

1560924

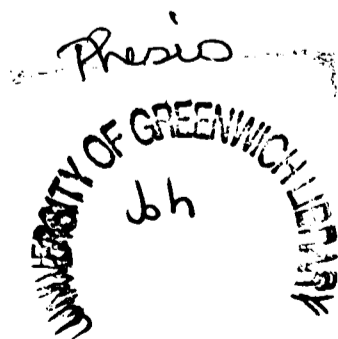
M0006726T9

**Anti-Parliamentary Passage:  
South Wales and  
the Internationalism of Sam Mainwaring (1841-1907)**

**Kenneth John**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the University of Greenwich  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**March 2001**





## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Entrance Middle, with ‘Osmosis’.	12
Chapter Two: Proto-Syndicalism. A Fresh Look At 1834.	47
Chapter Three: The Engineers Meet The Positivists and Others.	72
Chapter Four: Workers As Better People.	107
Chapter Five: More From the New World.	143
Chapter Six: <i>Verloren Hoop?</i>	181
Conclusion	229
Bibliography	235
Appendix: ‘Sam Mainwaring and the Autonomist Tradition’ ( <i>Llafur</i> 1986).	245

## ABSTRACT

The world views of Economics and History which derive from the writings (themselves often derivative) of Karl Marx have been further progressed through two channels – which I here first categorise as STATIST and ANTI-STATIST.

The historical Communist parties, and those Social Democrats who accepted a measure of Marx's analysis, have sought to gain control of some form of State apparatus. In this, they shared an objective with other groups to the Right who may well have been travelling the same route for much longer. To the Left, in the other channel, are those who refute any claimed superiority for statist formulations and who, as an alternative, offer the concept of federation among localities. In instrumental terms, this is the difference between Parliamentary or representative 'democracy' and Councillist or participatory 'self-government'; between the delegated and the mandated. It should be noted that *both* systems offer potential for extended, cross-boundary, co-operation; in the self-governing mode through a *federation of federations* for specific purposes. This latter arrangement, which may be properly termed 'Anarchist', allows for negotiated *contract* as in the international postal service.

By definition, Anti-Statist concepts contain the eventual intent of a total break with, and replacement of, the historically developed 'State' – which latter is seen as a ruling-class invention and as maximising reification. Local institutions, economic and more widely cultural, can be created within the interstices of existing states as seeds of desired, post-State, circumstances. But, again by definition, Anti-Statists cannot look to take over existing Governmental systems. Rather, they must view a different perspective of change and the *practice* of their ideas in modern times has so far been restricted to short experiments during, for example, the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Spanish worker-managed co-operatives of 1936-1939. These were both genuinely 'bottom-up' growths, but the Anarchist dream (or *tendency* to be pursued) has also influenced the decentralised organisation of some more conventionally originating Socialist states – as in Algeria, Libya and Yugoslavia for different periods during the second half of the twentieth century.

The linking of Anarchism with trade-union activity in large-scale industry (Anarcho-Syndicalism) is usually associated with the nineteenth-century school of Michael Bakunin, but anti-statists also connect with more general examinations of 'freedom' such as those set out in William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* of 1798. This Thesis is concerned with the acceptance of Marx AND Bakunin's thinking into the mind-set of Libertarian British working-men during the four decades immediately preceding the First World War, and relates that acceptance to longerstanding notions of 'rationalism'. It does so with particular reference to the intellectual journey of one very special artisan: Samuel Mainwaring (1841-1907), South Wales born but lastingly internationalist.

A fuller summary of the content of Chapters is given in the Introduction, but the salient points are as follows. In Chapter One, I look at Mainwaring's earliest subversive, neighbourhood, links with Welsh Unitarianism and the most radical elements in the seventeenth-century English Revolution. In Chapters Two and Three, I examine the nature

of early nineteenth-century proto-Syndicalism in England and its 1850s influence on the first of the New Model trade unions, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers – which Mainwaring joined as soon as he was of an age to do so. In Chapters Four and Five, I find similarities between Capitalist Exploitation in the United Kingdom and the United States (where Mainwaring lived for some years during the 1860s and 1870s), compare the writings of American mechanic Ira Steward with those of Marx and Bakunin, and discuss the Marxist-Bakuninist split in America following the transfer of the First International's controlling Council from London to New York. In Chapter Six, I show the existence of a 'Bakuninist' strand on the British Left in the last quarter of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries. Explaining Mainwaring's prominent position in that alignment, I also indicate his leading role in international Anarchist initiatives.

My research involved what I believe to be a closer reading of three relevant London-based periodicals (*The Crisis*, *The Pioneer*, and *The Leader*) than had previously been carried out by historians, and I also draw on largely unpublished material held at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, and at the State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin. In my Conclusion, I compare the 'hidden from history' story of the Anarchist Left with that encountered by Feminist researchers.

## INTRODUCTION

This Thesis presents a traverse. The chosen pathway attempts to show something of anti-parliamentary ideas which existed on the British Left from the time of the Tolpuddle Martyrs to the pre-First World War years of pan-European Imperialism. Although my study does not aim to fashion a full biography, I have centred the narrative on aspects of the life and earlier formative circumstances of Samuel Mainwaring (1841-1907), and on subsequent activities of members of his family. The extent and pattern of Mainwaring's personal development as a libertarian socialist or anarchist seems an ideal vehicle for carrying the wider story. He was the only one of those seceding from the Executive Council of the Social Democratic Federation to form the Socialist League (they included William Morris and Eleanor Marx) who later went on to join Peter Kropotkin in the Freedom Group. I see relevance in early attitudes to Biblical religion. In exploring the growth of Mainwaring's ideas, I will start from *truly* nonconformist elements in the Calvinist and Calvinist-influenced 'Nonconformist' world of his youth.

Sam Mainwaring was a South Walian and *Cymraeg*<sup>1</sup> speaking, but the surname had been introduced to his home town, Neath, from the Midlands of England around the end of the seventeenth century, and is apparently of Norman derivation. On his mother's, Llewelyn, side he may have been unremittingly Welsh and, indeed, he could even have

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cymraeg* (usually referred to as 'Welsh' in English) is the older and less spoken (around 20% of the population overall, although very much more in some parts) of the two languages of twenty-first century Wales. In the nineteenth century it was spoken by a majority of the population. It is said to show syntactic similarities to Berber languages of the Maghreb; variation from an Indo-European (including continental Celtic) pattern being explained by early insular ('Iberian') admixture. See Appendix B, contributed by J. Morris Jones, in John Rhys and David Brynmor Jones, *The Welsh People*, (London 1900). Mainwaring was, of course, also fully fluent in English.

supposed pre-Celtic roots. One of his maternal grandmothers, Catherine John, was born in 1774 in Llanguig parish, the northwestern corner of the old county of Glamorgan. That upland area had been part of an ancient late-Cymricised core where, quite possibly, the lost aboriginal 'Iberian' language lingered alongside that of the incoming Silures.<sup>2</sup> Mainwaring can, therefore, from the beginning be also branded as something of an internationalist. His later Internationalism embraced at least four continents and, as I propose to show, was significantly shaped by both North American and Continental European influences. We might also note, at this early stage, that he was more inclined to make a hero of Wat Tyler than Owain Glyndŵr. The Neath man paid his reasonable debts to Wales but, as we will see, his activism was class rather than nationality based. His dialectic essentially involved the much smaller scale, *local*, organisation of labour, and its *global* federation. He is, in fact, the only person credited with invention of the term 'Anarcho-Syndicalism'.

My story involves six main chapters. The treatment is broadly chronological but, more specifically, has overlapping concerns. My method is to take a required span of historical time to discuss a theme, even where that span is partly revisited in consideration of ensuing themes. There is a certain natural break between most of the content of Chapters One to Three and that of Chapters Four to Six. The bulk of the material in the first three chapters relates to Mainwaring's family background and the years of his own childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, and is geographically limited to Britain and the near side

---

<sup>2</sup> It is possible to construct survival (including slave) scenarios for 'pre-Celtic' elements in post-Roman Wales. The same could be said for remainders of penal labour shipped into Nidum (Neath) for Sarn Helen, military road, march to the Dolaucothi gold mines (where 30,000 workers are said to have perished) or for other work camps. See video and other explanatory displays, as well as going underground, at the National Trust's preserved Roman (and later) mine between Lampeter and Llandovery.

of mainland Europe. The later chapters commence with his marriage to Jane Gregory in 1868, go on to deal with the mature working man and make extensive connections with that part of his life which was spent in the United States, as well as with Middle, Eastern and Southern European dimensions. Overall, the prime intellectual alignment is with that praxis deriving from Michael Bakunin (1814-1876).

In Chapter One I concentrate on the Unitarian and earlier Independent, religious, influences bearing on Mainwaring's youthful years. This entails a fairly full description of the rural West Wales origins of Welsh Unitarianism and its eastward extension to Neath, alongside mention of pre-1700 or only a little later (Mera) working class immigrants to the town and the latter people's orally reported links with the most radical elements in the English Revolution. A late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century juxtaposition of Unitarians and Ranter descendants invited another interaction. Contextual reading of published Welsh historiography highlighted the hopes of Gwyn A. Williams for 'the intransigence of Infidelity'.<sup>3</sup> In a not wholly hagiolatrous engagement with Wales' most charismatic and penetrative historian, I give some initial consideration to Williams' ignorance of Mainwaring, as indicated in the former's writings of the 1970s. That ignorance may have been lessened by the 1986 publication in *Llafur* of my short article 'Sam Mainwaring and the Autonomist Tradition'. The article was written to mark the coming centenary, in 1987, of the first socialist propaganda tour of the South Wales valleys.

---

<sup>3</sup> Gwyn Alfred Williams (1925-1995) was, successively, Professor of History at York and Cardiff. An acclaimed television performer, his books include: *Proletarian Order. Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils and the Origins of Italian Communism 1911-1921*, (London 1975) and *When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh*, (London 1985). The first of these is dedicated to the memory of Pietro Ferrero, a Turin metal-worker and anarchist. For Williams on 'the intransigence of Infidelity' see 'By Way of Preface: The Primitive Rebel and the History of the Welsh' in his collection *The Welsh in their history*, (London 1982).



The tour was undertaken by Sam Mainwaring and London-born Frank Kitz in the summer of 1887, and I begin Chapter One with a recapitulation of its progress. One of my reasons for doing so is to present a foil for much of what follows in succeeding chapters. Mainwaring's earliest placing in the world of ideas was, of course, an accident of birth. But the main lines of his subsequent movements were increasingly, one suspects, part of a planned and implemented search for Socialist truths. In 1887, and later, he attempted to communicate something of the results of that international search to varying sized bodies of South Wales listeners.

Gwyn A. Williams maintained that a South Wales working class movement of 1831 was driven by a desire for 'control'.<sup>4</sup> It seems that little more than increased participation in shaping the immediate conditions of labour was involved. For the first notions of producers *qua* producers controlling an alternative parliament, or *an alternative to parliament*, we must look at England in 1834. 'Producers *qua* producers' means representation of, if not mandated delegation by, workers as colliers, tailors or whatever 'trades', and not as mere 'citizens' – which latter catch – all category would, if not abolished, continue to give the franchise to individual *owners* of capital and property. In Chapter Two, I offer the results of a close reading of 'proto-syndicalist' writers in the *Crisis* and the *Pioneer*. These writers are sometimes included under the single term 'Owenite' but it will become clear that they developed a substantially different agenda to that of Robert Owen. They were writing before Sam Mainwaring was born but their ideas were there to be carried forward through trades union thinking, including that of the New Model organisation which Mainwaring

---

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter Nine, 'Movement', in Gwyn A. Williams, *The Merthyr Rising*, (London 1978).

would join – the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. A related result of my close reading is the confident identification of *Pioneer* writer ‘Senex’ as William Cobbett in the last year of his life – thereby recruiting that longstanding advocate of wider suffrage as, finally, a supporter of ‘industrial’ action. Late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century Syndicalism became closely associated with the instrumental power of the General Strike, and the beginning of Chapter Two is a convenient place to examine that instrument’s early promotion as manifested in William Benbow’s *Grand National Holiday* pamphlet of 1832.

The Amalgamated Society of Engineers came into being in 1851. Within months of its birth the new union was subjected to massive assault by Engineering employers. The workers cause was notably supported by the weekly *Leader* where the editors included George Henry Lewes, the Positivist companion of Mary Ann Evans (the novelist George Eliot). Alongside extensive coverage of the 1852 national lock-out, the *Leader* published explanations of Auguste Comte’s processal view of history and of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s *Idée Générale de la Revolution au XIX Siecle* (unavailable in English until 1923). Close reading of these contributions and of Karl Marx’s contemporary *Class Struggles in France* show a unified view of the Second French Republic; the essence being, for British workers, that the establishment of republican government did not equate with Social Revolution. Sam Mainwaring’s eldest brother Will, eighteen years older and a sometime engine fitter, was among the generation of skilled men which the *Leader* sought as readers. During the lock-out the Engineers turned again to ‘Owenite’ concepts of worker control, and in Chapter Three I consider that aspect alongside the *Leader* expositions of Social Revolution and of ‘Locality’ as the ground for organising change.

Chapter Four takes up the general theme of early Capitalism's immorality, and of working people's need to frame an opposing solidarity. Sam Mainwaring married Jane Gregory at Cardiff Registry Office in August 1868 and they shortly afterwards moved to the United States. In a Transatlantic comparison I demonstrate the close fit between South Wales and Pennsylvania forms of exploitation, as well as an internationally minded proletariat's opposition to the Franco-Prussian War. I am also able to consider the economic writings of American mechanic Ira Steward and their convergence with those of Karl Marx. Mainwaring was living in the United States when Marx transferred the administration of the First International to New York. The Welshman was a member of the clandestine Knights of Labour, knowledgeable about (and quite possibly an actual participant in) the first ideological battles between Marxists and Bakuninists. Using previously unpublished material held at the State Historical Society in Madison, Wisconsin, I am able to throw new light on that conflict in Chapter Five. I explain the difference between Steward's and Bakunin's views on political action, and go on to emphasise the hitherto un-specified presence of Bakuninists, including a returned Mainwaring, in Britain's late-nineteenth century Socialist League.

Chapter Six, my longest, looks at the whole of Mainwaring's London and Welsh activities from the later 1870s onwards. I commence with the linked appearance of socialist and other unorthodox ideas in the *Secular Review*, and connect it to British friendships with emigré, Continental, Socialists (including libertarian socialists) in London. Among the latter, and a very special friend of Mainwaring, was Max Nettlau, an Austrian-born Celtic

scholar who later became *the* historian of Anarchism. Again drawing on previously unpublished letters, annotated by Nettlau and held at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, I am able to give further consideration to the context of the 1887 tour of South Wales by Mainwaring and Kitz. The Welshman's role in the expulsion of Eleanor Marx's Bloomsbury branch from the Socialist League leads to a comparison with Keir Hardie, Ayrshire born Independent Labour victor at Merthyr Tydfil parliamentary elections. Mainwaring's *resident* propaganda in the Rhondda Valley and at Swansea is shown to precede the establishment of Independent Labour Party branches in those places. Towards the end of Chapter Six I examine Mainwaring's affinity to some Continental Socialists whom Gwyn A. Williams presented as models for Wales. I close the Chapter with a discussion of Mainwaring's 'bravest fight' – his attempts at a relatively advanced age and in conjunction with Fernando Tarrida del Marmol, a former Director of the Barcelona Polytechnic, to set up a structured interchange of international libertarian opinion. That discussion leads naturally to the content of my Conclusion.

As already indicated, Sam Mainwaring was unknown to Welsh historians before 1986. Among English writers he figured in E. P. Thompson's biography of *William Morris* (London, 1955) and Yvonne Kapp's biography of *Eleanor Marx* (Volume II, London, 1976), but with little or no reference to Welsh origins or American residence. The latter lacuna also affects John Quayle's history of British Anarchism, *The Slow Burning Fuse* (London, 1978), which notably fails to provide a proper Bakuninist context. The naming of Mainwaring as inventor of the term 'Anarcho-Syndicalism' occurs in Albert Meltzer's recollections, *The Anarchists in London 1935-1955* (Sanday, Orkney, 1976), and, as will be

explained later, is based on that author's conversations with Emma Goldman. For more detailed, personal, information one has to look to articles by family members and fellow workers, as well as Mainwaring's own contributions to *Commonweal*, *Freedom* and the *General Strike*. The fullest reminiscences all appeared in *Freedom*: by his son Will in January and February 1927, and by Mat Kavangh in May 1934 and mid-December 1943. Among short sections of books, I consider that in Tom Mann's *Memoirs* (London, 1923) to be the most telling. Taken together with Census enumerations this internally consistent, colleague, material allows a coherent description of both the Welsh and London years.

References to Mainwaring's working-class *circle* in allegedly authoritative works are frequently slipshod or obviously uninformed. In George Woodcock's *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (New York, 1962), Joe Lane (1851-1920) is referred to as 'an elderly carter who remembered the days of the Chartists'; this of a thirty-something activist in the 1880s. As oppositional tendency, Deian Hopkin's 'Labour's Roots in Wales, 1880-1900' in D. Tanner, C. Williams and D. Hopkin (eds.), *The Labour Party in Wales 1900-2000* (Cardiff, 2000) manages to make Frank Kitz (1849-1925) 'young' in 1887; this apparently in extension of my *Llafur* 1986 mention that Kitz was younger than Mainwaring (actually 38 compared to 45). Perhaps one should add that anti-parliamentary Mainwaring would not give thanks for association with the configuration of Ron Davies, Alun Michael and Rhodri Morgan.

On the other hand, in pursuit of the wider story I discovered historical gems crafted from real knowledge of primary sources. David Montgomery's deep understanding of Ira

Steward's unpublished writings, as shown in *Beyond Equality* (New York, 1967), is one. Heiner Becker's full appreciation of the Mainwaring-Nettlau friendship, as evidenced in his Introduction to *A Short History of Anarchism* (London, 1990), is another. That book is abridged from Nettlau's five volume, German, survey of international Anarchist history, in which *he* says: 'Mainwaring war seit 1887 der erste wirkliche Freund, den ich in London fand' [he calls Mainwaring his 'first real friend in London].

Knowledgeable *speculation*, even when long neglected, is also to be welcomed. My close reading of 'Owenite' papers sprang from Max Beer's words in *A History of British Socialism* (London, 1919): 'The intellectual history of this period [1834] has remained unknown to the present time. It is essentially the history of the separation of the workers from orthodox Owenism. The documents lie scattered in the weeklies, the *Crisis*, *Pioneer*, and *Pioneer and Official Gazette*'. My debt to Beer is in no way reduced by the fact that he wrongly identified 'Senex' as somebody other than William Cobbett. It was a mistake repeated by G.D.H. Cole and John Saville.

My own interest in Sam Mainwaring grew independently of any involvement with professional historians. Suggesting, and subsequently given the task of implementing, the radical decentralisation of functions in a large English local authority I concurrently extended my previously sketchy knowledge of Anarchist variants – and more particularly of Anarcho-Syndicalism. Mulling over the possibility of giving factory workers representation *as factory workers* on Black Country ward committees I discovered a shared,

Neath, starting point.<sup>5</sup> That my children are also descended, on their mother's side, from Catherine John further motivated the necessary research. Rudolph Rocker's *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism* (London, 1973, but previously published as part of other works) provides the best introductory overview of anarcho-syndicalist theory and practice. We will see that Rocker, too, was a personal friend of Mainwaring during that Welshman's last years.

As the only Welshman thought to have named an international 'ism, Mainwaring can guide an instigating incision. If a real *People's* History of Wales ever comes to be written it could use his world-wide workerism as template. Cutting away the still stifling agenda of princely praise and associated Celt worship, such a history would start from slave and serf families who carried everything else on their shoulders. A properly internationalist perception tells us that Welsh slaves might, for example, have been Moroccan or Mercian sourced; some of the North Africans perhaps later than expected, sold in by Dark Age Vikings. To postulate is to reveal the paucity of empirical connection. One is approaching considerations of cognitive scale, of ever wider narrative coherence, of speculative philosophies of history. Mainwaring's circle got *that far* first, with their artisan interrogation of Comtian and Marxian theory. Evolutionary anthropology, with its genetic aides, offers improving tools for understanding the pre- and only partly historical. A prime

---

<sup>5</sup> The initiating field was Town Planning, in which context the industrial population of some areas was of the same order as the residential population without necessarily involving the same families (and voters). I was attracted by Edvard Kardelj's formulation of *functional* representation in the Yugoslav system of 'social self-management'. For a comprehensive discussion of that, see Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, (London 1977). Soviet (and British) Stalinists accused Tito's inner circle of adopting anarcho-syndicalist notions. Yugoslavs returning from the Spanish Civil War (to start-up the Partisans) were said to have been 'infected' by Andalusian and Catalonian models. Kardelj, a Slovene and Tito's long-time but pre-deceased Deputy, claimed to have developed his vision from a wide study of revolutionary theory as well as the practical imperatives of a multi-national Balkans.

task is to plot the origins of that exploited majority whose descendants left the Welsh (and other) land to become part of concentrated Welsh industry. Sam Mainwaring will then take his place in a paradigm extended to our more recent, literate, era. The present study is intended to make a contribution towards that last section of an alternative reading.



## CHAPTER ONE: ENTRANCE MIDDLE, WITH ‘OSMOSIS’

In 1887 Wales’ National *Eisteddfod* was held at London’s Albert Hall. Queen Victoria’s eldest son attended and, getting up to leave at the start of a popular song, gave the impression that he was standing for *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* – thereby contributing to its acceptance as *the* Welsh anthem.<sup>1</sup>

The Prince’s audience certainly desired Royal Approval. Imperial Britain was riding high and they were, or wanted to be, *respectably* part of the act. They might privately laugh at the story of an incognito and inebriated Edward being shown the door, supperless, one night at Adelina Patti’s Swansea Valley castle but the Neath Station hot chestnut seller who, it is related, subsequently hoisted a ‘By Appointment’ board above his barrow was better talked about than handled in the flesh.<sup>2</sup>

The then Rector of Neath was a leading Eisteddfod man. He was Chairman of the National’s Organising Committee as well as being, concurrently with his Rectorship, Archdeacon of Llandaff. This John Griffiths, son of the agent to Cardiganshire’s Tyglyn Aeron estate, urged the Glamorgan working class to accept what he saw as its ordained position. He later associated with, and claimed to understand the chiliastic contribution of, Frank and Seth Joshua – evangelising mentors of Neath’s Methodist Forward

---

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is based on Hywel Teifi Edwards, ‘Victorian Wales Seeks Reinstatement’, *Planet* 52 Aberystwyth, 1985. Professor Edwards, historian of the *Eisteddfod*, repeated his conclusions at a meeting of *Pont Siôn Cwilt*, Chaired by the present writer, at Aberaeron in October 1992.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘By Appointment’ story circulated in the Neath area during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and was first told to me by my father, Tom John, who was born in 1892. Adelina Patti (1843-1919), considered by Verdi to be the greatest soprano of her day, purchased Craig-y-nos in 1878. Neath was and is the nearest railway station with regular and frequent trains to London.

Movement mission.<sup>3</sup>

The Reverend Griffiths had become Rector in the middle 1850s. That was the time when Neath's Unitarian chapel finally lost its drive, the Quaker ironmaster J. T. Price died, and the Mainwarings of Mile End Row on the Briton Ferry road moved twenty miles to the bigger and faster growing town of Aberdare.

There were seven Mainwaring sons. The second youngest boy, Samuel, trained as an engine fitter. Now, in the summer of 1887, he was forty-five years of age and a prominent London Leftist. On Saturday 13 August he joined returning *eisteddfodwyr* entrained for South Wales. He was accompanied by thirty-eight years old Frank Kitz, a dyer at William Morris' Merton works. The two men's intention was to proselytise the Valleys for Socialism.

A one week tour, originally advertised to also cover Rhymney and Tredegar, in the event came to be restricted to Pontypridd, lower stretches of the two Rhondda Valleys, Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil. The Cymraeg speaking Mainwaring was described as 'a tall full-bearded man' and 'Big in body and mind'; Kitz as 'a fine burly figure with a mass of light brown curly hair'. They needed to be fit and strong. It was intended to walk a good part of the route and to hold meetings in the open air. Literature for distribution was to be carried in 'an enormous sack and bag ditto'. There was the

---

<sup>3</sup> For more on John Griffiths and the Joshua brothers, see D. Huw Jones, *The Story of St. David's Church, Neath, 1866-1966* and R. Leslie Jones, *Mission Hall Neath, 1882-1982* – both published privately in the town.

possibility of fights.<sup>4</sup>

Saturday night was spent in Cardiff, probably at the Broadway, Roath, home of Sam's sister Jennet and her blacksmith husband David Jenkins. Taking the first train up the Taff on Sunday morning, the missionaries met friends awaiting them at Pontypridd before proceeding to the Rocking Stone on the Common. Then, in Kitz's words, 'From this bold situation overlooking the whole of the valley and town beneath, and in the midst of mountains, we began our work...' There was also a continuity. The location had been favoured by William Price, Chartist surgeon and Druidical crowd puller. Born in 1800 and still alive in 1887, Price had in 1861 identified himself and his eldest daughter as children of the Lord Rhys, a twelfth century Welsh prince; the claim being contained in a letter to auctioneers which also stated that on 9 November 1861 'the present Foreign Government of Great Britain...shall cease to be' and 'Capitalists are hereby informed that there is no Title to hold land now'.<sup>5</sup>

On 3 March 1881, colourfully dressed and carrying a large red flag, Price had mounted the stone at noon before speaking to the Sun. Mainwaring and Kitz's tactic was to commandeer the rock at an earlier hour and, given good weather, to so interest the numerous morning listeners that an even bigger gathering was guaranteed after dinner. They succeeded in this on both the first and subsequent Sabbaths. They preached about

---

<sup>4</sup> My description of the tour is based on Mainwaring and Kitz's reports in *Commonweal* on 27 August and 3 September, 1887 – from which are also taken their *Pontypridd Herald* extracts. I have been unable to trace any extant copies of that newspaper.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Davies, 'Empire and Identity: the case of Dr. William Price', in David Smith (ed.), *A People and a Proletariat*, London 1980, is especially illuminating on the background.

the nature of Capitalist Exploitation – and (in Price's wake) met with some sympathetic responses. The *Pontypridd Herald* commented that 'A state cannot be governed in accordance with the eternal principles of equity' if it 'permits Lazarus repulsive from dirt, disease and starvation to sit daily at the gates of Dives clothed in purple and fine linen'.

And, the paper's correspondent continued:

Looking at our social arrangements as they now stand one cannot fail to perceive how utterly at variance they are with any system that has for its object 'each for the other and God for us all'. In fact the genius of society as at present constituted seems to find its fitting expression in the formula 'each for himself and the devil take the hindmost'. Were it not for the cohesive influence of the human values, which ever and anon have play, the social fabric would verily fly into pieces. It certainly does seem cruelly unjust that a workman, steady, industrious, aiming at the highest standard in the character of the work he turns out, and in every respect a kind husband, a tender father, and an intelligent citizen, should, as a producer of wealth, simply get a small percentage of the profit on the work he does, while the larger percentage of profit enriches the man who employs him. The consequence is that should Labour be stricken down with a heavy reverse of fortune, sickness and what not, in a few weeks his family becomes pauperised. Capital, however, is exempt from such affliction.

The message was carried up the Rhonddas on Monday 15 August; leaflets being distributed at various collieries and an afternoon meeting held for miners coming off shift at Tylorstown. From there the two men walked over the mountain to Aberdare where Sam's oldest and widowed brother Will, a boy of sixteen at the time of the Chartist march on Newport, lived in Ynysllwyd Street, near the present Maerdy road.

Much of Wednesday was spent going over Dowlais ironworks, where '9,000 people – men, boys and girls' were employed. Kitz noted the environmental and personal degradation:

...Truly, if noise, grime, filth, steam, smoke and mountains of rubbish are marks of progress, then is Dowlais a progressive place. There is a plentiful supply of cripples made by all this...and they are kindly allowed to work as labourers about the works at wages varying from 15s. to 18s. per week. Shorn of a leg or an arm, they are painfully fulfilling their part in progress.

Meetings were held in Merthyr that evening and on the Thursday; 'the forest of hands being held up in our favour' at the former apparently leading to the presence of 'some local bigwigs, a magistrate and justice of the peace' at the latter. Agents for William Morris' journal *Commonweal* were believed to have been secured at both Merthyr and Aberdare, where a meeting was held in the Boot Square on Friday.

The *Herald* recognised an 'advance guard' of Socialism. In one sense the harbingers had arrived more quickly than the Normans from Hastings. It was just ten years since Kitz had formed an English section of Soho's previously all-German Social Democratic Club. Karl Marx of Trier (1818-1884) and David Davies of Llandinam (1818-1890) were close contemporaries. It's a comparison worth keeping in mind when considering the history of late-Victorian Wales.

Davies was not the first chapel-going farm boy to become a tycoon. David

Thomas of Ty-Llwyd above Neath Abbey, apprenticed at the Quaker's works and subsequently an innovative manager at Ynyscedwyn, had been recruited by Pennsylvanian agents to become 'Papa' in Allentown – Bethlehem's mid-century iron industry. The Montgomeryshire man's victory lay in doing it at home. Starting as a navy-cum-contractor of huge robustness, Davies burst through to 'millionaire' status behind the incoming lines of Crawshay, Guest and the rest. The 1887 consolidation of the Ocean Coal Company is a marker of Welsh embourgeoisment. With the building of Barry Dock (opened in 1889) and its buccaneer railway, Davies finally confronted, and succeeded against, the Bute *regime*. Change was in the air.<sup>6</sup>

Mainwaring was born in 1841 and died in 1907. He had a little over twenty years to live in August 1887, and was then half-way through his mature life. A justification for entering that life at the point which we have done, at the start of this Thesis, is my wish to straightaway register him as a significant *Welsh* figure. In ensuing chapters I will progressively render him as pivotal to understanding my story of a *British* Left's century-long anti-parliamentarism, but initially my concern is to give the man a native visibility. The 1887 Socialist propaganda tour was the first such excursion to the South Wales Valleys – although apparently long unknown to the small country's professional historians. We can no doubt explain the lacuna by a main-line filtering of Welsh Labour

---

<sup>6</sup> For further detail on David Davies of Llandinam, see Herbert Williams, *Davies the Ocean*, Cardiff 1991. For David Thomas, consult Alan Hayward, 'David Thomas (1794-1882)' in *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society*, 1980-81.

history through parliamentary party prisms – Independent Labour, Labour and Communist – and the fact that Mainwaring’s Socialism was of a different, and therefore unrecorded by the establishment, sort. A Welsh Left has been represented as born of Lib-Labism or, at its most ‘extreme’, of latter-day De Leonist missionaries and Moscow’s Lenin School. This is, of course, a question of historical winners and losers. But now that, post-Soviet Union, once apparent winners have also become losers, we may be allowed some review of situations.

In considering an 1841 to 1907 span extended at both ends to include, for example, mention of Iolo Morganwg (1747-1826) and Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), I will engage in some parallelism with internationally minded Gwyn A. Williams. Williams seminally concluded that during our core period ‘the Welsh working class lost its memory’. Seeking an explanation for, and ways of overturning the results of, his recognised phenomenon he said that he was going ‘to creep up...crabwise’ on ‘one operative substitute for an ideology...the intransigence of infidelity’. He said that in 1979, when he was 54. It is my understanding that he had not completed the task by his death at 70. Perhaps he lacked the necessary human armature – somebody who was Welsh, had lived through the period in question, and could, without too much forcing, be wound around with before and after favourites – which is what Morganwg and Luxemburg certainly were for Williams. Sam Mainwaring gives us such an armature.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Gwyn A. Williams discusses the realignment of memory in ‘Locating a Welsh Working Class’ (1980), and his plans for future work in ‘The Primitive Rebel and the History of the Welsh’ (1979). Both essays are contained in his collection *The Welsh in their history*, London 1982.

Explaining the descent of his middle name, 'Alf', Gwyn Williams told a story about his great-grandfather, a sailor who kept the Tap pub in Briton Ferry, where the River Neath enters Swansea Bay:

He claimed that he used to hunt whales from Briton Ferry. I believe him. I'd believe anything about anybody from Briton Ferry. He was...a believer in the Norman Yoke theory of history – that this island had been a democracy before the coming of the base and brutal Normans, ruled by a real people's King, good King Alfred...several newspapers named themselves after this populist hero. One was called *The People's Alfred* and an edition came out in Swansea.

We will find that Sam Mainwaring was more rooted in the Peasants Revolt – but after visiting and talking to Williams at his last, rural Carmarthenshire, home I strongly suspected that one element contributing to his 1990 willingness to 'believe anything about anybody from Briton Ferry' was my 1986 revelation that an estuarine originating Mainwaring had thumbed his nose, figuratively but face-to-face, at Frederick Engels. 'Lloyd George knew my father, my father knew Lloyd George': so go the words, repetitively sung to the tune of 'Onward Christian Soldiers', which Williams would have remembered from 1940s Aberystwyth college debates. Knowing Engels seems rather more special for a Welshman. If one adds, more remotely but quite possibly, Karl Marx and, certainly, friends of Michael Bakunin, we do seem to be operating on an extended terrain. I propose to start making some maps.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Williams relates the 'Alf' story in 'A Pistol Shot in a Concert?', *Planet* 84, Aberystwyth 1991. The conversation with him, to which I refer, took place at Drefach-Felindre, Carmarthenshire, on a Saturday morning in 1992. I intended to continue the discussion at a later date, but that was not possible due to his initially full diary and later terminal illness.



For his own cartography, Gwyn Williams claims that:

Over great tracts of Welsh history, it is necessary to know what Sabellianism was and how it differed from Arianism, constructive, conglomerate and concurrent; it is important to know whether an Arminian was related to a Campbellite; we have to place Muggletonians and Swedenborgians, differentiate between what seems to infinity of Calvinists and an eternity of Baptists. Over whole stretches of our history, ordinary working people, for sound historical reasons, found meaning in their lives precisely in such, to us, or to me anyway, alien and often alienating notions. People defined what we would call their class status by their attitudes to a particular set of Biblical texts; they defined their lives in that way, explained themselves to themselves in such terms.<sup>9</sup>

Some critics say that Williams' insistence on seeing Unitarianism as the seed-bed of democracy in Wales is more asserted than proven, but as a *logical* hypothesis we can test its circumstantial possibilities among Sam Mainwaring's predecessors and in that man's early life. Such an exercise will anyway temper the Merthyr-born professor's excessively Merthyrcentric approach. A more appropriate context is the Swansea-Merthyr arc, taking in not only those two largest Welsh towns of the early nineteenth century but also, and most relevantly for our present purpose, their closer outliers – Neath and Aberdare. Our territory there is that boundary of an industrialising south-east Wales which was open to a Teifside, West Wales, rationalism – whose origins I discuss in my next section.

We will also enter the realm of 'osmosis' – a word which, in its historical and

---

<sup>9</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, 'The Primitive Rebel and the History of the Welsh', *op. cit.*, pps. 9-10.

WEST

EAST

1	2	3	4	5	6
GELLIONEN	CASTELL NEDD	BLAENGWRACH	TRECYNON	CEFN COED	TWYNYRODYN

1760

1770 JOSIAH REES

1780 Produced first

1790 Welsh language

1800 magazine: *Yr*

*Eiurgrawn*

THOMAS

DAVIES

1810

1820 JOHN JAMES

1830 Proposed Unitarian

1840 College at Neath

(with D. Davis and I.

Morganwg)

THOMAS MORGAN

Administered Cowpoz

before Jenner

THOMAS

EVANS(Tomos

Glyn Cothi)

OWEN

EVANS

DAVID JOHN

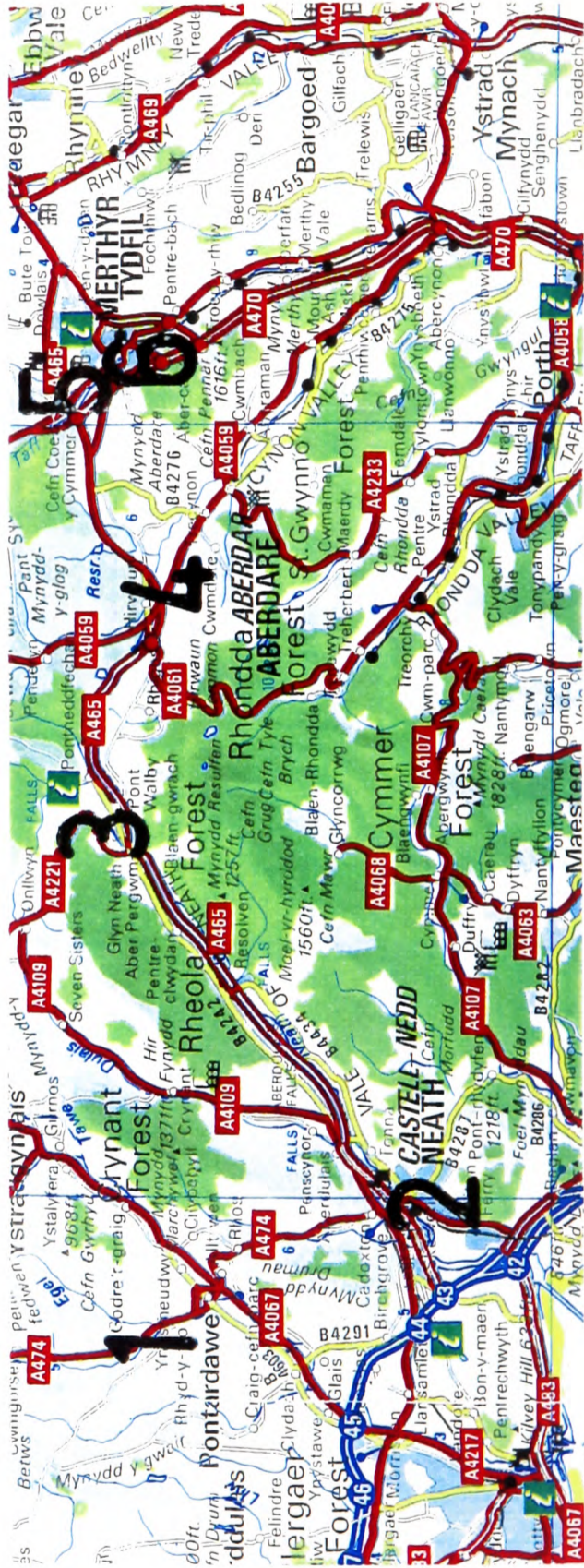
SENIOR

JOHN JONES

Chartist

1870

### UPLAND GLAMORGAN: EARLY UNITARIAN MEETING HOUSES AND MINISTERS



sociological sense, one associates with Gwyn Williams in the same way as one associates 'hegemony' with Antonio Gramsci. I take the first term to refer to that background or those influences which enter our cultural make-up without us consciously recognising experiential circumstances or consciously undertaking a learning process. In Chapters Two and Three I propose to look at strands which would most probably have entered Mainwaring's psyche through the workplace. In the rest of this chapter I will discuss some of chapeldom's maverick emanations. I start with the Unitarian circumstance, before moving on to the possibly unique, for Wales, Neath remnant of an earlier rage.

### **UNITARIAN CIRCUMSTANCE**

Four of the six oldest Unitarian chapels in Blaenau Morgannwg (upland or north Glamorgan) emerged *in situ* through doctrinal change among Independent congregations; these being Gellionen (Swansea Valley), Blaengwrach (Vale of Neath), Trecynon (near Aberdare) and Cefn Coed (near Merthyr). The other two, Castell Nedd (Neath town) and Twynyrodyn (Merthyr town), were created *de novo*. At Neath, Unitarian members had earlier and temporarily taken over Maes-yr-haf (Summerfield), the mother Independent church, before being forced to set up their separate meeting place. In that, the Neath experience contrasted with nearby Gellionen, where it was the more conservative Independents who left – to build Baram chapel.

The disposition, west to east, of the six Unitarian chapels is indicated on the facing map and table. The table shows the period of longer serving (five years plus) pre-

1850 ministers, together with some biographical details of those at the four western-most chapels. The establishment of Achos Undodaidd Castell Nedd (Neath Unitarian Cause) preceded the building of Twynyrodyn by two decades.<sup>10</sup>

At the 1851 Religious Census, Neath's worshipers were shown to be overwhelmingly, if variously, 'Nonconformist'. The numbers attending morning and evening services on counting day were given as:<sup>11</sup>

ANGLICAN	350m	
METHODIST		
Calvinistic	341m	273e
Wesleyan	215m	200e
'OLD DISSENT'		
Independent (Congregational)		
Zoar	495m	711e
Maes-yr-haf	206m	288e
Wind Street	52m	
Baptist		
Bethania	161m	295e
Water Street	80m	130e
Unitarian	80m	115e
Quaker	40m	

If correctly recorded, the total turn-out in a town of 5,778 people was, in relative population terms, on a par with that for big Rugby games during the Neath club's great run of the late 1980s – when the 'fanaticism' of supporters' dress and decorated shopping

---

<sup>10</sup> This summary and my further description of South Wales Unitarianism is based on T. Oswald Williams, *Undodiaeth a Rhyddid Meddwl*, Llandysul 1962, D. Elwyn Davies, *Y Smotiau Duon*, Llandysul, 1981, and D. Rhys Phillips, *A History of the Vale of Neath*, Swansea 1925. Also relevant is Emyr Humphreys, *The Taliesin Tradition*, London 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Figures from Ieuan Gwynedd Jones and David Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851* Volume I, Cardiff 1976.

centre took on carnival dimensions. In 1851 such popular theatre clearly reached its *Sunday* evening climax at Zoar, evangelical outreach of Maes-yr-haf.

The denominations were gridded by theological (Calvinist-Arminian-Socinian) and organisational (Episcopalian-Presbyterian-Congregational) divisions. Mainstream chapel theology ranged from Calvinist (only a select would be ‘saved’) to Arminian (all were capable of ‘salvation’), but beyond the latter lay the exploration of those Arian and Socinian doctrines which gave rise to formally Unitarian (anti-Trinitarian) congregations; Arians arguing that Christ was of a different nature to God, Socinians going as far as to say that Christ was just a man. Organisationally, the Independents held to the autonomy of individual congregations whilst the Calvinistic Methodists (a wholly Welsh denomination which had only broken finally with the Established Church in 1811) developed a less risky, Presbyterian, system of government.

There was certainly some understanding of such distinctions among ordinary people; attendances were not simply a function of charismatic oratory. It was quite widely appreciated that the Independents and Baptists’ roots went back to, or before, Cromwell’s Civil War. The Baptists’ practice of adult immersion to confirm a mature belief reflected wider questions of grown-up responsibility. The Civil War connection clearly posed Parliamentary Reform as opponent of Oligarchy, at the same time as Independent autonomy carried the seeds of a more direct political democracy. Elements among both other believers and among non-believers recognised, and sometimes hated or sympathised with, Unitarian efforts to reconcile Reason and Faith. At Neath in 1851 the

Unitarian meeting-house, which had been closed for eight years up to 1850, was still battling against 'hot religion'. We can see that its 80 morning and 115 evening attenders were comparable with those of other Welsh Unitarian chapels:<sup>12</sup>

UPLAND GLAMORGAN

Cefn Coed 113m 84e

TEIFI-AERON DIVIDE

(the rural West Wales 'Black Spot' of Calvinist demonology)

Llanwnnen 300m

Ciliau Aeron 75m

Cribyn 100e

'Puritanism-Dissent-Nonconformity: the decline collapses into a surrender. *Dissent* still carries the sound of resistance to Apollyon and the Whore of Babylon, *Nonconformity* is self-effacing and apologetic; it asks to be left alone'. So writes E. P. Thompson in his *Making of the English Working Class*.<sup>13</sup> The difficulty with Gwyn Williams, it seems to me, is that looking at a succeeding propinquity of period he does not follow through again to, for example, Positivist philosophy. With Williams, one *jumps* from Unitarianism to Marxism. Searching for stepping stones I go first to Chwarel Bach (Little Quarry).

The Indulgence List of 1672 records an Independent group gathering in the Neath home of one Elizabeth Morgan. A purpose built meeting house at Chwarel Bach, Melincryddan, out of sight (as then required) of the parish church, was erected in 1695.

---

<sup>12</sup> I. G. Jones and D. Williams, *idem*.

<sup>13</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* London, 1963. The quotation comes from the beginning of Chapter Eleven, 'The Transforming Power of the Cross'.

Around 1772, on the granting of a 1,000 year lease of land on the Summer Field by Humphrey Mackworth II of the Gnoll, Neath's great house, a new chapel with double gallery was built in the town proper. A re-building of 1864-1866 now houses a re-united Soar-Maesyrhaf, but it was at the eighteenth century edifice that a fifteen years old Sam Mainwaring acted as witnessing signatory to sister Jennet's 1856 marriage. Brother Will had preceded her by five years, and it does seem that the *family* were not among those of the Congregationalist working class who had succumbed to Zoar's attractions. At that time the state prevented marriages at Unitarian chapels and, leaving aside spouses' wishes, one cannot on such slender wedding evidence get very close to the Mainwarings' 1850 *majority* posture. But, writing in *his* own London paper, a 1903 Sam included this placing of denominational positions:

...at the outbreak of the war against the two Dutch Republics in South Africa for the sole purpose of stealing their gold mines, the Church went out of its way to fête and glorify the authors of that most nefarious war, and the greatest crime ever perpetrated by any government.

At a meeting of Congregationalists held in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, composed chiefly of ministers, one had the courage to propose the condemnation of the war by the denomination, but the whole meeting sneered at the idea and amidst uproarious laughter the question was dropped and the resolution not even discussed.

In the election following in 1900 the whole of the Church – from the Roman Catholics through the denominations down to the Unitarians – voted for this pernicious government.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *The General Strike*, 1 October 1903

Writing between the two World Wars, one of Mainwaring's sons did, indeed, disclose that his father was a youthful Unitarian.<sup>15</sup>

A hundred and seventy seven years before the Farringdon Street meeting a young student had been prohibited, on account of his Arminian views, from entering the pulpit at his home Independent church in what was to become the Black Spot (Y Smotyn Du). But this Jenkin Jones established his own Llwynrhydownen chapel in 1726. He was succeeded by David Lloyd, his nephew, and a David Davis; the latter two acting jointly for a time. During his longer, fifty, years at Llwyn the Arian Davis also kept an academy at his nearby farm, Castell Hywel. Among those who passed through that 'Athens of Ceredigion' and on to the Carmarthen theological college was his son, David Davis junior. In 1800 the younger Davis was called to serve as minister by the newly formalised Unitarian congregation at Neath, where he also established a very successful school.

It was in the year before Davis' arrival that members with Unitarian views had seized Maes-yr-haf for five weeks. Their intensity of purpose was soon reflected in the new minister's activities. Cymdeithas Undoddiaid Deheudir Cymru (the South Wales Unitarian Society) was founded near Neath in 1802, with David Davis, Castell Nedd (to distinguish him from his father – David Davis, Castell Hywel) as the first secretary. The other initial Committee members were Josiah Rees (minister at Gellionen), Thomas Morgan (minister at Blaengwrach), Thomas Davies (minister at Cefn Coed), Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg) and John Rowland (later Mayor of Neath); Rowland, who

---

<sup>15</sup> 'W.M.' (William Mainwaring, d. Treherbert 1940), 'A Fight of Forlorn Hopes', *Freedom*, January 1927.



worked for the Glamorganshire Bank (subsequently as Chief Cashier) being appointed Treasurer. The list is more widely noteworthy. Josiah Rees produced the first Welsh language magazine – *Yr Eurgrawn (The Treasure)*. Thomas Morgan is reputed to have been the first person to administer the serum of cowpox against smallpox (i.e. before Jenner). Iolo Morganwg, a stonemason, invented the modern Eisteddfod (among other things). John Rowland became president of the Neath Mechanics Institute, the book collection of which is believed to have passed down to the first town library (before being destroyed by fire in the early twentieth century). Also to be passed down was the collection of the Unitarian Book Club founded around the same time as, if not actually co-existent with, the more general South Wales Society. It is quite likely that some of its volumes found their way, in the first instance, to the Institute – since a number of Neath’s middle-class Unitarians, apart from Rowland, were prominent in the 1840s management of that workingmen’s facility. And another interwoven strand of intellectual provision was the Neath Philosophical Society where J. T. Price, a founder of the national [British] Peace Society as well as an ironmaster, was 1830s Chairman. One writer describes two craftsmen, Unitarian John Walters and Quaker Joseph Pollard, fervently disputing on philosophical questions at Price’s works.

Iolo Morganwg wanted a creedless, searching ‘glorious Unitarian Church’ for Wales. He was present at the first Unitarian meetings held at Essex Street, Islington, London, in 1774, and pressed his contacts to send material for distribution and missionaries into Wales. There were tours by a Lyons in 1811 and R. W. Wright (three visits) between 1818 and 1822, and it was at Neath that they met with Morganwg. Lyons

preached there in 'a large room, up one flight of stairs'; Wright, four times, in a 'neat little chapel recently erected for Unitarian worship'. Some of the congregations were 'large'. To Lyons, Morganwg was a man of 'great liberality, and of great zeal for the promotion of rational religion'; to Wright, the old man was 'enthusiastically fond of liberty'.

Iolo Morganwg's 'very extensive and varied information' (Lyons) and 'great deal of genius and information' (Wright) may also have pointed to something like an indigenous approach to rationalism in upland Glamorgan. One of the benefits of our Neath-Aberdare arc is that we are allowed to look at the mountain hub within that arc. Those of a Jungian disposition can claim great things for the high land between the Vale of Neath and the head of Cwm Rhondda. Morganwg's bardic name and most famous inventions may have been based on some perception of a 'collective unconscious' before the term. We are discussing the southern end of a spine which extends northwards through the whole length of Wales to the Great Orme's pre-Celtic mine workings. It was also the non-Celtic borderland between the Demetae and Silures tribes, and, quite likely, one of the last places where the lost Bronze Age language was last spoken. Sam Mainwaring would certainly have appreciated the implications of that.<sup>16</sup>

However, in the particular case here related we are only asked to go back to a life lived some time during the period 1510-1612. From traditional statements which he

---

<sup>16</sup> Raymond Williams (b. Pandy, Gwent, 1921), author of *Culture and Society*, was very much aware of one implication: that *Cymraeg*, itself, can be construed as a conqueror's language. See his review of Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales?*, in *The Guardian*, 24 January 1985.

claimed to have collected, Iolo Morganwg asks us to believe that a Thomas Llewelyn of the Neath Valley's east side was the first Nonconformist preacher in Wales and a translator of the whole of the Bible into Cymraeg. More provable seems to be the claim of the bardic Carw Coch (Red Stag) that Blaengwrach old meeting-house (mid-way between Neath and Aberdare) was erected in 1704, and of research to the effect that a member in 1734 had married a grand-daughter of the Llewelyn. A prosperous farmer of the same general area and bearer of the same surname, Llewelyn Llewelyn, was among contributors to the funds of the Unitarian Book Club in 1802. He gave two guineas at a time when Prime Minister Pitt considered William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* too expensive, at four guineas, to be worth banning. We might also note that when Morganwg visited Neath he stayed with the Redwoods, Quaker tanners. The 1851 Census shows another of Sam Mainwaring's sisters, Mary, to have been a servant in the Redwood house. A Redwood descendant recalled that a special chair, 'Iolo's chair', was kept for the bard. It is not too great a flight of imagination to see a young Sam getting in it, between running errands for the older Mary.

