



Appeal to the US Congress to Support Scotland's Cause

From the very beginning the Scotland-UN Committee had a substantial number of members and supporters in the United States of America, some of them in very highly placed positions and all working at an advanced intellectual level. These supporters were in a position to exert an influence in academic, political, governmental and similar circles, not least through discussions at conferences and social events. It was soon evident, however, that some form of backup was necessary in the form of written material that could be handed over to supplement conversations. While knowledge of the close links between Scotland and the early history of the US is widespread in educated circles, this is mostly incomplete or in some cases inaccurate. It was therefore decided to spearhead the approach with a comparison between the democratic situation at the foundation of the United States and Scotland's existing democratic deficit, as well as stressing Scotland's enormous contribution to the creation of the American Union itself. There was no mass distribution of this pamphlet, since it was intended as backup material to supplement initial verbal advances. The high aiming point was the members of the two Houses of the US Congress, but with the intention that it would also be used for similar purposes elsewhere. Scotland-UN also made approaches to US President Ronald Reagan personally, but this avenue proved less than fruitful at a time when the Reagan Administration was working hand in glove with the Thatcher regime in London. The UK diplomatic representatives did everything possible to discount the Scotland-UN campaign, but they were unable to prevent the countless seeds we planted from germinating in later years. The text of the paper is as follows:

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United States of America is the world's leading democracy, a state that for more than two hundred years has been regarded as the global standard for republican government. This is a matter of justifiable pride for all Americans. We in Scotland have no less justification for being proud of the American achievement, bearing in mind the enormous contribution that Scots have made to the founding of the US. May we therefore remind you very briefly of the considerable debt that the United States owe to Scotland in respect of the very formation of the Union?

It was the advanced social science taught in the Scottish universities that fuelled the American Revolution, when the works of Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Lord Kames and Adam Ferguson, to name only the most prominent among them, were the standard textbooks of the colonial colleges. At Princeton, at William and Mary, at Pennsylvania, at Yale, at King's and at Harvard, the young men who rode off to war in 1776 to fight against remote rule from London had been trained in the ideas developed by Scottish social and political science. A large number of these were, in fact, Scots of the first or second generations in America, as were their professors.

We have not forgotten the considerable influence exerted by Scotland on the Constitution of the United States of America as it exists to this very day. There is no need to dwell on the considerable proportion of Scots among the Founding Fathers who met in Philadelphia in 1786, but we would point out specifically that it was the political philosophy of our own David Hume, as written into the Constitution by James Madison, that became the foundation of the present US federal system, and indeed of most civilized government in the world today. Who can overlook the contributions made by Scots of the first and second generations such as Principal Witherspoon, Alexander Hamilton, who in addition to founding the US Treasury elucidated the theory of the judicial review of legislation, or James Wilson, who took with him from Scotland to America the principle that We, the People, are the source of all power in the state?

The strength of our links is undeniable. There are reputedly 20 million people of Scottish descent in the USA, an ethnic element that, electorally and politically in general, is every bit as important as that of their first cousins, the Irish. There is scarcely a family in Scotland that cannot trace some relative in the States, and the course of American history is one gigantic roll call of famous Scottish names, whether they be direct emigrants like Andrew Carnegie, or descendants through several generations like Neil Armstrong.

In view of these links, we will not need to emphasize why the political welfare of the Kingdom of Scotland should be a matter of special interest to the USA of all states in the Western world. In particular, is a nation like Scotland, with a centuries-old tradition of this quality behind it, to be regarded as incapable of running its own affairs, as all other nations of its size in Europe have long since done? It is precisely this inviolable right - for it is by no means a mere privilege - that is now being denied to us, and moreover illegally.

This is the reason why we are asking for your personal help and support. We, too, are facing a situation of remote colonial rule, a situation in which not only the rights of the Scottish people, but even the hard-won basic principles of democracy itself, are being trampled underfoot by an imposed illegal regime. For more than one hundred years we Scots have been attempting to have our ancient national Parliament recalled to deal with Scottish affairs, something to which we have a perfect right under international law and those principles enshrined by our forefathers and yours in the American Declaration of Independence.

During this century, literally dozens of bills and motions to this end have been defeated by one form of chicanery or another, were either ignored, refused time for discussion, killed by filibuster tactics, or simply voted down by the huge English majority of all parties in the Westminster Parliament, against the votes of the Scottish Members of Parliament. Is that what you understand by democracy? Would you not agree with us that it amounts to blatant racist oppression, such as is supposed to have been banned by international law? Has Scotland not as much right as any State of the American Union to its own legislature and government?

You are probably not aware that since long before the Second World War opinion polls have with monotonous regularity reported majorities of the Scottish people, bordering on unanimity, to be in favour of having their own legislature again. Are you aware that in 1950 almost two and a half million out of three and a half million Scottish voters signed a National Covenant requesting the recall of the Scottish Parliament? Yet when the delegation arrived in London to present the petition all the government doors were contemptuously shut in their faces. Do you consider that to be justice? To say nothing of good manners and civility?

