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# Our three nations



## **About this book**

***Should Scotland and Wales  
be self-governing ?***

***Should the United Kingdom  
as we know it be replaced  
by a " Confraternity " of free  
and equal nations within the  
wider Commonwealth ?***

***These and other issues are  
considered in this book which  
is sponsored by Plaid Cymru  
(the Welsh Nationalist  
Party), the Scottish National  
Party and the (English)  
Common Wealth Party.***

Cover by Ivor Owen

**2/6**

# OUR THREE NATIONS

WALES : SCOTLAND : ENGLAND

by

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## Introduction

Should Scotland and Wales be self-governing? The authors of this work think they should and suggest that in the decades to come the United Kingdom as we know it will be replaced by a "confraternity" of free and equal nations within the wider Commonwealth. The new term "confraternity" is used to stress both the authority and the co-operation which will mark such a political reaction.

This book is essentially designed to interest the general reader and to stimulate discussion. The arguments used are consistent with the aims and outlook of the three parties but are not necessarily part of their agreed policies. It is published as a useful aid to people prepared to face up to the issues raised.

The book is sponsored by :

Plaid Cymru (The Welsh Nationalist Party), 8, Queen-street, Cardiff, Wales.

The Scottish National Party, 59, Elmbank-street, Glasgow, C.2, Scotland.

Common Wealth, 12, High-street, London, N.W.3, England.

## PART I

### The United Kingdom Today

#### Preamble

**T**HE first of the two World Wars which were to end all Wars was described as a fight for democracy against Absolutism. The second World War was also a struggle for the survival of democracy—this time against Totalitarianism.

Both broadly succeeded so far as immediate results were concerned. Tsar and Kaiser and a host of minor Royal tyrants were swept into oblivion in 1917 and 1918 and it was some time before democrats realised that the successors of the absolute monarchs were, in most cases, not to be democratic republics but dictatorships; dictatorships of a new and virulent type which had to be fought in the second World War. Again the democracies survived the conflict, although this time with the help of one of the greatest of the dictatorships, which greatly strengthened itself in the process, and at once constituted a new threat to the democratic world.

Nevertheless, for the time being at least, parliamentary institutions not only regained lost ground in Western Germany and Italy but spread during the immediate post-war years to Asia and even Africa.

But in spite of successive military victories, indeed, partly because of the militarisation which made the victories, democracy as expressed in parliamentary institutions had itself undergone far-reaching changes between 1914 and 1945. So also had economic and social conditions and institutions; in few places more than in the supposedly 'stable' United Kingdom.

This book gives an interpretation of the nature and meaning of those changes as experienced in the United Kingdom. There are many parallels between the state

of affairs we describe in the United Kingdom and the conditions found in other countries of the world today, and in our last chapter we revert to a discussion of some of these. But in two important respects the problems experienced in the government of the United Kingdom differ from those in most other countries. *First*, we do not know the meaning of poverty or of open tyranny as two-thirds of the human race knows it. *Second*, and partly because of this, Communism is not a direct threat in any part of the British Isles.

Therefore, although the facts of world poverty and of the Cold War are ever in the background, they do not impinge directly on our discussion of the internal problems and relationships of the United Kingdom.

This has the great advantage of allowing considerable simplification of our argument as compared with similar discussions of the internal problems of, say, France or Italy, where the prevalence of poverty and the existence of powerful Communist Parties cause the Cold War to be waged in earnest.

It is our belief that if and when some of the existing tensions found within the British Isles can be relieved, its inhabitants will be in a much stronger position to contribute towards world peace and progress, for they will be endowed with a detachment and disinterestedness made possible by a greatly increased internal harmony and fellowship as well as by freedom from want and immunity from Communist propaganda.

## CHAPTER I

### THE DAWN OF MANAGERIALISM

**I**N 1914 the United Kingdom was the most perfect example of a non-military, liberal, capitalist democracy.

The subordination of the Executive to the majority of the elected representatives in Parliament still meant something at a time when the largest party could govern only with the support of one or both of two small parties—Labour and Irish Nationalists. Ministers and their departments had few powers for which they were not directly responsible to Parliament. The Cabinet met without a prepared Agenda, kept no minutes of its proceedings and had no secretariat. Parliament held sway over the whole British Isles, but its central control was mitigated by the existence of genuinely autonomous local authorities exercising wide powers.

On the economic side Parliament left nearly all control in the hands of private enterprise. Monopolies were few; the competition of the classical economists seemed still the rule. If Parliament left industry to its own devices, it also left it unprotected and unsubsidised. British faith in Free Trade had been emphatically re-asserted at the General Election of 1906. Compulsory health and unemployment insurance were in their earliest experimental stages. The only protection afforded to most families against the slings and arrows of a competitive economy were: their savings, Trade Union or Friendly Society benefits, charity and the Workhouse. Only the last was State-provided and even that was administered by locally-elected bodies and financed out of local rates.

There was vaunting wealth and degrading poverty, economic despotism and wage-slavery; but also the solid independence of artisan, shop-keeping and pro-

fessional classes. There was freedom of thought and political action—and this freedom was effective, for there was no Broadcasting monopoly and few large circulation newspapers. Most of the press was 'capitalist' in outlook, but it was possible for unorthodox journals with small circulations to pay their way. It was comparatively easy for a new Party—Labour—to break into British politics. There was hope of and belief in Progress. There were crusades against injustice. There was no 'call-up.' A great battle was raging in Labour and Trade Union circles between the State Socialists and the Guild Socialists. The Irish had renewed their demand for Home Rule and a Bill was awaiting Royal Assent.

### The Gradualist Revolution

The thirty years that elapsed between 1914 and 1945 saw the transition from a pacific and complacent liberal system into a highly armed and apprehensive managerialist system.

In outward form Constitution and economic system had changed little. The Monarchy, Parliament and Cabinet Government had all survived. But the powers of the Executive—the Cabinet and Government Departments—had increased out of all recognition. The final triumph of the two-party system deprived M.P.'s of their last vestiges of freedom from the party Whips, making it possible by 1950 for a Party with a majority of five to remain in power for fifteen months, and then choose its own time for an appeal to the electorate. Cabinet procedure had been streamlined in 1916 and thereafter worked like a well-oiled machine, complete with ever-growing secretariat and hosts of sub-departments.

The Defence of the Realm Act in 1914 and the Emergency Powers Acts of 1939/40 delegated huge legislative powers to Ministers. New Ministries were created to deal with new laws ranging from Conscription and Direction of Labour to the governmental control of

Transport and State provision of Health Services. New Tribunals were created to deal with disputes between citizens and Government departments. In most cases no appeal was allowed from these Tribunals to the ordinary Courts of Law or to any other impartial body. New crimes were created by Ministerial Order. Local Government Authorities were brought under close Ministerial control in one sphere of activity after another.

Although Parliament remains legally sovereign, its power is now no more than nominal. The government of the country has left its hands and now rests with the oligarchy controlling one or other of the two major parties.

### The Almighty State

Most of these developments were precipitated by the first World War, proceeded more slowly with many setbacks between the wars, and were brought to completion during the second World War. They run parallel with corresponding economic trends. Industrial amalgamations and monopolies became the rule. Under the stress of the slump in the thirties Free Trade was abandoned and governmental regulation of industry and agriculture accompanied subsidies and Protection. Shortage of labour in the two wars and unemployment between them both contributed, paradoxically, to the rapid growth of social legislation aiming at the amelioration of the lot of the labouring classes. Despite setbacks, Trade Unionism and the Labour Party grew from strength to strength and soon the consolidated ranks of Labour faced the consolidated ranks of Capital. Competition retired, defeated, to linger in the distributive trades.

The working classes, pauperised by Tory Governments between the Wars, were then rebuked for 'irresponsibility' by the new Labour Government of 1945 and told finally and definitely that they were 'not

ready' for "workers' control" in industry. The battle between the State Socialists and the advocates of "workers' control" with decentralisation (the Guild Socialists) had been won long since by the State Socialists. The effect of the first world war in militarising and centralising the governmental and economic systems of the United Kingdom had made this outcome inevitable. As G. B. Shaw wrote in 1980—under the threat of German force, Governments '*could perform with precipitous celerity . . . and success . . . feats of national organisation . . . declared impossible . . . when pressed (by no more than) the arguments of Fabians and the votes of Socialists.*'

The moral was too obvious—why strive along the doubtful and difficult paths of voluntary combination for a re-birth of democratic and co-operative activity in industry, when State action had already been demonstrated as efficacious for the control (or even displacement) of capitalism and private ownership? When, eventually, the State Socialists had their way in the nationalisation programme of 1945/50, there were no vocal Guild Socialists left to say 'I told you so' when the result turned out to be absenteeism, unofficial strikes, indifference to pleas for more productivity and a general absence of any sense of loyalty in the workers to the new Public Corporations. This along with a regrettable tendency for Trade Union leaders, on and off the Boards, to hob-nob with their old class enemies, the ex-owners (now managers and administrators of State industries) and forget their links with their rank-and-file membership.

And if the Guild Socialists had been there, they would have found it well nigh impossible to get a hearing. The Labour Party would not give such blatant unorthodoxy a hearing without a struggle. And without the sponsorship of one of the big parties they would be denied access to the most important communication mediums of all—radio and television. We have it on the authority of no less than President

Eisenhower that the scarcity and cost of newsprint in Europe and the United Kingdom is making the dissemination of minority views through the printed word almost impossible. The big circulation newspapers—even the best of them—will permit no publicity for views repugnant to owners, advertisers or readers. Freedom of expression is almost intact in law but virtually denied in practice to those who need it most—the minorities.

## New Masters

We designate a political and economic system run on these lines as managerialist.

It is democratic to the extent that an elected Parliament is still the source of all legality and executive power and to the extent that those powers which it delegates it can itself resume at any time.

It is undemocratic in that the operation of the two-party system limits the choice of the electorate to two sets of opposing politicians with two (not always opposing) policies.

It is managerialist because the sovereign powers of Parliament are in practice now widely delegated not to democratically elected subordinate bodies such as local authorities, but to Civil Servants through delegated legislation and the setting up of administrative tribunals; to the nominated members of the Boards of nationalised industries; to the highly paid officials of the large Trade Unions whose counsel is sought by Tory as well as Labour Ministers; to the military and naval leaders whose influence and prestige has been so greatly enhanced by two World Wars and the continuance in peace time of conscription. The values of this society are the Spartan military virtues of discipline, efficiency and productivity, tempered by the grudgingly recognised necessity of keeping the population quiet with bread and circuses.

Is it any wonder that the leaders of Church and State, of all denominations and parties and of none, bemoan the lack of interest, of a sense of responsibility, even of honesty, among the majority of the people? Is it any wonder that their exhortations fall on deaf ears and that with the autonomy of voluntary associations and of local government authorities by-passed by Whitehall planners we pass into a state of popular indifference compatible only with servitude?

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CASE FOR DECENTRALISATION

THE case for decentralisation rests on nothing less than the nature and needs of man in society. The liberal theorists of the French Revolution and the classical economists of the English Industrial Revolution saw Society in the form of a democratic, political State in which, ideally, every individual would be the political equal of every other individual. Forms of organisation which came between the State and the individual—Trade Unions, Guilds, Friendly Societies, membership of minor Nationalities, Secret Societies, the unestablished Churches—were considered as no more than vested interests, the sole concern of which was to win privileges for their members at the expense of unorganised individuals, of other groups and of the greatest Community of all—the State itself.

