

## **Reflection 4**

### **Class Struggle . . .**

### **The Trespass and the 1930s**

The previous two reflections used the seven motifs to explore aspects of both the long hinterlands and the more immediate landscapes from which the Mass Trespass emerged. This reflection takes things forward from the time reached at the end of those seven explorations. It considers the reverberations of the Mass Trespass in the turbulent inter-war years.

My starting point is the re-shaped political landscape of the 1920s. I move on to the rapid growth of recreational rambling and the associated politics of land and countryside in the 1920s. What was carried forward from the pre-WW1 decades and what was new in the outdoors and access arena? I consider the originators and immediate aftermath of the Trespass in 1932, followed by an exploration of the reverberations of the Trespass during the years before 1939. I end this fourth reflection with a few thoughts on the key shifts which were taking place in the underlying political discourse of the 1930s.

As in previous reflections, what I offer here is not a continuous narrative. It is a collage of people, ideas, trends and events to convey a sense of the complexities and cross-currents of the politics of the Mass Trespass in the 1930s.

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#### **4.1 Into the 1920s – a new political normality**

Britain was amongst the countries which saw themselves as unequivocal victors at the end of WW1. The Liberal Party's Lloyd George remained Prime Minister after the 1918 'Coupon Election'; it gave a superficial impression that the wartime coalition government would take a similarly victorious lead in building a homeland fit for heroes. There was a Spanish Flu pandemic to get through; the death-toll for the UK was roughly as high as the casualties at the 1917 Battle of Passchendaele.<sup>1</sup> But by 1920, there was an expectation that the return to some sort of normality would get under way after all the pain, grief, hardship and dislocation of war. Indeed, trampers, ramblers and walkers could begin to hope that, in due course, a reforming Liberal MP would get round to introducing yet another 'Bryce' Access to Mountains Bill to enable the returning heroes and their families to walk on upland areas to recover from their wounds and their shell-shock. It did not take long for it to become apparent that the havoc wreaked by four years of global warfare had blocked the route back to 'the old normal'.

##### **a. "The strange death of liberal England"**

This was the intriguing title of an idiosyncratic book by George Dangerfield published in 1935.<sup>2</sup> By then it was clear that the Liberal Party, the dominant political party of the 19th century, the party of Gladstone, J S Mill, Manchester Liberalism and the orthodoxies of individualism and private property stretching back through Adam Smith and the Whigs to John Locke, the party capable of delivering radical reform when necessary (Russell in 1832; Lloyd George in 1906) . . . this grand old English political workhorse was not going to play a central governmental role any time soon. In the arena of electoral politics it was no longer a leading political player. It retained loyalties and built majorities in some large local authorities, including Manchester, but by 1935 George Dangerfield was moved to declare 'liberal England' dead.

The cause of death, according to Dangerfield, lay in the Liberal Party's mishandling of three crises during the pre-war years: the Suffragette Movement, New Unionism and the quasi-military opposition of protestant Ulstermen to any engagement with issues of Irish home rule / independence. These were undoubtedly three key factors foreshadowing political tensions for the post-WW1 years; there were demonstrable weaknesses in the Liberal Party's handling of those issues. But subsequent historians are far from agreed on: a) whether the three factors proposed by Dangerfield were adequate explanations for the Liberal Party's inter-war decline and b) even more important, whether liberalism died at all during those years.

The 1920s and 1930s were politically turbulent years, but not because liberalism was absent from the scene. Liberalism proved resilient and enduring; far from being extinguished, the torch of liberalism was carried forward in various guises. It was not, however, carried solely or primarily by the Liberal Party which found itself either in parliamentary opposition or the junior partner in Labour or Tory led coalitions. The Tory Party sought, under Baldwin's leadership, to become more of a 'One Nation' party for the era of universal suffrage; this entailed a setting of aspirations and a direction of travel towards a more modern industrial economy and the nurturing of the underlying liberal ideology of possessive individualism.

Similarly, although the Labour Party did not entirely shy away from its formal commitment to a socialist goal of 'common ownership', in practice its MPs retained a huge autonomy; on many issues of public administration and political economy they tended to take up positions which were closer to those of reforming liberalism than socialism. When it came to drawing up policies on land, for instance, Labour MPs took more account of liberal Georgeism and land taxation than socialist land nationalisation. What had formerly been Lib-Labism became Lab-Libism during the inter-war years. The Fabian end of the Labour Party drew from the LSE where, for instance, the liberal William Beveridge learnt his trade as a social reformer and was working up the ideas for what eventually became the Welfare State introduced by the 1945 Labour government. Similarly, J M Keynes, the dominant economic theorist of the inter-war years saw himself in the 1920s as an active inheritor and protagonist of both socialism and liberalism.<sup>3</sup>

So liberalism still informed the political landscape during the inter-war years, even though it was not always named as such. It was undoubtedly the case, however, that those countryside organisations and campaigns expecting to resume their work alongside a reforming Liberal Party had to learn how to navigate their way round a much changed political landscape.

### ***b. Socialism: reform and revolution***

Significant political space opened up in the immediate aftermath of WW1 for two significant socialist parties to emerge in the UK from the maelstrom of socialist visions I explored in the section on *Common Ownership* in Reflection 2.

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Sidney Webb, the Fabian *eminence grise* of the Labour Party, [LP] did not just write the formally socialist objectives of common ownership into the 1918 constitution of the party.<sup>4</sup> He also set out the basic structures and procedures which shaped the work and development of the LP as a socialist party during the inter-war years. The LP was to be a broad-based mass organisation, with individual members and affiliated organisational members such as trade unions and allied socialist groups such as the Fabian Society, the ILP and the Co-op Party. In this way, the LP presented itself as the political arm of the wider 'labour movement'. By virtue of its continuing links with the ILP, it sought (in principle if not always in practice) to be a political arena which also embraced more ethical strands of socialism, a banner under which peace movement organisations, groups concerned with birth control, family planning, radical / alternative sexualities, co-operators, environmentalists, some countryside protectionists, anti-imperialists and so forth could also advance their causes.

The LP was rooted in notions of electoral representative democracy (not direct or delegate democracy). "Of political parties claiming socialism to be their aim, the Labour Party has always been the most dogmatic – not about socialism, but about the parliamentary system."<sup>5</sup> Its aims were to be achieved gradually by means of reform through parliamentary legislation and local authority administration on the basis of winning majorities in elections. To that end, its MPs and elected councillors were afforded considerable autonomy in relation to the wider party and its affiliated and individual members. The accountability between representatives elected in national and local elections and the party's membership was weak and malleable. It was left to MPs' and councillors' judgement to decide in practice how to progress both the party's broad socialist objectives and specific policy options determined by its annual membership conferences. 19th-century novels were described by Henry James as "large, loose, baggy monsters"; the description also admirably sums up the LP!

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After several decades of complex in-fighting between various groups laying claim to the mantle of the Marxist tradition of insurrectionary / revolutionary socialism, the SDF of the 19th-century finally morphed into the Communist Party of Great Britain [CPGB] in 1920. It had prior activist roots amongst trade unions – particularly the syndicalist end of the trade union movement – and anti-colonial and some anti-WW1 groups. It brought together many of those who had been active during the war in such movements as Red Clydeside (Rent Strike, Women's Peace Crusade, 40-hour Strike) and comparable actions across the UK. The CPGB had an internationalist approach to socialism and located itself within the 'Third / Communist International' set up in 1919. It adopted the sorts of internal party structures and procedures developed by the Bolshevik faction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The CPGB was never a mass party. By virtue of its self-defined role as a 'vanguard party' within the political traditions of what came, post-1917, to be referred to as Marxism-Leninism, the building of a mass membership was less of a priority than undertaking and sustaining suitably strategic interventions within the dynamics of class struggle and related areas of social and political contestation. Whereas the LP sought to be a socialist coalition drawing on a wide range of social groups and interests, the driving coalition within the CPGB during the inter-war years was more narrowly defined as a strongly working-class and trade union oriented activist base, alongside a not insignificant group of radical, modernist intellectuals and cultural workers.

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The divergences and convergences between the LP and the CPGB played a major role in shaping the terrain on which the politics of land and countryside generally and the Mass Trespass in particular played out during the inter-war years. The following are worth bearing in mind as you work your way through this Reflection.

- *The Working Class.* Both parties sought to improve the conditions of the working class and remove the social, political, cultural and economic conditions which prevented the working class from flourishing. The LP perceived itself as acting 'in the interests of' the working class'; the CPGB perceived itself as acting more directly to enable the working class to take control of its own destiny. The LP's approach was one of making reforms on behalf of the working class. The CPGB's was one of building, through routine industrial and political conflicts, a working class movement capable of progressing a more far-reaching, root-and-branch transformation of the social, political and economic order. The differences between the LP and the CPGB was a British version of the contrasts generally between reform- and revolution-oriented socialisms across most of the industrialised economies of the inter-war years.

- *Direct Action and Mass Protest.* Two books published in 1920 set out an agenda which exercised both the LP and the CPGB: Mellor's *Direct Action* and Goodhart's *The Frontier of Control* with a foreward by R.H Tawney. Both books built on the syndicalist dimension of new unionism, which located trade union activity within a broadly-defined framework of class struggle. Indeed, the deliberate extension of trade union influence / control through the process of collective bargaining across industrial sectors could be seen as an expression of gradualism within the LP. For the LP, with its extensive membership base of affiliated trade unions, *Direct Action* entailed close political and working relationships between the leadership of the unions and the leadership of the parliamentary end of the LP. The CPGB realised its commitment to *Direct Action* somewhat differently. The building of wider support through direct action was an important element in creating a pre-insurrectionary working class movement from the bottom up. Hence the focus of the CPGB tended to be not so much on the leadership of the trade union movement but the rank-and-file membership, local branch officials and emerging groups of shop stewards. This significant divergence over *Direct Action* generated tensions which resonated across such major set-piece moments of Direct Action as the 1926 General Strike, but also across the wider development of union activism and other forms of social and political protest in the inter-war years.
- *Socialist values / culture.* A third book published in 1920 was R H Tawney's *The Acquisitive Society*. What Tawney contributed was a perceptive and influential critique of the long-standing and deep-rooted assumptions of liberal 'possessive individualism' and its elaboration through the values associated with the growing arena of consumption, leisure-time, personal identity etc. *The Acquisitive Society* set out an alternative framework for a politics of socialism during the inter-war years; it provided an umbrella not just for the politics of class as reflected in trade union activity, but for a wider politics of class in relation to personal aspirations and visions of an alternative social order. This brought the public protests and demonstrations of women's struggles / campaigns, the marches and campaigns of the peace movement and other similar inter-war progressive / alternative movements within the ambit of the politics of class, direct action and mass protest of both LP and the CPGB.
- *Internal party cultures and discipline.* We noted earlier that the LP was a loose and baggy monster. It held together not just different sections and organisations but also quite wide-ranging visions of socialism and how the party should disport itself to achieve such visions. Once a policy position was agreed, then in principle that position should be adopted by and inform the work for all individual and associate members. In practice such unity was never achieved. The wrangling and jostling continued just as before and everyone, from MPs to local card-carrying members, continued to argue their support for or opposition to the agreed policy. By contrast, the CPGB aspired to be a sleek panther; on the basis of what was termed *democratic centralism*, it adopted a more disciplined set of internal procedures. Fierce internal democratic argument was allowed to rage over the determination of policies or 'lines' (i.e. broad strategic approaches); but once a particular policy or line was agreed, it became a centrally monitored obligation for all members to publicly pursue that policy or line.

