

CHAPTER 1.

CHILDHOOD DAYS.

Museum 108/9/10

CHAPTER 1.

It was on May 11th 1915 when I was born in a downstairs front room of a typical working class terraced flat, 62 Holly Avenue, Wallsend on Tyne. My only sister had been born there over three years earlier and my parents had arrived from Middlestone Moor in Durham five years before.

Holly Avenue extended in a straight line for over half a mile, it was ended at the top by Wallsend Railway Station and at the bottom by the winding gear of Wallsend's 'G' Pit. It was that pit that brought my father to work in Wallsend. It was the main alternative employment to the shipyards and engineering works that dominated the town.

The area 'planning' was simple; the streets ran parallel to an elevated railway line, which for some distance separated the houses from the works and shipyards, which ran parallel with the railway line and the River Tyne. On the river banks the works were located.

Further east there were houses built between the railway line and the factories and these were given work a day names, first, second, third Avenues, and they ended at Hadrian Road, a street named after the Romans Invaders of centuries ago who had been responsible for ending that part of the Roman Wall and calling the area Segudunum. The Hadrian Stores took their name from the street and were the first of the local grocery stores to develop a series of Hadrian branches throughout Tyneside which preceeded the 'modern' super market stores.

Holly Avenue had three intersecting streets, clearly designed to provide alternative routes to the shipyards and engineering works, with narrow bridges cut beneath the railway lines causing human 'traffic' jams at peak times which were immediately before the works buzzers blew to announce that the yard and factory gates would be closing in five minutes time and then immediately prior to the gates being closed.

CHAPTER 1.

These accesses also provided, together with the railways, the routes through which vast quantities of heavy materials travelled to their factory destinations. The vehicles making the journeys were driven down the steeply sloping banks before they finally disappeared behind the yard gates.

Wallsend took ^{especially} great pride in the ships it produced. The 'Turbinia' which revolutionised modern naval warfare was built on Tyneside and Parson's Engineering works built the steam turbine and was a thriving works. The S.S. Mauratania retained for many years the 'Blue Riband' for the fastest Atlantic crossing and was built in Swan Hunters Tyne Shipyard. The men who built her were proud of their combined skills and their sons were happy to follow in their fathers footsteps.

Not so the sons of miners. They were brought up to share a common hatred of working down the pits - a detestation of an industry which so barefacedly exploited them in working conditions that could only be described as uncivilised.

Wallsend epitomised the industrial revolution. Men like Charles Parsons, G.B. Hunter and others were inventors and hard old fashioned employers. Their drive and ability combined with the application of thousands of highly skilled craftsmen combined to put the town on the worlds industrial map.

To accommodate the increasing population houses were thrown up across the roads from the factory gates, ^{often} on sharply rising banks, and houses were designed with no other thought than providing shelter and sleeping accommodation. The social provisions were limited to public houses and a range of denominational churches from which residents could choose, or ^{simply} ignore.

CHAPTER 1.

Builders and landlords cared little about the people who were to occupy their premises - they were the early days of landlordism in which their unenviable reputation were being thoughtlessly developed - "if you don't like it, get out" was the limit of their housing management skill .

The houses, provided as they were, for men, who with few exceptions, worked in jobs that made them physically dirty, contained no *allegu* washing facilities.

The only water tap was in the backyard and bathrooms were unthought of.

Mining was the dirtiest job of all, and miners came home to bath in front of a coal fire in a woefully small tin bath, filled from water drawn from a backyard tap and heated in iron cooking pans on the coal fire. After the bath the water was ladled out and carried *in* several journeys into the backyard and emptied *ed* into the backyard sink.

Providing pit head baths for the miners was as unthinkable to colliery owners as was the prospect of landing a man on the moon.

Diseases and death were commonplace - especially among young children - the diseases were those of poverty and often related to the insanitary and over crowded living conditions.

Overcrowding apart, the problems were connected with unclean household water and scarcely existing washing facilities. The most primitive provisions were those for household and personal waste; these consisted of an open closet, built into a backyard outhouse, which was used for tipping the ashes out of the coal fire grates and then, in addition, for all personal toilet uses.

CHAPTER 1.

The middens were emptied once a week by the corporation men, who shovelled out this insanitary mess and carted it off to an approved tip not too far out of town.

Caring mothers dreaded the annual infectious diseases which always included some killer disease against which they were helpless to act.

