

The End of Britishness

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Context

The End of Britishness is the theme of an Address by Plaid Cymru President Mr. Gwynfor Evans to a Rally held in Port Talbot on Saturday, 4 October 1980 to launch the party's campaign against unemployment.

Abstract

Who defends Wales? Nobody can sincerely claim that she is defended by the British Conservative or the British Labour Party. On the contrary. One party has been built for that purpose. In all Welsh history Plaid Cymru has been the only independent Welsh political party. It fights day in day out for Wales, that is the purpose of its existence, and it strives for justice and freedom. It is the only hope of Wales. If it should fail, then this ancient nation has no national future.

THE WELSH COMMUNITY

We meet today on the western edge of the Vale of Glamorgan where Maelgwyn Gwynedd, the biggest political figure on this island in the 6th century, was educated at Llanilltud Fawr about the time that Arthur died of the wounds he received at the battle of Camlan, probably before the birth of St. David Maelgwyn Gwynedd came from Gwynedd to the Glamorgan coast through a country which had been united by nearly a thousand miles of Roman roads, and in which a sense of belonging was fostered by history, religion, language and traditions. He would not have understood the purpose of the Margam steelworks but he would have guessed at the purpose of the non-military attack made upon it and its neighbouring town and much of Welsh life by a hostile government. It was during this century that Taliesin and Aneurin composed poetry so splendid that there must have been a long tradition behind it and no English poetry was written for another 800 years. The Welsh and their magnificent language were here 1500 years before the British came into existence. It is our determination that we shall be here after them too.

Wales is a small but ancient national community whose miraculous survival in the shadow of a nation which has been, and whose language still is the most powerful in the world, helps one to understand Solzhenitsyn's belief that each nation has a mission. Our first loyalty as Welshmen is owed to our nation; our duty is to create the conditions in which her great Christian heritage can survive and develop. This heritage is Wales' great contribution to the world. There is in Wales a deep sense of community which we must further deepen, and in which a just and Welsh society can grow, infused by Welsh values. This means putting our people in possession of their astonishing history, tending their roots, deepening their knowledge of their rich and varied culture from poetry and music to rugby.

Not all take this view. In a radio programme put out in the U.S Neil Kinnock has said that from the 15th to the 17th century Wales had no history at all, and that before that it was the history of brigands ennobled (his word) as Welsh Princes.

DENMARK

We can learn from the early folk colleges of Denmark through which so big a part of Danish youth passed in the last century, in which there were neither examinations nor notes, complete reliance being placed on what Grundtvig called "the living word". Two subjects only were taught, the history and literature of land the youth of Denmark were conscious of belonging to a remarkable community of which they were proud. They had a sense of belonging, of fellowship, on which the great Danish co-operative system was founded.

People are becoming more aware today of the need of community, that government should be of community, by community, on the local and national levels. There are calls by leading politicians for the creation of community, an infinitely difficult task, for community is the fruit of growth, and in the case of a nation often of slow growth. But we do not need to create community in Wales. It is already here, and has been for 1500 years. Our need is to renew and deepen the sense of community. This is done by heightening Welsh consciousness.

THE BRITISH CON-TRICK

The hope of British politicians is to create community on the British level. This is probably impossible. Britain is not a nation; it is a state. The idea of British nationhood is a con-trick. The population of Britain is a huge amorphous mass in which a sense of community exists only fleetingly during time of war, and in which no deep sense of belonging can otherwise be discerned. Its hugeness inhibits a development of a sense of community in times of peace. The calls of politicians, though they express a real need, blow in the wind in Britain. The Political Editor of the Sunday Times wrote a few months ago, "By pride in our culture, just as by standing up to the Russians (sic), Britain rejoins the company of self-respecting nations." But British culture is English culture, the British language is the English language, the content of Britishness is Englishness. The dull and opaque concept of Britishness is the political face of Englishness.

But Wales is a nation. That is, she is a community. And Wales is small only 5 per cent of the population of Britain, so that the sense of community here can be strong. We can all feel members of a closely knit community. We are clearly Welsh, not amorphously British. True the Welsh are British subjects; they must become Welsh citizens.

WELSH CONSCIOUSNESS

The consciousness of Welshness is not deep among more than a part of our people. Only a part of them give their loyalty to Wales; most give it to the state, or to a class or the labour Party. But Welsh consciousness is deepening these days, in part as a consequence of the vigorous Englishness of Mrs. Thatcher and a very English government. Many who used to think of Wales as a British region, and of themselves as British Labour, now think of Wales as a nation, as their country, and of themselves as Welsh. If this change develops it is bad news for the British Government and the British Labour Party, for it may presage a fusion of the national and the labour movements in Wales into such a powerful force that a free and just Wales may emerge, the last thing the Government and the labour Party want to see.

