

THE

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Welsh Nationalist

ORGAN OF THE WELSH NATIONALIST PARTY

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The New Nationalism in Wales: What It Means

By SAUNDERS LEWIS

THERE are many things that one might usefully discuss in the first number of a new political paper. Especially, the economic crisis and its Welsh aspects seem to press for illumination. But perhaps I shall do best of all if I try to show the change of meaning which the term "Welsh Nationalism" is acquiring today through the efforts of the Welsh Nationalist Party.

You know the old meaning—the wretched and poor and rather despicable meaning. You get it still quite regularly in obituary notices of successful politicians and business men and even trade union leaders, who were born in Wales and were, perhaps, Welsh-speakers. The English newspapers that circulate in Wales, after describing the career of such a respectable and successful man and how he rose from humble origins to positions of eminence and influence and control, end up by saying that "the deceased gentleman was also an ardent Welsh Nationalist, presided frequently on the platform of the National Eisteddfod, was a prominent figure in denominational assemblies, and attended regularly the annual dinner of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion."

Such was Welsh Nationalism. It was the spare-time hobby of corpulent and successful men. But we of the Welsh Nationalist Party want to extirpate that kind of "Ardent Welsh Nationalist." We want to sever the association of the adjective "ardent" with Welsh Nationalism. We want also to make it impossible for the Members of Parliament now in Westminster as representatives of Welsh constituencies, and obedient adherents to any of three English political parties, to meet together once a session or so and call themselves the "Welsh National Party." They are no

such thing. They are no party. They are anti-national and only some of them are Welsh.

Nationalism is for us a political faith. We refuse the name of Nationalist to anyone who denies or ignores the principle that a society possessing evident marks of being a nation should be required and enabled to take complete responsibility for its own government and administration. For us, the word Nationalism has no other meaning. A Welsh Nationalist is one who believes that Wales is a nation and that the Welsh Nation should manfully and delightedly take again the responsibility of building a Welsh civilisation. We are out to put the Dominion of Wales on the map of Europe.

I believe that this definition will clear the air. This paper will have the task in future of revealing, to those who through no fault of their own have lost the life-giving contact with Welsh history and tradition and speech, just what that loss has meant in the impoverishment of their lives and in the cruelty and hardship of their economic environment. It will have to try to revive in them the consciousness of nationhood. It will have to show them the advantage of belonging to a nation and to a historic society. It will even have to persuade them to strive to attain to the dignity of self-government and freedom. Let us, therefore, never lose our clear and severe apprehension of the main point: that it is our absolute duty to ourselves as adult men and women to demand and to insist on the responsibility of self-government. This great thing is not a luxury. It is not a caprice. To refuse it is to betray the Christian conception of Society. It is to repudiate the whole development of European history. That, and not the advantages of self-government, is what I wish to put first in this new organ of our Welsh Nationalist Party.

The Economic Case for Self-Government

By D. J. DAVIES

UNDER English rule Wales is drifting fast to economic ruin. Nearly 35 per cent.—or between three and four out of every ten—of her insured workers are unemployed, while only 21 per cent.—or two out of every ten—of the insured workers in England are without employment. Over-capitalisation and financial trickery have been allowed to play havoc with the solvency of Welsh industry for the sake of the profit of a few; and there has been no guiding and co-ordinating authority to encourage the development of a variety of industries to give employment to our people when our major industries are depressed.

The recent Census showed that Welsh rural counties and industrial areas are losing their population. Moreover, the physical quality of our remaining population is being impaired. Welsh maternal mortality rates are the worst in Europe, for example, and Welsh tubercular death-rates are appalling. These circumstances, and the reduced standard of living due to unemployment and to the depression in our industry and agriculture, are bound to react detrimentally on our economic efficiency.

Why does Welsh economic life present this depressing picture today? In the first place, because it has been controlled by an alien Government which has consistently neglected Welsh interests for the sake of the interests of the English ruling class, and for the sake of Imperial prestige and power. And in the second place, because this alien rule has tended to deprive Welshmen of the sense of responsibility and initiative and social harmony which should have found expression in our economic life.

England's foreign trade and credit systems have long been instruments of an Imperialistic exploitation policy. She has sought to exercise control over other countries by giving them loans, as a money-lender exercises control over his debtors, and to make London not only the political, but also the financial, centre of the world.