The solutions to the problems of water, drainage, and sewerage seemed to be engineering problems and the ~~an~~ engineer became a key officer in the developing local services being provided. Together the Engineer, Medical Officer, Treasurer and the Town Clerk were the principle officers *in local government.*

Radical and other concerned people were already beginning to voice doubts about the traditional political parties and a minority were already raising the call for independent trade unions and a labour party.

The problems facing masses of ordinary people called for the kind of ^{Nx}representative that knew from experience what the people were being made to tolerate. From those situations there began to emerge the representative, selected because he showed sympathy and understanding of the problems confronting people. These people met together, policies were discussed and ordinary people began to feel that they could have a voice in the things which concerned them.

Men had flocked to the colours the year before I was born believing that World War 1 would be over 'by Christmas'. The truth was sadly different. The international Merchants of Death were preparing for a mighty harvest, for massacres on an unprecedented scale. *Men* still volunteered but not *in sufficient numbers* - and conscription was introduced for the first time in British History.

CHAPTER 1.

The calls to arms were stirring 'Fight for King and Country'
'Fight to make a land fit for heroes to live in' and then
To top it all - "Fight the War to end wars".

My earliest memories concerned the years immediately after the armistice. Men left the train at Wallsend Station, which was at the top of the street, and then marched down Holly Avenue past our front door to be demobbed at the drill hall at the other end of Holly Avenue. No glamour, no special welcome, there were too many men coming back over too long a period. The long journey home from France had wearied them and just behind that experience they had known the horrors of war behind them thousands of dead men who had been their comrades in the trenches. It was a lasting impression on my young mind.

Once demobbed, the men were ill equipped for peace and the provisions for rehabilitation were largely non-existent. At least, they were alive.

Because of an acute housing shortage, the slogan which was the most emotive and which irritated the ex-soldiers most of all was, "Homes fit for heroes to live in". Already cartoonists were turning the phrase to read "And only heroes can live in them". It was an additional irritant when they had to 'live in' with their in-laws or even complete strangers.

I was much too young to understand the depth of feeling which was building up, but the 1921 miners strike hit my own home, especially the money shortage which inevitably brought acute problems to my mother.

As my earliest memories all seemed to include soldiers coming and going past my front door, it was not surprising that, on the first occasion my father took me on his Sunday morning, pre pub walk through the Wallsend Park, and showed me a small portion of reconstructed Roman Wall, he also explained in simple terms how the Romans occupied places such as Wallsend.

CHAPTER 1.

Holly Avenue was in just the kind of location near the river for such a wall to have been built more or less where we now lived. Some how the mental picture *my father gave me of* the mighty Roman soldiers did not square up with the 'real' soldiers I had become so used to seeing.

While talking on the subject of soldiers and war, he always explained to me his view of 'them', the people who exploited ordinary people in wartime and peace time. Remembrance Day, "a mockery my boy, a sop, if they really did care about the ex-soldiers they would build them decent homes and find them reasonable jobs'.

"They do little to help the families of men who died and certainly make inadequate provision for those who were badly wounded."

There are few other groups of men who could compare with the miners, and Durham miners were especially remarkable. The solidarity between them was born of hard working conditions and equally hard employers who waged a constant battle against them.

My grandfather, father, and his only brother were miners and all came from Durham to Tyneside in the early part of the century. When they arrived they could not get colliery houses, always a desirable objective because they were rent free when working, and you lived among your 'marrers'. My uncle quickly moved into a colliery house in 6th Street, but it was some years before my father was able to secure a colliery house and we moved into it. *Portugal Place*.

Holly Avenue was one of many Wallsend streets with an attractive name, Woodbine, Laurel, Park, were the adjoining streets with names which created visions of Ebenezer Howards Garden Cities. Our new street had a strange sounding name, Portugal Place. I never understood how anyone could name a street in working class Wallsend 'Portugal Place'.

CHAPTER 1.

Far from our moving house ushering in a new era of prosperity it did the reverse. Employment in the local pits became increasingly spasmodic and the only value of living in a colliery house was lost. You had to pay rent. The miners 1926 strike was already looming ahead.

Without the rent free advantage, Portugal Place was in a much worse external environment than was the austere Holly Avenue.

