

# Social Reactions to Economic Change

*Deian Hopkin*

The enduring image of Wales in the inter-war years is one of unremitting depression, unemployment, decline and misery, a hollow-eyed nation in permanent procession to the Soup Kitchen. It is an image reinforced by the most effective literature of the period and by the carefully nurtured nostalgia of politicians. It is also an image perpetuated by historians who readily march side by side with the hungry.

It is difficult to avoid this compelling imagery, even though our historical common-sense tells us that it cannot have been like that all the time, for everyone, and everywhere. At face value, the statistics are a litany of suffering — the levels of unemployment, the condition of housing, the state of the nation's health. Between 1920 and 1938 expenditure on clothing and footwear, among the most basic human needs, fell by almost 40 per cent, representing a decline of 15 per cent in the quantity of such items purchased after allowing for falling prices. This is a more graphic indication of destitution than any rhetoric. On the other hand, there were more wireless sets in Cardiff per head of population than in Slough and more cars than in Luton in the late 1930s and a casual examination of the local press in the period suggests that for some people at least these may not have been bad times at all. Where, then, does the truth lie?

In one major field, demography, the evidence is incontrovertible. After a century of unremitting growth, the upward climb of the Welsh population suddenly ground to a halt and then went into reverse (B.1). After an intercensal rise of 13 per cent over the previous half century, there was a 2 per cent decline in the total population in the 1920s and 4 per cent in the 1930s. From a peak of 2.7 millions in 1924, the Welsh population declined steadily year by year to 2.4 millions in 1939. The variation between the counties was considerable, however. The greatest decline was in Monmouthshire and parts of rural mid-Wales, while Flintshire and Denbighshire were alone in experiencing a population increase. The impact, of course, was manifest in individual communities, both urban and rural; Nantyglo, Mynydd Islwyn, Rhymney shared the decline of Brecon, Newtown and Haverfordwest. By contrast, Colwyn Bay and Conway, if not flourishing, were maintaining their recent growth.

**B.1**

Another indication of demographic change is revealed by the statistics for the Welsh language. The proportion of monoglot Welsh speakers dropped dramatically from 155,000 in 1921 to 97,000 by 1931, and probably to no more than 60,000 by 1939 (B.2). But it was the decline in Welsh speakers as a whole that was most serious. While the statistics for 1921 show an increase of around 5 per cent

**B.2**

over 1911, by 1931 the downward trend had begun and accelerated throughout the period.

Much of the decline arose because a substantial sector of the population was fleeing. This was a process which the countryside had witnessed for the best part of half a century, but the experience was new to the latterly booming industrial areas (B.3). A combination of structural decline and cyclical depression, with its concomitants of astonishingly high unemployment levels and a general sense of pessimism about the future, forced the young, the able-bodied and the adventurous to depart in their thousands for the alluring prospects of Slough, Sussex and even New South Wales, 430,000 of them between 1921 and 1940. In the 1930s, Wales was a point of origin, not a destination, but even that came into doubt with the decline in the birth rate which accelerated in the inter-war years. In 1926 the crude rate dropped below 20 for the first time since the eighteenth century and reached its lowest point of 15.0 in 1937. The declining marriage rate was only partly responsible for this, although the variation from pre-war levels was not noticeable. There was a marriage boom, inevitably, in the immediate post-war years with the rate per 1,000 of the population reaching 19.4 in 1920, the highest level since the advent of civil marriage registers. Thereafter, there was a sharp drop to an average of around 14.5 for the remainder of the 1920s, rising slightly in the 1930s to an average of 16.0.

**B.3**

Even if one only half-accepts a *Malthusian* explanation of rates of marriage and procreation, the economic condition of Wales must be seen to be partly responsible for the demographic crisis. Two features of the economy bore directly on people's lives; the nature of work, and the level of real wages.

Important changes took place in a number of occupations. The gradual decline of agriculture as a major employer of labour continued, especially among women. In Carmarthenshire, the reduction in the female agricultural labour force, which had been the largest in Wales, was five times as rapid as among men between 1911 and 1931; to a lesser degree, the same is true of every other Welsh county. In the economy as a whole there was a shift away from domestic service and an increase in the clerical work force (B.4). There was a substantial increase in the number of labourers and professional workers, and a reduction in the number of textile and clothing workers. Generally speaking, however, the inter-war years did not create new trends in employment, apart from the trend towards unemployment.

**B.4**

In one section of the community, however, there was a hopeful new trend. The break-up of the great agricultural estates proclaimed a new dawn for small farmers; by 1941, 37 per cent of all farms in Wales were owner-occupied compared with only 10.5 per cent in 1909. Many of these were below 20 acres, barely enough for subsistence, but for many former tenant farmers, subject to the vicissitudes of absentee landlords as well as the uncertain climate,

there was at least the prospect of a new beginning and for the most enterprising the chance to prosper.

In the second place, the rapid rise in real wages which most people had experienced during and immediately after the war was followed, in the inter-war years, by much more insecure times. Even before the unexpected collapse of the international banking system, there were harbingers of misery. The folly of the Allies' reparations arrangement produced a haemorrhage, the consequences of which were felt throughout south Wales. The average earnings of coalminers, which had trebled to 16s. a shift between 1914 and 1920 spiralled rapidly downwards to 8s. in 1921 and remained at roughly that level throughout the rest of the period. The average weekly rates of agricultural workers witnessed a similar decline from 50s. in 1920 to 31s. by 1933. For those on the dole, the level of earnings was pitiful, a mere 23s. a week for a couple plus 2s. per child.

On the other hand, although *Geddes' Axe* and the other dreadful instruments of economic surgery cast long shadows over the lives of professional Welsh families, there is no doubt that what affluence there was in the inter-war years came the way of the middle classes. If the salaries of public servants, teachers and administrators declined by around 20 per cent, prices fell even further so that their real wages actually rose.

But what could such wages and salaries buy? For those who were in work and also able to keep abreast or even ahead of falling prices it was possible to maintain a very reasonable standard of living. The range of goods on offer increased with technical advance and improvement. The main semi-official source for consumption of durable goods in the inter-war years was the 1937 Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom. Somewhat surprisingly it revealed that the purchasing power of the major south Wales towns, judged according to a formula which included wage rates and rents as well as the value and quantities of the goods consumed, compared favourably with most towns in Britain. Indeed, Cardiff was regarded as an above average market (B.5), only a little behind Greater London, while Swansea and Newport were comparable markets to cities such as Coventry, Manchester and Derby. On the other hand, these were clearly the most favoured areas of south Wales. Elsewhere the picture was bleaker. Merthyr Tydfil had a purchasing power rating of 107 against a national average of 126 while Rhondda, with 104.6, was the fourth-lowest-rated market in the United Kingdom. More specifically, there were 932 telephone subscribers in the Rhondda, one for every fifty households, while in Abercarn, the figure was one in a hundred. By contrast, in Newport, the figure was one in nine, and in Cardiff one in six. An even more telling index of differential patterns of consumption was the figures for wireless receivers, which were to the 1930s what the video recorder is to the 1980s. There were 56,970 wireless licences issued in Cardiff in 1937, approximately one per household; there were half as many per family in Merthyr Tydfil. Much the same picture emerges from examining

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figures for houses which were wired or private car registrations; generally the depressed coalfield area of south Wales lagged behind the commercial, coastal towns. In north Wales, patterns of consumption were comparable to the most prosperous areas of south Wales. In Bangor, unemployment was well below 10 per cent, virtually all the houses were wired and there was one telephone per nine households. A similar picture emerges in Wrexham, Deeside and other industrial areas, while the coastal resorts of Llandudno and Rhyl in the north and Pembrokeshire in the south were booming (B.6, B.7).

**B.6**  
**B.7**



Queen Street, Cardiff, c. 1939. (Source: BBC Hulton Picture Library.)

Indeed, the expansion of the holiday resorts is a reflection of a growth in tourism and holiday-making in the inter-war years. Again, the experience was class-specific though there is much evidence of working-class outings in the apocryphal charabanc to the seaside. The Edwardian love of rambling and country-walking continued, but foreign travel began to extend to less affluent classes than hitherto. Nor should we forget that it was the experience of a wet day in Barry Island in 1935 that persuaded the young Billy Butlin to inaugurate the first holiday camp in Britain, in Skegness.

There were greater opportunities for travel than ever before. Above all, the great expansion of the motor car and motor bike (often with a sidecar attached) opened up new horizons for thousands. By 1938 there were 55,000 private cars licensed in south Wales, and 21,000 in north Wales. Cardiff, with 8,300 private cars, had the largest concentration, followed by Swansea with 5,000. Yet this greatly exceeded the number of families earning more than £10 a week, which suggests that car-ownership was extending down to quite modest middle class families by the end of the 1930s.

For the remainder, public transport expanded as never before. The number of people using public trams in Wales reached 100,000 in 1919 and remained at around that level throughout the 1920s. 1921 was the peak year in terms of the miles of available track, but from 1929 onwards both mileages and passengers declined. Indeed, the decline was extremely sharp in the last two years before the Second World War, with the number of passengers falling to 35 per cent of the peak year which, ironically enough, was 1926. On the other hand, this was largely due to the vast expansion of bus services which occurred at this time.

For those who could only dream about holidays or travel, there was always the Irish Sweepstake, which began in 1930, and the new Football Pools to fuel their fantasies. Their real world, however, was dismal enough. In economically depressed communities, people were denied access to the facilities which only the more prosperous communities, with their higher yields from the rates, could afford. This is not to say that the depressed communities did not make strenuous efforts to compensate for these deficiencies. The minutes of communities such as Rhosllannerchrugog, Brynmawr, Llanelli and Bargoed, echo with the vigorous demands of local councillors for better facilities. Parks were cultivated, public film screenings were organized, and recreations were encouraged, but they were often improvised and short-term. In the end, employment was the only real solution.

The economic contrasts and contradictions of Wales in this period are clearly revealed in the housing market. There is plenty of contemporary qualitative evidence for the decline of housing stock, with large numbers of houses unfit for human habitation. More seriously, however, the rate of housing replacement declined over the period. In the first flush of Lloyd George's promise of 'homes fit

for heroes' ambitious plans were laid. Largely through the work of *Christopher Addison*, some 28,000 houses were constructed by private enterprise and local authorities between 1919 and 1925, and a further 34,000 were built in just three years to 1928, but this was the end of the boom. Thereafter, the number of authorizations and completions fell dramatically. Over the next five years, a little over 21,000 houses were built, relatively few of them by local authorities. Indeed, almost three times more houses were built in the 1930s by private builders compared to local authorities, nearly all for the middle classes. It is the private estates of bow-fronted semi-detached houses in the Uplands in Swansea, Garden Village in Wrexham and Cyncoed and Roath in Cardiff which are the legacies of the 1930s. The working classes would have to wait for a post-war Labour government before their needs were attended to.

