



In 1170 Prince Madoc sailed to America 300 years before Columbus.

THE YANKS ARE COMING.

*Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there.
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming ev 'rywhere.
So prepare, say a pray 'r, Send the -word,
send the word to beware.
We 'll be over, we 're coming over.
And we won't come back till its over, over there!*
(George M.Cohan-1917)

**..to begin at the beginning.*

A call to war in 1917 brought the USA into Europe, but the 'drums' have been 'rum-tumming' in Wales since the 12th Century and continued to do so hi the communities of the country through significant periods of history. The influences of American culture have resonated through social life hi Wales, affecting language, attitudes, dress, manner and even religion. Dissect the cultural life of Wales, that small Celtic land separated by Offa's Dyke from England and with a strong cultural identity, and the indelible flavour of Chicago, Philadelphia and of course Hollywood would soon be revealed.

Since 1170, Welsh folk tales reminded generations that America had really been discovered by Prince Madoc ap Gwain Gwynedd. This Prince, whose father Owain was considered one of the greatest Welsh rulers of the 12th. Century, fraught with battles with Henry 11 of England sailed out of Rhos-on-Sea on the North Wales Coast, in 1169 to find a new place to live in the western ocean. Some years later he returned with news of a **'new abundant country'**, gathered a fleet often ships and hundreds of expectant settlers and sailed west again, never to return. Legend tells that they landed somewhere hi the area of what is now Alabama, and settled down eventually hi the Great Plains. Stories filtered back to North Wales in the nth. Century, a Reverend Morgan Jones hi 1669 reports that his life was spared by a tribe of North American Indians because they were Welsh speaking!! Other colonists tell tales of Welsh speaking Indians, hi 1810, Major Amos Stoddard, first Governor of Tennessee discovered that Indian history believed that ancient forts close to the Alabama River were built by the 'welsh' whose leader was Modok. The story is considered myth, but the legend lives on; an eccentric nationalist once insisted that the real Prince of Wales lives hi Mobile, Alabama near to the spot where Madoc supposedly landed hi 1170.

**..off to Philadelphia in the morning.*

So the symbiosis between Wales and the now United States of America took root, the Madoc Saga and its 'account' of the hundreds of migrants travelling to North America may be set hi legend but the records of hundreds of thousands hi the 19th /20th reality. Prior to that period hundreds of Quakers were driven out of Wales, to settle hi

Pennsylvania. So inevitably in the collective consciousness of Wales, America began to imprint itself on the culture of young people, in the way they understood the world, the way they spoke, dressed, ate, responded politically, walked and behaved. Letters from Pittsburg, returnees to Wales, new family members and filtering through ideas all influenced a way of thinking; strange life styles and accents invaded the Valleys of South Wales. Gwyn Thomas, the noted Anglo-Welsh writer recognised 'the booming American Wales' by recalling how his grandfather had left the Rhondda Valley in the 1860s to settle in Pennsylvania. There Thomas's father was born hi 1872; returning to South Wales as a young man his '**yankee**' accent was a source of great curiosity, and young men mimicked the 'twang' perhaps to prepare themselves for their voyage from Liverpool to New York. Such was the attachment to the American opportunity, Thomas observed that '**places like the Rhondda were parts of America that never got on the boat.**'

The phenomena of outward migration from Wales to the USA as the result of the basic problem of unemployment and poverty, hand in hand with the concept of the promised land of abundance and new opportunities grew with the expanding industrialisation of society and expanding world markets. Between the mid 1800s and the 1920s **almost 100,000 left Wales for the New World**, each phase responding to peculiar social times; the exodus in the 1920s linked directly to the social desolation caused by the aftermath of the Great War. A 'country fit for heroes to live in' became a country to leave and find a better life. A phase of transfer to the USA in the period 1945 to 49, and involving principally women and small children was directly related to the presence of American servicemen in Wales prior to the invasion of Europe.

