

Working Class and Radical Movements in Scotland
and the Revolt from Liberalism, 1866-1900.

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THE SCOTTISH SETTING

In contrast to the five or six decades before the passing of the Reform Act of 1832, Scottish society was remarkably hegemonic during the long reign of Queen Victoria. The dominance of the Victorian middle classes was reflected in the striking electoral supremacy of the Liberals at the Parliamentary level, and from the mid-Victorian period onwards the ideological affinities between the Scottish Liberals, Lib-Lab trade unionists and the Free Church Presbyterians cemented a society which, in spite of the stresses and strains created by industrialisation, remained cohesive and unified. The economic, social, political, cultural and psychological bonds binding the majority of the people to the Victorian middle classes had their roots in the preceding decades, and in the mid- and-late Victorian period Thomas Muir of Huntershill, George Kinloch, the 'Radical Laird' and the martyrs of the radical war of 1820 were subsequently canonised by the Scottish Liberals and utilised to keep the Tories and Toryism odious in the eyes of the labouring poor.

By the mid-Victorian period the total social situations in which the Scottish and English labour movements functioned were profoundly different, and one manifestation of this was the endemic weaknesses of Scottish trade unionism.¹ A vast social gulf existed between the activists in the Scottish labour movement and the working classes, and a major consequence of the Reform Act of 1832 was that the overwhelming

1. W.H. Marwick, A Short History of Scottish Labour (Edinburgh 1967), p. 22 and p. 47.

majority of electors henceforth relegated the Tory Party (a Party which had previously dominated Scottish politics) to a permanent role as a minority Party within British Parliamentary politics. In Scotland, where a qualitatively different type of Poor Law from that existing in England put an onus on self-help before Chartism emerged, the majority of the Scottish Chartists lacked the revolutionary ardour of their English counterparts. But if the advanced political elements of the English working class only adhered to 'the petty-bourgeois values of betterment, thrift and self-help' after the collapse of Chartism,¹ their Scottish equivalents were already committed to temperance and self-help even before the Chartist movement reached its zenith.

Presbyterianism played a crucial role in determining the character of Scottish Chartism, and a great deal of popular energy was absorbed by the Ten Years' Conflict. Presbyterian influences, however intangible or difficult to quantify, circumscribed indigenous working class movements, and the agitations for Parliamentary reform and the repeal of the Corn Laws proved that 'many more dissenting than Established clergy were to be found on "the side of the people"'.²

The Scottish Chartists were usually interested in moral persuasion rather than in physical force, and their advocacy of total abstinence, Chartist co-operation and Christian ethics were by-products of their particular social situation. Moreover, the Relief and Secession Churches often provided church halls for Chartist meetings, and working people

1. John Saville quoted in the Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, no. 16, p. 9.

2. A. Wilson, The Chartist Movement in Scotland (Manchester, 1970), p.13

were bitterly disappointed when dissenting clergymen found excuses for not openly identifying themselves with Chartist agitations. In the struggle for the repeal of the Corn Laws, the Chartists were not hostile to middle-class organisations striving for the same objective. They did not have revolutionary, anti-capitalist aims, and they were so close to the dissenting Presbyterians that they helped to minimise social tensions in a backward country which was undergoing the process of industrialisation.

The working classes were already alienated from the Church of Scotland, though a relatively large number of working people were church-goers. The struggle for the repeal of the Corn Laws was the major political issue in the 1840s and it was, as Dr. Wilson argues, 'the Tories and aristocracy who were regarded fundamentally as the enemy of the working classes', so that the Scottish Chartists did not evolve a critique of industrial society.¹

I.

The distinctiveness of Scottish Chartism had an important bearing on the subsequent development of the labour movement. Already remote from the majority of the working classes in the 1830s and 1840s, Scottish labour activists increasingly alienated themselves from the working classes in the mid-Victorian period by their puritanical attitudes and behaviour. The social unity characterising Scottish society in the 1860s and 1870s and the cohesiveness of a 'community'

1. Ibid., p. 151.

in which most of the social values of the possessing classes were not questioned by the working classes resulted in the labour movement's relative isolation from the 'masses'.¹ Moreover, the artisans, who dominated the Scottish labour movement, shared the working classes' traditional hatred of the landed aristocracy; but this potential basis for a political alliance between the artisans, who wanted to strike out in the direction of political independence from Liberals and Tories, and the unprivileged miners, agricultural workers and labourers was vitiated by the artisans more middle class social expectations and habits.² This relative isolation from the working classes, together with the Liberals' invulnerable electoral predominance in Parliamentary politics, led the Scottish labour movement to adopt more militant and class conscious attitudes and programmes than the English labour movement.

Mid-Victorian Scotland was an unusually hegemonic society, and the milieu in which the labour movement developed had very long traditions of social repression and economic backwardness.³ A system of democracy inherited from the Calvinist revolution of 1559, social mobility and the comparatively superior educational opportunities of working class

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1. Fiona and Royden Harrison, in the Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 23, 1971, p. 82.
 2. The difference between different groups of workers which Peter N. Sterns has perceived in the French and German labour movements from the 1890s were already evident in the Scottish labour movement in the 1860s. As Sterns puts it: 'Artisans had many habits and expectations that were all middle class. They had a low birthrate, about half that of the miners or unskilled workers.' H. Mitchell and P.N. Sterns, The European Labor Movement and the Origins of Social Democracy, 1890-1914 (Illinois, 1971), p. 146.
 3. E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (London, 1968), pp. 257-265.

children were, in the considered opinion of a large number of journalists, clergymen and members of Parliament, the dominant characteristics of Scottish democracy. In practice, the educational opportunities and social mobility open to the working classes were severely circumscribed by the conditions industrial capitalism had engendered; and in the mid-1860s the labour movement, though influenced by the traditions of Scottish democracy, began to evolve an independent political programme.

In 1866 the labouring poor were socially and culturally fragmented, and the Scottish working class had 'many subdivisions and gradations including occupations as various as those of the dexterous artisan and the rude miner, the intelligent factory hand and the casual dock labourer'.¹ The artisans possessed the characteristics of 'industry, skill, independence and self-respect',² and labourers were labourers because they were 'lazy and profligate'.³ Such characteristics as industry, skill, independence and self-respect were allegedly restricted to the artisans and skilled workers, and a Scottish educationalist argued that:

There are in every school boys who are fit only to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.⁴

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1. Edinburgh Review, Vol. CXXVIII, no. 262, 1868, p. 249.
 2. Ibid., p. 490.
 3. Reformer, 25 March 1871.
 4. Report on Scottish Education for 1871, Parliamentary Papers, 1872, p. 93. I owe this reference to Mrs. Madeline Monies, of the National Library of Scotland.

The superior education and the 'democratic instincts' of indigenous working people occupy a major niche in the mythology of Scottish history,¹ and 'the popularity of the democratic (Presbyterian) Church in the middle and lower classes', was proverbial among journalists, clergymen and Scottish members of Parliament. The reality was somewhat different, and Presbyterian clergymen, educationalists and middle-class Liberals recognised and encouraged class differences, status differentiation and social stratification.³ In social, economic and political life there were, as the Edinburgh Review put it, 'orders and degrees' which did not 'jar with liberty'.⁴

The social misery, gloom, brutality and insensitivity of Scottish society were reflected in the socially stratified and authoritarian educational system. Moreover, the poverty and brutality of social life were manifested in the statistics of drunkenness, overcrowding and illegitimacy; and the possessing classes had little sympathy for the plight of the labouring poor. Besides, every town and city contained a 'floating mass of shivering, shirtless and shoeless humanity',⁵ and

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1. 'Scottish democracy was the ideological basis of the Liberal Party in Scotland, but it could not apply to the Irish. Roman catholic, uneducated, and not too concerned with the dignities of man in the face of a struggle for survival, the Irish working class (and there were not many in any other class) seemed a threat to the Scottish way of life. James G. Bellas, The Development of the Liberal Party in Scotland, 1868-1895, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1966, p. 26.
 2. 'Secondary Education in Scotland', North British Daily Mail, 18 March 1868.
 3. S. Mechie, The Church and Scottish Social Development, 1780-1870, (London, 1960), p. 60.
 4. Edinburgh Review, Vol.CXXVIII, no. 258, 1867, p. 452.
 5. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 January 1867.

in towns and cities such as Falkirk, Dunfermline, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, a large, shiftless population was commonplace. As boom and slump alternated during the second half of the nineteenth century mass unemployment was often widespread, and in 1867 the North British Daily Mail estimated that, in Glasgow, thirty thousand working men had been unemployed for nine months.¹ In Edinburgh the convenor of the Relief Committee was appalled by the 'abstract political economy' of the Scottish Liberals which looked 'with a cold eye upon the exertions' being made to mitigate 'the existing destitution'.²

Social problems were frequently discussed in the Presbyterian Churches in the 1860s and 1870s, and the clergy invariably confronted the problems of an industrialising society - the problems of drunkenness, poverty, illegitimacy and insecurity - by impressing upon the working classes the need for temperance reform, thrift, self-discipline and self-help.³ The Free Church and the Scottish National Reform League,⁴ an organisation created to agitate for Parliamentary reform, were in sympathy with the agitations for land reform, and the Free Church clergy were often critical of the cash nexus and the acquisitive spirit of the

1. North British Daily Mail, 28 September 1867.

2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 January 1867.

3. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1867, p. 7.

4. In a letter to the editor of the North British Daily Mail, George Jackson, the secretary of the Scottish National Reform League, reaffirmed the League's programme of 'arbitration, legalising the trade unions, liberating the churches and unlocking the land' North British Daily Mail, 21 August 1867.

age.¹ The Trades Councils simultaneously advocated thrift,² emigration,³ and temperance reform,⁴ and the Trades Councils and the Free Church interacted ideologically. Presbyterianism had helped to create and sustain the social unity that existed between the different social classes.

As a result of the social unity that existed between the different social classes in Scotland there was a certain antipathy for trade unionism, and the shipbuilding industry was established on the Clyde in the 1860s to escape the high wages and strong craft unions of the south of England.⁵ By comparison with the English, the Scottish trade union movement was relatively weak in the mid-Victorian period. The relative weakness of Scottish trade unionism isolated labour activists from many working people, and this isolation was one of the factors which helped to push the Scottish to the 'left' of the English labour movement. It was, however, only one factor. Another important factor was the electoral predominance of the Scottish Liberals.

The Scottish National Reform League was created by middle class advanced Liberals who were initially to the 'right' of the Reform League in England. Since the Scottish middle class advanced Liberals

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1. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1870, p.20.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 17 February 1876.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 4 May 1867 North British Daily Mail, 29 June 1896, Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 29 September 1863, Ibid., 23 June 1868.
 4. Ibid., 22 February 1870; North British Daily Mail, 4 March 1870.
 5. Sidney Pollard, The Economic History of British Shipbuilding, 1870-1914, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1951, pp. 207. ff.

were dependent on the support of the activists in the labour movement if they were to win support for the programme of advanced Liberalism and capture control of local Liberal Associations in constituencies where branches of the Reform League also existed, they soon had to move to the 'left' of the English Division of the League.

In contrast to England, where some of the labour leaders felt compelled to abandon the programme of advanced Liberalism under pressure from wealthy Liberals who were supplying them with funds in 1868 in case the Tories should gain an advantage in marginal seats where the Liberals could not afford to fight each other over policy issues, the Tories in Scotland were so numerically weak that Whigs, independent and advanced Liberals could fight each other without being threatened by the possibility of the Tories gaining Parliamentary seats. It was significant that in the constituencies in those Scottish cities where advanced Liberalism was influential, the middle class advanced Liberals depended on labour organisations such as Trades Councils for their dominance over the Whigs or independent Liberals. Except for the miners, the Scottish Labour movement unanimously supported the Liberal Party.

If a relatively smaller proportion of Scottish than English artisans were organised in the 1860s, then the differences between the Scottish and English miners, whether organised or not, were much greater. Conditions in the Scottish coalfields were indescribably savage; and, while there were some English miners who owned their own houses and thus qualified for the franchise in 1874, most Scottish miners in the 1860s lived in houses which the coalowners' let to them on a basis of day-to-day tenure.¹ Moreover, there were very few Scottish miners who enrolled

1. See chapter 7 entitled 'The Miners' County Unions, 1866-1900'.

in the Scottish Division of the Reform League in the mid-1860s, and of those who did John Muir, a veteran Miners' leader in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, broke the labour movement's solidarity with the programme of advanced Liberalism in 1868 by backing Bouverie, the Whig. For the organised miners as a whole, however, the Tories were preferable to the Liberals, whether the latter were Whigs, independent or advanced Liberals. The latent tensions that had long existed between the artisans and miners finally erupted during the general election of 1868. Indeed, the only issue on which the artisans and most of the organised miners saw eye-to-eye in 1868 was the common Scottish attitude of hatred for the landed aristocracy.

In the 1860s and 1870s the Scottish landed aristocracy was hated by the middle classes as well as the labour movement. This hatred was forcibly expressed by a number of influential elders and clergymen at the General Assembly of the Free Church in 1869, and one speaker asserted that the lairds were 'aliens from, and hostile to, the national faith'.¹ The land agitations of the 1880s were, moreover, already foreshadowed in the 1860s, and in 1868 a protest movement against tolls in the Highlands reached a high point of violence and physical force.²

The political and cultural identity between the artisans in the labour movement and the Free Church was reinforced by a shared hatred of the landed aristocracy. As a whole the working classes at least identified with either the Established, Free or United Presbyterian

1. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1869, p. 229.

2. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 11 July 1868.

Church for the purposes of baptism and burial; but for the artisans who were involved in the labour movement the Established Church was anathema because of its association with the landed aristocracy and the Highland clearances. Also there were far more Scottish than English artisans involved in Church membership, and even with the trade union 'explosion' of the early 1870s the Scottish labour movement was predominantly made up of privileged or 'superior' artisans. The miners' general exceptionalism was also seen in their lack of involvement in Church membership, though in one or two rural communities a few of them were active in the Established Church. Nonetheless the organised workers, whether they were artisans or miners, were both class conscious and critical of the landed aristocracy.

The organised workers who made up the Scottish labour movement were an unrepresentative minority, and even their class consciousness which manifested itself in sustained criticism of the landed aristocracy sometimes seemed to make their anti-capitalist sentiments, formally pro-capitalist. This mid-Victorian tendency to regard 'the landlord class and not the industrial bourgeoisie' as 'the main enemy' of the working class was also a dominant theme of English working class agitations.¹ A major reason for the even deeper and more extensive hatred of the Scottish landed aristocracy was the prolongation of the Highland clearances in the 1860s and 1870s. Far from preventing the Scottish workers' programme² from going beyond the programme of advanced Liberalism in 1868,

1. John Saville, 'The Background to the Revival of Socialism in England', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 11 1965, p. 14.

2. See Chapter 3.

the organised artisans' hatred of the landed aristocracy was an important element in keeping them to the 'left' of both the middle class Liberals and the English labour movement in the late Victorian period.

But if the Scottish labour movement was at one with the French and German labour movements in 'inculcating among the workers other essentially middle class values' of temperance, sobriety and thrift,¹ the Scottish and English labour leaders were very ambiguous when they advocated the values of self-help. The Scottish middle class Liberals and Presbyterian clergymen did not share the same conceptions of self-help as the leaders of the labour movement. As in England, where labour leaders often equated thrift with 'the mutual insurance provisions of the unions' and self-reliance with the political independence of the working classes from the Tories and the wealthy Liberals,² the labour leaders in Scotland simultaneously displayed class conscious, anti-capitalist attitudes alongside adherence to ambiguous notions of self-help.³ The cultural attitudes and class consciousness of the activists in the Scottish labour movement (as distinct from the attitudes of the vast majority of unorganised workers) were an ambiguous mixture of individualistic and collectivist values of self-help and mutual aid. The self-reliance of the vast majority of unorganised workers was unambiguously more individualistic than the type of self-reliance advocated by the labour leaders. Moreover, the apparent paradox of the Scottish artisans being to the 'left' of the English ought to be seen as an aspect of the ambiguity of their self-help notions.

1. Mitchell and Sterns, op.cit., p. 151.

2. R. Harrison, 'Afterword', in Samuel Smiles, Self-Help (London, 1968), pp. 268-9.

3. See below.

The cultural attitudes and the consciousness of class among the vast majority of the unorganised working people have yet to be investigated by historians of Scottish labour, but two distinct, though ascending levels of class consciousness - the elementary and the intermediate - have been defined as 'a fairly accurate perception of class membership on the part of a particular individual' and 'a certain perception of the immediate interests of the class of which one is conscious of being a member'.¹ In both senses the labour movement was class conscious, and the class consciousness of the activists in the labour movement found expression in the manifesto published by the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council immediately after the general election of 1874. A part of it read:

Bitter experience has taught us that common justice for working people is not yet a tenet of Middle-Class interests, we are abandoned the moment we begin to attend to our own. We are still despised as a servile class, and it is for us to wipe out the stain of class-inferiority by incessantly demanding from the Legislature equality before the law.²

Class consciousness was also expressed in the decision of the Glasgow Trades Council, in 1876, to create 'a consolidation fund to furnish some little assistance to those who, in their struggles with capital, were worsted from the lack of the sinews of war'.³

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1. R. Miliband, 'Barnave: a case of bourgeois class consciousness', Aspects of History and Class Consciousness, edited I. Meszaros (London, 1971), p. 22.
 2. The Manifesto of the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council was only published in the newspaper press by the (Tory) Edinburgh Evening Courant during the general election of 1880 when the same working class leaders were again supporting the middle class Liberals. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 March 1880.
 3. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 20 May 1876.

II

In the mid-Victorian period working class incomes in Scotland were lower than in England;¹ and the Scottish possessing classes steeped in a Calvinist tradition which attributed poverty to moral laxity and sin,² were less willing than their English counterparts to spend money on poor relief.³ The fact that poverty and destitution were largely unrelieved in Scotland put a strong onus on the working classes to help themselves. In addition to this indirect stimulus to self-help, the Scottish educational system - according to M. Biot, a French educationalist who worked in Scotland, and other observers - fostered 'the habit of self-reliance' in working class children in their formative years.⁴

Indeed the Scottish educational system was the key factor, together with other Calvinist traditions, underlying the existence of a hegemonic society during the second half of the nineteenth century. Confronted with a traditionally docile labour force (a labour force split by race and religion), there was even one educationalist in the 1870s who was prepared to tolerate strikes as the price of one kind of self-help.⁵

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1. D.M.Home, Social Reforms Needed in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1867), p. 33.
 2. W.W. Straka, 'Reactions of the Scottish Working Class to Economic and Social Changes in Scotland, 1782-1832', Proceedings of a Conference on Scottish History held in the University of Guelph, Canada, 1971.
 3. In 1840 the cost of poor relief in England stood at £4,570,000 and in Scotland it was only £115,121. L.J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 198.
 4. John Kerr, Memories (London, n.d., probably 1902), p. 99.
 5. A.D. Wilson, Trade Unions and Self-Help (Edinburgh 1873), p. 11.

It was more usual, however, for educationalists and clergymen to emphasise the mutual dependence of capital and labour.

Whatever their differences over political questions in the 1850s and 1860s, the possessing classes were agreed on the need to teach working class children the elements of political economy. In 1854 the Edinburgh Review argued that the 'elevation and welfare' of the working classes depended on 'temperance, economy, docility and self-restraint' rather than 'combinations, strikes, communism, or the Charter'.¹ Moreover, in 1862 John Gordon, who was HMI for Church of Scotland schools in Ayr, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Lanark, Renfrew and Wigton, wrote about the need to improve the teaching of political economy:

94% of the working people can read essay narratives ... Of the 94%, those who read at all 62% ... who read little or nothing 32%. About 60% can sign their names ... 50% require to be better instructed in those principles of political economy which concern the mutual relations of capital and labour.²

A similar viewpoint was expressed by William Ellis in his pamphlet Combinations and Strikes from the Teacher's Point of View:

It is quite within the scope of school instruction that correct views (on strikes and combinations) shall be formed by the pupils in their schools.³

Such views were the rule, and not the exception. In a study of national education published in 1860 James Begg, a Free Church clergyman, argued that there was an urgent need to teach working class children

1. Edinburgh Review, Vol. C., no. 204, 1854, p. 190.

2. Parliamentary Papers, Vol. XLVIII, 1863, p. 147.

3. William Ellis, Combinations and Strikes from the Teacher's Point of View, (Edinburgh, 1865), p. 1.

'thrift and practical subjects';¹ and in 1868 the Church of Scotland published a pamphlet advocating the need to intensify their efforts to teach working class boys 'the elements of political economy' with 'industrial work for the girls'.² With the propagation of such ideas in the elementary and secondary schools, it was to be expected that class tensions would be somewhat minimised.

Nonetheless trade unions, if they did not always thrive and prosper, were formed and re-formed, and the realities of a competitive, industrial society sustained the conditions in which trade union activity was inevitable. Furthermore, skilled workers were sometimes involved in prolonged and bitter strikes, and in the early 1870s the Free Church clergymen criticised the thousands of artisans who were supporting the Republican clubs.³

Working class politics were dominated by a 'labour aristocracy', and in the eyes of contemporaries the members of the 'labour aristocracy' were artisans.⁴ In an influential essay on 'the Labour Aristocracy', Eric J. Hobsbawm has suggested that there were six criteria which determined whether or not a particular occupational group belonged to the 'labour aristocracy'. He listed them as: level and regularity of

1. James Begg, National Education for Scotland (Edinburgh, 1860), p.1.
2. National Education and the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1868), p.18.
3. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1870, p.248.
4. See, for example, the letter by 'Excelsior' a Tory artisan entitled 'The Suffrage and the Aristocracy of Labour'. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 31 October 1866.

wages; prospects of social security; working conditions (including treatment by foremen and masters); relation to the strata 'above' and 'below' them in the social hierarchy; living conditions in general; and prospects of future advancement and those of their children.¹

Zygmunt Bauman, a Marxist sociologist, while accepting Hobsbawm's general approach, questions whether the first of Hobsbawm's six criteria was really the most important one.² This criticism has been carried further by another Labour historian, Henry Pelling, who explains some of his own objections: 'The first point to be made is that the wages of the individual worker do not readily provide us with an index of his relative affluence, which must depend upon the size of his family, the earnings, if any, of his wife and children, the ability of his wife as a housekeeper, and his and her financial self-discipline, foresight, intelligence and temperance.'³

It is very difficult to form an acceptable definition of a 'labour aristocracy', and in the mid-Victorian period a 'labour aristocracy' of Scottish artisans existed in the sense that many of them were closer to the middle class than the unskilled working class in terms of their social outlook, behaviour and social expectations. Throughout the mid- and-late Victorian period there were in Scotland as elsewhere in Europe⁴

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1. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth Century Britain', in Democracy and the Labour Movement, ed. John Savile (London 1954) p.202.
 2. Z. Bauman, Between Class and Elite (Manchester, 1972), p. 68.
 3. H. Pelling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain (London, 1968), p. 52.
 4. Mitchell and Sterns, *op.cit.*, pp. 145-7.

great social differences between most of the artisans and the vast bulk of working people, and Scottish artisans enjoyed a greater expectation of life than miners and tailors.¹

Moreover, the social gradations within the Scottish working class were seen in the different types of working class housing, and in Edinburgh in 1866 there was a large intermediate group between the 'labour aristocracy' of artisans and 'the poor'.² This pattern was still evident in Edinburgh³ and other Scottish cities in the 1880s; and most, though not all artisans, were specifically identified by the editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant in 1866 as an 'aristocracy of labour' by virtue of the fact that they already enjoyed the privilege of the franchise and lived in superior houses to labourers and other working class social groups. In so far as the artisans enjoyed superior housing, education, life expectations⁴ and life-styles, they formed a 'labour aristocracy' between the unskilled working classes and the 'industrial bourgeoisie'. It is in this sense that the concept of the 'labour aristocracy' is used in the following pages.

In so far as a 'labour aristocracy' existed contemporaries had - or thought they had - a clear idea of how it operated and regulated its

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1. Miner, 1 December 1879; North British Daily Mail, 26 January 1867.
 2. 'The Poor of Edinburgh and Their Homes', Edinburgh Evening Courant, 10 December 1866.
 3. R.Q. Gray, 'Styles of Life, the "Labour Aristocracy" and Class Relations in Later Nineteenth Century Edinburgh', International Review of Social History, Vol. XVIII, 1973, Part 2, p.432.
 4. A.M. Anderson, MD., The Duration of Life in Dundee (Dundee, 1833), p. 8.

its conditions of labour. Trade union 'regulations' were, for example, described as 'an endeavour to secure a better remuneration for labour by limiting the number of workers, and the amount of work done by each; in other words by causing an artificial security of labour'. Artisan trade unionists allegedly believed that 'by limiting the number of apprentices, by discouraging overtime and piece-work, by maintaining the exclusive privilege of tradesmen who have served an apprenticeship, and by securing a minimum wage for every workman who practices a trade, an artificial scarcity of labour may be maintained'.¹ Moreover, the artisan or 'skilled mechanic' was 'a person of whom it behoves us to speak with the consideration due to his not inconsiderable social position, as well as to his newly acquired political importance'. He was 'the spoiled child' of 'the political family', and he gained immeasurable benefits from 'the substantial comforts of life, the consciousness of power and influence in the State, the means of cultivating his intellect, an open path through the agency of his intelligence'.²

Yet not all artisans were organised in trade unions; and Scottish trade unionism was still endemically weak. The relatively large number of artisans in the burghs who already had the vote in 1866 provides further evidence to suggest that there was not a direct connection

1. North British Review, Vol. LXVI, No. XCI, 1867, p. 26.

2. Edinburgh Review, Vol. CXXVII, no. 258, 1867, p. 442.

between membership of the 'labour aristocracy' and trade union membership. In May 1866 there were 55,515 electors in the burghs of whom 10,174 belonged to 'the artisan class. Their proportion to the whole varied in different places, being 20% in Edinburgh, 12% in Glasgow, 50% in Elgin burghs'.¹ In the burghs with the narrowest industrial base, where one might expect trade unionism to be weakest, a relatively large number of artisans enjoyed the privilege of the suffrage.

The 'labour aristocracy' was universally identified with the artisans; and they were assumed to constitute the main group of trade unionists (as distinct from the majority of unorganised labourers who had no prospect of being able to vote before the Second Reform Act was passed). Furthermore, occupational, geographical and international mobility was an important feature of Scottish labour;² and a prominent aspect of emigration was the high proportion of skilled workers who emigrated³ and therefore contributed to what has been described as the poor quality of labour.⁴

Consequently trade union organisation was vitiated and emigration sometimes contributed to the scarcity of skilled labour. This happened on the Clyde in the early 1870s when there was a shortage of working

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1. Lord Advocate's speech, 7 May 1866, Hansard, Vol.CXXXIII, Third Series.
 2. T.G. Byers, The Scottish Economy during the 'Great Depression', 1873-1896, B.Litt. thesis, 1968, University of Glasgow, p. 673.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 683.

engineers.¹ However, skilled workers who emigrated to Canada, America or Australia sometimes returned, and in 1876 the Glasgow Trades Council authorised the return of a hundred masons from the United States.²

In the 1860s the conditions of the Scottish economy (an economy peculiarly vulnerable to cyclical fluctuations of business activity due to heavy dependence on export markets) inhibited the development of strongly entrenched craft unions, and the protracted decline of the textile industry and the concomitant sudden and dramatic rise of heavy industry led to the emergence of a loosely disciplined labour force of semi-casual workers.³ The shipbuilding industry was the only major branch of industry in the west of Scotland which sometimes employed high quality and highly organised labour.⁴ Even so, shipbuilders sometimes had great difficulty in getting particular kinds of skilled labour.

In the early 1870s there was an explosion of strikes for shorter hours and higher wages⁵ and the organised and spontaneous impulses behind the nine hours movement were the most intense and dramatic in

1. Ibid., p. 161.

2. North British Daily Mail, 31 August 1876.

3. Fred Reid, The Early Life and Political Development of James Keir Hardie, 1856-1892, Ph.D. thesis, Oxford, 1969, p. 250.

4. Byers, op.cit., p. 683.

5. There were over five hundred strikes for shorter hours and/or higher wages between 1871 and 1875, and they were reported in the North British Daily Mail in some detail.

nineteenth century trade union history - and labourers and women were in the forefront of these struggles. Trades Councils were often reluctant to organise women workers because of the formidable practical problems involved in mobilising those who were 'below the social scale';¹ and in factories and workshops, where there was no trade union organisation, employers prevented potential strikes by conceding wage increases and shorter hours before workers asked for them. Hundreds of strikes were reported in the Press between 1871 and 1874; but there is little evidence that trade union branches or Trades Councils were able to absorb the men and women who participated in these spontaneous strikes, and, with the onslaught of the 'Great Depression', their makeshift organisations vanished without a trace. More importantly, whatever gains had been made by working class militancy were soon wiped out, and one historian has drawn attention to the thorough setback to Scottish trade unionism during the decade 1875-1885.²

But if the Scottish trade union movement was very weak by comparison with its English counterpart, how do we account for the presence of a 'labour aristocracy'? Partly by recognising that the trade unions did not use uniform methods to enforce job-control, and partly by examining the way trade unions or artisans exploited the scarcity of skilled labour. In 1876, for example, the Operative Association of Masons gave the employers permission to employ 'as many apprentices as they chose provided they were bound for four and not more than five years'.³

1. Ibid., 4 February 1875.

2. W.H. Marwick, A Short History of Labour in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 47.

3. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 21 May 1876.

However, in Greenock the organised masons refused to work with 'nobs',¹ and they enforced the restriction of apprentices to six for every journeyman.² Many groups of organised workers such as the coopers³ and most of the miners were in too weak a bargaining position to secure job-control; and in Aberdeen the local branch of the Association of Joiners and Carpenters were able to maintain job-control without introducing 'forced membership'.⁴ This type of evidence reinforces Dr. Hobsbawm's argument that lasting job-control did not 'depend on formal institutions such as apprenticeship or even trade unions'. Indeed, job-control was often secured 'not so much through collective bargaining as through a tacit unilateral imposition of conditions'.⁵

The numerical weakness of the Scottish trade union movement was probably a central factor in shaping the working class political response to Liberalism, and the organised artisans were usually isolated from the vast majority of the unskilled and their families. While they were able to mobilise thousands of unskilled workers during the Reform crisis of 1865-1867, the trade union movement absorbed very few of them. The artisans and the unskilled were alienated from each other by different life-styles and conflicting social attitudes. While many of the artisans - and particularly those involved in the labour movement - opted for temperance reform and

1. Ibid., 27 May 1876.

2. Ibid., 5 August 1876.

3. 'The Coopers', North British Daily Mail, 4 January 1868.

4. Ibid., 23 October 1876.

5. Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History No.18, 1969, 52-3.

membership of one of the Presbyterian churches, the unskilled contributed to the high level of drunkenness.¹

If the leadership of the Scottish labour movement was 'more radical and class conscious' than the English from about 1850, it was also more distant from the unskilled.² The unskilled were caught in a way of life which offered them little other than hard work and drink,³ and they were separated from the artisans by a vast social gulf.⁴ Trade union branches and Trades Councils always met in temperance hotels;⁵ and most working class leaders had been temperance advocates from at least the Chartist period. Before then whisky had disrupted the business of trade union organisations; and a trade unionist who had been one of several talented leaders of the Glasgow Committee of Trades' Delegates subsequently explained that most of them had been 'morally shipwrecked' by drink.⁶

This was the background against which working class leaders were increasingly converted to temperance. By the 1860s temperance was an

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1. 'The average quantity of distilled spirits annually consumed by an adult male is, in England above 2 gallons; in Ireland, 3½ gallons; and in Scotland no less than 11 gallons,' Edinburgh Review, Vol.C., No. 203, 1954, p. 60.
 2. Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 23, 1971, p. 82; Reid, op.cit., p. 199.
 3. 'If the mid-Victorian years were a gloomy age in the social life of the English poor, they were a black one in Scotland', E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (London, 1968), p. 264.
 4. H. Mitchell and P.N. Sterns, The European Labor Movement, the Working Classes and the Origins of Social Democracy 1890-1914 (Illinois, 1971) p. 146.
 5. Throughout the mid-and-late Victorian period the Glasgow Trades Council met regularly in Neilson's Temperance Hotel; the Edinburgh Trades Council shifted, in 1867, from Burden's Coffee House to Buchanan's Temperance Hotel where it met for the next twenty years; and the Aberdeen Trades Council met in a variety of Temperance Hotels.
 6. J.D. Burn, Autobiography of a Beggar Boy (London, 1855). p. 125.

essential attribute of artisan respectability, and in 1870, a delegate to the Edinburgh Trades Council defended trade unions as 'great checks to drunkenness and immorality'.¹ Advocacy of temperance undoubtedly separated them from 'the masses', and when the Reform crisis developed in 1865 there was little evidence to suggest that the labour movement would be able to mobilise the vast majority of working people - the unorganised, labouring poor.

1. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, ed., Ian MacDougall (Scottish History Society, 1968), p. xli.

Liberalism, Parliamentary Reform and the
Scottish National Reform League, 1866-1867

The National Reform League was founded at a public meeting in St. Martin's Hall, London, on 13 May, 1865.¹ The formation of a Scottish League was frustrated by divisions within Liberal and working class organisations and by the inhibiting 'no politics' rule of many trade unions.² During the few months between December 1865 and February 1866 George Howell, the national secretary, unsuccessfully tried to persuade leading Scottish reformers to form a Scottish Department of the National Reform League.³ The leading reformers in Glasgow were not at that stage prepared to join in an agitation for universal manhood suffrage.⁴ The horizons of the Scottish reformers were still narrow, and the majority of Liberals would have settled for household suffrage protected by the ballot.

In October 1865 Henry John Temple Palmerston had died, Lord John Russell had become Prime Minister a second time, and William Ewart Gladstone had become leader of the House of Commons. In 1866 Gladstone introduced a bill to extend the franchise to householders paying a rent of £7 in the burghs or £14 a year in the counties. This Bill, while enfranchising the better-paid artisans in towns, would have left the mass of workers in town and county voteless

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1. F.E. Gillespie, Labour and Politics in England 1850-1867 (Durham, 1927), p. 253.
 2. See the Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1865, p. 16.
 3. See George Howell's letters to George Jackson, who was soon to become the secretary of the Scottish National Reform League. Howell's letters are dated 19 December 1865 and 24 February 1866.
 4. See the political programme of the Glasgow Reform Union in the Howell Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London.

and would have preserved the electoral preponderance of the middle class. Nevertheless, the proposal to give votes to some of the working classes so alarmed 'right-wing' Liberals that they joined with the Tories¹ to defeat the government.² Edward Stanley Derby took office a third time, and Benjamin Disraeli a third time became Chancellor of the Exchequer. But now the National Reform League began to mobilise working class opinion by organising public meetings and trade union conferences. A period of booming trade and speculation had been followed in the spring of 1866 by a new epidemic of bankruptcies and unemployment. Widespread distress, coinciding with the rejection of Gladstone's Reform bill, led to a partial revival of the old Chartist spirit. London working men assembled in their tens of thousands to hear speeches by trade union leaders like George Odger, W.R. Cremer, or by the popular radical free-thinking orator, Charles Bradlaugh; to pass resolutions demanding nothing less than manhood suffrage and the ballot; and to cheer the name of Gladstone, though he had in fact proposed nothing of the sort. When forbidden by the government to meet in Hyde Park, the demonstrators thronged down the railings and entered.³ In the north of England still larger demonstrations took place, at which resolutions in favour of manhood suffrage and the ballot, incon-

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1. The word Tory rather than Conservative was used by all Scottish Liberal newspapers, and even the editor of the Tory-oriented Edinburgh Evening Courant restricted his use of the word Conservative to editorial comment. In the text of this and other chapters historical rather than contemporary usage of the word Tory will be followed.
 2. Gillespie, op.cit., p. 262.
 3. Royden Harrison, Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics 1861-1831 (London, 1965), p. 82.

gruously coupled with the name of Gladstone, were passed by enthusiastic audiences.

In 1865 the structure of some Scottish labour organisations corresponded to an earlier phase of industrialisation,¹ and the Trades Councils in Glasgow and Edinburgh were still bound by constitutions which contained a 'no politics' clause.² Under the impact of mass agitation in England for a new Reform Bill³ Scottish labour organisations became increasingly caught up in the struggle for Parliamentary reform, and in 1866 the Edinburgh Trades Council took the initiative in organising a mass reform demonstration⁴ and in 1867 the Glasgow Trades Council adopted a new constitution.⁵ By February 1868 the Glasgow Trades Council were discussing the possibility of returning working men to the House of Commons.⁶

In Aberdeen Sir James Elphinstone, the Tory candidate, told a meeting of electors that he had no objection in principle to a Reform Bill; but, while Gladstone's Bill stipulated 'a £7 burgh franchise', there was 'no principle in it - nothing to keep you from a £6 franchise, and after that a £5 franchise, down to a £1 franchise and ultimately universal suffrage, or swamping by

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1. In the west of Scotland the miners were still practising what the Webbs characterised as 'primitive democracy' such as the rotation of chairman at trade union meetings. See reports in the North British Daily Mail for 1865 and later.
 2. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, Glasgow, 1865, p. 16 and the Report of the Edinburgh Rest Day Association, Edinburgh, 1865, p. 10.
 3. Harrison, op.cit., pp. 94-5.
 4. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 22 October 1866.
 5. Glasgow Sentinel, 17 August 1867.
 6. Ibid., 22 February 1868.

democracy'.¹ In Montrose Mr. W.E. Baxter, M.P., who was considered to be a 'very advanced Liberal indeed', told a large reform demonstration that the men who were 'marching in procession through our large towns' were artisans, and that they were 'the men who manage the great co-operative societies, who read the penny newspapers, who are quite as intelligent, and much more independent than thousands of small traders enfranchised at present.' But this very advanced Liberal was not prepared to go beyond supporting the enfranchisement of the artisans; and he was concerned that in the absence of an 'extensive enfranchisement of the skilled workmen' a revolutionary situation might develop.² 'We do not want', he said, 'a repetition of the excitement which so nearly brought disaster upon us five-and-thirty years ago. If you refuse a request so reasonable, do you imagine that a far more ugly rush will not soon be made, before which all your favourite barricades will be borne away?'³

In 1866 the Scottish working classes were apathetic about politics, as they were about their social conditions. This dilemma was resolved by a combination of fortuitous circumstances from the closing months of 1866 onwards, including a severe economic depression, the mass agitations of English working men for Parliamentary reform⁴ and the derogatory remarks made

1. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 9 May 1866.

2. Ibid., 30 November 1866.

3. Dundee Advertiser, 30 November 1866.

4. Gillespie, op.cit., p. 270.

in the House of Commons about the 'venal, vile and ignorant' working classes.¹

The Scottish National Reform League was founded at a public meeting in Bell's Hotel, Glasgow, on 17 September 1866 against a backcloth of mounting discontent, poverty and unemployment. The reformers in Glasgow adopted several resolutions identifying themselves with the National Reform League, the principle of manhood suffrage protected by the ballot, and a great Scottish reform demonstration was to be addressed by John Bright, Edmund Beales, the Scottish Liberal M.P.'s and other prominent reformers.² Though the leading reformers in the Scottish National Reform League had been stung by critical comments about the apathy and ignorance of the working classes made in the House of Commons, they were nevertheless moderate reformers. However, if the propertied classes were to be pressurised into granting a limited franchise, the moderate reformers had still to create a mass working class movement. But a mass working class movement is, in a period of crisis and social tension, easier to create than control. A sign of the dominant role to be occupied by the artisans in the struggle for a new Reform Bill was indicated by the invitation to 'all trade, provident and other temperance societies' to attend the proposed Reform demonstration in Glasgow.³

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1. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 18 September 1866.
 2. See the pamphlet, The Great Reform Demonstration at Glasgow, 16 October 1866.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 18 September 1866.

Whether a revolutionary spectre threatened the established social order or not, the great majority of Scottish Liberal M.P.'s supported the enfranchisement of the artisans.¹ In late 1866 the artisans had been so angered by derogatory remarks about the working classes that their innate class-consciousness had reached a high pitch of intensity, and they were therefore prepared to involve the unorganised and the unskilled workers in mass reform demonstrations.² Contemptuous Parliamentary criticism of working class apathy had the unsought result of unleashing popular energy, a rising wave of mass discontent, and new social and political expectations. Confronted by a situation of acute social tension, independent Liberals like Duncan McLaren decided to support working class agitations for Parliamentary reform in a perhaps desperate attempt to keep working class revolt under the control of local Liberal committees, rather than radicalise working people still further by intransigent opposition. As middle class Liberals were not always willing to do so by supporting the popular agitations for manhood suffrage, they could not be accepted by the working class movement as leaders of a movement for Parliamentary reform. Where middle class Liberals like James Moir became leaders of local branches of the Scottish National Reform League, they had to pay lip-service to the demand for manhood suffrage.³

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1. On related problems in England see 'Revolution in Relation to Reform' in Royden Harrison, Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics 1861-1881 (London, 1965), pp. 78-136.
 2. The Great Reform Demonstration at Glasgow, 16 October, 1866.
 3. Appendix I. Scottish National Reform League. Address by the Executive Council to the People of Scotland.

The greatest political demonstration that Scotland had ever seen was witnessed in the city of Glasgow on 16 October, 1866. A procession of thirty thousand people stretched along the streets of Glasgow for five miles; and a mass demonstration of an estimated 200,000 people was addressed by John Bright, Edmund Beales, George Potter, Ernest Jones, George Newton, John Proudfoot and Alexander MacDonald. Resolutions were passed unanimously calling for manhood suffrage and the secret ballot; and Ernest Jones told the demonstrators that 'the voice of the people was the voice of God'. George Newton, secretary of the Glasgow Trades Council, expressed the militant sentiments of thousands of working people when he declared that the question of Parliamentary reform had been too long ignored. 'They had been mere puppets in the hands of the parties ever since the last Reform Bill', he continued, 'and it was time now that they should take the matter into their own hands. They did not need to despair. Gigantic monopolies had fallen before the trumpet blast of the people's breath, and it would be the case again'.

Working class leaders linked the demand for manhood suffrage to new expectations of social reform, and their hopes were encouraged by 'the old Chartist orators.'² In the giant reform demonstration of 16 October a group of operative masons carried a banner inscribed with the words: 'Nine hours - a new era in the

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1. North British Daily Mail, 17 October 1866.
 2. Thomas Johnston, The History of the Working Classes in Scotland (Glasgow, 1920), p. 260.

history of labour'.¹ The artisans were interested in Parliamentary reform as a means towards social legislation beneficial to the working classes.²

In contrast to Glasgow, where middle class radicals like James Moir,³ George Jackson,⁴ John Burt,⁵ and Robert Cochrane⁶ were leading figures in the local branch of the Scottish National Reform League, Edinburgh had no middle class radicals who were prepared to place themselves at the head of a movement for Parliamentary reform. When a meeting of the 'parties favourable to Parliamentary reform' was held in Buchanan's Temperance Hotel on 6 October, the principle of manhood suffrage was adopted as the basis of popular agitation.⁷ As Duncan McLaren and other leading Liberals were strongly opposed to manhood suffrage, they were thrown into a dilemma by this decision. Consequently they could not lead the movement for Parliamentary reform, and they could not altogether divorce themselves from it either. On 20 October the adjourned meeting of 'tradesmen and others', representing nineteen trade unions, and a few Liberals appointed a committee to organise a reform demonstration in Edinburgh similar to that which lately took place in Glasgow.⁸ This committee secured the support of Duncan McLaren and co-operated with the Trades Council in organising

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1. North British Daily Mail, 17 October 1846.
 2. This was also the case in England. Gillespie, *op.cit.*, p. 282.
 3. Obituary notice, Glasgow Weekly Mail, 6 December 1880.
 4. Obituary notice, North British Daily Mail, 31 August 1885.
 5. Profile, The Bailie, 22 October 1873.
 6. Obituary notice, North British Daily Mail, 18 June 1897.
 7. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 8 October 1866.
 8. Ibid., 22 November 1866.

and contributing towards the cost of erecting platforms in Queen's Park.¹ But the studious reluctance of middle class Liberals publicly to associate themselves with the mass agitation for manhood suffrage delayed the formation of a local branch of the Scottish National Reform League.

A small but enthusiastic meeting of the supporters of Parliamentary reform was held in the Music Hall, Aberdeen, on 17 October, when resolutions were passed supporting registered, residential manhood suffrage, the protection of the ballot and backing the members of Parliament for the city and the county. Mr. Dugwall Fordyce, the member for the city, told the meeting that he could not be bound by any of the resolutions. Nevertheless, he supported 'a large extension of the suffrage - such an extension as would completely enfranchise the middle classes, and give the working classes a fair share of the representation'.²

An Aberdeen branch of the Scottish National Reform League was then formed.³ The Aberdeen Trades Council had not yet been reformed, and there was no working class organisation in existence to mobilise and co-ordinate working class and middle class opinion on the reform question. The Aberdeen branch of the Scottish National Reform League was to remain a weak and ineffective body; and it failed to exert any pressure on the local Liberal committees.

1. Ibid., 8 November 1866.

2. Dundee Advertiser, 19 October 1866.

3. Ayr Advertiser, 20 October 1866.

Along the north-east coast the movement for Parliamentary reform had been initiated by the East of Scotland Reform Association.¹ This organisation, with headquarters in Dundee, had committed itself to 'obtain such a measure of Parliamentary reform as will allow the working classes to enjoy a much larger share in the representation of the country than they have at present'.² By then the Auchtermuchty Reform Association had criticised the East of Scotland Reform Association for being so moderate in their objectives; and they had decided to join with Edmund Beales and the men of Glasgow, Leeds and London in agitating for nothing less than 'registered, residential manhood suffrage'.³ The schisms in the Parliamentary reform movement in the north-east were referred to by the editor of the Dundee Advertiser:

With the greatest respect and deference to the Auchtermuchty reformers, we think that they misinterpret the character of the East of Scotland Reform Association which was intended to be a union not of extreme men and representatives of the working classes alone, but of all classes of reformers, including the upper and middle classes anxious to see an extension of the franchise to the working men. ... the Auchtermuchty men would exclude earnest and sincere reformers who cannot agree to manhood suffrage as well as others who conscientiously disapprove of the ballot.⁴

A deputation from the East of Scotland Reform Association had, in fact, no difficulty in persuading the Dundee Working Men's Association to accept their policy; and the agitations of the artisans in the Dundee Working

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1. Dundee Advertiser, 26 October 1866.
 2. The East of Scotland Reform Association was listed in the National Reform League's complete list of branches for 1866 as a branch of the Scottish National Reform League.
 3. Dunfermline Press, 26 October 1866.
 4. Dundee Advertiser, 26 October 1866.

Men's Association were sufficient to dispel working class apathy about social and political questions.¹ A few weeks later a branch of the East of Scotland Reform Association was formed in Montrose, where artisans joined with local employers and middle class Liberals in calling for a moderate extension of the franchise to some of the working classes.²

In Edinburgh a militant working class movement was not so easily appeased by middle class Liberals. Indeed the disagreements between trade unionists and middle class Liberals were brought into the open at the giant demonstrations for Parliamentary reform at Queen's Park on 17 October. Duncan McLaren and Mr. Miller, the members of Parliament for the city of Edinburgh, told an audience, estimated at 40,000 people that they could not support a demand for manhood suffrage (as distinct from an extension of the franchise) as the working classes were insufficiently educated.³

Mr. Campbell, the editor of the Glasgow Sentinel, advocated manhood suffrage and denied the truth of Duncan McLaren's remarks; and McLaren retorted that 'the working men of Edinburgh are not the working men of the United Kingdom. We know from statistics of the Registrar-General what a large percentage in the sister countries cannot sign their own names to their marriage certificates'.⁴

1. Dundee Advertiser, 13 November 1866.

2. Ibid., 23 November 1866.

3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 November 1866.

4. Since a separate Scottish Reform Bill was required and introduced in the House of Commons on 13 May 1867, McLaren's 'explanation' was less than convincing. The Scottish Reform Bill was given the Royal assent on 13 July 1868.

Mr. William Troop, of the Edinburgh Trades Council, said:

'Give us a Parliament elected by manhood suffrage, and we will soon educate the working classes'. But Mr. Miller, M.P. observed 'They had to procure a system of education which they had not at present, and they would not have that system until they had a reformed House of Commons'.¹

Liberals who supported mass demonstrations and meetings for Parliamentary reform without advocating manhood suffrage had contributed, though unwittingly, to the development of a situation that sometimes looked as though it might get out of control. By early November, a Tory daily newspaper compared the situation to 'that which preceded in France the Revolution of 1848', and added that 'those who shrink from public duty because to discharge it would outrage their sensibilities, may discover their error when it is too late for penitence and clearer knowledge to repair it'.² A few weeks later even the sober and moderate Dundee Advertiser issued a warning in very emphatic terms:

It is evident that the subject must soon be removed from the area of Parliament, if the various classes of the community are to live in harmony together. Longer delay will only excite more intense animosity on the part of those who are denied what justly belongs to them; and scrupulous agitators will arise to widen the breach which already exists. It is time the agitation were set at rest by a measure which will satisfy the wants of this generation. The regular business of the country will never be satisfactorily carried on while the question is undisposed of.³

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1. Scotsman, 19 November 1866.
 2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 9 November 1866.
 3. Dundee Advertiser, 27 November 1866.

But while those Liberal M.P.s who refused to campaign for manhood suffrage were being criticised by trade unionists, the Whig faction at Edinburgh had decided 'to oust Mr. McLaren and his party from the share they have acquired in the representation of the city'.¹ Conflicts within the Liberal Party were therefore contributing to the general social and political instability unleashed by the agitation for Parliamentary reform.

By the beginning of 1867 there were signs of acute social tensions in Scottish society, and the conflict between the defenders of the status quo and the forces of Parliamentary reform had reached an impasse. Judged by their speeches, the great majority of Scottish M.P.s were clearly prepared to accept a limited enfranchisement of the artisans, but by then controversy and agitation were raging around the future role of working class electors within a Parliamentary democracy. In a lecture in the Edinburgh Working Men's Club on 3 January, 1867, Professor Blackie, a somewhat unorthodox Tory,² said he 'would rather have no Reform Bill at all than one in the direction of manhood suffrage. He did not begrudge better representation to the working class, duly checked and controlled; he did not grudge them representation, he only refused them domination'.³ On the following evening Ernest Jones replied to Professor Blackie's lecture on democracy before

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1. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 22 December 1866.
 2. In 1885 Professor Blackie defended the crofters in a book entitled The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws (London).
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 4 January 1867.

the same audience. He criticised Professor Blackie's assumption that democracy meant the rule of the working classes, to the exclusion of all others - and particularly his tendency to equate the working classes with a mob, the okoos, and not the demos.
 Creek democracy meant not the rule of a class, but of a nation.¹
 But Tories and Liberals had a tendency to equate manhood suffrage with majority rule, the rule of a class; and Ernest Jones and the majority of trade unionists in the Scottish National Reform League pinned their hopes on manhood suffrage as a lever which they could use to inaugurate a comprehensive programme of social reform related to the needs of working people.²

The rule of the 'nation' was precisely what the possessing classes feared most, and their fears were reinforced by working class demonstrations and extra-Parliamentary activity. Moreover, extra-Parliamentary activity stiffened the resistance of those spokesmen of the possessing classes who were ambivalent about what form any extension of the franchise ought to assume. Many defenders of the status quo thought that the controversy over Parliamentary reform had reached a crucial and decisive stage; and Blackwood's reflected the intransigent mood of many Scottish Tories when it attacked popular demonstrations as 'dangerous and inconvenient'; the coercion of Parliament was tantamount to rebellion and intolerable; 'the respectability of London' had

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1. North British Daily Mail, 5 January 1867.
 2. See the comments of Edinburgh trade unionists at the November reform demonstration quoted in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, 10 November 1866.

repudiated Fergus O'Connor previously and would similarly repulse any mob that the latest reformers might assemble.¹

The National Reform League kept up a constant agitation for manhood suffrage, and they concentrated on mobilising working people to pressurise the Government into granting an extension of the franchise.² In Dumfries a large demonstration of working people representing twenty one trade unions began the new year by passing resolutions demanding 'registered, residential manhood suffrage, protected by the ballot'.³

As a result of a deputation from the National Reform League, led by Mantle and Odgers in London, a decision was taken to form a Dumfries branch of the Scottish National Reform League.⁴

However, the judicial decision handed down in January in the case of Hornby v. Close, depriving the trade unions of legal protection for their accumulated funds, soon provided trade unionists with a new reason for agitating for Parliamentary reform.⁵ In any case the Glasgow Weekly Herald observed that the working classes had been in 'a state of chronic agitation' since the failure of Gladstone's Bill, but it advised the demonstrators that lesser claims in fact meet a better reception.

Indeed demands for manhood suffrage - 'this old banner of democracy' - served only to repel the middle classes.⁶

1. Blackwood's, January 1867, p. 132.
2. Gillespie, op.cit., pp. 259-62.
3. Dumfries and Galloway Courier, 2 January 1867.
4. minutes of the National Reform League, 2 January 1867, Howell Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London.
5. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London, 1894), pp. 262-64.
6. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 5 January 1867.

Scottish trade unionists were now earnestly organising themselves for a prolonged struggle for Parliamentary reform, and on 6 January Ernest Jones addressed a crowded meeting in the County Hotel, Selkirk, on 'democracy' at the request of the Selkirk Working Men's Reform Committee. Jones had resigned from the National Reform League in May, 1866, over their decision to support Mr. Gladstone's Bill instead of adhering to the original programme of manhood suffrage.¹ He now told his Selkirk audience he 'would not gainsay any measure that would admit any proportion of the working classes to the elective franchise provided it did not tend to increase the present relative disproportion by admitting a greater number of the upper and middle classes now holding no qualifications'. He concluded by urging working men to restrict their agitation to moral persuasion, and he 'cautioned them against anyone who would insinuate the propriety of adopting any course that might lead to the slightest violation of law and order'.²

In January and February the Scottish National Reform League grew by leaps and bounds. On 29 January, George Jackson, the secretary of the League, reported to a meeting of the General Council in the League's Glasgow offices, that they now had a total membership of 6,534. Moreover, many new branches of the League were in the process of formation, and 'deputations from the General Council were appointed to wait on various trades for the purpose of seeking their co-operation in the coming crisis on the Reform

1. Gillespie, *op.cit.*, p. 260.

2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 8 January 1867.

question'.¹ It was clear from George Jackson's report that the east of Scotland Reform Union had kept aloof from the Scottish National Reform League.²

On 28 January the East of Scotland Reform Union held a meeting in Dundee 'chiefly composed of working men', and the outcome was that a totally middle class leadership was elected and entrusted with the future business of the organisation. The office-bearers of this Reform Union were Provost Parker, Mr. Latto, the editor of the Dundee Advertiser, and Liberal members of Parliament such as C. Carnegie, W.E. Baxter, J.D. Nicol, A. Kinnaird and E. Ellice. As the object of the East of Scotland Reform Union was defined as 'to give the working classes a larger share in the representation of the country', and as the artisans in Dundee were at that time less militant than their counterparts in Glasgow or Edinburgh, the Liberal M.P.s in the north-east had no difficulty in imposing their leadership on/^apredominantly working class movement for Parliamentary reform.³ By then they had between 400 and 500 members.⁴ In Glasgow the Scottish National Reform League had enrolled 400 new members among the bricklayers, slaters, hatters. and engineers within a few days.⁵

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1. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 2 February 1867.
 2. Ibid., 2 February 1867.
 3. Dundee Advertiser, 29 January 1867.
 4. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 1 February 1867.
 5. Glasgow Sentinel, 2 February 1867.

On 6 February the Edinburgh Trades Council formed a local branch of the Scottish National Reform League.¹ At this stage of the agitation for Parliamentary reform few middle class Liberals were willing to associate with the local working class leaders, and the Liberal-dominated town council was hostile towards such agitations. A deputation appointed at a previous meeting said they had waited upon the Lord Provost and he had confirmed their information that 'a large body of police had been secreted in a brewery' during their Reform demonstration on 17 November 'without the knowledge of the trades, and that these police constables were supplied with beer'.² As well as expressing strong indignation about the action of the Lord Provost, the members appointed a deputation 'to represent the trades of Edinburgh at the demonstration in London'.³

Meanwhile, the General Council of the Scottish National Reform League in Glasgow, enrolled new members among potters, power-loom dressers, boxmakers, cabinetmakers, glaziers, nailers and cotton-spinners, and they organised deputations to join the demonstration in London.⁴ The coal miners in the small town of Rutherglen, who had, together with the Scottish miners as a whole, hitherto held aloof from agitations for Parliamentary reform, appointed Mr. John Muir, a veteran miners' leader, to represent them in the Glasgow branch of the Scottish National Reform League.⁵ At the same time,

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1. Gillespie, op.cit., p. 275.
 2. Scotsman, 7 February 1867.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 7 February 1867.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 6 February 1867.
 5. Glasgow Sentinel, 9 February 1867.

the Glasgow reformers discussed 'the importance of the Irish question' and the urgent need for all reformers and radicals to work together. The Glasgow Sentinel, the organ of the Scottish miners, argued that 'the morality' of the middle class was 'so bad' that any political change which took exclusive power out of their hands was to be welcomed.¹ Scotland, like Britain as a whole, was in political turmoil, and many sober and hard-headed politicians and newspaper editors were afraid of the consequences of prolonged opposition to a 'reasonable measure' of Parliamentary reform.

At this point Derby and Disraeli determined to resolve the serious situation in the country and 'to dish the Whigs' by bringing in a wider measure of reform than that offered by Russell and Gladstone.² After much Cabinet dissension Disraeli in February, 1867, introduced a Bill enfranchising all householders in the burghs, subject to two years' residence, and those householders in the counties who paid £15 a year or more in rates. At the same time he proposed to give an extra vote to persons paying 20s a year in direct taxes or possessing certain educational qualifications. This dual vote, added to the plural vote already enjoyed by those who owned property in different constituencies, would have gone far to neutralise the concession of the franchise to urban workers. Nevertheless on 2 March three Tory ministers, including Robert Cecil, Viscount Cranborne, the future Marquis of Salisbury, resigned on

1. Ibid., 2 February 1867.

2. Robert Blake, Disraeli, (London, 1966), p. 474.

the ground that the Bill provided insufficient safeguards for property.¹

A meeting of the Kilmarnock branch of the Scottish National Reform League was held in the Crown Inn Hall on 20 February, and a report was heard from the delegates who had represented them at the Reform demonstration in London. A resolution was carried expressing strong disapproval of the Government's Reform Bill, and instructing the local leadership to promote and intensify the Reform movement in Kilmarnock.² In Dundee the Rev. William Sharnan addressed a meeting on 26 February, and he moved a resolution denouncing 'the franchise concession' to the working classes as being 'so paltry' as to call into question the competency of 'the present Government to settle the Reform question'.³ On 30 February a meeting of the Reform Committee in Greenock adopted a resolution 'to the effect that the Government's measure of reform was inadequate to the working classes and unjust in not giving additional members to Scotland'.⁴

By March the protests against the Government's failure to produce an adequate measure of Parliamentary reform were reaching a crescendo, and thinly veiled threats of physical force were being voiced by working class leaders. In Edinburgh, for example, the chairman of the local branch of the Scottish National Reform League told the members at a meeting on the Reform Bill 'the

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1. Harrison, op.cit., pp. 124-5.
 2. Ayr Advertiser, 21 February 1867.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 2 March 1867.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 2 March 1867.

enlargement of the franchise depended very much on the unfranchised themselves'.¹ On this occasion several advanced Liberals and Liberal town councillors attended the meeting of the working class reformers on the Tory Reform Bill.²

A meeting of the Hawick branch of the Scottish National Reform League was held in the Town Hall on 19 March, and Mr. Charles Hunter, a stocking-maker, was voted to the chair. Mr. Hunter told the meeting that: 'For his part, he had no faith in either Whig or Tory - the only difference between the two was, that while the Tories promised something and gave nothing, the Whigs made great promises, but never fulfilled one of them'. Mr. R. Ewan, a manufacturer, was elected to represent them at the national conference of the Scottish National Reform League in Glasgow in two days time.³ A meeting of the Dumfries and Galloway branch of the League was held in the Working Men's Institute, Dumfries, on 24 March, and a resolution was carried condemning the Government's Reform Bill.⁴

A national delegate conference of the Scottish National Reform League on the proposed Reform Bill for Scotland was held in Glasgow on 21 March. Councillor Burt presided, and he said they now had thirty branches and almost 10,000 members in Scotland.

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1. Ibid., 14 March 1867.
 2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 14 March 1867.
 3. Ibid., 21 March 1867.
 4. Dumfries and Galloway Courier, 25 March 1867.