## **4.2 The politics of land and countryside in the 1920s**

Clearly things were afoot in the 1920s on the terrain of *Common Ownership* and *Direct Action*. I now need to check on how things were, in the immediate aftermath of WW1, for the other dimensions of the politics of land, landscape and countryside. What resumed where it had left off in 1914 in the tramping, climbing and access worlds, and what was new?

### **a) The political economy of land**

Alun Howkins described the inter-war years as 'The Locust Years' for the English countryside and agriculture.<sup>6</sup> Those who eventually returned from the war did not find a land ready and fit for heroes. Agriculture had been supported by government subsidies during the war years and the Agriculture Act enabling those measures was repealed in 1921. By 1923, the distressed state of agriculture and the rural economy generally was such that the Country Landowners Association and the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers [NUAW] joined forces in a visit to the then Tory Prime Minister, Bonar Law, to ask for a return of the subsidies. Bonar Law's reply to their entreaties was both dispiriting and revealing:

*I do not see what can be done, or what you could expect the government to do. You come to me and say the position is very bad, and you ask the government to put it right. We should only be too glad to if we were able . . . but I cannot see any practical scheme by which that can be done. . . . I think that the agricultural industry is in a worse position than almost any other industry, but they have all suffered; but the question is, is agriculture to be self supporting, or to be supported by the State? I think the latter is impossible. If there were any way we would like to help you, but it seems to me that agriculture must lie on an economic basis.<sup>7</sup>*

By the mid-1920s, less than 7% of the English workforce was employed in the rural economy – and that included those who were in non-farming occupations such as railway workers, postal workers, white collar workers. Agriculture accounted for no more than 4% of the distribution of the national income. The trends of the great agricultural depression resumed after WW1. Bonar Law's response was a stark expression of the marginality of "the agricultural interest" as a distinct sector of the nation by the mid-1920s.

As we will see, ruralism still held a strong ideological and cultural sway, but the reality was that the UK was a thoroughly urban society by the 1920s and recognised as such by the legislators of all parties. Bonar Law's successor, Stanley Baldwin, attended primarily to matters of industry, trade and empire in the later 1920s. The Labour Party did attempt to establish a political presence in rural England, but it was an uphill battle. Both Labour and Tories recognised the need for achieving some sort of improvement in agricultural efficiency. But the Tory Party left it to the farming sector to sort itself out in the same way as any other struggling industry in a *laissez-faire*, market economy. And the Labour Party never quite grasped the nettles of extensive planning and/or radical changes in land tenure. Indeed, the Labour Party had to grapple with an enduring paradox in relation to the rural economy. What was its political priority? Was it to support the farming industry and increase its efficiency through such long overdue developments as greater mechanisation and investment – which would benefit the farmers and landowners rather than the landworkers? Or was it to improve the working conditions of the rural landworkers, which would tend to reverse the costs and benefits?<sup>8</sup>

### **b) The politics of countryside**

There were some signs of fundamental changes occurring in the social and political order of the countryside. But it was not until the late-1930s that one catches sight of the long-term trends taking

place across the countryside during the Locust Years. I will explore them in due course. For the time being, I will focus my attention here on one of the few areas of countryside activity where dynamic changes did take place during the 1920s, namely, the activities of recreational walking, tramping and climbing.

Inevitably many of the pre-WW1 rambling and outdoor clubs and groups did not survive into the 1920s. What was noteworthy was the speed with which new clubs emerged and the fact that walking / rambling / tramping became an increasingly popular leisure-time pursuit by the mid-1920s, especially amongst young people – most of whom did not even bother to join a club. They simply made their own way to the countryside with a map or a guidebook and organised their own walks, even though footpaths were not yet a standard feature on OS Maps.

Alongside the growth in numbers regularly walking in the countryside, the pre-WW1 organisational network girding the outdoor movement was also reviving and renewing its various endeavours.

- Following the example of London in 1905, Manchester (1922), Liverpool (1923) and Sheffield (1926) set up their own city-wide Federations of Rambling Clubs. Not only did they co-ordinate activities, share experiences and do their own work around footpaths and other local access negotiations; they also resumed their grass-roots access campaigning in support of a renewed series of 'Bryce' Access to Mountains Bills. The Labour MP Charles Trevelyan presented one such Bill in 1926, 1928 and 1929. In 1908 Trevelyan had previously presented the same Bill as a Liberal MP! By 1930 and 1931, it fell to Ellen Wilkinson – "Red Ellen" – to present the almost annual Access to Mountains Bill on behalf of the climbing and rambling communities.
- The preservationist bodies such as the COSFPS and the PNFA resumed their activities with renewed vigour within their respective southern and northern bailiwicks. Worth noting, incidentally, that the growth of leisure-time rambling was faster and more extensive in the southern counties than the northern regions. Those flocking to Box Hill outnumbered those heading for Bleaklow.
- The NT continued to acquire new estates as a result of the somewhat volatile market in land during the early post-war years. The process by which some larger estates opted to move into the NT in the light of problems in the rural economy and/or inheritance duties was in train in those years. Also worth noting that the NT acquired its first property in the Dark Peak area in 1930. A rather complicated deal put together by G H B Ward and the City of Sheffield enabled the NT to take into its portfolio the Longshaw estate just beyond the south-eastern edge of the city's moorland boundary with Derbyshire. The estate was above Padley Gorge and looked out over Hathersage along the valley towards Bamford, Hope, Win Hill and Kinder.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the legislative baton being passed from the Liberal to Labour MPs, these were all routine continuities. The 1920s also saw the appearance of several new initiatives, organisations and trends relating to the growth of popular engagement in outdoor countryside activities.

- *Northern Access Rallies.* In 1926, the Manchester and Sheffield Rambling Federations organised the first of an annual series of access rallies in Winnats Pass, the dramatic limestone gorge leading out of Castleton to the west. They were presided over by G H B Ward from Sheffield and Edwin Royce from Manchester, both ardent campaigners for open access to moorland. They also attracted a range of regular speakers such as the Labour MP, Hugh Dalton – the Rambler's MP, who became a President of the Ramblers Association

in the 1940s – and other Labour MPs. This was an early reflection of the growing dalliance between Ramblers and the Labour Party during the inter-war years.

The rallies were also addressed by such figures as Cyril Joad, who was, thanks to the BBC, an early public intellectual and controversialist (along with such figures as Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw and J B Priestley). He was a Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck, Fabian socialist, ardent countryside preservationist, and sometime supporter of radical / progressive causes such as open access. He was a popular figure, whose opinions were always presented engagingly, if not entirely consistently. He achieved considerable fame and notoriety as a member of the radio's Brains Trust panel during WW2.

The Winnats Pass rallies attracted crowds in the thousands, the largest probably being more than 10,000 in 1932, shortly after the imprisonment of the Kinder Scout Mass Trespassers.

- *The Youth Hostels Association [YHA]*. The CHA and the HF, both founded by T A Leonard before WW1, flourished in the 1920s. Both were underpinned by a strong sense of the values of ruralism; both had an international dimension and loose leanings towards the peace movement and a moderate, ethical socialism. Esperanto courses appeared on their programmes. Aware, perhaps, of the growing number of young people taking up rambling and that the full week-long rigours and commitments of the CHA's and HF's educational-cum-countryside appreciation programmes were beyond their reach, Leonard set up a young person's feeder organisation in the shape of the YHA in 1930. Spartan and simple with a strong ethical underpinning, Youth Hostels became one of the largest and most widely used outdoor networks of the inter-war years.<sup>10</sup>
- *The Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE)*. Set up in 1926, the CPRE was an active and influential new kid on the countryside preservationist block. I will explore the role of the CPRE more fully later when I review the 1930s. The CPRE was staunchly preservationist / conservationist, but it was not in the nostalgia business of recovering a lost golden age. Its founder was Patrick Abercrombie, a leading town planner in the inter-war years. The CPRE saw itself as bringing both professionalism, planning and modernism to the business of conserving the English countryside. It acted as an efficiently run and well resourced umbrella body for countryside preservationism generally. It organised annual conferences on major policy issues in relation to rural life and undertook substantial lobbying and research. Its initial focus was opposition to the expansion of suburbs and ribbon development and support for inviolable green belt land round cities; but its reach was much wider and diffuse as a leading proponent of the ruralist cause. It attracted widespread support and involvement from across the political and cultural spectrum. It should also be recognised that the CPRE was not set up as an access or rambling oriented organisation. Indeed, many of its positions in relation to the conservation of the countryside ran contrary to the interests of popular or recreational access. As with the earlier preservationist bodies, the CPRE's position was at times ambiguous and contradictory.
- *The Pinnacle Club*<sup>11</sup> The women-only Pinnacle Climbing Club was founded in 1921 by, *inter alia*, Pat Kelly and Dorothy Pilley. In the post-suffragette and flapper era, women were still barred from all the major climbing clubs other than the *Fell and Rock Club* in the Lake District. Dorothy Pilley was a leading rock climber and mountaineer putting up such routes as Original Route – still a classic VS – on Holly Tree Wall in Ogwen (leading her husband the academic and literary critic I A Richards) and several new routes in the Alps.

