

TYR-GWYR-GWERYN

(“Land – Truth – People”)

**A Further Response to the
United Kingdom Government’s
3rd Compliance Report**

With regard to the

Council of Europe’s

Framework Convention

For the

Protection of

National Minorities

and the UK State’s continuing refusal

to acknowledge and include

the

Cornish National Minority

Submitted direct to the COE Advisory Committee Delegation

In advance of a meeting on Wednesday 9th March 2011

12:30 to 13:30 pm.

The Big Sleep Hotel (breakfast room), Bute Terrace, Cardiff, CF10 2FE,

Cornwall: *The very sophisticated face of legitimised genocide!*

Introduction:

Cornwall has been a consistent participant in the search for our Cornish Rights to be acknowledged and recognised by the UK multinational State for the protections offered by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). The Cornish have been denied this recognition without any explanation of why we should be treated less favourably than our analogous groups the Welsh and the Scots, and it transpired at the 2nd cycle Country visit that the UK Government had declined the Advisory Committee's offer, following the 1st cycle, to facilitate a meeting between interested parties. Once again, there have been no reasons given to us, by the Government, as to why.

The Advisory Committee has, in its previous Opinions called upon the UK Government to give the Cornish Case a more sympathetic consideration. Further, our case gained even more support from the then Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) during the 2nd Cycle. Yet despite this much-valued support, there was not a sign of any response to this in the final 3rd cycle report from the UK Government, nor any indication that this silence had been 'challenged' by the CRE, or the Advisory Committee. A perusal of the final acceptance of the Compliance Report offered no seeds of hope with respect to the Cornish Question and it is to be hoped that there might be some clarification on this during the proposed visit on the 9th March 2011.

To a greater or lesser extent of relevance, Cornwall suffers from many, if not most, of the potential abuses listed by the clauses of the FCNM. In fact, it is fair to say, that Cornwall represents the very sophisticated face of genocide that, in theory, the FCNM would/should protect us from. This in no way is offered as some form of comparison to the atrocities that are manifested by 'physical' methods of genocide, but Raphael Lemkin was acutely aware of the non-physical processes that are equally destructive. I am convinced that Cornwall is in need of an independent Rapporteur, commissioned by the Council of Europe, to study the Cornish situation, in order for an objective assessment to be identified. The UK Government has a vested interest in keeping us out and cannot therefore be trusted.

It is, perhaps, timely that the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg, published a press release on the 22nd March 2010, for which the concluding comment, appropriately, was:

"Historical controversies should not hold human rights hostage. One-sided interpretations or distortions of historical events should not be allowed to lead to discrimination of minorities, xenophobia and renewal of conflict. New generations should not be blamed for what some of their forefathers did.

What is important is an honest search for the truth and a sober, facts-based discussion about the different versions. Only then can the right lessons be learned."

Thomas Hammarberg

There have been a number of events, since the last Monitoring Cycle, which highlights how the failure to acknowledge the Cornish as a National Minority, whose origins derive from a time before the concept of 'England' or 'English' ever darkened these shores, impinges negatively upon our rights to be viewed as a historical territorial group within the United Kingdom. I include below a brief comment in respect of three such events during 2010. These relate to examples of:

A – Media Prejudice!

B - Government Intransigence!

C – Academic Mischief!

A – Media Prejudice!

Radio Cornwall is a ‘local’ radio station introduced in 1983 by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to serve ‘local’ interests. As a station, it receives many accolades and, as such, most probably well deserved. However, it had the potential to embrace the particular uniqueness of our Cornish Duchy and, at times, it has shown how effective that potential could have been. The problem is that it reflects the English Establishment and could be taken out of Cornwall without any change to its policy or output. Radio “Cornwall” it definitely is not and, since its introduction, has simply, coercively, represented an external view of Cornwall as an English administrative county that is an integral part of an ‘English’ Southwest. In keeping with the BBC policy it appears to be entirely hostile to “Cornish” aspirations and talents. In this respect it has had an entirely negative effect upon Cornish Rights.

I cite a recent example, Jan 2010, where the presenter of a lunchtime phone-in programme was guilty of what I would describe as unprofessional and anti-Cornish conduct. The programme covered a news report that “The Celtic League” had made representations to the “Equalities & Human Rights Commission” (EHRC) – formerly the “Commission for Racial Equality” (CRE). – with regard to derogatory and insulting comments contained in Press Reports and Articles, over recent years, about the Cornish people.