Labour is revolted by the thought of an upsurge of Welsh nationality. It hopes to replace the Tories in power in the next election, but if its Welsh pocket-boroughs are captured for Wales that hope is likely to be dashed. So Labour's internecine British quarrels may be taking place over a Welsh time-bomb.

THE END OF BRITAIN

They share another Welsh cause of depression with the Tories and the Government. If Plaid Cymru wins for Wales a self-governing confederal status, and the SNP wins the same status for Scotland, that is the end of the so-called British nation.

These islands will be under the government of a partnership of free and equal nations of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The British state will have ceased to exist, and with it the "British nation." In opposing national freedom for Wales and Scotland, the British parties are fighting for the life of their alleged nation. This rally is concerned with language and work, "iaith a gwaith". Linking the two, far from being incongruous, is natural, for in Wales they are woven together in a seamless web. The Welsh language is not only our greatest tradition, it is the great tradition Wales has, the one really great feature of world importance in our life. Its power is immense. Not only is it the vehicle of a rich and ancient culture. Language can precreate a culture. It can even, as in Israel, create a culture anew. The State's attack on it has been part of an attack on the Welsh identity and on the national community of Wales. The attack on the Welsh economy has likewise been an attack on the language and culture of Wales. Today the assault on the steel, coal and other industries is the same as the assault on Welsh society and culture. Likewise the defence of the language is one with the defence of the economy and the community. It is the defence of Welshmen as autonomous human persons and of their dignity and identity against the onslaught of Britishness. We fight to prevent the conversion of Welshmen into abstract beings lost in a rootless mass.

In this struggle, the language is a mighty weapon. We can adapt to our situation what Jean-Paul Sartre said of the Basques, "To speak Welsh is a revolutionary act." It challenges the whole of the formidable British establishment; and will help us overcome the oppressive British state. And we must always bear in mind that the British state, whose function as our state, is to succour and strengthen the life of the Welsh nation, is the centralist enemy of Wales.

MRS. THATCHER

When Mrs. Thatcher came to Swansea she unmasked its inhuman face, urging the 123,000 Welsh unemployed of the day to be mobile, to uproot themselves from community and culture, to be reasonable and realise that family and social life was something which it was sensible to cast aside to meet the demands of British capitalism. "The Welsh have been used to moving about in search of work" she said. Indeed they have. In 1920-1940 the Government adopted the Portal Commission's policy of transference of labour, and transferred no less than 500,000 unemployed Welsh people, mainly young, to England, where work of course awaited them. They were regarded as a pool of labour not as human beings to be used for the benefit of English industry. There was never a more brazen demonstration of colonialist exploitation; the exploitation of Welsh human resources for the metropolitan state was far worse than the ruthless exploitation of Welsh coal and other mineral resources, of which water was a notorious example. The economic and social basis of the national culture and language of Wales was ravished. It was after this colossal migration that West Indians and Pakistanis had to be brought in to take the jobs still unfilled.

This was the government that had excluded the Welsh language from legal and official life, and from the schools of Wales, establishing a system which punished children if they spoke a word of Welsh to each other in school.

Can anyone maintain that a Government which treats a little nation in the way in which the British Government treats the Welsh nation is doing its utmost to sustain and strengthen the nation's life so that it is richer and fuller in every way? That is the function of government, and lovingly does it fulfil this function in England. In Wales, however, it has to be admitted that the British Government is an enemy. The British State is a killer state.

ECONOMICS AND CULTURE

All this shows how inseparable are language and economics, culture and industry. D. J. Davies used to tell of a debate he attended in the Gwyn Hall in Neath in 1920 about the time of the publication of the Sankey Report on the coal industry. The famous name in the debate on the future of the industry was H. N. Brailsford, the great socialist journalist. He argued in favour of the Webbian system of centralist control which in fact prevailed in 1947: everything organised bureaucratically from London. With the victory of the Webbs this centralism became the heart of Labour policy. Against Brailsford, a Welshman argued for decentralist, co-operative control. At that time the guild socialism of G. D. H. Cole was popular in Wales, especially in that it had a close affinity with the policies and attitudes of Keir Hardie's I.L.P. (from which so many members moved into the early Plaid Cymru.)

