

Senate Blocks Drive for Gun Control

By JONATHAN WEISMAN, *New York Times*, 17 April 2013

WASHINGTON — A wrenching national search for solutions to the violence that left 20 children dead in Newtown, Conn., all but ended Wednesday after the Senate defeated several measures to expand gun control.

In rapid succession, a bipartisan compromise to expand background checks for gun buyers, a ban on assault weapons and a ban on high-capacity gun magazines all failed to get the 60 votes needed under an agreement between both parties. Senators also turned back Republican proposals to expand permission to carry concealed weapons and to focus law enforcement efforts on prosecuting gun crimes.

Sitting in the Senate gallery with other survivors of recent mass shootings and their family members, Lori Haas, whose daughter was shot at Virginia Tech, and Patricia Maisch, a survivor of the mass shooting in Arizona, shouted together, "Shame on you."

President Obama, speaking at the White House after the votes, echoed the cry, calling Wednesday "a pretty shameful day for Washington."

Opponents of gun control from both parties said that they made their decisions based on logic, and that passions had no place in the making of momentous policy.

"Criminals do not submit to background checks now," said Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa. "They will not submit to expanded background checks."

It was a striking defeat for one of Mr. Obama's highest priorities, on an issue that has consumed much of the country since Adam Lanza opened fire with an assault weapon in the halls of Sandy Hook Elementary School in December.

Faced with a decision either to remove substantial new gun restrictions from the bill or to allow it to fall to a filibuster next week, Senate leaders plan to put it on hold after a scattering of votes Thursday. Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the majority leader and a longtime gun rights advocate who had thrown himself behind the gun control measures, is expected to pull the bill from the Senate floor and move on to an Internet sales tax measure, then an overhaul of immigration policy, which has better prospects.

More than 50 senators — including a few Republicans, but lacking a handful of Democrats from more conservative states — had signaled their support for the gun bill, not enough to reach the 60-vote threshold to overcome a filibuster.

Democratic leadership aides said the effort could be revived if a public groundswell demanded it. "The world is watching the United States Senate, and we will be held accountable," said Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, who helped lead the gun control effort.

But with the families of Sandy Hook students in the Senate gallery and a flurry of gun rights phone calls flooding Senate offices, it was hard to imagine how much more emotion could be brought to bear. Aides to senators supporting the bill said that only outside circumstances, like another mass shooting, might cause those who voted "no" to reconsider their positions.

"It's almost like you can see the finish line, but you just can't get there," said Andrew Goddard, whose son, Colin, was hurt but survived the shooting at Virginia Tech. "It's more annoying to be able to see it and not get to it."

Mr. Obama — who avoided the gun issue in his first term and focused on proposals he thought had a better chance of passing, only to seize on expansive measures after the Newtown shootings — made last-ditch appeals to senators, including Dean Heller, Republican of Nevada, and Kelly Ayotte, Republican of New Hampshire. Both rejected his entreaties.

Standing in the Rose Garden next to former Representative Gabrielle Giffords and other victims of gun violence, Mr. Obama flashed anger as he said that the gun rights lobby had "willfully lied" about the legislation, and that Republicans and Democrats had "caved to the pressure."

"But," he added, "this effort is not over."

For now, the gun rights lobby has proved more persuasive.

The National Rifle Association mobilized members to blanket the Senate with phone calls, e-mails and letters. The group also spent \$500,000 on Wednesday alone, on an advertising campaign criticizing "Obama's gun ban" and using Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, a deep-pocketed gun control advocate, as a foil. "Tell your senator to listen to America's police instead of listening to Obama and Bloomberg," the ad said. [...]

Surveillance and Its Discontents

The false 'tradeoff' between liberty and security in the terror war.

Wall Street Journal, 14 June, 2013

5

In 1998, after Osama bin Laden orchestrated the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, FBI agents were deployed to collect evidence so they could issue a warrant for his arrest. Twelve years later, Seal Team Six raided his Abbottabad compound, shot and killed him and his guards and then dumped his corpse into the sea.

10 The difference is that the U.S. is now waging a war on terror, and not a metaphorical war like LBJ's on poverty. This is a crucial distinction that has been lost amid the growing ruction over the National Security Agency surveillance programs. Another point lost amid the uproar is that the safety of citizens is the first—and in our view, the principal—obligation of government.

In our age of proliferating nuclear weapons and genetically engineered biotoxins, a country serious
15 about self-preservation must detect potential threats and prevent attacks before they occur, not prosecute them as crimes after the fact. The architecture to protect civilians must therefore include signals intelligence, or surveillance, to obtain actionable information about the plans, actions and capabilities of the decentralized and lethal networks that are al Qaeda and its franchises.

It has been instructive to watch liberals rediscover that the Constitution limits government power, at
20 least on civil liberties. Too bad they show no such compunction about economic liberty. The ObamaCare mandate-tax that commands Americans to buy a private product is far more offensive to the Constitution than NSA reading the emails of terrorists overseas.

The regulatory agencies claim—and use—the power to seize property and control individual conduct.

The very administration of the entitlement state depends on tracking (Social Security numbers), data-
25 processing (Medicare benefits) and individual scrutiny (tax audits). The IRS knows far more about American citizens than the NSA does, and while there is much speculation about the potential for surveillance abuse, we now have real evidence of corruption at the IRS. So which is the greater scandal?

Libertarians at least claim that both national-security surveillance and economic compulsion are
30 equally offensive, but even most of them concede that a core purpose of the state is to defend against foreign powers and their agents. The legitimacy of the American form of government, as the Constitution's preamble establishes, is to "insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, . . . and secure the Blessings of Liberty."

The more nuanced critics—those who don't invoke George III or the Stasi—argue that the U.S. is
35 striking the wrong balance between tranquility and liberty. Or as President Obama has put it, that there is a "tradeoff" between security and freedom. More government power often does come at the expense of liberty, but in the case of data-mining this tradeoff is vanishingly small.

The Fourth Amendment restricts unreasonable searches on individuals but imposes few limits on collection and analysis, and technologies have no privacy rights. The NSA is screening the data
40 system in general for conduct that threatens the security of the system, not targeting any particular individual or group using the system. The right comparison is a cop on a beat who patrols public spaces. He's not investigating a crime or enforcing a law; he's watching for suspicious behavior.

As the legal scholar Philip Bobbitt argued in his important 2008 book "Terror and Consent," antiterror methods ought to be "measured not only against the liberties these practices constrict, but also with
45 respect to the liberties they may protect."

Data-mining is a tool to infer patterns and relationships, but you can't connect the dots without, well, dots. There really is safety in numbers. The de minimis costs to individuals of data-mining are worth the benefits for society at large, which include not being blown to smithereens on your morning commute.

50 Some commentators assert an abstract sense that the government has gone too far, but liberty cannot exist absent the basic conditions of security. A government that cannot ensure peace also cannot protect individual rights. Alexander Hamilton in the first installment of the *Federalist* notes that "the vigor of government is essential to the security of liberty" and "their interest can never be separated."

His famous disquisition about "energy in the executive" in *Federalist* 70 is that power vindicates "the
55 security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy." [...]

Despite Americans' outrage, NSA scandal draws mostly shrugs abroad

By Max Fisher, 7 June 2013, *Washington Post*

Revelation that the National Security Agency is mining vast amounts of private data from American telephone and Internet users may be generating outrage and fierce debate here in the U.S. but so far, the story does not appear to have attracted much attention abroad.

When foreign media outlets have paid attention, it's mostly been to report on the possibility that U.S. spy agencies could access the social media accounts of foreigners who use U.S.-based services such as Facebook. Such major American political controversies are typically big news abroad, so the relatively muted reaction this time around is unusual. Perhaps, as some U.S.-watchers suggest, this may say more about Americans' particular sensitivities to perceived government invasions of privacy than about foreign indifference.

With the exception of the U.K. and Canada, where papers have been following the story closely, foreign media has given the NSA story relatively little coverage. Media outlets abroad seem not even to rank the story very high within their international coverage — Russian President Vladimir Putin's announced split with his wife still seems to dominate. And a number of regional stories received more attention. In Africa, the U.K. government apology to Kenyan victims of the 1950s Mau Mau uprising seems to rate higher. Asian outlets are giving more airtime to planned talks between the Koreas and even Chinese President Xi Jinping's upcoming summit with President Obama. Turkey's protests and Syria's ongoing fighting are attracting more attention in Middle Eastern outlets, including the Iranian outlets that are often so keen to needle the U.S.

When foreign outlets do show interest in the story, it's mostly to ask what it means for them. The news that Facebook and Google may be included in the NSA's data collection program, known as PRISM, have set off fears around the world that non-American users might have their data compromised. A story in *Le Parisien*, a French newspaper, noted that Facebook and Google users in France could theoretically be the focus of NSA snooping. A Dutch outlet noted a similar backlash among tech and privacy groups within the Netherlands.

Globo News, a prominent Brazilian TV news station, was one of the few international outlets to report on the story primarily for the debate it's sparked within the U.S., rather than for how it might affect Brazilian social media users, as other outlets in the country did.

Surprisingly, there's been little opprobrium from foreign state media outlets in countries such as Iran or Russia, which typically take gleeful shots at the U.S. for such privacy abuses, eager to counter U.S. criticism of their own countries. Moscow-run RT did cover the story, of course. But within Iran, some of the most comprehensive coverage came not from state-linked media but from the BBC's Persian service. China's coverage has been tepid, overshadowed by the Xi-Obama summit and local stories, with little of the usual finger-wagging in Chinese state media that seeks to assure its viewers that U.S. freedoms aren't so great after all. But that could change. "Coverage was tentative, which is common for sensitive overseas stories," Adam Minter, a Shanghai-based journalist, said. "I bet we'll see a more robust approved narrative soon."

Maybe so, but Chinese Web users themselves, often glued to U.S. news, don't seem too interested. That might in part be a function of China's much more intrusive surveillance state, but it's worth noting that Web users in open societies, such as India, also seem to be devoting little attention to the story, based on social media searches.

The story does seem to have generated a very different sort of discussion: about Americans and their unusually suspicious view of their government and at times fervent rejection of state intrusion into their lives and private data. "I think America is one of very few countries where this NSA thing would be much of a story. And I mean that as a compliment," Tom Gara, an Australian *Wall Street Journal* reporter previously based in the Middle East, wrote on Twitter. Hussein Ibish, a Lebanese-American member of the American Task Force on Palestine, responded, "Depends on your expectations. By U.S. standards, it's completely outrageous. Elsewhere, few would care much." Issandr El Amrani, a Moroccan journalist well known for his coverage of the Middle East, put it bluntly: "America is special about these issues."

Slipping the constitutional leash

By George F. Will, *Washington Post*, 15 June 2013

In May 1918, with America embroiled in the First World War, Iowa Gov. William Lloyd Harding dealt a blow against Germany. His Babel Proclamation — that was its title; you cannot make this stuff up — decreed: 5“Conversation in public places, on trains and over the telephone should be in the English language.” The proscription included church services, funerals and pretty much everything else.

Iowa’s immigrant communities that spoke Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and French objected to this censorship of languages of America’s wartime allies. Harding, however, said speaking any foreign language was an “opportunity [for] the enemy to scatter propaganda.” Conversations on street corners and over telephone party 10lines — Iowa telephone operators did the metadata-gathering that today’s National Security Agency does — resulted in arrests. Harding was ridiculed but Germany lost the war, so there.

The war validated Randolph Bourne’s axiom that “war is the health of the state,” but it killed Bourne, who died in December 1918 from the influenza epidemic it unleashed. Today, as another war is enlarging government’s intrusiveness and energizing debate about intrusiveness, it is timely to remember that war is not the only, or even 15primary, cause of this.

Or, more precisely, actual war is not the only cause. Ersatz “wars” — domestic wars on various real or imagined vices — also wound the defense of limited government. So argue David B. Kopel and Trevor Burrus in their essay “Sex, Drugs, Alcohol, Gambling and Guns: The Synergistic Constitutional Effects.”

Kopel and Burrus, both associated with Washington’s libertarian Cato Institute, cite the 1914 Harrison Narcotics 20Act, which taxed dealings involving opium or coca leaves, as an early example of morals legislation passed using Congress’s enumerated taxing power as a pretext. In 1919, the Supreme Court held that the law “may not be declared unconstitutional because its effect may be to accomplish another purpose as well as the raising of revenue.”

Its “effect”? The effect of suppressing the drug business obviously *was* its purpose. Nevertheless, the court held 25that even if “motives” other than raising revenue really explained Congress’s exercise of its enumerated power, the law still could not be invalidated “because of the supposed motives which induced it.”

“Supposed”? The court’s refusal to reach a reasonable conclusion about the pretext Congress used in this case for trespassing on territory reserved to the states enabled the federal government to begin slipping its constitutional leash. In 1922, Chief Justice William Howard Taft warned that Congress could seize control of 30“the great number of subjects” reserved to the states by the 10th Amendment by imposing a “so-called tax” on any behavior it disapproved of: “To give such magic to the word ‘tax’ would be to break down all constitutional limitation of the powers of Congress and completely wipe out the sovereignty of the states.”

So, a 1934 law imposed a \$200 tax on the making and transfer of certain guns. Supreme Court Justice Harlan Fiske Stone complacently said that any act of Congress “which, on its face, purports to be an exercise of the 35taxing power” should be treated as such, without judicial inquiring into any “hidden motives” Congress had. “Hidden”?

Congress responded to this “abdication of judicial scrutiny” (Kopel’s and Burrus’s correct characterization) with the 1937 Marihuana Tax Act, another supposed tax law actually designed not to raise revenue but to legislate morality by changing behavior. The 1951 Revenue Act taxed “persons engaged in the business of accepting 40wagers” and required them “to register with the Collector of Internal Revenue.” The IRS was becoming the enforcer of laws to make Americans better behaved, as judged by their betters in the federal government.

There have been equally spurious uses of Congress’s enumerated power to regulate interstate commerce. In 1903, the court upheld, as a valid exercise of that power, a law suppressing lotteries by banning the interstate transportation of lottery tickets. Dissenting, Chief Justice Melville Fuller argued that the power to regulate 45persons and property in order to promote “the public health” and “good order” belongs to the states.

Seven years later, the Constitution’s commerce clause was the rationale for the Mann Act banning the transportation of females for the purpose of “prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose.” Including, it turned out, noncommercial, consensual sex involving no unhappy victim.

Today, Congress exercises police powers never granted by the Constitution. Conservatives who favor federal 50“wars” on drugs, gambling and other behaviors should understand the damage they have done to the constitutional underpinnings of limited government.

Supreme Court Decision On Affirmative Action Looms

By JUSTIN POPE, *Huffington Post*, 6 June 2013

[...] As a barrier to opportunity, class is getting more attention, while race is fading.

The shift is perceptible in a range of ways:

5 You can see it in polling, like surveys from the Pew Research Center, which shows the percentage of Americans who feel racial discrimination is the chief impediment to black progress is falling, from 37 percent in 1995 to 23 percent in 2012.

10 Polling on affirmative action varies widely depending on how questions are phrased, but an ABC News/Washington Post poll released Wednesday showed strong feelings about using race in college admissions: Just 22 percent of Americans support letting universities consider applicants' race as a factor, and 76 percent oppose the practice. The proportions supporting racial preferences were similar for blacks (19 percent) and Hispanics (29 percent) as for whites (20 percent).

15 You can read it in the tone of recent opinion pieces penned even by left-leaning academics and columnists, whose support for racial preferences has eroded under a mountain of evidence that quality higher education is tilting further toward the already-wealthy.

20 You can hear it, too – in conversations on elite college campuses, where the dearth of low-income students is replacing race as a topic of debate. And in the words of the first black president, who has said there's no good reason his own daughters should benefit from racial preferences when they apply to college.

25 The shifting debate has painted supporters of race-based affirmative action into a difficult corner. Most agree the barriers to low-income students are a serious problem that should be addressed, and of course, many minority students are also low-income.

But they acknowledge widening income inequality has made it harder to make their case that special attention to race remains justified.

30 "This is the first time you have whites thinking they face more discrimination than blacks do," said Camille Charles, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania who studies class and race. "You have people who have come to believe the system is set up to benefit black people at the expense of white people." Such beliefs, she said, reflect ignorance about the persistence of discrimination, about how much harder minorities were hit by the Great Recession, and about how affirmative action actually works (many incorrectly conflate "affirmative action" with "racial quotas," which the Supreme Court long ago ruled unconstitutional).

35 In his 2010 book "The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth," Harvard economic historian Benjamin Friedman charted how during periods of prosperity, societies throughout history have expanded opportunities to disadvantaged groups and become more open and inclusive. During economic struggle, by contrast, they typically close ranks.

40 The Great Recession was no exception, he said, persuading more Americans that efforts to ensure minorities are represented among the scarce slots at top universities are "a luxury they cannot afford," Friedman said by telephone.

45 Indeed, many people ask, why not do both? Kahlenberg says he's all for that, but "universities never get around to the class part of the equation. They would rather have a class of fairly wealthy students of all races." A big obstacle is cost: By definition low-income students need more financial aid, while race-based preferences don't necessarily go to the neediest students. In fact, research has confirmed large proportions of minority students at selective colleges come from middle- and upper-income families.

50 Kahlenberg believes with some creativity, colleges can use class-based affirmative action to ensure racial diversity. That's happened at many schools in states where affirmative action is already banned. However, the broader consensus is that, at least in the short term and at the most elite schools, replacing race-based preferences with class-based efforts would cause minority enrollment to fall.

55 "Low-income will not replace diversity," said Ted Spencer, admissions director at the University of Michigan, which won the right to use race as an admissions factor in the 2003 Supreme Court case, but later lost it in a voter referendum. Michigan's numbers of minority students have not fully recovered.

But Spencer emphasized the court's justification for race-based affirmative action has never been only about minorities, or about rectifying society-wide discrimination, or about pitting racial barriers against class ones.

Rather, the court's justification was educational – that all students benefit from a racially diverse student body. Employers increasingly want students accustomed to working with people from different groups, and many students want that experience, too. If the court rules as expected, he's worried they'll have few options.

"As we prepare people for work and life," he said, "the absence of diversity on campus deprives all of our students of a very important part of their academic growth."

Thinking About the Government

Robert Kuttner, *Huffington Post*, 6 June 2013

I remember a time when liberals were the people who used government as a democratic counterweight to the abuses of capitalism, and conservatives were those close to big business who wanted to limit government. Liberals also recognized, with the Framers of the Constitution, that government had to be strong enough to protect the rights of the weak. Conservatives didn't like the power of the state, but were fine with concentrated private power.

Yes, there were inconsistencies and exceptions on both sides, but there was a philosophical coherence to it. And when regular people got mobilized and attractive candidates appeared, we could even elect leaders who would direct government for the public good.

But, lately the lines have blurred. The old, stylized picture of what liberals and conservatives want of government doesn't mean much, especially to younger Americans, because they have seldom experienced it. Consider: An administration currently run by supposed liberals thinks that it's ok for government to secretly seize phone and Internet records of citizens, without the kind of explicit search warrant contemplated by the Fourth Amendment. The conservatives who controlled the federal government in the Bush administration were even more cavalier about trampling citizen rights. You have to go to the libertarian right (Rand Paul) and the progressive left (Bernie Sanders, Jeff Merkley) to find support for containing the national security state.

And the whistle blower who raised the curtain on some of the NSA's secret data-mining program? Edward Snowden worked for a government contractor, Booz-Allen-Hamilton. More and more of the government is being contracted out and privatized, even the most sensitive state secrets, not to mention basic public services. Even the U.S. armed forces depend increasingly on private mercenaries.

Far from being a counterweight to economic elites who invoke the freedom of markets, government has gotten into bed with those elites. Democrats are almost as corrupt as Republicans when it comes to raising money from the very rich, at using public service as a gateway to careers in private lobbying, at turning over public functions to private interests.

Once conservatives supported balanced budgets, while liberals were willing to use deficits to finance public investments to dig out of economic slumps. Today's conservatives run up deficits as a way of clubbing government, and liberals in the White House cut public spending as a way of showing fiscal responsibility. No wonder voters are baffled about who really stands for what.

The financial collapse and presidential election of 2008 were a moment for political reformers to dismantle the Wall Street power that caused the financial collapse and did such damage to ordinary people. But the moment passed with only feeble reforms, which are being dismantled daily as lobbyists eat away at the regulations to carry out the ambiguous constraints of the Dodd-Frank Act. Liberals would like to support their government in its effort to clean up Wall Street, but Wall Street is inside the government.

Or consider the public services that provide security and opportunity to regular people -- things like schools. A supposedly liberal administration has joined the assault against public schools, using the carrot of federal money to induce states and towns to shift to charter schools and hobbling public schools with teach-to-the-test requirements.

In embracing universal pre-kindergarten as a signature initiative in his State of the Union message, President Obama did not propose expanding public schools one year downward. Instead, his program, if enacted, would underwrite a patchwork of private preschools, church basements, and the occasional genuine early kindergarten.

A health reform that professes to use government to move us closer to universal insurance coverage is actually a command for people to buy insurance from private industry, which is fatter and less efficient than ever. Government is less of a counterweight than an enabler.

A liberal national administration has colluded with conservatives in failing to help state and local government bridge over economic recession without crippling layoffs. This is the first recession in a century when government employment and public services were cut rather than expanded to compensate for the weakness of the private sector.

Take enough resources away from government, and it becomes too enfeebled to do its job for regular people. Citizens then give up on government. Why throw good money after bad?

Both parties outdo each other to give away tax breaks to business. The tax breaks have little tonic effect on a depressed economy, but deny government needed revenue. Neither party has the nerve to mount a serious offensive against corporate tax cheats. Then both parties condemn deficits and cut government further. [...]

President Obama Must Speak the Word 'Union' Loudly

Leo W. Gerard, International President, United Steelworkers

Huffington Post, 11 February, 2013

5 [...] Obama has assured union members he has their back. Here's what he said in his first Labor Day speech in 2009: "So let us never forget: much of what we take for granted -- the 40-hour work week, the minimum wage, health insurance, paid leave, pensions, Social Security, Medicare -- they all bear the union label. It was the American worker -- union men and women -- who returned from World War II to make our economy the envy of the world. It was labor that helped build the largest middle class in history. So even if you're not a union member, every American owes something to America's labor movement."

10 On Labor Day two years later, radicals in the Republican Party were pushing so-called Right to Work (RTW) legislation that denies companies and unions the right to bargain over requiring payments in lieu of dues from workers who decline to join the union. These laws weaken unions because they allow workers to shirk their responsibility to help pay the costs of the union services they benefit from. Here's what President Obama said then:

15 "I know it's not easy when there's some folks who have their sights trained on you. . . And I want everybody here to know, as long as I'm in the White House I'm going to stand up for collective bargaining. And we're going to keep at it. Because having a voice on the job and a chance to organize and a chance to negotiate for a fair day's pay after a hard day's work, that is the right of every man and woman in America - not just the CEO in the corner office, but also the janitor who cleans that office after the CEO goes home. Everybody has got the same right. »

20 As he ran for President in 2007, Obama walked a picket line with UNITE HERE Local 1 in Chicago, and he said this in a speech at Converse College in South Carolina:

25 "And understand this: If American workers are being denied their right to organize and collectively bargain when I'm in the White House, I'll put on a comfortable pair of shoes myself, I'll walk on that picket line with you as President of the United States of America. Because workers deserve to know that somebody is standing in their corner."

30 When the radical Republican governor of Wisconsin stomped on the bargaining rights of public sector union workers, when the radical Republican governor of Ohio restricted the collective bargaining rights of 360,000 public workers, when the radical Republican governors of Indiana and Michigan signed legislation denying workers bargaining rights, some union members called for President Obama to put on those comfortable shoes. But he did not.

35 He did not put on those shoes when his Republican opponent Mitt Romney attacked 29,000 Chicago teachers striking in President Obama's hometown of Chicago, or when Hostess Brands management bankrupted the company -- again -- and speciously blamed the loss of Twinkies on the company's 15,000 union workers, or when the American Crystal Sugar Co. locked out 1,300 union workers.

40 Now, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that in 2012 the number of American workers in labor unions fell to a record low of 11.3 percent, down from 20.1 percent two decades earlier. Now, new legislation to limit bargaining rights has been introduced in Pennsylvania and Missouri, and even in the U.S. Congress by radical Kentucky Republican Sen. Rand Paul.

These Republicans intend to wipe out labor unions. In his 2011 Labor Day speech, President Obama described the consequence of killing unions: "America cannot have a strong, growing economy without a strong, growing middle class and without a strong labor movement."

45 The American labor movement knows President Obama supports it philosophically. He has said so repeatedly on Labor Day. But he never mentioned unions in his inaugural or State of the Union addresses, except once in passing. As extremists try to destroy the labor movement in this country, it's essential for President Obama to formally and forcefully declare to the entire nation the merits of unions.

50 Last month, in his second inaugural address, the President said: "preserving our individual freedoms ultimately requires collective action."

His fifth State of the Union speech this week gives President Obama a perfect opportunity to proclaim to all of America that he will *preserve the freedom to engage in collective action*. It's an important moment for him to say the word union loudly.

The Split Between the States

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD, *The New York Times*, 5 June 2013

Wisconsin and Minnesota are neighboring states with long traditions of caring for the least fortunate, but, at the moment, only one of them is concerned about the health of the poor and uninsured.

5 In February, more than 130,000 Minnesota residents who lack health insurance became eligible for coverage when the state expanded its Medicaid program under the health care reform law. That will save the state \$129 million in the first two years alone.

10 Wisconsin, however, has chosen to take the path of indifference. On Tuesday, the Republicans who control the State Legislature's Joint Finance Committee voted to reject the expansion of Medicaid, even though it would have covered 85,000 people at less cost to the state. The committee was marching in lock step behind the governor, Scott Walker, who claims to be worried that federal financing will run out. What's really going on, of course, is that state Republicans have made poor people the victims of their ideological resistance to President Obama and his health care law.

15 That infection has spread to 25 states, mostly with Republican leaders, that have said no to the Medicaid expansion or are resisting it. As Robert Pear of The Times recently reported, more than half of all people without health insurance live in states that are not planning to expand coverage. Many of those states already do a terrible job of covering the poor and have no interest in changing their ways, no matter the financial incentive.

20 On Medicaid, education and many other issues, the map of the United States is becoming a patchwork of conscience and callousness. People on one side of a state line have access to health care, strong public schools and colleges, and good transportation systems, while those on the other side do not. The breakdown of a sense of national unity in Washington is now reflected across the country, as more than two dozen states begin to abandon traditions of responsible government.

25 This is not entirely a partisan issue; several Republican governors, including Jan Brewer of Arizona and Rick Scott of Florida, have crunched the numbers and decided to support the Medicaid expansion, though their legislatures refuse to go along. But most states dominated by Republicans are cutting back on their responsibilities, while states dominated by Democrats continue to believe that government has a large role to play in maintaining the safety net.

30 In Kansas, for example, Gov. Sam Brownback, a Republican, is energetically trying to repeal the state's income tax and replace it with an increase in the sales tax, unconcerned that the move would shift the tax burden from the wealthy to the poor and middle class. But some extremist lawmakers there want to cut the sales tax, too, and with it the state's meager spending on basic services. In January, after last year's state tax cuts for the rich, a Kansas district court ruled that the state's school spending was unconstitutionally low. (Rather than do the right thing, the state appealed the decision.)

35 Last week, Kansas lawmakers cut the higher-education budget by nearly 5 percent, which University of Kansas officials said would be devastating.

40 Also last week, with money running short from a state government led by Republicans, the Philadelphia School District passed what the superintendent called a "catastrophic" budget that lays off 3,000 employees and eliminates athletics, art, music, librarians and counselors. In Indiana, Georgia, South Dakota, Pennsylvania and several other states, conservatives are blocking the adoption of national Common Core education standards. Many states are refusing to spend money on necessary road repairs. Missouri's transportation budget is barely half of what it was a few years ago, but lawmakers have refused to raise taxes to pay for badly needed improvements.

45 The one virtue of a patchwork is that better examples are not far away. When residents begin to realize the grass is much greener on the other side of the state line, budget-slashing lawmakers will be under pressure to either change their ways or change jobs.

The Spite Club

By PAUL KRUGMAN, *The New York Times*, 6 June 2013

- House Republicans have voted 37 times to repeal ObamaRomneyCare — the Affordable Care Act, which creates a national health insurance system similar to the one Massachusetts has had since 2006. Nonetheless, almost all of the act will go fully into effect at the beginning of next year.
- There is, however, one form of obstruction still available to the G.O.P. Last year's Supreme Court decision upholding the law's constitutionality also gave states the right to opt out of one piece of the plan, a federally financed expansion of Medicaid. Sure enough, a number of Republican-dominated states seem set to reject Medicaid expansion, at least at first.
- And why would they do this? They won't save money. On the contrary, they will hurt their own budgets and damage their own economies. Nor will Medicaid rejectionism serve any clear political purpose. As I'll explain later, it will probably hurt Republicans for years to come.
- No, the only way to understand the refusal to expand Medicaid is as an act of sheer spite. And the cost of that spite won't just come in the form of lost dollars; it will also come in the form of gratuitous hardship for some of our most vulnerable citizens.
- Some background: Obamacare rests on three pillars. First, insurers must offer the same coverage to everyone regardless of medical history. Second, everyone must purchase coverage — the famous "mandate" — so that the young and healthy don't opt out until they get older and/or sicker. Third, premiums will be subsidized, so as to make insurance affordable for everyone. And this system is going into effect next year, whether Republicans like it or not.
- Under this system, by the way, a few people — basically young, healthy individuals who don't already get insurance from their employers, and whose incomes are high enough that they won't benefit from subsidies — will end up paying more for insurance than they do now. Right-wingers are hyping this observation as if it were some kind of shocking surprise, when it was, in fact, well-known to everyone from the beginning of the debate. And, as far as anyone can tell, we're talking about a small number of people who are, by definition, relatively well off.
- Back to the Medicaid expansion. Obamacare, as I've just explained, relies on subsidies to make insurance affordable for lower-income Americans. But we already have a program, Medicaid, providing health coverage to very-low-income Americans, at a cost private insurers can't match. So the Affordable Care Act, sensibly, relies on an expansion of Medicaid rather than the mandate-plus-subsidy arrangement to guarantee care to the poor and near-poor.
- But Medicaid is a joint federal-state program, and the Supreme Court made it possible for states to opt out of the expansion. And it appears that a number of states will take advantage of that "opportunity." What will that mean?
- A new study from the RAND Corporation, a nonpartisan research institution, examines the consequences if 14 states whose governors have declared their opposition to Medicaid expansion do, in fact, reject the expansion. The result, the study concluded, would be a huge financial hit: the rejectionist states would lose more than \$8 billion a year in federal aid, and would also find themselves on the hook for roughly \$1 billion more to cover the losses hospitals incur when treating the uninsured.
- Meanwhile, Medicaid rejectionism will deny health coverage to roughly 3.6 million Americans, with essentially all of the victims living near or below the poverty line. And since past experience shows that Medicaid expansion is associated with significant declines in mortality, this would mean a lot of avoidable deaths: about 19,000 a year, the study estimated.
- Just think about this for a minute. It's one thing when politicians refuse to spend money helping the poor and vulnerable; that's just business as usual. But here we have a case in which politicians are, in effect, spending large sums, in the form of rejected aid, not to help the poor but to hurt them.
- And as I said, it doesn't even make sense as cynical politics. If Obamacare works (which it will), millions of middle-income voters — the kind of people who might support either party in future elections — will see major benefits, even in rejectionist states. So rejectionism won't discredit health reform. What it might do, however, is drive home to lower-income voters — many of them nonwhite — just how little the G.O.P. cares about their well-being, and reinforce the already strong Democratic advantage among Latinos, in particular.
- Rationally, in other words, Republicans should accept defeat on health care, at least for now, and move on. Instead, however, their spitefulness appears to override all other considerations. And millions of Americans will pay the price.

America's Assimilating Hispanics

The evidence shows they are following the path of earlier immigrants.

The Wall Street Journal, 17 June 2013

- 5 As immigration reform moves through Congress, one claim by opponents is that this time immigration is different because the country's latest arrivals aren't assimilating. On the contrary, however, the evidence overwhelmingly shows that today's immigrants are acculturating and moving up the economic ladder like previous generations.
- 10 The media's tendency to report "averages" in educational attainment, English-language skills, income and other traditional measures of assimilation can make it difficult to determine whether immigrants are making gains. Since Latino immigration continues, averaging together the poverty rates or homeownership levels of large numbers of people who arrived recently with those who have been here for decades can provide a skewed view of progress.
- 15 Measuring assimilation properly requires following the same immigrants over generations. And the good news is that longitudinal studies that take this approach show that Latino immigrants have made gains similar to other groups who preceded them.
- Consider the claim that Hispanic immigrants are rejecting English in favor of a separate Spanish-speaking culture. Census data from 2005 show that only one-third of immigrants in the country for less than a decade speak English well, but that number climbs to nearly three-quarters for those here for 30 years or more.
- 20 A 2007 Pew study of 14,000 Latino adults showed that while just 23% of immigrants report being able to speak English very well, "fully 88% of their U.S.-born adult children report that they speak English very well. Among later generations of Hispanic adults, the figure rises to 94%."
- 25 All of this follows the traditional three-generation model of linguistic assimilation that characterized European immigrants in the last century. Typically, English is the dominant language of the second generation, and by the fourth generation fewer than a quarter can still speak the immigrant tongue.
- Educational progress among Latino immigrants is also evident, and it too fits a pattern shown by previous ethnic newcomers. Nearly half (47%) of foreign-born Hispanics lack a high-school diploma, but that number falls to 17% among their offspring. And 21% of second-generation Hispanics are college graduates, compared with 11% of foreign-born Hispanics residing in the U.S.
- 30 Latino immigrants who have been in the U.S. for three decades or more are also more likely than recent arrivals to own a home, live in a family with an income above the federal poverty line and marry outside of their ethnic group—all common measures of assimilation. According to 2012 Census data, the median household income for second-generation Hispanics is \$48,400, versus \$34,600 for Hispanic immigrants and \$58,200 for all groups.
- 35 A Pew report from February on Hispanic and Asian immigrants—who comprise about 70% of foreign born adults in the U.S.—found that the second generation of both groups is more likely than immigrants to have friends outside of their ethnic or racial group, to say their group gets along well with others and to think of themselves as a "typical American." Pew also noted that "second-generation Hispanics and Asians place more importance than does the general public on hard work and career success."
- 40 Like many Mexicans today, Italian immigrants who came in large numbers in the late 1800s and early 1900s valued work over education. Italy had one of the highest illiteracy rates in Europe at the time—62% in 1871—and illiteracy was especially pronounced in southern Italy, where most Italian-Americans trace their ancestry. In 1910, just 31% of Italian immigrants aged 14 to 18 were enrolled in school, compared to 48% of the Irish and 56% of the Jews. Today, Italian-Americans exceed national averages in educational attainment and income.
- 45 Fears that the newest arrivals are overrunning America and changing it for the worse have a long pedigree. "Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs," wrote Benjamin Franklin in 1751.
- 50 Big Ben wasn't paranoid, but he was living with a flood of German immigrants into Philadelphia. Street signs were printed in German, and German-language newspapers proliferated. In 18th-century America, you could travel from Pennsylvania to Georgia and speak only German.
- It's true that many on the left promote a separate Hispanic identity, but their impact is small compared to the great assimilating maelstrom of American culture and economic life. The stultifying attractions of the welfare state are also a barrier to upward mobility, but that is best addressed with reforms, not by limiting immigration. Despite fears and much bad data, immigrants continue to be the American asset they have always been.
- 55

The Real Debate over Citizenship

Immigration reform is only part of a larger conversation about what it should mean to be American.

Robert Reich, *The American Prospect*, 6 February 2013

5 [...] On one side are those who think of citizenship as a matter of exclusion and privilege—of protecting the nation by keeping out those who are undesirable, and putting strict limits on who is allowed to exercise the full rights of citizenship.

On the other are those who think of citizenship inclusively—as an ongoing process of helping people become full participants in America.

10 One part of this conversation involves immigration. I'm not just referring the question of whether or how people living in the United States illegally can become citizens. (Courtesy of our fast-growing Latino population, 70 percent of whom voted for President Obama last November, we're far closer to resolving that one than we were a year ago.)

15 It's also a question of who we want to join us. Engraved on a bronze plaque mounted inside the lower level of the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty are Emma Lazarus' immortal words, written in 1883: "Give me your tired, your poor/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free/ The wretched refuse of your teeming shore/ Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost, to me."

By contrast, a bipartisan group of lawmakers last week introduced a bill giving priority to the highly skilled. "Our immigration system needs to be ... more welcoming of highly skilled immigrants and the enormous contributions they can make to our economy," said one of its sponsors, Florida Senator Marco Rubio.

20 So is the priority to be those who need us, or those whom we need?

Another part of the same larger conversation concerns voting rights—the means by which citizens participate in our democracy.

25 Long waiting lines depressed voter turnout last November, especially in cities where Democrats outnumber Republicans. One study showed blacks and Hispanics on average had to wait nearly twice as long to vote as whites. Some gave up trying.

Voter registration is part of that issue, along with what sorts of proof of citizenship states may require. Dozens of legal challenges and lower-court decisions were made in the months leading up to the November election. Some are heading to appellate courts.

30 Congressional Democrats are pushing legislation to require states to ease voting requirements—allowing more early voting, online voting, and quicker means of registering. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court is preparing to hear a major challenge to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, potentially giving states more leeway to tighten voting standards. A different aspect of the citizenship conversation concerns the rights of corporations to influence elections. The Court's bizarre 2010 decision in "Citizens United versus Federal Election Commission"—deeming corporations people under the First Amendment, with unlimited rights to spend money on elections—didn't consider the question of corporate citizenship as such.

35 But it's likely to become a big issue in the future as large American companies that pour lots of money into our elections morph into global corporations without any particular national identity.

40 Most of Chrysler is owned by Fiat, and most of Fiat is owned by non-Americans. Both IBM and GE have more non-American employees and customers than American, and foreign ownership of both continues to increase. At what point do these global entities forfeit their right to influence U.S. elections?

And then there's the growing debate about whether American citizens have the right to a trial by an impartial judge and jury before the government executes them.

45 You might think so. The Constitution guarantees American citizens "due process" of law. But a "white paper" from the Justice Department, recently obtained by NBC News, argues that an "informed, high-level" government official can unilaterally decide to put an American citizen to death without any judicial oversight if that official decides the citizen in question is an operational leader of Al Qaeda or one of its allies.

50 Even if you trust high-level officials in the current administration, their argument should give you pause. The relative ease by which targeted drones can now kill particular individuals far from recognized battlefields, (as did the drone attack on American-born Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in September, 2011) raises uncomfortable questions about the protections accorded American citizens, as well as the potential for arbitrary decision making about who lives or dies.

55 They may seem unrelated, but all these issues—who gets to be an American citizen, how easily American citizens can vote, whether global corporations are American citizens entitled to influence our elections, and whether American citizens are entitled to a judge and jury before being executed—are pieces of the same larger debate: Are we more fearful of "them" out there, or more confident about "us?" Is our goal to constrain and limit citizenship, or to enlarge and fulfill its promise? It's an old debate in America. The greatness of our nation lies in our overriding tendency to choose the latter.

Three New Facts about the Tea Party

Abby Rapoport, *The American Prospect*, 29 April 2013

1. Tea Party activists are not Republicans.

[...] While 70 percent of FreedomWorks activists identify as Republican, another 23 percent reject the Republican label entirely and instead, when asked which political party they identify with, choose "other." Asked if they considered themselves more Republican or more a Tea Party member, more than three-quarters chose Tea Party.

Given that so many don't identify with the GOP, it's perhaps not surprising that the activists also rate the party they vote for so poorly. Given a spectrum of seven choices from "outstanding" to "poor," only 9 percent of activists rated the Republican Party in the top two categories. Meanwhile, 17 percent put the party in the bottom two. In total, 32 percent rated the party in one of the three positive categories while a whopping 40 percent rated the party in one of the negative ones.

In other words, the activists providing a huge amount of the labor and enthusiasm for Republican candidates are, at best, lukewarm on the party they're voting for. Few are concerned about what their impact on the future of the GOP will be. Which brings us to:

2. Tea Party activists aren't nearly as concerned about winning.

Or at least they're significantly more concerned with ideological purity than with political pragmatism. The survey asked FreedomWorks activists if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "When we feel strongly about political issues, we should not be willing to compromise with our political opponents." Altogether, more than 80 percent agreed to some extent. Thirty-two percent of respondents "agree strongly" with the statement. Meanwhile, less than 10 percent disagreed even "slightly." In another series of questions sent out to FreedomWorks activists, the survey asked whether they would prefer a candidate with whom they agree on most important issues but who polls far behind the probable Democratic nominee or a candidate with whom they agree "on some of the most important issues" but who's likely to win. More than three-fourths of respondents preferred the candidate who was more likely to lose but shared their positions.

