

Regional Spaces, Spaces of Regionalism

Territory, Insurgent Politics, and
the 'English Question'

Structure of the Presentation

- ▶ 1. The Geography of UK Devolution and England's 'New Regionalism'
- ▶ 2. Regional Spaces, Space of Regionalism: Recovering a Territorial Perspective
- ▶ 3. The Evolving English Questions: Regionalization or Regionalism?
- ▶ 4. Insurgent Regionalism? Struggles to Institutionalize Territory in the South West of England
- ▶ 5. On 'Relational Regions' and the Territorialization of Political Life

The Aims & Argument

- ▶ 1. The Geography of UK Devolution and England's 'New Regionalism'
- ▶ 'Renewing the Geography of Regions' and 'cultural political economy'
- ▶ Devolution and Constitutional Change—'centralised Britain to a plural state'
- ▶ Take debate beyond the Celtic nations ...
- ▶ To uncover the processes of regionalisation and regionalism in England
- ▶ Focus on problems of establishing a constitutional convention in South West England
- ▶ Policy/Political: Show the limits to regionalisation in securing economic renewal and territorial identity
- ▶ Academic: Questioning the jettisoning of scalar and territorial approaches, in favour of relational space

Regional Spaces, Spaces of Regionalism: Recovering a Territorial Perspective

- ▶ 2.1 New Regional Spaces, New Spaces of Regionalism
- ▶ - Debate on regional change shrouded in confusion
- ▶ - Regional Spaces
- ▶ - Spaces of Regionalism
- ▶ “Regions are ... social constructs that are created in political, economic, cultural and administrative practices and discourses” (Passi 2001, 16)

- ▶ 2.2 The Relational Region: *Both* Networked *and* Scalar
- ▶ “Language of scale and territorial boundaries “omit much of the topology of economic circulation an networking folding characteristics of capitalism” (Amin 2002, 395)
- ▶ 1. one region tells all scenario
- ▶ 2. space over time
- ▶ 3. need to unpack difference between identity of a region and regional consciousness of its individuals
- ▶ 4. plays down the *realpolitik* and power-laden acts of regionalization and regionalism
- ▶ 5. social and political acts are centred on a pre-existing or aspirant spatial scale or territorially articulated space of dependence

The Evolving English Question: Regionalization or Regionalism?

▶ 3.1 England's 'Territorial Enigma'

- ▶ - In contrast in rest of UK, English lack a collective territorial emphasis
- ▶ - State centralization and difficulties of mobilizing a coherent regional vision
- ▶ - Tension between state regionalization and democratic regionalism:
“The key to understanding the role of regional structures in British public administration is that they are primarily concerned not with the management of territory but the delivery of functions” (Hogwood 1996, 1).

- ▶ 3.2 New Labour, New Regionalization: RDAs as 'Programmed Spatiality'?
- ▶ - Embedded history of regionalism within the Labour Party
- ▶ - Development Agency model from 1970s and 1982 Alternative Regional Strategy
- ▶ - *Renewing the Regions* (1996) rationalize institutions of economic development and produce an economic dividend
- ▶ - "hard-headed economics rather than a sentimental identification with a particular part of the country" (Caborn 1998)
- ▶ - Fragile institutional settlement due to: naïve faith in clusters as a recipe for economic success, they can all win, democratic deficit, cultural void plugged only by 'regional cultural consortiums'



- ▶ 3.3 Enacting Spaces of English Regionalism
- ▶ - Post-1997 insurgent politics in the English regions on two level: civic regionalism and grassroots regionalism
- ▶ - *Civic regionalism* linked to North East activists and the Campaign for the English Regions (CFER)- bringing public policy closer to people
- ▶ - *Grassroots regionalism* linked more to cultural representation and arguments for historic regionalism

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
THE ENGLISH REGIONS

CAMPAIGNING FOR
**POWERS
TO THE
REGIONS**

Campaign for the
ENGLISH
REGIONS



REGIONAL BRITAIN : movements for autonomy



Shetland Movement



Orkney Movement



Scottish National Party



Campaign for the North



Movement for Middle England



Plaid Cymru



Wessex Regionalists



Mebyon Kernow

DECADE MOVEMENT
FOR AUTONOMY
FIRST LAUNCHED



1920s



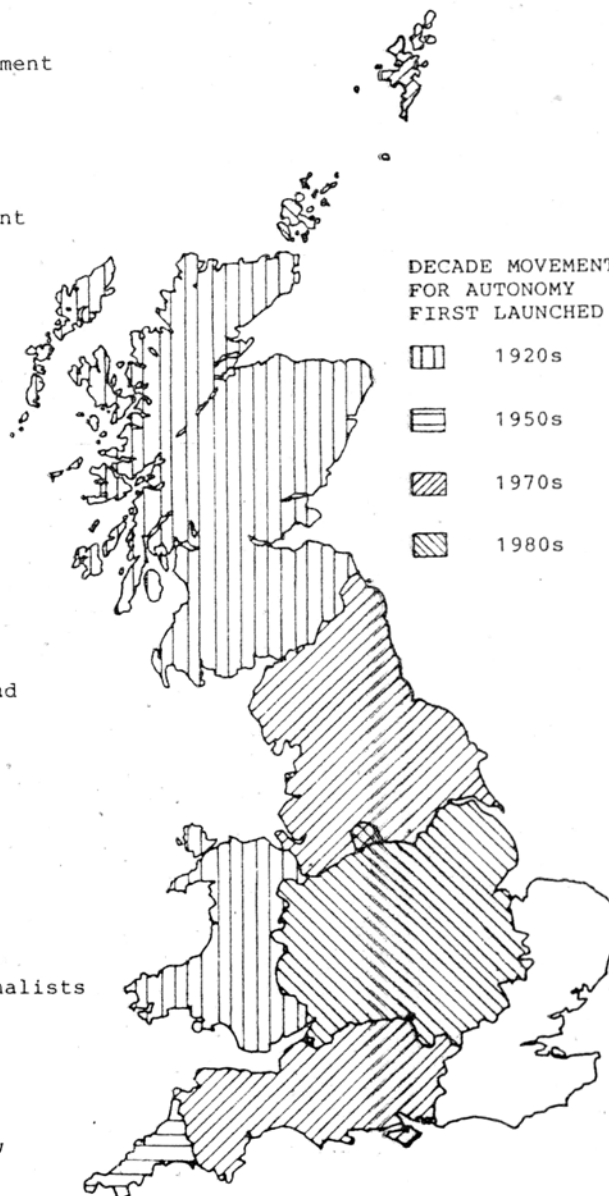
1950s



1970s



1980s



[illegible]

Your Region, Your Choice

Revitalising the English Regions

Annex B

PRO-FORMA FOR RESPONSES TO THE SOUNDINGS EXERCISE ON THE LEVEL OF INTEREST IN EACH REGION IN HOLDING A REFERENDUM ABOUT ESTABLISHING AN ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

1. Your name, or that of the organisation on whose behalf you are responding (if you are responding on behalf of a representative group, please list the people/organisations you represent):
2. Have you responded to this soundings exercise before?
3. Please indicate the region that your comments relate to (Please tick one box. Please complete a separate pro forma if you wish to respond in relation to more than one region):

☐	East Midlands
☐	North East
☐	South East
☐	West Midlands

☐	East of England
☐	North West
☐	South West
☐	Yorkshire & The Humber

4. What is your connection to the region for which you are responding (e.g. resident in region, work in region, business in region)?
5. Postal address:
6. E-mail address:
7. Do you want a referendum in your region? Yes/No

8. What is your view on the level of interest in holding a referendum about establishing an elected regional assembly in the region for which you are responding? Please tick the box you believe best represents the overall level of interest:

Very Strong	☐
Strong	☐
Neither strong nor weak	☐
Weak	☐
Very weak	☐

9. Please give reasoning, evidence and information to support your answer to question 8.

10. Please use this space to inform us of any information or evidence you have (if any) regarding the differences in the levels of interest in holding a referendum between regions.

