CORE AND PERIPHERY IN MODERN BRITISH HISTORY

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Read 1 November 1984

As the first professor of history in a Scottish university to be honoured with an invitation to deliver this celebrated lecture, my title perhaps suggests itself. Sir Walter Raleigh himself, I admit, had reason to be unenthusiastic about incursions from the north, but perhaps an exploration of Britain by a West Countryman with direct northern experience may constitute a proper tribute to his own historical writing.

Throughout western Europe, recent decades have witnessed a great interest in local and regional history. Historians have stressed the distinctive aspects of particular localities in speech, land tenure, religious practice, and much else. Archival research has been matched by psychological and anthropological insight. This zeal both reflected and fed a certain disenchantment with the contemporary centralized state. It seemed important to stress the vast diversity lurking behind Italian or German 'unification'. Even in the case of France, Baron Haussmann's claim that she was 'the most "one" in the world' seemed preposterous to Professor Weber as he explored, with the eyes of a foreigner, its regional characteristics. In discussing contrasting *mentalités*, he referred to the 'two nations' of Disraeli's *Sybil* and added that the author's concern with 'rich' and 'poor' stemmed in part from the fact that 'regional differences were of less account in England than in France'. There was nothing in England that approached the distance that separated the departments of Nord and Seine-Inférieure, say, from Lozère and Landes.[1]

In this country, however, local history was blossoming and new journals were devoted specifically to the north, the midlands, and the south of England. The *Scottish Historical Review* found new life and was matched by the *Welsh History Review*. County record

[1] E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (London, 1977), pp. 8–10.

societies maintained their publications. The new urban historians ensured that no major city was left unstudied. Social historians stressed local custom and practice. Alongside this activity there developed an obsession with the small world of the political élite. Regional historians and the practitioners of 'high politics' seemingly had little to say to each other, but together they have combined, no doubt innocently, to exclude from serious consideration what might be termed the territorial dimension in modern British history. The interplay between the constituent elements of modern Britain has elicited, until recently, only casual comment.

Professor Weber himself casually assumes that it is the degree of diversity in *England* which has to be compared with France in discussing the two countries—and he is not using England as synonymous with Britain. A French sociologist, Gustave d'Eichthal, who did visit England *and* Scotland in 1828 could have given better advice. 'The character of the Scots', he wrote, 'is quite different from that of the English. They are not at all starchy, formal, and fastidious like that of their neighbours, whose lack of free-and-easiness often makes them very tedious. Here you are allowed to have the knot of your tie awry.' Despite the 'auld alliance', however, he found it surprising how little even well-informed men in Edinburgh knew about France. The country might have been in the depths of Poland for all they knew or cared.[1]

It was common nineteenth-century practice, of course, to use 'England' and 'the English' to refer to all the inhabitants of Britain. Lord Randolph Churchill, for example, had no qualms about speaking in Edinburgh in 1882 on 'England and Egypt'.[2] This custom remains commonplace on the continent. Domestically, however, a long, though not altogether effective, campaign has been waged against the habit. Lord Randolph's son disliked being told to say 'Britain' and complained plaintively: 'I like England.'[3] Historians in our own time have great difficulty in deciding what it is they are writing about. Some books which purport to be about Britain are in fact about England, while others which purport to be about England also talk about Britain.[4]

[1] B. M. Ratcliffe and W. H. Chaloner (eds.), *A French Sociologist Looks at Britain: Gustave d'Eichthal and British Society in 1828* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 76–7.

[2] *Lord Randolph Churchill's Speeches*, i (London, 1889), 70–85.

[3] James Stuart, Viscount Stuart of Findhorn, *Within the Fringe* (London, 1967), p. 99.

[4] All the volumes in the Arnold *New History of England* covering the years since 1760 have the subtitle 'Britain'. The Fontana *History of England* is also taken to embrace Britain in its modern volumes. Two of the volumes in the Pelican *British Social History* have the subtitle 'England'.

Social historians are no more sensitive in these matters than are their political colleagues. Such rampant confusion, needless to say, is reflected at all levels in schools and universities in the United Kingdom.[1]

The historian must admit, however, that it is easier to be censorious or amused than to find a solution. 'Britain' and 'British' are difficult words to use and define, with all respect to this Academy. 'Britannia', concludes Peter Levi, 'has her toes in the surf of the cold sea and whatever the sea carries comes to her. Her past is terrifying . . .'[2] That may be poetic licence, but in his Wheeler Lecture Professor Alcock drew attention to the enigmatic processes whereby Celtic Britain became England, Scotland, and Wales.[3] Equally complex forces were at work in the attempt to re-invent Britain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the 1540s and 1580s abortive schemes for union were given enthusiastic support in the interests of 'the empire of greate Briteigne'.[4] Lord Protector Somerset referred to Britain as 'the indifferent old name', though he did not originate it. Historians and writers of tracts produced remarkable descriptions of a common past, but enthusiasts had to wait until 1603 and the union of the crowns for their desires to be gratified. The role of North Britons in the invention of Great Britain was very considerable but a commitment to an imperial vision did not imply the erosion of Scottish identity.[5] There was an ambivalence from the outset, as events in the mid-seventeenth century were to demonstrate.[6]

[1] Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, has recently referred to his belief that 'national, that is, for me, British history must play a central part in the construction of any history syllabus in English schools'. (*The Times*, 24 August 1984.) He cannot, of course, speak with authority about schools outside England, but whether 'British' history is thoroughly taught in any part of the United Kingdom may be doubted. K. G. Robbins, '*History*, The Historical Association and the "National Past"', *History*, lxvi, no. 218 (October 1981), 413–25.

[2] P. Levi, *The Flutes of Autumn* (London, 1983), p. 184.

[3] L. Alcock, 'Cadbury-Camelot: a Fifteen-year Perspective', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, lxviii (1982), 386.

[4] A. H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 151–2.

[5] Williamson, 'Scotland, Antichrist and the Invention of Great Britain' in J. Dwyer, R. A. Mason, and A. Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, n.d.), p. 52; J. Wormald, 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?', *History*, lxviii, no. 2 (June 1983), 187–209.

[6] See Roots's own essay in I. Roots (ed.), '*Into Another Mould': Aspects of the Interregnum* (Exeter, 1981); D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637–44* (Newton Abbot, 1973), and *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Scotland, 1644–1651* (London, 1977).

