

PLAID CYMRU AND THE GREENS: FLASH IN THE PAN OR A LESSON FOR THE FUTURE? *

Beginnings

It is worth emphasising that the agreement between Plaid Cymru and the Greens that led, among other things, to the joint campaign's memorable victory in Ceredigion in 1992, was no mere electorally-convenient response to the 1989 European elections. The roots went deeper than that.

Welsh nationalists and Green campaigners had forged a harmonious relationship, for example, through the protests of the peace movement. Some time during the 1970s Plaid Cymru and the *Resurgence* magazine held a joint conference. Leopold Kohr, who became a close friend of Schumacher, prophet of small is beautiful, and an iconic figure of the Green movement, advised Gwynfor Evans and Plaid Cymru on economic policy and promoted the concept of Wales as a self-governing state within a devolved Europe. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s there was abroad a sense of a certain deep-level compatibility between the aspirations of Wales's national movement and the green movement's values.

For my own part, *Blueprint for Survival* (1971), the initial manifesto of green politics, immediately struck me as a document of revolutionary significance. *Blueprint's* message was that what we may term the current western way of life, with its total indifference to the destructive impact of mankind's action upon the natural environment, was inexorably leading the world towards ecological catastrophe that was in turn bound to cause serious degradation in the quality of life of *homo sapiens*. Broadly speaking, the components of the crisis were loss of biodiversity through species extinction, the ravaging of natural resources (including soil), over-population, and the pollution of the natural world well beyond its capacity to absorb the effects.

We shall return to all this later on, but what is significant within the context of this lecture's theme and my perceptions at the time is the authors' verdict, (with Edward Goldsmith prominent among them), that in any strategy to save the planet, the decentralisation of power, together with the processes of production and distribution, to relatively self-sufficient communities, was essential. Here was a vision, as I saw it, that challenged the conventional wisdom of the age that large scale centralisation and uniformity (cultural as well as economic) were unavoidable realities. Within such a vision, driven according to *Blueprint*, not by sentiment or morality, but by necessity, Plaid Cymru's emphasis on the small nation, the local community and the safeguarding of cultural and linguistic diversity, would be vindicated. It was as if the tide of history was about to turn in our favour.

Thereafter, mainly through the columns of the *Ecologist* magazine, I followed the growth of the green movement: the stream of publications, the formation of the Ecological (later the Green) Party and Friends of the Earth, the growth of *Die Grunen* in Germany leading to their gaining 27 seats in the Bundestag in 1983. And I enthusiastically applauded it all.

So it came as quite a shock to me when, as parliamentary candidate for Plaid Cymru in Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire in 1983, I was confronted by a candidate for the Green Party in the person of Marilyn Wakefield. In 1983 she secured 431 votes and almost doubled them, to 821, in 1987. The green agenda's sun was obviously in the ascendant, and it reached its first remarkable noonday in the 1989 European elections. In Wales, the Greens pushed Plaid Cymru, which had worked diligently on European policy, had adopted for the first time a thoroughly positive attitude to the European Community and had fought an effective and lively campaign, into fourth place in three out of four constituencies. Only Dafydd Elis

Thomas's strong performance in the North, where there had even been hopes for victory, that clinched third place for Plaid in the total number of votes nationally.

Towards the end of 1988, Alun Williams, Elections Co-ordinator of the Wales Green Party (WGP), had urged that party's candidates to avoid standing against Plaid Cymru's candidates. He had also presented Plaid Cymru with a frank but friendly critique of its 1987 election manifesto, under the heading 'Why Plaid Cymru is not Green'. I well remember Phil Williams's thoroughly positive response to this critique.

On 13 June 1989, two days *before* the European elections, a letter was sent to Alun Williams on behalf of Plaid Cymru's Executive Committee inviting representatives of the Wales Green Party (WGP) to the annual conference at Denbigh in September. (I recall meeting Peter Keelan, who had prepared a discussion paper on the topic, and Syd Morgan, at Talgarreg to consider how this move might be promoted). At the conference, a two-hour debate with WGP representatives Brig Oubridge, Barbara McPake, Patrick Adams and Alun Williams was held in the Sunday morning session, resulting in a decision to form a working-group of the two parties to discuss policy. Phil Williams led the discussions on behalf of Plaid Cymru. Ken Jones, who subsequently became a key figure in the Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire discussions, was amongst the WGP representatives.

The outcome of the work of that joint committee, which met for almost a year, was a detailed policy motion, drafted by Phil Williams, to the Plaid Cymru Conference in Cardiff in the autumn of 1990. Some of the elements of that lengthy and detailed motion merit attention.

Plaid Cymru's aim, states the motion, was *'to create a sustainable economy not reliant on the exhaustion of non-renewable resources ... nor the production of pollution that cannot be assimilated naturally; along with a stable population enjoying economic and social justice. The transitional stage would involve cutting back on material consumerism and, unless carefully planned, this could result in damage to the economy and personal hardship'*. The essentials of life – an adequate income, good food, proper homes and health care – would have to be guaranteed. Implicit in all this was the need to distribute the fruits of economic activity more equitably.

The motion then called for a shift towards economic activities such as renewable energy and energy conservation, recycling and repair, new means of transportation and communication, etc. Plaid Cymru, says the motion, deplored mass consumerism; distribution centres displacing local factories and chain stores forcing local shops out of business.

Further, a policy of economic decentralisation would be essential so as to distribute development evenly, and implicit in this was the need for political decentralisation.

And then came the linkage between greenness and Plaid Cymru's nationalism. Large-scale industrialism, based on economic growth, was destructive not only of the environment but also of local identities and specifically the identity of Wales, Plaid Cymru's central concern.

I shall not venture tonight on a critique of this policy resolution, approved by an overwhelming majority, except to mention three things: the huge amount of water that has gone under the bridge of the economy since 1990; the striking faith in the ability of society and the state to plan such a far-reaching and complex transformation, and even manage a reduction in the level of material consumption; and the undeniable fact that Plaid Cymru had drunk deeply at the fountain of green ideas, undergoing some kind of conversion in the process.

At the same Conference, Jill Evans, now an MEP, presented a motion on Europe, the outcome of discussions between Plaid Cymru and the Green Party of Wales on Europe and on Wales in

Europe. The key objective, according to the motion, was '*a federation or a confederation of nations and historical regions reflecting cultural and ethnic divisions ... supported by an effective regional policy to rectify economic inequalities*'. (This was of course before the slaughter associated with the break-up of Yugoslavia made 'ethnic' into a dirty word and 'divisions' a problematic concept). '*In every nation and region there would be elected assemblies dealing directly with the Community on regional, economic, social and cultural issues*'. Jill Evans frequently represented Plaid Cymru in the meetings of the European Free Alliance, an organisation of regional parties and small nations whose members in the European Parliament belonged to the same group as the Greens, the Rainbow Group.

At about the same time, the Greens were contributing in turn to the conceptual convergence. In their *Green Charter for British Democracy* they stated that '*The United Kingdom is made up of a range of diverse national and regional cultures whose identity is often unappreciated by key policy makers. The Green Party's policy is to promote self-government for Scotland, Wales and English regions*'.

