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## Notes and Comments

### REPRESENTATIONS OF SCOTLAND IN *NASHE SLOVO* DURING WORLD WAR ONE: A BRIEF NOTE

For socialists of an internationalist persuasion the outbreak of the Great War was a cruel blow, dashing their hopes that the solidarity of 'united workers of all countries' would prevent a conflict. The minority of socialists who remained faithful to internationalism, opposed the war and fought for a new International, propagated their case in newspapers and at conferences which were published and organised in difficult circumstances. Prominent among the internationalists were sections of Russian Social Democracy. In Switzerland Lenin continued to issue *Sotsial'demokrat*, from whose pages he advocated turning the imperialist war into a civil war of the workers against their national bourgeoisies. The most frequently published, widely circulated, and influential Russian internationalist broadsheet of World War One, however, was the Paris-based daily *Nashe Slovo* (*Our Word*), whose illustrious editors included, amongst others, Julius Martov and Leon Trotsky. *Nashe Slovo* had an editorial line which reflected the changing balance of opinions on its editorial board. Even so, it consistently printed views from all shades of socialist thought. This helped it to attract contributors from across Europe. Through its correspondents it attempted to keep its readership acquainted with events in all the belligerent countries, so that even those who disagreed with its editorials, such as Lenin,<sup>1</sup> eagerly sought out *Nashe Slovo* so as to keep abreast of the latest developments. Of particular interest was news of any action by the workers which could be interpreted as taking an anti-war, pro-socialist direction. It is in this context that events in Glasgow during World War One achieved a special prominence in *Nashe Slovo's* reportage; the more so as events there included collaboration between Scots and Slavs. 'Red Clydeside' is an important part of Glasgow folklore, and the special place occupied by John Maclean in Soviet Russia has long been recognised.<sup>2</sup> It is surprising that to date no researcher<sup>3</sup> has examined how Glasgow in particular, and Scotland more generally, were represented in *Nashe Slovo* before the October Revolution, for, as will become clear, there were long-standing consequences, both for John Maclean and for the fate of the Scottish workers' movement.

Twenty-three articles on Scotland appeared in *Nashe Slovo*, the first in April 1915, with the heaviest concentration between January and July 1916. The subjects covered fall into seven themes. The first of these, the one which led to the initial mention of Scotland in *Nashe Slovo*, was the emergence of strike activity and

<sup>1</sup> That Lenin was a regular, if unsettled, reader of *Nashe Slovo* can be seen from his frequent references to the newspaper in, e.g., his correspondence of the war years. Thus, there are over thirty citations to *Nashe Slovo* in the index to V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. xlix *Pis'ma Avgust 1914–Oktjabr 1917* (Moscow, 1978), 580.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., I. D. Thatcher, 'John Maclean: Soviet versions', *History*, lxxvii (1992), 421–429.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to make the claim that no researcher has noted the existence of writings to which reference is made in this article. Both R. Grant, 'British radicals and socialists and their attitudes to Russia, c.1890–1917' (Glasgow University Ph.D. Thesis, 1984), and T. O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution: G. V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1918–1930* (Ames, Iowa, 1988), amongst others, note that Chicherin sent articles about Scotland to *Nashe Slovo*. However, no scholar has examined the content of these works and the broader debates and context in which they were produced.

anti-war feelings among Scottish workers. The report of April 1915 claimed: 'the strikes of mechanics, metal workers and shipbuilding workers in Scotland, which arose despite the wishes of their leaders . . . show that the workers are not keen on the ideas of patriotism and civil peace.'<sup>4</sup> This was soon followed by news that in towns across Scotland, but especially in Glasgow, May Day 1915 was celebrated as never before: attendance figures were up, as were the number of participating organisations.<sup>5</sup> The image of a buoyant Scottish workers' movement was kept alive by subsequent reports of worker unrest, even if limited to standard issues such as pay.<sup>6</sup>

A second theme, related to the first, but adding to the picture of a strong workers' movement in Scotland, concerned accounts of the repressive measures taken by the government in an attempt to control the Scottish situation. Articles of February and March 1916, for example, chronicled the arrest of key workers' leaders, including William Gallacher, Walter Bell and John Muir, and the closure of the workers' newspaper, the *Worker*. When, in order to press for the release of their leaders, the workers crowded in their thousands around the courts, formed committees and refused to return to the munitions factories, heavy fines were imposed upon them.<sup>7</sup>