At the end of the debate D. J. Davies said that in a group gathered near the platform H. N. Brailsford said to his opponent, “You were quite right, your solution is the ideal one. But we could not work it in England. It would be impracticable. You could do so in Wales, because your people have culture.”

Had Wales her own government in those years doubtless that is what would have happened. Not only would the worst of the economic holocaust have been avoided, but a humane system of industrial democracy would have been established, and what a valuable lead it would have given to England and other countries. I have never been able to get out of my head the idea that Wales, with all its exceptional talent, should be a kind of social laboratory. But so far from being able to make any economic decisions for Wales, or take any action in those years, Wales was not even regarded as an economic entity. It was even possible to plan the administration of Wales in all fields from Bristol, Birmingham and Liverpool. We have come a long way since then thanks to Plaid Cymru, though few realise the magnitude of our achievement. As late as 1966 the Beeching Commission’s plan for the legal administration of Wales was to base it on Bristol and Liverpool. That was written into the Commission’s final report when the Carmarthen by-election happened. Three visits to the Commission’s head-quarters changed that. Wales is administered as a legal entity from Cardiff, and Gwent is included after having been excluded since 1536.

TRANSPORT

Talking of Beeching, it was the failure to get Wales administered as a transport entity which gave him the chance to wreak such havoc on the Welsh rail system, which was the most prosperous in the whole of Britain. And we have paid heavily for the non-recognition of Wales as an entity in roads. We still have no major north-south highway to unite us – divide and rule still applies here. When pressed the authorities would say, after pointing out the danger of snow in winter that there was no industry, a typical British Government response. In Italy the authorities said. “There is no industry in central Italy therefore we must build a road”. They built the magnificent Autostrada del Sole.

The need is still to enlarge the freedom of Welshmen to give them a central role in decision making in politics and in industry in a much more participating democracy. We must work not only for a radical decentralisation of power –and decentralisation lives at the heart of our philosophy– but for the establishment of Welsh democracy. There is no such dignified thing today in our poor little peripheral province.

The creation of a Welsh democracy is a great political undertaking. No advance is possible on any front with organised political action. Economics are subordinate to politics. If you have political power you can hope to create a strong and healthy economy. Without political freedom, as Wales is, you can do nothing. In Wales you are entirely at the mercy of the bureaucratic and political oligarchy in London.

THE CAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The cause of the mass unemployment and migration and poverty of the 20's and 30's was not economic. It was not due to poverty of natural resources or of human resources –Wales had a unique wealth of those. The cause was political. If Wales were governed by the Welsh and not the British it would not have happened or at least in nothing like the devastating form we saw. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland have nothing comparable with the rich natural resources of Wales. They thrived. Whereas the population of Wales remained stationary between 1920 and 1970, theirs doubled. Whereas 9 of the 13 Welsh counties in 1970 had smaller populations than in 1850, this was true only of Middlesex in England, while the populations of every one of the 18 counties of Norway which stretch up into the Arctic Circle, increased, thanks to the careful development policy of the Norwegian Government.

The mass unemployment and threatened migration today is still due to political causes. New Zealand's unemployment rate is 4.0 per cent
Austria is 2.1 per cent
Sweden is 1.8 per cent
Norway is 1.6 per cent
Switzerland is 0.2 per cent

These countries are small but self-governing. They show that mass-unemployment is far from being inevitable. Self-government is the main condition of successfully rebuilding the Welsh economy. Welsh unemployment exceeds 11 per cent because we have no Welsh government to put things right.

TV CAMPAIGN

The TV campaign has shown how to fight mass unemployment in the short term. It has been a long struggle, a splendid chapter in our history, in which a great deal of self-sacrifice, even of heroism, has been shown. Fifteen young people have spent periods of three months or more in prison in the course of it, Ffred Ffrancis for 3 and 1/4 years. Many hundreds, and not all young, have been imprisoned for shorter periods. Two thousand refused to pay for their TV licences in the biggest civil disobedience campaign seen in Britain, and were prepared to face prison rather than pay the fine.

The television fight was not fought for Welsh speakers alone, but for all the Welsh people. The victory was won for the whole of Wales. We brought the Government to its knees because Wales was united in a way which made the Government fear the powerful growth of nationalism.

True, not all, perhaps none, of the establishment saw it that way. A Liverpool Daily Post article said, "Gwynfor Evans" threat showed no signs of budging Mr.