The Conference was hardly begun before the advocates of 'physical force' and the advocates of 'moral force' were engaged in a heated discussion about the future policy of the League. The Rev. William Sharman, Aberdeen, counselled the delegates 'to organise themselves so that if occasion required it they would be able to do their duty as citizens of a country whose freedom had been won not by soft speaking, but by men who had in former days shed their blood. He believed that they would get no real Reform Bill from either Whigs or Tories unless it was seen that justice must be done. The only free nation was an armed nation, and he would counsel them when they went home to their several districts not only to organise Reform leagues, but to join rifle corps and drill themselves well.'¹ Mr. B.F. Dun² had worked hard behind the scenes to persuade the Glasgow reformers not to allow Sharman to speak at the national delegate conference;³ but Sharman's call for the use of 'physical force' was received with warm applause. Dun, referring to the remarks of the Rev. Sharman, said he was of the opinion that 'Reform must be carried by moral means, and that in the exact proportion of brute force used their moral influence would be lessened'. But Mr. John McAdam, a veteran Chartist, asked the conference 'to recollect whether any reform

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1. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 23 March 1867.
 2. B.F. Dun was a veteran Edinburgh teacher and radical. In 1832 he presented William Cobbett with an address asking him 'to defend the cause of the working class'. William Cobber, Rural Rides, ed. by G.D.H. and Margaret Cole (London, 1930), pp. 771-76.
 3. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 30 March 1867.

had been accomplished in this country save under brute force'.¹

However, the conference ended in harmony when a resolution moved by Dunn and seconded by Sharman was carried unanimously demanding manhood suffrage, protected by the ballot, and re-affirming the belief that 'the people are the source of all political power'. The conference was followed by a public meeting in the evening, which was addressed by Mr. Dalglish, the member of Parliament for the city of Glasgow. Dalglish wanted them to accept the present Reform Bill and to support the 'extreme portion of the Liberal Party who were going to improve the Bill in committee and use it as the thin 'edge of the wedge' towards 'a much more liberal and much better representation'. But once again working class leaders advocated physical force as an alternative to their dependence on Parliamentary manoeuvre. Mr. George Ross, a prominent member of the Glasgow Trades Council, addressed his audience:

Unless they got a voice in the Government of the country, he would go to the length of denying they had a right to be called upon to pay taxes ... and while it was a strong thing to introduce physical force into any question, he had only this to say, that before any great reforms were carried out in this country, there had been very nigh a revolution.²

At the same time a meeting on the question of Parliamentary reform was held in Perth, where a branch of the Scottish National Reform League was formed, and resolutions passed demanding registered

1. Ibid., 23 March, 1967.

2. North British Daily Mail, 22 March 1867.

residential manhood suffrage, the protection of the ballot and a redistribution of Parliamentary seats.¹ In Selkirk the local branch of the League passed resolutions condemning the Government and demanding manhood suffrage and the ballot.² At a meeting of the Working Men's Reform Committee in Dalkeith on 10 April a resolution supporting the use of 'physical force' was only narrowly defeated.³ By contrast a meeting of the predominantly middle class Greenock Reform Committee held a large public meeting in the Town Hall on 5 April, and they had no difficulty in gaining approval for their critical support of the Government's Reform Bill subject to 'the introduction' of 'a liberal lodger franchise'. Moreover, the comments of James Stewart, the main speaker, repudiating the Rev. Sharman's recent advocacy of 'physical force' were welcomed.⁴

In Kirkintilloch 'a numerously attended and enthusiastic meeting' of the local branch of the Scottish National Reform League unanimously passed a resolution declaring that 'no measure shall be considered final which is not based on the principle of manhood suffrage'. The Kirkintilloch men were sufficiently worried by the schisms in the Scottish movements to pass a second resolution pointing out 'the duty of all true reformers to join the Scottish National

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 23 March 1867.
 2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 2 April 1867.
 3. Dalkeith Herald, 12 April 1867.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 6 April 1867.

Reform League'.¹ In Kilmarnock the Trades Council took the initiative in organising the delegate conference of all the branches of the Reform League in Ayrshire.²

The Ayrshire delegate conference of the Scottish National Reform League was held in the Temperance Hall, Kilmarnock, on 13 April, and a resolution supporting the principle of manhood suffrage was carried unanimously. George McEwan moved, and Matthew Todd seconded, a resolution asking the conference to support 'an honest Reform Bill' emanating from either of the parties in the House of Commons. An amendment, moved by George Jackson, the Scottish secretary, and seconded by Charles Johnstone, declaring that the House of Commons had forfeited the confidence of the people, was lost by 5 votes to 8. One delegate told the delegates that 'he had shouldered a pike on behalf of reform, and if the Bill, which the convention referred to by Mr. Jackson might draw up, was thrown out by Parliament, he would shoulder a pike again'. The conference, however, repudiated 'physical force' and passed a resolution calling on all reformers in Ayrshire in the event of a general election 'to organise Associations in their districts to extend liberal opinions by returning representatives in favour of Liberal principles'.³

A public meeting of the Scottish National Reform League was held in Glasgow on 26 April, and John Burt was elected to the

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1. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1867.
 2. *Ayr Advertiser*, 15 April 1867.
 3. *North British Daily Mail*, 15 April 1867.

chair on the motion of William Smeal.¹ Burt told 'an audience composed chiefly of working men' that the Tories 'had systematically and obstinately resisted all measures of reform', and he therefore hoped Mr. Gladstone would 'frame a more liberal and thorough measure'. Then he gave support to the advocates of extra-Parliamentary action by expressing the hope that Gladstone would 'lean on the country instead of on the House of Commons'.² On 30 April the General Council of the League passed a resolution criticising 'the announced intention of the Government to prevent by force the proposed meeting of London reformers in Hyde Park on Monday next', and expressed their solidarity with reformers throughout the country who were defending the constitutional rights of the people.³ The editor of the Glasgow Sentinel referred to the threatened encounter between the authorities and the reformers. He feared that 'the whole scum of the metropolis' would flock to an encounter with the police, with consequences so far unimagined; a government possessing the people's confidence would have rendered such a meeting unnecessary and it was a calamity when governments were so out of sympathy with the people, for this encouraged collisions with results which neither the governors nor the governed had originally envisaged.⁴

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1. Mr. William Smeal was a veteran radical who had been the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society in Glasgow in the 1830s.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 27 April 1867.
 3. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 4 May 1867.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 4 May 1867.

A mass demonstration was held in Hyde Park, London, on 6 May, 1867, in defiance of the Government's ban, and the call was sounded for a national convention to prepare its own Reform Bill.¹ The arrangements for such a convention had already been discussed by the National Reform League, and 'numerous branches' of the Scottish National Reform League had committed themselves to support the national convention in London.² The Rev. William Sharman³ told the London demonstrators that 300,000 men from the north would persist in pressurising the House of Commons until their demands were conceded or 'until England had found a new Cromwell to turn out the men who had misrepresented the people in St. Stephens'.⁴

The 6 May, 1867, was the real flashpoint in the agitation for the second Reform Bill,⁵ and on 17 May Grosvenor Hodgkinson's

1. Harrison, op.cit., p. 94.
2. North British Daily Mail, 1 May 1867.
3. The Rev. William Sharman was a Unitarian minister in Aberdeen from 1863 to 1867. This stormy petrel of Scottish Unitarianism took up a new post in Bradford in April, 1867. For details of his stormy career in Aberdeen see L. Baker Short, Pioneers of Scottish Unitarianism (Swansea 1863) p. 137. He died in Preston in November, 1889. In his last years he described himself as a socialist. See his obituary notice in the Aberdeen Journal, 21 November 1889.
4. National Reformer, 12 May 1867.
5. 'It was not until 6 May that Gladstone discovered the importance of the lodger franchise and "the immense anxiety of the working men of London to obtain it". Within a fortnight Hodgkinson's amendment had been accepted by Disraeli'. Harrison, op.cit., p. 99. An editorial in a Scottish newspaper on the events of 6 May concluded: 'The irresolution of the Government may have shed bloodshed, but who can say that it has not learned the mob a lesson which may yield bitter results at some other time?'. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 11 May 1867.

amendment abolishing 'the compound householders' was accepted by Disraeli.¹ Now that working class enfranchisement in some form had become inevitable,² neither Party dared alienate future voters by an unreasonable appearance of distrust.³ The Reform Bill was considerably remodelled in committee: the proposed dual vote was abandoned, the burgh vote was extended to lodgers paying £10 a year, the county vote to £12 a year householders, and in this shape the measure became law. The groups still disfranchised included agricultural labourers, many miners, and the poorer migratory workers in the towns, and all women.

The Scottish Reform Bill, introduced in the House of Commons by the Lord Advocate on 13 May, 1867, was based on essentially the same principles as were laid down in the English Reform Bill.

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1. A sympathetic historian has explained Disraeli's change of attitude thus: 'The explanation of this paradox is, of course, partly the changed climate of Parliamentary opinion caused by the mass agitations which imparted an urgency to the Reform question, lacking in the previous year'. Blake, op.cit., p.463.
 2. 'If it (the working class) had abandoned its revolutionary ambitions, it had not wholly lost its revolutionary potentialities. It left no doubt that these potentialities might be speedily developed if it was too long thwarted in its desire to secure political equality. In short, it had attained precisely that level of development at which it was safe to concede its enfranchisement and dangerous to withhold it. It was this circumstance, rather than the death of Palmerston, which determined the timing of Reform'. Harrison, op.cit., p. 133.
 3. In May 1866, the editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant argued that Parliamentary reform was 'not needed', and he criticised the Liberals for allowing reform 'to be rendered unavoidable'. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 5 May 1866. By July, 1867, he said that Gladstone's measure would have enfranchised only what is called the upper crust of the working classes, the skilled mechanics or artisans whose tyrannical tendencies have been thoroughly revealed to us through the investigations of the Trades Union Commission'. He went on to justify Disraeli's apparent volte-face by arguing that 'a wide and large consideration of the past of the Tory party will convince impartial judges that the Government has acted with statesman like wisdom, and in harmony with a comprehensive regard to the requirements of the national interest, which is the criterion of conservative consistency and principles'. Ibid., 19 July 1867.

But since the Scottish Reform Bill only received a third reading on 13 July, 1868, the Liberals in the country had more time to influence the House of Commons on points of detail following Disraeli's acceptance of the lodger franchise. Now that the crisis point in the agitation for a second Reform Bill had passed its peak, middle class Liberals were increasingly in the forefront of the campaign to influence Scottish M.P.s over detailed changes in the Scottish Reform Bill.¹ In Alloa Dr. Duncanson, who had not previously associated himself with the Reform agitation, chaired a meeting of the local branch of the Scottish National Reform League where 'satisfaction was expressed that Alloa was to form one of the Stirling group of burghs'.² However, the Alloa branch of the League passed a resolution in favour of the assimilation of the county and burgh franchise; and a large number of Liberals throughout Scotland also supported such a demand. By contrast Duncan McLaren, who was to the 'left' of the Whigs and to the 'right' of the advanced Liberals, opposed any extension of the county franchise, and he was sharply reminded by the Glasgow Sentinel that 'occupiers of small holders in the counties are as well qualified to give a conscientious vote as the artisans in the towns'.³ A meeting of the Edinburgh branch of the League accepted the provisions of the Scottish Reform Bill as 'an instalment of the rights of the people'; and the meeting was 'attended and addressed

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1. For a particularly distinct example of working class bitterness over the seesawing behaviour of middle class liberals, see page
 2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 23 May 1867.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 25 May 1867.

by members of the more advanced section of the Radical Party'. On this occasion few working class members were given an opportunity to speak, and the chair was occupied by Councillor Fyfe.¹

The General Council of the League petitioned the House of Commons to amend the Scottish Reform Bill by assimilating the county and burgh franchise, by providing for voting by ballot, by creating equal electoral districts, by adding a sufficient number of new constituencies to provide Parliamentary representation 'to bear the same relation to population and taxation' as in England and by dropping the proposed investment of graduates of universities with double votes.² This and similar petitions from different parts of Scotland were presented in the House of Commons by Mr. R. Dalglish.³ The Arbroath branch of the League decided to petition Parliament for similar amendments; but 'instead of praying that the Bill be rejected if the amendments were not granted, as the General Council had proposed, it was resolved to petition for the Bill in any case'.⁴ By May the branches of the East of Scotland Reform Association had become in effect and sometimes in name branches of the Scottish National Reform League; yet the differences of attitude and approach to the

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1. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 25 May 1867; Edinburgh Evening Courant, 22 May 1867; Scotsman, 22 May 1867.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 1 June 1867.
 3. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 25 May 1867.
 4. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 30 May 1867.

conduct and tone of the Reform agitation had not been eliminated. In places like Dundee and Arbroath where the middle class Liberals ruled the roost without being challenged by a militant working class movement, the Liberal committees consciously kept the political temperature down by putting forward moderate demands. This was reflected in the decision of the Arbroath branch of the League not to press the General Council's resolutions too far or too hard.

A group of middle class Liberals called a public meeting in St. Boswells on 15 June 'for the purpose of organising an opposition to the clauses in the Reform Bill for detaching the towns of Hawick and Galashiels from these counties and annexing them to the Haddington district of burghs'. The working class radicals were only prepared to remain in the county if 'household suffrage were to be given in the counties as in the towns'. The middle class Liberals at this meeting were, however, monolithically opposed to 'any reduction' of the county franchise.¹ Mr. Rankie, the delegate from the Galashiels branch of the Scottish National Reform League, expressed the bitterness of the working class delegates who were present when he said: 'But they must consider that the so-called Liberal Party left the working men to struggle alone in getting up agitation for Reform until these redistribution clauses were proposed; and now they turned round and cried, let Hawick and Galashiels remain as they are, thereby depriving the working men of the benefit of the agitation'. Mr. John Ord, of

1. Ibid., 18 June 1867.

Muirhouselaw, 'denied' that they had not helped the working classes in the Reform agitation. Nevertheless, Mr. Frank Lynn, a working class delegate, told the meeting that 'if they would not support assimilation, the working men would have to go with the Haddington burghs'.¹ Though attempts were made to persuade the working class delegates from the League branches to vote for a resolution to petition Parliament to amend the redistribution clauses of the Reform Bill 'so far as regards the abstraction of the towns of Hawick and Galashiels from the counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk', the working class leaders only agreed not to vote against the resolution on condition that their dissent should be recorded.²

The Edinburgh Evening Courant was cock-a-hoop over the dissension and commented that it would not suit the middle class liberals 'to have the radical workmen rejecting their William Napiers and setting up candidates of their own. The "gentlemen" of Haddington burghs, too, were alarmed at the advent of sturdy radicalism, and the Provost of Haddington coalesced with the master manufacturers to prevent the annexation, and thus condemn the intelligent working men to continued disenfranchisement'.³

In mid-June a delegation from the Paisley branch of the League visited a miners trade union meeting in Inkerman. Mr. Mitchell, who was called to the chair, appealed to the miners to form themselves

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1. Scotsman, 17 June 1867.
 2. Dumfries and Galloway Courier, 17 June 1867.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 16 June 1867.

into a body 'to obtain a fair redistribution of seats for Scotland, and also to have the English Bill passed into law. He afterwards spoke of the many changes which required to be made yet for the working man, the most prominent amongst which was a national system of education, and the abolition of the laws of entail and primogeniture.¹ These changes, he assured them, would not be affected without an earnest effort on the part of the working classes of the country, and the object of the deputation in coming to Inkerman was to induce them to join the Paisley branch of the Reform League, which had for its aim the accomplishment of these and similar objects'. A committee of five was formed to enrol miners in the area who wanted to join the League.² On 13 July the Hawick branch of the League held a public meeting at which resolutions 'in favour of additional members for Scotland, the assimilation of the county and burgh franchise, and, failing this assimilation, the grouping of the towns of Hawick, Galashiels, and others in the district, were moved, seconded, and adopted by the meeting'.³ A few days later the League called a large public meeting in the City Hall, Glasgow, to present Mr. Lloyd Garrison, the American abolitionist, 'with a congratulatory address on the success of his noble labours in the cause of freedom'.⁴

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1. As the coal miners had many Irish immigrants and Highlanders in their ranks any reforms related to the ownership of the land usually struck a cord in working class consciousness.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 19 June 1867.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 16 July 1867.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 20 July 1867.

The working class leaders of the League in Glasgow and Edinburgh encouraged rank-and-file trade unionists to look beyond the agitation for a new Reform Bill to the approaching general election. But this was not true of all working class leaders; and the Glasgow Trades Council vitiated its political effectiveness by not following the example of the Edinburgh Trades Council in agitating for Parliamentary reform.¹ There were, however, some middle class Liberals who disapproved of trade union involvement in politics altogether. The Glasgow Weekly Herald, for example, had criticised the political activity of the Scottish trade unions:

They are becoming political agitators, and are spending their funds in the getting up of monster meetings and Reform demonstrations ... For a long time trades unions refused to mix themselves up with politics, but many societies have broken through this salutary rule during the present agitation. Others, however, still hold aloof, and confine their operations to the purposes for which they were originally established; and this, we think, is very good evidence of forethought and common sense.²

But extra-Parliamentary agitation impinged on the class consciousness of trade unionists; and the reminiscences and literary allusions of veteran Chartists, who were active in the Reform agitation, led them to see the connections between trade union and political questions.

Though George Ross, J.C. Proudfoot and other leading figures of the Glasgow Trades Council were active in the Scottish National Reform League, the Glasgow Trades Council, as 'a representative body' refused

1. Edinburgh Trades Council Minutes, 25 December 1866.
2. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 26 January 1867.

to become involved in politics.¹ Moreover, some of the leading men in the Glasgow Trades Council (for example, Alexander MacDonald, Charles Lang and J. Proudfoot were apathetic towards Liberalism, and they probably did not want to embarrass the Tories by agitating against the Tory Reform Bill.² This created a serious split in the trade union movement in Glasgow, and led to the formation of a rival organisation.

A meeting of the delegates from seventeen trade unions met in Glasgow on 31 July 'to consider what course should be adopted by the trades respecting the Scotch Reform Bill'. George Jackson, a leader of the Glasgow Trades Council in the 1870's, took a prominent part in the proceedings. Resolutions 'to continue the agitation for political reform'; to promote 'the formation of Reform committees in our respective trades'; and to accept 'the platform of the Scottish National Reform League' were passed unanimously.³ This meeting marked the birth of the Glasgow Working Men's Association.⁴

By August the Glasgow Sentinel observed that 'without the protection which the ballot affords, the Reform Bill will be to many no better than a dead letter, as they must either wrong their conscience by voting for a candidate they do not approve of or else

1. Glasgow Sentinel, 5 October 1867.
2. On the 14 November, 1868, A. MacDonald, C. Lang and J.C. Proudfoot addressed a meeting in the Corn Exchange, Falkirk, at which they told an audience of working men that they 'had not been, nor could not be represented' by Liberals like Merry, the member for the Falkirk burghs. Glasgow Herald, 16 November 1868.
3. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 3 August 1867.
4. The annual report of the Glasgow Working Men's Association, published in the Reformer in 1868, mistakenly gave the foundation meeting of the Association as 14 August, 1867. The Reformer, 19 December 1868.

forebear exercising their right'.¹ But the miners lacked the ability of the artisans to impose their views on the local committees; and in any case a very large number of ordinary miners² and many of their leaders³ had marked Tory sympathies.⁴ The political differences between working class Liberals and those miners' leaders who had Tory sympathies were openly fought out in the general election of 1868.

In the closing months of 1867 the conflicting political attitudes of middle class Liberals were manifested in various ways. In a letter to George Jackson, Duncan McLaren not only refused to participate in a national conference of the Reform League, but he also expressed the view that 'all agitation' for an extension of the franchise 'should cease for many years'.⁵ On the other hand, middle class Liberals who had been hitherto reluctant to associate themselves too closely with militant movements for Parliamentary reform, were increasingly to be seen in the forefront of Reform League conferences.

In the report presented to the annual business meeting of the Scottish National Reform League in Glasgow on 16 September, George Jackson informed the members that the League 'now had fifty branches'. The General Council of the League were also on 'friendly relations with reform committees more or less advanced in various towns and had correspondents in many places

1. Glasgow Sentinel, 17 August 1867.

2. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 4 July 1867.

3. See below.

4. The majority of the miners leaders openly displayed their Tory sympathies in the general election of 1868.

5. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 31 August 1867.

where as yet no organisation existed'. He concluded by expressing the hope that 'reformers would be thoroughly prepared throughout the length and breadth of the land to select candidates for Parliament who would thoroughly represent the great body of the people.¹ The national conference of the League, met in the Lesser City Hall, Glasgow, on 17 September, and Provost Hay was elected to the chair. Although a few working class delegates were in evidence, the proceedings of this conference was dominated by middle class Liberals from Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and other Scottish towns. A resolution accepting household suffrage 'with a liberal lodger franchise for the burghs as an instalment of the rights of the people' and condemning 'an extensive franchise being withheld from the inhabitants of the counties' was carried unanimously.² The attitude taken up in relation to the assimilation of the burgh and county franchise was what separated the advanced middle class Liberals and working class leaders on the one hand and the 'right-wing' and independent Liberals (like Duncan McLaren) on the other hand.

The divisions between the different groups of Liberals were not always so clear-cut; and the class-consciousness of working class leaders often manifested itself in strange ways. Mr. Ballatine, a working class delegate from Selkirk, told the national conference in Glasgow that 'with national suffrage and the ballot the country had nothing to fear from the overflowing of democracy, even although it should embrace the London rougns and the scum of Edinburgh'. Moreover, Mr. George Miller, a trade unionist from the Gorbals,

1. North British Daily Mail, 17 September 1867.
2. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 21 September 1867; North British Daily Mail, 18 September 1867.

informed the middle class Liberals that the time had come 'for them to say to trade unionists - "if you will support us, if you will labour with us to gain a fair representation in Parliament, we will aid you in seeking protection for your private property". The working class leaders also wanted legal protection for their trade unions; but most of the other speeches, criticising detailed aspects of the Scottish Reform Bill, were delivered by middle class Liberals.¹

The Scottish Liberals were, as we have already seen, far from being a united political force; and their divisions led to independent and advanced Liberals opposing each other in some constituencies in the general election of 1868. In 1867, Mr. James Lamont, a Scottish Liberal M.P., refused to support the September conference of the Scottish National Reform League on the grounds that 'any further agitation' would 'damage the real interests of the working classes by keeping the country in a state of disquiet and uncertainty, and to serve the selfish objects of a knot of professional agitators'. He also accused George Jackson of desiring the abolition of the 'effete establishment' including 'the army, the navy, the church and the monarchy'.² Then Jackson attacked Lamont for replying 'through the public prints to a private letter' and said working men were not, in spite of Lamont's advice to the contrary, going to abandon their political programme of 'national schools, establishing courts of arbitration, liberating the churches and unlocking the land'.³

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1. North British Daily Mail, 18 September 1867; Glasgow Herald, 18th September; Edinburgh Evening Courant, 18 September 1867
 2. North British Daily Mail, 26 August 1867.
 3. Ibid., 21 August 1867.

On 18 September a conference of East of Scotland Reform League delegates met in Dundee, and speeches were delivered by Ernest Jones and Edmund Beales. The delegates agreed to form 'a Reform Trades Association' in Dundee and 'to continue the various organisations until the Reform Bill for Scotland and other social reforms shall be accomplished'. It was also agreed to organise 'the proper registration of voters', and that 'the candidates for election to Parliament shall be prepared to advocate and support the rights of the people'.¹ By then the various branches of the League were making plans to influence the outcome of the forthcoming general election. By October 1867, when Ernest Jones gave a lecture in Glasgow on Parliamentary reform,² the agitational work of the Reform League had already passed its climax. However, the year 1867 culminated in 'a bang' rather than a 'whimper'. On 22 December a small group of Irish coal miners, who were in sympathy with 'the Fenian brotherhood', set fire to several ricks at Lassodie House farm, Dunfermline.³ This incendiary act in support of the Fenians by a 'primitive rebel' resulted in P. O'Neil, an Irish miner, being sent to prison on Christmas Day.⁴ Four days later Sergeant James Sutherland, of 'the 21st Fusiliers', was arrested in Dumfries on 'a charge of sedition'. In conversation with 'the landlord and other persons', he said that 'the working men of England and Scotland should unite with the Fenians and upset the Government'. He was not a Fenian, but 'a man of strong democratic principles'.⁵

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1. Scotsman, 19 September 1867; Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 September 1867.
 2. Glasgow Sentinel, 5 October 1867.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 24 December 1867.
 4. Ibid., 26 December 1867.
 5. Glasgow Sentinel, 4 January 1868.

In a few Scottish towns, where the authorities had not already enrolled special constables,¹ they were soon to do so in places such as Wishaw and Kirkcaldy.²

When the annual meeting of the Edinburgh branch of the League was held on 5 February, 1868, the proceedings were mainly conducted by trade unionists and working class radicals. Councillor David Lewis and B.F. Dunn were the only middle class Liberals present, and Lewis did not speak on this occasion. B.F. Dunn moved the adoption of the annual report, but the report was opposed by D. Moore, George Scott and Jackson, a Tory bootmaker. Scott described the report as 'untruthful', 'intolerant in spirit', and 'revolutionary in its tendencies'. But though Jackson expressed his support for Disraeli before he tendered his resignation, the report was supported by a 'very large majority'. Dunn was elected president, and he replaced William Troop who had been chairman of the Edinburgh Trades Council.³

In 1871 Dunn initiated a long controversy in the correspondence columns of the Scotsman in which he revealed that the Edinburgh branch of the League and the Trades Council had been hotbeds of Republicanism in the late 1860s and early 1870s. In a letter to the Reformer, a pro-labour organ of the advanced middle class Liberals in Edinburgh, Peter McNeill accused Dunn of having become 'a reactionary Tory'.⁴

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1. Ayr Advertiser, 9 January 1867.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 2 March 1868; Dunfermline Press, 27 January 1868.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 8 February 1868.
 4. Reformer, 9 September 1871.

The Reform League played a very important role in the general election of 1868,¹ and in many Scottish towns helped to build the foundations of the new Liberal Party which emerged from the struggle over the Reform Bill of 1868.² In England the National Reform League dissolved early in 1869;³ but the Scottish League survived into the 1870s.⁴ On 3 March, 1873, a meeting of the General Council of the Scottish National Reform League took place in Glasgow. The meeting was chaired by Bailie Moir, and Jackson, the secretary, reported that branches of the League and Reform committees in seventeen Scottish towns were in favour of 'Sir Charles Dilke's motion' on 'a more equal distribution of political power and the Household Suffrage (Counties) Bill'. A plan had also been considered to 'promote an organisation of the Reform party throughout Scotland similar to that which existed during the agitation which resulted in the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867.'⁵ The political programme of the League and other working class organisations such as the Dundee Working Men's Association⁶ on land reform and the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland was taken up by working class radicals in

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1. This is dealt with in chapter three.
 2. 'There emerged from the new political situation what were virtually two new parties - the Conservatives replacing the Tories and the old Whig right-wing, and the Liberals absorbing the radicals as well as the main body of the Whigs'. G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics (London, 1941), p. 29.
 3. Gillespie, *op.cit.*, p. 294.
 4. The meeting of 3 March, 1873, was probably the last meeting of the Scottish National Reform League.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 4 March 1873.
 6. In 1866 the Dundee Working Men's Association advocated the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland.

the 1880s. The main significance of the stage army of Reform committees created by George Jackson in 1873 was the distinctive sense of national consciousness that even working class Scots were fiercely proud of.

In the meantime it could hardly be argued that the Scottish working class was sufficiently homogeneous socially, sufficiently politically conscious, or sufficiently united in its political attitudes, where these appeared, to be in a position to exercise a dominant influence on the course of the forthcoming general election. The artisans were far enough removed from the great body of the labouring population to make them at times ready co-operators with the middle classes themselves. If they were ready at times to threaten physical violence in order to secure a wider suffrage, they were at other times clearly conscious of the dangers of total popular involvement in the achievement of this end and shared many middle class fears. And so they were persuaded to act alongside middle class Liberals for a partial enfranchisement of the working classes, even if they did see the 1867 Act as a basis for further demands, and, whatever their disillusion in 1867, they still remained identified politically with Liberalism for another decade. Their political action through the Scottish National Reform League was often as individuals since their organisations, the trade union branches and the Trade Councils, did not always get involved as such in politics. One trade union group with a known preference, the miners, did in fact incline towards the Tories and weaken working class political potential in the short run both through its separatism and by its choice of allies.

1. During the Reform agitation in 1867 working class radicals frequently evoked the name of William Wallace, the Scottish

The Scottish National Reform League, the Lib-Lab

Alliance and the General Election of 1868

The Scottish National Reform League was founded at a meeting in Glasgow on 17 September 1866, and by February 1867 the League had enrolled 5,200 members.¹ By July 1867 the National Reform League had 488 provincial branches, and only 64 of these branches were Scottish ones. Moreover, in 16 of the 32 Scottish counties there were no branches of the League,² and trade unionists formed a small minority of the Scottish membership except in a few branches. Most of the branches of the Scottish National Reform League were dominated by middle class advanced Liberals, and on 13 October 1867 George Howell, the national secretary, wrote to George Jackson, the secretary of the Scottish League, as follows:

It was reported at our Council last night that your resolutions were to be of the old Milk and Water sort, instead of Manhood Suffrage and the Ballot. Now Mr. Beales will support no resolution unless it goes for manhood suffrage, and he wishes me to tell you this. Moreover, our Council will not allow any of its advocates to go for less.³

The Scottish Reform League was accurately described by the press as an association of 'advanced Liberals' with their headquarters in Glasgow;⁴ yet they had to be persuaded by their English associates to campaign for manhood suffrage and the ballot. From then on they would be to the 'left' of the National Reform League.

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 2 February 1867.
 2. A.D. Bell. The Reform League From Its Origins to the Reform Act of 1867. D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1961, p. 292.
 3. League Letter Books. Howell Collection, Bishopsgate Institute.
 4. Dunfermline Press, 5 September 1868.

The Scottish Reform League was from the beginning autonomous; it issued its own membership cards; and it did not pay a percentage of its membership dues to the central administration in London.¹ Not only were the day-to-day affairs of the Scottish Reform League controlled by such middle class Liberals as George Jackson, James Moir and John Burt; but the League's Honorary Presidents included three Liberal members of Parliament, Robert Dalglish (Glasgow), A.M. Dunlop (Greenock) and James Merry (Falkirk). They were all advanced Liberals who supported the labour movement's agitations for the ballot and a considerable extension of the franchise.² But in time they would incur the active hostility of Alexander MacDonald and the miners' agents in the west of Scotland.

There were already evident differences between the National and the Scottish Reform League. By 1867 the English trade union artisans had effective majorities on the Councils of the Reform League in London and the English provinces;³ but the Scottish trade unionists were outnumbered by middle class Liberal elements who were concerned about the outcome of the ensuing general election. While English trade union leaders within the National Reform League had forfeited their opportunity to foster working class candidates independent of the two major parties by accepting money from wealthy Liberals during the Reform campaign,⁴ Scottish trade union leaders, already at odds with each other,⁵ were not in a position to influence the Scottish Reform League. The English

1. Bell, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

4. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.

5. See W.H. Fraser, 'Trade unions, reform and the general election of 1868 in Scotland, Scottish Historical Review, Vol. 50, 1971.

labour leaders, who were in a position to push independent labour politics, opted for a secret pact with the Liberal whips; and it has been argued that 'the existence of some pact or arrangement could not be inferred from the election results by any intelligent political observer'.¹

In contrast to the Reform League in England, the numerical weakness of the Scottish trade unionists was revealed when the annual meeting of the Scottish League took place in September 1867. Of the 300 delegates who attended the conference on 17 September, only 61 delegates represented trade unions. Their financial contribution was not, therefore, very important; and only £253 of the Scottish Division's annual income came from subscriptions under £5. Moreover, Liberal M.P.s. such as Dalglish and Corbet had given donations of £25 and £20 respectively, and there had been an anonymous donation of £50.²

For the sake of efficiency and effectiveness the leaders of the Reform League in London were willing to sacrifice individuality for authority, and the Central Association did not hesitate to impose its authority on recalcitrant branches in the English provinces.³ When the annual meeting of the Bradford branch of the League met in October 1867, the Rev. Sharman had no difficulty in persuading the meeting to accept a third clause to the future programme on which the League would fight the general election:

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1. R. Harrison, 'The British Working Class and the General Election of 1868', International Review of Social History, Vol. V. 1960, p. 425.
 2. Bell, *op.cit.*, pp. 292-3.
 3. Michael R. Dunsmore, The Working Classes, The Reform League and the Reform Movement in Lancashire and Yorkshire. M.A. thesis, University of Sheffield, 1961, p. 22.

Justice to labour in its struggle with capital, by the protection of the funds of trade societies and by the revision of the Acts relating to the conspiracy and intimidation.

A further resolution, urging 'the early assembly of a people's convention to determine upon the action to be taken by the League on the election of 1868', was also adopted.

The proposals being canvassed by those members of the English provincial branches like Sharman, who were to the 'left' of George Howell, were incompatible with the plans being shaped in London,¹ particularly during the months immediately before the general election when they were engaged in delicate - and secret - negotiations with the Liberal whips.² Then in mid-January, 1868,² the Reform League in Bradford, where the advanced Liberals had been fairly strong, abandoned their previous commitment to campaign for justice for Ireland and a system of national education.³

In the English provinces, and particularly in Leeds, the programme of 'advanced Liberalism' had been characterised from the mid-1850s by such tenets as justice to Ireland, a national system of education, reform of the land laws, a Ballot Act, disestablishment of the Irish Church and a modification of the laws affecting trade unions. Nonetheless the tests, deciding whether Liberal candidates were advanced or otherwise, were very loose, and the fundamental opposition to trade unionism by Liberal employers such as Robert Kell, a Liberal notorious for his anti-trade union attitudes, did not mean that they could not

1. Ibid., p.221.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. Ibid., p.222.

be described as 'advanced Liberals'.¹ Whether potential Parliamentary candidates were defined as advanced, independent or Whig really depended on local Liberal Associations, and they were usually dominated by middle class elements who were more interested in other tenets of the programme of advanced Liberalism than reform of the laws affecting trade unions.

In England the programme of advanced Liberalism lacked - or was assumed to lack - a wide, popular appeal,² and this, together with the League's financial dependence on wealthy Liberals, was an 'important factor in pushing the London leaders into accepting a more moderate programme. By contrast Scotland was, in electoral terms, to the 'left' of England in so far as the programme of advanced Liberalism had a wider, popular appeal. A crucial factor in allowing the Scottish Reform League to campaign for the agitational demands of the advanced Liberals - a programme almost identical with the English one - was the relative absence of a Tory Party which constituted a serious electoral force.

The Liberals had won a large majority of the Scottish seats from 1832 onwards, and whatever electoral strength the Tories had was mainly restricted to the rural areas. Indeed, it had been fairly commonplace for the Tories not to contest many urban seats during the two decades before 1868, and many electoral fights had been between Liberal candidates belonging to different factions of the Liberal party. In Scotland the three major political tendencies within the Liberal party were advanced, independent and Whig, or, in modern parlance, the left, the centre and the right. The political position of the independent Liberals was tersely summed

1. Ibid., p. 63.

2. Ibid., p. 221.

up by S. Laing: 'I am a decided but Moderate Liberal, sincerely attached to the Monarchy and leading Institutions of the Country, though always ready by timely reforms, not inconsistent with their spirit, to keep them in harmony with the progress of the age, and thus avert the danger of revolutionary changes'.¹ The language employed by Laing and other independent Liberals was reminiscent of Peel's Tamworth Manifesto; and in 1868 the Whigs were not a dominant force in the Scottish constituencies. Besides many of the electoral contests between Liberals were between independent and advanced Liberals.

The Central Association of the Scottish Reform League was dominated by middle class advanced Liberals - most of whom were ex-Chartists - and they campaigned to strengthen the advanced Liberal elements within the Liberal associations. They made no attempt to impose a uniform electoral programme on the other Scottish branches of the League, and the programmes of some branches were to the 'left' as well as to the 'right' of the central association. By the middle of 1868, by which time the general election campaign was under way, the leaders of the Central Association in Glasgow - James Moir, George Jackson, John Burt and Robert Cochrane - were prepared to promote the candidatures of advanced middle class Liberals even in constituencies where there were good prospects of pushing the claims of working class candidates.

1. To the Electors of the County of Orkney and Shetland. Election address of S. Laing, see 387/123, in the Reid Tait Collection, County Library, Lerwick.

Alexander MacDonald and some of the leaders of the Glasgow Trades Council had long associations with Lord Elcho, the Tory M.P. who had opposed Parliamentary reform, and they were attached to him because of his prolonged efforts to amend the Master and Servant Act.¹ Elcho had, moreover, frequently promised to secure legislation beneficial to the miners. But by the time the general election campaign was underway the Glasgow Trades Council who actively assisted MacDonald's promotion of Tory candidates at the expense of Liberals did so as individuals rather than as representatives of their trade unions.²

The Scottish miners entered the general election with their own strategy and programme. The miners' organisation in the west of Scotland - in Fife the miners supported Henry Campbell, the advanced Liberal³ - was the only Scottish working class organisation which initiated and sustained a systematic campaign against Liberal parliamentary candidates. In contrast to the Scottish workers' programme,⁴ the miners' political programme attracted considerably less attention from the Liberal and working class press.⁵ The latter programme, in the form of a series of test questions to be put to all parliamentary candidates, was published in the Glasgow Sentinel, a working class newspaper,⁶ in July. A little later the Edinburgh

1. Fraser, op.cit., pp. 142-3.

2. Fraser fails to point out that the Glasgow Trades Council collapsed in April 1868. See Glasgow Sentinel, 18 April 1868.

3. Dunfermline Press, 5 September 1868.

4. 'The Scottish Programme for Workmen', Reynolds Newspaper, 3 November 1868, Appendix 2; Spectator, 24 October 1868; Dundee Advertiser, 30 October 1868; Kilbarnock Advertiser, 30 October 1868; Edinburgh Reformer, 26 December 1868.

5. Glasgow Sentinel, 11 July 1868. See Appendix III. Questions to be put to Candidates for Parliamentary Honours.

6. W.H. Fraser, 'A Newspaper for its Generation: The Glasgow Sentinel', Scottish Labour History Society Journal, July 1971, pp. 18-31.

branch of the Scottish Reform League¹ and the Edinburgh Trades Council² drafted a series of test questions which formed the basis of the Scottish workers' programme.

In June the miners' leaders launched their first attacks against Liberals in general and James Merry, the member of Parliament for the Falkirk burghs and an Honorary President of the Scottish Reform League, in particular. The Glasgow Sentinel put the miners' argument very sharply: 'Instead of being returned to his present constituency, Mr. Merry may be thankful if he is not hooted from every meeting in which he may appear in the mining constituencies'.³ The miners leaders hated Merry as a coalowner, and his record as an unsympathetic employer of miners was of greater concern to Alexander MacDonald and the miners' agents in the west of Scotland than his genuine support of the programme of advanced Liberalism.

Two weeks later the Glasgow Sentinel returned to the subject in a long editorial entitled 'the Coming Election' in which the Liberal caucus in the mining areas of Lanarkshire was caustically referred to and prospects analysed.⁴ In Glasgow, where new working class electors formed a majority, they had the means of returning two members; one of them ought to be a working man who would be better able to understand

1. Scotsman, 16 July 1868.

2. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 11 August 1868.

3. Glasgow Sentinel, 6 June 1868.

4. 'Two of the seven additional seats were allocated to the shires, Aberdeen, Ayr and Lanark each being divided into two constituencies, while Peebles and Selkirk were joined as one; among the cities, Glasgow got a third member and Dundee a second, while a fifteenth district of burghs, that of Hawick, came into being; and the two remaining members went to the universities - one to St. Andrews and Edinburgh, the other to Glasgow and Aberdeen.' G.S. Pryde, Scotland: From 1603 to the Present Day (London, 1962), p. 205.

and look after their interests than a representative from the employing classes. West Lanarkshire should also be an area they would strongly influence; in Wishaw, Motherwell, and Coatbridge they would be more than a match for Lord Bellhaven, though they could hardly hope to touch the upper ward where the landed interest was all powerful and likely to return the sitting Whig, Sir Edward Colebrooke.¹

Although Alexander MacDonald eventually stood for election as 'the people's candidate' in the Kilmarnock burghs, the miners initially set their sights on obtaining a Parliamentary seat for him in either the Falkirk burghs or in the city of Glasgow. This was made crystal-clear in an editorial in the Glasgow Sentinel before the vital electoral conference of the Glasgow branch of the Scottish National Reform League and trade delegates was held in Glasgow to select a candidate for the third seat:

The great majority of the electors in the Falkirk burghs will, under the new Act, belong to the working classes, and they will show a strange indifference to their best interests if they do not look out for a better representative ... If the working men of Glasgow decide on returning a member of their own, let it be a bona fide working man, and not a tea dealer or peddling shopkeeper.²

A major factor in shaping the election strategy of the miners' leaders was their close identification of 'the whole class of harpies who live upon the producing class' with the Scottish Liberals - and particularly Scottish Liberal M.P.s who were also coal owners.³ While support for Liberal candidates was almost universal among the leaders and rank-and-file

1. Glasgow Sentinel. 20 June 1868.

2. Ibid., 27 June 1868.

3. Ibid., 22 February, 30 May and 28 June 1868.

of the artisans the miners' leaders stood alone in their commitment to Tory candidates. In the urban constituencies working class leaders were often involved in having to decide which of the two, or even three, Liberal candidates they would support in a particular constituency. A large number of the urban constituencies were not contested by the Tories at all.¹

In the mining constituencies the working class was badly split by the conflicting aims of the Tory miners and the Lib-Lab artisans.² On one occasion a working class elector told Alexander MacDonalld at a public meeting in Airdrie in support of James Merry that, if all the miners demands were raised in the House of Commons, 'their (Parliamentary) representative would have very little time to attend to the interests of the artisans in the five burghs'.³

In July a conference of Lanarkshire miners passed a resolution thanking 'Alexander MacDonalld for the course he had adopted to bring the miners' creed before the candidates for Parliamentary honours'.⁴ When the Liberal and Tory organisations held meetings in the mining constituencies, the miners' leaders lost no opportunity in putting their programme before predominantly working class audiences. In the

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1. In 1868 the Tories were very weak, and they recognised the overwhelming strength of Liberalism by not contesting thirty-seven Parliamentary seats.
 2. Within the boundaries of the mining constituencies there were towns and urban labour organisations, and the miners' leaders had no hope of mobilising the working class vote without the help of the Lib-Lab artisans. In several constituencies the miners' leaders and the Lib-Lab leaders of the urban working class confronted each other in bitter face-to-face political struggles.
 3. Hamilton Advertiser, 22 August 1868.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 25 July 1868.

initial phase of the general election the miners' leaders attempted to feel their way towards independent working class politics. On 25 July a long editorial in the Glasgow Sentinel entitled 'Are the Interests of Capital and Labour Antagonistic or Identical?', argued that existing legislation, where not directly hostile to labour as in the non-protection of trade union funds, was at least favourable to capital, and that the injustice could only be eliminated if workmen remained true to their own interests at the coming election.¹

In the hurly-burly of the elections the miners were less clear-cut in their political attitudes, and, as the campaign developed, the miners' agents often tried to mobilise the mining vote for the Tory candidates. Once the Trade Councils and artisans had repudiated the election strategy of the miners' leaders and their allies in the Glasgow Trades Council,² the miners were increasingly forced into the Tory camp.³ Before then, however, the miners' agents sometimes gave away the few opportunities they had to develop independent working class politics. When Thomas Smith, the miners' agent, addressed a mass working class meeting in Wishaw in June, he was cheered for his denunciation of the Liberals and commendation of 'the Tories or Conservatives so-called' as the Party of 'progress and reform'.⁴ The difficulties inhibiting the development of independent working class politics - and particularly

1. Ibid., 25 July 1868.

2. See below.

3. The election of 1868 was the last general election before the introduction of the secret ballot, and some newspapers claimed that foremen and managers had canvassed workers for votes. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 24 October 1868; Glasgow Sentinel, 23 November 1868.

4. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 4 July 1868.

the latent conflict between Orangemen and Irish nationalists - were formidable. In practice the only hope the miners had of developing an independent programme depended on their ability to influence 'a nucleus' within the labour movement. But although Alexander MacDonald and Alexander Campbell were associated with the Glasgow Trades Council and the Glasgow Master and Servant Act Committee, the Glasgow Trades Council had come under sharp criticism from the Glasgow Working Men's Association¹ and the Edinburgh Trades Council² for their moderation and co-operation with Lord Elcho, the Tory member of Parliament.³ As a consequence of frequent strikes, lock-outs, unemployment and acute poverty in 1867 and 1868 the mass of the miners had been too poor to enrol in the branches of the Scottish National Reform League. The miners were therefore deprived of 'a nucleus for action' within the labour movement; and Liberal newspapers heaped abuse on Alexander MacDonald, the miners' general secretary.

On 7 July a vital electoral conference of delegates representing the district committee of the Scottish National Reform League, the Glasgow Working Men's Association, the Conference of the United Trades and fifteen individual trade union organisations was held in the Trades Hall to select 'a third candidate for Glasgow in the Liberal interest'.⁴ This conference was in effect, as the Glasgow Sentinel observed a few days later, 'an election meeting to promote Mr. George

1. Glasgow Sentinel, 2 May 1868.

2. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 14 May 1867.

3. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 1859-1873, ed., Ian MacDougall (Edinburgh, 1968), pp. XXXi-xxxii.

4. North British Daily Mail, 8 July 1868.

Anderson' who had been 'nominated in a packed meeting'.¹ Alexander MacDonald, Thomas Smith and Charles Lang² led the opposition against the adoption of the executive committee's report 'in so far as it submitted the names of the candidates', and the approval of the report was carried by 53 to 49 votes.³ When the conference came to discuss the controversial issue of selecting 'a working class candidate', George Ross, a leading member of the Old Glasgow Trades Council, supported the advanced Liberals in the Reform League and the Glasgow Working Men's Association who had suggested that Anderson was a suitable candidate to represent working class interests in Parliament. Moreover, the delegates, who were sympathetic to the adoption of a working class candidate, were divided on whether working class candidates should be financially supported by the local trade unions or the national Exchequer.⁴ When MacDonald and Lang persisted in advocating the adoption of working class candidates, George Ross retorted that 'the time for that had not yet come'.⁵ Notwithstanding MacDonald's opposition to the Liberal caucus, a resolution was carried by a large majority inviting Anderson to address the electoral conference as the third Liberal candidate for Glasgow.⁶ But the struggle was not yet over; and a number of working men who had been denied voting rights left the conference and held a meeting on Glasgow Green. At the meeting on the Green over five hundred working men denounced the Liberals who had

1. Glasgow Sentinel, 11 July 1868.

2. Charles Lang had been the chairman of the Glasgow Trades Council before its demise in April, 1868.

3. North British Daily Mail, 8 July 1868.

4. Glasgow Herald, 8 July 1868.

5. North British Daily Mail, 8 July 1868.

6. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 11 July 1868.

manipulated the electoral conference.¹ Once the conference was over, the Glasgow Sentinel, with a note of resignation, accused the organisers of the electoral conference of manipulation.² The 'programme of business' in the handwriting of James Moir confirms the truth of the Glasgow Sentinel's accusation and emphasises the influence that James Moir and George Jackson had within the Liberal caucus in Glasgow.³

The general consensus of the electoral conference was that 'the best interests of the Liberal cause would be most effectually promoted by a cordial union of the supporters of the two present members, and the supporters of the third candidate in the Liberal interest'.⁴ Furthermore, item eight on the programme of business, together with various newspaper reports of the conference, suggest that agreement had already been reached behind the scenes on the formation of aggregate Liberal committees to work for the return of Robert Dalglish and William Graham, the sitting members, and Anderson.⁵ As a voice of Scottish Whiggery the Glasgow Herald attacked the Scottish National Reform League and belittled the political influence of Moir and Jackson;⁶ but the electoral conference of 7 July, 1868, marked the historic advent of the Liberal-Labour alliance and the entrenchment and strengthening of the advanced Liberals in Glasgow.

The conflicting attitudes of trade union leaders in 1868 towards the concept of independent working class politics were occasionally

1. Glasgow Herald, 8 July 1868.

2. Glasgow Sentinel, 11 July 1868.

3. 'Programme of Business for Electoral Conference', in the James Moir Papers, Mitchell Library, Glasgow,

4. Glasgow Herald, 8 July 1868.

5. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 11 July 1868.

6. Glasgow Herald, 11 July 1868.

reflected in the sometimes ambiguous editorials of the Glasgow Sentinel. Though the Glasgow Sentinel was much more critical of the Whigs in the Scottish Liberal Party than the Edinburgh Reformer, it was sometimes less open in its support of the Tories than the miners' leaders themselves.¹ While the Glasgow Sentinel bitterly denounced the political machinations of the organisers of the infamous electoral conference in Glasgow, it concluded one editorial: 'What is wanted to secure unity in the Liberal ranks is leaders on whom the electors can rely in the approaching struggle'.² By contrast a mass meeting of Lanarkshire miners on the day following the Glasgow conference carried a resolution committing the miners to 'do all that they can to raise the means to return Mr. MacDonald to Parliament'. MacDonald agreed to seek election on condition that the miners raised enough money for his campaign.³ At this time he leaned to Toryism rather than Liberalism; and he expressed his warm admiration for Richard Oastler and Joseph R. Stephens whose pamphlets advocating a 'ten hour day', had first come into his hands during the miners' strike of 1842.

The miners and their leaders heckled Liberal and Tory candidates throughout the long election campaign between July and November; and they generally ended up by expressing their support for the Tories. A factor of some importance in reinforcing the Toryism of many indigenous miners was their sympathy for the Orange lodges. Contemporaries were not able to quantify Orange support in the mining communities with real accuracy; yet the surviving literary evidence

1. See the editorial entitled 'Tory candidate for Glasgow', Glasgow Sentinel, 24 October 1863.

2. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1863.

3. *Ibid.*

underlines its hard reality in working class life. An awareness of such religious and ethnic prejudice led the editor of the Tory oriented Edinburgh Evening Courant to entertain high hopes of a Tory victory in Lanarkshire when he wrote:

Fortunately the mass of the population of Lanarkshire are not so easily beguiled as masses of the working classes have proved themselves at other times and other places by more party names.¹

But class hatred was much more important than religious bias in goading the miners' leaders into their blistering criticism of the Liberals; and Andrew McCowie, the Scoto-Irishman, was as fierce in his criticism of James Merry as indigenous Presbyterian miners like MacDonald.² Moreover, MacDonald went out of this way to criticise Liberals such as Sir Edward Colebrooke who were being returned to Parliament unopposed; and at a meeting in Airdrie in October he was asked why he supported 'the Tories at every turn'.³

In July a small private meeting of the Liberal committee met in Wishaw to nominate Major John G.C. Hamilton to contest the southern division of Lanarkshire in the Liberal interest. A few days later a miners meeting condemned the action of the Liberal caucus in nominating a candidate without consulting 'the electors and non-electors of the burgh of Wishaw'. Thomas Smith and Robert Steele told the miners that the county member of Parliament had been 'the nominee of a small clique' for too long; and they were clearly preparing to support the Tory candidate, Sir Norman MacDonald Lockhart.⁴ On 16 August Alexander MacDonald expressed his satisfaction with the answers Sir Norman Lockhart had given in

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1. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 25 August 1868.
 2. J. MacArthur, New Monkland Parish (Coatbridge, 1890), pp. 379-380.
 3. Hamilton Advertiser, 17 October 1868; Scotsman, 14 October 1868.
 4. Hamilton Advertiser, 18 July 1868.

connection with the miners' creed;¹ and a little later he told a mass meeting of miners in Wishaw that 'he had a strong hatred of Major Hamilton for the connections he was in. He came there as the nominee of Lord Bellhaven. What was their recollection of that latter gentleman? In twelve years how many times had that man turned them out of their homes? Could anything good come out of Bellhaven Castle? The man who came as the nominee of Lord Bellhaven was a dangerous one'.² On polling day, and in spite of the optimism of the editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant, Major Hamilton defeated Sir Norman Lockhart, his Tory opponent, by a narrow majority of 221 votes.³

In July the miners' leaders heckled the Liberal candidates at every meeting they addressed in the mining constituencies. The persistent hectoring to which the miners subjected James Merry was at least partly motivated by their desire to see their general secretary nominated as a working class candidate for the Falkirk burghs.⁴ On 19 August at a public meeting in Falkirk 'MacDonald and his supporters' failed to persuade a predominantly working class audience to carry a vote of no confidence in Merry. The subsequent failure of James Blee and Charles Lang to secure MacDonald's nomination at a breakaway meeting of miners and ironmoulders in the Academy Park, Falkirk, was the end of the first phase of the miners' campaign against the Liberals;⁵ and the Dunfermline Press dismissed the miners' general secretary with a note of triumphant glee:

1. Scotsman, 17 August 1868.

2. North British Daily Mail, 22 August 1868.

3. T. Wilkie, The Representation of Scotland: Parliamentary Elections since 1832 (Paisley, 1895), p. 198.

4. Dunfermline Press, 29 August 1868.

5. North British Daily Mail, 20 August 1868; Falkirk Herald 22 August 1868.

Mr. Alexander MacDonald is not heard of as a candidate yet, so that all the bounce has come to naught. This gentleman has been making earnest efforts to keep himself in the notice of the public, but he will find the result different from what he expects. He has got a good "snuffing out" at two elections meetings, and I am certain he must feel himself "out in the cold". There is an old adage "every dog has its day", and if what everybody says be true, it is about the gloaming with him; and time, too, that the working man saw that their cause will not prosper until a different means of dealing with their employer be taken.¹

But while Liberal journalists were fashioning their funeral obsequies, the miners were preparing to nominate their general secretary as the working class candidate for the Kilmarnock burghs.

In July the Kilmarnock branch of the Scottish National Reform League convened a conference of trades' delegates in the New Temperance Hall, Kilmarnock, to discuss their programme and policy for the general election. The Scottish workers' programme was unanimously adopted; and the delegates 'agreed that the conference should be resolved into a public meeting'.² A majority of the delegates supported a resolution that the Hon. R.P. Bouverie did not deserve the confidence of the working classes; but a minority led by James McEwan and other middle class radicals thought he 'had been a good and faithful servant for twenty-five years'. However, a further resolution insisting that the candidate coming forward should support a Permissive Bill was withdrawn after a stormy debate on the temperance issue. The conference concluded by agreeing to consult the trade unions and electors in the four other towns in the constituency.³

On 23 July a public meeting of the Kilmarnock branch of the League accepted 'the platform of principles agreed upon at a recent meeting of

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1. Dunfermline Press, 22 August 1868.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 11 July 1868; Ayr Advertiser, 16 July 1868.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 13 July 1868.

the trades' delegates to which anyone coming forward as a candidate would be asked to adhere'.¹ Then Edwin Chadwick, in search of a Parliamentary seat, had a meeting with the local leaders of the League in Kilmarnock on Saturday 22 August; and two days later a number of newspapers announced that he was going to oppose Bouverie.² The miners in the constituency had little or no influence in the local League, and John Muir, the veteran miners' leader in Rutherglen, was so attached to laissez-faire economics³ and Whiggery that he campaigned for Bouverie.⁴

On 24 August George Howell wrote to inform James McEwan that Chadwick wanted to stand for election in the Kilmarnock burghs.⁵ 'If he does, do aid him all you can; at any rate do not give your pledges too early for any one else'.⁶ Moreover, the Kilmarnock radicals were so sharply divided that some of them refused to cast Bouverie aside;⁷ but once the decision had been taken to support Chadwick the local leadership collectively campaigned for him. McEwan published a letter from John Stuart Mill arguing that Chadwick's absence from the next Parliament would be 'a public misfortune';⁸ and the Glasgow Herald praised Bouverie's 'admirable address'.⁹

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1. Scotsman, 25 July 1868.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 24 August 1868; Ayr Advertiser, 27 August 1868.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 10 July 1868.
 4. Ibid., 5 September 1868.
 5. James McEwan was the secretary of the Kilmarnock branch of the Scottish National Reform League.
 6. George Howell to James McEwan, 24 August 1868. Howell Collection, Bishopsgate, Institute, London.
 7. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 12 September 1868.
 8. Glasgow Herald, 16 September 1868.
 9. Ibid., 29 August 1868.

A mass meeting of miners met in Rutherglen on 27 August to hammer out their local election strategy. They criticised Bouverie's views on 'the responsibilities of employers for their managers', and they enthusiastically passed a resolution inviting MacDonald to stand against Bouverie.¹ In the early part of the campaign MacDonald concentrated on winning support among the miners, though he argued that the 'working classes' had distinct class interests of their own.²

In a letter dated 7 September Professor B.S. Beasley wrote to MacDonald:

I see there is a disposition among the colliers to bring you forward for Kilmarnock. I sincerely hope that they may do so, and that they may be strong enough to carry you in. You are one of the few representatives of Unionism I know who would be able to fight the battle with effect in such an assembly as the House of Commons.³

But by then the trades' delegates in Kilmarnock were committed to promote the candidature of Chadwick; and Muir, the most influential miners' leader in the constituency, was committed to Bouverie.

The Dunfermline Press criticised the perennial agitation of 'the irrepressible MacDonald' and his lack of a 'practical remedy' for the

1. 'There was a man among them who was equal in intelligence to Mr. Bouverie, and who, at the same time, knew all their "ills" that they as working men and their families were "heirs to". It was said, and he (Blee) sometimes thought that it was true, that the individual referred to was tainted with Conservatism. That man was Alexander MacDonald, and he thought they ought to invite that gentleman to explain his views, politically and socially, and then consider the propriety of asking him to become a candidate for the representation of the Kilmarnock burghs ... The mention of Mr. MacDonald's name was received with vociferous and repeated cheering, and thereafter it was agreed that Mr. MacDonald should be requested to meet with and address the electors in the New Town Hall, Rutherglen, on Wednesday, 9th September.' North British Daily Mail, 28 August 1868.
2. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 5 September 1868.
3. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 12 September 1868; Dunfermline Press 12 September 1868.

miners problems;¹ and the Glasgow Herald ridiculed him as 'a promoter of a working man's Elysium, as graphically portrayed in the lines:

Eight hours to work,
Eight hours to play,
Eight hours to sleep,
And eight hours a day'.²

However, the sharpest thrust of all came from the editor of the North British Daily Mail who criticised MacDonald for his lack of political experience and for his inconsistency; his recent statements, though not unambiguous, identified him with the Liberals, though his earlier inclinations had been towards the Tories.³ These criticisms by the Liberal press, together with the accusations of Liberal trade unionists, provoked Smith, the miners' agent, into denying that 'the people's candidate' was a Tory.⁴

The miners in the constituency diligently attended MacDonald's meetings,⁵ and the Glasgow Sentinel asked if 'the working men in Kilmarnock' had 'sufficient public spirit' to support 'a man belonging to their own order' rather than a scion of the nobility.⁶

At meetings in Kilmarnock,⁷ Dumbarton,⁸ and Rutherglen,⁹ the miners turned up in large numbers to give MacDonald overwhelming votes of confidence. Arthur Cunningham, a miners' leader, cashed in on the

1. Ibid., 26 September 1868.

2. Glasgow Herald, 19 September 1868.

3. North British Daily Mail, 21 September 1868.

4. Scotsman, 18 September 1868.

5. Ibid., Ayr Advertiser, 24 September 1868; Kilmarnock Advertiser, 26 September 1868; Scotsman, 29 September 1868.

6. Glasgow Sentinel, 12 September 1868.

7. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 3 October 1868.

8. Scotsman, 8 October 1868.

9. Glasgow Herald, 7 October 1868.

nationalist sentiments of working people by insisting that they needed 'a Scotsman to represent them and not an Englishman'.¹ By the end of September MacDonald was worried by the support the artisans in the constituency had given to Chadwick; and he tried to cope with this problem by arguing, in the face of irrefutable evidence to the contrary, that the local artisans had invited him to seek election. He told a meeting of working people in Kilmarnock that he had at the outset been received unhesitatingly by artisans and other solid citizens as a proper person to represent Kilmarnock and later been given backing by a meeting representing every trade in the town; on the strength of this evidence he had presented himself as a candidate.²

As the pressure against MacDonald's candidature was intensified by Liberal newspapers³ and the local Reform League,⁴ he denied he had supported Tory candidates.⁵ In October James Moir, the national president of the Scottish National Reform League, spoke for Chadwick at a meeting in Kilmarnock,⁶ and the Reformer appealed to MacDonald and the Rev. Robert Thomson to withdraw from the election and give Chadwick a straight fight with Bouverie.⁷ Then MacDonald alleged that working men had been intimidated in Dumbarton, and that foremen had gone among the workers 'book in hand' canvassing for votes.⁸

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1. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 17 October 1868.
 2. Ibid., 3 October 1868.
 3. Glasgow Herald, 16 October 1868; Dunfermline Press, 7 October 1868.
 4. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 31 October 1868.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 9 October 1868.
 6. Ibid., 17 October 1868.
 7. Reformer, 14 November 1868.
 8. North British Daily Mail, 9 October 1868.

A few weeks later Smith, the miners' agent, came out in support of Bouverie without abandoning his commitment to the miners' creed;¹ and the miners were becoming increasingly doubtful of MacDonald's prospect of electoral success.

On 28 October MacDonald told 'a respectable audience' of working people that Chadwick had no 'practical knowledge of the great Scottish questions'. When he addressed a second meeting in Kilmarnock on the same evening, he was challenged by members of the local Reform League to submit to 'a test vote' to see whether he or Chadwick 'had the greatest number of votes'. As the meeting was breaking up, he denied that he wanted to 'split the Liberal interest'.² His retreat from the contest was reported in the press about two weeks later,³ and some of his committee joined forces with Thomson, the other Liberal candidate.⁴ But the miners general secretary had not yet closed his campaign against the Liberals.⁵

By October the mining constituencies had become a cauldron of seething discontent, and in Glasgow the Orangemen had bitterly criticised the campaign against Robert Dalglish.⁶ At the same time the miners in Lanarkshire sharpened their criticisms of Hamilton⁷ and Colebrooke,⁸ the

1. Ibid., 30 October 1868.

2. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 31 October 1868.

3. North British Daily Mail, 11 November 1868.

4. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 14 November 1868.

5. In the middle of his election campaign, MacDonald appealed to a meeting of 2000 working people to depend on their trade unions. 'He said that working men could only protect themselves effectually by becoming trade unionists; and, if returned, he would do everything in his power to get trade Unions legalised.' Scotsman, 29 September

6. Glasgow Sentinel, 17 October 1868.

7. Hamilton Advertiser, 17 October 1868; North British Daily Mail, 16 October 1868.

8. Hamilton Advertiser, 24 October 1868.

Liberal candidates. In a letter to the editor of the Hamilton Advertiser a miner accused the Liberals of being 'actuated by the most selfish spirit of class legislation'.¹ Then the scene and the 'agitators' shifted to the Falkirk burghs constituency, where very bitter clashes, often bordering on violence, between 'the upper crust of the working classes' and the miners were deepened by the intransigent Toryism of the miners' leaders.