The yoke of an oppressive British administration also featured in the third aspect of *Nashe Slovo's* reporting of Scottish developments in World War One, that of the links between Scots and Slavs. That the cause of the Russian revolution was close to the hearts of Scottish workers was clear from several acts of support covered in *Nashe Slovo*. Thus, for instance, there are stories of Scots joining together with Baltic, Russian and Jewish comrades under the rubric of the United Committee to Aid Political Prisoners in Russia. A meeting of 25 April 1915 raised £2 to be sent to those whose only crime was that they 'remained true to the interests of the working class'.<sup>8</sup> At the May Day rally of 1915 in Glasgow, the international sympathies of the Scottish public were revealed in speeches being made in Russian, Yiddish, Lithuanian and Polish alongside English; a sale of red bow ties added £5 7s. 3½d. to the fund for political prisoners in Russia.<sup>9</sup> The event accorded the most sustained treatment on this theme was the arrest of Peter Petroff in January 1916. Petroff was a Russian émigré who, since his arrival in Britain in 1907, had achieved, by 1914, a position of prominence in the British Socialist Party (BSP). In 1915, at the invitation of the Glasgow district council of the BSP, he had travelled from his home in London to Glasgow to undertake agitational activities. Whilst carrying out these duties, he was charged with contravening the Aliens Protection Order. After serving a two-month jail sentence, Petroff was interned from March 1916 until his repatriation to Bolshevik Russia in January 1918.<sup>10</sup> His trial and

<sup>4</sup> P. D. P., 'Angliiskie rabochie i 1 maya', *Nashe Slovo*, 27 Apr. 1915, 1.

<sup>5</sup> V. K., 'V Glazgov (ot nashego korrespondenta). I. Pervoe maya v Glazgov', *Nashe Slovo*, 13 May 1915, 2. 'V. K.' was the pseudonym of Vincas Mickevicius-Kapsukas, a leading Lithuanian socialist who maintained close links with Scottish socialists. For a brief account of Kapsukas's activities in World War One, see, e.g., M. Rodgers, 'The Anglo-Russian military convention and the Lithuanian immigrant community in Lanarkshire, Scotland, 1914–20', *Immigrants and Communities*, 1 (1982), 66–67.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., 'Volneniya rabochikh v Anglii', *Nashe Slovo*, 30 July 1915, 2.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., 'V Anglii. Repressii v Glazgov', *Nashe Slovo*, 18 Feb. 1916, 2; 'Na r. Klaid', *Nashe Slovo*, 31 Mar. 1916, 2.

<sup>8</sup> V. K., 'V Glazgov (ot nashego korrespondenta). II. Rezolyutsiya protesta', *Nashe Slovo*, 13 May 1915, 2.

<sup>9</sup> V. K., 'Pervoe maya v Glazgov'.

<sup>10</sup> For a brief but very informative account of Petroff's career, see M. Rodgers and J. Smyth, 'Petroff, Peter (1884–1947)', in W. Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders, 1918–1939: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh, 1984), 224–230.

subsequent fate were closely recorded in *Nashe Slovo*, including the efforts of Scottish workers on Petroff's behalf. An article of February 1916, for example, stressed that the affinity between Petroff, a Russian revolutionary working in Scotland, and the Scottish working class was closer than that between the latter and the moderate, London-based leadership of the BSP, whose open suspicion of Petroff may have contributed to his arrest.<sup>11</sup> A sequel to this piece, appearing on the next day, recounted specific acts by Scottish workers in Petroff's defence: a meeting of several hundred delegates issued a unanimous protest against the arrest; a circular explaining the affair and containing the workers' appeals was published and circulated; speeches were made at meetings attended by thousands of workers. According to this report, the 'Petroff Affair' had intensified worker-government antagonism to the point at which 'the growing revolutionary-proletarian movement in Scotland will have to face the test of history'.<sup>12</sup>

It is clear from the treatment of the 'Petroff Affair' that the workers' movement in Britain was not united. Just as in other warring countries, British socialists were divided between pro-war 'social-patriots' and anti-war 'internationalists', with the British peculiarity that this divide perhaps followed a geographical fault-line. Each faction drew different conclusions from worker activity, the social-patriots limiting its significance, the internationalists viewing it as evidence of potential for revolution. This split – our fourth theme – was reflected in *Nashe Slovo*. Here, prefiguring a debate which has continued into recent times, there was a dispute over the commitment of the Scottish workers to revolutionary ideals.<sup>13</sup> Ironically, this issue, and the related question, whether its mode of action could serve as a model for the rest of Britain, was raised in *Nashe Slovo* between two Russian émigrés living in London. Each considered himself an internationalist, though neither had actually visited Scotland.

