



*Published by J. E. Jones, Organising Secretary,  
Swyddfa Plaid Cymru, 8, Queen Street, Caerdydd*

*Priory Press Ltd., The Friary, Cardiff.*

# **A PARLIAMENT IN CARDIFF**

BY  
**Dr. J. GWYN GRIFFITHS**

**3<sup>d</sup>.**

**PLAID**

**CYMRU**

## ALSO READ

"WHAT IS WELSH NATIONALISM?" by H. W. J. Edwards.  
6d. (7½d.).

"70 CWESTIWN AC ATEB AR BLAID CYMRU," gan  
Gwynfor Evans. 6d. (7½d.).

"CAN WALES AFFORD SELF-GOVERNMENT?" by Drs.  
D. J. & Noelle Davies. 2/- (2/3).

"TOWARDS AN ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY" by Dr. D. J.  
Davies. 2/- (2/3).

"PLAID CYMRU AND ITS MESSAGE" by D. Myrddin Lloyd.  
6d. (7½d.).

"PLAID CYMRU A'I NEGES" gan D. Myrddin Lloyd. 6d. (7½d.).

"THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF WELSH NATIONALISM"  
Ed. D. Myrddin Lloyd. 7/6 (8/-).

"SEILIAU HANESYDDOL CENEDLAETHOLEB CYMRU"  
Gol. D. Myrddin Lloyd. 7/6 (8/-).

"Y DDEDDF UNO, 1536" Gol. W. Ambrose Bebb. 2/- (2/4).

"Y GONGL FACH HON" gan Dr. Pennar Davies. 6d. (7½d.).

"THE PENCADER POEMS" Ed. Dr. Noelle Davies. 6d. (7½d.).

"CAMRE CYMRU" Barddoniaeth, Gol. Bobi Jones. 6d. (7½d.).

To be obtained from SWYDDFA PLAID CYMRU,  
8 QUEEN STREET, CARDIFF

## A Parliament for Wales in Cardiff

**capital** (II), 1: "The chief city (of a country or county), the seat of government and administration."—H. G. WYLD, *Universal English Dictionary*.

THE QUESTION of establishing a capital for Wales has aroused a great deal of interest lately, and, not unnaturally, some sharp rivalry as well among cities and towns which have fancied their claims to the honour.

Sometimes this rivalry has descended to a rather petty level, and commentators have expatiated on what they regard as further evidence of the eternal disunity of the Welsh people. Unanimity, however, is found only in nations governed by totalitarian regimes, and critics who believe disunity is a specifically Welsh trait should ponder the political situation in England today, where government has operated for several years only on the basis of a slender majority. On fundamental matters, it is true, there is probably much unity of belief among English politicians, and there is little doubt that the Welsh people, if they had a chance to make themselves articulate politically with regard to their national affairs, would show a similar unity.

The controversy about a capital should have one salutary effect: it should make us ask, What is a capital? and What relation should it bear to the life of the country of which it is the capital? Above all, what significance should it have politically?

### 1. Normal Nationhood

We have the authority of Sir Winston Churchill for the statement that Wales is a nation. In making the statement—



at Cardiff, incidentally—he was well aware, not only of the historic claims of Wales, but of the abundant modern proofs that national consciousness is vitally vigorous among our people today. We *know* that we are a nation, and upon this knowledge we must base our conception of our responsibilities in things cultural, political, and economic.

But if Wales is a nation, she nevertheless lacks the powers which are normally the corporate expression of nationhood. She has no political institutions of her own. She has no legislature or judicature or Trade Union Congress of her own. Her system of education is not one which her own people have shaped. She is not represented in the councils of the nations; and because she has no government of her own, Wales is not on the political map of Europe. Letters from the continent often reach Swansea with the address, "Swansea, England." Politically, the description is accurate, for Swansea is in Wales and Wales is a part of England.

