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# THE NEW WALES



SYNOPSIS OF THE  
POLICY OF THE  
WELSH NATIONALIST PARTY

*Swyddfwr Blaid, Caernarfon*

# THE NEW WALES

## SYNOPSIS OF THE POLICY OF THE WELSH NATIONALIST PARTY.

### 1. SHORT HISTORICAL SURVEY.

#### a. THE TRADITIONAL SOCIETY.

THE Welsh of old were kinsmen dwelling on land held in common. The "gwele" (*i.e.*, the communal land) belonged neither to the prince nor to the "uchelwr" (lord), but was the inalienable possession of all the nation's freemen. So also with the blood relationship or "bonedd," that bound each to each and all to all.

The word "teulu" (family), in its modern sense, would be a sufficiently accurate description of the early Welsh Society. It was essentially a family, and remained so for centuries.

#### b. THE NATION'S DECLINE.

The first heavy blow that that life sustained was the death of Llywelyn, the last of the princes. Thenceforth, unity vanished, and in spite of the struggles of individual leaders, foreign customs encroached with ever increasing rapidity. The Norman lords, with their castles and their law, introduced feudalism and its attendant chaos, polluting and destroying the traditional society. Even the monasteries helped to destroy the "llwyth" (tribe) and all it stood for. By the time of Henry VII, Welsh law had lost ground in even the most Welsh parts of Wales.

#### c. THE ACT OF UNION AND ITS RESULTS.

Such was the position when his son Henry VIII passed the Acts of Union. These completed the work begun by Edward I and the Normans, and dealt the deadliest blow of all, not merely to individual aspects of the old life, but to that life in its entirety. They completely disintegrated the "tribe" and the traditional idea of

“bonedd” and “perchentyaeth.”\* They destroyed Welsh law. They overthrew the barriers that had safeguarded social and individual life. They took away the freeman’s right to his house and land. They killed the traditional idea of responsibility, and opened the flood-gate to the greed of immigrants and to the rapacious competitive spirit of English shopkeepers and merchants. Now, for the first time, the worldly canons and standards of English commerce penetrated a society whose common folk have not yet lost that innate dignity and nobility that is their inheritance from the days of Welsh independence.

*d. THE INJURY TO THE LANGUAGE AND SOUL OF WALES.*

Land was indiscriminately appropriated. Sometimes it was bargained for, sometimes appropriated by law, and without exception from the unfortunate Welshman who was ignorant of the new English law. The fate that befell the communal land of the tribe, befell, likewise, the land of the monasteries which amounted probably to a fourth of the total area of Wales. It was a time of unprecedented robbery, litigation, wrong and suffering. Furthermore, at a time when almost everybody had to appear in some court or other, the Welshman was deprived of the right to use his native language there or in any other public office. Of all the centuries of Welsh history, none has been so laden with disaster for the mass of the Welsh people as the sixteenth.

*e. THE RAPE OF THE WEALTH OF WALES.*

The unequal Union with England was the beginning of a period of ever accelerating decline in the history of Wales. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th century is already implicit in the Acts of Union. First the land fell a prey to the harpies of the Tudor regime, who battered on it for over a century. Having exhausted the surface, they fell on the riches hidden below—coal and iron, tin and slates. The land was bruised and torn in the search for wealth. From the cities of England, there flocked to Wales a horde of rootless capitalists to suck

her lifeblood and leave her in a more miserable state than before. It is estimated that more mineral wealth was produced and sold from Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire in twenty-five years than from any other part of equal area, throughout the world. Meanwhile the Welshman lost the remnants of his freedom, and degenerated into a servant, a slave, a mere cog in the wheel of the new robber machine.

*f. THE POSITION TODAY.*

The ruin and disintegration of the ancient society, the destruction of her law and social organisation, and their replacement by others hostile to her, the official ostracism of her language, the confiscation of her land—such has been the lot of Wales in the past. Modern Wales, as we know it, is the result of these centuries of exploitation—a land where no industries, major or minor, flourish; where Agriculture, the basic industry, is in fatal danger, where the percentage of unemployed is double that of England; and whence, in the course of fifteen years, 400,000 of the inhabitants have been compelled to emigrate into the country of the ancient foe. One industry alone flourishes in Wales today—that of draining the country of its best blood.

