

The Principles of Nationalism



The Struggle for Human Dignity in Wales.

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One Shilling

The substance of the following pamphlet was first given in the form of two addresses to the Summer School of Plaid Cymru. The first of these was delivered at Portmadoc in August 1955 and the second at Llangefni in August 1959.

"Nationalism," like romantic love, is greatly over-rated and frequently misunderstood. For those whose blood still runs hot it is the elixir of life which sanctifies all youthful indiscretions. For those whose deeds of heroism are confined to maintaining things as they are it is the beast from the abyss.

Like the beast from the abyss it is as elusive in its properties as it is rich in the variety of its manifestations. Not the least fascinating thing about "nationalism" is the great variety of types that suffer from it. German Fascists, Algerian Communists, Spanish Falangists, Afrikaner farmers, Greek-Cypriot Unionists, Kenyan Teddy-boys and Plaid Cymru have all been labelled "nationalists" from time to time. And yet, wonderful to relate, many of the people who can recognize a "nationalist" at a hundred paces with their eyes closed never recognize the same symptoms when they themselves suffer from them. Examples of such are English Tories and Welsh Socialists.

ENGLISH NATIONALISM

English nationalism is a most powerful sentiment—almost as powerful as Russian nationalism. But what precisely is English nationalism? Is it represented by such famous words as:—

*"This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happy lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."?*

Or is it the sentiment expressed in such words as these?

"The Saxons have the two qualities I value most in this world—two qualities that explain why they have inherited the earth; kindness and dependability . . . two qualities the Celts never had."

Is English nationalism best expressed by Shakespeare's Richard II or by Houston Stewart Chamberlain? Or does one express a U-type nationalism and the other a non-U-type? Whether English "nationalism" takes one form or many it is beyond controversy that Englishmen react nationalistically just as they speak prose—without knowing it. An amusing example occurred recently at Welshpool. The Rt. Hon. Henry Brooke in a speech there complained bitterly of the rudeness of Welsh Nationalists. At least, said Mr. Brooke, they could be gentlemen even though they conceived themselves to be defending their heritage. Yet, sixteen years or so ago, Mr. Brooke and his fellow-countrymen were defending their English heritage. In the process they reduced cities such as Hamburg to ruins and in a way that would need a much stronger adjective than 'rude' to describe it. But then, one of the vagaries of our subject is that so many people round about us firmly believe that Wogs, Jugs and Niggers may well be riddled with nationalism—but Mr. Henry Brooke never!

THE WELSH ENGLISH NATIONALIST

Some pernicious forms of English nationalism are easily cultivated in other countries. One of the most curious is the sub-species grown in Wales. Its characteristics are well-known. The Welsh-grown English nationalist is a fervent internationalist; he always speaks of "Britain"—an entity otherwise unknown except perhaps to Cymmrodorion Welshmen and Government publicity departments. He is enthusiastic about the Red Dragon, Welsh postage-stamps, the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales, America and Royalty. He may appear on a Conservative, a Labour or a Liberal political platform since the difference between those three parties no longer has any relevance for Wales and all three of them in slightly different ways serve as the outposts of English nationalism in Wales. And so it is that many Welshmen can reproduce with uncanny precision all the reactions of a Harrow-trained English nationalist.

MUCH-ABUSED WORD

These observations make our task a little easier. Once it is realised that there is such a thing as English nationalism, we can discuss Welsh Nationalism with less heat and more clarity. At least, we can begin by understanding that it is not a disease (such as Druidism or penillion singing) which breaks out only amongst atavistic Celts. Englishmen, Russians and American are not immune. But they take it for granted. Their national existence is not seriously threatened. That is not so in Wales. Normally, I am not conscious of my toes until someone treads upon them; but once that happens I am hardly conscious of anything else. So with nationality. It becomes an object of serious thought once it is threatened. We talk much of our nationality precisely because it is in danger. We can hardly expect Englishmen to sympathise deeply and on a large scale with our predicament for it is not a stinging reality to them. And yet, there are some great and fundamental principles involved in our struggle which should interest all Englishmen as well as men of other nations.

Another point that has already become clear is the wide variety of meanings given to the word 'nationalism' in the English language. Only too frequently in recent years it has become a term of abuse. It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to embark upon a study of the way in which the word is used. I am concerned not with words but with things, and in this case, the nationalism which Plaid Cymru (the Welsh Party) espouses and expounds. Therefore, I shall not attempt to explain what 'nationalism' means in Togoland or India nor will I ask whether the policy of the National-Socialist Party of Hitler's Germany or of the South African Nationalist Party have any relation with nationalism as we understand it. An exposition of the principles underlying our policy and strategy will provide the intelligent reader with the materials with which he can draw his own conclusions.

