

THE REGIONALIST

No 8



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The Regionalist is promoted by the Regionalist Seminar, a forum which provides an opportunity for those interested in regionalism to meet from time to time to discuss issues of common concern, to exchange information and ideas, and to spread knowledge of what regionalism is about.

The first Regionalist Seminar was convened at St. Anthony's College, Oxford, on 10th May, 1980, and those attending agreed to make it a regular event. Subsequent Seminars have been held in Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, Windsor, York, Cambridge, London, St. Austell and Durham.

DECLARATION OF OXFORD

We, the signatories of this Declaration, representing various movements for autonomy, declare that we are joined together in determined support for the right to self-government of communities and nations within Britain and against the centralism of the Westminster Government.

Signed by representatives of movements attending the first Regionalist Seminar in May, 1980, and subsequently ratified:

Campaign for the North - Cowethas Flamank - Mabyon Kernou
Orkney Movement - Shetland Movement - Wessex Regionalists

The Regionalist Seminar is not an organisation: it is a mutually supportive network the effectiveness of which depends on the strength and activities of the groups belonging to it. It has one liaison officer, the Honorary Secretary, who is also Acting Treasurer. He is Davyd M. Robyns of Flat 3, Asquith Court, Eaton Crescent, SWANSEA, SA1 4QL Cymru/Wales.

The Regionalist is printed and published twice yearly by John Ellis of Sancroft House, 6a Church Street, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 4DN. Articles and correspondence to John Banks of 3 New House Close, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7BQ.

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IS THE WHOLE OF BRITAIN PERIPHERAL TO DOWNING STREET?

At the first Regionalist Seminar in 1980 it was said that mere proximity to the centres of political power in Westminster/Whitehall did not necessarily gain advantages for the people of London over those of the Provinces or National areas. If Scotland, Wales, Cornwall or England north of the Watford Gap were largely unknown territories to Minister and Mandarin, so equally unknown were Walthamstow or Wandsworth.

This was, of course, to some extent an exaggeration. Mandarins live within commuter distance of Whitehall (but not in Woolwich or Wembley), as do indeed most Ministers (Hampstead or Dulwich preferred), which gives them at least a nodding acquaintance with the physical aspect of South East England, while accessibility to the engines of government combined with the proximity of Europe has brought material prosperity to much of this region. Michael Stead has written about the way in which wealth, influence, even the sense of English nationality, decrease inversely with distance from London, and he pursued this theme again at the 10th Regionalist Seminar earlier this year (see Report, pages 4-6).

Abolition of the G.L.C. for purely partisan reasons re-inforces the view put forward in 1980, namely that when the chips are down the interests of Londoners are as expendable as those of the people of Liverpool, Newcastle, or Scotland's Outer Islands, a view that has received support from Jim Bulpitt in his recent book Territory and Power in the United Kingdom, referred to by Michael in his Durham talk.

Bulpitt in effect traces the origins of centralised political power in Britain to the exercise of the Royal Prerogative in all important matters of concern to the State (high politics), while local matters (low politics) were traditionally left in the hands of the squirearchy. Today No. 10 still derives much of its executive power from the Prerogative, while if the elected successors of the squirearchy step out of line they are harassed back in again by Whitehall, or in extremis abolished, vide the G.L.C. and the six Metropolitan Counties.

This central/local nexus obtains regardless of geography, and Jim Bulpitt reasonably concludes that demands for Devolution or Regional Government will not constitute an effective challenge to the centre until they come from the English provinces, including the Home Counties and the South East, as well as from the Celtic Nations.

In the light of this contention it may therefore be thought particularly appropriate that the current issue of The Regionalist focusses on a part of England which many had supposed to be happily acquiescent with the political status quo, but which turns out to have a number of unsuspected problems lurking behind a facade of rural abundance.

With the current issue The Regionalist has now devoted a Special Supplement to each region of England, to Wales, Cornwall and Scotland's Outer Islands. Back numbers covering all of these except East Anglia (No. 1) are still available on request (page 27).

ABOUT OURSELVES

Organisations represented at the first Regionalist Seminar.

The Campaign for the North was founded in 1977 to promote the interests of the North Country, and in particular the cause of regional self-government. The Campaign does not put forward candidates at parliamentary or local government elections.

President: the Lord Crowther-Hunt

Chairman: Kevin Daws

Publications: UP NORTH, 1978, £1
THE NORTHERN DEMOCRAT, 40p.

Address: Sancroft House, 6a Church Street, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 4DN

Cowethas Flamank was formed in 1969 in response to the attack on the integrity of Cornwall contained in the Redcliffe-Maud Report on Local Government. It is a current affairs and research group and sponsors conferences and working parties to consider the future of Cornwall and of the Cornish peoples.

Administrator: John Fleet, 47 Lawrence Weston Road, Bristol, BS11 0QQ

Publication: KEVREN, twice yearly in English and Cornish, £2 for four issues. Editor: Tony Casey, "Gwel an Eglos", 22 Killigrew Avenue, Saltash, Cornwall.

Mebvon Kernow was founded in 1951. It is a political party whose aims, based on the principle of Cornish nationhood are:

- 1) To secure self-government for Cornwall;
- 2) To advance the social and economic welfare of the Cornish community; and
- 3) To promote the Celtic culture, language and traditions of Cornwall.

These aims are pursued by means of political activity, including putting forward official candidates for public elections within Cornwall.

Chairman: Loveday Carlyon

Publication: 'MAKING OUR OWN DECISIONS' (policy booklet), 40p + 20p postage.

Address: 11 West Street, Liskeard, Cornwall.

The Orkney Movement was founded in 1980 with the initial aim of combatting proposals for uranium mining in the islands, to achieve which it wants absolute local control of mineral rights and other domestic matters by an Islands Parliament. It won its first seats on the Islands Council in May 1982.

Chairman: Spencer J. Rosie

Secretary: Margaret T. Flaws, Castlehall, Wyre, Orkney.

Publications: ORKNEY MOVEMENT (policy statement) 1986. NEWSLETTER (combined with membership subscription, £1 per annum).

The Shetland Movement was founded in 1977, initially to solve the islands' fishing problems, but by 1980 had evolved to include in its aims a Shetland Parliament. It first won seats on the Islands Council in May 1982.

Chairman: Cllr. John Graham

Secretary: John Robertson

Publication: SHETLAND MOVEMENT (policy statement).

Address: 11a Magnus Street, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0JT.

The Wessex Regionalists were established by Alexander Thynn of Longleat, and have contested eighteen parliamentary and two European Assembly seats since 1974. W.R. seek to establish a Regional Assembly to control domestic affairs.

President: Colin Bex

Publications: THE STATUTE OF WESSEX, 1982, £1
YOUR REGION NEEDS YOU, 1984
WESSEX AWAKE (A monthly digest of Extracts from the Regional Press. No price, donations welcome).

Address: 42 Rectory Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire.

The above were signatories to the Declaration of Oxford in May, 1980. Two other organisations represented at the first Seminar were:

Common Wealth, founded in 1942 and represented at every Seminar to date. C.W. advocates the diffusion of political and economic power, hence its support for regional government.

Chairman of the Executive Committee: Roma Bannister

Secretary/Treasurer: Cllr. W. J. Taylor

Publications: WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS (a manifesto)
THE LIBERTARIAN, 45p, twice yearly.

Address: 107 Pilton Street, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 1PQ

Plaid Cymru, founded in 1925 with the aim of achieving Dominion status for Wales. It contests local, parliamentary and European Assembly elections, and has been represented at Westminster since 1966, with one break from 1970 to 1974. P.C. has sent speakers or observers to the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 8th Regionalist Seminars.

Secretary: Dafydd Williams

Publications: THE WELSH NATION, monthly, 20p, annual postal subscription £3.50, overseas £4.0
Y DDRAIG GOCH, same terms. (Note: a selection from some sixty titles currently available was listed in The Regionalist, No. 7).

Address: 51 Heol yr Eglwys Cadeiriol, Caerdydd, Cymru.

Other organisations with which friendly contacts have been established:

Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, founded in 1981, is a group receiving support right across the political spectrum in Scot-

land, the sole object of which "is the creation of a directly elected legislative Assembly or Parliament for Scotland with such powers as may be desired by the people of Scotland."

National Convenor: Jim Boyack, 20 Holyrood Crescent, Glasgow G20 4E21, Scotland.

The Celtic League, founded in 1961 for the purpose of fostering co-operation between the six Celtic nations (Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany) in their struggle to secure their full freedom - political, cultural, economic and social. The League has been represented at the 3rd, 8th and 9th Regionalist Seminars.