Fortunately, in neither the United Kingdom nor in the United States was this view of lesser associations within the State taken so seriously as it was in France. At the time of the French and American Revolutions the mediaeval craft and trading guilds had long since been replaced in the United Kingdom by the entrepreneur from whom sprang the factory-owner of the 19th century; the Enclosure Acts of the 18th Century ended the last vestiges of communal work on the land; from 1800 to 1824 Trade Unions were illegal bodies; but in contrast with French experience the autonomous local government corporations survived to be reformed and multiplied from 1835 onwards, and apart from the early attack on the Trade Unions neither English nor Scots law discouraged the formation of voluntary associations.

#### The Voluntary Movement

In these two fields—local government by elected bodies instead of officials appointed by the central



government and tolerance, if not encouragement, of the whole range of voluntary societies from worker-communities and producer co-operatives to private charities—the United States has followed British rather than French practice.

American federalism and the inheritance of English Common Law and custom have both played their part and the result has been an unexampled richness and variety of social and cultural life and activity, the value of which is often overlooked on this side of the Atlantic where we tend to see only the graft and indecisions of American public life. Characteristically, English people, especially English Socialists, blame federalism for the flaws in American government. Federalism is said to divide a nation which, without it, would have developed much greater homogeneity.

This is in itself a doubtful proposition, but in any case does not justify the brushing aside of all the advantages of spontaneity and variety in the conduct of social and political affairs made possible by federalism, relatively strong local government and lack of restriction on most forms of voluntary association. A strong case could also be made to show that the worst faults of the American Constitution stem not from federalism but from the way in which the Founding Fathers applied the French doctrine of the Separation of Powers. Senator McCarthy's Investigating Committee certainly has its basis in this doctrine and so has the sometimes weak position of the Presidential office.

*Spontaneity and variety : these are the pre-eminent virtues of decentralist policies, whether expressed through federal institutions or not. How markedly absent are they from the prototype of centralised unitary States : France. How rapidly they are being lost in the United Kingdom, where voluntary societies, including Friendly Societies run on democratic mutual-aid lines, have been replaced by State Agencies in Social Services ; where local government has been progressively stifled by Ministerial control ; where the principles of*

*co-operation have been outraged by the practice of Nationalisation ; where M.P.'s act less as individuals and more as robots with every Parliament ; and in which the national languages of millions of people are now threatened with extinction after constant use for thousands of years.*

## The Centralist Argument

The Centralists of all Parties tell us that to strengthen local government will disrupt the essential unity of the social services and of the economic life of the Kingdom. They say that while Co-operation may have to be tolerated in the wholesale and retail trades, its extension into the industrial field through any form of workers' control will threaten the basis of the Welfare State by slowing down the fight for productivity.

Voluntary Societies are valued as pioneers of social reform, the fruit of whose work may be properly gathered by State institutions in the fulness of time. The idea that voluntary societies may be the best *permanent* instruments of social service is never entertained (although, of course, the voluntary societies will always be needed to fill in the gaps left by the State !).

The conception of Home Rule in Scotland and Wales is regarded as disruptive in every sense of the word, for economic unity would be threatened—all would suffer, Scotland and Wales more than England. The argument runs on : this is an age of increasing integration, as witness moves towards European Unity ; Home Rule would foster nationalism, which in turn breeds war ; Customs barriers mean armed frontier guards ; and finally the United Kingdom has been united too long and occupies too small an area for Home Rule, however defined, to be tolerable.

## Away from the Centre

We shall examine the nature of the attack on Home Rule for Scotland and Wales in greater detail.

We shall show that with Home Rule an economic interchange freely entered into between political equals will replace the present economic domination of Scotland and Wales by England, and may well increase the flow of goods and services.

We will show that production, far from declining, will increase (but in Wales, in particular, there will be much less emphasis on production of a few commodities for vulnerable export markets) ; that given control of their own destinies Scotland and Wales are as capable of achieving prosperity as are Denmark and Switzerland ; and that modern methods of economic control do not necessarily involve the use of Customs' barriers against England or each other.

To those who raise the charge of Nationalism, we say that Welsh and Scottish Nationalism is and will be of the variety practised in Scandinavia, not that of Germany or Italy. One guarantee of this is the size of the countries we are discussing.

To those who consider that the United Kingdom is too densely populated even for federalism, we point to Switzerland which comprises twenty-two self-governing Cantons into an area half that of Scotland and with almost the same population. The Swiss are not notably poor, down-trodden or belligerent. Their country is encompassed by land frontiers with large and powerful neighbours. Yet the existence of a land connection between England and her two Celtic neighbours is often quoted as an unanswerable objection to any form of Home Rule. On that argument it was absurd of Sweden to grant sovereignty in 1905 to Norway, with which she had a common frontier of no less than 1,632 kms and which she dominated in the United Kingdom of Scandinavia by virtue of her greater population and resources.

There is as much logic in insisting on the unity of Scotland and Wales and England, on these grounds, as there would be on a union 'on equal terms' between Germany and Denmark.

## Moral Choice

We oppose the stereotyped orthodoxy of contemporary political and social life in the United Kingdom with its two-party system, its stifling bureaucracy, its gag on minorities and its contempt for the social experiments of those it calls cranks.

We oppose it with the ideal of political, social and cultural decentralisation designed to promote experiment and diversity, aimed to strengthen a sense of community and individual responsibility and therefore to be truly democratic in a new and vital way. Our decentralisation is not a political panacea—it is a moral conception. From its development we believe that the British peoples can once again give the world an object-lesson in government. Parliamentary and Cabinet government have been widely copied throughout the world. The relationship between the free and independent States of the multi-racial, world-wide Commonwealth offers a standing challenge to more formal types of political association.

Confraternity and the moral and social ideals which inspire it is but a revival and extension of the best in the British tradition.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE POLITICS OF DECENTRALISATION

**M**ANY people in the United Kingdom are today antagonistic to one or more aspects of managerialism. Few recognise the connection between their various grumbles, that they are up against a system, a new authoritarianism, of which our day to day grouches are but symptoms. Fewer still attempt any consistent resistance, or try to bring together the different strands of opposition with a common plan of action.

#### Can the Labour Party be changed?

Discontent with the present set-up and failure to realise its causes is simultaneously demonstrated by the attitude of many people towards the Labour Party. The Labour Party is, in fact, the chief architect of managerialism in the United Kingdom but instead of recognising it as such, its disillusioned supporters persist in regarding it as being still the main hope for their particular vision of democracy. Are we appalled by British participation in the Cold War? Very well, we must convert the Labour Party to a neutralist, Third Way, 'socialist' foreign policy. Do we believe that colonialism is wrong and plays into the hands of the Communists? Then let us be thankful that Mr. Fenner Brockway has a Labour seat in Parliament. (And let us forget that the Labour Government surrendered its grip on certain colonial territories only for reasons of necessity). Do we support some form of workers' participation in the control of industry? If this is to be achieved, it can only be through the Labour Party! Do we want the Co-operative Movement to grow apace? Do we regard local government as the nursery of democracy? We must reverse present Labour policies regarding them both! Do we think the Scottish and Welsh nations should have their own parliaments? These can only be won through the

Labour Party—at this point the transition into absurdity should become apparent to the most purblind.

When all these hopes are brought together and shown to be absurd; when reference is made to the undemocratic distribution of internal power brought about by the unbalanced federal constitution of the Labour Party; when the domination of that Party by undemocratic Trade Unions is pointed out—the average disillusioned Labour supporter becomes distracted and may either retire from active politics or remain in the Party as a bitter and unconstructive obstructionist. He rarely has the vision or the courage to attempt independent political action. And indeed, the system is hardly designed to encourage him. Without funds and supporters he will be jeered at as a crank, derided for his inability to 'co-operate' with the big battalions, and accused of 'splitting the vote.' His protests will not be 'news,' he will find the cost of independent publishing prohibitively high and he will be forced to rely solely on the street corner for spreading his point of view. If he goes to the street corner he will stand alone while his potential converts will be sitting at home listening in disgust to the party political broadcast of one of the official Labour leaders.

#### The Co-operative Party

Such is the political fate of the libertarian socialist under the present system. There remains one other organised body of Socialists which retains some vestiges of independence of action, thought and policy. This is the Co-operative Movement and Party, which realises that Labour's bureaucratic nationalisation plans threaten Co-operative economic interests and achievements.

The Co-operative Party in particular shows in its plans for the democratisation and decentralisation of industry an enlightened realisation of the psychological needs of industrial workers which is far in advance of anything produced by the official Labour Party for thirty years.

But it is significant that the majority of active Labour workers are absolutely ignorant of Co-operative Party policy on these or any other matters, that little or no impact has been made on the Trade Unions and that the publications of the various groups of Labour intellectuals—the Fabian Society, Socialist Union or the Bevanists—give them no publicity.

Equally significant is the fact that the Co-operative Union itself is the victim of an undemocratic constitution and that the powerful C.W.S. has been able to veto important Co-operative Party policy statements. Finally, although the Co-operative Party is decentralist in outlook, its practice of nominating Parliamentary candidates jointly with local Labour Parties shows that neither the leadership nor the rank and file understand that this same Labour Party is their main enemy and that co-operation with Labour effectively neutralises the spread of their own political and economic outlook.

### The Tory Paradox

This is not to say that the Conservative Party is a friend of the Co-operative Movement, or even that it is genuinely decentralist, although this word has great currency in Tory circles and has a few genuine individual adherents.

The Conservatives today are in a dilemma. Defeated in 1945 because the electorate was sick to death of them, their qualified victory of 1951 was the result of disillusion with the Labour Government rather than any recovery in their own popularity. Their decentralisation is based on policies which have no basic appeal to the majority of the electorate, being chiefly inspired by private enterprise economics and a local government strengthened only to enhance their domination of County Councils.

Anything that weakens the authority of the employer—be he owner or manager—or that weakens the military power of England is anathema to them. They

are therefore inexorably opposed to both workers' participation in the control of industry and Home Rule. But although they may enjoy electoral triumphs over Labour, the lack of a widely acceptable policy of their own has reduced them from the pre-eminent position they enjoyed during the inter-war years. They are in fact forced to administer Labour centralist policies in order to retain power even temporarily.

This is a measure of the triumph of Labour managerialism and a vindication of the statement that the greatest enemy of the decentralism outlined in these pages is the chief architect of the present system, the Labour Party.

### Liberal Weakness

If the Tories find themselves inescapably tangled in the Welfare State, how much unhappier is the fate of the Liberals. They, along with the dissident Socialists in the Labour Party, are victims of the electoral system. Reduced to a handful of Parliamentary seats (and these held by courtesy of non-competition from Tory candidates) they may well cease to be a Parliamentary Party in the near future. This is in many ways a tragedy, because, for all their shortcomings, they are the most genuinely democratic of the historic British Parties.

Their decentralist policies are much more far-reaching than those of the Tories, covering as they do not only the realms of local government and a measure of Home Rule, but even a degree of joint control of industrial establishments by employers and employees. Apart from the rather academic approach towards political problems shown in such things as their continued adherence to Free Trade, we believe that the greatest obstacle to Liberal revival today lies in what orthodox people would consider one of the Party's greatest assets—its position as a political organisation in each of the three countries of the United Kingdom.



For the Liberal Party, even more than the Labour Party, depends on the support of Scottish and Welsh voters for its representation at Westminster. But it is now beginning to dawn on these voters that they are pawns in the political game played at Westminster on English soil with primarily English interests at stake. As this realisation sinks in, the Liberal Party will lose its remaining Scottish and Welsh support, as eventually will the Labour Party. Decreasing Liberal and increasing National Party votes illustrate this development.

If the Liberal Party hopes to survive, we would recommend that it practice the decentralisation which it preaches and becomes in reality an alliance of separate, independent national parties in England, Scotland and Wales. This would certainly enhance its prospects in Scotland and Wales and would enable the English Party to concentrate its attention on more specifically English problems without having to cast nervous glances over the shoulder at the reaction of Scots and Welsh Liberal voters. The Scots and Welsh Liberal parties could then join the Liberal International.

