The Rise of Scottish Nationalism
In the Nineteenth Century

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THE NATIONALISM WHICH I propose to discuss today is political nationalism. The 19th century saw a good deal of sentimental and romantic nationalism, particularly in the field of literature, but to examine such questions at the present time would only confuse the issue. There were literary nationalists dissatisfied with the constitutional arrangements worked out in 1707, but others, and notably the greatest of them all, Sir Walter Scott, were in political terms stout supporters of the Anglo-Scottish Union. To such people a strong sense of national identity was not incompatible with a commitment to the United Kingdom. The nationalism I want to consider is political, the demand for regional autonomy for Scotland, advanced by those Scots who felt that matters of significance to their country were being neglected or mismanaged by the Westminster Parliament and a government which was predominantly English in its membership and wholly English in viewpoint and interests. The nationalism of the 19th century, however, was very different from the nationalism of the Scottish National Party with which we have become accustomed today, so different in fact that it takes quite an effort of recollection to remember that it was this 19th century nationalism which enjoyed the support of most Scots who were dissatisfied with the existing constitutional position until very recently. The fast moving events of the 1960's and 70's have overshadowed all that went before that it is easy to overlook that it was in fact this 19th century brand of nationalism which enjoyed the support of most Scottish nationalists as recently as the 1950's. The modern Scottish National Party arose from the ruin of the Scottish Convention, which was the last manifestation of 19th century nationalism. Modern nationalism only began to develop a mass following when it was clear to the Scottish people that anything less than an independence movement was futile. Having tried and failed to gain regional autonomy for the better part of a century, it was time to move on and look for a different solution, and one which might be more understandable to a British Parliament.

Nineteenth century nationalism was essentially support for political devolution. At first this took the form of pressure for some measure of administrative autonomy, and secondly for a Scottish assembly or regional parliament, able to legislate on designated subjects for Scotland, reserving other functions to an Imperial Parliament in London. When this pressure first began to be felt Scotland and England had formed a single kingdom for well over a century. Why, then did Scottish nationalism re-surface so long after the supposed creation of a British state and nation? Why, in short, has the term British subject been a legal description rather than an accurate statement of nationality? Without overstating the case, it can be said that there is little evidence of widespread enthusiasm for the Union in 1707. On the other hand there were enthusiasts who saw it as a new beginning. A Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Cromartie, urged, in a letter written during the period of the Union negotiations, the necessity of:

"Ane intire union with England. I doe not mean without provisions and exceptions, that were ridiculous for both, but in substantial, that both head and body might be one politick body ... May wee be Brittaines, and down goo the oldignominious names of Scotland, of England .... England is a dishonorable name, imposed on Brittaines by Jutland pirates and mercenaries to Brittaines, usurping on their Lords. Brittaines is our true, our honourable denomination..."1

If we ignore Lord Cromartie's doubtful sense of history, his letter gives a fair representation of the enthusiasm with which a section at least of the Scottish nobility greeted the Union of 1707. Such enthusiasm did not last. Within a few years there were attempts to repeal the Union Act, and a dissolution of the bond between the two countries might well have taken place had it not been for the fact that the outspoken enemies of the Union were Jacobites, supporters of the exiled Roman Catholic princes of the House of Stuart. The Union probably survived the difficult early years.
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by default. Anti-Jacobite sentiment in Scotland found itself attached to
the cause of Union with England much against the will of many Presby-
terians to whom the Union was merely the lesser of two evils. That the
Union survived was due more to the imminent threat of Jacobitism than to
any great enthusiasm for the constitution, or even for the economic
benefits which ultimately were to flow from the English connection.2

The constitutional arrangements of 1707 proved more durable than
deserves to be, for the difficulties inherent in the Union settlement
did not become apparent until the middle of the 19th century. The crux of
the problem was the creation by the Union of a new state, without
creating at the same time a new nation, or even laying the foundation
for the evolution of such a nation. A federal arrangement had been
ruled out, and the Scottish Parliament disappeared; but the new British
Parliament was to all intents and purposes the old English Parliament
continuing, whatever the Treaty of Union might say to the contrary.
The largely English Parliament of Great Britain, though reinforced by a
minority of Scottish members, was naturally much more concerned with
England's affairs and relatively indifferent to those of Scotland.