**II. THE REMEDY.**

*A. Politically—A Free Wales.*

WE see, then, how deep-rooted and widely spread the canker is. It follows that the cure must be equally deep-and wide-reaching. In other words, it must be both political and social, if it is to undo the whole centuries-old evil. A non-political remedy will lack the necessary effective power, while the new Wales will be without design and chaotic unless the remedy be also a social one.

*DOMINION STATUS.*

What, then, is the political remedy? Precisely that which was applied to Ireland, Canada and Australia, *viz.*, a Parliament with full power to organize the internal

\* For an explanation of this word, vide p.8, footnote.

structure and to determine the foreign relations of the country. The official name given to this power is Dominion Status, and nothing short of this will satisfy us. A Secretary for Wales is not enough, and such a measure of de-centralisation as that of Northern Ireland (Ulster) is not adequate. Both at their best are mere morsels which serve only to postpone the full meal. We demand, therefore, nothing short of Dominion Status, and let nothing else be offered to us.

#### *WELSH AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.*

That Parliament will legislate for every aspect of Welsh life and its official language will be Welsh. So it will be in all the schools and law courts of Wales. Our language is the symbol of our nationhood before the world, and it is at our peril that we neglect it. It is the breath of our life, and without it we have no real life. Only when it becomes the official language of a Welsh Parliament, of the education and of the law courts of Wales, will its future be sure and glorious.

#### *WALES A MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.*

It has already been mentioned that a Welsh Government will determine its own foreign policy. By now the majority of the nations send their representatives to that international Parliament, which is called The League of Nations. At present Wales has neither voice nor say at Geneva, much though she wishes to express her views on international affairs. A Secretary for Wales would not secure for us the right of representation in the League. But self-Government, *i.e.*, Dominion Status would gain for Wales equality with Ireland, Canada and every other nation. That is why "Representation on the League of Nations" has been on our programme since the formation of the Party. Thus shall the world know that Welshmen are no longer slaves.

#### *B. The Cultural Remedy—A Welsh Wales.*

THE English government has destroyed practically all the bases of our national unity. It has deprived us of our political freedom, so that we have no Welsh government; of our laws and law courts so that we have no Welsh system of justice; of our economic independence so that we have become slaves to the City of London. All these we shall have to rebuild from the very foundations.

But there still remains one heritage, in whose bonds North and South are one—the Welsh language. This is in our possession; it needs not to be regained but only to be safeguarded. It is the proof of our nationality, and our right to a place in the society of nations. It is the rampart behind which the nation may gather its strength for the reconquest of the lost territories.

Retention of our language makes possible the achievement of our independence, the restoration of our system of justice, and the reorganization of society in our country. But if we renounce it, all these things also we renounce, for upon it rests our hopes. If we renounce our language, it will be futile to complain of the injustice of foreign administration; futile to protest against transferring trials from Wales to London; futile to attempt to save Wales from the grip of English capitalism.

It is therefore our inescapable duty to safeguard the Welsh language, and to resist all attempts to destroy it. Its survival is a standing miracle. All the power of English law, education and money has been pitted against it. It has become a secondary consideration in its own home. Law courts regard it as a foreign language; it is not even compulsory in schools and colleges; only one half of our people speak it. In spite of this, the leaders of education in our country believe that it is safe, and politicians with a turn for suave platform phrases at eisteddfod and festival derive comfort from the fact that more Welsh is spoken today than in the time of Glyndŵr!

*The keystone of the Welsh Nationalist Party's policy is that the Welsh language should have precedence over all other languages on its own soil.* The disadvantages of an inability to speak Welsh in Wales should be identical with those of an inability to speak English in England. Just as the ordinary Englishman finds English fully adequate to all the demands of a full life, whether in religion, education, government or industry, so we anticipate the days when the ordinary Welshman will have no need of any other language than Welsh from his cradle to the grave. To *pride* ourselves on being bilingual and to suggest that Welshmen who speak two languages are twice as able as Englishmen who speak only one is, we believe, merely an inferiority compensation. To the majority of men one language is the natural thing and it is one that they speak. It is the pressure of circumstances alone that drives them to speak more than one. In the case of Wales those circumstances were its political subjection to England. A removal of the cause will remove the effect. Naturally the vocation, *e.g.*, of scholars and diplomats will compel a knowledge of other languages. We are speaking of the ordinary man, be he intelligent or otherwise.