Our cultural and educational institutions, our economy and public life generally, are overrun by English carpetbaggers, while qualified Scots have to move abroad to get a living. Most of these colonists have no knowledge whatever of the innumerable unique aspects of the Scottish situation, and usually make no effort to find out about them before imposing their own cultural values, or lack of them, on Scotland. Never in the history of the British Union has Scotland been so delivered over to the mercy of arbitrary London rule which, when it is not imposing its will on the Scots out of a sense of imperialist superiority, does so with a childlike obliviousness to the mere possibility that another culture with a different scale of values could conceivably exist alongside its own.

In March 1979 a national referendum was held in Scotland to decide whether a certain scheme to set up a Scottish legislature was to be implemented. Despite the obvious weaknesses of the plan in question, this Scotland Act was adopted for implementation by the Scottish electorate, with virtually the same support that was given to membership of the European Economic Communities. It was a clear and constitutionally valid decision by the country's highest constitutional authority in favour of setting up the Scottish legislature, and one that stands for all time.

The implementation of the Scotland Act was subsequently supported by an overwhelming majority of more than two thirds of our elected representatives in a vote in the House of Commons, the usual standard for the adoption of a constitutional law. Despite this, the present United Kingdom Government, which has no mandate to govern in Scotland at all, pushed through a constitutionally meaningless "repeal" of the Scotland Act, with the use of their overwhelming English majority in the Westminster Parliament and against the bitter opposition of the Scottish Members of Parliament. In spite of their own solemn promises to set up a Scottish legislature with even stronger powers than those contained

in the Scotland Act, they now flatly refuse to do anything at all to rectify the situation, which is one of the most blatant unconstitutionality.

Does this reflect the ideals that your forefathers and ours fought for in 1776 and on many another occasion? Why did US armies take part in the last two world wars, if it was not just to banish such exploitation from the world?

The latest Scottish election results show that the Conservative Party is now as good as dead there, and the reason is not far to seek. Opinion polls show that well over 80 percent of the population want their ancient national Parliament recalled. The proportion that wants total independence from England is now over one third, and rising rapidly with every rejection of the more modest demands, and with every one of the increasingly oppressive actions by London against Scotland.

You are not dealing here with mere regional demands. Scotland is one of the world's oldest monarchies, and was reputedly the first nation state in Europe. The ancient crown, sceptre and sword of state in Edinburgh testify to this, while the Parliament House of Scotland, built in 1632, testifies to this day to the antiquity of Scotland's tradition of democracy in a national Assembly for which a chronicler used the expression "parlament" as early as the year 1174. We are sure you will agree that a dynastic marriage in the late Middle Ages between the Scottish and English royal families is no basis for determining the legislative structure in the late 20th century.

Many past and present members of the US armed forces will testify to the important role Scotland has in the Western defence system. But against what are we supposed to be defending ourselves? Against centralization, foreign rule and colonization, foreign control of the media, political brainwashing, autocracy, arbitrary rule, contempt for the democratic processes and the rule of law, or the systematic persecution of dissidents - in this case known advocates of autonomy for Scotland?

All this and more accurately describes the Scottish situation. We say to you frankly that if the Supreme Soviet were our legislator instead of the Westminster Parliament, our subjection to an imperialist foreign rule could not be more complete, or our "democratic" system more of a sham. We state most firmly that our adherence to the Western way of life and to Western values is not in question, but we are not on this account going to permit ourselves to be condemned to a national serfdom without parallel anywhere else in the West. The threat to our way of life and to our very existence does not emanate from Moscow, but from London.

For this reason, a Scottish Constitutional Convention is being set up to draw up a scheme of government for Scotland without further reference to London. As regards the justification for this step, we can do no better than refer you to the terms of a certain document drafted by Thomas Jefferson in 1776, and to the terms of reference of the Philadelphia Convention a decade later.

We know our rights, as your forefathers and ours did then, and we are going to have them, no matter what guile or force is used in the attempt to deny them to us.

In view of this, we feel we have the right, not merely to ask, but to expect the whole-hearted support of the Members of the Congress of the United States of America, with whom we have so much in common. If, as seems increasingly likely, we are obliged to take unilateral action to realize our undeniable right to have our ancient national legislature recalled, we trust that you and your colleagues will give Scotland that decisive support that Scotland gave America more than two hundred years ago.

After almost a century of attempts to resolve this matter by democratic means, in the course of which no perversion of democracy and the rule of law has been considered unacceptable as a means of suppressing the movement for Scottish self-determination, who will deny that it is democracy itself that now waits blindfolded on the scaffold? Who is going to step in here and save, not merely Scotland, but democracy, if not America?

Is the principle of government of the People by the People, which was carried from Scotland to the New World more than two centuries ago, now going to be allowed to perish in this part of the earth? Is America, the Land of the Free, going to stand idly by and watch this crime being committed against one of the peoples who gave it birth?

Members of the US Congress, Scotland is looking to you to save its very life!

In the name of the Scotland-UN Committee,

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