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MADOC, MASCI, MERTHYR TYDFIL: THE MADOC
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It was one of those moments which happen in archives, one of those occasions you half-hope for every time your fingers fumble at some filthy old familiar of a bundle.

After some years' immersion of a Baptist totality in the journals of Gramsci and the drawings of Goya, I clutched at archives like an artisan of the London Corresponding Society clutching at the latest instalment of Volney's Ruins. In the chaste yet tense, Welsh-whispering hall of the National Library of Wales, volume after volume of letters of the Welsh Jacobins of the 1790s built a wall which shut off even the echoes from Spain.

They were in the grip of their America fever, an appropriate response to the French Revolution among a radical minority located as firmly in an Anglo-American republican tradition as Thomas Paine, burrowing away among an unresponsive and marginal people on whom 'politics' of any kind had first registered in the popular ballads of the American War. On the Ohio and the far Missouri their eyes were fixed, on that new, free, republican Wales which was to arise in the Land of Freedom alongside British-republican Sparta in New York state, the Jacobin-cum-Jacobite New Caledonia of John Millar's son, the Liberty of Joseph Priestley on the Susquehanna, where a momentarily revolutionary Coleridge hoped to plant Pantisocracy.

A leader among the coterie of London-Welsh intellectuals who were the outrunners of an alternative society slowly shaping in the home parishes, with its roots in particular in that nursery of the democratic ideology, the big villages with their urban amenities in the Vale of Glamorgan and the craggy Cromwellian communities of the hills, clustering around the Merthyr of the first iron-works and moving remorselessly into a liberal Presbyterianism-Socinianism-Unitarianism, was Edward Williams, Iolo Morganwg. A stone-mason, tramping artisan who really tramped (he usually walked his horse from charity) gifted poet, antiquarian, scholar and wit, Iolo was also a forger without equal, Fabricator-in-Chief to that new Welsh 'nation' of which he and his friends were the embryo. He was also a Jacobin - 'Now there'll have to be a great changing of Tory bedsheets.' he crowed after the French landed in Fishguard in 1797 - and in the euphoric year of 1792, he was busy drafting schemes for the wholesale transfer of the Welsh to their new, enlightened homeland. He

drew up an eleven-point plan for the trans-Atlantic Cambria, in which the French revolutionary calendar was to co-exist with the revived Order of (suitably regenerated) Druids and in which the official language was to be Welsh. It was to be Welsh, however, in the new and enlightened orthography invented by his friends which made yr hen iaith into as true an Esperanto of Liberty as Noah Webster's American-republican speller. To spell labour labor was a political act; so it was to spell Gwynedd Gwynez. Such minds would feel at home among the radical elite of the New Order of the Ages. About this time Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine and Madison were struggling to define 'a generation', for in the people's republic, no assembly could bind the generations unborn; after much wrestling with actuaries' tables, they came up with 19 years after which time, all laws were to lapse. Benjamin Rush, who invented the phrase 'mental illness' and wanted New World medicine to be a new world medicine, who was to find the land for Pantisocracy and did find the land for Cambria, called for the curriculum of a new federal university to be built around a Course in the Art of Forgetting. Iolo could not go that far; English was to be taught in Cambria, you'll be relieved to hear, if only as 'a language of commerce and learning'.

In an appropriate state of hypnotic and genial obsession, I'd been through the major series and was working on a guide to American references which Claire Taylor of the Aberystwyth staff is preparing. This turned up what looked like a singularly unpromising volume, bound in marble. Post Office, it said, volume 4, and that's all there was. Donated by a Mr. Owen in 1930, it seemed to have some connexion with Lord Walsingham, whom Pitt had installed in the Post Office just before the Fall of the Bastille, the struggle over the Test and Corporation Acts and the Nootka Sound crisis - that conjuncture which gave birth to the America fever in Wales.

Much of the material was technical, but then, in the middle of it, came a clutch of letters from August-October 1789. John Drummond, anxious to enlist Walsingham's help in getting a contract for a saltpetre manufactory out of the Master of the Ordnance, that Duke of Richmond whose levy on coals so infuriated Tom Paine, was bombarding him with letters and offers. He was particularly anxious to alert government to the threat to the West Indies posed by Spain's opening of Trinidad to settlement, the infiltration of French revolutionaries among both the blacks and the British and the clearly Jacobin-inspired campaign against slavery conducted by Wilberforce with Pitt's support - 'Is it possible that the British ministers can be the dupes of this wicked and ruinous plan of leaving the British people here as a sacrifice to so abandoned a race of monsters as

negroes let loose are?'

To buttress civilisation, Drummond offered not only gunpowder of superior quality but a rich store of historic documents, twelve chests of them, no less, which had once belonged to the Jesuits of Guiana and had passed to a kinsman of his, who'd served as a Portuguese bishop in Brazil and had died in 1780. These documents, he said, he had promised to the Royal Society in Paris (just as he had promised the manufactory to his former employers, the Spanish government). But he was saving those regarding the British nation ('Mine in point of Profit, with Notarial copies of the whole') because of the great weight of tradition and interest they brought to bear in support of the Crown.

There, in the middle of them, was this:-

Island of Trinadada
City of St. Joseph, 20th of Maye,
1595

I, Sir Walter Raleigh commander in chief by land and sea etc etc etc - for the most high and Pusiant (sic) Princess Elizabeth Queen of England, Wales, France and Irland - and of the Dominions and seas there unto belonging and of all lands, continents, islands and seas, in and beyond the Atlantic ocean round the great continent called America and unto the South Seas - in and over All Lands and Estates heretofore had and discovered for and on the behalf of the most Excellent, high and Renowned Prince Owen Guyeneth or Guyneth prince and Sovereign of North Wales, next unto the Nation of the Scotch or Northern Brittons, discoveries and conquests first made in the year of our Redemption and Salvation 1164 (or their about) by the great and valliant Prince Madock ap Owen Guyneth the youngest son of the said Prince Owen Guyneth, he being provided with a powerfull fleete and Men of War, and arms famous for valour by Land and Sea takeing with him Many Noble Brittons both of Wales and of the Northern race besides Valliant Men from Irland and other adventurers for new and great discoveryys, did first come into these Seas in the year of Salvation aforesaid named and set down 1164 and the second time in 1170 and did Make notable discovery conquest and settlements of all the Parts of the said great Continent of America and of all the Islands round that Mighty tract of Land and in all the seas, from the Latitude of 36 degrees North all along and round the saide Contiente Unto this said Island of Trinadada passing Unto Guyeneth, Guyneth or Guyannah, to which Vast Space of Country he, the said prince Madock ap Owen Guyneth gave his own Name, Gueneth, Guyenth, Guyneth, now Corrupted and

Calld Guyannah, from thence passing on To the degree and Latitude of five North and to Mouth of the Amazonia Great River or Rio Aragona and round the vast coast of Brazillia Unto the south Sea or Pacific Ocean.

