

THE ARKLETON TRUST

**DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTIONS AND
APPROACHES IN THREE
RURAL AREAS OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM**

*The Report of the 1982 Arkleton Trust Study
Tour of Mid-Wales, the Western Isles and the
Grampian Region of Scotland.*

by

B.S. Baviskar, A.U. Patel and J.B. Wight

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THE ARKLETON TRUST uses its resources for the study of new approaches to rural development with emphasis on education and training. It aims to promote dialogue between politicians, administrators and practitioners at all levels on the problems of Europe and the Third World.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SELECTED AGENCY ADDRESSES

ADAS	Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; serving England and Wales).
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy (of the European Economic Community).
CDB	Congested Districts Board (defunct)
CEP	Western Isles Community Education Project (in association with the Bernard Van Leer Foundation).
CoSIRA	Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (an agent of the Development Commission).
DAFS	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland (Chesser House, Edinburgh EH11 3AW).
DBRW	Development Board for Rural Wales (Ladywell House, Newtown, Powys SY16 1JB).
DC	Development Commission (11 Cowley Street, London SW1P 3NA).
EEC	European Economic Community (Brussels, Belgium).
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund (EEC Regional Policy Directorate).
HIDB	Highlands and Islands Development Board (Bridge House, Bank Street, Inverness IV1 1QR).
IDP	Western Isles Integrated Development Programme (EEC/CAP Structures Policy).
IMF	International Monetary Fund.
LFA	Less Favoured Areas Directive, (EEC/CAP).
MWIDA	Mid-Wales Industrial Development Association.
MWNTDC	Mid-Wales New Town Development Corporation.
NESDA	North East Scotland Development Authority (8 Albyn Place, Aberdeen AB1 1YH (pre-1975 NESD Association).

NOSCA	North of Scotland College of Agriculture (service area includes Grampian and the Western Isles; based in Aberdeen).
NWERAC	North Wales Employment and Advice Centre (Bangor, Gwynedd).
RET	Road-Equivalent Tariff.
SDA	Scottish Development Agency (120 Bothwell Street, Glasgow G27 7JP).
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
WDA	Welsh Development Agency (Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan).
WIIC	Western Isles Islands Council (Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, PA87 2BW). (Also Comhairle nan Eilean).

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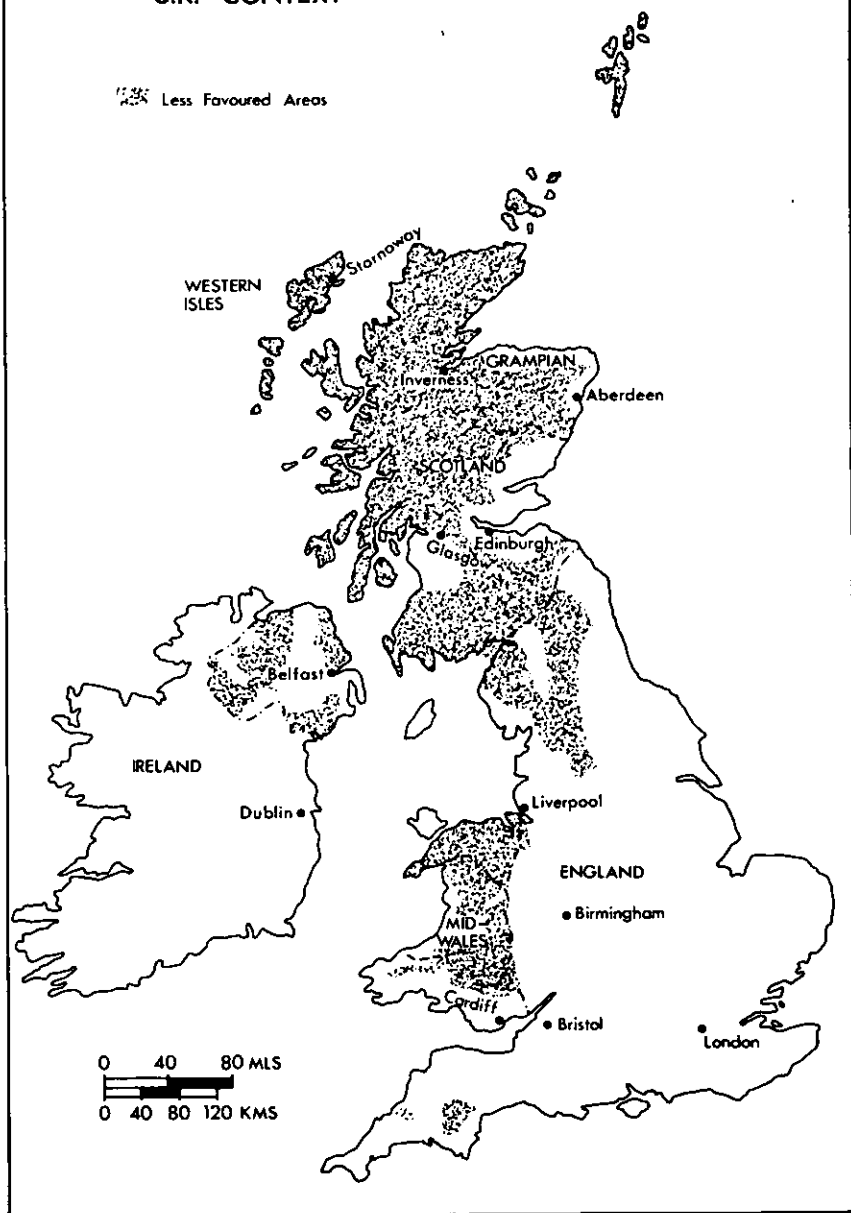
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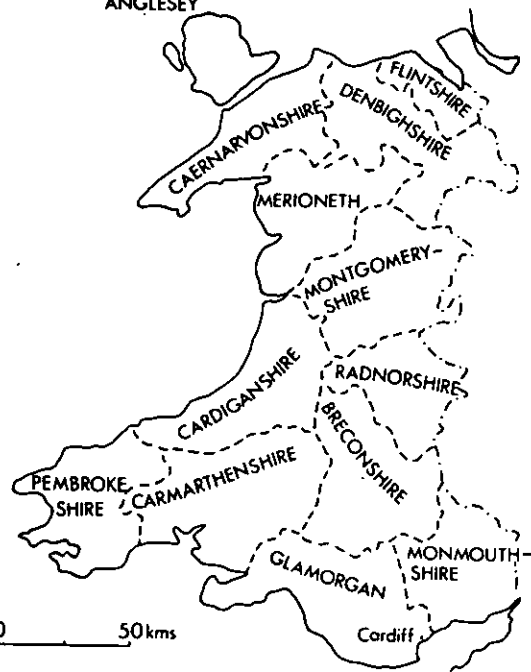
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MAP 1: THE STUDY AREA -
U.K. CONTEXT

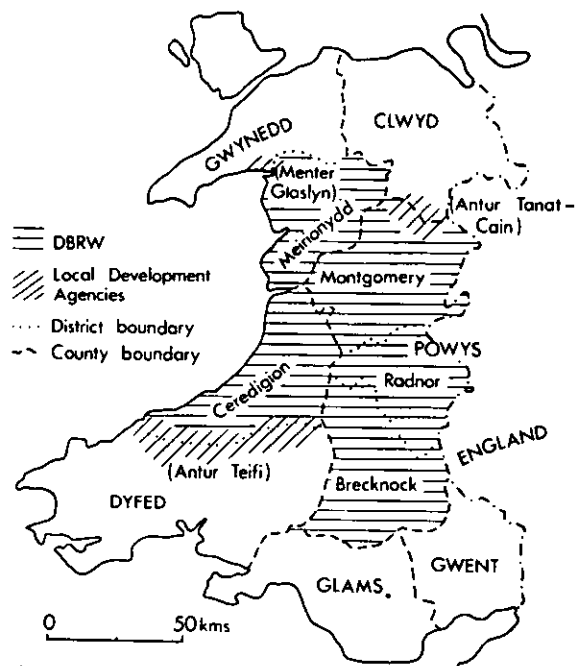


MAP 2: THE MID-WALES CASE.

ANGLESEY



a) FORMER WELSH COUNTIES (Pre 1974)

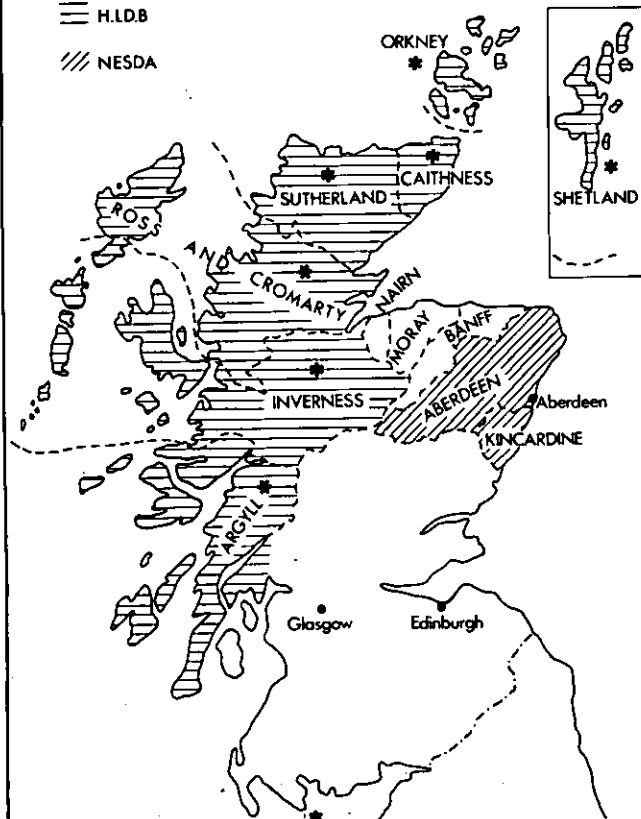


b) THE NEW COUNTIES, DISTRICTS AND DBRW AREAS OF WALES.

MAP 3: THE CONTEXT FOR THE SCOTTISH CASES

≡ H.I.D.B.

/// NESDA



a) THE CROFTING COUNTIES and
FORMER COUNTIES OF N.E. SCOTLAND (Pre 1975)

≡ H.I.D.B.

/// NESDA

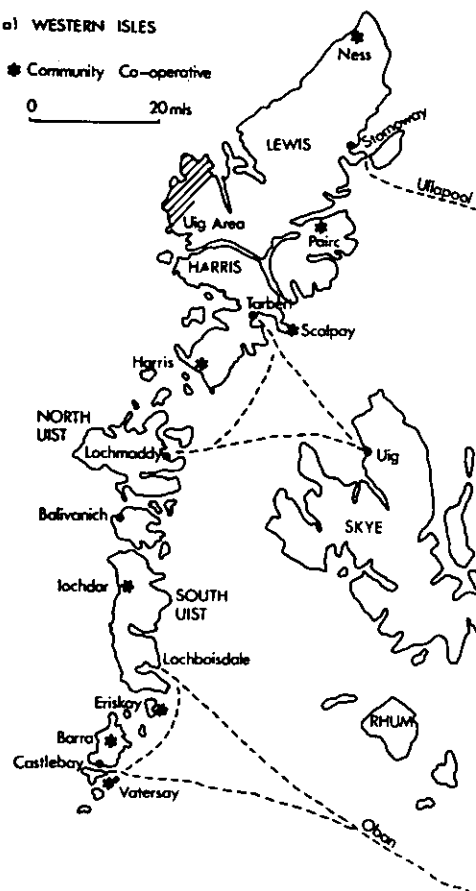


b) LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGIONS
and ISLANDS AUTHORITIES (Post 1975)

a) WESTERN ISLES

* Community Co-operative

0 20 mls

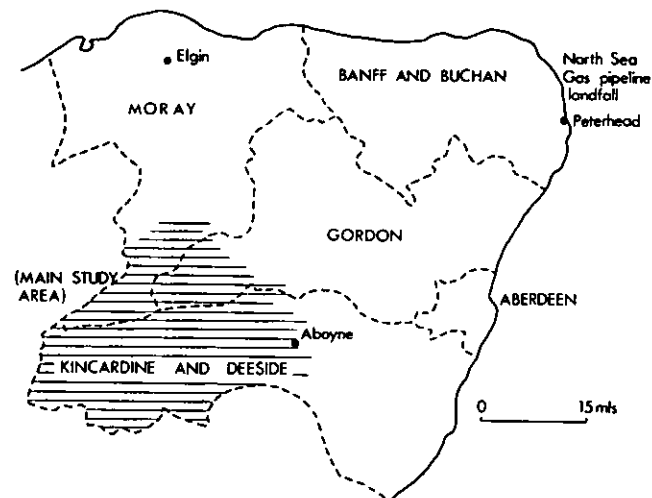


MAP 4: THE SCOTTISH STUDY AREAS

The Western Isles is a single-tier, most purpose authority.

Grampian Regional Council is complemented by a lower tier of 5 District Authorities

b) GRAMPIAN REGION & DISTRICTS



FOREWORD

The study tour reported here echoes a similar initiative by the Arkleton Trust in 1980. On that occasion the participants — drawn deliberately from countries of the Third World — were able to contribute their impressions to the third Arkleton Seminar, which dealt with the subject of 'Education, The Farmer and Rural Change'. The contribution proved to be of seminal importance, as may be appreciated by consulting the seminar report.¹ As a consequence a separate report on the study tour was prepared.² It attracted widespread interest, mainly on account the unusual fact that a Third World group was commenting critically on examples of UK rural development programming. The whole experience proved an interesting reversal of the normal procedure by which experts from Britain, or other ostensibly 'developed' countries, have been asked to appraise or devise Third World programmes.

The 1980 study tour was structured around three discrete rural development *projects*, two of which were located in English settings, and the third in Southern Scotland. By contrast the 1982 tour focussed upon specific *areas* which have been the subject of attention by formal development institutions over a long period: the Development Board for Rural Wales (DBRW), and its predecessors, in the case of Mid-Wales; the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB), complemented recently by the new islands authority, in the case of the Western Isles; and the North East Scotland Development Authority (NESDA), in the case of the Grampian region. Compared to the previous study tour projects the present subject areas are more peripheral — geographically, economically and culturally. This feature is underlined by their official recognition as being 'less favoured', under the European Economic Communities Common Agricultural Policy, (see Map 1) and as being in need of various degrees of 'development assistance' under British regional policy.

Rather than dwell completely on the activities of the official development agencies the tour group was encouraged to consider also the developmental activities of other statutory and non-statutory bodies operating in the study areas. In this way it was hoped to build up a picture of the diversity of institutional approaches to rural development in one European state, and thus

be in a position to enrich the discussion at the fourth Arkleton Seminar, to which the group was expected to make their preliminary report.³ This seminar addressed one of the principal subject areas in the Trust's current programme,⁴ and follows on from earlier work of a more general nature dealing with aspects of 'disadvantaged rural Europe'.⁵

Building on the successful experience of the 1980 study tour it was again decided that the chief participants should be drawn from Third World countries. Such a group would bring a fresh perspective, and might be expected to see more clearly the strengths and the weaknesses of rural development approaches in a heavily urbanised and highly industrialised country. The particular selection also acknowledged that such people, working in settings where the bulk of the population lived in rural areas, would have accumulated considerable formal and informal experience in the field of rural development and this experience might yield useful practical insights in relation to European rural settings. The study tour was led by Dr B.S. Baviskar (Reader in Sociology, University of Delhi, India), who also led the 1980 tour. He was accompanied by Dr A.U. Patel (Professor of Agricultural Extension Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria). The group was also to have included a Caribbean agriculturalist, attached to the World Bank, and a Kenyan social anthropologist, but, regrettably, both were forced to withdraw at short notice owing to circumstances beyond the Trust's control. The tour was organised by Mr J.B. Wight, a doctoral student at the University of Aberdeen, and an Ernest Cook Fellow who acted as the team's research fellow and 'counterpart'. Trained in Geography, and a Canadian regional development planner, his studies deal with the inter-relationships between official development agencies and popular organisations in various 'Celtic fringe' settings. Mr Wight's expertise and knowledge of the areas studied proved to be an important contribution and the Trust are grateful to him for the enthusiasm and energy which he applied to the task.

On behalf of the tour group the Trust wishes to sincerely acknowledge the generous assistance of the numerous individuals and agencies (detailed in Annex I) who were instrumental in making the study tour such a success. The tour members were particularly impressed by the friendliness and openness that characterised the discussion sessions, and were most grateful for

the enthusiasm communicated, and the hospitality extended. They are acutely aware that they cannot hope to do full justice to the quality and quantity of information, analysis and ideas to which they were exposed, but trust that their observations will nevertheless be of interest, and will stimulate useful discussion. A draft version of the report was circulated to representatives of the main development institutions studied, with an invitation to submit supplementary comments. A summary of comments received is contained in Annex II.

Finally, the Trust acknowledges with gratitude a generous grant from the Commonwealth Foundation which made the study tour possible.

August 1983

John Bryden
Programme Director

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- 1 'Can Education Change Rural Fortunes?'; report of a seminar on Education, The Farmer and Rural Change, held in Scotland from 7-14 June 1980, 32pp.
- 2 'Rural Decline in the United Kingdom — a Third World View'; report by a Third World group on rural development programmes in North Staffordshire, Hereford and Worcester, and the East of Scotland; 1980, 28pp.
- 3 'Institutional Approaches to Rural Development in Europe'; report of a seminar held in Scotland from 17-23 October 1982, 60pp.
- 4 '1982-1985 Arkleton Trust Programme', 32pp.
- 5 'Disadvantaged Rural Europe — Development Issues and Approaches'; report of a seminar held in Scotland, 2-9 June 1979, 48pp.

SUMMARY

Following on the success of the 1980 study tour by Third World Fellows the Arkleton Trust sponsored a similar study tour initiative in late 1982, just prior to the fourth Arkleton Seminar. On this occasion the focus included the Celtic 'periphery' of the United Kingdom — Mid-Wales and the Western Isles of Scotland — and the Grampian Region of Scotland. These areas have been the subject of attention by formal, nominally rural, development agencies over a comparatively long period, namely: the Development Board for Rural Wales; the Highlands and Islands Development Board (complemented recently by the new islands authority, Comhairle nan Eilean); and the North East of Scotland Development Authority.

The tour participants were again drawn from Third World countries, in the expectation that they might be able to provide a new perspective on, and new insights into, the strengths and weaknesses of rural development approaches in a heavily urbanised and highly industrialised country. The immediate aim of the study tour was to assess three different approaches in ways which would inform the 1982 Arkleton Seminar, on the theme of institutional approaches to rural development in Europe's less favoured areas.

After a short introduction detailing the context and the approach adopted, the report is divided into two main parts. A background commentary outlines the three study areas and their rural development infrastructure. This is followed by the reflections of the participants.

It was quickly sensed that the three study areas were not only geographically peripheral but also culturally peripheral — if to varying degrees. The group felt that the more peripheral the area the greater was the sense of rural deprivation, the greater the perceived need for asserting a separate cultural identity, and the greater the propensity for local development initiatives at the community level. It also seemed significant that these marginal, 'problem', areas were the subject of attention by an unusual multiplicity of various agencies charged with concerting development on a broad front, or in relation to a single function.

The most striking impression about the UK scene was the lack of clarity surrounding basic rural development objectives; it appeared that only lip service was given to the notion of truly

integrated rural development, and to the prime need — in the view of the Third World observers — to create self-sustaining and vibrant rural communities. The general impression gained was that development strategies tended to be sectoral and individual-orientated rather than integrated and collectivity-orientated; policy instruments were mainly monetary in nature, depending largely on grants and subsidies; and the special development agencies were created and controlled by central government, were dominated by technocrats and bureaucrats, and had limited scope for meaningful popular participation and involvement.

