GENOCIDE AND ETHNOCIDE[1]:
THE SUPPRESSION OF THE CORNISH LANGUAGE

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This paper investigates the relationship between the Cornish language and officialdom over the past thousand years. The social status of Cornish is examined along with attitudes towards the language held by monarchy, government and their agencies. During the Middle Ages, Cornish was relatively stable and indeed enjoyed some prestige amongst the gentry who used Cornish as their preferred language for family mottoes. However, following the Tudor accession, the number of Cornish speakers was greatly reduced following the brutal repression of several popular uprisings when a significant proportion of the Cornish speaking population were exterminated. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Cornish continued to be used amongst the poor in Cornwall's fishing communities. The revival of Cornish began around 1900 and the number of speakers grew throughout the 20th century. Nevertheless, the government and state education system provided no support for Cornish language learners until 2002 when the European Union granted Cornish official "minority language" status under Part II of the 1992 Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. In 2005, the government confirmed modest funding support for the Cornish language. Local government in Cornwall are currently implementing a Cornish language strategy to determine a standard written form for Cornish that can be used for official purposes, such as signage, and for education in schools.

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[1] A reviewer comments that the view that 'language death occurs because speakers 'choose' the dominant language needs to be put into context: speakers were arguably forced to 'choose' English because all the necessary supports for a viable norm (prestige, association with a nation or clearly defined ethnic group, potential for intergenerational transmission, H functions) were systematically and deliberately ripped away by speakers of the dominant language.

Whitaker (1804: vol. 2, p. 37) writes, "The English [language] was not desired by the Cornish, but forced upon the Cornish by the tyranny of England, at a time when the English language was yet unknown in Cornwall. This act of tyranny was at once gross barbarity to the Cornish people, and a death blow to the Cornish language." An unnamed writer (quoted by Polwhele 1806) maintains that "*preventing* any people from performing their public worship in the language they understand is a violation of the natural rights and liberties of mankind; and, that appointing clergymen to perform divine service in an unknown tongue is, in effect, such a *prevention*; that by the 24th article, the clergy are required to read the public prayers and administer the sacraments in a language with which the people are acquainted; ... and lastly, that by the act of uniformity, incumbents, who reside on their livings, notwithstanding they have curates, are obliged, without a lawful impediment, to read a service once every month, in their own churches, in the language which the people understand." This paper will show how authority has, throughout history, sought to suppress the Cornish language and the role that the Anglican Church in particular has played in this repression of linguistic rights.

Cornwall is situated in the south-west peninsula of the island of Britain in the European Archipelago. Cornish, the language of Cornwall, is a Brythonic Celtic Language and a member of the Indo-European group of languages. The Celts are thought to have arrived in the European Archipelago around 600 BC. The Cornish language passed through several phases. The 6th – 9th centuries are known as Primitive Cornish (Jackson 1953: 5; Gregor 1980: 31). The Old Cornish phase lasted from 800 AD to 1200 AD. The Middle Cornish phase lasted from 1200 AD to 1500 AD. The Early Modern Cornish phase begins in 1500 and ends in 1650. Late Modern Cornish begins in 1650 and ends in 1800. From circa 1900 onwards we have the Revived Cornish phase.

Proto-Indo-European is the parent language from which Proto-Celtic and Proto-Germanic developed as daughter languages. The Stammbaum model (Figure 1) shows how Cornish is descended from the prehistoric Proto-Indo-European language and shows how the numbers 'four' and 'five' are realised as words in several Indo-European languages. Not all the branches of Indo-European are shown in the Stammbaum model, nor all the languages descended from the various branches. The Celtic languages are initially divided into two groups. The long extinct languages of the European Continent are known as Continental Celtic. These Continental Celtic languages include Galatian, Celtiberian, Gaulish, Lepontic and Belgian. The Celtic languages of the European Archipelago are known as Insular Celtic and are divided into two branches, Goidelic

Celtic and Brythonic Celtic. It is from Proto-Brythonic Celtic that the Cornish language is descended.

The Norman conquest of Cornwall was undertaken as a secondary venture following the conquest of England. Between December 1067 and March 1068 William the Conqueror led the first foray into Cornwall. The consolidation of the conquest of Cornwall was entrusted to a Breton contingent under two Breton leaders; Judhellus filus Aluredi and Brient of Bretagne, a count of Brittany, son of Eudes of Brittany (Count of Brittany and Penthievre, 999-1079 AD).