We are viewing a language frontier. 'There is but little Welsh spoken in *it*': the sentence is from George Borrow's *Wild Wales* and he is talking about Neath in 1854; the italicised word is mine. I am reminded of uncles who, as town children of a later generation, suffered Zoar's Cymraeg services without understanding a word. From these same uncles I have inherited *Selections From Ingersoll*,<sup>17</sup> in which is reproduced an 1892

---

<sup>17</sup> Ram Gopal (ed.), *Selections from Ingersoll* [Robert G. Ingersoll]. The book was published in Bangalore, India in 1931. Such sourcing is a revealing, uncle, variation from, say, Victor Gollancz Ltd. (London publishers of, for example, Leon Trotsky's three volume *History of the Russian Revolution*, 1932). One uncle was a collier, the other managed a wholesale newsagents.

speech to the New York Unitarian Club when the former Colonel of Illinois Cavalry said:

Suppose a man had control of the atmosphere and the rain clouds, so that he could control the wind and the rain; suppose a man had that power, and suppose that last year he kept the rain from Russia, and did not allow the crops to ripen, when hundreds of thousands were famishing, and when little babes were found with their lips on the breasts of dead mothers! What would you think of such a man? Now, there is my trouble. If there be a God, he understood this. He knew when he withheld his rain that the famine would come. He saw the dead mothers, he saw the empty breasts of death, and he saw the helpless babes. There is my trouble. I am perfectly frank with you and honest. That is my trouble.

The American's words encapsulate the essence of opposition to, in the first instance, the Calvinist position and, thereafter and progressively, all the Christian stances. We can guess at the time and progress of Sam Mainwaring's 'trouble'. The more general question for Welsh historians is how within less than a century, and probably *very much less* for many of the unrecorded outside church and chapel renderings, old Iolo's Unitarian hopes were washed away – to the 'Left' as it were.

The novelist Emyr Humphreys has written<sup>18</sup> that 'by the middle of the nineteenth century Welsh Calvinists could hotly argue...Unitarianism had held the door open to an aggressive humanism...bent on reducing Christianity...to a mere exhibit in an anthropological museum.' In the 1990s that notion was fruitful for the new 'What if?' school of alternative imaginers. The possible queries rain down. What if Iolo Morganwg

---

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Thirteen, 'The Fruits of Heresy', in E. Humphreys, *op. cit.* He is not there writing as a novelist.

had lived fifty years later than he actually did? What if his genius had been harnessed to the Biblical Criticism of David Strauss? What if Cymraeg had become the language of not Heaven but Atheism, or at least Agnosticism? What if the sacerdotal medium had somehow become that of a different Enlightenment? Such an interrogation begets a dialectic in which answers are required as to what popular force could have carried on and enlarged a rationalist tradition. I suggest we might look among strands of skilled workingmen.

Emyr Humphreys also reminds us that dissenting academies of eighteenth century South Wales, such as that at Carmarthen which produced Jenkin Jones and his successors, offered the most advanced education of their day. An ensuing task was to carry their torch, which was also that of Isaac Newton and Joseph Priestley, through Wales' different incendiaryism of Evangelical Piety. Gwyn A. Williams is fluent with stories of 'middle class' craftsmen who dabbled in spare-time science. I think the reason why his river of discovery eventually peters out in a sort of desert, or perhaps more appropriately in a miasmatic swamp of mass production, is that in *this* specific respect he was too much concerned with the mere 'Welshness' of things. Similarly, one could say that Welsh labour history more generally has been obsessed with colliers – and especially with Welsh colliers. The situation is, of course, understandable in that Welsh history as a subject of study must, initially, spring from Wales and given the coal industry's sometime size in the country. But there were more than coal cutters and coal carriers at the mines. To particularise, there were also workers who maintained (and made) the leading edge technology of their time, steam engines; not only in the collieries and other

extractive industry but also on the railways and in the docks or at sea, who were transferable between these sectors of employment and, indeed, other manufacturing – and who, above all, came to be earlier and successfully organised in an all-Britain trade union. The language of that union, and of the world of translation to which its activists had access, was English.

The European environment of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in the early 1850s will concern us in Chapter Three. For the present, we will continue our discussion of Neath and Aberdare Unitarianism in the preceding decades. We can, though, allow ourselves an over-arching consideration:

The era of positivism, so far as it may be considered to have marked the literary activity of Comte, fell between the years 1824 and 1857. As might be inferred from these limits, positivism received an incentive from the absorbing interest which began to be taken in the natural sciences in the second quarter of the last [i.e. nineteenth] century. But perhaps a more potent cause of its origin may be found in the social ideals which were inherited from the French Revolution. As a result of that great crisis there was begotten in not a few minds an enthusiastic confidence in the possibility of making over society to new and improved patterns. Comte shared largely in this confidence. His early association with Saint Simon was indicative of his bent; and, though, he came to speak disparagingly of the scheme of this socialistic leader, he ever regarded the working out of a social ideal as the supreme end to be achieved.

The quotation comes from Henry Sheldon's *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*,<sup>19</sup> which

---

<sup>19</sup> Henry C. Sheldon, *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 78 (London, no date but probably before 1930).

also belonged to the monolingual uncles. The bridge I wish to highlight at this stage is not specifically Comtian but the more general coming – together of Science and a loosely defined ‘Politics’.

In the first year of Sheldon’s positivist era, 1824, David Davis junior was succeeded at Neath, as both minister and schoolmaster, by John Davies, another product of Castell Hywel and the Carmarthen college. In turn, one of Davies’ young pupils was Thomas Stephens. As a Merthyr Tydfil chemist and literary scholar, Stephens was later to deliver a great blow for, in Humphreys’ words, ‘simple truthfulness’. On the last day of the *Eisteddfod Fawr Llangollen* in 1858, Stephens’ essay on ‘The Discovery of America in the Twelfth Century by Prince Madoc ab Owen Gruffydd’ was disqualified on the grounds that it showed the Madoc story to be lacking any verifiable foundation. Humphreys likens the event to the Bryan and Darrow monkey trial at Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. Perhaps more to the point is the fact that 1858 was also the year of Darwin and Wallace’s appearance before the Linnean Society, and that one of the latter pair was what we would today call Welsh.<sup>20</sup> We might also add that David Strauss’ *Leben Jesu* was published in 1835 and translated into English by Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) in 1846.<sup>21</sup>

As an inhabitant of Aberdare, a sixteen year old Sam Mainwaring was able to

---

<sup>20</sup> The Bryan and Darrow comparison is made in Chapter Eighteen, ‘The Glass of Fashion’, of E. Humphreys, *op. cit.* Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) was born at Usk and lived in Neath, where he worked as a surveyor and lectured at the Mechanics Institute, for much of the 1840s. In 1858, he and Charles Darwin jointly presented the seminal paper on Natural Selection to the Linnean Society, London.

<sup>21</sup> David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* was a ground-breaking work of Biblical Criticism. For the translation from the German, see Rosemary Ashton, *George Eliot: A Life*, London 1996.

view the Llangollen affair, with its insight into rigorous Criticism, from the town which regarded itself as the dynamic centre of Welsh opinion. ‘What Aberdare thinks today, Wales thinks tomorrow’ is a remembered Victorian epithet, and the population of the parish increased from 14,999 in 1851 to 32,299 in 1861. The Mainwaring move there was probably related to the mid ‘50s expansion of the Unitarian, Wayne, owned Gadlys Ironworks – although the Vale of Neath (Neath to Aberdare) Railway, operating on a line surveyed by Wallace, is an equal possibility as Sam’s place of apprenticeship. The leader of the family exodus is likely to have been brother Will, who had previously been employed at ironworks in the Neath area. The father David, was anyway too old to be a prime recruit and as a former collier may well have been incapacitated in some degree. But the following extracts from 1861 Census enumerations show the attractiveness of a younger male cohort:

*16 Pump Row, Robertstown, Aberdare*

David Jenkins	29	Blacksmith
Jenet Jenkins	28	
Mary Anne Jenkins	4	Scholar
David Jenkins	2	
Priscilla Jenkins	4m.	

*17 Pump Row, Robertstown, Aberdare*

David Mainwaring	62	Outside Labourer
Mary Mainwaring	59	
Morgan Mainwaring	27	Blacksmith
Thomas Mainwaring	22	Blacksmith
Samuel Mainwaring	19	Fitter
Francis Mainwaring	17	Blacksmith
Anne Mainwaring	13	

*66 Ynysllwyd Street, Aberdare*

William Mainwaring	37	Fitter
Ann Mainwaring	36	
Evan Evans	20	Fitter



Robertstown was laid out on fields lying between the works (and nearer railway line) and the River Cynon, around the time of the Gadlys expansion. Incorporating a previously isolated Independent chapel and equipped also with the free-standing Gadlys Arms and a purpose built shop, this alternately named Tresalem boasted something of the character of a planned suburb. However, deliberately or otherwise, its growth stopped at five streets and a larger area of remaining land, including that immediately to the rear of the Mainwaring and Jenkins' homes, came to be long used as allotment gardens. Apart from the elderly David and Mary, all the other 1861 householders and their spouses were under thirty-five years of age, with the overwhelming majority born in West Wales, it being certain that the initial Robertstown was mainly Cymraeg speaking.

The older, larger and more-or-less adjoining Trecynon, up the valley beyond the allotments, was the location of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd (the Old Meeting House) which had welcomed Tomos Glyn Cothi (Thomas Evans 1764-1833) as its Unitarian minister in 1811, and also of The Stag pub where landlord Carw Coch (William Williams 1808-1872), a former member of the Blangwrach congregation, had accommodated his Free Enquirers. Whether or not his mother's somewhat peripheral (Melincryddan) origins and Maes-yr-haf's town centre persistence had been sufficient to put Sam Mainwaring among the bilingual minority of Neath's children, he had definitely transferred to a two-tongued world. Memorably radical therein, was Glyn Cothi's story. Nicknamed 'Priestley Bach', that sometime salesman of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* had been imprisoned at Carmarthen from 1802 to 1804 for allegedly singing seditious songs.

Tomos Glyn Cothi's theology, though, may be judged less questioning than *The Age of Reason*. I quote from his 1794 Declaration of Faith:<sup>22</sup>

I profess myself a Christian because my beliefs are at one with the general faith established by Christ and his Apostles: that there is One God...and that He is the initial Creator and the constant Sustainer of heavens and earth...He is omnipotent in power, perfect in wisdom and infinite in goodness...

I believe that He has endowed man with a considerable degree of reason and understanding in order that he may attain the purpose for which he was created...and, yet, because the light of nature *on its own* is insufficient...He gave a more complete and perfect revelation of His will to mankind...

I believe according to the testimony of the Scriptures that Jesus Christ was Man like ourselves...being different only in the remarkable power and honour given to him by God...

According to Christ's own words and resurrection we are given sufficient hope that he will appear again, with great power and glory, to raise the whole of mankind from the grave and...judge every man according to his own deeds...

Returning to Robert Ingersoll at New York in the 1890s for comparison and contrast, we find.<sup>23</sup>

*...I have great respect for the Unitarian Church. I have great respect for the memory of Theodore Parker...for every*

---

<sup>22</sup> This text is reproduced from p. 178 in D. Elwyn Davies, *They Thought for Themselves*, Llandysul 1982. The book is essentially a translation of the same author's *Y Smotiau Duon* (mentioned in note 10).

<sup>23</sup> p. 173, Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*

man who has assisted in reaving the heavens of an infinite monster...for every man who has helped put out the fires of hell...The Unitarian Church has done more than any other church – and may be more than all other churches – *to substitute character for creed*, and to say that *a man should be judged by his spirit*; by the climate of his heart; by the influence that he exerts, *rather than by the mythology he may believe*.

The Theodore Parker to whom Ingersoll referred was a New England Unitarian whose 1840 to 1860 Boston ministry became a potent factor in preparing the platform for the 1867 initiation of Free Religion in America; his confident intuitionism about the essential goodness of Man placing diminished stress on any version of historical Christianity. In 1859, the year before his death, he wrote:

...All the six great historical religions – the Brahmanic, Hebrew, Classic, Buddhistic, Christian, Mohammedan – profess to have come miraculously from God, not normally from man; and despite the excellence which they contain, and the vast service the humblest of them has done, yet each of them must ere long prove a hindrance to human welfare, for it claims to be a finality, and makes the whole of human nature wait on an accident of human history – and that accident the whim of some single man.<sup>24</sup>

Parker's apostle in Wales was Gwilym Marles (William Thomas), great uncle of the poet Dylan Thomas and minister at Llwynrhydowen from 1858 to 1879. To the argument that 'saving faith...belongs to Jesus but not to anything else', Marles responded with both question and statement:<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> See H. C. Sheldon, *op. cit.* p. 185.

<sup>25</sup> D. Elwyn Davies, *They Thought for Themselves*, *op. cit.* p. 170.

Was not a Saving Faith in the world before Jesus, and can it not be found now in the countries that have not hitherto been blessed with the announcement of the Good News?

...the name Man is older in its roots and broader in its context than the word Christian.

John Jones, Glyn Cothi's successor at Trecynon, was among the disgusted fellow preachers. To illustrate the different, and sometimes limited, aspects of 'radicalism' one needs to be told that the Reverend Jones had been constrained to go into hiding at his brother's Black Spot farm after the 1839 Newport Rising. In that restricted mode Unitarianism persisted at Aberdare. At smaller and historically different Neath it seems to have been squeezed out between personalised freethought and a more popular religion. The resident Unitarian minister making the 1851 Neath return was a Lant Carpenter, scion of an English middle class intellectualism. He was followed briefly by G. H. Stanley who moved to a Sydney, Australia, church in 1853; services at Neath ceasing by the second half of the decade. The loss of actual or potential attenders from Mainwaring and similar movement may well have contributed to that demise, but in their overall Neath – Aberdare period there is no doubt that Sam's family were there to receive whatever the Welsh Unitarian exposition had to transmit. In the context of Gwyn Williams' plan to 'creep up...crabwise', I would say that the decisive *theological* shift is that between Glyn Cothi and John Jones on the one hand and Parker and Gwilym Marles on the other. This was the move on from a Denial of the Transcendent Sonship of Christ to a Denial of the Finality of Christianity. In a Mainwaring context I believe that the latter was an important, if 'osmotic', feeder for a Denial of the Finality of Parliamentary

Government.

## **REMNANTS OF AN EARLIER RAGE**

As set forth in *Leben Jesu*, David Strauss' criticism of Gospel history included the following elements: disagreement of a narrative with itself and with other narratives, discourses of a more poetic and elevated description than suits the actors or the situation, marked conformity between the content of a story and the views of the circle within which it originated, and – most importantly for our present purpose – contravention of the laws which universally govern events. In a subsequent and 'popular' version, he argued that any miraculous intervention would involve God in a temporal scheme:

A God who now, and then again at another time, works a miracle, who accordingly uses a certain kind of activity at one time and refrains from it at another, would be a being under subjection to time, and consequently no absolute being; the doing of God, therefore, is rather to be construed as an eternal act, which on its own side is simple and like to itself, and only on the side of the world appears as a series of divine acts following one after another.

Such combination of factual doubt and philosophical nicety was a powerful mixture for the thoughtful. In the context of an Actually Existing Capitalism where churchmen too often appeared to serve the Establishment's interests, it might join with a Parker type Denial of Finality to form that freedom where religion, paying no respect to a supernatural being or life, signified only a harmonious adjustment to the world on the basis of personal truthfulness and conscientiousness.

Strauss' popular version, *fur das Deutsche Volk bearbeitat*, first appeared in 1864, a year after Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. The latter may in time have achieved a greater readership in Wales, if only on account of its Breton author's other writings on Celtic personality, but taken together the two works, in translation or through commentary, provided a Continental phalanx pushing towards the primacy of empirical science over theological speculation. And, notwithstanding Glyn Cothi and his successor's sticking points, anyone possessing some familiarity with the Unitarian story could have been prepared for that thrust. After all, the very term 'Arian' derived from Arius, an ancient Alexandrian presbyter, who had asserted that a necessary condition of the filial relationship is for a father to be older than his son, and that therefore 'before he was begotten the Son of God was not'. It was that strictness of method to which Thomas Stephens adhered. For the Mainwarings, rigorous theory stood to be bolted on to a Neath experience. One part of the latter was of a general, Glamorgan, working-class sort; the other was specific, and unique in that it had to do with the first 'Welsh' working class we know anything about.

In 1686 the twenty-nine year old Sir Humphrey Mackworth, a native of Shropshire, married Mary Evans, sole heiress to Neath's Gnoll estate. To further develop his wife's inheritance of coalmining leases and a metalworking monopoly, he had to bring in additional labour from afar. This comprised two elements: convicted criminals and necessary skilled workers, the second of which it seems may also have been elsewhere involved in 'subversive' activities. In 1700, for example, we find judges on

the Norfolk Circuit excusing ten men from hanging provided that those men agreed to be transported to Neath and there be bonded to work for Mackworth. Labour was wholly transferable between pit and furnace, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century there were around a hundred such workers. Key men were recruited from the North Midlands, and for some mix of the newcomers Mackworth built a model village on the Mera meadows beside the Gnoll brook, in extension of the existing town and between it and the overlooking hilltop mansion. Among the original occupying families were the Mainwarings and the Hills. Sam Mainwaring was in direct line from the first, the present writer's mother, Sarah Ann Hill, in direct line from the second; Sarah being close to the last if not *the* last child to be born in the last remaining Mera houses prior to their demolition for the laying out of Victoria Gardens (Neath's central 'Park') to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.<sup>26</sup>

Sarah's brothers, the uncle possessors of *Selections from Ingersoll* and *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century* as well as Renan's *Life of Jesus*, talked of passed-down family memory to the effect that some, at least, of the first Mera people were 'children of Ranters' and among the founding congregation at Chwarel Bach. 'The Ranters', in A. L. Morton's description, 'formed the extreme left wing of the sects which came into prominence during the English Revolution, both theologically and politically'.<sup>27</sup> East

---

<sup>26</sup> For the eighteenth ('Mackworth') century in Neath, generally, see D. Rhys Phillips, *op. cit.*, and Elis Jenkins (ed.), *A Neath Symposium*, Neath 1974. There are also numerous relevant articles in the *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society*. Much of the material finds a place in Geraint H. Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales*, Cardiff and Oxford 1987.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter Four, 'The Ranters', in A. L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters*, London 1970. Also, for a wider context, Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, London 1957 and Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, London 1972.

Anglian and other artisans are said to have been influenced by the Miinster Anabaptists, and among Ranter writings Morton finds:

...deep concern for the poor, a denunciation of the rich and a primitive biblical communism that is more menacing and urban than that of Winstanley and the Diggers. Like the Diggers and unlike Lilburne and his followers, they were ready to accept the name of Leveller in its most radical implications, but with the difference that God himself would confound the mighty by means of the poorest, lowest and most despised of the earth.

Christopher Hill, in *The World Turned Upside Down*, reminds us that a great period of freedom of movement and freedom of thought closed in 1660; twenty-five years before Humphrey Mackworth married Mary Evans:

For twenty years men had trudged backwards and forwards across Great Britain, in the Army, in search of work, in the service of God. The mixing, the cross-fertilisation, must have been immense. After the restoration officers of the New Model returned to their crafts. Preaching tinkers returned to their villages, or like Bunyan went to goal. Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and Fifth Monarchists disappeared...Fox disciplined the Quakers; they succumbed to the protestant ethic...Women were put back in their place...Milton's nation of prophets became a nation of shopkeepers.<sup>28</sup>

Hill also tells us that it had been a young man's world while it lasted. Abiezer Coppe, the leading Ranter, was born in 1619 and James Nayler, the culmination of the Ranter tendency in Quakerism, in 1618. Both were under thirty when the Civil War ended.

---

<sup>28</sup> I quote from 'Defeat and Survival' in Chapter Eighteen, 'Conclusion', of Christopher Hill, *idem*.



The generations fit the uncles' 'myth'. And so does a carry-over of circumstances on the ground. Morton also says of the Ranters:

The conviction that God existed in, and only in, material objects and men led them...to a pantheistic mysticism and a crudely plebeian materialism, often incongruously combined in the same person. Their rejection of scripture literalism led sometimes to an entirely symbolic interpretation of the Bible and at others to a blunt and contemptuous rejection. Their belief that the moral law no longer had authority for the people of a new age...led to a conviction that for them no act was sinful, a conviction that some hastened to put into practice.<sup>29</sup>

We should not be surprised that elements of the same Mera community which contributed to Chwarel Bach were also characterised as loose-living by native Neath people.

The duality lasted. The Mera population and its spreading descendants became a significant section of the townspeople, and we can reflect on Christopher Hill's continuing analysis:

*...nothing ever wholly dies* [my italics]. Great Britain no doubt fared the worse in some respects for rejecting the truths of the radicals in the seventeenth century, but they were not wholly lost. Just as a surviving Lollard tradition contributed to the English Reformation over a century after the defeat of Lollardy, just as a surviving radical protestant tradition contributed to the English Revolution...so the radicals of the English Revolution perhaps gave more to

---

<sup>29</sup> A. L. Morton, *op. cit.*

posterity than is immediately obvious.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, we are probably being more concrete than Hill when he says that one ‘need not bother too much about being able to trace a continuous pedigree for these ideas’. We can, though, agree with him that: ‘They are the ideas of the underground, surviving, if at all, verbally...’

We can certainly postulate two religious strands as contributing towards a lasting lack of deference (‘Neath against the world’). Both, Unitarian induced and Ranterish, were ultimately sourced in England and that country is, undoubtedly, where our *titular* Internationalism starts. The incoming early industrialists were, in that regard, helpers. The eighteenth century was the Mackworth century. The then masters of the Gnoll were Humphrey, Herbert, Humphrey II and Robert. In addition to causing the Mera to come about, Humphrey, grandson of an officer in Cromwell’s army, exchanged land to provide a site for Chwarel Bach. When Robert died childless, from a thorn-induced infection, his teenage widow, formerly Molly Miers of Cadoxton Lodge, took time to give Quakers a location before taking Capel Hanbury Leigh of Pontypool as second husband. That was in the middle 1790s, the decade during which the Quaker ironmasters came to Neath from Cornwall. There was no substantial Friends presence before that time and, notwithstanding Christopher Hill’s findings that many of the first English Quakers were in union with Ranters, it is to the Independents (and possibly a sometime General Baptist cause) that we must look for the initiation of radicalism in Neath.

---

<sup>30</sup> Christopher Hill, *op. cit.*

We have seen that Sam Mainwaring was placed to have inherited both the English and Welsh influences at Maes-yr-haf and, thereby, to have achieved a balanced view of Aberdare's Cymricism. In a later, Essex, colleague's testimony, Mainwaring maintained that Cymraeg was 'the finest speaking language in the world',<sup>31</sup> but Sam was certainly not prepared to enthuse about Welsh people or things simply because they were Welsh. Consider, for example, his 1903 chastisement of a Cwmafan born Calvinistic Methodist of like age:

...Mabon M.P. said this was the first meeting of miners in South Wales since the death of Lord Salisbury...He asked them to show their appreciation [of Salisbury]...by singing the hymn 'Jesu, lover of my soul' to the tune 'Aberystwyth'.

'Jesu, lover of my soul'...Would it not have been more appropriate to have sung the first verse of the hymn for which the tune was composed?

Beth sydd imi yn y byd  
Ond gorthrymder mawr o hyd  
Gelyn ar ol gelyn sydd  
Yn fy nghlwyfo nos a dydd

[What is there in the world for me  
except great and continual oppression?  
Enemy after enemy wounding  
me both day and night]<sup>32</sup>

In the very same newspaper column, he was also able to write:

Stedman [a speaker at that year's TUC]...called the attention of the Mayor of Leicester to the fact that 'We

---

<sup>31</sup> Mat Kavangh, *Freedom*, May 1934.

<sup>32</sup> *The General Strike*, *op. cit.*

have in the assembly of delegates...one occupying a similar position to him – the humble carpenter and joiner who had the honour of being mayor of Battersea...among organised labour they were rapidly advancing'. Yes, probably advancing into the position of a Sir William Walworth when another WAT TYLER [Mainwaring's capitals] will have to champion the cause of the workers.

By then, in completion of a circle, Sam had added a long friendship with William Morris, dreamer for John Ball, to Mera memories, and had himself preached in the Eastern Counties. In Chapter Two I will have much to say about a Southern country man.

## CHAPTER TWO: PROTO-SYNDICALISM. A FRESH LOOK AT 1834

Parliament as a body representing 'the people' can find its origins in the Anglo-Saxon *witan*, an assembly of aristocratic 'wise-men'. A 'Whig' view of nineteenth and twentieth century history sees the Westminster institution becoming more and more democratic; progressing from the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 through to votes for women and eighteen year olds. One ought though, as a hint of something different, to note Tom Paine's comment in Part II of *The Rights of Man*<sup>1</sup>:

Mr. Burke is so little acquainted with constituent principles of government that he confounds democracy and representation together. Representation was a thing unknown in the ancient democracies. In those the mass of the people met and enacted laws (grammatically speaking) in the first person.

Notwithstanding that fact that Athenian society, for example, included a significant proportion of non-voting slaves, one can recognise Paine's concern with an aspect of citizenship. In an early-twentieth century Welsh publication, the co-operatively authored *Miners' Next Step*<sup>2</sup> of 1912, there is an added emphasis:

To have a vote in determining who shall be your foreman, manager, inspector... is to have a vote in determining the conditions of your working life... To vote for a man to represent you in Parliament, to make laws for and assist in

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man, Part II*, London 1792. The quotation is from Chapter III, 'Of the Old and New Systems of Government'.

<sup>2</sup> Anonymous, *The Miners' Next Step*, Tonypany 1912. Among the contributors to this co-operatively written pamphlet was Swansea-born W. H. Mainwaring. His surname probably derived from the same Mera origins as that of Sam Mainwaring.

appointing officials to rule you is a different proposition altogether.

The *Miners' Next Step* belongs to the literature of Anarcho-Syndicalism, an anti-parliamentary system which interlaces territorial decentralisation and self-government (the Anarchist strand) with a commitment to producers ruling as a class (the Syndicalist strand). In this Thesis I will be examining the combination of these elements in the intellectual development of Welsh born Samuel Mainwaring (1841-1907), who, indeed, has been claimed as originator of the *terms* 'Anarcho-Syndicalism' and 'Anarcho-Syndicalist'. In the present chapter, I look at what professional historians of the Left<sup>3</sup> have described as the birth of 'Syndicalism' or Proto-Syndicalism in England during the summer of 1834 – some seven years or so before Mainwaring's birth. My findings differ from those of earlier writers in important matters of fact and interpretation. These differences stem from what I see to be my closer reading of primary sources. In support of that view I include extensive quotations from those sources. I will also adopt that method in Chapter Three where in a related context, and again contrary to a climate of received opinion, I identify important similarities in the opinions of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Karl Marx.

In the present chapter, my main primary sources are a series of articles (including reproduced lectures) published in *The Pioneer*<sup>4</sup> and *The Crisis*<sup>5</sup> between 15 March and 28

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism*, London 1919. He says that 'the mental activity' of British Syndicalism 'sank into complete oblivion' after the summer of 1834.

<sup>4</sup> *The Pioneer, or Grand National Consolidated Trades Union Magazine* (1833-1834) was edited by James Morrison, a former building worker.

<sup>5</sup> *The Crisis, and National Co-operative Trades Union and Equitable Labour Exchange Gazette* (1832-1834) was owned and initially edited by Robert Owen. Subsequently, 'Shepherd' Smith became editor and the 'Equitable Labour Exchange' part of the title was dropped.

June 1834 – all of which were either written (in the case of two editorials, perhaps part written with James Morrison) by J. E. ('Shepherd') Smith, or, when signed 'Senex', have previously been attributed to him. For developmental purposes, I also consider William Benbow's pamphlet, *Grand National Holiday*<sup>6</sup>, of 1832 and another Smith item of 1833. My detailed treatment will be to make two sets of comparisons. First, between Benbow's pamphlet and three of Smith's lectures; second, between the editorials read together with the lectures and Senex's fourteen 'Letters to Associated Labour' – which latter, I argue, were not written by Smith (or Morrison) and for which I confidently name another author. I conclude by speculating on the ramifications for the later 1830s and the 1840s (i.e. up to the start of Mainwaring's working years) of the divided authorship.

### **BENBOW'S PAMPHLET AND SMITH'S LECTURES**

The pamphlet promotes the idea of a Congress of the Productive Classes; such an assembly and preliminary [local] meetings to take place during a summer calendar month's work stoppage, the Holiday. The Producers and their supporters are then to consider the 'Condition of England' (in Carlyle's later phrase) and decide on the best methods whereby Labour can secure its Deliverance.

Benbow starts with an exposition of prevailing exploitation, which he presents as that of 499 by 1 in a population of 500 parts. He identifies the controlling portion who 'call themselves the people' as, in their own estimation:

---

<sup>6</sup> William Benbow, *Grand National Holiday and Congress of the Productive Classes*, London 1832. comprised five pages of an 'Introductory Address' followed by eight describing 'The Holiday'.

*the people of substance, the people of character, the people of condition, the people of honour!*

but, in his eyes:

*the jugglers of society, the pick-pockets, the plunderers, the pitiless Burkers... all Bishops!*

He tells the 499 that they are the source of all wealth. 'Pick-pockets' and 'plunderers' reflect the attack of Moral Economy on Political Economy, of a concern with the distribution of means as well as with the processes of capital accumulation. In critical examination of the Malthusian view, Benbow's proposals include a concurrent census and survey of land potential.

The author of *Grand National Holiday* then goes on to remind the majority that they have long fought for the 'caprice of kings and ministers', and says that the time has come when they must fight for themselves:

When the people fight their own battles – when they are active in resistance to the greater part of existing institutions – when they have a proper opinion of themselves... when they are convinced of their own power and worth, then they will enjoy the advantages a people ought to enjoy.



However, the modern reader is met by an immediate paradox. Benbow predicates success on assistance from within the aristocracy, if not a transcendental millennialism. Workers are told to lay in supplies for the first seven days, but that ‘provisions for the remaining three weeks can be easily procured’:

‘The cattle upon a thousand hills are the Lord’s.’ When the people’s voice, which Lord Brougham proclaims to be the voice of God... calls for its own... let them order it to the slaughter-house, and their herdsmen and drovers will obey.

Dukes, Marquesses, Earls... will freely contribute to our glorious holiday. Some of them... will send us a hundred sheep, others twenty oxen; loads of corn, vegetables and fruit will be sent to each [local] committee... which when distributed among the people will enable them during the CONGRESS to legislate at their ease, without any fear of want tormenting any part of them.

As either genuine belief in the prospects of rich-men’s collaboration or tongue-in-cheek call for forceful appropriation, such words seem to speak of a great naiveté.

One is similarly struck by the assumed homogeneity of Benbow’s intended audience. There is no countenance of more, or less, skilled elements among the working classes – and, hence, of differential (including vanguard) scope for betterment. Participation in production is seen as the pre-requisite for sharing its fruits, and morality is certainly fed from the sweat of people’s brows:

infirm persons... will not be entrusted to... poor-house keepers [but] ought to be treated as *martyrs of labour*.

But there is not a single mention of specific trades. And whilst the temporary ‘committees of management of the working classes... in every city, town, village and parish’ might sound like something with *soviet* potential, there is no explicit suggestion of labour, long term, ruling *qua* labour. Rather, producers are told that the ‘Lord Chancellor [Brougham] will volunteer his services as one of your Deputies to CONGRESS’.

‘Shepherd’ Smith approaches these matters in a lecture, titled ‘Education’, given at the Owenite Institution, Charlotte Street, London on 25 August 1833.<sup>7</sup> He commences by saying that ‘Politics, that is parliamentary politics, are not intellectual enough for the people’. By ‘intellectual’ he means concerned with existential understanding, and continues:

what have the people to do with... the Grand Turk, Don Pedro or Miguel, or the new Queen of Portugal? Of what advantage will it be to a working man that he can speak an eloquent philippic an hour in length...

He sees political societies as ‘only useful... to prepare the way for other combinations of the working men, in which they shall... discuss those projects which it is in their power to reduce to practice’. There is a vision, if not of a coming dictatorship of the proletariat, of at least some ‘co-operative unions, in which politics hold such an inferior importance that probably they may be entirely overlooked’. And, of course, he enumerates *groups* of artisans:

---

<sup>7</sup> This lecture was reproduced in *The Crisis* of 31 August 1833.

it is necessary not only that the working men unite together but also that they each of them endeavour, as much as time and opportunities will permit, to become acquainted with the scientific [and managerial] elements of the profession to which he belongs... the mechanic... the mason... the engineer.

Smith succeeded Robert Owen as editor of *The Crisis* in the autumn of 1833. On 30 March following, five weeks after the Tolpuddle arrests in the year of the Poor Law Amendment Act, he lectured at Charlotte Street on 'The Prospects of Society' and the sermon appeared in his paper on 12 April 1834. He is now more aware of State power and more closely links industrial organisation to a legislature:

The only House of Commons is a House of Trades... every trade shall be a borough... Our present commoners know nothing of the interests of the people, and care not for them. They are all landholders. How can a landholder represent a tradesman? Have the shoemakers a representative in the House of Commons? There are 133,000 shoemakers in the country, and these, with their wives and families, make upwards of half a million of human beings in this country, all living by shoemaking. Yet not one representative have they in the house of legislation; but, according to the proportion which they bear to the population, there ought to be twenty-five representatives of the shoemakers in Parliament. There ought to be nearly as many carpenters, and all other trades in proportion. This would make a literal House of Commons – not a false one, as the present is, which is merely a branch of the House of Lords, and transacts the business of the aristocracy in the name of the people, without the authority of the people.

He is not, however, necessarily calling for the immediate abolition of the House of Lords:

It is the House of Commons which has deceived us – the House of Lords has acted quite in character. It has acted for the Lords as was to be expected from it – it has not belied its name; but the House of Commons has belied its name... it has not acted on behalf of the people. For this reason, the House of Commons has more need of reform than the other. Had we a real House of Commons, such as the one I have described, we might be content to suffer the existence of the Lords along with it; they might be useful in carrying on correspondence with other nations, and, under the wise and popular check of a House of Trades might infuse a spirit of refinement and polish into the representatives of the people, and teach them... secrets of foreign legislation, with which they might be unacquainted.

This seems to echo Benbow's willingness to accept assistance from the likes of Brougham – or more positively, in a twentieth century revolutionary pattern, to foreshadow alliances between *separated* workers and intellectuals. By implication, it also seems to question the possibility of an intellectually self-sufficient, and incipiently self-managing, class of *worker-thinkers*.

Yet within two months Smith's constitutional theory was declared more fully. His 18 May lecture on 'Organisation and Government' was published in *The Crisis* on 24 May 1834. An interim coupling of Wage Labour and Hereditament was still presented as method for organic change, but the eventual achievement was clearly envisaged as a world of fully responsible producers:

There are only three different species of government... monarchy, oligarchy or aristocracy, and democracy.

The only [immediately] practicable species of government is a mixture of all three... We want no new thing, therefore, to renovate society; we want only a more equitable proportion of the different ingredients. Hitherto there has been too much of the monarchical and aristocratical ingredient.

Universal suffrage is democracy...

No other system is consistent with the idea of liberty... but there are two ways by which this universal suffrage may come, and these two make the principal difference between the old Radicals and the Trades Unionists. In the first place, universal suffrage may come, as the Radicals would have it come, by extending the franchise to the whole male population (for no one ever proposes to give the women a vote).

... it is very evident that the Trades Unions or Co-operative system could as yet find no place in such discussions. The public... see no further than the present system; therefore they would merely stimulate their representatives to humble the [Establishment] pensioners, and reduce the burden of taxation. We should merely have a political [Party] struggle, if universal suffrage was gained in this way... But I am disposed to think universal suffrage must come very differently; it must come in a way which will make people not politicians, but tradesmen, producers and distributors of wealth.

‘Practicable’ and ‘equitable’ acceptance of some ongoing Peer participation may still look a little weak alongside a seventeenth-century Leveller view that the Civil War was fought to establish the supremacy of the Commons over the King and Lords. But, taking Britain as he found it, Smith is positively addressing the arrival of industrialisation and widening working-class consciousness.

## SENEX'S *PIONEER* LETTERS AND THAT PAPER'S EDITORIALS.

To accept that 'Shepherd' Smith wrote the fourteen 'Letters to Associated Labour'<sup>8</sup>, one has to believe that he was involved in some enormous role-playing exercise. Smith was then about thirty-three. But *senex* is Latin for, literally, 'an older man', and from the incidental biographical information provided by the author we learn that *he* was well into his fourth score of years. Further, that he was affected by some continuing sickness and did not expect to live much longer:

Ill health, the usual attendant of old age, has interrupted, and must again occasionally interrupt, the series of letters which, brethren, it is one of the highest consolations of my remaining days to address to you (Letter V, 12 April 1834).

We are, in fact, dealing with a writer who was born during the third quarter of the eighteenth century and close to dying. We are also dealing with a writer who could refer to William the Conqueror as 'Billy the Bastard', and phrase the following polemic:

The Tory church party, with Peel, Wellington, Weatherell, Sugden, and others of that stamp, particularly silly Winchelsea, vain Wharncliffe and slobbering Wynford, want to get up the revolutionary cry of the 'Church in danger' – they do not exactly intend to bring about a revolution: but I believe they care little what happens, so long as they can keep the church property under aristocratic patronage. They do love that lump of rubbish dearly. You have seen a dunghill cock and his brood of hens and their chicks upon a heap of muck in a stable-yard. You have observed how they scratch and scratch, and pick and pick. They are in a state of

---

<sup>8</sup> The 'Letters' appeared in *The Pioneer* during the spring and summer of 1834 – between cumulative pages 212 and 419.

voluptuous ecstasy. There is not much clacking or crowing among them; they have no time for anything but scratching and picking, except that now and then the overgrown Dorking dunghill, in the pride of his heart, beats his wings against his sides, stretches out his neck, and crows about with delight, while all the little cock-a-doos, and the hens and broodies, chuckle, and twaddle, and cackle in chorus; and should a stray terrier cur, with a Whiggish-looking snout, like the nose of the Lord Chancellor, happen to run in among them, the clamour becomes absolutely revolutionary, as they all at once rush upon him to drive him off their sacred territory (Letter XIV, 28 June 1834).

This is, anyway, altogether too earthy to be Smith. In my view, we are dealing with William Cobbett (1762-1835) in the last year of his life.

The 'dunghill' description is of a part with Cobbett's SHOY-BOY (scarecrow) one of Brougham and the moderate reformers, quoted at length from the *Political Register* of 1 September 1830 by E. P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class*.<sup>9</sup> Both read as classic examples of that Cobbett device which Thompson calls 'the homely, practical analogy, most commonly taken from rural life'. Likewise, 'silly Winchelsea... slobbering Wynford' echo that Cobbett bluntness of naming, 'Parson Malthus... the Thing', which, in Thompson's words, 'made even Shelley blench'.

Thompson considers Cobbett's 'tone' in comparison with that of William Hazlitt, and says that the former would never have written, as the latter did, of 'our State-paupers':

---

<sup>9</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London 1963. The discussion of Cobbett's phrasing is in Section II of Chapter 16, 'Class Consciousness'.

Since his every sinew was strained to make his audience see the stock-jobbers and placemen as *them*; and as a corollary, he could not have written, with this sense of distance, of ‘the children of the poor’ – he would have said (to his audience) ‘*your* children’ or would have given a particular example.

Similarly, Anthony Arblaster quotes from the *Register*:<sup>10</sup>

I say WE, because I never do and I never can separate myself... from the labouring classes.

And Cobbett as Senex, with proving attack on Cobbett’s famously hated newspaper man, gives us this:

Your meeting in Copenhagen – fields on the 21st... and your subsequent march to Whitehall, merits, BRETHREN, and will obtain, whatever your enemies assert, the applause and gratitude of all who sincerely love their fellow creatures. That miserable scribbler, the editor of the *Times*... has been instructed to stigmatize your objects, and to condemn your pacific display...

But let the *Times* deal with US, BRETHREN, as it may think pleasing to its patrons; WE look for the approbation of a wider and better-informed portion of the public than those who comprise the bulk of his readers... who is it that reproves US for the sacrifice WE made on the twenty-first? Truly those who have boasted of the numbers in which WE have assembled on occasions which they are pleased to call *loyal*; who have extolled US when they saw US in the train of any man in power, whether a Wellington or a Grey; and who, a few years ago, boasted of the multitudes with which WE appeared ready to support the Whigs and their most promising of all promising administrations. No, BRETHREN... your proceedings on the twenty-first is

---

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Arblaster, ‘William Corbett and the Struggle for Parliamentary Reform’, in David Rubinstein (ed.), *People for the People*, London and New York 1973.



nothing less than this – *the productive class reproofing the executive power for the injustice committed against certain of its members*. And the executive power, in the persons of the ministers of the crown, *do stand reproofed by you*, and *will stand reproofed by you* in the page of history to the end of time. I know the sort of sneer that the editor of the *Times*, and those of his kidney, will endeavour to throw upon this assertion... Were history to continue to be written as it has been heretofore, such *reproof* might be suffered to slide away from the pages in which the people were forgotten, and kings and courtiers only named. But WE shall be for the future OUR own historians; and statesmen shall learn to dread the recorded condemnations of the people. (Letter VI, 3 May 1834).

It is a fact that Smith also used the inclusive pronouns:

*We* have never yet had a House of Commons. It is merely a name they have given that aristocratical house at St. Stephen's which is called the House of the People... *We* shall have a new set of boroughs when *our* unions are organised (*The Crisis*, 12 April 1834, my italics 2000).

But his association is less lusty, half-way to Hazlitt as it were, and one will search his lectures in vain for a mention of 'Brethren'. The capital lettering of *whole words* in the 'Copenhagen Fields' quotation is mine. I will here do the same for another extract containing the 'B', 'O', and 'W' words alongside a rural analogy.

Social liberty must precede political liberty... before the horse is turned out to enjoy freedom in the green meadow he must be unharnessed from the shafts of the wagon. OUR position, BRETHREN, is not political and it cannot become political with any benefit to OURSELVES until WE have found means to obtain a greater independent weight in society. This can only be the result of Unions.

In an earlier article, ‘Sam Mainwaring and the Autonomist Tradition’ (*Llafur*, 1986), I have attributed this, following Max Beer (*A History of British Socialism*), to ‘Shepherd’ Smith. The previous attribution was wrong. The extract originates in Letter XII. That letter is titled ‘Universal Suffrage as a Principle of Union’, and the context of its publication is of wider relevance for an appreciation of anti-parliamentary thought. For a full understanding, one needs to read it together with Letters VIII and X as well as two *Pioneer* editorials (or leading articles) which were undoubtedly written or heavily influenced by Smith. The 1834 date order of the whole set of items is as follows:

17 May	Letter VIII, ‘The Representation of the Productive Classes in Parliament’ (Cobbett).
31 May	Leading article, ‘Universal Suffrage’ (Smith or Morrison/Smith).
	Letter X, ‘On the Pretended Ignorance of the Labouring Classes’ (Cobbett).
7 June	Leading article, ‘Universal Suffrage – No. 2’ (Smith or Morrison/Smith).
14 June	Letter XII, ‘Universal Suffrage as a Principle of Union’ (Cobbett).

In Letter VIII, Cobbett, himself one of its Members, says that the reformed Parliament was, so far, ‘unworthy of our confidence’. He exhorts the productive classes to ‘UNION... one *Grand Consolidated* UNION’, but, also, ‘to look attentively to *the state of our representation in the legislature*’:

We perceive that our direct influence in the House of Commons is very small... *Property* regards *Labour* as a beast of burden; and though there may be some of the property-people more inclined to soothe it, to stroke it and even to feed it, than others, yet they all dread the idea of letting it loose... and say, that this beast of burden is actually a wild beast, and that it would, if set at liberty, lay waste and devour all the property in the land!... Is it likely that we will destroy that which is our own offspring? No, brethren, we have no madness of that nature in us: we are more likely to increase and to improve it, and turn it to good account, than to destroy it. We certainly shall instruct the representatives of the great productive [class?], when we have the pleasure of sending such representatives to the national parliament, to look after our darling offspring, property, and to be very watchful that it does not go astray, as it has been sadly doing, for the want of our potential care and attention... We shall inquire into its transactions at the Treasury, and balk [sic] the foolish fondness it has acquired for playing at soldiers. We shall show it must act for the general benefit, and particularly how it must obey the *fifth* commandment, by honouring its parents, its fathers and mothers... And we would advise property to remember that building workhouses for starving and toiling parents is not honouring them...

Yes, brethren, productive labour must, indispensably, take its seat in the senate.

This reads as a call for an increased, and possibly independent, 'Labour' presence in a further reformed Parliament. Bronterre O'Brien thought he saw a weakening in the 'anti-parliamentary' position of *The Pioneer*. The editor, James Morrison, and his confidante, Smith, were forced to reply – in the first of the Leading Articles:

We are in some measure called upon to give our opinion upon this subject [Universal Suffrage], on account of some humorous whim of the *Poor Man's Guardian* of last

week... It was evident that he [O'Brien] wished the public to understand that we are changing our opinions, and beginning to follow the cart-ruts of the *Guardian* and the old radicals...

But... we have been advocates for universal suffrage ever since the *Pioneer* had a being. Universal Suffrage is the fundamental principle of a Trades' Union, where every brother is understood to have a voice in the management of the common affairs of the trade... it is universal suffrage which begins with the elements of government and not, like the democratic principle of the *Guardian* and his friends, with the universal business of political legislation.

In such a generalised milieu as the latter, the mass of producers were seen, untrained, as 'so short sighted that they look only to partial release: the diminution of taxation, the separation of church and state, the revision of the pension list, and... other milk-and-water favours':

and, when they have received these... pray where are they? Is the power of private capital and monopoly in any wise impaired? Is the system of commercial competition paralysed? And, finally, have the working classes obtained any practical knowledge by merely scrutinizing the measures of government... No, none of these objects are gained. There is only one way of gaining them, and that is by a general association of the people for the purpose of initiating themselves into the practice of conducting those affairs in which they have some experience. The Unions are... the only mode by which universal suffrage can safely be obtained, because it is obtained by practice...

Such is our opinion of the growing power and growing intelligence of a Trades' Union, that... it will become... a most influential, we might almost say *dictatorial* [my italics], part of the body politic... for if every member of the Union be a constituent, and the Union itself become a vital and influential member of the state, it instantly erects itself into a House of Trades.

We hear, again, Smith's message at Charlotte Street and in the *Crisis* of the previous month.

One cannot imagine Cobbett agreeing to be censored but it is perhaps, also, a sign of Morrison's fairness as an editor that in the same *Pioneer* issue as carried the reply, Senex is allowed to attack the idea that the working classes were insufficiently educated to participate in democratised government. As conclusive evidence that Senex is not Smith, this is Cobbett as Senex opposing Smith's views:<sup>11</sup>

There is a most discouraging opinion, brethren, frequently in the mouths of our oppressors and their tools, which is sometimes received and countenanced by some among ourselves... I have heard it repeatedly asserted, and very lately by a person who advocates the justice of your cause, that the majority of you are too ignorant to conduct your own affairs...

In the old fashioned mills, where horses were used, they were frequently bandaged and blinded, to prevent the poor animals becoming giddy, and because in that state, as I have been told, they would work harder. Our task-masters, upon the same principle, blind us as much as they can; and when they find that they cannot altogether put out our eyes, they endeavour to persuade us either that we cannot see, or that we are giddy and deluded...

Brethren, there is an immensity of benefit in what is called education; but do not suffer yourselves to be tricked and bamboozled out of your rights under the notion that you must have education before you are fit to have justice. Education is a very good thing; but... there is such a thing as education without knowledge, and there is also such a

---

<sup>11</sup> *The Pioneer*, 31 May 1834. The Leading Article ('Universal Suffrage'), as first item, is immediately followed by Letter X ('On the Pretended Ignorance of the Labouring Classes').

thing as knowledge without education; and of these two things the last is much better than the first... There are many learned men who are very great fools...

Even in point of book-knowledge... of which so much is thought at the present day [1834], the barons and the first representatives of the commons, five hundred years ago, were far more ignorant than the majority of ourselves, brethren, are at present; but they depended on their perception, their common-sense... They advanced themselves and you, their descendents, one degree in the scale of society... it is for you, by their example... and with far greater advantages, to advance yourselves and your immediate posterity the next degree.

A week later, in the second Leading Article, Smith retreads his earlier ground, and enlarges his bicameral vision:

There are, no doubt, many individuals amongst the common people, who are equal in point of intellect and general knowledge to the very best of the nobility and gentry of England; but, as a body, the people are far inferior in intellectual attainments. A great proportion of them cannot read... their minds are as confined in their views of social policy, as their knowledge of society is confined to the little circumference of manufacturing industry, in which... they were brought into being... What can such people know of general politics? Nothing: and therefore for general politics they are not fit.

To govern a trade, and to govern a state... are two very different things: the one requires particular experience, the other requires general experience... These two characters are both extremely useful in their place; and we shall now show our readers to what sort of use we should apply them. They form the materials for two distinct houses of legislature – the one for particular trades and the other for general business.

The house for particular trades is a real House of Commons, composed of tradesmen *only* – not a single

individual being there who is not, or has not, been a producer, skilled in some species of handicraft, and delegated by his Union to represent their interests in Parliament. Thus, the shoemakers, carpenters, tailors...

Having got universal suffrage and a House of Trades, by means of Trades' Unions, let us now see how we should make up the other house. Let that be composed of the delegates of all the rest of the community; *let the rich and the noble unite themselves* [my italics] as they think proper, and find representation for themselves to act in concert with the trades – the one party to exist and act as a check upon the other. The aristocracy... are not acquainted with any particular art, but they are generally conversant with subjects of taste, literature and science, and all the refinements of intellect... None could be better qualified... than gentlemen of enlightened minds, who have seen the world, who have studied the language of other nations, and can correspond with the different inhabitants of the globe... amateurs and connoisseurs in the fine arts, and highly gifted with all that polish of mind which is not to be expected from a mere tradesman, but which is indispensable in the leaders and governors of a country... These would form an Upper House, and the other our Commons; and not a member of the state could say that he was not fully represented in both houses.