In a review of 'British Socialism and the War', printed in *Nashe Slovo* of 7 December 1915, Theodore Rothstein, a Russian émigré of long-standing and prominence in British socialist circles,<sup>14</sup> discussed the social-patriot/internationalist groupings mainly as they affected the BSP, but also drew comparisons with the position of the internationalist Independent Labour as a section of the social-patriotic Labour Party. Rothstein highlighted a peculiar balance of forces in the BSP. The internationalist viewpoint was supported by a large proportion of the rank-and-file, and five out of nine members of the Central Committee. And yet, in its official publications, the BSP pursued a social-patriotic line. For Rothstein this anomaly had arisen because the social-patriotic leaders were

<sup>11</sup> Orn, 'Delo tov. Petrova i dvizhenie v shotlandii', *Nashe Slovo*, 22 Feb. 1916, 1. The version of the BSP's less than helpful action in the events leading up to Petroff's arrest arose because of a short note, published in the BSP's newspaper *Justice*, which questioned why Petroff was in Glasgow, and at whose invitation. See 'Who and what is Peter Petroff?', *Justice*, 23 Dec. 1915, 4. This brought forth much reaction, both for and against Petroff and the extent to which it was sensible to invite an alien to a sensitive place (Glasgow) to engage in sensitive acts (anti-war agitation). See, e.g., against Petroff: 'The Imprisonment of Petroff', *Justice*, 13 Jan. 1916, 4, J. Morton, 'P. Petroff's misfortune', *Justice*, 20 Jan. 1916, 7; and in his favour: J. Maclean, 'Concerning P. Petroff', *Justice*, 30 Dec. 1915, 7; G. Tchitcherine, 'Concerning P. Petroff', *Justice*, 6 Jan. 1916, 7; P. Petroff, 'Peter Petroff replies', *Justice*, 27 Jan. 1916, 7 and J. D. MacDougall, *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Orn, 'Delo tov. Petrova i dvizhenie v shotlandii (okonchanie)', *Nashe Slovo*, 23 Feb. 1916, 1.

<sup>13</sup> For a recent work which views the Red Clyde as a construct of 'excitable minds', see I. McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh, 1983).

<sup>14</sup> For an account of Rothstein's activities in the British socialist movement, see the references to him in W. Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900–21: The Origins of British Communism* (London, 1969).

genuinely popular figures who, through directorships of co-operative societies, also controlled the movement's central organs. Faced with this problem, Rothstein reported that the internationalist members of the BSP were using their growing numbers slowly to wrest control of the party from the social-patriots. The beneficial effects of their tactics were already evident. Thus, for instance, the BSP Central Committee had been pressured to send a delegate to the conference of internationalists at Zimmerwald, held in September 1915, whose manifesto had then been circulated to branch members. Moreover, the social-patriots had been forced to create their own openly nationalistic 'Socialist Committee for National Defence' *outside* the BSP. This 'Socialist Committee' could then be, and had indeed been, criticised by the BSP. An immediate split from the social-patriots from within the BSP was ruled out by Rothstein because it would result in the break-up of a party which had taken a considerable time to form, and would only strengthen the hand of the social-patriots. In any case, he reassured the readership that the trend of events favoured the internationalists: a point would be reached at which the social-patriots would be nothing but 'generals without an army and then it will be easy to deal with them'.<sup>15</sup>

