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# WALES AS AN ECONOMIC ENTITY

## A REPLY BY GWYNFOR EVANS



Self-government can bring  
immense benefits to Wales,  
as to all other nations

Professional politicians,  
FOR PARTY ENDS,  
cry "Wolf-Poverty"

Gwynfor Evans gives them  
a reasoned and factual reply

He is the President of  
Plaid Cymru, the Self-  
Government Party

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## Wales as an economic entity

by  
**GWYNFOR EVANS**

*It is all very well for them (Plaid Cymru) to talk glibly about economic separation from England, but they should be fair to the people of Wales and admit that it must mean a fall in their standard of living.*

Mr. J. Idwal Jones, M.P. (Labour), 12 June, 1959.

*The Welsh nationalist policy spells economic ruin for Wales. If they had their way in cutting the ties with England, that would drive the Welsh standard of living down, like the Gadarene swine, not into the Sea of Galilee but into the Dead Sea of dire poverty.*

*Conservatives are large-minded . . . we have done more for Wales in these last seven years than any other party in history.*

Rt. Hon. Henry Brooke, M.P. (Conservative), 23 May, 1959.

*The greatest tragedy which has happened in Wales in the twentieth century has been the establishment of the Welsh Nationalist Party dedicated to obtaining Dominion Status.*

*The economic life of Wales is linked to those of England and Scotland. The Welsh Nationalist policy for economic separation was one which would place Wales economically in the backwaters . . . The Welsh Nationalist Party are splitting the Welsh nation.*

*The Liberal Party has done more for Wales than any other.*

Mr. Emlyn Hooson (Liberal), 23 May, 1959.

### What the Professional Politicians say:

**T**HE IDEAS of our professional politicians as to what can be done for Wales are vague, obscure and tentative. Their views upon what cannot be done for her are clear and strong.

They are agreed in particular that the economic life of Wales cannot be organised on a national basis, and their descriptions of the dire effects of doing in Wales what other people do so well are always extravagant, to the point of fantasy.

They picture the Welsh people, compelled by the wild nationalists to live on their own resources, sitting hopeless and hollow-eyed before their empty cupboards. They implore us to face, as a hard fact, that Wales is of necessity, now and forever, an integral and undifferentiated part of England (usually called 'the country as a whole').



**Up to now the politicians do not seem to have been able to think of any other hard facts to support their thesis.**

No effort has been made by them *factually* to show why Wales cannot be administered as a national entity, relying on her own resources *at least as much as any other country*.

The appeal of the anti-freedom politicians is not to reason but to the emotions, particularly the emotion of fear. They assume that everybody knows by a kind of instinct that Wales cannot live without being governed from England. They are unmoved by the evidence that Wales, under that same government, is actually ceasing to live. Her wealth of natural resources they brush aside as if the Welsh were too fey to administer them effectively.

Their conclusion is always satisfying to the parties and government in London: it is that the Welsh would soon be swept under the mat if they tried to be themselves.

### **The "Horrors of Separation."**

Ever since the Welsh developed a sense of nationhood (in Roman times, says A. W. Wade-Evans), strong forces have threatened to obliterate them as a national group. They have always been a comparatively small people, perhaps no more numerous in the Middle Ages than are the people of Swansea Town today. They have, however, stubbornly retained their identity and traditions, of which the most remarkable is their language, which is today the tongue of the oldest living literature in Europe.

**Never have the Welsh faced so formidable a threat to their national existence as they do now, and though their spirit is still strong enough to build a fine country, they are denied the tools to do the job.**

The anti-national forces try to justify themselves by picturing the awful economic consequences of equipping the nation with the institutions of parliamentary democracy. The spectre they raise is Poverty.

And a people who have had their share of poverty and unemployment under English government are *easily intimidated* when knowledgeable politicians assure them that they would have still more under Welsh government.

'Separation' is the word most usually used by the propagators of this fear, for it powerfully evokes the thought of lonely poverty.

The horrors of separation are dwelt on at length—lower pensions and benefits, poorer roads and schools—and the contrasting glories of 'unity' and 'partnership' are extolled. English politicians visiting Wales confess themselves deeply moved when they think of this 'unity' of England and Wales. '*We two are one*' they tell rows of swelling Welsh breasts, tactfully omitting to add the whale's other famous words to Jonah, '*and I am that one*'.

This *Jonah-in-the-whale* unity has been known to be the theme of more than one Welsh peroration too. It is found to be particularly effective when combined with an exhortation to stand fast by our heritage, to cherish all things Welsh—especially those in the National Museum—and to dare all in a rearguard action which will prevent Wales dying too quickly.

### **Swiss Cantons' Terrible Suffering!!**

The professional politician's opposition to a federal form of government is usually as fierce as it is to Dominion Status within the Commonwealth.

The argument from Separation is indeed deemed to be a sufficient answer to every demand for self-government, whatever the status involved. It was the stock reply to the proposal of the Parliament for Wales Campaign that a Welsh Parliament be established on the line of the twenty-two Swiss Canton or the forty-nine U.S. State legislatures.

