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Membership Form

WELSH NATIONALIST PARTY

- AIMS: 1. To obtain self-government for Wales.
2. To foster the cultural and economic life of Wales.
3. To obtain for Wales right of admission to a league of nations.

PLEASE ENROL me as a member of the Welsh National Party. I am not a member of any other political party. The sum of _____ s. (minimum 1s. a year) is enclosed as my Membership Fee for this year.

I would prefer to receive communication in the _____ language.

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PLAID CYMRU

A TRADE UNION CONGRESS FOR WALES

BY

ITHEL DAVIES,

Barrister-at-Law.

3d.

CARDIFF:
PRIORY PRESS LTD.,
THE FRIARY

A Trade Union Congress for Wales.

THE workers of Wales are as well organised in their particular Trade Unions as the workers in any other country. But though they are sectionally well organised the point of unity of the sections is outside and not inside Wales. They are isolated parts in a unit comprising England and Wales and in which Wales has no distinctive existence and no independent, national voice. They have no focal point within their own country, and no point of contact one Union in relation to another in the Principality. Because of that they cannot frame or further any industrial or economic policy affecting Welsh interests and life.

The Trade Union Congress of England being overwhelmingly English in its character and outlook can hardly be expected to devote its time in discussing and pursuing questions affecting Wales, its present peculiar problems and its future prospects.

National problems cannot arise because the Unions of Wales retain no vestige of national identity in such a Congress and Welsh national interests and aspirations have no means of expression.

Wales as a nation and a people can derive no benefit or advantage from such an arrangement except it happen that what is of national importance to Wales coincides with what is of importance to the T.U.C. generally or to some section of it. Whereas there are many problems which are common to the workers everywhere equally there are problems which are peculiar to their national communities and countries. *Peculiar national problems demand a national body able to deal with them. Wales has no such body.*

The function of a Trade Union is in particular to protect and further the interests of its members in regard to wages and conditions of labour. But the horizons are much wider than such a statement may imply and that because of the impact upon those interests and conditions of external forces which go largely to determine wages and conditions of labour.

Hence the need for co-ordinating Trade Union activity and bringing the Unions together in national Congresses to consider and influence policies in political administration which inevitably bear upon the life and labour of the workers in their respective pursuits.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY.

National Trade Union Organisations or Congresses are not concerned merely with wages and conditions in themselves. They are vitally concerned in the entire political and economic structure, in social tendencies and in government and administration. For

all these bear directly or indirectly upon those things which concern the workers most intimately. That is also why the organised workers in the different countries have thought it necessary to come together internationally. They realise that the international policy of governments equally affects them, as it must.

Furthermore the range of industrial policy has a scope of combination unknown before. All the more necessary it is, therefore, **for the workers within each national group to unite their forces not merely to safeguard their own national interests in disregard of others but to enable them to express and pursue their interests in co-operation with and through understanding of others rather than in conflict with them.**

It is said that the interests of the workers are the same everywhere. That is no doubt broadly true. They are concerned everywhere in improving the conditions of labour and life. But it would be a gross over-simplification of their problems to think that they are confined in their interests to bread and butter, however fundamental bread and butter is to everyone.

What affects bread and butter issues are not the same in every country. The economic life of the different countries has developed in different ways and in different stages of time. And so long as national economic ends determine the policy of States in relation to one another there is need for the Trade Unions to relate their organised activity to that state of affairs.

Moreover, however close an affinity there be between the workers across political frontiers the fundamental fact in the life of each one of us is that we belong to a particular national life. There is not, indeed, at the present stage of civilization a more ineradicable tie than that of nationality and no more fundamental bond than that which unites an individual to his people.

COMMUNITY AND INTEREST.

The workers are interested in preserving and fostering the life of their community and nation, its traditions, its culture, its institutions and all the other things which grow up with them in the community into which they are born and in which they find their spiritual satisfaction.

To preserve and strengthen that community members must identify themselves in their organisations and activities with it and they owe a natural duty to their community which they can only discharge by taking an active and live interest in the entire structure of it, political as well as economic, spiritual as well as temporal.