For the needy, of course, there were alternative ways of acquiring goods, if not property. The official returns for indictable offences known to the police reveal substantial increases from 1920 onwards; compared to an average of 6,200 in the ten years up to 1914, the post-war average from 1920 onwards was just under 10,000. The number of non-indictable prosecutions remained at roughly the pre-war level while the number of convictions showed an actual decline.

For those who could neither earn nor steal their daily bread, there was, however, only one resource. It is difficult nowadays to imagine what terrors the idea of 'public relief held for the indigent poor. The spectre of the workhouse had only been partially alleviated by the Report of the *Poor Law Commissioners* in 1909. Poverty was still held as a sign of moral failing and personal incompetence. In the early 1920s some courageous local authorities sought to lay the ghosts of the Victorian moralists by undertaking substantially greater commitments to poor relief than the official guidelines permitted. The most celebrated of these authorities in Wales were the *Bedwellty Guardians*. Taking their cue from the *Popular Guardians* of a few years earlier, they managed to spend half a million pounds a year on a wide range of public and personal services before the government brought its crushing weight of authority to bear in 1927 and dissolved it. Other local authorities adopted a less confrontationist policy, providing discreet but real subsidies for education and other social services. Nevertheless, the Bedwellty case forced the government to re-examine its social obligations and to replace the old poor law authorities with public assistance committees (B.8).

**B.8**

All of this was scant consolation for those who were in receipt of public relief. For the unemployed these were harsh times (B.9, B.10). The daily struggle for subsistence was compounded by the humiliating rituals to which the unemployed were continually exposed; the probing enquiries of the *Means Test* official, the threat of a loss or reduction of benefit, the despair which came with every new rejection. The world of the unemployed was a world of rumour, false dawns and eternal twilights, alleviated only by sharing the experience of misery with others. Great energy and enterprise was devoted to providing some form of organized support for the unemployed, ranging from recreational and occupational clubs, evening educational classes and tutorials, to full scale cooperative ventures, such as the Brynmawr and Maes-yr-haf schemes (B.11, B.12). There is no doubt that these contributed in no small measure to sustaining the community infrastructures which were mortally endangered by the economic holocausts of the 1930s.

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B.11  
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In general, however, successive inter-war governments chose to ignore the evidence of economic deprivation, preferring to regard the unemployed as unfortunate but necessary casualties of a brutal economic reality. No government, however, could safely ignore the irrefutable evidence of the medical officers of health and the specialized committees of enquiry into infectious diseases. Despite the work of the *Welsh National Memorial Association* in fighting *tuberculosis*, the Welsh statistics remained grim. Seventeen sanatoria were opened, the death rate fell by 38 per cent but in a report in 1939 it was revealed that Wales supplied the seven counties which headed the list for the whole of England and Wales for this disease. Other diseases, too, were rife, including diphtheria and scarlet fever, and expert opinion was virtually unanimous in attributing many of these to the high level of malnutrition (B.13). While the steps which were taken in the 1930s to combat this scourge were largely ineffective, there is no doubt that the statistics culled from this mass of human suffering, and the chastening experience of those who had to deal with it, laid the foundation for the revolution in public health which came in the 1940s.

B.13

In the midst of economic adversity, moreover, there were some rays of hope for the future. The inter-war years saw bolder steps towards an adequate system of public education, at all levels, than ever before. Expenditure on elementary education rose by 44 per cent, while university income rose by 91 per cent and expenditure by 74 per cent. A fourth university college was opened in Swansea, while in Harlech a bold new experiment in adult education was successfully launched. Perhaps the most important advances were made in secondary education, with 37 new schools being opened between 1919 and 1938, an increase of over 30 per cent; the number of pupils rose by almost 80 per cent. Many of these, of course, were pupils who had hitherto remained in the elementary schools as pupil teachers; indeed the total number of children in elementary schools declined by 24 per cent but this in turn was in large measure due to



the substantial decline in the birth rate. In general, there is no doubt that educational provision and standards improved in the inter-war years.

On the other hand, if education was on the increase, religiosity as measured by church attendance was, on the whole, on the wane. Attendance at Sunday schools, for example, fell sharply in these years. By 1939 there were 27 per cent fewer *Congregational* pupils attending Sunday school, 30 per cent fewer *Baptists*, 31 per cent fewer Anglicans and 40 per cent fewer *Calvinistic Methodists*. This reflects a general fall in attendance and affiliation in all the major nonconformist chapels (B.14). Even the Church in Wales suffered. In the wake of disestablishment, the number of Easter communicants increased, but the number of baptisms fell by 30 per cent. Indeed, the only major church to show any expansion were the Roman Catholics, with an almost 50 per cent increase in membership and a 66 per cent increase in the number of marriages solemnized. In the long term this helps to explain the boom in the number of pupils attending Roman Catholic schools in Wales in the post-war years (B.15).

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B.15

One explanation for this change, much favoured by an older generation of chapel-goers, is the rise of the cinema and dance-hall which offered an irresistible lure to a generation struggling to forget the horrors of the First World War. The 1920s and 1930s were an age of celluloid heroes and heroines, when the Hollywood stars lit up every coal-dark valley. It was also an age of gramophone records and popular music, and of the wireless (B.16).

B.16

Sport, too, offered a release from the harsh real world, even though it was touched all too often by the turns and eddies of the economic current. The inter-war years were golden years of Association Football in Wales with six Welsh teams in the Football League. In 1926 Swansea Town enjoyed a record income of over £33,000 but by the early 1930s the general depression in south Wales was badly affecting gates and in 1935 the club launched an appeal entitled 'Save the Club from Decline'. Not for the last time, the members rallied around and ensured the continuation of the club. Rugby, too, felt the pinch, with gross revenues of clubs like Cardiff plummeting to half the pre-war level. In rugby, moreover, the situation was complicated by the competition between the professional and amateur codes. During the inter-war years, 48 Welsh international players accepted professional terms and 'went north', often for substantial sums of money. Many more lesser-known men followed in their train. That they did so is hardly surprising. To an unemployed man, the prospect of an immediate cash sum, perhaps the equivalent of two years' earnings, together with the prospect of generous match bonuses, was often too much to resist, even in the face of the life-time ban from Rugby Union which invariably followed. In the 1920s, however, the North began to encroach on the South. Major matches were staged in Pontypridd and Cardiff, watched by thousands of spectators, and although the professional game was never

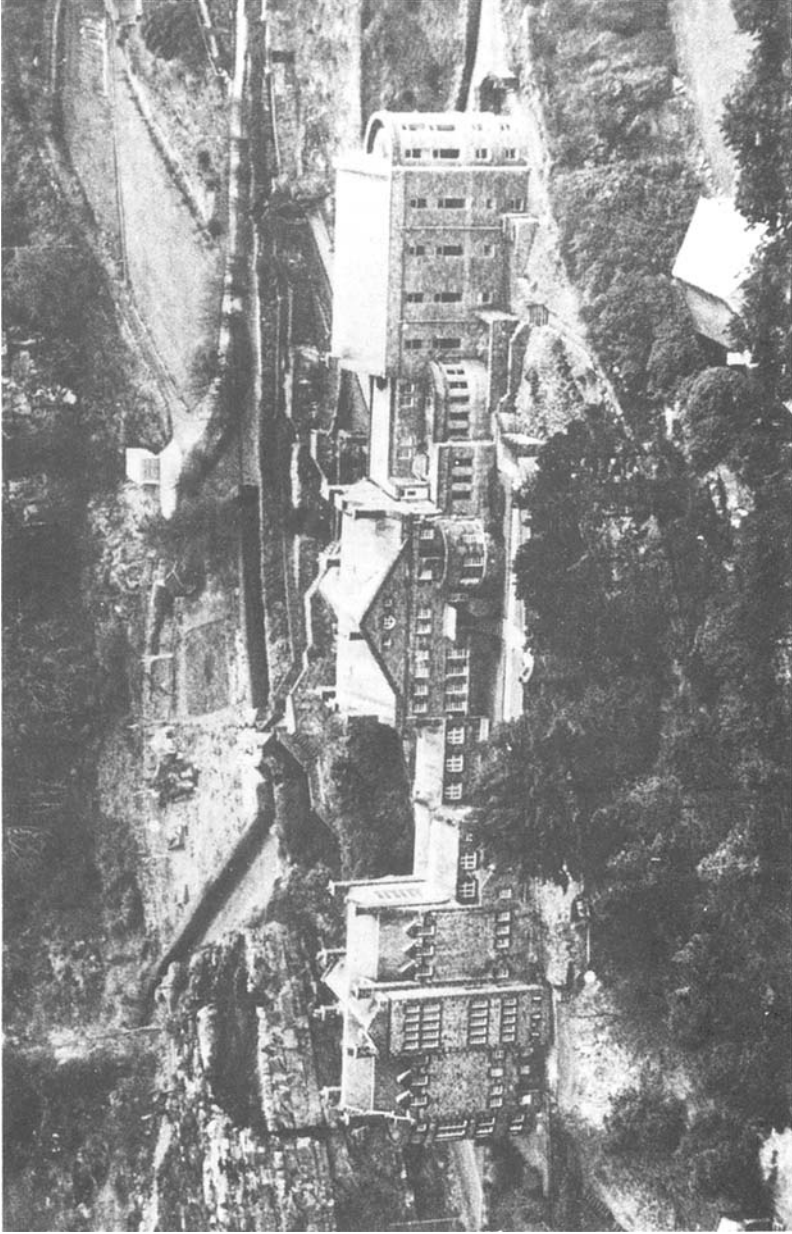
established in Wales, the enthusiastic rugby follower was spoilt for choice in these years (B.17).

**B.17**

In other sports, too, these were good years. Glamorgan entered the first-class championship and in the 1930s Maurice Turnbull's excellent teams regaled crowds as never before, and in some people's view, never since, with players of the calibre of Dai Davies, Spencer, Sullivan, Able and, of course, the wonderful opening partnership of Emrys Davies and Arnold Dyson. To cap it all, in 1937 Emrys Davies achieved the unique Glamorgan record of 2,000 runs and 100 wickets in one season. In the altogether more individual sport of boxing, too, there were bouts to remember, with the emergence of Tommy Farr, immortalized in Wales as 'the man who nearly beat Joe Louis'.