This is a challenge to the Liberal Party which we would like to see it accept, although we do not expect it to do so.

## The National Parties of Scotland and Wales

In the meantime, the strongest and most self-conscious forces for decentralisation in the United Kingdom today are the Scottish and Welsh National Parties.

These are the spearheads of their respective national campaigns for the establishment of National Parliaments and Home Rule, which have, in both countries, already revived a conscious and purposeful sense of national community.

England, whose national culture and existence has not been subjected to comparable threats, has little awareness of national community and is, we believe, the poorer for it.

## Common Wealth

Here, Common Wealth, founded in 1942 and for some time active in Scotland as well as in England, is a smaller but active and articulate Party which now confines its political work within the borders of England, but has a working alliance with the two National Parties and strong fraternal links with decentralists in many other parts of the world.

If it can surmount the difficulties presented by the operation of the two-party system and the psychology that goes with it, Common Wealth can play a vital role in filling the political vacuum that exists in England today.

Not the least of its tasks is that of making the programmes of the two National Parties as acceptable to 'progressive' circles in England as Irish Home Rule was in the early part of the century. As Dr. McIntyre has said, Nationalism in the British Isles is an English rather than a Scottish, Welsh or Irish problem. Let England replace the conception of Empire with that of Commonwealth, within these islands as well as beyond the seas, and the problem is solved.

## PART II

### The United Kingdom Dissolved

OUR conception of decentralism applied to the British Isles would mean first the endowment of each Nationality with commonwealth status; and second, the decentralisation of much of the newly-acquired State power to a reformed local government and to occupational and cultural associations.

In each of our three Parties the State is regarded as being properly a Community of Communities, the guardian of the lesser associations within the Law.

#### False Roads

We are neither Devolutionists nor Federalists so far as the affairs of the United Kingdom are concerned.

Devolution seeks merely to relieve pressure of work at Westminster and Whitehall, while retaining full sovereignty in the hands of the United Kingdom Parliament over all the things that matter. Federalism, while formally sharing sovereignty, would in practice involve the continued domination of the Federation by one of its members, England, whose representatives would outvote those of Scotland and Wales on all important issues as they do under the present system.

#### The Alternative

The Scottish and Welsh National Parties therefore work for commonwealth status for their respective countries. Plaid Cymru has co-operated with those who work for a subordinate National Parliament within the United Kingdom, but the fulfilment of this more limited programme is regarded as a step towards the achievement of their aim of national freedom.

The official policy of Common Wealth with regard to Scotland and Wales is to concur with whatever

degree of separation the majority of the Scots or Welsh people desire—a policy that all democrats worthy of the name should support. Common Wealth therefore advocates plebiscites to ascertain what the majority really does want in both countries. In the meantime Common Wealth is sufficiently convinced by the arguments in favour of commonwealth status put forward by its Nationalist friends to work out in advance with them, in this book, some of the principles underlying the relationship that should exist between the several self-governing nations within the British Isles.

The next three chapters are contributed independently by spokesmen of the three Parties.

## CHAPTER 4

### A NEW WALES

**M**ODERN Welsh nationalism is based on two facts. Taken together they explain the enthusiasm we feel for the project of a Confraternity of the British Isles to replace the present monolithic State.

#### Wales is a Nation

The first is that Wales is a nation. It is not just a region, a rather quaint but backward part of a modern political unit called "Great Britain." Perhaps, if we spent our time hurling abuse at our neighbours across international conference tables, this fact would be more easily understood by those who do not know Wales. But in these small islands of ours there is no place for hostility and bickering of the kind that makes the news in your daily newspapers.

The kind of nationalism we need here, for the good of all of us, is a friendly nationalism; and we hope that the relations of England and the free Dominion of Wales will resemble those of Norway and Sweden or Holland and Belgium rather than, shall we say, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Provided each is willing to respect the other, there is no reason why this should not be so.

But we are a nation. That is a historical fact and no laws passed by the Westminster Parliament, nor resolutions passed at the annual Conferences of either the Conservative or Labour parties, can in any way alter it. Closing one's eyes to historical facts is never good politics, even though it may often suit the interests of the party which holds the whiphand in Britain at any particular moment.

We are, it is true, a small nation. Not by any means the smallest; one of the most prosperous nations in the world, New Zealand, has a population smaller than ours. But our civilisation happens to be one of the oldest in Europe and in spite of several centuries of submersion beneath English administration, our national consciousness remains very much alive.

English people do not often have to ask themselves what they mean by nationality; but we, who have not the glitter of military parades or even a government to boost our national prestige, have been face to face with the question for a long time. A nation is not a group of people having one language, one government and the same coloured skins. Very few of the nations of the world will fit in with that description, if you look at them closely enough. It is a natural, historical community which binds its members together in a spirit of loyalty and co-operation and which, over centuries of triumph and suffering, has learnt some of the secrets of how to live together for the good of all. It is a community in which past, present and future are of equal importance.

When we think of the national heritage which generation after generation of Welshmen, over a period of two thousand years, have carved out for us by their imagination, their courage and their hard work, we are not being sentimental about the past. We regard it as the only sure foundation on which we can build a road into the future. If we fail, our children unborn will be the sufferers: for them, twenty centuries of achievement will have crumbled into the dust. And you cannot compensate for that loss by giving the next generation television sets, football pools and hydrogen bombs.

The second fact upon which Welsh nationalism is based is that the freedom of the individual and the freedom of the nation go hand in hand. If a man's nation is not free, he cannot be free himself.

## Towards a Free Wales

A man (or woman—for we would mention that the young women of Wales are today very prominent in the national movement) is not just a name on the electoral register. Democracy means not only giving each citizen the right, once in five years, to put a cross on a piece of paper against the name of the candidate he thinks will do the least harm, but the right also to fight elections on issues which are important to him, and so to elect a government which will preserve and develop all that is best in his national heritage.

If you look at the Welsh election results from the end of the first world war onwards, you will notice a very marked trend; the rise of the Labour Party to a position in which it holds an overwhelming majority of the Welsh seats.

If Wales were a democratic country we should have had, during that period, a Labour administration. In actual fact, we have had one only on those rare occasions when the English people have felt like a change. If, as seems to be the case, the Labour Party is losing ground in Wales and will in due course follow the Liberals on the road out, the reason is quite simple. The people of Wales are coming to realise that voting Labour is the most uncertain way possible of electing a socialist government. Year after year they have merely elected an opposition; and that, you will agree, is not likely to satisfy a politically conscious people. Before you can have a socialist government you must have a government, which is just what Wales has not got.

Everyone knows that, in the interval between the two world wars, the living flesh of Wales was rotted through by poverty and unemployment. The situation was so unforgettable that socialist speakers have been making capital out of it ever since. We know that England suffered too; but apart from an occasional

black spot such as Jarrow we can unfortunately claim a melancholy superiority.

In loss of manpower (one fifth of our workers emigrated to provide cheap labour for English factories), in the ruin of our industry and damage to our national morale, we suffered the same sort of crippling blow which in other nations could only result from years of warfare and epidemic. For us at that time there could be no political or economic problems comparable to the urgent need to put our industry on a sound footing.

But the English government which had the backing of only a handful of voters in Wales, was occupied with the much more difficult task of preserving the privileges of wealth at home and of imperialism and reaction abroad. It may be that the Baldwin government, in pinning its faith in the maintenance of the prestige of English banking, commerce and industry acted in accordance with the wishes of the English people; for the English people, at least, elected them, and could throw them out if they were not satisfied.

But we in Wales were not satisfied and could do nothing. And when, in subsequent years, we found that the policy of Labour governments was nothing more than to direct the surplus of English industry into Wales and hope that American aid would keep the wheels turning, what could we do? Unemployment remained, and still remains, far higher in Wales than in England, and we know that our tender offshoots from English industry will curl up and die at the first blast of depression from abroad. Should we vote Conservative by way of protest? The very thought, to the average Welshman, is fantastic.

## The Burden of "BRITAIN"

But, it will be said, it is quite natural that a Conservative or Labour government should be occupied with problems other than Welsh ones, for Wales is



only a small part of Britain. So it is. That is precisely why we need our own government. Someone has to solve our problems and the only people in a position to do so are ourselves.

So long as power in Britain is centralised, every English government will give precedence to English needs: for under English law Wales is dependent on England economically and cannot know prosperity unless England herself is prosperous. We live perpetually with our heads a few inches above water level; when the tide of unemployment rises we are the first to be submerged.

In only too many of our towns and villages the most talented and ambitious of our young people emigrate automatically to England because we have so little to offer them. And this is not due to any lack of natural resources in our soil or of natural skill in our people. It is the result of a centralised economic system in which industry has been concentrated in England and the "outer fringe" has become little more than a colony from which raw materials—coal, electricity, food, water—may be obtained cheaply to keep the factories busy in London, Birmingham, Liverpool or Coventry.

It is for that reason alone that Wales has become economically dependent on England; and so long as this situation continues no government will see any solution to Welsh problems except that of increasing English prosperity and allowing the backwash to flow over the border.

This is not the way to bring prosperity to any country. To do that, you must tackle a country's problems on their merits and not as secondary issues. The real problem of Wales will be solved not in the Parliament or factories of England but in the ports, in the mining valleys, on the farms and the tourist centres of Wales. They are our real wealth.

That is why we are going to establish a Welsh government on our own soil; why Welsh nationalism, after contenting itself for many centuries with being a cultural force, striving to defend the Welsh language and literature, has converted itself in the mid-twentieth century into a political movement with the support of a large number of people who do not even speak the national language.

## The True Patriotism

But patriotism, as our fathers were warned at the time of the first World War, is not enough. To have an exaggerated idea of the importance of one's own country is as dangerous as to be cynical and rootless. Nationalism must not be a negative force, thriving on mistrust and hostility. It must be constructive.

The Welsh government will have responsibilities not only towards its own people but towards the world. Through it we, the people of Wales, will make our small but useful contribution towards the maintenance of world peace.

You will never hear from us the cry of "Wales for the Welsh." We have no intention of closing our frontiers against other peoples (we would be foolish if we did) or of limiting our citizenship to people of Welsh birth. We have already, within our borders, members of many races and they have the same rights here as our own people. For indeed they have become our own people. When the Welsh government is established it will be elected by all the citizens of Wales, whatever their language or racial origin; and the sole condition of citizenship will be that a man shall regard Wales as his homeland and accept such standards of loyalty towards the community and its elected government as are considered essential in every civilised country.

So we will welcome the chance of joining with England and Scotland and, we hope, with Ireland, in

a Confraternity of the British Isles. The day in which any nation, even the most powerful, could hope to stand alone, has long since passed. Since its early days the policy of Plaid Cymru has been to win for Wales the status of a Dominion within the British Commonwealth, which will enable us, while practising the fullest democratic self-government, to maintain close and cordial relations with those nations with which history has associated us. The ideal of a Confraternity, if it can be achieved, only takes us further along the path which we are in any case determined to follow, and it helps to establish our relations on a surer basis.

### The Structure of a Free Wales

In this chapter it is impossible, of course, to give details of the policy which a Welsh government will adopt. That policy will depend on circumstances prevailing at the time and will be decided not by any party in advance but by the government itself acting in accordance with the wishes of the Welsh people. All we can do here is to mention a few points which seem clear from the standpoint of Plaid Cymru (the Welsh Nationalist Party).

The head of the State will continue to be the Queen, who will hold, among her other titles, that of Queen of Wales; and since she will not normally be resident in Wales she will have a permanent representative to act on her behalf as she has at present in Canada or Australia. This representative will be chosen by her on the nomination of the Welsh government and will act on the advice of that government; thus in Wales, as in England, it will be parliament and not the Queen who will be responsible for the passing of laws.