This is hardly the producers as a 'dictatorial part of the body politic'. *Pioneer* readers could understandably be confused. Although sighting the possibility of government by labour *qua* labour, Smith was not yet ready to wholly disengage from an existing elitism.

One week later again, Cobbett begins Letter XII thus:

Circumstances, of which, brethren, you must all be pretty well aware, have recently drawn my attention to the subject of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE; a subject on which I have written and spoken at various periods... a subject which has at times awakened the most enlivening emotions... that I

ever felt; a subject which I promise you, brethren, I will never lose sight of, until death consigns me to the grave.

His Finality ignores the concept of a House of Trades working in tandem with an aristocratic or gentry body. *His* practicality is directed at his perceived impossibility of incompatible interests working together:

The basis of representation, on which the branch of the legislative, falsely and ridiculously called the 'House of Commons', is constituted, is *property*. The men who have got possession of property... make laws for the preservation of it in their own hands; while those who create that property, or are endeavouring by labour and by prudence to get hold of a part of it, though they are numerous, active, and, in a very considerable degree, intelligent, are denied their right to interfere in making the laws...

HE THEN PACES HIS ACT. In the key passage, he says of Universal Suffrage: 'No: not yet!'; the subsequent words, in full, being:

social liberty must precede political liberty. While we are in a state of social slavery, our rights would be exercised for our tyrannic employers, and not for our own benefit, and we should be made subservient to their purposes, or, what is worse, to their parties, who, with our aid, would rush into... conflicts with one another. No; before the horse is turned out to enjoy his freedom in the green meadow, he must be unharnessed from the shafts of the wagon; the galling rein that holds back his neck to the collar must be loosened, the bit must be taken from his mouth, and the collar itself from his shoulder; nor will he go forth in the valley rejoicing in his strength, while lumber of the geer [sic] hangs over his loins and encumbers his feet.



which he follows, further on, with:

where and how, brethren, shall we obtain... the safeguards of short parliaments, and the ballot by the side of it?... I witnessed, last election, when reform was in every man's mouth, and when thousands actually believed that we had accomplished a great work of liberty, the most disgusting exertions of party influence on the behalf of the Whigs, in a county where there was no necessity to disguise their wonderful new bill by any interference with the ten-pound voters... I saw plainly enough, and I said then<sup>12</sup> as I have repeatedly asserted since, that 'our position, brethren, is not political, and that it cannot become political with any benefit to ourselves, until we have found means to obtain a greater independent weight in society'. This must be the result of UNION.

For Cobbett, the producers' priorities were 'to change *your wages* into a fair *share of* profits of the productive concern in which you are employed'.

The identification of Senex as Cobbett and not Smith, and an understanding that Cobbett and Smith wrote *at* each other, presents a framework in which to examine, anew, the extent of a 'Syndicalist' presence in 1834. The fact that Cobbett's plea for an industrial robustness *outside* Parliament was separated from Smith's vision of an Industrial chamber *within* a differently constituted Parliament means that one cannot find, completely formed, in their debate, an institutional prescription for Syndicalism. What one has are *elements* which either of them, or another (James Morrison died young), could have put together and enlarged on. Beer, who unequivocally identifies Smith as

---

<sup>12</sup> Cobbett here appears to be referring to an earlier (probably 1832) declaration, and it would be interesting to see what a search of the *Register* revealed.

Senex, further occludes matters by failing to mention Smith's advocacy of an 'Upper House'.

In effect, what Smith was asking for in his 'House of Trades' was an extension of the franchise to include all skilled male workers (or, at least, those in demand and unionised), and that they then be allowed to influence decision taking by an enlightened aristocracy. Nevertheless, his proposal for the representation of *occupational* constituencies does mark a significant step towards the concept of rule by labour *qua* labour. What it lacked, of course, was just that exclusiveness, that pursuit of autonomy, which Cobbett's hatred of 'property – people' might have provided.

Raymond Williams, in *Culture and Society*<sup>13</sup>, reminds us how Cobbett's assault on the inequities of industrialism was rooted in an older England, and it is this which makes understandable the transition from one-nation Tory to populist Radical and, eventually, to something more:

Aye! you may wince; you may cry Jacobin and Leveller as long as you please. I wish to see the poor men of England what the poor men of England were when I was born... (*Political Register*, 28 February 1807, quoted in *Culture and Society 1780-1950*).

In the *Pioneer* Letter I, Senex sets out his end-of-life judgement in what seem to us almost Marxist terms:

---

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, London 1958. He evaluates Cobbett in Section (i) of Chapter I, where he gives the 1807 *Register* reference I include.

You kicked, you stretched out your limbs to their full extent, you held your head erect, and you told the proud and perverse capitalists that you were MEN, and that, instead of their cramming you into their narrow system, in which it was impossible for you, as human beings to exist, you would have a system of your own, made in every respect conformable to your proper dimensions, as *men!*

Brethren, you are beginning to act upon this enlarged system. It is the system of associated labour. There are three states of labour –

Enslaved, or compulsory labour  
Hireling, or marketable labour  
Free, or associated labour.

These last quotes come from the first half-dozen paragraphs of the set of Letters – which John Saville ('J. E. Smith and the Owenite Movement 1833-34' in *Robert Owen : Prophet of the Poor*)<sup>14</sup> calls 'the most theoretically integrated of all Smith's writings'. Saville is, presumably, following Beer, although covering himself with: 'It is assumed here that James Smith was their author' and mention of G. D. H. Cole's 'rather casual query of that matter', i.e. in *A History of Socialist Thought*. One might now usefully amend the opinion to 'the most theoretically integrated of all Cobbett's writings', whilst agreeing with E. P. Thompson's and Raymond Williams' more widely based assessment that the some-time Tory had not been, primarily, an Ideas person. In the Letters, one is, after all, dealing with an *old man's* Testament.

---

<sup>14</sup> John Saville, 'J. E. Smith and the Owenite Movement 1833-1834' forms Chapter Six of S. Pollard and J. Salt (eds.), *Robert Owen, Prophet of the Poor*, London 1971.

Raymond Aron tells us that 'Each age chooses its own past'<sup>15</sup>, and E. H. Carr says 'Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment'.<sup>16</sup> Although not published until after the First World War, Max Beer's book was completed in the same year as *The Miners' Next Step*, and his selectivity may well have been affected by the Syndicalist activity of that period. In looking again at 1834, I have benefited from my own more recent experience as a practitioner of decentralisation and, in particular, from a study of the multi-cameral nature of Tito's Yugoslavia. However, I think one needs to pass beyond the sociology of historical writing into old fashioned epistemology. Beer was fully aware of Smith's dates (1801-1857), and I am sure that if Thompson had been involved in a textual analysis of Senex's Letters then Cobbett's authorship would have been recognised before now.

That recognition has important ramifications for my further examination of Sam Mainwaring's inheritance. I decided, intuitively, to go back before his birth and look for a 'pre-Chartist Endurance'. I found a bigger paradox than that which I mention in my discussion of Benbow's pamphlet. It is that the handing on of a specifically 'Trade Union' viewpoint does not cease with the closure of the *Crisis* (by Owen as owner) and the *Pioneer* (at Owen's instigation) in the summer of 1834. Rather, one can envisage it being carried forward on a longerstanding current of protest, that of Cobbett<sup>17</sup>, which

---

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Aron, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, Boston, 1961 (English translation of a French work published in Paris). Cited in Serge Gagnon, *Man and His Past: The Nature and Role of Historiography*, Montreal 1982.

<sup>16</sup> Most specifically, in Chapter 2 of E. H. Carr, *What is History?*, London 1961, one finds: 'When you take up a historical work, it is not enough to look for the author's name on the title page – look also for the date of publication and writing...'

<sup>17</sup> Ian Dyck, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture*, Cambridge 1992, argues that Cobbett's increasing class consciousness and 'closing political testament' derived, above all, from the nastiness of Poor Law Amendment. Dyck appears to be unaware of the Senex authorship.

*individuals* were free to channel through those trade societies which stood substantially apart from Chartism, and which in the case of the amalgamating Engineers (Mainwaring's union) emerged as the first of the New Model. My next chapter, therefore, will deal, inter-alia, with the Engineers in the early 1850s – by which time Mainwaring was in employment. It will also be a convenient context in which to introduce the Anarchist strand.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE ENGINEERS MEET THE POSITIVISTS AND OTHERS

Between 2 April and 4 June 1937, Max Nettlau<sup>1</sup>, ‘the Herodotus of Anarchy’, contributed a series of articles to the British anti-Fascist fortnightly *Spain and The World*.<sup>2</sup> Under the overall heading *Anarchist Ideals From The Root*, these were titled:

- I ‘William Godwin’s *Political Justice* (1793).’
- II ‘From Winstanley and Godwin to 1850.’
- III ‘The Anarchist Revival In The Wake Of The Revolution of 1848.’
- IV ‘Joseph Lane and William Morris.’
- V ‘Kropotkin Since 1866, Later Developments, Conclusion.’

The paper, published from Whiteway Colony, a Cotswold anarchist commune, was taken regularly by fourteen subscribers at Neath, where the Borough Council provided free accommodation for the town’s Spanish [Republican] Aid Committee.

Half a century earlier, Nettlau had been one of two new Honorary Members elected by the 1887 Council of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion (the other being Sir S. W. Griffith, Welsh-born Prime Minister of Queensland). The Austrian (not the Australian) had contributed ‘Observations on the Welsh Pronouns’ (49 pages), ‘Observations on the

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Max Nettlau (1865-1944) was born in Neuwaldegg near Vienna – son of the Court Gardener to Prince Schwarzenberg.

<sup>2</sup> *Spain and The World* was started by Vernon Richards, a twenty year old civil engineer, in December 1936. His father-in-law, Camillo Berneri, an Italian opponent to Benito Mussolini, was assassinated by Barcelona Communists in May 1937.

Welsh Verbs' (64 pages), and 'Observations on the Welsh Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs' (45 pages) to Volume VIII, Part 1, and Volume IX, Parts 1 and 2, of *Y Cymmrodor*. A Volume IX, Part 1, review of his *Beiträge Zur Cymrischen Grammatik* said:

...Though not yet twenty-three years of age, he has received and profited by the best linguistic training that the universities of Germany, pre-eminent in this branch, can afford. He has worked in Berlin under Brückner; Hoffory, Hübner, Oldenburg, Scherer, Johannes Schmidt, Schott and Weber; in Vienna under Miklosich and Muller; in Leipsic under Kogel, Laskian and Windisch...

More interestingly for our present purpose, the review also stated that 'notwithstanding this, and his visits to London and Oxford, it is not quite clear whence he has acquired his extensive acquaintance with Cymric', and continues:

Instruction in Welsh is not easy to obtain in Germany, contemporary German Celtists having given their chief attention to Irish; and, with the exception of Schuhardt, we cannot recall any prominent scholar east of the Rhine capable of teaching it.

Nettlau, himself, throws some light on the matter in his Appendix to the 'Verbs' where, in a footnote, he touches on assistance provided by 'my friend Mr. S. Mainwaring'<sup>3</sup>. In notable conjunction, writing of 1887 in the fourth of his *Spain and The World* articles he also says that 'Sam Mainwaring...stood up once more for complete socialism in Godwin's true sense – a socialism guaranteeing all the fruits of freedom as

---

<sup>3</sup> *Y Cymmrodor*, Volume IX (1888).

well as the fruits of solidarity'<sup>4</sup>. Both references relate to that year in the August of which Mainwaring, accompanied by German speaking Kitz, conducted his first propaganda tour of upland Glamorgan. Had he known about them, the set of associations might have confounded another Cymmrodorion member of that time – Lascelles Carr, editor of the *Western Mail*. It was Carr's newspaper which characterised Mainwaring's Pontypridd Rocking Stone audiences as 'rabble'. Regarding continuity among 'rabble-rousers', we can, too, note in passing that the collector for the fourteen 1937 subscribers was Sam Mainwaring junior – steelworker, sometime California member of the Wobblies, first-name friend of Emma Goldman when she spoke at Neath in 1925, and nephew of our hero of the same name<sup>5</sup>.

However, the continuity I am principally concerned with here is the longer term one reflected in Nettlau's *Spain and The World* articles. Of the five people mentioned in the titles, Sam Mainwaring was a personal friend of three: Lane (author of an *Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*), Morris and Kropotkin – and their relationships will loom large in later chapters. Winstanley connects with the 'myth' of Mera Ranters mentioned in Chapter One and, perhaps, with a memory of Common Law Democracy which I shall highlight in the chapter. Godwin, transcends centuries and his extended influence on proletarian thinkers will be considered further in this chapter. The overall concern of the present chapter, with the early 1850s, springs from Nettlau's third article: 'The Anarchist Revival In The Wake of The Revolution of 1848'. There he says:

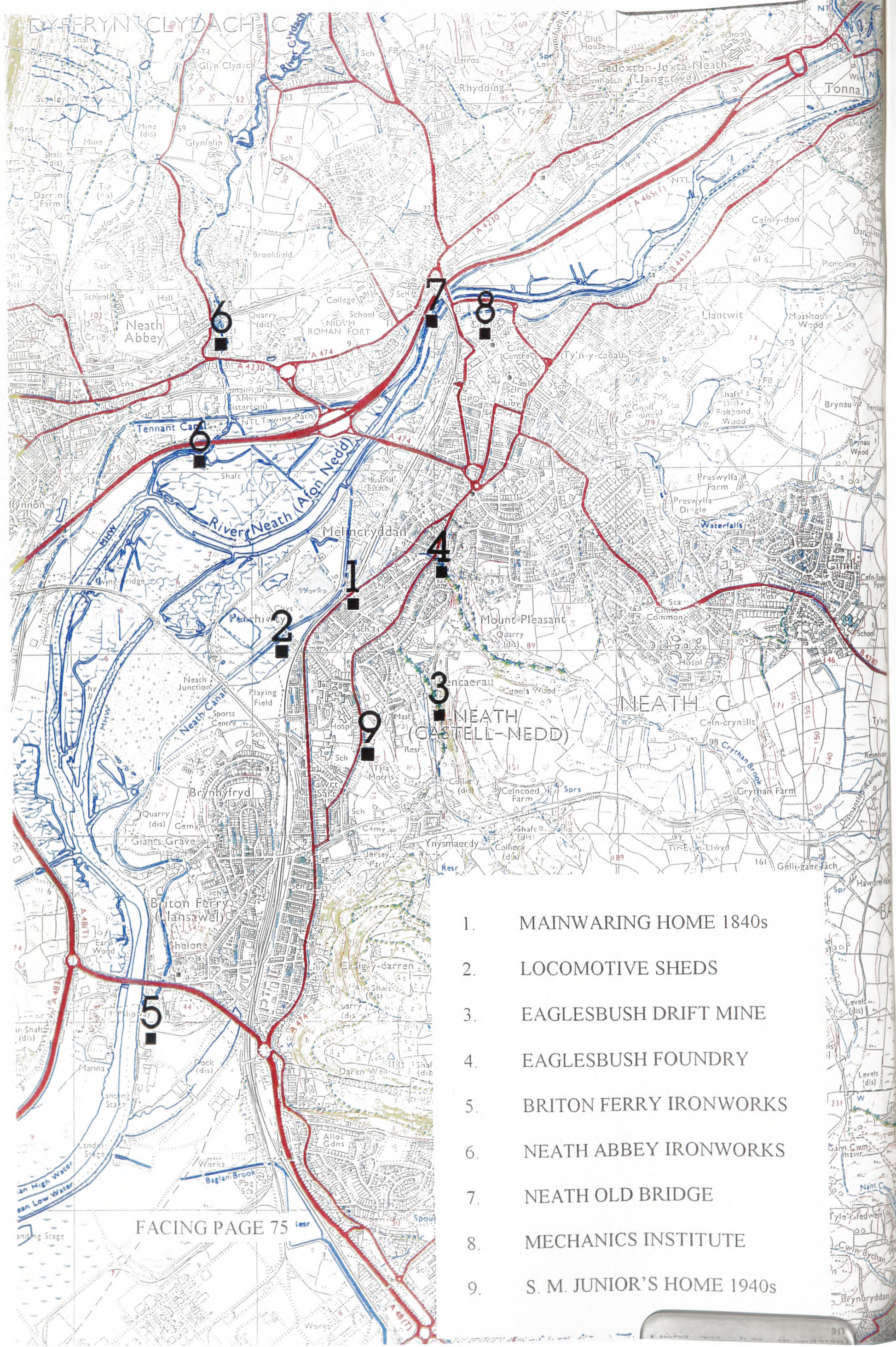
---

<sup>4</sup> *Spain and The World*, 19 May 1937.

<sup>5</sup> See letter from Sam Mainwaring junior, *Spain and The World*, 5 January 1938. In addition to his 14 regular purchasers at Neath, he had, on Sunday 19 December 1937, sold 40 copies of the paper in Port Talbot.







1. MAINWARING HOME 1840s
2. LOCOMOTIVE SHEDS
3. EAGLESBUSH DRIFT MINE
4. EAGLESBUSH FOUNDRY
5. BRITON FERRY IRONWORKS
6. NEATH ABBEY IRONWORKS
7. NEATH OLD BRIDGE
8. MECHANICS INSTITUTE
9. S. M. JUNIOR'S HOME 1940s

FACING PAGE 75

...Continental and American experience, the breakdown of illusions on Chartism and sectarian Socialism, recollection of the good old Godwinian tradition and the poignant logic of powerful authors like Proudhon...rekindled a libertarian current in London...

At Neath in those years, Sam Mainwaring, bearer of a Mera name, had commenced in paid employment – most probably on the young boy fringes of mechanical engineering and quite possibly with Brunel’s South Wales (later Great Western) Railway which reached the town in 1850, passed in front of Sam’s Penrhiwtyn home, and subsequently erected locomotive sheds within half-a-mile of the house. Other possibilities include the Eaglesbush Colliery and its inclined tramway on the hill behind, Gardiner’s Eaglesbush Foundry and Forge, owned by a Quaker mayor and utilising the nearby Cryddan brook, and the Briton Ferry Ironworks. The internationally renowned Neath Abbey ‘bespoke’ iron and engineering works, owned by the Quaker Prices and Foxes, was visible a mile distant across marsh and river although twice as far by way of the upstream, town, bridge<sup>6</sup>. These various locations are shown on the modern map facing this page.

Sam’s eldest brother, Will, eighteen years older and apparently a guiding influence, seems to have been employed at the Briton Ferry works, which commenced operations, an acceptable mile and a half walk from the Mainwaring home, in 1847. His occupation is

---

<sup>6</sup> Close to where the Mainwarings lived, there is an old causeway running across the marsh towards the river bank, and it is possible that this together with use of a small boat could have given quicker access to Neath Abbey. The fact that Sankey Gardiner is also listed in an 1852 trade directory as one of three ships chandlers in business at Neath or Briton Ferry indicates the then ‘port’ character of the estuary. Steamships were *built* at Neath Abbey.

given in the March 1851 Census as 'Baller' and on his May 1851 Marriage Certificate as 'Baller at Ironworks'. The 'Ferry works, the first to be built on the South Wales coast, adjacent to deep water, initially comprised twelve puddling furnaces, a forge train, twelve *balling* or reheating furnaces and a rail mill. Much of the plant had been manufactured at Neath Abbey; the sixty-inch steam engine and four boilers costing £3,750 compared to £90 for each of the twenty four furnaces. The balling furnaces allowed puddled bar to be reheated to 'welding temperatures' prior to rolling for rails<sup>7</sup>. The Quakers did not, themselves, engage in that sort of mass production, but Will's Aberdare 1861 Census and 1892 Death Certificate entries as, respectively, 'Fitter (Ironworks)' and 'Engine Fitter' could suggest that he served some part of an apprenticeship at Neath Abbey or a comparable place<sup>8</sup>.

A. R. Wallace, Charles Darwin's later collaborator on Natural Selection, who lived in Neath for much of the 1840s and lectured at the Mechanics Institute, has left this 1843 description of the skilled workingmen's style:

When times are good their wages are such as to afford them many luxuries which the poor farmer considers too extravagant. Instead of living on vegetable diet with cheese and buttermilk, the luxuriate on flesh and fowl, and often on game too, of their own procuring. But in their dress is the greatest difference. The farmer is almost always dressed the same, except that on Sundays and market days it is newer.

---

<sup>7</sup> The 'Ferry works did not initially possess blast furnaces (two were erected in the period 1854-1856), and pig iron would have been bought in, probably from the Aberdare area whence it could be transported by tramway to the head of the Neath Canal, which terminated at its sea end on the riverside in Briton Ferry adjacent to the works. See C. W. Roberts, *A Legacy From Victorian Enterprise: The Briton Ferry Ironworks and the daughter companies*, Gloucester, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Equally, of course, Will could have learned 'on the job'. Sam, though, was a fully trained man.

But the difference between the collier or furnaceman at his work – when he is half naked, begrimed from head to foot, labouring either in the bowels of the earth or among roaring fires, and looking more like demon than man – and on holidays dressed in a suit of clothes that would not disgrace an English gentleman, is most remarkable. It is nothing uncommon to see these men dressed in a coat and trousers of *fine black cloth*, elegant waistcoat, fine suit, beaver hat, Wellington boots, and a fine silk handkerchief in his pocket; and instead of being ridiculous as the clumsy farmer would be in such a dress, wearing it with a quiet, unconcerned and gentlemanly air<sup>9</sup>.

We can assume that the women-folk were equally well done by, for best, and Wallace goes on to tell us that the colliers and ironworkers were ‘far more intellectual than the farmers’, and paid more attention to their own and their children’s education. In the surveyor-scientist’s view, many of them were ‘well informed on most subjects’.

Wallace says that the wages which they were paid – in good times £2-£3 a week – prevented them, with moderate care, from ever falling into great distress. He thought that they lived well, ‘which the poor farmer does not’, and, though many of them had a bit of land and all a potato ground, that the turnpike grievances, poor rates and tithes did not affect them ‘as compared with the farmers’. One might stress that injury could make a massive difference, but the essential picture is of a small-town *class-in-a place*, capable of combining significant, if variable, industrial income with subsistence smallholding and poaching. Equipped, also, with the solidarity of extended families, the work gangs

---

<sup>9</sup> A. R. Wallace, *My Life*, London 1905. The comparisons are made in an article on ‘The South Wales Farmer’ which is reproduced in full in the autobiography. The article was written after the Rebecca Riots of the early 1840s when the destruction of toll-gates spread from West Wales to Glamorgan. Wallace was then about nineteen years of age.

provided a platform for entry into a wider, English and Continental, world of Associative Ideas.

The cultural construct of ‘class-in-a place’ as opposed to simple ‘class’ and ‘nationality’ is mine, and will be returned to in my Conclusion. For an early 1850s view of the wider, Associative, world, Nettlau tells us to look at *The Leader*, the London weekly edited by G. H. Lewes, companion of George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), and Thornton Hunt, companion of Mrs. Lewes<sup>10</sup>. As *the* historian of Anarchism, the Austrian says that 1851 to 1854 issues of the paper ‘teem with articles and discussion on the works of...Proudhon, and on Modern Times’ – the latter being a Long Island, New York, commune. We can only speculate as to whether Nettlau discovered the publication for himself or whether, in backward progression from the present writer, he was in turn pointed towards it. Of one thing, though, we can be sure. The early *Leader*, concerned with all the then varieties of ‘Association’ and ‘Socialism’, was outstanding in its explanation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers’ case during the great lock-out of 1852; sections of it becoming, in effect, a Society organ. This support, arriving at a time when the Chartist leader Ernest Jones was attacking the union<sup>11</sup>, raises the question of how much individual Engineer readers (who included men of Will Mainwaring’s generation) were influenced by the amalgam of anti-, and extra-, parliamentary ideas which the paper also discussed. We can

---

<sup>10</sup> R. G. Cox, ‘The Reviews and Magazines’ in B. Ford (ed.) *From Dickens to Hardy: Volume 6, The Pelican Guide to English Literature*, London 1979, refers to ‘Lewes’ Positivist *Leader*’, but a reading of the paper shows that Lewes recognised Hunt as managing editor. According to F. B. Smith, *Radical Artisan*, Manchester, 1973 (a biography of W. J. Linton), Hunt aimed for a ‘middle-class, free-thinking, reformist audience, but appealing also to respectable...artisans’. G. J. Holyoake was employed as office manager and Hunt’s ‘errand boy’.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Jones’ ‘The resources wasted in the Trades Union might have carried the Charter’ and ‘*All trades unions are lamentable fallacies. All co-operative efforts are waste, misdirection of time, means and energy...*’ in *Notes To The People* pieces of this period.

approach that problematic by considering the treatment of the lock-out alongside the *Leader* review of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIX Siècle* (first published in July 1851 but unavailable in English until 1923) and the paper's coverage of two other, London-based, sets of historical opinion – those of F. W. Newman and J. T. Smith. The Proudhon review will also enable us to take stock of Karl Marx's contemporary position. Indeed, we have the opportunity to place Marx alongside Godwin, which is certainly the position they occupied in the minds of some mid-nineteenth century autodidacts. As a final prothesis, we can here set out some observations of Marx's soon-to-be, and closest, colleague Frederick Engels. Writing a year or so after Wallace's description, he gives us, in his 1845 *Condition of the Working Class in England*, these further glimpses of the self-tutored:

...in how great a measure the English proletariat has succeeded in attaining independent education is shown especially by the fact that the epoch-making products of modern philosophical, political and poetical literature are read by workingmen almost exclusively. The bourgeois, enslaved by social conditions and the prejudices involved in them, trembles, blesses and crosses himself before everything which really paves the way for progress; the proletarian has open eyes for it, and studies it with pleasure and success...Strauss' *Life of Jesus* and Proudhon's *Property*...Shelley, and Byron, with his glowing sensuality and his bitter satire upon our existing society, find most of their readers in the proletariat; the bourgeoisie owns only castrated editions...cut down in accordance with the hypocritical morality of to-day. The two great practical philosophers of latest date, Bentham and Godwin, are, especially the latter, almost exclusively the property of the proletariat; for though Bentham has a school within the Radical bourgeoisie, it is only the proletariat and the Socialists who have succeeded in developing his teachings a step forward. The proletariat has formed upon

this basis a literature, which consists chiefly of journals and pamphlets...far in advance of the whole bourgeois literature<sup>12</sup>.

This perceived ability of parts of the working class, in the realm of Culture, is something to be carried forward in our discussion of Self-Management and Self-Government.

## **THE LOCK OUT**

In 1838 the Manchester based Friendly Union of Mechanics joined with the Yorkshire Mechanics Friendly Society to form the Journeyman Steam Engine and Machine Makers Friendly Society ('the Old Mechanics'). In 1851, around the time Sam Mainwaring was entering employment, further affiliations led to the creation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Machinists, Smiths, Millwrights and Patternmakers (the ASE, which was later to become the AEU); the enlarged organisation setting up headquarters in London. The first Secretary was William Allan, a Scotsman who had moved south to work at Crewe, and another leading figure on the seven man Executive Council was William Newton, a Londoner<sup>13</sup>.

On Christmas Eve 1851, the Council published a circular recommending that the union's 12,000 members stop doing piecework and systematic overtime after 31 December. Samuel Fielden, a Todmorden cotton manufacturer and son of the John Fielden (Cobbett's

---

<sup>12</sup> Quotation from a 1969 English edition, with Introduction by Eric Hobsbawn.

<sup>13</sup> Harry Browne, *The Rise of British Trade Unions 1825-1914*, London, 1979, explains Allan and Newton's push for further amalgamations, following the arrest of 'Old Mechanics' members during an 1846 strike at Newton-le-Willows. Document 7 in Part 4 is particularly relevant to the present discussion.

fellow Member for Oldham) who had successfully piloted a Ten Hours Bill through Parliament in 1847, set out the preceding and succeeding events in a letter to *The Times* of 2 March 1852, which was subsequently quoted at length in the *Leader* of 6 March. That statement taken together with letters from Allan and speeches by Newton, which were respectively printed and reported in the *Leader*, form the basis of the following account.

For two years previously there had been a dispute at Hibbert and Platt's works, Oldham; the three sources of contention being: 1. The use of new machinery by partly trained men to do work previously done by all-round engineers, 2. Piecework, as practised, 3. Systematic overtime. In May 1851, John Platt, the active partner in the firm, signed an agreement promising that a new system, conceding at least some of the skilled men's demands, would be introduced after Christmas, provided work continued under the existing arrangements until then. Fielden took the view that Platt never intended to keep the promise, and that it was given only to get work in hand finished and to allow time for the formation of, in the former's words, a 'combination of masters who, on the 10th day of January, passed an indiscriminate sentence of starvation on 60,000 people.'

The ASE circular of 24 December ('The Manifesto') took up a nationally applicable position on piecework and overtime. Newton, speaking at the Hall of Commerce, Threadneedle Street, London on 30 December said that a man working ten hours a day for six days a week should be able to earn enough to keep himself and a family. 'The Society did not ask for reduction of these hours' but only that a man should be allowed to leave when such a day's work had been done. It had been argued that men were not forced to



work overtime. 'But, indeed they were. If a man declined, he was immediately discharged. That was compulsion; he saw on one side of him excessive labour, and on the other starvation. There were scores who had been discharged because they refused to work overtime.' And, as to piecework:

...the public thought that every man had a right to make the most he could of his superior ability and expertness. Granted; piecework was not objected to, but only the manner in which it was now carried out. Let it be done by contract between employers and employed...and no man would object. But a piece was brought into the workshop, and a man was told he must do it for so much; if he said he could not do it for that, he was told 'You must do it or leave'...There was no consultation in the matter; the man was never asked his opinion, and...was told that the employer 'would not be dictated to'...it gives men less than their ordinary wage<sup>14</sup>.

Parliamentary protection was being overpowered by crude Capital. Furthermore, the Union's position was deliberately misrepresented. The Manifesto made no mention of opposing the improved technology, but on the same day as it was published a meeting of masters acted on a message from Platt's party to the effect that the Engineers were seeking the dismissal of unskilled men. Whatever the sometime situation at Oldham, this was certainly not the ASE's considered position. *The Times* was among those who, deliberately or otherwise, wrongly interpreted the facts, and Ernest Jones' attitude was simply tendentious. Jones was asked to leave the Threadneedle Street meeting addressed by Newton; the *Leader* reporting the following exchanges:

---

<sup>14</sup> *Leader*, 3 January 1852.

Jones...amidst hisses: I have studied the question of labour and capital deeply –

Robinson: Ah! Ah! Very little of either are you acquainted with.

Jones: And my antecedents are such – (Roars of laughter).

Brown: His antecedents!

This was dismissal by the leading section of the working class as organised at the point of production.

On 3 February 1852 the masters' combination, the Central Council of Employers of Operative Engineers, advertised that their establishments would be closed one week later. Their short-term objective was to secure maximum returns from investment in new equipment. But beyond that was the more general question of taming a technically trained and reading workforce; customers for mill and other machinery, including cases where contracts specified penalties for late delivery, giving 'the most cordial assurances' of 'the utmost amount of indulgence'. The combining firms and their allies were fighting a class war. During the 1840s, the Old Mechanics had been successful in defensive strikes against the employers' 'quittance paper' (an identity card, setting out an employee's reason for leaving a firm and the latter's opinion of the workman). The ASE was seen as having the potential to go beyond that, and Platt and his like called for a united front against it. For union members, the situation was part of proletarians' long struggle to maintain (or improve) their families' quality of life across technical change. Given Jones' later placing in the panoply of British Marxism, it is perhaps relevant to give Marx's own, 1864, prescription:

After a thirty years struggle, fought with the most admirable perseverance, the English working classes, improving a momentous split between the landlords and the moneylords, succeeded in carrying the Ten Hours Bill. The immense *physical, moral and intellectual* benefit [my italics] accruing to the factory operatives, half yearly chronicled in the reports of the inspectors of factories, are now acknowledged on all sides.

(Inaugural Address to First International)<sup>15</sup>

The phrases could, in part, have been copied from Newton at the Hall of Commerce. There overtime was wrong:

*...physically, morally, intellectually* [my italics] and socially. The workmen felt this fifteen years ago...It was not uncommon for men to work for weeks together from four or six in the morning until ten at night...the workmen had no opportunities for improvement...Why, but from long hours of work had mechanics institutes proved such a dead failure.

One is reminded, too, of a letter to the *Crisis* of 4 August 1832. Under that paper's heading 'On The Affluent or Unproductive Classes, As They Affect the Arts', we find:

Godwin, in his *Enquirer*, has with an acute philosophy, sufficiently exposed the gross, but very popular, error that the rich pay for all the benefits they may receive from the labours of the industrious classes...There is, however, another consideration attached to the subject which I am not aware Mr. Godwin has deigned to notice...though we may repeatedly issue our protest against the privilege conferred upon the wealthy...without this same indolent and voluptuous class of persons, civilisation, after all, could never reach any great elevation.

---

<sup>15</sup> See L. E. Mins (ed.), *Founding of the First International: A Documentary Record*, London 1939.

If the toiling mechanic, the ingenious artisan...had only their own fancies to please...how very few masterpieces of art or luxury would there be to attract the gaze or gain the plaudits of the connoisseur!

The editor of the time, Robert Owen, or his aide had retorted that the letter-writer 'evidently does not understand the affluent state in which...new arrangements will place society...'

It was to contemplation of such new arrangements that the Engineers turned again in the early part of 1852. At an Executive Council meeting on 10 January, the following suggestions were agreed upon, for the subsequent approval of branches:

1. That £10,000 of the funds of the Amalgamated Society shall be paid over to such number of trustees, not less than six, as are selected by the executive...to advance the same from time to time to managers appointed by the executive, whose appointments will be afterwards approved by the society, for the purpose of carrying on the business of engineers...
2. These advances, as well as those which the trustees may obtain from other sources, shall be secured by a mortgage of all the plant and stock in trade employed in such business to the said trustees, who shall have a power to give preference security to any other advance over sums advanced out of the funds of the Society.
3. The conditions of work under which such business is carried on shall be such as are approved by the executive of the Amalgamated Society...with a view of giving employment to the greatest possible number of members of the trade out of employment for the time being...

The document which contained these proposals also stated that:

This is such a contest as has never before occurred...The old feudal times have passed away, when the baron had a property in the person of his retainer; but their spirit is inherited by our employers of to-day...they seek to own and dispose of our persons at will, and to enslave and degrade our minds by destroying all our opportunities for mental improvement...There is but one way in which this can be met, workmen must work for themselves...

The *Leader* editorial of the same day recognised a 'sequel to the movement made in Charlotte Street'<sup>16</sup>.

The union's design did, indeed, reflect that of 1830s Owenism. However, too much was expected in the way of an instant revival. *The ground had been insufficiently prepared through the intervening years.* The bringing forth of a new culture needs to be previewed in the subversion, over time, of an old one. The £10,000 represented 40% of the ASE's funds but, in the event, there was simply too little means. The internal finance was something less than £1 a member (say, a quarter of one week's wages, per head). Compare this with the £8,000 each contributed by redundant miners (say, twenty weeks wages, per head) to the 1995 Tower Colliery, Hirwaun, buy-out. Negotiations to purchase the Lancashire works of John Finch (Owen's successor at Harmony Hall) for £50,000 foundered. The union had to give priority to the immediate, weekly, needs of its impoverished unemployed.

---

<sup>16</sup> A full account of the Executive Council meeting is given in the 17 January number.

The masters were able to hold firm. The Executive Council of the ASE acknowledged defeat on 26 April. The *Leader* published Allan's letter to branch secretaries:

Our future efforts must be constantly directed to prevent the possibility of such a catastrophe again occurring. How shall we set about the work of preparation for a coming time. There is but one way – we must co-operate for production. The events of the last few months have directed the attention of working men to co-operation, and inclined them to it more decidedly than years of prosperous industry could have done. Perhaps a greater good is to come out of the present evil than could have been in any other way brought about. We have learned that it is not sufficient to accumulate funds, that it is necessary also to use them reproductively; and if this lesson does not fail in its effects, a few years will see the land studded with workshops belonging to the workers – workshops where the profits shall cheer and not oppress labour, where tyranny cannot post an abominable declaration on the gate, where the opportunity of working is secured without the sacrifice of all that makes work dignified and honourable. Then, indeed, the artisan may successfully assert his claims to be treated as a man with thoughts and feelings, instead of a machine. And if the employers, seeking to wrong him, close the gates of the factories, he will not then stand in forced idleness, consuming the accumulations of past years, but with double energy he will turn...and...do the work of the country without the unneeded help of others. 'That is a consummation devoutly to be wished', and if we set about the task with only the same earnestness, good faith and patience as have been brought to bear upon our past movement, it will be accomplished<sup>17</sup>.

This was a vision of worker control. Allan's letter expressed the clear understanding that a meaningful measure of such control, and of producers' ownership, had to be constructed throughout the course of 'better [or easier] times' and not just turned to in strife. The

---

<sup>17</sup> *Leader*, 1 May 1852

perceived need was to create what we would now call a *hegemonic* state of mind and course of action. Operatives, acting in combination, should save to buy places of work in much the same way as they might, individually or in smaller groups, save to buy homes.

If we disentangle my next italicised word from the notion of armed insurrection, we might also describe the union's vision as a theory of 'social *revolution*'. A more widely contextual illustration of that phrase, though, requires an international canvas. The lock-out, and the leading Engineers' expression of the lessons to be learned from it, came shortly after Marx and Proudhon's assessments of a post-revolutionary French government's response to the Luxembourg Commission. It is to a consideration of those assessments that we now turn.

### **'THE REPUBLIC IS NOT THE REVOLUTION'**

In 1848, following the fall of Louis Phillipe's 'bankers' monarchy', the Paris proletariat was instrumental in bringing about the declaration of a second Republic.

In his *Class Struggles in France*, originally written as a set of January to March 1850 *Neu Rheinische Zeitung* magazine articles<sup>18</sup>, Marx gives the following analysis:

---

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Lewis S. Feuer (ed.) *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, London 1969. The *Neu Rheinische Zeitung* monthly magazine took the same name as a daily newspaper which Marx had previously edited at Cologne.

Up to noon of February 25 the republic had not yet been proclaimed...But the workers were determined not to put up with any bamboozlement like that of July 1830. They were ready to take up the fight anew...The bodies of the fallen were scarcely dead, the barricades were not yet disarmed.

By dictating the republic to the provisional government, and through the provisional government to the whole of France, the proletariat stepped into the foreground forthwith as an independent party, but at the same time challenging the whole of bourgeois France to enter the lists against it. What it won was the terrain for the fight for its revolutionary emancipation, but by no means this emancipation itself.

The first thing the February republic had to do was rather *to complete the rule of the bourgeoisie* by allowing, besides the finance aristocracy, *all the propertied classes* to enter the orbit of political power. The majority of the great landowners, the Legitimists, were emancipated from the political nullity to which they had been condemned...The nominal proprietors, the *peasants*, were put by universal suffrage in the position of arbiters of the fate of France. The February republic finally brought the rule of the bourgeoisie clearly into view, since it struck off the crown behind which capital kept itself concealed.

Just as the workers in the July days had fought far and won the *bourgeois monarchy*, so in the February days they fought for and won the *bourgeois republic*. Just as the July monarchy had to proclaim itself a *monarchy surrounded by republican institutions*, so the February republic was forced to proclaim itself a *republic surrounded by social institutions*. Marche, a worker, dictated the decree by which the newly formed provisional government pledged itself to guarantee...to provide work for all citizens...And when, a few days later, it forgot its promises and seemed to have lost sight of the proletariat, a mass of twenty thousand workers marched on the Hôtel de Ville with the cry: 'We want the organisation of work! We want our own Ministry of Labour!'

'Reluctantly', in Marx's judgement, the provisional government then nominated a special commission charged with finding the means of improving the lot of the working classes.



‘This commission consisted of delegates from the corporations of Paris artisans. The Luxembourg Palace was assigned to it as its meeting place.’

The *Leader* review of Proudhon’s book quotes the latter in overlapping interpretation:

...the proletariat, suddenly interposing in the quarrel between the middle class and the Crown, made its cry of misery heard. What was the cause of that misery? Want of work was the answer. The People, therefore, demanded work; its protest went no further. Those who had just proclaimed the Republic in the name of the People, having promised to find work, the People ardently embraced the republican cause...

[But] The proclamation of the Republic...was...one thing...the revolutionary question, labour, which made the Republic an object of interest and alone gave it a real value in the eyes of the masses, was another. No: the Republic of February is not the revolution. It has been no fault of those who have governed that Republic, from the highest to the lowest, if the pledge has not perished: the People have now to decide on what conditions they shall in future be intrusted with its guardianship.

The review appeared, as four notices, between 6 September and 18 October 1851; the reviewer approaching Proudhon’s work from the supportive but apparently *previously held* position that:

The Revolution of ’89 was *Political*; the Revolution of ’48 was *Social*. In the first the struggle was for The Rights of Man; in the second the struggle was for the Rights of Labour. Before ’89 the People were politically no more than things; they conquered their existence as *men* and *citizens* by a fearful and gigantic combat. Their political existence thus

secured, they had then to conquer their social existence. They had been slaves to Privilege, they were now slaves to Capital. They found citizenship a vain distinction without Socialism. They cared less for a Republic than for the Organisation of Labour.

Such, reduced to its ultimate terms, we believe to be the Revolution of the Nineteenth Century; such is the idea animating it...the admirable instinct of the populace persisting in the formula of a 'Republic democratic and social' (so little understood by the vulgar Republicans of the Provisional Government, who only aped the Revolution of '89).

Although Nettlau would have been hurt by the connotation, I shall describe the anonymous *Leader* writer as a Comtian with an interest in Proudhon and Marx, among others. His or her Positivism is signalled in the first sentence of the first notice: 'After Comte there is no one in France to compare with Proudhon for originality, daring and coherence.' It is confirmed in the latter half of the final notice:

Auguste Comte has luminously shown...that liberty of private judgement is absurd in astronomy or physics – no man is free to doubt their demonstrated truths, unless he aspires to the freedom of the lunatic asylum; and the omnipotence of the Authority of Reason in matters of Science will be accompanied by an equal omnipotence in matters of Social Life *when Social Life has its Science*.

In the later words of J. H. Bridges, Medical Metropolitan Inspector to the Local Government Board and 1865 translator of Comte's 1848 *Discours sur 'ensemble du Positivisme* (as *A General View of Positivism*), the French founder of Sociology

‘appreciated the labour question as the principal problem of statesmen’<sup>19</sup>. The intended dialectic was no doubt meant to be ‘managerial’, not about class struggle, but the searches of our 1851 reviewer seem to have discovered something like the point in the *Neu Rhenische* articles where Marx says:

The Luxembourg Commission...must be given the credit for having disclosed...the secret of the revolution of the nineteenth century; *the emancipation of the proletariat*.

That commission was chaired by Louis Blanc, a journalist, and A. M. Albert, a mechanic. Blanc’s 1839 *Organisation du Travail* had argued for the state funding of enterprises somewhat similar to the ASE’s proposed co-operative. During the lock-out the union’s leaders were accused of promoting a form of Blancism – with Newton responding that they put forward views:

...not because Louis Blanc advocated them...but because experience taught them that it was necessary that some change should be made in order to alleviate their social condition (Hear, hear).<sup>20</sup>

Blanc’s 1848 Luxembourg Palace advocacy of his *ateliers nationaux* had been resisted at the Hôtel de Ville, but the *name* was stolen for what Marx called ‘English workhouses in the open’. Twenty-four thousand fifteen to twenty year olds from the lumpen proletariat (dregs) had already been recruited as uniformed *Mobile Guards* at one

---

<sup>19</sup> J. H. Bridges, ‘The Positivist Catechism’, London 1897, in *Illustrations of Positivism*, 1915, a selection of articles.

<sup>20</sup> *Leader*, 3 January 1852.

franc fifty centimes a day and, in the German's view, the provisional government looked for some sort of 'second proletarian army against the workers' among twenty-three sous a day shovelling, but not *absolutely* starving, labourers; a small hill being removed on the site of what is now the Boulevard Montparnasse. In fact, by June, when 120,000 were being 'doled' the pittance and the lists closed, the 'state pension for sham labour' became the focus of petty bourgeois and, especially, peasant fury at increased taxation. The, by then, formally and all-France elected Constituent Assembly of the Second Republic decreed that every unmarried man in the Paris 'Workshops' should be forced to join the Army, with the remainder sent to the provinces.<sup>21</sup> Six days of bitter street fighting ensued, to be followed by acts of great barbarity against surviving worker-prisoners and the forced removal of a considerable proportion to Algeria. In Proudhon's phrases, as quoted by the *Leader*:

...the Government which spent 1,500,000,000 francs yearly in *keeping order*, was constrained to confess that not a centime remained within which to assist the workmen...the Government gave men to understand that there was nothing to be done but to be resigned, to maintain order, and to be patient and hopeful.

...the Government, instead of stimulating, like Louis XVI, the researches of public writers, instead of attracting the attention of every citizen and sollicitating the expression of their feelings on the great questions of labour and want, was seen keeping a hostile silence of four months; when it was seen hesitating to acknowledge the natural rights of men and citizens; distrusting liberty, especially that of the press, and of popular assemblies;...creating a body of praetorians in the *guard mobile*, ready for any emergency; cajoling the clergy; summoning back the troops to Paris...; giving anew the signal of hatred to *Socialism*, the new name assumed by the Revolution; then either from carelessness or incapacity, either from misfortune, intrigue or treachery, or from all these causes together, driving the unsalaried masses to a desperate

---

<sup>21</sup> The Constituent Assembly also revoked the law which limited the working day to ten hours.

struggle...and finally, after victory, the having but one thought, one idea, that of stifling *par fas et nefus* the cry of the workmen, the protest of February.

That which I myself imperfectly conceived before the days of June, that which I have since understood day by day with certitude affirm: THE REVOLUTION IS DEFINED: IT KNOWS ITSELF, IT EXISTS [my capitals].

We have, then, unearthed a unity in Marx and Proudhon's views. In further considering our Comtian's 'Marxian' commentary on the *General Idea of the Revolution*, we can perhaps get closer to that reviewer's identity. Although Julian Harney's *Democratic Review* of April, May and June 1850 carried extracts from the *Neu Rheinische* articles, the English monthly does not contain the phrase: 'the revolution of the nineteenth century'. Its use, by the *Leader* writer, with what looks like some longerstanding intimacy, may indicate a reading of Marx's originals and/or of any emergent Proudhon phrasing from, say, the period of the latter's 1848 paper *Le Representant du Peuple*.<sup>22</sup> Whatever the details of such a case, Lewes, partly educated in France, a biographer of Goethe, and contributor of a signed set of *Leader* articles on Comte, is a strong contender to have also been our unnamed author.

According to Bridges, Lewes and Eliot were among the most enthusiastic mid-century English students of Comte's works; introducing the latter, in French, to Herbert Spencer, who had written *Social Statics* whilst ignorant of Comte's previous use of that

---

<sup>22</sup> George Woodcock, in his English biography *Proudhon*, Montreal 1972, says the Frenchman defined four revolutionary phases in a speech on 15 October 1848: The Christian, proclaiming the equality of man before God. The Renaissance, proclaiming equality before reason. The Enlightenment, proclaiming equality before The Law. The fourth, that of the nineteenth century, based on the right to work. But Woodcock does not say whether Proudhon used the phrase *then*.

title<sup>23</sup>. Eliot's translation of D. F. Strauss' *Das Leben Jesu* matched her with Lewes as a German scholar, but her later willingness to pen, in the persona of Felix Holt, the *Address to Workingmen*, with its pleas for deference to 'the great law of inheritance', tends to confirm that of the two partners *she* was the less happy in anything approaching a revolutionary stance.

Lewes was to oppose Eliot's decision to write the December 1867 *Address*; being, in the novelist's words, her 'domestic critic'. Twelve months before, as editor of the Positivist *Fortnightly Review*, he commented that the Geneva Congress of the First International would be regarded by historians as the most important event of 1866<sup>24</sup>. From such nuances in a relationship, we might construct an opinion as to the possible effects on skilled artisans of a Comtian teaching across that decade and a half which followed the 1851 reviews of Proudhon. Our other starting point is the founder of Sociology's 1822 formulation of a three-stage development in all branches of human knowledge; the theological or fictitious state, the metaphysical or abstract state, and the scientific or *positive* state. In this scheme Mathematics and Physics were seen as the sciences which had been longest in the positive stage, with Biology as a recent entry and the intended Science of Society yet to enter. It was an attractive display for, say, a steam engine mechanic curious about the way in which the *social* order worked and intolerant of any division in his cultural continuum. We might count it particularly attractive post-1858, the year of Darwin and Wallace's joint presentation, for somebody who had passed the latter on a small-town

---

<sup>23</sup> J. H. Bridges, 'Comte and Spencer on Sociology', 1904, in *Illustrations of Positivism*, London 1915.

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix A in the Pelican English Library's edition of *Felix Holt*, 1972, and Henry Collins and Chimen Abramsky, *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement*, London 1965, citing the *Fortnightly Review* of December 1866.

street or, indeed, talked to the man who could have taught one's brother trigonometry. There could have been an almost seamless progression from, for instance, the rational religion of Unitarianism.

We should note, too, that Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, with its talk of historical process, was translated in Harney's *Red Republican*, 1850 successor to the *Democratic Review*. And that Marx sent Darwin a copy of *Capital*, confident that it would have an effect comparable to *The Origin of Species*. For readability though, a popular rendering of Positivism may have sourced an easier and earlier 'processal' comprehension among artisans. To quote Bridges again, on the search for answers: 'Discussions of government and of political institutions must be brought into far more intimate connection with the history of religion, of science, of art, of industry, than is usually done by academics and professors'<sup>25</sup>. The ultimate and, literally, revolutionary difficulty for somebody like Lewes, of course, was that in exploring such connections he found a mind, a *sociologist of Capitalism* in fact, who took a rather more cataclysmic view of Comte's third state than that old master had ever envisaged. Nevertheless, Eliot's companion, or somebody in their circle, presented, or re-presented, a section of a more-or-less post-Chartist working class with a much bigger view of change. And did it only a few months before, and in the same journal as, Allan and Newton explained the Engineers' proposals. Having so juxtaposed Social Revolution and Producer Control, we can next position that combination in the particularity of place.

---

<sup>25</sup> J. H. Bridges, 'Comte and Spencer on Sociology', 1904, in *Illustrations of Positivism*, London 1915.

