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THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 'NEW NATIONALISM'
THE WELSH NATIONALIST PARTY TO 1946

This paper reinterprets the development of a 'new nationalism' in Wales during the period 1919 (the end of the First World War) to 1946 (the end of the Second World War and the election of a majority Labour UK government).[1] The focus is on the building of a new political movement, the Welsh Nationalist Party, as the instrument for the creation of a new, territorially based nationalist ideology. It identifies critical policies and actions by that party which led to its increasing visibility as the carrier of the new discourse. In particular, this analysis seeks to deal with matters of perception and politics of the defined era.[2] It also examines if, to use Enric Ucelay-Da Cal's phrase, the party's 'possible clientele [...] realise that they incarnate "something else"'.[3] The paper argues that this particular 'new nationalism' was very much 'something else' and was, contra the accepted historical narrative, relatively successful by the end of this period. It also demonstrated some but not overwhelming success in the 'task of "nation-building" outside government institutions'.[4]

The evidence presented here suggests that it is possible to identify seven key actions and party policies between 1919 and 1946 which characterised this new form of Welsh nationalism, distinct from its predecessor variant, which was defined, both then and now, as Home Rule. These demonstrations of its visibility firmly position the Welsh Nationalist

Party outside the UK political norm. The seven key actions are delineated here as v.1 - v.7 ('v' for visibility) for the purpose of analysis (Table 1).

Table 1 | *The visibility of the new nationalism, 1919-46*

v.1	Establishing an independent party	1925
v.2	Agreeing the aim of a separate state	1930
v.3	Adapting to linguistic change	1932-46
v.4	Anti-imperialist international and defence policies	1925-46
v.5	Non-violent direct action	1935
v.6	Defensive neutrality	1939
v.7	Wartime policy development and campaigns	1939-46

Why a 'new nationalism'?

The term new nationalism has been used variously to re-define developments in nationalist ideology for over a century. For example, in 1910, American then ex-president Theodore Roosevelt used it to brand his progressive political philosophy in which government would serve a more inclusive and socially just nation.[5] A hundred years later, it has been used in an analysis of contemporary Chinese nationalism, to legitimise the Communist Party of China hegemony while modifying the more rigid form of communism of the Maoist era.[6] In both cases, what is 'new' is the attempt to fuse popular nationalism with state governance in a re-worked national project. In the context of this paper, the term is (re-)used to

distinguish between the many and varied forms of pre-World War One decentralised governance within multi-national states, particularly empires (instituted in response to internal nineteenth-century popular national movements), and the widespread post-war phenomenon of the formation of new *states* focused closely, but not exclusively, around the territorial boundaries of previously sub-state nations. With different manifestations, it was a worldwide phenomenon. But original state-formation is the key determinant of the new nationalism here defined; in Europe following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian Empires and in the Middle East with the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. Some of the resultant new states agreed under the Versailles treaty system were stillborn, e.g. Armenia, Kurdistan. Others – although for the first time acquiring defined political borders – were not independent but colonial possessions under League of Nations mandates, so their new nationalism took the form of anti-colonial struggles that 'profoundly altered the standards of values'.[7] Exceptionally in the West European peninsula, the Irish Free State struggled into existence through a War of Independence and despite the separation of 'Ulster'; mainstream Irish nationalism had moved decidedly beyond its Home Rule phase in 1916.

All national movements were given a new, moral impetus and greater legitimacy – even to their sceptics – by American president Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (1918). Although he never used the term, Wilson's concept of the 'right of national self-determination' entered popular international discourse.[8] In the field of international relations, Wilsonian advocacy of self-determination further legitimised the right of each nation to have its own state, a key concept for the subject of this paper. In Wales, over a decade, post-war nationalist ideology became qualitatively different from longer established 'Home Rule' movements within the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland (1801-1922). It can, therefore, claim definition as the 'new nationalism' of its era. The crucial role of statehood *per se* was recognised by US Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, in 1921: 'Rights unsupported by actual power are only moral concepts.'[9] Opponents also recognised this fundamental difference. Writing in 1941, Alfred Cobban perceptively argued 'it is necessary to take

the sting out of nationality by disassociating it from sovereignty.'[10] 'Writing history backwards', the new nationalism also recognised Enoch Powell's later maxim about UK devolution (the re-worked Home Rule), 'Power devolved is power retained.'[11] In the inter-war period, Welsh nationalism – as exemplified by its vanguard, the Welsh Nationalist Party after its foundation in 1925 – was decidedly Wilsonian and thus both ideologically and politically different from its half-century old UK predecessor, despite sharing the same branding. (This distinction was often overlooked by contemporaries and historians.) As it developed policies and activities throughout this period, the new party's territorially exclusive state-centric perspective was instrumental in developing notably divergent political, economic and cultural values, a fundamentally different national interest from that of the UK state.

'Welsh nationalism' – as an ideology and a political programme – had, for over fifty years previously, been closely linked with Great Britain's Liberal Party, which was electorally ascendant in Wales from 1865. The party was so massively the traditional vehicle for this form of Welsh nationalism that 'liberalism and nationalism were fused'.[12] This synchrony manifested itself in Cymru Fydd, a civic movement, founded in 1887, which advocated the recognition and equality of the Welsh nation within the UK and a federalist form of Home Rule across the islands of Great Britain and Ireland.[13] This can properly be defined as old nationalism as it does not seek to undermine the integrity of the state – secessionism – nor its differently constructed 'national interest'. However, in addition to its attachment to 'Home Rule' Welsh nationalism – the Welsh variant of British liberalism – was markedly non-conformist in religion, agrarian and culturally nationalist. In 1891, the UK party's 'Newcastle Programme' set out its specific priorities for Wales: the disestablishment of the Church of England within Wales, restrictions on the liquor trade and land reform to meet the aspirations of small farmers.[14] In the pre-World War One period, it successfully implemented those parts of its electoral platform – but not the constitutional aims. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Welsh nationalism also had notable successes with the establishment of new national non-state institutions, a common development throughout Europe.[15] In many sub-state nations, these sometimes became building-

