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Glamorgan, 1750-1830: A Study in Social and Cultural Change

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A THESIS

in

The Department

of

History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Canada

September, 1976

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ABSTRACT

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This is a local historical analysis of Glamorganshire,Wales, during the early modern period. Research material has been drawn almost entirely from secondary sources in an effort to completely exhaust published and known historical documents and written works.

Glamorgan has been associated with as many known historical values as possible in an effort to determine the exact position of the county in relation to those problems which have been raised throughout the course of British historiography of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Emphasis has been placed upon those aspects of the county's history which are most relevant to the issues and questions raised in current British historiography. An effort has been made to clarify the outstanding differences between Welsh historians and British historians in general.

The social and cultural life of Glamorgan has been analysed against the geography and economy of South Wales,especially those factors relating to the Industrial Revolution and its repercussions upon society and culture.

Collective behaviour has been employed as a mechanism whereby social and cultural variables can be associated in a manner conducive to the study of human personality during a period of intense social and cultural upheaval.

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Chapter I

Introduction

It is beyond question that the history of Glamorganshire was characterized by rapid and monumental change during the period under analysis. Between 1750 and 1830 all facets of the county's economy, society and cultural life were transformed due to the effects of the Industrial Revolution. By 1830 Glamorgan was the most heavily industrialized, urbanized and populous county in Wales and the centre of the rapidly expanding economy of the southern coalfield. Glamorgan was emerging as one of the major industrial areas of Great Britain.

It is my intention in this essay to concentrate on the effects of the Industrial Revolution upon the social and cultural history of Glamorgan. An essay of this tenor radically departs from many traditional views concerning Welsh history. Until the middle of the twentieth century it was commonly believed that Welsh history *per se* mysteriously ended with the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284 or with the Act of Union in 1536. In fact, Welsh historians have concentrated their efforts in unravelling the causes and effects of these two events. Other historians, while recognizing the fact that Welsh history does indeed exist, have considered Welsh historical development as being totally separate from the rest of Britain and so completely unique that integration and comparison are impossible.

In a recent article, Glanmor Williams has admirably

stressed the importance of abandoning these antiquated concepts:

> A...change of emphasis which appears... necessary is to abandon the traditional division of Welsh history into a medieval and a modern period, with the watershed at the Act of Union in 1536. The major division which can best be justified is one between Wales before the Industrial Revolution and Wales since...First, because the communities in which most Welsh people now live have been created by and since the Industrial Revolution... Finally, in terms of the human society in general and of the tiny Welsh fragment in particular, the Industrial Revolution is one of the two or three basic changes in the nature of human existence.[1]

Upon occasion, the traditional intellectual occupations of Welsh historians have not been treated in so gentle a manner. Peter R. Roberts, in an article concerning the Act of Union and its consequences to the present day, strongly rebuffs the residue of antiquated views expressed in Welsh historiography:

> For most Welshmen the history of modern Wales begins, if not with the Methodist Revival and the Industrial Revolution, then certainly with the events of Henry VIII's reign, the Reformation and the 'Union of England and Wales': This orthodoxy is still reflected in accounts of the Welsh past, persistant proof it seems against the changing styles of historical interpretation.[2]

The period presently under analysis has not been

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[1] Glanmor Williams, "Local and National History in Wales", Welsh History Review, V (1970-71), 61.

[2] Peter R. Roberts, "The 'Act of Union' in Welsh History", Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, I (1974), 49.

ignored by the economic historians,but there have been few attempts to study the social and cultural ramifications of the Industrial Revolution. The inevitably infers another departure from seemingly rooted historiographical traditionalism:

> For earlier centuries the most interesting recurrent question is what happens to a small people living side by side with a larger neighbour,economically and politically more powerful,to whose sovereignty it gradually becomes subjected? After the coming of industrial change we have to ask what happens to this same people,hitherto living in an isolated and rather static pastoral society, when it is subjected to a set of economic and social changes unparalled in their force and speed?[3]

A central theme in this essay is the association of Glamorgan with problems raised in British historiography in general and Welsh in particular. In essence,this refers to the isolation and analysis of the major social and cultural consequences of industrial change. It is ridiculous,however, to assume a twin likeness between localities which have experienced a similiar historical phenomena such as the Industrial Revolution:it is equally absurd to assume a total lack of comparability. R.H.Tawney has written that "one must not dogmatise about changes which took place at very different degrees of speed in different parts of the country".[4] A father of modern local historical research,

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[3]Glanmor Williams,"Local and National History in Wales",Welsh History Review,V(1970-71),64.

[4]R.H.Tawney,The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century (New York:Harper & Row,2nd ed.,1967),p.208.

W.G.Hoskins, criticizes the tendency towards generalization and disregard of local variation: "every community is a unique organism in some ways, with its own peculiar flavour and individuality."[5]

Local historical research must therefore be geared to the problems which have attracted the attention of historians writing at the national level and be comparative in the sense that wider theories and developments can be tested at the local level. Too often, local studies have been sunk in the mire of bland chronology or detailed explanations of specific events and developments. In effect, much of local historiography is antiquarian in nature and "still fossilised in the fact-collecting stage."[6]

It is a paramount concern in this essay to isolate major historical problems and analyse them in terms of the local milieu. For example, if one considers an historical development as vague as the Agricultural Revolution, it is preposterous not to note the variations between regions of arable and pastoral husbandry, vale and highland, soil types and climatic factors. Moreover, a series of variables relate to change in the agricultural community: markets, labour, transportation, communications, land tenure and the diffusion of technology. Obviously, if the Norfolk four-course system

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[5] W.G.Hoskins, The Midland Peasant (London: MacMillan, 1959), p.XIX.

[6] W.G.Hoskins, English Local History: The Past and the Future (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), pp.4, 10.

of intensive agriculture is best suited to the English Midlands, it cannot be necessarily recommended for the high-land and peripheral regions of Glamorgan. On the other hand, new and improved agricultural techniques were adopted in areas which were reflective of the new husbandry.

The above example of the Agricultural Revolution illustrates to a large extent the general course of this essay. In fact, the variety of historical variables and wide range of opportunity for comparative studies have been major factors in the choice of Glamorgan as a county for analysis. Due to the high degree of diversification within Glamorgan, however, a special emphasis will be placed upon comparisons between the various sub-regions of the county. This necessitates a strongly typological approach.

The establishment of typologies has proven to be of inestimable value in both comparative and local studies. Historians such as Eric Kerridge, Joan Thirsk and Alan Everitt have succeeded in presenting many general hypotheses in their respective work concerning farming regions, distribution of rural industries and patterns of rural dissent. I propose in this essay to rely heavily upon patterns of distribution in order to arrive at basic hypotheses concerning industry, agriculture, religious dissent, education, language and culture.

During the period under analysis Glamorgan was emerging from a predominently rural agricultural milieu into an urban industrial complex. This transitional development is

the focus of the discussion concerning the cultural life of the county. The first part of this analysis will be a general county topography followed by a discussion of the agricultural, pre-industrial and industrial economic structures. After the nature of the Industrial Revolution has been established, in addition to the immediate consequences for trade, commerce and agriculture, attention will be given to the process of industrialization and those aspects which bear relevance to social change in Glamorgan: transportation, communications, demography, urbanization and the emergence of a working class.

The problem of popular culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is difficult to explore. Moreover, to a large extent, Glamorgan is a hub between Wales and England, and is characterized by a great diversity of social and cultural variables. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a series of religious and educational movements emerged which helped to transform an ancient bardic and essentially oral popular culture into one of literacy. The period between 1750 and 1830, however, witnessed the destruction of the isolation which had fostered and protected the existence of Welsh culture for generations, a process which was largely the result of the Industrial Revolution. This analysis of cultural change will focus upon education, religion, literary forms, language and cultural institutions. A special emphasis will be placed upon the process of Anglicization.

An essay of this breadth must have a specific focus, a fulcrum upon which social and cultural change can be balanced, not as equals or opposites, but as mutually dependent historical variables. It is a prime concern in this essay to relate social and cultural variables in a manner conducive to the study of human behaviour. For this reason, collective behaviour has been chosen as the conclusive episode.

Glamorgan experienced a drastic revolution in political life between 1750 and 1830. Political domination by the landed gentry was eroded by the power of the county's new industrial capitalist elite, but a radical class of merchants and shopkeepers emerged which became increasingly influential, especially in the new industrial complex of Merthyr Tudful, later to become a parliamentary borough with the Reform Bill of 1832.

The events occurring in Merthyr Tudful between the years 1830 and 1835 are the conclusion of this essay and exemplify both the course of collective behaviour and radical politics during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It is proposed to arrive at this apex via two means: a study of the emergence of radical ideology, and an intensive analysis of collective behaviour from 1793 to the strike of 1843. This analysis of collective behaviour will rest upon the assumption that popular protest followed a path from traditional peasant rioting, to strikes and momentary working class organization, and finally to trade unionism and popular political ideology. Merthyr Tudful, the epitome

of industrial South Wales,has been utilized as a convenient microcosm to demonstrate the full consequences of the intense social and cultural changes which engulfed Glamorgan during the period under study.

Chapter II

The Land of Morgan

Adaptation to the blessings and inconveniences of nature has placed limitations upon human activity and much of man's acheivement has been based upon the simple maxim of living in concert with his physical environment. An appreciation of this fact is essential to understanding the social,economic and cultural development of Glamorgan.

Glamorgan covers an area of 813 square miles. The distance from Monmouth to Carmarthen is 53 miles and between the Bristol Channel and Brecknock,29. A western maritime climate predominates,giving the county a yearly average temperature of 50° (62° in summer and 38° in winter) and a mean rainfall of 50 inches.[7] This mild climate is most characteristic of the southern coastal regions. In the highlands there are more mornings with snow covered ground, colder temperatures and fewer hours of sunshine.[8]

Glamorgan is divided into three basic geographic sectors:the Vale of Glamorgan,Gower Peninsula and the northern highlands. The Vales of Glamorgan and Gower are classified as lowland areas,but are really coastal plateaux which rise from two to three hundred feet above sea level.[9]

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[7] C.J.O.Evans,Glamorgan:Its History and Topography (Cardiff:William Lewis,2nd ed.,1944),pp.3,12-13.

[8] E.G.Bowen,ed.,Wales:A Physical,Historical and Regional Geography (London:Methuen,1957),pp.83,87-9.

[9] S.W.Rider and A.E.Trueman,South Wales:A Physical and Economic Geography (London:Methuen,1929),pp.16,28.

Underlain with lias limestone and shale, the soil is superb for pasture and tillage, being a light rich loam where a high content of clay is neutralized by a high lime status.[10] The vales are free from the heavy soils produced by boulder clay, so prevalent in the highlands.[11]

In the highlands the soil is sandy and dry due to the underlying sandstone of the Pennant Series and scattered with damp peaty patches.[12] This region is suitable for the rearing of sheep and the thin yellow-brown loam, lacking in chemical nutrients, is of inferior agricultural value.[13] In the lower levels the soil is more fertile due to the presence of boulder clay and gravel. Where glacial deposits have accumulated, the soil is capable of supporting fair agricultural pursuits.[14] Pastoral farming is the mainstay of this region.

The three basic subdivisions of Glamorgan are not rigid and considerable variations mark the countryside. As there is a large area which spans the gap between the strict definition of highland and vale, the vales are separated into intermediate sectors loosely referred to as the Border Vales. Those areas which have characteristics common only to lowland

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[10] C.J.O.Evans, Glamorgan, p.26; E.G.Bowen, Wales, p.407.

[11] Margaret Davies, "Field Patterns in the Vale of Glamorgan", Cardiff Naturalist's Society, LXXXIV (1955-56), 55.

[12] C.J.O.Evans, Glamorgan, p.26; E.G.Bowen, Wales, p.359.

[13] E.G.Bowen, Wales, p.359.

[14] C.J.O.Evans, Glamorgan, p.26; E.G.Bowen, Wales, p.359.

regions are entitled the Vales Proper.[15] For example, in the Border Vales areas surrounding Bridgend and Kenfig, glacial deposits have resulted in the presence of heavy boulder clay and drift gravel. In Gower, the soil deteriorates from east to west and from north to south, becoming heavier with a lower lime content and underlain with a less desirable base of carboniferous limestone.[16] To conclude, the Border Vales are plagued by deficiencies akin to highland areas and act as a kind of buffer between the Vales Proper and the highlands. They are regions where contrasting physical features loose their rigidity and merge into a more varied landscape.

Lying between mountains and the sea, Glamorgan is spanned by numerous rivers whose numbers and swiftness rendered them adaptable to the water wheel and driving the blast for furnaces. Although none of these rivers are navigable far beyond the coast, dock facilities and improved communications networks have resulted in the growth of large ports like Cardiff and Swansea. Glamorgan possesses the largest towns in Wales due to massive industrial development and the fact that its ports have been conveniently

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[15] Other terms are also employed to denote specific areas in the county. West Glamorgan refers essentially to the land west of the River Ogwr. The northern highlands are also entitled the Northern Outcrop or the Coalfield. Whenever the "Vale" is mentioned, unless otherwise noted, the Vale of Glamorgan is intended.

[16] C.J.O. Evans, Glamorgan, p.26; E.G. Bowen, Wales, p.424.

located for both British and overseas markets.

Mineral wealth is Glamorgan's greatest natural gift. From the late sixteenth century,rich forests and a plentiful water supply attracted entrepreneurs,but the heavy industrial development of the eighteenth century was founded upon the localization of ironstone,coal and limestone to provide flux for furnaces and building materials.[17]

The localization of industrial materials have divided the county as much as soil types and topography. West Glamorgan has been noted primarily as a non-ferrous metallurgical centre where copper,brass,lead,zinc and tinplate have dominated the economy. Ideally located for the shipment of ores from Cornwall and Anglesey,the west became a mecca for smelting and refining. The ability of West Glamorgan to maintain its industrial character is primarily due to its wealth of fuel supplies. For example,until the establishment of the Siemans-Martin process in the late nineteenth century,nearby wooded areas provided the necessary charcoal for tinplate steel;but when coal replaced charcoal,local supplies of anthracite were mined in abundance.[18]

The expansion of the iron industry in the eastern section of the coalfield did not spread beyond the Vale of

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[17] J.F.Rees,Studies in Welsh History (Cardiff: University of Wales Press,2nd ed.,1965),p.132.

[18] Allan Birch,The Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry (London:Cass,1967),p.137.

Neath. At the head of the Vale the steam and bituminous coals, suitable for coking, are replaced by the anthracites of the western coal basin, which burn to ash. Moreover, the deposits of ironstone become progressively thinner towards the west.[19] In the east lies the richest ironstone and the best coal seams for the manufacture of coke. By the end of the period under analysis the variety of coals meant that the county could supply every grade for home and industry. Thus, the sparsely inhabited valleys of the Northern Outcrop developed into congested centres of population and industry, outstripping the Vale of Glamorgan, "The Garden of Wales", as the major source of wealth and prosperity.

Lack of homogeneity is also revealed in social and cultural variations. In the broydd (lowlands) such as the Vale of Glamorgan, the land was accessible to invasion from the east. There the Normans established their castles and, later, their towns as strategic points in order to maintain some degree of control over the countryside. In the wake of the Normans remained the manorial system with its open fields, nucleated villages, feudal tenures and English field terminology.[20] The broydd have thus become nuclei of English influence upon settlement patterns, the holding of

[19] F.J.North, Coal and the Coalfields of Wales (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1926), p.137.

[20] Margaret Davies, "The Open Fields of Laugharne", Geography, XL, Part III (July, 1955), 169-70; Rhosili Open Fields and Other Related South Wales Field Patterns", Agricultural History Review, IV (1950), 86-7.

property, language and customs. This was made stronger with the trickle of settlers from across the Bristol Channel and nearby English borderlands.

The blaenau (highlands) on the other hand, are those areas where alien influence has been weakest. Characteristics of the manorial economy such as the growing of wheat and arable husbandry were prohibited by the dearth of suitable geological requirements. Pastoralism remained supreme and hamlets, single farmsteads, and traditional laws, customs and language retained their vitality.[21] Legally, the broydd and blaenau existed as different nations, referred to as "Welshries" and "Englishries", each with its own peculiar insularity.[22] By the modern period these terms had long lost their legal status, but the physical characteristics of settlement patterns, agriculture, language and culture remained.

Sharp lines of demarcation cannot be drawn between the broydd and blaenau. As in the case of crops and soil types the Border Vale looms as a large region which defies accurate definition. The Vales of Glamorgan and Gower appear as enclaves that have been transplanted from England,

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[21] Margaret Davies, "Rhosili Open Fields and Other Related South Wales Field Patterns", Agricultural History Review, IV (1950), 86-7.

[22] Frank V. Emery, "The Farming Regions of Wales" in The Agrarian History of England and Wales, IV, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp.114, 150-2.

while their individuality prevents them from merging into larger areas. The same is true of the blaenau which cannot penetrate economically or culturally the stability of the broydd.

The Border Vale may be considered "an area of overspill from Blaenau Morgannwg" where opposing forces have been modified or rejected according to circumstance. Movements of people from the northern highland areas saturated parts of peripheral vale land to the point that they increased the dominance of Welsh law,custom,language and economic structure akin to the blaenau. The broydd,however, remained quite insular and stable. Movements of people from the blaenau failed to penetrate the nucleated villages and vale market towns.[23] Much of the extreme southern coastal region of Glamorgan has had stronger connections with the West Country than with the rest of Wales.

West Glamorgan is not traditionally associated with either Bro or Blaenau Morgannwg. Excluding the Vale Proper of Gower,it is in reality a part of west Wales and more a sector of Carmarthenshire. Due to the Act of Union in 1536 seignories of Gower and Kilvey were neatly affixed to the new shire of Glamorgan as a matter of administrative convenience to the new Lord of Glamorgan. By the samo act Glamorgan spans two dioceses,with the west in St.David's and

[23] E.G.Bowen,Wales,pp.401,409,411-12.

the remainder of the county in Llandaff.[24] Glamorgan's share of west Wales did little to alter the nature of the county during the sixteenth century, but later the Border Vale characteristics of the west strengthened the percentage ratio of Welsh language and customs. There is no point at which West Glamorgan begins and ends. The Vale of Glamorgan proper and West Glamorgan do not divide at Swansea Bay according to the ancient borders, but around the Ogwr River. West of the Ogwr, people, language and customs become increasingly Welsh.[25]

Glamorgan's diversity can be noted in smaller units such as the Cardiff Plain, the Vale of Cowbridge and the Vale of Ogwr, but the larger delineations which have been discussed represent the major geographic factors which have influenced the course of Welsh historical geography. Diversity is not to be considered an unnecessary complication, but an advantage in the employment of comparative analysis. Glamorgan is thus a microcosm, a curious combination of Wales and England, a vantage point to study the "natural disregard of people concerning the rigidities of nature and the movements of men and their changing cultures."[26]

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[24] William Rees, An Historical Atlas of Wales (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p.54.

[25] E.G. Bowen, Wales, p.410.

[26] David Thomas, "Agricultural Changes in the Welsh Borderland: A Study in Cultural Diffusion at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century" in Geographical Interpretations of Historical Sources, ed. Alan R.H. Baker, John D. Hamshere and John Langton (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p.211.

Chapter III

The Agricultural Economy

In the eighteenth century agriculture dominated the economic life of Glamorgan. Contemporary accounts and present day historians all agree that agricultural technique was primitive and the land abused and undeveloped. The agricultural economy languished until the first rumblings of the Industrial Revolution,intensification of population and the diffusion of technology from more advanced areas of Britain. New markets emerging in the county and increased demand for certain commodities provided the initiative for the adoption of new methods of production and cropping practices.

In order to discuss changes in the agricultural economy it is necessary to indicate farming regions and denote their basic characteristics. The Vale of Glamorgan was devoted primarily to wheat and dairy production. Sheep,lush hay and pasture,and barley flourished,but where the soil was sandy, for example around Neath,hardier grains such as oats and [illegible] were common. In Gower barley was the major cereal crop,but rye,great oats,peas and vetches prospered. Gower specialized in the production of malting barley and milling wheat,and the rearing of sheep and beef cattle.[27] Proximity to peripheral

[27] Frank V. Emery,"The Farming Regions of Wales" in The Agrarian History of England and Wales,IV,ed. Joan Thirsk,pp.117-18.

highland areas usually indicated the dominance of mixed farming. Wheat generally declined in a northerly direction, giving way to a dominantly pastoral economy in the upland regions of the county.[28]

The ability to grow wheat marks the geographical limit of arable husbandry and of the nucleated settlements which invariably accompany it. Two examples of compact villages well within the highland zone serve to illustrate this conclusion. Llangynwyd is located on a small plateau in the middle of a widened valley and Llanharry is situated on an outcrop of limestone which projects through glacial drift: both villages are suitable for the growing of wheat. In effect, the difference between nucleated villages and a scattered countryside was purely economic, with meadows, pastures and wastes pivoting around the growing of wheat.[29]

In the _blaenau_ people lived in scattered farmsteads and specialized in the rearing of sheep, cattle and horses. The uplands were characterized by large grazing areas, but near the homesteads there were small arable fields in which oats, potatoes and beans were cultivated. Sheep dominated the upland plateaux and livestock grazed on narrow tongues of

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[28]Moelwyn Williams, "Some Aspects of the Economic and Social Life of the Southern Regions of Glamorgan, 1600-1800", _Morgannwg_, III (1959), 23; Frank V. Emery, "The Farming Regions of Wales" in _The Agrarian History of England and Wales_, IV, ed. Joan Thirsk, p. 137.

[29]H.J. Randall, _The Vale of Glamorgan_ (Newport: R.H. John Ltd., 1961), pp. 27, 37. See Plates I, II and III.

pasture projecting southwards.[30]

The Rhondda Valleys were typical of upland Wales. Farmers obtained their livelihood mainly from the rearing of sheep and cattle. As there was little meadow land and much of the hillsides were forested, arable farming was limited to valley floors and hillside terraces. Sufficient crops were produced for domestic use and some wheat was cultivated in the alluvial flats of the Rhondda Fawr. As most farms were situated in the river valleys, cereals were grown mainly on terraces, especially on hillsides facing southwards and having lighter soil.[31]

In the Pontardawe region, spanning the vales of Neath and Tawe, conditions were similiar to the Rhonddas. Except in narrow river valleys the population was scattered and as the rainfall of sixty inches per year was unsuitable for the cultivation of wheat, large areas were allotted for grazing. In the more favoured regions wheat and hay were grown, but grass, oats, barley, beans and potatoes were the most common crops.[32]

Field patterns emphasize the relationship between economic structure and settlement patterns. In the <u>blaenau</u>

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[30] E.G.Bowen, <u>Wales</u>, p.372.

[31] E.D.Lewis, <u>The Rhondda Valleys</u> (London:Phoenix House, 1959), pp.18-20.

[32] John Henry Davies, <u>History of Pontardawe and District</u> (Llandybie:Christopher Davies, 1967), pp.26-7.

fields were not ribbon-shaped as in the <u>broydd</u>, but square due to the concentration of arable plots around the homestead to form a compact self-contained unit and the convenience of ploughing in opposite directions. The manor of Newton Nottage, spanning the Border Vale and the Vale Proper, illustrates the ties between field and settlement patterns. Small strip fields persisted on the level land near Newton Down, but at the foot of the Down they cease and are replaced by irregular fields without trace of strips. With extended distance from Newton Down, scattered farmsteads increasingly dominated the landscape.[33]

Farms in Glamorgan were generally small and the smallholding, or <u>tyddynnod</u>, was typical. In the Vale of Glamorgan these farms averaged between thirty and fifty acres and were worked mainly by the farmer and his family, supplying wheat, butter and cheese to local markets.[34] Farms were invariably larger in the highlands due to the extensive tracts employed for grazing purposes. Conditions of life, however, were less amenable in the highland regions and the farmer paid his rent from the sale of his cattle and by obtaining meagre amounts of cash from the marketing of dairy produce. With the exception of the extreme southern coastal regions of the county and the eastern plains around Cardiff and Cowbridge,

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[33] H.J. Randall, <u>The Vale of Glamorgan</u>, pp.62-3.

[34] Moelwyn Williams, "Some Aspects of the Economic and Social Life of the Southern Regions of Glamorgan, 1600-1800", <u>Morgannwg</u>, III (1959), 23-4.

mixed farming was the bulwark of the agricultural economy and was fostered by landholding patterns. Especially in the marginal regions it was common for the farmland to be dispersed. Some land could lie on the coastal plain or the river valleys, while part of the farm existed on nearby hills. Others, less favourably disposed, were spread on the sides of hills and fringes of upland moors.[35]

Investigation of crop and animal husbandry is severely hampered by the fact that tours and travels are absent between the writings of Daniel Defoe in 1720 and Arthur Young in 1768. The first hints of agricultural improvement in Wales occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century. Inflated prices during the Seven Year's War stimulated the adoption of the more advanced methods of English agriculture and estates and mansions were improved from the proceeds of rising rents and the increased availability of capital.[36] It is not clear, however, whether or not the rise in rents can be taken as proof of general prosperity, despite the fact that the concomitant rise in the price of certain commodities could have been beneficial to many farmers.[37]

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[35] A.H.John, The Industrial Development of South Wales (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950), p.4.

[36] Sir Leonard Twiston Davies and Averyl Edwards, Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century (London: Country Life Ltd., 1939), p.1; A.H.John, "The Course of Agricultural Change, 1660-1760" in Studies in the Industrial Revolution, ed. L.S.Pressnell (London: Athlone Press, 1960), pp.143, 153-4.

[37] A.H.John's mention of rising rents fails to assess the relevence of mineral rents. In fact, the most advanced estates existed in the environs of Swansea and Neath, the only industrial area of note in the mid-eighteenth century.

During the years between 1745 and 1757 English livestock was depleted by a series of cattle plagues and the demand for new stock increased. Thus, the stock-breeding areas of the highland and peripheral regions received a strong economic advantage. The demand for dairy products in England was correspondingly high as well. One writer in 1770, John Dove, wondered at the fate of English farmers "if there had been no Scotch or Welch cattle."[38]

As Glamorgan was ideally suited for stock-breeding and export markets depended largely upon meat, wool and dairy produce, it is logical that agricultural improvement should occur first in the stock-breeding sector of the economy. Animal husbandry within the county received excellent commendations from contemporaries. The small native breed of Welsh cattle were superb for fattening on barren or "middling" land, but as few were fatted before market, breeding received prime attention. Red Glamorgans were prized as an all round breed and were large beasts, providing carcasses ranging from 640 to 720 pounds.[39] Sheep were essential to the rural

[38] A.H.John, "The Course of Agricultural Change, 1660-1760" in Studies in the Industrial Revolution, ed., L.S. Pressnell, p.145; Charles F. Mullett, "The Cattle Distemper in Mid-Eighteenth Century England", Agricultural History, XX, No. 3 (1946), 144-5; G.E.Fussell, "The Size of English Cattle in the Eighteenth Century", Agricultural History, II, No.4 (1929), 179.

[39] G.E.Fussell, "Animal Husbandry in Eighteenth Century England", Agricultural History, II, No.2 (1938), 98, 115; "The Size of English Cattle in the Eighteenth Century", Agricultural History, II, No.4 (1929), 163-4.

economy. New breeds such as Shropshire and Leicester were introduced into the lowlands in order to supply the demand for wool and the Welsh mountain sheep,smaller in size but excellent for mutton,provided the raw material for the flannel industry.[40] But concentration upon animal breeding also had some detrimental effects upon agriculture in Glamorgan. Easy access to wooded areas by highland farmers for grazing purposes checked forest regeneration,hence eliminating an important element in their income. As early as 1600 the demand for charcoal had turned parts of north Glamorgan into "a fair and large sheep leaze."[41]

If new crops and technological improvements were introduced in the middle of the eighteenth century,they did little to alter the dominance of animal husbandry. A better balance was not obtained between crop and animal husbandry and despite the small exports of grain to Bristol,arable farming was geared to domestic consumption. Only stock and dairy produce seem to have been affected by external markets. The smallness of Glamorgan's farms and traditional and underdeveloped market economy were detrimental to large scale innovation in agricultural production. Only substantial farmers could utilize the Norfolk System,"a system of

[40] G.E.Fussell,"Animal Husbandry in Eighteenth Century England",Agricultural History,II,No.3 (1937),190-4, 205.

[41] Frank V. Emery,Wales (London:Longman's and Green, 1969),pp.72,78-9.

intensive agriculture which required substantial capital investment",and which was designed to increase the net produce of land already under cultivation.[42] In sum,there was as yet no stimulus offered to the agricultural community towards technological innovation and increased production in the arable sector.

The arable sector of the agricultural economy remained stagmant. When Arthur Young travelled through the Vale of Glamorgan he remarked that "About Cowbridge and Bridgend... the husbandry is the most imperfect I ever met with;and totally contrary to the most common ideas in more informed counties." He was appalled at farmers being so "extravagantly stupid" as to keep between two and four hundred sheep without folding them,at finding light soil without evidence of turnip husbandry,at his discovering excellent potatoes and carrots being grown in gardens but absent from the fields and by the heretical practice of feeding hogs with clover.[43] Although clover had been introduced in the Vales of Glamorgan and Gower as early as 1700 and trefoil,ryegrass and sansoin appeared about the middle of the century,they were still uncommon in 1768. Beans,peas and vetches were in

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[42] A.H.John,"The Course of Agricultural Change,1660-1760" in Studies in the Industrial Revolution,ed. L.S. Pressnell,p.132.

[43] Arthur Young,A Six Weeks Tour Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales (London:W. Nicholl,1768),pp. 123-5.

general use,but were not part of any widespread system.[44]

Agricultural implements and cropping practices were traditional and showed little evidence of the more advanced methods of English technology. Glamorgan farmers employed lime indiscriminately on all types of soil at the rate of four to five hundred bushels per acre,seldom made use of fallows,and persisted in using heavy ploughs drawn by oxen instead of the lighter horse-drawn ploughs. Paring and burning were widespread,but burnbreaking,or the burning of vegetation before ploughing,was just coming into vogue.[45] Numerous rotations were practiced,but the most common was to simply exhaust the soil with wheat several tears in succession and then turn cattle loose on the fields to renew them with manure.[46] Better farmers were said to exhaust the soil by growing wheat,barley and clover in succession,while Arthur Young noticed the larger farmers using rotations of wheat and barley,with oats,peas,beans,or fallow:the usual course of rotation was four years.[47] Young

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[44] Frank V.Emery,"The Farming Regions of Wales" in The Agrarian History of England and Wales,IV,ed. Joan Thirsk,p.159;G.E.Fussell and Constance Goodman,"Crop Husbandry in Eighteenth Century England,Part II", Agricultural History,XVI,No.1 (1942),50.

[45] G.E.Fussell,"Science and Practise in British Agriculture",Agricultural History,43,No.1 (1969),10.

[46] David Williams,A History of Modern Wales (London: John Murray,2nd ed.,1969),p.18.

[47] G.E.Fussell and Constance Goodman,"Crop Husbandry in Eighteenth Century England,Part II",Agricultural History, XVI,No.1 (1942),50;Arthur Young,A Six Weeks Tour,pp.124-5.

also commented upon the lack of ploughing for most crops and the fact that beans were never hoed. He was shocked at the low yields per acre:25-30 bushels for wheat,25 for barley and 15 for beans. His major suggestion was the use of carrots and turnips in rotation and the laying down of sansoin with oats.[48]

The Board of Agriculture reports compiled by Fox in 1794 and 1796 were not so drastic as Arthur Young's.[49] His major complaint was that there was a shortage of wheat because of the large amount of land afforded to pasture,but his opinion of livestock was high:"I feel no scruple in declaring that the native good qualities of each species,is such as to need no aid beyond what the county affords." Unlike Young,Fox praised the expeditious use of rotations "conducted in many instances with much credit to the agriculturalist",but although beans,peas and vetches were grown as "ameliorating crops alternatively with grain",fallowing, little practiced,was judged to be soon bypassed in favour of

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[48] Arthur Young, A Six Weeks Tour,pp.124,128. His suggested rotations were 1.turnips 2.barley 3.clover 4. wheat 5.carrots 6.oats and 1.turnips 2.barley 3.clover 4.wheat.

[49] Fox and Young were not local men and probably did not understand regional markets and local agricultural peculiarities. Moreover,all the reports concentrate upon the Vale of Glamorgan and contain little information concerning the other regions of the county. The report of 1814,compiled by Walter Davies,is highly detailed. Davies,originating in North Wales,would probably be more familiar with the agricultural economy of Glamorgan,especially considering his familiarity with the Vale of Clwyd in Denbighshire. The vales of Clwyd and Glamorgan were quite similiar.

constant cultivation. Fox condemned the large amount of waste as extravagant,but welcomed the introduction of the plough horse:however,this innovation was hampered by the fact that it was common to see horses and oxen in the same team. Manures such as marl and compost were employed,but lime,being cheap and easily procured,was applied in such great quantities as to partially destroy the soil.[50]

The final Board of Agriculture report,compiled by Walter Davies in 1814,differs significantly from that of Fox. Davies made the standard complaints concerning the obstinacy of the small farmers,the poor condition of many farm buildings and implements,and the unrestricted use of lime. The propensity for improvement and appraisals of the larger estates are repeated,specifically with relation to West Glamorgan where programmes of irrigation,reclamation and reforestation were begun,along with orchards and one orangery.[51]

By 1814 the entire state of arable agriculture appears to have undergone considerable improvement. Marl was seen in use by some gentlemen on their own lands and by tenants on long leases. Almost every farmer owned a lime kiln. Peat and lime were made into compost,ashes from coal or wood used as

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[50] James Fox,General View of the Agriculture of Glamorgan (London,1794),pp.20-22,28-9,34-5,39,43.

[51] Walter Davies,General View of the Agriculture and Domestic Economy of South Wales (London:B.MacMillan,1814), II,pp.10-15,199.

a top dressing and braes, a mixture of ashes and coal, was employed in the Coal Tract. Livestock received its accustomed praise, but hogs were mentioned as being increasingly important, alledgedly due to the export of bacon. Gentlemen's parks and enclosures were being utilized to introduce new breeds of sheep "of as many varieties as are known in England." In the vales of Glamorgan and Gower pastures were described as "excellent" and some crop yields appear to have improved: whereas Young tallied 25 bushels as the average yield per acre of barley, Davies gives an average yield of from 17 to 40 on the stronger soils in the Vale of Glamorgan and 30 to 50 on better soils, while the average for Gower ranged from 30 to 50 bushels and occasionally as high as 60.[52]

The picture that emerges is one of minor improvements around the time of Young's tour, becoming established by the time of Fox's report, and showing a marked change in technology and cropping practices when Davies compiled the final report in 1814. This improvement consisted mainly of adaptations to the new husbandry which were suited to the geological realities of the county. For example, despite the fact that Fox predicted the replacement of fallowing by intensive agriculture, Davies tabulated over twenty fallows in

[52] Walter Davies, General View, I, 540-1, 461.

the county, rendering the judgement that "No fallows in the world are cleaner than those of Glamorgan: nor is the fallowing system any where better, if as well, understood." Many criticisms of Fox and Young appear to have been vindicated. Davies noted that several rack-rented tenants in the Vale of Glamorgan grew between 15 and 25 acres of turnips and "till of recent times" wheat was cultivated on a small scale, but had experienced a considerable increase in acreage.[53]

Despite the much vaunted estates of West Glamorgan, especially around Margam, it appears that agricultural changes of greater significance occurred in the eastern section of the county where arable husbandry was dominant. The allusions of Young and Fox to the eastern sections of Glamorgan being more advanced finds substance in Davies' report: he stated that in the east there was "an earlier attention to improvement in agriculture."[54]

Changes in market structures and communications facilities had a profound effect upon east Glamorgan. By the end of the eighteenth century the direction of alterations in agricultural practices was towards the reduction of pasture and increase in tillage; and, as pressures to increase arable production rocketted, the cattle and dairy markets

[53] Walter Davies, General View, I, 515, 308.
[54] Ibid., II, 285.

subsequently decreased. Walter Davies commented upon the diminishing size of Glamorgan's dairies while all agree that the cattle trade, still important in the highlands, was beginning to stagnate as the selection of the best stock for sale was inhibiting improvement in breeding areas.[55] The introduction of advanced technology and newer crops appears to follow a westward pattern of diffusion. For example, it was noted that the light Rotherham plough was acheiving wide credit in the county, but was named the Whitchurch plough.[56] Whitchurch, seated on the Cardiff Plain and notorious for the cultivation of wheat, was ideal for the implementation of new techniques and accessible to ideas emanating from the south and east of England. By comparison, in the isolated Rhondda Valleys, sleds instead of carts were still used at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and as late as 1860 the ancient heavy Welsh plough, pulled by a team of oxen, was still in vogue.[57] Glamorgan's major turnpike road, from Cardiff through the Vale of Glamorgan to Swansea, opened the broydd to technological influences as early as the seventeen-

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[55] Walter Davies, General View, II, 225; David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963), p.15; D.J. Davies, The Economic History of South Wales Prior to 1800 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1933), p.90.

[56] George Alexander Cooke, A Topographical and Statistical Description of the Principality of Wales (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1810), pp.53-4.

[57] E.D. Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, pp.20-1.

sixties, when it was completed. For example, turnips were demanded by innkeepers in market towns like Cowbridge as a fodder for the increasing stream of travellers from the east.[58]

The diffusion of the new husbandry and in particular the Norfolk System of intensive agriculture was restricted by ecological realities. Intense economic pressures engendered by shortages of grain, especially wheat, motivated Glamorgan's farmers to increase production and to profit from hungry markets. From the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars until Lord Pelham, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, ordered the 1801 survey of crop acreages, bad harvests and food shortages resulted in acute inflation, especially in the emerging industrial regions of the county.[59] The Lord's Committee Survey of 1800 reveals that at least one third of the grain consumed in Glamorgan had to be imported, despite the fact that the major grain crops experienced an average harvest. There are even examples of wheat being grown on the same land for four years in succession, and as early as 1794 Fox noted that there was not enough grain for Swansea and its immediate neighbourhood.[60] At Merthyr Tudful potatoes were

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[58] David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, p. 166.

[59] H.C.K. Henderson, "Agriculture in England and Wales in 1801", The Geographical Journal, 118 (1952), 213.

[60] David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, pp. 49, 166; James Fox, General View, p. 10.

grown in fields and gardens and there are hints that turnips were attempted on the coalfield.[61] The incentive displayed near the new iron centres astounded the antiquarian Benjamin Heath Malkin, who toured the region in 1802:

> Since the establishment of the iron-works, the great increase of the population, and the proportionately imperious demand for articles of consumption, the farmers have been excited to improve their lands; so much that all sorts of corn, in very good, and plentiful crops, are now raised upon lands, where it was once taken for granted that no crop could be possibly produced.[62]

The quest for cheap and plentiful food was beginning to rouse the agricultural community even before the French Wars. For example, when the Glamorganshire Agricultural Society was founded at Cowbridge in 1772 under the auspices of local landowners, the borough residents were reeling under the Window Tax and the penny household loaf was reduced to thirteen ounces. The stated aims of the society were to encourage an improved system of husbandry and of breeding stock in the hilly districts as well as in the Vale of Glamorgan, and to "reward the honest industry of the labouring poor."[63] In sum, economic and demographic pressures within Glamorgan forced the farmers into the new husbandry in order to meet the everyday demands of the local inhabitants.

Several interesting observations can be made based upon

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[61] David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, p.163.

[62] Benjamin Heath Malkin, The Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales (London, 1804), p.171.

[63] John Richards, The Cowbridge Story (Bridgend, 1956), p.42.

the 1801 Crop Returns. Traditionally, wheat dominated arable agriculture in the Vale of Glamorgan, barley in Gower and oats in the highlands, but in 1801 these established trends appear to have been wavering.[64] In West Glamorgan this change was obvious, especially around Margam. For example, potatoes were more common than in the remainder of the county and despite the location of Margam in a predominantly barley growing region, there was a proportionately high acreage of wheat. In the Border Vale it appears that wheat was gaining equality with the hardier grains. At Cilybebyll, Llantrisant and Llanharry wheat was almost equal to oats, previously the major crop of the peripheral highland regions.[65]

Analysis of the Board of Agriculture reports of 1794 and 1814, combined with distribution maps of the Crop Returns of 1801, reveals that the most active period within these two decades in agricultural improvements fell somewhere between 1794 and 1801. The crux of this activity was the utilization of clover on a wide scale together with a new cropping system. Oats declined considerably in importance; and though

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[64] According to David Williams in "The Crop Returns of 1801 for Wales", Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, 14 (1950-1), reports from the highland areas and peripheral regions are sparse. Rye is also absent from the returns, but is agreed to have been common in the highlands. See Plate IV.

[65] David Williams, "The Crop Returns of 1801 for Wales", Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, 14 (1950-1), 39-40.

turnips did not play a prominent role, the introduction of short clover leys had the effect of extensively modifying older cropping practices. Clover gained widespread usage as a one year crop between two of grain. Peas were nearly as often utilized for the same purpose as clover, and on the heavier soils, for example around Pyle, beans and wheat were alternated for a period as long as six years. As the new cropping system was best suited to areas of low rainfall and chalky or sandy soils, the long ley was adopted in many cases as "a compromise...necessary between the better aspects of the old system and after the new."[66] In effect, these innovations were selected modifications of the new husbandry which were best suited to the soils, climate and topography of the county.

Soil types, altitude, temperature and rainfall determined to a large extent the diffusion of agricultural technology. The process of diffusion which characterized the agricultural economy during this period with relation to the growing of wheat and implementation of the Norfolk System was following a well established route. Cultivation of barley, essentially a lowland crop established through years of Anglo-Norman

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[66] David Thomas, "Agricultural Changes in the Welsh Borderland: A Study in Cultural Diffusion at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century" in Geographical Interpretations of Historical Sources, ed. Alan R. H. Baker, John D. Hamshere and John Langton, pp. 222-3; Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, pp. 167-8, 166.

colonization,reflects "vestiges of a previous diffusion of agricultural method" in Gower:sometime before 1801 the crop had spread throughout West Glamorgan and into nearby peripheral highland regions.[67] But the diffusion of new crops and cropping practices was restricted by the barriers of climate and topography,especially with relation to a system of agriculture best suited to the English Midlands.

As in the case of Norman manorialism,the blaenau determined the ecological limits of the diffusion of the Norfolk System and the introduction of new crops:"the stabilizing force operating here was the physical nature of the borderland itself." Improving farmers,anxious to imbibe the new technology and reap profits from markets suffering shortages of specific crops,failed to comprehend geographical realities:

> The general improvement of rotations reached the whole of the area,but the spread of turnip husbandry was halted. In the peripheral highland areas...there was at first,an advance of the Norfolk four-course rotation followed by a rapid retreat,which pointed to the fact that the system had been diffused beyond its physical limits.[68]

Only the southern coastal plain was ideal for the new

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[67] David Thomas,Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars,pp.126,90-1.

[68] David Thomas,"Agricultural Changes in the Welsh Borderland:A Study in Cultural Diffusion at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century" in Geographical Interpretations of Historical Sources,ed.Alan R.H.Baker,John D. Hamshere and John Langton,p.224.

agricultural methods. Farmers in the peripheral regions of the county, through the application of unsuitable technology, inhibited the advancement of agriculture in those areas. The decline in the quality of breeding stock and the abandonment of the Norfolk System attests to their failure.

The question of enclosure has caused agrarian historians to become entangled in a quagmire of conflicting theories. In Glamorgan the picture is complex and confusing, while research has been severely limited and references quite contradictory.

The word enclosure essentially implies two systems of land management, common field and severalty: "What distinguished the two managements was not merely the hedges, ditches and fences, but the presence or absence of common rights."[69] In Wales the enclosure controversy has focused upon the disintegration of the "tribal" system and the incorporation of communal lands within the sphere of private ownership. Despite the myth that old customs evaporated like an eerie phantom with the Act of Union in 1536 and the introduction of English law and custom, Welsh methods of landholding and agrarian patterns persisted longer than the phantom advocates would have us believe. More truth can be found in the view that Welsh and English methods of land management

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[69] Eric Kerridge, "Ridge and Furrow in Agrarian History", Economic History Review, 2nd series, IV (1961), 28.

blended according to immediate economic and social pressures. During the Tudor period, for example, the demand for wool led to extensive enclosure for the purposes of extending private ownership. This movement resulted in altering the agrarian framework in some highland regions, but in other highland areas that framework was fossilized, especially with reference to transhumance. The real significance of Tudor enclosures was that the upper fringe of the common was brought within the realm of private ownership while the ffridd, or lower highland levels, remained as rough grazing land for common use.[70]

Enclosure in Glamorgan was gradual and there appears to have been no concerted movement at any given time. The irregularity of shape displayed by old enclosures reveal that they were "performed at various times, by different persons", depending upon a variety of motives and circumstances.[71] By the middle of the seventeenth century Glamorgan's small freehold farmers had succeeded in enclosing 90% of the common land in the vale regions. They were enticed by rising prices and the profits to be derived from sheep farming.[72]

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[70] Colin Thomas, "Encroachment on the Common Lands in Merioneth in the Sixteenth Century", Northern Universities Geographical Journal, V (1964), 37.

[71] Walter Davies, General View, I, 219.

[72] Frank V. Emery, "The Farming Regions of Wales" in The Agrarian History of England and Wales, IV, ed. Joan Thirsk, p.153.

Enclosure appears to have been limited to the vale arable areas of Glamorgan in the eighteenth century. According to Walter Davies in 1814 three quarters of the county was computed to have been enclosed, but 100,000 acres of waste remained unenclosed: 14,000 acres of waste remained in the lowland regions and 86,000 existed in the highlands. Highland wastes consisted of mountain land and the more fertile soil fringing the higher elevations. Davies' report stated that unenclosed lowland wastes were not a hindrance to agriculture as they were considered superb for sheep and herbage and "as valuable to sheep farmers as any old pastures."[73]

During this period Wales experienced a spate of private Acts of Parliament relating to enclosure of wastes in the peripheral and highland regions: Glamorgan is the only county absent from this movement. The aim of this action was the enclosure of rough grazing land used to depasture stock and constituted mainly sheepwalks and upland moors.[74] Agricultural improvement was coupled with the desire of the landowners to establish legal proprietorship over lands which had been hitherto loosely held. Acts of enclosure rarely eliminated sheepwalks or grazing rights _per se_, but

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[73] Walter Davies, _General View_, I, 219.

[74] David Thomas, _Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars_, p. 130; Davies and Edwards, _Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century_, pp. 2-3.

they became attached to farms and estates to which the enclosure commissioners granted proprietory rights.[75]

In most Welsh counties the eighteenth century agrarian framework was seriously affected by parliamentary acts of enclosure. The typical Welsh hill farmer operated through a system of transhumance,spending a part of the year residing in his mountain hafod tending stock. This system was widely destroyed by enclosure,the thrust of which was to build compact estates. Some blocks of land were exchanged by agreement between landowners,but in the main the hill farms became detached and self-contained. The upland farmers then resorted to being suppliers of store cattle and sheep,buying fodder for the winter months from the lowland arable farmers.[76]

Enclosure through private acts of parliament was insignificant as far as Glamorgan was concerned. During the period under analysis there were four such acts:the enclosures of Town Hill and the Burrows at Swansea in 1761 and 1763 respectively,consisting of 750 acres;the New Forest at Cowbridge in 1801,comprising 250 acres;the Great and Little Heaths in 1801,enclosing 1,200 acres on the Cardiff Plain;and the enclosure of 600 acres within the

[75] A.H.John,Industrial Development of South Wales, pp.170-1.

[76] David Thomas,Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars,pp.134,140-1.

parish of Loughor in 1833.[77] A total of 2,800 acres, limited to the lowland regions, enclosed through act of parliament over a span of seventy-five years, was definitely not a large scale enclosure movement. Lands near Cardiff and Cowbridge were undoubtedly enclosed for reasons of agricultural improvement and their enclosure did occur during the period of intense agricultural improvement, but other motives such as increasing rental value in and around market centres were also present. Town Hill and the Burrows in Swansea were let by the corporation and the rents divided between the mayor and the burgesses. Enclosed land around the industrial village of Morriston rose in rental value from 4s. to 30s. per acre.[78]

Scanty research renders it impossible to offer an explanation of why Glamorgan was absent from the movement of parliamentary enclosure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As most acts of parliamentary enclosure in other counties occurred in upland regions it is possible, however, to suggest why this may not have occurred in Glamorgan. Fox noted that the rights of occupiers were clearly defined,

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[77]Ivor Bowen, The Great Enclosures of Common Lands in Wales and Monmouth (London: Chiswick Press, 1914), pp.47-8, 53; T.I. Jeffrys Jones, Acts of Parliament Concerning Wales, 1714-1901 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966), p.289.

[78]Glyn Roberts, Aspects of Welsh History (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), pp.123-4; James Fox, General View, p.43.

which "tends very much to increase their security, and to the most profitable exercise of them."[79] Davies offers another explanation more relevent to the highland regions of Glamorgan:

> The freeholders in this, and in other such mineral tracts, are not over anxious for having the wastes enclosed; for they are aware, that...the lords of the respective manors, will retain their right to the minerals; so that a freeholder's allotment, when improved at a considerable expense, will always be liable to be entered by the lord, or his lessee, to delve for coal and ironstone....[80]

Another factor inhibiting enclosure of the upland regions was the expanse of lands involved and the cost of enclosing them. Frequently, the original investment was greater than the long term profit.[81]

According to descriptions of upland Glamorgan, and specifically the Rhondda Valleys, the system of transhumance appears to have died a slower death than was generally true in the rest of Wales. Moreover, the thrust of the Agricultural Revolution in Glamorgan was towards the increase of grain production and implementation of new cropping practices. The concentration of the woollen industry in the north and west of Wales during the late eighteenth and early nine-teenth centuries would of necessity provide incentive for

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[79] James Fox, General View, pp.43-4.

[80] Walter Davies, General View, II, 84.

[81] David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, p.31.

farmers in these regions to enclose sheepwalks and establish secure proprietorship. In Glamorgan, agricultural improvement was geared to the new industrial markets which had arisen within the county; the highland regions appear to have continued in supplying stock to the lowlands and being involved in subsistence farming.

