LILLIPUT REVISITED: Small Places in a Changing World

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June 1992

FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, I have carried a Lilliputian passport. It offers, I have always thought, an irresistibly fascinating approach to the world. It is a passport which reaches the furthest nooks and crannies of the globe. Indeed, it is to these very places that we Lilliputians are drawn: far-flung islands and coral atolls; ancient republics that straddle mountain tops; principalities and duchies that lie in forgotten valleys; odd little enclaves which astonishingly survive the logic of their own surroundings; and those strange outposts of early colonial exploration, settlement and even imprisonment that now stand alone in their solidarity as the sea changes of global forces pass them by.

This is Lilliput: the world of micro-states, islands and very small communities of every description: some remote and exotic; others surprisingly in our very midst. Perusing the images of Lilliput is like sifting through a grand old family album with all of the idiosyncrasies of personality and setting that span the generations: sprawling Victorian verandas and gardens in the Kingdom of Tonga, the Friendly Isles as they are called; the ancient dhows that congregate in the harbours of tiny Persian Gulf shaikhdoms, a sharp contrast to the backdrop of skyscrapers and duty-free airports which now line this coast of pearl fishers; the scores of museums, churches and terraced restaurants which cling to the cliffs of Mount Titano in San Marino, the most ancient republic in Europe; the patisseries and cafes of St. Pierre and Miquelon, a drop of France in the huge expanse of Canada, sustained still from Paris, after 350 years, like a miniature version of the Berlin airlift; the penguins and the sheep whose presence nearly overwhelms the stolid people of the Falkland Islands, for so long the most neglected corner of Lilliput. And, of course, there are the neat white villages set in a collage of red and green that is Prince Edward Island. These are some of the images of Lilliput. There are many more, and, with each port of call, one is struck by the exhilarating diversity of the human experience represented in these distinct little places which, for one reason or another, survive the conformist forces of late twentieth century life.

If we believe, as Lilliputians are likely to believe, that diversity is the miracle of human civilization, then the survival and well-being of these very small communities is a source of some inspiration and reassurance. I say reassurance in recognition of the powerful homogenizing currents of our age. Indeed, the survival of distinct cultures and community values in very small places may seem as nothing less than remarkable given the many predictions for their extinction. There was little room in the Marxist vision of the future, for example, for cultural and national sources of identity. Marxist scholars and activists looked to the eventual triumph of international class solidarity to sweep aside all those atavistic loyalties which distract the masses from realizing their own interests. Of course, from the outset, Marxists had difficulty in persuading even their own followers that internationalism and class solidarity should supersede all other loyalties. And now the Communist systems are gone in the deafening chorus of resurgent

nationalism.

But Marxists were not alone in their impatience with cultures which seem to separate people from one another. In the years surrounding the Second World War, students of functionalism promoted a new international system based on the organization of common welfare needs. All peoples, they argued, regardless of cultural differences, shared the same material wants. Inspired by the brilliant work of David Mitrany, functionalists sought to expand the early foundations of international organization to reach every facet of social and economic life. In their view, national frontiers, territorial identities, and local loyalties only frustrated the most efficient and most equitable allocation of resources. If welfare needs could be met through functionally specific organizations in an expanding global framework, then these parochial loyalties would eventually be re-directed to a genuinely international community. Old prejudices would give way to a rational assessment of common needs and interests. Yet the inevitability of an emerging and institutionalized global community was ill-founded. Though functionalist organizations have thrived and expanded in the post-war period, particularly within the United Nations system, these agencies have not challenged the appeal of territorial loyalties. Nor have they fatally undermined the authority of local governments.

In the footsteps of Mitrany, the so-called neo-functionalists sought to build a new political community in the rabble of war-torn Europe. Once again nationalist and parochial loyalties were seen as the seeds of self-destruction. Too many generations of Europeans had suffered in the ferocity of old tribal enmities. Clearly, it seemed the nation-state was obsolete; doctrines of national sovereignty were hopelessly outdated. Surely, any rational individual would see the logic of reaching beyond these prejudices once and for all. The notion of a new European Community, eclipsing the old nation states, was to be the inspiration for similar movements to regional integration throughout the world. And it remains a powerfully attractive idea for many still.

