

THE BEST FOR WALES

**Plaid
Cymru's
Programme
for
the New
Millennium**



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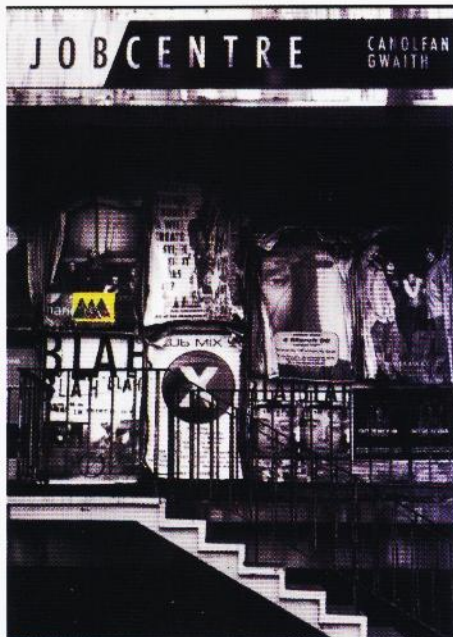
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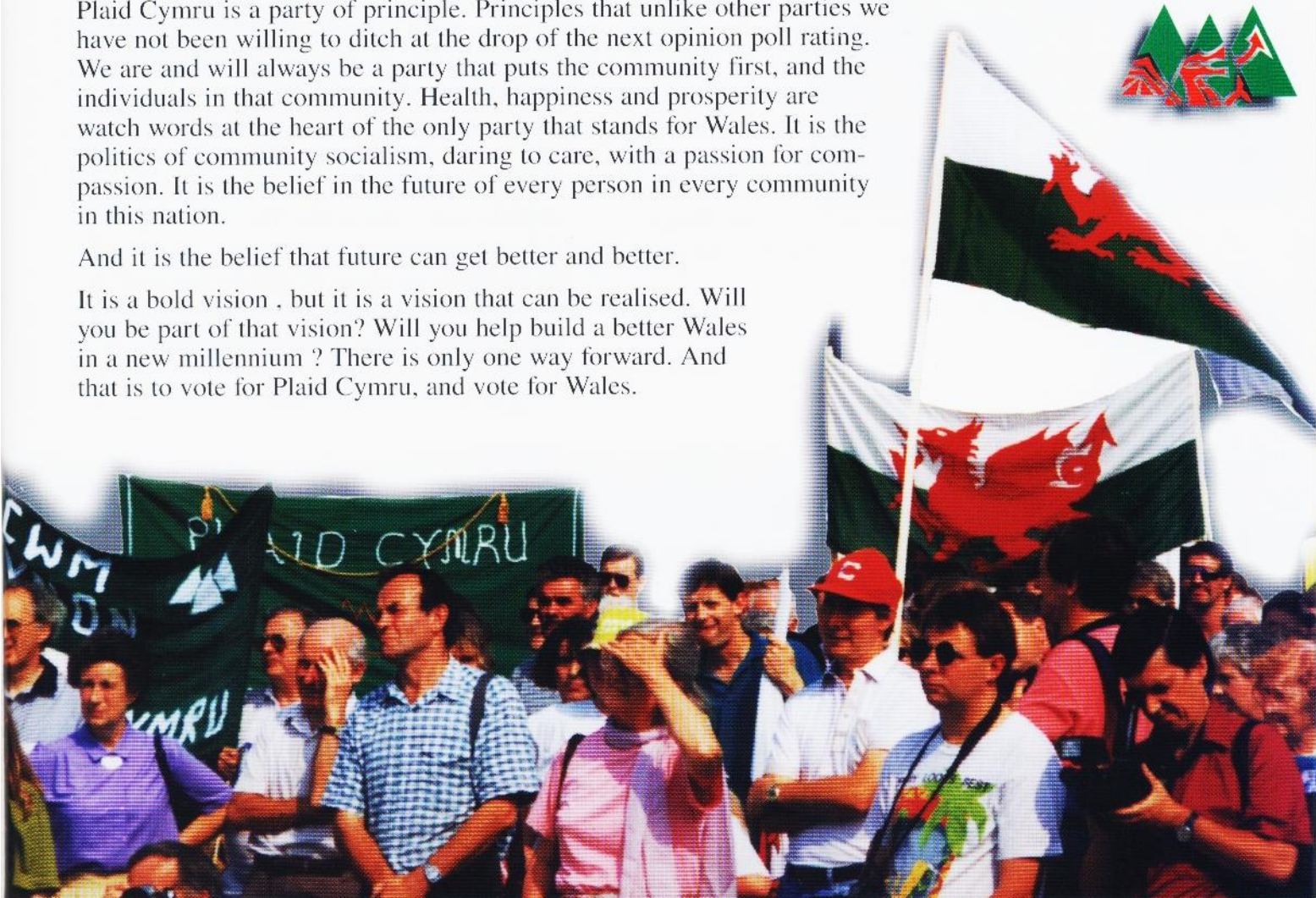
Look at Wales - what do you see? Is it a country striding towards the millennium, full of hope and vigour? Is it a country prospering and at work, building a bright future for the generations to follow? Or is it a country whose progress towards a better future is obstructed by a second-class system of government? Under centralised London rule, Wales' level of income has been pushed down to 83% that of the UK. But it doesn't have to be this way- it shouldn't have to be this way.