THE HUMAN PERSON

Our fundamental principle can be put in one sentence.

We are supremely concerned with the fate of the human person in Wales.

It is this central concern that gives passion to our struggle and it is this that links us with a thousand other movements throughout the world.

All over our globe civilization and barbarism are struggling over the soul of men and it is our humble belief that we, too, are locked in that struggle on the Welsh section of the front. Politics is not concerned with all facets of the battle. Religion is fighting the most bitter and crucial part of the battle. But the same struggle is going on as well in the realms of literature and drama, painting and architecture, in the cinema, on radio and T.V. Our interest in these is, of necessity, indirect, but none the less real for that. For a political party that has no interest in these subjects—the subjects that give greatness and dignity to human life—is itself a part of the terrible barbarism that threatens to engulf us. Subjects such as these must be of profound interest to the politician precisely because they can enrich the spiritual life of human beings.

The human person is gradually being eroded of some of its most valuable characteristics in present-day Wales. Let it be said at once that this process is going on amongst many other nations. It is not out contention that anything unique is happening in Wales. Much of what we say of Wales is applicable, to Scotland or Brittany or Friesland—and for that matter, to England and France. What we argue is that Wales must study the characteristics of the disease as it appears amongst us and wake up to the truth that we must provide our own remedy and not suppose that anyone else will provide it for us. Indeed, one of the paradoxes of this disease is that the sick should insist on healing themselves.

TECHNIQUES OF DEGRADATION

Following some suggestions made by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel, we may notice how the techniques of degradation are employed in contemporary Wales.

First and foremost, **man's idea of himself is being degraded.**

The idea that each one of us has of his own nature and destiny is crucial in its importance. If our idea of our responsibilities and of our human significance is degraded, then we ourselves are degraded. The doctrine that man is

nothing but the material producer of material goods is a terrible degradation of man's idea of himself. Gradually men reared on this conception take on many of the attributes of material things. They become material in outlook and even learn to accept without protest the treatment usually meted out to material things. They are content to be pushed around like tables and chairs.

In Wales man's idea of himself is being degraded as a result of a long course of indoctrination which has as its aim to persuade him that he is a second-class citizen. The story of the decline of the Welsh language during the last century is also the success story of this indoctrination. After the publication of the 1847 Report on Education, with its urbane inanities about the condition of our nation, the Welsh people became obsessed with the idea that they must become Anglicised in order to prove that Welshmen are as good as Englishmen. They are still trying to prove that they are as good; and they still have not succeeded in convincing themselves—as the long succession of English appointments to professorships in the University of Wales shows.

One of the most tragic consequences of this degradation of our idea of ourselves is now seen in the split between those who speak Welsh and those who do not. Those who speak Welsh will tell you without blinking an eye-lid that Welsh has no commercial use—it is no help to get on in the world. Those who do not speak it will often tell you the same. But an appreciable section of the latter group are ready at the drop of a hat to indulge in violent abuse of those who dare defend the language. The frequent attacks on the National Eisteddfod are probably the best-known examples. Lord Ogmores, Lord Raglan and Mr. David Llewellyn can be relied upon at any hour of the day—or night—to give forcible expression to a quite fanatical hatred towards anything that firmly resists the encroaching tide of Anglicisation. This is a form of masochism that has interested psychologists during recent years. Just as that would-be chosen race, the Germans, persecuted the real chosen race with fearful barbarity and so revealed in its cruelty its envy of it, so these Welshmen reveal their envy of those who retain their historic language not by the civilized method of acquiring a knowledge of it but by bitter persecution of it and of the people who dare defend it.

And so the Welshman's idea of himself is degraded. He becomes ashamed of precisely that which is his special contribution to human life and history. He becomes ashamed of himself and loses that dignity which belongs to all who are content to be themselves.

MEN WITHOUT A HISTORY

We can turn now to a second technique of degradation.

The human person is degraded wherever the past history of his society is neutralised.

