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Maynard, David, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1992

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IDEOLOGY, COLLECTIVE ACTION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE BRETON MOVEMENT, WESTERN FRANCE

by

DAVID MAYNARD

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1992

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DAVID MAYNARD

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

IDEOLOGY, COLLECTIVE ACTION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE BRETON MOVEMENT, WESTERN FRANCE

by

David Maynard

Adviser: Professor Jane Schneider

This dissertation presents an ethnographic and historical study of a contemporary ethnoregionalist social movement in Brittany (western France) known as the Breton movement. Based on anthropological fieldwork conducted in 1985-1987, the interconnections between ideology-production, collective action and life experiences of participants in the movement are examined in order to construct a holistic account of a counter-hegemonic culture of resistance. Particular analytical attention is paid to structural and ideological explanations of the relative "weakness" of Breton ethnic politics and its attempts to resist capitalist inequality and French state power in Brittany. Recent theories of social movements are reviewed and critiqued and a more anthropologically informed alternative theoretical approach is suggested.

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CHAPTER I

ETHNICITY AND POLITICS

Studies of ethnicity and politics have noted two interrelated processes; first, that ethnic (and/or racial) competition, conflict and violence are pervasive if not universal in contemporary stratified societies and, second, that such conflict and violence are usually isomorphic with political struggles over scarce resources (Horowitz 1985; Rothschild 1980; Olzak 1983; Olzak and Nagel 1986; Tambiah 1989; Nash 1989; Williams 1989). An alternative tradition of ethnic studies has emphasized the symbolic constitution of ethnic identity as ideological representation. A small number of case studies have combined these two perspectives by exploring the dynamic relationship between historically constructed ethnic identities and the maintenance of, or resistance to, relations of domination and inequality (Cohen 1969; Bourgois 1988). The project described here consists of an ethnographic and historical study of a contemporary ethnoregionalist social movement in Brittany (western France), known as the Breton movement, or, as it is typically referred to in Breton, Emsav (literally "to rise up", also variously translated as "uprising" and "revolt").

I did my ethnographic fieldwork in Brittany during 1985

and 1987 (a total of ten months). For much of that time I was based in Rennes, a city of roughly 200,000 people located in eastern Brittany about three hours (or 300 kilometers) by train from Paris. Brittany is an administrative region in western France where a substantial minority claims a Celtic ethnic identity (a culturally Breton identity) and where a significant minority speaks Breton as a second language. In 1987, the four departments making up Brittany had a population of approximately 2.7 million and with the Loire-Atlantique added (traditionally a part of the region but not currently so recognized by the French state) around 4 million. It is generally agreed upon that there are roughly 600,000 Breton speakers at present. Data from a survey on French attitudes show that while 22% of Brittany's population considered themselves solely "Breton" and 26% identified themselves as equally "Breton" and "French", over 80% of the respondents reported satisfaction with the current political status of Brittany in the French state, with only 12% favoring "autonomous status" (cited in Olzak 1983).

The Breton movement consists of a wide array of cultural-linguistic organizations, political parties and small informal coalitions (numbering about 60 in 1987, no exact number can be given due to the instability of many of the formations). At present, perhaps 5000 individuals are actively involved politically as "militants" (<u>an emsaverien</u> or <u>ar stourmerien</u> in Breton). "Militant" can be glossed

from French as "political activist", yet it lacks the connotation of radicalism in the English cognate; hence, it is possible to be a "militant" in mainstream French political parties, whether in the French Socialist Party or the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic party. They usually avoid the label of "activist" for this has a connotation of extremist violence. Breton militants tend to be male, fairly young (thirty to forty years old, on average), urban dwelling, university educated, and hold middle class salaried professional occupations. A large proportion work in educational institutions (lycées, universities) and "middle class intellectual" is not an inappropriate label. As a group they generally share a leftist ideological position emphasizing resistance to what they perceive as the linguistic and cultural domination of the region by the French state, or, less often, economic domination of Brittany and Breton workers by either externally owned (Paris based or transnational) capitalist enterprises or by the inequality producing effects of EEC and state agricultural policies.

The movement expresses solidarity with other Celtic peoples (particularly the Welsh and Irish), with other regional-ethnic minorities within Europe (especially the Basques and Corsicans) and with various peoples who are oppressed by the French nation-state (most notably the Kanaks of New Caledonia); indeed with all oppressed ethnic minorities (Native Americans being one striking example).

The forms this solidarity takes are primarily rhetorical rather than organizational. My study of this population of Breton militants was carried out through interviews with leaders and "ordinary" members of all principal organizations, participant observation of rallies, marches, protests and court trials, and via the analysis of a large corpus of political texts disseminated by various organizations for propaganda purposes (Breton militants regularly use the word "propaganda" to describe their pamphlets, tracts, posters and writings). Many of my research findings are consistent with what is known about the Breton movement from other independent researchers; hence the ethnographic material presented in my work may be said to have a degree of external validity.

Although the general insights from the ethnicity literature form a useful point of departure for my analysis, my theoretical perspective places the explanatory emphasis elsewhere. In particular, the central concerns of this study are the genesis, form and content of ideological discourse, the multiple connections of ideology to strategies of collective political mobilization and the influence of life-experiences on the beliefs and actions of individual militants within the Breton movement. This perspective emerges from Sherry Ortner's call for anthropological theorizing which focuses on symbol production and social action within clearly understood encompassing contexts of asymmetrical political and economic relations (Ortner 1984).

In the case of the Breton movement, these contexts take the form of unequal capitalist development in Brittany and the expansion of centralized control by the French nation-state in the region; but, however important these contexts, they do little in and of themselves to account for the particularities of form and patterning of belief and practices in this social movement.

An ever-present problem of anthropological research lies in attempts to interrelate global, national or regional processes of social change with events, activities and cultural forms observed and described at the local level by ethnographers (see eg. Ortner 1984; Roseberry 1988; Rebel 1989a and 1989b). Charles Tilly, perhaps the most influential historical sociologist studying contention in France, remarks "no doubt the rise of Breton and Occitan nationalism in the 1970s had something to do with statemaking and capitalism", but goes on to add that "regional and ethnic movements do not follow as directly from the logic of statemaking and capitalism as do, say, workers' organizations and taxpayers' resistance movements" (Tilly 1986:6). Many social scientists have attempted, however, to explain characteristics of ethnic minority movements in western Europe in terms of economic relationships between industrially developed cores and underdeveloped peripheries (see especially Hechter 1975; Gourevitch 1979). From a structural viewpoint, much variation in the experiential and political saliency of

ethnicity can probably be explained in the following terms; namely, that there is a dialectical tendency in the divergent effects of state policies and the operation of capitalist labor markets on ethnicity. While modern territorial states often try to homogenize ethnic or linguistic differences (see, for instance, Weber 1976 on the French case), capitalist labor markets reproduce, and indeed generate, such differences (see Gordon et al 1982; Wolf 1982).

Theorizing of this sort is very useful for our understanding of the large scale dynamics implicated in the persistence and expansion of ethnic minority movements in western Europe after 1945. Since the 19th century, Brittany has been a more or less peripheral region within France, that is, less industrialized, lower returns to labor, higher unemployment, and much greater dependence on agriculture and tourism than other portions of the country, particularly the Paris basin. Beginning in the mid 19th century, Brittany has been the arena of a continuous, uneven and often intense process of "forced cultural assimilation" by the French state centered around the persecution of the Breton language. Economic inequality and linguistic discrimination form much of the cultural raw material of political discourse among Breton militants. Thus, it is undeniable that capitalism and statemaking are directly involved in the form and patterning of the Breton movement. As an ethnographer, my methodological strategy is to examine what

is observable in a particular time and place, and what I chose to observe are expressions of social consciousness, the construction of political text and rhetoric, and the modalities of political struggle.

During my fieldwork informants often referred to two anthropologists who had conducted fieldwork in Brittany prior to mine: Lois Kuter and Maryon McDonald. Kuter, an American anthropologist, did her research in the mid 1970s on Breton identity as reflected in both popular music and linguistic struggles (Kuter 1981). She later became a devoted advocate for Breton political causes. Among other activities, she served as the American secretary of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language, participated in protests against the French government's policies in Brittany and wrote academic articles which treated Breton militancy in a quite sympathetic and perhaps uncritical way (see for instance Kuter 1985 and 1989). Breton militants are eager for any form of external support or validation for their struggles and so it is understandable that numerous informants spoke very positively of Lois Kuter's work--both academic and advocacy; and, in fact, several of those informants made transparent attempts to coopt me to act as an advocate in ways similar to hers.

Maryon McDonald, on the other hand, is not so popular in Breton militant circles--one of those ethnographers victimized when "informants read what we write" (see AAA

1990)--due to her research findings that the average Breton speaker willingly embraced the opportunity to learn French. Breton militants found this difficult to accept as it contradicts their basic ideology of French oppression of Bretons. McDonald describes militant reaction to her academic work in various publications (see especially McDonald 1989 and 1987). More generally, however, McDonald's accounts of her fieldwork conducted between 1978 and 1981 tend to parody and satirize Breton militants in a rather cruel way. If the language of representation is at all important in ethnography as a writing genre, then McDonald departs from an old anthropological tradition of romanticizing those who offer resistance against hegemonic structures. As one reviewer of her book put it: "...perhaps she might have been kinder to the militants of the Breton movement, whose excesses and absurdities are pitilessly depicted in her pages...[and who as] zealots will inevitably appear somewhat foolish and decidedly inauthentic ("militant Breton" is scarcely intelligible to native speakers in Brittany)" (Dorian 1981: 509).

In my own ethnographic writing, I alternate between my own voice and that of my informants without trying to privilege one account over the other. "Privileging" means giving special priority to an opinion, a theory, an ethnic group, a paradigm, a perspective, a "text" or an informant and represents an ultimate sin in both the politics of multiculturalism and the poetics of postmodernism (see

Rosenau 1992; Clifford 1988).

My own political and moral position is ambivalent. While there is no doubt a case to be made for a history of oppression--political, economic and cultural--in Brittany, much of that oppression today is cognitively and symbolically self-constructed in the minds of Breton militants. Oppression and injustice are problematic concepts when used by middle class intellectuals describing their own situation while it goes without saying that the everyday experience of oppression in Brittany is insignificant when compared with that of many other subordinated ethnic peoples around the world. Since social groups like peasants, industrial workers and popular Breton speakers form a very small minority of participants in the contemporary Breton movement, one has to rethink questions of its underlying identity, purpose and structure. In essence, it is a rhetorically progressive or radical movement which pursues both in intellectual and class terms an elitist, exclusionary political agenda. With respect to linguistic issues, Breton militants speak and act for an imaginary constituency--those 10,000 or so neo-Breton speakers and all those who could in principle learn to speak the language--not for the interests of the 600,000 living popular Breton speakers in rural lower Brittany. On economic issues, Breton militants largely speak and act for their own class interests while on the surface claiming to speak for the Breton people, nation or region. For these

reasons, I prefer to be neither a satirist of nor an advocate for the Breton movement; rather, as a politically progressive yet cynical ethnographer working within a political economy perspective I seek to objectively analyze the dynamics of power, resistance, identity and ideology of Breton ethnic politics no matter what form they may actually take.

Research Questions and Notes on Methodology

My broadest goal in conducting the research was to examine the internal political dynamics of a weak or unsuccessful social movement--something contrary to the main thrust of most studies. Breton ethnic politics have neither been a mass-based popular phenomenon nor have they been able to press various claims against the French state with any substantial degree of visible effect. Political and ideological repression, internal divisions and poor mobilization of material and symbolic resources are some of the underlying causal factors responsible for this relative failure of the Breton ethnic political agenda. Yet the movement has persisted, in its various forms, over a long time span. I am concerned, therefore, with the ideological and emotional motivations of Breton ethnic activists which in part account for this persistence.

More specifically, this dissertation attempts to address five important questions regarding the Breton movement.

1. What forms does ideology production take for Breton militants and how does that ideology function as counter-hegemony in its mobilization of both militants and other Bretons to take part in the politics of protest and everyday resistance? Here the analytical issue is to examine the symbols embedded in propaganda, rhetoric and discourse as self-consciously constructed texts created by intellectuals largely, though not exclusively, for an audience of intellectuals.

2. What individual motivations do Breton militants have which facilitate, encourage or even guarantee their participation in ethnic politics? Here I examine both implicit and explicit motivational contexts--economic, moral, political--as well as life events which best predict political engagement and commitment. The social consciousness of Breton militants is primarily a product of everyday perceptions of personal experience with stigmatization, discrimination and oppression. Most informants age thirty or older can report some incidents of social sanctions experienced as Breton speakers in school, work or urban living situations. Insofar as the majority of Breton militants are self-conscious and often aggressive speakers of Breton in a world made up of French speakers, some of these experiences are partly self-created.

The specific formation of these militant modes of consciousness is not readily explained, although life history data suggest at least three possible scenarios.

First, some militants emerge from militant families where (most typically) their fathers and (some of) their siblings shared in both a nationalist political ideology and a bilingual home speaking environment from a young age. Relatively few militants fit this characterization; however, small number of actively militant families have been key actors in this movement since the 1930s. Second, a greater number of militants share similar life experiences; that is, Breton speaking parents who preferred that their children learn French, a period of "discovery" of their own language resulting in a shift of attitude from "shame" to "pride", some isolated yet cognitively privileged incidents of linguistic discrimination, participation in the Breton cultural revival (especially music) of the 1970s and attempts to improve their command of Breton through formal instruction and self-study. These life experiences seem to be formative for their present political orientation. Third, some militants emerge from a 1960s or post-1968 leftist political milieu where the precise form of their commitment happens to focus on regional economic or cultural issues, even though these militants often do not have Breton speaking parents and may not be Breton speakers themselves. It should be noted that these life course scenarios are very much age-dependent, but since the majority of active militants are between ages thirty and forty it is possible to suggest some general pathways.

3. What forms do collective action take in the culture

of resistance embodied by the Breton movement and what factors account for variation in their repertoire of marches, rallies, demonstrations, illegal symbolic protest activities and other modalities of political struggle? Here, my analysis is both ethnographic and comparative. I focus on an ethnography of social protest as well as a comparison of Breton ethnic collective action to that of other actors in Brittany--peasants, workers--as well as to other new social movements in France and the United States. The broader goal of this part of my analysis is to construct some new theories for understanding new social movements. The practice of ethnography and theory building must always go together based upon coupling new explanatory frameworks with what E.P. Thompson once called a "creative skepticism about empirical materials".

4. I am especially concerned with the absence of political violence in the Breton movement. Unlike many other contemporary ethnoregionalist movements, Brittany has not seen the emergence of armed groups directly contesting the state and civil society through terrorism, murder and military struggle. This is particularly interesting since many of the same underlying conditions exist in Brittany as those found in Corsica, Northern Ireland or the Basque region of Spain. I offer a preliminary explanation of this comparative dimension of violence later in this chapter.

5. What range of factors account for the relative lack of success or "weakness" of Breton ethnic politics? In the

concluding chapters I assemble a range of research findings on language, identity, ideology, collective action and the cultural worlds of Breton militants to address this important comparative question. As part of this summarizing explanatory effort, I present a series of comparisons and contrasts of Breton ethnoregionalist politics with more visibly successful new social movements. In particular, I focus on ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power)--perhaps the most successful and dynamic new social movement of the past five years.

From a methodological standpoint, I used the traditional anthropological techniques of participant observation and directed interviews (see Bernard 1988). My sample consists of roughly 50 Breton militants--informants chosen because they were well-known in the movement, leaders of major formations or because they were willing to be interviewed. It is difficult to imagine generating a random sample of Breton militants--in part because the population boundaries are not well-defined and in part because the population itself is geographically highly dispersed. Maryon McDonald goes so far as to say that "the movement is not a 'countable' phenomenon in the conventional sense" (1989: 75).

Even estimating the overall size of the Breton movement is difficult since 1) there are always conflicting membership estimates from inside any given formation and estimates from outside are nearly always sharply lower, 2)

"militant" identity is essentially self-ascribed and militants vary widely in their level of commitment and engagement (some leaders in the movement distinguish between "passive" and "active" militants), 3) Bretons, or for that matter, non-ethnic Bretons, may act as militants in a situationally variable way; for instance, politicians elected to the Conseil Régional may choose to vote to provide financial resources for the Diwan schools, but may vote quite differently when it comes to bilingual road signs, 4) some organizations have semi-secret memberships (Stourm Ar Brezhoneg, for instance), 5) knowledge is hierarchically monopolized in the Breton movement and intentional overestimating of membership is likely given the overall weakness and small size of the movement, 6) there is a significant degree of overlapping membership in major formations and militants sometimes circulate their allegiance to one or more parties over time, and 7) there are a broad range of activities and sentiments which characterize Breton militants, as McDonald expresses it: "...it is possible to do anything from dancing Celtic dances to blowing up the Palace of Versailles and claim membership of (sic) the movement. In order to be taken seriously, however, by those who tend to dominate the modern movement, it is necessary to speak, or seriously aspire to speak, Breton" (McDonald 1986b: 334).

In addition to interviews, I directly observed two major episodes of collective action and a few smaller

protests--these were virtually the only such events that happened during my fieldwork. I rely on secondary literature for descriptions of some other sequences of collective political mobilization. I have collected as well approximately 100 "political texts" published between 1984 and 1992. These texts, about three quarters of which are written in French rather than Breton, include broad ideological statements on the goals of particular political formations, policy orientations on specific issues and commentary on current events. Most of the texts were printed in the three primary Breton political journals, others were published and diffused as propaganda pieces in diverse contexts. I view these texts as cultural products embodying, in a formal and repetitive way, the social consciousness and ideology of Breton militants. The main task of analysis will be to decode the stylistic and semantic forms of the messages contained in this sample of texts. Finally, I collected some anecdotal and impressionistic data on the avenues and patterns of the diffusion of Breton political journals and present these data as a window on communication processes underlying the transmission of Breton ideas and sentiments.

Two other methodological points are of interest. First, by necessity my fieldwork took place in multiple locations. As Marcus and Fischer put it:

> Regional analysis should thus involve not only geographic-economic mapping of what happens where, but also the relative power-linked articulation and

> conflict over ideologies, world views, moral codes and locally bounded conditions of knowledge and competence. ...With the inclusion of the interpretive perspective on local and regional cultures, such studies might be moving in a more experimental direction that would operate on two levels simultaneously, one that would provide culturally motivated views of what goes on in connected locales, and one that would provide an account of the system which connects them. It should be noted that the realization of multilocale ethnographic texts...may entail a novel kind of fieldwork. Rather than being situated in one, or perhaps two communities for the entire period of research the fieldworker must be mobile, covering a network of sites that encompass a process, which is in fact the object of the study (1986: 94).

Thus, while some of the best European ethnography focuses on communities (White 1980; Netting 1981; Harding 1984; Behar 1986; Rogers 1991) or on regions (Schneider and Schneider 1976; Hansen 1977), this study focuses on the ideas and actions of a highly dispersed population of actors unified by shared ideologies of oppression and injustice within a regional context. It is useful to point out that much research on Breton ethnic politics could also be conducted in Paris since so many Bretons--and some Breton militants--live there as immigrants.

The second valuable methodological point concerns the use of a category of informant I call "informed outsiders". In a social movement dominated by intellectuals and intellectualized discourse, there are local observers who know a great deal about the internal dynamics and who can offer an ethnographer a well-informed and often critical point of view. These "informed outsiders" may or may not be currently involved politically in the movement yet

definitely have a wide and long-term acquaintance with militants who are. They include such actors as academics, journalists and politicians. As well-informed observers they may be distanced from the personality disputes, ideological orthodoxy and petty arguments characteristic of the Breton movement. In my research, I relied upon three such informants--a linguist and the directors of a state funded cultural institute. All three had been engaged at one time or another in the movement, yet all three were also in a sense outsiders to it in that they owed no particular allegiance to any cause or group and all three were as well dispassionate observers of this political arena. I would add finally that in general it was peculiar to be conducting this research in the sense that the vast majority of my informants were highly educated and used a discourse of social science and historiography when being interviewed or in casual conversations. Since my informants often utilized a Marxist vocabulary, I sometimes felt as though I was interviewing myself or my colleagues in anthropology!

Theories of Ethnic Politics

There is an extensive social science literature on ethnicity and ethnic politics (Banton 1987 and 1983; Cox 1948; Despres 1975; Fox 1985; Kahn 1981; Keyes 1981; Rex and Mason 1988; Miles 1989; Stoler 1989; Van den Berghe 1970; Vincent 1974; Wilkie 1977; Worsley 1984; Yinger 1985, in addition to the works cited on page one). I do not propose

to review that literature here since others have already done so. Instead I will lay out a framework for examining ethnic politics and then will proceed to offer a comparative perspective for understanding ethnic nationalism in post-1945 western Europe.

Ethnicity (like race) is primarily a power relation. As such one must understand different ways that dominant groups relate to minority groups (understood here in the sociological rather than statistical sense). Simpson and Yinger identify six main types of policies pursued by dominant groups: assimilation, pluralism, legal protection of minorities, population transfer, continued subjugation and extermination (Simpson and Yinger 1972; see also Yinger 1985). These policies are not mutually exclusive, some or all may be carried out simultaneously and, taking the United States as one example, all may be used at one point or another in historical time. Simpson and Yinger do not choose to emphasize the conflictual nature of each of these possibilities for structuring inter-ethnic relations nor do they adequately take into account cases where different dominant ethnic groups control, respectively, state institutions and key sectors of the economy (Malaysia, Uganda, and South Africa would be some recent examples). I briefly discuss this typology.

1. <u>Assimilation</u> involves attempts to eliminate cultural differences through conformity to a dominant group norm, usually primarily through education. In Brittany and in the

provinces generally in France, this process has taken both linguistic and cultural dimensions (see Weber 1976; Grillo 1989).

2. Pluralism involves the management of inter-ethnic relations in such a way that diverse groups can coexist and mutually accommodate themselves to their differences while simultaneously cooperating in areas like defense, taxation and foreign policy. Switzerland is generally mentioned as the most successful example of a pluralist system organized in a federalist model.

However, federalist systems are often subject to breakdown and internal strife. In Yugoslavia, for instance, diverse ethnic groups were held together by a strong centralized state after World War II, but when Communist authority started to collapse several republics began to seek independence from the Serbian dominated state structure. Several factors are of relevance in the subsequent Yugoslavian civil war. First, cultural and religious differences between Serbs, Croatians and Muslim Slavs, coupled with the historical legacy of genocide against Serbs conducted by the wartime fascist Croatian state, created the foundations for ethnic antagonism and hatred. Second, Slovenia and Croatia both had more highly developed economies than Serbia yet paid a disproportionate share of the tax burden to subsidize a relatively backward Serbian economy (see Sudetic 1991). This created an economic basis for ethnic autonomy based on private

enterprises with trade links to Italy and Austria. Finally, although the Yugoslav federal army is dominated by Serbian officers, the Tito regime created republic-based military forces as a second line of defense against external attack, thereby giving independence minded republics the military wherewithal to contest their secession by force. Federalist--or pluralist--systems may also be dissolved through constitutional means as the case of Canada suggests. Here, the possible secession of Quebec is related both to struggles over cultural and linguistic differences as well as to worries on the part of the Quebecois capitalist and middle classes regarding the economic viability of an independent Quebec (see Handler 1988). France remains a highly centralized system so this policy is not applicable to the Breton case.

3. Legal protection of minorities involves the attempt to guarantee equal rights to all minority group members by legal and constitutional means. Ironically, such a policy often coexists with severe patterns of racial and ethnic stratification even though discrimination with respect to access to critical resources is not legally sanctioned by the state (for the Netherlands and the United States, see, for example, Essed 1991). In Brittany, all citizens are legally granted equal rights by the French state as part of the historical denial of ethnic differences by successive French regimes.

4. Population transfer involves moving the minority

group somewhere else, often by coercive means. The separation of Pakistan from India after World War II involved the migration of approximately 12 million Muslims and Hindus and is perhaps the best known example. "Ethnic cleansing" conducted by Serbs in the Yugoslavian civil war is a more recent instance. Yet such diverse cases as the forced resettlement of indigenous peoples throughout the world (including the United States) and the global refugee problem of the 1980s suggest that this is a common scenario.

5. Continued subjugation involves the maintenance of a hierarchical structure of ethnic or racial inequality founded on economic exploitation and political domination. While apartheid in South Africa is generally seen as the classic example (see the excellent history by Thompson 1990), my estimate would be that such a policy is characteristic of at least 75% of contemporary societies--including the United States (see Hacker 1992). Many Breton militants would argue that the scenario best fits the situation in Brittany; however, the objective and empirical evidence for this is fragmentary and contradictory.

6. Extermination. Both history and current events provide examples of genocide and some anthropological research has concerned itself with the destruction of indigenous peoples by European colonialism (and neo-colonialism) since 1500 (see Bodley 1990; Wolf 1982). Some extreme militant conceptions in Brittany might argue that Bretons were victims of genocide in World War I (see

Chapters Two and Four) and that the Breton language is presently threatened by a policy of "cultural genocide" waged by the French government.

There is also an extensive ethnographic and comparative literature on ethnic politics in western Europe (Brass 1985; Breuilly 1982; Esman 1977; Foster 1980; Heiberg 1989; Mayo 1974; Rokkan and Urwin 1983). Again, I do not propose to review this body of literature but will instead concentrate on the theoretical work of two researchers: Michael Hechter and Peter Gourevitch. Their models of ethnic conflict are especially relevant for the Breton case.

Hechter's work is nearly always invoked in discussions of ethnic nationalism and so it is appropriate to use it as an example here (Hechter 1975). In Internal Colonialism, Hechter addresses the social origins of ethnic solidarity and its relationship to economic development. His model is organized around the concept of economic cores and peripheries, in the way that Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1979, 1980) uses these terms. Core and peripheral groups have differential access to political and economic resources; peripheral groups are disadvantaged and discriminated against by core groups. This stratification system, which Hechter calls a "cultural division of labor", contributes to the maintenance, intensification or perhaps creation of distinctive ethnic identification in the two groups. To the extent that social stratification in the periphery is based on observable cultural or linguistic

differences, there exists the probability, according to Hechter, that the disadvantaged group will react to this prevailing inequality by asserting ethnic identity, claims for nation-hood or for greater access to resources. In essence, this is a model of the "pissed off periphery" or perhaps "petulant periphery".

Internal Colonialism is to be commended for emphasizing that ethnic politics have a basis in productive and power relations. However, Hechter's work is replete with problems of various kinds. I briefly discuss three of them.

First, there are some empirical problems. For instance, we can think about economically peripheral regions whose potentially ethnic populations do not develop ethnic identity and claims for nation-hood or greater access to resources. In addition, and much more troublesome, do any real cases of ethnic minority nationalism correspond to this model? Politically salient ethnic minority nationalist movements in the 20th century have emerged in regions that are economically developed (Basque provinces, Catalonia), undergoing de-industrialization or experiencing re-industrialization (Wales, Scotland). As it happens, Brittany may be one region where a more or less pure form of "internal colonialism" can be found (see Reece 1979; Fortier 1980).

Second, Hechter's model fails to disaggregate ethnic social movements either in time or institutionally. By the phrase "disaggregation..." I mean that ethnic social

movements typically undergo changes in form (autonomist versus separatist, for instance), institutional density (how many distinct groups are in operation), class composition and types of collective action engaged in as they develop through historical time. They are plainly not homogeneous or continuous phenomena, either institutionally or chronologically.

Finally, social movements never emerge magically out of some reactive context. Political mobilization is an active process, involving what some Marxists call agency (E.P. Thompson 1978), and is organized around bundles of class interests. In particular, regional elites or "professional middle classes" are often key actors in episodes of group formation in ethnic politics.

Peter Gourevitch's work (1979) is apparently less well-known and certainly less frequently cited than Hechter's publications. Yet Gourevitch offers us a very elegant model which fills some of the gaps present in Hechter's internal colonialism thesis. Gourevitch's model is elegant because it contains only three variables, and offers only three hypotheses which clearly state the relationship between these variables. Gourevitch suggests that the concept of "core" can be understood in two senses. First, in any given nation-state, there is a geographical center of "political leadership"--the center of state-building activity historically and current political administration. Second, "core" can be understood in a more purely economic sense as

the historical locus of industrialization or high rates of economic growth. These two types of core may or may not be congruent in geographical space. Gourevitch's third variable is "ethnic potential"--basically whether a population possesses some distinctive cultural or linguistic markers which can potentially be mobilized for political purposes.

Gourevitch's three hypotheses are as follows:

1. When political leadership and economic dynamism are concentrated in the same region--when the two types of core overlap in space--ethnic peripheral nationalism tends to be weak, or politically non-salient. France, Italy and Germany are relevant cases here. The reason why this should be so primarily has to do with the fact that peripheral groups which are both politically and economically powerless lack the necessary resources to sustain an effective movement vis-a-vis the state.

2. When political leadership and economic dynamism are concentrated in different regions, and one of those regions has ethnic potential, then peripheral nationalisms tend to be strong, or politically salient. Examples here include the relationship between Britain and Scotland, or between Spain and Catalonia or the Basque provinces. Empirically, these cases have to do with peripheries which a) can develop resources of their own to re-industrialize (like Scotland and its North Sea oil) or b) are dependent on the state for economic development resources (like Catalonia, see, e.g.

Hansen 1977) or c) have high levels of economic development (for instance, the Basque case). The key idea is that as long as the core is viable economically, peripheral elites or middle classes will accept a subordinate economic role. But, when economic development in the core falters or slows down (as with Britain), the attractiveness of that role diminishes. As a result, at these points in time, there is a greater probability of ethnic nationalism emerging.

3. When there is no ethnic potential, there will be no ethnic politics. This is a counter-factual hypothesis which is probably never empirically observable.

Gourevitch's model, as I have outlined it here, goes a long way towards correcting some of the limitations of the internal colonialism thesis and also explains some of the features of ethnic social movements--timing, variation in political saliency and so on. Moreover, both his and Hechter's expectations or predictions mesh well with the historical experience of Brittany and Breton nationalism. Brittany has many of the standard indicators of a peripheral region, and it does have a history of ethnic politics. At the same time, Breton ethnic politics have hardly ever been politically salient in France and can be viewed as a type example of the "weak" form of ethnic nationalism described by Gourevitch.

Real histories, however, always muddle models. Neither Gourevitch's nor Hechter's abstract structural formulations can tell us much of anything about the historical specifics

of 80 years of Breton ethnic politics. As I have already suggested, this is so because both models leave out the roles that ideology, the construction of tradition, historical conjuncture and, indeed, for the most part, class interests play in changing patterns of group mobilization. Part of my goal in this dissertation is to fill in the necessary ethnographic and historical gaps in macro-level political economy theorizing of the kind done so well by Hechter, Gourevitch, Tilly, and others.

Violence as a Comparative Problem

Recent anthropological work on ethnonationalist violence in western Europe has discussed the underlying cultural and moral logic of organizations like ETA and the IRA. Zulaika (1988) suggests that Basque nationalist violence has a sacramental aspect based upon a "logic of polarization" within the collective representation of Basque cultural identity. This logic of polarization includes moral obsessions with themes of betrayal, sacrifice, martyrdom and loyalty--all necessary ingredients of a culture of violence. Feldman (1991) examines the symbolism of the body as contested terrain for state authorities and urban guerillas alike in Northern Ireland. Both studies are ethnographically rich in description and have interesting analytical viewpoints.

Violence in a comparative perspective is more difficult to understand. Rokkan and Urwin write:

> The most extreme strategy is violence. Bombing and assassination may be good propaganda which can serve to quell possible objections from the peripheral population and to impress upon the center the high costs of any attempt to eradicate the violence. It is doubtful, however, whether violence as a strategy can be structurally predicted. The existence of a clandestine military tradition dating back to violent historical events seems to be more important than contemporary characteristics of the communities: ETA and the IRA have more in common with each other than with the Basque and Northern Irish communities. Overall, violence is most likely where there seems to be little or no support for the policy, or when other avenues for pursuing demands are closed: it is very much a costly policy of the last resort (1983: 150).

I would add that violence is also likely where the material inequality is very great but where state repression is insufficiently organized to stifle all resistance. In Northern Ireland, most of the men of violence come from extremely poor neighborhoods in Belfast and Londonderry where unemployment rates are as high as 50%. In the Basque case, ETA activity increased after the demise of the Franco regime in 1975 and the lessening of efficient state repression of protest. The cultures of violence embodied in groups like ETA and the IRA are, as Rokkan and Urwin suggest, self-replicating as organizational and symbolic forms.

Why is there a relative absence of violence in Breton ethnonationalism? Breton militants fall somewhat short of active unequivocal condemnation of violence in the Basque area or Northern Ireland, yet do not pursue such tactics themselves. I suggests five possible explanations to account for this.

1. Everyday life in Brittany is not lived as a colonial experience. While there may be regional inequalities within France, Brittany is far less a colony than Corsica, living standards are high and there is more local ownership of resources. There has been a progressive amelioration of the economic situation over time and daily life is not a desperate confrontation with a rigid stratification system.

2. There is no visible French military presence in Brittany in everyday life (armed soldiers do not patrol the streets) and therefore there is no "politics and poetics of military occupation" so crucial to the formation of cultures of resistance based on armed struggle (examples include the intifada in the occupied territories in Israel, black townships in South Africa during the 1980s, Northern Ireland). Cultural repression in Brittany is largely invisible and takes place through education and the media as part of a French state policy I call "fiscal brutality" in Chapter Three.

3. Violence is not part of a traditional cultural repetoire in Brittany. Unlike Corsica, where cultural forms like vendetta, bandits and Mediterranean codes of honor play an important part in the cycles of violence, Brittany has seen a powerful influence from both Christianity and non-violent political struggles over the past fifty years.

4. Bretons have historically had some negotiating space with the French state at least in the domains of language and culture which presently constitute the principal goals

of Breton militancy if not on most economic autonomy issues. Violence may therefore be excluded from their repetoire of collective action as an expensive and unnecessary strategy.

5. Breton militancy has long faced dual problems of a limited organizational capacity to create and maintain clandestine groups coupled with highly effective repression by the French state. The absence of violence becomes a conscious choice by Breton militants who recognize these material constraints.

In summary, no informant has ever suggested to me that Bretons should adopt a military strategy to pursue their ethnonationalist objectives. There is, however, a remote possibility of a new cycle of FLB style "symbolic violence" if governmental changes in Paris see rightist leaders replace the current Socialist administration. Breton militants believe this could result in a contraction of negotiation opportunities on cultural issues where their options would be more sharply limited.

Real and Imagined Oppression in Brittany

Oppression is a central organizing theme of the symbolism underlying Breton militancy. But like the "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and "nostalgia without memory" (Appadurai 1990) now so popular in the social sciences, oppression and injustice in Brittany are to some extent ideological constructions on the part of Breton

militants. Evidence on linguistic discrimination and oppression is discussed in detail in Chapter Three and Breton militant conceptions of political oppression in Chapter Four. Here, I focus on the economic history of Brittany since the 19th century--a history of economic change and social class processes which, similar to those of language and politics, offers ambiguous support for militant conceptions of society and culture.

An economic history of Brittany beginning in 1800 would suggest two contrasting views. The first view focuses on agriculture: extensive subsistence agro-pastoralism combining cereal grain cultivation (rye, buckwheat, wheat) and cattle raising on small farms (10-20 hectares) amalgamated into small villages with dispersed settlement patterns (Kenny 1963; Smith 1978). The region as a whole was not urbanized and had a low population density. By 1841, for instance, out of 41 communes in Brittany, urban population structure resembled the following (Weber 1976):

Population size	Number of Cities	Total percentage of population
50,000 +	0	0
10,000-49,999	3	3
3,000-9,999	19	6
1,500-2,999	19	2

In Brittany, roughly 11% of the population lived in urban settlements as compared to an average of 33% in "highly urbanized regions" of France such as Alsace, Languedoc, Nord

and Provence at the same time period (Weber 1976). Rennes in the early 19th century had a population of 32,000 (Skol Vreizh 1980). It was primarily an administrative town (see Weber 1976 on "frontiers and colonization") and was inhabited by an elite class of bureaucrats, lawyers and government officials, lacked any substantial number of commercial bourgeoisie but had numerous artisans, laborers and poor people. In general, Brittany could be described at this time as a highly rural agricultural region with no large agricultural estates and no large-scale manufacturing.

But there is a second and rather different view of political economy in Brittany to be considered as well. In the 18th century, Brittany was a locus of proto-industrial textile production--part of the decentralized, small-scale rural manufacturing of the time centering on linen and hemp production (Kriedte 1983; Tilly 1981). There is substantial evidence for land concentration and rural inequality (by some estimates 20% of the rural population was indigent and 40% worked as agricultural proletarians) as well as for systematic political pressure on communally held land and other resources (Skol Vreizh 1980). Brittany was a region of wheat production for export and possessed a fishing industry--both characteristic of the provisioning function of peripheral areas in early modern Europe (Wallerstein 1980). Finally, merchant trade, ship construction and privateering were all lucrative avenues of wealth accumulation in the region's principal ports of Nantes,

Brest and St. Mâlo. Some of these patterns of economic change are typical for France in general.

This contrasting picture suggests a mixed, diversified economy based on partial industrialization, long distance merchant trade and export oriented agriculture. The social class structure therefore in reality consisted of: merchant capitalists, agricultural elites in the countryside, small farmers, a large agricultural proletariat, and many poor people. The overall economic diversity makes it difficult to characterize the region as a "periphery" in the conventional political economy sense of the term; rather it is perhaps more accurate to say that Brittany was *not* a primordially underdeveloped periphery and had certain core-like features even in the late 18th century.

What happened to these core-like economic features during the 19th century? In textile production, there was a general shift from linen to cotton production resulting in the de-industrialization of flax and linen producing areas, rural pauperization and a transition towards urban concentration of labor and capital with tighter capitalist control over raw materials and energy sources in industrial production. A number of factors led to a decline in both merchant trade and shipbuilding: the naval blockades of the Napoleonic Wars, small ports, decline in overseas trade volume, poor internal transportation linkages and limited internal regional market demand. Brittany's agriculture was less productive and modernized later than many other French

region. Finally, and perhaps most important, Brittany lacked indigenous sources of industrial raw materials and energy (e.g. coal and iron) and was therefore not well placed for any later industrial development. With deindustrialization and the decline of merchant trade, Brittany's economy throughout most of the 19th century probably better resembles the first contrasting perspective--rural, subsistence agriculture.