Following the Norman Conquest, Saxon landowners and clerics were replaced in Cornwall. Bretons, in particular, were placed in charge of Cornwall. Judhellus filius Aluredi became lord of Totnes and held 107 manors in Devon and one manor, Forchetestane (Froxton), in Cornwall. In 1069 Brient of Bretagne was granted Cornwall and West Devon. Wihumar/Wihomarch held Tremarustel/Tremarwestel (Treroosel), Tucowit (Tucoyse in Constantine) and Tricoi/Trecut (Tregoose).

Gunnar held the manors of Dimelihoc (Domellick) and Wilhuniow.

Blohin held five manors, Trefrioc (Trefreock) and Treveheret/Trewehret (Trewethart) – both in St. Endellion,, two larger manors in Deliau (Delamere) and Duuenant (Dannonchapel) - both near modern Delabole, and St. Michael's Church, Treiwal/Treuthal (Truthwall). Jovin held Bellesdone (Balsdon), Chori (Curry), Disart/Lisart (Dizzard), Lanehoc/ Lantloho (St. Kew), Lantmatin (Lametton), Mortune (Moreton), Nortone (Norton), Rosperuet/paruet (Tresparrett), Sainguinas/Sanwinas (St. Gennys), Trebleri (Tremblary), Treuret (Trerice) and Treurgen (Treworyan). Hamelin the Breton held Betnecote (Barnacott), Boieton/atona/etonai (Boyton), Douenot (Dawna), Lege/Lega (Lee), Maronecirche/Maroncirca (Marhamchurch), Mideltone (Milton), Orcert (Week Orchard), Penfontenio (Penventinue), Recharedoc/Rekaradoc (Rosecraddoc), Torne (Thorne), Tredhac / Trethac (Trethake), Treganmedan (Tregavethan), Tregemelin (Tregamellyn), Tregoin (Trewoon), Tremarustel/Tremar/wstel (Trenance in St. Austell), Treoloen (Trelowia), Wadefeste (Wadfast). The Breton, Robert Earl of Mortain, half brother of William the Conqueror, succeded Brient as Earl of Cornwall. This was a shrewd move by William because he knew that appointing Celtic Bretons to Cornwall would be popular and cause fewer problems: a closely related Celtic tongue would have been widely spoken and prestigious at the time. Alain de Bretagne became Earl of Cornwall in 1140. Alain was son of Stephen, Count of Tréguier, and married to Bertha, daughter and heiress of Conan III, Duke of Brittany. During the Norman period, there were proportionally more Bretons in Cornwall than in any county of England so that in Cornwall the
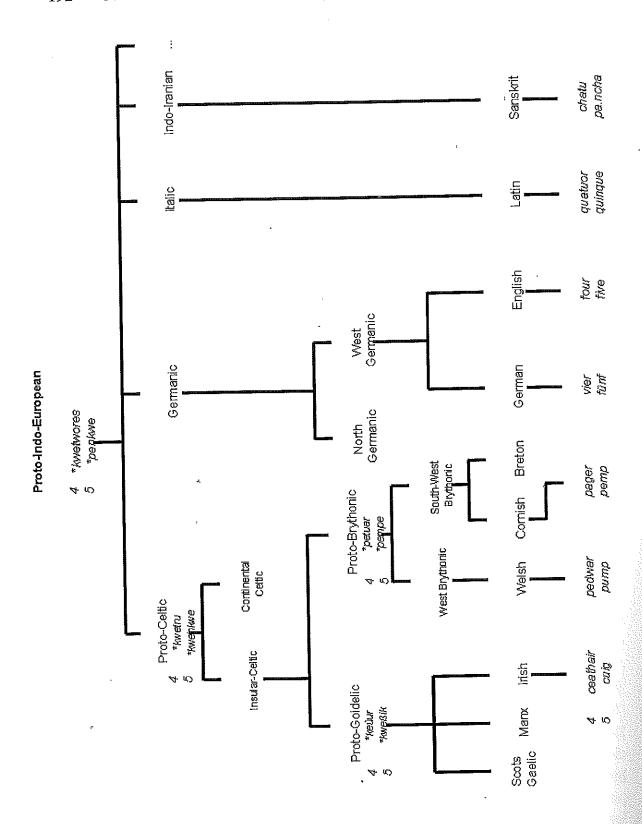
Figure 1 Stammbaum Model

"Norman Invasion" has been referred to as the "Armorican Return" (Watkin 1914: 656; Taylor 1916: 41; Ditmas 1973: 510, 518, 521-2; Keats-Rohan 1992, Williams 2006: 106).