- *Hiking, Camping, Singing and Gaudy Clothing*. These were all newcomers to the world of 1920s walking and rambling by young people. From the Americanism of 'Hiking' to shorts, coloured shirts and plus-fours, these were all rejected as inappropriate by the established and older members and organisations of the outdoor movement. The Manchester Ramblers' Federation explicitly banned the use of the word 'Hiking' in its newsletters and journals.
- *Kibbo Kift and Woodcraft Folk*. These were nation-wide youth organisations which engaged in outdoor activities; both deliberately offered a non-militarist, non-imperialist / pacifist alternative to the Scouts Association. The *Woodcraft Folk* were founded in 1925 and had a strong orientation towards socialism, mainly in the ILP tradition; their objective was "to educate and empower young people to be able to participate actively in society, improving their lives and others' through active citizenship." The *Kindred of Kibbo Kift* (founded in 1920) was also staunchly pacifist and internationalist. It was individualist rather than collectivist in its outlook; personal character strengthened by mental discipline was the key to the future, not mass movements based on groups defined by class, race or nation. Both organisations flourished during the inter-war years, indeed, the Woodcraft Folk were involved in the Abbey Hey Trespass of 1932 (see later). The Kibbo Kift ended in 1951; the Woodcraft Folk continue to this day and have been actively involved in many access and post-Trespass events over the years.
- *The British Workers' Sports Federation*. The BWSF was another 1920s newcomer to the outdoor scene. As it was pivotal to the history and politics of the Mass Trespass, I will accord the BWSF the honour of its own set of reflections. I merely note here that, amongst many other things, members of the BWSF did indeed camp, wear shorts, sing and hike in the cause of socialism and radical Clarion-style countryside fellowship.

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To round off this much condensed survey of some aspects of the countryside movement in the 1920s, I offer Thompson's (2018) observation on the underlying dynamics of the movement in the 1920s:

*Numerous clubs failed to revive after the War, and the new rambling clubs that started to emerge, after a post-War lull, in the mid-1920s tended to be open to all outdoor enthusiasts, with no pretensions to serving a higher intellectual, spiritual or political purpose. However, the pre-War enthusiasts who assumed positions of leadership within the formal rambling movement in the interwar years, and who were responsible for producing nearly all the written records of its activities, continued to regard rambling as a cause.*

*In their attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside, the leaders of the formal rambling movement stood in an intermediate position between the pre-War, upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering tradition and the post-War hikers. Many shared with the pre-War trampers an aesthetic, almost pantheistic, love of the countryside, but their social instincts were more egalitarian and inclusive. The main distinction between the leaders of the rambling movement and hikers was that the former aspired to be 'informed' citizens, with a knowledge of local history and natural sciences, and continued to regard walking as an activity that contributed to the improvement of the individual and the development of a just society. . . . [m]ost hikers regarded walking as an energetic, companionable, leisure activity; not a solemn duty.<sup>12</sup>*

*If you skipped Reflection 1, or want to refresh your memory on the immediate political contexts and events of the Mass Trespass, this would be a good moment to have a quick look back. The rest of this Reflection assumes you are familiar with what I said there about the early-1930s in general and the events of the Mass Trespass in particular.*

### **4.3 The British Workers' Sports Federation and the Communist Party**

I am now obliged to hack through a tangled thicket of socialist politics in the 1920s and early-1930s.<sup>13</sup> Knotted within the BWSF are not just the complexities of the politics of class struggle and the broadly-defined politics of leisure, outdoor activity and culture in relation to the LP, TUC and CPGB; in the undergrowth one also finds some particularly thorny brambles relating to the internal politics of the CPGB.

#### **a) The origins and first few years of BWSF**

The BWSF was set up in 1923 under the auspices of the Clarion Cycling Club. It had broad support from the TUC, LP and across the Labour Movement. It had a strong initial international orientation – *Footballs not Cannon Balls; Peace through Sport*. The early BWSF generated involvement in a range of sports for many working-class groups, building on the pre-WW1 traditions of Clarion; it enabled some sportsmen and women to participate in the alternative Socialist Olympiads. But by 1927 it was not as well-established or socially and politically prominent as the comparable workers' sports bodies in other European countries – including the new USSR – where traditions of active participation in sport were much wider and deeper.

At the same time, the Young Communist League [YCL], the youth section of the CPGB, was actively exploring the opportunities for British workers to participate in the Red Sports International [RSI] set up in 1921. Rather than pursuing the BWSF's somewhat loose, sub-Clarion approaches to socialism, the YCL and RSI were inspired by the idea that 'physical culture, gymnastics, games and sport are a means of proletarian class struggle. . . accessible to all proletarian elements which recognise the class war.' The conflation of physical / sporting activity and class struggle entailed developing a critique of all forms of sport which were likely to undermine the class struggle and/or provide support for the ruling class. So, for instance, the YCL opposed scouting, sports clubs run by factory owners and commercial sports generally. Initially the likelihood was that the YCL would set up its own sports organisation and, in this way, the BWSF and the YCL's mooted new organisation would have reflected the standard division between LP reformists and CPGB revolutionaries.

In the event, what happened was that these political differences played themselves out at the BWSF's 1928 National Congress. In the elections for officers and committee, members of the YCL gained a majority and hence took effective control of the BWSF. Changes were made to its aims and objectives; from 1928 the broad objective of the BWSF, was to support sportsmen and sportswomen in: "an unrelenting struggle against the existing capitalist domination of sport, and the introduction of a socialistic content into sport and physical recreation."

Not surprisingly, the General Council of the TUC felt obliged to withdraw its support from the BWSF; the National Executive Committee of Labour Party made a similar move and the Clarion Cycling Club severed its connections, complaining of the links with the RSI. Although membership of the BWSF remained open to workers from any party and none, the CPGB, through its youth wing, effectively ran the BWSF.

## **b) 'Class against Class': the BWSF and CPGB in the early 1930s**

The skirmishes within the BWSF between the YCL and other socialists were taking place against the background of a major shift in the overall strategic political line of the international communist movement and the reflection of that line in the CPGB. Hitherto, the advocates of a revolutionary road to socialism in the UK had been able to find a measure of common cause with the advocates of reform across the socialist movement. They had argued fiercely and adopted different tactics in the face of such major events as the General Strike of 1926, but they had avoided outright direct political confrontation; they shared a sense of common cause ('united front') in their respective attempts to replace capitalism with socialism. By 1928, in the face of early signs of an emerging fascism across Europe, the viability of that tacit united front was collapsing as far as the communist parties were concerned. The Communist International of 1928 observed that:

*According to changing political circumstances, the bourgeoisie resort either to fascist methods or to coalitions with social democracy [i.e. gradualist reformers], while social democracy itself, particularly at crucial moments for capitalism, not infrequently plays a fascist part.*

In the UK, Palme Dutt (the CPGB's leading theoretician at the time) translated these sentiments into terms relevant to the situation in the UK:

*. . . new methods have been found [by capitalists] in post War Europe. In Italy and other countries they have taken the form of fascism; in Britain . . . they have taken the form of the 'Labour Government' and the employers–TUC conferences. The appearances may differ; the essence is the same. They are forms to maintain the rule of capitalism in its decline.*

Given that the Labour Party was a creation of the working class and the Left of the Labour Party still appeared to represent the interests of the working class, the class remained attached to the Labour Party. Unfortunately, as Palme Dutt continued, the situation meant that the strategic task of the CPGB was now to:

*. . . fight against the Labour Government and 'the lefts' . . . [because] the more the Labour Government exposes itself as the weapon of the capitalists, the more it relies on the "left" phrasemongers to delude the workers and hold them back from action.<sup>14</sup>*

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The implications of this nowadays arcane and jargonistic left political analysis were enormous for the CPGB. It meant that, rather than acting in 'united front' mode with the Labour Party and other UK socialists, the CPGB's new strategic line was to confront / oppose the Labour Party and the leadership of trade unions and other socialist-oriented groups. The new line was duly adopted in 1928 and the CPGB entered into what became known as the period of its *Class Against Class* [CAC] line.<sup>15</sup>

CAC was not simply unbridled sectarianism or crude workerism. It had a resonance in people's lived experience at a time when many of the reforming left / socialist parties across Europe were adopting free market and austerity-based policies in response to the global Depression. The policies of Ramsay MacDonald's 1929 – 31 labour government and the National Government he led after the 1931 election was a stark demonstration of that tendency. (It is, perhaps, a pity that the much reduced parliamentary Labour Party was caught in the CAC cross-fire in 1931 at a time when it had expelled MacDonald and produced its most radical, nationalising, economic-planning manifesto yet.)<sup>16</sup>

There was a clarity about CAC and it proved to be a framework for the CPGB to make significant political interventions, not just in terms of core issues of political and economic struggles, but more generally in terms of cultural initiatives which offered working people newer

perspectives and opportunities. The BWSF's opposition to "bosses' sports" and to the increasing commercialisation of such leisure-time activities as professional football may have been a tad shrill, but it chimed with people's experience of leisure-time as a form of potential social control. If 'religion had been the opium of the masses' for Karl Marx in the 19th century, commercial, consumer-based leisure-time opportunities had the capacity to serve a not dissimilar ideological function in the 1920s and 1930s. Nor was it entirely fanciful to warn against the risks that bodies such as the Ramblers' Federations, COSFPS and CPRE might, in their various negotiating and lobbying activities, be tempted to cosy up to the landowners a bit too closely and not press hard enough for self-directed recreational access on the terms aspired to by the ramblers themselves.

The BWSF was not the only CPGB-led organisation in the cultural / leisure-time sphere. The Workers' Theatre Movement [WTM] at that time was providing opportunities and alternatives to commercial theatres and entertainments. It gave a voice to working-class and radical actors, access to plays and drama, and dramatic representations of working class lives and struggles – as well as laying the foundations for a general widening of the scope of the performing arts generally. The CPGB sponsored bookshops and cafes and, through the *Daily Worker*, provided a different set of perspectives, not just on political matters but all other dimensions of the news.

The CAC years were ones of vibrancy and urgency for members of the CPGB. To be a CP member was to lead an all-consuming, active political life alongside comrades and friends in a lifestyle which sought to embody an optimism and commitment to newer / alternative sets of personal and social values and behaviours.