By the end of the 19th century, however, Brittany began to experience substantial agrarian change. Agriculture was intensified (through technological innovations like chemical fertilizer and mechanization) and expanded (land clearing almost doubled the arable area between 1860 and 1910) (Weber 1976; Skol Vreizh 1980). Most of this new production was market oriented (of potatoes, pork and vegetables), a large number of canneries were opened and due to mechanization there was a steep net decline in the agricultural labor force (this process, known as the rural exodus, continues well into the 20th century, see Mendras 1970, Morin 1970). Railroad linkages with the rest of France after 1880 were especially significant in stimulating commercial agricultural production in the region (Weber 1976; Fortier 1980).

Since 1945, Brittany has experienced a long series of economic and social class changes. I focus here on four major sectors: agriculture, tourism, fishing, and industrial manufacturing. Breton agriculture is nowadays firmly

integrated into the EEC and global markets, and Brittany has emerged as the primary agricultural producing region in France with 80% of production destined for export outside of Brittany. Since the 1950s Breton farmers have moved towards capital intensive confinement agriculture--raising chickens, pigs and cattle in addition to vegetable production (peas, beans, artichokes) on relatively small family owned farms (20-40 hectares). This form of agriculture has been promoted by feed grain producers (both multinational corporations and large grain farms in the Paris basin) who have established dependency relations with Breton farmers in areas like inputs, marketing and credit. In the late 1980s, these grain producers diversified into hog rasing since feed prices were very low. While this offers an advantage of scale for large producers, smaller producers pay higher prices for feed. Breton farmers naturally do not like this state of affairs, but are relatively powerless to change it. Breton farmers in general have historically experienced low prices for their agricultural products and have a long history of collective agrarian protest over these prices (see Berger 1972, Elegoet 1984). Other external entities also have an impact on Breton agriculture. For instance, EEC milk quota policies result in less profitability for medium scale dairy farmers who are so typical of the region. While Breton farmers argue that milk can be produced more efficiently in Brittany, the French state continues to support dairying in mountain areas--the price supports there

are utilized to keep "peasant workers" in place as labor for the tourist industry, and maintaining pasture helps prevent erosion and avalanches. So EEC policies, French state policy and the operation of large transnational capitalist enterprises deeply affect contemporary Breton agriculture and, according to Breton farmers and Breton militants, do so to the comparative disadvantage of Brittany.

Tourism is also a major industry for Brittany. Brittany is the third largest tourist region in France after the Riviera and Paris. Tourism in the region is mainly a coastal phenomenon which has seen the gradual disappearance of elite tourist resorts since the 19th century. The number of hotels has declined, large hotels have been torn down and converted into apartments and generally the market has been widened in social class terms through secondary home construction (rented out to middle class tourists in the summer) and increased reliance on camping for accommodation rather than luxury resort areas. Tourism in Brittany is linked to the creation of folk culture through summer fêtes and festivals; essentially, this represents the commodification and marketing of Breton culture. Tourism is often weak as a development strategy since first, it has a low multiplier effect on economic growth; second, it is highly vulnerable to demand fluctuation based on weather or economic conditions, and third, it tends to have a negative effect on income equality and local patterns of ownership (depending on the size of the capital holding entities

involved and the effects of tourism on local real estate and consumer prices). The first two disadvantages of tourism are significant for Brittany, the third less so.

Fishing in Brittany was a stable industry immediately after 1945, but presently could be described as marginal. An aging fishing fleet, higher fuel and construction costs, lower market prices for fish, closing of interlinked canneries, pollution, overfishing and changes in international maritime law are all responsible for the marginalization of fishing in Brittany (Skol Vreizh 1983). The problems of maintaining a diversified regional economy in the world capitalist system are well-illustrated in this sector.

Industrial decentralization from the 1950s onward has had a relatively small impact on Brittany. Between 1954 and 1972 state-supported implantation of industry in the provinces resulted in the creation of 170 industrial enterprises in the region with 50,000 new industrial jobs. The industries included electronics, chemicals and automobiles. Brittany is basically not heavily industrialized and continues to have plant closings today in its remaining industrial firms. There is, however, as is the case in most post-industrial societies, a large tertiary sector in Brittany (shopping malls are now ubiquitous).

These economic changes have had important consequences for class formation in the region. As late as the 1950s,

there was a small Breton bourgeoisie, at present there is no large company owned by a Breton. Breton owned industries were typically bought out by multinational corporations in the 1960s and 1970s. Large enterprises in Brittany today are controlled by multinational corporations, Paris based capitalists or are state operated enterprises (including, for example, the tobacco industry, the French navy in Brest and armaments manufacture in St. Nazaire). The demise of the Breton bourgeoisie can be linked to the effects of capitalist competition and investment preferences centering on land, summer homes and houses in Paris. Many children of the 1950s Breton bourgeoisie are now salaried professionals.

At present, there is evidence for new patterns of capital accumulation and an emergence of a new Breton bourgeoisie. Between 1965 and 1985, approximately 1000 industrial companies with ten or more workers were established in Brittany. These are mostly small firms specializing in electronics and food processing--the latter often developing as expansions of artisanal baker or butcher shops. The members of this "new bourgeoisie" are most likely return migrants of the 1960s and 1970s who acquired management skills and start-up capital while working in Paris or elsewhere outside of the region. For the Breton middle class, on the other hand, there has been a longterm problem of highly educated Breton young people who have few job opportunities. The latter trend seems particularly significant for an understanding of contemporary Breton

ethnic politics (see Chapter Two).

Summing up, what of economic oppression? Breton militants since the 1960s have emphasized a colonial metaphor as a mobilizing theme. Yet the evidence for "internal colonialism" is both contradictory at one level and not extremely persuasive at another (see, e.g., Reece 1979; Rogers 1984; McDonald 1989: 84-87). Most current empirical assessments suggest that variables like unemployment, income and standard of living have essentially converged with most other French regions and that Brittany and Bretons are in general no worse off materially and no better off than anyone else in France. If salaries are significantly higher in Paris, then so is the cost of living in Paris. From the mid 1980s onward, even major Breton political parties like the Union Démocratique Bretonne (founded on an anti-colonial and anti-capitalist ideology) have begun to move away from the colonial metaphor since it increasingly lacks symbolic resonance.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL HISTORY OF BRETON MILITANCY

Political Realignment and Ideological Continuity in the Breton Movement, 1935-1987

Sitting in the dimly lit Roparz Hemon Cultural Center in Guingamp on a chilly August afternoon, I faced across a desk one of the best known Breton militants of the 1980s, a man who had often been in jail and in court for his activities against the French state. We had spoken of many things that afternoon, much of it already in the public record, and so much of what I written down in my notebook was not surprising. Yet near the end of this interview we were speaking of his family -- most of whom were also politically engaged in the Breton movement -- when, quite casually, he added that his father had been a member of the PNB (Parti National Breton) during the 1930s. The paradox was astounding. During the interwar period in Brittany, the Breton movement -- an ethnoregionalist social movement which has been in formal existence since 1898 -- was most prominent for having adopted extreme-right, proto-fascist political rhetoric and, during the German occupation of Brittany, for having collaborated with the German occupiers.

Yet the man I sat across from on that August afternoon in 1987 was, like most contemporary Breton militants, an ardent supporter of the extreme left on a range of political causes not least of which was Breton nationalism.

Like most paradoxes in politics, this one is not easily explained. It is worthwhile to point out that the post-1950 Breton movement is a new social movement whose social composition, actual personnel, and political strategies are discontinuous with what occurred prior to 1945 in Breton nationalist politics. Although a few families have had continuous (unbroken) transgenerational participation in the movement, (spanning the 1930s to the 1980s), they are very few indeed. And most Breton militants today, it seems to me, are profoundly ambivalent, sensitive and defensive about the events of the 1930s and 1940s although all strongly condemn the systematic and violent repression of Breton nationalists by the French state between 1944 and 1947. In addition, most prewar regionalist movements in France were associated with the right (anti-Revolution, anti-Republican, pro-Catholic, elitist, and so on), while most of those emerging in the 1970s were situated on the left.But the central implication of this fascinating fieldwork paradox is clear. Despite great political change in the Breton movement over the past sixty years, there is strong evidence for ideological continuity in the rhetoric and culture of resistance which the Breton movement embodies. Specifically, the ideological continuity is represented in

the following forms:

1. Breton-French relations must be understood as a history of oppression, domination and discrimination on the part of the French state towards Brittany and the Breton people.

2. Both race and language serve as fundamental ways to distinguish Bretons (Celts) from French (Latins).

3. For a variety of reasons, most of the Breton population is unable -- or unwilling -- to engage in nationalist political activity; thus it is left up to a small self-conscious minority to lead the way.

4. The ultimate goals of Breton political struggle must be to restore Breton as the national language and to recreate an autonomous Breton nation-state, no matter how far from fruition such goals might be at the present time.

Like any set of ideological constructions, these are not necessarily universally shared or agreed upon by the entire population of actors engaged in real political action. I therefore simplify matters somewhat. In order to examine ideological continuity of this sort, I briefly step back in time to look at political rhetoric in the 1930s and then in the 1980s through a focus on several key texts.

During the early 1930s, the PNB's principal leader Olier Mordrel began to put forward an authoritarian-right political program of Breton facism. In large measure, this program emerged as a way to lure rightward leaning Breton

voters away from Action Française (French authoritarian party led by Charles Maurras). Although it met with initial opposition from other ranking officials of the PNB, Mordrel's program was eventually accepted as an appropriate political ideology.

Mordrel's point of departure was a belief in the racial distinctiveness (and superiority) of the Breton people. Writing in 1933, he stated that "race is a network of profound affinities that unites Bretons to each other and attaches them to their native soil, all joined by 2,000 years of common life. This is what makes us something other than a common horde" (quoted in Reece 1977: 134). Mordrel offered a vision of an independent Breton state where only Bretons would enjoy full citizenship rights, where a strongly authoritarian and hierarchical government would rule, where the Breton language would be imposed through the schools and where the central purpose of the education system would be to socialize morally and physically fit men into the ideology of the Breton state.

The parallel with Nazi Germany is not coincidental. Throughout the 1930s, the PNB increasingly came to support German foreign policy and became increasingly critical of the French government. Indeed, a major slogan of Breton nationalists during the 1930s was "France's difficulty is Brittany's opportunity." Ultimately, the wartime strategy of the PNB was to assume first, a complete German victory over France and, second, a willingness on the part of the

Germans to allow the creation of an independent Breton state. Both assumptions were deeply mistaken, and the eventual defeat of Germany led to the systematic repression and destruction of the Breton nationalist movement in 1944-1947. Unfortunately, the stigma of "Breton collaboration" long remained an obstacle in the reconstruction the postwar Breton movement, even though--it is essential to point this out--only a tiny minority of Bretons actually collaborated with the Germans. The historical myth of Breton collaboration created the ideological basis for the repression and delegitimation of Breton nationalism by the French state in the postwar period.

Moving to the 1980s, we find a very different sort of social movement. Currently there are five Breton political parties, nearly all of them left or extreme-left. The most recently created Breton political party EMGANN and its associated cultural organization Stourm Ar Brezhoneg were founded in 1982/1984. The published texts and interviews with key political activists suggest the primacy of the following ideological conceptions of identity and resistance.

1. The Breton nation is a historically constituted entity whose people form a geographical, cultural and economic community.
2. The Breton nation submits both to the colonial politics of the French state which enslaves the Breton people and to the capitalist system which super-

exploits them.

3. The essential goal of the struggle for national liberation must be the establishment of an independent socialist Breton society in which all men and women will finally be in control of their own destiny.

4. The French state wages a policy of linguistic genocide against the Breton language, and the ultimate goal must be the establishment of Breton as the sole official language of Brittany.

I do not wish to suggest any direct affinity between Mordrel and the founders of EMGANN, nor do I wish to suppose that a hypothetical independent fascist Breton state would in any way be identical to an imaginary independent socialist Breton state. But there are many lines of continuity at the level of ideology. I have stated these already. And there are lines of continuity in practice as well, for while Mordrel was inclined to mobilize only the more "thoughtful" Bretons, the founders of EMGANN have been concerned to slowly build a cadre of educated and conscientious militants. In both instance the vanguard approach to building organized opposition is in operation.

Political realignment--the right to left shift--is difficult to account for. The Breton movement began as an elite and middle class conservative (indeed reactionary) form of political organization in the early 20th century. For most of the 20th century, voting patterns in Brittany leaned towards the right, and conservative candidates

fielded by the PNB received well over 150,000 votes in the parliamentary elections of 1936 (Reece 1977: 140). The geopolitical situation in the 1930s favored the development of proto-fascist ideologies since, or so it seemed at the time, only the demise of the French state via external conquest could lead to precondition for an independent Breton state. Beginning in the late 1960s, electoral voting patterns shifted significantly towards the left in Brittany. By this time, the newly emerging Breton movement had come to depend on a broader base of working class and middle class constituencies and, most importantly, on the institutional French left for its electoral success and public legitimacy. I put forward the suggestion that although the Breton movement's ideological basis has remained intact over the past 60 years, its political expression has been conditioned by broader trends in French regional and national politics.

Abner Cohen once wrote that "ethnicity is fundamentally a political phenomenon as the symbols of the traditional culture are used as mechanisms for the articulation of political alignments" (Cohen 1974:69). While traditional cultures are generally invented ones, the focus on the political uses of symbolism for identity and resistance is important. The ideological continuity exists precisely because a narrow set of powerful, ambiguous and multivocal ethnic symbols have such great emotional and motivational appeal. These symbols can be constructed and deconstructed, articulated and rearticulated for strategic use in quite

diverse political environments.

Perhaps the best evidence for ideological continuity in the Breton movement over the past 60 years comes not from the meanings embedded in political propaganda, but rather from another set of symbols altogether. It is compelling that virtually all Breton militants own--and have most certainly read--two books. In a sense, these are the ideological codebooks of Breton nationalism. The first is a 1970 work by Morvan Lebesque called Comment peut-on être breton? Essaie sur la démocratie française. The central thesis of this thin volume is that the French state can scarcely be called democratic in that it denies Bretons cultural and political autonomy. The second book is very much an "insider" work and it is available only in Breton, not in French translation. Its title could be glossed in English as "A Breton Discovers Brittany". This book consists of a series of essays which appeared in the literary review Gwalarn in the 1920s. The essays are racialist and elitist in orientation, emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Breton people and the necessity of purifying the Breton language from the corrupting influence of French. These essays were written by Roparz Hemon, and I do not find it at all ironic to end this part of my discussion where it began, sitting across from one of EMGANN'S founders in the Roparz Hemon Cultural Center in the Breton town of Guingamp.

The history of the Breton movement is important not

only as necessary background to this mostly ethnographic study but also because Breton militants themselves are deeply knowledgeable and profoundly self-conscious about their own political history. Militants frequently choose to talk about their collective past, and deny, justify and reinterpret various segments of that past. The past is therefore always salient in the present in the Breton movement and indeed most of the French language histories have been written by militants--sometimes active, sometimes former, sometimes disgruntled or disillusioned militants. For that matter, much of the ethnographic literature on the Breton movement written in English has been produced by authors who were either more than sympathetic advocates for or else cynical, bitter critics of Breton militancy. My own political and moral position is discussed in Chapter One. In this chapter, I present a chronologically organized historical overview of the Breton movement through the late 1970s, discuss in detail the paradoxical effects of French socialism on Breton ethnic politics during the 1980s, then conclude with a descriptive summary of the structural features of the movement during 1987-1989--structural patterns that are presently in a state of continuous flux.

A Chronological History of the Breton Movement

History is sometimes thought of as "one damned thing after another", but most histories are written from a particular viewpoint. One way to schematize and understand

the historical background of the Breton movement is to examine the underlying class bases of Breton militancy over time, and the resulting class interests of different factions of Breton militants. For most of its history, the Breton movement--as with politics in the region as a whole--can best be described as conservative or perhaps even reactionary. From 1898 to the 1930s, the Breton movement was composed largely of conservative middle class and upper class segments of people who stood to lose the most politically and economically from the increasing political, economic and cultural incorporation of Brittany into the French state. Here "resistance" to colonialism and forced cultural assimilation actually involves an attempt to maintain traditional power relations for the benefit of ecclesiastical and rural elites.

The emergence of a right-wing proto-fascist Breton movement in the interwar period, discussed earlier in this chapter, appears to be a predictable outcome of this trend. Political independence of Brittany--and a continuation of existing power relations within the region--was tied strategically to a victory by Germany over France. During 1944-1947 the French state manipulated the limited collaboration of Breton nationalists with Germany into an ideological rationalization of violent oppression of all forms of Breton militancy. While throughout the first three decades of the 20th century, the French state had been reluctant to repress the Breton movement too vigorously lest

the repression help build popular support for the Breton cause, the wartime events provided the perfect symbolic and pragmatic window for the French state to undertake such oppression on a large scale, thereby ironically inverting the PNB's slogan: the Breton nationalists' difficulties became France's opportunity. As Michel Phlipponneau has observed, "for a long time Brittany has been one of the provinces most susceptible to regionalist, autonomist and ever separatist notions and during the 1960s [one may well add the 1930s and 1940s], for Jacobin minds, it seemed, much more than Corsica, to menace national unity" (1986:9).

When the Breton movement reappeared a few years later, it did so in an explicitly "non-political" form. Its principal organizational expression was known as the Comité d'Etude et de la Liaison des Intérêts Breton (or CELIB, founded in 1950 and active until 1969). CELIB functioned primarily as a lobbying and planning group concerned with economic development in the region. Nominally independent from the French state, CELIB joined together over 400 of Brittany's political, economic and administrative elites and lobbied successfully for industrial and infrastructural investment in the region. This investment ultimately came largely from the French state and if Charles de Gaulle's praise for CELIB ("What CELIB did for Brittany was essential, and it is what must be done in all of France" -- a speech by de Gaulle in Rennes on January 31, 1969, see Martray 1983) was lavish, it must also be kept in mind that

from the mid 1950s to 1969 Brittany could fairly be described as a citadel of Gaullisme; that is, an electoral stronghold for the Gaullists. In other words, it is no surprise that Brittany received such investments as rural electrification, credit for industrial expansion and better roads during CELIB's tenure: this is precisely how power elites, patronage and brokerage operate in conjunction with the state (see Chubb 1982; Silverman 1965; Tarrow 1977). CELIB also lobbied for the Breton language but although Martray notes that "CELIB was born out of a prise de conscience for the economic and demographic situation of Brittany" (1983:76), it is perhaps more accurate to say that the organization emerged and expanded as a result of a convergence of state and regional elite class interests.

From 1969 to the 1980s electoral patterns in Brittany shifted toward the left, with a slight majority voting for the Socialists by 1981 (see Phlipponneau 1986:8). The Breton movement became closely tied with the institutional French left--parties and unions both--and generally adopted political rhetoric consistent with these alliances. The principal slogan of the largest Breton political party (Union Démocratique Breton or Democratic Breton Union, abbreviated as UDB) became "work and live in Brittany", and this is also a slogan of the French left in general ("work and live in your region"). The slogan is perhaps less important as rhetoric than for what it says about the present class basis (and implied class interests) of Breton

militants. In essence, the current highly educated, middle class Breton movement has as one underlying goal an attempt to guarantee the maintenance and expansion of a large tertiary service economy in Brittany which provides the kind of middle class employment opportunities Breton militants require both for obvious utilitarian reasons and to furnish the necessary economic basis for the cultural struggles of Breton linguistic militancy. To put this in very straightforward terms: the ideal job for a Breton militant might be as a lycée or university level instructor of the Breton language whose salary is paid by the French state, and one major locus of political struggle centers around the paucity of such jobs.

In the next five sections of this chronological history, I elaborate upon this analysis, using the following periodization: early emergence of the Breton movement (1898-1918), the interwar and wartime events, the postwar repression of the Breton movement, the role of CELIB in the 1950s, and the 1960s leftist transformation of Breton militancy including the impact of the Front for the Liberation of Brittany (abbreviated as FLB)--perhaps the best known manifestation of the movement for a general audience.

The Breton Movement up to 1918

Michel Nicolas writes that Brittany in the 19th century experienced a great deal of intellectual and literary

production which laid the cultural, historical and linguistic foundations of the ideology of the Breton movement. This intellectual production involved attempts to create a romantic, exotic and culturally distinctive Celtic and Breton identity separate from that of Latin and French identity (see Nicolas 1986; McDonald 1989). Celtic and Breton became cultural, linguistic and racial categories aligned in structural symbolic and political opposition to Latin and French.

Perhaps best known among these intellectual antecedents of Breton nationalism was the work of a Breton nobleman named Theodore Hesart de la Villemarqué (1815-1895) who published an account called <u>Barzaz Breizh</u> (The Bards of Brittany) in the late 1830s. Largely a folkloric compilation, the widely read and frequently reissued collection established not only a distinctively rich oral literary tradition for Brittany but also the primordial quality of that tradition stretching back to the Middle Ages and beyond. It is here perhaps that Brittany became "fixed as a peculiarly expressive land of folk-custom, mystery, ritual, song and lyricism" (McDonald 1989: 104)--popular images which persist today. Reece notes that the Barzaz Breizh was instrumental in arousing national consciousness among many leaders and followers in the twentieth- century Breton movement and that "it would in fact be difficult to overstress the importance of the Barzaz Breizh in the emergence and development of Breton national feeling" (Reece

1977: 26). Indeed, one of my informants presented me with a copy of the volume as I was leaving Brittany.

The underlying ideology of the Breton movement has always symbolically privileged the Breton language as a key locus of identity and distinctiveness as well as of oppression by the French. Yet racial images are also central to the construction of Breton identity--and to the political history of the Breton movement. One of the more influential historiographies produced by a Breton militant in this regard is C. Danio's (a pseudonym of Jeanne du Guerny) Histoire du Notre Bretagne, originally published in 1922. The book represents, in effect, a textual codification of much of the 19th century intellectual production on language, culture and race. Part of Jack Reece's excellent summary is worth quoting in detail:

> The point of departure of Danio's history is the Celtic origin of the Breton people and their distinctive ethnic identity apart from the French. The Celtic ancestors of the Bretons, she explained, were a Germanic people who had preserved their ethnic purity in successive migrations from northern Europe to the British Isles and then to the Armorican peninsula of modern-day France...Danio stressed other factors, particularly those relating to physical appearance, moral values and political attitudes that she claimed ethnically separated Celts from Latins. Contrasting images of tall, blond, freedom-loving Celtic democrats and short, dark Latin centralizers were the result. The implied message is clear: peoples so different were bound to be bitter antagonists. Indeed, ancient conflict between Celtic and Latin civilizations--the one robust, pure, and original, the other debilitated, corrupt, and derivative--is the leitmotif of Danio's whole historical outlook (Reece 1977:6).

Even today, older Breton militants' rhetoric and consciousness often gives primacy to notions of Breton

racial distinctiveness and of racial and moral superiority over the French. Younger militants tend to focus more on themes of oppression and social justice.

The literary, historiographical and intellectual origins of Breton nationalist ideology are fascinating in their complexity and a lengthy research project could be conducted which would analyze the numerous texts involved and the social histories of the personalities who produced them. Broadly speaking, intellectual trends in Brittany at this time reflect patterns of European cultural production in the 19th century--especially cultural production associated with romanticism and nationalism. This project is beyond the scope of the present work.

In the last two decades of the 19th century, the conservative rural based ruling clerico-aristocratic elite in Brittany found its power threatened by both state penetration and industrial development (see Reece 1977, Chapter 2). Numerous social and economic changes brought about this weakening in the political position of Brittany's ruling class: migration exposed Bretons to new ideas, urban and industrial employment replaced agriculture, the state became more important in patronage and ideological control. The clerico-aristocratic elite was particularly concerned over its losses in the elections of 1893 and 1898 and became convinced they "had to find a way to mobilize the Breton masses politically so that particular conservative objectives could be achieved without at the same time

altering the paternal relationships that traditionally kept them subservient to Brittany's old ruling class" (Reece 1977: 52).

In essence, the ruling elite's strategy was to use the ideological theme of defending the Breton people, Breton language and culture, and the economic interests of the region in order to successfully mobilize Breton voters and simultaneously struggle for autonomy from Paris, thereby maintaining both their political power in Brittany and traditional forms of class domination over Breton peasants. In this process, Breton intellectuals--whose economic interests were directly tied to those of the clerico-aristocratic elite--became coopted spokesmen and ideology producers for this new expression of Breton regionalism.

In the summer of 1898, a meeting at Morlaix led to the creation of what most historians agree to be the first formal organization in the Breton movement: the Union Régionaliste Bretonne (abbreviated URB). Led nominally by the Breton writer Anatole Le Braz but in reality by the Breton aristocrat the Marquis Régis de l'Estourbeillon, the URB advocated administrative decentralization for Brittany and the defense of the Breton language. According to Monnier (1980: 266-268) and Reece (1977: 61), the sociological composition of the URB's 689 members (probably its maximal size) in 1911 was as follows: landed aristocrats (25%), clergy (17%), middle class professionals (*professions libérales* in French, typically including notaires, lawyers,

doctors, pharmacists etc., 11%), shopkeepers (11%), parliament members (8%), state functionaries (6%), artists and writers (6%), industrial workers (5%), teachers and students (4%), others (3%). Although avowedly non-sectarian and non-partisan, the organization quickly established itself as pro-Catholic, anti-Socialist, anti-modern and wholly conservative (see Reece 1977: 54-58; Nicolas 1982: 53; Fortier 1980). The URB's proposals to Paris for administrative decentralization and bilingual language instruction in schools were, not surprisingly, ignored by the French government, and it is at this point in time that one can already observe the antagonism between the Breton movement and the French state.

In September 1911, the URB effectively ceased to exist, after a dramatic confrontation between the highly conservative Francophone Estourbeillon and more radicalized Breton speaking militants. The schism led to the formation of the Fédération Regionaliste de Bretagne (abbreviated FRB) in late October 1911. Its leader, Jos Parker, noted in his inaugural speech that the FRB's goal was to struggle for "decentralization and autonomy that will permit the full development of our interests and the qualities of our race as well as respect for our ancestral traditions" (quoted in Reece 1977: 64). Stressing the language issue much more than the URB, less politically conservative than the URB, and more representative of Brittany's social structure (see Nicolas 1982: 61), the FRB initially attracted nearly two

hundred members, but like so many organizations in the history of the Breton movement, its existence was more fictional than material and by 1914 the group was already moribund. As with the URB, the FRB's influence in Paris was negligible at best, yet both formed models for future Breton movement organizations. While the URB and the FRB persisted organizationally into the interwar period, their political position even within the already marginal Breton nationalist movement became increasingly insignificant.

It is worthwhile to note the parallel developments in the formation of Breton cultural associations. Perhaps the best known was a Catholic association founded in 1905 by a liberal priest named Abbé Perrot which was called Bleun-Brug (heath flower in Breton). This association participated mainly in the preservation and revival of the Breton language and traditional folk culture (music, songs, dances, and costumes), insisted that any Breton revival should have its roots in traditional Catholic values, and eschewed more militant forms of nationalist activity (see Fortier 1980: 142; Reece 1977: 76). Hobsbawm observes that the Catholic Church identified and sympathized with Breton nationalism; however, this sympathy extended only so far (Hobsbawm 1990: 69). Rokkan and Urwin write: "...the Breton [Catholic] Church became a staunch opponent of gallicization and was to remain until the twentieth century an effective agency for the maintenance of a distinctive Breton culture" (Rokkan and Urwin 1983: 98).

A third and final formation of passing historical interest was the Parti Nationaliste Breton founded in July 1911 by Camille Le Mercier d'Erm. The first resolutely separatist party in the history of the Breton movement, the handful of militants did little more than produce a journal called Breiz Dishval (True Brittany) and engage in some symbolic protest acts. Even the normally sympathetic Skol Vreizh historical series has this to say: "The more than minority character of this new group didn't allow it to produce anything else other than a very symbolic protest--a few whistles--during the inauguration, on October 29, 1911, of a monument commemorating the Union of Brittany and France in an alcove of the Town hall in Rennes" (Monnier 1980: 269). But since Le Mercier d'Erm was arrested for disturbing the peace, tried in an obscure court and then fined seven francs, he was able to claim later that he "was the first Breton patriot to be prosecuted, judged and condemned in the name of the French people for his fidelity to the Breton fatherland" (quoted in Reece 1977: 82). This incident--ineffectual symbolic protest followed by what is labeled as state repression--encapsulates much of the Breton movement's history and is in important respects a metaphor for Breton militancy in general.

An overall assessment of the Breton movement prior to 1918 would fairly state that, apart from establishing an organizational tradition of political activity, it was a failure. The organizations were small, short-lived and

highly fragmented. Both major organizations failed to implement their stated programs. Three general causes can be suggested for this lack of success. First, the organizations were fractured along lines of linguistic difference (French versus Breton speaking), religious difference (Catholic versus freethinkers), political difference (conservative versus socialist) and class difference (aristocratic versus middle class)--as well as by personalistic conflicts of ego and temperament. Second, these organizations failed to mobilize the general Breton population with a coherent and persuasive symbolic appeal. As such, the organizations remained elite and intellectually dominated groups sharply divided by social class from the Breton masses. H. Stuart Hughes' brief and disappointingly naive discussion attributes the failure of Breton nationalism primarily to the "region's split linguistic personality" and the hopeless attempt by the militants to "preserve Breton speech and even to implant it in Haute Bretagne" [the eastern region of Brittany where Breton was never historically spoken] (Hughes 1988: 56-57). Clearly there is much more at work in the Breton case. Third, the power--ultimately state power--really rested in Paris and these early militants had little hope of influencing policy. All of these factors are equally as present in the 1980s as in the early years of the 20th century, and continue to account for the movement's form and operation today.

The Interwar Period and Wartime Breton Nationalism: 1918-1944

Breton nationalism effectively collapsed during World War I. Given its small scale and limited resources, this comes as no great surprise. During the war, a large number of Breton soldiers were killed at the front--estimates range from 120,000 to over 240,000 (see Cassard 1983: 24)--and while Breton militants have long claimed that this was a deliberate effort on the part of French army commanders to use young Bretons as cannon fodder, it seems just as likely that Bretons--usually poorly educated peasants without special skills or training--would have simply been assigned to the infantry and, also ignored by the nationalists, there are many local monuments throughout Brittany commemorating the brave sacrifice of young men who "died fighting for France". But the deaths of a whole generation of Breton men gave a new symbolic impetus to the reemergence of Breton ethnic politics.

The organizational expression of interwar Breton militancy began as the Groupe Régionaliste Breton (founded in September 1918), which successively became the Unvaniez Yaovankiz Vreiz (Union of Breton Youth) in 1919 and finally a political party called the Parti Autonomiste Breton (abbreviated PAB) in August of 1927. Over time, this formation underwent a number of gradual changes (see Déniel 1976, Fouéré 1977). First, regionalist moderates who favored cooperation with Paris were gradually pushed out and

replaced by more radicalized militants who favored direct political action to build a mass-based party outside the realm of electoral politics. Second, the organization became more explicitly and self-consciously ethnically Breton while simultaneously becoming more virulently separatist and anti-French. Third, over time the organization became increasingly dominated by three men--Français Debauvais, Maurice Marchal and Olier Mordrel--who were the key ideology producers and, in the case of Mordrel, the locus of a cult of personality later to be diagnostic of the proto-fascist Breton ethnic politics of the 1930s. Much of this ideology was disseminated through a journal called Breiz Atao (Brittany Forever). Fourth, Marchal and Mordrel bitterly attacked through their press any Bretons whose sentiments were not part of their emerging orthodoxy. Finally, these organization always remained extremely small-scale--fewer than 500 militants and probably only a few dozen truly active militants--and always short of financial resources.

The Parti Autonomiste Breton moderated its rhetoric by advocating a federalist position after 1927 and attracted a wider membership and more money, widespread media attention in France and internationally and greater surveillance and repression by the French state (see Reece 1977: 107-108). But by 1931, faced with a wide variety of crises--financial mismanagement and debt, internal conflicts between separatists and federalists, personalistic rivalries, an

expensive but embarrassing electoral campaign in 1930 (the PAB candidate received 349 votes of 13,872 cast)--the PAB collapsed entirely by August 1931 (see Reece 1977: Chapter 5). Olier Mordrel, along with Debauvais, reorganized the remaining separatist nationalists as the Parti National Breton.

On August 7, 1932, a bomb blast destroyed the statue in Rennes--mentioned earlier--which symbolized the Treaty of Union between France and Brittany in 1532. A secret society Gwenn-ha-Du ("Black and White", the name of the Breton flag designed by Marchal) claimed responsibility for the blast. This is one of the earliest episodes of terrorism directed at symbolic manifestations of French state power in Brittany. The statue itself represented Duchess Anne of Brittany kneeling subserviently before the French throne--naturally not well appreciated by Breton militants. Gwenn-ha-Du was evidently a more violent splinter faction of the PNB, but the attack led to a wave of repression by the French state including increased surveillance, police questioning and arrests of suspects (see Monnier 1983: 116). The drama of the event, the subsequent repression and resulting press attention led to an important increase in the circulation of Breiz Atao and financial resources for the PNB.

At the beginning of this chapter, I briefly described the evolution of Mordrel's program during the 1930s. It is worthwhile to note the paramilitary organization of the PNB,

the increasingly repressive stance of the French state towards the party, and finally that the class composition of the roughly 1500 members was nearly 50% proletarian (Monnier 1983:117). This latter fact is not inconsistent with the sociology of fascist parties elsewhere in western Europe at this time period. But if the original URB was composed mainly of landed aristocracy, the PNB could be characterized as dominated by a reactionary petite bourgeoisie segment resisting capitalist penetration into Brittany.

By 1939, the French state suspended publication of Breiz Atao, dissolved the PNB, and vigorously repressed all other organizations in the Breton movement as actually or potentially subversive (Reece 1977: 150-151). Mordrel and Debauvais fled to Belgium to escape arrest, later to Germany and in 1940 organized an attempt to recruit Breton-origin French prisoners of war held by the Germans into a Breton army. Only 150 Bretons out of 60,000 prisoners volunteered (Reece 1977: 153).

The PNB was barely tolerated by both the German occupation hierarchy and the Vichy regime, yet the occupation years saw two important developments. First, Vichy-sponsored reforms paved the way for Breton language instruction in the schools and widespread publication of Breton language newspapers. These reforms were introduced in return for general Breton support for the Vichy regime (see Fouéré 1977). Second, the Bezenn Perrot--the small paramilitary unit of the PNB (no more than 80 members)--

became incorporated into the Waffen-SS and actively collaborated with the Germans against the French Resistance (see Reece 1977: 165). Mo¨drel, meanwhile, had been stripped of any significant role in Breton politics and was exiled in Paris after offending both the Vichy and German hierarchy and Debauvais was dying of tuberculosis. Breton nationalists themselves came increasingly under attack by Resistance fighters.

The wartime politics of Breton nationalism are quite complicated (see Nicolas 1982: 91-102), but the events of the summer of 1944 are more easily understood. In essence, at least thirty nationalists were summarily executed by the Resistance--some of whom had been collaborators but many of whom had not collaborated in any way (see Nicolas 1982: 102, Reece 1977: 167), even while virtually all of the important wartime nationalist leaders--including Mordrel--managed to escape. Extrapolating from data presented by Cassard (1983: 165), these summary executions represent less than 4% of all such killings of collaborators carried out by the Resistance in Brittany. In other words, Breton nationalists were not singled out on a large scale to be killed simply for their political beliefs. As Charles de Gaulle said in Vannes in early 1945: "If the Breton autonomists have committed treason, they will be punished for it; if they have only been autonomists without having betrayed France, that is another matter" (quoted in Reece 1977: 167). These issues deserve more detailed discussion since they continue to have

a great deal of resonance in Brittany up to the present.

Postwar Repression: Collaboration, Resistance, Ideology Making and the Denial of History

Beginning in late 1944, French authorities in liberated Brittany began to arrest all known Breton nationalists. As many as a thousand suspects were rounded up, several hundred of whom were eventually released without any judicial action being taken against them. Of the rest, twenty were sentenced to death (although only eight executions were finally carried out), seventy earned prison terms ranging from five years to life at hard labor, and several hundred others suffered civic degradation and banishment from Brittany. Civic degradation involved "loss of civic rights, cancellation of civil and military decorations, reduction to the ranks, cessation of pensions, even for disabled persons and widows and prohibition of employment in many professions, particularly the civil service, teaching, publishing, and journalism" (Reece 1977: 168). These punishments effectively ruined the lives and livelihoods of those so sentenced.

It is not surprising that "in recent years Breton writers have sought to portray the prosecution of Breton militants during the period 1944-1947 as part of a vast French conspiracy to destroy the Breton nationalist movement" (Reece 1977: 171). It is, however, quite astonishing that both Reece (1977: 171)--one of the most

neutral and accurate histories--and Nicolas (1982: 102) argue that in Reece's words, despite "obvious cases of injustice", it is difficult to "assert that they prove the existence of a palpable anti-Breton conspiracy on the part of the French government" or in Nicolas' words that "it is difficult to give credence to the thesis according to which there was a deliberate intent on the part of French authorities to hit the ensemble of Breton activities very hard with a view to decapitating them". If one examines various estimates of the size of the entire Breton movement--political parties and cultural associations alike--around 1939, the data would suggest something in a range of 2,000 to perhaps as many as 5,000 militants. The repression in the 1944-1947 period therefore affected a substantial percentage of those engaged in political and cultural militancy.

Just as important for future mobilizations, "after 1945 it became an accepted part of World War II historiography in France that the Breton nationalist movement had been fabricated by German occupation authorities virtually out of nothing" (Reece 1977: 175; see also Aron 1958: 72-73). Hegemonic views of Vichy, the Resistance, collaboration and the role of Breton nationalists during the occupation all served to delegitimate Breton ethnic nationalism. However, the interwar period saw at least two enduring and positive developments; first, the widespread dissemination of Breton political ideas and the creation of a tradition of militant

political action and second, the growth of cultural associations known as Cercles Celtiques which successfully preserved and expanded the performance of traditional folkloric art forms, especially music and dance.

But the most significant question for current Breton militancy is the following: how do militants justify, rationalize, explain and represent the form and operation of the Breton movement from the 1930s up to 1944? Since for the most part current militants are leftists, their past would seem difficult to reconcile with their present. Maryon McDonald writes: "The Breton enthusiasts of the war period are treated with some ambivalence by militants of the younger generation, but open accusations of 'collaboration' are unusual, partly because a few prominent younger militants are related to those older members and partly because the issue of collaboration is still capable of tarnishing the whole movement" (McDonald 1989: 124).