The circumstances of full union in 1707 have been subjected to fresh scrutiny. The tendency has been to minimize the element of 'vision' and to stress the extent to which negotiators on both sides of the border were motivated by short-term considerations.[1] The creation of a new political entity was not accompanied by such an outpouring of poetic fervour as had accompanied the union of the crowns. Historians will naturally disagree on the extent to which the union was inevitable, as they will on whether or not it was desirable. It is generally agreed, however, that after the disappearance of the Scottish parliament the power of the magnates did not long survive exposure to British politics. Scotland, Dr Riley argues, became an 'additional buttress of court dominance'.[2] Of course, the events of 1715 and 1745 required exceptional and specific attention to Scotland at Westminster but, in general, the 'management' of Scotland did not pose undue difficulties. Recent studies have illuminated the mechanisms and personalities involved. By the middle of the century, the repeal of the union and the rejection of the Hanoverians disappeared as a serious possibility. The 1707 settlement, with its guarantees concerning the nature of the Church of Scotland, the universities, the legal system and courts, and the rights and privileges of the royal burghs, were as entrenched as a doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty could permit. It seemed appropriate to develop the notion of a 'North Britain' and a 'South Britain'. The former style was to have a useful life for some two hundred years, but then rapidly declined. 'South Britain', on the other hand, never seriously established itself as a conceivable alternative to 'England'.

Historians have dabbled from time to time in the language of core/periphery or centre/fringe but for the most part have left the concept in the realm of grand theory to be fought over by political economists or geographers.[3] Scholars in these disciplines have made interesting suggestions but have by no means agreed on what constitutes a 'core' and what a 'periphery'. Some have argued that the notion has 'an intuitive meaning', a conclusion which has in practice informed the writing of modern British

[1] W. Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: a Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977); T. C. Smout, 'The road to union' in G. S. Holmes (ed.), *Britain After the Glorious Revolution* (London, 1969); T. I. Rae (ed.), *The Union of 1707: its Impact on Scotland* (Glasgow, 1974).

[2] P. W. J. Riley, *The Union of England and Scotland* (Manchester, 1978), pp. 312-13.

[3] D. Sears, B. Schaffer, and M.-L. Kiljunen (eds.), *Under-developed Europe: Studies in Core-Periphery Relations* (Hassocks, 1979); J. Gottman (ed.), *Centre and Periphery: Spatial Variations in Politics* (London, 1980).

history.[1] The general assumption is that, as Lord Beloff puts it, 'It is possible for the 1914-45 years to deal with politics nationally, that is inevitably London-based', though he concedes that 'a future historian' might well decide to allot more space to Scotland and Wales.[2] His statement finds a ready echo in practically every general history of Britain since 1707.

There is, indeed, little point in contesting the view that London was the core of national politics in the British state. It was in the forum of Westminster that the new Scottish MPs had to operate after 1707 and they did so with some relish. It has been calculated that of the 261 between 1707 and 1760 151 came from titled families. Sixteen Scottish peers, selected from their total number, sat in the House of Lords. The more grand among them had no taste for a return to merely Scottish public life. It was the 'poor worms' who remained in North Britain. This exodus was not confined to the representative peers. A recent examination has concluded that there were only a dozen non-soldier representative peers who could have taken part in public work in Scotland for more than five consecutive years. One of them, the 4th Earl of Selkirk, was known to have lived 'in the most retired manner' in the University of Glasgow for a decade after 1742.[3] There was nothing retiring about the Duke of Argyll in England. In 1742 he became Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, in which post he was succeeded by another Scotsman, the 2nd Earl of Stair. It was the beginning of a notable Scottish role both in the command and composition of the British Army.[4] Scottish sailor peers, who had a markedly short life expectancy, also left Scotland and played no significant part in its affairs. The 'management' of Scotland rested in the hands of the Earl of Islay (who succeeded his brother to the dukedom of Argyll in 1743) from the mid-1720s

[1] J. Galtung, 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research*, viii, part 2 (1971), 81-117, and E. L. Gidengil, 'Centres and Peripheries: an Empirical Test of Galtung's Theory of Imperialism', ibid., xv, part 1 (1978), 51-66.

[2] M. Beloff, *Wars and Warfare: Britain, 1914-1945* (London, 1984), p. 8.

[3] Sir James Fergusson, *The Sixteen Peers of Scotland* (Oxford, 1960); J. S. Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society, 1707-1764: Power, Nobles, Lawyers, Edinburgh Agents and English Influences* (Edinburgh, 1983), pp. 5-9; A. Murdoch, '*The People Above': Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980).

[4] For the role of Scots in the Victorian Army see H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army' in M. R. D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society: Essays in Honour and in Memory of J. R. Western* (London, 1973). For a comment on the twentieth century see J. Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy* (Harmondsworth, 1983), pp. 166-70.

until his death in 1761. His nephew, the 3rd Earl of Bute, with whom he was by no means invariably in accord on Scottish matters, rose to spectacular heights, if briefly, to become Prime Minister in 1762. The prevalence of Scottish influences in the early years of George III, or so it was believed, led to various popular expressions of anti-Scottish sentiment, though Wilkes's use of 'North Briton' was supposedly an attack on the government in particular than on Scotsmen in general.[1] On his accession, George III had caused some surprise by his firm declaration that he gloried in the name of Briton—there is some suggestion that this was interpreted to mean that he was a Scot. If so, he did not require to explore his northern kingdom in person. That was left to the extravagant visit of George IV in 1822.[2]

In this transitional period of 'British' politics it is not easy to find the right terminology either for the state or the men who operated it. To confine ourselves to Bute and Islay, neither man could be said to be deeply Scottish. Islay had been born in Surrey and educated at Eton. He only came to live in Scotland at the age of 17 to study at the University of Glasgow. He then went to Utrecht and returned to England in the year of the union. Bute was educated in England and at Leiden and did not actually live in Scotland before 1739 and did not return there after 1745. Are they early 'Anglo-Scots', 'Englishmen of Scottish extraction' or 'Scoto-Britons'? Did their careers confirm that at least in an age of aristocratic politics Scotsmen had no alternative but to come to court and parliament in London if they wished for power in a British context? Distance and the difficulties of travel ruled out the possibility of rapid movement between North and South Britain. And where did this leave Scotland itself? Historians, on the whole, speak of it as a 'province'—Lenman refers to it as the most subservient and undemanding—but to do so is not altogether satisfactory.[3] In England, by the end of the eighteenth century, the term 'the provinces' was coming into use to describe the regions beyond London but in such a context Scotland was emphatically different.[4]

[1] G. Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty* (London, 1962), pp. 13–14.

[2] Its flavour is given in *A Historical Account of His Majesty's Visit to Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1822). D. Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: the British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition"', *c.* 1820–1977' in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), makes no mention of this event. Indeed, there is no mention at all of the not insignificant Scottish element in the British monarchy during this period.

[3] B. Lenman, *Integration, Enlightenment and Industrialisation: Scotland, 1746–1832* (London, 1981), p. 42.

[4] D. Read, *The English Provinces, c. 1760–1960* (London, 1964).

