THE COMMUNAL DEFENCE OF THREATENED ENVIRONMENTS AND IDENTITIES

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ABSTRACT
The communal defence of threatened environments and identities
The article discusses the the recent environmental movements referring to threatened places and identities. It tries to find out some relations between ecologocal and nationalistic ideas. Due to a process of territorial restructuring and socio-political transformation in order to adjust to a new European order it is necessary to protect the places where the national groups live. The national identity derives from living environment which is the source of material and spiritual goods.

KEY WORDS
environmentalism, national groups, autonomy, social movements, identity

IZVLEČEK
Skupno varovanje ogroženega okolja in narodnih skupnosti
Članek govori o najnovejših prizadevanjih okoljevarstvenikov za ohranitev ogroženih območij in narodnih skupnosti in išče vzporednice z nekdanjimi nacionalističnimi oziroma avtonomističnimi gibanji. Zaradi novih vizij razvoja sveta je nujno treba zaščititi prostor, v katerem narodne skupnosti prebivajo, saj njihova identiteta temelji na pokrajini, v kateri živijo in iz nje črpajo materialne in duhovne dobrine.

KLJUČNE BESEDE
varstvo okolja, narodne skupnosti, avtonomija, družbena gibanja, identiteta

1. Introduction

The aim of this essay is to relate the recent concern of environmentalists with threatened places and identities to an older tradition of territorial politics manifested by ethnic-nationalist ideology and action.

Given the fluidity of real-world politics and of academic theorising about socio-political change, we are currently faced with a super-abundance of interpretations for the rise of the environmental movement. Even describing it as if it were a single movement is to fall into the trap of assuming that it is an autonomous force, self-directed and volitional in form.

So powerful is the need to respond to the ecological crisis that we are daily presented with a new eschatology of environmental thought and action, which suggests that if we are not already all ecologists now, we certainly should be! The danger inherent in some strands of this new environmentalism, is that it threatens to undermine the meaning of our language of description and interpretation. Take, for example, the notion that ecological thought is holistic in form and intent. If the logic of this new super-paradigm is to be accepted, then all matter is to be subsumed by it, as all features of social existence have a bearing on environmental action. If so, then we have not only rightly created a new way of thinking, but also an intellectual justification for a potentially new hegemonic structure of thought and action.

This is not to deny the urgency of the environmental call to arms. As professional geographers our careers are devoted to environmental understanding through a catholic discipline. What is intriguing, however, is that in the past many individual and communal acts have been ecological in nature but have operated from within a different value system. We should not be so mesmerised by the recency of ecological thought as to dismiss previous concerns with the defence of the environment. Indeed, quite the opposite view can be supported. In this essay I want to argue that the relationship between ecological movements and the new localism is resonant with meanings about the tensions between the 'global' and the 'local', between individual acts of socio-economic development and the communal defence of threatened environments and between transnational structural integration and ethnic-regional struggles for relative autonomy.

Notions of community defence have been commonplace since at least the early mediaeval period. But it is only rather recently that a self-conscious concern with issues of social fragmentation and community decline have given rise to the need for active revitalisation and empowerment of threatened communities. Community empowerment is an attractive notion but one which citizens find increasingly difficult to realise because of the complexity, scale and pace of socio-economic change. Conventionally it has been argued that community ownership of the processes of social reproduction is made more difficult within bilingual, multilingual or border land societies because of the structural tension inherent in a situation of competitive language contact. Whilst I accept that the extra frisons of inhabiting a linguistically plural society creates some difficulties as well as obvious joys, it is not impossible to counter these conventional arguments so long as the structural preconditions of community involvement are in place to allow the trigger of interventionist language planning to instil a fresh sense of ownership of the community's integrity and destiny. Today, many societies such as those in Brittany, Estonia, Euskadi, Slovenia and Wales are undergoing a process of territorial restructuring and socio-political transformation as they adjust to a new European order. Geo-strategic and economic questions are inherent in this process of adjustment, but so also are basic issues related to more universal questions and tensions regarding the role of humans as agents in environmental change.

These tensions derive from our attitude to a fundamental question of moral philosophy, viz.: Are humans masters over nature?

We may answer this question by reference to four distinct human-nature positions derived from key Jewish, Graeco-Roman, Christian, Modern and other views of nature. The positions are respectively that:
• nature is neutral and without purpose;
• that nature is a divine creation in the service of man and devoted to the Glory of God;

- that nature as a divine creation is good for its own sake;
- that nature has a meaning and a purpose and reflective man must ascertain that purpose and accommodate it (Williams 1991).

Current manifestations of ecological thought can be traced to each of these separate positions but are most commonly associated with the fourth position whereby powerful ideas such as the GAIA thesis and the 'deep green' concern with earth survival and co-existence are connected to earlier traditions of humanistic thought.

Most ideas are not new. Certainly most of what passes for contemporary environmental thought can be traced back to earlier epochs in the long inter relationship between human speculation and natural conditions. Some would claim that what is new about environmentalism is its global concern and sense of urgency. We need only remind ourselves of the universal appeal of all world religions and of the imminent need for 'salvation' from sin, destitution and the apocalypse to come, to realise that both globalism and imminent disaster have been central planks of earlier, more persistent, ideologies. Neither can we accept the revelation that environmentalists have discovered a new truth about humanity. Drawing on several earlier traditions, the Humanists of the Enlightenment could support Hume's dictum that »In all nations and ages, human nature remains still the same«. (Hume 1975). Interpreting the universal history of mankind led enlightenment thinkers to argue that reason was the same for all. Yet Solomon (1980) suggests that humanity was, in fact, 'a new discovery of sorts, a grand abstraction without geographical or anthropological limits'. For "in the name of Enlightenment humanism, the middle-class philosophers could declare their interests to be universal interests, and their interests to be the dictates of reason. And since their reason was the very heart of human nature, one's own enlightenment self-interest was never merely one's own, but in the interests of everyone. To emphasise the universality of such interests, therefore, they could be turned into universal laws, and it is extremely significant that the enlightenment philosophers insisted on 'government of laws, not men'. (Solomon 1980, 29–30).