My own ethnographic interviews confirm this, but I have also seen a number of other responses. Several of my informants, for instance, assured me that there was a substantial leftist and progressively oriented Breton movement during the 1930s and that the political landscape of Breton ethnic politics was not entirely dominated by Mordrel's PNB. When I showed great interest in this, to me, newly discovered historical evidence, my informants were somewhat vague on the details, other than to assure me again that it was indeed so and that I should read the histories.

Nicolas notes that the Breton left in the 1930s was restricted to a small number of intellectual socialists, most notably Emile Masson and Yann Sohier, and goes on to say ironically that their commitment to socialism sometimes seemed ambiguous in that they cooperated regularly with the rightist nationalists (Nicolas 1982: 85). A more common response from my informants was an attempt to minimize the wartime role of Breton nationalist collaborators and to stress, first, the injustice of repression directed against non-collaborating Breton militants and second, the important role that Bretons (meaning the Breton people in general) played in the Resistance. Alternatively, they stressed the fact that many more French were collaborators than Bretons. One of my normally most dispassionate informants once gave me an impassioned twenty minute lecture about the almost immediate participation of Bretons in the Resistance, how widespread this participation was, and how strategically significant Breton guerilla activity was in the liberation of the region from the Germans. Here, there is abundant historical documentation to support such assertions (see the Skol Vreizh volume 1983: 156-162). These responses represent not so much a denial of history, but an attempt to reconceptualize it so that Bretons appear on the side of the noble winners rather than on that of the fascist losers. Finally, as a postscript to the racialism of 1930s Breton nationalism, it is important to emphasize that the post-1960s leftist-oriented movement, especially the UDB, takes

a very strong position against racism of any form.

The Postwar Breton Movement I: 1945-1966

Contrary to the position still held today by Breton militants--that of a brutal and systematic repression of their movement by the French state resulting in its effective disappearance after 1944--Breton nationalist activity revived quite quickly in various forms as early as 1945 (see Reece 1977: 177; and especially Nicolas 1982: 103). By 1950, CELIB was created and it is probably safe to say that this organization represents the single most successful period in the history of the Breton movement. Although the PNB in the late 1930s had many more active militants (some recent research suggests over 5000)--and enjoyed some electoral success--CELIB as a lobbying and planning group assembled a wide range of Breton elites who effectively pressured Paris on such issues as infrastructural investment and industrial development in Brittany (see Dulong 1975; Lovecy 1982; Martray 1983).

CELIB from its inception formally disavowed any nationalist political agenda and instead concentrated its efforts on plans to ameliorate the economic underdevelopment of Brittany which had increasingly characterized the region since the early 19th century. The organization did lobby for the Breton language but with little overall effect--it was not an issue among their highest priorities. CELIB unified "the entire Breton parliamentary delegation, general

councilors, economists, bankers, entrepreneurs, high civil servants, labor leaders, chamber of commerce officials and peasant organizers...[as well as] approximately 900 municipal councils and 200 other bodies--from the four departmental councils that provided the bulk of its financing to factory unions and specialized interest groups--[who] were involved in various CELIB activities" (Reece 1977: 180-181). In effect, a wide spectrum of Brittany's political, economic and intellectual elites united in an effort to halt Brittany's economic decline.

Why did CELIB experience such success? I suggest four reasons. First, CELIB represented an alliance of elites worried about their class interests in a region whose economy was in a rapid state of decline. In 1950, Brittany was more than just another underdeveloped West European periphery; rather it was faced with an almost desperate situation: a massive population loss through the "rural exodus" (see Morin 1970), a province which had missed the first industrial revolution and had both the lowest per capita incomes in France and economic productivity lower than the national average in all sectors (see Martray 1983: Chapter 1). Although the indigenous Breton bourgeoisie lost out to capitalist market dynamics in the 1960s and 1970s--during which time the majority of industries located within Brittany became owned by either transnational corporations or Paris-based capitalists--the 1950s represented perhaps the last chance for Breton capitalists to seek new avenues

for accumulation. Ultimately they did not succeed and most of that Breton bourgeoisie generation's children became university educated, salaried professional wage workers. In the 1980s there was a limited trend within Brittany towards a reemergence of a small Breton capitalist segment, however, this class formation process remains in a nascent phase. But in the 1950s it was not surprising to see the capitalist class--and its associated groups and actors--band together in an attempt to force concessions from Paris since, as Martray puts it, "all regional development continued to depend on a centralized state" (Martray 1983: 204).

The question then becomes the following. Why would such a centralized state, which had for so long resisted any regionalist pressures, now choose to make concessions? There are three explanations, one of which is political and the other two of which are economic. Reece expresses the political explanation in a succinct way:

> The ultimate success of CELIB in fact depended on the willingness of Brittany's elected national representatives to put the interests of their local region before their loyalty to party or legislative majority. Thus the general role of the CELIB parliamentary commission was to act as a pressure group on behalf of Breton interests in the French legislature. In this way, French centralization, which so many Bretons considered responsible for their homeland's depressed social and economic conditions, would be turned to the advantage of Brittany's regional development. During the Fourth Republic when governments in Paris depended for survival on narrow majorities in the National Assembly that invariably included the parties that captured most of Brittany's legislative seats, this tactic seemed to produce results (Reece 1977: 181-182).

In other words, CELIB profited from the instability of

electoral coalitions in Paris to make deals which furthered the short-term economic interests of the region (see also Monnier 1983: 189). When the arrangement of these coalitions radically changed in the Fifth Republic, CELIB no longer possessed the political leverage in the centers of state power necessary to pressure Paris and the organization in fact had become powerless by 1964. In general, French regimes have been very determined not to yield any decision-making powers to the provinces (see Gourevitch 1981)--the decade of CELIB's ascendancy is the exception which proves the rule.

Two other factors which provided a window of opportunity for CELIB have more to do with the underlying economics of capitalist market dynamics than the shifting alignments of state power. Brittany in 1950 was a region ripe for development precisely because it was underdeveloped. David Harvey (1985), among others, has pointed out that capitalist development and accumulation result from the construction of new built environments: roads and other infrastructure, housing, factories, centers of tourism and so on. Economic activities such as rural electrification, road construction, industrial decentralization and improvement of railroad linkages all contribute to capital accumulation; indeed, construction became one of Brittany's most important industries after 1950 (see Skol Vreizh 1983). Since the ownership of most productive property in Brittany was rapidly passing into the

hands of non-Bretons, this industrialization--or, more accurately, reindustrialization of Brittany (see Chapter One) is readily comprehensible as part of postwar capital accumulation in France. But there was another economic factor in operation as well.

New industries in Brittany during the 1950s and 1960s included automobile production in Rennes, electronics production in Rennes and Lannion and various kinds of industrial food processing. These industries benefitted from the availability of laborers who would work for low pay. Even though most of the managers and highly skilled technicians were imported from outside the region (see Nicolas 1982: 126), the unskilled workers were primarily of local origin. Due to both state sponsored industrialization and the increasing capitalization of agriculture, there was an incredible growth in Brittany's service sector during the 1970s accompanied by a steady increase in the size of the tourism industry (see Skol Vreizh 1983). It may not quite be justified to say that CELIB should be given sole credit for these economic transformations; however, the organization did provide an initial catalyst. The ultimate collapse of CELIB illustrates both the strength of French state power and the weakness of political and economic power among Brittany's elites.

The Postwar Breton movement II: The MOB and the FLB

In late 1957, just as CELIB was beginning to have some noticeable economic impact in Brittany, Yann Fouéré and Yann Poupinot created a new political movement called the Mouvement pour l'Organisation de la Bretagne (abbreviated MOB). Although this group unified Bretons of diverse political views--ranging from extremely right-wing to communism--its social class composition was overwhelmingly from Brittany's business and professional middle classes (see Reece 1977: 190). This a familiar theme in the history of the movement; indeed, Michel Nicolas writes at some length on the elitist character--politically, economically, intellectually--of Breton ethnic politics (Nicolas 1982: 192-204; see also Nicolas 1986).

MOB's program was based on a charter calling for administrative decentralization and a federalist structure for Brittany, Breton language and history instruction in schools, and fiscal aid provided by Paris, but allocated by a regional Breton government (see Fouéré 1977: 82). MOB wished to defend the rights and liberties of the Breton people by supporting all political, economic and cultural actions which favored the interests of Brittany; thus, they supported both CELIB and the active cultural movement Kendalc'h. Although the organization preached a position of non-partisan ideological neutrality, it was united by a strongly colonialist interpretation of contemporary Breton history. Ironically, political considerations lead MOB's

conservative dominated leadership to back Gaullist policy in France's colonial war with Algeria--MOB counted on a Gaullist victory in Brittany in the 1962 parliamentary elections and supported the regime's policy as a way to win political concessions--and grave internal schisms between conservatives and progressives on this issue led to the breakup of MOB in the mid 1960s. The youthful progressive--mostly student--wing of MOB split off in 1964 to found the UDB--a democratic, socialist and nationalist party with a strongly anticolonialist political ideology. I offer a more detailed analysis of the history, ideology and contemporary form and operation of the UDB in the concluding section of this chapter. MOB, on the other hand, became more conservative and even reintegrated former PNB members into its leadership and propaganda efforts and effectively disappeared by 1968. MOB eventually evolved into POBL (Parti pour l'Organisation d'une Bretagne Libre) by 1982, still headed by Yann Fouéré, and is also described at the end of this chapter.

Beginning in 1966, a more direct form of resistance emerged among Breton militants. This was an organization called the Front de Libération de la Bretagne (abbreviated FLB) whose goal was to blow up "symbols of French occupation"--but without killing anyone. Between 1966 and 1978, there were approximately 200 bombings of symbolic and infrastructural manifestations of French state power in Brittany. Targets included tax offices, government

buildings, police barracks, industrial factories, electrical installations and power plants, television transmission towers, vehicles of the French riot police (the CRS), and even the Palace of Versailles. Apart from one FLB militant who was accidentally killed while trying to defuse a bomb, no deaths or personal injuries resulted from these attacks, leading the French press to label the FLB's activities as "smiling terrorism". The symbolic violence of the FLB--done largely to mobilize Breton public opinion about Brittany's social and economic problems--therefore cannot be meaningfully compared to the strategies employed by ETA in the Basque areas of Spain, the IRA in northern Ireland or the FLNC in Corsica. In addition, unlike nationalist movements in Wales and Corsica, outsiders (e.g. tourist homes) were not usual targets of FLB militants' bombs.

Various assertions and claims made by the FLB point to a strongly anti-colonialist and anti-capitalist ideology of resistance to French state power (for various accounts of the FLB, see Nicolas 1982, 1986; McDonald 1989; Dulong 1975; Reece 1977; for trial transcripts see Le Scouezec and Pineau 1973). Public opinion in Brittany was generally sympathetic towards the FLB during the late 1960s and early 1970s but over time there was a gradual hardening of police surveillance and repression against the movement which resulted in a series of arrests and trials. Public sympathy and expressions of support increased when FLB militants were arrested, tried, convicted and jailed, so the French

government chose to temper the oppression with a series of amnesties and suspended prison terms.

From a political standpoint, what is perhaps most interesting is that arrested FLB militants spanned a wide range of occupations (industrial wage workers, farmers, teachers, military officers, businessmen, priests) and were often socially respected members both of local communities and within the Breton political sphere. In addition, virtually all were quite young (the 53 militants arrested in 1969 were mostly born after 1940). This age factor coupled with the social backgrounds of the arrested militants, discredited the French government's attempt to portray the FLB as a resurrection of wartime PNB pro-Nazi collaborators (see Monnier 1983: 200; McDonald 1989). The successful delegitimation of this hegemonic ideological claim by the French state represents one of the more valid instances of counter-hegemonic resistance in the recent history of the Breton movement. While there have been isolated bomb explosions in Brittany throughout the 1980s and while pro-FLB graffiti periodically appeared in Rennes during my fieldwork, the FLB has essentially ceased operation; however, many of its former members are still active in Breton ethnic politics today.

Breton Ethnic Politics and French Socialism after 1981: Paradoxes and Contradictions

The Breton movement benefitted directly from the expanded electoral strength of the Socialist Party (and, to a lesser degree, the French Communist Party) in France, and in Brittany especially, during the 1970s. But it should be stressed that the benefits flowed in both directions. One key to the Socialist victory of 1981 was the Socialist Party's effective cooptation of (or alliance-building with) various progressive social movements, including ones organized around regionalism, environmentalism and feminism. As later events were to show, there are basic contradictions between the historical trajectory and contemporary form of French state-making and the demands made by regionalist movements, the end result being that regionalist movements received rhetorical sympathy from the left in the late 1970s without benefitting from any concrete reforms after 1981.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Breton movement expanded and flourished as part of a broader growth in the aftermath of May 1968 of progressive movements oriented towards environmental issues, regionalism and feminism. As a larger scale, more broadly based social movement, Breton militancy probably reached its peak around 1979. What happened after 1981 would not likely have been predicted by either social scientists or Breton militants; namely, that a progressive social movement would essentially collapse as soon as a socialist regime was elected into office. It is

to this topic that I now turn.

The spring of 1981 was a time of great hope, promise and anticipation for those active in the Breton movement. Breton militants had worked hard for and looked forward to a Socialist victory in the upcoming elections since, or so they were convinced, such a transition towards the left augured well for realizing future tangible gains for the cultural, linguistic and economic programs that their movement had long demanded from the French state. These demands included greater state support for the Breton language in both education and the media, greater public investment in the infrastructure of the region, the release of Breton political prisoners from French jails, and, finally, favorable consideration to the administrative "reunification" of Brittany. This last claim has long been a source of militant protest. Brittany traditionally consisted of five departments, but was partitioned during World War II such that the Loire-Atlantique (the department including Brittany's largest city, Nantes) became part of the Pays-de-Loire. The militant campaign to reunify Brittany assembled as many as 8,000 people in Nantes for a demonstration in 1980. François Mitterand, in various speeches given in Brittany, had promised--sometimes vaguely--to fulfill some of these demands. And it was thought that a Socialist government would be far more sympathetic to progressive regionalist politics than the then current rightist administration.

The Breton militants were soon to be disappointed. Although the newly elected Socialist government did grant some small concessions (e.g., the release of thirty or so Breton political prisoners, policy modifications in university-level Breton language instruction), these reforms were widely perceived by the militants as being token in nature and quite unsatisfactory. Simply put, they had expected much more from the Socialists.

Three transformations followed this crisis of disappointment. First, widespread demoralization set in among formerly active militants, and, coupled with other factors, led to a general contraction in the level and intensity of collective political mobilization. By contraction of collective action I refer to the decreased size and frequency of mass political mobilizations. Virtually all informants agreed that after 1980 the Breton movement entered a quiet period. It was not until March 1987 that a large scale mobilization occurred at Carhaix to "defend the Breton language" (see Chapter Five for a detailed analysis). This contraction of collective action also seems related to the aging of Breton militants. People who entered the movement as college students at the beginning of the 1970s were in their early thirties by the time of the 1981 elections. These militants generally had careers and families by this period and so had less time to participate actively in nationalist politics. As many researchers have pointed out, social mobilization occurs in

cyclical patterns (see Tarrow 1989). Coupled with this aging process, there was a general crisis in the recruitment of young people--including university students--into Breton ethnic politics throughout the 1980s. In short, Breton militancy lost much of its symbolic and emotional energy and much of its salience as a form of resistance to the political and cultural domination of Brittany by the French state.

In a second major transformation, the Breton movement underwent considerable fragmentation. In particular, the largest Breton political party (the Democratic Breton Union, or Union Démocratique Bretonne, abbreviated UDB), which was--and is--closely allied to the institutional French left, fractured along the issue of maintaining electoral alliances with the Socialist Party. This conflict, among others, led to a substantial weakening and loss of membership in the UDB. Fieldwork data suggest that the UDB's active membership declined from around 2000 militants in the early 1980s to less than 1200 by 1987.

Third, and perhaps most important, changes in political rhetoric and practice after 1981 are best seen in the emergence of micro-parties which promoted radical forms of collective action constituted around linguistic issues and which formally rejected any alliances with the institutional French left. The best example of what Michel Phlipponneau calls the "multiplication of micro-nationalist formations" (1986: 147) would be the political party EMGANN and its

associated organization Stourm Ar Brezhoneg ("Combat for the Breton language", abbreviated as SAB) discussed earlier in this chapter. Greater detail on both EMGANN and SAB are provided later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter 3.

Stourm Ar Brezhoneg in particular illustrates many of the paradoxical effects of French socialism on Breton ethnic politics. A leftist micro-party rejects any alliances with the institutional French left, thereby excluding itself from having any kind of regional electoral impact. The same leftist micro-party implores the French state to save the Breton language while at the same time condemning that state for its policies of linguistic genocide. As with other organizations making up the Breton movement, the period of greatest demobilization and fragmentation occurs just at the moment when the broader political context would seem to allow for a greater freedom of movement to request and receive various concessions from the state.

How would a Breton militant explain all this? In a phrase that they repeat over and over: "The French state is hypercentralized and, no matter which political party is in power, the state is antithetical to the interests of regions and minorities". Once, while riding in a car with several Breton militants, I asked if it was not so that France was the "Nation of the Rights of Man". They laughed derisively and went on to give what seemed to me a typically French intellectualist explanation of why this was not the case. Breton militants are very much a product of French culture

and education, and so not surprisingly appropriate the linguistic and philosophical forms of their French oppressors. Yet given France's history of forced cultural assimilation of ethnic minorities, the Breton militants' viewpoint cannot be dismissed as mere ideology.

An Ethnographic Sketch of the Political Landscape

Most researchers of the Breton movement choose to emphasize its diffuse and dispersed organization and the fact that many individuals participate in contexts outside major groups or parties (see McDonald 1989; Nicolas 1982; Kuter personal communication). Some knowledgeable informants will also claim that because individuals with "Breton ideas and sentiments" are so widely scattered throughout Brittany's social structure the movement has strength and influence beyond what its organizational form might suggest. Nicolas for instance describes Emsav as resistance by the Breton community to the political, economic and cultural integration of Brittany into France (seen as a coercive process) but goes on to say that "it is a sort of nebula defined by an ensemble of energy and activities inspired by a common sentiment in favor of Brittany, but polymorphous in its expression" (1982: 26), while McDonald writes:

> There is not, it should be emphasized, any one organization that is 'the movement". The term is sometimes used to describe a wide range of cultural, linguistic, economic and political activities in Brittany and applied to an ever-changing array of

> societies or groups, united only by a common commitment to some aspect of Breton language, culture or politics (McDonald 1989: 73).

Given the numerous diagnostics of the Breton movement's political weakness discussed in Chapter One, however, I generally regard these claims as ideological in nature. That is, such statements serve as an attempt to mask or conceal what most researchers (except perhaps Lois Kuter) and many informants would willingly admit: this movement is not mass-based, it is organizationally fragile and unstable, and its concrete achievements in the arena of resistance are limited. The amorphous character of Breton ethnic politics makes it difficult to study ethnographically, yet most activities within the culture of resistance embodied by the movement take place in an organizational context. I turn now to a survey of those organizational forms during my fieldwork in 1987.

The Union Démocratique Bretonne

The Union Démocratique Bretonne (abbreviated UDB, Democratic Breton Union in English and Unvaniezh Demokratel Breizh in Breton) was founded in 1964. It is a progressivist, socialist autonomist party with a focus first, on the economic problems of Brittany--including, but not limited to capitalization and investment, emigration, living standards, per capita income, unemployment and deindustrialization--and proposed solutions to those problems and second, on the defense of Breton language and

culture. The UDB has participated in worker and peasant struggles, environmental protests and anti-racism demonstrations as a way to popularize the themes of the party. Its ideology could perhaps be summarized in a slogan which appeared around 1980: "Vivre et Travailler au Pays: Quel Pays? Pas de Bretagne sans Culture Bretonne"--or "Live and work in your region. There is no Brittany without Breton culture." Since 1971, the UDB has averaged approximately 5% of the vote in cantonal elections and a bit over 2% in legislative elections (see Phlipponneau 1986), and in 1987 claimed to have between 80 and 100 elected officials (primarily conseiller municipals elected to office as Socialist party candidates as well as two mayors of small rural communes who were elected more on the basis of personality than party affiliation). No accurate estimate can be made regarding the number of UDB militants; however, most informants agree that the party membership probably peaked at around 2000 in 1980, and by 1987 had declined to 1000-1200 (although informed estimates range from as few as 400 to as many as 1500).

Prior to its structural fragmentation and financial crisis of the early 1980s the UDB could be characterized as a real political party--one of the few formations in the history of the Breton movement that could be so described--with a real propaganda journal of high quality (Le Peuple Breton, a monthly journal printed at press-runs of 10,000 copies in 1980). Published analyses of its pre-1980

structure point to a hierarchically organized and centralized party with roughly 100 local cells or sections grouped into 14 Federations (see Nicolas 1982; Union Démocratique Bretonne 1977a and 1977b). Although there were periodic purges of those militants who were considered too radical (for instance, UDB members who actively sympathized with the FLB) or those who had too intimate ties to French political parties, the UDB's central strategy has always been to form close alliances with the institutional French left--both political parties (the Socialist party and the French Communist Party) and labor unions (the CGT and CFDT)--as a means of winning local elections. UDB leaders feel that there are no contradictions between an "autonomist party" and "alliances" with French parties since for them the goal is to govern a city for the good of its Breton people in everyday life with respect to such concerns as housing, jobs, public services and culture as well as to advance the program of the party.

In 1981, some of the key founders (Ronan Leprohon, Jean-Pierre Duval and Jean-Yves Veillard) left the UDB in an atmosphere of their increasingly radicalized rhetoric which stressed a harder nationalist position and a greater emphasis on a class struggle theme. The UDB splintered after 1981 and underwent significant structural charges. By 1987, these changes had resulted in the following organizational form. The UDB had been reorganized into seven Federations based primarily on French territorial

administrative departments; thus, there were Federations of Ille-et-Vilaine, Finistère, Morbihan, Loire-Atlantique, Côtes du Nord/St. Brieve and Côtes du Nord/Trégor-Goelo as well as a Federation of Immigration based in the Paris region. A permanent technical political secretariat had been created; in essence, a political bureau composed of members elected by the party congress and representatives of the Federations who were dedicated to such activities as press relations, interior and exterior affairs and finance. Finally, there was a self-conscious attempt to democratize the functioning of the party--a tacit admission that the previous structure was too rigidly centralized, authoritarian and based on a personalization of power--to the extent that its leadership claimed in 1987 that the UDB was in fact more democratic than the French Socialist party since there was more of an opportunity for all members to voice opinions and the law of majority rule strictly governed.

The social class and gender composition of the UDB largely reflects that of Breton ethnic politics as a whole. In class terms, membership in the Breton movement is not representative of the Breton population, yet individuals from all classes are represented at one time or another. While there are no wealthy capitalists or industrialists in 1987 and few workers and peasants, there is a high concentration of middle class intellectuals--university educated middle class professionals like teachers, doctors,

lawyers, architects, notaires. These people all share certain characteristics: they have some money, job security and leisure time (especially long summer vacations). These are the necessary economic foundations of participation in militant politics.

In gender terms, at most 20% of Breton militants are female (except in the Diwan movement, where as many as 50% may be women). Most influential and powerful figures in the Breton movement are men and they have an embarrassed difficulty explaining this gender inequality other than assuring me that this is typical for all French political parties as well.

The UDB's reported social class composition in 1987 was as follows: teachers (25%), farmers (8-10%), salaried workers (22-25%), functionaries (20%), diverse middle class professionals (shopkeepers, doctors, artisans, and nurses, 20%). Men make up 60% of the party membership. The UDB is an aging party in that most its members are older than 25, and the average age is around 40. Historically, the party was much younger in average age and teachers and students formerly made up nearly half the membership and most of the leadership. The present UDB leadership is deeply concerned about problems of recruiting people between ages 18 and 25 into the party, linking the difficulty both to a militant discourse which does not appeal to younger people and a general decline of youth participation in labor unions and political parties. Indeed, recruitment into the party is

not systematic--it takes place through the journal, personal networks, Breton cultural associations and various Celtic folk festivals held during the summer months.

The UDB's annual budget in 1987 is reported at one million French francs (approximately $167,000 U.S.). Budgetary sources include membership dues based on income (raising roughly 60% of the budget) and fund-raising activities (concerts, Fest-Noz, sales of calendars). Some paid elected officials donate part of their salary to the party. Their principal expenses include propaganda and bureaucratic overhead; the former consisting mainly of posters and the latter the maintenance of the UDB's various offices.

These budgetary data do not include their journal Le Peuple Breton. Although the journal had a debt of 500,000 FF in 1985, this was paid off by 1987 largely through militants' donations and now has a balanced budget. The journal costs 14 French francs in 1991 (10 FF in 1987), has some advertising, and accepts donations from supporters. In 1987, there were 5000 copies per month printed with 1500 subscribers and 2000 copies sold in limited outlets. The remaining copies are handed out free at summer Celtic festivals. There is no systematic newsstand distribution of the journal since commercial press distribution is highly centralized in France; in Rennes for instance there were only three outlets where the journal could be purchased in 1987. As such, militants themselves must deliver copies of

the journal to participating outlets and this poses considerable logistical problems.

So the question now becomes: what does the UDB actually do? As the largest and most legitimate Breton political party, its activities take three major directions. First, it pursues a strategy of getting its candidates elected at the local level (for comparison purposes, there are roughly 20-25,000 conseiller municipals in Brittany and 500,000 altogether in France). Because in France it is necessary to obtain at least 10% of the votes in two separate elections, no UDB candidate could be elected to office at the departmental or regional level. Second, the UDB works at the European level as a recognized regionalist party trying to build a concrete and realistic program for the autonomy of Bretons as an ethnic minority. This is mainly rhetorical as one might expect given the weak overall influence of the party. Third, the UDB disseminates propaganda and pronouncements on a wide range of economic and cultural issues.

Consider the example of the UDB in Rennes. There are about fifty UDB militants in the Federation of Ille-et-Vilaine, twenty of whom are in Rennes and the remainder in St. Mâlo. The twenty militants in Rennes, four of whom are women, are mostly middle level salaried employees between 30 and 40 years old with occupations ranging from government bureaucrats, to nurses, teachers and computer engineers. There is only one university student (age 20) represented.

The ranking official is a 35 year old real estate accountant who has been a Rennes conseiller municipal since 1983. Rennes has 59 conseiller municipals in its current Socialist administration (45 from the left--including one UDB militant--and 14 from the right, the mayor Edmond Hervé is a Socialist).

The UDB section meets once per month, its meetings are conducted in French and are not open to the public. Their primary activity is to put up posters and conduct fundraising by selling Le Peuple Breton and UDB calendars. The annual budget of the Ille-et-Vilaine Federation is estimated at less than 100,000 FF, and there is a constant worry about paying their office's rent and electric bill in addition to their election campaign expenses. At the meetings, they discuss presidential elections, municipal problems, Breton culture, taxes, often concrete issues (parking, heating costs) as well as their ideological "work of reflection" on the oppression of Bretons and other peoples like the Kanaks of New Caledonia. They engage in symbolic protest acts; for instance, handing François Mitterand a letter on the reunification of Brittany when he comes to Rennes on a visit. Militants work perhaps one to two hours per week at party activities, sometimes three to four hours, and a bit more at election time.

In summary, the UDB could be fairly characterized--in the words of one of its leaders--as the "biggest among the smallest"; that is, the largest and most well-known Breton

political party, the only one with a substantial membership and the only one with elected officials holding political office. At a regional level, its influence on policy and development has been at best moderate and at a national level basically non-existent. The UDB remains, however, the primary institutional and organizational expression of Breton ethnic politics.

EMGANN

EMGANN (sometimes translated as "Combat") was founded in 1982. Its point of departure lies in a committee called KAD (Kuzul An Distaoliadey in Breton or Comité Amnistie Bretagne) established in the late 1970s to defend the interests of Breton political prisoners in French jails. Among other lobbying activities this group published a dossier called "Bretons Prisons: Bretons Face à la Repression" which detailed the conditions experienced by those FLB members who were imprisoned after 1978. When these prisoners were amnestied and released in 1981, EMGANN was founded in response to a lack of concrete results from the left in general and from other Breton political parties in particular. Its creation represents first, a deep frustration with alliances with mainstream French political parties and especially with the French Socialist party and its failure to keep its implied promises after 1981 with respect to such issues as the reunification of Brittany, fiscal support for the Diwan schools and Breton language

instruction in public schools and universities and second, a realization that Brittany is no longer an economic development priority for Paris and that there is rising unemployment and renewed economically forced out-migration for young Bretons. EMGANN is constituted both as a national liberation movement and a progressive socialist party with the goal of creating an independent autonomous Breton socialist state. It is a young party, not only in the sense of being newly created but also with mostly young members (average age estimated at 25) and still in its formative stages.

EMGANN's total reported membership is around 300 militants. As with most such claims, this probably represents a one hundred percent overreporting. EMGANN's leadership claims that it wishes to maintain a steady and gradual development of its cadres by acquiring members slowly. Their policy here is to maintain strong internal cohesion and to build up a solid body of dedicated, hard working and responsible militants. EMGANN no doubt has more sympathizers than active members. Members are recruited through personal networks, through propaganda (posters and EMGANN's monthly journal of the same name) and through the party's limited scale protest activities (marches, demonstrations).

Many of EMGANN's militants also belong to Stourm Ar Brezhoneg--its perhaps more well known linguistic protest ancillary organization (see Chapter Three). The reported

composition of EMGANN is different from that of other Breton political parties in that it has a smaller proportional representation of intellectuals and a membership composed mainly of proletarians. Its militants include unemployed people, students, factory and service workers but few peasants or shopkeepers. Although its founders and leaders readily admit that there are "few women in Breton or French political parties", they claim that between 25-35% of EMGANN's members are female. The leadership believes that Breton nationalist sentiments are more widespread and stronger among working class Bretons than among the middle class or bourgeoisie. This is a remarkable belief and wholly inconsistent with the generally agreed upon social class composition of the contemporary Breton movement.

EMGANN's structure is on paper democratic in form, but like all of the past and present parties is in reality hierarchical, based on the personalistic influence and power of its leading militants. This rhetorical democratic structure is necessary, according to its leadership, since "too heavy and rigid a structure impedes development and dynamism". At the base of EMGANN are twenty local committees which are grouped into a federation--in effect, a national committee of coordination. This federation meets once per month with delegates from each committee with voting powers, but these meetings are also open to all members. There is also a national secretariat with various officers who are directly elected at the party's annual

National Congress. The local committees are fairly evenly distributed throughout Brittany (there is also a committee in Paris). The original local committees dating from 1982 include those located in Rennes, Quimper, Brest, Nantes and Guingamp while other local committees in the department of Ille et Vilaine have since been established in Fougères and St. Mâlo. The local committees vary slightly in organization, members, financial resources, frequency of meetings (most meet regularly) and their degree of integration into their respective communities. The Rennes committee has approximately twenty active militants, half of whom are women. EMGANN meetings are closed to the public--members only are allowed to attend. Although the leadership insists they have "nothing to hide" they are--perhaps justifiably--concerned about security issues and are fearful of French state repression. The meetings are conducted in Breton or French depending on the linguistic competence of the militants present.

EMGANN has two conspicuous problems: a lack of money and a lack of political recognition. EMGANN's financial resources come primarily from membership dues (which vary according to a militant's income). Other sources of income include the sale of posters and stickers, their monthly political journal and the periodic organization fund-raising events (Fest-noz and variety shows). The committees have very small budgets, EMGANN as a whole has very little money (probably less than 20% of the UDB's annual budget) and

self-consciously chooses to charge nominal amounts for admission to its events or for its journal because their constituencies are relatively poor and/or unemployed. The money is spent mainly on journal publication and printing costs of posters. Perhaps more constraining, EMGANN has a public relations problem with the Breton people: it is not a widely known party. Their principal activities therefore are concerned with trying to make themselves better known within Brittany through propaganda, posters, and demonstrations. EMGANN ostensibly wished to run candidates in cantonal or municipal elections in Nantes, Rennes or the Trégor--but with little chance of winning and even less money such electoral efforts represent in the words of one informant "a self-test, but after all, if one never works, one will never win or get anywhere". The same militant elaborated on EMGANN's second problem while simultaneously representing it as a long-term strategy:

> Widespread support and sympathy is possible when public actions take place, but this doesn't necessarily lead to investment...for example, everyone is for the Breton language, but if no one does anything for it, it could die a friendly death. If we don't work for the language, nothing will advance, there is much work to do. Things like Diwan and road signs are concrete, they can be organized to do this, you know, it happened in Wales, Flanders, Catalonia too--the road signs are an efficient and high payoff work, a small step perhaps, symbolic, only the beginning of the work, in a sense a first step on the way to win other goals since once one thing is won, it's easy to win other goals. The bilingual signs lead to the mobilization of other people--members of Cercles Celtiques begin lobbying their municipal elected officials for the signs--and results in Breton becoming something ordinary and a part of everyday life.

In general, EMGANN appears to be a party waiting to do something rather than actually doing it. For example, EMGANN works with CONSEO in its attempts to construct a Breton nation--not a realistic program if viewed objectively--and rhetorically supports the Kanaks of New Caledonia but possesses little in the way of resources to do anything in concrete terms. EMGANN has probably seen more success in practical contexts from the protest activities of Stourm Ar Brezhoneg while it structurally represents a more radicalized, working class expression of Breton nationalism which remains essentially marginal and powerless. EMGANN's ideological production is analyzed in Chapter Four, and its political praxis in Chapter Five and Six.

Other Formations: POBL, MIB and the CRB

POBL (Parti pour l'Organization de la Bretagne Libre) was founded in 1982. Its membership is estimated at between 80 and 300 militants. It is also a middle class, male dominated group although the membership seems to be more upper middle class and older than either the UDB or EMGANN. From a structural standpoint, there is a committee of directors representing local groups. Ideologically, the leaders of POBL claim to have no ideology; that is, they are neither left nor right and committed to neither socialism nor capitalism. POBL's political position covers three main themes: nationalism (freedom to maintain cultural identity and control natural resources), democracy (an elected

assembly to represent Brittany and exclusively Breton interests) and federalism (promoting a Europe of ethnic peoples each with their own territorial and political sovereignty). In my research I could not discover any significant political activity by this party other than the publication of their journal L'Avenir de la Bretagne. Although they have participated in a few local elections, they have no elected officials and like EMGANN rely principally on propaganda efforts to publicize their political program.

The MIB (Movement Independiste Breton) is based in Loire-Atlantique and particularly in Nantes. It has a very small and young membership, which refuses French military service and deploys an extreme left discourse coupled with a propensity for violence in Breton movement demonstrations. It is essentially another radicalized marginal faction of militants, but the data are limited.

The Convention pour la Région Bretagne (CRB), on the other hand, was a party in formation in 1987 and claimed to have acquired hundreds of members. A concise description is given by A. Heusaff:

> The CRB started as a club but decided recently in An Oriant [Lorient] to become a political "movement" with a federal structure based on "Comités de Pays" (Pays meaning traditionally defined parts of Brittany). It criticizes the present Regional Council as lacking a policy for Brittany, dominated as it is by members of French parties elected on a département basis. it wants to prevent moves toward renewed centralization which the Chirac government is pushing ahead with. It is for a European federation of regions. It wants

> equal official status for the Breton language and, in particular, Diwan to be endowed with the means to exist and develop. Its program for regional autonomy is being worked out (Heusaff 1987: 7).

The CRB has continued a modest-paced growth since 1987. By 1992, it had constituted itself as a more centrist party with goals of regional economic development, promoting education and environmental protection and guaranteeing cultural preservation within a general set of claims calling for greater regional autonomy. Most recently, they ran campaigns in the regional elections of March 1992.

In the next chapter, I move to a discussion of the ideology and politics of the Breton language. Language has long been the most active arena of contention in Breton ethnic politics. The privileged location of the language issue in ongoing political struggles over the past century results from, in my view, two factors. First, Breton is one of the few significant ethnic markers in the region. Second, French state repression of Bretons historically has been most visible in the linguistic domain. Therefore, militants have long emphasized the defense of the Breton language even if, as has often been the case now and in the past, they are not always competent native speakers.

CHAPTER III

THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN BRITTANY

> Politics is expressed through symbolism. Rather little that is political involves the use of direct force; and, though material resources are crucial to the political process, even their distribution and use are largely shaped through symbolic means. To understand the political process, then, it is necessary to understand how the symbolic enters into politics, how political actors consciously and unconsciously manipulate symbols, and how this symbolic dimension relates to the material bases of political power (Kertzer 1988: 2-3).

> One of the strongest tendencies in recent work by both anthropologists and historians has been to downplay the degradation and terror experienced by victims of exploitation and persecution. The new tone is one that stresses such extant aspects as the discovery and wielding of power even from weakness, the development of "cultures" of resistance, the achievement of some sense of social identity and belonging as a benefit derived from participating in even the most debased circumstances, and so on (Rebel 1989a: 117).

The first passage, the central theme of David Kertzer's recent book, is simultaneously a truism and an exercise in naiveté. Politics does of course involve the use of ideology in symbolic and ritual forms, yet even a modest perusal of this week's newspapers or the history books reveals the quite pervasive use of violence--murder, torture, genocide--as an integral part of the political

process. The second passage, from Hermann Rebel's at times incomprehensible article, suggests that some social scientists--especially those adopting various textual approaches--have failed to grasp a fundamental essence of exploitation and domination. Here, I would like to examine this interplay between, if you will, text and brutality through a discussion of some of my fieldwork material from Brittany.

If Kertzer is even partly correct about politics, it should be possible to locate symbolically defined arenas of contention within the culture of resistance embodied by the Breton movement. To borrow from Sherry Ortner (1973), the Breton movement collectively manipulates only three categories of "key symbols" which, for Breton militants, form the ideological basis of both collective political mobilization and personal acts of resistance. The three symbolic categories could be labelled as territorial, historical, and linguistic. I briefly describe each in turn.

Territorial symbols: Brittany is a geographical and cultural unit with known historical boundaries. Since the Vichy regime, Brittany has been partitioned such that Nantes and the Pays Loire-Atlantique is administratively separated from the rest of Brittany. Over the past decade some of the largest mass mobilizations of Breton political protest have called for the "reunification of Brittany".

Historical symbols: Brittany was at one time a prosperous

and politically autonomous society which, over the past 500 years, has been subjected to conquest, domination and peripheralization by the centralized French state. Bretons are nowadays both dominated by the French state and exploited by the capitalist economy. Far from being an internal colonialism just-so story, the Breton version of events is more or less historically accurate.