All which Lands, Continents and Islands, from that of the great, wealthy and vast Empire of Mexico (otherwise The Empire of Madock) which he, the said Madock ap Owen Guyneth did first conquer and People with his Welshmen and his Brittons and his tribes of brave adventurers, from whence he did carry into Wales three Several times Mighty store of massey silver and gold, precious stones, diamonds and emeralds etc etc, And his race thereafter reigned Emperors of Mexico untill Montazuma which the Reccords of North Wales and Brittons and Mexico are the noblest testimonials, proofs and the Most Effectual truths and genologies of right - the speech and confession of the Emperor Montazuma before the Captain of the Spanish robbers Hernand Cortez in 1520 when the spainiard Usurped Mexico - Are undeniable truths besides the Proofs of reccord History and the assertions and confessions of many Noble Spainiards particularly Francis Lopez de Gomara, Don Alonzo de Maquira and Don Juan de Gallowania and also Don Carlos d'Owena Madoxus, all Noble Native Mexicans owning and challenging their descent from the Brittons - these being Princes of the Blood of Montazuma by Marriage and Descent, besides these, The Mexican Tongue, their habits, manners and various British Customs still remain amongst the Descendants of the first Welsh Settlers in Mexico at this day, 431 since the Royal Race of Prince Owen Gwyneth possessed the Mexican Empire.

Of which Continents and Islands, I, Sir Walter Raleigh, am in command and Empowerd to Expell, Drive out of every part of the said Continent and Islands all the spanish, Portugez or foreign usurpers, subjects of every kind, officers, Commanders, Governors and all persons whatever Presuming to keep or hold Lands and possessions Either in the Island or upon the Main Land, but such as shall Submit unto and Remain in the Alleigance and Obedience of My said Royale Mistresse the Princess Elizabeth Queen of England, Wales, France and Irland - and of all the Kingdoms and Dominions Annexed unto her Royal Dignity, Crown and Tittles etc as Lineally and of right descended from and of the said Prince Owen Gwyneth and of the son and general of the said Prince and as in relation unto the said Madock Ap Owen Gwyneth, the Lieutenant and vice roye of the said Prince his father. I do take Possession of this Island and Government of Trinadada heretofore Usurped by the said King of Spain - By you his governor

and Lieutenant Don Antonio de Bereo whom I do now dispossess, and do Replace in the government of Trinadada my trusty friend and Brave Lieutenant for and on behalf of my said Royale Mistresse the Queen of England, Wales, France and Irland and of the said Continent and Islands as before described, Captain Joseph Whiddon, with all full and ample Command over this and all the Surrounding Islands: as set forth in our Commission unto the said Capt. Joseph Whiddon.

And here I do set up the standard of England etc forever takeing posession for the said Royale Queen, her Heirs and sucessors for Ever. Sign

Walter Raleigh *

Joseph Whiddon *

Don Antonio de Bereo *

Don Micheal de Lara *

Reccorded the same day by
Order of the persons Under-
signing - it being first noted

That Don Antonio de Bereo and
Don Micheal de Lara are at the

time of their signing Prisoners of the English commander as I also am the
under signing Public Reccorder. Marc Antonio Meliora de Galvez.

(the above note translated). 159 (sic) Maye 20, Island of Trinadada,
city and fort of St. Joseph

(Transcribed exactly: punctuation modernised)

Nor was this all. In another titbit, there was an account of Sir John Hawkins's famous fight at San Juan Ulloa in 1568. According to this, the Spanish commander in Mexico had hanged twelve Englishmen caught on shore and had written to Sir John, 'I did not hang your countrymen, sailors and soldiers, Sir, as Englishmen but as pirates, plunderers and invaders'. Whereupon, in that true-born Briton style to which we have sadly grown unaccustomed, Edward Thurlow stormed the fort and put the garrison of 500 to the sword, saving only 36 gentlemen for the gallows 'to satisfie the manes of 12 brave English men'. 'I have given as revenge to each Ghost three Spainards in order to appease their sorrowful and wandering spirits'. And, ramming home the Cymric lesson of Sir Walter, he added that he'd had these men hanged... 'not because they were Spainards - and Men - but because they were Traitors to England, usurpers of the Territorys of her Crown and Sovereignty, Murderers and Robbers of Mexicans, the Descendants of the Antient Brittons whom we are come to Rescue from the yoke of Spanish tyranny and usurping slavery...'

Stay, brothers, there is yet more. The piece went on to describe the journey made by Thurlow and Captain Joseph Manningham inland to Mexico City

itself, to request the surrender of 'the President and Council'. Thurlow's description of Mexico City as a Paradise was quoted at length - I can confirm it, said Drummond, because I lived there in 1749 - and Manningham's speech was reproduced. 'We have proved the Right of our Sovereign by the Proofs laid down by my comrade - and of the Crown of England by Lawful inheritance and Royal Descent, to Mexico. The order of issue is cleared up unto you. In all the discoveries made in this Part of the Globe, ours is the first, yours but an Usurpation and Crewelty. We are a free Nation, our customs, manners and habits are parts of our Liberty and Natural Inheritance. The Manners of Slavish Nations follow them into all their Polity. We give men rational Liberty, you bind down a free People with chains, whips, and bonds. The native Mexicans are our flesh and blood, all of them now round your Council Board, who are mixed with old Spainards, are our allies and relatives. We have no enmity nor hatred to native Spainards, but as they are base and deceitfull through their mixture with the blood of Moors. Embrace freedom from us and Grow Noble spirited. We will abide by you....'

Triumph was completed in the ultimate climax... 'The Women of Mexico' cried Thurlow, 'are perfect Beautys, fashioned as one may truly say for Love.' The Men, ugly, black and malignant in their looks, especially all the old Spainards. In the natives we still behold the traits of their Antient British Beauty and indeed in the Country Wenches we could trace the Welsh Pedegree in their fine, round, apple smooth countenances and fat, plump cheeks and bodys. These were a perfect treat to Myself and Manningham. While we were introduced to the Beautifull Damsels of the City, so elegant in Manners, Person and Attire, whom it would better become Ovid, Lucullus or our Divine Countryman Chauser to picture them. God forbid old England should ever be forced to abandon Mexico, now nearly conquerd, Pacified and ready to Embrace us...'

(Students who wish to pursue this subject further should consult National Library of Wales MS. 6687D).

Needless to say, the impact upon me can be described only in terms of one of those Methodist Conversions of the 18th century - I was Struck by the Lord in the early afternoon, about a quarter-hour after dinner.'