If organized sport or the Saturday night hop helped to channel latent social violence into an ordered form, there were times when nothing could prevent the frustration and anger of the underprivileged from spilling over into the streets. In retrospect it is difficult to explain why Wales and the north of England did not follow the European path towards the twin poles of communism and fascism which, after all, flourished in similar conditions of economic deprivation and political bankruptcy. But there were confrontations and even pitched battles, usually between police and unemployed workers. Strikes were often accompanied by some violence, as in Ammanford in 1925, though there was nothing on the scale of pre-war battles such as Tonypany or Llanelli. Social violence, however, was not confined to the industrial sphere. In Cardiff there was continuing racial tension throughout the inter-war years (B.18).

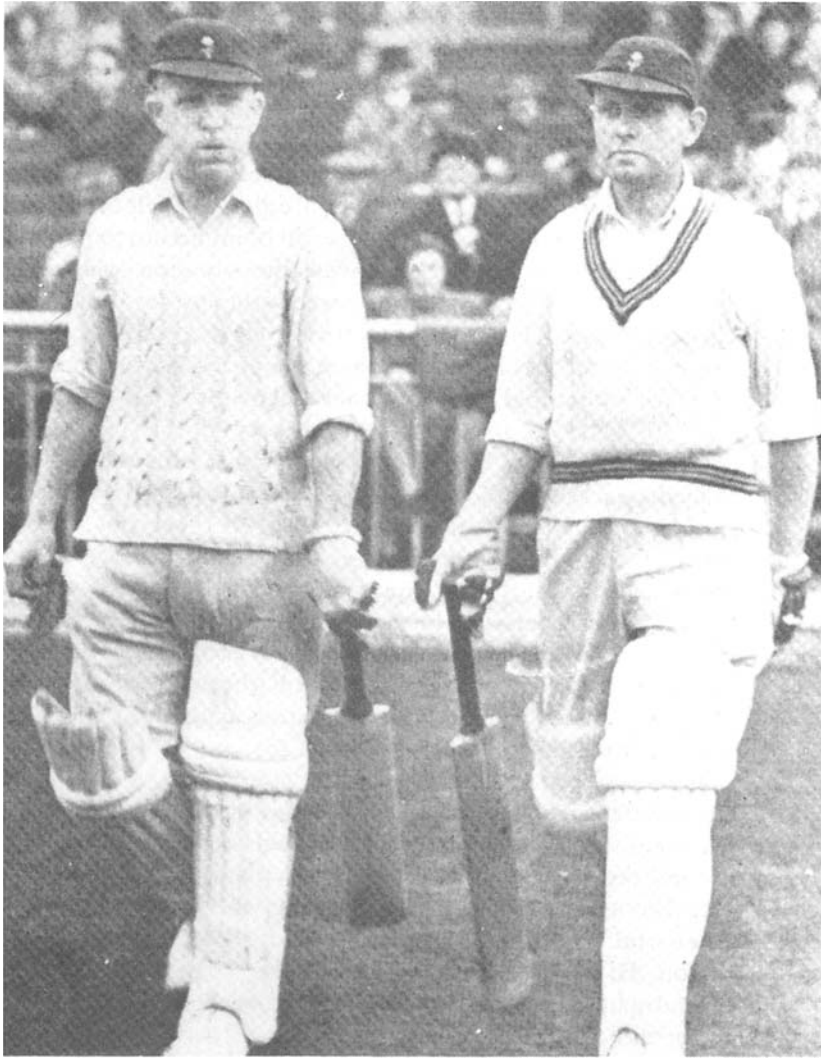
**B.18**



Coleg Harlech, 1939.

The enduring symbols of working-class resistance to economic illogic were the stay-down strikes of the 1930s. In the wake of the débâcle of 1926, organized unions were forced into political retreat and this was greatly compounded by the international financial collapse after 1929. Seizing their advantage, the coalowners attempted to organize the more pliable workers into 'company unions' by a combination of inducement and threat; the Welsh version of the *Spencer Union* in north and south Wales attracted as many as 50,000 members. Many more resisted, most dramatically in Nine Mile Point colliery near Bedwas, where a stay-down strike of a fortnight's duration helped to galvanize support for the *South Wales Miners' Federation*. By the end of 1935, the company unions were all but defeated.

There were few real victories or victors in the inter-war years. The struggle for peace floundered with the rise of European fascism, the struggle for better standards of living faltered in the face of profound economic obstacles. If the image of a destitute Wales persists, it is perhaps because that was the commonly experienced truth. Yet, for the lucky few, there were good times. High society continued its relentless search for new extravagances; the prophets of fashion were lionized as ever. The young found their compensations, the salary-earners their material satisfaction. But for far too many, the inter-war years were bleak years, in which the nightmare of French battlefields of the recent past was compounded by the hopelessness of the present. In the inter-war years, the future looked very distant.



Emrys Davies and Arnold Dyson, inter-war Glamorgan batsmen.

## Sources

### B1 Population 1. total population and intercensal changes by sex, wales 1801–1971

Date of Census	POPULATION			INTERCENSAL CHANGE					
	Males	Females	Total	AMOUNT			PER CENT		
				Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1801 March 9/10	279,407	307,838	587,245						
1811 May 26/27	322,371	350,969	673,340	42,964	43,131	86,105	15.38	14.01	14.66
1821 May 27/28	390,735	403,419	794,154	68,364	52,450	120,714	21.21	14.94	17.93
1831 May 29/30	445,702	458,698	904,400	54,967	55,279	110,246	14.07	13.70	13.88
1841 June 6/7	518,372	527,701	1,046,073	72,670	69,003	141,673	16.30	15.04	15.66
1851 March 30/31	581,840	581,299	1,163,139	63,468	53,598	117,066	12.24	10.16	11.19
1861 April 7/8	641,652	644,761	1,280,413	59,812	63,462	123,274	10.28	10.92	10.60
1871 April 2/3	706,048	706,535	1,412,583	64,396	61,774	126,170	10.04	9.58	9.81
1881 April 3/4 (1)	786,322	785,458	1,571,780	80,274	78,923	159,157	11.37	11.17	11.27
1891 April 5/6 (a)	892,256	879,195	1,771,451	105,934	93,737	199,671	13.47	11.93	12.70
1891 (b)	892,256	879,195	1,771,451						
1901 March 31/Ap. 1	1,011,458	1,001,418	2,012,876 (2)	119,202	122,223	241,425	13.36	13.90	13.63
1911 April 2/3	1,231,739	1,189,182	2,420,921	220,281	187,764	408,045	21.78	18.75	20.27
1921 June 19/20	1,329,994	1,326,480	2,656,474	98,255	137,298	235,553	7.98	11.55	9.73
1931 April 26/27	1,293,805	1,299,527	2,593,332	-36,189	-26,953	-63,142	-2.72	-2.03	-2.38
1939 Mid-year	1,228,000	1,259,000	2,487,000	-65,805	-40,527	-106,332	-5.09	-3.12	-4.10
1951 April 8/9	1,270,103	1,328,572	2,598,675	42,103	69,572	111,675	3.43	5.53	4.49
1961 April 23/24	1,291,764	1,352,259	2,644,023	21,661	23,687	45,348	1.71	1.78	1.75
1971 April 25/26	1,327,507	1,403,697	2,731,204	35,743	51,438	87,181	2.77	3.80	3.30

- 1) 1891 (a) Ancient County  
 (b) Administrative County  
 All figures 1801–81 for Ancient Counties  
 All figures 1901–71 for Administrative Counties
- 2) Boundary change 1891/1901:-  
 Sum of counties in 1891, for areas as constituted 1901, is 1,771,430

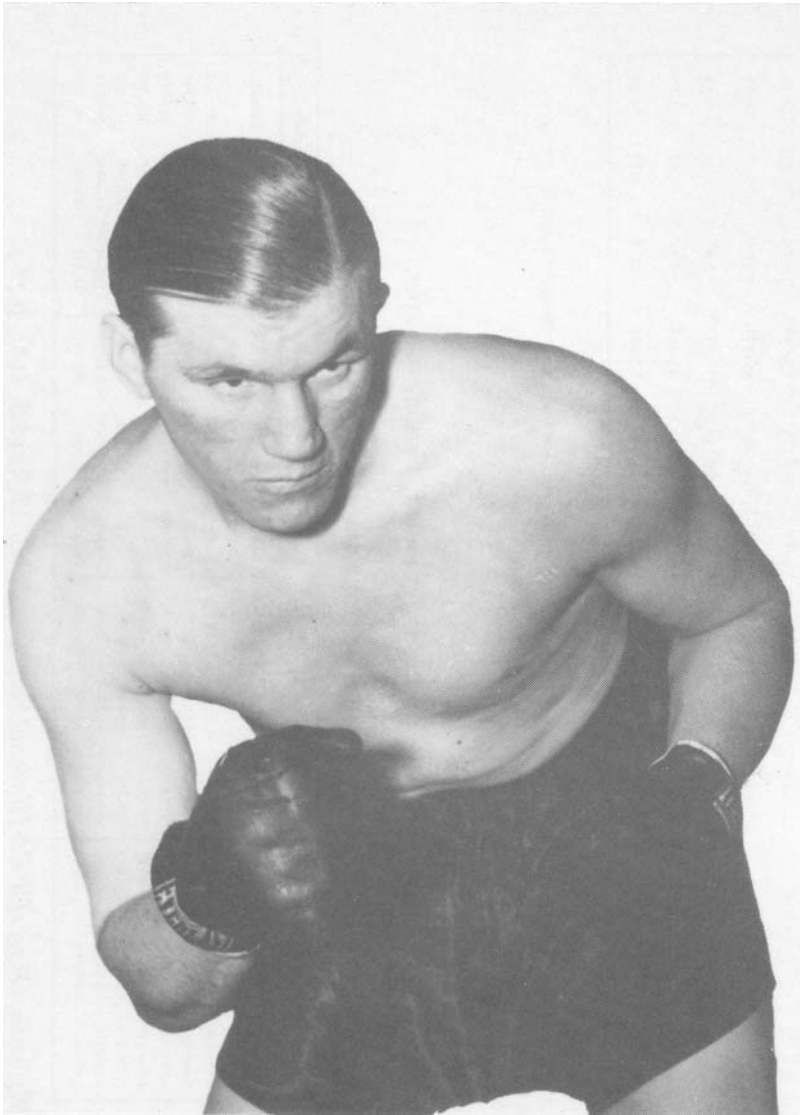
The source for all figures for Table 1 is the *Census Returns* 1801–1971.