That is why Plaid Cymru - the party of Wales - exists. It is the only party putting the people of Wales first and foremost. It is the only party that believes Wales should have the power to choose its own tomorrow, and to make that it a better one. Plaid Cymru stands and fights for every single person in Wales, whatever their background, their birthplace, the colour of their skin, their religious beliefs, or the language they speak - be it English or Welsh. If you live in Wales then you are part of Wales - and Plaid Cymru is working for you.

Plaid Cymru is a party of principle. Principles that unlike other parties we have not been willing to ditch at the drop of the next opinion poll rating. We are and will always be a party that puts the community first, and the individuals in that community. Health, happiness and prosperity are watch words at the heart of the only party that stands for Wales. It is the politics of community socialism, daring to care, with a passion for compassion. It is the belief in the future of every person in every community in this nation.

And it is the belief that future can get better and better.

It is a bold vision, but it is a vision that can be realised. Will you be part of that vision? Will you help build a better Wales in a new millennium? There is only one way forward. And that is to vote for Plaid Cymru, and vote for Wales.





A Parliament for Wales

There is one single key to a better Wales, a key to unlock the tremendous potential of the nation and talents of its people. It is a **POWERHOUSE PARLIAMENT**. It is the tool that will give Wales the things it truly needs. It can offer us real social justice, where our needs in the home and work place are at the heart of government. It offers Wales

democracy, a true democracy that comes from the people of Wales.

At present we are ruled over by a Secretary of State answerable to no-one but the Cabinet in London, treated like an Imperial conquest given to a governor-general as a plaything to test out twisted ideology. Wales has become the land of the **QUANGO** - with the Governor General appointing party cronies to rule almost every aspect of our lives, in education, health care, employment and economic development.

The need for real democracy, power in the hands of the people and their communities, is clear. And it seems, finally, we are moving as a nation to this vital understanding. But unless we give our democracy - our parliament - real power, it is all worthless talk. While Scotland could control its own laws and finances, Wales could be left impotent to the harmful rule of London.



We need a parliament that can bring forward its own legislation, ensuring the future of our industries, our education, our health and welfare. We need a parliament that could say **NO** to the poll tax, and **NO** to nursery vouchers. And a parliament that could say yes to a new jobs programme to give opportunity to the young and yes to a decent pension for our elderly.

