

Cornish National Minority Report

November 1999

The Cornish and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

“I warmly commend the Cornish National Minority Report and call upon all those in authority dealing with these matters, to give the Report every consideration and to act on its recommendation”

Dafydd Wigley AM MP

Member of National Assembly of Wales/Member of Parliament for Caernarfon

With the assistance of Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust

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Bernard Deacon
Redruth, November 1999

The Steering Group members: Ann Trevenen Jenkin, Richard Ford, Graham Sandercock, Hugh Rowe, Mark Kaczmarek, David Fieldsend, Alistair Quinnell CC, Stephen Horscroft, Dick Cole, Neil Plummer CC, Bert Biscoe CC, John Angarrack, Dr Philip Payton



Foreword

An Derivas Leriv Kenedhlek Kernewek ma yw profys kyns oll dhen Kessedhek-kusulya a wra hwithra obayans an RU dhen Ambos Framweythek rag Difresyans Lerivow Kenedhlek. Entent an derivas yw dhe jalenjya savla an RU yn kever Kernewek, keffrys ha gul dhen Kessedhek-kusulya dhe grysi bos res hwilas akord an Kessedhek Menysteryon dhe ordena hwithrans manylys an savla kernewek yn kever an Ambos Framweythek.

This Cornish National Minority Report is addressed primarily to the Advisory Committee which will scrutinise the UK's compliance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. It is intended to challenge the UK's position regarding the Cornish, and to convince the Advisory Committee to seek the agreement of the Committee of Ministers to carry out a detailed study of the Cornish situation in relation to the Framework Convention.

Derivas Leriv Kenedhlek Kernewek

Kommendyans gans Colin Lawry CC

2000AD - hag yth omgyv Kernow ow sevel dherag spasow a jalenj hag yn kettermyn dherag godrosow. Dre skonya dhe dhadhla rannvro yma Governans an RU ow kodros dieneth menystransek a Gernow. Ev re dhesedhas Kernow yn gwrians rannvroek fals -an Soth-west - hag yw pur vras hay wonisogeth diskevelsys.

An tu arall, an spasow nowydh profys dre waynya Amkan 1 an Arghasow Framweythek an UE rag Kernow han Ynysow Syllan ny veu gwaynys marnas wosa sewena lies den ha kowethas kernewek a gaskyrghas rag bos Kernow henwys rannvro hy honan rag porpos statistegel europek.

Derivas Obayans Governans an RU yn kever an Ambos Framweythek rag Difresyans Lerivow Kenedhlek a dalvia bos hwarvos poesek rag Gwerin Kernow, ha ni ow strivya dhe weres drehevel Europa selys war liester, hag a aswonn an ober gwrys gans pub pobel a Europa yn unn wruthyl kesson ha kres sostenadow. Byttegyns, an Derivas Obayans a nagh yn kler aswonn hevelepter an Gernowyon avel Leriv Kenedhlek.

An Derivas ma re beu kessettys gans Bagas-lywya hag a omguntellas rag chalenjya savla Governans an RU ha rag erghi may hwrello an Kessedhek-kusulya ordena studhyans an Gernowyon. An Bagas a syns ynno tus dhiworth treustrogh an gemmynieth, kelmys oll dhe amkan kemmyn a waynya aswonnvos ha kehavalder rag an bobel gernewek. An Bagas-lywya a woer gras an gront poesek res gans an Fydhyans Dasfurvya Josef Rowntree, dhe bub huni a ros arghans, termyn, skians ha nerth, dhe Eseli an Senedh kernewek aga hennerth, dhe Dhavydh Wigley AM ES ay Rager. Diwettha, mes na an lyha, godhon meur ras dhe Bernard Deacon hay was Julian German aga hwithrans ha skrifa an Derivas.

An bobel gernewek a dhendil bos aswonnys ha goelys. An Derivas ma a dhyght mater an aswonnedh a Gernow hag an bobel gernewek yn gettestenn an Derivas Obayans an RU, mes devnydh an tybyansow ha dadhlow kevys war an folennow ma a vydh milweyth efanna.



Cornish National Minority Report

Introduction by Colin Lawry CC

2000AD - and Cornwall finds herself facing challenging opportunities and threats. By refusing to debate region the UK Government is threatening Cornwall's institutional integrity. It has placed Cornwall in an artificial regional construct - the South West, which is very large and culturally incoherent.

In contrast, the new opportunities presented by the achievement of EU Structural Funds Objective 1 status for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly were only won after the success of many Cornish people and organisations in campaigning for Cornwall to be designated a region for European statistical purposes.

The UK Governments Compliance Report in respect of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities should have been an important event for the Cornish People, as we strive to help build a Europe founded on diversity, recognising the role to be played by all the peoples of Europe in creating sustainable harmony and peace. However, the Compliance Report explicitly denies identification as a national minority to the Cornish.

This Report has been commissioned by a Steering Group which came together to challenge the UK Governments position and to prompt a study of the Cornish by the Advisory Committee. It comprises individuals from a wide cross-section of interests and activities, all bonded by the common goal of achieving recognition and equality for the Cornish people. The Steering Group is grateful for the significant contribution made by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, to all those who donated money, time, expertise and energy, to Cornwall's MPs for their encouragement, to Dafydd Wigley AM MP for his Foreword. Not least, we are grateful to Bernard Deacon and his assistant, Julian German, for their research and authorship of the Report.

The Cornish people deserve to be recognised and celebrated. This Report addresses the issue of the identity of Cornwall and the Cornish people in the context of the UK Compliance Report, but the application of the ideas and arguments found in these pages will be far wider.

Summary

The Cornish are a people living on the north-western edge of Europe.

☉ The UK Government has decided that the Cornish are not a national minority for the purposes of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

☉ This report concludes that the Cornish have a distinct historic identity, with origins that are non-English. There are also a number of constitutional, linguistic and cultural 'differences'. These elements combine to produce a claim to be regarded as a national minority that fits even the restricted UK Government definition of the term 'national minority'.

☉ Moreover, the Cornish are a self-aware and distinct ethnic group and some members of the group see themselves as part of a distinct nation. This has given rise to a cultural and political 'Celtic Renaissance in Cornwall that indicates its similarities with Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Mann and Brittany and distances it from the majority English culture of the UK state.

☉ Outsiders also often regard the Cornish as 'different' and a number of (sometimes racist) preconceptions and stereotypes are reproduced about the Cornish.

☉ The Cornish are poorer, earn lower wages, are less likely to occupy high status and decision-making jobs and more likely to live in social housing than the English in Cornwall. Population movements of the past 40 years have worsened the relative position of the Cornish.

☉ This has produced a sense of frustration and powerlessness in Cornish communities.

☉ The media in Cornwall offer little serious coverage of issues of Cornish identity and heritage or space for minority views of the Cornish and their future.



Introduction

Where is Cornwall and who are the Cornish

Some Key Dates in Cornwall's History

577 After the Battle of Deorham down near Bristol the West Welsh (Cornish) were separated from the Welsh by the advance of the Saxons

936 Athelstan's settlement established the Tamar as the border between Cornwall and England. The Cornish were evicted from Exeter.

1337 Duchy of Cornwall Created

1497/1549 Cornish uprising

1508 Charter of Pardon extended legislative powers of the Cornish Stannary Parliament

1642-46 War of the five peoples (English, Scots, Welsh, Cornish) in Britain

1740's Expansion of deep copper mining in Cornwall heralded the Industrial Revolution

1743 John Wesley arrived in Cornwall and established Methodism, which became the dominant religious denomination.

1866 Collapse of the price of copper began the process of de-industrialisation and added to the process of mass emigration of the Cornish overseas.

1904 Jenner's *Handbook of the Cornish Language* initiated the Cornish renewal.

1960's Counter urbanisation resulted in major population migration to Cornwall.



1.1 Cornwall is situated on the north-western edge of Europe and the south-western edge of the United Kingdom. It is bordered on three sides – the north, west and south – by the sea. The 520 km of coastline ensure that Cornwall and its people have, historically, looked outwards to Europe and overseas. On its eastern side the River Tamar forms the boundary for all but 18 km. Cornwall is just over 356,000 hectares in area and its resident population at the 1991 Census was 468,425. Its current population is estimated to be over 490,000.

1.2 Cornwall is a relatively deprived European region. Its gross domestic product per head is less than 75% of the European average, a situation that helped it win European Union Objective 1 structural funding in July 1999. In 1998 earnings in Cornwall were 32% below the British average, winter unemployment levels 30% above the average and summer unemployment 6% above (Cornwall County Council, 1999, 14 and 22). As a result of these and other factors the UK Government's Social Exclusion Unit report that two of the 90 most deprived districts in the UK are found in Cornwall DETR, 1998 Index of Local Deprivation (communication from David Fieldsend).

1.3 The two main groups of people who inhabit this region are of Cornish and of English descent. The former are the indigenous group; the latter are predominantly recent migrants. Very rapid population growth since 1960 has resulted in a situation where somewhere between 40 and 50% of the population is Cornish, in stark contrast to the 1950s when between 70 and 80% of the population had been born in Cornwall.

The UK Government and the Cornish

" The United Kingdom today draws its strength and vitality from the diversity of our society. Different heritage - whether race, faith or culture - should be respected and valued."

(Jack Straw MP, *UK Report on the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, 1999)



2.1 In February, 1995 the UK, along with 21 other member States of the Council of Europe, signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The broad aims of the Convention are to ensure that the signatory states respect the rights of national minorities, undertaking to combat discrimination, promote equality, preserve and develop the culture and identity of national minorities, guarantee certain freedoms in relation to access to the media, minority languages and education and encourage the participation of national minorities in public life.

2.2 Article 25 of the Framework Convention binds the signatory states to submit a report to the Council of Europe containing "full information on the legislative and other measures taken to give effect to the principles set out in this framework Convention" (Council of Europe, 1994, 7). A UK Compliance Report duly appeared in 1999 (Home Office, 1999). This report will now be considered by the committee set up to advise a Committee of Ministers established by the Council of Europe to oversee the implementation and regulation of the Framework Convention.