It was apparent that, despite its long history, rural depopulation has only very recently been recognised in the UK as a general problem, afflicting more than simply the most remote areas. For most of the time in fact it appears to have been viewed as 'a good thing', rather than a problem. Quite suddenly however its concomitant, rural deprivation, has become a major issue, being experienced by more (rather than less) people, and throughout British society generally (rather than simply on its margins). Yet rural people are surprisingly ill-equipped institutionally to respond constructively to the challenge it constitutes. Their highly subordinate and under-resourced local governments are unaccustomed to playing a development role. Instead of strong local governments the rural scene is dominated by a plethora of central government agencies, deferring to a wider urban-moulded 'national interest', and tending to be inadvertently hostile to the interests of those people who traditionally live and work in the countryside. The Third World observers were particularly struck not only by the apparent divorce between local government and certain development agencies, but also by how even agricultural policy was seemingly divorced from rural development, as they understood this term. Some progress was nevertheless noted; in contrast to the impression gained during the previous study tour, people and policy-makers in the UK now seem to be openly talking about rural development acknowledging it to be a live issue, without the embarrassment which was sensed in 1980.

Reflecting on particular aspects of the Celtic areas, the Third World observers noted the growing assertion of Welsh nationalism, and the eagerness of the people of the Western Isles to strengthen their Gaelic cultural identity. These trends were deemed healthy (and not pathological), meriting positive

harnessing for the purposes of rural development 'from below'. More generally, and reflecting their own Indian and Nigerian experiences, it was thought that Britain needs to give greater rein to such regionalism, in the interests of preserving its continuing over-arching unity and fending off the possibility of a complete 'break-up'.

A recurring theme in the course of the study tour was the comparative predominance in the UK context of a host of relatively powerful central government agencies (often dealing only indirectly with rural matters), and the very low profile ascribed to local government bodies. Some reforms appeared necessary to better equip local government to function in a development capacity: indeed in the absence of such revitalisation it was difficult to perceive how all-round rural development could otherwise be secured (it was presumed that such reforms would be accompanied by a much more vital local democracy than is presently evident).

In addition to local government reform the Third World observers noted the desirability of some modest land reforms (to stimulate more small-scale labour-intensive, part-time farming), and for a reappraisal of the rural development implications of agricultural policy (which needs to become more of a means for concerting, rather than confounding, positive rural development).

On a general plane it was concluded that the UK was an industrialised society overburdened by its past history and unadapted to its somewhat reduced position in the modern world. As a consequence there is a clear need in the eyes of outsiders for the UK to re-orient its development strategies to deal with its radically revised circumstances: this seems to be particularly the case with regard to policy in the fields of agriculture and industry. To better meet this task it seemed obvious that the UK should consider paying more, rather than less, attention to rural development — by innovating programmes and institutions which are integrated, decentralised, and democratically participatory.

PART I INTRODUCTION

The Context

For decades Europe has hosted numerous schools and institutes engaged in the field of development studies, but the main object of their interest has invariably been located outside Europe, in the realms of another, 'less developed', 'Third World'. Somehow it seemed rather unnatural, if not even offensive in the eyes of some, to entertain the notion that Europe itself might, in large part, or in certain important respects, be considered to be 'underdeveloped' and thus constitute a worthy focus for students of development. In this context it was virtually unthinkable to consider inviting development practitioners from the Third World to come and comment critically on European practice: what possible point would be served!? The fact that such Eurocentric chauvinism is now breaking down is amply demonstrated by the Arkleton Trust's deliberate involvement of Third World representatives in its activities — including the study tour reported here.

That Europe might indeed have a development problem of its own has received most recognition in the case of those peripheral areas which are strongly rural in character, the classic examples being perhaps the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and the Italian Mezzogiorno.¹ Yet the official response has been more in terms of *regional* development, rather than rural development or community development. 'Development' has been perceived mainly in terms of urbanisation and industrialisation, involving growth pole policies or key settlement strategies. As far as rural areas were concerned such concentrated growth approaches implied a *de facto* planning for decline: they were expected to undergo a negative adjustment, effectively depopulation, rather than experience positive development; they were treated as residuals, as functionally subordinate to urban interests. Fortunately, just as European chauvinism is on the wane so also is unbridled urbanism. This has opened the door further to the possibility of relevant contributions from the Third World. In this 'world' the bulk of the national populations live in rural areas and it is in such settings that basic developmental efforts have been concentrated. In the process Third World practitioners have accumulated a considerable body of expertise which might

inform rural development efforts in ostensibly more developed countries such as the UK.

That Britain as a whole might constitute a justifiable case for conscious development efforts is no longer such an outrageous proposition as it might once have seemed;² witness for instance the need to resort to IMF financial assistance, the current massive level of unemployment, and the recent urban rioting. There have also been allusions to the failure of British 'national' development in a political sense, testified to by the persistence of a 'Celtic fringe', comprised of 'internal colonies',³ and by talk of the pending 'break-up of Britain'.⁴ There is also the open sore to be observed in the case of Northern Ireland. The official interpretation of these situations as 'regional' problems has tended to mask a more widespread underlying 'rural' problem. Recognition of the latter is only now emerging, partly as a backlash to the recent preoccupation with the problem of inner cities: it seems that deprivation — of the urban or rural variety — has become endemic. The diagnosis is thus not all that different from that pertaining in Third World settings.

Whereas awareness of a rural problem — experienced especially as a decline in services — is only now becoming more general in the British population, in the remoter rural areas the problem has been experienced with greater acuteness, in greater complexity, and for a longer period of time. Its main manifestation has been chronic depopulation and the underlying consequence has been a trend towards the comprehensive disintegration of rural communities — often on a regional scale — in the face of urbanising and industrialising pressures. However, it seems that the problem has only become political where an additional cultural dimension has been present, most notably in the context of the Celtic fringe. In other parts of Britain the rural problem has been resolved, in a fashion, and with implicit consensus, through a re-integration of rural populations into a city-region system. In the Celtic fringe such a solution evokes no comparable degree of consensus since, in the opinion of a substantial minority at least, the offending industrialising and urbanising forces are associated with an alien culture, and the new regions are foreign impositions serving another's 'nation-building' interest. Thus, positive rural development becomes not only a function of appropriate institutional change, but may ultimately be dependent on constitutional change — from a less 'colonial' to a more autonomous, if

not quite independent, political status. From such a perspective it is also possible to appreciate that a fundamentally better solution to the more general rural problem might derive from an improved constitutional balance between the institutions of local and central government.

The Celtic fringe appears to recommend itself as a particularly rich context for an exploration of the rural development theme, and one which is unusually conducive to pursuit by Third World representatives experienced in the traumas of colonialism. To acknowledge the existence of a Celtic fringe to the British Isles is effectively to acknowledge that Britain is not so much the inviolable unitary formation that it is so often made out to be but is instead a potentially fluid *multi* nation state. Thinking through its implications leads to a fresh interpretation of the true meaning of *local* government, and of the distinction between self-government and simply acting as the agents of another's — perhaps 'foreign' — administration. A few moments reflection might also encourage the view that the 'Celtic Fringe' and the 'Third World' are but distantly related cousins in the extended-family of development studies discussed earlier. The semantic simile may be further developed to indicate that they are both comparatively 'poor relations' in their respective wider contexts.

Method of Study

Though Scottish-based, and with a strong interest currently on a European plane, the Arkleton Trust has, from its inception, attempted in all of its activities to involve representatives from Third World countries. This has been predicated upon a strong belief in the value of a two-way exchange of ideas and impressions between rural development practitioners from Europe and the Third World. A particular path-breaking initiative in this regard was the 1980 study tour by a group of experts from the Third World who were asked by the Trust to consider critically three UK rural development projects (in North Staffordshire, Hereford and Worcester, and the Scottish Borders). Encouraged by the success of this initiative the Trust decided to sponsor the study tour reported here. Compared with its predecessor the 1982 tour was somewhat more ambitious in scope: instead of simply focussing on discrete projects the emphasis was placed on particular areas that had been the subject of special development

efforts over a protracted period. Although the general areas were selected in part according to the presence of formal regional development agencies — the DBRW, the HADB, and NESDA — the group was directed to also consider the contributions to rural development by other statutory and non-statutory bodies operating in these areas. To fulfil this broad remit the group had to travel extensively, not only to reach the far-flung study areas, but also within each area. The group also had to cope with an additional cultural dimension not present in the previous tour: the study areas were located within the Celtic fringe of the British Isles — effectively in disputed political territory, where constitutional change has been actively sought in recent years by Scottish and Welsh Nationalists.

The Trust's major expectation of the study group was that it would be in a position to make an informed contribution to the 1982 Arkleton Seminar which the tour immediately preceded. The seminar had as its theme 'Institutional Approaches to Rural Development in Europe'. Of particular concern were those parts of rural Europe subject to the European Economic Community's (EEC) 'less favoured areas' (LFA) directive.⁵ Taking its cue from the Seminar the tour had as its general focus the response to the problems of the poorer rural areas of the UK (a) by the British Government and its various agents, (b) by voluntary and cooperative bodies, and (c) by rural people themselves. There was a special interest in identifying successful responses to the problems commonly afflicting such areas: i.e. high levels of unemployment or underemployment; chronic depopulation; remoteness from the centre of government and business — and hence a comparative powerlessness to influence not only their level of material wealth but also the course of their own political destiny and the maintenance of their social integrity.

In attempting to analyse the elements associated with 'successful' action to counter the above problems, recourse was had to preliminary criteria advanced in an 'issues paper' prepared for discussion at the seminar.⁶ Therein it was proposed that a successful outcome in the field of rural development would necessitate changes on three fronts.

- (a) the improvement in the material conditions of rural people (i.e. in terms of incomes, consumption, employment, productivity, the meeting of basic service needs, etc.).

- (b) the opportunity for rural people to play a real part in their own future, ensuring that it is their own and not an alien value system which determines the 'content' of development in particular areas.
- (c) an institutional framework which allows increasing, rather than decreasing, control by rural people over the internal and external influences which determine the nature, content and mechanisms of change in rural areas.

Therefore, the group was deliberately looking beyond the normally pre-eminent criterion of material gains in the economic sphere to encompass more explicit socio-political considerations and an effective concern for the democratisation of development. In this way it was anticipated that development strategies should ideally be not simply sympathetic in tone, but empathetic in nature, and be naturally in tune with the values held by rural people. Furthermore these people should be in control of the development experience, rather than functioning simply as 'developees' in a technocratic exercise.

The tour extended for 20 days (September 26th-October 16th, 1982). Approximately five working days were spent in each of the three areas, the remaining time being taken up with report drafting and by being in transit. The group travelled over 3,000 miles by road, rail, air and sea. In the course of about 80 appointments it met with around 200 people from a wide range of backgrounds including: academics, agriculturalists, businessmen, farmers, fieldworkers, local development practitioners, officials and politicians (see annex I for details). Impressions were formed mainly in the course of a variety of discussion sessions with specially invited groups of people. No set pattern was observed: some sessions were large, others small; some featured officials, others emphasised lay persons — while in some cases there was a deliberate mixing; a few took the form of inter-agency gatherings; and several sessions realised a valuable group dynamic. While the programme was organised around a focus on particular 'lead' agencies or authorities, a deliberate effort was made to go beyond their confines to confront other institutions operating in the development field. There was a parallel attempt to meet with ordinary people as well as agency officials, i.e. the developees as well as the developers. In all cases the group strove to keep an open mind, trying to escape any official strait-jackets

and to entertain other perceptions, or brands, of development. They particularly enjoyed visiting farmers, at the grassroots and on the cutting edge of rural development.

On virtually every occasion the group was faced with the need to rationalise the tour, and in particular its Third World basis. This was accomplished first of all by stressing what the tour was *not*. Although a very common perception among those encountered it was stressed that the tour was *not* an opportunity for people from the Third World to learn directly from the UK experience, with a view to applying any knowledge gained in their own countries. Also, the tour was *not* intended as a means by which people from the Third World could authoritatively criticise or formally evaluate UK experience. Instead the tour was ascribed much more modest aims, *viz.*, as a means of generating observations, impressions, and commentary on the UK situation by individuals from the Third World with particular expertise in the field of rural development. Perhaps these individuals might see, more clearly than the British themselves, the strengths and weaknesses of their approach to rural development. Their relative ignorance of the specific British context, but expertise in the field of general interest, provided a valuable opportunity which the Trust sought to exploit.

The 1982 study tour proved to be a very intense affair, with a packed itinerary and a multitude of experiences flashing past in kaleidoscopic fashion. Physical stamina and mental acuity were taxed to the limit. A tight structuring was passed over in favour of a greater sensitivity to the diversity that is so much part of the rural scene. The 1980 study tour had been given fairly close terms of reference in anticipation that a formal evaluation of each project might be forthcoming. In the event, and despite the 1980 tour's narrower remit, this proved to be too much to expect, and ensured that the 1982 tour would have to be much less structured if it was to be free to generate useful insights. The present group shares with its predecessor however the concern that the contents of this report be recognised as their general comments and observations, rather than as a comprehensive and authoritative evaluation of the main development institutions operating in each study area.

The remainder of the report is in two parts, the first being a commentary, by the tour organiser, providing background on the study areas and on what might be termed the rural develop-

ment infrastructure. There then follows the key part of the report where the Third World participants indicate their impressions of the UK rural development scene, as prompted by their tour of the study areas.

PART II THE STUDY AREAS AND THEIR RURAL DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE — a background commentary by J.B. Wight

INTRODUCTION

A Brief Institutional Overview

In contrast to the English bias of the Trust's first study tour the present cases have been drawn from parts of Scotland and Wales (Map 1), and thus from the Celtic fringe of the British Isles. In two of the cases — Mid-Wales and the Western Isles — the cultural distinctiveness is underlined by the fact that substantial portions of the population are bilingual, speaking Welsh or Gaelic as well as English.⁷ These 'fringes within a fringe' are central to the native culture, defining territorial heartlands — 'Y Fro Gymraeg' in the Welsh case and 'Gaidhealtachd' in the Scottish case. In the third case, Grampian, a modern region with a lowland outlook is literally 'backed' by a rich Highland heritage in its extensive upper reaches. Though now only remotely 'Celtic' in character, and while lacking the degree of differentiation that comes with a distinctive language, the region manifests a remarkable cultural self-sufficiency, underpinned by the Doric dialect.⁸ Notwithstanding these remarks it must be acknowledged that, to a large extent, the Celtic character of the study areas is of incidental rather than instrumental significance, but it is a factor which is certainly worth bearing in mind from an analytical perspective.

In line with the 1982 seminar's focus on the poorer rural areas of Europe it was natural that the study areas should be drawn from those parts of the UK considered to be 'less favoured' by the EEC. This designation applies to the LFA Directive, operated as part of the structures element of the Guidance section of the Fund associated with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The directive applies to the whole of the Western Isles and to all but the most lowland parts of the other two areas. Apart from this common feature the specific study areas were selected primarily because they exemplified different types of rural development initiative in operation.

In the case of *Mid-Wales* the initiative presently rests primarily with the Development Board for Rural Wales. Despite the scope

inferred by the title the Board is currently limited in its jurisdiction to Mid-Wales with many other equally rural areas having to be served by the Welsh Development Agency (Map 2b). The Mid-Wales bias — now made explicit by the Board choosing to sub-title itself as 'Mid Wales Development' — reflects the historic efforts of local authorities in this particular area to gain a state-sponsored regional development body of their own. The campaign was mounted by the Mid Wales Industrial Development Association (MWIDA) formed in 1957 by the old counties of Cardigan, Merioneth, Montgomery, Radnor and (north) Brecon (Map 2a). Now that this has been achieved the local authorities have been content to let the DBRW take the lead in the development field. This stance has been further encouraged by the fact that the original counties have been relegated to district status. It is also of interest that the DBRW took over the functions of the Mid Wales New Town Development Corporation (MWNTDC), the main activity of which was a new town development scheme dealing with the coincidentally named Newtown.

In the *Western Isles* the young local authority, invigorated by its single-tier most-purpose status, has adopted a much higher profile than the local authorities in Wales. It has attracted the attention and active cooperation of a range of outside bodies, and between them several innovative schemes have emerged. These include: the Western Isles Integrated Development Programme, partly funded by the EEC as part of its structures policy; the Community Cooperatives Programme, initiated by the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) and piloted in the Western Isles; and the Community Education Project run by the Islands Council with the help of the Van Leer Foundation.

The *Grampian Region* of North-East Scotland is also the basis of a new and apparently strengthened local government system, but the regional council must share responsibility with a lower tier of district councils (Map 4b). In 1970 the core of what was to become the new region crystallised in the formation of the North-East of Scotland Development Association, (City of Aberdeen and the Counties of Aberdeen and Kincardine). Unlike the Mid-Wales case the North-East did not achieve its own central government financed Development Board, but has had to settle for the sparser services of the Scottish Development Agency, currently preoccupied with the severe problems of Scotland's

Central Belt. NESDA continues to exist not as an association, but as an authority, being essentially the industrial development department of the Grampian Regional Council. At the same time development has tended to be more spontaneous as a consequence of the impact of North Sea Oil exploration on the region. Because of this distorting factor the study group focussed only upon the upland parts of rural Grampian most remote from the main oil-impacted areas.

Physical and Demographic Aspects

The study areas earn their 'less-favoured' classification mainly on physical grounds. A combination of topographical, geological and/or climatic factors conspire to create a comparatively harsh environment from an agricultural perspective. Opportunities for successful arable cultivation are severely limited, resulting in a strong emphasis upon grazing geared to the raising of livestock (particularly sheep). Their geographically peripheral location constitutes another handicap from an economic point of view, with this factor obviously being of greatest significance in the Western Isles: it is not only peripheral but is also insular.

Depopulation has been a common demographic feature for more than a century although in recent years there have been signs that the trend has bottomed out. Whereas small gains have been registered on a regional scale *rural* depopulation remains significant within parts of each area, and a strong pattern of natural increase has yet to be re-established. The population composition, after decades of selective outmigration, is still unhealthily weighted in favour of older age-groups beyond the stages of family formation. However, it is generally the case that demographic prospects are at their brightest for over a century, even if this is in large part due to the depressed economic condition of the UK as a whole. There is thus less incentive, or opportunity, for the best young people to leave such rural areas, as has traditionally been the case; and even established families are leaving urban black-spots, attracted by the seemingly higher quality (if not material quantity) of rural life.

For the most part the study areas must be considered to be sparsely-populated with a poorly developed urban hierarchy, though Grampian is something of an exception in this regard. The *Mid-Wales* population is 200,000 (about 7% of the Welsh

total) and is distributed widely. There are no major population concentrations other than at Aberystwyth and Newtown (both approximately 11,000 population); apart from a dozen or so small towns of up to 2,000 the bulk of the population is scattered in hundreds of villages and in the open countryside.

The population of the *Western Isles* is currently around 32,000 (which is similar to that for the district of Merioneth in Mid-Wales — see map 2). It amounts to less than 10% of the Highlands and Islands population (353,000), and forms an almost insignificant proportion of the Scottish total (5,200,000). The Isles' population is concentrated in the northernmost Isle of Lewis where Stornoway, the only real urban centre (8,000 population), is located (map 4). The remaining third of the population is divided between Harris (2,600), North Uist (1,700), Benbecula (1,400), South Uist (2,500) and Barra/Vatersay (1,100). Outside Stornoway the population is mainly located in hundreds of linear crofting townships.⁹

The population of Grampian is 445,000 with almost half of this total accounted for by the city district of Aberdeen. A fairly well-developed urban hierarchy accounts for much of the remainder of the population with only a minor proportion residing in hamlets or in the open countryside.