blocks to later statehood. In the case of Wales, a number of them were instrumental in providing the intellectual foundations for the new nationalism. Simplistically, the trajectory of the rise, change and decline of Liberal Welsh nationalism is personified in the career of David Lloyd George, Member of Parliament. A semi-official guide to the Westminster parliament labelled him as a 'radical and Welsh nationalist' up until 1923. Following his term of office as UK Prime Minister and coalition government leader (December 1916 - January 1920), he was re-branded as a 'Liberal'.[16] At the same time as it was implementing key policies – and transforming itself from Welsh nationalism within the state to a party largely at ease with British imperialism – the UK Liberal Party was losing electoral support in Wales, most significantly to the Labour Party. The year before the foundation of the Welsh Nationalist Party in 1925, the Liberals had fallen to the position of second party in what was now a three-party system, and continued to decline thereafter (Table 2*).*[17]

Table 2 | *Party representation in the UK House of Commons*

Year	Liberal	Conservative	Labour
1885	30	4	
1900	27	6	1
1906	28		6
1910	27	2	5
1924	10	9	16

The pre-war Labour Party had many policies in common with the Liberals, evolving as it had from the 'Lib-Lab' tradition.[18] Apart from exceptional individuals such as Kier Hardie and Arthur Henderson, the ascendant Labour Party had made few pre-war commitments to UK Home Rule. Post-

war, it took some major initiatives. The 1918 UK Labour Party Conference agreed 'Home Rule All Round'. A Special Labour Party Home Rule Conference was held in Cardiff in July 1918. But ultimately, 'industrial, economic and social issues [were] closer to the hearts of Labour leaders' as were 'cosmopolitanism and internationalism' and constitutional reform markedly receded as a priority.[19]

The failure of UK Home Rule: 1919-1925

In parallel with the two UK parties changing their positions on Home Rule, other events demonstrated that this fifty-year old political movement was coming to an end. Although in 1918, Welsh local authorities resolved 'to transfer all functions of government [...] not [...] imperial concerns', by 1921 draft law to create a Secretary of State for Wales within the UK cabinet (administrative devolution) failed, as did the more ambitious 1922 Government of Wales Bill. A national conference to reinvigorate the constitutional momentum was 'poorly attended'. UK party manifestoes in the 1922, 1923 and 1924 Westminster elections 'witnessed few references to [specifically] Welsh issues'. These post-war failures demonstrated 'the hopelessness of Welsh nationalist aspirations as long as the British parties remained the sole channels'.[20] In addition to markedly decreased momentum within Great Britain, Welsh nationalism's transformation from 'old' to 'new' coincides with the post-war triumph of Irish nationalism. Many founding members of the WNP claimed influence from Ireland's experiences.[21] Certainly, its political opponents believed that. However, the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922 weakened 'Home Rule All Round' in the rest of the British Isles, thus, paradoxically, allowing public space for the formulation and development of the new nationalism.[22] A further factor, alongside the exemplar of Irish independence and the two British parties' abandonment of the constitutional cause, the new Welsh nationalists were motivated by an intense concern for Welsh language decline (Table 3).[23]

Table 3 | *Monoglot & bilingual Welsh speakers (in 1000s)*

1891	898	54.4%	
1901	929	49.9%	minority
1911	977	43.5%	
1921	929	37.2%	decline
1931	909	29.0%	

The creation of a membership-based, independent Welsh nationalist party [v.1] was a gradual process. Rather than a single national event, it was implemented through the merger of local centres. This contributed, initially, to sometimes unclear and contradictory policies. University-based Cymdeithas Genedlaethol Cymru (National Association of Wales) was founded at Bangor (1921). It advocated radical economic and social policies and used Welsh as its official language. Despite, constitutionally, only advocating Home Rule, opponents nevertheless accused it of 'aping the tactics of [Irish independence leader Éamon] de Valera'. Its wider significance was in joining Caernarfon-based Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (see below) in January 1925. The rationale for an independent Welsh Nationalist Party was postulated by J. Dyfnallt Owen in April 1923. A new party was 'necessary because of the importance which the Labour Party attached to class rather than the nation'.[24] The second local organisation, Y Mudiad Cymreig (The Welsh Movement), was formed in Penarth during January 1924. Its mission was 'to save Wales [...] and transform it into a Welsh Wales' in which the Welsh language would be compulsory. Despite an electoral strategy of contesting UK parliamentary elections, its successful candidates would not take their seats. This was the 'abstentionism' practiced by Sinn Féin but abandoned by Fianna Fáil in 1926. Opponents labeled Mudiad Cymreig as 'the Welsh Sinn Féin advocates'. It was at this time that the qualitative divergence between the

old and new nationalisms began to be reported in the mainstream press.[25] A third constituent organisation was Byddin Ymreolwyr Cymru (Wales Army of Home Rule), later Plaid Genedlaethol Gymreig (Welsh Nationalist Party), founded September 1924. Its aim was to 'fight for the preservation of the language and build the future of Wales on a foundation of Welsh traditions and ideals'. Yet again, it was reportedly only a 'movement for Welsh Home Rule'.[26] Thus, at this stage in the development of the new nationalism, the Wilsonian goal of statehood [v.2] was, at best, unclear – despite the momentum towards building an independent Wales-only party [v.1] as the agreed vehicle.

Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru

The eventual fusion of these forces into a single nationalist party took place on 5 August 1925 at that year's peripatetic National Eisteddfod in Pwllheli. The foundation of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party (WNP) is widely recognised as the founding action of modern Welsh political nationalism [v.1]. The party published its own monthly Welsh language political newspaper, *Y Ddraig Goch*, from June 1926. The same year, Saunders Lewis was elected as its president. He subsequently served until August 1939, providing 'stability, cohesion and continuity' as well as much more.[27] Also in 1926, the party increased its profile further by instituting the first of its peripatetic Annual Summer Schools. These were the crucible 'in which the ideology of the party was moulded'.[28] That October, a national office with an organiser was opened. Yet despite these initial strides towards visibility in the public sphere, the new party held a number of policy positions which it needed to change to succeed in its parliamentary strategy. Other designated campaigns were the implementation of its policies through elections to local government and, perhaps surprisingly, the administration of justice through Sinn Féin-type courts.[29] As shown above, it is debatable whether or not – despite what its opponents stated – the WNP advocated an independent state [v.2] at its inception. This probably accounts for contemporary and some current misunderstandings of the Party's positioning on the old

nationalism / new nationalism spectrum. In a seminal lecture, *Principles of nationalism*, delivered by Saunders Lewis in 1926, there were unformed and unclear constitutional aims.[30] Lewis argued the new party should shun the English parliament (abstentionism) and join the League of Nations (statehood) yet merely advocate a 'self-government' on the grounds that independence was unrealisable.

The Welsh Nationalist Party contested its first UK parliamentary general election on 30 May 1929, in only one of Wales' thirty-six seats. It gained 609 votes (1.6%).[31] The electoral experience of 1929 caused a step-change in its Westminster strategy. Its 1930 conference rescinded parliamentary abstentionism. More importantly, the clear constitutional aim of 'Dominion Status' was adopted, seeking equal statehood with the countries of the British Commonwealth including, of course, the neighbouring Irish Free State [v.2].[32] This now was a clear challenge to the integrity of the UK State.

Further, the Party faced two major structural challenges. First, the on-going absolute and relative decline in numbers of Welsh-speakers (Table 3) had further changed the dynamics. In 1926, a major funder had suggested the proposed new political newspaper, *Y Ddraig Goch*, 'should be bilingual to awaken the Anglicised Welsh'.[33] In the event, it was only published in Welsh. Six years later, probably in response to the 1931 census (Table 3), the party decided to take its message directly to English-speakers:

> The decision to publish *The Welsh Nationalist* was made because there are people in Wales who do not understand the Welsh language, but who are, in spite of that, part of the Welsh nation.[34]

This fusion of a civic, inclusive ideology and *Realpolitik* demonstrates a particular characteristic of the new nationalism being constructed by the WNP. Within the wide range of new nationalisms evolving across Europe in the inter-war years, it can arguably be marked out as a progressive movement. The first monthly edition of *The Welsh Nationalist* was published in January 1932 [v.3]. But this action was only the start – albeit a major one – towards the party fully recognising linguistic reality and

actively including non-Welsh speakers within its widening discourse. As well as responding to linguistic change, the party confronted the issue of open borders, particularly with England. Its ideological approach had been laid down in *Principles of nationalism*: 'Outsiders increasingly come to Wales', and 'by their intrusions and numbers […] Welsh life is rapidly being anglicised'. But, rather than advocating immigration restrictions, it was argued that 'we must turn the outsiders into Welshmen [and] give them a Welsh mind, the Welsh culture and the Welsh language.'[35] In 1930s Europe and, in particular, the rise of British fascism, this liberal counter-narrative required continual reinforcement and the development of policies consistent with its principles. The Welsh Nationalist Party repeatedly reiterated its 'civic nationalist' position:

> 'Wales for the Welsh' has never been the slogan of the nationalists. This is a wilfully misleading phase used by our opponents. Our policy is: Wales for every person who respects and serves our country.[36]

> Welsh nationalism means not 'Wales for the Welsh' but Wales for all who have to live in Wales.[37]

In addition to changes brought about by immigration and anglicisation, the country also suffered from an absolute decline in population. Between 1921 and 1939, the net population loss due to migration totalled 450,000.[38] Thus, attempts to build this new nationalism must be seen against substantial population displacement and its negative effects on 'nation-building', especially the impact on the Welsh language. The party was developing against a strong demographic tide (Table 4):

Table 4 | *Population decline (in 1000s)*

1921	2,656
1931	2,593
1939	2,465

British nationalism and imperialism

Wales' relationship to England has been described as colonial since 1282.[39] A peninsula with an accessible coastline, low-lying northern and southern coastal plains and its strategic position between England and Ireland exposed Wales to invasion, colonisation and particular forms of socio-economic development. By an English law (1538), the Welsh border was defined and the country governed almost entirely as an integral part of England. The Three Kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland had been united through the Monarch since 1603. The parliamentary union of England and Scotland (1707) created the Kingdom of Great Britain and generated modern British nationalism. Deep-seated and powerful, it preceded the popular American and French revolutions. By mid-18th century, 'the birth of a powerfully self-confident British nationalism' had already occurred. Conceived in the era of 'Rule, Britannia!' and 'God Save the King!', this hegemonic form of nationalism was imperialist and global: 'The British Empire [...] a political community incorporating [Great] Britain, Ireland and the [American] plantations [was] seen from the works of moral philosophers, historians, pamphleteers and poets across the whole range of private and public discourse.'[40] By the inter-war era under consideration here, 'the British Empire reached its greatest territorial extent [...] encompassing a quarter of the World'.[41]

Despite the centrality of Empire to UK history, it is argued here that conventional British historiography does not recognise the *synchrony* between the UK's imperial and colonial policies and its foreign or international policies. Against this British imperial consensus, the Welsh Nationalist Party developed a strong ideological and policy framework – amounting to a powerful alterity – which fundamentally challenged British political orthodoxy. This merely viewed UK state actions 'overseas' or 'abroad' as *synchronicity*. Thus, again meeting Ucelay-Da Cal's criteria, WNP opposition to imperialism was very much 'something else' contra the UK and a major element in its public discourse.[42] It is further argued that the international relations policies of the inter-war Welsh Nationalist Party – though less visible today – were certainly not so in the period under consideration. Despite their importance, they are under-researched

both by historians of Welsh nationalism and international relations specialists. This paper seeks to illuminate its importance.