For a moment, we seemed to have direct proof of the use of the Madoc legend in the field. The Madoc story first appeared in print in the 1580s. Briefly, it asserted that America had first been discovered by a Welshman, Madoc, son of Owain Gwynedd (an authentic twelfth-century prince of Gwynedd in north-west Wales) in 1170. He had returned to a Wales in the grip of civil war and

carried away settlers on a second journey. His landing was located somewhere in the Spanish Main. In the 17th century, the story took on a new dimension, in that Welsh-speaking Indians, clearly descendants of Madoc's men, were said to have been encountered on the American mainland. From that moment, the stories multiplied and snowballed into a tremendous folk-pic, probably the dominant myth of early American history. The second climax was reached in the late 18th century, when the London-Welsh sponsored an expedition by an explorer west of the Mississippi to find the Madoc Indians. This journey was in fact an integral element in the whole Jacobin campaign to plant a new Wales in the West. In my opinion, the Madoc myth in the 1790s was itself an integral and symptomatic component of the new and radical 'collective mentality' forming among a minority of Welsh intellectuals who themselves foreshadowed the populist radicalism of 19th-century Wales.

We already know that, from the moment of its first appearance, the Madoc legend was pressed into political service. There was evidently some tradition of a Welsh prince who sailed away to an unknown land. Evidence recently unearthed, particularly that of a Flemish troubadour of the 13th century, makes it clear that some such story was common in Wales before Columbus. The tale assumed what became its 'traditional' form in the writing of Humphrey Llwyd, a learned antiquarian in touch with the celebrated Netherlands school of mapmakers and geographers. In a history of Wales he wrote, he said that Madoc had sailed to the west leaving Ireland well to the north. He deduced that his landfall 'must needs be...by reason and order of Cosmographie', the lands which the Spaniards had found, Nova Hispania or Florida. Llwyd died in 1568, his history unpublished.

This was the year of Sir John Hawkins's third journey to the West Indies, which figures in the second Post Office extract. With Hawkins sailed David Ingram, who seems to have initiated what became a great tradition. In a report made, significantly enough, to Sir Francis Walsingham, the most fiery imperialist of them all, Ingram claimed that Indians he had met used Welsh words. The classic case was penguin: Pen = head, gwyn = white, penguin = white head, Q.E.D. The only snag here is that penguins have black heads. No speculative linguist worth his salt is to be deterred by such little local difficulties. By 1900, by my count, at least fifteen Indian languages had positively been identified as Welsh, often by linguists of such uncommon facility as to be able to recognise the Welsh language without knowing it.

Ingram's evidence was used in an imperialist pamphlet by Sir George Peckham in 1583. The enterprise was probably stimulated by the work of John Dee, a rather strange figure who haunted the Elizabethan court, astronomer and astrologer once attacked by a mob as a black magician. He steeped himself, in near-manic dedication, in current scholarship and cartography, working through the whole mystery world of pre-Columban discovery, peopled by such figures as the English monk Nicholas of Lynn, who was said to have travelled into the polar regions and whom a Russian scholar has recently credited with the first discovery of America (which seems remarkably generous, unless it is yet one more fiendish plot to unhinge the Atlantic alliance). Dee, it is said, prepared for a sceptical Queen Elizabeth a fully-argued brief in support of her prior claim to America, based on Madoc. The sea-dog empire-builders were quick to snap it up.

Ingram's word-count and other new evidence appeared in the first published history of Wales worth the name, David Powel's renaissance-style Historie of Cambria of 1584. Here, however, the Madoc location shifted. His landing was now placed in Mexico. In support, Powel cited Montezuma's famous speech before Cortes. The spiritual founder of Mexico had been white, had come from and sailed away to, the north-east. This legend, which so psychologically crippled the Indians in face of the Children of the Sun, was read as proof of Madoc's voyages. Further 'linguistic' evidence was cited. (a later version, of which I am very fond, has the Spanish-11 derived from the Welsh-11 through Mexican!) This was the form in which the legend first crystallised.

And it was immediately drafted for war service. What rights could Spaniards claim, with their paltry papal bull, against Gloriana who had at command a resident British prince of her own race? Madoc was duly quoted in all the major celebrations of English enterprise - Purchas, Marriott, Paget, Abbott. It duly lodged in Hakluyt's great compilation of voyages and traffiques of the English, the very voice of Elizabethan expansionism. All in the cause aptly summarised in one title of later date...The British Sailor's Discovery or the Spanish Pretensions Confuted.

These new examples clearly fit into this first 'tradition'. It is a measure of the power of the myth that, despite an inner awful certainty that these documents just had to be false, I became terribly reluctant to lose that vision of sea-dogs storming ashore with the cry Madoc! on their virilely-bearded lips! Alas, cruel mischance...as medieval chroniclers used to say, dogs our every step. Professor David Quinn of Liverpool made mincemeat of them. They

are without doubt fabrications. The Hawkins story, in particular, seems to have been lifted from a French account of massacre and counter-massacre in Florida in 1565-68.

Having, by the authority vested in me by the Druids of Glamorgan, duly anointed David Quinn as Don Dafydd Matamadoc, I am still left with the problem of just who fabricated this material and why and when? This makes the problem of the 'discovery of America' a five-finger exercise!

The Madoc myth was initially revived by the Nootka Sound crisis of 1789-90, which resurrected the hoary old quarrel over sovereignty between Britain and Spain. The crisis did not become public knowledge, however, until 1790, though there was a permanent running fight over the rights of British timber-cutters in Honduras (a sight nearer Trinidad than Nootka, of course). The first letter about Welsh Indians to the Gentleman's Magazine were written in October 1789. The first, by a Welsh Jacobin minister in Lynn, Norfolk, was rejected, but the second, dated 24 October, was published and started the great 'Padouca Hunt'. This notice cited the Elizabethan references to Madoc. It was signed M.F. which I suspect was the signature of William Owen, one of the prime movers among the London-Welsh. In the papers of William Owen and Iolo Morganwg and in the book of John Williams which 'documented' the campaign and ran to two editions over 1790-92, there is reference to a Captain Drummond who had just returned to Britain from the West Indies, who had served the Spanish government as a surveyor in New Mexico and who, in that capacity, had heard Indian mothers singing to their babies in Irish! This Drummond was a Highlander who spoke Gaelic.

This must be the John Drummond of the Walsingham correspondence. Note the intrusion of those heretic Scots and Irish into what had hitherto been a purely Welsh enterprise! From detail scattered in the Walsingham letters, it is clear that Drummond had become a naturalised Spaniard, had performed many services for the Spanish government and had acquired an estate on a small island off the coast of Grenada. His close friend was a count O'Reilly (presumably a papal count) son of an Irish general in the Spanish service. Drummond had returned to Britain from the West Indies in 1788. He made some obscure claim of having drafted a plan to capture the enemy Windward Islands during the War of American Independence and of having been an intimate of the previous administration. He had lost the favour of the Pittites. In June and July 1789, Drummond was in France and claims to have joined the entourage of the Duke of Orleans (much of his correspondence with Walsingham deals with French affairs

in 1789). At that moment, his colleague O'Reilly was apparently touring Europe over the saltpetre enterprise before returning to Spain. There is also mention of an expert colleague, a 'colonel' Brown.