But the language must be kept alive today. Not otherwise can it become our one and only language. The following are some of the things that must be done today to safeguard it.

*i.* It should be made impossible for anyone to receive his education in Wales without learning the language. To object to this as being compulsion is sheer cant. The phrase "compulsory English" in England is unheard of. Why? In England there is and can be no education apart from the language. In England education and the English language are synonymous. Let it be so in Wales. If education, then Welsh; no Welsh, no education.

*ii.* All arts subjects, from the infants school to the honours course in the University, should be taught in Welsh, at least to Welsh-speaking pupils. This would make the pupil's or the student's mind more precise; for English lends itself much better to loose thinking than Welsh.

*iii.* In addition to learning the language, special attention should be paid to the history of Wales, so that the language, as it is gradually mastered, will become the medium in which the national consciousness, developed in the history courses, will be expressed. This should be especially the case in non-Welsh speaking districts.

*iv.* Welsh should be made compulsory for matriculation to the University. That and that only is worthy of a *Welsh* University.

*v.* Particularly in rural districts, a genuinely Welsh education should be given, aiming primarily at qualifying the pupils for life in the Welsh country-side. The only true education is education for life; in Wales, therefore, for Welsh life. The City of London figures far too prominently in our system. Instead of developing Welsh citizens, we are mass-producing English clerks.

Up to now, only the work possible in schools has been touched upon. It is evident, however, that neither education nor a language can be protected by a mere education and language policy. There must be fostered outside schools and colleges a national life to which Welsh will be the necessary key. Welsh having been given pride of place in schools and colleges, it would be absolutely fatal to relegate it to the rear in the outside world. It must have equality of status inside and outside schools and colleges. Therefore we demand

*vi.* That the Welsh language be accorded the dignity of official status in the administration of justice in Wales. The dignity of the Law is the highest lay dignity in the State. It is therefore of the utmost importance that Welsh be recognised as the official language of the law courts in Wales.

*vii.* No-one who is not Welsh-speaking should be appointed to a post under the government or any

public authority. Consistently with this, Welsh should be one of the official languages of every department of the central government, and of every local authority in Wales.

All these things can be secured, before actual self-government is achieved, and they would hasten its realisation. For the vital links between Wales and its past would be reformed, and the yoke of English capitalism and English industrialism on Wales be broken. A thoroughly Welsh education in Wales is the Beautiful Gate to self-Government.

### *C. The Social Remedy.*

A CO-OPERATIVE WALES, or  
"PERCHENTYAETH."\*

HAD the Welsh Nationalist Party been founded in the last century, it is doubtful whether its policy would have included this section. To have asked for a Free Wales and a Welsh Wales would have been enough. The Nationalism of the nineteenth century was purely political and cultural, and Mazzini was its prophet.

But since the Welsh Nationalist Party is of the 20th century, social and economic policy finds an important place in its programme. It is no longer enough to state that we desire a free and Welsh Wales; people want to know what kind of Wales we propose, what its social structure, and what the principles upon which we intend to build.

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\* This utterly untranslatable word (it means literally "possession-of-a-house-ness") expresses the fundamental conceptions of the traditional Welsh view of society, as based upon the family, its properties and the rights and duties attaching thereto; it is used by the Welsh Nationalist Party, against that background, in the sense that general economic freedom for the people is possible only when ownership is as widely distributed as possible.

People ask these questions today, because they have realized that a political and cultural freedom without economic freedom is not enough. The great aim of the last century was to win the vote. Its realization, however, was not the dawn of the golden age. The capitalist was no less oppressive now that his men had secured the vote; and before long, the worker saw that the freedom of the polling booth which he went to every four or five years in no way lessened the tyranny of the factory which he went to every day.

