

# Revolt and revival in the valleys: the influence of religion and revivalism on the politics and labour relations of the Taff Vale Railway, south Wales, 1878-1914.

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### Abstract

This thesis considers the social, political and religious changes affecting south Wales in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods through a holistic study of the lives of the men employed by the Taff Vale Railway (TVR). Its importance derives from four novel features. At its core are the employees of an entire railway company, not just a single centre or grade, and it has been informed by a wide range of disciplines from anthropology to theology. It has provided a closely observed examination of east Glamorgan society over the period, and it is emphasised that religion and politics were inextricably entwined in much of Welsh society. A contribution is made to the ongoing debate on the nature of community and its usefulness as a concept, and from this a 'Network Community' is proposed as a concept or investigative tool for use by social historians. The management's treatment of its workforce and the control strategies employed by companies through paternalism, welfarism and

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discipline are analysed. The Taft Vale dispute of 1900 is set in the context of the company's industrial relations history, and Ammon Beasley, General Manager 1891-1917, is shown to have been of greater importance to labour history than has been recognised. The fault lines in the realms of religion and politics, their influence on the company and the communities it served, and the denominational involvement of the TVA workmen are investigated. It draws attention to the fact that religion still played a ubiquitous role in the mores and culture of late-Victorian and Edwardian society. In south Wales this was dramatically enhanced by the phenomenon of religious revival; that of 1904-05 is shown to have been facilitated by the technology of the period, including the Taft Vale Railway, but without much impact on the railwaymen

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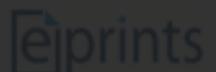
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