The vision of a Europe beyond tribes and national frontiers has always functioned at different levels of appeal. There is the Carolingian memory of a European civilization bound by the unity of Christendom and marked by the free movement of peoples, goods and, above all, ideas across the rich and diverse tapestry of its regions and sub-cultures. It is an appeal which touches even the Euro-sceptics: the British and the Scandinavians, for example, who shy away from grand schemes of European federalism, but who, nonetheless, support the notion of a Europe bound together by cooperation, coordination and even harmonisation. It also underlies Mr. Gorbachev's lofty phrase, "a common European home," suggesting as it does ancient bonds and long association which antedate the nationalist and ideological divisions of the modern age.

But the European idea has its functionalist logic too. It is the familiar belief that nation states simply can not meet the demands of their peoples without unacceptable inefficiencies and shortfalls. Surely it is obvious, we are told repeatedly, that European states can do together so much more effectively that which they have long done separately. Moreover, like their functionalist predecessors, the architects of the new Europe believe in the demonstration effect of integration. Loyalties will be redirected to Brussels, and even perhaps eventually to Strasbourg, when it is clear that it is through these institutions peoples' crucial interests are most satisfactorily met. And it is the political expectations of interest groups in fierce competition with

one another which is most important in this model. Unlike earlier functionalist approaches there is little stress here on popular consensus. This is a model of integration which is based on competitive pluralism. Once self-seeking interests see that their ends can be best achieved through channels beyond their national governments, their political expectations will change accordingly.

The strategy is relatively simple. Areas of allegedly low political import are tackled first: the removal of tariffs and the establishment of a customs union, seemingly manageable sectors of integration: transport, agriculture, the fishery. The core areas of national sovereignty, money, defence and foreign policy, come later when the habits of integrative behaviour have been acquired and valued and when the institutional arrangements are in place. It is sometimes called "federalism without tears" or "federalism by the back door." It is, in any case, a variation of "the withering away of the state." And, as such, it seems to suggest that national governments and the peoples of Europe themselves will not recognize this "integration by stealth." In due course, and for many of its most ardent proponents, inevitably, Europeans will wake up one morning and find themselves in a new state.

And let us be clear about this. This model of integration is NOT an attempt to go beyond the nation state itself. This is a vision of a new state, a European federal state, a United States of Europe. Both in the scholarly and popular literature analogous references to the American experience abound. Recurring too is the belief that only a supranational Europe will be a bloc powerful enough to survive and compete in what is becoming a fashionable scenario, a future world of great regional blocs. The undisguised ambition of the federalist vision of Europe belies many of the arguments for going beyond the power politics and jealousies of national sovereignty. It is a vision which simply lifts national sovereignty intact to the mantle of a continental superstate.

And it is this particular set of objectives which is giving pause for second thought in most European countries. Misgivings are all the more justified when we consider the now familiar "democratic deficit" of this proposed union: a massive bureaucracy with little day to day accountability except to the elected ministers of national governments, and eventually, it is hoped, to a continental parliament far removed from the traditions and local concerns of a vast electorate. The Danes are not an introverted, parochial, unsophisticated people by any means. But their own democratic culture runs deep, and, if early assessments of the referendum vote are valid, the Danes have serious reservations about the étatist and bureaucratic culture of a Europe moving headlong into political union, just as they are apprehensive, given their small size, for their own identity in the grand scheme of Maastricht.