Barbarism has no past; only civilization has a past. For the barbarian there is only today. The barbarian bombs cathedrals; he burns books; he rips up paintings; he pulls down ancient buildings to make room for his own miserable huts. He turns a countryside into a desert and melts statues to make guns. For him the delicate bonds that tie men together and the languages with which men communicate their thoughts and feelings mean nothing. All the past can be wiped out so that he can enjoy himself today. The generations that have lived and died are but stepping stones. They are but means to an end. They need not be remembered or thanked or respected.

And the man with no past is the man with no future. It matters nothing to the barbarian that his children and his children's children will have hearts and souls. They can be poisoned with radio-active dust a hundred years before they are conceived. They have no heritage. The barbarian owns everything and he takes no thought for those who might like to enjoy what he is destroying.

For the modern barbarian no generation is of infinite worth in itself. All history is meaningless except as a ladder by which the chosen few climb to their Utopia; and so perfect is that Utopia and so self-contained that the ladder can be conveniently kicked away once the heights have been reached.

This type of thought is sadly evident in Wales today. The barbarian amongst us is busy destroying the results of fifteen hundred years of Christian civilization. For him the culture of our nation is as nothing. It is his property to dispose of it as he sees fit. He weighs it in the balance of

his commercial counting-house and finds it wanting and away it goes into his capacious dust-bin. The past of Wales can be erased; it is neutralised. One by one the delicate bonds that link us to our own past are broken and we, too, become barbarians who enjoy the bilious experience of belittling our fathers that begat us and the thousand humble generations that gave us something that no one else in the world possesses—our Welsh history.

WASTE PRODUCTS

Humanity is degraded also whenever people's self-respect is undermined by persuading them that they are no more than human waste products.

This was the technique of degradation used in the Nazi extermination camps. It is always the result of modern war. It happens wherever men and women suffer from poverty, disease, malnutrition and exploitation.

It is happening in Wales. Since the economic life of Wales is a mere addendum to that of England and not a matter of continuous concern to any government, the Welsh nation is at the mercy of serious economic crises. The economic life of Wales has been assiduously built up not to answer the needs of the Welsh people but to suit England. The result is chronic unemployment and an alarmingly high rate of emigration. In the last 40 years the three counties of Anglesey, Caernarfon and Merioneth have lost more people by emigration than the present population of Merioneth.

This condition undermines people's self-respect. They say, "We are not wanted here." A growing pessimism spreads over Wales. People feel increasingly that they are expendable waste products and they are reconciled to their lot only by believing the lie that Wales cannot afford to give them a livelihood. This is the way adopted by the great English political parties in order to channel this deep frustration into their own party water-wheels. But by now the success of this transparent conjuring trick is fading. It is becoming clearer every day that Welsh men and women are not destined to be the expendable waste products of the mad economy constructed by English planners; they are human beings who are learning to seek responsible freedom.

PROPAGANDA

The last of the techniques of degradation that are being used in Wales is propaganda.

The human person is degraded wherever propaganda is used as an instrument to kill men's ability to react individually to public questions.

In an atmosphere of freedom, propaganda is legitimate. I and my friends may get together to persuade the public that a course of action is right and good and reasonable. That is propaganda. But while people have the freedom to form other groups to persuade the public that the doctrine expounded by my friends is wrong and pernicious, propaganda is the life-blood of democracy. The pre-suppositions of such propaganda are respect for the intelligence of opponents and for the freedom with which they may criticise.

There is a propaganda, however, which is nothing less than a poison. There is hardly need to explain its characteristics to the people of the twentieth century. That type of propaganda is used with devastating effect by the English Establishment in Wales. It does not emanate from a central headquarters. It works through a thousand channels—through radio and T.V., through newspapers and the great political parties. It extols freedom but close examination will reveal that it is a highly restricted freedom. It is freedom for those who support English imperialism in Wales. The most shameful example of the way in which the powerful have maintained freedom for their own propaganda at the expense of the freedom to criticise is to be seen in the Radio Ban. The Labour and Conservative Parties have used their considerable political power to ban party political broadcasts by minority parties. The result is that although Plaid Cymru proposes to contest some 20 seats in the next General Election, it will be debarred from putting its case before the Welsh public on radio and T.V. This is an obvious and barbaric example of using propaganda not to teach people to judge for themselves, but to benumb people's capacity for individual judgment.