In other words, the Tea Party cares more about what nominees believe than whether they can win—and compromising on politics means compromising on principle.

The findings help explain what's happened in so many GOP primary races. Both nationally and at the state level, moderate GOP officeholders found themselves with primary challengers. The Tea Party has helped propel several upstart candidacies, like Christine O'Donnell's infamous effort to win Delaware's Senate seat or more recently, Richard Mourdock's successful challenge to sitting Senator Dick Lugar. In both of those cases, and several others, the Tea Party candidate has proved too extreme for the general election and lost. But despite the losses, the push toward conservative purity continues. A recent *New York Times* story showed that even House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, seen as the leader with the most clout in the Tea Party movement, has been unable to move the faction's members in his party into more moderate terrain. In light of these survey results, that makes sense—Tea Party elected officials are simply reflecting their supporters. Meanwhile, those left in the establishment fear the party's new direction.

3. Attempts to bridge the gap between establishment Republicans and the Tea Party are doomed to fail.

There's no shortage of moves from Republicans to keep the Tea Party in the fold while shifting things more to the center. After the dismal GOP performance in the 2012 elections, establishment figures began pushing back against the Tea Party. Famous consultant Karl Rove announced a new political action committee designed to challenge extreme GOP candidates with more marketable ones. The national party even put out a report after the 2012 losses that pushed for more pragmatic candidates that could have a broader appeal. As noted, even Eric Cantor is trying.

But the gap between the two groups is huge. In the YouGov survey the study uses, more than two-thirds of Tea Partiers put themselves in the two most conservative categories on economic policy, social policy, and overall policy. Only 23 percent of non-Tea Partiers place themselves in the most conservative categories on all three issues; nearly 40 percent don't locate themselves in the most conservative categories for any of the three policy areas.

Most jarring: On some issues, like abolishing the Department of Education and environmental regulation, the establishment Republicans are actually closer to Democrats than they are to the Tea Party respondents. That's a gap too large to be overcome by a few political action committees and gestures of goodwill.

Tea Party activists dominate the Republican Party, and they're no less willing to compromise with the GOP than they are with Democrats. FreedomWorks President Matt Kibbe summed it up nicely in his book title: *Hostile Takeover*.

Simply put, the GOP is too reliant on the Tea Party—and based on these survey results, the Tea Party doesn't care about the GOP's fate. It cares about moving the political conversation increasingly rightward.

The Liberal Landslide

Joshua Green, 9 November 2012, *Business Week*

- Summing up Tuesday's election, David Espo of the Associated Press wrote, "Obama won the popular vote narrowly, the electoral vote comfortably, and the battleground states where the campaign was principally waged in a landslide." It's a good line and an accurate one—but the real landslide on Tuesday was broader and deeper than the presidential race. Up and down the ticket, from candidate races to ballot initiatives, a liberal landslide swept the country.
- In Wisconsin, Tammy Baldwin became the first openly gay U.S. senator, and the biggest story about the race is that her sexuality didn't turn out to be a big story. Gay-marriage proponents won in all four states where the issue appeared on the ballot—Maine, Washington, and Maryland became the first states to approve legal gay unions; voters rejected a Minnesota initiative to outlaw them. The surge surprised many strategists working on the issue. Going into the night, only Maine was considered a strong bet.
- In 2004, Republicans placed marriage initiatives on the ballot in contested states like Ohio in a successful effort to exploit anti-gay sentiment. This year, Obama became the first president to endorse same-sex marriage, and he won Ohio.
- Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize recreational marijuana use. (A third, Oregon, came close.) Here, the liberal tide swept even beyond the Obama administration's comfort zone. The Justice Department reiterated that marijuana is illegal under federal law and users will be prosecuted.
- In California, labor interests defeated a major initiative, Proposition 32, to limit their power. And, of course, the candidate of business, Mitt Romney, fared worst of all. "The notion that paper-pushing Wall Street-associated rich people better understand the economy than working people took a shellacking on Tuesday," says Jeff Hauser, an AFL-CIO spokesman.
- The true cause of Romney's loss, and the reason why polls disagreed leading up to it, was that minorities and young people (liberals) showed up in record number and whites (conservatives) did not—something GOP polls didn't anticipate. Blacks, Asians, and Latinos made up a larger proportion of the vote than ever before, whites a smaller one. A RealClearPolitics analysis estimated that 7 million fewer whites voted than in 2008. The landslide was vividly apparent on the issue of choice. A chorus of appalling comments by GOP candidates on rape and abortion helped Obama win women by 12 points and single women by 38 points.
- The strength of the liberal wave isn't fully reflected in the numbers. Gerrymandering saved GOP House seats that would have flipped, so Democrats, who performed strongly in Senate races, only gained about seven seats in the House.
- And the broad Republican effort to suppress minority voting surely had a real effect. An election-night survey by the AFL-CIO and Hart Research found that 9 percent of whites had to wait more than 30 minutes to vote. By contrast, 22 percent of blacks and 24 percent of Latinos had to wait that long. Many simply gave up.
- This liberal landslide was the product of two forces neatly encapsulated in the examples of what happened with women's rights and gay marriage. Until recently, acceptance of marriage equality was growing at a steady pace because of what strategists call "generational replacement"—old people who oppose it were dying off and being replaced by young people who support it. Now, acceptance is speeding up. "The president's use of the term 'evolution' to describe his changing view is actually very reflective of what's happening in the country," says Bill Smith, an independent political consultant working on the issue.
- By contrast, support for abortion rights doesn't move much. We're a narrowly pro-choice country. A shift in the female vote to Obama and the Democrats didn't reflect changing societal views about abortion. It reflected a rejection of conservative Republicans.
- Both forces shaped the election's outcome in ways that will soon be very clear—not just in terms of who's marrying whom or what they're smoking or who's president. When the 113th Congress convenes in January, white men will constitute a minority (47 percent) of House Democrats, the first time in U.S. history for a party caucus (House Republicans will be 90 percent white men). If Republicans don't change course, this could repeat for years to come. The latest U.S. Census figures reveal another milestone: In 2011, for the first time in history, minority newborns outnumbered whites.

At the Supreme Court, a Timid Defense

Jeffrey Toobin, *The New Yorker*, 11 October 2012

After the arguments in the Supreme Court yesterday, it's unclear whether there is a legal problem with the affirmative-action admissions program at the University of Texas. Regardless of how the case turns out, though, it is clear that there is a political problem with contemporary affirmative action.

The flagship U.T. campus in Austin admits students in two ways. First, students at the top of their high-school class—usually the top ten per cent—are admitted automatically. Second, some students are admitted under a “holistic” analysis of all of their qualifications, including their race. Abigail Fisher, a white woman who was rejected for admission, sued, claiming that the consideration of the race of minority applicants amounted to discrimination against her.

Nine years ago, in the case of Grutter v. Bollinger, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's opinion upheld a similar admissions program at the University of Michigan Law School. Even then, her ruling expressed palpable discomfort with any sort of racial preference; she said racial considerations should be allowed on campuses for no more than the next twenty-five years. But less than a decade later, her successors on the Court may be on the way to limiting, or overruling, her opinion.

Supporters of affirmative action are now reduced to talking about how little these programs do, not how much. As Justice Stephen Breyer said at the argument, “There is no quota. It is individualized. It is time limited. It was adopted after the consideration of race-neutral means. Each applicant receives individual consideration, and race did not become the predominant factor.” At the daily White House news briefing, Jay Carney gave a similarly grudging endorsement of the practice: “I think you know the President's position on affirmative action. As the Supreme Court has recognized in the past, diversity in the classroom has learning benefits for students, campuses, and schools. President Obama has said that while he opposes quotas and thinks an emphasis on universal and not race-specific programs is good policy, considering race along with other factors can be appropriate in certain circumstances.”

In light of this chronic defensiveness on the part of affirmative action supporters, it's no surprise that conservatives are emboldened. Justice Antonin Scalia focussed on the vexing question of who is, in fact, a minority: “Did they require everybody to check a box or they have somebody figure out, Oh, this person looks one-thirty-second Hispanic and that's enough?” (The lawyer defending the program said that the university relied on the students to define their own ethnicity.) In the same vein, Samuel Alito wondered about the accuracy of the categories: “How do you justify lumping together all Asian-Americans? Do you have a critical mass of Filipino Americans? Cambodian Americans?” O'Connor's decision said that universities could seek a “critical mass” of minority students. “What is that number?” Chief Justice John Roberts wanted to know. “What is the critical mass of African Americans and Hispanics at the university that you are working toward?” (The lawyer said there was no specific number.)

Alito raised the difficult issue of race and class, which is actually a happy consequence of the development of a sizable upper-middle-class minority community. (This might be called the Sasha and Malia problem.) “If you have a [minority] applicant whose parents... put them in the top one per cent of earners in the country and both have graduate degrees, they deserve a leg up against, let's say, an Asian or a white applicant whose parents are absolutely average in terms of education and income?” Not really, said Gregory Garre, the lawyer for the university, adding, “we want minorities from different backgrounds. We go out of our way to recruit minorities from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

Garre and the liberal justices tried so hard to say what the affirmative-action program was not that it became hard to understand what it was. At one point, Donald Verrilli, the Solicitor General, who was defending the Texas plan on behalf of the Obama Administration, said that race did not function as a tiebreaker in admissions decisions. “I don't understand this argument,” Justice Anthony Kennedy responded, “I thought that the whole point is that sometimes race has to be a tiebreaker and you are saying that it isn't. Well, then, we should just go away. Then we should just say you can't use race, don't worry about it.”

“I don't think it's a tiebreaker,” Verrilli tried again in response, “I think it functions more subtly than that, Justice Kennedy.”

Subtle indeed, apparently. It may be that, after the Court decides the Texas case, affirmative action will survive in some form or another. But it speaks to the perilous state of public support for affirmative action that its supporters in the Supreme Court could scarcely articulate what it did and why it mattered—while the opponents of the policy spoke with clarity. Policies survive when their benefits are clear—and that wasn't the case for affirmative action on Wednesday at the Supreme Court.

Oprah, Harvard, and Inequality

George Packer, *The New Yorker*, 4 June 2013

Harvard's commencement speaker last week was none other than Oprah. I happened to be in Cambridge, flogging "The Unwinding," and was more than a little interested in this fact. Oprah is one of the ten famous Americans whose lives are chronicled in the book, alongside the unknowns who are its main characters. The invitation from Harvard, along with an honorary doctorate, marked a kind of apotheosis in Oprah's celebrated story of struggle from poverty and obscurity to colossal wealth, fame, and success.

"Oh-h-h, my goodness, I'm at *Harrrrrvard!*" Oprah exclaimed to the Class of 2013, letting the graduates in on her self-amazement. She told the story of her Mississippi childhood, her ascendant career, and her recent troubles in getting the Oprah Winfrey Network off the ground. After some embarrassing setbacks, she said, "I'm here to tell you today that I have turned that network around." She offered her own tale of grit, determination, and inspirational thinking as a model for the students, who sat rapt before her. And she reminded them that, no matter what happens, they will always be able to say that they graduated from Harvard.

Two weeks ago in this space, I wrote about the strange conjunction of America's ever-widening inclusiveness and ever-growing disparity. Oprah at Harvard is a perfect illustration: her arrival at that summit is improbable and extraordinary, a parable of individual talent meeting social opportunity. She took the occasion to remind her audience of her triumph, and of the blessings that surely come in America today with the right alma mater and the right connections. Her presence was proof that the meritocracy really works, that equal opportunity is real—a reassuring thought in a time and place where social mobility has dwindled and American success stories are more and more likely to be born rather than made.

I don't think there's a causal relation between these two essential facts from the past generation: that a poor black girl from the Deep South can grow up to be an empire-builder, and that the gap in income and life chances between Americans with Harvard degrees and Americans without is getting bigger every year. They have happened at the same time, and they pull in opposite directions. One doesn't necessitate or further the other. But my last column got a critical rejoinder from Samuel Goldman, in the *American Conservative*. Goldman claims that the two trends are intimately related, and that they're somehow the doing of post-sixties educated liberals like me, and, perhaps, you, who have gone all in for tolerance, diversity, and lax moral standards while forsaking the troubled working class. It might not even be possible to have Oprah *and* fairness: "It is hard for a society characterized by ethnic and cultural pluralism to generate the solidarity required for the redistribution of wealth. People are willing, on the whole, to pay high taxes and forgo luxuries to support those they see as like themselves. They are often unwilling to do so for those who look, sound, or act very differently."

Goldman is conflating a number of things here—among them, the ideal of equality before the law and the reality of a loud, consumerist, gadget-dazzled, indifferent society. Is there something about black enfranchisement, women's quest for equal pay, and the right of gays to marry that required Americans to start overspending, paying their workers less, and neglecting their children? If so, should we return to segregation, bored housewives, and the closet on the chance that these might restore unions to health and revive public schools? Goldman's argument is that, beyond a certain level of diversity, a democratic society—that is, one in which equal opportunity means something more than the chance for each of us to have our own TV network—stops being possible. This view takes us back to conservatism of a particular sort—not the universalist creed of the Declaration but the philosophy of the Know Nothings.

On the other hand, there's this uncomfortable truth, pointed out by Ross Douthat, of the *Times*: the period of greatest economic equality and social solidarity, the years between the Great Depression and the nineteen-seventies, which I call the Roosevelt Republic, coincided with the doors being firmly shut to immigrants. The decades that came before and after this more secure era—from the Gilded Age to the nineteen-twenties, and the generation since the late seventies, the period of the unwinding—saw those doors swing wide open. Douthat suggests that waves of immigration have created social divisions and competition for jobs at the bottom, both of which have something to do with the fraying of the social contract. If human beings were better, it wouldn't be so—but they aren't, so it is. Douthat's is a more subtle, less partisan argument than Goldman's, and it poses a problem for liberals who want more equality and more immigration. [...]

The World Without America

Richard N. Haass, *Project Syndicate*, 30 April 2013

- NEW YORK – Let me posit a radical idea: The most critical threat facing the United States now and for the foreseeable future is not a rising China, a reckless North Korea, a nuclear Iran, modern terrorism, or climate change. Although all of these constitute potential or actual threats, the biggest challenges facing the US are its burgeoning debt, crumbling infrastructure, second-rate primary and secondary schools, outdated immigration system, and slow economic growth – in short, the domestic foundations of American power.
- Readers in other countries may be tempted to react to this judgment with a dose of *schadenfreude*, finding more than a little satisfaction in America's difficulties. Such a response should not be surprising. The US and those representing it have been guilty of hubris (the US may often be the indispensable nation, but it would be better if *others* pointed this out), and examples of inconsistency between America's practices and its principles understandably provoke charges of hypocrisy. When America does not adhere to the principles that it preaches to others, it breeds resentment. But, like most temptations, the urge to gloat at America's imperfections and struggles ought to be resisted. People around the globe should be careful what they wish for. America's failure to deal with its internal challenges would come at a steep price. Indeed, the rest of the world's stake in American success is nearly as large as that of the US itself.
- Part of the reason is economic. The US economy still accounts for about one-quarter of global output. If US growth accelerates, America's capacity to consume other countries' goods and services will increase, thereby boosting growth around the world. At a time when Europe is drifting and Asia is slowing, only the US (or, more broadly, North America) has the potential to drive global economic recovery.
- The US remains a unique source of innovation. Most of the world's citizens communicate with mobile devices based on technology developed in Silicon Valley; likewise, the Internet was made in America. More recently, new technologies developed in the US greatly increase the ability to extract oil and natural gas from underground formations. This technology is now making its way around the globe, allowing other societies to increase their energy production and decrease both their reliance on costly imports and their carbon emissions.
- The US is also an invaluable source of ideas. Its world-class universities educate a significant percentage of future world leaders. More fundamentally, the US has long been a leading example of what market economies and democratic politics can accomplish. People and governments around the world are far more likely to become more open if the American model is perceived to be succeeding. Finally, the world faces many serious challenges, ranging from the need to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction, fight climate change, and maintain a functioning world economic order that promotes trade and investment to regulating practices in cyberspace, improving global health, and preventing armed conflicts. These problems will not simply go away or sort themselves out.
- While Adam Smith's "invisible hand" may ensure the success of free markets, it is powerless in the world of geopolitics. Order requires the visible hand of leadership to formulate and realize global responses to global challenges. Don't get me wrong: None of this is meant to suggest that the US can deal effectively with the world's problems on its own. Unilateralism rarely works. It is not just that the US lacks the means; the very nature of contemporary global problems suggests that only collective responses stand a good chance of succeeding.
- But multilateralism is much easier to advocate than to design and implement. Right now there is only one candidate for this role: the US. No other country has the necessary combination of capability and outlook.
- This brings me back to the argument that the US must put its house in order – economically, physically, socially, and politically – if it is to have the resources needed to promote order in the world. Everyone should hope that it does: The alternative to a world led by the US is not a world led by China, Europe, Russia, Japan, India, or any other country, but rather a world that is not led at all. Such a world would almost certainly be characterized by chronic crisis and conflict. That would be bad not just for Americans, but for the vast majority of the planet's inhabitants.

America the Unequal

Naomi Wolf, *Project Syndicate*, 31 January 2013

- PARK CITY, UTAH – The last documentary film that used dry charts and statistics to make an abstract argument about a global issue and nonetheless became a pop-culture hit was Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. But the hit of this year's Sundance Film Festival was a low-key affair called *Inequality for All*, in which Robert Reich, a labor secretary in the Clinton administration, explains how rising income inequality and the demise of the middle class is causing so many Americans to suffer. With President Barack Obama recently taking up some of these themes in his second inaugural address, it is worthwhile to examine the message of *Inequality for All* more closely. The film's charts are not boring, but actual showstoppers: Reich makes the point that the mid-1940's to the mid-1970's were decades of relative income equality, which corresponded with overall affluence. (The last time that income inequality in the United States was as deep as it is now was immediately before the 1929 stock-market crash.)
- But the last 20 years have witnessed a spike in the difference between the top earners and the middle class: the "1%" really are living in a stratospheric bubble. As the journalist Chrystia Freeland has recently argued, a meta-class of global "plutocrats" is emerging – people who have little in common with the rest of us.
- Inequality for All* makes the case that the wealthiest 1% simply cannot consume enough, no matter how hard they try, to generate the revenue that an affluent middle class could. The secret to a strong economy is to invest in education, strengthen household incomes with a decent minimum wage and strong unions, and raise skill levels, thereby generating sustained consumer demand. This, Reich argues, is the "virtuous cycle" that we see in strong economies such as Germany, in which workers are highly skilled and educated, unions are protected, and the middle class has leisure and money to spend.
- Reich also persuasively describes the "vicious circle" – with falling wages undermining consumer demand and leading, in turn, to shrinking output – that has made the US economy fragile and boosted social instability. He analyzes a middle class that is skating on the thinnest of ice, with employment coming at the price of lower wages and benefits. Moreover, millions of middle-class American homes are "underwater" (the mortgage is more than the home's underlying value).
- The film interviews one of the rich, a charming millionaire who owns a pillow company and points out that he and his fellow rich guys and their families simply cannot spend enough to offset the lost demand of a strong middle class. In fact, the richest save rather than spend their dollars, and send them around the globe in transnational hedge funds rather than using them to create more jobs at home. So, the "trickle-down" story that the middle and working class are told every election cycle in America – that cutting wealthy people's taxes means more job creation in America – is simply not true. Those wealthy people's untaxed dollars stay in hedge funds and out of the revenue stream. The cost to social programs, infrastructure, and public schools intensifies stress on the middle class, who end up poorly educated, work long hours in dual-career ill-paid jobs, lack leisure time and money to spend, and so on.
- Are we stuck with this vicious circle, which advocates of laissez-faire globalization have told us for 15 years is an inevitable consequence of the "invisible hand"? Or could Reich's retro prescriptions, which he has affirmed for decades, be taken up again? Could they bring back the affluent years of the early Clinton era, when it seemed as if domestic policies could actually influence and even benefit the US economy?
- I asked Reich what three policy prescriptions he would give to an American president and Congress today, especially drawing on the lessons of other countries. "I'd like to see what we did so successfully in the first three decades after World War II, when prosperity was widely shared." That means large investments in public education, including higher education; substantial investments in infrastructure, funded by a highly progressive tax whose top marginal effective rate never fell below 50%; and strong labor unions.
- "Anyone who thinks these policies are no longer feasible in a global economy," Reich told me, "hasn't looked at modern Germany, which features all of them, and where the median wage is higher than ours." [...]

The Iraq War Ten Years Later

Joseph Nye, *Project Syndicate*, 11 March 2013

- CAMBRIDGE – This month marks the tenth anniversary of the controversial American-led invasion of Iraq. What has that decision wrought over the last decade? More important, was the decision to invade rightly made?
- 5 On the positive side, analysts point to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the creation of an elected government, and an economy growing at nearly 9% per year, with oil exports surpassing their pre-war level. Some, such as Nadim Shehadi of Chatham House, go further, arguing that, while “the US certainly bit off more than it could chew in Iraq,” America’s intervention “may have shaken the region out of [a] stagnation that has dominated the lives of at least two generations.”
- 10 Skeptics reply that it would be wrong to link the Iraq War to the “Arab Spring,” because events in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 had their own origins, while President George W. Bush’s actions and rhetoric discredited, rather than advanced, the cause of democracy in the region. Removing Saddam was important, but Iraq is now a violent place governed by a sectarian group, with one corruption index ranking it 169th out of 174 countries. Whatever the benefits of the war, skeptics argue, they are too meager to justify the costs: more than 150,000
- 15 Iraqis and 4,488 American service members killed, and an estimated cost of nearly \$1 trillion (not including long-term health and disability costs for some 32,000 wounded US soldiers.) Perhaps this balance sheet will look different a decade from now, but at this point most Americans have concluded that the skeptics are right, and that thinking has influenced current US foreign policy. In the next decade, it is very unlikely that the US will try another prolonged occupation and transformation of another
- 20 country. As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates put it shortly before stepping down, any adviser recommending such action “should have his head examined.” Some call this isolationism, but it might better be called prudence or pragmatism. After all, President Dwight D. Eisenhower refused in 1954 to send US troops to save the French at Dien Bien Phu because he feared that they would be “swallowed up by the divisions” in Vietnam. And Ike was hardly an isolationist.
- 25 While a decade may be too soon to render a definitive verdict on the long-term consequences of the Iraq War, it is not too soon to judge the process by which the Bush administration made its decisions. Bush and his officials used three main arguments to justify invading Iraq. The first tied Saddam to Al Qaeda. Public-opinion polls show that many Americans accepted the administration’s word on the connection, but the evidence has not sustained it. Indeed, the evidence that was presented publicly was thin and exaggerated.
- 30 The second argument was that replacing Saddam with a democratic regime was a way to transform Middle East politics. A number of neoconservative members of the administration had urged regime change in Iraq well before taking office, but were unable to turn it into policy during the first eight months of the administration. After September 11, 2001, they quickly moved their policy through the window of opportunity that the terrorist attacks had opened.
- 35 Bush spoke often of regime change and a “freedom agenda,” with supporters citing the role of American military occupation in the democratization of Germany and Japan after World War II. But the Bush administration was careless in its use of historical analogies and reckless in its inadequate preparation for an effective occupation. The third argument focused on preventing Saddam from possessing weapons of mass destruction. Most
- 40 countries agreed that Saddam had defied United Nations Security Council resolutions for a dozen years. Moreover, Resolution 1441 unanimously put the burden of proof on Saddam. While Bush was later faulted when inspectors failed to find WMDs, the view that Saddam possessed them was widely shared by other countries. Prudence might have bought more time for the inspectors, but Bush was not alone in this mistake.
- 45 Bush has said that history will redeem him, and compares himself to President Harry S. Truman, who left office with low poll ratings because of the Korean War, yet is well regarded today. Will history really be so kind to Bush? Truman biographer David McCullough warns that about 50 years must pass before historians can really appraise a presidency. But one decade after Truman left office, the Marshall Plan and the NATO alliance were already
- 50 seen as solid accomplishments. Bush lacks comparable successes to compensate for his mismanagement of Iraq. History tends to be unkind to the unlucky, but historians also judge leaders in terms of the causes of their luck. Good coaches analyze their game and their opponent’s game, so that they can capitalize on errors and benefit from “good luck.” By contrast, reckless reality-testing and unnecessary risk-taking are often part of “bad luck.” Future historians are likely to fault Bush for these shortcomings.
- 55 Even if fortuitous events lead to a better Middle East in another ten years, future historians will criticize the way Bush made his decisions and distributed the risks and costs of his actions. It is one thing to guide people up a mountain; it is another to lead them to the edge of a cliff.

The north of England

The great divide

Economically, socially and politically, the north is becoming another country
 Sep 15th 2012 | THE ECONOMIST | MANCHESTER AND SUNDERLAND |

IN 1962, as Britain pulled slowly out of recession, Harold Macmillan told an audience that he was determined to "prevent two nations developing geographically, a poor north and a rich and overcrowded south". The price of failure, the Conservative prime minister said, would be that "our successors will reproach us as we reproach the Victorians for complacency about slums and ugliness."

If Macmillan has escaped reproach, it is not because he succeeded, but because the task was so hopeless. The north's industrial economy had begun to crumble after the first world war; subsequent wars and government policy slowed the decline, but could not stop it. Between 1918 and 1962 the proportion of the population living in England's three northern regions (the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber) declined from 35% to 30%, reversing the northward migration of the 19th century. In the 50 years since it has declined to 25%.

For Macmillan's successors, including David Cameron, another Eton-educated Tory with one-nation ideals, the challenge is just as tough. The north remains poorer than the south, with sharply lower employment rates and average incomes. In 1965 men in the north were 16% more likely to die under the age of 75 than men in the south. By 2008 they were 20% more likely to, according to a study published last year in the *British Medical Journal*. This is not just because poor people die young: rich northerners apparently live shorter lives than their southern peers.

And yet England's north has never been as uniformly grim as sentimental films like "Billy Elliot", "Brassed Off" and "The Full Monty" suggest. It contains poor ex-industrial cities, like Bradford and Middlesbrough, and depressed towns like Consett, near Newcastle. But there are also impressively wealthy parts, such as Sheffield Hallam, where 60% of the residents have degrees, and York, where the unemployment rate is a quarter lower than the national average.

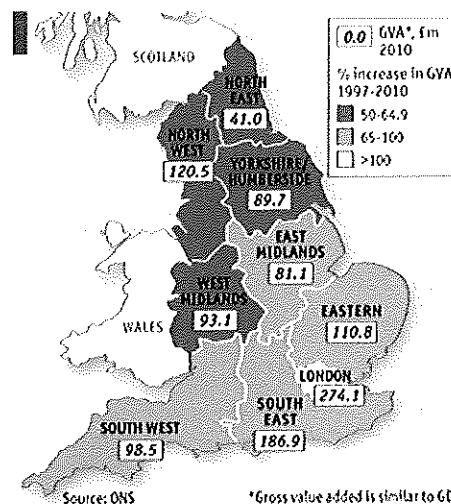
As Danny Dorling of the University of Sheffield puts it, the difference is that, in the north, there are "islands of affluence in a sea of poverty". In the south, the sea is of affluence. And the contrast is growing. For much of the past 20 years growth in the British economy has come from two sectors: government spending, primarily on health care and education, and the private service sector. The north has benefited only from the first, and it is ebbing.

Whereas government spending is spread fairly evenly across the country—nurses and teachers are needed roughly in proportion to the population—private-sector growth has been heavily concentrated, mostly in and around London. Between 1997 and 2010 gross value-added, a measure of output, grew by 61% in the three northern regions. In London and the South East, it shot up by 92% (see map). According to a study by the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change at the University of Manchester, the state accounted, directly and indirectly, for 64% of the jobs created in the north between 1998 and 2007, against just 38% in the south.

Now public spending is being cut everywhere, as the government tries to tackle a huge budget deficit. That would be expected to hurt the north more anyway, but the cuts are actually sharper there, in three ways. First, the government has cut funding for the regional development agencies, which doled out cash to support growth in northern regions. Second, under the formulae used to determined local government financing, cuts to council budgets are deeper in poorer places—which includes most northern local authorities. Finally, although infrastructure spending has been cut everywhere, in the south several large projects have been left intact, including Crossrail, Thameslink and the Olympic games.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think-tank, estimates that local authorities in the North East and North West must cut their spending by around 12%, compared with just 4.6% in the South East. IPPR, another think-tank, estimates that 86% of the government's spending on big transport projects is in London. The big infrastructure debate at the moment is over whether it would be better to expand London's Heathrow airport or build an entirely new airport in the south-east.

The private sector has not yet come close to filling the gap left by the retreating state. In the North East, where the public-sector is proportionately the largest and has shrunk fastest, the unemployment rate has risen by 1.2 percentage points over the past two years. In the North West and in Yorkshire and the Humber it has risen by 0.9 points. In the South East, by contrast, unemployment is almost unchanged, while in London, it has actually fallen by 0.3 points. [...]



Why are lefties so sycophantic to Margaret Thatcher?

Yes, a few drunken anarchists danced, but most of the left has marked Thatcher's death with synchronised sycophancy

The Spectator / [Ross Clark](#) / 13 April 2013



SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

I've been scratching my head for the past half hour trying to work out how I would react if I were a Conservative MP and a BBC reporter stuffed a microphone in front of me and told me that [Note: National Union of Mineworkers' leader] Arthur Scargill had just died. I know I wouldn't punch the air, but a syrupy tribute?

I think not. It would go something like this: 'I'm sorry to hear that. Scargill was a charismatic leader to his followers but one whose legacy was to destroy the industry he loved, and all for his own ego.'

Would I expect to be hauled over the coals for saying that? Surely it is not unreasonable to react to the death of a political figure with a genuine assessment of their foibles.

Yet the left's reaction to the death of Lady Thatcher was bizarrely schizophrenic. Handfuls of activists did indeed attempt to create the Mafeking they had promised, with fireworks, balloons and whistles, to name a few of the contents of the party packs put together by the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre and on sale at last year's TUC conference. Yet the numbers attending impromptu street parties were pathetically small.

Meanwhile, the mainstream left maintained a front of sycophancy. To read through the Twitter accounts of Labour MPs one might have thought they were paying tribute to Fidel Castro.

'My condolences to the Thatcher family,' swooned Harriet Harman. 'First woman PM, a towering figure.' Yes, this is the same Harriet Harman who, when spending our money on a 'Women in Power factsheet' to distribute to schools in 2009, omitted to mention Mrs Thatcher at all.

Labour MP Chris Bryant put out an almost identical tweet: 'Warm condolences to the extended Thatcher family. A towering figure who was never afraid of controversy.'

This from a man who told the *Independent* in 2010: 'It was when I saw the effect of Mrs Thatcher's policies on our inner cities that I realised Conservatism was divisive, uncaring, economically incompetent and morally wrong.'

Almost simultaneously, the Twitter feed of former Labour minister David Lammy burst into life, stating: 'RIP Margaret Thatcher. Whatever you think of her she will remain a political giant. End of an era.' All from a man who remembered in the *New Statesman* recently the 'tears of joy' he had cried when he heard she had resigned as Prime Minister.

Between this and the unpleasant contributions on the outer fringes of the left, the worst being George Galloway's 'may she burn in the hellfires', there has been virtually nothing. The unions have remained almost silent.

What's wrong with them? Why can't they say what they really think, which in most cases is that Mrs Thatcher was a callous Prime Minister who cared more for her free market ideology than she did for human beings?

I wouldn't have thought any the worse of Ed Miliband if he had enlightened us as to where he thought Thatcher had gone wrong, rather than laying on his condolences with a trowel. He, Blair and Brown all made pointedly more generous tributes than did Michael Heseltine, John Major or Geoffrey Howe. Labour's reaction looks co-ordinated, as if the spin doctors had calculated that even slightly barbed words would be used against them. Emotional correctness has trumped even the left's visceral hatred of Thatcher.

But there is another possible explanation for Labour's reluctance to trample on Lady Thatcher's grave: Labour's own failures have taken all the sting out of attacks on Thatcher and her government. How do you accuse her of having bumped off the sick — as Kinnock liked to claim — when it was during Labour's great NHS spending splurge that the worst NHS scandal of all occurred: the deaths of up to 1,200 patients in Mid Staffs? How do you accuse Thatcher of encouraging greed when the yuppie bankers of her day earned peanuts compared with those of Brown's Britain, who not only stuffed their pockets but drove the banking system to ruin?

At least the privatisations of Thatcher's day worked well for the taxpayer, which is more than you can say of current train-operating companies and PFI hospitals.

Compared with the excesses of recent years, the 1980s now come across as rather quaint. Even her housing boom was relatively sane compared with what was to come. True, Thatcher's comments on Nelson Mandela and Clause 28 still give the left some means to attack her as heartless. But try to condemn her on most economic grounds and all Labour politicians will manage is to draw attention to things about the Blair and Brown years that many of them would rather forget.

No wonder Lady Thatcher has enjoyed a gentle passing.

Margaret Thatcher's Britain: we still live in the land Maggie built

The coalition is maintaining Thatcher's project of rolling back the frontiers of the state, dismantling the settlement that held from 1945 until it unravelled in the 1970s

Jonathan Freedland / The Guardian / Monday 8 April 2013

Back when we called her Maggie, when it seemed she would have her wish and "go on and on" in ruling the country, her opponents would lament some new step towards social ruin with the withering, two-word verdict: "Thatcher's Britain."

It was meant as a term of condemnation, a concise way of arguing that riots in the street or the devastation of a pit village were the inevitable features of this new land that had arisen in the 1980s, a country reshaped by the woman at the top.

Curiously, the phrase does not sound as dated as it should. That's because, 23 years after she was ejected from Downing Street by her own party, the country we live in remains Thatcher's Britain. We still live in the land Margaret built.

Just look around. Visit a station and notice the plethora of competing train companies, replacing the single British Rail that operated in the pre-Thatcher days – the fruit of a rail privatisation that was not hers, but was made possible only by the serial privatisations she had pioneered and made normal. Look at the cars on the road, none made by the old, nationally-owned British Leyland and only few by the British marques that once dominated but which went the way of much of British industry – unable to survive the chill wind of "market forces", another phrase which filled the air back then. Look inside your own house, at the water coming out of the tap: once a public utility but, after Thatcher, the property of private companies, many foreign-owned. Gaze at the telephone. When she took over in 1979, the bottom of that device would have carried the legend, "Property of the GPO." It was not yours, but belonged to the Post Office: in effect, the government. What's more, it was moulded to the wall. That was before Thatcher modishly renamed the service British Telecom and sold it off.

Viewed from today, that past Britain is indeed a foreign country. In her 1982 party conference speech, Margaret Thatcher offered a prediction for the future: "How absurd it will seem in a few years' time that the state ran Pickfords removals and Gleneagles Hotel." Absurd or not, it does indeed seem alien – not least to those born in the 1980s, the generation we shall always call Thatcher's children.

For some, the only consequence of that shift, still visible today, will be a changed brand name or higher bills. But for others, the change in landscape is all too real. Across Yorkshire or south Wales, Kent or Nottinghamshire, there are villages that have never recovered from the closure of coal mines, ordered by a Thatcher who ruled there was no place for pits that were not "economically viable", regardless of the social consequences. Some places have become heritage parks, remembering an industry now vanished. But other villages have never recovered, their heart and purpose ripped out. Those abandoned places are also landmarks in Thatcher's Britain.

To have achieved all this alone would have made Margaret Thatcher a towering, transformational figure, one who altered the physical fabric of the nation. But these concrete achievements do not wholly explain why she still looms so large, large enough that not one but two current West End plays – *The Audience* and *Billy Elliot* – grant Thatcher a pivotal, if largely unsympathetic, role, whether seen or unseen.

For she changed the ethos of Britain as well as its landscape. In 2009, Boris Johnson lamented that Thatcher had become "a boo-word in British politics, a shorthand for selfishness and me-first-ism, and devil-take-the-hindmost and grinding the faces of the poor."

The London mayor regretted that usage, but he surely understood its origins. The set text is still Thatcher's declaration – quoted in *The Audience* – that "There is no such thing as society". Her defenders always insisted that sentence had been misunderstood, but it stuck because it seemed to capture something essential about the Thatcherite creed: its embrace of individualism and apparent disdain for the collective.

At its best, that has meant a mood of freedom and choice that has made these islands a brighter, less drab place than they once were. One might even credit Thatcher with a willingness to jettison the old rules and conventions that used to prevent individuals deciding their own destiny.

But at its crudest, the Thatcher ethos translated into the get-rich-quick, greed-is-good spirit of the 1980s. The Big Bang of City deregulation, the scramble for buying and selling shares, the sense that money is the highest value, wealth the greatest sign of worth – all these were hallmarks of the Thatcher era in its mid-80s pomp. Few would argue that they have not endured. On the contrary, consumerism and materialism have been the norm ever since, rising inequality the consistent trend as the rich soar ever further away from the rest. Moreover, it's hard not to see the roots of the 2008 crash in the unshackling of the City two decades earlier. [...]



The Big Bang of City deregulation was among the hallmarks of the Margaret Thatcher era in its mid-80s pomp. Photograph: Nils Jorgensen / Rex Features

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

George Osborne: Why should the taxpayer fund 'lifestyles' like those of the Philpotts?

George Osborne has suggested that the conviction of Mick Philpott, who killed six of his own children, raised fundamental questions about Britain's welfare system.

By Peter Dominiczak, and Robert Winnett

10:00PM BST 04 Apr 2013

In a controversial intervention, the Chancellor said that it was now time for Government and society to "question" whether it was appropriate for "lifestyles" such as Philpott's to be funded by the taxpayer. On Thursday, the unemployed father of 17 was sentenced to life in prison after being found guilty of deliberately burning down his taxpayer-funded house and killing six children. The shocking details of his benefit-funded lifestyle, which emerged during the court case, have led to allegations that Philpott sought to manipulate the welfare system by forcing women to have large numbers of children to receive state handouts. It is thought that the former soldier, a violent drug user, received the equivalent of a £100,000 salary when his benefits payments were added to the wages he forced his wife and mistress to hand over.

On a visit to Derby, Mr Osborne stressed that Philpott was responsible for his "horrendous crimes." However, he then added: "It's right we ask questions as a Government, a society and as taxpayers, why we are subsidising lifestyles like these. It does need to be handled." His intervention was welcomed by Tory backbenchers. Priti Patel, the MP for Witham, said: "I completely support George Osborne's comments. We are at a stage where society has to look at the way benefits are used and abused. The Philpott case typifies that and it is absolutely legitimate to ask these kinds of questions." And Dominic Raab, the MP for Esher and Walton, said: "Nothing can excuse the individual moral and criminal responsibility for this ghastly crime. But we would be abdicating our responsibility as a society if we did not look at whether there is some link with the climate of dependency that our bloated welfare system has helped to create." However, Labour accused Mr Osborne of "cynically" exploiting Philpott's crimes to justify the Government's controversial benefit reforms unveiled this week. Ed Balls, the shadow chancellor, said: "We should have a proper debate about welfare reform," Mr Balls said. "But for the Chancellor to link this wider debate to this shocking crime is nasty and divisive and demeans his office. George Osborne now needs to explain why he has chosen to comment on this case, and why he has sought to make a link between a terrible crime and the welfare system, when he has said nothing about the financial circumstances of those who commit other terrible crimes." Dame Anne Begg, the Labour MP who chairs the Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee, added: "It was an evil act and I don't think we should be making policy on the back of a very exceptional case."

Philpott, 56, was described as a "disturbingly dangerous man with no moral compass" as he was sentenced to life in prison for the murders. As he was led from the dock he smiled and stuck two fingers up as family members shouted, "Die Mick, die" from the court's public gallery. His wife Mairead and co-conspirator Paul Mosley were handed 17 years each for their part in the plot. The fatal blaze that tore through the house in Victory Road, Derby, was started by the trio in an effort to try and frame Philpott's former mistress, Lisa Willis, after she left the family home with her five children three months earlier. She had lived in the three-bed council house for 10 years with the Philpotts and their six children. It meant that Philpott had been entitled to claim thousands of pounds every month in benefits.

Ordering him to serve a minimum of 15 years in prison, Mrs Justice Thirlwall described how Philpott had forced his wife and mistress to channel their wages and benefits into his bank account. She said: "You controlled and manipulated those women as you had controlled and manipulated their predecessors. They ran the household and looked after all the children. They went out to work. Their wages and their benefits went into your account. You controlled how money was spent."