Now, it is just possible that this Brown had some connexion with the John Brown who was a prime mover in the 'Spanish Conspiracy' in the western USA in the 1780s and 1790s. Brigadier-General Wilkinson, second-in-command of the American army fighting the Indians beyond the Ohio frontier, became a Spanish agent and plotted to detach Kentucky and Tennessee from the Union and to annex them to Spain (in order to secure the essential navigation of the Mississippi and access to New Orleans). What is very striking about the whole Welsh enterprise in quest of Madoc Indians in the 1790s is that it moves almost wholly within a Spanish orbit.

The chosen explorer, John Evans, was employed by a Spanish company deliberately created at St. Louis to open the route to the Pacific, commandeer the Indian trade and 'discover new nations'. At its head was an alleged Frenchman who bore the distinctly un-French name of Jacques Glamorgan and who was, in fact, Charles Morgan, a Welsh 'West Indian'. It was members of Wilkinson's Conspiracy who got John Evans out of trouble in his early days in Spanish St. Louis and who assisted another Welshman prospecting a site for Cambria. The enterprise first took on practical shape after the London Welsh had been addressed by a Mr. G., described as a merchant of St. Louis. This might have been Glamorgan himself or his brother who acted as a banking agent for him in London or it could have been a M. Gariot who met Iolo Morganwg in London, a merchant of New Orleans. John Evans himself finally entered the Spanish service; the Spaniards intended to send him to the Pacific ten years before Lewis and Clark. The Spanish governor at St. Louis was very careful indeed in his handling of the Welsh Indian story, out of fear of British claims based on it, and there is evidence of a deliberate campaign to suppress John Evans' full report on his journey.

It is impossible at present to make much of this (particularly since it is possible that Drummond belonged to a Highland family which inter-married with a Welsh gentry house at Edwinsford. He lived in Bath, which was the recognised market for Welsh heiresses. My Colleague Henry Loyn, in fact, suggests that these delicious Drummond documents are the product of a long winter at Edwinsford when the fishing was bad!)

But there is a feeling that there is something here, just beyond the fingers' reach. It certainly gives the little grey cells furiously to work, hein, hein?

to quote Brother Hercule.

At the thought of a Taffia conspiracy which could embrace a Brazilian bishop and twelve chests of Jesuit archives from Guiana, the mind admittedly boggles. Cambro-Britons, however do crop up in the most unlikely places. In Trinidad itself at this time, there was a Mrs. Griffiths who was a great favourite of British naval officers. At Kaskasia, on the edge of the American wilderness, there was a Jones and within Spanish Louisiana itself, in New Madrid, there were a Mr. and Mrs. Rees. Of course, if the whole shebang, 12 chests of the Jesuits and all, is a fake, then all one can say is Help! (though, at least, one would not then have to go and find those chests!').

The point is, once the Madoc myth had been refloated, it was given a tremendous boost by the Nootka crisis and then swiftly absorbed in the America fever which was the Welsh radical response to the crisis of the French Revolution.

There are two points at which the myth becomes something more than a fascinating and entertaining yarn or an unnerving exploration of the psychopathology of Welshness (after 1814, many Welshmen believed Napoleon to be Welsh and hiding out in Merioneth; during World War II, the Russian marshal Timoshenko was well known in Wales to be a descendant of the (quite genuine) Welsh iron town of Hughesovka in the Donetz basin, where Khrushchev first worked - from a man, obviously, called Timothy Shinkins). The first is the sixteenth century, where the relationship to reality is direct, simple and piratical. The second is the 'age of revolution' in the late eighteenth century. At that point, I think, the myth is an expression and a charactersitic expression of the first phase in the formation of a Welsh intelligentsia which is an almost perfect example of what Antonio Gramsci meant when he spoke of 'organic intellectuals', the intellectuals who achieve the articulation and express the self-consciousness of social groups and classes first entering into effective historical action.

In the history of the legend, of course, the critical period is the Shift to the North American Mainland. By the middle of the 17th century, a James Howell had discovered an 'epitaph' to Madoc in the West Indies (which so impressed Dr. Samuel Johnson that he translated it into Latin). Some time later, John Cleland shifted epitaph, relics - and a tomb as well - bodily to the mainland in the Florida region. Over the years, dozens of zealous local antiquarians followed up, concentrating in particular, on the mysterious earthworks and forts which run north from the Gulf of Mexico towards the Ohio and which clearly marked the route of the Madocians. Their work received the final accolade in

1953 when the Daughters of the American Revolution raised a memorial to Madoc at his 'landing-place' in Mobile, Alabama.

For in 1669, the crucial contact had been made. In that year, Morgan Jones a minister from Bassaleg, Monmouthshire, sailed south from Virginia with Major-General Bennett's expedition. The sortie met disaster. Supplies ran out and they made a run for it, through Indian territory. They were captured by a party of Tuscarora Indians, with some Doegs. Told to prepare for death, Jones cried aloud, in his despair reverting to the language of his childhood. A tremor ran through the Doegs. They cried halt! Or rather, they cried Arhoswch! For these Indians spoke Welsh.

Jones was released and preached to the Doegs three times a week in their common language. Madoc's men had survived after all. And from that point on, the Madoc myth begins to burn across the continent like a prairie fire. It became easily the most titanic myth in American history, one which exerted a direct influence on that history.

Finding Welsh Indians became a minor American industry. Thomas Jefferson boasted that his mother's family had come 'from Snowdon' and instructed Lewis and Clark to find the Madocians (they did, too!). John Sevier, founder of Tennessee, knew that they had been the first comers to Alabama before the Chickasaws drove them out. Francis Lewis, who was to sign the Declaration of Independence as New York delegate, was captured by Montcalm and turned over to the Indians. He found a chief who conversed with him in Welsh. The frontiersmen knew them well. Daniel Boone had seen their moccasin prints in the trail ahead. The renegade woodsman, James Girty, knew so many Welsh Indians that he helped compile a Welsh-Indian vocabulary. Colonel George Croghan knew that they had moved on far to the West. There are literally scores of instances of people reporting that they had actually talked with Indians in Welsh. Cherokees said digon for enough and eisiau for want. One man found the Comanches rather hard to understand. He was a South Walian and they spoke North Wales Welsh. There are at least five fully authenticated cases of Indian chiefs solemnly swearing to statements that their ancestors were Welsh. I can merely report these quite genuine instances and refer them to psychiatrists. I suppose they represent the triumph of good taste over good sense.