2.3 In its report the UK Government has decided that the Cornish heritage does not require special protection. It rejects the case put forward by Cornish organisations and representatives for the Cornish people to be considered as a national minority. Those making representations included MPs and MEPs, "seeking recognition of the Cornish as a national minority under the Convention. The Minister responsible for Race Relations, Mike O'Brien MP, has also met with an MP and an academic from Cornwall to discuss these concerns" (1999, UK Compliance to FCPNM). Nevertheless, despite this meeting with Andrew George MP and Dr Philip Payton, Director of the Institute of Cornish Studies, the UK Government has maintained "the view that we do not consider that the people of Cornwall constitute a 'national minority'" (Home Office, 1999, paragraph 48). No detailed reasons are forthcoming, other than the repeated assertion that the Cornish do not qualify as a national minority under the criteria adopted by the UK Government.

2.4 The first aim of this report is to review the case for recognising the Cornish as a national minority. Secondly, it will examine the links between the presence of a distinct Cornish group in Cornwall and the chronic levels of deprivation experienced in this region. The specific conditions of the Cornish people will be related to various Framework Convention articles, a duty the UK Government has avoided through its decision not to define the Cornish as a national minority. This report is necessarily provisional and interim in nature as much of the data required to document fully the state of the Cornish people as a national minority are not collected systematically. We hope therefore that this preliminary audit paves the way for a fully funded and resourced research profile of this particular minority.

Summary

The UK Government has decided that the Cornish are not a national minority under the terms of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

This report sets out to:-



Establish the grounds for including the Cornish as a national minority



Provide a preliminary audit of the position of the Cornish in respect to the articles of the Framework Convention.

Part 1: The Cornish Case

Defining a national minority

The Minority Rights Group International suggests that, if states opt out of parts of international treaties then this action, in International Law, should not be contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant treaty. Thus, if the existence of minorities is denied this should not be discriminatory, i.e. make unjustified distinctions between groups. The logic of this position is that the existence of a minority does not depend upon a decision by the State but must be established by objective criteria (Minority Rights Group International, 1998, 13)

So what is a "nation"? Lord Simon, in the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruling of 1997 said that....
The Scots are a nation because of Bannockburn and Flodden, Culloden and the Pipes of Lucknow, because of Jenny Geddes and Flora MacDonald, because of frugal living and respect of learning, because of Robert Burns and Walter Scott...
The Welsh are a nation ... by reason of Offa's Dyke, by recollection of battles long ago and pride in the present valour of their regiments, because of musical gifts and religious dissent, because of fortitude in the face of economic adversity, because of the satisfaction of all Wales that Lloyd George became an architect of the welfare state and prime minister of victory (Industrial Relations Law Reports, 1997, 612)

3.1 The term 'minority' is uncontroversial. It simply denotes a numerically smaller and non-dominant group. However, the term 'national minority' is not so transparent. There are three possible sources for a definition of this term in relation to the Framework Convention. First, there is the language employed within the Convention itself. Second, we could use the definition decided upon by the UK Government. Or third, we might turn to an independent and more widely accepted academic definition.

3.2 The Framework Convention itself contains no explicit definition of the term 'national minority'. This was for pragmatic and political reasons, as member states could not agree on a definition. However, running through the Convention document there is an implicit definition. For example, in discussing the background to the Convention it notes that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called for "wider protection of the rights of national minorities" as early as 1949, in its first year of existence (Council of Europe, 1994, 11). This is a relevant point as it suggests the use of the term 'national minority' precedes the period of mass immigration into Europe of peoples of non-European origin.

3.3 Article 5.1 of the Convention specifies religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage as key identifiers of the identity of national minorities. Article 3.1 implies that an element of self-identification is important and that individuals may decide not to be treated as a member of a national minority. This reflects the flexible and variable aspect of identity claims in the late twentieth century and avoids a simplistic and fixed classification of national groupings. Finally, and most crucially for the Cornish case, articles 10.2, 11.3 and 14.2 refer to "areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers", introducing both a possible territorial dimension to the term 'national minority' and the notion of long-term association with a specific territory.

3.4 Clearly therefore, while not specifying a definition of national minority, the intention of those who drafted the Framework Convention was to be inclusive and to incorporate groups with a historic relation with a territory as well as groups with a cultural heritage different from that of the majority.

3.5 At first glance, the UK Report would seem to adopt a much narrower definition of 'national minority'. Indeed, the Home Office even states that "the Government does not recognise any 'national minority' under the Convention because this is not a legally recognised term within the UK" (Mike O'Brien, Parliamentary Under-Secretary Home Office, Hansard, written answers, 22 October 1998). Instead, the UK Government defines a national minority as a 'racial group', as defined by the Race Relations Act, 1976. However, the Race Relations Act of 1976 actually adopts a relatively loose definition of 'racial group' and specifically includes reference to groups having 'national origins'.

3.6 A racial group is defined in this legislation as "a group of persons defined by colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins" (Home Office, 1999, para 2). The UK



Compliance Report concludes that groups qualify either as an "ethnic minority community" (by implication including such groups as Afro-Caribbeans for example) or "by virtue of their national origins" (including the Scots, Welsh and Irish). The Compliance Report thus distinguishes between ethnic groups, which it describes as "visible minorities", apparently basing its definition on phenotype and biological appearance, and "historic national identities within the UK" (Home Office, 1999, para 2). Under this definition therefore any Cornish case for inclusion has to rest on the second variant, 'a historical national identity within the UK'.

3.7 What is at issue, therefore, is whether the Cornish qualify as a group with 'national origins'. The Government is adopting a legal definition so we can first turn to the courts to see how 'national origins' might be defined there. Following the case of Northern Joint Police Board v Power (1997), the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruled

to the effect that the Scots and the English are separate racial groups defined by reference to their 'national origins'. Whether a group could be defined by reference to its national origins depended on whether there were identifiable elements, both historically and geographically, which at least at some point in time reveal the existence of a nation. It can hardly be doubted that the same rule would apply to the Welsh. On the other hand, purely regional identities would not fall within the definition. There would appear to room for argument so far as the Cornish... are concerned (Harvey, 136, L/259)

3.8 But the UK Government employs a second line of defence. For a group to be defined as a racial group under the Race Relation Act, it needs to be defined as such in case law, that is as a specific result of a ruling on an action brought under the Race Relations Act. Because no Cornish case has been brought before the courts a succession of Home Office civil servants can claim in various letters that "the Cornish have not been found to be a racial group under this act". But while not clearly ruled as being a racial group under the terms of the 1976 Act, equally the lack of legal judgement means that the Cornish have not been ruled not to be a racial group. Therefore, even under the legalistic definition of national minority employed by the Government the Cornish case remains an open one.

3.9 Moreover, the implied usage of the term 'ethnic' in the UK Government's Compliance Report and the distinction between an ethnic group and an historic nation runs counter to virtually all academic writing on issues of ethnicity, race and nation since the passing of the Race Relations Act in 1976. The most striking difference is that, in the academic literature, the concept 'ethnicity' is not confined merely to minority groups distinguished on some supposed genetic basis. For example, one approach sees 'ethnic categories' as divisions based on cultural distinctions, including language, economic life and even psychological make-up, similar criteria to those noted in the Framework Convention, articles 5, 10 and 11. For some, when members of ethnic categories become self-conscious and attach explicit value to these cultural differences they become an 'ethnic group' (Rex, 1986, 12) or an 'ethnic community' (Eriksen, 1993). Ethnicity is thus a first order categorization, a primary social grouping that humans use to classify themselves and their social world (see Jenkins, 1997). In other words, we are all members, or potential members, of an ethnic group. Such a

Even the definition of an "ethnic group" under the Race Relations Act can be interpreted more widely than the UK Government does in paragraph 2 of its Compliance Report. Thus, in 1988 Lord Fraser, in a House of Lords judgement stated that:

For a group to constitute an ethnic group in the sense of the 1976 Act, it must, in my opinion, regard itself, and be regarded by others, as a distinct community, by virtue of certain characteristics. Some of these are essential... The conditions which appear to me to be essential are these.

- a) a long, shared history, of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups, and the memory of which it keeps alive
- b) A cultural tradition of its own, including family and social customs and manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance.

(House of Lords, Mandla v Dowell Lee, 1988)

definition could include all minorities in the UK, whether Sikhs or Scots, Afro-Caribbean or Irish, as well as the majority English.



3.10 The distinction between ethnic group and national minority or group remains rather less clear. There are two possible meanings of 'national group' available. First, it could mean a group that adopts an ideology of common origins and which struggles actively for the establishment of political institutions that reflect a separate and distinct political community. Second, it could mean an ethnic group or community that occupies a minority position within a nation state. It would appear that both the Convention, by implication, and the UK Government, by specifically including as national minorities groups that have no nationalist ideology, adopt the second of these meanings. Indeed a definition produced by the Bolzano Group and presented to the Council of Europe in 1992 uses the terms 'national minority' and 'ethnic community' interchangeably and defines the latter as

" an ethnic community – historically present on the territory of a State Party - which is smaller in number than the rest of the population of a State, whose members who are nationals of that State, have ethnical, linguistic or cultural features different from those of the rest of the population and are guided by the will to safeguard them" (Bolzano Group, 1992, draft Convention on the Fundamental Rights of Ethnic Groups in Europe, 1992, 8)

3.11 The next section of this report will identify the Cornish case for inclusion, both as a 'historic national identity within the UK', under the definition of national minority adopted by the UK Government, or as an 'ethnic community' under a wider, more inclusive academic definition.

Summary

- ① The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities defines a national minority implicitly to include minorities possessing a territorial identity and a distinct cultural heritage.
- ② The UK Government, in contrast, bases its definition on the 1976 Race Relations Act. But it still defines a national minority as including those groups with a 'historic national identity'.
- ③ The academic definition of minority ethnic communities, possessing features different from those of the majority population of a state, is more appropriate and closer to the intention of the Council of Europe.
- ④ The Cornish case for inclusion can be assessed in terms of both 'historic national identity' and 'ethnic community'

Historical Difference

4.1 In 1993 the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly explicitly defined ‘national minority’ in their Text of the proposal for an additional protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In that definition they made their implicit intention, discussed above in paragraphs 3.2 – 3.4 much more explicit. In 1993 they decided that the expression ‘national minority’ refers to a group of persons in a state who



- a. reside on the territory of that state and are citizens thereof;
- b. maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state;
- c. display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics;
- d. are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of that state;
- e. are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language

4.2 Both this definition and that of ethnic group suggested by Lord Fraser in 1988 share a recognition of two aspects common to all identity claims. These are the presence of difference and the agency of members of the group in acting upon those perceived differences. At the outset we must realise that differences can be both material/objective and imagined/subjective. They can also be quite subtle. And to a large extent it is not the attributed ‘difference’ that makes the group but the group that makes the ‘difference’ important.