Pact

Following the Denbigh Conference, the Plaid Cymru Executive approved meetings with the Greens at the local level with the view to forming electoral pacts. In Ceredigion and Pembroke North there was a wish to take this seriously. The key people in the Green Party there were Alun Williams, Anna Gifford, Ken Jones (highly influential and passionate in his love for Wales), Chris Simpson and their prospective candidate Tim Foster.

In the autumn of 1990, Tudur Jones, Plaid's organiser in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, and I went to meet the Greens at Tim Foster's house in Llanbadarn. I opened the discussion by tracing my spiritual pilgrimage in green issues and the response was warm. Then Chris Simpson remarked, '*Well, yes, and there's been a poll, hasn't there?*'. He was referring to the work of a somewhat clandestine body named *Aber Research*, the brain-child of Gwyn Jenkins, which had conducted a street survey in the constituency's towns in August 1990 on voting intentions. According to this survey, 28.7% intended voting for the Liberal Democrats (down from 36.6% in 1987), 22% for Plaid Cymru (up from 16%), 19.5% for Labour (up from 18.6%), 13% for the Conservatives (down from 26.9%), and 7% for the Green Party (up from 1.7%). Obviously, Ceredigion's political terrain, if not tectonic plates, was moving. Among Plaid Cymru supporters, 91% were Welsh speakers, and only 6% born outside Wales. Since an increasing and significant proportion of the constituency's population constituted incomers, this posed a problem. But half of the Green Party's supporters saw Plaid Cymru as their second choice.

At that little meeting the decision was to proceed, but the work had barely started. Discussions on policy issues were held.

Tim Foster prepared a 1300-word document *Basis for an Agreement for a Joint Election Campaign*, based on drafts written by Ken Jones and myself.

The document insisted that '*the global economic and ecological crisis must be raised as a central political issue*' and emphasised the need for radical change. There was a need for action not only at the global and European, but also at a local level. Wales must be given power as a national community through a legislative Parliament as a step towards self-government within the European Community, as must our local communities, so as to enable people to control their own future. '*The struggle for minority cultures is international in nature. Welsh nationality is not a racial issue - it is to do with life and living in Wales and with committing oneself to the future of Wales*'.

There is reference to the need for a vital and more self-sufficient local economy whilst also acknowledging a role for inward investment; to the need for positive support for agriculture, with livestock as a key element; to the need for housing *for local people*; to the need for a Language Act ('an opportunity to unite the Welsh and non-Welsh speakers in support of the language'); and very significantly, to the need for good roads including a North-South road link.

What this document demonstrates, and what I recall from the discussions, is that there was a will, a positive desire, to agree, a willingness to give as well as take, and to achieve mutual understanding.

Tim Foster came to address Plaid Cymru's Constituency Committee, and both of us went around the constituency to meet local Green groups. Events were arranged to enable members of both parties to socialise together: Welsh culturists and non-conformists consorting with non-conformists of a very different kind. The process was not without a degree of irony.

Early in 1991, arrangements were made for all members of both parties to vote on the question of an electoral pact. In meetings for voting, I presented Plaid Cymru members with arguments in favour of a pact, emphasising the significance of the green theme as such and for the Plaid vision and the opportunity, through bringing the streams together, to *'create a very exciting fusion capable of igniting people's imagination'*. Having highlighted the opportunity for a Plaid breakthrough in Ceredigion, I argued that it was imperative to attract the support of immigrants and non-Welsh speakers; and the need for that 'something extra' which would establish electoral credibility, provide publicity and ensure success.

Overwhelming majorities in both parties supported the pact. The *Western Mail* carried a substantial centre-page article with a photograph of Tim Foster and myself.

But it would be a mistake to believe that the progress was all plain sailing. I succeeded in getting Plaid Cymru's Executive Committee to approve the pact in January 1991. However, Dafydd Wigley was unhappy, in particular about having the description 'Plaid Cymru and the Green Party' on the ballot paper and also the problems that could arise in constituencies where the parties were head to head. The regulations of the Green Party also prohibited a member of another party from standing for the Greens. That problem was resolved by adopting the words 'Plaid Cymru - Green'. By December 1991 Dafydd Wigley was arguing in a strategy paper for the Executive Committee for Plaid to give particular prominence to green issues and not to attack the Greens or react to attacks from the Greens in constituencies where the two parties were in competition.

In the South-East, in the constituencies of Islwyn, Monmouth and Torfaen, a pact had been agreed. Then, unexpectedly, a by-election had to be held in Monmouth in May 1991. Helen Mary Jones (prospective candidate for Islwyn) and I urged the Executive to support Mel Witherden, the Green Party candidate, and this was agreed. The outcome was disastrous, with 277 votes for the Green Party, less than Screaming Lord Sutch's 317. It is hardly surprising that the South Glamorgan Regional Committee wrote to Plaid Cymru's Working Party insisting that lessons must be learnt and that the Party should never again *'have a joint candidate with any other party'*.

Cith ap Henri's observations in his resignation letter to the Executive Committee in March 1990 represent the response of fundamentalist nationalism to the discussions with the Greens. As well as arguing that Plaid was in a state of terminal decline and that compromising on the issue of independence was unacceptable (*'There's no such thing as half sovereignty - you are either governed from Westminster or you have a Free Wales'*), he regarded holding discussions with the Greens as foolish. *'The Greens were flattered by being taken seriously.'*

We are given to understand that the party of cranks, the vegans, wigwam dwellers, the visionaries and the ardent middle-class good-lifers are on a par with us. We have heard a great deal about the need to change Plaid Cymru's policy in order to accommodate them. We have heard nothing about the Greens being converted to the campaign for a Welsh national state.'

I cannot resist the temptation to include a quotation from the letter of Royston Jones of the *Cyfamodwyr* (Covenanters) to me in June 1991. I had previously responded in the press to a statement by the Covenanters attacking incomers as '*English middle-class drop-outs*', the very people whose support I was eager to obtain. I am going to break my own rule now by quoting in English, for fear of distorting an example of incomparable prose invective.

'You, and the other sons of the manse, those breeding grounds for hypocrisy and treachery, so brilliantly vilified by Ceredigion's greatest son [Caradog Evans I presume], have had your day. You are the heirs of that sub-species of Welshman that has slunk through history, one hand clutching purse, other hand on forelock and both eyes greedily seeking opportunities for self-advancement. ... You play the patriot when it suits your selfish purposes – but careful never to offend the English!... You and your kind have never been leaders of this nation, you've never been more than parasites, ugly little bloodsuckers on the long-suffering body of our people. Now – and only in order to safeguard your own status – you are prepared to share the feast with other, English parasites.'

And to conclude: *'I trust that I have left you in no doubt that I have nothing but contempt for you, your associates and the evil you represent. I will conclude by wishing you disaster at the polls, and an eternity in that special hell reserved for those who sell their souls and betray their nation.'*

In the autumn of 1991, I came across this approach's green counterpoint, with the pact long since agreed, when I went to address (along with Mel Witherden) a fringe meeting organised by the Wales Green Party (WPG) at the England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) Green Party Conference at Wolverhampton. We sat in a circle as is appropriate for members of a party that believes in consensus, and Mel and I opened the discussion. Immediately I found myself facing a ferocious attack on Welsh nationalism and Plaid Cymru's entire philosophy, by representatives from Arfon and Meirion, John Nicholson and Chris Busby. Two bones of contention were the practice of community councils in Gwynedd of conducting their meetings in Welsh only (as they had always done), thus making it impossible for non-Welsh speakers to participate, and forcing Welsh-medium education on children from English-speaking homes. And as backdrop to this, of course, all the evils of nationalism, a dangerous ideology totally at variance with the values of the green movement that believed rather in regionalism (as indeed the *Blueprint for Survival* had highlighted at the very outset). I tried to respond, rather lamely, and through rational defence rather than counter-attack, but I came from the meeting feeling quite shaken. However, things had gone too far, and were looking too promising, in Ceredigion and Pembroke North (CPN) to turn back now. But those of you who are familiar with the story will know that Chris Busby will reappear before the end.

