 inches long 12 inches broad and 12 inches high, with hinged legs to fold up so that it may be carried easily' as well as a selection of literature), and by finding an appropriate place for the meeting ('a main thoroughfare, a little bit up or down a side street, market places, public parks or squares, or wherever wage-slaves "most do congregate"').[157] Communication in this context required a wide and responsive repertoire encompassing both serious argumentation and lighter methods such as musical performance ('a very good way in which to attract an audience […] but unless the singers have some knowledge of harmony it is no good').[158] But most importantly when addressing a work-weary crowd meeting in evenings or on Sunday afternoons, with little energy or patience for academic speech, a suspicious idiom in any case, the writer advises the speakers to 'give a straight plain English lecture, using as few scientific terms as possible, so that all may understand'.[159] The speakers thus approached a high-risk environment with pedagogical intent:

> In answering questions the speaker should always be courteous. He may be asked some stupid or silly questions, but let him bear in mind that our class has had small chances to educate themselves on their own class interests. But should any "fakir, freak, or fool" dare to cast ridicule on our Party or principles, then the speaker should wade into and annihilate him, as a street crowd always like to see a smart (?) chap get a take down.[160]

While the humorous tone of this propaganda manual may suggest figurative meanings of 'take down' and annihilation of hecklers, physical confrontations were not uncommon, and the propaganda meetings could quickly develop into a physical confrontation between

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[156] 'Regarding Outdoor Propaganda', *Socialist*, October 1904, p. 4.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid. The term 'fakir' refers to official leaders in the labour movement; Daniel De Leon uses the term labour 'fakers' in his pamphlets to refer to the same type of official, and the term may have morphed in the British context to receive an orientalist inflection.

clashing publics. Thus, Bell records how John Muir was addressing an audience on Buchanan Street, just outside the *Glasgow Herald* offices (the bulletins carrying the latest news on display in the windows would attract large crowds), when an 'angry mob of the [university] student element collected' and the platform 'was rushed and blows struck'.[161] To protect themselves from such attacks, the SLP members 'organised groups of non-party workers who belonged to our "corner" (the streets where we lived). These workers knew nothing of politics, but they were always ready for a fight, especially when one of their own was involved'.[162] One of the qualities that was fostered among interlocutors in the proletarian public sphere was stubbornness and perseverance in conflict (and not only verbal conflict as just seen). A fostering of combativeness was by no means the preserve of the proletarian public sphere, however; recall the 'soldier spirit' that Lord Haldane had sought to inculcate the University of Glasgow's students with, as seen in the previous chapter's admiring report in the *Glasgow Herald*. Against such violent confrontations between publics, the animating ambition within the proletarian public sphere was to produce reasoned discourse. Indeed, an express ambition to reach an idealised deliberative standard at street-meetings is also articulated in the *Socialist*:

> The success of our meeting is not determined by the lung power of our speakers but by the amount of interest and discussion that our argument produce. The best criterion by which to test a successful meeting is the questions and discussion.[163]

Just as appeals to reason were prominent among the *Socialist*'s writer, so did ideals of reason and careful argumentation animate spoken practice. Thus, a writer in the *Socialist* sought to caution and instruct the readers on rhetorically potent words and phrases that may be deployed by opponents seeking to circumvent reasoned, logical, discourse:

> THERE are a certain number of blessed words, sworn enemies of reason. They belong chiefly to the armoury of the worsted in debate. When you cannot give passable argument against your opponent, you stand and shout one of these magic vocables. For example these are – "crude," "immoral," "Un-English," "Anarchistic," "out-of-date," and many others, that will no doubt suggest themselves.[164]

By using such words, the writer explains, the aim 'is to raise in the mind of a possible third person – an unprejudiced truth-seeker perhaps – a cloud of irrelevant associations, that will prevent his getting a fair hold of the true relations of the matter under discussion'.[165] The

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[161] Bell, p. 103.
[162] Ibid. pp. 103-04.
[163] 'Regarding Outdoor Propaganda', *Socialist*, October 1904, p. 4.
[164] 'CATACLYSM', *Socialist*, November 1906, p. 4.
[165] Ibid.

questions and discussions provoked though this form of boisterous and polemical public speaking opened up previously undisclosed areas of the lifeworld to problematisation, and in doing so, it was designed to motivate both further study and instrumental political action. It was a discourse of reason, but a one-sided version of rationality; the aspect of reason that most animated this cultural formation was instrumental reason, concerned with well-grounded assertions, means-ends relations, and the dispelling of factual error, over and above other aspects of reason, including what Habermas calls '*normatively* [or morally] *regulated actions* and *expressive self-presentations*' concerned with inner experience and aesthetic values.[166] In the next section, I consider some of the cultural implications of this partiality for instrumental reason for the proletarian public sphere.

3.5 An Instrumentalised Culture?

Alan McKinlay draws on an article by R.M. Fox in the *Socialist* which captures the distinctive materialism of Clydeside engineers in the early twentieth century: 'Just as the craftsman used reason, experience, and skill to transform metal into useful things so he would apply the same faculties to remake the world'.[167] The social world, it was thought, could be reshaped in the same way that the world of objects could be remoulded. To manual workers this creed was sure to inspire both confidence and legitimate motivation for action, but it also carries limitations. What a one-sided focus on instrumental reasoning neglects is the alternative aspects of rationality oriented to deliberation on issues of normative (or moral) and aesthetic-expressive values; under the aspect of instrumental reason, the necessarily normative goals of action risks becoming sidelined or assumed without sufficient discussion.[168] Charles Taylor's intellectual history tracing the moral sources of the modern self through close readings of philosophical and literary texts helps illustrate this by directing attention to the radical enlightenment's troubled relationship with notions of the moral good.[169] The rationalist self-image typical of enlightenment modes of thought, from liberal utilitarianism to more rigid forms of Marxian materialism, leads, in Taylor's account, to theories that are 'strangely inarticulate' concerning their own 'moral sources' or 'constitutive goods'.[170] In radical enlightenment thought, moral sources

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[166] Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1*, p. 15.
[167] Alan McKinlay, 'Philosophers in Overalls?: Craft and Class on Clydeside, C1900-1914', in *Roots of Red Clydeside 1910-1914?*, ed. by William Kenefick and John McIlroy (John Donald, 1996), pp. 86-106 (p. 86).
[168] See Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1*, pp. 15, 237-38.
[169] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[170] Ibid. p. 338.

are articulated either by means of vague invocation ('the greatest happiness', 'universal justice'), or, more commonly, by means of rhetorical negation. As Taylor puts it, moral sources in radical enlightenment argumentation 'mainly consist of the polemical passages in which error, superstition, fraud, and religion are denounced. What they are denounced for lacking, or for suppressing, or for destroying expresses what we who attack them are moved by and cherish'.[171] This means that radical enlightenment critique necessarily relies on lifeworld resources outside the bounds of its own articulation. Imaginative literature is one crucial place where such resources are contained and can be retrieved, which helps explain its prominent and often compensatory ideological place in classical notions of enlightenment education or *Bildung* (as seen in relation to the *Glasgow Herald*). A closer consideration of the treatment of imaginative literature in the *Socialist* will help further chart the iteration of instrumental reason that held such powerful sway within this cultural formation. Imaginative literature is perhaps most noticeable for its absence in the educational journalism of the *Socialist* (despite the critical resources that many working-class radicals have historically found in it). The internal reasons for this occlusion are revealing of problems in a strand of proletarian intellectual and political culture distinctive of the period, with important historical precedents in radical plebeian rationalist culture as well as its heirs in later twentieth century iterations of socialism and communism.

I noted earlier the *Socialist*'s explicit rationale for sidelining cultural-literary education in favour of a focus on political economy. Despite this order of priorities, the *Socialist* did engage in the construction of an alternative socialist literary canon. An indication of its rationale can be got from the 1903 manifesto-issue, where James Connolly's 'A Rebel Song' ('Come, workers, sing a rebel song, a song of love and hate. // Of love unto the lowly, of hatred to the great') appears in the left column of the front page.[172] Immediately below Connolly's song a citation from the former Conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Coningsby* (1844) appears: 'The Whigs are worn out, Conservatism is a sham, and Radicalism is a pollution'.[173] That a 'conservative canon' was prevalent among working-class readers has been firmly established by Jonathan Rose, who surveys working-class autobiographies to reconstruct typical reading patterns.[174] The affordances of such a canon, and the meanings that working-class publics construed from its texts, were as manifold as textual interpretations allow, however. Writers in the *Socialist*

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[171] Ibid. p. 339.
[172] *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 1.
[173] Ibid.
[174] See Chapter 4 in Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edn (Yale University Press, 2010).

recognised that imaginative literature had at least instrumental value to the cause, and melodramatic popular literature with a clear and simple moral vision was especially valorised. In a full-page piece on Eugène Sue and Daniel De Leon (who had translated Sue's novels into English, novels that were made available through the Socialist Labour Press), the writer remarks that not everyone can be a student of history or scientific literature:

> There are questions of time and taste. History to some folk is as objectionable to the mind as cod-liver oil to a disordered stomach. The majority of healthy minded people, however, can always enjoy a novel, particularly when it is not too long nor too dry, and a science, be it history, astronomy, or biology, will thrill the reluctant and protesting mind, and have an enduring effect, if the vehicle of transmission is a charming yarn.[175]

Although the writer makes no reference to the age of the anticipated readers, it is likely that they were young (similar in character to those working boys that the factory welfare officer writing in the *Glasgow Herald* was concerned with monitoring and educating) and in any case lacking much formal education. Indeed, the recommended literature often had an overtly didactic orientation: Jack London's novels are advertised in the *Socialist*, but especially Sue's novel suite *The Mysteries of the People: or, The History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages* (1849-1856) was valued for its ability to transmit a grand historical narrative of class struggle, of working-class heroism and virtue, and of ruling class cruelty and vice, by using the generic devices of melodrama.[176] Recalling that Sue was an important trend-setter for the genre of city 'mysteries' in the mid-nineteenth century, this was precisely the kind of literature deplored as 'decadent' in the *Glasgow Herald*'s aesthetic-political interventions, as seen in the previous chapter.

Elsewhere, a front-page essay discourses on Robert Burns, who was similarly valued for the political content of his songs. However, the focus turns to the emergent heritage industry surrounding the name of Burns. The writer has visited Kilmarnock and is disturbed by the tourism industry that has been constructed around the poet's legacy, and turned him into a commodity: 'Capitalism has now covered him, as it has hundreds of other great men and women, with its loathsome slime'.[177] 'What would be the thoughts, what the actions of the poet, could he but again visit these scenes of his boyhood's days?' the writer asks.[178] Considering the revolutionary commitments of Burns, the writer

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[175] 'Eugene Sue and Daniel De Leon', *Socialist*, May 1913, p. 69.
[176] *Socialist*, 20 November 1919, p. 414.
[177] 'Robert Burns and Capitalism', *Socialist*, October 1906, p. 1.
[178] Ibid.

provides an answer: '[…] we are confident enough to assert that such an observant revolutionary would have selected the Socialist Labour Party as the one that most promises success'.[179] The projection continues:

> As one of old scourged the money changers out of the Temple, so would the soul of Robert Burns loathe the modern defilers and exploiters of his name and genius; and as he devoted his powers to the scornful lashing of the medical, political, wealthy and religious frauds and hypocrites of his day, so would he now bring to bear on the capitalist class and its pliant and corrupt lieutenants the Labour Fakirs, the full strength of its biting sarcasm, and the searching light of his marvellous mind.[180]

The *Socialist* helped construct a socialist literary canon which included popular writers such as Burns, William Morris, Sue, and Jack London, but this was justified in narrowly rationalistic, indeed utilitarian, terms. The instrumental focus encouraged and helped cultivate a small but highly committed cadre of working-class autodidacts who found themselves caught in the ambivalent tension between, on the one hand, an egalitarian political commitment coupled with a strident populist idiom and, on the other hand, a sectarian, text-bound intellectualism (centred on Marxian political economy, industrial history, and socialist political writings on movement strategy and tactics rather than imaginative literature). I want to conclude this chapter with some reflections on the political culture mediated by the *Socialist* and its relation to wider working-class culture and politics.

The political culture of the *Socialist* offers a useful supplement to the argument made by Stedman Jones concerning the re-making and ultimate containment of working-class culture in the late Victorian period; a re-making he sees a definitive also of the twentieth century. On the basis of London sources, he characterises working-class culture as a 'life apart', primarily seen in 'a way of life centred around the pub, the race course and the music hall'.[181] Impermeable to middle-class efforts at moral improvement and yet lacking 'any widespread class combativity', he characterises working-class culture as 'no longer threatening or subversive, but conservative and defensive'.[182] Now, Stedman Jones's account on this point is both overgeneralised (relying primarily on London sources) and overly pessimistic (due to the experience of popular support for the Thatcherism that Stuart Hall and others were then analysing), as Epstein points out.[183] Nonetheless, the account offers a useful frame of reference, and I want to posit that the political culture

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[179] 'Robert Burns and Capitalism', *Socialist*, October 1906, p. 1.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Stedman Jones, p. 215.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Epstein, *In Practice*, pp. 30-31.

mediated by the *Socialist* was characterised by a simultaneous sense of a 'life apart' *and*, contra Stedman Jones, a subversive combativeness.

Consider the first SLP manifesto, which concludes with a slogan that would occupy the masthead of the *Socialist* for years to come, signalling the ideologically purist intent of the party: 'Socialism is the only hope of the workers. All else is illusion'.[184] A further expression of this ideological tenet of the SLP is found in the front-page article: 'We must rid ourselves of all this cant of alienating the sympathies of the workers. We must remember we are in politics as practical men for the realisation of our principles and not because of our sentiment'.[185] A demanding rationalist culture was thus projected through the *Socialist* from early on, and in its political culture, the *Socialist* can be usefully compared to the 'Zetetics', or 'seekers'; the followers of Richard Carlile as reconstructed by Epstein.[186] After the suppression of radicalism in the 1820s pursued under the Six Acts – a persecution that Carlile, the *Republican*, and his zetetic followers survived and resisted admirably – this strand of demanding radicalism was 'increasingly reduced to sectarian status' and despite a widely shared admiration for Paine 'most working-class radicals resisted the brand of systematic rationalism and universalism that zetetic culture demanded'.[187] Epstein suggests that the intellectualist commitment within zetetic culture involved a 'strong crosscurrent of elitism that flowed against the mainstream of egalitarianism' and attributes this cultural tension to the class composition of the movement, made up of 'humble men and women of learning – intelligent people with unrealized potential, anxious to pit themselves against the world of elite learning'.[188]

In confrontation with both a classical bourgeois public as mediated by the *Glasgow Herald* (counting the very employers that the industrial unionists sought to confront among its core readership) and an emergent popular-commercial culture mediated by a mass press that promoted both depoliticised entertainment and imperialist ideology, writers in the *Socialist* became entangled in a contradictory cultural politics. Firstly, in educational praxis, the transition described in the *Socialist* from 'democratic discussion classes' to the highly systematic study-groups is important, because it indicates a shift away from communicative action and towards a more instrumental orientation focussed on efficiency

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[184] 'Socialist Labour Party. – MANIFESTO TO THE WORKING CLASS', *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 5.
[185] N.M.M., 'THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION RED HERRING', *Socialist*, May 1903, p. 1.
[186] Epstein refers to the lively zetetic society in Edinburgh, see Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp. 113-14. Gordon Pentland's study is more detailed and takes note of the attention paid by early twentieth century radicals such as the Glasgow-based anarchist Guy Aldred to a leading figure of the Edinburgh Zetetics, James Affleck. Pentland, p. 314.
[187] Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 110.
[188] Ibid. p. 129.

and success in action, and on means-ends relations in the objective world.[189] This transition (which was partly a product of material conditions and a real need for ideological counter-measures) carries the risk of reification, whereby participants approach one another as mute objects rather than interlocutors in discussion.[190] There is a tragic irony in this. With a view to realise the ideal socialist public sphere model against the dominant and commercially steered publics, the *Socialist* mediated a counterpublic that became caught in a contradictory praxis prioritising modes of instrumental reason oriented to success (over communicative reason oriented to mutual understanding) as the means of overcoming one of the original blockages to proletarian enlightenment; reification, or the worker becoming 'a part of the machine itself'.[191]

Secondly, and relatedly, the *Socialist*'s critical populism at times tipped over into intellectual condescension vis-à-vis a projected working-class readership, and the *Socialist* and its political party risked both cultural and political isolation. Culturally, a popular didactic literary canon is being promoted along with appeals to bourgeois aesthetic judgements centred on taste and sensibility, as mobilised against the vulgar stylistics of the popular-commercial press. Meanwhile, politically, the constitutional strategy and rhetoric is eschewed just as the labour movement is on the cusp of gaining parliamentary representation. All this points to the difficulties involved in joining legitimating discourses as constituent elements of a working-class lifeworld, to an autonomous working-class politics under conditions of a structurally transformed public sphere. One response to this difficulty was the impossibilist stance of the SLP, and Epstein's remarks regarding the earlier plebeian formation of ultra-radicalism again seem fitting:

> Zetetics cut themselves off from the two most powerfully legitimating discourses within British political culture: constitutionalism and popular Christianity. […]

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[189] Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1*, p. 15.

[190] In their diagnostic critique of modernity, Adorno and Horkheimer equated the enlightenment's central category, reason, solely with its instrumental dimension: 'Reason serves as a universal tool for the fabrication of all other tools, rigidly purpose-directed and as calamitous as the precisely calculated operations of material production, the results of which for human beings escape all calculation. Reason's old ambition to be purely an instrument of purposes has finally been fulfilled', Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. by John Cumming (Verso, 1997), p. 23. Partially to avoid the theoretical difficulties of the earlier generation of the Frankfurt School, which would struggle to account for its own possibility of existence as a critical project in a world totally subsumed under the aspect of instrumental reason, Habermas designed his concepts of communicative action and the lifeworld to facilitate a different iteration of the reification problematic: 'The problem of reification arises less from a purposive rationality that has been absolutized in the service of self-preservation, from an instrumental reason that has gone wild, than from the circumstance that an unleashed functionalist reason of system maintenance disregards and overrides the claim to reason ingrained in communicative sociation and lets the rationalisation of the lifeworld run idle'. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1*, pp. 398-99.

[191] 'THE MIND OF THE MODERN WORKER', *Socialist*, 5 October 1922, p. 294.

> There was a formalization of meanings and a closure in the language and culture of plebeian rationalism.[192]

A similar difficulty beset the cultural and political formation mediated by the *Socialist*, and these difficulties (along with some of its strengths in terms of cultivating a committed cadre for the trade union movement and in public intellectual life) were arguably carried over into the CPGB which absorbed much of the membership in the early 1920s. In the case of the *Socialist*, it was not merely the legitimating discourse of popular Christianity that was elided, but also secular moral-practical discourses towards which it related predominantly negatively, leading to a curious inarticulacy. In the next chapter, I turn to a periodical that helped constitute the proletarian public sphere somewhat differently; it confronted the commercially segmented public sphere as well as the evolving constitutional context in Britain in a more accommodating and gradualist way, it mediated a more diverse working-class culture, and the place of moral articulation vis-à-vis instrumental reason was more central in it: Tom Johnston's *Forward*.

[192] Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 110.

Chapter 4: *Forward* (1906-1920s)

The *Forward* has not gone unnoticed in historical scholarship, and the paper has been mined as a rich documentary depository for the labour movement and the events of the Red Clydeside years.[1] As mediation of a distinctive print culture, however, less has been said, with some exceptions. Thus, in a recent history of the newspaper press in Scotland, 1850-1950, Hamish Fraser pays special attention to *Forward* by framing it as the most successful socialist weekly of its period in terms of longevity: 'Attempts to maintain a weekly socialist voice rarely survived for more than a few weeks. The exception in Scotland was *Forward*'.[2] In his history of the Scottish Trade Union Council, Keith Aitken attributes three long-term legacies to the role played by *Forward*: the Scottish popular, or populist, socialism centred on Clydeside, the coupling of the Catholic vote to Labour rather than the Liberal Party, much thanks to the journalism and public interventions of John Wheatley, and the marrying of Scottish trade unionism to the Scottish home rule cause.[3] Such commentary indicates *Forward*'s importance as an ideological mediator of working-class struggles in Scotland at a time of multiple unfolding crises in Britain; the industrial and economic crisis underlying the Great Unrest of the pre-war years, the crisis of political representation leading to the emergence of the Labour Party as an electoral force superseding the Liberal party, and the crisis of war itself which prompted considerable integration between state bureaucracy and the economic sphere, perhaps most clearly seen through the Ministry of Munitions. The present chapter argues that, within this crisis-context, *Forward* emerged as a significant Scottish print medium which partially redeemed Habermas's Kantian enlightenment public sphere, wherein publicity is envisioned as a bridging principle between morality and politics, and between enlightenment as *Bildung* or

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[1] Terry Brotherstone pioneered research on the journal when he studied the circumstances surrounding its suppression in early 1916 on flimsy grounds related to a report on Lloyd George's visit to Glasgow, where he was greeted by a heckling crowd of trade unionists at St Andrew's Hall, see Terry Brotherstone, 'The Suppression of the *Forward*', *Scottish Labour History*, 1.1 (1969), pp. 5-23. Iain McLean, after pursuing a rather fragmenting analysis of the short Red Clydeside drama centred on the war years, was left grasping for a common thread to bind the Red Clydesiders together, and suggested tentatively that 'they surely all read the *Forward*', see Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (John Donald, 1983), p. 22. With greater conviction, contributors to the edited volume *The ILP on Clydeside* sought to centre the ILP as the most important cultural and political, or 'networking', agent of the Red Clydeside years, and although the *Forward* is not analysed as a distinctive print culture, Joan Smith rightly posits the paper as the 'galvanising hub of the entire Glasgow labour movement presenting a distinctive and cohesive presence in local politics', see Joan Smith, 'Taking the Leadership of the Labour Movement: The ILP In Glasgow, 1906-1914', in *The ILP On Clydeside, 1893-1932: From Foundation to Disintegration* (Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 56-82 (p. 61). The sources I have consulted include the digital holdings of the British Newspaper Archive (this collection begins with the 1916 issues), the microfilm holdings at Glasgow's Mitchell Library (containing the full run of the paper), and physical holdings at the National Library of Scotland.