In late October the Hon. E. Horsman came forward to challenge Merry for the privilege of representing the Falkirk burghs.² Once MacDonald had been persuaded to submit to 'a test vote';³ the miners threw their support behind Horsman, the Tory candidate. In meetings in every part of the constituency, the miners heckled Merry without mercy and lauded Horsman with praise, and the artisans formed a Working Men's Liberal Association to promote the candidature of Merry. A wide range of Liberal newspapers supported Merry,⁴ and only the Glasgow Herald in the west of Scotland adopted an ambiguous political attitude towards the contest going on in the Falkirk burghs.⁵

Nevertheless the working class electors, though divided among themselves, were less reluctant to take sides in the struggle between the two candidates. At a meeting in Hamilton on 11 November Blee and

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1. Ibid.
 2. Glasgow Herald, 4 November 1868.
 3. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 31 October 1868.
 4. Glasgow Herald, 4 November 1868.
 5. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 31 October 1868.

John King, miners' agents, and John G. Proudfoot¹ and Lang, of the defunct Glasgow Trades Council, had no difficulty in getting the miners to support Horsman.² On the same evening representatives of the Hamilton branch of the Scottish National Reform League and of the local branches of the shoemakers union and the carpenters and joiners unanimously declared their support for Merry.³ The miners and the skilled artisans clashed at a meeting in Airdrie on 13 November, and 'the uproarious proceedings' were so violent that the meeting had to be abandoned altogether. King asked 'the artisans', who had convened the meeting, if they were 'the intellectual working classes'; and J.R. Barr told the miners they were 'a lot of serfs' who 'ought to treat' the artisans as 'gentlemen'.⁴

On 14 November MacDonald, Blee, King, Lang and Proudfoot convened a meeting of 'working men and tradesmen' in Falkirk 'on how they had not been, nor could be represented by Mr. Merry'. In the event only the ironmoulders turned out to support MacDonald's agitation, and they were followed into the Corn Exchange by members of the Working Men's Liberal Association. Both sides were soon engaged in violent arguments, and 'MacDonald and his supporters' were rescued by the police from an angry and incensed crowd.⁵ In Airdrie on the following evening Roman Catholic miners were persuaded by the same critics of Merry, who had

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1. A persuasive labour historian has argued that John G. Proudfoot was 'even more attached to the principles expressed in the essay "On Liberty" than they (the Liberals) were themselves'. Harrison, op.cit., p. 203. Nevertheless Proudfoot defied the Lib-Lab establishment by campaigning for a Tory.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 13 November 1868.
 3. Ibid., 13 November 1868.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 14 November 1868.
 5. Glasgow Herald, 16 November 1868; North British Daily Mail, 16 November 1868. Thomas Johnston attributed 'the attack on MacDonald' to the ignorance of 'a whisky corrupted working class mob'. Johnston, op.cit., p. 261. The artisans in no sense constituted 'a mob'.

organised the Falkirk meeting, to vote for Horsman, the Tory.¹

By this time the Glasgow Sentinel had turned a political somersault by coming out in support of Merry who had rescued 'the constituency' from 'Tory thraldom'. The constituency therefore owed him 'a debt', and in any case Horsman was 'a brilliant but erratic Tory'.² In the face of almost monolithic opposition by the Liberal press and the artisans, and the Glasgow Sentinel's somersault, the miners were even more vociferous in their support of Horsman. Consequently there were more arguments between the miners and the artisans, and they culminated in 'a stormy altercation between the two candidates and their law agents'.³

The Glasgow Sentinel savagely criticised Horsman for violating the Sabbath by addressing a meeting of Roman catholic miners in Airdrie on the evening before polling.⁴ This meeting had been organised and convened by MacDonald and his friends, and Alexander Campbell, the editor of the Glasgow Sentinel, clearly disapproved of the miners' support of Horsman. By then Horsman had announced his withdrawal from the contest, but not before sixteen electors had cast their votes for him.⁵ In March 1869 Blee stood trial in the Hamilton Sheriff Court for having bribed electors to vote Tory; and he was 'committed to prison' for three months as 'a warning against such electioneering practices'.⁶

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 14 November 1868.
 2. Glasgow Sentinel, 14 November 1868.
 3. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 14 November 1868.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 21 November 1868.
 5. Wilkie, op.cit., p. 128.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 22 March, 1869.

Outside the mining constituencies the Liberals usually reigned supreme; and they were not challenged by the working class movement. The Liberal Party had been expanded as a result of the new opportunities opened up to the politically ambitious by the creation of seven new Parliamentary seats; and the term 'Liberal' had become less distinct.¹ Nevertheless most, if not all, of the Liberal organisations accepted the advice of one Liberal newspaper editor to 'select men that we know and can trust as our representatives ... whom we know have been identified in the past, or are likely to be identified in the future with the Party of progress'.² And in some of the rural constituencies the Whigs still had influence in the Liberal organisations. In Edinburgh there were three Liberal organisations - the aggregate Liberal committee, backed by the Scotsman, the advanced Liberal Association, backed by the Reformer, and the independent Liberal Committee. Of the three, the independent Liberal committee, dominated by the dictatorial Duncan McLaren, was the ruling policy-making caucus. The advanced Liberals were active in the independent Liberal Committee, too, and in 1868 they were prepared to coexist and co-operate with the independent Liberals.³

In 1868 the Scottish workers' programme was accredited to the Edinburgh trades' delegates.⁴ The Kilmarnock trades' delegates had, in fact, anticipated their Edinburgh counterparts by several weeks.⁵ Moreover, the test questions, forming the basis of the Scottish workers' programme, had been formulated by the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish

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1. Falkirk Herald, 26 September 1868.
 2. Ibid.,
 3. Reformer, 29 August 1868.
 4. Reynold's Newspaper, 8 November 1868.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 11 July 1868.

National Reform League in July¹ about a month before the Edinburgh Trades Council had set up a committee to 'draw up a series of test questions on Trade Subjects'.² By the time the Edinburgh workers' programme was eventually formulated within the Trades Council, the trades' delegates had obviously decided to go beyond trade subjects, and the incorporation of demands for the nationalisation of the railways and the establishment of a national library had been approved of by the middle class advanced Liberals in the local branch of the League.³

The independent Liberal Committee re-adopted their candidates - Duncan McLaren and John Miller of Leithen - for the city of Edinburgh without bothering to consult the Trades Council or the local branch of the League. The local radicals in the League had therefore no reason to harbour illusions about McLaren's sympathy for what became known as the Scottish workers' programme; and, when they appointed a deputation to seek Miller's endorsement of their platform, they ignored McLaren.⁴ The Tories attempted to promote the candidature of Lord Stanley; but the Tories, in spite of the ambivalence of the Scotsman⁵ and the Glasgow Herald⁶ towards Stanley's candidature, had not a sufficiently strong organisation to fight a Parliamentary election. The local Reform League⁷ and the Trades Council⁸ supported McLaren and Miller; and, in the Scottish stronghold of laissez-faire, the radicals in the League who wanted a candidate committed to support a Permissive Bill withdrew their opposition.⁹

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1. Scotsman, 16 July 1868.
 2. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 11 August 1868.
 3. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 31 October 1868; Reformer, 2 January 1868.
 4. Scotsman, 16 July 1868.
 5. Reformer, 21 November 1868.
 6. Glasgow Herald, 27 July 1868.
 7. Scotsman, 20 July 1868.
 8. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 17 November 1868.
 9. Scotsman, 16 July 1868.

As it happened, McLaren and Miller were returned unopposed without the Trades Council putting any pressure on them; and the Reformer was cock-a-hoop over the defeat of the 'mercenary and reactionary forces' of Toryism. This election had also resulted in the triumph of the independent Liberal Committee, and the disorganisation of the Whig members of the aggregate Liberal Committee with whom they had 'waged war' for so long.¹

In the Leith burghs two Liberal candidates fought for the right to represent the constituency. Robert A. Macfie was supported by the Leith branch of the League² and the Reformer³ and William Miller, his opponent, was described as 'a wealthy, dock magnate'.⁴ A meeting of the working class electors was called in Leith in July, and John Poole, a working class radical, accused the two major political parties of using working men as 'mere tools on the occasion of a general election'.⁵ The comments of Poole and other working class radicals would suggest that some of the working class electors were more anti-Miller than pro-Macfie. Nevertheless the latter candidate came top of the poll with a majority of five hundred and ninety-seven votes.⁶

By contrast the working class radicals in Hawick, Selkirk and Galashiels, who had shown signs of willingness to strike out in the direction of independent political action in 1867, gave the Liberals their uncritical support in the Border burghs. In the towns of Hawick, Selkirk and Galashiels the aggregate Liberal Committees held separate

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1. Reformer, 21 November 1868.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 22 August 1868.
 3. Reformer, 14 November 1868.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Scotsman, 14 July 1868.
 6. Wilkie, op.cit., p. 212.

meetings to decide whether George O. Trevelyan or James T.S. Elliot would go forward as the Liberal candidate for the Border burghs.¹ Working class radicals such as Lynn² in Galashiels and Hunter³ in Hawick, who had been acutely class conscious during the crisis of 1867, supported Trevelyan; and decisions were taken at each of the three meetings to put Trevelyan forward as the Liberal candidate. In November he was returned unopposed.⁴

The working class movement in Aberdeen in 1868 was socially fragmented, class conscious and badly organised. Chartist legends were still a part of the oral culture of working people,⁵ and in October the secretary of the mechanics institute deplored the 'desire for equality of wages' among many workers in the building trades.⁶ Furthermore, during the national agitation for Parliamentary reform in 1865-67 the working class in Aberdeen had been politically apathetic, and the Trades Council was only re-organised in October 1868.⁷

In November Colonel W.H. Sykes, the Liberal candidate for the city of Aberdeen, was canvassed by the local branch of the League and the Trades Council to see if he would support the Scottish workers' programme.⁸ The Aberdeen correspondent of the Reformer reported the upshot of the Trades Council's deputation thus: 'He is at least in favour of legalising the funds of the trade unions and establishing courts of arbitration, and also in favour of making the decisions of

1. Scotsman, 14 July 1868.

2. See page

3. See page

4. Wilkie, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

5. K.C. Buckley, Trade Unionism in Aberdeen, 1878-1900 Edinburgh 1955, p. 104.

6. Aberdeen Free Press, 30 October 1868.

7. Reformer, 24 October 1868.

8. Aberdeen Free Press, 13 November 1868.

such courts binding'.¹ Sykes supported the demand for legalising the funds of trade unions,² yet he was a staunch Whig or 'right-wing' Liberal. The intransigence of his Whig philosophy was driven home when he refused to support a Permissive Bill, though deputations from the three Presbyterian churches in Aberdeen, the local branch of the League and the Trades Council had asked him to do so.³ With the approval of the League and the Trades Council,⁴ he was returned to Parliament unopposed.⁵

Archibald Orr-Ewing stood as the Tory candidate for the county of Dumbarton, and he was returned unopposed.⁶ He had been previously described by the Scotsman as 'a Tory or worse'.⁷ In Paisley H.B. Crum-Ewing and Archibald Kintrea, two advanced Liberals, and Colonel A.C. Campbell, a Tory, competed for the right to represent the constituency. The Paisley branch of the League campaigned for Crum-Ewing, and he was elected with a very large majority over his two opponents.⁸ His election was described by the North British Daily Mail as 'a great victory for Liberalism'.⁹

In Greenock the contest revolved around Provost James J. Crieve and William D. Christie, two advanced Liberals. Trade union representatives

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1. Reformer, 28 November 1868.
 2. Robert Hannay, the Liberal candidate for Kirkcudbrightshire, was very exceptional among Scottish Liberals in his condemnation of trade unions. See Reformer, 19 September 1868.
 3. Aberdeen Free Press, 13 November 1868.
 4. Ibid.,
 5. Wilkir, op.cit., p. 44.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 20 November 1868.
 7. Scotsman, 24 July 1868.
 8. North British Daily Mail, 20 November 1868.
 9. North British Daily Mail, 20 November 1868.

invited the contending candidates to address a mass meeting of working class electors in the Greenock Town Hall. Grieve ignored the invitation altogether,¹ and the meeting 'unanimously resolved that Mr. Christie was the accepted candidate of the trades in Greenock'.² Grieve had certainly done nothing to dispel the impression that he was 'the candidate of the employers and traders';³ but whether or not he bribed⁴ working class electors, he was elected by a comfortable majority.⁵

In the east of Scotland Lord Elcho stood for election to Parliament in the county of Haddington, and he was attacked by the Liberals and many leaders of the labour movement. He was, moreover, accused by the North British Daily Mail of persuading the landowners to 'put the screw' on wayward tenants.⁶ By contrast the Glasgow Sentinel urged working people in Haddington to cast their votes for 'the aristocrat and Tory' and concluded:

Notwithstanding his belief in the infallibility of the Constitution, his reverence for the Protestant revolution, and his opinion that the working men have been sufficiently represented in Parliament, Lord Elcho has given a very practical assistance towards emancipating the industrial class from their oppressors.⁷

On polling day he was returned with a secure majority in the face of formidable opposition.

In Glasgow the creation of an additional Parliamentary seat transformed the city into a three-cornered constituency, and each elector had two votes. Sir George Campbell, a Tory, competed with George Anderson for the third

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1. Glasgow Herald, 26 September 1868.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 27 September 1868.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 4 July 1866.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Wilkie, *op.cit.*, p. 159.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 23 September 1868.
 7. Glasgow Sentinel, 24 October 1868.

Parliamentary seat, and the Glasgow Sentinel justified the Tory intervention on the grounds that it would reveal 'the actual strength of Conservatism in Glasgow and at the same time afford experience in the working of the minority clause'.¹ On the other hand the Glasgow Herald criticised the Liberals for allowing themselves to be dominated and manipulated by the Scottish National Reform League and accused the three Liberal candidates of belonging to 'the same extreme political complexion'.² In fact Anderson was a strong Republican and critic of the Monarchy,³ and he⁴ and Dalglish⁵ drew considerable fire from the Orangemen. Nevertheless the election of the three Liberal candidates was never in doubt.

But though Anderson was backed by the Glasgow Working Men's Association⁶ and the Conference of the United Trades,⁷ a minority of working class critics, led by the miners, challenged him to support at least one progressive demand. In reply to a working class heckler, who had advocated the shortening of the hours of labour by Parliamentary enactment, he said he 'would not support any measure to interfere with the hours of grown men'. Adult workers were, in his opinion, able to 'protect themselves'.⁸ He and James Moir also opposed a Permissive Bill as interference with the laws of economic enterprise,⁹ and Anderson opposed 'state aided emigration' for the unemployed.¹⁰ This led the Glasgow Sentinel to defend Andrew Muir, the miner who heckled Anderson

1. Ibid.

2. Glasgow Herald, 1 August 1868.

3. The Baillie, 22 January 1873; 31 March 1880; and 18 February 1885; Clydeside Cameos (London, 1885), pp. 197-203.

4. North British Daily Mail, 28 August 1868.

5. Glasgow Sentinel, 17 October 1868.

6. Reformer, 19 December 1868.

7. Ibid., 14 November 1868.

8. North British Daily Mail, 5 September 1868.

9. Ibid., 31 July 1868.

10. Ibid., 28 August 1868.

in Glasgow, in a long editorial entitled 'Surplus Labour and Emigration'.¹

On 17 September 1868 the Dundee Trades Council appointed a special committee to confer with the Liberal candidates 'anent the proposed Trades Societies Act'.² There were four Liberal candidates - two advanced Liberals and two independent Liberals - competing for the two Parliamentary seats, and the dominant Liberal organisations seem to have been controlled by the advanced Liberals.³ The Trades Council made no attempt to heckle the Liberal candidates during the election campaign, and the representatives of the special committee restricted themselves to asking the candidates about their attitude to industrial questions. When the committee reported to a full meeting of the Trades Council on 6 October, a motion to recommend 'our constituents' to support 'two of the Liberal candidates' was defeated. An amendment asking the Trades Council to abstain from 'recommending anyone in particular' was carried by a majority.⁴ The two advanced Liberals were, however, elected without the active intervention or endorsement of the Trades Council.

Liberal predominance was the key factor in defining the role of the Scottish Division of the Reform League. Liberalism had had a monolithic grip on the Scottish electorate since 1832, and this phenomenon was reinforced by the second Reform Act. When the election results of 1868 were tabulated, it was seen that the Tories had captured only eight of the sixty Scottish Parliamentary seats. And the seats they had captured were in rural constituencies.

1. Glasgow Sentinel, 12 September 1868.
 2. Dundee Courier, 19 September 1868.
 3. Dundee Advertiser, 20 October 1868.
 4. Dundee Courier, 9 November 1868.

If the Scottish labour movement was to the 'left' of the English one in 1868 in terms of their respective election programmes, a few Yorkshire branches of the Reform League had nonetheless promoted 'working men's candidates in the 1868 election'.¹ For England as a whole, however, 'suggestions from branches' were not accepted by the Central Association in London in case the delicate negotiations being conducted with the Liberal whips would be thrown into jeopardy.² As a result of the electoral predominance of Scottish Liberalism, the Scottish Reform League could afford to campaign for the programme of advanced Liberalism without being in danger of allowing Tory candidates to be elected. (And the Scottish workers' programme had, of course, gone beyond the programme of advanced Liberalism). This was why the Scottish Reform League 'rivalled the activity, and sometimes the authority, of the central Executive in London'.³

Just as there were Liberal industrialists in England who feared the potentialities of trade unionism much more than the consequences of a working class vote,⁴ so there were in Scotland, too. The Scottish Liberal industrialists were, however, less open in their criticism of trade unions; and the Scottish Liberal Party, though a loose coalition, was more reluctant to antagonise the trade unions than their English counterparts. When Hanny, the Liberal candidate in Kirkcudbright, attacked trade unions

1. Dunsmore, op.cit., p. 253.

2. Ibid., p. 24.

3. Bell, op.cit., p. 175.

4. Dunsmore, op.cit., p. 217.

in principle, his statement was described by the Reformer, the Edinburgh organ of advanced Liberalism, as 'prejudicial to the Liberal cause'.¹

In some of the English provinces the labour movement sometimes regarded Liberal candidates as the lesser of two evils,² but, unlike the Scottish miners, they did not campaign against them. For some Scottish trade unionists adherence to advanced Liberalism was almost more important than a candidate's attitude towards trade unionism. For example George Anderson, the Liberal candidate and later M.P. for Glasgow, was, in spite of his lack of enthusiasm for trade unionism, popular with the artisans because of his Republicanism and advocacy of land reform.

In contrast to its English counterpart, the Scottish League was, as has been seen, dominated by middle class advanced liberals. In Glasgow they used the League to extend the power and influence of the advanced Liberals within the Liberal Associations, and this was why they, unlike the English, developed their own programme. The emissaries of the Reform League, who were financed out of the 'special fund', confined their activities to England, with the sole exception of their intervention in setting up a branch in Dumfries in January 1867. In Scotland there was, moreover, an absence of small Tory held burghs which had afforded the main target in England; and this was why the Scottish Division of the League fulfilled different functions altogether. Nevertheless the Liberals in Scotland and England,³ whether advanced,

1. Reformer, 19 September 1868.

2. Dunsmore, op.cit., p. 219.

3. R. Harrison, 'The British Working Class and the General Election of 1868', International Review of Social History, VI, p. 79.

independent or Whig, had one thing in common - they united to prevent trade unionists or working class candidates from being elected as M.P.s.

A prolonged election campaign had weakened the political potentialities of the Scottish working class movement by accentuating the existing splits and divisions between the miners and the artisans. For a short time, it seemed as if the Glasgow Sentinel, under the editorship of Alexander Campbell, might succeed in developing a tendency of independent working class politics. In 1868 Campbell was, as Dr. Fraser has argued, an advocate of 'a policy of independence from middle-class Liberalism';¹ but he was less consistent than Fraser assumes him to have been. Campbell had written to Lord Elcho in October requesting financial aid for Alexander MacDonald's campaign in Kilmarnock, where he was standing as the 'people's candidate'; and, when Elcho refused either material or moral support since he had been asked by someone 'whose authority' he recognised to 'dissuade MacDonald from standing',² the Glasgow Sentinel switched its support to the Liberals.

The political somersault of Alexander Campbell and the Glasgow Sentinel had done nothing to mitigate Alexander MacDonald's hostility towards James Merry and the Liberal coalowners. It had been increasingly obvious that the 'anti-capitalist speeches' of Campbell and MacDonald were more rhetorical than operational, and MacDonald's genuine support for the programme of

1. W.H. Fraser, 'A Newspaper for its Generation: The Glasgow Sentinel, 1850-1877', Scottish Labour History Society Journal, July 1971, p.28.

2. Lord Elcho to Mr. Campbell, 23 October 1868. RH/40/9. Scottish Records Office, Edinburgh.

advanced Liberalism was almost totally subordinated to the miners demands for narrow, sectional legislation.

The Scottish working 'class' was very heterogeneous - ethnically, religiously and culturally. The trade union organisation in the west of Scotland coalfields was vitiated by religious and ethnic splits, and it is probable that only a minority of the miners acquired the vote in 1868.¹ The miners' leaders had tried to persuade the artisans to support them in promoting working class candidates; but when they failed, they displayed what Selig Perlman has described as 'job consciousness'.² From July to the close of the election campaign, they demonstrated their inability to go beyond the exigences of their class situation to agitate for collectivist legislation relating to the re-organisation of society as a whole.

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1. Electoral registers for the mining constituencies have not survived, but the electoral registers for Glasgow show that some miners, who lived in Glasgow were enfranchised by the Act of 1868.
 2. Selig Perlman, Theory of the Labor Movement, (New York, 1949), pp. 168-9.

The Scottish Liberals, the Criminal Law
Amendment Act and the Trades Councils, 1870-1879

In the 1870s Lib-Lab-ism, self-help and class consciousness co-existed within a militant labour movement. Strikes were sometimes sanctioned and supported by influential sections of Scottish society, and in some communities Presbyterian clergymen and local Liberal newspapers occasionally sided with labour against capital. A militant Scottish labour movement already existed in the 1860s, and militancy and class consciousness were not sudden or abrupt eruptions which occurred in the 1880s.

Liberal-Labourism and self-help complemented each other, and middle class Liberals and Lib-Lab trade union leaders accepted the implicit assumption of Liberal individualism - the concept of personal responsibility for poverty. The leaders of Scottish labour, whether they represented miners or artisans, adhered to 'the petty bourgeois values of thrift, betterment and self-help', and thereby separated themselves from the labouring poor.¹ In the 1860s and 1870s the English and Scottish labour movements were just as opposed to socialism as the middle classes; but the leaders of the British Trades Union Congress were not so socially conservative or so uncritical of middle class economics² as was argued by historians like Theodore Rothstein.³

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1. Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 16, 1968, p.9.
 2. D.W. Crowley, The Origins of the Revolt of the British Labour Movement from Liberalism, 1875-1906, Ph.D., London, 1952, passim.
 3. T. Rothstein, From Chartism to Labourism (London, 1929), passim.

The middle-class-working-class alliance of 1868, which was subsequently characterised by F.E. Gillespie as 'the Liberal-Labour alliance', persisted, and, indeed, grew in strength in the 1870s. Professor Saville has defined the ideology of the Lib-Lab trade union leaders as 'an ideology which looked to Parliamentary methods for the redress of grievances and the long-term solution to working class problems'.¹ The Lib-Lab ideology as defined by Saville increasingly deepened its roots within the British labour movement, and thereby made it possible for the Liberal Party to present itself to a large number of working men as 'the Party of progress'.²

In April 1871 the newly-formed Glasgow Trades Council initiated a long campaign against the Criminal Law Amendment Act by deciding to co-ordinate local and regional protests and by organising a Scottish petition.³ But when Sykes, the Liberal MP died in June 1872, the Aberdeen correspondent of the Reformer argued that the by-election would most likely to a great extent turn on the views expressed by the candidates on the Game-laws as affecting the food consumers'.⁴ However, the Aberdeen Trades Council raised a number of working class demands with W.J. Barclay, the advanced Liberal candidate, including the demand for the nationalisation of the railways and the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.⁵ In spite of the Trades Council's support for Barclay, J.F. Leith, who belonged to the Whig faction of the Liberal Party, was returned by a very large majority. The third candidate, a Tory, picked up a few hundred votes.⁶

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1. John Saville, 'Notes on Ideology and the Miners before World War I, Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 23, 1971, p25.
 2. John Saville, 'The Backbround to the Revival of Socialism in England', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No.11, 1965, p14.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 6 April 1871.
 4. Reformer, 22 June 1872.
 5. Ibid., 29 June 1872.
 6. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 9 August 1873.

Not until the early months of 1873 was class consciousness again manifested in political action when Greenock,¹ Glasgow,² and Edinburgh³ Trades Councils protested against the imprisonment of the London gas stokers under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Scottish trade unionists were, moreover, indignant over 'the class actuated legislation' which had resulted in the imprisonment of trade unionists, and their worst suspicions and their class consciousness were intensified during 1873 when there were four cases of Scottish trade unionists being imprisoned.⁴ In Glasgow, where the three Liberal members of Parliament, Dalglish, Graham and Anderson, informed a public meeting of trade unionists that they supported the amendment of the Act under which trade unionists had been sent to jail, the representatives of the Trades Council, and particularly Andrew Boa and Mathew Allan, demanded its total repeal.⁵ At that time, however, the battle between the Scottish labour movement, with Glasgow forming the spearhead, and the Liberal M.P.s was only beginning; and before it was over the Liberal candidates in Glasgow would require to make considerable concessions to the Trades Council .

A by-election in Dundee in early August 1873 gave the local Trades Council an opportunity to mobilise trade unionists against the Criminal Law Amendment Act. The Trades Council opposed James Yeaman, the Tory, and James F. Stephen, the official Liberal; and they campaigned for Edward Jenkins, the independent Liberal, who was a strong critic of the

1. North British Daily Mail, 18 January 1873.

2. Ibid.

3. MacDougall, op.cit., p. xxxiv.

4. Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 19, 1969, p. 38.

5. North British Daily Mail, 6 February 1873.

law relating to trade unionism. Yeamen came out at the top of the poll; Jenkins came second; and Stephen came out at the bottom with a very small vote.¹ In the months between August 1873 and January 1874 there were three mass demonstrations against the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Masters and Servants Act in Edinburgh,² Glasgow,³ and Dundee⁴ in which the Trades Councils of the four principal Scottish cities participated. The Glasgow Sentinel observed that the Edinburgh demonstration in August 1873 had 'given great offence to those journals which represent the interests of capital.'⁵ In Glasgow a committee for the Repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was founded for 'the purpose of organising electoral committees of working men in every town in Scotland.'⁵

An important consequence of the Edinburgh trades demonstration was the creation of the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council. In September 1873 this body invited Bailie David Lewis, a leading middle class figure in the advanced Liberal Association, to stand for election to Parliament against McLaren, the Senior member for Edinburgh. However, Lewis admitted that his loyalty to the local Liberal Party prevented him from opposing McLaren.⁶ Then the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council sent a deputation, consisting of J.C. Burn, A. Dewar and W. Fairbairn, to interview Miller, the Junior member for Edinburgh, who was known to be very sympathetic towards them. They questioned him about 'the extension of the hours of polling, the equalisation of the constituencies, the Game-laws, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the penal clauses of the

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1. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 9 August 1873.
 2. Scotsman, 25 August 1873; North British Daily Mail, 25 August 1873.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 3 November 1873.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 10 January 1874.
 5. Ibid., 30 August 1873.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 24 November 1873.

Masters and Servants Act, the application of the law of conspiracy to questions of labour, and payment of members of Parliament'; and they expressed satisfaction with his answers.¹

In Edinburgh these basic issues were not discussed in the Trades Council (as distinct from the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council) at all; and some trade unionists in Edinburgh were very critical of leading members in the Trades Council involving labour in politics.² But though the leading members in the Trades Council in the late 1860s and early 1870s were frequently accused of 'revolutionary tendencies'³ and 'Republicanism',⁴ the issue of sending a working class representative to Parliament was never raised in the Trades Council at this time. And when the Edinburgh working class leaders had been most alienated from the Scottish Liberals, they had, as we have seen, turned to advanced Liberals like Miller and Lewis who were not strong enough to exert any pressure on McLaren or the independent Liberals.

In early October 1873 Peter Henrietta, a tailor, gave notice to a weekly meeting of the Glasgow Trades Council that he would raise the question of 'taking some steps to secure a working class representative as one of the three Members for the city of Glasgow' at the next meeting.⁵ During the debate at the Trades Council the following week Henrietta argued that 'the present time presented a most favourable opportunity to bring forward a working man's candidate

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1. Ibid., 29 September 1873.
 2. Reformer, 9 September 1873 and 23 September 1873.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 6 February 1868.
 4. Scotsman, 17 September 1871.
 5. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 11 October 1873.

for Glasgow' and his resolution was carried without any opposition.¹
 The question was again raised in the Trades Council in November,² and on 3 December 'the motion of Mr. Boa for the formation of a committee to ascertain by plebiscite or any other mode what support the working men of Glasgow' would lend to such a candidate at the next general election was debated for several hours.³ However, there was considerable opposition to the idea of working class representation; and the Glasgow Sentinel reported an 'animated discussion' in relation 'to what would have to be the religious opinions of the candidate'.⁴ An opponent of Boa's motion said that he 'had a conscience, and as eternity was before him, he could not give his aid to return a Secularist working man candidate'.⁵ A prolonged and controversial discussion was adjourned without any general agreement being reached.

The debate on Boa's motion was resumed at a meeting of the Trades Council on 24 December. The motion was carried by a very small majority, and a committee was appointed to organise a plebiscite. This 'victory' for the advocates of working class representation was a moral triumph rather than a politically effective decision, since influential Liberals like John Battersby, who were opposed to a working class candidate in the present 'political climate', were elected to the committee; and even Lang, who had fought for independent working class politics in 1868, spoke of 'the spirit of suspicion and hostility too common amongst the workmen'.⁶

1. Ibid., 18 October 1873.
 2. Ibid., 29 November 1873.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 4 December 1873.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 6 December 1873.
 5. Ibid.,
 6. North British Daily Mail, 25 December 1873; Glasgow Weekly Herald, 27 December 1873.

In Edinburgh McLaren blatantly displayed his opposition to the demands of the local trade unionists, and in October 1873 he received a deputation from 'the Advanced Liberal Association'. In a long interview he challenged Lewis to oppose him at the general election, and he told the advanced Liberals that he would be re-elected in spite of opposition from the advanced Liberals and the leaders of the working class movement. He argued that the intervention of the dissident Liberals would 'not allow Tories to be elected', and he was satisfied that no Tory candidate 'could get 5,000 votes in the city'. As there were '25,000 electors on the roll', the advanced Liberals and trade union dissidents should be 'under no alarm about "letting in a Tory"'.¹ Then at a mass meeting of Liberal electors in Edinburgh on 22 December, McLaren refused to 'vote in favour of Mr. Mundella's Bill for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act'; and William Paterson, the secretary of the Associated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, successfully moved a vote of no confidence in McLaren.²

The Scottish Liberal newspapers, whether of the Whig or the advanced Liberal persuasion, were appalled by the behaviour of the Edinburgh trade unionists towards McLaren. In an editorial the North British Daily Mail observed that he had been 'brought up in a season and school when it was the orthodox thing to denounce combinations as a sin against the gospel of political economy promulgated by Adam Smith'; yet 'the trades people' had been 'ungracious and

1. North British Daily Mail, 8 October 1873.

2. Ibid., 27 December 1873.

impolitic' to 'press him so far as they did'.¹ The Reformer thought that 'his past services to the working classes' should have mitigated the harsher parts of the resolution read by Mr. Paterson';² and the Scotsman reiterated the traditional Whig view that trade unions militated against 'the good, industrious and able worker' by destroying individualism.³ Nevertheless Paterson denied McLaren's allegation that 'the opposition of that night was organised by the trades unions'. Moreover, he confessed that the question of criticising McLaren 'had never been before any of their committees'.⁴

The independent Liberals were so incensed by the support Miller of Leithen had given to the working class agitation for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act that they refused to nominate him as their Parliamentary candidate.⁵ Then the aggregate Liberal Committee nominated James Cowan, the Lord Provost, as McLaren's running mate;⁶ and Miller was supported by the advanced Liberals and most of the leaders of the labour movement in Edinburgh.⁷ McLaren and Cowan were supported by the Roman Catholics,⁸ and by a tiny number of trade unionists such as T. Pendrigh and W. McVie.⁹ The Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council appealed to the working class electorate not to vote for J.H.

1. Ibid., 25 December 1873.

2. Reformer, 27 December 1873.

3. Scotsman, 25 December 1873.

4. Ibid., 24 December 1873.

5. Ibid., 27 January 1874.

6. J.B. Mackie, Life of Duncan McLaren (Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 53-7.

7. Scotsman, 27 January 1874.

8. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 3 February 1874.

9. Scotsman, 31 January 1874.

A. MacDonald, the Tory candidate; then, after the election, they issued a manifesto denouncing Cowan, McLaren and the middle class Liberals.¹

The central weakness of the strategy of the leaders of the Edinburgh labour movement was their dismal failure to raise controversial political questions in their trade union branches. In the early 1870s they were Republicans, and they were repeatedly accused of using the Trades Council as 'a front organisation' for the Edinburgh Republican Club.² In an anonymous letter to the Scotsman 'An Ex-Delegate' accused them of alienating 'some of the strongest and best unions' in Edinburgh by subordinating the Trades Council's trade union functions to political agitation.³

The leaders of the working class movement in Edinburgh were obviously to the 'left' of rank-and-file trade unionists; and, in a city with a relatively large middle class, they lacked the political power of the labour movement in Glasgow to influence the decisions of the local Liberal organisation. By 1874 the class bitterness directed against 'the whole of the Independent or Middle Class Liberals' through the manifesto issued by the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council was unparalleled in the annals of the Scottish labour movement. This bitterness was reinforced by the electoral triumph of McLaren and Cowan. The manifesto concluded:

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1. Ibid., 30 March 1880.
 2. Scotsman, 5 September 1871.
 3. Ibid., 14 September 1871.

Bitter experience has taught us that common justice for working people is not yet a tenet of Middle-class Liberalism. Though our aid is courted to promote Middle-Class interests, we are abandoned the moment we begin to attend to the most elementary of our own. We are still despised as a servile class, and it is for us to wipe out the stain of class-inferiority by incessantly demanding from the Legislature equality before the law. We will neither be respected, nor can we truly respect ourselves, till this be accomplished. In the school of adversity we must learn a lesson of fortitude, perseverance, and self-dependence, and bide our time.

John G. Holburn, Chairman. 1
David Gibson, Secretary.

When the Edinburgh Evening Courant published extracts from the manifesto of the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council in March 1880 Holburn claimed that the manifesto issued by the Edinburgh Trades Council (sic!) in 1874 had totally rejected support for MacDonald, the Tory candidate, who had promised to press for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.² As the Tories were an insignificant electoral force in Edinburgh, the local working class movement lacked a weapon with which to exploit Liberal fears of a Tory victory at the polls as had been done so successfully in some English constituencies.

By January 1874 there were five Liberal candidates in Glasgow - A. Crum, G. Anderson, C. Cameron, P.S. MacLiver and C. Neil - seeking the three Parliamentary seats for the city, and the last four were competing for the endorsement and active support of the local Labour movement. The three sitting members of Parliament had already been petitioned by the Glasgow Trades Council on the Criminal Law Amendment

1. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 March 1880.
2. Scotsman, 30 March 1880.

Amendment Act and the Masters and Servants Act;¹ and the retiral of Dalglish and the withdrawal of Graham to another constituency may have reflected the strength of the Trades Council in influencing the political decisions of Liberal politicians. At a public meeting in the City Hall on 28 January Henrietta and Boa opposed a motion thanking Graham and Dalglish for 'their past services to the working classes'; but a large number of working men, including leading members of the Trades Council, helped to carry the motion by an overwhelming majority.² Moreover, the Trades Council decided by a plebiscite of the delegates at their meeting on 29 January to support Anderson and Cameron rather than MacLiver or Neil.³ This decision was taken in spite of Anderson's firm opposition to shortening the hours of adult workers by Parliamentary enactment.⁴

As a consequence of the Trades Council's decision Boa offered his resignation as the chairman of the Committee for the Repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. But his resignation was refused, and the Repeal Committee refused to support either Anderson or Cameron, the advanced Liberals. However, they agreed to support MacLiver, as he was 'the only candidate of the four who said he would vote for the total repeal of the Act'.⁵ By contrast the Glasgow Sentinel argued that MacLiver and Neil were not working men's candidates as they had not been invited by working men; if only Glasgow working

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1. North British Daily Mail, 29 May 1873.
 2. Ibid., 29 January 1874.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 30 January 1874.
 4. Ibid., 29 January 1874.
 5. Scotsman, 31 January 1874.

men had been properly organised they might have returned with ease a candidate of their own choosing.¹

Nevertheless a small minority of trade unionists in Glasgow did support the agitation for independent labour representation in Parliament. In late January several deputations of trade unionists requested Boa 'to come forward' as a working class Parliamentary candidate for Glasgow;² but the Trades Council was still under the influence of Liberal ideology. By this time Boa was suffering from advanced tuberculosis,³ and the labour movement was badly split over political issues. There is no evidence to suggest that Boa was a secularist as some suggested; but he was certainly a very talented and articulate working class militant who was dedicated to the amelioration of working class social conditions.⁴ However, Henrietta had Republican leanings and he was probably a secularist;⁵ and he may have contemplated standing as a working class Parliamentary candidate.

Paradoxically the working class leaders in Glasgow (in contrast to their counterparts in Edinburgh) failed to raise such issues as the payment of members of Parliament or the extension of the hours of polling with the Liberal candidates who were seeking election to Parliament. Moreover, while McLaren, the Edinburgh apostle of laissez-faire, claimed to support the demand for a ten hour day for

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 31 January 1874.
 2. Scotsman, 29 January 1874.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 17 November 1877.
 4. The Bailie, 11 August 1875.
 5. Dr. G.B. Clark, 'Random Recollections and Reflections', Forward, 8 May 1920.

railway workers,¹ Anderson, the advanced Liberal in Glasgow, attributed the demand to 'a new and very questionable theory of economic science propounded by Mr. Disraeli'.² The Whigs, who had formerly had some control in Glasgow, were losing their grip, and the Glasgow Sentinel pointed to 'the confusion in the Liberal ranks'. Furthermore, the Liberals 'who used to pull the strings at former elections seem to have disappeared altogether, or if they are still in the body, they seem afraid of meddling in the matter, and the consequence is that the new candidates who have come forward are free lancers'.³ But once the Trades Council had endorsed Anderson and Cameron, MacLiver and Neil announced their withdrawal from the contest.

The Irish League put forward Francis. E. Kerr as the Catholic and Home Rule candidate. However, the attempt of the Glasgow branches of the Irish League to secure the Trades Council's support for Kerr was unsuccessful,⁴ though he stood for the total repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.⁵ The intervention of a specifically Roman catholic candidate was a new source of tension among working people; and this almost certainly strengthened the Tory elements among the predominantly Presbyterian working class. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of the members of the Scottish Trades Councils were identified by contemporary observers as dedicated Presbyterians.⁶

Meanwhile, the militants in the Glasgow Committee for the Repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act continued to exert considerable pressure

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1. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 15 November 1873.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 29 January 1874.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 31 January 1874.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 26 January 1874.
 5. Ibid., 4 February 1874.
 6. Spectator, 24 October 1868.

on Anderson and Cameron; and before polling day they had forced important concessions from Anderson and 'secured a written pledge' from Cameron to support the agitation for the total repeal of the infamous Act.¹ The result was that Cameron and Anderson, the advanced Liberals, came out at the top of the poll with A. Whitelaw, the Tory, while J. Hunter, the Tory, A. Crum, the Whig, and Kerr, the Roman catholic, were unsuccessful.² In an editorial the North British Daily Mail welcomed the victory of Anderson and Cameron and concluded: 'The power of the Whig clique who arrogated the right to manage the whole Liberal interest is utterly broken'.³

In 1874 the miners played an insignificant role in the general election, though John Gillespie, the miners' agent for Stirlingshire, heckled the Liberal candidate at a meeting in Falkirk over his attitude to the Criminal Law Amendment Act.⁴ The two crucial reasons for the miners non-involvement in the election campaign were the beginning of a severe depression in the Scottish coal industry and MacDonald's contest as a working class candidate in the English constituency of Stafford.⁵

MacDonald's candidature⁶ was promoted by the London based Labour Representation League,⁷ and miners in Lanarkshire agreed to 'raise the necessary funds for paying his election expenses'.⁸ After his election to Parliament the Scotsman argued that he was a working class

1. Scotsman, 8 February 1874.
2. North British Daily Mail, 5 February 1874.
3. Ibid., 5 February 1874.
4. Ibid., 30 January 1874.
5. G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914, (London, 1914), pp. 67-8.
6. Minutes of the Labour Representation League, 24 October 1873.
7. Cole, op.cit., p. 52
8. Glasgow Sentinel, 10 January 1874.

representative of 'marked ability, especially in business' rather than a working man. He was also accused of supporting the Tory candidate in Durham, as he had done in South Lanark in 1868.¹ In any case the Scottish miners did not again intervene in a general election on a big scale until after his death in 1881.

In Dundee the Trades Council was no more successful than it had been in the by-election of 1873; and the Trades Council in Aberdeen had virtually collapsed. By contrast with the election of 1868, when the Tories returned eight members of Parliament, the Tories won nineteen Parliamentary seats in Scotland. The Edinburgh Evening Courant was, however, far from satisfied by the increase in Tory Parliamentary representation. The editor attributed the neglect of Scottish affairs in Parliament to the strength of the Scottish vote which was 'almost wholly Liberal'; the only really effective way to rescue Scotland 'from such ignominy' was to strengthen the Conservative Party, and 'every ballot paper given for a Conservative candidate' was 'a vote for securing national honour and the Protestant faith'.²

In December 1875 Jackson³ invited the co-operation of the Trades Council in the re-organisation of the Glasgow Liberal organisation, and this was an indication of the intention of the advanced Liberals to consolidate their control of the Liberal Association in Glasgow. The Trades Council refused to take any action beyond recommending

1. Scotsman, 10 February 1874.

2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 3 February 1874.

3. George Jackson was the 'solitary councillor' representing 'the trade unions' in the Glasgow town council in the 1870s. James Mavor, My Windows on the Streets of the World (London, 1923), p. 54.

the Liberal Association 'to the consideration of working men'.¹ Then in 1876 the Glasgow Liberal Workmen's Electoral Union was founded on the initiative of the advanced Liberals; and at the first public meeting of the new working men's Liberal organisation Simon Martin, who had been the secretary of the Committee for the Repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act in 1873, appealed to working men to 'individually help to turn over among their fellows the undergrowth of political ignorance which abounds'.² This working class organisation, in contrast to the earlier experience of its counterpart in Edinburgh, was not only integrated into the Liberal organisation, but also played a crucial role in promoting working class demands in the Glasgow Liberal Association.

When the Aberdeen Liberals formed a new Liberal Association in 1877, they asked the Trades Council for assistance in attracting working men to their ranks.³ A joint meeting of the two organisations was held in February to arrange for working class representation on the General Council of the Liberal Association.⁴ There was evidence of tension in the relations between the Trades Council and the Liberal caucus in Aberdeen, too; and this tension was highlighted in 1879 when the Trades Council refused to support the re-election of A. Hunter, a Liberal town councillor, who 'had proved himself on several occasions as an enemy of the working class'.⁵ The difficulties

1. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 25 December 1875.

2. North British Daily Mail, 16 October 1876.

3. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 7 February 1877.

4. Ibid., 2 March 1877.

5. Ibid., 25 October 1879.

were eventually smoothed over, and Hunter was elected without opposition.¹ The incident in 1879 was a portent of things to come, and of battles to be fought, in the 1880s.

In 1870 the Edinburgh Trades Council had refused to affiliate to the Labour Representation League,² and the League, in spite of MacDonald's connection with it,³ remained an essentially English labour organisation.⁴ In Dundee and Perth in the 1870s the agitation against the tolls and pontage connected with the Dunkeld bridge gathered momentum, and in Perth an attempt was made to bring the local land and labour agitations into a common movement. On 17 July 1878 a land and labour advocate wrote from Perth to the secretary of the Labour Representation League in London as follows:

Dear Sir,

I daresay you will recollect of my mentioning to you that I have for a considerable time entertained the idea that the City of Perth if appealed to might be very likely to return a Working Man's Candidate to Parliament. Recent inquiries have greatly strengthened me in this notion. So much is this the case that I have spoken to a number of my friends about appearing as a candidate myself at the expected dissolution. Before however announcing myself I write you to ask if the coast is clear and to say that if you have any other party in view I will say nothing more on the subject.

Yours faithfully,
Alexander Robertson.

Private. N.B. You may make what use you like of this note. I am now issuing an appeal to the People of Scotland on the question of the Dunkeld Bridge grievance - the Edinburgh folks are promising to come to the rescue and it is expected that the provincials will follow suit.⁵

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1. Buckley, op.cit., p. 118.
 2. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 April 1870.
 3. Minutes of the Labour Representation League, 19 May 1874, in the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics and Political Science.
 4. Cole, op.cit., p. 54.
 5. This letter is pasted into the Minute Book of the Labour Representation League. L.S.E.L.

The possibility of a Labour candidate capturing Perth was soon vitiated by the abolition of tolls under the Roads and Bridges Act of 1878. This Act was a direct consequence of the agitation initiated by Robertson in 1867.¹

In the late 1870s the Liberals in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh made big efforts to attract the support of the Trades Councils. Nevertheless in Edinburgh the leaders of the labour movement were not encouraged to organise a legitimate pressure group in the Liberal Association comparable to the Glasgow Workmen's Electoral Union. As a consequence of the debacle the Tories suffered in the general election of 1868 the Edinburgh Evening Courant concluded an editorial assessment of Tory weakness in Scotland among 'the lower middle class in general' by emphasising the need to appeal to 'the working classes'.² The subsequent growth of Tory support among working people in some of the large urban centres³ forced the middle class Liberals to integrate the working class leaders into the machinery of the Liberal Party. At a public meeting of the executive committee of the West of Scotland Liberal Association in July 1879 working class leaders such as Battersby and George Hammond got Mr. Tennant adopted as the third Liberal candidate for Glasgow in the face of some opposition by middle class Liberals.⁴ With the increasing involvement of the vast majority of the Scottish working class leaders in the

1. Dryerre, op.cit., p. 283.

2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 7 December 1868.

3. D.W. Unwin, 'The Development of the Conservative Party Organisation in Scotland until 1912', Scottish Historical Review, 1966, passim.

4. North British Daily Mail, 8 July 1870.

machinery of the Liberal Party the emergence of independent working class politics was inhibited.

The social tensions and stresses in Scottish society in 1879 were reflected in conflicts between middle class Liberals and working class leaders in the labour movement and Liberal Associations. The decision of the West of Scotland Liberal Association to adopt Tennant as the third Liberal candidate under pressure from Battersby and Hammond provoked the North British Daily Mail to criticise editorially the manipulations of the Glasgow Workmen's Electoral Union (a body subsidised by wealthy Liberals). The advanced Liberals attached to the North British Daily Mail preferred Mr. Middleton to Tennant as the third Liberal candidate;¹ but the Glasgow Trades Council endorsed the candidature of Tennant.² At the same time a mass meeting of the Lanarkshire miners demanded the equalisation of the county and burgh franchise and pledged themselves to 'use every effort, by agitation and otherwise, to bring to an end a condition of things so anomalous and urgent'.³

A sharp controversy broke out in Glasgow between the leaders of the Trades Council and some of the middle class leaders of the Liberal Association over whether Tennant or Middleton ought to be the third Liberal candidate, and Tennant eventually withdrew from the contest.⁴ Conflict between the two sides was fought out over the allocation of

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1. Ibid., 9 July 1879.
 2. Ibid., 17 July 1879.
 3. Ibid., 5 September 1879.
 4. Ibid., 20 March 1880.

the tickets for the giant Gladstone meeting in Glasgow in December 1879, and the Liberal Association 'objected to the large number of tickets which had been allocated to the University people and to the Trades Council'.¹ The Trades Council unanimously condemned the Liberal Association's objection and accused them of trying to 'sow division among the Glasgow working men'.²

Both the Scottish and English labour movements had come into conflict with the Liberal Party during the 1870s; for, though they were often frustrated by the dominant elements within the Liberal Party, they were themselves 'men of Liberal principles'. Once the general election of 1874 was over, the frustrations of the London-based Labour Representation League were soon formulated:

The Labour candidates to a man were men of Liberal principles - yet the managers of the Liberal Party, in nearly every constituency where they appeared, regarded them with suspicion, and treated them in an unfriendly spirit ... The Workingmen must, therefore, take their stand at once, and inform the middle class managers of electioneering contests that their claims, both as to their men and their questions, must be acknowledged ... if the spirit that prevailed in the recent elections is prevailed in then the working men must fight their own battle in their own way, at whatever cost to the Party which, whilst calling itself Liberal, makes prejudice and exclusion leading characteristics of its policy.³

In Britain as a whole, therefore, trade unionists and middle class Liberals did not always interpret 'Liberal principles' in quite the same way or from the same vantage-point.

A major Scottish peculiarity, however, was that the Liberals made a much bigger impact on the social consciousness of working class

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1. Ibid., 3 December 1879.
 2. Ibid., 11 December 1879.
 3. Edinburgh Reformer, 14 March 1874.

electors than their English counterparts. Though the English Tories were stronger in the rural than in the urban constituencies down to 1865, they made inroads into the urban constituencies after the second Reform Act had been implemented. In 1865 in the eight English burghs in which working men had an 'electoral majority', there were 9 Tories and 5 Liberal M.P.s elected.¹ In the Scottish urban constituencies, the Tories had long been a negligible electoral force.

From 1868 Scottish and English electoral history followed divergent paths. In the 1870s the Tories made new inroads into the English burghs, where they had previously been weak; and the Liberals increased their already strong grip on the Scottish burghs. Nevertheless the Scottish and English labour movements increasingly accepted 'the landlord class and not the industrial bourgeoisie as their main enemy'; and they simultaneously accepted some of the elements of the 'economic ideology' of the middle class.² A new feature of Scottish working class history in the 1870s was that the first signs of conflict between the Liberal artisans and the middle class Liberals indicated a portent of things to come.

For the decade of the 1870s as a whole, however, it would be true to say that the cause of independent labour representation in Scotland did not make significant headway, though desultory attempts had been made to argue the case for such a course of action. The miners, under MacDonald's leadership, had made some efforts in 1868 at asserting an

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1. P. Smith, Disraelian Conservatism and Social Reform (London, 1967), p. 29.
 2. John Saville, 'The Background to the Revival of Socialism in England', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 11, 1965, p. 14.

independent position, but their campaign was not renewed in 1874, in part because of the loss of MacDonald to an English seat and in part because some of the miners were unenfranchised, being county rather than town dwellers. The artisans confirmed their Liberal alliance and attempted, usually with limited success, to exercise influence over Liberal attitudes and policies, and the alliance persisted in spite of Gladstone's unpopular trade union legislation and other Liberal snubs. The belief remained fairly widespread that independent working class politics was not a proper sphere for trade union involvement. By the end of the decade there had been just a few signs that this situation might change.

The Revolt from Liberalism and the Origins of Socialism, 1880-1889.

A new era in Scottish Lib-Lab politics began in the early 1880s. There were still occasional signs of conflict between the miners and the artisans, though they increasingly co-operated towards the end of the decade. Moreover, the tendency for some of the miners' leaders to prefer the Tories to the Liberals persisted; and, since the trade union movement had been severely weakened by the first onslaught of the 'Great Depression',¹ the Scottish Lib-Lab leaders were not in a position to drive a hard bargain with the Liberals. The advanced Liberals were often just as insensitive to working class claims as the independent Liberals or the Whigs; and in the years following the new Reform Act of 1884 and the re-distribution of Parliamentary seats, and in contrast to the English Liberals, they made few convincing attempts to integrate either the Lib-Lab candidates into the Liberal programme or Party machinery.

In 1880 the Scottish labour movement solidly backed the Liberals and contributed enormously to Liberal electoral successes in returning so many of their candidates to Parliament. Only the miners' leaders in the west of Scotland opposed the Liberals' candidates, though they were too weak to influence the election results. In March, 1880, for example, James Keir Hardie wanted Ramsay, the Liberal candidate, to give the miners 'who inhabited the masters' houses a system of yearly tenure, and thereby do away with the system of tenant-at-will which deprived them of all electoral and other privileges'.² Since Ramsay adhered to laissez-faire economics, he was naturally opposed to Hardie's demands.

1. W.H. Marwick, Labour in Scotland (Glasgow, 1945), p. 13.

2. Hamilton Advertiser, 27 March 1880.

The leaders and rank-and-file of the artisans and the miners were still occasionally in conflict, and the miners had not yet affiliated to the Trades Councils. In September 1883, when the miners were agitating for the franchise, the Lord Provost of Glasgow justified the nonenfranchisement of the miners, in contrast to the socially superior craftsmen and artisans in the shipyards, in terms of their social inferiority. Andrew McCowie, the Scoto-Irish miners' leader in Cambuslang contrasted the drunkenness he had seen amongst the craftsmen and artisans in the Glasgow shipyards with the sober responsible and well-disciplined behaviour of the men in 'the pits' with whom he had worked for forty years.¹ In contrast to the social status enjoyed by the craftsman and artisans, the social inferiority of the miners was legendary. By exploiting and playing on these differences and attitudes the ruling classes helped to retard the growth of a unified Scottish labour movement.

In 1880 class consciousness and militancy were at a very low ebb in the labour movement, and the Trades Councils tacitly accepted some of the tenets of Liberal orthodoxy. In the general election of 1880 the Aberdeen Trades Council unanimously endorsed John Webster, the Liberal candidate,² and the local working class leaders campaigned for him.³ He easily captured Aberdeen in a straight fight with a Tory.⁴

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1. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 15 September 1883.
 2. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 17 March 1880.
 3. Scotsman, 16 March 1880.
 4. Wilkie, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

In Edinburgh the working class organisations had no representation on the executive committee of the Liberal Association, though a substantial number of trade unionists belonged to its general committee. Even the general committee was controlled by the independent Liberals, such as Duncan McLaren, and the Whigs, since their votes were greater than the combined votes of the working-class Liberals and the middle-class advanced Liberals. On 10 March a private meeting of the executive committee adopted a resolution that McLaren and James Cowan should be recommended to the general committee, though the advanced Liberals wanted to replace Cowan by 'Trayner or some other Liberals'.¹ The general committee met on 13 March and McLaren was unanimously adopted as the Liberal candidate; and Cowan was adopted as the second Liberal candidate by 146 votes to 43 votes. The majority of the trade unionists on the general committee voted against Cowan; but a few of them, including J.G. Holborn, supported his candidature.²

The Tories tried to stir up conflict between the Edinburgh Trades Council and the Liberal Association by publishing the manifesto issued by the Edinburgh Workmen's Electoral Council in 1874;³ but this led Holborn and other working class leaders to minimise and play down the disagreements they had had with McLaren and Cowan.⁴ The editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant also asserted that Cowan had again alienated 'the working men and the Liberal Churchmen'.⁵ Nevertheless the Roman Catholic electors in

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1. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 11 March 1880.
 2. Scotsman, 15 March 1880.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 March 1880.
 4. Scotsman, 30 March 1880.
 5. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 15 March 1880.

Edinburgh unanimously resolved to support McLaren and Cowan.¹ So did the Edinburgh Temperance organisation.² By contrast the Roman catholic and Jewish electors in Glasgow took a decision to vote for the Tories.³

A by-election in Glasgow in July 1879 had resulted in Charles Tennant being elected to Parliament unopposed. The success of the working-class movement in imposing Tennant's candidature on the Glasgow Liberal Association still rankled with the middle-class Liberals; and, when the annual meeting of the 4th Ward of the Liberal Association was held in January 1880, James Colquhoun demanded the abolition of the Glasgow Working Men's Association.⁴ Some of the middle-class Liberals wanted to substitute Robert T. Middleton for Tennant; but a clash between the two sides was avoided by Tennant's withdrawal from the contest altogether.⁵ The Glasgow Trades Council supported the Liberal candidates - Anderson, Cameron and Middleton - as the best candidates 'in the interests of labour';⁶ and on polling day an aggregate number of 71,034 votes were cast for the Liberal candidates, who were all elected to Parliament, in contrast to the aggregate number of 22,693 votes cast for the two unsuccessful Tory candidates, William Pearce and Sir James Bain.⁷

1. Scotsman, 23 March 1880.

2. Ibid.

3. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 27 March 1880.

4. North British Daily Mail, 17 January 1880.

5. Ibid., 20 March 1880.

6. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 3 April 1880.

7. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 3 April 1880.

The first Scottish socialist organisation was established in Hamilton, Lanarkshire where there was a large community of immigrant and indigenous miners. In 1881 a small group of socialists took a decision to form a Scottish Labour Party committed to a programme including the 'nationalisation of the means of industrial production'. Robert Banner, who had been won over to socialism by Andreas Scheu,¹ was one of the secretaries of this new organisation.² This embryonic Labour 'Party', though tiny and impermanent, helped to spread socialist ideas and shake the miners' tenuous allegiance to Liberalism. John Dunn, a Lanarkshire miner, and a frequent contributor to the Labour Standard,³ was almost certainly connected with the new organisation; and he championed the agitation for independent labour representation among the miners. At a mass meeting of the Lanarkshire miners in 1882 he 'denounced the heresy of identity between capital and labour'.⁴ Thus he challenged the fundamental assumption of Liberal-Labourism; and, though the miners were not so influenced by Liberalism as the artisans, a large number of the miners were Liberals.

When Henry George came to Glasgow in March 1882 to address the inaugural meeting of the Glasgow branch of the Democratic Federation, he attracted the support of Shaw Maxwell, Angus Sutherland, the future crofters' member of Parliament, and John Ferguson and Richard McGhee,

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1. See below.
 2. C. Tsuzuki, H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism (Oxford, 1961), p. 43.
 3. Labour Standard, 13 August 1881.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 13 October 1882.

two influential Irish nationalists in Glasgow.¹ This organisation was a sort of staging post for men who had not yet found a place in radical or socialist politics; and, though they were attracted to some socialist ideas, they were repelled by marxism. The Glasgow branch of the Social Democratic Federation was founded in 1884, and its leading members - Robert Hutchison, Moses McGibbon, William J. Nairn and J. Bruce Glasier - were of Highland stock. Nairn and Glasier - and Glasier's parents had been evicted during the Clearances - were attracted to the Social Democratic Federation by its militant advocacy of land nationalisation.²

However, the Edinburgh branch of the Social Democratic Federation was 'the first to be established in Scotland'.³ Its leading members were Andreas Scheu, Leo Melliet, John Leslie and John Lincoln Mahon.⁴ Scheu had lived in Edinburgh, in 1880, where he had introduced discussions on socialism among secularists and radicals. He soon left Edinburgh for London; but not before he had won Banner for socialism. He returned to Edinburgh in 1884.⁵ Melliet was a Communard refugee, who taught French in Glasgow and Edinburgh for thirty years, before he returned to France to become a Deputy in the National Assembly.⁶ Leslie, the son of Roman catholic immigrants, was born in an Edinburgh slum. He was a clever boy, who was educated by the priests during a

1. Glasgow Herald, 21 March 1880.

2. Socialism in Scotland (Glasgow, 1918), p. 10; James Leatham, Glasgow in the Limelight (Turiff, n.d.), p. 78.

3. David Lowe, 'Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town', Forward, 23 January 1915.

4. Ibid. E.P. Thompson, William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary (London, 1955), p. 405.

5. Ibid.

6. Socialism in Scotland, op.cit., p. 12; Mavor, op.cit., p. 112.

long illness, but he joined the Fenians when he was in his teens. Banner converted him to socialism.¹ John Lincoln McMahon, the son of Irish immigrants, was baptised at St. Mary's Cathedral on 2 July 1865.² His parents had come to Edinburgh from Northern Ireland; and he later dropped the Mc from his name.³ In the mid-1880s he helped the miners in Broxburn to organise themselves; and in this work of trade union organisation he often obtained the assistance of Roman catholic priests.

In 1885 the Edinburgh Republican club was killed by the secession of its members to the socialists.⁴ By this time the socialists in London had split into two organisations - the Social Democratic Federation, led by H.M. Hyndman, and the Socialist League, led by William Morris.⁵ The foundation of the Edinburgh branch of the Socialist League - formerly the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish Land and Labour League - coincided with the demise of the Edinburgh Republican club.⁶ The leading members of the Scottish League in

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1. H.W. Lee and E. Archibald, Social Democracy in Britain (London, 1935) p.144.
 2. I owe this information to the Right Rev. Monsignor David McRoberts. In his letter to me he comments thus: 'The addition of the name Lincoln is interesting and one presumes it derives from Abraham Lincoln, assassinated on 15 April of that year. This shows that McMahon's parents were very politically minded because it was not usual for Catholic children to receive such names in the nineteenth century'.
 3. Letter to the author from his son, John Mahon, 26 March 1969.
 4. The Republican, May 1885.
 5. Thompson, op.cit., pp. 412-414.
 6. 'In these circumstances, Scheu and Mahon took the decision not to form a native organisation, the "Scottish Land and Labour League", which could affiliate to the Federation'. Ibid., p. 406.

Edinburgh were the Rev. Dr. John Glasse,¹ a Presbyterian, and John Bayne and John Gilray, who were trade union activists.²

James Mavor, a professor of economics, was the first secretary of the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League. Its members included Glasier, John Warrington, a future president of the Trades Council, R.F. Muirhead, an assistant professor of classics, H.J. Moffat, Stephen Downie, Pete Curran, a Roman catholic trade union organiser, J.M. Biggar, Robert Thomson, a great grandson of Robert Burns, the national bard, and William Pollock. The Socialist League in Scotland had more influence than the parent body in England.³ Their collective activity of agitation and socialist education in the trade unions, the universities, the Presbyterian Church and the Scottish branches of the Irish League had some influence on the thinking of a section of the clergy in the Church of Scotland.⁴

A revival of labour militancy was stimulated by the demonstrations and agitations of the Liberal Associations, the Trades Councils and the miners' organisations in 1884 for an extension of the franchise. In September 1884 thousands of working people took part in a gigantic west of Scotland Liberal franchise demonstration. The presence of the miners, with their colourful banners and coalbearing lorries, attracted a lot of press comment.⁵ This led a Lanarkshire miners' agent to criticise the local coal owners for compelling their men to take part in a political

1. Unpublished Letters of William Morris, introduced by R. Page Arnot (London, 1951), p. 406.
2. David Lowe, 'Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town', op.cit.
3. Socialism in Scotland, op.cit., passim.
4. See below.
5. North British Daily Mail, 8 September 1884.

demonstration in which large lumps of coal were displayed to the public.¹ And if the coal owners had the power to compel the miners to participate in political demonstrations, they also had their own reasons for making them vote for Liberal candidates in Parliamentary elections. In any event the miners were enfranchised in 1884; and this Liberal legislation, together with the presence of socialists and socialist ideas, had an important bearing on the growth of the movement for independent labour representation.

