

THE GRIST

KELTY
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INFO@THEGRIST.ORG.UK



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Welcome to The Grist - issue 9

2016 saw the deaths of many famous stars : David Bowie, Alan Rickman, Leonard Cohen to name a few. We also lost some stars who spent their lives making a difference in our community. In a previous issue we paid tribute to David Love. We were also greatly saddened by the death of Jim Smith. Jim worked tirelessly for Scottish Independence for many years and could be seen every day manning the Yes Kelty Hub on Main Street during the first Independence Campaign.

Kelty has another star living amongst us – Congratulations to Maciej Wiczynski who, proudly

wearing his kilt, picked up the award for Outstanding Young Pole in the United Kingdom 2016 contest. Before we knew of his award, we had already asked Maciej to write a piece for this issue of The Grist so you can read a little bit about how he feels about living and working in Fife.

Our thanks also go to our writers, Carol and Betty, Peter, Maciej and Lillian; Chris Cairns, for the cartoon; to our advertisers; Printing Services (Scotland) and our trusty distributors. •

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Kelty's mining heritage celebrated!

Sixty years ago nine men lost their lives in the Lindsay Colliery Disaster. Fifty years have passed since the last pit in Kelty closed.

To commemorate both these historic anniversaries, Kelty Community Council Mining Heritage Group plan to host a series of events over a long weekend 24th to 27th of March.

To kick start the weekend Kelty Mining Heritage have teamed up with Kelty Community Cinema to show "The Happy Lands" a film developed and created along with members of the mining communities in Fife. Inspired by true stories from local families in Fife who lived through the general strike in 1926, it tells the story of ordinary law abiding folk who became law breakers in a heroic battle against the state. Around 1000 people were involved in the making of the film - there are a few "weel kent" faces in the cast!

This is a free event, first come first served and tickets will be available from Kelty Community Centre. The film itself will be shown at 7pm on 24th March in the Moray Institute.

Events continue on Sunday the 26th and Monday the 27th with an inspiring exhibition in Kelty Community Centre. The exhibition promises

an intriguing mix of amazing memorabilia which has been brought together for this event as a result of fantastic collaboration between many individuals, groups and organisations.

Some of the exhibits will be interactive, others thought provoking and a life size "miners raw" front room promises to take you back in time to experience how miners and their families lived not so long ago.

These are family events and the Mining Heritage Group hope to build on the success of last year when they facilitated a trip to Newtongrange Mining Museum for all of Kelty's P7 pupils.

The young people were very enthusiastic and enthralled by their experience. It was certainly authentic as the museum is run by volunteers, who are, themselves, ex miners.

They were happily challenged by the genuine and well thought out questions from the youngsters.

The Mining Heritage Group hope to continue to engender this enthusiasm within our wider community by providing these experiences so please come along, enjoy, and make the weekend the success it deserves to be. •

• *Carol Gilmour & Betty Rodden*

A citizen's basic income: Fife

Fife is leading the UK in exploring the opportunity to pilot a Citizens Basic Income Scheme. At the time of going to print, a new Scottish charity Citizens Basic Income Network (CBIN) that aims to raise awareness of this new 'social security for the 21st century', is to hold an event with speakers in Kelty Community Centre on 28 January 2017.

Rather than helping people experiencing difficulties to feel secure, our current social security system can create even more problems. It is also expensive to administer and consumes funds that could instead be distributed to the people the system was originally intended to help.

A Citizens Basic Income scheme is a system where every citizen is given a fixed amount of money monthly, according to their age, that isn't decreased or discontinued and is paid to every citizen no matter their circumstances.

The current complex household means tested benefits could be replaced by this straightforward system with housing and disability benefits to support people with specific needs.

The Grist will cover this subject in more depth in a future issue. Meanwhile check out: <https://cbin.scot/> •

I always saw the Kingdom of Fife as a potential place for making my home, the place where I could set up my family life and put down roots.

And here I am!



How it feels to be a Polish person living and working in Fife

So it has been almost a decade since I first set foot on Scottish soil. I remember it as if it was yesterday. Good Friday - flying with the airline, Centralwings which has since become bankrupt. From Edinburgh to Glasgow then on my way to the Isle of Arran, my first stop in Scotland. Then I travelled to the Isle of Bute, Pitlochry and Dunkeld... but I always saw the Kingdom of Fife as a potential place for making my home, the place where I could set up my family life and put down roots. And here I am! Why? In short I saw the potential of this area. Fife is a place in Scotland which has a huge potential both economically and socially. Unfortunately it has not been unleashed to its full extent.. yet. This might change after the May local elections, I hope so.