Welsh Indians existed. Everyone knew they did. Only they were always a little further on, in some place we hadn't reached yet, perhaps round that next bend in the great and unknown river or beyond that next blue mountain barred with snow. They were the Dogs or the Delawares or the Shawnees until we

reached the Ohio. By 1710, they appeared on the Mississippi as the Padoucas. When it was clear that they were not the Pawnees, they were the Comanches. At least 13 real tribes were identified as Welsh Indians; 5 other imaginary tribes were given names to fit; three others described but not named. By the late 18th century, it was at least realised that the Madocians had gone into the land of mystery up the great Missouri river where they enjoyed their golden age as the (light-skinned and relatively civilised) Mandan Indians.

By this time their historiography had swollen to massive proportions. They now had a Welsh bible, which they cherished (they were correct to cherish it, they'd had one a couple of hundred years before the old folks at home). All the myths of early America were fitted into this superlative legend. All those relics which turn up to tease the mind of mid-western farmers and are today automatically assumed to be remains of Leif Ericson and his Norsemen were in the 19th century automatically assumed to represent the impact of Welsh culture on the American West. All were integrated into one magnificent folk epic.

And what's amazing is how much of all this was accepted by serious scholarship. George Catlin, the first Indian anthropologist, firmly believed that the Mandans were of Welsh descent; so did many others. Many American school texts in the early 20th century stated the fact baldly. The geographer Alexander von Humboldt thought the story worthy of consideration; so did Bancroft. Even Justin Winsor, said to be the most sceptical historian who ever lived kept an open mind. In 1862, the American Ethnological Society gave Madoc its imprimatur; in the following year the American Antiquarian Society gratefully accepted a relic of the Welsh Indians. In 1865, the Smithsonian Institution regarded the Madoc story as an open question.

It was in 1858 that Nemesis struck. The Welsh eisteddfod back home offered a prize for the best essay on Madoc. Thomas Stephens, a chemist of Merthyr Tydfil, a fine critical intelligence and author of the first serious history of Welsh literature, produced a devastating critique of the legend, a classic of destructive analysis. The eisteddfod committee (not even the adjudicators!) said that since the subject was Madoc's discovery of America and Stephens's essay was on the non-discovery, it had to be disqualified! Stephens mounted the platform to protest, the chairman ordered the band to strike up. It was, in short, an eisteddfod scandal, a phenomenon almost as characteristic of modern Welsh culture as a chapel split. Stephens's study was finally published over thirty years later. Belief in Madoc since has to rest on faith rather than works. The faithful, however,

stand firm, and in considerable number. In 1947, the Madoc Indians were identified as the Kutenai Indians of British Columbia; more candidates appeared in the 1950s. The American bicentennial is producing a crop of Madoc celebrations.

History tuppence-coloured evidently registers more effectively than history penny-plain. 'There's more enterprise in walking naked', said the Irish poet Yeats, after he had withered out of mythology into truth, but hardly anybody listens to him, at least among nations so insecure that they have to shout at the tops of their voices to convince themselves that they exist. 'We need myths' some-one told me the other day, both as Welshmen and as a working class.

It would seem so. For several years, a couple of us common-or-garden chroniclers laboured dry-as-dust mightily to transfer the Merthyr Rising of 1831 and the first Welsh working-class martyr Dic Penderyn, out of myth and into history. The only response apart from the professional, came, paradoxically enough, from the Anglican Church (or yr hen fradwres, the old traitress, as she was familiarly known in the Principality). The Church in Wales raised a belated memorial to Dic Penderyn by his felon's grave at Aberavon churchyard. Merthyr Tydfil itself, matrix of modern Wales and the Welsh working class movement, mother-town of Welsh radicalism and Welsh socialism, full of 'staunch old Republicans' according to the Jacobin John Thelwall in the 1790s, decided to raise a plaque to Dic (on its brand-new, white-tile courthouse just across the way from its Disneyland shopping centre, both built on the ruins of the old heart of the town and its Faubourg St. Antoine) only after its shame-faced councillors had been mercilessly harangued by the fire-and-brimstone novelist Alexander Cordell. He had 'immortalised' Dic in one more of his Silurian-Gothic books.

Life gets tasteless, don't it?

But in the end, of course, some-one just had to go to find the Welsh Indians. And the time just had to be the late 18th century. The best way to approach this rather remarkable conjuncture, I think, is first to tell the 'story', the story of some Welshmen and their 'America' in the age of revolution.

The 'Welsh revival' which looms like an Alpine range across Welsh history text-books, was well under way. Among the London-Welsh and their scattered correspondents in the parishes, a cluster of lively, indefatigable 'patriots' (in the 18th-century sense of the term) had emerged, poets, writers, antiquarians, linguists, revivalists, supporters of the American and French revolutions, victims of Pitt the Younger during the repression of 1794. In the first glow of Wordsworthian enthusiasm, they decided to send a man west of the Mississippi.

Their Columbus was John Evans, a young Methodist exhorter from Waunfawr, near Caernarvon. His journeys were worthy of Madoc himself.

John Evans crossed in 1792. He moved along what was in fact an established, Baptist international network engaged in a continuous trans-Atlantic discourse. This was the framework and channel for the distinctly political emigration which characterised the 1790s. It had its own ships, its own houses of call, even its own university in Rhode Island College (built on the pillars of Welsh-American Baptists and West India rum and appropriately called Brown). After settling in among the American Welsh, Evans set off from Philadelphia in the spring of 1793. He took flatboat down the Ohio to the frontier town of Cincinatti, then in the grip of the last Indian war in the old north-west. He was taken over by that engaging crook, Brigadier-General Wilkinson, still immersed in his plot to detach Kentucky from the Union and attach it to Spain. On went Evans, to cross the Mississippi into Spanish territory at New Madrid, where there were a Mr. and Mrs. Rees. At New Madrid, he was laid out for two months with an 'intermitting fever', but finally set out, with one companion (and one dollar, 75 cents in his pocket) to walk the largely unknown Missouri.

Total disaster. They got lost, wandered through the wilderness, struggled through water from hip to armpit, 'amongst a numerous crowd of the biggest reptiles I ever saw'. They were baked half-crazy by the sun and finally reeled into a Spanish post and tottered back across the river into the American outpost of Kaskasia, where fortunately, there was a John Rice Jones, Esq. For two years, Evans vanished from sight. He must have been there when the Michaud expedition approached, on its own Jacobin-Jeffersonian conspiracy against Spain. In the interval, Evans moved from Methodism to Baptism to Freemasonry, which I'm sure must be significant.

