

Gwynfor Evans is a great man, loved and respected by hundreds of thousands of his compatriots. He is a man of many parts -a barrister by training; a farmer and market gardener in practice. His love of Wales shows in all his activities-as a leader in the Christian Church in his land, as a scholar, writer and speaker, as a County Councillor (since 1945), and as a much travelled internationalist and pacifist known in many countries throughout the world. At the General Election in March, the Labour Party candidate had been elected with a majority of 9,233, the Liberal candidate having been second with 11,988, and Gwynfor Evans had come third with 7,416. Exactly 15 weeks later, on 14th July, Gwynfor Evans won the seat with a majority of 2,346. Naturally, the SNP was overjoyed and the *Scots Independent*, in welcoming the result, said prophetically, "There are few safe seats left for Labour or Tory in Scotland. The first by-election in Scotland will prove it."

Gwynfor came to Scotland in October to speak at meetings in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Thousands came to hear him and gave him standing ovations. His basic theme in his speeches was the importance of nationhood. It is a basic fact of human life, he said. "We are separate nations . . . we have more in common than that which divides us but the differences are important because they do something to enrich our life and the life of the world. A nation is a community, a society with certain characteristics performing a most important function - the transmission from one generation to another down the centuries of values which have been found to be good and true in our lives together. This education which is given by national traditions to all of us in human values is the most important education any of us ever gets. This should comprehend all formal education as it is the basis of civilisation.

A nation cannot live without national freedom just as it is for a man or woman to live a full life unless he or she is free. A slave may have the best treatment in the world but, if he lacks freedom, he can never fully be a human being. It is equally true to say the same of the human communities we call nations. The nation is the basic community on which world order rests. There is no other possible moral basis for international order. Wales and Scotland have something to do in the world scene but we can do nothing. The English Parliament in London makes use of us. It disposes of our wealth, it feeds on our moral support - for example, it assumed that we were behind the Labour Government in the obscenity of a war in Vietnam. We ought to be in a position to express our own attitudes to such matters. There are smaller, less experienced communities than ours who are in a position to do that-over 30 member states of U.N.O. are smaller than Wales and over 50 have smaller populations than Scotland."

Gwynfor Evans concluded: "It is high time that the people of Scotland insisted on doing their duty as a nation and taking their due place in the life of the world. Their due place is in the van of nations - not in the dim, grey provincial existence of the British state. There is no such thing as a British nation. A British state - yes - but a British nation is a creature of a state. There are four nations in these islands. This is a multi-nation state but this fact is ignored completely by the English Parliament from which our Governments are formed. The people of Scotland must now take their country seriously."

Gwynfor Evans' visit was the signal for the SNP's autumn recruitment drive. Enthusiastic activity went on all over Scotland, almost entirely by people without previous active experience in a political party. The belief in nationhood which Gwynfor Evans and many others expressed, spread throughout the people of Scotland. New members were recruited sometimes at the rate of over 1000 a week and new branches were formed, especially in those parts of the country in which we previously had no organisation at all.

Billy WOLFE, *Scotland Lives*, Edinburgh: Reprographia, 1973, p. 90.