In February 1884 the Scottish Land Restoration League, a Henry-Georgeite organisation was formed;² and Henry George toured Scotland advocating land nationalisation.³ George inspired many working class agitators and radicals including Keir Hardie; and he was denounced by a wide range of Scottish Liberal newspapers.⁴ In 1892 Michael Davitt, the Irish labour leader, came out in support of George's land nationalisation programme;⁵ and in 1884 his advocacy of the nationalisation of minerals was added to his armoury of labour ideology.⁶ The miners in the west of Scotland were particularly sympathetic to the demand for the nationalisation of mineral royalties; and they opted for socialist demands to their problems before the artisans attached to the Trades Councils.

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1. Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald, 22 August 1884.
 2. T.W. Moody, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, iii (1953), p. 62.
 3. E.P. Lawrence, Henry George in the British Isles (East Lancing 1957), pp. 17-18.
 4. See for example the editorial entitled 'The Georgeite Confiscation', Dunfermline Journal, 27 December 1884.
 5. Lawrence, *op.cit.*, p. 18.
 6. Thomas Johnston, The History of the Working Classes in Scotland (Glasgow, 1920), p. 393.

Irish immigrant miners were much more active in assisting the formation of trade union organisation than historians have often assumed or even argued;¹ but attempts to foster trade union organisation were often thwarted by the preference of a large number of the miners for 'Orange demonstrations'.² In 1868 the major leaders of the Scottish miners had been MacDonald, Blee, Smith, Muir and McCowie, the Roman catholic Scots-Irishman. Blee died in May 1880, and MacDonald died in November 1881.³ Even so, the miners still had a number of competent leaders in their ranks; but they had none of comparable ability to MacDonald. On the death of MacDonald, McCowie enlisted the services of William Small to promote militant trade unionism among the miners.⁴

Small, the illegitimate son of a rich Dundee jute merchant, had moved into Lanarkshire when his father died after losing most of his money in the City of Glasgow Bank failure in 1878.⁵ He decided to throw in his lot with the miners when he was thirty-four years old. He gave up his drapery business, and from then on earned his livelihood

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1. The foremost authority on the history of the Irish in Scotland argues: 'Even in the mining industry, where grading according to skill did not enter and where the immigrants were numerically very strong, they failed to make their voice heard and left the leadership to Scotsmen such as Alexander MacDonald, Keir Hardie and Robert Smillie'. James E. Handley, The Irish in Modern Scotland (Cork, 1947), p. 320. In fact Smillie was an Irishman who had been born in Ulster.
 2. Glasgow Sentinel 21 July 1877.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 1 November 1881.
 4. 'William Small, the Man', manuscript, probably in the hand of his daughter Beryl Small, found among her papers relating to the life of her father in the National Library of Scotland, Ms.Acc. 3359, hereafter cited as Small Papers.
 5. 'Papa's Father', manuscript notes of Beryl Small, and a paper found in William Small's desk after his death. Small Papers.

as a miners' agent or trade union official.¹

Small was a modest, scholarly man who spent a lot of his leisure time in the British Museum researching into land and mining questions.² A student of Thorold Rogers, and an advanced Liberal in politics, he rapidly moved to the 'left'; and he played a key role in propagating socialist ideas among the miners.³ His wife was a Roman catholic, and his eldest son, William B. Small was baptised in a Catholic Cathedral. He may have had connections with nationalist priests in Lanarkshire, though McCowie probably provided the link with Davitt. In any case, when the immigrants first permanent newspaper the Glasgow Observer,⁴ appeared in April 1885, the Roman catholic clergy, who were responsible for its publication, gave his activity among the miners sympathetic coverage.

In the Scottish mining districts a growing dissatisfaction with orthodox Liberalism was manifested in the growth of new political organisations. In Fife, this deep dissatisfaction was reflected in the formation of branches of the People's League in 1884-1885.⁵ The members of the People's League were usually advanced Liberals, and they advocated the abolition of Royalty and the House of Lords.⁶ In Dunfermline the leading members included John Weir, the secretary of the Fife and Clackmannan miners, Thomas Don⁷ and a number of middle-

1. 'William Small, the Man', Small Papers.

2. Robert Smillie, My Life for Labour (London, 1924), p. 42.

3. The typical leader of the 'new unionism' possessed a copy of Roger's book. Henry Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party (Oxford, 1965), p. 82.

4. Handley, op.cit., p. 274.

5. Dunfermline Journal, 22 November 1884.

6. Ibid., 24 October 1885.

7. When the Dunfermline Trades Council was formed in 1890 Thomas Don was appointed secretary.

class town councillors. A number of miners were active in the various branches of the People's League; and this was probably the first time a group of miners in Fife had taken an active interest in advanced Liberal politics.

In September 1884, Small informed a miners' meeting in Hamilton that he had written to 'fifty leading gentlemen to elicit their advice as to the abolition of mineral royalties'. In reply to Small, Davitt wrote from Ireland:

The most unrighteous exactions are kindred in their injustice to the rack-rents which Irish landlordism inflicted upon agricultural industry in this country previous to the Land League, and which are not abolished as yet; mines, like land, should be - and yet will be - the property of the State. It is monstrous to think one man can not only claim as his the land which God has made for all, but that he can claim as his fuel which it has taken nature millions of years to form and deposit in the bowels of the earth.

So he advised the Scottish miners to campaign for the nationalisation of mineral royalties and for the application of the funds to State insurance for the miners.¹

Small estimated that the Duke of Hamilton had 'pocketed £114,487' in mineral royalties for 'the 12,000 miners' employed in the Hamilton coalfields. Murdoch, the crofters' leader, unsuccessfully appealed to the miners to affiliate to the Scottish Land Restoration League. McCowie thought 'they would attain their ends more rapidly by themselves than if affiliated with the Land League, for they could not bring coal from America or Odessa as they could wheat'. A decision to form a Scottish Miners' Anti-

1. Hamilton Advertiser, 20 September 1884; Dunfermline Journal, 20 September 1884.

Royalty and Labour League was taken, and branches were to be formed throughout the coalfields.¹

Keir Hardie settled in Cumnock, Ayrshire, in 1880, where he had gone to organise the miners into a county union. In 1882 he joined the staff of the Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald as a journalist, while continuing to work among the miners in a part of Ayrshire where there was no strong tradition of trade unionism.² His opposition to Liberalism developed slowly and haltingly, and in 1884 he discouraged criticism of the Liberal coal owners who had compelled their workers to participate in a franchise demonstration in Glasgow. He disapproved of the miners' agent in Lanarkshire who described the lumps of coal displayed to the public in this demonstration as 'a portion of the overweight taken from the men who were unprotected by checkweighmen'. Such remarks were, in his opinion, 'injudicious' and 'not the way to encourage good feeling'.³ So it was not surprising when he rejected the radical programme of the Scottish Miners' Anti-Royalty and Labour League as extremist.⁴ By contrast Weir was sympathetic to the agitation for the nationalisation of mineral royalties, and he informed Small that the Fife and Clackmannan miners would support 'a well-devised scheme for the reform of this anomaly'.⁵ However, he could not carry the executive committee of the county union with him, and in October they refused to affiliate to the Scottish Miners' Anti-Royalty and Labour League.⁶ In November the local miners' leaders

1. Ibid.

2. William Stewart, J. Keir Hardie (London, 1921), pp. 17-18.

3. Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald, 22 August 1884.

4. Ibid., 27 September 1884.

5. Dunfermline Journal, 27 September 1884.

6. Ibid., 18 October 1884.

in Hamilton decided to form a branch of the Scottish Miners' Anti-Royalty and Labour League as trade union organisation was 'deemed useless' in the prevailing climate of apathy and inertia.¹

By 1884 a small minority of delegates in the Trades Councils were influenced by the propaganda of the Scottish Land Restoration League, and in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh they pushed resolutions advocating the nationalisation of the land. Such men were invariably newcomers to the Trades Councils, and they were often young men who were presumably more open to new ideas than the veteran Lib-Labs. In the Glasgow Trades Council John Battersby advocated the reform of the land laws and an amendment supporting land nationalisation was overwhelmingly defeated.² A similar amendment was defeated in the Edinburgh Trades Council on the occasion of the debate on the preliminary programme submitted by the Trades Union Congress for its annual conference; and Neil McLean spoke of the need for security of tenants' rights and compensation for crofters displaced by agricultural improvements.³ In Aberdeen, too, the advocates of land nationalisation were defeated,⁴ though support for this measure soon developed.

In December 1884 the Glasgow Trades Council debated 'the hardships' and 'the starvation' conditions of the crofters, and the advocates of land nationalisation moved a resolution attacking the shortcomings of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Conditions of the Crofters. They sympathised with the land agitations, and they expressed

1. Ibid., 15 November 1884.

2. North British Daily Mail, 4 September 1884.

3. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 26 August 1884.

4. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 17 June 1884.

considerable surprise that the crofters had not cut 'cows tails' or destroyed any of the animals. On the other hand, Battersy hoped they would keep their agitations and protests within the law, and he recommended 'a system of emigration as the land was not able to bear the people on it'. His amendment supporting the recommendations of the Royal Commission was carried by the casting vote of the chairman.¹

With the passing of the Reform Act of 1832 Scotland now had 72 Parliamentary seats, and the extension of the franchise to working men in the counties as well as in the burghs, together with the re-distribution of seats, encouraged the Lib-Labs in the labour movement to expect the active assistance of the Liberals in securing the election of a few working class candidates to Parliament in the ensuing election. However, the Scottish Liberals were much more intransigent in their opposition to a Lib-Lab pact than their English counterparts - indeed the latter not only encouraged, but also assisted a few trade union leaders to become Lib-Lab members of Parliament in 1835.² Moreover, Scottish Lib-Lab trade unionists consistently complained of local Liberal Associations being controlled by 'the shopkeeping class' who were brutally insensitive to working class feelings and aspirations.³

In December 1832 the opinion was voiced in the Glasgow Trades Council that 'one or more' of the four additional Parliamentary seats in the city 'should be filled by a practical working man'.⁴ A resolution on these lines was accepted unanimously in January 1835, and it was agreed to call a meeting of 'the trades societies' to discuss labour representation.

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1. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 10 December 1832;
North British Daily Mail, 11 December 1832.
 2. G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics (London, 1941), p. 98.
 3. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 26 January 1835; Daily Free Press, 4 June 1835; Buckley, op.cit., p. 126.
 4. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 24 December 1832.

A Trades Council special committee was set up to implement these decisions,¹ and the committee drew up 'a scheme for raising money' for the return of a working class candidate.² This agitation for direct labour representation in the west of Scotland coincided with the growth of socialist groups and the demand for independent labour representation. As the agitations for direct and independent labour representation developed side-by-side, and as the socialists at this period supported both demands, the Liberals probably thought it best to resist the labour programme altogether.

In 1885 working class Parliamentary Associations were organised in various constituencies in Glasgow,³ and in March a branch of the Social Democratic Federation was formed in the mining village of Cambuslang. Thirty members joined the new socialist group, and Small, the miners' leader, was elected chairman.⁴ At this time a number of future working class leaders - R. Chisholm Robertson, Bruce Glaiser, John Warrington, Robert Smillie and George Carson - came to the forefront of the labour scene.

Carson, Robertson and Warrington were not yet members of the Glasgow Trades Council; but Robertson, Small, Glasier and Nairn popularised socialist ideas among the miners and in the west of Scotland branches of the Irish League. And the miners and the immigrant Irish nationalists were largely concentrated in rural areas. Even so, a minority of working class activists struck out in the direction of independent working class politics. In the two Glasgow constituencies of Tradeston and Blackfriars and

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1. Ibid., 11 March 1885.
 2. Ibid., 29 April 1885.
 3. Johnston, op.cit., p.263.
 4. Justice, 28 March 1885.

Hutchesontown (later renamed the Gorbals) working class Parliamentary Associations were formed, and the elected office-bearers included Warrington and John McCulloch. At the foundation meeting of the new organisation 'legal and class privileges' were attacked, and J.M. Cunningham said:

... that whatever party was in power it was the privileged class who prevailed; but it was for the new Parliament elected by the people, to destroy privilege and secure justice.¹

This working class organisation was much better organised in Blackfriars and Hutchesontown than in Tradeston, and it provided an organisational basis for the promotion of the candidature of Shaw Maxwell.

In April the Glasgow Trades Council took a decision to 'raise £1,000 for the purpose of returning a Labour candidate at the next general election'. An attempt was to be made to get 20,000 working men in trade unions, workshops, shipbuilding yards, warehouses and factories to contribute a shilling each to the Trades Council's election fund. The money was to be collected in two instalments, and it was hoped that £1,000 would be gathered by the beginning of September.² A further meeting of the delegates from the trade unions in the city was held under the auspices of the Trades Council in May. At this meeting a number of delegates were very sceptical about the feasibility of raising sufficient money to support a working man if he were elected to Parliament; and Carson, representing the tinsmith workers, said it 'would be a mistake' to think 'they were to be an appendage of the Liberal Association'. Nevertheless the Trades Council was committed to support the Liberal candidates, and the Lib-Labs in the Trades Council voiced their firm opposition to 'the

1. The Exile, 16 May 1835.

2. North British Daily Mail, 30 April 1835.

Blackfriars and Hutchesontown Working Men's Parliamentary Association' and 'the Scottish Land Restoration League'.¹

Moreover, Battersby thought it 'would not be prudent to put down a candidate without consulting the leading Liberals of the district'.² On 4 June they decided on Camlachie as the constituency in which they would put forward a working class candidate; and the trade unions were to be invited to vote for a candidate from a short list of candidates which included John Inglis, R.C. Grant, Thomas McDuff, Battersby and A.J. Hunter.³ Three weeks later the Camlachie Liberal Association invited 'a prominent member of the Liberal Party' to contest the division,⁴ and the consultations of the Trades Council had not been successful. A meeting of the delegates from the city trade unions met on 1 July, and they were clearly finding it difficult to raise funds.⁵ A subsequent meeting was held in August, and a number of delegates thought they should organise a series of meetings in Camlachie to put the matter of labour representation before the public. They in fact shelved their plans for a working class candidate, and Lib-Labs such as Grant and Battersby continued to work for the return of Liberal candidates.⁶

On 7 April the Edinburgh Trades Council issued a circular to the trade unions in the city asking them to form a committee to promote the

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1. The Exile, 16 May 1885.
 2. Ibid.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 4 June 1885.
 4. Ibid., 25 June 1885.
 5. Ibid., 2 July 1885.
 6. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 8 August 1885.

election of a working class candidate at the general election.¹ However, Alexander McLean 'pointed out that the circular issued by the Council to the trades set forth that they as a Council would have nothing to do with the matter after the meeting of representatives of trades. They would be breaking their word if they sent representatives to any political committee, and it would be a clear violation of their constitution'.² Moreover, the secretary was 'strongly opposed to the Council being associated directly in any electioneering work. He knew that there were members of the Council who held Conservative opinions, and it would be unfair if a majority of the Council, which was for an altogether different purpose, attempted to carry the minority, however small, along with them in matters which were altogether outside the Council'.³ Furthermore, the trade unions had not been sympathetic to the idea of a working class Parliamentary candidate, and it was agreed not to pursue the matter any further.⁴

In Aberdeen the initial challenge to the Liberal orthodoxy of laissez-faire capitalism came when a small group of advanced Liberals - some of whom were to turn to socialism in the late 1880s - invited Davitt to address a meeting in Aberdeen on land nationalisation.⁵ At the same time the Aberdeen Junior Liberal Association was organised 'for the purpose of pulverising the local Caucus'.⁶ The Aberdeen Radical Association was formed two years later, and it was almost indistinguishable

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1. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 7 April 1885.
 2. Glasgow Observer, 15 April 1885.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 22 April 1885.
 4. Glasgow Observer, 15 April 1885.
 5. Buckley, op.cit., p. 99.
 6. Aberdeen Labour Elector, 18 March 1893.

from the Trades Council.¹ The Liberal Association in Aberdeen was still controlled by the Whigs, and the advanced Liberals were struggling to gain a foothold in the organisation's decision-making caucus.

In May the Trades Council considered promoting a working class candidate of the Lib-Lab persuasion; but they were unable to raise the necessary funds.² Moreover, the Whigs who dominated the Liberal Association were far from enthusiastic about land reform or land nationalisation, and a Liberal newspaper commented on the situation:

Advanced Aberdeenshire Liberalism is differentiated from militant Liberalism elsewhere mainly by what is in some quarters termed general "robustness", and by a preference for the land question as a testing one rather than that of the Church.³

Land reform was viewed by the Whigs with abhorrence; and some of the members of the Radical and Junior Liberal Associations were prepared to support the heretical doctrine of land nationalisation. The Liberal Association had no hesitation in rejecting a proposal that representatives of the Radical Association, the Land-law Reform Association and the Trades Council should all be allowed to participate in the selection of the Liberal candidate for the new Parliamentary division of North Aberdeen.⁴

The Trades Council held a special meeting on 3 June to discuss the situation, and A. Catto spoke of 'the very disrespectful way in which the Liberal Association treated our correspondence ... and the contemptuous way in which they treated us as a Council and the representatives of the Council who were present at their last meeting ... we have arrived at that period in our history as working men when we must look to ourselves to get

1. Buckley, op.cit., p. 100.

2. Daily Free Press, 7 May 1885; 21 May 1885.

3. Glasgow Herald, 4 November 1885.

4. Daily Free Press, 2 June 1885; Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 6 May 1885, 12 June 1885.

men to represent ourselves (applause). It seems to me that the shop-keeping element and the upper class element in the Liberal Association are wanting to keep us out of sight'. Then the Lib-Labs in the Trades Council challenged and defied the Liberal Association by inviting W. Hunter, an advanced Liberal to contest the new Parliamentary seat 'in the interests of the working classes'. This invitation was soon followed by an invitation from the Radical Association,¹ and the general council of the Liberal Association were caught in a delicate and highly embarrassing predicament. So they grudgingly endorsed Hunter's candidature, as a rival candidate would have split the Liberal vote.²

The Trades Council had no representation on the general council of the Liberal Association, and they discussed breaking with the Liberals altogether over this issue.³ The internal conflict in the Liberal Association between the Whigs, the independent Liberals and the advanced Liberals absorbed a great deal of the time and the energy of the Trades Council members, and thereby stifled the growth of a socialist tendency in the labour movement. Fifty newly enfranchised farm servants met 'in the farm of Deystone, Kintore, Aberdeenshire', and they adopted a series of resolutions:

... the land of the country should be so subdivided as to give a much larger proportion of large and small farms, so that labourers and farm servants would have an opportunity of getting houses of their own and of raising themselves in the world, and pledging those present to support at the coming election no candidate that will not go for a thorough reformation of the Land Laws, abolition of the Game laws, Church Disestablishment, Free Education, local option, shorter Parliaments, and curtailment of the power of the House of Lords.⁴

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1. Daily Free Press, 4 June 1885.
 2. Ibid., 9 June 1885.
 3. Ibid., 4 June 1885.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 24 August 1885.

Later on the Aberdeen Radical Association (in which the members of the Trades Council were prominent) promoted the candidature of Quintin Kerr against the sitting Liberal, J. Farquharson, in West Aberdeenshire. Farquharson, the Whig, retained the seat, though the farm servants had backed the advanced Liberal.¹ There were frequent, and often bitter, quarrels between the Whigs and the advanced Liberals, and the Glasgow Herald explained that what separated the advanced Liberal from the Whig was the attitude to local option and disestablishment.² However, in sensitive areas such as Aberdeenshire the Whigs and the advanced Liberals were differentiated by their attitude to the land question.

By contrast most miners lived in constituencies in the counties, and their enfranchisement in 1884 gave their various agitations a new impetus. In June 1885, Small persuaded a mass meeting of Lanarkshire miners to pass a resolution committing themselves to independent labour politics:

That there will be no miner in the county that will not do his utmost to prevent any iron or coal master or any employer of labour from entering the Reform Parliament at the ensuing General Election at which the miners of this county will possess enormous power.³

In the Mid-Lanark constituency Smillie and Cunningham heckled Forrest, the Liberal candidate, in connection with the miners' tied houses, the abolition of mineral royalties and disestablishment.⁴ A few days later a miners' agent addressed a mass gathering of miners in Hamilton:

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1. Aberdeen Free Press, 23 November 1885.
 2. Glasgow Herald, 23 October 1885.
 3. Hamilton Advertiser, 20 June 1885.
 4. Ibid., 25 July 1885.

Now was the time for them to be up and doing, and by putting their hands in their pockets, to send a working man to Parliament to represent their interests. (Cheers!) Until they did so they would not be fully represented. In conclusion, he advised them to meet a week hence, and to endeavour to have the whole county with them, to decide whether they were to support a Tory, Liberal, or Labour candidate.¹

In the mining communities, where trade union organisation existed, the idea of independent Labour representation was gaining popularity among a section of the miners.

However, the miners who supported such ideas in 1885 were not numerically strong. In 1885 Smillie and Hardie opposed socialism, and Small subsequently taught them the principles of socialism in the evening classes he conducted for working men.² Moreover, the attempts of middle class men such as Small and Carrick to popularise socialism and the need for working class Parliamentary candidates were not always successful.³ In August when a mass meeting of Lanarkshire miners assembled in Hamilton, a vocal majority of the miners objected to politics being introduced into their discussions about trade union affairs. A decision was therefore taken by the meeting to keep trade union affairs and political questions separate, and the discussion on politics was relegated to the bottom of the agenda. During the discussion on labour representation in Parliament an old miner argued that they could not get 'the funds' in time for the coming election, but he advised them 'to organise and be prepared when the occasion came round again for them to send one of themselves'.⁴

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1. North British Daily Mail, 31 July 1885.
 2. Small Papers.
 3. Hamilton Advertiser, 15 August 1885.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 7 August 1885.

In August Small invited Glasier to address an open-air meeting of miners in Hamilton.¹ This was the beginning of a long series of regular 'Labour lectures' in Hamilton, and a large number of miners turned out on a Sunday evening to hear Glasier lecture on 'the Robbery of Labour'.² Chisholm Robertson, the Roman catholic miners' leader, almost simultaneously made his first appearance on the labour scene as an official in the Lanarkshire miners' union.³ In August, too, the Glasgow Observer published an article by Small entitled 'A New Labour Movement'.⁴ The new ideas were beginning to make an impact on the political consciousness of the miners, and in September the Lanarkshire miners passed a resolution:

That we, the miners of Lanarkshire, demand from all Parliamentary candidates a pledge to restrict by act of Parliament all labour in mines to eight hours a day.⁵

This led the Glasgow Herald to attack 'the least informed and reckless of the (Liberal) candidates' who had not opposed such dangerous demands.⁶

There were no socialist groups or branches of the Irish League in Fife, and the indigenous miners were organised in the strongest county union in Scotland.⁷ In 1885 the Fife miners challenged the Whig orientated Liberal Association throughout the county, and looked as if they too might strike out in a socialist direction. In October Weir and James Innes, of the Fife and Clackmannan miners' union, organised a meeting in Cowdenbeath for 'the purpose of forming a branch of the People's League'. Then Weir told the meeting that:

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1. Commonweal, October 1885.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 1 September 1885.
 3. Ibid., 28 August 1885.
 4. Glasgow Observer, 29 August 1885.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 18 September 1885.
 6. Glasgow Herald, 19 October 1885.
 7. R. Page Arnot, A History of the Scottish Miners (London, 1955), p. 59.

the time had now come for the working classes taking the initial step to being better represented in Parliament. He would not say that a candidate would be brought forward in opposition to the Hon. J. Preston Bruce, M.P., in the WCst of Fife, but there was a pretty general feeling in favour of a thorough-going Radical candidate. In a candidate pledged to attend specially to the interests of Labour would come forward, he was sure that such a candidate would snatch the seat from Mr. Bruce.¹

In an editorial the Dunfermline Journal defended Bruce as the best candidate to represent working class interests and simultaneously criticised the 'political will-o-the-wisps' who were luring 'the unthinking into the bog of socialism'.²

John Weir, the miners' secretary, formulated an election programme for the Fife and Clackmannan miners.³ He wanted the Mines Regulation Act of 1872 and the Employers Liability Act of 1880 amended, and he advocated 'the abolition of perpetual and excessive pensions'. Moreover, he told a mass meeting of the Fife miners that there was a 'probability of a Labour candidate coming forward to contest West Fife', and he advised them of 'the necessity of supporting those whose sympathies were most in common with the working classes, and who had by personal experience endured many of the hardships peculiar to the life of the working man'.⁴ The People's League had been preparing to challenge Bruce, the Whig oriented member of Parliament, for some time; and the secretary of the Dunfermline branch said they had received moral encouragement and financial aid from Andrew Carnegie, the American industrialist, who had been born in Dunfermline.⁵

1. Dunfermline Journal, 24 October 1885.

2. Ibid.

3. The historian of the Scottish miners inaccurately described John Weir as 'a douce ultra-respectable Fifer' of the Lib-Lab school, Arnot, op.cit., p. 74

4. Dunfermline Journal, 31 October 1885.

5. Ibid., 24 October 1885.

In late October J.G. Weir, of Hampstead, London, a native of Dunfermline, came forward as the Labour candidate in opposition to Bruce. He was supported by Weir, the miners' secretary, and the Fife People's League. He advocated the establishment of land courts, the abolition of the Game laws, local option, free education, an eight hour day and the abolition of mineral royalties. He described the last as 'that blood tax paid into the already overflowing purse of the landlord'. He concentrated on winning support among the miners, though he also campaigned on issues popular among the advanced Liberals. He failed to attract much working class support, and he decided to withdraw from the contest in West Fife.¹ Then he moved to the Falkirk burghs, where he stood for election as a Labour candidate. There he received the support of the Highland Association, the Scottish Land Restoration League and the local leaders of the ironmoulders such as William Fechnie.² Small, Murdoch and W. Forrest, the ex-president of the Hamilton miners, spoke for him in Falkirk,³ and Small appealed for support for his candidature at a miners' meeting in Airdrie. However, Small's appeal was 'met with cries of "It's not that we came here for" and "This is a meeting for miners' affairs"'.⁴

The Falkirk Herald criticised J.G. Weir's attempt to set class against class, by a series of general accusations against the higher classes, and especially the landowners. 'If landowners, because they are rich, are to be made subjects of political attack, there will be

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1. Ibid., 31 October 1885.
 2. Falkirk Herald, 9 December 1885.
 3. Ibid., 11 November 1885.
 4. Ibid., 5 December 1885.

an end to public confidence. The advocacy of land reform is one thing, with which we as Liberals have no sympathy'.¹ In a subsequent editorial his advocacy of land reform (as distinct from land nationalisation) and a legal eight hour day was described as 'the wildest and most extreme Socialism'.² However, Falkirk was an urban centre in a widely scattered constituency in which the Whig element was dominant, and the middle class advanced Liberals were in sympathy with criticism of the landowners and the Whiggery of L. Ramsay, the official Liberal candidate.

In late November Weir rejected the request of the Falkirk burghs Liberal Association for a test ballot,³ and Ramsay's candidature was accepted by 11 votes to 6 after Gladstone's personal intervention.⁴ Weir polled 814 votes, S. Mason, the Tory, polled 2,204 votes and Ramsay polled 3,104 votes;⁵ and the Hamilton Advertiser reckoned that most of Weir's votes had come from miners rather than artisans.⁶ And James Furie, a Roman catholic miner, criticised the leaders of the Irish League for instructing the Irish miners to vote for the Tory candidate rather than Weir.⁷

In Falkirk J.G. Weir and Small campaigned for a Scottish Parliament;⁸ and in nearby Slamannan Chisholm Robertson canvassed 'the Irishmen of the locality' who were interested in forming a branch of the Irish League.⁹ In Glasgow he gave a lecture on 'Should an Irishman be ashamed of his

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1. Falkirk Herald, 11 November 1885.
 2. Ibid., 21 November 1885.
 3. Ibid., 25 November 1885.
 4. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 24 October 1885.
 5. Falkirk Herald, 9 December 1885.
 6. Hamilton Advertiser, 5 December 1885.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Falkirk Herald, 2 December 1885.
 9. Glasgow Observer, 24 October 1885.

nationality?';¹ and Glasier told Irishmen in Glasgow that if they were 'true and loyal to Mr. Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party at the present time, the independence of Ireland is sure to be accomplished in a very short time'.² When a Scottish miners conference discussed the possibility of putting forward a miners' Parliamentary candidate, Hardie persuaded the delegates to support Stephen Mason, the advanced Liberal, in Mid-Lanark, as an alternative strategy.³

By contrast the Scottish-Americans in Chicago were gathering funds for the Scottish Land Restoration League;⁴ and in late November the Scottish Land Restoration League and the Highland Land Law Reform Association offered the miners in Mid-Lanark financial aid to promote a Labour candidate. The miners' union nominated Small and agreed to support J.G. Weir in the Falkirk burghs.⁵ Small addressed meetings of the Irish League in Mid-Lanark, and he spoke of 'the sufferings of the working class in Ireland and Scotland at the hands of the landlords'.⁶ Then Parnell issued a manifesto appealing to the Roman Catholics and Irish in Scotland to vote for the Tory candidates;⁷ and Small did not go to the poll.⁸

The intense bitterness existing between different Liberal factions was intensified by the propaganda of the Scottish Land Restoration League and the Highland Law Association. Consequently there were double

1. Ibid., 10 October 1885.
2. Ibid., 31 October 1885.
3. North British Daily Mail, 4 September 1885.
4. Ibid., 24 August 1885.
5. Hamilton Advertiser, 21 November 1885.
6. Glasgow Observer, 28 November 1885.
7. Scotsman, 23 November 1885.
8. Hamilton Advertiser, 5 December 1885.

candidatures in a large number of Scottish constituencies, and in Perth the Liberal Association put up a candidate, A. MacDougall, against C.S. Parker, the sitting member of Parliament.¹ Nevertheless the latter was elected with a clear majority.² In the Kirkcaldy burghs J.M. Inglis, the secretary of the Scottish blacksmiths, opposed Sir G. Campbell, the sitting member. Inglis was the official Liberal candidate,³ and he did not fight the seat as a Lib-Lab.⁴ The voting figures were: Campbell, the Whig, 2,180; Inglis, the advanced Liberal, 1,504; and Munro, the Tory, 746.⁵

Davitt supported the Scottish Land Restoration League, and in Greenock Shaw Maxwell advocated the nationalisation of the land.⁶ Maxwell was supported by Warrington,⁷ Carson,⁸ Small,⁹ and Muirhead,¹⁰ and he drew attention to 'the keenness of the battle between labour and capital'.¹¹ Grant,¹² Battersby,¹³ Duff,¹⁴ and Alexander Wilkie,¹⁵ the leaders of the Glasgow Trades Council, supported the Liberal candidates. Moreover, Battersby told Liberal and working class electors in Tradeston 'that those who were saying they were Labour candidates had no interest whatever in the advancement of labour

1. Scotsman, 3 September 1885.
2. Wilkie, op.cit., p. 247.
3. Scotsman, 23 September 1885.
4. G.D.H. Cole, op.cit., p.265, incorrectly describes Inglis as a labour candidate.
5. Wilkie, op.cit., p. 190.
6. Glasgow Herald, 22 October 1885.
7. North British Daily Mail, 23 November 1885.
8. Ibid., 17 November 1885.
9. Ibid., 14 August 1885.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 23 November 1885.
12. Ibid., 28 October 1885.
13. Ibid., 24 November 1885.
14. Ibid., 31 October 1885.
15. Ibid., 4 November 1885.

questions'.¹

The North British Daily Mail, the organ of the advanced Liberals, opposed the Land and Labour candidates even where they stood against Liberals of the Whig persuasion; and the Glasgow Weekly Mail urged the dissident candidates to submit to a plebiscite.² Nevertheless the Scottish Land Restoration League, in spite of opposition from the leaders of the Trades Council and the advanced Liberals, put up five Parliamentary candidates in the west of Scotland; Morrison Davidson (Greenock) polled 65 votes; Wallace Greaves (Tradeston) polled 74 votes; Shaw Maxwell (Blackfriars and Hutchesontown) polled 1,158 votes; William Forsyth (Bridgeton) polled 978 votes; and John Murdoch (Partick) polled 74 votes.³ In Bridgeton there was, perhaps significantly, a large Roman catholic community;⁴ and in Blackfriars and Hutchesontown there were large Roman catholic⁵ and Jewish communities.⁶ Once the election was over, however, Robertson persuaded the Irishmen in Slamannan to pass a resolution:

That we, the members of the Daniel O'Connell branch of the Irish National League, deeply regret the action of the Executive in withdrawing the Irish vote from Mr. Shaw Maxwell, the candidate for the Blackfriars division of Glasgow, and that the motion be sent to the Glasgow Observer for publication.⁷

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1. Ibid., 24 November 1885.
 2. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 10 October 1885.
 3. A.W. Humphrey, A History of Labour Representation (London, 1912), p. 95.
 4. Pelling, op.cit., p. 402.
 5. Ibid., p. 401.
 6. Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, ed., Rev. William Ewing (Edinburgh, 1914), pp. 91-106.
 7. Glasgow Observer, 12 December 1885.

In 1886-1887 the stability of Scottish society was dramatically challenged by the emergence of a militant working class movement. By the beginning of 1886 there was widespread unemployment in the west of Scotland,¹ and the concomitant social distress created what the North British Daily Mail described as the 'social danger' of revolution.² Groups of socialists proliferated, and Small, Glasier and Nairn openly expressed their commitment to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society. 'Dynamite was abroad', Small told a mass meeting of Lanarkshire miners, and 'a great demonstration would take place next week when the men would parade the principal streets with picks'.³ In Hamilton a resolution, congratulating the hundreds of rioting miners who had stolen food from shops and vans in Blantyre was carried by an overwhelming majority of the organised miners.⁴ The miners had also been disappointed by the outcome of the general election of 1885, and in January 1886 they decided to approach other trade unions and the socialist organisations to make arrangements to promote Labour candidates in the mining centres at the next general election.⁵

The evictions of the Whig landowners were challenged by the crofters for the first time in 1882. The crofters' revolt, epitomised by the 'Battle of the Braes', had been influenced by the agitators Davitt and the Irish Land League had sent 'across the Irish Sea'.⁶

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1. North British Daily Mail, 19 January 1886; 26 January 1886; 12 February 1886; Glasgow Observer, 16 January 1886.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 12 February 1886.
 3. Falkirk Herald, 23 February 1886.
 4. Ibid., 12 February 1887.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 8 January 1886.
 6. Lawrence, op.cit., p. 17.

The Scotsman described the crofters' resistance as 'lawlessness',¹ and the extreme Whig elements who influenced - and who were influenced by - the Scotsman and the Glasgow Herald were becoming increasingly alienated from the Liberal Party.

In 1885 the North British Daily Mail and the advanced Liberals generally gave their support to the seven 'independent crofter' candidates who opposed the official Liberals. Six of the 'independent crofter' candidates were successful,² and they were not opposed by the Whigs in 1886.³ The land reform envisaged by the North British Daily Mail was unacceptable to the Whig-dominated Liberal organisations in the Highlands, and the Highland Land League and the crofters candidates were not sufficiently radical to embrace land nationalisation. By contrast the branches of the Highland Land League in the west of Scotland were much more radical than their Highland counterparts, and they joined forces with those miners who were agitating for the nationalisation of land and minerals.

When a second general election came in 1886 the miners and artisans subordinated their own interests to the furtherance of Gladstone's new policy of Home Rule for Ireland. A striking feature of the general election was that Orangeism was universally opposed by the Scottish labour movement. In the face of bitter opposition from the Tories and the secession of the Liberal-Unionists and the Scotsman and Glasgow Herald from the Liberal Party,⁴ the Trades Councils,⁵

1. Ibid.

2. Pelling, *op.cit.*, p. 380.

3. Ibid., p. 381.

4. W. Ferguson, Scotland: 1689 to the Present (Edinburgh, 1968), pp. 328-9.

5. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 26 June 1886; North British Daily Mail, 23 June 1886.

the miners,¹ and the socialists urged working men to vote for the Liberal candidates.² Moreover, the jingoism of the Tories and Liberal-Unionists caused the labour leaders and the socialists virtually to eradicate their class programme altogether and to emphasise the importance of the Home Rule Issue; and even R.B. Cunningham Graham limited his radicalism³ to support for a Ten Hour Bill for railway workers.⁴

Conversely, the Roman catholic Glasgow Observer subsequently supported the miners' agitation for the nationalisation of mineral royalties;⁵ and Robertson told 20,000 workers in Motherwell that the miners' leaders, 'were trying to bring the steel and iron workers, miners and agricultural labourers into one great federation to wrest from the capitalists the privileges of which they had too long deprived the working classes'.⁶ In February 1887 the miners' leaders in the west of Scotland - Robertson, Small, Smillie⁷ and Hardie - agitated for the nationalisation of mineral royalties.⁸ The Roman catholic clergy grouped around the Glasgow Observer felt no need to justify their warm espousal of land nationalisation by reference to theology or legitimacy, though they were subsequently forced to do so as they increasingly came under pressure from socialists within their own ranks.

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1. Glasgow Observer, 1 May 1886; 22 May 1886; 17 July 1886.
 2. Ibid., 22 May 1886.
 3. There is no evidence for the claim that Cuninghame Graham fought the election on a 'class war' programme. Johnston, op.cit., p. 263.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 8 July 1886.
 5. Glasgow Observer, 11 September 1886.
 6. Ibid., 11 September 1886.
 7. In the early days of his activity in the miners' union Smillie spelt his name as Smellie, but he changed the spelling to Smillie later on.
 8. North British Daily Mail, 24 February 1887.

The discussions and arguments about the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland¹ and Irish Home Rule were so emotionally charged that historians have explained the relative electoral success of the Liberal-Unionists in 1886 as a consequence of Orangeism.² Ethnic conflict and religious prejudice had traditionally had a debilitating influence on class consciousness; but the changing economic conditions of the time had a bearing on the shifting political allegiance of large employers of labour in the west of Scotland. Liberal policy was biased towards Little Englandism and a small naval programme; and some Liberal shipbuilders and mineowners went over to Unionism. In an area of dockyards, where there was a strong dependence on imperial trade, the Unionist programme of protectionism was becoming more attractive than free trade.³ Ordinary working men (as distinct from those who were actively involved in the labour movement) were just as influenced as shipbuilders and mineowners by the argument that unemployment would only be relieved by the Unionist programme of naval expansion. This bread-and-butter argument was probably a more powerful factor in weakening the Liberals' hitherto monolithic grip on working people than religious prejudice or ethnic conflict.

In February 1887 the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League called a demonstration on the Green in support of the striking Lanarkshire miners, and 20,000 people assembled to protest against the 'starvation' of the miners. Muirhead told the demonstrators that the miners struggle

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1. D.C. Savage, 'Scottish Politics, 1885-86', Scottish Historical Review, no. xl (1961), passim.
 2. Ferguson, op.cit., p. 329; Pelling, op.cit., pp. 372-413.
 3. B.H. Brown, Tariff Reform Movement in Great Britain, 1881-1895 (New York, 1943), pp. 70-4.

was 'but one incident in the conflict which was proceeding over the whole world between the labourer dispossessed of the means of production and the capitalist who held that means'. As the meeting was ending the mounted policemen were 'hooted and mobbed' and the ensuing disturbances 'threatened to assume serious proportions'.¹ In the mining town of Hamilton forty miners formed a branch of the Socialist League, and, when William Morris addressed them about a month later, Small, of the Social Democratic Federation, shared the platform with Morris.² At the same period Mahon had formed new branches of the Socialist League in Arbroath, Carnoustie, Lochee, Cowdenbeath, Dysart, Callatown, Aberdeen, Dundee, Galashiels, Lochgelly and West Calder.³

Socialist propaganda was making its impact on teachers, clergymen and intellectuals up and down Scotland, and in Ayr a few teachers were spreading 'the new evangelism' of socialism.⁴ In 1886 'the chief minister' in Ayr 'preached a sermon very favourable to Socialism'. Archibald McLaren, a teacher and extra-mural lecturer, predicted that 'the more honest class of ministers' would become 'a strong force on the right side'.⁵ Small, who was passionately interested in geology, invited Kropotkin to Blantyre to deliver lectures to the miners on anarchism; and the Scottish miners were 'natural anarchists'.⁶ Moreover, there were small groups of foreign socialists - 'German bottle-blowers, Italian plaster-workers, French pastry-cooks and Russian Jews, all fraternally blended together' - in Glasgow in the mid-1880s;⁷ but there is no evidence of their participation

1. North British Daily Mail, 14 February 1887.

2. Thompson, *op.cit.*, p. 515.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 557.

4. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 9 March 1886. McLaren Muirhead Correspondence, Baillie's Library, University of Glasgow. Hereafter cited as the McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence.

5. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 6 June 1886. McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence.

6. James MacDougall, 'The Scottish Coalminer', Nineteenth Century and After April 1927, p. 764.

7. J. Bruce Glasier. 'The Revolutionary Days'. Forward. 4 January 1913.

in the labour movement. The Jewish tailors subsequently affiliated to the Glasgow Trades Council, and they were committed revolutionary socialists.

A small number of teachers formed a branch of the Socialist League in Ayr in 1886;¹ and a number of Presbyterian clergymen, led by the Rev. John Glasse,² Edinburgh, propagated socialist doctrines in the Church of Scotland. Meanwhile, McLaren persuaded a shopkeeper in Tighnabruaich, Argyllshire - 'Socialism has followed me hither or rather I have found it here before me' - to 'sell Socialist literature'.³

The socialists' critique of capitalist society was not narrowly economic, and in 1888 McLaren wrote to Muirhead thus: 'I am going to lecture at John Street tonight. Subject: Socialism and Sex - dangerous'.⁴ What made a really deep impression on Presbyterian clergymen⁵ and university teachers, however, was the threat to the stability of the established social order.

A tiny minority of influential intellectuals and middle class men and women campaigned for sex reform, free education, better education, shorter hours of labour, higher wages and the amelioration of intolerable

1. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 9 March 1886. McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence.
2. Report of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1889.
3. 'The lot of the fishermen hereabouts and indeed on the West Coast generally is not a very bright one. They are feeling acutely that they are being made the slaves of the middlemen who convey their fish to the town markets. The poor men have but little education and no organisation to enable them to do something to secure for themselves the best share of value of their labour. I deeply sympathise with them - but matters are certain to grow worse with them instead of better. Yet their labour is one which under proper conditions would certainly be a pleasure instead of a toil'. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 12 April 1886. McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence.
4. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 24 June 1888. McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence.
5. Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, 9 January 1889.

conditions.¹ Margaret Irwin campaigned for the emancipation of women workers in the sweated trades from incredibly low wages and very long hours of labour,² and intellectuals like Glasse, McLaren, Small, Muirhead and James Leatham opposed the dominant social values, social conventions and sexual attitudes of the Victorian Establishment. The socialist pioneers met frequently in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen to hammer out their ideas, to draft pamphlets and to present their demands before middle class, as well as working class, audiences. The self-sacrificing efforts and the publishing ventures of pioneers like Leatham in Aberdeen³ were inspired by a profound compassion for the poverty of the labouring poor and by a moral fervour amounting to religious devotion. For Scottish 'left-wing' intellectuals socialism was, as McLaren put it, 'the only thing worth living for'.⁴

As the socialists developed their critique of Scottish society and gained support in some of the mining communities, a few Scottish M.P.s took up some of the miners' grievances. In February 1887 the Scottish miners' leaders including John Weir of Fife had a conference with Donald Crawford, Stephen Williamson, G.E. Clark, Graham and Mason whom they had to convince that the miners' county unions were too weak to win an eight hour day by trade union agitation. Mason and Crawford agreed to move amendments to the Coal Mines Regulation Bill.⁵ The miners' leaders were highly critical of the amendments envisaged by the advanced Liberals, as the rights of

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1. W.M. Haddow, My Seventy Years (Glasgow, n.d.), passim.
 2. 'Margaret H. Irwin', Glasgow Herald, 22 January 1940.
 3. 'James Leatham, the Complete Master of His Craft', Aberdeen Press and Journal, 22 December 1945.
 4. Buckley, op.cit., p. 104.
 5. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 12 April 1886. McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence.

checkweighmen were to be curtailed.¹ In any case the amendments were defeated in the House of Commons by Liberal as well as Tory M.P.s.² A similar amendment was introduced by Williamson on 17 August 1887, and it was defeated by 54 to 159 votes.³ Moreover, 16 Scottish members voted for the amendment including 2 Tories, while 6 Liberals and 9 Tories voted against.⁴ Clearly, there was little difference between the two major political parties in relation to the miners' grievances and demands.

During strikes in Slamannan,⁵ Broxburn⁶ and Blantyre⁷ police and troops were used to keep order and to enforce the eviction of the miners from the coalowners' houses and the Miner argued: 'Never, probably in the history of mining, were the miners of Scotland face to face with a graver crisis than they are at present.'⁸ Graham attacked his fellow Liberal members of Parliament, and he told a miners' audience that the Scottish employers 'were on the whole more hard-hearted and tyrannical' than those in England.⁹ In Broxburn, a part of the east of Scotland where there was no tradition of trade union organisation, Graham and Mahon got the miners to pass a resolution expressing their sympathy with socialist objectives.¹⁰ The miners had not been so militant for decades, and their aggressive opposition to the coalowners' traditional modes of social control attractive

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1. Miner, April 1887.
 2. House of Commons Debates, 3rd series, ccxix, 900 ff.
 3. Division List, no. 397, 1887.
 4. Ibid., no. 445, 1887.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 9 January 1886.
 6. Ibid., 8 February 1887.
 7. Ibid., 11 October 1887.
 8. Miner, February 1887.
 9. North British Daily Mail, 1 October 1887.
 10. Ibid., 13 October 1887.

a modicum of Parliamentary attention and sympathy. The sympathy of some advanced Liberal members of Parliament, who were usually located in constituencies where the socialists had some influence, was not sufficient to satisfy the miners, and Hardie wrote:

In all matters affecting the rights of property or capital or interfering with "freedom of contract" there is not, nor has there ever been, much to choose between Whig and Tory.¹

By 1886 Justice, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation, had penetrated into the small Ayrshire town of New Cumnock, and working men such as James Neil, James Patrick and Hardie were battling against laissez-faire philosophy within the local Liberal Association.³ Hardie's attitude to socialism was still cautious, and, when he attended a national miners' conference in Edinburgh in October 1887, he was not prepared to go so far as Small in his espousal of socialist demands.⁴ By then, however, he was increasingly coming under the influence of Graham, and in September 1887 the Scottish miners had already put Hardie forward as a Labour candidate in the constituency of North Ayrshire.⁵ A harbinger of the 'new unionism', he clashed with Broadhurst at the annual Trades Union Congress in 1887 over the issue of the legal eight hour day.⁶ Hardie's attack on Broadhurst was bitterly denounced by the North British Daily Mail⁷ and this incident marked the beginning of a long

1. Ibid., 13 October 1887.

2. Miner, July 1887.

3. J. Neil, 'Memoirs of an Ayrshire Agitator', Forward, 4 July 1914; James Strawhorn, The New History of Cumnock (Glasgow, 1966), p. 134.

4. North British Daily Mail, 15 October 1887.

5. Ibid., 3 October 1887.

6. Labour's Turning Point, ed., E.J. Hobsbawm (London, 1948), pp. 96-7.

7. North British Daily Mail, 24 September 1887.

vendetta between Hardie and Dr. Cameron, the owner of the North British Daily Mail.

Hardie was described in Commonweal as 'the first tender shoot of the Socialist growth in British trade unionism'.¹ The miners were increasingly coming under socialist influence, and Hardie followed rather than led the miners in their drift to the 'left'. When Mahon attended a miners conference in October 1887, he wrote: 'As appearances go at present there may soon be a Scottish Labour Party of which Mr. Cunninghame Graham will be the chief'.² The miners were now mounting a full scale revolt against the Liberals, and in February 1888 the Stirlingshire miners, with the backing of the Scottish Miners' Federation, adopted Robertson as the Labour candidate for Stirlingshire.³

In July 1887 Hardie presented a programme for the labouring poor in the Miner under the heading 'the Sons of Labour'. In a wide-ranging programme designed to inaugurate a social democracy he called for temperance by 'local option; payment of members of Parliament; payment of election expenses out of the rates; adult suffrage; triennial Parliaments and the abolition of all non-elected authority'. The social reforms he envisaged included 'a graduated income tax on all income over £300 a year; re-enactment of a State rent for land; home colonies and reclamation of waste land; free education; establishment of an eight hour day in mines and elsewhere it may, on inquiry, be found judicious; a national insurance fund; State ownership of minerals, royalties and mines, the purchase price being paid only in annuities;

1. Commonweal, 17 September 1887.

2. Ibid., 22 October 1887.

3. Falkirk Herald, 7 March 1888; North British Daily Mail, 9 March 1888.

compulsory provision of healthy dwellings for working people; protection of workers' household effects against seizure for debt; tribunals for the settlement of all labour disputes; the abolition of all food duties and all indirect taxation'.¹ This programme challenged areas of social and economic life hitherto assumed to be inviolable by the apostles of laissez-faire capitalism.

In May 1887 Carson was sent by the tinsplate workers as a delegate to the Glasgow Trades Council,² and in January 1888 he was joined by Robertson,³ the Stirlingshire miners' leader. Between them, they played a major role in challenging the traditional Lib-Lab ideology of the Glasgow Trades Council. In June 1887 Carson argued that labour's present methods of struggle were now totally inadequate,⁴ and by the beginning of 1888 a resolution advocating the legal eight hour day was carried in the Glasgow Trades Council by a small majority.⁵ In the same year, however, the Edinburgh Trades Council rejected the socialist demand for a legal eight hour day by a substantial majority.⁶ In February 1888 the Aberdeen Trades Council supported the demand for a legal eight hour day by an overwhelming majority.⁷ Only the miners were prepared to oppose the Liberals in the electoral field; and they were committed to some collectivist demands when the organised artisans still resisted the demand for the nationalisation of the means of production. By the beginning of 1888 some of the miners were in revolt against laissez-faire capitalism and Liberal politicians.

1. Miner, July 1887.

2. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 8 May 1887.

3. Ibid., 1 February 1888.

4. Ibid., 15 June 1887.

5. North British Daily Mail, 19 January 1888.

6. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 13 March 1888.

7. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 1 February 1888.

In December 1886 Hardie attended the inaugural conference of the Scottish Liberal Association, and he probably antagonised the middle class and upper class Liberals by demanding working class representation on the general council of the new national Liberal organisation.¹ Then Patrick, Neil and Hardie quarrelled with the Liberal Association in Cumnock,² and in May 1888 the Ayrshire miners passed the following resolution:

That in the opinion of this meeting, the time has come for the foundation of a Labour Party in the House of Commons, and we hereby agree to represent the miners of Scotland at the first available opportunity.³

The Scottish Miners' Federation was founded in October 1886,⁴ and, when Hardie presented his first annual secretarial report in 1887, he said:

The formation of a Labour Party in the country has hitherto been looked upon as a dream of the enthusiast. It would appear as if the miners of Scotland were to have the credit of transforming it into reality. Resolutions have been passed at various large centres in favour of this being done, while in some constituencies candidates have been selected. The Labour Party will be a distinct organisation from the Trades Unions.

In a concluding paragraph, he expressed the miners hostility to capitalism:

Ours is no old-fashioned sixpence-a-day agitation. We aim at the complete emancipation of the worker from the thraldom of wagedom.

His report was adopted by the conference of the Scottish Miners' Federation,⁵ and Robertson, Small, Weir and Hardie were preparing for a fight with the Liberals.

1. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 22 December 1886.
2. Strawhorn, op.cit., p. 134.
3. Stewart, op.cit., p. 22.
4. Arnot, op.cit., p. 67.
5. Arnot, op.cit., pp. 69-70.

The opportunity to oppose the Liberals came in March 1888 when Stephen Mason, the advanced Liberal member of Parliament for Mid-Lanark, resigned his seat owing to ill-health.¹ The North British Daily Mail observed that 'the railway servants vote' was stronger in Mason's constituency than in any other constituency in Scotland, and the editor recommended Stewart MacLiver as a 'staunch friend' of the railwaymen.² In 1874, when the Glasgow Trades Council selected three Parliamentary candidates, they voted for Dr. Cameron, the owner of the North British Daily Mail, instead of MacLiver,³ and in any case the miners in Mid-Lanark were numerically stronger and more militant than the railway workers. On 8 March 1888 a mass meeting of Stirlingshire miners passed a resolution urging the miners in Mid-Lanark to select a labour candidate.⁴ A few days later a delegate meeting of the Larkhall miners invited Hardie to contest the Mid-Lanark constituency as a Labour candidate.⁵

The impetus behind the agitation for an independent party of labour came from the socialist elements within the miners' county unions, and Smillie and John Gray were the leading miners' agents in Larkhall.⁶ The miners traditional cultural alienation from the Liberals made them more susceptible to socialist ideas than the artisans, and this factor rather than Hardie's innate class-consciousness,⁷

1. North British Daily Mail, 8 March 1888.

2. Ibid.

3. See p. 159.

4. North British Daily Mail, 9 March 1888.

5. Hamilton Advertiser, 17 March 1888.

6. Stewart, op.cit., p. 44.

7. Stewart, op.cit., pp. 38-9

inordinate personal ambition¹ or megalomania² was the driving force creating the pre-conditions for a new labour party. Hardie's emergence as 'the Labour and Home Rule'³ candidate in 1888 reflected the success of Small and the Socialist League in winning so many of the miners' leaders for a socialist programme.⁴

Dr. Cameron and the North British Daily Mail opposed Hardie's candidature,⁵ and Hardie demanded a plebiscite of the Liberal voters in the constituency to select the Liberal nominee.⁶ Hardie's demand was ignored, and J.W. Philipps, a London barrister, was adopted by the Mid-Lanark Liberal Association as the Liberal candidate.⁷

Threlfall, who had been influenced by H.H. Champion, had already come north to assist Hardie on behalf of the Labour Electoral Association. Towards the end of March the Scottish Miners' Federation, in spite of the opposition of the advanced Liberals and the North British Daily Mail,⁸ decided to give Hardie their full support. Moreover, 'all the miners' agents present' offered to address meetings in Mid-Lanark, and Weir was appointed as the treasurer of Hardie's election fund.⁹

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1. Fred Reid, 'Keir Hardie's biographers', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, no. 16 (1968), p. 32.
 2. D. Carswell, Brother Scots (London, 1927), p. 178.
 3. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party (Oxford, 1965), p. 66.
 4. See the annotation by Beryl Small on The Independent Labour Party, 1893-1943; Jubilee Souvenir: 'Hardie Smillie taught at my home by Papa'. Small Papers.
 5. Stewart, op.cit., p. 38.
 6. Scottish Leader, 27 March 1888.
 7. Pelling, op.cit., p. 65.
 8. North British Daily Mail, 30 March 1888.
 9. Hamilton Advertiser, 31 March 1888.

On 8 April Philipps was adopted as the Liberal candidate, and some of Hardie's middle class Radical supporters met and decided he should be asked to withdraw from the contest.¹ Then Threlfall asked Hardie to withdraw, and there was a furious row between the two men.² Schnadhorst, the secretary of the National Liberal Federation, tried to mediate with the local Liberals;³ and Sir George Trevelyan offered Hardie a safe seat at the next election, with a salary of £300 a year, if he would stand down at Mid-Lanark.⁴ Schnadhorst failed to persuade the Liberal constituency organisation to recognise the existence of the Labour Party. And in April Hardie told his supporters, 'They were fighting now for the National Labour Party'. On this fundamental point of principle Hardie and the miners would accept no compromise in their negotiations with the Liberals.⁵ When Hardie met his own committee in Hamilton on 21 April, he offered to withdraw from the contest; but his committee urged him to carry on the struggle against the two major political parties, and he did not need too much persuasion.⁶

The hostility between the Scottish miners and the Liberals had existed for decades;⁷ and the editor of the North British Daily Mail denied that the Scottish miners had a special claim on Mid-Lanark. Moreover, he attributed the trouble the Liberals were having with Hardie and the miners to 'the interference' of the Liberal leaders

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1. Scottish Leader, 9 April 1888.
 2. Keir Hardie, 'More Reminiscences', Labour Leader 18 March 1914.
 3. Pelling, *op.cit.*, p. 65.
 4. Hardie, Labour Leader, 18 March 1914.
 5. Scottish Leader, 18 April 1888.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 23 April 1888.
 7. See chapter three.

in London, and he defended the intransigence of the Scottish Liberals in refusing to consider the claims of working class representation in Parliament.¹ Those who were promoting Hardie's candidature countered the arguments of the advanced Liberals by blaming Gladstone's intervention in the general election of 1885 for J.G. Weir's failure² to be elected as the Labour candidate for the Falkirk burghs.³ By 1888 J. Galloway Weir was the secretary of the Parliamentary committee of the Highland League, and he was campaigning for Hardie.⁴

Hardie advocated a legal eight hour day for 'all working men'⁵ and the nationalisation of mineral royalties.⁶ Philipps refused to support the nationalisation of mineral royalties,⁷ and he told a working class audience that he was opposed to 'governmental interference with wages'.⁸ The Liberals were aware of the many demands Hardie had propagated in the Miner and elsewhere, and in September

1. North British Daily Mail, 27 March 1888.

2. See above.

3. Glasgow Herald, 20 April 1888.

4. Stewart, op.cit., p. 40.

5. Glasgow Herald, 10 April 1888.

6. Dr. Pelling argues (op.cit., p. 65) that Hardie's 'programme was not in advance of that of several Radical M.P.s.' However, the Scottish Liberals, whether they were Whigs or advanced Liberals, were uncompromisingly opposed to land nationalisation, the nationalisation of mineral royalties and a legal eight hour day for ideological reasons. Pelling has been unwittingly influenced by the hagiographers of the Scottish labour movement (Stewart, op.cit., p. 393) who did not understand that Hardie's radical demands put him far beyond the pale of Scottish Liberalism. A failure to understand the climate of opinion of Scottish society in the 1880s has led many historians into the mistake of assuming that Hardie's demands were relatively moderate: but in the context of a situation in which the Scottish Liberals were monolithically and intransigently opposed to the Lib-Lab programme of labour reform, Hardie's demands were 'revolutionary'.

7. Scottish Leader, 5 April 1888.

8. Ibid., 17 April 1888.

1887 the North British Daily Mail had denounced Hardie's attack on Broadhurst at the Trades Union Congress. And Gray, a miners' agent, bitterly attacked the local Liberal Association's 'arbitrary assumption' of their right to impose a middle class candidate on the constituency without consulting the working class electorate,¹ and this same complaint had been made by the Lanarkshire miners during the general election of 1868.²

Hardie's campaign was supported by Champion,³ Small,⁴ Robertson,⁵ Mahon,⁶ Graham,⁷ Smillie,⁸ Murdoch,⁹ and Galloway Weir;¹⁰ and the Labour candidate, like Alexander MacDonal in 1868, displayed political skill in playing the Tories off against the Liberals and vice-versa. He told one audience he 'thought land reform could be got from the Liberals, but labour reform more readily from the Tories'.¹¹ In the Glasgow Trades Council Carson told the delegates a Labour Party had been formed to struggle 'for the emancipation of the working classes'; and a resolution supporting Hardie's candidature was carried by a large majority.¹² Following Threlfall's withdrawal of financial aid, Hardie was supported by the Scottish Land Restoration League, the Scottish

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1. Hamilton Advertiser, 7 April 1888.
 2. See p.
 3. Glasgow Herald, 14 April 1888.
 4. Ibid., 25 April 1888.
 5. Arnot, op.cit., p. 74; North British Daily Mail, 6 April 1888.
 6. Ibid., 25 April 1888.
 7. Pelling, op.cit., p. 65.
 8. North British Daily Mail, 23 April 1888.
 9. Ibid., 25 April 1888.
 10. Glasgow Herald, 10 April 1888.
 11. North British Daily Mail, 20 April 1888.
 12. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 4 April 1888.

Miners' Federation and the Highland Land League.¹ On 17 April, when Small addressed a meeting of Hardie's supporters in Hamilton, he gave a promise that the miners would 'continue the struggle to the bitter end, even should it result in the loss of a seat by the Liberal Party'.²

There was a large Irish element in the Mid-Lanark constituency, and the major leaders of the Irish National League in the West of Scotland - Ferguson, McGhee and Robertson - addressed meetings on Hardie's behalf from the beginning of the campaign onwards. The Home Government branch of the Irish National League passed a resolution 'hailing with delight the candidature of Keir Hardie'. Moreover, they attacked the Scottish organiser of the Irish National League for 'asking their fellow-countrymen who risk their lives in the mines to vote against a working man who had also been a true friend of Ireland'.³

The Irish in the constituency were deeply divided between the miners who supported Hardie and the uncompromising nationalist elements who took Parnell's advice to support Philipps.⁴ But not all of the Irish immigrants were hostile to Hardie; and such influential Scottish-born Irishmen as Robertson⁵ and Mahon⁶ campaigned for Hardie. Robertson and Mahon, with the assistance of the Roman catholic clergy had already organised immigrant and indigenous miners in the Lothians, Stirlingshire and Lanarkshire; and Smillie, a Presbyterian who had been born

1. Glasgow Herald, 26 April 1888; Hamilton Advertiser, 21 April 1888.

2. North British Daily Mail, 18 April 1888.

3. Hamilton Advertiser, 31 March 1888.

4. Ibid., 7 April 1888; 14 April 1888; 21 April 1888.

5. 'R. Chisholm Robertson', Miner, January 1887.