Land Tenure Features

Each study area exhibits significantly different land tenure patterns which may have analytical significance. The basis for the current patterns was laid in the late nineteenth century when the extension of the franchise led to a decline in the influence of landowners. This coincided with a period of comparatively poor returns on agricultural investments. In the Welsh case these factors contributed to the break-up of the vast rural estates, with many former tenants purchasing their holdings.¹⁰ The majority of Welsh agricultural holdings are now owner-occupied. At the same time a process of amalgamation has been at work leading to a shake-out of many of the smaller units.

In the Western Isles, as in the Highlands and Islands generally, the excesses of landlords, epitomised in the infamous 'Highland Clearances', eventually culminated in a mass rebellion by their tenants, the crofters. Coupled with the relative decline in political influence of the landlords at the time, these outbursts —

characterised by some in terms of a 'land war' — led to the institution by central government of a unique form of crofting land tenure, whereby the crofters were granted security of tenure and heritability, and an assurance of very low annual rents.¹¹ This special legislation was confined to the seven 'crofting counties' (Orkney, Shetland, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness-shire and Argyll) (Map 3a), but in the present day it is probably of greatest practical significance only in the West Highlands and Western Isles. Crofters have exclusive rights over a very small area — a few acres at the most — as well as rights to share in much more extensive common grazings. They are mostly subsistence farmers, with very little commercial production: the croft is used mainly as a home base, and the crofter tends to have several occupations in addition to agricultural work on the croft. Landowners still have some presence, mainly through their retention of sporting rights.

North-East Scotland has its own unique agricultural history.¹² It is rooted in a very fine gradation in farm size, even if landownership was concentrated in comparatively few hands. There were several classes, from the crofter to the large farmer, and it was possible for a peasant to progress up the ladder and accumulate capital. The arrangement suited both tenant and landowning interests, bolstering the economics of the latter while diluting the radical politics of the former. Although there was one determined defence of the peasantry mounted in the 1880's, it could not match the scale and directness of the Highlanders' and the North-East was excluded from the special crofting legislation. Large estates therefore continue to play a major role in rural life (especially in the upland areas focused upon by the study group), thus conferring a relatively high proportion of tenanted units compared with the Mid-Wales uplands for instance. Farming tenancies have come under particularly severe pressure in recent decades through competition from other land uses, notably forestry and sport, as well as from the increasing tendency for vacant tenancies to be taken 'in hand' by estates to farm them themselves. As a consequence the farm structure in these areas has undergone a particularly marked rationalisation, intensifying the process of depopulation.

UK RURAL AND REGIONAL POLICY

The Rural Policy Vacuum

The UK government has no formal Rural Policy just as it has no Urban Policy. Its organisation reflects a strong bias in favour of the functional, rather than territorial principle, and it cannot comfortably handle policy which requires the integration of many sectors on an area basis. This seems to be a particularly acute problem in the British context since it effectively precludes, for instance, the type of policy-making that occurs for mountain areas in France, or the interior of Southern Italy. The lack of specific governmental attention is also a reflection of the fact that in Britain the primary sector (i.e. mainly agriculture) accounts for only a tiny proportion of total employment (2.7% in 1976) compared with 10.8% in France and 15.5% in Italy. In addition the rural population as a whole, apart from being swamped numerically by its urban counterpart, cannot readily be mobilised into a significant political force, as is possible in Norway for instance. Instead the rural vote tends to be highly fragmented, often comprising largely of mutually antagonistic interests: there is thus no major constituency committed to maintaining the health, vitality and integrity of rural areas. This situation may be changing however with the recent coming together of major rural interest groups to identify common concerns and to lobby for appropriate government action. ('Rural Voice' in England and Wales; 'Rural Forum' in Scotland).

The rural policy field in the UK has not been completely unattended however. Mention must be made of the efforts of the Development Commission which at its inception in 1909 had a jurisdiction that included the whole of Great Britain (but not Ireland). With more recent institutional developments affecting Scotland (HIDB, SDA) and Wales (DBRW, WDA), the Commission now effectively functions as England's de facto rural development agency.¹³ It is a rather low-profile body, poorly endowed financially, fulfilling a distinctly residual function, and unable to involve itself directly in rural development. The main focus, treated by its agent, the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA), is the rural economy, and, specifically, the fostering of small, rural-based industry. However, it also assists the voluntary sector through support for county-based

rural community councils. Constituted as a form of standing Royal Commission its continued existence is always in question, limiting the scope for major long-term initiatives. While its circumstances may be symptomatic of the official neglect of a meaningful Rural Policy, the Commission has clearly never been a satisfactory substitute for such policy.

To a certain extent it seems that the UK government is currently being goaded in the direction of a more formally articulated Rural Policy through its involvement in the EEC — the LFA Directive being a major case in point. Although the potential of this measure has been far from fully exploited¹⁴ — the tendency having been to use it simply as a means of continuing the former hill livestock subsidy — its existence has prompted pressure for a more significant programme, and a more coordinated set of policies, for the UK's less favoured areas.¹⁵ In addition the EEC has recently been the catalyst for experiments in integrated rural development programming, and for policies and programmes which are more area-specific rather than purely functional in nature — the Western Isles IDP being a case in point. Just as the previous enlargement of the EEC hastened the emergence of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to tackle in particular the problems of the maritime peripheries, so the current enlargement (Greece, Spain and Portugal), involving extensive rural societies, is being used to justify the need for a European Rural Fund and associated policy.¹⁶ If the UK government is to take advantage of such measures it seems that it will have to directly confront the current dearth of explicit Rural Policy and perhaps fashion something which is more closely on a par with the status that has been traditionally accorded to Regional Policy.

The Regional Policy Bias

While it is difficult to identify any formal Rural Policy impacts on the study areas they have all obviously benefitted from the UK government's Regional Policy — but in two of the cases the experience has been short-lived. British regional policy originated in the Depression years around 1930 and contracted a bias in favour of industrial conurbations with high levels of unemployment.¹⁷ The latter became entrenched as a main criterion for the designation of areas to be assisted. In rural areas

however depopulation was the major scourge, the process operating so effectively as to prevent the registering of high levels of unemployment. It was not until the 1960's that depopulation was rated as an important indicator of a problem situation. This was when new industries prepared to locate in areas such as Grampian and Mid-Wales became eligible for significant levels of grant assistance. What is now the Western Isles reaped even greater benefit through inclusion in the jurisdiction of the HIDB, established in 1965.

In 1979 the new government began implementing a major rationalisation of regional policy. The trend is for fewer areas to benefit and/or to receive lower levels of grant assistance. Effort is again being concentrated on the unemployment black-spots which tend to be the inner cities and traditional industrial centres. It is such areas where the new Enterprise Zones, epitomising the latest policy drift, have been established: no comparable special measures have been devised for rural areas. Grampian and Mid-Wales, with a few minor exceptions within each case, have thus recently lost their assisted areas status. As a result they also lose their eligibility to receive assistance from the ERDF. By contrast the Western Isles retain their access to the HIDB's assistance and are currently receiving a special injection of funds, in part from the EEC, under the IDP.

It is also significant that a distinct 'regionalisation' of British Regional Policy was effected in the mid-1970's with the creation of national development agencies for Scotland and Wales (and Northern Ireland). The continuing presence of the SDA and the WDA may be considered to have cushioned, to a certain extent, the effects of the withdrawal of assisted area status from Grampian and Mid-Wales. Indeed a special financial package — worked through the WDA for implementation by the DBRW — has been devised to compensate Mid-Wales for its loss: the measures apply in particular to certain 'growth towns'. Nevertheless, the national development agencies tend to be preoccupied with the industrial restructuring problems of the most populous parts of their respective jurisdictions (South-East Wales; Central Scotland). The rural areas unserved by the special development boards (DBRW, HIDB) tend to lose out in the competition for limited agency resources. By contrast it is easier for the Western Isles to receive generous and sensitive treatment under the umbrella of the comparatively well endowed HIDB — especially

now that the Board is striving to decentralise its operations in line with a more territorial, and less purely functional (or sectoral) approach.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTING

The Development Limitations of British Local Government

More by default than design on the part of central government — and more out of necessity than by choice on the part of local authorities — the task of coming to grips with the problem of rural development has fallen mainly upon the shoulders of local government. Despite recent reorganisation however it remains somewhat ill-equipped to take on the task: it is firmly under the thumb of central government, and does not generally enjoy active popular grass-roots support. It may be the case nevertheless that the problems of Rural Policy and Regional Policy could be more effectively resolved, if not dissolved, by radically rethinking the institution of 'local' government in its widest sense and by revamping its constitutional relationship with central government. This seems to be one lesson that may be taken from the experience of certain Third World countries, especially those that are federally constituted.

In the UK, local government has evolved over a long period but it has never been endowed with a central development function: instead it began by fulfilling more of a regulatory function, maintaining rather than developing, responding rather than initiating. State intervention in the market economy — the main engine of contemporary 'development' — was heavily frowned upon at the time; now the state has become an accepted medium of development — but it was the central state, and not the local 'states', that cornered the new 'market' situation. Local governments in the UK may do only what central government allows them to do, or requires them to do; they have very little discretion to concert development on their own terms, according to their own needs. They are not so much local 'governments' as agents of the central government, undertaking only what they are authorised to do.

Up until quite recently the field of economic development was

reserved by central government, but the mounting economic crisis has encouraged a small let-up here and there.¹⁸ Local authorities are increasingly exploiting the few provisions that now exist to intervene in their local economies, but inevitably it is in a piecemeal fashion and to only very modest effect. Nevertheless they are fast gaining experience in this unfamiliar field, especially as a consequence of their active involvement in the several temporary job creation schemes that have been tried in recent years. This has engendered a much more positive development outlook than has traditionally been the case. In the process local authority planning has become less purely physical (i.e. oriented towards 'development' *control*) and much more developmental. There remains however a strong tendency to 'functionalise' through the creation of a separate 'development' department, tacked on to the list of standard functions, rather than conceiving the authority as a whole in developmental terms. If this could be achieved there would be a ready-made network of 'development agencies' — finely tuned to particular urban or rural settings — all across the country.

As it is however the legacy of a strongly reactionary, highly subordinate, minimally interventionist, local government system continues to predominate. The consequent weakness of local authorities as development media has in fact been used to justify special, central-state-sponsored development agencies on a regional scale. In the absence of devolved regional government such bodies cannot but seem more technocratic than democratic when viewed from the perspective of the developpees. The point could be developed to illustrate the need for a fundamental dual commitment to the ongoing conscious development of democracy, and to the deliberate democratisation of development as we now know it. And whereas local government reform might seem to be a logical avenue by which to discharge such a commitment, the British experience would, for the most part, suggest otherwise — the most notable exception being perhaps the case of the Western Isles.

Local Government Reorganisation

The present British local government system dates from 1889 with a major reorganisation in 1930. The latest reorganisation began to be pursued in earnest by the new Labour government of

1964, about the same time as 'national' economic planning — on a British and regional scale — made its first formal appearance in the UK context: to expedite the latter it was deemed necessary to effect the former. It was therefore a reform initiated mainly 'from above' by the central state apparatus, with concern for local democracy losing out to an obsession with technical efficiency and economies of scale. The most extreme consequences of this particular bias were avoided by the fact that although the reorganisation was begun by a Labour government it was implemented by a Conservative government. Its modifications did not alter the fact however that the basic change was more in the nature of centralisation rather than localisation of government, as well as seeming to be more technocratic than democratic in spirit.

The above outcome was reinforced by the fact that, because of the rising popularity of Welsh and Scottish Nationalists — the UK government of the day was *forced* to initiate investigations into the need for constitutional change at about the same time as it was pursuing its *own* desire for change in the institution of local government. Although it might seem logical to outside observers the two items were never linked, and were considered independently of one another. There was thus never any likelihood of local government being consciously strengthened through a transfer of power and resources from central government. Similarly there was never the possibility of substantial constitutional change, the options being quickly narrowed to various degrees of devolution — leaving central government in the driving seat — while effectively excluding consideration of federal options.

While some have loftily implied that local government was 'reformed' territorially to greater democratic effect, in reality it was simply a case of reorganising existing functions. Rather than loading the existing authorities with more functions and powers (necessarily from an already overloaded central government), and hence making local government more meaningful and relevant, the major functions were simply reorganised on a more extensive spatial scale. The old top-tier county authorities were in fact for the most part relegated to district status to mop up the remaining minor functions, and some suffered the additional indignity of dismemberment or amalgamation. Many smaller local authorities, such as urban, burgh or rural district councils were eliminated altogether. These losses were mitigated to some

degree by provisions for the establishment of community councils, but the token nature of these provisions is indicated by the fact that the councils in question would have neither executive powers nor financial resources for the most part: they are essentially advisory bodies only.

The Study Areas' Experience

Wales

Turning to the experience of the study areas, local government reorganisation took a slightly different form in Wales compared with Scotland. The Welsh case was handled in tandem with England, much to chagrin of many Welshmen since Wales became subject to English-based standards, scales and thresholds, notwithstanding their patent inappropriateness to much of the Welsh context (especially rural Wales).¹⁹ In England a constant underlying theme was the need for larger counties to better match the city regions that had become commonplace: in rural Wales by contrast the same processes were still effectively being contained by the historic county units. There was no comparable population 'overspill', nor the problem of absolute growth; rather, their problems had more to do with the contraction in their population. Therefore, although it has been claimed that Wales divides into 13 counties 'almost as naturally as the year divides into 12 months', rural Wales was reorganised on the basis of three 'super-counties' comprised mainly of an amalgamation of former counties (Map 2).

Prior to the reorganisation Mid-Wales was accounted for by the five counties of Cardigan, Merioneth, Montgomery, Radnor, and (north) Brecon: after reorganisation the latter three units became districts of the new county of Powys; Cardigan became a district of Dyfed; and Merioneth a district of Gwynedd. The new counties are named after ancient principalities for which there is very little popular affinity. They have been described as being too small to be outstanding large authorities as well as too large to develop a compensatory sense of community. The only 'large authority' which might be justified in the Welsh context — the argument continues — is an elected council for Wales as a whole i.e. a Welsh Parliament. Such a body, helping to support and supplement the work of a single tier or most-purpose authorities

based mostly on the historic rural counties would, it is claimed, provide Wales with a much more democratic and organic form of local government.

Scotland

Unlike Wales, Scottish local government was favoured with its own Royal Commission,²⁰ but the pressure for larger units and the tendency towards greater centralisation were no less important, especially on account of the influence of the Scottish Office. Much more deeply entrenched than its Welsh counterpart this 'intermediary' tier of government has been credited as being the mastermind behind the whole local government 'reform' movement.²¹ The Scottish Office is a form of administrative devolution, a concession granted as a consequence of the late nineteenth century campaigning for 'Home Rule' in the Irish, Scottish and Welsh contexts. (The Welsh were not granted a separate Welsh office until 1964). In the course of its comparatively long life the Scottish Office has taken over some of the area occupied by local government in England and Wales, and has played a stronger directing role. For instance in the field of education local authorities in Scotland have been subject to much more detailed controls than are faced by their English counterparts. A feature of the Scottish Office's approach had been the promotion of supra-local cooperation on a single-function basis (e.g. water, fire, police, etc), and it was therefore natural, when economic planning began to dominate its thought in the early 1960's, to contemplate a more general 'regionalisation' of local government. Such 'modernisation' was seen to be justified in order to cope with the major infrastructure development then being envisaged. Parallel initiatives at the time included the New Towns Programme, the Scottish Special Housing Association, and the HIDB.

As in Wales, but unlike England, the highly skewed nature of the population distribution (concentrated in a narrow central belt) seemed to rule out the possibility of designing a uniform Scottish scheme of evenly matched authorities, equal in (population) size and area. The associated diversity of circumstances appeared to merit serious consideration of a comparatively decentralised approach. This option might have been more compelling had constitutional devolution preceded, or been linked

with, local government reform. As it was however the Wheatley Commission came down in favour of the centralisation associated with a few large-scale, top-tier regions, seeing this framework as being suited to an anticipated future devolution of power from central to local government (Map 3). Since this key presumption was never acted upon the Scottish system may be considered to have suffered the same, 'worst-of-both-worlds', fate as that of Wales. Local democracy appeared to be a particular casualty in a system which had half the population of Scotland in one region (Strathclyde) and half its area within another (Highlands and Islands). And even after a supposed 'reform' of local government one informed observer was forced to conclude that the amount of independence which the local authorities had from central government seemed to make a mockery of local autonomy.

Despite the deficiencies of the overall system both Scottish study areas came out of local government reorganisation comparatively well placed. *Grampian* region was fashioned basically from the former counties of Morayshire, Banffshire, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Kincardineshire (Map 3a). It is possibly the most logical of all Scotland's new regions and the one least disputed following the Wheatley Commission's report. Encompassing the area traditionally referred to as North-East Scotland, Grampian is a good example of a modern city-region. Aberdeen dominates but does not dictate, accounting for slightly less than half the total population: it is the undisputed regional service centre, challenged only slightly by Elgin in the Moray area. Prior to reorganisation the region, as the North-East, was already recognised by the Scottish Office for various purposes e.g. economic planning, police, fire, water, hospitals etc. Within Grampian the study group focussed on Upper Donside and Deeside, both parts of the former county of Aberdeenshire, although now served by two new districts (Gordon and Kincardine/Deeside) (Map 4a).

In stark contrast to Grampian, Wheatley's proposed Highlands and Islands region evoked considerable protest, especially from Orkney and Shetland. Each archipelago had enjoyed separate county status since 1890 and did not take kindly to the proposal that they should become mere districts of a super-region based on the mainland at Inverness. Fortunately certain members of the Wheatley Commission were highly sympathetic

to the islanders' point of view, to the extent of submitting a minority recommendation favourable to the islands. The case for special most-purpose island authority status was subsequently acknowledged and, somewhat fortuitously, this special status was also conferred on what is now the *Western Isles* (Map 4a). Unlike Orkney and Shetland the Western Isles had never enjoyed the benefit of a local government of their own: instead the Isles had been split between two, large, mainland-based authorities, which were often dominated by large land owning interests antipathetic to the wishes of the islands'crofting population. The Isle of Lewis was part of Ross and Cromarty, and was administered from Dingwall on the east coast. The rest of the archipelago (Harris, the Uists, Benbecula, and Barra) was part of Inverness-shire, administered from Inverness — again on the east coast.

By virtue of being the two most insular and peripheral parts of extensive, mainland-based jurisdictions, there was little occasion and less opportunity to associate formally with one another. The advantage of a single autonomous islands authority could not be readily perceived. The self-confidence necessary to push aggressively for such an initiative had been sapped by decades of depopulation and an almost resigned acceptance of a highly subordinate marginal status. There was no unanimity on the issue within the Isles: while some Lewis interests envied Orkney and Shetland enough to seek similar 'county' status for Lewis and Harris at least, the Southern Isles recoiled from such Stornoway-based overtures, preferring the status quo. As it happened Wheatley proposed that the whole of the archipelago become one unit, but with only district status under the Highlands and Islands super-region. After the precedent set by the Orkney and Shetland interventions however the Western Isles became united enough and emboldened enough to actively seek the same special islands authority status for themselves. This claim was granted in December 1971 and the new authority formally began operations in April 1975. It is the only authority to constitute a democratic gain in terms of more functions coming under local control: every other case has experienced various degrees of centralisation through the removal of power to a higher level of authority.

