THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Have your say by emailing letters@thenational.scot

Where is the hunger, fire and passion in those we've elected?

JIM Stamper's letter (Sep 29) raised a matter on which the SNP might pointedly attack the UK attitude to Scottish independence.

As a party to the 1976 UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UK is obliged "to promote the realisation of the right of self-determination of non-self-governing and trust territories ... in conformity with the provision of the Charter of the United Nations."

The UK Government, Jim concludes, "should be promoting the realisation of (Scotland's) right of self-determination, not denying it."

Yes, Scotland should forthwith put to the UN this dereliction of duty by the UK Government. The UN could well become our authoritative ally in the great cause. However, it may well be that we have also to get the SNP on board. Is the executive seriously bent on independence?

The question is apt.

The recent Scottish election, many of us suggested, was a wonderful opportunity for the SNP to get together with other indy-seeking agencies each to present a similar manifesto promising to work together in the great cause. It was a means of revealing to the world united Scottish feeling for freedom.

The SNP weren't interested, and seemed in a hurry to get the election over and done with as quietly as possible. A rare means of expressing the national voice was subdued and squandered. John Swinney has been reported declaring that he would be happy to serve a second term as First Minister. He has been quoted on his expectation to win a referendum within five years.

Yes, that's at least how long John's just going to keep on asking another country if it's OK if we ask ourselves if we want to exercise a national birthright.



John Swinney knows that asking another country if it's OK for us to exercise our right to decide is humiliating, but he still continues to do exactly that

Now John isn't stupid. He knows what all the dogs in the street know, that this national humiliation will be fruitless. So why persevere?

Could it really be that the SNP hierarchy, beyond the begging bowl, just haven't the mettle for confrontation with Westminster and its attendant unionist press?

One recalls the suffering of our historic heroes: Robert Bruce, cold and hungry in a spidery cave; William Wallace hanged, drawn and quartered for public display not far from Westminster. Is it that John and the upper tier of our party are simply happy looking for further years in the comfort zone of Holyrood?

In months past, Old John declared in these pages that the SNP hierarchy was the "enemy within" of independence. I recall thinking that judgement a mite harsh, but it returns to haunt me whenever I look in vain for a hint of hunger, fire, passion in those we have elected to return what the above heroes won for us at the cost of their very blood and guts.

John Melrose
Peebles

MAY I thank author Ron Culley for his brief bio on my 90th birthday. I actually served three years, not four. The National Service period was two years. Like many others at the time, I served an extra year – three in all – for financial and domestic reasons. I did, however, serve four years, on and off, in the Merchant Navy after being demobbed.

As for serving more time in Aqaba, Jordan, for supporting civilian Palestine refugee workers, I came under scrutiny from the Special Investigation Branch (SIB), which consisted of military police sergeants in civvies. The SIB was formed during the Cold War in Berlin to

Clarifications and corrections

IT is our policy to correct errors as soon as we can and all corrections and clarifications will usually appear on this page.

We are regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice (see www.ipso.co.uk).

The National is published by Newsquest (Herald&Times) Ltd.

Complaints should be referred to Stewart Ward, Managing Editor, The National, 194 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4HG, or emailed, for the attention of Stewart Ward, to letters@thenational.scot

● If we cannot reach a resolution, contact complaints@ipso.co.uk or by post at Ipso, 10 Eastcheap, London, EC3M 1AJ.