

Saving the Soul of the Nation: Essentialist Nationalism and Interwar Rural Wales

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Abstract This article explores how the land and the agricultural community were made out to be central to the assertion of Welsh national identity between the world wars. Political Nationalism came out of a disillusion with Liberal national sentiment. Liberal nationalists had recognised the significance of the land in Wales and made secure a devolved administrative regime for agriculture, the Welsh Council of Agriculture, originally established before 1914. For the political Nationalists, however, this was far too little. They perceived a cultural and economic crisis which might be overcome only through complete self-government. That crisis originated historically in the annexation of Wales to England which had intruded an alien land system and destroyed a natural, patriarchal rural order; which had foisted an alien commercial, industrial system and had led to the Anglicisation of Welsh society. In its depressed state, inter-war Wales was subjected to a new and reactive form of politics, often influenced by European right wing ideas, which was anti-urban, anti-capitalist, anti-English and anti-modern, all of which had wider repercussions for the future of Welsh identity.

This article¹ explores how the land and the agricultural community were made out to be central to the assertion of Welsh national identity between the world wars.² There are two features to this. *Firstly*, and what will be the main focus of this discussion, there was the idealisation by the emergent political Nationalist party, Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, of the land and rural culture as the essence of national life, which could only be preserved by securing autonomy for the Welsh nation. Although electorally weak and often naïve, the party, because of the nature of its membership (totalling some 3750 by 1939³ and composed of academics, professionals and farmers), exercised an influence over what was, *secondly*, a broader ‘quasi-nationalist’ sentiment. This encompassed patriotic elements – Cambrian social radicals – in the other (British oriented) political parties in Wales, which had been active for a measure of Welsh ‘home rule’, within the Liberal Party especially, since the later nineteenth century.⁴ The older idealisation of rural and Welsh speaking Wales, preceding Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, was a product of those pre-First World War Liberal-nationalists and patriotic social radicals who had identified, and continued to find after 1918, arguments in favour of Welsh devolution of powers and even Home Rule, for example, Alderman William George, brother of David Lloyd George, and Daniel Lleufer Thomas. They had been much influenced by Ernest Renan’s

abstract conception of national identity as a spiritual collective and a fair proportion of that pre-War sentiment had concentrated on the land as the spiritual heartland of the Welsh nation. Consequently, Welsh land issues had been at the forefront of proposals on Welsh devolution. Indeed, it had been argued that there was a distinctive Welsh land question, based on issues of tenure and modernisation, which justified creating the pre-war home rule agenda as proposed by Liberal politicians such as Edward T. John.⁵

A Welsh Council of Agriculture had been established by the Liberal government in 1911 as a result of the intervention of David Lloyd George, and it was reorganised in 1920. For a variety of political reasons, the Council exercised only a limited degree of executive devolution and while it went on into the post-Great War period it was always deferent to the Ministry of Agriculture and could not initiate any distinctive Welsh agrarian policies. Although the Council was among the more successful of devolved advisory bodies for Wales in these years, and the least affected by Whitehall hostility, it did not go as far as many Liberal 'quasi-nationalists' desired in allowing Wales autonomy in rural affairs. Indeed, the inability of Lloyd George's Coalition government to advance any meaningful devolutionary initiative dismayed 'quasi-nationalist' sentiment among Liberals in Wales and among some Welsh Labour proponents of devolution too. With the contraction of the Liberal Party electorally even in Wales by the 1930s, and the apparent emphasis by most Welsh Labour MPs on so-called 'materialist' politics and on industrial matters, erstwhile Liberal 'quasi-nationalists' such as Edward T. John or patriotic Welsh Conservatives like John Arthur Price turned elsewhere, notably to Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, for support to promote issues such as rural regeneration and the improvement of rural health, and to cultural movements such as the Celtic Congress to sustain the preservation of language and rural customs. While not going as far as Y Blaid Genedlaethol in advocating full autonomy nor in subscribing to the more reactionary sentiments of the party or their hostility to Empire, the Liberal 'quasi-nationalists' nevertheless gave credence to some of the Plaid Genedlaethol appeals and provided an occasionally sympathetic hinterland for Nationalist propaganda. And while the Nationalist movement asserted its primacy in airing Welsh rural and agrarian matters, it could not do without the 'quasi-nationalists'. Together, they contributed to sustaining a Welsh political agenda in which the governance of Wales, either as devolved administration or through full autonomy, became a significant issue by 1939.⁶

By the 1920s the sentimental identification of rural Wales with the essence of being Welsh not only owed much to Renan directly but was also indirectly indebted to a romantic, and sometimes hard edged, pre-war literary output associated with certain writers and poets, most notably T. Gwynn Jones, the critic and controversialist Emrys ap Iwan, and the historian and educator, Owen M. Edwards. Edwards's idealisation of rural Wales was to be found both in his scholarly and popular works, notably in his travel books such as *Yn y Wlad*, where he asserted that the Welsh were essentially a non-urban people:

I Gymro, anodd yw gwneud ei gartref mewn tref; plentyn y mynydd a'r môr a'r awyr lan agored yw ef. Deffry dyhead yn ei galon am y cwm a'r llyn a'r caeau, ac y mae swyn y breuddwyd hwnnw yn ei dynnu allan o drigfannau dynion yn ôl i'w wlad ei hun. Ni dduir ei hawyr hi ond yn anaml iawn gan fwg trwm dinasoedd. Yno y mae milltiroedd rhwng pentre a phentre, ac yno y mae holl gyfrinion natur yn agored i'r hwn sydd yn dymuno eu gwled.⁷

In *Cartrefi Cymru*, he argued that the land sanctified the individual and made him selflessly patriotic:

Gallu grymus fu gwladgarwch erioed, ac er daioni bob amser. Y mae hunanberth ynddo, collir hunan mewn gwlad; y mae ymsanteiddio ynddo, – llysg hunanoldeb fel sofr sych a difa'r hen lid teuluol sy'n chwerwder bywyd barbaraid, a dwg ddyd yn nes at Dduw. Yng ngrym ei wladgarwch y mae nerth pethau gorau cymeriad dyn; yn erbyn gwladgarwch y mae'r pethau gwaelaf yn ei gymeriad, – awydd am elw, cas at ei gyd-ddyn, rhagfarn.⁸

The almost mystical beauty and very musicality of land and river would elevate the Welsh peasantry (*gwerin*) and sustain the native tongue:

Os cwmpodd y tywysog olaf ar dy lan [Afon Irfon], y mae gwerin yn codi ym Muallt a fydd yn well tywysogion i ti. Ynghwsg ac yn effro daw sŵn dy lais murmurol i'm clustiau, a chwyd dy olygfeydd mewn breuddwyd o hyfrydwch gerbron fy llygaid. Ac fel sŵn dy fwisig yn f'atgofion i, erys sŵn pêr dy bregethwyr ym mywyd fy ngwlad. A chyhyd ag y bo miwsig yn dy donnau, siarader Cymraeg ar dy lan.⁹

It is little wonder that such sentiments had not only acquired a currency among patriotic Welsh Liberals but had brought to bear an even profounder influence on the founding members of the emergent Nationalist Party, such as William Ambrose Bebb¹⁰ and David James Williams, and their political ideology.

In their different ways, these writers conveyed the core idea that the essence of nationhood lay in Wales's historical experience and in the Welsh language, both of which were retained especially strongly in the lives of the *gwladwr* (the country dweller) and *gwerinwr* (the peasant or common man or small holder – the term would change according to the context) within the rural communities. Indeed, the land (*y wlad*) of Wales was a metonym for the Welsh nation and its language. 'Language and Soil', therefore, not Blood and Soil.