Responses are requested by **16 May 2003**.

Please send your response to referenduminterest@odpm.gov.uk

If not sending via e-mail, please send your completed response to:

Regional Policy Unit (regions soundings exercise)
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Zone 1/A6
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister may wish to make responses to this soundings exercise available to Parliament and for public inspection in the Office's library. We will assume that you do not object to this unless you specify otherwise. Responses that are submitted on a confidential basis will, nevertheless, be included in any numerical analysis of responses.

Thank you for responding.

Insurgent Regionalism? Struggles to Institutionalize Territory in the South West of England

- ▶ 4.1 Regionalization: A South West Development Agency
- ▶ - Largest and most complex of all the English regions but not much attention in academic debates

SOUTH WEST

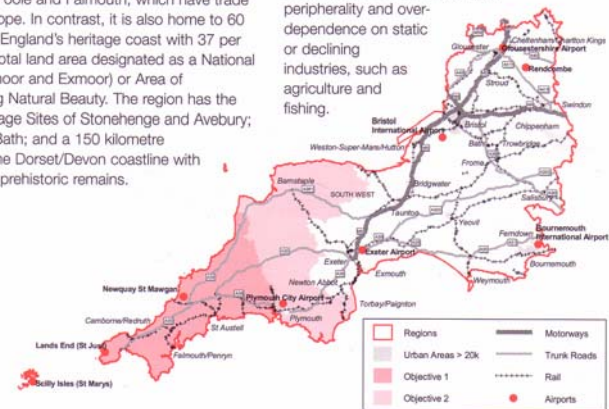


The South West has the largest land area and the lowest population density of any English region. More than four-fifths of the total land area of the region is agricultural and just under a

tenth urban or suburban, making the region predominantly rural in character. Over half the population live in rural areas or towns of less than 20,000 people.

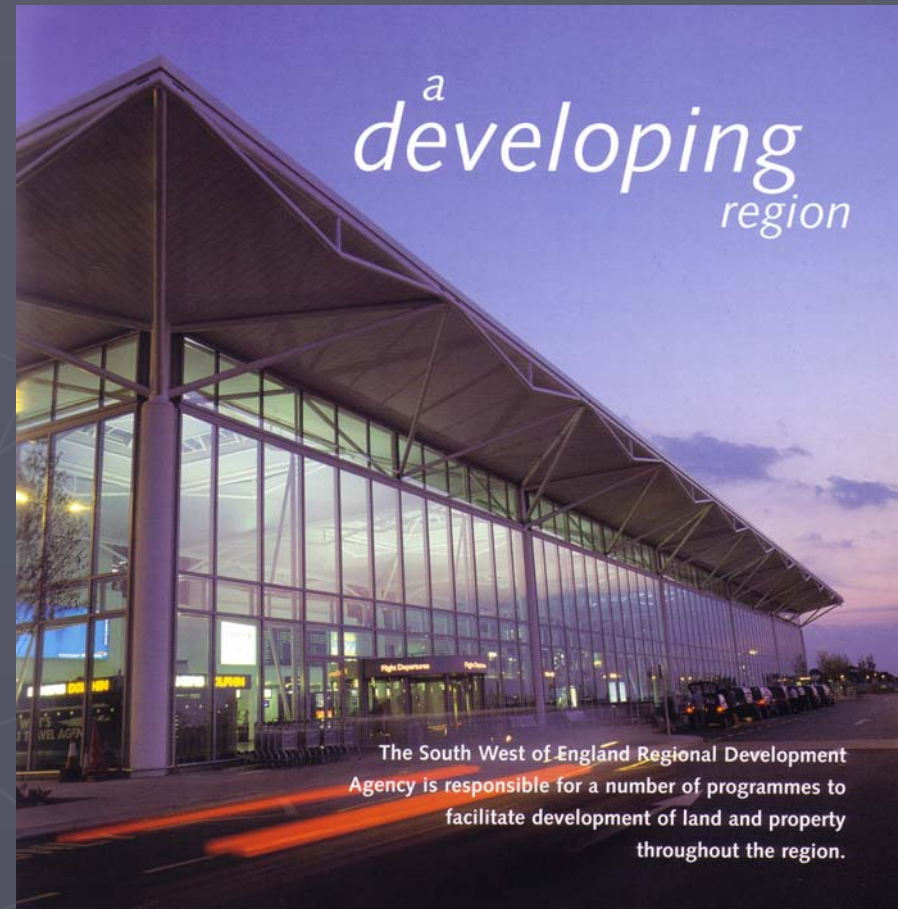
The South West is a region of considerable diversity. It has the busy commercial centres of Bristol and Swindon and the ports of Bristol, Plymouth, Poole and Falmouth, which have trade links to Europe. In contrast, it is also home to 60 per cent of England's heritage coast with 37 per cent of its total land area designated as a National Park (Dartmoor and Exmoor) or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The region has the World Heritage Sites of Stonehenge and Avebury; the city of Bath; and a 150 kilometre stretch of the Dorset/Devon coastline with a wealth of prehistoric remains.

The region's economy is very varied. Although traditionally associated with tourism, agriculture and fishing, food, drink and tobacco and the aerospace and defence sectors, recent years have seen a substantial growth in the financial and business services sectors, in the multimedia industry, and in the electronic and high tech industries. The M4/M5 corridor provides a base for global manufacturing companies such as Airbus, Rolls Royce, Honda and Smiths Industries, as well as major producers in telecommunications and electronics such as Orange and Hewlett Packard. The north and east of the region are generally economically prosperous, whereas the far south-west and less accessible rural areas suffer from peripherality and over-dependence on static or declining industries, such as agriculture and fishing.



Area (square kilometres)	Population	GDP per head (£)	Number of deprived areas	Local authorities	Parliamentary constituencies	Members of the European Parliament
23,289	4,935,700	11,782	4	6 counties with 36 districts; 9 unitary councils	51	7

- - SWRDA supported and launched to promote world-class region status based on economic competitiveness and the learning economy

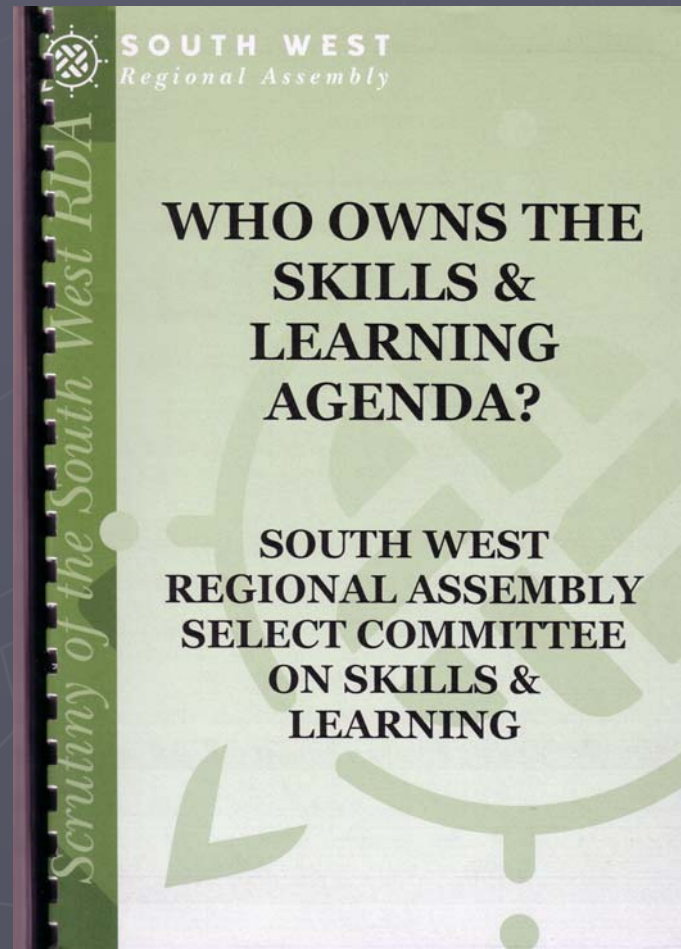


the competitive edge



One of the key parts of the Agency's activity, and one of the Objectives of the Regional Strategy, is to increase prosperity by improving business competitiveness.