There are those who annoyingly insist that all of this is simply a matter of time. Common sense will prevail. People will rationally assess their interests and choose accordingly. Sentimental appeals to local cultures and national traditions will give way eventually. One is struck by the complacency and arrogance of these predictions. And now they seem all the more absurd, given the collapse of the Soviet Union, the liberation of Eastern Europe, the redrawing of boundaries unthinkable only a few months ago and, not least, the pressures for Community enlargement. The debate over the architecture of the new Europe is by no means over. Particularism is a powerful force in all parts of Europe, East and West. Indeed, as we shall see shortly, the revival

of regional and local cultures within the European Community, many of them now enjoying a large measure of autonomy, itself demonstrates the resilience and defiance of older values and associations.

Marxists, functionalists and the architects of regional superstates have all had reason to doubt the persistence of local and parochial identities and cultures. So too have proponents of the international market economy. Once again there is a familiar ring to the argument: national sovereignty means little at a time when global economic forces are functioning with increasing indifference to national borders. Indeed, some liberal voices, like The Economist newspaper, for example, suggest that even European union may be short-sighted and insular given the broader long-term interests of a larger community of liberal polities and free market economies.

If global economic forces debase the currency of sovereignty, they also promote an international market with consumption patterns that cross nearly all cultural frontiers. It is now possible to move from one hotel suite to another, across thousands of miles, undisturbed and scarcely aware of strange cultures which live perilously beyond the hotel gates. Blue jeans in China, McDonalds in Moscow, and, God help us, Disneyworld in France: this is the triumph of the global market. For many liberals, it represents great hope. Just as the market is likely to reduce the importance of those cultural differences which foment conflict, so it will promote the values of individual choice and individual responsibility which are themselves essential to a civic culture.

Of all the centralizing and levelling forces at work in the modern world, the expansion of the global market, and particularly the triumph of Western popular culture, may prove to be the most difficult to resist. Certainly, free governments have limited options for protecting indigenous cultural values and institutions from the intrusion of market forces. Nonetheless, it may be that the politics of status and jurisdiction are still critical here. Small communities seeking greater autonomy usually stress the importance of separate jurisdiction to protect and promote their distinctive cultures. Certainly that is a familiar argument to Canadians. And, as we shall see later in the discussion, cultural concerns are central to demands for greater local and regional autonomy in most European states.

Thus far, we have discussed those prophecies which would see the development of the modern world in terms of universal values and a growing consciousness of commonalities. Of course, these can be, and are often, noble aspirations. Nor are they necessarily inimicable to the preservation of distinct cultures, local loyalties and separate identities. Similarly forces of particularism are not at all times civilizing. We need not look far for disheartening examples of patriotism that has degenerated into an ugly and vicious xenophobia.

With that caveat in place, there are two manifestations of particularist currents in these times that are most relevant to our discussion of small states and small islands in an increasingly interdependent world. The first is the movement for greater self-government and enhanced jurisdictional status in small societies. Most dramatically, this is evident in the proliferation of very small states in the years since 1960: the so-called micro-states with populations of less than one million. But it is also central to the changing circumstances of those small islands and territories, particularly in Europe, which are seeking greater autonomy short of statehood. Indeed, the movement to a Europe of the regions is itself a curious counter-trend to the

provisions set out in the Maastricht treaty.

The second area which we might examine this evening is the related issue of the resurgence of sub-national cultural movements. The salvaging and, in some cases, the rediscovery, of ancient languages, literatures and customs is a manifestation of localism that is embraced as if it were an antidote to the large-scale and anonymous forces that so shape and prescribe our lives. In some cases, as suggested earlier, these cultural movements are inextricably linked to questions of political autonomy and legal status. In any event, they represent an encouraging response to the reductionism of much of twentieth century life.

In considering the survival and the resurgence of particularist forces in the post-war world, clearly no development is more striking than the ongoing appeal of national self-determination and the vast number of new sovereign states which that movement has produced. Not even the most optimistic liberal in 1945 could have anticipated the extent to which aspirations for self-government have been realized in every corner of the world. How wrong Marx was to believe that nationalism was doomed once class consciousness was raised. National self-determination, for better or worse, and sometimes it is worse, has been the most powerful ideological force of both 19th and 20th century life. Even the smallest, most remote, least developed, least confident peoples have been finally convinced that they too can enjoy the mirrored reflection of their aspirations to dignity which statehood and membership in the international community bring.