The head of the government will be the Prime Minister, chosen by the majority party in the parliament or by a coalition of parties as the case may be. Elections will, of course, be fought in full freedom by candidates of all political colours.

### The Two Languages

In parliamentary debates every member will have the right to speak either Welsh or English as he chooses. Until the day when everyone understands both languages interpretation will be necessary; but this is not as complicated as it sounds. It is done efficiently at every international conference, and years of experience at the Annual Conference of Plaid Cymru have shown that it works perfectly smoothly in Wales too.

Perhaps at this point we should say a word in general about the language situation. The Dominion of Wales will have two languages, both equal in status. There would be nothing unusual in this, of course. Canada, Belgium and South Africa likewise have two official languages, while Switzerland has three (not to mention a fourth semi-official one!). Wales would automatically follow the example of these nations.

There can be no question of abandoning Welsh, for it is the normal speech of a large section of our people, and besides having a literature and culture of its own, is also for most of us—including many who cannot speak it—the living symbol of our nationality. It has been the most important channel down which the life and civilisation of our people has flowed from generation to generation and will continue to fulfil this vital function.

Nor can there be any question of abandoning English. For this also is the natural language of a large number of our people, who would be rightly indignant at the idea of being forced to use a language not their own. Without the support of both language groups no Welsh government could succeed in its task. Each Welshman will therefore be free to use whichever language he chooses and to have his children educated in that tongue.

It will not at first be possible to achieve an entirely bi-lingual civil service, since that would involve the

obvious injustice of excluding from government employment Welshmen not familiar with both languages. But every Welsh speaking child at school will learn, as a second language, English and every English speaking child will learn Welsh in the same way. Hence, in the second generation of free Welshmen, the linguistic difficulty will no longer exist; each citizen will be able to use his own language and be sure of being understood. The English holidaymaker, spending a week or a fortnight at one of our resorts, will not find himself hampered by a language barrier.

### Sources of Strength

In the establishment of democratic self-government in Wales we have two great advantages—both of which, oddly enough, have been considered insuperable obstacles by the pessimists.

First of all we are a small country. In England many millions of voters have never seen the men who rule them and know little about them except what the newspapers choose to tell them. They have never heard a single one of the debates in Parliament which raise or lower their wages, precipitate or check strikes or declare war. The country is divided into, on the one hand, a small class of influential people who are "in the know," and on the other, the masses who can make only a fleeting impression on their government by submitting themselves to one or other of the big parties.

In Wales, a small country, there would be a direct personal contact between the government and the governed and we would end the present ridiculous situation in which, for instance, one member of parliament is expected to represent the two counties of Brecon and Radnor and at the same time spend most of the year in London. For the first time in many years our members of Parliament would find them-

selves able to maintain contact with their electors and make their influence felt on the decisions of the government.

The second advantage is that internally our country is characterised by strong local and group loyalties. At the present this is a weakness because we have no central parliament in which our differences can be resolved. In a free self-governing nation, it is one of the major factors which makes impossible the tyranny of one class, party or faction over the country as a whole.

The only kind of internal difference of opinion that a democratic country need fear is a split between two powerful uncompromising and approximately equal groups. Supposing, for instance, in Wales the south were industrial, English speaking and socialist and the north were rural, Welsh speaking and non-socialist, the problem of achieving a stable government would be formidable.

Fortunately this is not the case. The linguistic division runs along the country lengthwise, the eastern counties being English speaking and those to the west being Welsh speaking. The Conservative minority is to be found in both the towns and the countryside; socialists are elected by the English speaking Rhondda valley no less than by the Welsh speaking Swansea valley; by English speaking rural Breconshire and Welsh speaking rural Anglesey. Support for the Welsh Nationalist cause is equally strong and growing in industrial and rural areas. The densely populated industrial south is English speaking in the east, Welsh speaking in the west, and the three counties where this population is concentrated (Monmouthshire, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire) contain large rural areas. There are also important though much smaller industrial areas in the north: the workers of Wreccsam speak English, those of Rhos nearby, Welsh. Everyone knows of the strong chapel loyalties which characterise Welsh life: but the fact that a man is, for example, a

Methodist does not mean that he supports any particular political party.

Our political life will therefore be flexible and variable, with no group strong enough to dominate our national life. Neither Conservative, Labour nor Nationalist, English-speaking nor Welsh-speaking, industrial nor rural groupings could command a clear enough majority to pursue a policy which would injure the interests of the rest of the country. But the solid loyalty given by Wales in the past, first to the Liberal Party and subsequently to the Labour Party, shows that the country will give faithful support to a strong and united government which it considers represents the national interest.

### Vision of a New Wales

Plaid Cymru, if elected to power, will recognise this characteristic of Welsh life and develop a system of administration which takes it into account. We have a long tradition of local democracy in our country. It seems to us both possible and desirable that the affairs of Caernarvon should be decided as far as possible in Caernarvon and those of Cardiff in Cardiff. It will be the task of the central government, above all, to co-ordinate all this local initiative and to ensure that national is not sacrificed to local interest. We would encourage our local councils not only to take the initiative in providing housing and public amenities but in building and running factories.

In all branches of industry under public control we would abandon the policy, pursued hitherto by Whitehall, in creating remote, centralised bureaucracies, responsible to no one but themselves; our aim would be, as far as possible, to put control into the hands of the men and women who know local conditions. In commerce and industry generally, of course, there would remain full scope for enterprise by individuals, co-operative groups or local authorities.

On the other hand, it will be equally important to develop and encourage national solidarity and this will be the general effect of our economic policy.

One of our weaknesses at present is that half our population is crowded into the three southern counties, while the remaining ten are seriously underpopulated and their economic potential neglected. This lack of balance will tend to right itself under self-government. For none of the large industrial areas of Wales wishes to see a great increase in population. The shortage of building sites in the industrial valleys together with the demand for better social amenities will make inevitable the building of new townships which, in course of time, will spread our people more evenly through the country.

One of our first steps in this direction will be the construction of a main road to link north and south Wales. Only when this is done will it be possible to set up new factories and townships in those parts of the country which are rapidly turning into unpopulated moorland. Without good communications a factory can neither bring in its raw materials nor attain its markets without exorbitant expense; nor can a farm be worked economically if it is cut off, by miles of undeveloped countryside, from the main centres of population. Simultaneously, a grid system must be constructed to take electricity, produced from Welsh coal, to all parts of our country. The distances involved are so short, judged by modern standards, that the provision of these services, together with water and gas, at the point where the development is to take place, will present no very formidable difficulties once we have the freedom to act.

### A Welsh Economy

The new industries will naturally bear a relationship to our present resources; we should have little use for the kind of factory which imports its raw



materials and sends most of its finished products abroad. Since we have large resources of coal and milk we will doubtless build up an important plastics industry. We are, at present, producers of almost all Britain's tins and we have excellent conditions in many parts of our country for market gardening and fruit growing; so there is little doubt that we will can our own produce. As important producers of steel we will doubtless undertake the manufacture of equipment for use in our mines and on our farms.

Such a programme of development will give a healthy impetus to every branch of our economic life. The introduction of new townships into sparsely populated areas will make possible the profitable exploitation of farms in the neighbourhood; it will bring new life to the commerce of already existing small towns and villages. In the construction of roads and buildings our stone and slate quarries, our brick and cement industries will play an essential part and there will be scope for enterprising new industries to produce household, office and industrial equipment. And a large proportion of the imports and exports of this growing community (for we have no intention of pursuing the impossible aim of self-sufficiency) would pass through and bring new life to our ports. The future of Newport, Cardiff and Swansea, no less than their past, is linked inseparably to our coal industry and whereas we have no intention of cutting off supplies to English industry, England would no longer be our sole purchaser. Once again Welsh coal will take its place on the world market.

But where, it will be asked, will the money come from?

### The Financial Future

For the everyday functions of government the money will derive from the same source as at present; that is to say, in general, from taxation. It will cost no more to govern ourselves than we at present pay

to Whitehall to govern us. The amount we pay at present, per head, is far in excess of that paid by the citizens of other free nations. In the Dominion of Wales every bank, every insurance company, every chain store, every branch factory of an English firm operating in our territory will pay its normal taxation not to Whitehall but to Cardiff. And this money, received by the Welsh government, will be poured back into Wales.

The amount a government receives in taxation depends, of course, on the prosperity of the nation. Our prosperity will be based on the fact that all our natural resources—for example, coal, steel, tins, chemicals, electricity, slate, milk, meat, etc.—will be at our disposal to use as we think best and that we shall have built up a wide range of secondary industries to give as wide a scope as possible to the skill of our people. We will trade with our neighbours in Britain, with the Commonwealth and with the world.

To meet the cost of capital development during the first few years, special measures will, of course, be necessary. The Welsh state would doubtless launch loans, internal and external, for this purpose. It would have no difficulty in finding subscribers, for the development would pay for itself within a comparatively short period of time and with an ample margin of profit. The amount required would be, by modern standards, small. Supposing we were in the position of Canada which, with a population of fourteen millions, has a territory larger than that of the United States; or New Zealand which, with a territory as large as Great Britain, has fewer inhabitants than we have in Wales—then the burden on the individual in any campaign would obviously be heavier. But our territory is extremely compact, rich in minerals, and almost all of it can be put to economic use. We do not intend that it shall be all urbanised; our mountains and lakes will retain their appeal for the tourist and for the men and women whose homes for many genera-

tions have been among them. The sheep on the hill slopes, the cattle and crops in the valleys will make a still greater contribution to our national life ; and the farmer will possess electricity and adequate comfort for his family and machinery to aid him in his constant struggle against the weather and the soil.

### The Basis of Friendship

There is nothing Utopian, nothing grandiose about such projects. Far more ambitious schemes have been carried through with success in the Tennessee Valley of the U.S.A. and in the State of Israel. Successful self-government in Wales will demand of our people both courage and hard work ; but our task will be greatly lightened if we can carry it out in the friendly and co-operative atmosphere of the proposed Confraternity of the British Isles.

## CHAPTER 5

### A NEW SCOTLAND

WHATEVER is wrong in Scotland, and there is a great deal that is wrong, it cannot be ascribed to the failure of the people of Scotland to remember that they are nation, one of the first to attain that status in Europe. But it can be ascribed to the fact that we have failed to act as a nation in comparatively recent times.

### The Historical Background

The two hundred and fifty years that Scotland has not enjoyed and exercised self-government are but a chapter in the story of a Nation and State which goes back in written history to the beginning of the Christian era.

Scotland was the first part of the British Isles to bring into one State under one government the whole territory which is still recognised as hers. We were a united country before the Norman Conquest of England, a kingdom which had grown by natural consolidation and union and which proved strong enough to maintain its independence against all aggressors, including medieval England.

Scotland is today part of the United Kingdom only because its Parliament chose to unite with that of England, undoubtedly in the belief (mistaken as events have shown) that it was a logical continuation of the process of consolidation which had created Scotland. We entered into a bargain which has not been kept although it was a bargain which was carefully set out in an International Treaty of Union but which England, using her numerical superiority in the resulting United Kingdom, has flagrantly flouted for her own advantage.

## Betrayal of the Union

Two examples of violations of the Treaty of Union may be given—merely as illustrations, since such violations have been, and are, numerous.

Within a few years of the solemn signing of the Treaty, the Westminster Parliament deliberately broke it by re-introducing patronage into the Church of Scotland. Out of this and subsequent State interference arose a series of violent controversies within the Church of Scotland, resulting in repeated secessions and culminating in the Disruption of 1843 which took more than half the people of Scotland out of the Established Church.