But this policy of economic and financial Imperialism has defeated itself. It was one of the chief factors in bringing about the Great War and the resulting increase in the National Debt, which has burdened British industry with annual debt charges of £360,000,000. The loans made by England to other countries (of money which should

have been spent at home for the welfare of the people) have enabled them to develop industries to compete with ours, and have involved them so deeply in debt that they have been compelled to set up tariff barriers against British goods in order to obtain an export surplus to enable them to pay interest on their debts.

Under the combined strain of these factors, the balance of trade has turned against Britain; unemployment has soared, and so has the Budget deficit; and the year 1931 has witnessed the collapse of English financial supremacy. The world's great moneylender has been forced to solicit loans from Paris and New York, and, despite all efforts, has been driven off the Gold Standard. The temporary advantage derived by our industries from the fall in the value of the £ will cease when the international market readjusts itself; and the attempt now being made by England to regain her financial supremacy by means of tariffs (which incidentally bids fair to ruin the South Wales coal industry by provoking retaliatory tariffs in France and other countries) is foredoomed to failure.

English economic Imperialism is finally discredited, and the only hope of economic salvation for Wales is to cut loose from her passive subjection to English policy, and develop a policy of her own, directed to the social and economic welfare of her people. Some, however, even among those who recognise that England's policy has been disastrous, ask whether self-government would really be of economic benefit to Wales.

It is easy to see that it would, both on *à priori* grounds and from the experience of other small self-governing countries. Self-government would get rid of our inferiority complex, and reawaken a spirit of self-respect, enterprise, and solidarity, which would soon transform our economic life. Moreover, the advantage of having our own Government on the spot to deal with all our economic problems from the standpoint of the welfare of the Welsh people would be incalculable. A Welsh Government for instance would grapple at once with the problem of inefficient transport which at present hampers our economic development, and with the reorganisation of industry and agriculture on co-operative lines. Such matters can be

(Continued at foot of next page)

Culture and Economics

By MORRIS WILLIAMS

DURING the first few years of its existence the Welsh Nationalist Party was continually charged with stressing too much the cultural side of Nationalism and ignoring economic facts. There was a great deal of truth in this charge. The men who came together to form our Party were men who had the future of Wales at heart and saw the Welsh language dying out. They were interested in seeing the language revived and our cultural life enriched.

But let it also be admitted that the pioneers were willing and eager to learn from experience. They soon found out that Culture embraced *everything* that enriched the nation's life. The craftsman at his work in field, mine, or workshop was contributing to the nation's culture equally with the writer or artist. Further, it was found out that Wales was suffering materially as well as spiritually from being tied to the English Government, and it was felt that, by applying Nationalist principles to industry, the country would be enriched both morally and spiritually.

The gradual grinding down of men until they were mere machines had made them naturally deaf to all appeals to higher things. You cannot expect a man earning a pound a week—or, very often, less—to interest himself in Art. He is too busy trying to keep his body alive to think of anything else. It is only the ignorant who believe that Art and Culture flourish more in poverty than in plenty. Any man who told a starving person: "Forget your empty stomach and listen to this song or lyric" would be both callous and ignorant. Give a man security, freedom and leisure—and then you can say to him: "Behold this work of art."

It is because we are thoroughly convinced that we offer them a better standard of life

than it is possible for them to obtain from an English government that we appeal to the Welsh workers for their support. We believe that once they have had a true National awakening not only will their every-day life be improved but they will also heartily co-operate to enrich Welsh culture.

Let it be clearly stated that we have not lost our faith in the finest and highest things in life. A man who joins the Welsh Nationalist Party simply because he believes it is a short-cut to prosperity and because it will give him an easier life in field, mine, or workshop is not a true Nationalist. Protecting and enriching Welsh culture is as important today as it ever was. All those who join us and cannot speak our language will do everything they can to uphold the glory of the Welsh language. If they be young enough they will endeavour to learn it; if they are advanced in years or are unable for some reason or other to learn a new language, they will see to it that their children are taught that language.

Thus our aim is to enrich Welsh life and to bring about the rebirth of a great and strong nation. By applying Nationalist aims and ideals to our industrial life we will give a higher standard of living to our people. And by continuing the fight to keep the language alive and its sphere extended we will give those people who have secured a higher standard of living something that will make them a proud and happy people.

A Welsh Nationalist who does not try to improve our workers' standard of living is betraying the cause. And any member who forgets to do everything possible to enrich our cultural heritage is likewise betraying the same great ideal.

Economic Case for Self-Government—continued

much more efficiently tackled in a small State than in a vast amorphous empire.