What is new is the politicisation of issues such as acid rain, marine pollution, land degradation, deforestation and desertification, and the realisation that the inter-connectedness of environmental destruction, at a global level, wherever it may occur is mutually harmful. Economic development is no longer viewed as the apex of civility and progress, and is increasingly being blamed for much of the worlds problems. It is the scale and intensity of world development which poses the ultimate threat to the biosphere.

»How else can one explain that more destruction has been wrought to the fragile fabric of the biosphere during the last 40 years, since global development has really got under way, than during the preceding two or three million years of the human experience on this planet?« (Goldsmith 1988).

The question remains whether we can learn anything from former ideologies and mass movements for social change? I believe that there is a particular merit in focusing on the comparisons which can be made between environmentalism and other isms, particularly communalism and nationalism.

2. Environmentalism and nationalism

It is instructive to compare and contrast current environmental ideas with those of an earlier, all-embracing ideology, nationalism. Of interest is the manner in which both environmental and regional-nationalist movements focus on the state as the central agency of 'structured oppression' and the principal upholder of the military-industrial complex. Galtung (1986, 75–90) has summarised the opposing characteristics of establishment and ecological values and movements. Figure 1 is a schematic representation of such features.

It is evident that many autonomist movements share several of the characteristics Galtung describes as being attributable to green policies. Thus, for example, many nationalists movements in post-war Europe, have adopted a non-violent form of resistance to the incursions of central state agencies. Both Christian pacifism and widespread conscientious objection were used as instruments of opposition to

A SURVEY OF GREEN POLICIES

Mainstream Characteristics			Green Policies, Movements
Economic Basis	1.	Exploitation of <u>external proletariat</u>	Cooperative enterprises, movements; labour buyer / seller difference abolished, customers directly involved
	2.	Exploitation of <u>external sector</u> Relations, liberation movements	Co-existence with the Third World; only equitable exchange
	3.	Exploitation of <u>nature</u>	Ecological balance Person-Nature; building diversity, symbiosis; complete or partial vegetarianism
	4.	Exploitation of <u>self</u>	More labour - and creativity-intensity; decreasing productivity in some fields; alternative technologies
Military Basis	1.	Dependency on <u>foreign trade</u>	Self-reliance;self-sufficiency in food, health, energy and defence
	2.	Dependency on <u>formal sector</u>, BCI-complex	Local self-reliance, decreasing urbanisation, intermediate technology; defensive defence policies with less destructive technology, also non-military non-violent defence.
	3.	<u>Offensive</u> defence policies, very destructive defence technology	
	4.	<u>Alignment with super powers</u>	Non-alignment, even neutralism de-coupling from superpowers

Mainstream Characteristics			
Structural Basis	1.	<u>Bureaucracy</u>, state (plan) strong and centralised	Recentralization of local level: building federations of local units
	2.	<u>Corporation</u>, capital (market) strong and centralised	Building informal, green econommy: - production of self-consumption - production for non-monetary exchange - production for local cycles
	3.	<u>Intelligentsia</u>, research strong and centralised	High level non-formal education, building own forms of understanding
	4.	MAMU factor; BCI peopled by middle aged males with university education (and dominant race / ethnic group)	Feminist movements, justice/equality and for new culture and structure; movements of the young and the old; movements for racial / ethnic equality.
	1.	<u>Non-manual work</u>, eliminating heavy, dirty, dangerous work	Keeping the gains when healthy, mixing manual and non-manual
	2.	<u>Material comfort</u>, dampening fluctuations of nature	Keeping the gains when healthy, living closer to nature

Mainstream Characteristics			Green Policies, Movements
Bourgeois Way of Life	3.	<u>Privatism</u>, withrawal into family and peer groups	Communal life in bigger units, collective production/consumption
	4.	Security, the probability that this will last	Keeping security when healthy, making life style less predictable
Chemical, Circus Way of Life	1.	Alcohol, tranquilisers drugs	<u>Moderation</u>, experiments with non-addictive, life-enhancing things
	2.	Tobacco, sugar, salt, tea, coffee	<u>Moderation</u>, enhancing the body's capacity for joy, e.g. through sex
	3.	Chemically treated food, panem, natural fibres removed	Bio-organic cultivation, health food, balanced food, <u>moderation</u>
	4.	Circuses, TV, sport, spectatorism	Generating own entertainment, moderate exercise, particularly as manual work, walking, bicycling

Figure 1: Schematic representation of opposing characteristics of establishment and ecological values and movements (Galtung 1986).

warfare in the name of imperial defence and the subjugation (genocide) of minority peoples. There has often been an acute sense of divine destiny in the mobilisation of minority cultures, whether in Catholic Catalonia and Euskadi (Conversi 1997), Ireland (Goldring 1993) or Nonconformist Wales (Llywelyn 1999).

Equally revealing has been the concern with the localism, with self-reliance and with non-alignment, in order to distance supporters from the hegemony of the superpowers and strong states.

At root both environmental and minority autonomist rights movements seek to place the individual within a wider communal framework, stressing inter-dependence and a shared destiny. Feelings of belonging, of shared responsibility and of rootedness are figure prominently, in contrast to the possessive individualism stressed by the post-Fordist culture with its mobility, individual advancement and regime of flexible accumulation.