(L. John Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics*, Volume I, Cardiff, 1985, p.7.)

**B.2 Population and language. number of welsh-speakers by sex in wales, 1891–1971.**

	Population aged 3 yrs & over		Welsh-speaking		Speaking both English & Welsh		Total Welsh Speakers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1891 <sup>1</sup>	1,685,61 <sub>a</sub>	—	—	508,036	—	—	910,289 <sup>2</sup>	—	—
1901	1,864,69 <sub>c</sub>	937,236	927,460	280,905	137,333	143,572	929,824 <sup>2</sup>	461,872	467,952
1911	2,247,92 <sub>7</sub>	1,144,694	1,103,233	190,292	92,737	97,555	977,366 <sup>2</sup>	488,644	488,722
1921	2,486,74 <sub>n</sub>	1,243,768	1,242,972	155,989	76,591	79,389	922,092 <sup>2</sup>	458,557	463,535
1931	2,472,37 <sub>o</sub>	1,232,580	1,239,798	97,932	48,629	49,303	909,261	456,057	453,204
1951 <sup>3</sup>	2,472,42 <sub>n</sub>	1,205,506	1,266,923	41,155	19,528	21,627	714,686	347,561	367,125
1961	2,518,71 <sub>4</sub>	1,227,512	1,291,199	26,223	13,542	12,681	656,002	315,289	340,713
1971 <sup>4</sup>	2,602,95 <sub>5</sub>	1,261,705	1,341,255	32,725	15,865	16,860	542,425	255,790	286,630

(L. John Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics*, Volume 1, Cardiff, 1985, p.78.)



Tommy Farr. (Source: BBC Hulton Picture Library.)

**B.3** The other general consideration is that Wales is primarily a national, not an economic, unit, and that economic policies should be framed in the light of this fact. There are many issues, including particularly the question of communications, which need to be judged in the light of Welsh national feeling; but undoubtedly the most important is the problem of controlling the location of industry. It is inconsistent with the preservation of the Welsh culture and traditions that a solution to the economic difficulties of Wales should again be found, as it was before the war, in extensive migration to other parts of Great Britain, or even in large-scale movements of population over long distances within Wales itself. Movements of these kinds occurred before the war, and they may well recur afterwards; but there is no essential reason for them. It is clear from an examination of the problems of the Eastern valleys of South Wales or of the depressed Western valleys of the



anthracite belt that some movement of population will be needed; but this movement need not be so great as to involve losing touch with the areas from which migrants come, and in most cases it should be possible to establish new industries within daily reach of workers living in their existing homes, even where they cannot be found work actually in their own home districts. Substantial measures of re-housing and general redevelopments will be needed throughout Wales after the war; it should be possible to plan these measures so as to bring population and new industries very much closer together than in the past, without in any way encouraging the break-up of the life of Welsh communities.

(Michael Fogarty, *Prospects of the Industrial Areas of Great Britain*, Chapter 3: Wales and Monmouthshire. London, 1945. Nuffield College Social Reconstruction survey.)

#### B.4 Labour 1. occupations, wales, 1801–1971 C. 1911–71

	Males						Females					
	1911 <sup>1</sup>	1921	1931	1951	1961	1971	1911 <sup>1</sup>	1921	1931	1951	1961	1971
1 Fishing	1,282	1,879	2,379	1,334	730	470	68	35	18	3	–	20
2 Agriculture	102,374	95,480	92,510	79,457	61,230	45,130	20,192	11,355	8,606	10,267	6,470	7,620
3 Gas, Coke and Chemicals	1,342	5,011	3,489	9,408	11,440	12,090	229	102	81	1,348	1,420	1,020
4 Metal Manufacturing and Engineering	94,436	98,558	81,449	112,430	142,37	160,12	3,839	4,527	1,627	7,345	13,91	19,550
5 Mining and Quarrying	256,25	274,682	234,554	110,000	79,470	36,500	268	146	32	32	20	60
6 Woodworkers ( + Cork and Cane)	23,325	20,575	17,770	19,667	17,580	17,330	493	170	72	225	300	470
7 Leather Workers, Fur	9,057	5,544	4,897	3,325	2,130	1,620	1,007	211	132	1,011	800	1,390
8 Textile Workers	6,856	1,876	1,291	1,892	1,530	2,850	7,358	1,629	2,237	2,106	2,050	2,120
9 Clothing Workers	8,030	6,342	4,718	3,131	1,930	2,220	32,464	19,436	10,447	13,156	11,71	13,130
10 Food, Drink and Tobacco	8,549	8,824	8,878	7,534	10,930	9,170	1,976	2,609	1,912	2,831	3,150	3,690
11 Paper and Printing	4,966	3,824	3,768	3,170	3,940	4,850	1,933	1,272	1,120	1,291	1,700	2,410
12 Building and Contracting	35,928	38,735	43,227	63,098	30,690	31,900	20	100	42	81	20	80
13 Makers of Other Products (Rubber, Plastics etc.)	50	5,671	3,833	2,695	6,450	9,950	10	216	160	1,395	3,940	5,240
14 Painters and Decorators	6,652	8,019	8,503	12,113	12,410	11,820	2	82	85	397	540	480
15 Stationary Engine and Crane Drivers	14,826	20,203	20,965	22,472	26,990	25,970	—	—	23	150	130	170
16 Labourers (n.e.c.)	23,145	39,264	42,371	67,736	77,120	72,350	77	446	131	17,988	5,260	6,150

17	Transport	and	89,720	88,674	94,774	86,167	74,660	64,080	2,679	2,920	2,597	5,353	4,800	5,830
18	Warehousemen, Storekeepers,		212	5,727	6,880	12,972	18,1990	19,870	6	1,294	1,552	4,416	6,470	8,480
19	Clerical Workers		16,695	21,746	25,986	36,715	45,320	41,300	2,763	12,303	13,179	45,393	63,600	85,420
20	Sales Workers		49,683	59,026	77,211	60,996	58,440	50,780	15,995	32,191	34,165	42,219	52,180	54,050
21	Services, Sport Recreation(inc. Personal	and	20,393	21,730	25,877	31,960	34,680	39,510	106,719	94,827	98,234	67,059	67,590	95,230
22	Administrators and Managers		—	9,578	4,510	15,681	21,480	28,680	—	3,323	198	1,357	1,190	2,410
23	Professional, Workers, Artists	Technical	21,282	22,117	23,829	37,326	56,720	66,140	16,854	22,536	23,580	30,334	39,350	48,850
24	Armed Forces		3,000	4,933	2,746	20,776	11,640	4,450	—	—	—	641	230	290
25	Inadequately Described Occupations		4,448	9,349	34,187	8,567	18,390	16,200	245	936	5,763	2,465	7,980	22,480
26	Glass, Ceramics, Cement			3,040	2,070	2,901	2,580	2,040	484	483	146	498	560	509
	TOTAL OCCUPIED		807,59	880,407	872,67	833,52	829,040	780,39	215,681	213,149	206,13	259,36	295,550	387,230
27	Retired and Unoccupied		144,89	123,643	95,533	135,45	154,470	215,09	696,687	792,497	773,65	779,84	759,050	701,430

<sup>1</sup> The Figures for 1911 represent an attempt to redistribute the information from the 1911 Census on the same basis as that used for 1921–1971.

(L. John Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics, Volume I, Cardiff, 1985, p.97.*)

**B.5**

**Cardiff**

**Marketing survey's purchasing power index (1938) 130.7 (1937) 129.7**

**Population**

Estimated total (1937) .....	220,200
Total insured persons (1938) .....	70,970
Employed (% insured) (June 1938) .....	82.7
On Poor Relief (1938) .....	8,627
Total Census .....	223,589
Males: 107,309	Females: 116,280
Under 14: 53,158	Occupied, 14 and over 100,322
Out of work 2,600	Males 14,586; Female 8,069;
Unoccupied, retired 62,040	Males 8,069; Female

**Towns and Villages within 5 miles**

Barry, Caerphilly, Penarth, Michaelston-le-Pit, Rumney, Whitchurch.  
Total: 92,386

**Standard of Living Factors (1938)**

Telephone subscribers (1937) 7,789;	(1938) 8,288
Private cars licensed (1937) 7,612;	(1938) 8,290
Commercial vehicles licensed (1937) 2,072;	(1938) 2,153
Wireless licences .....	56,970
New houses built (1936) 1,400	(1937) 1,251
No. of dwellings at diff. rateable values (1938) .....	47,542
£35 and over .....	4,096
Under £35 and over £13 .....	33,902
£13 and under .....	9,544
Dog licences .....	9,936
Cinemas 15;	Seats 20,965

*Industries:* Docks — engineering — chemicals — smelting — iron and tin plate, etc. — (exports coal, machinery, etc.).

**Private Families**

Estimates (1937) 55,050	Total (1931) 54,820
Class A (£500 a year and over) .....	3,250
Class B (over £5 and under £10 per week) .....	7,650
Class C (over £2 10s. and under £5 per week) .....	32,700
Class D (£2 10s. a week and under) .....	11,450

**Public Services Data (1938)**

Amount of rates in £ (1938) .....	12s. 6d.
Amount of rates in £ (1937) .....	12s. 1d.
Amount of rates in £ (1936) .....	12s. 1d.
Total rateable value (1937) £1,851,963;	(1938) £1,824,815
Average per head of population .....	£8 9s.
No. of schools	Elem. 54; Sec. 4
No. of scholars	Elem. 30,291; Sec. 3,208
No. of houses in area .....	47,542

*Electricity Supply:*

Cardiff Corporation Electricity Dept.

Charges	L. 3d.,	H. 1d. - $\frac{3}{4}$ d.;	P. 1d. per unit
Voltage .....	A.C. 200/230 v.		
Houses wired	47,351;	A.C. 45,535;	D.C.

*Gas Supply:*

Cardiff Gas Light & Coke Co.

Charges .....	9. 3d sliding to 6.5d. per therm
---------------	----------------------------------

*Town Clerk:* D. KENVYN REES

Cinemas 6;  
unascertainable

Seats | M.O.H.: J.G.G. WILSON, M.D., M.R.C.P.