The difficulty inherent in this settlement was the 'provisions and
exceptions' to which Lord Cromartie referred. The Union Treaty
provided that the laws of Scotland, in so far as they concerned private
right, should remain unchanged 'in all time coming, except for the evident
utility of the subjects'.3 Obviously it was impossible for a British
Parliament to enact legislation intended to have effect in Scotland
without considering the Scottish aspects separately. But no British
Parliament has been willing to devote the time required to deal adequately
with Scottish legislation.

In the 18th century the reluctance of English members of Parliament
to concern themselves with Scottish affairs was not a serious problem, for
there wasn't much legislation anyway. Parliament in the 18th century
was essentially a debating chamber rather than a legislative body, but the
problem was serious in the following century. This proved to be the best
argument which 19th century Scottish nationalists could find to impress
the Westminster politicians with the need for a separate local assembly, in
fact their case was unanswerable. In addition to a separate legal system
necessitating special legislative consideration for Scotland, the Union left
Scotland with a separate Established Church, quite distinct from that of
England, a fact which was of much greater significance in the 18th century
than it is today. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland actually
formed a kind of consultative assembly in which representatives of the

government could evaluate Scottish opinion, or at least the opinion of the
dominant religious group in the Scottish population. Important functions
were left entirely to the care of this body. Education and what poor relief
was provided in Scotland lay entirely within the competence of the
Church Courts, and Parliament offered no interference. Thus, for much
of the 18th century and later, the weaknesses of the Union settlement
were not particularly obvious. There was little legislation, not even for
England, and the Scots had no reason to feel that their interests were
being neglected.

The political issues which arose during the 18th century rarely had
anything to do with nationalism. The country was invariably govern-
ared by a Scot. A politician nominated by the government of the day
was charged with the political management of Scotland, with a view
towards securing favourable election returns. This manager generally
had enough influence with the British government to prevent it from
making his task more difficult by opposing against national suscepti-
bilities. Nearly everything of daily concern to the Scottish people
remained in their own hands through the Church organization, while
routine administration was controlled by the manager and the two
Scottish law officers, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-General for
Scotland, assisted by the leading judicial officers. If legislation having
force in Scotland was required, these men did not promote it without first
consulting their colleagues, the Edinburgh lawyers and, if appropriate,
the representative of the ruling oligarchies of the Scottish towns, the
Convention of Royal Burghs. There would be no point in denying that
Scottish politics were spectacularly corrupt in the 18th century, but it is
equally true that the dominant groups in Scottish society enjoyed a
relatively autonomous position within what was supposed to be a single
state.

Administrative autonomy was probably essential to the Union's
survival, yet it made Lord Cromartie's hope for the emergence of a British
nation an even more unlikely prospect. Administrative autonomy simply
reinforced the separateness of Scottish culture and the general feeling of
national identity even though economic benefits made any call for
dissolution of the Union bond unlikely in the later 18th century. Not that
the emergence of a British nation was ever very probable, for centuries of
national independence could not be easily forgotten. But if one looks for
the reasons for the survival of a Scottish nation, one factor should not be
forgotten, namely English nationalism. Few Englishmen saw any reason
to make a new start in 1707. Few Englishmen then or later ever considered
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themselves anything but Englishmen. English patriotism, coupled to the fact that the Scot was just about as unpopular in 18th century England as the Irishman was to be in the next century, goes a long way towards explaining the continuing strength of national feeling in Scotland. Injured national pride kept the flame of nationalism alive even among Scots who were in no sense political nationalists and even strong supporters of the Union found themselves sentimental or cultural nationalists. Politically, however, nationalism was dead, killed by its association with Jacobitism. There was to be no real revival of political nationalism before the middle years of the 19th century, when the constitutional problem became too obvious to be ignored.