- ▶ - Regional Chamber/Assembly reviews suggesting congested agendas and lack of coherence within the region





SOUTH WEST
Regional Assembly

Are current Strategies Joined Up?

Appraisal of 15 Regional Strategies

- **Weak analysis of issues**
- **Short time horizons**
- **No clear relationship with other regional and national strategies**
- **Implementation poorly addressed**
- **From sum of 15 strategies, no clear picture of regional priorities**

- ▶ - Culture promoted by the South West Regional Cultural Consortium and its creation of 'Gerrard (Chunky) Dunster'

In search of Chunky Dunsters...

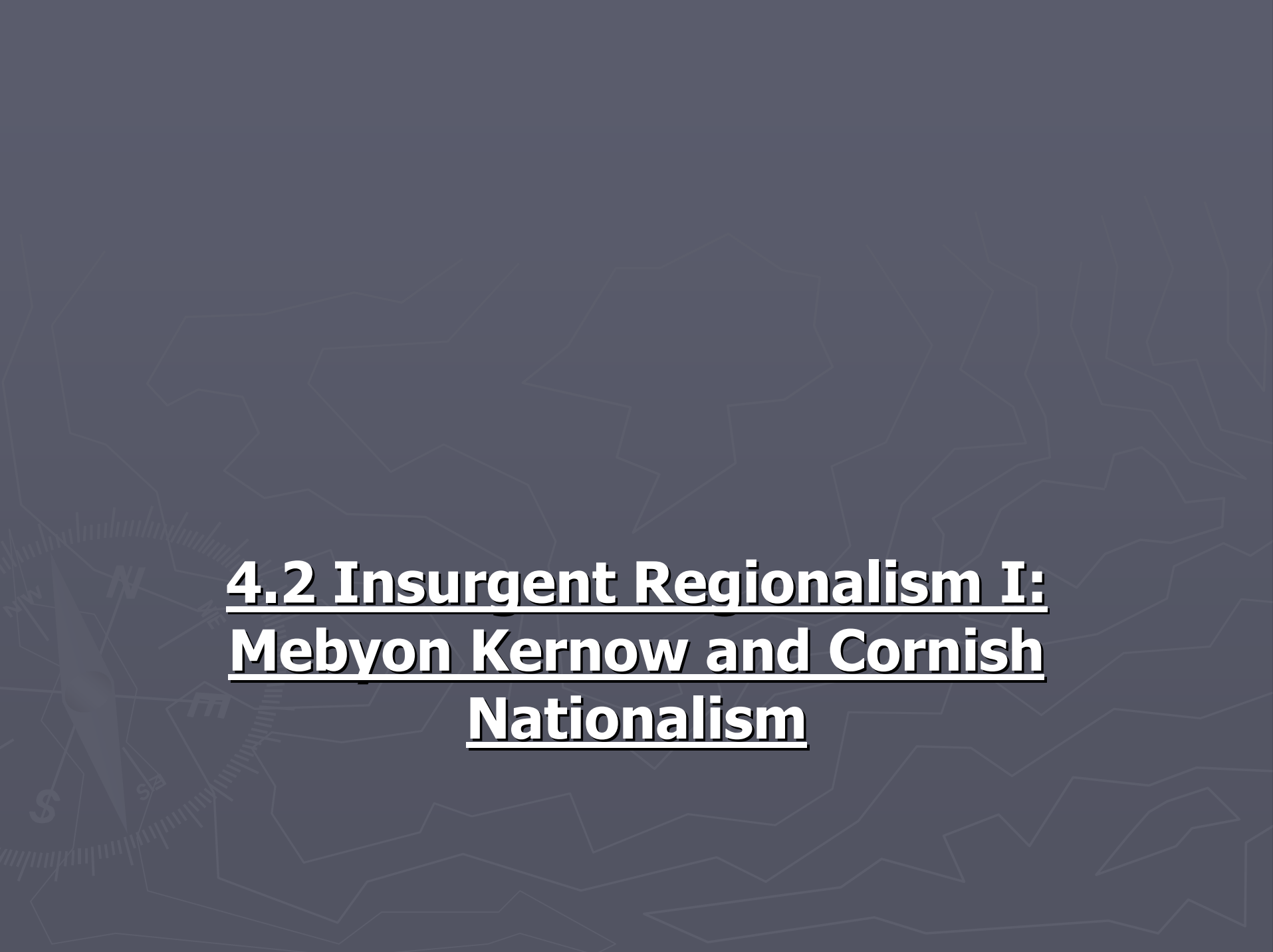
A Cultural Strategy for the South West





“Roll over Rio and Mardi Gras, one of the most spectacular carnivals takes to the streets in ... Somerset” (Cultural South West 2001, 30)

Obvious tension between *identity of a region* and *regional consciousness*!

The background of the slide is a dark grey map of Cornwall and the Mebyon Kernow region. The map shows the coastline and internal regional boundaries. A compass rose is visible on the left side, with the letter 'N' indicating North. The text is centered over the map.

4.2 Insurgent Regionalism I: **Mebyon Kernow and Cornish** **Nationalism**

Cornish NATION



1549 Rising Commemorated

AUTUMN 1999
KYN YAV
ISSUE No. 15

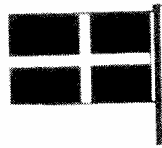
*Feature on
Poverty in East
Cornwall*

*MK to fight
General
Election*



Local issues in
BLACK & WHITE

£1



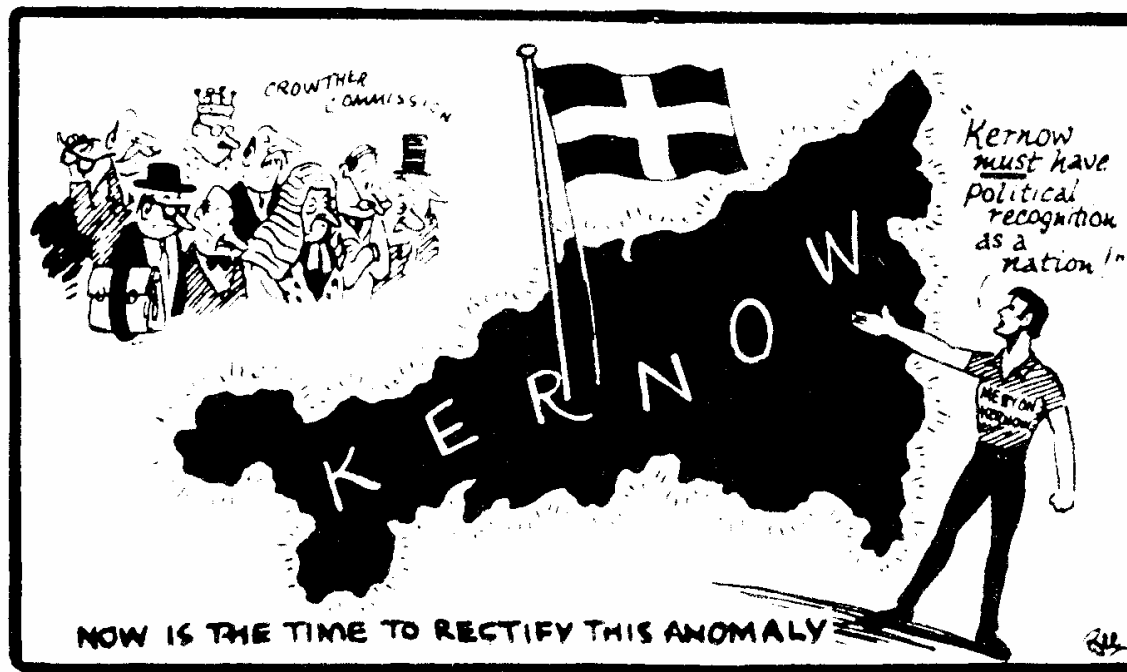
CORNWALL'S

**RIGHT:
INTERNAL
SELF
GOVERNMENT**

ASSEMBLIES FOR
SCOTLAND AND WALES :
WHY NOT CORNWALL?