Rents and leases bore a direct relationship to agricultural improvement. Larger farms generated the necessary capital, but the average holdings in Glamorgan, ranging from between fifty to sixty acres, did not produce sufficient capital for the implementation of new agricultural techniques. Short leases and the exaction of fines for their renewal kept the smaller tenant farmers from investing capital in their land. Moreover, the payment of tithes in kind operated against large scale cultivation and favoured small scale animal husbandry.[82] On large farms which generated substantial capital, enclosure could raise the value of the land, while additional improvements arising from this process could inflate the rental value. Fox attributed the shortage of wheat and hay to the lack of initiative among farmers on old leases; but among those on leases for lives, improved farming practices were being introduced: the latter were required by their new leases to keep fences in repair, to refrain from ploughing meadow

[82] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.90.

lands, to spread dung collected on the farm, to lay down a specified portion of arable to grass, not to assign his lease without the landlord's consent and to crop his land "according to the custom of the county."[83] Renewal of leases provided improving landlords with the means necessary to enforce advanced technology. For example, J.H.Lloyd of Cilybebyll attempted to promote the Norfolk System by forbidding tenants with renewed leases to grow more than three crops of wheat in succession.[84]

Larger farms, longer leases and stricter control over the tenantry were the aims of improving landlords. Davies recommended the £100 a year farm as the most rewarding and advised division into four sections: hay, pasture, tillage and "extra uses."[85] In reality, the small subsistence farm was rendered obsolete by the new demands laid upon the agricultural community and they became increasingly difficult to possess and maintain. Moreover, rents had become disproportionate in relation to the size and real value of the farm: rates of rental decreased as the acreage increased due to the large number of bidders for the smaller farms. Some farmers adopted the policy of merging three or more tenements into one in order to ensure the presence of more substantial

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[83] James Fox, General View, pp.41, 10, 57.

[84] David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, pp.164-5.

[85] Walter Davies, General View, I, 162.

tenants.[86]

The influence of growing towns and manufacturing centres was also important in determining both the selling price and rental value of land. Contemporaries agreed that land generally decreased in value with distance from large towns and that retailed land usually brought a large return. Enclosed land selling at £17 to £20 per acre at the beginning of the century had risen to 30 or 100 Guineas by the time of Davies' report, while land near the new industrial centres and large towns let from £3 to £5 per acre of potatoes or hay, declining from £1 to 35s. for farms "on the best soils" and to as low as 3s. for the poorest land.[87]

The Industrial Revolution also had adverse effects upon the agricultural community. Agricultural labourers were attracted to the towns because of the higher wages offered in industry and their migration resulted in high costs of agricultural labour and changes in the practice of hiring. One specific example is that of hand-reaping in the Vale of Glamorgan. At harvest time the farmer let his wheat to be reaped "with victuals and beer." Each reaper claimed his right by "immemorial usage" for his next of kin while he

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[86] Walter Davies, General View, I, 163; David Williams, History of Modern Wales, p. 184.

[87] Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, p. 60; Walter Davies, General View, I, 163-6.

reaped and, if he had no next of kin, he would lease his field to other gleaners at a specified price per acre. In the late eighteenth century the reaper obtained 6d. per acre from the gleaners, but this rose to 1s. in 1802 and 2s. 6d. by 1811. In the eighteen-thirties the price was set according to "the conscience of the reaper" who would lease whatever share he desired to the gleaners. Farmers in the mid-eighteen-thirties claimed that the "conscience" of the reapers was costing them as much as 30s. per acre. This in turn forced the farmers to increase numbers of imported labour, especially from the west of Wales and across the Bristol Channel.[88]

The utilization of land for the purposes of industry characterized land management in industrial regions. In West Glamorgan, the Margam and Briton Ferry estates typify this phenomenon. Around Swansea and in the nearby wood-shorn uplands sophisticated programmes of reforestation were in operation to satiate the market for charcoal and pit-props.[89] At Briton Ferry leases stated that a specified number of "coal horses" had to be supplied by the tenants "under pain of being arraigned before the Grand Sessions." On the 30,000 acre Margam estate rentals of wayleaves, mines and industrial sites raised the 1767 gross profit of £4,835 to £8,000 in

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[88] Moelwyn Williams, "Observations on the Population Changes in Glamorgan, 1800-1900", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 112, 110.

[89] Walter Davies, General View, II, 27; Hilary M. Thomas, "Margam Estate Management, 1765-1860", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 22.

1820 and £24,000 by the middle of the century.[90]

Various measures were adopted by the landlords of West Glamorgan to insure the success of their enterprises. On the famed Margam estate, noted for attracting tenants with substantial capital, every aspect of estate life was supervised by the landowner and his estate agent. Tenants were held responsible for repairs while the estate furnished new implements, and the terms of cultivation were an integral part of leases. In the event of economic difficulty, abatements rather than rent decreases or evictions were made in order to maintain a stable tenantry and to stabilize the economy of the region.[91]

The success of the Margam and Briton Ferry estates typifies the agricultural history of Glamorgan. Although new crops and techniques had been introduced at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the full force of agrarian technological advancement was not felt until the pressures caused by the concentration of industry and growth of population acted as stimuli for increased production. By the end of the period under analysis, there can be little doubt that the agricultural community had become subsidiary to that of the industrial,

[90] A.H.John, "Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate, 1700-1740", Economic History Review, XIII, 1st series (1943), 98; Hilary M.Thomas, "Margam Estate Management, 1765-1860", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 15-16.

[91] Hilary M.Thomas, "Margam Estate Management, 1765-1860", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 17-18, 21-2.

and that rural production was concerned mainly with meeting the demands of the new markets which had sprung up on its doorstep. The old subsistence agricultural economy,with its small local markets and limited associations with Bristol and the West Country,was shattered. As industry expanded, the agricultural community was twisted and distorted by hungry and expanding markets. The industrial colossus had begun to scar and disfigure and quiet hills and vales of the Land of Morgan.

Chapter IV

The Pre-Industrial Economy

Before the Industrial Revolution, the trade and commerce of Glamorgan was a by-product of agricultural pursuits. What was not produced as the fruits of nature or surplus of domestic industry was insignificant and presented no alternative to the essentially subsistence economic structure. The pulse of commerce depended upon what could not be produced or consumed in the county. Tiny ports and markets reaped their prosperity from the surplus of farm and dairy. Except in the limited area of Swansea Bay in West Glamorgan there was little evidence of an industrial future in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The wealth of Glamorgan in the eighteenth century emanated from the densely populated Vale of Glamorgan, and the coastal trade with Bristol and the West Country dominated commercial activities. Small shipments of produce were sent to France, Ireland and the Channel Islands, but the most important exports consisted of consignments of raw wool, corn and livestock to ports like Barnstaple in Somerset and Ilfracombe in Devon, and kelp and lime to Watchet and Dunster.[92] Oysters and lobsters were exported from Mumbles

[92] G.E.Fussell, "Traffic in Farm Produce in Seventeenth Century England", Agricultural History, XX (1946), 83-4; Frank V. Emery, "The Farming Regions of Wales" in The Agrarian History of England and Wales, IV, ed. Joan Thirsk, pp.157, 134-5; G.E.Fussell and Constance Goodman, "Traffic in Farm Produce in Eighteenth Century England", Agricultural History, XII (1938), 367.

and Oystermouth in Gower. Marble, freestone and lias stone were sent from the Vale of Glamorgan, while lime and cement were so important for parts of Gower that hundreds of cargoes were shipped to Devon each summer and provided a vibrant subsidiary industry for the country people.[93] The Vale cattle, reputed to have "the thinnest hides of any known... scarcely thicker than the Hereford calf-skins", produced high quality leather, especially destined for the Bristol market.[94] Cattle and sheep-raising dominated the <u>blaenau</u>, but small charcoal and forestry enterprises were profitable. Occasionally, women stripped bark for sale to the tanneries at Bridgend or for shipment to Cardiff.[95]

Cardiff, Aberthaw and Newton typify the coastal trade and the commercial affiliations of Glamorgan with Bristol and the lesser ports on the Channel coast. Moreover, certain patterns emerge which depict the intimacy between ports on both sides of the Bristol Channel. Cardiff was associated in all aspects of trade with Bristol, but the export of corn, meat products and dairy produce in return for manufactured goods formed the basis for commercial intercourse. Ties between smaller Channel ports could be established upon the

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93 Walter Davies, <u>General View</u>, II, 307-8, 419, 182.

94 Walter Davies, <u>General View</u>, II, 444; Moelwyn Williams, "Some Aspects of the Economic and Social Life of the Southern Regions of Glamorgan, 1600-1800", <u>Morgannwg</u>, III (1959), 35.

95 E.D. Lewis, <u>The Rhondda Valleys</u>, p.23.

basis of some specialty,or sporadic demands for a single product. For example,mats were the mainstay of trade between Newton and Minehead and kelp from Sully and Aberthaw to Bristol. Knitted stockings were exported from all the Glamorgan ports at various times to several West Country destinations,but this relied upon supply and was not marked by regular shipments or voyages.[96] Trade networks within Glamorgan can also be distinguished. Cardiff was the port for the fertile eastern section of the Vale of Glamorgan, comprising the Cardiff Plain and the Vale of Taff;Aberthaw acted as the major outlet for the central portion of the Vale and the market centre of Cowbridge;Newton was the main port for the less fertile western section of the Vale of Glamorgan,stretching from Bridgend to Pyle.[97]

The port of Aberthaw exemplifies the scope of Glamorgan's coastal trade. Aberthaw's commerce was closely integrated with the Somerset port of Minehead and depended upon a variety of commodities produced by small farms and domestic industry. In return,local people received goods such as wines,brandy,tobacco,earthenware,salt and vinegar. Although the port was diminutive,it nevertheless forged an important link between the agricultural community of the

[96] Moelwyn Williams,"Some Aspects of the Economic and Social Life of the Southern Regions of Glamorgan,1600-1800", Morgannwg,III (1959),33-4,26,31.

[97] Moelwyn Williams,"A Contribution to the Commercial History of Glamorgan,1666-1735",National Library of Wales Journal,IX (1955),189,198-9.

mid Vale and the markets of the West Country. Aberthaw was the hub between the local markets and fairs of the Vale of Glamorgan and the demands emanating from the Bristol metropolis and lesser provincial ports.[98]

Commercial ventures in pre-industrial Glamorgan were small in scale and wholly dependent upon agriculture and related activities. They did not generate accumulation of sufficient capital resources in the hands of a powerful merchant class. Moreover,the small-scale entrepreneurs rarely extended their activities outside the boundaries of the tiny ports or market towns.

Analysis of Aberthaw's port books reveals a large variety of goods being imported and exported,and a surprisingly large number of ships,masters and merchants involved in the coastal trade. Forty-three Aberthaw merchants were active participants:twenty-two were masters and merchants, eighteen were merchants only and five were masters only. A total of twenty-one ships traded with either Minehead or Bristol between 1666 and 1735 which were registered "of Aberthaw." They ranged between ten and thirty tons and carried a crew of two or three men. There is positively no evidence to reveal any concentration of trade or shipping,or the existence of joint-stock companies.[99] Due to the

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[98]Moelwyn Williams,"A Contribution to the Commercial History of Glamorgan,1666-1735",National Library of Wales Journal,IX (1955),352-3.

[99]Ibid.,198-9.

comparatively large number of masters and merchants involved in a trade with little possibility of expansion, there was little opportunity for commercial activities to concentrate in the hands of one individual and generate large capital resources.

The cattle trade produced a unique class of men, the drovers. In many instances they were the only link with the external world of commerce, driving herds as far afield as Essex, Kent and the Midlands.[100] The drovers were a privileged group within the community and were excluded from the bankruptcy laws. Their travels enabled them to return home loaded with currency, reserving for them a key position in the credit system as suppliers of money. Some drovers were able to establish small private banks in the market towns.[101] These banks emerged out of a simple process. If a Welsh squire wished to settle an account elsewhere he would give the drover the amount of the bill. The drover, as a safety precaution, left the money home in a strongbox and paid the bill from the money gained from the sale of his cattle, receiving a commission for his troubles.[102]

The remote Rhondda Valleys were connected to external markets largely through the efforts of the drovers. Richard

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[100] Davies and Edwards, Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 10-11.

[101] D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.100; A.H. John, Industrial Development of South Wales, p.11.

[102] D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.100.

Evans of Pont-Rhondda Farm made an annual journey to the Bristol fair to sell skins which were entrusted to him collectively by local farmers. Upon his return he supplied the region with currency in the form of gold and the £5 Banbury Notes issued by the Bank and England.[103] With few exceptions the drovers did not accumulate large capital resources or embark upon significant commercial ventures. Their economic activities were too much an integral part of the pastoral economy of the highland regions and seldom separated from the occupation of driving herds of cattle for local farmers.

Home industry stagnated during the eighteenth century. The woollen industry typifies this general malaise,a fate largely due to the fact that "this was purely domestic industry,in the sense not only of its products being of home manufacture,but also that they were for home consumption."[104] Limited production and supplementation of farmer's incomes through the sale of flannel and stockings at local markets and fairs constituted the extent of the woollen industry. Wool was purchased at the fairs and afterwards taken home to the farm for knitting and weaving,but the more prosperous farmers kept two or three hand looms to be employed in periods of slack by their servants. Most poor families bought wool to make their own clothes;they obtained little

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[103] E.D.Lewis,The Rhondda Valleys,p.19.
[104] D.J.Davies,Economic History of South Wales,p.111.

or no profit for surplus production.[105] In the Rhonddas, farmers saved the low quality black wool to knit their own stockings and the better wool was woven into yarn,cloth,or flannel by the local weaver. Later,an itinerant tailor would arrive at the cottage and make clothes according to the farmer's specifications.[106] Many small mills dotted the countryside,the most common being those where farmers brought fleeces to be woven into cloth for their families. Little or no cash was involved in these transactions as the mill owner kept part of the fleece as payment. He then wove his portion into cloth,stockings,or blankets which he sold at the local markets or fairs.[107]

The comparative simplicity of Glamorgan's economic ventures in the eighteenth century was partially a result of the fact that there lacked an influential middle class involved in vigorous commercial ventures. Welsh merchants played a passive rather than an active role in the economy. In fact, West of England merchants employed itinerant middlemen to deal directly with the people of the county. Farm and dairy produce was purchased at various markets and fairs by their hired representatives and English hosiers and clothiers

[105] Davies and Edwards,Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century,pp.110-11,41

[106] E.D.Lewis,The Rhondda Valleys,p.21-2.

[107] J.G.Jenkins,"The Welsh Woollen Industry" in The Wool Textile Industry in Great Britain,ed. J.G.Jenkins, (London:Routledge and Kegan Paul,1972),p.282.

bought finished stockings and woollen cloth from individual farmers and cottagers.[108] The presence of this type of exogenous business organization was responsible for the underdevelopment of commercial classes in urban areas and effective disregard of local market infrastructures.

One of the key elements in Glamorgan's commerce during the eighteenth century was the export of coal, especially from the western ports of Swansea and Neath. The rise of the "sea-sale", or export coal industry, was due to an increase in British domestic consumption, a process which gained momentum during the course of the eighteenth century; however, the Welsh coal trade in general was relatively small in scale until the eighteen-thirties. Swansea and Neath exported 40,000 tons of coal between 1681 and 1690. During the same decade all of Wales shipped 200,000 tons, but this only represented a mere 7% of the total national output.[109] Ireland and the West Country were the major importers of Welsh coal, but shipments of "stone coal", or anthracite, to London and overseas markets were also important. Despite the overwhelming domination of the coal trade by Newcastle and Sunderland, low transportation costs made it easier for Glamorgan coal to successfully compete in the Channel markets. One Somerset port, Bridgewater, emerged as a major

[108] Moelwyn Williams, "Some Aspects of the Economic and Social Life of the Southern Regions of Glamorgan, 1600-1800", Morgannwg, III (1959), 25-7, 33.

[109] J.U. Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry (London: Frank Cass, 1966), I, 110, 19, 23, 53.

distribution centre for West Glamorgan coal in the West of England.[110]

The growing importance of coal as an export commodity appears to have led to the expansion of Swansea and Neath at the expense of other Glamorgan ports engaged in the coastal trade. For example,Cardiff shipped almost no "sea-sale" coal and attempts to do so were met with failure. In the period 1682-3 Cardiff shipped forty-nine cargoes of which all but five were bound for Bristol;in 1732 only twelve cargoes passed out of the port,all of wool and apparently destined for Bristol;by 1734-5 the cargoes bound for Bristol had shrunken to two.[111]

All manner of commodities appear to have increased in volume between other Glamorgan ports and the West Country which were involved in the coal trade. Barnstaple sent cargoes of tobacco,cloth,salt,earthenware and wine in exchange for coal. It is also apparent that some trade in agricultural produce was deflected to coal exporting centres as the demand for mineral fuel increased. For example,in addition to coal,Bridgewater imported pigs,cattle,sheep, horses and oatmeal from Neath and Swansea.[112] Evidence

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[110] T.S.Willan,The English Coasting Trade,1600-1750 (Manchester:Manchester University Press,2nd ed.,1967),pp.66-7;J.U.Nef;Rise of the British Coal Industry,I,88.

[111] J.U.Nef,Rise of the British Coal Industry,I,54-5; T.S.Willan,The English Coasting Trade,pp.176-7.

[112] T.S.Willan,The English Coasting Trade,pp.168,170.

points to the conclusion that the increasing demand for coal was improving the commercial strength of West Glamorgan and upsetting traditional commercial patterns governed by purely agricultural pursuits.

The woollen industry brings to light all the economic difficulties plaguing Glamorgan's commercial and industrial activities during the eighteenth century. By the end of the century, satiation of local markets was still the only goal possible to attain, and the increase in the exportation of raw wool signified that the small mills and home manufacturing was also on the wane.[113] The structure of the Welsh woollen industry seriously inhibited the implementation of new methods of manufacturing, assumption of mass production and the ability to compete favourably with other woollen centres. Units of production were invariably small and scattered about the countryside. Although some of the carding and spinning mills were established to produce yarn for domestic use, no large factories emerged which integrated all the processes of production into a single operation.[114] From the sixteenth century the Welsh woollen industry was governed

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[113] J.G.Jenkins, The Welsh Woollen Industry (Cardiff: Welsh Folk Museum, 1969), pp.311-12, 115, 125; A.H.John, Industrial Development of South Wales, p.12.

[114] Caroline A.J.Skeel, "The Welsh Woollen Industry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", Archeologia Cambrensis, LXXIX, Part I, 7th series (1924), 37; Anna M. Jones, The Rural Industries of England and Wales (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p.19.

by the capital and monopolistic control of alien merchants and traders,the most significant being the Shrewsbury Drapers. The power of this organization was so vast that the industry was freed from regulations confining weaving to incorporated towns and the forcing of weavers to accept guild regulations. It was the overt aim of this organization to prevent concentration and maintain the scattered and fragmented character of the Welsh woollen industry in order to avoid competition. Moreover,the Shrewsbury Drapers preferred to import rough unfinished cloth from Wales and carry out weaving and finishing under their own auspices in England. Enterprises remained rural and so many fulling mills were erected that concentration never occurred within a few selected river valleys.[115]

As the Industrial Revolution progressed in Glamorgan it was believed that the burgeoning centres of population would provide a ready market for a rejuvenated woollen industry. This simple calculation,however,failed to accommodate the changes that had occurred in the national economy due to the overwhelming effects of industrialism. Traditional concepts of supply and demand were antiquated. The rise in production costs and competition with Yorkshire woollens and worsteds and with Lancashire cottons,imported into the county via new transportation networks,was not given adequate consideration.

[115] J.G.Jenkins,The Welsh Woollen Industry,pp.100,110, 113.

Attempts to apply the factory system in the woollen industry met with failure. In Glamorgan this desire arose within the agricultural community. The Bridgend Woollen Factory was founded in the seventeen-eighties under the instigation of two local landowners, Sir John Franklin and Thomas Wyndham of Dunraven. A spinning jenny was purchased by the Glamorganshire Agricultural Society.[116] Between sixty and one hundred workers (mostly children) were employed, both dyeing and finishing took place on the premises and all types of yarn and cloth were produced.[117] This enterprise was a failure from its inception. In fact, the company made little or no profit and from 1806 onwards, frantic meetings of the proprietors were held. By 1807 it was stated that "the gentlemen who formed themselves into a company for carrying on the business...divide no annual profits" and in 1808, the entire operation, estimated to have cost £10,000, was advertised for sale. No offers were received and the proprietors transferred the business to Mr. Dare, the manager. Despite the fact that Dare was an experienced West Country clothier, attained royal patronage and stream-lined production to a few of the most popular articles, the factory was eventually sold to a tanning company which used the buildings as warehouses.[118]

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[116] H.J.Randall, Bridgend: The Story of a Market Town (Newport: R.H.Johns, N.D.), p.67.

[117] Anna M. Jones, Rural Industries of England and Wales, p.19; J.G.Jenkins, The Welsh Woollen Industry, p.318.

[118] J.G.Jenkins, The Welsh Woollen Industry, p.318; H.J. Randall, Bridgend, p.68.

The Bridgend Woollen Factory failed for a number of reasons, but existing secondary sources do not fully explain the causes of its disappearance. Numerous suggestions, however, can be made. For example, during the period the factory was in operation the export of raw wool from Glamorgan was increasing. Moreover, most of the wool sold was yarn for domestic use rather than cloth or finished products. The factory managers were forced to sell mostly yarn as it was impossible to have an article woven under 3d. a yard which would have been done for 1¼d. in the West of England.[119] High production costs were thereby aggravated by mechanization and a shortage of labour due to competition with the metallurgical and related industries due to the higher wages being offered. The proprietors of the Bridgend Woollen Factory had to advertise for children between the ages of ten and fourteen. Although they offered services and education to better the souls and minds of pauper children, they had to be bound by indenture; escapes were common.[120]

The disaster at Bridgend also served to aggravate ills already rampant in domestic industry. Attempts to introduce the factory system accelerated the decline of home industry and many of those who depended upon knitting and weaving to

[119] J.G.Jenkins, The Welsh Woollen Industry, pp.311-12; Anna M. Jones, Rural Industries of England and Wales, p.19.

[120] H.J.Randall, Bridgend, p.69; E.J.Jones, Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales (London: P.S. King & Son, 1928), p.96.

supplement their incomes were turned upon the parish.[121] Moreover,unlike in Yorkshire,there was no attempt to organize domestic industry in a manner which combined knitting, weaving and farming as a single operation,thus ensuring some degree of security to the individual farmer or weaver.

The only centre where the woollen industry was successful in Glamorgan was Caerphilly,ideally situated at the crossroads between Merthyr Tudful and Cardiff. At the end of the eighteenth century the town possessed two factories,two fulling mills and a host of dyers and weavers. Woollens flourished at Caerphilly until the middle of the nineteenth century and found a ready market in the miners and colliers of the Northern Outcrop. Shortly thereafter,cheap Lancashire cottons and woollen goods from the north and west of Wales dominated the markets of the coalfield. Initial success was largely due to the emphasis upon the local market for flannel and the skillful dyeing for which the town became famous. Between sixty and one hundred people were employed at one mill.[122] It is quite possible,therefore,that the concentration upon yarn and specialty goods at Bridgend served to stunt the woollen industry in the west of the county.

The introduction of the factory system and implementation of new methods of production in Glamorgan's woollen

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[121] Walter Davies,General View,II,472.

[122] J.G.Jenkins,The Welsh Woollen Industry,p.316;D.J. Davies,Economic History of South Wales,p.113.

industry was peripheral. When carding and spinning machines were introduced they were invariably purchased second-hand from one of the large English manufacturers as Welsh entrepreneurs lacked the necessary capital to purchase new ones; they were usually obsolete. Lack of capital, even of adequate credit facilities, and remoteness from large financial centres, served to intensify the effects of external competition.[123]

The Welsh woollen industry was severely under-capitalized during all periods of its existence. Units of production remained small and few enterprises combined all the processes of production in a single concern. Local and migratory capital investment was not concerned with Glamorgan's ability to produce woollen goods due to the county's wealth of raw materials, but was heavily concentrated in the mining and smelting industries. Large scale production was never acheived and much of the market had fallen prey to regions where cloth manufacturing was the leading sector of the local economy:

> The inventions which occurred in the English woollen industry were one of the chief causes of the Industrial Revolution in England. . .The Industrial Revolution dealt a death-blow to the Welsh woollen industry.[124]

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[123] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, pp. 86-7.

[124] Caroline A.J.Skeel, "The Welsh Woollen Industry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", Archeologia Cambrensis, LXXIX, Part I, 7th series (1924), 37; Idris Jones, Modern Welsh History (London: G.Bell & Sons Ltd., 1934), pp. 171-2.

Glamorgan's pottery industry, situated at Swansea, Ewenny and Nantgarw, was small in scale and catered to local market demands. In 1764 the Cambrian Pottery was founded at Swansea by William Coles, a Cadoxton industrialist, and was designed to cater to the local market for small wares.[125] This enterprise was profitable and in 1802 the then noted industrialist, Lewis Weston Dillwyn, assumed management. Being faced with financial difficulties, the firm cut operations in 1817 and limited production to high quality porcelain and curios.[126] Perhaps, as one contemporary noted, the Swansea potteries were hampered by the lack of local materials:

> There is a very flourishing pottery carried on there, on Mr. Wedgewood's plan. The clay is brought from various parts of England, and mixed with flint very finely ground.[127]

There were seven small potteries noted at Ewenny, near Bridgend, in 1814 which catered to local markets. A modern pottery was founded by Billingsley and Walker in 1813 at Nantgarw. This plant was ideally located near excellent transportation facilities and markets, being seven miles from the growing port of Cardiff and bordering the Glamorganshire Canal on the main turnpike road to Merthyr Tudful.[128]

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[125] Norman Lewis Thomas, The Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages (Neath: Guardian Press, 1965), p.14.

[126] Elis Jenkins, "Swansea Porcelain", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 119.

[127] Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, p.587.

[128] Anna M. Jones, Rural Industries of England and Wales, p.93; Elis Jenkins, "Swansea Porcelain", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 121.

The Nantgarw Pottery crumbled in 1819 due to financial difficulties. Lack of capital had plagued the operation from the time of its founding.[129]

The mining and smelting industries provided the basis for Glamorgan's industrial expansion. Labour and capital was concentrated in these industries and Glamorgan developed into a mecca for entrepreneurs. Unlike the woollen and pottery industries,mining and smelting provided Glamorgan with marketable export commodities,produced cheaply, abundantly and competitively.

Glamorgan's first mining and smelting centre was located in the west of the county. This was facilitated by the abundance of raw materials for smelting,ease of transportation and the geographic proximity of Neath and Swansea to ore sources and markets for finished metals. West Glamorgan was established as a hub between the copper mines of Cornwall and the lead mines of Cardigan,and was conveniently located for both the capital and market potentialities of Bristol. Moreover,the coal trade blossomed as a result of the fledgling metallurgical industry as coal provided return cargo for ore-carrying vessels.[130] Many of Glamorgan's earliest entrepreneurs were Cornishmen who,attracted by the

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[129] C.J.O.Evans,Glamorgan,p.347.

[130] G.O.Roberts,"The Development and Decline of the Non-Ferrous Smelting Industries in South Wales" in Industrial South Wales,1750-1914,ed. W.E.Minchinton (London: Frank Cass,1969),pp.127-9.

availability of fuel, combined smelting with their mining enterprises and benefitted from the localization of the industry in one area.[131] The products of West Glamorgan were varied. Swansea and Neath exported bell wire, copper wire and iron to Bristol. By the end of the seventeenth century, Neath was exporting lead, copper, silver and coal. The chemical industry grew alongside that of metal; soap, alum, vitriol and sugar of lead were manufactured at Neath.[132]

Industrial expansion in West Glamorgan was greatly facilitated by the arrival of Sir Humphrey Mackworth from Shropshire in the late seventeenth century. Mackworth inherited substantial mineral lands in the Neath area from his mother and upon marriage into the Evans family, local squires, acquired other estates. Moreover, he was heavily involved in forming a company to mine and smelt on his lands. The text of a petition for a charter incorporating the Company of Mine Adventurers in 1704 stresses the variety of Mackworth's activities at Neath:

> The convenience and cheapness of coal hath occasioned the building of great work-houses, or manufactories, by Sir Humphrey in Neath, at the expense of several thousand pounds; for smelting of lead and copper ore, for extracting silver out of the lead, and for making Lytharge

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[131] D. Trevor Davies, The Economic Development of Swansea and the Swansea District (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1940), pp. 65-6.

[132] D. Trevor Davies, Economic Development of Swansea and the Swansea District, p. 16; Rider and Trueman, South Wales, p. 78; D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p. 119.

— — and Red Lead for the use of the Mine Adventurers.[133]

Mackworth was able to supply adequate capital, establish a respectable joint-stock company and insure a localized and integrated metallurgical industry.

The copper industry of West Glamorgan grew steadily during the course of the eighteenth century. In 1711 a Cornish mineowner named Pollard established a copper works at Landore in partnership with his son-in-law Dr. Lane, who erected his own works in 1720. The initial venture cost £4,000 for buildings and £2,000 for utensils.[134] By the middle of the century there was furious activity, especially under the influence of Bristol capital and entrepreneurs. John Percival of Bristol financed the John Freeman and Copper Company in 1742, consisting of twenty-six furnaces and yielding a weekly output of forty-nine tons; Morris and Lockwood began their expansion of Landore and Forest in the middle of the century; the White Rock Copper Works were established by Thomas Coster in 1746; Chauncey Townsend began the Middle Bank Copper Works in the mid-seventeen-fifties.[135]

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[133] Henry Hamilton, The English Copper and Brass Industries to 1800 (London: Frank Cass, 2nd ed., 1967), p.105; G.G. Francis, The Smelting of Copper in the Swansea District (London and Manchester: Henry Sotheran & Co., 2nd ed., 1881), p.83.

[134] D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.134; Norman Lewis Thomas, Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages, p.141.

[135] Henry Hamilton, English Copper and Brass Industries, pp.153-4; Norman Lewis Thomas, Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages, pp.143, 146; G.G. Francis, Smelting of Copper in the Swansea District, pp.115, 117.

The economic effects of the non-ferrous metallurgical industry were greater than the value of the metal produced. In 1740 the number of metalworkers was only two hundred, a number doubled only by 1770; however, the gross value of production and number of metalworkers was small in comparison with the allied industries of mining, shipping and services.[136] This is borne out by the fact that there was a general rise in the prosperity of West Glamorgan. At Neath, within the space of ten years, £16,699.15.4 was expended on wages, smelting, refining and freight. After the completion of a wagonway from nearby coal mines to Neath, £1,000 was collected annually from customs duty. Mackworth's enterprises were a boon to West Glamorgan, as contemporaries noted:

> The coal works and Work-Houses employ a great number of men, women, and children, to whom several thousand pounds are paid every year, which circulates in this neighbourhood, and other trade is thereby increased, the market much improved, and the rents better paid, as has been acknowledged by Sir Edward Mansel and others; the country receiving money for provisions.[137]

Prosperity and sustained economic growth continued to characterize West Glamorgan. In 1750 about half the copper produced in Great Britain originated around Swansea Bay.

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[136] G.O. Roberts, "The Development and Decline of the Non-Ferrous Smelting Industries in South Wales" in Industrial South Wales, 1750-1914, ed. W.E. Minchinton, pp. 133, 135-6.

[137] G.G. Francis, Smelting of Copper in the Swansea District, pp. 83-5.

Comparative economic stability prevailed as the demand for copper continued during periods of depression in other metallurgical industries. Moreover, the constant invention of new uses for the metal aided the industry to withstand unfavourable economic conditions.[138]

The iron industry suffered a serious decline in the first decades of the eighteenth century. In 1720 there were sixteen furnaces in South Wales, but only seven existed in 1740. Glamorgan possessed two of the seven furnaces, one at Neath and the other at Caerphilly, yielding a combined output of four hundred tons annually.[139] The decline of the South Wales iron industry corresponds to a general fall in production throughout the whole of Britain during the same period. National output in 1610 was over 180,000 tons, but had fallen to 17,350 tons by 1740.[140]

The reason usually presented for the decline of the iron industry in Wales is the alleged shortage of timber by the eighteenth century for the manufacture of charcoal; however, charcoal iron was still used in the middle of the nineteenth century for the manufacture of specialty products

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[138] W.E. Minchinton, ed., Industrial South Wales, p.X; R.O. Roberts, "The Development and Decline of the Non-Ferrous Smelting Industries in South Wales" in Industrial South Wales, ed. W.E. Minchinton, pp.136-7.

[139] W.E. Minchinton, ed., Industrial South Wales, p.XI; Rider and Trueman, South Wales, p.88; D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.136.

[140] F.J. North, Coal and the Coalfields of Wales, p.144.

and the demand for iron in general increased rapidly during the course of the eighteenth century. The major reason for the decline of the British iron industry was the success of the Swedish ironmasters in totally dominating the British market. Sweden was able to supply cheap and plentiful amounts of iron. Only in the middle of the eighteenth century,when importation of Swedish metals was totally disrupted by the action of the Seven Year's War,did the British iron industry experience a revival.[141]

Sporadic ventures were still possible. Sir Edward Mansell,encouraged by a momentary crisis in the Swedish iron trade,erected furnaces at Melin-y-Cwrt in 1718 and 1719 and some years later his son,for the same reason,built another in the Neath Valley;both enterprises were short-lived.[142] Immediate demands could spark entrepreneurial initiative,but this could not endure in the face of foreign competition. The ability to produce or supply cheap and plentiful amounts of iron,essential in satisfying British markets,simply did not exist.

The iron industry of the early eighteenth century suffered ills similiar to those characteristic of the woollen industry. Forges and furnaces were small and scattered.

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[141] Harry Scrivenor, History of the Iron Trade (London:Frank Cass,1967),pp.55,87.

[142] A.H.John,"Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate, 1700-1740",Economic History Review,XIII,1st series (1943),95.

throughout Glamorgan,and the constant search for adequate supplies of wood for the manufacture of charcoal tossed the tiny particles of industry pell-mell about the county. Mines, mills,furnaces and forges,many of them diminutive and independent ventures catering to local or sporadic upsurges in demand due to shortages,were strewn about the countryside with little or no attempt at integration or establishment of large concerns.[143]

Lack of sufficient capitalization posed a serious problem for the iron industry. The small amount of English capital was confined to the copper industry and local capital,limited to the landed gentry and wealthier yeomen, was not being applied in adequate quantities to industrial usages. Lack of capital also led to severalty of ownership in one or more tiny enterprises,but without the establishment of integrated industrial concerns or joint-stock companies.[144] In the early days of ironfounding in Glamorgan the vast majority of entrepreneurs were drawn from the ranks of the landed gentry. Much of the scattered nature of the early iron industry and lack of integration originated in the fact that it was common for coal and iron to be mined

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[143] A.H.John,"Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate, 1700-1740",Economic History Review,XIII,1st.series (1943), 93-5;T.S.Ashton,Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution (Manchester:Manchester University Press,2nd ed.,1951),p.22.

[144] A.H.John,"Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate, 1700-1740",Economic History Review,XIII,1st.series (1943), 93-5.

and smelted together on the estate,leading to the establishment of tiny estate-owned furnace and forge operations and the selling of coal in the "land-sale" or "sea-sale" markets. In fact,iron and coal ventures were carried on as part of estate management and a convenient method of supplementing the incomes of local gentry,especially in West Glamorgan. Moreover,it was common practice among landowners to relegate the management of industrial enterprises to the estate steward instead of being personally involved.[145]

The general crisis in the iron trade in the first decades of the eighteenth century had severe repercussions with relation to Glamorgan's landowner-industrialists. Mansells,Prices and Popkins were selling their interests to the copper masters under the strain of finding adequate capital to finance their ever-deepening collieries,the virtual disappearance of the iron trade and their inability to become competitively involved in the lucrative non-ferrous metallurgical industry,already dominated by West Country English capitalists. The coppermasters,unlike the numerous small investors in the iron trade,integrated these enterprises into their own expanding industrial concerns. Only on the most valuable mineral estates did the "sea-sale" coal trade,especially with relation to high quality anthracite,provide adequate justification for the continuation of

[145] J.U.Nef,Rise of the British Coal Industry,II,5; A.H.John,"Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate,1700-1740", Economic History Review,XIII,1st.series (1943),95.

mining activities. The gentry families supplemented their incomes instead by industrial rents, the leasing of mineral lands, dock facilities, wagonways and waterways, and the lending of available capital to individuals or companies.[146]

In the middle of the eighteenth century there was no viable group of native Welsh entrepreneurs heavily involved in industrial activities. English capital was concentrated in the non-ferrous metallurgical industry which was localized in the west and unfavourable conditions in the iron trade prevented investment in that sector. The phoenix of the Industrial Revolution in east Glamorgan, the iron industry, bears a stark relationship to the most traditional, but totally inadequate view of the Industrial Revolution in Wales:

> ...in 1760 there were no definite indications of an industrial future. The country was poor. There were no capital accumulations in the hands of any section of the community; there was no equipment...there was no large body of specialized labour with hereditary skill. As far as Wales is concerned we have no reason for revising what used to be the accepted view of the Industrial Revolution by insinuating that there was a solid basis for it long before.[147]

This traditional generalization infers that there were simply no pre-conditions to the Industrial Revolution

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[146] A.H.John, Industrial Development of South Wales, pp.36-7,23,46.

[147] J.F.Rees, Studies in Welsh History (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2nd ed., 1965), p.132.

throughout the whole of Wales, yet completely ignores the non-ferrous metallurgical and coalmining industries of West Glamorgan. While the iron industry was almost eliminated until the arrival of English capital and investors in the late seventeen-fifties, nevertheless iron was basically the victim of world-wide markets, a characteristic of that industry well after the industrialization of the region. Pre-conditions to the industrialization of South Wales are not figments of the imagination, but appear to have been clouded due to historical concentration upon the iron industry, a failure to cope with West Glamorgan and an apparent tendency to ignore the general economic conditions of the mid-eighteenth century.

Chapter V

The Industrial Revolution

In the period 1760 to 1830 the iron and smelting industries emerged to dominate the entire economic and social structure of Glamorgan. The process of industrialization resulted in the establishment of an essentially staple economy, dependent upon heavy production and the vagaries of world markets. Emphasis in this essay will be placed upon the iron industry which was characterized by a high concentration of labour and capital. The related industries of mining and refining were totally dominated by the large iron producers. The history of the iron industry during the period under analysis can be subdivided as follows: the foundation of the industry from 1760 to the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the "Great Iron Period" from 1815 to 1860, when iron was the staple of industrial Glamorgan.[148]

During the seventeen-fifties Glamorgan's iron industry was reborn. Between 1756 and 1757 Lewis and Company put into blast the furnaces at Hirwaun and Dowlais, motivated by the demand for iron generated during the Seven Year's War.[149] Lewis, owner of the Pentyrch and other small furnace and forge operations, secured the lease of properties composing the Merthyr district, including both minerals and coal for

[148] J.F. Rees, Studies in Welsh History, pp.132,136.

[149] T.S. Ashton, Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution, pp.132-3.

the low annual rental of £31.[150] In September of 1759 the future Dowlais giant was born. Eight men possessing £4,000 capital divided into £16 shares formed the initial partnership. John Guest, later to be the sole owner of the Dowlais works, operated as a sub-contractor until the seventeen-eighties, guaranteeing the partners a make of 700 tons per annum at the price of £2 10s. a ton.[151]

During this period in the development of the iron industry there was no single entrepreneur with sufficient capital to establish the gigantic concerns which would later characterize the Northern Outcrop. The larger furnace and forge operations were in this period governed by joint-stock companies and it was quite common for one entrepreneur to become involved in more than one venture through partnership or sub-contract. For example, Isaac Wilkinson was associated with three companies between 1757 and 1771. The fame of Wilkinson as an ironmaster and his technique of boring cannons cast in the solid enabled him and his partners to attract sufficient amounts of capital from Bristol investors and neighbouring Glamorgan ironmasters.[152] The mammoth Cyfarthfa works at Merthyr originated in a series of sub-contracts and agreements. Anthony Bacon, a wealthy merchant

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[150] Alan Birch, The Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, 1784-1879 (London: Cass, 1967), p.67.

[151] Ibid., pp.68-9.

[152] W.H. Chaloner, "Isaac Wilkinson, Potfounder" in Studies in the Industrial Revolution, ed. L.S. Pressnell, pp. 42, 45.

with numerous business connections in London and easy access to government contracts, began his Welsh ventures by securing land in the Merthyr district which involved no royalties. After the founding of the Cyfarthfa works Bacon expanded his control over nearby forges, furnaces and mining operations through a complex network of leases, partnerships and agreements. In reality, Bacon had succeeded in unifying a multitude of small iron concerns into one large operation, which fell like manna into the hands of the future "Iron King", Richard Crawshay. Bacon's business strategy is illustrated by the following agreement which he made with the ironmaster William Homfray. Homfray had to agree to honour certain committments:

> ...he could not erect any blast furnaces in Glamorgan for the purpose of casting or producing pig iron without the consent of Bacon, his heirs, or executors...to provide Bacon with all the castings to be made at prime cost...to do nothing which might be prejudicial to Anthony Bacon carrying on the Cyfarthfa furnace or any other which Bacon might erect at any time.[153]

The expansion of the iron industry in Glamorgan was largely due to the adoption of new methods of production, especially the utilization of coal for smelting purposes. In 1735 iron was successfully smelted with coke, but it lacked the necessary malleability for rolling; however, in 1783 Henry

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[153] Sir Lewis Namier, "Anthony Bacon, M.P. An Eighteenth Century Merchant" in Industrial South Wales, 1750-1914, ed. W. E. Minchinton, pp. 84-6; John P. Addis, The Crawshay Dynasty (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1957), pp. 2, 7-8, 10.

Cort produced malleable pig iron with coke by the infusion of oxygen during the smelting process. This method became known as "puddling" or "the Welsh method."[154] The puddling process soon became "the keystone of the industrial structure of the Glamorgan iron smelting district" and as early as 1790 it had completely superceeded the old forge operations at Merthyr Tudful.[155] Richard Crawshay, owner of the Cyfarthfa works, was the greatest propagandist of the puddling process, not merely through its application, but by successfully removing imperfections in the process.[156] To a large extent, therefore, the Northern Outcrop of Glamorgan was a centre of technological innovation.

Contrary to some views, the South Wales iron industry did not experience its re-birth and expansion solely because of the implementation of the puddling process and the use of coal for the manufacture of coke. Although the last decades of the eighteenth century witnessed victory over the "tyranny of wood and water" which had plagued massive production of iron, the upsurge in iron production in the middle of the century occurred at a time when charcoal was still the only viable source of energy. In fact, charcoal-fired furnaces were used well into the nineteenth century

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[154] Idris Jones, Modern Welsh History, pp. 181-2.

[155] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p. 42; A.H. John, Industrial Development of South Wales, p. 157.

[156] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p. 39.

in the manufacture of iron for tinplate. Before the establishment of the puddling process at the Cyfarthfa works, the men worked three days a week at the furnaces and spent the remainder of their time cutting wood.[157]

The iron industry of eighteenth century Glamorgan was favourably affected by the increased demand for iron production arising due to intermittant wars. During the late seventeen-fifties the major source of Britain's iron supply, Sweden, was effectively isolated. Moreover, British furnaces and forges could not produce sufficient supplies of cheap and plentiful iron. Increased demand due to war and technological innovation served to boost Glamorgan's iron production soon after the first new ironworks were founded. Anthony Bacon applied Wilkinson's method of boring cannon cast in the solid during the early seventeen-sixties. Solid castings were shipped from Merthyr where they were bored at a mill near a newly-constructed wharf, significantly entitled the Cannon Wharf.[158]

War production had profound effects upon the re-establishment of the British iron industry. In a list of furnaces for Great Britain compiled in 1790 it is indicated that

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[157] E.G.Bowen, Wales, p.209; Charles Wilkins, The History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate, and Other Trades of Wales (Merthyr Tudful: Joseph Williams, 1903), p.50; Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p.166.

[158] E.L.Chappell, History of the Port of Cardiff (Cardiff: Priory Press, 1939), p.55.

eleven furnaces were erected during the course of the Seven Year's War, but only four during the succeeding eleven years of peace. In 1788 the total production of British bar iron was 33,000 tons, but in 1791 puddled and bar iron together totalled 50,000 tons. Pig iron produced in South Wales during the year 1788 was only 18% of the total British production, but by 1796 this had risen to slightly over 27%.[159] The trend established in the iron industry was one in which the demand for ordnance resulted in intermittant periods of depression and heavy production. For example, in 1766 the demand for ordnance coincided with a rise in the price of iron which rocketted production at the Cyfarthfa works; however, during the years between 1783 and 1785 the iron trade was depressed as the productive capacity reached during the American War was greater than that required to meet peace-time demands.[160]

The use of coal for the smelting process tended to concentrate the iron industry in the Merthyr district and drive the smaller operations in the county out of existence. After the implementation of Cort's process of puddling and rolling, integrated coal and iron concerns dominated the

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[159] T.S. Ashton, Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution, p. 135, 97; D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p. 139.

[160] T.S. Ashton, Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution, pp. 136, 139.

economic life of the coalfields.[161] As in the case of Lancashire cottons and Yorkshire woollens and worsteds, Glamorgan's iron industry was heavily concentrated in a coal belt and developed into the leading sector of the local economy.

The large integrated companies which characterized industry on the Northern Outcrop was necessitated by the fact that it was cheaper and more convenient to mine, smelt and refine as one operation. Ironmasters greatly increased their profits through the inclusion of mining coal, ironstone and limestone as part of their smelting and refining activities. Middlemen, so prevalent in the early days of iron-founding, were rendered obsolete by the end of the eighteenth century.[162] The consumption of raw materials and the productive capacity of the ironworks ensured that the large integrated mining and smelting concern was the only viable unit of production. For example, at Dowlais in [illegible] eight tons of coal were needed to smelt 1 Cwt. of pig iron. As each furnace at Dowlais produced twenty tons of pig iron each week, the weekly consumption of coal per furnace stood at 3,200 tons.[163] Rentals and leases were carefully worded in

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[161] E. J. Jones, _Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales_, p. 47; T. S. Ashton and Joseph Sykes, _The Coal Industry of the Eighteenth Century_ (New York: Kelly, 2nd ed., 1967), p. 6.

[162] D. Morgan Rees, "The Industrialization of Glamorgan", _Glamorgan Historian_, I (N.D.), 25.

[163] Charles Wilkins, _History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate, and Other Trades of Wales_, p. 297.

order to avoid misunderstandings between landowners and ironmasters. Bacon's mineral lease at Cyfarthfa in 1765 included the right to mine both coal and ironstone. In 1763 the sponsors of the Dowlais Company secured the lease of "all the coal, iron and stone" under the lands being rented to them.[164]

The massiveness of Cyfarthfa and Dowlais either drove the smaller furnace and forge operations out of existence or forced them to consolidate in order to remain competitive. In 1782, John Miers of Neath purchased the small ironworks at Ynys y Pensluch, Ynys y Gerwn, Afon and Dulais, uniting them into one large company under a single proprietor. His son later married into the Homfray family, owner of the Plymouth-works in the Merthyr district, and eventually tied the two concerns together by purchasing pig iron from the Plymouth works and carrying on the finishing process at Neath. Miers eventually became a partner in the Plymouth works.[165] In a similiar manner the Melingriffith works grew into a large integrated concern. The proprietors of Melingriffith purchased outright in 1805 the ironworks at Radyr-Pentyrch and Tongwynlais in one transaction.[166]

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[164] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.141.

[165] John Lloyd, The Early History of the Old South Wales Iron Works, 1760-1840 (London: Bedford Press, 1906), pp. 104-5.

[166] William Rees, Industry Before the Industrial Revolution (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1968), I, 300.

A severe problem faced by the Welsh ironmasters was the fragile structure of the iron trade,subject to periods of heavy demand and intense depression. This fragility was further aggravated by the immense output of the ironworks and competition with other British iron centres. In 1800 the average make of the Glamorgan furnaces ranged from 1,100 to 1,250 tons per annum,while the larger furnaces erected at Cyfarthfa yielded 2,200 tons.[167] The Bishop of Llandaff reported that there were forty-four furnaces in his diocese in the year 1806,producing 73,580 tons of pig iron and 45,000 tons of bar iron annually.[168]

The days of sporadic ventures,sometimes on a diminutive scale,were destroyed with the domination of the iron trade by large integrated coal and iron concerns. Catering to local and West Country markets and possession of limited capital resources was a thing of the past. The ideal iron-master was forced by circumstance to keep large stocks of iron in order to meet periodic upsurges in demand and because risk-bearing and waiting was greater than in other enterprises,he had to control immense capital resources to meet any contingency.[169] The success of Welsh iron was

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[167] A.H.John,Industrial Development of South Wales, p.154.

[168] Alan Birch,Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry,p.41.

[169] T.S.Ashton,Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution,p.227.

partially due to the manner in which business was conducted. One method of meeting periodic upsurges in demand was keeping a stock in London as the Crawshays did in George Yard, making it the centre of Cyfarthfa market operations. London business connections grew to such proportions that by the eighteen-thirties commission agents in the city were responsible for selling most of the iron produced in the Welsh coalfields, and other sales agents were established in the ports of Bristol and Liverpool to deal with foreign consignments. Associations between the Northern Outcrop and the London business community were so strong that a London brokerage house, Bateman and Bramwell, managed a sale of bar iron from Cyfarthfa to the forges of Aberdare, a few miles distant.[170]

During periods of depression in the iron trade, the competition from other British centres forced some degree of unity among the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop. Although in times of prosperity the relationship between the ironmasters was marked by "unrestrained competition", adverse conditions occasionally led them to form a coalition against their common enemies, whether competitors from other iron-producing regions or labour unrest. For example, in 1802 the Welsh Quarterly Association commenced sittings in an attempt to set standard prices and control conditions of

[170] John P. Addis, The Crawshay Dynasty, pp. 18, 98-9.

sale. It was hoped by the ironmasters that some degree of unity would ease the effects of depression in the iron trade and eliminate the labour unrest which had plagued the coalfield in 1800 and 1801.[171]

In the period between 1800 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars the coalfield was hit by a spate of intermittant depressions in the iron trade. Depression occurred in 1800-1801, 1808,1810-11,1813,1816 and 1817. New uses for iron partially compensated for the lack of sales,but the industry did not fully recover its vitality until the eighteen-twenties because war-time production had so outstripped the demand that huge stockpiles of iron remained unsold.[172] During this period a dangerous price war developed between the Welsh ironmasters,concerned with gaining what was left of a diminishing market. Attempts to deal with the situation met with failure. In 1810 disaster hit the coalfield due to the policy of having the market "open to everyone to sell as he likes",but in 1813 and 1814 there was a general desire to lower the price of iron from between 10s. to 20s. at Cardiff and Newport. A gentleman's agreement concerning price controls continued until 1824 when stability returned to the iron trade for a short period,ending the meetings of the

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[171] John P. Addis, The Crawshay Dynasty, pp.64, 17-18.

[172] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, pp.63-4.