The view of the USA as the land of freedom and opportunity, wherein citizens owned their country was an attractive concept to the Welsh in the 19^h and early 20th. Centuries who had experienced the control of their industrial masters. The '**American Dream**' began to be quietly embedded hi the Welsh culture, and manifestly influenced the material shape of Wales well into the mid 20th. Century; America became a concept (Smith,p.3/4) A longing for freedom that grew after the American Civil War of 1865, which resulted in significant numbers of Welsh people migrating to America. Young steel workers at Bersham hi North Wales helped make cannon for the Civil War, and 'fired' by the cause many of them migrated to America. In that village today is a row of cottages still called Bunker Hill. Out of that discontent grew the beginnings of working class consciousness, the first stirrings of trade unionism and of socialism as a Welsh phenomenon. Industrialisation was taking its toll in the early ^^Century, and the **American invasion of minds** would increase in subtle forms as the new century took a grip on changing times.

An exemplar that offers all social changes of a developing Wales is provided by the iron and steel town of South Wales, Merthyr Tydfil. **The crucible of the Industrial Revolution**, the first industrial railroad in the world, advanced Smelting furnaces ad the classic division between a controlling family, the Crawshays, and an exploited working class. The site of classical working class revolt and middle class suppression, chronicled hi depth by sociologists and novelists. Riots hi 1831 led to four of the working class rioters being transported to Australia for life....others not subject to the law **took the boats to America**. Jack Jones, the Merthyr born (1884-1970) novelist with his social commentary style catches the mood of migration to the USA hi that period with his notable novel "**Off to Philadelphia in the morning.**"

Merthyr Tydfil also at that time had a unique American presence and a sort of reciprocal migratory pattern, small groups of Americans and returning Welsh and larger groups, **in their hundreds moving out to the New World**. A uniqueness that had a profound effect on the behaviour, faith and morals of that town. In 1843, the Church of the Latter Day Saints began an association with the town, an association set to continue into the New Millennium. By 1848 Merthyr Tydfil became the "Mother Branch" of the Mormon Church in the UK, with 700 members... as reported in the Millennial Star of March 1848. At Mormon 'schools' Merthyr children, **learned the teachings of Mormonism** in particular the ravages of sin in particular the evil of alcohol and the **strength of abstinence**. The latter, taken up by the evangelist churches, dominated the moral education of young people well into the 1950s. Working class families were sworn to abstinence in return for loans to cope with living costs hi the 1920s, and photographs of that tune show small children marching, against the **Evils of Drink**, through the terraced streets of the Valleys.

The migratory phenomena associated with the Mormons was not entirely a response to the '**American Dream concept**', or real discontent to the trauma of Merthyr's industrial life. Undercurrents of intent might well open up a critical view of the Salt Lake missionaries hi the valley. An intent that manifested itself the sailing of the "Buena Vista" sailing out of Liverpool on 26th. February 1849, bound for America with 249 ex-Merthyr citizens, men/women and children. The passengers were named by the Mormon Church as **the Welsh Saints, their destination the "new Zion"** to be built near Salt Lake City. Since then" arrival in Merthyr, the Latter Day Church had encouraged the reading of the Book of Mormon, which described the building of a new Zion hi America, where Christ would reign personally upon an earth made new and like Paradise. Converts were encouraged to save money for the voyage to America and Zion, a deposit of £1 secured a place hi Paradise. A princely sum in a time when the average weekly wage was £1 to £2 ten shillings a week, spent almost exclusively in the employers shop (Cardiff & Merthyr Guardian 1st. May 1847). In September 1849, President Brigham Young, leader of the new Mormons hi Utah, set up a **Perpetual Emigration Fund** to enable potential immigrants to travel from Merthyr to Salt Lake City. One criteria of the fund was that those without means could receive credit, to repay later; indirectly the Salt Lake community introduced the '**means test**' into Wales. A facet of provision for the poor that was an anathema to those working class people living hi Wales during the poverty years between the wars...1918 to 1939. Even into the 1950s, the means test lurked hi the urban streets of Wales, and children receiving 'free dinners' at school carried a kind of stigma. If they had known that it was from the building of Paradise, it might have taken the sting out of the shame!! America touched the lives of the young and maturing generation hi many ways, and there was more to come; more hi the incoming of images and the invasion of minds and new ways to see the world.