The old bogey that Wales could not afford self-government has long been discredited by the example of countries like the Irish Free State and Denmark. Out of £75,000,000 revenue raised in Scotland in 1924-25, only £25,000,000 was spent on Scottish services; the remaining £50,000,000 was taken for "Imperial" purposes. Probably the proportion is much the same in Wales, and by cut-

ting out unnecessary "Imperial" items of expenditure we could obtain sorely-needed revenue for our own development. On obtaining financial self-government, for instance, Wales would immediately disarm, and devote the millions thus saved to an organised campaign of national economic reconstruction.

Self-government is not a sentimental whim; it is a solid economic proposition. There is no question of our not being able to afford it; our state is so desperate today that we cannot afford anything else.

The Welsh Nationalist

The Welsh Nationalist Party stands for the attainment of Dominion status for Wales within the British Commonwealth of Nations, with a view to the reconstruction of Welsh national life. Entirely independent of the English political parties, the Nationalist Party's appeal is to every Welsh man and woman, without distinction of class. Further information and applications for membership can be obtained from the Welsh Nationalist Party Offices, Caernarvon, North Wales.

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Notes and Comments

VERY little reflection is needed to disclose the inaccuracy of the opinion that Welsh Nationality is the peculiar monopoly of Welsh-speaking people. To say this is not to disparage the Welsh language, with the rich traditional culture it embodies, nor to minimise its continued importance as a dynamic expression of a nation's aspirations and ideals. It would appear that the fallacy of identifying Nationality with language is far more prevalent outside than within the ranks of the Welsh Nationalist Party; and it is true that the latter's reputation for narrowness and exclusiveness has been in the main a doubtful honour thrust upon it by others who have readily accepted this vague and uncriticized assumption. Welsh Nationalism is neither more nor less than a legitimate attempt to give a many-sided expression to the uncontroverted fact of Welsh Nationality; and, in connection with this enterprise, it is scarcely possible to overestimate the importance of our living native language. The rôle which it has hitherto played in preventing the spirit of Nationality from becoming dormant has been invaluable; and it is certain that the future will have to record its profound indebtedness to the magnificent achievements of those groups of scholars and their supporters who have enabled the first quarter of the present century to mark the re-establishment of this language on a more secure footing than it had ever before experienced. At the same time, however, we must remember that Nationality and Language can never be interchangeable terms. Welsh Nationality is, on account of its pecu-

liar language, richer in content than that of many other nations. Yet, however important an element in any Nationality such a language may be, it is not, in the last resort, even its indispensable criterion.

* * *

THE WELSH NATIONALIST appears as a modest venture intended to meet the requirements, in reference to the claims of Welsh Nationality, of those of the inhabitants of Wales (including Monmouthshire) whose reading is partly or wholly done in English. English is not, from a practical standpoint, a language that is foreign to Wales. It is a current medium of intercourse in many parts of the country: in some areas it is the sole medium, whereas in others it divides the field with our own distinctive language. Those for whom this paper is primarily intended will realise that Welsh Nationality, as an ineradicable historic fact, is something which is indissolubly linked up with their own welfare and destiny. It is hardly credible that, after due reflection, any citizen of this nation should rest satisfied that a common possession, such as this, should ever be permitted to become static and totally destitute of function. We would accordingly anticipate for our present venture a measure of welcome from every quarter of the community.

* * *

[THESE editorial notes had been written prior to the publication of the Winter number of "Y Llenor." However, we have decided to restrict—at least, for the time being—our reply to its able editor's fear of "The Welsh Nationalist" to the following opinion of a Welsh Liberal paper, which cannot be charged with a prejudice in this matter, and from which we take the liberty of translating:

"This matter (i.e., the publishing of an English newspaper) received the careful attention of the Executive Committee at its meeting in Aberystwyth, and it was practically unanimously decided to proceed with the paper. If the Party seeks self-government for the whole of Wales, its policy must be explained to the large number of the people of Wales that do not understand Welsh, as well as to those that are thoroughly Welsh. And if it be thought that all that remains of Wales is the Welsh part, then Nationalists might as well admit that they have already been defeated. The thing is quite simple. But another point should be noted. Even now those members of the Party that are not conversant with Welsh are often more enthusiastic than members from Welsh districts, and this is quite consistent with the psychology of conversion. The English language will only be a means of explaining the Party's policy,

and of showing those who do not understand the Welsh language (among other things) the importance of both the Welsh language and civilisation. . . . It would pay those who fear propaganda in English to read the history of the Nationalist movement in Czecho-Slovakia. German was the only language used in those peoples' struggle for freedom, but today their own language is the official language."