Mr Osborne's comments were seen as an attempt to defend the changes to the tax and benefit system brought in by the Government this week. The Coalition is pushing through the biggest overhaul of the benefits system in decades, starting this week with cuts to housing benefit for social housing tenants with a spare room, changes to council tax and the gradual introduction of Universal Credit, replacing work related benefits. Other tax changes include an increase in the tax free personal allowance to £9,440, a freeze in fuel duty and the introduction of the new 45p top rate of tax.

Labour has been joined by church leaders, campaign groups and charities in condemning the changes to Britain's welfare state. Mr Balls has called the reforms "callous" and described this month as "Black April". In a joint report, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland said there was a "systematic misrepresentation of the poorest in society" that was being used to justify the cuts.

Did Britain's benefits system contribute to the Philpott fire killings?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Vote

[View Results](#)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9972717/George-OSborne-Why-should-the-taxpayer-fund-lifestyles-like-those-of-the-Philpotts.html>

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Benefits reform: 'welfare victim' who dared Iain Duncan Smith to live on £53 is a gambler

A father who dared Iain Duncan Smith to live up to his claim that he could survive on £53 a week has been revealed as a gambler and a self-confessed 'ducker and diver'.

By Melanie Hall

02 Apr 2013 / THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

David Bennett, 51, told the BBC he was struggling to survive after his housing benefit was cut, but it has emerged that the divorced father of two is a regular gambler who used part of an inheritance from his grandmother to play poker.

Mr Bennett had given an emotional interview on BBC Radio 4's Today programme saying he was a market trader working up to 70 hours a week whose money all went on rent and bills, adding that he was forced to borrow to survive and that he was no scrounger.

However, it has been revealed that Mr Bennett has accounts on poker websites and used some of his inheritance to gamble in December, the Daily Mail reported.

On his Twitter account, Mr Bennett's profile says 'Poker player, self-employed ducker and diver', although he changed this yesterday to 'Market trader', and adds that his hobbies are 'football, poker and beer'. In February, he tweeted to two gambling tipsters saying: "Rough day today lads, gonna have to find your magic potion again soon."

He said he was asked onto the Today show after he left a message on the BBC's website criticising welfare cuts. "I put a comment on saying David Cameron can stick his Big Society where the sun doesn't shine, or words to that effect," he said. "As a result I was invited to go to Newcastle and be interviewed by John Humphrys." Mr Bennett had been asked on the programme about whether he had any questions for Mr Duncan Smith, and responded: "Could you survive on £53 a week?"

When Mr Humphrys put the question to the millionaire former Tory leader, Mr Duncan Smith replied: "If I had to I would."

The exchange prompted an online petition calling for the Work and Pensions Secretary to forego his £134,565-a-year salary and live on Mr Bennett's income for at least a year, which attracted almost 67,000 signatures in 12 hours.

However, Mr Bennett's gambling history has thrown up questions about whether the BBC should have given him such a high-profile platform. He told Today he had worked as a credit manager for most of his life, until he was made redundant three years ago, and then set up a new business as a self-employed market trader.

Mr Bennett claimed he worked up to 70 hours a week, sometimes working every day, but that he had earned only £2,700 in 14 months. He said he was forced to borrow money to pay his rent after his housing benefit was cut from £75 a week to just £57, and he was made to pay £5 a week toward council tax.

He told the programme: "I work for a living, I've always worked for a living, I've worked since I have been 17 years old. I put a lot of money in taxes and national insurance but what I'm finding now is that it's hard times. Why would I consider myself a scrounger?"

"I try to stand on my own two feet. Conditions have gone against us. Everybody hits hard times every now and again. If the Government wants to class me as a scrounger that's entirely their problem."

Mr Bennett said he was paid housing benefit and working tax credit, and earned around £200 a month from his stall, giving him a total monthly income of £633, according to the Daily Mail.

He pays £400 in rent per month and around £176 in utility bills, but also pays for a landline, mobile phone and Sky with broadband, and claims his bills leave him with £23 a month, meaning a £10 bet would account for almost half of his monthly disposable income.

"I don't want to make this political, but the politicians are just rich Tory boys who don't live in the real world. They are hitting the people who don't vote for them."

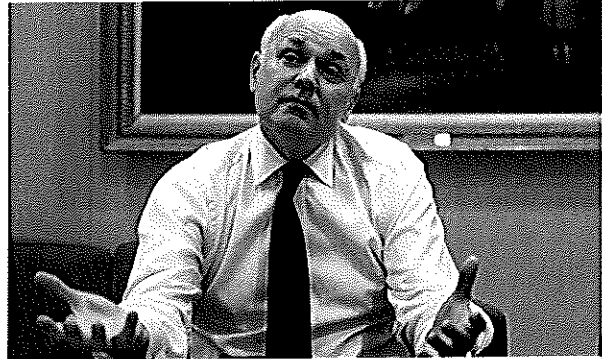
In contrast, Mr Duncan Smith lives in a £2 million Tudor house on an estate in Buckinghamshire dubbed 'mini-Chequers', with a swimming pool and tennis courts.

Mr Duncan Smith said he lived on benefits himself after he left the Army and had a more recent taste of life on welfare when he briefly stayed on one of Britain's toughest housing estates for a Channel 4 documentary.

"Successive governments have come in and when they've had a problem they've cut welfare bills and then later on they've ballooned again," he said. "What I'm trying to do ... is to change the process so that we end up restructuring the culture so that people find that work always pays."

A BBC spokesman defended Mr Bennett's interview on the Today programme and said the corporation stood by his account.

The spokesman claimed staff had checked his story, adding: "We stand by the interview, which was used to illustrate how the changes to the welfare system might affect people within a wider piece, including a lengthy interview with Iain Duncan Smith. Mr Bennett outlined his circumstances, but was also questioned robustly."



The Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith Photo: GEOFF PUGH

'It is time for the British people to have their say': David Cameron promises EU exit vote by 2017

ANDREW GRICE / THE INDEPENDENT / WEDNESDAY 23 JANUARY 2013

David Cameron called today for a fundamental change in Britain's relationship with the European Union as he made his promise of an "in or out referendum" within five years on whether the country should remain a member of the 27-nation club.

In a landmark speech on Europe that will set the tone for British politics for years, the Prime Minister said the "ever closer union" which was the founding principle of the EU should no longer apply to Britain.

"We understand and respect the right of others to maintain their commitment to this goal. But for Britain – and perhaps for others – it is not the objective. And we would be much more comfortable if the treaty specifically said so, freeing those who want to go further, faster, to do so, without being held back by the others.

"Power must be able to flow back to member states, not just away from them," he said. "Nothing should be off the table." He added: "The biggest danger to the EU comes not from those who advocate change, but from those who denounce new thinking as heresy. In its long history Europe has experience of heretics who turned out to have a point," he said.

Mr Cameron pledged that, if the Conservatives win the May 2015 election, a referendum would be held within the first half of the five-year parliament – which means by the end of 2017. It will be the first referendum on Europe since Britain voted in 1975 to stay in the EU, two years after joining.

Although his clear promise of a simple "in or out" vote was welcomed by Tory Eurosceptics, his speech left some crucial questions unanswered.

Mr Cameron said he wanted Britain to remain in the EU and was confident of winning a "new settlement", with some powers returned from Brussels to London, that would enable him to recommend a Yes vote in the referendum. But answering questions after his address, he refused to say what he would do

if other EU leaders did not give him a deal he could recommend to the British public. This is seen as a highly possible scenario on the Continent, where other EU nations say the UK cannot "cherry-pick" the EU laws which suit it.

Mr Cameron said he would table Britain's demands even if the EU backed away from a new treaty to entrench reforms to the eurozone. "If there is no appetite for a new treaty for us all then of course Britain should be ready to address the changes we need in a negotiation with our European partners," he said.

He questioned the EU's need to legislate on areas such as the environment, social affairs and crime and made clear that Britain wanted to extend its opt-out from aspects of the working time directive. "It is neither right nor necessary to claim that the integrity of the single market, or full membership of the EU requires the working hours of British hospital doctors to be set in Brussels irrespective of the views of British parliamentarians and practitioners," he said.

Mr Cameron had some words of reassurance for pro-British businessmen. "I never want us to pull up the drawbridge and retreat from the world. I am not a British isolationist. I don't just want a better deal for Britain. I want a better deal for Europe too. So I speak as British Prime Minister with a positive vision for the future of the EU. A future in which Britain wants, and should want, to play a committed and active part."



"It is time for the British people to have their say. It is time to settle this European question in British politics.

I say to the British people: this will be your decision.

And when that choice comes, you will have an important choice to make about our country's destiny.

I understand the appeal of going it alone, of charting our own course. But it will be a decision we will have to take with cool heads. Proponents of both sides of the argument will need to avoid exaggerating their claims.

Of course Britain could make her own way in the world, outside the EU, if we chose to do so. So could any other Member State.

But the question we will have to ask ourselves is this: is that the very best future for our country?

We will have to weigh carefully where our true national interest lies. "

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

News / Front page

Most voters want Britain to quit EU, poll shows

Roland Watson, Political Editor

Friday 25 January 2013 / The Times



Forty per cent of voters would leave the European Union according to the Populus survey
Lawrence Lawry/Getty

Britain would vote to leave the European Union if a referendum were held today, a poll for The Times suggests.

Forty per cent of voters would leave, 37 per cent would stay and 23 per cent do not know how they would vote, according to the Populus survey. That translates into a 53-47 vote in favour of leaving after taking into account people's likelihood to vote and stripping the "don't knows" from the figures. The finding shows the scale of David Cameron's gamble in promising to put Britain's EU membership to the vote within five years.

The survey also reveals that many voters have already made up their minds, regardless of the new deal that Mr Cameron is seeking to negotiate for Britain. Half those who want Britain to remain in the EU, and two fifths of those who want to quit, say that their vote in 2017 will have little or nothing to do with the details of opt-outs or the repatriation of powers.

Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, put a question mark over whether he would support continued EU membership in the referendum. "I can't say now," he told an interviewer at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "But my overwhelming instinct would be that we can get sufficient changes, reforms and improvements to the treaty to make it sensible, for most people in my country to vote to stay in the single market."

Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, made no reference in her speech in Davos yesterday to Mr Cameron's pitch for a reformed EU — an omission interpreted by the German press as a snub for the Prime Minister.

Downing Street was initially buoyed on Wednesday when Mrs Merkel said that she was happy to talk about his ideas.

George Soros, the currency trader who made \$1 billion betting against sterling in 1992, said in Davos that the referendum was a dangerous gambit. "Britain is in the best of all possible positions because it is a member of the EU but not the euro, and any change in that status will be detrimental. Britain is opting out of decision-making," he said.

The poll also shows that the Prime Minister's landmark speech on Tuesday did little to improve his chances of an outright Tory victory at the next election in 2015. A quarter of Liberal Democrat voters (23 per cent) and Labour voters (26 per cent) said that his "renegotiate and referendum" strategy made it less likely that they would vote Tory. Significantly, 75 per cent of the UKIP vote remained unmoved by the speech, while 17 per cent said that it made them less likely to back Mr Cameron.

Only 8 per cent of UKIP supporters said the speech had made them more likely to vote Tory.

However, Mr Cameron emerged the clear winner when respondents were asked who they most trusted to renegotiate Britain's EU membership on more favourable terms. A third (36 per cent) said Mr Cameron, including a quarter (23 per cent) of Lib Dem voters; Ed Milliband was backed by 18 per cent; Nigel Farage, the UKIP leader, by 10 per cent; and Mr Clegg by 5 per cent.

Mr Clegg indicated yesterday that Mr Cameron's promise of a referendum would not stop him joining a Tory-led coalition. The Prime Minister said on Wednesday that the referendum was a "red line" and he would not allow his plan to be derailed if he failed to win an outright majority.

The poll showed that Tory supporters were split 44-56 in favour of leaving the EU today. Two thirds of Labour (63 per cent) and Liberal Democrats (65 per cent) would stay in. Support for the EU was stronger among men, with 52 per cent wanting to stay, while 59 per cent of women supported leaving. Populus interviewed 2,024 adults online between January 23 and 24. Results have been weighted to be politically and demographically representative of the GB population as a whole.

Politics

Rebuff for Cameron as 130 MPs back Tory rebellion on Europe

Roland Watson and Michael Savage

15 May 2013 / The Times

Tory Euro-sceptics staged a massive show of strength tonight as David Cameron failed to limit the party's split over Europe.

Despite the Prime Minister's hastily-produced referendum Bill 115 Conservative MPs voted against the Queen's Speech, including 11 parliamentary aides.

5 The scale of the Tory vote surprised even leading rebels who earlier in the day believed many colleagues had been bought off by Mr Cameron's manoeuvre.

But MPs spurned the olive branch and took Mr Cameron at his word when he said he was "profoundly relaxed" about Tory MPs voting against the Government's legislative agenda.

10 Last night's rebel amendment lamented the absence from the Queen's Speech of a Bill to enshrine in law Mr Cameron's promised in-out EU referendum before the end of 2017. It was defeated by 130 votes to 277.

15 The scale of the rebellion will force Mr Cameron to secure Commons time for an MP to pilot the Tories' referendum Bill through the Commons. MPs will learn this morning who has secured a slot near the top of the ballot for private members' Bills. The highest ranking eurosceptic is expected to take up the Bill produced by the Tories earlier this week, enshrining in law a 2017 referendum.

Such a Bill is likely to become a new coalition flashpoint, with Nick Clegg refusing to give government time to a measure the Liberal Democrats insist is a distraction.

However, Mr Clegg yesterday shifted his party, saying it was a matter of "when not if" the public was given an in-out referendum.

20 The Deputy Prime Minister said an eventual vote was likely because emerging new rules for the eurozone would change the EU fundamentally, a process that would require the consent of the British public.

25 However, he said he would oppose any moves to give government time to a private member's Bill aimed at writing into law now a 2017 referendum. Lib Dem officials said such a measure should not be a priority of the Government.

Mr Cameron today accused the Liberal Democrats and Labour of sticking their heads in the sand for opposing an EU referendum.

30 The Prime Minister said that he did not regret saying in 2006 that his party should stop "banging on about Europe". However, he said that the crisis in the EU meant that discussing the topic had now become "inevitable".

Speaking in New York, where he is chairing a UN panel on international development, Mr Cameron said both the Lib Dems and Labour had not backed his pledge of holding an in-out referendum in 2017. He will hold the referendum after attempting to secure a new relationship with Brussels.

35 "You can make your response sticking your head in the sand and pretending nothing has changed and just carrying on and accepting everything that comes out of Brussels," he said. "This is not a sensible approach, although it does seem to be the approach some in British politics seem to take.

"Or you can say Europe is changing, Britain needs to be a part of forging that change, just as the eurozone countries come together and do more things together, so those countries outside the eurozone need to work out how they're going to make their relationship work with Europe."

40 He also denied his party would be split further over Europe by today's Commons motion, expressing regret that an EU Referendum Bill was not included in this month's Queen's Speech. He said Tory MPs voting for the motion were not rebels because they had not been instructed to oppose it.

Mr Cameron also signalled he would go no further in appeasing Tories demanding a tougher stance on Europe. Some want an immediate referendum.

45 "The clear view from me is exactly what I set out in the January speech, which is reform, renegotiation and then referendum and the referendum must be by the end of 2017," he said. "That is the very consistent picture and that's the right policy, it's the right approach for Britain.

50 "In the January 24 speech I did say we were going to draft legislation before the election. You've got a very clear approach from the Conservatives, which is reform, renegotiate, referendum. What's interesting now is the focus should be on the other parties — what is your position, are you going to trust the British people and allow them to have a say?"

He added: "If you're reworking this relationship and you're going through the process of reform, a certain amount of discussion of European issues is going to be inevitable.

55 "But we should keep it in proper context, it is one of many reforms I want to pursue, but it's obviously an important one."

Benefit cuts: Monday will be the day that defines this government

Those on low incomes, after all the vicious talk dismissing them as cheats and idlers, will be hit by an avalanche of cuts

Polly Toynbee / The Guardian / Thursday 28 March 2013

Not many know what is about to happen on Monday: neither those about to be knocked down nor those sailing too high above them to notice. But historians will see it as the day that defines the Cameron government. An avalanche of benefit cuts will hit the same households over and over, with no official assessment of how far this £18bn reduction will send those who are already poor into beggary.

In his 2009 Hugo Young lecture, David Cameron spoke with apparent passion of the damage done by inequality: "We all know, in our hearts, that as long as there is deep poverty living systematically side by side with great riches, we all remain the poorer for it." The wise saw the wolf beneath the sheepskin: sure enough, once in power, the language he and his ministers used to blame the poor for their plight was cruder and fiercer than in Thatcher's day. You need to go back to Edwardian times to find ministers and commentators so viciously dismissing all on low incomes as cheats, idlers and drunks.

On BBC news, Iain Duncan Smith, confronted with irrefutable cases of hardship, said: "It's about trying to get as many people as possible out of the welfare trap and into lives they can control themselves." As the economist JK Galbraith observed: "The modern conservative is engaged in one of man's oldest exercises in moral philosophy: that is, the search for a superior moral justification for selfishness."

So far, public opinion seems alarmingly content with these cuts – but before we despair of human kindness, many can plead ignorance. The government relies on destitution staying silent and unseen, isolated in families with no collective voice.

Dear Guardian reader, you know what's happening because we report on the social security calamity almost daily, as you would expect. Readers of the Mirror have been briefed this week, and the Independent covered the bedroom tax on its front page. But look back through this week's Times, Telegraph, Mail and Sun to see how their readers are told nothing. They know a lot about immigrants. Sun readers were told the welfare bill is soaring out of control. They read a freak story of a woman refusing to take well-paid jobs to keep her children's free university places.

Times readers learned at length of Tanni Grey-Thompson's ordeal of hauling herself up 12 floors when her lift broke down, but only a very short story on her admirable campaign against cuts leaving disabled people £4,600 poorer. Telegraph readers were told "benefit claimants should be forced to seek extra work", with a battery of stories against unfair budget treatment of stay-at-home mums suffering a "traditional families penalty".

People may read these papers to be protected from inconvenient facts about growing inequality and the catastrophic falling behind of the poor. The Brookings Institution reports that ever-worsening inequality will be "permanent" from now on. Most people would be alarmed at a never-ending widening of the gulf, if they knew. Most people want to believe the equal opportunities myth, but are easily comforted when told the poor are bad and the well-off deserving, so social justice prevails in this best of all possible worlds.

No amount of IDS newspeak can turn the bedroom tax into a "spare bedroom subsidy". Frank Field calls for social landlords to knock down walls or brick up rooms so people can keep their homes. From Monday, most of the poorest get a new bill of an average £138 for council tax.

Now add in these: disability living allowance starts converting into personal independence payment with a target to remove 500,000 people in new Atos medical tests. The Guardian has revealed how jobcentre staff are under orders to find any sanction to knock people off benefits. New obstacles are strewn in their path: people must apply for their benefits online from computers they don't possess; many of these claimants are semi-literate. When in dire straits, there will be no more crisis loans, only a card for buying food, with not a penny for bus fares. Trussell Trust food banks expect a great surge of the hungry, so they ask everyone to donate the price of an Easter egg.

Here is the final wicked twist: legal aid has been removed for advice on benefits, housing, divorce, debt, education and employment. On Monday the budget of Citizens Advice for such cases falls from £22m to £3m. The few emergency cases still covered – families facing instant eviction – can only use a phone service, not face-to-face legal help. Law centres will close. There will be no help on school exclusions, landlord or employer harassment, or failure to pay wages.

I refuse to believe most people would not be shocked if they knew, if they saw and if they understood. Even some of the 30% who always vote Tory might be appalled if they weren't so well deceived by their ministers, MPs and newspapers, who lie knowingly and deliberately. People should know that historians will record the earthquake of social destruction that happened in their name, while they read of nothing but "scroungers" and the "soaring benefit bill".

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

We have to talk about why some people agree with benefit cuts

Centre-left politicians catch glimpses of public opinion on 'welfare' and are frozen, while the right seizes its chance

John Harris / The Guardian / 31 March 2013

So, here it all comes. As of Monday, the spare bedroom tax is not merely the subject of highly charged radio phone-ins, but blunt reality. The same goes for alterations to council tax benefit, and the overlooked change whereby the Department for Work and Pensions' discretionary social fund is no more.

5 The period for the 1% cap on increases to working-age benefits starts in five days' time, and next week the DWP will begin the transition from disability living allowance to the personal independence payment. The government hopes to save £2bn, largely by denying up to 500,000 people the new benefit. From 15 April the across-the-board annual benefits cap of £26,000 will be piloted in four London boroughs. And all the time, the dawn of universal credit – due in October – looms, amid plenty

10 of signs of hubris and ineptitude leading to disaster.

At which point, some polling numbers, just as crude and blunt as the changes themselves. According to ComRes, 64% of Britons believe the benefits system either does not work well or is "failing", and 40% of us think that at least half of all benefit recipients are "scroungers". Ipsos Mori reckons 84% of its respondents either agree or tend to agree with stricter work-capability tests for disabled people, and

15 78% are in accord with the idea that benefits should be docked if people turn down work that pays the same or less than they get in benefits.

The same research suggests 62% are OK with the idea of benefits being capped "if people choose to

have more children", and 57% agree with the essential logic of capping housing benefit.

When it comes to big-picture stuff, a majority of us seem to believe in the notion of welfare dependency (once a controversial trope peddled by the nasty Tory right, but now as firmly built into the public consciousness as the idea that the poor spend too much of their money on booze, fags and Sky TV). It may be a cliché to suggest that tens of millions of people have precious little objection to what

20 Iain Duncan Smith is up to, but that does not make it any less true.

As yet another poll – by YouGov, commissioned by the TUC – proved last year, people seem to hold wildly inaccurate views about the scale of benefit fraud and the proportion of spending that goes on people who cannot find work, and more. But in three years of regularly asking people what they think about the welfare state, I have never heard a single voice echoing the *bien-pensant* – and factually accurate – view that benefit fraud accounts for a tiny share of social security spending. Instead, people think it is a real, urgent problem, and everyone claims to know someone who does it.

30 The day after George Osborne floated the idea of a child benefit cap at the Tory conference in Birmingham, the argument in nearby Handsworth was not about the principle but when it should kick in. Down the road in Newtown, I had already canvassed local views on the link between low pay and people's supposed unwillingness to take work, and serially bumped up against a proposal curtly suggested by a shift worker I met outside a budget supermarket: "Cut the benefit."

35 In Warrington, Liverpool, Hartlepool, Peterborough and many other places, I have heard much the same stuff, and two rules always apply. First, as against the idea that disaffection with the benefits system amounts to a petit bourgeois roar from the suburbs, a lot of the noise gets louder as you head into the most disadvantaged parts of society. Second, it is the under-30s who have the most severe perspective of all. Polling bears this latter point out: in the aforementioned ComRes poll, the share of

40 those aged 18-34 who thought a half or more of people on benefits were "scroungers" outstripped that of all other age groups by nearly 10 percentage points.

Much of this strain of public sentiment has always been with us, though in the days when one-nation Toryism was still thriving, and the Labour-voting working class could just about be understood as a coherent and united political entity, politicians tended to avert their eyes from it. But with all that long gone, the politics of so-called welfare now falls one of two ways: centre-left politicians catch glimpses of public opinion and stay frozen to the spot, while the right endlessly seizes its chance.

45 This is why Labour politicians are in such contortions about the benefits system, why Ed Miliband's opposition to the 1% cap on benefit increases was an underrated act of political bravery, and why Labour MPs recently made the infamous decision to abstain when the Commons voted on a bill that will prevent 250,000 people from receiving £130m in rebates, after regulations covering unpaid work experience were judged unlawful by the high court. They are usually terrified, and not without reason. [...]

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Woolwich attack: of course British foreign policy had a role

While nothing can justify the killing of a British soldier, the link to Britain's vicious occupations abroad cannot be ignored



Joe Glenton / The Guardian / Thursday 23 May 2013

I am a former soldier. I completed one tour of duty in Afghanistan, refused on legal and moral grounds to serve a second tour, and spent five months in a military prison as a result. When the news about the attack in Woolwich broke, by pure coincidence Ross Caputi was crashing on my sofa. Ross is a soft-spoken ex-US marine turned film-maker who served in Iraq and witnessed the pillaging and irradiation of Falluja. He is also a native of Boston, the scene of a recent homegrown terror attack. Together, we watched the news, and right away we were certain that what we were seeing was informed by the misguided military adventures in which we had taken part.

So at the very outset, and before the rising tide of prejudice and pseudo-patriotism fully encloses us, let us be clear: while nothing can justify the savage killing in Woolwich yesterday of a man since confirmed to have been a serving British soldier, it should not be hard to explain why the murder happened.

These awful events cannot be explained in the almost Texan terms of Colonel Richard Kemp, who served as commander of British forces in Afghanistan in 2001. He tweeted on last night that they were "not about Iraq or Afghanistan", but were an attack on "our way of life". Plenty of others are saying the same.

But let's start by examining what emerged from the mouths of the assailants themselves. In an accent that was pure London, according to one of the courageous women who intervened at the scene, one alleged killer claimed he was "... fed up with people killing Muslims in Afghanistan ...". It is unclear whether it was the same man, or his alleged co-assailant, who said "... bring our [Note: *our*] troops home so we can all live in peace".

It should by now be self-evident that by attacking Muslims overseas, you will occasionally spawn twisted and, as we saw yesterday, even murderous hatred at home. We need to recognise that, given the continued role our government has chosen to play in the US imperial project in the Middle East, we are lucky that these attacks are so few and far between.

It is equally important to point out, however, that rejection of and opposition to the toxic wars that informed yesterday's attacks is by no means a "Muslim" trait. Vast swaths of the British population also stand in opposition to these wars, including many veterans of the wars like myself and Ross, as well as serving soldiers I speak to who cannot be named here for fear of persecution.

Yet this anti-war view, so widely held and strongly felt, finds no expression in a parliament for whom the merest whiff of boot polish or military jargon causes a fit of "Tommy this, Tommy that ..." jingoism. The fact is, there are two majority views in this country: one in the political body that says war, war and more war; and one in the population which says it's had enough of giving up its sons and daughter abroad and now, again, at home.

For 12 years British Muslims have been set upon, pilloried and alienated by successive governments and by the media for things that they did not do. We must say clearly that the alleged actions of these two men are theirs alone, regardless of being informed by the wars, and we should not descend into yet another round of collective responsibility peddling.

Indeed, if there is collective responsibility for the killings, it belongs to the hawks whose policies have caused bloodbaths – directly, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, and indirectly in places as far apart as Woolwich and Boston, which in turn have created political space for the far right to peddle their hatred, as we saw in the immediate aftermath of the Woolwich attack.

What we must do now is straightforward enough. Our own responsibilities are first of all to make sure innocents are not subject to blanket punishment for things that they did not do, and to force our government – safe in their houses – to put an end to Britain's involvement in the vicious foreign occupations that have again created bloodshed in London.



SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Woolwich backlash: Ten attacks on mosques since murder of Drummer Lee Rigby

As the number of Islamophobic incidents continues to increase, EDL raises temperature with London march

CAHAL MILMO, NIGEL MORRIS, THE INDEPENDENT, TUESDAY 28 MAY 2013

The number of reported Islamophobic attacks since the Woolwich murder has continued to rise dramatically amid warnings from Muslim community leaders that the backlash which has seen attempted firebombings of mosques is being fuelled by far right groups.

As participants in an English Defence League (EDL) march in Whitehall were recorded giving Nazi-style salutes, Faith Matters, which monitors anti-Muslim hatred, said the number of incidents in the past six days had risen to 193, including ten assaults on mosques. The figure compares to a total of 642 incidents in the previous 12 months – meaning the last week has seen a 15-fold increase on last year's average of 12 attacks per week.

The spike came as Scotland Yard said it had made a tenth arrest in the investigation into the murder of soldier Lee Rigby on Wednesday. A 50-year-old man was detained on suspicion of conspiracy to murder. Earlier, three men arrested on Saturday were released on police bail.

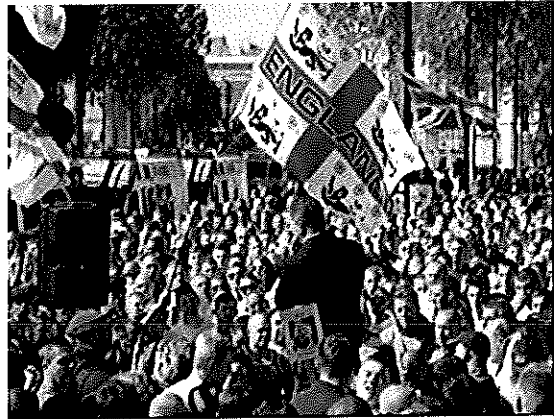
Fiyaz Mughal, director of Faith Matters, who has been targeted by extremists posting his home address on Twitter and inviting others to shoot him, told *The Independent*: "There is a significant scale of backlash going on and it is extremely important that it be highlighted. We have been told time and again that the EDL and its like are not a significant issue. But what we have seen in recent days is this sharp increase in rhetoric and then attacks. Our data shows that more than one in three of attacks last year were linked to far-right sympathisers."

The most serious attack yet took place on Sunday night with the attempted firebombing of a Grimsby mosque. Community elders said the incident, during which three petrol bombs were thrown at the Grimsby Islamic Cultural Centre while people were inside, amounted to "attempted murder". The attack took place despite an increased police presence following an attack four days ago by a group of teenagers. Humberside Police said it had arrested two men and was investigating messages posted on social media which appeared to incite violence at named locations. Dr Ahmad Sabik, a member of the mosque committee, told Sky News: "I would say I can describe it as an attempt to murder because what we have got was really serious. It was a fire." He added that the mosque's chairman, who went to extinguish the first petrol bomb, had a narrow escape. "The brother who was coming out of the door, it was just a part of seconds but, alhamdulillah, nothing happened and he was not injured."

The Yard said it was also investigating the daubing of graffiti overnight on Sunday on two London war memorials. The word "Islam" was sprayed in red paint and inscriptions defaced on the monuments to Bomber Command and animals in war but it was not clear if the perpetrators were Islamist extremists or if it was a further attempt to stir up anti-Muslim feeling.

Police mounted a massive operation as up to 1,000 supporters of the English Defence League staged a protest outside Downing Street. EDL marchers chanting anti-Muslim slogans were confronted by anti-fascist demonstrators and bottles were thrown as lines of police officers separated the two groups. Police, some in riot gear, repeatedly had to intervene to stop the rival groups clashing as the EDL marched from Trafalgar Square to Downing Street. EDL leader Tommy Robinson told the demonstration: "They've had their Arab Spring. This is time for the English Spring." Referring to the row over Prime Minister David Cameron's decision to take a holiday this week in Ibiza, the crowd repeatedly chanted "coward" after Mr Robinson said Mr Cameron had left the country "because he doesn't care". Scotland Yard said three arrests had been made. EDL members congregated after their march. As one youth was taken away by police, the crowd began throwing bottles at them. One officer was hit on the head with a glass bottle and the mob followed the officers, chanting "who the f*** is Allah?".

Faith Matters said most of the incidents reported to its hotline since last Wednesday's murder consisted of "general abuse" at Muslims on the streets or over the internet. A further 47 consisted of threats of violence with another 35 minor assaults including eggs being thrown. Elsewhere it emerged that an attempt by the EDL to march on a mosque in York on Sunday had been met by a show of solidarity from the local community when 200 people arrived to show their support. When only about seven EDL members turned up, they were approached by mosque members and four reportedly entered the mosque for tea and biscuits.



Despite its clownish candidates, Ukip should be taken seriously

Ukip's voters aren't just disaffected Tories - people from all kinds of backgrounds who feel hostile to establishment parties are turning to them.

BY DANIEL TRILLING / 01 MAY 2013 / THE NEW STATESMAN

One evening in March 1957 at De Montfort Hall in Leicester, Harold Macmillan had just begun his first major speech as prime minister when a shout came from the audience: "Stop the meeting!" Looking down from the platform, Macmillan saw a well-dressed gentleman, perhaps a doctor, bending over a young woman who had seemingly fainted. "This patient," the doctor announced, "is in a fit because of the government's policies of betrayal of this country." Amid jeers, the woman leapt to her feet. "I confirm that diagnosis," she declared. "Join the League of Empire Loyalists and fight to keep Britain great!"

Whenever Ukip is mentioned, I think of its ancestors in the League of Empire Loyalists – and not just because of the Blimpish stunts. Formed in 1954, the league was a hard-right gathering of disgruntled Tories, ex-colonial administrators and other malcontents who opposed Britain's withdrawal from its colonies. But it also harboured more sinister politics: its founder, A K Chesterton (a cousin of GK, the writer), had been a member of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in the 1930s, and among the younger recruits was John Tyndall, who went on to found the modern BNP.

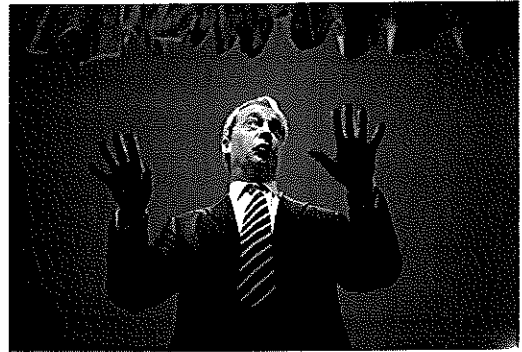
Might something similar be true for Ukip? In recent weeks, as local elections have drawn near, we've seen a series of revelations about its candidates, some of whom have been caught voicing anti-Semitism or homophobia and, in one case, either giving the Nazi salute or "imitating a pot plant", depending on who you believe. Nigel Farage, Ukip's leader, has tried to play this down as "teething problems" with the party's system of vetting. Yet the boundary between fascists and the hard right is often porous, as he knows only too well.

Ukip's core positions on immigration and on cultural diversity appeal as far as they can, within the boundaries of acceptable language, to racism: for instance, the "threat" of immigration from Romania and Bulgaria is inflated to ludicrous levels, implying that millions of citizens of these two countries are poised to descend on the UK; Islam has been portrayed as extremely antagonistic to British life, as in 2009, when Ukip's then leader, Lord Pearson, invited the Islamophobic Dutch politician Geert Wilders to parliament. This provoked the English Defence League to rally outside in support. At the start of April, the EDL's leader Stephen Lennon claimed that Ukip "are saying exactly what we say, just in a different way." With the BNP in a state of collapse, and the EDL's own efforts to build a political party having failed, Ukip inevitably attracts such attention.

But to understand how it differs from the likes of the BNP we must consider who is in charge, and why. The BNP is run by committed fascists who have tried to hide their views in order to win votes. Ukip, by contrast, is funded and led by previously Tory-leaning businessmen who want Britain to leave the EU primarily for economic reasons. They are open about this. After Margaret Thatcher died, Farage described Ukip supporters as her "true inheritors".

The voters are a different matter. As opinion polls repeatedly indicate, most people don't consider the EU to be one of their top priorities, so Ukip needs to win support by other means. As the political scientist Rob Ford, the co-author of *Revolt on the Right*, a forthcoming book on the roots of Ukip's support, has argued, it would be a mistake to see its emergence merely as a problem for the Tories. Drawing on analysis of voting intentions since 2004, Ford writes that Ukip is "by no means solely a home for discontented Tories" and that many supporters come "from working-class, Labour-leaning backgrounds and are deeply hostile to all the establishment parties". It's a profile similar to those who voted for the BNP, but potentially much larger. The "common sense" that Ukip appeals to – you can't say what you think in your own country any more, grasping politicians bend over backwards for minorities but do little for the majority, taxpayers are being leeched off by benefit scroungers, and so on – may be common sense as defined by the right-wing press, but it all points to a more profound feeling of disenfranchisement. One could argue that Ukip is what you get after 30 years of political convergence where the institutions through which we can build solidarity – the welfare state, public services, even political representation – have been undermined. Although some of the less competent party activists might be dismissed as "clowns", their voters most certainly cannot.

The irony is that the kind of "independence" Ukip offers – opening Britain further still to the ravages of market forces – would intensify the process. Far from being anti-establishment, Ukip's leaders want the same as the elite they condemn, only more so.



Ukip leader Nigel Farage addressing a public meeting in South Shields. Photograph: Getty Images

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Rise of UKIP threatens the union; UKIP rise may break union

Jason Allardyce

19 May 2013 / The Sunday Times

RISING support for UKIP and English opposition to EU membership could tip Scotland towards independence, a new poll suggests.

Support for the Yes and No camps would be neck and neck in next year's Scottish referendum if voters think Britain is likely to withdraw from the European Union, it found.

Last week UKIP leader Nigel Farage was mobbed by nationalist protesters while campaigning in Scotland where his party polled less than 1% at the last Holyrood elections.

Farage needed to be locked in an Edinburgh pub for his own safety and rescued by riot police after being surrounded by a hostile crowd shouting "racist Nazi scum" as he launched a by-election campaign.

He in turn termed the mob "fascist scum" who had "utter hatred for the English".

The Panelbase poll of 1,004 Scottish voters for The Sunday Times and Real Radio Scotland puts support for Scotland breaking away from Britain at 36% (unchanged since March) while 44% (-2) would rather remain part of Britain, with 20% undecided.

However, when asked how they would vote if it looked like Britain was going to leave the EU, 44% said they were likely to vote for Scottish independence and the same percentage said they would vote against it.

Ivor Knox, the Panelbase MD, said: "The prospect of the UK leaving the EU has little impact on those Scots who have formed a view on independence, but among undecided voters three times as many tend to support independence as oppose it, under those circumstances."

The findings will give some comfort to Alex Salmond whose party has struggled to build support for Scottish independence in the face of an onslaught from Better Together, the cross-party campaign led by Alistair Darling. The nationalists claim Scots are more pro-EU than the English and that the rise of UKIP in this month's English local elections is evidence of a divergence between Scottish and English politics which will boost support for independence.

A YouGov poll last week found 43% across Britain do not want to remain in the EU, while 37% want to stay in, while a recent Mori poll found 53% of Scots support British membership of the EU and 34% do not. Salmond has said a No vote in Scotland's referendum next September would lead to "Scotland being dragged to the EU exit door against our will", whereas a Yes vote would see Scotland "remain in the EU as an independent member and a seat at the top table".

However, there is no guarantee that Scotland would remain in the EU under independence. The nationalists accept Scotland would have to apply for membership as a new member state, requiring the support of all the 27 existing members. The latest poll also indicates SNP claims that English opposition to EU membership will be a gamechanger may be overstated. Even under the scenario of the UK's likely exit from the EU, much support for Scottish independence is soft, with only 32% being "very likely" to back it in these circumstances and 37% "very unlikely" to do so. A further 12% say they would "quite likely" support independence and 7% would be "quite unlikely" to do so.

Yesterday Farage criticised Salmond for failing to condemn the protesters he faced in Edinburgh. Salmond said he would condemn any lawbreaking but played the issue down as "a student demo", adding Farage is "outwith the context of normal politics".

Farage said: "The really nasty party in UK politics is the SNP." He said the Panelbase findings reflected a lack of debate on the EU in Scotland.

"In England the more this is debated, the more sceptical people become about the European project," he said.

Following David Cameron's decision to offer Britain a referendum on EU membership, Alan Trench, a constitutional lawyer, suggested delaying the Scottish referendum until Britain's position is resolved.

On Holyrood voting intentions the Panelbase poll points to a slight narrowing of the gap between the SNP and Labour. In the constituency vote, the SNP is on 45% (-2), and Labour is on 30% (no change), with Conservatives on 13% (+1), Lib Dems 5% (no change) and others 6% (no change). In the regional vote the SNP is on 45% (no change), Labour 27% (+2), Conservatives 13% (+1), Greens 6% (-2), Lib Dems 6% (+1) and others 4% (-1).

Panelbase surveyed 1004 Scottish voters on May 10-16.

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Bishops under pressure to abstain in gay marriage vote

Bishops are facing intense pressure from inside the Church of England not to use their votes in the House of Lords to block gay marriage, The Daily Telegraph has learnt.

By John Bingham, Religious Affairs Editor
The Daily Telegraph, 02 Jun 2013

Despite vocal opposition from the Church to the Government's plans to allow same-sex couples to marry, it is understood that senior officials have personally urged bishops to stay away from this week's vote. They fear that a large bloc of clerics turning up to vote down the bill could rebound on the Church, reopening questions over the right of bishops to sit in the Lords and even raise the prospect of disestablishment. They have also told bishops privately that they are convinced the bill, which includes



Bishops in the House of Lords are under pressure to abstain in the gay marriage vote. Photo: PA

legal "locks" to prevent clergy being forced to carry out same-sex weddings against their beliefs, is the "best" they could hope to achieve. It comes amid warnings of a "dangerous" constitutional stand-off between the Commons and the Lords if peers vote to reject the bill, which has already received strong backing from MPs. Peers will begin two days of debates on the bill today with a vote on Tuesday. Writing in The Telegraph, Viscount Astor, the stepfather of David Cameron's wife Samantha, argues that blocking the bill in the upper chamber could threaten the future position of the House of Lords itself.