[2] W. Hamish Fraser, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Newspapers, 1850-1950* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), p. 466.

[3] Keith Aitken, *The Bairns O' Adam: The Story of the STUC* (Polygon, 1997), p. 47.

education and political representation, as it sought to engage its largely working-class readership in radical enlightenment discourses, and to represent this readership before and against both the state and a hostile commercial print public sphere.[4] In doing so, I argue, *Forward* is an important print trace of a public sphere that combined what Mark Hampton, drawing on Habermas, terms the 'educational' and the 'representative' ideals or visions of the press at a time when these became increasingly bifurcated in the elite perspectives traced by Hampton.[5] By separating the representational and political from the educational and culturally formative, the intellectual groundwork was laid for two competing visions of a one-dimensional concept of public opinion with political consequences: a representational vision where static political attitudes are 'reflected' in media, often fashioned by self-styled people's representatives-cum-merchants like the emergent Press Barons, attitudes which, the liberal-utilitarian insists, can be replaced by input of normatively neutral facts and information through a greater proliferation of accurate news. Meanwhile, by detaching the educational function of the press from functions of political representation, the valence could shift from liberatory and enlightening, to social control and opinion-policing.[6] The combination of educational and representative ideals, or functions, is a key aspect of the Habermasian public sphere; opinions formed through deliberation mediated by periodicals within a public are addressed outward to the state as representations, according to a recognisably normative 'principle of publicity' integral to forms of democratic politics. That principle was transmuted within the bourgeois-commercial formation but was retained within a socialist proletarian formation.[7] Importantly, the self-styled socialist periodicals drew their understanding of the principle of publicity from a *different* tradition, the radical plebeian public sphere, which was locked in dialectical, mutually constituting, tension with the bourgeois public sphere virtually from the start. Thus, Hampton's study provides an important historical register of how 'elite' attitudes and strategies shifted from the 1880s to a representative ideal, in response to the activities of the labour movement and dissenting publics – or in Hampton's words, as articulations of an 'elite culture', produced primarily by leading writers, journalists, and politicians, these reflections on the press focussed on its effects 'on the behaviour of the nonelite'.[8] I argue that *Forward* materialises a print response that eschews the bifurcation

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[4] See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1989), p. 104.
[5] Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (University of Illinois Press, 2004), p. 9.
[6] Hampton, p. 9. See Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England', in *The Victorian Revolution: Government and Society in Victoria's Britain,* ed. by Peter Stansky (Franklin Watts, 1973), pp. 199-227.
[7] Hampton suggests as much, but without closer investigation of socialist papers. See Hampton, p. 61.
[8] Ibid. p. 5.

of the visions, and seeks to combine the representational and the educational functions of the press in the common interest of a dissenting popular and working-class public faced by both an actively hostile and commercially segmented print public sphere.

The timing of the paper's arrival in the public sphere is significant for understanding these dialectical shifts because, as Aitken argues, *Forward*'s arrival in 1906 quickly established it as a 'powerful platform' for mediating the ideological shift within the labour movement during the Great Unrest in the years leading up to the First World War.[9] As Aitken details, industrial conflict in the economic sphere was on the rise in these years, when the material expectation of a slowly but steadily improving standard of life went increasingly unmet in the experience of working people.[10] Meanwhile, and connectedly, the ground was shifting in the established political sphere with the emergence of Labour as an independent electoral force, which aided the Liberal party's landslide victory against Conservative and Unionist party in the 'watershed' general election held in early 1906 which, in spite of the Liberal victory, marked 'the beginning of the end for the Liberals as a party of government': many of the new MPs were not 'the sons of landed gentry, but were lawyers, teachers, journalists', and no less than 53 Labour MPs were elected.[11] A sense of urgency is palpable in the first leading article of the paper which motivates the launch of the paper as a response to the needs of the times, rather than in response to market opportunities: 'We came because we had to […] Our coming, we believe, is at the psychological moment'.[12] It indicates the distinctive relation to time of the radical press, of journalism as crisis-driven intervention, and the launch is expressly connected to concerns and needs found within working-class experience, as developed within lifeworld contexts, rather than within Walter Benjamin's suggestively termed 'homogenous, empty time' – a temporality which is reinforced by the clock as much as by the daily arrival of the newspaper, and which is a condition for the production of abstract surplus-value but which is only imposed on experience through strict regimentation.[13]

The first leading article of *Forward* announced the paper's role as a discussion platform in print in an idiom that recalls both the optimistic attitude of the Habermasian

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[9] Aitken, p. 46.
[10] Ibid. p. 43.
[11] Ibid. p. 42.
[12] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[13] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*, ed. by Steven Eric Bronner and Douglas Kellner (Routledge, 1989), pp. 255-63 (p. 260). See also E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past & Present*, 38.38 (1967), pp. 56-97. Gilmartin pays special attention to the temporal dimension of radical plebeian print culture, and writes of its formal responses to 'the shifting density of political time', see Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 86-87.

public sphere ideal and the adversarial tone of the old radical plebeian press: 'Progressive thought is wide in its sweep and the Truth arises from the clash of opinions'.[14] Compare this editorial statement to Richard Carlile's vision for the Rotunda, an old theatre hired for the purpose of hosting discussions: 'I very much desire to bring to the Rotunda all sects, all parties, all trades. […] We fear no discussion of any kind. […] We want mental conflict and discussion'.[15] While *Forward* was animated by similar intent, the clash of opinions is largely shifted from face-to-face settings to the periodical print medium, thus mirroring what Habermas traced as the trajectory of the earlier liberal-bourgeois public sphere. In envisioning the periodical as the main discussion platform of the local labour movement, *Forward*'s editor was forced to address the limitations of the print public sphere into which the new journal entered; a public sphere characterised by industrially produced newspapers:

> For many years the massed forces of reaction, the pimps, the plunderers, the conservers, the old women in trousers, the farthing reformers, have had it all their own way. A Capitalist Press, from the "Scotsman" in Edinburgh to the "News" and the "Record" in Glasgow, consistently, and with one accord, stifles, throttles, sneers, misrepresents, and caricatures the wailing shriek of the underdog for Justice. […] From Press, College and (alas!) Pulpit, the weekly shriek goes up: Property! Property! Property![16]

As I discuss below, concerns over what became understood as manufactured public opinion were raised through the paper in the 1920s in ways that bespeak an emergent theorisation of an industrialised, and not merely privileged, press. For now, I stay with the first leading article, to consider how representational and educational aims blended through the editorial style of *Forward*. *Forward* contrasts with the *Socialist* in its maintenance of a dual representational appeal, at once confrontative and combative while laying claim to the moral legitimacy of social concerns in a manner capable of acceptance by middle-class opinion (and ultimately, via Parliament, to the state):

> The aspirations and the dreams of art, the physique and lives of the workers, the toil-worn rag-picker, the emaciated, skinny, rickety children of the cities, the wretchedness of the small shopkeeper who lies awake o'er his bills o'nights, the drudgery and hopelessness of the ploughman's lot – Hide them! Away with them! Give us Profit! Rent![17]

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[14] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[15] Cited in Kevin Gilmartin, 'Popular Radicalism and the Public Sphere', *Studies in Romanticism*, 33.4 (1994), pp. 549-57 (p. 550).
[16] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[17] Ibid.

There is much of the posture and perspective of the sincere and radical 'Gentleman leader', as anatomised by James Epstein and John Belchem, in such passages.[18] The generous use of exclamation marks in this and the previous passage speak of a radical style, drawn from declamatory modes of speech long cultivated on the platforms. A cultural critique, radical but not without of a degree of paternalism in the tradition of Morris and Ruskin, and stretching back to William Cobbett and Henry Hunt, can be detected in the vivid depictions of the 'emaciated' and 'toil-worn', coupled with the conviction that the aspirations and dreams of art are politically important imaginative resources.[19] In the latter respect especially, the journalism in *Forward* admits of a wider range of aspects of rationality compared to the previously discussed *Socialist*; in the former, aesthetic products articulate 'moral sources' of not merely didactic value (as in the *Socialist*) or as a means of subjective inward ideological compensation for the outward experience of an instrumentalised world (as in the *Glasgow Herald*), but rather as a critical resource of wider social significance.[20] The 'aspirations and dreams of art' are explicitly contrasted with the realities of industrial capitalism in the passage above, and enable the goals of strategic action within social systems to be brought under critical and normative deliberation.

Forward moves uneasily both within and against a liberal culture shared widely within the British print public sphere. Thus, Johnston's appeal to the intended readers – 'knowing that there is already a sufficient body of public opinion in Scotland with knowledge enough to pass intelligent criticism on our efforts, we betake ourselves with a light heart to our business' – plays on the phraseology of the more polite and respectable kind of public, but in addressing itself also to working-class readers, radically extends the presumption of rationality to a different class of reader, with *already* sufficient knowledge and capacity for 'intelligent criticism'.[21] But such capacity alone does not guarantee that 'really useful knowledge' is reached through participation in public discourses, especially in the context of a structurally transformed public sphere. And it is the express editorial ambition of the publication to both represent working-class demands to a wider public sphere, and to engage in a form of print pedagogy on the stylistic model of old Radicalism: *Forward* is conceived as a print platform from which popular leaders and intellectuals

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[18] James Epstein and John Belchem, 'The Nineteenth Century Gentleman Leader Revisited', in *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 126-45.
[19] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Penguin, 1963).
[20] See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 91-92.
[21] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.

could address a working-class audience, and counteract the narratives presented them through a commercial press in the hands of a few antagonistic press barons:

> Hyndman, Hardie, and Shaw, and countless other prophets, seers, and leaders of the people may address huge packed audiences in theatres – and the Press gives them half a dozen lines. Half a dozen lines to the cries of Justice! and reams of paper and oceans of ink to all the silly twaddle about Court functions, Lady Mary Hamilton marriages, filthy divorce cases, betting; and all the little trifling reforms over which they contrive to keep the workers excited – and deluded.[22]

There is a critique of the layout of 'news' in the commercial press in this passage, where the half-dozen lines diminishes and distorts by formal fiat the 'cries of Justice'. Both the style of this passage ('and reams of paper and oceans of ink to all the silly twaddle […]') and its argumentative content ('they contrive to keep the workers excited – and deluded') offer a fine example of the popular rhetoric which Williams associates with 'genuine arousal' and distinguishes from the commercial style 'of apparent arousal as a cover for an eventual if temporary satisfaction'.[23] Furthermore, the idea that the mainstream press, conspiratorially termed the Capitalist Press, is deluding the workers, who are thus in need of more enlightening reading matter speaks for the educational vision of *Forward*; it aims to 'counteract the adverse influence of the Capitalist Press, and enlighten the public on what [is] really going on'.[24] As Mark Hampton argues in a study focussed on elite understandings of the competing 'educational' and 'representative' visions of the press in Britain in this period, the educational ideal of the press contained an important normative core when it *intersected* with the representational ideal:

> The educational ideal of the press derived from a belief in the desirability of popular self-government through rational public discussion. […] For the truth or common good to emerge from a politics by public discussion, multiple voices had to contend.[25]

Hampton suggests that the educational ideal yielded to the representative ideal in the 1880s, but that it was retained among the popular Radical and socialist press nonetheless, and the intersection of these ideals, announced in *Forward*'s first leading article, continued to inform its editorial practice into the 1920s.[26] Importantly, this combination of ideals is the normative core stressed by Habermas, in which the press promises to mediate a critical-

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[22] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[23] Raymond Williams, 'Radical and/or Respectable', in *The Press We Deserve*, ed. by Richard Boston (Routledge, 2016), pp. 14-25 (p. 21).
[24] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[25] Hampton, pp. 57, 61.
[26] Ibid. p. 10. See also Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Manchester University Press, 1990).

rational discussion free from coercion on matters of common concern, in which participants can learn from one another. But additionally, the imperatives to 'counteract' and 'enlighten', as the leader-writer put it above, is couched in a style that recalls the combination of arousal and pedagogy which struck Thompson in reading Cobbett's *Political Register*. This is how Thompson interpreted an 1816 passage where Cobbett sought to explain that the clergy ought to be judged by their actions and not their status:

> Cobbett's relationship to his audience in such passages […] is so palpable that one might reach out one's hand and touch it. It is an argument. There is a proposition. Cobbett writes "metaphysical", looks up at his audience, and wonders whether the word communicates. He explains the relevance of the term. He repeats his explanation in the plainest language.[27]

The best examples of such an explanatory, popular-radical rhetoric are found in the Sanny McNee columns that later appeared as a regular feature in the paper, and I return to these later in this chapter. For now, it suffices to note the editorial intention to combat and correct a dominant press which follows issues such as a 'strike against a reduction of a farthing per hour in bricklayers' wages, or a demand for municipal housing' with headlines, imaginatively construed here by the editor, such as 'The Tyranny of Labour', 'Trade Driven out of the Country', 'The Follies of Municipal Finance' or 'Pleas for the Poor Houseowner'.[28]

In the following sections, I explore how *Forward* integrated its readership in forms of rational-critical debate on matters of common concern through a range of editorial devices. First, I consider the paper's advertisements, financing, and public notices for indications of the class-composition of the readership, the shifting relationship between proprietors and readers, and the changing methods of print transmission and distribution. I then return to the more discursive features of the paper, analysing the legal advice and discussion columns as indications of the periodical's dialectical relation to constitutional politics and as further proof of the symbiosis of print and oral discourse within the proletarian public sphere. Thereafter, I consider some of the animating structural problems confronted by this print formation, including the problem of news presentation, 'manufactured' public opinion, and the implications of constitutional electoral politics for autonomous political culture. Finally, I turn to the debate on working-class adult education as enacted in *Forward*.

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[27] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin, 2013), p. 823.
[28] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.

4.1 A Whole Way of Struggle? Financing, Advertisements, Notices, Transmission

Unlike the *Socialist*, *Forward* was sustained partially on advertisement revenue, but the editorial policy on advertisements was highly selective. As Johnston's biographer puts it, the 'campaigning young editor refused to permit advertisements for alcohol, or any gambling news, to sully his cherished endeavour'.[29] This rejection of alcohol advertisements illustrates the commitment to temperance within the proletarian public sphere characteristic of this historical socialist way of life, highlighted so forcefully by W.W. Knox as discussed in the Introduction.[30] There was much besides the religiously infused emphasis on temperance within this culture of working-class respectability, however. The nature of *Forward*'s advertisements is worth considering more closely, both because they tell us something about the class-composition of the readership, and because they signal a form of counter-cultural politics within the genre of advertisement, at a time when the 'magic system' of modern display advertisement as a mode of communication oriented not just to 'inform' customers but to organise and constitute new markets, was becoming dominant within the wider print public sphere.[31]

Contrary to the daily *Glasgow Herald*, *Forward*'s front page and backmatter are relatively free from advertisements (they can be found in short columns on either side of the masthead, but rarely elsewhere, while the backmatter is dedicated primarily to public notices, surveyed below). Instead, advertisements are found in full-length columns alongside the leading article and other editorial contents in the middle pages of the seven-column broadsheet comprised of between four and eight pages per issue. The commodities advertised are often modest consumer goods (including the regularly appearing Barr's 'Iron Brew', soap, boots, and political literature), which indicates a largely working-class anticipated readership. The advertisers themselves were often ideologically compatible businesses advertising wares with statements about the labour conditions under which the commodities are manufactured, or directly from trade unions and co-operative societies. Thus, among the former we find Archibald's Bread, '*Baked under strictly Trade Union Conditions*',[32] and Calton Furniture, 'made by skilled workmen (only trade union labour employed)'[33] and among the latter we find the National Union of Textile Workers

[29] Russell Galbraith, *Without Quarter: A Biography of Tom Johnston* (Mainstream, 1995), p. 17.
[30] W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
[31] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism* (Verso, 2005), p. 186.
[32] Advertisements, *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 8.
[33] Advertisements, *Forward*, 22 October 1921, p. 7.

advertising itself to prospective members, the Garment Workers' Tailoring Guild advertising its tailoring services as 'A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF LABOUR CONTROLLING ITS OWN INDUSTRY' because 'Controlled and Supervised by Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union, No. 2 Branch',[34] and the I.L.P. Boot Works in Northampton urging prospective buyers to 'SAVE Shopkeepers' Profits – BUY DIRECT',[35] or indeed the 'Trade Union Smokes – Are made by the Workers, for the Workers, in the Workers' own Factory' made by the Cigarette Makers' Trades Union.[36] Such advertisements seek to appeal to an audience for whom the production process is of direct interest – who makes the goods, how, and under what conditions? – and the advertisement's promise, a key modern feature of this genre, refers as much to the production process as to the user or consumers' satisfaction of personal needs, wants, and desires.[37] Indeed, whether the reader is addressed as a user or consumer is the question actualised by these advertisements, and there is at least a tangential counter-cultural politics in *Forward*'s advertisement columns. Because as Williams suggested, the 'system of organized magic which is modern advertising is primarily important as a functional obscuring of this choice'.[38] The display advertisements appearing in commercial newspapers are designed to mystify or occlude the genesis of the commodity on offer by appealing instead, often knowingly and with self-awareness, to the personal anxieties and desires of the reader, and in doing so posits the readers as consumers, 'the channels along which the product flows and disappears', rather than as users with democratic claims on the common product of society.[39] *Forward*'s advertisements run against this current, and credibly so through the advertisements' references to co-operatives and trade unions, but not unambiguously. Thus, more individualistic and market-oriented solutions to social problems also appeared in the advertisements of the paper, perhaps most notably those promoting a house-purchasing scheme presented as a solution to the housing problem, which emerged in the wake of the 1915 Rent Strikes: 'RENT STRIKES ARE GOOD! NO RENT IS BETTER! YOUR OWN HOUSE IS BEST!'[40] Indeed, as I show below, a tension between whose interests to represent and form – a print public opinion centred on the middle-class, or a working-class

[34] Advertisements, *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 8.
[35] Advertisements, *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 3.
[36] Advertisements, *Forward*, 10 November 1917, p. 3.
[37] Thus, Williams references Samuel Johnson's 1758 words that 'Promise, large promise, is the soul of advertisement', which suggests that the advertisement's gesture to excess, in the eyes of a contemporary, was distinguishing and separating it as a genre from the 'notices', of which it was previously part. Williams, *Culture and Materialism*, p. 172.
[38] Ibid. p. 186.
[39] Ibid. p. 187.
[40] Advertisement, *Forward*, 25 February 1916, p. 2. It was placed by Planet, a 'friendly assurance collecting society', to advertise their house purchasing scheme.

largely outside the realm of print mediation? – can be felt in the paper as the Labour Party came closer to electoral victory nationally. Compare with the fate of *Reynolds's* in the late nineteenth century as documented by Curran: '*Reynolds's Newspaper* continued to take a radical democratic stand on most major issues of the day, but it also increasingly expressed the individualistic values of the more affluent readers whom it needed to attract'.[41] However, at least in its first decades of publication, the *Forward* appears to have found a relative autonomy from purely commercial advertisers by relying on a few ideologically sympathetic private donors.

Johnston himself had inherited the printing press from a wealthy relative, along with two weekly papers printed on the press, including a journal dedicated to the interests of grocers, which had been a platform in the grocers' campaign against the co-operative societies in the late 1890s.[42] With a starting capital of £1000, the publishing company included a mixed group of financiers.[43] Fraser provides a useful picture of the interests – political as well as financial – of these donors:

> [A] relatively well-off group of Fabians, consisting of Robert Pollock, a builder, William Martin Haddow, owner of an electrical firm, Dr J. Stirling Robertson, a surgeon from Clydebank, Robert McLaurin, an engineer who had developed a process for producing smokeless fuel, and, most importantly of all, the tanner, Roland Muirhead, and the former Crofters' Party MP Dr G. B. Clark, who were regularly tapped. All of them were nationalists as well as socialists.[44]

I use the term 'donors' rather than 'investors', because, as Fraser implies with reference to Muirhead and Clark, the paper operated at a loss for many years and was unlikely to provide return on investment, although it did eventually turn a profit in about 1920 from a combination of advertisement revenue and circulation, which had risen from the 10,000 of the first issue in 1906 to 50,000.[45] A feature that notably distinguishes *Forward* from the *Socialist* is the considerable middle-class support of the paper, which effectively made it a platform of cross-class collaboration on the basis of shared, if differently motivated, interests between working- and middle-class publics, led by a middle-class editor of 'old-fashioned radical' persuasion.[46] Johnston 'was committed to temperance and generally disapproved of many aspects of popular urban culture', but through inclusion of writers

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[41] James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, 8th edn (Routledge, 2018), p. 35.
[42] As Johnston's biographer puts it, when *Forward* was launched '[the] same printing press which had been used to revile some of the most cherished beliefs of the labour movement now targeted its detractors'. Galbraith, pp. 16-17.
[43] *Glasgow Herald*, 13 October 1906, p. 4.
[44] Fraser, *Scottish Newspapers*, p. 466.
[45] Brotherstone.
[46] Fraser, *Scottish Newspapers*, p. 466.

such as Patrick Dollan, John Wheatley, and even John Maclean occasionally, the paper overall displayed 'much more understanding and empathy with the Glasgow working class' than Johnston's own worldview would seem to permit.[47] While the class composition of *Forward*'s leadership helps explain its relative preference for respectable politics by public opinion in print over street protest and radical trade union organising, an editorial responsiveness and organic relation to the readership was sustained through this mixed model of financing, wherein a few wealthy donors played a critical part. The responsiveness to the readership and the labour movement is demonstrated by the public notices section, which provides an institutional map of the working-class culture mediated by the journal.