But those communities were now perceived to be increasingly under threat from industrialism, urbanisation and in-migration. By 1921, the Welsh vernacular was clearly declining, as the census of that year showed, and implicitly the ties between rural and industrial Wales – the uniformity of language and values – had been loosened by the ever larger inward movements of non-Welsh populations into the industrial districts, as was recognised in the report by Daniel Lleufer Thomas and others to the Commission on Industrial Unrest in 1917.¹¹

Language erosion through English cultural hegemony, the conflict of language domains, the weakening of historical identity through capitalism, secularism and modernity, the relegation of the rural as epitomised by the population decline in the rural counties – all these coloured the ideas of the political Nationalists, together with their disillusion with the British/English political parties as adequate vehicles for preserving Welsh identity. The Conservatives were depicted as English Nationalists pure and simple and thus as a lost cause as far as Wales was concerned. The failure of the immediate post-war Liberal-led campaign to achieve any form of consensus, let alone legislation on Home Rule for Wales and the perceived inadequacies of the so-called all-party Welsh Party in Parliament, and of Lloyd George in particular, to protect Welsh interests enhanced Nationalists' disillusion. Even the emergent Labour Party was dismissed for its 'faux'

internationalism and for its failure to press forward with devolution and acceptable rural policies.¹²

Founded in 1925, *Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru* was the culmination of attempts to establish an autonomous politics of national reassertion by groups of largely alienated intellectuals, including, for example: Iorwerth Peate, later the pioneer of the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan; G.J. Williams, an eminent Welsh literary scholar; and J.E Daniel, a theologian and academic, most of whom had been brought up in rural Wales. Peate, in particular, anticipated the disappearance of a distinctive Welsh rural civilisation unless action were taken:

Fe wyddom oll bellach fod yr oes hon yn groesffordd yn hanes ein cenedl. O'n blaen gorwedd y cyfnod diwydiannol gyda diwydiant datblygedig a'r dulliau diweddaraf oll yn gweithio trwy gyfrwng gallu rhad. O'n hol, yng Nghymru gorwedd gwareiddiad sy'n bum mil o flynyddoedd o oedran – yn dechrau o'r cyfnod pan ddaeth mudiadau o'r dwyrain a dulliau amaethu a dofi anifeiliaid i ffurfio sylfaen diwylliant ein gwlad. A phan fetho'r dull hwn o fyw fe orffennir cyfnod sydd morfaith ac mor hen fel na fedrwn yn iawn amgyffred ei hynafiaeth.

Ac yn wir, efallai y gofyn rhai ohonoch ai croesffordd ydyw'r oes hon o gwbl. Dywedaf innau yn ddibetrus mai ie, ac y mae'n rhaid penderfynu heddiw pa beth a ddigwydd i ddiwylliant Cymru. Y mae'r hen ffordd o edrych ar bethau – Duw a noddo'r rhai a'i datblygodd – yn cymryd tro yn ein hoes ni. Yn wir onid egniwn, bydd darfod amdani.¹³

It was also a politics of reaction, notably seen in the *Egwyddorion Cenedlaetholdeb* [Principles of Nationalism] penned by J. Saunders Lewis, the party's first president, in 1926. Indeed, Lewis and Ambrose Bebb were the two foremost ideologues of the new party in its first decade and their ideas about Welsh nationhood and its relationship to the land were an eclectic mixture of conservative ideas. Some were drawn from contemporary *New Age* English and neo-Catholic, radical right-wing rural idealists such as Belloc and Chesterton.¹⁴ Other, similar, influences were continental, specifically from reactionary French right-wing politics, notably Maurice Barrès and Charles Mauras, and from elements of the neo-fascist movement, Action Française.¹⁵ To a lesser extent, fascist Italian ideology as elaborated by Gorgolini¹⁶ also influenced their world view. All this undoubtedly contributed to the discomfort of other Nationalists who came into the *Plaid Genedlaethol* from leftist syndicalism (D.J. Davies), rural Labourism (D.J. Williams) or rural Liberalism (Moses Griffith/Gruffydd) and led to their having to defend the party against accusations of authoritarianism and worse.¹⁷

Party members as a whole, however, subscribed to a grand narrative and to core beliefs that Wales was a perennial historic nation, an organic entity defined by its language and culture derived from a rural people whose sense of community was marked by interdependence. That historic nation had been gradually eroded over time by the intrusion of English overlordship and English oppression. The conquest of Wales in 1282, it was argued, had been bad enough in undermining a native aristocracy who were both social and cultural arbiters, but worse were the acts of union and the Protestant Reformation in the Tudor period, in which English state imperialism had imposed an alien social and linguistic uniformity on Wales.

The Reformation had cut Wales off from its religious roots in Catholic Europe, instilling individualist values at the expense of communal ones. Moreover, the union

legislation of 1536, in addition to imposing a controversial language clause, had seen the imposition of English land law, replacing the partibility of inheritance (*cyfran*) by primogeniture. As a result, over time, the nature of rural society changed. The traditional social pattern of landownership in which land had been fairly equally distributed among a population of collaborative small owners, in which the values of *perchentyaeth*¹⁸ predominated, was replaced by land accumulation into substantial gentry estates whereby small owners were relegated into tenants. Moreover, land accumulation led to the eventual cultural alienation of the emergent gentry from the rest of rural Wales by the forces of Anglicization and by the opening up of Welsh land to materialism and capitalist exploitation, leading to large scale industrial combines (Mondism) which had so poisoned (physically and metaphorically) parts of Wales, notably the south-east.¹⁹ This analysis remained largely the same throughout the inter-war period enhanced perhaps as Wales's economic, and hence social, situation deteriorated under further pressures.²⁰ Thus, industrial capitalism was increasingly beset by the vagaries of international trade and technological obsolescence. Agriculture saw the contraction of the landed estates system, and in its place the growth of owner-occupation and of independent small farmers burdened by the costs of mortgage borrowing and financial instability.²¹

The answer to all this was not to embrace an alien, even atheistical, socialist or communist ideology then emerging in the mining valleys, nor to continue with English Liberal laissez-faire capitalist democracy but rather to offer a synthesis, to transform Wales by restoring to her that *gwareiddiad* [civilization] that had been so profound when Wales had once been 'free'. Autonomous rule for Wales (but not necessarily of a republican kind)²² would produce an enlightened elite or 'new aristocracy',²³ possibly made up some of the old gentry²⁴ but more likely of artists and intellectuals, whose leadership would restore those diminishing Christian values and regenerate that idealised rural community.²⁵ That regeneration would involve restoring the esteem deserved by all toilers of the soil as the most precious of occupations.²⁶ Indeed, rather than sanction or even acknowledge²⁷ class conflict, Lewis, Bebb and the others conceived of a Wales where a form of corporatism would operate in which farmers and labourers, employers and workers would unite into local guilds or unions to serve the community. That way, advocated Bebb, both Welsh agriculture and indeed all Wales would find felicity:

Dylai'r holl amaethwyr a'r holl weision yn yr un sir ymuno â'i gilydd i sicrhau buddiannau amaethyddiaeth – er mwyn gwerthu'n dda, er mwyn prynu'n rhad, a dyna ennill i'r amaethwyr, ac ennill i'r gweision. Oddimewn i'r undeb hwn bydd y gweision a'u hundeb eu hunain, i gael y cyflog uchaf yn dâl am eu llafur mwy. Yr un fel yr amaethwyr. Felly'r ddwyblaid yn yr holl siroedd, nes ffurfio undeb o amaethwyr a gweision fydd yn cynrychioli Cymru achlân. A dyna ddydd dedwydd i Amaethyddiaeth, ac, o ganlyniad, i Gymru!²⁸

Lewis added that Wales's future as a confident and *self sufficient* nation lay in small capitalist enterprises:

Cenedl y mae mwyafrif ei haelodau yn fân gyfalafwyr, yn berchenogion tir neu'n dal bob un ei gyfran mewn gweithfa neu ffatri neu chwarel, dyna'r genedl a fag feibion a marchod beilch, dibryder, heb ynddynt na thaeogrwydd na rhagrith na digter cudd na brad. Cenedl anodd ei gorchfygu na'i chywilyddio na'i gostwng i wadu ei hawliau na'i genedigaeth fraint.²⁹