** ..lets go the pictures.*

..... and Charlie Chaplin and Al Jolson had much to do with this invasion!!!
Hollywood and the movies came to Wales hi the 1920s. Gwyn Thomas a Welsh wordsmith of distinction captured the newcomer with his phrase...

*' the Marx (brothers) films began landing like shells in the Valley Stockades.'*⁵

(Thomas,1985)

The language, attitudes, style, musical tastes, manner, and self perceptions of the young would never be the same again. Aneurin Bevan, Member of Parliament and founder of the Health Service, vowed to "**switch the lights on in rooms that have been dark for ages**". His lights were political awareness and the aspirations to better lives; but the dark corners of Wales were becoming lit by the brighter light of the Cinema Screen!! The Odeon, the Grand, the White Palace, the Monico, the Pavilion, the Palladium and other cinemas illuminated a new life to the receptive young of the Welsh working class. Leaving the small terraced house, **lit by gas-mantles** and warmed by open coal fires that often tumbled onto the home-made rag mat and entering into the bright **world of the screen was a mind-turning experience**. Bleak lives became neon-lit by the glamour of California and the wonder of the Prairies, the screen became an escape from the drizzle streets and the outside toilet What an escape! Escape to another world that was being lived hi the USA; the American Dream before your very eyes, and the late 1920s and 1930s saw another rush to emigrate. Not only did the 'moves' communicate facets of American life, they intentionally instilled notions of morals, political messages and "**subtle social messages beneath the surface of overt content.**" (Sklar, Robert/Pi96)

By the mid 1930s there were more cinemas in South Wales than there were in all the industrial areas of the UK. Pontypridd, with a population hi excess of 24.000 had 7 cinemas in 1938. They became central to young peoples social lives, dates were made to go to 'the flicks' with the back row of the cinemas, the one —and - nines, much sought out by courting couples. Children would march back into the class-room at the end of morning break singing'**Hey Ho Hey Ho, its off to work we go!**', recalling the: Saturday morning visit to the cinema to see Disney's ' Snow White and the 7 Dwarves'(1937) A particular genre of film attracted followings among the young, and copy-cat behaviour of the 'stars' were much hi evidence hi adolescents and young adults as they developed social images.

Children were captured by the Western, and the wide open spaces of Nevada took hold of Wales as Tom Mix, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry chased the Lone Ranger through the back streets of Wrexham and Tredegar, ragged trousered boys would flip then- hips in pursuit, as they hollered '**Hi Ho Silver**' as they rode off into the sunset over the coal tips. With a Texan drawl, and hitching up their steed, they would arrive home demanding their tea! Chivalry and the fight against evil became influential concepts, and you could bet your '**bottom dollar**' that the Apaches, the Sioux or the Blackfoot Indians were the 'bad guys', and Black Americans were kept hi then- place. '**Cowboys and Indians**' arrived hi Wales, and would be part of the play-culture of children well into the 1950s, and indirectly shaped a view of the social system hi the States. The portrayal of Black Americans as '**comic figures**' in the 'movies' established stereotypical opinions among the people of Wales for many generations. A view that became modified, to some extent, hi the mid -1940s when **Ralph Ellison** (author of that seminal novel, ' The Invisible Man'/1953) was stationed in Wales hi readiness for D-Day. He wrote a short story, 'hi a Strange Country', hi which a young black GI was roughed up by bis white counter-parts and then rescued by a Welshman,