Eighteenth-century Edinburgh in the heyday of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' would not have seen itself as 'provincial' and remained, in a sense, a capital. The scholarship devoted to the intellectual life of late eighteenth-century Scotland over recent decades makes it impertinent merely to offer a few remarks.[1] However, explanations for its brilliant flowering are still somewhat elusive. Paradoxically, an element in its vitality may be the removal of independent political life. While it may be right to speak in a political sense of Scotland being 'ignored', this was not so either commercially or intellectually. The spectacular growth of the Glasgow tobacco trade in the 1760s and early 1770s had indeed been at the expense of the ports of the south-west of England and of London.[2] It was the very 'peripheral' position of Glasgow, in a British sense, which made it, for a time at least, pivotal in the wider British North Atlantic world. In that world 'Scotus Americanus' had an important part to play.[3] Intellectually and commercially, neither Glasgow nor Edinburgh was on the edge of that Britain which, sadly for them, was to be shattered by war and revolution in the American colonies.

It was a Scotland which could attract a clutch of young English aristocrats north of the border at the end of the century, though admittedly, if there had not been a continental war in progress, they might never have come. After Eton and Cambridge, William and Frederick Lamb came to Glasgow to sit at the feet of John Millar (and lodge in his house) in the last years of his life. It no doubt comes natural to Melbourne's biographer to characterize the inhabitants of the house as 'earnest, industrious and provincial'. Two of young Lamb's companions each thought himself as wise as Aristotle and Plato. Millar himself was pronounced 'a little jolly dog, and the sharpest fellow I ever met'. William reported to his mother that the Scotch universities were very much calculated 'to make a man vain, important and pedantic'. At least Melbourne contrived not to fall into the latter category himself.[4]

[1] A. C. Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment: a Social History* (London, 1976); N. Phillipson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment' in R. Porter and M. Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981); R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (eds.), *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1982).
[2] T. M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords* (Edinburgh, 1975).
[3] A. Hook, *Scotland and America: a Study of Cultural Relations, 1750–1835* (Glasgow, 1975); W. R. Brock, *Scotus Americanus: a Survey of the Sources for Links Between Scotland and America in the 18th Century* (Edinburgh, 1982); J. M. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance* (Edinburgh, 1982).
[4] Lord David Cecil, *The Young Melbourne* (London, 1954), pp. 54–6. Millar's

A year later, the younger and less sophisticated Harry Temple set off for Edinburgh in mid-September 1800 and arrived there a month later. His father took him *en route* to Glasgow, Loch Lomond, and an ironworks at Stirling—a fine estimate of what Scotland had to offer the southern visitor. The future Lord Palmerston lodged in the house of Dugald Stewart and was subjected to a rigorous diet of universal history, moral philosophy, and languages. He also took Scottish dancing classes and, in the summer, failing to find sufficient Scottish cricketers, was forced to take up golf, a poor pursuit in comparison. He was deemed to be a 'Paddy' and invited to celebrate St Patrick's Day.[1] Lord John Russell had initially shown resistance to the idea of acquiring 'Scotch knowledge in a Scotch town'. Political economy might surely be studied in England and he hardly knew the meaning of the term 'metaphysics'. In the end he spent three years in Edinburgh.[2]

The arrival of three English aristocrats in Scotland for part of their education was not a development which many would have envisaged a century earlier: even less that these three men should become Prime Ministers of Great Britain. Lord Lansdowne and Lord Dudley, two future Cabinet ministers, were also in Edinburgh at this time. However, this conjuncture was not to set a pattern; indeed it was never to be repeated. With the conclusion of peace, the continent again proved a more attractive alternative to men of standing seeking an occupation between school and university in England. In addition, the waning of the intellectual power of the 'Enlightenment' after the early decades of the nineteenth century was apparent, even south of the border. While all three men undoubtedly benefited from their experience of Scottish life and gained some insight into its character, it would be unwise, except perhaps in the case of Russell, to trace any very specific intellectual legacy.[3]

The general movement of population, however, was from north to south. In most professions and in commerce, the financial rewards were, on the whole, greater in England than Scotland.

most notable works were his *The Origins of the Distinction of Ranks* (London, 1779) and *An Historical View of the English Government* (London, 1787). See W. C. Lehmann, *John Millar of Glasgow* (Cambridge, 1960).

[1] K. Bourne, *Palmerston: the Early Years, 1784–1841* (London, 1982), pp. 11–30.
[2] J. Prest, *Lord John Russell* (London, 1972), p. 11.
[3] R. Pares, 'A Quarter of a Millenium of Anglo-Scottish Union', *History*, xxxix (October 1954), 233–48, has some general reflections. See also S. Collini, D. Winch and J. Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 23–61.

Quite apart from overseas emigration, the Scottish element in the English population steadily increased so that we can perhaps speak of a million Scots who have been absorbed into the English population.[1] The Scottish-born inhabitants of London constituted just over 1 per cent of the total population in each decennial census from 1841 to 1891.[2] Quite apart from those who settled permanently, many others came for short periods. Clubs, societies, and churches at least for a time preserved a Scottish past for those who wished to retain it, but it is a moot point whether it makes sense to speak of a Scottish 'minority'.[3] As is frequently the case, however, some groups of Scottish 'exiles' in London were more self-consciously Scots than those who stayed at home. There were, therefore, networks of communication between London and Scotland which ran alongside official political channels.

It is, however, rather too simple to speak in the nineteenth century of both 'England' and 'Scotland', since the pace of commercial and industrial development in both countries accentuated differences between region and region and created a multiplicity of new cores and peripheries. As Professor Smout points out, 'Scotland is a periphery to south-east England, but Shetland a periphery to an Edinburgh–Glasgow core, and the outer isles of Shetland, Whalsay and Unst, a periphery to its capital at Lerwick.'[4] Likewise in the case of England. Population growth was steady in London and the south-east of England in the mid- and late nineteenth century but so was it in the north, north-west, and north-east of England. Population declined in an area through the north midlands to the south-west. It was southern England

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[1] M. W. Flinn (ed.), *Scottish Population History from the Seventeenth Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977). Dame Flora Robson was only one of many Scots brought up in England to be treated as an alien in Scotland. 'I expected to feel at home in Scotland,' she wrote, 'but to my surprise I was treated as a Sassenach. It was a great shock to me.' K. Barrow, *Flora . . .* (London, 1981), p. 71. Earlier generations had comparable experiences.

[2] H. A. Shannon, 'Migration and the Growth of London, 1841–1891', *Economic History Review*, v, no. 2 (1935), 81–3. The 'tramp' of a Scottish working man in search of work is described in D. Vincent (ed.), *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy* (London, 1978). In 1830, for example, he travelled 1,400 miles from Glasgow before finding work in Dorset.