One reason for the popularity of the appointment of Bretons in Cornwall is that the Breton language, at this time, was extremely close to the Cornish language. Williams (2006: 94) suggests that the name 'Kernuack' for the Cornish language probably originated as a result of this Breton immigration. Until the Bretons arrived, the Cornish probably called their language *Brethonek. The need then arose to distinguish the Cornish language from its sister language, Breton or 'Brezhoneg'.

During the middle-ages, outsiders taking up appointments in Cornwall could find themselves in difficulty if they spoke no Cornish. In 1318, John de Lancestone replaced Adam Murymouthe as prebend at Glasney College in Penryn on the grounds *propter Linguam Parcium Cornubie quam non nostis,* that Murymouthe did not know Cornish (Peter 1903: 117). In 1346, Sir Adam de Carletone exchanged his archdeaconry of Cornwall for Brington R. (Hunts.). Amongst the reasons that de Carletone gave was *ubi ... lingua mea est magis nota,* that his speech would be better known; in other words Carletone spoke no Cornish (Hingeston-Randolph 957 and 1263; Peter 1903: 115). In 1355, Roger Tyrel of the Convent of Preaching Friars at Truro had to be appointed penitentiary for those Cornish who spoke no English (Peter 1903: 64).

From 1337, Cornwall, regarded as a separate province, was administered as a palatinate known as the Duchy of Cornwall, whose sovereign was and still is the Duke of Cornwall. Edward the Black Prince son of Edward III (d. 1376) was made the first Duke of Cornwall. The Plantagenets were rather keen on things Cornish and Celtic since Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100 – c.1155) had used Cornwall, and Tintagel in particular, as the setting for Arthurian history in his *Historia Regum Britanniae.* In order to associate himself with Arthurian heritage, Edward the Black Prince built a grand castle of no military strategic significance on a former Celtic site at Tintagel. Thus political independence and the allure of a romanticised Celtic heritage ensured the integrity of the Cornish language throughout this period. Although French was the language of the court for some 300 years following the Norman Conquest, the Cornish language was used amongst the whole population of Cornwall, gentry and populace alike.
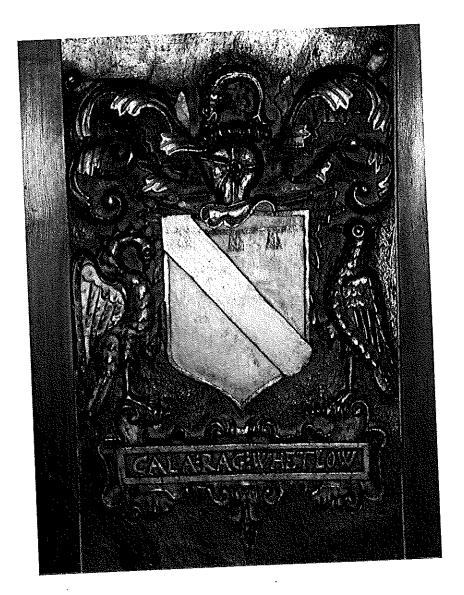
Not only was Cornish used by all social classes, it enjoyed some prestige amongst the gentry[2], who preferred the Cornish language for family mottoes. A case in point are the arms belonging to Carminow of Carminow in the parish of Mawgan in Meneague (azure, a bend or) which are to be found carved on the sixteenth-century pulpit in the church of St. Teath (see Figure 2). They are also found on a stone effigy of a knight of circa 1300 in Mawgan church. During the 14th century, a Cornish knight of the Carminow family was required to prove his right to bear these arms. The same arms were also claimed by an English knight, who claimed that his family had born these arms since the Norman Conquest. Carminow testified that his family had been granted the arms in the time of King Arthur. The council of knights who heard the case accepted both testimonies. The rule was, and still is, that identical arms may not be born by two knights of the same nation. However the records of the case state that Cornwall was a separate country, "a large land formerly bearing the name of a kingdom" (Misc. Rolls of Chanc. Nos 311 qnd 312, cited in Endean Ivall 1988: 14-5). The motto, "Cala rag Whethlow" may be translated as 'A straw for tales' (cf. Berresford Ellis 1974: 32-3).[3]