In the early years of the 19th century, however, Scottish nationality was in greater danger than it had ever been. There was a definite tendency to Anglicize the Scots, or at least the dominant groups in Scottish society, many of whom looked to England for a career. Everything seemed to combine to promote this trend. Even the long wars with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France around the turn of the century worked in the same direction, arousing in many Scots feelings of British patriotism, which saw the term "North Britain" used more extensively in the titles of military formations and elsewhere than at any time since the immediate post-Union period. In politics Scottish nationality was not an issue. The interest which absorbed the attention of those Scots who were dissatisfied with the constitution was not Scottish autonomy but the demand for reform of the electoral franchise. The right to vote in parliamentary elections in Scotland was governed by statutes of the pre-Union Scottish Parliament. The restricted franchise was certainly dated and in need of extensive reform, but although it might have been argued that the absence of a Scottish Parliament had perpetuated this abuse, such arguments were not employed by the reformers who instead looked to England. The party which eventually carried out the electoral reform in 1832, the Whig Party, was in fact much more radical than its Tory rival to adopt English usages in all fields. Nationalism came closest to extinction in those years for there was a definite tendency to Anglicize the country to the point where there seemed some likelihood that Scotland might extinguish itself as a nation. The pressure came from Scotsmen themselves, but this does not alter the fact that the increasing assimilation was likely to make the merger with England reality if it persisted. The tendency to Anglicize the Scots was only partially offset by the popularity of literary nationalists like Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott. Similarly, the pride which many Scots felt for the military achievements of their national regiments might not have been enough to prevent the growth of the idea that the Scot was indistinguishable from the Englishman, for there was a marked increase in the use of the terms 'England' and 'English' by Scots, when in fact they meant 'Great Britain' and 'British'. National sentiment alone might not have been enough to keep the Scottish nation alive in the face of the increasing pressures towards assimilation.

What really revived nationalism in Scotland was the increasing evidence of administrative inefficiency as democratic government was hampered by the restrictions of the constitutional settlement. It was the misgovernment of Scotland, as many Scots began to see it, together with the example of more active nationalism afforded by Ireland, which revived Scottish nationalism. The termination of the peculiar management system, by which Scotland has been controlled since the Union, was the starting point. The end of management was inevitable. In 1828, when the government of Lord Canning failed to name a successor to the outgoing manager, Viscount Melville, there was no pressure from within Scotland for a new appointment. Political reform was under discussion and management was too closely associated with corruption. On the other hand, Scotland, in 1828, ceased to have that de facto administrative autonomy which the management system had provided since the Union. For the first time Scotland passed directly under the authority of the Home Secretary. Thus Scotland came fully under the authority of central government just at the moment when the success of parliamentary reform was about to open the way for a rapid increase in the amount of legislation enacted by Parliament. Until 1828 Scotland had some degree of autonomy in the sense that policy recommendations were made by an established Scottish politician whose opinions carried weight with government. The manager for political reasons paid some attention to the wishes of those groups in Scottish society who had a share in political life. This was far from democracy of course, it was at best a kind of benevolent dictatorship, but the manager could not afford to ignore the views of the influential sections of society. Undoubtedly the termination of management could be seen as marking an improvement in the tone of Scottish politics, but it scarcely effected an improvement in administrative efficiency. Some of the old pattern remained of course, for the Scottish law officers continued, but the men holding these appointments in the 19th century were not significant political leaders, they were junior members of predominantly English governments. After 1832 Scottish members of parliament may have better reflected Scottish opinion, but this did not help secure administrative efficiency either, for it
simply brought into the open the fact that parliamentary time for Scottish business was very grudgingly apportioned.