The spokesperson, on an earlier interview, gave a sample list of the offensive remarks, which included, “the Cornish are inbred”, which could only ever be an intention to insult. It is unnecessary to give all the details, because this observation is with regard to how this was treated by the programme’s presenter. The background to what happened is that sometime in 2009 the Celtic League declared publicly that it had approached the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, with respect to insulting and derogatory comments that were being published about the Cornish people. It was not until the 26th January 2010 that a representative of the Celtic League was interviewed on Radio Cornwall early that morning.

This interview was later replayed as the introduction to the Laurence Reed lunchtime phone-in programme. Reed’s closing comment (to listeners) was, “*Interesting isn’t it? Whether you are Cornish or not, have a chat to me please. **Let’s have a sort of reasoned debate on this.***” What followed was nothing short of a travesty. It should also be noted that a Cornish campaigner had previously arranged with the station manager, who had guaranteed support, that he was officially launching a Campaign, which sought recognition of Cornwall as a participating member of the Commonwealth Games Federation. This launch, wittingly or unwittingly, was totally marginalized by the station’s decision to run with the Celtic League story.

To return to the Laurence Reed travesty: To open this “*sort of reasoned debate*”, Reed introduced two academics, Prof. Philip Payton, Director of the Institute of Cornish Studies, and Dr. Malcolm Smith, Department of Anthropology from Durham University, presumably to set the stage into some “*sort of*” context for listeners. Given the amount of genetic research involving the Cornish people, over recent decades, the choice of Dr. Malcolm Smith, whose research into blood samples was about twenty years ago, exposes a questionable agenda. That agenda soon became patently obvious as he continually attempted to put words into their mouths, in order to direct them to his preferred ‘punch line’ that he could ‘parade’ in front of his listening audience, as he later does consistently with the phone-ins.

What is also clear, thankfully, is that the academics were not going to be led by the nose and their input was exemplary and very professional. It was not, however, what Reed wanted to hear and for the rest of the programme he completely ignored everything that they had said, and he maliciously trivialised the whole topic, focussing instead solely on his personally being **anti-‘PC’** and this sort of nonsense **must stop** and there being **no Cornish ‘race’**, so why seek redress via the Race

Relations Act. He had badgered Dr. Smith until he had to say that “From his point of view the Cornish did not constitute a race”. What Reed completely ignored was Smith’s qualification of what ‘Race’ meant to him as an academic, but that it had other meanings when associated with identity. Reed had an opportunity to expand his own personal understanding of the difference and, even more than that, the opportunity to raise that awareness with the general public. It was a gross abuse of his position, which ensured that he had absolute control over the outcome.

His conversations with the two academics has to be heard to do justice what was actually happening and I have recordings of the whole programme, including the phone-ins from the listeners, who were being driven to agree with his personal, and prejudicial, conclusions. At no time did he ever refer to anything that the two academics had commented on, in connection with the questions that he posed to them and they steadfastly refused to confirm what it was that he obviously wanted them to say. I can make a copy of the recorded programme available to the Advisory Committee should that be deemed necessary.

It has to be said that the general BBC (as with all ‘official’) policy regarding Cornwall is that it is an English administrative county and in England. Whilst that may be taken to be *de facto*, it is certainly not *de jure*. It is the inevitable source of all the hostility that ‘declaring Cornish aspirations’ seems to engender and which recognition as a National Minority would resolve.

B – Government Intransigence!

Throughout the 20th century, there have been a number of proposals that have threatened the integrity of the Cornish border with England. With the exception, regrettably, of the first & subsequent constituency for the European Parliament in 1979, Cornwall has succeeded in its long and hard Campaigns, since 1942, to retain our Cornish integrity. These campaigns are well known by the Government, and what follows is a calculated insult to the Cornish people.

Following the Elections to the Westminster Parliament, in May 2010, and the subsequent Coalition Government, came a proposed Bill to change the voting system to that of the Alternative Vote (to replace the existing First Past the Post) coupled to that of changing the constituency boundaries to achieve a more equal electorate per constituency. Whilst this hides behind a supposedly ‘improved’ form of democratic accountability’, its introduction has been rushed through, without any public consultation, nor facility for such during the Boundary Commission’s deliberations on the final arrangement of boundary changes. The UK ‘Democratic Deficit’ is **not about ‘votes’**.