General Secretary: B. J. Moffat, 24 St. Germain's Place, Peel, Isle of Man.

Publications: CELTIC LEAGUE ANNUAL
CARN, 80p, quarterly, multi-lingual. Editor: Pat Bridson, 33 Bother Bancroft, Tamlacht, Ath Cliath 24, Eire.

The Cornish Assembly, founded in 1979 (Secretary: Jack Spry, 15 The Terrace, Port Isaac, Cornwall).

The Cornish Nationalist Party, founded in 1975, affiliated since 1982 to the European Federalist Party (Chairman: Dr. J. Whetter, Trellispen, Garran, St. Austell, Cornwall).

The Stannary Parliament, 1198 - 1753, revived 1974 (Clerk: F. R. A. Trull, Flos Carrelli, Hingston Down, Gunnislake, Kernow).

10th SEMINAR, DURHAM, 1986

This began with an address by Michael Steed, lecturer in Government at Manchester University, past President of the Liberal Party and founding chairman of the Campaign for the North, speaking on 'England and Englishness'. Michael captivated his audience for nearly an hour with a comprehensive overview of the development, use and manipulation of these concepts, and it is hoped to publish the full text as a separate booklet later this year.

'English' as an adjective has a series of meanings quite distinct from the territory of 'England'. For many people, especially foreigners, it is synonymous with 'British'; even Sir Winston Churchill talked of the English as an Island Race, although England itself is not an island. In Wales 'Englishness' is a Teutonic culture which exists in England, parts of Wales, and parts of Scotland. In Scotland Englishness is attached to the institutions of statehood, like the English Parliament or the English legal system, which refer to England and Wales. If the Scots and Welsh don't have the same image of what English means, then it does raise serious questions as to whether English is a meaningful word.

A fourth meaning of the term 'English' is essentially south-eastern or Home Counties. Those things said to be 'typically English' are characteristics not of the whole territory but only of the dominant culture. The choice of images to represent England on postage stamps may seem trivial, but when even

these are unrepresentative it speaks volumes on a country's perception of what it comprises.

Turning to 'England' it is now true that such an entity exists, but only through the hiving off of Scottish and Welsh administrations over the past 25 years. In the voluntary sector organisations are either 'National', 'British' or 'Royal', or they exclude Scotland, Wales and the North of England. Those that are organised on an all-England basis are often the product of recent Civil Service initiatives.

Historically England is just as slippery a concept. Anglo-Saxon kings claimed dominion over the whole of Britain - as was expressed many times in the title 'Bretwalda' - but had effective control over much less than the area of England. The English state grew out of the union of Wessex with Mercia; many years later it conquered Northumbria; and then turned its attention to Wales. It is in effect an expanding core with its eye always fixed on bigger things. History books which present this process as 'the formation of England' are putting the cart before the horse.

One view now sees the Hundred Years War as the beginning of national consciousness in England and France. This identification with territory as more than the Monarchy or the State was reinforced by Shakespeare, who created early nationalist memories out of the dynastic struggles of the 15th century. If the risings of Glyndwr and Percy had succeeded these would have been used in the same way to mold Welsh and Northumbrian nations during the 16th and 17th centuries. History is how we see our past and makes assumptions about who 'we' are.

The Tudor period was critical to the development of Englishness. The State replaced the Church as the provider of welfare services, and as its institutions expanded England began to change from being 'a theatre of action', as we might for instance describe the Midlands, to being a 'structure of authority', a civic consciousness to which loyalties attach. Centralisation and national sentiment then became mutually re-inforcing.

With the rise of revolutionary nationalism at the end of the 18th century comes the first popular consciousness of being British; Scotland becomes 'North Britain' and England and Wales are labelled 'South Britain'. From the mid-19th century Britishness is taken for granted and becomes subsumed in the wider concept of Empire, and Scotland re-appears in place of North Britain. But internal nationalism developed very late considering that Britain was an early developing country. Differentiation was expressed instead through voting behaviour, whereby United Kingdom parties had regional strongholds: the Conservatives in core Britain, the Liberals in Scotland, the North of England, Wales, Devon and Cornwall.

The reaction of English M.P.s to Home Rule, and particularly to the idea of 'Home Rule all-round' deserves greater study. It is in the years between 1910 and 1920 that we see the beginnings of the debate about what is the equivalent, in that part of the U.K. which is not Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Should it be England as a whole or should it be provinces and if so, what should they be? <

The failure of the Speaker's Conference of 1919 led to a period of about 40 years when centralisation was in the ascendant. Culture became increasingly standardised through the cinema, the pulp novel, Fleet Street and B.B.C. English. From the 1960's new trends such as regional television, a greater acceptance of regional accents, regional economic planning (now scrapped) and the whole devolution debate, together with the re-emergence of regional polarisation in voting behaviour again argue for some popular differentiation. What is clear is that the differentiation is not between and England, a Scotland and a Wales, but between regions grouped in concentric circles around London.

In the discussion which followed it was observed that England lacks a national literature in the sense of writings such as inspired nationalist struggles elsewhere. Sir Walter Scott created much of the mythology of Scottish nationalism, and counter-parts can be found in the Spanish regions and in Eastern Europe. English literature of the Romantic period and beyond is either court-centred or localist; Thomas Hardy's Wessex is unique in having a broad territorial basis.

Regional Reports began with an account by John Ellis of Campaign for the North's joint submission with Transport 2000 to the House of Commons Select Committee considering the Channel Tunnel. CFN opposes the Chunnel on the grounds that new development and public expenditure on infrastructure is needed in the North, whereas the Chunnel will only re-inforce the existing concentration of resources in the south-east. If a tunnel is to be built the rail-only option is the least harmful to Northern interests, provided that through routes are possible avoiding the need to change trains in London. This will require investment not only in the South-east, but also in the North to provide for improved services to Europe.

Reference was made to remarks by Don Dixon, M.P. for Jarrow, who had recently been sacked as a Labour spokesman after opposing Scottish devolution. CFN has an important role in persuading M.P.s and local councillors to see that Northern interests are best served by demanding parity with Scotland rather than by preserving existing centralised structures.

It was noted that nuclear power has become a key issue in Orkney and northern Scotland, and also affected other regions, particularly those bordering the Irish Sea. While leaving to others the technical questions of safety and energy requirements the Seminar felt that regionalists have a mandate to oppose the centralising aspects of nuclear power. Energy production should be de-centralised and plants should not be imposed on peripheral communities 'in the national interest'. As such installations proliferate it becomes increasingly apparent that the alleged national good is eclipsed by the totality of regional and local harm.

Following discussions on finance and publications Michael Walker, editor of the Scorpion magazine, suggested a collection of songs from the regions. Many songs current throughout England and many from the Celtic countries are well-known, but specifically regional songs are neglected. Readers are requested to send in songs and ballads (words and music, please) from their locality for inclusion in a forthcoming songbook, and are asked to include what they know of the origins of those songs which have a historical meaning.

Davyd Robyns.

FIFTH PERRANPORTH CONFERENCE, 1986

The most recent of this series was held on 31st May/1st June. Under the general theme "Manifestations of Cornishness", writes Paul Smales, "we were looking at ways in which Cornish identity expresses itself, and took several practical instances as illustrations of this." The following are extracts from his report:

Journalism. "... it was extremely encouraging to hear about the birth and progress of the latest publication concerned with all matters Cornish, namely 'Cornish Scene'. The editor, Sarah Foot, emphasised that the magazine was there to be used by Cornish people and she hoped that contributions would continue to pour in. . . (telephone: Ince Barton, Saltash 07555 7709). . . It was also heartening to learn of another project being undertaken by Denzil Crowle, of Helston, who . . . has just produced the first edition of a new Cornish newspaper. It will be brought out on a quarterly basis and is called 'An Kenethlor'."

Education. "What Cornish content is there in education in Cornwall? . . . The Deputy Secretary for Education in Cornwall, Roff Rayner, said that in fact an enormous amount of work in local studies was being done in schools, including visits to a wide variety of places of interest. He was picked up on his use of the phrase 'local studies' by Roger Holmes who maintained passionately that 'Cornish Studies' were not to be equated with 'local studies', nor compartmentalised. 'Cornish Studies' embraced a wide range of other subjects- history, literature, geography, language, religion, music, drama etc - and there should be someone responsible for the whole spectrum on the permanent staff of the Education Authority. Roff Rayner replied that the funds for this were simply not available. . ."