6. See above.

in Ulster,¹ found no difficulty in working with Robertson and Mahon for Hardie's election as a Labour candidate. On polling day Hardie polled 617 votes, and, with so many influential Irish working class leaders campaigning for him, it would have been surprising if some of the immigrants had not voted for him.²

Such newspapers as the Glasgow Herald,³ the North British Daily Mail⁴ and the Glasgow Observer⁵ stimulated and accentuated the divisions and splits between the working class electors in Mid-Lanark over the issue of Irish Home Rule for their own political advantage, and Liberal-Unionist newspapers like the Glasgow Herald and the Scotsman egged on the emerging Scottish Labour Party as a method by which to weaken the Liberals' grip on working class voters. The really surprising development, however, was that some Irish immigrants were prepared to support Hardie at the risk of allowing the Tory candidate to be elected; and, when Graham addressed a meeting of Hardie's supporters in April, he was able to announce that 'one third of their

1. 'Life and Times of Robert Smillie', Forward, 2 May 1914.
2. Donald Carsewell and James G. Kellas have argued that the 617 electors who voted for Hardie were Presbyterian Scots, and that the Irish in Mid-Lanark were completely united in their opposition to Hardie. Like Moody (op.cit., p. 66), Carsewell and Kellas were unaware of the ethnic and denominational origins of Robertson, Mahon and Smillie. Moreover, they have allowed their own doctrinal commitments to blur their vision of what was actually happening in the 1880s - that is, the beginning of real class solidarity between the Roman catholic Irish immigrant miners and the indigenous Presbyterian miners. See P. Carsewell, op. cit., p. 178. and James G. Kellas, 'The Mid-Lanark by-election (1888) and the Scottish Labour Party (1888-1924)', Parliamentary Affairs, no. 18 (1964-65), p. 320.
3. Glasgow Herald, 10 April 1888; 14 April 1888; 20 April 1888.
4. North British Daily Mail, 30 March 1888; 14 April 1888; 16 April 1888.
5. Glasgow Observer, 14 April 1888; 21 April 1888; 28 April 1888.

delegates were Irishmen'.¹

Moreover, the Irish nationalists' opposition to Hardie perpetuated the split between the urban and the rural working class movement. Threlfall's promise of the support of 'the Parnellite party' had been a major factor in the decision of the Glasgow Trades Council to support Hardie;² and there is no evidence that the Trades Council campaigned for Hardie after Parnell's opposition became public knowledge.

The voters in Mid-Lanark went to the polls on 27 April and a total of 7,381 votes were cast for the three candidates.³ In March the Irish organisers estimated that the total Irish vote in the constituency was approximately 1,308,⁴ and the organisers of the Irish National League had not always had their own way in committing the 'Irish' vote to particular candidates.

After the by-election Cameron accused Hardie of having used 'Tory Gold' to further his fight against Philipps,⁵ and Hardie counter-attacked by describing Cameron as a 'sweater' who ran a 'rat shop' in Dublin. During the by-election the Glasgow Observer had accused the emerging Scottish Labour Party of 'sacrificing Home Rule for their own interests';⁶ and after Hardie had gone to the poll the North British Daily Mail predicted that he would be 'ostracised from every Liberal Association in the west of Scotland'.⁷ Hardie fought the efforts of

1. Ibid., 21 April 1888.

2. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 4 April 1888.

3. Philipps (Liberal), 3,847, Bousfield (Tory), 2,917, Hardie (Labour), 517.

4. Scottish Leader, 17 March 1888.

5. North British Daily Mail, 22 June 1888.

6. Glasgow Observer, 21 April 1888.

7. North British Daily Mail, 28 April 1888.

the Liberals to ostracise him; and, in a perceptive letter to the secretary of the Home Government branch of the Irish National League, he predicted a conflict between capital and labour in Ireland himself. He wrote:

I very much fear that Ireland's true battle will only begin after Home Rule has been granted, as the conduct of certain "leaders" on this occasion bodes ill for their future action, when Land and Labour questions come up for discussion on College Green.¹

The Scottish branches of the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League were influenced by the nationalist climate of opinion, and in December 1888 they decided to sever their connections with London. Then a Scottish Socialist Federation was set up to propagate socialist ideas, and W.D. Tait was elected the national secretary.² Though the Scottish Socialist Federation did not champion Home Rule for Scotland, a number of prominent marxists in the 1880s, including William Diack,³ were subsequently associated with such an agitation.⁴ However, Hardie did not expect much from the Liberals, and he had no illusions about Home Rule being a partial substitute for a socialist programme. By 1889 he was writing in the Labour Leader:

I don't deem Home Rule of itself as a settlement of any question whatever. But it will be valuable as a means of bringing the legislative body more in touch with the people.⁵

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1. Hardie to the Secretary of the Home Government branch of the Irish National League, 11 May 1888. National Library of Scotland. Acc. 504 Ms. 1809/75.
 2. David Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour (Glasgow, 1919), p. 129.
 3. Buckley, op.cit., passim.
 4. Scottish Review, no. 42 (1919), p. 388.
 5. Labour Leader, April 1889.

On the day after the Mid-Lanark by-election, Hardie's supporters held a conference in the mining town of Hamilton. A decision was taken to form a Labour Electoral Association throughout Lanarkshire, and Graham and Smillie were elected as office-bearers.¹ On 19 May twenty-seven men, including Smillie, Murdoch, Hardie and Ferguson met in Glasgow to discuss the formation of a Labour Party in Scotland.² This provisional committee invited delegates from trade union branches, Trades Councils, socialist groups and 'societies working for the moral and social elevation of the people'.³

The foundation conference of the Scottish Labour Party was held in Glasgow on 25 August, and it was attended by Dr. G.B. Clark, the crofters' M.P. for Caithness, Shaw Maxwell, of the Scottish Land Restoration League, Murdoch, McGhee, Ferguson, Dundan McPherson and Smillie. McPherson, a Gaelic-speaking Highlander, was an active member of the Glasgow Trades Council. In a challenging speech, Hardie warned the Liberals not to expect any respite from the Scottish Labour Party. He denounced the Liberals, and in a fiery speech he announced to the conference that:

... he had severed his connection with the Liberal Party that day by becoming secretary to the newly-formed Scottish Labour Party; and if the Liberal party desired to prevent the Labour Party from splitting it in twain, it was an easy way out of the difficulty to adopt the programme the Labour Party had laid down, and it would find them working heart and soul with it as good Liberals as they had been hitherto. A party which looked askance at the eight hour day movement when there were one million British working men tramping our streets in enforced idleness, who stood by and said "We can do nothing", when 6,000 Scottish working men were converted into tramps in one year, and when the increasing power of the capitalist threatened to crush the industrial community out of existence, and to reduce them to a state of serfdom, must be split up, and must be split up in order that the people might live.⁴

1. Hamilton Advertiser, 5 May 1888.
2. Stewart, op.cit., p. 43.
3. Miner, June 1888.
4. Scottish Leader, 27 August 1888.

The Glasgow Council did not send delegates to the foundation conference of the Scottish Labour Party, though Graham and Hardie addressed a meeting in Aberdeen in the spring of 1888 on the need for working class politics. Leatham attributed the demise of the Aberdeen Junior Liberal Association to the visit of Graham and Hardie.¹ The Edinburgh Trades Council sent Neil McLean² to the conference after they had instructed him to oppose the demands in the Scottish Labour Party's programme for a legal eight hour day and State insurance for sickness, accident, death or old age.³

The Scottish Labour Party's programme challenged the whole edifice of Liberalism,⁴ and a conference of the Scottish Liberal Association which met after the Mid-Lanark by-election refused to consider working class candidatures.⁵ Hardie wanted to create a mass working class party, and his approach to the electorate and the labour movement was a broad, non-sectarian one. He had to overcome Liberal influence over working people, and in the Miner, he wrote that:

The Labour Party in Scotland exists for the purpose of educating the people politically and securing the return to Parliament and all local bodies members pledged to its programme. If, therefore, anyone, peasant or peer, is found willing to accept the programme and work with the Party, his help will be greatly accepted.⁶

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1. James Leatham, The Gateway, vol. xxviii, no. 332, pp., 9-11; 16.
 2. For biographical details of Neil McLean see the Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 1859-1873, ed. Ian MacDougall (Edinburgh, 1968), p. xxiv.
 3. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 25 August 1888.
 4. 'Programme of the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party', R.H. Campbell and J.B.A. Dow, Source Book of Scottish Economic and Social History (Oxford, 1968), pp., 209-10, See Appendix 4.
 5. Miner, May 1888.
 6. Ibid., September 1888.

But though Hardie was aware of the need for a mass-based trade union Labour Party, he was not blind to the importance of middle class sympathy. Small, a man of wide culture and broad social sympathy, had had a strong influence on Hardie; and Small had played an important role in the organisation of the Scottish Labour Party. However, the urban trade unionists were often less enthusiastic about middle class and aristocratic socialists talking down to them as Graham certainly did,¹ and this conflict of attitudes had much to do with the subsequent emergence of the Scottish Trades Councils Labour Party.² In his first secretarial report for the Scottish Labour Party, Hardie referred to the role of the middle class:

Whilst carefully avoiding overrating the sympathy of the wealthy, still, judging from the past, we cannot doubt that among the thoughtful of the well-to-do classes there is an earnest desire to lessen the oppressive burden now borne by Labour. The sentiment which enabled interested men to work for the overthrow of slavery will also act in freeing men from the bondage of the commercial system.³

The optimism of Hardie, Graham and Ferguson, who belonged to the 'permeationist' group in the Scottish Labour Party, was stimulated by the sympathy of a small but influential section of the middle class and by an apparent rapprochement with the Scottish Liberal Party. As a consequence of the Mid-Lanark by-election Majoribanks, the Liberal Whip, promised to allocate seven Parliamentary seats to the Scottish Labour Party at the next general election. The Glasgow Observer claimed that these concessions were completely the work of Ferguson, who, 'though

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1. Hugh MacDiarmid, R.B. Cunninghame Graham (Glasgow, 1952), p. 9.
 2. See below.
 3. Scottish Labour Party, First Annual Report of the Executive n.d., 1889, incomplete photocopy in the Library of Transport House, London.

most unfairly abused and maligned by certain speakers and newspapers over the Mid-Lanark contest, had through a long public career acted with uprightness, honesty of purpose and unselfishness combined with courtesy towards opponents which it would be well for public life if most politicians would emulate'.¹

However, the Scottish Liberals were inherently antagonistic to the growing aspirations of the labour movement, and the local Liberal Associations were usually unresponsive to working class agitations. Lord Elgin, the president of the Scottish Liberal Associations, was fundamentally hostile to organised Labour; and he was not equipped to cope with Lib-Lab leaders who were being influenced by socialist propaganda. Theoretically the general council of the Scottish Liberal Association was responsible for party policy; but neither Elgin nor the general council were prepared to support any measures which might interfere with private property or weaken the power of the elements who controlled the Scottish Liberal Association. In 1889 conferences of the Scottish Liberal Association had, for example, passed resolutions supporting Scottish Home Rule and the payment of members of Parliament out of State funds, and these resolutions were deliberately ignored by Elgin and the general council.²

The Scottish Liberal Association had been created as a consequence of the Third Reform Act, and the extension of mass democracy had resulted in an uneasy alliance between the advanced Liberals, the independent Liberals and the Whigs. The advanced Liberals wanted to press for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and, within limits, land and labour questions; the Whigs, with their network of family connections

1. Glasgow Observer, 23 June 1888.

2. Labour Leader, March 1889.

linking Elgin to a number of Liberal M.P.'s, were committed to defend the status quo; and the independent Liberals sometimes held the delicate balance of power between the two main warring factions within the Scottish Liberal organisation. The general council, theoretically responsible for passing on the decisions of the Scottish Liberal Association to the Parliamentary leadership, was hostile to the demands of the advanced Liberals; and Elgin asserted that debate in the association was 'wholly free of consequences'.¹

Once the Mid-Lanark by-election had driven home to the Liberal Whips the crucial necessity of forging an electoral agreement with the Scottish Labour Party, the viability of the Majoribanks compact rested upon the ideological passivity and organisational unity of the labour movement. At first such a development seemed feasible, and, with the affiliation of the Mid and West Lothian miners to the Edinburgh Trades Council in February 1888,² it seemed that the traditional enmity between the miners and artisans was coming to an end. At the same time, however, Graham and Ferguson were pressing the Liberals from within to come out in favour of socialistic measures, and in October³ and November⁴ 1889 conferences of the Scottish Liberal Association rejected resolutions advocating a legal eight hour day. Nevertheless the temporary alliance between the Liberals and the Labour movement was maintained, and the optimism of the 'permeationists' was reflected in the Scottish Labour Party's support for the Liberal candidate in January 1889 at the Govan by-election.⁵

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1. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 8 February 1887.
 2. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 21 February 1888.
 3. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 22 October 1889.
 4. Ibid., 22 November 1889.
 5. The Independent Labour Party, 1893-1943 (London, 1943), p. 12.

The Liberals were, of course, divided among themselves on issues of fundamental importance; but the permeation of labourist radicals into the Liberal ranks did not prevent the three Liberal factions from uniting to oppose the campaign for a legal eight hour day. The opposition of the Liberals encouraged those elements in the Scottish Labour Party - and particularly the miners - who were striving to separate themselves from the Liberals, and Hardie reflected the growth of socialist feeling in the labour movement when he wrote:

Liberalism is one thing, Socialism is quite another, and the new Labour Party is socialistic. It is this which marks the dividing line, and the outward and visible sign of it at present is the Eight Hour Question.¹

A whole range of Liberal newspapers such as the Falkirk Herald² and the Dunfermline Journal³, attacked the idea of Parliamentary interference with the hours of labour, and the Dunfermline Journal tried to create discord between the miners in Fife and those in the west of Scotland by pointing out that the Fife miners had already won an eight hour day by employing 'the methods of self-help'.⁴

Moreover, the basis for a viable alliance between the Scottish Labour Party and the Liberals was being destroyed by the socialistic demands of Labour candidates. And some of the miners were waging war against the two major parties. In Falkirk the miners readopted Robertson as the Labour candidate for Stirlingshire; they condemned the sitting Liberal member of Parliament and his Liberal-Unionist opponent; and they appealed to trade unions in Stirlingshire to have

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1. Labour Leader, May 1889.
 2. Falkirk Herald, 1 June 1889.
 3. Dunfermline Journal, 11 May 1889.
 4. Ibid.

189.
The question of a Labour candidate 'thoroughly tested' at the next general election.¹

John Preston Bruce, the sitting Liberal member of Parliament for West Fife, had been ill from the beginning of 1889, and by May the miners' leaders were aware of the possibility of a by-election. When Graham spoke at a miners' rally in Dunfermline in early June at the invitation of the Fife county union, he said that:

The working people should regard both parties as a set of rogues, and send to Parliament one of themselves. There was one man who was going there, and that was John Weir.²

At a subsequent miners' rally the Fife miners carried a resolution by a large majority approving of 'the idea to bring forward a Labour candidate';³ and they subsequently decided that they only required to augment the present salary of their full-time secretary, Weir, if he should be adopted by the Liberals as the Lib-Lab candidate for West Fife.⁴ A number of miners were, however, opposed to putting forward a working class candidate; and some miners argued that Weir's election to Parliament would result in his neglect of union affairs.⁵

When Bruce resigned his Parliamentary seat for West Fife, he informed Elgin, who was his brother, instead of the local Liberals;⁶ and the North British Daily Mail, representing the views of the advanced Liberals, opposed John Weir's candidature on the grounds that the Scottish miners did not have a national Parliamentary fund.⁷

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1. Falkirk Herald, 1 June 1889.
 2. Dunfermline Journal, 8 June 1889.
 3. Scotsman, 8 June 1889.
 4. Dunfermline Journal, 19 June 1889.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Scotsman, 17 June 1889.
 7. North British Daily Mail, 19 June 1889.

By this time the Scottish Miners' Federation had virtually broken up, and most of the county unions outside of Fife had all but collapsed. Those who controlled the Liberal caucus were hostile to Weir's radical views, and, in their view, he was just as much a dangerous extremist as Hardie. Moreover, in Mid-June the Dunfermline Journal reported that Munro Ferguson, the Liberal agent, had organised 'a central Liberal Association' in anticipation of 'a vacancy'; and, when the West Fife Liberal Association met to select a candidate, they refused to give the Liberal working class delegates who were present six days to give Weir an opportunity of being nominated.²

There were no socialist groups in Fife to drive the miners into open opposition to the Liberals, and the active members of the Fife miners county union were themselves divided on the question of independent labour representation. However, Wemyss, the Liberal-Unionist coalowner of Wemyss Castle, offered to finance John Weir as an independent Labour candidate; and the offer which Wemyss had made to Weir privately was revealed and played up by the local Liberals. Weir had no hesitation in refusing the offer; but not before he had made a blistering attack on the Liberal caucus.³ Weir took no part in the by-election;⁴ and the indigenous miners of Fife⁵ were slower to agitate for independent labour representation than the miners in the west of Scotland where the socialists were active and influential.

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1. Dunfermline Journal, 15 June 1889.
 2. *Ibid.*, 22 June 1889.
 3. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1889; 20 July 1889.
 4. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1889.
 5. Pelling, *op.cit.*, p. 397.

There had been rivalry between Hardie and Robertson after the Mid-Lanark by-election, and Hardie, Small and Robertson had competed for a place on the Royal Commission on Mineral Royalties.¹ Hardie had ferociously attacked Robertson at the annual conference of the Trades Union Congress in Dundee in 1889 for not supporting his call for a boycott by the whole of the Scottish miners of a Dundee newspaper which prohibited trade union organisation in its printing shop.² Conflict between the miners' leaders had been endemic for decades, and the conflict between Robertson, Hardie, Weir, and Small vitiated the growth of a strong labour movement.³

In June 1889 the Edinburgh Trades Council had no real reluctance in rejecting an appeal by Graham and Maxwell to affiliate to the Scottish Labour Party,⁴ and at the same time the Glasgow Trades Council had voted for affiliation.⁵ At a subsequent meeting of the Glasgow Trades Council Robertson opposed affiliation to the Scottish Labour Party, though he emphasised his support for independent labour representation.⁶ Moreover, the central branch of the Scottish Railway Servants Society voted against affiliation on account of 'the violent speeches of Mr. Cunninghame Graham'.⁷

A national seamen's strike broke out in June, and the Glasgow dockers came out on strike in support of the seamen. Hardie and Graham went to Leith, and they told the seamen that a combined

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1. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 10 April 1889.
 2. Labour Leader, March 1889.
 3. Arnot, op.cit., p. 74 and p. 86.
 4. Scotsman, 6 June 1889.
 5. Ibid., 7 June 1889.
 6. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 19 June 1889.
 7. Ibid., 24 July 1889.

strike of miners, seamen and dockers would be irresistible. Hardie had advocated violence,¹ and a number of working class leaders felt compelled to criticise Hardie and Graham for their irresponsibility.² While McLean, the secretary of the Edinburgh Trades Council, had supported the seamen's strike, he nevertheless felt obliged to condemn the violence advocated by Hardie and Graham.³ At a time when the leaders of the Scottish Labour Party were appealing to trade union organisations for support Hardie and Graham had unwittingly alienated important trade union leaders. The Liberal press had seized upon these speeches, and had used them to heighten the dissension among the leaders of the labour movement. The Liberals therefore had some reasons for assuming that they had confronted and disposed of the challenge of the Scottish Labour Party, and the onlooker surveying the labour scene in 1889 might have had some justification for thinking the Liberals had succeeded in crushing the movement among labouring men for independent labour representation.

Scottish trade unionism suffered so severe a setback between 1875 and 1885 that 'its revival' in the late 1880s ought, in the opinion of one Labour historian, to be regarded as 'opening a new phase'.⁴ In Scotland, as in England, the 'new unionism' was usually organised by socialists; but there were some parts of Scotland where the 'new unionists' were not so completely under socialist influence as their English counterparts. In 1889, for example, the Leith and

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1. Scotsman, 12 June 1889; North British Daily Mail, 21 June 1889; Labour Leader, July 1889.
 2. Scotsman, 17 June 1889; North British Daily Mail, 25 July 1889.
 3. Scotsman, 17 June 1889.
 4. W.H. Marwick, Labour in Scotland (Glasgow, n.d.), p. 13.

Edinburgh branches of the Scottish Horsemen's Union organised a mass demonstration in which they carried banners through the streets of Edinburgh:

Not defiance, but defence; Give us back the land - it is ours; a Man's a man for a' that; a noble peasantry is a nation's pride; fifty six hours per week is sufficient for man or beast; compulsory emigration is no remedy - let the idle and worthless go - keep the bones and muscle at home.¹

The members of this organisation - a union described by the historian of the Scottish carters as 'new unionist'² - were still, therefore, campaigning for the demands of the 'old' unionists.

The weakness of Scottish trade unionism was almost certainly an important factor in shaping the Liberals' unsympathetic response to the new challenge of socialist ideas. It was, however, only one factor: an equally important factor was that Liberalism refused to accommodate itself to the growing socialist militancy out of a fear of social change. At first, they refused to support demands for land nationalisation, payment of members of Parliament and an eight hour day, and then, when the labour radical permeationists such as John Ferguson succeeded in getting the Scottish Liberal Association to pass resolutions, Lord Elgin told the Liberal delegates that their debates were 'wholly free of consequences'.

With the advent of the mass electorate created by the Third Reform Act the leaders of the two major parties in England began to vie with each other in promising to promote far-reaching programmes of social reform. In Scotland, where the Liberals had been previously divided into the three groups of independent, advanced and Whig, there was an increasing polarisation into Whig and advanced Liberal. Moreover,

1. Scotsman, 17 June 1889.

2. A. Tuckett, The Scottish Carter (London, 1967), p. 33.

the advanced Liberals were much more interested in the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and Home Rule for Ireland than in labour or social legislation; and the advanced Liberals, though afraid of the candidates put up by the Scottish Land Restoration League in Glasgow and the west of Scotland, could still afford to put up their own candidates against sitting Whigs.¹ And it ought to be remembered that M.P.s who were described as independent Liberals in the 1870s were more likely to be described as Whigs in the 1880s. A major factor in bringing this change about was undoubtedly the propaganda of Henry George and the Scottish Land Restoration League; for Liberal M.P.s, Liberal candidates - and Liberal newspapers - who had been enthusiastic about land reform in the 1860s and 1870s had second thoughts when agitations for land reform became inseparable from land nationalisation.

Dr. Charles Cameron and the advanced Liberals, who had bitterly criticised the Scottish Land Restoration League candidates in 1885, were simultaneously promoting the candidates being put by the Highland Land League for two reasons. First, the candidates sponsored by the Highland Land League were not so 'left' as the Land and Labour candidates; and, secondly, the Scottish Land Restoration League candidates could not be used by the advanced Liberals to strengthen their own party position or ambitions.²

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1. In May 1885 John McIntosh wrote on behalf of the Perth United Liberal Association inviting A.B. Haldane to stand against Parker, the sitting Whig, thus: 'The total number of electors is about, 4,400 and as only about 800 at the most are Tories, you will perceive at once that there is more than ample margin to enable two Liberals to be run with perfect safety'. A.B. Haldane Papers, MS. 5902.
 2. D. Savage, 'Scottish Politics, 1885-1886', Scottish Historical Review, Vol. XL, 1956, p. 127.

The Liberals, whether advanced or not, refused to adopt working class candidates in any of the Liberal constituencies where the Lib-Lab working men were both strong and well-organised. In Fife John Weir, the highly respected Lib-Lab miners' secretary, was opposed by Dr. Cameron, the North British Daily Mail and the advanced Liberals just as much as by the Whigs who dominated the Fife Liberal constituency associations. Different middle class groups influenced different Liberal constituencies before the third Reform Act and that situation did not change significantly in Scotland after 1884;¹ and, while the Whigs such as those in Aberdeen were prepared to tolerate middle class advanced Liberal (as distinct from really 'left-wing' Scottish Land Restoration League) candidates being imposed on them, the Whigs and advanced Liberals united to prevent working class candidates being adopted by Liberal constituency associations. What frightened Dr. Cameron was the fact that Scottish advanced Liberals such as John Weir were far too the 'left' of any of the middle class advanced Liberals. In 1888, as we have seen, Dr. Cameron's North British Daily Mail attributed the Scottish Labour Party's agitation for labour representation to the 'interference' of the English Liberal whips.

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1. In December 1881 R.P. Bruce, the Liberal member for West Fife, wrote to Arthur Elliot: 'Those north eastern M.P.s will do anything the farmers tell them to do. They think they depend on that class for their seats. It is different in other counties, such for example as this, where the farmers are not so powerful. I believe that among the middle class in Scotland, the most active and influential of which are not the farmers, there is a strong feeling in favour of free contract, and that this feeling might be successfully appealed to to resist excessive demands by the farmers for special legislative protection'. Arthur Elliot Papers, Acc. 4246, National Library of Scotland.

In the 1880s the English Liberals were to the 'left' of the Scots, and this was seen in two crucially important ways. First it found expression in the English Lib-Lab parliamentary pact, which helped to integrate most of the leaders of the 'old' unionism into the Liberal party. Secondly, it found expression in Joe Chamberlain's 'unauthorised programme' - a 'left-wing' programme which was, in 1885, responsible for the Liberal victories in the English counties where the agricultural workers had just been enfranchised.¹

The failure of the Scottish Liberals to evolve either a Lib-Lab parliamentary pact or a radical labour programme designed to accommodate the growing socialist militancy of the Labour movement must therefore be seen as important factors in the development of the movement for independent labour representation. For a time, the movement for independent labour representation was halted in constituencies where the labour movement was able, as in Aberdeen, to replace Whigs with advanced Liberals. Nevertheless there was a growing dissatisfaction with the Liberals insensitivity towards labour demands, and the Glasgow and Aberdeen Trades Councils were becoming more and more critical of the 'shopkeeping' element in the Liberal party.

1. C.H.D. Howard, 'Joe Chamberlain and the "Unauthorised Programme"', English Historical Review, Vol. LXV, 1950, p. 477.

Liberalism, Socialism and the Emergence of a
Scottish Working Class Movement, 1890-1900

An unprecedented upsurge of class conscious militancy coincided with 'a tidal wave of New Unionism',¹ and 'the most conspicuous characteristic of 1890' had been 'the frequency of the struggles between Labour and Capital'.² Michael Davitt had conferred with the American leaders of the Knights of Labour in Minneapolis in 1887, and Terence V. Powderly had 'engaged his services to aid in developing their order in Europe'.³ By 1890 the Knights of Labour had 3,000 members in the west of Scotland,⁴ and they were predominantly Irish⁵ miners, dockers and unskilled workers.⁶ They had been organised by Shaw Maxwell, Richard McGhee and John Ferguson, and the unskilled Irish workers in the west of Scotland had been attracted to the new organisation by the publicity the Glasgow Observer⁷ and the Scottish Leader⁸ had given to the American Knights agitation for land nationalisation and a legal eight hour day. Moreover, the American labour organisation enjoyed enormous prestige among the Scottish labour leaders, and in February 1890 Maxwell wrote to ask Powderly to send a letter to

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1. Edinburgh Review, no. 370, 1894, pp. 353-4.
 2. Falkirk Herald, 31 December 1890.
 3. Glasgow Observer, 15 October 1887.
 4. W.H. Marwick, A Short History of Labour in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 67.
 5. Labour's Turning Point, ed., E.J. Hobsbawn (London, 1948), p. 119.
 6. Hamilton Advertiser, 25 May 1888; North British Daily Mail, 27 August 1888.
 7. Glasgow Observer, 7 May 1887.
 8. John Ferguson, 'The Liberal Associations and the Organisation of Labour', Scottish Leader, 21 May 1888.

Cunninghame Graham at the House of Commons supporting their demand. However, the Scottish Knights collapsed in the early 1890s after the Glasgow Trades Council had refused to allow them to affiliate;¹ and 'new unionism' was probably not as extensive as it had been in England.

Self-help and individualism were the dominant characteristics of Liberalism, and the Scottish Liberals had always uncompromisingly opposed legislative interference with the hours of labour of adult workers or other encroachments upon the inviolable rights of property. What distinguished the Scottish from the English Liberals was the doctrinaire intransigence of the former; and the Scottish Liberals operated in a milieu which lacked the softening influence of a minority tradition of Tory paternalism and where the social values and norms of a monolithic Liberalism had penetrated the consciousness of the vast majority of ordinary working men and women. Moreover, the Scottish Liberals had had a profound influence on the consciousness of working people, and socialist ideas had not hitherto enjoyed wide popularity in the labour movement. By 1890 the miners' trade unions were becoming increasingly involved in the urban Trades Councils in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Kilmarnock, Falkirk and Dunfermline; a militant and unified labour movement was beginning to emerge; and the impact of socialist ideas on the consciousness of trade unionists was beginning to weaken the Lib-Lab alliance, as well as helping to undermine the adherence of the most class conscious workers to the Liberal doctrines of thrift, individualism and self-help.

1. North British Daily Mail, 17 April 1890.

Labour unrest was the leit-motive of the decade beginning in 1890, and the Scottish Liberal press responded to the new ideas of socialism by raising the spectre of the communism of the German labour movement. Working people were therefore warned of the threat that communism or collectivism posed to those of them who valued the liberty of the individual. By then, however, David McLardy and Ferguson and the 'permeationists' in the Liberal organisations were trying to force the Liberal Associations to adopt some socialist measures including the demand for the legal eight hour day. In November 1891¹ and in October 1891² conferences of the Scottish Liberal Association passed resolutions in favour of a legal eight hour day; and these votes had been influenced by the decision of the Scottish miners not to vote for Liberal candidates unless they promised to support an Eight Hours Bill for miners.³ The political pressures exerted by organised labour had compelled a section of the Liberal Party to pay lip-service to the idea of granting a legal eight hour day to workers whose trade unions were too weak and ineffective to enable them to gain shorter hours of labour through collective bargaining.

A number of Liberal newspapers and M.P.s encouraged the strengthening and expansion of trade unionism as a bulwark against the encroachments of socialism.⁴ In important industrial centres, where Trades Councils were

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1. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 8 October 1891.
 2. Ibid., February 1892.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 31 July 1890.
 4. Edinburgh Review, Vol. CLXXX, No. 370, 1894, p. 353.

formed in a decade dominated by social tension and class conflict, Liberal newspapers frequently confronted the socialist challenge by encouraging working people to intensify their self-help efforts. And for some of the Scottish Liberals' trade union activity was an aspect of self-help.

R. Chisholm Robertson was largely responsible for the formation of the Central Ironmoulders Association in Falkirk in April 1889, and he was criticised in the Glasgow Trades Council for helping to form a new organisation in opposition to the Associated Society of Ironmoulders of Scotland.¹ The Central Ironmoulders Association was a local rather than a national organisation; and, in contrast to the semi-skilled members of the Associated Society of Ironmoulders of Scotland, the members were predominantly unskilled workers.² In March 1890 the Stirlingshire miners set up a committee to organise support for a Labour candidate in the Stirlingshire constituency at the next general election,³ and Robertson and James Roden, the Roman catholic miners' agents, appealed to the trade unions in Falkirk to form a Trades Council. The organisation of the Falkirk Trades Council was immediately undertaken by the Central Ironmoulders Association.⁴

The Falkirk Herald aided and encouraged the formation of a Trades Council, and the editor wrote thus:

Among other acquisitions, Falkirk is to have a Trades Council. The institution, I am persuaded, will be a useful one, that is, if properly conducted; and of that, I think, there need be no fear.⁵

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1. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Councils, 17 April 1889.
 2. Marwick, op.cit., p. 62.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 28 March 1890.
 4. Falkirk Herald, 26 April 1890.
 5. Ibid., 30 April 1890.

The miners, and ironmoulders and ironmoulders' labourers formed the backbone of the Falkirk Trades Council, and they were joined by the printers, bakers, brickmakers, plasterers and joiners. A dramatic breakthrough came in September when the Trades Council organised a mass demonstration to agitate for a legal eight hour day, payment of M.P.s and independent labour representation. The demonstration was attended by five thousand working people.¹

Although the editor of the Falkirk Herald made no secret of the Liberals' preference for the old rather than the new unionism,² he had no hesitation in supporting the Scottish railway workers' agitation against the long hours of labour they had to work.³ Then when the Trades Council opted for socialism and the class struggle, the editor of the Falkirk Herald found its first annual report a 'significant document' in 'fervid phraseology'. The Trades Council had accomplished much work, whatever value might be placed on this work, and having overcome many obstacles, were 'marching onward in the great social warfare between capital and labour'. But not content with confining their attention to working class welfare, the Trades Council had, in the editor's view, fostered unreasonable discontent and was seeking to promote 'class ascendancy'. It had become a political institution holding extreme views unrepresentative of the majority of working men, and this was quite a different thing from protecting the interests of the working classes. If working men sought a political role, it must be exercised in a community, not a class, interest.⁴ Nevertheless the Falkirk Herald continued to adhere to trade unionism as a form of self-help which was allegedly compatible with laissez-faire individualism.

1. Ibid., 17 September 1890.

2. Ibid., 3 September 1890.

3. See the article by 'A Signalman', Long Hours on the Railways', Ibid., 8 October 1890.

4. Ibid., 30 January 1892.

The Scottish Labour Party held their first annual conference in Glasgow at the beginning of January 1890, and Maxwell made it clear that they were prepared to harass and embarrass the Liberals. In a speech made on behalf of the executive committee, he denied that their attitude to the Liberal Party was in any way intended to promote the Conservative interest, the cause of labour was their guiding concern. They had, however, accomplished very little support from the urban trade unions or Trade Councils, though the Lanarkshire miners were well represented by William Small and Robert Smillie.¹ Hardie and Robertson were still at loggerheads,² and, in 1889, Robertson had voiced his antipathy for the Scottish Labour Party.³

The urban trade unions had not yet committed themselves fully to the agitation for independent labour representation in Parliament; and the attempt by George Carson⁴ to get the Glasgow Trades Council to appoint a deputation to interview the Liberal-Unionist candidates in the Partick constituency on their attitude to the legal eight hour day and the Employers Liability Act was defeated.⁵ Nevertheless the Liberals were worried by the possibility of losing Parliamentary seats in three-cornered contests, and an understanding was allegedly reached between the Scottish Labour Party and the Liberal Whip, Marjoribanks, that labour would be allowed an unchallenged run in Greenock and two other constituencies as long as acceptable Labour candidates could be found who would support the Liberal programme

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1. Scottish Leader, 6 January 1890.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 26 March 1890.
 3. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 19 June 1889.
 4. 'George Carson', Glasgow Herald, 27 July 1921.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 6 February 1890.

on other than labour questions.¹ The local Liberal Associations were, in practice, hostile to the political aspirations of organised labour, and Marjoribanks had no solution for the accelerating conflict between the middle class Liberals and the socialists in the labour movement. The labour movement was undergoing a metamorphosis, and the Lib-Labs undoubtedly blunted the middle class Liberals' awareness of the need to make concessions to organised labour by their opposition to socialist measures within the local Liberal Associations.

Moreover, the socialists refused to draw a sharp distinction between direct labour representation and independent labour representation, and working class leaders, whether they were socialists or Lib-Labs, often spoke of direct labour representation when they really meant independent labour representation.² When Maxwell, for example, spoke at a meeting of the Scottish Labour Party in connection with the Partick by-election, he argued that the Unionists and Liberals were already looking for candidates known for their popular sympathies; in his view in working class Partick a vigorous effort should be made to secure direct, by which he clearly meant independent, labour representation.³ Furthermore, many working class leaders used the phrases 'direct labour representation' and 'independent labour representation' interchangeably, and, by doing so, they probably vitiated their own efforts to win popular support for an independent working class party. On the other hand, they were the prisoners of a situation in which the vast majority of Scottish working people still adhered to self-help and 'sturdy independence'.⁴

1. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 1 February 1890.

2. See below.

3. North British Daily Mail, 20 January 1890.

4. Congregational Paper of the St. Clements Free Church, Aberdeen, December 1892; Report of the Free Church Deacon's Association of Glasgow, (Glasgow, 1839), p. 10.

Working class leaders were compelled by the circumstances in which they worked to speak of direct when they really meant independent labour representation as they simultaneously belonged to the Scottish Labour Party and their local Liberal Associations. Such working class leaders, who were trying to permeate their Liberal Associations with socialist ideas, failed to gain the support of the Lib-Labs for their proposals and programme;¹ and, since the conflict between the socialists and the Lib-Labs was carried into the Liberal Associations, the middle class Liberals had no compunction about giving the proposals put forward by the socialists short-shrift. When the Glasgow Central Liberal Association, for example, met in January to endorse the candidature of Sir Charles Tennant for the Partick by-election, only two members voted for Maxwell's amendment calling on Tennant to support Home Rule for Scotland, the taxation of ground annuals and feu duties, a legal eight hour day and the nationalisation of mineral royalties. R.C. Grant, a former president of the Glasgow Trades Council, was totally out of sympathy with the programme of the Scottish Labour Party; and he presided over the meetings of the Glasgow Central Liberal Association.²

As Hardie, Carson, Maxwell and Smillie intensified their efforts to secure Liberal endorsement for Labour candidates in a number of constituencies where by-elections were pending, the advanced Liberals flaunted their opposition to direct labour representation. In March the Blackfriars and Hutchestontown Liberal Association repudiated the Marjoribanks compact and passed a vote of confidence in their sitting

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1. K.D. Buckley, Trade Unionism in Aberdeen, 1878 to 1900 (Edinburgh, 1955), p. 99.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 24 January 1890.

member of Parliament.¹ At approximately the same time the Scottish Labour Party selected Graham, the controversial M.P., to contest Greenock.²

This decision was attacked by the North British Daily Mail on the grounds that Graham was not 'a working man';³ and the Greenock Liberal Association voted against endorsing him as a Lib-Lab candidate.⁴ With the leading organ of advanced Liberalism refusing to do anything to allay the prevailing labour unrest, it was not surprising that the local Liberal Associations were so opposed to the Marjoribanks compact. In March, when the Tory defeated the Liberal candidate in the Ayr by-election, the North British Daily Mail, attributed this set-back to the Liberal's failure to dissociate himself from the Scottish Labour Party.⁵ Before very long the Liberals were to pay a bitter price for their refusal to nominate Labour Parliamentary candidates.

When Robertson was organising the Trades Council's labour demonstration in Falkirk in 1890, he arranged for Provost Yellowlees, a Liberal-Unionist, to address the mass gathering of working people in September. Dr. Charles Cameron, the owner and editor of the North British Daily Mail, who had previously accepted the Council's invitation to speak boycotted the demonstration; and Yellowlees advocated 'State insurance for the sick and the aged'.⁶ State insurance, or any other socialist panacea, was anathema to the Liberals.

Then in February 1892 Robertson tried to persuade the Glasgow Trades Council to support Bennet Burleigh's candidature in the Tradeston division

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1. Ibid., 4 March 1890.
 2. Ibid., 28 February 1890.
 3. Ibid., 8 March 1890.
 4. Ibid., 6 March 1890.
 5. Ibid., 27 March 1890.
 6. Falkirk Herald, 17 September 1890.

of Glasgow; but the Council refused to endorse him since he was not a working man.¹ Since they were already committed to supporting Graham,² the reason the Lib-Labs gave for their opposition was not the real one. In fact Burleigh had been a Liberal-Unionist candidate in one of the Glasgow constituencies in 1886, and the Lib-Labs had some evidence for their suspicions of his Tory sympathies.

The socialists and the 'new unionists' in the Edinburgh Trades Council were not so numerous or so influential as their counterparts in Glasgow, and in Edinburgh the momentum of the 'new unionism' came to a halt after Hardie and Graham had intervened in the seamen's strike at Leith. In Edinburgh the agitation for land nationalisation had never been in the forefront of socialist propaganda. Indeed the socialists there argued that the land agitation in Glasgow and the west of Scotland had been diversionary, and that agitations connected with the land question had only vitiated the struggle between labour and capital.³

Nevertheless in Scottish towns and cities where the socialists had some tangible influence in the labour movement the agitation for land nationalisation had created an ineradicable conflict between the working class movement and the Liberals. Moreover, the land agitation had stimulated the class consciousness of working men not only in Glasgow and the west of Scotland, but also in parts of the east and north-east such as Falkirk and Aberdeen. In Falkirk, for example, Robertson told a mass meeting of working men that 'the landlords drew from the land large sums they called rent. He called it a great import they were not entitled to'.⁴

1. Workman's Times, 9 April 1892.

2. North British Daily Mail, 12 November 1891.

3. Labour Chronicle, 15 October 1894.

4. Falkirk Herald, 1 August 1891.

Moreover, in these parts of Scotland, a preoccupation with what Robertson called 'the land question',¹ continued to dominate the agitations of socialist working men after they had successfully committed their local labour movements to a socialist programme. In Aberdeen the socialists had more influence in their local labour movement than the socialists in any other Scottish town or city; and in localities where the socialists had tangible influence in the labour movement agitations against capital had developed side-by-side with the agitations for land nationalisation.

Champion was the principal speaker at the May Day demonstration in Aberdeen in 1890, and the Trades Council had 5,000 copies of his speech printed at 1d. each.² By then the labour movement there was in revolt against the policy of the Scottish Liberal Party, and Champion's emphasis on the need for a legal eight hour day had driven a wedge between the working class movement and the Liberals in the north-east.³ A correspondent in Justice, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation, subsequently described the influence the socialists had gained in Aberdeen:

Altogether the Aberdonians seem now to be in the vanguard of Scotch Socialism. We could wish they would return a good sound Socialist (like Cunninghame Graham) to Parliament. But that too may come before long. Would that some other Scotch towns we could mention were anything as active as Aberdeen in propagandist well-doing.⁴

Nonetheless the labour movement in Aberdeen was committed to Presbyterian values and the Trades Council refused to desecrate the Sabbath by participating in the local May Day demonstration on Sunday, 1 May 1892.⁵

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1. Ibid.
 2. Buckley, op.cit., p. 133.
 3. Daily Free Press, 23 October 1889.
 4. Justice, 18 June 1892.
 5. Dundee Advertiser, 2 May 1892.

The labour movement in Aberdeen had resisted the social values of Liberalism more successfully than the artisans in other urban centres, and in 1892 the Free Church there debated the issue of the legal eight hour day. The cultural alienation of labouring men in Aberdeen existed from the mid-Victorian period onwards, and in 1868 the Secretary of the Mechanics Institute had attacked the 'desire for equality of wages' among the local workers in the building trades.¹ At the same time the Whigs who controlled the local Liberal Association had met no effective opposition from the advanced Liberals, and in the 1880s the Junior Liberal Association had been founded 'for the express purpose of pulverising the local Caucus'.² Perhaps the labour movement's comparatively early commitment to a socialist programme was itself a reflection of the cultural alienation of the majority of working people from the social values of the upper classes. There had always been 'a sharp division' between 'lower and upper-class culture' in the north-east;³ and in 1891 Chartist ideas were part of the oral culture of working people.⁴ Moreover, the Secretary of the Aberdeen Trades Council in the 1870s, constantly used the expression 'the working class' rather than the conventional Victorian terminology 'the working classes' employed by other Scottish working class leaders.

The movement for independent labour representation in Aberdeen was launched by a small group of disaffected 'left-wing' Liberals after the

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1. Aberdeen Free Press, 30 October 1868.
 2. Obituary notice of Professor Minto by 'Thorough' (a nom-de-plume used by G. Gerrie), Aberdeen Labour Elector, 18 March 1893.
 3. Geoffrey Wagner, 'Lewis Grassie Gibbon and the Use of Lallans for Prose', Aberdeen University Review, Vol. XXXIV, no. 107, p. 327.
 4. Buckley, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-4.

collapse of the Junior Liberal Association in 1888.¹ A group of middle class Liberals under the leadership of Gerrie formed the Aberdeen Labour Committee about 1890;² and they were the catalysts who were destroying the Scottish labour movement's traditional allegiance to Liberalism. Moreover, they were devoted to Champion,³ and they worked hard to allow him to become 'a second Parnell for the Labour movement'.⁴

In 1890 the Aberdeen Trades Council unanimously agreed to 'pledge themselves to make the interests of labour the first and determining question in all their political action imperial and local'.⁵ A few months later a joint committee comprising representatives from the Aberdeen Labour Committee and Trades Council was formed to 'draw up a programme of labour questions of pressing importance'.⁶ This committee recommended that the Trades Council should call a Scottish conference of Trades Councils and labour organisations to discuss labour representation in Parliament, payment of members of Parliament, a legal eight hour day and the abolition of the Conspiracy Laws.⁷ Hardie was willing to support the proposed conference;⁸ and the Aberdeen Trades Council decided that 'anyone could take part in the conference who was favourable to the labour interest but who was precluded from becoming a trade unionist'.⁹

1. Buckley, op.cit., p. 131; William Diack, History of the Trades Council and the Trade Union Movement in Aberdeen (Aberdeen, 1939), p. 22.

2. Buckley, op.cit., p. 136.

3. Ibid., p. 131.

4. Fiery Cross, 27 June 1892.

5. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 2 July 1890.

6. Ibid., 28 January 1891.

7. Daily Free Press, 28 May 1891.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 3 May 1891.

There were, however, latent tensions in the approach of Hardie and Graham and the working class leaders who were feeling their way towards the creation of a Labour Party based on the trade unions. This was seen in January 1891 when Graham argued that trade unionism was useful but only within certain narrow limits. Strikes were bound to do greater harm to the workers themselves because they lacked the financial resources to avoid the suffering; the freeing of the workers from 'the tyranny of capital' could not be done by trade unionism; it would, presumably, have to be done by socialist agitation.¹ Such critical comments on the limited nature of trade unionism could only lead to the further alienation of Graham and Hardie from the working class movement.

A conference of Trades Councils, trade unions and branches of the Scottish Labour Party was convened by the Aberdeen organisers on 8 August 1891, and 67 delegates, representing 84,500 members, came to Edinburgh from all parts of Scotland to discuss 'united action in pressing forward measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working class'. The Ayrshire and Broxburn miners were represented by Hardie and John Wilson, and two other miners' leaders - Chisholm Robertson and John Weir - represented the Falkirk and Dunfermline Trades Councils. A resolution demanding 'a legislative eight hour day' was carried by 43 votes to 7; and a resolution on the need for direct Parliamentary labour representation was moved to Mundie who asked for every support to be given to Labour candidates put forward by recognised labour organisations.

1. Scottish Leader, 5 January 1891.

A confused discussion on the need for Parliamentary labour representation ensued; and, when Mundie moved his resolution on direct labour representation, he soon made it clear that he really meant independent labour representation. His argument was that they had been a shuttlecock of the Salisburys and the Grand Old Man for long enough. Politics must now be used to their own advantage and they must shake themselves clear of the influence so far exercised over them by the leader of the Liberal Party. On Hardie's advice amendments to the resolution were withdrawn, and it was carried unanimously.¹

The Edinburgh conference was criticised by the Glasgow Weekly Mail, and Hardie, 'the traitor to Liberalism', was accused of working to organise 'the Labour vote in Scotland "on independent lines".² The Scottish Leader lamented the developing divisions between the Liberals and the working class movement, and conceded that the local Liberal Associations were usually hostile to Labour candidates. As the editor put it: 'It would be a blessed relief to the Liberal chiefs if the local committees would agree to accept a Labour candidate; to force such a candidate on an unwilling constituency would not only be going in the teeth of Liberal principle, but from the standpoint of the Party would be suicidal'.³ Such logic seemed to justify the arguments of the leaders of the Scottish Labour Party, and Hardie was cock-a-hoop over the success of the conference in Edinburgh.

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1. Trade Unionist, 15 August 1891; Scottish Leader, 10 August 1891; Daily Free Press, 10 August 1891; Scotsman, 10 August 1891.
 2. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 15 August 1891.
 3. Scottish Leader, 10 August 1891.

It had, he said, 'given an impetus to the forward movement in this country, which, in his most sanguine expectations of less than a year ago, he did not hope for within the next twenty years ...

Since the Edinburgh conference, the ordinary working man had got the idea into his brain that the leaders of labour in Scotland saw the necessity for and the urgent need for political unions in Scotland as they had labour trade unions.¹

By the beginning of 1892 the Liberals were contemplating financing 'Labour-Liberal candidates' to oppose the Labour candidates being put forward by the Scottish Labour Party at the coming general election. Hardie declared that the Liberal Whips in London were trying to get Henry Tait, the general secretary of the Scottish Society of Railway Servants, to oppose Burleigh in the Tradeston constituency. Hardie said that they would oppose 'such men' with 'greater vigour and activity' than they would in the case of 'ordinary Liberal candidates'. At the same time the delegates to the third annual conference of the Scottish Labour Party were told that they intended to oppose Edmund Robertson, the sitting member of Parliament for Dundee, at the next election. However, the Dundee Trades Council immediately repudiated the rumours that they would oppose Robertson, and reaffirmed their commitment to support the Liberals.² The Liberals therefore encouraged Professor Mavor, a former member of the Socialist League in Glasgow, to oppose Burleigh as a 'Labour-Liberal candidate', though there was an official Liberal already in the field.³ In the event, Mavor did not go to the polls;⁴ and the executive committee of the Scottish Trades

1. Ibid., 4 January 1892.

2. Dundee Advertiser, 6 January 1892.

3. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 2 April 1892.

4. North British Daily Mail, 25 June 1892.

Councils Independent Labour Party subsequently had occasion to repudiate an attempt to form a new labour organisation in Scotland 'to subordinate itself to and work for Gladstonian Liberalism'.¹

The local Liberal Associations were not willing to nominate or endorse Labour candidates, and the Liberals justified the absence of Lib-Lab candidates in Scotland by arguing that the conditions were not ripe for such a political development. In a long editorial entitled 'the Scottish Labour Party' the editor of the Falkirk Herald, for example, argued that the working classes generally were content that the Liberals were doing their best for working men, and the Liberal Party, for its part, was anxious to have more working men in Parliament; unlike the Scottish Labour Party, however, it realised that the time was not yet ripe for full labour representation.² But the leaders of the labour movement were not only at odds with the Liberals over the issue of labour representation - they were also divided on the controversial questions of land nationalisation and the legal eight hour day. Hardie had already accused the Scottish Liberal Association of passing resolutions in favour of land nationalisation and the legal eight hour day to blunt the Scottish Labour Party's electoral appeal to working people; and the Liberals had never had any intention of pushing these measures through the House of Commons. This was demonstrated when the general council of the Scottish Liberal Association met in February 1892 before the general election campaign had got underway. Ferguson and McLardy moved a resolution to make conference decisions binding on the Scottish Liberal Association and the local Liberal Associations, but their resolution was defeated by 34 votes to 22.³ Then in June the North

1. North British Daily Mail, 1 August 1892.

2. Falkirk Herald, 9 January 1892.

3. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 17 February 1892.

British Daily Mail carried a long editorial entitled 'General Election Issues' which contained not a single reference to the demands being put forward by the Scottish labour movement.¹

A second conference of the Scottish Trades Councils Labour Party was held on 5 March 1892, and a decision was taken to rename the Scottish Trades Councils Labour Party the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party 'to make it clear that they intended to carry on their crusade by a Labour Party independent of either the Liberal or Conservative Party in the House of Commons'. Robertson, the miners' leader, was elected secretary of the new organisation, and a labour programme was adopted including the demands for a legal eight hour day, adult suffrage, payments of M.P.s., triennial Parliaments, local option and the nationalisation of mines, railways and land.² The Dundee and Greenock Trades Councils refused to affiliate,³ and the Greenock Trades Council was described at an executive committee meeting of the Scottish Labour Party as 'a Tory preserve'.⁴ By then the Scottish Labour Party no longer had representation on the executive committee of the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party,⁵ and the two organisations were increasingly to follow divergent paths.

While Robertson and Weir were leading members of the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party, they represented their Trades Councils rather than the miners county unions in that organisation. Besides, as the general election got underway it became clear that the organised

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1. North British Daily Mail, 6 June 1892.
 2. Scottish Leader, 7 March 1892.
 3. Marwick, op.cit., p.71.
 4. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 23 January 1892.
 5. Marwick, op.cit., p. 71.

miners were not in a united political force. In Fife the miners' union supported the Liberal candidates, while insisting on the need for payment of M.P.s and a legal eight hour day;¹ and the Lanarkshire miners were the only organised workers who supported the Scottish Labour Party.²

Moreover, during the election campaign the Scottish Labour Party held their meetings in the mining centre of Hamilton, where their audiences were usually 'confined to the mining class'.³ In the absence of Hardie, who was contesting a Parliamentary seat in London, Small and Smillie led the Scottish Labour Party in Lanarkshire; and they persuaded the miners to pass a resolution opposing the Liberals:

That, in consequence of the determined opposition offered by the Liberals to the nominees of the Labour Party in every constituency, the meeting is of the opinion that every Liberal member and candidate should be opposed by a Labour candidate, and that representations of the situation be made to the party whips, but, adjourns consideration of definite action for a week.⁴

However, the Scottish Labour Party did not put up any Labour candidates in Lanarkshire, but they advised working men not to vote for Liberals unless they committed themselves to support a legal eight hour day.⁵

Nevertheless every miners' county union in Scotland supported Robertson's candidature against the Liberal and Liberal-Unionist in Stirlingshire.⁶

The Fife miners were supporting the Liberal candidates in their own county, but they were prepared to support Robertson in Stirlingshire in the face of fierce Liberal opposition. This was a reflection of the miners' peculiar sense of class solidarity for those working class leaders who belonged to their 'own order'.

1. Dunfermline Journal, 11 June 1892.

2. Hamilton Advertiser, 18 June 1892.

3. Ibid.

4. Scottish Leader, 13 June 1892.

5. Hamilton Advertiser, 25 June 1892.

6. Scotsman, 2 July 1892.

When the executive committee of the Scottish Labour Party met in May, a resolution was passed advising working people not to vote 'for Liberal candidates unless the opposition to the Labour candidates in Glasgow and elsewhere' was withdrawn.¹ By contrast the leaders of the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party were at first only concerned with whether the Liberal candidates were prepared to accept their programme or not.² When the replies of the independent Labour candidates and the Liberal candidates were received, the executive committee decided that 'the following candidates' should be 'recommended' to the working class electorate:

Peter Esslement, Aberdeen; Sir W. Wedderburn, North Ayr; Seymour Keay, Nairn; J. Rigby, Forfar; Donald Crawford, North-East Lanark; J.G. Weir, Ross and Cromarty; R. Chisholm Robertson (Labour), Stirlingshire; W.A. Hunter, North Aberdeen; H.H. Champion, (Labour), South Aberdeen; W. Birkmyre, Ayr Burghs; John Wilson (Labour), Edinburgh Central; T.R. Buchanan, Edinburgh West; C. Graham, Camlachie; R. Brodie (Labour), College Division, Glasgow; J.H. Dalyiel, Kirkcaldy. In reference to the Tradeston Division of Glasgow, as both Bennet Burleigh and Professor Mavor had adopted the party's programme, it was felt that the party should take no action, but leave the constituency to decide for itself.³

In contrast to the leaders of the urban trade unions, with the exception of those in Aberdeen, Robertson had more sympathy for the Tories than the Liberals, and he soon persuaded the small executive of the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party to rescind their previous decision to support Liberal candidates. The Party therefore 'decided to refrain from taking any direct action to support any candidates except those recognised to be Labour candidates'. The

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1. Dunfermline Journal, 28 May 1892.
 2. Dundee Advertiser, 17 May 1892.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 13 June 1892.

Labour candidates they recommended were : Wilson, Brodie, Graham, Burleigh, Champion and Robertson. However, in contrast to the Scottish Labour Party they did not openly advise working people to vote against the Liberals, and they insisted that the Scottish Trades Council/Independent Labour Party was 'the only exponent recognised by the organised workers with regard to labour representation in Parliament'.¹

While the leaders of the Trades Councils were striving to assert their political independence from the Liberals, a correspondent in Justice was heaping abuse on the failure of working class leaders to launch a frontal assault on the capitalist system. James Smith, a leading member of the Social Democratic Federation in Glasgow, wrote:

... Well, I have seen the programme of two of their candidates, and both ignore the only cure, while some of their proposals are distinctly reactionary ... last Sunday Nairne challenged any of their leaders who were present to point out a single item in Brodie's programme which would benefit the workers, and none of them accepted it.²

Nonetheless the Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist League, the Scottish Labour Party, the Trades Council and the Labour Army formed a joint committee to organise a mass demonstration to celebrate the International Labour Day in Glasgow. Side-by-side with the innovation of a Labour Church, secularism and anti-clericalism were beginning to make an impact on the labour movement in the west of Scotland.

In the late 1880s Champion was a member of a 'Christian Socialist group' led by J.L. Jones,³ and in the election address he issued to the electors in South Aberdeen he quoted from the scriptures. He enjoyed considerable popularity in Aberdeen, and a large number of working people signed a requisition requesting him to stand as a

1. Ibid., 27 June 1892.

2. Justice, 7 May 1892.

3. S. Mayor, The Churches and the Labour Movement (London, 1967), p.190.

Labour candidate.¹ He campaigned for an Eight Hour Bill, land nationalisation, and old age pensions;² and he had the complete support of the Trades Council.³ He was accused by James Bryce, his Liberal opponent, of having Tory leanings, and the Fiery Cross retorted: 'This, if it were true, would perhaps be better than to be a convinced reactionary'.⁴ Moreover, in marked contrast to most of the other Scottish Labour candidates he refused to campaign for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Disestablishment was an issue for the Scottish people to settle 'by itself and for themselves, which we take to mean in their own Scotch Parliament'.⁵ Consequently the Rev. C.C. MacDonald, a socialist clergyman who had worked with and for the Aberdeen Trades Council since 1882,⁶ issued a letter to the electors of South Aberdeen on Champion's behalf:

I am resolved to give my hearty support to Mr. Champion. The most urgent problems of the day are those of labour ... I wish we had three or four such men to take up the claims of labour, and at the same time, as true Liberals, to secure for the Church of Scotland a fair trial at the bar of the people. I think we can find them safe seats.

At this time a section of the clergy in the Church of Scotland came out in favour of socialist measures for dealing with poverty, though their Church had always been identified with the Tories.⁸ But while the mass of the working class electors cast their votes for the Tory and Liberal candidates, Champion (polling nearly a thousand votes) got the highest

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1. Fiery Cross, 27 June 1892. The Fiery Cross was issued during Champion's election campaign, and it was edited by Maltman Barry.
 2. Ibid., 30 June 1892.
 3. Buckley, op.cit., p: 135.
 4. Fiery Cross, 25 June 1892.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Buckley, op.cit., p. 121.
 7. Dundee Advertiser, 7 June 1892.
 8. Alexander Wilson, The Chartist Movement in Scotland (Manchester 1970), p. 170; Glasgow Echo, 26 May 1893.

vote of all the Scottish Labour candidates in 1892.

In Edinburgh the Lib-Labs had considerable influence in the Trades Council, and in March 1892 Wilson, the Broxburn miners' delegate, moved a resolution:

That we give our utmost assistance to organise the labour vote on the clear understanding that we put forward Labour candidates where they have every chance of success. But on no account to put forward a Labour candidate to allow a Tory to beat a Liberal or Radical.

His apparent concession to the Liberals was designed to win support for the concept of independent labour representation without seeming to give an edge to the Tories in Parliamentary election campaigns. In any case his resolution was defeated by 17 votes to 12.¹ However, the defeat of his resolution was not an affirmation of support for independent labour representation; and the Trades Council continued to ignore the requests of the Scottish Socialist Federation to support a Labour candidate in Edinburgh.

Then the Scottish Socialist Federation promoted the candidature of Wilson in Edinburgh Central,² and he was supported by the Trades Council and the Temperance Party.³ During the election campaign he told a working class audience that: 'As a Trade Unionist I am in favour of the eight-hours movement, amendment of the Employers' Liability and Factory Acts and the abolition of the Conspiracy Laws'. Moreover, he wanted the taxation of ground values and compulsory purchasing powers for local authorities 'until the land is nationalised'.⁴ Meanwhile, the Edinburgh Trades Council formed a branch of the Scottish Trades

1. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 1 March 1892.

2. David Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour (Glasgow, 1919), pp. 128-9.

3. Scottish Leader, 2 May 1892.

4. Ibid., 16 June 1892.

Councils Independent Labour Party, and one representative of the Council insisted that 'they would be independent of any political Party'. And Wilson told the same audience that it was as hopeless 'to expect beneficent labour legislation from one Party as the other'.¹

A delegate who attended the inaugural meeting of the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party informed the gathering that the foundation of the new Party in 1891 had been inspired by 'the election of so many Labour representatives to the Parliament in New South Wales'.² Wilson was supported by James Connolly,³ and John Leslie who was secretary of his election committee, appealed to the John Dillon branch of the Irish National League to support Wilson's campaign. But they refused, and, in their reply to Leslie, they emphasised the point that they were 'loyal Nationalists'.⁴ Wilson was opposed by Connell, who described himself as 'a Labour and Unionist candidate', and McEwan, the Liberal candidate, who was a wealthy brewer. The editor of the North British Daily Mail attributed Wilson's intervention to 'Tory trickery',⁵ and McEwan was selected with a secure majority.

Once the general election was over the accusation of 'Tory trickery' was echoed in the Edinburgh Trades Council, and Mallinson, an influential Lib-Lab, persuaded the Council to withdraw from the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party since the Tories had offered £1,000

1. Scotsman, 30 June 1892.

2. Scottish Leader, 22 June 1892.

3. Scotsman, 5 July 1892.

4. Ibid., 20 June 1892.

5. North British Daily Mail, 25 June 1892.

to allow them to contest four Liberal seats. Mallinson's statement was soon hotly repudiated by Chisolm Robertson who maintained that the charges were known to be false by those who made them.¹ Consequently the previous decision to withdraw from the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party was rescinded;² but within a few weeks Mallinson had persuaded the Trades Council to withdraw its connections from all political associations.³ The Lib-Labs were no longer influential enough to commit the Trades Council's support to the Liberal Party and so it was clearly better, from their standpoint, to keep the Trades Council out of politics altogether.