It is of course possible for a nation to exist without embodying itself in a state. The consciousness of nationhood is mainly spiritual and cultural, and it has prevailed in Wales for four centuries although we have not possessed, during this period, a government of our own. Two observations must, however, be added here. First, it should be realized that it is exceptional for a nation to survive without political freedom. The Jews used to be cited as a classic case of such survival, but even they have now sought successfully the embodiment of their nationhood in a twentieth-century state. Secondly, politics have today become more intrusive throughout the world. Regimentation and centralisation have steadily increased. Even the democracies of Western Europe and America, when compared with their predecessors of a century ago, have changed radically in this respect; today they invade the lives of their citizens at a thousand points. If Wales has successfully survived four centuries of rule from London, this does not by any means guarantee her survival under the impact of the political and cultural influences of our day, all-pervading as they are through the modern techniques of propaganda. The omens are that Welsh nationality will no longer preserve its identity if the present system continues. What safeguard, then, is possible? Against a threat which is mainly political there is a political defence. We must build our own institutions. We must return to politics, to the outward and visible signs of nationhood. No longer can we allow our nationhood to be a disembodied spirit.

And the need is urgent. Although the sense of belonging to a national community is still strong among us, we must not blind ourselves to the forces of disintegration which have been at work. There has been a recession of vitality, in recent years, in our language, our social customs, our religion, and our cultural creativity. No wise student of human affairs would argue that the decline in these matters is simply the result of our being without self-government. Industrialisation and mechanisation have produced some similar results in many other parts of the world. But it is noteworthy that the havoc has not been so extensive in small nations which have enjoyed political freedom. An outstanding example is Denmark, where a truly democratic culture still flourishes and where the art of living in society as integral persons is still practised by men and women.

What we must combat today is the "Big Unit" idea—the belief that a central colossus, bureaucratic at home and imperialistic abroad, is the only fit arbiter of human destinies. No Christian, indeed no humanist, can countenance this belief. It is the duty of everyone who cherishes the traditional values of civilisation to succour the small communities with their intimate, personal relationships. That is one reason why the attainment of self-government in Wales and Scotland and elsewhere is a moral duty. The freedom of small nations has been a popular cry in the West, especially in times of war. It is ironical that the youth of Wales have sacrificed themselves for the principle without realising that it should be applied to Wales too; and it is tragic that Wales is still without the freedom for which her sons have bled. Nor does this principle involve anything which can be deemed to be wildly revolutionary. Many small nations, including a number which are smaller than Wales, already possess their own governments. Wherever democracy is respected, this is the normal and natural procedure.

One of the corporate facts which plays a weighty part in the affairs of free nations is the existence of a capital. A capital is a centre and a focus, a visible witness to national identity. It is often an important patron of architecture and the visual arts. In some countries the influence of the capital is, no doubt, unhealthily dominating. This is not true of Dublin and Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen. There is no reason why it should be true in Wales, where the life of the village and small township has deep and traditional roots. A capital in Wales would, at the same time, function as a needful symbol of national



unity; provided of course that it would be a capital, not merely in name and prestige, but in the full accepted sense of the term. This sense is bound up with self-government.

## 2. Democratic Self-government

That is why Plaid Cymru's rally at Cardiff on September 26th, 1953 specifically—and legitimately—links the ideas of a capital for Wales and self-government for Wales. Many believe already that Wales needs a capital. We ask them to face up to the implications of their belief.

The call for democratic self-government has increased notably in volume during recent years. When we prefix the adjective "democratic," by the way, we do so with studied intention. A demand has been lately voiced for "Home Rule for Kenya," and upon examination has been found to claim that the white bureaucracy in Kenya should be independent of London control. This may be a rare use of the term, but it is necessary to point out that self-government is traditionally a democratic conception far removed from the present cry of the European settlers in Kenya. In our demand for self-government in Wales we are asking that a Parliament be set up on our soil where democratically elected representatives of our people will make our laws.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Owen Glyndŵr held a Parliament of all Wales at Machynlleth. Had he succeeded in making Wales independent at that time, the story of the last four centuries would have been very different, especially as a national university was a part of his plan.