**Retail Outlets**

Bakers, pastrycooks .....	Fruit, greengrocers .....	Men's outfitters .....	
116	312	65	
Bicycle dealers .....	Grocers, prov. dealers .....	Women's outfitters .....	
61	817	40	
Boot, shoe dealers .....	Men's hairdressers .....	Stationers, newsagents .....	
198	154	231	
Butchers, pork butchers .....	Women's hairdressers,	Sports stores .....	
261	beauty shops .....	12	
Chemists .....	58	Tobacconists .....	
88	Ironmongers .....	289	
Confectioners .....	59	Tailors .....	
400	Jewellers .....	106	
Dairies .....	33	Transport contractors .....	
175	Laundries .....	42	
Drapers .....	18	Wireless dealers .....	
163	Milk Bars .....	53	
Fishmongers .....	9	Co-op, stores & branches .....	
101	Off licences .....	18	
Fried fish dealers .....	81	Department .....	stores
85	Public houses .....	..... 5	
Furniture dealers .....	221	Fixed price .....	stores
73		..... 4	
Garages .....			
98			

<b>Employment Analysis</b>					
<i>Industry</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Fishing	334		Wood furniture (inc. basket ware)	1,241	93
Agriculture	481	38	Paper goods, stationery requisites	408	176
Mining, quarrying	476	43	Printing, bookbinding, photography	1,195	446
Non-metalliferous products	414	9	Building, decorating, contracting	3,473	34
Bricks, pottery, glass	137	1	Rubber mfrs. (exc. clothing, belting)	48	15
Chemical, dyes, explosives, paint, oils	377	72	Musical instruments	90	13
Metal mfrs. (exc. electrical apparatus, precious metals, plate)	5,567	491	Other manufacturing industries	201	137
Elec. apparatus, cables, install	577	96	Gas, water, electricity	1,046	48
Prec. metals, jewellery (+ watches, etc)	60	8	Transport, communications	13,667	338
Textile mfrs. (inc. cellulose, but not dress, except knitted goods)	159	135	Commerce, finance, insurance	13,554	6,113
Skins, leather, leather substitutes (not clothing, footwear)	83	45	Public administration, defence	5,460	2,316
Clothing mfrs. (inc. boots, shoes other than rubber, but no knitted goods)	1,009	1,734	Professions	1,840	1,731
Food, drink, tobacco	2,860	1,761	Entertainments, sport	673	426
			Personal service (inc. hotels, catering)	2,378	8,733
			Other industries	228	48
			<b>TOTAL IN INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>58,036</b>	<b>25,100</b>

(Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom. London, 1937.)

## North Wales

B.6

### Distribution of Population

	Urban	Rural	Total		Urban	Rural	Total
Population (mid-1937)			535,130	Domestics per family			.17
Sep. families (mid-1937)			135,475	Families in 8-rm. dwellings	6,758	7,017	13,775
Population (census)			531,069	Percentage of whole	12.2	8.9	10.3
Separate families	55,414	78,953	134,367	Total insured persons			105,940
Children under 14	46,071	73,100	119,171	Unemployment (June, 1938)			18.6

### Professional Occupations

	Male	Female		Male	Female
Clergymen (Anglican Church)	57		Teachers (not music)	544	1,098
Roman Catholic priests, monks, nuns	14	25	<i>Professional Engineers:</i>		
Ministers of other religious bodies	11	1	Civ. 120, Mech. 62, Min. 18. Total	199	1
Judges, stip. magistrates, barristers	16	1	Architects	45	
Solicitors	89	1	Ship designers, surveyors, etc	18	
Physicians, surgeons, etc	17	20	Chartered, incorp. accountants	115	1
Dental practitioners	71	7	Authors, editors, journalists	100	9
Veterinary surgeons, practitioners	10		Other professional occupations	631	1,104

### Media and Services

#### Press Facilities

(a) Press Media pub. from Cardiff:-

Mornings: WESTERN MAIL & SOUTH WALES NEWS, St. Mary's Street, Cardiff: 7000.

Evenings: SOUTH WALES ECHO & EVENING EXPRESS, Cardiff: 7000.

Weeklies: SOUTH WALES FOOTBALL ECHO & EXPRESS, Cardiff: 7000; pub. Sat.

WEEKLY MAIL & CARDIFF TIMES, St. Mary Street, Cardiff: 7000; pub. Fri. & Sat.

(b) The National Newspaper, Magazine and Periodical Press (see p. 59).

#### Poster Services

CARDIFF & GLAMORGAN ADVERTISING CO., LTD., 59-63, Penarth Rd., Cardiff: 522.

CENTRAL RHONDDA & DISTRICT BILLPOSTING CO., 117, St. Mary Street, Cardiff: 3404.

GRIFFITHS & MILLINGTON, Ltd., 6/7, St. John's Sq., Cardiff: 6381.

PERRY PUBLICITY, 102, Broadway, Cardiff: 7403.

#### Sampling and House-to-House Distribution

PERRY PUBLICITY, 102, Broadway, Cardiff: 7403.

#### Railway Services

G.W.

#### Airport

PENGAM MOORS

#### Factory Sites

GEO H. WHITAKER, City Engineer and Surveyor, Development Section, City Hall, Cardiff.

### Standard of Living Factors

Private cars licensed	(1938) 21,175	Telephone subscribers	(1937) 14,785
Commercial cars licensed	(1938) 5,350	Rateable value (exc. County Boros., 1938)	£2,478,718
Wireless licences	(1938) 79,122	Rates per head (exc. County Boros., 1938)	£4 12s. od.

**Professional Occupations**

	Male	Female		Male	Female
Clergymen (Anglican Church)	503		Teachers (not music)	1,518	2,996
Roman Catholic priests, monks, nuns	74	105	<i>Professional Engineers:</i>		
Ministers of other religious bodies	672	2	Civ. 299, Mech. 100, Min. 41. Total	439	1
Judges, stip. magistrates, barristers	20		Architects	105	
Solicitors	229	4	Ship designers, surveyors, etc	5	
Physicians, surgeons, etc	382	30	Chartered, incorp. accountants	84	1
Dental practitioners	156	5	Authors, editors, journalists	148	16
Veterinary surgeons, practitioners	72	1	Other professional occupations	1,105	2,398

(Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom, London, 1923.)

**B.7** The changing scene in Pembrokeshire:

Outwardly the new era is mostly evident on the coast — the usual rash of newly built bungalows on the dunes and on the cliff. And need the affront have been so obvious? Might not the rest of the tiles have been grey-green, instead of that florid red, to harmonize with the quiet sad colours of the dune land? And there is the danger, growing greater yearly, that you and I who love this grand coast may be barred from the cliffs and the shore where the land has been bought to be ‘developed’ . . . There is in progress — and it has been proceeding for a quarter of a century and more — a steady ‘suburbanization’ of the life of the country districts . . .

(Dr E. Roland Williams, *Tenby Observer*, 11 November 1938.)

**B.8** Co-operative Society.

The Co-operative movement in South Wales has been very flourishing in the mining towns, much more than in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. The Blaina Industrial and Provident Society is the biggest in South Wales. It has branches in nine towns. I have gone into the finances and working of the Society thoroughly, and have the balance-sheets and reports for two half-yearly trading periods. The justification for the somewhat extended treatment that follows is that the Society is virtually the food-depot or Food Ministry for the people of Blaina.

There is no doubt that the Society is, next to the Ministry of Labour and the Poor Law Union, the most important agent in feeding the Blaina population. The Society has suffered heavily, as the details following



show, but, supported by the immense resources built up in the past years, the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and the spirit of co-operation, it is facing the present conditions in a manner not possible to a private trading concern.

In comparing the two periods ended January 17, 1921, and June 26, 1922, period must always be read to consist of twenty-nine weeks. This difference of six weeks does not, in so great a contrast as the two periods show, affect the conclusions to be drawn.

#### SHARE CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Total share capital—January 17, 1921	£249,210
.....	
(Blaina, £61,229)	
(Abertillery, £50,179)	
Total share capital—June 26, 1922	£111,542
.....	
(Blaina, £19,041)	
(Abertillery, £25,479)	
Contributions to share capital—January 17, 1921	£36,694
.....	
(Blaina, £10,986)	
(Abertillery, £8,730)	
Contributions to share capital—June 26, 1922	£2,951
.....	
(Blaina, £989)	
(Abertillery, £699)	
Withdrawals of share capital—January 17, 1921	£51,568
.....	
(Blaina, £18,314)	
(Abertillery, £10,240)	
Withdrawals of share capital—June 26, 1922	£4,226
.....	
(Blaina, £820)	
(Abertillery, £1,537)	

N.B.—The Society stopped withdrawals early this year, save as against goods supplied.

#### PENNY BANK DEPOSITS

Depositors' Balances—January 17, 1921	£59,346
.....	
(Blaina, £13,031)	
(Abertillery, £9,905)	

Depositors'	Balances—June	26,	1922	£25,202
.....				
	(Blaina, £3,450)			
	(Abertillery, £4,092)			
Half-yearly	Deposits—January	17,	1921	£18,581
.....				
	(Blaina, £4,490)			
	(Abertillery, £3,353)			
Half-yearly	Deposits—June	26,	1922	£2,097
.....				
	(Blaina, £204)			
	(Abertillery, £463)			
Half-yearly	Withdrawals from January	17,	1921	£21,664
.....				
	(Blaina, £5,369)			
	(Abertillery, £4,878)			
Half-yearly	Withdrawals—June	26,	1922	£8,707
.....				

#### TRADING ACCOUNTS

Sales	for	year	1920	£800,641 or £15,396 per week
.....				
Sales	for	year	1921	£495,511 or £9,529 per week
.....				
Sales	for	23 weeks,	1922	£156,163 or £6,790 per week
.....				

This is a reduction of 55.9 per cent, from 1920 and 28.7 per cent, from 1921.