But that parliament must also have control of its own finances - or we are left as we are now, with the begging bowl at Downing Street. How can we plan for our future, and ensure the benefits and investments in our communities are met if we cannot take hold of the purse-strings? And a Powerhouse Parliament does more than just hand back democracy to Wales, it also puts us at the heart of Europe. It will mean for the first time Wales can take its place in discussing our European future - and how we can benefit by working together. And the benefits can be huge.

Just two hours by sea from Holyhead is Ireland. It is becoming one of the shining lights of modern Europe. Its economic and social revival has seen it overtake Wales in the prosperity league - and recently it has passed the UK as a whole. It has achieved this by using its position in Europe to win help in building its industry and welfare systems. A Powerhouse Parliament will put Wales at the heart of a new Europe of the Nations and historic Regions - no longer left on the furthest edge of the UK listening to the Euro-squabble of middle England. A Plaid Cymru Powerhouse Parliament is the only answer - only it can deliver the medicine Wales needs.



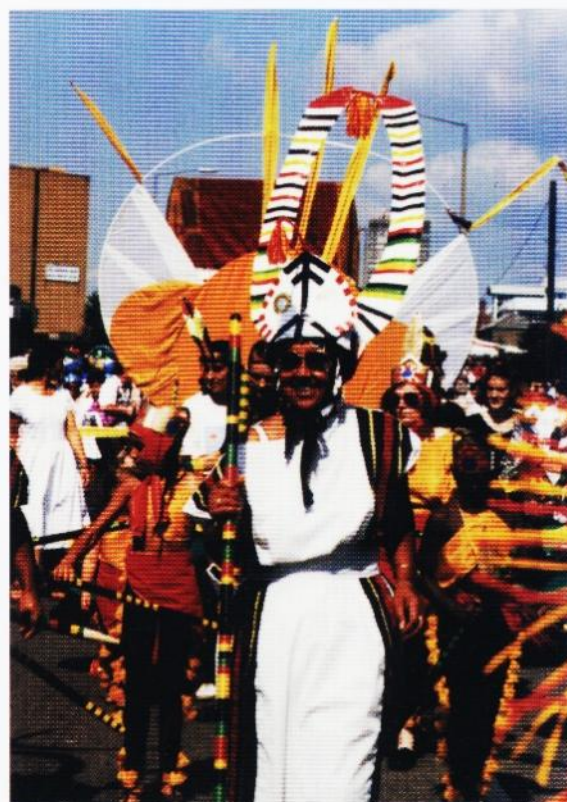
Social Justice

In the 1990s, it has become a recognised fact that the gap between the Haves and Have Nots is now a gulf. But it is much worse than just those with or without money.

Today, in a Wales facing the new millennium, there is an underclass. A generation of people in our communities being deprived of a decent education, job opportunities, proper health care, housing - the list goes on and on. The British political parties are standing by as the future of our country - its people - are thrown on the scrap heap of I'm all right Jack ideology and rhetoric.

But given the right tools to do the job, and once again Wales will be a nation that can promise and deliver real social justice. Social justice that ensures education is funded properly, with accountable and democratic control back in the hands of the communities - back in the hands of those who know what needs to be done, and where the right to a decent schooling does not rely on the lottery of where you live or the wallet of the parent. It means health care that is free. Free from prescription charges and dental bills, that are nothing more than a tax on the most needy in society. It means health care that is delivered to the highest standard where and when it is needed, and it means health care back under the control of the communities who know what they need.

And it means a system of taxation that finally reflects the true ability of people to pay - rather than crippling the lowest paid or most needy. How can it be right to put a tax on the fuel that keeps us warm in winter? Plaid Cymru is dedicated to the principles of Social Justice. And the only tool that can make this happen is a Powerhouse Parliament.





▲ Plaid Cymru's team of MPs

Sustainability

The future of Wales must be one built on a bedrock of sustainability. It must be a nation that can sustain its workforce, its economy and its social community. But it must also be a nation that sustains its environment. And all these things are inextricably linked. They are bonded together and to neglect that bond is to plan for disaster. You cannot demand a clean-up of pollution and spend millions on the task, while ignoring the problems of badly managed industries spewing filth into the environment. And you cannot address the plague of crimes and social deprivation unless you tackle the economic rot that lies at its root.

