

The Welsh Republican

Y GWERINIAETHWR

Editorial

The Welsh Republican Movement is fully committed to the centuries-old struggle of the Welsh people to improve their living standards and win security for themselves and their children. No form of Welsh Independence can be ultimately acceptable to Welsh Republicans unless it results, at the same time, in an improvement in the welfare of Welsh citizens. There is no place in the Welsh Republican Movement for those nationalists who bubble over with love for "Wales and the old language", yet stand utterly aloof from the day-to-day struggles of the Welsh people.

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Welsh Republicanism is rooted deeply in Welsh history, emerging especially clearly in the working class struggles of the 19th. century, the Welsh Fighting Century. For modern Welsh Republicanism is at one with the struggle developed by Dic Penderyn in 1831, by the Scotch Cattle in 1832 to 1843, by the Welsh rebels of 1839, and by the Rebecca Movement of 1839 to 1843. It is equally a continuation of the work of those political groups in Wales, which, at the end of the 19th century, committed themselves to the twin fight for social justice and national freedom. Of those forerunners of modern Welsh Republicanism, there was for instance, the group of Monmouthshire Socialists who, at the close of the century, maintained that, "The time has come for our Welsh people to demand the right to govern themselves in the way they judge best for the benefit and happiness of all. Today we are governed and dominated by a parliament which sits in London, and makes laws, not for the good of the Welsh people, but to enrich the great landlords, bankers, bondholders, and all those who live in idleness on the toil of the workers." Or there were the Radicals of both north and south Wales who invited Michael Davitt, great Irish Socialist and Fenian, to assist in the formation of a Welsh land-league, and to state his case for land-nationalisation from Welsh platforms. And there were great Socialist propagandists who, like Robert Jones, cried, "Every Socialist is a world-citizen, but that does not destroy his nationalism. What is needed is unity in diversity. Self-government at home and an equal union among all nations,— that is the only order that can ensure peace and prosperity".

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Hence it was that in the Wales of fifty years ago the scene was, in many ways, set for an all-sweeping drive for a Welsh Republic wherein the true will of the Welsh people, unstultified by the English connection, could find genuine expression. It was widely recognised in Wales, as it was recognised by James Connolly in Ireland and John Maclean in Scotland, that the social revolution in Wales, whereby the life-and-death grip of the coalowners, ironmasters and landlords would be broken, could but be incomplete without a corresponding national revolution, whereby the grip of an imperialist England on a subject Wales would be equally broken.

That revolutionary situation, and the whole working-class tradition in Wales, was betrayed by a generation of Welsh "Socialists", who, following the first Great War, placed personal ambition before the interests of Wales, and sought honours and rewards in the English parliament, the English Trade Unions, and the English Labour Party.

The Welsh Republican Movement stands for a return to the true traditions of Welsh Socialism, confident that the prosperity of the Welsh people in the future depends upon the success of the fight for a Welsh Republic.