The new Western Isles authority has faced a mammoth task in strengthening inter-island ties and counter-acting the divisive influence of three separate mainland connections (to Ullapool in Wester Ross; to Uig in Skye; and to Oban in Argyll) (Map 4a). It

also has to contend with a marked imbalance in the population distribution, and with a potential sectarian rift in that the northern parts tend to be Protestant while the southern isles are Catholic in their religious affiliations. That it has made a good start to overcoming these difficulties in its short life may be illustrated by the fact that certain interests in neighbouring islands, e.g. Skye and Tiree, are keen to come under its umbrella. The proposals recall a particular visionary suggestion, made during the Wheatley Commission's public hearing, for a separate Hebridean region or province, broadly coincident with the Scottish Gaidhealtachd. Much of the inspiration for this suggestion seems to have stemmed from the case of Faroe — another peripheral archipelago, but one which is constituted as a self-governing province within the state of Denmark.²²

Local Governments as Rural Development Agencies

For our purposes it is important to note that most of the new regional authorities in Scotland, and all of the islands authorities, work in a predominantly rural context. To some observers they appeared to constitute potential 'rural development agencies',²³ mainly on the grounds that the most important — and expensive — local government functions were to be exercised in a more coordinated fashion, and on a more extensive spatial scale than had previously been the case. These top-tier functions include: strategic planning (including local planning in certain regions); industrial development; roads; public transportation; and education. The only major second-tier function is housing with a few others exercised concurrently. In the islands virtually all the functions are the responsibility of a single-tier, despite the fact that their small populations would only just justify district status in a mainland context: from a local perspective they clearly derived the best deal out of reorganisation. Even in their case however the functional endowment falls far short of that necessary to be a truly effective rural development agency, especially when compared with the powers and financial discretion available to the HIDB for example. The clear need is for greater financial independence from central government, and for more power to be devolved to the local level — but for the most part current trends go against the meeting of these needs.

Interestingly it is the Island Authorities which are in the

vanguard of future local government reform, making the case for greater local autonomy in a wider range of fields. The case is presently being led before a special Committee of Inquiry (The Montgomery Committee) set up somewhat reluctantly by the Scottish Secretary of State to look into the affairs of islands authorities. This opportunity was gained mainly through requests by Shetland for a more substantial constitutional commission to consider the government of Shetland in general. It is almost inevitable that the Committee will recommend an enhanced measure of local autonomy for all the island bodies, but it is unlikely that the measures will go far enough to fully satisfy Shetland. It is striving for a steady progression — a form of rolling devolution — towards the type of status enjoyed by the Isle of Man in the UK context, or the Faroes and Greenland in the Denmark context. Whatever the outcome the Western Isles seem set to make further gains thanks to the Shetland initiative. It is also interesting to note that one of the issues being considered involves the islands authorities taking over the powers and responsibilities currently exercised in each jurisdiction by the HIDB. There is also an effort being made to give the islands an opportunity to be excepted from, or to vary, certain UK legislation which is inappropriate or injurious to their interests. The logical next step would be to seek legislative powers of their own. There is therefore the prospect that the islands authorities at least, including the Western Isles, might realise their full potential as locally-based, democratically constituted 'rural development agencies'.

For the present the prospect held out above must be conditioned by the acknowledgement that one of the basic failures of past reorganisations of local government has been the failure to consider this activity in tandem with the need for reforming the *financing* of local government. There is a pressing need to secure for local government a greater proportion of revenue which is free of central government strings and whims, and which incorporates a wider tax base than the present property tax rating system. It is this weakness in local government finance which has given rise to the very realistic fears that financial provision will not adequately match additional powers given, and even if this does happen initially, funding will remain highly vulnerable under the present system. To take the specific case of HIDB powers, which are currently funded under a different Scottish

Office budget from Local Authorities, there must be doubts as to whether the Western Isles, if granted Board-type powers, would continue to receive a genuinely additional sum equivalent to that which the Board would have spent there.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS

Introduction

In the absence of a natural and effective encompassing of rural development concerns by the established framework of local and central government the chief approaches to such problems have been characterised by their strongly *ad hoc* nature. No basic pattern may be readily identified: in a few cases a special state-sponsored body was created as a response to particularly effective political pressure²⁴; in other cases under-resourced non-statutory organisations arose, partly out of frustration over central government neglect or insensitivity, attempting to fill, through promotional endeavours, a perceived development gap. Many of the earlier initiatives appear to have been primarily *regional* and only incidentally rural, development efforts. However, more recently a greater localism, reflected in the popularity of community-based development initiatives, has more naturally incorporated the rural element through efforts, among others, to maximise the development of local natural resources and to encourage communities to become more self-reliant as regards basic needs and related services. In many contexts the latter trend appears to have been associated in part with the higher profile of voluntary and cooperative bodies. The three study areas demonstrate many of these points.

Mid-Wales

The first body to really tackle the problems of Mid-Wales, and indeed to substantiate its particular regional identity, was the Mid-Wales Industrial Development Association.²⁵ Formed in 1957 as a grouping of the five former Mid-Wales counties it was particularly concerned to overcome the complacency of dominant agricultural interests — both in the region, and in official circles. In the Association's view these interests seemed unwilling to recognise both the seriousness of the depopulation prob-

lem and the need to aggressively develop the region in industrial, and not solely agricultural, terms. From the beginning it campaigned for a major central government initiative but initially it had to be content with assistance from the Development Commission, which was probably instrumental in seeing the Association through its formative years (MWIDA was the Commission's local agent in Mid-Wales in relation to the programme of advance and purpose built factories). In terms of policy the Association adopted a *regional* outlook and quickly came to favour a combined approach involving strategic settlement planning and industrial estate development in selected towns: given its own highly limited resources and essentially promotional status it is not surprising that concentration of effort came to be strongly favoured, and this was manifested in a powerful commitment to the then generally popular growth centre policy. This developed into a concern not simply to halt depopulation but to foster re-population on a massive scale through the promotion of a major new town.

The Association only began to make real headway when a new (Labour) government was elected in 1964. The latter fashioned a basically two-pronged response to the Association's case:

- (a) creation of a Mid-Wales New Town Development Corporation to work on urban development, beginning with the doubling of the population of the coincidentally named Newtown; and
- (b) a proposed Rural Development Board, under the provisions of the 1967 Agricultural Act, to tackle rural issues, mainly with a view to promoting rationalisation of the farm structure, and more integrated land use.²⁶

The latter initiative failed on account of considerable resistance from the regionally significant lobby of small farmers — mainly owner-occupiers who were deeply suspicious of the compulsory purchase powers to be made available to the proposed Board. Perhaps the most useful step taken by the new government however was to grant Mid-Wales Assisted Area status under Regional Policy. The Association was nevertheless deeply hurt that Mid-Wales was initially not also granted the type of special development agency conferred on the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. As it happened such a response emanated from the latest Labour government in the form of the Development Board for Rural Wales, established in 1976 (Map 2b). Confined at

present to the Mid-Wales portion of rural Wales there were fears during its gestation that instead of a new body the government might opt simply for a rural division of the already established WDA, but those fears were not realised.

The DBRW began basically as a consolidation of pre-existing development efforts by bodies such as the MWNTDA, MWIDA, and the Development Commission/CoSIRA. It has, however, matured into a much more substantial operation than was perhaps initially envisaged, although Board interests have also argued the need for more resources to allow it to do a proper job.²⁷ Constituted under the Development of Rural Wales Act of 1976 the Board is empowered to carry out measures for the economic and social development of Mid-Wales, but it is not nearly so well endowed as the HIDB, with the notable exception of the power to build key-worker housing in support of its pre-eminent factory-building activity. This does not compensate however for the present lack of a selective financial assistance facility. Partly as a consequence of these limitations the Board pursues the aim of "urgent accomplishments in identifiable points", continuing the growth pole policies of its predecessors and strongly resisting any dispersal of effort and resources. The main exception is the comparatively minor social development grants scheme which helps to buy the Board some goodwill in many rural settings unable to benefit directly and substantially from its economic development initiatives.²⁸

By virtue of its regional outlook and its effective emphasis on urban-industrial development the DBRW has inevitably left a large part of the development field in Mid-Wales comparatively untilled. This remains the case even after allowing for the specific efforts in the agricultural sphere under the auspices of the Agricultural Development Advisory Service (ADAS) or of those developmental activities of the Forestry Commission. (The DBRW is specifically excluded from engaging directly in agricultural and forestry development — a continuing legacy of the difficulties which surrounded the earlier Rural Development Board proposal). In fact the most impressive contribution to filling this gap seems to be coming from non-statutory locally-based initiatives forming part of a broader community development movement. In certain cases these 'grass-roots' organisations arose out of a frustration over the perceived insensitivity or inaction of the DBRW, in relation to the concerns of rural

communities, and especially of those remote from the Board's headquarters in Newtown (See Map 2b). Several have been inspired by the community cooperatives model being employed successfully in Western Ireland and in the Western Isles, but the DBRW has been reluctant to promote the application of this model in a major way in the context of rural Wales. As a consequence it has been left to voluntary or cooperative agencies to attempt to service this demand, e.g. North Wales Employment Resource and Advice Centre, and Antur Teifi. These particular bodies are supported in part by local authorities and by central government, through an adaptation of the 'Urban Aid' Programme, but they are usually grossly under-financed and lead a very precarious existence. To the DBRW's credit it has recently agreed to contribute to experiments with the community cooperative model, (e.g. Menter Glaslyn, Antur Tanat-Cain) but the new policy came too late to assist the Bala-based Cymdeithas de Gwynedd (now bankrupt but one of the first and most ambitious local development efforts in Mid-Wales).²⁹

The Western Isles

The Western Isles, with the Highlands and Islands in general, have often been the object of official 'development' efforts, one in fact dating from just after the momentous '45 Rebellion³⁰ (Board of Commissioners for the Annexed-Jacobite-Estates, 1745-84). 1745 marks the beginning of the (forced) demise of the traditional clan-based Highland society, and the main point of conception of what has become the unusually persistent 'Highland Problem'.³¹ A more recent effort at its solution was the Highlands Congested Districts Board (1897-1912) which replicated an earlier effort to placate increasingly restive and land-hungry Irish peasants.³² This Board complemented the efforts of the Crofters Commission, established in 1886, and still extant — though with a long period of dormancy in the first half of this century. (In 1911 the Commission lost most of its judicial functions to the Land Courts, and it was effectively reformed only in the 1950's to assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the Taylor Royal Commission).³³ Today's HIDB is thus only the latest in a long line of official efforts to cope with the Highlands Problem. Pressure for such a comprehensive development agency was building up as early as the 1930's, inspired in particular by the example of the Tennessee Valley

Authority in the USA. Initially activists had to be content with a mere Highlands and Islands Advisory Panel (1946-1964)³⁴ until the HIDB was eventually established by the new Labour government in 1965.

The HIDB under the terms of its Act, is charged 'to assist the people of the Highlands and Islands to improve their economic and social conditions, and to enable the area to play a more effective part in the economic and social development of the nation'. Serving the seven historic crofting counties its functions are more extensive than those of any other statutory agency in the field of economic policy: for instance, it may undertake, promote or aid developments in every sector of the economy: it can give financial assistance by grant, loan and equity subscription; and it can innovate its own development schemes. Of particular importance to the Western Isles has been the Board's scheme to develop community cooperatives.³⁵ Prior to the innovation of this programme in 1977 the Board was not highly regarded in the Isles: it was seen to be overly concerned with proposals by outside entrepreneurs which resulted in little long-term benefits for the islanders. Also, the Board's overall strategy favoured a concentration on three major growth poles in the eastern part of the Board's area, which if successful would only have hastened depopulation of the islands. Nevertheless the Board had always acknowledged that it would be judged on its ability to stem such depopulation.³⁶

The HIDB's Community Cooperatives scheme was devised in 1976 following study of similar developments in Western Ireland. The Western Isles was selected as a pilot area and so far eight coops have been formed (Map 4a). The cooperatives are multi-functional in nature, engaging in social development projects as well as commercial enterprises. They seem uniquely suited as a development model for the island communities.³⁷ The Board assists by: matching the monies raised through public subscription in the community; paying the manager's salary initially; and through project grants. It also employs a team of fieldworkers to act as catalysts and resource persons. The coops have evolved to the stage where they are actively contemplating a loose federation to support a joint servicing company.

The relevance of the Board to the Western Isles has been further heightened in recent years through the operation of an area office, based in Stornoway, and established in 1976. At

present too it appears that more emphasis is being placed on area development, using such offices to integrate the Board's sectoral functions in a manner which is more sensitive to the needs of the many diverse territories subsumed by the Board. This decentralisation is to be given substance by granting more decision-making autonomy to area officers and to Board members with particular responsibility for the area in question. It is possible that these moves constitute in part an effort by the Board to undermine the islands authorities' case (presented in submissions to the Montgomery Committee of Inquiry) that they should take over the Board's functions. Whatever the reason it appears that the rural development needs of the islands at least will be better served, either by a more decentralised HIDB operation, or by a more autonomous local authority. The coordination problem is also being tackled currently through moves to formalise an informal inter-agency liaison group, bringing together local and central government bodies operating in the Isles.

It was not really until the advent of the new islands authority that the people of the Western Isles had the opportunity and the incentive to become actively involved in the development process. They had become accustomed to being on the receiving end of development 'from above', dictated by interests based outside the islands and out of touch with island traditions. Apart from the early official efforts, Lewis and Harris, around 1920, also experienced the attentions of Lord Leverhulme, a capitalist autocrat who sought to industrialise an agrarian society in a very short space of time. His initiatives ultimately failed for a variety of reasons.³⁸ There was nevertheless one early 'self-help' initiative in the form of the Lewis Association (1943-1954) which aimed at promoting social and economic development of the island.³⁹ However, the members of the Association, though obviously well intentioned, were not fully representative of, nor unambiguously sympathetic towards, the indigenous Gaelic culture, especially as this was manifest in rural Lewis. It remained a select pressure group respectfully lobbying for state support, but never managed to evolve in the manner achieved by MWIDA or NESDA. Now however the Western Isles as a whole have effectively a development body of their own, as well as access to the HIDB.

Whereas local government was simply 'reorganised' in the rest of Scotland in the Western Isles it was truly a case of reform,

comparable in certain respects to an imperial power granting independence to a former colony. Because of the comparative neglect or insensitivity suffered at the hands of previous regimes the Western Isles constituted an obvious case for development and the new authority has been forced to become a *de facto* rural development agency. Of all the functions which the new authority inherited perhaps the most important from a developmental perspective is education. There is little doubt that this function is being wielded as a major development tool: in the formal sector particular attention is being given to bi-lingual education, while in the non-formal sector community education has been the subject of much innovation. The latter emphasis has been accomplished in part via a special action-research project, *Proisect Muinntir nan Eilean* (Western Isles Community Education Project) (CEP).⁴⁰ The aim of the project was to investigate how the resources of education, in the broadest sense, might be directed towards enhancing the self-confidence and self-reliance, and hence the potential for development, of rural communities. Major funding for the project has been provided by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, an international educational trust, based in the Hague, Netherlands. A notable spin off has been several highly successful local history projects.

The arrival of truly *local* government for the Western Isles has had many other positive implications from a rural development perspective. A greater sensitivity has been brought to bear on matters of settlement policy, especially as it relates to the smaller and more remote communities. There is for instance a greater commitment to maintaining small schools than would be the case if the islands were administered from the mainland. Similarly, public housing developments are dispersed to a greater degree, rather than being concentrated in a few culturally inappropriate 'key settlements'. The authority has also been in a position to exploit special employment programmes in a major way to meet very basic infrastructural needs e.g. peat roads, piers and jetties, sheep fanks etc. Of fundamental significance however has been the manner in which the authority has underpinned a Gaelic cultural revival, not least by its early adoption of a policy of bilingualism, and by pump-priming involvement in arts-based projects such as community theatre/video, Gaelic theatre, and bilingual publishing. By its very existence a greater number of talented young people have been enabled to remain in the Isles,

while others have been able to return to pursue their chosen profession; it seems that a vicious circle of depopulation might be being replaced by a virtuous circle, fuelled by increased local autonomy. Many difficulties remain, and the whole system is still heavily 'dependent', but there can be no doubting the current comparative optimism and growing self-confidence.

The Western Isles is serviced by a remarkably large number and wide range of rural development practitioners. The islands council, itself — Comhairle nan Eilean — maintains, for its size, a very well manned Development Department, as well as a group of community education officers, both these services having a considerable field presence. There is in addition the HIDB's basic complement of area development officers working out of Stornoway, and the special team of field officers assigned to the Community Cooperatives. The North of Scotland College of Agriculture (NOSCA) has two area advisers in the Western Isles. Recently a new team has been added in conjunction with the Integrated Development Programme (IDP) one of three pilot schemes currently being pursued within the EEC.⁴¹ The aim of the IDP is to improve the social and economic structure of the Western Isles through a coordinated series of measures including the development and the improvement of the basic industries of agriculture and fisheries. The main elements relate to land development, livestock improvement, fisheries and fish farming, and — the most significant innovation in a programme which otherwise is mainly an extension of existing measures — a comprehensive agricultural improvement scheme. The programme is to run for five years initially (from September 1982) and is scheduled to involve £20 million of direct UK public expenditure, 40% of which will be recoverable from the EEC. (It should be mentioned that the IDP also envisages contributions from the ERDF and the European Social Fund in addition to the £9 million or so from the Agricultural Fund. The former sources should yield contributions for infrastructure, industrial/craft/tourism ventures, and training schemes. Related details, including EEC contributions towards the costs are not yet known, though conceivably the WIIC will be involved more directly in such expenditures). The main role of the three man team is to assist people to take advantage of the programme, but final approval for individual projects, and related grant payments, rests with either the HIDB in Inverness or the Department of

Agriculture and Fisheries in Edinburgh. Although it may yet suffer from the lack of local influence in its formulation, and the lack of local control over its implementation, the presence of the IDP seems likely to ensure that the Western Isles will continue to be a mecca for study groups, such as the present one, for many years to come; such is the wealth of innovative rural development initiatives which may be investigated.

Grampian

The North-East part of Scotland has never quite been able to achieve the official 'problem-region' status effectively conferred upon Mid-Wales and the Highlands and Islands, and, although a worthy candidate at the time, the region did not furnish any of the 'crofting counties' designated under the crofting land reforms of 100 years ago. One consequence is that the region must live in the immediate shadow of the HIDB a fate which is particularly galling for contiguous zones with a good Highland pedigree such as Upper Banffshire. In recent years also the glare from North Sea oil-related development has blinded a full appreciation of the real problems being experienced by the traditional, indigenous industries and the remoter rural upland areas most distant from the comparatively prosperous coastal belt.⁴²

Before the advent of oil (from around 1970) the situation was a little clearer than it is now: the traditional industries were in decline, and rural depopulation was a general problem, so much so that the region was granted assisted area status in relation to UK regional policy. The precarious state of the regional economy was documented in 1969 in the 'Gaskin Report'⁴³ and it was this which spurred certain former counties of the region — Aberdeenshire, the City of Aberdeen, and Kincardineshire (Map 3a) to band together to form the North East of Scotland Development Association. No sooner had the Association been established than the oil and gas was discovered under the adjacent North Sea. And while the Association had been set up mainly with the problems of rural areas and indigenous industries in mind its agenda inevitably came to be dominated by efforts to capitalise on the opportunities generated by North Sea Oil development.