[3] Perhaps old memories died hard in Northumberland. In 1846, a revising barrister struck off the list of voters persons 'chiefly Scotchmen' in Alnwick. 'There now,' he remarked, 'we have repelled the invasion of the Scots.' J. Prest, *Politics in the Age of Cobden* (London, 1977), p. 95.

[4] T. C. Smout, 'Centre and Periphery in History; with Some Thoughts on Scotland as a Case Study', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, xviii, no. 3 (March 1980), 263.

which appeared to be peripheral at a time when the north seemed dynamic. Cobden, so widely taken as the personification of 'Manchester man', had moved from Sussex. Writing of the general conditions of the Labour market in the late nineteenth century Dr Hunt concludes that what emerged prominently from his research was 'the plight of the rural labourer of southern England and parts of Wales and northern Scotland'.[1] It was easier, cheaper, and faster to travel between different parts of Great Britain than it had ever been in the past.[2] Scotland as a whole appeared to be closing the gap in its per capita incomes as compared with England. Wages in central Scotland were, in Hunt's words, 'characterized by long-term improvement relative to other parts of Britain'. By the turn of the century it had become one of the four highest out of thirteen wage regions in Britain. Clearly, mere distance from London did not in itself make a region 'peripheral'.[3]

At the level of high politics, in the transitional decades from oligarchy to democracy, the integration of English and Scottish politics appeared to be increasingly a fact, at least in terms of individual careers. Of the men who either reached Downing Street or came close to doing so, the proportion of Scots is astonishingly high. We must consider Lord Aberdeen, William Ewart Gladstone, Lord Rosebery, A. J. Balfour, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Andrew Bonar Law in the period leading up to the First World War. There are many nuances and subtleties in such a list. Aberdeen, as his recent biographer makes clear, follows firmly in the steps of the eighteenth-century aristocratic diaspora. Most of his time was spent in England, where he had largely been brought up. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge. Although he eventually succeeded in becoming an English peer, he had earlier been closely involved in Scottish politics and he took a keen interest in his estates in north-east Scotland. There were times, not very frequent, when he felt

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[1] E. H. Hunt, *Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850–1914* (Oxford, 1973), p. 356.

[2] Before the advent of the railways, the number of coach passengers conveyed between London and Edinburgh in the 1760s has been put at some twenty-five monthly rising to four thousand monthly in the 1830s. By that date several steamships sailed weekly between the two capitals. It is well known that the dying Sir Walter Scott, returning from the continent, chose to sail from London to Leith. A. M. Milne and J. C. Laight, *The Economics of Inland Transport* (London, 1963), p. 28. 645,000 passengers flew between London and Glasgow in 1972.

[3] Hunt, op. cit., p. 177; see also S. and O. Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland, 1832–1914* (London, 1984), p. 13.

particularly Scottish and spoke in parliament on Scottish questions with some authority. That apart, he seemed an English peer.[1] Gladstone was a rather different kind of Scot. When described as a Scotsman, he did not disclaim the honour—at least not in Scotland. He admitted in Dundee, for example, that 'not a drop of blood runs in my veins except what is derived from a Scottish ancestry'.[2] His father, John Gladstone, had moved from Leith to Liverpool and, like other Scotsmen, played a major part in its commercial affairs.[3] William, however, became an Anglican and an Englishman through the exertions of Eton and Christ Church. Father Gladstone returned to Scotland as a landed gentleman and William always felt himself to have a particularly close grasp of Scottish life, even if that life needed purifying by the instrument of Glenalmond. It was fitting that he should latterly campaign in Midlothian.[4] Lord Rosebery might at first sight appear the very epitome of an anglicized Scottish peer.[5] Yet he had a deep feeling for Scotland which must be balanced against Mentmore, the Derby and the London County Council. As a youthful Rector of the University of Aberdeen he strongly urged the merits of a Chair of Scottish History. He played an important part in the establishment of a Scottish Secretaryship.[6] In 1882 he threatened to blow up a Scottish prison as a means of drawing attention to the country's needs. He gloried in 'our Scottish nation' in speeches in Glasgow, particularly when he could claim that Scots believed in levelling up rather than down.

The Scottish occupation of Downing Street continued into the twentieth century. Campbell-Bannerman became the first Prime Minister of Britain to go to school in Scotland.[7] He always claimed to be most at ease in Scotland and represented a Scottish constituency. His correspondence with other Scotsmen betrays a belief that they understood each other—even Rosebery had urged

[1] M. E. Chamberlain, *Lord Aberdeen* (London, 1983). Dr Chamberlain devotes one chapter specifically to Scotland. It is entitled, significantly, 'A Scottish Interlude'.

[2] A. J. Hutton and H. J. Cohen (eds.), *The Speeches of the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, on Home Rule, etc., 1888–1891* (London, 1902), pp. 288-9.

[3] S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones* (Cambridge, 1971).

[4] R. Kelley, 'Midlothian: a Study in Politics and Ideas', *Victorian Studies*, iv (1960-1), 119-40.

[5] R. Rhodes James, *Lord Rosebery* (London, 1963), pp. 130, 465.

[6] Lord Rosebery, *History and a Chair of History: a Rectorial Address Delivered Before the Students of Aberdeen University* (Edinburgh, 1880).

[7] J. Wilson, *The Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* (London, 1973), pp. 154-7.

Ronald Munro-Ferguson to remember that 'C-B' was a Scot—
though that did not seem invariably the case.[1] Sir Henry took the
notable step of substituting 'Scotland' for 'N.B.' on his headed
notepaper. His national allegiance also expressed itself in a
partiality for continental travel. Campbell-Bannerman's prefer-
ence for his own countrymen did not extend to his predecessor as
Prime Minister, A. J. Balfour.[2] Despite suggestions to the
contrary, Balfour undoubtedly thought of himself as a Scot, at
least when he was in Scotland. He took communion in both the
Church of Scotland and the Church of England in royal fashion.
His appointment as Chief Secretary for Ireland brought one letter
from the senior Inverness Law Officer expressing his pleasure
in 'watching the career of a Scotsman in whom we may all be
proud'.[3] His successor as leader of the Unionist opposition,
Andrew Bonar Law, was a man of very different stamp. Like
Campbell-Bannerman, he too was educated at Glasgow High
School, but then became an iron merchant in the city.[4] He
conformed to an English notion of what an earnest, hardworking,
graceless Scot should be. Some historians have found it surprising
that the city of Glasgow should produce prime ministers of Great
Britain.

