

2016-11-20

# Feminism in Cornwall

Tredinnick-Rowe, JF

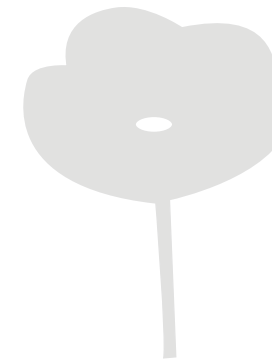
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**FEMINISM ON THE PERIPHERIES OF EUROPE**  
**AN INCLUSIVE AND INTERSECTIONAL YOUTH APPROACH**

Project developed by  
European Free Alliance Youth & Plaid Cymru Ifanc

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Project coordinated by **Gerard Bona i Fonoll**

Centre Maurits Coppieters  
2017

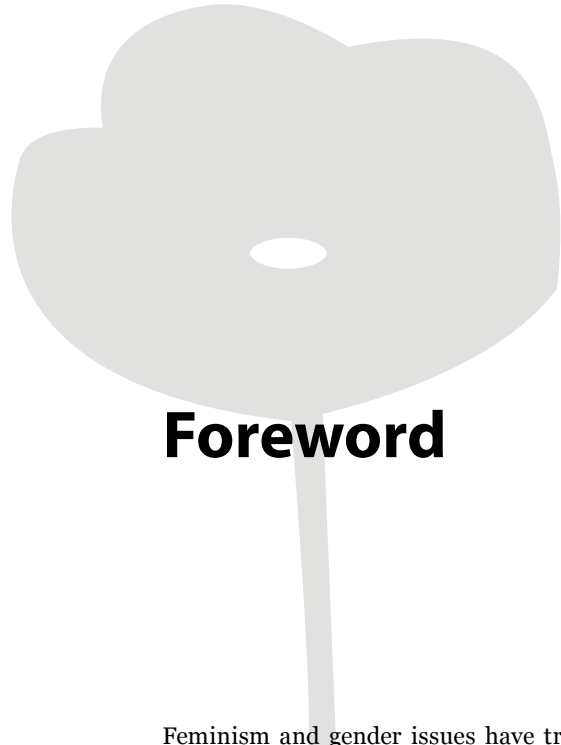
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*This publication is financed with the support of the European Parliament (EP). The EP is not responsible for any use made of the content of this publication. The editor of the publication is the sole person liable.*





## Foreword

Feminism and gender issues have traditionally not been seen as being a part of national and cultural movements or minority politics. In some aspects, the concepts of fatherhood and patriarchy have historically been linked to this political tradition if we take into account the ethnic roots of these political phenomena. In many cases, the concept of nationalism is evolving from ethnic to rather civic arguments because of the emergence of more civic and progressive pro-independence and autonomist movements.

A great majority of the most successful movements seeking greater decentralization and self-government in Europe have adopted feminism and gender issues as key features of their political discourse and program. After all feminism, gender issues, environment, social justice, migration and refugees are all issues that are relevant to national and cultural movements.

From a utilitarian and Kantian perspective, the newly elected EFAY Bureau in the General Assembly in Corsica considered that if self-determination, regionalism and minority politics are to become mainstream, supported

by political actors traditionally not too sympathetic to these ideas, we must leave our comfort zone and begin discussions on issues not always found in nationalism and minority politics but that are an integral part of such movements, such as migration and refugees, feminism and gender issues, and social justice issues. This book, “Feminism on the Peripheries of Europe”, is the result of a conference organised under the same name in Cardiff last June, and the crystallisation of this reflection made by our members.

National and minority politics must focus more on the future than on the past. Without forgetting who we were and why we are here, we should focus less on “us” and increasingly focus on how we can enlarge this “us” with “them”. By “them”, I do not only mean newcomers who have arrived and will continue arriving to Europe and our countries, but also those who have traditionally been reluctant to talk about national identities, minority languages and cultural traditions.