Wales had to wait until the nineteenth century for a re-statement of the desire for political freedom. It was partly under the influence of the national movements in Europe and in Ireland that Michael D. Jones and Emrys ap Iwan proclaimed their belief in the principle. Afterwards, the Liberal leaders, notably Tom Ellis and the young Lloyd George, openly championed Home Rule for a time. So did early Labour leaders.

But it was not until 1925 that Plaid Cymru was formed as an independent political party with the aim of making Wales a free member of the Commonwealth. Plaid Cymru's progress was slow at first. Since the end of the Second World War, however, the movement has made striking headway. Nor is the

reason far to seek. From their window on the world, the young people of Wales have looked back on the condition of their own nation. Longing for a peaceful world-order, they are realising that to be creative it must be truly international. If political freedom within a world-order is the right thing in Europe and Asia and Africa—and there can be no mistaking the vast upsurge of the tide against imperialism—it is right also in Wales. Charity begins at home. So does democracy.

These last years have communicated some costly lessons to those who are ready to learn. We saw in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy perversions of nationalism which have made some people afraid of any talk of nationhood. It is our duty to recognise these movements for what they were. With their claims of racial superiority, their belief in a "Herrenvolk," and their grandiose schemes of conquest, they were really crude forms of imperialism. They denied the first principle of Christian nationalism, that all nations, large and small, are equally sacred in the eyes of God. "The things that God hath cleansed, call thou not common."

We must beware, at the same time, of going to the foolish extreme of denying the place of nations in the ideal of humanity at one. The bleak universalism of H. G. Wells was guilty of this folly. The brand of "Socialism" which was disseminated for some years from Ruskin College, Oxford, was grievously guilty of it. Too many students have returned to Wales from this centre with the idea that Socialism implies the obliteration of all national entities. Economic man, according to them, would perpetrate a merger of all cultures; and this horrible dream they called "internationalism." As though internationalism were possible, by any definition, without nations!

It is a pity the schools of Wales do not give more time to the study of Latin and Greek. Much time would be saved, if this were done, in political discussions about internationalism, democracy, and autonomy. As it is, too many voters (to quote Gwyn Thomas) even of Grammar School vintage do not know the meanings of the words, not to mention the inspiration of the classical era of Greece, when democracy was born.

As for Socialism and internationalism, suffice it to refer to Keir Hardie, James Conolly, Jean Jaurès and Karl Marx himself. None of these Socialists believed that the adoption of Socialism



would wash out the cultures of the nations and dye them all into an indiscriminate proletarian red. On the contrary, they believed that Socialism would enrich the national cultures; and they were supporters of national freedom.

Dr. Grahame Clark's politics are not known to me. He is an English archaeologist. But the following statement, from his essay on *Education and the Study of Man*, seems incontrovertible

*'Realization of a world order based on the extinction of diverse national traditions would be the Dead Sea fruit indeed, for it is only by the cultivation of their diverse traditions that national communities can contribute anything of value to the international comity.'*

And it does not require much perspicacity to see that the cultivation of which Dr. Clark speaks is impossible without free institutions.

What we possess at the moment is miserably inadequate and comes nowhere near the full political freedom which self-respecting nations enjoy. True, we are allowed to participate in one luxury—the democratic machinery of free elections. Once elected, however, our 36 M.P.'s. join a Parliament of 625 in London where the great majority represent English constituencies. It is impossible, in these circumstances, for Welsh affairs to be discussed adequately or for Welsh opinions to leave a proper imprint on the laws by which Welshmen are governed. When military conscription in peace-time was made law in the London Parliament, the great majority of Welsh M.P.'s voted against it. That is one important example of the travesty of democracy which the Welsh nation now suffers.

It is sensed in London that the Welsh freedom movement is growing apace. Hence the minor concessions of recent years. We have been given a "Welsh Day" in Parliament, which means that our national problems can now be discussed **for four or five hours every year**. We now possess a Minister for Welsh Affairs—to be precise, Half a Minister, for he is also Home Secretary. Sir David Maxwell Fyfe has endeared himself to everybody. He is more like a Guardian Angel than a Gauleiter. But if he were Gabriel himself, he would be no substitute for self-government.