The damage to Scotland's spiritual well-being was grievous. Economically, she suffered considerably in that a whole new Church, complete with churches, manses, colleges and so forth, had to be created out of the sacrifice of the people who had been forced out of the Established Church by State interference. The State, through Parliament, eventually annulled the objectionable legislation and the various Churches have re-united—but how much was lost over those two hundred years?

Thus, from the beginning, the Westminster Parliament set aside that essential provision of the Treaty which brought to an end the separate existence, as States, of England and Scotland and which set up a new State, the United Kingdom of Great Britain. The English majority made no pretence of carrying out this provision—Parliament was the English Parliament, the Monarchy was the English Monarchy and so forth.

The Treaty also guaranteed to Scotland the continuation of her own system of law which differs in many fundamentals from that of England. It further stipulated that there should be no appeal from the Scottish Courts. Nevertheless, the right to appeal against decisions of the Scottish Supreme Court (the

Court of Session) to the House of Lords was soon established and in the Lords a great many rulings from Scotland have been overturned on principles quite unknown to Scottish law.

The latest violation of this clause, of which the last has not been heard, is the application of English law to Scottish military conscripts. So long as recruitment to the armed services was voluntary, any Scot who joined them and subjected himself to English law, did so of his own choice. But a different principle is involved when Scots are conscripted and then denied the protection of their own system of law.

Strange as it may seem to Englishmen, Scots prefer their own system of law, believing it to be fairer. Sooner or later, Scottish conscripts will refuse to recognise a court-martial convened under English law and the issue between the two systems of law will be unavoidable.

## The Right of Withdrawal

What the people of Scotland are re-asserting is that the right of self-government, which was voluntarily given up in that Treaty, can now be legitimately resumed since the Treaty has failed in its safeguards for Scottish interests and in its intention to create a new nation which would be neither England nor Scotland.

What the Treaty tried to do was, as we can now so clearly see, quite impossible. The Scottish and English peoples had developed too long on their own different lines for these differences to be resolved and a new common line of development adopted. They either had to continue as different nations and different States, each with its own great role to play, or one of them had to be absorbed into the other, giving up its history, its institutions, its national consciousness and national conscience and its own national interests.

There is reason to believe that this was realised by the English statesmen even when they were putting the Treaty of Union through their own Parliament. Certainly, from the day the Union was a legal entity, they proceeded on the basis that the United Kingdom was merely England grown greater, with all that was England continuing and all that was Scotland destroyed.

That is, of course, exactly the kind of thinking which numbers all the monarchs of the United Kingdom in the English sequence—the thinking which made the present Queen, Elizabeth II, although the first or English Elizabeth was an English Queen only. It is characteristic of English isolationism that the rulers of England could not understand why the Scots refused to have the insulting “II” used in Scotland, even if it took a pillar box bomb to make their protest effective.

Because that Treaty of Union has proved such a bad bargain, the Scottish people naturally want to rescind it. Because the treaty has been broken so flagrantly by England for the benefit of England and to Scotland's hurt, the Scottish people are satisfied that they have the right to recall the bargain, to rescind the Treaty and to have set up a fairer arrangement between Scotland and England.

## Self-Government must be the Primary Issue

There is just no question about the belief of the Scottish people that they are a nation. It has been asserted by Royal Commissions, committees of enquiry and even by the English political parties in Scotland. Scotland does not lack self-government because she does not believe she has the right to it but because the issue has never been put to the people as the sole issue.

The Scottish National Party is thus not working to persuade the people of Scotland that they should have self-government. The task is the much more difficult

one, because so much less clear-cut, of persuading the people of Scotland that self-government is more important than certain programmes for social justice or opposing these programmes in their present form. We have to persuade the Socialist and the Conservative that self-government first would make the solution of these problems easier and not as the English political parties in Scotland preach, that self-government would come easier and be more useful after these problems have been solved.

The question of self-government in Scotland is thus one of priority and only a matter otherwise for argument on the point of what kind of association is to be set up between the people of the British Isles. On that question only the Scottish National Party in Scotland has fully made up its mind and it is to the National Party that opinion in Scotland is moving, slowly so far but significantly.

We therefore quote in full the “Aim of the National Party” from the policy of the Party adopted in 1946 :

“The People of Scotland, as members of one of the oldest nations in Europe, are the inheritors, bearers and transmitters of a historic tradition of liberty. They have in common with the people of all other nations an inherent right to determine their own destiny in accordance with the principles of justice accepted by the social conscience of mankind.

The aim of the Scottish National Party is therefore Self-Government for Scotland—the restoration of Scottish National Sovereignty by the establishment of a democratic Scottish Government, whose authority shall be limited only by such agreements as will be freely entered into with other nations in order to further international co-operation and world peace.”

Out of that last paragraph can come a full measure of participation by a self-governing Scotland in a Confraternity of the British Isles or any other political arrangement which is for the manifest advantage of all

who will be taking part and which will recognise fully the national status of each of the British Nations.

Scotland, in short, will be prepared to go as far as the other nations in giving up some of her powers of national sovereignty for the common weal but she will not agree to any arrangement by which she is required to give up more than the other nations and accept a less sovereign status than any other nation in the confederacy.

Obviously, no such supra-national organisation will be allowed to interfere with full self-government in internal affairs. Judging from past history and present expressions of opinion, the limits on such international co-operation are likely to be drawn more strictly by England than by Scotland or Wales—or perhaps even by Ireland with all her past unhappy experience of any form of union within the British Isles.

### Methods of Achievement

Arising out of that aim and a realisation that the people who regain self-government for Scotland will be the people who will have to set the course for the initial period, the Scottish National Party has adopted a detailed policy which is printed separately and need not be examined in detail here. There are some points, however, affecting in various ways the other nations of the British Isles, which ought to be mentioned.

For example, the method by which the Scottish National Party intends to recover Scottish self-government :

" On the election to the British Parliament of a majority of Scottish National members from Scotland, a Scottish Constituent Assembly shall be summoned either a) in virtue of an Act of Parliament passed by agreement with the English Members of Parliament or b) failing such authority, by the Scottish National

members acting in terms of the authority conferred upon them by the Scottish electorate."

It is obvious that under b) the Scottish members would, failing agreement with the English members, withdraw to Edinburgh and proceed to set themselves up as the Government of Scotland. We cannot believe that this unilateral action would become necessary.

The policy further provides that the functions of the Crown shall be exercised in Scotland only through a Scottish Privy Council and that there will be no appeal beyond the Scottish Courts.

In considerable detail it deals with local government, freedom of religion, international relations, national planning, a major section on economic questions and finally a social section.

### The Struggle so Far

One very important factor in the present Scottish situation, which will facilitate the resumption of self-government, is the extent to which administration has been devolved under growing Nationalist pressure. The treaty of 1707 guaranteed the retention of many of the functions of government in Scotland but it was soon and progressively violated by the removal of many of these to England.

Within the succeeding century this process went a long way and the first major opposition did not come until the Disruption, previously mentioned, of 1843 reduced the State Church to an empty shell. This was a fierce and particularly effective revolt against direct meddling by the London government and it has not been altogether forgotten by that government. Following this great event there arose in Scotland the first of the modern Nationalist organisations, the Scottish Rights Society, whose major achievement was the institution of the office of Secretary of State for Scotland, then as one of the minor Ministers.



Over the last hundred years there has been a constant agitation in one form or another for Home Rule which has not brought self-government but certainly has forced an ever increasing measure of administrative devolution. Industrial nationalisation and other measures following the Second World War seemed to reverse this trend but ever since the original highly centralised corporations were set up, the pressure of Scottish opinion under Nationalist leadership has been forcing more and more devolution in their affairs too.

### The New 'Toom Tabard'

The situation can be symbolically illustrated by an incident from Scottish history. The unhappy king, John Balliol, who was promoted to the vacant Scottish throne by Edward I of England (called in as an umpire) accepted the throne with so many English restrictions on his power that he was promptly nicknamed "Toom Tabard" by the Scots. He was an empty show. He did not last as King of Scotland and neither did the English dominion over Scotland, which had been won by deceit and trickery.

Today we have another "Toom Tabard" in Scotland, a Secretary of State for Scotland with all the administrative machinery to run the country, but tamely taking orders from London. So much Scottish unrest has already gained us all the trappings of government but not the power to make the policies.

The new "Toom Tabard" will not last much longer, nor will the government of Scotland from London.

## CHAPTER 6

### A NEW ENGLAND

THE nature of constitutional changes in England and the impetus and occasion of these changes will depend largely upon the sort of settlement brought about in Scotland and Wales.

Federalism or devolution are unacceptable as permanent solutions of the Scottish and Welsh problems to the National Parties of those countries, although to many Home Rulers in all three countries they appear to be less drastic than commonwealth status. Yet closer examination shows that in many important respects the policy of commonwealth status for Scotland and Wales would present England with fewer difficulties than either devolution or federation.

We have noted that the main Nationalist opposition to a federal solution stems from the preponderant position of England in any conceivable scheme. These objections would remain even if England were obligingly prepared to be split into a number of provinces each with a subordinate legislature with powers equal to those of Scotland and Wales, thus losing its own national identity in the interests of preserving the unity of the United Kingdom Parliament. Under such a scheme, the Scots and Welsh would expect the representatives of the English provinces in the United Kingdom Parliament to 'gang up' against them on too many important issues for the federation to work harmoniously.

Purely English objections to a federal scheme are of a different sort. Leaving aside objections to a diminution of English Imperial power, the purely constitutional objections have been best expressed by Mr. Ronald McNeill, who presented a Memorandum on the subject to the Speaker's Conference on Devolution, held in 1920. Mr. McNeill then wrote that in a Federal Britain, England "altogether overtops the other two

combined in size, wealth and population to such an extent that her legislature established in the Metropolis might offer effective rivalry to the Imperial Parliament itself, in prestige and power."

It will immediately be perceived that commonwealth status resolves this English dilemma just as effectively as it resolves Scottish and Welsh difficulties by abolishing the Imperial Parliament itself.

## How Great a Change?

Assuming commonwealth status for Scotland and Wales, a number of possible courses of action would be open to the English Parliament. Those concerned with relations with Scotland and Wales are dealt with in part III. This chapter is concerned with the internal repercussions of the change.

These may not be great. The problem of governing an English population of 41,000,000 would be much the same as that of governing a United Kingdom population of 50,000,000. Parliament would continue to deal with the whole range of its present business, from questions of foreign and commonwealth relations to the control of finance and domestic policy. A few government departments would be truncated. The Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, of Education and of Health, the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor's Department would lose only their Welsh jurisdiction, for none of them administer Scottish Services at the present time. Ministries such as Fuel and Power or Labour and National Service would also lose their Scottish departments. The Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry would lose dockyards, aerodromes and famous regiments but the Foreign Office would be unaffected and the Commonwealth Relations Office would have to be extended to include Scottish and Welsh Divisions.

In terms of numbers, of administration, even of economics, these are not cataclysmic changes. Psychologically we believe they would be of tremendous importance. The Imperial power wielded by England over centuries would receive a mortal blow. The proof of this will be the bitter opposition of all who believe that imperialism, colonialism and playing a part in Power Politics is still a desirable policy for the people of the British Isles to follow. Only those who believe that the future for the English people lies along the road of freely accepted co-operation between friendly but independent peoples at home and abroad will welcome these developments and will seek to re-orientate English political life and institutions accordingly.

## Consequences

The restriction of the power of the London Parliament in these islands to England is likely to have three main inter-related effects. First, there will be a fresh impetus towards self-government among our remaining colonies in Asia and Africa. Second, such a voluntary dissolution would run counter to the present 'war-conscious' search for massive centralised power and give England a moral status she has not possessed since India was given her freedom. Thirdly, the joint repercussions of Scots and Welsh pioneering in industrial democracy and the weakening of imperialism and of military influence will undermine the system of managerialism under which the whole United Kingdom is governed today.