Directly opposite our front door and visible from the front window was a mens urinal. It not only served the drinkers who were clients of the 'Anchor' public house at the top of the street, but also of the working mens club which was just over the road from us.. It was ^{the} late night 'watering' place for men buttoning up their trouser fronts ^{whilst} continuing the inconsequential discussions interrupted by closing time, or singing as only drunken men could, the old war time songs.

To top it all, when they had all departed, the smell remained with us, and my mother at once decided that the accursed urinal had to go. It was a personal 'Clochmerle' campaign in reverse ^{and} in the end successfully fought.

The street fronted on to a long wall some 12 feet high which enclosed the Wallsend Corporation Cleansing Depot. Six days a week at 6.30 a.m. the men turned up to prepare and feed the horses which were the main source of transport.

Then, each morning and noon there began a familiar dispersal of horse drawn carts and waggons to all parts of the town. Collecting and dumping the towns rubbish was the main assignment. The men with barrows went out to sweep the streets. They all returned at 5 o' clock ^{pm}.

The great advantage to me of the Portugal Place location was that you soon got to know some of the more friendly men and some of their horses and it was revealing to me that men who would violently curse each other would be universally kind to their animals treating them with great sensitivity and consideration.

8

CHAPTER 1.

So far as the men were concerned, they hated the job with good reason, when it entailed cleaning out the still considerable, but fortunately diminishing, number of ash middens. I never could understand anyone doing a job as unpleasant as that.

Another related "attraction" for me was the blacksmith's shop outside our back door. Every chance I got, and there were many, I would get myself behind the half door and watch the blacksmiths at work. To see them pressing the bellows and then see the small coal in the furnace getting brighter and brighter, and observe them skillfully taking the piece of red hot iron out of the furnace and turn it into a horse shoe, was always enthralling.

I loved the smell of burning hoof which arose from the blue smoke as the shoe was fitted to the horse's hoof. When I qualified to help the process by pressing the bellows handle, I really felt a big guy among my mates. The reward for me was a personally made iron hoop with which I ran for miles around the streets. Our game was a 'gord racing' and we raced each other as though driving racing cars in the 'gord' racing season.

Adjoining the blacksmiths shop and just over the road, were two buildings both used as slaughter houses. Each butcher bought and killed his own meat, and that entailed them being at Newcastle Cattle Market early each Monday morning, buying, and then driving, the sheep and cattle five miles to Wallsend. Years later, sheep were transported by lorry and, later still, the cattle were transported the same way.

It meant that every Monday afternoon the back lane resembled a wild west rodeo. Once the cattle got the smell of the slaughter house they tried everything they could, to prevent ~~them~~ being forced into the lime washed stalls. Every now and again one of them would go berserk and escape into the streets to be inevitably followed days later by an outcry in the press and demands that 'this must be stopped'.

8.

CHAPTER 1.

Sheep were always compliant and their hooves on the ground made a sound I can always recall as I could also appreciate what was meant by being "led like lambs to the slaughter."

I was quickly aware of the difference in attitude between the Corporation man and his horse and the cattle drover *and* the animals in his charge. The lesson remained with me, that what you do daily for a living, conditions your outlook on certain issues.

Sadly, I now recall that I came to look forward to the Tuesday afternoon slaughtering especially when I was able to get involved in the slaughtering process.

The small slaughter house adjoining the blacksmiths' shop, was operated by a cousin of mine who ran a butcher's shop around the corner on the High Street, with the help of a young butcher boy. I used to go up there from school and he taught me how to prepare sheep for the slaughter and, although at first I was too young, small, and not strong enough, I grew up to the stage where I could do all the preparation except the actual killing, which he, rightly, insisted on doing. I was then assigned by him to the job of swilling out the slaughter shop and cleaning it completely down. The slaughtered sheep hung in a row, draped in the fat cut from the My reward was some free offal which I proudly took home, *after* I had convinced my mother that I was not doing any harm by helping the butchers.

Her real objection to this activity was, that I inevitably picked up the 'bad language' which was common place, and then, from time to time, 'forget myself'. My home was a place where bad language was never used and, although I heard my father swear outside, I never remembered him swearing in the house.

CHAPTER 1.

One other annoying feature of the weekly animal invasion especially for my houseproud mother, was the animal excreta which gave Portugal Place the smell of the deepest countryside without a single blade of grass to compensate. Once on your boots, it got trodden into the house and, ~~it~~ the polished lino, it took real energy to remove it.

Like my father, my mother was a 'Christian' socialist, and, like him, held pacifist views in relation to war. That set them apart from the other folk in the street.