Cornish Music. "Jory Bennett led a lively discussion on the music scene . . . The conference was informed of the recent Cornish Composers' Workshop held on Trevithick Day in Cambourne . . . Out of that event had arisen several ideas for the future . . . Richard McGrady, Head of Music at the Extra-mural department of Exeter University in Truro . . . expressed his support for these ideas, and . . . there appears to be every prospect of exciting developments in the future."

'Cornwall Comes to London, 1989' "The originator of the idea, Frank Hoppé, and Cornwall's Deputy Planning Officer, Ian Martin, who are jointly undertaking the promotion and organisation of this proposed exhibition, gave stimulating accounts of the aims, nature, and practical organisation of it . . . and one of the most useful ways to help may be by serving on one or other of the proposed working parties being set up by the organisers." (Ian Martin's telephone: 0872-74282).

Cornish Culture and Cornish Australia. "An absorbing and amusing account of the development over the centuries of various strands and elements in Cornish cultural life was given by Bernard Deacon. . . Mrs. Betty Eggleston . . . gave a fascinating account of the growth of the three Cornish Associations in Australia - the South Australian, the Sydney and the Victorian - and of the formation of a Federation of these Associations last year. Dinner parties, outdoor picnics attracting over 600 people, and the Kernowek Lowender, attracting 25,000, were now all part of the . . . Cornish cultural scene in the Antipodes."

Debate on the Tin Crisis. "... at the outset of the conference we were privileged to have with us Ken Gilbert, Executive Vice-Chairman of Geavor Tin Mine, Ray Rodden, Senior Shop Steward, as well as other Union leaders, Mick McCardle and Terry Addicoat. Ken Gilbert brought us up to date on the latest position regarding negotiations with the DTI and said that an announcement would be made on the following Monday as to whether the package deal put forward by Geavor was acceptable to the Government. We now know, of course, that it was not, and a sop of £1 million is being offered to ease unemployment in the area. . . ."

Other topics were Cornish Paepholgy, addressed by Adrian Lee, Head of the Department of Social and Political Studies at Plymouth Polytechnic, who gave an interesting account of voting patterns, mostly in General Elections; the Celtic Film and TV Festival, which now looks like being held in Cornwall in 1989; and a Cornish Consciousness Campaign enthusiastically advocated by Paul Laity.

It is clear from successive reports that the Perranporth Conferences are being taken seriously by more and more people of influence. Paul Smales concludes: "We hope to hold the next Conference in November, and to continue the theme of 'Devolution' which formed the basis of the Fourth Perranporth Conference."

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND and the REGIONS

In response to a letter from the Campaign for the North, 12th August, 1985, the Commission stated the order in which they would conduct their investigations into the Shire Counties (the areas of the defunct G.L.C. and six Metropolitan Counties are excluded from their terms of reference). The counties were placed in three groups, those in Phase 1 to be dealt with from July 1985, in Phase 2 from January 1986 and in Phase 3 from September 1986. It is astonishing that they were arranged in no sort of geographical, let alone regional pattern. The Northern counties of Cheshire, Cleveland, Durham, Lancashire and Northumberland are all in Phase 3, cheek-by-jowl with others from the Midlands and South East, but Cumbria and Humberside are in Phase 1 and North Yorkshire in Phase 2.

Wessex fared no better, with Berkshire and Devon in Phase 1 and Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire in Phase 2, an arrangement that does not even recognise Whitehall's division of the region between S.W. and S.E.

On 8th January, 1986 and on 21st July the Wessex Regionalists made their own submissions to the Commission. These criticised the rules which Whitehall had set out for the review, claiming that they were biased in favour of technocratic solutions: "They relate to the county as an area for the organisation of service provision and only obliquely recognise its importance as a cultural unit of great antiquity to which identity and loyalty attach. We consider that the criteria chosen are weighted in favour of the continued and further distortion of the true county boundaries and we cannot therefore place any faith in the impartiality of the present review."

Making the most of such loopholes as exist the Wessex Regionalists proceed to argue for the restoration of Bournemouth and Christchurch to Hampshire and repeat their long-standing opposition to the County of Avon. Under WR proposals Gloucestershire and Somerset would be restored to their traditional boundaries.

Special attention is given to the status of Bristol: "The city of Bristol was, from 1373 to 1974, a county in its own right and ideally we would wish to see this status restored. However, the Commission's terms of reference do not permit them to recommend changes in the structure of local government and Bristol must therefore be placed in one of the adjoining counties as an interim measure." It is then suggested that Bristol be added to Somerset but would advocate that the county delegates to the city or to an area committee the greatest degree of autonomy that present legislation permits.

The submission also asks that the traditional boundaries of Wiltshire and Devon be respected, and that the Vale of White Horse be restored from Oxfordshire to Berkshire.

The party conclude in support of their proposals: "In each case we believe that the interests of effective and convenient local government are best served by defining areas so as to harness the power of historical association. We believe that the disruption of long established boundaries can only sow confusion and generate alienation from the institutions of local government."

FORTY YEARS OF EUROPEAN REGIONALIST MOVEMENTS

The Treaty of Versailles was hailed as a triumph of self-determination for Small Nations. The great Imperial States, Russia and Germany, had been much reduced and Austria-Hungary dismembered to make way for a re-born Poland and Lithuania, and entirely new creations such as Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

Even then the claim that this was the day for small nations rang rather hollow. True, the Successor States brought freedom to millions from Russian, Teutonic and Magyar domination and exploitation, but these new 'nation' States were themselves often uneasy conglomerations of peoples with quite different traditions, e.g., Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs, urban Czechs and rural Slovaks, and in Poland, Catholic Poles dominating large minorities of Orthodox Ukrainians and White Russians. Not to mention the lesser minorities of Macedonians in Yugoslavia or the sizeable enclaves of Germans and Magyars separated from their home lands.

Not to mention either lesser nationalities scattered throughout Western Europe for which the 1919 Peace Settlement provided no sort of recognition.

Between the wars these minorities, East or West, fought for their rights as best they could, but largely in isolation from each other. The assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia by Croat nationalists in 1934 or sporadic violent protest by the IRA won brief attention but little sympathy.

This situation continued until in 1949 there was created in Paris the Federal Union of Nationalities and Regions, which after early

setbacks launched a bulletin "Small Nations" (No.1, Vol.1, March 1954), and at its 4th Annual Congress at Munster in May, 1954 published a Statute of Association, duly amended and ratified at Cardiff in May, 1955.

Section 2 of the Statute referred to Nationalities who either do not form their own state, or live outside a state of their own nationality, and Regions and Communities whose language and customs were in danger.

The purpose of the Union was stated in Section 3 as "the preservation of the national peculiarities and culture of the European regions and nationalities, i.e. their languages and religion, their legal systems and other customs and as far as possible the further cultivation and development of such peculiarities and customs."

Organisations listed as members at the time included, from the U.K.: Plaid Cymru, Mebyon Kernow, the S.N.P. and two other Scottish bodies now defunct; from Spain the exiled Government of Euzkadi (Basques), and the Catalan Council of the European Movement; from France three Breton groups; from Germany two Danish groups; two Slovene groups situated respectively in Austria and Italy; a German group in Denmark and an Austrian group in Italy (S. Tyrol); a Lepp group in Finland, Frisian groups in Holland and Denmark; a French group in Italy (Val d'Aosta); a Walloon group in Belgium; and an emigré organisation of Macedonians in Canada and the U.S.A.

Associated with the Union were another 24 bodies scattered over Europe, including the Anti-Partition Association of Ireland, the Swedish minority in Finland, Slovenes in Yugoslavia, the Rumantscha minority in Switzerland, the Heligolanders (Frisians), and emigré Ukrainians in the U.S.A. Later were added organisations from the Faroes and Greenland, both since successful in achieving self-government.

Three interesting things arise from this account.

First there is hardly a minority which lacked representation - the Union had a most catholic embrace. Second the Union drew support from diametrically opposed groups, e.g., Danes in Schleswig-Holstein and Germans across the border in Nord Slesvig, yet this was the source of their moral strength for they protected the rights of each minority without fear or favour to whichever Government was acting oppressively. A number of similar instances were listed in the Report to the 6th Annual Congress in Carinthia, Austria in May 1956. Third the Union was concerned exclusively with ethnic/cultural minority groups, and was not concerned with any wider concept of regional government that did not rest on preservation of their rights, despite the reference to regions in their title and Section 2 of the Statute.