The party expressed strong support for the League of Nations, praising the policies of small states, and welcomed their increasingly influential role on the League Council. Against UK norms, it urged a European focus in place of that of Empire. In *Principles of nationalism*, the initial formulation of the Party's ideology, Lewis rehearsed his country's millennia-old European connectivity until it was annexed to England in the sixteenth century. Opposing insularity, he stated, 'we who are Welsh claim that we are responsible for civilisation [...] *in our part of Europe*' [emphasis added]. Lewis ambitiously challenged 'the Welsh concept [to] influence Europe'.[43] Throughout, Europe was presented as the alterity to Empire and 'Great Powers' who refuse to share their sovereignty and practice imperial rivalries. More concretely, in his election address to the University of Wales constituency in October 1931, Lewis committed Welsh nationalist parliamentarians to 'maintain such a standard of information in international affairs and so European – in opposition to Imperialist – a standpoint in matters pertaining to the organisation of peace and the co-operation of peoples'.[44] The Party's pan-European perspective extended to what it considered to be exemplar nations, particularly the small European states, working as partners through the League of Nations and promoting economic nationalism, especially on co-operative principles.[45] There is also (as yet under-researched) evidence of powerful policy alignments with the Irish Free State, especially through de Valera's Fianna Fáil political party.[46] Through cultural exchanges, correspondence, personal connections and political missions, an often intense transnational transfer of policy over three decades between the two parties extended to constitutional, international, defence, economic and language issues as well as, post-war, ideas of Celtic solidarity.[47] This active relationship culminated in de Valera's mission to Wales in October 1948 – jointly organised with Plaid Cymru (the new name adopted by the WNP after the war) – as part of his global anti-partition campaign after his party had lost power in February of that year to an inter-party government with John Costello as Taoiseach (i.e. the Irish head of government).[48]

Consistent with these anti-colonialist principles, the WNP strongly opposed the RAF inter-war practice of aerial bombing. This method of warfare was increasingly used in the expanded post-1918 British Empire – notably Iraq and Palestine – as well as Afghanistan and Sudan. Throughout this period, the party issued continuous condemnation of what was officially termed 'air policing' in those territories.[49] Against this ideological background, the party opposed UK 'rearmament' from the beginning of the process in 1933. This then led to specific campaigns against the increasing 'confiscation' of land for military purposes.[50] Allied with the rearmament and confiscation policies was the 'forced' movement of men and women out of economically depressed areas, mainly to England, under the UK government's 'transference through training' schemes.[51] A predominant characteristic of party policy and propaganda in the 1930s was demonstrating the connections between UK international and domestic policy [v.4]. The WNP highlighted the inconsistency between UK criticism of other Great Powers aggression and its own colonial activities. Following the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the party argued that the UK had diluted its opposition at the League of Nations to safeguard the informal British Empire in China.[52] Following the 1936 Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the party highlighted the inconsistency of British policy of sanctions against Italy when, at the same time, the UK was conducting military operations against Afghanistan's Mohmand tribes.[53] It was only logical that the party supported nationalist movements in Cyprus, Egypt, India, Malta and Palestine, and was extremely critical of the actions of both Conservative and Labour governments at the time.[54]

Non-violent direct action: 'Penyberth' – a 'perfect storm'

The international situation and its increasing impact on domestic politics led these new nationalists to 'one of the most defining moments in modern Welsh history'.[55] The UK re-armament programme called for the construction of an RAF airfield on the overwhelmingly Welsh-speaking Llyn peninsula. To be used for practicing aerial bombing, this was also opposed as having a negative impact on the notable Christian history and

culture of Llyn. Combined with the affront to Welsh nationality and the imposition of the facility, conditions were created for what resulted in its major political act to date.[56] Eighteen months before the seminal action, widespread opposition to the 'Bombing School' had been expressed across democratic, civic society – and failed. On 8 September 1936, three leading party members burned construction huts and surrendered themselves to the police. They voluntarily admitted their crime, stressing its political nature [v.5]. It was an act of deliberate damage to property, not people.

At their first trial, the local jury failed to agree a verdict. The transfer of the case to London magnified the political nature of the process. Even Lloyd George considered that an 'outrage which makes my blood boil'.[57] The sense of injustice was maintained when 'The Three' were jailed for nine months in London. It was no surprise that 15,000 people greeted them at a 'Welcome Home' rally. Other large public meetings were held across the country. The 'Burning of the Bombing School' had a significant political impact. Welsh Nationalist Party membership doubled. Its local branches expanded from 72 to 111. Circulation of *Y Ddraig Goch* increased by 2,000 per month. At county council elections the following May 1937, the party fielded nine candidates. The sensational Penyberth event and London re-trial had brought the new nationalism to the attention of the London and global press [v.5], if not always in sympathetic ways.[58]