Produced by the Cornwall Partnership

Printed by the Cornwall Partnership



Cornish NATION

Mebyon Kernow cartoon from an
old 'Cornish Nation' published in
the early 1970's.

1. MK members fighting against the new south-west region.





THE CAMPAIGN TO ESTABLISH THE Cornish Regional Assembly

Cornwall is a distinct region. It has a clearly defined economic, administrative and social profile. This unique identity reflects its Celtic character, culture and environment.

The people of Cornwall will be best served in their future governance by a Cornish Regional Assembly. The campaign is committed to achieving a devolved Cornish Assembly - Senedh Kernow. It has set up the Cornish Constitutional Convention to be the body which drives the campaign forward.



Cornish
Constitutional
Convention
SENEHDH KERNOW

FACING CORNWALL'S FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE

www.senedhkernow.freeuk.com

I Support the Campaign for a Cornish Assembly

Cornwall is a nation with its own identity, culture, traditions and history - it also suffers severe and unique economic problems.

Important decisions about our future are increasingly taken outside of Cornwall and such decisions are often inappropriate or even contrary the needs of our local communities.

Scotland now has its own Parliament and Wales its own Assembly - but Cornwall has been ignored. We have had the artificial 'south-west' region foisted upon us.

Cornwall has had to accept second best for too long.

We, the People of Cornwall, must have a greater say in how we are governed. We need a Cornish Assembly that can set the right democratic priorities for Cornwall and provide a stronger voice for our communities in Britain, in Europe and throughout the wider World.

I support the campaign for a Cornish Assembly.

Signature .....

Full name .....

Further information (eg. pensioner, fisherman, housewife, councillor, etc.)

.....

Address .....

.....

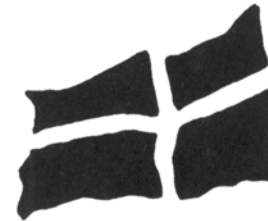
.....

Date .....

Please return to -
**Campaign for a Cornish Assembly, c/o Dartington, Chyvelah Rd,
Threemilestone, Truro, Cornwall.**

Important note -

Your name will be added to a list, alongside the thousands of others calling for increased political power for Cornwall. This list will be presented to the Government as part of the campaign for an Assembly for Cornwall. This individual petition form will also be forwarded to the Prime Minister.



***Best
for
Cornwall***

***Facing
Our
Future
with
Confidence***

Printed and published by
Mebyon Kernow - the
Party for Cornwall,
Dartington, Chyvelah Rd,
Threemilestone, Truro,
Cornwall.



**Cornish
Constitutional
Convention**

SENEDH KERNOW

- 50,000 people
can't be wrong
- Cornwall is a Region
- I support a referendum
in Cornwall for a
devolved Assembly
for Cornwall

Mr John Prescott MP

Regional Policy Unit (White Paper)
Department for Transport,
Local Government & The Regions
Zone 1/A4
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Cornish NATION

WINTER 2002
GWAV
ISSUE No. 24

Assembly Campaign in Downing St

*A Tribute to
Ron Williams*

*Survival for Tribal
Peoples*

*Cornish News
and Views*



Local issues in
BLACK & WHITE

£1

Mebyon Kernow The Party for Cornwall



Mebyon Kernow is a progressive political party campaigning for self-government for Cornwall.

Our political philosophy is based on four important cornerstones. We are Cornish, Green, Left-of-Centre and Decentralist.

It is our aim to offer a real voice for the people of Cornwall.

We are working to create a just and fair society in Cornwall, with greater economic prosperity and real social justice for one and all.

We are leading the fight to win a legislative Cornish Assembly, with the powers to make a difference.

We are working to build a better future for all the people of Cornwall, regardless of gender, age, health, religion, national/ethnic origin or sexuality.

We are campaigning hard to protect the environment for future generations and safeguard local communities.

We are an internationalist party and put all our policies in their global contexts. We speak up against injustice wherever it occurs.

MK has branches in each of Cornwall's five parliamentary constituencies. The Party is also represented on four of Cornwall's six district councils, as well as a number of town and parish councils.

Membership of the Party costs only £8.00 a year (£4.00 unwaged or £10.00 for a family).

To join MK, write to:

MK, Lanhainsworth, Fraddon Hill,
Fraddon, St Columb TR9 6PQ.

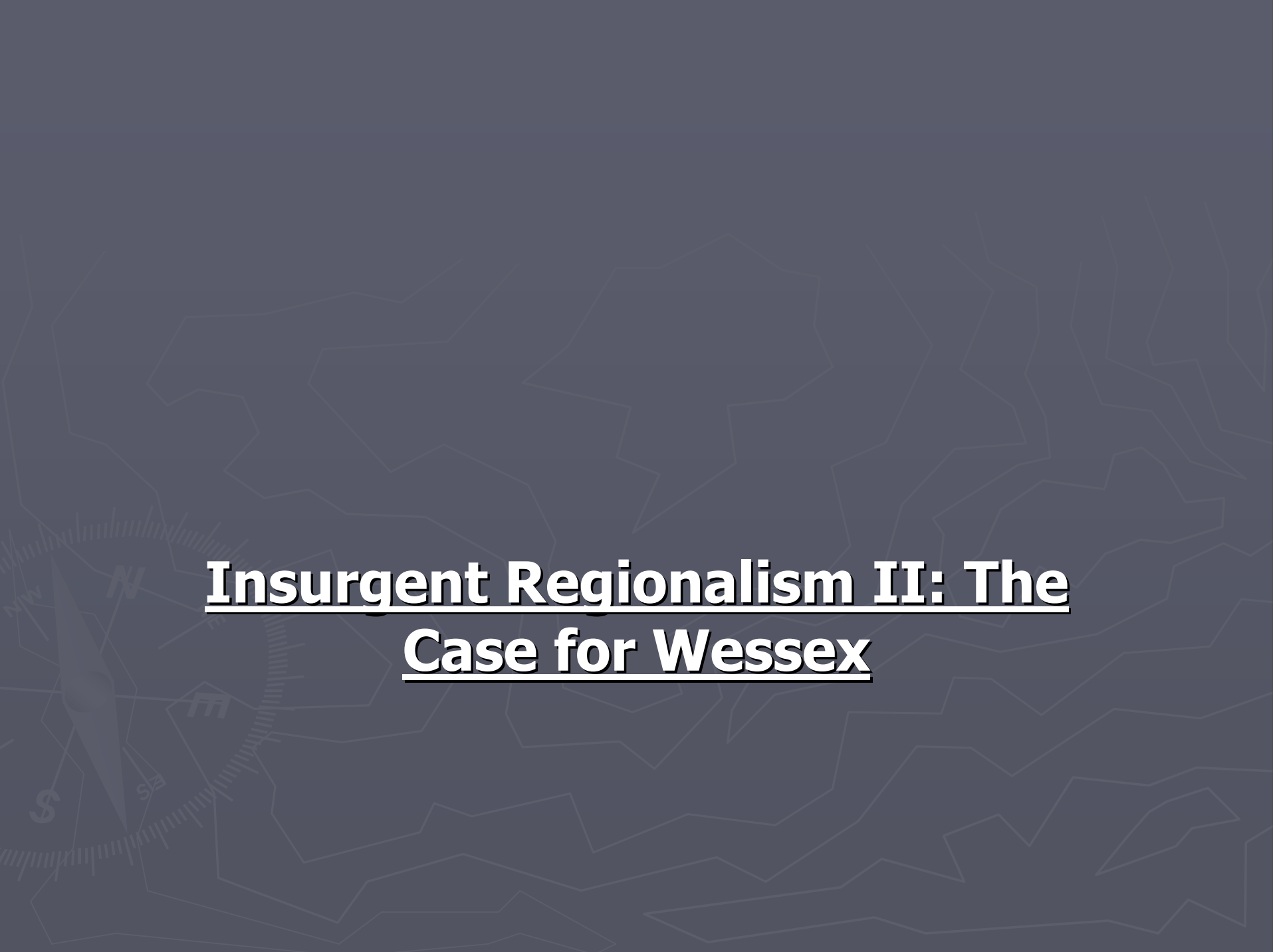
Cornish Nation 25



Working for Cornwall

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is the only political party based in and working wholeheartedly for Cornwall.