who treated him with kindness and took him to choir-practice!! A social encounter that has an echo in the experiences of **Paul Robeson**, actor and singer of repute, who starred in a major Welsh Film.. "The Proud Valley".. A film in which a black itinerant saves the village choir from failure, and becomes a hero to the community. In making the film, Robeson commented that his purpose was to "**depict the Negro as he really is—not the caricature he has always represented to be on the screen.**"... His involvement in the Trade Union Movement in Wales, especially his radio broadcast to the 1957 Miner's Eisteddfod in Porthcawl, following the American Government's refusal to give him a visa to travel, made him **an icon**. The broadcast arranged in secret via a trans-Atlantic telephone link in 1957 was a unique episode in USA influence upon the working class people of Wales. That contribution was recognised by the setting up of a permanent exhibition at the Pare and Dare Hall in Treorchy, Rhondda in 1995, opened by Robeson's son. Closed in 2005 because of rebuilding, the exhibition awaits reopening. **The Ellison and Robeson episodes reflects the liberalism of acceptance** of others who are marginalised and oppressed, that has nurtured in the Welsh psyche. Both recognised that tolerance of others that is embedded in Welsh social culture.

**..I'm singing in the rain,*

Of all the glory to shine on the eyes of the young in Wales from the cinema, in that 1920s to 1950s period, was the Musical!!!. 'Singing in the Rain' brought a new dimension to the drizzle of the industrial areas. Bursting out on to the streets of Merthyr and Bangor, after living through '**West Side Story**', young people danced their way home to Collier Terrace and Mafekin Row. Marlon Brando started a new craze for leather jackets, **and young Welsh baby boys were christened Marlon!**. One sociologist observed that:

" the musical presented its vision of the unfettered human spirit in a way that foreclosed a desire to translate that vision into reality." Wonders to fill the young minds, the screen brought new heroes well dressed, sophisticated and glamorous. **Jane Russell** in 'The Outlaw', induced ecstasy among young men, and envy and determination to the young women. **Debbie Reynolds**, a Hollywood 'teenager', gave a role model to young women by her liberated image. Her style was copied in countless corners of Wales, and dirndl skirts swirled in the 'new' Dance Halls that were springing up in all the major towns. Later in 1955, **James Dean** would become a demi-god to a generation of young people, where as '**the Rebel without a cause**' he would revolutionise concepts of identity, liberation and masculinity. Living the dream of the '**Easy Rider**', the first Welsh Chapter of Hells Angels, roared their bikes through the narrow slate streets of Welsh-speaking Blaenau Ffestiniog. (Wenger, C. PI20)

**.. 'Rocking Billy'*

With the Musical came the music that filled the heads of the young people of Wales, and opened up new social outlets and widened the narrow world of the valleys and rural Carmarthen-shire. In the 1920s the sophisticated young adults flooded into Cardiff and Swansea to enjoy '**the flapper's culture**' and to tap their feet to the new 'Jazz'. Dance Halls opened to offer a Saturday night alternative to the boredom of terraced-life and the sameness of country living. Glamorous images and the sounds of

Memphis were the catalyst for emerging dreams of self-identity, expression and the beginnings of **new freedoms that would shape young people through the 1960s and '70s**. A metamorphosis that would have a direct outcome on the phenomena of 'youth cultures'. By the early 1960s the notion of '**liberated youth**' was beginning to be explained by sociologists, sparked by the influences of James Dean and **Bill Haley** and his "**Rock around the Clock**". That period saw the first **Teddy Boys** parading the High Streets across Wales, so different in character from the 'monkey parades' of the early 1950s. (Jones and Rose 1963). With his gelled DA hairstyle, **Tom Jones** strutted his 'stuff through the streets of Pontypridd....not dreaming that one day he would be wowing his fans in Las Vegas!

Like **comets** (Haley fans note) musical variations showered onto Wales, from the **Gold Diggers of 1933**, the mellow tones of **Crosby and Sinatra** through to the hip-swivels of **Presley**. Each nurtured a following, some manifested in a street style among the young; **to be a 'rocker, one had to look like a rocker.'** The first stirrings of inter-group conflict among young people, identified with a cultural position, became evident. Newspaper reports in the early 1960s highlighted street clashes in Brighton, Southend and Cardiff between "the mods" and "the rockers". **Abrams** in his book "**The Teenage Consumer**" (1959), commented the "**Americanisation**" as describing popular youth culture in the post-war period. So was it in Wales.