Second World War: activities and consequences

Standard historiography posits that the boost in publicity and support the party received over the Bombing School action was dissipated by its position over the outbreak of the Second World War.[59] Although often labelled as 'pacifism', its policy can be more accurately characterised as 'defensive neutrality', since it accepted the necessity for military defence and international alliances. Placing the party's policy in context, twenty-two European states had declared themselves neutral in September 1939.[60] Highly relevant to the position taken by WNP was, again, the policy of the Irish Free State. Under the 1938 Anglo-Irish Agreement, UK-imposed military facilities on Free State territory were relinquished for a

guarantee that Eire 'would never allow itself to be used to harm Britain's security interests'.[61] Its Taoiseach declared that 'Ireland would fight against any country that invaded Irish territory'.[62] Outside the UK consensus, the Welsh Nationalist Party developed similar views, declaring 'our country is sacred *and each of us is bound to defend it by force of arms, if necessary.* An obvious case where war is necessary and just is the invasion of a country by a foreign power.'[63] Earlier, with the threat of war against Italy over Abyssinia, and in conformity with its anti-imperialist position, the Party's 1934 conference decided that while 'England will be involved in any European war: Ireland will not be involved. It is for Wales to decide with which she will stand.'[64] As war with Germany approached, the Party decided that it would 'declare Wales a neutral country' [v.6].[65]

With conflict imminent, the WNP hardened its position: war was seen to threaten for one reason, 'imperialism is the main cause of modern warfare'; 'no [party] member may join the military voluntarily or under duress' (1936); and 'disobey the [military conscription] law' (1939).[66] After the War, its pacifist president, Gwynfor Evans, stated that the party had 'demanded the right for Wales to decide for herself whether she should be belligerent or neutral'.[67] Party policy had evolved – reconciling its nationalist and pacifist factions – as the international situation worsened. In the event, whilst some of its members were exempt from military service on grounds of conscience, government tribunals refused to accept Welsh nationalism as a valid reason. Only twelve party supporters were imprisoned using this defence but, although their number was small, it was enough for Evans to claim they formed the basis of a 'small resistant movement' of post-war significance.[68] It is unlikely that this defiant political faction was ignored by state authorities and, if so, represented another level of visibility for the national movement. Other members quietly joined the British armed forces, while continuing to express support for the party's constitutional aims.[69]

Even after the outbreak of war, the party called for the cessation of hostilities and a negotiated peace to prevent further slaughter.[70] Clear views were expressed against the 'methods of this war' – blockade and bombing.[71] This conveys the vast difference between the wartime policies of the WNP and the prevailing – perhaps mythic – British narrative [v.6].

This alterity contributed to the continuous construction of a radically different concept of a Welsh national interest intended to 'help make a movement synonymous with the territory it claims to represent'.[72] Inevitably, war itself impacted upon domestic politics. Largely rural, Wales received large numbers of children evacuated from English cities. In response to former president Saunders Lewis' concern these would 'submerge and destroy the Welsh national tradition', future president Gwynfor Evans' solution – consistent with its civic nationalism – was to 'befriend and Welshicise them as much as possible'. In reaction to UK policies of population transfer, a Committee for the Defence of Wales (later, Undeb Cymru Fydd) was established in December 1939. By no means exclusively Welsh nationalist, it reflected widespread concern in civic society and local communities, representing educational, cultural and religious bodies and county and district councils. The organisation also kept in touch with Welsh people in the armed forces and workers from Wales directed from their communities through the wartime Transfer of Labour scheme.[73]

The party confirmed throughout the war, like Fianna Fáil, its lack of animosity towards England. This had originally been made clear in 1935 when, in a signed editorial, *The Welsh Nationalist* declared, 'we can guarantee peace towards England by a treaty rejecting any present or future claim to each other's land, and preventing one country being used for war operations against the other.'[74] Five years later the journal emphasised how 'Welsh nationalism has never espoused the cause of any foreign nation opposed to England.'[75] In his 1942 New Year message, Saunders Lewis wrote that 'the Welsh Nationalist Party wishes England no ill. It desires the welfare of England.'[76] But having been demonstrably outside the state norm on many issues pre-war, the party's wartime policies and activities inevitably invited more intense political attacks. In 1942, Lloyd George's former Cabinet confidant, Tom Jones, labelled it 'the Fascist Party in Wales', and 'a Nationalist Party [...] possessing its newspapers and conducting an active campaign, with all the devices of the old parties and with some new ones learnt from Nazis and fascists.'[77] Linked to its alleged fascist proclivities was the additional 'charge' of Catholicism and Papal rule due to the religious choices of Saunders Lewis

and some other leading members.[78] Yet, in policy formulated well before the outbreak of war, the party had actively distanced itself from fascism. When fascists first organised in Wales, *The Welsh Nationalist* declared that 'Welsh nationalists are its enemy', advocating a Welsh Free State [sic] as 'protection' from English fascism.[79] Early on, it criticised the British Union of Fascists' 'vague and evasive attitude towards Welsh nationalism', concluding that 'Welsh nationalists cannot make any peace with fascism.'[80] The same year, it praised the failure of the Blueshirt movement in Ireland.[81]

Responding to 'taunts of fascism' by a future Labour MP in 1938, Lewis wrote, 'co-operation [...] is the only defence of the individual against the capitalist on one side and the state on the other. Like trade unionism, it is essential to the teaching of the Welsh Nationalist Party.'[82] The 'truly objectionable features of German fascism [are] its imperialism, militarism, racial theories, deification of the state, and antagonism to individual liberty.'[83] The use of the term to attack the Party continued post-war, notably in the Ogmore parliamentary by-election, 1946, where Labour widely distributed an eve-of-poll poster, *Welsh Nationalism Means Welsh Fascism*, quoting from a 1934 article by Saunders Lewis in *Y Ddraig Goch.* Post-election, the Party issued a lengthy rebuttal, focussing on Lewis' condemnation of state centralism and its concluding 'The growth of fascism constitutes a menace to the peace of the world.'[84] Yet, these public attacks and counter attacks thrust the party further into the political limelight, and did not appear to inhibit post-war electoral growth.[85]