Rank capitalism would be abolished, the deindustrialisation of the south was advocated, and instead Distributist principles based on *petit* capitalism and small scale agriculture were given primacy. These features were reemphasised in Lewis's official *Ten Points of Policy* (1934).³⁰

Some of these qualities the Nationalists perceived already to exist in other small nations. Bebb, for example, with his links to the separatist movement Breiz Atao, found much inspiration in Brittany which, although it had long lost its political independence, still retained its traditional rural ambience, its language and customs and, more problematically, its Catholic inheritance.³¹ Similarly, Ireland's rurality, or rather the rurality of the Gaeltacht, was an inspiration through the literature about rural Ireland in, for example, Jane Bradshaw's Bogland stories or Peadar O'Connell's account of the Irish rural labourer, portraying a noble people in a harsh environment. George William Russell (AE) and his volume *The National Being* (1916), was a particularly important influence on the more democratic nationalism of D.J. Williams, a revered figure in the party ranks.³²

The ability of the Irish Free State to so organise its rural community as to preserve the essence of the Irish nation was also an incentive to contemporary Welsh Nationalists. The compulsory Gaelicisation policy of the Free State, as relayed by leaders such as Douglas Hyde, particularly in relation to the language in the rural districts, influenced Nationalists' attitude to promoting the Welsh vernacular. Similarly, Irish measures to ease tenants' arrears and assist land purchase and investment in rural enterprises informed Nationalists' economic ideas.³³

Reviving the ideal of medieval interdependence also found inspiration in Denmark's Cooperative movement. This was not unattractive to quasi-nationalists,³⁴ and gave Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru its basis for a clearer economic, as opposed to a political and cultural, strategy. This conceived of a discrete and planned Welsh economy and owed much to Plaid's economic adviser, the agricultural economist Dr D.J. Davies and his (Irish) wife Noelle Davies, both also early converts to the Danish Folk High School movement and the communal ideals and cultural and educational aspirations of its founder, Bishop N.F.S. Grundtvig.³⁵ Agricultural cooperation on the Danish, or other Scandinavian, model, voluntarily entered into but also centrally directed, offered a more uplifting view of agricultural collaboration compared with British government policy, which emphasised agricultural competition:

The co-operative spirit is latent in the national consciousness; and when it is drawn up into our conscious being by a genuinely national education, and directed into proper channels, it has the power, however weak and frail it may be at first, to lead the nation to economic prosperity and security. Compare Denmark and Finland, where co-operation in the economic sphere has grown naturally from patriotism – a patriotism consciously fostered in the schools.³⁶

Although Plaid Genedlaethol Nationalists came to engage more with practical economic issues by the early 1930s, their initial stress on the essentialist features of nationhood chimed with a wider and longer established 'quasi-nationalist' sentiment that there were spiritual and moral characteristics to nationhood which rested in the countryside, not in the town, a view recapitulated by David Evans in 1933.³⁷ This resisted

the emerging conception of a Welshness based on the urban and industrial experience and on a body of literature about Wales which was English in language. Also, Nationalists and 'quasi-nationalists' suspected Anglo-Welsh writing of promoting an avowedly anti-rural sentiment which had first been introduced in the short stories of Caradoc Evans, beginning with the notorious *My People* (1915), a satire on rural Cardiganshire.³⁸ It was not at all accidental, therefore, that D.J. and Noelle Davies's experiment in creating a Welsh Folk High School was established at the very edge of the south Wales coalfield, at Pant-y-Beiliau, Gilwern, Breconshire, as an attempt 'to restore Wales's language, customs and traditions to the anglicized south'.³⁹

In the absence of any immediate hope of complete autonomy, Welsh Nationalists and quasi-nationalist sympathisers set about in four ways to protect the nation and its rural identity, for they saw that rural life was becoming enervated.⁴⁰ Firstly, they presented critiques of particular policy decisions reached in London which were deemed deleterious to Welsh economic interests. Secondly, they proceeded to promote the notion of economic planning on an all-Wales basis to coordinate such devolved administrative bodies as had already been set up. Thirdly, they tried to conjure up specific policy outlines for rural advancement drawn on that planning model. Fourthly, they attacked decisions taken by governmental and non-governmental bodies in England which in their view were diametrically opposed to the *cultural* as well as the economic health of rural Wales.

Firstly, from about 1930, common ground between Nationalists and quasi-nationalists was found in criticising both Labour and National governments for ignoring real Welsh rural interests. These included the inadequacies in a departmental committee Report on Education in Rural Wales in 1931⁴¹ which overlooked not only the importance of the teaching of Welsh traditions and customs but also seemed to want to inculcate 'team spirit' among rural youth, implying competition against others. This was not the same, argued D.J. Davies, as true cooperation of the sort propounded in the past by Mazzini, Henri de Mann and more recently H.W. Wolf, 'the cooperative expert', as well as implemented by the advances which had occurred in Denmark.⁴²

The National Government's resettlement and transference schemes in 1929 to 1930 were attacked because they showed no sensitivity to keeping Welsh workers in Wales and relocating them on the land.⁴³ Thus, the restoration of the marginal lands of Wales, which might have been accomplished by the redirection of Welsh workers, was ignored as was the opportunity to reacculturate them.⁴⁴ The Ottawa Conference and the proposed creation of an imperial free trade area also came in for considerable criticism, for the cheap credit given to 'Anglo-Saxon' dominions like Canada and New Zealand and the marketing of their imperial produce such as eggs at the expense of 'fresh' Welsh output.⁴⁵

Although British government support for farmers became a significant feature of agricultural policy from the mid-1930s, the Nationalist view was that it still privileged the English farmer. The Milk Marketing scheme of 1934 was condemned for not giving Wales its own administration like Scotland. Indeed, for administrative purposes, Wales was divided into two regions, an arrangement which excluded Monmouthshire. In addition, both the premium and regional pool price arrangements were causing unnecessary competition among producers and bureaucratic confusion.⁴⁶ Later, the limitations to the ability of the Parliamentary Party group of Welsh MPs to protect Welsh national

and rural interests were highlighted by its failure to press the Minister of Agriculture to establish a Welsh sub-committee under the livestock legislation of 1937,⁴⁷ thereby ignoring the interests of the upland Welsh farmer.

Equally, the inability of central government to appreciate the special health problems of Wales and the accompanying inadequacy of the devolved administration of health matters came to a head in the controversial Tuberculosis Inquiry on Wales of 1937 to 1939,⁴⁸ which confirmed what was already well known to Nationalists and others from the analyses of Edward T. John, for example,⁴⁹ that *y dicáu* [tuberculosis] was at its very worst in the rural and semi-rural counties, and notably in the Welsh speaking northern heartland. Self-government in order to tackle this crisis was the only solution.⁵⁰

In the absence of any immediate prospect of full self-government, Nationalists hit upon the second aspect of their critique by the 1930s, namely to secure the creation of an all-Wales administration of the nation's economic life and also its welfare interests. This holistic idea preceded Lewis's Ten Points and in a way, because of its reasonableness, appealed to quasi-nationalists too. It stemmed from the fact that government, in attempting to address Wales's industrial decline, had established a South Wales Development Council which eschewed any interest in the rural parts of Wales or of north and mid-Wales. Efforts by local authorities in Wales to make the Council an all-Wales body were resisted⁵¹ and this allowed Saunders Lewis to make the case in relation to Plaid Genedlaethol's aims of restoring the land and resettling the industrial population thereon.⁵² One might add that local authorities themselves could not be entrusted to recognise a mutuality of interest in planning for land use, as shown, for example, in the disagreements between Rhyl Urban District Council and Flintshire County Council.⁵³ This added to the view that an all-Wales planning authority was all the more necessary, especially given that most British regional planning experts gave no credence to a distinctively Welsh context.⁵⁴

There was also the issue of emulating other nations in going down the road of economic planning. Scotland had its own Development Council but just as importantly all the major European nations had effective and successful organisations, notably the Segretariato della Bonifica in Italy, the German National Economic Council (1920) and the French National Economic Council (1925):