*..**LMe Billy**.

A genre of film that had an influence on young people in the South Wales valley towns in the early 1940, perhaps exacerbated by absent fathers away at the war, was the "gangster movies". **Edward G. Robertson and James Cagney** bred the tough guy image, inspiring the '**gang culture**' dressed by sharp hats and a new slang wherein '**a lousy rat**' was kept to describe a rival gang leader. 'Little Billy', a gang leader hi Pontypridd in the early 1940, swaggered his way in the style of Cagney whose role hi "**Angels with Dirty Faces**' was the exemplary of 'style'. Street corner style, just like the **Bowery Boys**, lived hi the Valleys before Whyte even though of the concept. Perhaps Billy dreamed of emulating **Murray the Hump**, second —in — command to **Al Capone**; Murray, bom **Llewelyn Humphries** was the son of Welsh immigrants from Llanidloes, Mid Wales who chased the American dream in the early 1890s.

The "**Americanisation process**" has had its critics, perhaps first was the strident opposition to the Mormons from the Welsh Chapel groups in the 1850s, who warned against the 'ungodly behaviour' of the Latter Day Saints. Smith hi describing the influence of the Cinema and Music suggests that a powerful opposition saw the attack on the minds of the young as "**American demotic, in print and cinema.**". Jane Russell's film hi the 1950s was condemned as immoral, and petitions and demonstrations called for its closure. Dance Halls were a constant target, and some Venues in South Wales, hi an attempt to appease the chapel-lobby, displayed "**No Jiving allowed**" notices!! Residues of such attitudes still stir under the surface of social life in the new millennium. But devil or not the experiences of film and music brought a new dimension to the social life of young people, being young would never be the same again. Images from the USA would forever impinge upon the shaping of young people as they move through the process of becoming mature adults.

**...got any gum chum?*

The changes rumbling through Europe in the 1930s and the maelstrom of 1939, brought more than images to Wales.. another war would soon bring many thousands of US soldiers into towns across the country. **The GIs** on their way to the battle-grounds of France, using Wales as a launch-station to the beaches of Normandy; the real thing, not the flickering pictures on the white screen of the Odeon! **The gum chewing 'Yanks' had arrived; their influence on young people was to be profound.** Exotic strangers radiated their style, language and ambience by their very presence, GIs (why they were called Government Issue is a mystery) filled the streets in the mid-1940s, attractions to all by the glamour they seemed to exude.. living movies. Keith Nurse, writing in the New Welsh Review (1996), writing of his memories of **'the yanks in Wrexham'**, commented that: *"looked as if they had just stepped from the screen at the Odeon in Brook Street!!!"* A new dimension took over local culture; another lexicon became points of contact....." Any **Gum chum?"" Some Spam for my Mam?"" Got some nylons for my sister?"**. These new visitors had goodies, and many a tin of fruit found its way into terraced homes.

The first trickle of US Troops began hi early 1942, in the months leading up to the invasion of Normandy on **Tuesday 6 .June 1944** numbers increased significantly. In that period **Wales had become a 'little USA'**, and many idioms embedded themselves in the Welsh profile. On May 25th. 1943, **250 men from the 94th.Medical Gas Training Battalion arrived at Pontypridd**, and were soon billeted in church halls, scout huts and some homes...they were to stay until August 1st before leaving for France. About the same period the 733 Field Artillery Battalion's 500 men took their residence at Denbigh hi North Wales, and 250 other GIs began to arrive at Ruthin. The pattern was repeated all over Wales, **by early 1944 there were over 155 Battalions and Units scattered hi all areas of the country,6 hospitals** had been set up, mostly in North West Wales ready to receive the casualties of the war. The scale of the hicoming can be imagined by the fact that he 129th. Division of the General Hospital of the US Army was set up in early 1945 at Penley on the North Wales/Cheshire border, wher at 10,000 battle casualties received attention.