Without wishing to go into any details as to the effect that this will have within England, it again raises the spectre of predatory ‘fiddling’ with our Cornish Border with England and the long-term consequences from such infringements of our Territorial Rights. This has been facilitated by the lies that the Crown, including the Duke of Cornwall, and its agencies have perpetrated against the interests of the Cornish people and which misrepresents our territory as an ‘English administrative county’(sic).

Despite the concerted efforts of a “Keep Cornwall Whole” < <http://keepcornwallwhole.org/> > Campaign, the Bill was passed into law in February and will come into effect in 2013. For Cornwall, this represents yet another aspect in a multi-faceted process of genocide over an ‘officially’ unrecognised historic national group and National Minority within the United Kingdom multi-national State

C – Academic Mischief!

In late April 2010, in Oxford, England, Dr. Oliver Padel delivered two lectures, which were advertised as:

DR O.J. PADEL: '**Governance and language in medieval Cornwall**' (O'Donnell Lectures), Lecture Theatre 2, St Cross Building, 5 p.m.

Having learnt about this too late to consider attending, or notifying others of the possibility, I contacted the University, and eventually Dr. Padel, to enquire whether the lectures were planned to be given also in Cornwall. The response was positive and the Royal Institution of Cornwall (RIC), of which Dr. Padel is a member, arranged them for its Autumn Lecture. They were duly given over a three-week period in November 2010. Once again, what transpired was nothing short of a travesty.

The emphasis of the lectures had changed from that given in April to what was advertised on the RIC's website as:

Royal Institution of Cornwall Autumn Lecture:

When did Cornwall become English? by Dr Oliver Padel

13 November 2pm, followed by 20 November and 27 November at 10.30am

This year's Autumn lecture will be the first of a series of 3 talks, all delivered in November at the museum by Dr Oliver Padel. Cornwall's relationship with the rest of England has often been a theme of public discussion. The aim of these talks is to examine the evidence for when Cornwall became a county of England in the central Middle Ages, and the ways of establishing how much of the county spoke Cornish at the time of the literary flourishing of the language in the 14th and 15th centuries. Evidence that has been claimed to show that Cornwall was not an English county will also be examined. The third talk will take the form of a discussion with Dr Bernard Deacon of the Institute of Cornish Studies.

Dr Padel worked at the Institute of Cornish Studies for sixteen years, and was later Reader in Cornish and Celtic Studies in the University of Cambridge. He has published books and articles on Cornish language, literature, history and place-names.

There were very brief summaries of each lecture provided at the commencement of the third session, which would be improper to enclose with this submission to the Advisory Committee. It is our intention to prepare a response to the general, and specific, nature of what we feel are serious misrepresentations within the lectures towards Cornwall and when this has been completed, a proper document will be supplied to you for further consideration. Whilst Dr Padel may be presumed to be a person with excellent academic credentials, his delivery, as with the synopsis above, exposed a very prejudicial agenda, which the summaries do not even come close to revealing. I enclose a copy of the response prepared by Dr. Bernard Deacon to the first and second lectures, which was then used to form the basis of a discussion between them. Whilst he does not discuss the various 'facts', he occasionally implies some form of academic agreement with Dr. Padel's opinion as to their accuracy. This will be taken up by the group being coordinated to

respond to Dr. Padel. Nevertheless, it has been appended, because I would suggest that it stands, in its own right, as a most appropriate testament to the enduring depth and quality of Cornish determination as a National Minority.

At the end of the first lecture, because he was making some very critical accusations at certain unnamed individuals, I asked if he intended to supply written copies of his lectures, in order that those whose opinions he so strongly challenged, could respond accordingly. He appeared to be very reluctant to do so, but was encouraged by RIC to do so. I sincerely hope that the summaries that were provided are not intended to be his response to that request, since they do not address the necessity of being able to respond to the sources of his information. A key factor that needed to be addressed was his almost closing comment (challenged from the floor) that the 'county' and 'Duchy' of Cornwall are "not the same". Whilst in the sense of function that might be true, it certainly is not true with respect to territory, de jure constitution, or prerogative rights of the Duke within his Duchy and county of Cornwall.