The same process can be illustrated in another way, by reference to the most brilliantly whited of all our sepulchres—the B.B.C. Not for one week have we been allowed to for-

get the last great war. Week after week the R.A.F., the Army, the Commandos, the Merchant Navy, the Generals, the Admirals and the politicians fight their battles over and over again. And they all emerge as heroes before the microphones and the cameras. History is twisted and falsified without compunction. Yet hardly any time has been given by the B.B.C. to explain how Franklin D. Roosevelt strained every nerve to lure Japan into an attack on Pearl Harbour. Nor are we told at length how completely unnecessary the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were. For that side of the story we have to turn to distinguished but unpublicised works by American historians and to such rare journals as *Peace News*.

So in Wales. The English Establishment does not like Wales. The result is that the case against Wales is pressed with a terrible and unyielding consistency. Wales on the other hand has no means of meeting this propaganda effectively. Its radio and television services are carefully controlled by London and always at the mercy of the Labour and Conservative Parties whose bias is consistently anti-Welsh. The newspapers have shown a marked ability for preserving the appearances of giving Wales a fair amount of attention, while at the same time undermining the faith of Wales in itself. The greatest offender of all is the central government in London. It holds all the trump cards. Fair words, judiciously mixed with imperialistic actions, have gradually undermined the ability of Welshmen to react as Welshmen to the continuous propaganda. Wales is given a Minister of State—and then he promptly helps the City of Liverpool to drown the Tryweryn Valley.

This is invariably the fate of a nation without a government. Wales has no government to see that fair play is done to our country. We have no means of ensuring that the case for Wales gets as much time as the case against it. It is only the growing power of Plaid Cymru and the long faithfulness of Welsh churches to our national tradition that have nerved Welshmen to take a more critical attitude to the continuous pro-English propaganda.

DEGRADING SOCIETY

The conclusion we can now draw is **that the degradation of the human person in Wales is happening precisely where man is connected with society.**

It is not our argument that men are being degraded by the infliction of personal cruelty. There are no concentration camps in Wales and no one is shot for arguing that Wales needs self-government. People are not beaten up by the police for gathering together in political meetings. In Wales the process is far more subtle just because it makes people unaware of what is happening to them. They grow to approve of it. But by destroying the nation to which a man by history belongs, you degrade the man himself—and the fact that he seems to approve of it only adds pathos to the tragedy.

What remedy do we offer?

Our critics laugh us to scorn with the taunt that we suppose all will be bright and breezy in a free Wales. We are described as sentimentalists who imagine that a collection of men meeting at Cardiff will show more wisdom than the present collection sitting at Westminster. We are paralysed with the pathetic belief that Dominion Status is the open sesame to all that is good and true and beautiful.

It is true of course that we are not smitten with ecstasy whenever we think of the present collection of sages sitting at Westminster. We have the very high authority of Mr. Aneurin Bevan for believing that the majority in the present Parliament is a "sterile mass of obedient morons." And we know from experience that quite a number of those who sit behind Mr. Bevan are hardly miracles of intellectual fecundity. But we have never argued that all that is needed is to have a parliament in Cardiff. What we have argued is that nothing whatsoever can be done to save Wales without a parliament at Cardiff. At least Wales must be free. Whether Wales will use its freedom wisely and creatively depends on the level of its own spiritual and cultural life. But we know for certain that without a parliament the Welsh nation will cease to be. Moreover, our demand for a parliament is but a part of our social doctrine, and it is our belief that that social doctrine taken as a whole is far more likely to give

Wales a civilized future than the visionless imperialism of the Labour and Conservative Parties.

NATION AND STATE

Man lives his life within a network of societies. Some of these societies have their justification as expressions of human fellowship. The family, the club, the cultural or sports society and the Church, are examples of these. And men form other societies in order to achieve a specified purpose. They get together to build factories, to sink pits, to open quarries or to run trains. They form states. The nation is a society which includes within itself this bewildering variety of smaller societies. The health of the nation at large depends very much on the vitality and freedom of these societies and real danger is threatened when their freedom is imperilled.

For us it is a cardinal principle that **the nation is a society of societies.** To say, as the late Professor H. J. Laski did on *A Grammar of Politics* (p. 105), that the state is a society of societies is to embrace the basic tenet of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism makes the state supreme and wishes to see every organisation serving it. Our nationalism, being fundamentally anti-totalitarian, thinks of the state as one form of human society but certainly not as an institution that may claim unique rights over against the individual man and those societies that men organise. Once the state is thought of as an all-inclusive and unique institution, then the horrors of Hitler's Germany follow inevitably. The family is made to serve the state, and parents urged to have more children in order that the state may have more soldiers. Youth movements, women's clubs and cultural societies all become subservient to the state. Their value rests no longer in being expressions of human vitality but in their efficiency as state agencies. On the same principle the nation itself is made to serve the glory of the state. Bach, Luther or Goethe are extolled according to the contribution their careers made to state power. All in the history of the nation that does not feed the glory of the state is either quietly discarded or actively uprooted. Once the significance of the individual man or the individual society is measured by reference to the state, true culture wilts under the touch of death. For once

the state is made supreme, it becomes a Moloch to which all else must be sacrificed.