Meanwhile an alliance of independent church leaders has issued a strongly worded call to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, not only to vote against the bill himself but to press other bishops to do so. In a letter to be handed in to Lambeth Palace this morning, 30 leaders of independent churches, including a string of so-called "black majority" churches, warn that the church of England faces a "defining point" over the issue of same-sex marriage.

It is understood that the Archbishop intends both to speak and vote against the bill. But officials are anxious not to be seen to be taking on the Government over the issue. Last night Lambeth Palace confirmed that Archbishop Welby would attend but declined to comment on how he would vote. A recent Church of England briefing note to MPs warmly praised the Government for introducing legal protections for clerics.

A total of 26 bishops are entitled to sit in the Lords - although the bishops' bench is currently reduced with the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, recovering from a cancer operation, and the see of Durham left vacant by Archbishop Welby's promotion to Canterbury. But under current convention they take turns to sit in the Lords, with usually only two bishops in attendance for most debates. Officials in Church House are said to have urged bishops to limit their numbers to around six at the most for the controversial debate. It is thought that up to 10 of them could defy the advice and vote against the bill. The officials are said to be afraid that were the bill to be defeated by a handful of votes, the bishops would be singled out for blame.

One senior source said that officials in the Church had begun to "call the shots more and more" during the last 10 years, under the tenure of the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams. "What they are scared of is that this goes down by a few votes and then the bishops are seen as having swung the vote," said one.

But non-Anglican church leaders stepped up pressure on the Church of England to use its unique position on behalf of other churches. In a letter seen by The Daily Telegraph, 30 evangelical and Pentecostal church leaders urged Archbishop Welby to resist the "temptation to be swept along by the latest current of cultural thinking". "For the sake of society, we provide an alternative perspective to society," they wrote. "We therefore implore you to seize this opportunity to speak boldly and clearly at a critical juncture in the life of our nation, to vote against this bill and to urge all other Anglican Bishops in the House of Lords to do the same. We recognise that this represents a defining point in the future direction of the established Church and you can of course be assured of our prayers as you act courageously."

A spokesman for the Church of England said: "The bishops in the House of Lords do not have a party whip, they do not vote according to a party line. Each will vote according to their own conscience."

Earlier the former Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Rev Michael Nazir-Ali, led an informal prayer service at the gates of Buckingham Palace to mark the anniversary of the coronation and oppose the bill.

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Cameron refuses to back boycott of tax-avoiding companies

Philippe Naughton

3 December 2012 / The Times

David Cameron has refused to back calls for consumer boycotts of multinational companies that avoid tax after a powerful MP called such a move "good citizenship".

As chair of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Margaret Hodge, Labour MP for Barking, has been leading the attack on companies such as Google, Amazon and Starbucks, that are accused of deliberately depressing UK profits to reduce their global tax bill. The PAC released a report today calling for tougher government action and in a round of broadcast interviews Mrs Hodge complained that large multinationals were effectively being allowed to choose how much corporation tax they pay.

"The way in which this tax is currently administered, it's almost becoming voluntary whether or not a global company pays corporation tax," she said. "That's not fair. It's not fair to the small businesses, it's not fair to the local bookshop having to compete with Amazon and it's not fair to the corner coffee shop having to compete with Starbucks."

Mrs Hodge said that she had already stopped buying coffee at Starbucks and had stopped using Amazon despite being a "Kindle fanatic". "Google I find more difficult," she said. She went on: "I think actually the Government can do things like ... we buy a lot of stuff, we can say we won't buy from companies. I think it's good citizenship."

But the Prime Minister's official spokesman said that boycotts were "an issue for individuals".

"The issue for Government is how we tackle that tax avoidance, and the Treasury have been setting out what we intend to do today," he said.

"What we have to do in Government is make sure we are tackling that kind of aggressive tax avoidance. We are doing that in a number of ways. We are bringing in a general anti-avoidance rule, we are working with other countries."

Mrs Hodge was speaking after the publication of a PAC report criticising Google, Amazon and Starbucks and urging the Government to "get a grip on large corporations which generate significant income in the UK but pay little or no tax".

Starbucks said yesterday that it was reviewing the way it transfers profits overseas after listening to "feedback from our customers and employees". The company, which has paid just £8.6 million in UK corporation tax in the past 14 years, buys its beans through a Swiss subsidiary and pays a proportion of sales to a sister company in the Netherlands to cover "royalties" for intellectual property.

The Treasury announced meanwhile that tax investigators are being handed an extra £77 million to target global companies and wealthy individuals who dodge paying their fair share of tax. George Osborne, the Chancellor, insisted that the package showed that Government was determined to "go after" aggressive avoiders and evaders, branding their behaviour "unacceptable".

The funding package, which covers the next two years, was confirmed in advance of this week's mini-budget, which is expected to deliver bleak news for benefit claimants as well as the wealthy. Economists expect Mr Osborne to make a humiliating climbdown over one of the coalition Government's key goals – to have debt falling as a share of national income by 2015-16. The boost for HM Revenue and Customs is part of a scheme to raise the tax take by £10 billion.

The cash injection will help to speed work in challenging multinationals' transfer pricing arrangements to stop global companies using legal loopholes to shift profits out of the UK.

A hundred new investigators will be recruited, and a "centre of excellence" established within HMRC to focus expertise on tackling offshore evasion and avoidance.

HMRC's wider operations will be supported with another £70 million of funding in 2013-14 and 2014-15, details of which will be announced in the Autumn Statement.

Mr Osborne said: "The Government is clear that while most taxpayers are doing their bit to help us balance the books, it is unacceptable for a minority to avoid paying their fair share, sometimes by breaking the law. We are determined to tackle this problem and HMRC are making good progress, but we are giving them additional tools to bring in more. It is very important that people who try to avoid their taxes understand that we are going after them. In Britain we want successful businesses, we want a very competitive tax system. But people have to pay those taxes that are due, and that includes multinational companies."

The Government is also proposing a crackdown on "cowboy" tax advisers who sell aggressive tax avoidance schemes with tougher disclosure rules and penalties. And the Chancellor is poised to confirm a deal with Switzerland that will raise more than £5 billion in previously uncollected taxes from Swiss bank accounts over the next six years. Treasury officials are also working on plans to replicate an information exchange agreement between Britain and the United States with other countries to stop international borders being exploited to avoid tax.

News

Barack Obama lectures Britain on EU membership: the US president looks arrogant as well as clueless

By Nile Gardiner

19 December 2012 04 :09

The Telegraph Online

The White House is warning the British government against leaving the European Union, claiming this would weaken Britain's standing on the world stage, and thereby London's relationship with Washington. As The Telegraph's Alex Spillius reports: *The Obama administration has expressed concern at what US officials see as Britain's slide towards the European exit door. Washington firmly believes that the departure of its strongest partner in Europe would also reduce American influence on the continent, as Britain so often shares American views. An EU without Britain would be seen as weaker on free trade and less reliable on defence and foreign policy issues.*

According to The Telegraph report, President Obama himself has personally raised the issue with David Cameron, and an official with the White House's National Security Council has conveyed the same message to Downing Street and the Foreign Office: *With David Cameron now saying a Britain out of Europe was now "imaginable", US agitation has reached a new high.*

After observing the rise in popularity of Ukip and the rise of anti-European sentiment generally, the issue was raised by President Barack Obama in a video-conference call with the Prime Minister on Tuesday. It was also high on the agenda of a visit by a US national security council official to Downing Street and the Foreign Office earlier this week. "It is important to state very clearly that a strong UK in a strong Europe is in America's national interest," said a senior US administration official. "We recognise national states but see the EU as a force multiplier."

The White House is perplexed by the view held by some Euro-sceptics that the so-called Special Relationship would be enhanced by a British exit, because it believes Britain would have more clout as a full partner of the European club.

Barack Obama's extraordinarily arrogant and clueless direct intervention in the internal affairs of Great Britain echoes the remarks of his Ambassador to London, Louis Susman, who told a private meeting of British MPs back in January 2011 that "the UK needs to remain in the EU," and "all key issues must run through Europe." It also reflects a deep-seated vein of support for European integration that runs through the State Department and the upper echelons of the Obama administration, which sees the preservation of the European Project as vital to US interests.

Vice President Joe Biden ludicrously referred to Brussels as "the capital of the free world" in a visit to Belgium in 2010, and heaped praise upon the European Parliament as "the bastion of European democracy," comparing it to the United States Congress:

As a lawmaker for more than 36 years in our Parliament, I feel particularly honored to address the European Parliament. Together with my former colleagues in the United States Congress, you and I represent more than 800 million people. Stop and think about that for a moment: *two elected bodies that shape the laws for almost one-eighth of the planet's population. That's truly remarkable. Let me state it as plainly as I can: The Obama-Biden administration has no doubt about the need for and strongly supports a vibrant European Union. We believe it's absolutely essential to American prosperity and long-term security. So have no doubt about that.*

British policy on Europe is frankly none of Washington's business. Barack Obama and Joe Biden are an irrelevance when it comes to Britain's decision on whether or not to remain in the European Union. The White House's silly attempt to intervene on such a highly sensitive matter for the British electorate may please Downing Street, but it certainly won't play well in Middle England. President Obama's views on the EU are as relevant to British voters as the futile ranting of Herman Van Rompuy or Jose Manuel Barroso, and will only serve to reinforce the determination of millions of Britons to throw off the shackles of Brussels.

It is rather sad to see Washington parroting the propaganda of the European Commission. It should know better. After all, the polls are very clear. The British public is moving in only one direction – towards support for a British exit from the EU and complete national sovereignty in Europe. Barack Obama is standing on the wrong side of history on this issue, and is hugely out of touch with British public opinion.

President Obama is also completely wrong in suggesting that Britain's position as a global power will be eroded if it departs the European Union. British trade outside the EU is now larger than trade with the EU, and that figure will only grow larger. And as for the alliance with the United States, the greatest threat today to the Special Relationship and the transatlantic alliance is posed by the tentacles of European integration, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defense Policy. The European Project is not in Britain's interests – nor is it in America's. It is time the Obama administration woke up to this reality, and stood on the side of freedom and sovereignty in Europe, instead of backing a fundamentally undemocratic and unaccountable European Project.

The Labour party has failed us. We need a new party of the left

Britain needs a party that rejects neoliberal policies and improves the lives of ordinary people. Help us create one

Ken Loach, Kate Hudson and Gilbert Achcar / The Guardian / Monday 25 March 2013



The original parliamentary Labour party on the terrace of the House of Commons, London, 13 Feb 1906. Photograph: John Londei/Rex Features

SERIE LANGUES VIVANTES

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

As the age of austerity bites harder and deeper than many anticipated, it is little wonder that Ken Loach's new film *The Spirit of '45*, charting the great post-war social advances, strikes a powerful chord. Yet the promise of opportunity, dignity, health and work, fulfilled by Labour's welfare state after 1945, is not to be one that we can look to today's Labour party for. Yet contemporary Britain – and beyond – is precisely where such policies are needed.

Austerity is wreaking economic catastrophe on Europe, most recently on the people of Cyprus, but George Osborne is still following the same disastrous policies. Last week's budget came as no surprise: Osborne announced yet more spending cuts and extended the public sector's pay rise cap, amounting to a real terms pay cut. He's digging us even further into an economic hole, as the Office for Budget Responsibility's revised output forecast shows – from a predicted 1.2% growth down to 0.6%. That sounds like further decline, not the promised growth, and ordinary people are paying the price. The virulence of the government's economic attacks knows no bounds: Atos, workfare, council tax, the bedroom tax – punitive policies against the most vulnerable in society.

Judged by its own stated goals, government policy isn't working – borrowing will be around £61.5bn higher than planned. Of course the reality is that austerity policies are actually designed to dismantle the welfare state, bring down wages and fully marketise the economy, destroying all the social and economic gains of ordinary people since the second world war. So from the government point of view the policies are working.

Across society, there is an increasing understanding of the government's real agenda and as a result, opposition is mounting and economic alternatives are being discussed. Only last week, the Guardian published a letter from over 60 economists, warning that the worst was yet to come with 80% of the cuts still ahead of us.

Yet while economic alternatives are articulated, where can we turn politically to see these expressed as party policy? Who is on our side, to fight for an alternative? In the past many expected the Labour party to stand for us, and with us, but no longer. Workfare? Last week Labour abstained on the vote and now the government can work over quarter of a million jobseekers. Bedroom tax? Would a Labour government repeal it?

We need policies that reject Tory cuts, regenerate the economy and improve the lives of ordinary people. We are not getting this from Labour. There is no doubt that some of Labour's past achievements have been remarkable – the welfare state, the NHS; a redistributive economy making unprecedented levels of health and education possible. But such achievements are in the past. Now Labour embraces cuts and privatisation and is dismantling its own great work. Labour has failed us. Nothing shows the contrast more clearly than *The Spirit of '45*.

Labour is not alone in its shift rightwards and its embrace of neoliberal economic policies. Its sister parties across Europe have taken the same path over the past two decades. Yet elsewhere in Europe, new parties and coalitions – such as Syriza in Greece or Die Linke in Germany – have begun to fill the left space, offering an alternative political, social and economic vision. The anomaly which leaves Britain without a left political alternative – one defending the welfare state, investing for jobs, homes and education, transforming our economy – has to end. For this reason we are calling on people to join the discussion on forming a new party of the left – you can find out more about our appeal here. The working class cannot remain without political representation, without defence, when all its victories and advances are being destroyed.

1.	The Spirit Of '45
2.	Production year: 2013
3.	Country: UK
4.	Cert (UK): U
5.	Runtime: 98 mins



Philip Stephens

The trouble with freedom is that it is abused. A justice system that guards the innocent will see thieves and worse go free. Uphold human rights and terrorists will sometimes slip the net. Champion press freedom and newspapers may hack the telephone of a murdered teenager.

Lord Justice Leveson has given his verdict on the "culture, practices and ethics" of the British media. Running like a dark thread through the 2,000-page report are words such as reckless, outrageous, harassment, hacking, surveillance, bribery and corruption.

A swath of outstanding criminal prosecutions of former executives and journalists at Rupert Murdoch's newspapers means that Lord Justice Leveson at times pulled his punches. But the narrative still reads like a journey through the sewers. Some of it covers familiar ground: the charges of phone-hacking, corruption and bribery of public officials, and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice at Mr Murdoch's News International; the anguish of the parents of the murdered Milly Dowler, whose voicemail was intercepted by the News of the World; the tabloid character assassination of a retired teacher arrested in a murder inquiry.

The really damning indictment lies in the exposure of a culture of casual contempt for decency, fairness and privacy in newspapers representing a sizeable chunk of what used to be called Fleet Street. Traducing the innocent, routine disregard for truth, and riding roughshod over individual rights - all were deemed acceptable

in the cause of a "good story".

It should be obvious to everyone but a handful of cynical proprietors and editors that the media cannot, in Lord Justice Leveson's phrase, forever be allowed to "wreak havoc with the lives of ordinary people". The behaviour of newspapers such as the now defunct News of the World, The Sun, the Express and the Daily Mail has put freedom of the press in direct conflict with the rights and liberties of ordinary citizens. The role of newspapers in a democratic society is to speak truth to power, not to trample over the powerless.

Sadly, David Cameron's response to the report has been to run scared. The prime minister set up the inquiry to deflect attention from his close personal ties to senior figures in News International. The report clears him of the charge of trading political influence for Mr Murdoch's support. But in arguing that the press must be given another chance to put its affairs in order he has bowed to the threats of retribution.

So what is to be done? The first thing to say is that self-regulation does not work. During the past 70 years there have been seven inquiries, including three royal commissions, into the feral behaviour of journalists. All have brought promises of tighter self-regulation. Nothing has changed. When editors and proprietors are told they have entered the last chance saloon their reaction is to call for another round of drinks.

This time, the press barons promise, it will be different. They have come up with a plan for "independent regulation-with-teeth". In truth, the proposal is at very best half-baked - and deliberately so. In spite of a veneer of independence, real power would remain firmly in the hands of editors and proprietors. The most striking thing about the behaviour of the newspapers in Lord Justice Leveson's line of fire has

An opening gambit for a grand bargain with the press

been a complete lack of contrition. It is almost as if the real crime of the phone hackers was to get caught.

So, in advance of publication, Lord Justice Leveson was accused of seeking to throw overboard press freedom in favour of a Soviet-style system of state regulation. Mr Cameron was warned of dire political consequences if he accepted the report. The strategy was clear: derail attempts to establish independent oversight, lie low for a while and then return to the old ways.

The second thing to say is that, as long as some newspapers believe they should be able to behave as they like, there is no system that will strike a perfect balance between press freedom and the rights of the citizen. Even as one winces at the lying and cheating, media excess is a price that has to be paid to preserve a fundamental pillar of democracy.

Lord Chief Justice Judge put it well in a speech last year: "Whatever means of regulation are designed to reduce the occasions of unacceptable behaviour by elements of the press they must not simultaneously diminish or dilute the ability and power of the press to reveal true public scandals or misconduct." The rule of law cannot be sustained if the media is muzzled.

Lord Justice Leveson has tried to

map a path through all this by suggesting that a new system of regulation - independent of government and parliament - should be underpinned by legislation. This is not, as Mr Murdoch and his chums would have it, state regulation. To make this clear, the report says that any such statute should guarantee explicitly the freedom and independence of the press.

The basic judgment here is right. The weak and vulnerable need guarantees against the habitual abuse of press power. But Lord Justice Leveson should have gone further in offering protections for the media when it is doing its proper job of holding to account those in positions of authority and influence.

A balanced package would put into statute a provision for a robust public interest defence when the press is scrutinising the behaviour of the mighty. Alongside this, the legislation would include a drastic rebalancing of the burden of proof in the draconian libel laws that now offer an impenetrable shield to those with the money to buy access to the courts. Lord Justice Leveson is right: the press cannot any longer expect to mark its own homework; but neither should the rich and powerful.

philip.stephens@ft.com

Newspapers should speak truth to power, not trample over the powerless

Republicans are losing America's culture wars



FINANCIAL TIMES FRIDAY OCTOBER 5 2012



Philip Stephens

It is pretty much an iron rule of politics that those bidding for high office should share a nation's sense of itself. Parties out of sympathy with the values and instincts of citizens usually condemn themselves to long spells of opposition. This happened a few years ago to Britain's Conservative party.

America's Republicans seem to [be] striking out in the same direction.

The response of the Tories to Tony Blair's 1997 election victory was to lurch to the right. The Conservatives became a flag-waver for the anti-gay, anti-immigrant, anti-personal choice and anti-Europe. When you added it all up, they really did not like what they called "broken Britain". The voters returned the compliment, backing Mr Blair's relentless optimism in three consecutive elections.

Things got so bad that people who supported a particular policy stance when presented in a "blind" test instantly rejected it when told it had been authored by the Tories. It was not until 2005, when David Cameron assumed the leadership that the party faced up to the fact that the Tory brand had become toxic.

Something similar is happening to the Republicans. After Mitt Romney's strong showing in the first of the televised debates, the presidential election may not be over. The economy is on Mr Romney's side, and the media will certainly do its best to keep the contest alive. There are though, some important structural foundations holding up Barack Obama's opinion poll lead.

One is about US demography; the other, less often remarked upon, tracks the changing mores of American society.

The demographic tide running against the Republicans has been well documented. Mr Romney's support is rooted in the white working class, particularly in southern states. This group has a shrinking share of the vote.

Hispanics, by far the fastest-rising segment of the population, are overwhelmingly in Mr Obama's camp. The last Pew Research Centre polling figures show that Hispanics break by about 70 per cent to 25 per cent in the president's favour.

There is nothing inevitable about this. Many Hispanics share the Republican attachment to family life and to traditional social values. Many run small businesses and see the Republicans as friendlier on issues such as tax and regulation. Mr Romney's problem is his party's hardening hostility to immigration. To satisfy the Republican base, he is backing draconian anti-immigration measures, including the deportation of illegal immigrants.

With some 800,000 young illegals facing the threat of expulsion - many of them sons, daughters and cousins of settled immigrants - it is scarcely surprising Hispanics have moved into the Democratic camp. Mainstream Republicans warn that without a change of policy on immigration, the demographics will condemn the party to permanent exile from the White House. The Democrats have won a bigger share of the popular vote in four out of five of the last presidential elections.

The Republicans are also losing the culture wars. A few years ago, headline conservatism on issues such as gay marriage, abortion and stem-cell research was judged an election winner. Karl Rove built George W. Bush's 2004 campaign around a clutch of social issues. Mr Rove

synchronised the re-election bid with a nationwide campaign for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

I remember interviewing Bill Clinton before the 2004 election. John Kerry's task, he said, was to prevent Republicans from pulling the debate away from the economy on to the chosen ground of Christian evangelicals. Mr Kerry failed in the task. This year, however, the mood could not have been otherwise. The Democratic convention turned into an unabashed celebration of social liberalism. Only on gun control does the party still keep its counsel.

The polls explain why. In 2004, according to Pew, 60 per cent of Americans said they were opposed to gay marriage, with 31 per cent in favour. By this year the figures were 44 per cent against and 48 per cent for. The Democrats have a similar lead on abortion. Some 53 per cent of voters think abortion should be legal in most or all cases. The proportion against has fallen to 41 per cent.

It is not that Americans are clamouring for gays to walk up the aisle or for more women to have abortions. Rather the public mood is framed by greater tolerance. A more diverse society is becoming more respectful of, well, diversity. About half of Americans say Mr Obama is

best able to reflect their views on social issues against 36 per cent for Mr Romney. This helps to explain the Democrats' advantage among women voters, where Mr Obama holds a 56 per cent to 37 per cent lead.

Mr Romney, one suspects, understands this. Given a free hand he would tug the Republicans back towards the centre. You could see the instinct in this week's debate. But the candidate is held prisoner to promises made to win the nomination. Tea Party conservatives have been empowered by a system of constituency boundaries and primary elections that hands the choice of candidates to grassroots activists.

There are still Republicans who believe that Mr Romney can swim against these demographic and social tides: that the polls overstate Mr Obama's lead and that Republicans will outdo the Democrats in mobilising an, albeit smaller, base. But whatever the election outcome, the long-term challenge remains.

The other day I asked a Republican friend in Washington what the answer would be if, as the polls suggest, Mr Romney does go down to defeat. He gave a two-word answer: Jeb Bush.

philip.stephens@ft.com

It's not that people are clamouring for gays to walk up the aisle; rather society is much more respectful of diversity

International Herald Tribune - Open and closed By EVGENY MOROZOV – March 18, 2013

“Can 3D printing be subversive?” asks a voice in the creepiest Internet video you’ll be likely to watch this month. It’s a trailer for Defcad.com, a search engine for 3D-printable designs for things “institutions and industries have an interest in keeping from us,” including “medical devices, drugs, goods, guns.”

The voice belongs to Cody Wilson, a law student in Texas who last year founded Defense Distributed, a controversial initiative to produce a printable “wiki weapon.” With Defcad, he is expanding beyond guns, allowing, say, drone enthusiasts to search for printable parts.

Mr. Wilson plays up Defcad’s commitment to “openness,” the latest opiate of the (iPad-toting) masses. Not only would Defcad’s search engine embrace “open source” — the three-minute trailer says so twice — but it would also feature “open data.” With so much openness, Defcad can’t possibly be evil, right?

One doesn’t need to look at projects like Defcad to see that “openness” has become a dangerously vague term, with lots of sex appeal but barely any analytical content. Certified as “open,” the most heinous and suspicious ideas suddenly become acceptable. Even the Church of Scientology boasts of its “commitment to open communication.”

Openness is today a powerful cult, a religion with its own dogmas. “Owning pipelines, people, products or even intellectual property is no longer the key to success. Openness is,” proclaims the Internet pundit Jeff Jarvis.

This fascination with “openness” stems mostly from the success of open-source software, publicly accessible computer code that anyone is welcome to improve. But lately it has been applied to everything from politics to philanthropy; recent book titles include “The Open-Source Everything Manifesto” and “Radical Openness.” There’s even “OpenCola” — a true soda drink for the masses.

For many institutions, “open” has become the new “green.” And in the same way that companies will “greenwash” their initiatives by invoking eco-friendly window dressing to hide less-palatable practices, there is also a term to describe similar efforts to read “openness” into situations and environments where it doesn’t exist: “openwashing.”

Alas, “openwashing,” as catchy as it sounds, only questions the authenticity of “open” initiatives; it doesn’t tell us what kinds of “openness,” if any, are worth pursuing. We must differentiate the many different types of “open.”

Take the “openness” celebrated by the philosopher Karl Popper, who defined the “open society” as the apotheosis of liberal political values. This is not the same openness implied by open-source. While Popper’s openness is primarily about politics and a free flow of ideas, open-source is about cooperation, innovation and efficiency — useful outcomes, but not in all situations.

Take how George Osborne, the British chancellor of the Exchequer, defined “open-source politics” recently. “Instead of relying on politicians” and “civil servants to have a monopoly of wisdom,” he said, “you’d be engaged through the Internet” with the “whole of the public, or as many of the public are interested, in solving a particular problem.”

As an add-on to existing politics, this is wonderful. As a replacement for existing politics, though, this is terrifying. Of course, it’s important to involve citizens in solving problems. But who gets to decide which “particular problem” citizens tackle in the first place? And how does one delineate the contours of this “problem”? In open-source software, such decisions are often made by managers and clients. But in democratic politics, citizens both steer the ship (with some delegation) and do the rowing. In open-source politics, all they do is row.

Likewise, “open government” — a term once reserved for discussing accountability — today is used mostly to describe how easy it is to access, manipulate and “remix” chunks of government information. “Openness” here doesn’t measure whether such data increase accountability, only how many apps can be built on top of it, even if those apps pursue trivial goals. This ambiguity of “openness” allows British Prime Minister David Cameron to champion open government while also complaining that freedom of information laws are “furring up the arteries of government.”

This confusion isn’t limited to government. Take the obsession with massive open online courses. In what sense are they open? Well, they are available online for free. But to celebrate this as a triumph of openness is premature. A more ambitious openness agenda would not just expand access to courses but also give users the ability to reuse, remix and repurpose their content. I could take somebody’s lecture notes, add a few paragraphs and distribute them further as part of my own course. This is not what most MOOCs currently offer: their terms of use often ban such repurposing.

Will “openness” win, as the digital Pollyannas assure us? It well might. But a victory for “openness” might also signify defeat for democratic politics, ambitious policy reform and much else. Perhaps we should impose a moratorium on the very word “open.” Just imagine the possibilities this could open up!

Britain's energy plan is dangerous and out of date

Dieter Helm

After 12 years of reviews, white papers and some legislation, the UK government has finally come forward with what it regards as a definitive set of energy policy reforms. Sadly the Energy bill is anything but definitive. Over the long period of the bill's gestation, the world's energy markets have changed radically.

At the heart of the bill is the idea that the government should contract directly for new power stations, agreeing in advance a fixed price for the electricity they will generate. Contracting is not in itself a bad idea. Britain needs investment, much more than the market will deliver left to its own devices. The upfront capital required to develop nuclear power stations, in particular, requires political commitment. But there is a world of difference between auctioning contracts and politicians fixing them.

Once the government is picking the winners, it matters which sectors it chooses. Ed Davey, the energy secretary, comes armed with

explanations. He predicts the future will be one of "volatile" gas prices, which will head ever upwards. And Mr Davey believes that his chosen technologies will insulate Britain against them.

For the past decade, gas prices have indeed been rising. But it is one thing to know the past and another to know the future. While officials and ministers have been working away at one energy plan after another, the world around them has changed. The idea of "peak oil" (the point at which the world's oil supplies go into irreversible decline) has turned out to be nonsense. There has been a revolution in fossil fuel technologies. With shale oil and gas, North America is rapidly reaching energy independence and the price gap between the US and Europe on gas is now so enormous as to undermine Europe's competitiveness and begin a process of re-industrialisation in the US. America's shale bounty will feed through to world prices - and therefore Britain's prices.

If this part of the rationale behind the energy bill has collapsed, it might be argued that the

government is at least doing something about climate change. But a moment's reflection yields the unfortunate conclusion that not only are current renewables making little difference to global warming but that they never could. Wind in particular is a low-density, intermittent energy source. Future renewables might well close the gap, but not the current forms of renewable energy.

Before deciding which technologies

It is worth remembering that while government might like to pick winners, losers tend to pick governments

to award government contracts to, it would be wise to think through what might happen if the secretary of state turns out to be wrong. Power stations tend to be long-lived, which means that mistakes hang around the economy's neck for a long time. Suppose the future is not going to be the one conjured up by the peak oil

brigade, the supporters of current renewables, and by the secretary of state. Suppose world fossil fuel prices fall but Britain is committed to high-cost current renewables.

The UK's carbon production might indeed fall: the deindustrialisation that might result from high energy prices is a sure route to lower emissions. But that would be a false blessing, offset by carbon-intensive imports, as is already happening. Energy demand would probably fall, too - not because of the Green Deal, Mr Davey's programme to increase British homes' energy efficiency, but because of higher prices. Reducing emissions by contracting energy-intensive industries and reducing household incomes is hardly an attractive route to decarbonisation.

It is not too late to head off the worst aspects of this approach. The secretary of state has himself promised to move towards auctioning the contracts when the low-carbon technologies "mature". To that end, he promised to "blaze a trail towards competition". There is plenty of time for amendments to the bill and there will inevitably be more reviews and legislation in the next few years.

All the government really needs to do is to ensure there are sufficient contracts auctioned to generate enough electricity and that market mechanisms exist to ensure the decarbonisation path is pursued. It does not need to be in the business of picking winners or negotiating prices. Once those habits are acquired, they will be hard to break and probably won't be. It is worth remembering that while government might like to pick winners, losers tend to pick governments. Their lobbyists are already doing overtime.

The secretary of state may turn out to be right. The future may be just as he predicts, leaving us all grateful to have been saved from high oil and gas prices. But if he turns out to be wrong, he will have presided over a serious dent in Britain's competitiveness, while doing virtually nothing to address global climate change and at the same time reducing Britain's security of supply and increasing energy bills. That would be quite a legacy.

The writer is Professor of Energy Policy at the University of Oxford and author of "The Carbon Crunch."

Torture, lies and movies

HOLLYWOOD HISTORY I

Promoters of torture get to hoodwink journalists, authors and Hollywood producers.

Ali H. Soufan

I watched "Zero Dark Thirty" not as a former F.B.I. special agent who spent a decade chasing, interrogating and prosecuting top members of Al Qaeda but as someone who enjoys Hollywood movies. As a movie, I enjoyed it. As history, it's bunk.

The film opens with the words "Based on Firsthand Accounts of Actual Events." But the filmmakers immediately pass fiction off as history, when a character named Ammar is tortured and afterward, it's implied, gives up information that leads to Osama bin Laden.

Ammar is a composite character who bears a strong resemblance to a real-life terrorist, Ammar al-Baluchi. In both the film and real life he was a relative of Bin Laden's lieutenant, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. But the C.I.A. has repeatedly said that only three detainees were ever waterboarded. The real Mr. Baluchi was not among them, and he didn't give up information that led to Bin Laden.

In fact, torture led us away from Bin Laden. After Mohammed was waterboarded 183 times, he actually played down the importance of the courier who ultimately led us to Bin Laden. Numerous investigations, most recently a 6,300-page classified report by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, have reached the same conclusion: En-

hanced interrogation didn't work. Portraying torture as effective risks misleading the next generation of Americans that one of our government's greatest successes came about because of the efficacy of torture. It's a disservice both to our history and our national security.

While filmmakers have the right to say what they want, government officials don't have the right to co-opt the

Numerous investigations have reached the same conclusion: Enhanced interrogation didn't work.

free market of ideas, but a controlled market subject to manipulation. That's an abuse of power.

John O. Brennan, a former C.I.A. official and now President Obama's nominee to head the agency, recently testified that the classified report raised "serious questions" about information he received when he was the agency's deputy executive director. Brennan said publicly what many of us — who were in interrogation rooms when the program was devised — have been warning about for years: Senior officials, right up to the president himself, were misled about the enhanced interrogation program.

For instance, a 2005 Justice Department memo claimed that waterboard-

ing led to the capture of the American-born Qaeda member José Padilla in 2003. Actually, he was arrested in 2002, months before waterboarding began, after an F.B.I. colleague and I got details about him from a terrorist named Abu Zubaydah. Because no one checked the dates, the canard about Padilla was repeated as truth.

When agents heard senior officials citing information we knew was false, we were barred from speaking out.

After President George W. Bush gave a speech containing falsehoods in 2006 — I believe, his subordinates lied to him — I was told by one of my superiors: "This is still classified. Just because the president is talking about it doesn't mean that we can."

Some of these memos, and reports pointing out their inaccuracies, have been declassified, but they are also heavily redacted. So are books on the subject, including my own.

Meanwhile, promoters of torture get to hoodwink journalists, authors and Hollywood producers while selectively declassifying material and providing false information that fits their narrative.

The creators of "Zero Dark Thirty" attempted to document the greatest global manhunt of our generation. But they did so without acknowledging that their "history" was based on dubious sources.

The filmmakers took the "firsthand accounts" of a few current and former officials with an agenda and amplified

their message worldwide — suggesting to Americans in cinemas around the country, and regimes overseas, that torture is effective and helped lead to Bin Laden. There is no suggestion in the movie that another narrative exists.

Hollywood is primarily about entertainment. The moral responsibility for setting history straight, ensuring the public isn't misled, and making sure mistakes aren't repeated falls to Congress and the president. Yet the Senate report remains classified, and only those with security clearances, like Brennan, can read how the public was misled.

It's the duty of the president and Congress to responsibly declassify the report — and the other documents that advocates of torture don't want released.

That's the only way to ensure that future generations won't ever go down that dark and dangerous path again. As Senator John McCain has said, the Senate report "has the potential to set the record straight once and for all" and end "a stain on our country's conscience."

Once that's done, it won't be long before another Hollywood movie comes along to tell the real story about how America killed Bin Laden.

ALI H. SOUFAN is a former F.B.I. special agent who interrogated Qaeda detainees and the author of "The Black Barbers: The Inside Story of 9/11 and the War Against al-Qaeda."

Leveson's lessons for Fleet Street

Newspapers must respond constructively to judge's ideas

Lord Justice Leveson's report into the British press is a damning indictment of the culture and practices of the newspaper industry. Press abuses, he says, have caused real hardship and wreaked havoc with the lives of innocent people.

Newspapers have never shied away from judging others. Fleet Street should have the humility to accept criticism that is justified. There is no merit in the press laying claim to be above the law. Editors and owners must not present themselves as reincarnated trade union barons from the 1970s. It behoves the industry to embrace the report, even if it does not agree with every single recommendation.

The catalogue of abuses laid out in the report confirms that parts of the industry were out of control. There are numerous examples of reckless conduct. The Fourth Estate basked in the privileges of the harlot: power without responsibility. Redressing the balance is primarily a task for the industry rather than the politicians. In this respect, David Cameron's reaction to the report deserves commendation. He is right to warn of the risks of statutory intervention in newspapers. The government must take care not to suffocate the free press by trying to sanitise it.

The first task must be to fix the industry's broken system of regulation, which contributed to the excesses documented by Lord Justice Leveson. The Press Complaints Commission has palpably failed to protect the public. While it was never created to tackle criminal behaviour, the PCC suffered from being dominated by industry insiders and serving editors.

The challenge is to come up with a new system that has teeth while trying to avoid opening the door to state interference in the press. Many of Lord Justice Leveson's ideas in this regard have merit. He has taken some of the ideas proposed by Lord Hunt and Lord Black for a new self-regulatory body. Where he has made changes, he has often strengthened them.

The new body he proposes would have greater powers than the PCC and would enforce a new code of conduct. It would have serious enforcement powers, including the right to levy fines of up to £1m or 1 per cent of turnover. Lord Justice Leveson's new body would be far more independent than the Black-Hunt model. There would be a majority of independent members. Serving editors would not be eligible for the board.

Any new body must have distance from those it regulates. Newspapers cannot, as the judge notes, mark their own homework.

However, it is vital that people with proper experience of journalism are heard, too.

The bigger conundrum is how to ensure that the whole industry signs up to a system that is nominally voluntary. Black-Hunt has proposed a contract in civil law. Lord Justice Leveson wants to go further. His novel idea is to encourage participation through incentives, notably by offering some protection against excessive legal costs in libel actions. This form of arbitration has merit, though it comes at a price. The functions of the new regulator would have to be enshrined in statute, with some entity given the power to oversee the mechanism. In this case, Lord Justice Leveson recommends considering Ofcom, the broadcast regulator, for this role. The sweetener, at least in the judge's view, would be a recognition in the new law that the government has a duty to promote press freedom.

The Financial Times has reservations about this approach. While

Whatever its recent failings, the press remains a cornerstone of our democracy.

there may be merit in a grand bargain that trades the incentives to participate for some measure of statutory underpinning, the idea of handing oversight power to Ofcom is wrong-headed. Ofcom is charged with regulating television broadcasters that have a legal obligation to impartiality. It reports directly to government. This is a step down the road towards state licensing of a press that, of course, has no obligation to provide balance.

This newspaper is also worried about Lord Justice Leveson's proposals for a "backstop regulator" that would step in if news organisations did not join the new body. This explodes the concept of voluntarism that lies at the centre of his recommendations. It is a press law by the back door and one that pays scant attention to the revolutionary changes in the media landscape. This is increasingly dominated by digital innovators and social media.

The newspaper industry must now respond constructively. It has been given time to develop reforms that are workable and command public trust. Whatever its recent failings, the press remains a cornerstone of our democracy. This should not be forgotten.



Série Langues vivantes - Analyse d'un texte hors programme (LV2)
Nom :
Prénom :
Signature

The price of Obama's leading from behind

Richard Cohen, September 18 2013 *The Washington Post*

What lessons can be learned from events in Libya? That nothing good will come out of the Arab Spring? That Arabs are volatile, easily excitable and prone to acting out? That the United States, Mitt Romney notwithstanding, cannot control everything or that the United States, Mitt Romney more to the point, has tried to control nothing? In other words, is this what happens when the United States is "leading from behind"?

This phrase, you might remember, was coined in reference to Barack Obama's reluctance to take the lead in the NATO air campaign that toppled the dictatorship of Moammar Gaddafi. And that operation, in which the French seized the initiative, was mounted to save Benghazi, the city where the insurrection started and the one where U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans were killed last week. Benghazi was saved from Gaddafi's bloody reprisals, but not from mayhem.

The notion that the United States can lead from behind is pitiful, the sorry concoction of an Obama administration that mistakes dulcet passivity for a foreign policy. The view from behind now has to be awfully depressing. Where once Obama could see the gallant tails of the French, the British, the Italians and some others, there is now no one. The predictably indignant Nicolas Sarkozy has been replaced by the soullessly pragmatic Francois Hollande, who has other fish to saute. NATO's warplanes have returned to base and Libya, a tribal society, was left to fend for itself. It has not fended all that well.

Until recent events offered a rebuke, the Obama administration treated its toe-in-the-water response to the threats uttered by Gaddafi as an unalloyed success. The dictator had been ousted (and subsequently killed), no Americans had died in the effort and the wisdom of doing as little as possible was proclaimed a sterling triumph. Had the United States taken the lead, however, someone might have been paying more attention to events there and trying to forge a government out of heavily armed militias. After all, it's not as if all of Libya was sacking the U.S. legation; it was a well-armed few. Much of the rest of the country was appalled by what happened and the president of the national congress, Mohamed Yusuf al-Magariaf, offered an apology and vowed to find the terrorists and, as always, bring them to justice.