As work became increasingly difficult for my father to secure, my mother reacted by first of all taking in 'lodgers', and a young married couple ^{who} had been transferred to work in Wallsend Post Office rented our front room. ~~This~~ creat many sleeping problems for the rest of us.

Once the couple moved out and ~~moved~~ into a house of their own, my mother took on a cleaning job. She was part of a team of women who had to clean out the Wallsend Telephone Exchange each morning before the staffs arrived to start work at 8.30. a.m. Her job entailed her leaving home at 6 a.m. She would then hurry home to make sure that my sister and I were going to school clean and tidy. Woe betide us on the occasions when we tried to dodge out below her strict standards.

Later, she took an additional job in the evenings cleaning at the offices of Shell Mex in Newcastle's Haymarket. ~~As~~ the main transport was the slow moving tram car, she had to leave home around 4.30. in the afternoon and was lucky to be back by 9 p.m. On Friday evenings it was even later.

CHAPTER 1.

The purposes behind her efforts, were to give 'us' a better chance in life, and her continual sacrifices made a profound impression on me, as did her simple Christian faith. My father by comparison was easy going, although, as the years went by, he began to help with household chores. In the early days he saw house work as womens' work.

The reward ^{was} for us all when, after two years, mother was able to buy, on H.P., a new piano from her hard earned savings, and my sister could, at last, begin, to practice for her A.L.C.M. That piano is still in my sisters home to day. I used to feel extremely sorry for her, when she was 'made' to practice for hours every day. She felt the greatest hardship when my father regularly insisted on her playing one or two of his favourite pieces, especially the Caliph of Bagdad or the William Tell Overture.

Music was in my life to stay and, although I never became proficient on the piano, I learned enough about music to appreciate other players and performers.

Every Winter Sunday evening was spent around the piano and Portugal Place, on summer Sunday evenings, became a regular concert pitch with the audience sitting, relaxing, talking and even joining in the singing. Slaughter houses and Blacksmiths shops ignored.

My mother also bought a second hand gramophone on which we played mainly second hand records, carefully saved for us by a Mrs. Paterson who ran a 2nd hand shop next to the butchers' shop on the High Street. I still retain original records of Caruso, Chaliapine, Clara Butt and many other world famous voices, famous in a world where even radio communications were still in a primitive state.

CHAPTER 1.

I had become a boy soprano in the church choir and every Sunday morning and evening joined my father who had a pleasant baritone voice with an exceptional range,

Soon I was singing the popular anthem solo's of those days and had Ernest Lough as my boy singing hero. Years later, when I was in prison, I recalled the solo, 'Oh for the wings of a Dove' and realised what a mental escape, even in prison, was mine because of those early musical days

Added to my fathers insistance on spelling and reading, and encouraged by the pennies he gave us for learning poetry, I guess I was lucky in being given a rounded out education at home, which augmented the three 'R's' education the day school was giving me.

I was undistinguished at school but certainly responded to the music master who, although he seemed to dislike me, nevertheless taught me much about music and certainly displayed a capacity to stimulate ^{musical} interest among the boys.

Number 9 Portugal Place was an upstairs flat and it contained all the inconveniences of Holly Avenue, but it did have an outside wash house which was shared with the downstairs tenants. There was also a sink in a small scullery at the top of the open wooden back stairs which led into the yard. The toilet was in the back yard ^{and} it was a flush toilet and ^{thus} more than anything improved our 'quality' of life. In winter the problem was to prevent the W.C. lead pipes from freezing and splitting. There ~~was~~ no means in the toilet of turning the water off in the freezing weather and the door was totally ill fitting.

By the time I had reached the age of 8, I had experienced at first hand many of the problems confronting working class families. I did not appreciate the from time to time, a young school friend died of T.B., or some bad infectious disease, ^{Even worse,} I did not think that there was anything abnormal about children dying, it seemed to be part of normal life.

CHAPTER 1.

Nevertheless

I was always emotionally moved when I saw the horse drawn hearse move off with a small coffin 'about my size' in it. I always got a lump in my throat when I was asked to sing at the funeral service and had an ex ray mind view of my friend in the coffin. Funerals were more frequent and affected my life more often, then weddings were also very special occasions. One of the wedding customs was for the couple when they were driven away from the church to throw pennies out of the window. We used to wait outside and then run behind shouting 'Hoy Oot' until the pennies were thrown. If you were lucky, you had at least your penny for the pictures with some to spare.