From the WNP's inception, established politicians had predicted failure. In 1926, Lloyd George stated 'the Welsh National Party [...] will disappear quickly.'[86] Yet, it 'emerged from the Second World War stronger than it had been in 1939.'[87] Post-war, its new president revealed: 'It was feared that the temerity of so unpopular a stand for the rights of Wales would involve the dissolution of the party.' Yet, 'far from being destroyed [...] it found itself [...] in a far stronger position than at the beginning [of the war], strong enough in 1945 to fight ten seats in the [UK] Parliamentary election, and in 1946 to win 80 seats on local authorities; strong enough to increase its staff threefold and to open a [second] office in Cardiff.'[88] This was 'a remarkable feat in view of the hostile attitude the party had taken

towards the war and the consequent social, legal and political pressures inhibiting party activity.'[89] This revival of fortunes came about due to the changing wartime political climate, party activities and a fortuitous electoral opportunity [v.7]. In 1942, the University of Wales parliamentary constituency became vacant. Although the party failed to contest three earlier wartime by-elections, it had contested this seat previously and done well. Its candidate was Saunders Lewis. Despite five candidates in the contest, the focus was the battle between Lewis and the Liberal candidate. Unsurprisingly, 'defeating Lewis was regarded as part of the war effort'. The 'weight of publicity in the English-language press was hostile.'[90] In the January 1943 poll, Lewis gained second place with 1,330 votes (22.5%).[91] Although defeated, 'nationalism [was] the topic of the day' [v.7].[92]

Not just an isolated phenomenon, the by-election reinforced other developments enhancing WNP visibility. A Southern regional organiser was appointed (1940), English was also used in official meetings (1941) – leading to an English-speaking party cell in Glamorgan – and, from 1942, a bilingual *internal* newsletter was issued [v.3]. The party published thirty-three political tracts between September 1939 and August 1945 [v.7].[93] As the perceived threat of invasion receded and with the USSR and USA as allies, the party, like others, focused on post-war reconstruction. Its expanding political focus included economic viability, industrial development, trade unionism and health policies.

There was also, it was claimed before the war ended, 'a new unity [...] between [returning soldiers and repatriated factory workers] and the small resistant movement which had sought to keep burning the flame of Welsh freedom during the six barren years of War.'[94] In this period, the party tactically softened its stance towards the UK devolutionary gradualism of other political parties. It welcomed the campaign for a Secretary of State (1943) and a 'Welsh Day' at Westminster (1944).[95] Adapting to 'heightened interest in the party not as a vehicle for unconstitutional action but political organisation', the WNP emphasised the role of MPs working for Wales in post-war planning.[96] Yet the Party retained its fundamentalist principles [v.7], as evidenced by the provocative terminology used in its 1944 political analysis, *The wages of servitude: Wales' reward for collaboration with English government.*

Additional to the increased visibility achieved in the 1943 University by-election, the Scottish National Party's victory in the April 1945 Motherwell by-election confirmed the changing wartime political landscape. Although previously it had contested only four of the thirty-six constituencies from 1925 to 1945, the Welsh Nationalist Party contested and polled well in two by-elections in that year, prior to the post-war UK general election (Table 5). In the subsequent UK-wide general election, the party nominated candidates in seven constituencies, three in the populous southern coalfield, with the results displayed in Table 6. Following the election of a majority Labour government in 1945, the party's electoral performance increased dramatically in two by-elections the next year. These were, significantly, in two southern constituencies, thus posing a threat to Labour hegemony, again enhancing its political profile in the post-War era (Table 7).

Table 5 | *The WNP and the 1945 by-elections*

Constituency	Date	Candidate	Votes	%
Caernarfon Boroughs	26 April 1945	J.E. Daniel	6,844	24.8
Neath	15 May 1945	J.W. Samuel	6,290	16.2

Table 6 | *UK General Election, 5 July 1945*

Constituency	Candidate	Votes	%
Caernarfon County	Ambrose Bebb	2,152	5.4
Caernarfon Boroughs	J.E. Daniel	1,560	4.5
Neath	Wynne Samuel	3,659	7.3
Meirionnydd	Gwynfor Evans	2,448	10.3
Ogmore	Trefor Morgan	2,359	5.6
University of Wales	Gwenan Jones	1,696	24.5
Rhondda East	Kitchener Davies	2,123	6.1

Table 7 | *The WNP and the 1946 by-elections*

Constituency	Date	Candidate	Votes	%
Ogmore	4 June 1946	Trefor Morgan	5,685	29.4
Aberdar	5 December 1946	Wynne Samuel	7,090	20.0

Conclusion

Thus, at the end of this foundational period, the Welsh Nationalist Party had not only disproved Lloyd George's 1926 prediction, it had created a marked profile for its new nationalism, both intellectually and publicly. It can be argued that its performance in parliamentary elections not only raised its visibility but also provides evidence that, post-war, its wartime policy of defensive neutrality had not made it less popular; quite the contrary, demonstrating that over time, the party and its activities were established as a 'political factor which will remain'.[97] As such, it had become 'a real social process in itself'.[98]

In this period, intersecting with the political decline of the 'old nationalism' expressed through the Liberal and Labour parties, a new Welsh nationalism was created. Its essential vehicle, in this case, was a new political party, territorially centred in Wales [v.1]. From a distinctive ideological base – the concept of the Welsh nation with its own state [v.2] – it created and propagated a very different Welsh nationalism from the Lib-Lab version. Distinct from its precursor, it challenged hegemonic, imperialist British nationalism in almost every policy area. Unlike the old nationalism, it did not compromise with Britishness in the public sphere. It accepted only the legitimacy of England (not the UK), Europe and the World.