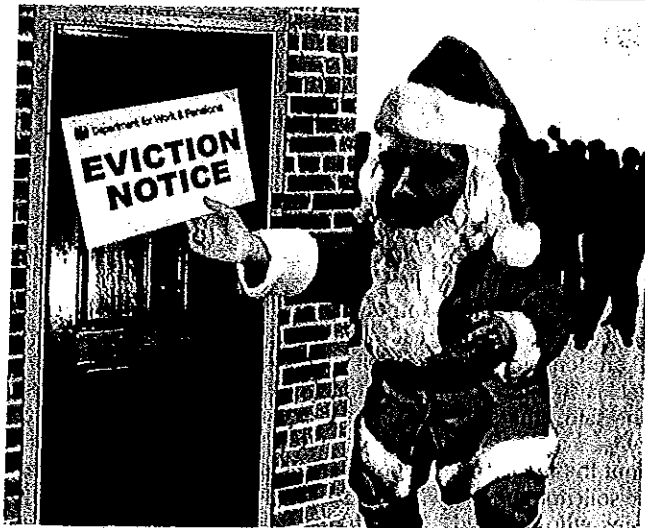
Some things are true even though Obama is president. The Arab world is culturally a very distant shore. It will not embrace American values such as free speech and religious toleration because certain speech and certain religious practices are truly repugnant to it. The intellectual godfather of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb spent many months in the United States and returned to Egypt loathing America and fulminating about its obscenely provocative women. The 9/11 terrorists lived among us as well — and not one of them was deterred from their mission by the sweet treats of U.S. life. I love us to pieces, but we are, for some people, awfully revolting.

Another thing. Without U.S. leadership, nothing happens. Our allies are incapable of leading because (1) they do not have the military wherewithal, and (2) they have forgotten how. The French determination to bring Gaddafi to heel and avoid a massacre was a short-lived affair. We see what has happened in Syria. The French and British are outraged; the Turks are appalled. The Jordanians are anxious and the Saudis are indignant. Still, Bashar al-Assad remains in power because the United States will not impose a no-fly zone — and really no one else can do so. This cautious policy has resulted in many civilian deaths, a huge refugee crisis and the comfy feeling in the White House that we have ducked another quagmire. The situation may now be beyond remedy, and the chirpy forecasts that Assad is a goner are way past their pull date. Every president gets his foreign policy regret. Syria will be Obama's.

Romney was wrong and ham-fisted and alarmingly premature to criticize Obama for a statement put out by the U.S. Embassy in Cairo. He is both wrong and dishonest to keep repeating the canard about Obama being a serial apologist. But he is right in sensing that beyond the very Obamaness of Obama himself — the quality that made him a Nobel Peace Prize winner in the pupal stage of his presidency — lurks a foreign policy that has been more sentiment and aspiration than hard reasoning. Leading from behind is not a nifty phrase. In Libya, it's an indictment.

Bagehot | A season of dolour and dole

Squeezing the welfare budget is popular. But the Tories may still suffer for it



GEORGE OSBORNE has long since made the part of Scrooge his own. Yet as a third Christmas of austerity approaches, the chancellor of the exchequer has pulled off a rare triumph. The bigger-than-expected cut in welfare spending proposed in his Autumn Statement on December 5th was not merely a case of giving his indebted country the tough medicine it needs. Against a backdrop of rising resentment of welfare "scroungers", it also gave gloomy British taxpayers something they actually want.

According to polling by YouGov, 52% of Britons thought the proposed cut—which will save £4.4 billion (\$7.1 billion) a year by 2017-18—was either reasonable or too modest. This represents a striking change in British attitudes to welfare. Though Britons of all political persuasion remain, by and large, deeply attached to the welfare state—hence their near-blanket support for the National Health Service—they are increasingly reluctant to pay for it. In previous recessions, opposition to the social-security budget has tended to fall temporarily as the number of those drawing on it rose. This recession has been different: resentment of the welfare bill has surged. According to a poll last year by NatCen Social Research, only 28% of respondents want to see an increase in welfare spending, compared with 35% in 2008.

The change probably reflects the long duration of this economic downturn, a spate of attacks on benefit cheats by excitable newspapers and the fact that spending on benefits is at an historic high. As a percentage of GDP, it has almost tripled since the 1950s—to around 14% this year. Many Britons think there are too many scroungers taking them for a ride. And this puts Mr Osborne in new territory: he is not used to being liked for saving money. An added boon for the chancellor is that the proposed cut, which he is expected to bring before Parliament in January, puts his Labour opponents in a tricky position.

Going along with Mr Osborne's proposal on welfare—which would restrict the rate of increase in housing, unemployment and other benefits to a below-inflation rate of 1% a year over three years—would strike many Labour voters as a betrayal of core principles. Yet more than half, according to another recent poll, want to see benefits cut. Labour's leaders—in particular the shadow chancellor, Ed Balls—are also haunted by a reputation for past profligacy in government. Opposing Mr Osborne would there-

fore put Mr Balls under acute pressure to say where savings should be made instead. And this would not be easy. The welfare cut envisaged by Mr Osborne is bigger than the annual budget of the Foreign Office. Given that Mr Balls has so far trodden a fine line between grumbling about the chancellor's shears and keeping quiet on how otherwise the deficit is to be reduced, the issue threatens to embarrass his party on its most neuralgic issue.

For the Tories, it may be equally significant. Under the leadership of David Cameron, the prime minister, the Conservative Party has sought to attract centrist voters by appearing keener than in the past on a range of liberal issues, including climate change and gay rights. Plans by the coalition government it leads to allow gay couples to marry in church are the latest example of this. Yet opinion polls suggest that harping on socially liberal values has done nothing to dissuade voters from the view that the party stands squarely for the interests of the rich. With Britain's economic troubles likely to continue through next year and beyond, and most of the pain of austerity still ahead, that perception will put the Tories in an increasingly vulnerable position.

Still nasty, then

Their response is to woo hardworking blue-collar folk—in Margaret Thatcher's day a staunch part of the Tory base, but whose loyalties are now more divided. Mr Osborne's proposed benefits squeeze may be seen as a first strike in that campaign. In a speech delivered at the Tory party conference in October, the chancellor painted a sympathetic portrait of a fictive blue-collar striver, rising early for work only to see the drawn curtains of his neighbour, "sleeping off a life on benefits". Nasty as that may sound, it is probably as good a way as any to go about slashing the welfare budget at a time of economic hardship.

Yet it is a risky ploy. Mr Osborne's latest attack on benefits is already less popular than a previous pledge to restrict the entitlements of any family to £26,000—the median post-tax earnings of a working household. That idea, which is to be implemented next year, has a simple appeal to Britons' sense of fair play. The same cannot confidently be said of exposing those depending on benefits to the ravages of inflation, this year's wheeze. And it will no doubt come to seem ever crueller after a flow of hard-luck stories in left-wing newspapers. Worse for Mr Osborne, there is also evidence to suggest the cuts will be felt more widely than his drawn-curtain trope was intended to suggest. Labour's leaders claim that 60% of the households likely to be affected by them are not daytime sleepers, but in work. That would include many of the blue-collar strivers the Tories seek to reassure.

To offset the potential damage, Mr Osborne has already announced a few well-aimed sweeteners, including plans to cancel a rise in fuel duty and to raise the personal income-tax threshold. More such promises will follow: an influential Tory think-tanker, Neil O'Brien, has been recruited to design them. But, in the absence of much cash to command, his task will not be easy. Without a rapid uptick in Britain's economic fortunes, which few expect, the effect of the welfare squeeze is likely to be painful and its political benefits for the government fleeting. Even if the electorate continues to approve of Mr Osborne's hard-nosed penny-pinching, it may punish his party for it at the next election, due in 2015. Voters do not always thank politicians for pandering to their less charitable urges. ■

Why have Tory MEPs rejected a free market solution to climate change?

By sabotaging reform of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, Conservative MEPs have shown that they can't be relied upon to champion British interests in Europe.

BY MATTHEW SPENCER NEW STATESMAN 18 APRIL 2013

It may surprise some on the centre left but there is nothing innate to conservatism that makes it less able to take pragmatic decisions in favour of sensible environmental policy. It has had a refreshing ability to acknowledge the intrinsic value of nature and stewardship even if it has become more conflicted about the means to deliver these outcomes. It is a broad church that spans from the one nation Heseltines to the radical free marketeers like John Redwood. But if there is one thing that unites them, it's the belief that markets offer most of the answers. Which is why it is so baffling that Conservative MEPs voted down a measure that might have kept the European Emissions Trading Scheme alive. Trading is not the only way of tackling emissions but it's the poster child of free market thinkers because it promises an economically efficient, non-regulatory solution to a giant supranational problem.

The back story is that, on Tuesday, the EU parliament voted against a minor technocratic fix that would have rescued the floundering European carbon market, which is struggling under the weight of too many pollution permits in the system. The fix would have involved 'backloading' the sale of some excess carbon allowances to 2019, so the number of allowances in the system would be reduced, increasing the price which has dropped as low as €3 per tonne of carbon in recent months. While more profound reform is required, it would have been a first step to putting the mechanism back on track. The vote failed by 19 votes. Twenty Conservative MEPs voted against it. In doing so, they failed their constituents and UK business.

A strong carbon price across Europe is directly in the UK's interest. Its main benefit is to provide financial incentives for switching from coal to gas, with the costs being born by coal heavy countries like Poland and Germany and rewards flowing to those that have already made the switch, like the UK. One of Thatcher's less controversial legacies is an energy system which has less and less coal and a relatively high proportion of gas, so UK generators and fuel suppliers stood to gain significantly from the EU carbon market fix. By voting against it, Conservative MEPs have rewarded coal at the expense of gas and Germany at the expense of the UK. This will be the first of many negative consequences arising from the failure of EU emissions trading. At our Chancellor's insistence, the government has also introduced a carbon price floor, which means we are paying higher carbon prices than our neighbours. It creates an attractive revenue stream for the Treasury but many British businesses will now feel aggrieved that it could now be at least a decade before there is a single carbon price across Europe.

This is part of a pattern of conflicting behaviour from different parts of the Conservative Party that should worry its leaders. There is no evidence that the British public sees climate or environment as a partisan issue. It is a 'valence' issue, like national security, in which voters expect any party of government to be competent.

Emissions trading may be too obscure for the public to notice but experts in business, NGOs and academia do and, for many, this will be another worrying sign that the Conservatives are struggling to govern coherently on one of the big issues of our age. We've already seen this confusion with the Energy Bill, where the Chancellor agreed to spend £7.6bn a year on new low carbon energy (mostly renewables) but then opposed a decarbonisation objective for 2030 which would have ensured that much of the equipment required would have been built in new UK turbine factories.

The debate now moves on to what 2030 climate package the EU should adopt. The UK should be at the heart of the debate, fighting for an ambitious carbon goal that matches our own. But the prime minister has yet to get his ministers to agree a common position. Whether or not the British government takes a lead, the EU will adopt a new climate package at some point in the next 18 months under pressure from France and Germany. Yesterday's action by Conservative MEPs has made it more likely that it will be focused on fiscal and regulatory measures, and less on trading. That may turn out to be a good thing, but Conservative MEPs have just shot themselves in the foot by making market trading solutions less attractive. They have also made it considerably more difficult for David Cameron to demonstrate that his party has championed British interests in energy and climate change effectively.

Matthew Spencer is director of Green Alliance

Op-Ed Columnist

Marches of Folly

By PAUL KRUGMAN *The New York Times* March 17, 2013

Ten years ago, America invaded Iraq; somehow, our political class decided that we should respond to a terrorist attack by making war on a regime that, however vile, had nothing to do with that attack.

Some voices warned that we were making a terrible mistake — that the case for war was weak and possibly fraudulent, and that far from yielding the promised easy victory, the venture was all too likely to end in costly grief. And those warnings were, of course, right.

There were, it turned out, no weapons of mass destruction; it was obvious in retrospect that the Bush administration deliberately misled the nation into war. And the war — having cost thousands of American lives and scores of thousands of Iraqi lives, having imposed financial costs vastly higher than the war's boosters predicted — left America weaker, not stronger, and ended up creating an Iraqi regime that is closer to Tehran than it is to Washington.

So did our political elite and our news media learn from this experience? It sure doesn't look like it.

The really striking thing, during the run-up to the war, was the illusion of consensus. To this day, pundits who got it wrong excuse themselves on the grounds that "everyone" thought that there was a solid case for war. Of course, they acknowledge, there were war opponents — but they were out of the mainstream.

The trouble with this argument is that it was and is circular: support for the war became part of the definition of what it meant to hold a mainstream opinion. Anyone who dissented, no matter how qualified, was ipso facto labeled as unworthy of consideration. This was true in political circles; it was equally true of much of the press, which effectively took sides and joined the war party.

CNN's Howard Kurtz, who was at The Washington Post at the time, recently wrote about how this process worked, how skeptical reporting, no matter how solid, was discouraged and rejected. "Pieces questioning the evidence or rationale for war," he wrote, "were frequently buried, minimized or spiked."

Closely associated with this taking of sides was an exaggerated and inappropriate reverence for authority. Only people in positions of power were considered worthy of respect. Mr. Kurtz tells us, for example, that The Post killed a piece on war doubts by its own senior defense reporter on the grounds that it relied on retired military officials and outside experts — "in other words, those with sufficient independence to question the rationale for war."

All in all, it was an object lesson in the dangers of groupthink, a demonstration of how important it is to listen to skeptical voices and separate reporting from advocacy. But as I said, it's a lesson that doesn't seem to have been learned. Consider, as evidence, the deficit obsession that has dominated our political scene for the past three years.

Now, I don't want to push the analogy too far. Bad economic policy isn't the moral equivalent of a war fought on false pretenses, and while the predictions of deficit scolds have been wrong time and again, there hasn't been any development either as decisive or as shocking as the complete failure to find weapons of mass destruction. Best of all, these days dissenters don't operate in the atmosphere of menace, the sense that raising doubts could have devastating personal and career consequences, that was so pervasive in 2002 and 2003. (Remember the hate campaign against the Dixie Chicks?)

But now as then we have the illusion of consensus, an illusion based on a process in which anyone questioning the preferred narrative is immediately marginalized, no matter how strong his or her credentials. And now as then the press often seems to have taken sides. It has been especially striking how often questionable assertions are reported as fact. How many times, for example, have you seen news articles simply asserting that the United States has a "debt crisis," even though many economists would argue that it faces no such thing?

In fact, in some ways the line between news and opinion has been even more blurred on fiscal issues than it was in the march to war. As The Post's Ezra Klein noted last month, it seems that "the rules of reportorial neutrality don't apply when it comes to the deficit."

What we should have learned from the Iraq debacle was that you should always be skeptical and that you should never rely on supposed authority. If you hear that "everyone" supports a policy, whether it's a war of choice or fiscal austerity, you should ask whether "everyone" has been defined to exclude anyone expressing a different opinion. And policy arguments should be evaluated on the merits, not by who expresses them; remember when Colin Powell assured us about those Iraqi W.M.D.s?

Unfortunately, as I said, we don't seem to have learned those lessons. Will we ever?

The coalition's welfare reforms will tackle the causes of poverty

By Christian Guy *The Financial Times* April 12, 2013

Universal credit is about being ambitious for the poor

Promises to fix Britain's broken benefits system have been a mainstay of our politics for decades.

~~Successive governments have come to office making grandiose guarantees that they would repair the~~

UK's welfare structure ... all came, all went, all failed. Many of the current administration's long-awaited reforms are coming into force this month, representing the biggest overhaul for decades. Some criticism is warranted. A cap on the amount that any one household can receive in benefits would have been fairer had it been done on a regional basis. Many reforms could have been applied to new claimants only. On top of this, universal benefits continue to be handed out to wealthier pensioners, undermining the idea that we are all "in this together".

The harsh realities of the economic crisis are clear to everyone. And people will think it is strange that precious billions are being poured into new social care reforms that only protect homeowners – not the most vulnerable – and a new childcare scheme that will prioritise couples earning up to a £300,000 a year.

But those who stop there and tear into this government's programme of change should take a broader look. Root-and-branch welfare reforms will be no magic wand, but they signal a government finally getting to grips with our toxic welfare predicament.

Despite some good intentions, welfare policy in the UK became so perverse that it stripped the poor of their independence and drained the nation's economy. Some 4.5m people of working age were on out-of-work benefits before the 2008 recession and, of those people, 1.4m had been receiving out-of-work benefits for nine of the past 10 years. The number of households where no one had ever worked almost doubled from 184,000 in 1997 to 352,000 in 2010.

Furthermore, between 2004 and 2010, the government spent more than £170bn on tax credit payments to working households. The welfare system became an unsustainable default for topping up income – at one point, nine out of 10 families qualified for support.

This approach let our poorest citizens down. The Centre for Social Justice has spent almost 10 years working in Britain's most deprived areas; we have seen countless families in too many communities beached on our dismal and often counter-productive benefits system.

Benefits became an end in themselves without any vision or ambition to help people back into work or to progress up the career ladder. The biggest tragedy of this is it has left a group of people – well intentioned, instinctively industrious, keen to get on in life – stagnating on a scrapheap.

Work became a mug's game for so many. No wonder: our system ensured that employment made people worse off. Many who would not have been unwilling to work in principle made the rational decision not to seek employment because there was no incentive.

This should make people angry – not at claimants, but towards the politicians that let them down.

These challenges should have been tackled in the times of plenty and it is unquestionably more difficult now – especially in certain regions where economies are in crisis and living costs are soaring – but it is happening, finally.

Universal credit, which will start being implemented this month, is about being ambitious for the poorest in society. At the moment we have a situation where some of our poorest people are hit with tax rates of 90 per cent in extreme cases – it would be immoral not to correct this. UC will make work pay and allow people to keep more of their earnings by withdrawing benefits at a single consistent rate, avoiding the cliff edge of the current system.

Weaning the country off welfare dependency is important for society, and our economic prosperity.

More importantly, it would be transformational for those who have been written off for so long. The whole of the state – not just the welfare state – should be geared around helping people into work and, ultimately, work that pays well enough that they can become economically independent.

If the government can get this right while also ensuring it gives people the long-lasting skills to take advantage of employment, it could leave a major legacy.

For too long a government's compassion has been measured by the size of its welfare cheque. That has been found out as counter-productive. These reforms are not easy, but they represent an attempt to tackle the root causes of welfare dependency and poverty. That's the right thing to do, even now. In fact, especially now.

The count's in: 147 UKIP councillors. What now?

Farage's party have changed the landscape – at least for a bit.

BY ALEX HERN PUBLISHED 04 MAY 2013 *NEW STATESMAN*

After all councils across England and Wales have declared, UKIP has 147 councillors, far in excess of where it was predicted come before the elections.

Although there have been murmurs of protest – that the party's success was a self-fulfilling prophecy once the press started boosting Farage and co as a viable electoral force – there is no doubting that it's an important threshold for the erstwhile "fruitcakes" (although, of course, victory in local elections does not necessarily mean one is not a fruitcake...), and the conversation has turned to what happens next.

For the Conservative party, the consensus seems to be that treating the party as a laughable collection of far right xenophobes hasn't worked. Instead, the commentators suggest, it's time to look back to UKIP's roots as a single-issue anti-EU party, and outflank them there. So, Charles Moore writes in the *Telegraph*:

Already, it is clear that Mr Cameron has two desires – to win the next election and stay in the EU come almost what may. His speech is seen as a feint. Hence Ukip's momentum, and hence the resurgent anger in his own party.

But Matthew Parris offers the opposite view in today's *Times*. UKIP should still be taken seriously, but not as a shining light of where popular conservatism lies; instead, Cameron's party should view it "as an enemy". He writes:

I'm a Conservative because I believe in the party's central strand of moderation, social liberalism and internationalism. There are some on the Right who do not want these things. There is a limit to how far I would move to accommodate them, and a point beyond which I think they should consider a different party. That party might be UKIP. Well, so be it. Mr Farage should be challenged to forget about playing footsie with other people's parties and make a decent fist of organising his own.

But while it's Conservatives who are having a crisis of faith this weekend, UKIP faces tough challenges on the horizon as well. For the party now has to deal with the nitty-gritty of local politics – a challenge which has scuppered other far-right parties. And while tactics of obstructionism work in the European Parliament, where the vast majority of UKIP's elected officials have say until now, there will be councils where the party is expected to provide a positive contribution to governance: if the candidates Farage would have "rather not" had don't get their act together, they will struggle for re-election in 2017.

What of the other parties? UKIP has overthrown the electoral calculus in more ways than one, of course. As our own Rafael Behr writes, Labour can't be complacent about UKIP's success:

There are plainly gains to be made for Labour nicking Tory seats if right-wing voters break for UKIP. That should offer very little comfort to Ed Miliband. Farage's party came a respectable second place in South Shields, suggesting that voters who have been culturally inoculated against backing the Tories for a generation have no such qualms about UKIP. There are seats across the north of England and Scotland that Labour has taken for granted, where the party machine has rusted, where there are no up to date voter lists and the activist base is tribal and complacent.

Ironically, it's only the Lib Dems who can take an unabashedly positive view of UKIP. The party, already frequently a protest vote and with such clearly euophilic tendencies that it runs little risk of losing votes to the purple wave, has suddenly found a way of winning in the LD/Tory marginals which are increasingly its only hope in Westminster. If Tory votes go to UKIP, while Labour votes (grudgingly) tactically come to the Lib Dems, the party might be able to staunch the flow.

And finally, spare a thought for the Greens. They didn't show too badly on Thursday – gaining five councillors in elections far outside their core – and, as they keep pointing out, they do have an MP, something which remains a dream for UKIP. But the greater success of the green movement (even UKIP has a green policy of sorts, although it rejects the "LibLabCon-sensus" that climate change is man-made) might have left the Green party floundering for a reason to exist. After this week, it might see a bright future in the much-tossed-around idea of a "UKIP of the Left", but whatever happens, a reinvention seems necessary.

After the Olympics, BoJo Has Britain's Mojo

By Toby Young

Poor David Cameron. Britain's prime minister was hoping the Olympic Games would serve as a "firebreak," containing the political woes that have beset his administration and enabling him to make a fresh start in the fall. No such luck.

Britain's strong showing in the medal table has indeed led to an outbreak of national euphoria, with more Union flags flying than at any time since the Falklands War, but there

has led to much pot-stirring among political journalists, with several suggesting it might be time for Mr. Cameron to pass the baton. Britain's biggest-selling tabloid newspaper even commissioned a poll to see how a Boris-led Tory party would fare against Labour. Turns out substituting the mayor for Mr. Cameron reduces Labour's poll lead to one point.

Such unhelpful hypothesizing comes at a bad time for the prime minister because the coalition he presides over with the Liberal Democrats is at a low ebb. A couple of weeks ago, Nick Clegg, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, had a throwing-toys-out-of-the-stroller moment when he announced that his party would vote against any boundary changes to Britain's legislative districts.

Mr. Cameron wants the lines redrawn, much as American districts are periodically adjusted by the party in power, to help elect more Conservatives. Most psephologists (or election-analyzing political scientists) agree that if the boundaries remain unchanged, the Tories would need a seven-point lead over Labour to win the next election, while Labour would only need a one-point lead. In an instant, the mountain point lead. In an instant, the mountain point lead.

Mr. Cameron has to climb got steeper. Boris hasn't done much to tamp down the speculation about his future. Asked by the Press Association recently whether he had any leadership ambitions, he said, "I cannot foresee the circumstances," and he reminded the interviewer that the same words were used by Michael Heseltine, a Conservative big beast in the mid-1980s, when asked if he had any plans to challenge

Margaret Thatcher. When the reporter pointed out that Mr. Heseltine had in fact challenged Mrs. Thatcher, Boris launched into one of his typically over-emphatic denials.

"No, no, no, no," said the man sometimes known in the press as BoJo. "My normal answer is about being blinded by a champagne cork or being reincarnated as an olive or locked in a disused fridge or decapitated by a Frisbee. All those eventualities—or waking up on Mars to discover Elvis Presley sitting next to me—all those eventualities are more likely."

Few commentators took Boris's denial seriously.

One of the mayor's strengths is his mastery of ironic counterpoint. He says whatever he's expected to say—he toes the party line—but in such a mischievous, twinkly-eyed way that he deliberately leaves you in some doubt as to whether he actually means it.

He knows the electorate is far too jaded to take anything a politician says at face value, so rather than try and fake sincerity, he's openly insincere. It's as if he's saying, "Like most politicians, I don't really believe any of this guff, but unlike my colleagues I'm not going to insult your intelligence by assuming you haven't cottoned on to that fact." As a strategy for diffusing public hostility to lying politicians, it's remarkably effective, and it helps explain why Boris is one of the few senior Tories capable of appealing to Labour voters—as his election to the London mayoralty testified.

Boris's trick is to appear authentic by trying and failing to mimic the behavior of more oleaginous politicians, as if he's just too honest to play the game. Early in the Olympics, he took to a zip-wire in a public park to

celebrate Great Britain's first gold medal. It was the sort of cheap stunt that less sophisticated politicians engage in all the time and, had he pulled it off, Boris might have seemed tediously conventional.

But as luck would have it, the stunt went wrong. Boris got stuck on the zip-wire halfway down and was left looking like a cartoon character dangling from a pair of giant underpants.

Instead of treating this as a PR disaster, he chortled away merrily, showing the world that he's capable of laughing at himself. Another triumph for the man who's been called Britain's first postmodern politician.

Whether Boris can take this act all the way to Downing Street is open to question and, in any case, he's not in a position to challenge for the Conservative leadership at present. To do that, he'd have to be a member of Parliament, and in May he won re-election to a second four-year term as London mayor. But no one doubts that he has his heart set on the top job, and when Boris wants something he generally gets it, even if the rules make it difficult. "My policy on cake is having it and eating it," he once said.

Meanwhile, the prime minister looks on, helpless in the charge of this comedic onslaught. To paraphrase Tolstoy, Mr. Cameron first took Boris for a fool, assuming from his erratic hand movements that he must be a crazy man. But as Boris gets ever closer to Downing Street, it's becoming increasingly clear that he's sharpening a knife.

Mr. Young is the author of *"How to Lose Friends & Alienate People"* (Da Capo Press, 2002) and *"The Sound of No Hands Clapping"* (Da Capo, 2006).

Bill Clinton's tutorial on the need for government

By E.J. Dionne Jr., September 5 2012 *The Washington Post*

Bill Clinton is typically described as the empathetic, feel-your-pain guy. But his greatest political skill may be as a formulator of arguments — the explainer in chief.

~~At the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night, he did not disappoint, boiling down Mitt~~

Romney's case to one sentence: "In Tampa," Clinton said, "the Republican argument against the president's reelection was actually pretty simple, pretty snappy. . . . 'We left him a total mess, he hasn't cleaned it up fast enough, so fire him and put us back in.' " He cast the philosophical differences between the parties just as crisply. Republicans, he said, believe in a "winner-take-all, you're-on-your-own society," while Democrats seek "a country of shared opportunities and shared responsibility — a we're-all-in-this-together society."

That Clinton, the cheerful political educator, played such a central role at this conclave reflected the extent to which it should be seen as a three-day tutorial designed not only to defend President Obama's economic stewardship but also to advance a view of government for which, over the past 40 years, Democrats have often apologized.

And off Clinton went in his classic style: the "country boy from Arkansas," who was rambling yet focused and methodical, embroidering his text with folksy asides, getting the crowd to cheer even budget numbers and statistics. He went long, and they wanted him longer.

It's ironic that the 42nd president played the co-professor with Obama in this advanced government class. Clinton is associated with a determined effort to distance his party from its past, and when he pronounced in 1996 that "the era of big government is over," it was taken as a concession to the new conservatism that swept to control of Congress just over a year earlier.

But Clinton's rhetorical move was more tactical than fundamental. He never stopped believing in the power of government. And with Republicans putting forward the most emphatically pro-business, anti-government agenda since the Gilded Age, Democrats feel an urgency to assert the state's positive role. Thus, one of the most applauded lines of the convention's first night came from Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick: "It's time for Democrats to grow a backbone, and stand up for what we believe." Rarely has a party so fully embraced a declaration that implied its own past spinelessness.

Clinton, once known for the strategy of "triangulation" between the parties, was among the speakers who answered Patrick's call. He assailed Romney and Paul Ryan for falsehoods on welfare and Medicare, dismantling one Tampa argument after another. Offering a vision of "shared responsibilities, shared prosperity [and] a shared sense of community," he stoutly defended Obama's health-care law, student loan reforms, rescue of the auto industry, commitments to community colleges and job training, and budget proposals.

He joined Elizabeth Warren, the financial reformer running for the Senate in Massachusetts, in presenting government Wednesday not as an officious meddler in people's lives but as an ally of families determined to help their children rise. Government, Warren said, "gave the little guys a better chance to compete by preventing the big guys from rigging the markets."

And there lay the other stark contrast between the Tampa Republicans and the Charlotte Democrats. Building their convention around an out-of-context quotation from Obama, Republicans offered a counter-theme, "We built it." But the message of Tampa often came off more as: "We own it."

Working people and the dignity of labor receded into the shadows cast by the investors, entrepreneurs and business leaders.

The Democrats' version of the American dream is built of different stuff, on individual and family struggle. Republicans may cast themselves as champions of "family values," but Democrats here — notably Michelle Obama and San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro — spoke far more about upward mobility as a family enterprise.

Yet Democrats know that the president still carries the burden of high unemployment and sluggish growth. And that is why Obama called in as a witness the man who presided over years that voters remember as an all-too-brief journey through the economic promised land.

Obama, Clinton testified, "inherited a deeply damaged economy, he put a floor under the crash, he began the long, hard road to recovery, and laid the foundation" for a new economy whose positive effects they would soon feel. "With all my heart, I believe it," he said, devoutly hoping that his heart-to-heart talk would get Americans to believe, too.

Three referendums that could change Britain as much as losing the empire
In the next five years, the Scottish independence referendum, an in/out EU referendum and a border poll on Northern Ireland could force a rethink of the entire British state.

BY KEVIN MEAGHER PUBLISHED 13 FEBRUARY 2013 *NEW STATESMAN*

"Devices for despots and dictators". That was Clement Attlee's brisk dismissal of referendums and it held sway as the default view in British politics until the 1975 national referendum on continued British membership of the then European Economic Community.

Since then, the growth in the use of referendums – and in calls to use them – seems inversely proportionate to the natural authority our risk-averse political leaders now wield. The bigger the decision, the less they want to take it.

As a result, there are now three big constitutional referendums lumbering into view over the next five years. Each is significant, but their combined effect could represent the biggest shock to the system since the break-up of the British empire.

The first is the referendum on Scottish independence. Alex Salmond knows that timing here is crucial and a date is so far elusive, although we know it is likely to be in autumn next year. Like a bee's sting, he has one go at this. If he mistimes the vote and a majority of Scots opt for the status quo, his lifelong project will be over. It is likely, however, that a consolation prize will see extra concessions wrung out of a relieved Westminster in the form of 'devo max'. Don't ask what that means though; as Scottish Secretary Michael Moore recently pointed out, it's a "brand without a product".

The second referendum is more speculative. Sinn Féin is agitating for a 'border poll' on Northern Ireland's constitutional status in 2016 – the centenary of the Easter Rising. So far, so predictable; that's what an Irish republican party is for. But the Good Friday Agreement makes allowance for such votes and what makes this call slightly more intriguing is the reaction of some unionist commentators and politicians. The Democratic Unionist's Arlene Foster recently said her party might "call [Sinn Féin's] bluff" on the issue and support a vote. "Sinn Féin are trying to cause instability in Northern Ireland," she claimed.

"If we have the border poll then that instability goes away and, in actual fact, what we have is a very clear validation of the Union and that's something we're looking at at the moment."

With the recent census demographics still showing a majority of Protestants in Northern Ireland (albeit tentatively) could this be a smart move by unionists, a last decent chance to show a majority want to remain part of the UK?

The third referendum is, of course, David Cameron's promise of an in/out EU vote following a renegotiation of Britain's membership. The PM has not set out what powers he wants to repatriate, nor if he would campaign to remain in the EU if his demands were not fully met. By 2017, the date a Conservative-led government would expect to hold the poll, both Northern Ireland and Scotland could conceivably already find themselves outside the UK.

For believers in the constitutional status quo, winning the three votes is not likely to settle grievances in the long-term. Scottish nationalism will continue to be an electorally potent reaction against Westminster rule, while the hope that Northern Ireland's disputatious existence will be neatly resolved is the supreme elevation of optimism over reality. But winning a referendum on British membership of the EU would be a powerful fillip for pro-Europeans and would help put eurosceptics back in their box, at least for a while.

If all, or any, of these plebiscites were won by the forces of separatism, the shockwaves would force a rethink of the entire British state from its very foundations. In terms of importance, 'losing Ireland' is the least significant, strategically and economically.

The intriguing question is which of the other two is more important: Scotland going its own way, or the whole of Britain voting to leave the EU? If both came to pass, might the new United Kingdom of England and Wales download the application form for NAFTA membership?

Op-Ed Columnist

Death by Ideology

By PAUL KRUGMAN *The New York Times* October 14, 2012

Mitt Romney doesn't see dead people. But that's only because he doesn't want to see them; if he did, he'd have to acknowledge the ugly reality of what will happen if he and Paul Ryan get their way on health care.

Last week, speaking to the Columbus Dispatch, Mr. Romney declared that nobody in America dies because he or she is uninsured: "We don't have people that become ill, who die in their apartment because they don't have insurance." This followed on an earlier remark by Romney—echoing an infamous statement by none other than George W. Bush—in which he insisted that emergency rooms provide essential health care to the uninsured. These are remarkable statements. They clearly demonstrate that Mr. Romney has no idea what life (and death) are like for those less fortunate than himself.

Even the idea that everyone gets urgent care when needed from emergency rooms is false. Yes, hospitals are required by law to treat people in dire need, whether or not they can pay. But that care isn't free—on the contrary, if you go to an emergency room you will be billed, and the size of that bill can be shockingly high. Some people can't or won't pay, but fear of huge bills can deter the uninsured from visiting the emergency room even when they should. And sometimes they die as a result.

More important, going to the emergency room when you're very sick is no substitute for regular care, especially if you have chronic health problems. When such problems are left untreated—as they often are among uninsured Americans—a trip to the emergency room can all too easily come too late to save a life.

So the reality, to which Mr. Romney is somehow blind, is that many people in America really do die every year because they don't have health insurance.

How many deaths are we talking about? That's not an easy question to answer, and conservatives love to cite the handful of studies that fail to find clear evidence that insurance saves lives. The overwhelming evidence, however, is that insurance is indeed a lifesaver, and lack of insurance a killer. For example, states that expand their Medicaid coverage, and hence provide health insurance to more people, consistently show a significant drop in mortality compared with neighboring states that don't expand coverage.

And surely the fact that the United States is the only major advanced nation without some form of universal health care is at least part of the reason life expectancy is much lower in America than in Canada or Western Europe.

So there's no real question that lack of insurance is responsible for thousands, and probably tens of thousands, of excess deaths of Americans each year. But that's not a fact Mr. Romney wants to admit, because he and his running mate want to repeal Obamacare and slash funding for Medicaid—actions that would take insurance away from some 45 million nonelderly Americans, causing thousands of people to suffer premature death. And their longer-term plans to convert Medicare into Vouchercare would deprive many seniors of adequate coverage, too, leading to still more unnecessary mortality.

Oh, about the voucher thing: In his debate with Vice President Biden, Mr. Ryan was actually the first one to mention vouchers, attempting to rule the term out of bounds. Indeed, it's apparently the party line on the right that anyone using the word "voucher" to describe a health policy in which you're given a fixed sum to apply to health insurance is a liar, not to mention a big meanie.

Among the lying liars, then, is the guy who, in 2009, described the Ryan plan as a matter of "converting Medicare into a defined contribution sort of voucher system." Oh, wait—that was Paul Ryan himself.

And what if the vouchers—for that's what they are—turned out not to be large enough to pay for adequate insurance? Then those who couldn't afford to top up the vouchers sufficiently—a group that would include many, and probably most, older Americans—would be left with inadequate insurance, insurance that exposed them to severe financial hardship if they got sick, sometimes left them unable to afford crucial care, and yes, sometimes led to their early death.

So let's be brutally honest here. The Romney-Ryan position on health care is that many millions of Americans must be denied health insurance, and millions more deprived of the security Medicare now provides, in order to save money. At the same time, of course, Mr. Romney and Mr. Ryan are proposing trillions of dollars in tax cuts for the wealthy. So a literal description of their plan is that they want to expose many Americans to financial insecurity, and let some of them die, so that a handful of already wealthy people can have a higher after-tax income.

It's not a pretty picture—and you can see why Mr. Romney chooses not to see it.

Bagehot

But a worse one for David Cameron, as the prime minister panders to the xenophobes



"I'M NOT a racist," says Phil, an unemployed resident of the tough Greenwich estate in Ipswich. "But we've got to do something about them." What follows, in response to a doorstep visit from Ben Gummer, the local Conservative MP, is so dreadfully predictable the wonder is that Phil bothered with the caveat.

On a personal level, he has no problem with the Iraqi (or possibly Iranian, it's hard to tell, isn't it?) asylum-seekers next door. Yet he suspects they are getting easier access to state handouts than he is. Nor has he anything but respect for the couple of thousand Poles who have arrived in Ipswich in recent years: "Fair play to them, they're hard workers." But for Phil, his neighbours and almost every resident of the four Ipswich streets Mr Gummer was canvassing, that is part of the problem. Immigrants, they said, were taking their jobs, their benefits and their children's future. Some also correctly divined the hand of the reviled European Union in this—the accession of Poland and other eastern European countries to the common market having helped drive a decade-long surge in immigration to Britain. The only dissenting view was offered by David, a resident of Wroxham Road, and in revealing fashion. "I don't mind the immigrants, to be honest," he said, lowering his voice to a furtive whisper. "But then all my friends think I'm a bit of a weirdo."

Mr Gummer is also a bit weird that way. A historian, raised in multi-ethnic London, he knows perfectly well that hard-working immigrants are culturally enriching and a necessary boon to Britain's economy. But after four years fielding the same complaint, he, too, wants to restrict their numbers. Not to do so would be undemocratic, he fears, and his boss David Cameron, the Tory prime minister, seems to agree. On March 25th in Ipswich he delivered a populist speech on immigration, in which he blamed his Labour predecessors for letting Britain become a "soft touch" for carpet-bagging foreigners. By tightening controls on student and other visas, his coalition government had sought to reverse this, Mr Cameron said. And he pledged to go further. New arrivals would be unable to claim employment benefit for more than six months and denied access to council housing until resident in Britain for two years. As for tax-dodging illegal immigrants, they had better watch out. Mr Cameron vowed a new campaign against them—starting with a decision, announced the following

day, to scrap the dysfunctional UK Border Agency. "You put into Britain—you don't just take out," the prime minister thundered.

It was a wooden performance by Mr Cameron's actorly standards. In a couple of places the Tory leader stumbled, almost as if his argument didn't interest him. Yet he at least sounded more convinced than his two main rivals, Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, and Ed Miliband, leader of the Labour Party, both of whom have also uttered stiff words on immigration this month. Mr Clegg, who is Mr Cameron's coalition partner, renounced a long-standing Lib Dem proposal to grant an amnesty to longtime illegals. Mr Miliband reiterated his regret that the previous Labour governments, under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, had taken such a laissez-faire view of the matter—allowing net immigration to rise by 2m in a decade. Still two years from the next general election, a grim pattern has emerged. Immigration, once unmentionable in polite political circles, will be one of the big issues in a painfully protracted campaign.

British antipathy to immigration is not new. It is intrinsic to Britain's island identity, in which an expansive view of the world is matched by a sometimes neuralgic fear of foreign influence. But even by historical standards anti-immigrant feeling is running high. In a poll by YouGov, 69% of respondents said they would reduce net immigration to zero. The recent influx, Euroscepticism and a tough economy have all played a part in this. Politicians are right to recognise public concern, though their enthusiasm for tackling the issue also owes to narrow electoral calculus. The UK Independence Party (UKIP), a fringe outfit dedicated to quitting the EU and curbing immigration, threatens all three main parties—the Tories especially. Whether talking tough on immigration will help them is another matter.

That old foreign bogey

It doesn't take too many encounters on Ipswich doorsteps to conclude that fears over foreign hordes are scarcely about immigrants at all. Most residents of Ipswich—a port town with a thousand-year history of trade, where the body of a 13th-century African was recently exhumed—claim to feel inundated by foreigners. Yet Ipswich's immigrant population is only 12% of the total. Some locals say immigrants are scroungers; in fact they are less likely to claim benefits than the natives. Others fear they work too hard; but that is scarcely a fault. In short, these are not rational arguments. They are proxy fears—expressing the uncertainties of a town where, until a few decades ago, three-quarters of the workforce had a stable factory job and family, and life was much more predictable than it is today. Mr Cameron's crackdown will deal with none of their descendants' worries. It probably won't do much at all—because what is true in Ipswich is true elsewhere. Immigrants are not a drag on Britain's welfare state. Most make few claims on it, as Mr Cameron should repeat like a mantra. He and his fellows are correctly grappling with Britain's immigration neurosis, but they will achieve nothing by pandering to irrational fears. Assuredly, they will not spike UKIP's guns.