Rothstein's scenario of a relatively smooth take-over of the BSP by its internationalist membership working from within was soon disputed. Georgii Chicherin, a future foreign minister of Soviet Russia, had arrived in Britain in the autumn of 1914 after fleeing the advancing German army in continental Europe. His time in London, until his return to Russia in January 1918, forms an important part of his intellectual biography. Chicherin was soon to convert from 'defencism' to internationalism and to play a leading role on committees in defence of anti-war, anti-conscription Russian émigrés.<sup>16</sup> His initial 'defencist' submissions to *Nashe Slovo* dissatisfied Trotsky;<sup>17</sup> but following his adoption of internationalism Chicherin became *Nashe Slovo*'s chief reporter of British developments, including those in Scotland. Letters he received from Peter Petroff constituted a main source of Chicherin's knowledge about workers' organisations and the general situation in Scotland.<sup>18</sup> Basing his views upon the picture painted in this correspondence, which assured him that the organisation in Scotland was 'clearly Marxist in character' and supported by the public, Chicherin launched an open attack on Rothstein. According to Chicherin, Rothstein had presented a false account of the BSP's affairs, overestimating the internationalist forces and severely underestimating the hold of the social-patriots. In actual fact, the only active, internationalist branch of the BSP was its Scottish section, which had 'an almost completely independent existence, little connected with the rest of the party'. This was why, sixteen months into the war, the BSP's *Justice* remained as social-patriotic as ever; indeed it acted as a police informer in the 'Petroff Affair' and printed an appeal for money to be raised for the social-patriotic Belgian socialist Emile Vandervelde. Against Rothstein's limited recommendations of 'committee manoeuvres', Chicherin called upon internationalists to follow the example of the genuinely revolutionary Scots, to found a fighting publication like *Vanguard* and to appeal to the masses:

When the Educational Board in Govan discussed Maclean's sacking from teaching, a huge crowd gathered around the building, filling the hall. When the Educational Board declared the meeting closed to outsiders, the committee members were forced into

<sup>15</sup> Th. R-n, 'Angliiskii sotsializm i voina', *Nashe Slovo*, 7 Dec. 1915, 1.

<sup>16</sup> For an accessible account of Chicherin's stay in Britain, see O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 32–45.

<sup>17</sup> I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879–1921* (Oxford, 1954), 223.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., the correspondence cited by Grant, 'British radicals and socialists', 238–239.

adjoining rooms while the session was turned into a meeting of the people. Despite the frost the crowd stood for several hours listening to orators. When it became known that Maclean's sacking was upheld, the people's anger reached new limits. In all districts there were protest meetings at which harsh resolutions were adopted.<sup>19</sup>

In his reply Rothstein began by seeking some common ground with Chicherin. He agreed that internationalists within the BSP did not always pursue their cause with sufficient vigour. All the same, he did not see any sense in Chicherin's critique of 'committee manoeuvres'. How else, he asked, were the internationalists to increase their influence in the party, including over the disappointing *Justice*?

The internationalist wing of the party in London is planning a new publication for its agitation, but even so, *Justice* remains in the opponent's hands and the party itself does not speak with sufficient clarity . . . Does Comrade Orn think it better that the Scots and Fairchild should resign from the party, leaving the field of action at the forthcoming party congress to the chauvinists? If not, one should value personnel changes on committees as an indicator of the resultant party . . . this may bring good results at the forthcoming party congress, at which the issue of the newspaper may also be resolved in our favour.

Furthermore, Rothstein cautioned against the internationalists becoming too extreme in their propaganda. After all, he claimed, the vast majority of the working class remained in favour of the war and of production of military essentials. The workers were, of course, concerned that the government was going to introduce *forced* conscription and productive norms, but they opposed these measures on traditional liberal grounds as an attack on individual freedom and trade union rights. 'It is possible,' conceded Rothstein, 'that on this basis the movement will turn into one of opposition to the war itself, but this lies in the future. In the current, liberal phase of the movement in Scotland I am not captured with the excitement which pervades Comrade Orn.' Finally, Rothstein doubted whether the tactics of Scottish colleagues could be transferred to London, as recommended by Chicherin. This, he reasoned, ignored the differences in conditions obtaining in the capital compared with the provinces, especially if one considered the historical peculiarities of London:

In the central party institutions work is more complicated, materially and morally, than on the periphery and, above all, London is not Scotland. London is not Scotland, nor is it South Wales, or even Lancashire. For reasons which cannot be gone into here, London, unlike other capitals, has never initiated, nor even been one of the main centres of social movements in Britain.