Plaid Cymru understands this, and with a Powerhouse Parliament, Wales will have the tools to make sure the balance is made. By investing in the future of Wales, Plaid Cymru believes we can put the nation back to work, providing 100,000 new jobs. There's work to be done in our communities, safeguarding the environment, improving public transport, combating crime, and investment in green and hi-tech technology. It is about a highly skilled workforce, with quality jobs, paying decent living wages. If we make these a priority we can take people off the dole queues, kick-starting the economy.

A Powerhouse Parliament taking in the whole picture, and intervening where the private sector is failing will put Wales back on its feet. The alternative from the British parties is let the market decide and to hell with our wants and real needs.



**Plaid Cymru has a vision. A better Wales in the new millennium.
Join the campaign to make that vision a reality**

Please send me more information about joining Plaid Cymru, without obligation:

NAME: _____

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Please return to Plaid Cymru, 51 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF1 9HD



Foreword

This Election is the first in a new political era. The parties have changed and the options before the Welsh electors are different to those which have dominated our politics over half a century. After 18 years of government the Tory party is split from top to bottom and looks like disintegrating. The Labour Party, as we have known it, has come to an end; new Labour has taken over with new faces, new policies and new principles – all geared to the politics of south-east England. The Liberal Democrats have thrown in their hand with Labour as far as Wales is concerned. So Plaid Cymru remains the only party which offers Wales a radical programme based on social justice, environmental sustainability, an elected national parliament and a voice in Europe. This manifesto defines these policies.

The constitutional future of Wales and Scotland is now a major issue. Little wonder: Wales is sick to death of rejecting selfish Tory values, election after election, yet still being forced to suffer right-wing policies imposed upon us by virtue of the Tory's London-veto. For it is not Wales which determines the policies that are administered by the Welsh Office and by the plethora of quangos which govern our country. Their remit is decided by London, and they are answerable to a Tory MP from Yorkshire who masquerades as a Secretary of State.

We need an elected Parliament in order to ensure policies implemented on the all-Wales level which corresponds to the needs of Wales, not London. We need priorities established in line with the values of the Welsh people. Simply, we need democracy.