Others dubbed the lectures as, "The Empire Strikes Back"!

D – Conclusion:

In all these cases (as with others, that I only allude to) there is no empathy, no concession nor respect for the aspirations of 'the Cornish' people. Aspirations that have been argued about and campaigned for throughout the 20th century, significantly more intense during the post war years.

Without exception, there are three 'official' aspects that are used, by others, to reject the Cornish Arguments, either singly, or together. These are:

1 – Cornwall is 'legally' an English administrative county, and

2 – The Cornish are not recognised by the Government as a National Minority

3 – The Duchy of Cornwall is a 'private estate' and nothing to do with Cornwall.

A bigger community, would have been self-empowered to take matters more directly into their own hands, but that is not, and never likely to be, the Cornish way, because our schools, and the media, are being used to rob us of our future identity and self-respect.

A considerable amount of information has been passed to both the UK Government and the Advisory Committee over the 3 reporting cycles. It is to be hoped that all this information will be revisited to refresh their minds as to the circumstances of the Cornish discrimination by the UK Government and that there might be something that the Advisory Committee can do to initiate action to, hopefully, speed up the end of our being denied our Rights and so properly place us within, and part of, the international community. We are ever hopeful!

As previously advised, I regret that I shall be unable to attend the meeting and would be grateful to receive some feedback on the issues discussed. In my Introduction, I referred to a hope that a Rapporteur might be a possibility and your thoughts on that would be very much appreciated.

E J Pengelly for "Tyr-Gwyr-Gweryn"

Thursday 03rd March 2011

Did the Cornish become English?

A response to Oliver Padel's RIC lectures

By Dr Bernard Deacon

November 2010

I heartily applaud Oliver's conclusion to his first lecture - that Cornwall has a unique blend of Celtic and English influence. This exactly echoes the theme I put forward in my Concise History of Cornwall (2007a. See also Deacon 2007b). However, while welcoming his agreement I'm less impressed by the regrettably robust tone that Oliver chose to adopt when pointing out to us our 'conceptual errors' and the depth of our historical ignorance. Adopting an intemperate macho style of debate merely mirrors the discourse of his detractors and does Oliver little credit. Indeed, it seems doomed to elicit inevitable accusations of arrogance and distract attention from the interesting narrative he puts forward in his lectures. Yet, while interesting, this narrative contains a number of serious flaws and gives rise to some questions. It is these that I want to turn to here. More specifically, I wish to raise six problems concerning Oliver's approach and then ask three questions.

Oliver works within the classic English (and Scottish) empiricist tradition developed by Bacon, Newton, Locke and Hume in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This claims that knowledge is derived from experience, and ideas are to be tested through evidence. This was a philosophy suited to the English/British nineteenth-century self-image of a pragmatic, straight-talking, down to earth people. It was objective, resting on careful observation and hard, shiny, glittering data. It was a method that morphed into the traditional historian's approach to the past, which emphasises the 'facts' and nothing but the facts. But things are not quite so simple. For a start, facts do not come ready packaged or speak for themselves; they are instead interpreted and placed into narratives. Those narratives do not, in turn, despite the pretensions of historians, arise freshly formed out of a morass of facts. They are influenced by the values of the historian, by previous narratives, by dominant ideologies, even by fashionable literary tropes. Data, in short, have to be interpreted. And the same facts often give rise to multiple interpretations.

Take the issue of land grants, which Oliver asserts 'mean administrative absorption, effectively complete control'. But did they? In thirteenth century Ireland English kings regularly granted land in Connacht and Ulster. At that time and in that place such grants have been described as 'speculative' (Simms 1989, 56) and did not equate at all to 'complete control'. It was up to the beneficiary to use the legitimacy of the land grant to impose their control by force of arms over the native Irish. Sometimes they could. Sometimes they could not. Land was granted all over Ireland and yet the evidence of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries suggests that English control shrank rather than expanded. Could the extent of Anglicisation in Cornwall in the ninth and tenth centuries not also have receded later on? There is more than a hint of teleology in Oliver's interpretation. Rightly rejecting a model of steady westwards anglicisation for language shift, why does he then unquestionably accept a similar model temporally but not spatially? Could it be that Cornwall became English, but then became less English, before becoming more English again, only then to become less English once more?