A similar depiction can be made for nationalism. In Figure 2 I have itemised ten structural characteristics of minority nationalism (Williams 1994). They relate to key concepts which re-appear in most nationalist struggles e. g. fear of loss of identity, exploitation of the cultural and physical resources of the nation, resistance to external intervention and control, reinterpretation of the nations plight in terms of the leaderships, mission-destiny view of their own transcendent existence, the ultimate securing of freedom in a world of free and equal nations. This nationalist iconography has raised a triad of political truths, sovereignty, autarky and cultural integrity, what J. R. Jones described as 'cydymdreiddiad iaith a thir', the mutual inter-penetration of land and language. (Jones 1970; Williams 1988). This Chalcedonian-informed interpenetration of place, nation and individual has been described by Llywelyn (1999, 74) as a »complex, multi-layered phenomena, each involving relationships: of place with time, time with place, and each individual with the transgenerational community of which he or she is a member. The integration of Chalcedonian concepts permits us to describe a relationship in which there is unity, but no merging, and in which the boundaries between metaphysical and psychological dimensions of place and of nation can be allowed their own autonomies without confusion of linguistic registers, or a false transference of ontic realities from one plane to another«. I believe that transgenerational concepts of community and of the nation defined as a community of communities are essential to the understanding of European minority nationalism which is detailed below in terms of ten structural features

3. Elements of minority nationalism

1. Nationalists invariably insist on the defence of their unique homeland and of the protection of their valued environment. This reflects the classic element of place-centred politics, and as geographers such as Agnew (1989), MacLaughlin (1986), and Williams (1982) remind us, nationalism is most often a response to a particular set of circumstances. It is not an autonomous force. It is evident that resistance, struggle and the politics of collective defence over land and territory dominate the relationship between a minority movement and its incursive, hegemonic state power. More recently ecologists have taken up this concern with valued environments and in some cases caused common alliance with nationalists to protect threatened spaces. This seems set to become a major issue of the twenty-first century where conflict over the control of space and resources will quicken our awareness of the commonality of defensive movements, even if their ideological rationale remains distinctly separate.

2. Nationalists also insist on the defence and promotion of their culture and identity. The most common diacritical markers of their nationality are often a combination of one or more of the following: a distinct language, religious affiliation, separate social existence, historical experience. As a meaning-seeking movement nationalism often attaches the utmost symbolic significance to the preservation of a separate identity. It does not always follow that the vast majority of its target constituents already share such markers as a common language, or religious persuasion. Indeed one of the inherent paradoxes of nationalism

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Some Structural Characteristics of Minority Nationalism

1) Defence of a unique territory, the homeland, and the protection of a valued environment.

2) Defence and promotion of a culture and identity-language, religion, social existence.

3) Resistance to centralist trends and relative powerlessness over decision-making.

4) Perception of exploitation and underdevelopment-structural discrimination.

5) Resistence to outsiders, immigrants, settlers, colonisers.

6) Fear of loss of local dominance and influence expressed through cultural attrition.

7) Violent and non-violent expression of ethnic dissent and discord-escalation of risks.

8) Group-learning, myth formation, persistent inequalities shape current ideology and define contemporary identity in light of historically significant acts of oppression.

9) Anti-state, anti-status-quo political action intended to realise new basis of legitimacy.

10) Redefinition of the problem situation and of conflict in the light of most recent events and renewed reforms, concessions, political accommodations and gains for beleagured minority within the dominant system.

Figure 2: Ten structural characteristics of minority nationalism (Williams 1994).

is that by searching for a distinct cultural infra-structure to differentiate itself from state-wide political parties or powerful neighbours within the polity, nationalist rhetoric often serves to alienate the very people in whose name the claim to liberty and equality is being made. However, most minority nationalisms justify their existence by a claim to separateness, usually on the basis of an unique cultural heritage.

3. Resistence to centralising trends which further integrate the national territory into the core state apparatus is a significant feature of nationalism. Often dismissed as anti-progressive or recidivist, nationalists who oppose such trends face a difficulty in constructing an economic argument to counter the economies of scale justification for state integration. Appeals to the anti-democratic nature of reducing local power and the consequent lesser influence over key decision-making bodies are countered by the perceived benefits of sharing power at a higher order in the political system. With the increasing scale and complexity of political units it is anathema to willingly return to small nations as the basic building block of the international political system. It is argued that the recent 'liberation' of the Baltic States, and of Slovenia and Croatia do not offer an exemplar to Scotland, Euskadi and Quebec, for they were born out of civil war and the threat of physical force in the wake of imperial dissolution. But this sort of reasoning serves to undervalue the historical integrity of territorial identities, as found in Slovenia and Croatia, which have an authenticity and integrity which pre-dates modern conceptions of the nation-state. Klemenčič and Klemenčič (1997) offer a systematic, cartographic analysis of the historical identification of the north-eastern Adriatic peoples with key locations and illustrates just how rooted are conceptions of land, language and nationhood in the European imagination.

4. Nationalists counter claims that many putative nations are not economically viable in an increasingly globalised system. Their objection would stress that Euskadi, Quebec and such like have been systematically exploited and underdeveloped as 'internal colonies' (Hechter 1975). It is argued that structural discrimination can only be halted and reversed through the twin goals of political sovereignty

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and economic autarchy. On realising their plight the masses will do what all other colonial victims have done, sooner or later, rise up and evict their oppressors in the name of national liberation. It matters less at this stage that nationalism *per se* offers little that it is prescriptive and detailed for the post-independence economic recovery. The important element is that the people become persuaded and have faith that their future will be more prosperous after independence. The advent of independence itself creates a new social reality, where truth, prosperity and development can be constructed largely from within the nation, rather than being denied from without. This is certainly the current experience of Scotland and Wales who since May 1999 have had their own respective Parliament and National Assembly, with a concomitant increase in national confidence and ambition to play a more active role within the international system.

5. A more persistent tendency is for local communities to resist population transfer and demographic changes which adversely affect the majoritarian position of co-nationals. Thus resistance to outsiders, immigrants, to settlers, to colonisers as agents of the hegemonic state and its associated culture is as widespread in rural Wales as it is in urban Euskadi. It is manifested in agonising fears over the survival of a threatened language where each child born to the foreigner and the death of each native speaker is logged in a mythical but pervasive national register and the balance of probability against the survival of Welsh or Euskerra weighed anxiously new every morning.