The enduring role of these institutions of "accommodation" into modern times was recognised by the Kilbrandon Commission on the Constitution in 1973 when it noted the "special" relationship between Cornwall and the Crown. The Commission suggested that "use of the designation (i.e. the Duchy) on all appropriate occasions would serve to recognise both this special relationship and territorial integrity of Cornwall" (Kilbrandon Commission, 1973)

4.3 Nevertheless, claims of difference underlie the Cornish case. We will identify, for illustration, three material differences, historic, linguistic and cultural, that are often, singly or separately, taken as the basis of the Cornish claim to be a distinct ethnic community or national minority.

4.4 Although administered as a county of England, the origin of Cornwall is not the same as that of English counties. While the latter were originally administrative sub-divisions of Saxon kingdoms, Cornwall was formerly a separate kingdom, populated by a Celtic-speaking populace and with its own ruling families. In 936 Athelstan, the ruler of Wessex, fixed the east bank of the River Tamar as the border between Wessex and Cornwall, thus creating the geopolitical entity of Cornwall as the home of the ‘West Welsh’, who were at the same time forcibly evicted from Devon. Because of its size, roughly equivalent to an English county, Cornwall came to be administered as a county, but this was a later and contingent outcome.

4.5 In the period before the Reformation Cornwall was certainly not regarded as a ‘mere’ English county. There are three aspects to this. First, Cornwall was exceptional in its ‘Celtic’ inheritance “within England” (Robbins, 1998, 8-9). This inheritance guaranteed Cornwall formally equal status as one of the four constituent parts of the ‘island of Britain’ in medieval times. As late as 1543 it was written that "Britain is divided into four parts, wherof the one is inhabited by Englishmen, the other of Scots, the third of Welshmen and the fourth of Cornish people" (Polydore Vergil, cited by Payton, 1992, 57). To the sixteenth century Cornwall was regularly distinguished from England in government documents such as Magna Carta and in other writings



and given a prominent status (for examples see Payton, 1996, 87ff). Secondly, an ambiguous constitutional position was reflected in what has been described as devices of ‘accommodation’, special institutions that helped solve the problems of governing this remote territory in the medieval period (Payton, 1992, 47). Examples were the Duchy of Cornwall, formed in 1337, and the Stannary courts and parliament, guaranteed by charters of 1201, 1305 and 1508, the last of which extended the Stannary Parliament’s legislative powers and "provided (an) aura of semi-independence" that recognised Cornwall’s distinct constitutional position in the medieval British Isles (Payton, 1992, 52).



4.6 Finally, ideas of national identity before the 1600s differentiated ethnic from political status. Thus the King’s political subjects included the English, Welsh, Scots, Irish, French, Flemings and anyone else who happened to live within the realm (Ellis, 1999, 104), Nevertheless, these ‘ethnies’, or early ethnic communities, were regarded as separate cultural groupings well into the 1600s. The Cornish were located as a group with a clear identity, but absorbed into a multi-ethnic England, and this was only challenged with the coming of the Reformation and the appearance of the modern notion of one ethnic group in one ‘national’ space (Hastings, 1997, 67). Given the size of the Cornish group in relation to the dominant English they were clearly vulnerable to a process of semantic ethnic cleansing that commenced in the 1600s.

4.7 It was this process that effectively marginalised and rendered invisible the Cornish. It also helps to explain the lack of visibility of the Cornish as a distinct group in the late twentieth century UK. Indeed, it is only in recent years that historians have begun to re-emphasise the distinct status of Cornish ethnicity in medieval and early modern England, a status that was culturally similar to the Scots and the Welsh, despite differences in governance. In a recently published article the historian Mark Stoye concludes that, in terms of a distinct "tradition of descent... language, law, life-style, dress... agricultural practices, (and) code of social values... naming forms and cultural practices" the Cornish "emerge as a ‘people’ on every count" in the period before the 1600s (Stoye, 1999, 426). The same historian has also called for the Civil War, now often regarded as a ‘war of four nations’ to be thought of "in terms of a ‘war of five peoples’: English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh – and Cornish" (Stoye, 1998, 51).

4.8 Moreover, historical difference did not cease in the 1600s and 1700s with the decline of the more visible markers of difference such as language and cultural practices. While there was some cultural convergence in the 1700s and 1800s, a period when Cornwall was one of the centres of European industrialisation, "nevertheless, there remained a stronger sense of separate identity and common purpose... among the people of Cornwall than in any other southern shire... Such politicisable ethnicity could hardly be found elsewhere" (Hastings, 1997, 67). In fact, events of the nineteenth century produced new tokens of historical difference. Early industrialisation based on metal mining was followed by early de-industrialisation and, at the same time, Cornwall became one of the major emigration regions of Europe (Baines, 1985, 157; Payton, 1999). This heightened the distinctiveness of the Cornish experience during the late 1800s, opening up new family and community links that were not bound by the parameters of the British nation-state or even by the British Empire. The resulting international context of Cornish cultural identity is on a scale matched only by the Irish and the Scots Highlanders within the British Isles. This again provided another element of difference, which together with an earlier ‘Celtic’ history,

Cornwall and Wales compared
The Welsh are regarded by the UK Government as a national minority. However before the 1960’s there was little difference between Cornwall and Wales in constitutional terms. Indeed, the Cornish Stannary Parliament had continued to meet for 300 years after the last representative Welsh assembly of the 1400’s. Separate legislation was still enacted in Cornwall into the eighteenth century whereas Wales was largely incorporated into English administration after the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543. But both countries have a similar relationship to the Crown, with the same person, the heir to the throne, acting as Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cornwall. In both the vast majority of place names are in a Celtic and non-English language. In both there is history of religious nonconformity. The Welsh and the Cornish have shared origins. So why are the Cornish treated differently?

supplies a rich repertoire of symbols for assertions of historical difference by the contemporary Cornish.

4.9 The separate origins of Cornwall and the Cornish people and their qualitatively different status from English counties and their inhabitants have been recognised by various state institutions as well as by historians. In 1855 the Duchy of Cornwall claimed that "Cornwall, like Wales, was at the time of the Conquest, and was subsequently treated in many respects, as distinct from England" (Observations on behalf of the Crown by way of a reply to the statement showing the grounds upon which is founded the alleged right of the Duchy of Cornwall to the tidal estuaries, foreshore, and under sea minerals within and around the coast of County of Cornwall, 1856, appendix). In 1973 the Kilbrandon Commission stated that "The early inhabitants of Cornwall were of Celtic origin. The Anglo-Saxon settlement of England did not extend to their territory and the people of Cornwall continued to be Celtic" (Kilbrandon Commission, 1973, para 329). As recently as 1998 the Office of National Statistics, when supporting the case for Cornwall to be regarded as a Level 2 European Union region for statistical purposes, argued that separating Cornwall from Devon would recognise the former's "distinct cultural and historical factors reflecting a Celtic background" (ONS press release, 29 June 1998). A final example of official recognition of the existence of a distinct Cornish group comes in the allocation, for the first time also by the ONS, of a Local Code to the Cornish relating to the ethnic identity question in the 2001 Census.

Summary

-  The historical evidence suggests that the Cornish can lay claim to a history that has much in common with that of the Scots and Welsh. Non-English origins and a Celtic inheritance provide the raw material for a distinct history.
-  A distinct origin separate from England was recognised by state bodies in the medieval period and still referred to into modern times.
-  This qualifies the Cornish as national minority under the definition of the Race Relations Act as they have a 'historic national identity'.

Linguistic and cultural differences

The UK Government provides £12 million to promote and support Gaelic language in Scotland (HO, 1999, para 154). This is £173 for every Gaelic speaker in the 1991 Census. The same per capita level of support for the Cornish language would equal around £350,000 a year. This would provide a huge boost to a language historically almost totally unsupported by central government.

5.1 The Cornish language underpinned the Celtic culture of medieval Cornwall and was reinforced by the high proportion of Bretons, speaking a mutually intelligible language, who were permanently resident in Cornish communities into the mid-1500s. Political developments originating outside Cornwall, namely the establishment of a separate Church of England and the loss of Breton independence, reduced these cross-channel links and marked the onset of a long term decline of Cornish as a major vernacular language in Cornwall. Nevertheless, the language was spoken traditionally to the years around 1800. In 1776 William Bodener wrote that "nag es moye vel pager pe pemp en dreav nye ell clappia Cornoack leben" (There are no more than four or five in our town who can talk Cornish now).

5.2 Nevertheless, its demise was late enough to attract the attention of antiquarians and, almost as soon as the last colloquial speaker died, other Cornish people were attempting to revive the language. Henry Jenner, one of those active in the cultural revival of the late nineteenth century wrote that "there has never been a time when there were not some Cornishmen who knew some Cornish" (Jenner, 1905, 240).

5.3 The language remains important in two ways. First, it is perpetuated in place and personal names. Over 80% of the placenames in Cornwall are in the Cornish language. As such, the language is woven into the texture of everyday life in Cornwall, an inescapable part of the culture of Cornish people. Second, it remains a potent symbol of a distinct Cornish identity. In this way it is both used symbolically, for example in institutional mottoes or town welcome signs, and practically, as it has been actively revived as a spoken language. Some people now again regularly speak Cornish on a daily basis and children are brought up with a knowledge of the revived language. A much greater number, estimated in 1981 as around 1,000, have at some point attended Cornish language classes and attained some knowledge of the language. With 25 classes occurring weekly, without support (Brown, 1981). This number may safely be assumed to be now over 2,000.



5.4 Books are produced in Cornish and songs are sung in Cornish. For example, a much acclaimed book of poems in the Cornish language has recently been published (Saunders, 1999). Cornish is represented on the Committee for Lesser Used European Languages and films in Cornish are submitted to the annual Celtic Film and Television Festival. In the 1997 Festival, the film *Splatt dhe Wertha* won the Golden Torc. In 2001 Cornwall will again be hosting this Festival. The importance of the revived language for the future of Cornwall has been recognised by Cornwall County Council, which stated in an Objective 1 Strategy document in 1998 that an intrinsic part of Cornwall's heritage, the Cornish language has been revived during this century and increasingly studied over the last twenty years. Its existence and the renewed interest in it taken by many people underline one aspect of the distinctive nature of Cornwall (and use of the language in an appropriate context could give added value both in cultural and economic terms) Cornwall County Council has adopted a policy on the Cornish language and this has now also been accepted by four of the six District Councils in Cornwall with the others considering it.