## THE LOCALITY THING

Overall and political (as opposed to literary) editor of the *Leader* in W. J. Linton's testimony, Hunt appears to have been less rigorously focussed than Lewes. For the consort of Mrs. Lewes:

All men are Socialists who believe – as we believe – that the misery and ignorance (parent of untold miseries) might be greatly alleviated by a more generous, co-operative social doctrine. It is not necessary to have a *system*, nor a faith in any system.

...on their common ground Owen would once have no church, while the most conspicuous ornament of Morgan's village is the Church of England; where Fourier places 'passionate attraction' Maurice places primitive Christianity.<sup>26</sup>

It was against such panoramic approaches that Marx and Engels finally defined their 1848 *Manifesto* as 'Communist', whilst Newton was simply down to earth:

The men have been called Socialists...if Socialism meant the right of individuals to associate together to find legitimate employment for themselves, then the meeting was a meeting of Socialists, prepared to carry out Socialism (Much cheering).<sup>27</sup>

Hunt's wide-ranging definition came after questioning by Francis W. Newman – Anglican, and later Unitarian, brother of the Cardinal. The churchman did offer a matching

---

<sup>26</sup> *Leader*, 18 May 1850.

<sup>27</sup> *Leader*, 31 January 1852.



diffusiveness: 'It...a Socialist is to mean one who holds that man is and ought to be a social being, I hope we are all Socialists'. But he quickly moved on to a more precise territoriality:

...as morality depends on the good estate of families, so freedom and good government depend primarily on the wholesome and energetic working of the local institutions which most clearly touch on the well-being of each humble family. But precisely because local freedom secures the practical independence of the poor, despots everywhere make war against it. The baron, if he was able, destroyed it in parishes and boroughs. If, however, these were sustained against the baron by the Crown it was only that (in most countries of Europe) the Crown might itself ere long perpetrate the same usurpation.

Thence, Newman goes on to develop a processal view of the particular, 'Anglo-Saxon', situation:

In England, the actual course of things has been somewhat different. Here, the landed aristocracy, greater and lesser barons, prevailed at last over the Crown...and established themselves as *landowners*, not merely as *landlords*. The local institutions decayed in energy...They fell in public esteem, so that reformers looked to the central Parliament, with all its defects, rather than the parish, or the county, or the borough, where a single squire or nobleman, or a family compact of aldermen was certain to thwart their attempts. The commercial classes, naturally enough, looked on land solely as an article of commerce, and rejoiced in every destruction or evasion of feudal restrictions which was based on an opposite principle. When the improvement of machinery for manufactures and the stagnancy of rural industry on great entailed estates drew together masses of population into the towns, if no statute-law had existed in England, a social organisation would gradually and inevitably have grown up among the townsmen, *as it always does*

*among barbarians.* But the lawyers and the Parliament forbid this...Each family is unnaturally isolated. If the parents have emigrated from a rural district, and have no kinsman in the town, the family have no one who will either naturally or legally care for it in sickness or distress. Benefit clubs are one attempt to remedy the evil, and the theoretic Socialism is another.

I am quoting from a piece which appeared in the *Leader* on 1 June 1850; the last paragraph wondering whether ‘on our old common law, which has been overridden by statutes and charters, we might perhaps find the means of associating freely and establishing all organisations *as fast as they are wanted*, exactly as our ancestors did in the Dark Ages’. Contemporary with Harney’s publication of a translated *Communist Manifesto* and the *Class Struggles* extracts, such suggestions must be accorded an equal power on understanding artisans. Students of ‘soviets’, in the original – Councillist – meaning of that word, may, indeed, see some precursor of modern revolutionary theory in the linking of ‘theoretic Socialism’ with localities. And, certainly, there is in this Newman an acceptance of a conjoining proletariat which goes beyond, say, the English Civil War description: ‘That the Electors in every Division shall be...such as have subscribed to this Arrangement; not persons receiving Alms...not servants to or *receiving wages* [my italics] from any particular person’.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the most significant thing about the latter is that it had been agreed by Lilburne’s Levellers but not by Winstanley’s Diggers. However, apart from an acknowledging nod to Ranter ‘freedom’, my connections at this point must be with the

---

<sup>28</sup> See A. L. Morton, ‘Leveller Democracy – Fact or Myth?’ in *The World of The Ranters*, London 1979, a collection of essays.

legacy of that eighteenth *and* nineteenth century writer who Nettlau invokes when telling us that Sam Mainwaring ‘stood up once more for...Godwin’s true sense’. That any revelation of local and direct democracy must include the philosopher’s major work – the 1793 *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* – is illustrated by the following excerpts from this 735 page treatise:

Government then being first supposed necessary for the welfare of mankind, the most important principle that can be imagined relative to its structure seems to be this: that, as government is a transaction in the name and for the benefit of the whole, every member of the community ought to have some share in the selection of its measures.

...to give each man a voice in the public concerns come nearest to that fundamental purpose of which we should never lose sight, the uncontrolled exercise of private judgement.

(Book III, Chapter IV)

It is to be regretted...that a majority should overbear a minority, and that the minority, after having opposed and remonstrated, should be obliged practically to submit to that which was the subject of their remonstrations. But this evil, inseparable from political government, is aggravated by representation, which removes the power of making regulations one step further from the people. Representation therefore, though a remedy, or rather a palliative, for certain evils, is not a remedy so excellent or complete as should authorise us to rest in it as the highest improvement of which the social order is capable.

(Book V, Chapter XIV)

The appearance which mankind, in a future state of improvement, may be expected to assume is a policy that, in different countries, will wear a similar form, because we have all the same faculties and the same wants, but a policy the independent branches of which will extend their authority over a small territory, because neighbours are best informed of each others concerns, and are perfectly equal to their adjustment. No recommendation can be imagined of an

extensive rather than a limited territory, except that of external security.

It may...be objected 'that great talents are the offspring of great passions', and that, in the quiet mediocrity of a petty republic, the powers of intellect may be expected to subside into inactivity. This objection, if true, would be entitled to the most serious consideration. But it is to be considered that, upon the hypothesis here advanced, the whole human species would constitute, in some sense, one great republic, and the prospects of him who desired to act beneficially upon a great surface of mind would become more animating than ever.

(Book V, Chapter XXII)

I hinted in Chapter One that *Political Justice* was possibly purchased by the Neath organised South Wales Unitarians within a decade of the book's original publication, and that it could subsequently have passed into the library of the Mechanics Institute. Owen's *Crisis* correspondent and Engels' testimony definitely indicate that Godwin's influence was alive among British workingmen into the 1830s and 1840s. Margaret Cole, for one, thought that Owen himself read the *Enquiry*<sup>29</sup>, and as an indicator of continuity from *Crisis* and *Pioneer* times we can note that the Newtown man (as well as 'Shepherd' Smith) was an 1850s contributor to the *Leader*. One may, too, reasonably assume that Newman, for whom 'Socialism' narrowly defined meant Owen's ideas, had a knowledge of Godwin's thinking. As exemplified by my excerpts, that thinking was a harbinger of a form of nineteenth and twentieth century Libertarianism. In fact, Godwin is widely recognised as a founding father of Anarchism, although it was Proudhon who first, proudly, accepted the name 'Anarchist', with a capital A, for himself.

---

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Cole, "Robert Owen" in David Rubinstein (ed.) *People For The People*, London and New York 1973.

In that respect, Lewes, if acknowledged to be the *Leader* reviewer of *The General Idea of the Revolution*, commented on the Frenchman thus:

For a grave writer this is startling is it not? A man deliberately proclaiming anarchy to be his aim, his ideal! Do not, however, take him at his word. He no more means to preach disorder than by his definition of property ['Property is Theft'] he means to preach brigandage. By 'anarchy' he means no more than what our admirable friend Herbert Spencer [in *Social Statics*] set forth as the goal to which civilisation is irresistibly tending, viz. the final disappearance of Government, become unnecessary because men will have learned so as to control themselves as to need no external coercion.<sup>30</sup>

My dictionary defines 'government' as 'the authoritative direction of the affairs of men'. One can readily catalogue more *authoritarian* versions and, viewed from 2001, Spencer's concept of final disappearance may be accounted uncommonly weak. On the other hand, this may be an appropriate stage at which to randomly populate the alternative dream. Ken Loach's 1995 film *Land and Freedom* reminds us that, for at least the best part of a century after Proudhon's nomination, masses of ordinary workers were honoured to take an uninhibited title that denoted Solidarity outside the State. In contrast, our Lewes called Proudhon's choice of word an example of the latter's 'crude energy of statement'. Likewise, many of those who have subsequently been otherwise sympathetic to that choice's bundle of sensations have also been too cultivated to replicate its elemental phrasing. Copying the Engineers, one must amalgamate for a single tradition. Instead of

---

<sup>30</sup> *Leader*, 6 September 1851.

‘Anarchist’, a lot of intended practitioners have preferred ‘Libertarian Left’. As we have seen, even Nettlau, in a particular ‘Popular Front’ context, speaks of Mainwaring’s ‘*complete socialism* [my italics]...guaranteeing all the fruits of freedom as well as the fruits of solidarity’. Raymond Williams, writing in 1982, questioned appeals to ‘parliamentary democracy’ and allegations that it was threatened by enemies on the Left: ‘Is ‘parliamentary’ a qualifying adjective, to indicate one kind of democracy but also to admit that there are other kinds?’<sup>31</sup> In 1977 Tom Nairn had given an 1843 explanation:

In his critique of Hegel’s theory of the state, Marx insisted that...middle class society evolved as its necessary complement an abstract political state-order; the new liberal and constitutional state. The key mystery of the relationship was representation. THE REPRESENTATIVE MECHANISM CONVERTED REAL CLASS INEQUALITY INTO THE ABSTRACT EGALITARIANISM OF CITIZENSHIP. [my capitals]  
*(The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism)*<sup>32</sup>

In the year before that of Marx’s birth, a *nineteenth century* Godwin, in his 1817 novel *Mandeville*, had written that ‘It is incumbent upon us to remark that anarchy as it is usually understood, and a well conceived form of society without government are exceedingly different from each other’. The case against ‘abstract equalitarianism’, against reification through representation, is well put in Sam Mainwaring junior’s reported, Briton Ferry 1930s, summary of Kropotkin’s suggestions: ‘Keep it small!’<sup>33</sup> In some memorable 1986

---

<sup>31</sup> Raymond Williams, *Democracy and Parliament*, London 1982. This Socialist Society pamphlet includes, as Appendix A, William Cobbett’s address on ‘Burning of the Parliament House’ delivered to the House of Commons on 1 November 1834.

<sup>32</sup> See ‘The Twilight of the British State’ in Nairn’s 1977 collection of essays.

<sup>33</sup> Billie Gregory, ILPer, and neighbour of Sam Mainwaring junior, in discussion with the present writer 1980.

words for the present writer, Murray Bookchin, a modern American Anarchist, says, in his *Theses on Libertarian Municipalism*: ‘The commune still lies buried in the city council; the sections still lie buried in the neighbourhoods’, and again: ‘The city is not congruent with the State. The two have very different origins and have played very different roles historically’.

We’ve spent a little time trailing locality across the years. Let us now return to an 1851 *Leader*. On 19 and 26 April of *that* year, before its consideration of *The General Idea of the Revolution*, the paper jointly reviewed two other ‘treatises’: *Local Self-Government and Centralisation*, a book by barrister J. Toulmin Smith, and ‘Sanitary consolidation, centralisation, local self-government’, a fifty-seven page March *Quarterly Review* article by early health and town planner F. Oldfield Ward.<sup>34</sup> The *Leader* wished to combine the managerial and the more widely existential:

Let us follow the arguments of the [*Quarterly*] *Reviewer*. He is a man of large and liberal mind, and his scientific training gives to his speculations that union of breadth and minute detail which is characteristic of the *positive* [*Leader* italics] thinker. He would meet Mr. Toulmin Smith on his own ground in applauding Local Government; but to that he would add the supreme, central, controlling, general power. He takes organic beings as an analogy; in the lowest forms of organic life we find only local life – in the highest we find the greatest diversity of local life within a supreme unity: ‘...as, within the womb the embryo man springs at first from a mere nerveless cell...which unfolds itself gradually, by simultaneous expansion of its local and central forces, into many-gangloined, full-brained humanity; so likewise does society, during long ages of painful gestation...’

---

<sup>34</sup> As subsequently identified by the *Wellesley Index of Victorian Periodicals*.

We can confront Ward's 'diversity...within a supreme unity' with not only the barrister but also Godwin's hypothesis that 'the whole human species would constitute... one great republic'. More specifically, the question is whether a *joint* sanitary board cannot be empowered, federally, from below, in contradiction to an overriding, top-down, authority. The planner's thoughts signal the dangers of Victorian workingmen being too *singularly* seduced by their contemporary Science, by a one-dimensional 'Efficiency'. Differently engined, Toulmin Smith follows in the wake of Cobbett and, at only a short distance, Newman:

There can be no shadow of question that, by the Common Law of England, Universal Suffrage is the inherent Right of the People of England...But then comes the question, what is, specifically meant by Universal Suffrage, and for what, and how, is it to be used?

If by Universal Suffrage is meant (which is what many do mean) that more men shall be able than now are to be drawn up, like sheep to the slaughter, to poll for him who talks loudest on the hustings, then indeed is Universal Suffrage a pure unmixed evil, a slayer of all progress, and unknown to the Common Law of England. It will merely be the machine for the more easily delegating empire to an oligarchy. And this is what Universal Suffrage always will be, as used in the Parliamentary Reform sense, and stopping there.

It is apprehended that the only sound definition of a true Universal Suffrage is – that every freeman has the inherent right and duty, by the Common Law of England, to take an active part in the management of all the affairs that concern him; while the 'Freeman' may most properly be defined as – Every grown man who maintains himself and his immediate family upon the results of his own freely disposed...effort.



But this idea of Universal Suffrage embraces, as an essential, that of the existence of Institutions of true Self-Government...No sincere friend of humanity can wish Universal Suffrage, unless that suffrage is to be an intelligent one. This it can only become by means of the full practical activity of Institutions of true Local Self-Government. Nothing else can supply the needful practical Social and Political Education. Schools and Colleges, whether National or Secular, and however pedantically ordered or approved by...Inspectors will never help to this.

In the pages of the *Leader*, brought to us through *Spain and The World*, and ultimately by virtue of Max Nettlau's friendship with Sam Mainwaring, we have, then, been able to rediscover a nearly simultaneous, mid-nineteenth century, discussion of three strands: Producer Control, Social Revolution and Local Self-Government, which can be seen to contribute to a later Libertarian vision. There is, too, in Toulmin Smith's stress on 'practical activity', an echo of 'Shepherd' Smith's words on learning through Trades' governance. However, for a full interweaving of the three strands with a fourth and earlier trope, Occupational Constituencies, we must move on to the years of the International Working Men's Association. That 1860s coming-together, and its further implications, will be the concern of Chapters Four, Five and Six.

## CHAPTER FOUR: WORKERS AS BETTER PEOPLE

Sam Mainwaring was certainly the *type* of skilled young man to agree with Lewes about the Geneva Congress of the First International (the International Working Men's Association) being the most important event of 1866.

Sam was then twenty-four years of age. Given his Canton, Cardiff, lodgings address when he married Jane Gregory, a customs officer's daughter, of the same town, at its Register office in August 1868, we can surmise that he had moved to the growing seaport before or during the first two or three years of the International's existence; the latest likely date for completion of an Aberdare apprenticeship being around the turn of 1862/1863. And we can note that the Great Western Railway's Canton maintenance and repair workshops were only a three-hour carry from London, city of the International's 1864 Inaugural Meeting chaired by Positivist professor E. S. Beesly.

Of even greater import in an internationalist context, I believe, is the fact that the young married couple quickly emigrated to the United States of America and were living in that many-sourced country during the period of the Franco-Prussian War and the 1871 Paris Commune. This was the panoramic experience and set of perspectives which Sam was able to bring back to mid and late 1870s Wales and London; in the capital city's case, during its revival of British Socialism.

That revival will concern us in Chapter Five. In Chapter Four I propose to deal with aspects of the American years alongside an earlier Welsh, and more particularly Neath and Swansea, terrain of 1843; in the latter instance, with an overlapping, half-way, time – between those 1834 and 1852 events which concerned us in Chapters Two and Three. One of the realities I will deal with is the hard labour of *free men* – so hard that such men, on both sides of the Atlantic, were constrained to make comparisons between their conditions and those of a supposedly abandoned slavery. Another thing I wish to invoke is an early prospect of United States *labour* thought entering the United Kingdom.

The present chapter is also one of the middle two of six and I want it, too, to be the pivot of a much longer time span. The pivotal notion I'll be examining is of a Working Class (or, at least, a significant part of such a class) seeing itself as MORALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY SUPERIOR. Again in a Transatlantic context, I will look at ordinary people's responses to externally attempted degradation – and at the writings of a quite extraordinary American workingman, Ira Steward.

We can initially and joyously approach such matters from just four years short of the Millennium and a full one hundred and thirty years on from Lewes' expression of opinion. In the Spring of 1996 British broadsheet newspapers carried reports of a distinctive funeral. At a crematorium in London's suburbia, a stand-up comedian told jokes to assembled mourners until they were 'rolling in the aisles', a home video showed the deceased himself laughing until he had to 'mop his steaming eyes', and the coffin slid away

to a crackling recording of Marlene Dietrich. Earlier, the procession had been led by a jazz band.

The dead man, Albert Meltzer, had been a teenage speaker on Anarchism at Neath during the Spanish Civil War, and long remained a sweet remembrancer of Sam Mainwaring junior's adopted daughter. Speaking of the admired girl's admired great uncle, the humorous choreographer of his own passing-on might have us smiling again:

Recently, a student writing a doctorate thesis on Anarcho-Syndicalism informed me that he spent a vast amount of time looking for references to find where this term (as distinct from Anarchism and Syndicalism) was coined. His references were French, Russian, Spanish and Italian. He might be pardoned for not looking up Welsh references. The first to use it was Sam Mainwaring (senior) of South Wales.

The claim is made in Meltzer's 1976 personal memoir *The Anarchists in London 1935-1955*. Interviewed by the present writer in 1979, he said that Emma Goldman told him so, and that it had also been confirmed as circumstantially likely by French associates.<sup>1</sup>

Meltzer's memoir explanation is that Mainwaring wanted to differentiate between an organisation like the Spanish C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour) and British 'Syndicalism' of the sort which was subsequently to flower in the Triple Alliance

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Anarchists in London 1935-1955* was published by Cienfuegos Press, Sanday, Orkney Islands in 1976. After reading it I met with Albert Meltzer, by prior arrangement, at the Punch Tavern, Fleet Street, London. He was then employed at the *Daily Telegraph* headquarters, opposite. For his funeral, see 'Anarchy's torchbearer', *Guardian*, 8 May 1996, and 'After the anarchy, the comedy', *Independent on Sunday*, 26 May 1996.



movement of 1912. In *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, written jointly with Stuart Christie in 1970, Albert or his co-author was more generic:

Revolutionary syndicalism accepts the idea of expropriation of the economic system, and the final aim of control by committees at the place of work, as against parliamentary reform or nationalisation. Anarcho-syndicalism, agreeing with this, has gone further to the idea of a full participation by all within a free communistic society. The use of the term *communism* implied that the basic unit of society should be the *commune*, the local community in which all forms of social and economic life should merge.<sup>2</sup>

Bertrand Russell was of the opinion that almost all the ideas which characterised late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Syndicalism ‘derived from the Bakuninist section of the old International’. Rudolph Rocker, a Yiddish speaking London colleague of Sam Mainwaring, additionally identified the earlier connection – with that (1830s) British ‘Proto-Syndicalism’ which we have already discussed.<sup>3</sup> The cusp we need to find in and around a young Sam’s Mera is where the curve of religiosity met that of its most vigorous enemy. The infidel alignment was tracing a WITHDRAWAL OF DEFERENCE.

One present day Welsh historian, K. O. Morgan, tells us that 1880s Neath was a citadel of religious ‘dissent’. The word in inverted commas is curiously undivided and may

---

<sup>2</sup> Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, London, 1979 revised edition. Christie, Orkney based publisher and lobster fisherman, served three years of a Spanish court-martial’s sentence for anti-Franco activity, and was later imprisoned in London for eighteen months until acquitted in the Angry Brigade trial.

<sup>3</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Roads to Freedom*, London, 1918, and Rudolph Rocker, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, London, 1973 reprint.

indeed represent a majority.<sup>4</sup> However, the town was never just a collection of chapels. For example, in 1859 a temperance meeting became the occasion for an anti-temperance demonstration during which the Vale of Neath Brewery Band played outside the meeting hall among two thousand sympathisers and when the effigy of a teetotaler was carried around the streets several times before being publically hung on a tree. In the following year the police superintendent who had launched a crusade against street football, among other things, was removed from office; this following calls to escort him out of town ‘to the sound of tin kettles’.<sup>5</sup>

Albert Meltzer, with an eye to his final scenario, might have warmed to tin kettling. As the son, grandson and great-grandson of copperworkers, my handed-down Neath family memory is more weighted towards our *oldest* metal industry. It is in that direction I find the first part of a Transatlantic comparison.

### **‘CONTRAST THE BONDS OF THE WEST INDIES’**

Near the date when a youthful A. R. Wallace was writing his description of the £2 to £3 a week good times, the Swansea *Cambrian* newspaper of Saturday 30 September 1843

---

<sup>4</sup> K. O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980*, Oxford, 1981, p.14 – but for the division of Neath Nonconformity into ‘Old Dissent’ (Independents or Congregationalists, Baptists, Unitarians and Quakers) and later Methodists (Calvinistic and Wesleyan) see Chapter One of this Thesis.

<sup>5</sup> For the context of these Neath events see W. R. Lambert, *Drink and Sobriety in Victorian Wales*, Cardiff, 1983, and D. J. V. Jones, *Crime in Nineteenth Century Wales*, Cardiff, 1992. Tin-kettling was a form of ‘rough music’ or ‘charivari’. For a wider discussion of such popular community sanctions in Wales, see Rosemary Jones, ‘Women, Community and Collective Action: The ‘Ceffyl Pren’ Tradition’ in Angela V. John (ed.), *Our Mothers Land*, Cardiff, 1991. For the alleged savagery of the Neath rugby team and supporters in the 1880s, see Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That*, Llandysul, 1991. In a more recent episode (the 1994 ‘Battle of the Gnoll’: result Neath 7 South Africa 8), the Springboks captain complained on BBC television about an intimidating crowd and home team.

reported that 'the town of Neath was thrown into some excitement on Monday afternoon', in consequence of it being rumoured that several of the men belonging to the Crown Copper Works had been apprehended for refusing to proceed with their work; the paper adding that they had only recently resumed work after a strike which lasted some weeks. In front of magistrates, the manager charged three among eighteen furnacemen in his employ of walking off the job without giving notice. In reply, 'a very well-spoken and intelligent workman' stated that the ore they were required to smelt was considerably heavier than previously, and that it was impossible to perform the labour required at the wages offered.<sup>6</sup> It was the year of Will Mainwaring's twentieth and Sam Mainwaring's second birthdays.

The earlier strike of some weeks, which had affected copper works at Neath and Briton Ferry alongside others in the Lower Swansea and Afan (Port Talbot) valleys, commenced with walkouts on Saturday 5 August 1843, following reductions in wages which the owners justified by a fall in the selling price of copper ingots from 12 to 9 pence a pound. A morning procession of more than 1,000 workers into Swansea was met at its High Street approach by the Mayor and the Member of Parliament, Henry Vivian, who was also a major copperworks employer; the Mayor announcing that orders had been received from the Government directing the Magistrates not to allow a march through the town centre. Following demonstrations a fortnight before, two hundred soldiers of the 75th Regiment had been sent to Swansea from Bristol by steamer, and Royal Artillery field guns (capable of firing grape shot), together with their crews, had been reported at Bath railway

---

<sup>6</sup> Although essentially supportive of the masters' case, the *Cambrian* was sufficiently broad in its reportage, and acceptance of letters, to give us a fair understanding of the workers' position. I have used its columns to fatten strands of family talk.

station, en route from Woolwich to south west Wales. At that time Rebeccaite destruction of toll gates had advanced to the western and northern agricultural environs of Swansea, and in the week before the walkouts a gate was destroyed at Llansamlet on the Neath road, in the (eastern) copperworks area, with the toll-keeper claiming to recognise *industrial* workers among the attackers.

The process of copper smelting involved at least six operations:

1. Roasting (calcining) of the ore to remove some sulphur, before passing to –
2. A melting furnace, where iron present in the ore combined with the silica of the gangue for removal as slag; the residual product, a mixture of cuprous sulphide and ferrous sulphide, being granulated by running off molten into water.
3. This ‘coarse metal’ was then ground up, again calcined, and –
4. Fused, to give a ‘matte’ containing 70 –75 per cent copper, which was –
5. Once more roasted, to ‘blister copper’, with further exclusion of sulphur dioxide prior to –
6. Final refining in a reverberatory furnace to commercial copper.

It was ‘killing’ work which had been calibrated to a not uncommon working class acceptance of better wages when you had the energy to earn them and uncomplaining ‘Christianity’ or escape to the open air when you didn’t; such freedom being heightened by the fact that payment was always in cash. Coppermen’s families were not tied to ‘truck’ shops and were therefore able to indulge, when in funds, in the shopping choice offered by two long established market towns which stood only eight miles apart; the smaller Neath, a chartered borough since 1147, being further favoured for the delights of its ancient fairs. At

---



Neath, certainly, there was too an interpenetration of the small scale urban with the rural fabric in a way which allowed the allotments, worker operated farm patches and poaching of Wallace's picture – with its hint of a measure of self-sufficiency.

It was on to such a balance, in that summer of 1843, the masters cast their proposals for, for example, a cut in the slag furnacemen's top earnings from 30s. to 22s. 6d. a week, i.e. a percentage reduction equivalent to the fall in copper prices. The workers' reply was that calibration had transferred to an unacceptable scale. A letter from men employed at Vivian's Hafod, Swansea, works published in the *Cambrian* on 12 August gave these sample opinions and requests:

Slagmen would earn 30s. a week provided each smelted 22½ tons but...they are from 2 to 4 changes deficient...therefore wages will not exceed 23s. a week...[they] cannot continue their work...owing to the amount of labour and extreme heat borne, with the sulphurous nature of the work affecting their health and constitution...Their reduced wages will be 18s. 6d. a week.

Coarse roasters' full work would be 31s. 6d. but are compelled to work 12 ten hours [i.e. 120 out of the 168 hours in a week] to earn that amount. But who can bear this? Where is the slavery equal to this? Their average wage is 21s., but the reduced 17s. a week. These seldom work 9 months every 12...

We would appeal to those who look with a magnifying glass...to consider impartially the different hard processes which coppermen are gradually going through: some 10, 20, 30 and even 40 years in the works before they obtain but a very insignificant advance, so that but a very few even reach the highest wages, while the majority have worn out their strength and lives in the bloom of their days. Let the emancipators of slavery but sincerely contrast the bonds of the West Indies with the drudgery and slavery of coppermen,

and ask him the conclusion of his investigation? Let their expenditure for eating, drinking and clothing be compared with any other class of workmen and their revenues... Contrast their countenances with any other class, though they expend their whole for the best the markets can furnish to uphold their natures. They are the subjects of sickness more so than any other class owing to their exertion, the extreme heat and the sudden transition to which they are continually exposed. This is acknowledged by all, for they are even excluded from having admission to benefit societies...

The coppermen's lot may, indeed, have been the worst but that of others was within measuring distance. Barclay Fox, Quaker nephew of Joseph Price the Neath Abbey ironmaster, has left this diary description of one day in April 1840 at his uncle's works:

14. Up at ½ past 5 & in the works before the bell ceased...I watched the poor wretches trying to tap the furnace in vain till ½ past 10, when I went home, pitying them from my soul. They did not succeed till 2 in the morning. The severity of the work consisted in 3 men standing at the very mouth of the furnace (I could not stand within 20 feet without being scorched). One of these held down the topping iron to guide it, the other two drove it in with alternate blows, till the sweat literally ran from them in streams. They rushed from the place when they could no longer bear it & others took their places.<sup>7</sup>

In seeking to understand the later Victorian mind of Sam Mainwaring we need to link his family's experience of such things, and that of older workmates in the Engineers' 1850s struggles, with an American intellectual stream of the 1860s and 1870s:

---

<sup>7</sup> R. L. Brett (ed.), *Barclay Fox's Journal*, London, 1979. Fox was based at Falmouth, where he had visited the Tasmania bound Newport Chartists on a sheltering prison ship. At Neath to learn the Abbey business, he records receipt there of a personal letter from J. S. Mill. Mill had sent the family a complete run of the *Westminster Review*, which he edited.

...To employ muscular labour instead of the great forces of nature not only means poverty but the physical abuse, deformity and premature decay of the laborer. This means shorter lives for laborers, and the loss of their self-possession and self-respect which does much to foster the oppressive and absurd idea that an inferior or laboring class is necessary to do the world's hard work; who must tamely submit to the slavish discipline and lordly authority exercised by a superior class that is expected to be kind to the poor, if the poor are good to work. But the logic of this theory is chattel slavery.<sup>8</sup>

The latter words are quoted, as introductory current, from an unpublished manuscript of the New England machinist Ira Steward. We shall meet him at greater length in my next section.

Brand new when Sam was born there, Mile End Row, Penrhiwtyn, Neath had been erected on land of the Eaglesbush estate primarily for workers at its own colliery. In March 1848, when Sam was six and on the borders of lasting memory, an explosion at the drift mine killed twenty men and somewhat older boys – including an uncle, Solomon Mainwaring. There was no Union but simply the day to day solidarity of a small group, as when collier John Parker told the coroner, sitting at Neath's Town Hall, that the Eaglesbush colliery was not well ventilated. All the air-ways and bolt-holes were smaller than the entrance and egress, and no air was passed through abandoned stalls. The whole distance the air had to travel through the mine was one mile and five furlongs. In the wrong weather it did not pass; it moved to and fro, or did not move at all. Fire-damp hissed out of

---

<sup>8</sup> Ira Steward, 'The Power of the Cheaper Over the Dearer', unpublished manuscript (no date, but thought to be from 1870s) in the Steward Papers at the State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

coalfaces in abandoned stalls and percolated through holes made by rats and mice in intervening gob-walls; in effect, a bomb awaiting a detonator. The coroner's opinion was that the owners could have been charged with manslaughter.<sup>9</sup>

For the copperworkers of five years earlier, solidarity had come in bigger numbers – although, again, not *formally* Unionised. Following the thousand-strong march, Vivian on horseback, accompanied by proprietor Benson of the Forest Works at Morryston, addressed a crowded field. Vivian said he didn't believe his employees would be party to any intimidation and asked the Hafod men to follow him back to that works where there would be no victimisation. The *Cambrian* reported a proposal to 'put it to the vote' with the great difficulty therein being that 'the men had bound themselves to act *in union* [my italics] with the workmen of other works'. A meeting of men from all the works, held at Llansamlet, passed resolutions to the effect that they 'should continue to assist and sustain each other'. The paper castigated them for holding prayer meetings every morning 'to implore the divine aid upon their exertions in maintaining the strike', for collecting money among the wider public, and for proposing to use, collectively, the funds of their own benefit clubs deposited at savings banks.

Prayers for the success of a strike highlight the variability of our cusp. From a different angle, Reverend Thomas Davies of Pentre Chapel told workers that 'your masters supported you when trade was prosperous and should you not, in adverse circumstances, stick to and support your masters in return ...for this state of affairs, I trust to God, will not

---

<sup>9</sup> This account is based on Harry Green, 'The Eaglesbush Colliery Explosion 1848' in *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society* 1979.

last long'. Initially, his plea did the trick; the *Cambrian* of 22 July 1843 telling us that 'the words were electrical, the worthy minister was received with repeated cheers, and the multitude returned contented to their houses, and on Monday morning they resumed work'. That Monday was 17 July. By Saturday 5 August the works were empty again. An Actually Existing Capitalism seems to have intervened. The paper's correspondent had written of 'evil minded and mischevious men who too frequently take advantage of present difficulties to sow dissension'. On a hill above the Swansea Valley, there were joint meetings of Chartists, Rebeccaites and Strikers.

The *Cambrian* translated Davies' words. They had been delivered in Cymraeg. We can find too, in that language, elements of a countervailing theory. Publicola, 'the Welsh communist', had been advancing on these lines in *Y Diwygiwr (The Reformer)* of July 1838:

Personal possessions have been a poisoned tree in the world, ever since its first planting...Progressively, some men went on to claim the right to certain plots of land...to assert nobility of pedigree, and with the assistance of priests...to assert a Divine right...and to regard the common folk as slaves to their will...the diligent people have not been allowed to attain the station that God and nature have accorded them...it is the employer who sets the wage and dictates the working hours; and tells them boldly and haughtily that he is being merciful by employing them when, in actual fact, he should be grateful to them for working instead of him.

...some hardfaced men claim that the extortionists, those professing to be righteous, and the wealthy, labour as well as farmers and manual workers...but they are labouring to keep hold of what other people have gathered together. The solicitor does not make the cauldron boil, the cashiers who print deceitful money do not sow or reap or gather to

their barns, the sluggard with his quill behind his ear does not  
fell trees nor build ships, and all the priest does is give advice  
which we can well do without.

[Translated].<sup>10</sup>

This historical appreciation comes ten years before Marx and Engels began their *Manifesto* with the trumpeting sentence: ‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles’. *Y Diwygiwr* was edited by David Rees, Y Cynhyrfwr (The Agitator), Independent minister of Capel Als, Llanelli, at which:

Dyma orchwylion tadau'r ddau gant cyntaf o blant a  
fedyddiwyd – hyd Hydref 1840.

[Here is the father's employment of the first two hundred  
children baptised – by October 1840.]

: Collier 56, Copper Man 45, Carpenter 12, Mason 11...  
Sailor 6, Smith 6... Minister 1.<sup>11</sup>

In a more conventionally Welsh paradigm, Publicola's views form part of that long expression of Leftish religion which included the *Pontypridd Herald* comment on Sam Mainwaring's 1887 tour, nearly half a century later. Then, you may recall from Chapter One, the supportive report drew on Dives and Lazarus from the *Luke* parable of rich man and beggar.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Y Diwygiwr*, Rhif 36, Llanelli, 1838. Number 33 of the same publication (April 1838) advertises *Preparatory Reflections for Coming Events* (English language) by Hugh Williams, Secretary of the Carmarthen Working Men's Association. I am indebted to Llyr Evans for assistance in translating the Publicola piece.

<sup>11</sup> Figures given in Iorwerth Jones, *David Rees y cynhyrfwr*, Abertawe (Swansea), 1971, p. 190.

Tightly tied to a concern with to-morrow's bread and butter, in a knot of Engineers' 1850s sort, the copperworkers of 1843 had to deal with the immediate effect of masters' motivations in a world of alternative locations. The copper smelting industry of south west Wales had its origin in Elizabethan Neath before revival by Sir Humphrey Mackworth on his late seventeenth century marriage to Mary Evans, sole heiress of the town's main, Gnoll, estate. The industry was the basis of the Swansea region becoming, by 1900, 'the metallurgical centre of the world'. But its own fortunes peaked in the 1880s; the last works in the area solely concerned with refining copper, the Rio Tinto on Port Talbot docks (previously the Copper Miners Company in the Afan valley), closing in the 1940s. A demise took place long before the final or near final diminutions of employment in the iron and steel industry and in coal mining.

Failure was due to the continued expectation, by employers, of a labour force willing or able to undertake particularly arduous processes in places which were supposedly becoming part of twentieth century Western Europe. There was little attempt to move into the manufacture of copper goods, beyond the rolling of copper sheets and wiremaking, and the production of such items gravitated towards Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and London. We are recording a *palaeotechnic* situation; the concentration on primary production involving a monopolistic Swansea Association of Smelters acting together to keep up the price of refined metal and keeping down that of copper ore.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> See D. T. Williams, *The Economic Development of Swansea and of the Swansea District to 1921*, Social and Economic Survey of Swansea and District – Pamphlet No. 4, 1940. The *Cambrian* of 12 August 1843 reported that workmen complained of illegal 'fore-stalling', which practice I take to involve the entry of masters into the market for their own products so as to influence prices to their advantage. See page 137 below for Pennsylvania anthracite companies' possibly comparable 1871 manipulation.

Eventually overseas mine owners decided to do their own smelting, exporting metal instead of ores. In the shorter term, of course, the 1840s strikers had to make the best of things as they were. In the later and smaller affair at Neath, magistrates persuaded the manager of the Crown Works to withdraw charges and invite the men back – and the latter, no doubt, had to make greater claim on the huckstering proceeds from family gardens.<sup>13</sup> For an engineer's global overview of that kind of adaptation we now move to Ira Steward.

**'IN CHINA...A MAN UNDERS SELLS A HORSE. IN AMERICA A WOMAN IS CHEAPER THAN STEAM.'**

Following the newly weds, we move to an early post-marriage milieu in the United States – a country which, only a few years previously, had suffered the most awful rupture of young lives, including immigrant lives. To take an example: recently settled Wisconsin, where the Republican Party had originated in 1854,<sup>14</sup> supplied whole regiments of German speakers for Lincoln's Union army; these refugees from Prussian militarism, and their descendents, subsequently helping to give Milwaukee a Socialist mayor as early as 1904. Such people had defended what they saw as, literally, *res publica* --the people's thing, and

---

<sup>13</sup> A traditional element of Neath working class women, 'the Mera girls' (although not all resident in the original Mera), journeyed throughout industrial South Wales selling garden produce and household utensils. At the point of sale, they carried goods in baskets on their heads. Census returns suggest that some of Sam Mainwaring's family were among their number. As 'Merched y Mera', these mothers, wives, widows and daughters of colliers and furnacemen get a brief, and *absurd*, mention ('a tribe of tinkers') in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Oxford Companion to Welsh Literature* 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Wisconsin became a State in 1848. Between 1842 and 1854 the population increased from 45,000 to 500,000 – mainly through New England Yankee and Northern European migration. On 13 July 1854 more than a thousand delegates assembled at Madison to organise the new political party. The convention resolved: 'That we accept this issue [freedom or slavery] forced upon us by the slave power, and in defence of freedom



the succeeding excesses of Robber Barons must have come as a very great shock to very many.

I cannot yet confidently identify the area or areas where Sam and Jane lived in America; later British censuses only giving the couple's oldest children's place of birth as 'U.S.A.' – where there are no national or individual state amalgams of local, county, registers to turn to. However, scattered and incidental references in Sam's later writings give one or two clues. He relates a conversation with a newly arrived immigrant which took place shortly after Charles Dickens' death in June 1870.<sup>15</sup> The newcomer had previously been known to Mainwaring in Wales. This suggests an American meeting in one of those places where South Walianes congregated; the most popular being in the Wilkes Barre – Scranton – Carbondale area of north eastern Pennsylvania, about 110 miles from New York city. Again, Sam quotes Horace Greeley (1811-1872) in a way which suggests good knowledge of or easy access to the Hudson Valley and adjoining areas.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the one possibly relevant entry for east of the Rockies encountered in the Mormon files refers to another Scranton and Carbondale, south of Topeka, Kansas – to which, presumably, some families had moved from the Pennsylvania anthracite field. Greeley, sometime editor of the *New York Tribune*, is of course famous for his exhortation: 'Go west, young man!'

---

will co-operate and be known as Republicans.' For a useful introduction, see N. K. Risjord, *Wisconsin: The Story of the Badger State*, Madison, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> 'Reminiscences of William Morris', *Freedom*, December 1896.

<sup>16</sup> 'The Future of Trade Unionism', *Freedom*, September 1898.

It could be said that definite locations are irrelevant, especially if numerous and geographically widespread. Since my concern is primarily with the world of ideas and since these were carried in an America-wide labour press, such reasoning is true up to a point. But closeness to, or actual involvement with, certain specific events would be very significant indeed. Taking another example: in March 1874 Erie Railway mechanics at Susquehanna Depot, 24 miles north of Pennsylvania's Carbondale, occupied and took over management of their workshops. That sounds like producer control and responsibility subverting a Robber Baron, Jay Gould, regime; the action ending with a concentration of 1,800 Philadelphia soldiers in the small town.

Workshops were certainly centres for the dissemination of ideas. As logical feeder for Sam's future elaboration of a federated Workerism, I here contribute some of the notions of Ira Steward (1831-1883). Ten years older than Mainwaring and likely to be of British parentage<sup>17</sup>, Steward was a prominent member of the American Mechanics and Blacksmiths Union (equivalent to the ASE) and leader of the Eight Hours League in Boston, Massachusetts.

---

<sup>17</sup> David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans 1862-1872*, New York, 1967, p. 249, is adamant that Steward was American born and employed in a Boston workshop as a teenager. However, he also indicates that the mechanic was resident in Kansas before or at the beginning of the Civil War. This opens up the interesting possibility of a New England – Mid West – New England circuit – especially in the light of the Yankee colonisation of Wisconsin. In March 1856, 55 wagons and several hundred pioneers left Milwaukee for the Topeka area, under the auspices of the Kansas Emigrant Aid Society of Wisconsin – formed to settle free farmers beyond slave owning Missourians' sphere of influence. All other references to Montgomery in this chapter relate to Chapter 6, 'The Hours of Labor and the Question of Class' in *Beyond Equality*.

Like Proudhon, Steward possessed the revealing strength of paradox – perhaps most tellingly in this cascade of repetitive argument from the first half of ‘The Power of the Cheaper Over the Dearer’:

... There is but one power that can prevail against the cheapness that now undersells and now rules everything; and that is the superior power of a *cheaper* cheapness.

... if the cheapness that now undersells can only be made sufficiently expensive it can be driven out of the world.

... the hardest and most disagreeable and the slowest methods can be driven out of the market, and out of the world, as soon as they are made sufficiently expensive ... the easiest and most agreeable methods can only prevail when they *undersell* every other.

The wealth which most machine using or civilized nations have already provided is ... cheaper for them than poverty.

[whether] poverty or wealth shall continue to be the cheaper, and *how* wealth can be made cheaper than poverty, are the coming questions. In other words, how can poverty be made so much dearer than wealth that ... no one can afford to remain poor.

... the lowest paid laborers and their hand made products can be driven out of the world as soon as they have been made sufficiently dear.

This is the opposite of Luddism. One might say it could only be American. The key point is that it came from *within* the American working class.

In the same manuscript, the Boston trade unionist develops an Oriental illustration:

In China, sedan chairs are used to carry passengers, instead of horses and carriages. Not because transportation upon men's shoulders is easier, or more rapid and pleasant than by horse power; but because, there, a man undersells a horse. Where men are cheaper than horses, the rudest and most humiliating contrivances for travel must prevail; to which royalty itself must bow down.

... The Emperor of China can send abroad and import, if he chooses, the most elegant and costly equipages. But if he attempted to make the roads and streets of his empire wide enough for their use, it would probably cost him a rebellion, if not the loss of his throne. Before he can ride over his dominions by horse and carriage, a political economy must prevail that will make horses *cheaper* than Chinamen.

And he then goes on to make a domestic comparison:

It is no more uncomplimentary, to the half civilization prevailing in China, to harness a human being to the drudgery that belongs to a beast or a machine than is the humiliating drudgery now imposed upon the women of the most enlightened parts of the world.

... the sewerage and plumbing, the steam and other agencies that belong to a higher domestic civilization are *undersold* by the low paid labour of women. In America a woman is cheaper than steam, waste pipes and elevators. She undersells the work that ought to be done better and easier in a laundry and baking department; and for precisely the same reason that in China a man undersells a horse. To abolish the drudgery of the average New England kitchen, and to introduce horses, carriages and machinery in China, are essentially the same problem, to be solved upon the same principle; and are destined to meet with the same narrow objections.

The mechanic is clearly in pursuit of improved technology, which he wishes to link to an easier life for working families; his broader theory, which I will shortly consider, springing

from an idea which he is said to have derived from John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) – that the standard of living of the masses can be increased only by changing their habits and wants.<sup>18</sup> It is a starting theoretical set which parallels the 1851 position of British Engineers.

Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848 and subsequent revisions), *On Liberty* (1854), *Representative Government* (1860) and *Subjection of Women* (1869) could well have been successive reading for Mainwaring in his Aberdare and Cardiff years. Or, in the case of the first two works, even earlier, since Mill was a family friend of the Neath Abbey Quakers; Barclay Fox first making the philosopher's acquaintance three weeks before penning the Neath furnace description, and subsequently recording this June 1840 London meeting, among others:

3 ... [drove] to the Mills, where we met Carlyle and wife. I spent most of the evening in listening to the first and chatting with the second ... He [Thomas Carlyle] spoke in strong reprobation of the want of sympathy with the working classes and takes a gloomy view of the present state.

Steward's ideas, scattered in short pieces and not consolidated in a single treatise, have been, in part, previously fitted together by David Montgomery – and my debt to the latter's writing is considerable. For the broader theory, the fundamental concept is that exploitation can take place at the point of production. Steward shared this understanding with, and presented it in English before, Karl Marx (Publicola, remember, was writing in

---

<sup>18</sup> Montgomery suggests that Steward might also have owed something to Malthus. However, several readings of the Steward Papers confirm for me that J. S. Mill was a more important influence.

Cymraeg). One can contrast it with that of, say, Robert Owen who believed that exploitation was wholly contained within the exchange process.<sup>19</sup>

Steward saw that an Entrepreneurial or Profit Making function as well as a narrowly Capitalist or Interest Earning function presented opportunities for exploitation – immediately, in the work place. He denied the validity of an ‘iron law of wages’ – related to the subsistence costs of animalised labour and above which payments to employees could not be raised significantly without terminally injuring the competitiveness of industrialists. To the contrary, there were often excessive expanses of profitability accruing to employers.<sup>20</sup> Alternatively, of course, profitability might have been eroded by employers’ technological lethargy. Both are perspectives which might be pointed at the decline of Swansea’s copper industry.

---

<sup>19</sup> For earlier economists’ overconcentration on the sphere of exchange, see Noel Thompson, *The People’s Science*, Cambridge, 1984. Fittingly, Thompson was on the staff of Swansea University when this book was published.

<sup>20</sup> The recognition of a fourth, separate, factor of production (i.e. Entrepreneurship, in addition to Capital, Labour and Land) seems to me to be essential for a ready understanding of *Profit as distinct from Interest, Wages and Rent*. The most succinct intimation of this that I have come across among Marx’s writings is ‘The Trinitarian Formula’ in Chapter XLVIII of the so-called Volume III of *Capital* (assembled by Engels after the author’s death):

Capital – Profit (Profit of Enterprise plus Interest), Land – Ground Rent, Labour – Wages, this is the trinitarian formula which comprises all the secrets of the social process of production.

Furthermore, since interest [among earlier economists]... appears as the characteristic product of capital, and profit of enterprise distinguishes itself from interest by appearing as wages [of Management] independent of capital, the above trinitarian formula reduces itself more specifically to the following: Capital – Interest, Land – Ground Rent, Labour – Wages. Here profit, the specific mark characterising the form of surplus – value belonging to the capitalist mode of production, is happily eliminated.

Building on Mill's insight, Steward turned the orthodox, bourgeois, theory of wages upside down. He argued that wage levels can be influenced by the tastes and customs of workers; that labour only receives high wages when they are demanded – for an 'American standard of living'.

For Marx, wants and the means of satisfying them were similarly the product of historical development, more *particularly* on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and the degree of comfort in which, the class of labourers has been formed. The sociologist of Capitalism further reminds us that throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century in England 'capital had not yet succeeded in getting possession of the whole of the worker's week in return for the payment of the weekly value of his labour power – excepting in the case of the agricultural workers':

The fact that they could live for a whole week upon the wages of four days did not seem to the workers any reason why they should work the other two workdays for the capitalist.<sup>21</sup>

In *his* particularity, Steward translated standard of living as length of the working week plus reciprocal wage levels. He has sometimes been characterised as an Eight Hours Fanatic and Narrow Minded Producerist, but such colouring of his priority programme of action indicates ignorance of the containing vision. In an 1865 lecture, 'A Reduction of Hours, An Increase in Wages', he berates insufficient pride and shows a path ahead:

---

<sup>21</sup> See *Capital*, Chapter Four, 'Transformation of Money into Capital', and Chapter Eight, 'The Working Day'.

Every laborer who saves rent by living in crowded tenement houses, narrow alleys and unhealthy localities can underbid the few who will not live in them.

Parents who do not educate their children, but send them into factories and shops, can underbid those who do.

Tempt every producer of wealth... by theatres, concerts, fine clothes, stories; and the leisure to enjoy, and the higher wages necessary to support them will, by wiser fellows, be used to study Political Economy, Social Science, the Sanitary Condition of the People, the Prevention of Crime, Women's Wages, War, and the ten thousand schemes with which our Age teems for the amelioration of the condition of man.<sup>22</sup>

There is here a mirror of Wallace's 1840s Welsh colliers and furnacemen.

We may, too, be reminded of a *Cambrian* 1843 assertion that international competition put an absolute limit on the ability of copperworks owners to maintain earlier wage levels. I believe Steward's answer to such a situation, as a continuing condition, would be that American, British, German and French communities so affected should move into other realms of production. This is certainly the corollary of both his enthusiasm for new technologies and his views on worldwide commerce. He was acutely aware of the effects of what we would now call 'globalisation', with lesser developed countries and their lower living standards undercutting home wages in labour intensive industry.

For the very long run, he postulated a whole-world view with equitable sharing of Managerial and Labour returns – so that workers everywhere would enjoy a reasonable life.

---

<sup>22</sup> There is a copy of the text of this lecture in the Steward Papers at the State Historical Society in Madison.



But it is wrong to say that he steered wholly away from forms of short term protectionism. He was especially concerned with that variety of globalisation which involved the import of cheap *labour* – as occurred with the introduction of low waged Chinese workers to New England shoe factories during the 1860s and 1870s. Relating such action to the concept of *res publica*, he says:

It is treason to the idea of Republicanism, to use the power of a Republic to make labour cheap. Because the most highly paid labour the world ever saw was necessary to make a Republican government possible.<sup>23</sup>

The Steward Papers at the State Historical Society in Madison contain an item copied from a leaflet dated 17 November 1863. The leaflet recorded resolutions passed at the Annual Session of the International Union of Machinists and Blacksmiths of North America, held at Boston two months earlier – some seventeen months before Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomatox. The key section reads:

*Resolved:* ... the most important change to us as working men, to which all else is subordinate, is a permanent reduction to EIGHT [original's capitals] of the hours exacted for each day's work.

Karl Marx wrote his Preface to the First Edition of *Capital* in July 1867. In Chapter Eight of that work, entitled 'The Working Day', he says:

---

<sup>23</sup> 'The Power of the Cheaper over the Dearer'.