It has been an astonishing process. In the last three years it has even reached the most unlikely parts of the Russian and Soviet empires. Who could have imagined an independent Ukraine or Belarus let alone a restoration of the Asian khanates with sovereign governments in Uzbekistan, Kirgizistan and Kazakhstan? In the early 1990's in the Russian empire, as in the 1970's in the South Pacific, in the 1960's in Africa, and in the 1950's in Central and Southeastern Asia, the experience is dizzying in its infectiousness. It is always the same pattern: the powerful demonstration effect of separate independence in one place emboldening demands for recognition in another. And, along the way, the resistance of central governments collapses as much in exhaustion as in exasperation. And, along the way too, the timidity of local leaders is overcome with each new fragment of evidence that some measure of self-determination, however formal and ritualistic initially, may be possible even in these most forgotten remnants of empire.

There are now 189 sovereign states in the international community. The United Nations has expanded from its 51 founding members to a body of 178 states - with the admission only a few days ago of Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Hercegovina. For much of this process, claims to national self-determination were confined to the dismantling of salt water empires. The beneficiaries of United Nations resolutions were colonial peoples, the imperial subjects of the European powers. The problem of determining the `self' in `self-determination', as Rupert Emerson put it, was eased by this distinction between colonial peoples and those other unfortunate souls who sought independence within the boundaries of existing states. It was not an entirely foolproof formula. Witness the problems of West Iran, East Timor, the Western Sahara, and for awhile, Belize. In these controversial territories, one colonial people's right to self-determination was viewed as an affront to another's claims of territorial integrity. In general, however, United Nations practice was based on the premise that all colonial peoples, however

small or undeveloped, had a rightful claim to self-determination. It was also founded on the notion that colonial frontiers, however arbitrary or capricious, were the basis for the new state.

Until very recently, neither doctrine nor practice supported those who regarded themselves as hostages within existing states, many of which were recent beneficiaries of decolonization. There was no right, then, to self-determination for Kurds, Tamils, Basques, Nagas, Biafrans, Corsicans, and countless others. In short, the rights to self-determination precluded secession. How important it was, then, for dissident communities to have those rights recognized before the transfer of sovereignty. But, even then, their prospects were bleak as the lobby of new states in the United Nations carefully monitored the decolonization process to prevent fetal dismemberment. The separation of Anguilla from St. Kitts-Nevis and Mayotte from the Comoros are exceptions to prove the rule that colonial borders hold as the basis for self-determination even in the pre-independence period. Secession, until the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, has everywhere failed except for Bangladesh. Even then the international community was reluctant to accept the divorce, fearful that it would set a dangerous precedent for disintegration in other states.

Recent developments, then, represent a major change in the course of national self-determination. It is true that the Russian empire, and, to some extent, even Yugoslavia, might be seen as analogous to the colonial systems of Britain and France. Certainly the glue of unity was coercion rather than voluntary association. Nonetheless, the dismantling of these states has raised the expectations of other minorities within the new states themselves: the Tatars, the Chechens and many others within Russia; the Ossetians and the Abkhazians within Georgia; the Dniester Russians within Moldova. One could go on. Surprisingly, with few tragic exceptions, the dismantling of the Soviet Union has not led to a Yugoslav nightmare. Internal borders have been respected in spite of being arbitrary and often artificial. And the difficult task of working out new relationships has been conducted relatively peacefully.

But these developments do serve to remind us that national self-determination has probably not yet run its course. There have been other times in the story of decolonization when observers were tempted to believe the course was indeed run, only to find, to their astonishment, that there was yet another queue of candidates waiting their turn for self-government. Perhaps the most unexpected queue was that of the micro-states, those bits and pieces of empire that most central governments believed would remain dependencies in perpetuity. As late as 1962, the Colonial Office believed that Sierra Leone would be the smallest territory capable of achieving full independence. How wrong they were as dozens of much smaller dependencies eventually won their sovereignty.