5.5 Despite government indifference the Cornish language is increasingly prominent in Cornwall. The Gorsedd, re-established in 1928, exists to maintain and give expression to the 'National Celtic Spirit of Cornwall' and annually confers honours on people for services to



Cornish culture. Its ceremonies are conducted in the Cornish language and it is closely associated with the Welsh and Breton gorsedd. An annual inter-Celtic music and dance festival, the Lowender Peran, is held every year at Perranporth and attracts participants from the other Celtic countries as well as from across Cornwall. Organisations exist to maintain and promote aspects of historical culture, such as Cornish wrestling or Cornish dancing. Cornwall has been represented in the Celtic Congress since 1904 and the Celtic League since its formation in 1961. These inter-Celtic links have been deepened by the fashion of twinning with Breton communities that spread across Cornwall during the 1980s. All these developments heighten the contemporary sense of difference to which Cornish people have access and help to differentiate its culture from that in other parts of the UK.

We might now look again at Lord Simon's account of why Scotland and Wales are nations (side box 3) and rewrite it in respect of Cornwall:

The Cornish are a nation because of Blackheath and Hingston Down and the Prayer Book uprising of 1549, because of Stannary Parliament, because of the Cornish Moonta and Montana, because of Richard Trevithick and Humphrey Davey. The Cornish are a nation... by reason of the river Tamar, by recollections of battles long ago and pride in the present valour of their rugby team, because of religious dissent, because of fortitude in the face of economic adversity.

5.6 The historical experience of the nineteenth century emigration is also echoed in contemporary expressions of Cornishness. In recent decades the descendants of the Cornish diaspora overseas have found a reinvigorated sense of pride in their Cornish roots. Regular cultural gatherings, festivals and a network of Cornish societies keeps alive a sense of ethnic difference. There is no ambiguity about the Cornish identity of these groups. Commenting on a visit to Cornwall in 1997 to attend the commemoration of the uprising of 1497, a Cornish woman from Salt Lake City wrote "Through the sights, sounds, aromas, thoughts and feelings, everyone participated in the spirit of national pride and expressed what it means to be Cornish" (cited by Hosken, 1998, 131-132). As Cornish descendants rediscover their ethnic identity (see the songs by Jim Wearne, 1999) so their enthusiasm is channelled back to Cornwall where it helps to produce a pro-active sense of Cornishness. In this way a vigorous family history network, oiled by the technology of email communication and the internet, is fast reproducing in a new guise the international sense of Cornishness that flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century (see Payton, 1999).

5.7 Cornwall continues to be different in other aspects of culture. For example the industrialisation of Cornwall in the late 1700s and early 1800s was accompanied by the adoption of Methodism. By 1851 Cornwall was unique outside Wales in its allegiance to Methodism (Coleman, 1980). As recently as 1904, significant numbers of Cornish dissidents were imprisoned for their religious beliefs. Methodism became a badge of Cornish identity and Cornish Methodism was viewed as subtly different from Methodism in general, an integral part of Cornishness (see Luker, 1986). In terms of religious affiliation Cornwall remains distinct. In 1989, the English Church Census illustrated this continuing difference.

Christian Religious Attendance, 1989 (%)

	Cornwall	SW England	All England
Methodist	44.2	11.6	10.7
Other Free Church	9.8	28.2	23.1
Church of England	28.4	42.2	30.9
Roman Catholic	17.6	18.0	35.3

(Source: Brierley, 1991) Cornwall remains as distinct from the South West of England in terms of religious attendance as it does from England in general.

Summary



The Cornish language, a 'Celtic' cultural renaissance and cultural features such as an international sense of Cornishness and religious non conformity are elements of Cornish culture that make it materially different from the majority culture of England.

Perceptions

6.1 But for an ‘ethnic category’ to become an ‘ethnic community’ or ‘national minority’ it requires more than objective differences. It needs to be seen as a distinct community by insiders, who act upon this perception, as well as by outsiders. Therefore the question becomes one of whether the Cornish perceive themselves as a distinct community and whether those who are not Cornish recognise that distinction and draw boundaries between themselves and the Cornish.

6.2 This is the real significance of aspects of Cornish difference such as the Duchy of Cornwall or the Stannary Parliament. There is a body of evidence that points to a special status for the Duchy (summarised in Payton, 1993, 245-246). For example, the Duchy still appoints the High Sheriff, unlike the usual case in English counties. The Charter of Pardon of 1508 bestowed distinct rights to the Stannary Parliament to veto Westminster legislation, rights that have never been repealed. The Stannary Parliament last met in its traditional guise in 1750, although a convocation was proposed as late as 1865 (Rowe, 1953, 314). Stannary powers and the status of the Duchy are often summarily dismissed outside Cornwall as remnants of feudalism. However, the relevant point in respect of the Cornish claim to be a national minority is that people in Cornwall have revived the claim of Stannary rights, meeting regularly since 1974 and actively demanding the recognition of rights long since ignored by Westminster.

6.3 The existence of bodies like the Stannary Parliament both re-affirms the distinct constitutional history of Cornwall and provides an ethnic dimension to contemporary protest movements that is rarely found in England. Thus, in 1990-91, the anti-poll tax campaign in Cornwall took on

6.4 Stannary Parliament activists are part of a political Cornish ‘Renaissance’ that is once again unique within the administrative boundaries of England. The main Cornish nationalist party, Mebyon Kernow, has been continuously active for almost 50 years, being founded in 1951. For the last 25 years it has regularly fought elections at all levels, receiving an estimated 10% of the Cornish vote at the European election of 1979. While it has remained marginal at Westminster elections it has achieved some limited successes at local level and is currently represented on Cornwall County Council as well as four of the six District Councils and many Parish and Town Councils. Its vote in local elections has been consistent, as shown below.

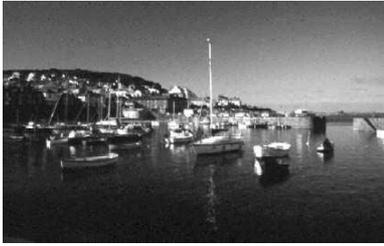
Mean MK vote at single seat County & District Council

Elections %	1976-83	1984-91	1992-99
Contests where 1 of the 3 major parties were absent.	22.8	33.3	28.7
Contests where all three major parties were present.	8.8	11.4	8.1
Number	34	18	3

Such a voting level reflects a respectable core of support for Cornish nationalism at a local level. And in a proportional voting system MK would gain considerably more seats than it does. Its persistence indicates consistent ethno-regionalist political organisation in Cornwall as is found in Scotland and Wales and in European regions and nations such as Brittany, the Basque Country and Catalonia.

National origins
It is important to stress that the Cornish claim that their origins as a group are non-English. The usual way this is done is by claiming Celtic roots. However, in the nineteenth century there were two other narratives of national origin in Cornwall. First, some claimed an origin as "one of the tribes of Israel". More usually, and this is still sometimes heard in contemporary Cornwall, others claim a Spanish origin, based on a misunderstanding of Cornish surnames such as Jose, Clemo, Jago, Pascoe and similar. But the point is that all claims of origin, however accurate they may be, share a common non-English origin.





A refusal to understand the Cornish Case can co-exist outside Cornwall with a feeling that the Cornish are "different". Thus, in 1998, the Transport & General Workers Union accredited a delegate to represent the Cornish on the Regional Race Equality Advisory Committee. But when this delegate duly presented himself at the committee he was met by a statement accusing him of representing a "dubious case of regionalism... under concepts of pseudo-nationalism that myself and other present members do not understand, wish to understand, accept or have intention to be involved in any way or circumstance" (statement of Regional Race Equality Advisory Committee, 1998)

6.5 At certain times the nationalist organisations in Cornwall draw in wider support, notably over issues that seem to threaten the territorial integrity of Cornwall and its formal border. Campaigns against proposals in 1969 to create a 'greater Plymouth' council helped to achieve the dropping of that proposal. And, from 1979, there has been considerable and sustained support for campaigns against the voting arrangements for the European Parliament, arrangements that resulted in Cornwall sharing an MEP with Plymouth before 1999 and since then with six English counties. The first European Parliamentary Boundary Commission received over four times the number of complaints from Cornwall as it did from the whole of England. Subsequent Boundary Commissions were forced to hold public enquiries although the consistent weight of opposition from Cornwall and Cornish demands for an MEP who would solely represent Cornish views in the European Parliament has been steadfastly ignored.

6.6 The campaigns over European representation reflect the strong territorial identity that exists in Cornwall. Indeed, territory is a core value of the modern Cornish identity (Deacon, 1993). Threats to a perceived territorial integrity are seen as threats to Cornishness and periodically draw in a wider constituency of support for the arguments of Cornish nationalists. This highlights an important distinction between Cornish political nationalism and Cornishness. The latter is a far wider phenomenon than the former. As the political scientist Jeffrey Stanyer suggests, "if Cornishness is important it is because it influences those who are not separatists" (1997, 93). While the label 'separatist' would no doubt be rejected by most Cornish nationalists, Stanyer has stumbled upon a key point here. Self-identification as members of a Cornish ethnic community goes much wider than those actively engaged in a Cornish cultural or political sub-culture. To restrict Cornishness to the latter would seriously underestimate the role of a Cornish ethnic identity in contemporary Cornwall.

6.7 The early traveller and antiquarian Norden noted in the 1500s that some Cornish "retain a kind of concealed envy against the English, whom they yet affect with a kind of desire for revenge for their fathers' sakes, by whom their fathers received the repulse" (cited in Cornwall, 1977, 42) Similarly the Cornish antiquarian Carew, writing around 1600, noted that some Cornish were still "fostering a fresh memory of their expulsion long ago by the English" (Carew, 1811). Such comments have been interpreted by a modern historian as clear "evidence of the West Cornish determination to resist cultural assimilation with England" (Stoyle, 1999, 431). This is also evidence for a perceived boundary between the Cornish and the non-Cornish. Such boundaries, necessary for the expression of ethnic claims, were clearest between Cornish speakers and English speakers (perhaps many of whom were born in Cornwall) in the sixteenth century.