On 10 April 1991, the Plaid Cymru-Green campaign was launched in a signing ceremony at the Porth Hotel Llandysul in the presence of Dafydd Elis Thomas and Alun Williams who signed on behalf of the Green Party instead of Tim Foster who had been taken seriously ill some days before. The document signed was the Candidate's Undertaking, which had two parts. 'During the Campaign' referred to the content of the literature, the activities of the joint campaign committee (equal numbers of members from both parties), regular consultation and so on. The second part, 'Having Won the Election', referred inter alia to promoting the green agenda in Parliament, utilizing the research resources of the Plaid parliamentary group to serve WGP and establishing relations with British and European green parties. A leaflet bearing the title '*Gyda'n Gilydd – Working Together*', a logo combining the

triban and the sunflower, a coach tour around the constituency, and the campaign was up and running.

In July 1991 *Aber Research* conducted another opinion survey. By now 37% intended voting for Plaid Cymru-Green, 32% for the LibDems, 22% for Labour and only 9% for the Tories. Plaid Cymru had lost none of its support despite its association with the Greens (contrary to several people's fears), but 33% of those born outside Wales intended voting for the joint campaign. The results were released, after some adjustment, to the media. The indications of a bandwagon gave members sufficient inspiration to double their efforts. At the beginning of 1992, Medi James was appointed organiser, and she set about creating a truly formidable campaigning machine.

We decided to put some meat on the principles of the joint vision by publishing a series of substantial policy documents. Chris Simpson accompanied me to the Young Farmers' Rally to launch *The Young Farmer's Opportunity* and both he and I were pleasantly surprised at the response. (Peter Midmore, an expert on agriculture and the rural economy and a member of the Green Party, had helped prepare the document and all along offered me constant advice and support in my involvement with farmers). Following a very successful Plaid Cymru conference on Cardigan Bay, held in the constituency in November 2000, a document was launched on marine pollution and methods of addressing the problem. Brian John compiled a document on the potential of renewable energy for regenerating the rural economy. Another document was produced on the potential of timber for diversifying farm income and contributing to the economy of the countryside. It is fair to maintain that the content of these documents was ahead of the game in the early 1990s and that some of it has since moved into the mainstream. Following the election, the documents were republished in a booklet entitled *Towards the Green Welsh Future*.

The decision of the CPN joint campaign to make the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (The Rio Conference, or Earth Summit – ‘our best chance, perhaps our last chance, to save the planet’ according to one expert), which was to be held in June, the main story on our campaign leaflet, must have been a rare exception.

Providence must have wanted to reward us for this when it arranged that the general election would be called two days prior to the public meeting the Green Party had already organised for Jonathon Porritt, at the Old College Hall on 16 March. The place was packed to the rafters. I got the chance to explain the joint campaign's *rationale* and emphasise the political opportunity, and got the seal of approval from the magnanimous, brilliant and confident old Etonian, former director of Friends of the Earth who had established himself as the green movement's principal voice in Britain. Perhaps the most significant thing that I said that night was that one of the objectives of the Joint Campaign was to bring together different elements of the population, the Welsh speakers, the indigenous non-Welsh speakers, and the immigrants - mainly English. ‘The New Wales must be built,’ I said ‘from these diverse elements; their coming-together must be a creative process, although this may not always be easy’.

One way or another, we swept to victory. The combined votes of the two parties rose from a total of 8,669 (under 17%) in 1987 to 16,021 (31.3%), gaining a majority of 3,193 over the Lib Dems. Throughout Wales, Plaid Cymru's vote had risen 1.5% including the CPG result. Where the Green Party had stood independently the average vote fell but there were more candidates, and a total of 5,273 votes were gained. In the joint campaign's constituencies in Gwent the result was a combination of rise and fall.

Parliament

The efforts to promote the Green Wales agenda went ahead both in Parliament and in the constituency, but as we shall see, the former lasted longer than the latter.

In keeping with the undertaking that I had signed, I immediately established a relationship with EWNI Green Party leaders – Sara Parkin and Jean Lambert specifically. Within a fortnight of the opening of Parliament the three of us held a Press Conference regarding what the British Government should press for at the Earth Summit. I spoke about that Conference in parliamentary debates and afterwards I followed in all manner of means (but metaphorically, not physically, by and large) what came to be known as the Rio Process, a kind of international circus travelling from place to place around the world. I regularly met up with Jean Lambert in London to keep in touch with latest developments in the Green Party.

With the extra funding the Plaid Cymru group received as a result of my election, Victor Anderson, a very able economist and a member of the Green Party, was appointed researcher, with the financial support from the Network for Social Change, and he stayed with us, making a major contribution to Plaid's work as well as to the green agenda until he moved on to become a Green Party member in the Greater London Authority, and in due course, environmental advisor to Ken Livingstone.

With Victor's assistance, and also that of Alun Tomos, the group's other researcher, I set about using the whole of parliamentary methods to raise the profile of green issues: written and oral questions, Early Day Motions (EDMs), adjournment debates and so forth. My parliamentary work focused so much on green issues that one of my colleagues in the group once told me, when I announced, with some pride, that I had secured an adjournment debate on Climate Change, 'You'll find a topic that's relevant to your constituents in this place one day.'

Bearing the responsibility of representing the green movement (not just the Green Party) in Parliament was no light burden. As well as undertaking parliamentary duties - and letters were arriving from all directions almost daily - I was expected to speak at meetings, from Newcastle upon Tyne to Manchester, and from Bristol to Cambridge. But of course, the position I occupied also gave me an *entree* into the world of the green movement, and some kudos in its wake. I was appointed Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Environmental Group and later on Chair of the Parliamentary Renewable and Sustainable Energy Group (PRASEG). I had the opportunity of addressing UNED UK (United Nations Environmental and Development Association) meetings and was invited to be a member of the UK delegation at a meeting of the United Nation's Commission for Sustainable Development in New York.

I then established contact with a body of European and international parliamentarians called *GLOBE* (Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment) and attended some of its meetings in Brussels, Bonn and Arhus, Denmark. Around 1987, I set up a rather successful branch of that organisation in Parliament and became its founding Chair. Our task was to ensure that the issue of sustainable development - with social and international justice being as important as the welfare of the natural environment - was constantly raised in Parliament. When the Labour Party set up an Environmental Audit Committee in 1987, fulfilling its manifesto pledge, I was appointed a member.