It is just here that Welsh national existence is being threatened and peculiarly at the point where the workers have a major bread and butter interest. For the industries of Wales are being closed down and her men and women folk driven out of the land of their inheritance in order to feed and supply the industrial development of England.

At the moment they have no means of meeting such a threat. Not until they unite in a national movement will they be able to do so.

In view of the processes which are at work it is somewhat surprising that such a movement has not sprung into being if only in response to the instinct of self-preservation.

The drift from Wales was present before this war, when over 500,000 people were transferred from our country, but the conditions of total war have given it an urgency and poignancy which is altogether disturbing. And there is not likely to be a reversal of that drift after the war, indeed, we may expect an intensification of it. For England is now laying down the foundations of an expanding industrial life at the expense of Wales.

Unless, therefore, the workers of Wales combine as a national force concerned to look after Welsh national interests at a time when those interests are most in jeopardy they will be failing in an obvious duty to their own kinsfolk and betraying the inheritance which is theirs.

Wales must, therefore, have its own Trade Union Congress so that the workers of Wales can speak with one voice on matters that bear upon the integrity and the prosperity of Welsh life.

NATIONAL EXISTENCE.

Wherever we go the conditions of the national life surround and envelope us. We cannot escape from that life. It is our birth-mark. National life is not an insubstantial piece of sentiment. It is the most real thing that confronts real men throughout life's sojourn here on earth.

Many decry national sentiment in an endeavour to attest some nebulous international interest or faith. However necessary it be to establish and maintain international community (and the future will give us a greater sense of international community, unless we are to go back into utter barbarism) it can only be done successfully if one's own national community is properly ordained and adequately cultivated and strengthened.

If any person is able to disregard those vital things that are natural and near to him, albeit by the accident of birth, such a person cannot be trusted with the preservation and fostering of the higher values which can be cultivated only in the warmth and intimacy of the community near to

you and wherein you live and move and have your being. That means something more than work. You can work in an office but you cannot live there. The same applies to the coal mine.

I mean by community the men and women in whose society you have your daily life and with whom you have your constant fellowship and with whom you hold the great ends of life in common by free choice.

In the final analysis, however, we find that they serve the world best who love their country most. To enrich and cultivate the culture and traditions of the people from among whom one springs is the highest service to the larger life outside.

Politics and economics are always with us and around us with all their manifold problems. The person who neglects those problems which are near to us can hardly be expected to attend successfully and practicably to the wider realms of political and economic implications.

Abstract thinking cannot be a substitute for real living. It is all very well to appear to be unsentimental about the things near to you but he who is without sentiment is himself an abstraction.

You can as a feat of the imagination put your arms around the earth but the amount of that earth you can in reality hold within the fold of your embrace is infinitesimal.

The larger you make the unit of your particular interest in politics and economics the more of an abstraction it becomes.

Love of humanity is a good thing, but it is purposeless if you do not appreciate the elements of that humanity and its operations in your village or township.

If you are a Welshman you can do little to foster real live civilization if you do not assist in the cultivation of the qualities and institutions indigenous to that community in which you live.

NATIONAL ORGANISATION.

The man who does not love and serve his country, *i.e.*, the community in which he has particular identities, such as language, culture, traditions and native institutions, cannot be trusted with the care and welfare of the universal community where the identities are at their minimum.

There are few people who love their country with greater intensity than the people of Wales, yet nowhere will you find a people who do so little of practical worth for their country in order to ensure for it the conditions best suited to its survival and development.

There is no country in Europe, however small, that has not its own national Trade Union organisation.

There is no country in Europe where the workers are so helplessly ineffective in relation to their own affairs as they are in Wales.

This is a serious indictment against one of the most highly cultured peoples in Europe. But the threat to that life of which we in Wales proudly boast is now becoming more and more critical. In more easy-going times it was possible for that life to hold its own. It did so precariously. Now, however, different considerations apply and the national crisis is deepening.