6.8 However, these ethnic boundaries are now drawn much more widely and are a part of everyday life in Cornwall, although flexible and fluid rather than fixed. In an ethnographic study of people in West Cornwall in the late 1980s Mary McArthur concluded that, in day to day life, "consciousness of ethnic difference can range from being non-existent on the part of both Cornish and English (in Cornwall) to being very important" (1988, 96). In general she found that awareness of their ethnicity was not weak among Cornish people. McArthur claimed that "most Cornish people were very sure of their Cornish identity" and found evidence for a sharpening of ethnic sentiment among many Cornish people, "even though this did not accompany political mobilisation nor support for Cornish nationalism" (McArthur, 98). Her research confirmed for her that The Cornish are a named group or community,



with a self-awareness (albeit of differing degrees) of a separate identity, being long established in a well-defined territory, and according to this definition do qualify for the label 'ethnic group' or 'ethnic community' (McArthur, 1988, 81).

6.9 Local government bodies in Cornwall such as Cornwall County Council have accepted that the Cornish make up an ethnic group within Cornwall. In 1987 the County Council stated that "it is not a legitimate planning consideration however to seek to preserve any particular ethnic group as a certain proportion of the population" (Cornwall County Council, 1987, 4), thus accepting that the Cornish were an ethnic group. And, in the mid-1990s, it was reported that "Treliske Hospital (at Truro) has acknowledged that 'the term "ethnic group" legitimately and technically covers groups such as Cornish, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, English'" (Sheaff, 1996, 143).

6.10 Often this feeling of ethnicity is explicitly described as 'nationality'. This appears to have surprised and confused the political scientist Bernard Crick, who, when confronted by an entry of 'Cornish' nationality in a hotel register responded "once I read 'Cornish' but I suspected, correctly, that it was a wag and not a nut" (Crick, 1989, 23). Crick's response reflects the way the Cornish issue has, until recently, been ignored or ridiculed by academics in the UK (see also Williams, 1992).

6.11 No doubt Crick would be seriously alarmed to discover that defining Cornishness as a nationality is by no means as uncommon as he believed. For example the entries of people with Cornish addresses in a Church visitors' book in a period over the late 1980s and early 1990s broke down as follows:
Description of 'nationality' in Old Kea church visitors' book, 1985-92 (entries with Cornish address)

	number	%
Cornish	152	29.9
English	71	13.9
British/UK	242	47.5
none	44	8.6
	509	100.0

Given that high rates of in-migration since the early 1960s probably mean that the proportion of the population of Cornwall who are Cornish born is somewhere between 40 and 50% this suggests that a high percentage of Cornish people are willing, in certain circumstances, to define their nationality as Cornish. This finding is borne out by other quantitative data. For instance a private sector housing survey carried out by Carrick District Council in 1996 gave residents the opportunity to describe their ethnic group as Cornish as well as White British, Black Caribbean, Black African etc. Of the 716 persons surveyed, 37.2% opted to describe themselves as Cornish, as compared with 58.7% who preferred the descriptor 'White British'. Again, this implies a considerable willingness to self-define as 'Cornish'. This is especially the case as the Cornish-born are more likely to be in public sector housing (see below, section 9).

6.12 More qualitative evidence for the strength of feeling of the Cornish ethnic community can be found in the support given to the Cornish rugby team, which acts as a surrogate for public expressions of allegiance to Cornwall. That this is viewed as qualitatively different from the normal run of loyalty to local sporting teams can be illustrated by comparing the addresses of the Presidents of the Yorkshire Rugby Football Union and

the Cornwall Rugby Football Union on the eve of the 1991 County Championship Final:

Cornwall County Council has summed up the strength of the local identity in the following way...

Cornwall's peripherality, geographic isolation and culture maintains a strong awareness of difference amongst the people of Cornwall of which they are fiercely proud. It is this difference which helps preserve the Cornish identity and sense of community.

(Cornwall County Council, 1993, 16)

While the Yorkshireman saw 'county' rugby mainly as a stepping stone to 'English rugby', this emphasis was entirely missing from the Cornish President's address. Instead, he referred to Bishop Trelawny's imprisonment and the legendary events of the seventeenth century and argued that 'the Cornish have the additional motivation of a Celtic people striving to preserve an identity' (Deacon, 1993, 207)

6.13 This perception was not limited to the Cornish alone. The response of the London press to the 40,000 supporters who followed the rugby team to Twickenham in 1989 suggests an awareness that the Cornish support for their rugby team took on extra symbolic overtones. The *Guardian* wrote: "like the Welsh, the Cornish take the view that rugby and community are the same thing". In a similar vein the *Independent* stated that "Cornishmen used the great ground (Twickenham) for a statement, if not of Celtic nationhood, then at least of their distinct identity" (cited in Cornwall County Council, 1993, 15). The Plymouth newspaper *The Western Morning News* also wrote in an editorial about the Cornish rugby fans "who carry the Cornish cause into the capital of foreign England" (cited in Payton, 1992, 244).

6.14 In 1997 the strength of feeling about the Cornish identity was graphically displayed in the widespread interest in and support for *Keskerdh Kernow 500*, the commemoration of the 1497 uprising that re-enacted the march of the Cornish 500 years before from St. Keverne in west Cornwall to London. Thousands turned out to take part in the start of the march, again when it crossed the River Tamar into England and yet again at its end at Blackheath in London. Schools and organisations across Cornwall became involved and the event received a high profile in the local media (see Parker, 1998). At events such as this or at rugby matches involving Cornwall the black and white flag of St. Piran is much in evidence. This is a potent symbol of belonging and its use has mushroomed in Cornwall since the 1950s.

6.15 The comments from outsiders cited in paragraph 6.13 above clearly show that the Cornish are often regarded as a discrete group by the non-Cornish in a similar way as are the Scots and Welsh. This is not new. In 1652 the English puritan Roger Williams complained that "we have Indians... in Cornwall, Indians in Wales, Indians in Ireland" (cited in Hill, 1994, 138). The term 'Indian' was "routinely applied by the inhabitants of Stuart England to groups that they felt to be quintessentially 'un-English'" (Stoyle, 1999, 431). In this stereotyping the Cornish were being compared with the Welsh and the Irish. The notion that the Cornish were somehow 'foreign' reappears regularly in the English imagination over the following three centuries. By the late 1800s the Cornish were being seen as a primitive and simple 'Celtic' folk and contrasted with the supposed 'modernity' of England (e.g. Hudson, 1908). In the inter-war period Cornwall was routinely evoked as "a foreign land – still rooted in the natural essence of its uncorrupted, aboriginal peasantry" (Vernon, 1998, 165).



6.16 These romantic English imaginings of the Cornish both reflected existing differences and helped reproduce a sense of difference among the Cornish, often in a reaction against the cloying romanticism of the dominant imagery. Texts such as Daphne du Maurier's *Vanishing Cornwall* (1967) or Denys Val Baker's *The Spirit of Cornwall* (1980) popularised to a market of suburban holiday-makers romantic stereotypes of a timeless, superstitious Cornish people rooted to their

land. Such ideas reinforced the idea of a boundary between the Cornish and the English and helped to fix the notion of 'difference' in the minds of Cornish and non-Cornish alike. At the same time, of course, such romantic notions, combined with the predominant experience of Cornwall as a leisure periphery, meant that the indigenous experience of Cornishness and the history on which it was grounded became part of that 'Vanishing Cornwall' that lies below the horizon of metropolitan visibility. Romantic notions of difference could therefore co-exist in the majority culture with ignorance of Cornwall's place in the diverse history of the British Isles.



6.17 Twee and romantic misrepresentations at times co-exist with more clearly racist attitudes. A.A.Gill, a Sunday Times journalist, described the Cornish in 1999 as "mean" and "stunted troglodytes" who were "easily bribed" (Western Morning News, 7th September). When challenged, his editor dismissed this crude stereotyping as "the basic tools of a jobbing humorist" (letter from Richard Caseby to Amy Hale, 15th September, 1999). The victims of racist 'jokes' are thus accused of lacking a sense of humour, a device typical of majority racist stereotyping of minorities. Many Cornish people find both this overt racism and romantic notions of difference deeply insulting.

6.18 Furthermore, outside agencies occasionally view the Cornish as an ethnic group. Thus the Minority Rights Group produced a report on the Cornish in the 1970s. Similarly, the Commission for Racial Equality reported, in a survey of racism in the South West, on the "special characteristics of Cornwall".

In the words of one local government officer:

"It is fair to alert you to the fact that there is a substantial number of indigenous Cornish people who feel themselves disadvantaged, compared with 'incomers', in relation to class, income, housing, employment and various other aspects of daily living. This manifests itself in a number of ways – for example, a feeling of 'losing out' to incomers in the scramble for affordable housing or the search for adequately remunerated employment, as well as concern about the erosion of traditional Cornish values and communities."

This being so, it is not surprising that another local government officer should have asked if the Cornish were an ethnic minority as defined by the Race Relations Act, or that, in a recent client profile produced by a citizens' advice bureau, "some Cornish people see themselves as a distinct racial group, and were identified under our 'other' category". (Jay,1992,15)

And when the Commission for Racial Equality held a one-day seminar on 'Challenging racism in the South West' at Truro in 1995 it significantly included a presentation and discussion of the oppression of the Cornish as a group (Commission for Racial Equality, 1995, 18-21).

Summary

- ② A large proportion of Cornish people identify themselves as Cornish, either as an ethnic group or as a nationality. The willingness to self-define as a nationality, in addition to the Cornwall's historic location as a 'Celtic' region, are at the core of the Cornish case to be considered as a 'historic national identity' within the UK. Neither of these factors is found anywhere else within the administrative territory of England.
- ② More widely, the widespread classification of the Cornish as a separate group by others, along with the evidence of 'difference' in the cultural arena, provide an argument that the Cornish should be recognised as an ethnic community, as they meet objective criteria for inclusion as a 'national minority'.

Part 2: The position of the Cornish - an audit

Measuring the problem

Comparing the size of the minority

How large is the potential Cornish ethnic group? In Cornwall somewhere between 40% and 50% of the population are Cornish, around 200,000 to 250,000 people. This is a larger number than the total for many ethnic groups recorded in the 1991 Census for the whole of the UK. At that time in the UK there were:

- 212,000 Black Africans
- 178,000 Black other
- 163,000 Bangladeshi
- 157,000 Chinese
- 198,000 Other Asian people enumerated

(Commission for Racial Equality, 1997)

7.1 The UK Government regularly states, both in its Compliance Report to the Council of Europe and in letters from Home Office Ministers and civil servants, that "we are not aware of any rights granted under the Convention which are being denied to any individual in Cornwall" (HO, 1999, para 48). However, even ignoring the fact that the Convention specifically refers to freedoms exercised "individually as well as in community with others" (Article 3.2), it is difficult to see on what grounds the Government and the Home Office make their statement. This is because no significant research has been undertaken on the position of the Cornish as a distinct 'national minority' or 'ethnic group'. In this second part of the report we synthesise some scattered and fragmentary findings that map, in a preliminary way, the economic, social and cultural position of the Cornish. These provide a starting point for further funded research on this issue. We will indicate as we proceed which articles of the Framework Convention broadly relate to our findings.