6. Fear of loss of dominance and influence is expressed through cultural attrition and campaigns to save local communities, sacred sites and valued land from rapacious developers, whether they be private companies or government departments conducting legally binding state business. Several campaigns in Wales, such as at Rhandirmwyn, Tân yn Llyn, 'Nid yw Cymru ar Werth' (Wales is not for sale), or in Brittany at Plogouf and second home/tourist development, and in Scotland in relation to nuclear installations and defence establishments, demonstrate the manner in which the socio-economic infrastructure is being changed to suit external interests. Most often dangerous and obnoxious industries such as nuclear power plants, oil terminals, defence establishments are situated within the minority's territory, for they are relatively powerless to stop such exploitation of their land and social fabric. Equally the minority territorial resources, be they natural such as water, a wild and rugged landscape, or human, a well-educated but relatively poorly paid labour force, are exploited in the service sector with its seasonal and tourist-dependant characteristics. All of which induces a dependency situation, which is reactive rather than purposive, defensive rather than self-confident, outer-directed, rather than inner-directed.

7. In selected circumstances this perception of being exploited and subdued leads to open conflict and sustained violence as in Euskadi, Ulster and Corsica. Attempts to define such violence through various stages of regional autonomy, power sharing and state re-structuring do not appear to be wholly successful. Unfortunately once a culture of violence has been established it tends to have an internal dynamic of its own, self-energising and sustaining, undeterred by piece-meal reform until complete independence is achieved via the Koloshnikov rifle and the Semtex bomb.

8. With the rise of print capitalism and the more rapid dissemination of information via radio, television and mass communication came the possibility of constructing alternative versions of historical reality (Williams 1988). Minority nationalist intelligentsias sought to influence group learning by stressing those aspects of a real or mythical history which would explain contemporary inequalities in the light of significant acts of oppression. New or reconstructed historical discourses contend with orthodox interpretations of popular history and state development. When powerful, centralising elites seek to ban or suppress such alternative discourses, as Franco sought to ban the political use of the Basque language because it told the vanquished's story, then a fresh round of psychological and material conflict is unleashed. Centralists express their virulent opposition to formal education in the minority's mother tongue precisely because they fear they will be unable to interpret and control the messages circulated through the minority languages. How often in Europe have we heard the charge that minority schools are the breeding ground for a new generation of dissenting nationalists? And throughout

Western Europe and North America we have new demands for a centrally controlled educational curricula rather than tolerate regional variations which may, in part, perpetuate group divisions and sectarian animosities.

9. An insistence on the immorality and political illegitimacy of the status quo provides a political rationale for the emergence of nationalist movements. Their radical anti-state rhetoric serves as a basis for a new legitimacy, not one which abhors all states qua states, but merely the existing one which so cripples the national spirit and stifles the call to liberty. 'The desire of nations' is to be a fully accepted nation among other nations, and in political terms this necessitates the attainment either of sovereignty or a great deal of devolved autonomy.

10. Finally minority nationalists are constantly seeking evidence which serves to redefine their situation in the light of the most recent events and renewed reforms, concessions, political accommodation and gains for the beleaguered minority within the dominant system. In Western European terms the nationalist appeal of the 'sixties was couched on the basis of a universal trend towards de-colonisation. What was good enough for Nigeria or Niger was good enough for Scotland and Brittany. In the 'seventies it was as a reaction to the overloading of government and the political centre in Westminster or Paris, such that developed government was good government, conferring the twin blessings of participatory democracy and enhanced efficiency in government services. In the 'eighties it was an appeal to localism, to valued environments, to the appeal of place over placelessness and anomie. In the 'nineties, following the miraculous year of reform in 1989, it was an appeal to reconstruct a Europe of the nations, to overthrow the state-centric and hegemonic nineteenth century state system and to return to the organic, fundamental units of Europe, namely the constituent nations. Unperturbed by the difficulties in squaring the reality of a multicultural and multinational Europe within a vision of 'natural' pristine, nationalistic order, contemporary leaders of minority nationalist movements seek to by-pass their respective state cores, such as London, Madrid, Paris and allow Edinburgh, Cardiff or Barcelona to entreat directly with the Brussels-Strasbourg axis in an increasingly federal Europe (Williams 1980). It is a moot point, however, and one which demands considerable restructuring, to appreciate how such small nations will fare better when faced with a plethora of competing claims in Europe, than in seeking redress of their grievances within the existing state structure. In Quebec, as the movement towards greater autonomy gathers apace once again, there are voices which argue that increased cultural erosion will accompany independence because the Quebecois state will no longer have the federal system to buffer it, and to insulate it in its dealings with foreign powers and agencies within the international system.

Much of the history of the past two centuries, since the dawning of the French Revolution, has been the attempt to realise these asserted truths as political facts, to make state and nation co-extensive entities (Williams 1989). Much of the history of the past two decades has been an attempt to supersede the national level of thought and praxis and promote and international, global awareness which does not deny the salience of the local, as in the slogan 'Think global, act local'.

Nationalism, like environmentalism, is also holistic in thought and deed. The universal desideratum is the ideal nation-state in an international community of free and equal states. Its local manifestation may be at any one of the varying stages in a continuum from full statehood through to a non-state nation in the making, but whatever its exact position it is always possible to relate the local to the global blueprint and back again. So it is with environmentalism. The unique character of the local environment is only given purchase by the general context of the global milieu. But it is given its urgency by the near-cataclysmic refraction of fundamental global issues viz. the green house effect, he destruction of the tropical rain forest, the degradation of soil and sustenance, the disappearance of species and habitat. Intrinsic to this coupling of the immediate and local to the evolutionary and global is a sense of shared involvement and responsibility, summed up so cogently in the true phrase 'Our common future'.

Increasingly we are seeing active co-operation between ethnic-regionalist (nationalist) and ecological (green) movements. Two major developments have served to bring both types of movement to central stage in Europe. The more fundamental event is the increased recognition of the cogency of the

ecological argument at all levels. At the macro level we have the central concern of the politics of global survival, with all its principled implications for socio-economic existence under the nuclear threat/umbrella. At lower levels in the hierarchy we have a concern with sustainable development, limited growth and control over immediate environments and opportunities for communal expression. Local politics is increasingly the politics of resource allocation and redistribution, where questions of appropriate economic development, raising the social quality of life and ecological regeneration, particularly in sprawling metropolitan areas, are the norm.