That was apparent on the evening of Mr Cameron's speech in another East Anglian town, Brandon, where a crowd of UKIP supporters had gathered to hear the party's jackanapes leader, Nigel Farage. "We're in politics because we believe something has gone fundamentally wrong with our country!" he declared, to raucous applause, before describing immigration's lead part in that. He is wrong and perhaps dangerous. Yet no other British politician can make his case half so well. □

Tread on Me: The Case for Freedom From Terrorist Bombings, School Shootings and Exploding Factories

By Michael Grunwald *Time* April 23, 2013

We're often told that our liberties are under assault. The right warns that our Big Government nanny state is plotting to seize our guns and our Big Gulps, while strangling our economic freedom with taxes and regulations. The left rails against our Big Government security state — the drone warfare, indefinite detention and electronic surveillance that make the war on terrorism sound like an Orwellian nightmare. The National Rifle Association had just finished bellowing about background checks violating our Second Amendment rights when the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) started shrieking about the FBI violating the Boston bombing suspect's Miranda rights.

America was born from resistance to tyranny, and our skepticism of authority is a healthy tradition. But we're pretty free. And the "don't tread on me" slippery-slopers on both ends of the political spectrum tend to forget that Big Government helps protect other important rights. Like the right of a child to watch a marathon or attend first grade without getting killed — or, for that matter, the right to live near a fertilizer factory without it blowing up your house.

Our government needs to balance these rights, which is tough sometimes. But not always. Requiring gun owners to pass background checks and restricting access to high-capacity magazines would be a minuscule price to pay to help avoid future Newtowns and Auroras. If the FBI waits a few days to read Dzhokhar Tsarnaev the Miranda boilerplate he's already heard a million times on *Law and Order*, the Republic will survive, and the authorities might learn something that will help prevent another tragedy. (In fact, if America's ubiquitous surveillance network hadn't captured Tsarnaev on video, he might still be at large.) Even in a free-enterprise system — especially in a free-enterprise system — a factory owner's right to run his business without government interference is trumped by the public-safety rights of the local community.

In the Obama era, Tea Party Republicans like Senator Rand Paul have portrayed the U.S. government as a threat to individual liberty, an oppressive force in American life. They just want government to leave us alone. But while the "stand with Rand" worldview is quite consistent — against gun restrictions, traffic-light cameras, drone strikes, antidiscrimination laws, antipollution laws and other Big Brother intrusions into our private lives — it's wrong. And most of us know it's wrong, which is why we celebrate our first responders, our soldiers, our law enforcers. They're from the government, and they're here to help. We know our government is fallible, because it's made up of people, but we still count on it to protect us from terrorists, from psychos with guns, from exploding factories. We also need it to protect us from floods and wildfires, from financial meltdowns and climate change. We can't do that kind of thing ourselves.

I don't want to imply that we live in a *Game of Thrones* episode — our nights are dark but only occasionally full of terrors — but last week, an Elvis impersonator trying to poison the President didn't even make the front page. There's dangerous stuff out there, and while it's probably fun to stand with Rand, I'm more inclined to stand with the public servants keeping us safe, even when the al-Qaeda operative they ice in Yemen is an American citizen, even when they shut down an entire city to hunt for a single teenager, and yes, even when they try to regulate coal plants and oil rigs and Wall Street casinos that would greatly prefer to be left alone. That's why I pay my taxes, and that's why I don't feel like I'm being tyrannized when I pay them.

I guess you could call me a statist. I'm not sure we need public financing for our symphonies or our farmers or our mortgages — history will also recall my stand with Rand on the great laser-pointing controversy of 2011 — but we do need Big Government to attack the big collective-action problems of the modern world. Our rights are not inviolate. Just as the First Amendment doesn't let us shout "Fire!" in a crowded theater, the Second Amendment shouldn't let us have assault weapons designed for mass slaughter. And if the authorities decided it was vital to ask Tsarnaev about his alleged murder of innocents before reminding him of his Fifth Amendment rights to lawyer up, I won't second-guess their call. The civil-liberties purists of the ACLU are just as extreme as the gun purists of the NRA, or the antiregulatory purists in business groups like the Club for Growth.

[...]

Margaret Thatcher vs the intelligentsia

Toby Young *The Spectator* 13 April 2013

On a warm summer evening in 1986, the crème-de-la-crème of London's literary establishment met at Antonia Fraser's house in Holland Park to discuss how they could bring about the downfall of Margaret Thatcher. Among their number were Harold Pinter, Ian McEwan, John Mortimer, David Hare, Margaret Drabble, Michael Holroyd, Angela Carter and Salman Rushdie, who referred to Thatcher in *The Satanic Verses* as 'Mrs Torture'. With characteristic lack of modesty, they called themselves the 20 June Group — a reference to the plot to assassinate Hitler that was hatched on 20 July 1944.

'We have a precise agenda and we're going to meet again and again until they break all the windows and drag us out,' said Pinter.

Several commentators have pointed out that one of the reasons Thatcher was able to win so many political battles is because she was blessed with particularly feeble enemies. They're thinking of Arthur Scargill, General Galtieri and Michael Foot, but these literary giants deserve a mention. They claimed to be of the left and thought of themselves as heroic dissidents, but their objection to the Iron Lady, in essence, was that she threatened the cultural hegemony of Britain's upper-middle-class elite by unleashing the forces of social mobility. This was obvious from the language that a member of this set, the opera director Jonathan Miller, used to describe her. According to Miller, Britain's first woman prime minister was 'loathsome, repulsive in almost every way'. He objected to her 'odious suburban gentility and sentimental, saccharine patriotism catering to the worst elements of commuter idiocy'. In other words, he didn't like her because she was a grammar school girl — a 'Northern chemist'.

Such snobbery was unlikely to turn the mass of the British people against her, yet it was equally apparent in *Paradise Postponed*, John Mortimer's 11-part jeremiad against Thatcherism, broadcast in 1986. The central character, the object of all Mortimer's scorn, was Leslie Titmuss, a farm labourer's son who becomes a right-wing Conservative MP. Mortimer's snobbery was so undisguised that even the *New York Times* objected that the 'lower orders' were portrayed as either forelock-tugging peasants or ruthless Tories. The message was clear: Margaret Thatcher should never have attempted to jump the counter of her father's shop.

Mortimer and others seemed to grasp that the 1945-79 consensus, with its uneasy truce between trade unionists on the one hand and the boss class on the other, depended upon every-one knowing their place. Whatever the shortcomings of the Tory old guard, at least they shared the metropolitan left's disdain for 'barrow boy' City traders and 'vulgar' businessmen. Provided the English class system remained intact, the post-war settlement could be preserved.

The extraordinary thing is that these Labour party stalwarts saw this as an argument in favour of Butskellism, rather than an argument against. The existence of 'the establishment' — first identified in the pages of this magazine in 1955 — wasn't merely an acceptable cost; it was a positive virtue. This was clear from the hostility exhibited in various novels and plays of the period towards anyone who showed the faintest sign of upward social mobility. Exhibit A is John Self, the monstrous protagonist of Martin Amis's novel *Money*, but there are countless examples. The working-class boy made good, in some 'ghastly' 1980s profession like estate agency, became the object of near-universal cultural derision. As far as the intelligentsia were concerned, the moneyed 'oik' was the unacceptable face of Thatcherism.

This analysis of Thatcher's cultural critics was fairly well-rehearsed at the time. Indeed, I was in the foothills of my career as a conservative pundit and often trotted it out myself. But what made the 20 June Group particularly welcome is that it laid bare the naked self-interest behind the sanctimonious arguments of her high-minded opponents. Of course they weren't in favour of the principle of meritocracy! Most of them were the beneficiaries of hundreds of years of inherited privilege. This was made explicit by the venue they chose to hold their first meeting in — a five-storey Georgian house in one of west London's most desirable squares, belonging to the daughter of an earl. The disconnect between the revolutionary rhetoric and the pampered reality was almost comic.

One day, someone will write a comic novel about Thatcher's Britain where the 'satire' isn't confined to young men who work in advertising and drive Porsches. Perhaps I'll do it myself.

U.N.: U.S. drone strikes violate Pakistan sovereignty

By Richard Leiby, March 15, 2013 *Washington Post*

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — CIA drone strikes on targets in Pakistan violate its national sovereignty and have resulted in far more civilian casualties than the U.S. government has recognized, a special U.N. human rights envoy reported after a secret investigation in Pakistan this week.

Ben Emmerson, the United Nations' special rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism, met with Pakistani government officials for three days and came away supporting their long-stated view that they do not consent to the remote-fired missile campaign that is the centerpiece of U.S. strategy to eliminate a wide range of Islamic militants.

This contradicts Washington's position that the Pakistani military and intelligence services have at least tacitly supported the strikes, which began in 2004 and have significantly escalated since President Obama took office. At one point earlier in the campaign, the two nations shared intelligence on militant targets, but Pakistani officials vehemently deny that they are still doing so.

The drone campaign "involves the use of force on the territory of another State without its consent and is therefore a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty," Emmerson said in a statement released Thursday that only gained wider notice Friday.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said that the Obama administration had "seen [Emmerson's] press release," but would not comment on classified information.

"What I would say," she added, "is that we have a strong ongoing counterterrorism dialogue with Pakistan, and that will continue."

For years the Obama administration has asserted that its covert, targeted killings with unmanned aircraft hovering over Pakistan and elsewhere are proper under U.S. and international law. Targets are chosen under strict criteria and civilian deaths and injuries are rare, the CIA says.

Emmerson, a British lawyer, said Pakistani officials have confirmed that at least 400 civilians had been killed as a result of drone strikes, and that another 200 individuals killed were "probable noncombatants."

Estimates of total militant deaths and civilian casualties vary widely. Independent confirmation is difficult in part because the strikes often occur in remote, dangerous tribal areas where Taliban insurgents and al-Qaeda and its allied militants are active.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism in London has estimated that at least 411 civilians -- or as many as 884 -- were among some 2,536 to 3,577 people killed in the CIA strikes in Pakistan. But Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D), who chaired the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence hearings last month that confirmed new CIA Director John O. Brennan, put the number of civilian deaths considerably lower.

"The figures we have obtained from the executive branch, which we have done our utmost to verify, confirm that the number of civilian casualties that have resulted from such strikes each year has typically been in the single digits," she said.

Emmerson conducted talks this week with senior civilian Pakistani officials, as well as representatives of tribal areas where the remotely piloted vehicles operate.

Emmerson reviewed 25 case studies of drone attacks dating to 2005, compiled by a Pakistani research group, and heard from tribal leaders who said innocent residents were targeted simply because their tribal clothing is the same as that worn by Taliban militants. Tribesmen also carry guns at all times, leading to other erroneous targeting, the statement said.

"Adult males carrying out ordinary daily tasks were frequently the victims of such strikes," Emmerson reported. Imtiaz Gul, an author who worked on the case studies and is head of the Centre for Research and Security Studies in Islamabad, said although a target may be legitimate, "a legitimate drone strike can kill innocent people."

He said his research also found that Taliban members bear a significant onus for civilian deaths. Militants are known to demand food and shelter from families against their will -- leading to women and children in those homes being killed in a strike.

And militants who know they are being hunted park their cars next to homes of innocent people and then hide a few houses away, so the drone operator ends up targeting the wrong house, Gul said.

During Emmerson's visit, evidently kept secret for security reasons, he did not meet with the key decision-makers in the drone program over the years: the Pakistan military and the Inter-Services Intelligence spy agency. "However, he was informed that their position would be adequately reflected by consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence," the statement said.

He also reported that Pakistani officials confirmed doing a "thorough search of government records" and could find no evidence of Pakistan's ever giving consent to drone attacks.

But Pakistani officials clearly have countenanced the attacks in the past because they have benefited Pakistan's own war against the Islamic radicals.

"I don't care if they do it as long as they get the right people. We'll protest in the National Assembly and then ignore it," then-Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani was quoted as saying by then-U.S. ambassador Anne Patterson in 2008 in a leaked cable.

The Independent - Daily Main Book – News The Lords on trial . June 4. 2013

By ANDREW GRICE Political Editor

(...) Peers from all parties warned the House of Lords last night that it would exceed its powers if it derailed plans to legalise gay marriage because the move has already won the overwhelming backing of MPs.

The Lords will vote tonight on a wrecking amendment to stop the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill. If passed, the motion would give David Cameron another headache as it would embolden Tory MPs who oppose the Bill if he pressed ahead with it.

Some peers believe the result is too close to call. But Cameron aides expressed confidence that the wrecking move would be defeated and refused to speculate about the Prime Minister's actions if it succeeded.

The vote is being held at a torrid time for the Lords, amid allegations that three peers broke parliamentary rules on lobbying.

Mr Cameron promised yesterday to publish legislation by next month to bring in a statutory register of lobbyists. Two Labour peers have been suspended from the party following the claims, while an Ulster Unionist peer has resigned his party whip.

The controversial gay marriage wrecking move was proposed during a passionate Lords debate by Lord Dear, a crossbencher and former Chief Constable of the West Midlands. He angered peers who support gay marriage by warning that the proposal could provoke a public backlash against gay people.

He said: "I fear the Bill, should it become law, could well create such opposition to homosexuals in general that the climate of tolerance and acceptance in this country, that we have all championed and supported and seen flourish over the years, could well be set back by decades."

Insisting the measure would overturn centuries of tradition by altering the concept of marriage, Lord Dear added: "It seeks to divide a nation with an argument that hides behind the concept of equality, when in reality it is about sameness and it stands on its head all considerations of electoral mandate."

But Lord Black of Brentwood, a gay Tory peer and executive director of the Telegraph Media Group, hit back at Lord Dear in a powerful speech. "This is 2013," he said. "Gay people don't want to be tolerated in this society. They want to be equal in this society."

Lord Black told peers that although he was in what Lord Dear called a "tiny minority", he was "the same as you except that I happen to love a man". He said his decision to enter a civil partnership with his partner, Mark Bolland, in 2006 had strengthened and deepened their relationship in a way he had not thought possible at the time. "This measure will not undermine marriage. It will strengthen it. I know that to be true because I have felt it."

Labour's Lord Smith of Finsbury, who was the first MP to come out as gay, said some of the remarks by the Bill's opponents were "mistaken, misguided and sometimes rather hurtful" and had underlined the need for it. "This is about love, commitment and mutual respect," he said, adding that it would challenge prejudice.

Lord Smith said peers would be ill-advised to block a measure that had been so strongly supported by the elected Commons. The same point was made by Lord Fowler, the former Conservative cabinet minister, who said: "I think we would be profoundly wrong if not politically suicidal to vote against such a second reading." He described gay marriage as "a fundamental moral issue".

Baroness Barker, a Liberal Democrat, who told peers she had had a female partner for many years, said the Bill reflected "the wishes of people who don't today just want to tolerate the views of lesbians and gay men but want to celebrate and support them as people in their own right".

She said: "I look forward to joining with people on all sides of this House to ensure gay people and their families are afforded the dignity and respect that others take for granted and that families, faiths and communities can grow stronger together as a result."

But Baroness Knight of Collingtree, a Conservative, countered: "Of course homosexuals are very artistic and delightful people, too. But marriage is not just about love. It's about a man and a woman, created to produce children, producing children... This Bill is pretending it can turn men into women; or that children do not need a father."

The Most Rev Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, opposed the Bill but did not support Lord Dear's move to kill it at its second reading. He said the Bill distinguished between same and different-gender marriage, "thus not achieving true equality... the result is confusion. Marriage is abolished, redefined and recreated."

The Archbishop admitted: "The Church has often not served the LGBT communities in the way it should. I must express my sadness and sorrow at that considerable failure. It is also necessary to express total rejection of homophobic language, which is wrong and, more than that, sickening."

Background Checks May Be Gun Control's Best Hope, for Now

Gun control advocates think public pressure will force enough senators to support tighter restrictions on sales.

—By Gavin Aronsen *Mother Jones* Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Last week, the Senate's focus on guns shifted away from an assault weapons ban toward beefing up the loophole-ridden federal background check system. Gun control groups, sensing a chance for success with this approach, are laying on a full-court press to convince pro-gun lawmakers to come around on a proposal that has overwhelming public support. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, through his group Mayors Against Illegal Guns, is leading the charge with a \$12 million ad rollout targeting senators in 13 key states.

At issue is a bill authored by Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) that would require private gun sellers to run background checks on their buyers (as commercial dealers are required to do) and would ramp up the penalties on states that fail to submit records to the national background check system. None of that's especially controversial: Roughly 20 percent of guns are sold without any background checks. Recent polls have shown that more than 80 percent of gun owners and nearly 90 percent of the public at large support closing the loopholes that allow such sales. Even Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who has threatened to filibuster "any legislation that will serve as a vehicle for any additional gun restrictions," recently voiced support for improving background checks.

In February, Schumer was in talks with NRA darling Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), hoping that he would cosponsor a bipartisan bill. But the negotiations broke down because Schumer wouldn't budge on requiring private gun sellers to keep records of their sales. Coburn countered that record keeping "cannot be used to enforce the law on the 250-300 million firearms in current circulation without the government knowing where all of them are on the date of enactment." In other words, Coburn worried that Schumer's bill would either be unenforceable or would lead to the national gun registry that gun advocates so fear. (The Brady Handgun Prevention Act of 1993, which established the federal background check system, currently requires that records of gun purchases be destroyed within 24 hours.)

The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, a gun control advocacy group that's also pressuring lawmakers, supports Schumer's bill. Ladd Everitt, the group's spokesman, dismisses Coburn's concerns as part of a "process to delay and sabotage" the bill. But Everitt's still optimistic that a strong background check bill will pass through Congress, considering the "off the charts" polling numbers. "You're going to have to see a breaking point where Republicans will be adversely affected at the polls," Everitt says. "When that happens I think you'll see change very quickly." (Coburn told the *Washington Times* that "some type" of improved checks would pass.)

Everitt attributes the gap between congressional and public support for stronger gun regulations to the influence of the National Rifle Association. He believes the NRA has been driven rightward as fringe gun groups have threatened to steal away its members. "To some degree, they've backed themselves into the corner with their radical rhetoric, where they either will not or cannot compromise," he says. "You're going to have to see a breaking point where Republicans will be adversely affected at the polls. When that happens I think you'll see change very quickly." After the 1999 Columbine massacre, NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre testified in support of "mandatory instant criminal background checks for every sale at every gun show." The NRA now publicly states that it "opposes criminalizing private firearms transfers between law-abiding individuals, and therefore opposes an expansion of the background check system." The reason for the change of policy, it says, is because background checks have proved ineffective. However, the group has reportedly been in closed-door talks with Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), an NRA member who's seen as a crucial cross-party negotiator, possibly indicating that the group is willing to cede some ground.

Senate compromise talks are expected to gear up after the Easter recess before a revised background check bill is introduced for a vote as part of a larger gun control package in April. If it avoids a filibuster or receives enough Republican support to override one, it also will have to be sufficiently bipartisan to stand a chance in the GOP-controlled House. (A spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner, who has the power to decide what bills reach the floor for debate, did not respond to a request for comment.) Mayors Against Illegal Guns has already conducted polls in at least 36 congressional districts, most represented by pro-gun lawmakers whose constituents strongly support universal background checks. The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence is also prepared to lay on the pressure in the House. Whatever the outcome, Everitt urges patience. "We're not going to undo years of NRA damage in three or four weeks," he says. "I think there was a fundamental tipping point after Newtown, but we've got a long slog ahead of us."

COMMENT

Austerity will give the Tories an electoral edge

Janan Ganesh

During the last general election campaign, Conservative candidates confidently ambled up tidy garden paths to canvass middle class families in the kind of invincible green suburbs that once served as the party's heartland. Time and again, however, they met the accusing rebuff: "You want to take away our tax credits." Among the legacies of Gordon Brown's decade as chancellor was a benefits system that ensnared relatively prosperous households, giving them a rational incentive to vote Labour. In 2010, it helped to keep suburban bellwether seats such as Birmingham Edgbaston and Bolton West out of Tory hands.

Mr Brown understood the power of policy to shape the electoral topography in his party's favour. But so does George Osborne, his successor but one at the Treasury. Of all the reasons to believe that the Conservatives are currently underpriced by the political markets, most are merely circumstantial: the economy is showing glimpses of recovery, Nick Clegg's possible replacement by Vince Cable as

Liberal Democrat leader could prise leftwing voters back from Labour and Ed Miliband has yet to be stressed. But another cause for Tory optimism is deep and structural. Austerity is changing the make-up of the electorate itself.

This month's employment figures offer a measure of the change. Public sector workers are likelier to vote Labour than Conservative, and their number is declining at a rate that should perturb Mr Miliband. The government headcount has fallen by around half a million to 5.7m under the coalition. It is already back to its 2001 level. By the end of this parliament in 2015, the great expansion of the public payroll that took place during the decade of Brownite munificence will be entirely undone. Meanwhile, private sector employment has swelled by over 1m to 23.9m since June 2010.

The electoral implication of all this is not lost on the Tories, even if they can never mention it publicly. Labour's client state is shrinking. Austerity is making other inroads into the Labour vote. Take those tax credits, for example. The government is imposing a tougher means test on them; households earning more than

£40,000 will see their entitlements shrink. Come the next election, those Tory candidates will encounter fewer well-to-do families with government income to jealously defend. The coalition is going even further by slaying some of the welfare state's most sacred cows. Child benefit was introduced as a universal measure to encourage baby-making after the war – but also to give the middle class a

The implication is not lost on the Tories, even if they can never mention it publicly: Labour's client state is shrinking

stake in big government. The chancellor is withdrawing it from higher earners.

Taking money away from people is, it is fair to say, a counter-intuitive method of winning their votes. Common sense suggests that households deprived of government assistance that they used to count on will punish the Tories. But voters are, above all, loss-averse. In 2010,

the loss of tax credits and the like was a prospective hazard to be feared. In 2015, it will have already happened. More to the point, Labour, which is warning its supporters against expecting any great reversal of the coalition's spending cuts, will probably not promise to restore these expensive goodies. Even if they did, they are unlikely to be believed. Voters are rightly cynical about promises of free money at election time. They suspect that Tory offers of tax cuts can only be delivered by reducing public spending (as the party learnt with the ignominious defeats of 2001 and 2005) and Labour promises of higher benefits can only be funded by raising taxes somewhere down the line.

Of course, Mr Osborne is not cutting jobs and benefits for the express purpose of helping his party, any more than Mr Brown inflated the government workforce to serve his. These are policies with higher goals – fixing the fiscal crisis or improving public services – that also happen to have happy political byproducts. Still, both men are eminently aware of those byproducts and seek to maximise them where they can. One of the chancellor's

biggest projects is to introduce regional variations in public pay. In poor parts of the country, government jobs are more attractively remunerated than equivalent work in business. As a result, the public sector dominates the local labour force and the Tories struggle for votes. If the reforms make areas such as the north-east more hospitable to the party, it will be in the very long run, by which time this ruling generation of Conservatives will have gone. They are keen on the prize regardless.

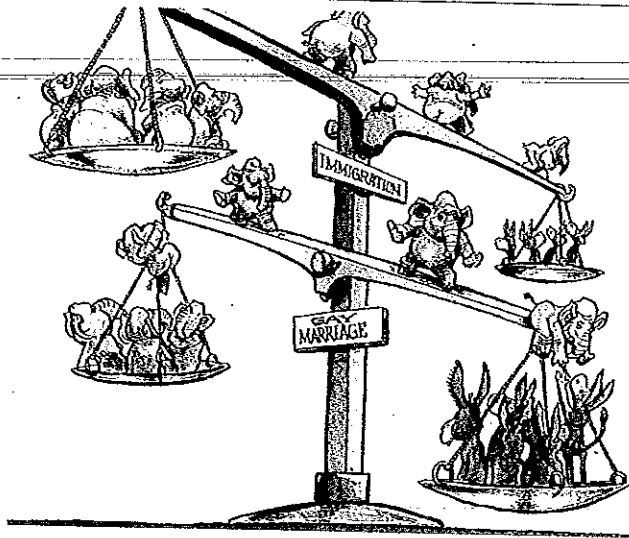
Mr Osborne's reputation for tactical nous was wounded by his unpopular budget in March but his strategic mind continues to whirl. Amid the din of argument over the economic wisdom and moral rightness of his cuts, their electoral implications are overlooked.

The era of landslide election victories is giving way to tight results. Small advantages matter. Austerity is pruning the number of Britons who have a direct material interest in the big state, day by day, constituency by constituency, household by household.

janan.ganesh@ft.com

Lexington | Empathy is not enough

The parallels between gay marriage and immigration reform



TWO earth-shaking movements can be felt in Washington just now. One involves grandees of left and right stampeding to embrace gay marriage, after years of timidity and hesitation. The second involves a contest among ambitious Republicans to support the boldest immigration reforms. Would-be Republican leaders are backing bipartisan policies that were taboo on the right only months ago, including work permits and a path to citizenship for the 11m migrants in America without the right papers.

Dry electoral explanations for these changes include the need to woo socially liberal women or Hispanic voters. But that rather mechanical explanation does not capture the magnitude of the political earthquakes under way. Simply put, public opinion seems to be deserting opponents of gay marriage. It is moving on immigration too, and pro-reform activists are starting to draw parallels between the two revolutions. Their case is that empathy explains both, as public understanding of once-unfamiliar, marginalised groups—gays on one hand, migrants on the other—reaches a tipping point. There is some evidence for their belief. That is good news for immigrants whose plight inspires public sympathy. But empathy alone is not enough.

Start with gay marriage. Opinion polls have tracked a surge in public support for such unions over the past decade, to 58% in one poll. Pollsters from Langer Research Associates note that this shift is matched by a sharp rise in the number of Americans who say that homosexuality is just how some people are, rather than a choice. That advance in compassion and understanding cannot be separated from the growing visibility of gay celebrities, friends and neighbours. A Republican senator who recently changed his stance on gay marriage, Rob Portman, ascribed his conversion to learning that his own son is gay. Announcing her own change of mind, Hillary Clinton, the former Democratic secretary of state, talked of her many gay friends and colleagues. Empathy for gays is here to stay. Support for gay marriage stands at 81% among “millennials” (adults under 30). Endorsing same-sex marriage shortly after Mrs Clinton, Claire McCaskill, a Democratic senator from conservative Missouri, admitted: “My children have a hard time understanding why this is even controversial.”

Opinion on immigration is also softening. In a recent essay for the *Washington Post* Frank Sharry, the head of America's Voice, an

immigrant-rights group, wrote of campaign tactics consciously copied from the gay-equality movement, above all the need for undocumented migrants to “come out” publicly about their status, giving their plight a human face.

Gay-marriage campaigners have long favoured unthreatening, often grey-haired monogamous gay couples as spokesmen (the “lesbians next door” gambit, as a study of the cause dubbed it). Immigration reformers promoted Dreamers: young campaigners named after the DREAM Act, a proposal to offer fast-track legal status to migrants brought to America as children, as long as they go to college or into the armed forces. Advocates such as Mr Sharry credit the prominence of wholesome, college-bound Dreamers with helping reshape the national debate.

A large nationwide opinion survey, published by the Public Religion Research Institute on March 21st, found that 68% of Americans back an earned path to citizenship for illegal migrants—a six-point rise since 2011. True, that headline number hides differences that spell trouble. Republicans are more hawkish on immigration than Democrats. Most whites, blacks and Republicans say that illegal immigrants hurt the economy by driving down wages. Hispanics mostly disagree and Democrats are divided. But the survey found another pattern of differences, involving big generation gaps, that may point to a more understanding future. Whether Republican or Democrat, millennials are consistently more liberal on the issue of immigration than their elders. Nearly seven in ten say that immigrant newcomers “strengthen” society. The same proportion say they have close friends born abroad. On both measures, young adults are way ahead of older Americans.

The right is moving, now it's the turn of the left

In Washington there is cautious optimism that a comprehensive immigration deal—combining tighter border controls, legalisation for migrants already in America and smarter rules for admitting foreign workers in the future—may now be within reach after years of failure. A bipartisan group of senators, including a potential Republican White House contender, Marco Rubio, has been meeting intensively to forge a pact that can survive passage through Congress. On March 25th, speaking at a naturalisation ceremony packed with fine new citizens—foreign-born volunteers in the American armed forces, a doctoral student of information technology—Barack Obama said he wanted to see Congress formally debating a plan by April.

Yet dangers lurk in a continuing stand-off between trade unions and groups representing employers over rules governing future visas for workers, especially those with mid-level skills not covered by other proposed agreements on the highly skilled or on temporary farm labourers. Eager for immigrant members, unions are keener on immigration reform than in the past (in 2007 they helped kill a reform plan rather than accept a guest-worker scheme). But they are still asking for tight caps and a politicised system of work-visa regulation that employers call unworkable.

Empathy is of little use in this dispute, which is more about economics than social justice. The right was too slow to acknowledge the civil-rights arguments for immigration (as it has been wrong on gay marriage). But immigration reform is also about promoting growth. Mr Obama and congressional Democrats must not give the left a veto. ■

Economist.com/blogs/lexington

Série Langues vivantes - Analyse d'un texte hors programme (LV2)

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature

Angelina Jolie's mastectomy news shocks, enlightens

Maria Puente, Donna Freydkin and Andrea G. Mandell, USA TODAY 12:51 p.m. EDT May 15, 2013

It wasn't just that a supernova movie star had her breasts surgically removed to improve her chances of not getting breast cancer. It was how Angelina Jolie — a woman who is rarely without a paparazzi scrum in pursuit — was able to do it in secret, and then announce it on her own terms.

This never happens. Until Tuesday.

The next shock was how the news went over with people who love her, people who loathe her, or people who up until yesterday didn't give a fig about her. In an exclusive interview with USA TODAY just hours after his fiancée went public, mega movie star Brad Pitt said he's "quite emotional about it, of course." He went on to say why her coming forward was important. "It doesn't have to be a scary thing. In fact, it can be an empowering thing, and something that makes you stronger and us stronger."

That strength was lauded in the world of social media, a place where comments can sometimes be soul-destroying. A surge of sympathy, respect and "well-dones" poured onto Twitter, praising Jolie, 37, for her guts, grace and candor in announcing her elective surgery and why she had it, in an op-ed piece in the Tuesday *New York Times*. She invoked her mother who died of ovarian cancer, the woman who would never live to meet some of Jolie's children. "We often speak of 'Mommy's mommy,'" she wrote, "and I find myself trying to explain the illness that took her away from us."

Tweeted breast cancer survivor Sheryl Crow: "Ladies, please check out Angelina Jolie's story today, especially if you have breast cancer in your family history. I commend Angelina Jolie for her courage and thoughtfulness in sharing her story today regarding her mastectomy. So brave!"

The question now is how much the announcement that reverberated across the globe will impact the treatment of breast cancer in a country where 232,000 women are diagnosed with it each year, and 40,000 women will die from it. What's clear already is that people who had no clue what a double mastectomy is and never heard of the breast cancer gene mutation BRCA1 — apparently multitudes — suddenly know all about them and why this *is* a big deal.

"Am I the only one who had to Google 'mastectomy'? Angelina got us learning new things," tweeted someone whose name was written in Arabic script.

THE REALITY BEHIND BRCA1

About one in 500 women have a mutation in genes called BRCA1 or BRCA2, which are involved in repairing genetic mistakes. Jolie said she was tested for the mutation because her mother died at age 56, nearly a decade after being diagnosed. Having a mutation in BRCA1 gives women a 54% chance of developing breast cancer and a 39% chance of ovarian cancer by age 70, according to the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center. Having a double mastectomy can reduce those risks by more than 90%, although there is still a small risk that cancer could develop in the skin left behind, or in the armpit.

Yet for the many women who may very well be inspired by Jolie's revelation and moved to act, prohibitive costs can stand in the way of these types of proactive treatments.

Genetic testing can cost more than \$4,000 and isn't always covered by insurance, says Lisa Schlager of FORCE, an advocacy group for women with the mutations. But if a positive diagnosis of the mutations is made, insurance plans generally do pay for preventive mastectomies for women who have the mutations, says Eric Winer, a breast cancer specialist at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. In her op-ed, Jolie notes that she underwent reconstruction and that "the results can be beautiful." The good news for women considering a path similar to Jolie's: A 1998 law requires insurance plans to pay for breast reconstruction, says Scott Spear, chief of plastic surgery at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

The klieg light attention her revelation has already received is invaluable, says Hans Sauer, deputy general counsel for the Biotechnology Industry Organization. "There's not a person in the United States that doesn't know that there is a genetic test available, and that's a good thing."

Even so, not all women are ready for surgery, Winer notes — especially if they're young and single. Some women instead choose to have frequent screenings, using mammograms and breast MRIs. Whether the thinking about such aggressive preventive treatment as Jolie's changes the approach toward breast cancer might not be known for years, but there's an unmistakable strength in what the Hollywood icon did on Tuesday. She's "sending a message to millions of women around the world: It's about taking control of your life and making decisions for yourself," says PR pro Howard Bragman, vice chairman of Reputation.com.

Obsessive compulsive hoarding: A serious health risk in store

The condition has just been reclassified as a psychiatric disorder, but how common is it? Jonathan Brown talks to a sufferer

JONATHAN BROWN — SUNDAY 19 MAY 2013



Richard Wallace is making great strides. "I have no problem with discarding things that are of no further use and I recognise that you can't keep everything," he says. "It's just not possible."

5 The sunny 63-year-old former television engineer now stores far less clutter. His quarter-acre garden in the pretty village of Westcott, Surrey, now holds the rotting hulks of only 16 cars, surrounded by tyres, walking frames, shopping trolleys and chairs. A marquee holds some of his collection of 36 years of newspapers and magazines. Inside the house, three fridges, old TV sets, drinks cans and milk bottles compete with other relics. It is possible, just, to enter four rooms of the family bungalow – the bathroom, lavatory, kitchen and a bedroom, where he has carved himself a tiny space among the towers of back copies of The Daily Telegraph. There he eats his staple diet of boiled eggs and sleeps
10 upright in a chair. Since appearing on the Channel 4 documentary Obsessive Compulsive Hoarder, Mr Wallace has become Britain's (if not the world's) most famous sufferer from a condition that is said to affect up 3 per cent of the population.

As of this weekend, there is new hope for those afflicted. The latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – the bible of psychiatric illnesses – recategorises hoarding in
15 its own right, after previously treating it as a symptom of obsessive compulsive disorder. This will result in more cash and research into the condition, boosting hopes for more effective treatment.

Since his first appearance on TV, Mr Wallace has been receiving help from a psychologist and from Andy Honey, his friend who lives next door with his wife and two children. With Mr Honey's help, more than 100 tonnes of jumble has been removed from the house and garden, while therapy has
20 helped him turn a crucial corner.

"The biggest progress that I have made is that I am not collecting on the same scale as I was," he explains. But the hoard is not going down as fast as Mr Honey would like. "Richard is looking at a five-year programme," Mr Honey said. "But I'd like to think it will be under control in another 18 months. He doesn't need to clear every single room, but I would like to see the things that he needs
25 become accessible to him and the papers stored in a way that he can get to them."

The extraordinary relationship between the two men has already been the subject of an acclaimed play, The Hoarder, which is now set to tour nationally. Mr Honey is also in talks with a production company in the US that wants to turn their story into a feature film.

Hoarding, meanwhile, has become the subject of a growing number of spin-off reality TV programmes as well as spawning a decluttering industry – its annual conference is being held in
30 London on Monday. Mr Wallace and Mr Honey are trying to help other sufferers. On Thursday they held their first group session with a local charity and NHS Trust, which was attended by 12 people – although few of them can compare to Mr Wallace. "Richard is the top of the tree. He is the king of the hoarders," says Mr Honey. Mr Wallace stopped throwing away newspapers when his father died in
35 1976 and completely lost control of his hoard in 2005 on the death of his mother. While he recognises that he has allowed himself to be dominated by the items he keeps, he insists that everything he does retain contains either useful "data" or, like the cars in the garden, will one day be used. Yet he has a more detached view of other hoarders he meets: "Some of them are in a real pickle. They realise they have a problem and they admit they need help but they won't do anything
40 about it. "When I watched the programme [Obsessive Compulsive Hoarder] I thought: 'You bloody fool, why don't you do this?' Then I realise I'm the same – it's me."

Dr Stephen Kellett, a psychologist from Sheffield University, says that reclassification of the illness may bring more research and funding. "No one knows the answer to what causes it," he says. "There is some evidence about the role of childhood trauma – loss, neglect, separation – and to some
45 degree there is a genetic component there." But there is no hard evidence to quantify its prevalence. "It tends to be seen as treatment-resistant," Dr Kellett says. "Normally outcomes are not brilliant; levels of relapse are very high."

Jonathan Romney on Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*: Leonardo DiCaprio gets lost in Baz's jazz

It's all over the place – but there is much to savour in this irresistible adaptation

JONATHAN ROMNEY — SATURDAY 18 MAY 2013



Like it or not, there couldn't be a more appropriate opening attraction for the Cannes Film Festival than Baz Luhrmann's 3D *The Great Gatsby*. The extravagant Jazz Age festivities that Luhrmann organises embody exactly the glamorous image that Cannes likes to project, while, conversely, the movie's sparkling soirées owe less to actual 1920s America than to a platonic fantasy of an eternal, orgiastic Cannes gala – palm trees, red carpets and all.

Never mind that *Gatsby* doesn't work by any conventional standards as an adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald's novel. It achieves what it's after, establishing a benchmark for what cinema can be as lavish spectacle in 2013. Here's an opulent special-effects movie that, for once, is about a different kind of superhero. You won't be bored, and you won't be unimpressed – even if you find Luhrmann's hysterical exuberance fairly indigestible. His *Gatsby* is not the slim Penguin paperback you know, but the leather-bound, gold-embossed interactive edition with built-in boom box. It's so hyperbolically madcap that you want to take Luhrmann aside and say, "Now calm down, old sport ..." Take the moment when Jay Gatsby first appears, at one of his parties. In the novel he self-effacingly turns up in the crowd; here, Leonardo DiCaprio toasts the camera with raised champagne glass, as *Rhapsody in Blue* hits its climax and fireworks blossom behind him.

Controversially, Luhrmann depicts the 1920s as the age When Bling Was King, using hip-hop style to draw comparisons between two periods of artistic creativity and of social and financial excess. Hence a soundtrack overseen by Jay-Z, featuring thunderous R&B rhythms over period newsreels, rappers in cars laden with crates of Moët (should have been Cristal, surely), snatches of Beyoncé and Florence Welch ... And it sort of works – that is, it's distracting only up to a point, but never fully makes its impact. Rather than go all out with anachronism, as in his *Moulin Rouge*, Luhrmann patches little funky surprises into what's otherwise a surprisingly faithful adaptation, unambiguously set in the 1920s.

The style, though, is pure Luhrmann. Simon Duggan's camera bombs over the waters of Long Island or plunges off skyscrapers, like King Kong taking his final dive. In the novel, a drunken get-together in a Manhattan apartment is a crisply acrid comedy of manners; here it involves pillow fights, slapped buttocks and screaming red decor.

When they come on all visionary, Luhrmann and his partner, producer and designer Catherine Martin, lay it on with a gold-plated trowel. *Gatsby*'s mansion is a Ludwig of Bavaria castle with the Gardens of Babylon attached. By contrast, the "valley of ashes" between Manhattan and Long Island becomes a benighted backwater of hell, its denizens ragged Orcs with soot-smeared faces.

The actors, understandably, can get a little lost, but Carey Mulligan's Daisy is a reassuringly candid presence – weary, wan, with a dash of Blanche Dubois. Also impressive, and perfectly period, is Elizabeth Debicki's golf gal Jordan – wide-eyed and angular, as if a gazelle had been crossed with an Afghan hound and hadn't recovered from the shock.

Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan is the shady Wolfsheim, here a Pharaoh-like corsair. Least impressive is Tobey Maguire's narrator Nick Carraway, disappointingly painted as a straw-hatted goof. Best of all, though, is Joel Edgerton, whose racist boor Tom Buchanan transcends the monstrousness to achieve genuine vulnerability in the one scene (his confrontation with *Gatsby*) that achieves dramatic resonance. But the usually compelling DiCaprio never comes into focus as *Gatsby* – one minute the suave châtelain, the next manically yelling his biography, then suddenly a confused dork in a too-farcical tea-party reunion with Daisy.

The stylistic lurches make for a messy, incoherent film, but think of Luhrmann as approaching the novel the way that some crazed avant-garde opera director would treat the Ring Cycle – a bit of post-modernist outrage here, back to trad Wagner there, and the devil take the hindmost. The result might be a travesty of Fitzgerald's ironic grace, but as a celebration of what CGI-age cinema can be at its showiest and most fanciful, *I'll take it over your usual blockbusters. Think of it as The Fast and the Furious: The Jazz Generation.*

Scottish independence: Pension and savings warning

THE SCOTSMAN

By ANDREW WHITAKER — Published on 20/05/2013

AN INDEPENDENT Scotland would have "significant difficulties" in underwriting personal savings of up to £85,000, the UK Treasury will claim today in a flagship report.

