



Simon Brooks: Pam Na Fu Cymru / Why Wales Never Was

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Mae Simon Brooks yw'r academydd ac awdur **Pam Na Fu Cymru**, sydd wedi cael ei rhyddhau mewn fersiynau Cymraeg a Saesneg.
Yma, mae e'n cyflwyno'r themâu allweddol o'r llyfr...

Simon Brooks is an academic and the author of **Why Wales Never Was**, which was released in both a Welsh and an English version. Here, he introduces the key themes of the book...

'The most challenging and significant work on Wales since devolution.' – Dr Huw Williams, Cardiff University.

Lledaenaid y Saesneg

Un o gwestiynau mawr hanes Cymru yw pam na ddatblygodd mudiad cenedlaethol Cymreig o'r iawn ryw yng Nghymru'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg? Fasa mudiad o'r fath ddim wedi arwain at annibyniaeth - roedd y Deyrnas Gyfunol yn wladwriaeth gref eithriadol - ond gallai fod wedi ennill digon o gonesiynau i gadw Cymru'n wlad ble mae'r mwyafriq yn siarad Cymraeg.

Yn wir, o edrych ar hynt ieithoedd tebyg i'r Gymraeg mewn rhannau eraill o Ewrop yn yr un cyfnod, dyna y buasai rhywun wedi ei ddisgwyl. Dyma Oes Cenedlaetholdeb, ac ar hyd a lled Ewrop roedd gwledydd bychain yn mynnu hawlau iaith - hawl i addysg yn y famfath, a'r hawl i'w hiaith gael ei defnyddio gan y wladwriaeth. Eto, doedd fawr o genedlaetholdeb yng Nghymru, ac erbyn

The Spread of English

One of the great questions in Welsh history is why the Welsh nationalist movement did not develop properly in nineteenth-century Wales. A movement of that kind would not have led to independence – the United Kingdom was exceptionally strong as a political entity – but it could have won enough concessions to keep Wales as a country in which the majority spoke Welsh.

Indeed, looking at what happened in the case of languages similar to Welsh in other parts of Europe, that is what anyone might have expected. That was the Age of Nationalism, and all across Europe small countries were insisting on language rights – the right to teach in the mother tongue and the right to have their language used in government. And yet there was not much in the way of nationalism in Wales, and by the end of the century Welsh speakers in Wales enjoyed fewer language rights than any similar people.

diwedd y ganrif roedd gan y Cymry Cymraeg lai o hawliau iaith nag unrhyw genedl debyg.

Y Saeson ddim ar fai

Y diffyg yw'r rheswm am wendid y Gymraeg heddiw. Rydym yn clywed yn reit aml ei bod yn wyrthiol fod y Gymraeg wedi goroesi, ond gallai'r gymdeithas Gymraeg fod wedi dal ei thir yn rhwydd iawn.

A'r syndod yw hyn! Nid gorthrwm y Saeson oedd yn gyfrifol am y methiant. Mae'r Cymry yn eu twyllo eu hunain os ydyn nhw'n meddwl mai'r 'Welsh Not' sydd ar fai.

Y Cymry eu hunain a oedd o blaidd lledaeniad y Saesneg.

Pam fod y Cymry wedi chwennych hyn? Roedd Prydain yn unigryw iawn am mai hi oedd y wlad fwyaf rhyddfrydol yn Ewrop, a Chymru oedd y rhan fwyaf rhyddfrydol o Brydain. A rhyddfrydwr oedd cewri deallusol yr oes - dynion fel J. S. Mill a Matthew Arnold, ac yng Nghymru Samuel Roberts Llanbrynmair, Gwilym Hiraethog a Henry Richard.

'Gwaddol cymhleth'

Dymuniad rhyddfrydwr oedd sicrhau cytgod rhwng Cymru a Lloegr, a ffodd o wireddu hynny oedd rhoi i'r Cymry yr un cyfleoedd â'r Saeson. A pha ffodd haws o wneud hyn na thro'i Cymry 'yn Saeson', trwy ddysgu'r Cymry i siarad Saesneg?

Nid er mwyn darostwng y Cymry y daeth yr awydd i'w Seisnigo, ond er mwyn iddynt gael chwarae teg. Wrth gwrs, mewn gwladwriaeth lai rhyddfrydol, ni fuasai'r un awydd i roi chwarae teg!

Roedd dysgu Saesneg yn rhan annatod o wleidyddiaeth radical y cyfnod am fod hyn yn llesol i'r Cymry - yn llesol iddynt fel unigolion, nid fel cenedl.

Gan hynny, mae gwaddol radicaliaeth yng Nghymru'n fwy cymhleth na mae llawer yn ei dybio. Yn wir, gellid dadlau y byddai Cymru yn lle Cymreiciach heddiw pe bai'n wlad fwy ceidwadol.

Trwy eu cefnogaeth i'r Blaid Ryddfrydol, ac yna yn yr ugeinfed ganrif i'r Blaid Lafur, uniaethodd y Cymry â radicaliaeth Brydeinig. Yn ddiweddar, bu Plaid Cymru hefyd yn cefnogi radicaliaid Prydeinig - yn y Blaid Werdd, er enghraift.

Ond mae hanes Cymru yn awgrymu fod hybu radicaliaeth Brydeinig yn debyg o arafu datblygiad cenedlaetholdeb Cymreig.

A gyda'r Alban yn mynnu mwy a mwy rymoedd iddi'i hun, ymddengys fod Cymru yn cael ei gadael ar ôl unwaith eto - yn union fel yn y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg

The English not to blame

This failure is the reason for the weakness of the Welsh language today. We constantly hear how remarkable it is that Wales has survived, but the Welsh community could very easily have held its ground.

And the surprising thing is this! It is not oppression by the English that was responsible for the failure. The Welsh deceive themselves if they think that it is the 'Welsh Not' that is to blame.

It is the Welsh themselves who were in favour of propagating the English tongue.

Why should the Welsh have wanted to do this? Britain was quite exceptional in being the most liberal country in Europe, and Wales was the most liberal country in Britain.

And the intellectual giants of the age were liberals too – men like J.S.Mill and Matthew in Arnold in England, and in Wales Samuel Roberts Llanbrynmair, Gwilym Hiraethog and Henry Richard.

'A complex legacy'

What the liberals wanted was to ensure harmony and mutual understanding between Wales and England, and the way to bring this about was to give the Welsh the same opportunities as the English. And what easier way of doing this than to turn Welsh into 'Englishmen', by teaching them to speak English? This desire to anglicise the Welsh was not for the sake of subjugating them, but to give them fair play.

Of course, in a less liberal government there would not have been the same desire to give fair play!

The teaching of English was integral to the politics of the period because it was a good thing for the Welsh – a good thing for them as individuals, that is, not as a people.

So, the legacy of radicalism in Wales is more complex than many imagine. Indeed, it could be argued that Wales would have been a far more Welsh place today if the country had been more conservative.

Through its support for the Liberal Party, and then in the twentieth century for the Labour Party, the Welsh identified themselves with British radicalism.

Recently, Plaid Cymru has also been a supporter of British radicalism – in the case of the Green Party, for example.

But the history of Wales suggests that espousing British radicalism is likely to have retarded the development of Welsh nationalism.

And with Scotland demanding more and more powers for itself, it is evident that Wales is being left behind once again – just as in the nineteenth century.