The first fruit of the [American] Civil War was an agitation for the 8 hour day... At the general convention of the National Labour Union held at Baltimore, it was declared on August 16, 1866: 'The first and great necessity of the present, to free the labour of this country from capitalistic slavery, is the passing of a law by which 8 hours shall be the normal working day in all States of the American Union. We are resolved to put forth all our strength until this glorious result is attained'.

In an accompanying footnote, Marx goes on to quote more of the *Resolution of the Workingmen of Dunkirk* [one time western, lakeside, terminus of the Erie Railroad], New York State, 1866:

We declare that the length of time of labour required under the present system is too great, and that, far from leaving the worker time for rest and education, it plunges him into a condition of servitude but little better than slavery. That is why we decide that eight hours are enough for a working day, and ought to be legally recognised as enough...

It is clear that Marx kept abreast of industrial relations in the United States before the publication of *Capital* and to that extent, at least, he can be said to have been aware of the likes of Steward. I cannot here go further to answer the question of how much Marx's existing thought was thereby reinforced or, indeed, whether it was then directly derivative. However, one *can* say that Steward developed his own system; there is no evidence that the Boston man had read anything of Marx's *economics* writings before some English translations of the middle 1870s. Both, though, may owe something to the English writer

Thomas Hodgskin, who in his 1825 *Labour Defended* had broached the helpful division of masters' functions into entrepreneur and capitalist.<sup>24</sup>

One needs to stress that Steward's thinking did comprise a *system* – despite its scattering in pamphlets and lectures alongside informal union talk. Montgomery highlights the Bostonian's proto-Keynsian emphasis on adequate producer purchasing power to source further consumer demand. And, in a wholly nineteenth century comparison, the Yale professor says:

In marked contrast ... to the thesis that employer abstinence creates a wage fund, Steward reasoned that employer expropriation of the excess of labor's product above the wages paid created, in effect, a capital fund. Marx reached a similar conclusion; jobs are created by the reinvestment of a portion of 'surplus value', at least after the first turnover of the initial accumulation of capital.<sup>25</sup>

Sam Mainwaring was a rest-of-century activist and remembrancer for Eight Hours campaigning. In his 'Reminiscences of William Morris', written at the time of the latter's death in 1896,<sup>26</sup> Mainwaring recalls the Socialist artist in 1886 – and mentions other events of that year, including: Belgian riots at Liège, Ypres and Charleroi, and continuing 'agitation for lessening the hours of labor [Mainwaring's spelling]... ending in the throwing

---

<sup>24</sup> H. L. Beales, *The Early English Socialists*, London, 1933, says that Hodgskin's works gave him a following in America and, also, that Marx acknowledged his debt to them. Marx did not really get on top of detailed economic theory until his 1860-1864 British Museum period. Of that time, Francis Wheen in his 1999 biography (*Karl Marx*, London, p.259) comments: 'Theoretical problems which had formerly defeated him were suddenly as clear and invigorating as a glass of gin'. To answer the question that I pose would now require a huge study in itself.

<sup>25</sup> For Marx on the start of capitalist production, see *Capital*, Chapter Twenty Four, 'Primary Accumulation'.

<sup>26</sup> 'Reminiscences of William Morris', *Freedom*, February 1897.

of the bomb in the Haymarket and the loss of so many staunch comrades' [the Chicago Martyrs]. We do not know the reasons for Sam and Jane's return to Britain before the birth of their third child at Swansea in 1875, but we can be pretty sure that, as an American engineer/mechanic of the immediately preceding years, the Welshman was fully exposed to Steward's ideas.

Montgomery comments that Steward accepted the then orthodox Labour Theory of Value, and was apparently unaware of the alternative, marginal utility, concepts that Stanley Jevons was developing in the 1870s. However, Montgomery also points out that the Labour Theory of Value (as distinct from a theory of surplus value) played no part in Steward's system. In this context and in that of Sam Mainwaring's subsequent involvement with Marxist teachings, we may usefully accommodate the analysis of G. D. H. Cole. In an Introduction to Eden and Cedar Paul's translation of *Capital*, published in 1930, Cole reasons thus:

If... we abandon the Marxian theory of value [which Marx took over from Ricardo], does Marx's theory of Surplus Value, which was his distinctive contribution to economic doctrine, therefore fall to the ground? I do not think it does... For the theory that the measure of the relative value of commodities is to be found in the amounts of labour incorporated in them has really nothing to do with the other theory that labour, by hand or brain, is the sole positive agent in the creation of wealth, and that the owners of capital are able... to appropriate to themselves a large part, if not the whole, of the surplus product due to economic advantages of associated production. This is the true foundation on which the theory of Surplus Value rests; and it brings into relief *the close relationship of the theory to Marx's doctrine of history* [my italics]. These two theories may be accepted or rejected, but it is pertinent to point out that neither of them stands or

falls with the 'Labour Theory of Value', and that they, and not the 'Labour Theory of Value', are the active principles of Marxian doctrine in the world to-day.

It is, of course, quite possible that Sam Mainwaring was introduced to the Marxian concept of Surplus Value by German-born friends in the United States – whilst Welsh historian I. G. Jones claims that the Chartist Ernest Jones' English language (but probably German, Marx, inspired) pamphlet on labour and capital was being read by Aberdare and/or Merthyr Tydfil workingmen at the time of or before the 1868 Parliamentary Election.<sup>27</sup> But, equally, it is probable that Mainwaring had advanced, in whole or part, by way of Steward's analysis.

So, for our investigation of the foundations of an 'Anarcho-Syndicalism', two crucial themes present themselves. Firstly, it is perfectly possible that through some combination of the writings of Publicola, Comte, Steward and Marx, Sam Mainwaring had by the early to mid 1870s arrived at an understanding of *both a processal view of history and of exploitation at the point of production*. Secondly, a very substantial element of such an amalgamated overview was available directly from a working class (and, more specifically, an engineer) author. Not only was it possible for a working class to induce a superior moral position from its solidarity in engagement with deprivation or relative deprivation; it could also be as intellectually able as, if not smarter than, its 'betters'.

---

<sup>27</sup> I. G. Jones, 'The Election of 1868 in Merthyr Tydfil', in *Explorations and Explanations*, Llandysul, 1981, p. 202 Ernest Jones was German speaking and an acquaintance of Marx – but for the Chartist's antipathy to trade union activity see Chapter Three of this Thesis.

Given this combination, proletarian groups were equipped to develop a proper disregard for unearned deference and to create a distinctive workerist 'ism. Before returning to Albert Meltzer's beloved London, where it seems that such a world-view was named, I wish to consider some other facets of the actually existing Republic which Sam Mainwaring experienced. This consideration rides in tandem with the section of Chapter Three entitled 'The Republic is not the Revolution'.

### **INTERNATIONALLY OUTSIDE *ONE* WAR.**

In his study of the Scranton Welsh, Williams D. Jones mentions a speaker at an 1888 New York St. David's Day banquet informing the audience that 'no-one has heard of a Welsh anarchist'.<sup>28</sup> I suppose it was important to such a speaker that the nearest thing among the Haymarket prisoners of the previous year was merely a 'thorough Englishman': Samuel Fielden, 1847 born in Todmorden, employed in his namesake's cotton mill at eight, and an 1868 American immigrant.<sup>29</sup>

One can hardly expect the St. David's Day performer to have known much about the varieties of, and the personalities involved with, London's socialism of 1888. But Tom Mann, who had Sam Mainwaring as his Marylebone foreman in Autumn 1879, confirms the latter Welshman's intellectual development from, at least, *that* earlier year:

---

<sup>28</sup> W. D. Jones, *Wales in America: Scranton and the Welsh 1860-1920*, Cardiff, 1993. All other references to W. D. Jones in this chapter relate to that book.

<sup>29</sup> See Samuel Fielden's contribution to Philip Foner (ed.), *The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs*, New York, 1977 edition.

4 September 1870	French defeat at Sedan and capture of Napoleon III. Second Empire overthrown in Paris and Third Republic proclaimed.
31 October	Surrender of French army at Metz.
5 January 1871	Prussians begin to bombard Paris.
28 January	Armistice between France and Prussia announced.
1 March	Ceremonial entry of Prussians into Paris. Peace treaty passed by French National Assembly.
15 March	Paris National Guard elects a Central Committee.
18 March	Government attempt to seize cannon on Montmartre and elsewhere fails. Government flees Paris for Versailles. National Guard Central Committee takes over Hôtel de Ville.
19 March	Central Committee of the National Guard announces elections in Paris for a Commune.
28 March	Proclamation of the Paris Commune.
30 March	Outbreak of civil war between Paris and Government at Versailles.
10 May	Peace treaty between France and Germany signed at Frankfurt.
21 May	Versailles troops enter Paris.
27 May	Execution of fallen Communards in the Père – Lachaise cemetery.
28 May	Last barricades fall.
November	First executions of condemned Communards.
May 1872	First deportations of prisoners. First International declared illegal in France.

He [Mainwaring] was one of the very first to understand the significance of the revolutionary movement, and the first, as far as my knowledge goes, to appreciate industrial action as distinct from parliamentary action... As time went on he showed an increasing disposition towards Anarchist Communism.<sup>30</sup>

Autumn 1879 was five and a half years on from Spring 1874 – time of the Susquehanna Depot occupation. Spring 1881 Bromley-by-Bow Census returns give the American born Mainwaring children's ages as 11 and 9 – which means that, *at a minimum*, Sam and Jane were resident in the United States from Spring 1870 to Spring 1871. It is quite possible that the stay was twice as long or longer, in the period from late 1868 to early 1875 – but, unfortunately, ships' passenger lists are not available for the years before 1890.

In any case, the core time takes in not only Dickens' death on 8 June 1870 but also the 19 July 1870 French declaration of war on Prussia and most of the succeeding sequence of European events listed on the facing page – the last of which is the banning of the First International in France.

On 1 April 1871, two days after the outbreak of the Civil War in France, the national *Workingmen's Advocate*, based at Chicago, reported that the American branch of the First International had issued an 'Address' to Pennsylvania anthracite miners. This open letter declared support for a strike which had commenced towards the end of the previous year – when the *Advocate* of 10 December 1870 had quoted the *Anthracite Monitor*:

---

<sup>30</sup> *Tom Mann's Memoirs*, London, 1923, p. 32.



Just before making up our form we received a communication from the upper end of Luzerne [County], informing us that the mines of Hyde Park [the main Welsh area of Scranton] and Carbondale had been notified of a reduction in prices and wages from forty to forty-five cents [which W. D. Jones says was a further 30 per cent cut, following five years of previous reductions].

The *Advocate* of the same date also referred to a 'telegraphic dispatch' from Scranton on 6 December, giving 'the following particulars':

[The] Miners and Laborers Benevolent Union... is composed of Welsh, Irish, English and Germans [the *Advocate*, and presumably a telegraphic, order of prominence].

At this moment between 30,000 and 40,000 miners are out of employment in this county [then Luzerne, which was subsequently – in 1878 – divided into a lower Luzerne, centred on Wilkes Barre, and an upper Lackawanna, centred on Scranton].

The miners do not hesitate to say that the strike has been originated and brought about by the managers for the purpose of bulling the coal market.<sup>31</sup>

The Chief Clerk of the coal department of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company says that the company has 150,000 tons [stockpiled] in yards... and in transit...

The Union has a fund of over \$200,000 [\$5 per head for 40,000 men!], all of which the strikers will expend rather than submit...

---

<sup>31</sup> See Note 12 above.

In another of our notable conjunctions, the report of the International's American Branch's 'Address' is immediately followed by one of the death of forty-one miners (from a night shift of about fifty) at Cory Brothers' Pentre Colliery in the Rhondda Valley: 'The flames shot up the shaft, burning all the frame work in their fury, sending the car up to the top and breaking it to pieces... mothers, wives and relations hurrying to the spot and filling the air with the wailings of sorrow and despair'. This story was more or less repeated ten weeks later, in the *Advocate* of 10 June 1871, under the headline 'Massacre', after another forty workers were killed at West Pittston, Wilkes Barre, by a fire started through overheating in a breaker fan at the head of the single shaft – before advancing downwards: 'the agonizing cries and prayerful entreaties of women and children, whose husbands, sons or fathers were in the mine, were simply heart-harrowing'. The 'Massacre' headline was occasioned by the company's slowness in providing a second, escape, shaft following a similar 'Holocaust' at Plymouth, Wilkes Barre, in September 1869. Then, 108 men died from gas or suffocation at the Avondale mine; a nearby Welsh Baptist Church losing 'all but three of its male members and there were as many widows in Wales as in the U.S.A.'.

The closeness in time of the 1871 Pennsylvania and Paris events parallels 1848 when the Eaglesbush Colliery explosion on 29 March came little more than a month after the initial declaration of the French Second Republic. The almost exactly repeated propinquity of happenings can, of course, be counted a historical coincidence, but for a young boy become husband and father over the intervening twenty-three years the illustration could not be more clear. Discussing the tragedy at West Pittston, the *Advocate* said: '... at Harrisburg [capital of Pennsylvania], at every other State Capital and at the

National Capital, money is in supreme control, and against its dictum, except under the most extraordinary circumstances, it is almost useless for labor to appeal’.

Alongside money, one might also mention the worship of Nationality or Imperial identity – for some version of which French and German men had been fighting each other in Europe. The Franco-Prussian War was something that Sam Mainwaring, for one, was able to view from the other side of the Atlantic and in the company of French and German workers who had left their homelands in the hope of, equally, becoming Americans.

Between the times of Sedan and Metz [i.e. before the proclamation of the 1871 Commune] New York French and German sections of the First International jointly adopted a manifesto ‘To their Brethren in Europe’. With historical reference, it begins:

The crushing of the insurrection of June 1848 [my italics] having left affairs just as unsettled as before the February Revolution, because the conditions of production were the same as before that period – the possessed classes languished for order... ‘Order!’ shouted all those wishing to see the workingmen *only toiling*. ‘Order’ roared the cannon, tearing up the giant body of the Parisian proletariat.<sup>32</sup>

The analysis goes on to the advent then collapse, after eighteen years, of the French Second Empire:

The success received its ‘bravo’; France and Europe were saved – saved by the fear of the *red spectre* the whole official world gazing proudly at their Savior.

---

<sup>32</sup> This could be Marx, himself, at his polemical best. See *Workingmen’s Advocate*, 22 October 1870.

... Bonaparte [Napoleon III] not feeling himself secure and strong enough to crush the awakening conscience of the labouring masses resolved to decimate them on the battlefield – THEREFORE WAR!

And continuing, identifies a German Empire as logical, bourgeois, successor:

... Louis Napoleon at Sedan delivered not only his fortress and army but above all his mission to the King of Prussia. The mission is: *Salvation of the Society!* Salvation of that Society whose motto is: to save property by theft, to maintain religion by perjury, family relations by prostitution, to establish order by disorder.

The manifesto ends: ‘Death to Wage Slavery! Death to Militarism!’ At a mass meeting, held to protest against the war, in New York’s Cooper Institute on 19 November 1870, an audience of 2,500 heard speeches in English, French, German and Czech. A Leipzig correspondent (apparently Wilhelm Liebknecht, father of the Reichstag member who voted against funding the 1914-1918 war) contributed a weekly series of long articles to the *Advocate* – which included the following observations:

... there is only one party in Germany which has not bent its neck under the yoke of Prussian despotism – SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. Undazzled by the glittering successor of the hour, the Social Democrats of Germany steadfastly follow the guiding star of Eternal Right.

P.S. To-day the news has arrived of the capitulation of Paris and of the conclusion of an armistice... From the organs of the Prussian government, which have suddenly left off blustering and bragging, it may be perceived that Count Bismarck has convinced himself of the impossibility of overthrowing the

French Republic. Whatever the conditions of the future peace will be, every point is of small moment compared with the single fact – the French Republic lives and will live. And its life is our victory.

(letter headed 22 January  
appeared in *Advocate* 11 March  
1871)

Members of our party... have blamed the French government for not yielding Alsace and Lorraine... From the International point of view, they argued, it is quite the same whether these provinces belong to France or to Germany. All we have to care for is that France and Germany be soon won for Social Democracy. This reasoning would have been correct if Germany was a Republic like France, and not a military despotism. The Alsacians and Lorrainers do not object to our nationality, which in fact is theirs too, but to our *political misery*...

(headed 12 February *Advocate*  
18 March)

That these comments may have been overenthusiastic in their initial expectations for an actually constituted Republic can perhaps be gauged from this further description:

... when the Guards, Turcos and Zouaves were all sent back to France, for some time no further French prisoners of war were released... They had to wait till the Commune was completely strangled, and the danger of a rising in the South had disappeared... Last Monday about 1,500 soldiers who had been stationed here in Leipzig, departed for their native country... when they entered the wagons, they shook hands with the people, mostly workmen that had assembled to look at the scene, and as soon as the train had started, from all the windows slips of paper were thrown out with the words in French written upon them: 'Long live the Republic! Down with the Kings and Emperor that the world may have peace, and all people be brothers. *Vive la Commune! Vive Lhumanite!*'

(letter headed 23 June, in  
*Advocate* 29 July)

A workingman who was both Internationally and historically conscious would have placed the Franco-German military machinations alongside his own Welsh and American familial and class-war experiences. In the latter, also a Transatlantic, context: 1848 Eaglesbush collier John Parker's evidence was mirrored in 1871 miner Simon Thomas' Pittston Town Hall opinion – 'there was not sufficient ventilation'.

Simon Thomas went on to say that he had been at West Pittston for three years, that the superintendent 'intended to mine up from the west heading towards the north to sink an airshaft there' [a second shaft], and that 'with the requisite force [will] they might have got it completed by this time'. Such owner laxity, or deliberate avoidance, is illustrative of why the type did not deserve moral superiority. Regarding the workingman Ira Steward's intellectual superiority, there is one question mark: his belief that a bourgeois government was capable of enacting necessary measures to make 'the Producer and the Consumer... commence *meeting and dividing between them* the profits of Capital'. This query, and its answer, occupied Sam Mainwaring in his 1875 onwards development as British Socialist. Our next two chapters will tell the story.

## CHAPTER FIVE: MORE FROM THE NEW WORLD

The dates of the first half of Sam Mainwaring's life – 1841 to 1874 – invite us to look further at a Transatlantic context.

Interviewing Herbert Gutman in 1982, Mike Merrill, co-director of the Institute for Labor Education and Research in New York City, gives us a starting point.<sup>1</sup>

If you look at America in 1840, it seems to me that the republicans are still justified in believing their world is possible. But if you look at America in 1880, if you look at Standard Oil and the other trusts being formed, it seems to me socialism was a much more viable and promising response... Socialism is much more collective than republicanism. It is large scale egalitarianism, with the emphasis on people working together, in contrast to republicanism, with its emphasis on people working for themselves.

Republicanism offers a small-scale egalitarian vision. *It is individualistic not in the sense of self-interested but in the sense of self-reliant* [my italics].

In his replies, Gutman, professor of history at the City University of New York Graduate Center, puts the final loss of faith in *res publica* at a little later: 'The really critical year, I think, was 1892'. He specifies:

If you locate events that tell us something about essential changes that shaped and re-shaped the consciousness of working-class leaders and radicals, of trade-unionists, on a time continuum, then 1892 was a big year. The Homestead

---

<sup>1</sup> See the exchange of views in H. Abelove, B. Blackmar, P. Dimock and J. Schneer (eds.), *Visions of History*, Manchester 1976, pps. 190-193.

lockout, the Buffalo switchman's strike, the Tennessee coal strikes, the New Orleans general strike, the Idaho mining strikes in Coeur d'Alene. The use of state power in the early 1890s against these workers was staggering! In the late 1880s and early 1890s there was a growing awareness among workers that the state had become more and more inaccessible to them...

Writing about America in October 1898, Sam Mainwaring gives an allied view:

What is it now, after a hundred years of legislation which was *intended* to give fuller life, greater freedom and true happiness to all? The legislators in their greed – not by open violence at first – but by sophistry, cunning and fraud have succeeded in monopolizing the great bulk of the wealth of the country. Less than two per cent of the population own seventy per cent of the total wealth. Fifty-five per cent of the wealth of the United States is in the hands of the one per cent of the population. On the other hand, the dispossessed are becoming more numerous, and their condition more and more intolerable. A hundred years ago a subsistence was easily gained; to-day millions are workless, therefore cold, hungry and downtrodden. A hundred years ago there were no beggars; to-day there are so many that it has been made a crime to beg.

Although violence was not resorted to in the beginning, the rulers do not hesitate to use it now. Think of McCormacks in Chicago, Carnegie in Homestead [Pittsburgh], and the miners who were shot by the sheriffs at Hazleton [Luzerne County, Pennsylvania].

This is probably the only country in the world where the government grants licences to assassins – for the Pinkertons can have no other name.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Sam Mainwaring (unsigned but authorship disclosed on p. 32 of April 1899 number), 'The Future of Trade Unionism', Supplement to *Freedom*, October, 1898.



Mid-way between Merrill's 1840 and Gutman's and Mainwaring's 1890s dates, in his 1868 pamphlet *The Meaning of the Eight Hour Movement* Ira Steward says:

We understand, quite as well as Employers, that four-fifths of a day's labor are not worth as much as *five-fifths*. But that is not the point. It is the *Wages* we have received, or that we may receive in future. Are they equal to what we have produced in Ten hours? Are they (allowing a proper margin for necessary expenses) equal to what we shall accomplish in Eight Hours. Is it not already a National scandal that such vast numbers of non-producers should be supported, in the most luxurious style, on the profits of our labor?<sup>3</sup>

And, again, in 'Wages and Wealth' from the same period, he argues:

There is no relation between what the laborer *does* and what he *obtains* from days works... there is no relation between the work performed (small service rendered) and the vast fortunes obtained by capitalists. But between the days works *performed* by laborers, and the vast fortunes *acquired* by capitalists, the relation is as perfect as between the two halves of an apple that have been separated from each other.<sup>4</sup>

These summations are of a part with Publicola's 1838, Llanelli, assertion of a truth: 'it is the employer that sets the wage and dictates the working hours'. The simile of the divided apple encapsulates awareness of the reciprocally variable rewards for Entrepreneurship and Labour, and of the first factor's potential exploitation of the second. There springs to mind,

---

<sup>3</sup> 'The Meaning of the Eight Hour Movement', manuscript in the Steward Papers at the State Historical Society, Madison, dated 'February 1868' (but a handwritten note thereon suggests the pamphlet may not have been published until the following year).

<sup>4</sup> 'Wages and Wealth' is one of a number of unpublished manuscripts which Ira Steward left to Miss Marietta Marshall of Nantucket. It is now in the Madison archive and annotated 'probably written about 1870'.

also, another of G.D.H. Cole's judgements: 'The notion that the poor man gets less than his due, and that the rich man lives by exploiting the poor, is not at all hard to grasp... And what is Marx's doctrine of Surplus Value but an elaborate theoretical formulation [of this]'.<sup>5</sup> Marx, of course, would not have been content with anything less than an elaborate theoretical formulation. Sam Mainwaring, one suspects, welcomed the widest possible attack – existential, intuitive and analytical. In the 1880s *he* would be one of the introductory speakers for a programme of lectures on *Capital* to be given by the companion of Marx's daughter Eleanor.<sup>6</sup>

For our purposes, 1868 was another 'big year'. If we accept Bertrand Russell's opinion that almost all the ideas which characterised late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Syndicalism derived from the Bakuninist section of the International Working Men's Association then 1868 is, in a sense, Year One. It was the year in which Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) became involved with the Association. In exploring the biography of an idea (Anarcho-Syndicalism), I next wish to consider Bakunin alongside Steward. In doing so, I am not forgetting Marx or his *Capital* – which had been published in German a few months earlier. For the present though we can put him 'on the shelf' as it were. On that shelf, he can perhaps be ticketed with Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer's view that 'Anarcho-Syndicalists always accepted Marx's economic criticisms and analysis,

---

<sup>5</sup> G.D.H. Cole's Introduction to Everyman's Library edition of *Capital* (translators E. and C. Paul), London, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> See advertisement for lectures at the South Place Institute, London, in *Commonweal*, February 1885 (the first number). Edward Aveling was the principal lecturer.

and disagreed with Marxism only on the need for legalism, political leadership, the question of state control and the role of the party'.<sup>7</sup> Or, to quote Bakunin himself from 1870:

Marx as a thinker is on the right path. He has established the principle that juridical [political] evolution in history is not the cause but the effect of economic development, and this is a great and fruitful concept. Though he did not originate it – it was to a greater or lesser extent formulated before him by many others – to Marx belongs the credit for solidly establishing it as the basis for an economic system.<sup>8</sup>

For a worker-intellectual like Sam Mainwaring who can be reasonably supposed to have accessed both the Marx/Bakunin and Steward forms of exposition, the continuing question was not the validity of their congruent explanations but what action should ensue therefrom. As one early debating place we can identify the Stratford [East London] Dialectical and Radical Club which Mainwaring belonged to around the time he was Tom Mann's 1870s foreman. To participate in any such debate, we need first to consider the observed results of Steward's American strategy. After that we can look further at Bakunin's variations on Marx.

#### **WHAT STEWARD WANTED. WHAT BAKUNIN HAD IN MIND.**

'What we Eight Hours men want, first of all, is National, State and Municipal experiments...'. So begins Ira Steward's 1868 pamphlet. His scheme was based on making

---

<sup>7</sup> Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, London 1970, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Taken from an unpublished Bakunin manuscript, quoted in James Guillaume (1844-1916), 'Michael Bakunin: A Biographical Sketch', reproduced in Sam Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchism*, Montreal 1980, p. 26.

a generally accepted public sector the exemplar for improved conditions in all wage-earning employment: ‘We ask Mr. Pond [a Massachusetts State Senator]... to introduce Bills and Resolutions’.

The *initial* objectives of these latter were to be threefold:

All Labor for the State of Massachusetts shall not be employed over Eight Hours a day, and that in awarding contracts preference will be given to parties employing their laborers for the fewest hours in a day.

Eight Hours shall be made the legal standard of a day’s labor in the absence of a written agreement, and agreements shall be renewed as often as once a year.

Senators and Representatives at Washington shall use every exertion to secure the adoption of the Eight Hour system for all Labor done by or for the Government of the United States; and also to secure amendment to the Patent Laws by which no man’s monopoly of the manufacture and sale of an invention shall be respected if he ‘employs upon it Labor for more than Eight Hours a day’.<sup>9</sup>

‘If there is a loss in these experiments, it will fall upon the public – just where it belongs’.

Steward himself was employed in the private sector: ‘We are willing to lose something for the sake of the instruction it will afford.’

*Then*, ‘the legislation next in order... brings us to the great battle-field in the coming conflict with the Wealthy Classes’:

---

<sup>9</sup> *The Meaning of the Eight Hour Movement*, Boston, Massachusetts, 1868 or 1869. As indicated in Note 3, above, a manuscript is held in the Steward Papers at Madison.

The People, acting in their collective capacity, through the Legislature will require that: 'The Corporations of the State [i.e. the private sector] MUST ADOPT THE EIGHT HOUR SYSTEM OR BE FORCED TO SURRENDER THEIR CHARTERS' [capitals as in original].

In the event of a conservative Senate refusing to concur, the House of Representatives should 'stop the supplies' [funding].

The Senator (Pond) was asked to call the workingmen of Worcester (Massachusetts) together and urge them to vote in their next Municipal election for those Common Councilmen only, who would answer 'Yes' to two questions:

Will you, if elected to this position, vote for the Eight Hour System for all persons employed by or for the City Government of Worcester?

In case the Board of Aldermen or the Mayor shall refuse to concur, will you vote to STOP THE SUPPLIES?<sup>10</sup>

In *total*, we are presented with a comprehensive scheme for demolishing an existing capitalism through the agencies of liberal democratic government. But, derived from the notion of a 'people's thing', such a plan posed contradictions which Radical Republicanism was unable to resolve. Steward might envisage the abolition of wage slavery as the next stage on from the abolition of chattel slavery, but the controlling system's liberalism (and the limits of that liberalism) was thoroughly bourgeois. Notwithstanding the 1867 support

---

<sup>10</sup> Ira Steward, *The Meaning of the Eight Hour Movement*, *idem*.

of the Governors of contiguous Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri for the eight hour working day, the 1887 hanging of the Haymarket martyrs followed demonstrations for just such a condition of labour.

David Montgomery gives us the 1864 American thoughts of the editor of *Fincher's Trades Review*:

Pondering the absence of protection against wage-slavery in the otherwise excellent federal Constitution, Jonathan Fincher concluded that because the Founding Fathers were not wage earners but men 'who spent their early and middle life amid the musty books of counting rooms or lawyer's office, or who *owned* a farm', they 'overlooked the claims of that class upon whose existence the whole superstructure to which they gave their attention depended, the laborer. Hence they 'failed to see the propriety of stating how many *hours* should be considered a legal day's work throughout the land.'<sup>11</sup>

Sam Mainwaring probably admired the 'Great Republic' when he emigrated to it, but his subsequent experience and observation of the United States would have combined with an understanding of France in 1848 and 1871 to fashion a different view. Ambrose Barker, a Leyton schoolmaster who was Secretary of the Stratford group, says in his unpublished 'Reminiscences of a Revolutionist' that the Welshman was an Anarchist 'from the beginning'.<sup>12</sup> Alongside Tom Mann's testimony that Mainwaring was 'the first'<sup>13</sup> to

---

<sup>11</sup> David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, New York 1967.

<sup>12</sup> Ambrose Barker, 'Reminiscences of a Revolutionist', unpublished manuscript of memoirs, p. 29. The original is in Vestry House Museum, Walthamstow, London. I am indebted to Stan Shipley for a long loan of a copy.

<sup>13</sup> *Tom Mann's Memoirs*, London 1923.

appreciate industrial action as distinct from parliamentary action, this takes us into the territory of Bakunin's beliefs.

Michael Bakunin became a member of the Geneva section of the International in July 1868, the month before Sam Mainwaring's Cardiff marriage to Jane Gregory. Bakunin died in July 1876 – two months after the birth of the couple's fourth child, Will junior, at Bermondsey. In 1919, *this* William Mainwaring,<sup>14</sup> then forty three, would announce the formation of a Treherbert, top of the Rhondda Fawr, branch of the Communist League. The latter, post World War I, organisation was an attempt to unite dissident, mainly Scottish, branches of the De Leon-influenced Socialist Labour Party with London anarchists. The whole presents a nice continuity. In R.W. Jones' words the essence of the new initiative was: 'an attempted fusion of Bakuninism and Marxism in an anti-parliamentary movement working for the creation of revolutionary workers' councils and factory committees'. Jones also tells us:

... until the formation of the CPGB [Communist Party of Great Britain], which took upon itself the definition of all things 'communist', it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that the anti-parliamentary and communist movements were synonymous. To be a communist before 1920, even 1921, was to be an anti-parliamentarian. Only after 1921 was the prefix 'anti-parliamentary' needed.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Not to be confused with Swansea born W.H. Mainwaring – one of the authors of *The Miners' Next Step* and later Member of Parliament for a Rhondda constituency.

<sup>15</sup> R. W. Jones, 'Anti-Parliamentarism and Communism in Britain, 1917-1921', *The Raven*, July-September, 1990. In the same article, Jones quotes Sam Mainwaring's son, William, from *The Communist* of June-July 1919.

In the same lasting mould Rudolph Rocker, Sam Mainwaring's turn-of-the-century London Yiddish-speaking colleague, repeated an early, 1869, Bakuninist declaration at the International's Basle Congress. In his *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, Rocker quotes Eugene Hins of Brussels:

... all workers should strive to establish associations for resistance in their various trades... to the end that the present wage system may be replaced by the federation of free producers... councils of the trades and industrial organizations will take the place of the present government, and this representation of labour will do away once and forever with the government of the past.<sup>16</sup>

We have here discovered the missing 1850s, Chapter Three, fourth strand of Occupational Constituencies – to interweave with Producer Control, Social Revolution and Local Self Government. I mentioned in Chapter Four that German-born Rocker also made a connection with the Owenites of the 1830s which was the decade too, as we discovered in Chapter Two, of William Cobbett's late, Senex, doubts about Parliament's value for wage earners. You may remember Cobbett's opinion, in the last year of his life, that 'Social liberty must precede political liberty'.

Unlike Proudhon's Anarchism, which was rooted in a world of small workshops, that of Bakunin became collectivist. It forged links between the Libertarian movement and mass, steam engine, industry. The use of the word 'collectivist' is clarified in a letter

---

<sup>16</sup> Rudolph Rocker, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, London 1973, p. 27.



written by Bakunin's *alter ego*, the Swiss printer and college teacher James Guillaume, in 1909:

At first [1868 Brussels Congress of the International] the term 'collectivists' designated the partisans of collective property; all those who, in opposition to the partisans of individual property, declared that mines, land, communications and transportation, machines etc. should be collectively owned... at the Basle Congress (1869) the partisans of collective ownership split into two opposing factions. Those who advocated ownership of collective property by the State were called 'state' or 'authoritarian communists'. Those who advocated ownership of collective property directly by the workers' associations were called 'anti-authoritarian communists' or 'communist federalists' or 'communist anarchists'. To distinguish themselves from the authoritarians and avoid confusion [of the varied descriptions], the anti-authoritarians called themselves 'collectivists'.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to Steward's intended use of existing legislative processes, the Bakuninist vision amounted to nothing less than a complete counter culture. In this latter, the collectivists built on longstanding defensive mechanisms like the strike, boycott and exclusive dealing, and looked to the further creative powers of working class self-education, solidarity and superior morality. A new society would emerge on the shoulders of institutions created in the old: more specifically from a network of trades unions and councils which would create hegemonic attitudes in their respective communities. In this context, it was foreseen that a full Social Revolution, when it came, could be effected relatively quickly – and that, therefore, mere Political Revolution (like that achieved in America and France) succeeded

---

<sup>17</sup> This letter, previously unpublished, was copied in the 1970s from Montevideo, Uruguay, by the anarchist historian Vladimir Minoz to Sam Dolgoff, who translated excerpts in his (ed.) *Bakunin on Anarchism, op. cit.*, p. 158.

by a continuing electoral struggle against monied Reaction was a false objective. It followed that, in the short term, Industrial (and other non-governmental Cultural) rather than Parliamentary struggle was the proper activity for proletarians.

In *L'Égalité* magazine on 21 August 1869, Bakunin memorably said:

There is an infallible sign by which workers can recognise a phoney socialist, a bourgeois socialist; if he says that the political must *precede* the social and economic transformation; if he denies that both must be made at the same time, or shrugs his shoulders when told that the political revolution will be meaningful only when it begins with a full, immediate and direct *social liquidation*...<sup>18</sup>

And in the following month, Hins was to tell fellow Internationalists: 'Whatever the English... the Germans and the Americans might hope to accomplish by means of the present political state the Belgians repudiated theirs'.

Criticising, in 1870, the programme of the Marxist German Social-Democratic Workers Party (founded in 1868), Bakunin sees its belief in the precedence of political revolution as 'fatal error', and shows great premonition of the Social Democrats' World War I Reichstag position:

Article 1 of the programme is in fact contradictory to the fundamental policy and spirit of the International. The S.D.W.P. wants to institute *a free People's State*. But the

---

<sup>18</sup> *L'Égalité* was the organ of the French Swiss (Bakuninist) section of the First International. The quotation comes from the third of four articles on 'The Policy of the International', which appeared from 7 to 28 August 1869. See Sam Dolgoff, *idem* and *op. cit.*, p. 170.

words *free* and *People's* are annulled and rendered meaningless by the word *State*; the name International implies the negation of the State...

Instead of dedicating themselves to the creation of the all-German state, the German workers should join their exploited brothers of the entire world in defense of their mutual economic and social interests; the labour movement of each country must be based solely on the principle of international solidarity... If, in case of conflict between two states, the workers would act in accordance with Article 1 of the social-democratic programme, they would, against their better inclinations, be *joining their own bourgeoisie* against their fellow workers in a foreign country.<sup>19</sup>

Guillaume recapitulates the alternative mechanisms in his 1876 *On Building the New Social Order*:

... each workshop, each factory, will organize itself into an association of workers who will be free to... administer production and organize their work as they think best, provided that the rights of each worker are safeguarded and the principles of equality and justice are observed.

The commune consists of all the workers living in the same locality... the local federation of groups of producers. This local federation or commune is organized to provide certain services which are not within the exclusive jurisdiction or capacity of any particular corporation [industrial union] but which concern all of them, and which for this reason are called *public services*.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> See 'Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis', in Sam Dolgoff, *idem* and *op. cit.*, pps. 214-215.

<sup>20</sup> Written in 1874 as 'Idées sur l'organisation sociale' but not published until after Bakunin's death. The original French version is given in Daniel Guerin (ed.) *Ni Dieu, Ni Maître*, Paris, 1965; the first English translation in Sam Dolgoff, *idem* and *op. cit.*

Internationalism would be effected by the further federation of communes, or of federation of federations, for specific purposes – if necessary beyond the territories of existing and putative ‘nation states’.

The Stratford Dialectical and Radical Club had sprung from the local branch of the National Secular Society. Before 1880 the Club, in turn, gave birth to the Labour Emancipation League, whose members had the actual path of American development over the previous decade, and longer, to compare with hoped for achievements of Marxist or Bakuninist socialism. Some, at least, of the group preferred the Libertarian direction. Ambrose Barker claimed to have given the first East London lecture supportive of Anarchism in February 1881.<sup>21</sup> Along with Sam Mainwaring, his fellow members included Joe Lane – later author of an *Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*.

Sam Mainwaring might well have contributed special, American-based, insights of the Marx-Bakunin split and First International’s break-up to Club and Emancipation League discussions. The State Historical Society’s archives at Madison again contain unique evidence – and I draw on these in my next section.

## **MARX MOVES THE INTERNATIONAL**

From the 1869 Basle Congress there was the prospect of the collectivists permanently gaining the upper hand in the International. They were a majority or

---

<sup>21</sup> Ambrose Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

potentially so among Spanish, Italian, Swiss French, French and Belgian members or federal sections, and were capable of making an alliance with those English Internationalists who wished to have their own federal section – independent of what some saw as a Marx dominated, London-based, General Council. Outside England, Marx's support was concentrated in German speakers. American participation in the Association included the much publicised 'anarchist', and hated by Marx, New York Section 12 – associated with Victoria Woodhull (1838-1927), alleged advocate of free love.

The position of the General Council needs some explanation. The International Working Men's Association had been established at a two-thousand strong meeting in St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, London on 18 September 1864. It followed increasing contacts between British and French workers; the immediate initiator being George Odger, Secretary of the London Trades Council – itself the 1860 outcome of a Nine Hours Movement. On the proposal of Victor Le Lubez, a French émigré, it was decided to proceed with a central commission in London – which supposedly also represented all affiliated overseas sections; these latter to engage in correspondence with respective London-based secretaries. The first General Council comprised twenty seven Englishmen, three Frenchmen, two Germans and two Italians; all the non-English being resident in London. Karl Marx was one of the Germans, and his *formal* position was that of Corresponding Secretary for his native country. Subsequent, policy making, Congresses of the International were held at Geneva (1866), Lausanne (1867) and Brussels (1868). The mix of attending delegates varied; for example, of 99 present in Brussels 55 were from Belgium. This affected the direction of policy, which could diverge from that said to be preferred through the General Council.

Marx planned to hold the 1870 Congress at Mainz, where Germans would have given him decisive support, but that intended event was cancelled because of the Franco-Prussian War. Instead a more limited *Conference* was held at London in 1871. There Marx failed in attempts to outlaw Bakunin's activities. More particularly, the German's organizational aims met opposition from the balanced Belgian leader César de Paepe (1842-1890), a printer who later trained as a physician. Marx resolved to do away with such uncertainty and, in effect, kill the International. At the September 1872 Hague Congress, on a vote of twenty-six to twenty-three with nine abstentions, he and Engels saw a majority agree to relocate the General Council in New York. The narrow squeak required a good deal of fixing. Debates on credentials filled a preliminary three days of private discussion, with Williams West's mandate from Section 12 being rejected – notwithstanding that he had crossed the Atlantic on a steerage ticket and with limited funds to be present.

Writing to an American colleague from London shortly afterwards, West said that his delegate standing had been turned down on the invented grounds that 'the Congress could not recognize sections composed of middle class people', and continued:

The Congress was packed... to perpetuate the disposition of Karl Marx... but the old I.W.A. is now dead. The removal of the General Council to N.Y. & the enlargement of its powers so that it is now authorized to suspend, without a *why* or *wherefore*, not only sections but entire federations & is also authorized to construe the principles and measures of the I.W.A. just [as] it pleases against the exprefs terms of the statutes has killed it. The Spanish, Italian, part of the French, the Belgian, the Swiss and part of the English federations

have revolted and will secede, and the American must ignore the G.C. at N.Y. and follow suit.<sup>22</sup>

The letter, now held in the International collection at the Madison archives, is perhaps most remarkable for the friend's address at which West was staying:

c/o G.E. Harris  
3 Camillia Place  
Wandsworth Road, SW.

George Harris is listed in a Name Index of the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism's *Documents of the First International* as 'active figure in the British working-class movement, follower of the social-reformist views of the Chartist Bronterre O'Brien; active member of the National Reform League; member of the General Council of the International (1869-72), Financial Secretary of the Council (1870-71).' A connecting link is offered in a letter Marx had written to another American in 1871 where Harris was named as belonging to the 'sect' of the late O'Brien, 'full of follies and crochets, such as currency quackery, false emancipation of women and the like. They are thus by nature allies of section 12 in New York and its kindred souls'.<sup>23</sup>

Karl Marx comes out of the whole Hague business very badly. Alongside the contrived exclusion of William West one can place the fact that one of the Marx supporting

---

<sup>22</sup> Letter from William West to John Mills, dated September 1872, in First International Papers at State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Karl Marx to Frederick Bolte, 23 November 1871. Cited in Henry Collins and Chimen Abramsky, *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement*, London 1965, p. 249.

and voting representatives (indeed, quite possibly Marx's principal agent) was the London journalist Maltman Barry, a Conservative Party activist and likely police spy; Max Nettlau later comparing Marx's weakness for Barry with that of Engels for Edward Aveling, and commenting that both aberrations lost them influence amongst British workers. The broader point for my present Thesis is that, through the testimony of people like West and Harris, a view of Marx's operational failings became available, both in Britain and America, to some of those who recognised his philosophical genius. Marx may have made things worse by attempts to justify an ill-conceived ruthlessness. In the context of the Merrill-Gutman dialogue, and of Mainwaring's related hundred years overview, we can note the German's apparently inane justification for the New York move: that the United States was now 'pre-eminently becoming the land of the workers.'

Marx's, at least partial, fall from grace could quite possibly have assisted towards two things which are of some importance in our consideration of a more libertarian socialism. Firstly, the evidence of the German's manouvering could have offset, to some extent if not wholly, any adverse perception of Bakunin's alleged secret or 'entryist' plotting to capture the International. Secondly, and more relevantly for the debates of 1880s British socialists, Marx was substantially removed from any God-like pinnacle of the sort which confounded post-1921 Communists. This latter cannot be over-emphasised given the later trajectory of much of the British (and other) Left. For Sam Mainwaring, Eleanor Marx – and her reading of her father's thought – would simply be *wrong*. That the early recognition of wrongness could have percolated through somebody like George Harris carries the implication of other connections. Mention of the O'Brienite National Reform



League, which was affiliated to the International, brings Alfred Walton into our picture. The Moscow Name Index details *him* as '(born 1816) – English *socialist* [my italics]; architect; President of the National Reform League; member of the General Council of the International (1867-70); delegate to the Lausanne Congress (1867).' Not detailed is that in 1868, to take just our 'big year' and that of Sam Mainwaring's marriage, Walton was living at Brecon and travelling to Cardiff.

The National Reform League<sup>24</sup> may be characterised as part of a 'Chartist Endurance'. Formed in 1849, its programme contained the demand for universal suffrage and a number of social measures including the nationalisation of land and currency reform. On 29 August 1867, Walton attended a meeting of the International's General Council in London to, inter alia, pay the League's entrance and annual fees. Earlier he had written to say that he would be attending the International's Lausanne Congress in his capacity as President of the League; this after previously indicating that he might be prevented from doing so on account of the publication of his book *Our Future Progress*. In November of the previous year, 1866, the *Cardiff Chronicle*, newspaper reported him sharing platforms at bilingual Merthyr Tydfil reform demonstrations with Matthew John and other old Chartists; the chairman of an afternoon market square meeting, J.W. James, saying that 'Twenty years ago he [James] took the chair on a similar occasion, when the six points of the charter were advocated, and he might inform them that he still held to the same opinion.'<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> To be distinguished from the non-socialist Reform League, founded in 1865.

<sup>25</sup> *Cardiff Chronicle*, 23 November 1866.

A progression from O'Brienite socialism serves as entrée to something further left. The Minutes of the General Council meeting on 29 August 1867 close with the revelation that 'Citizen Walton spoke on the general subject of credit. No one else took part in the discussion and the meeting adjourned.' Nevertheless at the Lausanne Congress in the following month, Walton, sharing objectives with Proudhonists, had the main hand in drawing up the report of a committee dealing with the desirability of co-operation financed by mutual credit; the document recommending a State Bank issuing free credit to finance production and trade by 'corporations or individuals'. It showed connections with a pamphlet Walton had written in 1848: *An Appeal to All Trade Societies on the necessity for a National Organisation of Trades for the Industrial, Social and Political Emancipation of Labour*. And for a Cardiff reader of reliable reports or, possibly, listener to Walton's personal explanations – ensuing events in the Swiss city would have helped towards understanding the developing position of 'collectivists'. A Congress resolution in favour of the Brecon man's suggestions was carried. But an amendment by De Paepe, recommending land nationalisation as a subject of study, was lost by twenty-seven votes to eleven<sup>26</sup> – a decision which was to be reversed in the 1868 Marxist – Bakuninist détente at Brussels.

The 1872 Hague vote to move the International's General Council to New York was a mélange. Some of Marx's otherwise strongest supporters voted against the change as they foresaw the organisation wilting without his close and constant involvement. Some of his opponents who might otherwise have voted against the change did not do so, in order to

---

<sup>26</sup> See the section on 'Mutual Credit and Land Nationalisation' in Henry Collins and Chiman Abramsky, *op. cit.*, pps. 128-129.

weaken his hold on the organisation. One of his biographers implies that Marx's plan was only carried with the support of a hard core of Bakuninists who wanted him out of things at all costs.<sup>27</sup> The narrowness of the majority achieved made the exclusion of West and the attitude of one or two others possibly crucial. These others would have included Guillaume. In an early speech, the latter had said that 'they all understood each other; discussion was useless' – and, indeed, he abstained from voting on all issues. Bakunin, himself, was not present.

Sam Mainwaring was quite possibly still in the United States when all this happened. He was even more likely to have been there at the time of the September 1871 London Conference, and, equally, to have known something of ensuing American events. Further letters in the Madison archives provide especially revealing insights of what then happened.

The London Conference, not being a full policy-making Congress of the International, was supposedly only able to take decisions on 'organisational' matters. But under this umbrella, Marx was successful in extending the powers of the General Council, which the Conference agreed should include the right to correspond with foreign sections direct and not necessarily through the appropriate Federal (i.e. National) Council. Whether Marx's letter to an American about the 'follies and crochets' of O'Brienites was covered by that provision, or was simply written by one intriguer to another, is a moot point. That letter was dated 23 November 1871 and the recipient was Frederick Bolte, secretary of the American Section 1 in New York. This German speaking section was one of perhaps six,

---

<sup>27</sup> Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx*, London 1999, p. 344.

out of an all-American (English, French, German and others) total of about fifty, which were even then seeking to disestablish themselves from the wider Federal body – and, no doubt, to establish themselves as the narrow basis for a future, transplanted across the ocean, General Council.

In this context, the text of a letter from I.T. Elliott of New York to J.W. Rehn of Philadelphia, dated 5 December 1871, needs to be here given in full:

As you are aware the regular meeting of the delegates for the presentation of Credentials for the purpose of forming a new Federal Council or Committee was to take place on Dec. 3, 10th Ward Hotel, 3 o'clock P.M. It was just 3o'clock when I arrived on the scene and I learned that the committee had met at 2 o'clock. Soon after my arrival various delegates came dropping in to the number of some 20 or more. We proceeded up in a body to the room we had previously used and there found the following persons assembled.

Mr. Sorge representing Section No. 1 [German speaking, New York] composed of 11 members.

Sections 4 and 5 of Chicago [German], one section in reality, represented by Karl and Starke, both of whom are members of Section No. 1.

Section No. 7 [Irish, New York], John Devoy. Section long since broken up.

Section No. 8 [German, Brooklyn] delegate Ruppell.

Section No. 11 [German, New York] delegate Filly of Section 1.

Section 16 California [German]. Delegate Bolte of Section 1.

Section 25 California [German]. Delegate Spyer of Section 1.

Section 21 [German, Brooklyn]. Delegate unknown to me.

These parties had organized the Council and elected themselves to the positions, ignoring all others. When I presented my credentials with the other applicants, we would not be received but referred to a committee – at which all demurred. The landlord of the establishment, a member of Section No. 1, closed the doors against the body and they adjourned to 68 Grand Street and there reorganised.<sup>28</sup>

Elliott was a previous secretary of the American Federal Council and hence able to recognize most of the early attenders. At least five of those appear to have been members of the eleven-man Section 1. More particularly, in noting that sections 4 and 5 were possibly paper ones (Elliott had never been able to obtain the names of Chicago-based corresponding secretaries for them), we should also register the fact that they were the groups which Maltman Barry was supposedly mandated to speak for at the Hague Congress of the following year.

Very probably, that mandating, and the decision on the transatlantic move, were fiddled. Marx intended that the tiny Sorge-Bolte New York Section 1 would comprise the core of a new General Council. In another letter to Rehn, Elliott had this to say:

The body of Germans... seeing that they could not control and govern the [American Federal] Council have resolved to split it.

They have written charge after charge to the [London] General Council demonising us as Free Lovers. Spiritualists and bogus Reformers... and through Marx's (sic) who in fact rules the London Council with a nod of his head, they have managed to have all of our communications suppressed and theirs attended to, the result of which has been the passing of

---

<sup>28</sup> Letter from I.T. Elliott to J.W. Rehn, 5 December 1871, in First International Papers, State Historical Society, Madison.

the following resolutions... no more American sections unless two-thirds are wage laborers (we being represented by the Sorge party as... tricksters and bourgeoisie), suspending Section 12 for introducing Free Love into the I.W.A. (a groundless charge) etc. etc.