The necessity of co-operative effort to provide for the future economic security of Wales seems proved. The establishment of a Welsh Development Council seems the most immediately practicable means of gaining the minimum of co-operation that can ameliorate our prospects.⁵⁵

Thirdly, Plaid Genedlaethol began to apply firmer policy outlines to its general rural essentialism and anti-free trade sentiments.⁵⁶ Economic nationalism and self-sufficiency were the main aims and, again, European examples were looked to.⁵⁷ For Wales, O.M. Roberts proposed the objective of creating a financial credit corporation sufficient to fund greater owner occupation and thereby enhance agricultural cooperation.⁵⁸ More detail and refinement was put on this policy in subsequent years by Moses Griffith, the Party's principal agricultural spokesman, R.C. Richards and Percy Ogwen Jones. Griffith, an agricultural scientist and practical farmer, was land manager of the Cahn Hill Improvement Scheme at Pwllpeiran, Cwmystwyth, Cardiganshire and thus aware of

the latest innovative techniques. In addition, he and other commentators and policy proposers, were au fait with official assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of Welsh agriculture⁵⁹ as well as with contemporary Welsh commentaries.⁶⁰ Thus, in what was the fullest elaboration of the Party's agricultural policy before the war, Griffith was able to stress the need to make agriculture central to Wales's economic progress, in contrast to the treatment by England, for example by redressing the imbalance in investment between industry and agriculture; offering support for small farmers in order to stimulate local economies; and instituting substantial land reclamation in order to facilitate land resettlement.⁶¹ Central to all this was to be the creation of an Agricultural Mortgage Corporation and a network of local credit societies similar to the German 'raiffeisen'.⁶² Jones, in echoing Griffith, concentrated on developing a viable home market for Welsh produce, emphasising local self-sufficiency and diversity of productive activity.⁶³ Richards took further the calls of Griffith and others for an effective credit scheme, criticising recent government legislation for its inordinate complexity and the expensiveness of borrowing. Like Griffith, he saw answers in the German local banks but, in line with the Nationalist fancy at the time, also felt that Denmark, with her credit associations, offered an attractive solution, even if initial investments would incur losses.⁶⁴

In similar ways too, all three policy formulators presented a contrast to the then dominant Nationalist ethos of wanting just to preserve the rural nation. They were also advocates of modernisation, of developing, within limits, the rural economy and infrastructure in order to stem the drift from the land and sustain a viable and progressive community. Although the Forestry Commission's behaviour in Wales was condemned by Griffith, nevertheless a more focused and directed Welsh forestry service was entirely approved of. Electrification was another objective which he saw would be beneficial in stimulating rural industries and in which Richards saw a potential for investment.⁶⁵ Indeed, Nationalists were already prominent in attempting to revive the Welsh woollen industry through the Welsh Textiles Manufacturers' Association Ltd. (founded c. 1919), headed by H. Maldwyn Williams.⁶⁶ The Association saw its function as being two-fold, to give technical and design advice and to enhance sales and marketing techniques by emphasising the distinctiveness of Welsh woollens compared with Scottish or English cloth.⁶⁷ Continental Europe also showed the way so that by the later 1930s, the Swedish Homecraft associations appealed to rural idealists like Iorwerth Peate as a means to revive *rural* crafts.⁶⁸

The fourth aspect to the Nationalists' critique was to show hostility to specific actions by governmental and non-governmental bodies which seemed to them to undermine the integrity of the Welsh rural community and hence the nation. While it was the British government which brought forth the wrath of nationalistically minded people by the end of the 1930s, the middle of that decade saw Nationalists fulminate in particular at the Bath and West Show. Between 1934 and 1936, the Nationalists organised a persistent campaign to prevent the Show from being held in Neath, Glamorgan.⁶⁹ While it was not unknown for the Show and for the Royal Agricultural Society of England to hold their annual events in Wales, the Bath and West did not receive the tolerant response shown to the Royal Show.⁷⁰ Unlike the Royal, the Bath and West, it was argued, had done little to help advance Welsh agriculture. Indeed, it was regarded as a real threat to the integrity

of the Welsh National Agricultural Society and its annual event, given that the Welsh organisation was undergoing difficult times financially and structurally. Worse still was the fact that a Welsh municipality had invited the 'alien' Bath and West to come and had, at the same time, invited Wales's premier national cultural institution, the National Eisteddfod of Wales, to visit the area in 1935.⁷¹

Nationalists' objections ultimately failed to deter the Bath and West from coming in 1936⁷² but by then concerns were directed towards the government again. Nationalists were more successful in inducing a concerted, non-partisan and popular opposition to the government's rearmament policy and the decision in 1935 to 1936 to locate an RAF bombing school on the Llŷn Peninsula, a heartland area for Welsh speaking rural Wales, and destroying the historically important site of Penyberth, near Pwllheli. The direct action to destroy the school's huts, undertaken in the summer of 1936 by the leading Nationalists Saunders Lewis, D.J. Williams and Lewis Valentine, and their eventual imprisonment, reignited the issue of the lack of sensitivity by Whitehall government to the special characteristics of Welsh society as opposed to English rural interests. The government had failed to appreciate the impact of an alien and anglicising influence on the heartland:

For Wales the preservation of the Llyn Peninsula from this Anglicization is a matter of life and death. That is why the case against this Bombing School is so infinitely stronger than that against any of the others.⁷³

Moreover, while the Government had heeded conservationist, historical and economic arguments for not locating the School at Chesil Bank, Dorset, Budle Bay, Northumberland, and Friskney on the Wash, it had ignored the spiritual sanctity of this core historic area of Wales. As Saunders Lewis remarked:

A wnewch chi geisio deall ein teimladau ni pan welsom ysgolheigion a llenorion blaenaf Lloegr yn sôn am 'gysegredigrwydd' hwyaid ac eleirch, ac ar gorn hynny yn llwyddo i gael gan Weinidog y Llu Awyr symud gwersylloedd bomio, a ninnau yng Nghymru, ac yn union yr un adeg yn gorfod trefnu ymgrych fawr genedlaethol i amddiffyn y pethau gwir gysegredig yng nghreadigaeth Duw, sef cenedl, ei hiaith, ei llenyddiaeth, ei thraddodiadau oesol a'i bywyd gwledig Cristnogol, ac ni chaem gan y llywodraeth gymaint â derbyn dirprwyaeth i ymddiddan ynghylch y peth?⁷⁴

A contrast was drawn between Prime Minister Baldwin's rather romantic sentimentalising of the (English) rural environment and this intrusive militarisation.⁷⁵

A variety of responses occurred to this 'cause célèbre'. Firstly, it encouraged further a renewed attempt by some Centre-Left Welsh and Welsh speaking politicians and activists in the Liberal and Labour parties and on the fringes of Nationalism to promote more devolution,⁷⁶ protect and enhance the legal status of the Welsh vernacular and adopt more progressive attitudes to both rural and industrial Wales.⁷⁷ Secondly, it placed Y Blaid Genedlaethol on guard, but without much effective power of resistance it should be said, against the implications for rural Wales of further war preparations by the government, such as the projected evacuation schemes and the bureaucratic arrangements for war agricultural committees, and conscription.⁷⁸ Thirdly, a broader coalition of rural interests emerged in Welsh-speaking Wales which was prepared to campaign for the

essential 'nation', eventually through the non-partisan movement Mudiad Cymru Fydd [The New Wales Union].⁷⁹

Although there was no inevitable convergence in these tendencies, what they all represented, nevertheless, was a significant upturn in the politics of Welsh recognition by 1939, a trend which was sustained in the Reconstruction debates during the Second World War and afterwards in the Parliament for Wales campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s. In all this distinctively Welsh discourse, the sense of the rural and the cultural nation were to remain central, with the Nationalist party ideology sustaining a politics of agrarian and rural recovery and revival.⁸⁰