In the midst of all this, we witness today the disappearance of the last independent section of the Welsh workers. The decision of the South Wales Miners' Federation to merge itself in the larger Federation of the Mineworkers of Great Britain is a surrender to the forces which disrupt and dismember the Welsh nation.

Surrendering in this way rather than by taking the lead in the direction of uniting the other workers of Wales in a national Congress will prove a fatal blunder which will have bad consequences for Wales. And this at a time when in other directions there is manifest a quickening of national consciousness.

With a vigorous independent unionism in Wales such an awakening could be the precursor of happier fortunes. It is still not too late to do something practical to ensure our future as a people. Part of the success in that direction is concerted action by the workers of the Principality.

They should combine not only to stop the further disintegration of the Welsh community but to work out the economic and political salvation of this ancient people.

The problem of the drifts of works and workers from Wales is a national one.

If the Welsh nation is to survive, the problems confronting us must be dealt with on a national basis. *So long as Wales is content to remain a mere appendage of England and her imperial economy and refuses to regard herself as an entity in a world made up of similar entities, she will be absorbed into, and be an inseparable part of, some other entity and will be crushed ruthlessly out of existence.*

The processes now at work tend towards her complete absorption and the unions of Wales have surrendered to that tendency.

EXTERNAL CONTROL.

The close intertwining of the economic life of England and Wales spread over centuries introduces into the problems of Wales a complexity which is not characteristic of the normal economy of a people who is master in its own house.

The position of Wales is aggravated by the fact that she is also part of England's imperial economic system. And though little may be left of such a system except the shadow after this war has ended, the difficulties of Wales will not be solved or reduced if, as is probable, the more virile and resilient economy of the U.S.A. will dominate and condition and perhaps absorb British economy. The ever-growing power of the increasingly concentrated finance-capitalist economy of the Great Powers creates a situation of great hardship for the smaller nations of the world.

The workers of Wales at the moment are under a double handicap. They exist within a workers' organisation which is not Welsh and takes no account of Wales as a national entity and also under a system which has no national delimitations but is controlled by the finance-capitalist hegemony of London.

In the face of such a menacing situation the people of Wales would do well to close their ranks and concentrate their energies upon the political and economic solution which will free Wales from the stranglehold of London and which will give her a chance to live the full and abundant life for which she has in herself all the qualities and the resources.

Do not let us react away from national duty because of the fear of being involved in some species of nationalism. There is a true as well as a spurious nationalism. A people who has no consuming awareness of its national life is like driftwood on the ocean.

SELF-RESPECT.

To urge national unity and consciousness is not to abandon one's larger obligations but to fulfil them more adequately.

The voice of Wales cannot be heard in the councils of the nations except the Welsh workers act as a national body.

Nor can they expect to make their contribution to the common life of their fellow-workers and fellow-men organised as they are everywhere in their national units if the Welsh people are not also acting as a national unit.

This is a matter of the utmost importance if Wales is not to be left out completely in the cold—perishing on the doormats of England

To share fully in the international life they must produce their national credentials and show a sufficient self-respect to entitle them to the respect of others in the same measure. They are worthless people who allow and look to others to provide for them what they ought to be able to provide themselves.

The period of reconstruction after this war is going to put heavy demands upon the national resourcefulness of Wales. **With a strong, virile Trade Union Congress in Wales it will be easier for us to cope with those demands.**

Such a Congress will at the same time reinforce the efforts Wales is now making to acquire for herself a measure of control over her destinies in particular spheres and eventually in all spheres.

In fine, the creation of such a Congress will add a thrilling stimulus to the whole spiritual and temporal considerations affecting the survival and fostering of Welsh life. And Wales being essentially a land of "gwerin bobl" no combination within it could be of better augury for the future or more in keeping with her high cultural interests than a combination of her workers of all grades and employment in one national body of their own.

England you can be sure will have little regard for those interests which Welshmen themselves do not consider of sufficient importance to inspire them to unite in their defence and for their cultivation and advancement. He who has no respect for himself and his own life and interests cannot complain if others do not give it.