Welsh ironmasters at Newport.[173]

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, especially immediately following the Napoleonic Wars, the Welsh ironmasters were involved in a deadly conflict with their confreres in Staffordshire. The South Wales ironmasters, led by Cyfarthfa and Dowlais, were attempting to destroy the competitive power of the Staffordshire ironmasters by gaining as much control as possible over the iron market. In 1816 one of John Guest's correspondents accurately remarked that the iron trade would eventually concentrate in South Wales and despite the fact that the Staffordshire ironmasters were prating that "they would rather give their coal and mines for nothing than be driven out of the market", their rate of bankruptcy was rapidly increasing. It was sheer folly for the Staffordshire ironmasters to become involved in a price war in view of the vast capital resources of Dowlais and Cyfarthfa. Their policy of lowering the market price in order to capture immediate market possibilities before their Welsh counterparts resulted in their eventual failure; these policies were correctly chided by a correspondent of the Dowlais company:

> Scarcity of orders is the reason assigned, for the Staffordshire reduction: What fools! Reducing the price will not increase the

[173] John P. Addis, The Crawshay Dynasty, pp.67,64; T.S. Ashton, Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution, p.178.

orders; lowering the make is the only answer.[174]

After successfully competing with the Staffordshire ironmasters a new policy was adopted on the Northern Outcrop in order to maintain a healthy margin of profit during a depression in the iron trade, that of lessoning the production of iron and retaining the pre-depression market price. This was readily agreed upon in order to prevent harmful competition among the South Wales ironmasters. Lessoning the make and maintaining a stable price characterized the iron industry during the troubled decade of the eighteen-thirties. At that time, the local ironmasters association reappeared and in 1836, resolutions were passed at Newport lessoning the production of pig iron by 20%. The profitable price of £10 per ton was retained, but a total of twenty-two furnaces were blown out.[175]

The period following the Napoleonic Wars was the most dramatic in the history of the Glamorgan iron industry. With the exception of the Swansea district iron was the major element in the industrial economy. The advent of the railway and new uses for iron found in the growing industrial towns and cities assured a steady flow of products from the

[174] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p. 152; Gilbert Gilpin to James Wise, Shifnal, 12 Dec., 1819 in Iron in the Making: Dowlais Iron Company Letters, 1782-1860 (Cardiff: Glamorgan County Council, 1960), Ed. Madelaine Elsas, p. 5.

[175] T.S. Ashton, Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution, p. 178.

begrimed and congested Northern Outcrop of Glamorgan.

The non-ferrous metallurgical industry of West Glamorgan had grown steadily during the course of the eighteenth century, but from the seventeen-sixties to the end of the Napoleonic Wars the smelting of copper emerged as the major staple of the industrial economy. Swansea became the Merthyr Tudful of West Glamorgan, performing the functions of a thriving port, a major smelting and manufacturing centre, and the chief entrepôt for the buying and selling of non-ferrous ores.

During the middle of the eighteenth century the demand for copper increased due to the discovery of new uses for the metal, the most important being the utilization of copper sheathing for marine construction. In 1768 a [illegible] vein of copper ore was struck at Parys Mountain in Anglesey and Swansea, already an established centre for the importation of Cornish ores, became a mecca for the importation of ores from North Wales.[176] The strike at Parys Mountain facilitated the departure of West Glamorgan from its dependence on the smelting of lead at Neath, small copper and brass enterprises and the export of anthracite coal. Thomas Williams, owner of the Mona Mines in Anglesey and monopolizer of half the copper trade in Britain, broke the hold of the Cornishmen on Swansea's copper smelting industry by constructing the Paris

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[176] W.E.Minchinton, ed., Industrial South Wales, p.XIII.

Mines Company in the town. He profited greatly through the smelting of his own ore and managed to dominate the copper industry of West Glamorgan during the last decades of the eighteenth century.[177] The arrival of Williams brought the influence of Birmingham (the centre of the British copper industry at this time) to bear upon the Swansea district, which became a magnet for the migration of capital. For example, in the seventeen-nineties the Rose Copper Company was formed in Swansea and the Crown Copper Company was established at Neath; both were subsidiaries of Birmingham metallurgical concerns.[178]

The control of the copper industry by Birmingham industrialists and the Mona Mines Company was a transitory development. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Cornish ore miners and smelters Vivian and Grenfell began their vast enterprises in West Glamorgan. Vivian established the copper works at Penclawdd, west of Swansea, in 1800, but by 1810 he had enlarged the Penclawdd works and established the largest copper concern in Britain, the Hafod Works. During the same decade a local family involved in commercial enterprises throughout the eighteenth century, the Morrises of Clasemont, were rapidly expanding their smelting activities in and around the environs of their own industrial creation,

[177] Henry Hamilton, The English Copper and Brass Industries to 1800, pp. 153-4.

[178] Ibid., p. 236.

Morriston.[179] The traditional backbone of West Glamorgan's industrial economy, local gentry and Cornishmen, regained their domination over the non-ferrous metallurgical industry.

The industrial economy of West Glamorgan in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was characterized by the allocation of large amounts of exogenous capital into large integrated concerns which combined mining, smelting and manufacturing in the same operation. Activities were varied and the export trade in anthracite coal provided an adjunct to smelting. For example, Harris, Lockwood and Company at Landore also developed their own coal mines and the Morris interests extended into collieries and smaller manufacturing concerns involved in the production of brass and brass wire.[180]

Although copper was the effective staple of West Glamorgan, the export trade in coal and the manufacture of lead, brass, zinc, tinplate and chemicals reveals a more diversified economic structure than in the iron centre of the east. The manufacture of zinc provided a vibrant subsidiary for the copper magnates, serving to fill the gap left in the economy of West Glamorgan by the diminishing importance of lead. Swansea witnessed the establishment of its first zinc works

[179] G.G.Francis, The Smelting of Copper in the Swansea District, pp.122, 126, 100.

[180] Norman Lewis Thomas, The Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages, p.70.

at Middle Bank in 1777. Early in the nineteenth century when zinc began to replace the more expensive copper for roofing purposes, the additional demand gave this fledgling industry greater vitality.[181] Diversification resulted in an economic structure which was less fragile than the iron centre of east Glamorgan, a region almost wholly dependent upon the vagaries of the iron market. West Glamorgan was less susceptable to bouts of severe depression and subsequent mass unemployment and stoppages of mining and smelting activities.

The manufacture of tinplate underwent considerable expansion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Melingriffith was a major centre. According to Malkin in 1802 these works were "perhaps the largest in the kingdom" and produced tinplate of the highest quality. Approximately 13,000 tin plates were sent to Bristol each year in boxes of 225 plates each, while a trade in bolt-iron for shipbuilding developed from the scrap left over after the manufacturing process.[182] Other works prospered at Treforest, Margam and Maesteg; Treforest was a subsidiary of the Crawshay enterprises. The tinplate industry emerged as a child of the iron industry, but prospered largely due to the proximity of ironworks geared to the production of bar iron and the wealth of local forests to produce the preferred

[181] D. Trevor Davies, Economic Development of Swansea and the Swansea District, pp.86-8.

[182] Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, p.97.

iron smelted from charcoal. Charcoal iron was needed to produce the highest quality of tinplate in the early days of the industry.[183]

Large integrated companies, substantial capital resources and a wealth of raw materials were crucial elements in the establishment of the tinplate industry; however, the eventual concentration of the industry in West Glamorgan was largely due to the adoption of new methods of production. In the early days of the tinplate industry the process known as "black pickling" tended to draw the industry to the Swansea district. This process utilized quantities of vitriol which was produced as a by-product of the non-ferrous metallurgical industry.[184] West Glamorgan's vast supplies of anthracite coal further ensured the concentration of the tinplate industry in that region. In the eighteen-sixties the Siemans-Martin process of producing "mild steel" from anthracite at Landore clinched the position of West Glamorgan as the world's largest producer of tinplate.[185] Near the end of the period under analysis it was evident that tinplate was fast expanding into the staple of West Glamorgan's industrial economy.

[183] Hilary M. Thomas, "Margam Estate Management, 1765-1860", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 26; Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, pp. 166-7.

[184] Idris Jones, Modern Welsh History, p. 185.

[185] H. O'Neill, "Siemans Steelmaking at Swansea, 1869-1888", Metals and Materials, III, No. 3 (1969), 313-15.

Coal,like tinplate,emerged into maturity under the tutelage of the major staples of the county's industrial economy. The coal industry had its humble origins in local domestic consumption. At Llangynwyd coal was the domestic fuel for centuries. It was easy to obtain since many coal measures "crop" or rise to the surface in that district. In the Merthyr district and in the Rhondda Valleys farmer's wives would send their servants to cut coal for household use in nearby valleys.[186] When coalmining began to expand in the seventeen-sixties due to the demands generated by the iron industry,ironmasters were the principal customers. With the exception of the "sea-sale" trade of West Glamorgan, local farmers were the next best customers. At Merthyr Tudful,Bacon and Guest would often sell their surplus to neighbouring farmers who would sometimes exchange a sack of lime for one of coal,paying an additional halfpenny per sack for the mining and cutting.[187]

Aside from the mines owned by the ironmasters,ventures were generally small and geared to the "land-sale" trade for local consumption. As little capital and equipment was necessary,this increased the incentive given to small private ventures,occasionally an addition to the farm or small business. One pit in Llangynwyd employed but a solitary

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[186] T.C.Evans,<u>History of Llangynwyd Parish</u>,p.50; Davies and Edwards,<u>Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century</u>,p.90.

[187] Davies and Edwards,<u>Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century</u>,pp.85-6.

collier and a windsman and in the Rhondda the average working was a drift-hole where about half a dozen men found employment, commonly seasonal or part-time. The Bodringallt Level in the Rhonddas typifies this type of undertaking:

> It never employed more than half a dozen men, who were 'partners' in this small venture. Two or three worked as hewers while others conveyed the coal on a sledge...to the coal depot...The carrier was expected to bring twenty loads a day to the depot where it was sold for sixpence a pwn - about two or three hundred pounds. Small coal was sold at the local smithy at twopence a pwn, the same amount was paid to the hewer for cutting it. Local coal was taken by pack pony in all directions.[188]

Many of the early coal mines were founded by entrepreneurs of an extremely varied background. In Llangynwyd the Reverend Mr. Parry of Corlanna was the owner of a small pit and Thomas Jones, a currier from Abergavenny in Monmouthshire, invested in a small enterprise which he leased from Llewelyn David, a small farmer in the Lower Rhondda who possessed a small level which he worked for personal use and local sales.[189] In the Pontardawe region of north west Glamorgan men of all classes of society invested in coalmining activities of various magnitudes. The valuation of collieries in the parish of Llangiwg, taken from the accounts of the parish vestry held on the 6th of August 1802, reveals a flurry of small coalmining ventures:

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[188] Ashton and Sykes, The Coal Industry of the Eighteenth Century, pp. 89-96.

[189] T.C. Evans, History of Llangynwyd Parish, pp. 26, 53.

R. Gough Aubrey,Esq.:Cwmtyrch Level,£20
Richard Parsons:Mines Work,£20
Thomas Sheasby & Co.:Brin Morgan Level,£10
William Arthur,Esq. & Co.:£6
John Jones:Gwaincaegurwen Level,£1
William Morgan:Plas Mouth Level,5s
Evan Watkin:Mynydd Bach Level,2s
John Henry:Coed Y Folde Level,2s [190]

According to the accounts of the Llangiwg vestry it appears that anyone from local squires to small farmers could be profitably involved in the coal industry of north west Glamorgan,most mining enterprises were geared to the local "land-sale" trade or individual sales to the smelters in the south.

The export trade in coal and the presence of numerous smalting concerns in West Glamorgan gave a greater incentive to become involved in coalmining activities. Most of the substantial entrepreneurs catering to export and industry appear to have been drawn from the ranks of the lesser gentry and large yeoman farmers. Some of the most noteworthy were Thomas Price of Penlle'gaer,Mathew Price and Robert Popkins of Llanrhidian. Gabriall Powell,the estate agent of the Duke of Beaufort,obtained a lease at Llanmorlais and later leased the Salthouse Pill from Sir Richard Mansell in order to export his coal.[191]

With the exception of the smaller pits geared to domestic consumption and the "sea-sale" trade,the coal

[190] John Henry Davies,History of Pontardawe and District,p.105.

[191] W.Gerwyn Thomas,"The Coal Mining Industry in West Glamorgan",Glamorgan Historian,VI (1969),206-7.

industry during the eighteenth century was seldom separated from smelting activities. As has been previously stated, coal was a major factor in the rise of the integrated concern in the county. The ironworks at Pentyrch had farms, collieries, ironstone quarries, furnaces and forges all included in the same operation.[192] On the Margam lands in West Glamorgan the copper works at Taibach and Cwmavon opened collieries at Goytre, Morfa, Oakwood, Argoed, Mynydd Bychan and elsewhere.[193]

It was common for West Glamorgan industrialists to become directly involved in the coal trade. George Fox and Peter Price, the Quaker ironmasters who acquired the Neath Abbey Ironworks in 1792, soon afterwards took lease on the minerals contained in the nearby Duffryn estate and formed the Neath Abbey Coal Company. Some of the gentry families previously involved in smelting enterprises began to concentrate upon feeding the growing demands of the "sea-sale"

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[192] J.B.Davies, "The Parish of Pentyrch", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 84. The landowner-industrialist of West Glamorgan lasted well into the nineteenth century, the most spectacular family being the Morrises of Clasemont. Although it has become accepted that economic pressures during the middle of the eighteenth century forced many of this class to withdraw from industrial enterprise it appears that the coal trade, perhaps due to the small amount of capital necessary to become involved and the fact that their lands were rich enough in coal to avoid the taking of leases, attracted sufficient numbers of the landowner classes. In fact, they drew large profits from the selling of coal and granting of leases to smelting and manufacturing companies.

[193] Hilary M. Thomas, "Margam Estate Management, 1765-1860", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 26.

trade. For example, Herbert Mackworth tended to neglect his father's copper works in favour of catering to the export trade in coal. Between 1743 and 1744 he used only 700 tons of coal in smelting, but shipped 3,000 tons.[194]

Smelting by far consumed the greatest amount of coal mined in Glamorgan until the middle of the nineteenth century; however, the increasing demands in the national market for domestic consumption was already beginning to tip the scales in favour of a vast export market by the end of the eighteenth century. In 1799 139,486 tons of bituminous coal and 13,319 tons of anthracite were exported, almost entirely from the ports of West Glamorgan.[195] The coal industry of all South Wales had grown to such proportions that they were supplying the following markets:

> the consumption of a great portion of seven counties: - about 58 blast furnaces: - about 50 iron forges and rolling mills: - and 10 large tin and copper works, whereas one copper works is said to consume about 70 tons of coal per day when in full work; besides vast exports...in the West of England, the western counties of Wales, Ireland, etc.[196]

In West Glamorgan there was a large degree of independence displayed by individual coalowners, but in the east the coalmining industry experienced much of its early growth

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[194] W. Gerwyn Thomas, "The Coal Mining Industry in West Glamorgan", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 206-7.

[195] D. Trevor Davies, Economic Development of Swansea and the Swansea District, p. 38; James Fox, General View, p. 11.

[196] Walter Davies, General View, II, 84.

directly under the influence of the ironmasters. The larger coalmining enterprises were almost totally dominated by the integrated iron companies and it was impossible for the individually owned collieries to acheive any degree of sustained growth and expansion. Although the coal industry of east and mid Glamorgan was brought into being largely under the tutelage of the iron industry,it was being purposely stunted by the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop.

Much of the bulk of Glamorgan's coal staple originated in the Rhondda Valleys. The first significant pit operations were established by Walter Coffin,a wealthy tanner from Bridgend,Jeremiah Homfray,relative of the ironfounding family of Penydarren;and Dr. Richard Griffiths,a local country gentleman. Griffiths expanded his operations by linking his coal lands by road and private canal to the Glamorganshire Canal in order to gain access to wider export markets. Coffin,after purchasing the Dinas Uchaf Farm,laid the foundations of the famed Dinas pits.[197]

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[197] E.D.Lewis,The Rhondda Valleys,pp.40-1. The theory that all of Wales lacked a middle class which was active in commercial and industrial enterprise appears to be entirely false with relation to the coal industry. In West Glamorgan both squires and yeomen were extremely active,as well as merchants at the ports of Neath and Swansea. The participation of parsons,tanners,curriers and local farmers certainly indicates willing entrepreneurship on the part of local men. Moreover,the origins of many of the independent coalowners seems to lie in market towns like Abergavenny and Bridgend. This lends credulity to the theory that the coal industry was dominated by Welshmen when it became the major staple product of industrial Glamorgan. Unlike the iron industry,that of coal was not the sole result of exogenous capital investment,perhaps because of the relatively small amount of capital needed to engage in pit operations.

Production in the Rhondda Valleys appears to have increased quite rapidly, but the independent colliery owners were hampered in their desire to meet expanding market demands by the ironmasters, who then held absolute control over the coal industry. In 1810 a series of meetings were held by the independent colliery owners of Glamorgan under the auspices of Coffin and Homfray. Their major grievance was the duty placed on all coal shipped east of the Holme Islands, lying outside Pennarth Harbour, Cardiff. This duty solely benefitted the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop and meant that the majority of Welsh coal was shipped down the Monmouthshire Canal to the thriving coal and iron port of Newport.[198] The ironmasters possessed the power of life and death over the coalowners during the period when the coal trade depended upon the amount of coal the ironmasters could spare. For example, during the recession of 1827 the ironmasters released large quantities of reserve coal into the market in order to retain their margin of profit at a time when they were blowing out their own furnaces. This policy undercut the coalowner's prices and caused massive unemployment in that industry.[199] In effect, the fledgling coal industry of Glamorgan was impotent in the light of the control of the ironmasters. Glamorgan's coal was only to be

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[198] E.D. Lewis, _The Rhondda Valleys_, p.132.

[199] David Jones, "The Scotch Cattle and Their Black Domain", _Welsh History Review_, V (1970-1), 227.

used for the purposes of making iron while the neighbouring county, Monmouth, dominated by the powerful elite of the Northern Outcrop, was benefitting from the export market.

By the eighteen-thirties Glamorgan's coal industry was straining at the bonds the ironmasters had placed upon it. In 1830 114,000 tons of coal were shipped down the Glamorganshire Canal to Cardiff where the Rhondda coal pioneer Walter Coffin bought wharves, establishing a selling agency and began to compete successfully with Monmouthshire coal in the market west of the Holme Islands. Coffin was especially successful in Ireland where Rhondda coal had acheived the status of "celebrated."[200] The Rhondda coal monster broke loose in 1831 when, under intense pressure by the independent coal-owners, the tax on coal shipped east of the Holme Islands was removed. This meant the penetration of Glamorgan's vast coal reserves and access to the lucrative markets of Bristol and London. Within two years port activity at Cardiff had rendered dock facilities obsolete, congesting traffic on the Glamorganshire Canal; and the trade of Monmouthshire coal and the port of Newport was forced into a subordinate position. In the year 1835 the Dinas pits alone were producing 50,000 tons of coal and sending it by tramroad and canal to Cardiff in order to meet the demands of the large eastern cities.[201]

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[200] D. Morgan Rees, "The Industrialization of Glamorgan", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 23.

[201] E.D. Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, p.133; D. Morgan Rees, "The Industrialization of Glamorgan", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 23.

This signalled the advent of the coal staple which became the major industry of Glamorgan during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The high quality of steam coal in Glamorgan and the increase in rail transport assured a prosperous market.

To describe the industrial economy of Glamorgan as a staple economy is justifiable. The exploitation of point resources to meet immediate demands meant that certain sectors of the economy were to pre-dominate for comparatively short periods of time. As it was "more profitable to concentrate capital and labour upon them than to spread the available resources over a wider range of enterprises", Glamorgan has been plagued by "a lack of industrial balance and consequently a danger that some change of circumstance would plunge the community into depression." [202] In fact, even when an established staple was experiencing a period of active expansion, the entire community would find itself unemployed if the staple product suffered a slight recession. Except in the limited area of Swansea Bay there was little evidence of diversification; and due to the cumulative effects of recession upon the major staple of Glamorgan, iron, subsidiary industries such as coalmining, quarrying and the service industries were adversely affected as well. The

[202] J.F.Rees, Studies in Welsh History, p.130.

entire staple economic structure was subject to the vagaries of world markets. It was governed by bust and boom, by prosperity and deep depression:

> South Wales has been all along a region of the heavy industries...iron, coal and tinplate have all enjoyed special advantages and have grown to dimensions only to be justified by access to a world market. With the shrinking of that market, distress was bound to emerge.[203]

[203] J.F.Rees, Studies in Welsh History, p.146.

Chapter VI.

Transportation and Communications

Before the flowering of industry transportation and communications facilities in Glamorgan were primitive and undeveloped. Except for the tiny ports engaged in the coastal trade the county was isolated from the external world. The Industrial Revolution proved the inadequacy of Glamorgan's transit networks and directed the energy and resources of the county into vast programmes of improvement. By the end of our period the isolation of centuries was broken. Glamorgan's industrial centres had become targets for turnpikes and canals and the major ports melting pots for products, people and ideas to penetrate into Wales.

In the early eighteenth century roads were geared to driving herds of cattle out of the country and the carriage of small shipments of agricultural products to the coastal ports. Travel was limited to necessary excursions out of the county to English roads leading to large metropolitan centres of business and administration.[204] Markets were difficult to reach and long distances over poor roads hampered the drovers as their stock often deteriorated before they reached their destination.[205] Travel for pleasure, interest, or visitation was shunned. In 1774 Thomas Wyndham, an English traveller, remarked that all of Wales was cut off from the

[204] E.G. Bowen, Wales, p.221; Thomas Bevan, "Glamorgan Communications", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 150.

[205] D.J. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, pp.90-1.

paths of normal human intercourse:

> ...while the English roads are crowded with travelling parties, the Welsh are so rarely visited, that the author did not meet with a single party during his six week's journey through Wales.[206]

Before the canal era the produce of mine and smelter was carried to the ports mainly on the backs of mules. Occasionally, horses were employed, but often small loads of coal found their way to market in baskets atop women's heads.[207] Difficult access to port facilities, shortages of food and supplies in the newly industrialized highland regions and the inability of farmers to market their produce in frontier industrial establishments led to demands for new and improved means of transportation.

The Vale squires were foremost in promoting turnpike construction, both as an improved method of marketing the produce of their estates and because turnpike trusts provided excellent opportunities for investment. In the years 1762 and 1763 meetings were held in Swansea at which turnpike commissioners were appointed to provide a major road through the county, linking Cardiff with the Severn ferries in the east and Swansea in the west. The first turnpike act affecting Glamorgan was passed in 1764 and a later amend-

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[206] Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, A Gentleman's Tour Through Monmouthshire and Wales in the Months of June and July, 1774 (London: T. Evans, 1775), p.2.

[207] E.J. Jones, Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales, p.64; Norman Lewis Thomas, Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages, p.197.

ment divided the county into five trusts:Cardiff,Cowbridge, Bridgend,Neath and Swansea. Each trust had powers "to raise capital and make charges by gates and toll-bars for the more effectively making and improving the roads of Glamorgan."[208] The main turnpike between Cardiff and Swansea was completed by the end of the seventeen-sixties. It spanned the Vale of Glamorgan and connected the most important markets of Cowbridge and Bridgend. Between 1771 and 1780 it was the aim of the turnpike trusts to construct feeder lines,joining the smaller market towns with the main road. After the completion of the Vale turnpike the major aim of the road promoters was an elaborate east-west transit system spanning the whole of South Wales. In 1789 the South Wales Association for the Improvement of Roads was formed with the goal of building a London to Milford road in order to tie the economy of South Wales to that of the metropolis. Glamorgan's main turnpike network was found to be so valuable to the county's economy that applications to parliament for road improvement totalled £1,200 in the early seventeen-nineties.[209]

Despite the terrain,Glamorgan's turnpikes were kept in excellent condition by the trustees, but the cost of repair

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[208] William Rees,Cardiff:A History of the City (Cardiff:The Corporation of the City of Cardiff,2nd ed., 1969),p.224;Thomas Bevan,"Glamorgan Communications", Glamorgan Historian,I (N.D.),151-3;Idris Jones,Modern Welsh History,p.191.

[209] Thomas Bevan,"Glamorgan Communications", Glamorgan Historian,I (N.D.),153.

and administration was enormous. The administrative structure was also a hindrance. As the turnpike trusts were lucrative investments for the local squires, tolls were high and the cost of travel and transport expensive. For example, the cost of personal travel between London and Swansea in 1783 was £26.7.6 one way. Moreover, the toll on coaches, 6d. in most counties, was 1s. in Glamorgan. The turnpike acts were a bane as well as a blessing for farmers and travellers as they contained uniform minimum charges: 6d. for every beast of draught with a vehicle and 2d. without, 20d. per score of oxen and 10d. per score of sheep, and double tolls were charged on Sunday.[210]

The industrialization of Glamorgan had profound effects upon transportation. In 1767 Anthony Bacon, hampered by the tracks over which his pack ponies were forced to carry iron, persuaded the farmers of the Taff Valley to unite with him in pressing for the construction of a turnpike from Merthyr to Cardiff, following the course of the Taff River.[211] Difficulties in obtaining food and supplies in the frontier highland regions, and the need for easy access to ports and market distribution centres, resulted in the encirclement of the county by a network of inter-connecting turnpikes from

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[210] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, pp.93-4; Davies and Edwards, Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century, p.31; Thomas Bevan, "Glamorgan Communications", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 153.

[211] James Fox, General View, p.191; Davies and Edwards, Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century, p.97.

the late seventeen-sixties to the late seventeen-nineties. Thus, a road was laid from Abergavenny to Swansea, via Merthyr, across the highlands and down the Vale of Neath, cutting twenty-seven miles from the old Merthyr to Swansea route, via Cardiff. This new road joined Cardiff to the new mining and smelting centre of Aberdare. Aberdare, in the centre of the uplands, was thus associated with the ports of Cardiff and Swansea, as well as the agriculturally rich Vale of Neath.[212]

The expansion of the iron industry in the late eighteenth century and the increasing volume of export commodities could not be accommodated by Glamorgan's turnpikes. Canal construction was the only effective means of coping with the ironmaster's concerns of cost, speed and volume. Moreover, it was of paramount importance to the ironmasters to be able to reach markets before their competitors. Promoted by the ironmasters Crawshay, Guest, Hill and Homfray, the proposal for constructing a canal was put forth by a private bill in 1790 and the Company of the Proprietors of the Glamorgan Canal Navigation was formed. It was their intention that the proposed canal would be the sole outlet for their industrial enterprises.[213] There was no shortage of capital or investers in the canal company. Eager to reap benefits from the industry of north Glamorgan and the fringes of Brecknockshire, merchants, attorneys and bankers

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[212] Walter Davies, General View, II, 373-5.

[213] William Rees, Cardiff, pp. 239, 232.

from the thriving town of Brecon were prominent investors and promoters of the original company charter. Messrs. Powell,Jones and Powell of Brecon solicited the bill in parliament and Wilkins and Co.,also of Brecon,were the sole official company bankers.[214] The largest contributors to the initial £60,000 capital were the Glamorgan ironmasters:the Crawshays raised £18,000,the Harfords of Melingriffith £6,000,the owners of Penydarren £2,500,of Dowlais £1,500 and of Plymouth £1,500. The remaining capital was raised from local businessmen and landowners,and from the merchant and professional class of Brecon.[215]

The Glamorganshire Canal was completed in 1798. Rising to a height of 568 feet above sea level at the Cyfarthfa works,the canal by 1793 reached a length of twelve miles to Pontypridd. Two years later it was extended another twelve miles to Cardiff. In 1798 two more miles were added which ran the canal directly to the coast. The total length of the canal was twenty-six miles and it contained fifty-one locks and up to mile-long quays for loading and discharging cargoes.[216] From its inception the Glamorganshire canal was an efficient operation,providing the speed and bulk capacity necessary for the iron industry. Barges on the canal re-

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[214] John Lloyd,Early History of the Old South Wales Iron Works,pp.45-6.

[215] Charles Hadfield,The Canal Age (Newton Abbot: David and Charles,1968),p.43.

[216] C.J.O.Evans,Glamorgan,pp.217,338.

quired one horse in charge of a man and a boy and carried up to twenty-four tons at the rate of two miles per hour,a feat previously engaging the services of twelve wagons;forty-eight horses,twelve men and twelve boys.[217]

The Glamorganshire Canal never failed to pay the maximum dividends to the shareholders. As a public utility there was a ceiling of eight per cent which could be paid to the shareholders,but as all the profits could not be consumed through repairs,maintaining regular service,extension and other improvements,amounts of unexpendable capital accumulated. The canal company solved this problem by granting free tolls to their best customers (also the principal shareholders) for stipulated periods of time,thus consuming capital which could not otherwise be exhausted due to the charter of the company.[218]

The effects of the Glamorganshire Canal upon the local economy was enormous. For example,before the construction of the canal,Cardiff's coal supply was obtained from West Glamorgan rather than from the coalfields just north of the city.[219] The canal also facilitated the opening of areas previously inaccessible to the penetration of industry,one region being the coal-rich Rhondda Valleys. As the canal

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[217] E.L.Chappell,History of the Port of Cardiff,p.61.

[218] Ibid.,p.64.

[219] E.J.Jones,Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales,p.65.

passed by Treforest at the head of the Lower Rhondda, the construction of a private canal and tramroad to this point in the early nineteenth century connected the richest coal-producing area of South Wales with the port of Cardiff.[220]

In West Glamorgan there was no initial effort to construct a single, unified canal system. Industry in this area was more diversified and not so heavily concentrated in a specific location as in the Merthyr district. Merthyr was at the head of one river, the Taff, and had but one port outlet, Cardiff; however, in West Glamorgan there were two major rivers, the Tawe and Neath, flowing to the ports of Swansea and Neath respectively. Both river systems were the main arteries for a dispersed industrial region, characterized by many private enterprises and scattered mines and smelters.

Private ventures linking individual mines or smelters to ports or local markets characterized the canal system of West Glamorgan in its early stages of development. The Cremlyn Canal was private property and was constructed in order to convey coal to the mouth of the Tawe River for export.[221] The Swansea and Neath canals were the most important in the region. Of the Swansea Canal one traveller made the following observations:

> There are no less than 36 locks on this canal, in the space of 16 miles, from an elevation

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[220] E.D. Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, pp. 39-40.

[221] Walter Davies, General View, II, 397, 404-5.

> of 372 feet,and several aqueducts. Adjoining are some smelting Copper-Works,the iron forge, brass and tin works,and a fine rolling mill.[222]

Lack of a unified plan of construction resulted in a mesh of small canals in West Glamorgan. In order to rationalize the system to their own advantage,the most powerful owners of mineral land in the west,the Duke of Beaufort and Lewis Weston Dillwyn,conspired through pressure and agreement to unite the maze of private waterways. For example, George Tennant,owner of the Tennant Canal,was forced into connecting his waterway to the Neath Canal. The initiative of the Duke of Beaufort is also evident in an agreement with the Morris family in 1794 which closed the Morris Canal to commercial traffic. Beaufort incorporated the Morris Canal into his own Trewyddfa Canal,but both would eventually be merged into the larger and more economical Swansea Canal.[223] The Swansea Canal proved a boon to the rich mineral lands north of Swansea. One landowner-industrialist,Richard Gough Aubrey,embarked upon his colliery operations by immediately connecting his mineral lands in the region to the canal.[224] In the coalfields of this area,previously untouched,the building of canals was a pre-condition to industrial devel-

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[222] George Alexander Cooke,_Topographical and Statistical Description of the Principality of Wales_,p.95.

[223] Norman Lewis Thomas,_The Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages_,pp.53,167.

[224] John Henry Davies,_History of Pontardawe and District_,pp.39,51.

opment.

The tramroads, or "railroads", received a great deal of attention. They were constructed of either wood or iron rails upon which carriages and wagons were drawn by horses. Usually of short duration, these roads were most commonly built to connect collieries, forges, or smelters with nearby ports or canal systems, replacing the more convential but slower and more costly occupation roads. For example, around 1800 a tramroad was laid at Dowlais, joining the company's limestone quarries with the forges. Each wagon had a capacity of nine or ten tons and was drawn by a single horse.[225]

The major tramroad in Glamorgan was constructed in order to unite the road system in the highland regions of the north. This served to join the Cardiff to Merthyr turnpike with that running from Neath to Aberdare and followed the course of the Cynon River.[226] In West Glamorgan the main tramroad was built in order to associate the collieries of north Gower and the resort areas of the Gower coast with Swansea. The Swansea and Mumbles Railway was completed in 1804 at the cost of £9,000 and was geared to both commercial and passenger transport. Sir John Morris, owner of the Ynys and Rhydydefraid collieries in Gower sponsored the project,

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[225] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.95.
[226] Walter Davies, General View, II, 374.

but other local landowners, colliery owners and businessmen contributed.[227]

Rapid and efficient means of transportation were a necessity in a staple economy catering to world markets and depending upon the export of bulk goods. Modes of transportation and communications were adopted or abolished as the need arose. For example, although a highway act was passed in 1741, the paths through Garnant and Gwauncaegurwen were untouched until 1817, when ancient tracks were connected to roads over which wagons could be hauled. This immediately preceded the advent of coalmining in the semi-anthracite region just to the north of Swansea.[228]

Glamorgan's transit networks had again become obsolete by the eighteen-thirties. Iron had produced cries for canals and tramroads, but the rapid expansion of the coal trade rendered them impotent. The sheer bulk of the coal trade was simply too great for the Glamorganshire Canal. Moreover, as the availability of ironstone decreased in the highland regions, the need for vast supplies of foreign ore antiquated the canal system. A massive two-way congestion developed which seriously affected both the import and export trades. In 1835 the industrialists of north Glamorgan banded together to form what would become known as the

[227] Norman Lewis Thomas, The Story of Swansea's Districts and Villages, pp.275-7.

[228] John Henry Davies, History of Pontardawe and District, p.32.

Taff Vale Railroad Company.[229] Increased volume in the coal trade thus gave birth to the railway age in South Wales.

Ease of transportation and communications, essential to the expanding industrial economy of the county, also had some deflating effects. For example, the canal system, originally constructed for the exportation of county products, also facilitated the importation of manufactured goods from elsewhere. Lancashire cottons, cheaper than locally produced woollens and flannels, aided the decline of the local textile industry.[230] The exportation of coal also had repercussions upon local consumption. In a region where fuel was either free or for the taking, or an integral part of leases and customary tenure, and usually sold for about 2s. per ton, coal for domestic use had risen to 4s. and 6s. a ton by 1814. This increase was noted by Malkin as early as 1802:

> From Cardiff there is a very good canal, which establishes that town as the connecting link between the great iron works of Merthyr Tydfil and the English markets. This canal, passing through a country so rich in collieries immediately on its banks, tends greatly to facilitate the exportation and thence reduce the price of coals to the public at large though it may enhance it near the pits.[231]

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[229] D. Morgan Rees, "The Industrialization of Glamorgan", _Glamorgan Historian_, I (N.D.), 23.

[230] Davies and Edwards, _Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century_, p. 40.

[231] Walter Davies, _General View_, II, 353; Benjamin Heath Malkin, _Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales_, p. 144.

In effect, local prices were rising to the level of national prices, regardless of supply.

The entire network of communications in Glamorgan was intended to associate inland centres of industry with the port cities; however, the large coastal towns were intermediaries with the commercial centres of Bristol and London.

The tentacles of Glamorgan's major ports extended like a net around the county, cutting it off from other regions of Wales to the east, north and west. No consideration was given to traditional cultural affiliations and the whole network appears to have severed the county, by fragments, from the rest of Wales. Although Glamorgan was united as an economic and commercial entity, "the evolution of neither the road system nor the railways did much to unite Wales as a cultural or economic unit"; economic contingency was paramount.[232] In reality, transportation and communications networks were opening this sector of South Wales to a more rapid diffusion of exogenous languages, ideas, customs and peoples. The isolation which had fostered and protected a unique cultural entity for centuries was effectively breached.

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[232] E.G. Bowen, Wales, pp.221,227.

Chapter VII

Demographic Tendencies

The massive growth of Glamorgan's population in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had profound effects upon the social conditions and turbulence of the coalfields. There were two reasons for this phenomena of massive growth: a natural increase in the agricultural community and intense migration from other regions due to a demand for labour in the industrial centres.

In 1750 the total population of Wales was 480,000. This increased to 587,000 in 1801 and reached 673,000 in 1811. As there was little migration to Wales during this period, the increase in population could only have resulted due to natural causes.[233] Population growth in Glamorgan follows an identical pattern. In 1700 the population stood at 49,700, rose to 55,200 by 1750 and increased to 71,525 in 1801. There was an increase of 11% between 1700 and 1750, but from

[233] David Williams, History of Modern Wales, p.195; "A Note on the Population of Wales, 1500-1801", Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, VIII (1935-7), 359-61. Population figures before 1801 were based by Williams upon Rickman's inquiries following the census of 1831. These figures were in turn based upon the average derived from baptisms, burials and marriages; thus, the population for 1700 would be derived from the average of baptisms, burials and marriages for the years 1699, 1700 and 1701 in order to assure accuracy. The difficulties of such data render precise figures inaccurate and estimates can vary considerably according to the interpretation and calculation of the investigator. Personally, I take the above figures to be merely indicative of basic trends of population growth, and not absolute tabulations of actual digital indices.

1750 to 1801 this rose to 29.5%.[234]

The only significant concentrations of population in 1801 occurred in the emerging industrial towns,ports and larger market towns of the county. Population distribution in the rural areas was not radically altered by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The average area of rural parishes reflects the distribution of population:10,000 acres in the highlands,2,000 in Gower and 1,000 in the Vale of Glamorgan.[235] This concurs with the density distributions of rural population. In the vales of Glamorgan and Gower the density ranged between fifty and one hundred persons per square mile,or one to every seven acres,but northwards towards the Border Vale there was often less than thirty-five persons per square mile.[236]

The industrialization of the Northern Outcrop served to disrupt population distribution and result in a massive migration to the coalfields. In the early stages of industrialization the bulk of the labour force was drawn from the counties and hundreds immediately adjacent to the coalfield;Glamorgan,Brecknock and Monmouth. This justifies the theory proposed by Redford:

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[234] David Thomas,Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars,pp.396-7,11.

[235] Rider and Trueman,South Wales,p.154.

[236] Rider and Trueman,South Wales,p.156;C.J.O.Evans, Glamorgan,p.32.

> Agrarian migration...was a short distance centripedal movement;and the motive force controlling the migration was the positive attraction of industry rather than the negative repulsion of agriculture.[237]

This has recently been illustrated by map distribution studies of the 1801 Census Returns. The number of uninhabited houses enumerated in the Census reveals that the eastern section of Glamorgan contributed most to labour migration in the early stages of industrial development,taking into account that some of the deserted houses might have been the result of the migratory nature of the early coal industry. In addition,most of the hundreds in which the agricultural population fell by ten per cent or more were located on the coalfield. Moreover,as those involved in the extractive industries were not returned as being employed in industrial activities,it seems logical that the number of industrial workers should have been considerably larger than the recorded figures.[238]

The end of the Napoleonic Wars witnessed the decline in importance of short-distance migration to the coalfield. After the wars,severe depression hit the agricultural regions of Wales,especially the western counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen. The high-pitched economy of the war years

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[237] A. Redford, Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850. (Manchester:Manchester University Press,2nd ed.,1964),pp. 61,70.

[238] David Thomas, Agriculture in Wales During the Napoleonic Wars, pp.109-10.

vanished. After the return to the gold standard farmers were unable to pay debts acquired in times of prosperity. They accrued heavy interest charges while the landlords kept rents high in order to maintain their level of income. This was especially disasterous for the backbone of west Welsh society, the small tenant farmer.[239] In addition to economic hardship, population continued to increase in the agricultural community. This resulted in an increase in the number of agricultural labourers, never a necessity in a society where the small family farm predominated. The surplus population, therefore, could not be absorbed in agricultural pursuits; neither could this surplus be attracted by decaying rural industries such as weaving and knitting. Concurrently, at a time when the poor rates had to be augmented, impoverished farmers were forced to dispense with the intensive methods of agriculture adopted during the war period, to the extent where employed labourers were forced from their means of income.[240] Migration to the labour-hungry coalfields was the only solution for those seeking employment.

It is an established fact that the surplus population of Wales was almost entirely absorbed by industry. Emmigration from Wales was insignificant until the end of the

[239] David Williams, The Rebecca Riots (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971), pp. 96, 106; Asa Briggs, The Making of Modern England (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 205; David Williams, History of Modern Wales, pp. 200-202.

[240] A. Redford, Labour Migration in England, pp. 23, 66, 79, 81-2.

nineteenth century, even in periods of acute depression and unemployment. What little emmigration did occur was limited to isolated individual examples and religious settlements. Even in 1841, a year of extreme economic distress, the total emmigration between January 1 and June 7 was a mere 1,149. Out of this number Glamorgan scored a minute twenty while the majority originated in the counties of Montgomery, Merioneth, Carmarthen and Cardigan. These counties were the most affected by the depressed state of agriculture and the final disintegration of the Welsh woollen industry.[241]

Industrial labour demands were so intense that during the inter-censal period between 1801 and 1811, the hundreds upon or adjacent to the coalfield experienced a population increase of between twenty to thirty per cent. Depression and unemployment was also rampant in the West Country as well as in the west and north of Wales. Despite the fact that their numbers were insignificant with relation to the percentage of migrants from the north and west of Wales, the majority of those applying for relief in Cardiff were alleged to be single young men from Somerset and Wiltshire, perhaps best illustrating the importance of Cardiff as a centre for exogenous influence due to the massive volume of port activity and capabilities for the penetration of Wales. It has also been recorded that many entire families were

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[241] David Williams, "Some Figures Relating to Emmigration from Wales", Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, VII (1933-5), 396-7, 401.

emmigrating from the West Country clothing towns in search of employment at the ironworks.[242]

After 1815 the widening scope of migration helped to undermine the centripedal pattern of gradual attrition. Direct migration to the iron and coal regions of Glamorgan was greatly facilitated by improved communications and the spread of industrialization within the borders of the county. This runs completely counter to the supposition inherent in application of the centripedal theory of migration,that employment opportunities occur at every stage in the drift to the towns.[243] Another factor conducive to the decline of the centripedal migration of labour is that the Poor Laws generally restricted settlement. Migrants from the north and west of Wales were therefore forced to go directly to the industrial regions. Only in the coastal regions,such as the Vale of Glamorgan,was employment in agriculture available due to the fact that a labour shortage resulted from competition with the industrial sector. It was ridiculous for the local gentry and magistracy to restrict a surplus population from going elsewhere;it was equally ludicrous for the magistracy to restrict settlement in the labour-hungry coalfield. As the ironmasters were in solid control of the magistracy,it seems unlikely that they would act in

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[242] A.Redford,Labour Migration in England,pp.103, 48-9.

[243] A.H.John,Industrial Development of South Wales, p.169.

opposition to their personal interests.[244]

Principally because of migration, Glamorgan became the most populous county in Wales. By 1911 more than one half the people of the Principality resided there. While the population increase for Britain between 1801 and 1851 was 93%, that of Glamorgan was 233%. In the inter-censal period from 1841 to 1851 the population of the county increased by 35%, a figure slightly higher than other industrial regions of Britain.[245] Migratory trends established around the time of the Napoleonic Wars continued throughout the nineteenth century. The trickle from border areas and the West Country persisted, but the majority of immigrants to Glamorgan continued to originate mostly in the north and west of Wales.[246]

A combination of both agricultural and industrial revolution, in addition to the growth of urban centres and the increased availability of goods and services, conspired to distort the stability which had characterized pre-industrial Glamorgan. A mutual reaction thereby resulted:

> ...a rapid increase in population is accompanied by greater productivity in agriculture enabling fewer people to produce more food, by industrialization, and by greater wealth enabling more to be spent on specialized

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[244] A.H. John, Industrial Development of South Wales, p.169.

[245] Leslie Wynne Evans, Education in Industrial Wales, 1700-1900 (Cardiff: Avalon Books, 1971), p.16.

[246] D. Friedlander and R.J. Roshier, "A Study of Internal Migration in England and Wales, Part I", Population Studies, 19 (1966), 252-5.

services.[247]

The high wages offered in industry and competition between the agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy for labour also affected family life and marital patterns. Especially near the growing industrial towns, many farmers were hard-pressed to maintain their labour force as higher wages were being offered by the industrialists in order to coax labourers away from agriculture. In areas of mixed husbandry the practice of giving board to labourers was discontinued as an economy measure, forcing them to migrate to the industrial regions or establish their own homes and families in many instances.[248]

I would suggest that the custom of "living in" as practiced by many young rural labourers discouraged early marriage as there was no genuine pressure upon them to marry and establish homes and families. In turn, cancellation of this custom and possible loss of employment would encourage migration to the coalfields. Moreover, the higher wages offered in industry and removal from familial ties through migration would enable him financially to assume family responsibilities at an earlier age.

Miners and ironworkers generally married at an early

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[247] C.M.Law, "The Growth of Urban Population in England and Wales, 1801-1911", _Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers_, 41 (1967), 125.

[248] A.Redford, _Labour Migration in England_, pp.76-7, 68.

age "often in poverty;children came rapidly and regularly, and so they remained in poverty." Marital patterns in industrial Glamorgan appear to have differed from those in rural areas. Not only did marriage occur at an earlier age, but illigitimacy was less common.[249] In contrast,figures extracted from parish registers at Llanilid,a hamlet on the tip of the Border Vale,reveal that eight out of ten children baptised in 1762 were born out of wedlock.[250]

In the Vale of Glamorgan the problems of depressed agriculture and surplus labour were unknown throughout this period. Competition with the industrial sector of the economy was compensated for by the migration of labour from depressed agricultural areas. Moreover,farmers took measures to make farm employment more attractive. For example,in 1816 the Glamorganshire Agricultural Society began to offer premiums of cash to exceptional farm servants in order to "encourage thrift and long service." High costs and competition forced farmers to increase the number of imported labourers,generally migratory and employed on a seasonal basis,for either planting or harvesting. Imported labour usually originated in the west

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[249] E.T.Davies,Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales (Cardiff:University of Wales Press, 1965),p.47.

[250] David J. Francis,"A Brief Account of Llanilid, Peterston-Super-Montem and Llanharan",Glamorgan Historian, VII (1971),210.

of Wales and across the Bristol Channel.[251]

Wage payment and hiring practices indicate the intense competition between the ironmasters, vying for workmen with particular skills. For example, Peter Price, the Quaker ironmaster of Neath, was quite upset when he wrote to Thomas Guest in 1812:

> I can hardly think thou would'st be the means of enticing Thomas Dabb, Engine Tender, from these works, therefore suspend my Judgement concerning thee, but there seems something of Cunning in the Affair, which is unpleasant.[252]

Sometimes the ironmasters were spurned into taking legal action in order for contracts to be taken seriously:

> Having this day seen that Philip Morgan is now Employed by you in the capacity of a Coaker, I beg leave to acquaint you that he is under a previous Contract to serve us in the Capacity of a Miner & that he has quitted our Service without our Consent. After this information, I trust you'll not let him remain longer in your Work, but immediately discharge him, so that he may return to his service with us, otherwise we shall consider that you retain him in defiance of the Law & shall proceed accordingly.[253]

Threats of legal action usually went unheeded. In fact, it was common practice to obtain the core of a labour force for a new enterprise from other establishments in the region

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[251] Moelwyn Williams, "Observations of the Population Changes in Glamorgan, 1800-1900", Glamorgan Historian, I (N.D.), 110.

[252] Peter Price to Thomas Guest, 1802 in Iron in the Making, ed. Madelaine Elsas, p.66.

[253] Thomas Guest to Samuel Homfray, Dowlais Furnaces, 27 May, 1790, Ibid., p.64.

already in possession of skilled labour.[254] Short-term employment at the host of small private ventures, especially coalmining, added an additional element of instability to the labour force.

Temporary or seasonal employment was widespread. It was common for married men to migrate from the rural regions of Wales to seek employment in industry, leaving their wives and families behind to maintain the farm. A large segment of the migrants, however, were young men who had no wives, families, or ties to the land.[255] Contract hiring was necessary in order to maintain control over skilled labourers; however, the amount of skilled labour needed for the iron and coal industries was comparatively small. Unskilled labour became increasingly more easy to obtain with the influx of migrants to the region. Even with the introduction of new methods of production, abundance of opportunity due to the expansion of industry could absorb the men removed from employment because of displacement. During the period when the large Glamorgan ironworks were being established, skilled workmen were sought in Stafford, Worcester and Gloucester, but afterwards it seems clear that skilled workmen, especially the "puddlers", were obtained locally.[256]

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[254] A.H.John, Industrial Development of South Wales, p.169.

[255] Anna M. Jones, Rural Industries of England and Wales, p.10.

[256] A.H.John, Industrial Development of South Wales, pp.61-2; Charles Wilkins, History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate, and Other Trades of Wales, p.41.

The migration of enormous numbers of people from the Welsh-speaking areas of north and west Wales ensured that the majority of immigrants were Welsh, both in speech and in origin. Even John Guest had to learn a little Welsh in order to converse with his employees. Despite the common myth that the industrial centres were inundated with hordes of Englishmen, their numbers in the early stages of industrial development were insignificant:

> The workmen of all descriptions at these immense iron-works are Welshmen. The language is almost entirely Welsh. The number of Englishmen among them is inconsiderable.[257]

Demographic tendencies in the period under analysis did little to upset the linguistic balance in Glamorganshire.

[257] Benjamin Heath Malkin, *Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales*, p.179.

Chapter VIII

Urban Problems in Glamorgan

It is an accepted fact that towns and cities experienced population growth and spatial expansion as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Preoccupation with growth *per se* fails to take into account the structural and functional realities of urban centres. In order for towns to survive and prosper, or even to exist in a rapidly changing economic milieu, special geographic and economic advantages were necessary. In this chapter, I propose to concentrate on the organic features of Glamorgan's major towns with specific reference to the structural and functional strains engendered by the industrial economy.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century Cardiff and Swansea emerged as the undisputed ports and commercial centres of industrial Glamorgan. The growth of Swansea was gradual throughout the eighteenth century, but experienced a rapid increase in the beginning of the nineteenth century due to the expansion of the non-ferrous metallurgical industry. Population rose from 6,099 in 1801 to 13,256 in 1831, increasing by approximately 2,000 in each decade.[258] Swansea's location at the mouth of the Tawe River, excellent harbour facilities and industrial establishments resulted in

[258] "Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain, 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831", *British Parliamentary Papers*, XVIII, Session 14 June to 20 October, 1831, 351-4.

the town becoming the chief entrepôt of West Glamorgan and the surrounding hinterland. A slower rate of population growth in relation to other industrial towns in Glamorgan did not produce the tangle of sordid slums having the atmosphere of a shanty town. This was largely due to the fact that,unlike the frontier aspects of towns like Merthyr Tudful,the rapid growth of Swansea during the first quarter of the nineteenth century occurred within an already well-defined pre-existing urban nucleus.[259] In effect, Swansea grew at a more steady rate,without mushrooming into a tangle of disorganized streets,impromptu shacks and semi-permanent dwellings.