The other major event is the apparently inexorable move forward of an enlarged and functionally integrated European Union. Following the dramatic developments in Central and Eastern Europe, and the extension of Community membership to embrace EFTA and former Warsaw Pact states, we will doubtless see a re-alignment of the role of majority and minority national groups by Europe. Regional and nationalist elites will seek to by-pass their respective state core areas and decision-makers and negotiate directly with a reformulated and re-constituted, quasi-federal Europe. They will also be seeking bi-lateral partnerships with selected regions within EU states, such as Catalonia, Scotland and Bavaria.

As the process of adjustment to new political realities unfold there is likely to be an increased pressure from new approaches to tackle old problems. Though by no means certain of success there is a new cogency to old de-centralist arguments for a regional scale governmental structure throughout Europe. In seeking to bring power back to the people at a recognisable scale, nationalists, liberals and ecologists are joining to create a Europe of the Regions (Williams 1989). Their appeals are likely to be strongest in the relatively under-developed regions of Europe and where an ethnically differentiated minority is striving for greater autonomy in order to preserve and protect it threatened identity in a hostile or disadvantageous environment. They are also likely to gain currency as the meso-scale of government achieves more prominence in an increasingly integrated European space.

Such appeals are likely to build on an earlier phenomenon, the ethnic resurgence in Western Europe in the last two decades. Regionalist success has been spectacular in Catalonia and Euskadi, moderately successful in establishing the institutional separateness of locales like Scotland, Wales, Flanders, Northern Italy and Friesland, and very limited in Brittany, Alsace and Greece.

It is evident that there is a new significance attached to the environment, a new holistic interpretation which is often based on a transposition of the writings of scientists such as Lovelock (1979, 1988) and his GAIA thesis into the realm of social and political affairs. This new 'self-consciousness' has been mobilised both by agencies of central government and by the leadership of those communities who feel in some way threatened by the developments of centralised bureaucracy and the ever-voracious economic imperative of resource extraction and exploitation by commercial interests.

In the past the land has been the single most significant element of the environment to be fought over by those competing interest groups wherein the conflict between the local and the universal, the indigenous and the exogenous groups have been mediated. But as I have described elsewhere territory is not merely contextual, it is not only a scene for the playing out of socio-economic factors, it is itself a significant source of symbolic and resource power (Williams 1987). Its possession and control is often deemed vital to the very survival of specific cultural groups, and it is this aspect of power and control in ethnically endangered societies that I want to analyse next.

4. The communal defence of the environment

Today our conception both of a 'threat' to and 'defence' of communal interests has widened. Though central, territory is no longer synonymous with environment. Communal action is often non-institutionalised, it cannot be captured within the simple description of party politics. Many activists have plural constituencies and interest groups which they can mobilise in defence of their environment, others have none, hence the difficulty in generalising about such instances.

We may, however, separate out various forms of communal defence and subject each to a different range of analyses. One may distinguish four ideal types of communal defence. The most extreme involves the destruction of the environment which congenitally supports the existence of threatened minority cultures, such as the Yanomami Indians of Brazil. This is also the most urgent issue facing us as it involves the destruction of precious cultures though it is not necessarily the focus of this essay.

A second category involves the perceived exploitation of a minority group by a state-backed majority group, as illustrated by Western Europe's ethno-linguistic minorities, which is the principal focus of this essay. A third category involves the citizenship of a state defending their environmental interests against a combination of industrial pollution and ineffective environmental legislative control. This is typically the case of many so-called Third World societies and of Eastern European societies such as the former German Democratic Republic. After 17 years in office as Environment Minister, Hans Reichelt resigned on the 9th of January, 1990 admitting that »conditions are such that someone new should take over the huge challenge of radically reforming the country's environment policy« (The Independent, January 1990). His state, the GDR, then ranked third in the world for energy consumption, per head of population, after the more industrialised economies of the United States and Canada. However, following unification we cannot assume that the problems were merely historical and are thus likely to diminish abruptly as the territory changes from a command economy to a more mixed economy, with all the structural support and reform it receives from the federal core.

As a contemporary newspaper report commented »the newest power station in East Germany will emit more sulphur dioxide than the whole of Sweden, and there are no plans to fit expensive flue gas desulphurisation equipment which could replace it« (The Independent, 10th January 1990). The bill for an environmental clean-up has been estimated at £72 billion, and this does not address the infrastructural aspects of such reform. Clearly the poor quality of life, health care, working conditions and anxiety over environmental degradation gave material sustenance to the more oft quoted ideological and economic reasons for populist opposition in Eastern Europe in the recent past. Initially the environment in its broadest setting was also the scene of opposition for in its purest form, such protest appeared to be apolitical and therefore non-state threatening. Recent history has revealed that was an underestimation of the power of environmental mobilisation to act as an umbrella for a plethora of other grievances to be expressed in collective opposition to authoritarian regimes.

The forth category goes beyond the nation state and represents international interest groups such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, etc, who advocate a global communal defence against environmental degradation, regardless of its source. The appeal is to 'Our Common Future' for we are a species threatened by our short-term perspective on development and modernisation. It involves moral questions e. g. should we work towards a nuclear free world? Do the future generations have a right not to inherit a world characterised by a structural killer such as radio active or toxic waste? It also involves key political economic questions related to global production and distribution of food, energy, medical advances and weapons. In keeping with its holistic nature, the international relations of the environment is literally all-inclusive in its scope, because all the earth's dwellers can be counted among its constituents. But there is an inherent duality in this stance.