The paper on the impact of independence on financial services warns that Scotland would struggle to provide protection that would match schemes such as the UK's Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), which protects deposits in UK banks up to that figure. It states that members of defined benefit pension schemes would not be covered by the Pension Protection Fund (PPF), with an independent Scotland required to provide such protection through a similar guarantee fund under EU rules. The paper will say that under independence it would be "difficult and expensive" to replicate the scheme, funded by levies on banks, due to Scotland's smaller banking sector and tax base.

The claims were made as the SNP government prepares to publish its own paper setting out the "strengths" of key sectors of Scotland's economy as part of the economic case for independence.

Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon will tomorrow set out the report, which will "explore the key strengths" of Scotland's economy in life sciences, creative industries, food and drink, renewable energy and tourism.

Meanwhile, the Treasury paper says schemes such as the FSCS are underwritten by the UK government, which lent it £20 billion during the banking crisis of 2008. The retail banking sector in an independent Scotland would be dominated by only two large banks – the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Bank of Scotland – with the costs for compensating the depositors falling on one bank if the other was to fail, the study will say. However, an independent Scotland would be required to set up its own deposit guarantee scheme rather than share existing UK schemes, the Treasury says. Account holders in England with savings in Scottish banks under independence would not be protected by the FSCS, the authors of the report will say.

The paper, launched by Scottish Secretary Michael Moore in Edinburgh today, is the third in a series of reports assessing the impact of a Yes vote in 2014. It says: "The UK government lent around £20bn to the FSCS during the recent financial crisis. Under European law, an independent Scottish state would not be able to 'share' the UK's deposit guarantee scheme, such that it covered firms authorised in both Scotland and the continuing UK. The retail deposit market in a separate Scotland would be dominated by only two large banks (RBS and BoS) and, if one of these were to fail, the costs for compensating the depositors would fall almost entirely on the one remaining bank."

It continues: "In an independent Scottish state, FSCS-eligible deposits held by Scottish firms (and which would therefore be covered by the Scottish compensation scheme) would be over 100 per cent of Scotland's GDP, representing a significant contingent liability of the state – and a much more significant proportion than in the UK as a whole. As was clear from the 2008 financial crisis, where there are doubts about the ability of the sector to meet claims through the compensation scheme, it can be necessary for governments to step in to guarantee deposits in order to prevent deposit flight."

However, Scottish finance secretary John Swinney insisted an independent Scotland would be wealthy enough to provide security for savings and pensions through its own scheme. He said: "Assertions and claims about Scotland's financial sector are entirely misleading – in terms of share of GDP, in fact, financial services are actually smaller for Scotland at 8.3 per cent than the UK at 9.6 per cent. So if the argument is about risk, then the risk is with the UK. Much of the Treasury paper also seems to be based on a flawed, outdated view of the world, which takes no account of the substantial banking reforms which have been ongoing across Europe since 2008."

Ms Sturgeon, speaking ahead of the launch of the Scottish Government's paper on independence, said she and Mr Salmond would tomorrow highlight economic strength. She said: "Everyone knows we have a strong offshore oil and gas industry, but Scotland is so much more than that. Our food and drink sector is booming, with a turnover of £12bn last year, our manufacturing industry exported over £14bn worth of goods and in creative industries, life sciences, tourism and new areas like the low-carbon economy, our talent can deliver real success."

Education: Private tuition booming in the UK

Yorkshire Evening Post — 14/05/13

Research has suggested that the UK private tuition industry is now worth up to £6 billion a year. And for some Leeds parents too, add-on education is now a necessity, not a luxury. Aisha Iqbal reports.

Hannah, 19, believes she would never have made it to university without the help of her private tutor. The nursing student is one of thousands of Leeds youngsters whose parents have signed them up to get additional out of school hours tuition to boost their learning and get through exams.

"I definitely needed a tutor for my nursing course," says Hannah, who is now in her first year at Leeds Met. We had sessions once a week, and we went over the stuff I did at school. My science teacher was really bad. The classes were just monotonous. She was not engaging me in the subject. She just copied it out of the textbook, and talked at us. And I don't learn like that."

Hannah explains that her class of 30 biology students had dropped to nine by the second year of her A-Levels - and her mum decided to take drastic action.

"My tutor had knowledge of the subject but he also wanted to teach it. He was passionate about the subject and he simplified it for me. I wish my biology teacher had been more like him. I don't think I would have got into University without him."

Hannah's mother paid £25 an hour for the extra tuition. It didn't come cheap. The single mum was jobseeking at the time, but she says Hannah's tutor, a final year medical student boosting his own income, was "worth every pound" of the £1,000 she spent over six months.

"People want their kids to succeed at any cost, it's becoming more of a necessity now for many," she said. "I think Hannah's school let her down, and let a lot of those kids down. We needed the tutor - he was a very good investment."

A recent survey by EdPlace, which provides subscription-based educational resources for parents, found that UK parents now spend £6bn a year on private tuition in the UK. The survey also found that more than a quarter of families now use private tutors to supplement their children's education. They pay, on average, £22 per hour, equating to £2,758 per child every year. One in three parents who used private tutors also admitted they didn't believe schools were providing adequate support. Preparations for SAT exams were cited as a key factor for extra coaching for youngsters. Private tuition certainly seems to be booming in Yorkshire. A simple Internet search reveals a huge proliferation of agencies and individuals offering private tuition in the Leeds area. Among them is Explore Learning, based in Harrogate Road, Moortown, which is part of a national network of learning centres offering extra-curricular Maths and English tuition to children up to 14. Carey Ann Dodah, Head of Curriculum at Explore Learning, insists the success of learning centres is not about failures of schools, but more about joined-up working.

"We do not believe that schools are failing children in the local area and we aim to complement the work being done in schools," she said. "The majority of parents, when asked, said they do not come to Explore Learning because of failings by the local schools, but in order to increase their child's confidence and to address an identified problem in maths or English to ensure they don't fall behind their peers. We are proud to work in close partnership with a number of schools in the Yorkshire area."

She said many children visiting the Leeds centre were showing improvements of up to 30 per cent in maths over a six month period - and increased interest in the subject.

Patrick Cooke, director of EdPlace, admits the private tuition industry is "very lucrative", but that doesn't mean it is taking over the job of schools.

"A huge number of parents are turning to tuition," Mr Cooke told the YEP.

"It is a very lucrative industry and a very expensive addition to the schoolwork that children get. But private tuition has almost become the default option for people, and that's why it commands such high rates. I think it's a great shame that people see it as the default option. There is lack of confidence in parents in providing that extra help to their children themselves, and equally a time pressure."

Mr Cooke adds that there "should be some kind of Government stamp of approval" to regulate the as-yet unregulated tuition trade. A strong lobby for regulation is already hard at work. But he insists tuition is not a replacement for schools.

Guns, grenades and toy soldiers: museum explores children's war games

Mark Brown, arts correspondent — *The Guardian*, Sunday 19 May 2013 16.26 BST

For a time in the 60s it was the toy every American boy had to have – the stupendous Johnny 7 One Man Army gun, which combined grenades and anti-tank weaponry and automatic firing with your more basic cap pistol. And more, all in one!

5 You can't easily get one these days, but you can get a UK government-sanctioned enemy fighter figure, complete with pump action shotgun, combined assault rifle and sidearm pistol. All the items are part of a thought-provoking exhibition opening at the V&A's Museum of Childhood on Saturday, which explores the role of warfare in children's play from 1800 to now.

10 Co-curator Leuan Hopkins admits they were not short of potential exhibits. "The first thing we did was go through the museum's collections and the amount of material we had relating to war was incredible, it was quite a surprise. War has always been a part of children's lives."

15 More than 100 objects will go on display in a show meant for adults and children. It is meant to provoke debate. "We've been careful not to come down on one side of 'are war toys good or bad?'" says co-curator Sarah Wood. "We are showing that these, mostly mass-produced, toys exist and we are putting them in context – how they have been used and how they've been perceived. We want to generate discussion and let the public have the argument."

Wood concedes that some parents may not want to come, although she hopes they will. "To have an adverse reaction is just as good as embracing it, I'd like people to come and see it and make up their own minds."

20 The exhibition explores numerous issues. It shows how toys have been used as tools of propaganda – a 1942 "Get Those Japs" dartboard being one of the cruder examples – and how they have been used to instill a sense of militarism and nationalism in children.

It also suggests there is not much parents can do to stop children playing war games even if they refuse to buy toy weapons. "Kids don't need mass-produced objects to play war," says Hopkins. "They'll go in the woods and get sticks, anything will do."

25 As an example of this a gun cabinet can be found in the first section, examining the more imaginative and physical ways kids play with war.

30 In it sits a relatively benign space gun alongside the Johnny 7 OMA gun and then simple sticks that Hopkins' four-year-old son foraged. He also made an impressive Lego gun in the cabinet. "I didn't help," Hopkins insisted. "I asked questions, so the orange button does fire and the yellow is off, the green one at the back turns a light on – it does lots of things."

Nearby is "a friendly, safe shooting range" that allows observation with binoculars and a periscope as the shooting.

35 The show alludes to changing attitudes in schools, where a zero tolerance for any kind of weapon play has relaxed into allowing things as long as they are part of an imaginative, creative process and are not mimicry.

40 The exhibition also asks if it is just boys who play at war – no, would seem to be the answer although HG Wells has his opinions on the matter with his 1915 war gaming book on display. Its full title is *Little Wars: A Game for Boys from Twelve Years of Age to One Hundred and Fifty and For that More Intelligent Sort of Girl who Likes Boys' Games and Books*. There are many beautiful things on display and surprises. Who, in 1959, would have bought a Corgi nuclear missile carrier for their child?

There are loans from the Imperial War Museum and the Spielzeugmuseum in Nuremberg, items from the V&A's collection as well as eBay, which is where most of the figures for a spectacular diorama were bought, creating one big battle involving everyone – aliens, knights, Power Rangers, superheroes, Daleks ... the lot.

45 It may be war but the exhibition is unquestionably fun and it will encourage younger visitors to dress up and answer questions such as: rifle, ray gun or water pistol? And, importantly, what would you save? Death Star or tin fort? Wood says the answers may surprise. "I thought it was no-brainer, everyone would say Death Star, but we did a workshop with some teenagers and they all went for the tin fort. They liked the fact it was old."

The parties can't ignore the looming student finance crisis

With further cuts to higher education and 40 per cent of student loans unlikely to be repaid, the parties need to agree on a sustainable funding system.

The New Statesman By Rick Muir Published 28 May 2013 14:50

5

George Osborne announced this morning that seven government departments have already agreed to further spending cuts in 2015-16. The business department was not among these 'early settlers', although most in the higher education sector expect major cuts to be coming their way.

10

In the last Spending Review, universities were spared significant reductions because their burden of deficit reduction was met by much higher tuition fees for future graduates. Having taken this controversial decision, the government has relatively little room for further large cuts in higher education spending, without potentially damaging a sector that is critical to our future prosperity.

15

Against this background, IPPR's Commission on the Future of Higher Education (which reports on 10 June) will recommend a number of short term measures to help universities get through the next Spending Review while ensuring that they remain well placed to support Britain's economic and social renewal as we enter the 2020s.

20

The government should start by protecting the cash ring-fence around the science and research budget, which implies real term reductions, but on a manageable scale. It should also protect funding for widening participation, which goes to universities to recruit and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. To find the resources for these measures, the government should hold steady the proportion of 18-21 year olds going to university on full cost courses, releasing between £1.5bn and £3bn over the next seven years because of a natural decline in the numbers of 18-year-olds in the population.

25

Universities should also take some of the cost cutting strain by freezing the 'teaching grant' in cash terms, alongside a freeze in the maximum tuition fee at £9,000, until at least 2017-18. Conversely, to enable institutions to raise more fee income, international students should be removed from the government's net migration target.

30

In order to continue to expand higher education opportunities during this period of fiscal restraint, the Commission will argue that the government should create a new £5,000 'fee-only degree' for students who live at home and/or work part-time. Students would not be eligible for maintenance grants or loans but would pay a lower tuition fee. This would allow an expansion of student places because of the very low up front cost.

35

The package of savings identified by the Commission could help the sector get through the Spending Review but there is still a long-term funding challenge facing universities. The government underestimated the amount of money that will repaid in loans by future graduates. It first predicted that 30 per cent of the total loans advanced would not be repaid but our Commission estimates the figure is more likely to be 40 per cent, eventually producing a black hole that could be as big as £1bn.

40

This means that all parties will need to propose ways of reforming the student funding system in their manifestos that will be sustainable in the long-term. The IPPR Commission has modeled a number of options for reform. One option is to try to recoup more money through the existing system, such as by increasing the rate of interest paid by the highest earning graduates. Another option proposed by the Labour Party and others is bringing the fee cap down to £6,000. This cuts long term costs but produces a short term funding gap (we estimate £1.67 bn) which Labour has pledged to fill in part from an increase in corporation tax.

45

Another widely canvassed option is to introduce a graduate tax. A tax of 2p in the pound paid by graduates through the tax system once they have left university is economically feasible but it bumps straight up against government accounting rules (set by the ONS and not by politicians). These currently score all fee loans as cash transactions that are 'off balance sheet' in the public accounts. When the loan becomes a tax, the fee outlay has to appear 'on balance sheet' as government spending. This means that, unless accounting rules could be changed (which most experts agree is unlikely), introducing a graduate tax would technically add around £7bn to the deficit.

50

Politicians might have thought that student funding had been put to bed as a difficult issue in the run-up to the next general election. They need to think again. With the likelihood of another hung parliament the parties will need to agree on a sustainable long term funding system for our universities.

Rick Muir is Associate Director for Public Service Reform at IPPR. The final report of IPPR's Commission on the Future of Higher Education will be published on Monday 10 June.

55

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Work and the young Generation jobless

The number of young people out of work globally is nearly as big as the population of the United States

The Economist, Apr 27th 2013

- 5 “YOUNG people ought not to be idle. It is very bad for them,” said Margaret Thatcher in 1984. She was right: there are few worse things that society can do to its young than to leave them in limbo. Those who start their careers on the dole are more likely to have lower wages and more spells of joblessness later in life, because they lose out on the chance to acquire skills and self-confidence in their formative years.
- 10 Yet more young people are idle than ever (see [article](#)). OECD figures suggest that 26m 15- to 24-year-olds in developed countries are not in employment, education or training; the number of young people without a job has risen by 30% since 2007. The International Labour Organisation reports that 75m young people globally are looking for a job. World Bank surveys suggest that 262m young people in emerging markets are economically inactive. Depending on how you measure them, the number of young people without a job is nearly as large as the population of America (311m).
- 15 Two factors play a big part. First, the long slowdown in the West has reduced demand for labour, and it is easier to put off hiring young people than it is to fire older workers. Second, in emerging economies population growth is fastest in countries with dysfunctional labour markets, such as India and Egypt. The result is an “arc of unemployment”, from southern Europe through north Africa and the Middle East to South Asia, where the rich world’s recession meets the poor world’s youthquake. The anger of the young
- 20 jobless has already burst onto the streets in the Middle East. Violent crime, generally in decline in the rich world, is rising in Spain, Italy and Portugal—countries with startlingly high youth unemployment. Will growth give them a job?
- The most obvious way to tackle this problem is to reignite growth. That is easier said than done in a world plagued by debt, and is anyway only a partial answer. The countries where the problem is worst (such as
- 25 Spain and Egypt) suffered from high youth unemployment even when their economies were growing. Throughout the recession companies have continued to complain that they cannot find young people with the right skills. This underlines the importance of two other solutions: reforming labour markets and improving education. These are familiar prescriptions, but ones that need to be delivered with both a new vigour and a new twist.
- 30 Youth unemployment is often at its worst in countries with rigid labour markets. Cartelised industries, high taxes on hiring, strict rules about firing, high minimum wages: all these help condemn young people to the street corner. South Africa has some of the highest unemployment south of the Sahara, in part because it has powerful trade unions and rigid rules about hiring and firing. Many countries in the arc of youth unemployment have high minimum wages and heavy taxes on labour. India has around 200 laws on work
- 35 and pay. Deregulating labour markets is thus central to tackling youth unemployment. But it will not be enough on its own. Britain has a flexible labour market and high youth unemployment. In countries with better records, governments tend to take a more active role in finding jobs for those who are struggling. Germany, which has the second-lowest level of youth unemployment in the rich world, pays a proportion of the wages of the
- 40 long-term unemployed for the first two years. The Nordic countries provide young people with “personalised plans” to get them into employment or training. But these policies are too expensive to reproduce in southern Europe, with their millions of unemployed, let alone the emerging world. A cheaper approach is to reform labour-hungry bits of the economy—for example, by making it easier for small businesses to get licences, or construction companies to get approval for projects, or shops to stay open in the evening.
- 45 The graduate glut Across the OECD, people who left school at the earliest opportunity are twice as likely to be unemployed as university graduates. But it is unwise to conclude that governments should simply continue with the established policy of boosting the number of people who graduate from university. In both Britain and the
- 50 United States many people with expensive liberal-arts degrees are finding it impossible to get decent jobs. In north Africa university graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-graduates. What matters is not just number of years of education people get, but its content. This means expanding the study of science and technology and closing the gap between the world of education and the world of work—for example by upgrading vocational and technical education and by forging closer relations between companies and schools. [...]

Nom :

Prénom :

Private schools abroad

On the playing fields of Shanghai

Some of England's best-known private schools are rushing to set up satellites abroad. But the market may be reaching saturation point

5 *The Economist*, May 4th 2013 [From the print edition]

CRICKET, boarding-house names reminiscent of Harry Potter's Hogwarts and ancient and peculiar customs are among the hallmarks of Britain's leading private schools. Now they can be found in Singapore and Kazakhstan. As the domestic market softens, some of the most famous names in British education are building far-flung outposts.

10 Harrow led the way in 1998 by setting up a school in Bangkok, where its straw boaters greatly amused the locals. It now has schools in Beijing and Hong Kong too. Sherborne, a private school in Dorset, has opened a branch in Qatar. From next year Wellington, a boarding school in Berkshire, will compete for Shanghai's pupils with Dulwich, a south London day school, which already has a franchise there.

15 At home, private schools are criticised for perpetuating privilege. Overseas, that may be precisely the appeal. ISC, a research company, estimates that some 6,300 "English-style" schools were operating overseas by 2012, up from 2,600 a decade earlier (that category includes many commercial and stand-alone outfits, some of which have been around for decades). The market grows by 6% a year.

20 Overseas expansion creates an extra revenue stream for private schools—handy at a time of domestic austerity and falling admissions. Schools also tout their foreign branches to British parents, who increasingly want their offspring to learn about fast-growing bits of the world and, particularly, to pick up some Chinese (though in practice some offshoots of British private schools in China are so rigidly Anglophone that pupils are told off for speaking the language).

25 The first international schools were set up in the 19th century in countries like Japan, Turkey and Switzerland, for the families of diplomats and business travellers. British private schools were set up in India with a rather different purpose: to educate the local elite to be British gentlemen. The new rash of British schools abroad combines something of both objectives. They are designed to appeal to a mixture of globetrotting parents and ambitious locals with an eye to a university education in Europe or America for their children. Pupils tend to sit the international GCSE, which some consider tougher than the standard British test, and often the International Baccalaureate.

30 Tiger trouble

The schools also offer a respite from traditional Asian rote learning and promote a more questioning outlook. Still, local aspirations die hard. One teacher in Hong Kong says it can be tough to persuade pupils to go home at night: some even try to sleep under their desks. In schools with a mixture of locals and foreigners, the Chinese pupils tend to dominate orchestras and maths competitions.

35 So far demand has been so strong that the main strategic question for private schools is how quickly to expand. Dulwich is the nippiest, with schools in China, Korea and one opening in 2014 in Singapore. It also runs sponsored A-level programmes for Chinese students in Zhuhai in Guangdong province and at the elite Suzhou High School in Jiangsu province.

40 The latter arrangement solves an irksome problem for educational expeditionaries. In theory, Chinese pupils are supposed to be schooled in the domestic system. Yet the rich and ingenious have found ways around this. Some parents seek passports from countries such as a few Balkan states and Cyprus, which offer them to big investors, so that their children can attend foreign-sponsored schools.

45 The new schools sometimes look spookily like the ancient English ones to which they are linked. And they strive for a close fit with the native institution. They hold speech days and house competitions, sing Latin songs and occasionally exchange teachers. But in many cases this masks an arm's-length business relationship. "Legally it's a franchise partnership and what we are selling is the name," explains Christopher Parsons of Dulwich College.

50 Most of the new breed of schools are run by local management companies. Some are even considering franchising entire regions to education providers, including American chains. At that point the link to the playing fields of England becomes rather tenuous. But Simon Lucas of EC Harris, a consultancy, advocates even looser ties. "A lot of schools are jostling for position in the upper quartile," he says. Creating partnerships with ambitious local schools, rather than franchises, would allow English-style schools to appeal to parents who cannot afford high fees for the best-known names. [...]

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Online titans who see a rosy future... in our love for nostalgia

Facebook snapped up Instagram; now Yahoo has spent a billion on Tumblr. Is there payback in youth's appetite for nostalgic sharing or have these corporate giants run out of ideas?

John Naughton, *The Observer*, Sunday 26 May 2013

5 You may have noticed the hullabaloo last week over the news that Yahoo, a weighty internet giant, had paid \$1.1bn to acquire Tumblr, a blogging platform allegedly popular with the yoof of today (as Tony Benn used to say). What you may not have noticed is the declaration by Marissa Mayer, Yahoo's reformist CEO, about her latest trophy acquisition. "We promise not to screw it up," she wrote on the company blog. "Tumblr is incredibly special and has a great thing going. We will operate Tumblr independently. David Karp will remain CEO. The product roadmap, their team, their wit and irreverence will all remain the same, as will their mission to empower creators to make their best work and get it in front of the audience they deserve. Yahoo! will help Tumblr get even better, faster."

10 As mergers and acquisitions go, this is surely a first. Usually what we get after the consummation of these dangerous liaisons is corporate guff about "synergy" and "efficiency gains". Yet here we have a CEO declaring that the one thing she will not do is destroy the outfit for which she has just paid a shedload of money. (An outfit, by the way, that had just \$14m in revenues last year.)

15 It's possible, of course, that Mayer knows what she's doing. A more plausible hypothesis, however, is that she's following an established strategic playbook. Technology companies start out being innovative. But as they grow they become like every other industrial corporation in one important respect: they find it increasingly difficult to innovate. So what they then do is to buy small innovative companies and rebadge their products. This is often how Microsoft (to take just one example) innovated: some of its best-known applications (PowerPoint, Internet Explorer, FrontPage, Hotmail) were created not by Microsoft but by companies the Redmond giant acquired.

20 What may also have been on Mayer's mind is a similar gambit recently executed by Facebook when it paid a billion dollars for Instagram, an online photo-sharing service that was likewise believed to be popular with yoof. Instagram enables smartphone users to take photographs, degrade them by pushing them through various kinds of filter and then publish the results online. The basic idea is that you can make a humdrum picture of a soup tin masquerade as "art". Andy Warhol used to say that anyone could be famous for 15 minutes; with Instagram, anyone can masquerade as Andy Warhol 15 times a day.

30 Instagram filters represent an interesting contemporary phenomenon – what one might call analogue nostalgia. Digital technology enables anyone to take photographs that are – technically – flawless, in the sense of being sharply focused and properly exposed. Some cameras even have features such as smile detectors so that they won't shoot until they detect at least a rictus grin. They have elaborate systems for controlling or eliminating the "red eye" effect of direct flash photography. And, of course, if you don't get a satisfactory picture first time you can keep going until you get something that looks acceptable on the camera's LCD screen.

35 All of this would have seemed like attaining Nirvana to earlier generations of (analogue) photographers. And yet the popularity of things such as Instagram, Hipstamatic, Pixlr-o-matic and other apps for creatively mangling photographs suggests that the effortless perfection offered by digital technology has come to seem, well, *boring*. So just as painters abandoned realism once photography arrived, Instagrammers, Hipstamaticians et al now seek ways of creatively degrading their imagery so that it looks different, arty, or just plain cool.

40 The same goes for movies. My iPhone shoots excellent HD video, for example. But I also have on it an app called 8mm that shoots jerky black-and-white videos so bad that even Buster Keaton's cinematographer would have me shot, or at any rate fired. And I have on my desktop computer an expensive piece of editing software that will take any digital image produced by a high-end camera and impose on it the grain pattern and tonal range of any one of dozens of ancient (and often now discontinued) films. So I can take a photograph shot today and make it look like something shot in the 1960s on 400asa Kodak Tri-X film.

45 I once tried to explain the delicious, geeky cleverness of this to a normal, well-balanced person. "Let me get this straight," he said, slowly. "You take this huge, sharp, properly exposed digital image with a wide tonal range and you run a program that turns it into a harsh, contrasty, grainy image that looks as though it's been shot through a garden sieve?" I nodded proudly.

"You know what," he said, "maybe you should see a psychiatrist."

SERIE LETTRES ET ARTS

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Woolwich attack: coalition failing to tackle extremism, says Hazel Blears

The Guardian, Saturday 25 May

Former Labour minister Hazel Blears says funding cuts are undermining government strategy against Islamist extremism

Daniel Boffey and Jamie Doward, *The Observer*, Saturday 25 May 2013 20.30 BST

The coalition's strategy to counter Islamist extremism is failing, according to an outspoken intervention by the former cabinet minister who ran the programme under the last government.

Speaking following the Woolwich attack, Hazel Blears MP, who as communities secretary led the

Prevent strategy under Labour, told the *Observer* that people vulnerable to the messages of extremist preachers were being spotted too late. She said it had been a serious mistake to dismantle Labour's policy of funding local authorities that have a population more than 5% Muslim, to help them curb radicalism by engaging and funding community groups, Islamic societies and mosques.

The mother of Michael Adebolajo, one of the two men arrested over the murder on Wednesday of Lee Rigby, a soldier in the 2nd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, is said to have sought help at a mosque over her son's vulnerability in his teenage years, but the system did not respond.

Blears, who is a member of the cross-party committee of MPs that monitors the intelligence services, said she was very worried that Prevent was now "basically dealing with people who are already crossing that line" into radicalism, rather than making an early identification of those who were vulnerable to extremist Islamic preaching. Her comments come in another eventful day following the attack.

Greenwich university confirmed that Adebolajo had studied there in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, but said that he had been asked to leave due to his poor academic performance. The university said that

the second suspect, Michael Adebowale, 22, had not attended the institution. The university announced that it was opening an investigation into any evidence of extremism on campus. Last night it emerged Adebowale had been detained by police two months ago after shopkeepers in the area had complained about his preaching activities in the street. He was released without charge.

The BNP was accused of exploiting Wednesday's attack to further its "own poisonous ends" after the far-right group announced it would be demonstrating in south-east London, where the attack took place. A huge rise in the number of anti-Muslim incidents has also been recorded, with 162 calls made to a helpline since the killing – up from a daily average of six. A YouGov poll also shows – amid a generally tolerant attitude towards Islam – an increase in the number of people, particularly from older generations, who believed there would be a "clash of civilisations" between British Muslims and native white Britons. This figure rose from 50% in November 2012 to 59% on Thursday and Friday.

Questions were being asked last night about how much MI5 knew of the two suspects, after Abu Nusaybah, a friend of Adebolajo, claimed that the secret services had tried to recruit the murder suspect in Kenya, where he was allegedly assaulted by local security forces. That claim has at least one precedent in British courts. In 2009, four Britons held in Kenya testified that they were interrogated under threat of torture by the country's anti-terrorism agency while MI5 agents declined to intervene.

Nusaybah was arrested on terrorism charges following an interview with *Newsnight* on Friday evening. The prime minister has announced that a preliminary report from MI5 on what the organisation knew of the men would be given to the parliamentary watchdog on which Blears sits this week. The former minister's comments will inevitably lead to a debate about whether the coalition rolled back the Prevent policy too dramatically. The Labour government's policy of encouraging local authorities to fund sympathetic Islamic groups was attacked in its latter years by critics who claimed that the government was establishing a network of spies to monitor Muslim communities. It was also claimed that extremist groups had received funding, and the strategy was redrawn in 2011. [...]

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Theresa May lines up new measures to combat terrorism

Patrick Wintour, *The Guardian*, Sunday 26 May 2013 11.47 BST

Home secretary plans to tighten up controls on internet and extend banning of radical groups preaching hate

5 Theresa May, the home secretary, has proposed a raft of measures to combat the radicalisation of Muslims, including new controls on the internet and the banning of groups preaching hate. Under current terror legislation, home secretaries have the power to proscribe groups suspected of being "concerned with terrorism", and actions in support of that group can lead to prosecution.

10 May also confirmed that she was still fighting to ensure the full communications data bill – the so-called snoopers' charter – is passed by parliament. She has won the support of the former Labour home secretary Alan Johnson, who said she should resign if the cabinet was not prepared to back her.

Johnson's remarks were aimed at the deputy prime minister, Nick Clegg, who has said he will allow only some small measures through.

15 May said she believed that the budget of the counter-terrorism police had to be treated differently from the rest of the police force in the current spending review and that it should be fully protected, as it was in the 2010 spending review.

May said: "I'm absolutely clear that we need to ensure that the intelligence services and, indeed, in policing CT (counter-terrorism policing) ... in the last spending review we ensured that CT

20 policing was not treated the same as overall policing and I see every reason to take that same view in the next spending review."

May said the government review of its anti-terror strategy needed to look "at the question of whether perhaps we need to have banning orders to ban organisations that don't meet the threshold for proscription".

25 May questioned why the BBC had allowed a radical cleric, Anjem Choudary, to appear on Newsnight last week. "I think Anjem Choudary has disgusting views and I think it is right that we look at how those views are being presented and I think there were many people who did indeed say what is the BBC doing interviewing Anjem Choudary?" she said.

30 But May did not criticise TV organisations for allowing video clips of those claiming to have been behind the Woolwich murder to be broadcast in the immediate wake of Drummer Lee Rigby's killing.

She also confirmed that the government's counter-terror strategy, Prevent, would be reviewed for a second time since the government came to power.

35 The first review led to a focus away from violent extremists to extremism in general, but it is clear that the government will again put pressure on universities to tilt the balance away from free speech to clamping down on the teaching of extremism.

The former communities secretary Hazel Blears criticised the government for cutting the Prevent budget. She said that it was focusing too much on those already on the edge of extremism, rather than trying to forestall a broader culture of extremism.

40 May said new rules from Ofcom had led to more than 5,500 unacceptable "terrorist" messages preaching violence or jihad being taken down from the internet. But she said she wanted to see what more could be done to police the messages circulated online.

45 She said: "There is no doubt that people are able to watch things through the internet which can lead to radicalisation. What we do is we have a referral unit which members of the public and organisations are able to refer into that unit when they've got concerns about what's being broadcast across the internet.

"There has been discussion of a greater use of court orders to block some sites, but it will be difficult to decide whether responsibility will lie with the Home Office or internet service providers." [...]

SERIE LETTRES ET ARTS

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Paying off NIMBYs Tilting opinions

Sharing in the profits from wind turbines might help persuade sceptics

The Economist May 25th 2013 [From the print edition]

5 ONSHORE wind, the cheapest form of renewable energy, attracts many enthusiasts. Those who live close to planned wind farms are rarely among them. In April fully 82% of the public told pollsters for the Department of Energy and Climate Change that they supported renewable energy. Support dropped to about half when they were asked if they wanted onshore wind turbines near their homes. And in practice many schemes encounter fierce opposition.

10 This is awkward for the government, which has promised to provide 15% of the nation's energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020. In 2011 only 3.8% came from wind, sun and the like. Nearly nine months after soliciting opinions on how to persuade local people to love wind farms, Michael Fallon, the energy minister, is expected to publish his plans shortly.

15 At present there is no standard way of compensating people when a wind turbine goes up nearby. Energy companies might pay for the maintenance of roads or to spruce up schools and village halls, either through an annual payment per megawatt of energy generated or in a lump sum. Local politicians usually decide where the money goes. In Scotland, where a register of community benefits invites comparisons between projects, annual payments of around £20,000 (\$30,000) or for each megawatt installed are now widespread. Some companies try to source work locally to create new jobs, and a few—such as Good Energy and RES—attempt to cut the bills of those who live near turbines.

20 Experience elsewhere in Europe suggests the best way of persuading local people to accept wind farms is to ensure they have some share of the potential benefits. In Denmark four-fifths of onshore wind turbines are owned by local communities; in Germany the figure is over half. In Britain just a tenth are locally owned. A rare example, the Westmill wind farm in Swindon, is owned by a local co-operative of 2,374 residents, who put in at least £250 each. Adam Twine, the landowner behind the project, sold it to the co-operative after a few years.

25 A study of attitudes to wind farms in two German towns showed that support for expansion was much higher (45% compared with 16%) where the wind farm was locally owned. Because residents in Swindon knew that profits were going back to those who lived nearby, rather than to a company, public resistance to the scheme was softer, Mr Twine says.

30 Denmark and Germany have been pushing alternative energy for longer, and their residents are perhaps greener. But government policies help, too. Under the EU Renewable Energy Directive, both countries give renewables priority access to the electricity grid. Quicker planning, tax incentives and generous feed-in tariffs (subsidies for the amount of energy generated) encourage residents to become shareholders or market providers.

35 Britain could yet match the record of its greener European counterparts. A local government finance bill means that, from April, business rates from renewable projects have been kept by local authorities, rather than going to central government. And this month a Rural Community Renewable Energy Fund worth £15m is due to be launched, which will offer loans of up to £150,000 to local organisations for “community-scale renewable energy projects”. Scotland's register of community benefits could be copied elsewhere in Britain. Inhabitants of a country buffeted by winds, Britons may yet be persuaded to see the value as well as the beauty to be found in their backyards.

SERIE LETTRES ET ARTS

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Royal Mail privatisation is being delivered behind closed doors

It is strange that with the sale of the postal service just months away the public has no idea of the details of the sell-off

The Guardian, Wednesday 8 May 2013 17.54 BST

5 Dennis Skinner's annual heckle at the state opening of parliament this year was a rallying cry for all those who worry about the little-discussed but imminent sale of Royal Mail.

10 Bolsover's finest chose the occasion of the Queen's speech to highlight plans to privatise her head. That particular aspect is perhaps symbolic but the wider impact of this privatisation will be anything but. Even his nemesis Lady Thatcher was loth to sell what many see as part of the fabric of our society and servant to our communities.

Desperate to reassure the public that selling this successful public-sector enterprise will be in our interest, the government, in the shape of Michael Fallon, the industry minister, has used all the powers he has at his disposal to "protect" what is called the universal service provided by Royal Mail.

15 But those protections are not enough and will certainly not endure. Despite the promises, it will not be possible to guarantee a privately owned business will want to (or be able to) maintain six-days-a-week collection and delivery services throughout the country. With the cost of most stamps now deregulated, the only restraint on rocketing prices is the vague argument of "market forces". One just needs to look at their energy bill to see how the impact of those market forces is working in that regard.

20 All of this adds up to a major concern for those who value or indeed rely upon the services provided by Royal Mail. As with many public services, those who most need the daily visit from the postie are the most likely to suffer from its disappearance. Older people are the first to stop sending letters and cards when stamp prices rise. Small businesses are very sensitive to price rises for packets and parcels.

25 Yet for the economics of this sale to work, the new owner will need to cut costs ruthlessly, particularly lossmaking rural services. While that might not be an immediate prospect, it will certainly be the long-term objective and something the owner will be able to do with little or any restraint.

30 The Save Our Royal Mail campaign has been established to highlight the threats posed by this stealthy privatisation. In the past, governments have been keen to trumpet the disposal of state assets. Telling Sid was perhaps a high point in that regard. With Royal Mail privatisation the opposite is true. The government seems very shy, preferring to use its consultants and bankers to sell the business to institutional investors behind closed doors. I do not recall the prime minister once defending the policy.

35 Even so, it is strange that with a sale only a few months away we still have no idea how much of Royal Mail will be sold – and perhaps more importantly – to whom. We know that private equity investors are running the rule over the books. This is particularly concerning, as their business model is well established: buy company, strip costs, maximise value, sell on. To make that prospect more likely the legislation passed to allow this sale makes the taxpayer responsible for any lossmaking rump that might be left behind once the value of the business has been stripped out.

40 Some argue that letters are a product of a bygone age, rendered obsolete by electronic communications. While letter volumes are in decline, the services provided by Royal Mail are as vital as they have always been. What enables Royal Mail to deliver from Land's End to John o' Groats for a single, affordable price is the huge growth in parcel and packet delivery, another by-product of e-commerce.

45 All of that is now under threat. The only upside is perhaps in the future we might be able to get Dennis Skinner's head on a first class stamp.

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Tory party out of control over Europe, says Lord Howe

Former chancellor launches scathing attack on David Cameron and says Euroscepticism is 'infecting party soul'

Daniel Boffey, policy editor. *The Observer*, Saturday 18 May 2013 21.00 BST

5 Lord Howe, the former Conservative chancellor who triggered the downfall of Margaret Thatcher, has launched a scathing attack on the prime minister, accusing him of running scared of his backbenchers and endangering Britain's future in Europe.

The Tory grandee says David Cameron has opened a Pandora's box by opposing the current terms of the UK's membership of the European Union and now appears to be losing control of his party.

10 The prime minister's actions, Howe writes in the *Observer*, have turned an internal Tory problem into a national one.

In a highly significant intervention over Britain's future, Howe laments the "new, almost farcical" level of debate over Europe in the Tory party, and says that Labour and the Liberal Democrats may need to bear the burden of retrieving the situation. Howe, Thatcher's longest-serving cabinet minister, whose resignation speech in 1990 is widely considered to have precipitated the then prime minister's downfall, writes: "Sadly, by making it clear in January that he opposes the current terms of UK membership of the EU, the prime minister has opened a Pandora's box politically and seems to be losing control of his party in the process."

20 "The ratchet-effect of Euroscepticism has now gone so far that the Conservative leadership is in effect running scared of its own backbenchers, let alone Ukip, having allowed deep anti-Europeanism to infect the very soul of the party."

Howe, who was also a former foreign secretary and deputy prime minister under the late Baroness Thatcher, adds that the events of recent days, in which the prime minister has been forced to offer more and more to satisfy his Eurosceptic MPs, were "more like the politics of the French Fourth Republic than the serious practice of government".

25 Citing the intervention of President Obama, who last week championed reform of the EU over Britain's exit, Howe laments: "The Conservative party now needs a US president to tell it what it once had the confidence to proclaim as common sense itself."

30 Howe's savage attack on the prime minister's leadership and the actions of his party follows the successful attempt by Eurosceptic backbenchers to bounce the prime minister into the publication last week of a draft referendum bill on EU membership.

Cameron had already been forced in January, against his stated will, to promise an in-out referendum before 2017, but the prime minister's backbenchers have since been demanding further assurances in the form of legislation. Eurosceptic Tory backbenchers have been energised by Ukip's success in the recent local elections, and a huge rise in national polls.

35 A new *Opinium/Observer* poll has Ukip attracting 20% of the vote, with Labour on 37%, the Conservatives on 27% and the Liberal Democrats down to 7%.

Howe states that the risk for the Conservative party, as Europe rises ever further up its internal agenda, is that it loses the next general election and moves to a position of "simply opposing Britain's continued membership, with or without a referendum".

40 In stark contrast to the view of his friend and former cabinet colleague Lord Lawson, who wrote recently that Britain should leave the EU, Howe believes that the UK is unlikely to hold anything like the position of power to which it aspires without the vehicle of the EU, unless the country was to join the United States. "Leaving the union would, by contrast in my view, be a tragic expression of our shrinking influence and role in the world – and the humbling of our ambitions, already sorely tested by the current crisis, to remain a serious political or economic player on the global stage."

45 Describing a withdrawal from the European Union as a "very dangerous choice indeed", the peer says Britons have hugely benefited from greater competition, lower prices and wider choice, due to membership of the EU. [...]