Scottish discontent was soon apparent. There was, however, no demand for anything approaching independence. Anyone who had argued in those terms in mid-19th century Scotland would have been considered the wildest eccentric. Enthusiasm for the Union was strong. Particularly among the Whig or Liberal party supporters, who secured for their party a majority of the Scottish seats in every election but one between 1832 and 1918. (The exception was the election of 1900.)

The liberal ascendancy did not, however, mean that the very real evidence of maladministration was ignored. The 1850's saw the emergence of the first political organization advocating what can be called Scottish nationalism, the Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, often called the Scottish Rights Society. This marked the real beginning of 19th century Scottish nationalism. Some degree of continuity in pressure for constitutional change can be traced from the foundation of the Scottish Rights Society in 1853 to the present. The Society resembled the only recently extinguished Covenant Association of the 1940's and 50's. Like the Covenant Association it included among its members Scots of many political persuasions, from Radicals to Conservatives, who found common ground in their dissatisfaction with the administration of their country. The short life of the Society, a mere three years, should not be allowed to obscure its significance. It's real importance lies in the evidence which it affords of widespread discontent with administration. The Society enjoyed the support of most Scottish town councils and other local authorities, and it was able to organize well-attended meetings in the major population centres, for the grievances it exposed were very real. It was difficult to get anything done in Scotland which required parliamentary action; the country as a whole was moreover greatly under-represented in Parliament, a grievance which was not to be rectified until 1884; and the particular grievance of many municipal authorities was the fact that very little tax revenue seemed to be expended in Scotland, in contrast to English cities. The programme of the Scottish Rights Society was anything but radical. There was no suggestion of national independence. What they wanted was administrative devolution, the revival of a quasi-administration for Scotland headed by a Secretary of State with authority over Scottish affairs. On the other hand, in view of the Irish example, there was an undercurrent of opinion among the Society's members which suggested that a local parliament might be appropriate should the appointment of a Minister be denied. In its official stance however the Scottish Rights Society was extremely moderate, an attitude which might well have rallied still greater support had it not fallen victim to the wave of patriotic enthusiasm which swept Scotland as well as England during the Crimean War, where in spite of the sad mismanagement of that campaign Scottish troops again distinguished themselves.

The collapse of the Scottish Rights Society in 1856 only proved a temporary setback. In the 1860's the struggle for redress of Scottish grievances was taken up from within the ruling Liberal Party, first by Duncan McLaren, a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh, who represented the city as a Radical-Liberal in the House of Commons, and then by Lord Rosebery who ultimately led the campaign for a Scottish minister to a successful conclusion. Rosebery had an uphill struggle to convince his own Party leaders of the need for such a Minister, and in fact he appears to have had more success in convincing the Opposition, for the creation of the Scottish Office was the work of Lord Salisbury's short-lived Conservative government of 1885. Thus, from 1885 Scotland had its own Minister, though initially only a Minister of junior grade who was not advanced to Cabinet status until 1892 and was not to become a full Secretary of State until 1926. Around this minister however a Scottish bureaucracy gathered as the administrative machinery developed over the years.

This apparent victory was soon seen to have created as many difficulties as it solved, and the existence of the Scottish Office had no effect in preventing the rise of national feeling. It established what was essentially an irresponsible bureaucracy, rarely exposed to democratic criticism and control. Until 1939 the bureaucrats were established in London, 400 miles from the country which they administered and thus insulated from public opinion there. They were scarcely checked by Parliament. According to a Scottish member of parliament, as late as 1913, "This House grudgingly allows to Scotland one day of seven hours in each Parliamentary year for the discussion of Scottish Estimates, on which alone any question regarding Scottish administration can be effectively raised." Even today the situation has not materially improved, the increase in business having more than offset the increased parliamentary time. Questions to the Secretary of State are scarcely any easier. Since the Minister is responsible for duties covered by as many as nine English Ministers, the Scottish MP gets a chance to ask a question relating to any aspect of the administration of his country about once every six weeks, if he is lucky, when it is the Scottish Secretary's turn to answer questions.
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The Minister moreover was not the leader of the Scottish MP's, he was, and is, the representative of the party with a majority in the House of Commons as a whole. In 1886, when Gladstone came out in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, the Conservatives formed a government and were to remain in office until 1892. Thus, the Conservatives controlled the House of Commons while at the same time the majority of Scottish members of parliament were Liberals, in spite of the Liberal-Unionist defectors who began to vote with the Conservative Party in opposition to Irish Home Rule.