I never expected that I would emigrate. My boss in Poland was a high profile figure (Vice-President of the European Parliament), so I had a few opportunities to realise how many gaps I had in my English language skills. So coming here to improve it was the best idea.

I have chosen Scotland as it has a good reputation abroad. Believe me, whatever you have heard said about Scotland in recent years especially during the Independence Referendum campaign - too small, too poor, too stupid- with a hand on my heart I can say, WRONG! Scotland is a highly recognised brand itself. Scotland doesn't need any Britishness to shine. I could argue that it is quite opposite. For me, Scottishness is a state of mind

which is difficult to explain. You are swallowing it with every single breath of fresh air or every single dram of Whisky... or both. Open-minded society - that is how I would describe Scotland.

I admire Scotland. I think it is the best place to be and I have never regretted that I decided to move here. In the last decade I have invested a lot of money, time and effort in my life here. In Scotland, in Fife, in Kelty.

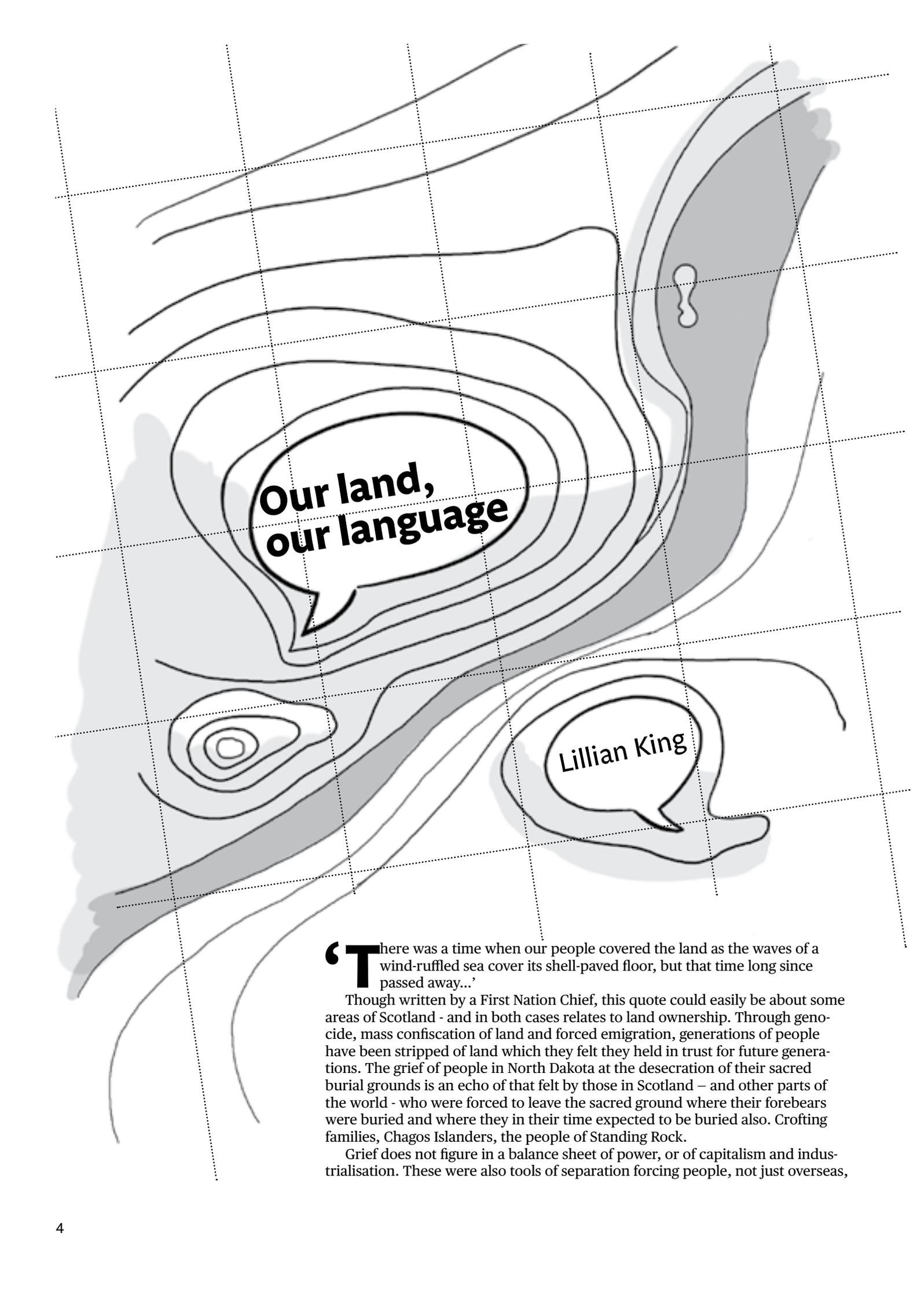
Indeed nowhere is prefect, but thanks to the society that I am living in I feel included. That should not be disregarded by others (Tories). Into the local community I bring what is best in me - my talent, my passion and my high working ethics. I am strengthening society, supporting public services, boosting the economy, and enriching culture proudly wearing my kilt.