The workers know from bitter experience that as far as the bare economics of their condition is concerned they cannot expect to have benefits conferred upon them which they themselves do not demand. It

should need no emphasising where Welsh people are concerned that the conditions of their national life are of as great importance as the conditions of their employment.

WALES AND GREAT BRITAIN.

To establish such a Congress does not mean severing all connection with the Trade Union Congress of England. We would then have a Trade Union Congress for each of the national divisions of Great Britain or the United Kingdom. Scotland already has one.

It would be an easy matter to arrange for the fullest co-operation between them, and Eire could be brought in.

In that case there would be need for a Joint Council of the various Congresses with provision for bi-ennial or tri-ennial Assembly of all of them and with powers for the Joint Council to convene a special Assembly whenever occasion demanded it.

On such a Council the Congresses should have equal representation just as the States of the United States have in the Senate. For such issues as might concern the Council would be the subject-matter of deliberation and judgment and not of power and force, and in such a case the aim would be agreement among equals rather than domination by the strong. That arrangement should not in any way affect the international position.

In the International Congress of Trade Unions Wales would have its own representation. And if Wales is to play its part in the international community it must have representation there as a nation enjoying equality of status with all the other nations comprising it.

It is for Wales to take her place in that community. She can only do so if she lives her own life fully and wisely and shows proper concern for her life and diligence in the pursuit of it.

The contacts her people make as representatives of her national life in the International sphere are the channels through which new influences are brought into her life, which in their absorption and adaptation give it a richer and deeper meaning. What contacts any of her people make under the present system are not only few but purely accidental and from the national point of view too personal and indirect to have any meaning. They do not affect Wales as such; they only affect a system in which Wales has no recognition.

No intercourse is possible between Wales and other countries because she is not recognised as a national entity. And she is not recognised because she has not sought to assert her title to it.

To enter into the partnership which the comity of nations implies she must herself be a nation with an individual life of her own consciously expressing itself within that comity. By not being within that comity she loses all the advantages to be derived therefrom and at the same time and for the same reason fails to make any contribution to it.

It is all very well for Wales to suffer extinction for the gratification of English or Anglo-Saxon desire for survival and for a worthy place in the comity of nations.

But while others live and flourish why should Wales wilt and die? We plead again that the workers who are already well organised can by combining their organised forces give to Wales a worthy place among the nations with all the benefits and opportunities which that makes possible.

RESPONSIBILITY.

The sense of responsibility which a Welsh Trade Union Congress will give to the organised workers of Wales is bound to make of them better men and women and better Welsh men and women. It is in the exercise of the function of one's natural and intimate society that one develops the powers and qualities of one's personality.

It is of vital importance in the preservation and progress of democratic life that people should assume increasing responsibility in relation to the ordinary functions of their community.

The nation is a most natural sphere for the advancement of those qualities that make for the greater life. If Welshmen are to enjoy greatness (and I do not mean greatness in the sense in which the Great Powers appraise it) they must make Wales rich and prosperous in national economy and equally in native culture.

The national life is not merely a matter of economics; but a people who disregard the economic foundations of national existence has little prospect of enjoying any kind of national life.

Our whole national heritage of which Welsh people are justly proud cannot survive as long as Wales lives economically on the fringe of an alien economy controlled by alien forces.

The threat to our existence as a people comes from that direction. To that threat the united workers of Wales can give an effective answer. Unless the workers are prepared to meet that threat there is no other effective organisation to which we can look in the absence of self-government.

Now is the opportunity for Wales to assert its individuality and for the people of Wales to demonstrate in a practical way their concern for their country in the present crisis and their love for the life which she contains and which she has nurtured throughout the dark ages of her existence.

The courage and resolution which has brought us through endless difficulties should not now fail us. The task confronting us is both grave and formidable. It is no kid glove affair; no sooth-saying business. It is a matter of life and death.

It is a matter that calls for the utmost resource and unbending resolution. It calls for imagination and energy. It may well call for sacrifice and hardship. The life of a nation and a people is at stake.