In the fifties the Union was hated by the main stream of the Right for its challenge to the authority of established government, and dismissed by virtually all the Left as 'reactionary' - 'arrant, arid nationalism', James Callaghan; while 'ethnic' politics were not as yet fashionable in 'progressive' circles.

The impact of the Treaty of Rome. Signed in 1959 and fully operative by 1962, the para-national machinery thereby set in motion had an immediate effect on official perceptions of regionalism

in the member countries. This was soon regarded by the Commission as providing an administrative mechanism for the implementation of their policies, and was recognised as such by de Gaulle who refused to break up the centralised French state on the lines of German Lander or Italian Provinces, although he did later submit to referendum - which he lost - a modified form of regional government, subsequently adopted in substance by the Socialist government in 1982. Deflected for the time being from their main purpose the Commission proceeded to deal directly with regional authorities where these existed, and to present national economic and social statistics on a regional basis, until Europe of the Regions came increasingly to be seen as the face of the future.

A constructive relationship between this essentially managerialist/functionalist concept and ethnic regionalism is not fully realised yet, but the gap has become smaller since the trauma of the Czech summer of 1968 and the student revolts of 1968/9 broke some of the rigidities of thinking on both Left and Right concerning the acceptability of ethnic movements.

To list a few on the developments in this direction: the electoral successes of Plaid Cymru and the S.N.P. from 1966 which led to the (abortive) Devolution legislation of 1978/9; the Austrian Ethnic Groups Act of 1976; the Netherlands legislation of 1977 which reduced the size while enhancing the powers of the provincial assemblies, and from which a Frisian province emerged; the division of Belgium into its Flemish and Walloon constituents in 1980; the establishment in 1983 of autonomy for Euzkadi and Catalonia, an example since followed in fourteen other historic/ethnic Spanish provinces.

Meantime in France in 1959 there came into being almost unnoticed the PNO - Parti Nationaliste Occitan - a dramatic event because it signalled the revival of a widespread culture in the southern half of France which had been suppressed since the massacres of Albigenes in the 13th century and the expulsion of Huguenots in the 17th century.

Insignificant at first, the new movement reaped some successes when the educational reforms of 1968 permitted the Langue d'Oc to be taught in State schools, and the State railways for a time advertised the Occitanian Express from Paris to Toulouse, but it is just because the very concept of Occitania runs counter to the idea of French unity and of regionalism as seen in France, advances on the political/economic front have not matched the modest gains achieved in the cultural/linguistic or tourist promotional fields.

A succession of such events within individual countries generates fresh initiatives at the supra-national level, some of which were referred to in a previous article (Approaches to Regional Self-Government, Autumn 1984). Motions by bodies such as the Council for Europe or the European Assembly rarely move governments to unwanted action, but some credit must be given for funds allocated to economic projects in peripheral areas or to the promotion of minority languages anywhere in the Community.

New co-operative initiatives. These continue between the many ethnic communities whose aspirations are still largely unfulfilled. They are, however, considerably more fragmented than in the

pioneering days of the Federal Union of Nationalities and Regions.

One such is the European Federalist Party, launched at Geneva in November 1974, with a view to attaining a "A Europe of the Peoples and Regions", the latter to be the basic units in a European Federation which rejects the old Nation-States and puts the principle of "protection of cultural minorities" above the principle of "rule of the majority".

The EFP is organised in sections, which include the Bavarian State Party (founded 1967, acceded to EFP 1977), the Breton Republican Party (f. 1979, to EFP 1981) and the Cornish Nationalist Party (f. 1975, to EFP 1982). Where it appears to have no recognised Section, the EFP nevertheless sometimes enters candidates for election to public office, e.g. twelve seats contested, North-rhein-Westfalen in June, 1985; and a number of seats won in the provincial and communal elections of May 1985 in Italy. The Party publishes a monthly bulletin in several languages.

Other groupings have been less formal. We have previously recorded the participation of the Campaign for the North in the Regions of Europe conference held in Copenhagen in 1977 (Special Supplement on the North, Spring/Summer 1985). In November 1978 the Munich-based International Institute for Nationality Rights and Regionalism - INTEREG - issued its 'Guiding Principles' which aim at federal status for democratically-controlled regions based on ethnic communities. INTEREG runs a Centre for the Study of Ethnic Group Rights and Federalism in Brussels, and holds conferences.

Then in July 1982 was launched the Assembly of the Fourth World, a body not solely concerned with European Regionalism, but working to advance the autonomy and independence of small nations and regions worldwide. Nevertheless the first three Assemblies were held in Europe - London, Berlin and Larzac in the heart of Occitania. Prime movers were John Papworth, founder of the journal 'Resurgence', and Nicholas Albery, an ecology activist; Gwynfor Evans, then still President of Plaid Cymru, and Leopold Kohr, Austrian author of 'The Breakdown of Nations' (1956) have been co-Presidents.

More recently still, in June 1985, a Council of European Regions has been set up in Brussels at the initiative of INTEREG. It claims to include all the regions of the twelve E.E.C. countries, plus Switzerland and Austria, and to handle their interests in dealings with Community institutions and the Council of Europe, by-passing national governments when these were unwilling to cede authority. A great claim, the substantiation of which remains to be demonstrated. For a body representing all the regions of the E.E.C. and more, the British contingent to the foundation meeting was thin on the ground: representation from West Yorkshire (now disbanded), Devon, and one each from unspecified Scottish and Welsh local councils.

In December 1985 a Catalan organisation, Consejo, held a conference in Barcelona of state-less European Nations, which, they said, were usually the ones that had been marginalised and denied freedom when Europe was becoming industrialised, but which should now reclaim their inheritance in the post-industrial era. In asserting their new freedom they should avoid behaving like the very Nation-States that were now increasingly discredited, and should regard mere autonomy as a device for propping up the old structures. . .

(To be continued)

John Banks

REVIEWS

Regional movements in Britain: a review of aims and status, R. J. Bennett, Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 1985 Volume 3, pages 75-96.

The purpose of this paper, the first comprehensive survey in its field to be published in an academic journal for a decade, is summarised in the Abstract so:

"... the activities of regional and nationalist movements in Britain are analysed with respect to five hypotheses: the degree and form of representation, including the role of elites; the extent of participation in regional identity; the form of existing and desired forms of decentralisation; the extent of specificity of regional issues; the extent of central economic and political dominance. Seven major areas are analysed: Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles, Cornwall, Wessex, the North, and North Devon, with some analysis also of Scotland and Wales. The existence of a considerable level of participation in regional identity in some regions, and a remarkable degree of success, by working through existing institutions, of movements in Shetland, Orkney, and North Devon will be demonstrated. For other regions, however, participation is 'dormant'."

Dr. Bennett has related recent academic literature dealing with nationalism and regionalism in general with the activities and pronouncements of the relevant movements in Great Britain, many of which have only appeared during the past decade. In the process he has acquainted himself very thoroughly with the situation within each movement through correspondence and interviews with some of the people involved.

In the past too many academic assessments in this area of politics have ended with a final sneer at the supposed 'reactionary', 'mediaeval', or even 'Poujadist' nature of the ethnic or autonomist movements described. Dr. Bennett's conclusion avoids any such display of bias:

"It is impossible to conclude from this analysis what will be the likely future of regional movements in Britain. However, it is possible to state that the superficial appearance of quiescence since the 1979 devolution referendum belies the actuality of a formidable level of regional feeling and activity in a few areas, particularly Wales, Scotland, Shetland, Orkney, and Western Isles; in other areas, such as North Devon and Cornwall, regional participation is 'dormant', but some success is being achieved by quietly working on and within the existing institutional framework."

The effects of government regional economic policy, B. Moore, J. Rhodes and P. Tyler, D.T.I., February 1986.

Regional economic policies pursued by central government over the past quarter of a century have often been dismissed as a dead loss, by nationalist and regionalist movements as much as by the present government.

The authors of the study under review would seem to endorse this judgement when they write:

"For regional policy to have solved the regional problem during the decade of the 1970's, policy would have had to have been

about three times more effective."

At the same time they claim that regional policies created some 600,000 manufacturing jobs in the development areas between 1960 and 1981, an average of nearly 29,000 per annum. The number of jobs surviving in 1981 is estimated at 450,000, or if the 'multiplier' effect of increased purchasing power in the several communities is allowed for, about 630,000.

Out of the 450,000 surviving jobs in manufacturing in 1981, two in three had been created by development grants, with industrial development controls, regional selective assistance and the regional employment premium accounting for the balance, in that order.