Branch reports from the SDF and the ILP were sporadic in the first issues of the paper – in contrast to the *Socialist* which emerged as a print platform directly from internecine strife in political parties seeking to influence the trade union movement and working-class consciousness more broadly – and the closer relationship between the paper and different political parties on Clydeside seems to have been prompted by the readers. Thus, in an early leading article, Johnston responds to correspondents asking why branches do not advertise more systematically in *Forward*:

> It has been suggested to us that we might announce the fact that many branches are making money – loads of it – from "Forward" sales. We are desirous of financially assisting branches in this way, if in none other; and any application for supplies from "deserving" branches will be welcomed here. Terms, 9d. per dozen – on sale or return.[48]

This tone of the negotiating businessman anxious to maintain some distance between political action and opinion formation in print is at variance with the more radical public sphere practice later developed through the paper. Nonetheless, *Forward* quickly came to play a key role as a noticeboard for the movement, and as the young paper approached its first 'summer propaganda' season in Glasgow in 1907 it included a list of meetings with the following editorial request: 'Every branch in Scotland is asked to keep us advised of their open-air meetings in advance'.[49] The list includes notices from ILP and SDF branches across Scotland, as well as the Clarion Scouts and the Glasgow Catholic Socialist Society.[50] The contradiction between the politicising radical tenor of the leading articles and this essentially commercial-pragmatic attitude to political action was only gradually

[47] Ibid.
[48] Leading article, *Forward*, 24 November 1906, p. 2.
[49] *Forward*, 11 May 1907, p. 3.
[50] Ibid.

resolved through a combination of open interaction with the readership and changing newspaper conditions during the war, as seen through the evolving distribution methods encouraged through editorial statements.

Initially the paper relied on standard commercial methods of distribution, as a regular editorial appeal suggests: 'ORDER THE "FORWARD" THROUGH YOUR NEWSAGENT EVERY WEEK'.[51] Within months, such editorial encouragements indicate expectations of a reader-driven model of distribution:

> We shall be glad to send supplies of OLD COPIES of "Forward" FREE to anyone who will undertake to distribute them among likely readers. […] By pestering newsagents to exhibit a contents bill, and by handing a copy to a likely reader, you can spread "Forward."[52]

Soon, an ILP bookstore, the Reformers' Bookstall, was opened and announced prominently in *Forward*. Much like the SLP's premises at 50 Renfrew Street which would open a few years later with the move of the *Socialist*'s printing press from Edinburgh to Glasgow, the ILP bookstore was conceived as both a cultural centre (a 'central trysting place for which there is great need' with back premises 'suitable for small gatherings') and a provider of literature designed for ideological interventions.[53] Thus, the 'Commodious premises' rented by the ILP City Branch at 126 Bothwell Street would carry 'a large stock of all Socialist and "Advance" literature' and the location of the shop next to the Christian Institute and the Religious Tract Society compelled a counter-cultural statement: 'It seems appropriate that an opportunity is to be given to the frequenters of aforesaid for getting the real facts of our case'.[54]

But it was with the coming of the war that older and more communal methods of print transmission were rediscovered also for *Forward*, and this reversion was partly forced by necessity. Thus, in a 1915 issue, the following editorial statement or notice can be seen: '*FORWARD* CAN BE HAD EVERY FRIDAY FORENOON, AT I.L.P. OFFICE, ST. BRIDE'S HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET, LONDON'.[55] While the offering of the paper in the ILP's London newsroom indicates that a rather select circle of readers were to benefit from communal reading practices, some readers of the paper appear to have taken matters into their own hands. Thus, a vastly different site of transmission is reflected in the same issue through a letter to the editor by J. Robertson, organiser for the

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[51] See *Forward*, 10 November 1906, and onwards.
[52] Editorial notice, *Forward*, 23 February 1907, p. 3.
[53] 'The Reformers' Bookstall', *Forward*, 25 May 1907, p. 3.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Notice, *Forward*, 6 November 1915, p. 2.

Farm Workers' Union, who suggests that the farm workers he addressed and to whom he offered reprints of articles from *Forward* are 'waking up from their long sleep. The high cost of living has forced them to think about their wages and conditions. Thinking leads to reading, and they are reading more than the war news'.[56] As the war dragged on, and paper rationing was introduced, the residual working-class practices reminiscent of those developed during the 'War of the Unstamped' were rediscovered in a new context. Thus, an editorial statement in 1918 elaborated on how the restricted circulation of the paper would have to prioritise its function for the less mediated regions of the proletarian public sphere:

> The cutting of our circulation last week by 10,000 copies has naturally caused a good deal of annoyance and protestant letter-writing to this office, but protests are not paper, and so help us, Mr. Paper Controller, we can do none other. In a short time we believe things will be so regulated *and the practice of passing the paper from hand to hand will be so common that, so far from having fewer readers, we will have many more without draining upon our meagre stocks of paper*; and, if the readers are there, we can very quickly revert to the old system whenever new paper becomes available. We have received many suggestions, and we have considered them all carefully, such as that we should only issue our front page, *but that would mean cutting out all the advertisements of meetings, which are so essential to the propaganda*, and it would have other obvious disadvantages.[57]

The statement displays an important shift in the editorial attitude to the paper's public. First, the old practice of '*passing the paper from hand to hand*' is now actively encouraged, and a lengthy list of public libraries that stock *Forward* is included to assist the reader.[58] The commentary is followed by a plea to readers for recyclable waste paper to be turned into pulp for the paper, and another direct appeal is issued: '*Forward* is not in the Edinburgh Public Libraries, we understand. Can the local Comrades see to it?'[59] Such appeals indicate that the relationship between the paper and its readers was not solely that of buyer and seller, but between participants in a common cause. Secondly, the public notices, '*which are so essential to the propaganda*', are no longer conceived in politically neutral terms, but as essential for the practical work of the movement. The Reformers'

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[56] Letter to the editor, *Forward*, 6 November 1915, p. 3. He goes on to offer a list of sales of Tom Johnston's *Our Scots Noble Families* (1909) at the meetings he has conducted in the month of October: 'Forfarshire, 200; East Fife, 100; Stirling, 80; Ayr, 50; Glasgow meeting, 50. Total, 480 copies sold at eight meetings'.
[57] Editorial statement, 'The Paper Famine: WHERE *FORWARD* CAN BE SEEN', *Forward*, 6 April 1918, p. 3. Italics mine.
[58] These included: 'Airdrie, Arbroath, Ayr, Bonnyrigg, Burntisland, Coldstream, Cullen (Banffshire), Corstorphine, Dyce, Elgin, Fraserburgh, Forfar, Galashiels, Hamilton, Hawick, Inverurie, Kirkwall, Kinross, Lossiemouth, Larbert, Maybole, Montrose, Motherwell, Newburgh (Fife), Perth, Rutherglen, Stromness, Selkirk, Tain, and West Calder. Glasgow Libraries. Dundee Libraries. […] *Other Institutions*: Miners' Library, Leadhills; Mechanics' Institute, Blairgowrie; Brown's Institute, Newmilns; Wm. Knox Institute, Kilbirnie; Moffat Library, Port-Glasgow; Mechanics' Institute, Kirkcudbright; Dick Institute, Kilmarnock; Duncan Institute, Cupar-Fife; Liberal Club, Cupar-Fife; Working Men's Institute, Bathgate'. Editorial statement, 'The Paper Famine: WHERE *FORWARD* CAN BE SEEN', *Forward*, 6 April 1918, p. 3.
[59] Ibid.

Bookstall also shifted the tone of its advertisements in *Forward* to adapt to such residual working-class print dissemination practices, highlighting the role of the hawker of literature as the really 'important man in the movement […] 100 per cent. more menacing to the "Boss" class than the most fiery orator', including an exemplary hawker: 'an unassuming Comrade in Glasgow whose name never appears in big or small print, who sells, off his own bat, 300 copies of Socialist papers every week in the factory where he is employed'.[60] By 1919, the factory had become an important site for distribution and dissemination of *Forward*, and thus brought it within the same proletarian public sphere as the *Socialist*. The public notices in these later years provide an important indication of a print medium fully integrated within this proletarian public sphere, and from a single issue of *Forward* a whole geography of print dissemination, and, by implication, of print-supported deliberation, can be reconstructed. Thus, the notices appearing in a 1918 issue offer a good indication of how these activities were centred on either educational and cultural practice (lectures, socialist Sunday schools, socialist choirs, and dances) or organisational work including local protests and demonstrations, trade union meetings, or electoral preparations.[61] The inclusion of the unofficial Clyde Workers' Committee here is notable for marking a direct link between the paper and radical industrial politics, and not only the official trade union congresses:

> CLYDE WORKERS' COMMITTEE […] meets every SATURDAY in the SHOP ASSISTANTS' HALL, 297 Argyle Street, at 3.30 p.m. Shop Stewards and Delegates from every Industry are cordially invited to attend. Business for Saturday First – "THE MAN-POWER QUESTION." The Miners are pressing this question, and consequently it is important that Delegates from all Industries be present on Saturday. Don't Stop at Grousing in the Workshop; come and discuss your Grievance.[62]

Within this institution of the proletarian public sphere, deliberation, education, and action effectively combine. A few years later, the public notices section capture a diverse and lively movement-culture in print. Thus, the 11 November 1922 issue include notices of Govan ILP's programme of evening lectures; a concert by the Socialist Choristers (Junior Section); Sunday evening lectures at the Central Halls by Tom Bell and Arthur McManus; classes in world history and economic geography at the Scottish Labour College; a Proletarian College class every Thursday; a special discussion evening at the Ross Street Unitarian Church under the topic 'Do the Rich Pay any Taxes?'; opening hours and

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[60] 'Great Socialist Literature Sales – REFORMERS' BOOKSTALL TURNOVER – THE LIT. SALESMAN THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIT IN THE BRANCHES', *Forward*, 15 March 1919, p. 4.
[61] Public notices, *Forward*, 6 April 1918, p. 4.
[62] Ibid.

lectures by Guy Aldred of the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation at Bakunin House; openings for tenors and basses at the William Morris Choir; and a 'GREAT RALLY' in the St. Mungo Halls for John Maclean, M.A. 'Bolshevik, Revolutionary, Communist, Convict, etc.' standing for election in Govan.[63]

Taken together, the dissemination and distribution practices, the public notices, and the advertisements of *Forward* constitute fragments not just of a 'whole way of life', but as Thompson amended Williams's original formulation, 'a whole way of *conflict*'.[64] Furthermore, the journal's integration with what Iain McCalman usefully terms a radical 'underworld' of immediate, local working-class lifeworld contexts, coupled with a principled editorial policy of wide and open participation, meant that concerns first articulated within these contexts could be mediated in more deliberative print forms too to break forth onto the printed page of *Forward*.[65] Thus, in December 1917, an article appears on the leader-page, between a leading article discussing socialist attitudes to President Wilson in America and Wheatley's regular 'Catholic Socialist Notes', on 'Shipyard Philosophy' signed Martin Eden. Martin Eden is likely a pen-name drawn from the titular character of Jack London's popular 1909 novel and there is much of the proletarian autodidact with literary ambitions in the *Forward* piece.[66] The narrative is punctuated throughout by the factory whistle marking meal-hour and resumption to work, and Eden effectively sets the scene and characterises his actors:

> The only compensation for being compelled to work in a shipyard is the privilege of being allowed to sit round a heater, drinking black tea out of a still blacker can and being allowed to share in the philosophic discussions which take place. […] The patriot with his slice of bread clutched tightly in a greasy hand pores over his *Daily Record* in search of some gem of wisdom with which to confound the sceptical anti-war Socialist.[67]

Between these characters, the *Daily Record*-reading patriot and the anti-war socialist, a debate soon erupts on the question of war aims, with the patriot drawing his arguments from the commercial press and the speeches of 'the Churchills and the Lloyd Georges' he finds there, and soon an 'audience gathers round, the tea-leaves are thrown anywhere out

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[63] Advertisements, *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 8.
[64] E. P. Thompson, 'The Long Revolution (Part 1)', *New Left Review,* 1.1 (1961), pp. 24-33 (p. 33.).
[65] Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Clarendon Press, 2002).
[66] *Martin Eden* is a *Künstlerroman* wherein the aspiring proletarian protagonist struggles to become a writer and to win favour with the middle-class reading public. In an effective critique of Nietzschean individualism, the titular character ends up winning success, but losing respect for the bourgeois society and cultural standards to which he originally aspired.
[67] Martin Eden, 'Shipyard Philosophy – TEA-HEATER DISCUSSIONS ON MR. GEORGE'S GOOD OLD WORLD', *Forward*, 22 December 1917, p. 2.

of the cans, the last bite of bread is helped over by a push from the stem of a dirty clay pipe'.[68] The patriot 'is very sore on the Russian betrayal of France' and, citing Lloyd George from a newspaper, continues: 'Russia threatens to retire from the war and leave the French democracy, whose loyalty to the word passed to Russia brought upon them the horrors of this war, to shift for themselves… The old world at least believed in ideals. It believed in justice, fair play, liberty and righteousness'.[69] The claim on behalf of the war effort to the ideals of the old world is made into an occasion for the anti-war socialist to launch into a history lesson before his audience, in characteristic declamatory style:

> "Do not forget," he said, "that it was the old world's sense of justice and righteousness that cleared the Highlanders from their straths and glens, that burned the clachans before the eyes of the women folk whilst their men fought for freedom from French Militarism in the Napoleonic Wars. It was the old world that hanged Wilson, Baird, and Hardie and transported hundreds of lovers of liberty to Botany Bay […]" But the buzzer had sounded again, the Socialist as a parting shot reminding the patriot that an employer in the old world sometimes had to whip his slaves in order to make them work. Now they blow a whistle![70]

The passage offers an indication of the declamatory rhetoric deployed in conjunction with the resourceful literary use of the buzzer or whistle, as a formal containment of the argumentative content intended to mirror the containment of the worker in a temporally regimented factory. The theme of the master's softer yet still effective means of coercion (the whistle rather than the whip, or the whip rather than the sword, as seen in the Sanny McNee column discussed below) was a common theme in *Forward* which indicates a popular preoccupation with problems of hegemony. Through the character of the anti-war socialist, the writer lists an impressive spatial and historical range of events to disprove the claims to legitimacy made by the patriot.[71] This is at once an indication of the real knowledge articulated in factory public spheres, and of the printed periodical's role in mediating such knowledge, since articles like these are not merely 'representations' of discourse, but tools by which participants could learn the modality and argumentative contents of working-class rational-critical discourse, much like the *Tatler* and *Spectator* mediated the classical bourgeois public sphere of the coffeehouses analysed by Habermas,

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Martin Eden, 'Shipyard Philosophy – TEA-HEATER DISCUSSIONS ON MR. GEORGE'S GOOD OLD WORLD', *Forward*, 22 December 1917, p. 2.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Events listed to indict the 'old world' include: Peterloo; the Opium Wars; the Congo atrocities; the 'horrors of the Putumayo rubber plantations'; the Boer War; the blowing up of the Mahdi's tomb in Sudan; the Denshawai Incident of 1906; the Featherstone Massacre of 1893; and the Ludlow Massacre of 1914. Eden, Martin, 'Shipyard Philosophy – TEA-HEATER DISCUSSIONS ON MR. GEORGE'S GOOD OLD WORLD', *Forward*, 22 December 1917, p. 2.

albeit in a different modality.[72] The symbiotic relation between print and oral discourse within this public sphere is furthermore shown by a leader-writer deploying the stylistics of radical discourse in print as seen in the first leading article (Johnston himself being a mediocre orator), and proletarian writers, like 'Martin Eden', developing literary stylistics in print communication.[73] Just as the *Daily Record* could be used within meal-hour debates, cementing dominant meanings of the 'ideals of the old world', *Forward* could offer an oppositional cultural politics destabilising and critiquing such claims. The print practice is testified to elsewhere in the paper, and in a 1915 issue a correspondent asks for clarification on a matter of legal representation discussed in the previous issue. The matter had arisen because, as was the workman's habit, '[h]aving a *Forward* with me at my work, I happened to show it to one of my workmates, so his eye caught this bit [regarding legal representation of workers at Munition Factories]' and the query arose.[74] *Forward* thus evolved, through responsiveness to the political needs of its readers and material and legal constraints, from a newspaper founded on a liberal-commercial public sphere model positing a separation between opinion formation in print and embodied political action and representation, to a proletarian counter-model with a far more symbiotic relationship between print and praxis.

4.2 Proletarian Deliberation: The Discussion and Legal Advice Columns

'Truth arises from the clash of opinions' was the animating editorial conviction of *Forward*, and soon an editorial device was introduced which promised to make good on this popular-radical rendition of the public sphere ideal.[75] In 1907 the leading article remarked in a show of responsiveness to its readers that '[it] has been suggested to us that we might open a Discussion Column'.[76] This column became a regular feature, but more importantly, even when the formal projection of deliberation under a standing rubric was absent, it remained an animating functional imperative of *Forward*'s cultural print practice. The dialogical practice established by the column (an opening argument followed by criticism and responses in subsequent issues, clearly announced through layout and headlines) indeed characterises much of *Forward*'s editorial content. Through the column,

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[72] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 43.
[73] Indeed, it has been remarked that Johnston, while an able journalist and editor, did not have the same flair for public speaking. As Galbraith puts it, Johnston 'was never a good public speaker in the accepted rousing, declamatory sense. His delivery was often dull and uninspiring. […] his assaults on people and policies were always most effective when delivered in print'. Galbraith, p. 42.
[74] Letter to the editor, *Forward*, 13 November 1915, p. 3.
[75] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[76] Leading article, *Forward*, 4 May 1907, p. 2.

the editor writes, 'a Scots Socialist Parliament might meet weekly to discuss some propositions of interest to the student of social affairs'.[77] The editorial understanding of the purpose of the column is significant in that it maintains publicity as a bridging principle between politics and morality, and between political representation within a constitutional order (the paper as 'Parliament') and a radical form of enlightenment (seen in the casting of the reader as a 'student of social affairs').[78] In reconstructing the Kantian public sphere ideal, Habermas argues that 'Kant's publicity held good as the one principle that could guarantee the convergence of politics and morality. He conceived of "the public sphere" at once as the principle of the legal order and as the method of enlightenment'.[79] The idea of a philosophical print parliament for students of social affairs shows how the ideal of the early *Forward* closely approximates the Kantian notion of the public sphere as a community of scholars, because as Habermas observes, the public use of reason was for Kant initially 'a matter for scholars' (especially philosophers).[80] *Forward* even initially voiced a familiar scepticism towards the sociality and cultural mode of working-class deliberation, and the editor construes the limitations of the soapboxing milieu as lacking in rationality (somewhat contradicting the earlier broad attribution of rational-critical capacity in the first leading article discussed above):

> The cool, calm, logical thinker, the "philosophic position" man is overshadowed by his brother on the platform, and as the latter has to be witty at all costs, to be pointed, to be essentially declamatory, it follows that he has neither the opportunities nor the conditions under which to reason out, step by step, the inevitable or the dim and distant probable. But more than that. He is limited by his audience. […] it is driven home to him that the conclusions reached in the calm atmosphere of the study are impossible of exposition in a crowded and excited meeting.[81]

The impression given here is of a defensively constituted *separation* between rational deliberation written from the private-intimate sphere of the 'study' and communicated in print, and a democratic but less stringent street culture of oral declamation. But this is deceptive, because *Forward* allowed a symbiotic, mutually constituting, relationship between readers and writers, between the cultures of platform and print. Habermas projected such a principle of mutual constitution back onto the Kantian model when he

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[77] Ibid.
[78] On the convergence of educational and representative visions of the press in Britain, see also Hampton.
[79] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 104.
[80] Ibid. This is Kant's own description: 'by the public use of one's own reason I understand that use which someone makes of it *as a scholar* before the entire public of the *world of readers*'. Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment? (1784)', in *Practical Philosophy,* ed. and trans. by Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 11-22 (p. 18).
[81] Leading article, *Forward*, 4 May 1907, p. 2.

wrote that '[i]n regard to enlightenment […] thinking for oneself seemed to coincide with thinking aloud and the use of reason with its public use', but he overstated the Kantian model's actual capacity for inclusiveness in this sense of symbiotic mutual constitution.[82] However, the principle animated publics with a very different socio-cultural makeup. Indeed, in a popular idiom I consider more closely below, Johnston's literary persona Sanny McNee would later express himself thusly:

> We should never be fear't o' mental effort, an' never let anither man dae oor thinkin' fur us. We may be richt, an' we may be wrang, we wull never ken unless we say oor say as weel as we can.[83]

As this idiom implies, *Forward*'s editorial attitude to popular sociality would change over the course of publication, due in no small part to a consistent adherence to the public sphere's principle of inclusion, extended not just to private men of property, but to all with the capacity to communicate: because despite the early aloof remarks on working-class sociality, Johnston's ambition was for the readership to be able to take up the role of writer too, and he stressed that while the discussion column operated on an invitation-basis, 'anyone may contribute to the discussion' through letters to the editor.[84] Unlike the Kantian public sphere model, the public sphere mediated by *Forward*, via print devices designed for working-class deliberation, was not premised on the same social basis of autonomy, namely on the property ownership of men engaged in fair and equal petty exchange of commodities, but in the public sphere itself. As I covered in the previous chapter, Habermas discusses an ideal socialist model with such an alternative basis of autonomy via Marx, but conceived it solely in the abstract as premised on socialisation of the means of production, and as a sublation of the bourgeois model's premise of autonomy in privatised means of production, and therefore never examined actual plebeian, proletarian, or subaltern public spheres animated ideologically by socialism.[85] However, by investigating historical proletarian public spheres like the one mediated by *Forward*, it becomes clear

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[82] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 104.
[83] 'Sanny McNee on the Trades Union Congress', *Forward*, 23 September 1916, p. 2.
[84] Leading article, *Forward*, 4 May 1907, p. 2.
[85] See Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 128-29. Indeed, framed in this way, the socialist public sphere cannot be other than an abstract proposition lacking historical concreteness, and Habermas's discussion may point to a rather too rigid notion of determination between base and superstructure implicitly operative in his first major work. He later sought to overcome this (the rigid determination and constriction of the participants' communicative autonomy by their social conditions of material reproduction) by positing that 'the species learns not only in the dimension of technically useful knowledge decisive for the development of productive forces but also in the dimension of moral-practical consciousness decisive for structures of interaction', in an attempted reconstruction of historical materialism that pointed the way to his later dual conception of society as system and lifeworld. Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1984), p. 148.

that a sufficient degree of autonomy could be anchored directly in the public sphere, without need for socialised means of production. Peter Uwe Hohendahl explains the *telos* of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's proletarian public sphere model in the following way:

> The goal of the proletarian public sphere is for the masses as working people (not as a party) to constitute their own experience; in other words, for them to gain an autonomous sphere in which they can formulate their own needs.[86]

This kind of public sphere does not denote the organisational forms of the labour movement, that is, its actual parties and trade unions. Rather, working people are confronted 'with the difficult and sometimes contradictory task of appropriating the bourgeois public sphere in order to prevent its misuse and with simultaneously constructing a counter-public'.[87] It is from this perspective that the rearticulation of a modified Kantian public sphere in a vastly different socio-cultural context, as through *Forward*, should be understood. With a universal participation principle taken more seriously than the merely 'ideological', indeed mystifying, articulation of it within the bourgeois formation, *Forward* opened up a print public sphere to concerns already articulated within lifeworld contexts in a way that challenges Habermas's insistence that the separation of private (including intimate) and public realms constitutes a *structural condition* for the public sphere not only as a forum for *private persons of property*, but also as a sphere of rational discussion on matters of common concern in such a way that domination could be subjected to reason.[88] I want to illustrate this by first considering *Forward*'s dialectical relation to constitutional politics (or how publicity was turned against the legal order), before returning to the discussion column to consider how the evolving integration of state and society was treated within the proletarian public sphere.