Whitelaw..... What won the Welsh their battle was the reasonable moderate face of Wales presented by wise and rational men. "Sir Anthony Meyer, M.P. said: "Had it not been for the mock heroics of Gwynfor Evans I believe Mr. Whitelaw would have come to this decision many weeks ago." Mr. Delwyn Williams, M.P. furiously dissented. A lady came to me on the street in Dolgellau and said. "You have been lucky of Labour haven't you, getting you out of a hole like that!"

With impeccable timing the Labour Party chose to denounce me the day before the Government backed down.

But I think it is generally realised that it was fear of Welsh Nationalism that caused the Government to cave in with such humiliation.

This is the power available to us in Wales in our fight for social justice and political freedom. It is as Welshmen that Welshmen can most effectively defend their prospects. But it must be stringently insisted that this great moral force which springs from loyalty to our nation is a process of self-discipline, often arduous and sometimes costly.

A WELSH PARTY

Keir Hardie had some inkling of its value when he urged Welsh M.P.'s to sit together in a Welsh Party in the House of Commons, but socialists in the countries of Britain, unlike Poland, Yugoslavia, the Scandinavian countries and others, have been oblivious of its value. They have countered it by a bogus internationalism. In a pamphlet on Yugoslavia which should be compulsory reading for all politically minded Welshmen, Robin Okey says that this internationalism of the centralist left "belongs to the most primitive stage of socialism, to the tradition historians have dubbed the 'naive cosmopolitanism' which characterised the socialist movements of all dominant nations in their inception." Here it was of course reinforced by centralised Britishness.

It is this Britishness which has inhibited most Welsh socialists from giving their loyalty to their nation, and nationalism is about loyalty. Jean Jaurés, was the great leader of French socialism in the years before the first world war, a pacifist friend of Keir Hardie who so believed in the brotherhood of man that he hoped for a general strike to prevent a war in which French workers would slaughter their German comrades. He was accordingly assassinated on the eve of war. Jaurés was a man of Christian values and vision like Keir Hardie, who had no doubt about the value of the nation. "Destroy the nation," he said you will sink back into barbarism."

That, too, was the standpoint of Connolly, one of the greatest of European socialists. He marched at the head of his battalion to the barricades in Dublin, Easter 1916, was wounded and carried in a chair to face his execution squad. On

his execution squad. On his way he said of the British Socialists. "They will not understand why I am here. They will forget that I am an Irishman." Too many Welsh socialists have forgotten that they are Welshmen who owe their loyalty to their land.

BRITISHNESS

It is by Britishness that their effectiveness has been destroyed, their attitude to Wales warped so that they simply could not see her straight as a nation, their own nation. In many of them a complex psychology developed in which an emotional antagonism to Welsh nationality and the Welsh language, often poisonous and malicious, played a part. We can all think of case-book examples.

Britishness has fouled the fair face of England. In Wales it has been an ugly mortiferous evil, destroying whatever it touched, never creating anything that was good or beautiful. Typical of its fruit is the awful lifeless, colourless provincialism of Welsh Conservatives, who live to ape London, and who never did a selfrespecting Welsh thing in their lives, except perhaps play rugby or sing in a choir. These are less dangerous than Labour because they have never won the hearts, let alone the minds, of the Welsh people. Anti-Welsh nation, the party of English in Wales who increase as Wales becomes more anglicised, the Conservative Party opposed any advance ever attempted for Wales and has been the constant enemy of Welsh nationhood. Its activities in Welsh affairs are governed by a solid British determination to prevent Wales ever living as a nation. It is impossible for anyone who gives his loyalty to Wales to support the Conservative Party.

THE LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party in Wales shares the Britishness of the Tories. Labour has not just been infected by the British pestilence. It is a British Party through and through. That is, it is English. It is 5 per cent Welsh and 85 per cent English. The content of its Britishness is Englishness, barely coloured in London by the 5 per cent Welsh, who do very nicely for themselves there, where Wales is out of sight, and number among them the most extreme British centralists, opposing even the little decentralism prepared in the ill-fated elected Welsh Assembly, but busily getting on in their distant political world.

Like its membership, Labour policies are English; its whole ethos is English. Many Welsh people have been silly enough to think that the Labour Party will fight for Wales, will defend Wales. They are being disabused of this belief now, in the day of our nation's crisis. The 85 per cent English are seen to be unmoved by the plight of the 5 per cent Welsh. Wales at this hour needs true socialists, not ambitious hacks, who will serve and defend her.