The resolutions passed by the Council were forwarded to us from London, and we have made our statement. Eccarius the [new] Corresponding Secretary for America informs us that our reports have never been introduced to the General Council. The trickery of these men has been discovered and I am the recipient to-day of a letter from John Hales the General Secretary stating that had he known what he now knows these resolutions would never have been passed by the General Council.<sup>29</sup>

On 28 May 1872, three months ahead of the Hague decisions, Marx proposed that the General Council should support only the New York section led by Sorge. Both Johann Georg Eccarius (1818-1889), the previous General Secretary, and the East Ender Hales (born 1839) had been longstanding supporters of Marx – but were now actually or close to being disillusioned with his tactics. The émigré tailor Eccarius, in particular, had shared a long path; he had been a member of the original Communist League, which commissioned the 1848 *Manifesto*, and was one of the founders of the German Workers Educational Association in London.

After the Hague Congress, a majority of Association sections in some countries and a minority in others refused to accept its authority. In the United States a Sorge group was opposed by an American Federal Council of which William West, George Harris'

---

<sup>29</sup> Undated letter from I.T. Elliott to J.W. Rehn, First International Papers, Madison.

Wandsworth lodger, became Secretary. *This* Council unanimously adopted a 'Circular To All Internationalists' which concluded as follows:

We must hasten the triumph of anarchy and collectivism by the destruction of all the authoritarian powers and class monopolies, so that we shall have no more popes, kings, nobilities... nor politicians of any shade. But in their stead, a universal federation composed of free trades unions of all sorts of industries and agriculture.

We shall attain this aim by solidarity of revolutionary action between all the workingmen of the world.<sup>30</sup>

At the same meeting was received an address from the Spanish Federal Council, dated Alcoy 27 February 1873, couched in similar terms.

Friederich Sorge sent Ira Steward manuscript translations of parts of *Capital*. In his letter of reply, the Boston man expressed pleasant surprise at the extent of the chapter on 'The Working Day' but asked for a footnote to correct Marx's history:

Our *systematic* agitation for Eight Hours began about the date he gives – with the abolition of slavery.

But one or two trades had actually *obtained* Eight Hours before our war began, the Caulkers and Ships Joiners about 1860.

The agitation for less hours began in 1831 in this country, the year I was born.

In the 'House Documents' of the Massachusetts Legislature for 1845 is the evidence that our movement had reached our legislature at that time.

---

<sup>30</sup> Press cutting (hand numbered page 24c) in First International Papers, Madison.

Under the National Administration of President Martin Van Buren between 1836 and 1840 the government works was brought down to Ten Hours.

Dr. Marx is excusable for his mistake because the movement for Eight Hours at the time he names was heralded further over the world than anything previously attempted. This was largely due to the fact that the names of Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith and several lesser celebrities were associated with it.<sup>31</sup>

In his Annual Report for 1866-67, Peter Fox, then American Corresponding Secretary for the London General Council, had written:

Several of the State Legislatures have enacted that in the absence of any agreement to the contrary, a legal industrial day shall consist of eight hours. In the state of New York, such an act has been passed but the working classes have not yet ventured to demand that it shall be put in operation.<sup>32</sup>

On 22 April 1873, the anti-Sorge American Federation of the International Working Men's Association convened a meeting of Trades Organizations in the City and State of New York to consider:

1. Providing ways and means for the prosecution of all violations of the Eight Hour Law in the State.
2. Framing and laying before the 'present Legislature' a bill providing for the enforcement of the Eight Hour Law.

---

<sup>31</sup> Undated letter from Ira Steward (at West Somerville, Massachusetts) to F.A. Sorge, in Steward Papers, Madison.

<sup>32</sup> 'Annual Report of the American Secretary', in *Documents of the First International, The General Council Minutes 1866-1868*, Moscow, no date (but published by C.P.S.U.)



The weakening succession provides another commentary on Mike Merrill's 1840-1880 span, and one explanatory background for Sam Mainwaring's homecoming. In America the Great Labour Uprising on the railways was to come in 1877.

## IN AND OUT OF HYNDMAN'S LOT

Marx's break-up of the International Working Men's Association together with the failing health, 1873 withdrawal from public life and 1876 death of Bakunin comprised a sort of beheading for the intercontinental Collectivist Left. British workingmen of that persuasion had to further their argument anew in amalgams of quondam internationalists and freshly aspiring socialists, or in merely investigative forums. East London – working class heartland of Britain's largest, most cosmopolitan and capital city – hosted the Stratford club and its outgrowth. In her biography of Tom Mann, Donna Torr describes the 'never forgotten' world of Tom's 1879 foreman in these terms:

Mainwaring's views would not have seemed strange to his grandfathers in 1833 and 1834, in the days of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union and of William Benbow; he derived them from anarchist influence... He belonged at this time to the Stratford Dialectical and Radical Club... which became the earliest group of Radical – Socialist workmen, the parent of the Labour Emancipation League, 1881... The Club and the League partly reflected older traditions... kept alive after the First International... by the small clubs and societies of French, German, Italian, Russian and Polish political refugees in Soho and the East End.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Dona Torr, *Tom Mann and His Times*, London 1956, p. 63. Torr was a leading member of the Communist Party Historians Group, 1946-1956.

In fact, the Mainwaring generations were such that Sam's education in the notion of a Grand National Holiday and concurrent Congress of the Productive Classes could have come from his father. David Mainwaring had been thirty four at the time of Dic Penderyn's Aberavon, Port Talbot, burial.<sup>34</sup>

This may, indeed, be an appropriate point at which to state or speculate on some other Welsh connections – past and future at that Torr time. We can start with the briefest suggestion or recapitulation that Mainwaring's leaning to decentralisation could have owed something to his boyhood engagement with (Congregational) Independency. Worth a longer mention is the fact that at the core of Torr's Soho stood Frank Kitz, who was to become Mainwaring's companion on the 1887 propaganda tour of Glamorgan. During the summer of 1877, at a meeting in the Spread Eagle pub near Middlesex Hospital, Kitz had moved that 'Seeing the necessity which exists for a club composed of the Social Democrats of London... immediate steps should be taken to organise for the formation of such a club'; the seconder being Eugen Mendel, then running the Café Vorwaerts, Angel, and a long time opponent of Marx in the International. Perhaps most worthy of further research, in extension of old Brecon resident Walton's views, is Usk-born Neath-enthusing Alfred Russel Wallace's 1881 acceptance of the Presidency of the Land Nationalisation Society. In the latter, and a wider Welsh context which should include the failure to create a specifically *Workers and Farmers* movement, we can note Guillaume's 1876 indications:

In many countries, particularly in France, the priests and the bourgeoisie try to frighten the peasants by telling them that

---

<sup>34</sup> Dic Penderyn (Richard Lewis), executed after the Merthyr Rising of 1831, is *the* most remembered martyr of the South Wales working class.

the Revolution will take their land away from them. This is an outrageous lie concocted by the enemies of the people. The Revolution would take an exactly opposite course: it would take the land from the bourgeoisie, the nobles, and the priests and give it to the landless peasants. If a piece of land belongs to a peasant who cultivates it himself, the Revolution would not touch it. On the contrary, it would guarantee free possession and liquidate all debts arising from the land. This land which once enriched the treasury and was overburdened with taxes and weighed down by mortgages would, like the peasant, be emancipated. No more taxes, no more mortgages; the land becomes free, just like the man!

As to the land owned by the bourgeoisie, the clergy, and the nobles – land hitherto cultivated by landless labourers for the benefit of their masters – the Revolution will return this stolen land to the rightful owners, the agricultural workers.<sup>35</sup>

To-day, it would be an interesting exercise in counter-factual history, and revealing comparison with a declaredly radical Liberalism, to work through the ramifications of this Bakuninist action – plan on a tenant-farmer Victorian Wales.

One cannot expect Donna Torr to have known Sam Mainwaring's positioning in a big set of brothers and sisters, and therefore that it did not require three generations to get back to the 1830s. However, we might more strongly query her suggestion, or assertion, that Mainwaring's views 'derived from anarchist influence.' In Ambrose Barker's specific testimony, the Welshman was *himself* a longstanding anarchist – and I have shown that circumstantially this was perfectly possible, given the sequence of events in the International. One might suggest that Torr's own posture had a certain typicality among post-1921 British Communists – that of an inability or unwillingness to recognize there had

---

<sup>35</sup> James Guillaume, 'On Building the New Social Order' in San Dolgoff (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 358.

been British Bakuninists. This difficulty seems to have afflicted even Edward Thompson who in his study of *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* manages to give a fairly extensive description of the 1880s Socialist League, with anarchists but with barely one reference to the earlier, and definitely contributory, parallelism of the International Working Men's Association.

By the later 1870s those London workers who could be variously described as Bakunist, Collectivist or Anarchist, faced the problem of holding their ideas together in a society where, given any British context of popular historical knowledge, 'anti-parliamentary' meant King versus Commonwealth. It was a context too where the wholehearted followers of still alive, and Hampstead resident, Karl Marx could point to the progress of the Reichstag-orientated German Social Democratic Party. An aspect of the situation which I have already touched on, but cannot be overstated, is that the 'Anarchists' accepted Marx's *economic* analysis.<sup>36</sup>

Marx's prominence in that area could have been reinforced by drip revelations of the content of *Capital* and realisation that he drew substantially on English (and English speaking) events. But equally, the same understanding might have contributed to the more challenging workers' sense of *shared* discovery. We can usefully consider a couple of examples.

---

<sup>36</sup> See Note 7, above.

Reflect first on a footnote Marx provides for part of Chapter Eight of *Capital*, 'The Working Day'. In it, he says: 'During the great strike of the London builders in 1860 to 1861, declared in order to enforce the reduction of the working day to 9 hours, the strike committee published a manifesto which corresponded in many respects to the above imaginary plea'. The description of that 'plea', given in the main text of the book, reads thus:

The capitalist has bought labour power at its value for a day. He has, therefore, acquired the right of making the worker work for him a day. But what is a working day?

The worker speaks as follows: 'The commodity I have sold you is distinguished from the ordinary mob of commodities by this, that its use creates value, and a greater value than its own. That was why you bought it. What to you seems a spontaneous expansion of capital, seems to me to be an excessive expenditure of labour power... The use of my daily labour belongs to you. But it is my concern to reproduce it daily, by means of the price of the daily sale, so that I can continue to sell it over and over again. Apart from natural wear and tear due to advancing years, and so on, I must be capable of working to-morrow with the normal measure of energy, health, and freshness I possess at my work to-day... I shall make a reasonable and thrifty use of my sole possession, my labour, and shall be careful to avoid squandering it... If you prolong the working day for me immeasurably, you will reach a point when you will be able in one day to set in motion an amount of labour power which may exceed what I can replace in three days... Using my labour power and despoiling me of my labour power are two very different things...'<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Section 1, 'Limits of the Working Day', in Chapter Eight of *Capital*. The text quotations are from pps. 232-233 of the 1930 Everyman's Library edition, where the footnote is on p. 234.

One might ask where imagination starts? The piles of old newspapers in Marx's writing rooms are well documented. And I have shown, in Chapter Three, that some of the Ten Hours wording in Marx's 1864 *Inaugural Address* to the International Working Men's Association was more than similar to that in an 1852 speech by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers' William Newton, as reported in a *Leader* of the earlier year. For me, such comment is not meant to belittle Marx's synthesising power but more to place us in the mindset of those elements among a contemporary working class who had no reason to simply bow down before him. The building workers mention is also appropriate in coming in the same chapter of this Thesis as my catalogue of Ira Steward's requests for footnoted corrections to *Capital*. The closeness makes for easier comprehension of a similar, English-speaking but Transatlantic, historical, awareness regarding the relationship between daily working hours, ongoing living standards and *the length of a working life*.

Our second example of worker/Marx 'shared discovery' can, indeed, take us to and fro across the Atlantic, to include a major plank in Steward's structure – the capturing of ever more advanced technology to benefit ordinary families. You will recall, for example, the New Englander's observation that 'in America a woman is cheaper than steam.' It is a useful stepping-stone back towards a debate which took place in the London General Council of the International on 11 August 1868. Then, Eccarius, the principal speaker in a discussion about 'the reduction of the hours of labour question', concluded that 'the increase in wealth which had lately taken place' meant that 'society could very well afford to pay the labourer the increased wages, which would be the inevitable result of a general reduction of the hours of labour.' George Milner, an O'Brienite, disagreed. In his view 'a

general reduction of the hours of labour... meant a diminution of the production of wealth; the opposition it would encounter from those who had amassed large fortunes out of other people's labour would be too great for the working classes to overcome.' He thought that 'a rise in wages could easier be obtained; the reduction of the hours of labour would follow that.' Marx partly sided with Eccarius. He 'could not coincide with Milner that it [a reduction of hours] would lead to a diminished production, because where the restrictions [on hours] had been introduced, the instruments of production had been vastly more developed than in other trades'; a reduction of the hours of labour was 'indispensable to give the working class more time for mental culture.'<sup>38</sup> A week before on 4 August 1868, in a related debate, Harriet Law was arguing that 'machinery had made women less dependent on men than they had been before and would ultimately emancipate them from domestic slavery.'<sup>39</sup> The whole constituted a wide ranging consideration of the *quality* of life. It came almost five years after the International Union of Machinists pre-Appomatox statement, three years after Steward's 1865 lecture 'A Reduction of Hours: An Increase in Wages', and two years after the August 1866 Dunkirk, New York State, workingmen's resolution which, as I have mentioned in Chapter Four, Marx remarks on in *Capital*. We can again note that, considering the last proofs for his book were not corrected until August 1867, he was there being remarkably up-to-date.

Marx's likely intellectual debt to working class activists, and his own genius, sat uncomfortably alongside perceived failings, misjudgments or vindictiveness in his treatment of socialist solidarity. He died in 1883 and was buried at Highgate, London.

---

<sup>38</sup> *Documents of the First International, General Council Minutes 1866-1868, op. cit., pps. 243-244.*

<sup>39</sup> *General Council Minutes, idem and op. cit., p. 239.*

Amalgams of actual or incipient London collectivists/anarchists like Sam Mainwaring, Frank Kitz, Joe Lane and Ambrose Barker had to decide on the future direction of their own solidarity. Barker, in his 'Reminiscences of a Revolutionist', gives Lane's account of circumstances leading up to the formation of the Democratic Federation in March 1881 under the presidency of Henry Myers Hyndman, a rich West Ender who appears to have then possessed a political vision of imperialism abroad combined with better times for British workers at home.

Hyndman had met Lane when speaking at the Marylebone Radical Club in 1879. In the following year, when a parliamentary candidate for the borough, he asked the Club, through Lane, for its support. Lane in a later letter to Barker says: 'after many conversations I told him it was a waste of time... Land nationalisation he thought too extreme and was opposed to Home Rule [for Ireland].'<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless Hyndman persisted in his general objective, if only to attune himself to acceptable policies, and a seminal meeting of representatives from all London Workingmen's Clubs was held at the Rose Street, Soho, International Club. Hyndman read *Capital* in French and made the acquaintance of Marx. Following the German's death, the fourth annual conference of the Democratic Federation, held on 4 August 1884, changed the name to Social Democratic Federation, became a definitely socialist organisation, and adopted, wholly or substantially, the programme of the affiliating East End Labour Emancipation League. Among those elected to the new Executive Council were Sam Mainwaring and Joe Lane, Eleanor Marx and her companion Edward Aveling, and William Morris.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ambrose Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 8.



Edward Thompson in *William Morris* says that the reconstituted Federation adopted all but one of six points in the League's programme, and lists those five thus:

Equal direct adult suffrage.

'Direct legislation by the people' [i.e. participatory NOT representative democracy].

A National Citizen Army in place of a Standing Army – the people to decide on Peace or War).

Free Secular Education.

Free Administration of Justice.<sup>41</sup>

Barker, in his reminiscences, implies that the sixth was also adopted but, deliberately or otherwise, omitted from subsequently printed literature. This sixth point was: Perfect liberty of speech, freedom of the press, right of public meeting and free association.

Ambrose Barker also tells us that, at the 1884 conference, Joe Lane had moved and John Sketchley seconded a motion 'That no political action shall be taken in the way of putting forward candidates for elections or in any way countenancing the present political system', that this was carried unanimously, and that it was never rescinded.<sup>42</sup> According to Thompson, Sketchley was born in 1822, had become Secretary of the South Leicestershire Chartists at seventeen, founded a Birmingham Republican Association which became the Midland Social Democratic Association in 1878, and was contributing to German Socialist

---

<sup>41</sup> E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, London 1955. Reference is to Section IV of Chapter III, 'The Split', in Part Three. See page 345 of 1977 Merlin edition.

<sup>42</sup> Ambrose Barker, *op. cit.*, pps. 10-11.

papers in the following year – when he also published the Principles of the Social Democrats of Germany and America.<sup>43</sup>

Neither Thompson or Barker mention that the Labour Emancipation League's six points closely resembled the first six in the programme of an enlarged German Socialist Workers Party as agreed at Gotha in 1875, and presumably as published by Sketchley four years later – when the Stratford Club emerged.<sup>44</sup> Given such a succession, Sketchley's seconding of Lane's anti-electoral motion attracts further comment. Either the Birmingham man's ideas had again moved on or he saw no necessary conflict between anti-electoralism and the *wording* of the Gotha programme. The latter's phrasing was no doubt influenced by the Reichstag's merely advisory role and Bismarck's anti-socialist legislation. But equally, in an alternative – British – context, 'direct legislation' would adequately cover a belief in 'participatory' as opposed to merely 'representative' democracy. Certainly, the second and third of the Labour Emancipation League's six points – that relating to direct legislation and that relating to a citizen army – can be interpreted as truly radical when compared to the Chartists' six. The League's (and Gotha) list seems to offer some reflection of Libertarian elements in the First International and the practice of the Paris Commune, as well as possibly a workingmen's heard echo of their own English Revolution.

Proudly Anarchist himself, Barker summarises matters at the time of the affiliation by indicating that, whilst 'we of the Labour Emancipation League... were consistent in our

---

<sup>43</sup> E.P. Thompson, *William Morris, op. cit.*, pps. 279-280 of 1977 edition.

<sup>44</sup> See Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (Marxist-Leninist Library, 15), London 1935. A revised, 1938 edition details the 1875 Gotha programme on p. 109.

opposition to political [i.e. electoral] action', Hyndman was motivated above all by his own Parliamentary or other governmental ambitions. He goes on to mention a meeting called by the old Federation at the beginning of 1884, and to which were invited 'sympathisers from other bodies who had been active in socialist propaganda.' A delegate called Setterick put the following to the gathering: 'In the opinion of this meeting the time for palaver has passed by; that the working class of this or any other country cannot depend any further upon parliamentary representation to better the condition of the wage slaves; that the time has now arrived when the working classes have to take the question into their own hands...'.<sup>45</sup> Hyndman, in the chair, had prevented discussion and immediately closed the proceedings. In Thompson's opinion Hyndman was convinced that 'the revolution was due to take place in England before all other countries' but 'asserted for himself the role of interpreter and chief apostle of a mechanical 'Marxist' dogma.' Eleanor Marx wrote to her sister Laura Lafargue complaining about Hyndman's 'disgraceful vilification of everyone to whom he personally objects as not being a 'follower' of himself'.<sup>46</sup>

Probably against its own better judgement, the Labour Emancipation League had affiliated with the Democratic Federation to further the cause of socialist solidarity. However it soon became obvious that the League's internationalism could not co-exist with a Hyndman jingoism, and Mainwaring and Lane determined to combine with the Avelings and Morris in a showdown. An opposition 'cabal' was formed, reasonably sure of carrying the Executive Council but less so of winning over the Federation's wider membership. At Morris' suggestion, a seceding statement of a majority was written in advance of the crucial

---

<sup>45</sup> Ambrose Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx, Volume II – The Crowded Years 1884-1898*, London 1976, p. 57.

meeting. On 27 December 1884, the Hyndman faction was outvoted by 10 to 8. The majority comprised:

Edward Aveling  
Eleanor Marx Aveling  
Robert Banner  
E. Belfort Bax  
J. Cooper  
W.J. Clark  
Joseph Lane  
S. Mainwaring  
J.L. Mahon  
Williams Morris<sup>47</sup>

The Socialist League was about to be born.

It would be a kind of re-birth. Marxists and Bakuninists had come together again for a short time, but after less than five months dalliance in a Social Democratic Federation whose 'leader' spoke disparagingly of the International Working Men's Association, our East Enders helped create a wider League, all-London and indeed all-Britain, where they could hope to further some of that old International's intentions.

---

<sup>47</sup> Names as signed, 13 January 1885. See, for example, Yvonne Kapp, *idem*, p. 65. Sam Mainwaring, then just past his forty-third birthday, was one of the older signatories.

## CHAPTER SIX: *VERLOREN HOOP?*

Sam and Jane Mainwaring's third child, and second son, David was born at Somerset Place, between the half-tide basins of Swansea's North and South Docks, in March 1875. The birth was registered by Sam, and it appears that he was then only recently returned from the United States or temporarily at home during a subsequent engineer-at-sea phase. A third son, William, born at Bermondsey in 1876 and writing in 1927, says that the resident American years were followed by a short period of ocean going before his father again secured shore employment in South East London. William goes on to tell us that Sam became a member of the East London Radical Clubs Association in 1876 or 1877, subsequently entered the Labour Emancipation League (which appears to have been established in 1878), and attended Political Economy classes at London University during the winters of 1878 and 1879. As we have already learned, at work the elder Mainwaring had also progressed to become a young Tom Mann's foreman by the end of 1879, and there is no doubt that, shorn of his Socialism, Sam was a prime candidate for the 'labour aristocracy'.

However, of the university tuition William says:

The knowledge thus acquired did not perhaps have the result desired by the good Professor [Bonar], because instead of making the pupil into a good Liberal it seemed to strengthen and clarify his unorthodox views...<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 'W.M.' (William Mainwaring), 'A Fighter of Forlorn Hopes', *Freedom*, January 1927.

We are further told that among Sam Mainwaring's favourite reading around this time was 'Saladin' and other writers in the *Eclectic Review*. William Mainwaring junior's understanding of events shortly after his birth is probably a little mixed up on this point. The *Eclectic Review* (1805-1868) had then ceased publication, and 'Saladin' (Stewart Ross) was a contributor to and later editor of the *Secular Review* which first appeared in 1876. Read now, the latter provides a cascade of articles and smaller pieces on, and the relationship between, the shades of 1870s Unitarianism, Secularism, Positivism and Socialism. Among the writers on 'German Socialism' were John Sketchley and E. Belfort Bax; the last named to later become an editor of *To-Day*, in which Sketchley contributed reminiscences of his Chartist activities. Both, of course, would be early members of the Socialist League – with Bax among the seceding majority of the Social Democratic Federation's Executive Council.

Sam Mainwaring's penchant for the writings of 'Saladin' can be readily appreciated: they have something of that Cobbett quality which made Shelley blench. In his book *The London Heretics 1870-1914*, W. S. Smith chooses this 1885 comment on a bishop's activities:

... We gather that it is somehow connected with an 'outpouring of the Holy Ghost', from which we infer that the Holy Ghost is now in liquid form. One step further he may be rarefied into gas, and then disappear altogether. It is distressing to know that the Ghost has got so thin. He couldn't be poured out in the grand old times when he visited the Virgin Mary. Joseph's rival was solid enough, and did

not then at all resemble a jug of stout or a pint of paraffin oil...<sup>2</sup>

On the Republican front the *Secular Review* of 18 February 1882 gives us this:

The first item in the Queen's speech is: 'I have given my approval to a marriage between my son, Prince Leopold (Duke of Albany) and her Serene Highness Princess Helene of Waldeck and Pyement. I have every reason to believe that this will be a happy union'.

Now, what have Parliament or the people of England to do with this? If I were in Parliament, I should resent as an insult being summoned to take part in the conduct of the affairs of this great country and first of all, as if it were of paramount importance, have this trumpany German lad and his nuptials thrust upon me. England that nurtured a Hampden and Cromwell, why invest your hard won earnings on trinket pieces, gew-gaw Nüremburg toys that squeak when a bridge is opened or chatter when a statue is unveiled, products from the German king factory, which factory seems to have monopoly for turning out microcephalous mediocrities with an inimitable blend of insatiable cupidity. Each of these Hanover trinkets, including the elderly invisible one [Queen Victoria], have a crack at the top of their heads suited for the dropping in of half-crowns, and millions of half-crowns are dropped into this cranial crack even by starving wretches who cannot get bread.<sup>3</sup>

Mainwaring, with an acute sensitivity to nuances among the declaredly 'progressives' of his time, would certainly have appreciated the humour in the following, October 1880, chastisement of G. T. Holyoake on behalf of those who had 'contempt for the finesse by which reprobated infidelity can be transmitted into a mild aspect of fashionable heresy':

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Saladin' in *Secular Review*, 9 May 1885, as quoted in W. S. Smith, *The London Heretics 1870-1914*, 1967, p. 67

<sup>3</sup> 'Saladin', *Secular Review*, 18 February 1882.

Mr. Holyoake spoke in a [Bolton] Christian church and, quite appropriately, Mr. James Grundy was in the chair, while Mrs. Grundy permeated the whole church with her presence, and the lecturer soothed her conventional susceptibilities by assuring her that she might have a soul after all and a future life. Mrs. Grundy has had a too-long life in the past, and I wish her no future life. I can only express my regret that the venerable head of George Jacob Holyoake should be laid on the lap of such a Delilah, who shears him of the locks of his strength...

When he steps into the Coliseum where Truth and Error confront each other, he first fills the arena full of smoke and mist, puts Error's jacket upon Truth, and Truth's breeches upon Error, rolls them both in the mud of platitudinarian obscurity, shuffles them over and through each other, and then marches off with self-gratification because 'myself was treated with courtesy'.<sup>4</sup>

Holyoake, who was the first proprietor of the *Secular Review*, may indeed be more properly classified as an Agnostic than Atheist – and, perhaps starting from that position, the periodical was altogether more wide-ranging in its contributors than Charles Bradlaugh's rival *National Reformer*. Besides being a totally unbending Atheist, Bradlaugh was vehemently Anti-Socialist. Nevertheless, he, too, was allowed to express his views in the *Secular Review*; one interesting series of articles comprising a debate on Socialism between Bax and Bradlaugh.

With an early eye to something like an Europe of the Regions, Bax's article 'Socialism and the Modern Revolution' of August 1878 called for 'Federalism as a political basis; the splitting up of existing nationalities into autonomous cantons' – these latter to

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Saladin', *Secular Review*, 30 October 1880.



have one to three million inhabitants and to co-exist with ‘international fraternity, the absorption of the national idea in the international’. Again, in February 1879 under the heading ‘The State: From the Communist Point of View’, he argued that ‘centralisation in large governmental units renders representative democracy a farce’. Such a libertarian angled overview could form a useful background for, for example, former sailor’s leader and future gold prospector Tom Lemon, who, speaking at the Stratford [East London] Dialectic and Radical Club in May 1881, said that ‘order is not preserved by legislative acts, but rather by public opinion’. On an even wider philosophical plane, Bax sought ‘the definite supercession of all theological by ethical thinking in the highest sense, the supercession of God by Humanity’ – whilst steering clear of the minutiae of Comte’s formal prescriptions:

We must guard... against our goal being either too vague or too particularised. Most attempts err on the former side – that of indefiniteness. Positivism, in common with certain forms of Socialism, I am certainly inclined to think on the latter – that of over-detail.<sup>5</sup>

That William Mainwaring junior’s memories of his father’s talk linked ‘Saladin’ with the *Eclectic Review* is, for us, fortunate. Indeed, it points to that sort of extension represented in the title of one of the groups regularly reporting to the *Secular Review* – the Glasgow Eclectic and Secular Society. In June 1877, these Glaswegians enjoyed a Sunday session on ‘Religion in the Grip of Science’. After pointing out where the two differed, and clearly showing that science had the best of it, the lecturer finished by:

---

<sup>5</sup> E. Belfort Bax, *Secular Review*, 4 August 1878.

... comparing religion to a wind-bag in which science was continually pricking holes, and tightening her grip upon it, so that gradually – though surely – the wind inside was escaping in spite of the frantic endeavours of the theologians to mend the article.<sup>6</sup>

We are, here, also extending the 1840s world of Alfred Russel Wallace and the Neath Mechanics Institute. The *Eclectic Review* in its last number, at the end of 1868, said that it had existed for nearly seventy years to widen the comprehension of those ‘usually called Congregational Protestant Nonconformists’. A planned four volume reprint of its essays included items such as:

Thomas Carlyle and his Critics.  
John Henry Newman.  
Metaphysical Tournaments: John Stuart Mill and S. W. Hamilton.  
The Theory of Cromwell’s Life.  
George Fox and the Early Friends.  
Modern Friends and their Ways.

With each of the four volumes containing a promised 500 pages, one is given a veritable insight into the ecleticisms that might have been available to a youth and young man down the years, within the ambit of any liberal and English speaking Welsh Independency.<sup>7</sup>

The originally liberating Earth Science of Charles Lyell (1797-1875) also featured, in June 1877 at London’s Manhood Suffrage League; the note of a lecture on ‘The

---

<sup>6</sup> *Secular Review*, 23 June 1877.

<sup>7</sup> See *Eclectic Review*, December 1868, for more on the volumes of reprints to be prepared in 1869.

Teachings of Geology and Theology Contrasted' being contributed by the organisation's secretary, Frank Kitz. Close to Sam Mainwaring's South East London home, the Deptford Secular Society was offering 'The Politics of the Bible, or Modern Christianity Opposed to the Secular Meaning of the Holy Scriptures'. At the Wandsworth Freethought Institute, the lecturers included Harriet Law, who we last met on the Council of the First International, and who now had her own, Birmingham based, *Secular Chronicle*.<sup>8</sup>

The continuing dialogue with Unitarianism, site of Sam Mainwaring's early subversion, can also be examined. By the 1870s there were twenty-six Unitarian chapels in the London area, with a combined average attendance of about 2,500. W. S. Smith says that these 'late-century Unitarians were at least as bourgeois as the Quakers, with little interest in evangelizing the masses'.<sup>9</sup> However, although the denomination refused to handle Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* in their book stores, the *Secular Review* was able to report favourably on the *Unitarian Magazine* of July 1878:

Mr. R. Stewart [Stewart Ross or 'Saladin'?] contributes a delightful paper on 'Lord Macaulay'. The literary merit of all the articles, in fact, is remarkable. The following is an admirable exposition of 'Free Investigation' by W. Lloyd Garrison [Ira Steward's supporter]: 'Imposture may always be suspected when reason is commanded to abdicate the throne; when free investigation is treated as a criminal act; when appeals are made to credulity, and not to the understanding...'

The *Unitarian Magazine* has a kindly notice of the *Secular Review*, of which it says: 'Though it fails to emphasise the facts of religious consciousness as fully as we

---

<sup>8</sup> For Mrs. Law at Wandsworth, see *Secular Review*, 9 June 1877. For Kitz at Manhood Suffrage League, 23 June.

<sup>9</sup> W. S. Smith, *The London Heretics*, 1967, p. 249.

Citizen \_\_\_\_\_ enrolled a member of the

# LABOUR EMANCIPATION LEAGUE.

## OBJECT.

The establishment of a Free Social Condition of Society, based on the principle of Political Equality, with Equal Social Advantages for all.

## PROGRAMME.

1. All Officers or administrators to be elected by Equal Direct Adult Suffrage, and by ballot.
2. Direct Legislation by the People. No project of Law to be Legally binding till accepted by the majority of the People.
3. The abolition of a Standing Army, and the establishment of a National Citizen Force; the People to decide on peace or war.
4. Education to be National, Secular, Gratuitous, and Industrial, Free to all alike.
5. Perfect Liberty of Speech, Freedom of the Press, Right of Public Meeting, and Free Association.
6. The administration of Justice to be Free and Gratuitous for all members of society.
7. As the Land is the Collective Property of the People, no individual has a right to property in the soil. The Land, with all the Mines, Means of Transit, &c., to be declared Public Property.
8. As Labour is the foundation of all Wealth, and as economical labour is possible only by Society, the Regulation of Production must belong to Society, and the wealth produced be equitably shared by all.
9. As at present the Instruments of Labour and the means of Employment are monopolised by the Capitalistic Classes, which monopoly is the cause of the misery and servitude of the Working People: the Emancipation of Labour requires the transformation of the said Instruments of Production and the means of employment into Collective or Public Property, for the benefit of all members of Society.

Supported by Voluntary Contributions.

All Communications to be addressed to—  
The Secretary, 38, Mile End Road, E.



S.-L, 541

## AN ADDRESS TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND.

Men of England, wherefore plough,  
For the Lords who lay you low;  
Wherefore weave, with toil and care,  
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,  
From the cradle to the grave,  
Those ungrateful drones, who would  
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,  
That those stingless drones may spoil  
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?  
Or, what is it ye buy so dear,  
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow another reaps,  
The wealth ye find another keeps,  
The robes ye weave another wears,  
The arms ye forge another bears.

Sow seed, but let no tyrant reap,  
Find wealth, let no imposter heap,  
Weave robes, let not the idle wear,  
Forge arms, in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;  
In halls ye deck, another dwells!  
Why shake the chains ye wrought? why see  
The steel ye tempered glance on ye?

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,  
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,  
And weave your winding sheet, till fair  
England be your sepulchre.

P. B. S.

The cost of, and charge for this Case is  
One Penny

Social and Political Notes, Newspaper Cuttings, &c.

could wish, yet it advocates the freedom of thought, the culture of moral character, and the dignity of human nature with most commendable earnestness'.<sup>10</sup>

In *The London Heretics 1870-1914*, Smith views Unitarianism as a bridge – both satisfactory and unsatisfactory. On the satisfactory side he says that J. H. Newman saw it as a link ‘which might avert another convulsion such as accompanied the Reformation’. On the unsatisfactory side there was ‘the road, taken by increasing numbers, from Orthodoxy to Freethought, who paused only long enough to break the journey’. More recently, the Welsh historian and educationalist David Barnes has reminded us that Erasmus Darwin, freethinking grandfather of Charles, had looked askance at the Unitarian faith of the Wedgwoods, the family that provided wives for his son and grandson, describing it as ‘a feather bed on which to catch a falling Christian’. I simply advise that around the time of Sam Mainwaring and Frank Kitz’s tour of the Valleys, the Welsh Unitarian monthly, *Yr Ymofynydd*, included an article on Geology – complete with drawings of folded strata.

#### **‘MEN OF ENGLAND...’ AND MAINLAND EUROPE.**

The Labour Emancipation League membership card shown on the facing page places the Gotha – derived first six points of its [London] programme alongside an Address by the anarchist-atheist poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, son-in-law of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft.<sup>11</sup> In another notable connection the first six paragraphs of the Constitutional Rules of the Socialist League differ only minimally from the first six

---

<sup>10</sup> *Secular Review*, 6 July 1878.

<sup>11</sup> For my earlier discussion of the Gotha Programme, see page 178 in Chapter Five of this Thesis.

paragraphs of the Provisional Rules of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) as drafted by Karl Marx in his Address of 1864.<sup>12</sup>

Two small differences between the Constitutional Rules and the Provisional Rules occur in the sixth paragraph, as follows:

That the present awakening of the working class in the great industrial countries of Europe *and America* [words in italics not included in Marx's document] while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the *workers of all countries* [words in italics substituted for 'still disconnected movements' of Marx's document].

The greater, and Transatlantic, integration indicated after the passing of two decades ties in nicely with some individual, 1870s, availability of Stewardian/Marxian economics and with Sam Mainwaring's apparent dismissal of Professor Bonar's alternative, London University, teachings.

William Mainwaring junior was firmly of the view that his father's Socialist League became the first body to present Marx's fully formulated *economic* theory to a significant audience of British working men.<sup>13</sup> The *Commonweal*, the Socialist League's journal established under William Morris' editorship in February 1885, provides corroborative evidence. This first issue advertised 'Lessons in Socialism' to be given weekly by Edward

---

<sup>12</sup> I have compared the copy of the Constitutional Rules held in the Socialist League Papers at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, with the Provisional Rules reproduced in L. E. Mins, *Founding of the First International*, London, 1939.

<sup>13</sup> 'W.M.', *op. cit.*

Aveling at the South Place Institute, and whereby ‘an attempt will be made to analyse Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*’.<sup>14</sup> The listed platform speakers for an introductory meeting included Sam Mainwaring – which tends to confirm that he did indeed possess some previous knowledge of Marx’s *tour-de-force*.

Aveling, who was assisting with the translation of the book into English, seems to have found the same explanatory difficulties with parts of the content as did Friederich Sorge in his American transmissions to Ira Steward. Then, alongside his request for footnoted corrections of United States labour history, the Boston man also commented that he wished to see Marx’s wider words understood:

I hope Mrs. Sorge is quite recovered from her adventure of walk and rain. Mrs. Steward is actually growing better, and the fact is marvelous in our eyes...

She has gone over the manuscript, as I could not, and Mr. McNeill read... the Hours of Labour chapter, in which we were all much interested.

I want the translation of Karl Marx *to be read!* With this idea, which is always before me, I have been much troubled at the passages that are, to English speakers, obscure.

The average reader will not struggle long to understand. And the ability of Dr. Marx leads us to believe that in his own language, he was clear and easily comprehended. Had I been able to spend the time from my own writing I would have made... an abridgement or an abstract of the chapters that precede the ‘Working Day’. Especially as the most obscure passages are in the first part of the manuscript.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> See Note 6 on page 146 in Chapter Five of this Thesis.

<sup>15</sup> Undated letter from Ira Steward, at West Somerville, Massachusetts, to F. A. Sorge, in Steward Papers, State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

One is reminded of Engels' advice, to Marx, to start with something easier – even in German. It seems from subsequent *Commonweal* reporting that Aveling did, in fact, commence with the particular abstractions of Chapters One to Four – and that the men of England were as pained as American comrades.

Programmes of different weekly speakers, in the mode of Secular Societies, were probably more appealing. Here is the monthly list for the Labour Emancipation League's Mile End branch as published in the March 1885 *Commonweal*.

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1st  | Charles Mowbray<br>'Why the Revolutionary Movements of 1848-49 Failed' |
| 8th  | Samuel Mainwaring<br>'Society'   |
| 15th | John Mahon<br>'The Meaning of the Revolution'                          |
| 22nd | Eleanor Marx<br>'The Factory Acts'                                     |
| 29th | William Morris<br>'Socialism' <sup>16</sup>                            |

That, second, number of the publication also carried Engels' article 'England in 1845 and in 1885'.

By then or only a little later, the Mainwarings had moved to the Lisson Grove area of Marylebone where they became leading lights in the local Socialist League branch. A

---

<sup>16</sup> Mahon, an engineer by trade, was the father of J.L. Mahon who became London District Secretary of the Communist Party. The older man subsequently acted as Keir Hardie's election agent in Mid-Lanark. For



handwritten draft of the group's winter 1887 into spring Sunday morning lecture programme shows William Morris, Victor Dave, Bernard Shaw and Charlotte Wilson among the speakers.<sup>17</sup> The Belgian Dave (1847-1922) was a multilingual journalist – of whom Emma Goldman was later to write:

Of the people I met [in early twentieth century Paris] I was most impressed with Victor Dave. He was an old comrade who during forty years had participated in anarchist activities in various countries. He had been a member of the first International, a co-worker of Michael Bakunin... Though sixty, he was as alert in mind and spirit as in his student days... I spent much time with him, and his lifelong companion, Marie, an invalid for many years, but still interested in public affairs.<sup>18</sup>

Charlotte Wilson (1854-1944), daughter of a Gloucestershire surgeon and married to a London stockbroker, was a close associate of Peter Kropotkin and long time editor of the Anarchist journal *Freedom*.

The international character of the early Socialist League is further illustrated by the mix of three dozen or so people who sat down for a supper on 5 July 1885. Alongside Sam and Jane Mainwaring, Joe Lane and his wife, Eleanor Marx and her companion, and William Morris with his daughter May – those present included Victor Dave, Friederich Lessner (1825-1910), Andreas Scheu (1844-1927) and Johann Neve (1844-1896).<sup>19</sup> A

---

Mowbray, see Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre*, Princeton 1978, pps. 102-109.

<sup>17</sup> See Item 548, Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam. This is possibly written in Jane Mainwaring's hand.

<sup>18</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, New York 1931. Appears on page 266 in Volume One of the 1970 republication.

<sup>19</sup> Item 10, Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam.

longstanding intimate of Karl Marx, a member of the First International's General Council and an early member of the Independent Labour Party, Lessner begins his 1907 *Sixty Years in the Social Democratic Movement* thus:

... At the age of seventeen, having finished my [tailoring] apprenticeship, I went on my travels... and finally settled down to live at Hamburg. In March 1847, in order to escape from compulsory military service, I came to London.<sup>20</sup>

Scheu, a Viennese furniture designer and Left revolutionary who moved to London in 1874, became a Jaeger salesman, provided Bernard Shaw with the latter's distinctive outfits, and was considered a good enough debater to represent the League against Charles Bradlaugh. Neve, a Schleswig (then Denmark) born joiner, had helped to organise an attempted 1881 revival of 'Bakuninist' Internationalism (the 'Black International') in London, and to earlier publish John Sketchley's 1879 *Principles of Social Democracy*.

Friederich Lessner had supported Karl Marx at and after the 1872 Hague Congress of the First International. Together with Eleanor Marx, and her still advising Engels, he contributed a strongly anti-Bakuninist element to the Mainwarings' Socialist League circle. On the other hand, two of the Welsh couple's own Marylebone branch, Gertrud Guillaume – Schack (1845-1903) and Max Nettelau (1865-1944), would provide an almost familial empathy with the Russian founder of modern Anarchism. Born into Silesian aristocracy, Gertrud Schack had got to know James Guillaume when living in Neuchatel, Switzerland,

---

<sup>20</sup> Frederich [sic] Lessner, *Sixty Years in the Social Democratic Movement, Before 48 and After*, London, 1907. Quotation taken from a typed copy given to me by Willie Gregory, friend of Sam Mainwaring junior. It was copied from a printed edition held in Briton Ferry Public Library.

and had been briefly married to his brother. She became a prominent member of the German women's movement before being expelled under Bismarck's anti-Socialist laws; lodging at Engels' house during her first weeks in London. Max Nettlau we have already met, in connection with his *Cymmrodorion* writings.<sup>21</sup> In his five volume history of Anarchism he refers to Sam Mainwaring as his first real friend in London ('der erste wirkliche Freund, den ich in London fand'). Putting aside his Celtic studies, Nettlau went on to unpick the worldwide Libertarian story and, more particularly, the life of Michael Bakunin. Peter Kropotkin, whom Nettlau met in London for the first time in 1888, introduced the latter to old companions in the Jura Federation (the Swiss Bakuninist section of the First International) and the younger man subsequently obtained Bakunin's posthumous papers from family in Naples; much of this material being summarised in volumes which James Guillaume used in *L'Internationale: Documents et Souvenirs*, published in Paris between 1905 and 1910. The closeness of the Mainwarings' connections with Schack and Nettlau was perhaps best illustrated when a new, London Fields, branch of the Socialist League sprang from the older Marylebone group in September 1888. Writing to F. C. Slaughter ('Fred Charles'), then League Secretary, 'C. G. Schack' as secretary of the new venture lists 'Mr. Mainwaring' [sic], 'Mrs. Mainwaring' [sic] and 'Dr Nettlau' as the first three of a dozen founding members.<sup>22</sup>

Sam Mainwaring's willingness to lecture on 'Society' indicates confident articulation of that concept's parts and development. Alongside a significant grasp of Karl Marx's economics, this would appear to present a complete, or *almost* complete, Marxist

---

<sup>21</sup> See page 73 in Chapter Three of this Thesis.

<sup>22</sup> Item 2648/2, Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam.

persona. Any earlier Comtian (theological – metaphysical – positivist) dialectic seems to have matured into historical materialism. An English translation of the *Communist Manifesto* had appeared in Julian Harney's *Red Republican* as early as 1850, but perhaps more relevant to our story is the fact that two such versions were published in the United States when Mainwaring was living there. Most relevant, of course, and what most conditions our 'almost' was the possibility of *combining* Marx and Bakunin. In her biography of *Eleanor Marx*, Yvonne Kapp inadvertently offers a Transatlantic template. Discussing the Avelings' September to December 1886 lecture tour of the United States, Kapp reminds us that two of the Haymarket Martyrs, Albert Parsons and August Spies, were leading members of the American formed International Working People's Association – an organisation 'based on Bakuninist principles' and initiated by Johann Most a former Chemnitz Socialist member of the Reichstag and populariser of *Capital* who had moved to the United States in 1882; Kapp further identifying the 'Chicago Idea' of Mid-West trade unionists as an early form of anarcho-syndicalism and telling us that Parsons was secretary of the city's Eight Hours League.<sup>23</sup> Most had been forced to leave Bismarck's Germany for London in 1878. In England he had accepted the editorship of the German language *Freiheit* and was imprisoned for publishing material in support of the assassination of the Russian Tsar Alexander II; Frank Kitz acting as secretary of a defence committee as well as editing English language issues of the paper.

Also in *Eleanor Marx*, Kapp mentions Engels' sometime belief in the revolutionary potential of the indigenous American Knights of Labour,<sup>24</sup> founded in 1869. In the

---

<sup>23</sup> Yvonne Kapp, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>24</sup> Kapp, *idem* and *op. cit.*, p. 145.

testimony of his son William, Sam Mainwaring was one of the Knights in their earliest, clandestine, years<sup>25</sup> – and certainly not later than around 1873, the year after the Hague Congress of the First International and William West's letter from George Harris' Wandsworth, London, home. We are, indeed, here very close to placing the elder Mainwaring among some measure of knowledgeable American 'activism' at the time of the decisive Marx-Bakunin split.

We have seen that the British Marxist-Bakuninist reconciliation, in the form of the Socialist League, followed mutual loathing of H. M. Hyndman's Presidency in the Social Democratic Federation. We have also noted that the Socialist League's Constitutional Rules of 1885 were virtually identical to the Provisional Rules penned by Karl Marx for the First International in 1864. As well as saying something about a broad Socialist memory, this also serves to remind us specifically of Marx's earlier success in finding a form of words which was acceptable to, among others, French Proudhonists – those 'craft Anarchists' whose concerns preceded the Bakuninist engagement with large scale industry. Key third paragraphs, two decades apart, were as follows:

*1864*

Considering....

That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

*1885*

Considering...


---

<sup>25</sup> 'W.M., *op. cit.*

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.



H. Spurling  S.-L, 1/2  
Socialist League  
Farringdon Road  
London E.C.



30/9/86

Comrade, why have I been chosen  
for a post at Trafalgar Square on  
Sunday? Have you overlooked  
the fact that the post is in Middle-  
sex? Morris ought to have been  
consulted in the matter, for, however  
willing I might be to risk anything  
I must decline to put M. in any danger  
of losing anything by my actions  
Yours. Sam Mainwaring

me.

Yours just  
S. Mainwaring

H. Barker.

MAINWARING'S HANDWRITING

W. L. J. L. 150  
When in the Thornbury  
branch handwriting the past  
2 years have continuously  
inquiries and plotting for  
the purpose of reversing the

MANUSCRIPT MENTIONED BY THOMPSON

That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which the Socialist League is subordinate as a means;

Eleanor Marx could hardly have objected to what was essentially her father's wording. But given her and Engels' leaning to a Labour electoralism in late 1880s Britain, the substitution of 'Socialist League' for 'every *political* [my italics] movement' and its linkage to a definitely *economic* emancipation, allowed an interpretation which she increasingly disliked. At the Third Annual Conference of the Socialist League in May 1887, William Morris moved an uncompromising anti-parliamentary amendment to an 'entryist' resolution put forward by J. L. Mahon, another of the original seceding majority on the Social Democratic Federation's Council and only newly a convert to such Parliamentary penetration. The amendment was carried by seventeen votes to eleven.

The result was that the Avelings refused to stand for continued membership of the Socialist League's Council, with their Bloomsbury branch becoming a focus for attempts to reverse the decision and, indeed, for ongoing support for 'electoral' activity; that branch eventually being excluded from the League after the Fourth, 1888, Annual Conference. Sam Mainwaring would certainly have been 'anti-Bloomsbury' but E. P. Thompson's indication that the manuscript of the excluding motion held at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, is in Mainwaring's hand is incorrect.<sup>26</sup> I present, opposite, part copies of that manuscript alongside ones of signed Mainwaring letters. Mainwaring's writing is rounder and flatter, and there is a notable difference in the forming of, for example, the capital B. All the documents are in the Socialist League archives which were

---

<sup>26</sup> E. P. Thompson, *William Morris*, London 1977, p. 509 footnote 3.

widely annotated by Max Nettlau after his assembly of them. On a separate page of the same handwriting as that in the larger manuscript, Nettlau seems to identify the writer as either 'Fred Charles' (F. C. Slaughter) or Henry Charles, both of whom performed secretarial duties for the Socialist League during 1888; Slaughter having moved to London after organising a Norwich branch and Henry Charles being an anti-parliamentary German who had personal experience of Bloomsbury branch discussions. It is possible therefore that the preserved motion, which appears to have been slowly and deliberately written, is a Secretary's neat recording of a rougher text put together jointly with Mainwaring. I cannot contradict what Thompson also says, in his biography of *William Morris*: that Mainwaring actually tabled the charges – which included the fact that Mahon (a Bloomsbury branch member) had acted as election agent for Keir Hardie in Mid-Lanark. In any event, we are provided with documentary evidence of the last considerable division between British Bakuninists and Marxists. And, at a sort of crossroads, we are also invited to ask where Hardie was coming from.

Prior to the 1888 by-election in the predominantly mining constituency of Mid-Lanark, Keir Hardie had made his position clear:

Much depends on the position taken up by the Liberal Association. It may or may not select a Labour candidate. In either case my advice would be that the Labour candidate should be put forward. Better split the party now, if there is to be a split, than at a general election, and if the Labour Party only make their power felt now, terms will not be wanting when the general election comes.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie*, London 1921, p. 35, quoting *The Miner* in 1888.



The Mid-Lanark Liberals adopted, and saw elected to the Commons, J. W. Phillips – a young Welsh lawyer who ultimately made his way to another House as Lord St. Davids. Hardie stood as an Independent Labour candidate, the first of its kind in British politics, and ‘settled... the impossibility of a Labour Party *within* the Liberal Party’. Nevertheless, in his election address, he said:

I adopt in its entirety the Liberal programme... On questions of general politics I would vote with the Liberal Party, to which I have all my life belonged.<sup>28</sup>

His life had clearly followed a different course from that of Sam Mainwaring.