Perhaps past regional policies should be described as inadequate rather than as completely useless. We nevertheless remain convinced that there is no substitute for regionally-controlled initiatives, not only for job creation as such, but for the general economic well-being of each and every national area or region in Britain.

Welcome Back, CORNISH RAILWAYS! BR has rescinded its decision to abolish Cornish Railways. This follows representations from many quarters, including Cowethas Flamank, whose administrator, John Fleet, has been assured by Western Region that it is their firm intention to continue to market rail travel in Cornwall under the name Cornish Railways, and that they intend to be just as alert to opportunities for doing business as in the past two years. A Customer Services Manager is being retained in Truro to keep a local eye on that side of things. From Kevren, Spring, 1986

ISLAND ELECTIONS, May 1986. Three out of seven candidates for the Orkney Movement, and five out of eight for the Shetland Movement were elected. Letter from Spencer J. Rosie (who was himself elected to the Orkney Island Council).

CORNISH DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS, May 1986. Mebyon Kernow retained Penzance Central and gained 9.6% of ALL votes cast for eleven seats in spite of contending only two of them. MK also came within 136 votes of winning a second seat on Penwith D.C. Kevren, Summer 1986

DOWNREAY. (1) The Western Islands, Shetland and Orkney Island Councils have shared joint legal representation in their opposition to the proposed spent-fuel reprocessing plant. Guardian, 26.5.86

(2) At its conference at Dunoon the S.N.P. has voted to halt construction of the reprocessing plant and to diversify research at Downreay into alternative non-polluting energy systems. Guardian 12.9.86

(3) The Declaration of Wyre, reproduced overpage, was drafted by Margaret Flaws. Wyre is not only where she lives, but has a place in the history of Orkney. Orcadian, 22.5.86

'NATIONAL' COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES? At this year's A.G.M. the London Branch of the Celtic League proposed deletion of 'National' from the title. The motion was lost after a member ridiculed it by calling for "freedom for Northumbria, Dumnonia and the Jutes of Kent." Letter from Padraic O Conchuir, 19.5.86.

The Declaration of Wyre



DECLARATION
OF
WYRE

To the Kings Most Gracious Majesties, Olaf, King of Norway and
to the Queens Most Gracious Majesties, Margrethe, Queen of Denmark.

We, the undersigned
being aware of the close proximity of the present nuclear
installations at Dounreay, Caithness, to Orkney and Shetland,
and being aware of the increased hazards inherent in the
proposed siting of the European Demonstration Reprocessing
Plant at Dounreay
and being aware of the real threat this poses to our economic
base in the renewable industries i.e. fishing, fish farming,
agriculture, tourism, food processing and distilling,
and being aware of the strong historical, cultural and legal
links between Orkney, Shetland, Norway and Denmark,
in particular the great descent of many of our inhabitants,
and being aware that such siting in the face of peace, in
1967, the constitutional status of Orkney and Shetland is as yet
unresolved.

We humbly ask that Your Most Gracious Majesties
consider and consult on our constitutional status
Reaffirm our strong historical ties with Norway and Denmark
Request the British Government until such time as our constitutional status is resolved
to honour the guarantees made at the impregnable and subsequently to safeguard our
race, rights and traditions
and inquire into the legality in international law of siting a nuclear reprocessing plant in
such a place as to threaten the safety of the waters in an area of unresolved constitutional status.

One of two copies of the "Declaration of Wyre" which will be carried to King Olaf of Norway and Queen Margrethe of Denmark. The document, which will
be passed around Orkney and Shetland for members of the public to sign, has been prepared by the Dounreay Expansion (CADE) and
asked the British Government to "inquire into the legality in international law of siting a nuclear reprocessing plant" in such a place as to threaten the safety of the waters in an area of unresolved constitutional status.

15



Plaid Cymru

Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol
Dafydd Williams
General Secretary

16

7 May 1986

Mr John Banks'
3 New House Close
CANTERBURY
Kent

Dear Mr Banks

Thank you very much for your kind letter of 7 April and
for sending me the latest copy of The Regionalist which
I was glad to read in full over the recent May bank holiday.

Congratulations on the very successful treatment of the
complex history and politics of Wales - I will be very
glad to refer students of Welsh politics to your supplement
and the valuable information and references it contains.

As you can imagine, I was on the lookout for any lacunae
from the point of view of Plaid Cymru, but I must say
that The Regionalist has succeeded in compressing
valuable information into twelve short pages.

I hope that Plaid Cymru's modest progress will make
necessary frequent revisions of your excellent treatment
of developments in our country!

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Dafydd Williams
DAFYDD WILLIAMS
General Secretary

LONGLEAT HOUSE
WARMINSTER
WILTSHIRE/WESSEX
GB: BA12 7NN

12 FEB 1986

Telephone: Maiden Bradley (098 53) 300

Station: Westbury Motorway: M4 Exit 17 (Chippenham)

Dear Davyd

I'll give you a few notes on the start of the Wessex movement.

I had become interested in trying to define the ideal democratic theory of government during my years up at Oxford, (1953-56). But it wasn't until 1969 that I had worked out a rough sketch of a theory involving both regional, and world levels of government, interlinked and mutually supportive. My first public speech on the issue took place towards the end of that year, at the South-West tourist board's convention. I believe this was at Taunton. I attended this in my capacity of representing Longleat, and I made what was perhaps too long a speech, urging the assembled company to adopt the concept of a Greater Wessex, stretching from Hampshire to Cornwall, in the presentation of our regional image for the purposes of attracting a larger slice of Britain's tourist trade. I only reached the end of my speech with some difficulty. There were some interruptions urging me to shut up, or to sit down. I was never quite certain whether this related to what I was actually saying, or to the bohemian character of my attire. But in any case, the general feeling within that assembly was for greater independence for a county's touristic self-expression: the further west, the stronger the insistence upon individualism, or at least with a westward-looking identity. All counties argued to exclude those to the east of their own borders, in all matters of touristic presentation.

The next event, as far as Regionalists were concerned, was the Kilbrandon Report of 1973. This got me writing letters to the press, objecting to the idea that Wessex hadn't been given an identity of its own. (Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Berkshire had all been included within the domains of London, while Herefordshire and Gloucestershire had been bracketed with the South-West.) A letter from me to the Guardian was published (Nov 6th) under the heading of 'Wessex against the imperial overlords'. Resulting from this, I received a few letters of sympathy and support, one of which was signed Anthony Hockler; and this led to a brief correspondence between the two of us.

The next event was the general election of February 1974. I had come to the conclusion that the only way of giving clear expression to my ideas on how Regionalism should operate within a democratic world society was to stand as a parliamentary candidate. And it should be recollected that, prior to February 1974, there were no English regionalist movements in operation: not even the Campaign for the North.

I waged a solitary election campaign, spending much time handing out a pamphlet on my political ideas, at street corners within all the towns within the constituency of West Wiltshire. Yet I was given considerable assistance by various members of the staff on the Longleat estate, in addressing envelopes to a good half of my potential constituents. This factor may well account for the encouraging total of 521 votes which I obtained.

Although this total may not be regarded as in any way significant, I feel entitled to claim that contemporary Wessex identity was resurrected within this election campaign. It had been revived in terms of people suddenly starting to

use the name of Wessex, to describe this region. It is my belief that, prior to 1974, the term had acquired a shrunken application, so as to denote little more than Dorset. It is only since Feb 1974 there came a rapid spread in the use of the name, within telephone directories and the like: as if the whisper of our Wessex identity had managed to get round, without anyone really knowing where it had come from. It should also be noted that Stephen Ross, who had just won the Isle of Wight constituency for the Liberals, first voiced within Parliament the desirability for a Wessex regional authority, when they were debating the Kilbrandon Report on March 20th 1974. I had in fact written to him, just after my election campaign, expressing the hope that he might promote the idea of there being a Wessex identity.

It was at a party in London, to celebrate the considerable triumph of the Scots and Welsh Nationalists during the election of Feb 1974 that I first actually met Anthony Hockler. At whose precise instigation I cannot remember, but we then came up with the idea of gathering together at Longleat some of those people who had written to me on the subject of Wessex identity, so that we could discuss the possibility of forming a Wessex Regionalist Party to fight the next general election: although we were not in fact ready to do anything about this by the time the next election was called, which was in October 1974.