A branch of the Scottish Labour Party had existed in Dundee since 1890,⁴ and in May 1892 Small, the Lanarkshire miners' leader was invited to contest Dundee as a Labour candidate. Alexander Taylor, a shuttle-maker, was in the chair, and he introduced Small as a native of Dundee. Small told his audience that:

Politicians pressed before them such questions as the dis-establishment and disendowment of the Church, and said if these were passed the country would be all right. Such subjects were mere red herrings dragged across the track to divert the attention of the country from other and more important matters.

The attendance at the meeting was very small,⁵ and James MacDonald - a Scottish labour leader who was better known than James Ramsay MacDonald⁶ - soon emerged as the Labour candidate for Dundee.

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1. Workman's Times, 22 October 1892.
 2. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 28 October 1892.
 3. Ibid., 8 November 1892.
 4. Lowe, op.cit., p. 37.
 5. Dundee Advertiser, 3 May 1892.
 6. H.W. Lee and E. Archibold, Social Democracy in Britain (London, 1935), p. 160.

MacDonald, a tailor and well-known figure in the trade union movement, was adopted by the Dundee branch of the Scottish Labour Party on 23 June as the Labour candidate for Dundee.¹ A few weeks later he addressed a meeting of the tailors union in Dundee, and the tailors decided by a large majority 'that this is not a fit and proper time for Mr. MacDonald to come forward'.² Then a special meeting of the Trades Council was held on 1 July to consider 'the replies of Parliamentary candidates to the list of questions propounded by the Council'. After a long discussion 17 delegates voted for 'the motion that the Trades Council support the candidatures of Messrs. Robertson and Leng, and 6 delegates voted for the amendment that the Council should support Messrs. Leng and MacDonald'.³ The editor of the Dundee Advertiser was delighted with the Trades Council's decision, and he triumphantly asserted that Robertson and Leng were 'officially and authoritatively entitled to be described as the Labour candidates and also as the Liberal candidates'.⁴ Dundee had been a two-member constituency, with each elector having two votes, from 1868; and MacDonald, polling 354 votes, came bottom of the poll, while the two Liberals were elected.⁵

In Stirlingshire Robertson denied being a tool of the 'Unionists'⁶ and he was often forced to identify himself with Gladstone.⁷

1. Dundee Advertiser, 24 June 1892.

2. Ibid., 28 June 1892.

3. Ibid., 2 July 1892.

4. Ibid.

5. C.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914 (London, 1941), p. 269.

6. North British Daily Mail, 9 July 1892.

7. Ibid., 2 June 1892.

But in spite of the support Robertson received from the Falkirk Trades Council and a substantial number of trade unions in Stirlingshire, he polled only 663 votes against 5,296 for the Liberal and 4,550 for the Liberal-Unionist.

The social tension between the Liberals, the Lib-Labs and the socialists in Glasgow reached a crescendo of bitterness and personal acrimony during the general election, and one Liberal, in denouncing the Trades Council, praised the North British Daily Mail as the advocate of the rights and claims of the poor and oppressed and the 'only genuine organ of Radical opinion and progressive politics in the west of Scotland'.¹ A number of influential members of the Glasgow Trades Council - for example, John Eddy, George Galloway, Tait, Grant, Battersby,² John Hodge, the president of the Glasgow Trades Council³ - supported Cameron, the Liberal candidate, in the College constituency in opposition to Brodie, the Labour candidate, whose candidature had been supported by the Trades Council by 32 votes to 22.⁴

Moreover, Eddy attacked Hardie, and questioned whether he really had the authority to speak for 'the working classes'.⁵ The three Labour candidates in Glasgow did very badly at the polls, and the Unionists captured two of the three Parliamentary seats where Labour candidates had intervened. The Scottish Leader commented on the Liberal defeats in Glasgow thus:

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1. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 2 July 1892.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 2 July 1892.
 3. Ibid., 5 July 1892.
 4. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 25 June 1892.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 2 July 1892.

Bitterness is no word for the feeling which the loss of these Glasgow seats has caused in every Scottish constituency where the vast majority of the wage-earners are wisely loyal to the Liberal Party and programme.¹

In the Camlachie constituency Graham, the Scottish Labour Party candidate, who had the support of the Glasgow branch of the Irish National League,² polled 906 votes against 3,455 for the Unionist and 3,084 for the Liberal.³ So perhaps the Irish vote was not of decisive importance in influencing the fate of a Labour candidate involved in a three-cornered contest. A report in the Workman's Times analysed the reasons for the failure of the Labour candidates in Scotland to poll higher votes:

There is not there, as in most London working-class divisions, huge trade union organisations, the members of which all resided in one district.⁴

This analysis did not, however, take account of the fact that the three successful Labour candidates in London in 1892 had had a straight fight with Tory opponents.⁵ Yet the fact remained that Scottish working class electors were reluctant to vote for Labour candidates.

The number of trade unionists per 100 of the population in England in 1892 was 4.55% and the corresponding figure for Scotland was 3.64%. Moreover, in Aberdeen, where there was strong trade union support for independent labour representation and where there were no Irish immigrants, Champion only did marginally better than the Labour candidates in Glasgow where weak trade union organisation was endemic in many working class

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1. Scottish Leader, 7 July 1892.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 6 June 1892.
 3. Scottish Leader, 5 July 1892.
 4. Workman's Times, 16 July 1892.
 5. Paul Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour (London, 1967), p. 106.

constituencies. Furthermore, Donald Crawford, the advanced Liberal M.P. for North-East Lanark, accused the 'Tory employers' of bullying 'their men' to 'get behind the secrecy of the ballot'; and he thought amendments to the Corrupt Practices Act were required to put an end to 'interference with workmen by their foremen and masters in their voting'.¹ Bribery and bullying by foremen and masters were probably used in other Scottish constituencies, too.

An important consequence of the general election of 1892 was that the advanced Liberals in the Scottish Labour Party were increasingly differentiated from the socialists.² Dr. G.B. Clark had been a Liberal candidate in Wick, and he had received the active support of Marjoribanks, the Scottish Whip.³ As a result of his refusal to leave the Liberal Party, he was compelled to resign from the Scottish Labour Party.⁴ Ferguson also refused to oppose the Liberals in 1892, and he was expelled from the Scottish Labour Party.⁵ Nevertheless in at least one constituency the Irish Nationalists had supported the Labour candidate in spite of the opposition of the Glasgow Observer. The Irish vote was not always cast for Liberal candidates, and Robertson was a committed Roman catholic and 'left-wing' Labour candidate.

The Roman catholic clergy had initially contributed to the upsurge of militancy among working people in the west of Scotland by sanctioning the agitation for land nationalisation; but by 1892 they were accentuating

1. Hamilton Advertiser, 16 July 1892.
2. The annual conference of the Scottish Labour Party decided in January 1893 that 'no office-bearer could belong to either the Liberal or Conservative party'. Scottish Leader, 4 January 1893.
3. North British Daily Mail, 10 June 1892.
4. D.W. Crowley, 'The Crofters' Party, 1885-1892', Scottish Historical Review, no. XXXV (1958), pp. 109-29.
5. Lowe, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

the existing splits and conflicts in the Scottish labour movement.¹

In an analysis of the 'Labour Churches' the editor of the Glasgow Observer declared:

No Protestant Church can ever tackle such a matter satisfactorily. The Church of the capitalists will preach nothing unpalatable and to the "Labour Church" and its remonstrances, Dives will turn a deaf ear ... When it (the Catholic Church) before was regnant we had no Labour Question, and till it reigns again the voices of other churches will never affect anything in a contest where human greed can always find a preacher to bless it with a text, however unfair its contention and unjust its claims.²

Such statements did nothing to eradicate or modify the ethnic splits in the Scottish labour movement, and there were frequent conflicts between the Glasgow Trades Council and the Roman catholic clergy over the lack of Roman catholic representation on the town council in the early 1890s.³

When the Scottish Labour Party met in conference in January 1893 a delegate claimed that 'the Council (the Glasgow Trades Council) was theirs (the socialists), and they would keep it'.⁴ The progress the Scottish Labour Party had made was described by Carson:

One of the most pleasing features, and it will also without doubt be of a far-reaching character, is the fact that very many of the leading members of the Trades Councils are now joining the party. In Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Paisley, Falkirk and many other places, the very cream of the Trades Unionists have fallen into line and are devoting their best energies and all the time they can afford to the movement.⁵

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1. See the Glasgow Observer, 3 October 1891.
 2. Ibid., 10 December 1892.
 3. The struggle for working class representation on town councils during the decade 1890 to 1900 is not examined in this chapter as the subject is too big and complex.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 4 January 1893.
 5. Labour Leader, March 1893.

Carson's optimistic assessments had been justified by the course of political events in 1892. And by 1892 such leading members of the Edinburgh Trades Council as David A. Blackburn, John McKenzie and Thomas Blaikie were committed socialists, and in November they joined forces with Leslie and Connolly to form the local branch of the Scottish Labour Party.¹

The Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party was dissolved in March 1893,² and the Scottish labour leaders played a prominent part at the foundation conference of the Independent Labour Party in Bradford.³ Champion's theories on the efficacy of the eight hour day⁴ were popular among Scottish trade unionists, and in March 1893 the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party rejected a motion assigning 'responsibility for finding work for the unemployed' to town and county councils, in favour of an amendment advocating the legal eight hour day as 'the best means of providing work for the unemployed'.⁵ However, in spite of the popularity of Champion's ideas in the labour movement, Champion himself was unpopular among the majority of Scottish urban working class leaders, and the attempt of Champion and Robertson to revive the Scottish Trades Councils Independent Labour Party ended in failure.⁶

Notwithstanding the policy differences and ethnic conflicts in the labour movement, the organised workers were increasingly alienated from the Liberals. Thus the editor of the Glasgow Echo, a Lib-Lab daily trade union newspaper, urged the socialists to 'persevere in permeating the Liberal Party more and more with such ideas as will make it the true

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1. The Minutes of the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish Labour Party from 8 November 1892 to 26 February 1894 are on microfilm in the National Library of Scotland.
 2. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 29 March 1893.
 3. William Stewart, J. Keir Hardie: A Biography (London, 1921), p. 74.
 4. Buckley, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-5
 5. Scottish Leader, 27 March 1893. 6. *Ibid.*, 9 October 1893.

Labour Party'.¹ In Glasgow the Lib-Labs attacked Cameron, the leader of the advanced Liberals, for refusing to press for the payment of M.P.s.² Then on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of York, the Edinburgh,³ Falkirk⁴ and Glasgow⁵ Trades Councils voiced their Republican sentiments by protesting against the expenditure of their respective town councils in connection with the celebration of the Royal wedding. Moreover, the Glasgow Echo's description of their German social democrats' programme of State 'legal and medical aid for the people' as 'a mild instalment of Socialism' was a reflection of socialist influence in the labour movement.⁶ What was more, the Liberals were unable to rectify the new situation in which they found themselves. In June, for example, the Glasgow Trades Council co-operated with the Liberals in demonstrating against the House of Lords opposition to Employers' Liability on condition that they would not be asked to express their confidence in the Liberal Government.⁷ It was a new sign of the times that the Liberals acceded to the conditions imposed by the Trades Council.⁸

A miners' conference was held in Motherwell in October 1893, and the principal speakers were Robertson and Crawford, the advanced Liberal M.P. Robertson immediately protested against the chairman's introductory remarks in which he had been described as 'the great socialist'. He had not 'come here to discuss socialism, but the necessity of union between the miners for

1. Glasgow Echo, 15 June 1893.

2. Ibid., 14 April 1893.

3. Ibid., 14 June 1893.

4. Ibid., 22 June 1893.

5. Ibid., 6 July 1893.

6. Ibid., 21 June 1893.

7. Labour Leader, June 1894.

8. Glasgow Echo, 2 June 1894.

their own benefit'. Nevertheless he appealed to the miners to 'pledge themselves to no party, and maintained that there were too many employers of labour in Parliament for working men to get their just rights'. As a result of these remarks there were heated exchanges between Crawford and Robertson, and Robertson conceded that Crawford was 'one of the most earnest members in the House of Commons in the interests of the labouring classes'.¹ Many rank-and-file miners were still devoted Liberals, and the alternating attitudes of individual socialist leaders towards Liberal politicians was often a direct reflection of their dilemma.

A by-election occurred in Mid-Lanark in March 1894 when Philipps resigned his Parliamentary seat, and Smillie came forward as the independent Labour candidate. Smillie's candidature was financed by the miners in Lanarkshire,² and by the Glasgow Trades Council.³ Smillie told an election meeting that James Caldwell (his Liberal opponent) 'had offered him election expenses and a salary if he would withdraw to North-West Lanark'. He explained that his 'reason for not fighting that constituency' was because he did not 'want to fight that seat or any other in the interests of the workers'.⁴ Moreover, he was apparently unaware of the 'democratic intellect' so commonplace among Scottish historians when he addressed a working class audience:

The Universities should likewise be thrown open to the children of the workers as well as the middle and upper classes.⁵

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1. Ibid., 14-October 1893.
 2. Hamilton Advertiser, 24 March 1894.
 3. Glasgow Echo, 22 March 1894.
 4. Hamilton Advertiser, 31 March 1894.
 5. Ibid.

The Roman catholic press, with the assistance of Davitt, McGhee and Ferguson,¹ campaigned for the Liberal candidate. In a three-cornered contest Caldwell, the Liberal, won easily, and the Glasgow Observer commented:

I am informed there are about 2,000 Irish names on the register. Probably 1,800 of these went to the poll. Had he obtained the 1,800 Irish votes in addition to his Scotch support, the result would have been as follows: Colonel Harrington Stuart, 3,635; Robert Smillie, 3,021; James Caldwell, 2,165. This would have meant a defeat for the Liberal candidate and a vote lost for Home Rule.²

Similar views were expressed by other newspapers, and the Hamilton Advertiser asserted that 'an important factor in the result was the arrival of Mr. Michael Davitt, who ... at once secured for Mr. Caldwell the solid Irish vote, which is all powerful throughout the division'.³ This sort of evidence has been accepted too uncritically by chroniclers of Scottish history, and they have erroneously assumed that the Irish electors were a monolithic block. And the Irish nationalist leaders were not only at odds with each other over the issue of independent labour representation, but they sometimes complained of their inability to persuade ordinary Irishmen to support the branches of the Irish National League in Scottish towns and cities.

John Connolly, the brother of James Connolly, was sacked by the Edinburgh Corporation for distributing socialist literature on May Day 1893,⁴ and he appealed to the Trades Council to take up his case.

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1. T.W. Moody, 'Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, iii (1953), p. 72.
 2. Glasgow Observer, 5 May 1894.
 3. Hamilton Advertiser, 7 April 1894.
 4. Glasgow Echo, 24 May 1893.

As a consequence of the Trades Council's intervention, he was reinstated in his job as a scavenger.¹ Then the Trades Councils sent two delegates to the Scottish Labour Party conference in January 1894, and the proposals which had been discussed at the conference were endorsed by the Trades Council.² In June, James Connolly, then secretary of the local branch of the Independent Labour Party, wrote to seek the assistance the co-operation of the Trades Council in putting forward a socialist Parliamentary candidate in the city at the ensuing general election. The Trades Council's Parliamentary committee 'were of the opinion that the minuted resolution preventing the Council from affiliating with political societies or organisations did not affect the present case', but nothing practical was done.³

In Glasgow the Independent Labour Party organised meetings to popularise socialist ideas, and John Murdoch, the crofters' leader, chaired a meeting of the Independent Labour Party in Govan.⁴ The Scottish Labour Party, with a relatively strong basis in Glasgow, now had thirty-two branches throughout Scotland. However, when the Party held its sixth annual conference on 26 December, 1894, it was unanimously agreed to form a Scottish Council of the Independent Labour Party.⁵

The Roman catholic clergy, who had contributed to the socialist revolt amongst the Irish immigrants in the west of Scotland by agitating for the nationalisation of the land and mineral royalties, were not forced into an impossible predicament. A considerable number of Roman catholic workers, being encouraged by the clergy to support the agitation for the nationalisation of the land and mineral royalties, argued that it was

1. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 23 May 1893.

2. Ibid., 16 January 1894.

3. Ibid., 19 June 1894.

4. Glasgow Echo, 14 January 1895.

5. Lower on cit. p. 170.

equally logical - and equally compatible with Catholic theology - to agitate for the nationalisation of the means of production. An editorial in the Glasgow Observer, regretting the fact that 'some of our Catholic young men have been so far misled as to become in certain localities members of the local branches of the Independent Labour Party', argued:

The Church teaches that what a man creates by his labour is his against the world, that a person has a right to private property, that the result of a man's labour belongs to society. It will readily be seen that both doctrines are in direct antagonism to one another. The Catholic Church teaches that religion and secular education must go hand in hand. The doctrine of the I.L.P. is that religion must be banished from the schools.¹

But Roman catholic workers continued to join the Independent Labour Party,² and the Glasgow Observer subsequently admitted that the Church had aroused much interest amongst readers, who had inundated the paper with correspondence, for which they had insufficient room.³

As the controversy deepened and as Roman catholic members of the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party debated the question of whether 'Catholicism and Socialism' were compatible, Catholic working men and women joined the Independent Labour Party⁴ and the Social Democratic Federation.⁵ In the hagiography of Scottish labour history, however, it is often argued that John Wheatley first initiated the debate on the compatibility

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1. Glasgow Observer, 12 October 1895.
 2. Ibid., 9 November 1895.
 3. Ibid., 11 January 1896.
 4. Justice, 13 July 1895.
 5. Glasgow Observer, 9 November 1895.

of 'Catholicism and Socialism';¹ and the obscurity surrounding the Roman catholic origins of working class leaders like McCowie, Annulty, Mahon, Connolly and Robertson was reinforced by the needs of Communist Party historiography.² As McAnnulty was, for example, a foundation member of the Communist Party,³ the historian who chronicled the history of the Scottish miners could not afford to investigate the possibility that such working class men might have had a Roman catholic background.

In 1896 a number of Roman catholic working men disputed the clergy's contention that 'Catholicism and Socialism' were incompatible, and they forced the clergy and the Church to differentiate between the nationalisation of land and the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The clergy's theological objections to socialism were outlined in the Glasgow Observer:

What we object to in Socialism is Communism or Collectivism, because that principle transgresses moral law and natural justice. That it does so we hope to show. Land is one thing. Capital and property - chattel property - are other things. Land was not made by man. It is the creation of God Almighty and His gift to the human race. For that reason we think the justest treatment of it is that it should belong to humanity at large: that each nation should own collectively the land within its boundaries. But as no man made land, just as assuredly some man or number of men made property and earned what is now capital.⁴

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1. R.K. Middlemas, The Clydesiders: A Left Wing Struggle for Parliamentary Power (London, 1965), pp. 35-40. For a critique of the Middlemas thesis and his interpretation of the Scottish background to the Independent Labour Party, see the review by James D. Young, Political Quarterly, vol. 37, no. 2, April - June 1966.
 2. Walter Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900-1921 (London, 1969), passim.
 3. Arnot, op.cit., p. 61.
 4. Glasgow Observer, 4 January 1896.

Yet Roman catholic workers, who already had socialist affiliations, were not threatened with excommunication.

The Roman catholic clergy were compelled to define their attitudes to socialism, labour questions and working class history, and in December 1894 the Rev. Father John, C.P., delivered 'a clever, instructive, and interesting lecture' on socialism:

The socialism which denied the right of all authority and condemned ownership of private property was condemned by the Church. All authority, whether of Kings or Republic, the Church considered was held from God. Referring to the cry for equality, the lecturer said there must be grades of society so long as good and bad exists - the good can never be put on a footing of equality with the good.¹

Meanwhile, the 'labour problem' was attributed to the Reformation and capitalism, and the Roman catholics in Glasgow rediscovered 'Cromwell's Atrocities'² and the 'Curse of Cromwell'.³ But this approach could only have worked with Irishmen who wanted to cling to their national identity, though they and sometimes their fathers had been born in Scotland. Besides, miners' leaders like Robertson and Roden kept their identity as Irishmen, agitated for socialism, and were active members of the Catholic Church. In any case as early as 1867 indigenous miners complained about those Irish miners in Armadale who had deliberately concealed their nationality and called themselves 'Scotch'.⁴ Then in 1895 a leader of the Irish National League regretted that so few Irish took an interest in the League, for the coming election would bring the Tories back to power

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1. Ibid., 8 December 1894.
 2. Glasgow Examiner, 22 June 1895.
 3. Ibid., 29 June 1895.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 12 January 1867.
 5. Scotsman, 18 June 1895.

unless something remarkable happened.¹ Nevertheless the Roman catholic clergy had unwittingly contributed to the growth of class consciousness and socialist awareness among the Irish immigrant miners and unskilled workers by encouraging trade union organisation and by sanctioning the agitation for the nationalisation of land and mineral royalties.

In 1894 the Scottish Council of the Independent Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Association discussed the possibility of forging an electoral pact, but the Liberals decided that the differences between the socialists and themselves was 'not one of representation but of principle'.² By 1895 the socialists in the labour movement had done their work well, and a large section of the labour movement opposed the Tories and the Liberals in the general election campaign. And though John G. Holborn was adopted as the Liberal candidate for the North-West Lanark constituency,³ the Liberals could no longer hope to placate the majority of the Scottish working class leaders. In any case Holborn was an orthodox Lib-Lab, and he was brought forward by the Liberals at a time when such working class leaders were being pushed out of the leadership by more militant socialist elements.

In the West Fife constituency the miners union kept aloof from the electoral struggle. Nevertheless a few socialists in Fife and rank-and-file miners heckled Birrell, the Liberal candidate, on mining questions, and at successive meetings they raised the issue of the legal eight hour day. They also moved votes of 'no confidence' in

1. Scotsman, 18 June 1895.

2. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 11 May 1894.

3. North British Daily Mail, 2 July 1895.

Birrell; but they had no political organisation and the miners' leaders neither actively supported nor actively opposed Holborn; and, since there were no socialist candidates standing for election in the mining constituencies, the miners' agents supported Smillie, who was the socialist candidate in Camlachie.¹

In Edinburgh 'the Socialist Election Committee' met to discuss the possibility of opposing McEwan, the Liberal MP., but there was some reluctance to 'venture on a hopeless task'.² By contrast with what had happened in previous elections, however, the Edinburgh Trades Council did not campaign for the Liberals; and in Greenock the Trades Council adopted a resolution asking local 'trade unionists to use their own discretion about who they should vote for'.³

The Independent Labour Party put forward seven Parliamentary candidates in Scotland, and five of them contested constituencies in Glasgow. However, the Glasgow Trades Council refused to support three of the five socialist candidates in Glasgow, and the decision to support Shaw Maxwell in Blackfriars and Frank Smith in Tradeston was bitterly opposed by the Lib-Labs.⁴ But in contrast to what had happened in the general election of 1892, the Lib-Labs in the Glasgow Trades Council such as Grant and Tait did not campaign for the Liberals and they kept aloof from the electoral struggle between the socialists and the Liberals in Blackfriars and Tradeston.

1. Glasgow Echo, 10 July 1895.

2. North British Daily Mail, 29 June 1895.

3. Glasgow Echo, 13 July 1895.

4. Ibid., 2 July 1895.

The Independent Labour Party fought the general election of 1895 on an uncompromising socialist programme,¹ and the Scottish socialists concentrated their attack on the Liberals rather than the Tories. Hardie told a meeting of socialist leaders and working class electors that 'the obstacle in the way' of socialism was 'the historic Liberal Party'.² But the Scottish Land Restoration League and its leaders like McLardy who had been involved in the Scottish Labour Party down to 1892, now supported the Liberals³ and campaigned against the socialists.⁴

In Aberdeen the leaders of the Independent Labour Party had connections with Maltman Barry, an influential Tory,⁵ and they had hoped he would be adopted as the Tory candidate for South Aberdeen. This would have enabled them to nominate John L. Mahon for North Aberdeen, thus giving Barry and Mahon straight fights against the Liberals.⁶ However, Barry was not nominated by the Aberdeen Conservative Association; and Stewart, the Lord Provost, was adopted as the Tory candidate for South Aberdeen. Mahon's chances of success in a three-cornered contest were very slim, and in the circumstances the executive committee of the Independent Labour Party in Aberdeen recommended the withdrawal of their own candidate

1. Ibid., 3 July 1895.

2. North British Daily Mail, 12 July 1895.

3. Ibid., 4 July 1895; Glasgow Echo, 13 July 1895.

4. Ibid., 11 July 1895.

5. Maltman Barry, a friend of Marx, had laboured for thirty years to 'bring about an alliance between the labour movement and the Conservative Party'. Henry Collins, 'The English Branches of the First International', Essays in Labour History, ed., Asa Briggs and John Saville. (London, 1967), p. 250.

6. Buckley, op.cit., p. 173.

and support for the Liberal.¹ But by the time the Aberdeen branch met to consider the recommendations of their executive committee, it was known that there would be no Tory candidate contesting North Aberdeen.

The Aberdeen Trades Council had already sent deputations to Bryce and Stewart, the Liberal and Tory candidates, to ascertain their attitude to the legal eight hour day question; and by the time the deputations were able to report to the Trades Council, the members of the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation within the Council were divided among themselves over the tactics they should employ in the election campaign. As a consequence of this division, the Trades Council decided to adopt an attitude of strict neutrality in South Aberdeen;² and the Independent Labour Party in Aberdeen issued a manifesto appealing to the working class electors to vote for Stewart.³ Mahon campaigned on a militant socialist programme, and he polled 608 votes against 4,156 for his Liberal opponent.⁴ As yet the mass of working class electors in Aberdeen were not prepared to vote against the Liberals.

In Aberdeen Mahon had done very badly in a straight fight with Dr. Hunter, the popular Liberal member of Parliament, though he had not enjoyed the benefit of the Trades Council's support. Yet Labour candidates in the west of Scotland had not fared any better, whether they had or had not received the support of the Glasgow Trades Council.

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1. Daily Free Press, 29 June 1895.
 2. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 10 July 1895;
12 July 1895.
 3. Daily Free Press, 13 July 1895.
 4. Ibid.

Nevertheless some of the Trades Councils were increasingly making the legal eight hour day a test question, and the days when leading members of the Scottish Trades Councils had campaigned alongside wealthy Liberals were gone for ever. So, when the Dundee Trades Council met on 3 July, the minority of Lib-Lab members made tremendous efforts to commit the Trades Council to support Leng and Robertson - the Liberals - but the Trades Council decided to make child labour and the eight hour day movement test questions. The Council appointed deputations to interview the five candidates - two Liberals, two Tories and one independent Labour - who were contesting the double-constituency of Dundee in which every elector had two votes.¹ A special meeting was held on 12 July to consider the replies of the five candidates to the test questions; and, after bitter arguments between the Lib-Labs and the socialists, the Trades Council decided by 24 votes to 10 that MacDonald, who had been the independent Labour candidate in 1892, was the only candidate they could support.²

However, the Dundee branch of the Irish National League opposed MacDonald, and M'Erlain, a local Irish nationalist leader said that unlike Tillet and Hardie, the Irish could not waste time boxing the Liberals and Tories when they had their own cause to fight for. The socialists were unprincipled and had no cause but the wrecking of the Liberal Party.³ MacDonald had, in fact, polled 354 votes in 1892, when he had been opposed by the Dundee Trades Council. In 1895, and with the support and approval of the Trades Council, he again

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1. Dundee Advertiser, 4 July 1895.
 2. Ibid., 13 July 1895.
 3. Glasgow Examiner, 13 July 1895.

polled exactly 354 votes.¹ So the support or opposition of the Trades Councils had little bearing on the number of votes Labour candidates polled in industrial constituencies. The great majority of the working class electors were either committed Liberals or in some cases committed Tories, and the latter only made headway in those constituencies where the Liberal Unionist programme had some appeal.

A decision to exclude the Trades Councils from representation at the annual meetings of the British Trades Union Congress was taken in 1895,² and, in 1896, the Falkirk Trades Council organised a conference of Scottish Trades Councils to discuss the possibility of creating a Scottish Trades Federation.³ As a result of this conference a decision was taken to form the Scottish Trades Union Congress,⁴ and from the preliminary conference in 1896 the militant socialist elements were in the ascendancy. A Parliamentary vacancy had occurred in North Aberdeen; and the delegates to the Falkirk conference were informed that Tom Mann 'had come north to try his strength against capital and so-called Liberalism'. The delegates then unanimously agreed to send their 'best wishes to Mr. Mann in his fight for labour in North Aberdeen.'⁵ The Scottish Trades Union Congress was therefore committed from the beginning to independent labour political activity.

In the Shetlands the fishermen and crofters began to show their interest in and sympathy for socialism towards the end of the century. In 1889 the Crofters' Commission took evidence in every part of the Shetland Islands, and Francis Henry Pottinger, an apprentice compositor

1. Dundee Advertiser, 15 July 1895.

2. Harry McShane, Glasgow Trades Council, 1858-1958 (Glasgow, n.d.)p.18.

3. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 25 February 1896.

4. Ibid., 23 September 1896.

5. Falkirk Herald, 25 January 1896.

in the Shetland Times office in Lerwick, was thunderstruck by the picture of semi-feudalism and oppression which emerged from the evidence given by the crofter-witnesses.¹ In 1893 James Pottinger and his cousin James Robertson (both composers), who were working and lodging in the Scottish capital, joined the Edinburgh branch of the Social Democratic Federation. There were other Shetlanders - and particularly J.J. Haldane Burgess and David Sutherland - who had worked in Edinburgh in the early 1890s, and who had come under the influence of Connolly and Leslie. Burgess, a student at Edinburgh University, and Leslie had strong literary tastes and interests; and Burgess had already published short stories and sketches describing the way of life of ordinary people in the Shetlands. His published stories were entitled 'Lamma Deep', 'By the Shore', 'Tammy Scollay's But-End' and 'Georgie Twatt's Bridal', and they were written in a form of Scots dialect.²

Francis Pottinger, the brother of James Pottinger, went to Edinburgh, in 1896, where he joined the Social Democratic Federation, and, when he returned to Lerwick just over a year later,³ a nucleus of socialists were ready to challenge the tiny but hitherto omnipotent elite of wool merchants and landowners.⁴ By 1900 Magnus L. Manson, a young law clerk, was beginning to emerge as one of the principal socialist leaders in Lerwick,⁵ and a socialist revolt was soon to be launched in the

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1. 'Francis Henry Pottinger - a Pioneer Socialist', The New Shetlander no. 7, December 1947.
 2. Peter Jamieson, 'Francis Henry Pottinger: Socialist Pioneer', The New Shetlander, no. 59, Yule 1961.
 3. Obituary for Francis Henry Pottinger, Shetland Times, 29 October 24 December 1918.
 4. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 28 January 1871.
 5. Obituary notice for Magnus Lawrence Manson, Shetland Times, 29 October 1943.

far-north of Scotland. In contrast to the situation in Tighnabruaich-Argyllshire, where the poor fishermen had no leaders,¹ the Shetland fishermen were organised in trade unions.²

The Shetland socialists were, however, culturally alienated from Scottish society, and they identified themselves with Scandinavia and Scandinavian history.³ A Shetland lawyer, who had attempted to form a Crofters' Union in the late 1880s, met with failure,⁴ but Pottinger and Manson, basing themselves on a fundamentalist programme of class struggle, had more success from the end of the century onwards. The first tangible indication of the success of socialist propaganda in the Shetland Islands came in 1897 when Robertson was elected to the School Board; but the story of the Shetlands' place in socialist history during the first two decades of the twentieth century falls outside the period of Scottish history examined in this thesis and the story must be told elsewhere.⁵

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1. See above.
 2. James D. McDougall, 'Socialism among the Scottish Fishermen before and after the War', Nineteenth Century and After, June 1927.
 3. 'Francis Henry Pottinger - Pioneer Socialist', The New Shetlander, no. 7, December 1947.
 4. I owe this information to Mr. Peter Jamieson, Lerwick, Shetland Islands.
 5. The Lerwick Working Men's Association was formed in 1905, and in 1910 this organisation became the Lerwick branch of the Social Democratic Federation. Meanwhile a Lerwick branch of the Independent Labour Party had been formed, and the Lerwick branch of the Social Democratic Federation (or British Socialist Party) was at its peak of activity and influence during the years 1910-1914. With about 250 members the Lerwick branch had about the highest membership of any branch of the Social Democratic Federation in the whole of Britain. But a large number of the members of the Lerwick Social Democratic Federation and Independent Labour Party were killed in combat during the first world war, and, in spite of the brilliance and popularity of Pottinger and Manson and the socialists' control of the Lerwick Town Council, the Liberals have kept control of the Parliamentary seat for the Shetlands division since the 1880s.

In January 1899 the Parliamentary committee of the Scottish Trades Union Congress took the initiative in organising a conference of trade unionists, co-operators and socialists to plan a 'campaign for the next general election'. At the same time the Parliamentary candidates the Independent Labour Party envisaged putting up in Edinburgh were endorsed by the Trades Council.¹ By then the Ayrshire Trades Council were campaigning for old age pensions,² and the Edinburgh Trades Council decided to support the recommendations of the Scottish Trades Union Congress for securing labour representation in Parliament.³ However, when the Parliamentary committee of the Scottish Trades Union Congress invited the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation to send delegates to a conference to set up the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Elections Committee, they referred to the need for the 'direct representation of Labour interests in Parliament'.⁴ In fact what they really envisaged was independent labour representation.

A conference of delegates from the Trades Councils, the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation and the Co-operative societies met in May 1899, and the delegates adopted a programme which included the demands for a legal eight hour day, the nationalisation of land and railways, old age pensions and the graduated taxation of all incomes over £300 per year.⁵ The Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Elections Committee was founded in January 1900, and this conference marked the formal emergence of a unified Scottish labour movement.⁶

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1. Labour Leader, 7 January 1899.
 2. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 25 February 1899.
 3. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 16 May 1899.
 4. Labour Leader, 4 February 1899.
 5. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 20 May 1899.
 6. Ibid., 13 January 1900.

A section of the Social Democratic Federation, led by Nairn¹ and Gunn, had some sympathy with the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Elections Committee; and they argued that 'the task of welding together a great number of workers into a class-conscious political party was a slow, uphill one ... and the S.D.F. should not be outside such a movement'.² By contrast G.S. Yates and J.C. Matheson³ asserted that they would no longer work with 'people who believe that the working class, instead of being educated into a consciousness of their position, should rather be tricked into action on any pretence, even with the sticking plaster of single tax. Let this Congress be a lesson. Once is enough in the history of the S.D.F. in Scotland'.⁴

There were only two Labour candidates in Scotland during the general election of 1900, and they were both supported by the Glasgow Trades Council.⁵ A.E. Fletcher had been adopted as the independent Labour candidate for the Camlachie constituency, Glasgow, by the Scottish Council of the Independent Labour Party in September 1899,⁶ and his candidature was only reluctantly endorsed by the Camlachie Liberal Association in September 1900.⁷ Fletcher was supported by the Irish nationalists, and Robertson and Owen Kiernan addressed meetings on his behalf.⁸ Fletcher was

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1. 'W.J. Nairn', Social Democrat, Vol VI, no. 15, February 1902.
 2. Justice, 3 November 1900.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., 13 January 1900.
 5. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 3 October 1900.
 6. Labour Leader, 30 September 1899.
 7. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 22 September 1900.
 8. Glasgow Examiner, 22 September 1900.

supported, too, by the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Elections Committee; but they refused to support William Maxwell, the other Labour candidate, who was standing in Tradeston, Glasgow, as he had already received official Liberal endorsement.¹ Both Fletcher and Maxwell were unsuccessful, though they polled substantial votes in straight fights with Tory opponents.

In 1900 the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' County Union had 10,000 members,² and they appointed delegates to attend the foundation conference of the Labour Representation Committee in London.³ There were now organised groups of socialists in the Fife mining villages, and the relatively 'high wages' in the local coal industry had created 'a spirit of apathy on the question of direct labour representation'.⁴ The West Fife Workers' Parliamentary Association was formed in June, and in July Weir, the miners' secretary,⁵ 'practically announced himself a (Labour) candidate for West Fife'.⁶ The miners made it plain that they wanted the Liberal Association to adopt Weir as a Labour candidate; but the Liberal Association adopted J.D. Hope without consulting the miners' leaders at all.⁷

The leaders of the Fife miners were split between the orthodox Liberal elements and the socialist elements who wanted the miners to

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1. F. Bealey and H. Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-1906 (London, 1958), p.292.
 2. Dunfermline Journal, 21 July 1900.
 3. Ibid., 20 January 1900.
 4. Dunfermline Press, 21 April 1900.
 5. Dunfermline Journal, 30 June 1900.
 6. Ibid., 7 July 1900.
 7. Ibid.

put Weir forward as an independent Labour candidate.¹ Then Weir came forward as an independent Labour candidate for West Fife,² and he was supported by the leaders of the Independent Labour Party³ and the Scottish Miners' Federation.⁴ But the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' County Union refused to release Weir from his duties as full-time secretary,⁴ and a local socialist predicted that the working class electors in the West Fife constituency would demonstrate their opposition to and 'censure' of the local Liberal Association 'at the ballot box' by not voting at all.⁵ And on polling day 4,465 electors out of a total of 11,206 abstained from voting,⁶ a higher percentage of abstentions than in 1895, and the percentage increased again in the general election of 1906.⁷

Before the working class electors went to the polls in 1900 however, the executive committee of the Scottish Miners' Federation adopted and published a resolution thus:

That, in view of the opposition by the Liberal party in West Fife to the adoption of Mr. John Weir in the constituency from the mining ranks, this Executive of the Scottish Miners' Federation advises miners in every constituency to withhold their support from the Liberal candidate where the opposing candidate is sound on the mining questions.⁸

1. Ibid., 14 July 1900.

2. Ibid., 28 July 1900.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 4 August 1900.

5. Ibid., 11 August 1900.

6. Ibid., 20 October 1900.

7. Henry Perling, Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910 (London, 1967), p. 395.

8. Dunfermline Journal, 29 September 1900.

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Though the miners still had a distinct sense of their own social peculiarities, a Scottish labour movement had now emerged. Moreover, the Scottish miners willingness in 1900, as in 1858, to support the Tories rather than the Liberals no longer isolated them from the rest of the labour movement, and the revolt from Liberalism was, in a sense, complete. Nonetheless the revolt from Liberalism was neither hegemonic nor self-critical; and, as we will see, traditional Lib-Lab attitudes co-existed with the new ideas of socialism.

The Miners' County Unions, 1866-1900

There were immense social and cultural differences between the Scottish miners and the artisans, and the Lib-Lab trade union leaders were not so successful with the miners as they were with the artisans in imposing what Professor Peter Sterns has called 'the essentially middle class values' of thrift, temperance, sobriety and regularity of work. The Scottish miners were often described as 'rude labour', and conflict and social tension were almost permanent features of their way of life.

The perennial social conflict between the miners and the artisans had been seen during the general election of 1868, and a unified Scottish labour movement only began to emerge much later on under the influence of new ideas. The Lanarkshire miners had affiliated to the Glasgow Trades Council in 1858,¹ but they had dropped out in the mid-1860s. In any case they had rarely sent a delegate to the Glasgow Trades Council in those years, and the miners only re-affiliated to the Trades Councils in Glasgow² and Edinburgh³ in 1888. Meanwhile they were engaged in their own sectional battles and locked in their own way of life in rural communities.

In 1606 an Act was passed in the old Scots Parliament impressing the indigenous colliers, salters and coal-bearers into a condition of serfdom. The 'slavery' of the collier-serfs was a consequence of the legislation John Knox had worked out to prevent the migration of labour;⁴ and in Fife

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 11 September 1858.
 2. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 1 February 1888.
 3. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 21 February 1888.
 4. Edinburgh Review, Vol. CLXXXIX, no. 389 1899, p. 381.

the collier-serfs in the eighteenth century were not allowed to occupy the same burial grounds as the free labourers.¹ In 1799 the indigenous collier-serfs were emancipated from legal bondage by an Act passed in the British Parliament; and the social and psychological stigma of serfdom was engraved on the consciousness of successive generations of Scottish miners. By 1867 the miners were still struggling to free themselves from their cultural inheritance, and the miners were, in the eyes of the urban poor, 'an ignorant class'.²

Throughout the nineteenth century the Fife miners, in marked contrast to their counterparts in the west of Scotland, were the most indigenous working people in Scotland.³ They were culturally, socially and psychologically close to their peasant origins, and they had inherited the culture, customs and dialect of the old Scots peasantry.⁴ Many of the Fife coal ventures were 'small privately-owned mines', and before the rise to dominance of the Limited Liability Companies in the closing decades of the nineteenth century 'the proprietors' of the numerous small pits had themselves 'sprung from the mining class'.⁵

A large number of the Fife miners were 'an industrious and markedly independent class';⁶ but, in contrast to the miners in the west of Scotland, they were not influenced by the Chartists. Moreover, some miners in Fife were more closely tied to the landowners who were involved in the coal industry than their fellow miners elsewhere in Scotland. In

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1. R. Page Arnot, A History of the Scottish Miners (London, 1955), p. 7.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 16 March 1867.
 3. David Rorie, M.D., D.P.H., The Mining Folk of Fife (Dunfermline, 1912), p. 385; H. Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910 (London, 1967), p. 397.
 4. Rorie, *op.cit.*, p. 389.
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 386.
 6. *Ibid.*

1861 they were still celebrating their 'emancipation from serfdom', and 'each successive laird at Fordell' (House) had presented them 'with a flag' since 'the date of their emancipation':

The first was presented in 1796 (sic!) by Sir John Henderson who was one of the leaders in obtaining the freedom of the colliers. This is now much tattered and torn, but is preserved as an interesting, almost sacred, memorial of that important epoch in the miners story.¹

So, the peculiarities of the mining industry in Fife, the lack of large pits, the inheritance of the superstitions, customs and dialect of the old Scots peasantry² and the geographical isolation of Fife³ from the rest of Scotland retarded and inhibited the growth of trade union organisation. Alexander MacDonald's first attempt to organise the Fife miners in 1857 ended in failure,⁴ and during the miners' hectic political activity in Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Stirlingshire in 1868 the Fife miners remained fairly passive.

In 1866 the vast majority of the Scottish miners lived in closed, tightly-knit rural communities, and in times of crisis they could be, and often were, called together by a 'common bellman'. Their isolation from the artisans was social as well as geographical, and sometimes political. The miners in Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Stirlingshire and the Lothians were the only organised workers in Scotland who openly proclaimed their support for Tory Parliamentary candidates in the general election of 1868. Moreover, the miners took far longer to adapt themselves to the

1. Dunfermline Press, 20 July 1861.

2. Rorie, op.cit., p. 389.

3. Ibid., p. 385.

4. A.S. Cunningham, Reminiscences of Alexander MacDonald, the Miners' Friend (Dunfermline, 1902), p. 13.

normalcy of an industrial society, and in so far as they clung to their own social and cultural values, they were never fully socialised.¹

In the early decades of the nineteenth century the majority of the miners in the Scottish coalfields were of peasant origin, and by mid-century their ranks had been augmented by Irish immigrants² and a significant influx of Highlanders from Sutherlandshire.³ Long after the Irish immigrants had been partially assimilated into the Lanarkshire mining industry, the miners there continued to use the Scots dialect.⁴ In 1879 a student of the conditions and origins of the Lanarkshire miners claimed that they were 'an independent, brave, and industrious portion' of the Scots peasantry.⁵ The characteristics of independence, quarrelsomeness and superstition were certainly more deeply rooted in the consciousness of the miners than the artisans,⁶ and, in spite of the perennial conflict between the Irish immigrants and the indigenous miners, the miners - with the exception of those in Fife - had evolved and formulated a workaday trade union strategy.

In 1867 the Scottish miners were subjected to a wide range of social controls, and the miners' houses were owned and controlled by the coal and ironmasters.⁷ The miners were tied to the coalowners and the ironmasters by a system of 'off-takes' for housing, medical attention,

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1. J.D. MacDougall, 'The Scottish Coalminer', Nineteenth Century and After, December 1927, pp. 764-5.
 2. Johnston, op.cit., p. 335.
 3. Hamilton Advertiser, 27 July 1895.
 4. Thomas Stewart, 'Among the Miners', Ibid., 26 July 1879.
 5. Hamilton Advertiser, 16 August 1879.
 6. Glasgow Sentinel, 9 March 1867; Thomas Stewart, 'Among the Miners', Hamilton Advertiser, 13 September 1879.
 7. R.H. Campbell, 'The Iron Industry in Ayrshire', Ayrshire Collections Vol. 7 (1966), pp. 98-101.

schooling, pick-sharpening, lamp oil and blasting powder.¹ The coal-owners made deductions from the wages of all male workers, whether they were Presbyterians or Roman Catholics, for the education of collier children. MacDonald and the miners' leaders campaigned against the coalowners' deductions from the wages of the Roman Catholics for the education of their children in the schools of 'the employer' where 'the dogmas taught' were 'those of the Presbyterian Church'.² But long after the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, schools belonging to the coalowners continued in existence in Ayrshire.³ As late as 1866 a Liberal M.P. 'called attention to the injustice which several employers of labour' in Lanarkshire were 'guilty of in paying to Protestant schools the school fees kept off their Catholic workmen'.⁴

Conditions in the Scottish coalfields were indescribably brutal and savage,⁵ and medical attention was often inadequate. In 1868 a small section of the miners in Fife struck work over their lack of choice in the appointment of colliery doctors, and they won the right to choose 'their own doctors'.⁶ However, the vast majority of the Scottish miners,⁷ including those in Fife, had to wait until the end of the nineteenth century before they won the right to select their own colliery doctors. Moreover, the miners' rows were let on a basis

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 25 January 1868; Rorie, op.cit., p. 386.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 24 April 1869.
 3. J. Boyd, Seven Centuries of Education in Ayrshire (London 1961) p. 115; Hamilton Advertiser, 12 May 1888.
 4. Glasgow Observer, 18 September 1886.
 5. Fred Reid, 'Keir Hardie's biographers', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, no. 16, p. 31.
 6. Scotsman, 30 September 1868.
 7. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 18 February 1899; Dunfermline Journal, 27 Jan., 1900.

of day-to-day tenure, and the miners who struck work were frequently ejected from their houses by the coalowners and the ironmasters.¹ On such occasions the miners and their families lived in tents,² and soup kitchens were set up to feed the destitute.³ Nevertheless the most oppressed, despised and 'ignorant class'⁴ of workers in Scotland developed sharply defined Tory sympathies and their own form of 'job consciousness'.

In the 1840s the miners in the west of Scotland inaugurated a system of restricting output known as the 'darg'.⁵ These miners had been influenced by Chartist and socialist literature⁶ and Tremeneere, the Commissioner of Mines, equated 'the spread of Socialism in the mining districts' with the miners' decision to restrict output.⁷ By keeping both coal and their labour scarce, and by keeping their wages up, the miners had hoped to work out a strategy comparable to that just beginning to be operated by the New Model unions. However, since they had gone much further than the artisans by restricting output, they understandably attracted more criticism from employers. While 'the nation' might have lost 'vast sums by way of the colliers restriction of labour',⁸ the miners' operation of the 'darg' was an ineffective

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 24 August 1867; 22 August 1868; Reformer, 4 January 1873; Hamilton Advertiser, 27 August 1874; North British Daily Mail, 5 August 1867; 23 June 1894.
 2. Glasgow Sentinel, 24 August 1868; Hamilton Advertiser, 14 July 1894; Dunfermline Press, 7 July 1894.
 3. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 17 October 1868; Hamilton Advertiser, 21 July 1894.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 16 March 1867; Labour Standard, 13 August 1881.
 5. Darg or daurk, a job of work; from the Gaelic dearg, a plough. Charles McKay, A Dictionary of Lowland Scotch (London, 1888).
 6. Johnston, op.cit., p. 336.
 7. Glasgow Courier, 11 March 1852.
 8. Reports on the Mining Districts, 1844, pp. 31-2.

trade union weapon when the mining industry experienced periodic contractions. Whether the miners pushed up their wages by means of restricting their output or not cannot yet be documented for the Scottish coalfields as a whole:¹ but in 1892 Eleanor Marx 'noticed with regret that the "darg" system in the Scottish mines, a method of limiting output to protect the slower workers, was being superseded by the competitive method of the devil taking the hindmost'.²

However, by the mid-1860s and down to the early 1890s, the miners' system of restricting the output of coal was a great deal more complex and complicated than it has been described by historians. The 'wee darg' and the big 'darg' often operated side-by-side with the approval of local miners' leaders, and, in addition to the basic tonnage rate which was paid to every miner, miners could, and did, increase their earnings by producing more than the basic 'darg'.

In the west of Scotland the miners' basic wages were related to their individual 'darg', and this system of protecting the slower workers led to long hours of labour. The miners' insistence on linking their 'darg' to their hours of labour infuriated the coalmasters, the ironmasters and Liberal politicians. In the Fife coalfields there was no fixed 'darg', and the slower workers were not protected from highly competitive methods of production.³ Besides, 'one of the conditions of membership of the miners' union was that members should only work eight hours a day'. In practice, however,

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1. A. Slaven, 'Earnings and Productivity in the Scottish Coalmining Industry during the Nineteenth Century; the Dixon Enterprises', Studies in Scottish Business History, ed., Peter L. Payne (London, 1967), p. 220; John Butt, 'The Role of Scottish Business History', The Journal of Economic Studies, 1967, p. 77.
 2. C. Tsuzuki, The Life of Eleanor Marx (London, 1967), pp. 212-20.
 3. Dunfermline Journal, 29 September 1877.

the organised minority had no means of forcing the unorganised majority to restrict their hours of labour.¹ The reason why the coalmasters preferred the Clackmannan miners to their counterparts in the west of Scotland was explained by the editor of the Dunfermline Journal:

The output of coals per man in the East of Scotland is greater, though the men here have been working only 8 hours per day, than in the West of Scotland where there is no limit to the working hours.²

In the 1870s the miners in the east of Scotland were therefore tied to more competitive methods of production and the miners in the west of Scotland were committed to methods of protecting the slower workers. These contrasting methods of production were at the root of the conflicts between the leaders of the Scottish miners in those years.

The consensus of opinion among those historians who have chronicled the history of the Scottish miners is that the Irish immigrants in the west of Scotland undercut the wages of the indigenous miners,³ and that the indigenous Fife and Clackmannan miners, whose wages were not threatened by 'cheap' Irish labour, had established an eight hour day in 1870⁴ and successfully resisted a substantial wage cut in 1877⁵. A series of strikes in the west of Scotland in the 1860s were, in fact, broken by the importation of 'blacklegs' from England⁶ and

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1. 'Fife and Clackmannan Coal Industry: Interesting Historical Notes', Dunfermline Press, 9 February 1924.
 2. Dunfermline Journal, 16 June 1877.
 3. A. Slaven, 'Earnings and Productivity in the Scottish Coalmining Industry during the Nineteenth Century: The Dixon Enterprises', Studies in Scottish Business History, ed., Peter L. Payne (London, 1967), p. 218. Mr. Slaven's argument is based on evidence belonging to the 1840s and 1850s rather than the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century.
 4. Arnot, op.cit., p. 51.
 5. Ibid., p. 59; R.H. Campbell, Scotland Since 1707: The Rise of an Industrial Society (Oxford, 1965), p. 313.
 6. Kilmarnock Advertiser, 31 October 1868; Glasgow Sentinel, 24 August 1867.

by cheap labour supplied by the Free Labour Society.¹ Moreover, a strike led by a 'justice man' in Holytown, Lanarkshire, was broken by the indigenous Presbyterian miners who had 'sold their honour for the burning draught of alcohol and in the midst of their drunken orgies declared the strike at an end'. Then 'the pit was thrown open, and the justice man was not allowed back, as he had taken an active part in the strike and is a Roman catholic'.² Furthermore, in 1877 an attempt to reorganise the miners in Lanarkshire failed as 'a large number of the men' had gone to 'the Orange demonstrations'.³

Andrew McCowie, the Roman catholic Scoto-Irishman,⁴ was one of MacDonald's chief lieutenants, and, when MacDonald died in 1881,⁵ he was responsible for persuading the miners to appoint William Small as the leader of the Scottish miners.⁶ In 1867 McCowie spoke for the miners and their families, whether they were indigenous or immigrant, Presbyterian or Roman Catholic, when he 'said he had seen women and children weeping and wailing when they were told of MacDonald's illness'.⁷ In any case there were important miners' leaders such as McCowie and James Roden who were committed Irish Roman catholics.

A number of historians of the Scottish mining industry have accused - or praised - MacDonald for opposing strikes⁸ and the 'darg'⁹ during

1. Ibid., 29 August 1868.

2. Ibid., 23 February 1867.

3. Ibid., 21 July 1877.

4. Small Papers.

5. 'Death of Alexander MacDonald, M.P.', North British Daily Mail, 1 November 1881.

6. Glasgow Herald, 24 January 1903; The Scottish Co-operator, 6 February 1903.

7. Glasgow Sentinel, 12 January 1867.

8. A.J. Youngson Brown, 'Trade Union Policy in the Scottish Coalfields', Economic History Review, Vol. 1953, p. 41.

9. W.H. Marwick, A Short History of Labour in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 25.

the years between 1855 and 1880. In fact MacDonald led a strike of the Lanarkshire miners in 1865 which lasted for over three months;¹ and in the 1860s he frequently urged the Scottish miners to wage a general strike to force up their wages.² Moreover, his advocacy of restricted production through the operation of the 'wee darge'³ was the cause of the abuse the Scottish Liberal press showered upon him.⁴ However, the Liberal press in Fife made their peace with MacDonald after the formation of the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' Association in 1870.

Before 1870 the Fife and Clackmannan miners were the worst organised miners in Scotland, and they 'had wrought the long degrading hours of 12 and 13 a day'.⁵ By 1872 their wages 'had risen from an average of 3s. for ten hours to 8s. for eight hours, and their comparative 'affluence' and shorter hours were a consequence of the boom in the export of coal created by the Franco-Prussian war.⁶ In May 1877 the coalmasters in Fife and Clackmannan threatened a lock-out unless the miners would agree to accept a reduction in their wages of 10 per cent.⁷ The Westphalian coalfields had become 'a very formidable competitor',⁸ and, after a struggle which had lasted for three months, the miners were defeated.⁹ Many of the miners and their families had been reduced to

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1. Hamilton Advertiser, 27 June 1874.
 2. Dunfermline Press, 16 May 1868; Glasgow Sentinel, 11 July 1868; Dunfermline Journal, 14 December 1872; North British Daily Mail, 10 December 1872.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 26 January 1867; 15 February 1868; Dunfermline Press, 29 August 1868; North British Daily Mail, 11 February 1868.
 4. Dunfermline Press, 26 September 1868; Glasgow Herald, 19 September 1868.
 5. Glasgow Sentinel, 15 February 1868.
 6. Dunfermline Press, 9 February 1924.
 7. Dunfermline Journal, 12 May 1877.
 8. Ibid., 11 August 1877.
 9. 'The Fife lock-out of 1877, with the substantial victory of the men, may therefore be considered a landmark in the history of the Scottish miners'. Arnot, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

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destitution,¹ and John Weir, the miners' chairman,² was forced to 'take a position in England'.³ Weir subsequently described what had happened when he addressed a miners' meeting in Dunfermline:

The year 1877 proved a somewhat disastrous year. After many reductions of wages had been submitted, to, another was intimated. The men struck work, and after a struggle which lasted for three months, the masters' terms were accepted. The Association's funds were depleted, and the membership of the Union was sadly affected.⁴

An increase in the foreign demand for Fife coal had strengthened the miners' organisation,⁵ and in June 1877 the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' Association had 5,000 members.⁶ The Fife and Clackmannan Miners' Association was utterly smashed during the course of the strike, and by 1880 the organised miners in the two counties had no more than a 1,000 members.⁷

In contrast to the miners in the west of Scotland, the Fife miners successfully resisted the attempts of the coalowners to evict them from their homes,⁸ and this may have been connected with the sympathy the local Liberal press expressed for the indigenous miners.⁹ A new feature of mining in Fife was the emergence of 'the contractor' or 'butties'. In some pits neither the miners employed by the 'butties'

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1. Dunfermline Journal, 29 September 1877.
 2. Richard Penman and Henry Cook led the Fife and Clackmannan miners before John Weir came on the scene. There are obituary notices for Penman and Cook in the Dunfermline Journal, 8 March 1873 and in the Dunfermline Journal, 10 July 1880.
 3. Obituary for John Weir, Dunfermline Press, 19 December 1908.
 4. Dunfermline Journal, 21 July 1900.
 5. A.S. Cunningham, Mining in the 'Kingdom' of Fife (Dunfermline 1913) p.13
 6. Glasgow Sentinel, 9 June 1877.
 7. Ibid., 9 June 1877.
 8. Dunfermline Journal 21 July 1900.
 9. Ibid., 2 June 1877.

not 'the non-Unionists' were locked-out.¹ There were very few 'butties' in Fife in 1877: but by 1886 they threatened the very existence of trade union organisation among the miners. A statement issued by the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' Association in 1866 concluded that:

The system of "contracting", which prevails in many collieries, one of the most fruitful sources of degrading evils to the miners. It has tended in every instance to increase the darg in many ways and the hours of labour, and brought through an unhealthy competition a lower remuneration for the work performed by the miner.²

In 1886 only a quarter of the miners in Fife and Clackmannan were enrolled in the Miners' Association,³ and between 1877 and the end of the century the miners in those counties had to increase their 'darg' and work more than eight hours per shift during the periods of depression in the local coal industry. The eight hour day which the miners won in 1870 was vitiated by the growth of the 'contracting' system, and one of the ironical results of the strike of the Fife and Clackmannan miners in 1877 was that the miners in the west of Scotland won a wage increase.⁴ The miners in the west of Scotland, moreover, kept free of the 'contracting system until the 1890s'.⁵ So much for the myth - a myth fostered by the Scottish Liberal press - that the miners in Fife and Clackmannan enjoyed an eight hour day and strong trade union organisation from 1870 onwards.

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1. Ibid., 26 May 1877.
 2. A statement issued to the Fife and Clackmannan miners by the Executive Committee of the Fife and Clackmannan Miners' Association, 27 March 1886. Dunfermline Public Library.
 3. Dunfermline Press, 4 February 1899.
 4. Dunfermline Journal, 29 September 1877.
 5. Minutes of the Larkhall Miners' Association, 12 June 1894, National Library of Scotland, MSS. 8023-5.

In an attempt to keep 'surplus labour' out of the labour market,¹ MacDonald persuaded Scottish miners to emigrate to America.² His visits to America in 1868,³ 1869⁴ and 1876⁵ were largely motivated by a desire to persuade American coalowners to absorb Scottish miners who had been made redundant by contractions in the indigenous coal industry. Moreover, the miners' leaders attacked the Scottish Liberals for refusing to support state-aided emigration,⁶ and, even when the American coalowners had labour surplus to their requirements in 1877, MacDonald informed the Scottish miners that those of them who wanted 'to pass from the grade of labourer to that of farmer' would find 'an easy access to the land'.⁷ Indeed, the Dunfermline Press accused him in 1868 of making 'a good speculation' out of the emigration of the miners, and, though he denied the accusation,⁸ this was probably the source of his 'modest fortune'.⁹

As well as advocating emigration as a means of keeping surplus labour out of the market, MacDonald also urged the miners to 'reserve their funds and turn their attention to co-operative mining'.¹⁰

Though he was occasionally criticised by local miners' leaders for his advocacy of emigration,¹¹ MacDonald had no difficulty in gaining support for his overall trade union strategy. Before 1880 the coal

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1. North British Daily Mail, 11 February 1868.
 2. H.G. Gutman, 'Five Letters of Immigrant Workers from Scotland to the United States, 1867-1869: William Latta, Daniel M'Lachlan and Alan Pinkerton', Labour History, Vol. IX (1968), pp. 384-408.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 1 February 1868; 8 February 1868.
 4. Ibid., 22 May 1869.
 5. Ibid., 23 September 1876; 28 October 1876; 9 December 1876.
 6. Ibid., 28 August 1868.
 7. Dunfermline Journal, 5 May 1877.
 8. Dunfermline Press, 29 August 1868.
 9. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London, 1894), p. 300.
 10. Hamilton Advertiser, 6 June 1874; 'Co-operation in Mining', Glasgow Sentinel, 18 January 1873.
 11. Ibid., 15 February 1868.

owners in the west of Scotland were divided into sale coalowners and the ironmasters, and, as there was a disparity in the wages and tonnage rates paid by the two groups of employers, the miners' leaders were sometimes able to compel individual coalowners to push wages up, or to cancel wage reductions, by putting individual collieries 'on the block'. By taking a ballot vote to ascertain which colliery or collieries should go on strike, the miners who remained at work were able to support those on whom the lot fell to come out on strike.

The effectiveness of co-operative mining, emigration and 'putting on the block' were, however, vitiated by the existence of a permanent pool of surplus labour in the Scottish coalfields. As the coalfields in the west of Scotland were supplying the home market¹ and the coalfields in Fife and Clackmannan were producing for foreign markets,² and, since prosperity in one section often coincided with depression in the other, a surplus of labour among the miners was perennial. This was why the Scottish miners had a reputation for being a 'migratory' class.³ It was against this background that MacDonald's policy and leadership were challenged by miners' agents and rank-and-file miners in 1874 and again in 1879.

The Scottish miners welcomed MacDonald's election as a member of Parliament for the English constituency of Stafford in February 1874,⁴ but, when a miners' strike spontaneously erupted in Lanarkshire in

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1. John Butt, 'The Role of Scottish Business History', The Journal of Economic Studies, 1967, p. 77.
 2. Dunfermline Journal, 10 May 1877; Augustus Muir, The Fife Coal Company Limited (Leven, n.d.), pp. 12-3; A.S. Cunningham, Mining in 'the Kingdom' of Fife (Dunfermline, 1902), p. 16; Dunfermline Journal, 20 January 1900.
 3. Ayr Advertiser, 31 January 1868; Thomas Stewart, 'Among the Miners', Hamilton Advertiser, 16 August 1879; Bob Selkirk, The Life of a Worker (Dundee, 1967), p. 3.
 4. Glasgow Sentinel, 14 February 1874.