Determining which interpretation of 'scarce documents' and partial sources is the most compelling is something I will leave to those better schooled in medieval history. However, I suggest there's a little more to the meaning of some 'facts', for example the Duchy, than Oliver implies. But let's move on from this first problem merely by noting how many qualifications and caveats pepper Oliver's paper. The English '**could have** had an influence as far west as the Tamar' by the early eighth century; the location of the grant of land at Pawton '**may ... have** been intended' as dominion over the whole of Cornwall; the Cornish bishop who acknowledged Canterbury's leadership was '**probably**' at Bodmin; Cornwall's links with Wessex in the later ninth century

'seem to have become closer'; Doniert or Duniarth **'may have been known'** as the last Cornish king. And this in just the first two pages. Oliver is rightly hedging his bets here, careful not to over-generalise given the quality of his sources. But this careful qualification sits oddly with his absolute and utter conviction that the Cornish were English before England even existed as a political entity.

Yet, to restrict ourselves to quibbling over the data would be to miss the bigger picture entirely. My other five problems with Oliver's lecture therefore move on to broader issues. As we have seen, data and the facts are open to plural interpretations and are not as transparent as Oliver suggests. If they were then historians would not be able to make a living out of constantly re-interpreting them. But British empiricism has some deeper problems. Basically it is not as objective and scientific as its proponents like to think. Over the past half-century various thinkers have challenged what some have termed 'naive empiricism'. Among other things, they note how scholars can never achieve in practice the objectivity they claim in theory. They point out how the empiricist method is also based on the power to define who has the right to speak on a subject and who, by implication, does not. Interpretations that are blessed (albeit indirectly) by the hallowed groves of our cherished academic institutions and by the accretions of tradition heaped up over seven centuries possess a lot more weight than other interpretations lacking these advantages.

In order to claim legitimacy for his interpretation Oliver first has to remind us that difficult sources require 'skilled analysis'. Only years of effort and proper accreditation can enable us to avoid being exploited by unnamed people who have perspectives that merely mask 'their own agenda'. Or should we not say another agenda? Once the right to pronounce is narrowly circumscribed in this way the power to speak is then structurally reinforced. Take, for example, the structure of the lectures within which Oliver's interpretation is presented. After two hours of being told why we have been so thoroughly mistaken, ten minutes were offered to present an alternative position. Those whose historical interpretations, or 'misunderstandings', are being directly attacked are not invited to respond at all, or can only do so as part of an audience. And all this takes place under the auspices of the Royal Institution of Cornwall and in Cornwall's proto-national museum. The power of interpretations rests not just on an impeccable and unquestionable methodology therefore, but also on ideological claims to the 'truth' and an institutional context that reinforces this. The medium enhances the message.

If empiricism in general involves unstated power relations then empiricism in this particular instance involves stunning disingenuousness - the third problem I have with Oliver's position. Oliver claims he is concerned solely about the 'misrepresentation' of the Cornish past. (He actually says 'Cornish history' but history - the story of the past - cannot itself be misrepresented, as it is already a representation.) He is not at all concerned with 'the case for Cornish separatism'. Yet it seems to me implausible on the one hand to claim a concern with fraudulent historical interpretations that nonetheless enhance some people's sense of pride in Cornishness and yet on the other hand claim to have no concern at all about whether this might impinge on wider issues of identity politics. Or, if not disingenuous, then extremely naive.

This segues into my fourth problem. For someone who is an expert in toponyms and language Oliver is sometimes amazingly casual about his own use of language. Let's look more closely at his denial that his re-interpretation will affect 'the case for Cornish separatism'. Why did he choose the word 'separatism' here? Why not 'nationalism' or 'devolution' or 'autonomy'? Who exactly are these nameless 'separatists'? By employing the word 'separatist' in preference to less loaded alternatives Oliver neatly conjures up pictures of mad separatists blowing up the Tamar bridges, appealing to atavistic English fears about their national decline and the break-up of Britain while our separatists merrily sail away into the sunset munching their pasties and waving goodbye to their English tormentors. Loaded language such as 'Cornish separatism' belies the careful impression of objective analysis of the facts assiduously but falsely constructed by empiricists.