The Association was given a more formal basis in 1975 at the time of local government reorganisation when it became the

NESD *Authority*, discharging the industrial development function allocated to Grampian Regional Council (Map 3b). By comparison with other regional councils the Grampian operation of this function is more fully developed, and more heavily manned in relation to population served. For a while the region enjoyed the dual benefits of assisted area status and oil-related prosperity, but the latter came increasingly to put the justification for the former in question from a broad central government perspective. With the recent removal of assisted area status and the downturn in oil-related activity the basic regional problems have been rediscovered. It is only recently therefore that NESDA has been forced to make a concerted effort to tackle rural development concerns in a more direct and intensive manner: thus for instance it is playing a lead role in a recently established consultative committee on agriculture matters, and on a sub-committee focussing on rural affairs. To be really effective however, NESDA, through the Regional Council, would have to be granted more of the powers and resources presently made available to the HIDB. This would necessitate a more general policy of doing away with special, ad hoc, regional development agencies, while enabling all the regions and islands to become more meaningful area development agencies. As matters stand NESDA must look to the SDA for a boost, but the latter's priorities tend to be elsewhere, reflected in the mischievous suggestion by some that its initials stand for not the Scottish, but the Strathclyde Development Agency, (Strathclyde being the major Scottish problem region).

At the community level Grampian region throws up little in the way of the locally-based initiatives that have been noted in Mid-Wales and the Western Isles. In some respects this may reflect a more rounded and more mature society, less ravaged by depopulation: there might have been *rural* depopulation but not necessarily *regional* depopulation on a major scale. The North-East seems to have been relatively well served by a peculiar cultural self-sufficiency which has helped to hold together both the region itself and its constituent communities. Community leadership has always been in fairly good supply either in the form of landed or farming interests, or the professions — most notably the doctor, minister, or school teacher. In addition voluntary community organisations abound. It is perhaps only in the most remote rural areas — where depopulation has been

most pronounced — that the system seems to have broken down, helped in some cases by the over-zealous rationalisation policies of absentee landlords. The main response has been an effort by the local authorities to provide non-formal, community education. The old county of Aberdeenshire was a major progressive force in developing a community education service, and this tradition seems to have been inherited by Grampian. This service is now provided largely from very impressive physical complexes which integrate day-school and community centre facilities: the group visited a particularly well managed complex at Aboyne which served the needs of about 9,000 people in Upper Deeside.

PART III A THIRD WORLD VIEW by B.S. Baviskar and A.U. Patel

INTRODUCTION

Before launching into the report proper it may assist the reader if we were to preface it with a few contextual remarks. Originally the Arkleton Trust had arranged for four Commonwealth Fellows to participate in the Study Tour, but unfortunately two had to withdraw at short notice owing to circumstances beyond the Trust's control. As a consequence fewer continents and disciplines than were originally intended, were represented on the tour group: it also placed an obligation on ourselves to be more general in our approach than might have been the case had the other specialists been able to participate. As for our own background we are both natives of India although one of us has spent a considerable part of his recent professional career in Nigeria, and it was this country's experience for which he had particular regard when forming impressions. Former British colonies, both Nigeria and India are comparatively *young* states, having gained independence since the Second World War. Both are well populated — as in the UK — but they are *federally* constituted in contrast to the unitary nature of the UK. Their 'nation-building' has been compressed into a short period of time, during which much wisdom has been accumulated — some of it painfully — in the matter of coping constructively with various regionalisms or tribalisms. Partly as a consequence of this experience *multi-lingualism* and the associated cultural differentiation, is accepted unthinkingly as normal, natural and enriching, whereas *bilingualism* and the assertion of a distinct cultural identity tends to be frowned upon in the UK context. In our countries also the combination of their youth, federal constitution, and pressing basic needs, has ensured that local governments are accorded a major developmental role: they are thus vital bodies and veritable hotbeds of democracy, effectively nullifying the case for the special 'regional' development agencies which we came to focus upon during the Study Tour. Finally, since the bulk of the population in our countries lives in rural areas, and is engaged in agricultural pursuits, then agricultural development and rural development cannot but seem inseparable, the former being an integral element of the latter, rather than being treated as a

separate development arena, as seems to be the case in the UK. These aspects of our own background must be considered as having conditioned the reflections which follow.

One of us had the advantage of having also led the 1980 Study Tour. With the benefit of hindsight it seemed right and proper that the report then had highlighted the pre-occupation with rural *decline*. The dominant impression on that tour had been the general concern with the problems of rural decline, but there seemed to be little in the way of positive steps in the direction of *development*. The 1982 Study Tour did throw up a major contrast with the 1980 exercise; while there was still much *talk* of rural decline we encountered many, more substantial, *action-oriented* initiatives, with special agencies designated to bring about rural development. Perhaps this was in large part a function of the distinctive character of the areas we visited. We were in no doubt that the three study areas were, if to varying degrees, not only geographically peripheral but also culturally peripheral. The contrast with rural England was particularly noticeable. During the previous study tour it was observed that the English, although aware of rural depopulation and decline as constituting problematic issues, did at least not hold the Welsh or Scottish to be responsible for these conditions. The Scots and the Welsh on the other hand *did* seem to share a feeling that the domination by England has contributed significantly to their problems. The people of the Western Isles also seemed to take exception to domination by the Lowland Scots. In general we felt that the more marginal the area the greater the sense of deprivation, the greater the need for asserting a separate cultural identity, and the greater the propensity for local initiatives at the community level. Perhaps significantly the more marginal areas were also characterised by the presence of a greater number — indeed a veritable multiplicity — of special, state-sponsored, development agencies. These points we try to bring out in the following overview.

An Overview of Each Case

Compared to the other two areas the *Grampian* region was considered to probably suffer least from any sense of deprivation, although it might share with the rest of Scotland the resentment against English domination. The region was noted as

having a fairly prosperous, if partially inegalitarian, agrarian structure, and a fairly sound industrial base: the many large landed estates and the abundance of distilleries (making whisky) could be singled out for special mention. There seemed to be no sense of insecurity, nor any special efforts to assert cultural identity. Little evidence was observed of local initiative on a community basis, such as the community cooperatives noted elsewhere. The Grampian region also lacked high profile special development agencies such as the DBRW, HIDB, or the IDP.

The Grampian areas studied in greater depth — the upland parts of Donside and Deeside in the former county of Aberdeenshire — appeared to be predominantly comprised of large estates (many over 5,000 ha) and associated tenant farms (averaging 100 ha), with an emphasis on forestry, grazing and sporting uses. The generally hilly terrain, much of it over 250 metres in elevation, appeared to place any farming activity close to the economic limits of production. There has been a particularly noticeable decline in the numbers working the land, with corresponding detrimental effect on community service levels. Tenant farms were steadily decreasing in number as landlords either amalgamated units, afforested them, took them in hand themselves, or sold the farm steading to non-agriculturalists. Some of the latter purchasers had associations with the oil-related industry which is concentrated in Aberdeen, 30 to 40 miles distant (and in other coastal parts slightly further afield). The area is also popular with retired people, with young professionals interested in a particular rural quality of life, and with tourists (especially in the case of Royal Deeside). It was reported that some of the indigenous residents of the area considered the oil-related 'in-comers' to be generally not as committed as they might be to maintaining the welfare of the local community. Such tensions were however nowhere nearly so serious as those that seem to have arisen in parts of Wales where the burning of second homes and holiday homes used by 'outsiders' has become a real issue.

By contrast with Grampian, in the rural areas of *Mid-Wales* we noticed, to a greater degree, a feeling of deprivation, both in economic and cultural terms — especially when comparisons were drawn with the neighbouring, and seemingly dominating, West Midlands of England. Expressions of open resentment or outright hostility — as hinted above — were not uncommon. More striking however were the sustained efforts all over Wales

to assert a distinctive cultural identity through activities centred around the Welsh language or nationalist politics. Some of these efforts take the form of locally based Anturs ('ventures') to encourage community businesses.⁴⁴ As a response to the region's problems the UK government has created a special development agency, the DBRW, which follows on from an earlier regional self-help effort (MWIDA).

The DBRW defines the major problem in terms of depopulation. The region has in fact lost over a quarter of its population in the present century. Unlike Grampian, because there was no significant industrialisation locally, young people had to move right out of Mid-Wales — often to England or abroad — in search of jobs. Because of relatively poor communications with other parts of Wales (mainly on account of topographical factors) the outward drift of able young people to another country took on a particular significance: they were functioning in England's rather than Wales' interest. While this 'integration' might be interpreted as 'development' in the context of the dominant culture, for the Welsh it meant not only depopulation but *disintegration* of their many much-valued rural communities. Where 'development' is viewed differently, depending upon the cultural context, particular problems might be expected for bodies such as the DBRW, which must straddle both cultures. Fortunately depopulation appears to be posing less of a problem than was originally the case. However, the slight increase in population registered over the last decade is due partly to inward migration of older people, and to the fact that local youth cannot now move out so readily to find jobs elsewhere. Furthermore, the depopulation of many *rural* areas (many of which are predominantly Welsh speaking) is still a major concern because of previous outward migration of young people.⁴⁵

A development board in Mid-Wales must also cope with basic physical problems such as the hilly to mountainous terrain, high rainfall, and generally poor soils. These factors appear to limit opportunities for further significant development of agriculture and forestry: in fact the DBRW does not have any remit to engage directly in such activities — tending to perpetuate the effective presumption in favour of footloose, factory-based, manufacturing industry. This bias against the truly rural industries is partially compensated by the existence of separate development infrastructures (e.g. ADAS, Forestry Commission)

but there is little evidence of truly integrated rural development across the main economic sectors. The group also noted that farming — the main rural land use — is organised mainly on a small farm basis (average holding about 80 ha.). There is a comparatively high rate of owner-occupation, and, unlike Grampian, tenancy does not seem to be such a major problem area. The raising of livestock predominates while some farmers attempt to supplement their income by operating tourist-related enterprises, some very successfully.⁴⁶

The *Western Isles* of Scotland — sometimes referred to as the Outer Hebrides — struck the group as a classic example of a marginal or peripheral area — a victim of centuries of isolation, oppression and exploitation. A chain of islands, 130 miles long and about 30-60 miles from the Scottish mainland, they are dominated by a unique system of land tenure, *viz*, crofting, which in most cases is accompanied by part-time, semi-subsistence farming. The people of the Western Isles are obviously proud of their Gaelic language and culture, and a major revival is currently in progress. In the past the islanders were subjected to domination by southern mainland interests which were unsympathetic to 'the Gaelic', even though over 80% of the islanders are bi-lingual. It was sensed that the cultural revival was bound in with the resolution of the identity crisis which had been developing, and also with the partial remedying of the political impotence of Isles folk. Domination by outsiders is now less of an issue; for instance, it seemed that feelings on this matter were stronger in Wales than the Western Isles. The new attitudes are shown in part by the ready response to attempts to encourage community-based initiatives. A new 'market' has been provided in which to test out innovative programming, such as the HIDB's community cooperative scheme, the EEC-stimulated IDP, and the Van Leer sponsored CEP. Much of the change seems to be related to the Western Isles islands authority (Comhairle nan Eilean) established in 1974 as a result of local government reorganisation. This has fostered a sense of self-confidence and efficacy among the elected representatives and their officials. The desire to strengthen the Gaelic culture has been a strong binding factor for the new authority. With their own council the islanders appear to have acquired at least a partial control over their own destiny. It will not be surprising if there are demands for the council to take over the activities of the HIDB in the Isles,

and more of the implementation of the IDP (now largely controlled by the HIDB and DAFS).

Until very recently the population of the Western Isles has been marked by a long period of decline, beginning about a century ago, but accelerating after the First World War. The population also became progressively older in terms of its age-composition. Socially, it was clear to us that family ties remain strong, with the Church, in its various forms, still carrying great authority. Coupled with the social cohesion contributed by the crofting system these basic integrating institutions seem to have helped to ensure the survival of many of the island communities in the face of powerful disintegrating forces. There are a few crisis areas however, especially in the more remote parts, such as Uig in Lewis, which are on the threshold of social as well as economic viability. This point was brought home forcefully when we heard of the difficulties encountered by young crofters attempting to find marriage partners willing to put up with the consequences of a sparse population and declining service levels. Not surprisingly such crisis areas are presently the priorities for intensive community education work.

In a sense the whole of the Western Isles is still an economic crisis area by national standards; the area regularly registers the highest unemployment levels in the UK. At the time of our visit around 30% of the employable population were without a job, the figure for males being nearer 40%. Many people have several occupations, some of which are pursued on a part-time or seasonal basis; such factors can render official statistics, based on full-time employment, to be of dubious value. Crofting has an all-pervading influence: for instance, its practice ensures that many of those who are officially 'unemployed' are not entirely 'out of work'. Most of the land area of the Isles is subject to crofting tenure, and there are somewhere in the order of 6,000 crofts (for a population of 30,000). The crofts are very small in size (averaging less than 3 ha.), though there is also access to extensive rough grazings:⁴⁷ 94% of the worked units have been assessed at less than 100 man-days, i.e. they provide only two days work per week for one person. In only a very few cases — where crofters shade into farmers — does crofting generate an adequate family income on its own. More commonly crofting must be combined with other occupations such as weaving (Harris Tweed), fishing, fish-farming, working for the local

authority, or other service sector positions.

Crofting is obviously a popular way of life: although crofters have recently been given the opportunity to become owner-occupiers, at very little expense, the vast majority have chosen not to exercise this right, preferring to retain a well-protected tenancy situation. It could be a more economically productive way of life however if there were more incentives for more intensive land use. Most of the advantages of the system seem to accrue on an individual level, whereas the disadvantages tend to affect the wider community. Crofting can reduce outlays for shelter, fuel (peat) and vegetables for the individual, but in the present situation it cannot generate the wider economic benefits which farming brings elsewhere. However it seemed to us that some of the barriers to such progress are being removed: e.g. the Comhairle's 'Development' section is supporting experiments to stimulate horticultural production and shell-fish farming, by applying very simple technology; and livestock marketing problems are being tackled by the HIDB through support for the establishment of local cooperatives. The IDP also contains a particular incentive for comprehensive schemes designed to achieve more intensive agricultural production, as well as several measures to stimulate fish farming. The effect of such moves would be to more directly improve the Western Isles 'balance of payments' with the 'rest of the world', by effecting import substitution and establishing more lucrative 'cash crops'.

AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The most striking factor, for Third World observers of the UK scene is the lack of clarity about the objectives of rural development. At the most only lip service is paid to the notion of *integrated* rural development: sometimes it may even be ridiculed as but a slogan or cliché, as somehow out of place in the British context. The lack of effective concern for such an approach does not augur well for the achievement of long-term goals. In practice in the UK the problem is often narrowly defined as one of rural depopulation and a solution is perceived in creating more jobs in rural areas — an important and difficult task in itself — in order that various services such as health, education, transport and communications might become more viable. What really seems to be at stake however is the creation of self-sustaining and

vibrant rural communities. Most of the present programmes are orientated towards the individual, and are based on the provision of grants and subsidies, on a blanket, country-wide, basis. There is no adequate recognition of local and regional variations. What seems to be required is the identification of existing and potential rural communities, and the planning for their survival and development. This will involve a more locally-based linking of different aspects of rural life such as agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, tourism, education and welfare in general. Language and culture will have to be given due consideration, as will popular involvement, by providing adequate rewards, not only in monetary terms but also in terms of status, prestige, power and influence. Once the creation and sustenance of living rural communities is accepted as a goal all programmes will have to be geared to achieving that goal, irrespective of cost considerations — as is mostly the case in relation to other essential societal goals such as freedom, defence, health and education. The choice seems to be between creating self-sustaining rural communities or maintaining a rural zone for the benefit of urban commuters, or for use by urban dwellers for recreation and vacations.

When looking at any rural development programme one has to consider the related strategies, instruments and agencies. Strategy refers to a broad policy approach: is it integrated and collectivity-orientated, or is it sectoral and individual-orientated? Instruments refer to the incentives for motivating people to act in a desired direction. Are they mainly monetary, based on grants, subsidies and loans, or physical in nature, such as ready-made factory premises? People might also be motivated to act more spontaneously on the basis of emotional involvement, commitment to a particular ideology, or rewards in terms of prestige and power. Agencies are the organisations engaged in the task of development. Are they centralised, bureaucratic and technocratic — without much popular participation in programme formulation and decision making, or are they largely responsive, and responsible, to popular participation at various levels? By and large (with a few notable exceptions) the strategies pursued in the study areas have been sectoral and individual-orientated. Instruments are mainly monetary, depending largely on grants and subsidies, and the agencies are centrally created and controlled. They are dominated by technocrats and bureaucrats with limited scope for popular participation and involvement.

What particularly strikes observers from India is the divorce between local authorities and development agencies. The local authorities seem to have limited powers and lack active popular participation. There is an astonishing degree of apathy about local government, especially for a state which often prides itself in being the cradle of modern democracy. Most development agencies are creatures of the central government and their schemes appear to be imposed from above making them insensitive to local needs and aspirations. Popular participation and democratic control might be expected to bring the agencies closer to meeting the wishes of local people. The notion that a simple provision of funds for various schemes will generate interest and enthusiasm among the people is a very naive view of the development process. Of greater concern should be the revitalisation of local government institutions, and the reversal of the past trend whereby whenever a problem arose central government tended to create a separate new institution for its solution, instead of strengthening the existing ones. While a few specialised institutions at central and regional levels may be useful — if they serve, rather than dictate, the requirements of local authorities — by providing technical expertise in specific fields, when they multiply in number a major coordination problem arises. Each body tries to over-emphasise its own importance, and they lose touch with the people they are supposed to serve through resort to baffling technical jargon and statistical manipulations. There can be so much importance attached to the advice of their experts that the voice of the people is virtually ignored: technocracy edges out democracy.

MID-WALES

In Mid-Wales, as it seems in other parts of the UK, the local authorities are weak, especially when it comes to playing a development role. Because of their limited powers, functions, and resources there is comparatively little interest in the elections to local councils at community, district, and county levels: few positions are contested; many are elected term after term without any contest; most of the policy-making seems to be in the hands of officials; and surprisingly few meetings are actually held at the district level. For instance, we were particularly struck by the

impressive council chambers at Dolgellau. Formerly used by Merioneth County Council, and now by Merioneth District Council, the group was astonished to learn that the latter only met in the chambers about five times each year. It was expected that such a facility would see much greater use, by a body with much greater responsibilities than could be discharged in only five days sitting in a year.

The limitations of local authorities in the development field became apparent when reviewing the structure plan prepared by Powys County Council, the chief local government in Mid-Wales. The plan, though systematically prepared, seemed, from a Third World perspective, to lack comprehensiveness: while much detail was present in regard to basic infrastructure (housing, roads, etc.) it contained only broad statements in regard to manufacturing industry, agriculture and forestry — the main sources of employment. Such economic development responsibilities mainly reside elsewhere, with central government or its agents, and these bodies generally do not operate in a manner which is amenable to local coordination on a district or county basis. Functional integration occurs mainly at the level of the UK, or its regions — rather than at the level of Wales, or locally valued territories — and this inevitably clashes with the spirit of Welsh ethnic identity (cultural and political) which is so noticeable to a visitor.⁴⁸ As a consequence there is a sense of a comparatively 'foreign' notion of development being imposed 'from above', by a multiplicity of technocratic agencies, with little encouragement for democratic local authorities to generate development 'from below'. This point also applies in the physical planning arena, where local authorities have been obliged to accept various assumptions which are in the interest of central government agencies, rather than pursue policies which are more in tune with grassroots interests. The group had the opportunity to meet an advocate of what seemed to be a more sensible alternative strategy for areas, such as rural Wales, with Celtic traditions.⁴⁹

The major state-sponsored development agency serving Mid-Wales is the DBRW. Established in 1977 as a partial consolidation of several previously disparate initiatives it has been entrusted with the task of arresting rural depopulation by means of economic and social development measures. It is endowed with a wealth of resources and skills, is served by an efficient and

well-qualified staff, and is very businesslike (rather than bureaucratic) in its approach. There is no direct popular involvement however and most people seem to find it rather remote — almost as if it was speaking a different language.⁵⁰ The Board does give grants for what are called 'social development' schemes, and for community cooperatives, but it is obvious that these are essentially for cosmetic purposes. Unfortunately the Board defines its role narrowly by concentrating on building advance factory units and housing for key workers. It then tries to 'sell' these advantages to potential entrepreneurs, many of whom happen to be outsiders. In some cases, such as at Bala, the Board facilities have very poor occupancy rates, and it appears to local people that the Board's resources might be better spent by training local people to engage in a more indigenous development (the vocational education function is not one of the Board's responsibilities however, and the Further Education Colleges are not particularly geared to fostering rural development).⁵¹ There are complaints that outside entrepreneurs have no particular stake in the areas, and are liable to close down their business once the initial perquisites have been exhausted. In addition, if a factory happens to be a branch of a larger business based outside the region, then in any crisis situation the branch tends to be the first to go. Another irritation seems to result from the fact that in some towns key worker housing may be kept empty while local people are on a waiting list for accommodation.⁵² And while the bigger expensive factory sites in the smaller towns are likely to remain vacant there may be a demand for some other form of assistance from individuals who prefer to operate on a small-scale from make-shift premises, in a garage or backyard for instance, — or an old barrack hut on an impromptu 'industrial estate', as we discovered when visiting a project assisted by Antur Teifi.