Scotland is my home and I think it is the best place to be. I don't want to see it drifting away from Europe. Moving back in time is not a way to move forward. I don't want my future and the future of my kids to be jeopardised by Brexit.

We all want to improve our home, to have a better life. That can only be achieved with inclusiveness which I have seen and felt in Scotland. That is the key to success. We are all in it together so let's make our home better.

Yours for Scotland

Maciej Wiczynski •



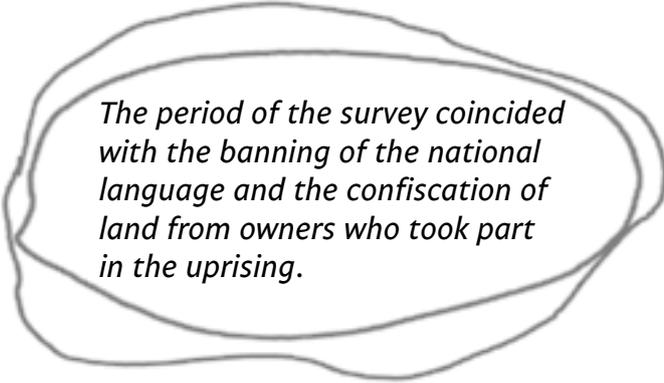
**Our land,
our language**

Lillian King

‘There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away...’

Though written by a First Nation Chief, this quote could easily be about some areas of Scotland - and in both cases relates to land ownership. Through genocide, mass confiscation of land and forced emigration, generations of people have been stripped of land which they felt they held in trust for future generations. The grief of people in North Dakota at the desecration of their sacred burial grounds is an echo of that felt by those in Scotland - and other parts of the world - who were forced to leave the sacred ground where their forebears were buried and where they in their time expected to be buried also. Crofting families, Chagos Islanders, the people of Standing Rock.

Grief does not figure in a balance sheet of power, or of capitalism and industrialisation. These were also tools of separation forcing people, not just overseas,



The period of the survey coincided with the banning of the national language and the confiscation of land from owners who took part in the uprising.

but into already overcrowded towns and cities and removing them from their land and history as well as their roots, and just as importantly, their language.

In the US, indigenous people using their native tongue are assumed to be migrants and told to speak American; in the UK, Paul Kavanagh, a Scottish political commentator was labelled a fascist, a Gaelic imperialist and a 'blood and soil' nationalist. Why? Because, using his own time and money, not to mention linguistic capability, he had created a Gaelic map of Glasgow and announced his intention of producing maps of other areas of Scotland. Why on earth would anyone think this was a worthwhile task, people asked, because as everyone knows, Gaelic is spoken only by a few rabid nationalists and some unimportant residents of the Far North and no-one in the rest of the country has *ever* used the language. At least, that's how the story goes.

But, the smallest degree of research would have uncovered the fact that place names throughout the land have Gaelic origins which contain descriptions of the locations - for example Inver (meeting of the waters) Inverness and Inverkip; Dun (fortress or castle) Dundee and Dunkeld; Dal (place of) Dalmarnock, Dalbeattie - giving clear evidence of Gaelic speaking occupants. Language has a close connection to land but with the proliferation of English, these links have become very tenuous. Place names like Auchenshuggle and Achiltibue only make sense when broken into their original component Gaelic parts.