## **LIBERALS, LABOUR AND *LIBERTY***

Sam Mainwaring was almost fifteen years older than Keir Hardie, and the former’s first propaganda tour of the Valleys preceded the latter’s second-place Parliamentary victory in the two-seat Merthyr Tydfil constituency by thirteen years. One could say that Mainwaring was ahead of his time or, perhaps more pertinently, ahead of Hardie’s time. Viewed from Tom Nairn’s 1970s *Break-Up of Britain* position, as set out in Chapter Three of this Thesis, Mainwaring had fully rumbled the ruse of the ‘representative mechanism’ by the 1880s – but it was too difficult a message to pass on. For a majority on the late-Victorian Left, separate Parliamentary representation seemed to offer the prospect of a quicker and, above

---

<sup>28</sup> Stewart, *idem*, pps. 37-38.

all, *constitutional* agenda. Building on regional growths in Scotland, Yorkshire, Lancashire and the North East of England, a nation-wide Independent Labour Party was consolidated at Bradford in 1893. Within twelve months, and with trade unionist support in the localities, it had 280 branches across Great Britain.

It can certainly be counted as unusually perceptive or bold to have occupied an anti-parliamentary position in a decade when progressives were still concerned with winning the battle for manhood suffrage. Recalling a literal fight for merely Socialist propaganda, Mainwaring is revealing about the regression or progression of an early associate:

John Burns referred to Bright as a silver-tongued hypocrite. This was enough for the radicals of the day; our banners and platform were torn and broken up, and some of us were being run to the Serpentine for a ducking... before they had taken us half way to the water we succeeded in making a stand, and I remember Morris calling on Burns to finish his speech... Burns said he wanted something to stand on. That day we had only our first pamphlet 'Socialism Made Plain', of which Morris had a large bag-full at his side. These we placed on the ground in a heap, and Burns mounted and continued his speech, while Morris and a dozen more of us were fighting to keep back the more infuriated of the people.<sup>29</sup>

The occasion was a 23 July 1884 Hyde Park demonstration, called by the London Trades Council after the House of Lords had rejected the Third Reform Act which introduced the County Franchise; John Bright, a veteran Liberal member of the Commons, having demanded severe limitation of the Lords' right to vote – and the Socialists having started their meeting at the close of the main event. In 1892, the year in which Keir Hardie

---

<sup>29</sup> Sam Mainwaring, 'Reminiscences of William Morris', Supplement to *Freedom*, January 1897.

temporarily won West Ham, John Burns would become a supposedly second independent Labour (although not Independent Labour) Member of Parliament, at Battersea. According to a Hardie biographer, Burns' then 'Socialist declarations had been even more militant than Hardie's'.<sup>30</sup> However in 1906, more than two decades on from the Hyde Park demonstration, and a year before Mainwaring's death, Burns took Liberal ministerial office at the Local Government Board – by which time, in a curious echo, Hardie was to say of him: 'In his early Socialist days he fought magnificently, but he has not shown himself the man to lead a forlorn hope or to stand alone in a crisis.'<sup>31</sup>

William Morris was influenced to take a different direction. Before the Third Annual Conference of the Socialist League, which saw his amendment to J. L. Mahon's entryist resolution, he was writing to a Glasgow friend that 'we should treat Parliament as a representative of the enemy.' Afterwards, in a repeated lecture on 'The policy of Abstention' he said:

This plan [abstention from voting in Parliamentary elections] is founded on the necessity of making the class struggle clear to the workers, of pointing out to them that while monopoly exists they can only exist as its slaves; so that Parliament and all other institutions at present existing are maintained for the purpose of upholding this slavery; that the wages are but slaves' rations, and if they were increased tenfold would be nothing more; that while the bourgeois rule lasts they can indeed take part in it but only on the terms that they shall do nothing to attack the grand edifice of which their slavery is the foundation. Nay more than that: that they are asked to vote and send representatives to Parliament (if 'working-men' so much the better) that they may point out what concessions

---

<sup>30</sup> William Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup> Stewart, *idem* and *op. cit.*, p. 221.

may be necessary for the ruling class to make in order that the slavery of the workers may last on...<sup>32</sup>

Morris argued that the real business of Socialist propagandists was to instill the 'aim of the workers becoming the masters of their own destinies, their own lives.' Then, the proletariat should be enrolled through trades unions in a 'federation according to their crafts,' forming a 'labour parliament' in opposition to the 'Westminster Committee'.

E. P. Thompson says that Morris' disgust at a 'Parliament of Podsnaps' had been nourished by Dickens and Ruskin – as 'synonymous with sharp-tactics, intrigue, false promises... the great myth of modern capitalism'. This mention of the two English writers may well have substance but, again in Thompson from his Stalinist years, one is struck by the lack of reference to the Bakuninist lineage of the Labour Emancipation League – where long-term London resident Joe Lane, for one, had progressed from 1870s membership of the post-Hague, 'anti-Marx', British section of the First International. Indeed, Lane had been among forty-six delegates to the 1881 Congress held in a meeting room at the Fitzroy Arms, Euston, which had established a new, albeit short lived, 'Black' (i.e. Anarchist) International Association. Of the forty-six, only six were British. The forty foreigners included Peter Kropotkin, with Marie Le Compte as sole American. During the preceding decade, Ira Steward had pleaded Le Compte's worth to an antagonistic Friederich Sorge: 'She has been the salvation of the Fall River [Massachusetts] *Labour Herald*... brought money, work and unusual ability'. When in London, she accepted an invitation to speak at Lane's Homerton, Hackney, Social Democratic Club and wrote that it had 'proved its spirit'

---

<sup>32</sup> See 'The Policy of Abstention' in E. P. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pps. 455-457.

at the Congress. What the original International meant to remembrancers like Lane, Mainwaring and Kitz is, of course, well illustrated by the Socialist League's adoption of that earlier body's Rules. This was formalised at the Socialist League's first, July 1885, Annual Conference, when temporary objectives were ditched. These latter, said to have been taken on board at Engels' suggestion immediately after the break with Hyndman, included: '2. Striving to conquer political power by promoting the election of Socialists to Local Government, School Boards and other administrative bodies'.

Joe Lane chaired the Socialist League's Strike Committee. This had been set up to organise aid for striking Northumberland miners, before taking Mainwaring and Kitz's August 1887 tour under its wing. Fifteen shillings and sixpence was spent on equipping the two Valley walkers with 5,000 leaflets.<sup>33</sup> We do not know whether these included printed copies of Morris' 'Abstention' lecture of the previous month, and we have no detailed knowledge as to how much specifically anti-parliamentary content the two propagandists included among a more general attack on Exploitation. However, although the Bloomsbury branch had not at that time been ejected, both men were themselves strongly anti-parliamentary and there must be a presumption that such a position coloured their speeches. Mainwaring and Kitz's meetings, which were certainly the first to systematically present a Socialist agenda in upland Glamorgan, may therefore have been positively unconstitutional and Revolutionary in character. This may help in explaining the subsequent condition as acknowledged in the Strike Committee's Annual Report – which was to the effect that a

---

<sup>33</sup> Report of Strike Committee, 29 May 1887 to 20 May 1888, Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam.

'spreading of the principles of Socialism' had not resulted in the establishment of activist *groups*. Letters to the Socialist League's London office set out some of the difficulties.

Writing from Alma Street, Dowlais on 28 August 1887, a John Rees said:

Possibly the holidaymakers of your League that addressed the Merthyr and Dowlais people in the Market Square, Merthyr, may think their speeches availed but little... but allow me to express my opinion in their behalf. I believe it has taken deep root in some of the listeners' hearts. Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall be seen in many days.

The minds of the toilers are very much disturbed this long time. It appears to me that they are that ignorant that they toil on in the expectation that the masters will better the state of things that now exists. All the workers endorse the opinion that we the toiling masses by all common sense and justice ought to be on a higher level than we now are. The fact of the matter to speak plain [is] men are afraid one of the other. I refer to tale-bearing and its consequences. I heartily wish better principles and better feelings could be instilled in them so that we could confide one in the other. I was sorry to find so many walking away without signing their names that night in Merthyr... as a matter of course, if I signed I thought I might be a marked man, but I do not fear the consequences now...

Trusting you will feed the fire now they have kindled it, wishing Socialism every success and God speed to the perfecting of a better state of things.<sup>34</sup>

From Graig-yr-Alma, Treforest, on 26 September, R. Gregory wrote:

... I have tried my best to get a meeting place to aid the furtherance of the League but speak to who I will on the

---

<sup>34</sup> Letter from J. Rees, 3 Alma Street, Dowlais, to Socialist League office, 28 August 1887. Item 2531, Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam.

subject they all seem to forget all about it and they tell me that if I want it to go on that there ought to [be] someone here regularly that understands the forming of a branch as there are nobody here that think themselves capable of speaking on the subject.

The *Commonweal* goes very badly... I understand that Mr. Hughes Bookseller was going to sell them but I have been to him about it and he positively declines to have anything to do with them as he says that they would do harm to his business.<sup>35</sup>

Even Sam Mainwaring's eighteen year old son Robert had to record resistance. Presumably serving a Dowlais apprenticeship, and writing from Pant Road there on 23 October, he said:

I must ask you not to send the full number any more as it is impossible to sell them here.

I can take 7 every week for distribution among friends but it is impossible to get rid of any more.<sup>36</sup>

Twenty five years later, South Wales would give the British labour movement *The Miners' Next Step*. One could say it came a quarter of a century too late. The three decades leading up to the First World War were probably the time when, if there had been an appropriate understanding and will, the concrete mode and conditions of production were nearest to optimal for creation of a Libertarian and Decentralised Socialism. Yet in 1887, the Valleys were barely speaking London's most radical language.

---

<sup>35</sup> Letter from R. Gregory, Graig-yr-Alma, Treforest, to Socialist League office, 26 September 1887. Item 1592, Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam. Gregory was possibly Jane Mainwaring's brother.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from R. R. Mainwaring, 3 Pant Road, Dowlais, to Socialist League office, 23 October 1887. Item 2174/1 Socialist League Papers, Amsterdam.

In the Metropolis itself, alongside the greatest wealth of Empire, the territorial model for change was seen as that of 1871 – with hopes again resting on the leeward edge of a capital city. With the side-lining of its Bloomsburyites, the Socialist League's anti-parliamentarism reached a climax. Citizenship of a *locality* was allied to one's producer role. Propaganda secretary 'Fred Charles' wrote in *Commonweal* on 12 May 1888:

The members of the East End branches of the Socialist League, feeling... in the present position of European industrialism and politics that no one knows what a year may bring forth, have decided to throw themselves more energetically than ever into the spread of our own ideas amongst the huge mass of workers living in all degrees of misery and want... so that when the chance comes again to us... as it came to our Paris brothers in 1871, we may not fail here in this centre of world Capitalism.

A month before the Bow 'Match Girls' strike, the 2 June issue listed twenty-nine open air meetings to be held during the following week across the area from Stamford Hill to Plaistow. Sam Mainwaring was named as an evening speaker at three Hackney pitches – for Sunday at Stonebridge Common, Wednesday at London Fields and Thursday at Packington Street; these in addition to Sunday morning at Regents Park and Sunday afternoon at Hyde Park. In his *Memoirs*, Tom Mann says that Mainwaring was 'a good speaker', and another contemporary recorded that 'Sam had his own style of address':

It was characterised by clear deliberate thought, argument and enunciation, which had his audience fixed until his message was delivered. He had a remarkable gift of humour, its form generally taking that of a story, the climax of which both amused and astonished the crowds who listened to him. It was a common thing for him to speak for four or five hours at



a stretch, often during that time attracting two or three fresh crowds of people.<sup>37</sup>

We can only guess as to whether this style owed something to ‘Saladin’.

Our East Enders may well have had in mind some of Karl Marx’s other comments on 1871:

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal *regime* once established in Paris... the old centralised Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers.

... the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of Labour.<sup>38</sup>

The first quotation makes one think of the supposed way in which the Newport, Gwent, Chartists were to send a message to other parts of Great Britain; the second tells us what would have been necessary to carry out a thorough – going Social Revolution. Although James Guillaume took the view that Marx’s support for the Commune was wholly opportunist, the German’s words were of the sort to stick in militants’ memory. Such people certainly envisioned an *alternative* to Westminster government. And, as we have traced, there was a longer trajectory. When William Morris spoke of a ‘labour parliament’ he was echoing thoughts that went back as far as the 1830s proto-syndicalists.

---

<sup>37</sup> Mat Kavangh, *Freedom*, May 1934.

<sup>38</sup> Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Address of the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association to all members in Europe and the United States), London 1871. Quotation from p. 41 of 1933 edition.

We can reasonably argue that much of Morris' thinking in that direction derived from colleagues who had been Socialists for a significantly longer part of their lives. Their somewhat ambivalent attitude to Marx is perhaps best summed up in the title of Joe Lane's *Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*, which was published in 1887. This sets out a comprehensive set of complementary positions for Revolutionary Socialists: 'Atheist in point of philosophy, Anti-Statist in point of politics... communists as regard the economic development of human society'. In a positively Bakuninist manner, Lane states that the Social Revolution 'will confederate from town to town, from country to country, internationally'. With a sign of past Positivist influence, he argues that 'the theological and metaphysical phases [of history] are spent' – and, most interestingly for modern anarchist-feminists, extends his notions of freedom to gender relationships in a most un-Marx like manner:

Thoroughly convinced partisans of the free union of the sexes, we repel the thought of marriage which institutes for the benefit of the man a new and exorbitant proprietorial right, namely the right of ownership of a woman... it is necessary that both the man and the woman shall enjoy the same right in society as well as have the same duties imposed on them.<sup>39</sup>

In a kibbutz-like construct, Lane unites the communitarian and personal thus:

We, the Anti-Statist Communists are the pioneers of the future state of society towards which all progress tends, namely, the free association of groups of workers (call them

---

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Lane, *An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*, London 1887. Quotation from p. 36 of 1978 edition.

Towns, Villages, Communes or what you will) holding the land and capital in common, working it on true co-operative principles, federated with each other for mutual assistance, every member working according to his ability and receiving according to his needs. Man and woman, being then equally free, would form connections through love alone.<sup>40</sup>

That children from failed relationships should 'be fed, clothed and cared for by the community' might read as a soft cop-out. But Lane and his wife, who was also active in the Libertarian movement, and some other older Leaguers, including the Mainwarings, did seem to happily accommodate their sexuality and nesting instincts within a framework of conventional marriage and family responsibility.

Nevertheless, the Victorian British State found aspects of the Socialist League's propaganda sufficiently subversive to require counter-action. Open air meetings were harassed, and at least one *agent-provocateur* infiltrated the organisation's decision making. Sam Mainwaring's first notable brush with the law came in 1886. Then, the Metropolitan Police decided to make a test case of Sunday meetings held in the wider part of Bell Street, Edgware Road, near his Lisson Grove home; over twenty mounted constables being stationed in adjoining streets on the set up occasion. Local shopkeepers were pressured to support charges of obstructing the highway and, together with Jack Williams of the Social Democratic Federation, Mainwaring was summoned and subsequently committed for trial at the Middlesex Sessions. The trial lasted three days, from 7 to 9 August; the principal witness for the prosecution being the Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, an arch-Imperialist. A sometime commander of the 'Diamond Fields Horse' in South Africa and

---

<sup>40</sup> Lane, *idem*, p. 39 of 1978 edition.

infamous for his inability or unwillingness to catch Jack the Ripper, Warren was also a Welshman of sorts – being born at Bangor, where his grandfather had been Dean of the Cathedral. Of Sam's self-defence, in an unashamedly class context, William Morris' daughter May reported in her father's paper:

... Mainwaring finished with an eloquent, simply worded statement of his position and opinions: 'If I were told not to speak in the streets in the future, I do not see how I could keep silent. I am bound to speak my thoughts. I began a hard working life at an early age to help my family – and I feel that I should be wrong indeed if, thinking that there was the possibility in the future of my children avoiding like hardships, I kept silent and did not do everything in my power to strengthen that possibility'.<sup>41</sup>

Both men were found guilty, fined £20 each (up to ten weeks wages for an artisan) and bound over in their own recognisances and one surety of £50 to keep the peace for twelve months. Mainwaring was given until 26 August to pay his fine, which was subscribed to by other Leaguers; Williams in default, being imprisoned for two months.

In the testimony of William Mainwaring junior, police persistence in the late 1880s made it difficult for his father to retain adequately paid employment in London and he was forced to take contract work elsewhere – lodging away from home. The older man may even have gone to sea again; Paul Avrich in *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* telling us that Sam Mainwaring 'came over' to the United States around this time. Much of the years 1890 to 1893 does appear to have again been spent in, or based on, the

---

<sup>41</sup> *Commonweal*, 21 August 1886.

Swansea bayside – but with a substantial stay in the Rhondda Valley. The earlier, Treforest, plea for ‘someone here regularly’ and ‘capable of speaking on the subject’ seems to have been met in Treherbert, Treorchy or nearby; of the latter residency, the son informing us that ‘During the ten months... he [S.M.] held many informal classes in economics in the clubroom of a local inn’.<sup>42</sup>

In 1893 Sam Mainwaring was able to secure permanent employment in Swansea, to be there joined by Jane and their younger children. And, at fifty-one years of age, was once more able to initiate sustained socialist propaganda. William Mainwaring junior was then about 17, and his cousin Sam Mainwaring junior two years younger. Sam junior was the son of Sam Mainwaring’s brother Tom, who had been a Swansea docks blacksmith and landlord of the Three Mariners in the town’s Strand before leaving for Pennsylvania in the aftermath of a row with his wife, also a Jane, about admitting prostitutes to the pub. It is possible that the Sam Mainwaring visit to America which Paul Averich mentions may have seen an attempt to get Tom to return to Wales, but in any event Sam became involved with the bringing up of Sam junior. Sam set up home in St. Thomas, on the east side of the River Tawe and adjoining those Lower Valley areas where copper workers militancy had flared strongest half a century earlier. Will junior later described the more subdued circumstances of his arrival thus:

Swansea in 1893, although a comparatively large town, had no forward Labour movement of any kind. There was, it is true, a few isolated individuals who had belonged to a branch of the S.D.F. at a neighbouring town, and there was at least

---

<sup>42</sup> For background to this paragraph see ‘W.M.’ (William Mainwaring), *Freedom*, January and February 1927. And Paul Avrigh, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

one philosophical Anarchist, a local bookseller; but for all else the town was barren and promised but sterile ground for the growth of revolutionary ideas...<sup>43</sup>

Sam Mainwaring's dates, 1841 to 1907, bridge that period during which, Gwyn A. Williams reasoned, 'the Welsh working class lost its memory'. More concisely, Swansea's loss from 1843 to 1893 faced Mainwaring with the problem of retuning minds.

Swansea was certainly not London. It was a 'Mecca of Nonconformity' lacking institutional nonconformity. Whilst there were, no doubt, unorganised non-deferentials to be channelled, the West Glamorgan town possessed no long-lasting strand of a declaredly Socialist stand. And, in a wider Wales, the Liberals – 'the Welsh party' – had won 31 out of 34 Parliamentary seats in the General Election of 1892; the three exceptions being on the Borders. For these reasons alone, any new approach from the Left needed to be a broadly embracing one – capable of considering and comparing all the varieties of Metropolitan argument. Will junior explains that:

... in a very short time Mainwaring had formed a group of eager inquirers... which ultimately developed into the Swansea Socialist Society. This was by no means an Anarchist organisation, but the platform was so catholic, the organisation so free from cut-and-dried dogma, that it performed very useful work in breaking up what was practically virgin soil. By the end of 1894 this body had managed to erect a hall of its own – Liberty Hall...<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> 'W.M.', *Freedom*, February 1927.

<sup>44</sup> 'W.M.' *idem*.

We are talking about a time thirty years before the Labour Party's major, 1924, Parliamentary breakthrough in South Wales, and five years or more earlier than the formation of its predecessor Independent Labour Party branches at Swansea and at Briton Ferry, five miles away at the other end of the Crymlyn Burrows sand dunes.

The construction of the Liberty Hall was linked with sales of the *Liberty* periodical – an open-minded Anarchist monthly published in London by James Tochatti for two years from January 1894. Canadian-born Tochatti, a tailor and bookseller, had been a Hammersmith colleague of William Morris. He continued in the Socialist League after Morris' 1890 departure but subsequently brought out *Liberty* to counterbalance the ongoing *Commonweal*, which was moving towards support of an individualist incendiaryism. The collaboration of Mainwaring and Tochatti can be seen as incrementally seminal in a process which led to the defining of Anarcho-Syndicalism. Mainwaring provided the principal leadership of a local regeneration. He also had space to reflect, from a heartland of matured heavy industry, on international trends in, and of necessary WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY opposition to, an empire building and incipiently world-warring Capitalism. We can now reflect, in the context of actually occurring World Wars, that the twenty-year period from 1894-1914 equals the later 1919-1939. In Swansea at the earliest of these dates, Mainwaring's thrust was two-fold. At a cadre level, he could nurture thoroughgoing Anarchists. On a wider plane, he could engender a networking 'dialogue between Anarchists, anti-parliamentary socialists and libertarians of more statist inclinations'.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> This 'dialogue' description is taken from John Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse*, London 1978, p. 203, where he discusses *Liberty*.

The nurturing of cadres is to be seen in the persons of the two young cousins, William junior and Sam junior. The Rhondda and Swansea Bay Railway, opened from St. Thomas through Briton Ferry and the Afan Valley tunnel to Treherbert in 1899, was a sort of umbilical cord. When a 1919 manifesto of the Communist League fused Bakuninism and Marxism called for 'local workers' committee and councils... the ultimate aim of a republic of federated communes and a declaration that the parliamentary vote was obsolete', William from the Treherbert branch rather wryly commented that it was wrong to speak of the parliamentary vote as obsolete because 'to say it is obsolete will lead many to suppose that it once was useful'.<sup>46</sup> Back working at Briton Ferry's Albion Steelworks in the 1920s, after a stint with the Mexican Magonistas, Samuel brought Emma Goldman to speak at neighbouring Neath's main Gwyn Hall on her disillusionment with Lenin and Trotsky's Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup>

On the wider plane, William says that Sam Mainwaring senior personally 'pushed' *Liberty* and its ideas beyond Swansea town. Certainly, some elements of Briton Ferry and Neath socialism exhibited a tolerant understanding of Anarchism, through the Independent Labour Party's 1932 secession from the Labour Party, right up until the Spanish Civil War. Albert Meltzer, of the jolly funeral, recalled speaking at Neath's ILP Rooms, next to the Gwyn Hall, shortly before the Second World War – as well as at a 'nearby' Valleys

---

<sup>46</sup> William Mainwaring, *The Communist*, June/July 1919. Cited by R. W. Jones, *The Raven*, 11 (July-September 1990).

<sup>47</sup> For Sam Mainwaring junior with the Magonistas (1911) and Emma Goldman at Neath in the 1920s, see Mat Kavangh, *War Commentary*, mid-December 1943 and Len Williams, *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society* 1977.



location, possibly in or close to Ammanford, where a group of *elderly* Anarchist women were present.<sup>48</sup> It was at Ammanford that the wealthy English anarchist George Davison had bought an old vicarage before the First World War for the establishment of a 'White House' Communist Club. Davison had been partly persuaded in this respect by D. R. Owen – a Garnant, Amman Valley, student at the Central Labour College.<sup>49</sup> Among the lecturers at the college during Owen's time there was Sam Mainwaring's old East London and Commune-extolling comrade 'Fred Charles' Slaughter.<sup>50</sup> Earlier, the *Liberty* periodical had recorded Mainwaring's Swansea Socialist Society extending its regular meeting to a coffee tavern at Landore, the core of the copperworks area.<sup>51</sup>

## GLOBAL 'ISMS.

If not another umbilical cord, the Great Western main line from Paddington to South Wales gave Sam Mainwaring a certain flexibility. Together with a differing pulse of skilled labour needs in the Glamorgan economy, it enabled him to get away from London in over-difficult times. Nevertheless he was clear in his mind that the Metropolis was the intellectual centre of the Libertarian variety of Socialism in Great Britain and, after his period of provincial achievement and reflection, seized an opportunity of returning to the capital city. In early 1896 he once more accepted an offer of appropriate employment there – at Silvertown, in the extended East End. The necessary transference can be compared and

---

<sup>48</sup> Albert Meltzer, about his 1938 activities, in conversation with the present writer 1979. See also his *The Anarchists in London 1935-1955*, Sanday 1976, p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> See T. Brennan, 'The White House', in the *Cambridge Review*, 1954. Also, for the recollections of a distinguished user, James Griffiths, *Pages from Memory*, London 1969, pps. 20-21.

<sup>50</sup> After splitting from Ruskin College, the Central Labour College remained at Oxford for two years before moving to London. Owen was present in the last of the Oxford and first of the London years.

<sup>51</sup> *Liberty*, April 1894.

contrasted with that of the Radical Liberal Sam, later Sir Samuel, Evans (1859-1918), a son of Skewen between Swansea and Neath, Member of Parliament for Mid-Glamorgan from 1890, and Solicitor General in 1908. Intermediate along this two-Sam spectrum was Isaac Evans (1847-1897), miners agent at Skewen, himself a candidate for the Mid-Glamorgan Liberal nomination in 1890, and subsequently a strong advocate of separate Labour representation at Westminster.

We can temporarily leap-frog to a Leftist outpouring. Eight decades after Mainwaring's move to Silvertown, in his 1979 radio lecture 'When Was Wales?' Gwyn A. Williams was to assert that 'The Europe to which we belong is not the Europe of Saunders Lewis [a 1925 founder and continental Catholic-leaning early President of the Welsh Nationalist Party, later Plaid Cymru]; the Europe of Saunders Lewis... is our enemy. Our Europe is the Europe of Rosa Luxemburg and Anton Pannekoek...'.<sup>52</sup> I doubt whether many of the radio's listeners then knew much about Spartacist Luxemburg and Council Communist Pannekoek. Williams seems to have been indulging his own intellectual mixture of historical knowledge and wish fulfillment as part of a campaign to direct Plaid Cymru along a decentralising socialist path. Quite possibly none of the listeners, together with Williams, knew anything about Sam Mainwaring. But what *we* can say with certainty is that there had been people in the wider world who did *know about* Luxemburg (1871-1919), Pannekoek (1873-1960) and Mainwaring. Indeed, there may even have been people – Max Nettelau for example – who actually *knew*, face to face, both Mainwaring and one or both of the others; Nettelau and Pannekoek, Dutch theorist of anti-parliamentarism, each

---

<sup>52</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, 'When Was Wales?', a radio lecture reproduced in *The Welsh in their History*, London 1982. See page 200.

being Amsterdam residents before and during the Second World War. As early as 1912, if not before, Pannekoek was predicting the replacement of parliamentarism by proletarian organs. Luxemburg's long pamphlet *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Union* appeared in 1906.<sup>53</sup> Mainwaring first edited his own paper *The General Strike* in 1903.

Rosa Luxemburg was murdered with Karl Liebnicht, son of the American *Workingmen's Advocate* 1870s Leipzig correspondent, by German reactionaries after the First World War. Writing in 1970 Albert Meltzer, who identifies Sam Mainwaring with the naming of 'Anarcho-Syndicalism', says that Luxemburg 'tried to reconcile social-democracy with council-communism', although 'her death came too soon for the inconsistencies in her thought to be made plain'. However, Meltzer also argues that 'the Marxist tradition in the working class, at the point which it reached among the Spartacists... became indistinguishable, except in phrases and associations from Anarcho-Syndicalism'.<sup>54</sup> Drawing on events in Russia before and during its 1905 Revolution, Luxemburg distinguished between the planned 'demonstration strike' and the spontaneous 'fighting strike'. She argued that widespread occurrence of the latter, as a revolutionary situation, could not be closely foreseen but that her party [German Social Democrats, of which the Spartacists were a Left element] should be ideologically ready to seize the leadership of such circumstances. Essentially, this was the strategy of Lenin's Bolsheviks in 1917. As presented in *The Mass Strike*, Luxemburg seemed to be ignorant or wholly dismissive of

---

<sup>53</sup> Luxemburg's pamphlet, first published in English at Detroit in 1925, is given in full as part of *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, New York 1970, pps. 153-218.

<sup>54</sup> Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, London 1970, pps. 41 and 159.

the Anarcho-Syndicalist view regarding prior establishment of widespread, decentralised, bases for a future socialist society. In 1906 she certainly accorded primacy to a vanguard party. Pannekoek retired from day-to-day activism in 1921, to teach Astronomy full-time at Amsterdam University. However, he continued as a theorist of Council Communism – which revived the Anarcho-Syndicalists’ ideas of a generation earlier, in opposition to Lenin’s Party Communism. Yugoslav ‘self-management’ as systematically developed by Eduard Kardelj, Tito’s long-time but pre-deceased deputy, can be seen as an attempt to move from centralised power to more autonomous postures.

But to return to Sam Mainwaring’s post-1896 London Socialist practice. We can first highlight a few ‘events’; his home locality now becoming West Ham and, a little later, Ponders End near the Lea Valley reservoirs between Chingford and Enfield.<sup>55</sup> Both residences afforded ready rail access via Stratford to his earlier stamping grounds at Whitechapel and Mile End in the old East End. This latter area was now increasingly being occupied by Eastern European Jewish immigrants and Mainwaring became intimately involved with their Anarchist movement. Rudolph Rocker, who subsequently led the Jewish East End tailors in their successful strike against ‘the sweating system’, confirms Ambrose Barker’s view of Mainwaring’s *early* Anarchism:

At first, the Democratic Federation, which afterwards became the Social Democratic Federation, was a... propaganda organisation, embracing Socialists of many different ideologies. But Hyndman was determined to turn it into a political party. Hyndman had started out as a Tory, and he remained a Tory at heart. He was a Jingo, and showed his

---

<sup>55</sup> ‘W.M.’, *op. cit.*

attitude during the First World War. He was dictatorial by nature.

... in 1884 William Morris and a number of others left the Federation, and formed the Socialist League. Some left for different reasons than others. Marx's daughter, Eleanor Marx-Aveling and her husband, and Friederich Lessner, for instance, were no doubt animated by the old enmity which existed between Engels and Hyndman.

But most of the members of the Socialist League were Libertarian Socialists, and a number, like Mainwaring, Lane, Kitz... were Anarchists.

It is a pity Morris and Kropotkin never got more together... in 1896 Kropotkin started the Freedom group... with a number of comrades, some of whom had belonged to Morris' Socialist League... Charlotte M. Wilson... Sam Mainwaring... William Wess and his sister Doris Zhook [the latter two from the East End Jewish community].<sup>56</sup>

In his book *The London Years*, Rucker records a great meeting in the Wonderland, Whitechapel, on 6 April 1904 to deal with the question of a tailors general strike:

There were five thousand seats, and every one of them was occupied... there were crowds outside who couldn't get in. The police had the doors closed. Besides our East End Jewish speakers we had all the leading speakers in our movement then in London, Malatesta, Tarrida del Marmol, Tcherkesov, Tchaikovsky, Mainwaring... Kropotkin was not well enough to come, but he sent a long message which was read out to tremendous applause.<sup>57</sup>

This was the Rudolph Rucker who elsewhere ventured that 'Anarchist ideas are to be found in almost every period of known history... and had an unmistakable influence on certain

---

<sup>56</sup> Rudolph Rucker, *The London Years*, London 1956 p. 183.

<sup>57</sup> Rucker, *idem*, p. 170.

Christian sects of the Middle Ages in France, Germany, Italy, Holland and England, most of which fell victims to the most savage persecutions'.<sup>58</sup> More up to date, he recorded that:

... it was reserved for... recent history to give a clear form to the Anarchist conception of life and to connect it with the immediate process of social evolution. This was done for the first time by William Godwin (1756-1836) in his splendidly conceived work, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence upon General Virtue and Happiness* (London, 1793). Godwin's work was, we might say, the ripened fruit of that long evolution of the concepts of political and social radicalism in England which proceeds... through... Gerard Winstanley... to... Joseph Priestley, Richard Price and Thomas Paine.<sup>59</sup>

Before 1919 German born Rucker and sometime German resident Pannekoek were positing and, perhaps sadly, nuancing a Council Communist or Anarcho-Syndicalist future for a reconstructing Reich; Pannekoek's ideas being especially expoused by Bremen Leftists.

As in the case of Nettlau, one is tempted to ask who might have contributed to Rucker's education in British labour history; the German having come to London in only 1895, just a little ahead of Sam Mainwaring's return and when the Mainz man was just twenty-two years of age. I have mentioned in earlier chapters Rucker's linking of Bakuninism with England's 'Owenites'. Writing from America in 1938 about Anarcho-Syndicalism he says:

...Its ideas and methods... were not new. They had already found a deep resonance in the ranks of the First International

---

<sup>58</sup> An example would be the Cathars of Languedoc, attacked in the Albigensian Crusades.

<sup>59</sup> Rudolph Rucker, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, London reprint 1973, p. 25.

when the great association had reached the zenith of its intellectual development. This was plainly revealed in the debates at its fourth congress in Basel (1869) concerning the importance of the economic organisations of the workers. In his report upon this question which Eugene Hins laid before the congress in the name of the Belgian Federation, there was presented for the first time a... point of view which had an unmistakable resemblance to certain ideas of Robert Owen and the English labour movement of the 1830s.<sup>60</sup>

Sam Mainwaring certainly distinguished between Owen, who he was inclined to despise, and the 1830s proto-syndicalists. But the more general connection is valid, as is the chronologically intervening one between the ‘Owenites’ and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers’ hoped-for response to their 1852 lock-out. Mainwaring repeated that hope in a pamphlet he published from Ponders End in 1898. It again called for the union to establish co-operative workshops – following a six months long strike for the eight-hour day; the strike having been defeated, in William junior’s words, ‘mainly, if not wholly’ by ‘the treachery of the self-styled leaders’.

In July 1898 Sam Mainwaring commenced a series of articles in *Freedom* entitled ‘The Future of Trade Unionism’. The first paragraph of the first article reads as follows:

The recent struggle between the Amalgamated Society of Engineers... and the Employers Federation was one which must inevitably result in a departure from the old methods of endeavouring to better the conditions of the workers; and not only the methods, but *the objects of trade unionism must necessarily be changed* [my italics].<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Rucker, *idem*, p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> Sam Mainwaring (unsigned), ‘The Future of Trade Unionism’, *Freedom*, July 1898. Authorship disclosed in April 1899 number.

In this first article he goes on to remind readers of the earliest need for protection against an emerging force of capitalists, by quoting Charlotte Bronte:

These... certainly think too exclusively of making money; they are too oblivious of every national consideration but that of extending England's (that is to say their own) commerce. Chivalrous feeling, disinterestedness, pride in honour, is too dead in their hearts. A land ruled by them alone would too often make ignominious submission – not at all from the motives Christ teaches, but rather from those Mammon instills.

In his October article he proceeds to a defining element of Syndicalism's saving strategy: 'The first step... must necessarily be a federation of all unions...' This combination of systematic overview with worker control of individual enterprises paralleled the contemporary local/national development of revolutionary trade unionism in France and Spain. In France, the Confederation Generale du Travail was founded at a Limoges Congress in 1895, and it and the Federation des Bourses du Travail amalgamated at a Montpellier congress in 1902. In June 1901, Sam Mainwaring was among those welcoming a delegation of fifty-seven French trade unionists to London – whence they had come 'to proclaim solemnly and jointly with the English workers the solidarity and brotherhood of the working classes of mankind'. On a *Freedom* front page, a list of the delegates was headed by the names of Emile Pouget, leader of the 'General Confederation of Workers', and of George Yvetot and Paul Delesalle, leaders of the 'Labour Exchange of France and Algeria'.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> *Freedom*, July 1901.



Mainwaring's perception of the need for a different sort of trade unionism brought him to enter his own organisation's formal systems. Elected to the Engineers' Executive in the early 1880s, he had then refused the post because of what he considered to be that body's over-centralised and authoritarian role. Now, at the beginning of the new century, he joined the multi-union London Trades Council as one of his Society's district representatives. In 1901, too, he helped to set up the Council's Barcelona Strike Committee – in which context he worked to find British employment for Spanish refugees<sup>63</sup> and first met one of the closest friends, perhaps *the* closest friend, of his remaining years, Fernando Tarrida del Marmol. Tarrida, a former Director of the city's Polytechnic Academy, had been among those held and tortured in Barcelona's Montjuich prison during the anti-Anarchist 'White Terror' of the 1890s. It was the publication of Tarrida's book *Les Inquisiteurs d'Espagne* in Paris in 1897 which had led to an agitation in the French and British press to bring the torture to an end. In London, surviving victims displayed the more presentable results at public meetings; closer friends being shown the like of crushed testicles in private homes. One result of Mainwaring's efforts was the placing of Spanish workers in employment at the Dowlais Ironworks. Some of these later transferred to a colliery, suitably called International, at Abercrave in the upper Swansea Valley. There they contributed to the growth of anarcho-syndicalist ideas in the area south of the Black Mountain. A year after publication of *The Miners' Next Step, Freedom* was able to claim that this area, which included Ammanford, possessed eight Workers' Freedom Groups with a programme which was thoroughly Anarchist.

---

<sup>63</sup> 'W.M.' *op. cit.*

In the summer of 1901, and possibly again in the autumn and the following year, Mainwaring and Tarrida went together to Dowlais – partly, at least, to ease tensions which had developed between Welsh and Spanish workers. Some of the Spaniards seem to have arrived from the Basque Country, after victimisation for trade union activity there. Eskudi was not a major centre of Libertarian ideas in Spain, but Tarrida took the opportunity to lecture on Anarchism in the new, South Wales, home. Jesuit-hating Tarrida and former Unitarian Mainwaring became soul mates. Writing in the September 1901 *Freedom*, the Welshman said:

The ironworkers are paid by the ton, but a great part of their time, for which, of course, they are not paid – is taken up in changing the cylinders, which is done as often as seven times in three days; worse still they have to attend on Sundays, for this purpose from 8 o'clock till 1 p.m., without pay; and if they don't attend they are fined from 5s. to 10s. This 'under the British flag' and the Nonconformist conscience, which abhors the 'Continental Sunday'.

Arising from his association with Tarrida, Mainwaring was also able to further a longstanding interest in libertarian education. He joined the managing committee of an anti-clerical 'free school' established in London on the model of Francisco Ferrer's Escuela Moderna.

William Morris had died in 1896, after earlier cutting his Anarchist links, and Joe Lane had before that suffered a lasting breakdown in health. Frank Kitz was still active in 1901 but Sam Mainwaring appears to have been the only one of the Socialist League's

A  
Mass Meeting

WILL BE HELD ON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, AT 8 P. M.,

at the

WORKINGMEN'S CLUB & INSTITUTE,

(CLERKENWELL ROAD, NEXT TO HOLBORN TOWN HALL.)

To Commemorate the Legal Murder of the

CHICAGO ANARCHISTS,

and to protest against the

**BARBAROUS EXTERMINATION**

of Boer Men, Women and Children in South Africa.

Speakers:

S. MAINWARING, P. KROPOTKIN,  
E. MALATESTA, F. KITZ, LOUISE MICHEL,  
WITHINGTON, KAPLAN, KELLY and others.

---

---

1884 seceding signatories who continued on into the twentieth century heart of Kropotkin's *Freedom* group. The November 1901 notice of a Chicago Anarchists commemoration and Boer War protest, copied on the facing page, shows the South Walian given a leading listing, ahead of the Russian prince and other luminaries like Errico Malatesta and Louise Michel. Mainwaring appears to have been accepted by Kropotkin and Tarrida as intellectually equivalent. And he injected a real workingman's, London Trades Councillor's, perspective into their discussions. In July 1901 it was reported that: 'One of the most interesting discussions that the Freedom Discussion Group has had for some time was the one opened by our comrade Mainwaring'. He took as his subject 'Methods of Propaganda' and advocated a renewal of open air meetings; Nannie Dryhurst, sometime-editor of the periodical, contributing that 'Anarchists should apply themselves more to literary work...'. Tarrida wanted to concentrate an agitation in the trade unions, without perhaps fully possessing Mainwaring's appreciation of the 'Mr. Chairman, on a point of order' difficulties in long-established British constitutions. Nevertheless, the close friends would soon co-operate in what William Mainwaring junior was to call his father's bravest fight. This was the editing and publication in late 1903 and early 1904 of the few numbers of *The General Strike*.

As we have seen in Chapter Two, the idea of the general strike originated with William Benbow in 1832 England. But it was not until a congress of the Belgian Federation of the Bakuninist International at Verviers in 1873 that the theory of such a strike as the main or sole means of bringing in a social revolution was fully put forward. It is to the Low Countries, too, that we have to look for its advocacy as proletarian means to

prevent imperialistic war. Returning to characters in Gwyn A. Williams' radio lecture we can note that, whereas Saunders Lewis was rather proud of his First World War officership, it was Anton Pannekoek's intellectual progenitor Domela Nieuwenhuis who premised the workers method to prevent that conflict happening. His experiences as an early (1888-1891) Socialist member of the Dutch parliament had also led Nieuwenhuis to reject parliamentarism as a weapon of social emancipation. We might further note, in passing, that the collections of Domela Nieuwenhuis and Max Nettlau formed originating bases for Amsterdam's International Institute of Social History. During the International Socialist Congress at Zurich in 1889, Nieuwenhuis had raised the idea of turning a war between nations into an international revolutionary war between classes by means of the general strike. In Holland, Pannekoek's views were shaped around 1903, the commencement year of Mainwaring's paper. Its a shame Gwyn Williams didn't know about that. If he had, the Welsh radio comparisons could have been so much more pointed. *The General Strike* did not appear after March 1904 when, with a slump in London, Mainwaring had again to return to South Wales to work. In a letter from Neath, probably addressed to Tarrida but published in *Freedom* towards the end of the year, he says: 'Down here we have... the cricket and [Rugby] football madness... to contend with. I believe that up in Dowlais... where the foreign element is strong, they hold meetings very often'.<sup>64</sup> Both Tarrida and Williams would have like that.

Publication of *The General Strike* followed the establishment of the International Group of Correspondence in London by Sam Mainwaring and others. The aim of the Group was to keep in touch by means of correspondence with all known exponents of

---

<sup>64</sup> *Freedom*, November 1904.

Libertarian thought throughout the world; the best results, according to Will junior, being obtained in the direction of Latin America.<sup>65</sup> Earlier, in 1900, an International Workingmen's Group had been formed in London. *Freedom* reported that it was this body which received the 'delegates from the Trades Unions of France', giving 'our members the opportunity of exchanging ideas... on the workers movement'. Lecture topics during the organisation's first year included: 'Patriotism and Internationalism', 'The General Strike', 'The Socialisation of the Means of Production', and 'The Position of Anarchists During the Revolution'.<sup>66</sup> Across the North Sea, Anton Pannekoek was stressing the subjective factor whilst Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), who had succeeded Engels as leading guru of a mechanistic 'Marxist Centre', ignored it. Class consciousness, Pannekoek held, was acquired through engagement in mass action, led by the workers themselves; Parliamentarism, he argued, was not the class struggle.

Kautsky adopted a fence-sitting position during the 1914-1918 hostilities – offering the, literally, killing sophistry that the [Second] Socialist International 'was not a weapon in wartime'. As a member of the early Socialist League, before the Bloomsbury exit, he had been assailed by Sam and Jane Mainwaring's Silesian friend, Gräfin (Countess) Schack, with the accusation that all the Reichstag's Social Democrat deputies were corrupt. Faced by the 1914 intellectual and moral bankruptcy of the Second International's largest party, Rosa Luxemburg was to adopt a humanitarian posture – calling for Peace. Russian Lenin, the ultimate operator, came to see War as instigator of Revolution. For our particular scene, the *most* illuminating circuit starts with Kautsky voting for Sam Mainwaring as member of

---

<sup>65</sup> 'W.M.', *op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> Supplement to *Freedom*, September 1901.

the Socialist League's first Executive Council. Then, Engels was pleased to rank the Welshman among 'the better of the known workers'. This was to change to 'workers with anarchist leanings'.

Sam Mainwaring died suddenly when addressing a meeting at Parliament Hill Fields, London, in September 1907. William Mainwaring junior titled his father's 1927 memorial 'A Fighter of Forlorn Hopes'. Alongside Gwyn A. Williams' invocation of Anton Pannekoek such a description may seem well chosen. 'Forlorn hope' derives from the Dutch *verloren hoop* – lost troop. The latter can be taken to mean 'a storming party' or 'those who undertake a hopeless task'. In my following Conclusion, looking from the vantage point of year 2001, I choose to consider more hopeful aspects. I see both world-wide and more specially Welsh resonance.

## CONCLUSION

We have rediscovered parts of the story of Libertarian Socialism in Britain. Some of the findings may be surprising: William Cobbett's late placement as supporter of 'industrial action', George Eliot's partner as revolutionary expositor, 1870s Leftist penetration *from* the United States, and an English copying of the Gotha Programme being obvious examples. *Most* provocative perhaps is the juxtaposition of Denials of Finality (as distinct from claims for freedom) in religious and juridical realms. Overall, such elements 'suggest that the socialist movement was rather different from the conceptions that came through the [parliamentary] Labour party or the [parliamentary] Communist party...' The latter words were originally Sheila Rowbotham's, and in the same expression of opinion she also says:

As historians we're used to looking at things that leave records, so often you start by looking at parties. But through the practice of the women's movement we've become aware... only certain memories get validated and *perpetuated* [my italics]... in British history the relationship between anarchism and syndicalist politics... socialist feminism and pacifism... is something that is rarely discussed because the people involved weren't part of either the official suffragette hierarchy or other [electoral] groups.<sup>1</sup>

In the set of interviews comprising *Chronicles of Dissent*, the anarchist Noam Chomsky talks about some writings on the Left being 'down a memory hole... They can't reach people, people can't use them and can't understand them. They're just too far off the

---

<sup>1</sup> Sheila Rowbotham in an interview given for *Visions of History*, Manchester 1976, pp. 56-57. See also Chapter Five, note 1.



received doctrinal position that's associated with real power.'<sup>2</sup> In such a vein, one suspects that the authors of *The Labour Party in Wales 1900-2000* find or would find Sam Mainwaring's views disconnectedly *strange*. But unvalidated memory and memory holes *conjoin* in those 'hidden from history' sets of circumstances with which a whole spectrum of feminist and more widely libertarian remembrancers have to contend. As Rowbotham again advises: 'connections appear... by finding particular people and then tracing and relating what they say.'<sup>3</sup> I was exceptionally fortunate, after initially generating an interest in 'Anarcho-Syndicalism', to find that the likely inventor of the label was born less than a mile from my own birthplace, had distant family connections, and shared a developmental stage in Unitarianism. However, the subsequent traverse (the 'Anti-Parliamentary Passage' of my title) would not have been possible if Max Nettlau had not previously and literally salvaged the records of the Socialist League from Frank Kitz's dustbins. Going through the organisation's papers at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, one is constantly amazed and grateful for the huge FIRST task which Nettlau accomplished – the sticking together of hundreds of repeatedly – ripped pages.

Nettlau's wider, international, labours will probably underpin all further contributions to our *understanding* of historical Anarchism. The greatest importance of such an understanding for ongoing historians of East London, South Wales and very many other places is that, in Richard Gombin's words:

---

<sup>2</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Chronicles of Dissent*, Monroe, Maine 1992, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Rowbotham, *op. cit.*

Chronologically speaking, the anarchists were the first to denounce the image Bolshevism sought to present to the world... This critique did not derive from some *a priori* ideology, as in the case of 'gut' anti-communists, but from the more or less lengthy practice of (or cohabitation with) communism.<sup>4</sup>

Of her *own* search, Sheila Rowbotham says:

In thinking about Edward Carpenter... I was tracking down a different sort of socialist consciousness. I was trying to enter a frame of mind that was pre-Leninist... I wanted to find other sources of socialism, when people actually hadn't *assumed* things that resulted from the impact of the Russian Revolution. I was interested in searching around for a lost idiom of politics not as 'the answer' but in order to recover perspective.<sup>5</sup>

One of the greatest tragedies, if not *the* greatest tragedy, of the twentieth century was that Bolshevism polarised world-views on the Left and Left Centre, right across the globe. Bolshevik malpractice was everywhere contrasted with the declared intentions of mainstream parliamentary parties; this despite Russian insistence that Western Communists should themselves participate in parliamentary elections. In this situation of massively resourced Soviet and Opposing state propaganda, the different voice of 'socialists against the state' (the Anarchists) was largely lost. Outside Spain, the latter were off the Agenda. In the countries which had fought the First World War, the failure of the international workers' movement to prevent that war by extra-parliamentary means left a lasting

---

<sup>4</sup> Richard Gombin, *The Radical Tradition: A Study in Modern Revolutionary Thought*, London 1978, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Rowbotham, *op. cit.*

confusion. In the Glamorgan Valleys, Sam Mainwaring's teachings were virtually extinguished. A blanket of Moscow defined 'Marxism' was laid across the land.

The removal job, in Wales and elsewhere, remains huge. Gwyn A. Williams somehow got it mixed up with 'nationalism' and devotees of a 'Welsh state'. I suggest that a better starting point lies in recovering combinations of locality and social cohesion, of *class-in-a-place*, like that indentified among Neath copperworkers of 1843 in Chapter Four. *Federations* of small units *across* Governmental boundaries need to be constantly exercised. Taking a Black Country example of the 1970s, eastern wards of Wolverhampton and western wards of Walsall had more in common with the 'others' than each group had with the rest of its 'own' Metropolitan Borough. Not that federations of communities need be physically contiguous. Given modern communications, one can readily envisage 'archipelagos' of co-operation. The one necessary component is an assertion of true democracy at a scale where false mediation, including media inspired reification, can be confounded by the facts of everyday life. To turn to Sheila Rowbotham again:

I believe our assumptions on the Left about how to organize need to be completely overhauled. This is daunting but inescapable. I think the failure in the socialist movement to take seriously democracy and the kind of personal democracy that has been a feature of the women's movement – *noticing not just resolutions or words but behaviour* [my italics] – has contributed to failure and disillusion.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Rowbotham, *idem* and *op. cit.*

My Mainwaring traverse stands to be extended in at least three directions as part of that further map-making which Rowbotham advocates. Firstly, the early post-First World War activity of the anti-parliamentary Communist League needs to be fully researched in both East London and South Wales; this as extension of R.W. Jones' work and, if applicable, in continuation of that inter-continental exchange of ideas which Will Mainwaring junior records his father overseeing during the first decade of the twentieth century. Secondly, the earlier emergence of specifically *Bakuninist* elements in London's Victorian socialism needs to be clarified; this in the context of a west-to-east Transatlantic, English speaking, transmission of ideas – and, particularly, with detailed knowledge of Sam Mainwaring's American activities. Thirdly, Karl Marx's replication of English and American *working class* thought and phrasing should be pursued beyond the few examples that I have given.

Harmonising with the Jewish-American intellectual Chomsky, the Palestinian-American intellectual Edward Said has written:

Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues... This problem animates all sorts of discussions – about influence, about blame and judgement, about present actualities and future priorities.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London 1993, p. 1.