The basic problem of our age is how to restore to men that social and economic freedom, that has been filched from them. Before suggesting the Welsh Nationalist Party's solution, let us trace roughly how the theft was contrived. It happened because all the means of production, both land and tools, passed from the hands of the people into the hands of a small class of capitalists. The yeoman gave way to the tenant and the farm-labourer; instead of ownership of and rights on the land came the tenant's rent and the labourer's wage, high rent and low wages.

This was also the fate of the craftsman. Where previously the craftsman had owned his workshop and the necessary equipment for pursuing his craft, under these new conditions, he was obliged to become a wage-earner in the capitalist's factory, and to use the equipment and machinery of his master. Where previously he had owned property and was therefore a free and responsible man, all that was left him was his labour, all he had to lose was his chains, his freedom and responsibility gone beyond recall. Time intensified the process. More and more wealth fell into the hands of fewer and fewer people, and although attempts were made to hide the real nature of the process when the Government (which was, of course, the servant of the capitalists, and more than willing to paper the

cracks of the system), introduced such measures as health insurance and unemployment payments, the great majority of our countrymen are at the mercy of their economic masters.

*What, then, is the remedy?* Some suggest that the capitalist system can be "reformed." That is not our belief. The need is not for reconstruction of capitalism but for its destruction. Revolution in some form or other is the only way by which an adequate system can be substituted for it.

Others suggest that the remedy lies in continuing the process. "It is true," they admit, "that the misery of the working class today is due to the accumulation of wealth and the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few. It should not be so. All wealth and economic power should belong to the State alone. That is the remedy." In other words, the remedy advocated is the intensification of the disease, *i.e.*, of the process of giving more and more to fewer and fewer, until finally everything is in the hands of one, namely, the State—in other words, in nobody's hands.

The Welsh Nationalist Party refuses this solution, as irrelevant. The original cause of all this misery was the confiscation of property from the people, and the consequent loss of that economic freedom which ownership alone can guarantee. *It follows therefore that the restoration of freedom depends on the restoration of ownership.* Equally too, it follows that that end will not be achieved by subordinating the individual to the State. *The aim is not an exchange of masters, but the restoration of freedom.*

The Party's policy, in the words of Mr. Saunders Lewis, its President, will therefore be "to make the families of the nation as free, secure and independent as possible. To that end, it will be necessary to plan and legislate for

a wide distribution of ownership, for ownership is the only guarantee of freedom. Ownership should be so widely distributed as to make it impossible for the State" (thus excluding Fascism, Communism, and many forms of Socialism) "or individuals or groups of individuals" (thus excluding Capitalism) "to exercise economic tyranny over the families of the nation."

Wales will also have to be defended against economic oppression from without. The trade of Wales with other countries should always be conducted to the advantage of Wales, and it will be the duty of the Welsh Parliament to protect Welsh trade against the free and unrestrained competition of other countries. So can the resources of Wales be best developed for her own sake and her neighbours'.

The economic foundation of the nation will be the family which is the basic unit of every Christian society, and around it will be built the social system. "Perchentyaeth" means simply "Family and Home." The crowning achievement, a Welsh Government will be to endow the families of the nation with the resources necessary to safeguard the Family and Home. To attain this :

- i. The land of Wales will, as far as possible, be divided among her people, because that system of ownership affords the maximum security. Through educational, technical and credit facilities, agricultural interests will be safeguarded.

- ii. In industries, where such personal and direct ownership is not practicable, the aim will be increasing ownership by the workers, and, through their trade unions, definite participation in the control of the industry.

- iii. South Wales will be, to a large extent, de-industrialised, because to confine the workers and

resources of Wales within the narrow, congested valleys of the South is both unhealthy and dangerous. From the standpoint of the balance and security of industry, absolute dependence on one industry, such as coal, which is an easy prey to merciless international competition, can never be permitted.

iv. In place of these major industries, new minor industries will be created, according to Sir Malcolm Stewart's advice, *that the cure for Wales lies in creating a local market for local products*. Wales will be an eminently suitable field for such a development owing to the present dearth of minor industries, depending, as it does, almost entirely on other countries for the satisfaction of her needs.

v. As far as possible agriculture and rural industries, and the establishing of new industries, will be carried through on the principle of co-operation. But where an industry because of its magnitude cannot thus be organized, it will be organized by the local authorities, on the Belgian model, which is fully explained in Mr. Saunders Lewis's pamphlet, *Local Authorities and Welsh Industries*. The principle, here also, is division of authority and responsibility, because such is the best guarantee of freedom.

