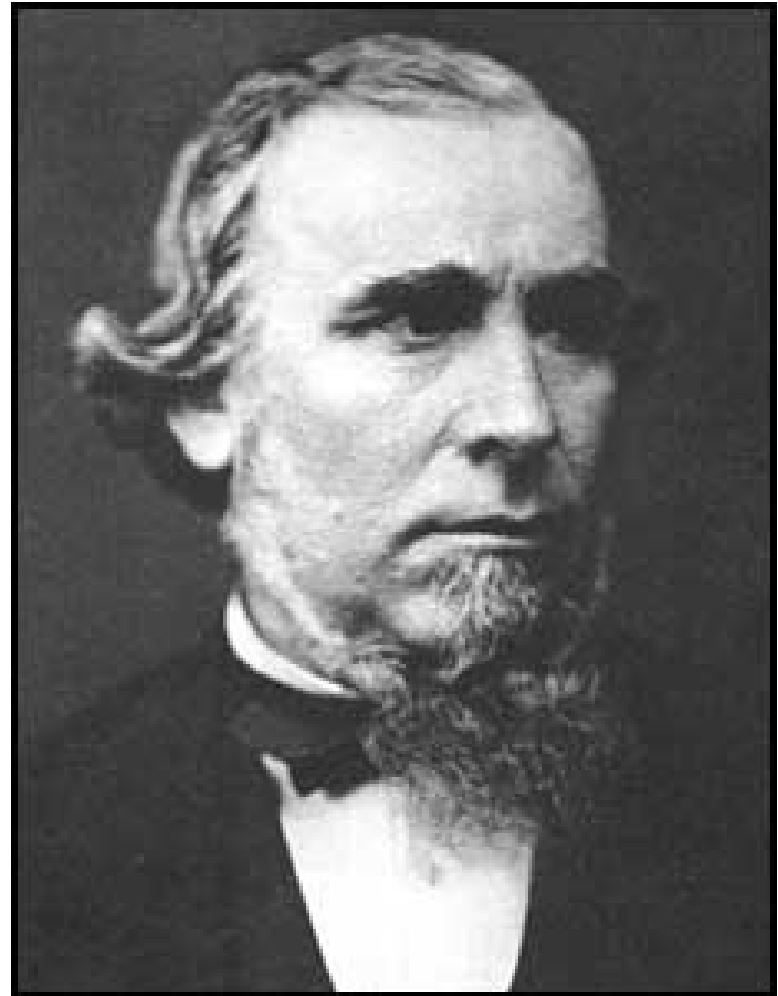
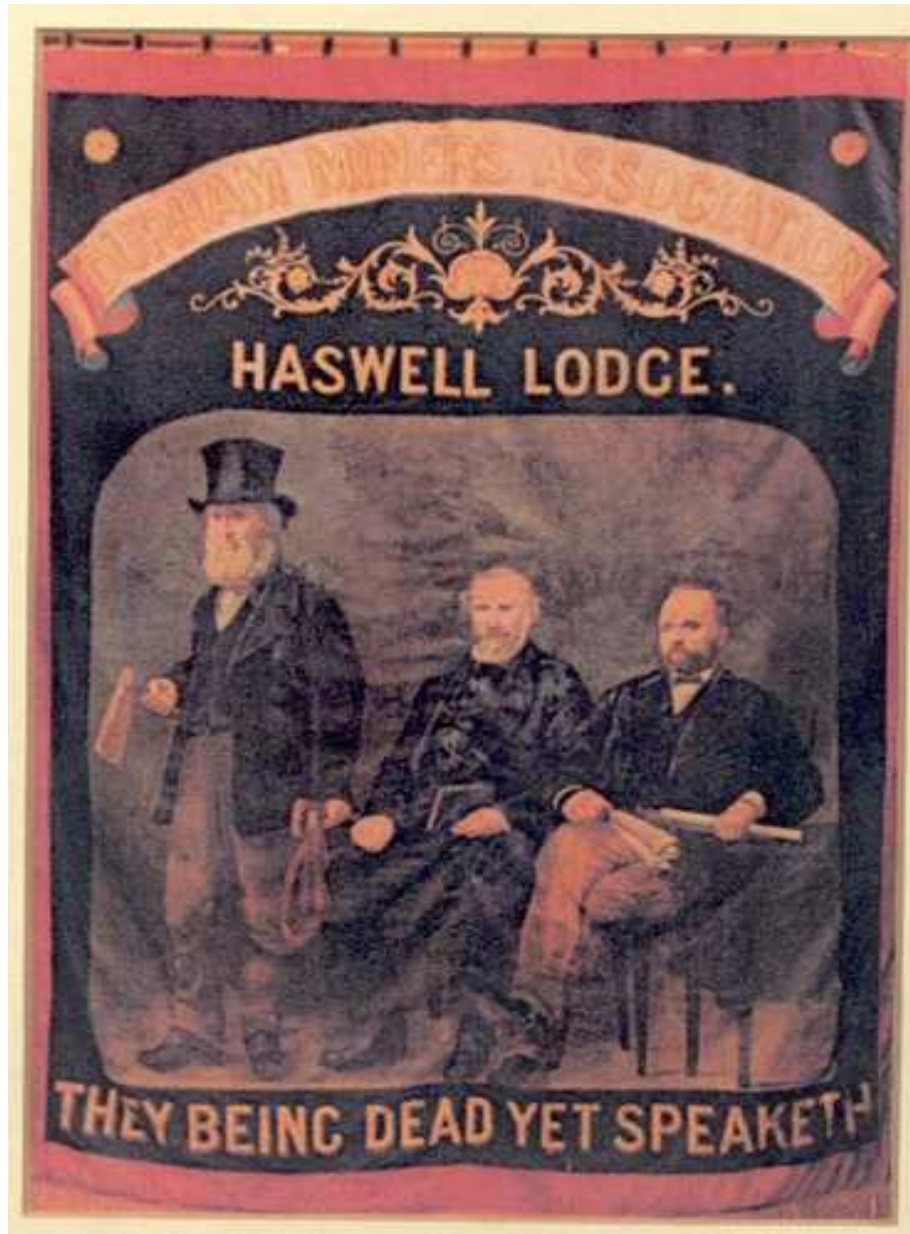