Forward's dialectical relation to constitutional politics is illuminated in the first editorial device developed especially for direct engagement with the readership: the legal advice column. Announced in 1906, the leader-writer promises that '[a]ny of our readers desiring legal advice free may have it through our columns. All letters on this subject

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[86] Peter Uwe Hohendahl and Marc Silberman, 'Critical Theory, Public Sphere and Culture: Jürgen Habermas and His Critics', *New German Critique* 16.16 (1979), pp. 89-118 (p. 107).
[87] Ibid.
[88] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 142. Habermas has since changed his mind regarding the structural importance of the integration of private and public realms via the welfare state settlement (understood as economic and state systems) for the possibility of a public sphere, but he has retained a concern with the tendency of 'blurring *the perception*' of the real boundary between private (in the sense of 'intimate' or 'personal') and public (in the sense of 'common' and politically relevant) within the new digital public spheres. See Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Polity, 2023), p. 21.

should have "Law" plainly written on the envelope'.[89] As a role consciously enacted virtually from the start of publication, *Forward* as public legal advisor should be understood in conjunction with the electoral orientation of the paper. It contributed to the integration of working-class politics into a constitutional framework wherein the gap between the public and the national electorate was closing (and made formally credible with the electoral reform acts of 1918 and 1928), and thereby helped fashion popular legitimation of a British constitutional framework (a framework that the *Socialist* remained extremely sceptical of). But this process of legitimation in *Forward* was dialectical, as the actual legal advice provided indicates: it issued advice on how to *assert* legal rights within a confounding legal order, how to *evade* that legal order when judged unjust, and how to overtly *challenge* the legal system from without to initiate legal reform through collective direct action.

The role of the paper as a citizens' legal advisor became crucial during the 1915 Rent Strikes, when a regular notice would appear on the backmatter: 'Don't Read this Paper! Your Factor doesn't like it'.[90] Elsewhere in the issue, Councillor P.J. Dollan provided a detailed report on the progress of the strikes, in which he issued more immediately practical and legal advice to readers, urging tenants not to sign any agreements with the factors and to ignore any eviction notices. The legal advice appears in italics, and stated that the eviction notices:

> *have absolutely no legal significance, as under the Court Powers Emergency Act,* 1914, *no tenant can be evicted without first being summoned to the Court and having it there proved against him that he is able to pay the increased rent demanded*.[91]

He further pointed to the fact that, given the numbers involved, the local legal system lacked capacity in the form of Sheriff Officers of the court to handle even a fraction of potential claims – an indication that legal advice was as much about evading and challenging the legal system, as about asserting rights within it. Indeed, in an earlier article in *Forward*, Dollan had argued that 'it is only by defying law and order that we are likely to compel the Government to prevent increases of rent'.[92] Such collective action was connected to reform efforts, and in a front-page article Wheatley made the political case for

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[89] Leading article, *Forward*, 20 October 1906, p. 2.
[90] Notice, *Forward*, 30 October 1915, p. 4.
[91] Patrick Dollan, 'Fifteen Thousand Glasgow Tenants on Strike. – Factors Trying a Game of Bluff. Tenants Stand Firm', *Forward*, 30 October 1915, p. 3.
[92] Cited in Pam Currie, '"A Wondrous Spectacle": Protest, Class and Femininity in the 1915 Rent Strikes', in *Rent and Its Discontents: A Century of Housing Struggle,* ed. by Neil Gray (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), pp. 3-16 (p. 8).

emergency public housing to be administered and controlled by the Town Council (to which both Dollan and Wheatley were elected), thus prefiguring the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 which made state provision of housing a social right for the first time.[93] The Rent Strikes thus saw two quite different forms of political participation intertwined: the Rent Strikes were a residual form of working-class political practice and culture, premised on direct action and self-representation through the taking up of public space in street demonstrations, while the legal route, where tenants would be represented by a professional politician or legal expert (mediated, through *Forward*, by a socially responsible journalism), is centred around a state and legal constitution seen as broadly legitimate. *Forward* thus lent conditional legitimacy to constitutional politics before a working-class readership and a similar dialectical relation to legality, of challenging and testing the limits of representation through the public sphere, can also be seen in relation to other working-class struggles with the law. Thus, when the introduction of DORA necessitated more covert advice, particularly concerning conscientious objection, a regular 'Answers and Notes' column appeared, where responses were given to unprinted questions: 'A.C.R. – You must remember the nation is at war', 'J. Younger. – Impossible to publish', 'W.D. Erskine. – Yes, we know. It is one of the things we have note of, for use in the happy days to be'.[94] These stunted, elliptical lines mark the limitations of public discourse under emergency legislation that effectively restricted the print public sphere's principle of publicity; a line that *Forward* occasionally tested and pushed, as seen in the resulting suppression of the paper in 1916 for carrying a rather too adroit report on the Minister of Munition's visit to Glasgow in late 1915.[95] In thus testing and challenging the constitutional boundaries of public deliberation, *Forward* at once affirmed the legitimacy of constitutional politics mediated through parliamentary representation, and challenged the functional divide between private and public as constitutionalised in a system of negative individual rights. This dialectical relation to constitutional politics also informed deliberation on larger questions of working-class strategies for improvement and its evolving structural conditions and possibilities.

In its early framing, the discussion column was to offer a forum for discussion on 'broad principles' and to 'discover tendencies with the same philosophic acumen as our

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[93] John Wheatley, 'Remedy for Rising Rents. – Factor's Case Smashed', *Forward*, 30 October 1915, p. 1. For a recent discussion of the significance of the 1915 Rent Strikes, see Neil Gray, 'Introduction', in *Rent and Its Discontents: A Century of Housing Struggle,* ed. by Neil Gray (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), pp. xvii-xxxix (p. xviiif.).

[94] 'Answers and Notes', *Forward*, 22 April 1916, p. 1.

[95] For a detailed account, see Brotherstone.

fathers did'.[96] The first topic to be discussed was framed in rather speculative terms (perhaps to avoid sedition charges), but the basic issue echoed one of the central internal debates of the European labour movement at this time, usually construed as the revolution or reform debate. Participants were asked to discuss 'the possibility of our Society ending (or mending) in Rebellion':

> Will the necessary Reforms be given or forced in time, and will a happier and healthier state of civilization be **evolved without "catastrophe,"** change and bloodshed, or will the ruling classes take to the guns (as some eminent Socialists believe) to defend the present condition of things?[97]

Aside from the question of moral or physical force which had already divided the Chartists, the question turned on the nature of the state with which local labour movements saw themselves faced. It was on this question that two distinct strategic tendencies within the labour movement, the electorally focussed ILP and Labour Party, and the radical trade union-focussed tendency discussed previously in relation to the *Socialist*, clashed in the pages of *Forward* in early 1918. The 'Parkhead Marxian Study Group' confronted the key local intellectual of the ILP, John Wheatley, through a series of articles staged in the format of the discussion column. Wheatley had used the example of the Glasgow Tramways to illustrate how local systems of infrastructure could be operated both democratically and efficiently through the Town Council (to which Wheatley was elected) in ways that could improve the material conditions of working people and gradually shift the balance of class power, while the Parkhead Marxists drew on their own experiences of centralised and far more authoritarian control of economic life by the Ministry of Munitions. Thus, the Parkhead Marxists would criticise Wheatley's carefully construed plans for gradual reform and public ownership with a rhetoric familiar from the *Socialist*:

> This is State Socialism: this is State Ownership [and] the rebel workers want none of it! It is a damned sight worse than Private Capitalism. There, at least, the individual had a little measure of liberty to fight and think as he thinks fit. Here, under State Socialism, the individual ceases to count; he is a number, a slave, bound hand and foot by the red tape of bureaucracy.[98]

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[96] Leading article, *Forward*, 4 May 1907, p. 2.
[97] Leading article, *Forward*, 4 May 1907, p. 2. Emphasis in original. The debate primarily between Gavan-Duffy, Robert Smillie, and Bailie McKerrel then played out in subsequent issues: '"FORWARD'S" SYMPOSIUM. – WILL IT COME TO THE BARRICADES?', *Forward*, 18 May 1907, p. 3; '"FORWARD'S" SYMPOSIUM. – WILL IT COME TO THE BARRICADES?', *Forward*, 25 May 1907, p. 3.
[98] Parkhead Marxian Study Circle, 'What Socialism Really Is – An Analysis of Bailie Wheatley's Articles in "*Forward*" Part II', *Forward*, 30 March 1918, p. 3.

Wheatley had argued that the refusal to engage in constitutional politics was not an 'advanced' position, as claimed by its proponents, but 'really old-fashioned' and based on already superseded socio-political conditions.[99] The debate, while grappling with difficult questions of social structure and political strategies, was carried out in a popular idiom drawn from the platform. 'The hard facts of economic laws shatter Mr. Wheatley's flimsy tower of nonsense even as Copernican Astronomy dispelled the fictions of priests and astrologers', the Parkhead Marxists declared in a statement that also signals the religious sectarian undercurrent of the overtly rationalist exchange, as indicated in the Introduction.[100] The Parkhead Marxists, as skilled craftsmen, were likely Protestant, while Wheatley was Irish Catholic, and the exchange highlights the cultural tensions between a largely temperate, Protestant working-class public and the Irish Catholic public on Clydeside.[101] No stranger to the culture of oratory before a demanding crowd with an appreciation for rhetorical flair, Wheatley responded in kind by targeting the zealous rhetoric of economic laws and historical forces among these Marxists:

> They have implicit faith in "forces" in society which have been, and presumably still are, driving us towards Socialism without our knowledge. These "forces" form a sort of headless, unintelligent deity to whom we are now invited to offer a helping hand. Fired by this faith our comrades look forward to the dawning of the day when international Socialism will burst forth like a chicken from a shell, destroying at its birth the frontiers of all existing states and establishing universally on that golden morn the brotherhood of man.[102]

Appeals to enlightened reason as against superstition and illusion (religious or otherwise) compete in this exchange. The modality of reason cultivated is not that of polite discourse centred on taste and sensibility as in the bourgeois coffeehouses (or in the literary societies frequented by writers in the *Glasgow Herald* for that matter), but no less reasonable for all that. For the disagreement concerns a genuine difficulty of social development unfolding around them at the time: on the one hand, a familiar dynamic of private capital accumulation, on the other, a state which was increasingly intervening in the private economic sphere and thereby presenting both opportunities for reform (Wheatley's preferred strategy) and threats to a degree of autonomy gained through hard-won struggles

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[99] John Wheatley, 'An Examination of some Current Criticisms of I.L.P. Policy. I. "Political Action is a Waste of Time"', *Forward*, 12 January 1918, p. 1.
[100] Parkhead Marxian Study Circle, 'What Socialism Really Is – An Analysis of Bailie Wheatley's Articles in "*Forward*"', *Forward,* 23 March 1918, p. 1.
[101] For a discussion of the relation between Protestant organised workers and Irish Catholics, see especially Chapters 15 and 18 in W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
[102] John Wheatley, 'THE POLICY OF THE I.L.P. – Bailie John Wheatley Replies to its Critics', *Forward*, 6 April 1918, p. 1.

by skilled workers (the older strategy which the Parkhead Marxists preferred, and sought to extend on industrial unionist lines). In arguing the case for reform through democratic public ownership of necessities including transportation and housing, that is, for a state extending into what had been understood as a private sphere exempt from political interference and public deliberation, Wheatley continued the constitutional precedent set by *Forward*'s legal advice column, but turned it against the central structural and ideological distinction of the liberal public sphere between the private and public realms. To Habermas, the 'downfall of the public sphere, demonstrated by its changing political functions […], had its source in the structural transformation of the relationship between the public sphere and the private realm', primarily in the form of increased state interventionism into the private economy from the late nineteenth century onwards.[103] But as seen from the perspective of a labour movement laying claim to positive-social rights, in addition to already constitutionally guaranteed negative-individual rights, exemplified here by Wheatley's position and the real gains made by the Rent Strikers in the form of rent control legislation and later public housing provision. State interventionism was not only the administrative response of a calculating state to changing world-market conditions (though it was surely that too): it was *also* a demand formulated within the proletarian public sphere formation and mediated by *Forward*, which directed itself against both a hostile commercial public sphere and the state bureaucracy. The changing political functions of the public sphere analysed and critiqued by Habermas (the morphing into a commercial platform for advertisement of both commodities and politicians, themselves presented as commodities through intricate public relations strategies, conjoined with opinion management and policing) can then be seen in a different light. It was not the result of systemic, structural collapse of private and public realms through a stipulated merger of state and society culminating in the welfare state. Rather, it was the defensive response of a post-bourgeois public sphere formation seeking to delay and contain oppositional claims for social rights made by proletarian counterpublics, claims which threatened to redefine and extend the remit of what was to count as the public concern, and thereby what sort of claims could legitimately be made on parliament and the state.[104]

I now turn to how the emerging political functions of the commercial public sphere were analysed and responded to within the *Forward*'s public.

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[103] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 142.

[104] Such an extension of the conditions for legitimacy would eventually lead to a new post-Second World War paradigm of politics as welfare state crisis management, as analysed in Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Heinemann, 1976); Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (Hutchinson, 1984).

4.3 The Problem of News and Manufactured Public Opinion

In an earlier chapter I traced the gradual reification of public opinion through the *Glasgow Herald*, from the repeal of the taxes on knowledge and the free-market dynamics this unleashed within the British print public sphere, and the emergence of what Habermas calls 'a new sort of influence, i.e. media power, which, used for purposes of manipulation, once and for all took care of the innocence of the principle of publicity'.[105] From the perspective of the victims of this transformation, however, the First World War seemed the crucial period when public opinion shifted from a concept of formative and educational discussion to something denoting rigid and solidified attitudes (most clearly marked by the 'public opinion' produced by opinion polls). While social control is an insufficient model for explaining dynamic cultural processes, both the *feeling* of social control among dissenting readers and writers and the *ambition* to police and moderate deep social and political conflict on the part of commercial newspaper proprietors offer important indications of increasingly strategic rather than communicative public sphere interaction. It is in this period, particularly just after the war when press freedom was restored, and fear of both real and imagined or anticipated repression was eased with the repeal of DORA, that theories of 'manufactured public opinion' emerged in the socialist press. The need for understanding this shift was particularly acute in politically radical but electorally oriented formations like the one mediated by *Forward*, because they could not simply dismiss the idealising wager of the public sphere solely as ideology. It was particularly in connection with general elections that such concerns were voiced in print.

The front-page editorial feature 'SOCIALIST WAR POINTS' was introduced at the start of the war as a column specialising in public opinion formation through commentary and summaries of news and opinion from across the print public sphere. In an issue dedicated to the upcoming general election of 1918 (held immediately after armistice) the Socialist War Points leads by commenting on the transformation of the print public sphere in Scotland over the course of the war:

> In Scotland, Labour has everything but a Daily or an Evening Press. […] All the fuglemen blow Tory-Imperial-Protectionist-Capitalist. […] the *Forward*, the *Highland News*, and the *Scottish Co-operator*, all weeklies, do their best, but there

[105] Jürgen Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', trans. by Thomas Burger, in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 421-61 (p. 437).

> is no daily paper meeting the deadly misrepresentations of the Capitalist journals.[106]

The main issue with the print public sphere was representational and concerned the gap between the available but narrow print opinion, a wider reading public, and a still wider electorate. The remedy was commonly found in an extension of circulation, as expressed here by a correspondent to the paper: 'When *Forward* attains a circulation of 200,000 the overthrow of the enemy is assured'.[107] There is of course a strongly educational vision of the press underlying this, since, the correspondent continues, the great value of *Forward* is that 'it provides the ammunition for use in private discussion and on the platform'.[108] From this representational perspective the issue of press ownership is central, and the ILP issued a meticulously researched pamphlet detailing ownership concentration and monopoly tendencies, with the implication that the interests of the owners risked saturating newspaper content, and thereby the worldview of readers. In its material analysis the pamphlet opens with a reflection on economic power:

> Wealth naturally controls the Press from the fact (*a*) that it needs a large capital to start a newspaper (*b*) a newspaper lives largely on the revenue from its advertisements. […] Since newspapers live on advertisement revenue, the big capitalist firms who advertise in newspapers have a big influence over those newspapers in the matter of policy and space distribution.[109]

This is a remarkably clear materialist analysis of the press and the freedom-inhibiting role of advertising which effectively anticipates Curran and Seaton's later sociological analysis of British press history, and which has often been lost in more Whiggish accounts (both old and new).[110] But the critique of public opinion produced through the commercial press was not only thought of in such strictly materialist terms. Thus, the last issue of *Forward* before the 1922 General Election, which concentrated on political campaigning, included an article by the Welsh schoolteacher Dan Griffiths wherein a rudimentary theory of the 'manufacture of public opinion' is being worked out before the readership:

> Public opinion has become a highly artificial product, and its manufacture a fine art. The class that owns the land and capital – the *material* means of life – owns also the Press and the other *intellectual* means of life, in order to own the *material* means! This is the […] optical illusion of modern society. […] Labour's task in a

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[106] 'SOCIALIST WAR POINTS', *Forward*, 30 November 1918, p. 1.
[107] Letter to Editor, *Forward*, 16 December 1922, p. 3.
[108] Ibid.
[109] *The Capitalist Press*, prepared and published by the Independent Labour Party Information Committee, 5, York Buildings, London, p. 1. The pamphlet itself is undated but relies for sources on the *Directory of Directors* and *Stock Exchange Year Book* of 1920, so it was likely published in 1920. The copy consulted is part of the National Library of Scotland's general collections.
[110] For a recent evaluative account of the historiography, see Chapter 1 in Curran and Seaton.

> nutshell is how to destroy the pernicious influence of the Capitalist over our brains – or how to get the workers to own their own *minds*.[111]

What is significant about Griffith's contribution is that it builds on both the materialist critique of press ownership as expressed in the ILP pamphlet, and the cultural criticism of commercial newspaper content as expressed in the *Socialist*. As seen in the previous chapter, the *Socialist* targeted the 'sensationalist' content of popular-commercial newspapers by questioning whether a paper 'seriously seeking to advance the working class' should 'encumber its pages with sensational police court news and all the filth of the divorce courts', concluding that 'it is foolishness to think that such matter can assist the working class in its efforts of emancipation'.[112] By combining materialist and cultural perspectives, Griffiths began articulating a critique of the real abstraction of print-mediated public opinion as an 'artificial product' or a manufactured 'optical illusion' with real consequences for the prospect of autonomous will formation, or the workers' control of the workers' 'own *minds*'.[113] Griffiths proceeds by vigorously citing sources that support his case, including Ruskin, Bernard Shaw, A.G. Gardiner, and Alex M. Thompson, but he also quotes the express intentions of Press Barons such as Lord Beaverbrook (Beaverbrook: 'Press are quite as important as the efforts of the army' during the war).[114] Griffiths then launches into a review of the organs of public opinion. Aside from the press, he criticises the churches ('They condemn the things that *annoy* the rich, not the things that *injure* the poor'), the schools ('They say nothing about the most important matters in life'), the theatres ('Most of our "dramas" deal with small, retail and conventional themes, belonging solely to the "existing order"'), the music hall (which is 'almost too notoriously the home of flag-wagging Jingoism, and the lowest and most sordid appeals in politics to need mention'), and the cinema ('Even the otherwise innocent, entertaining and instructive cinema plays its part in the Great Conspiracy. Many of the films shown are either open or veiled attacks upon our movement').[115] The attack on the theatres, music halls, and cinemas are noteworthy because they point to a critique of an emergent culture industry at odds with the enlightenment-imperatives of the proletarian public sphere. Griffith's writing displays both the rhetoric and perspective of a residual radicalism, and the remedy proposed by Griffith to remove the 'mountains of ignorance and prejudice' centred (as in the *Socialist*) on an independent press ('We must multiply the number and circulation of

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[111] Dan Griffiths, 'The Manufacture of Public Opinion', *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 3.
[112] 'A Working Class Paper', *The Socialist*, February 1911, p. 44.
[113] Dan Griffiths, 'The Manufacture of Public Opinion', *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 3.
[114] Lord Beaverbrook quoted in ibid.
[115] Ibid.

our own papers and magazines at least ten-fold') in *conjunction* with the less mediated spaces for knowledge production, 'our Branches, Study Circles, and Public Meetings'.[116] However, Griffiths also leans on the tradition of British cultural criticism and cites Ruskin: 'We have no right to *opinions*; we have a right only to *knowledge*'.[117] The resources of this critical tradition enable a more nuanced cultural critique than that seen in the *Socialist*, and Griffiths expresses quite clearly the shift in the concept of public opinion which Habermas described as its liquidation, from a formative concept to a static one akin to 'attitude', which had occurred over the decades prior to Griffiths's writing: 'Opinions are too frequently whims or fancies or fallacious deductions. Knowledge is always the result of analyses, comparison, honest inquiry, and reason. Public opinion should be public knowledge, and not organised ignorance'.[118] The statement expresses an important animating idea shared more broadly within the journalistic culture of *Forward*. This is clearly seen in how 'news' was understood by its writers and editors.