*(The Third Winter of Unemployment. The Report of an Enquiry undertaken in the Autumn of 1922, London, 1924, pp. 181–3.)*

#### B.9 Example 1.

Mr E. P. of Aberdare, Glamorgan. Number in family, man, wife, and four children, aged two, four, six, and nine years. Income per week from unemployment allowance is 38s. Conditions in the home are that all cooking has to be done on an open fire; there is no gas-stove. There are no decent cupboards or meat safes. By way of utensils the family have one kettle with a broken spout, three saucepans, one frying-pan, and one pot. There are two bowls with holes stopped up with pieces of rag. No dinner-plates, no bread-knife. Only four cups and two saucers for six in the family, two knives and two spoons, three forks and four small plates. The floor of the kitchen in which they live is bare stone, with no lino or carpet covering. There is only one blanket in the family, no sheets, no pillow-cases. Articles of clothes such as old coats are mostly used for bed-covering. A rent of 8s. 6d. a week is paid, 1s. 3d. insurance, 3s. 4d. coal, 1s. 6d. light, and an average of 2s. for boot

repairs, etc., leaving £1 1s. 5d. for food, clothes, and miscellaneous expenditure for six people. There are only three chairs for six people. Two spring mattresses in the bedroom are broken, and the room has no furniture in it besides the bed, not even a table on which to place a candle. There is electric light in two out of the four rooms, but one is completely empty.

Mrs E. M. W. of Pontypool, Monmouth. There are nine in the family, the ages of the children being fourteen, thirteen, eleven, seven, five, three, and two. The income from all sources is £27s. a week. Living-conditions in the home are that all food has to be cooked on the open fire — there is no gas-stove or oven. There is only one small cupboard for food and no meat safe. In regard to cooking utensils, the family has only one kettle, one small frying-pan, two small saucepans. Utensils for preparing food consist of only one bowl, which is used for making puddings and to wash up in. They have only seven cups and saucers between nine persons, two knives, six small spoons, six forks, and eight plates. The family live in three rooms, one living-kitchen and two small bedrooms. The kitchen has a stone floor and the bedrooms have bare boards; no lino. There are two full-size beds and one small bed. In bedclothes the family have only two flannelette blankets on each bed, one quilt and one sheet, three pillow-cases. All bed-clothing is very threadbare and has little warmth. The small bed does not belong to them; they have it only on loan. Four boys sleep in one bed and two boys sleep in the small bed. Husband and wife and child two years of age sleep in the other bed. The springs in one of the beds are badly broken and there is no money to get a new mattress. The house is old and very damp and cold. In a statement appended by the signatory who verifies the correctness of the above, he says: 'I have known the family for a number of years. Both parents are very sober and industrious persons and the mother strives very hard to keep her children clean and respectable. The family endeavoured to get a special grant from the U.A.B. [Unemployment Assistance Board] in order that they could make good the deficiency in household goods, but this was refused. The mother is now suffering from a skin disease which is considered to have been brought on by poor quality food and nervous tension.'

(From Wal Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas*, 1937, pp.65–6, 67.)

- B.10** A casual visitor to Rhondda, walking through one of its shopping-centres, might not notice many visible signs of a depressed area. As is frequently remarked, the people of the valley cling tenaciously to their standards. If, however, we should accompany a housewife on her weekly shopping expedition and observe how careful she must be not to deviate from the routine of expenditure which the limitations of her unemployment income dictate, we shall begin to realize something of the monotony and anxiety of her life. The following budgets show the

expenditure of two unemployed families as actually spent during the current week.

**Mrs A. — Expenditure of family of four**

**(HUSBAND, WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN)**

*Income—£1 10 6*

	<b>£</b>	<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>
<i>Rent</i>		7	0
<i>Food —</i>		<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>
Milk and bread	4	0	
14 lbs potatoes	1	3	
2 lbs butter	2	2	
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb margarine (for cakes)			$3\frac{1}{2}$
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb cheese			$4\frac{1}{2}$
2 packets flour		5	
4 lbs sugar		9	
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb tea		8	
1 lb currants			$5\frac{1}{2}$
Meat for weekend	2	0	
Meat for Wednesday and Thursday	1	0	
Cabbage for weekend		4	
		<hr/>	
			13
			$8\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Other household expenditure —</i>			
Coal	2	6	
Electric light	1	0	
2 boxes matches		2	
1 lb soap		5	
1 packet washing powder		3	
Polish (floor, boot, metal etc. according to need)		6	
		<hr/>	
			4
			10
<i>Insurances</i>			1
<i>Boot and clothing clubs</i>			3
<i>Doctor and Hospital</i>			4
<i>Sunday paper and sundries</i>			
			$6\frac{1}{2}$
			<hr/>
	£1	10	6
			<hr/>

**Mrs B. — expenditure of family of five**

**(HUSBAND, WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN)**

*Income—£1 13 6*

			£	s.	d.
<i>Rent</i>				8	6
<i>Food —</i>	<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>			
Bread	4	0			
2 tins condensed milk		3			
Potatoes	1	6			
2½ lbs butter	2	6			
½ lb margarine		2			
½ lb lard		4			
1 lb cheese		8			
4 lbs flour		7			
4 lbs sugar		9			
1 lb tea		8			
½ lb currants		3			
2 lb pot jam		10			½
Cocoa		2			
Salt		1			
1 lb bacon		10			
1 lb peas		2			½
Meat for Sunday	1	0		14	10
<i>Other household expenditure —</i>					
Coal and coke	1	8			½
Light and matches	1	0			
2 lbs soap and Persil		7			½
Polishes		4			½
				3	8
<i>Insurances</i>				1	3
<i>Boot and clothing clubs</i>				4	0
<i>Doctor and hospital</i>					4
			£1	12	9
					½

(*The Geographical Magazine*, March 1936.)

**B.11** The Maes-yr-haf Settlement is in the centre of the valleys, a section of the 'derelict area' of South Wales, where a very high percentage of the workers are unemployed. In attempting to meet the educational needs of people in this position, it is facing a new situation; constantly presenting great difficulties and problems. But these very problems bring opportunity for experiment, the breaking of fresh ground. The keynote of the work of Maes-yr-haf has been continued adaptation to the needs of a society struggling to make the best of the unexpected collapse of its means of livelihood.

Maes-yr-haf was actually opened as a centre for educational and cultural activities in the spring of 1927. An Adult School, which had been started in 1926, was moved to the Settlement, and additional schools for women and young people were opened. These schools, with four others outside the Settlement, united to form a Sub-Union of the National Adult School Union. In the winter of 1927 two Oxford graduates came into residence at the Settlement, and regular classes were held. Philosophy was a popular subject, and brought to light an interesting problem. It was found that the men's minds were keen enough, but were prevented from functioning fully and freely by an obsession derived from the doctrine of economic determinism on which they had been nourished. It was decided that a different form of mental discipline was needed as a training for philosophic studies. Accordingly classes were planned, with this idea in mind, on 'Man's Place in the Universe' — looking at mankind against a biological background rather than a specifically political one; and English Literature was also offered as a subject of study.

These schools and classes were maintained and developed, but, during the first three years of the Settlement's life, distress was so great that the organization of relief was necessarily very much to the fore. It was a temptation 'to sink all other interests in the attempt to meet purely physical needs.' However, in the cobblers' groups, which were reorganized and extended, and the sewing and mending groups for women, the principle of self-help was kept constantly before the people, and 'every opportunity sought of promoting constructive and educational activities and interests.'

(From *Education Yearbook*, 1935, pp.684–93.)

**B.12** When the (1926) strike was over and we had settled down sufficiently to gain a detached view, we were able to regard it as only a preliminary skirmish which should prepare us for further and greater struggles ahead. This conception, we felt, was due entirely to the work of our evening classes in economics where students had been persistently taught that industrial action was the sure and only means of winning industrial salvation. And what I was trying to teach in my valley was taught by others in other valleys.

These classes were a great success, and by the end of 1927 they were larger than they had ever been. Every student had Marx controlling his mind and 'Das Kapital' on his bookshelf. Thus we had an army of class-conscious students capable, we believed, of spreading a gospel

of revolutionary ideas throughout the coal-field. Our students had been trained to understand the nature of capitalism, how it developed and, we believed, how it would disappear. Disciplined to act when the opportunity came, they would nurture the revolutionary forces and speak for them. A minority, it is true; but revolutions depend on minorities. But even in our wildest moments we never considered violence as necessary. The revolution would be bloodless, a democratic triumph.

It was an overall picture that gladdened our hearts; we were succeeding in accomplishing what we had set out to do and, as I thought of it, I was proud of the part I had played in bringing it about. There appeared, however, a nigger in our wood-pile; he was at first only a baby nigger in our enlightened eyes, like the one on the old-fashioned money-box and one which we felt we could soon send back to the dark forest of useless ideas.

But the little nigger grew in stature in the period following the strike and he was apparently received with approbation in the valleys, where he loudly proclaimed that the cure for all his ills in the coal-fields was nationalization. We had been teaching that the control of the industry should be from the bottom, by the workers. The new idea, first brought to the valley by Keir Hardie and left to sleep for a long time, was that the industry should be controlled from the top, from Whitehall.

When it became clear in time that nationalization might push our enlightened ideas into the background we decided to act. A meeting was called of the more advanced economic students to decide on a plan of campaign. Convinced of our greater wisdom, we decided to preach our gospel from the house-tops, actually at Sunday night meetings and, in addition, to preach at organized week-end schools. At all costs we must succeed in persuading the miner and his wife that Post Office socialism would not cure their ills, that a change of ownership, from the mine-owners to the state, would not end exploitation.

The result of this was that during the few years that followed a choice of two meetings was offered to the people of the valleys, sometimes in the same street, always on the same Sunday evening, where state socialism was expounded at one with great eloquence and the Russian brand at the other. As it happened, the Russian brand lost popular appeal steadily and, I have to confess, the materialistic philosophy I had been teaching and preaching began to lose its appeal and meaning for me. And while I could never renounce my carefully-studied philosophy, that inner reserve of strength and faith which a crusader must have was no longer mine.

And thus I left the two ideologies to fight it out without me, not then certain which would dominate my valley's future.

(W. J. Edwards, *From the Valley I Came*, London, 1956, pp.260–1.)

- B.13** The district has again had a continued epidemic of scarlet fever during the year, the majority of the cases being of severe type and

complications were common. The general want of resistance to attack and the severity of the symptoms were, in my opinion, due to general malnutrition among the children, the result of the unfortunate economic conditions prevalent in South Wales.

(Report of Dr J. H. Rankin, Medical Officer of Health for the Gelligaer Urban District Council, 1933, in Wal Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas*, London, 1937, pp. 53–4.)