Rothstein, however, did not want Scottish or other colleagues on the periphery to conclude from this that they should break away and achieve success independently. In the last analysis, 'only London's support will guarantee victory'.<sup>20</sup>

Although Rothstein had given a well-reasoned defence of his own position, he satisfied neither the editors of *Nashe Slovo*,<sup>21</sup> nor Lenin,<sup>22</sup> whose theoretical journal

<sup>19</sup> Orn, 'Donos "Justice", organa sots-demokratii', *Nashe Slovo*, 7 Jan. 1916, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Th. R-n, 'Eshche ob angliiskikh sotsialistakh', *Nashe Slovo*, 19 Jan. 1916, 1.

<sup>21</sup> 'As will be clear to our readers the editorial board cannot agree with Comrade Th. R-n's theses. Considering an all-rounded analysis of the situation in British socialism of extreme importance, we . . . will publish an examination of these issues from a point of view closer to our own' ('Ot redaktsii', *Nashe Slovo*, 19 Jan. 1916, 1).

<sup>22</sup> Of the Rothstein/Chicherin dispute in *Nashe Slovo*, Lenin wrote: 'In the conciliatory Parisian *Nashe Slovo* Comrade Orn[atskii] performs a greater service to internationalist

*Kommunist* had published a contribution from Rothstein. Instead, *Nashe Slovo* turned to Chicherin. In Chicherin's survey of the Scottish workers' movement, which appeared in five-parts spread over several issues of May-June 1916, events are retold and perceptions summarised which would have been familiar to readers of earlier reports, but there is a higher level of detail and quality which comes from a sustained treatment. These articles, which trace the rise and fall of the movement – our fifth theme – form the centre-piece of *Nashe Slovo's* Scottish coverage.

The first two pieces in this series investigated the origins and emergence of 'the most wonderful phenomenon' of the British workers' movement.<sup>23</sup> Chicherin attributed the source of Marxist radicalism and its broad influence across the west of Scotland and beyond to the 'economic classes' offered to the workers of many districts by John Maclean. The topics covered by Maclean's course of lectures included Marxist theory, political economy, and the history of the workers' movement. The lectures had, in Chicherin's view, raised a large stratum of workers trained in Marxism to form the vanguard of the working class. This model of a socialist intellectual providing the necessary precondition, education in Marxism, to enable workers to take initiatives on their own behalf would have been familiar to Russian social democratic readers. After all, the formation of workers' education circles was an important part of the history of Russian social democracy.<sup>24</sup> The fruits of Maclean's efforts in Scotland were obvious:

The advanced elements of the Scottish movement are the organisers of continuous meetings at the factory gates, at the mines, at huge town halls, on the city streets and in

<sup>22</sup> (*continued*) work in Britain, arguing for an immediate split there. It goes without saying that we are in full agreement with Orn[at'skii] in his polemic with the Kautskyst position taken by F. R[othstein], a contributor to *Kommunist*. (*Leninskii sbornik XVII* [Moscow-Leningrad, 1931], 331). Rothstein's article in *Kommunist* surveyed the reactions of three British socialist parties (BSP, Labour, Independent Labour) to the outbreak of war. He pointed out that none of these organisations was Marxist, and that none had adopted an open anti-war programme. However, he stated that the internationalists were slowly increasing their influence in the BSP, on its committees etc., and that in this way they would eventually capture total control of the party. Rothstein also claimed that, as yet, Marxism enjoyed little hold over the British masses, who were 'too underdeveloped socially to take-up Marxism'. With correct leadership and a worsening of conditions due to the war, though, Rothstein conceded that this could change. Th. R-n, 'Razbrod v Anglii (Pis'mo iz Londona)', *Kommunist*, 1–2, 1915, 155–158. Rothstein was to repeat both these points in *Nashe Slovo*. For a long time Soviet historiography was silent on Lenin's criticisms of Rothstein. It was simply recorded that in the First World War Rothstein occupied 'an extreme internationalist position'. See, e.g., successive entries in the *Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, vol. xlix (Moscow, 1941), 496; vol. xxxvii, 2nd edn (Moscow, 1955), 262–263; and the obituary in *Voprosy istorii*, viii (1953), 190. In the 1960s an article on Chicherin did note that Lenin had taken Chicherin's side in his dispute with Rothstein: S. V. Tyutyukin, 'Stranitsa biografii G. V. Chicherina (1914–1917 gg.)', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, lxxix (1966), 255. When Rothstein returned to the history of the British working class in a work of the 1920s he had little to say about Scotland. He notes the growth of the shop stewards' movement in Scotland, which 'seemed to offer the promise of an interesting new development in the revolutionary trade union movement of England. But towards the close of the war it began to lose its influence, and after the war disappeared entirely.' Th. Rothstein, *From Chartism to Labourism* (New York, 1929), 317.