These principles can be exemplified in contemporary Wales. The Welsh nation is a society that men have created over a period of fifteen hundred years. Its glory, humanly speaking, lies in being itself. It does not exist to serve any state. But the sad fact is that this nation lives by the leave of the state—and a foreign state at that. The English state has always treated Wales—as it has treated so many of its colonies—not as end in itself, but as a means to serve its own greater glory. The life of Wales is so organised as not to cause inconvenience to the English state. Only a Welsh state could possibly serve the Welsh nation, and even that would have to be closely observed lest it should develop illusions of greatness. But without a state, the Welsh nation has no destiny but to serve a foreign state, and that spells totalitarianism.

An example or two will suffice. Wales may vote Socialist but it still has to suffer a Conservative government, because in Wales government is not by the will of the people but by the will of the English state. The majority of the Welsh people may object to the occupation of Tryweryn by Liverpool, but it is occupied nevertheless because Wales may not do anything to preserve the integrity of its land if that is in any way inconvenient to the English state. The Welsh language is not an official language, because to make it official would be highly inconvenient to the London bureaucracy. At every point Wales is subservient to the state, just as the German nation was made subservient to the state by Adolf Hitler.

We cannot escape this totalitarianism until we are able to make the state in Wales subservient to the nation. And that cannot be done until we have our own government.

Plaid Cymru, then, finds itself ranged against a pernicious form of totalitarianism. It is pre-eminently the democratic party in contemporary Wales. State-worship is threatening the very existence of our nation—it must therefore be destroyed and its high-priests (whether they call themselves Socialists or Conservatives) must be stripped of their power. For to argue against self-government for Wales, as they do, is to argue for totalitarianism.

PARLIAMENT FOR WALES

We believe that the next step in the political struggle is to secure for Wales a parliament of its own where its people can assert their national freedom by creative action within Wales itself and by establishing fruitful contacts with other nations.

It is often objected against us that our ideal is parochial in the extreme. Instead of enjoying the universal contacts that our integration in England provides for us, we hanker after the restricted life of the village pump. We are accused of desiring to wall ourselves in and with secretly wishing to erect large signs along our border saying, "Foreigners! KEEP OUT" (It is perhaps pertinent to observe that if Welsh people would like to behave in this silly way, who is England to prevent them?)

Plaid Cymru has always wished to see Wales playing its modest part in the councils of the nations. After all, the wisdom of men has no mathematical relation to the size of the nation that produced them—or else the great Jeremiah would be a fool indeed, and so would Plato. Parochialism has nothing to do with universal contacts. It is a matter of quality. So many people see everything and comprehend nothing. But fortunately one's faith in humanity is rekindled by meeting so many people who have seen very little but have understood to the full the significance of what they have seen. There are people who brag about their holidays on the continent of Europe; they have done Paris and Rome and Vienna. They return without a single syllable of Italian or French or German; they are apalled that European cities are so full of foreigners and within three weeks after returning home they cannot recall whether Leonardo da Vinci was the President of Switzerland or the centre-forward for Turin. On the other hand there are thousands of people who have spent all but a few hours of their lives within sight of the village pump and their generosity of heart and mind, their urbanity towards wayward human nature, their eternal sense of wonder and surprise make them true universalists. It has been a great tragedy that so many leading Welshmen—particularly in the political field—have adopted the studied parochialism of the English ruling classes rather than the

geniality and courtesy of so many Lancashire cotton-spinners and Yorkshire weavers. That there is much parochialism in Wales today is beyond dispute. It is after all a defence mechanism; those who feel that their position is unsafe try hard to foster an air of exclusiveness. And parochialism is exclusiveness. With the achievement of national freedom there is every reason to believe that much of this unlovely characteristic of our nation will disappear. They can then become creatively receptive to the influence of other nations.

BREAD

National freedom means Economic responsibility. National freedom is not true freedom unless a nation has full responsibility for its economic life.