Linguistic symbols: The Breton language remains the key symbol of Breton identity. Since 1976, the most salient domains of political contention have revolved around the language issue. The remainder of this chapter will focus on this area of rhetoric and social practice.

Many Breton militants systematically reject ethnic "cultural markers" as symbolic loci of mobilization. Such cultural markers include elements of "traditional" culture as music, dance, costume, sports and so on. For Breton militants, these represent the relegation of things Breton to the rustic past and a stereotyped ghettoization of Breton culture far removed from an image of modernity sought by the largely middle-class professional Breton militants. The paradoxical position of Breton culture in Breton militancy, as well as other aspects of ethnoregionalist ideology, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Current Status of the Breton Language

Breton is a Celtic language with a large amount of regional and local dialect variation. Breton is most

closely related to Welsh, and more distantly related to the other Celtic languages, e.g. Irish Gaelic, Scots Gaelic, Manx, and Cornish. Breton, like all other Celtic languages other than Welsh, has undergone a long historical process of decline. Although no official statistics have ever been collected, various private surveys suggest that in 1900 1.3 million people were Breton speakers, 1.2 million in 1930 and, 1.1 million in 1956 (see Hewitt 1977; Kuter 1981; Kuter 1989; Broudig 1987; Timm 1980). For demographic reasons, the Breton speaking population attained its largest size around 1914, with the biggest decline in the number of speakers taking place in the middle to late twentieth century.

About 600,000 people presently are able to speak or comprehend Breton (although perhaps only 250,000 actually do so on a daily basis). Virtually all Breton speakers also speak French although there are generational differences in linguistic competence. The present population of Brittany is either 2.7 million (if one accepts the French state's territorial divisions) or 4 million (if one accepts the Breton militants' version). Nearly all present day Breton speakers live in Lower Brittany, that is, the western half of Brittany. About 40% of the inhabitants of Lower Brittany are Breton speakers. Roughly 98% of all Breton speakers are non-literate in Breton, and speak a version sometimes referred to as "popular Breton". Popular Breton, in its four principal dialect variants, is a spoken vernacular

whose lexicon borrows extensively from the standard French lexicon. The "sociologically typical" popular Breton speaker is likely to be older (50 years or older), not highly educated, a resident of a small rural community, and often either a retired person or a farmer (see Broudig 1987). Most popular Breton speakers learned Breton first, at home and among their peers, and effectively became French speakers at school.

A sociologically typical Breton militant does not fit this description, indeed there is very little overlap. To review, Breton militants tend to be younger (30-40 years old, on average), university educated, live in an urban place (though there are rural militants as well, see Badone 1985; McDonald 1989) and hold middle class salaried professional occupations (see Beer 1977 and 1980). A large proportion work in educational institutions (lycées, universities) and 'middle class intellectual' is not an incorrect label. As Maryon McDonald has expressed it: "The Breton movement is, in more ways then one, a product of French education" (McDonald 1989:88). Breton militants often learn Breton as a second language, and speak a version sometimes referred to as neo-Breton or literary Breton (or less charitably by critics of the movement, chemical Breton, synthetic Breton or phony Breton). Neo-Breton has a grammar which is often heavily calqued upon French syntax, and contains a lexicon composed of neologisms largely unintelligible to a native, popular Breton speaker (see

Hewitt 1977; McDonald 1989: 115, 205-206). These neologisms are the product of linguistic reforms from the mid 19th century onward, where various intellectuals created new Breton words from Old and Middle Breton or Welsh roots using arbitrarily chosen rules of word formation (see Fleuriot 1981). The general goal of these reforms is and has been to purify "Breton" from "French" influence, since as one militant put it to me in an interview "the Breton language deteriorates in the countryside each day, it is slowly eaten up from inside as French vocabulary creeps in". This linguistic rot metaphor pervades much militant thinking on language issues and is coupled with an ambivalent disdain for popular spoken Breton.

Let me emphasize one point through an apocryphal story. A young woman living in Rennes rediscovers her Breton ethnic heritage and enrolls in Breton language classes at the university. After studying for a whole year, she leaves for the summer to visit her Breton-speaking grandmother on the farm down somewhere in the Morbihan. But once she gets there, she and grandmother are unable to understand each other at all! To phrase this in sociolinguistic terms, there is a low degree of mutual intelligibility between literary Breton and popular Breton. Perhaps the story is not really all that apocryphal, since a number of informants recounted one or another variation upon it--unelicited--while speaking to me about language issues.

A more specific empirical example is of equal or

greater relevance. Breton militants will often claim that certain "new words" have been widely disseminated throughout, accepted by and used in daily speech among the rural Breton speaking population. In these claims, the neo-Breton word for telephone pellgomz ("speak from far away", literally) is generally held up as the most visible "success story" for the popularization of intellectual neologisms. Indeed, throughout Brittany, the sign "pellgomz" is to be seen on telephone booths. Naturally, the signs were affixed by militants themselves. However, a very knowledgeable Breton-speaking linguist informed me that the typical word for telephone in daily speech among popular Breton speakers is the French language téléphone, and that pellgomz would be used only in an ironic or derisory fashion, or else as a joke. In addition, McDonald writes that:

> ...although local Breton-speakers could come to understand it [the word pellgomz] after some prodding, it remained laughably metaphorical for them. One kindly peasant in the north of Finistère explained to me: "You can speak from afar if you want, but it wouldn't be the same as telephoning, would it? You'd really have to shout!" (McDonald 1989:349).

The status of this word among popular Breton speakers (as opposed to its perceived status among militants) is of crucial significance since it points to a major conceptual gap between Breton militants and the broader population they claim to represent. To quote McDonald again:

> ...we can say that the militant world and the popular world have different "Bretons". They are not talking the "same" Breton; they are not talking about the same thing in commentary upon Breton; they do not have the same social value of Breton; they do not share the same

> level of education or the same linguistic and social sensibilities and competences. They are not, we might say, speaking the same "language" (McDonald 1989:279).

The linguistic and social class differences between Breton militants and the vast majority of living Breton speakers are major factors hindering the mobilization of large numbers of Bretons around the language issue. Lois Kuter, an American anthropologist who has worked with Breton militants since the 1970s and is a long-time political advocate for their cause in France and the United States, partially disagrees with this assessment. She writes:

> The social separation of language learners and militants from rural native speakers of Breton is often overemphasized. Even if many active language promoters are of an urban middle-class background, they are usually not far removed from rural grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The perception that local Breton dialects express a different world than standardized Breton is, however, a major factor separating native speakers from second-language learners...Those who learn a standard Breton find themselves in a no-man's land, speaking a colorless language which to many native speakers might as well be French for all the relation it bears their own "real" Breton (Kuter 1989:84-85).

Yet I have often found that militants will either regretfully and wistfully acknowledge these linguistic and social class differences or, alternatively, will take great pains to vigourously deny their existence which may, in fact, amount to much the same as an acknowledgement of the problem. Kuter's claim that Breton militants are one generation removed from an agrarian popular Breton speaking social class and linguistic milieu is one often voiced by Breton militants. Since Kuter and I interviewed some of the

same informants at different times, we have both heard this claim. I suspect that it is an ideological statement since many of my informants do not come from such a social background; that is, they have urban origins and non-Breton speaking parents.

But these matters are far more complicated from a linguistic and sociological standpoint. Here, it becomes necessary to briefly review some research on education and language use in Brittany over the past century. Popular Breton is not a prestige language. It has undergone a lengthy historical process not only of decline in the number of its speakers, but also processes of stigmatization and devalorization (for general perspectives on language decline, see Dorian 1989). As one author put it: "Breton has been the victim of one of the most resolute campaigns of linguistic oppression in Europe" (Hewitt 1977:46). These processes of stigmatization, discrimination and devaluation have promoted both alienation and shame among Breton speakers in regard to the learning and use of the Breton language. As one of my informants put it "many people who know Breton have socio-linguistic amnesia--they are too ashamed to admit that they even understand Breton, let alone speak it." Why is this the case?

At least five reasons could be outlined. Since the early 1880s, compulsory schooling has been conducted in French--a major component of the French state's effort to transform "peasants into Frenchmen" (Weber 1976). For most

of the past 120 years, harsh measures were used in the schools to actively discourage the use of Breton (see Hélias 1978 for some descriptions; see also Elegoet 1989; Piriou 1971). Within the ideology of the French nation-state, French citizens who are not French speakers are depicted as both unpatriotic and as backward savages (see Gal 1989; Cooper and Stoler 1990). By the early twentieth century, many parents did not want their children to experience the same humiliation in school and stopped speaking Breton at home to their children.

This issue of linguistic repression of Breton through French schooling is more ambiguous and complex than the usual account given by Breton militants (see, for the classic statement, Gwegen 1975; Kuter's summary in her 1989 review article also restates the standard position). Although some of the earliest legislation passed by the post-revolution French state in 1793-1794 dealt with the necessity of public education being conducted in French--linguistic homogeneity and political centralization are tightly linked for both structural and cultural reasons in the history of the French nation-state--it is perhaps true that the French state did less to systematically repress Breton language use than the Breton militants have generally argued. For example, throughout the nineteenth century, state officials allowed the use of Breton language instruction as a medium for learning French (McDonald 1989:47-50), linguistic repression of the type described in

militant historiography was experienced unevenly at the local level throughout the region (see Weber 1976), and many older people in Brittany neither remember experiencing such oppression nor seem to have resisted learning French in school--quite the contrary, since learning French was often perceived among peasants as a means toward personal, social and economic improvement and success (see McDonald 1989:242). Furthermore, many children in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Brittany never attended school at all and therefore could not have experienced such linguistic oppression. In the twentieth century, the Loi Deixonne of 1951 guaranteed the teaching of regional languages, and Breton language instruction is permitted--if not actively encouraged--by the state at all levels of instruction in public, and by extension, in private schools today.

McDonald's revisionism of the long-standing thesis of systematic and widespread linguistic repression is anathema to Breton militants and still provokes a certain degree of hostility towards McDonald's work in some militant circles today. Empirically, more historical research needs to be done.

From a theoretical standpoint, both viewpoints are likely to be correct and it is a straightforward task to reconcile them if one considers how state-making and ideology construction operate together. The state--an abstracted reification--is neither omnipotent nor

omnipresent even where the state is highly "centralized". Agents of the state, incompletely and, sometimes, ineffectively implement state policy at the local level but this implementation is not always carried out in a uniform manner. Given the varying characteristics of localities and ever present limitations on the application of state power at the local level, one would expect to see "repression" incompletely carried out, and sometimes largely unquestioned and be internalized by those who are victims of oppression. It seems that where hegemonic ideologies--for example, preference for and greater value placed on French as opposed to Breton--are widely accepted by rural people, ideology construction--understood as an integral part of nation-building--has been extremely successful. A wide range of evidence suggests that the French state--up until at least 1914--was never totally successful in imposing its power in the provinces even in critical areas like taxation and military conscription (see Weber 1976; Braudel 1984 and 1988). Presumably, linguistic repression through schooling would have been even less effective.

Other reasons for the decline and devalorization of Breton can be more briefly stated. Since the nineteenth century (indeed this process begins in the tenth century) Breton has increasingly become the language of the subordinate classes in Brittany: farmers, fishermen and, in general, of less educated people. The language has steadily declined in prestige over time due to its social class

association. Breton speakers have frequently faced linguistic discrimination from French speakers in two especially important contexts: military service and wage labor migration outside of Breton speaking areas. Eugen Weber remarks that "through most of the nineteenth century, 'racial' prejudice [in Paris] focused primarily on poor French immigrants from the countryside"--including Brittany (Weber 1986: 134). After 1945 Breton became symbolically associated in the minds of many Bretons with wartime collaboration with Nazi Germany (see Chapter Two), and both the status of Breton and attempts to institute Breton language education after World War II suffered from this association. Finally, as Breton becomes more and more a minority language and as the general dominance of French increases, knowledge and use of Breton tend to be perceived as either functionally useless or, worse, an active impediment to one's chances for social and economic mobility. As one militant remarked to me: "Our biggest problem is to convince people that they can speak Breton, and still be architects or doctors." Eric Hobsbawm in his discussion of nationalism refers specifically to Brittany and the economic utility of Breton language use, saying "that languages of purely local or socially restricted use should lose ground to languages of wider use is not surprising. Nor is there any evidence that such linguistic change and adaptation met with any resistance from below" (Hobsbawm 1990: 115, also 119).

These factors are implicated in the decline of Breton as well as in its stigmatization. But Breton militants usually point to another cause of language death, and that is television. Although television came late to many parts of Brittany (in some areas not until the late 1960s), and although French children watch fewer hours of television than their American counterparts, it is nevertheless true that television viewing is an important mechanism of language transmission. Apart from 90 minutes a week on Sunday morning, all television programming is in French. This program, called "Chadenn Ar Vro" ("Channel of the People"), combines documentary news features, human interest stories, game shows, animated shorts, science fiction and regional news--all sympathetic and sensitive to modalities of militant language use and political causes. Radio programming in Breton is more widespread, but not much more so. No daily newspapers are printed in Breton, only in French. Publication of most Breton language materials is limited to press-runs of roughly 3000 copies (see Broudig 1986). Breton, unlike Welsh or Irish Gaelic, has no official administrative status and no legal place in public administration. Breton is offered as an elective course in French public schools at both école and lycée levels where roughly 9000 students were enrolled in such classes in 1987, to be exact, 5950 école students and 3085 lycée students. This compares to 4.68 million students enrolled in English classes, 1.29 million in German classes, and one million in

Spanish classes. Total enrollment in the "regional languages" taught in French public schools (Basque, Catalan, Corsican, Alsatian, Flemish, Béarnais, Breton), was 135,000.

Given the dramatic evidence of language decline, the role of the French state in that decline, and the relative isolation of Breton militants from most other Breton speakers, what kind of political response has emerged? Aside from personal acts of resistance (see Chapter Five for further discussion) the collective responses have taken two forms since 1976; these are first, a private association of bilingual language schools known as Diwan (literally "seed" in Breton), and second, a linguistic commando organization known as Stourm Ar Brezhoneg (Combat for the Breton Language). I turn now to a discussion of political rhetoric and practice in these two movements.

Political Responses to Impending Language Death I: Diwan

Diwan was created in 1977 as a non-profit private association of preschool and primary schools with2 instruction in the Breton language. As with other Breton political responses, Diwan was modeled after similar schools in the French Basque region (Ikastolak, established 1969) and in Wales (Meithrin). In 1989, Diwan had 510 students enrolled in 19 preschool classes and 12 primary school classes, with a total of 18 separate establishments located primarily in Lower Brittany. Diwan presently employs 43 teachers and about a dozen administrative staff. The

various political struggles surrounding Diwan have mobilized a large percentage of Breton militants for, as they explain it, "Diwan is the only concrete thing being done to save the Breton language."

But virtually since the opening of the first school class, Diwan has been in crisis. In my encounters with Diwan administrators and teachers I was struck by their genuine commitment to their cause despite serious setbacks. As one teacher told me "you really have to be an active militant to do this job, it's a lot of time, but I love it." Diwan undoubtedly has many problems and at the same time raises many interesting issues about the ideology and social practice of linguistic minority protest movements.

Diwan's first problem is that it has never been able to attract a large number of parents or students. In Rennes, the Diwan school reopened in 1987 with only five children--all of whom were the children of quite dedicated militants. As the Diwan official in Rennes expressed, in a voice simultaneously anxious and puzzled, "five children out of all of the Breton speakers in Rennes, well, there must be many more out there. It's a matter of promotion, that's all. But five children, that's not so bad." This seems to be a nearly universal trait of Breton militants by the way: optimism in the face of admitted setbacks. More generally, 510 students (430 in 1987) out of a Breton population of 2.7 million (or 4 million in the Breton militants' political cosmology) is not so promising. When the American

ethnographer, in his polite, studied and objective interviewing style, asks Diwan teachers why there are not many more students enrolled in Diwan schools, the teachers tend to become a little defensive. Their explanation takes three parts. First, most Breton speakers are older and do not have school age children. Second, they point to the effects of stigmatization and devalorization on any aspect of Breton language instruction. Third, since Diwan is always in difficulty, only really concerned and active parents (parents willing to put in a large time investment) are likely to take part in the movement.

But Diwan's second problem has long been its biggest and most intractable one--not unrelated to the first I discussed--and this is the problem of money. Up until 1982, roughly 90% of Diwan's budget came from self-financing. These modes of fund raising included gifts, automatic deductions made from contributors' bank accounts, various fund raising events (fest-noz and crepe dinners, mostly) and the marketing of Diwan products (most notably calendars and T-shirts). Over 80% of the budget went to pay salaries of Diwan personnel.

But by 1986, Diwan's budgetary situation had changed dramatically, and for the worse. In that year, the annual budget was roughly 7 million francs. The money was acquired from the following sources: individual gifts/donations 1 million francs; fund raising 700,000 francs, 1.5 million in aid from Paris plus another 1.77 million in partial payment

of state aid promised--but not paid--from past years, and finally 233,000 francs from the Conseils généraux of Finistère (200,000 FF) and of the Côtes-du-Nord. In other words, by 1986, Diwan was providing itself with less than 25% of its annual budget. Diwan had become highly dependent on the state for financial support. Worse still, Diwan was roughly 2 million francs in debt by 1986. In 1989, the debt figure was 3.5 million francs, and a court in Brest ruled that any money coming from the state could be seized as payment for the contracted debt.

Why does Diwan suffer these repeated and severe fiscal crises? I suggest three reasons. First, in order for Diwan to be successful, it needed to expand the number of schools operating across Brittany since parents could not be expected to drive their children 100 kilometers a day back and forth between home and a Diwan school. Each new school opening entailed more fixed expenses and more labor costs (even though Diwan often receives rental space at nominal rents). Second, because many Diwan schools have limited student enrollments--the case I described in Rennes being an extreme example--each individual school probably effectively runs at an economic loss. Third, Diwan--like most of the Breton movement--lacks effective mass-based fundraising strategies. In the United States, a wide range of social movement organizations--all across the political spectrum--including the National Abortion Rights Action League, the National Rifle Association, the Sierra Club and so on--raise

large sums of money through direct mail solicitation. These fundraising campaigns consist of highly sophisticated marketing appeals targeting and channeling specific audiences' support of ideological agendas and political causes. Direct mail fundraising is generally a cost-effective strategy to mobilize monetary resources, yet Diwan--and the Breton movement as a whole--makes no efforts in this direction. Diwan's current fundraising attempts fundamentally rely on the same militants to give contributions over and over again--and they contribute relatively little per person--while an expanded base of potential financial supporters (for instance, setting up a computerized list of the 15,000 people who signed a petition asking for an official language statute for Breton in 1987-1988) and a well-thought out and executed marketing appeal could at least double the association's fundraising. The same comments are applicable to the absence of telephone marketing fundraising strategies in the Diwan movement. However, it is true that no movements in France employ these strategies.

The financial situation of Diwan weighs heavily on both its present and future efforts to operate its schools. Diwan is literally in a perpetual five minutes before midnight state of fiscal crisis, and periodically it is forced to fire its teachers for lack of money (they actually go on working, but without pay). Diwan officials blame much of their financial insecurity on the French state. In

February 1986, the French state signed an accord with Diwan--on the eve of the elections--stating, in essence, that the Ministry of Education would pay the salaries of Diwan's instructional staff. These contrats simples later were to emerge as a major point of contention because the French state's financial support of Diwan became contingent on Diwan altering its preschool curriculum to include many more hours of French language instruction. Two pertinent quotes from state officials: "Regional languages are beneficial for our country [read France], but the law states that there be a minimum of instruction in French" (Mme Alliot-Marie, State secretary in charge of teaching, 1987), and "Yes to the contracts for the teachers if the classes are really bilingual" (Réné Monroy, Minister of National Education, 1987). Although numerous evaluations by the French Education ministry have indicated that Diwan's pupils learned French perfectly well by the time they enter secondary school (whether they really learn Breton turns out to be another story!), Mr. Monroy voiced concern that the students might be at risk of being handicapped for the rest of their schooling if they were not fluent in French. As it happens, in 1989 only 10 of Diwan's 43 teachers are actually paid by the state directly and Diwan's debts are still growing. However, the association has managed to secure modest levels of funding from the Conseils généraux for the next five years (a little less than 1 million francs per year, with total debt estimated at 3.5-4 million francs).

Diwan, by agreeing to add more French to its curriculum, has come under attack by such organizations as Stourm Ar Brezhoneg since, for the militants of SAB, bilingualism is a bad thing and they believe that "the whole Breton movement must oppose this evolution and restore our language as an official one and the national one in Brittany".

Shifts in Diwan's budgetary sources point to another of Diwan's problems--the extent of popular support for the movement. Diwan's officials point proudly to the fact that 3500 Bretons agreed to have contributions deducted automatically from their bank accounts each month to support Diwan. But since most Breton militants (recalling that there are 5000 or so militants) at least give lip-service to supporting this movement, 3500 is not really such a surprising figure. Furthermore, the average amount of each contributor's gift is in the range of $50 per year. In general, however, there is not much of a tradition in France for making such contributions. While I have never encountered any real hostility to Diwan from people living in Brittany, it is evident that the level of popular support is not so great among the general population. As one Diwan teacher expressed it in a frustrated tone:

> The real problem is that Bretons do not support their own language. We are aware of this problem, we're not sure if it will succeed, but one must do something. It's funny, but everyone [the Bretons] says that the Breton language must be saved, but no one does anything for it. Ultimately, it's a fatalistic attitude, it's all in the head; if it's no longer the fashion to speak Breton, well, you have to do what everyone else does.

The general level of support for Diwan is difficult to determine, but in converstions with non-militant Bretons, a word commonly applied to Diwan--and the movement in general--would be "marginal", meaning "on the fringes of society". The perceived marginality of Diwan is another underlying cause of Diwan's problems, for perceptions and material reality are mutually-reinforcing. In 1990, some public schools in the Côtes d'Armor (formerly Côtes-du-Nord), most notably in Lannion, started up classes in Breton language, culture and history--and had numerous (200 or more) students enrolled. The classes proved extremely popular for parents and students alike so one could say that it is not the goals of Diwan's curriculum that are met with disinterest or disdain on the part of average non-militant Bretons but rather the ideological content and "marginal" social practice associated with Diwan which is at fault.

A final problem concerns the involvement of parents in the Diwan movement itself, and the implications their involvement has for the actual process of learning the Breton language by the children. According to Maryon McDonald, internal documentation collected by Diwan indicates that of 119 young Diwan mothers involved in 1979-1980, under 23% felt they knew enough Breton to speak it to their children at home and less than 7% were actually doing so, along with their husbands. None of these eight mothers had themselves been brought up to speak Breton by their own mothers, and four of them came from outside of Brittany.

The fathers were not more involved, although more of them knew or were in the process of learning Breton. And, as it turned out, the children were cheerfully speaking French among themselves at the Diwan schools (McDonald 1986a: 185-186). Since McDonald's publication of these data, Diwan officials have been reluctant to discuss such issues but there is no reason to believe that this situation has changed greatly since 1980.

A number of issues emerge from Diwan's struggles. The first of these is that Diwan employs a range of political protest strategies. Aside from a large meeting, rally and protest march at Morlaix in May 1987 (up to 2000 people attended) one of their most frequent activities is to block airports or trains as a way to attract media coverage giving them an opportunity to discuss the current depths of their crisis. These protests take place once every few months, but are not large scale or long-lasting, and I never personally observed any of them during my fieldwork.

The core ideological theme of Diwan was perhaps best summarized by Andre Lavanant, Diwan's president: "The Diwan movement is simply the expression a fundamental liberty: the right to education in the mother tongue and in respect for other languages". Yann-Ber Duval, another militant concerned with Diwan affairs, is more critical:

> The Diwan schools will continue despite the difficulties that assail them at this moment, it's naturally a financial problem, but above all the Nation of the Rights of Man--as it calls itself--is, and by far, the most backward in Europe when it comes to the

> universal rights of linguistic minorities and it has enormous difficulty in ridding itself of its Jacobinism and its centralism which make it scorn the languages and autonomous cultures which are not those of Paris, in accepting the rules and laws which would give them more freedom and opportunity, in understanding that they should be considered as riches for France and that it would be shameful to let Breton and other regional languages of France disappear.

The central theme in both statements is the relationship of a democracy to its linguistic minorities. If France is a democratic polity, the reasoning goes, then it must provide support for its minorities and their cultures. The references to Jacobinism and centralization in Mr. Duval's peech are typical for Breton militants--the "hypercentralized" French state is viewed, no matter which political party is in power, as having always been hostile to the interests of localities, regions, and minorities. The history of France's forced cultural assimilation of internal ethnic cultures lends credence to this point of view.

Two other issues deserve discussion. Diwan is one of the few places in the Breton movement where women play an active role. Although Diwan's leadership is largely male, many women are engaged both as teachers and as mothers of Diwan pupils. Gender constitutes one of the many paradoxes of Breton militancy: why is a leftist social movement so dominated by men? Another point concerns the symbolic valences surrounding the children themselves. Diwan supporters argue that learning Breton (and bilingualism) is highly desirable for the cultural, psychological and

emotional development and well-being of the children. The power of this symbolism should not be underestimated since who can question the social value of the well-being of children? At the rally for Diwan at Morlaix, after several hours of rather repetitious speeches by adults, a dramatic interlude occurred where thirty five young Diwan students walked to the front of the hall, and under the guidance of a well-known Breton musician, sang a folksong in Breton. The symbolic valence of the moment was indeed very powerful and emotionally compelling: Diwan became represented as a movement which allows Breton children to express themselves in their native language, in the language of their country, in the language of their ancestors.

Finally, those active in Diwan are fully aware that they are engaged in a struggle against a seemingly inevitable process of language decline. Since 8,000 to 10,000 Breton speakers die each year, unless an educational system which facilitates Breton language instruction from preschool to the university is rapidly put into place "one of the most important living heritages of the Celtic patrimony will be relegated to the curiosity of the archives and generations of Bretons will have nothing more to pass down than the deep traces of cultural wounds". For a number of reasons, Breton militants in Diwan, no matter how deep their commitment, are in a race against time which they cannot hope to win.

Political Responses to Impending Language Death II: Stourm Ar Brezhoneg

I begin with a text:

What is Stourm Ar Brezhoneg?

The Present Situation of the Breton Language

Those [masculine/feminine] who wish to describe the situation of our language today must recognize that it is bad and what we have succeeded in obtaining for it is quite small. On the one hand:

- the domain of the Breton language is shrinking little by little.
- Breton speakers form an aging population whose number diminishes a little more each day.
- the number of children raised in Breton are getting more uncommon.
- the place and importance of Breton is diminishing in society.
- the French state refuses to give Breton an official language statute in Brittany.
- the politics of linguistic genocide pursued by the French government continues at school, on the radio and television, and in public life.
- the majority of Breton speakers are still indifferent to the destiny of their language.

But on the other hand:

- the linguistic conscience of Breton speakers and their desire to learn and to defend their language is increasing.
- great progress has been made in the areas of publishing, theatre, the press and the creation of new words.
- the combat in support of the Breton language has taken an international dimension.

What Combat for What End?

We find ourselves today at a crossroads:

- either we do not react and we can announce that the Breton language will be dead a century from now.

- or we can fight to obtain a lot and quickly, until Breton is the language of society in Brittany.

Cultural movements exist today in Brittany which act in favor of our language. We do not think, however, that they are either ready, or capable, of fighting to obtain this. Because they have not made clear choices concerning the meaning of our combat for the Breton language, and the place that should be made for it. Because they are too closely tied to parties presently in power in the French state.

This is why we have created a new movement, Stourm Ar Brezhoneg (Combat for the Breton Language) and we declare:

- that we take part in the liberation struggle of the Breton people. We are thus a nationalist movement.
- that the situation of the Breton language is tied to the situation of the people who speak it, and thus that our combat for the language is tied to the combat of Bretons to live and work in their country by destroying the capitalist system which oppresses them and to create a society where relations are not founded on domination.
- that we are independent of all political parties.

<u>What Method of Struggle?</u>

In order to be effective, we will be led if necessary to break the law. We will therefore take all roads which seem to us suitable to lead [conduct] us to our goal. All our actions of this type will afterward be acknowledged.

Membership to SAB [address in Breton, Vannes]

This is a programmatic text published by Stourm Ar Brezhoneg (SAB) in various publications since the founding of SAB in 1984. Like most Breton political texts, few people have ever read it and, as such, its message is aimed

at an audience of militants. SAB was established as part of a splinter faction from a linguistic organization called Skol An Emsav--alluded to in the text--which was perceived as being too conservative in its political program and activities by the militants who went on to found SAB. The text itself is filled with rather sound sociological analysis, coupled with wishful thinking, and articulates some of the most general goals of the organization. The last paragraph, ironically written in the French language original, alludes to SAB's most conspicuous activity of symbolic protest. Since 1984, most people in Brittany have become familiar with SAB because members of the organization have painted over or tarred over thousands of French language road signs.

Stourm Ar Brezhoneg has about 150-200 members (no membership list is kept), but the association itself is shrouded in secrecy largely due to its illegal activities. Any Breton speaker (I could have joined too, if I had been learning Breton) can join and, although not all members of the organization paint over road signs, this what the SAB is most renowned for. There is an element of malicious fun in SAB's chief activity--outwitting the agents of the French state for the good of the Breton language and people--and, since militants are caught by the police from time to time in the act of defacing public property (road signs), this provides the opportunity for SAB's militants to decry the oppressive nature of the French government.

Being caught by the police defacing road signs is not necessarily a bad thing for the militants because the resulting court trials--and the publicity they generate in the news media--are one of the few vehicles open to the militants for diffusing their political program to a general audience. Typically, a militant on trial will refuse to speak in French and petition the court to be allowed to speak in his or her "native" language of Breton and, in accordance with international law, the court reluctantly ends up providing an interpreter. The use of interpreters in French courts in Brittany is nothing new, as interpreters were used in court trials up to at least 1899 in Brittany, Limousin and Provence where witnesses "neither spoke or understood French" (see Weber 1986: 44).

SAB's claims that their defendants should be allowed to express themselves in court cases in Breton rather than French are based on faulty legal arguments since the international accords cited by SAB clearly state that defendants are to be given an interpreter if he or she does not understand or speak the language used at the trial. Given the fact that most militants are native French speakers with varying degrees of competence in Breton, these claims are legal fictions at best. But the symbolism in the action is somewhat compelling, and often is dramatically acted out in the court trials themselves.

Since the militants do not deny their actions, they are found guilty by the courts and are often assessed fines of

up to, in extreme cases, $8,000. As far as I am aware, due to appeals and other delaying legal maneuvers, militants do not actually pay these fines. The entire purpose of such trials, from the militants' viewpoint, seems to be to generate publicity and internal solidarity among themselves in response to state repression. I offer a more theoretical analysis of SAB's "linguistic roadsign terrorism" in Chapter Five.

Stourm Ar Brezhoneg's activities have had a practical impact in Brittany. At present, over 200 municipalities have bilingual road signs and several departments have agreed, in part, to bilingual signs on highways maintained by them (national highways, of course, are unlikely to have such signs put up). Both political sympathy and financial practicality (it is expensive to continually replace or clean the road signs) seem to be at the root of these political compromises. Overall, the impact may be largely symbolic, but SAB's militants see bilingual road signs as only a first step in their program as well as a strategy to create greater public awareness of and support for the defense of the Breton language. The lobbying efforts of SAB have an effect at the national level as well. In March 1990, 520 municipal councils in Brittany voted at the Conseils généraux of the Côtes d'Armor, Morbihan and Finistère that the National Assembly be asked to consider a new law or statute on France's regional languages. SAB's militants are frequently vocal advocates and lobbyists at

the local level and their calls for action have sometimes had a measurable effect.

The political program of SAB rests on three issues. First, they demand compulsory public school education in Breton from preschool to university. Second, they demand television and radio stations with transmissions solely in Breton. Third, they demand an "official status" for Breton such that the language would become one of public and governmental affairs in Brittany. It must be noted that SAB's militants reject any compromise of bilingualism since Breton "is and should be the national language of the Breton people."

Given the unrealistic character of this program, one must wonder exactly why SAB's militants do what they do. There are many possible answers to this question. To a certain extent, SAB's militants first, are often basing their income-generating careers in Breton language militancy and second, given their social backgrounds as alienated, marginal and often very French individuals, Breton militancy provides one avenue of identity formation and the creation of meaningful lives. I am not entirely comfortable with such explanations, but in my view--and in the view of many informed outsider critics of the movement--such interpretations are not entirely implausible. Ironically, many Breton militants are paid by the French state while simultaneously representing the state as the essence of persecution and domination.

On the Linguistic Micropolitics of Resistance: A Comparison of Brittany and Catalonia

There is one additional important dimension to the politics of language in Brittany; namely, in what contexts is Breton used or not used in militant events (meetings, rallies, social gatherings). Since not all militants or aspiring militants actually speak Breton fluently, this choice is of both practical and political significance. Although McDonald discusses code-switching among both militants and rural popular Breton speakers, her work is not systematic (McDonald 1986b and 1989). Here, I present four brief ethnographic examples from Brittany and then offer a comparison between Brittany and Catalonia with respect to language choice and its political significance.

In most cases, it appears that the more politically and ideologically committed to language issues a particular set of interlocutors are, the more likely it is that they will insist on speaking solely in Breton, even if it is evident that some of the people present are not Breton speakers. One clear diagnostic attribute of militants is that they must either be speakers of Breton or be learning to speak Breton. Language use therefore symbolizes group identity and solidarity, and may also be used as a strategy to exclude non-militants from ongoing discourse. My four examples are as follows: 1) a rally for Stourm Ar Brezhoneg held at Carhaix in March 1987, 2) a rally held in support of Diwan which took place at Morlaix in May 1987, 3) a private

dinner party attended by militants--or former militants--of varying degrees of ideological commitment, and 4) a meeting of Diwan parents and administrators in October 1987.

The rally in support of an official status for the Breton language in Brittany organized by Stourm Ar Brezhoneg (see Chapter Five for more detail) was one in which the vast majority of those attending were, by definition, Breton speaking militants of the most politically radical persuasion. The program--brief and often impassioned speeches interspersed with musical performances ranging from classical Celtic harp to folk music to hard rock--was entirely in Breton. The one exception was the speech given in both French and Breton by the president of Diwan--a man who seem far more comfortable speaking the former than the latter. Diwan is no doubt in general more accommodating to French speakers, since many parents involved in Diwan do not speak Breton while hard-line Stourm Ar Brezhoneg militants reject bilingualism except as a matter of necessity. Indeed a rally designed to promote support for an official position for Breton in public life within Brittany would scarcely be likely to have much discourse in French--the language of the oppressor. As Maryon McDonald remarks, there is a moral persuasiveness in calling yourself oppressed (McDonald 1989:98).

The rally for Diwan held at Morlaix was a different story altogether. The majority of the speakers spoke in French, rarely solely in Breton, and some speeches in

English were simultaneously translated into both Breton and French. One goal of the rally was to demonstrate national and international support for Diwan (regional politicians and members of international human rights organizations and the European Parliament were among those speaking out in favor of Diwan), and perhaps it is not so surprising again that French would predominate. It is significant, however, that SAB militants circulated fliers (in Breton, French, German and English) expressing their deep concern regarding Diwan's capitulation to the French Education Ministry over the issue of adding more hours of French language instruction to Diwan's curriculum in exchange for long promised and long delayed state financial aid.

The organizational meeting for the Diwan school in Rennes was chaired by the same Mr. Duval quoted above. Apart from Mr. Duval and the young Diwan teacher, three parents were present, two very active militants and one couple who might be described as ambivalent aspiring language learners and potential militants and, of course, an American ethnographer who speaks passable French and no Breton. Mr. Duval immediately stated at the beginning that we should speak French since "not everyone here understands Breton". This was for the benefit of the couple who had not as yet positively made up their minds to send their children to Rennes' Diwan school--indeed, with such a low enrollment, the practicality of reopening the school was in question and two additional children could make the difference. Apart

from some stage-whispered jokes which passed between the two very active militants in Breton, the meeting proceeded in French. This is not unusual, McDonald reports that French is generally used in Diwan meetings, since so many parents are not Breton speakers (McDonald 1989:203).

The final example concerns a dinner party composed of current, former or marginally involved militants. As noted earlier, defining precisely who is a militant poses numerous problems, since although it is often a self-defined category militants vary significantly in their level of political engagement and ideological commitment. At this social gathering--composed of kin-related married couples--there was one couple very active in Diwan (the wife as an instructor, the husband--who held a professional job as a hospital administrator--as an activist), one couple where the husband had formerly been active in local UDB politics but whose wife was at best indifferent, and a third couple who at one time had been supporters of Diwan at a casual level of commitment but who were now somewhat disenchanted. All but one of these were Breton speakers (the wife of the UDB member excepted) and they had learned Breton as adults although their parents (two sisters and a brother being represented at the gathering, their spouses being non-Breton) were rural Breton speakers. At this party, everyone was speaking in French until the hospital administrator (a non-Breton, born in Paris, a radical who moved to Brittany and who learned neo-Breton as an adult) began aggressively

entering conversations speaking Breton, and forcefully carrying on in Breton until his interlocutors, who first responded in French, began to reply--sometimes in a hesitant way, not speaking Breton very fluently--in Breton. This went on for some time, until most of the talk (on mundane topics) took place in Breton, my friend and best informant and I continuing to speak in English. When the drinks were over and we sat down to dinner, the sociolinguistic tension was broken and conversation continued, with relief on most people's part, in French.

The point here is that Breton militants--especially the more radical ones--are frequently insistent and aggressive code-switchers even though their interlocutors may be more comfortable speaking French. As an effort to generate ethnic solidarity--a political act--this attempt to impose language choice may only alienate marginal militants. The hospital administrator also insists that these couples speak only Breton on joint-family outings and vacations much to the discomfort and disdain of his affinal kin. As my close friend remarked to me, this is the sort of activist who gives Breton militancy a bad reputation.

In summary, it would seem that Breton militants use language choice as a political tool in both everyday and highly politicized contexts. The symbolism underlying choices of when to use Breton, when to use French and when to use bilingual discourse cannot be overestimated given the emotional, moral and political dimensions associated with

language in Brittany. This remains an area in which considerably more research needs to be done.

In this regard, Catalonia makes a useful comparison and contrast with Brittany. Kathryn Woolard's 1989 book Double-Talk: Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia presents research focusing on the micropolitics of language use in Catalonia. In most respects, the status of both Catalonia and Catalan are exactly the opposite of those of Brittany and Breton and so it is worthwhile to discuss Catalonia as a comparative case.