In the meantime, another Cambro-Briton had come in along the Baptist network. This was Morgan John Rhys, a passionate radical from Glamorgan, who had preached Protestant liberty to the revolutionary French, been driven home by the war, launched the first political periodical in the Welsh language (the proceeds dedicated to the search for Welsh Indians) and, harassed by the repressions of 1794, crossed to the States. He went on an epic tour of the republic during 1794-95, looking for a site for Free Cambria with its Welsh-Indian associates. In Savannah, Rhys battled for a black church in the teeth of nobles and mobs. He turned his mare Primrose towards the West, crossed the Kentucky wilderness with an emigrant train, sniped at by Indians and renegades, and lodged with Wilkinson in Cincinatti, where they drank toasts nightly to the martyrs of Botany Bay and where Wilkinson offered to go and hang the Judge

Braxfield, wh 'd condemned them.

In the meantime, at Kaskasia, John Evans had heard of Spanish fur-trade and exploration missions up the Missouri and at the depth of winter 1794, crossed over to St. Louis. At that moment, the tensions of four imperialisms were intersecting on the Missouri; the Spaniards threw Evans into jail as a British spy. He was released at the instance of one of Wilkinson's conspirators and, assisted by Jacques Glamorgan, joined one of the Spanish expeditions, headed by the Scotsman and ex-Norwester James McKay. McKay had met Morgan Rhys in Cincinatti, after the latter had returned from Greenville, where he had been again transfixed, this time by the Six Nations of the Iroquois Indians as they made that surrender which was going to expel them from history. And as Rhys moved back east to begin setting up the Welsh settlement, McKay moved on west, enrolled Evans and set off up the Missouri.

Evans turned out to be something of a genius at the wilderness trade and to have the makings of as great a geographer-explorer as his fellow-countryman in Canada, David Thompson. He and McKay managed to break the Arikara and Omaha blockade. Evans hunted the buffalo for twenty-five days of winter. And in the spring of 1796, he set off for the Pacific, with a set of instructions from McKay which President Jefferson was directly to copy in his instructions to Lewis and Clark on their first land crossing a few years later. Driven back by the ferocious TetonSioux, Evans finally got through the blockade to reach the Mandan Indians, the first man effectively to do so up the Missouri. But through a desperate winter, he fought a losing fight against the Canadian traders pressing down from the north, and with the Spanish supply effort fading, was forced to retreat. He came down the Missouri in 68 days and had to report to the boys at home that the Mandans were not Welsh, that, as far as he could see, no Indians anywhere were Welsh. They were not pleased; some of them demanded their money back.*

Evans ended his days in the Spanish service as a surveyor near St. Louis and in New Orleans. He had, however, made a brilliant map of the upper Missouri (the first effective map) and on his death, the American consul in New Orleans passed his papers to Jefferson. They passed in turn to Lewis and Clark who used them on the first leg of their journey. A man with a name like Lewis would also look for Welsh Indians. He 'found' them, too, among the Flatheads, way off in the Bitterroot valley in the Rockies - 'These savages has the strangest language of any we have ever seen. They appear to us to have an impediment in their speech or a brogue or bur on their tongue. But they are the

likeliest and honestest savages we have ever yet seen. We take these Indians, therefore, to be the Welch Indians...' The logic is impeccable.

John Evans died in New Orleans in 1799 and his papers (including letters in Welsh) are today in the Archives of the Indies in Seville (filed under Cuba). Morgan John Rhys left little more of a memorial. He married into the Loxley family of Philadelphia. Ben Loxley had been Benjamin Franklin's technician and Old Lightning-Rod's kite (to quote William Cobbett, then a splenetic Philadelphia High Tory) ended up in Rhys's household. He finally launched the Welsh settlement, Beula, in western Pennsylvania in 1796. The British migration of 1794-1800 was intense and distinctive, strongly artisan-small-farmer-professional in character, deeply political; they put backbone into the Jeffersonian democrats. Cambria was supposed to rise on the Ohio, but the massive land-speculations, the scandals, the inadequate land-law closed that valley until 1800 and the incoming Welsh could not wait. 'Well, here we are in the land you called Land of Fridom. Now, where do we ground it?' For five or six years, Rhys and his men, supported by British Jacobins, tried to ground it in Beula, with a massive wilderness library devoted to the Enlightenment. They failed and with the final opening of the Ohio lands, Beula withered into a staging post. Rhys withdrew into public service as a Jeffersonian, the Welsh dispersed, and soon there was nothing left of Beula but a handful of gravestones, nodding towards the Ohio where the people had been carried, as if by some giant shrug of a westering ocean.

Some-one said once that this story of Welshmen and their 'America' in the 1790s sounded like science-fiction. Is it no more than that? Just another Welsh quirk, a hiccough? With Geoffrey of Monmouth and his Welsh King Arthur (who would have captured Rome, of course, had he not been stabbed in the back by his wife - his English wife, of course) we managed to bemuse medieval historiography; modern history we serviced with Madoc. It took me some time to realise that these Welsh phenomena of the 1790s were one. You tend to compartmentalise. Here, we have the first stirrings of 'politics' in Welsh life; the first radicalism; there, we have this slightly off-beat character Morgan John Rhys nipping over to Paris to help fulfil John Knox's curse on the French monarchy (a feeling common to many radicals born of Old Dissent), publishing the first Welsh political periodical but also sinking himself in this forgotten Welsh liberty settlement in the USA; over there, you have the Madoc myth and John Evans's incredible journey. It is customary in Welsh history-writing to pin-point the 'Jacobins' as a tiny minority and to leave it at that, with the Evans journey and Beula perhaps noticed in footnotes. It is not so simple.

That the Jacobins were a minority is certainly true, but they register as 'freaks' only within a limited and unreal perspective. Richard Price, the Dissenter radical who was the occasion for Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France and David Williams, friend of the Girondins, two radicals of European and Atlantic repute, in fact emerged from a developing society or sub-culture which in many important respects prefigured what was to be a characteristically Welsh nineteenth century. You can work back through the history of Welsh populist radicalism to these Old Jacks and Madocians but no further. They are the starting-point. What they prefigure in fact is the emergence of a 'nation' in Wales in the 19th century.

The clearest, most obvious and, I think, valid parallel is with the Czechs. Like the Czechs, the Welsh had 'lost' their 'natural' aristocracy. A few gentry houses patronised Welsh, but they were rare. The language was disintegrating into local patois in the 18th century, a popular culture dribbling out into sand. The 'revival' which looms so large in our history books was in fact a highly complex and contradictory phenomenon: a massive adult education drive associated with Griffith Jones's circulating schools which must have turned a majority of the population literate in Welsh for a time, an upsurge of interest in Welsh literature and antiquities, a Methodist movement whose origins were independent of that in England, shifts and stirrings within Old Dissent, the first emergence of 'politics' during the American War, not least in popular ballads, the first rumblings of industrialisation, the first 'towns' worthy of the name. In effect, in a maze of often directly contradictory 'movements', an alternative society was taking shape.