The illusory print public opinion critiqued from a left-wing perspective is constructed in part through the literary conventions of the 'quality' press. These include the authoritative voice of the anonymous, unsigned, leader-writer issuing decision and judgement more than invitation to argument, as the style and tone of the *Glasgow Herald*'s leading articles demonstrate. But they also include the avowed neutrality of news-reporting, which draw their legitimacy from a denial of normative judgement, in favour of a supposedly neutral observation of events construed as abstract occurrences. In popular papers with an openly declared ideological interest like *Forward*, such gestures of objectivity are routinely critiqued. Thus, an important front-page feature of *Forward* is the editorial news-summary column. The practice of inserting a summary of the main events and debates in parliament, local government, and press is common among all kinds of newspapers – the *Glasgow Herald* too carries it between the masthead and its leading articles – but *Forward*'s is decidedly more open in its evaluative commentary, thus displaying a less strict separation between news articles conceived as unproblematic facts, and analysis, evaluation, and judgement. As Gilmartin argues for the English radical plebeian press, the amalgamation of news and commentary resulted partly from legal struggle over the definition of 'news' where radical papers took advantage of a 'legal loophole that exempted periodicals containing nothing more than commentary on the news from taxes meant to keep political information out of the hands of the poor'.[119] But

[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Dan Griffiths, 'The Manufacture of Public Opinion', *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 3.
[119] Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, p. 78.

moreover, the practice of combining news and commentary initiated through struggle against the legal efforts at containing the radical press set a discursive precedent within radical print culture. As Gilmartin argues, it 'established a dialogic structure of argument' between reprints from the daily papers and radical commentary.[120] The Socialist War Points continue the older radical print practice of dialogic commentary in what Gilmartin describes as a 'combative' and 'engaged' style, but now in the context of the First World War.[121] The title's retention after armistice highlights the double-meaning of the column. It is not merely an emergency measure introduced to handle the increased output of war-reporting, but a print device dedicated to dialogical, ideological warfare tied to working-class needs which remained unmet after the war. Deian Hopkin cites a passage from *Forward* which succinctly frames the critical intent behind the column, and the alternative editorial understanding of 'news' among writers and editors of the paper:

> It is possible to give a synopsis of each week's news so complete that Labour readers would lose nothing by giving their daily papers a miss and at the same time we could attach such comments, connections and contradictions to the statements made by our opponents as are necessary to set matters in their true light.[122]

For 'news' to become both meaningful and politically useful, it had to be interpreted, scrutinised, and contextualised, and not merely presented in a deceptively 'neutral' fashion, as though the events described were mutually exchangeable. The alternative strategy of news commentary pursued through *Forward* is fashioned in response to a commercial press fostering a fragmentation of worldviews and consciousness. Because, as Richard Terdiman argues, the commercial logic of mainstream newspaper layout, within which each article and news item is 'conceived as autonomous and detachable' and where '*every* element of the social totality, through the operation of the market, may at any moment be randomly connected with any other element', *drains* much of the 'explanatory' and 'critical force' of both the very notion of connection and of contradiction.[123] Thus, where the commercial newspapers through their layout and neutral presentation of disjointed news-items 'rationalize disjunction' by virtue of being 'organized *as disorganization*', a press seeking to counteract the fragmentation of consciousness thus produced had to reorganise

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[120] Ibid. p. 79.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Cited in Deian Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press in Britain, 1890-1910', in *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. by D. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 294-306 (p. 304). It is unclear which *Forward* is intended, but given a 1904 publication date it is probably the Bradford or Leeds *Forward* rather than the Glasgow publication. Despite the uncertainty, I have chosen to retain the quotation because it captures the critique and ideal of 'news' animating socialist periodicals in the period.
[123] Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 127.

the disorganised, to analytically reattach the lost connections; not as in imaginative, organicist literature, with a view to harmonise or symbolically resolve real contradictions, however, but to bring these connections and contradictions into view and thereby 'set matters in their true light' as expressed above.[124]

This understanding of news and its critical uses was continued in not just radical print practices, but also reflects the oral communicative practices of the proletarian public sphere. To draw on a local example, Bell recounts how Sandy Haddow, an ILP councillor and orator in Parkhead in the 1890s, would conduct his outdoor meetings on Sundays and evenings: 'His propaganda was always simple, direct, and of local interest. With sheaves of notes and press cuttings he would lash the local municipal fathers for their graft, and end with a glowing picture of the future socialist commonwealth'.[125] Indeed, James Connolly recommends the same technique of using cuttings from the print public sphere as interlocutory scraps in the context public oration in a widely circulated 1909 pamphlet. Responding to an imagined interlocutor asking whether it would be right of socialists to confiscate the capitalist's property, Connolly steps into the role of the orator-educator addressing a live audience, and writes:

> Their property, eh? Let us see: Here is a cutting from the *New York World* giving a synopsis of the Annual Report of the Coats Thread Company of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, for 1907. Now, let us examine it […].[126]

What the Socialist War Points does is to shift this practice of popular oratory to the print medium. An example of this practice of drawing on neutral reporting, and of comparing, analysing, and re-presenting is found in a 1916 issue, where the Socialist War Points partially reprints two accounts of the financial situation of the shipbuilding firm Hawthorne, Leslie & Co. The first comes from the *Bulletin*, reporting the downbeat words of Herbert Bowell, the owner of Leslie & Co., concerning worker productivity under the headline 'SHIPOWNER'S PROPHESY – "DEVASTATING STRUGGLE BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOUR"'. The second comes from the *Journal of Commerce*, aimed at shareholders, presenting a decidedly more optimistic and detailed account of the yearly revenues and dividends of the firm. *Forward*'s editor cites both accounts and provides the reader with the following framing commentary:

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Thomas Bell, *Pioneering Days* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1941), p. 29.
[126] See James Connolly, *Socialism Made Easy*, Socialist Labour Press, undated [1909], p. 6. Consulted in National Library of Scotland's general collections.

> The workers read the *Bulletin*. This is in the *Bulletin* (16th) for the workers: - […] Now, the masters read the *Journal of Commerce*. This is the story as it is told to the masters in the *Journal of Commerce* (14th):- […] Henry dear, put on your thinking cap for a moment. Why did they not put the *Bulletin* story in the *Journal of Commerce*, and why did they not put the *Journal of Commerce* facts in the *Bulletin*? If you cannot guess the correct answer, just attend the next Socialist meeting in your neighbourhood and question the speaker about it.[127]

The instruction for the reader ('Henry Dubb' was a familiar cartoon character appearing in comic strips in the paper) to attend local political meetings is indicative of the projected deliberative practice located largely outside working-class print culture. By the same editorial method, *Forward* presented an economic summary account of the week's news combined with instructive, enlightening commentary and juxtaposition in an effort to fashion knowledge from the decontextualised news-articles of the commercial press. Here again is an example of the extended sense of 'critical populism' in proletarian print culture distinctive of the post-repeal phase of press-commercialisation, which I described in the Introduction and noted in the previous chapter on the *Socialist*.[128] A similar 'populist sentiment' combined with a critical and enlightening orientation animates *Forward* and its form of publicity.[129] The critical populism of *Forward* was expressed in a distinctive idiom, which I have already noted elsewhere, but which I now want to consider more closely.

4.4 The Popular Idiom: A Democratic Style?

A question animating Curran and Seaton's history of the press in Britain is why the radical press failed to live up to its early promise of combining political public opinion formation with news-reporting and entertainment features from the late nineteenth century onwards. As shown with the example of the *Socialist* in the previous chapter, many of the new socialist papers emerging from the 1880s – most famous among them Henry Hyndman's *Justice* and William Morris's *Commonweal* – withdrew into what Curran and Seaton describe as 'narrowly politicized journalism' written in a rather 'arid' style.[130] At stake in this proposed tonal shift of the late nineteenth century was the democratic and educational, or enlightening, role of the popular press, because, as Thompson was keen to note with reference to Cobbett's journalism, the popular tone and style also had a democratic and

[127] 'Socialist War Points', *Forward*, 23 September 1916, p. 1.
[128] Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism* (Routledge, 1992), p. 5.
[129] Ibid. p. 14.
[130] Curran and Seaton, p. 30.

educational function.[131] Although Curran and Seaton's question suggests a primary interest in the success of working-class journals in terms of circulation, or popularity, the stylistic shift seen in the late nineteenth century socialist journals also had pedagogical implications since a paper aimed at readers with limited time, energy, and formal education, and animated by a radical version of what Hampton terms the 'educational ideal' of the press, and a working-class lifeworld that included the expressive customs of both music hall and working-class protest culture ought to have presented useful symbolic resources for radical enlightenment.[132] Of course, the meaning of the popular idiom in print had begun to shift at the turn of the twentieth century, because the commercial press had learned to use some of these resources too, for different, neither educational nor emancipatory, ends (as hinted at with reference to popular imperialism in the previous chapter). Left-wing critiques of the commercial press articulate contemporary frustrations with the loss of a more critical-rational public opinion formation to a journalism marked by 'apparent arousal as a cover for an eventual if temporary satisfaction', rather than the 'genuine arousal' of an older radical journalism, as Williams put it.[133] But how can the genuine be distinguished from the apparent? This is not only a problem for the cultural historian but also a live difficulty confronting contemporary readers and writers. As if to dispel the representational 'illusion' of public opinion and to mark themselves as genuine rather than apparent, writers in *Forward* drew on the symbolic resources of a popular idiom. Among the literary devices deployed is the time-tested satirical device of translating, so to speak, the verdicts of the quality press into its proper vernacular. In addition to commentary and analysis of 'news', the Socialist War Points targeted the leading articles of the commercial press with a similar demystifying intent. Thus, as the plans for post-war reconstruction advanced by the political parties were subjected to scrutiny by public opinion in print, and the Labour Party's programme more so than most, the Socialist War Points commented satirically on the *Glasgow Herald*'s leader writer (discussed in Chapter 2): 'The Labour Party's memorandum on reconstruction after the War has driven the old party press crazy. It is Sawshullasm'.[134] By drawing out the *Glasgow Herald*'s hidden vernacular, the satire seeks to place them on equally embodied speaking terms, an embodiment that the tone of the *Glasgow Herald* masks through the voice of an authoritative observer offering judgement and decision more than argument, or invitation to argument, all under cover of journalistic

[131] Thompson, *The Making*, p. 823.
[132] Hampton.
[133] Williams, 'Radical and/or Respectable', p. 21.
[134] 'Socialist War Points', *Forward*, 12 January 1918, p. 1. See also William Stewart, 'Preparing for the Millenium', *Forward*, 5 January 1918, p. 1.

anonymity.[135] The technique, which stretches back to Cobbett's critique of Scottish 'feelosofy' and elite notions of 'heddekashun', was also used by John Wheatley during the 1915 Rent Strikes, when he wrote that 'the worker bleeds and dies that "proputty" may prosper'.[136]

In addition to this technique of radical translation, *Forward* featured renderings in print of its own Scots vernacular. Written by Johnston under the pen-name Sanny McNee, historical episodes are humorously related and pedagogically connected to contemporary working-class or popular struggles and concerns. Thus, in 1916, McNee made the following remarks in connection with the Trade Union Congress's decision to support the British war effort:

> Thirs an auld Greek story aboot hoo a lot o' slaves had revoltit against thir maisters, an' successfully resistit the efforts o' thir maisters tae subdue them by force o' airms. Thereupon a genius among the maisters said, "Let us lay doon oor swords an' use oor whups on them." Actin' on this advice, the maisters attacked the revoltin' slaves whup in haun'. As sune as the slaves heard the crack o' thir maisters' whups, they threw doon thir swords an' awa' they ran, an' alloo'd the maisters tae drive them aboot like a lot o' sheep. Thirs naething improbable aboot that story. In fact, it's owre true a story. If ye dinnae believe it, jist think owre the happenings fur the last twa years in this country an' then gaun an' read the reports o' the Trade Union Congress.[137]

McNee draws some further scolding comparisons ('Like a dug at the gramophone, they hear thir maister's voice' and 'like a lot o' puppet figgers in the haun's o' a ventriloquist, thir lips move, but the voice is the voice o' the maister cless') before delivering the moral of the story:

> Mental shackles are faur harder tae break than iron fetters, an' a mental revolution in the minds o' the workers is gey hard tae bring aboot […] We should never be fear't o' mental effort, an' never let anither man dae oor thinkin' fur us. We may be richt, an' we may be wrang, we wull never ken unless we say oor say as weel as we can.[138]

As previously noted, this is effectively a vernacularised rendition of Kant's valorisation of autonomy and wager that by free thought and discussion in public the truth may be arrived at, albeit without the sociological basis of autonomy in private ownership of commodities other than labour power.[139] But more than that, the popular idiom in which it is put adds a levelling critique of the implicit cultural criteria for participation in rational discourse. The

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[135] For a brief discussion of anonymity in the mainstream press, see Hampton, pp. 65-69.
[136] John Wheatley, 'Remedy for Rising Rents. – Factor's Case Smashed', *Forward*, 30 October 1915, p. 1.
[137] 'Sanny McNee on the Trades Union Congress', *Forward*, 23 September 1916, p. 2.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 104.

insistence to 'say oor say as weel as we can' challenges the notion that reason relies on a narrowly cultivated form of polite discourse, intended as a liberatory, democratic encouragement for the readers of *Forward*.

In doing so, *Forward* continued a tradition of radical journalistic writing in Scots vernacular that stretches back into the nineteenth century, as reconstructed in William Donaldson's study of Scottish Victorian popular literature.[140] The examples unearthed by Donaldson testify to a politicised journalism commenting on local, national, and international affairs in vernacular voices that constitute local perspectives through the press. Perhaps the strongest example is the vernacularist pseudonyms of William Latto, editor of the Dundee-based *People's Journal* and a former Chartist and handloom weaver. His first vernacularist pseudonym was simply 'Sandy', introduced with much popular success in the *People's Journal* in 1858, and it is possible that Johnston borrowed the name 'Sanny' from this original source.[141] Latto's 'Sandy' was introduced with an account of a local strike that was 'strongly favourable to the men'.[142] Like Sanny McNee, Latto's vernacular journalism was placed next to the leading articles, thus 'giving it an implied "official" status' which 'amounted to alternative leading articles in Scots'.[143] Latto's vernacular journalism was made available in more durable book form as *Tammas Bodkin: or the Humours of a Scottish Tailor* (1864), *The Bodkin Papers* (1883), and *Tammas Bodkin: Swatches o' Hodden-Grey* (1894).[144] The essays appearing in book form were written for a different, more middle-class, audience, and Donaldson suggests that much of the radicalism of the periodical pieces is absent in book form; furthermore, Latto's Bodkin as he appears in the *Journal* (but not in the books) acted as 'a vehicle for ideas: he analysed the Game Laws, discussed trade unionism, agitated the Nine Hour Question and a whole range of class-related social issues'.[145] Donaldson's central aim with the study is to show how a lively and sophisticated Scottish literary tradition existed and developed in the popular press in a period which has often been regarded as a low-point for Scottish literature, marked by the dominance of Kailyard fiction in book form, but it also highlights the expressive and radical democratic role of the press. Similarly, and in a more recent engagement with poetry published in the Scottish Victorian popular press, Kirstie Blair

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[140] William Donaldson, *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press* (Aberdeen University Press, 1986).
[141] Donaldson, p. 38.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid. p. 39.
[144] Ibid. p. 46.
[145] Ibid. pp. 46-8.

highlights the intimate relationship between poetry (often vernacular) and political reform and self-improvement:

> The association of poetry, more than any genre, with cultural capital and intellectual ability meant that the ability to write a poem that fell within the 'horizon of expectations' for Victorian popular poetry, and the ability to vote, were intimately linked.[146]

Through its use of a local identity-making vernacular journalism fusing enlightenment and political representation, *Forward* continued a distinctive popular press tradition into the twentieth century. Thus, the McNee column in *Forward* is often devoted to dispelling common sense myths, in what amounts to a cultural politics with educational, demystifying intent. Thus, the notion of the entrepreneurial and self-interested 'Canny Scot' – an ideological figure akin to the meritocratic 'lad o' pairts' – is deconstructed using counter-examples of historical figures ranging from the Covenanters to Thomas Muir, to Baird and Hardie (the leaders of the 1820 Radical War which, as discussed in Chapter 2, provided the impetus for modern industrial policing as promoted in the *Glasgow Herald*), all the way up to contemporary figures like Keir Hardie and John Maclean, who collectively, along with the 'Welsh an Scots colliers [of] noo-a-days' represent the 'bonniest fechters in Freedom's van'.[147] But McNee is also careful to turn the reader's attention to the real culprits:

> Whaur has the tradition come frae, that the Scot is a canny self-seekin', bawbee-grippin' skinflint? There's naething in Scots history tae prove that idea, unless we centre oor view on the daein's o' oor auld nobility, an' some o' oor Scots M.P.s.[148]

The Scottish nobility had already received a systematic unmasking by Johnston in *Our Scots Noble Families* (1909), a book which collates articles (written in standard English) originally published in early editions of *Forward* detailing the atrocities committed by the Scottish nobility and the dubious origins of Scottish aristocratic wealth.[149] Through

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[146] Kirstie Blair, *Working Verse in Victorian Scotland: Poetry, Press, Community* (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 11. For an account of trade-vernaculars developed in printers' trades' journals in the Victorian period, see also Chapter 3 in David Finkelstein, *Movable Types: Roving Creative Printers of the Victorian World* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

[147] 'Sanny McNee on the Myth of the Canny Scot', *Forward*, 24 February 1917, p. 3.

[148] Ibid. Johnston/McNee is referring to Henry Thomas Buckle's three-volume *History of Civilization in England* (1864-1868). In the third volume, which Johnston is likely drawing from, Buckle's focus is on Scotland which he compares to Spain: 'When the Scotch Kirk was at the height of its power, we may search history in vain for any institution which can compete with it, except the Spanish Inquisition […] Both were intolerant, both were cruel, both made war upon the finest parts of human nature […] One difference, however, there was, of vast importance. In political matters, the Church, which was servile in Spain, was rebellious in Scotland. Hence the Scotch always had one direction in which they could speak and act with unrestrained liberty. In politics, they found their vent'. Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England, Vol. III*, new edn (Rose-Belford, 1878), pp. 279-280.

[149] Thomas Johnston, *Our Scots Noble Families* (Forward Publishing, 1909).

McNee, Johnston analyses the historical events and details gathered in *Our Scots Noble Families* in a new literary style. Thus, by way of tempering the sharp distinction in moral outlook between the different classes of Scotland, Johnston has McNee suggest that the protestant reformation – conceived as a harsh attempt at remoulding the moral character of common people – may after all have contributed to a cool, calculating mentality:

> Bit there maun be some reason for the tradition that the Scots are a cauld, cautious, canny folk. Weel, A ken brawly A'm no' able for the task o' tryin' tae explain a' this, an' besides, A'm no writin' a book; bit jist a wee bit haverin' screed, bit A wid jist like tae p'int oot whaur it seems tae me that common tradition is wrang. […] Previous tae the days o' the Scots Reformation, an o' John Knox an' his fellow Calvinists, there's nae evidence o' ony great amount o' canny douceness amongst the Scots common folk. […] Buckle says that the Inquisition wis a' poo'er-fae in twa kintraes in Europe, Spain an' Scotland, an' in baith countries the character o' the people wis completely changed. Weel, it wis the Inquisition o' the Scots Kirk that gi'en the Scots folk their douceness.[150]

This is effectively a popular version of Weber's contemporaneous analysis of the protestant ethic which he mobilised for his social diagnosis of the times as an over-rationalised iron cage, typified by utilitarian 'specialists without spirit' and hedonistic 'sensualists without heart'.[151] Through McNee, Johnston shows the reader a common mind putting its critical faculties to use, self-conscious about its own educational limitations ('A ken brawly A'm no' able for the task') but supporting its conviction by enthusiastic reference to authoritative writings – not incidentally older writings, subject to re-print editions, that the readers could easily acquire. The cultural politics of such passages operates at both the level of style and content: stylistically, they trouble an otherwise uniform public print discourse in standard English, and in content they seek an active renegotiation of historical memory, a project that was central to Johnston's wider cultural politics. Because while Sanny McNee was not writing a book about all this, Johnston would soon publish his popular *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (1920).[152] This more systematic history of the virtuous 'common folk' of Scotland, and their culmination as the 'bonniest fechters in Freedom's van' aimed at tempering Whiggish account of Scottish improvement for a popular audience.