This important Scottish presence in Downing Street was also
matched at ministerial level. What did it signify? It clearly
suggested that 'Scots' could reach the highest political office in the
British state without much impediment arising from their Scottish
connection. It was not easy, however, even for men with property
north and south of the border, to be prominent figures in both
England and Scotland. Naturally, this was particularly the case
for the Scottish Secretaries. His biographer suggests that one of
them, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, was assisted in maintaining his

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[1] Rhodes James, op. cit., p. 420.

[2] A. J. Balfour, 'Race and Nationality', *Transactions of the Honourable Society
of Cymmrodorion* (Session 1908–1909). On p. 238 Balfour argued that 'there is
no such thing in these islands as a man of pure descent from any race what-
ever.'

[3] M. Egremont, *Balfour* (London, 1980), p. 80.

[4] R. Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister: the Life and Times of Andrew Bonar
Law* (London, 1955); Professor Donald Cameron Watt has many stimulat-
ing comments to make on the transatlantic relationship but it is surprising
that an Anglo-Scot should write that the Tories were 'discarding the scion
of the Salisburys for a Scots Canadian shipping magnate'. D. Cameron Watt,
Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place, 1900–1975 (Cambridge, 1984),
p. 29; M. Bentley, *Politics Without Democracy, 1815–1914* (London, 1984),
p. 315.

Scottish identity in England by his total imperviousness to music and colour, at least in worship.[1]

It is the appointment of Bonar Law, however, which is most significant for our theme. Unlike all his Scottish predecessors as party leaders in British politics, his background and formative influences owed nothing to England. His conduct of the Opposition before 1914, often found mystifying, cannot be explained without reference to this fact. He came to the west of Scotland at the age of 12 from New Brunswick where his father, who hailed from Portrush in Ulster, was a Presbyterian minister. From Bonar Law's perspective, it was London which stood at the edge of the British world. Glasgow was the core of the northern trans-atlantic British Empire. English contemporaries and subsequent historians have not been able to accept a temporary moment when the second city appeared first. Joseph Chamberlain did spot it. Significantly it was to Glasgow and Greenock that he came in October 1903 to launch his tariff campaign throughout Britain. He was even prepared to recognize Glasgow as the second city of the Empire.[2]

One further significant feature of these decades was the appearance of English politicians in Scotland in pursuit of constituencies rather than fishing. Receiving the Freedom of Edinburgh in 1910, H. H. Asquith recalled how, when he first invaded Scotland twenty-five years earlier, 'a ferry-boat conveyed me and my carpet-bag across the turbulent and treacherous waters of the Forth to the adjacent Kingdom of Fife, which has been my political home ever since'.[3] For a time he shared the kingdom with Augustine Birrell. When East Fife failed Asquith in 1918, it was Paisley which rescued him, though only temporarily, a few years later. John Morley had 'reluctantly' accepted the Montrose constituency: a diffident traveller, he did not excessively favour the burghers of Montrose with his presence.[4] Winston

[1] Lady Frances Balfour, *A Memoir of Lord Balfour of Burleigh* (London, n.d.), p. 201.

[2] R. Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain: a Political Study* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 285 ff.; C. W. Boyd (ed.), *Mr Chamberlain's Speeches*, ii (London, 1914), 140-64; Chamberlain urged his audience 'to consolidate the British race'. J. Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain: Vol. vi, 1903-1968* (London, 1968), p. 453, completely misses the point of Chamberlain's magnanimous opening concession that Glasgow and not Birmingham was the 'second city of the Empire' by bestowing that accolade upon Liverpool.

[3] H. H. Asquith, *Occasional Addresses* (London, 1918), p. 139. In marrying Margot Tennant, Asquith established another Anglo-Scottish connection.

[4] D. Hamer, *John Morley* (Oxford, 1968), p. 320.

Churchill was compelled to flee to Dundee. This English Liberal presence in Scotland combined with the Scottish Liberals to form, in the Cabinets before 1914, a most pronounced Scottish colouring to a degree which has not since been exceeded. It did not pass undetected. One of Sir Edward Grey's early biographers described him as 'a typical Englishman' in his 'simple straightforwardness', which contrasted with the Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen who played, some Englishmen thought, 'so disproportionate a part in the affairs of the United Kingdom'.[1] Even Sir Edward came from dangerously near the border. Were it not for the Scottish leadership of the Opposition at this juncture, the Tory party might have played the English card more strongly than it did. That there was an undercurrent of feeling can be noted, for example, in Sir Cecil Spring-Rice's private reference to Lloyd George as 'a Celt from the lower regions', and in the memorandum circulated by John Gretton, the midlands brewer and MP, in November 1910 in which he detected '... a widespread movement on foot among the Celtic elements in the U.K. to assert predominance over the Anglo-Saxon. An understanding exists between the principal Irish, Welsh and Scottish parties to cooperate at the right time.'[2] Commentators on the general elections of 1910 thought they saw a pronounced geographical aspect to British politics though, significantly, did not quite interpret it in the same way. Beatrice Webb commented on the 'dividing of England into two distinct halves each having its own large majority for its own cause', while J. A. Spender drew a distinction between the Liberal north, Scotland, and Wales on the one hand, and the Unionist south of England on the other.[3] The extent to which the division was within England rather than between England and Scotland and Wales has a bearing on the claim that the Tory Party owed eventual success to 'the highlighting of national differences between England and the Celtic regions'.[4]

[1] Anon., *Sir Edward Grey K.G.* (London, 1915), p. 11.

[2] S. Gwynn (ed.), *The Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice*, ii (London, 1929), 159–60; J. Vincent (ed.), *The Crawford Papers* ... (Manchester, 1984), p. 169.

[3] Cited in N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (London, 1972), pp. 380–9; the areas S. Macintyre identifies as being most sympathetic to Marxist influences between the wars—central Scotland, non-coastal south Wales, the north-east of England—share a similarity which derives from comparable socio-economic experiences. They have more in common with each other than with the nation or even region of which they are a part. S. Macintyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain, 1917–1933* (Cambridge, 1980).

[4] R. Taylor, *Lord Salisbury* (London, 1975), p. 189.