Many names have changed over the years. An 1801 map gives Cocklaw as Cockler and Westcroft as Westoft - toft being derived from Norse meaning house or settlement. An area in West Fife today known as Isle of Cauty is given as Elycantie. Early maps like the Dutch cartographer Johannes Blaeu's one of Fife in 1654 were possibly transcribed by people with no knowledge of the indigenous language and the spelling might have been based on the accent or dialect in which the information was given. Old Ordnance Survey maps will give you reasons why, for instance, Pitteuchar and Caskieberran areas of Glenrothes are so named.

Probably the most important early map was William Roy's Military Survey. Begun after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-1746 demonstrated the problems of armies not knowing the terrain they

found themselves in, one of the principles behind the project was 'to control and order geographical space through reconnaissance and survey.' Maps would place towns and villages within the landscape, but would also make it easier to put down any subsequent uprisings. This, too, was the reason for an accelerated development of the road system, built so that 'the King's writ would run in the whole of the land' and to ensure easy access to the new forts George, Augustus and William - named as constant reminders of royal overseers. The historical significance of these names has faded but there are others, recalling both victory and defeat, that still resonate - Glencoe, Killiecrankie, Stirling, Bannockburn. The period of the survey coincided with the banning of the national language (a modern day parallel would be the Tory government's insisting that people who have no IT skills or can't read and write, must use computers to access welfare, etc) and the confiscation of land from owners who took part in the uprising. This was only one of many land-grabs over the years, which continued into the twentieth century, when huge new regional authorities took over buildings and land belonging to the local burghs.

Today the land-grabbers are the investors, the snappers-up of swathes of countryside in which they have no personal interest and ownership is tied up in a maze of trusts and organisations almost impossible to unravel, or tax. The people who have tended the land can be summarily evicted with no compensation for the time, love and money they have expended. Old maps sometimes include the proprietor's name. In 1910, Lloyd George commissioned a survey that mapped and named the owner of every part of the UK for the People's Budget. With the skills and techniques available, this could be repeated, but only if the Gordian knot of obfuscation could be severed.

The criticisms of Kavanagh apply to all of us who applaud his achievements. 'Blood and soil,' a Nazi slogan denoting a nationalist ideology of race and territory is very different from the world view, the 'all Jock Tamson's bairns' ethos of a Scotland that welcomes all, irrespective of race, creed or colour. It is most used by those who persist in calling the SNP the Scottish Nationalist Party, and who treat Gaelic and written Scots as alien in their own land. While strongly denying the 'blood and soil' charge, what can't be denied is that we have an emotional attachment to our country, its land, history, language and culture, but that is an emotion shared by many if not all countries, and the current rise in interest and acceptance of Scottish, as well as Gaelic language, embraces and is embraced by many of our new citizens. The amount of support for the First Nation people demonstrates just how truly international the ties are between the land, its language and its people. •



Our children deserve better

Doreen Philp

I spent my early childhood living in poverty in the 50s. My Dad died 3 weeks before my second birthday leaving my Mum with three kids to raise without any family support. My mum's amazing ability to surround us with love meant that we didn't realise we were poor. I remember the day it dawned on me that serving us our tea her 'I'll have mine later' meant she was going hungry. Working as a school dinner lady she could sometimes bring home leftovers for our tea and I would innocently say: 'That's funny we had the same for lunch at school today'!

Some Friday evenings Mum switched off the lights and we hid in the darkness because she didn't have enough to pay the coal man. Shifting furniture around "for a change" was hiding the holes in the lino. On an autumn Saturday morning she would go rummaging at jumble sales for heavy coats to put on our beds to keep us warm in winter. I personally know that when kids grow up poor they miss out – school trips, having friends for tea, going to birthday parties, Christmas and birthday presents, holidays.

Families experience poverty for many reasons, but its fundamental cause is not having enough money to cope with the circumstances in which they are living. Being in work does not guarantee that a family will not live in poverty. A family might move into poverty because of a rise in living costs, a drop in earnings through job loss or benefit changes.