In these ways, the CAC period provided through the BWSF what can be characterised as a more politically dynamic and engaged version of Clarionism, prefiguring new, modern, socialist urban and rural ways of life rather than hankering after Blatchford's idealisations of rural life in Dorking.<sup>17</sup>

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#### ***4.4 The Mass Trespass and its immediate aftermath***



The Mass Trespass advertised itself in the following terms:

*A MASS TRESPASS . . . organised by the BWSF, who fight for Ramblers:–  
"Against the finest stretches of Moorlands being closed to us.  
"For Cheap fares, For cheap catering facilities.  
"Against any war preparations in rambling organisations.  
"Against petty restrictions such as singing etc.<sup>18</sup>*

*'It is a crime for workers to put their feet where Lord Big Bug and Lady Little Flea do their annual shooting'.<sup>19</sup>*

It was a deliberate, youthful act of class struggle politics at a time of widespread suffering and contestation as a result of the Depression, the perceived betrayals of the Ramsay MacDonald premiership, the resulting split in the Labour Party and the routine appearance of protest marches, meetings and demonstrations of one kind or another – Hunger Marches, Unemployed Workers Marches, Peace Marches, Gandhi's Salt Marches in the cause of Indian independence.

From the moment it was announced, it attracted opposition in the press and the outraged ire of just about every rambling and countryside organisation:

*Mob Law on the Moors . . .*

*Setting back the cause of access twenty years . . .*

*Hooligan element . . .*

*As an inveterate trespasser, the idea of a Mass Trespass does not appeal to me. . . I always think that the essence of trespassing is that it should be done quietly, neatly and successfully . . . a sort of adult substitute for the pleasure which every youngster gets raiding an orchard. . .*

*Risk losing public support by unnecessarily provoking measures.<sup>20</sup>*

The Manchester Ramblers' Federation led the opposition. It is also worth noting the preservationist position of Phil Barnes. Barnes was a well-known Dark Peak trumper and trespasser (in a distinctive brown velvetine suit), a leading access campaigner and a prominent member of the Sheffield and Peak District Branch of the CPRE and publisher, in 1934, of a book of photographs entitled *Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted*:

*I am afraid I care for Kinder so much that I am perhaps taking a rather selfish view but, frankly, I would rather stay away from the hills myself and leave them to the tender mercies of the shooter and the keeper, than see the delicate beauty of these cloughs vulgarised by picnic parties, as for instance the Conksbury Bridge end of Lathkill, or the Thorpe end of the Dove are today.<sup>21</sup>*

I will explore the ramifications of these reactions shortly. Before that, however, I want to give a bit of attention to the Trespass's immediate aftermath in 1932.

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The 1932 Winnats Pass Access Rally attracted its largest ever crowd, many of whom supported the trespass and heckled those speakers who expressed opposition or reservations about its efficacy. The prison sentences eventually passed on the trespassers in July were generally seen as being unduly harsh and gained wide publicity for the cause of rambling and the importance of securing recreational access to open countryside and curbing the autonomy of landowners.

Of particular interest was the response to the Trespass amongst the rambling community in Sheffield. Given their historic sense that the moors of the Dark Peak were more properly their patch than Manchester's, and not wishing to be outshone by a bunch of Manchester insurgents / upstarts, there quickly arose a movement for a Sheffield-originated Mass Trespass. It did not emerge from the local CPGB / BWSF members but from within the Sheffield Federation of Rambling Clubs, whose secretary was Stephen Morton, a public opponent of the Trespass and a key player in the National Council of Rambling Federations which had coalesced as a waystage towards the eventual setting up of the RA in 1934. The proposal for a Sheffield Mass Trespass was put at a Federation meeting chaired by no less a figure than Bert Ward. As the doyen of access and tramping trespassers Ward opted neither to oppose nor support the proposal; indeed, he remained resolutely silent for the rest of his life on the subject of the BWSF's Kinder Scout Mass Trespass. Cannily, Ward suggested that those members of the Federation who wished to take the proposal forward should meet separately. Which they duly did – and were then advised by Ward on rights of way and the law of trespass in relation to the moorland where they proposed to do their trespassing.

On 18 September 1932, as the Kinder Trespassers were coming towards the end their sentences in jail, a second Mass Trespass of some 200 ramblers took place on the Dark Peak's eastern moors at Abbey Brook on Derwent Edge. It was organised by, *inter alia*, the Woodcraft Folk, the Brightside ILP, Spartacus (the Sheffield branch of the YCL),<sup>22</sup> the ILP Guild of Youth, Sheffield Education Settlement and the Clarion Co-operative Ramblers. The trespass involved a walk along a right of way which had been blocked, with the option of an extension on an open moorland trespass along the lines of the Kinder Trespass. They were met by at least 100 gamekeepers and a handful of police officers. After the right of way section there was a threat of quite serious violence from the keepers and, after sitting down, eating their lunch and discussing the situation, many trespassers turned back. A few others continued on to the 'trespass land'. The keepers urged the police to arrest them immediately and were intensely annoyed that the police had obviously been given very different instructions from those given in Hayfield on 24 April. They assiduously 'kept the peace', escorted the trespassers back to an agreed right of way and bade them farewell. There was to be no legal 'second act' to the Abbey Brook Trespass.<sup>23</sup>

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And that was more or less it on the Mass Trespass front in 1932. The moors of the Dark Peak had been mass trespassed by urban socialists from Manchester in the west and from Sheffield in the east. Plans for a further 1932 Mass Trespass along the eastern edges were shelved and there was no further Dark Peak Mass Trespassing for the cause of recreational access for the rest of the 1930s. Having demonstrated that the workers could successfully seize the commanding heights of the Dark Peak moorland economy, there was little inclination to do it again on a regular basis.

The BWSF and the united left of Sheffield were not seen again (in organised form) in the Peak District. For Benny Rothman and the CPGB there were considerably more pressing battles to fight. Although he remained a keen walker and regularly took groups from Manchester and Salford to the countryside, Benny Rothman put his political involvement in the affairs of the Peak District on hold for fifty years. After he left prison in 1932, there were Mosleyite fascists to be fought on the streets of Cheetham Hill; there were Francoite fascists to be fought in Spain (on the basis of a highly problematic popular front); there were unemployed workers and their families to be supported; there were engineering industries in Manchester and Salford to be unionised; and within those unions there were rank-and-file membership bases and shop stewards' groups to be built.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, by 1934, the confrontational edge of the CPGB's CAC line was being toned down in favour of a new, cross-party 'popular front' line in the fight against capitalism and fascism as WW2 loomed.

## 4.5 Resonance 1932 – 39

The absence of the BWSF from the Dark Peak Moors after 1932 did not mean that the flame lit by the Mass Trespass was completely snuffed out. The underlying politics of the Trespass continued to inform the movement for recreational access to moors, mountains and crags. Indeed, looking ahead to 1977, another prominent CPGB member and sometime outdoor activist, the climber Dave Cook, was moved to make the following not entirely rhetorical claim a few years before the 50th Anniversary of the Mass Trespass:

*The mass trespass gained the cause of free access to mountains more sympathetic publicity in one day than the Ramblers' Federation had won for it in the previous thirty years.*

*Demonstrations of solidarity with those jailed, and the organization of other trespasses, such as the 'Abbey Brook' march in September of the same year, carried forward the tempo of the movement. Many more battles were necessary . . . but it was "The Battle for Kinder Scout" that lifted the movement from the level of private members' lobbying to that of mass politics. Its memory still echoes whenever the right to ramble or climb is threatened.*<sup>25</sup>

In the rest of this reflection I will consider the resonance of the Trespass during the last seven years of the 'Twenty Year Crisis' before the world returned once more to warfare. I will use my seven Mass Trespass motifs as the framework for my observations.

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### a. Direct Action

The Mass Trespass was a classic piece of Direct Action politics, straight out of The Diggers' playbook. The trespassers were largely young, largely male, landless urban workers, with a smattering of fellow-travelling middle-class intellectuals such as the student Tona Gillett, the historian A J P Taylor (lecturing at Manchester University), and the composer Michael Tippett (who happened to be in Manchester that weekend). They asserted their freedom to roam<sup>26</sup> by directly storming the Dark Peak landowners' "winter palace". They were not lobbying MPs, holding a campaign meeting or doing a spot of tough negotiating over access. They were prefiguring and doing by and for themselves that which they aspired to as a future social and political reality.

From the BWSF's decision to organise a Mass Trespass through to the months in jail, the narrative of the Mass Trespass encapsulated the core conflict over land ownership and use at the heart of the movement for recreational access to open countryside. As I suggested in Reflection 2, there is an element of risk, simplicity and high political drama inherent in most forms of Direct Action. A powerful political imagination informed the conception and the enactment of the Mass Trespass.<sup>27</sup> The Workers' Theatre Movement [WTM] could not have created a more compelling narrative arc if they had wished to put on a play about either the freedom to roam or, more generally, a symbolic enactment of the struggle of the working class to seize the commanding heights of the political economy. The Mass Trespass was a drama both specific to 1932 but capable of speaking much more generally – hence the debates in the 1980s about the mythic dimensions of the Mass Trespass.<sup>28</sup> Insofar as it was an action of the working class by itself and not in alliance with any other classes or organisations, it bore all the hallmarks of CAC-informed socialism.

As it happens, the WTM did not need to create a new bit of agit-prop theatre, as one of the youngest YCL trespassers did the job for them. Shortly after the trespass, Jimmy Miller captured the heart of the matter in an enduringly popular song – *The Manchester Rambler*. Jimmy is known

better by his subsequent professional name of Ewan MacColl. *The Manchester Rambler* was one of the earliest songs for which he wrote both the words and the music. It is one of his best known protest songs and contributed hugely to keeping alive the folk memory of the Mass Trespass, not just in clubs around Manchester and Salford before WW2, but much more widely on national and international stages after WW2 when MacColl was composing, writing and performing as a leading folk / protest singer. In one way or another, *The Manchester Rambler* presents all the key motifs of the trespass within an unmistakably socialist political frame. Quite whether this was envisaged by those early ruralists who founded the English Folk Song Society is a moot point. It is fitting, however, that the Trespass sang into that tradition as a complement to Greensleeves.