Then there is the Welsh Advisory Council, which has thoroughly vindicated its existence **as an advisory body** through its recent valuable report on rural depopulation. Excellent advice is there proffered, but it is surely the task of a Welsh Parliament to implement it.

### 3. A Parliament in Cardiff

A part of this September rally is the Marathon Run from Machynlleth to Cardiff. Runners in relay carry a torch from the historic Parliament-House of Owen Glyndŵr, and place it eventually on that plot of land in Cathays Park which has been wisely reserved for the specific purpose of erecting a Parliament for Wales. Here is a symbol of a famous event in our past; a symbol too of our present determination. When this prophetic sign is verified, Wales will renew her political life as a distinctive entity.

Cardiff, we believe, is the natural choice for the location of a Welsh Parliament. Its situation, though not central, places it near our most populous areas. It possesses a spacious and impressive civic centre. Its claim would seem already supported by a majority of our people. Already too, it has become the centre of such administrative devolution as we have acquired. This last point has been properly stressed in a statement issued by Plaid Cymru in 1949:

*"At the present time there is only one Welsh centre where there have been government offices for a generation, where the facilities for extension exist, and where the Civil Services have a tradition and recognised office and function. It is at Cardiff."*

To make Cardiff a real capital, however, it must become a centre not only of administration but of government. One of the first tasks of a Welsh Parliament will be to ratify the choice of Cardiff as its permanent meeting-place. There is little doubt that this will be done.

But the question is WHEN? The purpose of this rally is to hasten the decision of a fundamental issue in the life of our nation. If we are determined that the Welsh nation shall live, let us go about our purpose honourably and wholeheartedly.



It is time to finish with the shifts and patches, the subterfuges and substitutions which have hitherto done pathetic duty for democratic self-government. It is for us to face our national responsibilities. There is no evidence, as yet, that England will oppose our just claims. Indeed England has granted full autonomy, in recent years, to a number of nations which have expressed unequivocally their desire for it. Wales' only enemy is the apathy of her own people.

There are encouraging signs of a new awareness that now is the time to act. It has even reached the London House of Lords. This is what Lord Omore, a Welshman of generous sensibilities, has recently stated, writing in *The Western Mail*:

*"I wish, Sir, I were able to stand on the highest mountain in Wales and sound such a tocsin as would open the eyes, the ears, the minds and the hearts of my compatriots to the danger that faces our nation. It is nothing less than this, the virtual disintegration of our national life and the extinction of our national consciousness and identity."*

Here is enthusiasm. Here is true insight. In the same statement, however, Lord Omore calls attention to the need "for a focal person (i.e. a Secretary of State) and a focal place (i.e. a capital)." Alas, the noble lord's remedy does not match his diagnosis. A capital, yes—a real one. But who wants a Secretary of State? Even the Liberal Party has long since renounced this aim; and the Scots, over a million of them, have asked for a Parliament although they have had a Secretary of State for many years. It is to be hoped that Lord Omore will not climb our highest mountain to proclaim such a paltry policy. It will not be worth the trouble.

We invite him and others to support our demand for a focal institution in a focal place: a Parliament in Cardiff.

## Membership Form.

# PLAID CYMRU

## AIMS

- 1.—Self-government for Wales.
- 2.—To safeguard the culture, language, traditions and economic life of Wales.
- 3.—To secure for Wales the right to membership of the society of nations.

*I desire to become a member of Plaid Cymru, to further the above aims. I am not a member of any other political party. I enclose £ : s. d. (minimum 2/6) as my membership fee for the present year.*

*I would prefer to receive communications in: O Welsh; O English.*

(M ) .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 ..... 19.....

PLEASE send me (Place Xs in suitable O's)

O Party Badge (1/6, postage 3d.) (O Stud, O Tiepin, O Brooch).

O "Welsh Nation" monthly

O "Y Ddraig Goch" monthly

(Either party paper for 4/6 by post, 12 months; both 7/-)

O List of party publications

(Total sum enclosed, £ : s. d.)

Return to Secretary, Plaid Cymru Offices, 8 Queen Street, Cardiff.