A feature of the DBRW's strategy is its well articulated 'geographical' policy whereby its major efforts are concentrated on a few selected centres (or areas) organised hierarchically — factory size being an important differential. The most fully developed centre, at the top of the hierarchy, is Newtown, where the Board is in the process of completing the work begun by the MWNTDC. The group were able to observe the impressive and extensive estate development of factories and housing, and Newtown seems to be something of 'a success story' to set beside the complaints from more peripheral locations, further down the

settlement hierarchy. Some of Newtown's success may be due to its location close to England, in a part of Wales where the Welsh language is weak, and where there is little organised resistance to anglicising influences. The bias in favour of a few centres — while logical and even admirable for a *regional* development agency — seems to show up the need for comparably concentrated efforts further down the scale by *local* development agencies — especially in areas where the Welsh language and culture is of greater significance. In the absence of such initiatives the Board might attract a less hostile reaction away from Newtown: by increasing its field presence through a network of district offices; by sponsoring more, small-scale, cooperative enterprises; and by giving more weight to consultations with local councils.

While it might seem natural and logical for the existing local authorities to fulfill the function of local development agencies, they do not appear to be set up to do so. Instead the vacuum is being filled in an ad hoc manner by a host of community-based development initiatives which attempt to mesh economic and cultural considerations. Motivated by a sense of material deprivation and a common concern for preserving Welsh cultural identity, these largely voluntary bodies, with no statutory basis, have been doing sterling work with very limited resources in a rather hostile official environment. Some groups have tried to copy or adapt the community cooperative model being applied in other Celtic contexts, in Western Ireland and the Western Isles.⁵³ While the Welsh cases are not 'cooperatives' in the full sense of the word — being more in the nature of companies — they do have a strong community basis. A few groups emphasise local job creation, others produce local newspapers, one community group specialises in the promotion of energy conservation and the development of alternative energy sources, another operates a Welsh/English translation service. Though highly impressed by the energy and commitment of the groups visited we could sense that they laboured under severe handicaps on several fronts: in particular they lacked adequate initial 'seed' money and more general support services. A greater measure of institutionalisation of this locally-based development movement might be worth the risks which can accompany such a course of action. It was also pointed out that the cohesion of Welsh rural communities is now only well-developed on a cultural plane;

beneath this gloss there exists a comparative economic abyss, the former traditional ties having been extensively disintegrated. It will take much time and effort to re-integrate the communities on an economic plane, and this effort will be further hampered by a comparative political impotence born out of the lack of a meaningful political identity. More local autonomy could help to turn the situation around as seems to be happening in the Western Isles.

While there is an ugly side to Welsh nationalism (manifested in the sporadic burning of properties converted to holiday homes by rich outsiders), it seems significant that the community level initiatives involve the harnessing of various sentiments associated with Welsh nationalism for positive development purposes. Perhaps this practice could be extended through efforts to integrate higher level development agencies with popularly elected local authorities. At present Mid-Wales is served by a multiplicity of agencies with a development function, e.g. ADAS, Forestry Commission, Countryside Commission, Welsh Tourist Board, Wales Crafts Council, National Parks Authorities, DBRW, etc. Though there is usually some form of local representation on the boards or consultative councils associated with these bodies, the standard practice is invariably that of appointments rather than elections. Until such times as local authorities are re-constituted to do more of such work themselves it would perhaps be better if most of the positions were filled through elections, or through nominations by local authorities. As matters stand at present it seems that the various agencies work in isolation at the district and community levels, i.e. at the grass-roots level where the outcome of actions matters most. It is also remarkable that community councils are not more involved in the planning and implementation of development schemes. It is therefore hardly surprising that local people can appear to be apathetic about such schemes. All in all it was difficult to escape the conclusion that a major overhaul of the local government system was in order: to reduce the proliferation of central government agencies; to develop a healthier local democracy; and to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to function effectively as local development agencies. By also studying the Western Isles we were able to better appreciate the possibilities which might actually stem from such an overhaul.

THE WESTERN ISLES

Introduction

It is only very recently that the people of the Western Isles have been granted a unified local government all to themselves. While they could so easily have ended up with the type of lowly district status conferred on the former Mid-Wales counties, the Isles achieved most-purpose islands authority status combining in one council the powers that elsewhere were split between two tiers. The contrast with their previous fate could hardly be more dramatic. Formerly the Western Isles was the object of either oppression or neglect by dominant outside interests, depending on what suited the latter, rather than what was in the interests of the islanders. Though some Welshmen might see parallels between the treatment meted out in the past to the Western Isles, and that meted out to Wales by English interests, the group was aware that the Western Isles might constitute a special case.

In addition to the historical legacy it was observed that the Western Isles could be further distinguished from the other study areas by the institution of crofting and by the practice of bilingualism, most people communicating in their own language (Gaelic) as well as in English. (It should possibly be stressed that the comparison is with 'Mid-Wales' as a whole, rather than with those parts of that region, or of Wales generally, where Welsh speaking is as common as Gaelic speaking is in the Western Isles). Although crofting might not be 'profitable' in a narrow economic sense, it did enable a comparatively large population to live on the land by providing shelter and supplementary sources of livelihood. The elements which distinguish the islanders from those on the mainland also enable them to come together for communal action. This was illustrated by the relative vitality of some of their community cooperatives, community education schemes, and the enthusiastic response to the efforts to strengthen the Gaelic culture through bilingual publishing (Acair Ltd), and support for special educational initiatives. An example of the latter is the precedent-setting proposal, by the Gaelic College at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye, to offer a diploma in business studies for a programme taught essentially in Gaelic, in the Gaidhealtachd, to people committed to living and working in a Gaelic cultural context.⁵⁴

Comhairle nan Eilean

The creation, in 1974/75, of the Western Isles Islands Council (WIIC) — Comhairle nan Eilean to the islanders — emerges clearly as the single most important event from a rural development perspective. It is a means by which the local people can at last begin to fulfill their collective aspirations to a much greater extent than was previously possible. We are at a loss to understand why such a sensible step was not taken much earlier. Certain reservations might be noted nevertheless. The new council seemed to lack full popular involvement; for instance, only 11 of the 30 seats were contested in the last local election. Encouragingly though there is apparently an improving trend, with progressively more seats being contested at each election. Also, while the single-tier status is an obvious boon in these early years, when many new changes have to be absorbed quickly and efficiently, once the council settles down it may have to give more consideration to a strengthened community council system. At present such councils are only involved in local government in a rather minor advisory capacity, so much so that several communities find it not worth the bother to support them. If the islands council is successful in enhancing its powers (say as a result of representations to the current Montgomery Committee of Inquiry), but does not institute a corresponding decentralisation in its own operations, then it may run the risk of serious disaffection in areas remote from Stornoway, such as the Southern Isles. The problem might be averted by a preparedness to share power with a lower tier of community councils having more of an executive and less of a purely advisory nature. It seems however that the Comhairle can still count on the stock of goodwill that it has managed to build up through deliberate efforts early on to ensure more than a fair deal for the remoter areas. In Barra, for instance, we heard the view that the Comhairle had done more for that island in the few years it had been in existence, than the previous Inverness-shire county council had managed to accomplish in its lifetime (i.e. in over 80 years). If perhaps somewhat hyperbolic the remark nevertheless testifies to an underlying preference for, and general satisfaction with, the new arrangement.

In the Western Isles in particular the group had an opportunity

to study the new council's 'Regional Report' — a uniquely Scottish planning document required by the Scottish Office (unfortunately on a one-off basis) from the newly reorganised top-tier authorities. Compared with the 'structure plan' encountered earlier in Wales the 'Report' seemed to be closer to the type of document which we are familiar with in our own countries. It clearly dealt with the whole gamut of local authority functions, eschewing the structure plan's emphasis on physical planning matters. Full of policies and priorities the Western Isles report was noted particularly for the priority given to the reversal of population decline, the provision of more employment opportunities, and the bolstering of public service levels. The new council's development strategy appeared to contain a refreshing emphasis on fostering development 'from within' rather than relying on promotional efforts designed to attract outside entrepreneurs. We would particularly commend the Comhairle's efforts to sponsor special research surveys of the potential for development of the island's natural resources, and to conduct various experiments to test the feasibility of such developments. The Comhairle also seemed to be taking a commendably broad view of the development process; for instance, by making the most of its control over education. Whereas previous education authorities seem to have approached their tasks in ways that inadvertently undermined the Gaelic culture, the new authority obviously sees education as a means of underwriting, and positively validating, the native culture. The policy of bilingualism seemed right and proper to us especially given our own background of official *multi*-lingualism, but its innovatory significance in the Scottish context was not lost upon us. The action research on community education deserves unbridled approval. Not only were the field workers based in the subject communities but they were drawn from these areas, rather than being imported. People were being educated to a new appreciation of their communities and to a new understanding of how they might solve their problems instead of being resigned to a reliance on outside help. The associated 'consciousness-raising' is an obvious precondition for locally dictated development, and in fact it seems no coincidence that the initial work on the CEP was in areas which have turned out to have been in the vanguard of the community cooperative movement (Ness, Harris, Iochdar).

The Highlands and Islands Development Board

There seems little doubt that, in fashioning its own development strategy, Comhairle nan Eilean has been able to learn from the mistakes made by the HIDB in its early years. To its credit the latter has also learned from many — if not quite all — of its previous mistakes, with much of the new outlook stemming from the establishment of an area office at Stornoway, its staffing by native islanders, and the piloting, in the Isles, of the community cooperative scheme. The Board has therefore come to play — with greater sensitivity — an important role in initiating development activity in a difficult situation. For the most part — as far as the Isles are concerned — it has tried to support the traditional industries and encourage small business development by native entrepreneurs, but its generous level of financial assistance has also attracted outside entrepreneurs. Inevitably several of the latter's projects have proved to be of little long term benefit for the Isles — and some have been glorious failures — leading to accusations that the Board does not discriminate enough in favour of locally devised projects. And like many other similar agencies elsewhere it has also been susceptible to large-scale prestige projects involving large outlays without sufficient concern for local feelings: the much troubled fish-processing factory development at Breasclete, and the under-utilised hotel on the Isle of Barra, seemed to be obvious examples of this weakness.

The HIDB is uniquely endowed in the British context. It has a large measure of discretion to assist a wide range of projects in many possible ways: little wonder that its powers are so much envied not only by other development agencies, but also by the local authorities. Because of the breadth of its remit and the wide scope of its powers it may financially assist, by grants and loans, not only manufacturing activity but also developments in the primary sector of the economy, and even, with certain qualifications, in the service sector. Thus, unlike the DBRW, the HIDB may engage directly in agricultural and forestry development — or land development generally — which appears only sensible for a development agency dealing with such obviously rural matters. In the Western Isles for example, crofters have been able to benefit from special Board schemes, such as in regard to livestock marketing, as well as from assistance to enterprises in fields ancillary to agriculture.

The HIDB has also been comparatively free to develop the community cooperatives scheme with its multi-functional dimension. The latter scheme is particularly well geared to the Western Isles context: the Board is relating to communities, rather than individual entrepreneurs, thus directly tapping the communal traditions of Gaelic culture — traditions which have in fact tended in the past to discourage individual entrepreneurship. The Board has realised the need to help communities to help themselves by providing field workers to assist in the establishment of the cooperatives. The scheme also provides grants to match initial local contributions, and also funding for a full-time manager in the early years. There is thus an incentive for people to make a financial commitment, and the likelihood that the coop will have a good chance of becoming successful. Though many of the coops have still to become securely established it appears that a good start has been made, and they are proving to be a valuable, democratically constituted, local development institution. Their continued success will depend greatly upon constant attention being given to the effective discharge of the management function, by the manager and committee alike. To their credit the coops themselves are taking steps to help assure this outcome by pursuing the possibility of a central servicing operation to deal with common needs in the areas of training, financial and managerial advice, marketing, wholesaling, membership communications, and public relations etc. Were a formal union or federation of community cooperatives to evolve from this initiative the HIDB might be considered to have successfully worked itself out of a job, in one sphere of development at least: the new federation could become the more autonomous means by which central government supported such ventures. In similar vein the HIDB might begin to judge its success by the speed with which it was able to encourage the satisfactory transfer of more of its other responsibilities (and the associated powers and resources) to the local authorities in its region.

The Institution of Crofting

Crofters appear to be very well catered for, and very generously treated, by a wide array of state assistance, mostly in the form of grants, or price support payments, to individuals. Several bodies

are involved including DAFS, the Crofters Commission and the HIDB, while NOSCA is on hand with free advice. Assistance is available for housing, as well as for land and livestock improvement. The group formed the impression that the crofters are, on paper at least, over-compensated individually, but under-compensated collectively, for their exposure to comparatively harsh economic, environmental and geographical circumstances.⁵⁵ There is thus limited incentive for many individual crofters to substantially increase production or to intensify, or diversify, crofting land use. It appears that decisions are already made for them as a consequence of the particular grants emphasis: the priority becomes managing the grants system before managing the croft itself. However the main problems facing crofters seem to be in the areas of transportation costs and marketing where assistance is not so obvious, and where it is apparently far from adequate.

If the latter, system-wide, problems could receive as much emphasis as those treated by the existing, individualised, grant schemes then perhaps crofters could behave more autonomously, to the greater benefit not only of their own individual circumstances but also of the Western Isles economy as a whole. It was pointed out to us for instance, that if freight transport between the Isles and the mainland could be subsidised on the currently proposed, but yet to be implemented, 'road-equivalent-tariff' (RET) basis, then it would constitute a tremendous boost in the economics of crofting, and do away with some of the need for so much artificial stimulation via grants to individuals. Marketing schemes now being tried could potentially have the same effect in the long run, if the present momentum can be sustained. Given this line of thinking it is somewhat surprising and disconcerting, to see so much official energy currently being expended on a high-profile programme which seems in many respects to only further entrench the old questionable emphasis and further sustain the grant-giving bureaucracies built up outside the Isles.

The Integrated Development Programme

Despite the obvious relevance of the underlying concept, and in spite of all the associated publicity, we found it difficult to become excited about the Western Isles IDP which finally com-

menced in September 1982 after a gestation period of about four years. There is no doubting its laudable aims, but the means can certainly be questioned. It was sensed that too much fuss was being made of the IDP: it was but one more grant-giving body without adequate staff or sufficient incentives for truly innovative action and long lasting reforms. As most of its schemes were based on the principle of a partial contribution by the beneficiary it will help only those that are already most able to help themselves. It was reported to us that relatively few crofters would be in a position to be able to fully exploit the IDP measures, even though they appeared to involve very generous levels of assistance and very little in the way of associated conditions. We would not be surprised if there is disillusionment with the IDP since it seems to have created unfounded and exaggerated expectations. It has also added another layer of bureaucracy: while it may serve as a stimulus to improve coordination between existing central government agencies, the islanders themselves, through their local government, and the crofters through their unions, do not appear to have had a crucial influence in its formulation, nor any real control over its implementation. One suspects that the Comhairle would have had rather different ideas as to how the £20m. (over five years) might be spent, and it is clear from proposals submitted by the Uist Crofters Unions that the IDP, as it has finally materialised, falls far short of their suggestions in several important respects.⁵⁶ As it is, the activities of the existing agencies set the parameters of the programme, and, having been handed down from on high, courtesy of the EEC, the people of the Western Isles cannot readily identify with it.

It is somewhat regrettable that the IDP does not embrace more of the principles and approaches associated with the community cooperatives (Co-chomunn) and the community education programming: i.e. to encourage, and permit, local people to define their *own* needs and to establish their *own* terms of reference; and then support them in devising their *own* means of proceeding or organising to satisfy their needs. There is apparently some experimental dimension built into the IDP, thus allowing for some modifications as experience proves these to be necessary: it will be interesting to see if there will be sufficient flexibility to cope with the changes that may be needed to make it a success in the eyes of the islanders. So far it seems to be a long

way from the experiment in grass-roots policy making hoped for initially by the Uist Crofters. We also fear that the IDP could even be counterproductive in certain respects because of the enhanced scope for confusion, conflict and duplication of effort among the involved agencies, with the supposed beneficiaries being the most confused of all.

One of the critics of the IDP went so far as to suggest that it was a triple misnomer: being neither integrated; nor development; nor a programme. Perhaps there is scope for a more comprehensive integration (e.g. of other EEC, Scottish Office and HIDB activities) according to terms of reference in which the islanders themselves have a greater say. As it is they have been cast in the role of beggars who cannot be choosers. There also appears to be justification for questioning the 'development' aspect of the IDP. Most of the measures involve little fundamental change from existing programming; there is a lack of vision as to how the islands might become more self-reliant, and less hooked on grants. More incentives could have been provided for collective, cooperative endeavours for instance; and the whole programme could have been geared to promoting more local autonomy. Given their excellent record in exploiting the early job creation programmes the islands council might have been entrusted with much more responsibility at all stages — then some real development might have been on the cards. Finally, there may be grounds, however cynical, for suspecting that the IDP is not so much a programme as a token political expedient which popped out of negotiations on the CAP at a time when Britain appeared to be getting very little back from the EEC. There is no sign for instance that the islanders were actively campaigning for such a programme prior to its official appearance: they would probably have wished instead for a speedy and favourable settlement of the EEC's Common Fisheries Policy, or implementation of RET by the Scottish Office.

Summary

There was little doubt that the Western Isles would be better off in the long run if Comhairle nan Eilean was given an even more major role in the development of the area. There could be no escaping the problems to be faced: rural depopulation and the associated decline in service levels was still a problem in many

parts. The Comhairle appeared to be committed in principle to maintaining these communities, rather than letting them die off, but they seem to lack the resources and the necessary strategy to back up this commitment. Much will depend however on the crofters themselves and the steps that they are prepared to take, collectively, to ensure the continued viability of their communities. They can too easily become a prisoner of tradition and depend too greatly on the particular individual security that crofting can bring, overlooking the fact that such action may be to the detriment of a well functioning community. Rather than using the croft mainly as a place to withdraw to, it could be more positively perceived as a good foundation from which to launch new enterprises and to cooperate more extensively with one another. People were probably justified in fearing such change in the past because of the dominant influence of outside interests but now they have a local government which they can use to help manage the change in terms more agreeable to themselves.