<sup>23</sup> Orn, 'Shotlandskoe rabochee dvizhenie i reaktsiya v anglii. I. Shotlandskoe dvizhenie v 1915 g.', *Nashe Slovo*, 16 May 1916, 2–3; Orn, 'Shotlandskoe rabochee dvizhenie i reaktsiya v anglii. II. Lloid-Dzhordzh i shotlandskoe rabochee dvizhenie', *Nashe Slovo*, 18 May 1916, 1.

<sup>24</sup> On this topic, see, e.g., R. Pipes, *Social Democracy and the St Petersburg Labor Movement* (Cambridge, MA, 1963).

the countryside, and at these factory, mine and street gatherings the breadth and depth of the movement in all its forms have never been livelier, to such an extent that the Empire's ruling classes tremble.<sup>25</sup>

Faced with a reformist trade union leadership, Chicherin reported that the advanced Glasgow workers had formed their own 'Committee of the Red Clyde'. A meeting of delegates of December 1915 had approved the Zimmerwald Manifesto, the 'first instance of a mass, non-party acceptance of it'. As well as fighting against chauvinism and reformism in workers' circles in Scotland, Chicherin noted Scottish Marxists' attempts to link up with the radical workers of South Wales, a prospective regional coalition which was 'striking terror' in the hearts of the British ruling class. In his next article, however, Chicherin focused on the victories achieved by the conscious Scottish workers in Scotland, armed with their own leaders, organisations and publications. Chief among these successes were the hostile reception given to Prime Minister Lloyd George during his visit to Glasgow,<sup>26</sup> and the campaign against the sharp increases in Glasgow rents in the war months. The latter battle was of particular interest to Chicherin, for it combined a protest body which had emerged from below, the Scottish Labour Housing Association, with direction from the revolutionaries, most notably Maclean. It also provided high drama for a journalist of internationalist persuasions: women and children marching in the streets; non-payment of rent and imprisonment of debtors; a heightening of tension following the arrest of Maclean; the sight of a campaign beginning in Glasgow leaping to other towns in Scotland and then to centres south of the Border; and, eventually, a law which lowered rents to pre-war levels for the duration of the hostilities. Escalation of this sort offered an attractive prospect to internationalist readers of *Nashe Slovo*. Unfortunately, an anxious government could not allow the Scottish workers' movement to get out of control. Chicherin's next three articles traced the decline of the internationalists' fortunes on the Clyde as government repression hit hard.

Chicherin was at least able to take some comfort from the first tale of the government's backlash: the arrest, trial and imprisonment of Petroff and his wife.<sup>27</sup> To his credit, in a speech from the dock Petroff had revealed the bogus nature of the prosecution's case – that what in fact lay behind the trial was an alliance of reactionary Russian and British forces. Furthermore, a personal 'moral victory' brought broader political advantage to the internationalist cause, with Petroff's status as a martyr guaranteeing him greater influence at a subsequent BSP conference than he had hitherto enjoyed. Little solace, however, could be derived from Chicherin's version of what the government's 'iron heel' stamped on next.<sup>28</sup> The closure of the internationalist *Vanguard*, the arrest of Maclean and other key orators, slander from the 'yellow press', the opportunism of trade union leaders and, despite protest strikes, the introduction of compulsory conscription, all combined to dampen the revolutionary mood and self-belief of the masses. In these circumstances even the 'advanced Scottish workers' simply

<sup>25</sup> Orn, 'Shotlandskoe dvizhenie v 1915', 3.

<sup>26</sup> For an earlier report on Lloyd George's visit to Glasgow, see 'Lloyd Dzhorz ob angliiskikh rabochikh', *Nashe Slovo*, 8 Feb. 1916, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Orn, 'Shotlandskoe rabochee dvizhenie i reaktsiya v anglii. III. Delo t. Petrova', *Nashe Slovo*, 20 May 1916, 1–2.