One of the stock criticisms of Plaid Cymru is that it has no interest in the economic life of Wales. It is often suggested that we know very well that self-government will mean unemployment and poverty, and yet in our fanaticism for culture we consider this a small price to pay for a parliament of our own.

All this—as our American friends so elegantly put it—is bunkum.

The best way of refuting the calumny is by showing how closely economic questions are linked in our thought with the need for freedom and responsibility.

Although man does not live by bread alone, he most certainly lives by bread. And wherever the struggle for livelihood becomes so intense that man may be said to live **for** bread, there he has all but lost his freedom. Those of us who have been brought up in humble homes know only too well the indignities that the poor have to suffer because they are constrained to kow-tow to the better off in order to secure some of the necessities of life. There is no more effective way of destroying human freedom than by reducing men and women to poverty. There is no more effective way of destroying a nation either than by maintaining a stranglehold over its economic life.

In the modern world men have learnt that they need not be slaves to their economic circumstances. Our economic life can be reformed and organised, it can be altered and planned. No modern government—not even in the U.S.A.—can afford not to intervene in the economic life of its subjects. Man need not be governed by the blind laws of supply and demand; he can use his reason, his science, his ability to plan ahead so that the structure of the nation's economic life can serve the good of all. There is nothing new in all this; it is the central contention of socialism in its various forms.

The question that needs to be asked is, 'Who regulates the economic life, and for whose sake?' Let it be asked of Wales. The answer is, 'England.' The economic life of Wales is not organised by the Welsh people through their government for the sake of the Welsh nation. Quite otherwise, the economic life of Wales is organised by London for the sake of England. Our planners brag that there is no such thing as a Welsh Economy. Wales has no means of modifying any plan that may be hatched in London for re-constituting the Welsh economy. We are completely defenceless against the planners of Whitehall. If England wants our coal—it takes it. English pits may fail to pay their way, but Welsh pits are closed first. The whole economic structure and control of our economic life is biased in favour of England. The result is that Wales has suffered **insistent** exploitation to the detriment of our national life. Welsh workmen are continually being called upon to suffer unemployment and emigration for the sake of their English counterparts; but if it is suggested that English workmen might suffer a little for their Welsh fellow-men, there are immediate and sentimental appeals to the solidarity of the working classes. Anglesey milk is carried by the thousand gallons to Birmingham to be made into chocolate and then carried back by the hundred-weight to be sold in Anglesey shops. When it was suggested that it would be far more sensible to produce the chocolate in Anglesey because that would save a lot of trouble and provide work for the unemployed in Anglesey, we were told that to do that would mean less work for the toilers of Birmingham. It is becoming clearer every day that the solidarity of the working classes is all on one side.

If Wales is to survive as a distinct nation, it must have full responsibility for organising its economic life in such a way that the total life of the nation is strengthened and enriched.

It is worthwhile to pause at this point to look at the ironic situation in which the Labour Party in Wales finds itself on this issue. It is an instructive example of how a socialist party can completely misunderstand and then betray its own socialistic principles. Mr. James Griffiths and his train-bearers have been telling us for many years that the economic life of England and Wales are so intertwined that they cannot be dis-entangled. Therefore, they conclude, it is idle to talk of self-government for Wales. This argument pre-supposes that economic laws are like the laws of nature—they cannot be changed. It is supposed that because Welsh coal and steel have always gone to England they cannot possibly be sent anywhere else; that because England is the usual market for Welsh milk and beef, no other can be found. But, on the contrary, the economic life of Wales is a human creation and if men created it, men can change it. It is hardly necessary to lecture a Socialist, of all people, on this point. Yet, Welsh Labour leaders harangue their audiences to sleep on the impossibility of changing the economic set-up of Wales. There was a time when they said that Wales could not afford to have it changed. That line of argument however has miraculously disappeared after the publication of Dr. Edward Nevin's studies of the Welsh economy. Everyone now realises that Wales is suffering direct financial impoverishment through the present economic arrangements. So our socialists have retreated silently from their former position and are now telling us that economic arrangements are sacrosanct because they cannot be changed. They still compose purple passages on man's ability to control his environment and then go on to explain that Welshmen just cannot do this. Nothing perhaps shows better than this that the obedient morons are not all on one side of the House of Commons.

