

Green Islands Network Conference, November 2008

Organised by the Scottish Green Party with the participation of the European Parliament

## Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?



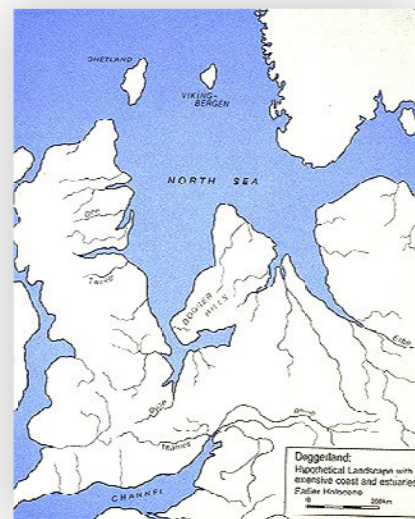
Paul Gauguin (1897-1898): Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?

*This conference will deal with issues of identity, the nation state, and global changes. Using stories and images to encourage an examination of personal and national identity, the event will seek to inform future policy making and define a clear Green vision on questions on independence, nationalism, movement and migration.*

As the world changes in response to globalisation, climate change and anticipated energy problems, there is a need for society - and particularly our policymakers - to consider who we are, and how our communities, institutions and political structures are evolving.

Is national identity important? Is independence an irrelevance? How does movement and migration affect democracy? How do Greens respond to new regionalist and nationalist movements across Europe?

*Where do we come from, what are we, and where are we going?*



The conference will have four broad aims:

- To examine ideas of identity, belonging, and nationality;
- To develop and refine a clear green alternative to nationalism and unionism;
- To assist future policy development;
- To raise profile of the Greens in advance of the European Parliament elections in 2009.

**Date** Saturday 15. November 2008.

**Venue** The Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh.

**Format** One day conference:

*Morning*  
Presentations from guest speakers.

*Afternoon*  
Workshops, followed by plenary session.

*Evening*  
Public meeting. Presentations, panel discussion and Q&A featuring SGP European Parliament election candidate and international guest speaker.

*We would like the event to have a more personal, visual feel, with stories rather than speeches, accompanied by images and artwork to illustrate and develop ideas.*

*Guest speakers will be encouraged to provide a selection of images to engage the audience and inspire further thought and debate. It is hoped this visual aspect will help create a thread which will run through to the public meeting in the evening.*

For further information, please contact:  
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## Draft agenda

0900-1000	Registration.
1000-1300	Welcome and introduction.
	Scottish and NI Greens on nationalism and independence.
	Tea and coffee.
	English and Irish Greens on issues of migration, movement, and asylum.
1300-1400	Lunch.
1400-1600	Workshops (40 minutes each). Choice of two from four:
	<p><b>Is independence an irrelevance?</b>  Climate change doesn't respect national boundaries, so is independence an irrelevance? When hit by weather of mass destruction, will it matter if Scotland or Ireland is an independent nation or part of the UK? As an alternative to nationalism and unionism, can we make localisation and decentralisation relevant, with the aim of promoting sustainability and greener communities (e.g. Transition Towns)?</p>
	<p><b>Notions of the nation state</b>  The Green tradition has always supported localism and decentralisation, but rejected nationalist notions of the nation state. How do Greens respond to new regionalist and nationalist movements across Europe? How can we ensure that efforts to re-draw the internal borders of Europe are based on democracy and self-determination rather than xenophobia? What can we learn from the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty?</p>
	<p><b>Movement and migration</b>  How does movement and migration affect democracy? What fault lines does it reveal in our institutions and our understandings of democracy? Can you have a democracy without the <i>demos</i>? How do we sell the Green position on immigration and asylum? Can we convince people to vote for responsible and ethical policies rather than the populist position?</p>
	<p><b>Is national identity important?</b>  What makes us Scottish, British, European? With increasing globalisation, interests, culture, food, fashion, and relationships are no longer tied to one's physical location so is national identity important anymore? Are political maps with carefully defined borders losing relevance to more abstract maps with fluid boundaries based on cultural ideas and attitudes?</p>
1600-1700	Plenary session.
1700-1900	Dinner.
1930-2130	<p><b>Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?</b>  Public meeting: presentations, panel discussion, Q&amp;A, featuring: Jean-Michel Javaux (Co-President, Ecolo), Martin Stepek (SGP), Alastair McIntosh (writer, social activist and broadcaster), and SGP European Parliament election candidate.</p>