Due care is taken to spare us a detailed description of the horrors endured in these Cantons and States as a result of their legislative separation from their country as a whole. Nor is anything said with exactitude of the measure of economic separation they suffer. Our sensitive politicians find the terrible poverty of Switzerland and the U.S. (one with the *highest* income per head in *Europe* and the other with the *highest in the world*) too harrowing to contemplate.

They pass quickly on from their Dead Sea of dire poverty to the next subject, having done their duty in warning us of the inevitable consequences of *any* measure of self-government.

**I will be forgiven for pressing this point concerning the Swiss Cantons, for it exposes the non-rational character of the opposition to Welsh political freedom.**

All the talk about the horrors of Separation is an attempt to rationalise, it is true, the determined opposition of the English parties to all measures of self-government. *They have their own reasons, which it is not politic for them to publish.*



The form the rationalisation takes may be ludicrous, but it achieves its purpose to the extent that it plays upon the latent fear of poverty. Its continual propagation, through the mass media of publicity, gives it a power—which its propagators prevent Plaid Cymru from countering effectively by means of the indefensible radio and television ban on the Welsh Party.

### Confusing Means and Ends

The campaign to associate the concepts of freedom with poverty obviously leaves the basic moral case for self-government untouched. The value of the nation transcends those institutions and methods of political and economic organisation, whose function is the subordinate one of serving her. There can, however, be no full life for the nation without these institutions. *He who wills that Wales shall live, must will the means.*

Those who rely on the economic arguments, in opposing Welsh freedom, are confusing means with ends. A great society heresy of the last 150 years has been to make the Economic the end of life. Throughout Europe, society has been sacrificed to the imagined demands of economic factors. Society has been run as an adjunct of the market, and social relations embedded in the economic system, so that organic forms of existence have been annihilated. This perversion of the right ordering of society sprang from a failure to apprehend man as a whole.

But during this generation there has been a truer understanding of man, and therefore of the importance of organic forms of society. For man is an essentially social creature, whose humanity and dignity require a place in a fitting cultural environment, at least as much as they require proper economic provision.

### "Prepared to Sacrifice the Welsh Nation"

The opponents of Welsh self-government, however, still cling to the nineteenth century heresy by diminishing and playing down the importance of the nation as a basic organic form of society, and insist that the governing factor in Welsh life should be the economy of 'the country as a whole'. In their view everything must be subordinated to the smooth working of the contemporary form of the economy.

**They are apparently prepared to sacrifice the Welsh nation on this economic altar, though not without anguished protestations that they are as good Welshmen as any.**

Their heart's desire, they may say, is that Wales should live for ever ('*Cymru am byth*' and all the other claptrap of the sentimentalists), but nothing can be allowed to change the providentially ordained form of the British economy. The Welsh nation is in the last resort expendable.

Some of these people have an honest concern for Welsh culture, which they hope to preserve in a compartment of its own, not realising that a country's culture cannot be pickled in a separate container away from the rest of the nation's life, untouched by the dynamic forces to which society is subject.

Unless favourable conditions are created—and this can be done by government alone in most matters—these forces can destroy a culture, as they are doing in Wales.

The assimilation of Wales in English society is the **inevitable** consequence of her political and economic assimilation in 'the country as a whole'.

### Industrialism and the Living Homeland

What would be gained by the victory of the defenders of the economy of 'the country as a whole'?

Wales the nation will cease to be, with all her many possibilities. In her place there will be, at best, a peninsula of well-fed, well-housed people perhaps, but no longer a community bound by the ties of two thousand years of history, and no longer stimulated by the traditions and thought-ways handed down through these centuries. At worst, it could be a peninsula of people to whom the word 'society' would not be applicable at all, the community atomised, the people a rootless mass, a proletariat.

**The struggle I see in Wales is between those who place the nation so high in their scale of values that they think that political and economic organisation should serve her society, and those for whom the economy is the supreme value and who think that the Welsh nation should be subordinated to their conception of its demands.**

It is in the interest of the *individual person* that nationalists want to subordinate the economy of Wales to her society. Their struggle is against the uprooting and proletarianising of a remarkable community. They think they are acting in defence of one corner of European civilisation, the only part of the world in which the vast majority of them can act effectively.



Their efforts for Wales the nation is therefore made on behalf of the dignity and freedom of man. 'Men are free', said D. H. Lawrence very truly, 'when they are in a living homeland . . . Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community'.

### Failure to ensure balanced development

Though the opponents of self-government might agree with much of this, their scale of values is different. The priority they give the economic has resulted in an obsession with industrialism; yet their rejection of all methods of governing Wales as an economic entity, is the very reason for the failure to ensure balanced and healthy industrial development, and therefore work in Wales for her people.