In fairness to the editor of "Y Llenor" (who is a member of the Party), let it be noted that the Aberystwyth meeting was subsequent to his proclamation of his attitude towards this new organ.]

* * *

THE question of the claims of Wales to govern herself in accordance with her own national ideals has long occupied the attention of serious-thinking people. The idea is a fascinating one; and it is perhaps on this account apt to be regarded as merely a pleasing dream rightly destined to be relegated to that limbo in which all impracticable fancies should find their resting-place. This seems to be the most charitable interpretation we can place upon the inactivity of leading Welshmen in the past towards an acknowledged ideal: they had the vision—and in many cases it was doubtless a sustained and lasting vision—but they lacked the opportunity and the support that might have enabled them to pursue it more effectively.

Things have changed in these post-war days. At last it is possible to view Welsh Nationality in proper perspective. With increased knowledge and with a mastery of economic and political problems—despite all their seeming complexity—bands of men and women, possessing not only the vision but also the equipment requisite to bring about its realisation, are steadily and clear-sightedly endeavouring to contribute towards a better Wales and a better world. These people are not blind to the facts; they are not just carried away on a passing wave of sentimentality and enthusiasm. They know that their objective is good and reasonable and in harmony with the best ascertainable knowledge of modern times, and that to reach it would be beneficial not only to Wales itself, but indirectly to the British Commonwealth of Nations and to the whole world.

* * *

DURING the last General Election there appeared in the Press a letter from the pen of a Welsh University graduate commenting on the election address (which is reprinted in this issue) of the Welsh Nationalist Candi-

date and containing the following unsupported utterance: "I venture to suggest that if Wales had self-government tomorrow, in six months' time she would be a bankrupt state; then there would be neither social life nor government." Expressed in this bald fashion, the writer's prophecy has no value at all. Yet it serves to indicate at least one requirement that "The Welsh Nationalist" should seek to satisfy. The people of Wales have a right to expect arguments and proofs in place of the empty platitudes that have hitherto been hurled at them in profusion. Unless "The Welsh Nationalist" succeeds in unfolding a sound presentation of the case for Welsh autonomy, its publication will be entirely unjustified and it will merit the utmost contempt of its readers.

At the same time, let it not be supposed that its policy is of a rigid and inflexible character. Welsh Nationalism is not a creed, but a spirit. It is acutely conscious of the claims of Wales to have full scope for the exercise of its inherent right to self-government. It does not doubt that, as an autonomous political and economic unit co-operating with England, on an equality of footing, Wales could contribute more richly and more effectively to modern civilization than is possible under present conditions. Moreover, it believes that, granted a full-orbed political autonomy, its own cultural development would become accentuated. These are definite objectives; but the best methods of attaining them must be matters for practice and experiment. With the sure increase in the organized strength of the Welsh Nationalist forces must come both modification and enrichment of detailed policy.

* * *

THE Welsh-reading public, which is considerable and which is destined to increase as the years advance, has had the Nationalist position presented to it in a sane, virile, and effective way, for a period of five years. "Y Ddraig Goch," which has been directed by able men from its first issue, and which has now for some time been under the competent supervision of Mr. Saunders Lewis, has consistently accomplished magnificent work; and "The Welsh Nationalist" aspires only to co-operate with this journal while, in the matter of language, it seeks to supplement the work it so excellently performs.

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Modern Problems from a Welsh Standpoint

(Being Extracts from the Election Address of Mr. Saunders Lewis, President of the Party)

THE City Editor of the "Times" wrote on September 28th: "Great Britain did not depart from the Gold Standard on September 21st as an act of policy; she was driven off it." This admission is historic. It means that the main line of English political action since 1919 has come to nought. It means that England's attempt to ignore the changed conditions of the post-war world, her blind and valiant effort to re-impose the politico-economic conventions of the 19th century, have ended in defeat. We may perhaps salute the stubborn desperation of the die-hards of the City of London who have fought for their international privileges to the bitter end, and have not yet lost hope of restoration; but for their blindness and cruel obduracy the people of England and Scotland, and especially the people of Wales, have paid and will long continue to pay a grim price. Belatedly, we recognise the close of a period. It is a grave moment in history.

Such a crisis naturally leaves its trail of wreckage. The Labour Party, after two unhappy years of government, is split in two. The Liberal Party is finally disintegrated. The mis-named National Government, called together to present a united front to the threat of the time, has with incomparable speed made itself a spectacle of derision to Europe. The English Tories, learning nothing and incapable of change, bent on a revival of imperial prestige, are the unconscious allies of Bolshevism and seem destined to bring class war and revolution to their country.