The micro-state phenomenon is one of the most interesting developments of the post-war period, largely because it was considered so unlikely even as scores of tiny communities prepared themselves for the event. In 1946 there were only 6 micro-states, all of them in Europe. Of these, only Luxembourg and Iceland were members of the United Nations and only they engaged the regular channels of international diplomacy. The others were confined to the margins. It was very clear in the early years of the post-war period that these tiny states were not welcome at the rostrums of international councils. They were regularly described in international relations textbooks in Ruritanian terms as "ceremonial states", "statelets", or "states for some purposes but

not for others."

The notion that micro-states were the exceptions to prove the rule that there were normal dimensions of statehood began to change in 1960 with the independence of Cyprus and the French West African territory of Gabon. Moreover, the notion that sovereignty required some measure of viability was also being eroded. Metropolitan powers were concerned that viability, potentially if not immediately, should remain a criterion in determining the political future of these smallest dependencies. Their efforts were thwarted by the very momentum of the process itself as every new micro-state strengthened the claims of those still in line. Moreover, the growing lobby of Third World states insisted that there could be no impediment whatsoever to the implementation of United Nations resolutions on self-determination: neither small size nor lack of economic development. In 1965, with the admission of the Maldive Islands to the United Nations, another tacit barrier had been breached. The Maldives was the first state to achieve United Nations membership with a population of less than 100,000. The United States and Great Britain, at this point, attempted to address the micro-state question with various suggestions for alternatives to full membership. Of course, these efforts were doomed from the outset. Sovereignty for colonial peoples is first and fundamentally a question of dignity. It is impossible to overstate the importance of the symbols of sovereignty and the process of self-affirmation which new states experience as they enter the international system. Schemes for two-tiered membership and various arrangements for association would have undermined the most important, and in its way, the most tangible, benefit of sovereignty for these communities emerging from long periods of subjugation. Even in those cases where colonial rule was benign or constructive, it was widely perceived as an experience of unacceptable indignity.

The bandwagon for micro-state independence rolled on. Last year the Marshall Islands with a population of 40,000 and Micronesia with 80,000 took their places at the United Nations. Even the European micro-states have been emboldened to exploit these precedents and assume a role in international life which would have been unthinkable in the early years of the post-war period. Liechtenstein joined the Council of Europe, became a full member of the European Free Trade Association and thus sat at the negotiating table with the European Community as they reached their historic accord for a European Economic Area of 19 states. The principality joined the United Nations in 1990, fifty years after her rejection by the League of Nations. Liechtenstein was, with its population of 27,000, the smallest state ever admitted to the United Nations. Following this example, San Marino also joined the United Nations in February. Like Liechtenstein, San Marino had gradually established the basis for her membership by active diplomacy in the Council of Europe and various United Nations specialized agencies. From Luxembourg in 1945 to San Marino in 1992, the expansion of the international system has been largely one of very small states.

Indeed, there are now 47 micro-states in the international system. A half dozen others (Trinidad and Tobago, Lesotho, Bhutan etc.) achieved independence as micro-states and have only recently passed the one million mark. There are still others in the queue: the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba, for example. And there are those controversial territories (Western Sahara, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) where the resolution of long-standing disputes might yet result in separate independence.

Most micro-states have populations of less than half a million. Indeed, 20 micro-states are even smaller than Prince Edward Island, and most are small islands. It was among these island dependencies that separate independence seemed unavoidable. Many students of small islands emphasize the acute sense of separate identity which island geography instills. As Stanley de Smith put it, ". . .these feelings are not necessarily different from the in-group loyalties of tribal, religious, linguistic or other communal groups in mainland societies; but by virtue of being expressed within confines of a visibly separate geographic area they may appear a "legitimate" and even to the spectator an attractive manifestation of particularism."