As an older well established town,Swansea still maintained many traditional features. Due to the reputation of the nearby spa,the Corporation had some hesitation in deciding whether Swansea should expand as a commercial and industrial centre or increase its exhalted status as a tourist resort.[260] Although the Corporation was dedicated to maintaining traditional crafts and trades,they were well aware of the commercial and industrial potential of Swansea and its environs. In 1791 they arrived at a compromise and passed a bill to repair and enlarge harbour and dock

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[259] Michael Scott Archer, _The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840_ (Chichester:Phillimore,1970),p.77.

[260] D.Trevor Davies, _Economic Development of Swansea and the Swansea District_,pp.39,42.

facilities,and to construct an elaborate bathing-house for the benefit of the tourist industry.[261]

Cardiff's pattern of urban growth differed from that of Swansea in that its population increased more rapidly over a shorter period of time. Population rose from 1,870 in 1801 to 3,521 in 1821,but almost doubled in the following decade, reaching 6,187 in 1831.[262] Throughout the eighteenth century the town's prosperity depended largely upon the export of agricultural produce to Bristol and the West Country. Cardiff enjoyed special privileges as chief customs port for the county by virtue of its being the seat of the Lord of Glamorgan. In addition,Cardiff was the major market centre for east Glamorgan and port for the lush Vale of Taff.[263] By 1800 Cardiff was the hub of all turnpike routes. Canals connected the port with the industrial region of north Glamorgan, thus establishing the town as the sole outlet for the steel, tinplate,iron and coal industries of the Merthyr district, Taff Valley and the Rhondda Valleys.[264]

Cardiff's expansion was due solely to the economic vigour of its industrial hinterland,but the rapid increase

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[261]George Alexander Cooke,Topographical and Statistical Description of the Principality of Wales, pp.94-6.

[262]"Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain,1801,1811,1821,1831",British Parliamentary Papers, XVIII,Session 14 June to 20 October,1831,351-4.

[263]D.Rhys Phillips,The History of the Vale of Neath (Swansea,1925),p.615.

[264]Michael Scott Archer,The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840,p.32;William Rees,Cardiff,pp.228,231,238-9.

in port activity resulted in the pattern of spatial growth resembling "a market town grown large."[265] In 1810 Cardiff's one industry was stated as being the manufacture of iron hoops, but considerable commendation was given to the town's concern with shipping:

> The trade of this town is increasing, and consequently its wealth, population, and prosperity. It has the advantage of Pennarth harbour, which enables it to carry on a considerable traffic with Bristol in the produce of farm and dairy...Vessels of four hundred tonz burthen come up to the town... Many hundreds of vessels may have ample room there. Very frequently twenty, thirty, and even fifty sail of the Bristol shipping are obliged to take shelter in Pennarth harbour.[266]

The massive expansion of Cardiff occurred with the peak of iron exportation in the eighteen-thirties and the intense growth experienced by the Glamorgan coal industry. In 1830 66,000 tons of iron passed through the port, rising to 132, 781 tons by 1837.[267] But coal proved to be the most important commodity. The coalmasters, anxious to capture as much of the London market as possible, started to deal directly with the London dealers, thus making the port of Cardiff a centre for immediate shipment to the metropolis. Insole consigned a quantity of Merthyr smokeless steam coal to a London merchant named Welford in 1830. In the same year, James Merrychurch, in

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[265] Harold Carter, The Towns of Wales (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1965), p.259.

[266] George Alexander Cooke, Topographical and Statistical Description of the Principality of Wales, pp.122-3; Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, pp.144-5.

[267] William Rees, Cardiff, p.238.

association with a London coal dealer named Lockett, contracted the entire output of Waunwyllt Colliery, bordering on the Glamorganshire Canal, at the price of 7s. per ton. By 1834, 100 tons a day were being shipped to London alone. In 1839, the total annual tonnage going to the metropolis increased to 45,816 tons, partially due to Thomas Wayne's opening of the Four Foot Seam at Merthyr and the contracted sale of the entire output to London merchants.[268] Largely because of the coal trade, the eighteen-thirties were the most prosperous period for Cardiff to that date. The population of the town grew from 6,187 in 1830 to around 10,000 in 1841.[269]

The Lord of Glamorgan, Lord Patrick James Herbert Crichton-Stuart, of the Bute family, took great interest in the expansion of Cardiff. His urban land in the town and vast amount of mineral land in the Taff Valley led him to embark upon a programme of dock construction known as the Bute Docks.[270] This increase in dock facilities laid the foundation for Cardiff's mushroom growth in the middle of the century. The attraction of Cardiff became so great that when foreign ores had to feed the smelters of east Glamorgan, it was thought more convenient by the ironmasters to

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[268] E.L.Chappell, History of the Port of Cardiff, p.75.

[269] "Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain, 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831", British Parliamentary Papers, XVIII, Session 14 June to 20 October, 1831, 351-4.

[270] E.L.Chappell, History of the Port of Cardiff, pp.78, 80.

move the entire iron and steel industry to the city and its environs. By the end of the nineteenth century Cardiff was the industrial as well as the commercial entrepôt of east Glamorgan.[271]

The internal governments of Cardiff and Swansea did not correspond to economic and social realities. They were essentially medieval castle towns in which the exclusiveness of the town corporations,born at a time of functional necessity,proved a hindrance to the growing commercial classes and efficient urban administration. The function of the castle town was anachronistic after the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century:

> The major function of the castle town carried the seeds of its own decay,for the effective consummation of its task meant the subjugation and pacification of the countryside and the creation of those conditions in which the castle town,as a military strongpoint,was no longer needed...The town for survival had to become the *de facto*,not merely *de jure* commercial focus of the countryside in which it was situated and also the centre of local administration and social life.[272]

Cardiff and Swansea were certainly the *de facto* hubs of commercial,industrial and administrative life in their respective realms in Glamorgan,but the functional characteristics of the castle town which still remained begot

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[271] D.G.Watts,"Changes in the Location of the South Wales Iron and Steel Industry,1860-1930",*Geography*,53, Part III (1968),300-302.

[272] Harold Carter,*The Towns of Wales*,p.29.

stresses and strains within the internal structure of the two cities.

Borough administration in Swansea was exclusive and chaotic. The burgesses were such an exclusive and privileged group that entry was impossible except through patrimony or an exhorbitant fee as high as sixty guineas for chosen men of substance. Quayage,wharfage,market dues,keelage,tolls, taxes placed upon a host of household commodities,the assize of ale and the taxes on public houses were enacted scrupulously,but only because the burgesses were entitled to them for personal profit and they were raised in accordance with the real value of currency. Despite the rigid exaction of dues,the Corporation received a modest income of £1,800 in 1833,a year in which the total debt of Swansea stood at £23,000. Moreover,a good deal of this debt was accumulated by the burgesses in litigation to enforce their rights to claim various dues against the opposition of non-burgess townsmen. In 1810 the Corporation was sued for a debt of £750 attained at least ten years before as a loan,and in one instance the Duke of Beaufort loaned the town £1,000 to pay a debt owing to his own estate steward,a burgess named Gabriall Powell.[273]

Opposition from the town's tradesmen to the privileges and exclusiveness of the burgesses grew with the course of the eighteenth century,but due to the vast power of the

[273]Glyn Roberts,Aspects of Welsh History,pp.121-5.

Corporation these efforts met with failure in spite of constant litigation. The burgess and non-burgess elements of Swansea were in conflict over such questions of privilege as the number of apprentices in contract;only the burgesses could have more than two in order to maintain their social and economic domination of trade and commerce. As late as 1830,when the tradesmen of Swansea banded together to oppose payment of dues,the Corporation issued an address stating that they would "defend to the utmost of our power the liberties and privileges of this borough,according to the oaths we have taken as burgesses."[274] The incongruity of Swansea's government with relation to the growing economic importance of the town was startling. In 1831 the streets of the industrial and commercial hub of West Glamorgan were provided with public lighting for only eight months of the year and with the services of but three constables;however, even these benefits did not extend beyond the limits of the old castle borough,the residential domain of the town's burgess elite. At the same time over one hundred foreign ships alone were calling at the port each year.[275]

In Cardiff a three-way conflict developed between the Lord of Cardiff Castle,Lord James Stuart;the burgesses and

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[274] Glyn Roberts,Aspects of Welsh History,pp.121-5.

[275] T.W.Freeman,"Boroughs in England and Wales of the 1830's" in Geographical Interpretations of Historical Sources,ed.,Alan R.H.Baker,John D. Hamshere and John Langton, p.301.

the established guild structure;and the newer class of merchants and tradesmen.many of whom were recent arrivals in Cardiff and attracted there by the increasing opportunities for trade and employment. New trades and crafts came into existence which could not be absorbed into the old guild framework. Attempts on the part of outsiders to open shops in the town inevitably meant stiff opposition from the guilds who,by virtue of law,possessed a monopoly over the granting of licenses under the protection of the Lord of Cardiff Castle. Although the exclusive burgess element,solidly in control of the trade of the town,could withold licensing, many of the new crafts and trades were external of the guild structure and out of control of the burgesses. Due to competition,many old guilds were forced to sign away their charters.[276]

Lord James Stuart's desire to capitalize on Cardiff's prosperity and attract favourable urban and mineral rents was greater than the urge to maintain outmoded restrictions and penalties. This led him into direct conflict with the established urban elite which the Lords of Cardiff Castle had previously patronized. In the eighteen-twenties the Castle authorities were questioning the right of the Corporation to own the town quay and be responsible for river control;however,the Corporation's right to levy tolls on the

[276]William Rees,Cardiff,pp.145,210-11,214-15.

Glamorganshire Canal was upheld in the Act of Parliament passed for the canal's construction. Legal opposition from the Corporation to the Bute interests resulted in the maintainence of various harbour services and duties enshrined in the act issued for the building of the Bute Docks;the maximum rates for harbour services,Corporation rights to town duties and the right of vessels to moor on the sand banks outside Cardiff without payment to Lord James Stuart.[277]

Neath did not expand into a commercial entrepôt like Cardiff and Swansea;neither did it emerge as a large industrial centre despite the fact that it equalled Swansea in the early eighteenth century. In 1728 the population of Neath was 1,500 and rose to 2,500 by 1801. After 1801,however,the rate of expansion followed the same pattern as Cardiff and Swansea,almost doubling in population to 4,000 in 1831,but experiencing its greatest period of growth between 1821 and 1831.[278]

Neath was overshadowed in industrial growth by larger centres like Swansea. The oldest metallurgical centre in the county drew the following comment from a traveller in 1810:

> There is no manufactory entitled to notice; the copper works at Melin Crythan...are discontinued,and the collieries have long been in a state of inactivity. However,the mineral tenures of the adjacent country,still create

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[277]E.L.Chappell,History of the Port of Cardiff,pp. 56,78,80.

[278]Michael Scott Archer,The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840,p.89.

> a considerable trade here, much promoted by the construction of a navigable canal from the upper part of the vale, to a shipping place at Briton Ferry, and communicating with the iron works at Aberdare.[279]

In addition to being the chief outlet for the works at Aberdare, Neath maintained its status as a minor mining and manufacturing centre, exporting copper, tin, iron, locomotives, oak, chemicals, culm and coal. Neath was also the major market town for the agriculturally rich Vale of Neath and was connected by road, canal and tramroad to neighbouring industrial establishments.[280] Ideal geographic location enabled the town to maintain itself long after the focus of industry had shifted elsewhere. Performing a variety of functions, the town remained prosperous as a castle borough, administrative centre, market, port and minor manufacturing town.

Towns which did not possess so ideal a geographic location could not maintain themselves in lieu of the new economic challenge. For example, as early as 1720 Aberavon, once an important borough and market town, was forced to discontinue its market. An early iron and copper centre, Aberavon was swamped by Neath in the early eighteenth century and entirely dwarfed by Taibach in the nineteenth. Taibach, however, was also adversely caught up in the tide. Growing from an insignificant hamlet in the eighteen-twenties

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[279] George Alexander Cooke, Topographical and Statistical Description of the Principality of Wales, pp. 97-8.

[280] Harold Carter, The Towns of Wales, pp. 61, 234-5.

due to the establishment of a copper works, Taibach began to suffer considerable decline by 1840. After that date the population moved westward one mile to Port Talbot, of which Taibach eventually became a suburb. Port Talbot, with its heavy volume of coal and metal shipments, in addition to the establishment of a large copper works, acted as a magnet which pulled smaller and less economically viable towns into its field of attraction.[281]

Villages like Taibach reflect many of the urban problems of industrial Glamorgan. The staple economy based upon the exploitation of localized resources resulted in the creation of many unfunctional specialized towns, especially in relation to the purely extractive industries such as coalmining. Established urban hierarchies and the grid network of towns which had emerged throughout the centuries were in some instances totally unbalanced by the process of industrialization.[282] By the late eighteenth century it was common for many mining and industrial centres to be superimposed upon settlements which sometimes had no real claim to true urban status. The presence of mineral resources in abundant quantities, often meant that site, not ancient grid position, was becoming the major locational factor. Older existing

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[281] Michael Scott Archer, The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840, pp.116,124.

[282] Basically, the grid network refers to the relationship between towns in terms of the functions which they perform, such as a weekly market, medical services, schools or courts. The urban hierarchy is the hierarchical ranking of towns with regard to the number, importance and variety of service functions.

nuclei were irrelevant in the face of the new demands imposed by new and massive industrial markets.[283]

The settlement pattern of the coalfield,especially in regions like the Rhondda Valleys which were entirely dominated by the extractive industries,was characterized by a spattering of amorphous settlements,with little or no nucleation,and often grouped together to form urban districts. Emerging in areas where urban life seldom expanded beyond the parameters of a previous urban nucleus,mining towns usually did not result in the fabrication of a true urban way of life. In fact,genuine nucleation did not occur in many instances,it being more common for houses to be dispersed along roads caused by a scatter of pit operations.[284] The fragmented geography of the _blaenau_ caused the emergence of quasi-urban dispersed settlements and cramped housing in narrow valleys. Normal outward growth was inhibited by geography and the landscape resembled "a virtually continuous built-up area cramped within a narrow valley,with small linear strips of commercial development."[285]

The speed at which the mining settlements grew and the migratory nature of the inhabitants conspired to create

[283] Harold Carter,_The Towns of Wales_,p.72.

[284] C.M.Law,"The Growth of Urban Population in England and Wales,1801-1911",_Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers_,41 (1967),126,130.

[285] Wayne K.D.Davies,"Centrality and the Central Place Hierarchy",_Urban Studies_,4 (1967),65.

appalling conditions of human life. In north Glamorgan the Industrial Revolution created a veritable jungle of unfunctional villages, often lacking such services as courts, schools, churches, hospitals and sufficient shopping establishments: "The mining village is perhaps above all, the epitome of the unfunctional, specialized settlement determined by the principle of separation." The only justification for their existence was mineral wealth or the presence of smelters, in many instances only for a short period of time. After the minerals were exhausted and the focus of industry moved elsewhere, it was common for a drastic population decrease through migration to result and the town decline considerably in importance despite its previous prosperity. Mining settlements, or specialized manufacturing centres, were unstable and occasionally transitory: "The nascent towns were fundamentally manufacturing camps which can be compared without exaggeration to the mining camps of the American West..." [286]

Merthyr Tudful was the most important mining and manufacturing centre in Glamorgan. In 1801 Merthyr was already the largest town in Wales with a population of 7,707, expanding rapidly during the growth of the iron industry during the seventeen-eighties and nineties. During the next three decades the population grew by approximately 5,000 people

[286] Harold Carter, The Growth of the Welsh City System (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p.22; The Towns of Wales, p.309.

per decade and did not, like Cardiff and Swansea, experience the greatest upsurge of growth in the eighteen-twenties. Moreover, the town was unaffected by expansion in port facilities and industries not related to coalmining and iron smelting. In 1831 the population stood at 22,083, with 9,000 men, women and children employed in the iron industry.[287]

Merthyr Tudful typifies many of Glamorgan's urban problems. The rapidity of demographic and economic expansion resulted in a tangle of unplanned confusion, haphazard construction and extreme filth and squalor. Merthyr grew upon the basis of a previous urban nucleus, usually a necessary pre-condition for sustained growth, the establishment of true and permanent urban status and a dominant position within a sophisticated urban hierarchy; however, its expansion was abnormally rapid and completely disruptive of the functions of the market town of the mid-eighteenth century. Merthyr became highly nucleated, but was characterized by cramped commercial and residential agglomerations clustered about a few large metallurgical concerns. Founded upon iron, the prosperity and population of Merthyr declined with the establishment of coal and iron industry at Cardiff, and the emergence of the coal and tinplate staples. The only function which the town could properly perform was that of a

[287]Michael Scott Archer, The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840, p.80.

mining and manufacturing centre. In 1801 Benjamin Heath Malkin gave this baneful description:

> These streets are now many in number; close and confined, having no proper outlets behind the houses. They are consequently very filthy for the most part, and doubtless very unhealthy...a place that never had a premeditated plan on which to be built, but grew up by accident, and on the spur of variously occurring necessities.[288]

The market towns of the Vale of Glamorgan also experienced the effects of the industrial economy. Indeed, they epitomize many of the problems posed in the study of Welsh urban history. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth century Welsh vale towns emerged from military strongpoints to castle boroughs and administrative centres. Usually of Norman origin, they were established at points where the manorial wheat-growing economy could be implemented. By the eighteenth century they had become market centres for the surrounding countryside.[289] After military functions had ceased, administrative and market functions preserved their existence. Before the advent of the Industrial Revolution there was little direct competition between towns as their prosperity depended upon the quality and intensity of local agriculture, especially in the corn-growing areas. Even in

[288] Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, pp. 177-8.

[289] Harold Carter, "Urban Grades and Spheres of Influence in South West Wales: An Historical Consideration", Scottish Geographical Magazine, 71 (1955), 55, 57.

the blaenau some small hamlets acquired status as quasi-urban centres and performed minor functions for the scattered highland regions.[290]

The sudden impact of industry twisted the hierarchical grid network which had taken four hundred years to reach a state of equilibrium. Established market centres declined as agricultural products were shipped directly to large ports and industrial towns via new and improved means of transportation and communications. Moreover, weekly markets were discontinued in many instances as permanent shopping establishments and specialization in retailing occurred.[291]

Old market towns which survived the impact of industrialization were forced to acquire new functions as commercial or industrial centres in order to exist. Caerphilly provides an excellent example. In 1775 Caerphilly was described as "a few straggling cottages", but a quarter of a century later was noted as "lately increased from an obscure village to a well-built little town." [292] The rejuvenation of

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[290] Harold Carter, "Urban Grades and Spheres of Influence in South West Wales: An Historical Consideration", Scottish Geographical Magazine, 71 (1955), 47; "The Urban Hierarchy and Historical Geography: A Consideration with Reference to North-East Wales" in Geographical Interpretations of Historical Sources, ed., Alan R.H. Baker, John D. Hamshere and John Langton, pp. 281-2.

[291] Harold Carter, Growth of the Welsh City System, pp. 18, 22.

[292] Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, A Gentleman's Tour Through Monmouthshire and Wales, p. 22; J.T. Barber, A Tour Throughout South Wales and Monmouthshire (London: J. Nichols & Son, 1803), p. 177.

the woollen industry,establishment of mining and smelting enterprises,and the town's favourable location along the Glamorganshire Canal and the main turnpike route between Cardiff and Merthyr Tudful,enabled the town to reap the benefits provided by an excellent geographical position as a nodal point for the surrounding countryside and easy access to large markets. Market functions in the town were increased with the advent of a thriving retail industry:

> There is one of those very large shops, furnished with articles of every description, which are established in particular sections of the mountainous country,and by supplying the inhabitants for many miles around, generally ensure a fortune to the industrious and indefatigable adventurer.[293]

Other market towns,however,were swamped by larger centres which usurped their functions. Llandaff was described in 1775 as "in reality a paltry village,though a bishoprick" and Llantwit Major received mention in 1803 as "a poor village, but once a large borough town."[294] It is certain that Llandaff was no match for Cardiff as an agricultural,commercial and market centre;similiarly,Llantwit Major could not cope with the competition emanating from the 'Vale Metropoli' of Cowbridge and Bridgend,situated on the main turnpike route between Cardiff and Swansea,central to the richest Vale

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[293] Benjamin Heath Malkin, *Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales*, pp.163-4.

[294] Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, *A Gentleman's Tour Through Monmouthshire and Wales*, p.33; J.T.Barber, *A Tour Throughout South Wales and Monmouthshire*, p.163.

agricultural regions and extending their functional webs over increasingly larger portions of the Vale and Border Vale areas of Glamorgan.

Cowbridge and Bridgend offer prime examples of rejuvenation after a period of apparent stagnation in the middle of the eighteenth century. The favourable geographical position of Bridgend aided in maintaining the town's status as an important market centre. Construction of a small ironworks, tanneries, potteries at nearby Ewenny, freestone quarries and a woollen factory helped Bridgend to emerge from a purely agricultural village to that of a mixed economy.[295] Cowbridge prospered mainly because of the town's privileged geographic location in one of the richest sectors of the Vale of Glamorgan and because it performed a wide variety of functions for the surrounding countryside. In terms of population the town grew gradually, from 500 in 1728 to 800 in 1801, and 1,000 in 1831.[296] Cowbridge in 1775 received comment as being "one broad and handsome street" and became entirely elongated because of the turnpike road which cut through the centre of town. In fact, the turnpike served to destroy the original north-south axis of urban growth. The turnpike was so important to the town's prosperity that accessibility was a major factor in its continued functional relevance. Location

[295] Michael Scott Archer, The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840, p.28.

[296] Ibid., p.46.

and accessibility were so crucial that Cowbridge was indispensable to the surrounding countryside due to the fact that "administration had of necessity to find some centre from which to operate."[297] From 1685 Cowbridge was noted as an important educational centre, charge for boarders being an important element in the economy; it was a contributory parliamentary borough, assize town and seat of the Glamorganshire Agricultural Society; the second Welsh branch of the National Provincial Bank of England was located there in 1835; two workhouses were established in the eighteen-thirties.[298]

Urban centres in Wales since Norman times have been alien to the traditional culture and society of the countryside. The contrast between orthogenetic and heterogenetic urban development has resulted in severe cultural strains. Orthogenetic towns are those which "carry forward into systematic and reflective dimensions an older culture", while heterogenetic towns display "new states of mind" and become "prominent creating original modes of thought and have authority beyond or are in conflict with old cultures and civilizations."[299] The castle town and the mining town are

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[297] Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, A Gentleman's Tour Through Monmouthshire and Wales, p.36; Harold Carter, The Towns of Wales, pp.45, 189.

[298] John Richards, The Cowbridge Story, pp.28, 42, 48, 63-65, 73.

[299] Harold Carter, Growth of the Welsh City System, pp.6-7.

classic examples of heterogenetic urban development. Original hamlets, especially in the highland regions, were left to languish. Despite the fact that the Industrial Revolution brought prosperity and settlement to upland Glamorgan, towns emerging out of folk society were arrested and dwarfed by unfunctional urban agglomerations. This type of heterogenetic development has been at the root of much of Glamorgan's urban difficulties. Newly established industrial towns have been characterized by the necessity to read and write the English language due to stark economic realities. Heterogenetic urban development, therefore, has been Anglicizing by nature due to economic convenience. These "new states of mind", originating during a period when folk culture was emerging into literacy and universal modes of thought, have been calamitous in terms of Welsh language and culture being sacrificed to aid the exploitation of physical resources:

> If the economic process is 'complete', the articulation of Welshness or of Welsh culture, those inherited traditions which internally provide a sense of unity and externally an awareness of difference, through and by the Welsh city system has not been acheived.[300]

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[300] Harold Carter, Growth of the Welsh City System, pp.13,22,27.

Chapter IX

Introduction to Religious Dissent in Wales

The relevance of religion to the social and cultural history of Wales cannot be underestimated. Textbook capsules like the following reveals the extent to which Welsh historians have accepted this fact:

> If it be a rhetorical exaggeration to describe Wales as 'a nation of Nonconformists', it cannot be denied that the majority of religious people belong to the Free Churches, and the culture of Wales for the last two centuries and a half has been dominated and even transformed by the influence of the dissenting sects.[301]

It is intended in this chapter to briefly analyse the origins and essential tenets of Welsh dissenting thought in the eighteenth century and present an introduction to a more detailed study of religion and education and the manner in which they shaped society and culture.

Religious dissent was rare in Wales previous to the eighteenth century. Almost entirely untouched by Puritanism or other Protestant teachings until the middle of the seventeenth century, Welshmen of all classes appear to have escaped the earlier throes of religious controversy. Isolation and inherited custom rooted the ordinary Welshman to Catholic ritual and theology. Acceptance of the Established Church in the sixteenth century did little to disturb the status

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[301] W.Llewelyn Williams, The Making of Modern Wales (London:MacMillan,1919),p.266.

quo. The common man remained loyal to his traditional religious sympathies while the upper classes,attached ever more closely to their English counterparts,accepted the church and doctrine which was associated with the existing social and political order.

The Civil Wars of the seventeenth century served to expand the tiny groups of dissenters in Wales. Shocked by the lack of Puritan supporters,Oliver Cromwell decided to literally educate the people away from their previous religious sympathies. In 1649 the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales was enacted. Commissioners were appointed to lay the basis of a general school system and crown revenues were alloted for approved teachers.[302] Success did not materialize. Cromwell's policy served merely to expand the tiny coterie of Puritans emanating from the Tudor Grammar Schools. As these schools were located solely in the market towns in the vale regions,their effects were felt only in the ranks of the incipient urban bourgeoisie and wealthier craftsmen and shopkeepers. The coherent and determined policy of indoctrination established by the Propagation Act gave life and substance to a previously insignificant section of the populace which adopted the religious and political ideology of the Parliamentarians. In turn,the supporters of Cromwell's government fostered the existence of dissenting

[302] A.E.Dobbs,Educational and Social Movements,1700-1850 (New York:Kelly,1969),p.95.

congregations:

> For seventeen years government by committees, composed almost exclusively of Englishmen, imposed the religious and political ideas of triumphant Puritanism upon the country.[303]

Anglicanism remained absolutely dominant in the countryside among the native Welsh population. Early dissent was severely limited to the boroughs and castle towns which had become centres for the Cromwellian committees. The dissenting congregations were situated mainly in South Wales along the Anglicized coastal plain. Their purely urban character isolated them from the majority of the population. Moreover,early dissent was highly limited to the confines of the English language and congregations lacked preachers who were proficient enough in Welsh to diffuse their ideas into the countryside.[304]

A major factor in the rise of Nonconformity was the structure of the Established Church and its methods of administration. In effect,the Established Church was established only in so far as it was the bulwark of a social and political elite. The Church's affiliations with the upper strata of society resulted in an ever increasing alienation from the mass of the people. Language and culture served to widen the gap. An early eighteenth century scholar and

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[303] M.G.Jones,The Charity School Movement (Hamden: Archon Books,2nd ed.,1964),p.278.

[304] E.G.Bowen,Wales:A Study in Geography and History (Cardiff:University of Wales Press,2nd ed.,1952),pp.78-80,82.

churchman, Erasmus Saunders, made a scathing attack upon the condition of the Church. The picture he painted was rank with illiterate disinterested men who were usually unfamiliar with the language of their parishioners. Lack of money resulted in a surfeit of lay proprietorship, absenteeism and pluralism:

> ...the poverty of the livings resulted from the depredations of the lay proprietors and thus poverty gave rise to pluralism which was an economic necessity if the poorer paid parishes were to be manned at all.[305]

Constructive criticisms went unheeded and the weakness and incompetence of the Church continued until the late nineteenth century. In fact, even the Archbishop of Llandaff was non-resident between 1680 and 1820 due to lack of money and insufficient patronage. As Glamorgan industrialized the Church failed to provide for the inhabitants of the growing towns and settlements. Lack of money and initiative even prevented the construction of new church buildings. In addition, the ties of the Church with the upper strata of society proved a definite hindrance in relations with the vast number of Methodists on the coalfield, swelled by a torrent of migrant fellows from regions of Wales where the problems of landlordism and tithes were burning issues. Industrial Glamorgan, characterized by its Nonconformity, could not accept "the gradations of an agricultural society

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[305] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education (London: Methuen, 1969), p.79.

which did not apply in industrial society" during a period when old social ties were in a state of disintegration.[306] A peripheral structure at the time of its inception, the Established Church remained incapable of coping with the Methodist tide and the effects of the Industrial Revolution.

Methodism, unlike the Puritanism of the towns and the Anglicanism of the upper classes, emerged in rural society and drew its strength from the native population. It was neither imported nor transplanted. Howell Harris, generally hailed as the father of Welsh Nonconformity, began his religious crusade in the hill regions of Wales before Whitfield had begun to preach. Moreover, Harris was preaching Methodist ideas three years before Wesley had returned from America and had never heard of the Holy Club at Oxford before his conversion. In effect, Welsh Calvinistic Methodism was a home-grown movement with its own leaders and organization, arising simultaneously with its counterpart in England. This was neither the product of the westward diffusion of ideas along the broydd nor the result of a foreign intrusion of culture and religion, but an internal development. In opposition to the belief that Wales has always been the object of the westward diffusion of ideas, the fact remains that Methodism was dominant in the north and west of Wales, not in the border counties and along the South

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[306] E.T. Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, pp. 22-3, 35-6, 91-2, 99.

Wales coastal plain.[307]

Howell Harris reflects many of the characteristic views concerning religion in Wales during the eighteenth century. Like Wesley, a loyal supporter of the Established Church, Harris repudiated the very word Methodist, considering it "of the Devil's putting, like calling me Hwlyn" (ranter). He maintained the perspective of an ardent reformer and critic of the Established Church and the decadence which he believed to have existed:

> I had no objection to the present Establishment but some few expressions in the Common Prayer (and) the laziness, lordliness and pride of the bishops...I see much legality and Judaism left in the constitution of our Church - holy days, holy places, holy persons, priests, vestments, tythes, law and forms of prayers, and all performances, and faith lost...light has taken its leave of this Church and Christ is lost, no foundation at all.[308]

Howell Harris' criticism of the Established Church bore strains of social as well as religious justice and originated in his studies of Anglo-Catholic theology, Calvinism and German piety. Based on the Moravian settlements of Hernhut and Fulneck, Harris established a colony at Trevecca in Brecknockshire. The settlers sought refuge from the external world and lived according to the doctrine of primitive communism as revealed in the Scriptures. Members of this model agricultural community forfeited all their worldly possessions

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[307] E.G. Bowen, Wales: A Study in Geography and History, pp. 83-4, 87, 82.

[308] Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Howell Harris, 1714-1773: The Last Enthusiast (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1965), pp. 43-5.

and the profits of their labour was pooled in a fund for the common good of the community.[309] In effect, the concerns of Howell Harris were two-fold: the reform of existing Church institutions and attitudes, and the plight of man in a world which he believed was filled with lust and evil. He desired a return to the purity of early Christian life.

Calvinistic Methodism was the most dynamic religious sect in Wales by the beginning of the nineteenth century. There was little increase in the membership of the older dissenting congregations and Wesleyanism failed to develop into a major Nonconformist sect. Wesley's excursions into Wales were only meant to be aids for Harris in what they considered to be a common cause. The first Wesleyan society in Wales was founded at Cardiff in 1739, being entitled the Religious Society of Anglicans and Dissenters. At the time of Wesley's death the entire Welsh Wesleyan movement consisted of only three circuits, seven preachers and about six hundred members scattered as widely apart as Mold in Flint, Roch in Pembroke and Chepstow in Monmouth. These centres were essentially English-speaking towns: and as the majority of Wesleyan preachers were Englishmen, they were incapable of penetrating the Welsh countryside. It was the native Welsh-speaking Calvinists who were able to reach the majority of the population, and Wesleyanism suffered the same fate as

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[309] Idris Jones, Modern Welsh History, p.149.

the Old Dissent.[310] That this tide of Calvinism was impossible to dike is illustrated by the factionalism of the Cardiff society. Wesley,in 1743,was able to preach in "the new room...just built in the heart of town." In 1753 he attempted to repair "what was once a society",but by 1763 he "found the society in as ruinous a condition as the castle. The same poison of mysticism has well-nigh extinguished the last spark of life here also."[311]

The teachings of the Welsh Methodist leaders were Calvinistic in principle,despite their support of the Wesleyan tenets of maintaining both the Anglican Church and the coherence of the reform movement. When Whitfield and Wesley parted ways in 1741 over the issue of predestination, essential to Calvinist theology,Whitfield's teachings and writings became the major external source of inspiration for the Welsh Methodists and future generations of preachers.[312]

Welsh Calvinistic Methodism was independent of English Methodism. In fact,despite the Calvinistic emphasis,the Welsh movement retained ties with the Established Church for a longer period of time. The Wesleyan Methodists severed their connection with the Anglican Church in 1784,but the Welsh

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[310] Idris Jones,Modern Welsh History,p.122;A.H. Williams,John Wesley in Wales,1739-1790 (Cardiff:University of Wales Press,1971),pp.XIX-XX,XXXII-XXXIII.

[311] A.H.Williams,John Wesley in Wales,pp.XIX,17,49,67.

[312] Davies and Edwards,Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century,p.141.

Methodists remained true to their original principles of being a tendency within the Church until 1811; however, the final break resulted out of similiar circumstances. At a meeting at Bala in 1811 it was decided to ordain lay preachers for the administration of sacraments. As ordination was the prerogative of the bishops this meant an immediate separation from the Established Church.[313]

The influence of the Calvinistic Methodists was so vast that they practically generated a "national" religious faith in Wales towards the middle of the nineteenth century. For the majority of the working classes the preacher, the Bible and the chapel combined to form what can with all fairness be entitled a near sacral society. All issues relating to personal and social life were approached via the paths of religious principles for a large section of the populace, especially those inhabiting the coalfields and the industrial settlements.

[313] Idris Jones, Modern Welsh History, p.154.

Chapter X

Religion and Education

The religious and educational movements of the eighteenth century constitute what has been dubbed "The Great Awakening", an arousal of both mind and spirit. This "awakening",despite the over-zealous theological use of the word,had severe repercussions upon the cultural life of Wales. For example,it made the Welsh people literate in their own language,gave them a religion which was more in tune with their daily needs and aspirations,and severed many bonds with the nation's cultural past. The purpose here is to analyse the various modes of educational instruction,curriculum,school patrons and motives for the establishment of educational institutions. Moreover,an effort will be made to distinguish the links between education and the spread of religious dissent.

The state of education in Wales at the beginning of the eighteenth century was extremely poor. After the Restoration the schools established under the Propagation Act were deprived of state support and suppressed. A few illegal schools survived,but they were abandoned after the foundation of the Welsh Trust. Thomas Gouge,an Englishman,manager of the Trust between 1672 and 1681,established between three and four hundred charity schools in Wales in which children were taught to read,write and count. During the same period the Welsh Trust established a grammar school in fifty-one towns,

accounting for slightly over one thousand students.[314]

The schools established by the Welsh Trust were limited to the wealthier classes in urban communities and did not penetrate the majority of the populace in the countryside. Another drawback was the organizational structure of the schools. Despite the fact that one of the original aims of the Welsh Trust was to indoctrinate the ideals of the Established Church after the Cromwellian era in Wales, an uneasy balance emerged between Welshmen and Englishmen, Anglicans and dissenters. Moreover, although Welsh squires and English ecclesiastics provided the money for education, most of the teaching was done by English-speaking clergymen. Another failure was that the sponsors of the Trust _in toto_ would not finance education in the Welsh language. This aroused much opposition from the early cultural revivalists, especially the volatile Stephen Hughes who rightly denounced the entire curriculum as an overt attempt at Anglicization.[315]

After the disbandonment of the Welsh Trust in the late seventeenth century, education rested solely in the hands of private individuals and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. The curriculum of schools sponsored by the S.P.C.K. consisted of learning, reading and writing the

[314] M.G.Jones, _The Charity School Movement_, p.279; John McLeish, _Evangelical Religion and Popular Education_, p.10

[315] M.G.Jones, _The Charity School Movement_, pp.286-88.

English language,and the essentials of farming,seamanship and domestic service. Other services were also provided by the S.P.C.K.,the most important being the distribution of literature and the founding of libraries. Four diocesan libraries and many parochial libraries were established under the auspices of such influential men as Sir Humphrey Mackworth in Glamorgan,Sir John Phillips of Picton Castle in Carmarthen and John Vaughan of Derllys. A host of wealthy subscribers combined forces with the S.P.C.K. to cover the costs of publication and distribution,but in spite of the fact that many of the books were printed in Welsh,the society's only interest in the language was that of a medium to save souls through the removal of ignorance and indifference.[316] The scope of reading material was limited to two editions of the Bible,printed sermons,and books and pamphlets dealing with religious subjects. This is illustrated by the following letter from Gower:

> Thanking the Society for the Packet he received, and declaring to have as many of the under-named books as can be bought for 25s. which Mr. John Lloyd of Ormond Street will pay for:The described books are:(50 copies of each)
> A Persuasive for the Observance of the Lord's Day
> A Dissuasive against Drunkeness
> A Caution to Swearers
> An Exhortation to Housekeepers for Family Worship
> Directions for the Publick Worship of God
> The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Explained in a Dialogue between Minister and Parishioner [317]

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[316] Mary Clement, <u>The S.P.C.K. and Wales</u> (London: S.P.C.K.,1954),pp.4,10,36-7,48,43-7.

[317] William Hopkins at Llantrythyd,16 July,1716 in <u>Correspondance and Minutes of the S.P.C.K.Relating to Wales</u> (Cardiff:University of Wales Press,1952),ed. Mary Clement, pp.87-8.

After the cessation of the society's direct participation in Welsh educational ventures it maintained its function as "a benevolent publishing firm", supplying books for educational instruction.[318]

Few schools were established by the S.P.C.K. after 1715 and none were founded after 1727. The alleged reason for this decline, as quoted by contemporaries and present-day historians, was the fear of Jacobitism. For example, three schools established at Merthyr Tudful by Thomas Lewis of the Van were closed after he was fined £10,000 for his Jacobite sympathies. Moreover, the total number of schools founded in Glamorgan by the S.P.C.K. declined from nine between 1699 and 1715 to three between 1716 and 1727. None were established between 1728 and 1740. In 1740 there were only twelve S.P.C.K. schools and four others left in the county.[319]

Other early educational ventures differed considerably from the charity schools. For example, Sir Humphrey Mackworth built a school at Neath in 1695 and ran it in association with his industrial enterprises. In 1709 the workmen were required to contribute half a crown per quarter. Mackworth employed a full-time schoolmaster at the rate of £30 a year and was concerned with the teaching of reading and writing in the English language and religion. The school apparently ceased

[318] Mary Clement, The S.P.C.K. and Wales, pp.83, 96-8.
[319] Ibid., pp.96, 158-9.

to operate after 1718.[320] Mackworth's school proved to be a template for later educational developments in the industrial regions, specifically the ironworks schools which would characterize industrial Glamorgan during the eighteen-thirties and forties.

The Cowbridge Grammar School was a permanent institution which has received admiration from its foundation to the present day. In 1685 the school was endowed by Sir Leoline Jenkins, Secretary of State under Charles II, and governed by the Principal and Fellows of Jesus College, Oxford. The Cowbridge Grammar School was reserved for the wealthier classes and boarding ranged from £10 to £13 per annum. Up to nine boys per year were sent to Oxford. This school also suffered a decline in its student body by the middle of the eighteenth century. The number of students fell gradually from one hundred in 1707 to sixty in 1737, a year when no new boarders were taken.[321]

The Circulating Schools founded by Griffith Jones of Llandowror were the most important educational institutions in eighteenth century Wales. Although Jones was a supporter of the S.P.C.K., he believed that the existing schools were of little use to the mass of the population; the cost was too great, English was the sole language of instruction and the course was too long for a people engaged almost entirely in

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[320] Leslie Wynne Evans, Education in Industrial Wales, pp.6-8.

[321] John Richards, The Cowbridge Story, pp.28-9.

agricultural pursuits. Griffith Jones stressed free education in the Welsh language and the limitation of curriculum to reading and the Catechism. His teachers were selected by the local clergy or specially trained by him at Llandowror in Carmarthenshire. Textbooks were provided by the S.P.C.K. and the schools circulated from place to place for short periods of time in order to instill literacy and knowledge of the Catechism in as many people as possible. Both children and adults were taught together and night schools were extremely popular.[322]

The motives of Griffith Jones transcended the mere acheivement of literacy and into the realms of piety and the saving of individual souls, a goal to be acheived essentially through reading and learning the Catechism of the Established Church. Jones, believing that he had undergone an inward religious experience, felt that the masses must have some need for a similiar conversion. With education and knowledge the people could seek their own salvation rather than rely solely upon a venal and disinterested clergy.[323] Justification by faith alone was insufficient and good works had to be manifest. The sermons of Griffith Jones contained scathing attacks upon the Welsh bishops, lay patronage, plurality, the lethargic attitude of the vicars and the despondency of their

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[322] Thomas Kelly, A History of Adult Education in Great Britain (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2nd ed., 1970), pp. 66-7.

[323] M.G. Jones, The Charity School Movement, p. 304.

congregations. In his collection of writings, Welch Piety, Jones emphasized "the wretchedly depraved and wicked generation" to which he belonged:

> ...disgust with human nature,concern about the prevailing irreligion and immorality,fear of eternal damnation for myriads of human beings by an outraged God...In his sermons,similiarly, Griffith Jones preached the dangers to which the unregenerate were liable,their guilt for Christ crucified,the wrath to come as a punishment.[324]

Similiar to Howell Harris,Jones was also steeped in the writings of French Calvinism.German Pietism and Moravian Evangelism. He extracted his idea of the Circulating Schools from Franck's account of the "ragged schools" of Halle and desired to teach the "deserving poor" to read and to supply them with Bibles and Catechisms.[325]

The Circulating Schools were financed almost entirely by voluntary contributions and church collections,even from the very poor;however,the "indifference",and even the "hostility" of the higher clergy and landed gentry was marked by the fact that the only landowner to subscribe was the indomitable Sir John Phillips of Picton Castle,Carmarthen.[326] Every effort was made to bring salvation to the people in the only language they could comprehend. The lower orders of the clergy, not far removed in terms of social standing from their students and parishioners,unlike the ecclesiastical elite,

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[324] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education, pp.117-18.

[325] Ibid., pp.103-4,6-7.

[326] Ibid., pp.38-9.

took into consideration the modes of cultural expression the people understood and appreciated,emphasizing pulpit eloquence and increasing the use of music in order to entice people to church.[327]

One of the most important acheivements of the Circulating Schools was that they taught the Welsh people to become literate in their own tongue. During the first twenty-four years of their existence,158,000 people were taught to read. In Glamorgan,where only ten of the Anglicizing charity schools were established,thirty-eight Circulating Schools were founded by 1740,having a total of 2,134 students.[328]

Financial problems posed the most serious threat to the continued existence of the Circulating Schools. Upon the death of Griffith Jones in 1761 his estate of £7,000 fell into the hands of Madam Bevan,one of his most ardent supporters, for the continuation of the schools. When Madam Bevan died in 1779 the entire system came to a halt as her personal legacy of £10,000 was successfully contested. A total of 3,495 schools were left without adequate funding.[329] The Circulating Schools performed well in their function of creating a literate people,but in my opinion,even with

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[327] Mary Clement,The S.P.C.K. and Wales,pp.54-5.

[328] Davies and Edwards,Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century,p.137;F.A.Cavenagh,The Life and Work of Griffith Jones of Llandowror (Cardiff:University of Wales Press,1930),p.33; Mary Clement,The S.P.C.K. and Wales,p.100.

[329] F.A.Cavenagh,Life and Work of Griffith Jones,pp. 61-2.

adequate funding their functional importance would have possibly declined towards the end of the eighteenth century. The advance of Nonconformity would also have rendered the teaching of the Catechism less a matter of urgency for the saving of souls.

The itinerant character of the Circulating Schools and the fact that teaching was in the Welsh language enabled the influence of these schools to penetrate deeply into the scattered countryside. For example, parish registers in the Rhondda Valleys reveal that the majority of the people were illiterate in that they were unable to write, and the only provisions for education were "private adventure" schools and the charity schools in the Border Vale towns of Llantrisant and Llanwynno. During the heyday of the Circulating Schools, Griffith Jones was able to establish seven schools in one highland parish, Ystradyfodwg.[330]

The dispersed region just north of Swansea, ignored by both grammar and charity schools, was deeply penetrated through the efforts of Griffith Jones. A typical enterprise was that of Clydach, served by the schools of Llangyfelach and Pontardawe between 1738 and 1761. A full-time teacher arrived for the first six months to instruct children during the day and adults at night in the arts of reading and Catechism. After a sufficient core of literate individuals were created, some of the most talented graduates were trained

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[330] E.D.Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, p.31.

to open their own schools. Lesser educational establishments were begun in Llangiwg, Gelligrawn, Cwm Mamllwyd and Cilybebyll and had between twenty-four and one hundred twenty-five students each year of operation. In some of the larger hamlets Griffith Jones personally founded schools at Gilfach-yr-Haidd, Ystradowen, Ystradgynlais and Alltygraig. His letters reveal a flurry of activity at Llangiwg:

> ...a Mr.H...T...taught children and adults at Waun Cygurwen in Llangwicke in 1739-40, when forty-five were enrolled. In 1741-2, forty-one attended at Cygurwen and fifty-two in 1744-5. A year later twenty-eight scholars attended at Lwyn-y-Celyn, in Llangwik...At Neudd in Llangwick, forty-three students were enrolled...in a school in 1750-1 at Cigerwen in the parish of Llangwick, forty-three students attended.[331]

The picture that emerges concerning the tenure of the Circulating Schools is that of a fairly rapid diffusion into the countryside once a school was established in one of the larger hamlets. Enrolment at first increased, but declined shortly after. Eventually, the school would cease to exist.

The Circulating Schools did not diffuse westward along the major communications networks or the southern coastal plain; rather, they diffused eastwards from their origin in Carmarthenshire and along the road networks between the town of Carmarthen and West Glamorgan, gaining footholds in the larger hamlets. Map distributions of the Circulating Schools reveal certain basic hypotheses; few schools were established

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[331] John Henry Davies, History of Pontardawe and District, pp. 197, 182-3, 195, 205, 212.

in the Vale market towns and the southern coastal regions; the most durable locations of the Glamorgan schools were in the north and west of the county between Bridgend and the Loughor River, and in the peripheral highland zone; the Circulating Schools in east Glamorgan were fewest in number and had the shortest period of tenure; only four schools ever existed in the Vale of Gower and lasted for a period of merely ten years.[332] From these observations it appears that the Circulating schools were more popular in regions where the Welsh language was the dominant tongue, a factor not present in the Vale market towns and the southern coastal plain. Moreover, urban centres and lowland areas were already serviced by other educational institutions where teaching was available in English.

The most pronounced attack upon Griffith Jones and the Circulating Schools was that they encouraged religious dissent. Though a ranter against abuses, Jones was constantly loyal to the Church, despite the fact that he was a friend of many leading dissenters and dissenting ministers. In order for him to maintain a competent teaching staff and run his schools cheaply, Jones found himself hiring teachers with dissenting views while trying desperately to maintain the good will of the ministers of the Established Church.[333]

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[332] William Rees, Historical Atlas of Wales, plates 61-3.

[333] F.A. Cavenagh, Life and Work of Griffith Jones, pp.31, 33, 40.

Eventually, drastic measures had to be taken in order to insure the security of his schools. He opened them for inspection and fired approximately one-quarter of his teachers who were suspected of harbouring dissenting views. Despite this purge, teachers who were peripherally loyal to the Church accepted Anglican tenets "with modifications of emphasis proper to a Calvinistic rather than a Lutheran interpretation of the Christian faith." Jones' efforts to attach the schools to the very institution which he was trying to defend and reform resulted in the handing over their administration to the local incumbants.[334] It was not merely the fear of antagonizing the Church hierarchy which caused anxiety for Griffith Jones. In effect, the deviants were working against his major goal, the "re-defining of role-expectations for clergy and congregation alike." Those not in agreement with his principles were to be dismissed without appeal:

> The masters must be sober, God-fearing members of the Church of England, loyal to the King and the Government, as such as devote themselves sincerely to their work: not standing about needlessly and idling about the place; not concerning about controversial issues of Religion, nor following any customs opposed to the Word of God, the Law of the Land, or the order of the Church, nor interfering in anything unconnected with their calling.[335]

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[334] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education, pp.26-7, 98, 145.

[335] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education, pp.141, 147; F.A. Cavenagh, Life and Work of Griffith Jones, p.51.

Griffith Jones' loyalty to the Established Church and the House of Hanover was in harmony with his emphasis upon social conservatism. He believed that the poor were designed by God to be instruments of charity so that the rich could acquire rewards for the after-life;however,he was deeply concerned with social injustices and was afraid that radical views might be infused into future popular dissatisfaction. Education was to be the means of social and political peace:

> For if the Lower People were duly taught, and influenced to know and fear God;they would not fail to become loyal Subjects, and peaceable neighbours;which I hope is literally true of every Person,taught in the Catechizing Schools.[336]

The loyalty to the state expressed by the Evangelicals and emphasized in the Circulating Schools is revealed in the fact that they were largely responsible for the detachment of popular loyalties to the old royal house and to those remnants of Catholicism which had become so routinized that they were meaningless to the majority of the people. In a sense,a new type of conformism came into being;existing social institutions were to be maintained,but were to be transformed to include the needs of the populace. The innovative properties of the Circulating Schools therefore gave impetus to clerical responsibility. Moreover,literacy fostered the participation of the common people in the formal institutional

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[336] John McLeish,Evangelical Religion and Popular Education,pp.84,136.

functions of the Established Church.[337]

The ideals of the Evangelicals,however,were buried with the advance of Calvinistic Methodism. In addition,their methodology of education eventually served to foster ideas contrary to their original goals. In essence,teaching the awareness of social justice was combined with the belief that the existing power structure could accommodate the common man through innovation in the network of communications between the peasantry and the elite of society.[338]

In addition to literacy and Catechism,a reshaping of the process of socialization and readjustment of cultural alliances was necessary in order to acheive the goals of Griffith Jones and the Evangelicals. The new religious approach depended largely upon the written word,and the oral customs and traditional cultural affiliations of the peasantry were considered to be irrelevant. The Bible and the Catechism became the focus of both religious and personal life,serving to detach the peasant from ancient modes of thought and expression. In fact,the Evangelicals believed it part of their mission to free men from past mental encumbrances. To some historians the entire religious and educational movement inferred the freeing of men from their traditional cultural and deferential inhibitions,resulting in the emergence of independent minds:

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[337] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education, pp. 102-4, 100.