The Scottish Office was thus in no way representative of the Scottish voters. The Minister was the agent of the Government, as of course all Ministers are, but without even the minimal checks which parliamentary procedure normally accords to elected members of parliament. The bureaucracy which staffed the various departments of the Scottish Office may have been well meaning and relatively efficient, but the fact remains that they were virtually unchecked by the elected representatives of the people. On many occasions measures desired by a majority of the Scottish MP's were opposed by Government and defeated in Parliament with virtually no debate. In effect the civil service made and administered its own policies. The argument over devolution really resolves itself around this point; either democracy was unimportant, whereupon the existing system might be sustained, or it was of significance and devolution was essential. Parliamentary democracy has taken some hard knocks in recent years, and the powers of the House of Commons are now questionable, but in the 19th century there was still no dispute, the House of Commons was the place where it was expected that policy should be made and defended. In the case of Scotland this did not happen.

This unsatisfactory situation brought 19th century nationalism into its final phase. Gladstone's adoption of Irish Home Rule as a solution to the problems of that unhappy country made many Scots Liberals look more favourably on the idea of a Scottish Parliament than they might otherwise have done. If Ireland was to have Home Rule, why not Scotland also? It should be pointed out that this Scottish Liberal enthusiasm for Home Rule for their country was not widely shared by Liberal leaders. A Scottish Parliament would inevitably mean a reduction in the number of Scottish MP's in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. Would this not drive the Liberals into permanent opposition? Could they afford to lose safe Scottish seats? The Scottish Liberal vote was essential to the formation of a Liberal Government in London just as the Scottish Labour vote is essential to a Labour Government today. Both need Scottish MP's in the Commons. But when the Liberal party did form a government again in 1892 it found itself having to deal with a Scottish Home Rule Association, largely composed of its own supporters. Clearly they couldn't just be ignored and some concession had to be made to the Scottish wing of the party if it was not to be split over the question. The rising political representatives of Labour co-operated with the Liberals, but they were still rivals, and the Labour leaders, Keir Hardie and Ramsay Macdonald were Home Rulers. The Home Rule Association pressed for a regional assembly responsible for Scottish affairs, and to which the Scottish Office bureaucrats would be responsible, on the face of it a reasonable demand, and if the powers of this assembly had been suitably restricted, the Liberal Government might well have felt able to retain substantial Scottish representation at Westminster as well. The concession offered by the Liberal government, however, was miserably small. Instead of a Parliament Scotland was given a committee of existing members of parliament, the Scottish Grand Committee. This creation of the Liberal Government of 1894 was neither Scottish nor grand. All the Scottish MP's belonged to the committee, but a further body of non-Scottish members of the House of Commons, up to fifteen in number, were added to retain the overall party balance as reflected in the House as a whole. It is difficult to understand why this brake on the Scots MP's was thought necessary, since they were given no real powers to do anything. They were only permitted to consider bills which the government considered non-controversial, and even then the second reading was taken in the House of Commons as a whole. Not surprisingly this was seen for what it was, a means of keeping the Scots under English control rather than a meaningful concession to nationalist sentiment. And even this pitiful fruit of the Scottish Home Rule Association's agitation disappeared for a time when the Liberal government left office. The Conservative Party had never liked the measure and did not proceed with the experiment when the Liberal government fell in 1895. The Scottish Grand Committee has had a chequered career since that date, re-appearing under Campbell-Bannerman's Liberal Government in 1907 and vanishing again in 1922, when its membership rules failed to guarantee government control due to the weakness of Scottish Conservatism, and resurfacing in 1948 with somewhat extended authority as a sop to growing nationalist feeling.