It was inevitable that such a presence would permeate into community life and culture, building on the years of 'Americanisation' that history records. The records of the 94th, Medical Battalion recall the comments of their soldiers billeted at homes In Pontypridd, S. Wales:

" // was somewhat difficult to adjust to their pull chain toilets, and shiny toilet Paper..... when it came to bedtime our host put a brick near the heat of the fire and gave it to the guest to keep the bed warm!!"

While the local people were "bewildered, the Americans were smart, well fed and well provisioned" (Thomas,Leslie). The migration of the Welsh in the 1920s to the land of the 'plenty' was easy to understand. The 94th Medical Battalions 'history' reports that **'O«r relationships with the Welsh were excellent*** but some tensions stirred particularly among young men:

'This was a mining town and there were many young miners exempt from military .Our young men (the GIs) in uniform apparently competed with these young Miners for the young ladies ofPontypridd. There were some altercations, a few bloody noses and shiners seen among members of the 94th !'
(Burry. William C: 1988).

This comment reflects a unique sequence of immigration in the 1945 post period, the exodus of hundreds of Welsh women.. **'The GI Brides'...to the USA** to take up new lives as the wives of American soldiers courted in the Valleys, some left despite the loss of their husbands hi the battle fields of Western Europe. Many were left in Wales as single parents, a status not well favoured in the communities; pregnant young women disappeared ,often to 'the workhouse in Cardiff where the new-born child was put up for adoption. (Morse,B.). Attitudes to children born out-of-wedlock were well entrenched in social structure: but the pattern of family life began to change by the total effects of war. It is interesting to note that Battle writing from an Australian view of GI Brides ('War Brides' 1982) suggested that most of the women: *"Were sure that America was a land of skyscrapers, Betty Grable,jazz bands and 'Gone with the Wind'".*

There was a visibility about the young GIs, they colonised the street corners hi best Marlon Brando style, 'rolling dice', **wolf-whistling to passing girls-** a sound that added to the whistling repertoire of the local young men or starting an impromptu game of base-ball. Doug Warner, of Swansea, interviewed for a BBC Archives Programme in 1993, recalled his school-days in 1944:

'The American soldiers would play baseball in the main road, and nearly always hit the ball down the road, and down the hill .one of us kids would run to get it and bring it back up the hill The reward was some gum.'

The game of baseball caught on, schools introduced it and in Cardiff the Park's Baseball League came into being. The Wrexham Leader,29th.June 1944, claimed that **the first GI Baseball match was played at the Race Course Wrexham,** and that local schools introduced the sport in their Physical Education provision. **The GIs involvement with young people and sport,** has a unique cameo at Taibach Youth Centre, Port Talbot-the first Full-time Youth Centre hi Wales. The 95th.Engineers Regiment billeted at Margam Abbey, volunteered to coach boxing at the Youth Centre, and one of then- young hopefuls was young Richard Jenkins, who would have his own impact on Hollywood as Richard Burton, the actor. Boxing was a trans-Atlantic linkage, and Wales remembers **Tommy Farr** almost beating Joe Louis for the Heavyweight Championship of the World hi August 1937.

In **Leslie Thomas's** novel of the 1939-45 war, **'Waiting for the day'**, he spends much of the dialogue exploring the **relationship between black American soldiers and their white comrades.** He reminds us that a Provost Marshall ruling forbade the mixing of white and black troops hi all social and military settings, a ruling that was evident hi Wales. Segregation army laws applied to pubs, cafes, place of entertainment etc. were enforced hi all the 170plus areas of Wales where the US where stationed, hi January 1943, two black soldiers were refused admission to the Plough Hotel hi St. Asaph, North Wales and a fracas ensued. Two soldiers were court-martialled, records do not record which two soldiers were punished! !(Clwyd

Records, 1980). It is on record that the black American soldiers were very popular in the towns of Wales, and people identified with their perceived low-status. In July 1944 the black soldiers of the 94th . Battalion billeted in Pontypridd, pleased with the way they were received, put on a Farewell Concert at the Town Hall Theatre of the town. The mood of tolerance and acceptance for others, by the Welsh people, was shown in the iconic regard for Paul Robeson in the 1950s, and in Ralph Ellison's account of his army-service in a small Welsh community.