For the metropolitan powers, especially Great Britain, very small island dependencies seemed particularly resistant to any arrangements for self-determination other than those of separate independence. Separatist sentiments bedeviled attempts to create island federations, most notably in the West Indies. In some instances, smaller islands felt themselves suddenly vulnerable to larger neighbours in a period of independence. The 6000 islanders of Anguilla harboured such fears when they considered their future in an independent state dominated by St. Kitts, itself the smallest of the Commonwealth Caribbean micro-states. Similarly, the prime minister of St. Lucia, in rejecting a proposed Federation of the smallest West Indies islands with Guyana, described the scheme as a union between "the giant shark and five little sardines." Guyana, itself a micro-state, was the shark.

In some instances, island colonial states artificially brought together very different island societies. The Polynesian peoples of the Ellice Islands, for example, chose to separate from their Micronesian neighbours in the Gilbert Islands. This single British colony became the two independent micro-states of Kiribati with a population of 65,000 and Tuvalu with a population of only 7000.

The proliferation of micro-states, even in societies with less than 10,000 souls, is a dramatic reflection of the persistence of particularist and centrifugal forces in the international system in spite of the powerful attraction of centripetal trends: the massive expansion of international organization and global regulation; the successful establishment of regional interstate economic and political unions; the increasingly integrative forces of the international economy.

To some extent, these forces have been mutually reinforcing. Ironically, the services, expertise and funds provided by a vast network of international agencies and inter-governmental organizations actually strengthen the case for self-government in very small territories. As sovereign states, they enjoy privileged access to multi-lateral institutions, a prerogative denied to most dependent territories and certainly to the constituent parts of other states. Islanders at the tail end of an archipelagic federation can not be sure that aid funds and investment capital negotiated by the central government will ever reach their shores. But, with a place at the table, they can call upon multilateral agencies directly for feasibility studies and projects specifically targeted to their own needs. They are not as disadvantaged in this competition as one might suppose. International development agencies are inclined to support projects where a little money may produce clear results. In micro-states of the developing world, it takes very little to make a large difference.

The safety net and support systems in the international community even extend to such

responsibilities of sovereignty as the burdens of diplomatic representation. Many of these very small states can not be expected to be represented on anything like the scale of even poor and small states such as Haiti, Chad or Nepal. Nor can they hope to attract a level of accreditation which would compensate for their own lack of diplomatic resources. But, fortunately, the organization of the contemporary international system is such that states are able to meet most of their diplomatic needs on a shoestring. The United Nations itself is, of course, the global agora. With even one overseas mission in New York, as expensive as it is, micro-states can maintain all the exchanges they need without the burden of extensive overseas representation, though some of them maintain surprisingly far-reaching services. Moreover, the Commonwealth and some donor states provide assistance where budgetary support for diplomatic representation is most needed. All micro-states have been able to maintain separate representation in crucial centres, even though, in some cases, they wisely share premises and support staff. In short, small states are not exposed to the harsh realities of subsistence and isolation as was once thought to be the case for those who chose independence. This is a comforting, supportive and even nurturing world community for small and weak states. The irony is powerful: the very forces which have encouraged a sense of international community, a network of universal obligations, have also created conditions where sovereignty is accessible to those once considered as permanent wards of more responsible powers.

The same ironies are evident in the changing complexion of European politics. The last twenty years have witnessed a surge in demands for regional autonomy. And these demands for greater autonomy, and even independence, seem to be given more credibility because of the fallback supports of the Community itself. Scottish nationalists insist that an independent Scotland is a viable proposition since Scots would not be facing a harsh and lonely future in a cold and ruthless world. They would simply assume their rightful places within the Community. The divorce would be neither wrenching nor disruptive. These sentiments are echoed by nationalist movements across the continent. In Eastern Europe too the logic was similar. Demands for independence from the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia were predicated on the assumption that the challenges of independence would soon be eased by the supports of Community membership. Slovak nationalists claim, somewhat naively, that their departure from the Czechoslovak federation would lead immediately to their membership in the Community.