But the most significant achievements came through collaboration with the remarkable Ron Bailey, the Green Party (purely honorary) Campaigns Co-ordinator. In the autumn of 1992, Ron met me in Parliament to make me an offer I couldn't refuse, namely the promotion of an Energy Conservation Bill drafted by him and chosen by the Green Party as its primary

campaign at that time. Ron, more than any one else, taught me the black arts of parliamentary lobbying and manoeuvring so as to achieve one's objectives.

Under the skilful guidance of Ron Bailey, I became, to all intents and purposes, a parliamentary focus to a campaign run by the Green Party in collaboration with organisations such as Friends of the Earth (FoE) and the Association for the Conservation of Energy (a trade association representing companies in energy conservation business). A detailed and highly professional newsletter was produced; the support of a wide range of organisations (Age Concern, Neighbourhood Energy Action and the Institute of Housing Association among many others) and local authorities was sought; pressure on MPs (ruthless and shameless if necessary) to sign the EDM promoting the Bill (the aim was to get half of all MPs to do so); letters to the press – these were some of the techniques used to put incessant pressure on John Major's government to concede. And part of the context was the continuing uproar about the Government's decision to raise VAT on domestic energy to 17%.

I presented the Bill under the Ten Minute Rule in February 1993 and got an adjournment debate on it in the summer. When the name of the Lib-Dem MP Alan Beith emerged from the hat in the private members' bills autumn ballot, he took it up but it was 'talked out' in April 1994. But there was to be no surrender in Ron Bailey's campaigns and the Home Energy Conservation Action (HECA) reached the statute books in the name of Diana Maddock, another Lib-Dem, in March 1995. I had pursued and facilitated the process throughout.

Ron Bailey and the Green Party's next parliamentary campaign, the Road Traffic Reduction Bill, was much more controversial. I presented the Bill under the Ten Minute Rule in May 1995 and a drastically weakened version reached the statute book during the latter days of John Major's Government in 1997. Then when my name emerged from the private members' bills hat at the end of 1998, I allowed myself to be persuaded by Ron to adopt the Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Bill. I was acutely aware of the fact that many of my constituents, people who were totally reliant on a car to conduct their lives, not to mention the transport businesses owned by many who were natural supporters of Plaid Cymru, and of course farmers, might well view this latest venture in greenness with considerable suspicion. But venture I did. Once again the Government - New Labour by now - was heavily pressurised by various mysterious means and, after much effort and careful negotiation, the Bill, albeit watered down, found its way on to the statute book in April 1999.

I have listed all these activities, not to boast so much as to demonstrate that I fulfilled, to the best of my ability and not without an element of political risk, one of the aims of establishing a Joint Campaign in 1991, i.e. 'to giving voice to green politics at Westminster'. In a very real sense, I was acting as an instrument for the Green Party and the green movement in Parliament. Note also that the Plaid Cymru parliamentary group co-sponsored the two measures I have referred to. It is only fair to bear all this in mind as we now proceed to outline how and why the pact in Ceredigion was brought to an end.

Separation

Following the success of 1992, a sense of camaraderie flourished in the constituency. The work of the joint campaign committee grew. *Towards a Green Welsh Future* was published and, interestingly enough, at the 1993 National Eisteddfod, the Language and Culture panel published a booklet listing Welsh organisations and institutions for the information of incomers. In the 1993 county elections, members of the two parties campaigned together for each others' candidates, and the late and much lamented Anna Gifford, came within 30 votes at St Dogmaels of becoming the first Green Party county councillor in Wales.

At the Green Party's EWNI Conference in Wolverhampton, the Ceredigion Greens gave a presentation about the famous victory at a fringe meeting, and I got to address the full Conference. However it was a far from pleasant experience to have Sara Parkin take me to a side room to explain – gently, even compassionately – why she was leaving the Green Party. In a statement she said, ‘I have been forced to the conclusion that the Green Party is a liability to green politics.’

But there were darker clouds gathering. During 1994, Chris Busby moved to Ceredigion to live. Early in 1993, the Plaid Cymru Executive Committee appointed Phil Williams and me to meet Green Party representatives, on my recommendation, to try to secure an electoral pact for the 1994 European election. We met Chris Busby and Richard Bramhall at the Bronafon hotel, Rhaeadr, in February 1993. My recollection is that the proposal was four seats for Plaid Cymru and one for the Green Party. It was not possible to reach an agreement.

The next development was Chris Busby’s being selected the Green Party candidate in the Mid and West constituency. According to Chris Simpson, this followed a ‘*bizarre chain of events*’ including Hugh Richards’s withdrawal. The selection of Chris Busby aroused considerable unease within the Green Party, he being an implacable opponent of the pact, ardent in his condemnation of Plaid Cymru. He was publicly criticised by Alun Williams. In the South-East constituency Mel Witherden was selected as candidate for the Green Party. When he tried to facilitate a pact with Plaid Cymru, WGP asked the EWNI Green Party Regional Committee to suspend him. That was done, there was an appeal, he was not readmitted, and he resigned from the party.

It is for you to decide whether what I did next was rational political action or underhanded Machiavellianism. I contacted Jonathon Porritt to ask whether he would declare support for Marc Phillips, the Plaid candidate in the Mid and West Wales constituency. I believed that this could boost Plaid’s attempt to secure election for Dafydd Wigley in the North and even Marc Phillips, into the European parliament. With characteristic magnanimous amiability Jonathon Porritt agreed, and a device was arranged whereby Peter Midmore, an enthusiastic supporter of the pact, would write to him for advice. In his reply, Porritt stated that the outcome of the agreement in CPN was ‘*one of the best things that has happened to our movement in years*’, declaring his disappointment that the WPG had rejected further pacts, that this was merely gesture politics, and that ‘the consistent and sincere progress happening within Plaid Cymru’ should be celebrated.

Marc Phillips came a respectable second at 25.4%, in the 8 June election with Chris Busby on 2%. In the North, at 33.8% Dafydd Wigley came second to Joe Wilson (Labour)’s 40.8%. At the count at Haverfordwest I was naive enough to admit to Chris Busby that it was I who had arranged Jonathon Porritt’s intervention. Whatever justification there may have been for my action, it was obvious that I had placed a weapon in the hands of the enemies of the pact.

Nevertheless, three days before the European election, members of the Ceredigion Green Party voted by 50-5 to continue with the pact in the constituency. Not only that, but in September 1994, the Executive Committee of the EWNI Green Party declared that ‘we welcome our special relationship with Cynog Dafis MP and hope that it will continue’; and that ‘we respect the arrangements of Ceredigion Green Party with Plaid Cymru in that constituency’ and that ‘Cynog Dafis will be described as Plaid Cymru-Green in our publications’.

The position of the EWNI Green Party Regional Committee was in total contrast, when they wrote to me stating that there was ‘no formal association between Plaid Cymru and the Green Party’, and that they wished me to refrain from describing myself as Plaid Cymru-Green MP. The same body suspended Jonathon Porritt’s membership of the Green Party because of his

intervention. Chris Busby was one of the two Welsh representatives on the Regional Committee.