Most Mass Trespasses or access protests had hitherto been local events organised by local communities seeking access to what they saw as 'their' local countryside. The 1871 Epping Forest protests had a wider Essex and East London resonance and reach. The 1887 Lattrigg Mass Trespass was organised by the Keswick and District Footpaths Preservation Association and primarily undertaken by local people. The 1896 Winter Hill Mass Trespass was a huge, celebratory assertion by the community of Bolton of their claim to the footpath over the hill which dominated the town. The 1932 Abbey Brook trespassers went to Derwent Edge on their local Dark Peak moorlands.

The Kinder Scout Mass Trespass was not a locally framed community action. It was undertaken by urban hikers from Manchester who had to travel by foot, bike and / or train to Hayfield before they could start their moorland walk. They were making a generalisable political statement about the nature of, and barriers to, recreational access to the countryside as a whole. Their experience crucially also captured and reflected the wider experience of the overwhelming majority of the new generation of 1920s and 1930s urban-based ramblers and outdoor activists. For all classes, leisure-time rambling involved deliberately leaving the local urban environment where they lived, worked, had their friendship networks and social lives and entering into a different, non-local rural environment.

### ***b. Common ownership***

*No man has the right to own mountains  
Any more than the deep ocean bed.<sup>29</sup>*

The possessive adjective "our" is notoriously tricky in the discourses of politics. The twenty essays in *Britain and the Beast* edited by Clough Williams-Ellis (1937) were, in effect, a CPRE manifesto. They were full of heartfelt pleas by articulate supporters of the CPRE to protect the beauty and the *mores* of 'our countryside'. It was quite clear, however, that all sorts of people were not to be included in 'our countryside' – land developers, motorists and owners of filling stations, young singing ramblers, owners of tea-rooms for those ramblers, those owning and living in mock-tudor houses in sprawling suburbs. 'Our countryside' is not for them; they have no claim on the countryside 'we share'.

In a similar vein politicians talk in general terms of 'our land' without ever spelling out who the 'we' are who actually own the land. The question "Whose land is our land?"<sup>30</sup> is rarely put. Woody Guthrie's 1940 song "This land is your land and this land is my land" is often put alongside *The Manchester Rambler* as a communist-inspired lyric asserting the common ownership of land. The title of Marion Shoard's (1997) book *This Land is Our Land* is another much used expression on this terrain.<sup>31</sup>

In the face of the ambiguities of who 'our' refers to in expressions such as 'our land' and 'our countryside' (and 'our heritage', 'our nation' . . . ) the Mass Trespass was unambiguously clear on the issue of property and ownership when it came to moors and mountains. They were part of the Common Treasury – land which should be owned in common. Given that the Communist Manifesto

remained in force as a canonical work of Marxist socialism, the BWSF sought the abolition of private property in land. This had real purchase and continued resonance throughout the 1930s, not least because land nationalisation also remained a stated manifesto commitment of the Labour Party from 1931 through to – and including – the 1945 general election.<sup>32</sup>

Support for land nationalisation in the 1930s was not confined to die-hard lefties. Two of the authors in *Britain and the Beast*, Cyril Joad and A G Street, made cases for the necessity of land nationalisation as a way of preserving the countryside at a time when it was becoming clear that the use of the countryside for recreational purposes was here to stay.

Joad acknowledged some of the contradictions in his thinking and his political rhetoric. He defined himself as a socialist and was an ardent supporter of free access to the countryside. Unfortunately he had a very dim opinion of the *mores* of most of the young and/or working class people who were making their way into the countryside by the 1930s. He was much more strident than Phil Barnes of the Sheffield CPRE. (see above) The hiking youth were not to Joad's taste at all:

*There are the hordes of hikers cackling insanely in the woods, or singing raucous songs as they walk arm in arm at midnight down the quiet village street. . . . There are tents in meadows and girls in pyjamas dancing beside them to strains of the gramophone. . . . There are fat girls in shorts, youths in gaudy ties and plus-fours, and a roadhouse round every corner and a café on top of every hill for their accommodation.*<sup>33</sup>

Along with motorists, golfers, and others, 'hikers' simply did not appreciate the beauty of the countryside. So Joad proposed that: a) the land should be nationalised because that was the only way in which it could be 'the people's land' to which he aspired as a socialist; b) that a massive programme of education should be undertaken to enable those lacking good taste, manners and discernment to learn how to appreciate the countryside; c) until that education programme was completed, those on the programme were to be barred from the countryside and the nationalised land was to be 'held in trust' for them until a later date. In other words, he made the case for a rural Common Treasury, from which most of the 'common people' would be excluded until they had been properly educated in good taste and cultivated rural behaviours.

A G Street was the only working farmer to contribute to *Britain and the Beast*. He arrived at a rationale for land nationalisation / common ownership by a very different route from either Joad or the socialist political economists. His case was premised on the fact that the countryside was in complete disarray. Neither the landowners nor the state were doing anything sustained or systematic to improve things and balance conservation, agriculture and recreational use coherently. In such a situation, the only recourse for Street was to make the entire population into the landowners, on the grounds that they would then look after their property (i.e. the countryside with its multiple uses) more attentively and sensitively.<sup>34</sup>

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Land nationalisation and common ownership were expressions of a more fundamental political / ideological orientation. They were underpinned by a rejection of the classic liberal tenets of possessive / competitive individualism as an inherent characteristic of human beings, and a positive assertion of the essentially social character of human beings, disposed to organising their affairs in common with others on the basis of an inherent sense of mutuality and collectivity. Arguably the underlying struggles taking place during the inter-war years were not only class struggles defined narrowly in terms of productive labour, but a more general array of struggles between an ideology of possessive / competitive individualism and an ideology of mutuality and collectivity.<sup>35</sup>

I will return to this more fully towards the end of the Reflection. Save to say, at this juncture, that the tensions between possessive individualism and mutuality / collectivism were integral to the

political turbulence of the 1930s. Much of the continued resonance of the Mass Trespass arose from the ways in which it uncompromisingly represented the mutuality / collectivist end of that political spectrum.

### ***c. Land & property***

By the same token, of course, the Mass Trespass simultaneously drew attention to the enduring continuity and resilience of the Lockean approach to land and property ownership and the state's assiduous pursuit of its foremost Lockean obligation to protect and uphold the exclusionary rights of the owners of property

Howkins (2003) and Griffiths (2007) explored the complex shifts taking place in the rural political economy of the 1930s. County Councils had begun to reduce the direct influence of landowners on rural life. The Labour Party was making serious attempts to establish an organisational presence in rural constituencies across England. And, as the ramifications of the Great Depression became apparent beyond the commercial and industrial heartlands, issues of modernising agricultural practice and establishing some sort of planning / developmental framework in rural areas were emerging on to the political agenda.

The CPRE, for instance, devoted much of its energy to making the case for town and country planning as a vehicle for rural preservation and holding back the growing use of land for housing and developing suburbs. But the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act was pretty toothless; it did little to constrain landowners' options on what they perceived to be their immediate best interests.

Given the persistence of Bonar Law's 1923 position on not deviating from a free market, *laissez-faire* approach to the 'industry' of agriculture, the opportunity never arose for England to adopt the sort of New Deal interventionist agricultural planning that Roosevelt pursued in relation to managing the 1930s rural Depression in the USA. Nor, for that matter, was it feasible for the Labour Party to follow up the intellectual interest, in the late-1920s and early-1930s, in possible lessons for agricultural and industrial planning to be learnt from the USSR's first five-year plan and its ruthless programme of rapid, forced collectivisation and mechanisation of vast swathes of rural Russia. Similarly, Keynes' macroeconomic approach to the state's role in managing capitalism through a period of crisis was not taken systematically into public policy at that time.

So, somewhat haphazardly, by the late-1930s, the social and political economy of rural England was presenting signs of an urgent need to engage with potentially far-reaching changes to the countryside. As the anguished tone of the essays in *Britain and the Beast* suggests, the achievements on the ground of the CPRE never quite matched its aspirations and its rhetoric. A lack of an effective planning framework (or sense of mutuality and collective endeavour) and the consequent operation of 'possessive individualism' and the unmediated operation of conflicting / sectional interests meant that ruralism tended to lose out in its struggle against modernism.

The growth of suburbs was not halted. The recreational use of rural landscapes continued apace, with all the resulting pressures and tensions. Roads had to accommodate more cars and motor tourism emerged.<sup>36</sup> Rural communities were being disrupted by incomers from the cities; the Bloomsbury Group decamped from central London to various fine houses and gardens in Sussex. Less grandly, buying a house in the countryside and commuting to work in the city affected the balance of property ownership – and prices, not just in the home counties but in areas such as Cheshire and South Derbyshire. Rural landworkers continued to drift into cities. A growing number of petrol stations catered for the motorists. Farmers found that they could supplement incomes from opening tea-rooms and B&Bs for the hikers. . . . And all the while little was done to improve or modernise agricultural practice. Contingency plans were being made for a rural command economy in wartime; but such plans were deemed exceptional and so lessons and potential applications which may have been useful in peace time were neither noticed nor learnt.

#### **d. Leisure & freedom**

For the most part, the BWSF's opposition to the commercialisation of leisure-time opportunities and activities for the working class did not result in a noticeable change in the recreational behaviour of the 1930s working class. 400+ men and a few women climbing up towards the Kinder Scout plateau on one weekend in 1932 did not dissuade well over 40,000+ men and a few women from paying 1/- every weekend (the price of two pints of beer) to watch Manchester City playing football at Maine Road. There is no record of a sudden drop in the numbers of working class people taking day trips to Blackpool. Indeed, in their roles as trade unionists, members of the CPGB were no doubt seeking pay rises for their members to enable them not just to subsist on their wages, but also to have sufficient income to purchase whatever they wished for their leisure-time activities.

The terms 'mass consumption' and 'mass leisure-time' are usually taken to be characteristics of the changing social economy of the 1950s – 1970s.<sup>37</sup> They are not entirely applicable to the social economy of leisure in the 1930s. But the 1930s undoubtedly did witness a marked quickening and growth in all forms of leisure-time activity across all classes and the Mass Trespass did prefigure some of the issues and politics associated with the 'massification' of social life.

Large groups – masses – of people engaged in a common activity have long been potentially problematic features of the social landscape. They can quickly come to be perceived as mobs, riots, and threats to the social order. It is noteworthy that the Mass Observation project of recording people's everyday behaviours began in the 1930s. The issues and politics of 'Mass' were on the agenda.