Furthermore, it betrays a worrying failure to comprehend the character of modern devolutionist political movements in Cornwall. This is not the only lacuna in Oliver's interpretation. It seems to

me that, while the discussion of Cornwall's incorporation into England may be an interesting one, he misses the fundamental point, despite several times referring to it in passing. This is the fifth and most serious problem I have with his lectures. If Cornwall really became English in the tenth century, then why is it that Cornwall 'remains the one part of England where not all indigenous inhabitants automatically describe themselves as "English"' (Ward-Perkins 2000, 521)? Why, if Cornwall was English 200 years before Cumbria, does Cornwall, alone among 'English' counties, have a nationalist movement and Cumbria does not? Part of the answer seems blindingly obvious and was covered in Oliver's second lecture. Despite assuring us that English was widespread even in west Cornwall by 1300 and the Cornish language on its last legs by the time of the Reformation it strangely staggered on into the last quarter of the eighteenth century. A non-English language and a cultural community that was 'different' from the run of the mill English ones to the east both provided a fertile breeding ground for non-English imaginations and later its former existence supplied the usable raw materials for a national history (for the concept of a usable past see Keating 2007).

Oliver seems to confuse the question of when Cornwall became English administratively with that of when did the Cornish become English. These are actually different questions. If the arguments based on history are all 'spurious', 'wrong', 'conceptual errors', 'misrepresentations' and 'misunderstandings' then why has the need to be 'different' endured for 1,000 years? We must be either incredibly stupid or amazingly stubborn. Perhaps history is less important than Oliver assumes. Perhaps there are other reasons. For Oliver the extent and longevity of this desire to be 'different' is just 'interesting'. He speculates that it may be something to do with Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth century fiction. Yet, Oliver himself informed us of the irate local in Bodmin who quarrelled with some visiting canons when they dismissed the notion that Arthur was a real historical figure. But this happened twenty years before Geoffrey of Monmouth's History appeared. At the time Oliver described this, I would suggest mistakenly, as an example of a 'strong national feeling when [Arthur] was mocked by outsiders' (Padel 2000, 122). What has happened to make him change his mind? What Oliver describes as a 'lingering sense' of difference thus predates Geoffrey of Monmouth. It even more obviously postdates it. Hugh Thomas (2003, 353) argues that in Cornwall Geoffrey helped 'to sustain an existing British identity' and a sense of being distinct from the English. This 'lingering sense' then lingered on for a very long time. In the fourteenth century John Trevisa felt the need to argue that Cornwall was firmly part of England in the face of assertions to the contrary (Davies 2000, 165). Half a millennium after Geoffrey in 1877 Bishop Benson could also note, rather dryly, that 'the Cornish are never weary of saying "they are a most peculiar people": it is the truest thing which I have heard them say' (cited in Morrish, 1983, 256). By Oliver's argument, this is a puzzle, something that should not have happened. Or at least it's an embarrassment for those who believe Cornwall was English before the English were.

Which brings me to my sixth and final problem. Oliver may be an expert on the tenth century. But his approach to the twenty-first century betrays a sad and 'fundamental misunderstanding of the sources'. He is right to point to the presence of nested identities in Cornwall but unfortunately he gets his identities all mixed up. The nesting is now of a Cornish identity within a British identity. Half a century or more ago Britishness may have been called Englishness, the Cornish adopting the tendency of their neighbours to conflate the two. But if that was the case in 1910 it is no longer the case in 2010. A growing number of people in Cornwall are now prepared to identify themselves as Cornish rather than English when given the opportunity. Data on this in the twenty-first century is almost as scarce as data on Cornishness in the eleventh. But ethnicity questions for local government and the NHS consistently point to around a third describing themselves as Cornish. Moreover, a preliminary survey that asked people if they were (1) Cornish only, (2) more Cornish than English, (3) equally Cornish and English, (4) more than Cornish than English, and (5) English only revealed the following binomial distribution.

Identity in Cornwall

	Cornish only (1)	More Cornish than English (2)	Equally Cornish and English (3)	More English than Cornish (4)	English only (5)
Cornwall 2008	24	18	24	10	23

(Source: Willetts 2008)

Over 40 per cent of the 2008 sample declared themselves to be Cornish only or more Cornish than English. Almost two thirds felt as Cornish as English, which suggests that at least some in-migrants must also be identifying as Cornish.