This book represents a small contribution to this ideological update, ensuring that feminism and gender issues become a core element of EFAY’s work program, and making an effort to leave our comfort zones and approach social groups that might not traditionally be identified with national, cultural and minority issues.

Max Zañartu Plaza  
EFA Youth President

# LEADERSHIP AND FEMINISM IN CORNWALL

John Tredinnick-Rowe

## Introduction and Hesitations

Before writing this chapter, I will admit to having reservations about the appropriateness of a man writing about the issues of feminism. As such, and with a due sense of humility, I am offering a historical account of the achievements of women in Cornish politics rather than specific feminist issue areas of importance in Cornwall.

The literature that exists on the intersection between nationalism and feminism has largely been confined to post-colonial studies, where the struggle for liberation takes a gendered meaning.<sup>1</sup> The exception being the racial interpretations of nationalism in the United States known as Black Nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Non-colonial literature on the role of feminism in nationalism can also be found, such as papers that highlight the barriers of nationalist politics to women's participation in Korean politics,<sup>3</sup> the exception being of course when the Korean peninsula was part of Japan's empire, where: "nationalism and feminism supported each other during the era of Enlightenment and Japanese colonial rule."<sup>4</sup>

In short, the intersection between these two subject areas remains complex and varied. The role of feminism in civic nationalism and pro-self-government movements of European stateless nations has been much less explored, with Northern Ireland being perhaps the one exception.<sup>5</sup> Although, beyond the legal aspects of how one separates post-colonial

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<sup>1</sup> Chaudhuri, 1997; West, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Hill Collins, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ching & Louie, 1995; H.-K. Kim, 2009; K.-A. Kim, 1996a, 1996b.

<sup>4</sup> K.-A. Kim, 1996b, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Roulston, 1997.

# LEDYORESOW HA BENENIETH YN KERNOW

John Tredinnick-Rowe

## Hockyansow ha Raglavar

Yth esa own genef dhe scyrfa an chaptra ma yn kever benenieth drefen bos nag esof un benen. An gordhebow yw, eus ewn rag den skrifa war'n materow benenieth? Orth ow bres, an gorthyp yw ea, mes yn gwiryonedh, yma hockyansow dhym. Me a wra yn uvelder profya ow prederow war ledyoresow ha benenieth yn Kernow.

An lien eus war an krowstrogh ynter kenedhlegieth ha benenieth re beu strothys dre vras dhe studhyansow wosa-trevesigel, le may kemmer an strif rag livreson styr a reydh.<sup>1</sup> An namm yw an styryansow aghel a genedhlegieth y'n Statys Unys aswonnys avel kenedhlegieth dhu.<sup>2</sup> Y hyllir kavos ynwedh lien di-trevesigel war an rol a venenieth yn omsavow kenedhlegieth, an paperyow ma a wolowboynt an lettow a bolitegieth dhe gemeryans rann benenes yn politegieth,<sup>3</sup> an namm ow pos heb mar pan esa an konna tir Korea rann a emperoureth Nihon, le may hwrug: "kenedhlegieth ha benenieth .... an eyl skoodhya y ben dres an osweyth a Wolowyans ha rewlyans trevesigel nihonek".<sup>4</sup>

War verr lavarow, an krowstrogh ynter an dhew arenebedh testen ma a drig kompleth ha varys. Rol benenieth y'n genedhlegieth vurjesek ha movyans governans owrewl a gwlasow distat europek re beu lieskweyth le hwithrys, gans Iwerdhon Gledh martesen ow pos an unn namm.<sup>5</sup> Byttegyns, dres an gwedhow laghel a fatel dhiberthir statys wosa-trevesigel

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<sup>1</sup> Chaudhuri, 1997; West, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Hill Collins, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ching & Louie, 1995; H.-K. Kim, 2009; K.-A. Kim 1996a, 1996b.