In a lengthy article in the *Independent* (29 August 1994), Jonathon Porritt declared that he was totally unrepentant about his stand and accused the Green Party of reacting to its electoral failure, because of 'a crass and cruel voting system', by adopting the role of 'Keeper of the Holy Greal defining with involuntary arrogance what is or is not truly green'. He stated that he still hoped that Ceredigion's example, with its joint list of candidates in the following year's county election, could pave the way towards the 'new politics' which he could not help but believe was 'emerging somewhere out there'. A characteristic of the Ceredigion venture was that it was speaking 'a different language ... the language of co-operation rather than ritualised conflict'. And who could tell that what had been achieved, and was yet to come, in Ceredigion 'might not presage similar local arrangements between the Greens and the Liberal Democrats, or the Greens and Labour, garlanded as it is now with Chris Smith's sparkling new policy document?'

It was not without a further persistent effort that Jonathon's hopes for a further blossoming of the 'new politics' were shattered. In February 1995, a joint Plaid Cymru-Green manifesto was published for the new unitary and community council elections, and when the elections came there were several candidates for the joint campaign. Two Green Party members, Chris Simpson and Alun Williams, won seats on Aberystwyth Town Council, and with five Plaid Cymru members, they formed a single group on the council. Nevertheless, the events that would undermine their efforts were already under way.

Following the decision of Ceredigion's Green Party in June 1994 in favour of continuing the pact (50-5), four of the opponents formed the Aberystwyth Green Party. This was the group later described by Ken Jones as '*Chris Busby's tiny Trojan horse – the Green Party's Militant Tendency*'. Chris Busby stood as candidate for that party in a county council by-election at Aberystwyth on 19 November against the Plaid Cymru candidate Einion Gruffudd, who campaigned with the support of the Ceredigion Green Party. Einion Gruffudd came second and Chris Busby last with 11 votes.

During the May 1995 elections, candidates of the Aberystwyth Green Party stood against the candidates of the joint campaign. In April 1995, Chris Simpson was suspended for having his photograph on the joint campaign's literature.

Despite the utter failure of the Aberystwyth Green Party candidates, there was now serious unease within Plaid Cymru. With the next parliamentary elections approaching, there was a real danger that the wrangling would become an object of ridicule, and the credibility of Plaid Cymru itself and me as MP undermined. What put the tin hat on things was the Green Party Regional Committee's decision to give official recognition to the Aberystwyth Green Party.

The Ceredigion Green Party agreed to my suggestion that the only way out of this predicament was for us to wind up the pact *as a joint action*. And at a Press Conference at the Talbot Hotel on 3 July 1995, with three representatives from both parties, (Chris Simpson, Graham Towns and Tim Foster; Iolo ap Gwyn, Elin Jones and Gwilym Huws) as well as myself, we did so, issuing also a rather defiant statement.

The parties, said the statement, 'jointly declared their satisfaction and pride at what has been achieved through five years of campaigning together'; at the parliamentary work achieved, the success in increasing public awareness of green issues and sustainable development in Wales. Furthermore, 'a bridge was built between the indigenous people of Wales and those who had moved here to live' for progressive and enlightened purposes.

After outlining the factors that had led to the decision, ‘with great sadness’, and as a result of sabotage through the ‘destructive energies of an unrepresentative minority’ to bring the pact to an end, abolishing the joint campaign committee, ceasing the use of the description Plaid Cymru-Green for the MP, and the special logo, the declaration stated that:

- As an MP, I would hold consultative meetings with the Ceredigion Green Party and continue to work with the EWN Green Party as far as was ‘mutually convenient and acceptable’.
- I would continue to promote the welfare of the environment and the case for sustainable development.
- Ceredigion Green Party declared its unequivocal support for me as MP.
- The councillors of the two parties on Aberystwyth Town Council would act as a single group, while the Plaid Cymru group on the unitary council would promote the policies agreed for the joint campaign.
- There would be occasional meetings between the two parties to exchange ideas and consider possibilities for collaboration on specific issues.

It is worth citing three responses to the formal statement, which show three specific perspectives. Jonathon Porritt said in a personal letter to me: ‘ I am incredibly sad and find it hard to bear the idea that everything you did to enhance green ideas should be rewarded in such an ungrateful and mean-minded way’. He offered to address a meeting for the next general election - and did so . WGP declared, ‘The long nightmare is over. At last we can get on with Green Party campaigns free of the ball and chain of nationalism’. A well-known and cultured farmer wrote to me thus: ‘I have just heard about your divorce from the Greens. Congratulations. Kind regards’.

In April 1996, the Ceredigion Green Party published a very generous declaration of support for me in the forthcoming election, which took place in June 1997, and Plaid Cymru increased its votes (in the Ceredigion constituency, without North Pembrokeshire) to 41.6%.

I think it is fair to mention here what happened to the two members of the Green Party with whom I worked closest at the parliamentary level, Ron Bailey and Victor Anderson. Having had more than enough of internal wrangling, Ron left the party around 1998 to join the Lib Dems who had a lively environmentalist wing. (I emphasise the word ‘wing’). Victor Anderson was elected as a member of the Green Party group in the new London Authority and was later appointed environmental advisor to the Mayor, Ken Livingstone. However, he found himself the subject of condemnation by his fellow party members, for putting cooperating with the Mayor before serving his own party. He found the tensions intolerable and yielded his place within the Authority. He is now head of research for the Plaid Cymru group in Parliament.

Greening Plaid Cymru, and Real World

In the meantime, it is fair to maintain that Plaid Cymru was seriously greening itself. For instance, the Plaid parliamentary group’s alternative Budget in November 1993 was a paragon of greenness: energy conservation, public transport, road-charging in order to limit traffic growth, agri-environmental payments for farmers, financial aid for Local Agenda 21, growth in renewable energy, a tax on carbon emissions and pollution, along with increased aid to poor countries. Could Friends of the Earth (FoE) have done better? In the 1987 election, the FoE declared that Plaid Cymru's manifesto was the greenest of all, apart from that of the Green Party itself. That was hardly surprising considering that Victor Anderson, in a special paper to the Plaid Executive, had proposed that the manifesto be based on three Ss: Social Justice; Self-government and Sustainability.

What greatly impressed me was the readiness and ability of Dafydd Wigley (who had been a sceptic on the question of a pact) to absorb and adopt the green movement's perspective. He accompanied me to a launch of the FoE document *Working Future* and an IPPR and Cambridge Econometrics seminar on the impact of environmental taxation.

Dafydd Wigley decided that he would make the need for a green transformation of the economy and society one of the main themes of his presidential speech at the Plaid Cymru National Conference at Llandudno in the autumn of 1994. There is a copy of that memorable speech safe and sound in the National Library's political archive. Plaid, he insisted, must be at the forefront in promoting a radically different vision of the future.

'There is a limit to the resources of the earth ... and one of the main priorities of our age is to move away from the thoughtlessness that ignores these factors'. The obsession with economic growth must be replaced by an emphasis on the quality of life. Over more than a decade of continuous growth in income per capita, there had been a great increase in homelessness, violence against people and waiting lists for hospital treatment, while the use of drugs was spreading like the plague. He quoted from a recent report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution: 'We need to change radically our economic and financial mechanisms in order to protect scarce materials and finite energy sources'. For Wales, the challenge was to implement 'a sustainable development strategy that interweaves environmental responsibility, social conscience, community security and cultural diversity'. A prominent member of the Green Party listening in the gallery told me that the speech had brought tears to his eyes.