The Wessex Regionalist Party wasn't really inaugurated until the eve of the next general election, in 1979. We then managed to field seven candidates, nicely spread over what we regarded to be the territory of Wessex. And our general purpose at this election was to acquaint people with a 12 point plan, which I regard as being the necessary basis upon which any of the English regions should seek to reestablish their political identity. (These ideas were derived largely, from 'The Regionalist Manifesto' which I had written in 1975.) Our success on the field of battle was somewhat varied. But we had in any case succeeded in bringing peoples' attention to the possibility of a Wessex identity, within a wide central stretch of the essential territory. And I gave the movement a wider continental context by standing as a Wessex Regionalist for the (new) Euro-constituency of central Wessex, in the very first of the Euro-elections, in June 1979.

The Wes.Reg.Party's principal concern, subsequent to these elections, was to draw up a highly professional 'Statute of Wessex', with the idea that this might serve as a guideline to the politicians who will eventually concern themselves with the task of creating a truly devolved Britain. The document was finally unveiled to the press in 1982.

Perhaps I should end by explaining my reasons for declining to participate within the subsequent Wessex Regionalist election campaign. I felt that we had in fact publicised, and achieved, all that was within our reach within this particular phase of political evolution. There didn't seem much point for me to be seen to be going over the same old ground, repeating myself, upon the political platform. Far better that I prepare myself for a time when I may have acquired an enhanced position to be useful to the devolutionary cause, with a seat perhaps, in the House of Lords; particularly if by that time there were to be an Alliance government in power. My concern has therefore been to avoid any manner of conflict with the S.D.P. which is the party of my choice. This way, I may yet rise again to fight another day.

With best wishes



WESSEX

History and territorial definition.

The area of England lying south of the Thames was not glaciated during the last Ice Age, and Mesolithic Man almost certainly entered it before the melting ice divided Britain from the rest of Europe, hunting and gathering in the tundra-like conditions. As the climate mellowed Southern England became the bridgehead for new flora and fauna, and eventually for the Neolithic culture based on farming and herding that had become established in Western Europe by the middle of the fourth millennium.

Later still came successive waves of Celts: Ligurians, first with copper then with bronze between 2000 and 1600 B.C.; then Hallstatt Celts and iron around 500 B.C.; finally the La Tene culture of the Gauls with new crops, horses and coinage.

The whole area flourished under civil rule during the Roman occupation, and it was not until the legions had gone for nearly a century that Wessex appears in the historical record. The land that was to bear this name had therefore already been inhabited for some nine millennia, and contained notable monuments to the past, of which Stonehenge was the most spectacular, the long barrows and hill forts the most widespread, and the Roman roads the most recent.

It was to the central area containing Stonehenge that the war-leader of the Gewisse, Cerdic, first settled with his warriors at the end of the fifth century. Reference to the map inside the end cover shows how the Gewisse joined forces with the West Saxons of Berkshire, whose name they later adopted, to spread during the next three centuries northwards, westwards and eventually eastwards at the expense of Roman-British, Jutes and Anglo-Saxons alike, until they controlled all England south of the Thames and Bristol Avon.

The overall process of expansion received setbacks, mostly administered from the powerful Midland Kingdom of Mercia, which absorbed early Wessex conquests north of the Thames, and for a while Berkshire to the south, and which also awarded a part of the Wessex heartland to the client Kingdom of Sussex (661-685). Mercia also asserted its overlordship during much of the seventh century, and again under Offa during the second half of the eighth.

During the interim (685-726) one Caedwalla re-conquered the lands lost to Sussex, asserted his mastery over various Wessex sub-kings and bequeathed to his successor, Ine, a united territory that by now extended into Devon, enabling him to consolidate the dynasty through the promulgation of laws that gave protection to conquerors and conquered alike.

The second period of Mercian domination ended with the accession of Egbert, who during the course of his long reign (802-839), pushed the Mercians out of Berkshire, took over their client kingdoms of Kent and Sussex, asserted his dominion over Celtic Cornwall, and invaded Mercia itself right up to the Northumbrian border.

Egbert's grandson Alfred (871-99) was able to build the foundation of an all-England monarchy only because under his leadership Wessex alone survived the Danish invasion which swept away the remaining members of the Heptarchy at the end of the 9th century.

In the process Wessex itself was to be relegated to the status of an Earldom, albeit a sufficiently powerful one to survive the rule of Danish Canute in the early eleventh century. The centrality of Wessex in the English realm even at the end of Edward the Confessor's reign is evidenced by the title of his chief minister, Godwin, Earl of Wessex, while Godwin's son, Harold, carried the Wyvern standard of his predecessors into history at Hastings. The ensign appears in the Bayeux tapestry beside the depiction of Harold's death. (See second Wessex map and page 26.)

Five and a half centuries of Wessex as a political unit came to an end with the Norman conquest, when William I chose to secure his authority by abolishing the earldoms in favour of the more manageable shires as the largest units of sub-national administration - a policy that central government pursues to the present day.

However, the Norman monarchy could not immediately divest itself of its West Saxon dynastic ties, and it was not until the end of the 12th century that the last functions of executive government were transferred from Winchester to London, while Parliaments continued to be held occasionally in Winchester well into the 13th. Counties and dioceses remained fixed within their Saxon limits. Even the social consequences of the Conquest were channelled along pre-determined routes: much of the best land in Wessex had found its way into the hands of the Church and the Crown, and the upheavals after 1066 were thus often more concerned with personalities than institutions.

A Region in Revolt.

Medieval Wessex is a neglected field of study so far as documentation is concerned, although the archaeological evidence is surveyed in D. Hinton's 'Alfred's Kingdom: Wessex and the South, 800-1500'. J. H. Betley provides an historical record for more modern times in his 'Rural Life in Wessex, 1500-1900', and this shows how much of the region's distinctiveness survived the changing fashions of national economics and politics.

During the 16th century life in all the rural communities of Wessex was greatly affected by the dissolution of the monasteries which were notable for their number, size and wealth. Their suppression destroyed many opportunities for employment, education and charity that they had provided; above all their destruction brought about a wholesale change in land ownership. Yet there was not a single protest movement against the Dissolution.

The 17th century tells a different story. Disafforestation and the enclosure of large areas of common grazing within the royal forests provoked riots in 1628-31 in Wiltshire, Dorsetshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire which probably constituted the most serious popular uprising in England in the years before the Civil War.

The damage and general disorder caused by the Civil War when it

came dislocated ordinary life in many parts of Wessex and gave rise to the remarkable protest movement of the 'Clubmen'. Incessant demands for the quartering of soldiers and the provision of commodities drove rural communities into armed neutrality and in 1645-6 gatherings were held in the area where Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire meet and petitions carried to both King and Parliament demanding a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Clubmen were ultimately suppressed only by Cromwell himself.

Other occasions for armed revolt included the ill-fated Royalist rising in Wiltshire in 1655, led by Colonel John Penruddock and, more notably, the Monmouth rebellion in 1685 which remains the most tragic and pathetic incident in the history of Wessex.

In these cases leadership came from the gentlemen and yeoman farmers; the only sustained attempt by the labouring classes to change their miserable lot by force occurred in 1830. The notorious 'Swing riots' began in Hampshire and Berkshire and spread into Wiltshire and Dorset in a frenzy of rick-burning and machine-breaking, accompanied by threatening letters signed by the mythical 'Captain Swing'. The riots lasted less than a fortnight and were suppressed without much difficulty, but the authorities were thoroughly frightened; it was their alarm on this occasion which led them to over-react so violently against the Tolpuddle labourers four years later.

The Wessex risings were a series of heroic but hopeless gestures in the face of much stronger forces. None of them had any real hope of success, but all are of interest in revealing the deepest feelings and attachments of rural society. Yet despite the harsh penalties inflicted the remarkable feature is not that protest occurred, but that the Wessex peasantry remained generally so submissive to power and authority.

The Antiquarian Revival.

It may be objected that to describe central southern England of the 12th to 19th centuries as "Wessex" is an anachronism. Certainly there was no popular consciousness of belonging to Wessex, but the region which the Victorians inherited was in all its essentials a logical development of the Wessex of Alfred. Only the railways, by re-organising production for the London market, made any lasting impression, and Dorset was the last county of England to be reached by this means.

Continental writers were more aware of the English regions than were indigenous commentators during this period. The French cartographer Guillaume de Lisle in his 'Atlas Nouveau', c.1720, shows England divided into its perceived provinces, the 'Province of the West' comprising Wessex and Cornwall. English geographers down to the 20th century were aware of the Avon/Thames line as the boundary between the Midlands and the South, and of the ten counties below this line four never bear the suffix 'shire', but those that do delineate Wessex.