The major fault nevertheless remains; the Scottish Grand Committee is a packed body, designed not to reflect Scottish wishes and needs, but the wishes of the majority party in Parliament. The time
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was this essentially 19th century policy which prevailed until the 1950's. MacCormick's loss of control of the Scottish National Party had no effect on public attitudes. The victory of the independence group in the National Party in 1942 simply condemned it to a decade of even greater obscurity. MacCormick, outside the party, was able to rally widespread support for a non-partisan nationalist organization, the Covenant Association, which successfully drew support from members of all political parties for a policy of devolution. In 1949 they got their answer. The Labour Government of Clement Attlee, which had recently dropped Home Rule from their own programme, denied that there was any real demand for devolution. Until their assumption of power at the conclusion of the Second World War, the Labour Party had nominally favoured Home Rule, but the speed with which the policy was dropped, suggests that the need of Scottish votes to maintain power at Westminster might have been a major consideration. The Covenant of the Association's title was an attempt to answer this Government claim that devolution was not desired by the Scottish people. By 1950 some two million signatures had been collected for a document which called for devolution. The Association requested the formation of a Scottish assembly with jurisdiction only over Scottish affairs, which was simply the 19th century programme continued into the mid-20th century. Quite probably it would have proved an unworkable scheme, but it was certainly a policy characterised by moderation. Needless to say the Covenant plebiscite was no more successful than any previous limited campaign had been. Both major political parties rejected it out of hand. In their view the plebiscite had no place in the British political tradition; only Parliament was competent to interpret the people's will. Exactly how a largely English body was to interpret the Scottish people's will was never made clear. The usual interpretation of the attitude adopted by both the Conservative and Labour parties was that if Scotland wanted Home Rule it would first have to elect members of parliament who favoured it, whereupon it was implied Home Rule would be conceded. This was never stated unequivocally of course, and it was worth recalling that period of 36 years or so when there was a majority of Scottish MPs in favour of Home Rule, and the meagre product of their agitation, the Scottish Grand Committee. Naturally the major parties did not expect to hear anything more of Home Rule. The Covenant Association was a pressure group rather than a political party. Its membership was actually a coalition of supporters of all political parties operating in Scotland who happened to favour devolution. Accordingly the Covenant Association was in no position to deliver its members' votes at an elec-

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allowed for debate is ridiculously short, and discussion is cut off as soon as that time has elapsed. As an answer to the Scottish demand for devolution it was an insult rather than a concession, and the case for devolution remained strong. The Parliament at Westminster could not begin to deal with Scottish legislation, there was no time for it. The expedient of the committee was the work of a political party which favoured Home Rule in theory, and in practice in the case of Ireland, but which showed great reluctance to do anything meaningful for Scotland. From 1889 onwards bills for Scottish Home Rule were introduced into Parliament, but they never got anywhere, always being scuttled before the final reading, and this in spite of the fact that most Scots MP's favoured them. The closest the Home Rule bills ever came to success was when Asquith's Liberal government introduced a measure for Scottish Home Rule together with the Irish Home Rule bill of 1913. The association with the Irish bill was unfortunate, for it suffered the same fate, being delayed by Conservative and Ulster Unionist opposition until it died with the outbreak of the First World War. Had the bill not been tied so closely to the Irish bill Conservative hostility might well have been less fierce, for after all, the loss of Liberal Scotland could have been a positive advantage to their party at Westminster. After the war Ireland got Home Rule, though only after fighting for it, but once again Scotland remained out in the cold. The Liberal party was on the way out politically, but the emerging Labour Party still supported Home Rule, and it was still possible to secure the support of a majority of Scottish MP's for such a measure in 1924 and 1927, but they failed to make any headway at Westminster.