At that time, Dafydd Wigley was working on a policy document that would be launched as Plaid's main initiative in the summer of 1995, with a special parliamentary debate on the subject, under the title *100,000 Answers*. The document called for an ambitious programme of public investment, partly funded by a substantial increase in taxation (including environmental taxation), to solve the problem of unemployment, with particular reference to regions of industrial decline such as the South Wales valleys. Steps to enhance the natural environment and invest in energy conservation and renewable energy were prominent in the programme.

It is worth including an anecdote here that illustrates, amongst other things, Dafydd Wigley's willingness to take an imaginative leap so as to get things moving in politics. One evening in the House of Commons members' dining room, he launched his brainwave – that Jonathon Porritt should be asked to stand as an independent candidate in the 1997 election in the West Clwyd constituency against Rod Richards, who was at that time not the most popular of Welsh MPs, and that we should call upon the other parties to support him. That would ensure a place for Porritt in parliament, greatly strengthening the green perspective there - and he might, if he so wished, take the Plaid Cymru whip. I then went up to London during the 1994 Christmas recess specially to present the idea to Jonathon. A few days later, after having time to think, he gave his reply. He appreciated the proposal as being 'truly creative and constructive ... an excellent plan'. However, circumstances made it impossible for him to move to West Clwyd to live and he was concerned that he would be seen as carpet-bagging. Bearing in mind the case of Martin Bell, imagining what might have happened is intriguing, but we won't pursue that now.

I met Jonathon to discuss this promising idea during the dinner hour on a day when he was chairing a meeting of the Real World Coalition - a collection of 32 organisations he had brought together to identify and promote a political agenda that could influence the debate for the forthcoming parliamentary election (which came in 1997), and hopefully, the policy direction of the new government likely to be elected. Among the members of the Coalition were not only the usual suspects such as FoE and Transport 2000, and world development

organisations such as Oxfam and Christian Aid, but also bodies concerned with social justice e.g. the Poverty Alliance, the Employment Policy Institute and the Unemployment Unit, as well as Charter 88.

I'll quote an extract from the preface to *The Politics of the Real World*, the report of the Coalition, written by Michael Jacobs early in 1996.

'For large numbers in Britain today, the new century is not a source of hope. ... People are anxious for the future, about the world they are leaving for their children. They see, with a profound understanding quite missing from national political life, the growing crisis of humankind's impact on the natural environment, as the simultaneous growth of material consumption and population generates inexorably greater pollution and resource degradation. They see poverty, famine and conflict in distant places and know that we cannot disclaim responsibility. They see the fabric of British society tearing under the strain of inequality and the glorification of me-first materialism. They foresee a world in which people live increasingly barricaded lives, fearful of others, besieged by crime; in which material wealth offers no substitute for the lost quality of community life.

Are we witnessing the first generation in 150 years to believe that 'progress' may have ended; that our children's experience of life will be worse, not better, than our own?'

The members of the Coalition were not voicing their own opinions here, but outlining the findings of two surveys, one by MORI and the other by Gallup, conducted in the Spring of 1995. However, it is not unreasonable to claim that this kind of picture, somewhat apocalyptic in nature, represents the way 'green left' thinkers viewed the situation at the time. The problem, the report went on to say, was that the 'British political system seemed to express so little understanding and so little awareness of what was happening. ... Our politicians and our political media do not seem to be living in the real world'.

The report goes on to call for an alternative model of economic and social progress that would not give priority to economic growth but elevate broader aims such as sustaining the environment, reducing inequality and poverty, increasing and redistributing employment and work. It was the responsibility of governments to intervene so as to curb the tendency of the market and globalisation to '*uproot communities and destroy settled cultures*'. Specifically, Real World called for a public investment and wealth redistribution programme funded by progressive taxation, with a clear shift towards environmental taxes. 'Taxation is the fee which must be paid for being a member of a civilised society'.

You will have noticed a striking similarity between Real World's recommendations and Dafydd Wigley's *100,000 Answers*. And, from Plaid Cymru's perspective, what was particularly delicious was Real World's call for a programme of democratic renewal including a Bill of Rights, proportional representation, strengthening local government, and parliaments for Wales and Scotland as 'distinct nations'. When I went up to London in November 1996 to represent Plaid Cymru in the packed rally organised by Real World, I was confident that I was speaking the same language as them. I felt very much at home.

At about the same time, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were promising to keep within the Tories' spending targets for the first three years of a Labour government, and not to increase personal taxation. Nevertheless, when the New Deal programme was implemented, it contained elements from the Real World and 100,000 Answers proposals, i.e. substantial public expenditure aimed at the unemployed. However it was a one-off windfall tax on the privatised utilities which funded that programme.

Green Redefinitions

I have referred to the quasi-apocalyptic note in the declarations of Real World. This continued a consistent theme in green movement rhetoric ever since *Blueprint for Survival*. But what became evident around the mid-1990s was an endeavour by the green organisations to move away from apocalyptic warnings and the notion that there must be sacrifices in order to meet the challenge, towards an emphasis on the positive benefits of the green transformation. Increasingly, I'd hear the phrase 'win-win', even 'win-win-win', being used, for example by Charles Secrett, director of FoE. There was an increasing tendency to deride 'hair shirt' attitudes. The argument put forward by *Working Future* was that policies for energy conservation, public transport, pollution control, waste management etc. would create more jobs than would be lost and contribute to economic growth. IPPR and Cambridge Econometrics showed, in the presentation I referred to earlier, how imposing a tax on pollution and bad practice rather than on income or jobs (e.g. employer's contributions to the National Insurance) would have the same effect.

After some time in parliament I was invited to become an (unpaid) advisor to the Environmental Industries Commission. The Commission was set up to promote the development of technologies that could solve environmental problems and create excellent profits for those companies who were members of the Commission. I found myself, and dined occasionally in style, in the company of a very different kind from that of the green comrades in Ceredigion among whom I felt so comfortable. The argument that I now heard was that in order to succeed in a ruthlessly competitive international economy and secure quick economic growth, it was vital that countries invest in environmental technologies. According to these thrusting people, environmental industries would grow at a much faster rate globally over the next two decades than the chemical industry. I could see important elements of the green movement beginning to adopt the language of conventional economics rather than continuing to challenge that mindset's presumptions fundamentally. One element differentiating them from other sectors perhaps was that they demanded more environmental regulation as a means of promoting the development of new technologies and hence the growth of the economy.

Jonathon Porritt himself was moving in this direction. Having distanced himself from, although not having left, the Green Party, he and Sara Parkin set about establishing Forum for the Future to promote a shift of emphasis from the threat of crisis to finding practical solutions. Amongst the business and corporate partners listed in the Forum's Annual Report for this year are: ICI, GlaxoSmith Kline, Sainsbury's, British Cement Association, Landrover Jaguar, Marks & Spencer, and Tesco.

Nevertheless, it seemed pretty clear that the challenge of a sustainable environment would involve big and far-reaching changes. It was Maurice Strong, no less, a successful oil-man who was nevertheless secretary to the Rio Earth Summit, who said that increasing environmental regulations would not suffice to save the planet. There would have to be 'a fundamental change in our economic systems'. At another time he referred to a 'fundamental civilizational shift'.