The first links between ancient and contemporary Wessex were forged by a series of antiquaries and diarists of the 17th and 18th centuries, foremost among whom was John Aubrey (1626-97). The 18th and 19th centuries saw the foundation of the county Archaeological & Natural History Societies and the birth of dialect studies. Thomas Hardy's mentor, William Barnes, the Dorset dialect poet, advocated an Anglo-Saxon-orientated vocabulary in

which Latinate words are shunned in favour of equivalents made up of native roots. Examples from Hardy's poetry include 'housegear' for 'furniture' and 'brushcraft' for 'painting'. Hardy himself insisted that vernacular speech was a language and not merely a dialect.

Hardy's Wessex.

Thomas Hardy's contribution to the rebirth of Wessex is considerable but often misunderstood. Researchers will find few clues as to the nature of modern Wessex Regionalism by scanning the fictional texts. Hardy's historical achievement was to restore the name of Wessex to contemporary use. A similar revival took place in East Anglia at around the same time, but that name re-entered popular consciousness from more diverse and anonymous sources. To illustrate the process of diffusion it is worth quoting at length the preface Hardy later added to the first of the Wessex novels:

"In reprinting this story for a new edition I am reminded that it was in the chapters of "Far from the Madding Crowd", as they appeared month by month in a popular magazine, that I first ventured to adopt the word "Wessex" from the pages of early English history, and give it a fictitious significance as the existing name of the district once included in that extinct kingdom . . . The region designated was known but vaguely, and I was often asked even by educated people where it lay. However, the press and the public were kind enough to welcome the fanciful plan, and willingly joined me in the anachronism of imagining a Wessex population living under Queen Victoria - a modern Wessex of railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union workhouses, Lucifer matches, labourers who could read and write, and National school children. But I believe I am correct in stating that, until the existence of this contemporaneous Wessex in place of the usual counties was announced in the present story, in 1874, it had never been heard of in fiction and current speech . . . and that the expression, "a Wessex peasant", or "a Wessex custom", would therefore have been taken to refer to nothing later in date than the Norman Conquest.

I did not anticipate that this application of the word to modern story would extend outside the chapters of these particular chronicles. But it was soon taken up elsewhere, the first to adopt it being the now defunct 'Examiner', which, in the impression bearing date July 15th, 1876, entitled one of its articles "The Wessex Labourer", the article turning out to be no dissertation on farming during the Heptarchy, but on the modern peasant of the south-west counties.

Since then the appellation which I had thought to reserve to the horizons of a partly real, partly dream-country, has become more and more popular as a practical provincial definition; and the dream-country has, by degrees, solidified into a utilitarian region which people can go to, take a house in, and write to the papers from."

People have been doing so for a century now and, as our sixth issue reported, telephone books in the region now list over 300 entries beginning with 'Wessex'. Many organisations also feature the wyvern as a badge, adding historical flesh to the bones of Hardy's literary scheme.

Administrative regionalism comes to Wessex.

The revival of Wessex as a cultural entity entered into official thinking at an early date. The armed forces, even today a major contributor to the economic life of the region, were the first to give official recognition. The Wessex Brigade, Royal Field Artillery was created before 1914, and the name has been used for other formations since - the Wessex Division, the Wessex Brigade, the Royal Wessex Yeomanry. Generally these have included all six counties, Berkshire, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire, Gloucestershire being sometimes added.

Civilians have been less comprehensive in their interpretation of the extent of modern Wessex. The geographer Fawcett, seeking in his 'Provinces of England' to provide a regional framework for local government reform, named one of his provinces 'Wessex' but confined it to Hampshire, Dorset and parts of Wiltshire, thus ignoring the claims of Somerset, Devon and Berkshire.

Fawcett wrote in 1919, but it was not until after 1945 that official regional bodies began to proliferate, and the appearance of the Wessex label was delayed until 1959, when part of the S.W. Metropolitan Hospitals Region was separated off to form the Wessex Regional Hospital Board. Redesignated the Wessex Regional Health Authority in 1973 it now comprises the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and part of Somerset.

A Wessex Water Authority was also set up in 1973, serving an area broadly coterminous with Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire plus the new county of Avon. The creation of this Authority epitomises a concept of 'Wessex-by-the-Severn' which was adopted in 1983 by the Labour Party in its somewhat nebulous project for regionalising local government, whereas Wessex Regional Hospital Board has served as prototype for the rival concept of 'Wessex-by-Solent', adopted by the Liberals (1968), the S.D.P. (1982) and the Greens (1982). Other combinations of counties using the collective name of Wessex appear from time to time, but to date the Army remains the only official body to include Devon, although in 1978 the English Tourist Board's 'Discover Norman Britain' did so. Berkshire has received official civilian recognition since 1973 as part of the Countryside Commission's North-Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but its claim to be part of Wessex is otherwise disregarded.

While official usage of the Wessex name has proliferated the territorial definition of the region has become increasingly confused, a confusion compounded by its division from 1964 until 1979 between the S.E. and S.W. Regional Economic Planning Boards. The division remains for the collection of official statistics, so that vital social and economic information regarding Berkshire and Hampshire/DOW is lost in the regional statistics of London and the South East, while that for the other four Wessex counties is similarly entangled with statistics for Gloucestershire and Cornwall. (See final Wessex map on inside end-cover).

The Economic Situation.

Wessex is often seen as part of the soft and wealthy South, but the reality is somewhat different. The rural inheritance of low wages persists, even though fewer than one in twenty now earn their living directly from the land, for pay in the holiday re-

sorts and tourist centres which have replaced agriculture as a major employer is also low. Second homes and retirement homes have created a housing problem for the working population.

"The lack of overall planning for our region has resulted in roads having to cope with a volume of traffic which was not envisaged under the road improvement schemes of the early seventies. Our villages will eventually become dormitory settlements for the fast-growing towns. Cities and towns have been forced to attract industry from other areas in order to provide employment, and then, as a condition of these companies moving in, have been forced to find housing for the employees which they bring with them. With constant Government cuts village life is being systematically destroyed, village schools that will be needed within the decade are being closed, the village shops are disappearing, bus services are inadequate, sub-post offices are being closed, medical facilities are not always available. The swamping of villages with large numbers of outsiders which cannot be integrated, the lack of social amenities, transport and work will ensure that within our lifetime the village as we know it will have disappeared forever." (Chris Dawe in 'Your Region Needs You' 1984).

While many of these circumstances are found elsewhere it is clear that the image of a soft and prosperous Wessex as popularly seen from outside the region is to some extent illusory.

The Wessex Regionalists.

In Wessex, as elsewhere, elected local authorities have been largely powerless faced with the free play of 'natural' economic forces, unchecked, even abetted, by central government. Only powerful elected regionalist bodies embracing areas larger than existing counties, can hope to channel these 'natural' forces in directions acceptable to the communities they should be serving, and at the same time make good the deprivations caused by generations of central government indifference.*

It was this realisation that brought Alexander Thynn, Viscount Weymouth, into the political arena in the early seventies. His own account appears in our correspondence columns, but although he and some of his followers have since parted company over tactics, it must be said that no one since Thomas Hardy has done so much to promote popular consciousness of the Wessex identity, at the same time pioneering the notion of benefits to be gained from regional self-government under a federal system.

Since the great Devolution debates of the 1970's and the debut of the Wessex Regionalists, all parties except the Conservatives have come to accept the regionalisation of England in principle, but none recognise the historic identity or territorial integrity of Wessex, instead continuing to adopt purely functional criteria for the processes of demarcation. This is why, against all the odds, including the increase of parliamentary election deposits, the Wessex Regionalists keep in being a political organisation concerned primarily with self-government for Wessex, the whole of Wessex and nothing but Wessex.

*Exceptions are those isolated areas, such as Cornwall or Scotland's Outer Islands, where the County or Island Councils must be retained and strengthened sufficiently to deal, free from outside controls, with their own unique mix of problems.

The Wessex Regionalist Electoral Record

The electoral record of W.R. is poor in comparison with those of most Celtic Nationalist parties. They are a party in a hurry: faced with the possibility of permanent dismemberment of the region by a reforming Alliance or Labour government they have concentrated on maximising publicity and demonstrating the extent of the region at the expense of votes. Little effort has gone into building up local strongholds where such investment can only show long-term results. After allowing for double counting W.R. have succeeded in placing their label on 800,000 ballot papers and in polling 5,000 votes across the region.