Why was the one-off Mass of 400+ people from Manchester going for a walk on Kinder Scout deemed a riotous assembly punishable by imprisonment, when the weekly 40,000+ Mass at Maine Road was the 'salt-of-the-earth' enjoying themselves? Why was a Mass Meeting of thousands of walkers and access campaigners at Winnats Pass in 1933, addressed by Arthur Henderson, the leader of the Labour Party, not deemed to be a public order offence. In the same vein, who were the problematic 'Masses' in 1936, when a Mass police presence of 6,000 sought to protect a Mass march through London's East End by 2,000 British Union of Fascists members in the face of a Mass protest of 100,000?

As we saw earlier, the rambling clubs around the Dark Peak in the 1930s did not object to walkers and climbers trespassing on Kinder Scout; what horrified them was the fact that it was a Mass Trespass. And, if we take Cyril Joad and Phil Barnes as representative, the perceived threat of the Masses was not just a matter of numbers or damage to the natural environment; it was also a matter of class and culture.

The class and cultural politics of Mass is, of course, a dimension of the politics of collectivity and mutuality I mentioned earlier. In the first decade of universal adult suffrage, the electorate was beginning to explore other means of expressing and asserting its political agency beyond the occasional sortie to the ballot box. As Dave Cook suggested (quote at head of this section) mass action was a more public version of the sorts of private lobbying and negotiating undertaken hitherto by access campaigning organisations. It was a means of expressing common and shared interests and an indication of a collective commitment to progressing those interests.

Alongside the cultural politics of 'Mass', the growth of leisure-time also raised issues in relation to the politics of social control. The Mass Trespass represented a manifest rejection of the late-19th century moral exhortation to the working class to seek personal respectability and self-improvement in their recreational lives. That rejection resonated with a more general 1930s modernism in attitudes to leisure. There was a general tension between leisure-time as a form of free expression and leisure-time as a vehicle for social control.<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting therefore how the issue of freedom of expression -v- social control played out specifically in the context of walking and rambling.

The Manchester Federation of Rambling Clubs [MRF] had been one of the first and fiercest opponents of the Mass Trespass – an active opposition which carried on well after the end of WW2 and the establishment of the National Parks. That opposition embraced the sort of criticisms of the new generations of hikers made by Joad and many in the CPRE. They sought very deliberately to distance themselves from everything these newcomers were getting up to in the countryside, notwithstanding their continued commitment to the cause of extending popular access.

To that end, they took steps to inculcate and reinforce what they took to be the proper behaviours and attitudes which ramblers should bring to their leisure-time activities. From around 1933, the MRF set up a group of 'warden-guides' in the Peak District who were expected to manage and watch the behaviour of walkers over the moors. This was matched by similar initiatives by the CPRE in the mid-1930s to create a *Code of Courtesy for the Countryside*. Not heavy-handed policing, but assiduous measures of social control none the less, designed to rein in collective / mass behaviours and restore rambling to what they perceived to be its earlier CHA-style role of creating a responsible, informed and respectable citizenry who rambled alone or in very small groups, never singing and never *en masse*.<sup>39</sup>

### **e. Nature & walking**

Amongst its aims, the BWSF sought "the introduction of a socialistic content into sport and physical recreation." What did that aspiration entail for the recreational sport of walking in the countryside? What did they perceive to be 'capitalistic' in the relationship between walking and the natural order? What would be involved in developing and taking forward an alternative / transformational vision of that relationship?

As far as land, ownership, property and organisational politics were concerned, there were some straightforward answers to those questions. Mass trespassing and arguing with both landowners and the 'leadership' of the outdoor / access movement were obvious ways to kick-start the process of building and disseminating an alternative, socialistic vision of walking in the countryside. In the fulness of time, no doubt the working class would, through the process of struggle, come up with its own cultural politics of walking and nature. As they would by simply going more frequently into the countryside for a hike; Benny Rothman continued to take groups from Manchester and Salford walking on the moors for many years after 1932. Beyond that, one can glean a few insights into the possible visions of 'socialistic walking' which were being shaped during the 1930s, even though it was not explicit within, or central to the BWSF.

In Reflection 3 I considered how the refrain of MacColl's *Manchester Rambler* echoed the experience of Rousseau in his quest to discover the essence of the natural order through walking. That process entailed a deliberate liberation from the constraints and the artifice of the social order. Nature offered a critique of the oppressions of the social order and it was that aspect of Rousseau's romanticism which found expression in MacColl's lyrics.

Insofar as walking on the moors provided a moment of freedom from wage-slavery, a sense of human equality and fellowship and a respite from the harshness of urban life, there was clearly something 'socialistic' about hiking. But there were tensions and contradictions in that position for 1930s members of the CPGB. As thorough-going modernists, working for a transformation led, in the first instance, by an industrial proletariat aspiring to the common ownership of the land and the means of production, the CPGB were not inspired by a vision of an ideal Rousseauesque society. They were not seeking to build on the ruralist, de-industrialised, back-to-the-land legacies of William Morris or Edward Carpenter. It was for the ILP to keep those particular flames flickering in the socialist world.

By the same token, there were ideological risks associated with following the model of such widely popular outdoor movements as the Wandervogel in Germany. Mass youthful sporting

endeavour on mountains and forests highlighted the fact that European traditions of outdoor romanticism were not necessarily or inevitably politically progressive.<sup>40</sup> Often quite the opposite. Similar reservations applied to the more domesticated / individualised versions of English romanticism. The patriotism and potential for social conservatism of the approaches to nature and walking amongst the RA and the CPRE, meant that those rationales tended to be avoided.

The upshot is that, in the 1930s, the Mass Trespassers and their fellow-travellers articulated an updated version of Sidgwick's non-romantic positions on the nature-walking relationship, shorn of Sidgwick's Edwardian, idiosyncratic social commentary. In that, they found themselves allied with the vast majority of the new generation of ramblers and hikers in the 1930s, who rejected what they saw as the commitments of the leadership of the outdoor movement to an outmoded moralism and high-mindedness about walking and nature. They were perhaps, the first generation of walkers who celebrated equally the cultures of the city and the country, who did not place those cultures in necessary opposition or seek something necessarily higher or more valuable in the natural order. Walking and hiking – and climbing – were 'in-the-here-and-now' activities undertaken in a natural environment. They were to be enjoyed; they were – echoing Ruskin's word but not his sentiments – essentially forms of 'play', not to be over-freighted with moral injunctions and high-minded cultural aspirations.

In that context I must also note developments in the rock climbing world. As well as the arrival of women climbers (see Pinnacle Club above) a dominant presence on cliffs and crags in the 1930s was John Menlove Edwards. A gay man, Edwards' exploits on rock (and in water) pushed the boundaries of what was thought possible on rock. His writing as a medic and psychiatrist also pushed the boundaries of psychiatry, and opened up, through his own often painful and tortured experience, a greater awareness of the potential meanings of rock climbing. He was not an Alpine mountaineer, objected strongly to the use of pitons in rock climbing and advanced the development of rock climbing as a distinct activity in its own right. He was left-leaning, a brother-in-law of the communist 'Red Dean' of Canterbury Cathedral, Hewlett Johnson, a pacifist conscientious objector during WW2 and a much troubled, though still climbing, man until his suicide in 1958.<sup>41</sup>

Another distinguishing dimension of the BWSF / CPGB end of the outdoor recreational world was the alignment between walking in the countryside and political protest – a modified version of Rousseau's scheme of things which avoided the somewhat dubious political consequences Rousseau himself drew from his approach to nature. The Mass Trespass lacked the sort of systematic philosophy of *satyagraha* which informed the 1931 Salt Marches organised by Gandhi,<sup>42</sup> but it stands as a waystage between, on the one hand, the violence of some forms of anarchism and the pragmatic stand-offs, pushing and shoving of some forms industrial struggle and, on the other hand, the more elaborated traditions of non-violent civil disobedience / direct action. Though the connections with nature were not being made in the 1930s, that form of civil disobedience and 'non-violent direct action' came to be frequently employed in the course of environmental campaigning during the later decades of the 20th century.

#### ***f. Accessing land***

The arrival of the CPRE in 1926 and its assumption of the leadership of the preservationist cause created divergences across the various strands of the outdoors movement. The Ramblers Federations effectively saw themselves as heading up a grass-roots campaign for the access cause and its legislative arm. Some preservationists such as the PNFS tended to ally themselves with the Ramblers. Others such as COSFPS tended to ally themselves with the CPRE. There was an element of north / south split in those tendencies.

The events of 1932 resulted in a measure of political realignment across the access movement, The Ramblers increasingly directed their energies and attention towards the Labour Party at national level, if not always at local level. The preservationists focussed their political energies

wherever they judged best at any given time; in many respects they sought out those who still bore the hallmarks of a reforming liberalism / Georgeism. All organisations (other than BWSF / CPGB) found themselves, either occasionally or as a matter of routine practice, in negotiations with landowners. Such negotiations were either individual / local in relation to particular stretches of countryside or more general and national over legislative matters or policy initiatives.

I will explore the positions of the CPRE more fully in relation to the politics of Rural and Urban Identities. In relation to the politics of Accessing Land, my focus here is mainly on the Ramblers and the Labour Party side of things and the priority they gave to the legislative route to access.

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In 1931, the National Council of Ramblers' Federations was formed. Although the organised end of the rambling community was still committed to the pre-WW1 values of rambling, a member of a local club affiliated to a northern Federation noted:

*When the craze for excitement, which afflicted us during the immediate post-war days, had spent itself, the countryside came into its own. Tramping suddenly rose to the heights of popularity, till now it is a fashion – being able to throw a rucksack over one's shoulder and proclaim to the world 'I am a hiker'...[M]any members of clubs are members because of the social life, and not because of the tramping...Instead of discussing the sculpture of the earth and the fullness of life and beauty which is upon it, many club members are engrossed with the latest dance or talkie.*<sup>43</sup>

In the same year Edwin Royce, the chair of the Manchester Federation commented on:

*. . .[the] superficial person who takes up rambling because it enables him or her to indulge in a childish taste for fancy dress or who looks on the countryside as merely a place for skylarking. When they have put away childish things we shall be pleased to see them...helping with the serious side of rambling on the Federation Council.*<sup>44</sup>

The generational divergence tended to become more marked after the Mass Trespass when, in 1934, the Federations opted to become a single, unified organisation tramping under the banner of *The Ramblers' Association* [RA]. The decision to set up the RA as a grass-roots, democratic organisation representing the interests of all ramblers in the mid-1930s did not sit entirely comfortably with the decisions to place the traditional campaign for Bryce-style access legislation at the top of the RA's policy agenda.