Catalonia is a "developed periphery"; that is, a region suffering historically from political, linguistic and cultural domination from Castille but a region which is also economically highly developed and industrialized. This contrasts greatly with the more typical peripheral ethnic nationalism of Brittany and other Celtic regions (see Gourevitch 1979; Hansen 1977; McDonough 1986). Although Catalan speakers (currently numbering five to six million in an area stretching from Perpignan in southern France to Valencia and Andorra and the Balearic Islands into Catalonia in northeastern Spain) form a territorial linguistic minority within Catalonia, they are a propertied, managerial and professional class with economic power over an immigrant working class speaking Castilian who arrived during the 1960s. This is a direct contrast to Brittany where Breton is associated with a subordinate class position and lower educational levels. Castilian--a language that the Spanish

state has attempted to impose from above on Catalonians--is spoken by roughly 50% of Catalonia's population, although all Catalan speakers are bilingual. Unlike Breton, Catalan has endured as a vernacular language despite repression under the Franco regime (see Woolard 1989:28-29). This is an important counter-example to the generalization that minority languages inevitably contract and disappear in complex industrialized societies (see Dorian 1989).

Unlike Breton again, Catalan is both a prestige language and one which has maintained, in fact increased, its number of speakers over time. Among other things, immigrant Castilians often seek to learn Catalan as an avenue of socioeconomic mobility or to avoid discrimination in employment and housing (see Woolard 1989:45 passim). In constructions of Catalan ethnic identity, language is the most important marker: "a Catalan is a person who uses Catalan in an native-like way as a first, home and/or habitual language" (Woolard 1989:39). This suggests that Castilian (or other regional immigrants) can <u>become</u> Catalan through linguistic assimilation. This situation is virtually non-existent in Brittany: no French speaker would move to Brittany and learn Breton as a strategy for socioeconomic mobility although some middle class neo-Breton speakers have done so to become part of a romanticized imagined community of oppressed Celtic peoples in a search for personal meaning and identity.

Woolard identifies some characteristic sociolinguistic

dynamics of Catalan language use and their political consequences. Catalans use Castilian in ethnically mixed groups and although they may borrow Castilian technical terms or humorously mimic Castilian speakers or phrases, they tend to avoid introducing too much Castilian into their speech flow. Bilingual conversations are avoided even though 94% of Castilians are passive bilinguals--Catalan speakers tend to follow the "politeness of the accommodation norm"; that is, the rule of etiquette is that they will switch to Castilian if there is any doubt that their interlocutor is not a Catalan speaker. The governing rule of language choice therefore is the following: Catalan should be spoken only between Catalans--from the first speech act onward--and Castilian should be spoken to non-Catalans. In order to follow this rule, one has to accurately predict a stranger's ethnolinguistic identity based on such characteristics as accent, physical appearance, clothing, walking style and occupation (see Woolard 1989:70 passim).

The location of the encounter is also significant: Catalan bookstores or bars, and public buildings associated with Catalan identity heighten the expectation that a stranger would be a Catalan speaker. These predictors have a social class and power component in everyday life. For instance, waiters or waitresses in restaurants are often assumed from the outset to be Castilian speakers by Catalans.

The use of Catalan has political significance. Language choice expresses group solidarity, sympathy with Catalan nationalism, ethnic pride, and rejection of oppression by the centralized state. This is both different from and similar to the situation in Brittany in that these observations certainly apply to Breton militants but not, for the most part, to rural popular Breton speakers who speak Breton by habit and not by political attachment (code-switching often with French, see McDonald 1989).

Many Catalans believe that the norm of accommodation represents a symbolic and practical recognition of the political power behind the Castilian language which has been imposed upon them from above by the Spanish state (Woolard 1989:80). But Castilians often perceive the use of Catalan as a boundary marker of Castilians' economic marginality in Catalonia. Any attempt by Catalans to impose Catalan on Castilians in interpersonal contexts is perceived by Castilians as an effort to emphasize and accentuate the marginality and interpersonal subordination of the Castilian speaker (here again, interactions in restaurants between servers and customers are of great relevance). The use of Catalan thus forms a "barrier"--linguistically and economically--to Castilian speakers.

In summary, according to Woolard, there exists a paradoxical core symbolism attached to the Catalan language. Within the context of the Spanish nation-state, Catalan is represented as an oppressed victim whose rights must be

defended, while within the context of Catalonia Catalan becomes an ever-present reminder of class differences whose use comes to resemble a potential weapon of class oppression. There is much less ambiguity as far as Breton is concerned. While there is shame and alienation attached to Breton for most speakers, militants view the language as an expression of the Breton people's distinctive identity and as a means of resistance against domination and oppression perpetrated by the French state. But since Breton has long since lost any association with elites (or even the vast majority of Brittany's middle class), it cannot be used as a tool of class differentiation and subordination.

Conclusion: Linguistic Genocide, Brutality and Resistance

The concept of brutality brings many images to mind: the South African police using whips, dogs, and tear gas to disperse anti-apartheid protestors, the People's Army firing assault rifles into crowds of demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, the government forcing student dissidents to serve as porters of ammunition and military supplies in the conflict with Karen ethnic resistance fighters in Myanmar, or the servile forms of labor control on Sumatra's plantations described by Ann Stoler (1985). This list could be extended indefinitely.

Brutality (or violence or coercion) can take many forms. The overt use of political force by nation-states

against internal opponents is clear cut enough. But most "brutality" is embedded in the labor process of specific production systems and in gender relations in virtually all societies. Violence is also employed as form of resistance by oppositional movements against powerholders. Brutality, in my view, need not always be physical in its consequences, it could well be psychological or emotional too as the quote from Hermann Rebel suggests.

Yet the policy of linguistic genocide presently waged by the French state against the Breton language entails no such overt violence. We cannot, however, ignore the historical reality of the terror of linguistic discrimination experienced in schools during the nineteenth and early twentieth century by speakers of Celtic languages in both France and Ireland. Rather, the coercion nowadays assumes the form of "fiscal brutality". The French state simply refuses to fund such projects as bilingual education, media or road signs at anywhere near the level required to prevent the death of the Breton language. At the present time, the French state does not systematically trouble itself to imprison, torture or murder Breton militants and, contrary to what some Breton militants claim, the total historical volume of violent repression directed against the movement has been minimal. Without resorting to torture or murder, the French state's policy is very effective in obtaining the desired result. Fiscal brutality is very effective because it is easier to mask ideologically than

the more overt forms of brutality alluded to above.

The continuing difficulties of Diwan and the limited and largely symbolic impact of Stourm Ar Brezhoneg's linguistic commando strategies are reflected in a widespread pessimism that is nearly omnipresent among leaders of the Breton movement. Time and again, they confided that "the struggle is already lost, and has been for 30 years". Breton militants understand the sociolingiustic dynamics of language death perfectly well and even massive state intervention might not be sufficient to prevent the effective disappearance of Breton within the next 50 years. For obvious reasons, such state investment will not be forthcoming. Breton militants who have not yet lost all hope in their struggle will continue to deploy their limited resources--both material and symbolic--in an effort to preserve the Breton language. Yet against a hegemonic fiscal brutality, the silent chorus of resistance articulated by the powerless may indeed be expressed only in the form of symbolic but impotent texts.

CHAPTER IV

SYMBOLISM, IDEOLOGY AND RHETORIC

Melanesian Dancers, Celtic Bar-Goers and Ideologies of Shared Oppression

It was a cold and foggy spring night in Brittany as we drove along some dark and winding roads in the Côtes du Nord towards the village of Confort-Behret and the Seizh-Avel bar. There is no word for "spring" in Breton and anyone who has lived in Brittany--or the "Celtic fringe" in general--will understand why. My companions--a Breton woman and another American anthropologist--and I were off for the evening to watch Kanaks from New Caledonia dance in a Breton night club. We arrived, went into the crowded and smoky club, paid our admission fee and found seats in the rear of the hall where the Melanesian performance group was assembled on one stop of its lengthy tour across Brittany. Our chairs were up on a high platform, the hall was darkened already and when I sat down, to my utter dismay the back legs of the chair were not quite planted on this platform and I crashed loudly backwards and downwards, through a pair of French doors and thus into an open courtyard laying on my back as a turtle might until my friends--Joe Gaughan, the

anthropologist and Claudine Schofield--helped me up. Claudine was very amused, Joe matter of fact, and the Breton audience nonplussed, although a few did cheer and clap. Claudine, when told earlier in the evening of the past half dozen or so ethnographers who had studied the Breton movement, had exclaimed: "It seems as though there are more American anthropologists interested in the Breton movement than there are Bretons interested in it!" After my acrobatic tumble, knowing how difficult it is for anthropologists to find jobs these days, I told Claudine and Joe: "If all else fails, I can always try out for the circus."

But by now, the performance was about to start. Ten stout Melanesian dancers from New Caledonia, wearing the proverbial grass skirts of the exoticized ethnographic other, began to dance. Each performance (the harvest dance, the bird copulation dance, the fish dance, etc.) was introduced and explained in French by their leader. At one point, while describing their indigenous costumes in great detail--the skirts were not made of grass at all, as it happened--the man added, nervously and mischievously: "But our underwear, of course, is made by you, the French." A stony silence fell among the two hundred or so Bretons in the hall, in a bar where Breton culture, politics, music and symbols were prominently represented, and a few in the audience jeered or whistled. The Kanaky realized his error, hurried on to finish his point, and the dance performance

continued. At the end, the Bretons were asked to join the Kanaks in dance and so everyone danced happily together in a syncretic dance form that was neither exactly Melanesian nor exactly Celtic.

Kanaks are the Melanesian population of the French overseas territory of New Caledonia. Breton militants and Kanaky militants have a mutual affinity for one another since both perceive themselves as victims of French colonial oppression. It is thus not really surprising to see Kanak dancers perform in a Breton bar just as it is not surprising to read about Kanaky politics in the Breton militant press. What is interesting here, though, is the political and symbolic misidentification on the part of the Kanaky dance group leader, who--we as anthropologists pausing to remember the anthropological principle of segmentary opposition--identified his audience as French rather than Breton and who thereby created an awkward moment where the imagined parallelism and affinity between the two oppressed groups was denied, or at least not represented and reinforced.

Theoretical background

The politicization of ethnicity necessarily entails the mobilization and manipulation of powerful symbols of territory, community and identity. While there is a long standing social science debate over whether the social phenomenon of ethnicity itself is primordial or instrumentally constructed, ethnic politics clearly requires

a self-conscious and intentional use of symbols to transform "ethnic potential" into ethnic action (see Smith 1986; Gourevitch 1979). Many theorists have suggested that the efficacy of ethnic symbols lies in the "emotional intensity" of such identities (Rothschild 1980) or in the elements of fictive kinship and stipulated common descent inherent in the self-perception of ethnic group membership (Horowitz 1985). This is no doubt correct. But as the seminal essay by Frederick Barth (1969) suggests, the most significant dynamic processes of ethnicity occur at the boundaries of ethnic groups; in particular, I would add, where the boundaries involve social relations like resource competition, exploitation, domination and oppression. In other words, ethnicity is nearly always a variant on power relations and it is here that one can usefully begin to locate one nexus of the symbol production which is a necessary pre-condition for ethnic political mobilization.

Breton militants have employed a wide range of symbols in their political struggles over the past hundred years. Apart from the symbolic dimensions of the language issue, considered elsewhere, one primary locus of symbol production emerges in the following interconnected web of meanings or "key symbols". These include a Breton version of a historical consciousness of Breton-French relations (essentially a history of colonial inequality and state domination), the production of an indigenous Breton history as counter-hegemonic discourse in opposition to the

ideologies of the French nation-state, and philosophical and moral reflections on the distorted nature of democracy as seen in the relationship of France to its various ethnolinguistic minorities. These key symbols are perhaps slightly different in nature from those which define Breton ethnic identity itself, but there is a large degree of overlap. Before proceeding to a substantive discussion of such symbols, a conceptual overview of terms like symbol, ideology, hegemony and counter-hegemony seems appropriate.

Symbols, Ideology, Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony and Resistance

Symbols are cultural elements which communicate meaning. Words, gestures, objects, actions, events, people, places and ideas all can potentially or in practice function as symbols; indeed, there is nothing which cannot in principle operate as a symbol in a given socioculatural system. The relationship between a symbol and its meaning (or meanings) is often said to be arbitrary in that there is no innate or ascribed characteristic of any potential symbol which dictates its meaning. Yet at the same time the attribution of meaning associated with a given symbol is based on shared, collective understandings and is also historically and culturally specific. Symbols are also often described as multivocal (possessing multiple meanings). Multivocality implies that symbols frequently are ambivalent, ambiguous arenas of cultural meanings; some of which are explicit, others implicit or largely

unconscious, subject to varying interpretations and having shifting and overlapping semantic boundaries. The "meanings" of symbols, then, are difficult to analyze empirically and decoding complex cultural meanings is more complicated and problematic than reading a "text". Since symbols are multivocal cultural elements--ambiguous and ambivalent--they are subject to manipulation for social, political and economic purposes. Symbols are important for an understanding of social action precisely because they invoke collective and individual emotional and pragmatic responses.

Symbols are produced, as suggested earlier, in various loci of stratification (in late capitalism, state, religion and the market--especially consumer advertising--as well as in domains of race, class and gender inequality). Eric Wolf writes:

> If we think of such interaction [between groups] not as causative in its own terms but as responsive to larger political and economic forces, the explanation of cultural forms must take account of that larger context, that wider field of force. "A culture" is thus better seen as a series of processes that construct, reconstruct and dismantle cultural materials, in response to identifiable determinants (Wolf 1982:387).

Sherry Ortner presents a useful set of conceptual and methodological guidelines for the analysis of "key symbols" (Ortner 1973). Key symbols take two possible forms: summarizing and elaborating symbols. Summarizing symbols are "those symbols which are seen as summing up, expressing, representing for the participants in an emotionally powerful

and relatively differentiated way, what the system means to them" (Ortner 1973: 1339). Elaborating symbols consist of "root metaphors" and "key scenarios". Root metaphors are basic analytical cultural categories in the classificatory sense which lead to fundamental ways of ordering experience in a particular society. Key scenarios consist of "clear-cut modes of action appropriate to correct and successful living in the culture" (Ortner 1973: 1341). According to Ortner, a fieldworker can recognize a key symbol quite easily: the natives say it is culturally important, they are emotionally concerned with it, it comes up in many cultural or behavioral contexts, and it is culturally elaborated either rhetorically and/or in terms of cultural rules or restrictions (Ortner 1973: 1339). I will return to Ortner's treatment of symbols as a useful analytical tool to understand Breton political symbolism later in this chapter.

Symbols are essential for the mobilization and use of power. Political anthropologists have thus long paid close attention to symbols (see Lewellen 1983 for one review). David Kertzer offers a summary of the roles symbols play in the political process--illustrated with numerous and wide ranging historical and ethnographic examples--which is furthermore representative of much anthropological thinking on the subject (Kertzer 1988). To greatly simplify, Kertzer outlines five basic ideas:

1. Symbols and ritual represent and define political systems by providing both identity and continuity (flags, songs, slogans, and emblems are central forms

here).

2. Symbols and ritual communicate information (cognitive classifications of reality, like Ortner's root metaphors) and invoke emotional responses.

3. Symbols and ritual provide legitimacy to powerholders while mystifying hierarchical relations via the ritual sacralization of political rule.

4. Symbols and ritual--through repetition, through shared belief, through action--build social solidarity even if true consensus is lacking.

5. Symbols and ritual are used as weapons by the powerless to resist inequality and domination.

Kertzer's discussion of political symbolism and ritual ultimately rests on an uneasy mixture of Durkheimian and Marxian ideas. But the last two general points are quite important in that they lead us to the concept of ideology--perhaps the most valuable and significant concept ever elaborated upon by the social sciences.

Ideology is symbolically encoded and ritually enacted. Ideology by my definition consists of a set of cultural beliefs which mask, naturalize or mystify economic inequality and political domination. While ideology is sometimes thought of primarily as hegemony, it is abundantly clear that it may take a counter-hegemonic form as well (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 19-27). James Scott writes:

> Hegemony is simply the name Antonio Gramsci gave to this process of ideological domination [originally described by Marx and Engels]. The central idea behind it is the claim that the ruling class dominates not only the means of physical production but the means of symbolic production as well. Its control over the material forces of production is replicated at the level of ideas, in its control over the ideological "sectors" of society--culture, religion, education, and the media--in a manner that allows it to disseminate

> those values that reinforce its position. What Gramsci did, in brief, was to explain the institutional basis of false consciousness (Scott 1985:315).

Counter-hegemony, by contrast, refers to the production of symbols and ideas which oppose, question or contest the hegemonic power structures and ideologies and, by extension, forms the basis of attempts to delegitimate, resist and transform those structures and ideologies.

Neither hegemony nor counter-hegemony work as effectively in real societies as these definitions might suggest. Scott, for instance, in his critique of the hegemony concept, suggests a number of reasons why it sometimes fails to attain its theoretical intent. While he certainly overgeneralizes from his ethnographic case of rural cultivators in Malaysia, Scott argues first "the concept of hegemony ignores the extent to which most subordinate classes are able, on the basis of their daily material experience, to penetrate and demystify the prevailing ideology"; second "theories of hegemony frequently confound what is inevitable with what is just, an error that subordinate classes rarely, if ever, make"; and third "a hegemonic ideology must, by definition, represent an idealization, which therefore inevitably creates the contradictions that permit it to be criticized in its own terms" (Scott 1985:317). Scott's discussion, in my view, does not adequately explain situations where hegemony is quite successful (class ideology in the contemporary United States represents one excellent example) and does not give

sufficient weight to the importance of non-symbolic components of power structures (property ownership, coercion) which generally make hegemony _relatively_ insignificant in maintaining a given _status quo_.

Counter-hegemony also offers a whole set of ambiguities to ponder. Robert Darnton, in several publications, has proposed that counter-hegemony is essential to successful revolutions or regime changes. He cites as examples the use of pornographic satire to delegitimate figures of authority--kings, nobles and clergy--in pre-revolutionary France and television broadcasts of the opulent private lifestyles of East Germany's socialist elite which served to sweep away ideological constructions of socialist egalitarianism prior to the fall of Eric Honecker's regime in 1989 (Darnton 1974, 1990). Yet quite frequently counter-hegemony is either weakly developed or again insignificant when up against rigid material structures of oppression. Generally speaking, various forms of hegemony and counter-hegemony coexist and cotransform, and only specific historical analyses can sort out the genesis, operation and outcomes of competing ideological agendas. Power always counts for something, however, and the material usually outweighs the symbolic in such matters.

Jean Comaroff provides one of the most fascinating illustrations of these issues (Comaroff 1985). Among the Barolong boo Ratshidi (or Tshidi), a Tswana chiefdom located along the borderlands of South Africa and Botswana,

religious belief and ritual have functioned, at varying points in time, as both hegemony and counter-hegemony. In the early 19th century Protestant Methodist missionary teachings adopted by many Tshidi emphasized values such as discipline, self-realization through work and peaceful acceptance of inequality. These values are important in creating conformity to capitalist work discipline and as such Methodism (and Protestantism in general) helped to establish capitalist hegemony both in Europe and in the colonial world (Comaroff 1985:132-134).

Over time, poorer Tshidi came to recognize the contradictions inherent in such religious teachings--the contradictions being highly visible in the daily experience of exploitation, deprivation and poverty. Around 1920, an evangelical Protestant sect known as the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion spread rapidly among poor, non-literate Tshidi while, even today, the wealthier Tshidi by and large remained adherents of Methodism. The Church in Zion emphasized spiritual healing and the rejection of money, wage labor, capitalist commodities (placing taboos on pork, liquor, tobacco) and work place discipline; in short, a rejection of white, colonial capitalist culture. In so far as the sect urged members to produce collectively, share, avoid using money ("eat the work of their own hands") participation in the Church in Zion served first, as a "blurred collective representation of class" (as opposed to wealthier Tshidi, see Comaroff 1985: 189) and second, as

symbolic and pragmatic resistance to capitalism.

Yet this does not exhaust Comaroff's account. Given the harsh material realities of Tshidi existence under apartheid (especially land concentration and proletarianization), most sect members were compelled to work in mines, in factories near Johannesburg or on white-owned farms in the western Transvaal (see Comaroff 1985: 162). In other words, economic constraints are often more powerful than ideology. The Tshidi tried to escape this contradiction through ritual--for instance, by purifying commodities with holy water prior to consuming them (Comaroff 1985: 218). In the end, however, there is a basic problem with this form of symbolic resistance as counter-hegemony--it cannot alter, by itself, basic structural conditions of material exploitation and deprivation, nor conditions of political domination.

Perhaps it is most accurate to see the beliefs and ritual in the Church in Zion as symbolic mediation and emotional catharsis of the structural conditions of neo-colonial capitalism or, alternatively, as the nascent basis of political class consciousness. Clearly, the Tshidi were forced to voice their protests in domains that seemed "non-political" due to the realities of coercive oppression by the South African state and its intermediaries in Bophutatswana. Today, the five million Church in Zion members throughout southern Africa are best known for their conservative, apolitical stance.

Symbolic resistance has recently become one of the most talked about, over-worked, over-used and ill-thought out concepts in the social sciences. Much of what is labelled as symbolic resistance really does not seem to be "resistance" at all in that the activities in question do little or nothing to transform existing conditions of inequality or domination. At best, they serve as catharsis or consolation--a social action analog of "false consciousness". All of the symbolic resistance offered by the Tshidi did nothing to transform capitalist inequality under apartheid and all of the gossip, slander, evasion and theft among the poorer villagers in James Scott's Sedaka did nothing to slow down processes of income polarization, proletarianization, labor displacement and alienation in a rural Malaysian village. In both cases, it can be argued, repression makes more overt resistance too dangerous for the subordinate classes to undertake, yet the term "resistance" is an exaggeration; indeed, symbolic resistance seems to preclude the possibility that other collective action will be mobilized at all.

There are, however, at least three sorts of cases where symbolic resistance works well--and they are by no means trivial. First, in situations where violent repression is both commonplace yet not totally able to stifle dissent, non-violent forms of symbolic protest frequently are able to generate and accentuate collective moral sentiments calling for social justice and, over the long-term, such sentiments

form the basis for successful social movements (for instance, Gandhi in late 1940s India). Second, in more openly democratic systems, symbolic protest often has the effect of shaming--literally, through the moral persuasiveness of embarrassment--powerholders (whether government officials or corporate executives) into doing the right thing in terms of social justice (the 1987 case of ACT-UP's protests against the pharmaceutical company Burroughs-Welcome for charging too high a price for the AIDS treatment AZT comes to mind as a recent example). Finally, as many observers of revolutions and regime changes have noted (e.g. Skocpol 1979), successful transformations of this sort generally share one important attribute: the failure on the part of forces of order to obey their orders from higher authorities to violently suppress mass demonstrations and protests. In these instances, lower-level commanders and ordinary police or soldiers refuse to employ lethal force against unarmed protestors engaging in "symbolic resistance" because they have been at least partly influenced by counter-hegemonic messages questioning the legitimacy and, indeed, morality of the current power-structure. Recent examples include the Philippines in 1986, East Germany in 1989 and the Soviet Union in 1991. Largely unarmed symbolic resistance is relatively simple to put down by the use of lethal violence too, as events in China showed in 1989. As Mao observed: "Power comes from the barrel of a gun." None of these three examples of successful symbolic

resistance apply to the Breton movement.

Research on Breton Ethnic Identity

Images of Breton identity constructed by militants overlap symbolically to a large degree with more widely shared conceptions of Breton ethnic identity in Brittany as a whole. Here, I briefly discuss some research on Breton ethnicity and its political (or historical) contextualization.

Catherine Bertho argues that regional identity differences did not become politically or symbolically salient in France until after 1789 (Bertho 1980). By 1830, key symbolic markers of Breton identity included three major components: natural features of the landscape and climate, a distinctively Celtic racial identity, and cultural markers like folklore, costume and the Breton language (see Gaughan 1985; Badone 1987). Contrasting affective values were attributed to these markers by French observers and writers through the 19th and early 20th centuries: savagery or utopian traditional agricultural society or a patronizing view of Bretons as rural imbeciles (see Bertho 1980: 48-49, 62). The first image is associated with the Romanticism of the early 19th century, the second with right-wing politics of the middle and late 19th century and the last with ethnic prejudice emerging from the cultural flows of immigration and military service after 1880.

Contemporary images of Breton identity reappropriate

the nature theme. To be Breton means to be connected holistically with the environment and to oppose the tyranny of civilization and the state. These are stereotypical images closely linked ideologically with leftist politics--including Breton militancy--in the region. In Badone's (1985) review of Bertho's essay, she writes:

> It is important to note that the passage from right to left has also entailed a renewal of the Romantic sauvage representation of Breton culture. To affirm one's identity as Breton in the 1970s and 1980s has been to take an explicit stance against civilization and against traditional authority, including that of the French state. To some degree, such an attitude is a reflection of disillusionment concerning French imperialism and involvement in the Algerian war. Those who define themselves as Breton frequently draw the analogy between the condition of their region as an internal colony economically and culturally, if not politically, colonized by France and other metropolitan powers (Badone 1985:3).

Other researchers agree with this general assessment. Suzanne Berger writes:

> ...the future of ethnicity in France depends not on the survival of linguistic and cultural differences but on the way that the changing relationships between center and periphery are perceived and politically interpreted. Ethnic symbols are a means for expressing a revolt against inequalities, against loss of power and against the impersonality and homogeneity of advanced industrial society (Berger 1977: 177-178).

In other words, power relations shape the genesis, form and transformation of symbols of ethnic identity.

Lois Kuter begins what is perhaps the most complete discussion of Breton ethnic identity with the admission that it is difficult and elusive to define (Kuter 1985). Her analysis points to four major components. First, there is a territory-ascribed identity based on situationally defined

geographical boundaries. Second, because these boundaries vary contextually, there is substantial local and regional variation in the symbolic expression of Breton identity. In other words, Kuter does not believe that there is a "Breton culture" writ large. Third, various cultural elements--styles of dance, costume and architecture--are diagnostic markers of Breton identity. Lastly, for Kuter, language is a potentially divisive marker--with its typical divisions between popular and neo-Breton speakers.

Kuter believes that ordinary Bretons generally respond to their Celtic identity in one of three possible ways. First, they may reject their identity as a negatively valued expression of traditional, stigmatized backwardness and seek to replace it with a more modern, French identity. Second, they may choose to reject their Breton identity as just something out of the past--neither negatively nor positively valued--but as a residual element supplanted by progress. Third, they may choose to accept Breton as a positive identity for the present and future.

As examples of the last scenario, she cites such new items of Breton cultural production as the Diwan schools, Datsum--"an archive of Breton oral traditions holding over 20,000 reels of music recordings as well as photographs and song texts--all collected by volunteers for use in the transmission of Breton culture to new generations" (Kuter 1985: 23)--and Breton language television and radio as representative of the acceptance of Breton as an identity of

the present and future. Kuter does not mention that these items of Breton culture are produced and used largely in a militant subcultural context. She is also unable to specify exactly why Bretons should choose one option over another except to state that:

> An understanding of the formation of positive and negative values in Brittany is possible only through examination of Brittany's past and present economic and political relation to the French state. The individual experience of being Breton in a French state is the key variable in the non-recognition of Breton identity today as well as in the formation of a negative Breton identity (Kuter 1985:23).

In other words, Kuter would no doubt agree with one of my informants who once remarked that "the French educational system is not designed for the good of the individual but to create good Frenchmen". That is, Bretons have been ideologically influenced by the French state to despise and reject their language and culture. As we have seen in Chapter Three, these issues are complicated by the fact that many rural Bretons eagerly and willingly embraced French language and culture as an avenue of socio-economic mobility.

Kuter concludes her discussion by noting again the complexity of the problem:

> If any conclusion can be drawn about Breton identity it is that diversity is an inherent and valued quality of it. Breton identity is best described not as an "ethnic identity" but as a geographic/cultural/social/political identity varying from one individual to another according to that individual's personal experiences, interactions with others and values. ... Breton identity is used as a tool to mobilize for economic and political rewards, but, far more often, political and economic tools are mobilized for cultural

> ends--to safeguard Breton identity. For much of the Breton population, however, the sense of social and cultural division between the French core and Breton periphery has stimulated a search for a French identity (Kuter 1985:23-24).

In summary, all of the work cited here agrees that ethnicity is heavily politicized in Brittany as a consequence of successful cultural assimilation by the French state or as a consequence of militant resistance to that assimilation. The principal lacuna here is that the research on Breton ethnic identity has been conducted almost entirely with populations of intellectuals--especially with militant intellectuals--and not with people living everyday lives in Brittany. Why? Lois Kuter acknowledges that researching Breton identity is problematic:

> Questioning people directly about what being Breton means was of limited usefulness. Those who were most articulate about identity issues were militants and nationalists, researchers or journalists--professional communicators who had already given considerable thought to the question. Very often, direct questions fell totally flat when directed at a neighbor, the local grocery store clerk, or random acquaintances. Most people found themselves at a loss as to what to say about Breton identity, just as most Americans have great difficulty expressing ideas about American identity (Kuter 1985:15).

Perhaps the solution to this problem is to use better fieldwork methods. Techniques like multidimensional scaling, hierarchical clustering analysis and time honored ethnosemantics allow researchers to map out and describe complex symbolic and cognitive variation in cultural categories like "identity". Future studies of Breton ethnic identity could perhaps more usefully focus on non-militant

Bretons' conceptions of what it means to be Breton.

Regional History as Counter-Hegemonic Discourse in Brittany

Eugen Weber, in his monumental work Peasants Into Frenchmen (1976) writes:

> City dwellers, who often (as in the colonial cities of Brittany) did not understand the rural language, despised the peasants, exaggerated their savagery, insisted on the more picturesque--hence backward--aspects of their activities, and sometimes compared them unfavorably with other colonial peoples in North Africa and the New World. In nineteenth-century Brest it was not unusual to hear the surrounding countryside described as "the bush": brousse or cambrousse. But colonial parallels were little needed when the armory of prejudice was so well stocked: "Potatoes for the pigs, the peels for the Bretons" (Weber 1976:6).

Brittany's association with a colonial metaphor is of great relevance to an ethnographic and historical understanding of Breton ethnic politics.

Since 1970 Breton intellectuals have produced histories of Brittany which represent 500 years of French-Breton relations as colonial domination. While these revisionist accounts are essentially "historically accurate", their political significance lies elsewhere. Breton activists use their accounts as counter-hegemonic discourse in opposition to French nation-state ideologies stressing the civilizing influence of Paris over the provinces. This attempt to show how a history of forced cultural assimilation and internal colonialism adversely affects all Bretons today is a key symbolic basis for ethnic political action. Here, I want to discuss some of the content of these regional histories,

show why they are important politically to the Breton movement, and conclude with some reflections on hegemony, counter-hegemony and resistance.

Historical Consciousness and Ethnoregionalist Ideology

In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm writes that "all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of social cohesion" (Hobsbawm 1983:12). Breton militants organize both their consciousness of everyday life and their political struggle around intertwined notions of the past history of collective repression experienced by the Breton people and personal memory of cultural or economic discrimination. In applying the term "invented tradition" to a Breton construction of French-Breton history, I do so with the explicit recognition that all histories--including "official national histories", of course--are invented to some degree, and are intrinsically no more and no less invented ("ideological constructions of the nation-state") than versions offered by social movements opposing the French state. For Breton militants, some of the key dates of their history are as follows:

1488 Defeat of the Breton army by the French (and various mercenaries) at St. Aubin du Cormier marking the beginning of the end of the region's independence.

1532 Signature of a treaty unifying Brittany and France, although Brittany retained some fiscal and administrative autonomy.

1790 The French Revolution brings an end to much of this autonomy. Throughout the 19th century, the French state extends its fiscal and administrative control over Brittany. Compulsory education in French--and the ideological stigmatization of the Breton language--is a major component of forced cultural assimilation.

1914-1918 Deaths of 120,000 soldiers from Brittany in World War I. According to Breton history, Bretons were less likely to be exempted from active service and more likely to be put into high mortality front line combat situations than were non-Bretons.

1944-1946 General repression--judicial execution, exile, imprisonment, murder--of Breton nationalists by the French state legitimated by the French as retribution for acts of collaboration by a minority of Bretons under the German occupation.

1968-1980 Peak of organizational and symbolic activity in the Breton movement. One major rhetorical contention is that the region and its people suffers from economic underdevelopment as an "internal colony" of France.

1981-1989 Widely perceived failure of the Socialist government to promote linguistic, cultural or economic reforms in Brittany. According to many militants the reluctance of the French state to effectively finance bilingual education, television and radio constitutes "active cultural genocide".

This chronology of oppression and resistance is not all inclusive. As Maryon McDonald once remarked--only half jokingly--her militant informants "urged her to write articles about them, and their oppression, and others were keen to get hold of her archival research, with a view to picking out any new citations of historical oppression that they might have missed" (McDonald 1986b: 334). Given the centrality of oppression in the militant construction of both Breton ethnic identity and Breton militant political struggle, it is not at all surprising when militants are

eager to document new examples of repression. Nor is it surprising that when McDonald published her thesis which suggests, among other things, that the rural population of Brittany actually welcomed French language education as an avenue of social and economic improvement that the militants were, to put it mildly, quite displeased (see McDonald 1989).

Historical Projects and Political Agenda

Two of the most prominent loci of the production of Breton historical knowledge are Skol Vreizh ("Breton School") and Dalc' homp Sonj (literally, "let us remember", also referred to as the Breton Historical Association). Skol Vreizh consists of a team of twenty historians (mainly instructors and researchers from the Universities of Rennes and Brest, but also teachers from high schools throughout Brittany). Since 1970 Skol Vreizh has produced a 5 volume "History of Brittany and the Celtic Nations", ranging from prehistory to the present. Originally, these books were intended for secondary school students but are now targeted for an adult reading public. They are widely available in bookstores throughout Brittany, and have sold nearly 100,000 copies. Dalc' homp Sonj consists of over 350 members divided into 13 local committees whose general goal is to popularize and disseminate the history of Brittany. The association publishes a quarterly glossy historical review by the same name; publication began in 1983.

While the content of these publications spans a wide range of topics, three points clearly emerge. First, many current and former Breton militants are active as researchers and writers in both groups. Second, an avowed goal of Skol Vreizh and Dalc' homp Sonj is to present Breton history to a wide audience since the history of Brittany is basically ignored in French schools. As Jean-Jacques Monnier (Skol Vreizh) put it, "one could very well have followed with passion French history in school without ever having heard of the history of Brittany". Monnier is also an important figure in the largest Breton political party, the Democratic Breton Union. Here, the political agenda is to demonstrate that Brittany and the Breton people have a history and identity distinctive from that of France. Third, much of the content--though by no means all--of these publications deals precisely with the chronicle of oppression and resistance, both recent and not so recent, so vital to the symbolic construction of Breton political struggle. So, these histories have a fundamental political function in much the same way that Hobsbawm suggests.

During my fieldwork, a 2-volume work called The Breton State in the 14th and 15th Centuries: Dukes, Money and Men, written by Jean Kerhervé of Skol Vreizh and the University at Brest was published. It is primarily a detailed description of fiscal and administrative structures in Brittany prior to the French annexation of the region. Initially, I was puzzled by the attention such a weighty

historical tome generated in the Breton militant press. But by the end of my fieldwork, its significance was clear: Brittany was portrayed as a prosperous, autonomous, well-functioning and well-organized entity that was then conquered by the expanding French monarchy. Such an understanding of the historical past is an all-important ideological underpinning of Breton ethnonationalism of the present.

If there is a French nation-state hegemonic ideology, it would be one glorifying the inevitable and natural expansion of French language, culture and civilization throughout the hexagon, and indeed through France's colonial possessions as well. The production of Breton historical knowledge functions here as a form of counter-hegemony. Yet both the acceptance of the dominant French nationalist ideology and the delegitimation of Breton political resistance to French colonialism are widespread among the contemporary population of Brittany. The reasons for this are very complex. But as historian Robert Darnton has written in "The Literary Underground of the Ancien Regime", the demystification of hegemony (in this case, through pornographic satire directed at aristocrats and clergy) requires active cultural production by groups opposed to established power structures (see also Schama 1989 for a discussion of these issues). This remains one of the unfinished political projects of Breton ethnic nationalism.

The Ambiguity of Modernity: Folk Festivals, Neo-Ruralists and the Paradoxical Position of Breton Culture in the Breton Movement

As the historical past greatly concerns Breton militants, so too does the construction of modernity. Jacqueline Urla suggests that ethnic nationalist movements symbolically appropriate modernity as one form of cultural resistance (Urla 1990). This works in two ways. First, the appropriation of modernity by nationalist movements refutes widely held assumptions that modernization inevitably entails the decline of difference through processes of cultural homogenization. Second, this same appropriation challenges the hegemonic view that ethnic cultures and languages are relics of an archaic and traditional past. One important way to appropriate modernity is to make ethnic minority language and cultural expression more "modern", especially in the realms of the sciences and the arts. Linguistic reform in Brittany has long sought to create and promote a modern scientific and technical vocabulary in Breton--and is targeted at specific occupational groups like architects, engineers and health care professionals. In addition, nearly all Breton militants stress the importance of creating novels, plays, films and television programs in Breton as a way of removing Breton language and culture from a stigmatized, ghettoized association with the rural past and thereby, of course, making Breton language and culture "modern".

Although the Breton movement has been in a state of organizational decline and disarray since 1981, "Breton cultural nationalism is probably running stronger today than at any other time this century" (Riding 1991). Cultural movements in Brittany--those groups devoted to the preservation and performance of traditional or neo-traditional costume, dance, music and sports--are far larger and more active than the Breton movement itself. There is not a large degree of overlap between the two. By some estimates, as many as 100,000 people are presently involved in such cultural associations. To some extent, the growth of these cultural associations is linked up with the commodification of Breton culture in the context of tourism, but it is also accurate to say that the groups represent a largely depoliticized expression of cultural difference. By "depoliticized" I mean that wearing the costumes, dancing the dances and performing the music are not necessarily accompanied by nationalist political demands.

Breton militants have at best an ambivalent view of the cultural movements. One militant, speaking of the largest annual folk festival--the Fête de Cornouaille held every summer at Quimper--said wearily, "Oh, you know, it's like Africans dancing for the white tourists", and he went on to laud the virtues of the Festival Interceltique held at Lorient--a more "modern" expression of Breton culture. Given the weakness of the Breton movement, they have difficulty disavowing any potential allies and my

informant's comment reflects the ambiguities and contradictions militants encounter in the symbolism of "traditional" and "modern" culture.