The institutions of managerialism in the United Kingdom have evolved in order that State power might be effectively concentrated in an age of large scale production, advanced technology and endemic world wars or threats of world wars. Many features even of the Welfare State can be explained more convincingly in the light of managerialist requirements than upon humanitarian grounds. It was only after the Generals

had been suitably shocked by the shameful state of national health revealed by the Army Medical Boards in 1914 that the needs of the war machine gave us the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1916. It was the need to buy off revolution after 1918 that led to the extension of Lloyd George's scheme for Unemployment Insurance during the post war years. After 1945 neither Labour nor Conservative governments could find money to raise substantially the pitiful Old Age Pension, but they compete with each other to raise Service rates of pay to encourage recruitment, and bend before the clamour for higher wages and salaries to keep pace with rising prices. Are these actions actuated by true regard for welfare or by the exigencies of power politics and party advantage?

### The New Face of England

Under the new conditions brought about by Confraternity, the impact of new ideas about politics will relax the grip of the two-party system. With Welsh and Scottish examples before them, workers in English industries will start talking about a share in running their own show. They may even get some definite help in this direction from the Co-operatives or from some of the Trade Unions. Local government Councils and their staffs will jointly demand more control over their own affairs. There will be a new upsurge of service in rejuvenated voluntary societies of all kinds. There will be more social activity, less individual crabbing and grouching; more of the spirit of adventure, less stuffiness. Paradoxically, there may even be a resurgence of English patriotism and national consciousness to take the place of the lost sense of Empire.

Under the pressure of these accumulative influences we would expect to see a fairer system of election at last introduced into Parliamentary contests and a considerable measure of devolution to new Provincial Assemblies based on cities such as Birmingham, Bristol, Plymouth, Norwich, Southampton, Manchester, New-

castle and York. Many schemes have been drawn up since the Speaker's Conference on Devolution postponed detailed examination of the problems involved until such time as the Parliaments of Scotland and Wales should be established. An attempt to set up a Regional Council for Greater London in 1927 foundered on the rock of opposition from local government authorities in the area. In 1940 the Government appointed Civil Defence Commissioners whose task was to direct the actions of both Civil Servants and local authorities in the Provinces in the event of a breakdown in central government caused by enemy invasion or intense air attack. It was widely advocated that they should be replaced by elected councils with permanent powers when the war ended, but the Coalition Government when it set up the Local Government Boundary Commission in 1945 pronounced firmly against regional devolution.

Regionalism has nevertheless made some progress by the back door of administrative decisions. Wartime dispersion caused many Ministries to set up Regional organisations which have been retained since 1945. Notable among these have been the G.P.O., the Board of Trade, the Ministries of Labour and National Service, Health, National Insurance, Transport and Civil Aviation, Supply, Works and Agriculture and Fisheries. The Civil Defence Department of the Home Office and the Housing Department of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government are similarly regionalised. The problem of co-ordination within each region became so acute that by 1946 a Regional Organisation Committee had been appointed by the Treasury and this recommended adherence by each regionalised Ministry to common boundaries for eleven 'standard' regions. The way in which all this happened without Parliamentary debate is typical of managerialist methods and is one more proof of who are the real masters.

The nationalised Coal, Gas and Electricity industries and the Hospital Services are also regionalised

—this time under the act of Nationalisation. Regional Advisory Councils have been set up to co-ordinate certain local government activities, such as the provision of further Education. Sometimes there is a connection between the local authorities and the regional offices of a Civil Service Department, as in the case of Housing, and between the local authorities and the body administering a nationalised service, such as Hospital Boards. The complexity of State control of economic life and the multiplicity of social services has forced regionalisation on to the country. But it is a bureaucratic system and there is a great need to put all these services under the general control of elected provincial councils or parliaments, which can bring about a more direct relationship between the electorate and the machinery of officialdom.

Provincial Assemblies would have as one of their functions the control of Planning, including Town and Country Planning, within the borders of their jurisdiction. But along with political decentralisation Common Wealth advocates the decentralisation of controls over industry to democratic institutions within industry itself. Some of these will need to be nation-wide, but many can be on a regional or local scale. We may like to see the coal mines run on the lines suggested by the Co-operative Party—that is, rented out by the National Coal Board (for England) to miners' Co-operatives. The latter would appoint and dismiss their own managements in the same way as is already done by the hundreds of co-operative co-partnerships in this country, France and Denmark. Thus bureaucracy would disappear from the English coal industry, the Coal Board, itself democratised, being responsible only for joint activities such as research and export policy, and incapable of detailed interference in the running of the mines themselves.

The introduction into industry of those democratic rights which we value in politics will not always be a simple matter but whatever the scale of production an

appropriate form of workers' participation in control can and must be found if political democracy itself is to survive.

## The Great Experiment

Devolution, both political and industrial, can be as far reaching and thorough as the inclination and experience of the English people lead them to desire. Numerous 'pilot' schemes of political devolution already exist, such as the Ulster Parliament or the Provincial Parliaments of Republican Italy. On a small scale the experience of the Isle of Man and of the Channel Islands can be very instructive, and may provide the model for the future administration of such highly individualistic areas of England as Cornwall. Once the English people have rejected the centralised, quasi-authoritarian managerialist State, they will find much to learn from the post-war industrial experience of Western Germany and France. At the present time the Labour Party, with its boasted internationalism, and those "good Europeans," the Conservatives, are both too insular and smug to make the necessary enquiries. The little band of Distributists in the Conservative ranks is more alive to the need for industrial democracy than either the Morrisonians or the Bevanists. But it would be foolish to expect anything from the party of the financiers and monopolists. The vacuum in English politics must be filled by a party and movement devoted from the outset to de-centralist ideals and thus allied to the Nationalist Parties and movements in Scotland and Wales.

## PART III

### Towards Confraternity

THE opponents of Scottish and Welsh nationalism invariably assume an air of virtuous internationalism—irrespective of their normal attitudes to foreigners and international affairs—and accuse the nationalists of indulging in 'parish pump' politics to the exclusion of the wider issues that affect mankind.

We took considerable pains in the first part of this work to rebut this accusation. Now that we have explained in some detail our internal programme, it is time to take up the challenge again and to show that we have given much thought to the wider implications of these programmes. In this part we shall therefore discuss first the effect on existing economic institutions of dissolving the United Kingdom, then the means which we consider appropriate to bring about adequate economic and other co-operation between the new States and finally, the effects of the dissolution on relations with foreign countries, with the rest of the Commonwealth and with the Colonial Empire.

## CHAPTER 7

### ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF DISSOLUTION

HOW can the nations of the British Isles dissolve into self-governing units without breaking up the economic integration which has made all parts of the United Kingdom so much more prosperous? That is the question which is usually trotted out by opponents of Home Rule, triumphantly assuming that it is unanswerable.

Like most questions of its kind it carries, within itself, part of the answer—a considerable part of what it asserts is not true. Economic integration of the British Isles is a very patchy affair and that portion of it which does exist has not resulted in making all parts of the United Kingdom more prosperous than they would otherwise have been. The prosperity of the United Kingdom has too often, in the past, tended to thin out as one moved from the complacent south-east of England towards the various sections of the perimeter. Even under present conditions of "full employment" this is markedly true. Nor has economic integration worked generally for the good of "fringe areas" where it has been absolute. For example, ownership of the calico printing industry was integrated under U.K. (or English) financial control and Scotland still remembers that its calico printing establishments were closed down one after another "for the benefit of Lancashire." Wales can quote similar experiences.

To go back to Scotland for another example of a slightly different kind—the jute industry (an almost entirely Scottish industry so far as the U.K. was concerned), was denied protection from low-wage Indian competition between the wars because, said the Government spokesmen, duties could not be placed on imported Indian jute goods lest India retaliate with heavier duties on Lancashire cotton exports. The policy



did not save Lancashire in the long run but it nearly ruined Dundee in the short run and the social cost to Scotland, between the wars, cannot be easily computed.

It is of interest to note that London has since had to accept (largely because of war experience) the case made by Dundee for protection and the jute industry is now protected by import controls.

Throughout Wales and Scotland a new English Branch factory is eyed askance and a community learns with fear that one of its factories has passed under English control. The memory of the depression years when similar branch or controlled factories were closed so that production could be concentrated in the English parent factories at a more profitable rate, is still fresh. The minorities in the United Kingdom have learnt that uncontrolled economics can be a very dreadful thing. There is no doubt that a very large part of the excessive damage done by the depression years to the social and economic fabrics of Scotland and Wales was due to "economic integration" with English concerns. The objection, of course, was not to the fact that they were English but to the fact that, the political government being in London, aid was not forthcoming as it would have been had south or middle England been the sufferer.

### The Notion of a "Customs Barrier"

But, say the objectors to Home Rule, you cannot have the British Isles cut up by customs barriers at every national border! They trotted out the same argument against Irish Home Rule. The customs barrier is there now and neither the world nor the British Isles has blown up as a consequence.

Customs barriers are becoming rather out of date nowadays although little can be done to reduce the very considerable one around the United Kingdom without stirring howls of protest from the same people

who think customs barriers within these isles would be impossible. In one case they desire protection against free competition from outside and in the other they deny protection against them, to anyone within.

The fact that Wales or Scotland or England might want to set up customs barriers against the rest is no good reason why they should not have self-government. It may be that they need protection against unfair competition from one another and if they do, no protestations are going to prevent them from asserting their right to provide it, even if it means a customs line. That can be a stronger argument for self-government than against it.

But customs barriers are no longer so popular except among the economic integrationists in England when it is a case of keeping out the too-efficient Americans or Germans or the too-cheap Japanese, Indians and (shortly) Hong-Kong-ese. In Europe a real effort is being made to get rid of them. Benelux has gone farthest on that road; the Six Nations in the coal and steel pact are likely to develop in the same way. We even have G.A.T.T. which tries to lower the existing barriers among all the main trading nations.

### Sane Trading

If the three nations now in the United Kingdom were to throw up customs barriers against one another it would, thus, not only be a strange departure from modern trends but it would be an almost conclusive evidence that something of the kind is badly needed. It may be so, but we still feel that customs barriers would not be the answer. There are so many ways in which the desired results can be more intelligently achieved.

An example is the motor car industry in England. It was saved by the hurried erection of tariff barriers but remained a relatively puny thing until Parliament approved the horsepower tax and gave an economic

advantage in the United Kingdom to the small engine car which was in no way suitable for the hills of Scotland or Wales. *They* would have been better off with the American type of car.

That for England, is an example of the more modern and intelligent way of giving protection to national interests and national industries. To impose customs duties brings retaliation and makes the cost of imported articles unreasonably high. If the country really needs the item this extra cost is uneconomic. If it is not needed, why let it in at all?

To protect and foster native industries nowadays and not to encourage them also to be inefficient (as tariffs do) subsidies can be given in various ways—a monopoly of Government orders, special tax rebates, interest-free loans of capital or outright gifts, massive assistance in research at Government expense, or legislation of their foreign competition out of business—this is not an exhaustive list.

But while there are important portions of the economic machine in all three countries which are even now as fiercely competitive with one another as with any foreign concerns, there is also much in which the three countries are complementary to one another. These things will become more obvious, after self-government, rather than less.

England will still find it cheapest and best to get her seed potatoes and seed oats from Scotland, her fresh mutton and beef from Wales and Scotland, anthracite and other coals from Wales, speciality steels and firebricks from Scotland, water for her towns from Wales and so on. Doubtless Wales and Scotland will still take their cars from England, a good share of their furniture, perhaps almost all their toys and most of their earthenware and a host of similar exchanges. What honest trader or manufacturer is going to lose by self-government? Will there not be, in fact, more

exchanges and more profit in trading since Wales and Scotland will not have to make as many unrequited exports to offset the hundreds of millions of pounds of taxes now drawn from them and spent outside their borders?