<sup>4</sup> K.-A. Kim, 1996b, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Roulston, 1997.

and non-post-colonial states, the issue remains vague in territories such as Northern Ireland with such a long history of British rule. As such, it is a timely moment to explore this issue in relation to Cornwall and other stateless nations with unique national identities grounded in culture, language and history.

### Historical Labour Division in Cornwall

In the first instance, the dominant cultural and historical aspects of life in Cornwall such as farming, fishing and mining may make the cultural space of Cornwall look masculine. Indeed, when one thinks of the popular pastimes of rugby, wrestling, gig rowing and male choirs a similar pattern appears to emerge. However, under further investigation industries such as mining and fishing were not as male dominated as one might suppose. Take for example the Bal Maidens, who broke rock on the surface of the mines, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows that while the work was segregated with the women working on the surface and the men underground, industries such as mining were not an exclusively male activity. Similarly, in the fishing industry women were the main workers on land responsible for salting and processing the fish, taking them to market and mending the nets<sup>6</sup> as famously depicted by the artist Stanhope Forbes. This, however, is not so much a victory for gender equality but as a consequence of poverty and limited job opportunities, forcing many who could do manual labour to do so regardless of gender.

### Cornish Nationalism and Feminism

Similar tropes emerge when one considers the contemporary participation in political life in Cornwall. Whilst politics in Cornwall as elsewhere can be seen as antagonistic and perhaps overly masculine in character, the nationalist movement in Cornwall seems to have been less effected by such anachronisms.

For example, the leading nationalist party in Cornwall *Mebyon Kernow*, a progressive left-of-centre party based on values of social justice, environ-

<sup>6</sup> Cornwall Museums, 2016.

ha di-post-trevesigél, an mater a drig diskler yn tiredhow kepar hag Iwerdhon Gledh gans istori mar hir a rewlyans bretennek. Avel hemma, yth yw pols a-dermyn dhe hwithra an mater ma perthynek dhe Gernow ha gwlasow distat erel. Gans honaniethow kenedhlek unyk, grondys yn yeth, gonisogeth hag istori.

### Rannans Lavur Istorek yn Kernow

Y'n kynsa gweyth, an gwedhow istorek ha gonisogethel gwarthevyek a vewnans yn Kernow kepar hag ammeth, pyskessa, ha balweyth a yll gul heveli gorow an spas gonisogethel a Gernow. Yn hwir pan brederir a wariow gwerinek a rugbi, omdowl, revya skath hir, an keuryow mebyon, patron hevelep a omdhiskwedh dos yn-mes. Byttegyns, yn-dann hwithrans pella, diwysyansow kepar ha balweyth ha pyskessa nyns o mar warthevys gorow dell yllir y dhesevos. Kemeryn rag ensampel Myrghes an Bal, neb a derri men war enep an balyow, diskwedhys yn Figur 1.



Figure 1 – Bal Maiden's from the mid-1800s, Source: London (2014)

Figur 1 – Myrghes an Bal dhyworth kres an 1880ow. Pennfenten: Loundres (2014)

Figur onan a dhiskwedh kyn feu ober diberthys gans an benenes owth oberi war an enep ha'n gwer yn-dann dor, diwysyansow kepar ha balieth nyns

mental protection and Cornish identity, language and heritage, had founder members who were women.<sup>7</sup> Equally, on the day of the party's creation in 1951, the party chose to elect Helena Charles as the organisation's chairperson,<sup>8</sup> which for the cultural standards of the 1950s was highly irregular. Helena went on to be heavily involved in the Cornish Gorsedh movement taking the bardic name *Maghteth Boudycca* ('Daughter of Boudicca').

Also present in 1951 was another founding member Ann Trevenen Jenkin, who amongst many other areas of note became the first female Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedh from 1997 until 2000.<sup>9</sup> Her daughter, Dr Loveday Jenkin perhaps in some way preceded this success in political terms by becoming the leader of *Mebyon Kernow* in 1990 until 1997. Such phenomena indicate that women have not been inhibited from participating in nationalistic political movements in Cornwall nor have they been hindered in becoming leaders of them.

