



ScottishPEN

defending the freedom of writers and readers

We smile and go on hoping: the 1940s

*After long months' uncertainty and groping
for peace and safety, now at last uncovering
the face of war we smile and go on hoping.*

Douglas Young, member, Scottish PEN

War came to Scotland on 16 October 1939 when the Luftwaffe bombed war cruisers in the Firth of Forth.

In March 1941 Clydebank was ferociously bombed. Scotland's writers, whether in the forces or on the home front, could not escape the realities of war. Their encounters were expressed in poetry and prose, published at the time and later.

The experience of war was reflected in the writing of many on the home front as well as those who served in the forces.

They included Hamish Henderson, Robert Garioch, James Allan Ford, Frederic Lindsay, Naomi Mitchison, Edwin Morgan and Eric Linklater, who became president of Scottish PEN. Eric Lomax's book *The Railway Man* (1995) recounted his experience as a Japanese prisoner of war. Douglas Young, whose poetry began appearing in the 1940s, was imprisoned for refusing war service unless on behalf of an independent Scotland. Naomi Mitchison documented wartime life in Kintyre, where she lived in Carradale House for most of the 1940s.

On the eve of war the International PEN Congress planned for Stockholm was cancelled. The only wartime Congress was held in 1941 in blitzed London, with the hopeful theme 'Writers in Freedom'.