They would do well to take R. H. Tawney's words to heart:

*'Industrialism is no more the necessary characteristic of an economically developed society than militarism is a necessary characteristic of a nation which maintains military forces . . . The essence of industrialism is . . . a particular estimate of the importance of industry, which results in it being thought the only thing that is important at all, so that it is elevated from the subordinate place which it should occupy among human interests and activities into being the standard by which other interests are judged'.*

The dissolution of men's cultural environment can be a cause of social degradation for which no amount of industrialisation can compensate.

### An Economy to Serve Wales

To live, the Welsh nation must have an economy which serves her. How absurd to contend that it is beyond the wit of Welshmen to fashion such an economy. But they cannot try until they have — the power of action.

In the past, Conservatives and Liberals have tended to think in terms of a liberal economy, and Labour of a socialised economy. But all have been content to allow the economy in Wales to dominate an increasingly atomised society. The nationalist standpoint is that the economy should be regulated to serve an organic society.

Would this, in fact, result in a fall in the standard of living?

No evidence has been published to show that it would do so. It is a sweeping assertion which is popularly believed because it has been repeated very often, very loudly by very many.

The evidence gathered and published by Plaid Cymru and other impartial authorities prove Wales to be comparatively rich in natural resources. Her intelligent people could make far more of them were they free to create the conditions in which they could be fully developed. In this matter, the intangible of national pride counts for far more than economists in the past have understood.

### Comparison with prospering Scandinavia

A comparison with the prospering countries of Scandinavia is instructive. I would urge those who are sceptical about the economic capacity of Wales to follow this line with care. They will emerge from the study deeply impressed by the economic possibilities of Wales. With a gross national income nearing a thousand million pounds, her thirteen counties even today produce nearly twice the wealth of the twenty-six counties of Eire.

Much is made of the high cost of the services enjoyed by Wales and a thousand times audiences have been asked how she could alone pay for her education and transport systems, for the health service, unemployment benefits, subsidies and all the services financed by the central government.

## Up-to-Date

—News of Wales' Campaign

—facts and arguments on self-government

## WELSH NATION Y DDRAIG GOCH

(3d. each from news-agents; 5/- each by  
post for 12 months; both different in content)

P.T.O for order form



The short answer is that she is paying for every one of them today. Taxes collected in Wales finance **every** government service in and for Wales, including her share of defence costs and of the interest on the national debt.

The two volumes of "The Social Accounts of the Welsh Economy" for 1948-1956, edited by Dr. Edward Nevin and published by the University of Wales Press Board, showed that after paying for all costs of government for the years studied, there remained to the credit of Wales the sum of £60,000,000. The total paid in taxation from Wales in 1956 was £220,000,000.

### Self-government for Development

The accent in a self-governing Wales would be on development. The purpose of freedom is to make moral and material development possible, so that the nation can be fully herself and can realise her potentialities.

There will be a new incentive to foster commerce and industry. The Welsh are an able, organising people, who will certainly develop trade relations to their fullest extent. Most of the trade will of course be with England, and it would be no one-way traffic. *There would be no need to emphasise this obvious fact had not an image of self-governing Wales been created which makes her an entirely separated, isolated entity, cordoned off from the rest of the world by mighty tariff and military barriers.*

The result of self-government will be more and freer intercourse with other peoples, increased trade and commercial relations and participation in the political and cultural aspects of international life.

To/

Plaid Cymru,  
8, Queen Street, Cardiff.

(Tick)

- ☐ I wish to join Plaid Cymru; annual fee enclosed.  
(Minimum 2/6; youth, 1/6)
- ☐ Please send *Welsh Nation* monthly by post;  
5/- enclosed
- ☐ Please send *Y Ddraig Goch* by post; 5/- enclosed.
- ☐ Please send further information about Plaid Cymru.

(M ) .....

Finally, the needs of the special relationship with England can be met without serious difficulty. In order to keep the economic programmes of the two countries in step there might be a permanent Standing Committee of the Ministers concerned, equipped with a permanent Secretariat. With an interchangeable currency this would make effective economic co-operation possible, while still leaving each nation free to develop her own economy to meet her own special needs.

The establishment of a Welsh State would be a revolutionary departure, but it is the kind of creative development which has a liberating influence in many differing places. The radical decentralisation which it portends is far more than a local need. And given the will that the Welsh nation must live, it is a necessary and practicable advance.

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## "International" defined

"Bentham coined the word 'international.' He used it first in 1789 in his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*: and subsequently in his *Principles of International Law* he made fully apparent the significance which the new word possessed for him.

"It bespoke a relationship between national states and peoples which should supplant cosmopolitanism and yet mitigate nationalism. The old cosmopolite had attempted to be a citizen of the world by spurning nationality and decrying patriotism.

"The new internationalist should be a good nationalist in order to bring about a better world order. But being a good nationalist meant doing to other nations what you would have them to do you. It meant that while love of country and national zeal were commendable sentiments, national partiality and prejudice were to be eschewed.

"It meant also that while the political map of the world should be redrawn on national lines, the emerging national states should compete and co-operate in works good for all humanity," — CARLTON HAYES, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism*.

(Taken from Plaid Cymru's Political Review, "*Triban*," for April, 1960. Price 2/6.)