In the wider political milieu, the story is not quite as reassuring, if one looks at the current gender split in the largest political body in Cornwall. In the Cornwall Council, elected representatives are still 75% male, with only one political party in the Council currently having elected a female leader. Exactly why the council is not more representative of the general population of Cornwall remains opaque and largely open to speculation.

From a cultural perspective, the Cornish cultural revival has also not produced any observable barriers to participation based on gender. Gig rowing now produces as many women's teams as men's.<sup>10</sup> The re-birth of Cornish culture has also had a large musical and dance component to it, neither activity having any structural or institutional bias related to gender. By their very nature traditional *troys* and dances were community events designed to encourage participation and bonding, the very opposite of exclusion.<sup>11</sup>

Cornwall is also distinctive in comparison to other stateless nations because women leaders tended to act as role models pursuing general

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<sup>7</sup> Deacon, Cole, & Tregidga, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Gorsedh Kernow, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> World Pilot Gig Championships, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Davey, 1983.

o yn ekskludys gwrians gorow. Yn kepar maner y'n diwysyans pyskessa benenes o an oberoresow meur war dir, gans charj a salla hag argertha an puskes, orth aga hemeres dhe'n varghas, hag ewna an rosow,<sup>6</sup> kepar dell veu liwys gans an lymner Stanhope Forbes. Hemma byttegyns nyns yw kemmys a drygh rag parder reydh mes avel sewyans a voghosogneth ha chonsow soodh strothys yn unn herdhya lies a ylli gul lavur dre dhorn dh'y wul yndella ny vern aga reydh.

### **Kenedhlegieth ha benenieth Kernewek**

Tropys kehaval a dheu yn-mes pan brederir a'n kemeryans rann kevos yn bewnans politek yn Kernow. Kyn hyllir gweles politegieth yn Kernow kepar ha leow erel avel gorthenebiethek, ha martesen gorow dres eghen y nas, an omsav kenedhlek yn Kernow a hevel y feu effeythys le gans kammamserennow a'n par ma.

Rag ensampel an chyf parti kenedhlek yn Kernow, Mebyon Kernow, parti avonsyanssek ha livrel, groundys war lelder, kerghydnedhek, honanieth Kernewek, yeth hag ertach a'n jeva eseli fondya neb esa benenes.<sup>7</sup> Ekwel, orth dydh gwrians an parti yn 1951, an parti a dhewisas dhe etholi Helena Charles avel kaderyores an kowethyans,<sup>8</sup> an pyth rag an savonow gonisogethek a'n 1950ow o digompes dres eghen. Helena a besyas dhe dhos ha bos omvyskys yn town y'n omsav Gorsedh Kernow yn unn gemeres an hanow bardhek *Maghteth Boudycca*.

Ynwedh yn le yn 1951 o ken eseles fondya Ann Treven Jenkin, neb a dheuth ha bos, yn-mysk lies arenebeth aral a vri, kynsa Bardh Meur benow an Orsedh dhyworth 1997 dhe 2000.<sup>9</sup> Hy myrgh, Dr. Loveday Jenkin, martesen yn neb fordh a vleynyas an sewena ma yn termow politek dre dhos ha bos an kynsa ledyores Mebyon Kernow yn 1990 bys yn 1997. Fenomena a'n par ma a dhiskwedh na veu benenes sprallys a gemeres rann yn omsavow politek kenedhlek yn Kernow, naneyl vons i lettys a dhos ha bos ledyoresow anedha.