One core party principle was the protection of the Welsh language. At a time of serious decline, it championed the cause whilst reaching out, gradually over time, to non-Welsh speakers [v.3]. This civic nationalism included all living in the territory and was thus able to address demographic change as both a threat and an opportunity. This alterity was especially marked in the field of international politics [v.4]. At the apogee of the British Empire, it espoused a fundamentalist opposition to imperialism. Although this critique encompassed all empires, its substantial focus on the British Empire was, naturally, to gain domestic electoral support. Its repeated reference to the connectivity between international and domestic policies gave it an alternative world-view in the minds of supporters and opponents alike. The party had a particular

relationship with Ireland and its ruling party. This affinity was controversial in view of the bruising after-effects of the Irish War of Independence, sensitivities around the establishment of Northern Ireland and inter-state trade and defence disputes [v.4]. Through non-violent direct action at Penyberth and the attempted use of Welsh nationalism as a legal justification to refuse military conscription, the WNP demonstrated that it was not just an intellectual and electoral force but one capable of and prepared to use non-electoral but non-violent methods. These, and the state's reaction to them, substantially enhanced its visibility to a wider world [v.5].

Nor was it just another political party competing within the state, but one with an alternative world-view – and markedly different from 'Home Rule' ('old') Welsh nationalism. Using Andrea Brighenti's analysis, its wartime policy increased visibility 'at a price', while the charges of fascism resulted in some unwanted 'super-visibility'. Finally, it 'articulated' a new nationalism which was 'empowering' and 'recognised', not 'subjugated' nor 'unseen'.[99] Its actual existence, state-centric ideology and mixture of traditional and unconventional political actions enhanced its intellectual and electoral visibility. Whilst it won no parliamentary victory in this period, it gained an increasing local government footprint. In the minds of the political elite – especially party political opponents and the mainstream press – it represented a challenge to the status quo. Their reaction to its 'principled fundamentalism' served to give the new nationalism the 'oxygen of publicity' which, it is argued from this evidence, further advanced visibility.

Endnotes

[1] J.G. Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', in: *National Library of Wales Journal*, 22/4 (1982) 429. Jones makes a passing reference to a 'new nationalism' without

further explanation. This paper seeks to place the concept in context and use it as a useful analytical tool.

[2] A. Brighenti, 'Visibility: a category for the social sciences', in: *Current sociology*, 55/3 (2007) 324.

[3] E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Nationalists and the problem of overcoming visibility: Catalonia and Wales* (briefing note) (Barcelona, 2013).

[4] Ucelay-Da Cal, *Nationalists.*

[5] Campaign speech at Osawatomie, Kansas, 31/8/1910.

[6] P. Hays Gries, *China's new nationalism* (Berkeley, 2004).

[7] S. Bowler, 'Ethnic nationalism: authenticity, atavism and international stability', in: K.J. Brehony & N. Rassool (eds.), *Nationalisms old and new* (Basingstoke, 1990) 57.

[8] Bowler, 'Ethnic nationalism', 58.

[9] Bowler, 'Ethnic nationalism'*,* 54.

[10] Quoted in Bowler, 'Ethnic nationalism', 59.

[11] Enoch Powell was a UK Conservative intellectual and parliamentarian (1950-1974) who then became an Ulster Unionist MP (1974-1987). Quoted in the House of Commons, 28/1/1998.

[12] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 425.

[13] E.L. Chappell, *Wake up, Wales!* (London, 1943) 20-30.

[14] Chappell, *Wake up,* 25.

[15] For example, University of Wales (1893), National Library (1916), Church in Wales (1920) and National Museum (1922).

[16] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 429.

[17] A. Butt Philip, *The Welsh question: nationalism in Welsh politics 1945-1970* (Cardiff, 1975) 9.

[18] 'Lib-Lab' is shorthand for Liberal-Labour. In response to its shift towards social liberalism and the growth of the working class and trades unions, Liberal Party organisations increasingly adopted working-class candidates. While taking the Liberal whip at Westminster, they also caucused among themselves, especially on trade union or class issues. Some later became Labour-only, while others remained Liberal and faced the electoral consequences. It can be argued that many in both factions retained vestiges of their Lib-Lab political experience.

[19] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 429. Also see my forthcoming paper, *The Labour Party and the UK State: 1914-1924.*

[20] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 432.

[21] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 430-431.

[22] J. Kendle, *Ireland and the federal solution* (Kingston - Montréal, 1989) 234-238.

[23] Butt Philip, *Welsh question,* 14; Chappell, *Wake up*, 90-91.

[24] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 433-434.

[25] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 436.

[26] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 436 and 438.

[27] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 451.

[28] Butt Philip, *Welsh question*, 16.

[29] A former *Sinn Féin* court judge, Kevin O'Shiel, then land commissioner in the Cosgrove government, addressed the party's first Summer School in 1926. Original programme in the author's possession.

[30] J.S. Lewis, *Principles of nationalism* (Cardiff, 1975).

[31] A.J. James & J.E. Thomas, *Wales at Westminster* (Llandysul, 1981) 140.

[32] G. Evans, 'The twentieth century and Plaid Cymru', in: A.W. Wade Evans, T. Jones Pierce, C. Thomas e.a., *The historical basis of Welsh nationalism* (Cardiff, 1950) 144.

[33] Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 445.

[34] *The Welsh Nationalist* [= *TWN*]*,* August 1934, 6.

[35] Lewis, *Principles,* 13-15.

[36] *TWN*, July 1933, 5.