Figure 2 Arms of Carminow See centrefold

Other mottoes known to have been used were *Frank ha leal ettoga* or *Franc ha leal atho ve* 'Free and Loyal Forever' or 'Free and Loyal Am I' (the Tonkin family, earls of Godolphin); *Bosco, Pasco, Karenza Venza* (The Boscawen family, Viscounts Falmouth); *Karenza whelas karenza*

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[2] A reviewer comments: "Welsh is favourably compared to Breton because there's a broadly agreed standard, while Breton is fragmented. Use of a language among an elite social group is a good way of ensuring an accepted standard (arguably a prerequisite for survival), and English elites removed that 'prop' in the case of Cornish ... association with a separate state also promotes a language's survival: again the claims to nationhood in Cornwall's case were deliberately and brutally undermined."

[3] Other mottoes known to have been used were *Frank ha leal ettoga* or *Franc ha leal atho ve* 'Free and Loyal Forever' or 'Free and Loyal Am I' (the Tonkin family, earls of Godolphin); *Bosco, Pasco, Karenza Venza* (The Boscawen family, Viscounts Falmouth); *Karenza whelas karenza* 'Love Worketh Love' (The Polwhele family); *Kenz ol tra, Tonkin, ouna Deu Mahtern yn* 'Tonkin, above all things, Fear God and the King' (Tonkin of Trevaunance); *Car Deu reyz pub tra* 'Love God Above All' (Harris of Keneggy); *Teg yw hedhwch* 'Fair is Peace' (Noye of St Buryan); *En Hav perkou Gwav* 'In Summer Remember Winter' (Gwavas); *Rag a Mahtern a Pow* 'For King and Country' (Polkinhorne); *Bethoh Dur* 'Be Bold' (Sloggett of Tresloggett).

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'Love Worketh Love' (The Polwhele family); *Kenz ol tra, Tonkin, ouna Deu Mahtern yn* 'Tonkin, above all things, Fear God and the King' (Tonkin of Trevaunance); *Car Deu reyz pub tra* 'Love God Above All' (Harris of Keneggy); *Teg yw hedhwch* 'Fair is Peace' (Noye of St Buryan); *En Hav perkou Gwav* 'In Summer Remember Winter' (Gwavas); *Rag a Mahtern a Pow* 'For King and Country' (Polkinhorne); *Bethoh Dur* 'Be Bold' (Sloggett of Tresloggett).

George (1986: 67) used various sources to estimate numbers of Cornish speakers between the Domesday enumeration of 1086 and the early thirteenth century. Starting from between 15,000-20,000 Cornish speakers in the 11th century, with some divergence from total population, the number rose to a maximum of approximately 38,000 in 1300. Thus in 1300, Cornish speakers are estimated to be 73% of the population of Cornwall. The Black death of the 1340s resulted in a demographic reversal. Subsequently, between the mid-fourteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries the number of Cornish speakers remained at approximately 33,000 whilst the population of Cornwall as a whole grew considerably.

For all economic and social purposes in the life and society of Cornwall, the majority of the populace used the Cornish language for most of the first 1500 years of its existence. And indeed for most of the Middle-Ages essentially the entire population of Cornwall, including all social classes, used the Cornish language as the common medium of communication. Throughout its early and middle periods until around 1500 AD, this was certainly true, although by 1500 Cornish had begun to weaken in the east of Cornwall. However trade and commerce was conducted with Brittany and many Bretons settled in Cornwall and were assimilated into the speech community. This strengthened and revitalised the Cornish language. The Cornish Stannary Parliament had an extensive and independent legislative role which brought about some stability for Cornwall and the Cornish language.

The advent of the Tudor period saw political and economic changes that were accompanied by a progressive east to west language-shift from Cornish to English. Within 150 years of the Tudor accession in 1485, three popular uprisings took place, which were to result in considerable loss of life amongst the male members of the Cornish speaking population – in particular those of child bearing age. As a consequence of the Reformation, the Cornish scriptoria at Glasney and Crantock colleges were lost, the English language was forced upon the Cornish in church, and ties

with Brittany were broken. Furthermore, the highly centralising English state suspended the Cornish Stannary Parliament[4].