There is another more concrete manifestation of modernity, or perhaps more accurately, of the future which concerns Breton militants. The impact of the Single European Act--projected to be completed by the end of 1992--on Brittany and Breton ethnic politics will certainly be of great ethnographic interest for some time to come. Anthropologists have of late presented research on various aspects of this *ongoing* transformation (see Wilson and Smith, 1991). Bull points out that there are both sizeable advantages and disadvantages to the SEA (Bull 1991). If on the one hand, the removal of obstacles to flows of labor, capital, goods and services within the 12-nation European Economic Community will make the EEC more efficient and more competitive with Japan and the United States--in part by saving European industries approximately 250 billion dollars per year (roughly 5% of the gross national product of the EEC)--then on the other hand, many observers believe that regional economic inequality will increase within the EEC as a consequence of capitalist market dynamics. This has a great deal of significance for Brittany as a region due to its historically underdeveloped status.

But what of ethnic politics? Jaffe suggests that nationalist movements in Corsica have two deeply contrasting views of the likely outcomes of the SEA (Jaffe 1991).

Optimists tend to envisage the construction of a new Europe composed of peoples, cultures, regions, communities, and entrepreneurs linked by horizontal ties--a kind of "new mosaic". In other words, these nationalists see a rosy future of greater regional autonomy after 1992. The second view is more darkly pessimistic, embodying the perspective that the post-1992 EEC will emerge more than ever as a Europe of powerful states and multinational corporations, vertically organized hierarchical structures and maintaining the political economic status quo. The Corsican nationalists described by Jaffe stress the role of cultural and ethnic solidarity in mobilizing to manipulate EEC policies in order to circumvent the power of national states.

Breton militants usually accept the more optimistic scenario that the increasing political importance of the European Commission and the European Parliament will allow Breton militants and Breton entrepreneurs to by-pass the power structures of the French state and to forge horizontal cultural and economic ties with other regions and peoples (Catalonia and Wales being the most frequently mentioned by my informants), thereby increasing the region's cultural, political and economic autonomy from Paris. While it seems something of a paradox that Breton militants, with their Marxist-derived understanding of political economy, would favor the optimistic scenario over the perhaps more realistic pessimistic one, many of my informants qualified

their optimism by characterizing these broad transformations of European society as "opportunities" rather than certainties.

Analysis of Political Text

The ideological production of Breton militants is encapsulated and formalized in political propaganda tracts. Although most of these appear in publications to be read only by militants, some are created for a wider public audience. I present here three texts--one from 1987 and two from March 1992. It is clear from these three texts that Breton militants over the past five years--and indeed over the past century--manipulate a very limited set of politicized symbols. In essence, these symbols are: cultural, linguistic and economic oppression of the Breton people, the over-centralization of the French state and its negative consequences, the necessity for political autonomy and accelerated economic development for Brittany, the territorial reunification of the region, and the political indispensability of a Breton ethnic consciousness for achieving these goals.

Text 1

After Carhaix 1987

To assemble several thousand people around the theme "Breton--official language in Brittany" could have seemed like a difficult wager to make. This bet was won since on March 21-22 5000 people responded to the call of CONSEO on the occasion of the International Day of Oppressed Languages

organized at Carhaix.

This success is explained in part by the conjunction of several movements of discontent rendering the circumstances rather favorable to such a mobilization (the situation of Diwan, refusal of subsidy, sabotage of Breton at FR3, in particular). This success can as much be actively attributed to the organizers of this rally--SAB and EMGANN, current constituents of the Movement of National Liberation in Brittany.

The mobilization of 21-22 March 1987 seems to us to be significant on several fronts:

1. It shows a renewal of interest by the population in the Breton language.

2. It brings a scathing denial to the partisans of the French occupation in Brittany who want to make believe in the isolation of the nationalists in the heart of our People.

3. It clarifies the combat for our language which has no meaning except in a global strategy of the National Liberation Struggle.

Forgetting, no doubt, their sectarianism of late, some people regretted the absence of a larger "union". We say that it is not sufficient to want to rake in everyone, again it is necessary to know for what objectives.

Are we ready fight for a minimum program to remedy the current linguistic situation to wit:

- education: the principle of obligatory instruction of the Breton language in the schools;
- media: the creation of a radio and television channel in Breton at the service of all of Brittany;
- public life--obtaining an official statute for our language.

Such are the propositions that we must make to our people if we wish that Breton will tomorrow be our national language with full rights. Failing the rapid realization of these objectives, Breton will no longer be but a dead language. These measures will not be offered to us on a platter by the French state. They will be the fruits of a [fierce, relentless] combat against the oppressor who govern us.

May the rally of Carhaix mark a decisive stage in the [taking of conscience/consciousness] of our people to whom belongs the final decision on the survival of the Breton language. Long live Carhaix 88.

EMGANN

Thematic Analysis

EMGANN published this political commentary on the mobilization at Carhaix in its political journal during the

summer of 1987. It was originally printed in French and Breton. The text is representative of the increasingly radicalized rhetoric of Breton militancy following the decline of post-1981 Breton ethnic politics. The language of the text is notable for what it says to an audience of militants. The dual focus on oppression and the rebirth of successful resistance is particularly relevant. The rhetoric employed--"French military occupation" and "French oppressors"--is neither new nor imaginative. But the claims that the mobilization at Carhaix demonstrated renewed interest in these struggles, that it is an integral part of a broader national liberation struggle and that it shows the approval of the militants by the general population in Brittany all represent counter-hegemonic mystification. Although Carhaix was the first large event in several years, the 500 people who attended (not 5000) were all militants, nor are the Breton people engaged in a national liberation struggle--only the 200 EMGANN militants. Ironically, since less than 1% of the Breton speaking population would be able to read the intellectualized Breton language version of the text, it is unlikely that Carhaix shows widespread support for the event. Finally, the authors' self-representation as the vanguard of political struggle in Brittany is problematic given their formation's tiny size, negligible resources, and its marginalized location even within an already marginal Breton ethnic political arena.

EMGANN ends its text by calling for a program of

immediate linguistic reform in Brittany. As discussed in Chapter Three, this program is highly unrealistic from a political standpoint. Overall, the text functions mainly to congratulate and energize the militants of EMGANN and Stourm Ar Brezhoneg.

Text 2

Regional Elections of March 22, 1992

Slate: Breton People, People of Europe.
Ecology, Development, Solidarity.
The future of Brittany is in your hands.

Three Breton formations (Democratic Breton Union, EMGANN, POBL) have joined together to propose slates of Breton candidates. Their ambition is to create a Europe of united peoples in which each will be able to carry weight on the decisions which concern them.

With a qualified workforce, a quality natural environment, a strong cultural identity, capital on hand, a maritime coast whole value can be increased: Brittany does not lack assets [trump cards]. These trump cards, let's play them together.

Why vote: "Breton People, People of Europe"?

Because the Paris region concentrates two thirds of research potential, two thirds of cultural investments, 80% of qualified jobs. Regional inequalities have increased from 1982 to 1988, to the advantage of the Ile de France. INSEE [government statistical agency] says it, not us!

The decentralization which should have been "the affair of the septennant" never benefitted from a significant budget. Brittany has thirty times less resources than Catalonia. The results are there! Paris pumps us dry! They tell us we have been assisted while we finance the deficits of Paris' subway system.

Because by the year 2000, one farmer in two will have abandoned his farm and the fishing fleet will be reduced by 40%. The center of Brittany is being deserted [depopulated] amidst a nearly general indifference.

Our farmers are among the most productive in Europe, we export our agricultural products, but the nitrates stay in the soil. Because they are paving over our coast, at Trébeurden and elsewhere.

The exclusion of the young, unemployed, aged, handicapped is the shameful sickness of our society.

Breton language and culture are still scoffed at. ...

However, solutions do exist.

In Europe today, "the region" is the space where effective decisions are taken. The best economic breakthroughs are made in solid regions which have been given real legislative and fiscal powers.

It is possible to act effectively on employment, in adapting training to economic needs, in inventing a new social dialogue, in investing here in capital and gray matter, in keeping the young in the region.

One does not build the future on a shredded social fabric--solidarity comes from human dignity. The same solidarity must work between rich zones and poor zones--l'Armor and l'Argoat--investments like National Highway 164, the University, the schools...are vital for the center of Brittany.

Cleaning up pollution costs four times as much as not polluting. Waste is uneconomical. It is possible to reconcile agricultural productivity and respect for the environment (CEDAPA has demonstrated this for years). Respect for nature, that is also respect for people.

The strength of Brittany is its identity. When one has deep roots, one has the strength to be tolerant.

These facts we have been repeating for years. The situation will not change as long as Brittany does not regain its historical size, with Nantes, which will allow it to count as much in Europe as Denmark.

The situation will not change as long as there is not a strong expression of rejecting the politics of contempt. That expression, it is yours. Your daily problems are at stake in the regional elections. You have the chance to take matters in hand. Don't blow it. March 22, there is only one voting.

[The document includes photos of the candidates, captioned with their names and towns, and a note that the flier is printed on recycled paper in order to preserve the environment.]

Thematic Analysis

This text is a remarkable document because first, it is the product of ideological agreement among three of the four main Breton political parties which in the past had maintained distant and mildly antagonistic relationships

with one another and second, it shows changes in rhetoric associated with the growing importance of the EEC. The text was designed as a campaign flier and distributed directly to voters for the regional elections of March 1992.

The text focuses on Brittany's problems and potential as a region in the new Europe of regions. It critically notes growing economic disparities between Brittany and Paris but points out that the region has considerable assets making it, although this is not stated explicitly, amenable to external capital investment. The principal political claim is that *if* the region were autonomous with respect to fiscal resources and decision making, then the Breton people could work towards economic development, environmental protection (heavily emphasized since in Brittany environmentalism is very popular among voters) and the reunification of the region.

The text has no concrete program, a deradicalized rhetoric and makes appeals to multiple groups. Its call for rejecting French political parties is reminiscent of EMGANN circa 1987, but the emphasis on economic and environmental issues (and a de-emphasis on the Breton language problem) suggest that the UDB had the largest influence in drafting the text. Indeed, its leading candidate is the official spokesman for the UDB whom I have interviewed on several occasions.

Text 3

United for the Côtes d'Armor and the Region

Economic Development--Education--Environment--Solidarity--

Culture--Who Are We?

Of a centrist persuasion, we wish that regionalization would go further and that France adopt a federalist model. We are weary of the dictate of the Parisian staff officers. Their politics of politicians has disappointed the voters, from whence comes the rejection of politics, rise of demagoguery and refuge in abstention.

An established fact: Paris-ism and centralization--inefficiency and wastage.

Like many French regions, Brittany suffers from the unequal distribution of investments, jobs and wealth between a monstrous Parisian region and the rest of the territory.

Without entering into details, let us give some numbers: Paris and the Ile de France concentrates 72% of industrial research, 40% of newly created jobs, 75% of credit for cultural affairs, 25% of hospital credits, all that for 16% of the population. The great public works have gobbled up twenty billion francs while at the same time the Breton road program has been amputated by 200 million.

Besides, the central administrations, fussy and too numerous, pretend to lord over it all. The smallest problem must ascend to Paris to be examined there. A relevant example: National Education, shaken periodically by reform plans which grow in incoherence and inefficiency. No doubt we can learn some lessons from our European neighbors. Each regional initiative, no matter how timid, finds itself facing the top chiefs of the left or the right, united as if by magic, to oppose it.

The taxation system is too strong.

The tasks of a strong Regional Council: according to us, the first job for the future regional assembly will be the creation jobs for our youth. To do this, it is necessary to move in three directions.

First, carry out a certain number of timely and significant projects. Without listing a catalog, let us mention: a central highway network (respecting the environment, of course), a fifth university in interior Brittany, extending the PME/PMI network supported by a tax on offices in the Paris region, increasing the value of agricultural production by enlarging them toward industrial scale enterprises. Finally, to create a real regional educational system taking account of regional specifics (40% of students in private schools--Breton language and civilization).

Second, correct internal economic disparities. We are witnessing a dangerous tendency marked by a concentration of

economic development in the east of Brittany (56% in 1990) at the expense of central and western Brittany, the most critical case is that of the Côtes d'Armor. To address ourselves to the problems of revitalizing the rural sector is crucial. Beyond the quarrels between elected officials, it is necessary to put an end to the sprinkling of credits. The metropolitan areas of Rennes, Nantes and Brest must establish a concerted program which will draw in their wake the networks of smaller towns and particularly those of central Brittany.

Third, reinforce the partnership with Europe. Poor understanding of forthcoming EEC decisions would be a grave error. In two years, 80% of these decisions will directly influence the daily lives of Bretons. It is necessary therefore to prepare by being informed. To do this, two measures are needed:

- create a commission in the Regional Council charged with following EEC policies;
- to expand regional representation in Brussels (a single delegate currently). The interests of Brittany and its inhabitants will then be much better defended.

In voting for the slate "United for the Côtes d'Armor and the Region", you will bring the second wind that our region needs so much.

Regional Congress for Brittany

Thematic Analysis

This text is also remarkable because it represents a drift of Breton political rhetoric away from the left or far left orientation of the past twenty five years. Also produced for the regional elections of March 1992, the symbol of the Regional Congress for Brittany is in itself astonishing. Their logo includes elements from the Breton, French and EEC flags. This combination of French and Breton motifs would be unthinkable in most militant circles. The organization's name is then written below their design in French, Breton and English.

The overall presentation is perhaps more like CELIB of

forty years ago than anything that has been seen in the Breton movement since 1968. The CRB calls for a European and federalist political solution to Paris' centralized control and increasing regional disparities in economic development. Its main priority for Brittany is to foster economic growth and create jobs for Bretons. The text makes specific references to solving the economic crisis of rural central Brittany, and like the Breton People's Alliance document, is short on ways to bring these changes about.

The text is notable for its call to use changes in the EEC as a window of opportunity to bypass the rigid and unjust control of the region's political economy by Paris. However, as with the previous text, it is ultimately unrealistic in that the Regional Council presently lacks the legal or fiscal powers to directly bring about any of the reforms the parties demand.

Both texts are characterized by a moderate rhetoric designed to appeal to as wide a spectrum of voters as possible and try to take advantage of the general dislike most French voters have for the mainstream political parties at this time. The "softening" of the political imagery suggests a new strategy for Breton political parties. In order to win votes, they now seem to believe, they must make the ideology appealing and relevant for most people in Brittany, not just a small group of militants. Future research will have to evaluate whether such strategic transformations of rhetoric and ideological presentation are

effective in broadening and deepening support for a distinctively Breton ethnic political project.

In the chapters to come I examine various forms of collective action and factors which explain the relative weakness of the Breton movement during the 1980s. It is not only the lack of a persuasive ideological program which condemns Breton militancy to political marginality but the organization and performance of how those symbols are communicated to a wider audience in the region which accounts in large measure for the movement's "failure".

CHAPTER V

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATIONS

Probably the most interesting questions to ask about social movements are ones concerning the motivations and emotions underlying individual participation in collective action. Various theoretical approaches deal with these issues, but the range of perspectives developed within the social sciences over the past twenty-five years tend to overemphasize a single dimension of the problem while downplaying or ignoring outright other dimensions. One main goal of this chapter, and of the ones to follow, is to try to break down the artificial dichotomy between rational cost-benefit analyses of social movements and those theories that stress identity formation. A more elaborate discussion of the relative "success" or "failure" of Breton militancy will be presented in Chapter Six.

In this chapter I examine the multiple interconnections between ideology, emotion, identity, class interests and collective action--and the role of the French state--in contemporary Breton militancy expressed as collective political mobilization. I will also briefly discuss certain repetitive practices of individual, informal resistance to the French state and its policies by Breton militants. This

linkage between macro and micro levels of analysis will be accomplished by presenting a series of ethnographic cases of collective action and some life history data which shed light on the underlying motivation and social consciousness of Breton militants.

Theories of Collective Action

Charles Tilly has defined a social movement as:

> a sustained series of interactions between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support (Tilly 1984: 306).

This definition provides a useful starting point for a discussion of collective political mobilization. A well-rounded ethnographic or comparative research program on social movements would minimally have to consider the following questions. Under what historical circumstances are movements likely to form? How do they emerge? What structural forms do they take? How is their leadership constituted? How do they recruit members and how do they generate and sustain participation, commitment and meaningful involvement by members? What roles do emotion, identity, ideology and rational self-interest play in on-ongoing continuity and transformation of social movements? How do strategies of collective action evolve and what effect do they have on the distribution or exercise of power? How are symbolic and material resources mobilized

and deployed? What role does surveillance or coercion by the state play in repression and transformation of social movements? And finally, what longer-term outcomes occur--why do some movements "succeed" while others "fail" to achieve their goals and objectives?

Consider various theories of social movements. Relative-deprivation theory, developed in the 1960s and 1970s, argues that social movements emerge when people feel deprived or mistreated or oppressed relative to either how other people in the society are treated or to how they feel they should be treated (see Gurr 1970). Relative deprivation is a useful concept to explain Breton militancy; yet other factors are also clearly important. Resource mobilization theory assumes that some discontent is always present among some people or some groups but argues that social movements emerge when actors have access to resources necessary to organize a movement. Money, technology, intellectual leaders, and interpersonal contacts are all key resources for political mobilization (see Jenkins 1983, McCarthy and Zald 1979). My discussion of Breton militancy has emphasized reasons why only limited material resources are mobilized. Political process theory argues that social movements emerge when the balance of opportunities and constraints generated by the broader political economy are correct for individuals and groups to mobilize (see Tilly _et al_ 1975; Jenkins and Perrow 1978; Tarrow 1988). Charles Tilly stresses, for instance, that the frequency and outcome

of collective action depends on the operation of the state (including repression, openness to reform and relative power of the regime vis-a-vis oppositional groups, see the discussion of political opportunity structure later in this chapter and Tilly 1978: 56). Finally European work on "new social movements" has examined the construction or negotiation of new collective identities by activists to combat the alienation resulting from the life-worlds of late capitalism (see Touraine 1985; Melucci 1980 and 1985; Cohen 1985; Offe 1985).

Two theoretical perspectives are of particular interest when applied to an understanding of Breton militancy: resource mobilization theory and an identity-oriented paradigm. The latter approach emerged in critical response to the former.

Resource mobilization theory involves five basic expectations about social movements:

1. collective action is a rational, utilitarian response to the costs and benefits of different forms of action;
2. the goals of movements emerge from grievances embedded in institutionalized power relationships;
3. these perceptions of discontent are very commonplace, so political mobilization depends on changes in resources, organization and opportunities related to collective action;
4. centralized and formalized movements are more

successful at mobilizing resources and generating sustained challenges to the state than decentralized and informally organized ones;

5. the ultimate success or failure of movements depends on these organizational factors and on the operation of wider fields of power relations (see Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1979).

Critics of resource mobilization theory suggest that this strategic approach ignores problems of collective identity, consciousness and solidarity and "excludes the analysis of values, norms, ideologies, projects, culture and identity in other than instrumental terms" (Cohen 1985: 688). Scholars working in this identity paradigm of new social movements want to understand contention over cultural meanings and the expressive aspects of participation in political action. I would argue that while both perspectives are clearly relevant to an understanding of Breton militancy, neither by itself can thoroughly explain the range of theoretical problems suggested earlier. I return to these issues in the final chapter.

If one were to perform a cost-benefit resource mobilization analysis of the Breton movement, the results would be quite surprising: little in the way of resources mobilized, little in the way of practical results. This immediately suggests that motivations, ideologies and emotions play an important part in generating Breton ethnic commitment and engagement as well as in the overall

persistence of the movement over historical time.

Forms of Individual and Collective Action

More than once I was told by informants that militants act out their engagement and commitment to Brittany in contexts other than mass political protests. A more cynical way of expressing this cultural belief is to say that being a militant is often a state of consciousness rather than of action. Frms of political action undertaken by militants span a relatively narrow range of variation. Basically, the range of variation falls along this continuum: large-scale rallies and demonstrations, smaller symbolic protests with a civil disobedience theme and everyday forms of resistance by individuals. Participation in electoral politics is another modality of Breton ethnic struggles; the UDB's efforts in this direction are discussed in Chapter Two.

Two mass rallies--a mobilization at Carhaix for the "Breton langue officiel en Bretagne" sponsored by EMGANN and Stourm Ar Brezhoneg (March 1987) and a meeting at Morlaix in support of Diwan (May 1987)--are discussed in detail in Chapter Six. These are sponsored by organizations or parties within the Breton movement. Contrary to what Charles Tilly (1986) has to say about the collective action repertoires of pre-modern or modern protest groups, there is not necessarily much in the way of transformation over time in how such protests are symbolically constructed or performed; moreover, Tilly ignores the dynamics of "everyday

forms of resistance" which take on greater significance in "weak" ethnic movements as "weapons of the weak".

By way of illustration, consider the following ethnographic examples from Stourm Ar Brezhoneg's "linguistic road sign terrorism" campaign of 1984-1987. Stourm Ar Brezhoneg's campaign of painting and tarring French language road signs in Brittany was briefly described in Chapter Three. This series of protest actions begins in early 1984 and continues to the present. Here, I describe two of the ancillary protests surrounding this struggle over the cultural meanings of place and employ them as empirical examples to critique Tilly's account of long-term changes in repertoires of collective action in France (Tilly 1986).

Protest #1 (April 7-8, 1984): Stourm Ar Brezhoneg militants set fire to tires and French language road signs around midnight in front of the home of François Riou, a Socialist conseiller général from the canton of Châteauneuf in Finistère. In a statement sent both to Riou and the newspaper Ouest-France, SAB protested the inaction of the Socialist party to fulfill its pre-election promises to the Breton people and called specifically upon Mr. Riou to act quickly in the Conseil Général to help put into place a system of bilingual road signs.

Protest #2 (November 1, 1985): At about 3:45 p.m., 100 SAB militants marched in the streets of Guingamp carrying mock road signs written in Breton, and banners and placards demanding that Breton be an official language in Brittany.

The procession wound its way through the cobbled pedestrian streets preceded by bagpipers while the marchers chanted a slogan demanding a statute for the Breton language. Their goal was to demonstrate against the legal treatment of three SAB militants caught defacing road signs who had been ordered by the French state to each pay a bond of 10,000 FF while awaiting their trials.

In front of the Palais de Justice, two of the accused Stourm Ar Brezhonegers gave speeches to their fellow militants and then--dramatic interlude--a car pulled up, a militant disguised as François Mitterand and carrying a rose exited in a very official manner and climbed up the steps, gave a short speech in Breton and then departed in his car, followed by another vehicle disguised as a highway department car driven by a masked militant in an orange safety-vest. The symbolic point was that Mitterand was authorizing the placement of bilingual signs. The demonstration then dispersed peacefully around 4:45 p.m. Afterwards, Hervé Le Bec, one of the accused militants, complained to the press about French state repression and the absence of certain Breton intellectuals from the demonstration while vowing not to pay "even one centime" to the state.

Why are these ethnographic details of theoretical importance? Mostly because they blur what Tilly believes to be clear cut distinctions between pre-modern and modern forms of collective action in France (Tilly 1986: 391-398).

Tilly suggests that popular collective action from 1650 to 1850 was "parochial and patronized" and had the following general characteristics:

> - Use of the authorities' normal means of action, either as caricature or as a deliberate though temporary assumption of the authorities' prerogatives in the name of the local community;
> - Tendency to participate as members or representatives constituted corporate groups and communities rather than of special interests;
> - Tendency to appeal to powerful patrons for redress of wrongs and especially for representation to outside authorities;
> - Extensive use of authorized public celebration and assemblies to present grievances and demands;
> - Repeated adoption of rich, irreverent symbolism in the form of effigies, dumb show and ritual objects to state grievances and demands;
> - Convergence on the residences of wrongdoers and the sites of wrongdoing, as opposed to seats and symbols of public power (Tilly 1986: 392).

These characteristics listed by Tilly describe almost exactly the two protests above. One of the characteristics--extensive use of public celebrations to present demands--is evident where Breton militants voice and act out symbolic protests in conjunction with summer folk festivals in Brittany. While some of the attributes of "national and autonomous" popular collective action (1850-1980) listed by Tilly (1986: 393) are arguably present in these rather ordinary examples of Breton militant protest, the overall mix of symbols and actions seems more at home in what Tilly says is typical of a much earlier time period.

Tilly's schematic of meta-shifts in the form and content of collective action in France is essentially of limited applicability here since weak political movements

often self-consciously appropriate symbolic and action repertoires from pre-modern forms of contention, and are often purely reactive (as opposed to pro-active) in their goals and objectives as well. Certainly, as political and economic power becomes more concentrated, one would expect the targets of collective action to change (see Tilly 1986: 395:398; see also Tilly 1990), but the abstract symbolic and action content of that collective notion may remain largely constant over time because the features described by Tilly remain effective as "weapons of the weak". Hence, post-modern forms of protest may in reality combine pre-modern and modern repertoires of collective action.

Repertoires of Collective Action

Early in my fieldwork, I observed a demonstration in front of the regional television network (FR3) on the Avenue J. Janvier in Rennes. About 35 militants assembled there to protest the rescheduling of broadcast times for the only Breton language television program. The administration of FR3 did not propose to eliminate or shorten the show, rather they wished to divide it up and telecast it in several shorter segments.

The militants--twenty men and fifteen women--were mostly in their late 20s to 40. They were from Stourm Ar Brezhoneg and EMGANN. They stood informally outside the building after assembling in front of the train station two blocks away. Some graffiti had been applied to the wall

near the entrance of the FR3 offices and the demonstrators carried one small banner (or placard) which read "Breton: Official Language". Later, several of the protestors chained themselves together; perhaps as a way to symbolize the cultural and linguistic oppression of the Breton people. There were no speeches, no marching; indeed it was a quiet, peaceful gathering with no visible police security and no particular attention paid by the few passers-by.

At first glance, this event seemed to me to be an exercise in futility. The area around the train station in Rennes is a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood, but it is perhaps 1,500 meters from the center of town and at 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning in April there is little pedestrian traffic. That same morning, on the Place de la Mairie of Rennes, closer to the economic and social center of the city, a charitable organization was busily selling apples to raise money to provide seeing-eye dogs for the visually impaired. These fund-raising activities undoubtedly made a bigger impression on the citizens of Rennes that morning than did the silent, symbolic and poorly executed militants' protest.

The apparent function of this protest in Rennes was to make a political statement to people already engaged in the movement--consciousness raising of the committed. It is a form of resistance and solidarity building periodically described in the social science literature. Carolos Velez-Ibanez (1983) refers to this as "rituals of marginality".

Groups of relatively powerless people gain a sense of identity, autonomy and empowerment even if they are on the losing end of political struggles against the state. Their activities may not lead to any meaningful reform of the status quo, but they build up the group's organization and identity (see also Kertzer 1988 on organizational rituals). Michael Burawoy (1991: 286) describes this process as follows: "...within a fragmented lifeworld people can sometimes go beyond a negotiated order and carve out spheres of self-organization. Although powerless to reshape the boundaries of the system, they can at least defend and reconstitute their lives within those boundaries". The literature on new social movements which emphasizes identity-building rather than strategic use of resources fits nicely around these perspectives (see Cohen 1985).

Repetitive Practices of Informal Resistance

Although I have previously characterized the contemporary Breton movement as a "culture of resistance", I do so with some reservation. True cultures of resistance, that is, systematically organized groups whose major activity is to offer counter-hegemonic opposition to some established hierarchy, are exceedingly rare. Apart from armed opposition movements, only two instances from recent history come readily to mind: one would be the Palestinian Intifada in the Israeli-occupied territories and the other would be the anti-apartheid movements operating in South

African segregated townships during the 1980s. Both of these cases are marked by a significant level of internal coercion--against those Palestinians or blacks unwilling to engage in or unsympathetic to organized resistance--by politically active groups within the respective communities. The Breton movement represents itself ideologically as a culture of resistance; however, it is both weakly and ineffectually organized.

One aspect of this rhetorical culture of resistance is composed of repetitive practices of individual, informal resistance. Much of this takes the form of individual acts of civil disobedience, which while they are repetitively practiced, are not systematically organized. I briefly describe two examples from my fieldwork data.

A Breton militant goes to the train station--a French government-controlled monopoly, the SNCF--to purchase a ticket. After unsuccessfully attempting to address the clerk in Breton for this transaction, the militant boards the train without a ticket. In the course of events he is caught out by the SNCF conductor, refuses to pay and is eventually arrested by the authorities. While a small amount of publicity emerges from this activity, the final result is inconclusive. The underlying goal is to publicize the problem of Breton not being recognized as an official language by the French public administration within Brittany, which as discussed in Chapter Three, is an unobtainable political objective.

In Rennes, a Breton militant tries to have various bills--most notably, from the electric company and from the government agency responsible for collecting the tax on television ownership--addressed to him in Breton. Breton language street and town names are rarely similar to those written in French and in most parts of Brittany the post office either refuses to deliver mail so addressed or else does so reluctantly and irregularly. In the course of events, these bills are not received--and therefore not paid--by the militant in question, who then goes through all of the attending financial, legal and bureaucratic difficulties which accompany not paying one's bills. Politically, the objective of this act of civil disobedience parallels that of the militant trying to ride the train without a ticket; namely, to make a symbolic protest about Breton not being recognized as an official language in Brittany by the French state.

A number of militants have engaged in this kind of activity and no doubt comparable instances occur throughout the movement. Insofar as the actions are not collectively and systematically organized, it is difficult to ascertain their social and political weight as counter-hegemonic resistance. Indeed, even if all active Breton militants were to pursue such a course of action, its effect against a highly centralized state structure would be questionable. As such, these actions are perhaps best evaluated as cathartic identity-reinforcing behaviors designed to produce

reactive oppression by French state authorities.

But what is missing most in discussions of symbolic protest and everyday resistance is a more detailed picture of motivations--economic, moral, political and cultural--which begins to account for the strength and persistence of (and sometimes the lack of) militant commitment and engagement. It is to this topic that I now turn.

Individual Motivations

The Breton movement is often, directly or indirectly, about jobs. For instance, when Maryon McDonald gave an inevitably controversial talk about her research in a seminar on the anthropology of Brittany at Nanterre in May 1987, the first person to jump into the question and answer fray afterwards was a man named Serge Richard. Richard, a young lycée teacher with a deep sense of political engagement and a bombastic wit, took the opportunity to discuss the repression of the Breton language by the National Ministry of Education, showed around various corroborating documents and distributed literature protesting his transfer from Versailles to Lille and his conversion from a lycée-level Breton instructor to a French instructor. Most of the French and American anthropologists present at the conference seemed bemused and impatient with his politicized monologue (diatribe being too strong a word, but French academics have even a stronger sense of hierarchy than their American counterparts and Mr. Richard went on for

a long time, thereby violating the academic tone of the proceeding). However, the event provides an interesting insight into one key underlying motivation of Breton militancy.

Although as many as one million Bretons live in the Paris region, and although Breton has been taught at about fifteen lycées in the region since 1977, relatively few students pass the baccalaureat examination in Breton (50 in 1985, 85 in 1986, 130 in 1987). Serge Richard has taught Breton at three high schools in Versailles since 1982, and by the 1987 school year his part-time position covered Breton language instruction to seven classes, each with roughly twenty students.

In the spring of 1987, Richard and Ronan Tremel (a Breton language instructor teaching in Paris) were both informed by the French Education Ministry that they were to be transferred to other postings (Richard to Lille and Ronan Tremel was to become a teacher of English thereby eliminating the full-time position as Breton instructor of nine classes in various Paris high schools that he had held since 1975). According to the Association des Professeurs de Langue Bretonne (APLB), these seemingly innocuous personnel shifts represented an attempt to sabotage Breton courses at all levels in the educational system, and the association called upon students, parents and "friends of Brittany" to mobilize against the reappointments of Richard and Tremel. Meanwhile, back in Brittany, the newspaper

Ouest-France wrote that "aside from their personal cases, it is the risk of Breton language instruction disappearing from the Paris region which is feared by these teachers and the association which supports them" (Ouest-France, September 17, 1987). The APLB initiated a letter-writing campaign (and telephone calls to the relevant school officials and Education Ministry bureaucrats) and Mr. Richard himself even promised to go on a hunger strike. But the Education Ministry reversed its decision just before the beginning of the school year and both teachers retained their posts, albeit with different titles.

The point to be made here is that some motivations in Breton militancy can be categorized as narrowly economic in nature; that is, militant political action is geared towards preserving jobs having to do with the Breton language, especially in areas like teaching, media and the arts. Breton language and culture have become a small-scale industry in Brittany, and it is not surprising that many militants are employed in this sector. Even clearer is the political engagement of Diwan teachers and personnel. By mobilizing to convince ordinary Bretons and more importantly to persuade the French state to fund their schools, Diwan employers seek to maintain their livelihoods and simultaneously defend the Breton language.

More Broadly Defined Motivations

The Breton movement at present is composed primarily of university-educated, middle class professionals. One would expect that their class interests have an impact on the form and content of Breton ethnic politics. Broadly speaking, the Breton nationalist agenda favors a higher level of autonomy and economic self-determination for the region, but generally coupled with demands for greater allocation of state resources as well (see the text analyses in Chapter Four). In essence, this agenda calls for economic development favoring the expansion of administrative and professional employment in Brittany, or, to put it another way, the reproduction of the professional middle class. Many Breton militants noted in interviews that university graduates in the region have difficulty finding jobs within Brittany and are forced to migrate to Paris or elsewhere in France to find work. Alternatively, professional people (e.g. architects, doctors, lawyers, teachers) often refuse better jobs and promotions to remain in Brittany. It is often the case then, that Bretons are overqualified and underpaid. In general, Breton political parties tend to be short on specific proposals for how to bring about these transformations. As much as anything else, this is a reflection of their lack of political power. While they often speak of economic programs to help farmers or factory workers, it is probably the case that they have no rational self-interest in the precarious economic situations facing

Breton farmers or the plight of factory workers confronting deindustrialization in the region. These groups make up a very small minority of participants in the Breton movement and are far more likely to engage in class-specific collective action like strikes or the well-known farmers' protests of blocking roads and dumping agricultural products in the middle of towns (see Berger 1972; Elegoet 1984). Farmers and industrial workers are not generally active or visible participants in Breton nationalist politics. Thus, when militants speak of industrial implantation or agricultural policy reform they do so for two reasons: first, to attempt to win political and electoral support from the groups whose interests they claim to represent, and second, to attempt to guarantee a diversified economic base ultimately necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of their own middle-class lifestyles. As noted earlier, the major slogan of the largest Breton political party is: live and work in Brittany.

Life Histories and Motivations

I turn now to some life-story accounts which point to the diverse (but still patterned) range of motivations which are not directly economic in nature, but rather reflect the ideological and emotional power of Breton ideas and sentiments. I present five excerpts from interviews with informants which deal with motivation. The five individuals are perhaps typical of the militant population: they are

young (ages ranging from 26 to 44 at the time of my fieldwork), university educated (two with post-graduate degrees), middle class and worked in occupations directly connected to Breton language and culture. Their larger life-histories correspond to the scenarios outlined in Chapter One. I prefer to use their voices--translated from French language interviews--rather than my interpretation of their underlying motivations. My thematic analysis follows their accounts.

I. Bernard (age 44)

In the 1970s, we thought everything was possible, but now, well, in the movement as a whole there's discouragement, a lack of hope and after 1981 or 1982 real despair, the movement was apparently incapable of organizing and changing things. But I'm fundamentally optimistic...our institute [Institut Culturel de Bretagne] exists today precisely because of the mass movement and elected officials and public opinion of the 1970s. The real problem now is that we're at the dawn of a much more serious confrontation over the defunding of the institutionalized aspects of Breton culture and language, including possibly the Celtic Sections at the University of Haute-Bretagne [Rennes] and at Brest. Our institute is less vulnerable to this, in part because we deal with many diverse things--art, history--not just the Breton language. But how much importance will elected officials attach to the perpetuation of Breton culture? Worse, there is a real possibility of a return to

FLB style actions, especially if there is a hardening of the French Jacobin politics of the right which would certainly threaten the modest space of freedom which currently exists for Breton culture. This would be a phenomenon of despair, not supported by the mass of Bretons. Another big problem is the aging population of Breton speakers. Will Breton go the way of Cornish? Will it be an artificially supported, reconstructed language spoken by militants, not a living language but rather something preserved like old cathedrals and manuscripts?

Question: Then where is the source of your optimism?

Cultural production is of much better quality now, music for example, than in the 1970s. We've reached a summit in that regard. There's been a decline in the number of Breton language schools for adults, but the practitioners are more serious now. But there are a lot of contradictions in Breton life. Breton ideas are very strong, even if Bretons are politically weak and disorganized. Breton ideas are not theoretical, they don't come from the sky, they're real. Brittany is an idea in people's heads, but also in everyday life. Every Breton, somewhere in his heart, believes in Brittany as a country. Brittany exists even without any official political existence, it has no army, no embassy, no postage stamps, but people with convictions make Brittany exist. There is, you know, both a history of persecution and a history of the region, and there is, and has been, a politics of cultural destruction. Breton ideas

are often diffuse, long-term, deep and not tied to political parties. Those political parties are much like the foam in the sea, not the sea itself. People consecrate their whole lives to the defense of Brittany, this is essentially inexplicable.

II. Jacques (age 26)

I was born in Lorient and didn't grow up as a Breton speaker. I became active as a cultural militant ten years ago. I learned from my family about events in Brittany's history and this seemed to be in contradiction with the mainstream French history--of the Revolution--that I had learned in school. So I began reading more Breton history, learned Breton through correspondence school...I still speak English better than Breton. I got exposed to things Celtic from the Festival Interceltique at Lorient. I've belonged, at one time or another, to nearly every [Breton] political movement, except EMGANN. Now that I have a responsible job, I try to be respectable so I have shed the radical connections. But the current Breton movement, well, it's presently infantile, ridiculous in its divisions. Each formation is too small, too fragmented, with many internal problems.

The alternative is to create a single movement with no ties to French political parties, a nationalist party after the models of Wales or Scotland. It's necessary to have agreement on four or five points for a program, this is possible. The meeting at Carhaix in March showed that a

mass mobilization is possible, 5000 people showed up, many of whom had dropped out for several years. A Breton political party could accumulate 30-40,000 votes and 2000 militants. This would be an important political formation, especially since Breton militants are more active than those of other main French parties.