What the Sanny McNee column illustrates is how *Forward*, and its chief editor in particular, continued the tradition of a politically radical literary playfulness, but adapted to the cultural conditions of a transformed public sphere, as a comparison with the rhetoric of

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[150] 'Sanny McNee on the Myth of the Canny Scot', *Forward*, 24 February 1917, p. 3.
[151] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (Routledge, 1992), p. 124.
[152] Thomas Johnston, *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (Forward Publishing, 1920).

an earlier plebeian radical demonstrates. T.J. Wooler is an example of a radical printer and editor in the plebeian phase who was in the habit of typesetting his articles without a written proof. Wooler's weekly political and satirical periodical *The Black Dwarf* (1817-1824) provides a good example of popular political rhetoric in this era, a rhetoric which would later be commercialised and depoliticised after the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge'. Wooler deployed the 'Black Dwarf' as an exotic literary persona who had come to England to report on its culture; a typical convention of Enlightenment literature, as Epstein remarks, which could provide 'a critical freshness available only to the outside observer'.[153] Through an idiom mixing high and low conventions, where the 'bombastic and pretentious quality' was offset 'by the carnivalesque, by ribald tones drawn from the popular theatre, the tavern, and the street', Wooler attacked the British establishment from the political position of radical constitutionalism on the model of Thomas Paine.[154] The 'Black Dwarf', according to Epstein, 'is a figure of misrule [and] elite sensibilities were offended not only by the journal's politics, but by its vulgarity and by Wooler's pretensions to engage in public affairs'.[155] Epstein recounts that Wooler's style was derided by contemporary critics as 'trashy', a 'gross burlesque' displaying 'coarseness' in style.[156] While 'Sanny McNee' was not exactly the impish foreigner from a distant land reporting on a strange culture with a clarifying distancing effect like Wooler's 'Black Dwarf', the voice is still a break with dominant journalistic convention, and its argumentative content a similarly a troubling presence within the wider public sphere, as seen through the comments made in a review of *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* appearing in the *Glasgow Evening Times*: 'Why rake up these unhappy, far-off things? […] Is it wise at this time of day to stress all the injustices and brutalities of the black pages of Scottish Industrial History?'[157]

What Johnston's history and Sanny McNee's more jocular-satirical pieces sought to do, was to split the history of Scotland along class lines, and to trouble narratives of progress inherited from the Scottish Enlightenment: in the passage above, this is clearly seen in the argumentative content, where Johnston seeks to detach the ethic of self-interest and utilitarian calculation, closely associated with the Scottish Enlightenment, from a more intersubjective moral understanding of freedom, symbolically located in the annals of Scottish popular history from which a common thread is drawn to the present political

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[153] James Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 38.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Cited in an advertisement for the book in *Forward*, 18 March 1922, p. 7.

project of ILP socialism cultivated by *Forward*. The cultural politics of the 'bonniest fechters in Freedom's van' is akin to the project of some earlier English radicals to construct a mythical past of the 'Freeborn Englishman', which could be drawn on for legitimation in arguments over constitutional reform.[158] However, it was not a solely a politics of popular Scottish nationalism. Thus, the English radical tradition was understood as containing equally valuable lessons for contemporary concerns, and in another issue Gerrard Winstanley's 'The Diggers' Song' is offered as a prelude to introduce the reader to this part of radical cultural history: 'The Diggers wir forerunners o' the Socialistic movement, wha tried tae pit their theories intae practice in England it the time o' the Civil War between Charles I an' Parliament'.[159] McNee then points out the continuing relevance of the Diggers' line that 'the club is all their law' before the readers.[160] While maintaining a discursive tradition derived from street oratory and vernacular speech, Johnston sought, like earlier radicals, to imagine a useful past capable of both motivating present working-class struggles, and to legitimate the socialist cause before a wider print public sphere.

That the legitimating force of this print politics stretched beyond a working-class readership, and was intended to appeal also, and simultaneously, to the cultural, moral, and political sensibilities and convictions of a middle-class public, can be seen in the rather tongue-in-cheek way in which Johnston addresses the issue of *Forward*'s financiers in his autobiography. The cause of Scottish Home Rule – and perhaps by extension the cultural politics of Sanny McNee – was partly a financially strategic emphasis within the paper, designed to speak to the interest of one of the journal's primary financiers, Roland Muirhead. As Johnston knowingly remarks in his autobiography:

> A witty but rather cynical friend used to say he always knew when the *Forward* was in exceptionally deep water; it would then come out with a specially strong Home Rule issue; that would be preparatory to "touching" Mr. Muirhead for a loan![161]

The appeal, and the sources of legitimation that the journal sought to construct and draw on, was cross-class, and the imagined reader of the Sanny McNee columns could easily be both the wealthy middle-class home-ruler and radical liberal with a pastoral taste for folk culture, shared also by far more politically conservative figures like William Power of the

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[158] For a detailed examination of this, and the connection between seventeenth-century English radical formations and the radical plebeian public sphere of the Romantic period, see Chapters 3 and 5 in Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Ashgate, 2010).
[159] 'The Idle Reflections o' Sanny McNee', *Forward*, 1 April 1916, p. 8.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Thomas Johnston, *Memories* (Collins, 1952), p. 33.

Glasgow Herald, *and* the working-class reader with memories of clearances still within living grasp, who could find claims to an alternative history and moral system rendered in a recognisable vernacular. The cultural politics and double appeal of *Forward* differs markedly from the *Socialist* in this regard and is partly attributable to the political strategy of *Forward*. The dual appeal had its strategic source in the periodical's orientation to a constitutional electoral politics demanding legitimation through will formation in the public sphere. *Forward* sought to mediate between writers and readers in ways that would approximate the ideal of the public sphere in print, calling 'for social integration to be based on rational-critical discourse', as Craig Calhoun describes the normative kernel of the public sphere concept.[162] Crucially, this ideal encompasses an educational vision:

> Integration […] is to be based on communication rather than domination. "Communication" in this context means not merely sharing what people already think or know but also a process of transformation in which reason is advanced by debate itself.[163]

But the project, and ideal, of social integration through rational-critical discourse in the public sphere is not uncomplicated, because this kind of *integration* is double-edged much like Gramsci's process of hegemony as described by Williams, it has 'continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own'.[164] Likewise, integration can entail the inclusion of participants into a system reshaped for the new participants. Yet equally, it can entail the subjection of new participants to a system which remains rigid and demands the reshaping of the participants. In the actual historical process, the two tendencies are intertwined, and the reshaping of the participants is not necessarily a bad thing, just as the reshaping of the system is not always good, as measured by the quality of discourse that is the output of their meeting. This tension is vividly captured in *Forward* as the experience of constitutional electoral politics accumulated after the war; was the political culture of the labour movement, including much of the popular idiom constituting the basis of communicative understanding and learning, to be adapted to an existing but alien public sphere discourse, or was the public sphere to be reshaped to accommodate the new electoral participants?

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[162] Craig Calhoun, 'Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 1-48 (p. 29).
[163] Ibid.
[164] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 112.

4.5 Problems of Incorporation I: Public Opinion

The tension is usually construed as lying between radicalism and respectability, and the paper was, perhaps ironically, a key print platform for an emergent managerial form of Labour politics alongside the kind of radical cultural politics discussed above. The tension is visible in one of Ramsay MacDonald's regular front-page columns from May 1919 (commenting on debates at the ILP conference held shortly after the Battle of George Square), where he seeks to temper the revolutionary enthusiasm he could detect also within the ILP, where a 'Jazz-dance music of revolution is being played, and we tap our feet on the floor keeping time to it. Some of us are trying to dance a Russian ballet in kilts'.[165] Unlike J.R. Clynes, who made himself useful on the platform of public opinion prepared by the *Glasgow Herald* as discussed in Chapter 2, MacDonald approached the proletarian publics via their own medium with a view to moderate the kind of reader appealed to by the *Socialist*. MacDonald opens with a commentary on the proliferating popular Marxist political literature, described as 'a barren kind of literature, falsely called scientific, which sterilises the minds of all who come under its influence'.[166] There is some truth to this, as implied via the analysis of imaginative literature in the *Socialist* in the previous chapter. Marxism as it was then commonly understood was indeed under the influence of ideological 'scientism', but it appeared useful from within the confines of specific social experience. The kind of works alluded to by MacDonald had been cautiously but favourably reviewed by Johnston in *Forward*, at the same time that the debate between Wheatley and the Parkhead Marxists was fought out in its pages, under the headline 'What Means this Industrial Unionism'.[167] The main virtue, as Johnston describes it, of industrial unionism lies in its struggle for local, autonomous, democratic control as a check on state-bureaucratic infringements. Thus, in an effort to widen the critical repertoire through aspects of reason beyond the instrumental, Johnston emphasised that 'Man is more than a producer of exchangeable commodities', with wide range of 'life interests' in family life and culture beyond trade and craft, Johnston sought to highlight the significance of industrial unionism as understood in Britain in terms of its development of democratic culture against functionalist rationalisation in economic life:

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[165] Ramsay MacDonald, 'The I.L.P. Conference', *Forward*, 3 May 1919, p. 1.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Thomas Johnston, 'What Means this Industrial Unionism', *Forward*, 16 February 1918, p. 3. The works reviewed include *A Worker Looks at History*, Mark Starr (Pleb's League); *Labour's Final Weapon: Industrial Unionism*, C.H. Stavenhagen (National Labour Press); *Trade Unionism at the Cross Roads*, W. McLaine (British Socialist Party); *The State: Its Origin and Function*, William Paul (Socialist Labour Press).

> the industrial Unionist whose propaganda stirs and stimulates us towards local control, and who struggles against regimentation from above and demands the largest possible self-determination of the individual at his daily toil, may not only disintegrate Capitalist industry much more rapidly than by the method of absorption by Parliamentary decree, but he will preserve the growing democracy, a clean and living thing, from being overlain and suffocated by bureaucracy.[168]

This organic notion of democracy, as a 'growing […] and living thing', implies an understanding of democratic practice as cultural practice involving active participation and contestation within a lifeworld threatened by systems encroachment. Articulated in a key public sphere medium of the labour movement, it poses an important question to Habermas's theory of communicative action, wherein the social movements gaining prominence after the second world war are conceived as 'new' in relation to capital-labour conflicts because erupting at the seam of system and lifeworld, that is, they were not conflicts ignited over distribution problems, but concerned the 'grammar of forms of life'.[169] However, it seems clear from Johnston's comments, spawned by reflections on industrial unionism and the issue of self-management, that the labour movement was not solely concerned with questions of distribution, but equally and perhaps even more so, with the question of a grammar of a democratic form of life. What this suggests is that Habermas's theory of communicative action, and of lifeworld colonisation, has a wider scope of application than originally intended.[170]

I turned a critical eye to the over-reliance on instrumental reason in the rational discourse of the *Socialist* in the previous chapter, but this one-sidedness was not the preserve of Marxists alone. Civil servants, employers, and industrial managers aside, an instrumental one-sidedness was also forced on pragmatic politicians like MacDonald, who grappled with the electoral dilemma confronting him as party leader before *Forward*'s readership:

> The democratic majority is a majority not of initiative, but of consent or of opposition. Majorities are the followers of minorities. Now, minorities secure majorities by certain means like the Press, tradition, lying, and so on. What is the limit to which minorities may go in order to secure majorities? Further, we are now

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[168] Thomas Johnston, 'What Means this Industrial Unionism', *Forward*, 16 February 1918, p. 3.
[169] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System, a Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1987), p. 392.
[170] Gemma Edwards reaches a similar conclusion concerning the wider scope of application of Habermas's theory, based on research into contemporary trade union campaigns, see Gemma Edwards, 'Habermas and Social Movements: What's "New"?', *Sociological Review (Keele)*, 52.1 (2004), pp. 113-30. With less appreciation for Habermas's theory, Kenneth Tucker also questions the novelty of Habermas's new social movements with reference to French syndicalism, see Kenneth H. Tucker, 'How New Are the New Social Movements?', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 8.2 (1991), pp. 75-98.

> ruled by a Capitalist minority. How far may a Labour minority go to upset that minority and, in the end, command the consent of a majority?[171]

It has been remarked of MacDonald that he 'was trying to make Labour a movement of public opinion rather than class', but such statements underappreciate the unchosen structural forces at play at this historical conjuncture.[172] The above passage illustrates the dilemma of autonomous working-class politics by public opinion in the context of a structurally transformed public sphere. MacDonald's analysis of the electoral dilemma of the Labour Party, within the existing confines of legitimation in a largely undemocratic public sphere and with all the difficult conditions of the British electoral system, is sharply drawn, and it raises the problem of incorporation into a political system steered, in part, by a public opinion that was far from deliberatively construed, and to which Labour would be forced to adapt.

Recall the previous discussion of the *Glasgow Herald* as constituting a readership with a motivational structure corresponding to Habermas's description of civil- and familial-vocational privatisms, capable of lending legitimacy to administrative and economic systems while effectively sidelining critical discussion on the goal-orientation of society.[173] More recent historical studies of the British context have traced the cultural development of such motivational structures empirically.[174] A long-term consequence of this change in the form of political participation was to make politics – including the participation in opinion and will formation – a more private matter, and thereby to blur the foundational distinction of the public sphere between private (in the sense of 'personal') and public matters of concern.[175]

Adaptation to such public opinion became a source of intense frustration, not just as seen through the *Socialist*, but in the more reformist *Forward* too. Johnston articulated the frustrations of pursuing a constitutional politics within a print public sphere exhibiting

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[171] Ramsay MacDonald, 'The I.L.P. Conference', *Forward*, 3 May 1919, p. 1.
[172] The statement is from David Marquand, erstwhile Labour MP and one of the defectors to the Social Democratic Party in the 1980s, and the statement may well be a case of strategic projection onto a foundational figure of the Labour Party to suit contemporaneous ideological needs. Cited in Galbraith, p. 59.
[173] Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 75.
[174] Thus, in a study of political culture and the idea of public opinion in Britain, James Thompson argues that in the late nineteenth century public opinion was increasingly understood as the opinion of a primarily consuming public; around this social activity and role 'the common interest that bound the public together and distinguished its interests from those of the producers waging industrial warfare' was construed, see James Thompson, *British Political Culture and the Idea of 'Public Opinion', 1867-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 44. Similarly, Malcolm Petrie has reconstructed the broader shift in popular political culture in Scotland in the interwar period, from a popular class politics centred on embodied protest to a respectable politics centred on representation through the ballot, see Malcolm Petrie, *Popular Politics and Political Culture: Urban Scotland, 1918-1939* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018).
[175] For a recent formulation of this argument against the background of the digital transformation of the public sphere, see Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*.

elements of refeudalization (as I argued in Chapter 2). Thus, in discussing the suspension of four Labour MPs (for accusing those fellow MPs who had agreed to cut the milk grants to local authorities of murder), Johnston fulminated:

> We are as a Party becoming obsessed with the idea that next General Election will see us in power. To get that power we must not scare anybody – especially the middle-class voter. Anything in the cargo we carry likely to frighten off a sympathetic *bourgeois* must be jettisoned […] the host that is to march forward to the destruction of Capitalism is to be disguised as voluntary welfare workers with elastic-sided boots out for an excursion; […] every change is to be so gradual that no exploiter need be unduly worried; the kingdom of man is to come by stealth.[176]

The 1918 Representation of the People Act had further narrowed the gap between public and electorate and made the idea of a British people more plausible. But, in Habermasian terms, without a properly functioning autonomous public sphere, public opinion would fail to be a jointly exercised will formation of the whole citizenry. Indeed, Johnston came close to such a formulation when he continued:

> Power got without a politically educated working class, in active and intelligent support behind us, would be power that would last a fortnight: and unless we go ahead creating Socialist opinion and not merely an opinion that we are tame and harmless substitutes for the old Liberal Party, we shall only get office and not power.[177]

And office without power, he ruminated, would spell 'disaster'.[178] Indeed, the interwar period in Scotland saw a dramatic cultural shift in popular politics, away from a politics of direct and embodied representation in crowded meetings and street protests, and towards a more privatised form of politics mediated by the ballot card, as Malcolm Petrie argues in a recent study:

> Local political identities, and especially those which had sustained the popular radical tradition, were integrated within a more uniform national political contest, while the mass franchise altered the way in which the relationship between the people and parliament was understood on the political left; politics was depicted in inclusive rather than oppositional terms.[179]

A more centralised and technocratic form of politics emerged to be consolidated in the mid-twentieth century welfare state settlement. Among the structural factors contributing to the formation of a new national (British) politics, Petrie counts the interwar process of

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[176] 'Socialist War Points', *Forward*, 7 July 1923, p. 1.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Malcolm Petrie, *Popular Politics and Political Culture: Urban Scotland, 1918-1939* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 186-87.

bureaucratic centralisation of welfare provision under pressures generated by the economic depression of the 1930s, a process which reduced the role of local government centred on parish councils and education authorities.[180] Changes in the media system, institutions of political representation and public opinion formation, played an important part, as Petrie argues: 'consolidation of the press and the arrival of radio changed how politicians and parties communicated with the enlarged postwar electorate'.[181] The problems of politics by public opinion as actualised in *Forward*, where they concerned the problems of parliamentary electoral politics, a commercial press system and print public sphere, and a public opinion that was overwhelmingly the opinion of a reified 'middle-class', received a more focussed cultural-political inflection in the key educational debate within the labour movement of these years. In the debate on the aims and ends of adult education, where the issues of press ownership and electoral arithmetic were kept in the background, a question which also animated Williams emerged concerning the possibility of a new democratic common culture, developed through education and the public sphere.

4.6 Problems of Incorporation II: (Adult) Education and Public Sphere Conflict

A significant rivalry was under way in these years over the practice and purpose of adult education, and the kinds of knowledge it ought to produce for its participants. Brian Simon analyses these conflicts as they developed from 1906 to the early 1920s, and describes the rivalry between the WEA, influenced intellectually by efforts in University Extension work animated by a 'liberal-humanist outlook', and the Marxian independent working-class education movement.[182] In doing so, he highlights the strong commonalities of the two rival formations: both rejecting 'the idea of education as a means of "getting on" in life, of material advancement' and both advocating the idea 'that the educated worker should not separate himself from his class [but that] he should remain with and of it so that through his influence the working-class as a whole might profit'.[183] And their key point of contention, according to Simon, was that 'one group saw education as a means towards transforming society, [while] the other wished to direct it to transforming the individual'.[184] *Forward*, as an autonomous print platform oriented to the 'clash of opinions' within the wide sweep of progressive thought, hosted a significant iteration of

[180] Petrie, p. 187.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), p. 304.
[183] Ibid. pp. 304-05.
[184] Ibid.

this debate in the early 1920s.[185] The debate provoked strong feelings among the paper's readers, as *Forward*'s correspondence column in these years testifies to.[186] I want to suggest that the central contention concerned whether the educational focus ought to be on instrumental 'spearhead knowledge', as mapped via the *Socialist* in the previous chapter, or general education, understood as cultivation across all aspects of rationality; instrumental, moral-practical, and aesthetic-practical. An important hurdle in this discussion was the notion of impartiality. One side emphasised the mystifying ideological function of appeals to impartiality, while the other adopted a recognisably Kantian defence of the impartiality principle in education.

In a letter to the editor, P. Lavin (of the Scottish Labour College founded by John Maclean) expresses the 'spearhead knowledge' view of independent working-class education as a substitutional programme of what Johnson termed 'really useful knowledge'.[187] Thus, Lavin argues that the function of education provided by the state, the church, or the employers 'is to impress bourgeois ideology upon the workers' children, or, in other words, to furnish them with a slave mentality'.[188] Such education, he argues, is carried out under the false pretence of 'impartiality', and therefore an openly partisan counter-strategy is needed, oriented to 'educating the workers as to their real interests'.[189] Lavin's letter echoes the perspective already explored in relation to the *Socialist*. In direct response to Lavin's letter, Marwick, a staff tutor for the WEA, expressed the alternative view, namely a version of the liberal-humanist position current within the WEA.

By contrast to Lavin, Marwick adopts a recognisably Kantian slogan for the rationale of this educational programme: 'Capacity for independent thought, zeal in the quest for truth must be fostered, out of the conflict of minds and the competition of ideas – the only form of competition and conflict worthy of civilised beings – truth will emerge!'[190] Marwick highlights the central features of WEA method, namely, 'democratic control by the "consumer"' such that students are to choose the subjects to be studied, 'co-operation between tutor and students', and 'impartiality' which, he adds, 'some confound

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[185] Leading article, *Forward*, 13 October 1906, p. 2.
[186] Thus, in addition to contributions by Lavin and Marwick cited below, further interjections, with slight variations in style and emphasis, came from both signed and anonymous writers: Richard Lee, 'The Bias of the W.E.A. (?)', *Forward*, Saturday 08 May 1920, p. 7; Letter to Editor, 'A Word for the W.E.A.', *Forward*, 5 March 1921, p. 7; Letter to Editor, 'The Effect of Indemnities – A Reply to Mr. Marwick', *Forward*, 14 October 1922, p. 7; J.P.M. Millar, 'The Intellectuals and Labour Education', *Forward*, 21 July 1923, p. 5.
[187] Richard Johnson, '"Really Useful Knowledge": Radical Education and Working-Class Culture, 1790-1848', in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. by John Clarke, Chas Critcher, and Richard Johnson (Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 75-102 (p. 86).
[188] P. Lavin, 'A Plea for Labour Colleges', *Forward*, 26 February 1921, p. 3.
[189] Ibid.
[190] W.H. Marwick, 'A Plea for Labour Colleges', *Forward*, 5 March 1921, p. 3.

with compromise'.[191] Marwick's somewhat hesitant inclusion of the term 'consumer' in an educational context to refer to students may be significant here, because in addition to the conception of the student exercising consumer-control of educational provision, it helps construct education as an education for consumption within newly gained leisure time.[192] But this emphasis is likely no more than a case of 'pre-emergence' within working-class culture in Scotland.[193] Indeed, the debate covered thus far offers a barometer of the extent to which the privatistic worldviews anatomised by Habermas, 'civil privatism' with its passive interest in system-maintenance and 'familial-vocational privatism' with its orientation to family life, career, and leisurely consumption, had crystallised within working-class lifeworlds in urban, industrial Scotland.[194] The interest in educational questions and the combative tone of not just the independents but of *Forward* as a whole suggests that privatistic worldviews were far less deeply encroached among working-class readers in Scotland than within the *Glasgow Herald*'s reading public, and possibly among London's contemporary working-class as studied by Gareth Stedman Jones too.[195] The interests of labour in production remained a sufficient common interest to constitute a cohesive public, as seen starkly in relation to the *Socialist*, but also in *Forward*.

