

FOUR PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENTS grouping the regional administrations under a central Dáil Éireann in Athlone.

If you agree that this is the sort of "regionalisation" which Ireland needs—and the only kind which will make any real difference—then give your support to Sinn Féin.

**Sinn Féin offers you an alternative
Ireland and asks for your support.**

VOTE

SINN FÉIN

for Local Government

Head Office : 2a Lr. Kevin Street, Dublin 8.

() is used to describe three different things :

1. Taking away powers from primary local authorities and giving them to regional authorities. This use of the word is particularly marked in Ireland.

2. Dividing up the State into economic planning regions for the purpose of regional consultative bodies that have no powers of their own. This kind of "regionalisation" exists in fact in Britain and France, and in theory in Ireland (no plans for the "planning regions" have actually been produced).

To call this sort of thing "regionalisation" is misleading for two reasons. Firstly, it confers no power, even planning power, on the region. Secondly, it refers only to one aspect of government and semi-state action — economic planning. The Irish "planning regions" exist only for the IDA and the Department of so-called "local government". All the other Departments (Agriculture, Education, Health, Social Welfare, etc.) and the semi-state bodies (ESB, Bord Fáilte, CIE, etc.) operate according to their separate regional systems and carry out their "planning regions" did not exist.

'REGIONALISATION'

3. The third meaning of "regionalisation" is the election of regional public authorities under democratic control; the co-ordination in these bodies of major government and semi-state action in the region; and the devolution to these bodies of the appropriate powers from central government. In short, the re-organisation of major state activities in the region in a co-ordinated form under a multi-purpose, democratic regional government.

Some countries had no need of such "regionalisation" of government since they already possessed self-governing regional communities e.g. the Swiss Canton, the German Land, the Dutch Province. But others, which had no real community between the primary

In Europe today, the word "regionalisation" (or "regionalism") is used to describe three quite different things :

1. Taking away powers from primary local authorities and giving them to regional authorities. This use of the word is particularly marked in Ireland.
2. Dividing up the State into **economic planning regions**, for which the planning is done centrally with some advice from regional consultative bodies that have no powers of their own. This kind of "regionalisation" exists **in fact** in Britain and France, and **in theory** in Ireland (no plans for the Irish "planning regions" have actually been produced).

To call this sort of thing "regionalisation" is misleading for two reasons. Firstly, it confers no power, even planning power, on the region. Secondly, it refers only to **one** aspect of government and semi-state action — economic planning. The Irish "planning regions" exist only for the IDA and the Department of so-called "local government". All the other Departments (Agriculture, Education, Health, Social Welfare, etc.) and the semi-state bodies (ESB, Bord Fáilte, CIÉ, etc.) operate according to their separate regional systems and carry merrily along as if the "planning regions" did not exist.

3. The third meaning of "regionalisation" is **the creation of regional public authorities under democratic control**; the **co-ordination** in these bodies of major government and semi-state action in the region; and the **devolution** to these bodies of the appropriate powers from central government. In short, the re-organisation of major state services in the region **in a co-ordinated form** under a **multi-purpose, democratic regional government**.

Some countries had no need of such "regionalisation" of government since they already possessed self-governing regional communities e.g. the Swiss **Canton**, the German **Land**, the Dutch **Province**. But others, which had no regional community between the primary local authority and the central government, have been moving in this direction.

Italy has established 20 regional governments; Belgium has constituted a Flemish, a Walloon and a Brussels region; in France, the establishment of self-governing regions has been the subject of political debate for several years.

It is this third kind of regionalisation which Sinn Féin proposes for the New Ireland.

It is the only kind of "regionalisation" which is of any real value. Only by reconstructing the Irish state in this manner can the appalling regional imbalances within Ireland be corrected—only in this way, and **not** by "planning" or "aid" handed down from Dublin.

Our present chaotic system of centralised government — the most centralised in Western Europe—with each department and semi-state body running its own autonomous empire, has manifestly failed to produce a balanced spread of population and prosperity throughout the country. Nor has it been able to prevent the progressive destruction of Dublin — socially and physically.

Moreover, this ruthlessly centralised state, with its all-powerful bureaucracy dominating the elected representatives cannot really be described as a **democracy**. Nor is it the kind of state which could possibly attract the Ulster Protestants, jealous of their own traditions and autonomy. Indeed, the monopolistic structure of the Dublin state was one of the principal, underlying reasons why partition occurred in the first place; and the threat which it represents for local minorities (witness the fate of the Gaeltacht over 50 years) has certainly helped to maintain partition.

Sinn Féin proposes to restructure government in Munster, Leinster, Connacht and Ulster on the following lines :—

DISTRICT COUNCILS for the local communities of 10,000—40,000 people, both in the county areas and within the large cities. Representation on these councils for elected community councils.

FIFTEEN REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS grouping these districts together as regional communities in the Cork, Dublin and Belfast conurbations; in North Munster, South Munster, East Ulster, West Ulster, North Connacht, etc.; and in a special Gaeltacht region.

Title: What Sinn Féin means by 'Regionalisation'

Organisation: Sinn Féin

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