7.2 Those who write about the contemporary position of the Cornish sometimes note "a measure of conscious anti-Cornish sentiment in some quarters, (but) we are generally talking about indirect, subconscious and structural discrimination" (Kennedy, 1995, 20). While accounts of direct discrimination abound in oral myths and anecdotes what we will focus on here is the evidence for claims that "widespread and structural anti-Cornish discrimination (is) so much a part of life in Cornwall today" (Kennedy, 18). Central to this perception of institutional discrimination are the housing and jobs markets in Cornwall. A survey of 12 rural parishes in 1988 revealed an "undercurrent of resentment about denied access to housing and jobs markets" (Griffiths, 1989, 168). Indeed, some have gone so far as to claim that "the way in which the labour and housing markets are operated is as good as a statement that the Cornish have no right to be in Cornwall" (Saunders, cited in Deacon et.al., 1988, 162).



The Cornish and economic deprivation

8.1 People in Cornwall receive the lowest wages in the UK. In 1997 average gross weekly earnings for men were 23% lower than the UK average and those of women 18% lower (Pullinger and Pickering, 1998, 31). Full time male wages fell from 84% of the British average in 1981 to just 77% in 1997. For women the drop was even steeper, from 90% to 81% over the same period (Cornwall County Council, 1998). GDP is also lower, so low that that Cornwall now qualifies for EU Objective 1 funding as its GDP per capita is more than 25% below the European Union average. Low wages lead to deprivation, "Cornwall exhibits a different pattern of deprivation than Devon: there appears to be widespread low-level deprivation which was described as extensive rather than intensive" (Payne et.al., 1996, 35). The same study found that the proportion of council tenants receiving housing assistance in Cornwall in 1993/4 was higher than in Greater London (Payne et.al., 41). The authors concluded that "low wages are a highly significant factor in Cornwall's economic and social difficulties, yet this is not reflected in the government's assessment of the County's needs" (Payne et.al., 46).



8.2 While the Cornish economy, with its chronic "job insecurity, under-employment, casual, seasonal and part-time work" (Payne et.al., 42), provides the backdrop to the economic conditions of the Cornish community this does not prove that the Cornish suffer worse conditions than the non-Cornish. But relatively high levels of inequality for rural areas, especially in west Cornwall, show that a major contrast exists between best and worst off groups within Cornwall (Gordon and Forrest, 1995). But do these inequalities have an ethnic dimension?

8.3 There is evidence that class differences within Cornwall mirror ethnic differences. In 1989 it was found that the average income of Cornish households in selected rural parishes was £9,000, compared with £10,500 for non-Cornish households. Households with a Cornish-born head were only half as likely to be in the top wage bracket as households with non-Cornish heads. The report concluded that "not only do local people tend to have traditional jobs, but they have traditional wages too... there is a considerable contrast between in-migrants who are more likely to have a better paid job in the tertiary sector which involves sometimes long-distance commuting; and the Cornish, who tend towards having more primary sector jobs, entailing lower income and a workplace close to home" (Griffiths, 1989, 109, 114).

8.4 There is clearly an economic cost to be paid when choosing to stay in Cornwall, as "out-migrants do better economically than those who remain in Cornwall" (Williams and Harrison, 1995, 190). And amongst those who live in Cornwall, recent in-migrants experience less of this cost than long-term residents. Low income has other effects. For example, in August 1993 the Times stated that "chronic ill-health is linked closely with poverty... in the North, inner cities and Cornwall, over a quarter of households contain at least one person suffering from long term illness" (cited in Payton, 1993, 233). The low income of Cornish households would appear to make them even more vulnerable to problems of chronic ill-health. But the Area Health

Related Articles of the Convention are:

Article 3.1 Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

Article 4.2 The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

Authority does not monitor the health of the Cornish ethnic group. "The resultant lack of information on health databases means that it is impossible for the National Health Service in Cornwall to map the incidence of conditions in relation to their impact on different ethnic groups. This prejudices equal access by Cornish people to preventative initiatives, preventing the NHS from developing practices and treatments that are culturally sensitive and more effective" (communication from Bert Biscoe).

8.5 The lower income suffered by the Cornish community reflects a cultural division of labour in Cornwall. This was asserted as early as 1973 when Professor Charles Thomas claimed that "medical and hospital services, all the various Government departments, County Hall and the local government network are ... largely in English hands" (Thomas, 1973, 11-12). More recently, empirical surveys have confirmed this widely held assumption. In-migrants to Cornwall have been found to be of a higher social class after migration than the local population. In 1982/3 a survey of 1,800 households in seven electoral wards in west and mid Cornwall found a clear difference in the occupational class profile of 'locals' and 'migrants'.

Social class of locals and migrants, 1982/3 (based on Perry et.al., 1986, 88)

	Locals	Migrants
Social classes 1 and 2	26.4%	49.0%
Social class 3	52.3%	41.0%
Social classes 4 and 5	21.3%	10.0%

Migrants were more likely to be in the professional and non-manual classes whereas locals were twice as likely to be in manual occupations. These findings were replicated in a study of 1981 and 1991 Census data. In-migrants to Cornwall were more likely to have professional and non-manual occupations while non-migrants were more likely to be working in manual jobs (Williams et.al., 1995, 46-47). Similarly, a study of rural parishes in 1989 showed that the Cornish were three times as likely to work in the primary sector and twice as likely to be in the secondary sector than the non-Cornish (Griffiths, 1989, 108). More recent data collected by the Cornwall Rural Community Council in the 1990s also suggest that the "Cornish are under-represented amongst the professional/managerial group, but over-represented in lower paid categories such as agriculture/fishing, the retail trade and secretarial/clerical" (Wills, 1999).

8.6 In an economy dominated by small businesses and the public sector (health, local government) this division of labour means that those in a position to hire and fire in Cornwall are rarely Cornish. Furthermore, in the small business sector, in 1989 less than 30% of the owners of small businesses surveyed were Cornish (Griffiths, 1989, 234). This proportion was especially low in tourism businesses, where only one in six was Cornish, a finding that supported earlier studies. In Looe in 1986 it was discovered that only 16% of tourist businesses were owned by Cornish people; in 1989 it was reported that "less than one third of the (tourism) entrepreneurs had been born in Cornwall"



(Hennessy et.al., 1986, 16; Williams et.al., 1989, 1646). The only exceptions to the pattern, where Cornish ownership is still widespread, are farming, fishing and building.

8.7 In such a division of labour it is important that interviewers show sensitivity and understanding when interviewing Cornish applicants, competing for a limited number of non-manual jobs against large numbers of applicants attracted by tourist and romantic images of Cornwall. It has been claimed that specific qualifications are often sought which cannot be obtained locally... Assumptions are made about Cornish job seekers. Mobility is equated with ambition and initiative, a factor which fails to take account of the special circumstances of Cornwall. The determination to stay in Cornwall after generations of emigration and commitment to the community are not seen as worthy of merit or indicative of resolve, dedication and different ambitions and aspirations. Instead Cornish candidates are assumed to lack drive and have an insular outlook (Kennedy, 1993, 21). Whether this is the case demands detailed ethnographic research and qualitative data on the assumptions of interviewing panels and those in high status jobs in Cornwall. What is clear, however, is that structurally, the Cornish only rarely occupy powerful and prestigious locations in the Cornish economy.

8.8 Finally, in terms of access to education, despite high rates of post-16 education in Cornwall, there is a distinction between the Cornish and the non-Cornish populations in terms of higher education experience. In the early 1980s a survey found that the non-Cornish were more than twice as likely to have continued full time education after the age of 19 than the Cornish. This was the case in all of the seven wards the project investigated (Perry, 1986, 87). This pattern was the result of selective out-migration of Cornish graduates, unable to obtain work in Cornwall, combining with the class and status character of in-migrants, skewed towards the better off and more highly educated.

Summary

- ① The Cornish ethnic group has a lower income than the average for Cornwall, already low by UK and European standards.
- ② This is reflected in higher levels of deprivation.
- ③ There is a cultural division of labour in Cornwall whereby the Cornish are under-represented in high status and over-represented in low status jobs.

The Cornish and housing

Related Articles of the Convention are:

Article 4.2 ([sidebar 2 section 8](#))

Article 15 The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to nation minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those effecting them.

Article 16 The Parties shall refrain from measures which after the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present Framework Convention.



9.1 Work by researchers at Plymouth University's Department of Sociology on housing issues in contemporary Cornwall demonstrates "that in-migrants enjoy better housing chances than locals when moving to Cornwall" (Williams et.al., 1995, 48). Housing issues featured strongly in comments by those interviewed in rural parishes in 1989, "in general around half of the people interviewed volunteered concerns about the housing market" (Griffiths, 1989, 136). Comments related to three connected aspects, the absence of affordable housing for local people, competition from in-coming better-off migrants and the purchase of houses as second homes. Inevitably, these issues have a cultural dimension. Thus it was stated that there were "too many people from over the Tamar coming down, paying cash for houses and this does not give a chance for locals", "the unique and original Cornish atmosphere is vanishing", "community spirit has died because of second homes" (Griffiths, 1989, 135). A study of second home owners in coastal communities has also found "evidence of social distance between second home owners and local residents who held some resentment towards the former" (Thornton, 1996, 155).

9.2 Surveys have found that the non-Cornish are more likely to be owner-occupiers than the Cornish. Whereas 71% of the Cornish in a survey in the early 1980s owned their own homes, 88% of the non-Cornish did so (Perry et.al., 1986, 88). These figures are very close to the results of more recent surveys carried out in the 1990s. Among the non-Cornish, 84% were owner-occupiers but only 71% of the Cornish were. The Cornish were also 2.3 times more likely to live in public sector housing than the non-Cornish (Wills, 1999). These distinctions have a spatial dimension and "some suggest the Cornish now live in 'reservations' (like American Indians or Australian Aborigines) – in the council estates tucked away on the edges of our towns and villages, in caravan parks or in winter-lets in 'resort' areas" (Deacon et.al., 1988, 139).