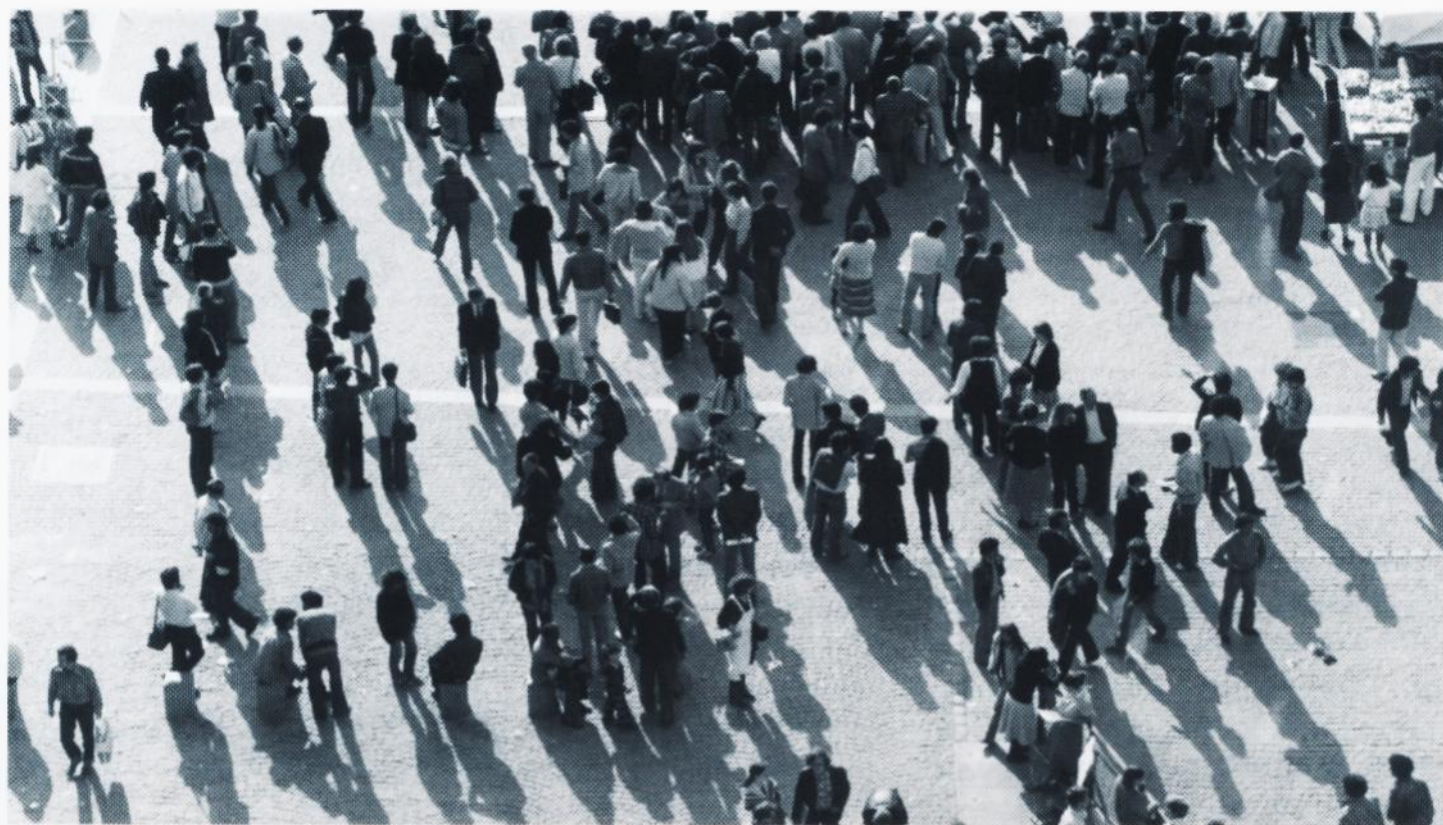
Such an elected Welsh Parliament would take over full responsibility for education, housing, health care, jobs, agriculture, transport and environmental policy in Wales. We could then determine for ourselves what should be public policy in these areas, instead of having them thrust upon us by Tories in London. This Manifesto highlights the precise policies Plaid Cymru wants implemented in these and in other policy areas.

But in order to make a difference, a Welsh Parliament must have adequate powers. It must be able to make laws in these matters, laws appropriate to securing a socially just community in Wales. It must have adequate resources – the taxes raised in Wales must be channelled through a Welsh Treasury Department for this purpose. And it must be allowed to develop its own direct link with the European Union, where so many decisions are taken today which affect the vital interests of Welsh industry and agriculture. Not least it must secure from the EU as fair a deal for Wales as the Irish Government have succeeded in getting for Ireland.



Dafydd Wigley





The Tories offer Wales nothing by way of national democracy. The Liberal Democrats (who used to support a proper Parliament for Wales) have sold out and back Labour's plans. The Labour Party, while offering Scotland a law-making Parliament, tax-varying powers and their own Prime Minister, offer Wales only a very limited Assembly. Such a body would be incapable of protecting Wales from the privatisation of education or the NHS by a future right-wing Tory Government in London.

Plaid Cymru is the only party which stands for a law-making Parliament for Wales with a voice in Europe. Plaid Cymru is the only party which insists that Wales shall not be treated as a second class nation compared to Scotland.