When Jacques Delors, Chairman of the European Commission, published his famous White Paper, *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*, it contained a chapter written by the Greek Environment Commissioner, Paleokrassas, in which he argued in favour of radically shifting the burden of taxation towards penalising activities detrimental to the environment, so as to bring about a fundamental economic transformation as significant as the Industrial Revolution. Here then, embodied in a high-level policy proposal, was one of the fundamental doctrines of the green movement, namely the necessity of 'internalising environmental costs' so that the environmental cost of any activity would reflect impact more fully, if not entirely, its impact on the natural environment.

In Britain, John Major's chancellor, Ken Clarke, had given force to that principle in the field where environmental impact may well be the greatest, transport, by introducing in 1992 the well known 'escalator', a year-on-year increase of 5% in tax on petrol and diesel. That was increased to 6% in Gordon Brown's first budget in 1997. But that came an end in 2000 under pressure from the roads lobby, with Welsh farmers and haulage contractors at the forefront of the protests while the public cried Hallelujah. I remember reproaching Ken Clarke for his inconsistency, aware that I was equally inconsistent, as we went through the lobby together to vote against the continuation of the escalator. His response was, 'I didn't expect things to go as far as this!'

How does today's reality compare with the ideas concerning a green transformation circulating in the early and mid 1990s? Although the escalator and the 17% VAT on domestic fuel were abolished, there has been a start in applying the principle of 'internalising environmental costs' through the taxation system: taxes on quarrying and landfill to encourage recycling and the conservation of raw materials, and the climate change levy to promote conservation and the production of alternative energy. There is a mechanism in place to promote renewables. The emphasis in agricultural policy is now on the importance of safeguarding the natural environment, and there is growth in the organic sector. But these are marginal adjustments, not moves towards the kind of profound transformation advocated by Commissioner Paleokrassas.

More striking perhaps is the way in which consumerism in all its manifestations is perceived, not as some kind of obsession from which people need to be weaned but as the salvation of the economy and the solution to unemployment. One could hardly imagine a less green solution, in the traditional sense, than that. And the enormous growth of supermarkets, with their long-distance procurement and distribution networks, is poles apart from the green aspiration to reinvent the economy on the lines of local self-sufficiency, although there is plenty of talk, and some action on, the use of public procurement to promote the 'selective re-localisation of the economy'.

Broadly speaking, the attitude of business to the environmental question is to acknowledge the importance of environmental issues while arguing that there is no conflict in dealing with the problem on the one hand and ensuring strong economic growth on the other. Indeed, only economic growth can provide us with the resources to solve it. In this world-view, the key is technological innovation and good practice. Thus can environmental impact be reduced without our having to sacrifice any of our lifestyle luxuries. There is no time, and in any case I do not feel qualified, to make a judgment on the validity of this analysis, currently deeply embedded in the conventional wisdom. All I want to do is note that, although there is a crucial role for technology as part of the solution, I am sceptical of its ability to provide a complete answer, and refer you to the chapter 'The credibility of the great tech fix' in Ken Jones' volume, *Beyond Optimism*, written in the wake of the 1992 triumph.

In the meantime, it seems clear that the environmental crisis is intensifying. Certainly, the attention it now receives, climate change in particular, in the media is striking. Here are just two examples taken recently from the newspapers. The World Bank issued a report claiming that millions of deaths are caused each year by environmental factors, including climate change and chemical pollution. Another report by a senior official in the United Nations claimed that environmental degradation creates as many as 10 million refugees each year, more than war, which in itself is often the consequence of environmental stress.

And to cap it all, we have the massive rise in the cost of petroleum as the demand from the developing countries, India and China in particular, intensifies, and as we, according to some experts, approach the peak of global production capacity. Thus the fulfilment of one of the most important predictions of the green movement.

The National Assembly

It is amid this confusion of complex arguments and global forces that we have to consider the special obligation placed upon the new National Assembly for Wales, under clause 121 of the Government of Wales Act, to promote Sustainable Development, or at least to 'make a scheme to show how it intends, in carrying out its functions, to promote Sustainable Development' and also to assess the effectiveness of the scheme's proposals. It is fair to note here that Plaid Cymru's parliamentary group played quite a significant role in the process of incorporating this clause in the Act. Furthermore, my feeling is that the prominence given to the concept of a Green Wales throughout the 1990s, partly through the efforts of the Ceredigion and Pembroke North pact, was influential to the same end.

However, I must confess that at this point that, in a personal capacity and also as Plaid Cymru's Policy Director, I became concerned quite early about its practical impact, for two reasons.

The first was the danger that it would be nothing more than words. I am not in a position to evaluate what the Government of Wales has actually accomplished since 1999 in terms of bringing Wales to the forefront in this field. And it is only fair to underline that the Assembly has none of the taxation or legislative powers pivotal in propelling things towards sustainability. But the impression I get is that a great deal has been done in terms of process - documents, conferences etc - but little in terms of achievement.

The best example is in renewable energy. It took from 1999 to the summer of 2005 to produce a strategy and planning framework, the much-heralded TAN 8, for developments in this field. Between 1999 and 2003 Phil Williams laboured to promote his vision of Wales, in view of the country's marvellous natural resources, as a pioneer in this field, and eventually, it was his targets that were adopted. But the TAN 8 is a most disappointing document, for one thing because it kowtows to the Ministry of Defence and rules out wind energy development in low-flying areas.

The second danger was that the duty might be used in such a way as to impede development in a country where the economy is weak, incomes are low and where a catastrophically high level of educated and ambitious young people are leaving. And the way to avert this danger in my view, speaking very generally and over-simplistically, was and is, to present Sustainable Development as an opportunity of being at the forefront of a transformation that is bound to come, rather than as a series of obstacles to be surmounted before any development can take place.

It was to this end that Victor Anderson and I drafted a policy document in April 1998, entitled *A Sustainable Future for Wales*. This was the first in a series of documents published in the period up to Assembly's first election in May 1999. The document highlighted the importance of leading the way in areas such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, public transport, information technology, environmental industries, environmental farming and green tourism, and high standards in pollution control. It was such an emphasis that I advocated to the civil servants responsible for drafting the Sustainable Development Scheme after the establishment of the Assembly.

And here is a quotation from the 2005 Annual Report of Forum for the Future regarding the latest, disturbing information on climate change that supports this approach: 'It's very tempting, faced with such a miserable prognosis, to retreat into evermore doom-laden calls for action. Give things up, pay more, and accept that things will get worse. Surely the evidence is now so compelling that people will see the need for radical behaviour change? At Forum for

the Future we're resisting that temptation, and for a very simple reason. It doesn't work. ... Instead, we're staying true to our mission and trying to present the opportunity agenda of dealing with climate change'.

I did not think it reasonable for a small country with what is in many respects an underdeveloped economy to don the hair shirt of strict environmental discipline while the rest of the nations of Britain, and the world in general, follow the path of conventional growth. I could also see a real danger that the perception of the Welsh landscape as a priceless treasure would fetter important developments even in areas crucial to the promotion of sustainability. I once heard an official from the Welsh Countryside Council outlining the factors which should, in her opinion, curb the development of offshore wind energy - e.g. whether there was a well-known painting of some particular view. When a proposition was put forward to build a biomass power-station to convert timber waste from sawmills and forests into heat and electricity in Newbridge on Wye, one of the objections raised was that a plume of steam (steam, not smoke) would rise from the chimney, thus damaging the landscape. Small hydro-electric enterprises were blocked by Environmental Agency objections because of concerns about the impact of diverting the flow of water a certain distance on rare micro-organisms. I am pleased to learn that the Agency has now changed its policy on this issue. In a country where 20% of the land is within a National Park (incidentally, which 'nation' is referred to here?) and has a host of other designations of ecological and scenic importance, it is obvious that the scope for creating obstacles to development is very considerable.