<sup>28</sup> Orn, 'Shotlandskoe rabochee dvizhenie i reaktsiya v anglii. IV. Nachalo repressii i martovskaya stachka', *Nashe Slovo*, 6 June 1916, 1, & 7 June 1916, 1; Orn, 'Shotlandskoe rabochee dvizhenie i reaktsiya v anglii. V. Pod "zhleznoi pyatoi"', *Nashe Slovo*, 9 June 1916, 1, & 10 June 1916, 1.



'could not function'. Reflecting upon Chicherin's account, a reader might conclude that it had taken a formidable array of means, from state power to the bourgeois press barons, to throw back the Scottish workers. On the other hand, as Chicherin admitted, protest had now descended to the level of the individual, divorced from a social movement. A good revolutionary optimist, Chicherin concluded on a positive note. The radical workers' organisations in Scotland were merely 'recuperating'. They had the resources to produce new leaders who would lead the British working class to a new stage of struggle.

Judging from *Nashe Slovo's* treatment of Scotland, it would take someone of immense stature to fill the gap left by the imprisoned John Maclean. A sixth theme in representations of Scotland in *Nashe Slovo* during World War One is the treatment of Maclean. The Parisian newspaper's devotion to Maclean amounted to a minor cult. No other workers' leader, from Scotland or elsewhere, had his photograph printed at the top of an issue's front page.<sup>29</sup> Maclean's defence of Petroff, first printed in *Justice*, was translated and reproduced in *Nashe Slovo*.<sup>30</sup> No other workers' leader's writings achieved such authority and attention. Although the careers of Maclean's colleagues earned mentions, no leader's achievements and tribulations were covered in as much detail as Maclean's. Chicherin called Maclean 'the most talented, knowledgeable, energetic, enthusiastic and revolutionary in temperament' out of all the Scottish comrades.<sup>31</sup> M. Bridget Adams claimed that the legacy of Maclean's classes to Scottish workers, and especially its younger members, was an 'internationalist base' on the Clyde. Despite sending Maclean to gaol, the British government would find it hard to build an 'imperialist superstructure' over the organised and independent Scottish working class.<sup>32</sup> Most disappointing for *Nashe Slovo* was the BSP's failure to direct the agitation felt by the masses during Maclean's trial along internationalist lines. As outlined in *Nashe Slovo*, the BSP procrastinated and sought excuses not to come out in open support of Maclean. Given Maclean's closeness to the people, a well-conducted campaign in Maclean's name could have put the Scottish working class 'back on its feet'.<sup>33</sup>

As news of the Scottish workers' movement was increasingly taken up with decline and missed opportunities, *Nashe Slovo* was also reporting the discontent in Ireland around the Easter Uprising of 1916. It is in this context that two final, if fleeting and contradictory, perceptions of Scotland emerge. The first came in an article of May 1916 which discussed the place of Ireland within the United Kingdom. It outlines special factors which made Ireland the most volatile component of the Union, the one most likely to mount a successful challenge to the power of the British Protestant aristocracy. In this analysis, Ireland's maintenance of the peculiarities of its national development contrasted sharply with the experience of recent Scottish history. For, after a period of struggle, Scotland had, from the eighteenth century onwards, been incorporated into British political institutions, economic development and social structure:

<sup>29</sup> *Nashe Slovo*, 28 May 1916, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Orn, 'K arestu tov. Petrova', *Nashe Slovo*, 8 Jan. 1916, 2. For a further translation of Maclean's thoughts, this time on the social-patriotic BSP member H. Hyndman, see K. Z., 'Kto takoi Gaindman?', *Nashe Slovo*, 22 Jan. 1916, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Orn, 'Shotlandskoe dvizhenie v 1915', 3.

<sup>32</sup> M. Bridzhes Adams, 'Tovarishchestvo, a ne liderstvo', *Nashe Slovo*, 1 May 1916, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Orn, 'Mane'ry protiv agitatsii za osvobozhdenie t. Maklina', *Nashe Slovo*, 11 July 1916, 1. In a subsequent note Chicherin reported a belated recognition from the BSP that it should do more on Maclean's behalf, but this, he pointed out, was three months after Maclean had been imprisoned. Orn, 'Call ob agitatsii za osvobozhdenie t. Maklina', *Nashe Slovo*, 22 July 1916, 2.