** Evangelist Billy*

The European Campaign came to an end, and gradually the Americans returned home to the USA. They left an indelible legacy of social behaviour that still has a residue in the minds of those who lived through those days and has been inherited by those growing up in the late 20th . Century. A social behaviour constantly reinforced by television, films, music... .and waiting to usher in that Half-Century was **Billy Graham**, the Evangelist. His 1949 Tour of Wales brought in a new phenomena, not unlike the Mormon approach of 1850, evangelical youth work where every young person was told the '**Jesus wanted them for a Sunbeam**'. Every Wednesday evening in towns across South Wales, streams of young people carrying a mug or cup, set of for the Elim Church where their attendance would be rewarded by a cup of cocoa. But growing sophistication of the young and looming globalisation overtook the cocoa,. .and waiting to seduce the young of Wales was the **BIG MAC!!**

A ' Whopper and fries.'

The **Macdonalisation of Wales** began its intrusion with the first 'burger' being sold at the MacDonal'd's hi Woolwich in London in 1974, its arrival filtered through to young people in Wales. The promise it offered was 'cool', meeting other '**teenagers**' who enjoyed their new found status from the '**Sixties**', in the well-lit post-modern arena where the Mac-burger was the ultimate in 'Statement'. Expectations were high, Macdonal'd's is coming to Wales!, via, of course, the USAin **1984** (seems an appropriate year!!) the Welsh press announced that "the franchise for MacDonal'd's was granted to Wales, together with Andorra, Finland and Taiwan. Overnight the symbolic M took over the landscape and young people flocked to the feast; consumerism had extended its grip on the budgets of the young. **Fromm** saw young people hi the 1970s being lulled into a 'false sense of Freedom', with a euphoria that embraced the notion of "New **is Beautiful**." The McDonald aspect of youth culture was, to Fromm, the epitome of the "**having mode**" of existence, it denied the individual their full humanity; young people were consumers to feed the profit motive of the fast-food industry.(Fromm /P.81). The critics were vocal, and hi the late 1990s into the New Millennium the issue of the health of the young became a prominent issue, that hi Wales the number of individuals with **obesity** was at a crisis level. Welsh statistics claim that over 50% of the Welsh population have some problems with obesity (Welsh Statistics 2006). All aspects of human health were at risk, teeth, organ problems, fitness etc, all claimed to be the result of the diet that firms like McDonalds marketed. In 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government began to align its Health Policy to issues of '**proper food**', including what schools could not sell to children. One such product was the 'side of the plate' friend of the Whopper Burger...Coca Cola The obesity problem still exists in Wales; young people are still attracted to their American favourites despite a health campaign by the government.

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One which finds parallel to another campaign against an import from the New World that arrived in Wales in the 17th. Century...tobacco. Itself a cause of concern for those working towards a "**Better Health for Wales**" (WAG), aware that there are more young women smoking (per capita) than young men.

Many of the issues raised in this paper seem to find expression in **the working class communities of Wales**, and therein that special group of adolescents struggling with puberty and self-identity. Fromm(Chp.V) suggests that working with groups who have been conditioned in a climate of dependency, is using strategies to move them to that position that he describes as 'being'. Since the mid-19 those who took up this work were broadly described as '**Youth and Community Workers**', and then- target groups were the working —class poor...i.e. those living hi '**poverty**'. So it is today, hi June 2006, when in the Parliament of the day a Minister declared: "**we are winning against the causes of child-poverty in Britain.**", hi Wales the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports (July 10[^].2006) that 250.000 young people hi Wales are living hi poverty.