I am not implying that these important considerations should not be respected and of all things that we should not view the richness of the Welsh environment as a treasure to be safeguarded as well as an asset to be utilized, but simply to note that very real dilemmas arise.

Sustainable Development for Wales states that 'The National Assembly should judge the success or otherwise of its policies for the Welsh economy not by financial indicators such as GDP per head, but by the real indicators of what is happening to people's health and well-being and what is happening to the environment'. Very enlightened. Taking growth and GDP as the only economic indicator that counts is both crude and seriously misleading. And a great deal of interesting work has been done to develop alternative indicators such as the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) and Victor Anderson's own book, *Alternative Economic Indicators*.

But GDP *does* count. There is an inextricable connection between GDP and average income and, in turn, between the average income and income tax contributions. Because the GDP of Wales is significantly lower than that of England, income tax contributions per head from Wales are significantly lower. How easy then to present the argument that Wales is financially reliant on England, a perception that causes distinct unease to the supporters of, and a convenient missile for the opponents of, self-government. The debate is complex, but it is fairly obvious that raising GDP and average income *per capita* is important to boost the confidence of the Welsh in their country's potential and its ability to stand on its own feet, and to persuade ambitious young people to choose to living here, whatever constitutional relationship may exist between Wales and the other countries of Britain. And to bring Wales's GDP closer to that of England, a significantly higher level of economic growth would be needed for a period of time.

May I draw your attention to another dilemma, in transport? The green movement's emphasis on reducing road traffic is absolutely correct, and for an array of entirely valid reasons. However, in post-colonial Wales we have inherited a network of East-West roads that binds Wales closely to England. The roads that link Welsh regions together, and in particular the North and South, are pitifully inadequate. Take for example the five hours along the A470 from Cardiff to Bangor compared with the two hours from Cardiff to London. The impact of this on the unity and cohesion of Wales, and hence on her ability to develop as a nation, is

grim. Of course, much can be achieved by improving railway services, but in my opinion it is impossible to ignore the need for a substantial investment in Wales's internal road network. And from the perspective of strengthening our national life, an increase in traffic along this internal network (giving priority of course to good quality buses) would be something to welcome.

Lessons

Having discussed the dilemmas, and hopefully highlighted some of the tensions, if not contradictions, in the concept of a Green Wales, I turn at last to the second part of the question posed in this address: are there lessons for the future? (I trust I have demonstrated that Plaid Cymru's relationship with the Greens, in the broadest sense of the word, has been considerably more than a flash in the pan).

Let us take as a starting point Jonathon Porritt's article in the *Independent* (August 1994) in which he emphasises the need for a new politics that would promote cross-party collaboration and avoid 'ritualised conflict', bearing in mind that he is referring to possible pacts between the Greens and the Liberal Democrats and Labour in some circumstances as well as Plaid Cymru, in order, I assume, to promote an agenda on the lines of *Real World*. It was such a spirit that informed Adam Price's proposal in *Triban Coch* that an electoral pact on the left should be sought for the National Assembly in Wales between Plaid Cymru, the Lib-Dems, the Greens, Forward Wales and some independent AMs, in order to loosen Labour's iron grasp on the nation's life. Personally I would support such a pact, but there is no chance that it will become a reality in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, the air is alive with the sound of coalition, and proportional representation in the Assembly elections means that coalition governments will become the norm rather than the exception. In this kind of climate, it seems to me that arranging local and regional pacts is a possibility to be taken seriously. In this respect at any rate what was done and achieved in Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire at the beginning of the 1990s offers lessons for the future.

But what about a specific understanding between Plaid Cymru and the Greens, or to put the question more comprehensively, between the 'national movement' of Wales and the green movement, the force of whose message is once again rising in the public consciousness? We discovered in the early 1990s that many green voters felt warm towards Plaid Cymru, which surely reflects some compatibility in the values of the two political streams, and that the two parties were competing for a significant number of the same voters.

Rather than presenting the argument for renewing a specific mutual understanding between Plaid Cymru and the Greens, I would like to conclude by outlining some of the conditions that would be necessary for it.

To start with of course both parties would need to be confident that they would gain something from the agreement. There would have to be give and take.

From the Green side there would have to be recognition of some of the dilemmas I have already referred to, and a willingness to compromise, especially with regard to the nation building project in Wales. Implicit in this would be the need to acknowledge that the national identity of Wales, and the desire to harness it for progressive purposes, is a valid concept. In considering this, it is worth revisiting Ken Jones' enlightened chapter, 'Nationality, community and periphery' in *Beyond Optimism*. After referring to the threateningly destructive nature of centralised nationalisms and ethnic cleansing, he says: *The problem is how to set limits so that more powerful and intrusive cultures do not overwhelm small nations, destroying their identity and the ecological and community values traditionally tied up with them. The nationalism of distinctive cultural identity is evidently among the most persistent and indestructible of social phenomena. It is not going to go away. And*

undoubtedly its future will need to be increasingly a confederal one, rather than the replication of either the bloody history of the nation-states and their empires or of Balkan-style ethnic cleansing.’ It would be beneficial for both Welsh nationalists and Greens to reflect upon this chapter.

With regard to the preference for regionalism at the expense of small-country nationalism as the basis for devolution of power, the Greens would do well to bear in mind that devolution in Britain, which could yet lead to the regionalisation of England, would not have got off the ground at all had it not been for Scotland and Wales insisting on their being nations.

On the language issue, the Greens would need to show positive support for the regeneration of the Welsh language and the strategies necessary to achieve this. For a movement that places such emphasis on the local and the diverse, this should be easy.

Plaid Cymru for its part would need to maintain, and further build upon, its commitment to Sustainable Development as a key component in the task of nation-building. I take it as read that Plaid Cymru will maintain strongly its espousal of internationalism, anti-racism, and world development, so powerfully represented by Jill Evans MEP, who is a member, along with Greens, of the Rainbow Group at the European Parliament.

Plaid will also need to emphasise anew that the basis of the self-governing Wales that exists and is to be must be universal citizenship for all who live in Wales. Specifically, it will be need to establish clear distance between itself the portrayal of immigrants to Wales, among whom there are many Greens, as a problem. My view is that the mindset underpinning that view of things is unproductive and futile. On the other hand, empathy with the concern for what JR Jones called ‘the crisis of our survival’, as well as a readiness to understand the heritage of the country they come to live in, would be very appropriate, among newcomers, and Greens in particular.

On consideration, the kind of mutual understanding, the rapprochement, that I have attempted, albeit somewhat crudely, to define, is relevant not only to the two streams that came together in the early nineties but also to the task of building a nation in Wales from all of the diverse elements that exist within its boundaries at the beginning of the twenty first century. Without such mutual understanding, we will get nowhere.

Cynog Dafis

Llandre

* The translated text of the nineteenth annual lecture of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales, delivered at Y DRWM, NLW, 4 November 2005.