Notes

1. This is an expanded and revised version of a paper first delivered to the Inter War Rural History Research Group Conference, 'Re-thinking the Rural: Land and the Nation in the 1920s and 1930s', at Royal Holloway, University of London, 4th to 6th January 2007.
2. See D. Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925–1945: A Call to Nationhood* (Cardiff, 1983); J. Graham Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru: Laying the Foundations, 1923–26', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 22:4 (1982); J. Graham Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru: Searching for a Policy, 1926–30', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 23:2; Pyrs Gruffudd, 'The Welsh Language and the Geographical Imagination 1918–1950', in Geraint H. Jenkins and Mari A. Williams, eds, *Let's Do Our Best for the Ancient Tongue: The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff, 2000), pp. 109–35; Pyrs Gruffudd, 'Tradition, Modernity and the Countryside: The Imaginary Geography of Rural Wales', *Contemporary Wales*, 6 (1994), 33–47; Pyrs Gruffudd, 'Prospects of Wales: Contested Geographical Imaginations', in R. Fevre and A. Thompson, eds, *Nation, Identity and Social Theory* (Cardiff, 1999), chapter eight; Emlyn J. Sherrington, 'Post-war Polarisation: The Choice between Rome and Moscow' (unpublished, c. 2000), chapter six, on the contextual European ideas and influences after 1918. I am most grateful to the author for permission to refer to this and other of his important, but hitherto unpublished, work. The most recent examination of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru's ideology is by Richard Wynn Jones, *Rhoi Cymru'n Gyntaf: Syniadaeth Plaid Cymru*, Cyfrol 1 (Caerdydd, 2007).
3. J.E. Jones, *Tros Gymru: J.E. a'r Blaid* (Abertawe, 1970), p. 189.
4. Richard Lewis, 'The Welsh Radical Tradition and the Ideal of a Democratic Popular Culture', in Eugenio F. Biagini, ed., *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 325–40.
5. Edward T. John, *Home Rule for Wales. Addresses to 'Young Wales'* (Bangor, 1912), esp. pp. 27–39, 'Self-Government and Rural Development'. Also, see W.P. Griffith, 'Devolutionist Tendencies in Wales, 1885–1914', in D. Tanner, C. Williams, W. Griffith and A. Edwards, eds., *Debating Nationhood and Governance in Britain, 1885–1945* (2006), pp. 89–117. The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in Wales and Monmouthshire 1896 and Lloyd George's Land Inquiry Committee of 1914's Welsh Report also sustained this Liberal agenda.
6. This is not to dismiss the significance of the urban and industrial distress in Wales by the later 1930s as also moulding a view that Wales ought to have some control of its own affairs; hence James Griffiths's advocacy of a Secretary of State for Wales. See J. Graham Jones, 'Socialism, Devolution and a Secretary of State for Wales, 1940–64', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1989, 135–6.
7. Owen M. Edwards, *Yn y Wlad : troeon crwydr yma ac acw yng Nghymru* (1921 ed.), p.11. [To the Welshman[sic], it is difficult for him to make his home in the town; he's the child of the mountain and the sea and the clean open air. A longing awakens in his heart for the

cwm (combe) and the lake and the fields, and the enchantment of this dream brings him out of the settlements of men to his own country. Her air is rarely darkened by the heavy smoke of cities. There are miles between village and village and there all the secrets of nature are opened to those who would wish to see them.]

8. Owen M. Edwards, 'Nodiadau', in Owen M. Edwards, *Cartrefi Cymru ac Ysgrifau Eraill* (1962 ed.), p. 102. [Patriotism has always been a powerful force, and always for good. It includes self-sacrifice, the self is lost in the country; there is a sanctification to it, – it sweeps away selfishness like dried chaff and extinguishes family rivalries which are the bitterness of barbaric life, and brings a man closer to God. In the power of his patriotism lies the strength of the best features of man's character; opposed to patriotism are the worst things in his character, – the desire for wealth, hatred of his fellow man, prejudice.]
9. Owen M. Edwards, 'Llanwrtyd', in Owen M. Edwards, *Cartrefi Cymru ac Ysgrifau Eraill*, p. 147. [If the last prince fell by your banks [River Irfon], the folk being raised in Muallt will be better princes to you. Asleep and awake, your murmuring voice comes to my ears, and your scenery arises in a beautiful dream before my eyes. And like the sound of your music in my memories, the sweet sound of your preachers will remain in the life of my country. And as long as there will be music in your waves, Welsh will be spoken on your banks.]
10. Bebb's diaries are very revealing on the Welsh romantic and French reactionary influences upon his nationalism. See Robin Humphreys, *Lloffion o Ddyddiaduron Ambrose Bebb 1920–1926* (Caerdydd, 1996), passim, esp. p. 277 for Edwards.
11. Julie Light, 'The 1917 Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest – a Welsh Report', *Welsh History Review*, 21:4 (2003), 704–25; Parliamentary Paper 1917–18 [Cd.8668], *Reports of the Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest: No. 7 Division, Wales and Monmouthshire*, pp. 14–17.
12. On Welsh farmers' attitudes to state control of land as embodied in Lloyd George's policies, see J. Graham Jones, 'Searching for a policy', 199, and 'Ein Tir: oferiad meddyginiaeth Lloegr i Gymru' [Our Land: the futility of England's remedy for Wales], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Ionawr 1927, 3. More generally, Clare Griffiths, "'Red Tape Farm"? Visions of a Socialist Agriculture in 1920s and 1930s Britain', in J.R. Wordie, ed., *Agriculture and Politics in England, 1815–1939* (London, 2000), pp. 199–241.
13. Iorwerth C. Peate, 'Y crefftwr yng Nghymru' [The craftsman in Wales], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mehefin 1929, 4. [We all know now that this age is a crossroads in our nation's history. Ahead of us lies the industrial age with advanced industry and the latest techniques all contributing to cheap production. Behind us, in Wales lies a civilisation that's five thousand years old – beginning with the period when migrations came from the east with means of agriculture and taming animals to form the basis of our country's culture. And when this way of life fails an age will end which is so long and so old that we cannot properly grasp its antiquity.
And indeed, perhaps some of you are asking whether this present age is a crossroads at all. I say without hesitation yes, and it is necessary to decide today what will befall Wales's culture. The old way of looking at things – God bless those who developed it – is taking a turn in our age. Truly if we do not bestir ourselves, it will cease to be.]
14. D. Tecwyn Lloyd, *John Saunders Lewis. Y Gyfrol Gyntaf* (Dinbych, 1988), pp. 235, 252, 270, 273–4. Cf. T. Villis, *Reaction and the Avante-Garde. The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy in Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (2006).
15. T. Robin Chapman, *W. Ambrose Bebb* (Caerdydd, 1997), pp. 58–59; Humphreys, *Lloffion o Ddyddiaduron Ambrose Bebb*, pp. 118–19.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 132 (on 6 April 1923); Pietro Gorgolini, *The Fascist Movement in Italian Life* (London, 1923). This explication of fascism had a wide circulation in many languages during the 1920s, though not in Welsh.
17. Lloyd, *John Saunders Lewis*, pp. 217, 226, 230, 237, 253. 'Ffascgiaeth a Chymru' [Fascism and Wales], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Gorffennaf 1934, 6; R.E. Jones, 'Ai Ffascgiaid ydym? No ato

Duw! [Are we Fascists? No, for God's sake!], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Tachwedd 1936, 6, rejecting unrestrained authoritarian state power. These accusations culminated in the wartime attacks on the party and its early leaders. See *The Party for Wales. Replies by Saunders Lewis and J.E. Daniel to Mr Gwilym Davies* (1942).