Its realisation was explosive; in fact it was created in little more than one generation in the early nineteenth century. Despite the stranglehold which Methodism, Dissent, Nonconformist radicalism, were to rivet on our historiography, it is doubtful whether Dissent, old and new, stretched to as much as 10 or 15% of the Welsh population by 1811. By 1851, it had captured 70-80% of the Welsh. Population explosion and Napoleonic War seem to have precipitated crisis in rural Wales; it might well be possible to relate the spread of chapels to the spread of the annual lease. Certainly the Welsh from west Wales coming into Merthyr in the early 19th century were Independents and Baptists coming in: and they were full of 'vital religion' too; chapel after chapel in Merthyr was split by demands for hymns and music, an unheard-of innovation! Moreover, for reasons which still escape us, there was a strong regional differentiation between Old and New Dissent; Clarkson, the anti-slavery crusader, noticed a visible

difference as he moved from south and east into west and north. 'Methodism' was to be hegemonic in the latter, not the former. This is an important distinction. The preacher-journalist was to become a central and characteristic figure in the new Welsh 'nation' of the 19th century but the distinction between Old and New Dissent ran right through families, sometimes dividing brothers. Much of the characteristically Welsh movement of the later 19th century has to be assessed in terms of this distinction. This is why another complex phenomenon, masked in a catch-phrase - 'the radicalising of the Methodists' - is central to Welsh political history. The working-class movement is something else again, though inter-penetrating with these neighbouring worlds. What is clear is that, by the middle of the 19th century, this complex of forces had created a 'nation' which, like the Czech, formed along a language and religion line which was also a class line, which like the Czech, for that reason felt itself 'class-less', rooted in a mythical 'gwerin' (people or folk; traditional and nationalist radicals in Wales go to great lengths to distinguish it from a 'proletariat'), with what Gramsci would call a 'folkloric' and 'organic' intelligentsia as its backbone.

That intelligentsia first assumes recognisable shape precisely in these late 18th century patriots. Their tone, of course, differed profoundly from that of later generations. They couldn't stand Methodists. They are Enlightenment men in whom the first leaven of romanticism is working; they are recognisable kinsfolk of Benjamin Rush and Ben Franklin and Joel Barlow and their like in the western or 'Atlantic' world. (their experiences have in fact led me to see much more in this 'Atlantic-revolution' notion than I was at first prepared to admit). Not all of them were radical by any means. But the hard core of them were. These were the people who revived the eisteddfod in 1789-92, specifically as a radical instrument, with revolutionary themes and French medals. Out of them came the invented Gorsedd of Welsh bards which ultimately lodged in the eisteddfod and remains there to the present day (now numbering in its ranks such Jacobins as Dai Francis of the NUM, Miss Mary Hopkin and Her Majesty the Queen). Moreover, they were outriders of a slowly-forming society. Scattered through the parishes were men of similar temper, men who tried spasmodically to launch Welsh radical journals and who initiated what became a national obsession with the printing press. Around them, the Arminians of south Wales, particularly, were clustering into Unitarian and quasi-Unitarian societies which were to organise themselves in the early 19th century and were to provide its first local oligarchy to booming Merthyr Tydfil. By 1836, radicalism of a peculiarly intransigent Dissenting kind, with strong working-class connections, had captured Merthyr and the form which Welsh Nonconformist and

working-class radicalism was to take seems to have crystallised first in the Aberdare valley. Indeed, the first Chartist leadership in Wales recognisably derives from this milieu, though there was a change after 1842.

These 18th-century patriots, in short, initiated what became a 'tradition' and themselves created an important sector of it. They very strongly resemble the first generation of Czech radicals and revivalists, emerging in the first aftermath of Joseph II's reforms. What is very striking about these Welsh 'organic intellectuals' is their massive disaffection from the British state and their America complex. William Jones of Llangadfan, one of Wales's few Voltaireans, preached the deliberate and wholesale transfer of Welsh Dissenters and peasants to the USA. He was a loner, but in fact, thinking of this order became general in the 1790s. The quite heavy Welsh-American correspondence of that period, also clustering around a Baptist core, was overpoweringly and explicitly 'sans-culotte' in tone (the word itself recurs frequently). The anti-Jacobin witch-hunt of 1794 and the persecution of Baptists which followed the French landing in Fishguard in 1797 did nothing to diminish it. The migrations of the 1790s have strong political overtones; these people were voting with their feet. In the citizenship records of Pennsylvania, the incoming Welsh (so numerous that the Welsh Society was revived to cope with them) rarely used the standard form for natives of Britain. Many, indeed, called themselves natives of 'The Kingdom of Wales'.

And it was precisely here, of course, precisely in this 'patriot', radical-national sense, that the Madoe myth worked its magic. It fused with that missionary impulse which was so potent in Welsh Dissent and which could assume a political as well as a religious dimension - witness the campaign against slavery (the main bridge between 'respectable' and 'artisan' societies) and Morgan John Rhys's mission to the sans-culottes. Most radical and populist movements sought their historical 'precedents' to buttress what was in truth an unheard-of innovation in the entry of 'mere mechanics and tradesmen' into political life. Thomas Hardy and the London Corresponding Society loudly demanded the 'restoration' of ancient English freedom; John Baxter the silversmith derived the right of armed resistance to George III from populist 'Saxon' precedent. How much stronger would this impulse be among a minority of Jacobins and radical Dissenters inhabiting a people itself a minority lacking parity of esteem? In the Wales of the 1790s, locked away in a corner of that Britain swept by gales of 'loyalism', disciplined by suspensions of Habeas Corpus and the Two Acts, patrolled by the Volunteers, deafened by God Save Great George our King sung fifteen times over in the playhouses to drown God Save Great Thomas Paine (one Welsh Unitarian was himself

jailed for singing a Welsh version of the Carmagnole) - where could they look but to that America which claimed to be the physical realisation of the principles of Enlightened Liberty, where even a Joseph Priestley could breathe? And how much stronger would that 'ancient Welsh liberty' seem when there were known to be physical exponents of it, ranging the limits of the land of freedom? Welsh Indians were Welsh freedom. At this particular historical moment, in fact, the Madoc myth was serving precisely the same function for Welsh Jacobins as the myth of the Freeborn Saxons and the Norman Yoke for their English comrades - or indeed as the myth of the Sons of Padilla for the Spanish, in their revolution of 1808.

And the 'realisation' of Madoc and Free Wales, John Evans's journey and Beula, were themselves 'inserted', made possible, by an Atlantic-wide movement which, in a conflict of imperialisms, was in fact creating an integrated world market. Even the movement of the myth itself, its focusing on the Mandan Indians, was a product of the geographical focusing of rival imperialisms.