The monarchy's empathy with Cornish Arthurian heritage ended when in 1497 the Cornish rose up in rebellion. Cornwall's complaints included additional taxation to fund Henry VII's war with Scotland, issues of central control of the tin trade, confiscation of the Stannary charters, and suspension of the Cornish Stannary Parliament. The rebellion was led by Thomas Flamank, a lawyer from Bodmin, and Michael Joseph, a blacksmith from St. Keverne. Michael Joseph was known as *An Gof*, which is Cornish for 'the blacksmith'. The Cornish army of 15,000 was defeated at Deptford Bridge, Blackheath by Henry's 25,000 strong army. Bacon (1790) records how 2,000 Cornishmen died in the battle. Those not butchered were hunted down and sold into slavery. Thomas Flamank and Michael Joseph were tortured before being hung drawn and quartered (*Great Chronicles of London*; Berresford Ellis 1974: 53-6; Fletcher 1986: 10-11; Stoyle 2002: 20-1). The catalogue of atrocities can be of course analogously extended to the murder of a language.

Four months after the Cornish defeat at Blackheath, West Cornwall rebelled once more in support of Perkin Warbeck's claim to the throne. Of the 6,000 Cornish rebels many were Cornish speakers (Berresford Ellis 1974: 56; Arthurson 1994: 181; Stoyle 2002: 21).

Cornish recrimination of these events is conveyed in the Cornish language miracle plays written at Glasney College in the 16th century. In the miracle play, *Passio Domini*, written in the Cornish language shortly after the 1497 rebellion, Jesus is referred to as the Son of Joseph the Smith. "Hemma yu an keth ihesu a lever y vos map deu map iosep an coth was gof" (*Passio Domini*: lines 1693-1695), 'This is the same Jesus who says he is the Son of God, Son of Joseph the old smith fellow'. "Cryeugh fast gans mur a grys may fo an ihesu crousys map an guas gof" (*Passio Domini*: lines 2477-2479), 'Cry aloud with much strength so that Jesus will be crucified, Son of the smith fellow'. These references to "an ... gof", 'the smith', allude to Michael Joseph *An Gof* of St. Keverne. Code-switching further reinforces the allusion; in the play Christ's torturers speak phrases of English.

Two other Cornish plays, *Bewnans Ke* and *Beunans Meriasek*, the Life of St Kea and the Life of St Meriasek, depict a pagan tyrant King Teudar, persecutor of Christians, and namesake of Henry Tudor. In *Beunans*

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[4] Reviewer's comment: loss of an H function (worship), cutting of trade links (with Brittany) which made the language seem 'useful' in speakers everyday life (forcing greater contact with English-speaking world), loss of statehood and political identity (and thus weakening of the language's identity function).

Meriasek, St. Meriasek is driven out of Cornwall by King Teudar, a self-styled "reigning lord in Cornwall", "prince", "emperor", "governor" and "conqueror" (Olson 1997: 54). As a result of this, Teudar is pursued by the Duke of Cornwall who confronts Teudar with the words "Ty turant a thyscregyans", 'You tyrant of unbelief' (*Beunans Meriasek* 2369). Teudar is then challenged, "Pendryu the kerth in pouma? Tytel na chalyng dyblans, aberth mam na tas oma, purguir nyth us", 'What is your right in this country? Obviously you have no clear title or claim here on either your mother's or your father's side' (*Beunans Meriasek* 2370-73). This contrasts with the Duke's assertion, "Me yu duk in oll Kernou; indella ytho ou thays", 'I am Duke over all of Cornwall; so was my father' (*Beunans Meriasek* 2242-44). Twice, Teudar is referred to as an 'alien' (*alyon/allyon*) (*Beunans Meriasek* 2415, 2451). In *Bewnans Ke* also we find Teudar referred to as a pagan tyrant. In this play, upon arrival in Cornwall from Brittany, Ke is arrested as a spy. Code-switching is similarly employed, with sentences of English being spoken by Teudar and his torturers, and by Ke when he first addresses Teudar.

Dissolution of the monasteries in Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and England took place under Henry VIII between 1538 and 1541. This was to have profound consequences for the Cornish language. The monastic colleges of Glasney and Crantock were the main sources of Cornish literature until they were suppressed in 1535, the year Henry VIII was excommunicated and Thomas Cromwell became vicar-general. These seats of Cornish learning were then smashed and looted and their scriptoria destroyed. According to Peter (1903: 100[5]),

> From the acts of the privy council we learn that the real motive of suppression of chantries etc., was to get money to meet the expenses of the Scottish and French wars. The act does not refer to this motive, but in its preamble speaks of erecting grammar-schools, augmenting the universities, and relieving the poor, -all of them laudable objects but not destined to be obtained.