[338] Ibid., p. 139.

> Laws of social subordination do not flourish in institutions devoted exclusively to the saving of souls. The supreme importance of the individual, not the reform of society, was the lesson taught in them...The schools made the Welsh people free of their national literature; they taught them the supreme importance of the individual.[339]

The inherent complexities and conflicts in the thought of Griffith Jones and the Evangelicals inadvertently led to severe contradictions in terms of goal acheivement. In fact, Griffith Jones desired the Catechical Schools to create "an informed, inner-directed and calculating behaviour, at once self-critical and analytical of social forms" while still attempting to enforce respect for the familial structure of traditional Wales and the embodiments of established authority. The attempts to introduce traditional forms of Welsh cultural expression such as music and oratory into the Anglican Church ritual, in addition to attacks upon the sinfullness of the state of the Established Church, resulted in a divorce between ideals and aims. Indeed, in order to bring true salvation to the lower classes, much of the past had to be destroyed:

> ...the substratum of pagan beliefs and practices which had survived from earlier pre-Christian times and on the dead fossilized ritualism from which religious feeling and Christian solidarity had long since drained away.[340]

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[339] M.G.Jones, The Charity School Movement, pp.324-5.

[340] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education, pp.133-4.

Family, class and community were to be open to individual analysis, but they were also the means by which the soul, the inner communion with God, would gain the necessary vitality in order to acheive salvation:

> The loyalties he owed to these groups had, so to speak, to be pulverised sufficiently to make available a store of primary emotion which could be used to attach him to the visible kingdom of God on earth. Evangelical Christianity, being above all an individualized religion, was in this social context an attack on family and social solidarity.[341]

After the eventual disappearance of the Circulating Schools in the late eighteenth century, the circulating Sunday Schools emerged as the most popular educational institution in Wales by the early nineteenth. The prime mover of this system, Thomas Charles of Bala, was an avowed Methodist and made no effort to hide the fact that he wished to use the schools for the advance of Calvinistic Methodism. Although the Sunday Schools closely resembled the Circulating Schools in terms of organization, Charles carried Jones' innovations of the process of socialization one step further by separating children and adults in the schools. It was his policy to educate children during the day and adults in the evening.[342]

The motivation for the establishment of the Sunday Schools was essentially the same as all religiously oriented

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[341] John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education, p. 133.

[342] M.G. Jones, The Charity School Movement, pp. 319-21. Thomas Kelly, History of Adult Education in Great Britain, pp. 78-9.

educational institutions in Wales since the Propagation Act; they were intended to educate children, free from parental tutelage if at all possible, into submission to a prescribed doctrine. The Sunday Schools, however, were an extremely popular institution in that they were organized at a grass roots level and taught the religious values hald by parents and subscribers. Moreover, contemporary social values were maintained and enforced. In his Rules for the Sunday Schools, Thomas Charles emphasized good manners and respect and submission to one's family and elders in addition to the public authority.[343] In effect, Charles' teaching method was designed to substitute or to complement the teacher for the parent in the process of socialization.

In the nineteenth century the ironworks and colliery schools were largely modelled after the National Schools, but bore a close resemblance to the school previously established by Sir Humphrey Mackworth in the early eighteenth century. Sponsored by the wealthy industrialists, these schools were geared to the teaching of basic skills. In some instances the schools were supported to an extent by the workmen, who contributed weekly or monthly sums ranging from 1d. to 9d. With few exceptions all the students were children of parents employed at the sponsor's mine or mill. Lessons were given entirely in English with the exception of the works school

[343] Leslie Wynne Evans, Education in Industrial Wales, pp.233,303,175.

Margam,but the use of Welsh to explain English texts was common practice. Education was limited to the teaching of reading,writing,arithmetic and vocal music,but there were occasional spicings of English history,geography and religious instruction. The schools at Dowlais and Hafod,sponsored by Messrs. Guest and Vivian respectively,were based upon Robert Owen's institution at New Lanark. Established towards the very end of the period under analysis,they concentrated heavily upon the teaching of simple skills and training for participation in industrial employment.[344]

With the exception of the works schools at Dowlais and Hafod,the quality of education in industrial Glamorgan appears to have been extremely poor. Perhaps because of the obsession with reading rather than writing or basic mathematics,the Commissioner's Report of 1847 resulted in a surfeit of caustic criticisms,as exemplified in the report relating to the Kilvey Infants and Juvenile Copperworks School near Swansea. Just before he left the school the commissioner was appalled [illegible] witnessed the following:"five young men...aged from 18 to [illegible] years,had all signed an agreement,respecting their work,with <u>marks</u>." The commissioner painted a sordid picture of the Kilvey School:

> It is held in a dingy,dilapidated building ...I found the old master (a mason disabled 41 years ago) sitting stick in hand. The 12

[344] Leslie Wynne Evans, Education in Industrial Wales, pp:233,39,159,3.

> senior boys present were reading the Epistle of St. James...The writing was middling. The books were not very clean. The master complained that the children would not come early in the morning,because they had to take their parent's breakfast to the works, and that they were removed at an early age from school...A list of attendance is sent weekly to the companies whose workmen support the school.[345]

In some instances the works schools were more serviceable to the community and the surrounding region. For example,the Harfords of Melingriffith invited Joseph Lancaster,the founder of the Lancaster school system,to address a meeting of interested parties concerning the establishment of a British School. After the school was erected it was run in association with the Melingriffith tinworks,but additional public su[illegible]iption enabled children from nearby Llwysilan, Whitchurch and Pentyrch to attend classes providing they held special admission tickets.[346]

The works schools formed an integral part of the industrial settlements. As these settlements were dominated by an English-speaking elite,Welsh language and culture had no place in their educational schemes and schools were structured to overtly attempt thorough Anglicization of the students;indeed,Welsh language and culture were considered hindrances to advancement in the new urban industrial milieu. The major concerns of the sponsors were essentially utilitarian in the training of personnel for business and industry,

[345] Leslie Wynne Evans, Education in Industrial Wales, p. 139.

[346] Ibid., pp. 158-9.

and the inclusion of social norms and values by such teaching methods as drill,discipline and civics. These schools,how-ever,did not prevail in Glamorgan during the period under study. Before 1850 the Day and Sunday Schools were the most numerous and contained the greatest number of students,the populace showing a slight preference for the Sunday Schools.[347]

The quality of education and standard of literacy appears to have been higher in rural Glamorgan than in the industrial regions,especially with regard to contemporary accounts at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Moreover, there seems to have actually been a general decline in educational standards and literacy during the same period in the new urban industrial complexes. In Malkin's jaunts about Wales he was astonished at the familiarity of the people with their national history and literature,and the witty speech of the peasantry,full of "figures and metaphors":

> ...the people are more respectable and better informed...the advantages of decent education have been longer established in Wales,than in most parts of England...our middle-aged to be much more ignorant than the middle-aged and elderly poor of Wales ...There are few persons in the towns, who are unable to read;and even in the villages,and in the more mountainous parts, schools are very common,and in many instances of ancient establishment.[348]

Malkin's reference to the knowledge of the "middle-aged and elderly" might very well attest to the success of the Circu-

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[347] Leslie Wynne Evans,Education in Industrial Wales, pp.38,72-3,240,245,248.

[348] Benjamin Heath Malkin,Scenery,Antiquities,and Biography of South Wales,pp.65-6.

lating Schools;however,the schools of "ancient establishment" in the "more mountainous parts" emits clues as to the surviv-al of traditional bardic education. Malkin also stated that these schools existed in areas where the English language was not spoken and the evils of the Industrial Revolution,such as alcoholism,was unknown.[349] Education in this type of "mutual aid" or "private adventure" school has been described as "a bardic education similiar in didactic method and content to that of classical Greece.". Erasmus Saunders,an ardent church and school critic,noticed many of these schools in the early eighteenth century:

> Most of those who attain a knowledge of reading and writing in the vernacular in this period do so as a result of mutual aid:they are instructed by their fellows ...privately...The private literary instruction given in these mutual aid groups is made agreeable by singing... carolion,which are often antiphonal in form,in a manner which recalls the practice of the primitive church.[350]

From Malkin's remarks it is possible to assume that some traditional modes of education,suspiciously contrary to the views of most present-day historians,survived in the scattered settlements of the northern regions of the county well into the nineteenth century. These regions were isolated

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[349] Benjamin Heath Malkin,Scenery,Antiquities,and Biography of South Wales,p.64.

[350] John McLeish,Evangelical Religion and Popular Education,pp.9,80.

from the Anglicized Vale towns and the emerging industrial centres and were not serviced by the Anglicizing charity schools, works schools, or those institutions established under the Propagation Act of the seventeenth century.

During the eighteenth century it is possible to establish associations between educational and religious activity. This was particularly true of the blaenau and border regions of Glamorgan which were characterized by small hamlets and scattered farmsteads, and where the Circulating Schools flourished. Moreover, these areas were distant from much of the pervading influence of Anglican vicars, squires and industrialists as well as the Vale centres of Old Dissent. For example, Llanharry experienced a steady growth in the number of religious dissenters during the course of the eighteenth century. Situated well within the confines of the Border Vale where isolated farmsteads and miniature nucleations dotted the countryside, the fragmentation of the hamlet invited the incursions of itinerant preachers, usually of Calvinistic persuasion. As early as 1730 a house on Gwaun Llanharry was licensed for preaching and the meetings of the Congregationalists in various houses were developing into centres of social life in the community. Bethlehem Chapel was built at Llanharan in 1780 and in 1801 the Maendy Independent Church was established.[351] This process was not characteristic of the Vale villages which were dominated by

[351] David J. Francis, "Llanharry: A Border Vale Mining Village", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 166, 168.

large resident landowners, noted for the growing of wheat and descending from a highly manorialized socio-economic milieu.

It was common for schools, chapels and meeting houses to be closely related and resemble the "mutual aid" efforts of self education. An example of this process can be found in the Pontardawe district of north-west Glamorgan. One of the earliest institutions was founded in 1724 when Joseph Simonds, a Calvinist educator, aided a local preacher and schoolmaster, Roger Howell, in the establishment of a small school. Religious and educational activities were closely related at Ystalyfera-Pant-Teg. In this hamlet the first public building to be erected was raised in 1785 and was intended to be a Day School. People shortly began to hold a Sunday School in the building which was followed by sermons and prayer meetings. It was common practice for preacher and schoolmaster to be the same individual. Moreover, as in the case of the Circulating Schools, schools <u>cum</u> chapels were begun in one of the larger hamlets and then spread into the surrounding countryside. For example, before 1828, with the exception of scattered sermons held in individual buildings, no religious service was held in the hamlet of Rhydyfo. In 1828 students from a school at nearby Baran came to preach at Rhydyfo, but in 1832 David Jones began a Sunday School in the village.[352] The pattern which emerges is that the founding of a school usually meant

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[352] John Henry Davies, History of Pontardawe and District, pp.132, 146, 158.

the establishment of a dissenting congregation with the preacher performing the dual function of minister and schoolmaster.

In Gwauncaegurwen, school and chapel were combined from the date of establishment. Reverend Noah Jones donated land at nearby Cwmbach and paid for the erection of a small school building in the year 1762. He bequeathed £2 per year to support poor scholars and an additional £1 for the Reverend Josiah Rees to preach in the school on Sunday afternoons during the summer. In 1767 the Clerk of the Peace licensed the building as "a proper place for Protestant Dissenters", thus initiating the founding of Carmel Independent Chapel. By 1821 a certain Hen Abraham (Old Abraham) kept a small school in the stable loft of the Old Carmel Chapel.[353]

The socio-cultural milieu which dominated the coalfield, dubbed the "Welsh Nonconformist Society" by many Welsh historians, originated in the countryside and retained many of its rural characteristics. The exclusiveness of the Old Dissent and lack of initiative displayed by the Anglican Church led to the swamping of both denominations by the exodus of Calvinistic Methodists and other sects from rural Wales. In the period when the industrial settlements were small and dispersed about a myriad of mines and smelters, the chapel as a centre of social life performed the same function as in

[353] John Henry Davies, History of Pontardawe and District, pp. 173, 212-13.

the rural regions. This phenomenon was maintained as long as the urban industrial environment was marked by scattered groups of dwellings, upon occasion characterized by a single congregation and chapel. In addition, denominational differences were so acute that they served to isolate each dissenting religious sect from one another almost as much as from the Established Church. The concentration of small groups of loyal supporters of each denomination into a series of tightly-knit congregations helped to preserve the internal cohesiveness experienced in the scattered hamlets during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution.[354]

In the industrial regions of Glamorgan the "Welsh Nonconformist Society" dominated most human activities until the early twentieth century. Religion, education, social life, culture and even political affiliations were closely related. The chapel was the central point of both the congregation and the community, and the preacher *cum* schoolmaster emerged as the popular leader of the lower classes.

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[354] E.T. Davies, *Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales*, pp. 16-17, 92, 50-4. See Chapter XII for a more detailed discussion of the relationship between religion and politics as well as the conflicts within society.

Chapter XI

Language and Culture

The problems of language and culture in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Wales have been consistantly approached by historians almost solely by reference to "The Great Awakening" and its repercussions. Albeit this "awakening" cannot be ignored;but a simple concentration upon religion,education and literature fails to take into account commercial patterns,urbanization,communications networks and the penetrating effects of the Industrial Revolution upon linguistic and cultural expression. Moreover,any analysis of language and culture in Wales must inevitably take into consideration the process of Anglicization. But this process *per se* cannot be regarded as the sole characteristic of changes in Welsh culture during the period under study. In essence,Welsh culture in the eighteenth century was in a state of transition:the agrarian folk culture of the common people,already under strain since the sixteenth century,was being revamped by the economic,educational and religious developments of the eighteenth century. Moreover,in South Wales in particular,an urban industrial environment was emerging in which traditional modes of expression were becoming obsolete.

It is beyond question that the Welsh language was employed by the majority of Glamorganians during the period under analysis;however,English had made significant advances

since the period of Flemish and Norman settlement in the late medieval period. In 1573 Humphrey LLuyd noticed that in the southern regions of the county the Welsh language was "most rudest,& coursest,because it hath greatest affinitie with strange togues." Another scholar of the same period, Rhys AmHeurug,gives a similiar conclusion:

> such as remayne at this day of the posterity of the Conquerers (which are but few),inhabite either the townes,or in the Lowe Country near the Sea Side,who in names and speech differ from the ancient Glamorganians.[355]

The southern coastal regions of the county,open for a long period of time to settlement,trade and commerce,were first to be affected by the diffusion of the English language. In 1700 at Llangrallo near Bridgend,a correspondant of the antiquary and statistician Edward Llhuyd stated "ye language is p'tly English,p'tly Welsh our trading being for ye most part with Summer and Devonshires wch spoiles our Welsh." Richard Warner,a traveller in the year 1798,stated that in Llantwit Major "the appearance and language" of the people did not resemble the Welsh and "there (was) not a trace of the Celtic tongue amongst them,their dialect approaching nearer to a broad Somersetshire than to any other." [356]

Correlation of place names with comments by contemporary

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[355] R. Brinley Jones,The Old British Tongue:The Vernacular in Wales,1540-1640 (Cardiff:Avalon Books,1970)., p.82.

[356] Moelwyn Williams,"A Contribution to the Commercial History of Glamorgan,1666-1735",National Library of Wales Journal,IX (1955),199-200.

scholars and travellers makes it possible to trace linguistic divisions. Moreover,the linguistic contrasts between pastoral and arable agriculture,dispersed and nucleated settlement,is strongly evident. For example,villages having names with Flemish and Norman roots such as Flemingston and Bonvilston in the Vale of Glamorgan appear having arable husbandry characterized by the growing of wheat. Horton and Port Eynon in the Vale of Gower are similiar examples. All four villages were and still are English-speaking. In some instances villages like Llantwit Major,which in unadulterated Welsh would be Llanilltud Fawr,English is the dominant language despite the fact that a fairly dispersed settlement pattern exists. This can be attributed to the fact that a Norman Manor once existed there and that the village has had commercial relations with the West Country for a considerable period of time.[357] A most interesting example is St. Donats,which is repeated a few miles distant as Welsh St. Donats. These two villages represent the contrast between husbandry,settlement and linguistic distribution. St. Donats was and is almost entirely English-speaking. The village is nucleated and nearby farmlands are dedicated to arable husbandry. There is evidence of English settlement. On the other hand,Welsh St. Donats is situated well within the confines of the Border Vale in a region of dispersed settlement and mixed farming. Originally,both villages differed

[357] E.G.Bowen,Wales,pp.411-12,421.

according to law, land tenure, custom and language [358] In 1802 Malkin stated that Welsh St. Donats was entirely Welsh-speaking and inhabited by native Welsh only [359]

According to accounts of travellers it is possible to conclude that most of the Vale market towns on the main turnpike road through the county caused them little difficulty as far as language was concerned. The further west they travelled, however, the more exasperated they became. One of the most amusing accounts is that of Viscount Torrington in the year 1787. On his journey from Newport to Cardiff he casually admits at not being understood in some places, but at Llandaff he gleefully remarked that there were only seven or eight members of the Welsh congregation remaining at the Cathedral and predicted the fate of Cornish within a few years. As an extra source of joy he stated that harping was also "on the wane." Torrington was shocked when he reached Pyle as "they yet speak of England as a foreign country: this idea their language has kept up", but when he veered towards Ystradfeltae, despair was evident: "all I got was dim sarsen-ick (sic) and am in the predicament of Mortimer with his Welsh mistress." [360] John Wesley, travelling through Glamorgan almost forty years before Torrington, attests to the same linguistic pattern. Wesley had little difficulty being

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[358] E.G. Bowen, Wales, p.412.

[359] Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, pp.72-3.

[360] Bruyn Andrews, ed., The Torrington Diaries (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1934), I, 280, 283, 293, 305.

understood in English as he preached in the Vale market towns, but at Llanwynno at the foot of the highlands and Margam in the most westerly part of the Vale of Glamorgan, he was forced to employ an interpreter to relate the essentials of his sermons.[361]

It appears that linguistic divides in Glamorgan were quite stabilized near the end of the eighteenth century. Only in ports and market towns with external commercial affiliations and in regions of past alien settlement and residual Norman settlement _cum_ manorialism was the English language dominant.

Some regions of Glamorgan remained comparatively unaffected by the English language to the present century. For example, the Vale of Neath did not experience alien settlement or immigration, even during the Industrial Revolution. The town of Neath was the only significant market town for the produce of the rich Vale of Neath, and the Vale itself was exempt from outward commercial ties. In this region of tiny hamlets and scattered farmsteads the framework of traditional economic life remained and the miner _cum_ smallholder was an integral part of the economy until late in the nineteenth century. Mines, not mills, dominated the industrial economy, and the scattered settlements did not expand into massive urban agglomerations.[362] In essence,

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[361] A.H. Williams, _John Wesley in Wales_, pp. 25, 40.
[362] E.G. Bowen, _Wales_, p. 254.

the Vale of Neath retained its Welshness due to comparative isolation and absence of Anglicizing factors.

If Welsh was the language of the majority in Glamorgan, English was a necessity for social and economic advancement. Since the Act of Union, English was the major medium of parlance for the upper classes - the nobility, squires, gentlemen and wealthier merchants in both the towns and the countryside. English was the language of county meetings, of political discussion, of advancement in the administration, of the economic elite, and of "polite" society. English, therefore, was a strict qualification for entry into the industrial and commercial life of the county.[363]

The history of Glamorgan's newspapers reveals the relationship between social status, economic activity and language. In the eighteenth century English newspapers from London, Bristol, Hereford and Gloucester were the clarions of business and politics in South Wales. Only in the beginning of the nineteenth century did Welsh newspapers come into existence; however, those which survived the Stamp Act and enjoyed wide circulation were inevitably written in the English language and represented the interests of the commercial and industrial elite. One Anglo-Welsh newspaper, The Cambrian, succeeded because thirty-five to forty per cent of its printed space was filled with advertisements. On the other hand, one paper printed entirely in Welsh, Seren Gomer,

[363] R.D.Rees, "Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales, 1790-1832", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 235.

large integrated concerns usually dominated a single town or valley and, except during periods of prolonged economic distress, protests tended to be limited and localized. Otherwise, large numbers of coalminers and ironworkers from Monmouthshire would arrive to bolster the ranks of the Merthyr strikers and rioters. The disturbance, providing there was widespread discontent, tended to concentrate in Merthyr, spread to Aberdare and then diffuse westwards via the Vale of Neath. Even in Merthyr strikes and riots did not necessarily affect the entire town. Protests were usually precipitated by one or more trade or craft at a single works: Cyfarthfa, Dowlais, Plymouth, Penydarren, Hirwaun, or nearby Aberdare. Disturbances at one of the larger works such as Cyfarthfa or Dowlais would invariably affect the whole Merthyr district and probably attract the coalminers and ironworkers of Monmouthshire.[533]

Early protest movements were usually of short duration, lacked any type of permanent organization or leadership and were not coloured by political or ideological overtones. They were for the most part incoherent expressions of popular ire due to severe economic distress. Evidence does suggest, however, that the newer arrivals to the coalfield were more willing to riot and protest violently. On the other hand, where workmen were more attuned to the

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[533] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, p. 102.

industrial environment, they appear to have been more experienced in peaceful protest and acheiving their wage demands. The Swansea district, perhaps due to the fact that industry was more diversified and therefore less subject to conditions of extreme depression and unemployment, was characterized by more coherent strike activity and a great degree of success by the workmen; there was also less violence than in Merthyr. On the other hand, the workmen of Monmouthshire appear to have been more violent than those of Merthyr. For example, following the end of the strike at Merthyr in 1816, the Monmouthshire workmen, many of them recent arrivals from the north and west of Wales, struck for a longer period of time. Moreover, when the Merthyr workmen were becoming familiar with radical politics and reform, their fellows to the east were developing their own form of unfriendly persuasion known as the "Scotch Cattle" by the early eighteen-thirties. This ancient folk style of protest involved the leader, or "bull", and his followers, "cattle", making nocturnal visits upon informers, managers and disloyal workmen; beatings, property damage and even the odd incidence of murder resulted. The "Scotch Cattle" would blacken their faces in order to avoid detection, blow horns to announce their arrival, write threatening letters to warn prospective victims and wear elaborate costumes to preserve their identity. Despite the success of the "Scotch Cattle" in terrorizing the industrial regions of Monmouthshire, there

is no record of any incident occurring in Glamorgan.[534] In effect,Merthyr was gradually emerging as a centre of coherent protest where the traditional riot and unorganized ineffective strike were becoming part of the past.

Between the years 1816 and 1831 there was comparative tranquility on the coalfield. During the intervening period between the prosperity following the post-war depression and the severe economic conditions developing late in the eighteen-twenties,there was a scatter of minor disturbances, but none of an extremely serious nature. The workmen confined themselves to minor protests coincidental with periodic grievances:complaints against the truck shops, working conditions,methods of wage payment and hiring practices occupied their time.[535] During the eighteen-twenties,however,it became increasingly evident that the conflicts between consumer and supplier were being replaced by friction between employer and employee. The era of pre-political social protest was waning as the spectre of reform seeped into the struggles of the working classes. Indeed,between 1830 and 1835 the Reform Crisis in Merthyr acted as a catalyst in destroying the pattern of protest on

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[534] David J.V.Jones,"The Scotch Cattle and Their Black Domain",Welsh History Review,V (1970-1),220.

[535] Ness Edwards,History of the South Wales Miners, p.10.

the coalfield. In 1831 the tragedy of Merthyr Tudful would provide an abrupt end to the pre-political atmosphere of the coalfield and bring the dawn of coherent efforts on the part of the working classes to improve their own lives.

Chapter XVI

The Merthyr Riots of 1831 and Their Aftermath

In 1831 Merthyr Tudful exploded in an orgy of violence and destruction,but the riots themselves were a curious mixture of _taxation populaire_,armed insurrection,trade unionism and popular fervour arising from the Reform Crisis. The riots were perpetrated by the standard sources of unrest on the coalfield:depression in the iron industry,price inflation,seizure of goods for payment of debt,wage cuts and unemployment.

The Merthyr Riots of 1831 were coloured by the spectre of the Reform Crisis,but the word "reform" had more than one meaning in the town. To the working classes it referred to an almost mystical solution to the problems of everyday life, but to the upper and middle classes it meant the acheivement of borough status for Merthyr. Moreover,under the temporary surface patronage of the town's industrial elite, Merthyr's middle class merchants and shopkeepers were attempting to reform the town's antiquated parish administration which had broken down under the impact of the Industrial Revolution;it was their desire to create an efficient urban government. The guise of reform united the employees of the ironworks and coal mimes,the capitalist elite and the town's radical middle class. When this unity disintegrated under the impact of the depression during the early eighteen-thirties,the workmen of Merthyr turned against their political tutors. When the riots,strikes and

elections finally subsided, the "inhabitants of the iron-works" had emerged as the ideological leaders of the working classes in South Wales.

The Reform Movement increased in popularity during the depression which followed the Napoleonic Wars. It is difficult to assess the effects of the Reform Movement upon the workmen at this stage, but as early as 1816 placards advocating the reform of parliament were secretly distributed in Merthyr and were believed to have originated in London. During the same period the speeches of Orator Hunt and other reformers were translated into Welsh and made accessible in Merthyr.[536] Immediately following the Napoleonic Wars petitions were sent to parliament from every part of Wales demanding that the income and property taxes established during the wars be repealed. In 1819 a sympathetic demonstration in protest of the "Peterloo Massacre" was staged and meetings were widespread in support of the Manchester reformers.[537] The outburst of enthusiasm following 1815 subsided during the comparatively prosperous decade of the eighteen-twenties. In 1830, however, a whirl of activity commenced with the townspeople of Merthyr showing unanimous support for the abolition of the truck system and

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[536] David J.V.Jones, "The Merthyr Riots of 1831", Welsh History Review, III (1966-7), 176.

[537] E.J.Jones, Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales, p.118; Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, p.87.

the Corn Laws, petitioning for the reform of parliament and demanding that Merthyr be granted representation in the House of Commons.[538]

The middle class merchants, professionals and shop-keepers of Merthyr closely resembled their more noteworthy fellows in Manchester. They controlled the entire scope of Merthyr's commerce in addition to subsidiary industries and housing. The social and cultural life of Merthyr was completely dominated by the middle class. They sent their children to Taleisin Williams' school, participated in his literary and language revival, formed the core of Merthyr's radical discussion groups and, like their counterparts in Manchester, were almost entirely Unitarian.[539]

Merthyr Tudful was essentially a rather unimportant market town which had mushroomed into a sprawling industrial menagerie by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its system of local government, however, had changed little and was totally unfunctional. The reform of local administration proved to be the major political occupation of Merthyr's middle class radical clique. This local reform movement was intended to equip the town with efficient and modern urban institutions:

[538] David J.V. Jones, "The Merthyr Riots of 1831", Welsh History Review, III (1966-7), 176.

[539] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 165-7.

> ...to refashion the structure of parish administration which had broken down under the impact of industry,to equip the sprawling settlement with institutions to fit its new urban personality,to win parliamentary representation for the town and power for its middle-class Dissenters.[540]

The wealthy Unitarian radicals,led by the powerful James family,obviously desired institutions which would protect their interests in the town. In fact,the most efficient administrative institution in Merthyr was the Court of Requests,founded as early as 1809. This court was responsible for the recovery of small debts and was presided over by commissioners appointed by the parish vestry,and was thus controlled by the merchants and shopkeepers of Merthyr. Wages and goods could be seized by the court and offenders could also be imprisoned.[541]

The ironmasters were also concerned about the gross inefficiency of parish administration in Merthyr. During every economic crisis they directly intervened in the affairs of the parish. Whenever the poor rate rose drastically,incidents of theft or violence increased or administrative chaos was evident,the ironmasters banded together to pressure the townsmen. Their major concerns were the efficient administration of justice and poor relief. During periods of social unrest the ironmasters were

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[540] Gwyn A.Williams,"The Merthyr Riots:Settling the Account",National Library of Wales Journal,XI (1959),125.

[541] Gwyn A.Williams,"The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836",Welsh History Review,I (1961),164.

particularly active. In fact, in 1811, in the midst of the "Luddite" crisis, the ironmasters Crawshay, Guest and Hill participated directly in the administration of the parish. Following 1817 and another crisis in parish affairs, the townsmen emerged as the direct applicants of the administrative schemes which the ironmasters concocted.[542]

The first effective parish government in Merthyr was established in 1822 with the introduction of a select vestry. Despite the fact that the James group dominated the vestry, they were forced by circumstance to come to terms with Merthyr's industrial elite. In effect, the James group's domination of the parish vestry from 1822 to 1831 was due to this compact with the ironmasters. The concerns of the ironmasters were also evident when in 1829 they were largely responsible for the establishment of a stipendary magistracy in the town, thus ensuring a more efficient means of administering local justice.[543]

In 1829 a long period of depression began in which men were dismissed from work, colliers worked half time and the ironmasters resorted to their accustomed method of reducing piece rates in order to maintain a healthy margin of profit and dominate the existing iron market. A loose organization

[542] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 166-7, 169.

[543] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Penderyn" in Merthyr Politics, ed., Glanmor Williams, pp. 14-15; "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 166-7.

was formed by the workmen,but a lull in the depression during the summer of 1830 witnessed its disappearance. By the end of the summer the throes of depression were again evident. Concurrently,the heat of the Reform Crisis was seething in Merthyr and the town's radical middle class managed to channel the workmen's discontent (much of which was originally directed against the middle class merchants and shopkeepers) into what appeared to be mass support in favour of reform. Unity between the lower and middle classes of Merthyr was temporarily cemented by a unified opposition to the truck system,the workmen because they were short of provisions and the cash to obtain them,and the middle class because they were hungry for the market which the abolition of the truck system would leave open. The workmen were willing partners at this stage. Due to the efforts of the town's radical clique a massive anti-truck petition was sent to parliament,given extra weight by the full support of William Crawshay and Anthony Hill. Appeals were made by the ironmasters based upon the premise that the violence,theft and vandalism then so prevalent on the coalfield would be lessoned if the truck system were abolished. Public meetings concerning abolition were a regular occurrence and they were well attended by all sections of the community.[544]

The unity between the Merthyr workmen,the James group

[544] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, pp.10-11,14.

and William Crawshay was born in mutual opposition to the truck system, but this alliance was quickly channelled into the sphere of radical politics. In addition to a coherent anti-truck movement, political unions of workmen and shopkeepers were established and committees were founded to press for parliamentary reform. Due to this middle class tutelage parliamentary reform became the major issue in Merthyr, the cloak under which all grievances were believed to be hidden.[545] In effect, the anti-truck movement faded into the background as the spectre of reform filtered downwards to all segments of the population and captured their ideals and aspirations.

The anti-truck movement resulted in the destruction of the unity customarily displayed by Merthyr's industrial elite. Crawshay and Hill emerged as the mouthpieces of middle class politics. At Dowlais, Penydarren and Aberdare, lower and middle class opposition to the truck system was growing, but only at Cyfarthfa and Hirwaun was it abolished. The darling of the middle classes, William Crawshay, complained loudly against what he termed the unfair competition of the other ironmasters of the region; in reality, he was merely repeating what the merchants and shopkeepers had been saying for decades. The depression and difficulties of

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[545] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr Riots: Settling the Account", National Library of Wales Journal, XI (1959), 125-6; Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, p. 15.

parish government and administration further cemented the alliance between Crawshay and the James group as Crawshay and Hill became intimately involved in another programme of parish reform.[546] In March of 1830 Crawshay and Hill extracted anti-truck and reform petitions from the workmen, but when the petition was presented to parliament it was read in consort with a spate of petitions originating in Merthyr and signed by workmen,ironmasters,coalowners,merchants and tradesmen. On 13 November 1830 another meeting was held under the auspices of William James. This meeting produced a petition directed against the continuation of the truck system and was sent to parliament containing over 5,000 signatures. The petition,in effect,contained the words and sentiments of William Crawshay and was directed at his greatest political opponent,the ironmaster Josiah John Guest.[547]

After the presentation of this last anti-truck

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[546]It appears that the motives of the James group and William Crawshay are severely suspect at this point. In my opinion,as subsequent events in the town of Merthyr would bring to light,the workmen were brought into the mainstream of political life as a means of preventing violence and destruction during the most severe depression of the period. In fact,the middle class of Merthyr had more to gain from the abolition of the truck system than the workmen. Due to inflation,it is highly doubtful if Merthyr's shopkeepers would be willing to give credit. In addition,the activities of the Court of Requests increased during the early eighteen-thirties.

[547]Gwyn A.Williams,"The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836",Welsh History Review,I (1961),164,174-5.

petition, the political heat of Merthyr focused upon parliamentary reform. Any issue, however, which related to the daily lives of the populace was assured of popular support. For example, a petition favouring the abolition of the Corn Laws was canvassed and signed by 9,000 people in the Merthyr district. On 23 December 1830, within days of a massive reform meeting held at Newport in Monmouthshire, the Merthyr radicals called for a meeting at the Waun, an area just outside the town, to prepare a petition for the reform of parliament. Eight hundred people attended. This petition demanded annual parliaments, dismissal of placemen from the House of Commons, abolition of rotten boroughs, parliamentary representation for all large towns and populous districts, and the extension of the franchise to all who directly or indirectly contributed to any form of taxation.[548]

The political union, founded as early as the spring of 1830, was the mechanism by which the town bourgeoisie sucked the workmen of Merthyr into the political arena, undoubtedly to suit their own purposes. Despite the fact that government reports following the Merthyr Riots of 1831 mentioned the use of professionals (who later regretted the introduction of the rowdy minors and colliers into the union) it is certain that the radical clique led by the James family were openly preaching the ideas of political unionism and

[548] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 174-5.

Job James personally propagated the writings of Cobbet and other popular authors among the town's workmen.[549] Thus, as in London, Manchester, Bristol and other towns, a lower class movement for reform emerged simultaneously with that of the more respectable middle class, one which was fostered to a great extent by them among the lower orders.

By the early spring of 1831 Merthyr was reeling under the burden of intense depression, a factor which destroyed the façade of alliance between the workmen and the middle class. Wages were falling, a large number of workmen were forced to seek poor relief and the Court of Requests was busy confiscating the goods and property of destitute workmen. The poor rate was forced upwards to 8s., furnaces were being blown out, houses and inns fell vacant, rates were in arrear, unemployment was heavy and there were constant complaints against the harsh attitudes displayed by parish officers and the Court of Requests. Poor relief caused such a strain upon parish finances that a debt of £600 was amassed during the month of March alone.[550] The ironmasters resorted to their traditional methods of maintaining their [illegible] and competitive vitality by reducing wages. Moreover,

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[549] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 176; "The Merthyr of Dic Penderyn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p.19.

[550] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 176; "The Merthyr of Dic Penderyn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p.19.

they also enforced the payment of rents and royalties at inflated prices.[551] The air was so tense in Merthyr that one shopkeeper, Thomas Barker, slept in a manner that would later be dubbed "Merthyr fashion"; two pistols loaded with swan-shot were kept under his pillow.[552]

The intense depression forced a repetition of events with relation to parish affairs and Crawshay and the Merthyr radicals decided upon definitive action. At the parish meeting in March of 1831 Crawshay managed to pressure the townsmen out of their suspected inertia. In a coordinated series of resolutions moved by Crawshay and his closest associates, Anthony Hill and D.W.James, and seconded by James' crony, Henry Jones, a total reform of parish administration was demanded. This alleged "reform", however, was merely a ruse. In effect, the result of the meeting was that the most radical of the townsmen formed the established government of Merthyr Tudful, with the full support of none other than the powerful William Crawshay. Approximately forty per cent of the parish vestry were composed of Unitarians of close friends of those who were.[553] The "staunch old republicans of Merthyr", it appears, had reached their finest hour.

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[551] Thomas Evans, _Background of Modern Welsh Politics_, p.79.

[552] Gwyn A.Williams, "The Merthyr Riots: Settling the Account", _National Library of Wales Journal_, XI (1959), 133.

[553] Gwyn A.Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", _Welsh History Review_, I (196[illegible]), 169-70.

The reform of parish administration was a microcosm of the reform of the British parliament, but it was a transitory means of quelling social unrest. The dreams of all sections of society on the Northern Outcrop might have been partially satiated when the town of Merthyr Tudful received mention in the King's speech at the opening of the new session of parliament, but public ire was loudly voiced when the reformer's demands were ignored by the framers of the first Reform Bill. As the depression increased in intensity the alliance of classes in Merthyr began to erode and reveal the false strings which had tied it together. The hero of the moment, William Crawshay, was at first able to keep wages at their normal rate due to his enormous amount of surplus capital. He was even able to entice workmen from other companies in the region. But by May he resorted to a general reduction of wages.[554]

During the spring of 1831 a series of minor disturbances were staged by the Merthyr workmen in the name of reform. In April popular leaders decided upon illumination as a sign for support of reform and those who did not comply had their windows smashed. On the 9th and 10th of May effigies were burned and the houses of the notorious Tories, James Stephens and William Thomas, were stoned. This demonstration,

[554] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr Riots: Settling the Account", National Library of Wales Journal, XI (1959), 138; "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p. 19.

composed of 5,000 workmen,was led by a Cyfarthfa collier, John Llewelyn. The following day,after Llewelyn's arrest,a crowd of 3,000 workmen forced his and others' release from gaol. Law and order in the town had deteriorated to the point where the magistrate,J.B.Bruce,admitted that he was unable to execute police edicts.[555]

The riotous initiative taken by the workmen did not please the merchants and shopkeepers of Merthyr,despite the fact that they were intended to lend active support to the reform movement. During the election campaign of May 1831 the fragility of the alliance between the workmen and the middle classes became increasingly evident. Workmen began to fritter away from the political unions and hold torchlight meetings of their own in the hills surrounding the town. They were more concerned with immediate grievances such as unemployment,wage disputes and the Court of Requests. Although the aura of reform still occupied the minds of all classes of society the common people were well aware of the fact that their plight was not solely the result of Toryism. In effect, the working classes were beginning to break away from the reform movement and resort to more traditional means of seeking redress:

> All the old millinarian ideals of the just

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[555] David J.V.Jones,"The Merthyr Riots of 1831", Welsh History Review,III (1966-7),177-8;Gwyn A.Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr,1800-1836",Welsh History Review,I (1961),178.

> society and the moral economy came bubbling to the surface,given point and significance by the current slogans of reform.[556]

A meeting held at the Waun Fair in early June set the stage for the Merthyr Riots of 1831. The original object of this meeting was the drafting of an address to the King, thanking him for the reforms which he had promised. This address met with no opposition,but when the speaker proposed adjournment he was vetoed by a handful of the more radical workmen who demanded that more immediate matters be discussed. They demanded abolition of the Court of Requests, prevention of the engrossment of food supplies,prohibition of miners taking stalls at advanced prices,implementation of free trade,abolition of the Corn Laws,correction of the improper use of parish funds and elimination of the harsh attitudes that the parish officers were displaying towards the poor.[557]

As the meeting at the Waun Fair progressed,it became increasingly evident that the attempts of Merthyr's middle class to channel the workmen's discontent into a peaceful reform movement of meetings and petitions was on the brink of total collapse. The most radical of the workmen took over the meeting and the middle class leaders and the more

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[556] Gwyn A.Williams,"The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in <u>Merthyr Politics</u>,ed.Glanmor Williams,p.19.

[557] David J.V.Jones,"The Merthyr Riots of 1831", <u>Welsh History Review</u>,III (1966-7),182-3.

peaceful of the workmen faded into obscurity. Delegates from the Lancashire Owenite miner's union also failed. Armed with funds collected in Ruabon, North Wales, their representative, Twiss, tried to take advantage of the Waun meeting, but his talk of national organization fell upon deaf ears.[558] The intensity of the depression and increase in the number of worker's grievances was destroying the credibility of coherent political activity between the lower and middle classes of Merthyr.

After the meeting at the Waun Fair, sufficient heat was generated in Merthyr for one of the town's periodic spasms of rioting. A day or so later the Court of Requests placed a restraint upon the goods of a haulier, Lewis Lewis, previously a staunch advocate of reform and a noted popular leader. This incident sparked the first outbreak of what would become known as the Merthyr Riots of 1831. Large crowds carrying banners marked "reform" and directed by the infuriated Lewis from a stand erected on Merthyr's main street roamed the town in squads and raided over one hundred buildings. Their main targets were merchants, shopkeepers and the hated Court of Requests. They raided the court, seized all the confiscated goods, and restored them to their original owners. After the court was destroyed and

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[558] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 178; "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p.20.

the merchants and shopkeepers of the town had taken refuge in a church,Lewis and his men proclaimed a general confiscation of the middle classes and announced intentions of marching to Cardiff and Monmouth. Some even made bold to suggest a march on London in order to institute the "reign of reform."[559]

This stage of the Merthyr Riots appears as a curious mixture of tradition and innovation. Many aspects of the riots of 1800-1801 and 1816 were in evidence. For example, there were a large number of women evident in the attack on the houses of the merchants Lewis and Coffin. Moreover,the raiding of shops and distribution of food gives the air of a typical _taxation populaire_ incident. After the destruction of the Court of Requests,restrained goods were returned to their original owners in the manner of holding a primitive popular court. It has also been established that the more radical of the workmen did not participate during this stage of riot activity.[560] In fact,the majority of the Merthyr

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[559] Gwyn A.Williams,"The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in _Merthyr Politics_,ed.Glanmor Williams,p.20-1;"The Making of Radical Merthyr,1800-1836",_Welsh History Review_,I (1961),178.

[560] I strongly suspect that it was unemployed ironworkers and their families who were the major protagonists in this stage of rioting. David J.V.Jones,in "The Merthyr Riots of 1831",_Welsh History Review_,III (1966-7),178,states that the unemployed participated in great numbers. It is almost certain that these workmen would be from the ironworks as the ironworkers were usually the first to be laid off. Moreover,after the outburst of the coal trade in the early eighteen-thirties,it was common for the ironmasters to build large stocks of coal in order to supplement their falling profits by flooding the market.

miners and colliers were in the pits and Thomas Llewelyn, miner's spokesman and advocate of reform,was still at work when the shops were being raided and goods and food distributed among the townspeople.[561] The character of the Merthyr Riots,however,rapidly deteriorated.

The most intense of the Merthyr Riots originated with a meeting called to discuss strike action in order to force a restoration of wages. When the men marched to Castle Inn to present their grievances to the ironmasters they were met by a regiment of highlanders. William Crawshay demanded that they disperse immediately and followed with an arrogant tirade. While John Guest,in his capacity as sherrif,read the Riot Act,the men attacked the soldiers. Despite the fact that one soldier was killed and the remainder pummelled and disarmed,sixteen Merthyr workmen were shot dead in the street.[562] Armed,the Merthyr men seized the Swansea to Brecon road across the Northern Outcrop and disgraced troops sent from the west;they marched in regiments,each with their own red flag;Melbourne and the King took a personal interest in the affair and were determined that the insurrection be crushed;literally thousands of troops were being dispatched

[561] David J.V.Jones,"The Merthyr Riots of 1831", _Welsh History Review_,III (1966-7),178.

[562] Ness Edwards,_History of the South Wales Miners_, p.15.

to the region;the military alone suffered over forty casualties.[563]

The fury of the Merthyr Riots faded away in the town after a few brief days of sporadic musket-fire and minor rioting. Merthyr Tudful had become an armed camp where overwhelming numbers of professional soldiers were dampening the spirit of the inhabitants. Only on the road to Brecon in the north were the troops unable to penetrate. Despite the fact that all sections of the labouring community,both skilled and unskilled,were united for the moment,they were impotent in the face of overwhelming odds.

A planned assault on Penydarren House brought the final end to the violence of Merthyr Tudful in 1831. Penydarren House,the temporary headquarters of the civil powers,contained the ironmasters in addition to magistrates and soldiers. This was the final straw for the workmen,and the men dispersed in the face of insurmountable numbers of soldiers and special constables. At this point the entire movement disintegrated as dissension arose between militants and those who wanted to accept the wage offer made to them at Penydarren House by the ironmasters. The militants themselves were also split into several groups,each with its own leader and banner.[564] There was no coherent organization

[563] David J.V.Jones,"The Merthyr Riots of 1831", Welsh History Review,III (1966-7),192.

[564] Ibid.,199.

among the workmen.

The world of Merthyr Tudful in 1831 was still characterized by a heroic and traditional air:

> It is essentially pre-industrial in nature; it belongs to the same picaresque world of Tyburn Fair, and the ballad singers and patterers. The coming of a truly industrial society with its discipline, its municipalities, its police, killed it stone dead. This was a community which could be seized by sudden spasms of careless enthusiasm for a noble or colourful ideal or a noble or colourful individual.[565]

The Merthyr Riots, however, provided a new type of tradition for the working classes of industrial Wales. Dic Pendeyrn, the alleged killer of a soldier, was executed into martyrdom by the authorities and mass demonstrations were held on his behalf. Lewis the Huntsman, a popular leader who mysteriously disappeared after the riots, became a local legend. The inhabitants of the coalfield were, in effect, adopting a new breed of popular hero. The futility of June 1831 and the suppression which followed can best be considered catalysts in the emergence of a truly working class culture in industrial Wales:

> The town was under military occupation in civil war conditions. Bodies were being buried secratly all over north Glamorgan; widows did not dare claim poor relief. Anyone who had ever been in trouble with the authorities was a marked man. There were frequent raids and house searches; troops patrolled the streets with their

[565] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p. 21.

> weapons cocked. It seems to have taken the power of an almost millenarian ideal to create the necessary self-consciousness. For the working-class movement in South Wales, this is the point of emergence.[566]

The immediate effects of the Merthyr Riots of 1831 upon the working class movement in Wales was enormous. Within days after the riots trade unionism began to spread over the coalfield. A Union Club was founded at Merthyr as early as the third of July and by early September *The Cambrian*, a local newspaper, was able to publish a list of the number of established clubs. It is not surprising that *The Cambrian* also noted that the clubs were most popular among the miners and colliers as they were definitely associated with the Friendly Association of Coalminers Union Society. Founded in Lancashire, the union was formed the previous year to prevent wage restrictions. The policies of the Lancashire union were therefore fully in accordance with the demands of the South Wales miners.[567]

The rapid spread of trade unionism roused the iron-masters and they immediately ordered a wage cut as a black-mail technique. They flatly stated that they would not employ union men, only those who would publicly sever all ties with such associations. Their major weapon was a general lockout which lasted through October and November.

[566] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in *Merthyr Politics*, ed. Glanmor Williams, pp. 24-5.

[567] E.D. Lewis, *The Rhondda Valleys*, p. 156.

After union funds were exhausted, destitution forced the men to accept the rate of wages before the wage cut in addition to a full rejection of union membership.[568] The issue of trade unionism united the shopkeepers, merchants and industrialists. It was made impossible for the strikers to buy food at the shops, even if they had cash. All but the workmen themselves were determined to break the National Union of Wage Labourers (N.U.W.L.) and readily volunteered for the ranks of the special constables.[569] Despite the fact that the men received between 3s. and 5s. per week from the union strike fund and supplies of flour were donated by other union branches, the men were unable to continue their action for any great length of time. Moreover, the House of Lord's rejection of the Reform Bill and an outbreak of cholera served to further dampen their spirits.[570]

The first large-scale organized union movement on the coalfields was thus totally crushed. After the month of December 1831 there is no evidence to suggest that union

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[568] E.D. Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, p.156.

[569] It appears that the Friendly Association of Coal-miners Union Society was limited to workmen in the coal industry, but that the N.U.W.L. represented the workers in the iron industry. There is no evidence to suggest that the two unions acted in concert. In fact, most historians of the South Wales Coalfield merely mention the union as the "Lancashire Union" without proper identification, thereby making quotations from secondary sources unreliable in a great many instances.

[570] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, p.25; Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Penderyn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p.25.

clubs remained in existence. In many instances to be a union member was the same as being a social outcast. Moreover, the Calvinistic Methodist Association condemned the unions on the grounds that the taking of oaths was sacrilege. They announced that trade unionists could neither join nor retain membership in the congregations.[571]

In West Glamorgan strike activity lacked the violence and suppression which characterized the eastern centres of industry. For example, at Llansamlet the workmen were opposing the industrialists over the issue of payment in cheques which could only be redeemed at the truck shops. The men began their agitation by presenting their grievances to the magistrates, who then made the agent of the collieries familiar with the powers invested in them to enforce the payment of wages in cash. This effectively eliminated the truck system at Llansamlet. A few days later the workmen from Landore did likewise and attained the system's abolition. At Neath between forty to fifty miners employed by the Neath Abbey Iron Company joined the coalminer's union, but they were persuaded by the owners and the majority of the workmen employed there to vote against admitting the union into the company. There is no evidence of representatives from the Lancashire union being active in West Glamorgan nor does there appear to have been

[571] E.W.Evans, The Miners of South Wales, pp.44-5.

any widespread movement in favour of trade unionism. Some contemporaries stated that the union was brought to towns in West Glamorgan at this time by groups of dismissed workmen who had begged their way down the Vale of Neath on their way home to the west and north of Wales.[572]

The comparative docility of the Swansea district during the otherwise tumultuous year of 1831 was due to a variety of factors. Not only was West Glamorgan free from the worst of depression conditions, but the policies of the industrial elite appears also to have been less repressive than in the Merthyr district with relation to wage restrictions, lock-outs and individual harassment. Moreover, West Glamorgan had nothing similiar to the detested Court of Requests. While it is well known that dismissed workmen and the destitute unemployed returned home to the west and north of Wales in great numbers, the testimony of contemporaries with relation to the dismissed workmen bringing the union into the region must not be treated with the air of _le grand peur_. In addition, the parliamentary reform movement did not involve the working classes in the west. Demonstrations, riots and petitions in favour of reform were absent in the region. Reformist sympathies were still the luxury of the capitalists, eager to gain borough status and representation for the west, in addition

[572] P.S. Thomas, _Industrial Relations_, pp. 23-4.

to freedom from the power of the great eastern interests.