As environmentalists appeal to all, they appeal to none specifically. Their universal claims are always in danger of being co-opted by non-ecological political movements, and reconstructed so as to fit in with the prevailing ideology of that movement. Green in rhetoric, red or blue in action, may be a familiar judgement on contemporary European governments who are seeking to marginalise the green challengers and adopt their most 'useful' ideas and policies without embracing their underlying philosophy.

Clearly in such a short essay we cannot do justice to all four types of communal defence. I have chosen to concentrate on ethnic minority movements in Western Europe, to trace their parallels and lineage between the ethnic and the ecological basis for communal defence.

5. Ethnic minority issues

If we recall that most ethno-linguistic minorities are also relatively under-developed in economic and political terms, it is clear that questions of language, culture and identity are not supplementary to the more routinized socio-economic concerns, but can themselves constitute the very essence of a minority's relationship with the state, in whose name the majority exercise power and control. As such expressions of group identity are rooted in the environment, and derive both material and spiritual sustenance from the immediate locale, it is not surprising that any threat to the environment is interpreted as a simultaneous threat to both culture and group survival. Place and territory are central to this process of control and development on behalf of the minority, and their appropriation has a long history associated with the development of the European state structure (Williams 1989).

The complex process of state development has resulted in the inexorable integration of diverse cultural groups into 'national' populations, who, in turn become the constituent citizens of the modern state in a system of putative co-equal states. State-integration resulted in the conquest of ethnic territory and denial of minority rights and often in the despoliation of the ethnic homeland. Whether through a forced out-migration as a result of land enclosure, as in Wales and Euskadi, most European ethno-linguistic minorities perceive their territory as having been under threat in modern history.

The institutional means of dissent being denied them, such minorities invariably focus on cultural diacritical markers, such as language or religion, as a means of expressing their resistance to state and private, commercial incursions of their territory. Well organised examples also exist elsewhere, as for example, the lobbyists supporting the ACFO and the Alliance Québec.

I want to illustrate the range of issues and campaigns evoked by this communal resistance in a small, but representative country, Wales.

In tandem with anglicisation and modernisation there was a structural transformation of the Welsh landscape whose effect was to incorporate Wales within an expanding world-economy via Whitehall, Westminster and the financial interests of the City of London. In truth many of the developments discussed below were paralleled within regions within England and interpreted there as being advantageous and conducive to its national growth. However, precisely because of national differentiation and external control, equivalent developments in Wales were considered damaging to Welsh life and counter-productive for the were perceived as seeking to exploit Wales. Nationalists and ethnic activists were most prone to interpret Welsh economic change as colonial development by England, and although clearly such an emphasis is crude in analytical terms, it had a remarkable appeal and facilitated the development of a number of political movements supporting Welsh autonomy: notably Plaid Cymru (The Welsh Nationalist Party formed in 1925 (Williams 1982).

Within the past century, we may identify several independent trends which cumulatively have transformed the Welsh environment. Clearly there is an inherent danger in suggesting that there has been a conspiracy to under-develop and/or exploit Wales by the British state and its ruling élite (some of whom obviously are Welsh in origin), however, there is an equal danger in suggesting that it has been Wales's relative powerlessness which has facilitated many of these developments. Let me suggest some of these discernible trends and then specify the form of Welsh resistance to such threats to identity and culture.

The most significant transformation was the extraction of mineral resources and the construction of a Welsh urban hierarchy consequent to rapid industrialisation in the late nineteenth century. The slate, coal, iron and steel industries were to make Wales a pivotal resource base for the development of the British Empire. In industrial Wales the effects were dramatically imprinted both on the population and on the landscape.

»Its social structure, settlement patterns, population composition and incipient radicalism all testified to the wholesale ravages wrought by the badgering of its coal-rich seams. The marginality of Wales's pre-industrial existence was swapped by a frenzy of commercial and social activity, the like of which had not been seen in Europe. Massive dislocation, an immigration rate second only to that of the United

States of America, and the reconstruction of local issues and concerns as British issues and imperial concerns transformed the insular periphery into an active participant in Britain's quest for global hegemony« (Williams 1990, 29).

A second theme has been a struggle for control of the environment, particularly the acquisition of farm land for large scale infra-structural improvements. The most symbolic act was the nationalist attack on a British defence establishment. In the inter-war years the government sought to establish an RAF bombing school at Penyberth in North Wales. On the morning of the 8th September 1935, three leading nationalist intellectuals, Lewis Valentine, Saunders Lewis and D. J. Williams set fire to the sheds of the bombing school and afterwards gave themselves up to the local police. At their trial in Caernarfon their defence appealed to the higher morality of defending one of Europe's oldest and most threatened cultures. The intrusion into a predominantly Welsh-speaking region of the RAF School, a symbol of British imperialism and militarism, was recognised by some of the local jury, who failed to agree on a verdict. The case was transferred to the Old Bailey where the three were found guilty and imprisoned on 19th January, 1927, only to be released on August 27th, 1927, to a heroes' welcome. In strict terms this was a minor incident, but symbolically nationalist historiography has raised them to the status of being the first Nationalist martyrs, willing to defy the state in the name of securing the cultural integrity of the local community. In post-war Wales subsequent demonstrations were experienced when war-time training grounds were not returned into private ownership but were kept by the Ministry of Defence as at Castle Martin in Pembrokeshire, Sennybridge in Breconshire and at Brawdy air station. This provoked claims of a permanent military occupation similar in tone, if not in scale, to Irish nationalist opposition of British troops in Northern Ireland.

Equivalent moves in England, as on Salisbury Plans evoked local opposition and some early CND opposition, but lacked the nationalist dimension of outrage and resistance so characteristic of Wales.

In civil affairs also Welsh communities fought to preserve their farming and rural environments. Post-war reconstruction and the growing modernisation of industry in England necessitated increased investment in the water-supply service. Large metropolitan councils like Liverpool and Birmingham had long established water supply links with rural Wales. However, in December 1955, Liverpool Corporation sought permission to drown the Valley of Tryweryn to create another reservoir. Penllyn was sparsely populated and ideally suited from a resource perspective. It was also an area rich in cultural heritage and epitomised all the virtues of rural Welsh-speaking areas which activists sought to preserve as a context for a distinct Welsh 'way of life' (buchedd).