April,¹ thousands of miners denounced his leadership. He advised the miners employed by the ironmasters in the west of Scotland to accept a wage reduction; but they defied his advice and the leadership of the strike was taken over by Thomas Smith, Hector McNeil and John Muir. MacDonald's leadership was now being challenged by veteran miners' agents, and Thomas Smith, Hector McNeil and John Muir disagreed with his assessment of the buoyancy of the coal and iron markets. They pointed out that iron prices were going up, and that the ironmasters had no excuse for reducing wages. But MacDonald countered their criticisms by arguing that the miners were in a very weak bargaining position, since iron prices had shot up 'under extraordinary circumstances'. Iron prices were not in 'legitimate hands', he argued, and 'the brokers' rather than the makers of iron had artificially created the price increases.² Nevertheless thousands of miners were not convinced by the 'economic' arguments of MacDonald and the ironmasters.

As many as 5,000 miners defied MacDonald's appeals to return to work, and the ironmasters in Lanarkshire evicted 4,000 miners from their homes. The strike was a new form of rank-and-file militancy. This was the first time that MacDonald's leadership had been so seriously challenged; and rank-and-file miners and some of their agents were not longer impressed by MacDonald's knowledge of economics and his advice not to go against 'the ordinary laws' of economics.³ He rather than the miners had undergone a change of heart in relation

1. Ibid., 11 April 1874.

2. Hamilton Advertiser, 20 June 1874.

3. Ibid., 6 June 1874.

to the problem of initiating strikes¹ when the employers seemed to be in a strong position, and his critics had some justification when they accused him of having gone over to the side of the employers.²

A number of militant miners called for a general strike of the Scottish miners;³ but MacDonald, who had called for general strikes in 1868⁴ and in 1873,⁵ argued that 'no power on earth could create a general strike'.⁶ Nonetheless the strike in Lanarkshire lasted for over three months, and there were very bitter recriminations between the opponents and the supporters of the strike among the miners. McNeil accused MacDonald of aiding and abetting the employers,⁷ and he retorted by arguing that the wages of the miners' agents depended on the continuation of the strike.⁸ In any case McNeil was ultimately compelled to advise the miners to return to 'work on the most advantageous terms they could get from the masters'.⁹ But MacDonald's troubles were not yet over, and he never again enjoyed undisputed leadership among the Scottish miners.

In November 1879 the coalmasters and the ironmasters in the west of Scotland threatened a wage reduction,¹⁰ and John Gray and

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1. McNeil argued that MacDonald had led 'a strike of fourteen weeks' in 1856 when the coal and iron markets had been in a similar condition to what they were in 1874. *Ibid.*, 27 June 1874.
 2. *North British Daily Mail*, 2 July 1874; 10 July 1874; 11 July 1874.
 3. *Hamilton Advertiser*, 2 May 1874.
 4. *Dunfermline Press*, 20 June 1868.
 5. *Dunfermline Journal*, 26 April 1873.
 6. *Hamilton Advertiser*, 11 July 1874.
 7. *Ibid.*, 4 July 1874.
 8. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1874.
 9. *Ibid.*, 27 July 1874.
 10. *North British Daily Mail*, 12 November 1879.

Keir Hardie accepted MacDonald's advice to press for a sliding scale of wages.¹ The traditional disparity in the wages of the miners in the west of Scotland had hitherto derived from the fact that the ironmasters and the coalmasters had been divided into two sections; but, since the two sections of employers had now formed themselves into a 'ring';² the miners' traditional trade union strategy was no longer appropriate. MacDonald therefore urged the miners to agitate for a sliding scale of wages³ 'so that when the coal rose to a certain percentage the miners' wages should rise also, and that when coal or iron fell the miners' wages should fall in the same ratio'.⁴ However, the employers refused to consider introducing a sliding scale of wages,⁵ and Hardie⁶ and Gray, opposed MacDonald's advice to accept wage reductions.

Gray⁷, the controversial Lanarkshire miners' agent, described MacDonald as 'an agent' of the employers,⁸ and, when miners were evicted from their houses by the Wishaw Coal Company in May 1880, the Sheriff was informed that the M.P. for Stafford was a partner in the Wishaw Coal Company.⁹ Hardie¹⁰ and Gray¹¹ opposed MacDonald's leadership, and they appealed

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1. Ibid., 11 November 1879.
 2. Ibid., 22 August 1879.
 3. Sidney and Beatrice Webb erroneously argued that MacDonald 'instructively maintained an attitude of hostility to the innovating principle of a sliding scale'. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (Longon 1894), p.324.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 24 October 1879.
 5. Sidney and Beatrice Webb described the workers' acceptance of the sliding scale of wages as the adoption of 'the intellectual position of their opponents'. Webb, op.cit., p.339.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 7 January 1880; Ibid., 10 December 1879.
 7. 'The Late Mr. John Gray', Hamilton Advertiser, 6 May 1911.
 8. North British Daily Mail, 16 December 1879.
 9. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 5 June 1880.
 10. North British Daily Mail, 16 January 1880.
 11. Ibid.

to the miners who were still at work to restrict their 'darg' and to work only four days per week. After being out on strike for ten weeks, the miners in the west of Scotland returned to work on their own terms.

The miners' correspondent of the North British Daily Mail concluded a report on the end of the strike by writing:

The men consider the strike highly satisfactory, and a great victory over Mr. MacDonald, M.P., who spared no pains to denounce their policy since the strike commenced.¹

The miners were legally entitled under the Mines' Regulation Act of 1860 to elect checkweighers or 'justicemen' to supervise the weighing of the men's 'darg'.² The Scottish miners were reluctant to elect checkweighers,³ and there were very few 'justicemen' in the Scottish coal-fields in the 1860s. The checkweighers' authority was legally strengthened by the Mines' Regulation Act of 1872, and in the early 1870s a minority of the miners in Fife,⁴ Lanarkshire⁵ and the Lothians⁶ elected 'justicemen'. A number of the miners' agents in the 1880s concentrated on persuading some of the miners in Lanarkshire,⁷ Fife⁸ and the Lothians to elect checkweighers;⁹ but the miners were often 'shy at paying wages to a justiceman'.¹⁰ The Glasgow Observer's special commissioner explained the difficulties which confronted the miners' agents who were involved in getting checkweighers appointed:

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1. Ibid., 17 January 1880.
 2. W.H. Marwick, Economic Developments in Victorian Scotland (London, 1936), p. 190.
 3. Arnot, op.cit., p. 46.
 4. Dunfermline Press, 6 August 1873.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 23 January 1874.
 6. Edinburgh Courant, 4 August 1893; 8 August 1873.
 7. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 27 October 1883; North British Daily Mail, 3 July 1884; 2 July 1885.
 8. Ibid., 29 October 1883.
 9. Ibid., 12 January 1891.
 10. Glasgow Observer, 4 September 1886.

If the men consider that they are being unfairly dealt with as to weight at the pit-bank, they must employ at their own expense, one of their own number to act as a check on the master's "justice man", as he is called, and this necessarily entails a further expense upon the miner varying from 6d. to 1s. per fortnight, according to the number of men employed in the colliery.¹

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century the miners' agents formed a nucleus of full-time trade union officials in the Scottish coalfields; but the miners were usually compelled to dispense with their services during periods of severe depression. By contrast the English checkweighers provided the miners with a solid nucleus of full-time trade union officials,² and after the implementation of the Miners' Regulation Act of 1872 the coalowners gave them facilities at the pitheads for carrying out their duties.³ The Scottish coalowners, however, opposed and frustrated the efforts of the checkweighers until the advent of the Coal Mines (Check Weigher) Act of 1894.

Only a small minority of the Scottish miners were prepared to pay the expenses involved in securing the services of their own checkweighers; but in any case the coalowners frequently rejected checkweighers from the few collieries where the militants insisted on electing their own representatives.⁴ In 1836 the Mines Regulation Act of 1872 was modified to allow the miners to elect checkweighers from outside their own ranks, and under the new Mines Regulation Act 'the owner or manager' of a colliery

1. Ibid., 27 June 1885.

2. Webb, op.cit., p. 306.

3. Raymond Challinor, Alexander MacDonald and the Miners (London, 1968), pp. 27-34.

4. Edinburgh Courant, 9 August 1873; Dunfermline Journal, 3 May 1884; North British Daily Mail, 29 October 1888.

'was empowered to retain the checkweigher's wages from the workmen and pay the same to the checkweigher'.¹ But the coalowners resisted the activities of the 'justiceman', and in the early 1890s the checkweighers were constantly victimised.² The brutal conditions in the coalfields were illuminated by the treatment the 'justicemen' received from the coalowners and their managers. In 1890 the manager of the Bog colliery, Lanarkshire, assaulted a checkweigher called James McLaren. However, the Procurator-Fiscal informed the Larkhall miners' leaders that 'they would not secure a conviction' in the Sheriff court;³ and the miners' leaders decided to drop the matter.⁴ In the 1880s and early 1890s the miners' leaders accepted the dismissal and victimisation of checkweighers with a sense of fatalistic inevitability.⁵

Truck was commonplace in the coalfields in the west of Scotland in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s,⁶ and the few miners who complained about truck in housing, education and social provisions were dismissed by their employers.⁷ The traditional divisions between the artisans and the miners were gradually eradicated after the formation of the Scottish Miners' Federation. From then on the miners were supported by the Roman

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1. James Barrowman, 'Scotch Mining Legislation', Transactions of the Mining Institute of Scotland, Vol. 10, 1888-1889, p. 82.
 2. Minutes of the Larkhall Miners' Association, 15 August 1890; 14 October 1890; 26 August 1890; 3 February 1890; 4 April 1891; 1 May 1894.
 3. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1890.
 4. *Ibid.*, 8 July 1890.
 5. Minutes of the Larkhall Miners' Association, 15 August 1890; 1 May 1894; 'The Late William Small', The Scottish Co-operator, 6 February 1903.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 12 June 1869; 15 July 1869; James E. Handley, The Navvy in Scotland (Cork, 1971), pp. 197-241.
 7. Glasgow Sentinel, 2 March 1867; Handley, *op.cit.*, p. 221.

catholic clergy,¹ and the Glasgow Observer welcomed the miners' militancy:

Let the men co-operate. Let the men band themselves together in terms of unity, and we are fully convinced that the Scottish Miners' National Federation will constitute one of the most powerful protective bodies ever formed in the interests of labour.²

Nevertheless the propaganda of the Scottish socialist pioneers made a much greater impact on the miners than the urban workers,³ and the last two decades of the century were dominated by violence and physical conflict between the miners and the police. In 1886 the police were used to break up picket lines in Slamannan;⁴ and in 1887 the police enforced the eviction of striking miners in Broxburn.⁵ Both strikes were supported by the Trades Councils, and the Liberal press began to manifest 'sympathy' for the plight of the miners. However, the police and the military were used to keep order in Lanarkshire in 1887 when a miners' strike culminated in 'the Blantyre riots'.⁶ The authorities were clearly worried by the socialists' influence in the mining communities, and Small subsequently accused the authorities of using 'secret service' agents to foment the riots in Blantyre. The Glasgow Observer defended the riotous miners and failed 'to see why miners should be branded because hungry women and children' had 'taken a little bread'.⁷

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1. North British Daily Mail, 25 February 1887; 1 October 1887.
 2. Glasgow Observer, 21 August 1886.
 3. In 1888 the Edinburgh branch of the Socialist League had had much more success in gaining a foothold among the Broxburn miners than among artisans or unskilled urban workers. See the handwritten report of the Edinburgh branch of the Socialist League, 12 May 1888. Archives of the Socialist League, International Institute of Social History.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 7 January 1886.
 5. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1887; Falkirk Herald, 12 October 1887.
 6. North British Daily Mail, 12 February 1887.
 7. Glasgow Observer, 12 February 1887.

The growth of support among the miners for a general strike was partly attributable to socialist propaganda; but the socialists had militant traditions to build on. In Ayrshire,¹ Fife² and the Lothians³ the miners' trade union activity was, for example, frustrated by 'the contract rules' which obliged the miners to give their employers fourteen days notice before they could withdraw their labour. Three miners were tried in Ayr Sheriff Court in September 1867 under the 9th section of the new Masters' and Servants' Act, and they were fined for striking work without giving their employers fourteen days notice.⁴ Then when the Fife miners subsequently wanted to emulate their counterparts in the west of Scotland by simultaneously restricting their 'darg' and their hours of labour, Sheriff Principal MacKay compelled the Fife miners to work an eleven day fortnight.⁵ In contrast to the miners in Lanarkshire, who were not subjected to 'the contract rules', the miners in Fife and Clackmannan were legally prevented from working a five day week.⁶ In 1890 the miners throughout the Scottish coalfields, with the exception of those in Fife who were circumscribed by 'the contract rules', decided to restrict their hours of labour to eight hours a day for five days per week.⁷ The organised miners and their leaders were caught in an impasse, and the oft-repeated demand for a general strike of Scottish miners was soon to be realised.

1. North British Daily Mail, 15 May 1872.

2. Ibid., 12 November 1886.

3. Dunfermline Journal, 7 June 1873.

4. Ayr Advertiser, 19 September 1867.

5. North British Daily Mail, 12 November 1886.

6. Ibid., 30 September 1886; Dundee Advertiser, 20 May 1892.

7. Ibid., 5 June 1890.

Meanwhile the growth of the 'butty' system in Stirlingshire,¹ Fife,² and Lanarkshire³ deprived the miners of the opportunity of restricting their output and their hours of labour in order to push up their wages. A Stirlingshire miner, who advocated 'a restriction of the "darg" system' to 'place young and old' miners 'on an equal footing', was easily defeated. A militant miners' leader was forced to admit that: 'Young men with families to support would not accept the proposal as to the "darg" system'.⁴ However, the 'contracting system' enabled some miners to buy their own houses,⁵ and by 1900 it was estimated that only one third⁶ of the Scottish miners lived in houses owned by the coalowners.

The miners' leaders from the 1860s onwards repeatedly 'blamed the miners for their poverty' and 'for not laying something away to enable them to resist the employers reductions'.⁷ MacDonald and Hardie attributed the miners' poverty to intemperance and improvidence,⁸ and the miners' leaders were constantly preoccupied with the drunkenness of the miners.⁹ The remedy of self-help and self-culture¹⁰ recommended

1. Ibid., 28 May 1892; Falkirk Herald, 2 June 1892.
2. Dunfermline Journal, 26 May 1877; Dunfermline Press, 4 February 1899.
3. Minutes of the Larkhall Miners' Association, 12 June 1894; Glasgow Weekly Mail, 15 April 1899.
4. Dundee Advertiser, 20 May 1892.
5. Glasgow Echo, 25 May 1893.
6. Justice, 24 March 1900.
7. Glasgow Sentinel, 18 April 1868.
8. Fred Reid, 'Keir Hardie's biographers', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, no. 16, 1968, p. 32.
9. Rorie, op.cit., p. 389; North British Daily Mail, 16 October 1873; 4 September 1885; 23 February 1887; Glasgow Weekly Mail, 15 September 1883; Minutes of the Larkhall Miners' Association, 29 July 1890.
10. Glasgow Sentinel, 26 January 1867; 5 September 1868.

by miners' leaders was transparently unrealistic, and in the 1880s the socialists attacked the self-help doctrine of thrift and frugality.¹ Nevertheless the advocacy of temperance was undertaken by socialists of all persuasions, and Scottish socialists in the early decades of the twentieth century were influenced by this legacy.

There were 20,000 miners employed in the west of Scotland in 1867, and the number of fatal accidents was estimated at 1,000 per year. There can be no doubt that the miner's duration of life was influenced by the large number of fatal accidents in the Scottish coalfields. As late as 1899, for example, the Glasgow Weekly Herald noted that the west of Scotland 'had a higher number of deaths through explosions than any other part of Britain'.² The miner's expectation of life was also influenced, however, by the employment of children in the mines. In 1870 children were allowed to work in the mines for 12 hours a day,³ and in 1871 the editor of the Reformer argued that the health 'of the rising generation' of miners was being 'made subservient to the interests of the coal and iron masters'.⁴ Then in 1899 a majority of the miners in the Lothians voted to raise the age of boys entering the pits from 13 to 14.⁵

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1. North British Daily Mail, 31 March 1890.
 2. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 14 January 1899.
 3. Reformer, 12 March 1870.
 4. Ibid., 18 February 1871.
 5. Glasgow Weekly Herald, 30 September 1899.

Moreover, there were a large number of uncertified deaths in Scotland in the nineteenth century, and 'public health statistics' were obscured by the absence of coroners' inquests. The Scots were criticised in the English medical press for their inadequate or false statistics concerning fatal accidents, and 'the existing registration law' had created 'large opportunities for the commission of secret crimes or culpable neglect'.¹ The lack of coroners' inquests into the cause of violent deaths was a particular grievance of the miners, and in 1877 Weir began a long agitation for coroners' inquests for miners.² Then, when the Trades Union Congress met in Aberdeen in 1884, a resolution calling for 'some kind of inquest into uncertified deaths' in Scotland was carried unanimously.³ The Fife miners again raised the demand for a coroners' inquest during the General Election of 1885;⁴ and legislation covering enquiries into fatal accidents and sudden deaths of persons in any industrial occupation' by 'the Sheriff or the Sheriff-Substitute'⁵ was passed in 1886.⁶

The miners became increasingly involved with the Trades Councils towards the end of the century, and the efforts of the Liberal press to play the Fife miners off against the miners in the west of Scotland were largely thwarted. The Liberals traced the Fife and Clackmannan miners alleged eight hour day back to their 'self-help' efforts in

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1. John Glaister, 'An enquiry into the necessity for legislative Reform in Scotland in regard to Uncertified Deaths', Proceedings of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow, Vol. XVI, 1884-1885, pp. 3-5-6.
 2. Dunfermline Journal, 9 June 1877.
 3. Report of the British Trades Union Congress, 1884.
 4. Dunfermline Journal, 31 October 1885.
 5. Encyclopaedia of the Laws of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1932), Vol. XIII, p. 353.
 6. 58 and 59 Vict. c.36.

1870;¹ but the Scottish Miners' Federation insisted on campaigning for a legal eight hour day.²

In May 1894 the coalfields in Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Stirlingshire and West Lothian reduced the miners' wages by a shilling per day, and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, under pressure from the Scottish Miners' Federation, decided to resist the deductions by calling a general strike of the Scottish miners.³ The strike was characterised by great violence in mining communities throughout Scotland,⁴ and in Hamilton the wife of a miner who was 'blacklegging' had 'a "go" at the manager of a local pit'. The women in the miners' rows in Lanarkshire used force to prevent blacklegs from going to work.⁵ Miners' wives, in contrast to artisans' wives, had always been prepared to use violence against 'black nebs',⁶ and in 1894 miners' wives in Fife had no hesitation in physically assaulting blacklegs.⁷ In Fife, however, picketing was 'an unknown weapon',⁸ and the miners there spoke of 'non-Unionists' rather than black nebs or blacklegs. The miners' general strike lasted for seventeen weeks in Fife and fifteen weeks in the rest of Scotland; but in both cases the miners were forced to return to work on the managers' terms.

By 1900 the contracting system had largely replaced the 'darg'; the miners traditional oral vocabulary was slowly being replaced by a socialist vocabulary; and the miners' commitment to the general strike

1. Dunfermline Journal, 24 February 1900.
2. Ibid., 29 September 1900.
3. Arnot, op.cit., p. 76.
4. Labour Leader, 24 September 1894.
5. Hamilton Advertiser, 7 July 1894.
6. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 24 August 1868.
7. Dunfermline Press, 7 July 1894.
8. Ibid., 30 June 1894.

as a legitimate trade union weapon had become common currency among the miners. There was a growth of the miners' sympathy for foreign miners;¹ and the miners intensified their traditional efforts on behalf of striking urban workers.² Moreover, the Scottish coalowners finally gave up their attempts to make the miners work an eleven day fortnight;³ and miners, artisans and unskilled workers came together in the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Elections Committee.⁴ Social, economic and political changes in the coalfields and mining communities led to an increasing repudiation of laissez-faire economics; and the Scottish mining communities continued to be seedbeds for left-wing political movements.⁵

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1. North British Daily Mail, 16 March 1891; 19 May 1891.
 2. Reformer, 26 February 1870; North British Daily Mail, 19 August 1873; Scotsman, 12 June 1889.
 3. Labour Leader, 29 July 1899.
 4. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 13 January 1900.
 5. J.D. MacDougall, 'The Scottish Coalminer', Nineteenth Century and After, December 1927, p. 762.

Presbyterianism and the Working Classes, 1866-1900

The cultural values of the Scottish possessing classes were diffused throughout working class communities and even working class institutions by the activities and teaching of Presbyterian clergymen. A larger number of Scottish than English artisans were involved in Church membership, and the working classes in Scotland were less alienated from the Churches than was the case in England.¹ Though many Scottish artisans were simultaneously involved in Church membership and activity in the Labour movement, they were to the 'left' of their English counterparts. The class consciousness and cultural attitudes of the Presbyterian artisans who were active in the labour movement cannot be understood without reference to the ideological influence of Presbyterianism.³

A conference of English clergymen and trade union leaders who met in London in 1867 provided the occasion for Scottish newspapers to comment on the contrast between working class church-going in England

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1. For the evidence on the English activists in the working class, see H. Felling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain (London, 1968), p. 21.
 2. Reynold's Newspaper, 8 November 1868.
 3. 'Any analysis (of the Scottish "labour aristocracy") must account for this consciousness of class, as well as for the diffusion of values held by the dominant middle class. This is, I would argue best seen in the perspective of Gramsci's concept of a "corporate" class consciousness. Gramsci was concerned with the fact that class antagonisms may be articulated, yet effectively contained "within the existing fundamental structures"'. R.Q. Gray, 'Styles of life, the "Labour Aristocracy" and Class Relations in Later Nineteenth Century Edinburgh', International Review of Social History, Vol. XVIII, 1973, Part 3, p. 429.

and Scotland. In Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh the consensus of opinion was that many working people attended Presbyterian Churches. As the Glasgow Sentinel put it:

In Scotland the Covenanted spirit of the seventeenth century still permeates all classes of Scotland, and, as a natural result all classes are pretty regular worshippers in some church or other; but in England the hold of the clergy over the great masses of people is every year becoming feeble.¹

The Aberdeen Free Press similarly thought that working class 'alienation' from the Church was 'proportionally greater in England than in Scotland.'² In a more critical and detailed criticism, the Scotsman observed that:

The lessons of the London conference are not altogether valueless north of the Tweed. With us, indeed, there is not nearly so great a desertion of the Church by the working classes as seems to prevail in England. Presbyterianism among us has taken greater pains than probably any other creed to procure, if not the attachment, at least the adherence of the people.³

Of all the Presbyterian churches, the Free Church probably made the sharpest impact on the social consciousness of the Scottish working classes. There were sound historical and sociological reasons for such a development. In 1843, the year of the Disruption, Dr. Thomas Chalmers demanded additional Churches, Churches near the people and seat rents suited to the financial means of the working classes. There was consequently a general expansion of Church building; and, though the building of new Churches after 1851 failed to keep pace with the

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 2 February, 1867.
 2. Aberdeen Free Press, 29 January 1867.
 3. Scotsman, 26 January 1867.

growth of population, clergymen continued to be preoccupied with the problems of intemperance, thriftlessness, pauperism and religious destitution.¹

A particular aspect of the Victorian period was that a sizeable minority of working people were regular church-goers. Moreover, the Presbyterian Churches were successful in securing the adherence of the working classes in urban as well as in rural areas. However, it must be admitted that the evidence bearing on working-class church attendance is mainly qualitative and literary; yet such evidence relates to important problems of working class attachment which can be unwittingly underestimated by historians who restrict themselves to the use of quantitative tools of analysis. Although it is impossible to estimate the number of working people who attended Church or who adhered to Presbyterian values, it is not difficult to show that some, though not always the same, working people were constantly involved with one of the Presbyterian Churches. Working class Church attendance was, moreover, influenced by such factors as downward social mobility, the lack of 'decent' clothing, economic depressions and the collapse of local industries.² But the fact that there was a continuity of working class Church attendance should not obscure the extent to which such involvement was often related to every turn of the trade cycle.

1. Rev. D. MacColl, Among the Masses (Edinburgh, 1867), p. 70.

2. Memorials of Elgin Place Congregational Church, 1803-1903, ed., H.E. Clark (Glasgow, 1904); Rev. D. MacColl, op.cit; Report on the Religious Condition of the People, Church of Scotland, 23 May 1893; Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1893, p. 1063; E. Palmer, The Story of North Woodside United Free Church (Glasgow, 1926) p. 24.

A number of Free Presbyterian Churches were situated in working class districts, and, since their congregations were predominantly working class, membership was affected by changes in the fortunes of local industry or economic depression. The consistently small membership of such congregations, together with the exacting demands and obligations imposed on working people by Church membership, would suggest that most working class members were also artisans. In any case Free Presbyterian Churches were often financially dependent on their working class communicants. Moreover, the prerequisites of church membership - good clothes, seat rents, a degree of security and relative leisure¹ - meant that the unskilled workers were, in practice, virtually excluded from the Presbyterian churches.²

In Aberdeen during the Victorian period there were at least four Free Presbyterian Churches whose prosperity was tied up with the trade cycle and the consequent mobility of the working classes. In St. Clements Free Church 'the closing of important works and changes among the industrial population' resulted in the membership falling from 1083 at its peak in the mid-Victorian period to 761 in 1900.³ In Woodside Free Church the 'congregation suffered heavily through industrial disaster in 1846', and recovered towards

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1. While the artisans worked relatively little overtime during periods of boom, it was not unusual for labourers to work sixteen hours a day. See, for example, the Edinburgh Reformer, 9 December 1871.
 2. Woodlands United Presbyterian Church. Jubilee Memorial (Glasgow, 1890), p. 21. Printed for private circulation.
 3. William Ewing (ed.), Annals of the Free Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 2 vols. 1914), p. 175.

the end of the century as a result of new economic growth in that area.¹ The congregation of the Skene Free Church 'suffered through the closing of the local wool factory, and the membership fell from 313 in 1848 to 156 in 1900.'² By contrast the membership of the Torry Free Church rose from 116 in 1874 to 437 in 1900, and the growth of this congregation was attributed to the 'opening of public works'.³

In Glasgow there were eleven Free Presbyterian Churches which were overwhelmingly composed of working class members, and the prosperity of these congregations was directly related to the vicissitudes of the trade cycle. The congregations of Barrowfield, Buchanan Memorial, Candlish, Cowcaddens, Fairbairn, Springburn and Anderson Free Churches were predominantly, if not wholly, working class; and, though these Churches were mainly formed in the 1870s and 1880s, there had been a considerable growth of membership in the closing decade of the century. This evidence of the fluctuating membership of these congregations strengthens rather than weakens the thesis that their members were artisans. In the Springburn Free Church, for example, 'the congregation was affected by the fluctuations of trade, especially the locomotive trade' and 'railway works'; and these were works where a high percentage of the workers were skilled. In the case of the North Woodside Free Church the congregation 'grew with the growth of population' which was chiefly made up of 'the respectable working class'.⁴

1. Ibid., pp. 174-5.

2. Ibid., p. 178.

3. Ibid., p. 175.

4. Ibid., p. 96.

Indeed, the financial health of this Church was threatened by the redundancy of the artisan communicants created by the slump in the building industry in 1876.¹ And this was when artisans within the Glasgow Trades Council were complaining about losing the vote for a period of about a year: a consequence of having to move to houses with smaller rents.

These Presbyterian Churches were situated in areas populated by artisans, and this was alluded to by a chronicler of the Free Church who bemoaned 'the deterioration' and downgrading of these areas by 'a large influx of Roman catholics and Jews' in the 1880s. In contrast to the indigenous artisans the Roman catholics and Jews were 'very poor'. And the Scottish possessing classes often equated the 'very poor' workers with the 'classe dangereuse'.³

1. 'An interesting sidelight is thrown upon its effects (the City of Glasgow Bank failure) on our own congregation, by the reply of the Deacons' Court to a request for a congregational contribution to a church extension Fund being promoted by the Free Church. First, that this congregation is made up almost exclusively of working people, whose income has been enormously diminished by the commercial depression. Second - that this congregation is at present passing through a peculiar crisis in its history, having been at first composed of working men connected with the building trades. When these trades failed in Glasgow, in consequence of overbuilding and speculation, the men had to leave the town in large numbers, so much so, that upwards of seventy of our number have had to leave town, or remove to other parts of the city, thus materially affecting our prosperity meantime. Edward Palmer, op.cit., p. 24.
2. Ewing, op.cit., pp. 94-96.
3. North British Review, Vol. XCI, 1867, p. 21.

A similar pattern was observable in other Scottish urban areas. In Dundee two Free Church congregations were weakened by the alternation of boom and slump, and in one case a Church 'suffered through the extinction of handloom weaving and the absorption of crofts in larger farms'.¹ The prosperity of Duntocher Free Church in Dumbarton was undermined by 'the stoppage of the mills' in the 1860s, and it only subsequently recovered through the opening of the Clydebank shipyard.² The intensity of denominational commitment therefore varied among individuals and groups: it really depended upon particular life experiences, life styles, family circumstances and the fortunes of local industries. Moreover, religious feelings sometimes existed within individuals and groups who lacked the material prerequisites for involvement in Church membership.

The mind of the Scottish worker - the perception through which he confronted industrial capitalism - was shaped by such factors as his occupation and geographical location. Similarly, a worker's particular denominational allegiance was often determined by fortuitous circumstances. Thus a minority of unskilled workers, who were thrust into new manufactories and collieries, were more easily recruited by the Free Church through their revivalist meetings than the farm labourers and miners who had already adapted themselves to the harshness of industrial society. Yet a few miners were recruited to the Free Church during the second half of the nineteenth century,

1. Ewing, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

and there were indeed miners and farm labourers who were disciplined by the various Presbyterian Churches in the 1860s and 1870s for being guilty of 'the sin of fornication'.¹ A major materialist factor which enabled the Presbyterian Church to recruit some workers into membership was the comparatively later development of Scottish industrialisation.² And late industrialisation had an important bearing on the conflicting social and cultural attitudes of the working classes as a whole and the sharp, class conscious militancy of the labour movement.

The Established, Free or United Presbyterian Churches had no difficulty in securing the attachment of large numbers of working people, though increasing numbers of them were alienated from Church involvement as a consequence of rapid industrialisation. The statistics produced by the various Churches relating to working-class Church attendance were often concocted for partisan purposes, so that they created an inaccurate impression of working class alienation from religion and the Churches. Nevertheless, the Presbyterian clergy had relatively more contact with the 'masses' than the Anglicans, and in contrast to the latter the Presbyterians did not approach working people as 'aliens with alien ideas'.³

1. Session Minutes of the Kirkintilloch Free Church, 16 December 1869; ibid., 23 April 1878, CH3/362/1; Session Minutes of New Monkland Kirk, 2 June 1867; Ibid., 7 July 1872; CH2/685/3. Scottish Records Office.

2. H. Hamilton, The Industrial Revolution in Scotland (London, 1966), p.1.

3. P. d'A Jones, The Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914 (Princeton, 1968), p.75.

In politics the Free Church clergymen were predominantly Liberals; they were usually identified with the advanced elements of the Liberal Party; and they were therefore able to form something of an alliance with the artisans in the labour movement by their advocacy of temperance and self-help. The other Presbyterian Churches shared the same values as the artisans and miners' leaders in the labour movement; yet Free Church clergy were not only more evangelical than the others but they were also much more willing to interfere with the drink trade by imposing restrictions through Parliamentary legislation.

There were two rival temperance organisations in Scotland - the Scottish Temperance League and the Permissive Bill Association. The former organisation wanted to employ moral suasion to gain sobriety and the latter wanted to impose sobriety by Parliamentary decree. Only a minority of advanced Liberals seemed to have supported the Permissive Bill Association in the 1860s, though the Free Church consistently supported Parliamentary measures aimed at reducing drunkenness and the drink trade.¹ By contrast the Established Church opposed the agitation for a Permissive Bill in the 1860s,² and they only subsequently opted for Parliamentary legislation to tackle the problem after the creation of a mass electorate compelled the two major political Parties to vie with each other for votes.

The Free Church agitated for the reform of the land laws within the context of laissez-faire economics; and in towns and cities where

1. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church, 1870, p.269.

2. Report of the Proceedings of the Church of Scotland, 1869, p.385.

the vast majority of working people were nominally Presbyterian, the labour movement was much slower to support the demand for land nationalisation than its counterpart in England. The members of that Church regarded 'the Scottish lairds as aliens from, and hostile to, the national faith'.¹ Furthermore, 'the Scottish Peers' were opposed to the agitation for an Education Bill and 'constantly dead-locking any measure which would be likely to be of value' to Scotland as a whole;² and 'the land interest was too strong in Parliament to allow them' to acquire a Bill granting education to the working classes. In 1868 the Dundee Working Men's Association and other labour organisations were even more insistent on the need for an Education Bill and disestablishment of the National Church than the Scottish Liberal Party, as the latter was a loose coalition lacking any strong, centralised leadership. Besides, as the content of advanced Liberalism changed in the late nineteenth century, the Free Church was even more persistent in its display of criticism of the landed aristocracy.³ This most political Church unanimously supported the agitation for the reform of the land laws in the 1880s, and a minority of Free Church members openly sympathised with the violence of those crofters in the Highlands who were resisting the landowners' evictions.⁴

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1. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1869, p.229.
 2. Dundee Advertiser, 10 November 1868.
 3. See the Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church for 1882, 1883, 1884 and 1885.
 4. *Ibid.*, 1885, pp., 151-55.

It was not therefore surprising that the Presbyterians in the Free Church and the Presbyterian artisans in the labour movement had little difficulty in co-operating on a whole range of political issues in the mid-Victorian period, though the former criticised some of the artisans in the 1870s for their 'Republican tendencies'.¹ They also occasionally criticised the labour movement for attempting to organise railway workers on the Sabbath. Such differences were, however, modified by the Free Church's support for Permissive Bills and agitations to eliminate Sunday work in the Post Office.² The labour movement was separated from the Free Church and the working classes by its ambiguous interpretation of self-help which often meant mutual aid and political independence from the two major parties. A crucial feature of the organised artisans endorsement of many Presbyterian agitations was the ambiguity of their notions of self-help.

The problems of illegitimacy³ and drunkenness⁴ which were much worse in Scotland than in England illuminated the vast social gulf between the Free Church clergy and the labour movement on the one hand and the majority of the working classes on the other. Nevertheless, some members of the intermediate group between the 'labour aristocracy' of artisans and 'the very poor' were sometimes disciplined by the Churches for any form of deviant behaviour. In contrast to the English experience⁵

1. Ibid., 1871, p.248.

2. The Free Church in Dalkeith, for example, petitioned Parliament in favour of Mr. Chambers Bill to abolish Sunday labour in the Post Office. CH/3/67/3. Scottish Records Office.

3. Reports of the Registrar-General of Scotland, 1866-1900.

4. For details of the high incidence of alcoholic consumption in Scotland, see Dr. E. Duncan, 'Some Observations on the Consumption of Alcohol and on the Comparative Death-Rate from Alcoholic Excess in England, Ireland and Scotland', Proceedings of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow, Vol. XXXIX, 1907-1908.

5. Pelling, op.cit., p.21.

revivalism was fairly common in mid-Victorian Scotland, and increases in the membership of the Free Church was often achieved through revivalism.¹ Even in the mining communities, where most miners lived in tied houses and were not involved in Church membership before the 1880s, the miners were often 'in the habit of having meetings for prayer underground during the meal hour'.²

For all their efforts to inculcate what Peter N. Sterns characterises as 'the essentially middle class values' of temperance and good behaviour, the Presbyterians were not able to reduce either drunkenness or illegitimacy. It was generally accepted that illegitimacy and drunkenness were much greater among agricultural labourers than other groups of unskilled workers;³ and the Churches' inability to persuade the agricultural workers to subject themselves to the discipline of the Kirk sessions was largely a consequence of their 'migratory habits'.

The cultural alienation of labourers and unskilled workers not only made it difficult to organise them into trade unions; it also resulted in their passive acquiescence in the social values of the possessing classes. By contrast the 'labour aristocracy' of artisans had a different conception of self-help from the rest of the labouring poor. For the artisans self-help involved mutual, collective aid and political independence from the two major political parties. From the 1880s onwards the artisans and the unskilled workers in the labour movement increasingly advocated collectivist legislation or practice as a solution for working social problems; and the Trades Councils' new agitation for the municipalisation of the drink trade instead of Permissive Bills or Local Veto, and the first challenge to Sabbatarianism, alienated many organised artisans from the Free Church.

1. Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland, 1867, p.4.
2. Ibid., 1870, p.21.
3. Ibid., 1870, p.272 and 1897, p. 27.

The culturally primitive way-of-life of the agricultural workers, labourers and most miners - and their bouts of drunkenness and sexual licence - generated surplus social energy. Such surplus energy was drained off by diverse moral lightning conductors, and thereby helped to underpin the status quo. The Presbyterian clergy, irrespective of their denominational affiliations, were obsessed with the mass outbursts of sexual permissiveness at the feeing markets, and they attributed the institutionalisation of sexual outbursts at the feeing markets as the chief causes of the social problems of drunkenness and illegitimacy.¹ It did not, of course, occur to them that such sexual permissiveness probably prevented the 'social revolution' they dreaded and anticipated.²

The link between Presbyterianism and laissez-faire Liberalism and the absence of a minority Tory culture in nineteenth-century Scotland³ robbed the working classes of the softening influences which had blunted the impact of industrialisation in England.⁴ This was also true of Scottish

1. Ibid., 1870, p.272 and 1897, p. 27.

2. 'The sort of societies in which the poor are strictly kept in their place are quite familiar with regular institutionalised mass outbursts of free sex, such as carnivals'. E.J. Hobsbawm, Revolutionaries (London, 1973), p. 217.

3. Reformer, 20 February 1868. J.T. Ward, 'The Factory Movement in Scotland', in Scottish Historical Review, Vol. XLI, 1964, pp. 100-123.

4. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, (London, 1968), p. 380. 'Against the "pig philosophy" of laissez-faire and utilitarianism the conservative philosophers developed a body of ideas which rejected the "cash nexus" and which laid emphasis upon the connection between status, especially that founded upon landed property, and obligation in society'. 'The Christian Socialists of 1848', in J. Saville (ed.) Democracy and the Labour Movement (London, 1954), p. 137.

society in the second half of the nineteenth century by which time the contours of industrialisation had been mapped out.¹ In opposition to English Tory paternalism - and the Christian socialism which had grown out of it - Scottish Liberal politicians and the Presbyterian clergymen advocated and assisted working people towards self-help, respectability, thrift, temperance and political quietism.² What made Presbyterianism so powerful and effective as a socialising agency was the practical work the clergy undertook in the towns and cities by winning general acceptance of self-help ideas among the intermediate group of working people who were buttressed between the respectable working classes (of which the 'labour aristocracy' was a part) and the undeserving poor.³

The Free and United Presbyterian Churches not only preached the virtues of temperance, thrift and self-help to the 'intelligent artisans' and the 'deserving poor', but they also set up savings-banks to encourage thrift among the stratum of working people who were just under the 'labour aristocracy'. In Glasgow in 1862, for example, one United Presbyterian Church persuaded many working-class families in an area where 'all were

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1. This was why H.H. Champion - described by Dr. Henry Pelling as 'a Tory Socialist' in Origins of the Labour Party (Oxford, 1966), p.24 - was so popular with the socialistic trade union leaders in Scotland in the 1890s.
 2. In contrast to England there were no Christian socialists in Scotland in the 1860s and 1870s. Descriptions of the activities and influence of the Christian socialists in England are given in: Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London, 1894), pp. 263-264. Peter d'A Jones, The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1914 (Princeton, 1968), pp. 170-200.
 3. From at least the 1830s down to the end of the century Scottish newspapers and literary journals distinguished between the 'respectable working classes' and 'the undeserving poor'.

poor and some very poor indeed' to join their savings-bank. The encouragement and development of thrift among working people led to the 'formation and habit of temperance and the awakening of honest independence and self-respect'.¹ In Edinburgh in 1866 David Lewis, the editor of an advanced Liberal working class newspaper delivered a Lecture in a United Presbyterian Church entitled 'Edinburgh: its social condition and the remedies for it' in which he advocated the advantages of saving and temperance and 'the benefits of a Liberal education to the lower classes of the community'.²

Therefore the dissenting Presbyterian Churches systematically propagated their ideas of self-help. Nevertheless there were many occasions when the working class movement was more partisan and intransigent than the churches in reinforcing 'Presbyterian' values in Scottish society at large. The Scottish Trades Councils - the backbone of the working class movement during the last four decades of the nineteenth century - were particularly active in promoting temperance and the observation of the Sabbath as a day of rest.³ In Edinburgh in 1863 the Edinburgh Working Men's Sabbath Rest Day Association,⁴ individual trade unions and the Trades Council were instrumental in keeping the Botanic Gardens closed on Sundays.⁵

1. Woodlands United Presbyterian Church, op.cit., p. 21.

2. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 14 December 1866.

3. See below

4. Report of the Edinburgh Working Men's Rest Day Association, 1863, p.4.

5. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 24 February 1863.

In 1865 the Presbyterians in working class organisations in Edinburgh consolidated their victory on this issue,¹ and by 1868 they had defeated the elements who had been campaigning for the Sunday opening of the Botanic Gardens.² The Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association campaigned against the systematic overtime in bakehouses on Sundays, and in 1878 they reported that the amount of overtime worked on Sundays had been 'considerably reduced'.³

In the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, the Edinburgh Working Men's Rest Day Association and the Scottish Trades Councils opposed the Sunday opening of national museums and picture galleries. In 1878 the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association opposed the running of tramcars on Sundays;⁴ and in 1881 they had persuaded the four Presbyteries to 'petition Parliament against the opening of museums and galleries on Sundays.'⁵ In 1883 the Glasgow Trades Council petitioned Parliament against the opening of museums and

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1. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1865, p. 16..
 2. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1868, p. 18.
 3. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1879, p. 7.
 4. Thomas Johnston, op.cit., p. 287. Thomas Johnston's strictures on the 'hypocrisy' of the Presbyterian church at this time reflected the later anti-clericalism of the Scottish labour movement.
 5. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1881, p. 15.

galleries on Sundays;¹ and Sir William Collins drew attention to the unity which existed between 'our Scottish artisans' in their Trades Councils' and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association' in seeking to preserve this day of rest'.²

At the annual meeting of the British Trades Union Congress in 1884 the delegates from the Scottish Trades Councils opposed a resolution (emanating from the London Trades Council) which supported the Sunday opening of national museums and picture galleries,³ and the defeat of 'the London secularists'⁴ was attributed to 'the strong element of Scottish Sabbatarians'.⁵ In 1884 the Scottish delegation was larger than usual since the annual meeting of the British T.U.C. was held in Aberdeen and the Scottish trade unions sent bigger delegations. At the annual meeting of the British T.U.C. in 1886 the opposition to the Sunday opening of museums and galleries was successfully led by A.J. Hunter, the secretary of the Glasgow Trades Council.⁶ However, in

1. Report of the Glasgow Trades Council, 1883, p.8.

2. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1881, p.35.

3. Report of the British T.U.C., 1884, p. 47.

4. Minutes of the Glasgow Trades Council, 18 August 1886.

5. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1884, pp.26-27.

6. A.J. Hunter was a member of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, and a vice-president of the Scottish Temperance League. 'His father was an enthusiastic supporter of Relief doctrines, and so strong was his devotion to that Kirk that for years he walked every Sunday all the way to Yetholm and back, a total distance of thirty miles, in order to attend the church which advocated those principles'. Glasgow Weekly Herald 31 January 1903.

1887 the resolution tabled by the London Trades Council was carried by a large majority;¹ and the victory of the London secularists was due to the absence of some of the Scottish delegates who had gone home before the conference ended.²

Working class adherence to Presbyterian values was sincere and often passionate, and the notion that the church might be used as a 'self-conscious front' to prosecute the class struggle would have been inconceivable to the men who dominated the Scottish Trades Councils down to the 1880s. In the West of Scotland in 1864, for example, an agricultural labourer was 'sent to prison for refusing to obey his master by going to church on the Sabbath day'.³ The ideological unity between the dissenting Presbyterian churches and the Trades Councils sometimes resulted in considerable middle class pressure being brought to bear on rapacious employers.⁴ Moreover, the economic ideas of the Free Church and the organised artisans complemented each other, and the religiosity and economic outlook of both institutions usually interacted. In 1865, A.J. Hunter attacked those employers who

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1. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1887, p. 46.
 2. Report of the Edinburgh Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1887, p. 25.
 3. Thomas Johnston, op.cit., p. 282.
 4. The Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association was a predominantly middle class - and therefore influential - organisation. Though it contained such leading members of the Glasgow Trades Council as A.J. Hunter, John Battersby and Alexander Wilkie, the office-bearers were sensitive to criticisms about the middle class composition of the organisation. In 1884 Mr. Robert MacIntosh, the secretary of the Association, countered the criticisms thus: 'In this work they had the sympathy of the working men of Scotland, the great bulk of whom were with them on this point; therefore the society was representative in its character, as it spoke the mind of the vast majority not only of the labouring class but all the industrial classes of Scotland'.

had introduced Sunday work, and he lamented the fact that 'hundreds of journeymen bakers' were therefore deprived of the opportunity of going to Church.¹ In 1886 the Convener of the Sabbath Observation Committee addressed the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland thus: 'But working men ought not to be deceived by imagining that if they are compelled to work on the Sabbath, that they will receive a seventh more of wages; for, although their bodies could withstand the effects of perpetual toil, and their minds retain their wonted vigour and elasticity, yet the very laws which regulate commerce would deprive them in a great measure of this increase of wages. The price of any article is regulated by the demand which exists for that particular article. If the supply is greater than the demand, then the article will fall in value. If the demand is greater than the supply, then the article increases in value. This is an everyday illustration, which working men know well; and Dr. Chalmers has said on this subject that to work seven days is equal to adding a seventh individual to compete in the labour market'.² The Free Church clergymen therefore had their own a-religious motivations for struggling to protect the Sabbath as a day of rest. It was against this background that the Aberdeen Trades Council and Presbyteries memorialised the town council in 1884 to abolish Sunday labour at the post office.³

Since the dissenting Presbyterian Churches and the Trades Councils shared the same social and religious values and the same body of economic

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1. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1885, 36-37.
 2. Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1885, p. 58.
 3. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 5 June 1884.

doctrine, the Churches had no difficulty in retaining the adherence of the organised artisans and the passivity of the undeserving poor. A number of leading figures in the Scottish Trades Councils were active within the dissenting churches and their genuinely religious involvement in Church congregations was reflected within labour organisations when they championed such political issues as the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland from the general election of 1868 onwards,¹ and in 1885 the Aberdeen Trades Council held a special meeting to debate - and in the event unanimously support - 'Dick Preddie's Bill for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland'.²

As an awareness of distinct class identity had not been eradicated from the consciousness of the members of the 'labour aristocracy' the existing tensions in the generally satisfactory relationship between the dissenting Presbyterian Churches and the Trades Councils occasionally erupted. The semi-feudal system of labour relations operated by the Scottish railway companies and the incredibly long hours worked by railway employees, together with the shift system, compelled the Trades Councils to attempt to organise the workers in the Scottish Railway Servants' Society by calling meetings on Sundays. This caused the 'General Assemblies of the Established and Free Kirks' to condemn

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1. In the general election of 1868 Scottish labour organisations and leading Liberals were at one in advocating disestablishment. This tied the dissenting churches still closer to the 'labour aristocracy', and therefore still further separated those working class elements who were committed to advanced Liberalism from the Church of Scotland.
 2. Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 29 June 1885.

the railway workers for organising meetings on the Sabbath.¹

In 1870 the Glasgow Trades Council defended themselves in their annual report very spiritedly.² But if the Trades Councils were sometimes prepared to allow class-consciousness to vitiate their adherence to some Presbyterian dogmas, there were also times when they put their religious values before the general labour interest. In 1870, for example, the Edinburgh Trades Council agreed to make an electoral pact with the Edinburgh Temperance Electoral Association without hammering out a general programme of social reform for the administration of the city.³ And during the general election of 1874 when

1. It was very unusual for labour organisations to organise Sunday meetings at this time, and the Glasgow Trades Council felt justified in violating the Sabbath by the exceptional discipline to which railway workers were subjected by the railway companies. A large section of Scottish railway workers nevertheless belonged to the 'aristocracy of labour'. 'Certain classes of them occupy a unique position. Their skill is both specialized and localized ... Work is hard but wages are high. The men in the higher grades - first, second, third class engine-drivers and guards - live in good houses and have bank accounts. James Mavor, The Scottish Railway Strike, 1891 (Edinburgh, 1891), pp. 49-50.
2. Report of the Glasgow Trades Council, 1870. 'The Council are of the opinion that a wide field of usefulness is open to the churches in this direction, in denouncing the great amount of unnecessary work now done by public companies in our midst, the shareholders of which are, we believe, in very many cases, strong stoops of the church. We hear a good deal about the carelessness of working men about matters of this kind, of church attendance and such like, may we be allowed to hint that working men have also their own ideas about the way in which the churches, as watchmen, perform their duties, and would, we feel certain, be more ready to attend to the ordinances of religion if they saw more faithfulness in matters of that kind'. Ibid., 1882.
3. The following amendment received little support: 'That as the Temperance party are pledged to support Temperance men as Town Councillors we cannot co-operate with such parties in as much as we consider that the right men for Councillors are those who will represent the rights of labour, whether temperance men or not'. Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 22 February 1870.

the Glasgow Trades Council was considering putting up an independent labour candidate a member of the Council helped to thwart this move by declaring that his 'religious principles' would not allow him to support a Parliamentary candidate who was a secularist.¹

During the period from 1860 to the end of the century the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen Trades Councils were the only Scottish ones which survived the ups-and-downs of the trades cycle. In Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Greenock, Paisley and Kilmarnock in the same period Trade Councils rose and fell with the alternation of booms and slumps in industries in those communities. Then in the 1880s and 1890s new Trades Councils sprang up in many industrial communities, and these were either promoted or supported by local Liberal newspapers whose editors preferred trade union agitation to state interference in the economy.² In the 1880s and 1890s the Glasgow and Aberdeen Trades Councils came increasingly under the influence of the socialists and the 'new unionists'. The 'new unionists' were usually more class-conscious than the skilled artisans, and they were more susceptible to socialist and secularist propaganda.³

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1. Glasgow Sentinel, 6 December 1873.
 2. The Falkirk Trades Council was assisted in its formation in 1890 by the Falkirk Herald, a Liberal newspaper, through sympathetic notices and comments. Then in 1892 the Trades Council was bitterly attacked by the Falkirk Herald for advocating 'collectivism'.
 3. 'There was a large and increasing amount of Sabbath desecration going on in their midst, and large and increasing multitudes were not applying the Sabbath to religious uses at all; and that even among the church-going classes a change was taking place in the manner of Sabbath observance, which would seem to indicate a ruining sense of religious obligation in connection with the day. Influences are to be found all around, in society and in the press, which tended to break down the religious character of that day, and these influences were telling on the minds of the people in a very marked degree. Report of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Working Men's Sabbath Protection Association, 1887, pp. 23-34.

But the greater willingness of the 'new unionists' to advocate state interference in the economy widened the gulf between the labouring poor and the dissenting Presbyterian Churches. At the same time, the leaders of the Trades Councils became increasingly critical of the Presbyterian Churches.¹

The disestablishment crisis coincided with a new wave of Scottish labour militancy and the emergence of a heightened form of class-consciousness. One important consequence was that the Churches as a whole displayed a new and active sympathy for the labouring poor. In 1889 the Glasgow Presbytery of the Established Church set up a commission on 'the Housing of the Poor in relation to their Social Condition',² and in 1891 Principal Rainy, a leading Free Churchman, defended railway strikers at a mass meeting in Edinburgh and moved a resolution 'approving of a ten hour day'.³

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1. 'At the meeting held in the evening of the day of the conference, a deputation from the Arbroath and District Trades Council expressed their views on the bearing of the social condition on the religious life of the people. It was urged that many of the working classes were helpless in the matter of improving their condition, and the church should assist them. A reason given for not attending church was that ministers showed no interest in the social welfare of the poor. When asked in what direction the church could in a corporate capacity help, the answer given was, by relieving poverty'. Report of the Commission on the Religious Condition of the People in Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1892, pp. 976-77.
 2. Glasgow Presbytery minutes, 9 January 1889. A.J. Hunter, the secretary of the Glasgow Trades Council, was appointed as one of the commissioners.
 3. P.C. Simpson, *op.cit.*, pp. 104-8.

By 1890 the Established Church had moved to the 'left', and this development was reflected in the recommendations of the report of the 'Commission on the Housing of the Poor in relation to their Social Condition'. A particularly 'socialist' recommendation of the commission was the proposal to form labour colonies to cope with the problem of the unemployed.¹ A major factor in the new and active sympathy for the labouring poor on the part of the Established Church was the disestablishment crisis.² This sympathy for the labouring poor was at least partially motivated by the persistent taunts by Free Church clergymen and Liberal politicians that the Established Church was Tory through and through. But the social gulf between the Established Church and the labour movement was so strong that the two institutions were incapable of working together. The Established Church was widely believed to be

1. When the Glasgow Independent labour party published their municipal programme in 1893, the programme contained the demand for 'municipal labour colonies to serve as outlets for the unemployed'. Glasgow Echo, 5 July 1893. The Glasgow Echo was a Lib-Lab weekly newspaper, 1893-5, launched by the labour movement in response to a lock-out of typographical workers.
2. See the Reports of the Church of Scotland on the Religious Condition of the People in the 1890s. The Established Church broadly shared the same social and religious values as the Free and United Presbyterian churches, and they also provided their own savings-banks for working people. See the Reports of the Barony Congregation, Glasgow of the Church of Scotland, 1852-1900. The Established clergy's failure to attract the support of the labour aristocracy and the labouring poor was a consequence of their widely assumed toryism and lack of evangelical zeal.

soft towards Toryism and the liquor trade,¹ and the Scottish labour movement was universally sympathetic towards the temperance movement.² Moreover, when the Established Churchmen attacked the dissenting Presbyterians and identified them with Scottish Liberalism³ they were cutting themselves off from the Lib-Labs in the labour movement. The Toryism of the Established clergymen, whether real or imagined, prevented them from making any impact on the consciousness of labour activists.⁴

The 'superior' artisans who dominated the Scottish Trades Councils down to the 1880s were overwhelmingly Lib-Lab in their political sympathies. The dissenting Presbyterians had attracted working class support in the first place by the systematic inculcation of their social and religious values into the consciousness of working people, and Thomas Chalmers had been quick to size up the importance of

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1. 'If we take the question of temperance we find the convenor of the Church committee confessing with something akin to despair that the movement meets with very little sympathy in the church. Compare this with the statistics of the dissenting Churches, and we are forced to the conclusion that the national Church has identified itself with the maintenance of the liquor trade. But what can be expected to result from Assembly speeches on the social question when leaders of the church cast their votes continually for Toryism pure and simple?' Glasgow Echo, 26 May 1893.
 2. Scottish socialists of all tendencies campaigned against the liquor trade. In Glasgow the Social Democratic Federation organised a lecture in 1885 on 'the Duty of socialists in relation to the Liquor Traffic'. Justice, 10 January 1885.
 3. See Scottish Standard, organ of the Established Church, 19 March 1892.
 4. For the number of Established and dissenting Presbyterian clergymen who voted Tory and Liberal in the general election of 1868 (the last general election before the secret ballot) see James Kellas, Modern Scotland since 1870 (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 264. The voting figures in that election dramatically underlined the Tory sympathies of the Established and the Liberal sympathies of the dissenting clergymen.

influencing a minority of pacemakers in local communities.¹ Perhaps even more importantly Thomas Chalmers and the Free Church provided an economic rationale for the Scottish labour aristocracy by justifying the abolition of the Corn Laws, emigration, free trade and laissez-faire economics on moral grounds.² So long as 'affluent' working people in labour organisations accepted and propagated Presbyterian values there was no real danger of 'the classe dangereuse' seriously threatening the established social order. The danger came when the Lib-Labs in the Trades Councils were challenged from the inside by socialists and 'new unionists'. By the 1880s the socialist challenge on a whole range of issues - Sabbath observance, emigration, thrift and laissez-faire economics - weakened the political alliance between the dissenting Presbyterians, the Scottish Liberal Party and the labour

1. Dr. Chalmers argued that 'the secondary influence of Christianity goes a great way further than its primary or direct influence. For every individual whom it converts, it may, by its reflex operation, civilise a hundred. We have the palpable exemplification of this in Sabbath-schools, where a few weeks from their commencement, we may perceive a decency, and a docility, and an improved habit of cleanliness and order, long before there is ground for the assurance, that even so much as one of the pupils has yet been Christianized. And what is true of children in a school, is alike true of grown-up people in a parish - where the regularities of Sabbath observance, and the humanizing influence of ministerial attentions, and the general recognition of what is right, and reputable, and seemly, have all been in force, perhaps a century ago, and been handed down with increasing effect, from generation to generation. Thomas Chalmers, Political Economy in Connection with the Moral Prospects (Glasgow, 1848), pp. 426-7 Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh and Malthusian, Thomas Chalmers was the founder of the Free Presbyterian Church in 1843.
2. Ibid., p. 253, p. 383-6 pp. 434-8 and p. 500. 'If wages be low, it is because labour, or the number of labourers, is in excess'. Ibid., p. 512.

movement. By the 1890s the Lib-Lab alliance had been shattered; and the labour movement, as well as challenging laissez-faire economics, attacked Presbyterian values.

Scottish Liberalism and dissenting Presbyterianism represented a common cultural and intellectual phenomenon, and they were linked together by an uncompromising bourgeois ideology.¹ By providing the 'labour aristocracy' of artisans with a body of economic doctrine which was compatible with trade union organisation, the Free Church helped to separate the artisans from the mass of the labouring poor. The Scottish Republican clubs were, for example, composed of 'the very elite of the skilled artisans', and a prominent member of the Edinburgh Republican club and advanced Liberal Association was simultaneously a leader-writer on the weekly Edinburgh Daily Review, a Free Church organ.² In every town there was a 'floating mass of shivering shirtless and shoeless humanity', and even in times of mass unemployment the possessing classes made a distinction between the unemployed labourers and the respectable unemployed artisans.³ In 1867 an influential daily newspaper suggested that the crowds of 'the poor' at the Edinburgh soup kitchens could be controlled by respectable unemployed artisans 'who would be glad to act as queue police for a moderate remuneration'.⁴ That such a proposal was made at all

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1. 'In Scotland, the most striking symptom of a general radicalism was not any political demand, but chaste electoral behaviour. Bribery was almost unknown there, and Scottish tenants, unlike English, had been known to vote "almost in a body" against their landlords, according to the Hartington committee'. John Vincent, *op.cit.*, p.48.
 2. W.H. Marwick, 'Two Unorthodox Alumni of Aberdeen', Aberdeen University Review, No. 91, 1944, p. 234.
 3. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 January 1867.
 4. Edinburgh Evening Courant, 22 January 1867.

in 1867 was indicative of very severe unemployment and poverty, as the skilled artisans were normally expected to provide for the contingency of unemployment by thrift and saving. By 1891 the advanced Liberals used the fact of working class 'thrift and forethought' as an argument against 'state insurance for old age'.¹

In 1892 the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Trades Councils Labour Party contested the general election on a socialist programme which included the demand for the eight hour day by Parliamentary enactment. This development forced the Lib-Labs further to the 'left' and strengthened the 'irreligious elements' in the labour movement. As the Presbyterian values of the laissez-faire economics had hung together a fundamental challenge to one inevitably struck at the foundations of the other.² When the Roman Catholic clergy called on Irish immigrants and their descendants to join trade unions in the West of Scotland, and simultaneously attacked the observation of the Sabbath they were unwittingly helping to destroy working class adherence to the traditional values of advanced Liberalism and Sabbatarianism.³

The growth of the Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh Trade Councils, and the growth of a relatively large number of new Trade Councils were a pro-

1. Glasgow Weekly Mail, 5 December 1891.

2. 'A commonplace politician is mainly ignorant of the connection which obtains between the religion of a people and the various civil and economical blessings which follow in its train. This single lesson, if but prized and proceeded on as it ought, were to him the greatest enlargement of political wisdom; and numerous are the practical corollaries which flow from it. Thomas Chalmers, op.cit., pp. 434-5.

3. Glasgow Observer, 28 March 1891.

duct of organisation among the unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

A large number of the 'new unionists' were Roman Catholics who had been encouraged by the Catholic clergy to join and organise themselves into trade unions from the mid-1830s onwards, and who were assisted by the advent of the weekly Glasgow Observer and Catholic Herald in 1885. The representatives of the hitherto unorganized workers in the Trades Councils lacked the reverence of the artisans for 'the Covenanted spirit' and Calvinist ethos of Scottish labour organisations, and when a few workers attended a meeting of the Scottish Trades Council Labour Party in 1891 'under the influence of drink' the Presbyterian traditions of Scottish labour were being flaunted for the first time.