- Mebyon Kernow is united in the fight to win an Assembly for Cornwall.
- MK would never betray Cornwall in order to force gains elsewhere, such as in Westminster.
- Mebyon Kernow is fighting for more of the decisions affecting Cornwall to be taken in Cornwall, and not by unelected south-west quangos or by a remote government in Westminster.
- MK is working tirelessly to maintain and assert the strength of Cornwall's identity.
- Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is made up of strongly motivated and caring individuals who are committed to their local communities.

The background of the slide is a dark grey map of Wessex, an ancient region in southern England. The map is rendered in a lighter grey tone, showing the coastline and internal boundaries. In the bottom left corner, there is a compass rose with a stylized arrow pointing towards the top left. The letters 'N', 'S', 'E', and 'W' are visible around the compass rose, indicating North, South, East, and West respectively. The title text is centered over the map.

Insurgent Regionalism II: The Case for Wessex

WESSEX?

The 'heartland' of Wessex comprises six shires - Berkshire, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire - within their traditional boundaries. Wessex, the cradle of England, is re-emerging as pressure grows for a more decentralised form of politics.



WESSEX REGIONALISTS?

Our aim is self-government for Wessex within the United Kingdom - a devolved assembly taking over matters of regional concern and leaving Westminster free to deal with issues of genuinely national importance.



The STATUTE of WESSEX



£1

WESSEX PETITION

We, the undersigned, call upon the Government to recognise the historic region of Wessex in any future regional policy, and to end its partition into artificial and unhistorical “South West” and “South East” regions.



NAME	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX	E-MAIL

Please return completed forms to: Wessex Petition, 121 Worthing Road, Patchway, Bristol, Wessex, BS34 5HU



WESSEX

WESSEX CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Devolution is making headlines. In Scotland. In Wales. In Northern Ireland. Even in London.

Wessex also is a voice being heard.

Central Government is pressing ahead with plans for limited regional government in England. Those involved claim they want the public to have their say. But the boundaries are non-negotiable.

So much for regional democracy!

On the table is an imposed 'South-West' region, forcibly incorporating the Celtic nation of Cornwall, and an unworkable, L-shaped 'South-East' region, stretching round London from Milton Keynes to Margate.

Unlike the historic regions they seek to over-ride, these drab, dreary areas have no soul, no colour, no life. Scotland and Wales now have their identities recognised. **So too must Wessex.**

The roots of current arrangements go back no further than Second World War civil defence areas. Boundaries designed for the job of keeping the Germans out are hardly the best basis for self-governing, elected regional assemblies in the 21st century.

To fight these unimaginative proposals, friends of our region have come together to launch the Wessex Constitutional Convention.

Do join us in our struggle.

WHAT IS WESSEX?

A Legacy from the Past

The kingdom of Wessex grew out of the merging of Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon cultures in the south and west of England between the 5th and 9th centuries AD. Despite the suppression of that identity after the Norman Conquest there remains a huge sense of regional distinctiveness. At various times this has found expression in the myths and legends surrounding King Arthur and King Alfred and through the Wessex novels of Thomas Hardy. Prince Edward's revival of the Wessex earldom has started renewed interest in the question: Where is Wessex?

A Reality in the Present

After generations when our rich dialect was regarded as the mark of ignorance, Wessex today is a region with growing self-confidence. The existence of over 500 businesses with the word 'Wessex' in their name suggests that it is already a force to be reckoned with. The mythical beast of Wessex, the gold wyvern, can often be seen displayed around our towns and cities and forms the focal point of the regional flag. Designed by the Flag Institute, this is included as part of the Convention logo, shown overleaf. Wessex is not just for antiquarians but offers a badge of identity to which all can relate.

A Necessity for the Future

Wessex makes sense. Some of those in power already know this. Recent announcements include the setting-up of a Wessex regional rail franchise for local train services west of London. The Government's alternative to Wessex is a regional boundary that divides Swindon from Reading, Salisbury from Andover and Bournemouth from Southampton. It is a line drawn right through one of the country's most dynamic areas. The result is a fragmented vision that is failing to provide our region with the economic, social and environmental policies it so badly needs.

OUR PLANS

The Wessex Constitutional Convention is an all-party pressure group with the following aims:

1. To achieve the broadest consensus on the form of self-government appropriate for Wessex.
2. To campaign for the implementation of that consensus at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. To oppose the continuing partition of Wessex between the 'South-West' and 'South-East' regions.

The background of the slide is a dark grey map of the South West of England, showing the coastline and major rivers. A compass rose is visible in the bottom left corner, with the letters N, E, S, and W indicating the cardinal directions. The text of the section header is white and underlined.

► 4.4 Regionalization Meets Regionalism: Convening the South West of England

THE FUTURE South West

A guide to involvement in the discussion about regional governance
incorporating a report of the founding meeting of the South West
Constitutional Convention