- B.14** In all denominations . . . the congregations have shrunk a great deal in size and the older folk are in the majority. In 1936 a survey was made of the effects of migration on the churches in the Rhondda Valley. It was found that 8867 members of the Nonconformist chapels of the Rhondda had moved away between 1925 and 1935. If we also take into account the Episcopal Church, the total loss of members due to migration cannot be less than 10,000 . . . By their very constitution and voluntary character, the Free Churches cannot protect their material resources by appealing to the state or to the public purse.

(Discussion between Revd Alban Davies and Revd Maurice Charles. Brinley Thomas, 'The changing face of south Wales', *The Listener*, 20 March 1938. The substance of ten broadcasts from Wales by Dr Brinley Thomas.)

- B.15** For some years now men who have believed themselves to be feeling the pulse of our national life have been telling us that religion in Wales is not what it once was and is far from what it ought to be. They point to the growing predominance of secular interests, the decaying allegiance to spiritual leaders, the decreasing membership in the various Churches, the growing prevalence of what our forefathers regarded as heinous sin, namely, Sabbath desecration, betting and gambling, an increasing levity concerning morals, together with countless other tendencies all moving in the same direction. Where religion is showing some feeble signs of life is in what is becoming known as the Catholic Movement. In the Church in Wales those who call themselves Anglo-Catholics are becoming increasingly active and are undoubtedly making themselves felt as a powerful religious force. Among Roman Catholics there is manifesting itself a deepened sense of national sentiment which is engendering in the minds of many Welshmen the feeling that they need not lose any whit of their nationality by being members of that communion. The gibe that the Roman Catholicism in our midst is merely an Irish and an Italian mission is rapidly becoming untrue. Even among chapel folk there seems to be a turning to certain Catholic points of view; there is among them an increasing demand for a more artistic manner of worship, even if such a worship should mean a dallying with the things strictly forbidden to a past generation; sacramentalism too, on account of a growing dissatisfaction with the old-fashioned extempore prayer and the long drawn out sermons full of literary inconsequences, logical inconsistencies, crude metaphysics and an emotional fervour foreign to our colder modern attitude to life, is asking to have its place recognized both in thought and worship. Nor are men so bitter towards Catholicism as they were even a few



decades ago; they are content to let it pursue its own way, and if it can claim men's allegiance they are willing to wish it well.

('Wales and Catholicism', Revd Dr E. E. Thomas, *Welsh Outlook*, Volume XIX, Number II, February 1932, p.47.)

- B.16** Expressions of dissatisfaction with the inadequate provision made by the B.B.C. to meet the special needs and conditions prevalent in Wales have been persistent since the establishment of the Cardiff Station in February, 1923. Time and again has the matter been discussed and made the subject of representations by various public bodies in Wales. Much appreciated features such as the monthly broadcast of a religious service in Welsh through Daventry have found a secure place in the B.B.C. programme as a result of such representations. But the tendency of the British Broadcasting Corporation to overlook the claims of Wales as a living and progressive national entity continues to manifest itself to a degree that has become most disquieting. The Court of the University of Wales, at its meeting held in Cardiff on July 19<sup>th</sup>, viewed the situation with grave concern. Fully realizing the immense influence which 'wireless' is destined to exercise in every sphere of national life, it resolved to urge upon the B.B.C. directly specific claims on behalf of Wales and to call upon all bodies and individuals interested in the maintenance of our national traditions to support these claims . . .

Wales has never been treated as a separate entity in the broadcasting system in the same sense as Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Cardiff Station, established in 1923, was not designed to provide a broadcast service that would 'cover the whole Principality'. It was intended to serve the teeming valleys of Glamorgan and Monmouth and the populous Bristol area across the Severn. Today it is officially the West Regional Station. Every claim made for more programmes designed 'to keep alive the memory of historical associations' has been countered, quite properly in the circumstances, by the reminder that the West of England has at least an equal claim upon the services of the Cardiff Station. The establishment of a relay station in Swansea in 1924 extended for a time the opportunities for broadcasting Welsh programmes and interludes conducted in the Welsh language. But 'Welsh' Wales, where the Welsh language is largely the speech medium of home and school, of office and workshop, was completely out of hearing of Cardiff and Swansea. The only service that could be relied upon in 'Welsh' Wales was that provided by Daventry.

In the autumn of 1928 I was making a brief sojourn in a Welsh village in Pembrokeshire. As a programme which I particularly desired to hear was due to be broadcast from Daventry during the period of my stay, I sought to arrange an opportunity to listen in. The hostelry in which I was a guest and the homes of two or three of my acquaintances in the village were furnished with wireless sets, but in all cases they were out of commission and had been in that state for varying periods. The explanation given was invariable: they could not 'get' Cardiff and Swansea, while the London programmes broadcast from Daventry contained too little that interested them to warrant the trouble and

expense of keeping the sets going. I suspect that such cases are numerous. What Wales should demand is no more than the B.B.C. is presumably prepared to concede once it is convinced of the reality of the demand, — no more than it has already granted to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(‘Wales and the British Broadcasting Corporation’, Professor E. Ernest Hughes, *Welsh Outlook*, Volume XVI, Number VIII, August 1929, p.230.)

- B.17** It is my considered opinion that Welsh rugby has made definite progress during the past few seasons, and particularly during this present one. There can be small room for doubt that since 1922 we have had our very lean years. Primarily that has been due to the nature of our forward play. It has always been an anomaly to me that Welshmen, who have rugby football ingrained in them, and who have so often been the teachers of the game, should so lag behind the other countries in the matter of forward play. Rugby football has altered considerably since the war, and nowhere to such a degree as forward.

Speaking generally, rugby football is in a decidedly healthy state all through South Wales, in spite of the fearfully depressing state of our trade. At Bridgend, Abertillery, Neath, Aberavon, and a host of other places enthusiasm is greater than ever. All that Wales needs now is for the game to spread with equal zeal into North Wales. We hear from time to time that the game is rapidly gathering strength there. I hear efforts are being made by certain clubs to seek membership with the Welsh Rugby Union. We want North Wales in the fold. It would be quite refreshing to be witnessing an encounter between England and Wales, say, at Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, or Wrexham.

The question of a national rugby ground for Wales was hotly debated in our borders at the beginning of the present season. This controversy followed the purchase by the W.R.U. [Welsh Rugby Union] of the Brewery field, Bridgend.

Whatever side you take in this debate, all are agreed that the present accommodation at either Cardiff or Swansea does not satisfy. If the accommodation were adequate and guaranteed, you could house double and perhaps treble the people who attend at present. But even present conditions are not what they could easily be made. I have recollections of my press seat in the game at Swansea between ourselves and France. The weather was bitterly cold, it snowed, and I felt I ought to apologise to all the English press visitors amongst whom I sat. Spectators near us had paid 10s. for a grand stand ticket. Really they were accommodated in a temporary stand in front of the permanent structure. I should have felt very aggrieved if such had been my ten shillings’ worth.

Personally I am all for one central commodious ground at Bridgend. For goodness sake do not condemn the idea because the crowd could not be catered for — the demand always ensures the supply. Neither view the actual position concerning approaches and exits as it is now.

Just use your imagination in a normal way and the rest is easy. I can quite understand vested interests in Cardiff and Swansea using powerful weapons to pour ridicule on the scheme. For my part I have a shrewd idea that the Welsh Rugby Union will refuse to be panicked into a surrender. We want a ground comparable with a Wembley or a Murrayfield. Time will bring it — and probably at Bridgend.

(‘Welsh Rugby Review’ by Clem Lewis, *Welsh Outlook*, Volume XVIII, Number IV, April 1931, p.108.)

**B.18** Thirty-five extreme cases were selected and thoroughly studied to expose the wilful misapplication of the Alien Registration Act of Great Britain in the case of Coloured British subjects residing and working out of Cardiff as Seamen.

- a) Eight persons who rightly claim British Nationality. And who have been and are to-day classified by the Cardiff Police as Aliens are in lawful and regular possession of British Passports. When summoned by the police for Alien Registration, each of the Coloured British Subjects displayed the certificates of Nationality to the said Public officials. Two of these men had birth certificates which they also presented. Even this indisputable proof, accompanied by avowed assertions of their British Status, and firm protests against being classified as Foreigners, did not deter the Police from forcing Alien cards on the men.
- b) Seven persons who rightly claim British Nationality, and who have been and are to-day classified by the Cardiff Police as Aliens, were in lawful and regular possession of British Passports when they were so classified. These documents are not now with their rightful owners! Some were forcibly withheld by the Cardiff Police when displayed for inspection as a protest against Alien Classification and no receipts were given for them. The other Passports were mailed to the Home Office in London for renewal, and were acknowledged by letters now held by the persons concerned. Correctly considered by these world-travellers as high and fixed proof of Nationality (irrespective of the date of expiration) when supported by continued and honourable residence in the country, their Passports were never lightly treated or released.
- c) Thirteen persons who rightly claim British Nationality, and who have been and are to-day classified by the Cardiff Police as Aliens, were in regular and lawful possession of British Mercantile Marine Identification Certificates, at the time of this classification. These documents clearly certify the Nationality of each holder as ‘BRITISH’, and are only issued above the signature and office of a responsible servant of His Majesty’s Service, three of these thirteen possess British Certificates, three possess Passports, and two held Passports which were surrendered during the Alien Registration drive among the Coloured Seamen.

- d) Fifteen persons who rightly claim British Nationality, and who have been and are to-day classified by the Cardiff Police as Aliens, have honourable records for Military Service for King and Country. One was at the memorable battle of Jutland; one served for three years in Mesopotamia; one carried the British colours against the 'BOERS'; Two joined in the British West Indies, and served the British Empire in its military conquest of Africa; Eight fought in the Great War; and Two hold good conduct and long service Medals. One held a letter of gratitude and the thanks from H.M. George V for military service during the War of 1914–1918. Serving either in the military ranks at sea or on land, or in the Merchant Marine, some of these men were injured. Three now classed as Aliens were torpedoed during the Great War, and subsequently received compensation awards from His Majesty's Government of £42, £42 and £29 respectively. Three men bear scars from severe injuries.
- e) Nineteen persons who rightly claim British Nationality, and who have been and are to-day classified by the Cardiff Police as Aliens, have lived in Great Britain longer than ten years. Of these nineteen, three have resided in this country thirty years or more; twelve from twenty to twenty-nine years; and four have lived here between ten and twenty years. As these men are seamen, employment records at various seaports in Great Britain reveal the fact of their residence. One of these men is sixty years of age, of which thirty-seven were spent in England. Fifteen of the thirty-five, originally selected, are married, with from one to seven dependents. In a few cases men, unable to secure employment because of an apparent discrimination against coloured British seamen in favour of non-coloured British seamen, have been out of work and on the dole for four years.