The America fever was precipitated by the Nootka Sound crisis of 1789-90. Nootka Sound, on the Pacific, with those vital sea-otter skins which opened up the trade of Canton in China and offered a chance to eliminate the permanent balance of payments deficit with the East, had first been opened by Captain Cook. The surgeon of his second ship, the Discovery, was David Samwell, one of the London-Welsh 'bards' who was to sponsor the Madoc hunt. Within a few years, Americans were challenging the British for this vital trade and alarming the Spaniards in their newly-expanding empire, already frightened by the southward advance of the Russians from Alaska and even more by the British from Canada who had 'inherited' the expertise of the French voyageurs, masters of the Indian trade. For Nootka was clearly a possible outer focus for the vital fur trades which were already arcing their way across the whole continent. With Nootka and a north-west passage a permanent obsession, the rival imperialisms came to a focus on the Spanish Mississippi and that Louisiana which was stretching out unknown towards the Nootka entrepôt. When the Spaniards tried to exclude the British from Nootka, raising the hoary old issue of Spanish exclusivism in the New World, Pitt and his Board of Trade, already alarmed by the Spanish recovery and threat to the English stranglehold on Spain's colonial trade, were ready to go to war; they were far more ready to go to war with Spain over Nootka than with France over the revolution. The Spaniards backed down - but it was this resurrection of an old quarrel which resurrected Madoc.

His Indian descendants were 'placed' in the same process. In the new American republic, keeping afloat on Dutch money and trying to force its way in a world of mercantilist empires, cohesion was precarious. The 'men of the western waters' in Kentucky and Tennessee desperately needed access to the Mississippi and Spanish New Orleans. They could fight to get it - and many rallied to the French republic which was trying to buttress its ('ghost empire' in the west with a 'French' army in Kentucky generalled by George Rogers Clark; they could intrigue to get it - and Wilkinson was to hard with his secessionist plans. The British from Canada were building up the Indians within the American north-west under their chief, the half-Scot Joseph Brant, as a buffer state for the fur trade. The Spaniards were doing the same with the Cherokees and Creeks under Alexander McGillivray (another half-Scot) and 'General' Bowles (who was to advise the Welsh on their Indian state). The Spanish position was in fact desperate. Thinly holding the Mississippi against the endless tide of people coming in from the USA, warding off British, Americans, Russians on the Pacific, they became yet more alarmed as the far west Canadians began to penetrate through to the Upper Missouri. In the 1790s, the Spaniards at St. Louis and New Orleans were obsessed by fear of a British attack on Santa Fe from Canada!

This, to us lunatic geography was, at that point, perfectly rational to any sane man working out from what was then known in terms of the symmetry then current in geographical thinking. Every watershed, it was thought, had rivers running to the four points of the compass. The rivers so running from the watershed in the west they thought they knew. It was known that the Missouri rose in the far west. A Great River of the West had to come out on the Pacific, somewhere near Nootka. Between it and the Missouri was 'a height of land'. Everyone believed it would be short - 'one day's portage' Jefferson told Lewis and Clark. It had to be short. The Rockies had been touched by individual explorers, but their real character, formidable chains of mountains, had nowhere registered in men's minds. The image of North America which people carried in their heads was shrunken and fore-shortened in the north; from it, the Rockies in their reality, were absent. Consequently, everybody's thinking closed in on the Upper Missouri. It was precisely there, in those misty realms, that everybody's mercantilist dilemmas could be resolved. Alexander Mackenzie was thrusting west first, through what was to become Canada. Jefferson was trying to get men up there while Louisiana was still Spanish. The Spaniards made their convulsive efforts in the 1790s - in what we now see as an attempt to

'forestall' Lewis and Clark.

And probably for the same reasons, it was precisely in this area that the myths focused - myths of the Inland Sea, the Volcano, myths of dwarf Indians, Chinese Indians, Indians with forked beards. Above all, there was the myth of the White Indians. Map after map in the late eighteenth century blazoned the blank area around the headwaters of the Missouri - White Indians or White Padoucas. Through their mist, these men were glimpsing a reality - the reality of the Mandan Indians, sketchily known from stray wanderers since the early 18th century. The Mandans were strategically placed between the Plains Indians, revolutionised by the horse, and the eastern Indians, revolutionised by European trade and colonisation, by mass migration. Though the Sioux were pushing west and crossed the Missouri below them at this date, and though smallpox devastated them in the 1789s, the Mandans remained the pivot of the whole western trade. Iron distributed through them Cook was to see at Nootka. To the north, they could be reached from Canada. Down the Missouri lay St. Louis. To the west, they could reach through the Cheyennes (whom John Evans actually met). And the Mandans were more fair in skin. They lived in clusters of earth lodges which did resemble British hill-forts. And all efforts had to concentrate on them.

In the early 1790s, Iolo Morganwg was busy building arguments in favour of a search in the Mandan area for the Welsh Indians. He deployed Nootka Sound and the possibilities of commercial empire. In fact, Iolo talked in exactly the same way as the more visionary spokesmen of commercial empire in government offices in Washington, Madrid, London, Montreal and St. Louis. He was using current commercial and geographical knowledge in a perfectly sensible and rational manner. The Spaniards in St. Louis and New Orleans agreed with his reasoning; they were prompt to issue passports and proclamations to John Evans, careful to suppress any news of the Welsh Indians lest it reach the British. A hard-head like the fur-trader McKay was quite ready to believe; so was Jefferson, so were Lewis and Clark. It was all perfectly rational.

And it was this 'intersection' between massive imperialist rivalry on the one hand, and on the other, the slow emergence of its first 'organic intelligentsia' among a tiny people entering its travail of 'modernisation' in one corner of the Atlantic basin which, for a brief moment, thrust Madoc and his white Indians into an historical centre they had not occupied since the days of Elizabethan propaganda.

Madoc in a global tapestry is thus intelligible. Madoc and the organic intellectuals of an emerging Welsh 'nation' is accessible in broad psychological

terms. But the reality of that particular relationship still escapes us. Just how and why did the Madoc myth interact in quite the way it did with the needs of a fulcrum group climbing towards a local hegemony? There are parallels elsewhere and we are none the wiser about them. Gramsci talks a lot about organic intellectuals, about folklore, 'common sense'; he tells us more than anybody else, I think. But he doesn't tell us enough. If we could penetrate to the reality of the Madoc myth in that particular human complex Wales at that particular moment of historical experience and perception of experience, we'd be feeling where the corn of history is green, to quote another Cambro-Briton.

God! (if you'll pardon a petty-bourgeois expression) I wish I could! But there, if I did, I suppose I'd be master of human history itself. Not even my mother would claim that. Not yet, anyway.

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