The mention of Lloyd George, and his emergence as the first Welsh-speaking Prime Minister of Great Britain, is a reminder of the extent to which the common nineteenth-century habit of referring simply to England and Scotland, or 'the two Kingdoms', was no longer adequate. The Welsh dimension in British history could not be ignored. In one sense of the word, the Welsh had a distinctive claim to be 'British'. Iolo Morganwg dreamed on Primrose Hill of the bards of Britain. Lloyd George himself in 1881 eyed the Houses of Parliament 'in a spirit similar to that in which William the Conqueror eyed England on his visit to Edward the Confessor, the region of his future domain'.[1] Welshmen had felt the same way since the sixteenth century. Welsh city life before the industrial revolution was London life. It was there that the first Welsh books were published. The societies of Welshmen in London maintained a close contact with Wales, but Welshmen were not a 'minority' living in separate ghettos. The nineteenth century, of course, saw major changes in Wales itself. A sense of national identity required institutional recognition in the shape of a national university and library. On the other hand, the Welsh language lost ground sharply, though the erosion was not as catastrophic as in the case of Irish. Wales was able to retain the bulk of its expanding population. There was even substantial immigration into south-east Wales from south-west England. Cardiff emerged as a substantial town with aspirations.[2] Wales as a whole was less remote and inaccessible from England than at any time in its history. The later Cardinal Vaughan expressed a youthful desire 'to get away from civilization altogether' which he thought might mean becoming 'a solitary priest at a seaside town in Wales'.[3] As he wrote, the arrival of the railway and the steady expansion of holiday-making meant that not even seaside towns in Wales were safe from civilization. One might meet Mr Gladstone or Mr Bright.[4] It was not easy to assess the impact of these developments for Welsh–English relations in the context of Britain. Cardiff, widely thought in Welsh/English circles to be 'unWelsh', hardly constituted the core of Welsh life. Quite apart from other considerations, geography and communication flows made that

[1] W. R. P. George, *The Making of Lloyd George* (London, 1976), p. 101.

[2] M. J. Daunton, *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff, 1870–1914* (Leicester, 1977).

[3] Cited in E. R. Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984), p. 358.

[4] J. K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: a Social History, 1750–1914* (Leicester, 1983), includes Wales and the Isle of Man within its scope; K. G. Robbins, 'Palmerston, Bright and Gladstone in North Wales', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, xli (1980), 129–52.

unlikely.[1] In the north, it was Liverpool, with its substantial Welsh community, which frequently served the Welsh hinterland. In the north-west, on the periphery, the slate industry seemed to be prospering.[2] Ships came to Porthmadog, where Lloyd George was a young solicitor, from across the globe. Even so, he at least would not be satisfied with local reputation and modest fortune. He wrote in 1884 that as for any higher object—fame—London was the place for that. His private description of Wales as 'this stunted principality' was not flattering.[3] Other Welshmen, less drawn to the prospect of power in London, continued with the task of inventing a national past at home.[4]

The same task was also found engrossing in Ireland.[5] In 1913, listening to the debate on the Home Rule Bill Leo Amery lamented that no speaker felt 'that the United Kingdom really is a nation and that Irish nationalism in any shape or form means the end of United Kingdom nationalism'. He believed that if only a single name had been invented for the United Kingdom in 1800, and the Vice-Royalty abolished, Home Rule would never have been considered.[6] Whatever the plausibility of that contention, the Act of Union certainly complicated the dimensions of Britain yet further. Some Irishmen did glory in the description of 'West Briton', but that terminology was unlikely to prove generally acceptable. Irish identity was too complex to be subsumed under that formula, or indeed perhaps under any. But since, by definition, the evolving Britain of the nineteenth century was an

[1] The establishment of a University of Wales was a case in point. Henry Bruce, Lord Aberdare, wrote in 1863 strongly supporting the establishment of such a scheme if it were attached to 'some considerable town', such as Swansea or Cardiff. But he wondered whether the north and the south could ever unite for such a purpose or agree upon the site. *Letters of the Rt. Hon. Henry Austin Bruce, Lord Aberdare of Duffryn* (Oxford, 1902), pp. 203–4.

[2] M. Jones, 'Notes from the Margin: Class and Society in Nineteenth Century Gwynedd' in D. Smith (ed.), *A People and a Proletariat: Essays in the History of Wales, 1780–1980* (London, 1980), pp. 199–214. However, when the English-educated Irishman H. R. Reichel was appointed as the first Principal of the University College at Bangor a century ago he had to admit that he had never, until that point, heard a Welsh hymn tune and did not know that such a beast as a red dragon existed.

[3] George, op. cit., p. 115.

[4] P. T. J. Morgan, 'From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period' in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 43–100.

[5] R. F. Forster, 'History and the Irish Question', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxxiii (1983), 169–92.

[6] J. Barnes and D. Nicholson (eds.), *The Leo Amery Diaries: Vol. I, 1896–1929* (London, 1980), p. 92.

amalgam, was there no place for Irish/British? That possibility was confronted by the alternative vision of a Gaelic nation. 'Celts' and 'Anglo-Saxons' apparently opposed each other as though a thousand years had not passed and as though the populations of Ireland or Britain could be accurately fitted into either category.[1] There was an Irish and Irish-descended population in Britain which was almost approaching the 'Irish' population in Ireland. It was not only their Atlantic perspective that linked Liverpool, an 'English' city, and Glasgow, a 'Scottish' city, but the fact that both contained between a quarter and a half of their populations who were 'Irish', and the same was true in lesser degree of other British cities.[2] Not that this influx had been without tension. Alarm amongst many Scottish Presbyterians, for example, reinforced a solidarity with the Scots-Irish of Ulster.[3] The failure of Gladstonian Home Rule had left unresolved on what basis Ireland might continue to exist alongside or within the 'British' world. It had also revealed the hazards that might attend any attempt to suppose that Ireland was a homogeneous entity.

It is, in part, this complex process of intermingling which makes ill-advised the ready and prevalent willingness to talk about any part of the United Kingdom (before or after 1922) outside England as a 'Celtic' land, region or unit. Even more so is this the case with that portmanteau favourite, the Celtic fringe.[4] It is not clear precisely when it came into use, but now seems to be thought indispensable. 'Celtic' in this connection is a good word at twilight, but historians should be wary of its use in modern British history. Of course, enthusiasm for matters Celtic occurred in the most diverse places in the nineteenth century, encouraged by the

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[1] H. A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons and Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1982); R. R. Davies, *Historical Perception: Celts and Saxons* (Cardiff, 1979).

[2] P. J. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: a Political and Social History of Liverpool, 1868–1939* (Liverpool, 1981); B. Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States, 1820–1920* (Aberdeen, 1984); M. A. G. Ó Tuathaigh, 'The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxxi (1981), 149–73; C. Holmes (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978); K. Lunn, *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities* (Folkestone, 1980).

[3] K. G. Robbins, 'Religion and Identity in Modern British History' in S. Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity: Studies in Church History*, xviii (Oxford, 1982), 465–87.