Not only are we faced with economic difficulties but also with Anglo-Saxon objection and opposition. A Welsh Office will not of itself solve our problems. The United forces of the

Welsh workers can achieve a good deal if only by giving to Welsh life a new synthesis and a new direction and bring within its province a power than can effectively exert itself in relation to it

In that there is hope of a new life for Wales. The alternative is death. And there is nothing more tragic or ignoble in history than the death of a people.

NOTE.—Delegates of the No. 1 (Anthracite) Area of the South Wales Miners' Federation passed a resolution at their meeting on Saturday, December 11, 1943, calling upon the Trade Union Congress of England and Wales to establish a separate T.U.C. for Wales.

SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION FOR A WELSH TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

Name.—The Trade Union Congress of Wales.

Objects.—To unite and combine the organized workers (whether by hand or by brain) in the thirteen Welsh Counties on a national basis in order to safeguard and promote the national interests of Wales and to safeguard and improve the conditions of labour and the economic life generally, to co-ordinate their activities and to prepare themselves to assume responsibility in working and administering industry and developing the economic life of Wales.

Membership.—The T.U.C. of Wales shall include all the Trade Unions organized and existing in Wales, who are affiliated thereto.

Affiliation Fees.—A Trade Union becoming a member of the T.U.C. shall pay such affiliation fee as Congress may from time to time approve and upon a basis to be agreed upon in Congress.

Funds.—The Trade Union Congress of Wales shall operate independently of the Trade Union Congress of England and shall have and administer its own funds except in so far as they shall mutually agree to co-operate.

Executive.—The T.U.C. of Wales shall elect and appoint a General Council whose officers and members shall be elected at the Annual Congress from nominations submitted by the Trade Unions. The representation of the Trade Unions on the Council shall be on such basis as the Trade Unions in Congress shall have agreed. The General Council shall have the following powers and such other powers as Congress may from time to time determine:—

- (a) To execute and decide all matters referred to it by Congress and to make recommendations to Congress upon matters within the competence of Congress.
- (b) To make and maintain such contacts with similar organizations in other countries as it may think proper or as Congress may direct.

- (c) To inquire and advise upon all disputes in which Trade Unions may be involved, including differences between any Trade Union and its members and between one Trade Union and another.
- (d) To appoint and maintain such office staff as it may require for the purpose of properly discharging its functions.
- (e) To convene Congress at any time between the Annual Congresses for the consideration of urgent matters calling for the decision of Congress.
- (f) To watch the political situation and to confer upon political issues and questions affecting the interests and welfare of the workers, and to take such action thereon as may be agreed.
- (g) To keep records and compile reports and publish works on industrial and economic conditions and to undertake research in all matters affecting the welfare of the workers.
- (h) To do such things and take such action generally both nationally and internationally as are calculated to further the interests of the Workers of Wales.

Relationships.—

- (a) The T.U.C. of Wales shall provide machinery for co-operation with the kindred associations of England, Scotland and Eire as shall be agreed between them for mutual discussion and joint action in any matter of common concern to them.
- (b) The T.U.C. of Wales shall be represented as it may decide upon the Trade Union International and shall have equal rights in all respects in common with the national Congresses of other countries in that international body.
- (c) The T.U.C. of Wales shall be represented on the International Labour Office and on any other international body on which national Trade Union organizations are entitled to representation.

Transitional Provisions.—The T.U.C. of England and Wales shall cease to exist as such, and upon the establishment of the T.U.C. of Wales a proportional part of the existing funds of T.U.C. of England and Wales shall be handed over to the T.U.C. of Wales to be administered and used by the T.U.C. of Wales independently. The T.U.C. of England and the T.U.C. of Wales shall refer all matters in controversy between them arising out of the establishment of the T.U.C. of Wales as aforesaid to a joint Committee for adjustment.

NOTE.

This suggested constitution is not intended to do more than set out in brief the main substantive provisions of the constitution. Other matters of administrative and procedural detail have to be provided for but which are immaterial for the purpose of this pamphlet.—I.D.