And if there is to be a referendum on constitutional reform, Plaid Cymru insists that the people of Wales be given a real choice, not a "Yes/No" option on an inadequate Assembly proposal. The options must include full self-government in Europe and an elected Parliament with full law-making powers. Opinion polls have shown consistently that the option most favoured by the Welsh electors is a law-making Parliament, as is in fact being offered to Scotland in their Referendum. It would be outrageous if the Referendum in Wales does not

even have that most popular option on the ballot paper.

Plaid Cymru wants real powers for a Welsh Parliament in order to break free from the demoralising Tory policies propagated at Westminster. Our programme, described in this Manifesto, provides for:

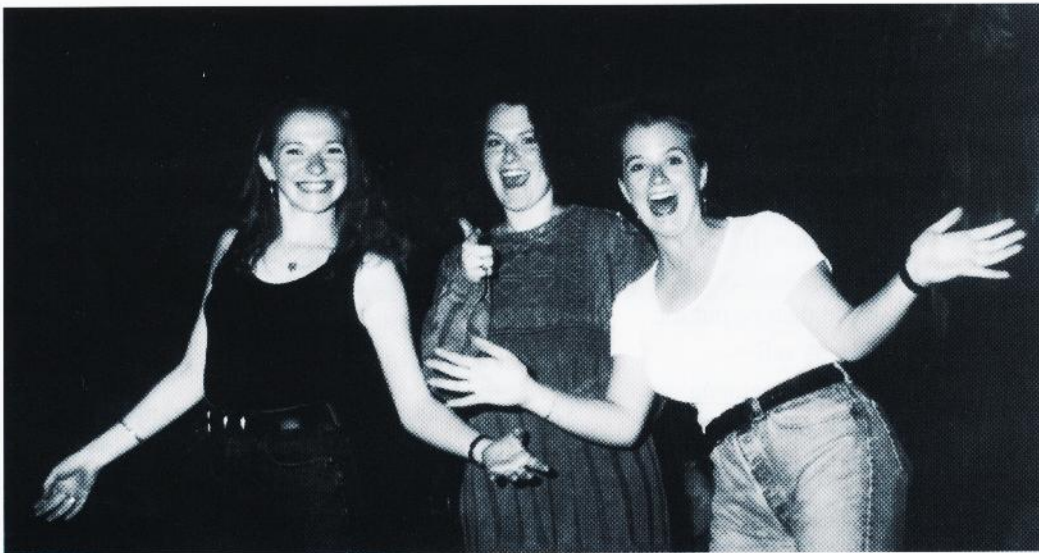
A commitment to full employment; a fair level of income tax to pay for properly funded health and education; a rejection of nuclear weapons and the massive armaments budget; a re-linking of pensions with average earnings; a commitment to sustainable environmental policies; a programme to rejuvenate Welsh agriculture.

This is a radical political agenda in line with the values of the Welsh nation. Plaid Cymru is now the only party in Wales which offers such priorities. We invite the people of Wales to transform these aspirations into reality and build a fairer Wales for all its people.

Dafydd Wigley

April, 1997.





BEST FOR WALES

Plaid Cymru's Programme for the New Millennium

Introduction

Plaid Cymru is the only party which places a self-governing Wales in a European Union at the forefront of its political agenda. To reach that aim, Plaid Cymru has a clear vision of what we wish to achieve for Wales and the people of Wales.

This vision arises from our belief in the inherent sovereignty of the people of Wales. It is not the Crown nor Parliament that holds the inalienable right to govern Wales, but the people of Wales themselves. Our political philosophy is rooted in this fundamental challenge to the British state; our political programme of action is rooted in the needs of the people of Wales for social justice and a sustainable future.

To attain social justice and a sustainable economy, Wales needs self-government. We have set out a two stage constitutional process to secure this, which is set out in our paper *'A Democratic Wales in a United Europe'*. There is an immediate necessity for an elected Parliament of Wales – with legislative and fiscal powers – to take over those functions of government currently carried out by the Welsh

Office and government quangos in Wales, together with those of the Home Office, Treasury, Department of National Heritage and aspects of industrial policy. Those matters not within the remit of this Phase I Parliament of Wales, would remain for the time being with the government at Westminster.