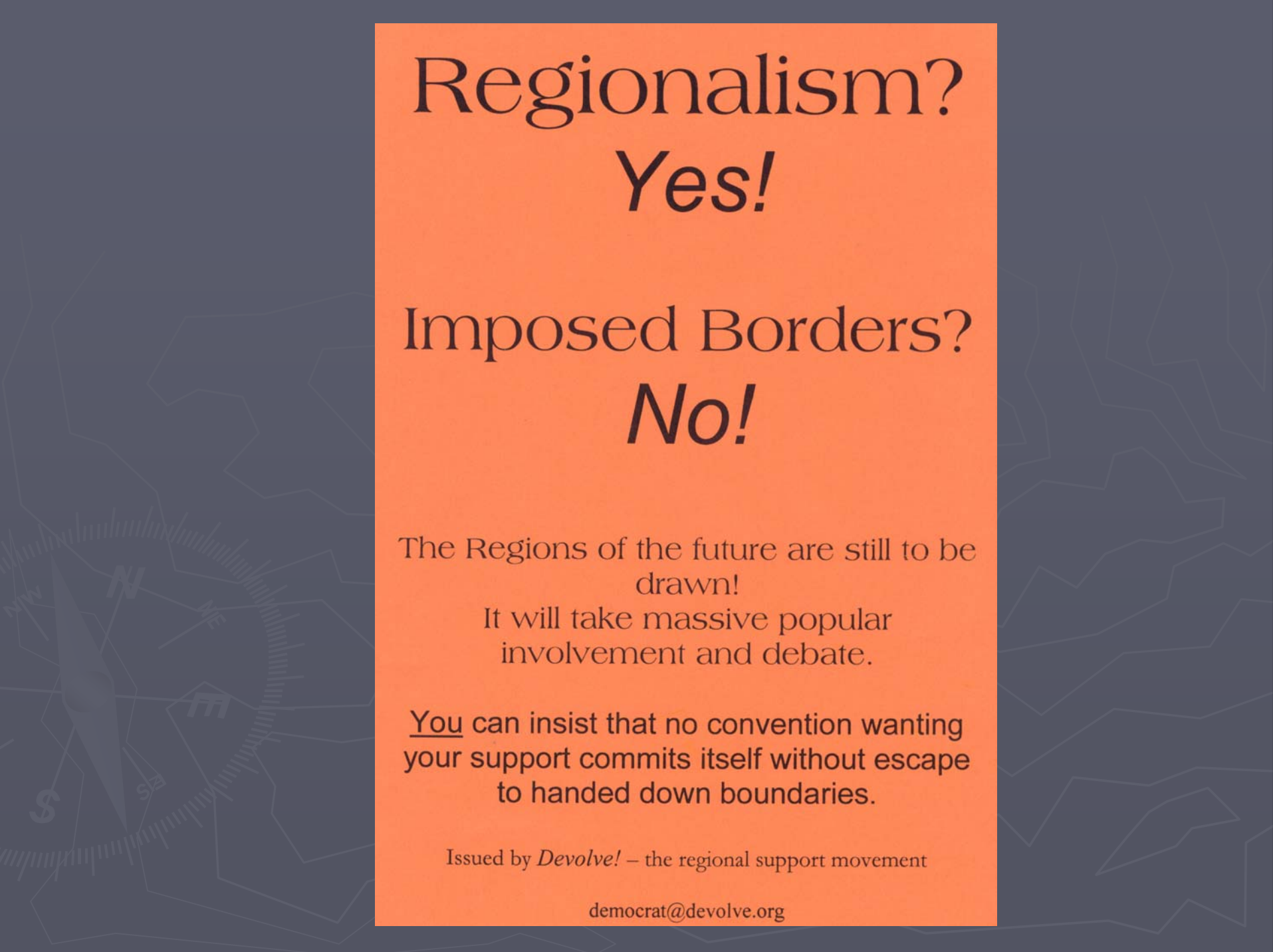
19 May 2001

Mission Statement

“ To work with others to achieve a referendum for directly elected and
representative governance for the South West ”

“ Our aim is to inspire a debate about how the South West should be governed.
We need to tackle the worrying disenchantment with the political process
caused by having structures which too few people understand let alone know
how to influence. ”

The Right Revd Michael Langrish, Bishop of Exeter
Chair of the South West Constitutional Convention

The background of the slide is a dark blue-grey color. On the left side, there is a faint, light blue map of the United Kingdom. Overlaid on the map is a compass rose with a needle pointing towards the top-left. The compass rose has markings for North (N), South (S), East (E), and West (W), as well as intermediate directions like NE, SE, SW, and NW. The map shows the outlines of the British Isles and some internal regional boundaries.

Regionalism?

Yes!

Imposed Borders?

No!

The Regions of the future are still to be drawn!

It will take massive popular involvement and debate.

You can insist that no convention wanting your support commits itself without escape to handed down boundaries.

Issued by *Devolve!* – the regional support movement

democrat@devolve.org

YOU HAVE A CHOICE
of how you spend your afternoon!

The **Wessex**
Constitutional Convention

starts 2 p.m.
at Phoenix Arts Centre
Gandy Street
Exeter

Come and debate the case for a future region run by
its people and centred on traditional Wessex

Views of prospective Wessex parliamentary candidates
- survey results presented

Issued by *Devolve!* – the regional support movement

democrat@devolve.org





The Founding Statement of the South West Constitutional Convention

The aim of the South West Constitutional Convention (SWCC) is to enable the people of the South West to express a considered view to central government on the issue of democratically accountable regional government.

It will consider the economic and social benefits that representative regional government could bring to the region and in particular to disadvantaged communities and individuals.

It will aim to bring about accountable and representative regional government for the South West.

We support the creation of the South West Constitutional Convention.

This will:-

Regardless of race, creed, social status, gender or sexual orientation, bring together persons, groups, associations, political parties, companies, trade unions, cooperatives and mutuals, wishing to debate and examine the possibilities for democratically accountable regional government within the official government region of the South West.

Plan and effect debate, education and research on the need for an elected regional assembly for the South West paying particular attention to models of elected representation likely to include the widest cross-section of the South West.

Seek at all times to promote the above debate at the level of local communities with appropriate out-reach to those social groups under-represented in existing political forums.

The Process

The Convention will build on its existing regional network together with media contacts to foster debate on the case for representative government for the region. We will:-

1. Produce or disseminate up-to-date briefing materials posing the key issues.
2. Hold community-based events regionally and at local level designed to involve a wide section of people in the South West in debating the merits of democratic regional government.
3. Lobby, influence and work in partnership with existing regional organisations, official or voluntary, on the merits of elected regional government.
4. Maintain links with the Campaign for the English Regions and other such bodies in order to involve the people of the South West in the wider debate on devolution and democracy.

Cornish Reactions

“It seems to me that before we go down the road of deciding what we want to do, we ought to ask ourselves what it is we mean by the term region. That is where we are coming from in Cornwall. Because we have a very strong sense of ourselves, our geography, our culture, of our constitutional position in Britain, of our economy, and of the way we can achieve success and become a major contributor of the well-being of Britain as a whole” (Bert Biscoe, Chair of the *Cornish Constitutional Convention*, University of Exeter, 19th May 2001).

NOTE: Below is given the draft statement presented to the conference, modified in the spirit of the amendments proposed from the chair after discussions and formally endorsed (see main report). The revised draft from the Steering Group has not been issued at the time of printing. Any draft will need to be ratified at the next conference of the Convention.

Founding Statement of the South West Constitutional Convention

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It will consider the economic and social benefits that representative regional governments could bring to the region and in particular to disadvantaged communities and individuals.

It will aim to bring about accountable and representative regional governments for the South West.

It will have no pre-determined view of the boundaries of the South West.

We support the creation of the South West Constitutional Convention.

This will:-

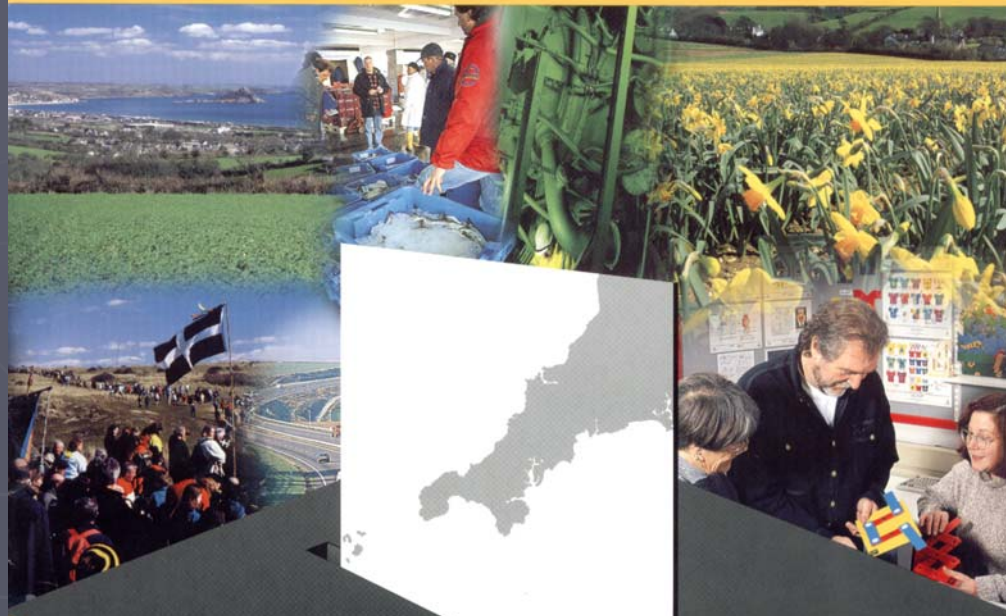
- Regardless of race, creed, social status, gender or sexual orientation, bring together persons, groups, associations, political parties, trade unions, co-operatives and mutuals, wishing to debate and examine the possibilities for democratically accountable regional governments within the South West.
- Plan and effect debate, education and research on the need for elected regional assemblies in the South West, paying particular attention to models of elected representation likely to include the widest cross-section of people.
- Seek at all times to promote the above debate at the level of local communities, with appropriate outreach to those social groups under-represented in existing political forums.