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<sup>6</sup> Gwithtiow Kernow, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Deacon, Cole & Tregidga, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Gorsedh Kernow, 2003.

issues in relation to nationalist issues, rather than picking a specific cause e.g. abortion or the gender pay gap. The only exception being the organisation of feminist protests in reaction to the election of President Trump.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 2 – Protesters march through Portholland on the first day of the Trump Presidency in solidarity with the Women’s March in Washington DC, Source: Cornwall Live (2017)<sup>13</sup>

Figur 2 – Gorthdestoryon keskerdhes dres Portalan war’n kynsa dydh an lewydh Trump yn unvereth gans an keskerdh benenes yn Washington, D.C. Gorgevren: Cornwall Live (2017)<sup>13</sup>

There have been other protests more recently, such as ‘Reclaim the Night’ organised by the Cornish branch of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom in Penzance in November 2016 to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Speeches, songs and performances raised awareness about gender-based violence with the hope of making streets safer for women and securing more government funding for refugees for women and children experiencing domestic violence.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Sanghani, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Davies, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Gaine, 2016.

Y’n kres politek ledanna, ny wra ri an hwedhel poran kemmys a fastheans, mar mirir orth an gansran reydh a-res y’n brassa korf politek yn Kernow (Konsel Kernow), an kanasow etholys yw hwath 75% gorow, gans unn parti politek yn unnik y’n Konsel a-res neb re dhewisas ledyores. Poran prag nag yw an konsel moy kanasek a’n poblans kemmys a Gernow a drig diskler, ha dre vras ygor dhe resnans.

Dhyworth gologva wonisogethek, an dasserghyans gonisogethek kernewek ny askorras naneyl lettys aspiadow dhe gemeryans rann, selys war reydh. Revya skathow-hir lemmyn a askor kemmys a barys benenes es an re na a’n wer.<sup>10</sup> An dastinethyans a wonisogeth kernewek ynwedh re gavas kerann ilowek ha donsya meur dhodho, nys eus gans unn gwrians po y gila ragvrens framweythel po fondyansel perthynek dhe reydh. Der aga natur pur, troyllyow hengovek ha donsow o hwarvosow kemenetek desinys dhe genertha kemeryans rann ha kevrenna, an kontrari pur a ekskludyans.<sup>11</sup>

Kernow yw diblans ynwedh herwydh pow heb-staw erel drefen bos hy ledyoresow yu semlant role modelys, ow hwilas rag achesonyow kenedhlegieth jeneral. Yn y le, ow dewis materow arbennek h.e. dyffrans reydh-pe. Marnas an keskerdh benenieth erbynn Etholans Lewydh Trump.<sup>12</sup>

Despit hemma, yth esa keskerdh erel a-gensow kepar ha ‘Reclaim the Night’ restris gans an skorren Kernow a’n Benenes Kesunyans Keswlassek rag Frankedh ha Kres yn Pensans, mis Du, 2016, dhe merkya an Dydh Keswlassek rag an Dileans a Garowder erbynn Benenes. Arethyow, kanow ha kesilowow ynkressis skians -adro dhe arowder reydh, rag salowhe an stretow ha gwaynya pygans rag foesygyon, fleghes, ha benenes gans freudh.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Kamyoriethow Skath hir Lewyador an Bys, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Davey, 1983.

<sup>12</sup> Sanghani, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Gaine, 2016.



## Observations

In Cornwall gender issues remain, in both political life and elsewhere. However, the issues seem to me largely non-existent in the nationalist movement right from the beginning up to the present day. The reasons for this remain to be determined, but if there is any concordance between devolution movements and post-colonial movements it might be that, those wishing to be liberated from a central power (colonial or otherwise) comprehend the wider issues of gender, national and racial liberation. One possible explanation for this could be that in Cornwall such issues are more closely linked to social class than gender, as hooks relates:

“Concurrently, they know that many males in their social groups are exploited and oppressed. Knowing that men in their groups do not have social, political, and economic power, they would not deem it liberatory to share their social status. While they are aware that sexism enables men in their respective groups to have privileges denied them, they are more likely to see exaggerated expressions of male chauvinism among their peers as stemming from the male’s sense of himself as powerless and ineffectual in relation to ruling male groups, rather than an expression of an overall privileged social status.”<sup>15</sup>