[4] M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London, 1975), is a general exposition, but many other authors use the phrase. R. J. Hind, 'The Internal Colonial Concept', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xxvi, part 3 (July 1984), 543–68.

writings of such varied figures as Matthew Arnold and the invalid uncle and namesake of Charles de Gaulle. The notion of 'sinking the differences between the different members of the great Celtic family' was aired. However, a Celtic League, designed to promote the common political objectives of the Scottish Highlands, Ireland, and Wales, foundered. The hard difficulty was that the religious and linguistic differences within the 'Celtic family' were acute.[1] Not only that, to categorize any of the non-English units of Britain as 'Celtic' *tout court* was, and is, a misleading description both of their past and of their nineteenth-century present. The 'Celtic' element was of undeniable significance but had ceased to be, indeed had rarely been, the whole. The use of the term 'the Celtic fringe' also sometimes posits some underlying 'peripheral' solidarity against the core of England, yet there is little evidence for any such phenomenon. The very few bilateral studies that exist of relations between Ireland and Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and Wales and Scotland disclose no fundamental affinity which links them with each other in a way which separates them from England.[2] The problem of Ulster is in itself a sufficient obstacle to any such notion.[3]

In the decade before the First World War, the Liberals and some other commentators contemplated the possibility that the relationships within the British Isles might best be catered for in terms of 'Home Rule All Round'.[4] Sir Edward Grey had declared in 1912 that harm would come from pretending that there were no separate units in the United Kingdom and no differences of national opinion. Devolution all round on a quasi-federal basis seemed to him to offer the best hope for the future. It would have

[1] R. Bromwich, *Matthew Arnold and Celtic Literature: a Retrospect, 1865–1965* (Oxford, 1965). For Arnold to have died in a Liverpool street was, from one standpoint, quite incongruous, but from another it was quite appropriate. B. Crozier, *De Gaulle: the Warrior* (London, 1973), p. 18; J. Hunter, 'The Gaelic Connection: the Highlands, Ireland and Nationalism, 1873–1922', *Scottish Historical Review*, liv (1975), 185.

[2] L. M. Cullen and T. C. Smout (eds.), *Comparative Aspects of Scottish Economic and Social History, 1600–1900* (Edinburgh, 1977); C. O'Rahilly, *Ireland and Wales: their Historical and Literary Connections* (London, 1924). My unpublished A. H. Dodd Lecture, 'Wales and the Scottish Connexion', was delivered at the University College of North Wales in May 1984.

[3] F. S. L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890–1939* (Oxford, 1979); J. C. Beckett, *Confrontations: Studies in Irish History* (London, 1972); D. Fitzpatrick, 'The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910–1921', *Past and Present*, no. 78 (1978).

[4] J. E. Kendle, 'The Round Table Movement and "Home Rule All Round"', *The Historical Journal*, xi, part 2 (1968).

the advantage that central government could concentrate upon external and imperial matters.[1] There was no lack of schemes— but no lack of difficulties. Churchill, who had been dabbling in this area for a decade, came forward with a plan to divide the United Kingdom into ten units which had regard to geographical, racial, and historical considerations.[2] The problem, however, was that to have regard to one of these factors might produce a very different result from that which could emerge from paying attention to others.

The First World War, at least as far as Ireland was concerned, changed the mood and nature of the discussion, but it resumed in 1919.[3] A Speaker's Conference met in October and produced comprehensive proposals in the following spring. The problem of Britain appeared intractable, both at the core and periphery. London, with the English Parliament, was the historic core of what by expansion and union had become the United Kingdom. If its four constituent countries were each to have a parliament, was it really conceivable that a separate English parliament would be set up alongside what would remain as the United Kingdom Parliament? Balfour in 1913 had not been able to conceive that such a parliament would accept subordination, since England's resources would be so much greater that there could be no parity between the four units.[4] If, in addition, Ireland were to have two parliaments, that would only accentuate the disparity. The solution of Halford Mackinder, the English geographer and Glasgow MP, was to divide England into three parts: London, agricultural England and the industrial North.[5] Only a geographer could think such a plan was feasible. Other commentators thought that England might return to the days of the heptarchy, but that did not seem very plausible. One correspondent had told Churchill before the war that the so-called 'provinces' just would not work—'the points of the compass have no traditions and excite

[1] *Home Rule from the Treasury Bench: Speeches During the First and Second Reading Debates* (London, 1912).

[2] Cited in H. J. Hanham, *The Nineteenth-Century Constitution, 1815–1914* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 131-3.

[3] V. Bogdanor, *Devolution* (Oxford, 1979), is a general discussion and one somewhat overtaken by events at the moment of publication.

[4] Wan-Hsuan Chiao, *Devolution in Great Britain* (New York, 1926), remains the best discussion. It must be a matter of speculation whether, as the author hoped, this study of devolution in Britain contributed to the constitutional development of China.

[5] W. H. Parker, *Mackinder: Geography as an Aid to Statecraft* (Oxford, 1982), p. 45.

no enthusiasm'.[1] In 1919, Balfour argued that it was illogical to be
contemplating treating England on a regional basis while pur-
porting to deal with Ireland, Scotland and Wales on a 'national'
basis. If there was a case, on administrative grounds, for
establishing provincial administrations, then that should be done
treating the United Kingdom as a whole and not being hindered
by boundaries inherited from the past. 'England', 'Scotland',
'Wales', and 'Ireland' could not survive such treatment, but
perhaps that did not matter. In its place might come a rationally
organized 'Britain' which truly reflected the historical process of
integration.

The impetus behind the consideration of 'Home Rule all
Round' derived not from Scotland, Wales, or England but from
the crisis in Ireland. When the Irish question was settled, for the
time being, the idea of a more general constitutional re-ordering
of Britain dropped from view. The new institutions of Northern
Ireland were anomalous and sprang from peculiar circumstances.
They were not for general emulation. How far and to what degree
the citizens of the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland were
'British' was, in the last analysis, a matter of sentiment and con-
viction. For the majority, Irishness and Britishness were not
mutually exclusive categories.

The severing of Ireland closely coincided with the advent of
democratic politics in Britain. The Anglo-Scottish aristocracy
which had played such a part in the government of Britain lost its
dominance although, in a curious way, the new Labour Party
mirrored the élite which it sought to replace. Its early parlia-
mentary leadership also contained a disproportionate share of
Scotsmen—Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald most notably.[2]
Even Arthur Henderson was born in Glasgow. Scottish and Welsh
Home Rule was part of Hardie's rhetoric, but the party as a whole
had little enthusiasm for such schemes. Henderson had even
battled against the idea that the Labour Party itself should have
a 'national' element in its organizational structure.[3] Like Lloyd
George, Ramsay MacDonald aspired to power at the centre of the
British state. The geographical spread of the Labour Party's
support repeated the pattern which had confronted the Liberal

[1] Sir Thomas Elliott to W. S. Churchill, 28 October 1901. I am grateful to
Sir Hugh Elliott for allowing me to see and use this letter.
[2] K. O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (London, 1975);
D. Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London, 1977).
[3] R. McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party* (London, 1974), pp. 168-9,
205.