18. Literally, householdership; in Welsh law, the unfettered right of occupation for a kindred group. This was accompanied by the core belief – common in right wing ideology – in the (self-sufficient) family as the basis for the nation (Saunders Lewis, *Canlyn Arthur: Ysgrifau Gwleidyddol* (Aberystwyth, 1938), pp. 43–50).
19. Sir Alfred Mond, a prominent Jewish south Wales industrialist. Both Lewis and Bebb openly proffered anti-Semitic sentiments here as well as anti-proletarian depictions of a Welsh industrial population uprooted from the land and from the cultural heritage (Sherrington, 'Post-war Polarisation'). For the broader intellectual context, see, for example, Kenneth Lunn, 'Political anti-semitism before 1914: Fascism's heritage?', in Kenneth Lunn and Richard C. Thurlow, *British Fascism. Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-war Britain* (London, 1980), pp. 20–40.
20. For an early reaction in the more anglicised south to this form of 'narrow nationalism', coupling exclusively language and ruralism with national identity and, implicitly if not explicitly, in the author's eyes, also with race, see J. Vyrnwy Morgan, DD, *The Welsh Mind in Evolution* (n.d. ?1925). For Morgan, see Gerard Charmley, 'J. Vyrnwy Morgan (1861–1925): Wales in another light', *Welsh History Review*, 24:2 (2008), 120–43.
21. R.J. Moore-Colyer, 'Farming in Depression: Wales between the Wars, 1919–1939', *Agricultural History Review*, 42:2 (1998), 177–96; A.W. Ashby and I.L. Evans, *The Agriculture of Wales and Monmouthshire* (Cardiff, 1944), pp. 92ff.
22. Inspired especially by the Statute of Westminster 1929, the party came to call for Dominion status for Wales, similar to that which the Irish Free State had attained; that is, still deferring to the British crown. The Welsh and Scottish nationalist parties jointly petitioned the crown for dominion status in 1935 (*Y Ddraig Goch*, Mai 1935, 2). It became a more contentious issue in 1939–40 (*Heddiw*, 5:7 (1939) and 7 (1940)).
23. Emlyn J. Sherrington, "'New Aristocracy": Rightwing Nationalism and its claim to Historical Leadership' (unpublished, c. 2000) chapter seven, on the Welsh, British and European right-wing influences in their espousal of an aristocratic, anti-democratic leadership of a resurrected rural polity. Sherrington identifies the contextual social analyses of Pareto and Nietzsche, mediated through French Symbolism, as significant.
24. The most significant figures to affiliate to the Party were Lady Mallt Williams of St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire, Johnny Morgan of Cross Hands and R.O.F. Wynne of Garthewin, Denbighshire, who, from the early 1930s, became a leading patron to the Party and an intellectual ally to Saunders Lewis.
25. A seminal essay by Bebb in 1923 set out the future Plaid Genedlaethol's direction in these respects. Wm. Ambrose Bebb, 'Achub Cymru : Trefnu ei Bywyd' [Saving Wales : Organising her Life], *Y Geninen*, 41 (1923), 184–96.
26. Bebb, 'Gweddnewid Cymru' [Transforming Wales], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Gorffennaf 1926, 1–2.
27. Tensions between farmers and agricultural servants and labourers had emerged in the later nineteenth century and had continued after the war as trade unionism and socialism, much of it English in origin, began to intrude into the rural districts. See David A. Pretty, *The Rural Revolt that Failed* (Cardiff, 1989), chapters six and seven. The clash between 'traditional' Welsh Liberal, Nonconformist values and Socialism in rural Wales was portrayed in the contemporary drama 'Crosswinds' by J.O. Francis (c.1920).
28. Bebb, 'Achub Cymru', 195–6. [All the farmers and all the servants in a county should join together to secure agriculture's interests – in order to sell well, in order to buy cheaply, and thus farmers win and servants win. Within this union servants will have their own

- union to achieve the highest wage in payment for their higher productivity. The same with the farmers. Similarly the two sides in all the counties, until the formation of a union of farmers and servants which will represent the whole of Wales. And that will be a happy day for agriculture, and, as a result, for Wales!] The non-sequiturs did not occur to Bebb, apparently.
29. Saunders Lewis, 'Cenedlaetholdeb a chyfalaf' [Nationalism and capitalism], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mehefin 1926, 3. [A nation in which the majority of its members are petit capitalists, as owners of land or each holding his share in a works or factory or quarry, that's a nation which will nurture proud men and women, fearless, possessing neither deference nor hypocrisy nor silent anger nor treachery. A nation hard to conquer nor to shame nor to subdue so as to forsake her privileges and birthright.] Cf. O. Boehme, 'Economic nationalism in Flanders before the Second World War', *Nations and Nationalism*, 14:3 (2008).
 30. 'Point 7. Agriculture should be the chief industry of Wales and the basis of its civilisation.' Lloyd, *John Saunders Lewis*, pp. 249, 265, 279, and 285–7. Cf. Belloc, *The Restoration of Property* (1936).
 31. Humphreys, *Lloffion o Ddyddiaduron Ambrose Bebb*, pp. 186, 221–2, 250–1; Catholic social action, as idealised by Bebb in relation to Brittany and by Lewis in relation to rural Ireland in particular, was not to the liking of moderate Nationalists of a Protestant persuasion, notably Prof. W.J. Gruffydd. On this, see also Trystan Owen Hughes, *Winds of Change: The Roman Catholic Church and Society in Wales, 1916–1962* (Cardiff, 1999), pp. 81–88, 163–70.
 32. Emyr Hywel, ed., *Anrwyd D.J. Detholiad o'r ohebiaeth rhwng D.J. Williams, Kate Roberts a Saunders Lewis* (Talybont, 2007), p. 11. D.J. Williams, *A.E. a Chymru* (Aberystwyth, 1929), reviewed somewhat critically by Saunders Lewis for A.E.'s over-optimism about implementing agricultural cooperation (*Y Ddraig Goch*, Ebrill 1929, 4).
 33. 'Gwneud y Dalaith Rydd yn Hunan-Gynhaliol: Y Mesur Tir a Mesurau Eraill' [Making the Free State Self-sufficient: The Land Bill and Other Bills], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Awst 1933, 4. Also, 'Y Blaid ac Iwerddon: tebygrwydd polisi'r Blaid i bolisi De Valera' [The Party and Ireland: The Similarity between the Party's Policy and that of De Valera], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Chwefror 1933, 8.
 34. Supporters of the Welsh School of Social Service were enthused by an address from Paul Hansen, founder and head of the People's College at Esbjerg. See Frederick Evans, 'Wales and Denmark', *The Welsh Outlook*, 17:9 (1930), 245–7.
 35. A general British interest in Grundtvig emerged during these years, see for example N. Davies, *Education for Life: A Danish Pioneer* (London, 1931); P. Manniche, *Living Democracy in Denmark* (London, 1939).
 36. D.J. Davies, 'An Economic Policy for Wales', *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mai 1931, in D.J. Davies, *Towards Welsh Freedom*, ed. C. Thomas (1958), p. 59. Cf. Caitlin Adams, 'Rural Education and Reform between the Wars', in P. Brassley, J. Burchardt and L. Thompson, eds., *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 36–52, esp. 47 n. Welsh Nationalists shared the concern of English rural advocates about supplying an appropriate education for rural dwellers, emphasising, however, that it should be culturally distinctive from that organised by Whitehall. Hence, they were prominent in campaigning for a separate Welsh Council for Education. Cf. also Marion Löffler, "'Foundations of a Nation": The Welsh League of Youth and Wales before the Second World War', *Welsh History Review*, 23:1 (2006), 74–105.
 37. David Evans, *Y Wlad: ei bywyd, ei haddysg a'i chrefydd* [The Land: its life, its education and its religion] (1933). Evans was Professor of German at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and conceivably had been influenced by continental ideas about land and nation, for example, the Celtic scholar Kuno Meyer (*Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig 1951–1970*, ed. E.D. Jones and B.F. Roberts (Llundain, 1997), pp. 48–49).
 38. For this, see John Harris, ed., *Fury Never Leaves Us: A Miscellany of Caradoc Evans* (Bridgend, 1985), A Biographical Introduction, esp. pp. 30ff.