# Alexander MacDonald: the Lib-Lab MP

- MacDonald was the son of a colliery worker, and he received no formal education.
- MacDonald was one of the leaders of the Lanarkshire Miners' Strike in 1842. The strike was defeated and MacDonald lost his job.
- He began to educate himself by saving money he earned from mining to attend night classes and education sessions at Glasgow University.
- 1851: MacDonald opened his own school. He closed it 4 years later, deciding to concentrate his efforts on improving pay and conditions for miners.



# Miners' National Association



- 1855: MacDonald formed the Coal and Iron Miners' Association.
- 1856: The new union fought a severe cut in wages. After a three month strike, the miners were starved back to work and had to accept the lower wages offered to them.
- 1863: Workers formed the Miners' National Association and Macdonald was elected president.
- MacDonald thought that the key to improving working standards was through new legislation and a conciliatory attitude towards industrial disputes.
- Encouraged miners through the 60's to settle disputes amicably, and told workers they would benefit from being able to work without the interruption of strikes, although wages may be consequently less.
- 1873: Macdonald *"I look upon strikes as the barbaric relic of a period of unfortunate relations between labour and capital."*

# Working Class Political Representation!

- 1872: Macdonald and the NMA are successful in the passing of the 1872 Mines Act
- 1873: Macdonald was appointed to the royal commission on trade unions
- 1874: He was invited to stand as a Lib-Lab candidate (a candidate nominated by the trade unions, but running on the Liberal ticket) for Stafford. He won the seat and joined Thomas Burt in becoming the first working class members of Parliament.
- Macdonald was criticised by Marx and Engels for his close relationship with Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Elcho (a Tory lord) and the conservative party in general.
- MacDonald became even more moderate over time as an MP, and was criticised for being politically too close to the coal owners.