The better-off miners, who had hitherto been predominantly involved in revivalism in so far as they had dealings with the Church, were increasingly involved in the new congregations set up by the Free Church in the 1830s and 1840s. This development was made possible by the growth of the 'butty system' and the acquisition of privately owned houses by miners who had lived in the coalowners' tied houses in the mid-Victorian period.¹ At the same time as the miners became better organised in the late Victorian period, they met in halls and committee rooms instead of meeting in public parks and at pit-heads. This, in turn, was the reason why drunken delegates appeared for the first time in many decades at

1. See the chapter on 'the Miners' County Unions, 1866-1900'.

meetings of Scottish working class organisations.¹ Yet the miners' leaders (as distinct from the rank-and-file) were both religious² men and temperance advocates.³ So widespread was the Presbyterian influence that the leaders of the Socialist League in Glasgow were often hampered by the 'unfavourable' views of the clergy,⁴ and in 1885 James Mavor, the secretary of the Glasgow branch of the League, wrote to criticise his London associates for making 'injudicious' criticisms of religion.⁵

When the editor of the Glasgow Weekly Herald in a critical review of Continental socialism argued that 'our Presbyterianism' had 'no part in dynamite or infernal machines' he was unaware of the influence of the foreign Jewish tailors and cigar workers and Roman catholic miners and dockers in the Glasgow Trades Council who were supporting the campaign against a foundation-stone of Presbyterianism, Sabbatarianism.⁶ The transformation which had taken place in the labour movement was

1. In July 1890 the Larkhall Miners' Association, who were troubled by the problems created drunken delegates, passed a resolution thus: 'That every member of the committee, who in the opinion of a majority of the committee, is under the influence of drink and incapable of conducting himself in a proper manner should be requested by the chairman to withdraw.' Minutes of the Larkhall Miners' Association, 29 July 1890.
2. J.D. MacDougall, 'The Scottish Coalminers', Nineteenth Century and After, December 1927, p.781.
3. R. Smillie, My Life for Labour (London, 1924), pp., 72-3.
4. Manuscript Report of the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League, 1856-1886, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
5. Socialist League Archives.
6. The Jewish workers were revolutionaries who had rejected their own religious leaders. See Arbeiter Freund, 25 July 1896. I owe this reference to my friend Dr. Joseph Buckman.

shown in 1894 when the Aberdeen Trades Council campaigned for the Sunday opening of museums and galleries.¹ In 1899 the Glasgow Trades Council,² together with the Secular Society, the Irish National League and local socialist organisations, sent a deputation to the Town Council to ask them to open 'the People's Palace on Sundays'.³ A counter deputation of Presbyterians and the decision of the Town Council to keep the People's Palace closed on Sundays deepened the gulf between the Presbyterian Churches and the Liberal dominated Town Council on the one hand and the labour movement on the other.

The indigenous leaders of Scottish labour were deeply influenced by the Presbyterian milieu, and Calvinism, with its emphasis on 'sturdy independence'⁴ was a formidable barrier frustrating the acceptance of collectivist doctrines by the majority of ordinary working people.⁵ Even the leaders of the Socialist League and the Social Democratic Federation were associated in the popular consciousness with Fenianism,⁶

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1. Aberdeen Trades Council Minutes, 4 May 1894.
 2. Report of Glasgow Trades Council, 1899, p. 15.
 3. Labour Leader, 2 September 1899.
 4. Report of the Free Church Deacon's Association of Glasgow, Glasgow, 1899, p. 10.
 5. Walter Kendall claims that Scottish marxism was strengthened by 'the Calvinist tradition of Scottish history'. Kendall, op.cit., p.105. In fact marxism and labour reformism were badly inhibited by Presbyterianism; and Irish and Roman catholics belonged to the Glasgow, Falkirk and Edinburgh branches of the S.D.F.
 6. 'William Nairne conveyed such an impression of integrity that he was taken to task by a Glasgow policeman, hailing, like Willie, from the north country, as to why he, a respectable man, should consort with a lot of Fenians'. James Leatham, Glasgow in the Limelight (Turiff, n.d.) p.78. William Nairne was the secretary of the Glasgow branch of the S.D.F. William Norris said he had put him 'through the catechism a bit, after your Scottish Kirk-session fashion, don't you think?' John Bruce Glaiser, William Norris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement (London, 1921) p.31.

and the accession of new branches in the coalmining areas could only be accomplished by allowing the innovation of socio-political sermons.¹ In 1892 the secretary of the Dunfermline Trades Council informed Sidney Webb that Presbyterian respectability had restricted the growth of trade unionism locally.²

If the Presbyterian artisans in the Scottish labour movement had been temperance advocates in the mid-Victorian period, they and the 'new unionists' subsequently intensified their commitment to temperance, thrift and self-help as socialist ideas gained influence and kept the labour movement to the 'left' of the labour movement in England. The Scottish labour leaders traditional commitment to collective self-help, and their increasing alienation from the middle class advanced Liberals in the late Victorian period, resulted in the labour movement's more intense desire to adopt socialist solutions to working class social problems. Of all the social problems facing working class Scots, drunkenness was the dominant one which obsessed working class leaders and Churchmen alike.

The 'high volume of drunkenness and disorder which mark(ed) Scottish statistics so unfavourably as compared with those of other countries'³ created a social gulf between the majority of the working classes and the unrepresentative minority who made up the labour movement. In the 1860s

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1. Justice, 18 April 1885.
 2. Thomas Don to Sidney Webb, 14 November 1892.
 3. Falkirk Herald, 15 December 1900.

and 1870s the Trades Councils had moved from calling for Permissive Bills¹ to advocacy of the need for Local Veto in the following decade.² By the 1890s they had separated themselves from the Presbyterian Church by agitating for the municipalisation of the drink trade.³ In 1885, and in contrast to the English members of the Social Democratic Federation, the Scots argued that it was 'the duty' of socialists to 'use their influence to put a stop to the drink trade'.⁴ In 1897 the President of the Scottish Trades Union Congress advocated 'collectivism and temperance' as the cure for working class social and political problems;⁵ and the difference between Scottish labour leaders in relation to the drink problem revolved around the most effective means of tackling the problem. But while most of the activists in the Trades Councils and the Scottish Trades Union Congress continued to advocate temperance, a vital factor in alienating the Scottish branches of the Social Democratic Federation from H.M. Hyndman and the other English elements in London was the Scots' fundamentalist opposition to the consumption of alcohol.⁶

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1. North British Daily Mail, 4 April 1872., 22 April 1875; Minutes of the Edinburgh Trades Council, 3 September 1878.
 2. North British Daily Mail, 26 April 1883; Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 6 August 1883.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 4 July 1893; Minutes of the Aberdeen Trades Council, 5 July 1893; Annual Report of the Glasgow Trades Council, 1896.
 4. Justice, 10 January 1885.
 5. Annual Report of the Scottish T.U.C., 1897, p. 13.
 6. T. Bell, Pioneering Days (London, 1941), p. 42.

There was an apparent paradox in the fact that the Scottish artisans were to the 'left' of their English counterparts from 1867-1868 onwards. In contrast to the English labour activists, the Scots participated in Church life and accepted some Presbyterian social values. However, the really important aspect of the Scots' acceptance of some Presbyterian social values was the essential ambiguity of their Church involvement and interpretation of self-help.

In the mid-Victorian period, when the Scottish labour movement was made up of 'superior' artisans, the Scots were only to the 'left' of the English artisans in the sense that they were able to campaign for a more advanced programme of social and political reform without weakening the Liberals' grip on the Scottish electorate. Moreover, since Scottish working people unambiguously accepted more individualist interpretations of self-help and Presbyterian teaching, the unrepresentative minority who made up the labour movement recognised their inability to muster very much electoral support for independent working class candidates. With the advent of socialist ideas and the 'new unionism' in the 1880s, the changed composition of the labour movement was an important element in weakening Presbyterian influences in the working class movement.

In the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s most of the leaders of Scottish labour were involved in Presbyterian Church activity, and the leading figures of the Glasgow Trades Councils - R.C. Grant, A.J. Hunter and John Battersby - were deeply involved in their Presbyterian Churches. In Aberdeen William

Leys,¹ George Taylor,² George Bisset,³ Donald Young,⁴ Oliver Gray,⁵ Charles Stopani,⁶ John I. Wilson,⁷ James Clark,⁸ James C. Thompson,⁹ and Robert Gilbert¹⁰ were simultaneously involved in Church activity as elders, precentors and deacons as well as in the work of the Trades Council. As the 'new unionists' belonging to the unskilled and semi-skilled increasingly dominated the affairs of the Trades Councils and the Scottish Trades' Union Congress from the early 1890s onwards, the older artisan leaders like R.C. Grant and John Battersby dropped out of activity altogether. In Aberdeen the leaders of the Trades Council in the 1890s such as William Diack,¹¹ William S. Rennie,¹² James Leatham,¹³ and John W. Annand¹⁴ had no Church connections; and in the Glasgow Trades Council the new generation of artisans joined with the unskilled and semi-skilled delegates, whether they were Roman catholic or uninvolved in Churches at all, in challenging Presbyterianism by campaigning against Sabbatarianism and for the municipalisation of the drink trade.

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1. In Memoriam (Aberdeen, 1907), pp. 84-6.
 2. Ibid., 1911, p. 132.
 3. Aberdeen Daily Journal, 22 March 1917.
 4. In Memoriam (Aberdeen, 1903), pp. 261-2.
 5. Ibid., 1911, pp. 61-2.
 6. Ibid., pp. 128-9.
 7. Ibid., 1912, pp. 160-1.
 8. Ibid., 1895, pp. 141-2.
 9. Ibid., 1904, pp. 130-1.
 10. Ibid., 1902, pp. 49-50.
 11. Aberdeen Press and Journal, 2 April 1942.
 12. In Memoriam (Aberdeen, 1894), p. 54.
 13. Aberdeen Press and Journal, 22 December 1945.
 14. Ibid., 22 February 1924.

The Scottish and English Labour Movements, 1866-1900: A Comparison.

A major feature of mid-Victorian Britain was, in the opinion of Professor Harold Perkin, the institutionalisation of the working class and the willingness of working class leaders to acquiesce in 'the middle-class ideal'.¹ But if the British labour movement had been institutionalised, working class leaders had at least succeeded in modifying the power of capital.² Moreover, the vacillations and inconsistencies of British working class leaders, whether real or apparent, and their ambiguous relationships with middle class Liberal leaders, often obscured the extent to which they were sometimes acutely aware of their distinct interests and class identity.³

Liberalism had been a formidable force in Scottish politics since 1832,⁴ and the electoral weakness of Toryism before the Reform Act of 1868 was passed influenced the working class response to the challenge of the Reform crisis of 1865-1866. In the general election of 1857

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1. H. Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880 (London, 1969), p. 380.
 2. E.P. Thompson, 'The Peculiarities of the English', Socialist Register (London, 1965), p. 343.
 3. 'One can understand neither the movements nor the men of the mid-Victorian Labour movement if the ambivalent attitudes of the workmen are not understood. Liberalism at the front of the mind, and old working class sentiments and traditions at the back of it, produced the characteristic vacillations and inconsistencies.' R. Harrison, Before the Socialists (London, 1965), p. 207.
 4. H. Hanham, Elections and Party Management (London, 1959), pp. 155-69.

the Scottish Liberals gained 39 of the 53 Parliamentary seats and the Tories failed to gain even one seat in a burgh constituency; and the same pattern was repeated in the general election of 1859 except that the Liberals gained an additional seat in a rural constituency. Then in 1865 the Liberals increased their Parliamentary representation to 43, and the Tories were left with only 10 seats in rural constituencies. Scottish Liberalism experienced no decisive change before 1886 and during the general elections of 1886 and 1892 the Tories (as distinct from the Liberal-Unionists) gained only 12 and 10 of the 72 Scottish seats. The Scottish Tories failed again and again to make any impact on the burghs, and, in the absence of the electoral pacts they made with the Liberal-Unionists, would have remained an insignificant electoral force.¹

This Liberal predominance was, in 1868, the key factor in defining the role of the Scottish Division of the League. By contrast with the English, the Scottish Division of the Reform League was dominated by middle class advanced Liberalism rather than by artisan trade unionists. In England the secret agreement between the Liberal Whips and some key trade union leaders resulted in Liberal candidates being promoted in small Tory held burghs at the expense of independent working class candidates.

1. T. Wilkie, The Representation of Scotland (Paisley, 1895), pp. 9-15.

The Scottish labour movement was to the 'left' of the English one in 1868 in so far as the former adopted a more radical, class conscious election programme. Since the Liberal Party was a loose coalition and since most Scottish working people belonged to a cohesive community and shared the social values of the possessing classes, the minority of Liberal candidates who accepted the Scottish workers' programme could do so without endangering Liberal electoral prospects. The conditions which made it possible for the Scottish labour movement to adopt a more 'left-wing' programme than its English counterpart in 1868 simultaneously made it impossible for the Scottish labour movement to feel optimistic about their own prospects of mustering much electoral support for independent working class candidates. Moreover, the split in the labour movement between the artisans and the miners was a major factor which contributed to Alexander MacDonal's withdrawal from the contest in Kilmarnock in 1868. Furthermore, there were few Scottish (as distinct from English) miners who possessed the vote in 1868, and this was a factor which encouraged the Liberals to ignore the agitation for direct labour representation in Parliament.

By the early 1870s, when the English Liberals were preparing to forge the Lib-Lab pact at the Parliamentary level, the Scots had no tradition of opposing the Liberals in Parliamentary elections by putting up independent working class candidates. The lack of such a tradition contributed to the Liberals' insensitivity and opposition to the agitation for a Lib-Lab Parliamentary pact.

It could, therefore, be argued that the Scottish were to the 'left' of the English in 1868 in so far as a minority of Liberal candidates accepted the Scottish workers programme. Moreover, since Scottish labour activists could contribute to the process of strengthening the middle class advanced Liberals who were edging out their Liberal opponents in such urban centres as Glasgow, the class antagonisms that they felt were both expressed and contained within the framework of Liberalism. In so far as the Scottish Liberals were insensitive to the demands of the labour movement from the 1860s onwards, there was a continuity of 'right-wing' Liberalism. By the early 1870s the Scottish Liberals were to the 'right' of their English counterparts in the sense that they had no sympathy for the agitations for either an alteration of the law affecting trade unions or direct labour representation at the Parliamentary level. Such a pattern was to persist well into the twentieth century.

There was a total absence of small Tory held burghs in Scotland, and the Scottish Division of the Reform League as well as the Scottish Trades Councils developed a programme of social and economic demands which was in advance of the English programme. But if the Scottish labour movement was to the 'left' of its English counterpart, the Scottish middle class Liberals were to the 'right' of the English. The absence of Scottish working class candidates in 1868, together with the comparative weakness of trade unionism, were probably major factors in persuading the middle class Liberals not to promote Lib-Lab Parliamentary candidates in the mid-Victorian period.

There was only a tiny minority of English miners who had the vote in 1874;¹ most of the miners who were registered voters by then were located in the constituency of Morpeth; and they would not have become registered voters at all without the encouragement and active assistance of middle class advanced Liberals such as Dr. James Trotter, W.E. Adams and Joseph Cowan.² In so far as one can judge from the surviving Scottish evidence, it would seem that few miners had the vote in the mid-Victorian period. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that they formed a majority of voters in a single constituency; and their lack of electoral influence was one factor which accounted for the absence of a Lib-Lab Parliamentary pact later on. An equally, if not more, important factor was the Scottish Liberals' intransigent opposition to the notion of promoting Lib-Lab Parliamentary

1. D. Torr, Tom Mann and His Times (London, 1956), p. 321.

2. A. Watson, A Great Labour Leader (London, 1908), pp. 124-9.

candidates: a pattern which was to persist beyond the end of the nineteenth century.

Republican sympathies were common in the Scottish labour movement in the early 1870s, though Peter Heneritta was the only leader of the Glasgow Trades Council who had known Republican sympathies.¹ By contrast the Edinburgh Trades Council was administered by Republicans, and they were frequently accused of alienating important trade unions by using the Council as a front organisation for promoting Republican doctrines. A fairly typical accusation was voiced by the printers' union:

A local election instantly transforms the Council into a democratic election committee; the marriage of a reigning family reveals the real tendency of the men; the visit of a free-thinking Republican lecturer is hailed with delight, and his sage utterances pass from lip to lip as morsels of unsurpassing sweetness; Communist insurgents are sympathised with in their most objectionable transactions; and the doctrine enunciated, that until there is a univereal Republic the world can never enjoy the blessings of peace'.²

Though the Scottish working class leaders, whether they were Republicans or not, inconsistently and haltingly attempted to assert their political independence from the Liberal Party, there is no evidence that they had connections with the London-based Land and Labour League.³ Emigration had been a prominent feature of Scottish social life since the early nineteenth century, and the psychological acceptance of emigration had a major influence on culture and imaginative

1. Glasgow Sentinel, 15 June 1872; Scotsman, 5 September 1873.

2. Scottish Typographical Circular, Vol. 3, 1 July 1871.

3. Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp. 215-46.

literature.¹ Trade union leaders, in marked contrast to their English counterparts,² were enthusiastic about the emigration of unemployed members. Scottish trade union leaders, depending on whether they were miners or artisans, quarrelled about the methods by which the emigration of unemployed working people should be promoted. The leaders of the carpenters, iron moulders and engineers, with their secure funds for assisting unemployed members to emigrate, were not in sympathy with the agitation for state-aided emigration. During the general election of 1868 the miners in the west of Scotland opposed George Anderson, the advanced Liberal Parliamentary candidate for Glasgow, because of his refusal to support their demand for state-aided emigration.³ Much later Blackwood's, the Scottish Tory journal, criticised the agitation for state-aided emigration as detrimental to 'the impulses of self-help'.⁴ The challenge to the concept of solving working class poverty by

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1. 'In the mid-19th century the Scottish literary tradition - the writing by Scotsmen of fiction and poetry of more than parochial interest - paused; from 1825 to 1880 there is next to nothing worth attention. This was also a period of very heavy emigration - a landslide of people away from the Scottish soil. It seems, prima facie, likely that the literary break was connected somehow with the social force which was then bursting in upon thousands of Scottish lives.' D. Craig, Scottish Literature and the Scottish People, 1680-1830 (London, 1961), p. 273.
 2. 'Emigration, as a cure for unemployment, was a panacea in which the trade union oligarchy itself had little faith, although as an established part of their credo, they turned to it on occasion.' R. Harrison, 'The Land and Labour League', Bulletin of the International Institute of Social History, Vol. VIII, 1953, p. 185.
 3. Glasgow Sentinel, 12 September 1868.
 4. Blackwood's, Vol. CXLVI, No. 885, 1889, p. 48.

emigration - a challenge mounted by the English Land and Labour League in the early 1870s - had to wait until the 1880s before it found an echo in the Scottish labour movement.

But if Scottish working class leaders sometimes raised the question of the need for independent labour politics in the mid-Victorian period in a somewhat desultory way, there was subsequently a much more sustained agitation for independent labour representation. In the opinion of G.D.H. Cole the intervention of the Scottish Land Restoration League in the general election of 1885, together with John Burns's contest at Nottingham, represented 'the pioneer battles for independent labour representation'.¹ Certainly something significant had happened in Scottish politics, and Dr. Fred Reid has argued that in the late 1880s 'the discontent of the working class provided the main basis for divergence between Scottish and English politics'.² As H.M. Hyndman put it:

Scotland was the country in which the independent labour movement began ... it seemed probable that Scotland, by far the best educated portion of the United Kingdom, would come to the front and take the lead in the political arena on behalf of the disinherited class. That I know what the hope and ambition then, not only of Graham and Hardie and Burgess, but of many who have since fallen into the muddy ways of capitalist Liberalism.³

In practice the break with Liberalism in 1885 was not so complete, either organisationally or ideologically, as has often been imagined.

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1. G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914 (London, 1941), p. 100.
 2. Fred Reid, The Early Life and Political Development of James Keir Hardie, 1856-1892, Ph.D. thesis, Oxford, 1969, p. 199.
 3. H.M. Hyndman, Further Reminiscences (London, 1912), pp. 242-43.

There was in the English labour movement from the 1860s onwards a conflict 'within individuals as well as within movements' between 'the desire to be assimilated and the urge to independence' from Liberalism.¹ In Scotland, too, there were very few individuals who were untouched by inconsistent and 'contradictory' attitudes towards Liberalism. In 1885 J. Shaw Maxwell, at the same time as he was fighting as a Land and Labour candidate in Glasgow, told the Linlithgow Liberal Association that 'the present century would be remembered because of the great legislative achievements of the Liberal Parliament'. During the course of a long address on the programme of advanced Liberalism in which he ignored any reference to socialism or even land nationalisation, he emphasised the need for land reform.² Then in 1895, when he was fighting in the same Glasgow constituency as an I.L.P. candidate, he said he had been fighting the cause of 'aggressive democracy' since 1885. By then he was arguing that 'both parties were capitalist', and that the fight was now between 'those who had property and those who had none'.³ Yet by the turn of the century, he would again evoke the example of Bright's aggressive democracy.

Moreover, such apparently contradictory attitudes towards Liberalism were not confined to 'soft' socialists of the I.L.P. variety. In March, 1885, William Small, a man who was to remain a Social Democrat until his death, formed a branch of the Social Democratic Federation in Cambuslang;⁴ then a few months later Small, Shaw Maxwell and other working class leaders joined

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1. R. Harrison, 'The British Working Class and the General Election of 1868', International Review of Social History, Vol. V., 1960, p. 424.
 2. Falkirk Herald, 7 October 1885.
 3. North British Daily Mail, 4 July 1895.
 4. Justice, 10 January 1885.

the new Glasgow Radical Association which had been organised by Dr. Charles Cameron and the advanced Liberals.¹ Chisholm Robertson, the miners' leader, also displayed 'contradictory' attitudes and ambiguities in his relationships with middle class Liberals. During his election campaign in Stirlingshire in 1892, where he was standing as a Labour candidate, he made a blistering attack on A.J. Mundella.² Yet he had just previously told a working class audience that: 'Mr. Gladstone's whole sympathies were with the workers, but he was hampered and crippled by his colleagues, who were less in sympathy with the aspirations of the workers'.³ Then in 1900, by which time the Scots were to the 'left' of the English and when John Weir was standing in West Fife as a Labour candidate, Dr. Bell, a leading figure in the I.L.P. in Glasgow, told a meeting of Fife miners that, by sending Weir to Parliament, they could 'foreshadow the better times prophesied by John Bright'.⁴ Clearly, there were many socialists and Lib-Lab leaders who did not regard political independence from the Liberal Party as being incompatible with adherence to some Liberal values and traditions; and in 1892, when Chisholm Robertson was fighting as a Parliamentary candidate, he told one audience that he had been asked 'by his fellow working men to go to London to work for them, to raise them in the social scale'.⁵ Trade union agitation and the fight for Parliamentary representation dovetailed, and both forms of agitation were seen as aspects of self-help. And such conceptions of self-help were compatible with Liberal values and ideology, at least theoretically.

1. North British Daily Mail, 23 October 1885.

2. Ibid., 9 July 1892.

3. Ibid., 2 June 1892.

4. Dunfermline Press, 28 July 1900.

5. North British Daily Mail, 9 July 1892.

In the 1880s the English leaders of the S.D.F. saw Gladstonian Liberalism as the main obstacle to an independent workers' movement and 'the leaders of trade unionism' as 'the main working class allies of Gladstone'.¹ By 1900 the English leaders of the S.D.F. were less intransigent towards the advanced Liberals, or Radicals as they were sometimes called, and H.M. Hyndman wrote a letter to the Ethical World announcing his opposition to the decision of the S.D.F. to 'support certain Radical candidates'.² In Scotland, where Liberalism was to remain a formidable force after 1900,³ the socialists were a bit firmer in their opposition to the Liberal Party. J.A. Tait, the secretary of the Socialist League, wrote to the secretary of the League in London after the general election of 1885:

The mob here as elsewhere are, of course, no use, at least at the present stage and in Edinburgh the class we want to get hold of just now seem from the results of the recent Parliamentary elections to be far back indeed and hopelessly out of reach. Edinburgh is still the home of Whiggery and orthodoxy: Socialism is not yet respectable enough for it I fear.⁴

The same inconsistent attitudes to Liberalism prevailed as in England; but the Scottish socialists were confronted with a much more powerful and socially insensitive Liberal Party.

In 1895 Keir Hardie told the Scottish District Council of the I.L.P. that they ought to use their votes to 'sweep away from their path the one obstacle which stood in their way - the historic Liberal Party'.⁵ A Par-

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1. H. Collins, 'The Marxism of the Social Democratic Federation', Essays in Labour History 1886-1913, ed. A. Briggs and J. Saville (London, 1971), p. 55.
 2. H. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party (London, 1965), p. 221.
 3. J.P. Cornforth and J.A. Brand, 'Scottish Voting Behaviour', Government and Nationalism in Scotland, ed., J.N. Wolfe (London, 1969), pp. 17-18.
 4. Socialist League Archives, International Institute of Social History Amsterdam.
 5. North British Daily Mail, 12 July 1895.

liamentary by-election in Edinburgh in 1899 provided the socialists with an excuse for asking working people to vote for the Tories:

The policy of sacrificing a minnow to catch a salmon is as old as the hills, and is well understood by the Liberal Party ... large numbers of the working class have been led to believe in it as the Party of progress.¹

And in 1900 Robert Brown, a Lib-Lab miners' leader, who had evoked the example of John Bright while justifying John Weir's claim as the Labour candidate for West Fife, said the miners in the Lothians would 'vote Tory because the Liberals in Fife had opposed Weir'.²

Peter Burt and David McLardy simultaneously belonged to the Socialist League, the Scottish Land Restoration League and the Liberal Party in the 1880s, and they frequently lectured for the Scottish Land and Labour League branches on 'the nationalisation of the land' and 'the nationalisation of society'.³ By 1895 they had become fairly orthodox Georgeites and they opposed the socialist and Lib-Lab candidates by campaigning for orthodox Liberals.⁴ It would, however, be a mistake to assume that the middle class Liberals were exempt from the process of social change, or that they were not influenced by the pressures exerted by the labour movement. In 1892, for example, Robert Brodie, the I.L.P. candidate in the College constituency, told an election meeting that the Labour Party 'had helped Dr. Cameron to make up his mind on State interference with labour';⁵ and, while Cameron's conversion had taken a long time since he had first been pressurised by the Glasgow Trades Council in the 1870s, his new attitudes to labour questions were a reflection of the changes in the composition of

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1. Justice, 24 June 1899.
 2. Dunfermline Journal, 21 July 1900.
 3. Socialist League Archives.
 4. North British Daily Mail, 4 July 1895.
 5. Ibid., 10 June 1892.

both the labour movement and Liberal Party.

Nevertheless Scottish Liberalism was to the 'right' of the English, and Scottish Liberal-Unionism also leaned to the 'right' rather than the 'left'. A few Scottish Liberals were aware of the fact that they were to the 'right' of the English; but, when they lamented over this fact, they blamed the social conservatism of the electors rather than their own lack of a 'left-wing' programme. R.B. Haldane, a leading Scottish 'advanced' Liberal, wrote to a friend from Baden in Germany:

To an English (sic!) politician one of the regrets of whose life is the difficulty of stirring the working classes in a free country into action, it would be amusing were it not pathetic to observe the terror of the educated classes at the Social Democratic movement in Germany. The university has no notion apparently of throwing itself on to the forward movement with the hope of winning the confidence of the people and guiding them alright. ... Yet after all what is the good of all our reading to us who are in public life if we cannot use it in the effort with all the strength we possess to guide the current of opinion among our constituents.¹

He later wrote to A.J. Balfour: 'I am not sure I do not agree with a good deal of what you concluded on the subject of Liberalism (I hate the name and call myself 'Progressive') in Scotland. But this, not because I disbelieve in what ought to be the cause of my Party, but because I have not a high opinion of my Scot as a social reformer'.²

R.B. Haldane saw himself as one of the most progressive of the Scottish Liberals, and he was indeed to the 'left' of many of his contemporaries. Haldane and Dr. Cameron were both advanced Liberals,

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1. R.B. Haldane to Mrs. Ward, 27 May 1890, Haldane Papers, National Library of Scotland, MS.5903.
 2. Ibid., MS 5904.

but some advanced Liberals were more advanced than others. Dr. Charles Cameron was more advanced than Haldane so far as labour questions were concerned; but Haldane, who had successfully contested Lord Elcho's old constituency in 1885, did not have to confront a militant or well-organised labour movement in his East Lothian constituency.

For the Scottish advanced Liberals in 1885 and later the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and, in constituencies where there was no organised labour movement, land reform were the main planks of the programme of advanced reform. Henry Calderwood, a Liberal official who had an office in Edinburgh, wrote to reassure Haldane who was worried about how he could best capture and hold the constituency of East Lothian:

I think the line you propose for yourself is the right one: a clear, quiet, decisive utterance on Disestablishment as the expression of Liberalism in the Church question; and a leading, strong and earnest pleading for reform of the land laws, as the main questions for East Lothian.¹

Yet even Haldane's Liberalism changed slightly under the impact of events, and in an article he wrote in 1888 he stressed 'a fulfilment of the just obligations of property'.² Nonetheless 'the obligations of property' did not include support for the legal eight hour day. Indeed Haldane thought that the real aim of the advocates of 'the Eight-Hours question' was to 'raise wages rather than to regulate hours';³ and he reminded the readers of the Contemporary Review that 'politicians must be not only idealists but men of business'.⁴

1. Ibid., MS.5902.

2. H.V. Emy, Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics, 1892-1914 (Cambridge, 1973), p. 39.

3. Ibid., p. 40.

4. R.B. Haldane, 'The Eight-Hour Question', Contemporary Review, February 1890.

For many working class activists the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland was still an important question, and farm servants, who were invariably Liberals, were particularly interested in disestablishment and land reform. Like the majority of the miners they only gained the franchise in 1884, and they were not influenced by the Liberal-Unionists. In 1892 farm servants had played a decisive role in defeating Arthur Elliot, the Liberal-Unionist candidate in Roxburgh, and in July T.S. Snail wrote:

We are very disappointed, and exceedingly for Mrs. Elliot and yourself; but the Hinds (in return for all you did for them) seem to have gone solid for Napier. After all, it is not a very big beating - if 80 of them had voted for you instead of Napier you would have gained the election.¹

Then a Liberal-Unionist in Elgin wrote to express the hope that Elliot would be able to reverse the Roxburgh verdict; but he wondered if 'the amount of trouble involved in getting at the rural voters' was 'worth the candle'.² The agitations for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and land reform were considered vital by many working class electors, and these particular agitations which had been formulated by the Scottish Division of the Reform League in the mid-1860s were given a new impetus by Henry George.

An activist in English politics recorded his impression that Henry George, though not a socialist himself, had done more 'than any other single person to stir and deepen in this country an agitation which, if not socialist, at least promises to be the mother of socialism'.³ In contrast to the English Land and Labour League the Republican elements in

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1. Arthur Elliot Papers, Acc. 4246. National Library of Scotland.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Quoted in H. Lynd, England in the Eighteen Eighties (London, 1954), p. 143.

the Scottish labour movement in the 1870s had not agitated for land nationalisation, and George's subsequent agitation for land nationalisation had an explosive impact on Scottish politics. There were no Scottish social investigators comparable to Charles Booth or the author of The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, and George made an important contribution to the growth of socialist sympathies by rediscovering the poverty of the labouring population. By dramatically directing attention to the hopelessly inadequate living standards of crofters and industrial workers,¹ he challenged the implicit assumption of the ruling class that the poverty of the working class was an inescapable consequence of thriftlessness and indolence.

By tracing poverty, unemployment and inadequate wages back to structural factors within capitalism, Henry George helped to give the labour movement's agitations a more militant edge. The accusation that poverty was created by capitalism struck at the cultural, psychological and spiritual roots of the hegemony existing in Scottish society, and James Leatham, a leading young socialist in the labour movement in Aberdeen in the 1880s, subsequently recalled this forgotten aspect of Georgeite propaganda:

Like Henry George at a later date and from a different opening Marx taught la Misère - the intensification of misery, or as George called it, the increase of want side by side with the increase of wealth.²

The Georgeites were important catalysts in the growth of socialist trends in the Scottish labour movement, and in the early 1880s the

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1. T. Johnstone, History of the Working Classes in Scotland, (Glasgow, 1920), p. 289.
 2. Gateway, mid-May, 1919, p. 18.

Georgeites and the socialists often worked together. In Edinburgh Andreas Scheu, an Austrian émigré, concentrated on influencing George's supporters. In a letter to Miss Reeves, a member of the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish Land Restoration League, he argued:

Not that I believe you to be a socialist; but I am aware that you are supporting a movement which goes very far in the direction of socialism. Two years ago I heard Mr. Henry George admit that himself by saying he knew full well that the nationalisation of the land would not solve the social question; but he was convinced that it was a sure step towards bringing that solution about.¹

The Third Reform Bill had created a larger working class electorate, and the local caucus-dominated committees of the Liberal Party had now to confront the challenge of some trade unionists and middle class radicals who were pressing for the acceptance of certain socialist demands. Laissez-faire Liberalism, with its 'night watchman's idea of the functions of Government', was henceforth questioned by permeationists who were committed to collectivist solutions to the social problem. The propertied classes had already been frightened by the spectre of German social democracy, and labour radicals, who belonged to the Scottish Liberal Association, played on these fears in order to persuade the middle class Liberals to accept a radical programme of social reform.

A profound fear of social revolution was deeply rooted in the consciousness of the propertied classes, and in 1887 a member of the Glasgow branch of the Socialist League described the response of one influential Liberal academic to the new threat to social stability:

1. Papers of Andreas Scheu. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

I have just come in from the (Glasgow) Philosophical (Society) where I heard Smart deliver a lecture on Factory, Industry and Socialism. Marx almost from beginning to end - vigorous and outspoken - conclusion of the whole matter something like this: 'If we who call ourselves the upper classes do not take Carlyle's advice and become real Captains of Industry and organisers of the people working not for gain but for the good of all, so as to open up to every man the opportunities for the higher life of culture at present the possession of a very few - if we do not do this within a very few years, then we shall have to prevent Revolution by leading it.'¹

Nonetheless the Scottish Liberal Association repeatedly rejected the demands of the labour radicals and the Georgeites for land nationalisation and a legal eight hour day,² and the Liberal-Unionists like Lord Melgund, who had just recently left the Liberal Party in 1886, criticised the agitations for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and Irish Home Rule. In his election address to the people of Selkirk and Peebles, for example, Melgund attacked the 'Irish-American agitators' who were working for 'the creation of a self-independent, disaffected State close to our own shores'.³

Moreover, Scottish Liberal-Unionism, in contrast to its English variety, was a conservative rather than a radical social force, and the Liberal-Unionists were frightened by the land agitations in the Highlands where the Whig elements had been challenged by the Crofters' Party. And by then John Murdoch,⁴ the crofters' leader, who had

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1. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 16 November 1887, McLaren-Muirhead Correspondence, Baillie's Institute, Glasgow.
 2. Minutes of the Scottish Liberal Association, 22 October and 22 November 1889.
 3. Address to the Electors of Selkirk and Peebles, June 1886. Melgund contested Northumberland instead of Selkirk and Peebles. See the Minto Papers, Box 175, National Library of Scotland.
 4. James D. Young, 'John Murdoch: A Scottish Land and Labour Pioneer', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No. 19, 1969, pp. 22-24.

obtained financial assistance from Dr. William Carroll, of Philadelphia, to prevent the collapse of his weekly agitational newspaper, The Highlander, was agitating among the coal miners in the west of Scotland.¹ Land and labour agitations were converging, and what Professor Hanham has perhaps erroneously called the porridgy uniformity of the 'sixties' had been watered down by the stirrings of discontented socialists and radicals.²

If Dr. Cameron and the advanced Liberals in Glasgow had been compelled by a militant labour movement to view the labour question more sympathetically than they had done earlier, the Liberal-Unionists sometimes chose to champion a radical programme of reform in order to attract votes. Scottish Liberal-Unionism³ was shaped by the initial leadership which included Sir Edward Colebrooke, and, while they were to the 'right' of their English equivalents, they were capable of promising a legal eight hour day and other reforms in order to attract the votes of working class electors. Haldane's Liberal-Unionist opponent in East Lothian in 1895 promised the working men old age pensions, poor law reform, a fixed number of holidays for ploughmen, temperance reform and a legal eight hour day for miners.⁴ The Liberal-Unionists did not, however, think of themselves as being to the 'left' of the Liberals, and in 1900 W. Stroyan, a Liberal-Unionist who was standing as a Parliamentary candidate in Stirlingshire, told electors that 'the Radical remnant which today calls

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1. Hamilton Advertiser, 20 September 1884.
 2. H.J. Hanham, 'The Problem of Highland Discontent, 1880-1885', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Vol. XIX, 1969, p. 33.
 3. J.F. McCaffrey, 'The Origins of Liberal Unionism in the west of Scotland', Scottish Historical Review, Vol. 50, No. 149, 1971, p. 53.
 4. Election address of W.G. Scott to the electors of East Lothian. Haldane Papers, MS.5904.

itself the Liberal Party is not the old Liberal Party.¹

The almost impregnable electoral dominance of Scottish Liberalism had been the key factor in pushing the labour movement to the 'left' of the English one from 1868 onwards, and this continuity was unbroken as a result of the Liberals' uncompromising refusal to make sufficient concessions to the labour movement. A large number of Scottish labour leaders were ambiguous about their attitudes to the Liberal Party and Liberal values, and Dr. James Kellas has used this fact to prove his argument that the middle class Liberals were to the 'left' of the labour movement.² But the ambiguity of the labour leaders did not prevent them from opposing Liberal candidates in Parliamentary elections, and even when some middle class advanced Liberals paid lip service to the agitation for a legal eight hour day their hearts were not in it. In 1891 Dr. Cameron's Glasgow Weekly Mail attributed working class poverty to drink and improvidence and denied the need for old age pensions by drawing attention to the large amount of money invested by the working classes.³

Moreover, there were other signs in the late Victorian period illuminating just how far the Scottish labour movement was to the 'left' of the English one. The Scottish Trades Union Congress had been under 'left-wing' influence since its foundation in 1896, and it was later to the 'left' of the British Trades Union Congress. In

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1. Stirling Journal, 14 September 1900.
 2. James G. Kellas, 'The Mid-Lanark By-Election (1888) and the Scottish Labour Party (1888-1894)', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. XVIII, 1965, pp. 318-20.
 3. 'State Insurance for Old Age', Glasgow Weekly Mail, 5 December 1891.

1897 and 1898 the socialists in the British T.U.C. had failed to persuade a majority of delegates to support resolutions committing the delegates to pay a political levy, and 'even in 1899 the socialists were not strong enough to carry such a scheme'.¹ In 1897 only four of the seventy-four delegates to the Scottish T.U.C. opposed a resolution on collectivism in which it was stated that the workers would not obtain 'the full value of their labour' until 'the land, mines, railways, machinery and industrial capital' were 'owned and controlled by the State';² and in 1898 only nineteen of the sixty-nine delegates opposed a resolution urging Scottish trade unionists to 'morally and financially support the working class Socialist Parties already in existence'.³

A majority of the delegates to the British T.U.C. in 1899 supported the following resolution which gave birth to the Labour Representation Committee:

This Congress, having regard to its decisions in former years, and with a view to securing a better representation, in the interests of Labour in the House of Commons, hereby instructs the Parliamentary Committee to invite the co-operation of all the co-operative, socialistic, trade unions, and other working class organisations, to jointly co-operate on lines mutually agreed upon in convening a special congress of representatives from such of the above-mentioned organisations as may be willing, to devise ways and means for securing the return of an increased number of labour members to the next Parliament.

Though this resolution had been drafted in the office of the Labour Leader, a number of historians have pointed out that it made no reference to political independence from the Liberals or a socialist basis for the

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1. G.D.H. Cole, Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1787-1947 (London, 1952), p. 253.
 2. Report of the Scottish T.U.C., 1897, pp., 29-30.
 3. Ibid., 1898, pp., 46-47.

new Party.¹

By contrast the Scottish T.U.C. in 1899 accepted unanimously a resolution calling for a new working class Party to fight for socialism:

That this Congress, viewing the present economic and political situation, with the break-up of the Liberal Party, consider the time ripe for the consolidation of all working class movements, whose ultimate object would be the nationalisation of the land and the means of production, distribution and exchange, and looks to the closest union of the Trade Unionists, Co-operators and Socialists to form the nucleus of this Party.²

The Scottish Co-operative movement, too, was 'much more socialist and much less averse to political action than the parallel movement in England'.³ In 1900 the Scottish T.U.C. not only adopted a resolution supporting the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Election Committee, but also accepted their leaders' recommendation that:

trade unionists should contribute at least one penny⁴ per quarter per member to the joint committee funds.

They simultaneously adopted resolutions calling for collectivism and the municipalisation of the liquor traffic.⁵ A further indication of the labour movement's alienation from middle class Liberalism was seen in the repeated demand for the second ballot.⁶ In 1900 a delegate to the Scottish T.U.C. explained why the second ballot was important, as well as revealing the working class electors' attachment to the Liberal Party:

1. J.S. Reid, The Origins of the British Labour Party (Minneapolis, 1955), p. 86.
2. Report of the Scottish T.U.C., 1899, p. 50.
3. G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914 (London, 1941), p. 155.
4. Report of the Scottish T.U.C., 1900, p. 38.
5. Ibid., p. 34.
6. Ibid., 1897, pp., 20-21; and 1900, p. 27.

If there were a second Ballot, electors would have no objection, after the obnoxious candidate was¹ eliminated, in supporting the Labour candidate.

Clearly, then, the Scottish labour movement was to the 'left' of the middle class Liberals as well as to the 'left' of the English labour movement.² The fact that Scotland was excluded from the MacDonald-Gladstone entente in 1905 was another sign of the traditional enmity between the Scottish labour movement and the middle class Liberals; and the two Labour candidates who won seats in Dundee and Glasgow in 1906 did so in the teeth of Liberal opposition. And this Liberal hostility was behind the labour movement's failure to gain Parliamentary representation between 1868 and 1900; for Scottish Liberalism, as G.D.H. Cole put it, 'would have no truck with Labour, even of the old-fashioned "Lib-Lab" brand'.³

In England the mining constituencies, except in Lancashire, provided the Liberals with their 'firmest' seats;⁴ but in Scotland the miners were in the forefront of the struggle for independent labour representation.⁵ The miners were also the main force within the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Representation Committee, and in the general election of 1900 their five candidates polled an aggregate vote of 14,878. But if the Scottish labour movement was to the 'left' of the English one, it was also to the 'left' of the majority of working class electors. A vital factor in the persistence of working class

1. Ibid.

2. In the Social Geography of British Elections, Henry Pelling ascribes the absence of a Lib-Lab pact in Scotland to 'the strength of Scottish Radicalism'. (London, 1967), p. 411-12. However, he produces little evidence for this view.

3. Cole, British Working Class Politics, p. 183.

4. Pelling, op.cit., pp. 411-12.

5. P. Poirier, The Advent of the Labour Party (London, 1958), p. 79.

electors in voting Liberal was the character of the Scottish community, a community which, if we may borrow the formulation of Dr. Christopher Lasch, possessed 'the cohesiveness and sense of shared experience that distinguish a truly integrated community from an atomistic society'.¹ In political terms this point is reinforced if we bear in mind that many of the Liberal-Unionists insisted that they were the true heirs of the historic Scottish Liberal Party.

In contrast to the situation in England where at least a third of the working class electors had always voted Tory since 1868,² the Tories in Scotland never made any real impression on the social consciousness of the working class. Throughout the period between 1868 and 1900 the Scottish Tories were to remain a relatively insignificant electoral force, though the Liberals, in 1900, were in a minority for the first time since 1832. An examination of the total votes cast in the general elections of 1865, 1868, 1874, 1880, 1885, 1886, 1892, 1895 and 1900 provides tangible proof of the strength of the Liberal Party since their percentage of the votes in those years added up to 88.88%, 82.21%, 67.54%, 72.61%, 91.97%, 72.23%, 55.04%, 52.64%, and 50.74%. Even after 1885 when the Liberals had to face the challenge of Liberal-Unionism during the general elections of 1886, 1892, 1895 and 1900, the Tory (as distinct from the Liberal-Unionist) percentage of the total votes cast did not exceed 22.82%, 17.06%, 30.98% and 26.11%.³

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1. C. Lasch, The Agony of the American Left (London, 1973), p. 37.
 2. R. MacKenzie and A. Silver, Angels in Marble (London, 1968), p.243.
 3. These percentages of the votes cast for Liberal and Tory candidates have been worked out on the basis of the data and classification of candidates given in T. Wilkie's book The Representation of Scotland and from 1892 to 1900 from information given in the North British Daily Mail. While these percentages could be challenged by questioning the classification of some candidates, the real difficulty is sometimes one of distinguishing between Tories and Liberal-Unionists rather than between Liberals and Liberal-Unionists.

Within a hegemonic Scottish society, where Liberalism was a formidable social and political force, Labour candidates were not able to muster very much electoral support. In 1885 the five Land and Labour candidates polled a total of 2462 votes; in 1892 eight Labour candidates polled 5267 votes; in 1895 eight Labour candidates polled 4878 votes; and in 1900 the two defeated Labour candidates, who had official Liberal support, polled 5902 against the 8734 votes of their two opponents. In England, where the Liberals often allowed Labour candidates straight fights with the Tories, the Lib-Lab and independent Labour candidates did much better than the Scots. In England eleven Lib-Labs were elected to Parliament in 1885; in 1892 ten Lib-Labs and three independent Labour candidates were elected; in 1895 ten Lib-Labs were elected; and in 1900 eight Lib-Labs and two Labour Representation Committee candidates were elected. Moreover, in England there were many unsuccessful Labour candidates who polled substantial votes.

As a consequence of Presbyterian influence on the social consciousness of working people, concepts of thrift and respectability made a bigger impact in Scotland than in England. Widespread and deeply-rooted values of thrift, self-help and respectability inhibited the growth of Scottish trade unionism, which, in turn, made it difficult for the labour movement to muster effective electoral support.¹ Yet working class notions of respectability and thrift probably prevented workers from accepting collectivist solutions to their problems.² In 1897 Harry Quelch thought thought the English working class had little enthusiasm for revolutionary socialism

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1. In a letter to Sidney Webb, Thomas Don, the secretary of the Dunfermline Trades Council wrote: '(Working people) are as a rule respectable, and respectability in an isolated town, where the manufacturer is the type of social and industrial omnipotence, is inimicable to the combination of labour'. 14 November 1892. Webb Collection, Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science.
 2. Ernest E. Williams, 'Respectability', Justice, 27 August 1892; and editorial on 'Thrift', Ibid., 30 July 1892.

and he concluded that they were 'most backward in contrast to elsewhere in Europe'.¹ But the English labour movement, though to the 'right' of the Scottish one, could muster greater electoral support.

As political circumstances changed in the 1860s the Liberal Party had to define and re-define its attitude to social and labour questions. The mature John Bright was no progressive on social questions;² but by 1873 Joseph Chamberlain was in the process of evolving a radical programme of social reform. Though he was not so progressive on labour questions as Frederic Harrison, the Positivist, would have liked,³ Chamberlain adopted a much more radical programme in the 1880s. The challenge of the extension of mass democracy was met by Chamberlain in 1885 when he formulated a comprehensive programme of social reform which, in his own words, marked 'the death-knell of the laissez-faire system'.⁴ Moreover, one historian has attributed the Liberals' large Parliamentary majority in 1885 to this 'new and bold platform of social reform'.⁵

However, in Scotland a whole host of factors combined, as we have seen, to inhibit the growth of a mass vote for Labour candidates. A majority of working people thought that they were responsible for their own poverty, and the ideas of thrift and self-help were deeply rooted in their social consciousness. Within the labour movement itself the older Lib-Lab leaders continued to preach the traditional values of thrift and self-help, and even after the miners' unions affiliated to the urban

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1. H. Quelch, 'Social Democracy and Trade Unionism', Justice, 22 May 1897.
 2. Harrison, op.cit., p. 273.
 3. Ibid., p. 300.
 4. Joseph Chamberlain, The Radical Programme, July 1885.
 5. Reid, op.cit., p. 31.

Trades Councils in the late 1880s the Sons of Labour tried to implement the collective self-help the miners had hitherto failed to accomplish:

by a united determination, concentrating all our efforts towards one end, we shall be able to better our condition, to raise ourselves in the social scale to a position of social equality with the mechanics, artisans, and other workmen of our country.¹

If these ideas lingered on in the labour movement, the more individualistic notions of self-help still dominated the social consciousness of ordinary working people in the early part of the twentieth century. As late as 1900 William Nairne, the militant leader of the S.D.F. in Glasgow, was forced to admit that 'the virtue of thrift' was believed in 'by a very large number of the very poor'.² Moreover, Scottish workers were more involved in the process of thrift than their English counterparts, and Professor Payne has concluded a careful study of banking in the west of Scotland thus:

It would appear that those who have argued that the trustee savings banks failed to achieve the high hopes of the founders may well be right if only English experience is analysed. In the west of Scotland the Glasgow Savings Bank did attract and retain the support of the manual workers. In this matter Scottish economic history appears once again to diverge from the so-called British pattern.³

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1. Hamilton Advertiser, 22 June 1889.
 2. W. Nairne, 'A Few Remarks on Thrift', Scottish Co-operator, 25 January 1901.
 3. Peter Payne, 'The Savings Bank of Glasgow, 1836-1914', Studies in Scottish Business History, ed. P.L. Payne (London, 1967), p. 165.

APPENDIX I

Scottish National Reform League.

Address By The Executive Council

To The People of Scotland.

Unenfranchised Fellow-Countrymen,

More than thirty years have passed since the class which then obtained the Franchise by our assistance promised to secure for us the same political right. That promise has been frequently repeated but remains unredeemed. The rejection of the same meagre measure of reform brought forward by the late Government, ought to convince the unrepresented classes that their redemption from political serfdom must depend on themselves. In seeking our sympathy and co-operation in our efforts to substitute for the misrule of a class the rule of the nation, we are firmly convinced that our cause is just, and that our welfare as a nation and as individuals depends upon its success. We demand that those upon whom the burdens of the State are thrown, who create the nation's wealth, obey its laws, and fight its battles should have a voice in the administration of its government. To secure this, let us, the unrepresented men of Scotland, united with our brethren in England and Ireland, league ourselves together to carry into effect the fundamental principle of all genuine Reform and Self-Government; MANHOOD Suffrage; and with it that essential safeguard to its independent exercise - THE BALLOT. We beg no favour. We crave no privilege. We only ask a restoration of our original rights as men and Britons, which are still recognised in theory by the law of the land, and are at present enjoyed with beneficial results by our brethren in the Colonies, and the great American Republic.

We seek Liberty, "the parent of Commerce, the parent of Wealth, the parent of Knowledge, the parent of every virtue", and without which peace and prosperity are impossible. We protest against a continuance of the present system of Representation, whereby the people are compelled to obey laws in the making of which they have no voice, which is subversive of the true principles of liberty, and opposed to the spirit of the ancient Constitution.

WORKING-MEN, MEMBERS OF TRADES' UNIONS! We would earnestly urge upon you the duty of supporting our efforts; because, while admitting the necessity of, and the good results arising from the existence of such societies, we unhesitatingly assert that your efforts to improve your condition may be and frequently are, frustrated by the great Capitalists' and Landlords' Union called the House of Commons, which can overrule your Unions, however powerful and well organised. So long as you are compelled to pay away without consent a portion of your wages in the shape of taxes, they who thus fix the amount which you must pay, decree how much you may keep. And this is your position. Your income is regulated by the House of Commons over which you have no control, and not by your Trades' Societies. The enactment of such laws as the Masters and Workmen's Act, and the manner in which it is enforced, as compared with others which should protect the employed, and which were granted almost for shame's sake, or through motives of expediency, clearly show that until Labour has a voice in the Councils of the nation, so long will working-men be compelled to wage an expensive, unequal and almost profitless war against Capital.

ELECTORS,

Knowing that the great majority of you owe your political existence to the Reform Bill of 1832, we ask, Is it wise, is it patriotic any longer

to allow our claim to these rights which you enjoy to be refused? and the monopoly of which, those who assume to represent you depend by the same arguments which were adduced thirty years ago by the monopolists of political power. If these arguments are valid now, where does your right to vote come from? But, if fallacious in 1830, they must be so still. Is it wise to support a system which grievously cripples our wealth-producing power. And that such is the case, we point to the fact that while the increase of wealth in the Free States of America from 1840 to 1850, was 60 per cent, and from 1850 to 1860, 126 per cent, that of Great Britain during the same period was only 37 per cent; and in the Southern States, where the wealth-producers were slaves, the increase was only 3 per cent. Is it patriotic to permit the existence of such a system of National Education; and which creates, or is unable to check the alarming amount of Pauperism in our midst? One MILLION TWO HUNDRES THOUSAND PAUPERS in Christian Britain! Shameful record. Does not wisdom and patriotism urge you to assist us in establishing the great principle of political freedom instead of allying ourselves with those who "animated by antiquated prejudices, and daunted with ignorant apprehensions, dam up the current of human improvement, until the irresistible pressure of accumulated discontent breaks down all barriers, and overthrows and levels to the earth those very institutions which the timely application of renovating means would have rendered strong and lasting".

We have just seen the freedom and unity of Italy accomplished, Germany enfranchised, the serfs in Russia emancipated, the attempts of Spain to destroy the Negro Republic of Hayti frustrated, the efforts of the slaveholding aristocracy of America to found there a Slave Empire, and that of European despotism to establish Imperialism in Mexico, baffled by the power

of freedom. Under such circumstances, the success of our cause is inevitable, and its triumph depends upon our united and organised efforts. To hasten this, while desirous of the co-operation of all classes of the community, we would earnestly call upon all unenfranchised Scotchmen to enrol themselves members of the League or its Branches, and to organise such where none already exist. By our mode of conducting this great cause, let us prove our fitness for the exercise of our rights, and the futility of further opposition to our demands.

John Burt, President.

James Moir, Vice-President.

James Smith, Treasurer.

George Jackson, Secretary.

27 Union Street,

Glasgow.

APPENDIX II

The Scottish Workmen's Programme.

Scotchmen are usually practical, know what they want and why they want it, and the new electors are certainly not deficient in the national characteristic. The workmen of Edinburgh and Leith have been enfranchised in thousands by the Reform Bill, the election is practically in their hands, and they have determined to use their power in a grave, sober, but very decisive way. The "Trades" of those two cities, and we believe of some other towns, have elected representatives or, as they call them, delegates, to consider what they really want; the delegates have met in Committee, and the result of their deliberations is a programme which older politicians will do well to study, if only for the light it throws upon the course which the politics of the future may take. Avoiding carefully all declamation or argument or complaint, the delegates reduce their wishes to questions, fifteen in number, which they ask all workmen in Scotland to propose to any candidate who may seek their suffrages. These questions are, we presume, to be in addition to the regular questions asked of every Liberal candidate in Scotland; and at all events they embody in an admirably condensed and concrete form the points on which the workman differs, or thinks he differs, from the rest of his fellow citizens:

- "1. Are you in favour of extending the full protection of the law to the funds of Trades' Unions, so long as their organisation is not in opposition to the common law of the country?
2. Will you support the introduction of a Bill inflicting penalties upon the employers of labour for negligence in trades - other than those already provided for by the Factory

Acts - when preventable danger may lead to accident?

3. Will you support a still further extension of the Factory Act, making it compulsory on inspectors to visit at least twice in the year factories and workshops mentioned in the Factory Act Extension Bill of 1867?
4. Will you support the introduction of a Bill for the purpose of amending and incorporating the provisions of the Bakehouse Regulation Act into the Workshop and Factory Acts applicable to the United Kingdom?
5. Will you vote in favour of the total abolition of the Act 6th George IV; cap. 129, commonly known as the combination laws?
6. Would you support a Bill, such as the temporary one by Lord Elcho, for the equitable regulation of the law of service between masters and workpeople, so as to place both on an equality before the law?
7. Are you in favour of the establishment of courts of arbitration for the settlement of disputes between employer and employed, legislative enactments to make their decision binding whenever appealed unto?
8. Will you support any Bill which may be introduced for additional precautions and legislative inspection in mines?
9. Will you support any measure having for its object the Government acquisition of the whole railway system of the country?
10. Are you in favour of the establishment of a National Library upon the basis of the Advocates' Library collection; if so,

state conditions?

11. Would you be favourable to the introduction of a Bill having for its object the presentation of free copies of Parliamentary papers to Free Public Libraries; and also for grants assisting authors in the prosecution of valuable art and other works of great public utility?
12. Are you in favour of an amendment to the Patent laws for the purpose of enabling inventors to benefit by their inventions at the smallest cost, as in America, for the benefit of the country?
13. Are you in favour of a national compulsory unsectarian system of Education? If so, state generally what you consider most necessary for the well-being of the country?
14. Are you in favour of a system of legislation which shall make it compulsory to provide full house accommodation for those of the working classes who may be evicted from their dwellings in consequence of civic improvements, railway acquisition, or similar causes, previous to such eviction taking place.
15. Would you be in favour of the introduction of a Bill for the prevention of deck-loading, and for the purpose of inspecting vessels previous to being allowed to proceed to sea?

There is an entire creed in those fifteen sentences, and Liberals will perhaps be as much surprised as relieved to find that it is one which the majority of their candidates can conscientiously accept. The first seven contain a plan for the regulation of Trades' Union upon the basis of the compromise which we are happy to perceive, after some very wild talk and much useless vituperation, has been accepted by the majority of the Liberal party.

APPENDIX III

Questions To Be Put To Candidates For

Parliamentary Honours

Fellow-Workmen,

We have now arrived pretty near to the great struggle for power and party in a New Parliament - a general election. To that Parliament have more of the leading coal and iron masters turned their attention than any Parliament that has yet had an existence in this country. If, therefore, you are not on your guard men may be returned whose election you ought to control, that will more than ever try to traffic, and get rich on the waste of yourselves and your children. I would, therefore, suggest to you that on every occasion where a party may appear claiming the suffrage of the people that you get his views on the following subjects; and should he refuse to support them, then do all in your power to prevent his being returned to serve in the coming Parliament:

1st - Will he support a bill that will fix the working of youths in the mines who are under 14 years of age to eight hours per 24 hours?

2nd - Will he support a bill for the better inspection of mines, and to carry it out, that a large body of sub-inspectors be appointed?

3rd - Will he support a measure that will make all the miners' work be weighed by the standard weight of the country, and these weighs to be under the superintendance of the weights inspector?

4th - Will he support a bill which will fully crush all truck shops, by making it a felony for a mine owner to have a truck shop?

5th - Will he support a measure making it imperative on all managers of mines having a certificate of ability granted from a board for the purpose?

6th - Will he support a bill which will make it imperative on all mine owners to submit the contract of hiring they may offer to their workmen to the Sheriff of the district, for his approval, before being acted on?

7th - Will he support a measure that will prohibit all employers from appointing medical officers or teachers, and then compelling their workmen to pay for such without any choice in the matter?

8th - Will he support a bill which will make the owner of any mine, pit, or factory responsible for the acts of neglect of the manager, or of any one acting as a deputy for him in the mine, pit, shop or factory?

9th - Will he support a measure which will prevent all children being employed in mines till they be 15 years of age, if they cannot read and write fluently and be fully certified that they can do so?

10th - Will he support a measure that will have the effect of protecting trades' society funds, as is extended to all other corporate bodies?

11th - Will he support a measure which will make the pays of all employed in mines, iron works, or foundries, not longer than 14 days at any one time?

Thus far as to acts of justice to you as a class; there are other matters you are fairly entitled to demand, especially you who live in counties, that you see that no man will have your support, or the support of those you can influence, who will not extend the suffrage to all that dwell in counties under the conditions only of those that may have voted in burghs. You ought to see also if the aspirants to new honours are willing to assist in forming boards of arbitration and conciliation between employers and workmen for the preventing of disputes, strikes and lockouts.

APPENDIX IV

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY LABOUR PARTY

The result of the Mid-Lanark election showed the pressing need there was for an organisation in Scotland which would enable the workers to exercise their voting power to their own advantage. Hitherto a number of isolated bodies have been at work in this direction, but the hold they have obtained on the working classes has been but slight, probably owing to the fact that they were content to sink their identity when the supposed interests of the Liberal party were concerned. Since April last Mr. Keir-Hardie has been devoting most of his spare time to the work of organising a distinct labour party, and on Saturday, 25th August, a conference was held in Glasgow to formally give birth to the new movement. In all, thirty-one representatives were present, representing the whole country from Dumfries in the south to Caithness in the north. Mr. Cunninghame Graham, M.P., presided ... The programme adopted included nationalization of the land, minerals, railways and banking systems, an eight hour bill, second ballot, payment of members, home rule, abolition of the House of Lords, disestablishment, free education, (boards to have power to provide food for children), adult suffrage, etc. etc. The office bearers elected were - hon. president, R.B.C. Graham, M.P. ... secretary, J. Keir-Hardie ...

A monster demonstration was held on the Green after the conference, when the proceedings of the conference were unanimously ratified. Speeches were delivered by Mr. Graham (who again presided), J. Robertson (Dundee), Rev. W.L. Walker, Keir-Hardie, A le Morton (Mondon), Donald Stewart, and Wm. Small. A spirit of hopefulness prevailed throughout, and the enthusiasm

at the demonstration was unbounded. Being now fully equipped for service, the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party should be a power in the land.

(Signed) J. Keir-Hardie

(6) SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY LABOUR PARTY -

Constitution

- I That the association be called the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party.
- II That its object be to educate the people politically, and to secure the return to Parliament and all local bodies of members pledged to its programme.

Programme

- 1st Adult suffrage, with abolition of plural voting
- 2nd Triennial Parliaments, elections to be all on one day
- 3rd Simplification of Registration Laws, so as to prevent removal from one constituency to another disfranchising a voter
- 4th Payment of Members by the State, and of official election expenses from the rates
- 5th Home Rule for each separate nationality or country in the British Empire, with an Imperial Parliament for Imperial affairs
- 6th Abolition of the House of Lords and all hereditary offices
- 7th A Second Ballot
- 8th Nationalisation of Land and Minerals
- 9th Labour Legislation - (a) An Eight Hours' Bill; (b) Abolition of present Poor Law System and substitution of State Insurance to provide for Sickness, Accident, Death, or Old Age; (c) Arbitration Courts with power to settle disputes and fix a minimum wage; (d) Weekly Pays; (e) Homestead Law to protect furniture and tools

to the value of £20 from seizure for debt; (f) Application of the Factories and Workshops Acts to all premises, whether public or private, in which work is performed.

10th Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic

11th No War to be entered upon without the consent of the House of Commons

12th Free Education, Boards to have power to provide food for children

13th Disestablishment

14th Reform in the system of civil government and abolition of sinecure offices and pensions

15th Simplification and codification of the civil and criminal law.

16th State acquisition of railways, waterways and tramways

17th National Banking System and the issue of State money only

18th Cumulative Income Tax beginning at £300 per annum.

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