No doubt it will be difficult to break out of the grants syndrome: at present the provision of various grants and subsidies seems to be regarded as a panacea for all the problems associated with crofting. However, we feel that there is a limit to what such direct financial assistance would achieve: it only conditions the behaviour of crofters, inhibiting processes of creative thinking and the exercise of free choice in decision-making matters. There appears to be much more of a case for giving attention to crofting in ways which might be a little less direct, but which would benefit all sectors of islands society, e.g. improving transportation (within the islands, between the islands, and with the mainland); developing better marketing procedures; encouraging the processing, in the islands, of islands produce; stimulating cooperative enterprises; establishing a local development bank or credit system etc. Such measures would inevitably make crofting more productive and profitable, while remaining a predominantly part-time activity. To sustain such a development path however will entail a constant attention to matters of institutional, and even constitutional, development. Not only would it seem desirable for the Western Isles to attain a greater degree of autonomy from central government, but this should be coupled with a devolution of power, within the islands, to community councils.

GRAMPIAN

The Grampian region of Scotland seemed to us to be a relatively prosperous one. A particular feature was the sense of two contradictory forces being at work: past and present; traditional and modern. The presence of a large number of huge landed estates recalled its feudal past, while the recent growth of the oil and gas industry in its vicinity has brought the challenges of modern, advanced, technological society. These two facets of regional life seemed to coexist with inevitable uneasiness. The large estates, with their glaring social inequalities, appear to be an anachronism to an observer from a Third World country where land is such a scarce and individually valued commodity. Surprisingly though, nobody seems to even talk about land reforms. Yet the question remains whether the large estates, controlled and managed as at present, are the best way of using so much of the UK's land resources.

It is difficult to generalise about the estate as a rural development institution: some, as at Glen Tanar near Aboyne for instance, are excellent examples of integrated land use which sustain comparatively healthy rural communities of reasonably contented estate workers and tenant farmers. Others, such as at Candacraig in Strathdon have a history of policies which seem to have put trees and sport before the interests of people, causing severe depopulation through a wholesale reduction in the number of separately operated, tenanted units. In other cases absentee — and often anonymous — landlords can be a particular bone of contention, with tenants seeing little re-investment to keep the estates in good heart. Such tenants are clearly at the mercy of their landlords, a situation which contrasts markedly with that in Mid-Wales, where owner-occupation is the rule, and in the Western Isles where the crofters — though tenants — are protected by their special legislation.

It appeared that the full impact of the North Sea Oil-related boom on rural areas has yet to crystallise. It was nevertheless obvious that the arrival of the high income earning 'incomers' has distorted the natural course of development and styles of life in the area. There has been created inevitable tensions between the older 'native' residents, and the newer, generally affluent, 'incomers'. Just as the estates could be rationally organised and utilised for the benefit of those who actually work on them, and for the communities at large, the wealth generated by the oil

boom could also be more systematically utilised for putting the remaining problem rural areas on a stronger footing, developmentally speaking. As it is, the local authorities in the region have been preoccupied with the problems of coping with oil-related growth, and until recently rural development seems to have been left largely to take care of itself. In addition, the focus of attention has necessarily been on a few coastal areas, and in Aberdeen in particular, rather than the interior and upland parts. No doubt Mid-Wales and the Western Isles would be more than pleased to have Grampian's problem of coping with relatively rapid growth, rather than wrestling with depopulation, but if the oil boom is not harnessed directly for rural development there is a real danger of a return to the stagnation and disintegration which seems to have been a feature of rural Grampian in the pre-oil era.

We could only look briefly at the scope for Grampian Regional Council to function as a comprehensive rural development agency. Unlike the Western Isles it has to share the local government scene with district councils: it also serves a much larger population meaning that people cannot identify with it nearly so closely as is possible in the Isles. Despite its size the regional council also clearly lacks the special development powers vested in the HIDB, while on the other hand its discretion is limited by the need to devote most of its resources to doing what is required of it by central government. In certain respects then the regional council appears to lack the efficacy, legitimacy, authority and autonomy that might be hoped for in a properly constituted development agency (the same points could be made for other regional councils in Scotland). In addition, from a rural point of view, the growing ascendancy in a regional context of the city district of Aberdeen may destroy the rather fine balance which exists at present, by tipping the scale too much in favour of urban or commuter concerns.

There is however no natural disposition to viewing local authorities as a whole as potential, all-inclusive, development agencies. Rather, the inclination is to focus on a particular type of development (industrial), and to pursue this as a separate local authority function. Grampian happens to be comparatively well-served in this connection by a body formed before local government reorganisation, and just before North Sea oil development began to impact upon the region. NESDA is now the industrial development wing of Grampian Regional Council, and it is

clearly one of the most sophisticated operations of its kind: size for size it has no obvious rival among the other Scottish regional councils. Its eight man operation may also be contrasted with the one man economic development office encountered at Gwynedd County Council in Wales. Nevertheless while NESDA compares very favourably with the other local authorities, it does not compare at all with the specialist development agencies such as the HIDB and the DBRW. In this company NESDA may be seen to have neither the plans nor the skills to accomplish integrated rural development. It also appeared to have been much too preoccupied with selling the oil boom to outside investors. The group sensed that the Authority has recently become much more sensitive to rural concerns; however, it will have to struggle to overcome the hostility that has been generated by its previous bias. While its efforts in the oil-related sector have been impressive, its support of small businesses and crafts in rural areas is not nearly so remarkable. Tangible examples of the recent diversification include: NESDA's support for a new Agricultural Committee of the regional council; the promotion of a Grampian Quality Beef brand label; and the sponsorship of an annual crafts market. Perhaps a better service to rural areas could be provided through more intensive work with district and community councils, and through an increased field presence.

It must be acknowledged that the rural areas in Grampian are, for the most part, among the most favoured and least deprived, compared with the situation in the other study areas. This was brought home when the group had an opportunity to observe the Aboyne 'community school' project where the normal formal educational facilities are integrated in the same complex with a community centre, both serving an extensive rural area of about 9,000 in population. This complex is apparently one of several throughout Grampian. The centre provides the basis for a community education programme covering social, cultural, recreational, vocational, and certain economic activities, for children, youths and adults. The high school facilities (laboratories, workshops, etc.) are available for community use, while the centre includes a swimming pool, theatre, library, cafeteria, and indoor games complex. A special cut-price bus service operates in the evenings to facilitate the use of the centre by people living in outlying areas. Taken overall much of the success associated with the complex depends clearly on the management policy

followed, and on close cooperation between high school and community centre staff. The policy is to encourage people to develop their own organisational skills, to satisfy their own particular needs, rather than relying on centre staff to dictate programming. In the process they gain self-confidence, and come to demonstrate more and more self-initiative, individually and collectively. The whole concept is a relatively new one to many however, and it will probably take a generation before people learn to use it optimally. We felt that there could perhaps be more use of the facilities to develop vocational skills, and that relevant public bodies, such as NOSCA and NESDA, should be encouraged to use the centre as an area base for their operations. We also approve of the conscious effort to ensure that the community education programming was not wholly concentrated at the centre: some form of satellite centres in outlying communities would allow the programme to reach and benefit more people.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Depopulation in many parts of rural Britain is not a new phenomenon. It has been present for at least a century with a significant acceleration after the First World War. However, it only really became considered as a problem comparatively recently — as late as the early 1960's as far as substantial official action was concerned — and only then in the most remote rural areas such as Mid-Wales and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It is only *very* recently — in the last few years — that it has been recognised as a more general problem, interpreted essentially as a decline in services to rural areas. For most of the time, from a national perspective at least, it seems that rural depopulation has been seen more as a 'good thing' rather than as a problem. This perception was helped by the fact that the people involved — the 'surplus' rural population — were able to secure employment fairly easily in the industrial centres, and there was always the option of emigration abroad to former British colonies. The current recession, accompanied by very high levels of unemployment and an apparent de-industrialisation, has had the effect of stemming the outflow from rural areas to urban areas. Indeed there are even signs of a measure of return migration as some people find it more advantageous to be technically 'unem-

ployed' or 'under-employed' in a rural setting, than totally 'out of work' in formerly prosperous metropolitan areas. A rather novel situation has therefore arisen quite suddenly whereby rural deprivation has become a major issue being experienced by more, rather than less, people, and throughout British society generally, rather than simply on its margins. The early clamour over the issue is now maturing into a concern for more positive rural development, and while official policy continues to be conditioned by the old urban-industrial order, alternative approaches are being pioneered, in large part it seems, by voluntary groups operating on a community basis.

By Third World standards the case for positive rural development in the UK is, at first sight, far less pressing. Those who remained in the countryside, despite the forces favouring rationalisation of the rural economy, were either cushioned by the welfare state apparatus, or were able to more easily earn a material improvement in their standard of living. Services have been contracting however, at such a rate and to such low levels, that it has become very difficult to reverse the trend in ways which satisfy the enhanced expectations of those who can no longer leave so readily, or those who have returned from nominally better served areas. It is little wonder that a sense of deprivation has arisen, and that this should be particularly acute in the remoter rural areas, culturally distinct from the mainstream. Such relative deprivation, wherever it occurs — in marginal regions or inner cities — demands a positive response in the interests of long-term socio-political stability.

Rural areas in the UK are at a particular disadvantage in that they do not carry the numerical political clout of their urban counterparts. With their highly subordinate and under-resourced local governments — unaccustomed to playing a developmental role — rural people lack the statutory capacity to rectify the situation in their own terms. Instead of strong local governments the rural scene is dominated by central government agencies, either discharging line functions, or with narrowly defined purposes. These — in their deference to a wider urban-dominated national interest — tend inadvertently to be hostile to the interests of those people who traditionally live and work in the countryside. Agricultural policy, for instance, is seemingly divorced from rural development; because of the prime concern for producing cheap food for urban consumers, farms have

become larger and more mechanised, resulting in a severe decline in the numbers working on the land thus undermining the viability of rural communities. It will take a major change in attitudes to have agricultural policy turned around to the point where it becomes a means of concerting, rather than confounding, positive rural development.

The study tour afforded the opportunity to consider specific initiatives in settings where the problem of rural depopulation has been particularly pronounced, and where the need for formal rural development initiatives — on a regional scale — have been recognised. It was our impression that even the limited objectives set out by the various agencies in their programmes appear to be only partially fulfilled. There is as yet little sign of rural depopulation having been securely arrested; of more concern however was the seeming lack of acceptance of our particular belief that *the* basic objective should be the creation of healthy, living rural communities, well integrated internally and naturally resisting the disintegrating tendencies of external forces. It must be acknowledged of course that the situation could have been worse if these programmes and agencies had not been set up, but there remains the suspicion that they too may on occasion have been part of the problem rather than part of the solution. A particularly welcome sign nevertheless (in contrast to the situation a few years ago) is the obvious general awareness of the problem nowadays. People and policy makers are openly talking about rural development as a live issue, without feeling embarrassed.

Although perhaps more general the above change in attitude may have been simply a function of the underlying nature of the areas visited on this occasion. We are aware that we were focussing upon a rather distinct part of Britain — its Celtic fringe. The growing assertion of Welsh nationalism, and the keenness of the Western Isles people to strengthen their Gaelic cultural identity, were deemed to be healthy and not pathological. It was considered that these could very well be harnessed for the purposes of rural development (rather than — as traditionally seems to have been the case — being viewed as an obstruction to a non-Celtic, 'regional' or 'national', development). From personal experience it was recalled that India had learned, at great cost, that the expeditious fulfillment of the autonomist aspirations of deprived or marginal groups is of crucial importance. Otherwise there may well be sudden outbursts of mass disobedience with a

potentially destructive effect on the entire fabric of society. It seemed to us that Britain needs to give greater rein to such regionalism in the interests of its continuing overarching unity. The alternative would appear to be separatism, and the 'break-up' of the UK.

Of abiding significance for us was the comparative predominance in the UK context of a host of relatively powerful central government agencies — mainly dealing only indirectly with rural matters — and the very low profile ascribed to local government bodies. As a consequence it seemed that consideration should be given to real reform of local government, to equip this level to function in a development capacity. To be meaningful the reform would have to engage constitutional considerations rather than be confined simply to institutional engineering. However it was accomplished, there is no doubt in our mind of the importance of revitalising county, district and community councils: it was difficult to perceive how all-round rural development could otherwise be secured. Perhaps county and regional councils could be given the responsibility for strategic planning on all fronts and for the local coordination of all the many and varied agencies currently impinging on the rural development scene. District and community councils could also be strengthened to ensure that local government action is sensitive to grassroots concerns, especially with respect to the local implementation of plans devised at higher levels. In those cases where rural people are in the minority, or where their interests cannot be fairly represented in the face of dominant urban interests, then consideration might be given to establishing a system of separate authorities for urban and rural areas. Until more of the development responsibilities can be shifted from central government agencies to local governments it seems desirable to ensure that the agencies are directed or guided to a greater extent by boards or committees with a majority of members connected with local government. All these suggestions presume of course that the reforms would be accompanied by a much more vital local democracy involving a much healthier electoral politics (e.g. more seat contestations, involving a wider range of more high calibre candidates, and attracting much higher percentage polls), and perhaps more parliamentary-type politics in the actual conduct of local government.

Coming from settings where it is impossible to separate

agricultural development from rural development we were also particularly struck by the apparent need in the UK for some modest land reforms, and for a reappraisal of the rural development implications of agricultural policy. More consideration could be given to consciously encouraging a more labour-intensive agriculture, especially in these times of very high unemployment. Such a transition might be aided if productivity was measured not only on the basis of labour input but also on an output per acre basis. Penalties could be introduced to restrict the size of farm units; tenancies could be more securely protected; incentives could be provided to increase the supply of small farms and small-holdings, and to maintain or actually increase the numbers working on the land. Extension services could look more favourably on small farmers or part-time farmers; research stations could be set up to assist these categories, and to experiment with appropriate technologies, geared towards intensification of production, but on a more extensive, rather than agribusiness, basis. Perhaps agriculture should be actively popularised — as is effectively the case with crofting in the Western Isles — rather than letting it become ultra-specialised. There is also the point that the level of individual grants and subsidies for agricultural production appears to be high: perhaps some of this money could be better spent in ways which aid the farming community, on a collective basis, in becoming more self reliant and less dependent on grants.

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The UK appears to us as an industrialised society overburdened by its past history: it has had to carry the burden of having been the first industrialised country in the world; it has to live with the scars of its lost empire and colonies. It has lost its previous sources of cheap raw materials, and its captive export markets. Its traditional industrial products are no longer competitive in the international market. All of these factors make the current unemployment problem even more serious and formidable than would otherwise have been the case. There is a clear need for the UK to re-orient its development strategies to deal with these radically revised circumstances; this seems to be particularly the case with regard to policy in the fields of agriculture and industry. To better meet this task the UK should consider paying more, and not less, attention to rural development — by means

of integrated, decentralised, and democratically participatory programmes and institutions.

In the ultimate analysis, if the objectives of rural development are to be achieved, the UK will have to seriously consider: overall planning at every level; a measure of land reform; and democratic decentralisation of its government as well as administration. In considering these matters, doubts as to the availability of the necessary financial resources should not be an excuse for inaction: a country which can find enough resources for Concorde, and many other dubious ventures, can surely find enough money for rural development. In fact, finding money has been among the least serious of past difficulties in this connection; indeed the mistake has often been to think that money, and money alone, can solve the problem. What seems to be required is a new clarity of thinking about goals and objectives. In the past, and up to the present, there has been a serious lack of any overall planning at the national, regional and local levels. What passes for planning is but a restricted physical planning policy framework for grandiosely titled structure plans. There has been too much dependence on market forces and purely fiscal measures. There has also been a lack of political will to implement land reforms, even though they need not be on the same lines as those which have had to be pursued in Third World settings.

The integration of development programmes and agencies with democratically elected local authorities is essential, as some of the Third World countries, including India, have learned from their past experience. This means democratic decentralisation, both for routine administrative purposes and for tackling the development task. To conclude on a complimentary note, the UK has at least one advantage in this respect over many Third World countries, *viz*, the civil servants in general and the administrators in the development agencies in particular are not only efficient and competent, but by and large they also appear to be free from the cancer of corruption which is so common in many Third World countries.

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- 10 See Glyn Williams', 'Industrialisation, Inequality and Deprivation in Rural Wales', p.168-184, in *Poverty and Social Inequality in Wales*, edited by G. Rees, and T.L. Rees, Croom Helm, London, 1980.
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- 28 For further details on DBRW strategy see 'Board Policy Statement', 1st March, 1979.
- 29 The 'grass-roots' development perspective in Mid-Wales has been articulated by G. Clare Wenger; see 'The Problem of Perspective in Development Policy' *Sociologia Ruralis* 22 (1) 1982, p.5-16. This piece distills the essence of several papers presented over the last few years, and draws on research documented in her *Mid-Wales: Deprivation or Development — A study of patterns of employment in Selected Communities*, University of Wales, Board of Celtic Studies, Social Sciences Monographs No.5, 1980, 202pp. See also: *Papers and Report on the Multipurpose Rural Community Cooperatives Seminar*, Aberystwyth, September, 1979, published by The Plunkett Foundation for Co-operative Studies. *Conference on Rural Cooperatives in Wales*, Aberystwyth, April, 1980, organised by NWERAC, on behalf of Welsh Community Enterprises. *Economic Regeneration — The Community Perspective* (Initial Report: an outline history of Welsh Community Enterprises), by John Lovering, for NWERAC, February 1981 (75pp). *Service for Community Cooperatives in Wales*, paper presented by Sally Ellis (NWERAC) to the Annual Conference of The Plunkett Foundation, April, 1981. *Community-Based Enterprises in Rural Wales*, three part report by Maryon

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 - 46 The group visited Tal-y-Waen, Dolgellau, where the farmer strives to combine tourism with agriculture. The enterprise — built around a working Welsh hill farm — includes a farm trail, barbecued lamb, wool spinning and other family type activities.
 - 47 The group was furnished with a paper and statistics on 'Agriculture in Lewis and Harris', prepared by John Nicol, Area Advisor for NOSCA.
 - 48 Dr Clare Wenger pointed out to us the importance of distinguishing between Welsh ethnic identity and Welsh nationalism, which are not, or at least not necessarily, coterminous. Even in the non-Welsh speaking areas, Welsh ethnic identity is very widespread, although nationalism has less widespread support.
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 - 53 See Maryon Trevelyan's survey of community-based enterprises in rural Wales, mentioned above (20).
 - 54 'Sabhal Mor Ostaig: A Two Year Course', (Feasibility study) Ad Hoc Committee, Board of Trustees, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Sleat, Skye: April, 1980, 52pp.
 - 55 It was later pointed out to the group that many of the grants payable to crofters are also given to farmers — often in much more 'favoured' circumstances — as is the

free College advice. There are in fact no price support payments which are special to crofters: the compensatory allowances are paid at the same rate as for cattle and sheep in the Southern Uplands of Scotland, or in Aberdeenshire, for example. Although some of the capital grants are at nominally higher rates for crofters (70% as opposed to 50% in some cases), there are absolute cash limits for expenditure on which these grants may be paid, which often fail to keep pace with inflation; effective rates of grant therefore tend to be below the nominal rates. Housing is the main item for which crofters receive notably special treatment.

- 56 Uist Crofter's Union: Draft Proposal for Improvements to Crofting Agriculture in the Uists; Summer 1981, 7pp.

ANNEX I

Schedule of Meetings during the Study Tour

1 Sunday, 26th September

- 1a Orientation and discussion session with Maurice Broady, Professor of Social Policy, University College, Swansea. (Senior author of 'The Politics of Rural Development: the Case of Mid-Wales'. Forthcoming from Bedford Square Press, London.)