This is not to say that politics in Cornwall is not adversarial and tainted with elements of machoism as the gender divide in Cornwall Council demonstrates. However, whilst this has dissuaded some, it clearly has not been a barrier to others. Whilst many feminist studies quite rightly highlight injustices that women and other genders face, it is also important to celebrate the successes. Too often gender politics fails to engage with a positive message, but it can be found in the civic nationalist movements calling for self-government and cultural recognition in Cornwall, from its inception up to the current day.

<sup>15</sup> 1984, 18.



Figure 3 – Organiser of the ‘Reclaim the Night’ protest, Source: Cornwall Live (2016)

Figur 3 – Komondoresow a’n ‘Reclaim the Night’ keskerdh, Gorgevren: Cornwall Live (2016)

## Aspiansow

Yn Kernow materyow reydh a drig, yn bewnans politek hag yn leow erel. Byttegyns an materyow a hevel dre vras na’s teves bosva y’n omsav kenedhlek yn ewn dhyworth an dalleth bys y’n jydh hedhyw. An achesonys rag hemma a drig dhe vos determynys, mes mars eus akordyans ynter digresednans burjesek hag omsavow wosa-trevesigel, y hyll bos an re na a vynn bos livresys dhyworth nerth kresek (trevesigel po aral) a gonvedh an materyow ledanna a reydh, kenedhelek ha livreson aghel. Onen acheson possybyl rag hemma yw, yn-meth hooks:

“Concurrently, they know that many males in their social groups are exploited and oppressed. Knowing that men in their groups do not have social, political, and economic power, they would not deem it liberatory to share their social status. While they are aware that sexism enables men in their respective groups to have privileges denied them, they are more likely to see exaggerated expressions of male chauvinism among their peers as stemming from the male’s sense of

himself as powerless and ineffectual in relation to ruling male groups, rather than an expression of an overall privileged social status<sup>14</sup>

Nyns yw hemma dhe dherivas nag yw politek yn Kernow eskarel ha mostys gans elvennow a wourylieth kepar dell dhiskwedh an rannans reydh yn Konsel Kernow. Mes kyn hwrug hemma disswadya nebes, kler yw na veu lett dhe'n re erel. Kyn hwolowboynt yn ewn lies studhyans benenieth an anjustisyow hag a eneb benenes ha reydhow erel, yth yw posek ynwedh dhe solempnya an sewenys. Re venowgh politek reydh a fyll omworra gans messaj posedhek, mes y hyllir y gавos y'n omsavow kenedhlek vurjesek ow kelwel rag omrewl hag aswonvos gonisogeth yn Kernow dhyworth y dhalleth bys y'n jydh hedhyw.

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<sup>14</sup> 1984, 18.

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## INTERVIEWS

- Estela Pareja, director of the Catalan Commission for the help of refugees (CCAR). Interviewed on October 14th, 2016.
- Rosa Cendón, advocacy coordinator, SICAR. Interviewed on October 24th, 2016.



# Centre Maurits Coppieters

The European Parliament recognized the Centre Maurits Coppieters (CMC) as a political foundation at a European level in 2007. Since then, Coppieters has developed political research focused on European issues in the fields of multilevel governance, management of cultural and linguistic diversity in complex (multi-national) societies, self-determination, decentralization, state and constitutional reform, conflict resolution and protection of human rights.

So far, every step has been important to the steady consolidation and growth of the Centre. That is why I am especially proud of this publication. Indeed, it undoubtedly represents a crucial contribution to the current state of affairs and will certainly have an impact, both in academia and among European decision-makers, as well as think tanks and other contributors to the European integration process.