As time went by, my father lost no chance to point out to me how yesterdays 'war heroes' were becoming todays 'lazy layabouts' -- that is if you read the Tory press - Miners who took strike action were branded as enemies of the country, as traitors.

In the 1924 election, Wallsend returned its first Labour M.P. He was a London Barrister, Patrick Hastings K.C, and when my parents learned at the declaration of the poll outside Wallsend Town Hall that Labour had won enough seats to form the first Labour Government, they, and hundreds of others, seemed to have something important to be happy about. The election taught me about Zinoviev a Russian and about two anarchists, Zacco and Vanzetti, who somehow seemed to be in many of my parents' conversations at the time of the anarchists trial. I still remember what seemed to be an interesting phrase used in their trial, and this was 'the road to human progress passes through a prison.' How fundamentally true I learned that phrase to be in relation to rising colonial 'rebel' politicians.

From the beginning of Patrick Hastings political work in Wallsend my father was suspicious of him, and when he was knighted, announced to me that he was "one of them". My simple mind at that stage still saw Knights as people in shining armour, rather than in black legal gowns.

CHAPTER 1.

My father saw Lords and Knights as people who owned land mostly illegitimately, and under much of that land was coal or other mineral wealth. For every ton of coal mined under their land received a Royalty which was part of their pay off for some past favours granted by Royalty for some seemingly unjustifiable reason. "Watch them my boy, watch them" was his constant admonition.

He travelled little and had no desire to do so, although he enjoyed walking. His paths were well trodden and varied little, he encouraged me to go walking with him, even if he some times left me outside the pub while he went in for a couple of pints. His pleasures and life, measured in physical terms, were simple. He liked to drink, he liked to bet on the horses and he took an interest in following the careers of local boxers. The latter interest meant that he always took me to the boxing booths of visiting fairs, whenever they came to town, and certainly when the big annual Town Moor Festival came to the ^{Newcastle} Town Moor for the Geordies Race Week holiday. "Keep on your feet for three rounds and you can win ten bob," it was a hard earned ten bob.

My mother on the other hand, interpreted her religion as making her essentially opposed to drinking and gambling. Not without good reason from her personal experiences, and also from what she saw in the lives of families all around her.

Discussions between my parents on these subjects always became heated. Mother was a passionate believer in her causes and, as with her political beliefs, she would argue them with anyone and at whatever heat they wanted.

She steadfastly refused to accept the kind of 'christianity' which allowed my father to drink and gamble while she had to work until she felt like dropping. She always got the best of the arguments and the worst of the marriage deal.

CHAPTER 1.

My father's brother was locally known as the miners' lawyer. When the subscriptions of the miners allowed the local miners lodges to build the Wallsend Miners Welfare Hall after the Rising Sun Colliery was opened up, Uncle George became its first caretaker and worked in that job until he retired. It was there that I first picked up a billiard cue and became interested in billiards, snooker, draughts, and chess.

Meanwhile his wife, my Aunt Dinah, was very active in the Wallsend Coop. Our members number was 226 almost among the founders. The great tragedy in the lives of my Aunt and Uncle was the loss of their only two sons in the naval Battle of Jutland when the Battleship Black Prince was sunk. I was named Daniel after my paternal grandfather and Thomas after my maternal Grandfather and, as one of the sons who had been drowned at Jutland was also a Daniel, I enjoyed a special place in my Aunt Dinah's life. Although she was known as a very hard woman, she always had a 'soft spot' for me.

My mother was one of a family of 11, 10 of whom were girls ^{and} the last born was a boy. Her father was a Cumberland farmer and he had died in his early 50's of a heart attack and left his widow with no alternative but to move to Durham, a place where she could survive. Grandmother's family split up, some of the older daughters moved to Durham with her and others settled down in Cumberland. Tom my only uncle on mother's side grew up in Durham and then later moved back to Cumberland to farm. Grandmother married a publican who managed the Parkhead pub in Coundon and my mother could never believe that ^{Grandmother} she would ever be happy with that kind of life. In the event she provided me with my first experience of a death in the family.

One morning in 1921 a letter with a black edging came through the door and my mother began to cry in a way I had never seen before at home.

CHAPTER 1.