39. Y Golygydd [The Editor – Saunders Lewis], ‘Pant Y Beiliau’, *Y Ddraig Goch*, Ionawr 1933, 4; D.J. Davies, ‘Amcanion yr Ysgol Newydd: magu dinasyddion ym Mhant y Beiliau’ [Aims of the new school: nurturing citizens at Pant Y Beiliau], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Chwefror 1933, 6; also, John Davies, Caerdydd, ‘Ein Diwylliant a’i Beryglon’ [Our Culture and its Dangers], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Gorffennaf 1932, 5–6.
40. For example, W. Ambrose Bebb, ‘Bywyd Gwledig Cymru Heddiw. Y nyctod a ddaeth iddo’ [Welsh Rural Life Today. The enfeeblement that has come to it], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mai 1927, 4, recounting the changes in his native Cardiganshire, blaming the education system and denominationalism for eroding communal customs and unity.
41. The Departmental Committee had been a concession to Welsh educationists in 1927 following the publication of a Board of Education committee report on *Welsh in Education and Life* (1927), paras. 385–6, which made several far reaching recommendations about rural and agricultural education. At the same time, the Conservative government deflected calls for a Welsh National Educational Council (*The Times*, 25th June 1927, p. 7).
42. D.J. Davies’s criticism in ‘Polisi Economaidd i Gymru [Economic policy for Wales]’, *Y Ddraig Goch*, Ebrill 1931, 3–4, following a critique by Prof. W.J. Gruffydd. Transl. in *Towards Welsh Freedom*, pp. 64–65.
43. J.E. Daniel, *Welsh Nationalism: What it Stands for* (London, c.1937), pp. 15, 43–47.
44. The regeneration of the wastes and uplands was a policy advocated by Sir George Stapledon, *A Survey of the Agricultural and Waste Lands of Wales* (London, 1936).
45. *Y Ddraig Goch*, Awst 1932, 1.
46. ‘Egluro’r Cynllun Llaeth’, [Explaining the Milk Scheme] *Y Ddraig Goch*, Chwefror 1934, 9.
47. Comments by a leading London based Welsh Nationalist, Alun Pugh, to a female activist, Mai Roberts, about the inability of Welsh MPs such as Dan Hopkin [Labour, Carmarthen] to openly agitate to persuade W.S. Morison, the Minister of Agriculture, and the failure of their ‘behind the scenes’ approach. Bangor University, General MS 20449, dat. 14/ii/1937. Cf. Moore-Colyer, ‘Farming in Depression’, 185–8, on the variable impact of inter-war government agricultural policies on the Welsh livestock sectors.
48. Ministry of Health, *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Anti-Tuberculosis Service in Wales and Monmouthshire* (1939). The report sensibly dismissed so-called ‘racial’ (Celtic) factors and concentrated on epidemiological, occupational and physical causes. Also, *The Times*, 14th March 1939, p. 19.
49. In 1929, John had argued that Wales suffered from being tied to England. Since English policies were unsuitable for Wales this was reflected not only in the higher incidence of TB but also in female mortality rates, especially, again, in rural Wales. It was the effects of the contrasting occupational patterns which were not being addressed. As many as 42% of Welsh workers were in extractive industries compared with 13% in England, and 30% of Welsh workers were in agriculture compared with 7% in England.
50. ‘Ymreolaeth i goncro Darfodidigaeth’ [Home Rule to conquer TB], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Chwefror 1936, 1; and see P. Michael and C. Webster, eds., *Health and Society in Twentieth-Century Wales* (Cardiff, 2006). The voluntary King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association, led by the Liberal peer, Lord Davies of Llandinam, Montgomeryshire, had been in the forefront of campaigning against TB, assisted by occasional government grants. This included trying to improve the quality of tubercular-free cattle herds in association with the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (*The Times*, 29th July 1933, p. 9).
51. ‘Cynhadledd Amwythig a’r Cyngor Datblygiad’ [The Shrewsbury Conference and the Development Council], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Hydref 1933, 1–2. George Williams, chair of the South Wales Development Council objected to an all-Wales body, stressing regional and economic differences between north and south.
52. ‘Before new farming colonies can be settled on the land in Wales, the land itself must be recovered and reconditioned’, Saunders Lewis, *The Case for a Welsh National Development Council* (?1933), p. 6.

53. J. Sheail, *Rural Conservation in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 95 and 201.
54. Sheail, *Rural Conservation*, chapter nine. Stapledon, *Survey of the Agricultural and Waste*, was the notable exception. Concern about the intrusion of urban life into the countryside and the erosion of rural values and dangers to the environment were rife in England too and enhanced the idea of imposing planning controls. Among the foremost advocates of these was Clough Williams-Ellis. See John Stevenson, 'The Countryside, Planning and Civil Society in Britain, 1926–1947', in José Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2002).
55. Lewis, *Case for a Welsh National Development Council*, p.11. The Segretariato was associated particularly with Arrigo Serpieri, notable as an expert on upland reclamation and a legislator and agrarian moderniser, including promoting credit facilities and encouraging the principles of small holding under the Mussolini governments.
56. J.E. Daniel, 'Economeg y Blaid' [The Party's economics], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mehefin 1934, 7–8.
57. R.C. Richards, 'Cenedlaetholdeb Ariannol. Polisi Primo de Rivera yn Sbaen' [Financial Nationalism. Primo de Rivera's policy in Spain], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mehefin 1934, 9.
58. O.M. Roberts, 'Hunanlywodraeth ac Amaethyddiaeth' [Home rule and Agriculture], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Rhagfyr 1932, 2; Ionawr 1933, 8.
59. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Economics Series No. 26, *Markets and Fairs in England and Wales*, Part IV, *Wales* (1930); Board of Trade, *An Industrial Survey of South Wales* (1932), chapter 7, 'Agriculture'.
60. For example, J. Morgan Jones, *Economeg Amaethyddiaeth* (Caerdydd, 1930); J. Morgan Rees, *Dirwydiant a Masnach Heddiw* (Caerdydd, 1931); J. Jones Griffith, *Magu a Phorthi Anifeiliaid* (Caerdydd, 1932). In addition, there were the learned articles in the *Welsh Journal of Agriculture* and other academic sources (Moore-Colyer, 'Farming in Depression', 179).
61. Some limited land settlement experiments were occurring in South Wales organised by the South Wales Rural Settlement Society, formed under the Welsh National Council of Social Service, together with the South Wales Industrial Development Council, e.g. at Boverton, Glamorgan and Neyland, Pembrokeshire, all under the aegis of the Special Areas Commissioner. See 'Land Settlement in South Wales', *Wales and Monmouthshire. The Official Journal of the Industrial Development Council of South Wales and Monmouthshire*, vol. 1:4 (1936), 30; *ibid.*, 1:6 (1936), 34; and *The Times*, 7th December 1935, p.9; 8th December 1936, p. 13.
62. Moses Gruffydd [sic], *Amaethyddiaeth Cymru* (1937; 2nd ed., 1938). For a broader view of the rural credit issue and its protectionist and ideological political biases, see Philip Conford, 'Finance versus Farming: Rural Reconstruction and Economic Reform, 1894–1955', *Rural History*, 13:2 (2002), 225–41. For Gruffydd, see Llywelyn Phillips, 'Moses Griffith' in D. Llwyd Morgan, ed., *Adnabod Deg: portreadau o ddeg o arweinywyr cynnar y Blaid Genedlaethol* (Dinbych, 1977), 96–105. The raiffeisen were the German credit unions based on the pioneering work of Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1818–1888), who was also a prominent supporter of cooperative initiatives. More generally on the inter-war banking crisis, see C.H. Feinstein, ed., *Banking, Currency and Finance in Europe Between the Wars* (Oxford, 1995).
63. Percy Ogwen Jones, 'Dyfodol Amaethyddiaeth a'r Bywyd Gwledig' [the Future of Agriculture and Rural Life], *Y Triban*, 3 (Gaeaf 1938–9), pp. 5ff. *Y Triban* acted as a research journal for the party.
64. R.C. Richards, 'Agriculture and Rural Industries in Self-Governing Wales', *Y Triban*, 1 (Hydref 1937), 2–12.
65. Gruffydd, *Amaethyddiaeth Cymru*, pp. 17–18; Richards, 'Agriculture and Rural Industries', 11. The Forestry Commission came in for criticism for its land purchase and re-leasing practices as well as for its misplanting of trees on good agricultural land. Emrys B. Owen,