On 16 April 1548, the building materials comprising Glasney College were sold off to Gyles Keylwaye for the sum of £3810 0s 11¾. "A great parte of the Leade that covereth the saide Church by virtue of warrant from the Counsell was sent to the thiles of Sille for the Kings Maiesties fortificacions there ..." (*Miscellaneous Books*). Thus the formal scholarship

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[5] A reviewer comments that there might be an argument that 'the language further lost prestige by virtue of the destruction of a literary norm'.

that had upheld the Cornish cultural identity was concluded (Peter 1903: 100ff.; Stoyle 2002: 20).

These events no doubt played an important part in engendering resistance to the imminent reformation. On the one hand, Glasney and Crantock were centres of Cornish cultural excellence. On the other hand they formed a link to Cornwall's Celtic past, an era prior to the take over by the current tyrant monarchy.

It is in the last years of the reign of Henry VIII that the English language is introduced into the liturgy in Cornwall. It is reported (Polwhele 1806: 5) that "Dr. John Moreman, a native of South-hole, and vicar of Menhenniet, was the first who taught his parishioners the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments in the English tongue." Most ordinary Cornish people had little or no English during this period. Thus Leland (1906), who visited Cornwall in 1538, describes how when Sir William Godolphin sent some expert tin blowers to London he had to apologise because they lacked English and that an interpreter was needed. So the 'H' language won: but this has not always been the case: Charlemagne was forced to admit vernaculars in church instead of Classical Latin in 842, and Luther's Bible translations had the same effect for East Middle German 700 years later.

Following the death of Henry VIII in 1547, the young Edward VI ascended to the throne. Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer was committed to creating a Protestant state. 1547 saw a turbulent demonstration in Penryn against religious innovations. The ban on religious processions and pilgrimages was accompanied by commissioners being dispatched to instigate a Cornish Catholic iconoclasm (Rose-Troup 1913: 73-82).

Following the passing of the Act of Uniformity, King Edward VI sent Commissioners around the country to destroy the symbols of the old Catholic form of worship. The Commissioner charged with implementing the king's affairs in Cornwall was Sir William Body, Archdeacon of Cornwall. Body had recently put down the Catholic Geraldine rebellion in Ireland and now took pleasure in his task in Cornwall. Body's desecration of religious shrines at Helston led to his being stabbed by William Kylter and Pascoe Trevian on April 5th 1548 (Rose-Troup 1913: 70-96) Perhaps, then, Cornish suffered by virtue of an association with the 'wrong' faith.

There followed immediate retribution when twenty eight Cornishmen were arrested, taken to Launceston Castle and executed. One 'traitor of Cornwall' was executed on Plymouth Hoe; details are given in the town accounts of the cost of timber for the gallows and poles to put the head and quarters of the said traitor upon. In order that English people might partake

of the festivities, a piece of the Cornishman's torso was conveyed to Tavistock. A priest of nearby St. Keverne, Martin Geoffrey, was taken to London where, after being hung drawn and quartered, his bloody head was impaled on a staff and placed upon London Bridge. This retributive barbarity only served to provoke even greater bitterness and anger in Cornwall (Worth 1893: 115; Rose-Troup 1913: 70-96).

In 1549, the four old liturgical books in Latin were replaced by Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*, which was published solely in English. The 1549 Act of Uniformity enforced its use not only in England but in Wales and Cornwall also. In Cornwall in particular, where most of the population at the time spoke only their native Cornish, this change was deeply resented. As a result, a Cornish army assembled in Bodmin on 6th June 1549. The articles issued by the Cornish army at Castle Canyke, near Bodmin reveal the ethnic dimension of the conflict: "And so we the Cornyshe men (wherof certen of us under stande no Englysh) utterly refuse thys newe Englysh" (*A Copye of a Letter* ...1549). It is clear from this article that the rebels were motivated by a resolve to withstand English cultural aggression (Berresford Ellis 1974: 60-2; Stoyle 2002: 24).