The above is quite obviously an outline of policy, stressing principles rather than details. This is intentional. The principles will remain unchanged; but the circumstances in which the builders of the New Wales will be called upon to apply them are hidden from us.

### III. PRACTICAL METHODS.

#### a. PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. THE FIGHT FOR WALES IN THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT.

THE Welsh Nationalist Party will fight parliamentary elections with a view to sending its representatives to London, as an independent party, every member of which is vowed to reject any office or honour offered to him by the English government. They will be there to serve Wales and Wales alone. They will press her claim to freedom, defend her language and culture, protect her workers, and put her on the map of the world. This will continue while Welsh representation in London remains necessary.

#### b. LOCAL ELECTIONS. SAVING WALES THROUGH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

The Welsh Nationalist Party realises that Wales already has a measure of autonomy in her local authorities. Its policy will therefore be, not only to seek greater freedom through Parliamentary action, but also to prove that Wales can use its present modicum of freedom to national ends. The strength of our claims in London will be proportioned to our success in Wales.

There already exists a Welsh National Development Council (the formation of which the Party had for three years continuously advocated). Every local authority not only possesses the right of membership but is invited to become a member. Up to the present the response has been disappointing. The different authorities have preferred selfish bickering for favours from the Government and from English and foreign industrialists to concerted efforts for the general well-being of Wales. *It is abundantly clear by now that in union alone lies the strength and hope*



*of Wales.* We entreat all the local authorities of Wales to realize that the surest way to save themselves is to save Wales, and that it is in their power today to lay the foundations of security and success by becoming members of the Welsh National Development Council. It will be part of the Party's policy to press this unceasingly on the various local council, and to make it an issue in all local elections. Thus will be formed the nucleus of an Economic Parliament for Wales.

It is thus possible for local authorities through the Development Council to start to rebuild the life of Wales. Mr. Saunders Lewis's pamphlet, *Local Authorities and Welsh Industry*, shows how this can be done, namely, by means of

#### PUBLIC UTILITY BOARDS.

These exist in Belgium. It is not a new untested invention, but a plan that has worked successfully for over fifty years, and it could easily be adapted to Welsh conditions.

It would introduce the principle of public ownership (by the local authorities, mainly) and co-operative control in industry, without government monopoly and without the obvious dangers of direct trade by local authorities. (For further details, consult the pamphlet which can be obtained from "Swyddfa'r Blaid," Caernarfon).

By means of such Public Co-operative Boards, industries could be established in Wales to supply all the needs of the local authorities. It is known that huge sums are being spent annually on education, houses, road, etc. Their budget is the only true Welsh national budget. Is it not natural, then, that these authorities should supply their needs from Wales? At present, Wales does not produce all the necessary commodities; they are bought from England. Has not Wales the first claim to this market? How splendid it would be if the Welsh

local authorities by means of these Public Utility Boards established industries in Wales, with—as is only right and proper—an assured market in Wales.

The same principle could easily be applied to the supply of water and electricity, and to the problems of transport.

Furthermore, the principle can also be applied to the coal industry. It is well known that the major problem of Wales is to find employment for at least 50,000 coal-miners, who under existing conditions, have no hope of reabsorption into the mining industry. The only salvation for that industry is the development of some oil from coal process. Rather than allow this to fall into the hands of English capitalists, to whom Wales is a mere name, and who would control it from London, let Wales, through its own local councils, grasp the opportunity of securing it as a heritage for the Welsh nation.

Among other things that the Party would press on the National Development Council, would be the building of a New Trunk Road, to connect North and South and make Wales a real economic unit. Not a bridge across the Severn to bring South Wales nearer to Bristol and London, but a road that would connect South with Central and North Wales—that would be the real boon.

(Translated from the Welsh pamphlet,  
"Cymru Rydd: Braslun Polisi'r Blaid,"  
by J. Gwilym Jones).

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