Returning to Marwick's contribution, he writes that the extension of 'the right of all, and not merely of a leisure class, to enter into the cultural heritage of mankind, and to develop their powers – intellectual and aesthetic – to their fullest capacity'.[196] This is an important articulation of the general education programme that the independent movement eschews in favour of a narrow programme of spearhead knowledge. Indeed, it illustrates a wider range of aspects of rationality to be cultivated; alongside what Habermas terms 'cognitive-instrumental rationality', which I argued was the primary focus of the independent movement, the WEA also sought to cultivate moral-practical and aesthetic-practical modes of rationality.[197] Marwick's counter-proposal for a model of adult

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[191] W.H. Marwick, 'A Plea for Labour Colleges', *Forward*, 5 March 1921, p. 3.
[192] The extension of the term from the specialist field of political economy to a wider usage in relation to public opinion, and then, as in Marwick's use, into the sphere of education, indicates an important tendency, inherent to but not necessarily dominant within the liberal model of education and with increasing resonance in the later twentieth century. See the discussion in Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Penguin, 1971), pp. 161-65. Additionally, James Thompson has recently shown that the term was becoming more prevalent in relation to public opinion, with an increasing identification of the public with the body of consumers. See his discussion of 'The Consuming Public', Thompson, pp. 41-56.
[193] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 126.
[194] Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 75.
[195] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 179-238.
[196] W.H. Marwick, 'A Plea for Labour Colleges', *Forward*, 5 March 1921, p. 3.
[197] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1984), p. 238.

education thus includes central aspects of a democratic and egalitarian form of learning, notably with its emphasis on culture as a common human inheritance, on democratic control over curriculum, and on the co-operative spirit between student and tutor. I return to the deliberative aspects of the WEA below through another interlocutor in *Forward*, A.D. Lindsay. For now, I want to highlight how Marwick's insistence on impartiality failed to convince proponents of the rival, independent movement.

In the 1920s, the WEA's combined emphasis on impartiality and on the prominent role of the cultural heritage provoked ire among the more instrumentally-minded proponents of the independent working-class education movement. Thus, one interlocutor asked of the WEA:

> *Education for what?* – What does the organised worker want education for first and foremost. To enable him to "talk" Geology? to appreciate Art? to discourse learnedly on Church Music? The organised worker needs an education that will help him to solve his industrial and political difficulties.[198]

Of course, such statements underestimate the normative resources available in cultural products (art and literature), resources that can be used for critical engagements with the 'grammar of forms of life' in a context where the lifeworld is increasingly subjected to systems-integration with reifying effects.[199] As I discussed in the previous chapter, the one-sidedly instrumental view among advocates of spearhead knowledge saw them caught in a contradictory cultural practice. Nonetheless, the independent movement's spearhead knowledge programme can also be understood as an attempt to retain the critical, emancipatory orientation of working-class education against encroachments by more depoliticising educational programme within the WEA, under the sign of strict philosophical impartiality.[200] Another contribution to the debate as carried on in *Forward* complicates the picture further by attaching more abstractly construed 'impartiality' to deliberative practice.

Thus, a defence of the general education-perspective is voiced in a series of articles published in *Forward* in 1923 by A.D. Lindsay, professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Lindsay was an experienced WEA tutor who 'delivered lectures on political economy to militant Clyde shipyard workers' at the time.[201] It is a public

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[198] 'Workers' Education – Criticism of W.E.A. by Scottish Labour College', *Forward*, 29 July 1922, p. 8.
[199] Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2*, p. 392.
[200] For a comparative analysis of the independent working-class education movement in Britain, drawing on alternative attempts in Europe, see Tom Steele, *Knowledge Is Power: The Rise and Fall of European Popular Educational Movements, 1848-1939* (Peter Lang, 2007).
[201] Douglas Sutherland, 'Adult Education, C. 1750-1950: A Distinctive Mission?', in *The Edinburgh History of Education in Scotland*, ed. by Robert Anderson, Mark Freeman and Lindsay Paterson (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 246-64 (p. 263).

intervention, written in anticipation of a Labour government, which seeks to raise the question of the proper role and function of universities and adult education 'in a democratic community', that is, in the context of franchise extension approaching universal proportions.[202] The key normative function of the universities which Lindsay seeks to impart to a future Labour government concerns 'the maintenance of the culture of the community': the community needs, besides 'bread' and 'powers over nature', 'common ideals, common conceptions of the value and meaning of life. It is a commonplace that in the world to-day our powers of controlling nature by mechanical invention have outrun our powers of controlling ourselves'.[203] Lindsay's use of the term 'community' signals his debt to organicist romantic cultural critique querying and criticising industrial, 'mechanical' society, in the vein of Carlyle and Ruskin. Similarly, Lindsay's use of the term 'culture' is aligned with that residual cultural tradition in Britain which sought to retain its meaning of process, as originally used in reference to the cultivation of crops and then, by imaginative extension, to the mind. Importantly, his use of the term dispenses with both the noun-meaning of the term, closely related to the notion of 'civilization' as an achieved state, and the cultural pessimism and scepticism of egalitarian democratic government which many defenders of 'culture', also in its sense of process, held to. Thus, Lindsay continues, beyond elementary education and professional training a modern democracy requires 'education in common culture or in citizenship. […] It is an education which none of us ever complete […] it is education in the ideals and practice of democracy'.[204] This framing of university education (recalling its limited student numbers in 1923) contrasts sharply with the pre-war British Hegelian iteration that I discussed in Chapter 2. An emphasis on schooling and instruction is retained (especially in education for the professions in law and medicine for example) but Lindsay's university model is not that of loyalty to the State, as propagated by Lord Haldane and Lindsay's predecessor, Edward Caird, if the *Glasgow Herald*'s highly militaristic summary is to be believed. Seen in this light, Lindsay's model of education is a radical reframing of the role of universities in complex democratic society, which, advanced by a Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow in a working-class newspaper, indicates an important shift in hegemony.

On the crucial question of adult education, of most interest to readers of *Forward* (most of whom would never attend university), Lindsay proposed a highly deliberative model of education, wherein education implies mutual cultural penetration and a reciprocal

[202] A.D. Lindsay, 'The Function of Universities in a Democratic Community', *Forward*, 14 July 1923, p. 4.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.

relationship between teacher and student: 'Adult education differs from other education in the degree to which it is a common task in which all take part, where the so-called teacher and the so-called students are all both students and teachers'.[205] As Tom Steele highlights, this was an animating principle for the later generation of WEA tutors including Williams, Thompson, and Hoggart, marking continuity with G.D.H. Cole, R.H. Tawney, and, I can add now, Lindsay.[206] The principle of mutual influence, when adhered to, had an important effect on intellectual production too, as Steele underscores through his study of the relationship between British cultural studies and adult education practice, and this was not lost on Lindsay. Turning to the anticipated objection against this notion of common culture on the grounds that the 'proletariat will have its own history and its own art and literature, its own economics, and its own philosophy, because it is bound to have its own culture', Lindsay acknowledges that there is 'some force in this argument' since the culture of the labour movement already has an effect on the intellectual culture beyond itself.[207] In the second instalment, he exemplified this cultural influence with reference to Tawney's work:

> The effect of the Tutorial class movement in the English Universities, and especially on their economic teaching, has already been remarkable. Such a book as Mr. Tawney's "Sickness of an Acquisitive Society" is significant in this respect. […] I have been in close touch with tutorial classes for more than twelve years and I have not found their students becoming less keen members of the Labour Party because they have been taught by a University teacher. I have found them becoming much more efficient in their work for Labour.[208]

For although he acknowledges the limited social horizon of university tutors – that they are largely concerned with teaching for the professions rather than with considering the problems facing wage-earners, that the university tutors themselves live comparably comfortable and secure lives and lack first-hand experience of working-class problems, and that this has a formative effect on their outlook – he emphasises that '[t]he bias that is complained of in University teaching is not a bias inherent in the minds of University teachers as such, but arises from the direction which has been given to their work'.[209] Lindsay's primary target here is the aloof attitude predominant among his contemporary colleagues vis-à-vis the wider public; if only the universities could be brought 'into more living touch with the democracy', this would be better for both the university and the

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[205] A.D. Lindsay, 'The Function of Universities in a Democratic Community', *Forward*, 14 July 1923, p. 4.
[206] Tom Steele, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies: Adult Education, Cultural Politics and the 'English' Question* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1997), p. 181.
[207] A.D. Lindsay, 'The Function of Universities in a Democratic Community', *Forward*, 14 July 1923, p. 4.
[208] A.D. Lindsay, 'Is University Teaching Biassed?', *Forward*, 4 August 1923, p. 1.
[209] Ibid.

community.[210] In a strong indication that the primary purpose of education envisioned is neither useful knowledge nor privatistic use of leisure time, but to cultivate active democratic participation, Lindsay criticises the one-sided emphasis on the instrumental function of universities, to the neglect of 'their contribution to the culture of the community as a whole'.[211] The practical-deliberative supplement to the doubtful and rather abstract formulation of philosophical impartiality is articulated in Lindsay's concluding statement. Lindsay proposes that remnants of 'bias' cannot be overcome on philosophical and methodological grounds, and that some disputes ultimately have to be settled communicatively: 'The only real way to get rid of bias is that we should each rub our particular bias against that of our neighbour in mutual discussion'.[212] To Lindsay, in other words, the universities and especially the extramural classes were model cultural sites where the normative ideal of the liberal public sphere as reconstructed by Habermas, of democratic influence through mutual discussion, could be concretely located. Lindsay gives little indication of the projected place of alternative modalities of rational-critical deliberation in WEA classes, but the invitation to argument extended to working-class learners and the valorisation of their insights and contributions suggest an important adaptation by the dominant to the pressures of the oppositional labour movement.

Where *Forward*'s pursuit and promotion of a radical enlightenment project was motivated by its oppositional stance within the wider print public sphere (where it combined functions of political *representation* before hostile publics and the state with *enlightenment* functions in dialogue with its own reading public), Lindsay's extramural classes struck a decidedly more redemptory or reconciliating posture. Indeed, it can be read as a concession from one of the cultural centres of the bourgeois public sphere (the *Glasgow Herald* reading public) which the proletarian public sphere had confronted in the preceding years; from Johnston's verbal and written clashes with Lindsay's predecessor Sir Henry Jones during the rectorial election contested by Keir Hardie, to the physical confrontation between the leading lights of the *Socialist* with university students outside the offices of the *Glasgow Herald*. With the adaptation to pressures from the labour movement within educational settings, as articulated by Lindsay, a cultural contribution of the labour movement within the process of hegemony is discernible which maps onto

[210] On the question of administrative control and political steering of universities, which was a common objection in working-class circles, Lindsay defends the British, and particularly the Scottish, universities for permitting a high degree of professional autonomy for tutors.
[211] A.D. Lindsay, 'Is University Teaching Biassed?', *Forward*, 4 August 1923, p. 1.
[212] Ibid.

Williams' early formulation regarding the social significance of working-class culture in *Culture and Society* (1958):

> We may now see what is properly meant by "working-class culture". It is not proletarian art, or council houses, or a particular use of language; it is, rather, the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought, and intentions which proceed from this. Bourgeois culture, similarly, is the basic individualist idea and the institutions, manners, habits of thought, and intentions which proceed from that. In our culture as a whole, there is both a constant interaction between these ways of life and an area which can properly be described as common to or underlying both.[213]

From this perspective of two distinct and competing cultural traditions, articulated in the debate on adult education too, the democratic cultural influence of the labour movement on British society seems clear.[214]

However, the print politics of *Forward* also indicate rapprochement with a cultural sphere previously regarded with hostility (mixed perhaps with self-conscious admiration of this alternative democratic style) as seen through the placement of Lindsay's articles. In 1923, by contrast to the earlier clashes, Lindsay's contribution to the debate was not only welcomed onto *Forward*'s platform, but appeared alongside the leading article (in the first instalment) and on the front-page of the paper in the left columns above the fold usually reserved for MacDonald (in the second), unlike so many eager interjections on the issue of adult education confined to the correspondent's columns. The public mediated by *Forward* presents a historical reminder relevant to revisionist attempts to emphasise the differences between public sphere traditions, as covered in Chapter 1, which mirrors Gilmartin's conclusion based on the example of Leigh Hunt, the middle-class 'conscience' of the radical plebeian movement:

> The unexpected return of a relatively polite and unitary political ideal at the heart of a movement known for conflict suggests that the revisionist case for diversity in the public sphere needs to remain sensitive to historical variations, or risk becoming as misleading as any insistence on uniformity.[215]

By way of conclusion, I want to reflect on some of the cultural ambiguities of this conflict driven double-sided incorporation (double-sided in the sense that both educational systems and the new participants seem to have undergone some reshaping in the process of integration).

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[213] Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, p. 313.
[214] Recall that Lindsay went on to play a key role in the founding of Keele University.
[215] Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, pp. 7-8.

Consider the stylistics of Lindsay's entries; stylistically, Lindsay exemplifies one version of democratic style, which comes close to what Williams originally thought of as 'genuine communication' and associated with many of the interlocutors in *Culture and Society* (1963). In an interview, he described the style thusly: 'You can feel the pause and effort: the necessary openness and honesty of a man listening to another, in good faith, and then replying'.[216] In his review of Williams's early works, Thompson suggested that what is evident in Williams's description 'is a concealed preference—in the name of "genuine communication"—for the language of the academy'.[217] The language of the academy is certainly one kind of democratic style, and a modality privileged from Kant, who spoke of scholars making public use of their reason, to Habermas, who at one point admitted to seeing universities as the model site of critical-rational argumentation and analytical procedure.[218] However, as Thompson argued, many of the interlocutors in the tradition surveyed by Williams did not carry their argument in such a modality at all, but rather in a variously malicious, inveighing, and abusive style and tone, often completely deaf to any disagreeing interlocutors.[219] Furthermore, Thompson argued that the '*aspiration* for a common culture in Raymond Williams' sense ("common meanings, common values") is admirable; but the more this aspiration is nourished, the more outrageous the real divisions of interest and power in our society will appear'.[220] In other words, to the extent that common meanings are clarified in public sphere deliberations, conflicts may also sharpen because the understanding of opposing interests (or arguments) receives fuller articulation. Something like this is arguably at work in the pages of *Forward*, which points to the limits of the public sphere as an institution of peaceful social integration, but more interestingly to its function of clarifying the very terms of conflict.

In the long run, and especially with the post-war disappearance of the independent working-class education movement capable of applying a certain pressure for social relevance in adult education, this meant an abandonment by the labour movement of a key institutional site of cultural reproduction, and an attendant weakening of autonomous intellectual capacity; a weakening exacerbated by the loss of an independent press (*Forward*, for example, ceased publication in 1959, but had already lost its political orientation). From this perspective it becomes clear that the WEA model of education,

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[216] Cited in Thompson, 'The Long Revolution (Part 1)', p. 25.
[217] Ibid.
[218] See Axel Honneth, Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, and Arno Widmann, 'The Dialectics of Rationalization: An Interview with Jürgen Habermas', *Telos*, 1.49 (1981), pp. 5-31 (pp. 29-30). Habermas has since retracted this, see Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, p. 17.
[219] Thompson, 'The Long Revolution (Part 1)', p. 25.
[220] E. P. Thompson, 'The Long Revolution (Part 2)', *New Left Review*, 1.10 (1961), pp. 34-39 (p. 36).

which encapsulated important aspects of a Habermasian public sphere ideal in its democratic, enlightening, and liberatory effects when conducted by earnest radicals like Lindsay and his later successors, was both constituted, conditioned, and maintained by tensions and crises outside its limited remit, in both the wider public sphere and in society. Seen in this light, the perspective of the independent movement is partially redeemed, insofar as it emphasised a strategic focus on material conditions and processes of production.

Conclusion

This thesis has traced contending public sphere formations with distinct modalities and cultural traditions but shared normative commitments (even if those commitments were by no means consistently upheld). Informed by the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas and some of his friendly critics (as examined in Chapter 1) I aimed to recover and interrogate the post-bourgeois public sphere formation mediated by the *Glasgow Herald*, and the proletarian public sphere mediated by the *Socialist* and *Forward*. The relationship between bourgeois and post-bourgeois modalities of reason and its class antagonists, at first plebeian, and later, as in this study, proletarian, was always dialectical. That is, they acted on one another with mutual, but unequal, influence in a hegemonic process of opposition, resistance and attempted incorporation. Because the case studies are organised around periodicals with their own internal histories, in what follows I seek to pull together common themes that emerged from my readings. These include the question of organic relationships between readers and writers within the public spheres, the problem of cultural fragmentation and public sphere segmentation, the anatomy of different public sphere models, and conflicting views of the role and purpose of education.

Clydeside Print Cultures: Organic Communities, Commercial Fragmentation

A public sphere oriented to political questions of broad relevance depends on a degree of organicity, community, or shared lifeworld. The *Socialist*, *Forward*, and even the *Glasgow Herald* constituted such 'organic' political publics characterised by a reciprocal relationship between readers and writers, with shared economic and cultural interests.[1] In all three cases I sought to reconstruct the organic composition of their reading publics, with special attention to class. Thus, the *Glasgow Herald*'s 'self-image as the embodiment of Scottish commerce was widely accepted by its peers' in the late nineteenth century as it aimed to represent the interests of West of Scotland employers, managers, and civil servants.[2] I suggested that the *Glasgow Herald* mediated an imagined community, in Benedict Anderson's sense, constituted by the newspaper's regular appearance and

[1] Raymond Williams, 'Radical and/or Respectable', in *The Press We Deserve,* ed. by Richard Boston (Routledge, 2016), pp. 14-25 (p. 15).
[2] James Thompson, 'Case Study 14: The *Glasgow Herald*', in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press: Expansion and Evolution*, ed. by David Finkelstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 545-48 (p. 548).

reception in the Hegelian secular morning prayer ceremony (2.1).[3] In addition to shared financial interests, the prominent place of aesthetic cultivation of taste played a central role in forging a culturally cohesive public, and the convergence of aesthetic with political anxieties was seen through overtly literary discussions of 'decadence' across the second half of the nineteenth century. I underscored the *Glasgow Herald*'s historical origins in the classical bourgeois public sphere and, and that heritage can be seen through the twentieth century editorial staff, who found both cultural edification and professional opportunities through Glasgow's elite literary societies (2.1).[4] Meanwhile, the *Socialist* mediated a distinctly working-class readership, as shown through signing practices and the relatively weak distinction between readers and writers, and the Socialist Labour Press was a nodal point in a wider counterpublic sphere linking Irish republican socialists (including James Connolly), the Suffragettes, and socialists in America and in South Africa (3.1). While I characterised *Forward*'s readership as more cross-class, the paper remained editorially sensitive to readers' responses and interests, which informed the paper's contents, features, and even dissemination practices; I showed how *Forward* was conceived as a discussion forum in print for an ideologically diverse labour movement intended to supplement the agitational mode of discourse within the movement by providing a deliberative print platform in the form of editorially structured discussion columns designed to facilitate clashing opinions within the movement (4.1, 4.2).

A further indication of the *Glasgow Herald*, *Socialist*, and *Forward* as mediators of organic political publics can be seen in their overlapping critiques of the commercial press (indeed, the capacity for critique is a defining feature of a political public sphere). The *Glasgow Herald* voiced a recognisably elitist critique of the popular press when it complained at the prospect of pandering to a 'depraved taste' marked by the trashy 'style of the mysteries of London or Paris' and aimed at those lacking 'information or strength of mind' (2.2).[5] While adopting a similar language of taste to deplore the commercial press, the *Socialist* aimed its critique primarily at the ideological distortions (including its jingoism and promotion of racial and religious antagonism) and sensationalist distractions from the political problems of working-class people (3.3). *Forward* went further analytically and developed critiques of reified and manufactured public opinion devalued

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[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1991), p. 35.
[4] For the excavation of the roots the *Glasgow Herald*/*Advertiser* in the classical liberal public sphere, see 'Let Scotland Flourish by the Printing of the Word: Commerce, Civic Enlightenment and National Improvement in the *Glasgow Advertiser*, 1783-1800', in *Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism, 1707-1840*, ed. by Alex Benchimol and Gerard Lee McKeever (Routledge, 2018), pp. 51-73; Alex Benchimol, 'The "Spirit of Liberal Reform": Representation, Slavery and Constitutional Liberty in the Glasgow Advertiser, 1789–1794', *Scottish Historical Review*, 119.1 (2020), pp. 51-84.
[5] *Glasgow Herald*, 3 January 1859, p. 4.

into mere attitude, as one writer memorably expressed it: 'Opinions are too frequently whims or fancies or fallacious deductions. Knowledge is always the result of analyses, comparison, honest inquiry, and reason. Public opinion should be public knowledge, and not organised ignorance' (4.3).[6] If broad critique of the popular-commercial press was shared across post-bourgeois and proletarian publics, their practical responses differed widely.

The new potential readership emerging in the post-repeal period posed a dilemma for George Outram & Co.: while as consumers they presented financial opportunities (by attracting advertisers), the entry of new readers into the *Glasgow Herald*'s public also threatened the internal cultural cohesion the original and limited public sphere. George Outram & Co. effectually resolved the dilemma between maintaining a community of readers (or an organic public sphere) by means of market segmentation as it issued the *Glasgow Evening Times*, an evening publication directed at a popular readership. What is perhaps distinctive about the new commercial press, as exemplified by the *Glasgow Evening Times*, is that it was not oriented to constituting an organic community of readers, but was rather strategically aimed at readers conceived as an aggregation of consumers. By drawing on the topics and concerns voiced in select leading articles in the *Glasgow Evening Times*, I argued that the fusion of a neutral, news-reporting journalistic style with moralistic editorials, and the pragmatic selection of a diverse range of contents to steer and cater to different reader-interests, is an indication of the paper's attempt to incorporate the new readers into the cultural and political valorisations of the *Glasgow Herald*'s core public, and, failing that, the readers were offered depoliticised forms of entertainment. Indeed, a direct editorial concern emerging also in the *Glasgow Herald* in the late nineteenth century was the cultivation of consumer culture through more conscious curation of advertisements and consumer-guidance, thereby fostering what Habermas terms civil and familial-vocational privatism as motivational structures geared towards passive provision of legitimation without substantial involvement in opinion formation.[7] Related to the overt editorial effort to select politically safe forms of entertainment, a perhaps less purposely construed aspect of commercial papers like the *Glasgow Evening Times* was its layout, which, drawing on Richard Terdiman's analysis of the French mass daily, I argued encouraged inattentive reading and fragmented worldviews not amenable to political orientation (2.2).[8]

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[6] Dan Griffiths, 'The Manufacture of Public Opinion', *Forward*, 11 November 1922, p. 3.
[7] Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Heinemann, 1976), pp. 37, 75-9.
[8] See Chapter 2 in Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (Cornell University Press, 1985).