Of course it is possible to change the economic set-up of Wales. The doubt lies not about the ability to do it but about the will to do it. The people of Wales can most cer-

tainly modify the pattern of their economic life if they so choose. Moreover, all the evidence goes to show that Wales can never have a flourishing economic life until it is armed with the means to change it. Whatever reasons there may be against granting Wales a government of its own, none of them is economic. What is ironic now is that the people who have fought so long against the capitalistic doctrine that economic laws are immutable and self-regulating are themselves the great bulwark of *laissez-faire* in Wales. Economic subservience to England is the great white bull of Labour polemics in Wales. Everything must be sacrificed to that—even the existence of the Welsh nation and the happiness of its people. The Tories, of course, have always held fast to the theory that the more colonies England possesses, the more it can exploit. It is a great tragedy that Labour should side with them against Wales.

It needs to be emphasised that what the nationalists are demanding is not economic isolation but economic responsibility.

Our critics spend an enormous amount of time regaling their audiences with lurid pictures of what a free Wales will be like. Here is an outline of the picture drawn. We shall depend on our own resources. We shall have no bananas or oranges; we shall have to drink all our own milk, eat our own lamb and burn our own coal. We shall have no cocoa, coffee or tea. No Madeira or Champagne will enter Welsh ports and we shall have to make-do with Corona and Llangadog tomatoes. We shall have no new motor-cars or electric light bulbs. No one will be allowed to shop in Liverpool or Bristol, and all English newspapers will be turned back at Chester, Oswestry, Hereford and Severn Junction. The National Eisteddfod will last for three weeks and attendance will be compulsory. No geography, physics, French, Latin, needlework or chemistry will be taught in schools; nothing but Welsh. No Welsh girls will be allowed to marry foreigners. Pubs will be closed all week and everyone will have to choose between going to a concentration camp and becoming a Congregationalist. The standard of living will go plummeting down and Mr. Aneurin Bevan will be the patron

saint of the Resistance Movement. In a word, Wales will be cursing the day she left the warm folds of the English apron.

This picture of fanatical exclusiveness may be a caricature; but the sad thing is that it is only a mild caricature of the kind of nonsense that is purveyed on our public platforms by men who are more concerned with maintaining their own positions of influence than with the truth.

BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

For Plaid Cymru one of the most valuable means that a nation has for cementing its friendship with other nations is through the control that it has over its economic products. No nation in the modern world can live unto itself; and Wales does not want to. Nor does Wales wish in any way to disrupt the close economic relations between our country and England. What we want is not economic self-sufficiency but economic responsibility. We wish to regulate the trade between Wales and other countries in such a way that Wales will get the maximum benefit. In other words, we want exploitation to end and co-operation between legally equal nations to take its place. We argue that Wales should be enabled through her own government to strike her own bargains with other countries. If England wants our water and our milk (either separately or mixed!) she can have them at a fair and reasonable price. If England can use our coal and our steel, and is prepared to come to amicable arrangements about them, then why on earth should Wales try to export them to Timbuctoo or Tennessee? And if England will not, or cannot come to an amicable arrangement, then why on earth should Wales not seek a more favourable market elsewhere? For it is on such reciprocal bargaining that the economic health and stability of a nation is founded in the modern world. Without this responsibility for its own economic well-being a nation will soon perish.

CO-OPERATION

The social and economic life of Wales can be organised in a far more humane and dignified way than at present. Hence our next principle.

The system of economic organisation best suited to our national tradition and to modern needs is co-operation.

Capitalism has done more than any other single element to destroy our nation. The exploitation, the bullying and the inhumanity of industrial barons has left an indelible mark on our social conscience. Our forefathers marched in the ranks of the Chartists at Llanidloes and Newport; or they broke down the toll-gates of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire with Rebecca and her daughters; the military broke up their pathetic attempts to achieve justice at Merthyr. As in so many countries, the Industrial Revolution deepened the social rift between rich and poor. For the rich our cultural heritage was at the best nothing more than the quaint ways of peasants and at the worst the seed-bed of social revolution. For them land was but land—it was not the home of a nation; people but hands to be hired and fired at will.