## A Just Financial Division

The problems of trading and manufacturing will not be nearly so difficult as those of financial co-operation. All three nations would doubtless like to see currencies that would circulate freely between the countries and be exchangeable at face value. This may well prove the most difficult thing to maintain for it is unlikely that a self-governing Wales and Scotland will tolerate a depreciation as rapid as London has permitted in the last ten years. To keep a uniform policy in this respect may be difficult, may prove to be impossible, but even that would not be fatal to interchanges and good relations—not even if Englishmen were to have a taste of the Scotsman's experience of having his money discounted in another part of the British Isles.

But nobody will have to change trains at the various borders or get passports and visas nor will there be any difficulty in apportioning shares of through railway fares or allowing free passage to planes!

There will be some difficulty if one country wants to surtax at £2,000 and the rest at £5,000 or if one has purchase tax and the others not—the rich may migrate if they can, they do to Ireland now, to some extent. But it need not be serious if individuals buy tax-free in Scotland and go over the Border with their spoils or vice versa if we are prepared to work out a sensible way of preventing the privilege becoming a racket. In a great many things it will be possible and advantageous to all, to have common policies, even if, at times, one national unit may be sacrificing a little of its national interest.

## A Just Financial Priority

In one field of national policy there is likely to be a sharp cleavage. The parts of the United Kingdom which have suffered most from London's recurrent restrictions on capital investment have been the minority countries. Both Wales and Scotland under self-government will require a far different and relatively far larger programme of capital creation and investment.

There is in Scotland, for example, a problem of housing which is not within sight of solution and for many years a large part of the capital created by the Scottish people will have to go into new houses. Scotland has also problems of communications—of roads, bridges, ports and airways—which are relatively much bigger than those of England. There is the comparatively huge Highland area, a problem of re-development and re-settlement which is primarily a capital investment question and which will demand high priority.

Both Scotland and Wales have one great asset as compared to England—their foreign exchange problem is simpler. This is because they are to a much greater extent self-supporting in food—not in all foods of course, but on balance. They are relatively richer in many industrial raw materials as well. The attitude of both countries towards the question of export priority will not be so desperate as England's tends to be and the imports which they will encourage or discourage will not be the same.

It is to be expected also that they may have very different attitudes to such matters as "defence" expenditure, especially when these are being incurred in far distant parts of the world where Scottish and Welsh interests are not greatly involved. If the choice is between neglecting investment in the Highlands or intimating to the United Nations that Scotland cannot maintain so many troops in other countries in time of peace, it is more than likely that the Highlands will get the money they need.

In these matters, as in all similar matters, if one of the nations decides that its national interest requires special action, the others must admit its rights and accept any inconvenience that may result.

## The National Debt

The division of the National Debt will be one of many related problems. The obvious arrangement would be to set up a joint commission, freeze the Debt at its then level and arrange to service it by national contributions levied in accordance with ability to pay at the time of dissolution. The future Debt policy of each of the three nations will then be determined to suit its own ideas and purposes.

Alternatively, the matter could be settled by making each nation responsible for that portion of the National Debt which is owned by residents within its borders, with arrangements to adjust any unreasonable excess that falls on one nation or another. Coupled with this question of apportioning the National Debt will be the allied one of apportioning the common wealth. Obviously there are assets in all three countries which represent part of the National Debt. If, as is obviously true, England must fall heir to an overwhelming part of the national assets in the form of Government buildings, museums, art galleries, palaces, air and naval establishments, army camps and barracks, ordnance depots and even the nationalised industries within her borders—a much larger part than her entitlement on a population basis—then the responsibility for the National Debt must be accordingly adjusted.

There will also be many external assets and some external debts to be adjusted along the same lines. Some of these things may be too complicated to be dissected and assigned in detail and some will not be sufficiently important to be worth the trouble. The lawyers, bureaucrats, economists and others may enjoy themselves for a long time straightening things out—

or, more probably, merely listing them and evaluating them so that a meeting "at the summit" can apply Alexandrian treatment to the Gordian knot.

### Economic Friendship

In short, no one can forecast what will be the exact lines along which economic relations will travel after the dissolution of the Union. There can, however, be no difficulty which mutual goodwill cannot resolve. Tolerance, willingness to give and take, appreciation of the other country's point of view and needs—these are the lubricants of good relations and they will have their chance to operate under the new conditions of self-government in a way that has been denied to them under incorporation and the domination which has inevitably resulted from England's overwhelming advantage in numbers.

We can—and should be—far better friends and far better customers for one another with self-government all round than we are today, when the minorities must fight tooth and nail for even a modicum of fair play and fair consideration.

## CHAPTER 8

### Co-operation within the Confraternity

IT is often said that all federations and con-federations in history have resulted from the drawing together of hitherto separate national communities for mutual defence and other common purposes. The federalisation of existing unitary States, much less the dissolution of such a State into smaller sovereign units, is said to be not only unknown but against the trends of political evolution, which is always towards the integration of units within the greater whole—from family to tribe, from tribe to city or nation-State and thence through regional federations to the World State.

### The Experience of the Past

This commonly held theory falls to pieces when tested against historical fact. There are numerous examples of unitary States becoming federations, for instance, nearly all the Latin American republics of any size, beginning with Brazil. In 1949 what had been Hitler's unitary Reich became the Federal German Republic—under Allied pressure it is true but three years earlier the unitary Kingdom of Italy was replaced, free from external pressure, by a Republic with provincial Parliaments, enjoying considerable power, devolved from the central legislature. There are also cases of unitary or federal states dissolving completely, but co-existing harmoniously thereafter, for instance, the breaking away of Belgium from Holland between 1830 and 1839 or the dissolution of the Scandinavian Union of Calmar in 1523, when Sweden asserted her independence of Denmark or the much more recent separation of Norway from Sweden in 1905 after ninety years of union. In each of these cases the union had been imposed in the first place by conquest or dynastic alliance and in defiance of the national

feelings of the peoples concerned. Dissolution of the union, whether brought about by force or by consent has, in both Scandinavia and the Netherlands, been followed by a growing desire for free co-operation. By way of contrast, when dissolution finally overtook the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918, the bitterness felt by hitherto subordinate nationalities towards their former masters prevented political and economic co-operation to the great detriment of all.

### Sureties of the Future

If the United Kingdom can be amicably resolved into the three nations of which it is an artifact, then the future relations of the three peoples will, we believe, be marked by a friendliness of spirit and a richness of co-operation of far greater benefit to all than the present strained union.

A degree of Scottish and Welsh co-operation with England and with each other would, in any case, result directly from membership of the Commonwealth. A common citizenship, freedom of movement across borders and regular exchange of views at Conferences of Commonwealth Prime Ministers are important aspects of such membership. Nevertheless, all will agree that geographical proximity alone demands a greater degree of voluntary co-operation of national activities within the British Isles than is necessary or possible for the Commonwealth as a whole. This is not to overlook the vital distinction between co-ordination as achieved by the centralised direction of the organs of a federal government and co-ordination which is derived through agreements freely arrived at by sovereign States, and as freely resolved. When outlining the forms that voluntary co-operation is likely to take, full account must be taken of the possibility that the foreign policy and defence arrangements of Scotland and Wales may differ considerably from those pursued by even a diminished and chastened England. Indeed,

the fear that England will continue a policy of colonialism and will try to play a leading role in power politics is one of the reasons for the Nationalist Parties' refusal to entertain a federal solution.

### Problems and Solutions

Diversity in foreign and defence policies would inevitably affect economic relations but there are certain patterns of economic co-operation which could take place without, in any way, compromising the freedom of the nationalities. Most obvious of these is transport co-ordination. Road, rail and air communications between England on the one hand and Scotland and Wales on the other should not be, in any way, interrupted under the new regimes and with the example given us by Ireland, recently, where the two governments have jointly nationalised the rail link between Dublin and Belfast, there is no reason to expect interruption.

More difficult problems will be met when attempts are made to keep taxation and tariff policies in step. Yet this is important if 'hot' capital is to be prevented from speculative flights from one country to another and if smuggling is to be prevented without hosts of customs officials and armed frontier guards along each border. It would also be of great advantage to integrate capital investment and economic planning programmes to avoid unnecessary duplication in the building of expensive hydro-electric stations or competition for scarce materials or skilled labour and to promote full employment in each country. The great cities of the English Midlands will still want Welsh water and Welsh-generated electricity. Normal trading relations will bring up the question of balance of payments and of Scottish and Welsh membership of the Sterling area.

To deal with these and many closely related economic problems there might be a permanent Stand-



ing Committee of the English, Scottish and Welsh Ministers concerned, equipped with a permanent Secretariat. With a common or interchangeable currency this machinery will take us far along the road towards effective economic co-operation, while still leaving each nation free to develop its own economy to meet its own special needs. The device of a Standing Committee of Ministers with a permanent Secretariat could be adapted to the needs of foreign policy and defence in the event of a similar outlook becoming apparent on the part of the three countries.

Problems arising out of dissolution must be regarded in the light of the fact that where a common need is genuinely felt, negotiation between equals will discover the means to its achievement, agreeable to all parties. Each nation can give unhindered attention to its real needs—rural electrification in Wales and Scotland, the Forth Bridge project in Scotland, provincial resurgence in England and many others. From this basis of responsibility and freedom, imaginative co-operation springs as a natural and fruitful result.

### The Social Perspective

In quite another direction Scottish and Welsh Parliaments can promote co-operation on specific projects where none exists today. If we include cultural exchanges and such projects as jointly sponsored research in Celtic archeology and languages, the field becomes indeed extensive. In addition we may hope that all these activities may help to break down the isolation of Ireland and eventually to bring about reconciliation between North and South and between England and the Republic.

Non-participation in English colonialism and imperialist power politics is one aim of Scottish and Welsh nationalism: the protection of the economic wellbeing of the two peoples is another; an even more enduring

reason for self-government is the necessity to protect the Scottish and Welsh national societies from the eroding influences of English and American cultures as propagated by the B.B.C. and Hollywood respectively. Yet once national Parliaments have the power to safeguard the languages and customs of their peoples against submergence in the tides of anglicisation, the social field can be the most important of all from the point of view of co-operation between the nationalities. In hundreds of instances voluntary bodies of every type will continue to be organised for the British Isles as a whole. These will include professional institutions, cultural and scientific societies, organisations for promoting sports and hobbies, churches and religious societies and charitable organisations. Students of one nationality will continue to be enrolled in Universities maintained by the others. Trade Unions and Trade Associations may, indeed, re-organise along national lines but here we can imagine that the closest ties consistent with autonomy will be maintained.

In all these cases the association of English, Scots and Welsh will be based on common interests, proximity and on habit. It will be the most valuable type of association because freely undertaken by individuals and social groups in the three countries. It is largely there already: its continuance need, in no way, harm the flowering of national cultural consciousness made possible by self-government: on the contrary, the richer and more varied the social interchange between the nationalities, the greater our mutual respect can be and the surer the prospect for a true Confraternity.

## CHAPTER 9

### The External Relations of the Confraternity

**I**MPORTANT as may be the effects of the creation of the Confraternity upon those nations forming part of it, its influence on world affairs may be no less significant. For there is no field in which the restoration or achievement of democratic control is more essential than that of the external relations of the State. The allocation of a gigantic part of the national income to military preparation, the existence of peacetime conscription, the threat of atomic weapons—these are factors which profoundly affect our domestic life. Yet the decisions on international affairs which control their impact on our daily lives lie almost outside the range of democratic machinery. We may put our trust in one or other of the main political parties; we know, however, that it will pursue a policy not radically different from that of the opposition. Our votes these days do not reshape the world. Indeed, it is ironical that, at a time when our human and economic wealth is poured out with breathtaking prodigality to maintain our status as a Great Power, we should find ourselves carried along more or less helplessly on the tide of world events and assured of being dragged into any conflict that may break out.