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3. Lobby, influence and work in partnership with existing regional organisations, official or voluntary, on the merits of elected regional government.
4. Maintain links with the Campaign For the English Regions (CFER) and other pan-regional bodies in order to involve the people of the South West in the wider debate on devolution and democracy.

Devolution for One and All:
Governance for Cornwall
in the 21st Century



Cornish
Constitutional
Convention
SENEDH KERNOW



The **Constitution** Unit

The Cornish Question: Devolution in the South-West Region

by Mark Sandford

funded by:

SOUTH WEST
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



Cornish
Constitutional
Convention
SEWEDH KERNOW

September 2002

► 4.5 Their Region, No Choice? The South West after the White Paper

'existing regional boundaries'

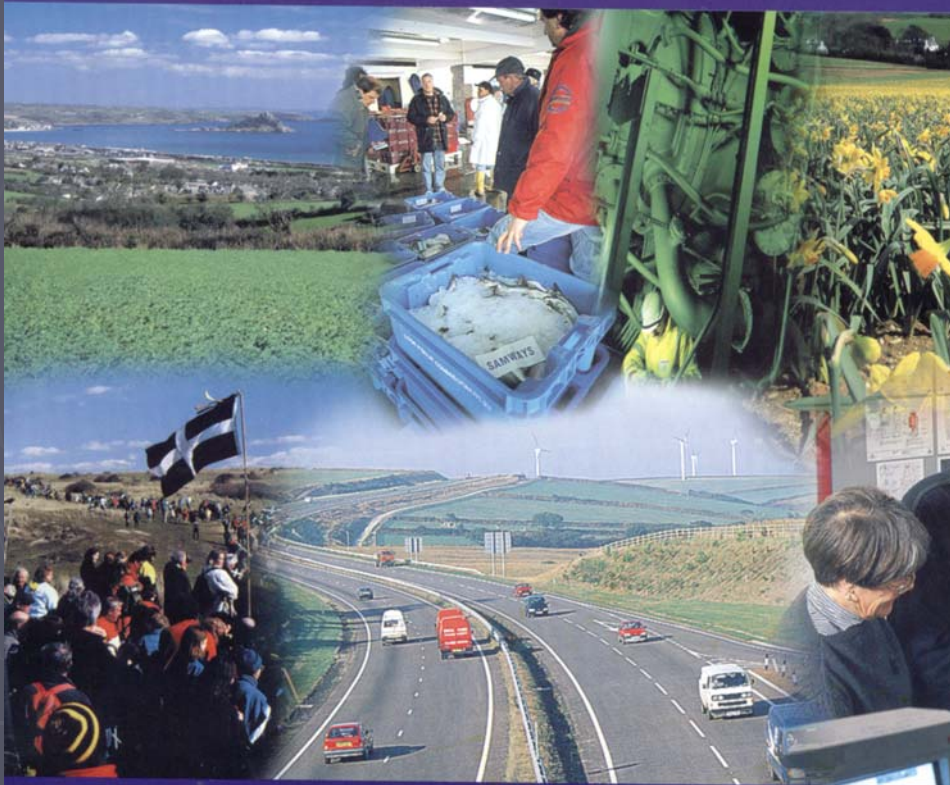
Cornish Reactions

"The Government should have learnt by now that its 'control freak' tendencies are always destined to failure. Evidence of an obsession with boundaries created to satisfy the administrative need of unelected Government quangos and departments does not make a sound basis for galvanizing public opinion" (Andrew George, MP for St Ives, *Cornish Guardian* 16th May 2002).

"The White Paper talks about choice, public support and local solutions. But for Cornwall these are empty words. If this about democracy—which it is—the Government has an obligation to allow everyone in Cornwall to fully consider the argument for and against a Cornish Assembly, and then vote in a properly constituted referendum. Denying the people of Cornwall the chance to vote for their own assembly will make a mockery of Labour's devolution programme" (Dick Cole, Leader of Mebyon Kernow, *Cornish Guardian* 16th May 2002).

Your Region, Your Choice: The Case for Cornwall

Cornwall's response to the
Government's Devolution White Paper



Cornish Constitutional Convention
Senedh Kernow

Devolution for Cornwall is not about structures and administrative arrangements, but about people achieving an acceptable level of economic prosperity and fulfilling their potential.

3.2 Cornish special needs

Cornwall, like Scotland or Wales, has always had a 'special status', not only legally, geographically, constitutionally, culturally and linguistically, but politically and economically. It is not, therefore, surprising that there has been sustained interest in devolution for Cornwall.

More recently, the desire for a major change in the way that Cornwall is governed has deepened, primarily due to the coincidence of economic and structural issues, an increasing feeling of disempowerment and exclusion, and cultural revival. This combination of factors is unique within the United Kingdom and points up the need to recognise Cornwall's case of 'special need'.

Because Cornwall can reasonably be considered a special case, we do not believe that providing Cornwall with a devolved assembly will set any precedent for any other part of Britain. Furthermore, Cornwall can legitimately be considered a region because:

- **Economic factors play a crucial role in differentiating Cornwall from Southwest England.** The fact of Cornwall's relative poverty and the importance of the need to implement an effective and sustainable Objective 1 programme cannot be understated. Economic and social issues are unusually prominent in Cornwall, with problems of seasonal and poor quality employment, low incomes and second homes dominating the local agenda. There is a strong and growing belief that Cornish solutions are required to solve Cornish problems. The fact that, in the UK, Cornwall alone is likely to qualify for a second round of Objective 1 funding is ample illustration of Cornwall's divergent economic behaviour.
- **Geography is a key differentiator:** this includes the overall settlement pattern; the lack of large cities and that Cornwall is a 'virtual island'; transport, housing, planning, tourism and economic development are tightly linked; there is a long standing, but frustrated, interest in the development of trade along the 'Atlantic Arc'. These factors mean that a careful, considered and tailored approach is required when developing strategy. Overall, Cornwall requires its own, integrated approach.
- **There is a very strong blend of modern political and cultural distinctiveness.** Many people come to Cornwall because they recognise its distinctiveness: there is considerable evidence that many new residents become strong supporters of devolution for Cornwall. There is also an increasingly prominent 'diaspora' that is supportive of political and cultural innovation as well as powerful role models provided by the other Celtic nations and regions.
- **There is a strong consensus within Cornwall that Cornwall constitutes a 'special case'.** Cornwall is a cultural and linguistic region, and is independently recognised as such.¹ In Cornwall, peoples' perceptions are strongly influenced by these factors, even if they are not themselves involved in cultural or linguistic activities.
- **Cornwall has a special relationship with England, as a Celtic region that is both part of England, and separate from it.** The anomalous constitutional position that applies to Cornwall together with historic links with European and Celtic regions contribute to the perception of difference: this special relationship is unique to Cornwall.
- **Cornwall appears to be the only region where there is a significant grass roots interest in devolution,** and this appears far greater than that evident in the standard planning regions, with the possible exception of Northeast England. Elsewhere in Southern Britain there appears to be general apathy towards regional assemblies.

3.3 The Cornish economy

Your Region, Your Choice states, "English regions are all different": This is an important point, particularly for regions that exhibit particular economic or social problems, such as Cornwall or Northeast England. Divergent behaviour is often the defining characteristic of a region, and therefore distinct policies are required to address distinct problems.

In Cornwall's case, defining characteristics are all too clearly visible. To quote Viscount Waverley "Crossing the border between Devon and Cornwall is like falling off an economic cliff."² As far as Cornwall is concerned, economic factors are crucial. This divergent behaviour may be best summarised by a comparison of key economic indicators.¹



Newsletter of the Wessex Constitutional Convention

WESSEX VOICE

No. 5

May 2002

Our Region? Our Choice?