From Bodmin they marched east to Crediton in Devon and then on to Exeter. The insurgents merely requested that they should not be compelled to worship in their conqueror's language. Nevertheless, the Cornish were dismissed as being of the Anti-Christ by Cranmer. King Edward VI and his Privy Council sent an army of mainly German and Italian mercenaries under the command of Lord John Russell to impose a military solution. No attempt to parley was made by Russell and some 3,500 Cornish insurgents were slaughtered by mercenary forces. In one instance, 900 unarmed bound and gagged Cornish captives had their throats cut in just ten minutes by Russell's troops. In another instance the English surrounded and set fire to the village of Clyst St Mary and approximately a thousand rebels were burned alive. Those who survived were driven back into Cornwall. There, they were pursued and the thousands captured were put to death. Thus half the Cornish speaking able-bodied male population (11% of the Cornish population) were exterminated. Since families lost their men folk and livelihoods, the actual figure may be estimated at around 20%. As a reward for his loyalty and service, Miles Coverdale, the chaplain to the English forces, was made Bishop of Exeter. Those slaughtered in the uprising were mocked by Cranmer, who never showed a twinge of remorse (Berresford Ellis 1974: 60-2; Angarrack 2002: 174-5; Stoyle 2002: 23-4).

In 1559, Elizabeth I introduced a new Act of Uniformity. The Preface to the 1559 Act of Uniformity states, "And moreover, wheras Sainct Paule

woulde have such language spoken to the people in the Churche, as they might onderstande, and have profite by hearing the same .... and is ordeyned nothing to be readde but the very pure woord of God, the holye scriptures, or that which is evidently grounded upon the same, and that in such a language and ordre, as is most easy and playne for the understandyng bothe of the readers and hearers" (An Acte for the Uniformitie of Common Praier 1559). The Book of Common Prayer (Cranmer 1549) was printed in French in 1553, in Welsh and in Scottish Gaelic in 1567, in Irish in 1608 and in Manx in 1610. However, a Cornish translation of the Book of Common Prayer was not forthcoming.

In order to impose the English language *Book of Common Prayer* upon the Cornish, priests and populace were murdered, texts and traditions were destroyed, children were beaten, and use of the English language was enforced in church education. For nearly 150 years, this continued, sufficient to coerce tens of thousands of Cornish speakers into abandoning their native language[6].

Following the Prayer Book Rebellion, the Cornish language was to become stigmatised as a 'backward' language, and the language of Catholics potentially allied to enemies of England. The Cornish language was thus largely abandoned amongst the Cornish gentry. In 1605, Richard Carew, Baronet of Anthony in Cornwall, wrote a paper entitled "An Epistle concerning the Excellencies of the English Tongue" (Carew 1769). However Carew (1602) also writes that many Cornishmen refused to speak English to strangers, "for if meeting them by chance you inquire the way or any such matter, your answer shall be, Meea navidna cowzasawsneck, 'I can speak no Saxonage'." However, Carew's translation is not good; the phrase in fact means 'I will not speak English!'

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Cornish continued to be used amongst the poor in Cornwall's fishing communities. A small community of educated skilled tradesmen, clergy, men of affairs, lesser gentry, and professionals took an interest in Cornish and produced a small amount of original literature in addition to documenting oral Cornish lore. An englyn collected from the Clerk of St. Just in 1700 poignantly reflects on language loss:

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[6] Interestingly, a reviewer questions whether people actually stop speaking a language because they were told not to in school. 'French made little headway in France, in spite of compulsory schooling in French, until urbanization and industrialization created the need for a lingua franca [and] Franco's attempt to suppress Catalan was similarly unsuccessful'.

An lavar kôth yụ lavar guîr
Bedh dɐrn rê ver, dhɐn tavaz rê hîr
Mez dên heb davaz a gɐllaz i dîr.
(Lhuyd 1707: 251)

'The old saying is a true saying. A fist is too short for a tongue that is too long, but a man without a tongue lost his land.'
There is sparse evidence for the continued use of Cornish during the 19th century.

The revival of the Cornish language began when Henry Jenner published his *Handbook of the Cornish Language* in 1904. Jenner (1904) wrote, "Why should Cornishmen learn Cornish? There is no money in it, it serves no practical purpose and the literature is scanty and of no great originality or value. The question is a fair one, the answer is simple. Because they are Cornish." Throughout the twentieth century, with no support from the government or the state education system, a number of Cornish people learned to speak Cornish once more. An independent survey carried out for the Government Office for the South West in 2000 (SGRŮD Research 2000: Table 3.1) found approximately 6000 speakers of Cornish with around 840 capable of fluent everyday conversation.

Before a Member of Parliament can take their seat, a swearing of allegiance to the Queen takes place. Some MPs choose to repeat the oath in Welsh or Gaelic. In 1997, Andrew George was the first MP ever to use the Cornish language for this purpose. The swearing-in reads, "I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God." In Cornish, that translates as: "Me a le gans Dew Ollgallojak del vedhaf len ha perthy omryans gwyr dhe hy braster an vyternes elisabet, hy Erys ha Sewyoryon, herwyth an laha. Ytho Dew re'm gweressa."