Ireland did not enter into the general life of the British nation. Retaining its existence in struggle against Germanic-Scandinavian, Protestant, landowning Britain, Ireland created for itself the political task of national independence and self-government . . . In this way Ireland would liberate itself from the power of the English-Scottish parliament. For Ireland this would have a special social significance. In Ireland there is a large majority of small peasant-farmers, a class weak in England-Scotland.<sup>34</sup>

This representation of a Scotland united with England contrasts with a sentence in an examination of the Dublin uprising published in *Nashe Slovo* two months later. This noted that, 'Scottish soldiers broke down the barricades in Dublin. But in Scotland itself the miners unite around the Red Banner raised by Maclean and his friends.'<sup>35</sup> The discrepancy between the socialist, anti-imperial sympathies of the Scottish working class and the British establishment's use of Scottish regiments to maintain the Empire was subsequently to be developed by Maclean.<sup>36</sup>

For historians who think Scotland and especially Glasgow experienced a genuine popular revolt with a potential for revolution, *Nashe Slovo's* extensive coverage of the Scottish workers' movement during the First World War will be taken as a natural reaction to important developments. For others, *Nashe Slovo's* devotion will be seen as the result of the biases of a select group of left-wing, internationalist Russian émigrés, most notably Chicherin and Petroff, who, as Rothstein alleged at the time, had little grasp of the real situation in Scotland. *Nashe Slovo* favoured Chicherin's and Petroff's articles and dismissed Rothstein's warnings out of a similar bias: it was eager to receive any indication of workers and revolutionaries combining to upset the war plans of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the themes raised in *Nashe Slovo's* accounts of Scotland were to have consequences beyond the war. The cult of Maclean, the reputation acquired of a committed revolutionary loved by the people, led to the many honours bestowed upon Maclean by the Bolsheviks in the first post-October years and beyond.<sup>37</sup> There was also a bitter pill for Maclean to swallow, one that soured his view of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in his last political campaigns. At the end of his life Maclean argued that Scotland, since it was more radical than the rest of Great Britain, should have its own communist party. Against him stood, amongst others, Rothstein, whose arguments against treating Scotland in isolation from the rest of the British workers' movement had first appeared in *Nashe Slovo*. Even comrades who came closest to Maclean in their appreciation of the special strengths of the Scottish socialist scene, including Chicherin, viewed the Scottish movement as but the spark that would alight the rest of Britain as, for example, in the coverage of the rent strike campaign. As rich and exciting as the image of a buoyant Scottish working class was, and however much the example of Scottish revolutionaries in open opposition to social-patriots was applauded, *Nashe Slovo* never encouraged the Scots to establish independent

<sup>34</sup> Varin, 'Irlandiya i britanskaya imperiya', *Nashe Slovo*, 13 May 1916, 1.

<sup>35</sup> 'K Dublinskim itogam', *Nashe Slovo*, 4 July 1916, 1.

<sup>36</sup> 'The preparations to use the Scottish coast and Scottish lads in John Bull's fight with Uncle Sam force on us the policy of complete political separation from England' (see Thatcher, 'John Maclean: Soviet versions', 425).

<sup>37</sup> These honours included: a congratulatory telegram from the Sixth Congress of the RSDLP(b) of 1917 upon his release from prison; election as Honorary Chairman of the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Jan. 1918; appointment in Feb. 1918 as first Bolshevik representative in Scotland; a street named after him in Leningrad; and in 1979 a commemorative stamp to note the centenary of his birth.

institutions. Although Rothstein was criticised for timidity in dealing with chauvinists in the British workers' movement, it was Rothstein's view of centre-periphery relations which prevailed when a Communist Party of Great Britain was founded in August 1920.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For an account of Maclean's dispute with Rothstein and like-minded colleagues in Moscow over the proposed formation of a Communist Party of Great Britain written from a pro-Maclean position, see, e. g., N. Milton, *John Maclean* (London, 1973). According to this source Rothstein merely carried out Moscow's orders, one more reason why Maclean distrusted him.