On behalf of Coppieters and our partners, I sincerely wish to thank the authors for their analytical and thorough approach to the subject and their passionate, conceptually robust, well-structured and factual presentations. Finally, I also wish to thank you (the reader) for your interest in our organization and for reviewing our contribution to a Europe-wide political debate.



Centre  
Maurits  
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## GOALS OF THE CENTRE MAURITS COPPIETERS

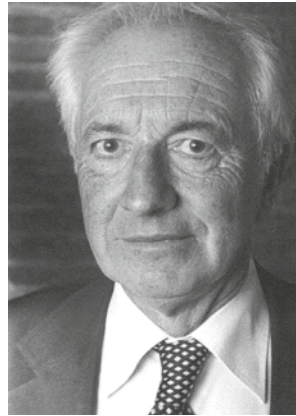
In accordance with its Statute, the Centre Maurits Coppieters asbl-vzw pursues the following objectives:

- Observing, analysing and contributing to the debate on European public policy issues with a special focus on the role of national and regional movements and the process of European integration;
- Defending the peoples' right to self-determination and the democratic respect for the right to decide by the majority of citizens, freely expressed through a consultation or referendum;
- Promoting scientific research, as well as gathering and managing information on the functioning and the history of all national and regional movements in the EU and making the results available to the public;
- Making information available to the public on the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity in a context of a Europe of the Regions;
- Serving as a framework for national or regional think tanks, political foundations and academics working together at the European level;
- Maintaining contact with all organisations active in the promotion of self-determination, human rights and diversity and institutions of the EU;
- Developing actions to open (historical) information sources in a structured and controlled way with the aim of building a common data network on issues of civic nationalism and regionalism in Europe.

The Centre Maurits Coppieters asbl-vzw takes all the necessary actions to promote and achieve the higher stated goals, always observing the principles on which the European Union is founded, namely the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.

## MAURITS COPPIETERS (SINT-NIKLAAS, 1920 – DEINZE, 2005)

The Fleming Maurits Coppieters studied history and later became a Doctor of Laws and obtained a Master's degree in East European studies. During the Second World War, he refused to work for the German occupier. After many years as a teacher, he worked as a lawyer for a while. He was one of the people who re-established the Vlaamse Volksbeweging (Flemish People's Movement), of which he was the President from 1957-1963.



Coppieters' political career began when he became a member of the Flemish nationalist party *Volksunie* (VU), which was formed in 1954. With the exception of two years, Coppieters was a town councillor between 1964 and 1983. He was also elected as a member of the Belgian Chamber (1965-1971) and Senate (1971-1979). At the same time, Coppieters became President of the newly formed '*Cultuurraad voor de Nederlandstalige Cultuurgemeenschap*' (Cultural Council for the Dutch-speaking Community), from which the Flemish Parliament emerged, when the VU formed part of the government. In 1979, Coppieters was elected during the first direct elections for the European Parliament.

As a regionalist, he became a member of the Group for Technical Coordination and Defence of Independent Groupings and Members in the European Parliament (TCDI). Among other things, he made a name for himself when he championed the cause of the Corsicans. In the meantime, Coppieters also played a pioneering role in the formation of the European Free Alliance, of which he became the Honorary President and continued to play a role in its expansion, even after he said farewell to active politics in 1981. In 1996, Coppieters joined forces with the President of the Flemish Parliament, Norbert De Batselier, to promote '*Het Sienjaal*', a project with a view to achieve political revival beyond the party boundaries. Coppieters died on November 11, 2005.

Among other things, Coppieters was the author of: '*Het jaar van de Klaproos*'; '*Ik was een Europees Parlements lid*'; '*De Schone en het Beest*'.

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CMC asbl, Centre Maurits Coppieters, Boomkwekerijstraat 1, 1000 Brussels  
www.ideasforeurope.eu

### **Publication date**

2017

### **Publication series and number**

CMC publications 13

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### **Graphics and Layout**

Wils&Peeters - Lier

### **Printing**

Drukkerij V.D. - Temse

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