

BOUGHT BY TYRANTS
SOLD BY KNAVES



*The Charter is our aim
We claim it as our right
Our ancient sires enjoyed the same
Nor feared oppression's might*

*Then let us persevere
In such a glorious cause
Let each demand a Briton's share
In making Britain's laws*

The National Chartist Hymn Book

set to authentic music
by Paul Guppy



I remember, in the far-off days of O-level History, studying the radical movements of the early 1800s. About 45 years later this subject assumed a more personal relevance when my attention was drawn to **The National Chartist Hymn Book** of c.1840.

The hymns it contains were written by poets and activists in the Chartist Movement, which campaigned for Universal (male) Suffrage in the mid-19th century. All express indignation at social injustice, all except one doing so in religious terms: as the historian Malcolm Chase put it, 'religious ideals were seldom far from the surface of Chartism'.

It wasn't long before I realized that the Chartist hymns were originally sung by the same sort of people who sang West Gallery Music - and to the same sort of tunes. The ensuing project was to find appropriate musical settings for the hymns - and then perhaps publish them. The resulting collection, **'BOUGHT BY TYRANTS, SOLD BY KNAVES'** is designed foremost to be a practical singing-book, with the hymns laid out accordingly; but I hope there is included enough of social and musical history to give a good historical context.

Of the 16 hymns we know the tunes for three - all to be found in WG manuscript books: the others I have selected from similar sources. Some will be familiar to present-day West Gallery enthusiasts, some less so. I have also included a further four hymns which do not appear in *The National Chartist Hymn Book*: three are examples of 'radical psalmody' associated with other 19th century political movements - the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Owenites, the Peterloo demonstrators - and the fourth a 'Smite-the-Mighty' psalm-setting by Joseph Stephenson. All, I hope, will enable WG choirs and quires to have a good sing in their familiar musical style - but with a slightly different lyrical emphasis.

We hope to raise some of the production cost by subscription - so I herewith invite you to put your name down for a copy or two, thereby benefiting from a reduced price - and moreover, from having your name inscribed on the inside of the back cover!

Paul Guppy, March 2022

For details about ordering please contact mike@maddingcrowd.org