Despite an unprecedented campaign of Welsh solidarity, with 27 Welsh MPs out of the 28 MPs present, voting against the passage of the Bill through Parliament, a huge majority of British MPs voted in its favour. For the first time in recent history, organised Welsh public opinion recognised that, despite having all the elected and representative bodies supporting the campaign, Welsh interests were a minority issue in a democratic Union.

'Cofia Tryweryn' (remember Tryweryn) became a rallying cry for young people in particular and came to symbolise Welsh dependency on state prerogative and power.

A further instance of state interests dominating communal needs was the siting of early nuclear energy installations at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa, a decision an earlier generation accepted as providing much-needed employment in rural Wales. However, in the 'eighties when the Central Electricity Generating Board sought to build a second PWR at Wylfa on Anglesey, local and national environmental and cultural-political movements combined to form PAWB (People against Wylfa B). It provided a detailed set of alternative proposals and mobilised opposition on the basis of five inter-related dangers. First that only a third of the 450 permanent jobs would be available for local people, whilst the influx of skilled scientists and technologists from elsewhere in Britain would be detrimental to the local Welsh-speaking community by accelerating language shift. Secondly that the 1986 Chernobyl accident had severely damaged Welsh agriculture and a major accident at one of the proposed two Wylfa power stations would be catastrophic to the rural economy. Thirdly, that during its lifetime Wylfa B would produce additional

nuclear wastes amounting to 10% of the low level and 13% of the high level wastes in the UK. It was estimated that such waste would be hazardous to life for 240,000 years! Fourthly, that radiation exposure levels would increase and fifthly that the highly radioactive core of the PWR would be a permanent danger for future generations. After a well conceived and highly articulate campaign, PAWB celebrated a partial victory for on the 21st November, 1989, the proposed PWR decision was postponed indefinitely.

A final theme is that of external private capital investment in Welsh areas. At the macro-level there are huge petro-chemical complexes as at the Milford Haven and Amlwch anchorage's, which are characterised as potentially damaging installations if chemical explosions or oil tanker spillages occur. Despite the relative decline of such facilities new developments are always under way and currently planning permission has been granted for a new oil terminal at Point of Ayr. At the micro-level we have the rapid expansion of tourism and second-home ownership. The latter has been the subject of increased controversy of late, with over 200 arson attacks on second homes, mainly in North and West Wales. The arguments are familiar and need not be repeated here except to instance that cultural activists have realised that the key to ethno-linguistic maintenance is adequate employment and suitable housing and a reasonable infrastructure, hence the campaign slogan of the Welsh Language Society is 'Nid yw Cymru ar Werth' (Wales is not for sale).

A small portent for the future may be the fact that the first Green M. P., Mr Cynog Dafis, owed his election victory in the 1994 General Election to a joint platform mounted in North Pembrokeshire and Cardigan between the Greens and Plaid Cymru. They had sufficient commonality of interest to invest their electoral hopes in a single candidate, and he has, to date, proved to be an effective spokesperson for both camps. In other parts of Britain, and indeed Europe, this would seem to be the most promising manner in which third or fourth party activists are likely to gain some degree of political representation at the state level. It would be ironic indeed if the pattern of association, represented at the European Parliamentary level by the Rainbow Alliance, would fail to appeal to the voters at lower levels because of partisan patterns of electoral socialisation.

6. De-territorialisation and the re-conceptualisation of space

Ethno-linguistic minorities have reacted to these impulses by searching for European-wide economies of scale in broadcasting, information networking, education and public administration. They have also established their own EU institutions and bureaux and entered new alliances to influence EU decision-making bodies (O'Riagain 1989). They believe that by appealing to the superstructural organisations for legitimacy and equality of group rights, they will force the state to recognise their claims for varying degrees of political/social autonomy within clearly identifiable territorial/social domains. Globalisation and its implications is thus a major factor for those ethnolinguistic movements who are seeking to engage in the process of European interdependence on terms which are more favourable to their participation than those which obtained until recently. Processes of social transformation, including the erosion of conventional networks and the disintegration of traditional homelands have forced the socio-linguistic articulators of minority movements to be less concerned with preserving than transforming lesser used languages. Their culture is becoming 'de-coupled' from territory and place and 'coupled' to new agencies and domains in predominantly urban environments thereby tying them closer to a new state dependency through institutionalised education, public administration and legal reforms. Attempts to resist the folklorisation of places, the museumisation of communities, and the commodification and gentrification of ethnolinguistic regions through tourism and the heritage industry focus on the opportunities provided by new telecommunication networks, the mass media and the empowerment of selected communities through strategic intervention in the form of Language Enterprise Agencies, Linguistic Animateurs and Local Authority Resource Centres and Sustainable Local Economic Development Agencies all of which provide the necessary infra-structural support to

encourage language reproduction and a far greater use of the threatened language within most domains in the community (Williams and Evas 1997).

A more sociological perspective is actor-oriented and asserts that social change is the result of a conscious set of decisions reflecting the power positions of strategic political actors, with some input from social élites and élite-led social movements. One set of the élite has determined that multiculturalism is the best approach to managing diversity. As multiculturalism is integral to all aspects of society one wonders whether it is specific enough to inform public policy. Does it absorb all other identities into its own? Is it in danger of becoming a hegemonic paradigm thereby loosing its purchase as a guide to action? At present the answer is probably 'no' but multiculturalism may push things in this direction, especially when the validity of more flexible and temporary groups (or constituencies) is denied. From this perspective the ideology serves the interests of government itself for it was born at a time when the integrity of that political system was under threat from political challenges to the future of Europe. However, it is equally clear that other powerful interests and indeed new sets of actors will emerge to challenge the salience of multiculturalism. But for the short-term, institutional multiculturalism will deepen the coming generation's experience of social life. From my perspective the critical features determining how vibrant this period will be is a combination of structural reform, demographic sustainability and democratic accountability in an enlarged Europe.