A factor still evident during the events of 1831 in Merthyr is that the workmen's activities were largely separated along company lines until the establishment of the unions. In fact, the riots of June in that year were perpetrated by the men in Crawshay's employ at Hirwaun and Cyfarthfa; they were also the most heavily involved in the actual rioting. On the other hand, the workmen most affected by the fall lock-out were employed by Guest at the Dowlais and Plymouth works. It also appears that the workers at Hirwaun and Cyfarthfa were usually the victims during the repression which followed the riots.[573]

Despite the fact that the official trade unions did not have a great effect on the Northern Outcrop before the autumn of 1831, it appears that the workmen were themselves making attempts to organize immediately following the riots of June, at least according to contemporary gossip. There is no evidence to prove that delegates from the English unions were active in Merthyr before September 1831.[574] Although the union representative, Twiss, was present at the Waun Fair meeting a few days before the Merthyr Riots, he was largely ineffective. It can be assumed with some degree of

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[573] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr Riots: Settling the Account", National Library of Wales Journal, XI (1959), 125-6.

[574] David J.V. Jones, "The Merthyr Riots of 1831", Welsh History Review, III (1966-7), 204-5.

accuracy that the workmen of Merthyr Tudful and the Rhondda Valleys made attempts to organize.[575]

After the suppression following the Merthyr Riots and the defeat of trade unionism, a new form of coherent political organization began to spread over the coalfields, Chartism. In the Rhonddas, shortly following the suppression of the union clubs, Chartism began to gain immense credibility and popularity among the coalminers. The most appealing Chartist tenets were the doubling of incomes through the abolition of taxation and the division of property.[576] Much of the violence characteristic of the coalfields was incorporated into the Chartist movement in Wales. In fact, physical force Chartism was most appealing to the coalminers. After the defeat of the physical force Chartists at the unsuccessful Newport Rising in 1839, however, the violent faction of the movement faded into obscurity.[577]

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[575] I would strongly suggest that the early stages of the trade union movement in South-Wales still presents many problems to historians of the region. In fact, it is not known if it was the workmen or the union representatives who were active immediately following the Merthyr Riots; it can only be suggested that the workmen were to some degree encouraged by their counterparts in England. Some evidence, however, points to purely internal development.

[576] E.D.Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, pp.157-9.

[577] It appears that the coalminers of the Rhonddas and the workers in North Monmouth were the main supporters of physical force Chartism. There is no available evidence to suggest that the men from Merthyr were heavily involved. During the violent Chartist protests of 1839, Monmouth was the focus and there is no reason to suggest that Merthyr was influential as a centre of radical activity and protest.

The most widespread and prolonged strike during the period under analysis occurred between March and June of 1843. During this strike it appears that the driving force behind the workmen was the Lancashire miner's union. In fact,the majority of the strikers were miners and colliers; it was they who struck for the longest period of time and proved to be the most adament in their attempts to acheive higher wages during a spell of intense depression. Merthyr Tudful exerted pressure as a source of moderation among the working classes of the coalfield. When one or two collieries in the Merthyr district accepted a reduction in wages, thousands of miners and colliers arrived from Monmouthshire and forced them to stop working. It appears that the Rhondda miners preferred to continue strike action,but the violence of the strike in Monmouthshire never penetrated into Glamorgan. In fact,the activities of the "Scotch Cattle" were limited to Monmouth and was only used as a threat to the Glamorgan workmen in order to secure their support.[578] As the Merthyr workmen were turning more and more to peace and politics,the newer body of workmen to the east and in the Rhondda Valleys were just beginning their own process of political education. In effect,the miners and colliers,not the ironworkers and coppermen,were becoming the most radical workmen in South Wales.

[578] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, p.26.

The strike of 1843 embraced all of the coalfield and was the longest in the region to that date;however,it was impossible for the men to continue the strike. Pit by pit, compromises were made and work resumed at a reduction of 2d. per ton on the piece rate of coal. The fact that the men accepted the reduction and returned to work displays the effectiveness of the measures employed by the coalowners; miners and colliers suspected of leadership were sent to gaol for two or three months on the pretext that they were guilty of breach of contract,workmen were ejected from houses owned by the coalowners,parish rates were made unattainable for strikers and the workmen had no available financial or material backing.[579] The strike of 1843 was badly organized due to the lack of a strike fund and efficient leadership and organizational structures during the early stages of trade unionism.

Despite the failure of the strike,however,its importance lies in the fact that it was crucial in educating the workmen in the methods of efficient trade union activity. In Glamorgan,there is no evidence that in 1843 the traditional food riot and violence to property or person marked the confrontation between labour and capital. In effect,the strike of 1843 can be considered a template for later incidents of labour unrest.

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[579] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, p.36.

The impact of the 1831 riots upon the internal politics of Merthyr was equally as profound as it had been for the emergence of trade unionism. By the summer of 1831 the town collapsed into complete political confusion and old loyalties and leadership were sharply criticized. The hero of Merthyr's middle class radicals, William Crawshay, fell into disrepute, having emphasized his personal interests rather than the political interests of the James coterie. Crawshay's indiscretions led to a clash between giants, Dowlais and Cyfarthfa. Public opinion began to turn against Crawshay as early as June of 1831. In fact, many townsmen believed that he was directly responsible for the outbreak of violence due to his erratic behaviour at Castle Inn when he harangued the workmen. During the autumn, however, Crawshay proved to be Merthyr's greatest hypocrite. The crux of the matter was a new valuation to be placed on coals, a measure brought forth by the parish administration of Merthyr. Not only did the ironmasters, the largest coalowners in South Wales, oppose the valuation, but Crawshay attempted to rouse the ironmasters and present a united front to the parish administration. Ironically, the parish government which had previously been tutored into reform and efficiency under the influence of Crawshay now found him their greatest political enemy; however, Crawshay still considered himself the unheralded leader of Merthyr's radical political group and the watchdog of parliamentary reform. In October of 1831, when the iron-

masters took an appeal against the rating of coals before the King's Bench, Crawshay's association with the James group evaporated. Eventually, a compromise was reached over the question of the rating of coals and all parties agreed to submit to a valuation prepared by an outside agency; however, this compromise was made only after Crawshay forced the dismissal of a constable and embarked upon a wholesale purge of parish officers who were not in accord with his policies. Crawshay's highhanded actions were tactical blunders. In fact, after the dismissal of parish officers, the town government grew increasingly more radical and the threat of an entirely Unitarian power clique ruling the town began to strike fear into the ironmasters.[580]

Although Merthyr Tudful acheived borough status, the ensuing election campaign resulted in a series of surprises. Oddly enough, William Crawshay had no apparent design on the new norough seat. Moreover, the fact that Crawshay was held in such low repute by the James group and Merthyr's radical clique left him without a power base within the ranks of the electorate. This power vacuum was filled by Josiah John Guest, who became Merthyr's first representative in the House of Commons. If the local Tories were shocked at an ironmaster turned radical, the Merthyr radicals were, to say the least, a little skeptical

[580] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 183-4.

of Guest as he had previously been lukewarm towards the James coterie. The election of 1832 was won by Guest, who was supported, although somewhat leeringly, by the Merthyr radicals; however, this was soon forged into an iron compact in opposition to Crawshay, now the major spokesman of the town's Tories. Indeed, the personalities of both Crawshay and Guest are perhaps the most difficult aspect of Merthyr politics to analyse, or even comprehend.[581]

Between 1832 and the election campaign of 1835 the political life of the new borough was strongly controlled by the town's radical clique. As these were fairly prosperous years, radical expression did not rise to the surface as a reaction to depression, but a newer movement began to emerge which was based more upon political and religious principles. During the election campaign of 1835 the appeals to Church and Chapel, Tory and Radical, and the personalities of both Guest and Crawshay were severely dominished. In fact, the election campaign was marred by gross corruption due to the emergence of a total battle between Guest and Crawshay.[582]

Crawshay, Thompson and Hill, backed by the wealth and coercive power of their giant iron and coal empires, set out to destroy John Guest and Dowlais, now their political

[581] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 180-2.

[582] Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, p.106.

as well as their economic rival. Due to the pressures which they were able to exert the tiny shopkeeping electorate of 502 was splintering, despite the fact that they had openly promised their votes to Guest at various public meetings. Threats of trade boycotts were used vigorously by both parties and a former bankrupt, Adam Newell, commanded a group which offered their votes for sale at the price of £10, fifty at a time. By the middle of the campaign Guest estimated that his majority had shrunken to a mere ten voters. Under the pressure and the power of Crawshay and his cronies, Guest was forced by circumstance to rely upon the £10 bribed voters in order to acheive his eventual victory. This meant that Guest was forced to rely upon all segments of the electorate whether "radical" or not. The larger merchants and shopkeepers, the Unitarians and ideological radicals, were therefore forced to rely upon any source of electoral strength. In reality, they needed the smallest of the town's shopkeepers and the wealthier of the workmen whom their spokesman, Morgan Williams, could command.[583]

Guest, therefore, in order to maintain a solid source of electoral support, found himself the spokesman of all segments of Merthyr's electorate from the sophisticated James family to Morgan Williams, the spokesman for much of the working class.

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[583] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 184-5.

The movement for local administrative reform, as well as the reform of parliament, was also freed from the control of Crawshay and his partners, Thompson and Hill. In November of 1836 the old system of parish administration ended. Under the statutes of the New Poor Law the Merthyr Union was established and was managed by an elected Board of Guardians. The elected board, which extended its control over nine parishes in the Merthyr district, was virtually controlled by the James group and their adherents.[584] The Merthyr radicals now possessed a degree of independence which they had previously never experienced. Beyond question, they were by 1836 the only strong united political force in the borough.

Guest's base of political support forced him to remain the hero of the radical clique. He emerged as the virtual mouthpiece of militant radical expression. In fact, by the end of the election campaign of 1835 he was critical of the Poor Laws, advocated the secret ballot, favoured the abolition of Church rates and supported the movement which demanded the admission of dissenters into the universities. Guest has been invariably chided by critics, both past and present, as the patron of a new pocket borough. But the structure of Merthyr politics reveals a contrary situation.

[584] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 186-7.

Whenever a conservative candidate dared to emerge and challenge the iron grip of Merthyr's radical clique, Guest was forced to move steadily to the left in order to maintain the support of the electorate. Without the willing support of the voters who had gained their franchise according to the £10 property qualification, Merthyr's radical clique led by the James group, and those portions of the working population which had managed to gain the franchise, Josiah John Guest would have been politically impotent.[585]

Merthyr Tudful had emerged as the political as well as the industrial epitome of industrial South Wales. The torrid events of 1831 and the suppression which followed were determining factors in destroying the incoherence of working class protest, leading to the establishment of both trade unionism and popular political pressure groups. Moreover, the mystique of reform had completely transformed the entire region. Not only did Merthyr Tudful emerge as the centre of activity for the new middle class which was developing in the industrial settlements, but was the focal point out of which much of the working class developed coherence and leadership. Ironically, much of this coherence originated in opposition to the aims and aspirations of the very class, the merchants and shop-

[585] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 187.

keepers which attempted to channel the difficulties experienced by the working class during the depressed era of the early eighteen-thirties. The reform of local administration progressed from the efficient handling of parish funds and the establishment of the Court of Requests, to the introduction of the select vestry, and eventually to the founding of the Merthyr Union. On the other hand, the movement for parliamentary reform resulted in the achelvement of borough status for the town and solid entrenchment of the middle class as the political leaders of the Northern Outcrop.

Chapter XVII.

Conclusion

The events which occurred in Merthyr Tudful during the eighteen-thirties are indicative of an almost total and irrevocable change in the pattern of human behaviour. It is too simplistic, however, to assume that this was a logical conclusion, an inherent and natural product of the Industrial Revolution. Nor can this stormy decade simply be considered an inevitable concomitant to a transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy, and from a rural to an urban society. The components of the dual process of social and cultural change during the period under analysis must now be isolated and a proper assessment given to the significance of collective behaviour as a medium of analysis.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century the culture of the commonalty was essentially pre-literate and consisted mainly of oral tradition, folklore and antiquated remnants of bardic institutions and customs which had ceased to bear relevance to everyday life. The eighteenth century, however, witnessed a series of educational and religious movements which had severe repercussions upon the course of political development. A dual combination of school and chapel proved to be the most important catalyst in the emergence of a truly modern popular culture. This merging of socializing institutions was paramount in the

transformation of oral culture through an emphasis on literacy. Moreover, the rapid spread of religious dissent destroyed much rooted and occasionally meaningless Catholic ritualism, bardic tradition and antiquated ancient institutions, and modes of cultural expression which were either considered sacrilege or irrelevant for the saving of souls.

It is important to note that the educational and religious developments of the eighteenth century were not a result of the Industrial Revolution. A more meaningful hypothesis would be that the transformation of oral culture and the emergence of literacy at the lower levels of society were part of a more comprehensive system of changes. This wider frame of historical development, shrouded under the elusive title of modernization, both pre-dates and coincides with the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution, however, due to its effects upon transportation, communications, demography and urbanization, created massive agglomerations of individuals who were products of what has been dubbed "The Great Awakening."

Recent research has shown that literacy and the standard of education in general declined in urban areas during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, specifically with relation to those who were not first generation migrants; however, this did not change the course

of cultural development or result in a reversion to traditional folk culture. The fact that the ranks of the religious Nonconformists swelled radically towards the middle of the nineteenth century compensates for the decline in educational facilities and literacy in general. It is my contention that Nonconformity, and the semi-sacred environment which it engendered, provided a mechanism powerful enough to maintain and advance the transformation of oral culture. In effect, Nonconformity had emerged as a culture in itself during a period when traditional culture was in a state of decay. An obvious corollary is that religiously inclined individuals, whose souls were allegedly saved through the acheivement of literacy and the elimination of ignorance, were almost forced by circumstance to seek their own religious salvation.

The conflicts engendered by religious affiliation had even more serious consequences upon social cleavage. With the spread of religious dissent in general and of Calvinistic Methodism in particular in the lower levels of society, self-awareness, individuality, independence and conscious criticism of existing institutions emerged as a crucial segment of popular expression. The Established Church and the elite for which it was a bulwark of social, political and ideological self-justification, represented a source of power and authority which legally censured the growing numbers of Nonconformists. These

factors served to aggravate conflicts between social and religious groups, one representing the establishment and the other the commonalty. For example, the struggle concerning control over educational institutions set the two factions at odds for almost a century. But the most significant consequence of religion during this period was that it provided a tangible focus for agitation. Opposition to the privileges of the Church was in reality an attack upon the entire power structure and the constitutional framework which fostered its existence. Nonconformity, therefore, was a decisive catalyst in setting the commonalty in direct opposition to statutes and institutions which forbade them rights. Religious tenets and the Scriptures lent a moral justification to those seeking equality. The quest for religious equality, however, was a preparatory stage in the struggle for political and social justice. Therein lies the most crucial relationship between Nonconformity and the emergence of radicalism and popular political ideas and organizations.

The disintegration of deferential society was accompanied by the emergence of social and political consciousness at the lower levels of the social scale. Social distress caused by economic failure gradually manifested in severe criticism and public opinion in general posed incisive queries concerning the social and political system. This development was directly related to

the erosion of the economic base of deferential society. The Industrial Revolution, however, did not cause the decline of deferential society, despite the fact that it greatly accelerated the process of decay. Social insecurity was vastly increased by the emergence of the cash nexus in the rural economy and the erosion and eventual disappearance of those protective devices provided by payment in kind and perquisites, or the permanent occupation of land. Wage labour served to reduce traditional employer employee relationships to one which was purely economic in both the industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy. The emergence of the wage labourer and the growth of tenancy reduced the fabric of landed society to a mere thread based upon the payment of cash and insecurity of leases rather than upon the aura of mutual dependence which previously had existed. The term collective behaviour, as employed in this essay, refers to any group action resulting from social and economic distress and directed towards seeking relief through either peaceful or violent means. Protest <u>per se</u> has always been associated with adverse social and economic conditions, but during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries protest experienced a drastic increase in both occurrence and intensity. Moreover, the character of collective behaviour underwent an almost total transition during the period under analysis.

The coming of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent effects upon transportation,communications,demography and urbanization destroyed the environment which fostered minor local protests of short duration. In the dispersed areas of rural agricultural society the possibilities for collective behaviour were severely limited due to the isolation of farms and hamlets. Market towns,providing goods and services for the surrounding countryside,which was usually fragmented and characterized by dispersed settlements and farmsteads,were the foci of protests in pre-industrial society. The gathering of people in urban centres was necessary to provide adequate contact among individuals who were otherwise isolated,and to promote the exchange of ideas and the airing of grievances.

The Industrial Revolution fostered the occurrence of periodic depression and hence widespread discontent due to the establishment of a fragile economic structure dependent upon bulk exports,having little diversification and subject to the vagaries of both British and world markets. It is impossible to denote a distinctly rural milieu within industrial Glamorgan by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The entire region of South Wales was totally dominated by the new industrial economy,and social protest at the close of the eighteenth century was widespread in both the industrial and agricultural sectors. Large concentrations of population in expanding industrial centres,

improvements in road networks and extensive depression caused mainly by failure in the industrial sector of the economy led to the supplanting of short-term protests resulting from food shortages, poor harvests and unusually high prices.

In pre-industrial society, social protest was expressed according to the norms and values of traditional peasant culture and ideology. Little or no threat was presented to existing social and economic institutions or structures. Pre-political protests were conservative and even backward-looking in nature. Such protests were generally not characterized by violence to either person or property. Action was usually directed against tangible objects of authority and despair; the manor house, shop, tollgate, pack train, or grain ship. This action was marked by occupation, demonstration, seizure and/or redistribution of goods, prevention of export and in some instances, destruction of some physical object such as a tollgate. Pre-political protest was also characterized by spontaneity, and its incidents occurred within limited localities and seldom spread over an entire region except when adversity was exceptionally widespread.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century collective behaviour was also traditional in the sense that occurrence coincided with economic and social distress, incidents were usually scattered and of short duration, and there was no

effective and coherent channels of communication whereby the commonalty could air their grievances in a peaceful and orderly fashion. In urban areas where the Industrial Revolution had been established for a considerable period of time,new institutions arose which,like the union clubs and Chartist organizations,resulted in the emergence of political consciousness and coherent opposition to those in authority.

The fact that Nonconformity arose in essentially rural and even dispersed regions of settlement destroys the myth that Nonformity was an urban phenomenon. During the period under study there is little evidence to suggest that Nonconformity was associated with chiliastic tendencies engendered by despair and alienation as a result of industrialism. In fact,the mass revivals,baptisms and conversions,occasionally accompanied by mass hysteria,were phenomena of the period following 1850. Towards the end of the nineteenth century,when mass religious hysteria was at its height,there was even a ludicrous attempt upon the part of some individuals to revert to Druidism,or rather what they believe to have constituted the Druid religion. This oddity strongly reflects the intensely religious milieu which had emerged and the entire scope of the cultural transition that had occurred. The genuine revival of Welsh culture,characterized by antiquarianism,literary and linguistic movements,was viewed almost entirely in

terms of religion when it filtered downwards to the lower levels of society from its middle class origins.

The cultural upheaval of the eighteenth century was accompanied by a traumatic social change. This concurrent social transition was characterized by the breaking down of deferential relationships, the alienation of classes and the emergence of conscious conflicts of opinion and interest between the various social classes.

From the time of the Act of Union in 1536 the upper classes of Wales had become increasingly alien to the commonalty of their own land. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the division of classes, from the nobility to the humblest squire, was further accentuated by the barriers of language, cultural affiliation and religious adherence. The notion of a natural and pre-ordained social order of balance, harmony and mutual dependence disintegrated as the ideals of loyalty, respect, leadership and tutelage became anachronistic if not utterly meaningless. In effect, the squire was losing his exhalted status as a leader in society and was becoming an alien in every respect; he was an English-speaking member of the Church of England, very often a foreigner through blood and birth if not by self denial of his own origins, generally an absentee landlord and commonly viewed as a mere collector of rents and tithes. Social division had thus grown into social alienation, with tangible and

concrete differentiations between the economic,social and political elites and the commonalty.

The religious developments of the eighteenth century served to widen the gap between the commonalty and the elite classes of society. In addition to this alienation of classes and fragmentation of the social fabric,a radical change in popular thought and attitudes began to emerge. The drive towards the attainment of mass literacy was encouraged largely by those who believed in the saving of individual souls. It was their contention that literacy and hence knowledge of the Scriptures and religious principles would propagate individual awareness and an intuitive sense by which to constructively analyse and criticize a religious institution which had grown corrupt,incompetent and distant from the needs and desires of common men. The rapid advance of Nonconformity,however, reveals that constructive criticism of the Church was ineffectual as the Church of England failed to accommodate the advice of reformers and fell into a state of absolute decadence.

The emergence of an urban industrial environment was a crucial factor in determining the scope of the social and cultural changes during the period under analysis. It is my contention that the character of collective behaviour was transformed in industrial areas when pre-political protest proved to be ineffective as a

weapon against authority. In fact, the further the workmen were removed from a traditional rural environment, the more likely they were to employ coherent methods of attaining their goals. An example of this development can be found in the case of the copper workers of the Swansea district, whose success in scoring legal victories in the courts over their employers attests to their degree of apparent experience and skill in dealing with labour disputes. Further evidence of this hypothesis is revealed in the actions of the Merthyr men during the eighteen-thirties when they refused to employ the terrorist tactics used by their fellows in neighbouring Monmouthshire. It also appears that, as in the case of the Monmouthshire workmen, first generation migrants were more apt to resort to traditional peasant modes of protest involving the blackening of faces, blowing of horns and the wearing of eerie disguises in order to avoid detection. By the second or third generation, however, evidence of permanent leadership and organization begins to emerge as the social and cultural environment of peasant values have sufficiently faded. The older group of workmen, generally skilled or having some degree of ownership with relation to tools or other forms of equipment, inevitably provided the leadership for demonstrations, petitions and embryonic union movements.

Before the reform legislation of the eighteen-

thirties Glamorgan's political life was largely dominated by the influence of land and the traditional power, prestige and patronage which it engendered. The socio-cultural norms of political life inferred, by tradition and stark patronage, landed control over administrative offices, social standing and a privileged status within the social life of the county. After the Reform Crisis, however, industrial and commercial interests were paramount and land was the basis of political power and prestige only if it was tied directly to commerce and industry. The appearance of a complete revolution in political affairs, however, was not as revolutionary as it might seem to be. The importance of the Mansell and Mackworth families in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was based largely upon their commercial and industrial interests in addition to their large and wealthy estates. Moreover, many of the ambitions of the Bute family with respect to their attempt to totally dominate the county's political life related directly to their desires to develop their urban and mineral lands in Cardiff and the Vale of Taff. In effect, the reform legislation served to bring reality into law and fully sanction the end of a process which had been developing for well over a century in the county.

The value of utilizing geographical variations as a tool of analysis cannot be over-estimated. An excellent example of geographic variation with respect to the

general tenor of this essay is the political conflicts engendered by the commercial and industrial interests of the eastern and western sectors of the county, a factor which set the pace of local politics for half a century. Another interesting example is revealed in the attitudes of the Merthyr workmen in striving towards recognition of trade unionism in opposition to the terrorist tactics of their fellows across the Taff River in Monmouthshire. The fact that the Monmouthshire workmen chose to become "Scotch Cattle" and recognize their temporary leader as "The Bull", definitely discloses the variations of human behaviour in terms of social and cultural development. To sum, the Industrial Revolution, or to be more specific, the process of industrialization, must not be treated as an all-encompassing omnipotent course of human development which affected all segments of society at the same time, in the same place and in the same manner.

In many instances the utilization of geographic variation and local comparison is crucial. For example, ignorance or misunderstanding of the variations between the <u>broydd</u> and <u>blaenau</u> would render any study in Wales, regardless of county, almost totally invalid. An essay devoid of concrete analysis of manorial versus pastoral <u>cum</u> tribal methods of landholding and farming techniques, crop variations and field patterns with relation to social and cultural implications, and without adequate

understanding of the development of urban centres and their functions,is empty and fruitless with regards to the pursuit of further historical endeavour. In essence,a thesis which has been essentially geared to typology and comparison,specifically within the borders of a single county,is not to be considered purely narrative or descriptive. Such an approach,providing it is associated with major historical problems and historiographical issues,should establish the basis for further county research;this has been the major objective throughout the course of this essay.

PLATE I

The Farming Regions of Glamorgan

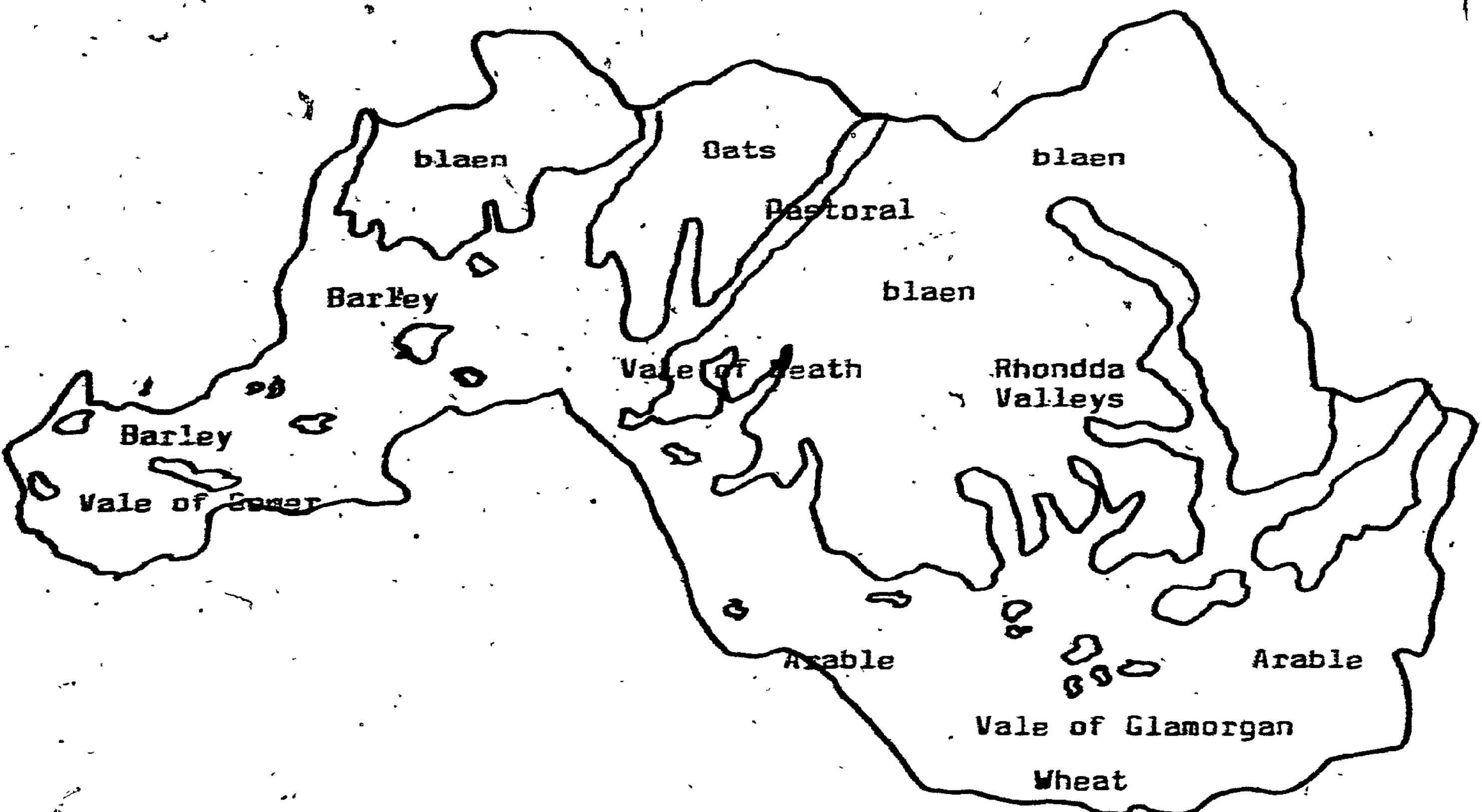


PLATE II

Major Towns and Road Networks in Glamorgan

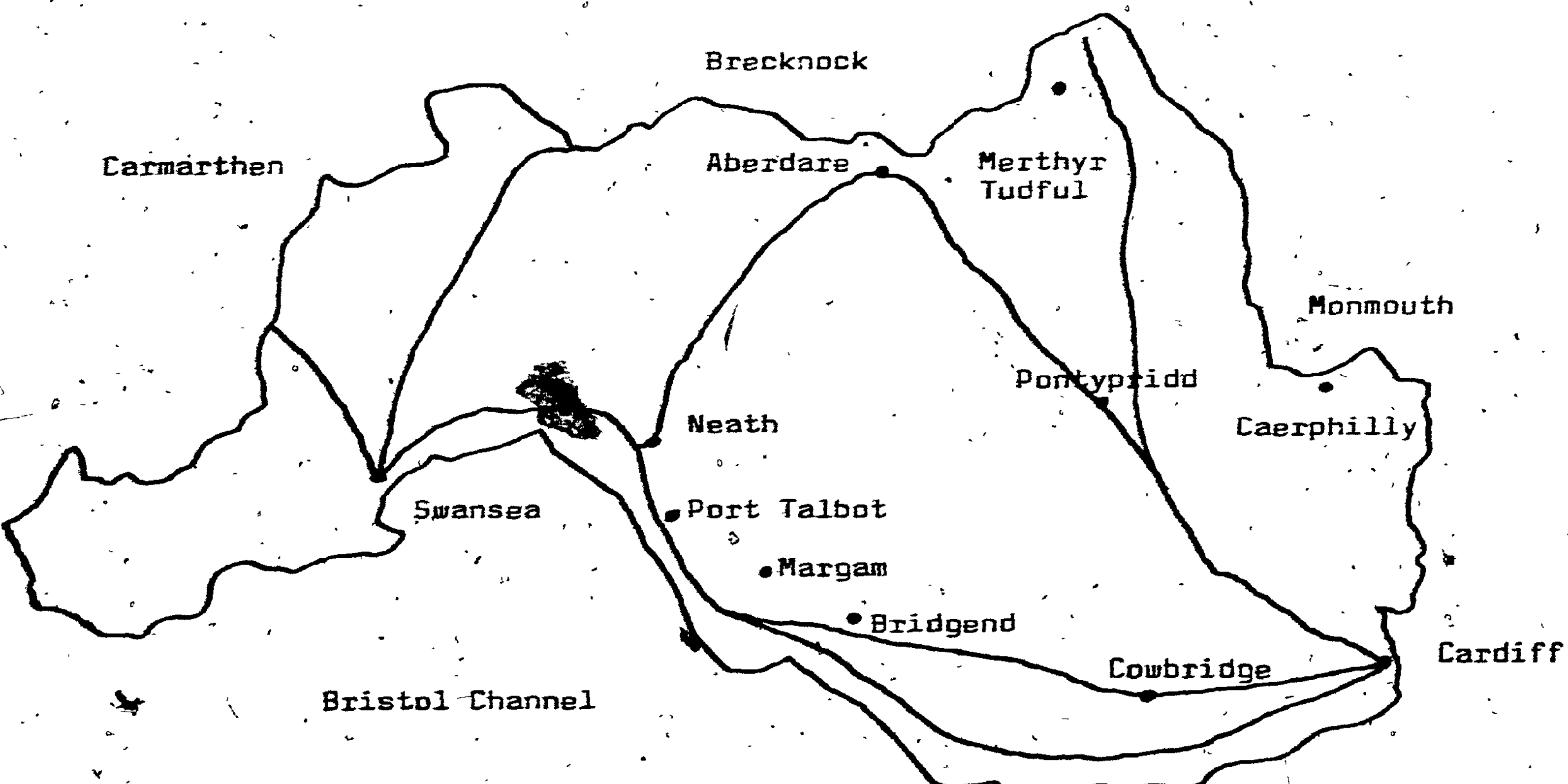
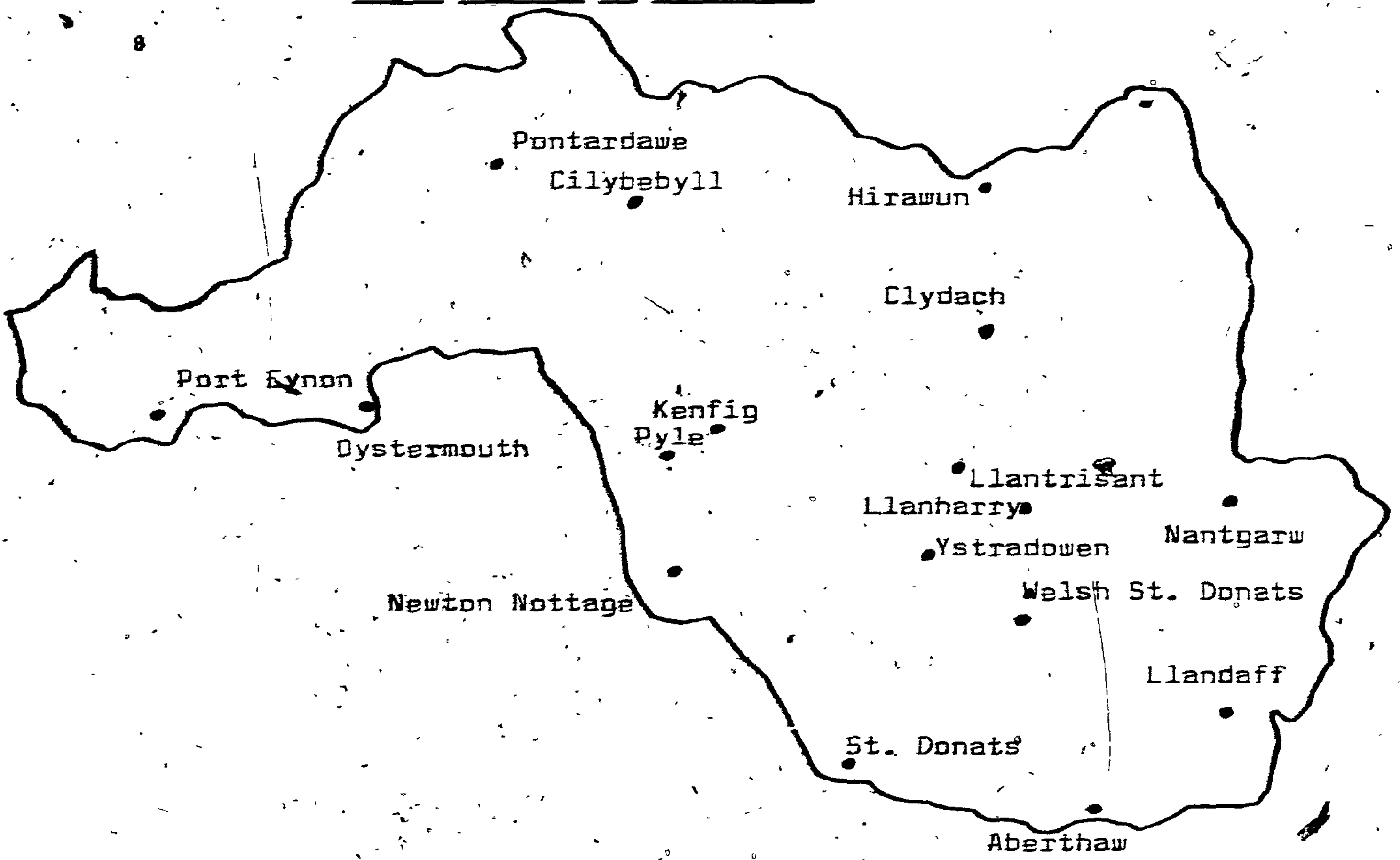


PLATE III

Major Hamlets of Glamorgan



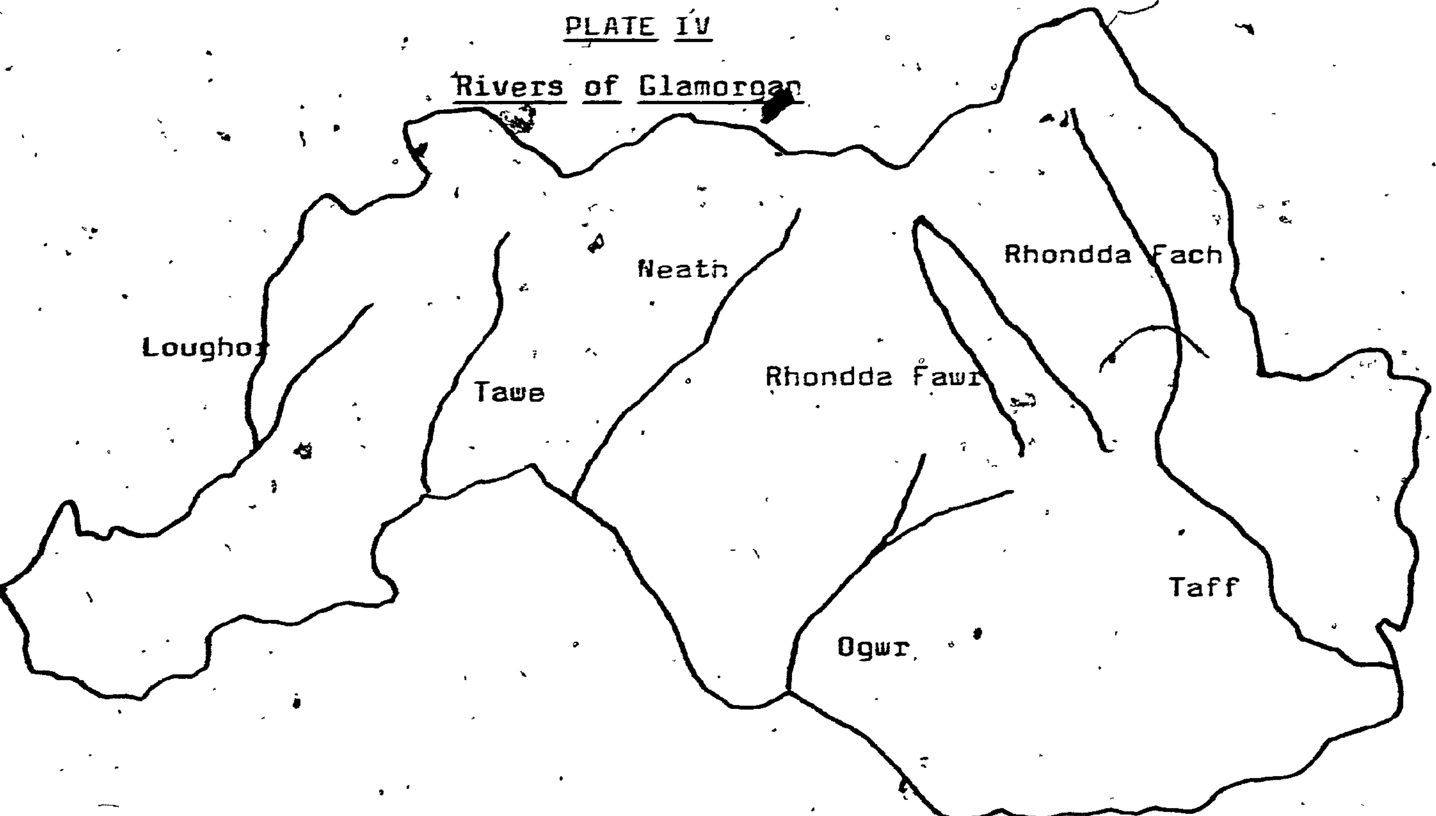


PLATE IV
Rivers of Glamorgan
Loughor
Tawe
Neath
Rhondda Fawr
Rhondda Fach
Ogwr
Taff

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eventually folded as businessmen would not use it for the purpose of advertising. Bilingual newspapers, Y Gweithiwr: The Workman and Y Freinlin Gymroaidd: The Cambrian Gazette, had short lives. These papers had little appeal to linguistically distinct communities with divergent political and economic interests and could not legally carry news because they were unstamped. Moreover, they carried views which were hostile to the business community. For example, Seren Gomer was notorious for supporting liberal views and therefore boycotted by the business community who refused to advertise in the paper. In addition, there was an apparent lack of interest on the part of the Welsh-speaking community in bilingual newspapers as they had the fewest number of subscriptions. This was perhaps due to the fact that they generally supported opposition to the business community and the views of radical or liberal politicians.[364]

Since proper usage of English was crucial to social and economic advancement, it was natural that attempts would be made by both parent and teacher to equip the young with a knowledge of English. In north-west Glamorgan, a predominantly Welsh-speaking region of the county, a school was founded at Garnant by one Richard William, himself a Welshman. Despite the fact that his pupils were monoglot Welsh, he permitted only English to be spoken under pain of punishment. If a

[364] R.D. Rees, "South Wales and Monmouthshire Newspapers Under the Stamp Acts", Welsh History Review, I (1960-3), 304-5, 308.

pupil was caught speaking Welsh,he had to wear the "Welsh Note",or "Welsh NOT",a square board with a cord to suspend it from the neck of the "culprit." The board had two letters, W.N.,carved upon it.[365] It was this very attitude towards their own language which cut drastic inroads into the numbers of Welsh speakers by the end of the nineteenth century.

Problems relating to literature,music,drama and intellectual life have resulted in a surfeit of broad generalizations concerning Wales in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Concentration upon literary history and the formulation of Toynbeean theories of culture and civilization renders the historiography of this period sharp with controversy,but lacking depth.

Cultural affiliations were similiar to those of language in terms of social class. The world of the elite of Welsh society,including the scholars and intellectuals,was broadening into a cosmopolitan milieu with the advent of the Act of Union. The ancient Welsh culture was left to languish among the lower classes with neither the traditional patronage of the wealthy nor the tutelage of the bards. What remained of the old bardic culture became increasingly fossilized and the state of native Welsh culture in general declined. Lewis Morris,an eighteenth century Welsh poet and

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[365] John Henry Davies,<u>History of Pontardawe and District</u>,pp.218-19.

critic, banefully described the decline of Welsh poetry, a view that many historians have accepted to this day:

> The Britons fell into a kind of heroic poetry when we came to be Roman provincials, which was new modelled by Gruffydd ap Cynon, and, as it were, religiously followed till the time of Queen Elizabeth, when it began to dwindle, and song writing occupied its place soon after.[366]

The state of Welsh culture in the eighteenth century has been the subject of severe criticism by many Welsh historians. One literary historian, Thomas Parry, has gone so far as to state that there was no general Welsh cultural milieu in the eighteenth century and that learning was at its lowest ebb due to indifference and even hostility. Inherited and preserved cultural traditions were becoming increasingly irrelevant to the mass of the people.[367] In e[illegible], a cultural environment which was a legacy from the Middle [illegible]es was an anachronism, an empty tradition.

The legacies of bardism proved a definite hindrance to those who were artistically creative. Preserved poetry ceased to have any direct bearing upon everyday life or contemporary issues or events. The strict rules and metres of the bardic tradition prevented experimentation and innovation, thus inhibiting personal expression. Little literary prose was

[366] Saunders Lewis, A School of Welsh Augustans (Bath: Firecrest Publishing Company, 1969), p.53.

[367] Thomas Parry, A History of Welsh Literature, trans. H. Idris Bell (London: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.295.

produced in the eighteenth century;and the intricate styles, once the diversion of the nobility,could not form the basis of popular literature.[368]

The entire façade of bardism had crumbled by the middle of the eighteenth century. Moreover,eisteddfodau,high quality bardic schools and the bardic orders had almost disappeared. Some students went to Oxford or Ystrad Meurig to study the classics and,upon returning home as rectors or vicars,founded literary societies and sponsored the occasional eisteddfod;however,such faint attempts to promote cultural involvement became increasingly rare.[369] In Glamorgan it appears that the eisteddfod was becoming a thing of the past. For example,the last eisteddfod at Beaupre was held in 1681.[370] At Ystradowen all evidence of organized cultural activities seems to have disappeared by 1730.[371]

The culture of the Gwerin (commonalty) was a folk culture consisting of popular ballads,poetry,vocal music and drama. Folk songs and ballads were the real Welsh newspapers and periodicals of the day and they were the principal means of disseminating news and ideas. They were usually written, sung or recited by the larger farmers and wealthier crafts-

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[368] Thomas Parry,History of Welsh Literature,pp.292-3.

[369] Ibid.,p.293.

[370] Benjamin Heath Malkin,Scenery,Antiquities,and Biography of South Wales,p.76.

[371] T.C.Evans,History of Llangynwyd Parish,p.86.

men.[372] _Carolion_ (carol poetry) and _penillion_ (verses) held a special appeal. Simple,but kept within the bounds of traditional bardic metres,especially _cynghanedd_ (assonance), they were sung by balladeers or sold cheaply in the form of almanacs,pamphlets,or _cyfeillon_ (written accompaniments) at markets and fairs. The _anterliwdau_ (interludes) were popular dramas which had arisen during the course of the eighteenth century from the pens of the balladeers. They were versified dramas which were performed at markets,fairs and inns and written in triplet stanzas according to the rules of _cynghanedd_. The _anterliwdau_ appear to represent the growth of a popular literature by the end of the eighteenth century which catered to the lower classes. Their immense popularity hinged upon their appeal to the common man and his everyday problems and aspirations. The most famous dramatist of the age,Thomas Edwards,or Twm o'r Nant (Tom of the Brook) expressed popular sentiments in his _anterliwdau_ and emphasized social justice and equality. For example,in his _anterliwt_ _The Four Pillars of Government_,the conflict between landlord and tenant is depicted:

> Here are the lands;leases they tell us,
> At an ever rising price,they'll sell us;
> Talkings' no use,nor to make a wry face,
> Stewards by God's grace are sturdy fellows.[373]

[372]Davies and Edwards,_Welsh Life in the Eighteenth Century_,p.81;Thomas Parry,_History of Welsh Literature_,p.264.

[373]Thomas Parry,_History of Welsh Literature_,pp.267-70.

The preoccupation of historians with the educational and religious movements of the eighteenth century has upon occasion resulted in the formulation of grandiose theories. Many have viewed the "Great Awakening" as the end of a long slumber beginning in Norman times, the unshackling of men and minds from the chains of bardism, and the emergence of modernity:

> From the thirteenth to the eighteenth century the intellectual condition of Wales is the fate of a people who, having reached a degree of mental culture in advance of their social organisation, became subject to a different race at a much higher level of political development...From the eighteenth century to the nineteenth there was a succession of educational and religious movements gradually drawing closer in sympathy with the spirit and needs of the masses.[374]

It has been a common occurrence for scholars to confuse the revival in religion and education with a general improvement in culture and intellect. Indeed, the above citation infers that religion and education were not symptoms of social transition, but concerted efforts upon the part of some individuals to destroy what lingered of the ancient tribal society and cultural values. Many have been pleased at the thought of cottagers who became "connoisseurs of pulpit eloqence" and debated delicate theological issues. They have considered this sacral atmosphere as one which resulted

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[374] A.E.Dobbs, Educational and Social Movements, pp.76-7,79.

in the "rejuvenation of energies which had been submerged at an earlier period" and "destroyed the backward romanticism of the ideal past."[375]

Some contemporary historians have not been so partial as to the quality of Nonconformity as a cultural milieu. In fact, the preachers attempted to eliminate the *anterliwdau* and *penillion* as sources of immorality and gradually replaced them with hymns, pulpit oratory and the reading of the Bible and religious tracts:

> An excellent thing from the standpoint of religion and morality, but this was no transformation of passing literary standards; rather it meant the casting of a nightmarish fear of hell-fire on the minds of common men and the setting of keen and gifted minds to expend their energies on splitting scholastic hairs... what with the controversies and edifying sermons, no one was allowed the leisure to write polished prose.[376]

The Evangelical and Methodist movements, in addition to the Circulating Schools and the Sunday Schools, had therefore succeeded in destroying vestiges of ancient values and culture, to the extent of dominating most minds with religious ideas. Moreover, the social and political conservatism of these movements was intolerant of the popular literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the *anterliwdau* and pamphlets contained views which were hostile to

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[375] A.E. Dobbs, *Educational and Social Movements*, pp. 76-7, 79.

[376] Thomas Parry, *History of Welsh Literature*, pp. 293-4.

social and economic inequality. In fact, many of the popular poets and dramatists of the period were avowed radicals; some called themselves Jacobins. In order for the preachers to perpetrate their ideas, as much of the old bardic culture as possible had to be curtailed. The cultural past was represented as venal and earthly:

> ...it was the Methodist revival and all the intermittant 'revivals' which followed it that raised the wall between Wales and its past, and that not only by turning men's minds to dogmas and morals, but also be representing anything before the Revival as essentially evil.[377]

The culture of the bards and eisteddfodau had to be destroyed, or at best transformed, in order for salvation to be maintained after the periodic revivals which swept Wales. It was the seist (essentially a frenzied prayer meeting at which people testified their evil nature before God, thereby cleansing themselves), occasionally marked by mass hysteria, conversions, baptisms and testimonials, that became the culture of a large percentage of the Welsh population.

One of the many products of the "Great Awakening" was the emergence of new myths concerning the gwerin. Originally meaning people, even democracy in a loose sense, the word was transformed into "folk" by the middle of the nineteenth century. In essence, the residue of traditional Welsh culture, transformed by the "awakening" which occurred during the

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[377] Thomas Parry, History of Welsh Literature, pp. 294, 298.

period under analysis, was the culture of the common man. For centuries dominated by an aristocracy which was alien by nationality and language, the common man, the working classes of Wales, grew their own leaders, first in the person of the preacher, then in the politicians and intellectuals who emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century and led the consequent cultural revival which followed. To some, the term "gwerin" and the "nation" became synonymous.[378]

The culture of Wales, however, proved to be more durable than the fear of Satan. It appears that in comparatively isolated regions of Glamorgan traditional modes of cultural expression survived the first shocks of the Industrial Revolution. For example, Lewis Hopcyn (1708-1771), a mason in the Vale of Neath, continued to write in the ancient poetic metres and claimed to be a direct descendant of a group of bards originating in the fifteenth century. Moreover, in dispersed regions like West Glamorgan the bardic practice of learning from a single teacher remained in the "mutual aid" or "private adventure" schools.[379] This ancient type of education was not destroyed by the Industrial Revolution. For example, north of Swansea, where boys would begin work as early as eight years of age, dinner time was utilized for

[378] Frank Price Jones, "The Gwerin of Wales" in Studies in Folk Life: Essays in Honour of Iorwerth C. Peate (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), ed. Geraint Jenkins, pp. 1-14.