This is hardly evidence for 'a nested identity of being both Cornish and English'. Indeed, Oliver's conclusion that Cornwall's unique sense of difference is a 'special blend of being both Celtic and English', which he terms 'a different way of being English' could just as easily be described as 'a different way of being Celtic'. Similarly, being Cornish, according to Oliver, 'is a special way of being English'. No, **this is also a 'special way of not being English'!** **Again the choice of language is** revealing here and hints at other agendas.

And this brings me to the three questions this all poses. First, why now? Is it just a typically defensive and appalled elite reaction against the democratisation of history as those beyond the academy claim the right to speak on their own past? Or is it a delayed response to those writings that have appeared over the past decade putting forward a nationalist perspective on our past? (Angarrack 1999,2002,2008). Oliver is not the only one to have questioned the details of this offering (see Deacon 2009), which makes up with enthusiasm what it lacks in substance. However, again the real question surely ought to be why such a perspective, despite its apparent flaws, has been seized on eagerly by a section of the population. This is little to do with its factual accuracy but an awful lot to do with that quest for evidence of Cornish difference which if anything seems to have strengthened since the 1970s. I wonder if here we are seeing the inevitable counter-offensive against that surge of Cornish assertiveness that has slowly built over the past generation. Having survived the twentieth century, demands for the right to be Cornish in Cornwall and to be treated with due respect have re-emerged, but this time in a less apologetic and more combative manner. The writing for those who would prefer Cornwall's status as an English county to remain unchanged is on the wall. Even academics now break the Establishment ranks and claim that ethnicity was a key factor in the events of the late fifteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries, according to Oliver 600-800 years after Cornwall became English. In the face of such dangerous revisionism we should not at all be surprised if, in the memorable phrase of Mark Stoye (2002, 112), there is an attempt 'to thrust the historiography of early modern Cornwall firmly back into the box labelled "English local history", and to nail down the lid'. Sometimes ascribed to Gandhi but apparently based on an address by American trade union leader Nicholas Klein in 1914 is the quotation 'First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win'. We appear to be in the third phase of this particular process.

If mounting concerns at rampant and uncontrollable questioning of the elite version of Cornish history and its replacement by a 'spurious' more pro-Cornish version helps to explain the timing of Oliver's presentation to the Cornish nation then the second question must be, why here? In 1861 the President of the RIC, Charles Barnaul, enthusiastically welcomed a communication from the Cambrian Society in Wales. 'We are here at the utmost verge of the Celtic system; we want to connect our local antiquities with the antiquities of other Celtic tribes' he said as he led the Cornish middle class towards a rediscovery of their Celtic roots (Barham 1861, 15-16). Yet here is the RIC 150 years later hosting a deconstruction of those roots. This is a question for the management of the Museum and the trustees of the RIC but why, when the organisation a century and a half ago

was in the vanguard of efforts to stitch Celticity onto Cornish difference is this body now equally keen to restore Cornwall's essential Englishness?

Which brings me to my final question, why? Is this just another manifestation of that irresistible desire which many seem to have to tell us we're wrong to describe swedes as turnips? There's more than a hint in Oliver's talks of a familiar patrician irritation at claims to Cornish distinctiveness. Such innocent claims can provoke exasperated outbursts from otherwise relatively sane observers in academia. For example, the late Bernard Crick, when confronted by a hotel register entry in the nationality column, which said 'Cornish', decided, that 'it was the work of a wag and not a nut' (Crick, 1989). Incapable of empathising with Cornish scepticism at the joys of being treated as a bog-standard English county, a scepticism that we now know has exceedingly long roots, academics on the left as well as the right take comfortable refuge in patronising and contemptuous dismissal. This consistent refusal to engage with the real question - why did people in Cornwall insist on looking for difference and what explains the incredible persistence of this drive not be to English, flying in the face of all known factual evidence, as we have been assured in these lectures - might suggest that the really fascinating problems here lie with the English rather than the Cornish (for some intriguing comments on the 'English problem' in relation to Cornwall see Vernon 1998). As the Archdeacon of Cornwall despairingly observed in 1342 when begging the Bishop of Exeter to release him of his post, 'the folk of these parts are quite extraordinary, being of a rebellious temper, and obdurate in the face of attempts to teach and correct' (cited in Payton, 1992, 56).

Bernard Deacon, November 2010

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