Cumulatively these trends will enhance the productive capacity of European economies, but they will also challenge the conventional integrity of civil society and strain the finances of responsible local and regional government. During economic downturns the refusal to honour any of these initiatives is likely to antagonise those immigrant groups who anticipate that they are an integral part of the realisation of a multilingual Europe.

The social forces which emphasised the training in official languages for immigrant adults so as to integrate them economically into the new 'host' community, are now waxing and waning because governments are seeking to withdraw from the financial implications of support and give back the matter to charities and the non governmental organisations. Any disputes about the presence of immigrants are concentrated on issues such as employment and racism, the host language is not an issue, just access to it via training. Nationalism's insistence on the primacy of the ethnic/national basis of culture reveals a preoccupation with past social formations and misses the current opportunities for new partnerships and the construction of post-modern alliances based on a variety of hitherto subordinated identities.

A key question relates to how conventional political policies based upon a tradition of state consolidation cope with identities derived from new social movements incorporating ecological, gender, race, regional/locale and religious principles. Should these alternative markers of group identity achieve salience, will conventional state citizenship as a base for social cohesion strengthen or decline in reaction to greater political-economic integration?

7. Conclusion

If concern for the 'New Environmental Age' is to be correctly discerned, it is imperative that we contextualize the environmental movement as the latest of a long line of establishment-challenging processes. This essay has highlighted one dimension, namely the prior concern with local communities to protect threatened environments as national resources, as homelands, as symbolic and material places to be nurtured from within the group, as opposed to being subject to external development. This is not to deny the urgency and potency of the ecological argument, merely to suggest that some of its origins may be traced to ethnic-regional movements among others. The comparisons made above stress the motivational aspects of such movements, their joint reaction to alienation and powerlessness as the scale of human activities increases apace, their interpretation of the relationship between development and group autonomy and the pivotal role of the intelligentsia in articulating the problems and

mobilising their constituents to act in a collective political manner. Further research might usefully be directed towards the means by which people perceive their interests as being best served in defence of their environment. This is particularly true of those communities where an outside eye can see the degree of overlap and common purpose expressed by many single-issue pressure groups, who cumulatively act to change their society.

The pity is that many insiders, activists and commentators have hitherto defined their particular interests in mutually-exclusive terms. The immediate problems facing fragile environments and their dependant communities are too pressing to tolerate such fragmentation for long. The greatest lesson we can learn from such comparisons is that co-operation is a fundamental necessity for survival, but that group conflict and tension is too often the human response to the question »What is to be done?«

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9. Povzetek: Skupno varovanje ogroženega okolja in narodnih skupnosti
(prevedla Mimi Urbanc)

Članek govori o najnovejših prizadevanjih okoljevarstvenikov za ohranitev ogroženih območij in narodnih skupnosti in išče vzporednice z nekdanjimi nacionalističnimi oziroma avtonomističnimi gibanji. Zaradi ekološke krize je prišlo do preporoda okoljevarstvenega gibanja, ki poziva k nujnosti takojšnega ukrepanja. Ekološka ideja je celovita v obliki in smotrih. Zahteva splošno podrejenost in popolno prežetost življenja družbe z okoljevarstvenimi principi. Sama okoljevarstvena ideja je sicer stara in je bila prisotna v različnih vrednostnih sistemih, danes, v obdobju prostorskega prestrukturiranja in družbeno-političnih sprememb zaradi prilagajanja novemu evropskemu redu, pa dobiva nove vsebine. V nasprotju s preteklostjo je v njem zaznati globalno skrb in »klic na pomoč«. Okoljevarstvena vprašanja so dobila novo, politično razsežnost, ekonomski razvoj pa ni več edino merilo uspeha. »Nova okoljevarstvena doba« črpa ideje tudi iz nekdanjih ideoloških in drugih množičnih gibanj za družbene spremembe.

Prispevek osvetljuje osnovno skrb lokalnih skupnosti za zaščito ogroženega okolja, ki ima za njih več pomenov; je naravni vir, simbolni in materialni prostor, ki se oplaja z notranjimi, lastnimi viri. Zato lahko sledove ekoloških gibanj med drugim najdemo v etnično-regionalnih gibanjih oziroma gibanjih za avtonomijo narodnih skupnosti. V osnovi obe gibanji poskušata umestiti posameznika v širši družbeni okvir s poudarkom na medsebojni odvisnosti in skupni usodi. Obe gibanji temeljita na motivaciji in skupni reakciji na brezpravnost. Osrednjo vlogo imajo izobraženci, ki opredelijo ključne probleme in sprožijo aktivnosti za njihovo reševanje.

V zadnjem času tako »zelena gibanja« kot tudi gibanja za avtonomijo dobivajo nove razsežnosti zaradi nove vizije sveta, ki jo ponazarja slogan: »*Misli globalno, deluj lokalno*«. Okoljevarstvena problematika se navezuje tudi na vprašanje narodnih manjšin, saj njihova identiteta temelji na pokrajini, v kateri živijo in iz nje črpajo materialne in duhovne dobrine. Zaradi ustavnega neupoštevanja njihove drugačnosti so se manjšine osredotočile na diakritične znake, kot sta na primer jezik in vera, in jih uporabljajo v uporniške namene. Tak primer je tudi Wells, kjer je narodna skupnost sprožila vrsto aktivnosti, usmerjenih proti politiki Londona, ki je povzročila precejšnje gospodarske, družbene in okoljske spremembe.

Ideja združene Evrope, Evrope regij obljublja nov pristop k obravnavanju etničnih skupin. Vendar se postavlja vprašanje, če sicer pozitivna multikulturnost ne bo vsrkala majhnih narodov. Ključno vprašanje pa je, kako se bo konvencionalna politika spopadla z identitetami, ki izvirajo iz novejših družbenih gibanjih, ki vsebuje ekološke, spolne, rasne, regionalne in verske principe.