Then came the Labour movement in its various forms. It would heal the social rift. It would close the gulf between the rich and the poor. Its instrument was public ownership; the wealth of the nation should belong to all. In 1945 the great opportunity of the Labour Party came. With a huge majority behind it, it could translate its ideals into institutions. And then came the great betrayal as far as Wales was concerned. The programme of nationalisation disregarded the identity of the Welsh nation. In two acts only was Wales respected. In the others the great socialist measures went through Parliament one after another as anglicisation acts. Wales was chopped up to suit the convenience of the new English bureaucracy. In five years the Labour Party revealed itself as a party that cared nothing for the destiny of the Welsh nation; it was obviously but an instrument of the English ascendancy. The opportunity of creating a network of nationalised industries as part of a more general programme for giving Wales effective self-

government was lost. Not one of the Labour marionettes that represented Wales in that parliament put up a fight for the integrity of his nation. They sat silent while blow after blow was delivered against the honour of their people. And they sacrificed their own integrity in the process for Labour had promised Wales a parliament of its own for half a century before that. The events of those years between 1945 and 1951 showed only too plainly that the promises were not part and parcel of Welsh socialist thought. They were merely used in order to hoodwink the Welsh people into conniving at the destruction of their nation.

MORE CAPITALISM

In addition, Labour's nationalised industries failed to meet the Welsh workers' desire for more responsibility for the industries in which they worked. Since the party had adopted the State Socialism of the Webbs, it turned its back on one of the most potent ways of increasing the workers' dignity. Instead of closing the social rift created by capitalism it merely changed its nature. The State itself became indirectly the most powerful of all capitalists. The pits, the railways, gas and electricity were only in an abstract sense made public property. The status of the workers was not changed except in theory. The individual workman had no more say in the running of his industry than he had before; still less was the road opened to co-operative ownership of industry by the men who worked it.

In this sad way the centralised bureaucratic state was immensely strengthened. It was strengthened first of all by ignoring the national identity of Wales, and in the second place it was strengthened by ignoring the right of the worker to have a real stake in the industry to which he gives not only his labour but his life. If we are to move from our present situation, nationalisation must respect national frontiers and the nationalised industries must be the pioneers of co-operative industry. It was a bitter, but not unexpected blow when the miners of Cwmllynfell were refused permission to run the pit themselves.

THE LAND

As in industry, so in agriculture. Huge estates in the rural areas correspond to combines in industry. They create a dependent and servile peasantry. It is our belief that farmers need to have a real stake in the land. That means the wide distribution of ownership. Plaid Cymru has fought the battle of the small farmer precisely because we believe that he is the backbone of our rural areas.

Nor do we believe that a stagnant countryside is a sign of progress. The idea that huge tracts of the Welsh countryside must be preserved just as they are is most dangerous. It is the townsman's view: the view that the countryside is made especially for his enjoyment. The country has been provided by the Creator for man's upkeep and only secondarily for his enjoyment. It is meant to be used and developed. We must not make an idol of it. On the other hand, the countryside must be used responsibly. It is not a virgin field to be exploited no matter what the cost in money and beauty. The earth on which we live is a sacred trust, but what makes it sacred is not that it can provide a suitable background for a pic-nic but that it is the home of a people. Agriculture, after all, is not an addendum to a nation's economy; it is the basis of all economy.

THE MEANING OF IT ALL

The significance of these principles is obvious. What we are aiming at is providing the Welsh nation with the external conditions of a full, free, vigorous and democratic life. This is the most that politics can do. It can provide the channels but it cannot provide the living waters to flow through them. Neither Plaid Cymru nor anybody else can breathe life into the dry bones of a dead Wales, but it can provide the conditions in which a living Wales can remove its shackles and walk to its freedom.

It has often been said on the shores of the Menai Straits that the first man to cross Telford's magnificent Suspension Bridge was a fugitive from the Anglesey justices. While the crowds at either end of the bridge hung back for fear the

bridge would not hold them, the man who desired freedom above all had the energy and the faith to venture over. Plaid Cymru cannot aspire to be more than a bridge builder. It cannot create in men who have much in their past to be ashamed of the desire for freedom. But even the sight of a bridge to freedom where there was none before can kindle to a flame the dying embers of the desire for freedom. And that is already happening in Wales. Throughout the country people who had all but given up hope are raising their heads. It is no accident that more and more people in all walks of life are joining the national movement. But Plaid Cymru can only build with a firm hope that the desire for freedom has not completely departed from Wales. It is evident on all sides that that hope is fully justified.

To change the metaphor, we must insist that the politician can only stand in the wings. The play must be written, produced and acted by the people themselves in their eisteddfodau, in their churches and chapels, in their Trade Unions, in their clubs and societies, in their families and their local councils.

And, with God's grace, that play may not be unworthy of one of the oldest of European nations.