Andrew George was also the first MP ever to use the Cornish language in the House of Commons in his maiden speech.

I congratulate honorary Members on the quality of their maiden speeches, which I shall try to match. I should like to take this opportunity to make a bit of history by saying: Me am beth hanow, Heb dewath ha bry, Bisgwethack rag nevra. Those words are Cornish. They were spoken by a blacksmith from St. Keverne, in my constituency, where I come from. That blacksmith was known locally as An Gof, which is Cornish for the smith, and was called Michael Joseph. He led an uprising from the constituency just one month short of 500 years ago. This weekend that uprising will be re-enacted when a large band of Cornish people will march 330 miles to London to celebrate and commemorate the Cornishmen's

storming of London. Sadly, that attack was not as successful as we would have liked. When the Liberal Democrats won the St. Ives seat earlier this month it was one of the last results to be announced. I pointed out that with our result it became clear that, for the first time, the traditional Celtic nations of Scotland, Wales and Cornwall were not represented by a single Conservative Member.

Speaking after the ceremony, Mr George said,

"Although we acknowledge that there are few speakers of the language, there is symbolism in using a tongue which has been widely spoken during the lifetime of our Parliamentary democracy. It is right that we should both recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, languages and histories of the country in the Houses of Parliament. This small but significant action helps to put Cornwall on the map for the right reasons" (BBC News 12 May, 2005).

The 1996 Education Act (Sections 406 and 407) forbids "the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject" and stipulates that "where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils," pupils must be "offered a balanced presentation of opposing views." Furthermore, a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg states,

The State when fulfilling the functions assumed by it in regard to education and teaching, must take care that information and knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner (*Kjeldsen, Busk, Madsen and Pedersen v Denmark* 1976).

Thus celebration of diversity through education is mandatory. However, when the Portfolio Holder for Education in Cornwall, Doris Ansari, was asked in 2001 "why Cornwall LEA were still implementing an imposed, wholly insensitive, mono-cultured educational programme, she said that to do otherwise would be *dangerous* and put Cornwall *on the road to the Balkans*" (Angarrack 2002: 16). The Minorities Unit of the Council for Europe receives all information demonstrating rights violations. Thus Ansari's violation of Convention principles was incorporated into the Council of Europe's evidence against the British Government (Angarrack 2002: 15-17).

In response to complaints to the Council of Europe about Ansari's remarks (Angarrack 2002: 17), the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe (6 June 2002) wrote,

The Advisory Committee notes that the Government does not consider the people of Cornwall to constitute a national minority. The Advisory Committee however notes that a number of persons living in Cornwall consider themselves to be a national minority within the scope of the Framework Convention. In this, the Advisory Committee has received substantial information from them as to their Celtic identity, specific history, distinct language, and culture (Council of Europe 6 June 2002, Article 3 [Comment 16]).

Following the Council of Europe's (6 June 2002) report, the government's representative in Cornwall, Candy Atherton, MP for Falmouth, made it clear that she would not support moves to make the Cornish language part of the school curriculum (*Western Morning News* 22 July 2002). Her hypocrisy was made evident three weeks later when she is reported as saying, "It is a sad fact that some ethnic minorities suffer discrimination. I strongly believe that diversity of culture should be celebrated and that education is a key to acceptance" (*Western Morning News* 23 August 2002).

After a long campaign fought by St Ives MP, Andrew George, the British Government was obliged to recognise the Cornish language. On the 5th November 2002, the Minister of State for Local and Regional Government, Nick Raynsford, announced that Cornish was to be granted official "minority language" status under Part II of the 1992 Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (Hansard 5 Nov 2002 : Column 207W). In implementing the Charter under Part II, the Government is obliged to consider the needs and wishes of groups that use the Cornish language and those who wish to learn the language (Council of Europe 1992).

As an initial step in the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter, a Strategy for the Cornish Language was adopted by Cornwall County Council and several Cornish language organisations on 6 April 2005. On 14th June 2005, Government funding to support the Cornish language was confirmed. Up to £80,000 a year for three years was agreed as match funding needed to support an application by Cornwall County Council for EU Objective 1 funding (Government News Network 14 June 2005). Currently a debate is taking place to agree upon a Standard Written Form of the Cornish language for official and educational purposes.

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