I think of myself as Breton and European, not French, even though my parents aren't Breton speakers. My goal as a militant is for a European state based on autonomous regions. We must weaken the French state by promoting the power of Brussels, construct a Brittany that is <u>really</u> Breton...autonomy as opposed to choices imposed by Paris. Ultimately, this is a question of democracy and choice. Democratically, people should have the opportunity to choose--Breton schools, TV, radio, Breton history. It's intolerable if the small changes--bilingual signs--don't lead to bigger ones.

The logic of the French state is to deny the existence of minorities and minority languages. We must battle against people much more powerful than ourselves, and by far. It is a hard and long struggle, a desperate struggle. Celts are by nature pessimistic, it's been a lost combat for a thousand years, but...with Emsav, I think, it's better to be pessimistic and disappointed than overly optimistic and always disappointed. Many people drop out for precisely this reason, they say it's over, it's a forfeit, nothing can be done. I consider it my duty to be a militant, even if

some of the work--stapling together sheets of paper--isn't all that exciting.

III. Mark (age 35)

The problem of the Breton language exists only insofar as people want it to exist, or think it exists. Wanting your kids to speak Breton is an act of a militant, but speaking Breton is not; for me, speaking Breton is natural. My parents were Breton speakers, it was their first language, they spoke it at home between themselves. I learned Breton and French as a kid. When I was sixteen or seventeen, I knew French better than Breton. I studied Breton through stages [summer immersion courses], correspondence courses, by myself and later at the university. My wife understands Breton, but doesn't speak it, she was born around Rennes, I came here in 1969. I speak to my kids in Breton, I want them to learn. I may not send them to Diwan, there are practical difficulties sending them there. But Diwan--it's the most important thing to happen in Brittany in the last ten years. There's mobilization, there's energy around an independent cultural achievement, something that creates the problem of the Breton language. It's a concrete thing to organize around--no longer just a vague set of ideas, it's possible to contribute money, act in favor of something. Diwan obliges people to show what side they're on, to act.

I'm not sure exactly why I wanted to learn Breton. I wanted to discover what was written in Breton, I knew some

already but I wanted to learn more, to be able to read and write in Breton. Later, I got other ideas. I consider myself a Breton nationalist. The Breton people are because of the French state, because of the apathy of Bretons who are brainwashed by the French educational system. I simply cannot accept personally the disappearance of the language and culture. The Breton language doesn't entirely characterize the Breton people, but if the Breton language disappears, the Breton people disappear. The Loire-Atlantique could be Breton, but only in geographical terms, not in cultural or linguistic terms.

I don't do much with Stourm Ar Brezhoneg. I don't consider myself an ideal example of a Breton militant. I teach Breton [and English, at a lycée in Rennes], I look at laws governing linguistic rights in Europe, I put together files on linguistic discrimination in Brittany, I organize letter writing campaigns. I write for journals in Breton, providing translations and news items. But SAB is very important. If Stourm Ar Brezhoneg didn't exist, Breton would never have become a subject of debate in regional politics, there would never have been any bilingual road signs.

I don't know why I participate in all this. Because I'm Breton, if I don't do these things, perhaps no one else will. I'm not sure if its important, but hope it's not useless. One must act when one is alive, if not, it's like you're already dead.

The most urgent job is to teach Breton to children. We must create an economic culture, jobs centered around the Breton language--in areas like administration, teaching, publishing. In order to do this, it is necessary to increase the number of active Breton language users. There is also a pressing need to create contemporary theater and cinema in Breton to show that culture in Breton can be living and modern--not just traditional--at present this is not true in the eyes of the general population.

I never ask myself if this will succeed. Over what period of time? What is success, in any case? That sort of thinking is frustrating, it provokes anxiety. Like with revolutionaries, like with Castro and Ho Chi Minh, it takes a long time. When I was twenty, I dreamed of an independent Brittany, where everyone spoke Breton. Now, it's living in a world where Breton is spoken, and that there is a possibility for my children to live in such a world as well. Younger people sometimes still have the dream of my youth, but this won't happen quickly, what happens after one realizes this?

IV. Evelyne (age 33)

I've been a Diwan teacher for the past seven years in Lannion. Currently we have twenty eight students enrolled in the _maternelle_ class (ages 2-5) and seven students in the _primaire_ class (ages 6-11), from thirty families. I'm very enthusiastic about the school. At first it was marginal in the town, and the pay was sporadic. The work is hard, it's

never finished. I make up a lot of my own instructional materials, translated from the French. The school's location, pedagogy and bilingualism are attractive to parents. We stress the transmission of culture as well as language, a living pedagogy. We do things outside of the school itself. We take field trips to farms, the countryside, factories. Old farmers give kids horse rides and tell stories in Breton to the kids.

Diwan is not well recognized yet; it's not a public school, but the nursery school has good enrollments. In the primary school the parents are afraid of bilingualism, but this is hard to understand. Only about one third of the parents speak Breton regularly to the kids at home. Parents have to make more of an effort, it's hard to ask the kids to make an effort if the parents don't. But the kids in Diwan are at the same level of French skill--reading, writing--as non-Diwan kids of the same age.

I used to work as a secretary in the town hall. It wasn't satisfying work. With Diwan, I'm doing a service, I like kids, it's more satisfying work. It's more fun to work with kids, kids are always in a good humor (or more so than adults). They give life and energy to me. We're paid less than teachers in other private schools. You have to be a little militant, put more energy into it, be more motivated, help parents register their kids, raise money, go to rallies. If you're doing it only as a job, you won't last at Diwan.

I'm motivated to do these things so that the Breton language won't die, even if it's not evident that Breton can be saved, especially with children of my own. Bilingual children have an advantage in life. I'm attached to the language personally. The future of all this is not so optimistic, but we have to do something. Diwan slows down the disappearance of the language; it's necessary to keep protesting and making demands to keep it alive. The real problem is that Bretons don't support their own language.

V. Hervé (age 36)

Breton speakers don't have consciousness of the weight of danger Breton is in. There's no open repression of the language, instead there's vicious but not visible repression through schools, TV, radio. People would react more if outright repression, as in 19th century schools, was used against the language. I was raised as a kid by my family in an atmosphere of Breton nationalism and bilingualism. I could have rejected these ideas, but I didn't.

The next ten or fifteen years are very important. We are at risk of losing the Breton language and culture through complete assimilation. This is already well advanced, so our combat may serve for nothing. We need an awakening of the consciousness of the Breton people to achieve this. For most people, militant action is not a priority, but people must become conscious that the need is urgent to promote Breton. Since Breton can't be reimposed by force, we must promote it by building a political

consciousness. This could be a lost struggle. I'm not pessimistic, no; but realistic, yes. I'm not personally interested in this political struggle if Breton isn't a living language with a community of speakers. One hopes that someday we'll arrive and make Breton a living language. But even if the Breton language disappears, we will continue to struggle [for leftist causes] at the level of France or Europe. We have the impression, sometimes, of racing through the fog. The future is not certain.

Currently, one shouldn't work in Breton TV or radio without being a militant. You can't make the language live without a militant consciousness. If people are able to work in Breton TV or radio, it's because of an external political struggle. People who benefit from this combat, but who aren't militants and are just earning a living aren't honest. They don't take risks. It's just a crummy job. Many of these people only want their jobs, and it's not honest.

Thematic Analysis of Informant Accounts

These accounts are extracted verbatim from longer interviews. Taken collectively, they shed considerable light on the ambiguous and ambivalent moral and ideological motivations of Breton militants. Seven themes are worth discussing.

1. Most of the accounts emphasize at one point or another the injustice of oppression by the French state with

regard to Breton language or culture. This represents the core of Breton nationalist ideological thought and is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

2. The themes of fairness, choice and democracy are also raised frequently, though not always in direct linkage to the first mentioned above. Outrage and frustration at what is perceived as a basic denial of human rights by the French state to the Breton people evidently represents a powerful motivation for individuals to participate as Breton militants.

3. Informants frequently express frustration and bewilderment over the lack of support given to Breton ethnic politics by the general population in Brittany. Militants often explain this lack of cooperation by reference to a poorly developed political conscience, false consciousness or the brainwashing of the Breton people by the French educational system. None of the informants here discussed any possibility of linguistic and class differences between themselves and most Breton speakers as being part of the problem underlying limited mass mobilization, although others did offer this as a likely explanation.

4. The informants who discuss their work as a direct part of their militancy explicitly deny any simple economic motivation underlying their political engagement. Rather, they choose to emphasize that they are accepting lower pay and harder working conditions in those jobs or the necessity of being a true militant if one is to perform the work well.

5. Most of these informants note the disorganization and powerlessness of the Breton movement and some suggest alternative forms of structuring Breton ethnic politics which could bring more effective results. In general, there is an acceptance of the idea that European political and economic integration would help the Breton cause far more than any conceivable policy reform in Paris.

6. All of the informants claim a profound emotional attachment to Breton language, culture, history or ethnic identity, even if those identities or attachments were learned as adults--often in an academic setting--and are not in any sense primordial or birth ascribed. Often there is a weakly submerged theme of Breton identity providing a more attractive alternative to being French. Here the attachment to ethnic heritage is very self-consciously learned and fashioned.

7. Most informants seem to switch frequently between optimism and pessimism about the future prospects for Breton language and culture.

But the tendency towards pessimism presents a theoretical problem. Theorists of social movements, especially the resource mobilization school, suggest that individuals will choose to participate in collective action only when they have some certainty that the action will be successful. None of my informants (virtually all of those interviewed, not just those quoted above) were never as certain as all that. Indeed, nearly all, at one time or

another during the course of interviews, acknowledged a strong possibility of defeat.

I think that the resolution of this question has to do with two aspects of militant experience and consciousness. First, militants self-consciously choose their identities as Breton militants and work at developing them over long periods of time through learned experience. Thus, the frequent references to "reading Breton history", "studying Breton", "learning the language through summer courses and correspondence courses" suggest that militants must be strongly attached to these chosen identities because they put so much effort into creating them. But, unlike a hobby or a favorite literary genre or musical form, a militant identity becomes an all encompassing worldview and cultural lifestyle. This is especially true where the militants works full-time (as many do) in the realm of Breton language or culture. But there is a second element at work. Militants do have their own lifeworlds: going on organized group summer vacations where only Breton is spoken, practicing their neo-Breton speech together at parties, attending fest-noz or protest rallies or working with the local Diwan school on fundraising. Because many militants are all consumed by this cultural and political engagement, it is easier to understand why they themselves cannot comprehend the apathy, indifference or even hostility expressed by most Bretons to militant causes.

For militants, one of their own is someone who speaks

or wishes to learn Breton, who agrees with the basic ideological themes of Breton militancy (oppression and injustice versus democracy and autonomy) and who does something--not necessarily within the context of a political party--to further Breton causes. But most participants in the movement make a sharp distinction between active and passive militants. As one informant expressed it:

> Bretons are stubborn, but not persevering, like all Celts, they go all out for several weeks or several years, then, umph, they no longer do anything. They consider that what they do has no results--no tangible results--they change and do something else. They remain faithful, they'll vote at elections, but action, action is something else, action is an everyday thing and this, besides, is characteristic of all the Breton parties, and of many of the French parties. But as for militants, an active one makes propaganda, puts up posters, goes to demonstrations, writes articles, goes to a public meeting while a passive one is one of those who stay at home and read, or maybe doesn't read, who doesn't act.

Some informants estimated the ratio of active militants to passive militants as 1:4. I will return to this piece of evidence in the conclusion of this chapter.

Summary: Motivation, Consciousness and Action

Breton militants learn a complex political consciousness--sometimes as children but much more often as young adults, with ages 16 through 18 usually seeming to be the most crucial developmental stages. Militant culture is transmitted through other militants to be sure, but since militancy is highly intellectualized much of the learning

takes place through reading books. Bookstores specializing in Breton literature, history and political propaganda are to be found in most major towns in the region and are generally owned and operated by militants.

The motivations embedded in this political consciousness are also complex. Many militants work in areas connected to Breton language and culture, so for them militancy literally becomes their lives and livelihoods. The social construction of militant lifeworlds as an alternative to French identity is then layered over narrowly economic motivations of guaranteeing one's employment. But these identities are themselves ambiguous and contradictory. As noted earlier, militants are direct products of French culture and education, are often paid by the French state and ask for greater resources from Paris even as they represent the French government as waging a politics of cultural genocide against the Breton people. One of my more critically minded informants expressed the paradox in the following way:

> The language militants all suffer from anomie. Ironically, they are the most Frenchified people in all of Brittany. They are not native speakers and their parents are often not native speakers [of Breton]. By holding on to elitist beliefs about language, they do as much, if not more, harm to the Breton language after the 1960s than the French state. These militants are very hostile to popular Breton, they think it's French-influenced and corrupted. In the extreme version of their viewpoint, popular Breton has to die, to disappear. Now, there are some "native speakers" in the Breton movement who are held out as examples that the population of Brittany is with the movement, but they certainly don't have positions of power or authority.

> The decline in militant protests after 1981, well, once again, it was because they expected everything just to fall from heaven, from Paris. This is a very French attitude. They gave up too soon instead of striking when the iron was hot, a big error. Later, around 1985, they blamed the French state and the Socialists for betraying the Breton movement.

The motivations and consciousness of Breton militants are directly translated into their repertoire of collective action. Why is Breton ethnic political mobilization so unsuccessful? Two of the most important reasons are beyond the direct control of the militants themselves. First, for numerous political and ideological factors already discussed, the mass of Brittany's population has no active commitment to participate in militant causes. Second, the decision-making and fiscal centralization of the French state effectively silences the voices and demands of Breton militants by ignoring them as much as possible, delegitimating their activities and, on occasion, exercising surveillance and coercion against the more radicalized groups. But the more salient reasons for the lack of success of Breton ethnic collective action are located in how militants have chosen to organize their strategies of political mobilization. Three factors are particularly worth discussing.

Militants usually do not engage in high cost protests. By "high cost" I mean those that carry a significant risk of injury or arrest by the police. Why not? In general, proletarianized social protestors in France--truck drivers, farmers, industrial workers--will do so, whether by blocking

roads, dumping vegetables or manure in front of government buildings or setting fires on railroad tracks to disrupt train traffic. But most of the Breton militants are middle class professionals, with families, jobs and "respectable lives" for whom the costs of being arrested and jailed are perceived as being too high. While high cost protests are indeed more risky, they also attract more media attention and action from powerholders. The major exception to militant unwillingness to be arrested lies in the road sign vandalism strategy. But Stourm Ar Brezhoneg's members tend to be younger, more proletarianized in terms of their economic status and also have the most radicalized consciousness among contemporary militants. Most UDB or POBL members are ambivalent supporters of these tactics, but would not engage in such activities themselves. More conservative militants do, however, admire the commando tactics of SAB.

> The road sign activists like Le Bec [Hervé ar Beg, co-founder of SAB and EMGANN] are very heroic. They sacrifice their careers, money, time and even their liberty to give Breton a public place. Since Breton has no official existence, it's not used in administration, not in daily print or other media--basically purely oral-anytime it gets used publicly is very important politically.

As we have seen, the "martyrdom" of Breton patriots arrested, jailed, tried and fined by the French state for painting over road signs becomes a major source of publicity for Stourm Ar Brezhoneg and eventually led to the implantation of bilingual road signs in many municipalities

throughout Brittany. However, the point remains: middle class professionals in their 30s or 40s will in general not engage in protest activities that could lead to arrest and imprisonment unless they are very motivated ideologically and engaged politically to mobilize around a particular issue.

The second major reason why Breton political mobilization strategies are less than effective is that many mass rallies or gatherings (as well as smaller protests) primarily function to build up internal solidarity or group cohesion and not to present their symbolic message to a wider public audience. Unlike ACT-UP, described in the next chapter, Breton political activities often work to build up enthusiasm and militant fervor among an already semi-committed group of activists or else to build political engagement among militants who are, perhaps, less than enthusiastic. Here, the ratio of active to passive militants is extremely important. Perhaps 80% of the 5000 or so current militants are generally inactive politically. Thus, mass rallies like those at Carhaix or Morlaix mainly function to energize those militants who are inactive or to convince active participants that it is worth their time and energy to continue as militants.

Finally, there is yet another ironic paradox to Breton militancy. Militants will often speak of the "invisible repression" waged by the French state against Breton language and culture. Yet many Breton political protests,

such as the one described in Rennes earlier in this chapter, are also invisible to any audience. Indeed, after 1981 Breton political protest was in general invisible. This conjuncture of invisible repression and invisible resistance represents one of the defining features of Breton militancy: while the state's repression is invisible because it mainly entails withholding resources rather than outright violence and coercion, the invisibility of ethnic protest is contingent on the movement's inability to mobilize resources--people, money, symbols--to support viable resistance against the state and, in addition, on militants' lack of risk-taking or creativity to make that resistance more than invisible in contemporary Brittany.

CHAPTER VI

IS THE BRETON MOVEMENT A "FAILED" STRUGGLE?

In the preceding chapters, I have discussed concepts such as "imagined (or constructed) oppression", "invisible repression" and "invisible resistance". Oppression--historically somewhat real, at present mostly imagined--is the emotionally laden mobilizing ideology of Breton militancy. The French state's repression of the Breton people--or perhaps only of Breton militants--occurs primarily through the seamless veil of fiscal brutality rather than the more noticeable forms of violence so commonplace throughout the world. And much of the protest or resistance embodied in Breton militancy is invisible because it consists of "rites of marginality" or else is poorly organized and performed on a limited base of symbolic and material resources.

But let me be more precise about what could be meant by "success" or "failure" of a social movement over historical time. Success is usually measured in terms of concrete results. Labor struggles are successful if workers receive higher compensation and/or increased decision-making power. Civil rights movements are successful if anti-discrimination

laws are enacted and enforced and if the economic status of the oppressed group in question improves over time.

In the case of the Breton movement, as I argued in Chapter Two, it is probably the case that only the period of CELIB's ascendancy constituted a period of "success" for the movement; that is CELIB functioned effectively to stimulate economic development in the region. An examination of the political programs of the various parties discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four demonstrates that most of the goals of Breton militancy have not been achieved. Indeed, many of the goals are so unrealistic that it is difficult to envisage any political scenario through which they could potentially be attained. The most important point to make here is that "success" or "failure" must be understood both historically and comparatively. I offer a comparison of more visibly "successful" new social movements later in this chapter. In historical terms, while CELIB was "successful" to some degree, much of the history of militant activity reviewed in Chapter Two points to a woeful story of "failure". The same critique applies to contemporary militancy and its various diagnostic markers of "weakness": electoral strength, influence on state policy, public support, numbers of active militants, and frequency of collective action.

But let us briefly consider the "failure" issue in terms of a counter-factual hypothesis. Suppose the Breton movement had never existed at all. What would have happened

then? Perhaps the region would be a little more "peripheral" in political economy terms (subtracting CELIB's influence, although for both political and economic reasons--discussed in Chapter Two--some expanded state investment and accelerated economic development would have taken place anyway at that period of time). There would be perhaps 25,000 fewer Breton language speakers (subtracting the militant neo-Breton speakers, since there is little reason to believe that the efforts of Breton militancy have <u>significantly</u> slowed the decline in the number of popular Breton speakers). Beyond that, I suggest that the hypothetical non-existence of the Breton movement would have had no measurable impact on political economy and culture in Brittany.

<u>Summary of Structural Reasons for the Relative "Failure" of Breton Political Struggles</u>

I suggest five principal reasons for the Breton movement's overall weakness.

1. The movement, historically and at present, has been internally divided along linguistic, ideological, factional or other lines. These divisions substantially reduce the efficacy of their attempts at political organization.

2. The movement basically possesses an elitist character which separates it from the Breton population it claims to represent. In combination with French state delegitimation of the Breton ethnic political agenda, this

line of separation makes it difficult for militants to mobilize large amounts of resources (people, votes, money). As a result, their collective action is less than effective.

3. The movement fails to mobilize symbols which have great appeal to the Breton people. For example, militants have long stressed the linguistic repression theme despite significant evidence that most Bretons did not mind learning and speaking French. The economic interests of most workers, peasants and middle class professionals in the region are more effectively met by more institutionally powerful labor unions or national political parties, especially the Socialist party since 1981.

4. The French state is highly centralized fiscally and bureaucratically, so the movement's potential for influencing policy tends to be very constrained (see Wright 1989). Cultural assimilation of "regional cultures" has been very successful in France. As such, many of the militants' characteristic perceptions and beliefs--linguistic purification, an emphasis on legitimate cultures, reliance on central state aid--mirror French identity more than a distinctively Breton one. Perhaps it is true that the identities of Breton militants represent an alternative French identity, rather than a Breton alternative to a French identity. The success of cultural assimilation in the region also partly explains the relative disinterest of most of Brittany's population in Breton militant politics.

5. A final irony of Breton militancy is that many of

its activities are partly or completely funded by the French state. The Cultural Charter of the late 1970s formed the legal basis for that funding. Examples include Diwan, the Cultural Institute of Brittany and even that hot-bed of militant organizing in Rennes (CRIB, Centre Rennais d'Informations Bretons is largely funded by the municipality of Rennes). Those activities which are supported primarily by the Breton "people" (cynically interpreted as "militants") tend to be very short of money. As a result, many militant activities are vulnerable to manipulation, control and cooptation by the state. The Education Ministry's efforts to take charge of Diwan's curriculum represents an excellent example of this process.

Ethnographic Evidence of "Weakness" in the Breton movement: Major Rallies in 1987

A Rally at Carhaix

(Excerpts from my fieldnotes, March 22, 1987)

Carhaix, Finistère 12:30-7:30 p.m., overcast, rain showers, cold. The event was a rally to recognize Breton as an official language, sponsored by EMGANN and Stourm Ar Brezhoneg, with participation on the part of "numerous" (I counted eight) other groups or parties including the UDB, POBL, Diwan, Association of Breton Language Teachers. This was in fact a two-day event, with a fest-noz (or Celtic dance party) on Saturday and this event observed by myself

on Sunday. The rally was publicized in the largest regional daily newspaper Ouest-France and with posters in towns like Rennes and Guingamp. Held in a rented municipal hall in Carhaix--a rather economically depressed town in the interior of Brittany--adults were charged 35 FF (around $6 US) for admission.

Outside of the hall tents were set up with non-sponsoring organizations represented, with Breton language or Breton political books, posters, postcards, and videos for sale. Inside the hall, by the entrance at the rear, was a bar serving a choice of warm Heineken or Kronenburg, Guiness, red wine, Orangina, lemonade and Perrier as well as some delicious-looking sausage sandwiches at moderately inflated prices. SAB and EMGANN had several tables too, set up with the usual array of literature, pamphlets, fliers and bumper stickers.

Throughout the hall, Breton flags were prominently displayed--above the tables, in front of the stage. At the other end of the hall, there was a small raised stage with a sound system along with a lectern--which was also draped by a Breton flag--for the day's speakers. When I first arrived, the hall itself was nearly deserted and I began to think that my original hypothesis about the Breton movement being "unsuccessful", "marginal" or "demobilized" were even more correct than I had imagined. I asked some militants and was told that the program had not started yet and indeed a few moments later the people in the hall were ushered

outside so that everyone could pay their admission fee.

Like other Breton political mobilizations, there are multiple events going on at the same time--an "official" program of music and speeches (speeches which most militants have heard over and over again, the themes are recycled like the binary oppositions in Claude Levi-Strauss' analysis of mythology) and militants in the rear of the hall drinking, talking and smoking. One informant later told me that he spent a lot of time catching up on news with old friends and acquaintances because this rally at Carhaix was one of the first "big" mobilizations since 1981.

The formal program was almost entirely in Breton and consisted of music interspersed with five brief 5-8 minute political speeches by SAB, EMGANN and Diwan officials. The music spanned a range from Celtic harp, to acoustic guitar and vocals, to heavy metal (all in Breton), and the renowned folk musician Alan Stivel put in an appearance to perform two songs as a special guest. From the summary translations of the speeches I received from my neighbors, the political content reflected a slightly more radicalized discourse on the linguistic themes discussed in Chapter Three. There is minimal ideological variation in Breton militant discourse on language topics.

The audience numbered around 300 people. I counted carefully, yet later press and organizational claims said between 3000 to 4000 people participated. Such discrepancies are common in crowd estimates for political

protest events throughout the world. A figure of 3000 to 4000 could be possible for both days, but this seems to be a significant overestimate. A head official of EMGANN was supervising the FR3 film crew recording the event (no doubt for the program Chadenn Ar Vro) and given the generally sympathetic treatment given to Breton militancy by Ouest-France and other regional papers, one can sketch many possible scenarios of manipulation or distortion. The crowd was mostly young (twenties to thirties), there were a few elderly couples, and in general mostly couples, although around 60% of those present were men. Many of the couples had brought their young children with them (kids between four and eight years old) and roughly 10-15% of the audience were children. Most of those attending, based on dress and appearance, looked like middle class professionals dressed informally in jeans or slacks and sweaters, although a few were clearly recognizable as students and it was evident from interaction that many of the people already knew each other as friends. There was a fair amount of audience participation which came mostly in the form of restrained applause between speeches and musical performances, yet in general there was no high level of emotional energy nor any particular peak or climax of audience display. Talking to informants suggested that they had traveled from all over Brittany--Brest, Lorient, Rennes--to attend the rally.

The formal program ended around 6:30 p.m., and people gradually drifted off.

Like many fieldwork accounts, these notes--taken almost verbatim from my notebook as they were written up on the evening of March 22--are condensed interpretations of a complex reality. One would never claim to have captured it all. Furthermore, one of the first rules of interviewing is never to take what informants say at face value until you have built up an overarching ethnographic context based upon multiple interviews or long-term participant observation of the cultural group in question. For instance, one of my conversations at Carhaix was with an older UDB militant who told me that unemployment in Brittany is _significantly_ higher than in France as a whole, mentioned specific factory closings as examples and cited figures of 10% in France and 12% plus in Brittany. Yet according to some government statistics printed in _Ouest-France_ on March 31st (a week or so after Carhaix) unemployment in Brittany for February 1987 stood at 6.9% and in France as a whole at 8.2%. There are many possible explanations for this ambiguity or discrepancy. The most parsimonious would be that my informant did not have his facts straight; this is not unknown in anthropology. Yet through further ethnographic research--both interviews and text analysis--it becomes clearer that one primary ideological process in Breton militancy is the construction of "imagined oppression". The informant's account then takes on a different meaning as a discourse fragment--or a cultural item--reflecting a much larger political and economic set of processes.

The Rally for Diwan at Morlaix (May 16, 1987): Contrasting Accounts

For once it was sunny in Brittany. I strained up a huge hill, one kilometer from the center of town, to reach the Stade Aurégon--a large enclosed hall where an international meeting in support of Diwan was to take place. Diwan was celebrating its tenth anniversary in its usual crisis situation: financial difficulties and ongoing negotiations with the French government regarding curriculum changes (more French language instruction) in exchange for delivering promised state funding. The general goal of the meeting was fundraising and solidarity building for Diwan.

I counted 60 cars in the parking lot and went inside. There were 300 seats in the hall, banners were draped around the walls (reading, in French and Breton: "Diwan: Living Our Identity in Today's Europe" and "Diwan: the Future of the Breton Language"), and, although the Breton flag was not displayed by the organizers, individuals in the audience had brought the ubiquitous black and white symbols with them.

As at Carhaix, the audience was composed of middle aged people with children, the regional media (Ouest-France and FR3) were present, and the mandatory bar served drinks and sandwiches. Unlike Carhaix, admission was free. At its peak, I estimated around 700 people attended today, taking into account the crowd outside as well. As at Carhaix, there were two simultaneous events--a formal program of speeches inside and informal drinking and talking outside.

The reason became clear when I wandered around outside: many militants had come to see friends and acquaintances from far off parts of Brittany and they had all heard the familiar rhetoric before.

Between 2:45 and 3:00 p.m. there was an audio-visual program on European minority languages watched by perhaps seventy people in the hall. The program of speeches began at around 3:15 p.m. and included--speaking in Breton, French and English--the socialist mayor of Morlaix, the representative of Breton mayors and elected officials, elected officials from the departments of Finistère and Côtes du Nord and a variety of international figures concerned in one way or another with minority languages and bilingual education. In this long procession of speakers, there were seven repetitive themes.

1. Breton language and culture must be preserved.

2. There are social and psychological advantages of bilingualism--Diwan is a good choice for the children.

3. In a democracy, there must be freedom of choice and self-determination for minority groups.

4. International solidarity with other minority language groups was frequently invoked, examples included--Occitan, Catalan, Estonian, Yakuts, Iroquois.

5. International expressions of support from various organizations and associations of minority languages were frequently emphasized.

6. Any regional support by elected officials in

Brittany of Diwan was stressed by the moderators.

7. The moderators and speakers alike encouraged the audience to write letters to elected officials to support Diwan and to contribute money to aid the schools.

As discussed in Chapter Four, there is a limited span of ideological variation in the symbolic content of rhetoric in the Breton movement. At one point I thought I was dreaming when I heard a British member of the European parliament say: "Why are European governments afraid to support minority languages? We have nothing to fear but fear itself." I looked up sharply to see if anyone would start laughing, but no, as the speaker's words were translated into French at the podium, no one in the audience even cracked a smile.

After ninety minutes of speeches, thirty-five Diwan children came to the front of the hall and sang three songs in Breton accompanied by two adults with acoustic guitars. The audience response was enthusiastic. The children seemed to lend a different moral quality to the proceedings by altering the symbolic valences--the goals and political struggles of Diwan came to be represented by the children who benefitted from Diwan's instruction.

After a few more speeches, the meeting abruptly ended at 5:45 p.m. and we adjourned for a march down the big hill to the town center and the hôtel de ville. Some small groups carried banners representing the usual organizations: UDB, SAB, EMGANN. There was no police presence except some

gendarmes doing traffic duty downtown, there was no big crowd gathered to watch the march either. Morlaix has a population of around 22,000, but few residents turned out as spectators. There were various symbolic packages displayed in the march. Some marchers carried effigies representing Jacques Chirac (then the Prime Minister) and René Monory (then the Minister of Education) as hangman or guillotine operators--executioners of the Breton language--and others transported a coffin with a Breton student laid out on top. There was Breton music at the front of the parade, a variety of posters, and some militants had painted their faces half black and half white. Although slogans were chanted, the march was basically silent. The absence of a police presence can be explained by the support of the rally by local authorities, hence it was a predictable protest unlikely to lead to any confrontation or violence. The procession ended at the hôtel de ville with yet another speaker--this time a woman--calling for action. I departed for Rennes around 7:00 p.m., the obligatory fest-noz was to start shortly after.

During the march, one participant offered the critical self-reflexivity diagnostic of the intellectuals which make up the movement by voicing the general misgivings that many militants candidly share about Diwan. His comments: this has no effect on public opinion, 90% of Bretons don't care, the rhetoric has been the same as always. He went on to say that although Diwan was an important symbol (the only thing

that is being done to help the Breton language), the schools were ineffective from the standpoint of linguistic instruction: "The kids don't learn Breton and their parents don't speak Breton." His view replicated the analysis offered by an anthropologist (McDonald 1989).

A Second Account of Morlaix (Le Télégramme de Brest, May 18, 1987, p.5)

> Diwan Day. Two Thousand Supporters at Morlaix. The supporters of the Diwan schools met Saturday at Morlaix. They numbered around 2000. In front of an audience entirely accepting the cause of the bilingual school, the officials and the personalities had, for the most part, a disillusioned statement: "The National Minister of Education continues to ignore Diwan. The elected officials of the region, those who have the power, seem not to be moving."
>
> If no new development occurs in the near future, the Diwan school in its current form, will disappear. This is paradoxical at a moment where its numbers are growing and where Diwan speaks of new school openings. The 54 salaried employees and the twenty or so teacher's aids who work under its banner know this. The notices of dismissals were just sent.
>
> On this Saturday, at Morlaix, the Diwan school didn't lack defenders. The speakers, one after the other, no matter what their nationality, spoke of their

struggles, their hopes, their disappointments, their anger, their frustration: "In terms of bilingual teaching, only the Latin American countries are more backward than France, dead last in Europe...".

By their presence at the podium, Dr. Cléach, the socialist mayor of Morlaix, and Mr. Jean-Yves Cozan, deputy of the UDF [Union for French Democracy, a rightist national French political party] wanted to show that Diwan's combat was neither a struggle of the right nor the left, but a problem of a region and its culture.

The Scotsman Jack MacArthur, president of the European Office of Minority Languages, president of the Commission of Education in the Regional Council for the Highlands, affirmed that 40 million Europeans speak a minority language: "Our role is to ensure the survival of minority languages and cultures. If the state is strong, it must be able to come to aid its minorities."

The Irishman Maher, from the European Parliament, was entirely of the same opinion: "Europe is rich in the diversity of its member states, which in turn are rich in their own diversity. If Diwan didn't exist, it would be the government's responsibility to create an equivalent service."

The Armenian Gilbert Dagalian, vice president of a world information center for bilingual education, defended bilingualism for youngsters: "A common Breton-

French base is the best opening for an apprenticeship in foreign languages. One encourages this bilingualism abroad, but they reject it in Quimper or Perpignan. Look at the example of how rich the Slavs are who speak four, even five languages."

The Spaniard Joachim Arenas, chief of Catalan instruction, presented the experience in Spain with Catalan. It works perfectly to everyone's satisfaction. 50,000 students from four to eight years old, taught in 518 schools by 1789 teachers, do an early apprenticeship in their regional language. The Spanish government has nothing to find fault with in this program.

The American Nathalie Novik, representative of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language, placed the debate on another plane: "The French had their Revolution. They created the Rights of Man. The manner in which the state treats Diwan, then, is an act of racism."

For the Breton Simone de la Bolladière, co-president of the Diwan support committee, "bilingualism is an opening of the mind, and strangling Diwan corresponds to making a culture die."

This international meeting in favor of Diwan was equally one of messages of sympathy and support, from the right as well as from the left. Diwan does not want to die, but its struggle for life is not a rear

guard action. The 2000 people who marched in the streets of Morlaix wanted to show that health and dynamism (LeClech 1987).

A Third Account of Morlaix (Ouest-France, May 18, 1987, p.8)

Two Thousand Demonstrators at Morlaix. Breton and European elected officials behind Diwan. Nearly two thousand people participated Saturday in an international meeting of solidarity for Diwan. But this was more than a mass gathering. The officials of the Breton maternelle and primary schools were pursuing two objectives: to confirm the value of their pedagogical principles and to assure the support of elected Breton officials from all sides.

In one month, Diwan risks having to dismiss 54 workers and ending its ten year experiment. This is because the state refuses to sign the proposed contracts with the schools. The motive: the place of French was insufficiently present in the primary school class schedules. Diwan uses a method of "linguistic immersion" which consists of privileging the dominated language, Breton, by relation to the majority language, French, to teach children who are perfectly bilingual by the time they get out of primary school.

From 1983 to 1985 a bipartite commission, including three bureaucrats from the National Education Ministry, verified, from classroom inspections, the

validity of this method. Saturday, the fertility of this pedagogy, applied in numerous countries, was confirmed by several international experts including Mr. Maher, president of the European Parliament's group on less spoken languages; Jack MacArthur, president of the European office of Minority Languages; Gilbert Dalgalian, vice president of the World Center for Bilingual Education. Joaquim Arenas, instructional head for Catalan of the autonomous government of Catalonia, notably declared: "for us, fifty thousand students follow this method of linguistic immersion with success, speaking Catalan as well as they do Castilian."

Deputies, regional and general legislators, town councilors: several dozen of elected officials from all political parties participated in the discussions and in the demonstration which followed. Many others had sent messages of support. This is what allowed Jean-Yves Cozan to say at the podium: "As a whole elected Breton officials share the pedagogical project of Diwan." Deputy and vice president of the Gernal Council for Finistère, Jean-Yves Cozan belongs to the CDS, the party of the National Education Minister, René Monory.

Satisfied with this broad support, André Lavanant, Diwan's president, deplored all the same that the Regional Council was not officially represented. "We

are going to multiply our actions in the field to remind the elected officials of their promises. It isn't out of the question that we would go to Paris. We are going to try to put together a delegation of regional elected officials who will meet with the minister [of education in Paris]. We are going to, as well, use our European contacts" (Guidet 1987).

I present the two press accounts in conjunction with my fieldwork account for three reasons. First, because the sympathetic tone of the articles refutes the typical militant contention that the press is hostile or indifferent to their causes. Both authors appear to be very much on the side of Diwan and offer a substantive defense of the school's record. Second, the accounts differ from mine in that not only are they less critical but also they choose to focus more on the external politics of the rally or in the case of Thierry Guidet's piece in Ouest-France on the success of bilingual education both in Brittany and throughout Europe. Finally, multiple accounts are always more productive descriptively than just one, even if their crowd estimates are substantially inflated over mine.

Some Comparative Examples of Successful Social Movements

Because so much of this dissertation is dedicated to a historical and ethnographic analysis of a relatively "unsuccessful" social movement, it is worthwhile to offer a

comparison with some highly effective examples of new social movements to emphasize some variables implicated in the successful mobilization of collective action. As part of my ongoing research on these issues, I present some empirical and conceptual material concerning two social movements based in New York: the well-known AIDS activists group ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and the less well-known ecological and transportation advocacy group Transportation Alternatives.

ACT-UP

ACT-UP was originally founded in New York by playwright Larry Kramer in March of 1987. Kramer delivered a dramatic and passionate speech at the Gay Community Services Center in Greenwich Village condemning his audience for its passivity in response to the "gay holocaust" of the AIDS epidemic. By the end of his speech, many in the audience were moved to take some more decisive action and within two days the group's size had increased from 300 to 500 activists. In the five years following its creation, ACT-UP has evolved into a highly successful national and international movement on the forefront of political and cultural struggles surrounding the AIDS crisis. The dimensions of the AIDS epidemic are well-known, but the statistics themselves allow one to understand the urgent and emotional commitment of ACT-UP's members. As of June 1992, over one million Americans had been infected with HIV, the

virus that causes AIDS, and over 150,000 have thus far died from AIDS in the United States. Worldwide, between 10 and 12 million may be infected with the virus. Because there is no cure or truly effective treatment for AIDS, this epidemic represents one of the most devastating health threats of this century.

The slogans and symbols of ACT-UP are also well-known. They include their own self-description: "We are a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis", and their invariable rallying cry "ACT-UP, Fight Back, Fight AIDS!" ACT-UP's core public symbol is a pink triangle (representing the label affixed to homosexuals in Nazi concentration camps) coupled with the highly evocative words "Silence = Death".