“The history of the English state and of the English people,” says A. J. P. Taylor, “merged for the first time” with the impact of the Great War. He quite properly calls it an English state, for English is synonymous with British, only rather more so. The Labour Party has been and is the faithful servant of this English or British state, never of Wales –the thought is laughable.

Wales has been in Labour’s pocket for 60 years, and look at the consequences. It closed a coalmine every seven weeks during its six years of power, 1964-70. It closed East Moors, stopped steel-making at Ebbw Vale, prepared for the closure of Shotton, and who thinks it would have saved Llanwern and Margam? It used unemployment as an instrument of policy just like the Tories are doing, and saw a million and a half people on the dole. Its housing record was abominable. It widened the gap between the rich and poor. It could have created a Welsh 4th channel television service in 1975 but refused. The Party that built the first British atom bomb, increased expenditure annually on armaments; particularly notable is the £1,000 million extra it spent on Polaris. And this was the party that killed the Welsh Assembly, leaving us naked and defenceless today in face of Thatcher. The Assembly was the creature of the Government, but that was all. The Government gave the country no lead, though it gave the opponents the freest of reins, and looked on benignly while they monopolised public attention and ignored a succession of 3-line whips. In Wales not a single local Labour party worked for the Assembly; every one worked against it. No wonder the result was such a fiasco. And now we face the devastating consequences.

WAR AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

If self-government is the condition of rebuilding the Welsh economy, full self-government is needed for Wales to play her rightful and necessary part in world order. That we have a contribution to make is seen when we consider that the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties support nuclear weapons in general and Trident in particular. This support springs from their British imperialist tradition which makes them hunger still after a Great Power role.

Wars have contributed enormously to the destruction of Wales, dragged through the centuries into a series of horrific wars which had much to do with furthering British interests and defending the British state but nothing at all to do with the defence of Wales and her heritage, of Welsh values, not to say of Welsh freedom, of which there was none. Every major war savaged the Welsh heritage even military preparations injured it, as in Epynt, Trawsfynydd and many other places. The Welsh people were simply used as cannon-fodder, exploited as Welsh natural resources were so ruthlessly exploited, to further the interests of the British state.

It was just for this sterile end that scores of thousands of Welshmen gave their lives in the first world war, for which there was no kind of moral justification. Wales came out of that war a different and poorer country, her values shaken, her

language and culture depressed, her morale low, less Welsh, much more British. It was before the war that The Miners' Next Step appeared: nothing like it appeared afterwards. It was before the war the South Wales Miners' Federation had its years of glorious struggle: after the war it sank into one British N.U.M. Wales became increasingly brainwashed by the British, and but for the rise of Plaid Cymru it might have succumbed as completely as the Bretons have succumbed to the French. But the British brainwashing softened the minds of the Welsh into a docile acceptance of the horrors of the unspeakable 20's and 30's whose effect Professor Gwyn Williams has compared with the Great Irish Famine. Half a million Welsh people were, in accord with the Portal policy, moved out from among the hundreds of thousands rotting on the dole, and transferred as part of a labour pool to England which had need of them. This is the way in which the British Government governed Wales. And yet the Welsh continued to be loyal to a British Government a British state, a British Party and, as hungry sheep, continued to look up to London and were not fed.

THE HOLOCAUST

Because all were agreed outside Germany that Hitler was one of the worst men ever to have walked the face of the earth, finding moral justification for the second world war was not difficult. It was the hideous extermination of the Jews which was later, however, most generally used, a crime so terrible that it silenced all critics. What was not realised was that but for the war the Jews would probably not have been exterminated. It was the war which made the holocaust possible as it made possible the nauseating action of the British after the war in returning two million Russians to certain death or concentration camps in Soviet Russia. What the war made possible cannot be used as its moral justification.

As British-Welsh today we must bare our share of the responsibility for the immoral nuclear Government programme. For instance, we will be partly responsible for building Trident at a cost of £5,000 million –talk of the cost of television! –whose avowed purpose is the mass murder of a hundred million or so children, women and other human beings. If there is a shred of moral justification for such bestial mass murder it has not been disclosed.