[379] Thomas Parry, History of Welsh Literature, p. 272.

the purpose of Welsh education. Some of the older workmen formed classes for reading, composition of speeches, the writing of verses and essays, and singing. All teaching was in the Welsh language and stressed the fundamentals of traditional Welsh education.[380]

Before the Industrial Revolution was advanced in the isolated Rhondda region the old culture was still deeply entrenched. In fact, the Rhonddas remained almost untouched by external linguistic and cultural influences and Nonconformity did not make significant advances until the middle of the nineteenth century. In the scattered settlements of the Rhonddas many evenings were spent relating _chwedlau_ (tales) and singing _tribanau_ (triplets). These were usually accompanied by the harp and had their literary origins in historical events, personal recollections, or descriptions of contemporary happenings in politics and local life. By the eighteen-thirties and forties the writings of popular politicians and poets began to gain considerable recognition. The _Almanac_ was found in many homes and _Seren Gomer_, the liberal monthly, was popular. Popular political expression focused upon the ballads and _anterliwdau_ of Twm o'r Nant, in addition to his volume of works, _Gardd o Gerddi_. Moreover, the poems and songs of Jac Jones of Glanygors, sympathetic to the Jacobins, were widely distributed. The popular culture which

[380] John Henry Davies, _History of Pontardawe and District_, p.219.

had arisen by the end of the eighteenth century could and did flourish where the power of the chapel was weak. Literature and other forms of popular culture in the Rhonddas were steeped in the message of social justice and equality, but thrived within traditional modes of cultural expression. In scattered regions where the traditional Welsh culture flourished, cultural transformation could occur without the destruction of traditional modes of expression and adapt to newly emerging social institutions. For example, at Ystradyfodwg in the Rhonddas a mutual benefit club was formed in the eighteen-twenties which met at Starr Inn, Gellidawl. After meetings it was customary procedure to indulge in penillion singing.[381]

To conclude, the educational and religious developments of the eighteenth century did destroy segments of ancient culture in Wales. Concurrently, a popular literature and song was emerging which was in some instances curtailed by the power of the chapel; but they survived in those regions where the old culture of Wales was free from the all pervading influence of preachers, the English language and those forces of power and social control which were not in agreement with the radical tinge of the new literature. Those modes of cultural expression which were relevant to the new social and economic milieu survived and flourished, eventually to

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[381] E.D. Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, pp. 33-4.

become the basis of a new and vibrant popular culture by the later decades of the nineteenth century and the basis of modern Welsh culture.

Chapter XII

The Emergence of Radical Opinion

Radicalism in the early modern period emerged due to the economic and social changes which accompanied the Industrial Revolution, but the tone and character of radicalism in South Wales was established largely as a result of the religious and cultural upheavals which occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The earliest Welsh radicals were an assortment of preachers, schoolmasters, authors and antiquarians who combined bardic tradition, contemporary Welsh literary developments and the social and political ideas emanating from the Enlightenment. By the eighteen-thirties Welsh radicalism had developed into a curious mixture of traditional peasant views concerning popular justice, parliamentary reform, Scriptural interpretations of social equality and an embryonic liberal working class ideology.

The emergence of radical opinion in Wales is closely linked to the intellectual environment of the London metropolis. Scholars attracted by the prospects of a higher learning and a broader intellectual milieu had formed a coterie of London Welsh by the end of the eighteenth century. While in London these scholars became enthralled with the writings of Paine and Voltaire, supported the American revolutionaries and thoroughly imbibed the democratic ideals of the French Revolution. Deeply concerned with the status of Welsh culture, they combined their political and social

thinking with their efforts to preserve and revive the Welsh language, ancient cultural institutions and bardic tradition. In fact, during the year 1794 they held an eisteddfod outside London where a genuine gorsedd (crowning) ceremony was held with all due pomp and solemnity. Despite this seemingly druidical image the cultural revivalists of London were led by the radicals who formed the elite of the London Welsh societies. These societies supported the French Revolution en bloc and were noteworthy for spending more time discussing Paine and Voltaire than relicts of bardism. Indeed, they faced heavy pressures during periods of government repression.[382]

Many of the London Welsh radicals and cultural revivalists had their origins in Glamorgan. They inevitably had associations with the schools and Independent Congregations in the major Vale of Glamorgan market towns. The Independent Chapels founded by Cromwell in Glamorgan proved a fertile breeding ground for political as well as religious dissent. During the course of the eighteenth century the intellectual tenor of these chapels was gradually evolving towards a brand of liberal Presbyterianism in which political discussion played an important role in the life of the congregations. Eventually, a group of "political dissenters" emerged by the end of the eighteenth century, clustered

[382] Thomas Evans, The Background of Modern Welsh Politics, 1789-1846 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1936), p.13; Gwyn A. Williams, Artisans and Sans-Culottes (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p.65.

about the Cowbridge Book Society and Rhys Prys' Academy at Bridgend. They were composed for the most part of middle class artisans,merchants and preacher-schoolmasters who spent their leisure time in discussion and circulating journals,Poor Richard and books and pamphlets translated from French.[383]

The market towns of the Vale of Glamorgan had evolved as centres of what was dubbed "intellectual dissent",but the societies and academies created some noted products. Doctor Richard Price was nurtured in the Vale of Glamorgan; David Williams,who aided in the drafting of the Constitution of 1793 in France and was made an honorary citizen of that country for his efforts;Edward Williams,the "Bard of Liberty",whose signature of the same when on a visit to a friend at Newgate Prison angered the younger Pitt to the point of seizing his papers;Morgan John Rhys,the "Radical Baptist", who edited the first periodical in the Welsh language and gained notoriety by offering public prayers on behalf of the Jacobins.[384]

The majority of intellectual dissenters,themselves largely the products of external cultural and intellectual contacts,wrote mostly in English at this stage in their

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[383] Gwyn A.Williams,Artisans and Sans-Culottes,p.65.

[384] Gwyn A.Williams,"The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics:The Making of a Working Class Tradition (Cardiff:University of Wales Press,1966),ed.Glanmor Williams, p.14.

development and had little immediate effect upon the predominantly monoglot Welsh population. Some, however, did return home to spread their message. Morgan John Rhys began his Welsh career upon taking up residence at Trevecca in the late eighteenth century. Rhys believed that true democracy was depicted at Trevecca due to the communal life of that religious community; however, he was expelled from Trevecca by the elders due to his radical leanings. Tomos Glyn Cothi, a poet, minister and author of radical tracts was steeped in Paine and the ideals of the French Revolution, but was imprisoned upon his return to Wales. He ended his days preaching at Aberdare in north Glamorgan.[385]

The American War and the French Revolution were major catalysts in the rise of radical opinion and the emergence of embryonic political consciousness among the lower classes. The popular literature of the period reflects a growing concern with social justice and national political issues. Ballads written in defence of the Americans represent the début of efforts by the radical poets and authors to instill the populace with a knowledge of political life. During the same period, David Jones of Trefriw wrote the first political pamphlet in the Welsh language, defending the American colonists in the year 1776.[386]

The relationship between religious dissent and

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[385] Idris Jones, Modern Welsh History, pp.217,226.

[386] Gwyn A. Williams, Artisans and Sans-Culottes, p.12.

radicalism is elusive and in many respects contradictory. It has been established that certain sects such as the Unitarians were generally political as well as religious dissenters, but the most trying obstacle in solving the mystery is the problem of Methodism.[387] Some historians have approached Methodism with an extremely cautious and frustrating air: "all we know is that Methodism advanced when radicalism advanced and not when it grew weaker."[388] A few illusions can be dispelled,however,through a contrast of Methodist tendencies in rural and industrial regions.

Although Methodism has been considered a force of conservatism in the industrial towns it has been viewed as a radical factor in the rural agricultural regions. In the countryside Church and Chapel could be seen by the agricultural population as oppressor and oppressed and "The Chapel in the agricultural village was inevitably an affront to the vicar and the squire."[389] Social cleavage was greatly heightened between farmer and squire by religious as well as linguistic,or even national differences in Wales. Moreover,

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[387]Methodist preachers in general took great pains to discourage the popular literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The radical content of the anterliwdau and ballads of the period would be anathema to the conservative Methodists. In fact,Twm o'r Nant,the most popular dramatist and balladeer,is most common viewed in contemporary prints as wearing the Red Cap of Liberty.

[388]E.J.Hobsbawm,Labouring Men (New York:Doubleday, 1967),p.38.

[389]E.P.Thompson,The Making of the English Working Class (New York:Vintage Books,1963),p.397.

social conflict was aggravated by tithes as the greatest proportion of them were in lay hands and fell into the clutches of the gentry.[390] In effect,Nonconformity provided an important link in the alienation of landowner and tenant.[391]

Calvinistic Methodism was the major religious denomination in industrial Glamorgan. As facilities for education,recreation and cultural expression were poor, everyday life tended to concentrate in the chapel,where one listened to the rantings of preachers and read denominational literature. The chapels became a "mother gin",a haven in which the working class could seek solace:"The Welshman had got from his chapel what the Englishman had sought for in the playhouse."[392] Nonconformity per se was not a radical

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[390] David Williams,History of Modern Wales,p.205.

[391] David Williams notes the apparent link between Nonconformity and social reform in History of Modern Wales, p.204,when he states that,in 1834,the Nonconformist press was adament in condemning the new system of poor relief,in which parishes were merged into unions with boards of guardians,outdoor relief was discontinued for the able-bodied,and conditions in the workhouses were more intolerable than experienced by the poorest paid employed labourer. Moreover, in the Rebecca Riots,pp.155,236,241,Williams shows that the Nonconformist press gave some support to the Rebecca rioters in agricultural west Wales. Although the press was opposed to violence (and the Rebecca movement was basically non-violent) the press condemned the intolerable conditions in the countryside and sympathized with the rioters. The rioters in their letters referred to the Anglican clergymen as "ministers of the national whore" and set themselves up as administrators of justice and "guardians of public morals."

[392] E.T.Davies,Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales,pp.120-21.

force in industrial Glamorgan during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It has been maintained by Welsh historians of political thought and religion that Nonconformity was "concerned almost exclusively with its own struggle to acheive legal equality with the Established Church", and the period from 1815 to 1830 was characterized by "Calvinistic fatalism, when religion had become a social soporific."[393] It appears, however, that radical opinions had seized many members of the congregations, a matter that caused grave concern with religious leaders. The largest religious denomination in Wales, the Calvinistic Methodists, were overt in their policy towards any brand of suspected radicalism and took measures to insure that the Chapel would remain a "social soporific." Antagonistic to benefit societies and labour unions, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Association, meeting in 1831 at Tredegar, condemned all organized reform activity and workmen's clubs, allegedly due to their custom of taking oaths.[394]

Despite the clergy's intention to stiffle radical opinion through the power of pulpit persuasion, an attitude towards social reflection took root in the ranks of the Nonconformists. In effect, the constant conflicts with the Established Church inevitably meant a confrontation with the

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[393] Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, p.84; E.T.Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, p.82.

[394] E.T.Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, pp.159,76.

constitution and government which forbade them rights. For example, the controversy over education was rooted in religious differences and opposition to the Anglican establishment: the National Society was backed by the Church while the British Society was supported by the Nonconformists.[395] If the chapels were the most important centres of social life in Wales for the majority of the people, they also served to mold the congregations together into distinct entities. The identity of the people with the chapel resulted in a personal unification of social as well as religious goals: conflicts with the Established Church cemented a large segment of the Welsh working class in a crusade for what they believed to be a just cause shrouded with religious overtones. Each conflict with the establishment further prepared the members of the Nonconformist congregations for organized opposition to existing institutions.[396] By the end of the period under analysis, there was a widespread tendency for the preacher and the politician to be closely related. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the pulpit inadvertantly became a vehicle for inculcating the ideals of social justice:

> It was this growing insistance on the social context of the Christian religion that justified the assertion that the great struggle in Wales

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[395] Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, pp.213-14, 10, 17.

[396] E.T. Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, pp.16-18, 82.

> was to reconcile the demands of the platform with the ideals of the pulpit, to re-unite the preacher and the politician in a crusade for rights.[397]

All aspects of radical or popular opinion were infused to some degree with religious dogma. For example, the attack upon privilege during the French Revolution was viewed by Welsh writers as an assault upon aristocratic religious orders. They utilized this as a template for their own battle against the privileges of the Established Church and the elite which fostered them. The additional burdens imposed by the Tithe Commutation Act for a while united all Nonconformist sects in a programme of concerted action. Christian principles gradually edged their way into popular attitudes regarding political issues. Agitation against the Poor Law was seen as a religious duty as it was believed that the new workhouses, according to their policy of separating males and females, violated the sacrament of marriage. Moreover, the social order, in which laws were imposed by the elite upon the majority, was deemed to be contrary to the Scriptures and the law of God, wherein distinct social classes were not meant to result in oppression of the poor.[398] In effect, the "Welsh Nonconformist Society" which had emerged after the first quarter of the nineteenth century had resulted in the entrenchment of a semi-sacral milieu where all aspects of

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[397] Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, p.20.

[398] Ibid., pp.115,131.

social and cultural life were tinged with religious overtones.

Despite the fact that an offshoot of the London Corresponding Society was believed to have existed in Cardiff at the beginning of the nineteenth century,radical thought and expression tended to concentrate in Merthyr Tudful.[399] Merthyr had developed into a miniature Manchester by the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed,the term "Manchester Radicals" could easily be applied to the coterie of middle class,Unitarian merchants who composed the town's radical elite. Merthyr was a cultural as well as an industrial centre throughout the period under analysis. Societies of doubtful tendencies abounded. In 1802 Malkin noticed a printing office,a bookseller who communicated regularly with London, widespread interest in scientific subjects,numerous book societies,a philosophical society and a theatre attended by a company of itinerant actors "by no means of the meanest description."[400]

Throughout the eighteenth century Merthyr was a relict of Old Dissent and the legacy of the seventeenth century parliamentarians. This mild form of "intellectual dissent" intensified in politics from support for the Americans during the American War,idealization of the French Revolution and

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[399] Thomas Evans,<u>Background of Modern Welsh Politics</u>, pp.115,131.

[400] Benjamin Heath Malkin,<u>Scenery,Antiquities,and Biography of South Wales</u>,pp.180-81.

eventually, Chartism. In the matter of religion the process of intensification was similiar as the middle class of Merthyr emerged from Presbyterianism to Unitarianism. The radical coterie of Merthyr was composed of merchants, the wealthier sort of artisans, minor industrialists and shop-keeping tradesmen. Most of the radical clique were connected either by family or business to centres of "intellectual dissent" in the market towns of the Vale of Glamorgan. Moreover, the mushroom growth of Merthyr attracted many of the Vale merchants to the town. These new arrivals inevitably shared the common titles of bourgeois and Unitarian, were steeped in the writings of Paine and Price, and supported the ideals of the American and French Revolutions. The radical clique of Merthyr developed into the vanguard of the reform movement in Wales.[401]

Despite the fact that all attest to the active tenor of Merthyr's radicals, much of their activity is shrouded in secrecy, even conjecture. In fact, the only society known to have existed purely for radical discussion was the South Wales Unitarian Association, established at Merthyr in 1801; it was short-lived. Contemporaries and present-day historians have occasionally conspired to create a cloak-and-dagger atmosphere in the town. During the French Revolution the

[401] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, pp. 13-14; Artisans and Sans-Culottes, p. 66.

Merthyr radicals were said to wear the Red Cap of Liberty and were known at the time as the "staunch old Republicans of Merthyr." In 1807 the extremely questionable Cyfarthfa Philosophical Society was founded, secret "Jacobin" meetings were commonplace and John Thelwall, during his "exile" in Brecknockshire, held reading circles on Paine and Voltaire in secluded mountain hide-outs at the turn of the nineteenth century.[402]

In spite of this surface heat, the middle class radicals of Merthyr were fairly restrained when concerned with practical politics; they advocated the secret ballot, supported universal suffrage and favoured repeal of the Corn Laws. Periods of peak political upheaval, however, appears to have ignited the occasional spark in their ideological committments. For example, during the wartime repression they listened to the "Jacobin" Tomos Glyn Cothi lecture in secret meeting places on nearby Aberdare Mountain; and when Taleisin Williams, son of the radical author Edward Williams, arrived in Merthyr, he found the radical clique "hot" for Napoleon.[403]

The tendency of the London Welsh radicals of the eighteenth century to blend their ideas of cultural revival with that of political activity was characteristic of

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[402] Gwyn A. Williams, Artisans and Sans-Culottes, p.66; "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p.15.

[403] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Making of Radical Merthyr, 1800-1836", Welsh History Review, I (1961), 172-3; "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p.13.

Merthyr Tudful as well. Higher bardic traditions flourished under the auspices of Taleisin Williams. Taleisin established his own school which was popular with sons of the town's middle class radicals and presided over a language and literary revival during the eighteen-twenties and thirties. In 1830 an eisteddfod was held at Merthyr in which the essay topic presented for contest was "Civil Liberty." The culture of the lower classes was still rooted in folk tradition and the popular literature of the eighteenth century. Waves of immigrants to the town brought the old ballad culture with them and workmen listened to Dic Deryll (Blind Dick) sing the ballads of Twm o'r Nant in the squalid sections of Jackson's Bridge and China. Moreover, specifically working class literature was spreading. By 1830 Welsh translations of men like Orator Hunt were becoming popular.[404]

Merthyr Tudful was truly the centre of radicalism in Wales during the nineteenth century and had emerged as the barometer of social unrest and political activity. The town's traditional reputation for religious and political dissent erupted in flagrant radical expression with the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution and the cultural and religious developments which had occurred during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By 1830 "Radical Merthyr" was the storm centre of the coalfields and the epitome of the effects of the Industrial Revolution in Wales.

[404] Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Pendeyrn" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p. 13.

Chapter XIII

Politics in Glamorgan

The political life of Glamorganshire in the eighteenth century was characterized by comparative calm and tranquility. Welsh members of parliament were noteworthy for their disinterested attitude and almost unquestioning support of the government. National issues did little to upset local politics in Glamorgan during most of the century. Local political life, whether relating to the county or to the boroughs, was completely dominated by the great estates and their owners. Only by the end of the eighteenth century were attempts made to challenge the hold of the county magnates. Strong and determined opposition to political domination emerged largely as a result of the Industrial Revolution and the conflicts which it engendered between the landed and industrial interests.

At the dawn of the eighteenth century Welsh politics were quite estranged from anything particularly Welsh. Directly following the Act of Union in 1536 the new Welsh members of parliament solidified into a national bloc, dubbed the "Welsh interest"; however, the heat of the Civil Wars during the seventeenth century and the religious and political realignments which followed completely destroyed their coherence. The mystique of Bosworth Field and the aura of mythology surrounding the Tudor Dynasty faded into tradition and no longer represented a social or political

reality. In 1690 the final bastion of Welsh parochialism, the Council of Wales and the Marches, was abolished, thus effectively destroying once and for all the idea of a semi-independent realm governed by council directly under the patronage of the king. Moreover, divisions following the Glorious Revolution replaced the old loyalties between families as well as the popular idea that to sit in parliament was to be a guardian of things Welsh.[405]

The quiescence of Glamorgan politics in the eighteenth century and the comparatively long tenures enjoyed by both county and borough members was partially due to the electoral structure established with the Act of Union in 1536.[406] Essentially, this act was designed to destroy the isolation of Wales and to assimilate the land into the legal and administrative institutions of England. By the Act of Union the forty shilling freehold franchise was established; however, only one member was to be elected for the shire, not two as

[405] A.H. Dodd, Studies in Stuart Wales (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971), pp. 193, 100-101, 200-202, 212-13, 233.

[406] The Act of Union and its consequences greatly facilitated the alienation of classes in Wales. By the end of the seventeenth century there was really no difference between a member of the Welsh gentry or nobility and his English counterpart. In addition to differentiation caused by a fragmented geography, the variations in language, culture, religion and economic status mentioned in previous chapters can be applied to politics as well. In effect, until the Reform Crisis and the rise of popular politics in the new parliamentary borough of Merthyr Tudful, issues relating directly to Wales were never of serious concern, even in Wales.

in England. One member was also to be elected for each shire town. With the exception of the counties of Anglesey, Brecknock, Carmarthen, Montgomery and Pembroke, which were assigned single borough constituencies, the remaining seven Welsh counties contained contributory boroughs. Glamorgan possessed eight contributory boroughs. These were collectively called the Cardiff Boroughs, Cardiff being the shire town. At the time of the Act of Union all the Welsh boroughs were uniformly granted a franchise based upon inhabitant household. With the sole exception of Flint, which maintained its status as an ancient English borough, the inhabitant household franchise was based upon a clause contained in the modified union legislation of 1543 which stated the following: "the inhabitants of all the cities and boroughs must bear and pay the wages of the borough representative." By the eighteenth century, again with the exception of Flint, all Welsh boroughs were enfranchised for freemen or resident freemen.[407]

Edward Porritt has made several rash generalizations concerning Welsh electoral history. He has stated that "Wales had no Old Sarum", that parliamentary representation was not so closely tied to the municipal system as in England, and that control over the boroughs by one powerful

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[407] Edward Porritt, The Unreformed House of Commons: Parliamentary Representation Before 1832 (New York: Reprints of Economic Classics, 2nd ed., 1963), pp. 104-5, 107-9, 115. In boroughs where "honorary" burgesses exercized the franchise they were in fact holding a status similiar to a freeman.

person was more difficult due to the existence of the contributory boroughs:

> The franchise was on a popular basis. Owing to the grouping of the boroughs the electors were scattered,and in such constituencies...a borough patron would be less secure of his hold....[408]

In both borough and county elections insecurity was seldom a serious problem. Part of the apparent casual air which characterized most Welsh elections,when they occurred at all,was due to the success experienced by the class which fostered and profited from the Act of Union.[409] It is no secret that the Act of Union was largely the result of lobbying on the part of Welsh landowners,a gentry class which had risen to power during a period of turmoil and desired the consolidation of their holdings in the country-side. In fact,many of these lands were newly acquired. At this point Chapter VIII,concerning the effects of urban

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[408] Edward Porritt,The Unreformed House of Commons, p.118.

[409] The landowning class which dominated the parliamentary history of Wales until well into the nineteenth century became an established political elite with the Act of Union in 1536. In fact,the consolidation of holdings perhaps best explains those sections of the Act which fully established English land tenure in Wales as law. Many of their newly acquired holdings were actually outside the realm of English law,claimed during a period of social dislocation and disintegration of the tribal system of landholding. They were usually on the ffridd,or lands in the peripheral highland regions,or on the sides of mountains. Moreover,the rise of the woollen and cattle industries would have provided adequate incentive for seizure. It is here that I must point out that Scotland had experienced its own Act of Union in the early eighteenth century. The power exercized by the Scottish borough patrons and the similiarity of the electoral system provides more than adequate justification for comparative analysis between Wales and Scotland.

growth in Wales, must be re-emphasized. In effect, as the castle town emerged into the borough town the functional intent of the settlement remained. The boroughs were, in fact, centres of justice and administration even after their military function had ceased. With a county franchise geared to substantial freeholders in a region where they were invariably small, and with a resident householder franchise in towns which were still tiny nodules in an essentially scattered and fragmented countryside, there was little possibility of violent contestations.

It was a major objective of shire towns to sever themselves from the contributory boroughs in order to possess the sole right of returning burgesses. Only twice did this occur successfully, in the boroughs of Beaumaris and Montgomery. Rather than risk an open contest between the shire town and its contributory boroughs, it was common procedure for the borough patrons and the municipal corporations to arrive at a pre-election consensus whereby elections were generally conceeded.[410]

Borough contests in Glamorgan were conflicts between the shire town, Cardiff, and its contributory boroughs. Cardiff was the seat of the Lord of Glamorgan, the most powerful borough patron in the county and one of the largest landowners.[411] In direct contradiction to Porritt's gross

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[410] Edward Porritt, The Unreformed House of Commons, pp.108-9, 111-13.

[411] David Williams, History of Modern Wales, p.165.

generalization,political control over the boroughs generally rested in the hands of whoever controlled Cardiff Castle and the degree of patronage exhibited in the various satellite boroughs of the Lord and his most powerful supporters. The extremely small borough electorates ensured an immense degree of borough control by the patron. For example,Aberavon never had more than forty burgesses. Llantrisant,an unabashed satellite of the shire town,was almost the personal property of the Lord of Cardiff Castle in terms of land and industry. Moreover,the Lord exercized full control in the matter of appointing burgesses.[412] Borough contests in Glamorgan were more complicated than in most other Welsh counties due to the presence of more than one powerful borough patron. For example,whereas the Lord of Cardiff Castle held absolute control over the boroughs of east Glamorgan,the Duke of Beaufort during the eighteenth century held total control over those of the west. Contests were the exception rather than the rule. Instead of risking an open contest,representation was usually decided by compromise and agreement.[413]

Early eighteenth century Wales has long been considered a bastion of Jacobitism. Due to the strong royalist connection of the previous century,opposition to the House of Hanover,

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[412]George Alexander Cooke,<u>Topographical and Statistical Description of the Principality of Wales</u>,pp.99,103.

[413]John Brooke,<u>The House of Commons,1754-1790:An Introductory Survey</u> (Oxford:Oxford University Press,1968), p.53.

is generally considered by modern historians to be a given factor, obscured by the belief that loyalty to the Stuart Dynasty was in some manner associated with national aspirations and a lingering of the Tudor mythology. Adherents of this theory have consistantly ignored the fact that the Welsh gentry were no longer an isolated and provincial group. In fact, it was they who petitioned for the abolition of the Council of Wales and the Marches and who were generally opposed to a dynasty which was Scottish, received French support and adhered to the Roman Catholic faith. It has been assumed that Welsh Jacobitism was a reaction to the Anglicization of the Established Church, but this fails to take into account the fact that the Welsh Jacobites were themselves thoroughly Anglicized. They worked in total harmony with their English counterparts and even referred to themselves in their correspondance as being "English." Moreover, the lower orders of society were the least Anglicized and, as is obvious, the most traditional, but they uttered not a murmur of support for the Stuart cause.[414]

Active Jacobite sympathy was limited to a few very powerful and vociferous individuals, whose holdings of land were concentrated in the north-east and south-east of Wales and who wielded tremendous influence in their respective localities. Seated at Raglan Castle in Monmouthshire, Henry

[414]Peter D.G. Thomas, "Jacobitism in Wales", Welsh History Review, I (1960-63), 279-80.

Somerset,first Duke of Beaufort,last president of the Council of Wales and the Marches and Lord Lieutenant of all the Welsh counties,led the Jacobite coterie in south-east Wales. Some of the most prestigious landowners in Glamorgan were supporters of the "Loyal Duke";Sir Charles Kemeys of Cefn Mably,Sir John Carne of Ewenny and Thomas Lewis of the Van. Sir Charles Kemeys represented Glamorgan in parliament from 1722 to 1734 and was considered the most reliable supporter of the Duke of Beaufort. Thomas Lewis of the Van was fined £10,000 for his Jacobite sympathies.[415]

Alleged supporters of the Stuart cause appear to have merely given lip-service to the powerful Jacobites because of their immense local influence. For example,Thomas Talbot joined the highly suspect Society of Sea-Serjeants after inheriting the Margam estates in West Glamorgan,but was never known to give active support to the Jacobite cause. The previous owner,Thomas Mansell,voted in 1689 against giving the crown to William and Mary,but was a personal friend of the moderate Tory leader,Robert Harley.[416] If Jacobitism was alive at all in Glamorgan it was merely a surface stirring emanating out of political contingency and deference to powerful landowners. During the '45 Wales in toto appears to have remained entirely loyal to the House of Hanover.

[415] Peter D.G.Thomas,"Jacobitism in Wales",Welsh History Review,I (1960-63),280;Idris Jones,Modern Welsh History,p.157.

[416] Peter D.G.Thomas,"Jacobitism in Wales",Welsh History Review,I (1960-63),291,294-5.

The political life of eighteenth century Glamorgan was dominated by the owners of the largest estates. For example, the Stradling family, occupiers of St. Donats Castle for over five hundred years, held control over the Cardiff Boroughs as guardians of the Herbert interest from the Act of Union until their line ended in 1738.[417] The families of Talbot and Mansell, respective owners of the estates of Hensol and Margam, and of Briton Ferry, held the county seat from 1660 until 1780 either by name or by patrimony. The Mathew family of Llandaff and the Vernons, inheritors of the Briton Ferry estate, intermarried with other West Glamorgan families and thereby inherited portions of estates, and represented the county with only periodic interruptions. George Venables Vernon held the county seat from 1768 to 1780 with no opposition until he succeeded to the peerage in 1780 and became Lord Vernon.[418]

In the boroughs, control by one powerful family was more pronounced than in the county. In fact, the Herbert family and their scions held control over the Cardiff Boroughs from the sixteenth century until the succession of their vast Glamorgan estates to the Bute family in 1790. The Mansells, owners of large estates in West Glamorgan, were

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[417] J. Roland Phillips, An Attempt at a Concise History of Glamorgan (London: Chiswick Press, 1879), pp. 69-70.

[418] W. R. Williams, The Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, 1541-1895 (Brecknock: Edwin, Davies & Bell, "County Times Offices", 1895), pp. 99-101.

perennial representatives of the Cardiff Boroughs and noted guardians of the Herbert interests after the powerful Stradling influence had waned. Marriage between the Mansells and Stradlings naturally passed the previous Stradling influence to the Mansell inheritances. Two other borough representatives were close associates of the Mansell family, Sir John Aubrey and Herbert Windsor of Beachworth,Surrey. Herbert Windsor was related to both the Herberts and the Windsors,both large landed proprietors;he held the borough seat for only a short period of time and eventually succeeded to the peerage. Between 1739 and 1790 the Mackworth family of Gnoll,borough patrons and staunch patrons over the Herbert interests,held tight control over the borough seat. Herbert Mackworth represented the Cardiff Boroughs until his death in 1766. Upon his death his son,Herbert Mackworth Jr.,succeeded him. In 1790 the Stuart family, Marquises of Bute,inherited the Herbert lands in Glamorgan and represented the Cardiff Boroughs from 1790 to 1820,1826 to 1832 and from 1857 to 1880.[419]

Land and lineage was the basis of political power in Glamorgan. Distinguished family background and ownership by marriage or inheritance of an ancient and known Welsh estate were political as well as social necessities. Appeal to those sentiments caused Englishmen to change or hyphenate their

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[419] W.R.Williams,Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales,pp.108-10.

names upon inheritance of a Welsh estate or marriage to a Welsh heiress. In fact,even the prestigious Stuart family, Marquises of Bute,found their Scottish blood a disadvantage in wooing political support from the local gentry.[420]

During the eighteenth century national issues,even national politics in general,did little to excite a political fever in Glamorgan. County "politics" were little more than a series of deals and compromises between the landowning classes,and a seat in parliament was merely a mark of prestige and honour. This political stagnation ended in 1790 when the Stuart family inherited the Herbert estates in Glamorgan. Lord Bute,through an attempt to further his interests in the sphere of national political life,tried to totally dominate all aspects of politics in Glamorgan. This was in direct contradiction to the political policies of the Herberts,who were not involved in national political participation at the level of the Butes. In doing so,Bute failed to take the feelings of the local gentry into consideration, but nearly always succeeded in offending them.

The new Lord of Cardiff Castle,Lord Mount Stuart,could easily secure the Cardiff Boroughs due to his position as borough patron and could compromise with other patrons in the county;however,despite the pressures from Cardiff Castle, the county seat could not be attained by concession for the

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[420] R.D.Rees,"Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales,1789-1832",Welsh History Review,II (1964-5),233-4.

younger John Stuart in 1790. With the full support of the Glamorgan gentry the sitting member, Thomas Wyndham of Dunraven, refused to relinquish his seat and held it in opposition to the Bute interests for twenty-five years.[421] Wyndham's immense popularity was due to the fact that Lord Mount Stuart had "offended the Glamorgan gentry by treating them in a cavalier manner" and had shown contempt for "the will of the county." Moreover, the large landowners in the west of the county were roused in Wyndham's favour by Thomas Mansell of Margam. Wyndham's own estates in the Vale of Glamorgan, in addition to the support of the large western landowners, were sufficient to entice full support from the majority of the landowners in the county. Only in the east and north-east of the county were the Bute estates large enough to insure domination in terms of land.[422]

The main political ideal in county politics, "independence", was waived by the Lords of Cardiff Castle in order to pursue their personal political interests, but Wyndham and his supporters maintained the exclusion of a Stuart from the county seat by loudly voicing the term. It was unwise for a candidate to offer himself as a Whig or Tory, but it was a respected county tradition to adopt the title of "independent." The term itself, in spite of its

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[421] William Rees, Cardiff, p.160; David Williams, History of Modern Wales, p.165.

[422] R.D.Rees, "Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales, 1789-1832", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 236-7.

original inference of opposition to external meddling in county affairs, meant everything and nothing by the end of the eighteenth century:

> It could mean independence of an aristocratic patron; or it might mean independence of a dominant group, a junta, of families; or it might mean independence of the ministers; or of a parliamentary connection; or independence of the electors themselves; or independence of fortune; - the possession of a private income large enough to allow the candidate to win his seat by his own efforts and to ignore mercenary inducements from ministers or others in the discharge of duty.[423]

In effect, whatever form of "independence" momentarily appealed to the gentlemen of the county put a candidate in good stead with the electorate. Moreover, this phenomena is a classic example of the conflict between "court" and "country" which characterized much of local political life in Britain during the eighteenth century. Bute's associations with the "court", especially between 1758 and 1762, would not put him in good standing with "independent" country gentlemen.

County elections up until the time of the Reform Crisis were fought mainly on the basis of "independence" and opposition to the Bute interests; however, by the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a growing murmur of dissatisfaction on behalf of the business community concerning the dominant position of land in determining the county

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[423] R.D. Rees, "Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales, 1789-1832", _Welsh History Review_, II (1964-5), 236-7.

representative. Even Wyndham,hero of the "independent" gentry and generally popular with all sections of the community,was the object of a hostile canvass sponsored by John Llewelyn of Penlle'gaer in 1807.[424] Benjamin Hall,a wealthy industrialist and active magistrate in Monmouthshire during periods of rioting and labour unrest,represented the emergence of new political forces. After Wyndham's death in 1814,Hall was elected to the county seat. He was the son-in-law of the "Iron King" Richard Crawshay and owner of the Rhymney Iron Works. Hall possessed such wealth that the Bute nominee was forced to withdraw from the contest due to lack of financial support.[425] This was in fact the first concerted effort on the part of the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop to exercise their enormous political potential in the field of county politics.

Upon the death of Benjamin Hall in 1817,Glamorgan politics were more factional and lively than they had ever been before. Sir Christopher Cole held the county seat for one year,but succeeded to Sir John Edwards of Rheola in 1818. The landowner-industrialist clique of West Glamorgan were enraged at the thought of Edwards representing the county as he had received support from the Lord of Cardiff Castle

[424] R.D.Rees,"Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales,1789-1832",Welsh History Review,II (1964-5),247-8.

[425] David Williams,History of Modern Wales,pp.175-6.

and thus put himself in opposition to their interests. Oddly enough, Edwards held a very traditional qualification for county representation, a large estate of land at Penrice, Gower. Despite the fact that Edwards was a western landowner, however, he was actively supported by Cardiff Castle and the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop.[426] Cole, however, had an even more traditional qualification as he was a relict of the old Mansell-Talbot clan and received the fullest of support from the most powerful landowners and industrialists of the west.

After the election of Edwards in 1818, Lewis Weston Dillwyn, Sir John Morris and Sir John Nicholl became the undisputed leaders of western landowners and industrialists. This group founded "An Independent Association for Preserving the Honour and Independence of the County" and were backed by a subscription fund of £20,000. In effect, the western interests, based upon industry and vast landed estates, was solidly opposed to the landowners of the east, the industrial might of the Northern Outcrop and the commercial dreams of the Bute family. The method of retaliation employed by the "Independent Association" was a refusal to cooperate at county meetings so long as the county was represented in parliament by Edwards and his "hired lawyers and large hired rabble." In the hotly contested county election of 1820 the

[426] W.R.Williams, <u>Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales</u>, p. 102.

landowner-industrialist clique of the west was powerful enough to defeat the combined forces of Cardiff Castle and the Northern Outcrop. Thus, the "Coal, Iron and Tin Co." were successful in literally ramming their candidate, Cole, into the House of Commons.[427] They succeeded in controlling the county seat until 1830 with Cole as their undisputed parliamentary leader. Afterwards, C.R.M. Talbot and Lewis Weston Dillwyn represented the west in parliament until late in the nineteenth century.[428]

The battle between Cole and Edwards reveals that many traditional ideals were still relevant to a large segment of the electorate. For example, Edwards won his seat in 1818 with the usual cry for independence, independence from the very coterie which had previously placed Wyndham in power and behaved in the same domineering fashion as the group of "independents" which they had so viciously opposed. Edwards was also successful in rousing the Vale gentry in favour of his supporters. In their eyes, he was the victor over the aristocratic forces which they believed were conspiring to dominate the county.[429]

The election of 1820 was characterized by much tradition and sentiment. Indeed, the whole affair was marked with the

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[427] R.D. Rees, "Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales, 1789-1832", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 248-9.

[428] W.R. Williams, Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales, p.102.

[429] W.R. Williams, Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales, p.102; Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, p.67.

hue of a comic opera. Sir John Edwards presented himself as "Edwards y Cymro", or "Edwards the Welshman", until thoroughly embarassed by Cole's supporters when they presented him with an abstract taken from the Lambeth parish registers, proving his English birth. Cole then decided to take advantage of his Cornish ancestry, giving himself the title of "the Welshmen's first cousin." The third candidate, William Booth Grey, pleaded the value of his "Cambrian wife." [430] Regardless of tradition and sentiment, it was in reality the "Coal, Iron and Tin Co." which played the commanding role in county politics.

Cries of "independence" had little meaning in the Glamorgan boroughs due to the tiny exclusive electorates and the power wielded by the borough lords. For example, Swansea was virtually governed by a manorial lord, the Duke of Beaufort. He could lawfully veto the election of town officers and held a free hand at election time due to the vast amount of patronage which he bestowed upon the burgesses. The borough electorate of Swansea was extremely small. From the late seventeenth century the right to become a burgess was gradually limited to sons born after their father's admission and, if admitted by virtue of marriage to the daughter of a burgess, the daughter had to be born after her father's admission. By 1831 there were only 104 electors out of a total population of 13,694. Despite the fact that

[430] R.D. Rees, "Electioneering Ideals Current in South Wales, 1789-1832", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 234-5.

the only real political control over the electors was manifested in the allocation of corporation funds to pay for the trip to Cardiff, the size of this group of electors and the ease with which patronage could be distributed guaranteed their full support of the patron's choice.[431]

In Neath the situation was similiar. The Mackworth family, due to their interests in industry and commerce, especially the coal leases which were rented exclusively by the town burgesses, embarked upon a programme of complete control over the town corporation. Through a series of mutual agreements, pressures and absolute control over the local manorial courts of justice, Mackworth was able to secure mineral leases for his own use. By the end of the eighteenth century, the limitation of burgesses meant political as well as economic domination of the borough. The patronage which Mackworth had the sole right to exercise was bestowed only upon his henchmen.[432]

Cardiff, the shire town and seat of the powerful Lord of Glamorgan, possessed a larger electorate and was much more difficult to control by the borough patron in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In 1831, Cardiff, with its population of 6,157, about half that of Swansea, had an

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[431] Glyn Roberts, Aspects of Welsh History, pp. 121, 127-8; 132.

[432] R.D. Till, "Proprietory Politics in Glamorgan: The Mackworth Family and the Borough of Neath, 1696-1794", Morgannwg, XVI (1972), 38-9; 41.

electorate of 359 burgesses.[433] This was three times the amount which Swansea possessed. The electoral history of Cardiff was more stormy than in the other Glamorgan boroughs.[434] Patronage was more difficult to bestow upon the burgesses of the town than in the other boroughs because the borough patron, Lord Cardiff, or the Lord of Glamorgan, exercised control over more than one borough. In effect, patronage could not be concentrated in one borough such as was the case in Swansea; it had to be spread thinly in order to secure as much support as possible. This provided a sufficient power vacuum within which the business community of the borough could challenge the rights and privileges of the borough lord. As early as 1800 the town clerk, John Wood,

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[433] It is interesting to note that borough politics in Glamorgan has received more attention than county politics. In fact, between the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century and the Reform Crisis of the eighteen-thirties, studies are sparse and concentrate almost solely upon the period between 1790 and 1832. Perhaps this is due to the lethargy of political life, but I would suggest it is also because of the apparent lack of research concerning the gentry of Glamorgan, their lands, interests and inter-relationships.

[434] The stormy electoral history of Cardiff in the early nineteenth century may possibly have in part been due to the fact that all the borough electors in the county had to travel to Cardiff in order to cast their votes. The conflict in interests between the east and west of the county, and the fact that all of the borough electorate would be concentrated in Cardiff, would therefore of necessity increase the friction between various segments of the enfranchised community.

called into question the power of veto vested in Lord Cardiff in relation to the election of town officers.[435]

The election of 1818,the only contest in the borough since 1734,witnessed the first genuine attempt to defeat the Lord of Cardiff Castle,Patrick James Chrichton-Stuart, who was trying to succeed his father,Lord William Stuart. Frederick Wood,the second candidate,was the hero of Cardiff's business community and major opponent of the Bute interests. Previous to the election campaign,Wood had won a court case against Lord Cardiff concerning irregularities in relation to the positions held by his henchmen in the borough. Demonstrators celebrating Wood's legal victory clashed with special constables in the streets who were employed by Lord Cardiff to quash the celebration.[436] Violence characterized the election campaign of 1818,the throwing of stones at candidates being the most common transgression. A third candidate, Lewis Weston Dillwyn,sensing the rift between the burgesses of Cardiff and the business community,jumped into the fray in order to further the interests of the western landowner-industrialists within the realm of borough politics. Dillwyn withdrew due to lack of

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[435] William Rees,Cardiff,pp.145,160,68.

[436] R.D.Rees,"Glamorgan Newspapers Under the Stamp Acts",Morgannwg,VIII (1969),70.

adequate support and the fact that a "western" candidate was not appreciated in the town. During the poll a scant sixty-two voters registered. Lord James Stuart received a total of forty-five votes and Wood a mere seventeen, thereby proving the ultimate power of the Bute electoral interest and making a mockery out of Wood's efforts to plan his own victory celebration.[437]

In 1820 Lord James Stuart decided to sit for his family seat in Buteshire,Scotland;and a hotly contested election followed in the Glamorgan boroughs. This election was perhaps the most peculiar in Glamorgan's electoral history. Two candidates stood opposed,Ebenezer Ludlow,a Swansea burgess,and Wyndham Lewis of Greenmeadow. The poll,quite suspiciously,was kept open for a period of seven days,allegedly (at least to some contemporary accounts) to give the men from the west of the county sufficient time to travel to Cardiff. Lewis won the election,receiving 457 votes to Ludlow's 245.[438] Alliances and factions during the borough election of 1820 are difficult to unravel. Despite the fact that neither candidate was fully supported by the Wood clique,

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[437] William Rees,Cardiff,p.161;David Williams, History of Modern Wales,p.176;W.R.Williams,Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales,p.109.

[438] W.R.Williams,Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales,pp.100-109.

the Wood family and their political adherents *in toto* voted for Ludlow because they believed that Lewis was the Bute nominee.[439] Ludlow, while paying lip-service to Wood, was in reality the actual nominee of the Marquis of Bute and the Duke of Beaufort, both of whom had definite interests in preserving their control over borough politics. One advantage Lewis maintained over Ludlow was that the latter, being a "westerner", was not favoured by the eastern boroughs.[440]

The confusion during the borough election of 1820 resulted in a menagerie of temporary alliances and attempted overtures. In fact, the burgesses of Cardiff and the contributory boroughs, rather than vote for the Bute nominee, even solicited the Marquis of Bute:

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[439] It is possible that this error was due to the fact that Lewis was considered to be more of a Cardiff townsman than a country gentleman. Moreover, Lewis might have been taken for granted as the Bute nominee because his estate was just outside Cardiff, bordering on Bute's mineral interests. In addition, Lewis was believed to have business aspirations in relation to Bute's scheme of dock construction at Cardiff.

[440] R.D.Rees, "Glamorgan Newspapers Under the Stamp Acts", *Morgannwg*, VIII (1969), 70-1. The political friendship between Bute and Beaufort rested upon more than just preserving the structure of traditional borough politics. Not only were they two of the largest landowners in the county, but much of their income was derived from mineral rents and dock facilities. It can be assumed, therefore, that Ludlow was supposed to represent the greatest economic forces in the county. In fact, as later political developments in the county would reveal, the Lord of Cardiff Castle was very much the anticipated ally of the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop as well.

> Lord James Stuart having declined coming forward as a candidate for the Boroughs, the Duke of Beaufort joining with the Marquis to introduce and support Mr. Ludlow, the Inhabitants of the Town resolving not to Submit to a Stranger, have invited Lord James to come forward, pronouncing him their Support against all other interests.[441]

According to the correspondance of the Dowlais Iron Company, it appears that the ironmasters played an important role in borough electioneering. The increased export of coal, iron and tinplate was manna to the Lord of Cardiff Castle due to his extensive mineral lands in the north of the county and along the banks of the Taff River. Moreover, Bute was eager to develop his urban land in Cardiff and embark upon a scheme of dock construction.[442]

The Marquis of Bute's active interference in borough politics during the election of 1826 resulted in the speedy exit of Wyndham Lewis of Greenmeadow. Lewis canvassed vigorously against Bute in the years 1825 and 1826 with the absolute support of the Wood coterie, but he was powerless against the combined might of the large landowners and industrialists whose interests were simply too vast to oppose with any degree of success. In fact, Lord James Stuart had the support of the westerners as well during the election campaign. C.R.M.Talbot of

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[441] William Wood to Josiah John Guest, Cardiff, 3 March 1820 in Dowlais Iron Company Letters, ed. Madelaine Elsas, p.225.

[442] Ibid., p.224.

Margam, Lord of the boroughs of Kenfig and Margam, as rotten as any in existence, guaranteed Bute the full support of the burgesses. Lewis wisely withdrew from the contest before the poll.[443] Lord James Stuart had little difficulty in holding his borough seat in the uncontested borough election of 1830. Once again C.R.M.Talbot came to his aid. Talbot created seventy-five burgesses out of his tenants and dependents in order to ensure the success of his favourite candidate.[444] Solicitations between Lord James Stuart and the industrial elite, especially that of the Northern Outcrop, were a crucial factor in Glamorgan politics. In a sense, coal, iron, mineral leases and concessions kept alive the old Herbert interest in the county, but this interest was commercial and industrial down to its very roots. The crux of Glamorgan's political life in the nineteenth century was deeply implanted in the county's industrial potential. In fact, during the borough election of 1830 the Lord of Cardiff Castle and the industrial clique of the Northern Outcrop acted in concert. As early as 1816 Bute was being solicited when there were threats of a new tax being placed on the sale

[443] R.D.Rees, "Glamorgan Newspapers Under the Stamp Acts", Morgannwg, VIII (1969), 71-2.

[444] Hilary M. Thomas, "Margam Estate Management, 1760-1860", Glamorgan Historian, VI (1969), 25-6.

of iron.[445]

The Reform Bill of 1832 as applied to South Wales was a victory for the industrial and commercial classes of Glamorgan. According to the Reform Act, the county of Glamorgan was to be given one additional member. The new parliamentary borough of Merthyr Tudful was created, but with its own representative. In addition, a new shire town was created, Swansea. Although the Cardiff and Swansea groups of boroughs were still contributory, the arrangement was entirely different. The Cardiff Boroughs were reduced to Cardiff, Cowbridge and Llantrisant, while the Swansea Boroughs consisted of Swansea, Neath, Margam and Kenfig. Thus, there were two borough representatives in the county.[446] The Reform Bill of 1832 ended many of the traditional political conflicts, especially in relation to the boroughs. In effect, the ironmasters of the Northern Outcrop, the landed and commercial interests concentrated in Cardiff, and the landowner-industrialist clique of the west were all represented in the reformed House of Commons.

The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 was more

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[445] William Taitt to Nephew Josiah John Guest, London, 26 February 1816 in Dowlais Iron Company Letters, ed. Madelaine Elsas, p.213.

[446] Edward Porritt, The Unreformed House of Commons, p.104; David Williams, History of Modern Wales, p.176.

sweeping than the Reform Bill of 1832 in its political impact upon the boroughs. Instead of being merely the constable for the lord of the borough, the mayors were made the elected heads of civic administrations and subject only to the elected civic councils. The new act also extended the franchise to those who had been resident in the borough for at least three years and who paid a minimum rental of £10. In addition, the elector had to pay both borough and poor rates.[447] The new franchise did not penetrate to the lower orders of the community, and the substantial property qualifications necessary for the offices of councilor and alderman limited those positions to the wealthier sections of the community. The electorates, however, increased considerably in number. For example, the population of Swansea increased from 13,000 in 1831 to 16,000 in 1839, while its electorate increased from a mere 104 in 1831 to a total of 747 in 1839.[448] By contrast, the new county franchise did not result in a massive expansion of the county electorate. Throughout the whole of Wales there were few copyholders and a scarcity of farms over £50 in value, conditions which, under the new legislation, would enable qualifying

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[447] William Rees, Cardiff, pp. 255, 258.

[448] Glyn Roberts, Aspects of Welsh History, pp. 138-9.

individuals to vote at elections.[449] To sum, the reform of parliament resulted in a clarification of various interest groups in relation to representation, but did not give rise to a more democratic electoral system.

The Reform Bill of 1832 raised the parliamentary representation of Glamorgan from two to five. The county seats were represented by Lewis Weston Dillwyn and C.R.M. Talbot of Margam, the first a traditional anti-Bute candidate and the latter a supporter of Cardiff Castle. John Vivian, the copper magnate, represented the Swansea Boroughs and John Nicholl, a wealthy Cardiff businessman, sat for the Cardiff Boroughs. The most spectacular entry into the new reformed parliament was Josiah John Guest, the "radical" ironmaster who was the first parliamentary representative of the new borough of Merthyr Tudful.[450]

Traditional political values, family ties and inherited estates of ancient name were of little consequence after 1832. The domination of political life by the ownership of land had diminished, largely due to the fact that the largest of the county's landowners were now

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[449] David Williams, History of Modern Wales, p.176; Thomas Evans, Background of Modern Welsh Politics, p.95.

[450] W.R. Williams, Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales, pp.102,110,112.

solidly associated with commercial and industrial activities. Land and industry did not represent bones of political contention *per se*, but were the volatile ingredients of new and conflicting political interest groups. The only occurrence of popular politics during this period emanated from the new borough of Merthyr Tudful where the magic of the word "reform" plunged the town into the depths of violence, destruction and repression.

