
CAYO-EVANS, WILLIAM EDWARD JULIAN (1937-1995), political activist

Name: William Edward Julian Cayo-evans

Date of birth: 1937

Date of death: 1995

Spouse: Gillianne Mary Cayo-Evans (née Davies)

Child: Sian Dalis Cayo-Evans

Child: Iestyn Ceredig Cayo-Evans

Child: Rhodri Owain Cayo-Evans

Parent: Freda Cayo Evans (née Cluneglas)

Parent: John Cayo Evans

Gender: Male

Occupation: political activist

Area of activity: Anti Establishment; Patriots; Politics, Government and Political Movements

Author: Lyn Ebenezer

Cayo Evans was born on 22 April 1937 at Glandenys, Silian, a mansion on the main road two miles west of Lampeter. His father, John Cayo Evans (1879-1958), was Professor of Mathematics at St David's College, Lampeter and he was High Sheriff of Cardiganshire in 1941-42. His mother was Freda Cayo Evans (née Cluneglas) from Cellan, Ceredigion.

Cayo Evans was educated at Millfield School in Somerset, where he came under the influence of his Housemaster, Yanick Helkzman from Poland, a former soldier and staunch nationalist who had fought against the Germans and the Russians, and who was primarily responsible for turning Cayo into an uncompromising enemy to the British establishment. In 1955, at the age of eighteen, Cayo was conscripted to serve with the South Wales Borderers and took part in the fighting against Communist guerillas in the Far East during a campaign which came to be known as the Malaya Emergency. When his period of National Service came to an end, he attended Cirencester Agricultural College for a while before returning home to concentrate on breeding Palomino and Appaloosa horses on his stud farm at Glandenys. He married Gillianne Mary Davies from Llangeitho in 1966, and they had one daughter, Dalis (born 1966), and two sons, Rhodri (born 1967) and Iestyn (1969-1993). They were divorced in 1975.

Cayo was radicalized in the early 1960s, particularly by the flooding of the village of Capel Celyn. It was on the day that the Tryweryn dam was opened, on 21 October 1965, that members of the Free Wales Army were seen in public in their uniforms for the first time. Cayo was one of nine prominent members of the FWA who were arrested in 1969. Following a trial that lasted 53 days and ended on the very day of the Investiture, 1 July 1969, he and two others were convicted of public order offences including wearing an illegal uniform, and were sentenced to fifteen months in prison.

Despite their threatening appearance, the FWA depended more on hype than on violence. They wore a green uniform and Cayo designed a badge based on the White Eagle of Snowdonia. They would parade in rallies and hold training camps in remote places, often in the presence of press and media.

The FWA was contemporary with MAC (Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru / Movement for the Defence of Wales). Independently of one another, the FWA's propaganda drew the attention of the authorities away from MAC's activities. That is how MAC managed to sustain a bombing campaign for so long. As a result of Cayo's gift for propaganda, he and some of his comrades were invited to appear on David Frost's television programme in 1967. They were also filmed by a television crew from Israel. Indeed, documents released in 1999 show that the attention they gained, alongside the clandestine activities of MAC, came very close to causing the cancellation of the Investiture. But the result of all the publicity was that the authorities were able to use that hype as evidence to prosecute the FWA.

When Cayo came out of prison he recommenced his horse-breeding business, but he also continued to be a prominent political activist. Unlike most of his fellow members of the Free Wales Army, his politics were right-wing. One of his heroes was General Franco. He was fiercely opposed to the Left, probably as a result of his experiences fighting the Communists in Malaya.

Cayo stood out in every gathering with his old-fashioned clothes including a long coat, tight trousers and cowboy boots. Wherever he went, he would attract a crowd around him, and he had the ability to mesmerize audiences with his elaborate and colourful stories.

He died suddenly on 28 March 1995 as a result of heart failure. His funeral in Silian cemetery was attended by hundreds of people, including a number of plain-clothes police who had been informed that a gun would be fired over his coffin in the tradition of IRA funerals. Instead a young man walked over to the grave carrying an accordion, and played the notes of the 'Cuckoo Waltz', Cayo's favourite tune.

Cayo continues to be a legendary character. In 2000 the brewers Tomos Watkins renamed the Apollo Hotel in Cardiff as 'The Cayo Arms'. He was an accomplished musician on the accordion, and Anhrefn Record Company published a CD in 2008 entitled 'Marching Songs of the Free Wales Army' (Anhrefn 018), collected from tapes made of Cayo performing patriotic songs in pubs. In 2003-4 the people of Wales voted for their 100 greatest heroes, and Cayo was number 33 on the list.

Author

Lyn Ebenezer

Sources

Lyn Ebenezer, *Adar Brith* (2005)

Further Reading

BBC News: [Free Wales Army inquiry revealed](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Julian Cayo-Evans](#)

Sound and Film

Archif ITV Cymru/Wales Archive: [Free Wales Army](#)

Additional Links

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