Proletarian print culture was organised to counteract such fragmentation effects, and it used both layout and synthesising journalistic practices to do so. Kevin Gilmartin proposed that an 'alternative phenomenology of the newspaper' is discernible in radical plebeian print culture, and I sought to illustrate its continuation in proletarian print culture.[9] I argued in Chapter 4 that *Forward* maintained a different relation to time compared to the commercial newspaper; attentive to local lifeworld contexts, it was politically interventionist and oriented to analytical synthesis and holistic understanding. Thus, the neutralised conception of 'news' was implicitly critiqued in *Forward* through the regular feature 'Socialist War Points' which sought to summarise and comment on the news as drawn from the wider print public sphere, and to insert the necessary connections and contradictions; a practice that mirrored techniques seen in working-class public speaking which relied on scraps of print to illustrate, critique, and support points made, while adding the connections lost to the fragmentation effect produced by commercial newspaper layout (4.3). Relatedly, a theory of reification emerged in the *Socialist* which I compared to later theorisations of cultural 'fragmentation' blocking attempts to synthesise and make comprehensible the social world from local lifeworld perspectives, which the periodical was designed to provide.[10] This was seen through distinctive features of its layout and materiality; its layout projected a synthesised progression of working-class learning in contrast to the commercial newspaper's assemblage of discrete and seemingly unrelated contents, while the *Socialist*'s cross-volume pagination and its recycling by readers suggests a different logic of intellectual and material durability which contrasts markedly with the ephemerality of the disposable commercial newspaper (3.4).

Clashing Public Sphere Models and Distinct Traditions

The clashes between the organic political publics considered here (the Rent Strikes of 1915 and the 1919 Battle of George Square) were expressly about conflicts of interest, but I have argued that they also involved clashing models of what constitutes legitimate political representation; virtual representation mediated by the press and the ballot card (on the liberal model) *or* direct, embodied representation through protest and strike action (2.4, 4.2). The post-bourgeois formation mediated by the *Glasgow Herald* had lost much of its

[9] Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 104.
[10] David Held, 'Crisis Tendencies, Legitimation and the State', in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. by John B. Thompson and David Held (Macmillan, 1982), pp. 181-95 (p. 190); Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System, a Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Polity, 1987), p. 355.

impetus for political confrontation with authorities, with whom it instead maintained a symbiotic relationship. Under these circumstances, publicity became one-sidedly focussed on popular containment, pursued primarily by means of education (via the press or formal schooling) or, if necessary, policing. Thus, I sought to check the pre-war political temperature of the *Glasgow Herald* by considering a symbolically important clash between the post-bourgeois public and its proletarian contenders at a key cultural site for the newspaper's readership, the University of Glasgow. By advancing Keir Hardie as a candidate in the 1908 rectorial election, a counterpublicity campaign led by the young editor of *Forward* challenged the inclusivity principle of the liberal public sphere. This triggered responses not only from university staff within the lecture theatre, but also in the *Glasgow Herald*, in ways that illustrated what Geoff Eley calls the 'fragility' of the classical liberal formation's commitment to politics by public discussion, as it sought to both confront the authority of the absolutist state *and* to defend itself against the claims of plebeian, and, as in 1908, proletarian publics (2.3).[11] Furthermore, I detailed the symbiotic, rather than critical or confrontational, relationship between the *Glasgow Herald* and local authorities through its mediation of the far more consequential confrontation between the public sphere formations during the 1919 Battle of George Square. I argued that the *Glasgow Herald*'s demand for a militarised police response to the embodied representations of the proletarian public sphere during the 40-hour strike represented a continuation of the paper's role as what Alex Benchimol describes as the 'voice of civil authority' first established during the 1820 Radical War under the magistrate-editor Samuel Hunter.[12] In its practices of management and display of public opinion issued in response to the industrial crisis and the proletarian challenge (partly by using the *Glasgow Evening Times* to issue a call for an end to the strike detached from decisions made by the strike leaders of the Clyde Workers' Committee, and partly by offering the *Glasgow Herald* as a platform for a curated and politically moderate form of working-class political representation in print as taken up by J.R. Clynes) I argued that the paper exhibited key aspects of what Habermas calls 'refeudalization' (2.4).[13]

By contrast, I suggested that the *Socialist* was animated above all by its projection of what Habermas describes, on the basis of Marx's writings, as a socialist public sphere

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[11] Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 289-339 (p. 321).
[12] Alex Benchimol, 'Policing the Industrial Order in the West of Scotland: The Radical War and Its Aftermath in the Glasgow Herald, 1819-1820', in *1820 Scottish Rebellion: Essays on a Nineteenth-Century Insurrection*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers, Kevin Thomas Gallagher, Craig Lamont and George Smith (John Donald, 2022), pp. 54-63 (p. 63).
[13] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Polity, 1989), p. 236.

model within which the whole of society (economy, state bureaucracy, and culture) could be steered through rational public discourse.[14] Empirically however, it constituted what Nancy Fraser conceptualises as a 'subaltern' counterpublic focussed on counterpublicity and intensive forms of directed, and diametrically oppositional, political education and public propaganda work which I return to below (3.3, 3.4).[15] While sharing the counterpublicity orientation of the *Socialist*, *Forward*'s print culture also actualised key normative elements of the Kantian public sphere model but in a vastly different social and cultural context; like Habermas's Kantian enlightenment public sphere, publicity in *Forward* was envisioned as a bridging principle between morality and politics, and between enlightenment and political representation, as it sought to educate and represent this readership before and against both the state and a hostile commercial print public sphere.[16] Through its legal advice column, *Forward* tested and challenged the constitutional boundaries of public deliberation, and in doing so it simultaneously contributed to Britain's constitutional legitimacy while pressing for expansion of social rights. Following E.P. Thompson's reading of Cobbett's journalism, I proposed that *Forward*'s popular idiom was a democratic style aimed at popular enlightenment (4.4).[17] Special attention was paid to the Sanny McNee columns written in Scottish vernacular. Key elements of a Kantian public sphere model fused here with a distinctive popular cultural modality, and I compared the popular idiom and stylistics of the Sanny McNee column with T.J. Wooler's satirical and polemical *Black Dwarf*. The passages analysed here provide a contrast to previous readings of the style of socialist journalism as too solemn or 'arid' to attract a wide popular readership, at least compared to plebeian print culture (4.5).[18]

I also noted the double-edged process of integration and asked whether the political culture of the labour would be incorporated into the commercial public sphere discourse or whether the public sphere itself would be reshaped to accommodate the new electorate. The pragmatic need for securing working-class parliamentary representation meant that the labour movement was forced to adapt to the sort of phantasmal public opinion mediated by the *Glasgow Herald* and its sister publication. As seen through comments by Ramsay MacDonald and Johnston, this risked a cultural reshaping of the labour movement to fit the

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[14] Ibid. p. 127.
[15] Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 109-42 (p. 123).
[16] See Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 104.
[17] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin, 2013), p. 823.
[18] James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, 8th edn (Routledge, 2018), p. 30.

needs of an existing political system, while losing its own cultural autonomy in the process. As seen through reviews of industrial unionist literature in *Forward*, the labour movement was concerned not only with questions of material distribution, but also with questions of control and the development of organic democratic culture, which highlights the labour movement's struggle against system's encroachment on the lifeworld (4.5).[19]

The hegemonic process of attempted containment or incorporation, and opposition or resistance, is most readily grasped in educational politics. The *Glasgow Herald*'s ideological heritage of Scottish Whiggism expressed itself in editorial opinion on education policy (the Scottish education act of 1918) and in its promotion of employer-led schemes of working-class education which mirrored the early nineteenth century SDUK. This two-level educational vision, with a utilitarian programme directed at working people and individual aesthetic cultivation for the upper-middle-class, represents a continuation of the educational programmes developed ideologically by Scottish intellectuals in the early nineteenth century, as analysed by Benchimol through the contributions of Francis Jeffrey (who informed Henry Brougham's practical project, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge) and Thomas Carlyle to the *Edinburgh Review* (2.5).[20] The employer-led educational initiatives were launched to counteract the influence of independent working-class education of the kind mediated by the *Socialist*.

I compared the educational praxis mediated by the *Socialist* to Richard Johnson's reconstruction of radical plebeian educational praxis as oriented to 'really useful knowledge', in contrast to the merely useful knowledge promoted by the SDUK and its twentieth century inheritors.[21] Centred on highly systematic study groups which focussed on Marxist political economy, the educational praxis was aimed at providing what Johnson terms 'spearhead knowledge', or directed forms of knowledge to meet the propagandistic needs of the labour movement (3.4).[22] The instrumentality of the post-bourgeois public's containment efforts were mirrored by the instrumentality of independent working-class education. Through articles of cultural commentary and the distribution of literature through its printing and publishing department, the *Socialist* constructed a socialist literary canon encompassing Robert Burns, William Morris, Eugène Sue, and Jack London; motivating this selection was a belief that these authors (especially the latter two) offered

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[19] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2*, p. 392.
[20] See Chapter 4 in Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Ashgate, 2010).
[21] Richard Johnson, '"Really Useful Knowledge": Radical Education and Working-Class Culture, 1790-1848', in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. by John Clarke, Chas Critcher, and Richard Johnson (Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 75-102.
[22] Ibid. p. 86.

expedient means of ideological transmission. I concluded the study of the *Socialist* by arguing that this print culture formation became caught up in an ambivalent cultural politics which left it somewhat isolated from the broader labour movement and possibly working-class people, much like the earlier rationalist or radical enlightenment followers of Richard Carlile (the Zetetics, or 'seekers') as anatomised by James Epstein.[23] When many leading figures of the Socialist Labour Party left to form the Communist Party of Great Britain, the political culture and cultural politics of this formation was carried through into the Communist movement in Britain (3.5).

Amid these confrontations in the early 1920s, a significant debate on adult education was carried out in *Forward*, through which I sought to illustrate the democratic influence of the labour movement on institutionalised education in the process of hegemony. The discussion followed Raymond Williams in locating the contribution of a distinctive working-class cultural tradition to democratic institutions, in this case a rapprochement between educational spheres that culminated in the WEA model of adult education characterised by deliberative reciprocity between students and teachers, and a claim for social relevance in the curriculum.[24] This limited development of democratic culture was effectively a settlement (a small aspect of the much larger emergence of the social welfare state by the mid-twentieth century) conditioned by social conflict which involved both discursive and strategic conflict (4.6).

The study has primarily contributed a cultural history of print culture in the Red Clydeside period, by analysing clashing print cultures afforded little prior attention. It may also have wider significance for studies of the press in Britain working from a Habermasian framework. In an overview of research on the press and the public sphere in the 1880-1940 period in Britain, Mark Hampton poses the following question intended for further investigation:

> [H]ow do activist journals and segmented markets relate to a wider public sphere? Can we connect them empirically, by documenting overlapping audiences and which journals take notice of which others, or are they best understood as distinct communities within a fragmented public sphere in which a common "conversation", a democratic politics by public discussion, is hopeless?[25]

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[23] James Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 113-14; Gordon Pentland, 'The Freethinkers' Zetetic Society: An Edinburgh Radical Underworld in the Eighteen-Twenties', *Historical Research*, 91.252 (2018), pp. 314-32.
[24] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Penguin, 1963), p. 313.
[25] Mark Hampton, 'Representing the Public Sphere: The New Journalism and Its Historians', in *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms*, ed. by Ann L. Ardis and Patrick Collier (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 15-29 (pp. 25-26).

Limited to their local Clydeside context, the case studies making up this thesis offer some answers. Regarding the relationship between 'activist journals' or 'communities' and a wider, segmented public sphere, it is possible to say that in the local Clydeside context there was indeed an overlap between publics constituted as unequally empowered communities locked in hegemonic struggle.[26] Concerning the prospects of deliberative politics akin to a 'conversation' between class publics, this study suggests that such reciprocal discourse was possible only in protected oases of the public sphere (such as within the WEA and *Forward*).[27] I hope to have shown, however, that the *ideal* of publicity linking politics with morality, and political representation with an educational process of enlightenment through discussion, carried normative force in the early twentieth century especially within the proletarian public sphere as mediated by *Forward* but also through *Socialist* (albeit with important political-cultural ambiguities). Normative notions like deliberative politics, the public sphere, and the lifeworld are designed to enable critical inquiry into their limiting conditions. With regards to such limiting conditions, the connection between an elite but relatively organic public mediated by the *Glasgow Herald* and the commercially driven *Glasgow Evening Times* through George Outram & Co. has implications for the understanding of the commercial press. As analysed by media sociologist Jean K. Chalaby, the post-repeal shift marked by the rise of the New Journalism was above all a shift from *publicity* (in the normative Habermasian sense) to *journalism* understood as a professionalised autonomous system steered by commercial imperatives.[28] This strikes me as an important distinction, but the linkage between the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Glasgow Evening Times* considered in this study suggests that the autonomous professionalised journalism also inherited an orientation towards popular containment which is more than an accidental side effect of the instrumentalising tendencies of commercialisation.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (Macmillan, 1998). Matthew Arnold coined the term in 1887 in response to W.T. Stead's journalism which he described as 'feather-brained', a quality he also associated with the wider 'democracy' or 'the new voters', see Matthew Arnold, 'Up to Easter', *The Nineteenth Century*, 123 (1887), pp. 629-43 (pp. 638-39). There has been much debate on the New Journalism, focussed on its supposed novelty and possible precursors, see for example Joel H. Wiener, 'How New Was the New Journalism?', in *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s to 1914*, ed. by Joel H. Wiener (Greenwood, 1988), pp. 47-71.

Further Research: The Emergence of Critical Populism, 1880-1920?

While I have emphasised continuities in political print culture between plebeian radicalism and the Clydeside culture of modern socialism, there are also important contrasts; consider only the infidel English radical plebeians as reconstructed by Iain McCalman showing the heady mixture of bawdiness and promiscuity with respectable self-improvement among the English radical plebeians.[29] Something like the Rabelaisian carnivalesque as anatomised by Bakhtin (which startled Habermas into awareness of the inner dynamics of popular culture) intermingled with solemn forms of radical Enlightenment culture in the earlier phase, and this opposition seems to be considerably muted in the proletarian public sphere on Clydeside.[30]

While a subversively humorous popular or democratic idiom did characterise discourse in the proletarian public sphere at times, it intermingled with austere forms of instrumental reason and partly self-imposed moral disciplines such as temperance and respectability (3.5, 4.4). Furthermore, while the different English and Scottish contexts play a role (the stronger role of religion in Scottish society, with its more severe and disciplinarian doctrines which Johnston/McNee complained of, and the central place of education and improvement ideology in Scotland) these differences cannot fully explain the discrepancy in cultural politics between English plebeian radicalism and Scottish proletarian socialism. Thus, Chris Waters's study of socialist responses to (commercial) popular culture makes use of predominantly English sources and highlights a similar respectability in socialist cultural politics conceived as an emphasis on 'rational recreation' against the encroachments of an early culture industry enjoining 'pastime' with 'business' (an alliance wherein the commercial press played a central role).[31] The emergence of such a culture industry perhaps offers a credible explanation for the shift from radical plebeian to proletarian socialist political culture, just as the loss of an autonomous working-class press by the mid-twentieth century helps explain the shift in political culture from an organic fusion of morality and politics mediated by an autonomous press to a more technocratic form of party politics mediated primarily by the ballot card. The rise and

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[29] Iain McCalman, 'Unrespectable Radicalism: Infidels and Pornography in Early Nineteenth-Century London', *Past & Present*, 104.1 (1984), pp. 74-110.
[30] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Indiana University Press, 1984); Jürgen Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', trans. by Thomas Burger, in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. by Craig Calhoun (MIT Press, 1992), pp. 421-61 (pp. 425-27).
[31] Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 17-19.

eventual fall of the socialist press in Scotland also helps supplement attempts to explain the shift in political culture occurring over the interwar period through temperance.

As discussed in the Introduction, W.W. Knox traces that shift through the waxing and waning of temperance in the labour movement and regards the ILP and *Forward* as the primary bearers of the culture of temperance.[32] However, Johnston's vernacular critique of the Scottish Reformation and its effects on the Scottish psyche (4.4) complicates this view, while my reading of the *Socialist* (3.5) suggests that moral discipline and respectability was prominent among Scottish revolutionaries too, and I have not found much to suggest that Scottish revolutionaries were more 'intemperate' than the reformists of the ILP, as Knox seems to suggest.[33] Temperance, although primarily a Protestant phenomenon, thus cut widely across political ideology, and may not be the best measure of an organic political community or public; indeed, as iterations of instrumental reason there is arguably more continuity than contrast between the disciplinarian temperance ethos and the calculated attitude of the social planner.[34] If the labour movement and the proletarian public sphere of the c.1880-1920 phase enacted a more organic form of politics, then the medium and measure of this political culture was perhaps not temperance, but rather the autonomous press itself. Thus, the decline of an autonomous working-class press and public sphere capable of fusing politics and morality (a decline which coincides with the waning of temperance in the interwar period) offers an important supplement to Knox's wider narrative of shifting political culture in Scotland.[35]

I proposed in the Introduction that John Maclean articulated a historical version of what Jim McGuigan terms 'critical populism', and I have since suggested that both the *Socialist* and *Forward* did the same in their counterpublicity and critiques of the commercial press (3.3, 4.3).[36] Against the backdrop of relatively recent preoccupations with populism within British social and cultural history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in what James Epstein terms 'the populist turn', the formation of a critical counterculture confronting an emergent culture industry and struggling to develop

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[32] See W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 247-8. Knox frequently cites *Forward* as a propagator of the culture of temperance and respectability, see for example pp. 172, 199, 200.
[33] Ibid. p. 180. Recall also that John Maclean, Willie Gallacher, and Tom Bell were all ardent teetotallers.
[34] Indeed, the first cultural diagnosed of such instrumental reason explicitly sought to trace it as emerging out of Protestant doctrine: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (Routledge, 1992).
[35] For a more recent account of the interwar period following a similar narrative of shifting political culture in Scotland, see also Malcolm Petrie, *Popular Politics and Political Culture: Urban Scotland, 1918-1939* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018).
[36] Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism* (Routledge, 1992), p. 5.

an autonomous cultural politics seems significant.[37] To explore this further as a process of hegemonic contestation, the focus must include analysis of the *cultural* public sphere to a larger extent than I have done here with my focus on the *political* public sphere. Nick Hubble's recent critical engagement with proletarian literature informed by an intersectional approach to class and gender, *The Proletarian Answer to the Modernist Question* (2017), offers one avenue for considering alternative literary iterations of modernist subjectivity not as 'an inward-looking culture' but pointing 'towards relationships with the other and the intersubjective possibilities of more open, rewarding forms of social life', as advanced by writers including Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Naomi Mitchison, and D.H. Lawrence.[38] Such iterations, as alternatives to both the classical bourgeois selfhood and the narrow vision of socialist realism (the rudimentary building blocks of which can be seen in the home-grown instrumental political culture associated with British Communism as discussed in section 3.5), are consequential for reexamining the changing structures of the private/intimate sphere in the modernist phase. Indeed, the evolving relationship and interpenetration of cultural/literary and political public spheres was a primary of concern of Habermas's, which warrants reexamination in the modernist period.

On the oppositional side, Elizabeth Carolyn Miller's study of literary radicalism and print culture structured around slowness in the late Victorian period offers a really useful account of the place of imaginative literature in oppositional politics, which even proposes a convergence between anti-commercial modernist aesthetics (often considered elitist) and socialist critiques of the culture industry.[39] Critical intersections between the proletarian public sphere on Clydeside and contemporaneous developments in Scottish modernism could be further considered, and periodicals such as the weekly *Scottish Co-Operator* (c.1892-1974) could offer further insight into the development of an autonomous working-class democratic culture in Scotland. Attempted cultural incorporation could be investigated by looking more closely at the *Glasgow Evening Times* than I have done, but also by considering the *Weekly Herald*, a product of George Outram & Co. which I discovered too late in the project to study in a sustained way, but which on a cursory reading appears to have targeted a working-class readership more directly than either of

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[37] See James Epstein, 'The Populist Turn', *The Journal of British studies*, 32.2 (1993), pp. 177-89; Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour, and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914*, ed. by Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[38] Nick Hubble, *The Proletarian Answer to the Modernist Question* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 200.
[39] Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 301.

George Outram & Co.'s other publications. A closer analysis of 'entertainment' features in these papers could shed light on local hegemony formation, a process which could also be supplemented by recent research on Glasgow's commercial entertainment industry in music halls, which might help explain the critical positioning of Clydeside socialists.[40]

Against this background the emergence of critical populism, as a cultural formation fusing distinctive idioms and normative principles drawn from a residual radical plebeian tradition with a critique of a developing culture industry (including, centrally, the commercial press) within working-class culture of the 1880-1920 phase, offers a promising hypothesis for further research. The possibility of a critical populism with autonomous traditions (a lifeworld, perhaps) constituted in opposition to a commercially formed populism, may also offer historical understanding of today's new forms of populism, shaped within the communication environment of a public sphere currently undergoing a new structural transformation, driven by technological change and old imperatives of capital valorisation and popular containment.[41]

[40] Paul Maloney, *The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall and Cosmopolitan Entertainment Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[41] Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Polity, 2023); Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power* (Profile Books, 2019).

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