ACT-UP worldwide now has a membership of around one million activists, and ACT-UP New York has around 4500. Its membership in New York is composed mainly of gay, white males who are both college educated and middle class. ACT-UP New York's annual budget is over one million dollars. Fundraising for ACT-UP has three principal sources. Roughly one third of their money comes from merchandise sales (t-shirts, buttons, stickers, posters, books), one third from various benefits (particularly art shows in downtown Manhattan galleries) and the remaining one third from direct mail solicitation and donations. The compelling combination of material and symbolic resources, large numbers, education

and creativity, and very motivated anger have made ACT-UP, in the words of one observer, a "guerilla army with real political clout".

ACT-UP operates simultaneously in many areas of contention involving AIDS. They protest against Federal government drug-testing policy, pharmaceutical companies' prices for AIDS treatment, any discrimination against people with AIDS (whether by employers, insurance companies, landlords or government agencies), the inaction of public officials in the AIDS crisis, the slow pace of research by the medical establishment, differential health care provided to different categories of HIV sufferers--particularly women and ethnic minorities (ACT-UP characterizes AIDS treatment and research programs as "medical apartheid"), the Catholic Church for its policies on condoms and sex education and, lastly, any journalists or media whose opinions ACT-UP finds objectionable.

ACT-UP is a direct-action protest and lobbying group. ACT-UP's organization is decentralized, highly democratic and meetings roughly follow Robert's Rules of Order. Although there is no paid staff, there are administrators elected to six month terms who are responsible for press relations, office management, finances and moderating general meetings using parliamentary procedures.

ACT-UP meetings in New York are held every Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. with 250-450 members in attendance. The facilitator (moderator) opens the meeting by asking that

any law enforcement officials present step forward and identify themselves. None ever do, and members assume that they are under police surveillance, yet because none of ACT-UP's operations or decision-making are secret, members believe that they are more powerful because the implied threat of surveillance is removed. A typical agenda includes announcements, medical updates from a Treatment and Data Committee, zap proposals, action proposals, and follow-up on previous actions. Announcements may include those of deaths and memorial services or on parties, apartments available or general information on gay related topics. When deaths are announced, there are a few moments of silence followed by many minutes of rage as someone in the audience begins the chant of ACT-UP, Fight Back, Fight AIDS! ACT-UP meetings in general tend to be emotional events. The Treatment and Data Committee then provides the group with the latest findings on medical research related to AIDS. The zap proposals (zaps refer to sending concentrated waves of phone or fax messages to annoy bureaucrats and officials) are quickly discussed. Action proposals--those ideas for demonstrations, protests or civil disobedience--more often become protracted sources of argument and debate.

Action proposals must minimally address the following questions in order to be placed on the meeting's agenda for discussion. Who is the target? What is wanted from the target? Who is to be reached with this action (media, target itself, public, powerholders, community)? What is to

be the message? How will this message be communicated--what tactics will be used? After the action proposal is debated and approved by vote, the logistical details (location, visual theme, observers, financial and legal support) are worked out in a committee. ACT-UP's protests frequently result in the arrest of its members, so priority is placed on training members to cope with this eventuality and providing legal support to those arrested. The demonstrations and protests themselves are conducted by small affinity groups for purposes of mutual solidarity and effective organization.

In other words, collective action by ACT-UP is carefully planned, highly structured and organized and self-consciously designed with respect to its symbolic presentation to attract public attention and media coverage through dramatic and clever protests. This organizationally harnessed anger usually takes the form of civil disobedience including disruption of meetings or speeches by public officials, blocking traffic, yelling at public officials, and taking over of corporate or media activity centers.

A brief survey of some of ACT-UP's early actions point to both their creativity and to their success in influencing dialogue and policy surrounding AIDS.

March 1987 ACT-UP holds their first demonstration on Wall Street. They protested the role of pharmaceutical companies (particularly Burroughs Welcome, the manufacturer of the AIDS drug AZT) in profiting from the AIDS epidemic.

Seventeen activists are arrested. Following the demonstration, the Food and Drug Administration announces it will shorten the drug approval process by two years.

March 1988 ACT-UP returns to Wall Street to celebrate their first anniversary. More than 100 activists are arrested and ACT-UP receives major media coverage and publicity for the AIDS crisis.

October 1988 ACT-UP joined by the National Act Now Coalition closes down the Food and Drug Administration headquarters in Washington, D.C. More than 1000 protestors are present and there are 180 arrests. The event receives international press coverage and issues of bureaucratic delays in testing and approving AIDS treatments are publicized.

March 1989 ACT-UP's second anniversary brings 3000 protestors to New York City Hall to demonstrate against Mayor Koch's inadequate AIDS policies. 200 activists are arrested. Two months later, Koch announces a new policy to offer housing to people with AIDS in New York.

June 1989 ACT-UP demonstrates at the Fifth International Conference on AIDS in Montreal to publicize the new concept of "parallel track" (the near simultaneous commercial release of drugs being tested). ACT-UP members meet with Federal officials and gain an important role in formulating medical policy.

September 1989 Seven ACT-UP members sneak into the New York Stock Exchange and chain themselves to a VIP balcony. Their

foghorns drown out the sound of the opening bell and the protestors unfurl a banner above the trading floor demanding "Sell Welcome". Four days later, publicly shamed, Burroughs Welcome responds by lowering the price of AZT by 20%.

December 1989 ACT-UP and WHAM! (Women's Health Action and Mobilization) co-organize Stop The Church--4500 protestors assembled outside St. Patrick's Cathedral to voice their opposition against the Catholic Church's policy against providing safe sex information for public and parochial school teenagers (a fast growing segment of the AIDS population) and to legal abortion. 111 people are arrested, including 43 for dramatically disrupting services inside the Cathedral. Cardinal O'Connor, Mayor Koch, local politicians, major newspapers and many gay organizations all severely criticized ACT-UP's tactics on this occasion.

ACT-UP's success can be accounted for by a number of factors. The underlying emotional motivation--themselves, friends and lovers dying of AIDS--are very powerful. A decentralized political structure mobilizes creative energy from a large membership. The middle class membership creatively raises a lot of money. The membership uses its networks and personal contacts to gain access to government and corporate policy-makers. The occupational backgrounds of many members are also in large part responsible for its success. As one activist says: "What distinguishes us from earlier protest movements is our ability to transform what we do into media events. Many of us are in graphic design,

public relations and media, but instead of selling soap, we're selling ACT-UP" (quoted in Taylor 1990). Here, middle class advertising professionals clearly have an advantage over middle class intellectuals in terms of successfully organizing and presenting symbolic protests.

There are, however, a number of limiting factors which prevent ACT-UP from attaining even greater success in reaching its goals. Four issues are of particular relevance. First, the membership is divided along lines of race, class, gender and sexual orientation. The ensuing conflicts have disrupted the organization's solidarity and efficiency. Second, the carefully planned protests may sometimes fail to reach their intended targets or communicate their intended messages--even professionally produced advertising may backfire (see Gamson 1991). Third, ACT-UP's confrontational tactics alienate both the public and powerholders. One consequence of the December 1989 protest has been an increase in the oppositional stance of the Catholic Church towards gay rights. A recent report states:

> The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Church's dogma warden, sent a directive to U.S. bishops in June [1992] instructing them to oppose laws protecting gay rights. "There are areas in which it is not unjust discrimination to take sexual orientation into account", it stated, and specified adoption, foster care, military service, teaching and coaching as areas where prejudice might be justified. Coming out, so to speak, just before the Eighth International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, the document was destined to make even more difficult the social struggle against the disease (The Nation, August 17/24, 1992, p. 157).

A brief comparative example may illustrate the potential risk involved in purely confrontational tactics. For the past several years, gay rights laws have failed to pass in New York's Republican controlled state legislature. Gay protest groups' direct-action strategies seemed to have an effect opposite to that desired by activists. Then a gay and lesbian lobbying group composed of young, professional--and traditional in orientation--political activists began quietly meeting with legislators in their offices and convincing them one by one that their respective communities had substantial voting blocs of gays and lesbians. After two years of these efforts, nearly enough votes have been mobilized to assure passage of the legislation. In such a political context, ACT-UP's collective action repertoire would be counter-productive.

Finally, ACT-UP must struggle against what amounts to a hegemonic homophobia in American society. Homophobia, exacerbated by negative stereotypes associated with AIDS, remains the most pervasive and least socially sanctioned bias. Public and media discourse on AIDS reflects this bias. A great deal of positive media attention and public sympathy has been given to three specific individuals: Ryan White, Kimberly Bergalis and Magic Johnson. Ryan White, a young hemophiliac from Indiana, acquired AIDS from a blood transfusion. Kimberly Bergalis, a young Florida woman, acquired AIDS from a medical procedure. Magic Johnson, most recently, acquired HIV from heterosexual intercourse. All

received sympathetic public treatment because they are perceived ideologically as "pure" or "innocent victims of the disease", not as people ill because of their "deviant practices" (homosexuality or intravenous drug use).

Transportation Alternatives

Transportation Alternatives is a pro-bicycle, anti-automobile advocacy and direct-action group operating in New York City. The organization was originally founded in 1973 by the New York Green Party and its long-time spiritual leader is a professional traffic engineer named Charles Komanoff. Although the group was functionally moribund throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s it was revived by 1985 and its membership has grown from 400 in 1986 to 1300 in 1990 to 2200 in 1992. Its most recent growth has been linked to the ecology movement, Earth Day 1990, and the Persian Gulf War.

Transportation Alternatives (T.A.) offers both a utopian vision of urban life and some specific plans to attain that goal. In their own words:

> Transportation Alternatives believes that bicycling is ideally suited to the dense urban environment of New York City. Biking is an antidote to NYC's traffic congestion, street accidents, noise and air pollution. Bicycling sets a worldwide example of a clean, quiet, space efficient, energy-conserving, non-polluting, affordable, human-scale form of transportation. A significant increase in city cycling is a dream in which T.A. invites all New Yorkers to share (Transportation Alternatives 1991).

More specifically, their political agenda aims at four major

goals; first to expand and maintain bicycle-friendly streets, bridges, greenways and bikeways; second, to reduce traffic accidents and urban stress by educating bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists to share street space; third, to curb bicycle theft by broadening cyclist access to buildings and by creating secure on-street parking; and finally, to shift the weight of government policy to favor bicycles and mass transit and reduce auto use. T.A.'s actual long-term goal is to make New York City automobile-free.

T.A.'s membership consists primarily of ecologically minded commuter cyclists who, not surprisingly, are white, educated, young and middle class. More surprisingly, the majority of core members are not active cyclists, but a curious socio-cultural mix of 1960s-style countercultural activism and 1990s-style marginalized leftist urban politics. T.A. has two full-time staff members and their office is currently located in a cramped basement at 92 St. Mark's Place. Their funding comes from four main sources: membership dues ($10 for students or low-income people, $20 for individuals, and $30 for families), advertising in their bi-monthly publication City Cyclist, fundraising events (most notably their 100-mile Ride-a-thon held in New York each September, the event raised $ 18,000 in 1990 and $ 30,000 in 1991) and private donations. A lot of T.A.'s resources and services are donated or volunteered, and this is an important source of material support as well. Although I have no accurate budget estimate, T.A. mobilizes

far less money than ACT-UP, and most of the budget goes into salaries, office management and publication costs.

Transportation Alternatives' organizational structure is very hierarchical with limited participation by the general membership. In essence, the Board of Directors, President and Executive Director (none of which are elected positions) make all key decisions about goals, strategies and tactics. My analysis suggests that less than 1% of the membership attends the monthly meeting, that a maximum of 20% and a minimum of 2% of the membership participated in the organization's major protest actions of 1991 and 1992 and no more than 20% turned out for their principal fundraising events in 1990 and 1991. This low participation rate suggests first, a leadership which is unwilling or unable to mobilize its membership for even the most central activities and second, a membership whose participation is limited to paying their annual dues.

Given these limitations in resources and organizational capacity, what does T.A. actually do? Their repertoire is parallel to that of ACT-UP. As far as the dissemination of ideology goes, T.A. publishes a bi-monthly magazine (16 pages) which is mailed to the 2200 members and distributed free in New York City bike shops to a reported 12,000 others. City Cyclist contains practical information on bicycling in the city, news on environmental issues, updates on T.A.'s political campaigns, a calendar of upcoming political events sponsored by T.A. and of upcoming

recreational bike rides organized by T.A. and other New York City cycling clubs.

But their major political activities are fairly routine. They organize letter writing and phone campaigns to pressure public officials on specific issues, lobby government officials directly, network with other environmental groups, and organize conferences of transportation advocates. These actions have had a cumulative effect on some concrete aspects of public policy concerning cycling in New York City (see below), but the overall level of success would have to be characterized as modest.

Their protests are, in general, less creative and receive less media coverage than those organized by ACT-UP. Examples include: 1) blocking automobile traffic on the Queensborough Bridge during rush-hours to protest limited access for cyclists and pedestrians, six demonstrators were arrested, tried, and eventually acquitted; 2) protests against George Bush and against the Gulf War on December 9, 1989 at New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel; 3) a periodic Gas Mask Street Theater where T.A. members don gas masks and decontamination suites in a Manhattan intersection and hand-out summonses to motorists for pollution and commendations to pedestrians and cyclists for not polluting.

But T.A.'s largest protests have been for an Auto Free Central Park. Since April 30, 1991, demonstrators have assembled--initially weekly, but at present once per month--

in the lower roadway in Central Park, to march with banners, chant slogans, sing songs and by force of numbers compel the police to close off the roadway to cars during the latter stage of rush hour. While the first protest mobilized 400 marchers, by mid-summer of 1991 as few as fifteen demonstrators showed up. Coupled with a petition drive which eventually obtained 10,000 signatures, T.A. forced the NYC Department of Transportation to conduct a feasibility study for full-time closing of Central Park to cars. This issue remains unresolved at present.

The Auto Free Central Park protests illustrate the problems and potential of T.A. In the July 1991 protest, less than two dozen marchers set off in a loosely grouped procession from Columbus Circle around the one-mile lower loop of the park. In the rather sultry weather at 6 PM, few of the marchers responded with much enthusiasm when the Executive Director, armed with a bull-horn, tried to get some chants going: "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, the Cars Have Got to Go!" Virtually no runners, cyclists or skaters going by bothered to snatch the informational fliers held out by the marchers. While the police had cooperated by closing off the lower loop to car traffic--mostly: some cars, driven by angry and delayed motorists, did somehow sneak through--the protest seemed to draw scant public recognition and no media coverage. The marchers were a little more enthusiastic when it came to singing T.A.s creative new protest song:

[sung to the tune of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"]

1. No more cars in Central Park
   Auto Free New York!
   Belching fumes from dusk 'til dark
   Auto Free New York!

   With a skater here and a runner there
   Here a kid, there a bike, this is what we all like!
   No more cars in Central Park
   Auto Free New York!

2. (The) Park's no place a car should go
   Auto Free New York!
   (We're) Tired of hearing car horns blow
   Auto Free New York!

3. For some quiet here and some clean air there
   Here a bird, there a bee, this is what we SHOULD see!
   Fight pollution, just say <u>NO</u>!
   Auto Free New York!

T.A.'s successes are best described in their own words:

> T.A. has won vital NY cycling facilities, including full-time bike lanes in Central and Prospect Parks, wider curbside lanes on Manhattan avenues, ramped paths on the Brooklyn and George Washington Bridges, and use of a scenic shore route across from Manhattan after years of harassment (River Road, NJ). In 1987, T.A. forged a coalition of messengers and other cyclists which blocked Mayor Koch's attempt to ban bikes from mid town Manhattan. In 1988, we staged NYC's biggest Clean Air demonstration in 10 years...(Transportation Alternatives 1991).

However, most of the improved bicycle access obtained through long and intensive lobbying and direct action give cyclists access only to either pedestrian walkways or low-traffic density roadways (e.g. River Road). The 1987 bike ban, where Mayor Koch attempted to placate a pedestrians' anti-cyclist lobbying group, was quickly overturned on a legal technicality. The Auto Free Central Park initiative is unlikely to succeed because it would necessitate impeding automobile use by affluent New Yorkers. Most of the

vehicles using Central Park for discretionary travel are taxis, limousines or luxury cars. Blocking off Central Park would also result in increased congestion, noise and pollution on Central Park West, Central Park South, and Fifth Avenue where some of the wealthiest New Yorkers happen to live. For all the usual political reasons, Auto Free Central Park is an unrealistic project.

Nonetheless, T.A. can point to the successful acquisition of specific political goals obtained under a highly constrained set of opportunities for meaningful reforms. T.A. faces the ideological and material hegemony of the automobile in the United States--a hegemony solidly reinforced by both state policies and corporate interests. Consequently, it is easy to understand that most of T.A.'s victories over the past three years only result from concessions which do not directly present obstacles to automobile use in New York and that those concessions are only grudgingly made by the state after long lobbying and protest activities.

Discussion

In summary, ACT-UP and T.A. display important similarities and differences to the formations making up the Breton movement. ACT-UP is more successful in influencing government and corporate policy than the Breton movement for the following reasons:

1. Activists in ACT-UP are more highly motivated by the

concrete reality of death for themselves, their friends and other people with AIDS. The impending death of the Breton language or minimal regional economic disparities are less visible and urgent causes to mobilize around.

2. ACT-UP follows a strategy of daring, creative and large-scale public protests, while the Breton movement is much less daring or creative and cannot mobilize on a large scale.

3. ACT-UP in New York City alone mobilizes three times as much money as the entire Breton movement and has as many or more active participants than the Breton movement.

4. The political process in the United States is considerably more open to influence by interest group protest and lobbying than it is in France, especially where the participants are middle class voters.

This is not to say that ACT-UP has emerged victorious in its political struggle over the AIDS crisis, far from it, but it is reasonable to suggest that in five years they have made more substantive progress than the Breton movement has made in the past fifty.

Transportation Alternatives is perhaps closer in form, operation and level of success to the Breton movement than it is to ACT-UP. T.A. has a small number of activists, limited resources, confronts yet another dimension of invisible repression in late capitalist societies

(automobile use has a very powerful material and ideological hegemony in the United States) and enjoys very little public support. Some of their proposals--Auto Free New York, for instance--resemble the most practically unrealistic programs of Breton movement formations like Stourm Ar Brezhoneg. I consider T.A. to be more successful, nevertheless, than the Breton movement because of some specific policy reforms and general reorientation of New York City transportation policy that they have achieved over their past five years of operation. In part, as with ACT-UP, this is because elected officials in the United States tend to respond favorably--albeit in limited degrees--to lobbying, even by very small groups provided that the lobby activity is persistent enough and that no more influential counter-lobbying occurs. However, I must emphasize again that most of the specific triumphs of T.A. have come in arenas where the reforms conceded by the state do not directly conflict with the primacy of automobile use.

As a final point of contrast, consider the case of SOS Racisme--an anti-racist social movement organization founded in Paris in 1984. A dozen university students created the group due to a wave of racist hate crimes and murders in France, and the growing electoral strength of the far-right National Front with its nativist and racist program. SOS Racisme expanded rapidly into a mass movement. Its rallies, concerts and marches attracted large crowds, and by early 1991 it claimed to have 17,000 registered members and 350

chapters throughout France (Simons 1990). SOS Racisme primarily gives legal aid to immigrants and people of color (mainly from North and Sub-Saharan Africa) who experience police brutality, housing discrimination, job discrimination and other forms of everyday racism in France.

Racism is a huge problem in France, with a 1990 French government survey discovering that 75% of French people said that there were too many Arabs in France, while 50% said there were too many blacks (Simons 1990). Everyday forms of racial oppression are highly visible in France, even while most French rhetorically show deep anger over intolerance and injustice. As such, it is far easier to mobilize many French--especially students--over these issues then it is to organize Bretons to resist the "politics of cultural destruction" within Brittany. However, as a counter-movement it is small in comparison to the National Front's ten percent return in national elections and the overall influence Jean-Marie Le Pen has had on the rhetoric and programs of not only right-wing French parties but also on the governing Socialist party itself.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the success or failure of the Breton movement, or any social movement, must be evaluated in historical and comparative terms. In my view, it is here that one must insert variables like emotion, motivation, identity, and ideology to understand why individuals

continue to participate--often in cyclical waves of mobilization--in relatively unsuccessful movements.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Overview

In this chapter, I present a generalized set of perspectives to understand social movements, a summary of significant research findings, and proposals for future research on the Breton movement.

New Theories for New Social Movements

Theory construction in the social sciences at its best means taking the most useful elements from a variety of perspectives and then creatively applying a new theory to better explain existing empirical materials. Although all of the principal theories discussed in Chapter Five have something important to offer to an understanding of social movements, each taken by itself misses something important. The hallmarks of an anthropological understanding of the sociocultural world are holism (everything is interconnected with everything else), comparison (generalizations derived from cross-cultural and historical cases), a historical approach (the present can only be understood by explaining change) and a critical perspective on power. None of these

sociological theories, taken individually, meet these standards of anthropological theorizing. Based on my research and on a general overview of the relevant social science literature, I suggest that a more anthropologically satisfying theory of social movements could begin with six analytical categories: domination, ideology, action, identity, resources and motivations. All must be viewed as complex processes, not as static categories.

Since social movements are _primarily_ about resistance to power hierarchies, domination is a useful point of departure. I will not consider here various counter-movements which organize themselves against large or successful social movements (including, for the United States, counter-movements in such areas of contention as civil rights, abortion and environmental politics). Where does domination come from? In relatively democratic industrial capitalist societies, sources of domination are primarily found in the state, large corporations and, less visibly, in religious institutions. As a result, the experience of oppression, deprivation or discontent is typically linked to the structure or policies of those entities by participants in protest social movements. What forms can domination take? The state engages in surveillance, coercion, and extra-legal use of violence, but perhaps more generally imposes its power by channeling, withholding or redistributing economic resources. States also mobilize power through legislation affecting particular

groups and through the production of pervasive hegemonic ideology justifying their policies. Capitalist firms impose their power primarily through normal business practices underlying capital accumulation (pollution, labor policies, racist and sexist discrimination, white collar crime, the creation of their own pervasive hegemonic ideologies) with the direct cooperation of the state. Religious institutions impose their power both via ideological means (typically formulated in terms of morality) and direct political action.

Core ideologies of social movements emerge directly as intellectual, symbolic and emotional resistance against existing patterns of domination. It is not by accident that the rhetoric and discourse of social movements revolve around concepts like freedom, justice, rights, fairness, democracy, the injustice of oppression, the well-being of the community, subordinate groups, nature or the planet, and the evil, corruption or indifference of large and powerful bureaucracies. The resulting counter-hegemonic ideologies may be expressed or rationalized or authenticated by intellectual or scientific discourse yet typically are simplified into symbolic dichotomies which possess great emotional power and appeal. For all of the intellectualizing of ideology worked out by the leaders or theoretical spokespersons of social movements, the social force of the ideology is essentially emotional.

Identities and motivations both emerge from a context

of oppression and its dialectical production of counter-hegemonic ideologies. The social and psychological genesis of identity and motivation is extremely complex (for a useful account of these processes for pro-life and pro-choice abortion activists in the United States, see Ginsburg 1989), and in general are more complicated than those characteristic of Breton militants. While identities and motivations are socially constructed and, often, economically defined, there seem to be serious constraints on their construction and definition in the context of late capitalism. Susan Willis (1991) points out the difficulty of creating ideological or practical alternative lifeworlds due to the hegemonic weight of capitalist relations and state power in everyday life. Here is the central paradox of the conflictual politics of social movements and their more powerful adversaries: social movements oppose the policies of large bureaucracies, yet are ultimately dependent on the willingness of the state to reform its policies or redistribute resources and of corporations to alter their economic behavior. The Breton movement in particular is trapped in this paradox and given the centralization of the French state there is no ready avenue of escape from such a contradiction.

The ideologies, identities and motivation which develop as a response to domination and oppression are ultimately translated into individual and collective political action aimed towards ameliorating that oppression. Resources are

inevitably necessary to undertake political action; thus, fundraising and recruitment are always key problems facing would-be organizers of social movements. Forms of action used by social movements in pursuit of their goals are remarkably narrow in variation: informal acts of civil disobedience, symbolic protests designed to raise public consciousness, shame powerholders or impede implementation of state or corporate policies, lobbying efforts to influence powerholders to reform policies and direct participation in electoral politics as a method of more openly contesting state authority. The effectiveness of such strategies vary much more widely and may be contingent as much as anything else on the shifting political opportunity structure and on the sensitivity of transnational corporations to public opinion and negative publicity. As always in the social sciences, ultimate outcomes of such processes must be investigated empirically in order to be explained.

In summary, social movement ideologies evolve in response to historically specific modalities of domination and oppression. Motivations and identities are related in complex ways to these oppositional ideologies. While collective action--ultimately dependent on resource mobilization--is oriented towards altering or reforming particular forms of oppression, success or failure essentially is related to a shifting distribution of power between social movements and their opponents--a distribution

of power where, by definition, the most powerful actors have the upper hand.

Summary of Significant Findings

The contemporary Breton movement is essentially a leftist oriented ethno-regionalist social movement with a largely middle class membership. Although no true estimate can be made of its overall size and strength, a number of approximate measures suggest that there are no more than 5000 active militants (and perhaps many less than this figure) and that its political influence remains minimal at present. I once asked an informant what would have happened if the Breton movement had never existed at all. He initially scoffed at the question, but then upon reflection replied that the result would have been the complete cultural and linguistic assimilation of the Breton people into a dominant French culture. There is no persuasive evidence for widespread popular support for Breton militancy at any point over the past one hundred years and, indeed, despite assurances from militant leaders that the movement gained momentum after 1981, there has been a marked contraction in the frequency and intensity of collective action during the 1980s coupled with shrinking membership in its principal formation and no significant change in its level of electoral support. If, as Sidney Tarrow suggests, the mobilization of social movements operates processually in cycles, then the Breton movement is certainly

experiencing a downturn since 1981 (Tarrow 1989).

What explains the small political success of Breton militancy? Two possible lines of explanation may be suggested. The first involves internal divisions within the movement itself. Historically, participants were divided along many lines including social class, religion, language, separatism versus autonomism and so on (see Chapter Two). At present, while there is a trend towards ideological convergence (and some short-lived political alliances) among the major groups making up the movement, there remains substantial disagreement over which political strategies to adopt. As many militants candidly admit, the costs of these divisions are extremely high in that they impede the mobilization of both material resources and the presentation of a coherent ideological package to would-be supporters in Brittany. A related factor concerns the social class and cultural characteristics of most Breton militants: they tend to be radicalized middle class intellectuals marginal to mainstream French politics and largely alien to the broader constituency of the Breton people they claim to represent. Due to the success of French hegemonic ideology in Brittany, a majority of people living in the region do not choose to act or think politically as ethnic Bretons.

The second way to approach this central question is to examine the larger political context created by the structure and operation of the French state. As Sidney Tarrow suggests, "if collective action is a form of

politics, then as in conventional politics, there must be a set of constraints and opportunities that encourage or discourage it and lead it towards certain forms rather than others" (Tarrow 1988: 429). Theorists of social movements refer to this set of constraints and opportunities as a "political opportunity structure". Tarrow goes on to list five major variables that make up this structure: degree of openness or closure of the political system, the stability or instability of political coalitions or alignments, the presence or absence of allies or supporting actors, divisions among powerholders which affect their tolerance for counter-hegemonic activities and the policy making capacity of the state (Tarrow 1988: 429).

Applying these variables to the relationship between the French state and Breton ethnic politics, one observes the following. Despite a minimal historical weight of state surveillance and repression, France is more than sufficiently democratic to allow non-violent modalities of protest and political organization to operate. French state repression cannot therefore explain the political weakness of the Breton movement. During at least two periods in the history of Breton militancy (the 1950s and the late 1970s) political exigencies for France's ruling or soon-to-be ruling parties (Gaullist and Socialist, respectively) facilitated state-sponsored reforms and concessions with respect to economic investment and language issues. These windows of opportunities were extremely narrow in historical

time. The Breton movement has in general lacked powerful allies (although there is a degree of institutional and interpersonal interpenetration with labor unions) and its institutional cross-linkages with complementary social movements are limited. What is perhaps most significant, however, is the political and fiscal centralization of the French state. Its policy-making capacity--and the material wherewithal to redistribute resources--remain very much based in Paris despite regional decentralization. As a result, the state retains the ability to withhold money necessary for Brittany to develop the economic or cultural autonomy demanded by militants and thus, following Peter Gourevitch's hypothesis, this case confirms the theory that where political and economic cores overlap geographically in a given nation-state, any peripheral ethnic-based opposition to the state will be relatively weak in terms of its ability to influence state policy favorable towards the periphery. This remains the principal external factor determining the nominal failure of any Breton political agenda.

Yet these external factors do relatively little to account for the internal organization, collective action strategies and symbolic, emotional and ideological content of Breton militancy. To return to the analytical categories discussed in the previous section of this chapter, let me now present a holistic overview.

The Breton movement represents a form of counter-hegemonic resistance to state power and capitalist

inequality. Although the level of coercive domination directed against Breton militants has historically been minimal, the French state has enjoyed considerable success in impeding the expansion of militant influence by withholding resources and, to a lesser extent, by delegitimating its counter-hegemonic authority via state-sponsored propaganda.

The ideological discourse of Breton militancy stresses a repetitive presentation of multiple forms of oppression--political, economic, cultural and linguistic--experienced historically as well as at present by the Breton people. Even though much of their concrete evidence is ambiguous, problematic or subject to alternative interpretations, the core intellectual and ideological theme remains the historical construction of an identity based on oppression. This theme is invariably coupled with calls or demands for social justice consistent with the morality which ostensibly accompanies democracy.

The socially constructed identities which emerge from participation and engagement in this culture of resistance to oppression are problematic in a theoretical sense. Breton militants, as previously noted, are very much products of French culture and education, yet aspire to represent the hearts, minds and souls of a Celtic ethnic identity. Militants seek to be more Breton than the Bretons, yet simultaneously are more French than the French; hence it is little wonder that their identities are

fragmented and insecure. This goes beyond the loss of meaningful life-worlds typically associated with the processes of late capitalism in that if reflects the militants' ambiguous position with respect to both Breton language and culture. The motivations underlying militancy are more clearly visible. In essence, some militants claim a strong moral motivation based on perceptions of injustice, discrimination or persecution--perceptions that are socially and sometimes self-constructed--while others base their participation on either narrowly or broadly formulated economic motivations. The former are concerned primarily with retaining their jobs connected to the commodification of Breton culture and the latter desire more generally to preserve an economic structure in the periphery which guarantees the possibility of middle class employment and lifestyle. Several life stories, discussed in Chapter Five, suggest these motivating factors often overlap and are further interrelated with the creation of a distinctively militant identity and culture.

Due to both internal and external variables elaborated earlier, the political organizations of the Breton movement mobilize limited material resources (both in terms of money and active participants). In consequence, the movement possesses only three modalities of collective action. Informal resistance, although consisting of repetitive practices of individual civil disobedience, has limited political impact. Symbolic protest activities tend to be

poorly planned, poorly executed and all too readily ignored or marginalized ideologically by state authorities. Participation in electoral politics has historically always resulted in minimal success due to the lack of popular support for Breton militancy within the region. Inability to mobilize resources, limited capacity to successfully organize collective action and a lack of widespread popular or electoral support are closely interrelated in that all are mutually reinforcing processes.

Future Research on the Breton Movement

Ethnographic research usually results in generating as many new questions for future studies as it does in providing answers to questions formulated at the beginning of the project. I offer a dozen possibilities for forthcoming, long-term research with this principle in mind. As Foster *et al* (1979) suggest, long-term field research in cultural anthropology allows for an analysis of socio-cultural change and generally becomes easier as an ethnographer becomes ever more familiar with a particular population and/or with specific informants over the course of years--or even decades--of fieldwork.

First, although there are a number of histories of the Breton movement, most have been compiled primarily through secondary sources. But there are many older Breton militants still living--those who were active during the critical period of the 1930s--who would provide invaluable

sources of data concerning major transformations of the movement over the past 60 years. This kind of salvage ethnography would have to be conducted in the near future due to the increasing age of those militants. Specifically, it would be of interest to compare and contrast various age cohorts of militants with respect to their life histories, motivations for joining the Breton movement, and their changing social class positions through time. This longitudinal and cross-sectional comparison would shed much light on how economic interests have shaped and transformed the ideological characteristics of the movement.

Second, how will the Breton movement respond to the opportunities and constraints presented by the Single European Act of 1992? What effects will the lowering of all barriers to capital, commodity and labor flows have on the historically peripheral position of Brittany? Will an increase in the power of supranational entities like the EEC and the European Parliament result in greater autonomy for Europe's regions and ethnic peoples? As discussed in Chapter Four, the resolution of such issues is by no means clear. While many Breton militants view these broad political and economic changes as an opportunity for the region to bypass the centralized power of the French state (particularly in terms of capital investment and economic restructuring), such an optimistic scenario cannot be taken for granted. This crucial research issue is important for European ethnography generally as various groups and

institutions throughout the EEC grapple with the consequences of Europe's increasing integration. As events in 1992 have shown, regional and national resistance to reductions in political sovereignty, adherence to common fiscal policies and other processes of economic standardization suggest that conflictual aspects will remain central to an understanding of these changes.

Third, I believe it is vital to empirically measure the levels of support enjoyed by the Breton movement by the non-militant population in the region. Ideally, a random stratified sample of around 500 adults drawn from telephone directories would be asked to respond to perhaps ten questions providing basic demographic data and their attitudes toward Breton militancy. Although various surrogate measures strongly suggest that the goals of the movement have little popular support among most Bretons, no specific survey research has been done to date. The time and money cost of a public opinion poll is considerable. But it is necessary to establish more clearly the relationships between militants and the broader constituencies they claim to represent.

A related issue involves the effects of chronological aging and bourgeoisification on the rhetoric, goals and strategies of the Breton movement. Generally, the Breton movement has shifted from a younger student movement in the 1970s to a middle aged, middle class movent in the 1990s. Their rhetoric--reflected most recently in campaign

literature from the March 1992 regional elections--is correspondingly marked by increasingly centrist and less radicalized claims focusing an economic development, education, environmental protection and the maintenance of a regional cultural identity. Breton ethnic politics are therefore changing in a direction of both deradicalization and routinization in its attempts to appeal to a wider segment of Bretons in the electoral arena. The success of these changes remains to be seen, but they appear to be closely related to the maturation of Breton militants in terms of age, economic status and political sophistication in marketing their programs. The overarching goals, however, remain constant: increased state investment in the region coupled with increased political and cultural autonomy.

Fifth, I would like to examine in greater depth the cultural aspects of Breton ethnic identity--music, sports, costume, dance--in order to more clearly locate the role of "traditional" cultural elements in the politicization of that identity. In particular, it would be useful to analyze in detail the symbolic content of music, folk festivals and popular expressions of Breton identity to see how such symbols are appropriated, distorted or rejected by militants in their own construction of what it means to be ethnically Breton.

Next, as part of an attempt to comprehend the historical origins of Breton nationalist ideology, I would

like to undertake a semiotic and literary analysis of the earliest--18th and 19th century--Breton political writings. In this dissertation, I have often stressed the continuity of an underlying ideology despite fundamental structural political change. Because the past is so often evident in the present of Breton militancy, such an analysis is important for understanding the intellectual and philosophical underpinnings of a counter-hegemonic tradition.

Another area of future study would entail long-term participant observation of a larger number of collective action events. I am uncomfortable with the small sample of protests and demonstrations observed during my fieldwork since it is difficult to ascertain either patterns of synchronic variation or changes over time. These data are limited due to the duration of my fieldwork and the relative quiescence of Breton militants throughout 1987. If my research had been conducted in 1984 or 1985, I would have been able to observe even fewer events. This is one major advantage historical sociologists like Charles Tilly (see Tilly 1986) have over ethnographers when it comes to studying collective action.

Another project worthy of future work would be to compare Breton militancy to parallel new social movements within France. SOS Racisme might be an appropriate choice as it represents a relatively recent emergence of a counter-movement against the anti-immigration and racist programs of

the right-wing National Front in France. Breton militants nowadays view themselves as being on the forefront of anti-racist political struggles and claim close affinity with the objectives of SOS Racisme. A related research effort would attempt to analyze Breton militancy in terms of its place in a larger social movement sector; that is, the context of other overlapping, complementary or oppositional movements (see Tarrow 1988 for a review; see also Melucci 1985; McCarthy and Zald 1979). The Breton movement is loosely articulated with feminist, environmental, anti-racist, and other regionalist movements across France and across Europe. The broader theoretical goal is to link a social movement to "a larger structure of action...that may include parties, state bureaucracies, the media, pressure groups, churches and a variety of other organization actors in a society" (Garner and Zald 1985: 120) in addition to a field of related movements. As Tarrow points out, "the size, the shape and the composition of the social movement sector change over time, as groups mobilize and demobilize, issues move on and off the political agenda, and elites respond with different combinations of facilitation, repression, indifference, and reform" (Tarrow 1988: 432).

A totally different research direction would be to emulate McDonald (1989) and Badone (1985) and conduct an ethnographic study of rural Breton militants. My fieldwork dealt primarily with urban middle class professional actors but it would be useful to develop a broader understanding

based on comparative research examining how militants interact with local people in rural communities. To facilitate this comparative study, I would make a concerted effort to learn Breton fluently, not so much to become a cultural insider in militant circles, but rather to have better access to politicized and everyday linguistic discourse in Breton. Knowing that all Breton speakers are bilingual in French, I had previously underestimated the importance of mastering Breton since I had supposed that all my interviews could be readily conducted in French. While this is technically true, I could develop a much better "thick description" of Breton militancy as a speaker of Breton.

Finally, in any future research I would pay much greater attention to interviewing officials of French state bureaucracies whom militants implicate in the repression of Breton language or culture. The oppressors' viewpoints, ideologies and practices seem ever more vital to a better understanding of the political and symbolic resistance by Breton militants to various forms of cultural or economic oppression.

Some Final Thoughts

Resistance against capitalism and state power is a central theoretical concern of anthropology. This dissertation has examined the form and operation, both ethnographically and historically, of one expression of that

political struggle. Breton militancy has not generally lived up to its potential of successful resistance to the French state for reasons already discussed. But what is most compelling about Breton militants is that they continue to think and act in terms of resistance against powerful hegemonic structures. For as long as they are able to keep their movement's hopes and dreams alive, there remains the possibility of Bretons transforming both French state policy and capitalist inequality in Brittany.

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