In its structure, the RA differed markedly from the CPRE, NT or COSPFS. It was organised along the broadly collectivist lines of such bodies as trade unions, the WEA or, for that matter, the Labour Party. The RA had local membership clubs / branches, sending representatives to the regional Federations, which in turn sent delegates to an annual policy-making council.

As is often the case with such organisations, the RA's early years were taken up as much with internal organisational politics as with access campaigning. There was a major battle in the mid-1930s over whether London or Manchester should be the location for the RA's national office. Given that the cause of Access had become strongly identified with northern rambling by the mid-1930s, a northern HQ made sense. When London was chosen, on the grounds that it was closer to other outdoor organisations, a majority of the active membership and MPs and parliamentary influence,<sup>45</sup> the Manchester Federation initially sought to secede entirely or set up a 'northern regional office'. Not that all was peace and unity within the Manchester Federation itself; many rambling groups in Lancashire beyond the city of Manchester resented the 'imperial' dominance of Manchester and took their leave of the Manchester Federation in order to found their own federation. For many young ramblers, the RA was simply not where they chose to put their energies. As the founder of the Woodcraft Folk, Leslie Paul, put it:

*Why should they be burdened with constitutions and subscriptions when all that was necessary was to sling your rucksack on your back on Saturday and, with the boys and girls who were your comrades, make tracks for the countryside?*<sup>46 47</sup>

Notwithstanding these internal wranglings and the absence of young people in an RA which disported itself as the voice of grass-roots rambling, a lot of care and attention was being given at the London HQ to nurturing support for the access campaign amongst Labour MPs. Although the public presence of the RA was represented through such figures in the northern Federations as Royce and Stephen Morton, the key 'behind the scenes' organiser in London was Tom Stephenson. His pre-WW1 formation was in the south west Pennines of Lancashire. He was another of the outdoor movement's early autodidacts who was also a pacifist and spent two years (1917 – 1919) in prison as a conscientious objector.

Stephenson's initial political leaning was towards the ILP, but he had thrown in his lot with the LP by the early 1930s. Indeed, he worked at Transport House<sup>48</sup> off and on throughout the 1930s. Although he worked as a Labour Party agent for several years, he opted not to become a Labour MP, and spent some time as a journalist on the Labour-supporting *Daily Herald*. He was a keen walker and sometime rock-climber and also ran the Workers' Travel Association. In these ways Stephenson spent much of the 1930s working in an environment which straddled the Labour Movement and the Ramblers' Association. He opposed the Mass Trespass, partly on ideological grounds – he disagreed with the CPGB's line and strategy for socialism generally – partly because he felt it was not an appropriate tactic to win the support of Labour MPs who would, he believed, be absolutely necessary if the RA was to deliver on its central policy commitment of achieving a successful passing into law of an Access To Mountains Bill. To that end, Stephenson spent many years assiduously building a network of Labour MPs committed to the cause of walking, rambling and access, especially in the Pennine areas. He took such leading figures as Hugh Dalton and Barbara Castle on walking holidays and encouraged them to share his vision of both a footpath along the entire length of the Pennines (which eventually materialised as The Pennine Way in 1964) and the cause of Access to Moors and Mountains generally.

The upshot of Stephenson's networking was the introduction of yet another Access to Mountains Bill in 1938 by the Labour MP for Shipley, Arthur Creech-Jones (also a CO during WW1). Indeed, this was the first such Act to be passed into legislation in early 1939. Sadly, however, it was the most Pyrrhic of victories as the terms of the Act introduced by Creech-Jones were watered down hugely in the course of negotiations with landowners and the amendments passed by Tory MPs. It ended up prioritising landowners' historic rights and set up a regulative procedure for access which would, in effect, have criminalised trespass on moors and open countryside.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the RA found itself in the awkward position in 1939 of having to denounce the Act – the culmination of all their efforts – as a landowners' charter. Seven years after his opposition to the Mass Trespass, Edwin Royce of the Manchester Federation complained about the Great Betrayal and found himself making a commitment to trespass on Kinder Scout, to be injunctioned, and then to trespass again until he was eventually sent to prison!<sup>50</sup>

The Mass Trespass was still shaping the access agenda as WW2 broke out. Shortly after 1945, Tom Stephenson became the first National Secretary of the Ramblers' Association. . . . And in 1979 / 80, a few years before the 50th Anniversary of the Mass Trespass, he and Benny Rothman (still in the CPGB) crossed political swords over the Mass Trespass . . .<sup>51</sup>

### ***g. Rural & Urban Identities***

In Reflection 3, I explored the some of the pre-WW1 ambiguities and tensions in the relationship between rural preservationism and extending recreational access. Those ambiguities and tensions had both national and regional dimensions.<sup>52</sup> They flowed into and through the inter-war years and in his analysis of the historiography of the inter-war outdoors movement, Thompson notes that:

. . . [T]he history of the outdoor movement has been appropriated by rural historians concerned with anti-industrialism and 'Englishness', or political historians concerned with class struggle, while historians interested in the evolution of youth culture have overlooked the outdoor movement because, despite being essentially an urban phenomenon, it largely took place within a rural setting.<sup>53</sup>

I readily admit to being a 'political historian' with an interest in class struggle! I nevertheless wish to embrace the cultural and political issues identified by the 'rural historians'. I have already considered ways in which the Mass Trespass was an "essentially urban phenomenon" which "largely took place within a rural setting" and which reflected and contributed to changing attitudes to rural and urban identities during the 1930s.

The following observations emerge primarily from a recognition of the scale and reach of the CPRE as the energetic newcomer and 'senior partner' in the preservationist camp in the 1930s. The CPRE brought to the arena of countryside activism and campaigning approaches which did not take enhanced recreational access to the countryside as a driving aim or a necessary criterion of success. I note here four aspects of the CPRE during the 1930s which shaped its approach to the cultural politics of landscape and countryside.

*Modernism & planning*      The CPRE was not inherently nostalgic for the recovery of a lost rural identity. Insofar as it sought to secure rural preservation through the mechanism of town planning it was distinctly modernist. It drew on the heritage of J S Mill's reforming liberalism when it came to the provision of a constraining framework around the notional freedom of landowners and, for that matter, any other sections of the population in matters of landscape and countryside use. By the 1930s, it accepted and worked through the necessity to accommodate and negotiate the potential oppositions between both the agricultural and the recreational dimensions of the countryside.

*A rural aesthetic*      More than any other group in the outdoors movement, the CPRE sought to articulate an up-to-date rural aesthetic. The NT's positions on issues of beauty in the 1930s was still rooted in the late-Victorian moralism of its founders. The CPRE sought a beauty – and even a rural technology – which was informed by the wider cultural / aesthetics dimensions of the 1930s. This is not to claim that the CPRE was wholly progressive and ultra-modernist in its aesthetics. Such matters are always culturally problematic and have an almost in-built tendency to present an aesthetics of previous ages as some sort of eternal present which one has to aspire to preserve. Nevertheless, there was a markedly new sense of the importance of aestheticism in the thinking and practice of the CPRE.<sup>54</sup>

*Radical conservation*      Insofar as rural conservation was defined primarily in terms of local cultures and rural lifestyles, there was always a risk that conservation would tend towards forms of rural conservatism. (See Joad and Barnes earlier in this Reflection.) However, what was potentially built into the positions of the CPRE was the capacity for conservation to become a framework for preventing environmental degradation. Though not to the fore during the 1930s, this was to become a major dimension of the CPRE in subsequent generations.

*National Parks*      It is no surprise that, after WW2 when the Labour Government finally got round to creating the framework for National Parks in 1949, all the groups engaged in access and other forms of countryside political activism should lay claim to a key role and responsibility for the 'success story' of National Parks. It became a particularly marked

feature of the RA's and political left's telling of the history of their long and heroic struggles during the inter-war years.

In point of fact, it was arguably the CPRE who first introduced the notion of a network of National Parks into the discourse of the outdoors movement in the late-1920s and 1930s. Within a couple of years of its formation, the CPRE began a series of annual policy conferences for all its affiliates – which included all the major players I have been considering in these Reflections. The idea of a set of protected / preserved landscapes – referred to as National Parks – cropped up at one of the earliest of these conferences; it acted throughout the 1930s as a focus for different conceptions of what a National Park might look like. Some quite different visions arose. Some saw National Parks as scrupulously protected and unspoilt Nature Reserves, into which recreational access would either be denied completely or rigorously limited and controlled in the interests of environmental preservation for its own sake. Others saw them as nationally / commonly owned public property in mainly upland areas in which recreational access would be a major feature.

. . . I leave the resolution of those debates hanging. I will pick them up further in Reflection 5 on the basis of what was finally negotiated and legislated for in 1949.

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What I hope these brief comments about the CPRE highlight is the scale of the cross-currents and tensions on the political and cultural terrain of rural and urban identities and aspirations by the end of the 1930s. I suggested earlier – in the section of this Reflection on land and property<sup>55</sup> – that in pragmatic terms, many of the hopes of the CPRE in relation to the countryside were not realised; just as the immediate demands of the Mass Trespassers were not immediately fulfilled. The issues remained no nearer any form of resolution by the time WW2 began; a complex cultural legacy and political agenda was set for those who sought to progress countryside issues in the course of the 1945 Labour Government.

The resonance of the proudly urbanist Mass Trespass could be seen, not as a direct influence on the positions of such preservationist bodies as the CPRE, but as a dimension of the wider cultural landscape which the CPRE sought to shape. There is a sense in which the Mass Trespass's urban-oriented identity and the CPRE's rural-oriented identity prefigured the later arguments about planning and the environment which took shape in the 1980s and beyond.

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By way of bringing this section on the resonance of the Mass Trespass during the 1930s to a close, I share with you another observation of Alun Howkins on the inter-war 'Locust Years' in the countryside. In this extract, Howkins is discussing A G Street, the farmer who contributed to the CPRE's *Britain and the Beast* and made a case for land nationalisation (see above p.16):

The pre-war planning battles and discussions revealed just how changed the rural was and began to show the first signs of arguments about the countryside which were to dominate the second half of the century. A.G. Street, a farmer and writer saw this clearly in his contribution to *Britain and the Beast* – the only contribution from a countryman from the 'traditional' rural world.