2 Monday, 27th September

- 2a University College, Aberystwyth: discussion session on Mid-Wales with a group of social scientists: Graham Day (sociology); David Law (economics); Michael Watson (politics); Ned Thomas (English); Tony Moyes (geography).
- 2b Discussion session on 'Mid-Wales: The Agricultural Context' with: John Morgan Jones (former Welsh Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture; former deputy director designate of the Wales Rural Development Board). R.W. Soden (former head of Agricultural Development and Advisory Service — ADAS — for Wales). T.D. Cameron (formerly with the Agricultural Land Service in Wales). S.B. Lees (Farm Management Advisory Officer, ADAS, Aberystwyth). W.D. Jones (Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Economics, UCW, Aberystwyth). T.N. Jenkins (Senior Research Officer, Department of Agricultural Economics, UCW, Aberystwyth). D.A.G. Green (Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Economics, UCW, Aberystwyth; Director of Farm Management Survey in Wales). A. Scott (Assistant Conservator, North Wales Conservancy, Forestry Commission).
- 2c Visit to Antur Teifi, a local development agency serving parts of the Ceredigion and Preseli districts of Dyfed, based in Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed: meetings with Wynford James, Development Officer; Councillor Davies,

Ceredigion District Council; and Dr Brian John, Chairman Newport and Nevern Energy Group. Site visits to projects assisted by the Antur, including a small-scale fibreglass manufactory and the conversion of a disused chapel into workshop units and meeting facilities.

- 2d Richard Morgan (former lecturer in Social Policy, UCW, Swansea; co-author with Broady of 'The Politics of Rural Development'; specialist in the demography of Mid-Wales).

3 **Tuesday, 28th September**

- 3a Visit to Pwllpeiran Experimental Husbandry (Hill) Farm, Cwmystwyth, Dyfed: tour conducted by John Wildig, ADAS; member of the farm's scientific staff.

- 3b Discussion session on the role of district councils in the rural development of Mid-Wales, with G. Hughes, Chief Executive, and H.H.B. Williams-Jones, Secretary of Meirionnydd District Council, Dolgellau.

- 3c Visit Talwaen hill farm, Dolgellau; meetings with the farmer, H.G. Humphreys and his wife, and J. Dyer James, local representative of the Farmers Union of Wales.

- 3d Discussion session on rural community-based enterprises in North Wales (in the Bala Lakeside Motel) with: Dafydd Elis Thomas, MP for Meirionnydd (Plaid Cymru — the Welsh Nationalist Party).

Cecil Edwards (ex-chairman) and Elwyn Edwards (ex-management committee member) of Cymdeithas de Gwynedd, a failed community cooperative serving Bala and environs.

Patrick Radley, Manager, Cywaith Uwchaled, a community cooperative serving the Cerrig-y-grudion area of the county of Clwyd.

Dick Richards, Manager, Antur Tanat Cain, a community based venture serving a part of the counties of Clwyd and Powys.

Dafydd Watts, former secretary of Menter Glaslyn, a community based venture serving parts of the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd districts of the county of Gwynedd.

4 Wednesday, 29th September

- 4a Discussion session in Bangor, Gwynedd, with Eurig Wyn, field officer, North Wales Employment Resource and Advice Centre, and member of Antur Broydd Cymru/Welsh Community Enterprises; John Lovering, former research officer for NWERAC; and with Maryon Trevelyan, author of an Open University-sponsored study of community based enterprises in North Wales.
- 4b Discussion session in Caernarfon, Gwynedd on inter-agency aspects of rural development in North Wales with:
- Dr Eirwyn Evans, Economic Development Officer, Gwynedd County Council.
- Gareth White, Chief Planning Officer, and David J. Hughes, Deputy Chief Planning Officer, Arfon Borough/District Council, Caernarfon.
- Bryn Parry, Small Business Advisor, Welsh Development Agency, Bangor.
- Gareth Roberts, Principal Planning Officer, Snowdonia National Park, Penrhyndeudraeth, Meirionnydd.
- 4c Visit to Menter Glaslyn, Penrhyndeudraeth; discussion session with: Dafydd Watts, former secretary; Cynan Jones, Manager; and Ffestyn Williams, Chairman.
- 4d Discussion session on development issues in the Bala area with representatives of Bala Town (Community) Council:
- Councillor Iestyn Thomas (retired printer and member of Meirionnydd District Council);
- Councillor D.J. Jones (farmer);
- Councillor John Griffiths-Jones (local government officer).

5 Thursday, 30th September

- 5a Visit to Antur Tanat-Cain, Llanrhaedr, Dyfed/Clwyd: discussion session with Dick Richards, Manager of the Antur; Janet Edwards, representative of a hand spinning cooperative venture, and Stuart Hatch, planning officer,

- Clwyd County Council and spokesman for Clwyd's Rural Development Programme.
- 5b Introductory session in Newtown on the Development Board for Rural Wales with Paul Pettigrew, Project Officer.
 - 5c Tour of Newtown (the subject of a small-scale new town development scheme) conducted by Peter Garbett-Edwards, Development Director DBRW (formerly Chief Executive of the Mid-Wales (New Town) Development Corporation and former Secretary of the Mid-Wales Industrial Development Association from its inception in 1957).
 - 5d Dinner discussion session hosted by Leslie Morgan, Chairman DBRW, with:
 Brian Cook (local industrialist) and Dr Glyn Thomas (a Meirionydd GP) — both Board members;
 Ian Bainbridge, Chairman of the Montgomery District Council, and the Board's lawyer;
 Joe Griffiths, Chairman of the Planning Committee of Powys County Council, and a local farmer and
 Peter Garbett-Edwards, Development Director, DBRW.

6 **Friday, 1st October**

- 6a Discussion session on DBRW's Marketing activities with: Roy Evans, Marketing Director; Colin Mitchell, Senior Marketing Manager; and Grenville Jackson, Business Advisory Service (and in-region growth).
- 6b Discussion session on DBRW's Social Development activities with John Hughes, Board Secretary and Dewi Hughes, Senior Social Development Officer.
- 6c Luncheon discussion session with Dr Iain Skewis, Chief Executive DBRW, and Paul Pettigrew, Projects Officer (Research Projects Manager).
- 6d Inter-agency discussion session with:
 Dr Iain Skewis, Chief Executive DBRW.
 Brian Poole, Head of the Agricultural Department, Montgomery College of Further Education.

Malcolm McIntyre-Read, Chief Executive, Wales Craft Council.

Martin Fitton, Principal Officer, Wales Countryside Commission.

Harry Jones, County Planning Director, Powys County Council.

7 Saturday, 2nd October

- 7a Farm visit: Buttington Hall, Welshpool, session with A.R. Tutton, Montgomery delegate of the National Farmers Union (of England and Wales) and member of the Milk Marketing Board.
- 7b Luncheon discussion session with Gwyn Williams, Lecturer in Countryside Planning, Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Manchester (Research interests in the field of community development and local initiatives in rural Britain).
- 7c Tour of the Lake District National Park, Cumbria.

8 Sunday, 3rd October

- 8a Visit to Brockhole, Lake District National Park Visitor Centre.

9 Monday, 4th October

- 9a Orientation and Western Isles programme briefing by John Angus Mackay, Senior Development Officer, HIDB, Stornoway.
- 9b Luncheon hosted by Western Isles Islands Council:
Councillor A. Matheson, Convenor
Councillor J.M. MacMillan, Chairman, Education Committee.
Councillor D. Mackay, Vice-Chairman, Education Committee
Councillor W. Macleod, Chairman Social Policy Committee

Neil Galbraith, Director of Education
 Finlay Macleod, Deputy Director of Education
 Roy MacIver, Chief Executive
 Roddy Murray, Depute Director-Development, Department of Planning and Development
 John Angus Mackay, Senior Development Officer, HIDB, Stornoway.

- 9c Briefing session on WIIC activities with Roy MacIver (Chief Executive)

Education: Neil Galbraith (Director); Dr Finlay Macleod (Deputy Director — Primary Education and Bilingual Education); D.K. Macleod (Assistant Director, Further Education); N. Maclean (Senior Community Education Officer).

- Planning and Development:* Roddy Murray (Deputy Director — Development); D. Maclean (Deputy Director — Planning) Acair (Publishing) Ltd; Agnes Rennie.
 9d Supper discussion session on crofting and the Crofters' Commission with Dr Alastair Fraser, Crofters' Commissioner.

- 9e Discussion session on the Western Isles Integrated Development Programme with: the IDP team; Bill Lawson (leader), Angus Macmillan and Angus Macdonald; John Nicol, Area Agricultural Adviser, North of Scotland College of Agriculture, Stornoway; and Dr Alastair Fraser, Crofters' Commission.

10 **Tuesday, 5th October**

- 10a Tour of Barvas Bog area of Lewis with John Angus Mackay (HIDB) and Roddy Murray (WIIC); croft visit with William Macleod, Barvas, and his wife (crofter-weaver-islands councillor).
- 10b Luncheon discussion session with Mrs Annie MacSween, Bilingual Development Officer, WIIC; formerly field worker in the Ness area of Lewis for the Van Leer/WIIC Community Education Project; and ex-member of the management committee of Co-Chomunn Nis (Ness Community Cooperative).

- 10c Flight from Stornoway, Isle of Lewis to Isle of Barra.
- 10d Tour of Barra conducted by Gerry Gillen, HIDB Community Coop Field Officer for the Uists and Barra; visit to Ardvénish to view fish factory and pier development.
- 10e Tour of Vatersay conducted by Joe MacDougall, Chairman of Vatersay Community Coop.
- 10f Dinner discussion session on Barra Community Cooperative with John Allan MacNeil, Chairman, Helen MacNeil, Manager, Gerry Gillen (HIDB) and John Angus Mackay (HIDB).

11 Wednesday, 6th October

- 11a Ferry trip from Eoligarry, Isle of Barra to Ludag, South Uist.
- 11b Tour of the Uists and Benbecula conducted by Roddy Macdonald, WIIC Development Officer for the Uists and Barra; *Visits* to shellfish cultivation experiment, Lochmaddy (Ian Binnie); salmon hatchery John Steele, (Manager); Highland Trout Company, South Uist; *Discussion Sessions* with Roddy Steele, chairman of the South Uist Crofters Union and part-time crofter; and with Neil Macpherson, Fisheries Development Officer, WIIC.
- 11c Ferry trip from Newtown, North Uist to Leverburgh, Harris, across the Sound of Harris.

12 Thursday, 7th October

- 12a Brief breakfast discussion with Brian Wilson, Publisher *West Highland Free Press* and Donald Dewar, MP in Harris Hotel, Tarbert.
- 12b Meeting with Neil Mackinnon, crofter, from Cluer, Harris; founding member of Harris Livestock Ltd (a recently established marketing coop).
- 12c Tour of Harris, conducted by Ken Kennedy, Principal Development Officer, WIIC; Bays area of eastern Harris, Lingerbay quarry.
- 12d Visit to Ann Clachan, Leverburgh, the base for Co-Chomunn na Hearach (Harris Community Coop); meeting with James Downie (Chairman), proponent of a Western Isles 'Federation' of Community Cooperatives.

- 12e Lunchtime discussion session in Tarbert with John Nicol (NOSCA) on the agricultural scene in Lewis and Harris.
- 12f Visit to Co-Chomunn na Pairc, Park area of Lewis; meeting with Calum MacRitchie, Manager, and visit to fish farm.
- 12g Visit to Keose Cooperative Ltd (a worker's cooperative engaged in the processing of seaweed).
- 12h Dinner discussion session in Stornoway hosted by HIDB with: John Angus Mackay; Dr Finlay Macleod (Deputy Director, Education WIIC); Roger Haworth (Director of Planning and Development) and Mairi Ferguson, member of the HIDB sponsored exchange visit between the Western Isles and the Mezzogiorno.

13 **Friday, 8th October**

- 13a Audio-visual presentation on the Van Leer/WIIC Community Education Project.
- 13b Debriefing session with WIIC staff officers (R. Murray, N. Maclean, D. Maclean, D.K. Macleod), John Angus Mackay (HIDB) and Agnes Rennie (Acair).
- 13c Visit to Stornoway Fishermen's Cooperative; discussion with John Nicolson (General Manager) and George Prince (fish salesman).
- 13d Tour of Uig area of Lewis conducted by Iain Sutherland (crofter-weaver-horticulturalist) Brenish; meetings with Diane Sutherland (potter); Norman Macdonald (Community Education Officer for the Uig area); the Buchanan crofting family (Mangersta) and Calum MacIver (Chairman, Uig Community Council).

14 **Saturday, 9th October**

- 14a Visit to John Bryden, Nethy Bridge; Arkleton Trust Programme Director (ex-head of Land Development Division of HIDB).

15 **Sunday, 10th October**

- 15a Tour of Glenbuchat and discussion session with Ron Boyko (potter) and Margaret Hyne (Knitwear designer).

- 15b Visit to Buchan mixed farm, and discussion with James Mathewson, Shethin, Tarves (tenant farmer of Haddo Estate).
- 15c Discussion session with David Myles, MP for Banff, member of the House of Commons Select Committee on Agriculture.
- 15d Viewed 'So Here I Am' BBC TV programme dealing with the history of crofting, presented by James Hunter, author of 'The Making of the Crofting Community'.

- 16 **Monday, 11th October**
- 16a Tour of Upper Donside (Strathdon, Corgarff and Glenbuchat) conducted by Gibby Mackintosh, proprietor of the Colquhonnies Hotel (Strathdon), featuring estates history and management policies.
- 16b Inter-agency discussion session on rural development in Glenbuchat and Upper Donside with: Bob Anderson (Socio-Economic Adviser, North of Scotland College of Agriculture, Inverness) and Ronnie Warren, Sinclair Simpson and John Gregor (Area Advisory Service, NOSCA, Aberdeen).
 Iain Slinn (Physical Planning Department, Grampian Regional Council, Aberdeen).
 Mike Nevill (Planning Department, Gordon District Council, Inverurie).
 Bob Leonard (Community Education Service, Department of Education, Grampian Regional Council, Alford).
 George Taylor (Assistant Conservator, Forestry Commission, Aberdeen).
 John Forster (Deputy Regional Officer, Nature Conservancy Council, Aberdeen).
 Hugh Black (Small Business Officer, North East Scotland Development Authority).
 Captain C.A. Farquharson (Secretary, N.E. Branch Scottish Landowners Federation; Vice-Chairman Agriculture Committee, Grampian Regional Council).
- 16c Farm visit; upland hill farm on a sporting estate: Farmton

of Glenkindie (and Ardler). Discussion with Hugh MacInnes senior and junior.

- 16d Discussion of rural development issues in Upper Don-side with a group of local residents and their elected representatives: Sandy Morrison, Corgarff (gamekeeper, Candacraig Estate); Mrs J. Parker, Skellater House, Corgarff; James Mackintosh (owner of the Lecht Ski Co.); Gibby Mackintosh (Secretary of the Lonach Society); Dr Nigel Plasby, Strathdon (local GP); David Maclean (Grampian Regional Councillor); Bobby Graham (Headmaster, Alford Academy, and Gordon District Councillor); and Hugh Black (NESDA).

17 **Tuesday, 12th October**

- 17a Overview of the activities of NESDA by Ronald Sampson, Grampian Region Development Officer (NESDA is the Industrial Development wing of Grampian Regional Council).
- 17b Tour of Aboyne 'Community School' Project, integrating Aboyne Academy and the Deeside Community Centre, conducted by Dick Stroud, Divisional Community Education Officer, GRC, Education Department.
- 17c Discussion session on the Aboyne Community School Project with representatives of the College Council; Ian McFedries, Sandra Wilson, Lillias Leighton, Jimmy Oswald and Dick Stroud.

18 **Wednesday, 13th October**

- 18a Discussion session on the role of community education in rural Grampian with local workers (Dick Stroud, Lillias Leighton, Bob Leonard, Sheila Sansbury) and with Bob Hamilton, Head of the Youth and Community Work Department, Aberdeen College of Education.
- 18b Tour of the visitor's centre, Glen Tanar Estate, Aboyne, conducted by Duncan Ross (ranger, and former chief forester).
- 18c Discussion on agricultural cooperation in the Grampian area with Nora Wright, Aboyne (ex-secretary of the Aberdeen branch of the National Farmers Union of Scotland, and former depute director of NESDA).

- 18d Discussion session with local residents on rural development issues in Dinnet (an estate village) and Upper Deeside in general; with Jimmy Oswald (head gamekeeper, Glen Tanar estate), Nora Wright, Dick Stroud, Sheila Sansbury (community education course student, College of Education, and former resident of Dinnet); John Forster (Nature Conservancy Council, and Chairman Finzean Community Association).

19 **Thursday, 14th October**

- 19a Overview of the activities of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, with Jim Hughes, Head of Policy and Research, Inverness.
- 19b Luncheon discussion session on the HIDB with Ian MacAskill (Board Secretary), Jim Hughes, and Neil Sutherland, Senior Land Development Officer.
- 19c Discussion of the land development activities of the HIDB, including the proposal for a Highlands and Islands Agricultural Development Programme, with Neil Sutherland and Sandy Cameron, Land Development Division.
- 19d Discussion of the relationships between rural development and the Gaelic language with Duncan MacQuarrie (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Gaelic College, Skye, and member of the HIDB's Gaelic Working Party).
- 19e Discussion with Nethy Bridge World Poverty Action Group on rural development issues.

20 **Friday, 15th October**

- 20a Tour of Speyside part of the Grampian region, visit to the Glenfiddich Distillery, Dufftown, and tour of the Cab-rach area of marginal upland farming.

ANNEX II

AGENCY RESPONSES

A draft of the report was circulated to representatives of the DBRW, HIDB, NESDA and Comhairle nan Eilean, with an invitation to submit any supplementary comments which might appear in order.

The NESDA representative indicated that the draft report had been read with great interest; no corrections or particular comments were deemed necessary at that point.

Responses were received from HIDB officials both in Inverness and Stornoway. No obvious errors were detected and the group was complimented for compiling a comparatively interesting and perceptive report after such a brief visit. It was pointed out however that the Western Isles are not 'typical' of the Highlands and Islands as a whole: circumstances in other parts of the Board's area are not so conducive to development approaches which emphasise community/cultural factors. The critical appraisal of the IDP was singled out as being possibly the most substantial contribution of the report, and potentially the most controversial. It was acknowledged that there was some basis for the main theme in the criticism and that perhaps indeed 'the Emperor has no clothes'. It was thought that there was already a certain awareness of this interpretation, not only locally in the Western Isles but also among some official bodies; the response has been muted so far, on account of an over-riding willingness to allow the programme to develop on the grounds that additional resources must have some impact, even if the impact is quite low at the margin. It was anticipated nevertheless that the people on the ground who have to date been less aware of the inherent gaps and shortcomings of the IDP will soon become more articulate on the subject: the group's report could play a useful role in highlighting the main points at issue. There was some question as to whether the criticism offered is sufficiently well substantiated to stand up to any defensive reaction that might ensue from official bodies who have been involved in formulating, and implementing the IDP. It was also pointed out that the programme was developed by a coordinating Policy Committee involving the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland (DAFS), the HIDB, Crofters Commission, North of Scot-

land College of Agriculture and the Western Isles Islands Council (Comhairle nan Eilean). On a more general point it was suggested that the report conveyed a rather too benign view of the WIIC, inferring that everything done by the Council is perfect when in fact it faces many practical difficulties. It was also thought that the HIDB could have been given more credit for its own initiative in setting up area offices for their inherent value and not as a political expedient.

The DBRW declined to make detailed comments on the draft report, although it suggested that the Board would have "serious disagreements with most of the report's description of the Mid Wales case, both in terms of policy and fact".

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