Chapter XIV

Conditions of the Labouring Classes

In the period under study the labouring classes of Glamorgan underwent a rapid transition due to the ever-increasing momentum of industrialization. Incidence of poverty increased drastically, but poverty *per se* cannot be analysed purely in terms of prices and wages. The extension of the cash nexus, means of wage payment and hiring practices, attitudes towards poverty and methods of alleviation, and general observations concerning the quality of life will receive prime consideration. In sum, the major foci of this chapter are the structures which underlaid the conditions of the labouring classes and the economic and social relationships between employer and employee.

It was common practice for labourers and their families to work all year round at a fixed charge, without victuals, and receive certain perquisites. Some peasants could keep a cow and possess a garden and house at an agreed rate of payment, or in return for their labour. Occasionally, a farmer would carry "a stipulated quantity of fuel to the cottager's door"; in return, the cottager and his wife would work an agreed upon number of days. Prices and wages were fairly stable and weekly rents were equivalent to a day's wages. Around the period of the Seven Year's War wages experienced a high rate of increase, but they failed to keep

pace with an even greater rise in prices.[451] Many Glamorgan examples give substance to this argument. According to Thomas Morgan of Rhymney, who wrote in the early seventeen-thirties, the ordinary agricultural labourer earned 8d. a day at the beginning of the century, but an increase in the price of certain catagories of labour caused this to rise towards the middle of the century. If 8d. a day was the average wage, variations were enormous. For example, in 1732 ditching brought 1s. a day while mowing earned a mere 3d.[452] Around 1750 "live-in" servants were hired at annual fairs held for that purpose. "Good, active girls" received £2.5.0 per annum, but men were paid £4.10.0; victuals were included in both instances.[453]

Wage and price estimates found in secondary sources are sketchy and do not cover a single occupation; neither do they exhaust one segment of Glamorgan over long periods of time in order to reveal an accurate picture of trends in wage and price fluctuation. It is possible, however, to arrive at tentative conclusions concerning wage and price spreads. At Llangynwyd the average wage in the seventeen-nineties ranged from 8d. to 1s. per day.[454] In the Rhondda Valleys

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[451] James Fox, General View, p.46; D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, pp.78, 147.

[452] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.145.

[453] Charles Wilkins, History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate and Other Trades of Wales, p.31.

[454] T.C.Evans, History of Llangynwyd Parish, p.30.

wages were between 1s. and 1s. 6d. per day at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but as much as 2s. for a man with a horse or two bullocks.[455] According to the Board of Agriculture Report of 1814, improvements in agriculture and competition for labour by the industrial sector of the economy pushed agricultural wages up to an average of slightly over 1s. per day, especially in vale regions. Wages also varied according to season. On "emergencies", wages rose to 15s. per week and during harvests, 2s. 6d. to 3s. or 4s. per day; victuals were usually provided on these occasions. West of the Ogwr wages were more constant, averaging 10s. per week all year round, but conditions appear to have been slightly better as wages were usually supplemented by perquisites and additional payment in kind. It was common in West Glamorgan to sell wheat to the labourers at 8s. a bushel which, by comparison with the market price, raised wages to about 13s. per week.[456] In effect, kind, perquisites and local custom perhaps gave a greater degree of security to the labouring classes.

The first decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a considerable rise in agricultural wages. High wages and labour shortages in the industrial sector of the economy promoted emmigration from agricultural areas and farmers

[455] E.D. Lewis, The Rhondda Valleys, p.24.
[456] Walter Davies, General View, II, 285.

were forced to pay higher wages in order to remain competitive in the labour market. The increase in the price of labour caused many farmers to dispense with payment in kind and perquisites as an economy measure, especially in the vale regions.

Outdoor servant's wages rose from £5 to £7 per annum by the end of the eighteenth century, but stood as high as £14 in 1814. Some servants who owned a wagon earned as much as £20 a year, but were without food, lodging and the right to wash at the farmer's house. West of the Ogwr the price for reaping remained fairly stable at 8s. a week with two meals and beer each day, but wages in the Vale of Glamorgan rose considerably. In the mid-eighteenth century wheat was hand-reaped for 2s. 6d. an acre with dinner each day. This increased to 5s. and 6s. per day with full victuals, but by 1814 the price ranged between 8s. and 10s. per acre with beer only, including stacking and binding into sheaves.[457] In the upland and dispersed regions of the county payment in kind and perquisites remained for a longer period of time, even after the first shocks of the Industrial Revolution. In the Rhonddas wages averaged 1s. 6d. a day at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but this rose to 3s., or 4s. a day with a horse and cart, by the eighteen-forties. Farm servant's wages increased from £10 a year with keep to £15 with keep during the same period of

[457] Walter Davies, General View, II, 289, 285.

time. In this region of Glamorgan the labourer's position was generally enhanced as he was usually a cottager and smallholder concurrent with his farm labour.[458]

Higher wages did not necessarily mean a better standard of living. In 1796,at a time when wages averaged between 1s. and 1s. 6d. per day,James Fox compiled the following price chart for basic provisions:

Prices per bushel of 10 gallons:
wheat - 7s. to 9s. 6d.
barley - 3s. 6d. to 4s.
oats - 2s. to 3s.
Prices per pound:
beef - 3d. to 6d.
mutton - 3d. to 5d.
bacon - 3d. to 5d.
cheese - 4d. to 5d.
butter - 6d. to 10d.[459]

If between 10s. and 15s. represented the average increase in wages before the rapid rise following the Napoleonic Wars, price inflation caused severe strain on the labouring classes. Excluding periodic upsurges in price during spells of intense depression,wheat rose in price from 13s. 4d. a bushel in 1800 to 15s. 10d. in 1812,representing an increase of about 10% within the space of sixteen years. As 1800 was a year of intense depression,high prices,grain shortages and unemployment,it is possible to conclude that basic foods consumed most of the working men's wages.[460] From the above observations,one can conclude that kind and perquisites

[458] E.D.Lewis,The Rhondda Valleys,pp.24-5.

[459] James Fox,General View,pp.46,50.

[460] E.J.Jones,Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales,pp.101-2.

provided labourers with security in relation to essential amenities. The pure cash nexus increased the susceptibility of the labouring classes to the vagaries of economic fluctuations.

In the eighteenth century the industrial labour force was not entirely divorced from a semi-rural environment. It was the era of heavy industrialization and the mammoth integrated mining and smelting concerns which in the course of the nineteenth century brought about the absolute predominance of the cash nexus and the disappearance of the part-time or casual labourer. But earlier, when mining and smelting enterprises were included as part of estate management, it was common to run farms, collieries and smelters as part of the same operation, thus ensuring a cheap and plentiful supply of food. This was particularly true of West Glamorgan. For example, on the Margam estates, many poorly-paid labourers were part-time farmers and the skilled workmen earned as much as 10s. per week over the 5s. for the unskilled. There were numerous instances of tenants working coal on their farms. Some tenants worked in partnership with the landowner, giving rise to the standard custom of paying miners when the coal was sold instead of immediately after cutting. It was normal for permanently employed labourers in the smelting industry to be paid by the ton. At the Aberavon forge in 1725 refiners earned 10s. a ton, but the hammermen 9s. Standard mining wages in West Glamorgan were 9s. 6d. a day for levelkeepers, from 8d. to 10d. a day for

casual labourers and from 10d. to 12d. a day for cutters and hewers.[461]

With the exception of the non-ferrous metallurgical industry,where men were employed on a regular basis,the most effective means of employing labour was to contract an entire process,or part of it,to one or more middlemen. This occurred most frequently in the early coal industry where groups of men occasionally worked through collective contracts. The single contractor could also be a small capitalist in his own right,supplying men,tools,or capital. In the coal industry the most common form of contract would engage a small entrepreneur to work an entire pit. Occasionally, capital was supplied by the owner while the contractor supplied the men and working equipment. Small entrepreneurs were often farmers who sought mining employment in the winter months as an adjunct to their agricultural activities. Many of the workmen not only possessed smallholdings or gardens,but received ale and occasional food for special work. All obtained fuel free or well below the regular market price.[462]

Work in industry was usually done by the "piece." At the Mackworth enterprises piece rates dominated all levels of employment. Some of the men's wages were paid to them

[461] A.H.John,"Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate, 1700-1740",Economic History Review,Series I,XIII (1943), 101-3.

[462] A.H.John,Industrial Development of South Wales, pp.75-7,86.

each week,but a "clear pay",or the remaining total of their wages,was paid every six weeks. Lack of currency was partially responsible for this method of wage payment. Mackworth contracted all forms of industrial labour. A skilled or unskilled man was generally contracted for the period of one year,but if he possessed peculiar skills the duration of his contract was considerably longer.[463]

Collective contracts made it easier for the entrepreneurs to exert control over large numbers of men burrowing in scattered mines,or pursuing a variety of crafts and trades in many furnaces and forges at the same time. Moreover,payment by the piece was a boon to production in a region short of adequate labour,and perquisites were a necessity due to a lack of liquid capital and credit facilities. Collective and individual contracts waned with the advent of the large integrated mining and smelting concerns and the concentration of industry in one specific area. The emergence of the integrated concern with large numbers of full-time employees encouraged the birth of a class of men who acted as bridges between the capitalists and the labourers. Especially in the coal industry the generally detested "masters of levels",or "butties",came into being. They were similiar in status to managers or foremen in the contemporary sense,but could also act as sub-contractors. In general,they were

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[463] D.J.Davies,Economic History of South Wales,pp. 89,150.

solely responsible for hiring and firing,wages and the conditions of labour.[464]

Industrial wages,due to variations in piece rates and general wages,are difficult to ascertain. Moreover,they varied according to trade,region and specific company. In the seventeen-nineties a collier's wage at Llangynwyd was 12s. per week. A carter and a winchman earned 5s. and 9s. respectively.[465] Industrial wages,like those in agriculture, appear to have risen sharply during the period of the Napoleonic and French Revolutionary Wars. Walter Davies calculated the average price paid to colliers for cutting and binding coal ranged from 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. per ton in 1814,which they earned "according to taste and luck." This amounted to 3s. or as high as 7s. a day,or £4 to £9 per month.[466] This rise in wages cannot,however,be taken out of the context of price inflation. At a time when the miner's wages averaged 12s. per week the following household items represent the strain on incomes:1s. to 2s. for a 7Lb. goose; 8s. per Lb. for salt;and flour,the main dietary item,ranged from 30s. to 35s. per bushel.[467] The spread in wages between

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[464] Ashton and Sykes,The Coal Industry of the Eighteenth Century,pp.111,113-14.

[465] T.C.Evans,History of Llangynwyd Parish,p.26.

[466] Walter Davies,General View,II,288.

[467] Charles Wilkins,History of the Iron,Steel, Tinplate and Other Trades of Wales,pp.177-8.

men, women and children was phenomenal. At the Varteg Ironworks in 1840 wages had risen to the point where the skilled men earned from 20s. to as high as 70s. per week. Boys earned between 4s. and 12s. and women grossed from 7s. to 8s. per week. At the same time agricultural labourers in the surrounding district earned between 12s. and 15s. per week.[468]

Shortages of currency, lack of credit facilities and the isolation of the iron centres in the early days of the Industrial Revolution resulted in a scarcity of household commodities and inflated prices. This was felt with particular severity in regions where the cash nexus was most fully established. For example, the 1s. per day earned by "the most energetic and skillful" at Ynysgedwyn would have been substantially offset by payment in kind, perquisites and smallholdings.[469] The 30s. a week earned by the highly-paid puddlers at the Cyfarthfa works in Merthyr during the year 1806 would be levelled by scarcity and inflated prices. In addition, the price per ton paid for puddled iron fluctuated. For example, during one recession the price was lowered by the ironmasters from 12s. to 10s. 6d. in order to maintain their usual margin of profit.[470]

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[468] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, pp. 263-4.

[469] John Henry Davies, History of Pontardawe and District, pp. 52-3.

[470] Charles Wilkins, History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate and Other Trades of Wales, pp. 68, 126-7.

In remote regions of heavily concentrated industry such as the Merthyr district,kind and perquisite appear to have been conspicuously absent from wage payment. The heavily capitalized,mammoth integrated concern did not breed the part-time farmer-miners of the early metallurgical industry in West Glamorgan or the embryonic coal industry. This region of low agricultural productivity and concentration upon animal husbandry did not develop a mixed economic structure with its characteristic pattern of dual occupation. In the Northern Outcrop recourse to the truck system was the only effective means of ensuring adequate food supplies.

In the early days of ironfounding at Merthyr the masters doubled as merchants and it was the custom to send some sheep to town each week to sell to the workmen,"a trifle above the cost." At the Dowlais Works the lack of a sufficient number of merchants and shops led to the establishment of a large shop sponsored by the ironworks. This attempt to capitalize on the dearth of a retail industry adequate to meet the needs of a growing population angered the small group of local merchants as the shop represented fifty different types of tradesmen. Their complaints were based upon unfair competition and usurping both their profits and opportunities for expansion.[471]

The truck system was established with as many variations

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[471] Charles Wilkins, History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate and Other Trades of Wales, pp. 188, 307.

as there were sponsoring companies. In 1803 the Hirwaun Company contracted with a private individual, Edward Overton. The charter read as follows:

> That all workmen, employed by the Company, should, at the request of one or more of the partners, have credit for Goods of the said Edwd. Overton and Co., not exceeding the wages they should be entitled to receive at the Hirwaun Co.'s office on the following monthly pay-day so much and such part of the wages shall be due to Edwd. Overton, but they the Hirwaun Co. not to be responsible for any sum beyond the amount of wages of such workmen.[472]

Company contracts reveal the profitable complicity of the ironmasters in the truck system. The lack of currency and adequate credit and commercial facilities is emphasized in the conditions established by the companies in their shops. At Dowlais the truck shop was managed upon much the same basis as that of Hirwaun where the workmen would receive in cash or cheque their wages, the cheques to be redeemed at the shop for goods. The workmen at one unidentified company in the Merthyr district could present their cheques at the shop and receive either cash or goods, according to choice. At another company shop the profit motive is evident as the men were paid solely by cheque and were compelled to receive goods when they discharged them at the company shop.[473]

In the absence of specific studies concerning the quality of working class life in Wales only generalizations

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[472] John Lloyd, Early History of the Old South Wales Iron Works, p.18.

[473] Ibid., p.95.

can be made at this point in time from secondary sources. Diet appears to have been fairly substantial in the agricultural regions, but there were minor variations. Beer was generally not an article of daily consumption. Even in Gower, noted for its export of high quality malting barley, milk was the everyday beverage. Barley was used extensively for bread in Gower, but in the highland regions, oatmeal and cheese were predominant.[474] In the Vale of Glamorgan wheaten bread was the major dietary item. All areas of Glamorgan reveal complaints over the increasing difficulty in the purchase of meat. On Sundays, however, labourers could afford salted beef, bacon, or mutton.[475] There appears to have been a general decline in meat consumption and a marked increase in the importance of wheaten bread in everyday diet, but especially among the growing numbers of townsmen. This notable change in eating habits sparked surprised comments from contemporaries, who believed the Welsh diet to rely heavily upon meat, cheese, milk and vegetables. Walter Davies also noted that "English custom" reduced the traditional three meal a day Welshman to two meals and having two "baits" between breakfast and supper.[476] The introduction of these "baits" was more common among the labourers and

[474] Walter Davies, General View, I, 481; Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, p.168.

[475] D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.153.

[476] Walter Davies, General View, II, 312-13.

probably reflects attempts on the part of the farmers to increase the productivity of the wage labourers. In summer the labourers in agriculture worked from six in the morning to seven or eight at night, but in winter they began work an hour later and retired one hour earlier.[477]

Alcohol presented the major social problem on the coalfields in the early nineteenth century, but there is little evidence to account for any other rampant immoralities. Yet drinking, partially due to the proportion of the workmen's wages spent on cheap rum, lay at the root of most other social problems. One of the most serious problems resulting from excessive drinking was the fighting and violence for which the coalfield was notorious.[478] But serious crimes against person or property were rare, people were on the whole respectable and houses kept remarkably clean despite the low quality of many dwellings and the presence of poverty.[479] Excessive labour for women and children was rare in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in South Wales and did not frequently occur until the eighteen-thirties. Unlike the cotton industry in the north of England, the mining and smelting industries required a great

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[477] James Fox, General View, p.46.

[478] Benjamin Heath Malkin, Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, p.80; E.T. Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, p.46.

[479] E.T. Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, p.47.

amount of physical strength. The expansion of the coal industry, however, appears to have altered the status of child labour. In north-west Glamorgan children by 1840 had begun to work in the mines as early as eight years of age.[480]

The problem of coping with poverty increased with the progress of the eighteenth century. It has been constantly assumed by historians that family ties in Wales were so strong that they prevented vagrancy and pauperism. But while it is true that the Poor Law of 1601 was little heeded and that in most regions no poor rate was raised, the above conclusions would nevertheless be ill-founded. Moreover, it has been further taken for granted that the "harsh attitude" towards the poor so prevalent in England during the eighteenth century was curiously absent in Wales.[481]

In the Vale of Glamorgan it appears that the problems of pauperism and poverty increased during the latter half of the eighteenth century. At Cowbridge in 1764 a civil parish was created for the relief of the poor and 2s. per pound was levied on all dwelling houses. The alleged lack of a "harsh attitude" was apparently disappearing as it was ordered in 1770 that all recipients of poor relief in Cowbridge were to be "badged." In 1772 the Glamorganshire Agricultural Society was formed at Cowbridge with one of its

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[480] John Henry Davies, History of Pontardawe and District, p.219.

[481] A.H.John, Industrial Development of South Wales, p.21; D.J.Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.79.

aims being to "reward the honesy industry of the labouring poor."[482] ~~Moreover,~~ in 1807 the Bridgend Woollen Factory advertised for pauper children to work according to indenture, using the lure of teaching them the "habits of thrift and industry."[483]

The question of poverty had begun to cause both the labouring classes and the elite elements of the community great concern by the end of the eighteenth century. One reaction was the foundation of friendly societies. In 1814 Walter Davies remarked that lower poor rates existed where these societies had been in operation for some time and that the highest poor rates were to be found in the areas of "extensive and uncultivated wastes." Davies also noticed that there were twenty-nine societies at Merthyr Tudful in 1811; seventeen for males and twelve for females.[484] The foundation dates of societies appears to correspond with periods of depression in the industrial centres. For example, out of eight societies in Swansea, four were founded between 1791 and 1794. During this period the county was plagued by food shortages, parish rates were stretched to the maximum and the mining and smelting industries were in the midst of a severe recession. Benefits accruing from such

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[482] John Richards, The Cowbridge Story, pp.48,41.
[483] E.J.Jones, Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales, p.96.
[484] Walter Davies, General View, II, 472, 467.

associations consisted of funeral expenses,death claims,sick pay and widow's pensions. Colliers and miners,perhaps because of their dangerous occupation and the possibility of undue strain on the society's resources,were not eligible for membership. In addition,court officers and lawyers were refused membership. Except in cases where men were forced to belong to a company club,no person could be a member of more than one society.[485]

Ratepayers,persuaded by their fears of rioting and increasing poor rates,also took action in order to alleviate poverty. For example,the farmers and landowners of the hundreds of Ogmore and Newcastle in the western portion of the Vale of Glamorgan held a meeting in 1812;they collected £1,000 immediately to buy corn for the local poor.[486]

Some methods of dealing with poverty were not as charitable and,indeed,were exploitative in nature. Around Neath a local version of the Speenhamland System was concocted. At first the members of the parish vestry suggested a vast programme of public works,but this was waived in favour of a method which would raise the value of farms and estates and allegedly increase the means of paying future parish rates. The local landowners agreed upon a programme to cultivate rough land,remake occupation roads and repair fences and ditches. Labour was recruited from the able-bodied poor.

[485] P.S.Thomas,Industrial Relations,pp.19-21.
[486] William Rees,Cardiff,p.180.

Acting under the authority of the parish vestry the Neath Committee supplied all implements,paid one-third of the cost of labour and appointed special overseers of the poor to supervise the workmen. Two-thirds of the labour costs were paid by the farmers and landowners whose lands were to be improved. Twenty per cent was paid by them in advance and the remainder was paid according to the progress of the work.[487]

Despite allegations that the disintegration of family ties under the impact of the Industrial Revolution resulted in a surfeit of poverty,I feel that alternative explanations have greater validity. In the town of Cowbridge,for example, poverty arose within a purely agricultural milieu and not in an industrial environment. The increase in population,decrease in the amount of available land and periodic bouts of depression are far more relevant than stark reversions to the belief that all of Wales was emerging from "tribalism" until the Industrial Revolution was firmly rooted. Industrialization,by removing the bulwarks of a traditional agricultural economy and pre-industrial methods of acquiring labour for small mining and smelting concerns,served to increase the insecurity of labour by the establishment of a

[487] P.S.Thomas,Industrial Relations,pp.19-21.

pure cash nexus. It was therefore the gradual introduction of the cash nexus into the agricultural as well as the industrial sectors of the economy which fostered the inordinate growth of poverty by the end of the eighteenth century.

Chapter XV

Pre-Political Social Protest

During the period under analysis Glamorganshire was plagued by a multitude of riots, demonstrations and minor insurrections. Before the Industrial Revolution there were occasional outbreaks of social unrest as bad harvests and poor communications often resulted in local famine. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, incidents of collective behaviour occurred with alarming frequency. Many of these outbreaks were isolated, but others were indicative of widespread discontent. Few incidents reveal any evidence of political or ideological overtones; indeed, the rioters and strikers can be best described as being outside the political nation and they indulged in collective action in order to air grievances and seek redress for immediate ills. It is my purpose here to analyse the causes of collective behaviour, the character of protests, the participants, the means of quelling social unrest and the policy of the industrialists towards their workmen.

The intensity of social protest varied according to economic fluctuations. This is illustrated by the spate of disturbances which occurred between the years 1793 and 1801, an era which witnessed the first general outbreak of the working classes in Wales. These were years of acute depression, scarcity of provisions, instability of wages, inflation and bad harvests.

The increasing domination of the workmen's diet by

bread had severe repercussions during the period from 1793 to 1801. Poor harvests occurred between 1794 and 1796 and by the summer of 1795, the shortage of corn was so acute that imports were necessary. The price of corn reached a peak in August of 1795 when it was double that of the previous September. This trend continued until 1796 when the price fell to the level of 1793, but prices remained fairly stable between 1796 and 1799. Between the summer of 1800 and the spring of 1801 prices increased to a level never reached during the course of the eighteenth century, representing a 100% rise in the price of basic provisions, especially corn. Despite the fact that the harvest of 1800 was fair, there was simply not enough wheat or barley to feed the inhabitants of Glamorgan. Moreover, wages remained the same as they were in the pre-depression period.[488] In 1793, a year of comparatively low prices, the copper workers of Swansea were already spending 48% of their incomes on corn alone. Moreover, in 1801, when wages in the industrial regions averaged 12s. per week, flour cost between 30s. and 35s. a bushel and salt, 8d. to 9d. a pound.[489]

The riots in the Swansea district during the depressed period between 1793 and 1801 were propagated by agricultural

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[488] David J.V. Jones, "The Corn Riots in Wales, 1793-1801", _Welsh History Review_, II (1964-5), 324-5.

[489] E.J. Jones, _Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales_, p.101; David J.V. Jones, "The Corn Riots in Wales, 1793-1801", _Welsh History Review_, II (1964-5), 324-5.

labourers and industrial workers,united in opposition to high prices and low wages. In 1793 frequent demonstrations of hundreds of people occurred in or near the town in which corn was demanded and pamphlets were circulated threatening reprisals upon those who cheated the poor. The copper workers issued the following proclamation:

> ...the advance upon Corn Cheese Butter Shoes and every article for our sustenance is Two Thirds dearer than what it was some years back when wages were equal to what it was at this period.[490]

But warnings and petitions went unheeded. On the 2nd of February 1793,market day,a march to Swansea from the surrounding countryside was staged. A large crowd,bolstered by the coppermen from nearby Llangyfelach,terrified farmers, merchants and maltsters in a frantic search for grain. On their way to town they raided farmhouses and took several farmers as hostages. Troops were dispatched to Swansea and the movement petered out. Although women were the most active participants in the early stages of these disturbances,demonstrations and public meetings rapidly deteriorated into full-scale rioting. After the reading of the Riot Act went unheeded,troops were sent to restore order. Further military assistance had to be dispatched from Cardiff before the riots were quelled.[491]

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[490] David J.V.Jones,"The Corn Riots in Wales,1793-1801",Welsh History Review,II (1964-5),327,324.

[491] Ibid.,327-8,345,335.

The most organized and successful element of the working classes in West Glamorgan were the men involved in the copper industry. In the first half of the eighteenth century the ironworkers of Neath, bolstered by the more numerous coalminers, formed a temporary combination in order to force their wage demands upon Sir Edward Mansell. But during the same period the coppermen of Neath were fighting their employers in Chancery Court.[492] Although there is no evidence of any permanent organization among the workmen, it appears that the copper workers of West Glamorgan were quite adept in acheiving their wage demands. For example, at the Mines Royal Works in Neath, the workmen struck for an extra 6d. a day in 1795, raising their wages to 16s. per week over the previous 13s. In Swansea, the men from six smelting works belonging to the Birmingham Copper Company united in 1798 in order to acheive the same wage demands.[493]

The most serious disturbances of this period took place in the industrial sector of north Glamorgan and concentrated in the town of Merthyr Tudful. All but two furnaces were stopped between Pontypool in Monmouth and the Vale of Neath by roving bands of workmen. It was their policy to demand that the furnace be blown out, but if their request was

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[492] A.H. John, "Iron and Coal on a Glamorgan Estate, 1700-1740", <u>Economic History Review</u>, XIII, 1st series (1943), 103.

[493] A.H. John, <u>Industrial Development of South Wales</u>, p.88; Henry Hamilton, <u>The English Copper and Brass Industries to 1800</u>, pp.315, 325.

refused, they cut the leather bellows.[494] Attacks upon the truck shops were commonplace, but the truck system *per se* aroused little opposition. These attacks resulted largely due to the fact that the men discovered that their company tickets or cheques had declined so much in value that they were almost useless. Moreover, not enough goods were available in the shops due to the severe food shortage. This can be considered a major factor concerning the pattern of protest in the Merthyr riots of 1800-1801; they were essentially *taxation populaire* outbreaks in which shops were sacked and goods were distributed among the workmen according to individual needs.[495]

Despite the fact that the riots of 1800-1801 were basically traditional peasant riots having the air of popular justice and the "just society", they generated great fear among the ranks of the industrial capitalist elite of the coalfield:

> The riot is now at such a height that it will be impossible to quell it without the Assistance of the Military - Morgan Lewis' Shop is totally demolished, the goods taken and carried away - and what will be the end nobody knows - immediate assistance must be had - I fancy 200 people are at present doing all the Mischief they can - Morgan Lewis' shop is not the only one destroyed -

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[494] E.J. Jones, *Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales*, p.101; Charles Wilkins, *History of the Iron, Steel, Tinplate and Other Trades of Wales*, p.177.

[495] Ness Edwards, *The History of the South Wales Coal Miners* (London: Labour Publishing Co. Ltd., 1926), pp.2-3.

> They have stopped everything at Cyfarthfa and Penydarren but the Furnaces.[496]

The fears of the ironmasters, however, were mostly unwarrented as the heat of popular anger was directed mainly against bakers, shopkeepers and the "petty merchants" of Merthyr. In fact, the town's middle class merchants were forced to come to terms with the workmen and agreed to a temporary price regulation.[497]

Much of the violence of Merthyr was propagated by the fact that both the civil and military powers were impotent during the early stages of rioting. The town therefore became a vacuum in which workmen from nearby industrial establishments rushed to join their fellows in Merthyr. In one day of uncontrolled rioting property damage was estimated to have run into thousands of pounds. Eventually, troops were dispatched to Merthyr from Cardiff and after a few brief skirmishes with the workmen, the imposition of a curfew and the taking of fifty prisoners, the riots were quelled.[498] Aaron Williams, a labourer, and Samuel Hill, collier, both of great importance during the riots as leaders, were sent to Cardiff and hanged; another workman was transported to Australia.[499]

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[496] David J.V. Jones, "The Corn Riots in Wales, 1793-1801", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 333.

[497] Ibid., 332.

[498] Ibid., 332.

[499] John Lloyd, Early History of the Old South Wales Iron Works, p.96.

Despite murmurings of impending insurrection,occasional appearances of "inflammatory tracts" on the coalfield and a mysterious visit of John Thelwall to Merthyr in 1800,there was more fright than danger. At Swansea in 1793 the corn rioters reminded their employers what the French workmen had done to their counterparts;at Neath one Soloman Lyons was bold enough to say that he would fight against the king; John Griffith of Neath publically stated that there were thousands of men who held the same views as he in opposition to the king and the activities of the press gangs.[500] Fear, rumours and bold assertions upon the part of a handful of verbose individuals do not indicate strong ideological committments within the ranks of the working classes. It is possible that some local leaders were familiar with radical views and current events,but they instilled much less fervour into the common man than the price of bread and flour.

The majority of riots and demonstrations between the years 1793 and 1801 were not characterized by damage to person or property. Most of the demonstrations were orderly and limited,especially in West Glamorgan. In fact,the public authorities of Swansea were appealed to before the initial demonstration of 1793,and the town itself experienced little looting or property damage. As the disturbances during this

[500] William Rees, Cardiff, p.179.

period were essentially corn riots,unrest related to industrial disputes and demonstrations against the capitalist elite were rare. The major targets of the rioters were farmers,maltsters,bakers,"petty merchants" and the truck shops. All incidents of social protest were marked by such actions as demands for a reduction in the price of food and seizures of pack trains or ships believed to be involved in the export or hoarding of grain.[501]

The most active participants in the Swansea riots were artisans,village craftsmen and small rural property owners. Colliers and skilled industrial workers,however,appear to have supplied the bulk of the leadership. For example,in the hunger march from Llangyfelach to Swansea in 1793 the rioters were led by Llewelin Llewelin,a collier,and by Thomas David and William Thomas,coppermen.[502] It appears that the coppermen were the propagators of social unrest, but they were bolstered in their action by the more numerous colliers. In 1793 evidence points to the possibility that the coppermen and colliers from Llangyfelach were successful in drawing artisans and village craftsmen into their wake as they progressed towards Swansea.

Despite the fact that demands were made by the workmen for higher wages and changes in the structure of wage payment in both Swansea and Merthyr Tudful,the riots of this

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[501]David J.V.Jones,"The Corn Riots in Wales,1793-1801",<u>Welsh History Review</u>,II (1964-5),336-42.

[502]<u>Ibid.</u>,336-42.

period were not caused by conflicts between capital and labour. These disturbances were basically confrontations between supplier and consumer due to high prices and the scarcity of food and household necessities.[503] The only strike activity which was organized occurred in the copper industry of West Glamorgan and during years not characterized by major outbreaks of social unrest. Even in the violent action of Merthyr price inflation was the major issue and there is little evidence of a strong organization within the ranks of the workmen.

All riots of the period 1793-1801 appear to have been marked by spontaneity and caused by widespread discontent. There was little organization, despite the belief by many contemporaries that doom had come upon them. The major problem for the authorities was posed by the fact that there were a large number of disturbances occurring at approximately the same time along with a spate of concurrent meetings and demonstrations. It was believed by the upper classes, however, that there was a concerted plan of action. Such was the case when the ironmaster, Samuel Homfray, wrote to the military commander at Cardiff, Lieutenant-General Rooke, in 1800:

> ...meetings have been held by the men at difft. places, that it is a deliberate and a full determination

[503] David J.V.Jones,"The Corn Riots in Wales,1793-1801",Welsh History Review,II (1964-5),336.

to lower the price of provisions.[504]

The major period of social unrest following 1801 occurred between 1810 and 1816. Unlike the widespread corn riots between 1793 and 1801, these disturbances were mainly limited to the Merthyr district. During these years the full consequences of a staple economy in the throes of depression were felt on the coalfield by ironmaster and workman alike. The actions of the ironmasters to foster their industrial interests and maintain a healthy margin of profit coincided with the wage demands of the workmen in a period of acute price inflation and scarcity of provisions. In effect, the corn riot of the eighteenth century was fading into the background as conflicts between labour and capital intensified.

It appears that labour combinations were becoming increasingly more common in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The most persistent policy of the ironmasters was the never-ceasing ferreting out of all combines, whether real or imaginary. Combination Acts were vigorously enforced. For example, at the Grove and Company Ropeworks in Swansea, five ropeworkers were committed to the Cardiff Gaol for a period of three months in 1806 under the Combination Acts. They were gaoled for conspiring to raise wages.[505]

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[504] David J.V. Jones, "The Corn Riots in Wales, 1793-1801", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 336-42.

[505] E.J. Jones, "Scotch Cattle and Early Trade Unionism in Wales", Economic History, I (1928), 209-10; P.S. Thomas, Industrial Relations, pp. 17-18.

The price of puddled iron was a barometer of social protest on the Northern Outcrop. In 1810 the price fell from 12s. to 10s. 6d. per ton and John Guest, owner of the works at Dowlais, gave one month's notice of a reduction in wages. During a meeting held at the Dowlais Inn one month before the expiration of the wage notices, the men decided upon strike action. After a period of five weeks, however, the men were forced by circumstance to concede to Guest's wage decree.[506] Despite the fact that the men took an oath never to work for reduced wages and brought the mighty works at Dowlais to a standstill, they began to dribble back to work after the first two weeks of strike activity. They were without a strike fund, unable to obtain food from the company owned shop and lacked an efficient and strong organization and leadership. Moreover, troops were dispatched to Merthyr immediately, thus preventing the workmen from using violence in order to acheive their goals. Discontent evaporated with a slight improvement in the iron market and restoration of the old rate of wages.[507]

The coalfield was comparatively quiet until 1813 when the puddlers at Dowlais took what has been described as a "Luddite" oath. They were later joined by their fellows at

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[506] E.J.Jones, Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales, p.102; Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, p.4.

[507] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, pp.4-5.

Cyfarthfa. This movement was successfully crushed by the ironmasters through the implementation of coercive measures. In addition to wage reductions, dismissal and imprisonment in the Cardiff Gaol under the Combination Acts, the ironmasters took full advantage of a temporary recession in the iron trade. William Crawshay II took the lead from his father in London who suggested that he "persevere with the puddlers until they agree that their Luddite oath is more honoured in the breach than the observance." He recommended the importation of puddlers from Staffordshire and elsewhere who were unemployed and would agree to work for lower wages.[508] This threat completely destroyed any attempts at strike action.[509]

In 1816 Merthyr Tudful was the scene of the first large-scale strike ever to occur in South Wales, and it was marked by an orgy of violence and destruction. By early autumn of that year the coalfields were reeling from the worse depression since the winter of 1800-1801. Despite the plight of the workmen the ironmasters continued their policies of coercion in order to eliminate any attempt at

[508] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p.249.

[509] There is no evidence that the workmen were in any way associated with Luddites elsewhere. ~~In fact, there were~~ no incidents of machine breaking on the coalfields, only periodic cutting of bellows in order to force furnaces to close and draw non-strikers into active participation. Moreover, mechanization of industry was never a cause of unemployment and the introduction of new machinery in the mining and smelting industries was minimal.

combinations and maintained their indexation of wages to the price of puddled iron on the open market. Moreover, the highly competitive nature of the British iron industry can be considered a major cause of the riots and strikes of 1816; this factor dominated the actions taken by the ironmasters.

The strike of 1816 was initiated by the Cyfarthfa puddlers when they petitioned for an advance in wages in order to aid them during the impending winter depression. Not only were they refused, but they were also forced to suffer a reduction in wages. The wage reduction resulted as part of a concerted effort by the capitalists of the Merthyr district to destroy their competitors in the iron trade, especially the Staffordshire ironmasters. Large stocks of iron and massive resources would therefore enable the Merthyr ironmasters to survive the depression and capture the markets vacated by the less favourably disposed Staffordshire capitalists. Reduction in wage payments would compensate for the cut in the market price of iron and aid in the retention of a fairly healthy margin of profit.[510]

The strike of 1816 was characterized by the usual raids on the truck shops and small merchants of Merthyr. Taxation outbreaks were marked by spontaneity and appear to have been the result of a general consensus concerning depressed

[510] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p.269; Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, pp.6-7.

conditions rather than the policy of a genuine workmen's organization. The wage dispute, however, did create a temporary but flimsy organization among the workmen, apparently led by a handful of puddlers. Most of the ironworks in South Wales followed the lead of the Cyfarthfa puddlers, and Merthyr developed into the centre of discontent for the entire region. A note from the Times of 20 October 1816 describes part of the action, when the workmen from Sirhowy and Tredegar in nearby Monmouthshire marched to Merthyr in order to join their fellows:

> ...they left the works and proceeded in a body towards Merthyr, with a view of learning the inclination of the men there. The proprietor of Dowlais Works, knowing their coming, instantly swore in a number of special constables, armed them with pikes, and placed them in the pass adjoining the works, near the dwelling of Mr. Guest...the men...finding themselves opposed by an armed force, seized some of the pikes from the special constables and broke them in pieces. The constables fled, but during this, some person in the house fired and wounded several, some severely, one of whom has since died...The men, however, proceeded to the works, stopped the blast at the furnaces, and, being joined by many others, went to Penydarren and Merthyr, and remained there all night...The military that came to Newport (Monmouthshire)...went forward to Merthyr...but no violence has been offered on either side...at a late hour last night the men were still assembled in different places, 300 to 500 and more together.[511]

[511] Ness Edwards, History of the South Wales Miners, pp.8-9.

The tenacity of the workmen caused a great deal of consternation within the ranks of the industrialists as the strike spread throughout the entire region:

> The enemy is in too great strength to oppose with any probability of success, have possessed themselves of all their works and wholly stopped them. They are yet exhalted in that they are about to proceed to Penydarren and Dowlais. My spies tell me they threaten hard your shop for they are hungry.[512]

The Merthyr riots of 1816 reached a climax on Saturday, 19 October. A crowd of between eight to ten thousand men faced the ironmasters outside the Castle Inn where they presented a series of wage demands. Their demands were rejected, but the presence of regular soldiers prevented further rioting and violence. They returned to work the following week. In the spring there was a marked improvement in the iron market and the depression gradually disappeared. Murmurings of labour unrest dissipated and the men were granted their original wages.[513]

Despite the fact that many aspects of the traditional food riot still remained an important element in collective behaviour, the pattern of protest in South Wales was being transformed by the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the intense depression which followed. Economic depression

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[512] Alan Birch, Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry, p.269.

[513] David J.V.Jones, "The Merthyr Riots of 1816", Welsh History Review, III (1966-7), 174.

certainly cannot be waived as an active force in precipitating social protest during these years,but in 1816 the workmen made a determined effort to raise their wages and improve conditions of labour.

If the labour force of the coalfield was in an embryonic stage of trade unionism,the ironmasters,on the other hand,appear to have been united and constructed an elaborate set of methods to deal with malcontents. Existing laws and the structure of local administration provided strong coercive mechanisms. A common occurrence was the gaoling of individuals under the Combination Acts who were believed to be involved in stirring up their fellow workers:

> I shall not wonder at more combinations of the kind you mention...you must act with firmness,'tis the worst of that hitherto in the manager which has made the men so unruly. I advise your going to Mr. Homfray or Mr. Crawshay and get them to committ to Bridewell 2 or 3 of the Ring Leaders...they may afterwards be indicted for the conspiring notwithstanding the Committment.[514]

With the ironmasters in full command of the magistracy it was an easy task to close offensive mouths. After the strike of 1816 and the restoration of wages,the men discovered that prices were still out of proportion to their wages. Most workmen,especially if they were married and had children, had to apply for parish relief in order to supplement their

[514] William Taitt to Thomas Guest,Cardiff 3 February,1799 in Dowlais Iron Company Letters,ed.Madelaine Elsas,p.66.

incomes. As the local magistrates had the power to return relief applicants to the parishes of their birth,and a large proportion of the labour force were migrants from other regions,the ironmasters therefore possessed a legal form of deportation from the coalfields to wield against verbose ringleaders.[515] Another method of getting rid of trouble-makers was "blacklisting." This was widely followed through a sort of gentleman's agreement:

> In consequence of a disagreement with some of our Puddlers we are aprehensive that the following Men or some of them may leave the place and in that place probably apply to you for work. Should they make this application we hope that you will not employ them,the dispute such as materially concerns every ironmaster in the country.[516]

Occasionally,action was taken against a specific section of the labour force,especially if they were prone to discontent. The colliers provide an excellent example as they were numerous and usually willing to participate in strikes and riots:

> I am sorry to have had so bad an account of the Colliers. Bedlington must take two or three of them before a magistrate & punish them by <u>committal</u> for Neglecting their work. Our works consume a regular daily quantity of material & there is no good reason why the supply should not be regular & the Colliers work in as regular a manner as Puddlers or any other class

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[515] Ness Edwards,<u>History of the South Wales Miners</u>, pp.9-10.

[516] William Wood to Thomas Guest,Penydarren Ironworks, 20 September 1823 in <u>Dowlais Iron Company Letters</u>,ed. Madelaine Elsas,p.66.

of men.[517]

The structure of the labour force and methods of wage payment bear a direct relationship to labour unrest. Cuts in piece rates and wages by the ironmasters affected the skilled workmen most of all. The puddlers,the most active members of the labour force,provide the barometer of protest during the period when the iron industry dominated the coalfields. In fact,the puddler's piece rate provided the guide for wages. Reduction in the price of iron in order to weather the storms of depression and eliminate competition from other iron centres inevitably meant a cut in the piece rate paid per ton to the workmen. This policy directly associated all wages with the market price of iron,which was in a state of constant flux throughout the entire period. It is therefore not surprising that the puddlers were usually the precipitators of strike action,but cuts in their piece rate signalled reductions in other trades.[518]

Despite the numerical superiority of miners and labourers,the skilled workmen were the most active in precipitating incidents of collective behaviour. In fact,the puddlers,furnacemen and rollermen played the most important role in the disturbances of 1810,1813 and 1816. The hauliers

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[517] Josiah John Guest to James Wise,London 26 May, 1816 in Dowlais Iron Company Letters,ed. Madeleine Elsas,p.24.

[518] Alan Birch,Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry,p.263;David J.V.Jones,"The Merthyr Riots of 1831",Welsh History Review,III (1966-7),199.

also provided many leaders of the early labour movement. They have been dubbed the "sans-culottes" of South Wales and filled the place of the "radical shoemakers" of England. The hauliers were the only workmen paid regularly by the day and often owned all or part of their equipment. As small property owners, they were notorious in demanding protection against seizure of their goods for debt or being forced to dispose of their equipment.[519]

The labourers in the coal industry proved a ready army to be placed under the leadership of the skilled workmen from the ironworks. There were three basic subdivisions; masters-of-levels, master colliers and common labourers. Many of the labourers were migratory, even vagrant, during the early years of the Industrial Revolution. Promises of high wages were used to attract men to the industry, but the custom of hiring men for either short or long contracts of low prices had serious repercussions during periods of economic distress. In effect, the men were caught by their own signatures and the coalowners would always take action against strikers or rioters by suing for breach of contract. As the masters-of-levels were usually responsible for wages and contracts, they were often the focus of violence for the workmen. In addition to the contract system of hiring, the

[519] David J.V. Jones, "The Merthyr Riots of 1831", Welsh History Review, III (1966-7), 199; Gwyn A. Williams, "The Merthyr of Dic Pendyern" in Merthyr Politics, ed. Glanmor Williams, p. 17.

seasonal demand for coal placed miners and colliers in a fragile position. During winter and early spring, in spite of their contracts, they could be shut out for as long as four months while available stocks were being sold. It was impossible for the men to compensate for this loss during the work season.[520]

Due to the depression which followed the Napoleonic Wars, unemployment in other iron centres and immigration to the South Wales Coalfield presented a ready weapon to be used against discontented workmen. With the influx of wage-cutting Irish the Welsh workmen were quick to retaliate and formed wandering squads. These squads were successful in frightening the Irish from the mines and mills through the use of fists, picks and shovels.[521] At Rhymney in 1825 Irish homes were attacked and the Irish _in toto_ were forced to vacate the town. Feelings ran so high that when the manager of the ironworks attempted to read the Riot Act his treatment was little better. By 1828 all the Irish employed at the copper works in West Glamorgan were forced to leave.[522] Anti-English sentiments were also periodically expressed. The fact that most of the industrialists were Englishmen occasionally brought traditional antipathies to the surface,

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[520] David J.V. Jones, "The Scotch Cattle and Their Black Domain", _Welsh History Review_, V (1970-1), 99.

[521] Ness Edwards, _History of the South Wales Miners_, pp.5-6.

[522] E.W. Evans, _The Miners of South Wales_ (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), pp.21-2.

but most of this sentiment was directed against members of their own class. For example, hostility was expressed in 1816 when the importation of "foreign" workmen from England was employed as a method of strikebreaking.[523] Never can these sentiments be considered a precipitant of social unrest.[524] They were merely expressions of working class anger over adverse economic conditions and the policies of the industrialists.

Despite the once exhalted view that "the majority of the riots which from 1800 to 1830 convulsed the mining districts of Wales were only the batterings of the workers against the Truck System", it appears that the system itself was seldom the object of the workmen's ire.[525] Although the truck shops were sacked during periods of depression and complaints were common relating to the quality and price of the goods sold, the system _per se_ was not seriously questioned until the eighteen-thirties. In fact, one shop owned by the Dowlais Company, which lasted from 1797 to 1823, sustained a loss of £3,000 during one year of operation due to an attempt by the owners to control prices and pacify the

[523] A.H.John, _Industrial Development of South Wales_, p.62.

[524] There is no evidence whatsoever of nationalistic feelings playing a role in popular protest during this period. Occasional references to the "Dics", or Englishmen, and eviction of the Irish from the mining and smelting districts were based solely upon economic factors. Traditional sentiments, however, might have lent an air of increased anger and justification to the actions of the workmen.

[525] E.J.Jones, _Some Contributions to the Economic History of Wales_, p.107.

workmen. On one occasion,the men voted unanimously in favour of maintaining the shop.[526] It was only when the truck system was being attacked in the heat of middle class agitation and the reform movement that the workmen lent active support in favour of abolition.

The frequency of social disturbances in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was partially due to a lack of efficient law enforcement. Existing arms of law and order were created to meet the needs of an agricultural community and were not adequate in industrial Glamorgan. Difficulties in transportation at first rendered the industrial regions of north Glamorgan isolated enclaves, remote from centres of administration and justice. Cowbridge and Cardiff were the nearest assize towns and the Northern Outcrop lacked sufficient numbers of noblemen and Gentry to exercise the semi-feudal system of law enforcement. Although the ironmasters were in solid control of the magistracy in north Glamorgan,they could only act in accordance with the dictates of the Lord Lieutenant at Cardiff Castle. Moreover, the antiquated machinery of local government left the in-industrial regions with little or no police protection. For example,in 1827 the entire Merthyr district,containing a population of 30,000 souls,possessed only two Justices of the Peace,despite the town's reputation for rioting and

[526] E.W.Evans, The Miners of South Wales, p.11.

violence.[527]

The practical administration of justice was impossible during periods of social unrest as cooperation from the general public was an absolute necessity for the restoration of order. Even the ancient custom of the posse commitatus, or the posse, was a mere testimony of juridicial impotence. For example, during the riots at Bridgend in 1795 the civil power was rendered useless "as those employed as constables rather lean to the country people." Samuel Homfray, the iron-master, informed Leiutenant-General Rooke at Cardiff that the Glamorganshire Militia "would be of little service as there are a great many Merthyr people amongst them."[528]

The effective use of constables was extremely difficult. Constables usually took the blame for failing to quell social discontent and were liable to face charges. For example, in 1827 several Glamorgan constables were fined 5s. for not executing a magistrate's warrant. The constables were also reluctant to perform their duties against friends or those individuals who enlisted popular support during protests. It was common practice for rioters to single out constables for punishment. During emergencies, when a quorum of five men were able to take an oath that extraordinary measures were necessary, and "specials" were needed to keep

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[527] David J.V.Jones, "Law Enforcement and Popular Disturbances in Wales, 1793-1835", Journal of Modern History, IV (Dec. 1970), 496-7, 501-5.

[528] David J.V.Jones, "The Corn Riots in Wales, 1793-1801", Welsh History Review, II (1964-5), 334, 339.

the peace, it was difficult to persuade people to take the constable's oath due to the danger of being attacked and beaten.[529]

Volunteer associations were more reliable in quelling unrest as they were composed of those classes which had the most interest in eliminating social protest. During the riots of 1800 and 1801 the large farmers and town merchants filled the ranks of the yeomanry and special constables. Local patrols usually consisted of yeomen, gentlemen and "the better sort of tradesmen."[530]

Before the establishment of a modern professional police force, the selection of reliable constables was a difficult task for the authorities. It was not uncommon for the magistrates and ironmasters to use coercion in order to assure fidelity;

> The men might be taken from the upper class of workmen with safety, for they are men who, swear they never so stoutly in the Union Lodge, will always fear the loss of the little properties they have built, and most certainly dread the indignation of their employers.[531]

Local financial considerations prevented the early establishment of a professional police force. Only in 1831, when Merthyr Tudful was experiencing the most serious riots of

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[529] David J.V. Jones, "Law Enforcement and Popular Disturbances in Wales, 1793-1835", Journal of Modern History, IV (Dec. 1970), 508-12.

[530] Ibid., 507-8.

[531] Edward Lewis Richards to Josiah John Guest, London, 12 November 1831 in Dowlais Iron Company Letters, ed. Madelaine Elsas, p. 218.

the century, were London police requested to intervene. In most instances the militia were extremely untrustworthy if they were not from large towns like Cardiff and Swansea. Moreover, their length of service prevented long-term involvement in police work. The most effective peacekeepers previous to the establishment of a professional police force were regular soldiers. They were especially useful in the mountainous districts far away from the arms of the magistrates and constables, but they could only be dispatched from Cardiff during extreme emergencies.[532] The regular soldiers were responsible for quelling the great disturbances of 1800-1801, 1816 and 1831. After the great Merthyr Riots of 1831, however, most of the large industrial settlements had the nucleus of a modern professional police force.

Before the emergence of trade unions and popular political parties, strikes and riots occurred haphazardly. Only during periods of severe depression did workmen of sufficient numbers act in concert. Seldom was there any widespread effort to cope with wage disputes or working conditions. During the period when the large integrated coal and iron concerns dominated the economic life of the coalfield, it was common for strikes and protests to be limited to one concern. Moreover, the geography of the coalfield hindered the emergence of large-scale protests. The

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[532] David J.V. Jones, "Law Enforcement and Popular Disturbances in Wales, 1793-1835", Journal of Modern History, IV (Dec. 1970), 513-15, 517, 519-20.