With this convincing and long term example of the failure of a campaign to win Home Rule through an existing political party, the way was cleared for the emergence of a new party committed to this cause, particularly in view of the current stress on the rights of small nations during the Versailles Peace negotiations. Several small groups of convinced nationalists did organize themselves, and in 1934 the greater part of them came together to form the Scottish National Party, which began its long road of faction fights, lost deposits and personality conflicts until its emergence as a real political force in the 1960's. The initial ineffectiveness was largely due to divided opinions within the ranks of the SNP. The gist of the dispute was whether to continue the 19th century struggle for Home Rule, the limited devolution of power to a local assembly, leaving supreme authority to the Westminster Parliament, or whether to take the road of other nations and fight for national independence. The first view was associated above all with the late John MacCormick, and it
tion, for at such times the basic political antipathies of the Association members and supporters came to the surface, and Scotland was the loser. But the two dominant British parties miscalculated badly. Far from destroying nationalism they were instrumental in creating it in its modern form, as a party committed to national independence. The older 19th century programme might not have satisfied Scotland for very long, for it was after all geared to the very different conditions of the last century, but in any event it was not tried. The major political parties missed an opportunity to head off an independence movement, and any attempt to do so now would in all probability be seen as a reluctant gesture dictated by the growth in support for full independence. So long as nationalists confined themselves to pressure for limited self-government they were scarcely taken seriously, independence would appear to be a demand which Governments are more likely to accept as real.14

Footnotes

2 The improved economic conditions are considered in Henry Hamilton: An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century. (Oxford 1963)
4 Alexander Allardyce, editor: Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, from the MSS of John Ramsay of Ochtertyre. (Edinburgh 1888)
5 Henry Cockburn: Memorials and Letters on the Affairs of Scotland, is representative of this tradition.
8 H.J. Hanham, op. cit., 77.
11 Formed in 1951 based upon the existing Scottish Convention established in 1936 to work for a domestic Scottish Parliament.
12 With the exception of the Communist Party.
13 There is still a marked reluctance on the part of SNP spokesmen to contemplate the refusal of independence even should they obtain the support of a majority of the Scottish electorate.
14 The evolution of Scottish Nationalism can be followed in:
   H.J. Hanham: Scottish Nationalism
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   J.M. MacCormick: The Flag in the Wind. (London 1955)

The Scottish Rising of 1820:
A Re-interpretation

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THE POPULAR UPRISINGS and accompanying general strike that made up the Scottish General Rising of April 1820 have recently been dealt with in a number of secondary works. Much of the interest in this subject has been generated by the resurgence of Scottish nationalism since the 1960s and this has resulted in an historiographical problem. The popular nationalist interpretations of the rising, which is also called the 'Radical War' or 'Scottish Insurrection', are distorted by two fundamental errors which are contradicted by a systematic examination of the sources. First, the nationalist view asserts that the general rising in Scotland was a secessionist or separatist movement of Celtic liberation which occurred in virtual isolation from the parallel unrest in England. Second, the rising is thought to have been triggered by the activities of 'agents provocateurs' working on behalf of the central government in London and their 'puppet' officials in Scotland. The latter claim is based on the writings of one Peter Mackenzie whose views are not borne out by the official records of either the Home Office or the Scottish authorities. Writing more than twelve years after the rising when the Whigs had returned to power in Parliament, Mackenzie found a receptive public willing to believe his story of a sinister Tory spy system. The recent work of William Roach on Scottish radicalism of the post-Napoleonic war years has completely discredited Mackenzie as a reliable chronicler of these events and at the same time exonerated Alexander Richmond, the Glasgow weaver accused of being a government 'agent provocateur'. While the work of Roach is free from a crude nationalistic interpretation of the rising, he too fails to fully
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