Growing up in poverty undermines the health, well being and educational attainment of children. One of my brothers was exceptionally clever with straight A exam results but had no chance of going to University: we had to be out to work at 16. Scotland's young people can now attend University without paying fees but the sad truth is that children from poorer backgrounds lag behind at all stages of education. The greatest barriers to young people maximising their educational potential is poverty and low family income.

As I write this I am angry that all these years later 220,00 children in Scotland are living in poverty. Within our own Kirkcaldy/Cowdenbeath Constituency over a quarter of households are struggling to make ends meet with 5,549 children living in poverty.

I am angry that the UK Government's austerity agenda condemns families to suffer and by repealing large parts of the Child Poverty Act 2010, the UK Government shows that they do not care about child poverty and poor families.

Any family can fall on hard times and find it difficult to make ends meet. But poverty isn't inevitable. With the right policies every child can have the opportunity to do well in life. Scotland is set to bring forward legislation to tackle the deep-rooted causes of child poverty for the first time in its history. I hope the Scottish Government succeeds. Our children deserve better. •

Peter A. Bell: True Tories

I dislike the term 'Red Tories'. I can understand why some people might think it an appropriate label to apply British Labour. It might readily be argued that they have brought it upon themselves. Nonetheless, I consider it a gross oversimplification of the kind that is invariably a hindrance to understanding.

Thinking in terms of such simplisms in relation to British Labour may be seen as part of a more general tendency that we might think of as 'active apathy'. A shallow attitude that dismisses all politicians with phrases such as "they're all the same". An unconsidered rejection of politics which, through intellectual inadequacy or - one suspects more commonly - intellectual indolence, eschews the effort required to properly analyse and differentiate. Basically, it's just easier to resort to some facile stereotype than it is to ponder the distinguishing features. Why bother thinking too deeply when there's a handy caricature which presents all politicians as some permutation of a list of negative attributes that includes, but is not limited to, venality, dishonesty, deviousness, hypocrisy, duplicity, corruptibility, arrogance, deviancy and incompetence.

Bad as British politics may be, it would surely be a lot worse if politicians were as unexceptionally and unremittingly bad as this caricature suggests. And to whatever extent they are, just ask yourself who elects them? Having the privilege of democratic choice, don't we get the politicians we deserve?

Similarly sloppy thinking lumps all political parties together as if there were no differences among them. Tending also to regard them as the problem. It has become almost fashionable to condemn the party system as either or both a symptom and the cause of the perceived failure of politics. This is to forget that, like trade unions in the realm of work and employment, political parties are the agencies by which 'ordinary people'

act collectively in the sphere of public policy. If they have ceased to adequately fulfil this function, who is to blame?

If political parties have become the tools of narrow vested interests is that not because all too many of us have forsaken them? If we don't lay claim to their power and harness it for our own purposes, have we any right to be indignant that others take advantage of our apathy? Having the privilege of democratic authority, do we not suffer the just consequences of neglecting the responsibility that goes with it?

Political parties are not all alike. To call British Labour 'Red Tories' is to trivialise the true awfulness of modern British Conservatism. Just as thoughtlessly referring to Scotland as a 'one-party state' trivialises the plight of those who suffer under the heel of genuinely totalitarian regimes.

The Tories have elevated heartlessness to the status of an ideology. A cold and cruel disregard for humanity has become an identifying characteristic and an imperative for any who aspire to a leadership role within the party, or to elected office under its banner. Margaret Thatcher's legacy is a party wholly in thrall to her example of using alienation, disaffection and inequity as instruments of policy.

For all its faults - and they are legion - British Labour cannot sensibly be said to be indistinguishable from the Tories. It might be more accurate to think of them as two aspects of the same flawed political system.

Aneurin Bevan famously labelled the Tories 'vermin'. If he felt such language was appropriate seventy years ago, he would surely be rendered uncharacteristically speechless were he witness to what they have become. He might also be somewhat lost for words at the sight of his own party. But he would surely never stoop to calling even today's Labour Party 'Red Tories'. •



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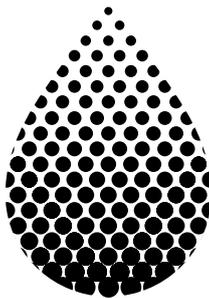
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Yes

Yes Kelty continues to work towards Scotland's independence
Meetings at 7pm on last Tuesday of each month in
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Everyone welcome.