The much-delayed White Paper on regional governance, *Your Region, Your Choice*, at last appeared on 9th May. Much that it contains will have life-long regionalists pausing to wonder which side of the campaign they should be on when it comes to a referendum.

Right from the title itself the White Paper is confused and confusing. Its strategy is to corral voters into artificial regions, chosen by Whitehall, which will form the units for the promised referenda. The referenda themselves are envisaged as bracketing together the introduction of elected assemblies and the reorganisation of local government in a single question, a sure way to maximise the 'No' vote.

The range of powers to be devolved is also disappointing, amounting largely to a list of matters on which an assembly may draw up strategies or write letters to Ministers. There is no suggestion that Whitehall will be down-sized to reflect the new constitutional arrangements. On the contrary, quite detailed powers of control will be retained, along with responsibility for over 95% of regional public expenditure. There will be no clear demarcation of competences, the absence of which is currently bedevilling Welsh devolution. Finance will be by block grant, topped up with a (cappable) power of precept over Council Tax, arguably the most regressive of all taxes. If this is about 're-balancing' the British constitution after Scottish devolution, Mr Prescott's scales are in serious need of recalibration. Per head of population, Scotland's budget is more than 20 times bigger than those proposed for English regional assemblies.

On boundaries, the White Paper seems unclear where it is heading. It does its best to discourage debate, insisting that public discussion of this issue would not necessarily produce anything better than the present map of regions. This, of course, is nonsense, since it is not possible to know the outcome before the debate happens. It also contrasts sharply with the Government's wish to be seen as one that consults and listens, still more with its belief that "our approach must be bottom-up, not top-down".

Signs of a different hand at work on the draft appear at paragraph 6.5, where care is taken to reserve the right to change regional boundaries in the 'longer term' (whenever that may be). Analysts may see in this a desire for early wins in Labour's northern heartlands, deferring for another day the thorny problem of the southern regions on which there exists nothing like a consensus, either geographically or politically.

Feedback on the White Paper is invited. The WCC Steering Group met at Weston on 26th May to plan our response. This will set out in detail why the boundaries must be changed (and changed *now* – not at some vague date in the future when even more damage has been done). It should be well understood, both by those who recognise the strength of our arguments and by those who, as yet, do not, that the White Paper represents, in effect, the starter's gun. It is very far from being the finishing line.

Supporters can assist by writing their own letters. The White Paper is explicit that letters from the public will be taken into account in judging when to hold a referendum; clearly the more the voice of Wessex is raised the sooner it will be heard.

Responses to the White Paper should be sent to:

Regional Policy Unit (White Paper)
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Zone 1/A4
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tears Without Tiers?

In place of a manifesto commitment to offer regional assemblies where 'predominantly' unitary local government is established, the White Paper seeks to make unitary authorities universal. No amount of official denial can disguise the fact that this would spell the end of most counties.

Local government suffered an exhaustive investigation by the Banham Commission, less than a decade ago, which failed to pull the perfect unitary map out of the hat. In most rural areas there is simply no alternative to the two-tier structure that can avoid centralising power. Counties are too large to be local; districts are too small to be strategic; and anything in between simply combines the defects of both with the benefits of neither. Indivisible county services will remain, under joint authorities having no direct accountability to the electorate. Eliminate elected county councils and decision-making that does not fit the capabilities of any narrower level then gravitates to the regions, irrespective of what the formal structures may be.

PRO-FORMA FOR RESPONSES TO THE SOUNDINGS EXERCISE ON THE LEVEL OF INTEREST IN EACH REGION IN HOLDING A REFERENDUM ABOUT ESTABLISHING AN ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

1. Your name, or that of the organisation on whose behalf you are responding (if you are responding on behalf of a representative group, please list the people/organisations you represent):
2. Please indicate the region that your comments relate to (Please tick one box. Please complete a separate pro forma if you wish to respond in relation to more than one region):

☐ East Midlands
☒ **Cornwall** ☒
☐ Yorkshire & The Humber

3. What is your connection to the region for which you are responding (e.g. resident in region, work in region, business in region)?

4. Postal address:

5. E-mail address:

6. Do you want a referendum in your region? Yes ☒ No ☐ - in Cornwall

7. What is your view on the level of interest in holding a referendum about establishing an elected regional assembly in the region for which you are responding? Please tick the box you believe best represents the overall level of interest:

Very Strong ☒ - in Cornwall
 Strong ☐
 Neither strong nor weak ☐
 Weak ☐
 Very weak ☐

8. Please give reasoning, evidence and information to support your answer to question 7.

The Government should be in no doubt about the strength of feeling on this issue in Cornwall. More than 50,000 people (over 10% of the electorate) have signed individual declarations for a Cornish Assembly, with supporters coming from all sectors of the community. Signatories include over 120 district/county councillors and four of Cornwall's five MPs.

A referendum on the issue of a Cornish Assembly is also backed by the majority of principal authorities in Cornwall and in recent months, the majority of the responses to the regional government White Paper came from Cornwall.

9. Please use this space to inform us of any information or evidence you have (if any) regarding the differences in the levels of interest in holding a referendum between regions.

Over the last three years, there has been more support for devolution to Cornwall than to the Government's (eight standard planning) regions put together (see above). In Cornwall, there has been a grass-roots campaign for a new democratic settlement.

Regional government is an issue of democracy. Surely, it would be undemocratic to deny the people of Cornwall the opportunity to say YES or NO to a Cornish Assembly in a referendum.

THE PEOPLE OF CORNWALL MUST BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE FOR CORNWALL.

Responses are requested by 3 March 2003.

Please send to: referenduminterest@odpm.gov.uk

If not sending via e-mail, please send your completed response to:

Regional Policy Unit (regions soundings exercise)
 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
 Zone 1/A6
 Eland House
 Bressenden Place
 London SW1E 5DU

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister may wish to make responses to this soundings exercise available to Parliament and for public inspection in the Office's library. We will assume that you do not object to this unless you specify otherwise. Responses that are submitted on a confidential basis will, nevertheless, be included in any numerical analysis of responses.

Thank you for responding.

On 'Relational Regions' and the Territorialization of Political Life

- ▶ Back to the Argument
- ▶ Problems of regionalisation
- ▶ Interaction between regionalisation and regionalism as 'new regional spaces' and 'new spaces of regionalism'
- ▶ Highlight tensions between relational and territorial readings of space

“The campaign to establish a Cornish Regional Assembly is not a subversive separatist plot. It is not a covert bid for independence or UDI. The campaign is about developing Cornwall as a region, with an assembly leading, monitoring, promoting ... doing strategic things which will generate success in the wider world for places like this” (Bert Biscoe, Chair of the Cornish Constitutional Convention, quoted in *Cornish Guardian*, 6th February 2003).

“Regional citizenship should not be reduced to regional cultural identification ... An alternative cultural imaginary points towards *cosmopolitan regionalism*, not a regionalism of indigenous roots; one that draws upon an open sense of place and a politics of local and translocal engagement ... This way of imagining regional culture replaces the politics of territorial confinement that has come to dominate current debate on regionalism by a politics of connectivity based on the acceptance of regions as sites where diversity and difference are juxtaposed and where flows and networks of different spatial reach overlap” (Amin et al. 2003, 37, emphasis added).

Limits to Relational Regions?

1.) So ... need to rethink territory: territory, territoriality, and territorialization within 'phase space'. Can we have topological territorialities?

"...the degree to which regions are regarded as closed, continuous and bounded or as open, discontinuous and permeable is perhaps best regarded as a matter to be resolved *ex post facto* and empirically rather than *a priori* and theoretically" (Hudson 2002, 3).

2). So ... need to also consider the relations between circuits, flows and spaces, which sees these in terms of complementary rather than competitive perspectives