The journey to the funeral was in it-self a near expedition. There were no through buses to any 'distant place' like Coundon in County Durham and so we had to take a tram to Newcastle ^{and} then a horse-drawn tram across the High Level bridge. We joined the bus at Gateshead, travelled to Durham City and ^{boarded} another bus to Coundon where we stayed with my Aunt Rose. I was taken to see my dead grandmother's body for the first and last time and, on the morning of the burial, was jammed into a ^{coach} with a number of other child cousins. It was an ^{unforgettable} occasion and the memory remains in my mind today. I seemed to have a limitless number of relations of whom I had previously heard but never seen.

It was the beginning of more frequent visits to my Durham and Cumberland relatives and I came to especially appreciate what friendly Durham mining communities were about. When almost everyone worked in the pit and village populations were entirely mining, they had a magic about them. Wallsend had nothing to compare with that kind of community life.

No wonder my parents were political - ^{They read about and} lived in the problems of the industrial revolution and they had also known two wars the Boer and the World War. They were by traditional standards uneducated but through effort and experience, they were civilised people with a passionate concern for their family and for society in general.

Parliament seemed to them to present hope of really fundamental change, although my father from time to time expressed doubts, and pointed to the Russian Revolution as an example of what ordinary people could be driven to by people like the Czar and his hangers on.

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, possibly including the name 'Mr. Hasting'.

CHAPTER 1.

The first Labour Minority Government did not survive for long and Sir Patrick Hasting's links with the town ended in 1926 when he was knighted and resigned the seat.

Miss Margaret Bondfield became the Labour M.P. in that bye election and became the first ever ^{women} Labour Cabinet Minister. Irene Ward won the seat for the Tories in 1931 and became one of the famous back-benchers.

Wallsend was in the forefront of womens' political LIB.

All our family political heroes were 'rebels' and the names of Maxton, Shinwell, Kirkwood, A.J. Cook and countless others were awarded high credit marks - while those Labour Leaders who secured high praise from the Tory press were always suspect.

Apart from the ^workers control of the streets and the poverty at home, my abiding memory of the General Strike was an open air speech made by A.J.Cook when he addressed an open air miners' rally at Holystone a few miles North of Wallsend. I and hundreds of others were spell bound and already I was beginning to be impressed with what was being described, in derogatory terms, as 'Soap Box Stuff'. How my father attacked the faint hearts among the Union leaders and those miners who had doubts about the justice of the miners' cause.

'Black Legs' were a small minority among the miners, but the hatred they engendered among their mates was the cause of real bitterness and resentment not only from their workmates but also from their neighbours. Black-legs were completely ostracised.

My father missed no opportunity to 'lecture' me on personal freedom and issues of human emancipation. Any freedom that we enjoy, he would say, has been to fight for. "No ruling class will ever give you any 'rights'".

Every single freedom has been hard fought for, and, when won, hard to retain. Equally, you can depend on it, that when you have won a freedom from a reactionary government or boss - they will turn to you and extol THEIR virtue as being *the people who* GAVE you the freedom".

They will, as long as they have power, wait, and then under some new guise, take back what they have lost. "Don't trust them ever".

The names of Mussolini and Hitler were beginning to be heard in households such as mine. I recall the anger of my father when he read that Winston Churchill was in Italy support Mussolini in his fight against 'Bolshevism'. "Churchill hates the miners, and he hates the Italians or anyone else concerned with ordinary people's interests. His friends are the Mussolini's *of this world*".

I could understand the hostility towards the coal owners who were demanding longer hours and less pay as I appreciated the historic significance of the miners slogan, "Not a penny off the pay nor an hour on the day". Having seen miners come home from work weary from exertion, *soaked* from working in wet working conditions always having to contend with possible mining injury and, in the end, to fear either lung or eye diseases, I did not understand anyone wanting to either lengthen their day or reduce their pay.

But that is exactly what the coal owners succeeded in doing.

I grew up in Wallsend and was drawn to the Speakers Corners, Hedleys and the Borough Field, to listen to the local 'agitators' and especially to Jimmie Stewart and to pass the Sunday night away after church. How Jimmie Stewart worked but always got an audience and how he operated to maintain it. It was for me to listen and learn from all he said.

CHAPTER 1.

Try as I could I had not then acquired the skill of reading the heavier volumes of my father's reading, Marx's Capital, Plato's Republic and War and Peace. It was many years later before I began to read and enjoy such books.