This Parliament would play an essential role in democratising Wales after years of abuse and Tory patronage of the political system. For the first time, the people of Wales would be able to make their own decisions regarding expenditure and priorities, rather than having alien policies foisted on us by unfriendly governments. Our central political programme of social justice and sustainability could start to be enacted. For example, Plaid Cymru's Parliament of Wales could:

- **Create 100,000 new jobs.**
- **Revitalise the National Health Service and reintroduce free prescriptions, dental check ups and eye tests.**



- **Reduce road traffic by 10%.**
- **Reject nursery vouchers and secure nursery education for all children.**

Full self-government could follow this Phase I Parliament after a minimum period of five years. Plaid Cymru foresees the Parliament debating and deciding upon self-government. A constitution, including a Charter of Rights, would then be put for approval by all the people of Wales. A self-governing Wales could then take its place among the nations of Europe and the world with an independent place in the European Union, Commonwealth and United Nations.

This manifesto explains how Plaid Cymru would act in a Parliament of Wales. In it, we set out our programme of action for both our Phase I Parliament, as well as our aims for a fully self-governing Wales.

As a party whose aim is self-government we have inevitably developed policies for that government to implement. This does not mean, however, that we have not been concerned with the current system of Westminster government or local government. The appalling lack of regard given to Welsh needs in that system, and the failure in particular of the British Labour Party in Wales to formulate policies to address those needs, has meant that Plaid Cymru has become the foremost campaigning party in Wales.

Our record in Welsh local government and the stature of our Members of Parliament speaks for itself. This manifesto contains much that our MPs will continue to fight for at Westminster, as well as practical ideas that our members, councillors and MPs will seek to realise here in Wales.

The principles of Plaid Cymru

Our principles do not arise from a history of imperialist exploitation of other nations, nor from any Welsh tradition of conquest and domination of other peoples. Rather our civic nationalism is rooted in a deep respect for the rights of peoples to self-determination, in a love of our heritage and environment, and in a profound appreciation of the fragile planet on which we live.

The twentieth century has seen many horrors perpetrated in the name of political creeds. Soviet

Russia killed many and blighted the lives of generations in the name of socialism and we have experienced many conflicts in the name of nationalism. Our current crisis of environmental degradation is similarly the fruit of unbridled capitalism. Plaid Cymru's civic nationalism rejects all such perversions of political belief. We gain our inspiration from the experiences of the communities of Wales, which survived long years of oppression, neglect and scorn.

Once, our nation was a seed bed for radical and socialist thought in response to the cruel social consequences of the industrial revolution. Now, Wales faces severe social and environmental challenges and is once more a home to radical ideas. Our civic nationalism welcomes all those living in Wales to join us in finding the solutions to those challenges and in restoring the equilibrium of social justice and environmental sustainability in Wales and Europe.

We do not seek to impose our views on other nations, nor to control their economic futures. We simply assert, peacefully and by democratic means, the right of the people in Wales to shape their own destiny. We do this in the full knowledge that the peoples of Europe must live in co-operation and peace. We, foremost among all the political parties in Wales, welcome the European Union as an opportunity to create such a Europe.

Within Wales we work on the principle of co-operation, drawing up our policies on the basis that many organisations, voluntary, statutory and private, may have similar ideals to ours. We welcome such co-operation as being in the tradition of Welsh community self-help and as one way of enabling our communities to gain the tools to set about solving their own problems.

Our self-governing Wales will be an open, democratic, just and equal society, drawing upon our radical and socialist traditions. The citizenship of such a nation will be open, extended to all either born or living in Wales. Plaid Cymru will therefore always be in the vanguard of the fight against racism, oppression, injustice and discrimination wherever it may occur.