Thirty-five persons whose rightful claims to British Nationality have been forcefully disregarded by the Cardiff Police are now in possession of the Seamen's Continuous Certificate of Discharge — wherein either the Nationality is recorded as British or the place of birth clearly appears. Some fifteen hundred are now forced to carry Alien Cards where the Nationality is unintelligently stated as 'SEAMAN' and the place of birth is purposely left unanswered.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If it is criminal and anti-social to tax out of existence a worthwhile enterprise, or ruthlessly to exterminate a helpless community in war; how shall a purposeful policy to drive some 3000 wage-earners out of their sole industry, be characterized? As this report goes to print, CARDIFF is doing 'just that'!

Thus a new monument to economic ignorance and racial animosity rises in England. Fresh, vigorous and dynamic, abundantly nourished

by the poisons of the depressions, this tower threatens all intelligent attitudes, and submerges the vital problems still unsettled among shipping labourers. Envious brutality is ever that way. It has recruited as fellow-artisans in this hostile construction, some strange bed-fellows. The Trade Union, the Police and the Shipowners appear to cooperate smoothly in barring Coloured Colonial Seamen from signing on ships in Cardiff. The legislative history of this policy has been traced chronologically, and due emphasis placed upon the stipulation to carry only British Seamen which accompanied the two million pound grant to hard hit shipping industry. These plans and methods were never unknown to the coloured seamen nor did they pass unchallenged by them. Tenseness increased tenseness until on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1935, a riot broke out at the Cardiff Docks over the flagrant discriminatory actions of a labour delegate in refusing the Chief Engineer of the S.S. *Ethel Radcliffe* the right to repick his coloured crew for a voyage.

This hostile labour attitude towards coloured seamen respects neither kith nor kin, creed or colour. For these coloured men have their homes in this country. Their wives are products of the soil, and their children are ENGLISH. Many of them have given of their youth and labour to the industrial and military services of this great nation, and they suffer, keenly in their deep sensitive souls, this unmerited assault. One feels it in the frank sincerity of their conversations; one knows it by the unassailable records they possess. True these men are coloured, so are five out of every seven persons in the British Empire! Without people of colour there would be neither Cardiff nor an Empire. For numerically and territorially this is overwhelmingly a coloured Empire, not a white one. It is true these 'yellow', 'red', 'brown' and 'black' men are said to be out of place in this 'white' country, consorting with its native women. These same charges may well be laid at the door of white men in some 'yellow', 'red', 'brown' and 'black' countries. Clearly, therefore, charges and counter charges may mount and remount, proving conclusively that the basis of the present Cardiff seamen's trouble lies more deeply rooted.

('Investigation of Coloured Colonial Seamen in Cardiff. April 13<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>, 1935', Geo. W. Brown, from *The Keys. The Official Organ of the League of Coloured Peoples*. October-November, 1935, p.21.)

## **Debating the Evidence**

In an essay bearing this title we might expect a different dimension from the charting of economic decline. We expect more value judgements, for the author has every opportunity in dealing with such a topic to engage sympathetically with the people and communities under that devastating economic strain which has already been brought to light. We might expect, too, that the kinds of sources will reflect this, perhaps with scope for more literary, more subjective and more private testimony. Here, then, are some rather more pronounced problems of interpretation, especially if the literature of political statements referred to in the author's first paragraph is to find

expression; more so if the author himself is one of those 'historians who readily march side by side with the hungry'.

### **Source B.1**

As Deian Hopkin says, the evidence for population *trends* is incontrovertible. But is there anything you would need to know about these census returns before accepting the actual figures as totally accurate?

### **Source B.2**

The statistics of numbers of Welsh speakers are taken from the census returns because in 1891, for the first time, this information was required. What significance might there be in it being required in that year? What difficulties of interpretation might there be in dealing with these statistics?

### **Source B.3**

What does the document tell us about its author? How far is the document evidence for seeing economic theory as being far from neutral?

### **Source B.4**

In what ways might the material in this source be held to be impartial, and in what ways biased? Given the author's immediate purpose in the essay, how far do you regard this information as being wholly adequate for his purpose?

### **Source B.5**

The existence of a marketing survey is in itself significant, as is the fact that the author calls it a 'semi-official source'. In what ways might the motives of government and the motives of traders in seeking such information differ? Do you see any significance in the categories of information required?

### **Sources B.6 and B.7**

Here we have two very different kinds of documents. The market survey of north Wales, like that of Cardiff in Document B.5, is statistical, carefully categorized. Dr Rowland Williams is presumably a columnist in the *Tenby Observer* which certainly ran features of this kind regularly. We might infer that he was an educated man and a local man. But it is obvious that this kind of literary source is very different from statistical information. Decide what the differences are in the use the historian might make of the two different types of documents. Would it be reasonable to class the former as 'objective' and the latter as 'subjective'?

### **Source B.9**

How could the factual information provided here about Mr E.P. be made to show his circumstances in a far more favourable light?

## **Source B.10**

This appears at first sight to be a rather different kind of document from B.9. One is more 'literary', the emphasis in B.10 is statistical. How far is this apparent discrepancy a real one? Despite the impressive appearance of the balance sheet what information do we need before being able to make informed judgements about the adequacy of the diets of unemployed Rhondda families? What significance is there in that this information appeared in the *Geographical Magazine*?

## **Source B.11**

What information about the *Education Yearbook* would be useful to you in making use of this document?

## **Source B.12**

Why might you regard the unwitting or unintentional record of this document as being of more significance than the intentional record, or witting testimony?

## **Source B.13**

What significance, if any, would you attach to the fact that the Medical Officers of Health in this document were employees of local councils?

## **Sources B.14 and B.15**

From reading these two documents would you be able to tell to which denominations or churches they belonged? Why might it be important information?

## **Source B.16**

The author uses this document to illustrate his assertion that this 'was also an age of gramophone records and popular music, and of the wireless'. Yet nowhere in this document does such a statement occur. On what basis, therefore, is the author able to make this assertion? Is his evidence adequate? What other evidence would help to bolster his case? What other judgements about radio broadcasting in Wales in the 1920s might you make on the basis of this document? Professor Ernest Hughes was a professor of history at University College of Swansea. Do you regard this information as significant?

## **Source B.17**

This is the third successive document which the author has taken from the magazine, *Welsh Outlook*. What have we learned about *Welsh Outlook*?

## **Source B.18**

In what ways do allegations of, and evidence for, racism tie in with other social reactions to the grim conditions of inter-war Wales? How far do they fit uneasily into the remainder of Dr Hopkin's analysis?

## Discussion

Inevitably, an essay discussing social reactions to economic plight ranges more widely than one charting dimensions of economic decline. So, we make short forays into topics as diverse as religion and association football.

It is hardly surprising that the range of sources on which the conclusions are based is more catholic, though the early groundwork is established by means of the statistics contained in B.1, B.2 and B.4. These documents are based on an invaluable collection of statistics, published in 1986, (L.J. Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics*) and many of the tables rely on material culled from census returns. But census returns, excellent as they are, need to be treated with caution. We know that the early census returns, especially that of 1801, are not as reliable as later ones. But even of the later ones we need to know, for example, whether the questions asked in successive censuses were the same and, if not, how this might distort the resulting information. And the table itself reminds us that administrative boundaries of counties can change so that if we needed exact county figures there would be particular difficulties. Fortunately, the author, as is the case with most historical problems, is seeking to establish trends, and here the statistics provide firm enough evidence. We would need to be rather more cautious with the statistical information provided in B.5 and B.6. A marketing survey might well want to concentrate on particular areas of the country, particular areas of the economy and ask questions related to the higher spending categories of the population. This would certainly appear to be true in these two documents and, if taken alone, provide a very distorted view of the economic structure of Cardiff and north Wales. It would certainly be misleading, therefore, to think of B.6 as objective and B.7, a literary source, as subjective. Both reflect the people who were responsible for bringing the sources into existence.

That subjectivity of language which is evident in B.7 is perhaps even more pronounced in B.9 which appears to be a straightforward account of living conditions for two families in the parts of south Wales most affected by the depression. Yet, at each stage, there are statements which might, in the absence of further evidence, be misleading. For example, the fact that Mr E.P. of Aberdare has no gas stove might indicate that this was a badge of great poverty, but a hundred years earlier the aristocracy would have been cooked for on open fires. A covering of lino for a bare stone floor was obviously considered in this document to be a mark of respectability. Nowadays lino is regarded as an inferior floor covering to carpet. Judgements here are relative — and the author has an axe to grind. He uses 'only' and 'but' at strategic intervals to point a moral. It would not be hard to find a mass of corroborative evidence for his general statements, but this should not blind us to the necessity for it. The problem is more subtly displayed in B.10, but here again we need to know what quantity of milk and bread 4s. could purchase for Mrs A.'s family, and how such balance sheets compared with those of people in employment at a variety of levels. At the same time it is significant to us that this information should be of importance to readers of the *Geographical Magazine* with its international readership. Reporters and readers must be reflecting that unemployed south Wales has become something of a by-word.



B.12, B.15, B.16 and B.17 are very different types of sources. Indeed an autobiography (B.12) raises a variety of questions about historical sources. W. J. Edwards writes from personal experience — he was there. But he writes thirty years afterwards. This source, like taped oral evidence, so useful to the historian of recent times, must probably be adjudged a primary source. Yet the gap in time is a yawning one and must pose questions about reliability. From extracts B.15, B.16 and B.17 we learn that *Welsh Outlook* was a publication which catered for a reading public interested in religion, broadcasting and rugby — that is unless the magazine was subsidized to such an extent that it did not have to bother about the concern of its readers, but merely those of its editor! In such documents information about authors becomes crucial to the interpretation and reliability of the pieces they write. Since the Reverend Dr E. E. Thomas was not a Catholic, source B.15 is a highly significant indication of a more ecumenical outlook than might be expected in inter-war Wales. Professor E. Ernest Hughes's political affiliations would be of interest to us in assessing the importance of B.16 and certainly we would need to know if these views were typical not only of highly educated Welsh people but also of other sections of the Welsh community. Such questions are just as significant in relation to documents like B.18. We have here a clear necessity for an assessment of the bias inherent in a publication on coloured people by the League representing that group.