*"Very definitely, the majority of people in this island have no use for the countryside. . . . Those who do value the countryside as a free playground consider its use for this purpose to be far more important than for farming. . . . Indeed, I doubt whether there are a thousand people in England today, either country folk or townfolk, who*

*value the countryside for its own sake. Generally speaking, the former value it as a business premise, and the latter as a free playground."*

This is not all Street has to say in one of the most interesting pieces in the whole book, but it does have a real prescience about the future of the rural areas – for the first time people were asking the question: What is the countryside for? <sup>56</sup>

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#### **4.6 Democracy, Collectivism and Mutuality <sup>57</sup>**

To round off, I draw attention to the theme which has been emerging throughout Reflection 4. That theme will be at the heart of the next two reflections and I refer to it here as *Democracy, Collectivism and Mutuality*. It emerged at the very beginning of this reflection when I was commenting on both the continued role of liberalism during the inter-war years, alongside the growing role of the broadly-defined collectivist politics of the Labour Party and the Communist Party.

The 1930s was the first decade in which universal suffrage pertained in the UK; it was the first decade in which the UK perceived itself to be a fully democratic polity. It was possible and realistic for all adults to be full participants in a democratic society and for that democracy to be a vehicle for taking decisions, not simply as a way of counting the private choices of random individuals using the mechanism of the polling booth, but more pervasively as a means of expressing common, shared, collective and mutual concerns and aspirations. Clearly there were wide divergences of opinion within that collectivity in relation to all sorts of decisions on all sorts of issues; the collective choices and decisions arising from the democratic process in any specific instance were both contested and, crucially, contestable. What underpinned the democratic process by the 1930s was, nevertheless, a shared acceptance that democratic decision-making was an inherently collective process at the heart of the social order.

In several respects, that shared sense of democratic collectivity was at odds – historically, theoretically and politically – with the essentially liberal / Lockean conception of the polity as an assemblage of individuals. For the classic liberal, democratic decision-making was an expression, not of a sense of, and commitment to, 'the collective and the mutual', but of a sense of the primacy of the individual's transactional pursuit of private, self-regarding choices / interests.

The middle years of the 20th century – from the 1930s through to the 1970s – were the 'high tide' years of democratic collectivity. It emerged, *inter alia*, through the pre-WW1 socialism as an alternative to the hitherto dominant liberalism; it grew during the inter-war years; it drove the WW2 and post-1945 social, political, cultural and economic settlement; it informed the 'consensus' years of the 1950s – mid-1970s. By the end of the 1980s, that ascendancy of democratic collectivity came under considerable pressure from the resurgence of what came to be known as Neo-liberalism.

. . . Which, looking ahead, makes for a lot of political and cultural complexity when it comes to the resonance of the Mass Trespass in the 1980s and beyond.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> 275,000. In the USA the number of deaths from Spanish Flu exceeded the total casualties amongst combatants during their years.
- <sup>2</sup> Dangerfield (1935)
- <sup>3</sup> [https://www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/archive/keynes\\_persuasion/Liberalism\\_and\\_Labour.htm](https://www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/archive/keynes_persuasion/Liberalism_and_Labour.htm)
- <sup>4</sup> See Reflection 2.3b p.16
- <sup>5</sup> Miliband R (1972) p. 13 This remains one of the best books on the history / analysis of the Labour Party 1918 – 1970.
- <sup>6</sup> Howkins (2003) pp. 44 – 144.
- <sup>7</sup> Howkins (2003) p. 50.
- <sup>8</sup> Griffiths (2007) Caps 7 & 8. See also Tichelar (2003 & 2019) on Labour's ambivalence on issues of land nationalisation.
- <sup>9</sup> *En passant*, Padley Gorge was the location for Testament's 2018 play *Black Men Walking*, about a group of hikers from Sheffield.
- <sup>10</sup> Also, note, in his guise as *eminence grise* of the organisational end of the outdoor movement, Leonard was also a pivotal presence in the eventual formation of the RA.
- <sup>11</sup> See <https://www.pc100.org/> and Pilley D (2011)
- <sup>12</sup> Thompson (2018) p.150
- <sup>13</sup> This section draws on Howkins (1980) and Jones (1988) *passim* and pp. 73 – 103 in particular
- <sup>14</sup> Quotes from Howkins (1980) p. 240–241
- <sup>15</sup> Sometimes also referred to as *Class on Class*. At some time or other, most Marxist-oriented political parties have found themselves in this position. Indeed, for some of the groupings in the Trotskyist tradition, opposition to the Labour Party and the leadership of the Labour Movement is their central and unwavering strategic *raison d'être*. The CPGB has always been more flexible – as we will see later in this Reflection.
- <sup>16</sup> "The Labour Government has already made a real beginning towards the scientific re-organisation of agriculture. The Labour Party will seek to press forward that development. It holds that, for this purpose, the land must be publicly owned and controlled, and much more fully utilised for food production and the provision of employment under good conditions." The 'Countryside' section of the 1931 LP General Election Manifesto.
- <sup>17</sup> See Howkins (1980)
- <sup>18</sup> Typed leaflet advertising the Trespass. Rothman (1982) p.21
- <sup>19</sup> BWSF Leaflet advertising the Trespass. Hill (1980) p. 63
- <sup>20</sup> Extracts from press: Rothman (1982) pp. 18 – 21.
- <sup>21</sup> Douglas (2018) p.108
- <sup>22</sup> This was a bit risky for the YCL trespassers whilst the CAC line was still in force as they were joining in a popular front with the capitalist lackeys and working-class-betraying lefties of the ILP! As it happens, the CAC line was relaxed after a few years as options of forming popular fronts became the new line across the international Communist movement from 1834 onwards.
- <sup>23</sup> Full account in Hill (1980) pp 69 – 73. Howard Hill was one of the members of Spartacus / YCL on the Abbey Brook Trespass. He remained an active member of the CPGB in Sheffield, was briefly a CP councillor on Sheffield City Council after WW2 and active in the Sheffield TU movement during the 1950s and 60s. See Carter (2017).
- <sup>24</sup> For an account of Benny Rothman's life overall, see Unite Education (2018): <https://markwritcouk.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/6328-benny-rothman.pdf>
- <sup>25</sup> Cook (1997) Dave Cook was a leading member of the Climbers Club and led the campaign for women to become members. He was also, during the 1970s and 1980s, one of the most publicly prominent members of the CPGB, occupying such key positions in the party as National Organiser.
- <sup>26</sup> As an aside, it is worth noting that the CPGB rarely engaged in the politics of rights. So Howard Hill's (1980) book is entitled the *Freedom to Roam*, unlike Marion Shoard's (1999) book *The Right to Roam* published some 20 years later. For the CPGB collective rights were OK; but individual rights tended towards a more individualist / bourgeois approach to the law and the polity.
- <sup>27</sup> Not entirely dissimilar, for instance, from the SWP's political imagination in the late-1970s and early 1980s in setting up the Rock Against Racism campaign or the Anti-Nazi League [See Reflection 5 for more on this.]
- <sup>28</sup> See Reflection 5
- <sup>29</sup> MacColl, Manchester Rambler
- <sup>30</sup> Hetherington (2015)
- <sup>31</sup> See Reflection 5 for a fuller discussion of Marion Shoard's interventions in the land and access arena.
- <sup>32</sup> See: Labour Party <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/>

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- <sup>33</sup> From: C E M Joad: *The People's Claim in Williams-Ellis* (1937) pp. 64 – 85.
- <sup>34</sup> Street: *The Countryman's View in Williams-Ellis* pp.122 – 132
- <sup>35</sup> Gilbert (2014) I have drawn on Gilbert's theoretical analysis of these tensions and conflicts throughout Reflections 4, 5 and 6.
- <sup>36</sup> Even Tom Stephenson, the hidden hand behind the Ramblers' Association from the mid-1930s onwards, earned himself some money by writing tourist guides to rural counties for motorists!
- <sup>37</sup> See Reflection 5
- <sup>38</sup> Stedman-Jones (1977)
- <sup>39</sup> Anderson (2015) and Anderson (nd)
- <sup>40</sup> Solnit (2014) pp 155 – 159
- <sup>41</sup> See Perrin (1985)
- <sup>42</sup> Gros (2014) pp. 193 – 206.
- <sup>43</sup> Quoted in Thompson (2018) p. 134
- <sup>44</sup> Quoted in Thompson (2018) p. 136
- <sup>45</sup> It should be noted also that southern rambling accounted for a larger proportion of the RA's membership than northern rambling. Thompson (2018)
- <sup>46</sup> Quoted in Thompson (2018) p. 143
- <sup>47</sup> Rambling as an activity was losing some of its popularity by the late 1930s. ". . . other outdoor pursuits such as youth hostelling, camping, cycling etc gained in popularity at the expense of rambling. The militancy of at least some ramblers may also have lost [the RA] the support of the more conservative bodies such as the National Trust, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society in the fight for greater access to the countryside." Bassett (1980) p. ii
- <sup>48</sup> The then shared HQ of the TGWU, TUC, LP and Workers Travel Association [WTA] which Stephenson ran during the late 1930s.
- <sup>49</sup> See Ashbrook (2014)
- <sup>50</sup> Hill (1980) p. 81
- <sup>51</sup> See Reflection 5
- <sup>52</sup> Reflection 3, sections 3.1 and 3.4 and 3.5
- <sup>53</sup> Thomspon (2018) p. 211
- <sup>54</sup> Consider the cultural dynamics and multi-faceted aesthetics of Portmeirion, the Italianate settlement created by the architect and designer Clough Williams-Ellis, the editor of *Britain and the Beast*, on the edge of what was to become the Snowdonia National Park in North Wales.
- <sup>55</sup> pp 16 and 17 above
- <sup>56</sup> Howkins (2003) p.112
- <sup>57</sup> This section is draws on the theoretical analyses of Gilbert (2014) *Common Ground: Democracy and Collectivity in an Age of Individualism*. Jeremy Gilbert's analysis has informed much of the underlying 'narrative arc' of Reflections 4, 5 and 6 and due acknowledgement needs to made here.