- Llanidloes, 'Rhaib Comisiwn y Coedwigoedd' [Rape by the Forestry Commission] *Y Ddraig Goch*, Chwefror 1937, 4.
66. BU General MS 20443, dat. 17 and 30/xii/ 1931 and MS 20444, dat. 5/iii /and 5/iv/1932, correspondence between Williams and Mai Roberts on rural industrial revival and economic nationalism . Also, Anna M. Jones, *The Rural Industries of England and Wales, A Survey made on behalf of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute*, vol. 4, *Wales*, (Oxford, 1927; republished 1978), chapter two; J. Morgan Rees, *Diwydiant a Masnach Heddiw*, pp, 126–7. Use was made of the *Rural Industries* journal to promote Welsh cloth. Cultural preservation was also a motivation, inspired by the Irish government's support for handloom weavers in the Irish speaking districts (BU General MS 20444, dat. 1932).
 67. H. Maldwyn Williams, 'The Woollen Industry in Wales', *Wales and Monmouthshire. The Official Journal of the Industrial Development Council of South Wales and Monmouthshire Ltd.*, vol. 1:3, Autumn 1935, 12–14; Anna M. Jones, *Rural Industries of England and Wales*, pp. 37–38. *Y Ddraig Goch* carried adverts encouraging the purchase of Welsh products and supporting Welsh labour.
 68. D.W.L. Jones, 'Crefftau gwledig Cymru a'r awdurdodau lleol' [Wales's rural crafts and the local authorities], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mehefin 1937, 9; on the Scandinavian influence on him, see Iorwerth C. Peate, *Rhwng Dau Fyd* (Dinbych, 1976), pp. 106–7, 133; Pysr Gruffudd, 'Tradition, Modernity', 37–39. There were also aspirations to create a national architectural tradition, emulating Sweden (D.O. Roberts, 'Ragnar Ostberg a phensaerniaeth cenedl', *Heddiw*, 6:5 (1940), 144–9). Peate had become disillusioned with Plaid Genedlaethol's constitutional and economic strategies by the late 1930s and argued that preserving the nation's cultural and linguistic integrity was more important than self-government (and did not wholly depend on it). See above n.22.
 69. 'Y Bath and West a Chymru, *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mehefin 1934, 6,8; 'Y Bath and West – rhesymau dros atal dyfod siou Seisnig i Gastell Nedd'[reasons for preventing an English show from coming to Neath], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Awst 1934; 'Perygl y "Bath and West" : y drwg a wna i Gymru'[The danger of the Bath and West: the harm it will do to Wales], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Mai 1935, 8. Cf. *The Times*, 26th April 1934, p. 8; *The Times*, 27th May 1936, p. 7.
 70. This was perhaps because the Royal Agricultural Society had always had a significant number of leading Welsh landowners among its members and vice-presidents and had from time to time reported in its *Journal* on Welsh agricultural and farming practices. It did meet with some more muted Nationalist opposition in 1938, however, when the Show came to Cardiff, causing the Welsh Agricultural Society to cancel its show.
 71. 'Brad Castell Nedd'[Neath's Treachery] *Y Ddraig Goch*, Ebrill 1934, 9; 'Gwaradwydd Castell Nedd'[Neath's Shame], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Gorffennaf 1935, 1; D.W. Howell, *Taking Stock: the Centenary History of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society* (Cardiff, 2003), p. 57. The Welsh and the Bath and West were of a similar size in terms of membership but the latter had double the reserves of the former (Howell, *Taking Stock*, pp. 52–53).
 72. It was among the Show's most successful years (*The Times*, 1st June 1937, p. 15).
 73. Welsh Nationalist Party, *Protest against the Establishment of a Bombing School at Porth Neigwl, Llyn Peninsula* (n.d.). Porth Neigwl was the nearby coastline where bombing practice was to occur. Support for the Peace Pledge Union's Peace Ballot had been high in Nonconformist rural Wales and gave the Nationalists confidence to oppose the remilitarisation policies of (as they saw it) British imperialism.
 74. Saunders Lewis, *Paham y Llosgasom yr Ysgol Fomio* [Why We Burned the Bombing School] (1937?).
[Can you try to understand our feelings when we saw scholars and authors in England referring to the 'sanctity' of ducks and swans, and on that score succeeding in getting the Minister for the Air Force to move the bombing school, and we in Wales, and exactly at the same time having to organise a great national campaign to defend really sacred things in God's creation,

namely nation, her language, her literature, her age old traditions and Christian rural life, and we not even having from the government as much as a hearing for a deputation to discuss the matter?]

75. 'Baldwin . . . Ddoe a Heddiw' [Baldwin . . . Yesterday and Today], *Y Ddraig Goch*, Ebrill 1937, 12, in which the praises he had heaped upon the unspoiled Welsh landscape at a St David's Day banquet in 1927 were thrown back at him. He had suggested the nationalisation of land of outstanding natural beauty. Interestingly, Lloyd George, in his presidential address to the National Eisteddfod at Neath in 1935 had emphasised preserving the rural from the philistines (*The Times*, 9th August 1935, p. 8). For Baldwin and his essay 'On England' (1937), see K. Robins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (1988), pp. 202–3.
76. From 1937, the appointment of a secretary of state for Wales was a feature of Welsh Liberal and Labour policies but was one which was rejected by Nationalists as being insufficient to defend Welsh interests.
77. Ieuan Parri, 'Gwerin', in Gwyn Thomas, ed., *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*, 26 (Dinbych, 2002), pp. 96–114.
78. And also more military installations. Contemporaneously with Penyberth was the move to establish an air base in the Vale of Glamorgan, against which the Nationalists (and notably Iorwerth Peate) raised a voice, but not so stridently; perhaps because industrial and commercial interests in nearby Cardiff were so strongly in favour. More resistance was nurtured to the intention to establish a mines depot at Trecŵn, Pembrokeshire. See 'Llywodraeth Loegr yn Meddiannu Trecwn', *Y Ddraig Goch*, Hydref 1936, 2. Most crucially came the appropriation of large tracts of Mynydd Epynt, Breconshire in 1940. See Pys Gruffudd, 'Welsh Language and the Geographical Imagination', 122–8; Herbert Hughes, *An Uprooted Community: A History of Epynt* (Llandysul, 1998). In the immediate post-war period, the continued military appropriation of land in Wales led to an effective oppositional alliance between Welsh scholars and some local communities such as Trecŵn and was a fillip to the Nationalist movement. On the impact of the war on Welsh agricultural practice more generally, see R.J. Moore-Colyer, 'The County War Agricultural Executive Committees: The Welsh Experience, 1939–1945', *Welsh History Review*, 22:3 (2005), 558–87.
79. Mudiad Cymru Fydd was largely composed of Nationalists and Liberals and during the ensuing few decades acted as a pressure group, drawing Welsh MPs' attention to cultural, economic and social (especially rural) issues which affected the Welsh nation and petitioning the respective governments about securing greater Welsh institutional recognition. Its principal spokesman and secretary was T.I. Ellis, son of the prominent late Victorian Liberal Nationalist MP, Thomas Edward Ellis. See R. Gerallt Jones, *A Bid for Unity. The Story of Undeb Cymru Fydd 1941–1966, with a postscript to 1970* (Denbigh, 1971). It had emerged from more local and ad hoc 'defensive' groups during 1938–40.
80. Plaid Genedlaethol after 1945 was recast as Plaid Cymru under the leadership of Gwynfor Evans into a more coherent electoral machine purporting to better defend the rural areas of Wales than the predominant Labour party. In actuality, the rural electorate was less impressed by nationalism prior to 1966 but the failure of Whitehall adequately to address rural recovery in Wales presented Plaid with a fruitful agenda. The post-war Labour government's one significant constitutional concession to Wales in the form of the advisory Council for Wales and Monmouthshire (1949) had included as one of its major remits the regeneration of rural Wales.