Said's declaration involves *periodisation*, associated geographical spread, and historians' choice in those categories. Present day Wales, the area west of a wiggly line from Chepstow to Chester, reflects the limits (more or less) of Anglo-Saxon expansion at the time of the Battle of Hastings. It would have been a 'problematic' entity for the Romans who ruled both sides of the Severn Sea from what is now Cirencester, with forward bases at the two Iscas (Caerleon and Exeter) – each a hundred miles from respective lands' ends. Dolaucothi and Dartmoor slaves were quite possibly administered from the same Cotswold headquarters. Such an early position is certainly relevant to any re-examination of 'Welsh' labourers' history. 'Who inherited the gold pits?' is a good opening question with which to prise apart the yarn of incoming and subsuming royalty from beyond Hadrian's Wall.<sup>8</sup> Sam Mainwaring and his circle searched for historical understanding beyond 'given' boundaries of thought and place. In the Victoria Gardens, 'the Park', at Neath is a memorial to local men killed fighting Fascism during the Spanish Civil War. One of them, Alwyn Skinner, was widely acknowledged, in the town, to have 'changed sides'; he left Neath a Communist and died an Anarchist. The change may have been wholly brought about by Catalonian experiences, paralleling those of George Orwell and Ken Loach's leading character.<sup>9</sup> Or information from home, from the likes of Sam Mainwaring junior and *Spain and the World*, may have contributed. Physically, location-wise, it is certain that the Park memorial stands on the site of the old Mera. Noam Chomsky might agree that memory holes come in all sorts of sizes and that not a few are worth delving into *very* deeply.

---

<sup>8</sup> The ruling house of Gwynedd, the doings of which shaped so much subsequent Welsh history, appear to have been imported from the Firth of Forth area towards the end of the Roman period, as client warriors to fight the Irish.

<sup>9</sup> See George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, London 1938, and Ken Loach's 1995 film *Land and Freedom*. The leading character in the latter was a Merseyside Communist when he left England to fight in Spain.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Manuscripts.

B. Published Material.

B1. Printed Minutes and Diary.

B2. Newspapers.

B3. Books and Pamphlets: Contemporary Works.

B4. Books and Pamphlets: Secondary Works.

B5. Articles in Journals.

### A. Manuscripts.

General Register Office and Public Record Office, London (various locations).

Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages (after mid-1837).

Census Enumerators' Books: 1841, 1851, 1861 and 1881.

International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Socialist League Papers (includes some printed notices and allied items).

National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Bishops' Transcripts of Parish Registers (before mid-1837).

State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Ira Steward Papers.

International Working Men's Association (First International) Papers  
(includes a few press cuttings).

Vestry House Museum, Walthamstow, London.

Ambrose Barker Papers ('Reminiscences of a Revolutionist').

### B. Published Material (place of publication is London unless stated otherwise).

B1. Printed Minutes and Diary.

Institute of Marxism-Leninism (C.P.S.U.)

*The General Council of the First International 1866-1868: Minutes,*  
Moscow no date.

Brett, R. L. (ed.)  
*Barclay Fox's Journal*, 1979.

B2. Newspapers.

English Language.

*Cambrian*, Swansea.  
*Cardiff Chronicle*, Cardiff.  
*Commonweal*.  
*Crisis*.  
*Democratic Review*.  
*Eclectic Review*.  
*Freedom*.  
*General Strike*.  
*Leader*.  
*Liberty*.  
*Notes to the People*.  
*Pioneer*.  
*Pioneer and Official Gazette*.  
*Secular Review*.  
*Spain and the World*, Stroud.  
*War Commentary*.  
*Western Mail*, Cardiff.  
*Workingmen's Advocate*, Chicago and Philadelphia.

Welsh Language.

*Y Diwygiwr*, Llanelli.  
*Yr Ymofynydd*, Aberdare.

B3. Books and Pamphlets: Contemporary Works.

Anonymous (South Wales Miners' Unofficial Reform Committee)  
*The Miners' Next Step*, Tonypany 1912.  
Bakunin, Michael (Sam Dolgoff ed.)  
*Bakunin on Anarchism* (includes contributions by James Guillaume),  
Montreal 1980.  
Barker, Ernest  
*Political Thought From Spencer to To-day*, 1915.  
Beer, M.  
*A History of British Socialism*, 1919.  
Benbow, William  
*Grand National Holiday and Congress of the Productive Classes*,  
1832.  
Borrow, George

- Wild Wales*, 1862.
- Brailsford, Henry Noel  
*Shelley, Godwin and Their Circle*, 1913.
- Bridges, John Henry  
*Illustrations of Positivism*, 1915.
- Davidson, William L.  
*Political Thought in England: The Utilitarians from Bentham to J. S. Mill*, 1915.
- Draper, John William  
*History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*, 1923 edition.
- Eliot, George (Mary Ann Evans)  
*Felix Holt*, 1866.  
*Address to Working Men by Felix Holt*, 1868.
- Engels, Frederick  
*The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, 1969  
English edition.
- Foner, Philip S. (ed.)  
*The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs*, New York 1969.
- Godwin, William  
*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 1798.
- Goldman, Emma  
*Living My Life* (two volumes), New York 1931.  
*Red Emma Speaks*, 1979.
- Gopal, Ram (ed.)  
*Selections from Ingersoll*, Bangalore 1931.
- Griffiths, James  
*Pages from Memory*, 1969.
- Lane, Joseph  
*An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*, 1887.
- Lenin, V. I.  
*The Paris Commune*, 1931.  
*The Revolution of 1905*, 1931 reprint.
- Luxemburg, Rosa  
*Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, New York 1970.
- Macdonald, J. Ramsay  
*Syndicalism*, 1912.
- Mann, Tom  
*Tom Mann's Memoirs*, 1923.
- Marx, Karl  
*Capital I*, Everyman's Library edition 1930.  
*Capital, Volume III*, Calcutta 1946.  
*Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1938 English edition.  
*The Civil War in France*, 1933 reprint.
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick (Lewis S. Feuer ed.)  
*Basic Writings on Philosophy and Politics* (includes *The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850*), New York 1959.



- Mins, L. E. (ed.)  
*Founding of the First International (September-November 1864)*,  
 1939.
- Morris, William  
*A Dream of John Ball*, New York reprint no date.  
*News from Nowhere*, 1970 reprint.
- Morris, William (A. L. Morton ed.)  
*Political Writings of William Morris*, 1973.
- Murphy, J. T.  
*The Workers' Committee*, Sheffield 1917.
- Paine, Thomas  
*The Rights of Man* (two parts), 1791, 1792.
- Paul, William  
*The State: Its Origin and Function*, Glasgow 1917.
- Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph  
*General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, 1989  
 edition.
- Rhys, John and Brynmor-Jones, David  
*The Welsh People*, 1900.
- Rocker, Rudolph  
*The London Years*, 1956.
- Russell, Bertrand  
*Roads to Freedom*, 1918.
- Sheldon, Henry C.  
*Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*, no date.
- Stewart, William  
*J. Keir Hardie*, 1921.
- Wallace, Alfred Russel  
*My Life*, 1905.

B4. Books and Pamphlets: Secondary Works.

- Abelove H., Blackmar B., Dimock P. and Schneer J. (eds.)  
*Visions of History*, Manchester 1976.
- Anweiler, Oscar  
*The Soviets: The Russian Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Councils  
 1905-1921*, New York 1974 reprint.
- Aron, Raymond  
*Main Currents in Sociological Thought* (two volumes), New York  
 1965, 1967.
- Ashton, Rosemary  
*George Eliot: A Life*, 1996.  
*G. H. Lewes: A Life*, Oxford 1991.
- Avrich, Paul  
*An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre*, Princeton  
 1978.

- Beales, H. L.  
*The Early English Socialists*, 1933.
- Becker, Heiner  
*A Short History of Anarchism*, 1990.
- Bolloten, Burnett  
*The Spanish Revolution: The Left and the Struggle for Power during the Civil War*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 1979.
- Brecher, Jeremy  
*Strike*, Boston, Massachusetts 1972.
- Brenan, Gerald  
*The Spanish Labyrinth*, Cambridge 1943.
- Browne, Harry  
*The Rise of British Trade Unions 1825-1914*, 1979.
- Carr, E. H.  
*What is History?*, 1961.
- Chomsky, Noam  
*Chronicles of Dissent*, Monroe, Maine 1992.
- Christie, Stuart and Meltzer, Albert  
*The Floodgates of Anarchy*, 1970.
- Cobban, Alfred  
*A History of Modern France* (three volumes), 1957, 1961, 1963.
- Cohen, Chapman  
*Bradlaugh and Ingersoll*, 1933.
- Cohn, Norman  
*The Pursuit of the Millenium*, 1957
- Collins, Henry and Abramsky, Chimen  
*Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement*, 1965.
- Davies, D. Elwyn  
*Y Smotiau Duon*, Llandysul 1980.
- De Caux, Len  
*The Living Spirit of the Wobblies*, New York 1978.
- Dolgoft, Sam (ed.)  
*The Anarchist Collectives: Worker Self-Management in the Spanish Revolution 1936-1939*, New York 1974.
- Duncan, Grahame (ed.)  
*Democracy and the Capitalist State*, Cambridge 1989.
- Dyck, Ian  
*William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture*, Cambridge 1992.
- Edwards, Stewart (ed.)  
*The Communards of Paris, 1871*, 1973.
- Evans, Thomas  
*The Background of Modern Welsh Politics, 1789-1846*, Cardiff 1936.
- Flynn, Paul  
*Dragons Led By Poodles*, 1999.
- Foner, Philip S.  
*The Great Labour Uprising of 1877*, New York 1977.

- Ford, Boris (ed.)  
*The Pelican Guide to English Literature, Volume 6 from Dickens to Hardy*, 1958.
- Francis, Hywel  
*Miners Against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War*, 1984.
- Garnon, Serge  
*Man and his Past*, Montreal 1982.
- Geras, Norman  
*The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg*, 1976.
- Gombin, Richard  
*The Origins of Modern Leftism*, 1975.  
*The Radical Tradition: A Study in Modern Revolutionary Thought*, 1978.
- Guerin, Daniel  
*100 Years of Labor in the USA*, 1979.
- Harper, Peter S. and Sunderland, Eric (eds.)  
*Genetic and Population Studies in Wales*, Cardiff 1986.
- Harrison, Stanley  
*Poor Men's Guardians*, 1974.
- Held, David  
*Models of Democracy*, Cambridge 1987.
- Hill, Christopher  
*The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972.
- Hobsbawm, E. J.  
*The Age of Capital 1848-1872*, 1975.
- Holton, Bob  
*British Syndicalism 1900-1914*, 1976.
- Hopkins, Anthony  
*Medieval Neath*, Pontypool 1988.
- Horne, Alistair  
*The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune 1870-71*, 1965.
- Humphreys, Emyr  
*The Taliesin Tradition: A Quest for the Welsh Identity*, 1983.
- Hyams, Edward  
*The Millenium Postponed: Socialism from Sir Thomas More to Mao-Tse-Tung*, 1974.
- Jellinek, Frank  
*The Paris Commune of 1871*, 1971.
- Jenkins, Elis (ed.)  
*A Neath Symposium*, Neath 1974.
- Jenkins, Geraint H.  
*The Foundations of Modern Wales: Wales 1642-1780*, Oxford 1987.
- Jenkins, Mick  
*The General Strike of 1842*, 1980.
- John, Angela V. (ed.)

- Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939*, Cardiff 1991.
- Johnson R., McLennon G., Schwarz B. and Sutton D. (eds.)  
*Making Histories: Studies in History Writing and Politics*, 1982.
- Jones, Barry and Keating, Michael  
*Labour and the British State*, Oxford 1985.
- Jones, David J. V.  
*The Last Rising: The Newport Insurrection of 1839*, Oxford 1985.  
*Crime in Nineteenth Century Wales*, Cardiff 1992.
- Jones, Gwyn Briwnant and Dunstone, Denis  
*The Vale of Neath Line*, Llandysul 1996.
- Jones, Ieuan Gwynedd  
*Explorations and Explanations: Essays in the Social History of Victorian Wales*, Llandysul 1981.
- Jones, Ieuan Gwynedd and Williams, David  
*The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume 1*, 1976.
- Jones, Iorwerth  
*David Rees, Y Cynhyrfwr*, Abertawe (Swansea) 1971.
- Jones, William D.  
*Wales in America: Scranton and the Welsh 1860-1920*, Cardiff 1993.
- Josephson, Matthew  
*The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists 1861-1901*, 1962.
- Kapp, Yvonne  
*Eleanor Marx: Volume II, The Crowded Years 1884-1898*, 1976.
- Kellner, Douglas  
*Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory*, Austin, Texas 1977.
- Lambert, W. R.  
*Drink and Society in Victorian Wales*, Cardiff 1983.
- Martin, Aubrey J.  
*Hanes Llwynrhydowen*, Llandysul 1977.
- Martin, Nansi  
*Gwilym Marles*, Llandysul 1979.
- Meltzer, Albert  
*The Anarchists in London 1935-1955*, Sanday, Orkney 1976.
- Miliband, Ralph  
*Capitalist Democracy in Britain*, Oxford 1982.  
*The State in Capitalist Society*, 1973.
- Montgomery, David  
*Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans 1862-1872*, New York 1967.
- Morgan, Kenneth O.  
*Wales in British Politics 1868-1922*, Cardiff 1980.  
*Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980*, Oxford 1981.

- Morton, A. L.  
*The World of the Ranters*, 1970.
- Nairn, Tom  
*The Break-Up of Britain*, 1977.
- Oliver, Hermia  
*The Victorian Anarchist Movement in London*, 1982.
- Orwell, George (Eric Blair)  
*Homage to Catalonia*, 1938.
- Pannekoek, Anton  
*Workers Councils* (four volumes), Melbourne 1947-1949.
- Pelling, Henry  
*A History of British Trade Unionism*, 1963.
- Phillips, D. Rhys,  
*History of the Vale of Neath*, Swansea 1923.
- Pollard, S. and Salt, J.  
*Robert Owen, Prophet of the Poor*, 1971.
- Quail, John  
*The Slow Burning Fuse: The Lost History of the British Anarchists*, 1978.
- Richards, Vernon  
*Lessons of the Spanish Revolution 1936-1939*, 1983.
- Risjord, Norman K.  
*Wisconsin: The Story of the Badger State*, Madison 1995.
- Roberts, C. W.  
*A Legacy From Victorian Enterprise: The Briton Ferry Ironworks and the daughter companies*, Gloucester 1983.
- Rocker, Rudolph  
*Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 1973.
- Rubinstein, David (ed.)  
*People for the People*, 1973.
- Rusinow, Dennison  
*The Yugoslav Experiment 1848-1974*, 1977.
- Said, Edward W.  
*Imperialism and Culture*, 1993.
- Saville, John  
*1848: The British State and the Chartist Movement*, Cambridge 1987.
- Shipley, Stan  
*Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London*, 1983.
- Smith David (ed.)  
*A People and A Proletariat: Essays in the History of Wales 1780-1980*, 1980.
- Smith, F. B.  
*Radical Artisan: William James Linton 1812-97*, Manchester 1973.
- Smith, Warren Sylvester  
*The London Heretics 1870-1914*, 1967.

- Stephens, Meic (ed.)  
*The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales*, Oxford 1986.
- Tanner, D., Williams, C., and Hopkin, D. (eds.)  
*The Labour Party in Wales 1900-2000*, Cardiff 2000.
- Thompson, E. P.  
*William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, 1955.  
*The Making of the English Working Class*, 1963.
- Thompson, Noel W.  
*The People's Science: The popular political economy of exploitation and crisis 1816-34*, Cambridge 1984.
- Torr, Dona  
*Tom Mann and His Times*, 1956
- Vidler, Alec R.  
*The Church in an Age of Revolution*, 1961.
- Voline (V. M. Eichenbaum)  
*The Unknown Revolution 1917-1921* (describes Anarchist activity in U.S.S.R.), Black and Red/Solidarity edition, Detroit 1974.
- Wallace, Ryland  
*'Organise!, Organise!, Organise!': A Study of Reform Agitations in Wales 1840-1886*, Cardiff 1991.
- Wheen, Francis  
*Karl Marx*, 1999.
- Wilkes, Ivor  
*South Wales and the Rising of 1839*, 1984.
- Williams, D. Trevor  
*The Economic Development of Swansea and of the Swansea District to 1921*, Cardiff 1940.
- Williams, Gareth  
*1905 And All That*, Llandysul 1991.
- Williams, Gwyn A.  
*The Merthyr Rising*, 1978.  
*The Welsh in their history*, 1982.  
*When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh*, 1985.
- Williams, Herbert  
*Davies the Ocean*, Cardiff 1991.
- Williams, Raymond  
*Culture and Society 1780-1850*, 1958.  
*Democracy and Parliament*, 1982.
- Williams, T. Oswald  
*Undodiaeth a Rhyddid Meddwl*, Llandysul, 1962.
- Woodcock, George  
*Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, New York 1962.  
*Proudhon*, Montreal 1987.

B5. Articles in Journals.

- Brennan, T.  
‘The White House’, *The Cambridge Review*, 1954 (Cambridge).
- Edwards, Hywel Teifi  
‘Victorian Wales Seeks Reinstatement’, *Planet* 52, August-September 1985 (Aberystwyth).
- Green, Harry  
‘The Eaglesbush Colliery Explosion 1848’, *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society*, 1979 (Neath).
- John, Ken  
‘Sam Mainwaring and the Autonomist Tradition’, *Llafur*, 1986 (Aberystwyth).
- Jones, R. W.  
‘Anti-Parliamentarianism and Communism in Britain 1917-1921’, *The Raven*, July-September 1990.
- Nettlau, Max  
‘Observations on the Welsh Pronouns, Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs’, *Y Cymmrodor*, 1887 and 1888.
- Williams, Gwyn A.  
‘Pistol Shot in a Concert’, *Planet* 84, December 1990-January 1991 (Aberystwyth).
- Williams, Leonard  
‘Emma Goldman – Associations with Neath’, *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society*, 1977 (Neath).

## **APPENDIX**

This comprises my article 'Sam Mainwaring and the Autonomist Tradition', which appeared in the 1986 volume of *Llafur: Journal of Welsh Labour History*.



## Sam Mainwaring and the Autonomist Tradition<sup>1</sup>

Ken John

Next year marks the centenary of the first, August 1887, Socialist propaganda tour of Pontypridd, the Rhondda Fach, Aberdare and Merthyr by Samuel Mainwaring, a London based engineer.<sup>2</sup>

Among the subsequently published recollections of him is that in Tom Mann's *Memoirs*.<sup>3</sup>

He was ... one of the very first to understand the significance of the revolutionary movement, and the first, as far as my knowledge goes, to appreciate industrial action as distinct from parliamentary action. He had been, in the late '70s, a member of the East London Labour Emancipation League, and was an early member of the Social Democratic Federation. Then, when the severance took place, he was one of the founders of the Socialist League. Sam Mainwaring was once my foreman, and he showed in the workshop the same quiet dignified bearing that characterized him at public meetings... After attending propagandist meetings William Morris frequently walked back with Mainwaring, and it was said of them that they looked like the skipper and the first mate of a ship. Mainwaring was a good speaker and took part in many meetings. As time went on he showed an increasing disposition towards Anarchist Communism, but the members of the League generally called themselves Revolutionary Socialists to differentiate themselves from Parliamentary Socialists.

From a wholly Libertarian point of view, Mat Kavanagh contributed to the May 1934 number of *Freedom*.<sup>4</sup>

The Anarchist movement, numerically always a small movement in this country, has been rich ... in exceptional personalities. One of the most outstanding was Sam Mainwaring. Big in body and mind, a Celt, with all the fire and enthusiasm of his race, he was yet a quiet and persuasive speaker, and a tireless worker. The Cause was not a spare time hobby with him, it was his life's work, and his zest never diminished. When he was too old to do much open-air speaking, he took care that at his favourite pitch, near Hoxton Church, there was a speaker, a platform and literature on sale ... he served for years as a delegate on the London Trades Council, and whilst never seeking an official position in his Union, he was active in it, seldom missing an opportunity of expressing his revolutionary views.

He was one of the original members of the Socialist League, a personal friend of William Morris, and was very closely associated with, and respected by all the propagandists of that day whose names have passed into history. Wherever he happened to be living, Wales, London, or elsewhere, that place became the centre of propagandist activity. Older comrades will remember Sam's propagandist tours into Wales ... Sam spoke in his native Welsh, which he maintained was the finest speaking language in the world.

As a propagandist orator, Sam had his own style of address. It was characterized by clear deliberate thought, argument and enunciation, which held his audiences fixed until his message was delivered. He had a remarkable gift of humour, its form generally taking that of a story, the climax of which both amused and astonished the crowds who listened to him. It was a common thing for him to speak for four or five hours at a stretch, often during that time attracting two or three fresh crowds of people.

... years ago Tom Mann, at a meeting at the Club and Institute Union Hall in Clerkenwell Road, introduced Mainwaring as his "old foreman who, in the engineers' workshop, where they were both employed, brought the message of Socialism to him". It is

lamentable that Tom should now be a public spokesman of a party who would, by the medium of the OGPU, put a Russian Mainwaring up against a wall and shoot him. Sam Mainwaring always advocated the right of others to express their own sincere convictions equally with himself.

This year being the centenary of William Morris, we ought to bear in mind some of the comrades who worked with him in the Socialist League. Some so-called historians of to-day regard Morris and the League as one and the same thing. The fact is, there was a body of really remarkable men and women in the League, and not the least of them was Sam Mainwaring. He left a gap which has not been filled.

And again, in *War Commentary*<sup>5</sup> for mid-December 1943, following the death of Sam's nephew of the same name, Sam Mainwaring junior, at Neath:

All old comrades who knew the Mainwarings will regret the passing away of Sam who died this week after an operation. Sam was the nephew of the famous Sam Mainwaring, and was reared by him, in every sense of the word ... brought up in such an environment, it would be impossible to be anything else than a revolutionist and an anarchist. The elder Mainwaring was a pioneer of Anarchism in England and Wales, a friend of Kropotkin and especially of William Morris. He started in collaboration with Tarrida del Marmol *The General Strike*, an English paper advocating industrial direct action. The watch-word was "Watch your Leaders", indicating their attitude towards the corrupt trade union bureaucracy of that day.

The younger Sam emigrated to South Africa whilst quite young and was active in the newly born labour movement here. So much so, in fact, that he soon found it wise to move on, so he emigrated to South America. But ever active he was compelled once more to move on, this time to the United States, where he worked on the Western Seafloor in the early and active days of the Industrial Workers of the World.

At that time the Mexicans were in revolt ... using San Francisco as a jumping off point. The brothers Magon were issuing their paper *Regeneration* from there, and Sam Mainwaring was in the midst of all their activities.<sup>6</sup>

The uncle was born into a Neath collier's family on 15 December, 1841; his mother's maiden name being Llewelyn.<sup>7</sup> In *Tom Mann and His Times*, Dona Torr discusses Sam's proto-syndicalist influence on Tom, and the source of the former's ideas:<sup>8</sup>

... before 1879 was out, Tom had a better job. He now worked in the Marelybone shop of a domestic engineer and went out to various customers. He turned and screwed the joints of the escape gear and fire extinguishing apparatus for the new Empire Theatre in Leicester Square, soon to be opened for the lovely ladies and swell johnnies of the '80s and '90s and helped to fix some grates into Lord Salisbury's house in Arlington Street, recently remodelled out of its long preserved eighteenth century fashion.

... foreman Sam Mainwaring, a tall full-bearded man ... who later became a close associate of William Morris, was now drawing Tom back to thoughts of working class organisation ... [his] influence could not bear immediate fruit, but it was never forgotten.

Mainwaring's views would not have seemed strange to his grandfathers in 1833 and 1834, in the days of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union and of William Benbow; he derived them from anarchist influence ... He belonged at this time to the Stratford Dialectical and Radical Club in East London, which became the earliest group of Radical-Socialist workmen, the parent of the Labour Emancipation League, 1881, whose programme was adopted in 1884 by the Social Democratic Federation. The Club and the League partly reflected older traditions ... kept alive after the First International ... by the small clubs and societies of French, German, Italian, Russian and Polish political refugees in Soho and the East End.



In fact, the Mainwaring generations were such that Sam's education in the notion of a Grand National Holiday and concurrent Congress of the Productive Classes could have come from his father. David Mainwaring had been thirty four at the time of Dic Penderyn's Aberavon burial.<sup>9</sup>

The Social Democratic Federation, previously the Democratic Federation, took its new name in August 1884. In December, a majority of the Executive Council broke away to form a separate organisation—the Socialist League.<sup>10</sup> They included Eleanor Marx and her companion Edward Aveling, William Morris and Samuel Mainwaring.

The Socialist League's journal, *Commonweal*, appeared under Morris' editorship in February 1885. This first issue advertised "Lessons in Socialism" to be given weekly by Aveling at the South Place Institute, and whereby "an attempt will be made to analyse Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*". The listed platform speakers for an introductory meeting included Mainwaring.

The second, March, number carried Frederick Engels' article "England in 1845 and in 1885". It also gave that month's speakers for the Labour Emancipation League's Mile End branch:

1st	Charles Mowbray <sup>11</sup> "Why the Revolutionary Movements of 1848-49 Failed"
8th	Samuel Mainwaring "Society"
15th	John Mahon <sup>12</sup> "The Meaning of the Revolution"
22nd	Eleanor Marx "The Factory Acts"
29th	William Morris "Socialism"

There followed the fight for free speech on London's streets. The Metropolitan Police set up a test case at Bell Street, Edgware Road, in July 1886; over twenty mounted constables being stationed in adjoining streets when Mainwaring and the SDF's Jack Williams addressed a Sunday meeting on a regular pitch. The two men were summoned for 'Obstruction', and subsequently committed for trial; the Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, being principal witness for the prosecution at the Middlesex Sessions. Sam defended himself in an unashamedly class context. One of Morris' daughters, May, reported in her father's paper:

...Mainwaring finished with an eloquent, simply worded statement of his position and opinions—"If I were told not to speak in the streets in the future, I do not see how I could keep silent. I am bound to speak my thoughts. I began a hard working life at an early age to help my family ... and I feel that I should be wrong indeed if, thinking that there was the possibility in the future of my children avoiding like hardships, I kept silent and did not do everything in my power to strengthen that possibility."<sup>13</sup>

Aveling was assisting with the translation of *Capital* into English at the time of the South Place lectures. There is no evidence that Mainwaring was fluent in more

than the two British languages and we do not know what he contributed to the introductory meeting. But the sum of these *Commonweal* references suggests a familiarity with, at least, the *Communist Manifesto*. It is possible that older brothers knew it through Julian Harney's *Red Republican* of 1850,<sup>14</sup> and English editions were published in the United States during the early 1870s when Sam was living there.<sup>15</sup> Most likely though, as means of access to its world view, was the tuition offered by German born workingmen. For example, the London *Labour Standard* of 6 August 1881 tells us about Adam Weiler explaining the pamphlet at the Three Doves public house, Berwick Street, Oxford Street. Weiler, a Marylebone carpenter, as a personal friend of Karl Marx—then still to be visited at Hampstead.

The following extracts from the 1861 Census sheets for three Aberdare houses show the family circumstances of Sam's late teens:

<i>16 Pump Row, Robertstown</i>			
David Jenkins	29	Blacksmith	
Jenet Jenkins	28		
Mary Anne Jenkins	4	Scholar	
David Jenkins	2		
Priscilla Jenkins	4m		
<i>17 Pump Row, Robertstown</i>			
David Mainwaring	62	Outside Labourer	
Mary Mainwaring	59	Blacksmith	
Morgan Mainwaring	27	Blacksmith	
Thomas Mainwaring	22	Fitter	
Samuel Mainwaring	19	Blacksmith	
Francis Mainwaring	17		
Anne Mainwaring	13		
<i>66 Ynystwyd Street</i>			
William Mainwaring	37	Fitter	
Ann Mainwaring	36		
Evan Evans	20	Fitter	

← His eldest brother, Will, and his sister who lived next door, Jennet Jenkins, had both been married at Maes-yr-haf (Summerfield). Neath's oldest Independent chapel.

The progression was to Freethought; Sam and Jane Gregory, a customs officer's daughter, marrying at the Cardiff Registry Office in August 1868. Allowing for a settling in period and the courtship, we can say that the young tradesman probably transferred to the growing seaport during the First International's initial (1864-67) phase.<sup>16</sup> And, if his subsequent awareness is anything to go by, that he then or shortly afterwards knew *something* about not only Marx but also Bakunin.<sup>16</sup>

Emigration to the United States would have reinforced any anti-parliamentary inheritance. Following the Civil War, much of proletarian life in that country came to be dominated by the Robber Barons.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the expectations raised at home by a working class vote's election of Nonconformist Henry Richard as one Member for Merthyr Boroughs (which constituency included Aberdare), the American lesson

was that merely representative government presented no barrier to exploitation by Big Business.

The alternative had been vividly expressed by James Smith in *The Pioneer of June 1834*:

Social liberty must precede political liberty ... before the horse is turned out to enjoy freedom in the green meadow he must be unharnessed from the shafts of the wagon. Our position, brethren, is not political and it cannot become political with any benefit to ourselves until we have found means to obtain a greater independent weight in society. This can only be the result of Unions.<sup>18</sup>

Belgian Internationalists were among those who now restated and extended such aspirations. Rudolph Rucker, another of Mainwaring's later London colleagues, makes the Owenite connection in his *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*,<sup>19</sup> and quotes Eugene Hins of Brussels at the 1869 Basle Congress:<sup>20</sup>

...all workers should strive to establish associations for resistance in their various trades ... to the end that the present wage system may be replaced by the federation of free producers. ... councils of the trades and industrial organizations will take the place of the present government, and this representation of labour will do away once and forever with the government of the past.

The Paris Commune of 1871 allied citizenship of a locality to one's producer role. Propaganda secretary Fred Charles wrote in *Commonweal* on 12 May 1888:

The members of the East End branches of the Socialist League, feeling ... in the present position of European industrialism and politics that no one knows what a year may bring forth, have decided to throw themselves more energetically than ever into the spread of our ideas amongst the huge mass of workers living in all degrees of misery and want ... so that when the chance comes again to us ... as it came to our Paris brothers in 1871, we may not fail here in this centre of world Capitalism ...

A month before the Matchgirls Strike,<sup>21</sup> the 2 June issue listed twenty nine open air meetings to be held during the following week across the area from Stamford Hill to Plaistow. Mainwaring was named as an evening speaker at three Hackney pitches—for Sunday at Stonebridge Common, Wednesday at London Fields, and Thursday at Pakington Street; these in addition to Sunday morning at Regents Park and Sunday afternoon at Hyde Park.

We can, then, closely place Sam's views at the time of the 1887 tour: Marxist in the sense that he was committed to class struggle, but anti-parliamentary and for the creation of institutions different from those of the British state. In the latter he had become opposed to the remaining Marx family—Engels and Eleanor, who were advocating the development of an electoral Labour party to stand alongside Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>22</sup> Within the Socialist League, where the majority were of a Mainwaring mind, things came to a head in the month of Charles' article, which was mid-way between the Commune and the 1905 Soviets. On Sam's motion Eleanor's Bloomsbury branch was suspended from membership.<sup>23</sup>

Karl Marx's own belief in something like soviet power is difficult to assess. In *The Civil War in France* his support for the Commune appears to be unequivocal: "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic

emancipation of Labour". But the subsequent attitude of his closest confidante questions the commitment.

James Guillaume, a Swiss Internationalist, and sometime associate of both Bakunin and Kropotkin (who never met), was one who suggested that the original allegiance had been an opportunist thing. In his dispute with Eleanor Marx, Sam Mainwaring was supported by Guillaume's wife, Gerrud Schack, then living at Crawley Road on the north side of Victoria Park and organising the League's Hackney campaign.<sup>24</sup> In August 1888, after the successful outcome of the Bow strike, Annie Besant and her current amour Herbert Burrows, William Morris, his longstanding friend the Oxford mathematician don Charles Faulkner, Schack and Mainwaring were the six outside Socialists invited to a weekend of meetings at Norwich.<sup>25</sup>

Sam Mainwaring died suddenly whilst addressing a meeting at Parliament Hill Fields on 29 September 1907. Like Donna Torr I can speculate outside the life span. In my case, working backwards from the 1937 formation of the Neath Spanish Aid Committee at the Glamorgan Hotel, on the corner of the Old and 'new' Briton Ferry Roads.

Drawing on interviews with surviving Communist and ILP participants, Hywel Francis in *Miners Against Fascism* states that the Committee's 'Popular Front' approach also embraced Anarchists. Among these was undoubtedly Sam Mainwaring junior, then living along the Old Road. He had returned home before his 1917 marriage to become a Briton Ferry steelworker. An American comrade also of Eugene Debs and Emma Goldman, he subsequently brought the latter to speak at Neath on her disillusionment with the Bolsheviks' Russia; lodging the world's best known Libertarian with the Nets—Polish Jews, dentists, and grandparents of Sam and John Silkin.<sup>26</sup>

Born in 1878, Sam Mainwaring junior was the son of Sam's brother Tom. Then a Swansea docks blacksmith and landlord of the Three Mariners pub in its Strand, Tom absconded to Pennsylvania when Sam junior was still a boy.<sup>27</sup> Following Sam Mainwaring's 1891 return from London for a stay of about six years at Swansea, the youngster's political education lay with the uncle. Sam moved to Morris Lane, St. Thomas, above the docks, and founded the Swansea Socialist Society. The group had its own Liberty Hall and also met at a Landore cafe in the Lower Valley.<sup>28</sup>

Landore was one direction from which anarcho-syndicalist ideas could have reached the anthracite mining villages of the upper Swansea and Amman Valleys. By March 1913, a year after publication of *The Miners' Next Step*, the area south of the Black Mountain possessed eight Workers Freedom Groups with a programme which *Freedom* itself considered thoroughly Anarchist.<sup>29</sup> We can enumerate some other contributors. In her autobiography *Living My Life* Emma Goldman says that Glanammann's Jim Colton, who she married,<sup>30</sup> was converted by the Chicago Martyrs executions of 1887.<sup>31</sup> D. R. Owen of Garnant attended the Central Labour College at Oxford when Fred Charles was tutoring there<sup>32</sup>—and helped persuade a wealthy anarchist, George Davison, to buy Ammanford's White House as a discussion centre.<sup>33</sup> Forerunners of the Abercraive Basques had been visited at

Dowlais by Fernando Tarrida del Marmol, Sam Mainwaring's collaborator on *The General Strike* and a former Director of the Polytechnic Academy of Barcelona.<sup>34</sup>

*Freedom* first mentions the Dowlais workers in June 1901, when at the end of an article of French and Spanish Syndicalism by Tarrida there is a note that he had been invited to address South Wales patriots in the August. The September edition indicates that they had come to the Valleys after being victimised for trade union activity in their own country, and continues:

...devoted to trade union principles, and strong in the belief that the workers' first duty is to combine they joined the Workers' Union (there being no organisation of their own trade in Dowlais) ...

The iron workers are paid by the ton, but a great part of their time—for which, of course, they are not paid—is taken up in changing the cylinders, which is done as often as seven times in three days; worse still, they have to attend on Sundays for the purpose from 8 until 1 without pay; and if they don't attend are fined from 5s to 10s. This under the British flag and the Nonconformist conscience, which abhors the "Continental Sunday".

Sam's life bridged that period during which, Professor Gwyn Williams tells us, the Welsh working class lost its memory.<sup>35</sup> The house in Thomas Street, Robertsrow, which was 17 Pump Row seems to merit a plaque. If it gets one and, being in the vicinity, you go to look at where all those big boys slept then also walk around to Salem by the side of the Cynon, and ponder on this 1903 item from Mainwaring's own paper:<sup>36</sup>

...Mabon M.P. said this was the first meeting of miners in South Wales since the death of Lord Salisbury ... He asked them to show their appreciation [of Salisbury] ... by singing the hymn "Jesus, lover of my soul" to the tune "Aberystwyth".  
"Jesus, lover of my soul" ... Would it not have been more appropriate to have sung the first verse of the hymn for which the tune was composed?

"Beth sydd imi yn y byd  
Ond gorthrymder mawr o hyd  
Gelynn ar ol gelynn sydd  
Yn fy nghlwyfo nos a dydd" \*

And ponder also on the fact that his youngest sons Will, born Bermondsey 1876 died Treherbert 1940, and Frank, born Bromley-by-Bow 1881 died Treherbert 1950, became Rhondda colliery smiths.<sup>37</sup>

The lineage of known twentieth century militants may well provide ways of crossing Gwyn Williams' "continents of ignorance".<sup>38</sup>

\*The words are by Morgan Rhys (1716-1779). Mainwaring goes on to give his free translation:

What is there in the world for me  
except great and continual oppression?  
Enemy after enemy wounding  
me both day and night.

## FOOTNOTES

1. I believe that 'Autonomist' is the best word to embrace those historically overlapping strands of thought and action which also include Council Communism. But for readers seeking a general introduction to Bakunin, Kropotkin and the First International (the International Working Men's Association) I suggest George Woodcock, *Anarchism* (London 1975). Follow it up with Stuart Christie and Albert Melzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy* (London 1979). For Council Communism see Richard Gombin, *The Radical Tradition* (London 1978).
2. Mainwaring, then aged forty-five, was accompanied by the younger Frank Kitz, a dyer at William Morris' Merton Abbey Works. For their description of the week long tour see the 27 August and 3 September 1887 numbers of *Commonweal*. The two men travelled down from Paddington on the same train as returning Jubilee *siteddyloddyr*. For the intellectual climate pervading that Albert Hall 'National' see Hywel Telf Edwards, "Victorian Wales Seeks Reinstatement", *Planes*, 52 (August-September 1985).
3. Labour Publishing Company (London, 1923). Mann here clearly contradicts those writers who state that the content of his Syndicalism (as well as its name) derived solely from French (CGT) and American (IWW) sources. The Fleet Street printworker Melzer goes further. In *The Anarchist in London 1925-35* (Sunday, Orléans, 1976) he states that Sam Mainwaring invented the term 'Anarcho-Syndicalist', during the early 1900s. Interviewed by the present writer in 1979, he said that Emma Goldman told him so.
4. The longest running British Anarchist paper.
5. World War II Anarchist publication.
6. The Magonista movement reached its climax in May 1911 when, under the banner of "Land and Liberty" and taking Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread* as their theoretical basis, revolutionary communes were established at Mexicali and Tijuana, Baja California. Sam junior's nephew, Sam Turner of Neath, says that his uncle returned home across the Pacific, and all surviving Neath and Briton Ferry acquaintances remark on phrases like "When I was in Tahiti". Among the testimonies I have been privileged to hear is that of the younger Mainwaring's Old Road neighbour Ivor John, a 'Ferry Christian ILPer, who, refusing to serve during World War I, was stoned at Yelverton when en route for Darinmoor prison. Over tea at his home in 1982 the ninety year old Ivor told me that the anarchist was "never active in our movement" but, in addition to union activities, was greatly involved with the Neath branch of the WEA. A former Resolven headmistress remembered him there as "altogether too advanced for a Swansea University professor".
7. Mainwaring's were among the first of Welsh proletarians: taking their name from a Shropshire man brought to work at Sir Humphrey Mackworth's Neath collieries and copper works in 1705. Sam was born at Mill-End Row, that distance along the 'new' Briton Ferry road. On 30 March 1848, when he was six, an explosion at the Eaglebush drift mine on the hill above killed twenty men and boys including a forty-four year old Solomon Mainwaring. For a description of the remarkable inquest which followed see Harry Green, "The Eaglebush Colliery Explosion 1848" in *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society* (1979). The coroner considered that a charge of manslaughter could have been brought against the colliery owners.
8. For a discussion of Dona Torr's work, and particularly the place of *Tom Mann and His Times* (London, 1956) in Left historiography see Bill Schwarz's article in B. Schwarz *et al.*, (eds.) *Making Histories* (London 1982).
9. The grave is about four miles from the site of Mile End Row, which was immediately south of the present Melincryddan schools.
10. It appears that the majority on the Council may have been unsure of carrying a majority of the SDF's national membership against the jingoistic leadership of H.M. Hyndman. For Mainwaring's view of events see his *Reminiscences of William Morris in Freedom* December 1896 to February 1897. See also E. P. Thompson's *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (Merlin Press, London 1977) and Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx* (Lawrence and Wishart, London 1976).
11. Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltaire de Clayre* (Princeton, 1978) gives information on the tailor Mowbray. See too Thompson, *William Morris*.
12. Mahon, an engineer by trade, was the father of J.L. Mahon who became London District Secretary of the Communist Party. For the older man's correspondence with Engels see Thompson, *William Morris*—particularly the longer edition of 1995.

13. See (the by then weekly) *Commonweal* of 21 August 1886. The trial lasted three days, from 7 to 9 August. Both men were found guilty, fined £20 each (about ten weeks wages for an artisan), and bound over in their own recognisances and one surety for £50 to keep the peace for twelve months. Mainwaring was given until 26 August to pay his fine (which was subscribed to by other Leaguers), Williams, in default, being imprisoned for two months. Jack stood as SDJ; Parliamentary candidate for Northampton in 1906, polling 2, 544 votes. Based on the 1841 Census of Mile End Row, Sam's three oldest brothers, Will, John and David, would have been aged about 27, 24 and 23 in 1850.
14. We know from his *Reminiscences of William Morris* that Sam was in the United States at the time of Dickens' death in 1870, and the 1881 Census of Fairfoot Road, Bromley-by-Bow shows that Sam and Jane's two oldest children Robert and Mary, then aged 11 and 9, were born in America. According to Marx and Engels in their preface to the German edition of 1872, at least three English translations of the *Manifesto* appeared in the States during 1871. See Penguin Books 1967 edition with introduction by A.J.P. Taylor.
15. For the early years of the International, and its reporting in British newspapers such as *The Beehive*, see also Henry Collins and Chimen Abramsky, *Karl Marx and The British Labour Movement* (London 1963). This book is pro-Marx. His protagonist Bakunin's position is encapsulated by Christie and Meltzer as "socialism without liberty means tyranny".
16. For the emergence of Andrew Carnegie, J.D. Rockefeller and others, a good beginning is Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists 1861-1901* (London 1962).
17. Quoted in M. Beer's 1919 *A History of British Socialism* (George Allen and Unwin, London), where he also says of the period 1832 to 1834: "... its characteristic was Syndicalism ... strenuous intellectual efforts were made to emerge from the socialism of natural rights, to make an end to Utopian experiments and to form a conception of history based on class war... in short to accomplish what Karl Marx took in hand ten years later". See too J. Ramsay MacDonald's *Syndicalism* of 1912 (Constable, London), in which he states "... the writings of the Rev. Jabez Ellmaler Smith, the preacher of Universalism, and the friend of Owen, could almost be reproduced by the Industrial Syndicalist Education League and palmed off upon the public as modern work".
18. Republished by Freedom Press, London 1973. I find the word 'Owenite' convenient as a form of shorthand but, as Beer shows, Smith and other syndicalist leaders broke with Owen's own schemes of class co-operation.
19. Following the 1864 Foundation Meeting in London, early congresses of the First International were held at Geneva (1866), Lausanne (1867), Brussels (1868) and Basle (1869).
20. In July 1888, 672 women employed at the Bryant and May match factory, Bow, East London came out on strike after their low wages and bad working conditions had been exposed by Annie Besant, a middle class socialist, in her paper *The Link*. Major concessions were won within a fortnight, after assistance from the London Trades Council.
21. As might be expected, Engels' view of Mainwaring had changed. In letters of December 1884 and May 1887 to Edward Bernstein, the German Social Democrat leader, Sam was counted among, respectively, "the better of the known workers" and "workers with anarchist leanings". See Thompson, *William Morris and Kapp, Eleanor Marx*.
22. Thompson in *William Morris* states that the manuscript of Mainwaring's resolution is in the Nettlau collection at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
23. James Guillaume had been a member of the First International's General Council when a college teacher at Le Locle. Gerrrud Guillaume-Schack was a German countess by birth. Active in the working class women's movement there, her Berlin paper had been closed by the police in 1886. She had stayed at Engels' house on her arrival in Britain—and subsequently became an intimate of Annie Besant. See Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*.
24. *Commonweal* 25 August 1888.
25. One of the Nett daughters married (the later) Lord Silkin, who served in the 1945 Attlee government. See Len Williams, "Emma Goldman—Associations with Neath" in *Transactions of the Neath Antiquarian Society* (1977). Len was at one time secretary of the Neath branch of the WEA, and his widow Bertha advises that he was close to Sam Mainwaring junior.
26. Information from Sam Turner of Neath. Tom Mainwaring's oldest surviving grandson, 1980. He says that the departure followed a row about allowing prostitutes into the pub.
27. See Tom Mann, *Memoirs and the Anarchist paper Liberty*, April 1894.
28. See *Freedom* April 1913. Quoted in John Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse: The Lost History of the British Anarchists* (London 1978).

30. This was a marriage of convenience at the Marelybone Registry Office in 1925, to prevent Emma being deported from Britain. Jim was then a sixty-five year old widower.
31. On the night of 4 May 1886 a bomb was thrown into a group of policemen dispersing a crowd in the Haymarket on Chicago's West Side. The police then fired into the crowd, with the combined result that several of the police and of the crowd were killed; over 200 people being wounded. Though no sound evidence proved their connection with the bomb throwing, a number of Anarchists were indicted and tried for their opinions; four being hanged.
32. After the split from Ruskin College, the Central Labour College remained at Oxford for two years, before moving to London. D.R. Owen, a colliery checkweighman, was present in the second of the Oxford and first of the London years. Fred Charles' main job was then with the Oxford Cooperative Society. See John Atkins, *Neither Crumbs nor Condescension* (London 1981).
33. See T. Brennan, "The White House" in *The Cambridge Review* (1954) and H. Francis, *Miners against Fascism* (London, 1984). Davison also made his Merioneth home available for the founding of Coleg Harlech.
34. For information on Tarrida del Marmol see Avrich, *An American Anarchist* and Gerald Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth* (Cambridge, 1943). He came to London after being held in Barcelona's Montjuich prison during the 'White Terror' of the 1890s.
35. See Gwyn Williams, "Locating a Welsh Working Class: the Frontier Years" in David Smith(ed.), *A People and a Proletariat* (London 1980).
36. *The General Strike* 1 October 1903.
37. Their mother and Sam's widow, Jane died at Treherbert in 1914.
38. I clearly need to learn more about what happened at Neath in the aftermath of the Merthyr Rising; for example, what pressures or inducements made 1840s men willing to work at fire-torn Eaglebush? And what to make of the 1871 Robertstown Census which, with all the boys and older girls gone, shows only a twenty-three year old student Anne at home with her parents?

I am indebted to my cousin Eddie John of Cadoxton for assistance in locating Dillys Richards of Neath (Sam junior's daughter); and to Nancy Bird (formerly Rees) of Neath for subsequently seeking out Sam Turner.

## From: The Commonweal, 27 August 1887

### SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH WALES

On Saturday 13th inst., laden with literature, we left London for Cardiff, in a train overcrowded with Welsh folk returning from the Eisteddfod. We passed the night in Cardiff, and started the next morning by first train to Pontypridd. We experienced many delays and misdirections before meeting the friends expecting us there, and found our luggage, consisting of an enormous sack filled with literature and bag ditto, terrible encumbrances. After receiving a hearty Welsh welcome from friends met at last, we proceeded to our business by holding the first meeting on the Rocking Stone. This stone stands in the centre of a depression in the soil, and is surrounded with a circle of other smaller unheven stones fixed in the ground. They are evidently Druidical remains. The oscillatory motion of the centre stone gives it its name. From this bold situation, overlooking the whole of the valley and town beneath, and in the midst of mountains, we began our work—a work, we believe, that will be crowned with lasting success—in these valleys. Our audience poured towards us from all points. They listened attentively to our exposition of Socialism, and cheered us to the echo. The only opposition came from a local schoolmaster, a

dogmatic sort of pedagogue, whose ire was aroused by Mainwaring's outspoken way of calling thieves thieves. The audience would not tolerate his interruptions, and at the conclusion of the meeting a workman stepped forward and suggested that we should call for a show of hands as to whether the workers present agreed with us or not. The show of hands was unanimously in our favour.

At the afternoon meeting the stone and its vicinity was alive with people awaiting us. A splendid meeting was held, our pedagogue again interrupting with no success, the meeting enthusiastically in our favour. The *Western Daily Mail* showed the importance of the gathering by a virulent and scurrilous report of the proceedings.

We left Pontypridd amidst expressions of goodwill and promises of help, and trudged along the Rhondda Valley to Tylors Town, calling at Coedcae and other collieries on our road to distribute leaflets. At Tylors Town we held a good meeting amongst the colliers, only marred by the interference of a burly boss contractor who stuck up for his queen, he did. We now know that he has recently had a house built for himself, at an expense of some £2,000, which explains his loyalty.

From Tylors Town up and over the mountains by narrow and precipitous paths, where a false step meant a fall of fifty or sixty feet, with the pulsing gasps of the engines and whirring of the windlasses of the collieries in the valleys below resounding around us, and past colliers' homes that we shall describe later on, we walked into Aberdare. Here we abandoned the projected meeting in order to look over the ground and secure the names and assistance of local men towards forming a branch. We got a hearty reception and promises of help, and agreed to hold our meeting on our return from Merthyr, where we went the same evening. We spent Wednesday in going over the Welsh Inferno, Dowlais Iron Works, now partially closed through want of water. This gigantic place employs some 9,000 "hands," men, boys, and girls. Iron and coal mining, engineering, and brickmaking constituted the chief industries carried on. In gloomy dens, deprived of daylight, men were washing coal by a Belgian process to fit it for use. Truly, if noise, grime, filth, steam, smoke, and mountains of rubbish are marks of progress, then is Dowlais a progressive place. There is a plentiful crop of cripples made by all this progress, and they are kindly allowed to work as labourers about the works at wages varying from 15s. to 18s. per week. Shorn of a leg or an arm, they were painfully fulfilling their part in "progress."

In Merthyr at night we held a splendid meeting, a forest of hands being held up in our favour; and having secured a meeting-place for a branch, we held a second meeting on Thursday. A large crowd was present, amongst which were some local bigwigs, a magistrate and justice of the peace, but no opposition was offered at the meeting indoors. We secured some names for a branch, and have made agents for *Commonweal*.

On Friday we returned to Aberdare, and held a great meeting in the Boot Square. Having secured agents for *Commonweal* and distributed a vast amount of literature, we proceeded to Pontypridd on our way home. On Sunday morning at eleven o'clock we had a good meeting at the Rocking Stone, and another at two o'clock. This last was an immense gathering. At its conclusion a branch was formed

and steps taken towards securing a meeting place and forwarding the movement in the neighbourhood. In our next report we will give an account of the workers of South Wales and the conditions under which they live.

S. Mainwaring and F. Kitz.