The resurgence of regional and local movements for autonomy is evident across the continent, most recently with the remarkable electoral successes of the Lombard League in Italy. In Belgium and Spain there has been a dramatic decentralization of authority. The Portuguese island regions now enjoy their own institutions of government and administration. Even centralist France in 1982 finally conceded a modest level of devolution to Corsica, though attempts to describe the Corsicans as a nationality were ruled unconstitutional. And in those islands which already possessed a separate constitutional status - the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, the Faeröes and the Åland Islands - local authorities have increasingly assumed greater competencies as central governments choose to retreat from island affairs. Not all these movements then seek full independence. Devolution to regional governments has successfully preempted separatist movements in many cases.

The Community itself is not a bystander in this process. The Commission actively supports the regions, perhaps, as some sceptics would have it, in a effort to decouple the regions from their

national governments. Certainly some regional leaders see the Community as a means of gaining leverage in their own capitals and enhancing their status and their powers. Some regional governments even maintain missions in Brussels to deal with Community institutions directly.

The need to assert local identities and familiar values is not only evident in political movements for autonomy and independence. In spite of an ever-expanding global culture, and perhaps because of it, there has been an astonishing renewal of ancient languages and culture in most areas of the world. In some cases, the former republics of the Soviet Union, for example, these movements are actually engaged in the reconstruction, if not the rewriting, of their history. Memories of golden ages seem all the more satisfying and soothing given the pain and humiliation of long years of oppression. In Western Europe, indigenous minority cultures were not terrorized but they were neglected, and in some cases, they existed in almost clandestine conditions. Now they are out and winning recruits among the young, the strange settlers in their midst and even once indifferent governments.

Examples abound but two fascinating cases should suffice. In Wales there has been an astonishing recovery of a language and culture that was long in retreat to the outermost fringes of the principality. In response to the Welsh language movement, the government in 1988 made Welsh a compulsory language in all schools. Welsh history and literature are now part of the curriculum throughout the principality. About 13% of primary school children are taught exclusively in Welsh. Anglophone parents, anxious to ensure future advantages for their children, are subscribing enthusiastically. And well they might, since the new Welsh Language bill will ensure that Welsh has equal status in all public institutions and services. Using models developed in Israel, Welsh immersion courses for adults are flourishing everywhere. And if Israel is a precedent, Welsh language and culture may yet be pulled from the brink of extinction.

Perhaps an even more remarkable example of cultural and linguistic rejuvenation is an appropriately Lilliputian one: the revival of Monegasque in the tiny principality of Monaco. In a fascinating recent article, Paul Robert Magosci explored this most esoteric of case studies. He seemed initially taken aback by the apparent absurdity of his own subject. Was Monegasque nationalism a terminological contradiction or a practical reality?, he asks in his title. It is soon evident that he regards it as a practical reality even though Monaco is a state smaller than Central Park in New York. Nonetheless, the revival of the Monegasque language and literature has quickened in recent years both in official policy and in the activities of various cultural organizations. Monegasque has now become a required subject in all schools in the principality. The Language Commission has introduced a full set of texts, and a standard dictionary is in preparation. The government is introducing the use of Monegasque in official documents and public services. Dr. Magosci seems fascinated that this cultural revival should take place in a country which has a long history of sovereignty. Usually, these movements serve to promote the cause of self-determination. At the same he recognizes the political import of the revival, "a calculated political move to encourage the culture as well as the legal distinctiveness of the principality vis-a-vis France that from time to time has revealed imperialist tendencies towards its tiny neighbour."

The proliferation of states, demands for self-government even in corners of Lilliput, and the revival of ancient languages and cultures all represent the still powerful appeal of local

communitarian values, of identities rooted in memory and constantly reaffirmed in experience. Though we continue to be drawn to universal ideals and though we are more than ever conscious of our common interests and our common fate, perhaps we are best placed to meet these noble challenges in the security of well rooted, accessible and clearly defined communities. Perhaps we all need a corner of Lilliput in our lives.

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