Government always links poverty to under-achievement hi education, so hence all intervention strategies are prescribed by that relationship. Even hi this facet of social life in Wales, there is a referencing to the United States of America!!! Faced with an **apparent decline in the standard of education in some State Schools**, those hi disadvantage communities, two leading Educational Advisors hi 1969:

"visited a wide range of American Projects. ..to assess their experience in providing effective education...in areas of social disadvantage where poverty was evident..."
(HalseyA.HJP:vii)

From their visit they produced a report, "**Strategies of Compensation; A Review of Educational Projects or the Disadvantaged in the United States**" (O.E.C.D./1971. That Report contributed significantly to the setting up of **Educational Priority Areas** (EPAs) in the UK. The EPAs were characterised by **poverty** and those inevitable factors that were attributed to failure at school, economic status of parents, poor pupil attendance, overcrowding, lack of resources and immigrant children. (Halsey/P.48). **Intervention in terms of more teachers, a better teacher -pupil ration, extra resources etc. was considered a compensatory approach to the inadequacy of the education being received by children in 'deprived area'**. The practice model hi the United States which provided the guidelines for the EPAs was the **Operation Head Start Programme**. The Programme worked on the principle of the input of resources and funding, together with an ethos of 'community based learning'. While the concept revealed a complexity of problems, non-less than **Bernstein's critique that education cannot compensate for society** (ref. Halsey/P21) and it would take a generation for teachers and parents to work together (Halsey/P136), the model was borrowed to tackle the problems of poverty and education in the UK of the late 1960s. The children of Wales, those in very socially disadvantaged areas, became subject to an experimental educational approach that had found its beginnings in the 1967 budget of 1.7 million dollars for the **War on Poverty under the Kennedy Government** of the United States. (Sheppard,D. P/182.)

The decline in funding for the EPAs is reflected in the research of 2006, some 26 years after the creation of the EPAs, which shows that in Queensway, Wrexham—once an EPA—53.2% **of children live in families that are living on benefit** (The Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

Other **action-research projects** from the same initiative as the EPAs, the **Urban Programme and the Community Development Project** (CDPs), borrowed from the experiences of the USA War on Poverty drive. All faded as funds fell away. In 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government launched their **Community First and Regeneration programmes**, variations on the CDPs; so **the flavour of American poverty strategies still linger in the social policy of Wales**. Referencing to the USA, in terms of education and community development, has always been part of planning. In 1999, a group of Socialist Members of Parliament travelled to New England to look at **the School Graduations procedures** in Senior Schools. Their intent was to consider introducing the practice in British Schools, so that motivation and anti-school behaviours would be eliminated. Even the **Albemarle Report** (1960) made reference to American youth work practice in the compilation of that report. In July 2006 the Welsh Government Education Department announced that behavioural techniques used in American schools were to be introduced to counter ant-social behaviour. The scheme was based on **Happiness Training**, suggesting that children in being happy were less likely to be troublesome (Western Mail July 2006). A letter to the Mail two days later, suggested that the "USA was no role model!!".

V Times have changed, **globalisation as made the world smaller**, but the USA still impinges on the minds of the people in Wales. Memories are etched into the behaviour patterns of many thousands; when the Welsh rock group **Manic Street Preachers** remembered Paul Robeson his then: song tribute, **'Let Robeson Sing'** in 2001 they gave an accolade to the values they shared with this sincere black American. Young people make sure they watch **"The Simpsons"** on TV, and the wonders of digital transmission beams **American messages into every home for 24 hours a day**. Wal-Mart captures the shoppers in many parts of Wales, and community shops go out of business, and parts of Florida his the summer months "are more like the Rhondda". Migration as become seasonal, and the days of the phases of mass transfer his the 1800s and the 1920s are gone. Those days have left a **"welshness" in America**, with the USA Census recording 1.8 million Americans being of Welsh ethnicity, with sizeable numbers his California (188K), Pennsylvania (182K), Ohio (132K), Florida (92K) and New York (85K). (Western Mail 13 July 2006). Ironic to record that in that population are some, Catherine Zeta Jones, Anthony Hopkins and Tom Jones, who now are part of that 'movies world' that once **subliminally touched** the minds of so many his Wales. So perhaps the shoe is on the other foot and we should be researching the impact on American society of the Welsh!!!!

B Jones July 2006