Speaking at Liverpool on September 29th, Mr. Winston Churchill said: "The prosperity and greatness of Britain have depended on three great glories and breadwinners—the Navy and Mercantile Marine, the Empire of India and the East, and the City of London. . . . What have we done to lose our glories and what can we do to bring them back?" The answer is that they must not be brought back. It is because these, and not other than these, have been its pillars that our civilisation is today tottering. If there is to be any worth and any happiness in these lands again, we must find very different foundations. A new orientation is the immediate need of our politics. More important than any change of fiscal device or machinery is the need for a new spirit, a new psychological approach to political and economic problems.

Such principles of reform I find in the sanities of a balanced Nationalism. I understand sound politics to be the attempt to establish and maintain the social conditions necessary to the Good Life. Such an attempt cannot, in the perverse and harmful manner of Imperialism, ignore and dismiss the fundamental facts of history and of the formation of human character. It must demand that the Welsh collier's cultural background shall be allowed the same dignity as that of the London stockbroker. It means that the social life of Wales in town and village and countryside shall, as far as political action may affect it, be made decent and civilised. It affirms that human beings shall not be degraded and made into mere wage slaves and machines for the hollow glory of "financial prestige" or to satisfy the knavish ambition to be the "world's banker" and the "world's workshop." It asserts, against all tyrannies and sectional interests, the right of every human family to property, to culture, to a fair degree of security and independence and leisure.

A Welsh Nationalist group in the House of Commons would:

- (1) Proclaim and maintain the right of Wales to be a self-governing Dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations;
- (2) Defend with its utmost force the present national institutions of Wales as well as its cultural, agricultural, industrial and financial interests;
- (3) Oppose all measures of excessive centralisation and bureaucracy;
- (4) Defend the legitimate rights of other minorities within the British Empire.

(Continued on Page Eight)

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MODERN PROBLEMS—continued

- (5) *Maintain such a standard of information on international affairs and so European—in opposition to Imperialist—a standpoint in matters pertaining to the organisation of peace and the co-operation of peoples, that the entry of the Dominion of Wales into the League of Nations, when the moment for that crowning achievement arrived, would be gladly voted and acclaimed at Geneva;*
- (6) *Finally in domestic affairs, it would work forthwith for the restoration of social order in Wales and would enlist the co-operation of all men of good will in the initiation of local enterprises and the fostering of a spirit of personal and social responsibility in every section of the community.*

We believe that only under a Welsh Government responsible to the Welsh people can the Welsh co-operative state be established. We see no other solution for our industrial and agricultural problems. We shall resist strongly the present government's determination to use all its resources, its well-disciplined press, its wireless propagandists, its docile publicists and economists, its Orders in Council, in order to fasten on us permanently the dictatorship of the City of London.

Important Notice.—We shall shortly commence a series of easy lessons in Welsh for the benefit of our readers who desire to learn our language.

SCOTTISH NATIONALIST TRIUMPH

The Nationalist candidate, Mr. Compton Mackenzie, secured the majority of the votes of the Glasgow University students at the recent Rectorial Election. Among his opponents were such eminent men as Sir Robert Horne (Unionist) and Professor Gilbert Murray (Liberal). The significance of this victory should not be overlooked. Nationalism is not the first fruitful and redemptive movement to have secured its initial triumphs within the walls of a country's seat of learning. Let us also remember that the strength of the Welsh Nationalist forces within our University Colleges at the present time is considerable, and, possibly, even overwhelming; so much so, that it requires very little prophetic insight to be able to foresee the elimination in the not-remote future from the Welsh University's Parliamentary representation of all but the Welsh Nationalist candidate.

FLINTSHIRE BOUNDARY QUESTION

It is now unnecessary to insert an article that had been prepared on Chester's base attempt to annex a part of Flintshire. But let us not think that the danger is gone for ever. It will arise again; and it is the duty of Nationalists to see that Welsh local authorities are prepared to make a united stand to protect our country against these incursions.

AN OPEN LETTER

To the Readers of "The Welsh Nationalist."

I want a place—Have you a vacancy? I could, if I had the opportunity to prove it, be the most useful servant you ever had. I take very little room in your house—do not require food or drink. I have over 40 years' experience to offer you—have never been turned away from any house but am constantly being recommended to others. I am no foreigner—I am 100 per cent. British and of Welsh stock. I can be had at your nearest Chemist for 1/3.

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