We do not claim to put forward any easy way of relaxing world tension. Confraternity will not make life easy, but it will restore responsibility by making the State the effective instrument of the peoples' will. It will not in itself solve problems, but it will provide machinery which will greatly aid us in our efforts to do so. And it may be that the greatest contribution which the Confraternity will make to world peace and stability will be the result of what critics will doubtless consider its weaknesses.

The condition of survival is adaptation to changed conditions and if we do not wish to ruin ourselves in

the pursuit of chimeras we must recognise that the pre-1914 world has gone for ever. In the modern world we must learn to live with our neighbours since we can no longer dominate them. This is not a recognition of defeat or failure but a demonstration of our ability to triumph over circumstances which would crush less resilient peoples. Our future is that of a free democracy among free democracies, not of a ruined imperialism seeking to maintain a facade of power in an alien world.

### Confraternity in a World Framework

So far as the English people are concerned we think it will not be a bad thing for them to discover that they have two neighbours within the borders of their Own United Kingdom. If few Englishmen have at present any real understanding of the domestic implications of Scottish and Welsh nationalism, even fewer understand that it has an international aspect. Both Scotland and Wales, being nations in every sense, though not at present political States, are conscious of their own historical traditions and have evolved their own political mentality. So different is this mentality from that which has normally prevailed in governmental circles that on very frequent occasions the actions of the English State in international affairs have been directly contrary to the wishes of the Scots and Welsh peoples. In Wales, for instance, public opinion has been consistently anti-colonial and uninterested in military prestige. Between the two wars it may be doubted whether the government's policy of mistrust of the League of Nations and collective security, the refusal of self-government to India and "non-intervention" in the Spanish Civil War, found any serious support at all in Scotland or Wales.

Although eminent Scots and Welshmen have from time to time made their mark on the course of world events they do not do so on behalf of their own people, nor have they been free to pursue the policy their

compatriots would have wished. The voice of Wales and Scotland is unheard in the Councils of the world. They are not permitted even to decide what contribution their manpower and industrial resources shall make in war or peace, or whether or not a resort to arms is justified in given circumstances. These life and death decisions are made for them by others.

## The Right of Responsibility

The Welsh and Scots have a right to their place as citizens of the world. Let no one delude himself that this nationalism is a desire to escape into isolation, to close one's eyes to the realities of the modern world. Rather is it the reverse, a feeling of indignation that the parochialism of English State policy should have created a barrier between them and the world. "It is as bitter," writes the eminent Scottish Nationalist Dr. Archie Lamont, "to lose the power to fulfil our obligations as to be deprived of our privileges. We have lost not only the power to serve ourselves, but the opportunity to serve the world." Mr. Saunders Lewis, perhaps the best known of the founders of modern Welsh nationalism, held up Thomas Masaryk as a pattern to his followers in that he taught the Czechs that they were citizens both of a country and of the world. And it is often forgotten that when three Welsh Nationalists burnt an Air Ministry bombing school in 1936 they did so not only to defend an age old culture against desecration by English officialdom but also in protest at a Government which had forcibly involved the Welsh nation in a foreign policy which it had uncompromisingly condemned.

Scottish and Welsh Nationalists will, therefore, not be content with any arrangement which leaves responsibility for external policy in the hands of a government centred in London. The prospect of a strong and unified Britain replaced by a weak Scotland and Wales and a consequently vulnerable England may seem an alarm-

ing one, as indeed it would be were the three nations divided by centuries of bitter hostility and blind refusal to co-operate. But fortunately neither Welsh nor Scottish Nationalism has ever been basically negative in its attitude towards England and the necessity for co-operation is fully appreciated. The demand made by the two countries for commonwealth status rather than independence should not be looked upon as a compromise, a concession to English self-esteem. It springs from an understanding that the survival of all concerned is linked to the success of that unique political experiment, the Commonwealth, in which nations of unequal military and economic strength work freely together as political equals.

Of course, however close co-operation may be, there remains the possibility that the nations of the Confraternity may choose to follow differing foreign policies. So long as these were not directly in conflict with one another, no harm need result. In some respects the situation would be beneficial, for there already exist important differences between the foreign policies of the nations of the Commonwealth, the ultimate survival of which depends to a large extent upon the willingness of all members to recognise that this must be so. India's interests are not those of Canada nor are her problems and it would be absurd to expect two nations differing in history, religion, race, economy and geographical situation to see eye to eye on all major problems. Co-operation in the British Isles of three nations differing in history, culture and political outlook would compel the statesmen of all three to keep a balanced view of the necessity for tolerance and understanding. We would have no opportunity of escaping the plain fact that strong-handed paternalism is no longer a practical policy.

The existence of three political nations in the British Isles would, it is true, make it difficult for any one of them to pursue a policy of aggression or imperialism simply because it is unlikely that the other

two would connive. The danger of any such policy, which would sow discord between the members of the Confraternity, should be sufficiently obvious to check rashness of this kind. This fact in itself would, we believe, encourage the evolution of a more democratic foreign policy, a policy less concerned with the maintenance of prestige and privilege and more with the needs of the common people.

## The Defence of our Three Nations

In the field of defence a closer understanding would be necessary than normally exists between members of the Commonwealth but since the interests of our three countries are, on this question, almost identical, such an understanding would not be difficult to arrive at. If the necessity to resist an invader should arise, the Confraternity would be stronger, not weaker, than the present unitary State. It will be recalled that when invasion seemed imminent in the Second World War, the authorities immediately took steps to decentralise administration; regional organisations were ready to take over in the event of the lifelines of the State, radiating as they all do from Whitehall, being cut by enemy action. What is proposed in the Confraternity is no less than the perpetuation for peaceful ends of this decentralisation. Likewise in the field of industry, the decentralisation proposed in the Confraternity would strengthen the nations of Britain in the event of war. The existence in a safely sheltered homeland of huge industrial cities and a wealthy centralised State was a great asset in the days when wars could be waged by trained armies on foreign territories. But today we are likely to fight on our own beaches in the event of war, in the factory or the pit three hundred yards from the front door, and in the ruins of our own houses. The great weakness of Britain today from the military point of view, as compared with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. or indeed

nations such as Australia or Canada, is that her industries and population, being crowded into a few overgrown urban agglomerations are extremely vulnerable to air attack. It will, as we have seen, be part of the policy of the Scottish and Welsh governments to build up industry and communications in those areas of their territory which, neglected under the present administration, are now only wilderness. Such development, besides increasing the wealth of the British Isles as a whole, would make these islands less vulnerable, for with responsibility shared by three governments, with industry widely spread and under local control, the heavy bombing or occupation even, of such a key centre as London would not be so disastrous as would at present be the case.

It must not, of course, be supposed that we claim that with decentralisation Britain, or indeed Europe or the world, could survive another war. Our purpose is solely to make it clear that, whatever policy the peoples of Britain may decide to follow in the matter of war and peace, they would as a Confraternity present no more tempting a prospect of weakness to a potential invader than they do at present.

## Commonwealth Relations

For the better fulfilment of certain Commonwealth responsibilities a specially close relationship would probably evolve between the nations of Britain. They are all, of course, "mother countries," but it is at least unlikely that either Wales or Scotland would wish to be associated with England in any kind of Colonialism. It may be that England may favour the setting up of a Commonwealth trust to administer colonial territories and in cases where the interests of particular members of the Commonwealth are involved, special agreement may be negotiated to meet the circumstances. Since neither Scotland nor Wales will wish to bear the cost of maintaining ambassadors or consuls

in all parts of the world, it may well be thought desirable to establish either joint Commonwealth Embassies or Confraternity Embassies in places where it is felt that such an arrangement would efficiently serve the interests of the nations concerned. Such an arrangement, of course, would not prejudice the right of any member of the Confraternity to maintain its own Ambassador in any country it wishes.

If we have emphasised here the part which a Confraternity of the British Isles might play in and through the existing Commonwealth this does not mean that their external relations would be in any way limited to this community. We have already seen that Wales and Scotland have particularly strong cultural and sentimental ties with Ireland, Brittany and Scandinavia and these ties might in time call forth political recognition. England's long tradition of international politics need not be abandoned but rather developed and the orientation of her policy abroad would still inevitably be guided by her past history and her economic needs. Also it is impossible to say what developments the future may bring in the form of European or World Federation nor what would be the reaction of the people of these islands to them. The freedom with which members of the Commonwealth have already developed their relationships with other nations and groups demonstrates that commonwealth status does not hamper the growth of other international links.

## The Community of Nations

The proposals here set out are in no way a Utopian dream, they are a forward-looking recognition of certain changes which are taking place in the modern world. If we insist on ignoring these changes we shall exhaust ourselves maintaining the cumbersome fabric of a power State and war machine over which we have no control. But by establishing democratic self-

government here in the British Isles, by encouraging the development and prosperity of those nations in our islands whose growth has been stunted by constitutional fetters, we can stand in the conferences of the world as a united camp, basing our policy firmly, without hypocrisy, on principles of universal application—the peaceful reconciliation of national freedom and social justice within the greater framework of the community of nations.



## APPENDIX

### Some Comparative Facts about the Wealth and Welfare of ENGLAND, WALES and SCOTLAND

and of certain other Nations whose right to national independence is not usually questioned

| Country and<br>Population | Annual Production<br>in<br>Thousands of Tons<br>Coal | Consumption of<br>Mechanical Energy<br>per Head (Measured<br>in equivalents of<br>metric tons of coal) | Inhabitants<br>per<br>Physician | Infant<br>Mortality<br>per 1,000<br>Births |
|---------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|--|
| ENGLAND                   | 163,720  | 10,512   | 1,200                           | 27.5                                       |
| WALES                     | 25,960   | 4,774  |                                 |  |
| SCOTLAND                  | 22,820   | 2,323  | 1,100                           |  |
| NEW ZEALAND               | 677  | Nil  | 700                             | 20.0                                       |
| NORWAY                    | 462  | 85   | 940                             | 23.7                                       |
| SWITZERLAND               | Nil  | Nil  | 1,000                           | 29.8                                       |
| FRANCE                    | 51,744   | 9,842  | 1,100                           | 37.8                                       |

It is no longer possible in the face of these figures to dismiss Scotland and Wales as "poor" countries economically dependent on England, although it can be said that long inclusion in the free trade area of the United Kingdom has contorted their economies in such a way as to give them an undue share of the basic industries, and an insufficient share of secondary industries. Self-government is necessary if this over-specialisation is to be corrected.

The two columns of health statistics show that even without the economic basis provided by heavy industry, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland, in important aspects of the well-being of their people, have equalled or surpassed the achievements of the United Kingdom as at present constituted. The supposed advantages of economic integration are not much in evidence here. Self-government pays a small nation.

These figures all relate to 1953, and are taken from the Annual Abstract of Statistics for the United Kingdom (1955), the Digest of Welsh Statistics (1954) or from publications of the U.N. Department of Information.

The countries chosen for comparison are all within the "western" family, and therefore enjoy comparable standards of living, well above the world average.

Scotland and Wales each have larger populations than New Zealand; Scotland has a larger population than either Norway or Switzerland. Scotland and Wales are enormously better equipped in the basic industries of coal-mining and steel production than are New Zealand or Switzerland. Indeed, in output per head of population Scotland and Wales each completely outclass both England and France as producers of coal and steel.