[37] *TWN*, February 1935, 7.

[38] B. Thomas, *The Welsh economy* (Cardiff, 1962) 9.

[39] R.R. Davies, 'Colonial Wales', in: *Past & present*, 65 (1974) 3.

[40] D. Armitage, *The ideological origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000) 170-172.

[41] S. Morewood, *The British defence of Egypt 1935-1940. Conflict and crisis in the eastern Mediterranean* (Abingdon, 2008) xi.

[42] Ucelay-Da Cal, *Nationalists*.

[43] Lewis, *Principles*, 3, 11 and 19.

[44] S. Lewis, *Address to the electors of the University of Wales*, 27/10/1931, 5.

[45] The moral value of small European nations is a constant theme promoted across Party publications. Those nation-states include Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal and Romania.

[46] D. McMahon, 'Irish Home Rule as devolutionary paradigm, 1914-39', in: D. Tanner, C. Williams, W.P. Griffith & A. Edwards (eds.), *Debating nationhood and governance in Britain, 1885-1945* (Manchester, 2006) 82-83.

[47] Considering personal connections: Margaret Gilcriest, later wife of the WNP president, Saunders Lewis, was an active Irish nationalist, as was Noëlle Ffrench, later wife of the party's leading researcher, Dr D.J. Davies. Considering political missions: Fianna Fáil politicians regularly addressed WNP annual Summer Schools. The WNP organised at least one study visit to Ireland in 1938. The two WNP monthly political newspapers carried regular features on Ireland, mostly concerning de Valera and Fianna Fáil. For both the personal and political exchanges, see my forthcoming doctoral thesis: S. Morgan, *The relationship between Fianna Fáil and the Welsh Nationalist Party, 1925-1951* (Swansea University).

[48] Morgan, *The relationship.*

[49] Examples can be found in *TWN*, September 1933, 5 and September 1934, 5.

[50] D.H. Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945* (Cardiff, 1983) 225.

[51] J. Field, *Working men's bodies: work camps in Britain, 1880-1940* (Manchester, 2013) 125-168.

[52] *TWN*, March 1933, 4; February 1934, 4.

[53] *TWN*, November 1935, 4-5; *Aeroplane,* August 2011.

[54] *TWN*, May 1932; *TWN*, December 1933; *TWN*, December 1934; J.E. Daniel, *Election address*, 14/11/1935.

[55] D. Jenkins, *A nation on trial: Penyberth 1936* (Cardiff, 1998).

[56] S. Lewis & L. Valentine, *Why we burnt the Bombing School* (Caernarfon, 1937).

[57] Butt Philip, *Welsh question*, 20.

[58] The events were reported, *inter alia*, in *Time* magazine, *The Irish Press, The Times, Sunday Times, New Statesman, Manchester Guardian, Daily Herald* and *Daily Dispatch*, even if, in the case of the London press, sometimes only in their Welsh editions.

[59] Evans, 'The twentieth century', 146.

[60] N. Wylie (ed.), *European neutrals and non-belligerents during the Second World War* (Cambridge, 2002) 10.

[61] E. O'Halpin, 'Irish neutrality in the Second World War', in: Wylie, *European neutrals*, 286.

[62] B. Tondra, M. Kennedy, J. Doyle & N. Dorr (eds.), *Irish foreign policy* (Dublin, 2012) 30.

[63] R.C. Richards, 'Civil war: pacifism not a Christian virtue but a vice', in: *TWN*, June 1934, 5.

[64] R.C. Richards, 'War a possibility at any moment', in: *TWN*, October 1934, 1-2.

[65] D.J. Williams, 'Self government the only course', in: *TWN,* August 1938, 4-5.

[66] Davies, *The WNP*, 224-225.

67 Evans, 'The twentieth century', 146.

68 G. Evans, 'On to 1945', in: *TWN*, January 1945, 1.

69 Davies, *The WNP,* 229-231.

70 Welsh Nationalist Party, *Wales and the War* (Caernarfon, 1940) 5-6.

71 Welsh Nationalist Party, *Wales and the War,* 6.

72 Ucelay-Da Cal, *Nationalists.*

73 Davies, *The WNP*, 231-232.

74 *TWN*, August 1935, 11.

75 *TWN*, June 1940, 2.

76 *TWN,* January 1942, 1.

77 Davies, *The WNP*, 236; T. Jones, *The native never returns* (London, 1946) 19.

78 *TWN,* July 1946, 2.

79 C. Huws, 'Nationalism v. fascism', in: *TWN*, November 1933, 1; 'If fascism comes', in: *TWN*, April 1934, 6*.*

80 'English blackshirts & Wales', in: *TWN*, July 1934, 4-5.

81 'Preparing the way for fascist dictatorship', in: *TWN*, November 1934, 1-2.

82 *TWN,* May 1938, 4

83 G. Evans, 'Socialist Germany', in: *TWN,* June 1938.

84 *TWN*, July 1946, p.2

85 Davies, *The WNP*, 237.

86 Jones, 'Forming Plaid Cymru', 443.

87 Butt Philip, *Welsh question*, 73.

88 Evans 'The twentieth century', 146-147.

89 Butt Philip, *Welsh question*, 73.

[90] Davies, *The WNP*, 239-240.

[91] James & Thomas, *Wales at Westminster*, 150.

[92] Davies, *The WNP,* 241.

[93] Davies, *The WNP*, 242.

[94] *TWN*, January 1945, 1.

[95] *The wages of servitude* (Caernarfon, 1944) 3.

[96] Davies, *The WNP*, 242.

[97] Evans, 'The twentieth century', 147.

[98] Brighenti, 'Visibility', 325.

[99] Brighenti, 'Visibility', 235-336.