9.3 The data on housing need are more ambiguous. Cornwall Rural Community Council survey data suggest that the Cornish are 50% more likely to be in housing need than the non-Cornish (Wills, 1999). However, a postal survey of 873 households in selected wards in the early 1990s by Plymouth University researchers found no significant variation in housing need between the Cornish and non-Cornish. But this may reflect a generational shift as the "adult offspring of in-migrants experience the same difficulties in gaining access to independent accommodation as young people who have lived in Cornwall all of their lives" (Williams, 1995, 204-205). And it may also reflect cultural differences between Cornish and non-Cornish in terms of the role of family support.

9.4 Tensions over housing have been exacerbated by the scale of demographic change experienced in Cornwall since the late 1950s. Current generations of Cornish people have lived through social changes on a scale unknown to their forebears. The population of Cornwall has risen by over 50% in the last 40 years, entirely as a result of in-migration, the bulk of which comes from the south eastern counties of England. This population growth rate is only exceeded by a handful of counties in England, places where, unlike Cornwall, there is no chronic problem of unemployment and low wages. It is this demographic process that has stimulated both a greater assertiveness by some Cornish people and a deep concern



over the future of their community. This is: a process that has reduced the Cornish from being most of the population to a disadvantaged minority within the space of 30 years ... The ability to be Cornish in Cornwall cannot be taken for granted. Within the Cornish community we can find initial reactions of alarm and anger giving way to disabling feelings of despair, defeatist acceptance and grief. There is a feeling of being the last Cornish generation which cannot easily be dismissed as paranoia (Kennedy, 1993, 19)

9.5 Population change and tensions over access to housing are related to the economic conditions of the Cornish. In-migration drives house prices up and wage rates down, thus worsening the position of existing residents. Cornwall is a region where, most unusually, house prices are above average and wages well below. Furthermore, in-migrants can afford to take poorer paid jobs if they have realised equity from selling houses in the south-east of England. This, plus redundancy payments and pensions in some cases, mean they often have an unearned income that supplements local wage rates. Therefore, the form of population movement to Cornwall has actually forced wages and relative wealth down. For example, 30,000 jobs have been created in Cornwall over the last two decades which is a relatively higher figure than in any English county, yet unemployment, underemployment and seasonal employment remain higher than the British average. Yet no government action is taken to address this process which exacerbates the economic problems of the Cornish community.

9.6 It is therefore not surprising that, in 1989, 10% of the replies in a survey of rural parishes contained spontaneous remarks that "in-migrants were taking over or eroding the 'Cornishness' of the place; either that or they did not join in with community activities, stunting well-being in a different way" (Griffiths, 1989, 154). As only 40-45% of those responding were Cornish this presumably represents around 20-25% of the Cornish replies. Local resentment was reported as 'running particularly deep' in some places and comments included :

- ✦ my mother, grandmother, and great grandmother lived here, but there are times now when I feel our village, in fact Cornwall, is not for the Cornish but a league of other people who have taken over
- ✦ the occasional 'second home' residents have an arrogant manner, and expect the local residents to be inferior in all respects. They possess an air of superiority and treat the locals as a group of unlearned peasants
- ✦ I think the parish is being taken over and governed by folk from the London area (Griffiths, 1989, 154-155)

Such comments were still being made in 1999

- ✦ the influx of people from up-country is destroying the very qualities which make Cornwall a desirable place to be (Cornwall Rural Community Council, 1999a, 21)
- ✦ development must only be for Cornish people... we seem to be losing our identity all round
- ✦ I am not Cornish but it makes me sad to see the Cornish treated as second class citizens (Cornwall Rural Community Council, 1999b, 29)



9.7 Reinforcing this, a study of Padstow found Padstonians felt a "sense of dispossession and impotence... in the wake of the transformation of the town by the social, economic and political power of outsiders" (Gilligan, 1990 176-177). This feeling goes much wider than Padstow. Such fears articulate with the structures of power delineated in section 8 above. When higher status occupations are staffed by the non-Cornish, unsympathetic or perhaps unaware of such deep rooted concerns, there is the potential for conflict and a lack of voice for the views of the Cornish. Indeed, it has been concluded that "the picture that emerges from our study is of a Cornwall swamped by a flood of middle-class, middle-aged, middle-browed city dwellers who effectively imposed their standards upon local society. Integration and assimilation was a one way process - of "urbanisation" rather than "ruralisation"'" (Perry et.al.1986, 129)

9.8 The psychological effect of these social changes has not been explored in depth. Some observers have suggested that "Cornish children have few role models and generally equate the accents of their parents and grandparents with low status and backwardness", reflecting the assumptions of the non-Cornish around them. (Kennedy, 1993, 20). Anecdotal evidence is not difficult to find of children being advised to lose their accents in order to 'get on', or, in areas of large scale in-migration, of children ridiculed at school for having a Cornish accent. (communications to the author). The effects of this are illustrated by a case reported in 1993 from mid-Cornwall. A young man "reported that when he had left Cornwall to study, his fellow students had treated his Cornish accent with derision and that as a result he had quickly learned to speak 'received English'. He added 'I'm proud to be Cornish, but I wouldn't be so proud if I had the accent'" (Buck et.al., 1993, 46).

9.9 One unexplored link is that between the low status given to local culture and a sense of powerlessness, inferiority and mental health. In Cornwall "rates of death from suicide and undetermined injury... remain higher than the national rates"(Cornwall Health Authority, 1998, 45). The standardised mortality rate for suicide and self-injury is 41% above the UK average, after allowing for differences in the population profile (Sheaff, 1996, 14). Whether such a phenomenon has an ethnic dimension is an obvious research question that has yet to be answered.

Summary

- ② Housing classes in Cornwall correlate with the Cornish/non-Cornish distinction, with the Cornish less likely to be owner-occupiers and more likely to live in public sector housing.
- ② Conflicts over housing are often expressed in cultural terms and reflect the striking demographic changes of the past four decades in Cornwall. These changes have increased inequalities within Cornwall.
- ② A sense of powerlessness is often expressed within the Cornish community, reflecting these structural economic and social changes

The cultural position of the Cornish



Dennis Flaherty
"Damn 'ee, I've taught 'ee all I know,
and now theese dunnaw nuthin."

10.1 The social changes outlined in the previous section shade into cultural issues. While there is a lack of both quantitative and qualitative data on these questions we might offer some preliminary observations on the position of the Cornish.

10.2 Little properly funded quantitative or content analysis research has taken place relating to the media. However, a common complaint is that the media in Cornwall are unresponsive to Cornish issues, peddle simple stereotypes and are even engaged in a systematic campaign of propaganda and censorship of Cornish views (see Angarrack, 1999, 277-300). It is not difficult to see why this conclusion is reached. The press in Cornwall is in monopoly ownership, focuses on parochial issues and does little to encourage critical debate about the political and social developments shaping modern Cornwall. When reporting issues of the Cornish heritage or Cornish culture the press can be either whimsically nostalgic and backward looking or patronising and trivialising (see examples in Angarrack, 1999, 285-286). Cornwall has no daily newspaper and the Plymouth based Western Morning News, which covers Cornwall, has consistently attacked or, more commonly, ignored campaigns to end the institutional vacuum that renders Cornwall powerless. Moreover, it provides a steady diet of positive and uncritical news coverage for the process of institutional merger of Cornish with Devon based institutions that peripheralises decision-making in Cornwall. (For examples see 'Bid for agency to help boost West's image', Western Morning News, 27th September, 1994 and 'Boosting the image of the region', Western Morning News, 2nd February 1995)

10.3 Local radio is also characterised by parochialism and a restricted space for the Cornish. It has been pointed out that, in the adverts for local events and services on commercial radio, Cockney or other English accents are used, never Cornish ones; "Unless, as in one particular advert for carpets, it is to portray someone who is stupid and/or mischievous" (communication from Steven Horscroft). Television coverage of Cornwall is patchy and concentrates on leisure activities. Cornwall is subsumed in a larger 'South West' or 'Westcountry' region. As a result its identity is lost. When media coverage of Cornwall and Cornishness was temporarily heightened by the re-enactment of the 1497 uprising and the march to London in 1997 television tended to shield its "viewers from the very real issues of identity, human rights and poverty and to pass the whole thing of as a piece of early summer madness in the mould of battle re-enactments or tiddleywinks championships" (Biscoe, 1998, 158).

10.4 Lack of positive role models in the media helps to reproduce stereotypes of the Cornish and of Cornwall as either a holiday land of cliffs and coast or of a slightly mysterious and interestingly romantic place of tribal passions. Such easy stereotypes and the more common lack of visibility of the Cornish people in the media, especially television, can reproduce a sense of inferiority and a lack of respect for Cornish culture. These stereotypes and myths are found even at the peak of supposedly technical institutions of economic development. Thus Mike Boxall, Director of the Westcountry Development Corporation, in 1994 asserted in all apparent seriousness that "tribalism increases as you move west" into Cornwall (communication to the author at a meeting in Plymouth, September, 1994).

10.5 This may lead in turn to the predominance of what has been referred to as an 'acceptance stage' of Cornish identity. In this stage the individual might reject his or her Cornish background, seeing

Related Articles of the Convention are:

Article 4.2 (sidebar section 8),
Article 5.1 The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

Article 6 The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

Article 9.1 (part)... The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

Article 12.1 The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.

Article 14.1 The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

Article 14.2 In areas inhabited by persons belonging to minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as is possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities to be taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.

Article 15 (sidebar section 9)

Cornwall as 'backward' and its people as 'unambitious' or 'incompetent'. Or they might display a more passive acceptance, "characterised by a self-deprecating knowledge that he or she is Cornish, perhaps regretting that 'I'm only Cornish, I can't do much' or insisting that 'it's too late, Cornwall can't survive the pace of change" (Ivey and Payton, 1994, 156). Such lack of respect for one's own cultural identity can leave the individual prey to populism, demagoguery, simplistic solutions and racism, as pointed out by Kennedy. He argues that a "confident sense of worth in being Cornish puts us in a good position to understand other minorities and have a positive approach to multi-culturalism" (Kennedy, 1993, 21). From this perspective, it is the denial of, or the refusal to recognise, a Cornish cultural identity that leads to despair and racism.