Parliamentary constituencies contested:	1974 (Feb)		1979 (May)		1983 (June)			
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
BERKSHIRE: Wantage					AM	183	0.37	4/4
Windsor & Maidenhead			CB	251	CB	68	0.12	7/7
DEVON: North			HR	50				
West & Torrington					HR	113	0.21	5/5
DORSET: North					DF	294	0.57	4/4
West			GE	192				
HAMPSHIRE: Winchester			MM	392	SW	155	0.28	4/4
SOMERSET: Wansdyke					AS	213	0.38	4/4
Wells			AT	155				
Woodspring					DR	177	0.32	4/4
WILTSHIRE: Devizes			AM	142	GE	234	0.38	4/4
Salisbury					MK	182	0.34	4/5
Westbury	AT	521	TT	1905	JB	131	0.22	5/5
European Assembly constituencies contested:			1979 (June)		1984 (June)			
			(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Devon (= 8 Parliamentary seats)					HR	659	0.33	5/5
Wessex (= 8 Parliamentary seats)	AT	1706						

Key (1) Candidates: JB - John Banks DR - Davyd Robyns
 CB - Colin Bex HR - Henrietta Rous
 GE - Gwendoline Ewen AS - Adam Stout
 DF - David Fox TT - Tom Thatcher
 MK - Maya Kemp AT - Alexander Thynn
 MM - Michael Mahoney SW - Simon Winkworth
 AM - Anthony Mockler

(2) Votes polled (3) %age of poll (4) position in poll and number of candidates

Early in 1983 the Wessex Regionalists offered an electoral pact to the Ecology Party at their regional conference held in Warminster. This was rejected. At the General Election the Ecologists fielded nine candidates in the six counties as against W.R.'s ten. There was one overlap, Westbury, which W.R. had already fought twice, but which the Ecology Party had not previously contested.

WESTSEXÆ LANDRICESTÆFA



It was in the 13 century that the first comprehensive attempt was made to catalogue and register the numerous and diverse heraldic emblems to which the feudal system had given rise.

Systematic marshalling of the extant designs coupled with definition and rationalisation of the myriad images which abounded, secured the future of these fabulous creatures of the imagination invented as symbols of protection to their bearers.

In addition to the several generic categories of creature, specific names (heraldic terms) were ascribed to each and an inventory of special features was compiled as an aid to identifying the various combinations of characteristic distinguishing one creature from another.

For example a "Unicorn" consists of a horse's head either on a horse's body or on that of a lion, and it has an antelope's horn at the centre of its forehead or a harwhal's tusk protruding from the lefthand side of the forehead (the tusk at the righthand side being repressed or, curtailed).

The creature adopted for Wessex was named "Wyvern" the etimological derivation of which comes from the Latin "Vipera" (a Viper). -Whether or not this explains the forked tongue which features in some of the dragon class of creature is not certain; but the Wyvern carried into battle by King Harold against the Normans at Hastings took the form of a "gonfalon", which is a three dimensional image of the beast consisting of a rigid head impaled at the top of a lance and trailing a conoidal fabric body which when subjected to adequate wind penetration (such as being carried fast forward on foot or on horseback) gave the impression of being animated, partly on account of the emission of a penetrating screech caused by the wind passing across vibrating membranes set inside the head, and partly by the swelling of its body and flapping or swishing of its tail.

The Wessex Wyvern derives from the European (Nordic/ Teutonic) dragon. It does not have its origins within the Oriental or Celtic tradition. It is characterised by the following features:-

Head, legs and feet of a Falcon, three fore-claws and one hind claw. The body and wings of a dragon the upper surfaces of which are covered in scales as also are the upper parts of both legs, the back having a crested spine. The undersides of the neck belly and tail are ribbed (armoured) and both the tail and the tongue are barbed.

To D. M. Robyns, Secretary to the Regionalist Seminar, at Flat 3, Asquith Court, Eaton Crescent, Swansea, Cymru/Wales, SA1 4QN:

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Minimal territories claimed by the Wessex Regionalists

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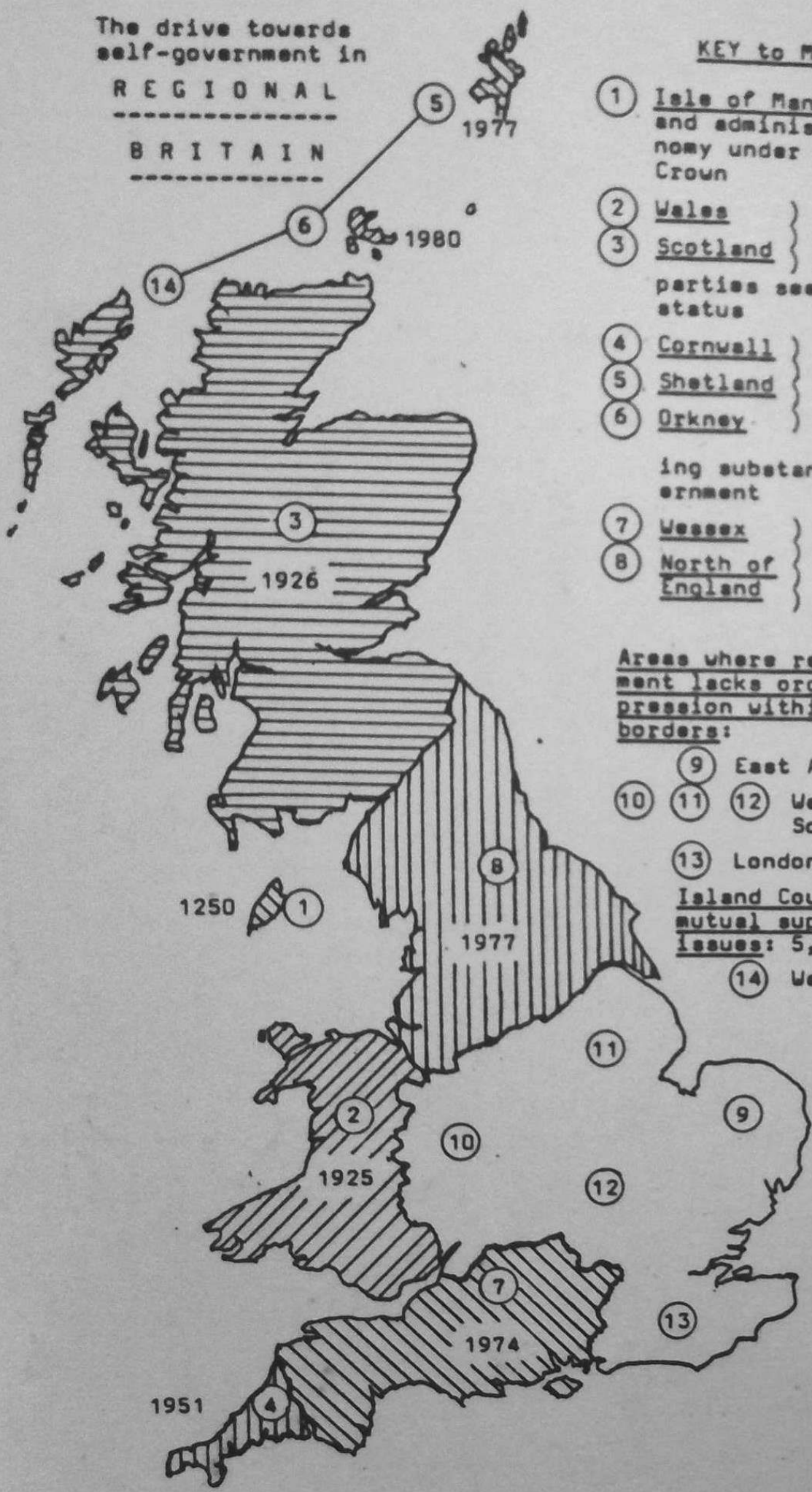
KEY to MAP

- ① Isle of Man - Legislative and administrative autonomy under the British Crown
- ② Wales } Administrative devolution,
- ③ Scotland } with National parties seeking Dominion status
- ④ Cornwall } Clearly defined territories with national/regionalist movements seeking substantial self government
- ⑤ Shetland }
- ⑥ Orkney }
- ⑦ Wessex } Territories with regional movements seeking substantial self government
- ⑧ North of England }

Areas where regional sentiment lacks organisational expression within recognised borders:

- ⑨ East Anglia
- ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ West, East and South Midlands
- ⑬ London & South East
- Island Councils linked in mutual support on common issues: 5, 6 and
- ⑭ Western Isles

Dates refer to the foundation of autonomy (IOM) or movements for autonomy



1951

1250

1926

1925

1977

1974

1977

1980