THE ARMS TRADE

We share responsibility also for the Government's lucrative if murky commerce in armaments. When arms sales was a private business it was abhorred as a sort of commercial leprosy. Salesmen were called the Merchants of Death. But now the Government –our Government– is the big salesman, proudly selling more

arms than any other country except the United States. The huge annual Exhibition at Aldershot has had another marvellous year, selling £1500 million worth of armaments this year. Profit and delicacy demand that the uses to which the arms are put are not looked at too closely, otherwise it will be discovered that they are often used by tyrannies to oppress their peoples, as they have been in Iran, Chile, South Africa, Western Papua and Indonasia, where one sixth of the total population of Timor were slaughtered after its invasion. They have found in London that even when you look the other way the profits flow in nicely. Most of the arms go to the poorest countries, the most under-developed nations, who are encouraged to spend a great part of their budgets on these lethal toys. But in favour of the Government, its absolute fairness must be made clear, there is nothing meanly one-sided about it. It sells to both sides in a quarrel, to India and to Pakistan, Egypt and Israel, Iran and Iraq. But no Welshman will be delighted by what they may feel to be the sickening immorality and hypocrisy of the only Government they have. No doubt to make a fair assessment, it should be judged in the light of the supreme value on earth – the value of the human person created in the image of God. All this will stir some to greater effort to overthrow a Government which emits a self-righteous odour but whose dealings with Wales smell pretty rotten. Its overthrow means not just changing a Conservative for a Labour Government, a merely cosmetic operation, but replacing a British Government with a Welsh Government.

UNITED NATIONS

A nation with a history and culture like Wales has an important duty to play a role in international life. During a visit to the United Nations Organisation years ago I noticed that if Wales were there, as fifty-three nations smaller than she are there, her representatives would be sitting between those of Venezuela and Yemen. They should be there. Wales has at least as much to contribute to the international order as most nations. As a peripheral region of England she can do next to nothing in the world. She has a right to international status: even more she has a duty to make her contribution to humanity.

The British Government and parties exist in Wales to make this full national life and international contribution impossible, not only during the next years, but if Mrs. Thatcher's Government has her way, for all time. Because it looks as if the Conservatives had understood the referendum fiasco and the general election drop in Plaid Cymru's vote as a signal flashing the message that they could now complete the policy of making Welshmen Englishmen, which inspired Edward I in 1282, the 1536 Act of Incorporation and the 1870 Education Act. The Thatcher Government mounted an all-out attack on every front in Wales, the industrial, economic, political, social, language and culture. Naturally there are fears that the traumatic experiences of the twenties and thirties may be re-experienced. It was feared that the Government this time intended to settle the Welsh question finally and get rid once and for all of a problem which had for so long been "a nuisance to those who believe in order." Tory euphoria and Welsh depression in 1979 combined to make

this credible. If that was the hope it has been ended by the television victory bringing the Tories humiliatingly to their knees. Let all Welsh people learn from this who are anxious about the future, and let them look further afield also, to Poland, Jugoslavia and elsewhere for splendid evidence of the constructive power of nationalism.

It must constantly be driven home that the central point to be realised about the appalling poverty, unemployment, depopulation and migration of the last 60 years is that their cause is political: the missing factor is a Welsh Government. It is one of Plaid Cymru's major achievements that Wales is always now recognised to be a national entity, that the social community of Wales is always to be the basis of economic administration. This forward move has been due to the power of Welsh nationalism, which has forced a long series of concessions from successive governments.

DEFENDING WALES

Who defends Wales? Nobody can sincerely claim that she is defended by the British Conservative or the British Labour Party. On the contrary. One party has been built for that purpose. In all Welsh history Plaid Cymru has been the only independent Welsh political party. It fights day in day out for Wales, that is the purpose of its existence, and it strives for justice and freedom. It is the only hope of Wales. If it should fail, then this ancient nation has no national future.

The job of all who give their loyalty to Wales is to commit themselves to building up the party, with all the costly, unromantic, unrelenting work that demands. Our duty as Welshmen is to create the conditions in which the splendid Christian heritage of Wales can live on.

The nation of Wales is in ruins today. But the foundations stand firm. Our enchanting homeland remains, as do our history and language, our values and traditions. On these we can and must build a land better and happier than that which British imperialism has made of it. In it we can replace an ugly, dying British order with a vital, human Welsh governance, a life-enhancing task which could bring a flash of hope to a sick world.

By far the most exciting thing about Wales is her possibilities. In a people of such talent as the Welsh, with such a magnificent history and tradition, these are almost limitless, whether in the field of social justice, cultural vitality, intellectual endeavour, industrial venture or in terms of a contribution to European civilisation or world order. I may be wrong, but I think there is beginning to develop a new spirit which will enable the people of Wales to rise to the level of history, to respond to the harsh challenge of our day, and to create in the land of their fathers a society of which their children will be proud a country free, just and Welsh.

Gwynfor Evans.

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