10.6 'Culture' in Cornwall tends to be reserved in the minds of policy-makers and grant gatekeepers for 'high culture'. The lack of Cornish control over arts funding, which is delivered via a quango based outside Cornwall at Exeter in Devon, helps to reinforce the marginality of 'Cornish' culture. Cornish culture is marginal in the sense that it is outside the mainstream understanding of the gatekeepers and marginal in the sense that it is also working class culture, rather than middle class. This explains the widespread feeling in Cornwall that Cornish culture is underfunded and ignored when compared with arts forms such as choral music, theatre, fine art and the like. Here, deeply ingrained attitudes about 'culture' in England reinforce the ethnic divide within Cornwall.

10.7 Just as there is no direct Cornish control over arts funding in Cornwall so there is no direct control over the material artefacts of the Cornish heritage. In a move that infuriated some Cornish people, ancient monuments in Cornwall have been the responsibility of the government quango 'English Heritage' since the 1980s. This repackages Cornish heritage as 'English' heritage in a blatant disregard for the historical perceptions reviewed in Part 1 of this report. More fundamentally, it again confuses and marginalises the Cornish cultural identity.

10.8 The influence of 'English Heritage' reinforces the effects of the "English" National Curriculum in schooling. The introduction of a centralised curriculum leaves little, if any, space for the education of young Cornish children in their own historical and cultural traditions. The "imposition of an anglocentric curriculum for Cornwall in 1987 destroyed much of the good work of the Cornwall Education partnership with individuals and institutions developing the Cornish Studies for Schools resource pack" (communication from Ann Trevenen Jenkin). Wales has its own national curriculum, as does Scotland. At the same time Manx language development teachers have been employed in Manx schools since the early 1990s. Cornwall has neither its own curriculum nor Cornish language development teachers, despite there being more speakers of Cornish than Manx. Given such disregard for Cornish culture and traditions it comes as little surprise that some reach the conclusion that Cornwall and the Cornish people have been subjected to "a millennium of religious and cultural persecution... centuries of utter contempt, wanton destruction and grinding exploitation meted out by our oppressors" (letter from John Angarrack to Bert Biscoe, 12th November 1999).

10.9 Cultural differences, in terms of the perceptions groups have of their social world, intersect in complex and subtle ways with the economic and social patterns of work, housing and demographic structures. Thus, it has been suggested that there are different attitudes to family amongst the Cornish – "assistance between Cornish kin is more frequent and intensive than among in-comers or



outsiders, and ... kin relationships are closer" (Buck et.al., 1993, 680-681). This may mean that housing need is more readily accommodated within the family among the Cornish, producing a hidden homelessness (Williams, 1993, 170-171).

10.10 In a similar way "the Cornish... are more prepared to view the landscape as a means towards production rather than consumption" (Thornton, 1996, 256). But at the same time the non-Cornish are more prepared to see the landscape as something to be utilised for recreational and tourism purposes. This sometimes results in disputes over development and planning issues taking on an ethnic dimension as differing perceptions of landscape and its utilisation clash. This is most visible in attitudes to Cornwall's minescapes. Thus, from a Cornish perspective these derelict landscapes "contribute to a local and proud sense of identity" (Cornish Social and Economic Research Group, 1996). But from a non-Cornish perspective, "the existence of obvious dereliction is an impediment to the creation of a favourable attitude towards Cornwall" (Cornwall County Council, 1976, paragraph 15). Social relations in Cornwall often contain such additional ethnic tensions on top of the more usual divisions around faultlines of class and gender (for an example see Ireland, 1993, 680-681).

10.11 The UK Government seems to be unaware that in Cornwall cultural differences mean that economic and social disparities are sometimes viewed as part of "the struggle for our very survival as a distinct people... This is not just a matter of wishing to obtain parity with Surrey in central heating radiators per home" (Letter from John Angarrack to Bert Biscoe, 12th November 1999). This economic and cultural cocktail was clearly illustrated during a debate at Cornwall County Council in 1998 concerning the bid documents which were part of obtaining Objective 1 structural funding. During questions about the use of the Cornish language in such a document a group of protesters lobbying on behalf of Cornish Solidarity, a pressure group established in 1998, together with some councillors became increasingly irritated by what they saw as the refusal by the leader of the Liberal Democrat group to answer the question directly. After some heckling one councillor "rose to his feet and informed the Chair that in the circumstances of persistent refusal to answer the question or to acknowledge the importance of the language left him with no alternative – and sang out the old American civil rights anthem 'We Shall Overcome'. The public gallery joined in and many councillors stood and joined him" (communication from Bert Biscoe).



Summary

- ① The monopoly-owned press in Cornwall provides little space for a critical debate on Cornwall's future.
- ② Radio and television reproduce majority stereotypes of Cornwall and the Cornish and offer few positive role models for Cornish people.
- ③ As a result the media help to reproduce a sense of inferiority and a lack of respect by Cornish people for their own history and culture.
- ④ 'English Heritage' and the National Curriculum reinforce this situation.
- ⑤ Cultural differences intersect with the economic differences outlined earlier.

Conclusion

11.1 In this report we have noted that Cornwall's history provides evidence that the Cornish possess a distinct national identity within the UK within the terms of the definition of 'national minority' offered by the UK Government in paragraph 2 of its Compliance Report. We have also noted that, in practice, the Cornish perceive themselves, and are perceived by others, as a distinct group, one that possesses the characteristics most independent academic opinion would describe as typical of an ethnic group or ethnic community. We have also provided a preliminary audit of the patterns that can be mapped across the ethnic divide in Cornwall. Structural divisions in the labour and housing markets have been exacerbated by a major class-selective in-migration flow since the 1960s. As a result there is an ethnic dimension to day-to-day life that is not found in England and is more reminiscent of parts of Wales.



11.2 However, the research on issues of discrimination is fragmentary and partial. One study concludes that "whilst there is evidence to suggest that the indigenous Cornish suffer discrimination... surprisingly little research has been conducted in this area" (Williams and Harrison, 1995, 190 and 193). Two things are urgently required. First, there needs to be comprehensive ethnic monitoring in order to assess whether participation in social and public life in Cornwall is equally available to all groups. Second, there is a need for properly funded research to explore the preliminary conclusions of this report and other surveys in depth. Such research could, by highlighting spatial differences in conditions within Cornwall and investigating the articulation of deprivation with ethnicity, clarify the need for more targeted initiatives that work to achieve real equality in Cornwall, for all individuals whether Cornish or non-Cornish.

Summary

- ① The Cornish have a historical, linguistic and cultural heritage distinct from others in the UK.
- ① Cornwall has unique institutions that express this difference.
- ① Some Cornish people feel they are part of a nation.
- ① Outsiders perceive Cornwall and its people as different.
- ① The Cornish have poorer access to housing and jobs, lower levels of income and wealth and higher levels of deprivation than the English in Cornwall.
- ① Media and educational institutions either reproduce negative images of the Cornish people or ignore its distinct culture and history.

Appendix – The Overseas Cornish

1. Cornwall's geographical position, jutting westwards into the Atlantic, has long provided the means to produce generations of fine seafarers.
2. Historically, the sea has proved to be Cornwall's most effective means of communication. Journeys by sea to the other Celtic nations of Brittany, Wales and Ireland were much easier and quicker than journeys to, say, London.
3. Cornwall developed strong cultural, economic and family links with its natural cousins in Brittany, Wales & Ireland. These countries also had strong connections with the sea and their seamen established early settlements in the New World.
4. The East Coast of North America is proliferated with Cornish place names. (Three places called 'Cornwall' in Connecticut, two in Pennsylvania and one in Maine.) The Historical Society in Cornwall, Connecticut 06753, records that its creation began in 1731 and it was incorporated as a town in 1740. Earlier still, the County of Cornwall in Maine has records to show that settlers from Cornwall arrived in the 1630s. There are also several Cornish town names (eg 'Falmouth' in Massachusetts)
5. Following the steady flow of Cornish settlers to North America during the 17th and 18th centuries there was a distinct change in emigration from Cornwall during the mid 1800s. After the collapse of the mining industry many Cornish miners, artisans and merchants were forced to seek employment overseas. Over the next fifty years hundreds of thousands of Cornish men, often with their families, set out to make a living abroad.
6. The main destinations were the mining areas of North America, South Africa and Australia. Smaller numbers went to South America, Mexico, India, Spain and anywhere that required skilled miners.
7. This scattering has produced a Cornish Diaspora which is unequalled by any county in England. In addition to their skills the Cornish established their culture, religion and community life in the nether regions of the world. They taught football and wrestling in Mexico and pasty making 14,000 feet up in the Andes.
8. Maybe the most important significance of the Cornish 'colonies' was their distinct Cornishness. Uprooted from their villages in Cornwall their occupants chose to keep together as they would have done at home. Houses (see Mineral Point WI) were built to designs similar to those in Cornwall. Not only did their Methodist God go with them but the Cornish built chapels as living representations of those which they had sadly left behind. Research in the towns of Maine and New Hampshire has revealed no less than a hundred names of Cornish origin.
9. As soon as they arrived the new settlers formed themselves in Cornish societies where they could gather and obtain succour as a community. The Cornish societies of Randfontein and the Transvaal have histories going back to the earliest days of the Cornish pioneers. Today the proud descendants of these Cornish pioneers around the world have formed even more societies and associations to strengthen the ties with their homeland. The societies often have memberships in excess of 500. They exist in North America (34), South Africa (1) and Australia, New Zealand (15). The Cornish flag of St Piran, its patron saint, flies constantly in the communities.
10. The Cornish communities in the new lands are just as nationalist as one would expect of the Eastern Europeans and the Chinese. These communities are treated today with respect by other nationals. An old Czechoslovak once said to me in America, "Ah the Cornish, they were the ones who could read and write".
11. When the first settlers and their children died there was a moment to remember their birthplace. All over the world there are gravestones commemorating departed Cornish people. They invariably refer to Cornwall, the country of their birth. Some of the gravestones were even shipped out from Cornwall, there being nothing better than pride in Cornish stone and workmanship.
12. In North America there are biennial gatherings of the Cornish at different locations. They are attended by several hundred people to research their genealogical and other links. Randfontein Cornish Association Rugby Football Club, 1912 Cornish gravestone in Western Australia. The gravestone was made in Penzance, Cornwall. The Cross of St Piran can be found anywhere in the world. Here it is proudly flying at the North Pole.

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