Party before 1914. To win power it needed support outside J. A. Spender's periphery of 1910, but if it failed to gain that support it might diminish its chances on another occasion by its very 'peripheral' appearance. The fact that all Labour Prime Ministers since MacDonald have been English may be more than accidental.[1]

It is noteworthy, however, that when discussion between the wars turned to projection of the national image abroad, those concerned still thought in English terms. The book which, indirectly, was to lead to the establishment of the British Council, Sir Stephen Tallents's *The Projection of England*, purported to concern itself with 'the standing raw material of England's esteem in the world'. Sir Stephen thought that meant the Derby and the Grand National, Henley and the Boat Race, Wimbledon, Test Matches, Trooping of the Colour, the Lord Mayor of London, Piccadilly, Bond Street, the Metropolitan Police, Big Ben, London omnibuses and underground railways, and *The Times* and *Punch*. Momentarily lifting his eyes to the periphery of England he included the *Manchester Guardian*, Oxford, and Edinburgh.[2] It was in the same spirit that Sir Robert Vansittart felt no inhibition in writing to the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, asking him for a short article for distribution abroad which would 'do something to promote better knowledge of English manners and customs and of the ideals on which our particular culture is based.'[3] It must be admitted that MacDonald had refused patronage for a 'Come to Scotland' movement on the ground that 'the mere tourist, up to now at any rate, is disgusting and disquieting . . .'.[4]

The Battle of 1940, however, was for Britain. Once again, the western seaboard, including Northern Ireland, was of critical importance. Scotland resumed a pivotal role in the North Atlantic Triangle, with Prestwick airport taking one to the land of Mackenzie King. Even more than in 1914-18, it was the core that was exposed to the threat from Europe while the periphery

[1] After Attlee, Gaitskell, and Wilson, Messrs Callaghan, Foot, and Kinnock have sat for Welsh constituencies and their personal ancestry is not straightforwardly English, though only Kinnock is partially of Welsh descent.

[2] P. M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 212-13.

[3] Taylor, op. cit., p. 236. MacDonald's biographer thinks it appropriate to write about him in the following terms: 'He had never been a cheerful Anglo-Saxon extrovert. He was a black and moody Celt, with a Celt's long memory and a Celt's capacity to cherish his grievances.' Marquand, op. cit., p. 408.

[4] Marquand, op. cit., p. 401.

preserved the vital connections across the Atlantic. Even so, elements of the past remained. Churchill was suspicious of Glasgow, writing in October 1939 that 'there are plenty of Irish traitors in the Glasgow area' who would be supplying details of shipping movements to the German ambassador in Dublin.[1] With victory achieved, however, Professor Namier in 1948 was writing of the 'British island community' and of a historical process which had produced 'a British island nationality'.[2] A quarter of a century later Professor Seton-Watson was among those who believed that this was ceasing to be true, indeed might already have ceased.[3]

There suddenly appeared to be convincing reasons why this might be so. 'Britain' had only existed in the common enterprise of empire, and that vital overseas focus was being removed.[4] Simultaneously, the creation of a European community raised questions about the appropriate units in such a community. As early as 1923 Mackinder had written in *Britain and the British Seas* that 'we Europeans will have to see ourselves massed into a single crowd'.[5] Now it appeared to be happening. Within such a crowd, the nation-states of the nineteenth century might no longer be appropriate. A new core might be emerging in Europe to which the whole of the United Kingdom was peripheral. From another angle, Britain might seem on the periphery of an English-speaking world now dominated by the United States.[6] In such contexts, domestic difficulties multiplied. The Northern Ireland settlement collapsed in protracted violence. A linguistic and cultural crisis in Wales, coinciding with industrial restructuring, appeared likely to be resolved in some form of self-government. A crisis of confidence

[1] M. Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: Vol. VI, Finest Hour, 1939–1941* (London, 1983), p. 71.

[2] L. B. Namier, *Vanished Supremacies* (London, 1962), p. 47.

[3] H. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States* (London, 1976), p. 42.

[4] K. G. Robbins, '"This Grubby Wreck of Old Glories": the United Kingdom and the End of the British Empire', *Journal of Contemporary History*, xv (1980), 81–95; after a lifetime spent travelling and writing on the history of the British Empire, Sir Reginald Coupland turned latterly to writing a book on Welsh and Scottish nationalism which he published in 1954. In 1950 he could write to Thomas Jones, 'As it happens I don't know a single Scot either in the universities or in the administration or in business.' Sir Reginald Coupland to T. Jones, 16 March 1950, Jones Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

[5] Cited in Parker, op. cit., p. 80.

[6] D. Cameron Watt, op. cit., *passim*; R. Jeffreys-Jones, 'The Inestimable Advantage of Not Being English: Lord Lothian's American Ambassadorship, 1939–40', *Scottish Historical Review*, lxiii, part 1, no. 175 (April 1984), 105–10.

and the advent of North Sea oil seemed to suggest the same out-come in Scotland. The solution attempted in the late 1970s was to bypass the problem of England and attempt legislation for Scotland and Wales (eventually separate legislation). The pro-posals did not receive the stipulated endorsement when the people of Scotland and Wales were consulted in a referendum. The English electorate was not given an opportunity to express a view on a development which would have changed the structure of Britain. On this occasion, at least, to attempt to restructure Britain would have produced as many anomalies and imperfections as the existing status quo.

'It is impossible to forecast the destinies of the human race', stated Lord Dufferin at a banquet in honour of Charles Dickens at St George's Hall, Liverpool, in April 1869, 'but there are some conjectures which may be hazarded without presumption, and perhaps one of them is that in God's good providence it is intended that a large portion of the habitable globe should pass under the domination of an English-speaking people.'[1] Lord Dufferin, an English-educated Ulster aristocrat, anciently of Scottish descent, who refused to be called an Englishman but gloried in the service of Britain, went on to serve the Crown as Governor-General of Canada, Viceroy of India, and Ambassador to St Petersburg and Paris. He remained, however, a man of the west, a perfect choice to unveil the inscription on Bristol's memorial Cabot Tower. Earlier, sailing up the splendid coastline of British Columbia, he knew that, in one sense, he was at the furthermost boundary of Britain. So, in another sense, was he when he received both a rapturous send-off and return home in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, *before* going on to London, the edge of the Atlantic world which he knew so well. He was well aware, however, that there was nothing static in the relationships within the British Empire. The core and the periphery, he implied, might so shift that the writings of Mr Charles Dickens might hold sway over the English-speaking community when all the more imposing political structures of the age had passed away.

[1] H. Milton (ed.), *Lord Dufferin's Speeches and Addresses* (London, 1882), pp. 86–90; Sir A. Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, 2 vols. (London, 1905).