The next step for Wales: a Parliament

Only Plaid Cymru has the record of consistently challenging the historical forgery that is the British state and of projecting a vision that reunites Wales with its European destiny. The constitutional imbalance in the United Kingdom and the democratic deficit in Wales is one of the core reasons for the relative failure of Wales, in comparison with similar European nations or regions, to deal with the transformation from a heavily industrialised economy to one which is more diverse and skills-based.

This fact was brought home in 1995 by the Republic of Ireland's success in achieving a greater income per head than Wales for the first time. Now that nation has overtaken the UK. Our constitutional relationship with Europe, via a Westminster government which is skewed towards the priorities of the south-east of England, has thwarted a full transformation of our economy. In particular, it has stood between Welsh needs and the structural and regional funds of the EU. As when, for example, parts of north Wales lost Objective 2 status in order that areas of the south-east of England would gain.

The constitution of the UK, once regarded by the London-based media as a field of esoteric academic debate, has now become the subject of intense argument. Plaid Cymru's standpoint has been vindicated. The expanding role and membership of the European Union; the demands of a peace process in Northern Ireland, and trenchant campaigning by Plaid Cymru, and the SNP in Scotland, have guaranteed that constitutional change will be at the forefront of political debate.

For the first time, the people of England are also realising that many of the Government's failures stem from constitutional inadequacies. Sleaze and corruption thrive in an atmosphere of political patronage. A parlous Tory government forces through unacceptable policies which feed off xenophobia and social alienation because its power base cannot represent the whole of the UK. New Labour may recognise the problems but offers different solutions to different electorates in a fudge between principle and a craven desperation for those same Tory votes.

In fact, the demands of political and monetary union in the EU force a decision between the small union – the UK – and the larger union – the EU. Most of the larger member states of the EU, but not the UK, have federal structures. Plaid Cymru's vision of a Europe of the regions has won the intellectual argument. The choice is between a united Europe based on quality of opportunity and sustainable development or isolation within an English isolationist state.

The reality of this choice is highlighted by the success of regions within economic unions such as the EU, South China, South East Asia, the Pacific Rim and California. Some of these successful economies, with highly educated work forces but poor social protection, offer threats and lessons for the European Union. They suggest that the future will belong to strong economic unions based on regional democracies.

Constitutional change is in the wind, but Plaid Cymru rejects tinkering with the present system. In



this manifesto, we are proud to draw on the radical and socialist traditions that have characterised Welsh political thought and development for a century. We offer a set of wholly practical proposals that would rebuild our nation and reaffirm our national and international aspirations.

Upon the establishment of a Parliament of Wales, Plaid Cymru would campaign to become the majority party. The proposals in this manifesto are those we would wish to see such a Parliament carry out for the benefit of Wales and its people. It is on the basis of such a programme that we feel confident the people of Wales would resolve to move forward to full self-government, and we here describe our vision of how such a Wales would relate to Europe and the world.

Our commitment to local democracy and empowerment of local communities means that many of the proposals in this manifesto will be delivered by local authorities. Others will be the remit of a Parliament of Wales. The following section sets out how the partnership between the Parliament of Wales and local government will work in practice. References hereafter to the Parliament of Wales are to Plaid Cymru's Phase I Parliament. References to a self-governing Wales are to the Phase II Parliament and Constitution which would follow a referendum on self-government. The processes are set out in our policy document *'A Democratic Wales in a United Europe.'*



Governing Wales for success and sustainability

At every level and for every aspect of Welsh life, Plaid Cymru believes that the principle of subsidiarity should prevail. This means that decisions affecting the lives of citizens should be taken whenever possible by the citizens through their nearest democratic body. Indeed, in our view sovereignty rests with the citizens and is only vested with local, national and international government in so far as is necessary to achieve effective government at every level. We therefore foresee a greatly enhanced role for community councils and want to restore to local authorities responsibility and fiscal control for their area.

Plaid Cymru's plans are for a two-chamber Parliament of Wales, the lower chamber (House of Representatives) to be the legislative house directly

Manifesto continues to page 36