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Briton picked for five-month mission on International Space Station in 2015

Tim Peake's selection seen as major boost for UK industry and an inspiration to young people
Robin McKie and Ian Sample

The Observer, Sunday 19 May 2013

- 5 Britain's first official astronaut, Major Tim Peake, has been selected to fly on a five-month mission on the International Space Station in 2015, it is believed. The go-ahead for the flight will be seen as a major boost for the UK's space industry. Peake graduated as a European Space Agency astronaut more than two years ago and has been waiting for a space mission since then. It was feared the former army helicopter pilot might be given a short-duration mission because
- 10 the UK only makes modest contributions to Esa's manned space programme. Major contributors such as France, Germany and Italy were expected to have priority. However, the *Observer* has learned that 41-year-old Peake has been assigned a lengthy stay in orbit in 2015. He will be blasted into space on a Russian Soyuz rocket from Kazakhstan in November that year and flown to the space station where he will stay for five months. He will be
- 15 able to take part in spacewalks and other complex scientific activities. UK space officials, who have refused to reveal any information about Peake's forthcoming mission, are expected to confirm details of his flight at a press conference on Monday at the Science Museum in London.
- 20 The news of Peake's mission was welcomed by Nick Spall, of the British Interplanetary Society, which has been campaigning for years for the government to change past policy and allow the UK to have official astronauts. "At last this has come about with a flight slot to the International Space Station (ISS) for Tim Peake," he said.
- 25 "The UK can now join in with important microgravity research work on the space station, win industrial contracts for future human spaceflight projects and forge new links with Nasa, Russia and hopefully China – and one day India – in space. Many young people will be inspired by Tim. It will also help boost the UK's technical employment potential for jobs and industry."
- Peake, who is married with two sons, is considered to be Britain's first official astronaut because in the past those UK citizens who have flown in space have either been privately funded for their missions – such as Helen Sharman who flew on a Russian rocket in 1991 – or have taken out
- 30 American citizenship, such as Nick Foale and Piers Sellers, who have both flown on the US space shuttle.
- By contrast, Peake was picked to be one of six new Esa astronauts who were selected, in 2009, from several thousand candidates. During their 14-month training programme, the six travelled to Nasa's astronaut base in Houston, to the Russian astronaut training centre in Star City outside
- 35 Moscow, to Tsukuba Space Centre in Japan, and spent two weeks on a survival course in Sardinia. To improve their Russian language skills, the astronauts spent a month lodging with families in St Petersburg. To see how the astronauts coped with stress, the training staff created mock emergencies, including one scenario where an astronaut fell unconscious during a spacewalk.
- 40 Peake completed his training in November 2010 and been waiting to be assigned a spaceflight. However, he has denied that the wait was causing problems. "No, it doesn't get frustrating at all – there's just so much going on, so much diversity, and there's brilliant training all along the way," he told the BBC a few weeks ago.
- A graduate from Sandhurst, Peake received a commission with the Army Air Corps in 1992 and
- 45 served as a platoon commander with the Royal Green Jackets in Northern Ireland. He gained his wings in 1994 after completing the army pilots' course. Following a posting to the US, he returned to Britain in 2002 to instruct trainees in flying Apache helicopters. He went on to graduate from the prestigious Empire Test Pilot School at Boscombe Down and conduct special forces operations.
- 50 He retired from the army in 2009 and joined Augusta Westland as a senior helicopter test pilot. He has flown more than 30 different aircraft.

SERIE LETTRES ET ARTS

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Multinational CEOs tell David Cameron to rein in tax avoidance rhetoric

Burberry, Tesco, Vodafone and BAE Systems join CBI chief in lobbying PM to stop moralising on tax ahead of G8 talks

Simon Bowers, Lawrie Holmes and Rajeev Syal, *The Guardian*, Monday 20 May 2013

5 The bosses of some of Britain's largest multinational corporations have urged David Cameron to stop moralising and rein in his rhetoric on tax avoidance ahead of a G8 summit next month.

Chief executives of companies such as Burberry, Tesco, Vodafone, BAE Systems, Prudential and GSK were keen to take a final opportunity to lobby the prime minister in advance of the meeting of political leaders in Northern Ireland.

10 Cameron has pledged to use Britain's G8 presidency to tackle aggressive tax avoidance by multinationals, but is also keen to heed the counsel of his business advisory group, which he met with on Monday.

Also present was Google's chairman, Eric Schmidt, despite the internet search firm coming under fierce attack from MPs last week because of its tax arrangements.

15 The president of the Confederation of British Industry, Sir Roger Carr, who was at the meeting, was among those who have taken issue with Cameron's attacks on the ethics of big business tax engineering.

20 During a speech earlier in the day at a London event organised by Oxford University's Said Business School, Carr said: "It is only in recent times that tax has become an issue on the public agenda – Starbucks, Google, Amazon – businesses that the general public know and believe they understand; businesses with a brand that become a perfect political football, the facts difficult to digest; public passions easy to inflame."

25 In what appeared to be pointed criticism of increasingly firm rhetoric from Cameron on multinational tax engineering, Carr insisted tax avoidance "cannot be about morality – there are no absolutes".

In January the prime minister used a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to put a marker down on questions of tax structuring by big business. "Some forms of avoidance have become so aggressive that I think it is right to say these are ethical issues," he said, urging multinationals to "wake up and smell the coffee".

30 Carr said: "Tax payments are not, and should not be ... a payment viewed as a down payment on social acceptability, or a contribution made by choice in order to defuse public anger or political attack."

The CBI boss, who is being talked of as a successor to Dick Olver as chairman of BAE Systems, invited the G8 to consider three points in relation to tax reform:

- 35
- Avoiding the moral debate – "it's all about the rules".
 - Fixing the rules on an international stage, not unilaterally.
 - Consulting on proposed changes with business.

40 A Downing Street spokesman said the specific controversy generated by Google's tax affairs was not raised during the meeting with business leaders, though discussions did focus on "explaining the tax and tax transparency part of the G8 agenda".

Also speaking at the Said business school event was Margaret Hodge MP, chair of the public accounts committee and one of parliament's most outspoken critics of tax avoidance. With Starbucks and the big four accountancy firms in attendance, she said: "Your time has now come on accountability. You are now being asked to answer certain questions and it's important that we

45 all engage.

"One could argue that the way some companies organise their affairs is anti-competitive to many British companies. Especially if you look at the way Amazon arranges its affairs." [...]

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Labour saves David Cameron's gay marriage bill

The Guardian, May 21st 2013

Rebel Tories are defeated in Commons after PM's last minute plea to Ed Miliband

Labour's move meant the amendment, tabled by the anti-gay marriage Tory Tim Loughton, was defeated by 375 to 70 votes, a majority of 305. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

The government's gay marriage bill was saved after David Cameron was forced to rely on Ed Miliband to defeat an attempt by his own MPs to derail the measure by trying to extend civil partnerships to heterosexual couples.

An 11th-hour plea to the Labour leadership by the Tory chief whip Sir George Young, who warned that the government was in danger of losing the vote, prompted a change of heart by Miliband, who had been planning to abstain on the amendment.

The Labour move meant that the amendment, tabled by the anti-gay marriage Tory and former children's minister Tim Loughton, was defeated by 375 to 70 votes, a majority of 305.

The decision by the Labour leadership, which has gone from supporting the amendment on civil partnerships to rejecting it within the space of 24 hours, means that the marriage (same-sex couples) bill will now experience a safer journey through parliament.

But the prime minister, who attempted to reach out to his party by emailing a "personal note" to all members saying that he would never work with anyone who "sneered" at them, suffered the humiliation of having to plead with the Labour party for support. He also saw more than 100

Tory MPs, including the cabinet ministers Iain Duncan Smith and Owen Paterson, vote against him on the first amendment of the day.

The prime minister will understand the dangers of relying on opposition support for a flagship measure after he personally ensured that Tony Blair's schools reforms survived with Tory support in 2006 three months after he became leader. Within months, supporters of Gordon Brown forced Blair to name the date of his departure the following year.

As the debate was under way in the Commons the prime minister moved to shore up his position amid anger in the party over allegations that Lord Feldman, the Tory co-chairman, described grassroots activists as "mad swivel-eyed loons". Lord Feldman strenuously denies having made the allegations.

In his email to party members, Cameron wrote: "I am proud to lead this party. I am proud of what you do. And I would never have around me those who sneered or thought otherwise. We are a team, from the parish council to the local association to parliament, and I never forget it."

But deep divisions in the Tory party were highlighted in the commons when Iain Duncan Smith, the work and pensions secretary, and his long standing ally Owen Paterson, the environment secretary, joined more than 100 Tory MPs to vote against Cameron in favour of an amendment that would allow registrars to opt out of conducting same sex marriage ceremonies. This amendment failed as did an amendment to protect the religious beliefs of a person who believes marriage can only take place between a man and women. All votes were classified as free which meant that MPs could vote according to their consciences.

In one of the most dramatic moments the former defence minister, Sir Gerald Howarth, complained to a lesbian member of the prime minister's policy board about "the aggressive homosexual community". Howarth made the remarks after Margot James, the MP for Stourbridge, said that the legislation was part of recent changes that have created a level playing fields for everyone regardless of sexual orientation.

The prime minister came under fire from the anti-gay marriage MP Tim Loughton after his amendment, which would have legalised civil partnerships for heterosexual couples, failed after the deal between Labour and the Tories. Loughton warned of a "grubby deal" between the two frontbenches as he told MPs: "We are in danger to a stitch up, a last minute stitch up between frontbenches." [...]

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Muslim converts

Changing my religion

A British strand of Islam is emerging as more people become converts

The Economist, May 18th 2013 | NORWICH | From the print edition

- 5 MUSLIM converts have an image problem. A handful, like Richard Dart, a Dorset native jailed last month, have been implicated in terrorism. Samantha Lewthwaite, who was married to Germaine Lindsay, one of the 7/7 bombers and himself a convert, is wanted by Kenyan police in connection with an alleged bomb plot.
- 10 Even without the taint of extremism, women are sometimes pitied for joining a religion accused of oppressing them. Despite these concerns, converts, for the most part peaceable, propel Islam's transition from an immigrant religion to a home-grown one.
- 15 Calculating convert numbers is tricky. The census in England and Wales only asks about people's current religion. Mosques do not record conversions centrally, and some new believers keep their conversions quiet. But using census data on race and religion, and questionnaires issued to mosques, Kevin Brice, a researcher at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, reckons around 5,200 Britons turn to Islam every year, bringing the total number of converts to about 100,000.
- 20 Proselytising has little to do with it. A handful of Muslim groups hand out tracts in the street. But most are more concerned with issuing press releases condemning extremism than wooing converts, says Leon Moosavi, an expert on Islamic conversions at Liverpool University.
- 25 Those who embrace Islam tend to do so after years of contact with Muslims. Reasons vary. Some, mostly women (who make up around two-thirds of new believers), want to marry a Muslim. Others are fed up with the bawdiness of British society. Many speak of seeking a sense of community. Batool al-Toma, an Irish-Catholic convert who runs the New Muslim Project in Leeds, was attracted, she says, by the spirituality of Islam and the warmth of relationships she saw among Muslims.
- 30 For men, prisons have proven a fertile ground for conversions. Just over 11,000 prisoners are Muslims, about 13% of the total. Last year an inquiry by the home affairs select committee named prisons as a breeding ground for radicals. But a study by the prisons inspectorate in 2010 produced a more positive conclusion. Converts, a third of those interviewed, said the discipline and structure of Islam helped them to cope with prison life. Others cited the support they received from their Muslim "brothers". Some were initially attracted by the prospect of a cushier spell in jail—more time outside their cells, for example, and better food at Ramadan, but then completed their conversion.
- 35 Upon release though, some prisoners are shunned by their fellow Muslims, says Tracey Davanna, who studies Muslim prisoners at Birmingham University. Ex-cons are not the only ones who find integration tough. Many mosques are ethnic clubs, says Mr Moosavi, and can be unwelcoming to converts. Few mosques offer substantial support to new converts. Organisations such as the New Muslim Project have sprung up to fill the gap. It provides certificates of conversion that new
- 40 believers can leave with their wills in case appalled relatives refuse an Islamic burial. Two mosques in Britain are now run by converts. The Ihsan mosque in Norwich encountered antagonism from some Muslims, says Uthman Ibrahim-Morrison, who has been a member of the community since the mid-1990s. Some questioned whether new believers should be in charge of a mosque, he says. But it has flourished. At Friday prayers they struggle to squeeze everyone in.
- 45 Despite successes like this, fears persist that this home-grown Islam will produce more Mr Darts and Ms Lewthwaites, intent on havoc rather than faith. New-found zeal may leave converts vulnerable to radical strains of Islam. Isolation from their old life and lack of integration with moderate believers can only make that risk worse.

SERIE LETTRES ET ARTS

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Nom :

Prénom :

Signature :

Yahoo

Rough and Tumblr

The Economist, May 19th 2013, 22:22 by M.G. | SAN FRANCISCO

AT A recent conference, Ken Goldman, the chief financial officer of Yahoo, admitted that the internet giant had an ageing audience and was looking for things to "make us cool again". The firm's senior executives appear to think Tumblr can give it a shot at rejuvenation. According to various media reports, Yahoo is likely to announce tomorrow that it is paying \$1.1 billion for the popular blogging service. (**Editor's update** (May 20th, 12pm GMT): Yahoo announced the deal on Monday morning.) Other companies like Facebook are said to be interested in Tumblr, but Yahoo is thought to be the preferred bidder.

It is not hard to see why Tumblr has attracted the internet giant's attention. The business, which was launched in 2007, is hugely popular and many of the service's users are young folk who like to share everything from their latest fashion tips to pictures of cats with their heads encased in bread (yes, really). Tumblr has grown rapidly and now has some 117m unique monthly users according to ComScore, a research firm. It manages 108m blogs and hosts 51 billion posts.

Tumblr's sizeable audience appeals to Marissa Mayer, the boss of Yahoo, who took over the reins at the internet firm last year. Her brief has been to try and turn around a company whose share of the online advertising market is being rapidly eroded by the likes of Facebook and Google. In the first quarter of 2013 Yahoo's revenue shrank 11%, to \$1.1 billion.

In a bid to reignite growth Ms Mayer has spruced up some of Yahoo's ageing products, including Flickr, a popular photo-sharing service, and has taken the company on an acquisition spree. In March, for instance, the company forked out \$30m for Summly, a company founded by a 17 year-old that makes apps that summarise news stories. And more recently it courted Dailymotion, a French video site, only to back away when the French government kicked up a fuss about an American firm acquiring one of the country's start-up crown jewels.

The common thread here is Ms Mayer's firm belief that Yahoo needs to make headway in new areas such as mobile services and online video if it is to prosper. The firm has also been looking at social networks and other online-sharing services, which has brought it to Tumblr. The big question is whether it makes sense to fork out a whopping \$1.1 billion for a company that is said to have made just \$13m of revenue last year.

Among other things, Yahoo will probably argue that it can speed up Tumblr's expansion by promoting it to Yahoo's 700m unique monthly users. It will also point out that it has the know-how and resources to help the blogging service mint money from online advertising. And it may drop hints that Tumblr executives can help it rethink other areas of its business to make them more social.

Critics have been quick to point out that advertisers are unlikely to want their ads to appear alongside some of Tumblr's content, notably numerous blogs that feature pornographic content. They have also been pointing out that a big part of Tumblr's appeal is that its bosses have not let the service become overrun with advertising. If Yahoo starts to pump in huge numbers of ads, people may abandon the service in droves.

True, but if Yahoo manages the acquisition carefully it could turn out to be a smart move. Plenty of folk predicted a mass exodus from Instagram, a photo-sharing service, after Facebook snapped it up for \$1 billion last year. But the social network has managed to develop the service without making users head for the exit. If Yahoo can pull off a similar feat with Tumblr, then it will certainly appear cooler to its shareholders.

SERIE LETTRES ET ARTS

ANALYSE LV1

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Less conservative America poses challenge to Republicans

By David Lauter

May 28, 2013

Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON – Although the controversies dominating political headlines eventually might undermine President Obama's standing with voters, a longer-term reality – a declining number of people who identify themselves as conservatives – could cause much more trouble for his Republican opponents.

5 Republicans won big in the 2010 midterm election, taking control of the House and numerous state legislatures. That victory corresponded with a significant increase in the percentage of Americans calling themselves conservative, particularly on economic issues. Since then, however, the percentage has steadily declined, according to an annual "values and beliefs" survey conducted by Gallup. The latest version shows a further drop, with 41% of Americans calling themselves economic
10 conservatives, down from just over 50% at the 2010 peak. On social issues, the share identifying as conservatives has dropped slightly and is now just more than 1 in 3. On social issues, the big gain has come among those who call themselves liberals, whose ranks have increased from 22% of adults in 2010 to 30% now. On economic issues, gains have mostly come among those calling themselves moderates, with the percentage of liberals holding relatively steady.

15 For Republicans, the trend poses a challenge. The party depends heavily on self-identified conservatives for votes, even as their ranks have become scarcer. Just more than a quarter of American adults (26%) now identify as conservatives on both economic and social issues. But that relatively small group makes up almost two-thirds (63%) of those who identify themselves as Republicans or independents who say they lean Republican, the Gallup data show. Conservatives
20 can take heart that they still outnumber self-identified liberals – 1 in 8 adults (13%) called themselves liberal on both economic and social questions. But Democrats don't depend on liberals as exclusively as Republicans depend on conservatives. Consistent liberals make up only a bit more than a quarter of those who identify themselves as Democrats or independents who lean toward the Democrats.

25 None of those numbers necessarily forecasts an election result. Republicans won big in 2010 in part because more Americans considered themselves conservative, but also because more of them showed up to vote. That's where the current Washington controversies over the IRS, the killing of the U.S. ambassador to Libya last year and other issues could have an effect. Republican strategists hope those issues will arouse their voters and spur them to the polls while dispiriting Democrats.

30 Over the longer term, however, Republicans clearly face a problem that will require either changing voters' minds or shifting their party's identity if it is to keep winning. Changing voters' minds can happen – after all, the percentage of Americans who call themselves conservative did go up after Barack Obama's first election as president, so presumably, it could go up again. But that would require swimming against a fairly strong tide, which shows up clearly in an analysis of different age groups that Gallup did for the Los Angeles Times.

35 Among adults 65 and older, those identifying themselves as conservative hit 43% on social issues and 47% on economic ones.

But among those younger than 30, the corresponding figures were 31% and 32%.

Among adults 18 to 29, those who call themselves liberals on social issues form a larger group (41%) than either social conservatives (31%) or social moderates (37%).

40 And among those in the next older age group, those in their 30s and 40s, liberals, moderates and conservatives on social issues make up about equal shares. The pattern is not quite as sharp on economic issues, but there too the results show a noticeable break around age 50 in the ideological labels people choose, with those who are younger significantly more likely to call themselves liberal.

45 On social issues, although not on economic ones, education levels matter a lot. Those with college degrees or higher call themselves liberal on social issues at a much higher rate than those without. In recent elections, Democrats have gained heavily among college-educated voters, and the percentage of Americans who go to college and earn a degree has been on a long-term increase.

These results should mostly not be affected by the well-publicized problems that befell Gallup during the last election, in which its results skewed significantly toward Republican candidate Mitt Romney.

50 Some of those problems had to do with how Gallup forecast who would show up to vote. Many of those problems, which Gallup has tried to fix, would not affect these numbers, which come from a survey of all American adults, not just likely voters. The survey, conducted May 2-7, interviewed 1,535 adults, age 18 and older. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Other states join New Mexico in granting driver's licenses to illegal immigrants

By Milan Simonich — Las Cruces Sun-News (New Mexico) — 05/11/2013

5 SANTA FE — Gone are the days when New Mexico and Washington were the only states to issue driver's licenses to immigrants in the country illegally. Last week, the governors of Oregon and Maryland signed bills that will allow state residents without proof of immigration status to obtain driver's licenses. Illinois authorized a driver's license law for illegal immigrants earlier this year.

10 Colorado legislators on Wednesday approved a similar bill, though no Republicans voted for it. Colorado's governor, Democrat John Hickenlooper, has not said whether he will sign the bill into law. Rhode Island, Connecticut and Washington, D.C., are considering expanding their driver's license laws to include those without proof of immigration status. Until the wave of recent changes, New Mexico and Washington state stood alone by granting driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. Utah

15 issues driving privilege cards to people without documentation of immigration status. Unlike the driver's licenses issued in New Mexico, Utah privilege cards are not supposed to be used as identification to board an airplane or to gain access to a secure government building, such as a federal courthouse. The laws in New Mexico and Washington state have been controversial in the last couple of years, generating repeal attempts.

20 State Rep. Paul Pacheco, R-Albuquerque, predicted that his repeal bill would clear the Legislature last winter. He pushed it with the backing of Republican Gov. Susana Martinez, but it did not win approval in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Pacheco called his bill a compromise because it would have allowed for younger immigrants with a designated lawful presence in America to obtain temporary driver's licenses. Many Democrats, led by Rep. Miguel Garcia of Albuquerque

25 and House Speaker Ken Martinez of Grants, fought hard to block Pacheco's bill in favor of keeping the existing licensing law. New Mexico Sen. Pete Campos, D-Las Vegas, introduced a bill to counter Pacheco's. It would have provided two-year licenses to foreign nationals without proof of immigration status. Many New Mexico licenses are good for four or eight years. But when Pacheco's bill was bottled up by House committees, Campos did not press for his proposal to receive hearings. In the

30 end, both bills died. So did a proposal by Sen. Stuart Ingle, R-Portales, that was similar to what Pacheco proposed.

New Mexico since 2003 has licensed illegal immigrants who have proof of state residency. The Rev. Holly Beaumont of Interfaith Worker Justice-New Mexico said the law has worked well, helping people drive to their jobs, support their families and pay their taxes. No change is necessary, she

35 said. Gov. Martinez disagrees. She described the licensing law as dangerous and said it invited fraud because illegal immigrants living elsewhere try to obtain New Mexico licenses. Of late, many politicians in other states have adopted a stand similar to that of state Rep. Antonio Maestas, D-Albuquerque. Maestas says that granting driver's licenses to those without documentation of immigration status actually improves public safety. People with driver's licenses have to pass tests


40 demonstrating they know the rules of the road, and they are listed in police databases, Maestas said. In Oregon, no proof of immigration status was required to get a driver's license until 2008. Many Oregon lawmakers said illegal immigrants began driving without auto insurance after that. They could not get insurance without a driver's license. Most Oregon legislators decided the roads would be safer with licensed motorists who pass driving tests and can buy auto insurance.

45 Six Republicans joined Democrats in the Oregon Senate in voting for the driver's license law, enabling it to pass with ease, 20-7. One Republican senator even cosponsored the bill. The Oregon law provides for licenses good for four years, but it contains restrictions preventing them from being used as identification to board a plane. Even so, the law remains controversial. Two Republican legislators say they will petition for a ballot issue in hopes that Oregon voters would overturn it.

50 Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley last week signed a licensing law similar to Oregon's. Numerous Republican legislators in Maryland fought the measure, saying it created an incentive for illegal immigrants to come to the state. New Mexico state Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell, R-Roswell, has been among the leading critics of licensing illegal immigrants. She said the system had not increased the number of insured motorists, and she feared that the law would devalue New Mexico licenses to the

55 point that they will not be considered valid identification. Ezzell said she feared that someday New Mexico residents would need a passport to board a plane for domestic flights.

Eyelid lifts for Medicare patients cost taxpayers millions

By Joe Eaton and David Donald
The Miami Herald 

Center for Public Integrity
Tuesday, 06.04.13

Aging Americans worried about their droopy upper eyelids often rely on the plastic surgeon's scalpel to turn back the hands of time. Increasingly, Medicare is footing the bill.

Yes, Medicare. The public health insurance program for people over 65 typically does not cover cosmetic surgery, but for cases in which a patient's sagging eyelids significantly hinder their vision, it does pay to have them lifted. In recent years, though, a rapid rise in the number of so-called functional eyelid lifts, or blepharoplasty, has led some to question whether Medicare is letting procedures that are really cosmetic slip through the cracks — at a cost of millions of dollars. As the Obama administration and Congress wrestle over how to restrain Medicare's growing price tag, critics say program administrators should be more closely inspecting rapidly proliferating procedures like blepharoplasty to make sure taxpayers are not getting ripped off. From 2001 to 2011, eyelid lifts charged to Medicare more than tripled to 136,000 annually, according to a review of physician billing data by the Center for Public Integrity. In 2001, physicians billed taxpayers a total of \$20 million for the procedure. By 2011, the price tag had quadrupled to \$80 million. The number of physicians billing the surgery more than doubled.

"With this kind of management malpractice, it's little wonder that the [Medicare] program is in such dire shape," said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who is also a physician. "The federal government is essentially asking people to game the system."

Plastic surgeons say there are a number of legitimate reasons for the spike, including a tendency among the elderly to seek fixes for real medical issues they might have quietly suffered through even a decade ago. But surgeons also acknowledge an increased awareness of the surgery fueled by reality television, word-of-mouth referrals, and advertising that promises a more youthful appearance. And doctors concede they face increased pressure from patients to perform eyelid lifts, even when they do not meet Medicare's requirement that peripheral vision actually be impaired. Thomas Scully, former Medicare administrator under George W. Bush, has a blunter assessment; he doubts the jump is caused by anything other than seniors seeking younger-looking eyes. "How many seniors among your friends or family have needed eyelid surgery?" he said. "I bet a hell of a lot of them at 65 say, 'You know what, I bet I can get Medicare to pay for this.' And I can imagine the plastic surgeons love it. If you can go to patients and say that Medicare will pay, they will do it in much larger numbers."

Florida surgeon bills Medicare for more than 2,200 eye surgeries a year

Surgeons who bill Medicare for large numbers of eyelid surgeries dot a map of the United States. Yet 11 of the 20 highest billers in 2008 were in Florida, which is both an elderly mecca and the country's foremost magnet for questionable Medicare billing. Among the top surgeons, the data show a South Florida doctor billed Medicare more than \$800,000 in 2008 for about 2,200 eyelid lifts. That's an average of six a day, including weekends. This same doctor was also a top biller in 2006 and 2007.

The Center is barred from naming the Florida surgeon. A 1979 federal court injunction blocks the Department of Health and Human Services from publicly releasing doctor's names in conjunction with specific Medicare billing information. The Center sued HHS to obtain the Medicare data but, as a condition for obtaining it, signed an agreement not to publish the names of individual doctors, unless they agreed to discuss their billing histories. After repeated calls for comment, and a fax including the billing referenced by the Center, the Florida physician's office assistant said he would not talk "due to prior engagements."

Dr. Michael Migliori, president of the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, said the Florida surgeon's billing level might be feasible, if he was a busy eyelid specialist who performed few or no other procedures. But since the doctor also advertises breast augmentations, tummy tucks, liposuction and a variety of other general cosmetic procedures, Migliori said his billing "does seem like an awful lot."

Ryan Stumphauzer, a former federal prosecutor in the Southern District of Florida and founding member of the Medicare Fraud Strike Force, put it more bluntly: "There is no way that is anything other than crap."

Tempe business gives wine bottles new uses

By Peter Corbett — The Republic | azcentral.comSat — Jun 1, 2013 5:43 PM

Entrepreneur Ray DelMuro is counting on Valley wine drinkers to help him grow his business and reach a goal of keeping 10 million wine bottles out of landfills. DelMuro, 35, founder of Refresh Glass LLC, is in his fifth year of turning wine bottles from restaurants and hotels into glasses, candle holders, vases and planters. So far he has reused nearly 330,000 wine bottles, transforming them into 100,000 glasses, all with slight variations in size, weight and color. "Each of those glasses has a story," said DelMuro, noting that the wine bottle might have been shared by people celebrating or drowning their sorrows. "It's not like these are Chinese mass-produced glasses." Refresh Glass has a long way to go in reaching its goal of 10 million bottles, but steady growth since 2008 and a recent infusion of investment capital should speed things up. Mac6, a Tempe-based business incubator, bought a 17 percent equity stake in Refresh Glass and is providing the company with 6,000 square feet of space in a Tempe warehouse and business-support services. The financial details were not disclosed. The investment will allow Refresh Glass to increase its capacity of processing 1,000 wine bottles per day. DelMuro said he plans to double his current payroll of six employees this year, including the company's first sales representative.

'Conscious capitalism'

Refresh Glass and Mac6, its new partner, are committed to a business practice known as "conscious capitalism." The idea, espoused by Whole Foods co-founder John Mackey, is that for-profit companies demonstrate a social responsibility that benefits people and their community. Kyle McIntosh, co-founder of Mac6 with his father, Scott, said they started the for-profit incubator in November and are backing nine companies. "We support a long-term approach to business instead of just looking at the quarterly profits," McIntosh said. "The other part is choosing companies that have a higher purpose than just making money." Mac6's incubator businesses include reNature Inc., which creates fertilizer from food waste, and Endless Entertainment, which recently staged Phoenix Comicon. "We picked (DelMuro) for the good his company is doing in taking all those bottles out of the landfill and doing something really cool with them," McIntosh said. DelMuro explained that his Refresh Glass combines "the heart of a charity with the horsepower of capitalism." He intends to make money but also contribute to the community. That includes helping Phoenix achieve its "40 by 20" initiative, diverting 40 percent of trash from landfills by 2020. It currently is at about 13 percent. DelMuro is in the Accelerator Program of Entrepreneur's Organization Arizona, which provides mentorship and training for new businesses. "Our goal is to try to get them to \$1 million in revenue as quickly as possible," said Robert Clickenbeard, program chairman.

Running on empties

Refresh Glass collects more than 15,000 wine bottles per month from more than a dozen businesses. That includes Pig & Pickle, Beckett's Table, Central Bistro, FireSky Resort & Spa, Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North and Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel. About 160 shapes of bottles are sorted by color: amber, green, gold, clear and antique, which has a light-blue tint. The vessels are cut in half after the labels and metal caps are removed. Then the top edge is heated to about 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit to give the glass a smooth lip. DelMuro, a former aerospace engineer, designed the equipment for this critical step in the process, and he is guarded about explaining how it works or having it photographed. "This is the Willy Wonka part of the tour," he said. The finished glasses are packaged in a cardboard sleeve. Refresh Glass sells a package of four 12-ounce glasses for \$25 and four 16-ounce glasses for \$30. A candleholder is \$30, and a self-watering planter is \$20. DelMuro said he settled on his business concept because it combines the engineering part of his personality with his artistic interests.

He has an engineering degree from California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo and worked for five years as an aerospace engineer. After quitting that job and traveling around the world, he came up with the idea of reusing, or "upcycling," wine bottles while working as a bartender. He started the business with a pickup truck out of his garage and initially sold glasses at the First Friday art walk in central Phoenix. "I figured out how to make a living doing what I love," DelMuro said.

Colorado drive-in theaters survive by investing in digital projection

By Steve Raabe — 06/02/2013

THE DENVER POST 

Say goodbye to the crackle and pop of celluloid movies at the local drive-in.

Just as surely as 50-cent popcorn is a vestige of the cinematic past, films on reels and massive 35-millimeter projectors are soon to be archaic. Digital projection, already the norm at indoor theaters, is now showing at drive-ins. Most of Colorado's few remaining passion pits— seven, at last count — either have made the expensive conversion to digital or are making plans to do so. It's another challenge for an industry that has faced its share of them. Since hitting a cultural and numeric pinnacle in the late 1950s, drive-ins have dwindled. About 350 remain in the U.S., way down from its peak of more than 4,000. Celebrating their 80th birthday this week — the first opened June 6, 1933, in New Jersey — drive-ins are the epitome of Americana. Generations have planned their summer evenings around viewing a movie from the comfort of their cars. But the industry has changed. Some drive-ins have succumbed to real estate development. Others shut down as consumers gravitated first to indoor multiplexes and video rentals, then to on-demand and Internet offerings. Movie studios say that this summer marks the virtual end of reeled film distribution. Almost all new movies will then be in digital formats. Digital films are sharper in clarity and sound. And importantly for distributors, digital copies of movies can be produced at a fraction of the cost of creating 35-millimeter prints. But facing prices of at least \$60,000 for new digital projectors, drive-in owners have struggled with the decision to either make the investment or simply shut down. "We finally had to bite the bullet and do it," said George Kelloff, owner of the Star Drive-In in Monte Vista. "I lost a lot of sleep trying to figure out if it was worth it." Kelloff's costs: \$124,000 to convert his two projectors at the two-screen theater. That's a major capital investment for an enterprise that is open only a few months a year. "To be honest, you don't make a lot of money in this business," said Kelloff, whose father built the drive-in in 1955. "Payback (of converting) probably won't happen in my lifetime." Kelloff's unique twist is his adjacent motel — the Best Western Movie Manor — where guests can watch the drive-in flicks through the windows of their rooms. "If we didn't have the motel, we probably would have shut down the drive-in," he said. Chuck James, who with his wife, Marianne, owns the Mesa Drive-In in Pueblo, also wrestled with the question of going digital or going dark. He previously considered selling the 18.5-acre site to Walmart.

But, like several other drive-in owners in Colorado, James was driven at least in part by a sense of obligation to the community to keep the three-screen theater open. "When you look at the investment needed, it's right on the edge," he said. "But Pueblo is the biggest small town I've ever seen, and people almost look at the drive-in as if it's their own. They love this place." James plans to install digital projectors next winter in preparation for the 2014 season. His costs will be about \$210,000. He said that as an estimated 85 percent of all U.S. movie theaters have converted to digital, technical bugs have been resolved, and costs have come down. Had he bought the equipment in previous years, the price would have been as high as \$370,000. James said he'll miss the tradition and ritual of running film through 35-millimeter projectors. "You're taking this perfectly good equipment and effectively throwing it in the trash," he said. "There's no market for it at all. It's really a case of just calling the scrap-iron company and having them haul it away."

Some drive-ins nationally, but none so far in Colorado, are using digital-conversion financing packages from film-industry firms such as Cinedigm and Digital Cinema Implementation Partners. Those packages offer loans that are capitalized by the savings that film studios realize from lower costs for digital movies. At the Star Drive-In in Montrose, owner Pamela Friend last year launched a crowdfunding campaign — "Save the Star"— to help with the costs of digital conversion. So far, the effort has raised \$16,000 through a series of donations and fundraising events. For the remaining \$69,000 needed, Friend took out a personal loan secured by her Montrose County farm. Prior to the funding campaign, "I was ready to close my doors and say we're done," said Friend, whose father built the drive-in in 1950. "But to see the support from the community, ... you're just tickled because you're providing a service to the community and they're showing their appreciation." In contrast to the feel-good story, Friend said she is disappointed that drive-in operators are not enjoying the benefits of lower costs for making and distributing movies digitally instead of with bulky reels.

White House, key Congress members still committed to Arctic drilling

By Sean Cockerham — January 3, 2013 — Anchorage Daily News

WASHINGTON — Critics want a halt to offshore Arctic drilling in the wake of Shell's latest mishap in the waters off Alaska but there's no sign the Obama administration and key members of Congress are backing off their support for drilling in the sensitive region.

- 5 Interior Secretary Ken Salazar let Shell begin preparatory drilling in Alaska's Arctic waters this summer, the first time in two decades. Environmental groups on Thursday called for the administration to immediately stop all permitting for Arctic offshore oil exploration as a result of Monday's grounding of Shell's drilling rig off Kodiak Island. But Salazar isn't willing to put the permits on hold. "The administration understands that the Arctic environment presents unique challenges and
10 that's why the secretary has repeatedly made clear that any approved drilling activities will be held to the highest safety and environmental standards," Salazar spokesman Blake Androff said Thursday. "The department will continue to carefully review permits for any activity and all proposals must meet our rigorous standards."
- 15 Salazar has not given Shell permission to drill deep enough to actually hit oil. The company hopes to get that approval this summer. The chairman of the House Resources Committee, Republican Doc Hastings of Washington, is a drilling supporter and that hasn't changed. "Rather than jumping to conclusions, he believes the focus right now needs to be on safely resolving the situation," said Hastings spokeswoman Jill Strait. Shell is taking some heat. A group of 46 House Democrats released a statement Thursday saying they want answers from the Coast Guard and the Interior
20 Department about the rig incident. "This is the latest in a series of alarming blunders," said the House Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition Caucus. But the group represents a small minority of the 435-member House of Representatives, which is controlled by Republicans. Shell's drilling rig Kulluk broke free from the ship towing it Monday after running into a winter storm in the Gulf of Alaska. The rig grounded off Sitkalidak Island, just south of Kodiak Island. An attempt to salvage the
25 rig is being planned. There are worries about a potential spill of an estimated 155,000 gallons of diesel fuel and other petroleum products on board. The vessel that was towing the rig, the Aiviq, is owned and run by the politically connected Louisiana company Edison Chouest Offshore. Edison Chouest was the top campaign contributor in the most recent election cycle for Hastings as well as Alaska Republicans Rep. Don Young and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, according to the Center for Responsive Politics in Washington. The company is also among the top donors to Alaska Democratic
30 Sen. Mark Begich, who also supports Shell's offshore efforts. Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat who is the incoming chairman of the Senate Energy and Commerce Committee, isn't ready to put the hammer down on Shell. "The Coast Guard and Interior Department will be investigating the causes of this incident, so it's too soon to draw any firm conclusions," Wyden said in a prepared statement. "But
35 as I've said before, I plan to look at drilling safety rules this year to see if regulators are doing enough to make sure offshore drilling operations aren't putting lives or the environment at risk."
- 40 Murkowski is the top Republican on the Senate energy committee and has shown signs of working closely with Wyden. "The extreme winter weather and high seas in the Gulf of Alaska would have been a challenge for any vessel," said Murkowski spokesman Robert Dillon. "This is a maritime transportation incident, not a drilling accident. There are certainly lessons to be learned from this event but it's irresponsible to use any pretext to try to stop the development of the energy our nation runs on."
- 45 Begich said he would likely hold an oversight hearing in Alaska into the grounding as chairman of the Oceans subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee. "We're going to have some hard questions on exactly what happened there," Begich said. But Begich praised Shell for immediately working closely with the Coast Guard instead of trying to push aside federal responders as Exxon did initially in the Exxon Valdez disaster and BP did in the Gulf of Mexico blowout. "The Arctic, in one form or another — us, Canada, Russia — it's getting developed, so let's do it right," Begich said. "If this teaches us some lessons, that's a positive thing."

New immigration approach? Give me your skilled masses, yearning to succeed

For the first time in nearly five decades, the nation's immigration system could undergo a shift of sorts, away from a preference to unite families here and toward one that favors foreigners based on their skill and merit.

By Lornet Turnbull and Kyung M. Song — June 1, 2013

The Seattle Times

Consider this: Two young people, both living in Honduras, and each with a strong desire to emigrate to the United States. One has learned English, was valedictorian at his high school and is in his second year of college. The other dropped out of high school, has minimal skills but has a brother already living in the U.S. Considering what's in the best interest of this country, which of the two should be allowed in? This hypothetical scenario, posed by Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama during a recent hearing on a massive bipartisan immigration bill in Congress, is at the very of a fundamental shift being proposed for U.S. immigration. The sweeping compromise measure awaiting debate by the Senate represents the most dramatic shift in American immigration policy in nearly 50 years — away from a tradition that has admitted immigrants based on family ties and toward one that gives preference to skill, merit and entrepreneurial ability. For the first time, automatic legal permanent residency — green cards — would be accorded to an unlimited number of high achievers, including scientists, professors, executives and holders of doctoral degrees in any field from any country. Experts estimate the overall number of green cards issued to foreigners based on personal merit and skill could triple under the measure's new or expanded provisions. At the same time, Senate Bill 744 would eliminate pathways through which U.S. citizens now bring siblings and some adult children, focusing instead on uniting nuclear families. Before closing those particular channels, the bill would expedite the entry of millions who've been waiting — decades in some cases — for green cards.

To be sure, the centerpiece of the bill — a 13-year path to citizenship for an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants that is tied to beefed up border security — is expected to be its most contentious piece. And the measure would also allow lower-skilled workers long sought by farm and service industries to come in greater numbers and stay longer. But perhaps its most noteworthy feature is creation of a new path, five years after passage of the bill, that for the first time would allow up to 250,000 people a year from anywhere in the world to gain legal status in the U.S., based in part on their own merit. Dubbed by some immigrant advocates as sisters vs. scientists, this new emphasis on merit was forged in part by lobbying from companies such as Microsoft and Facebook, which have long complained about shortages of high-tech American workers. And many conservatives, including those who advocate more controlled immigration, have argued that admitting too many immigrants of any type and especially those with limited skill and education has been a drain on taxpayers and hurt native workers. Currently, about two-thirds of immigrants to the U.S. gain green cards through family ties. That share would drop to around 55 percent, while green cards granted based on education would increase from 14 percent to nearly 40 percent.

Winners and losers

Asians, particularly Chinese and Indians, could emerge as both winners and losers under the legislation, as they tend to post some of the largest numbers in both employment and family-based immigration. "I think it's a shift of emphasis," said Pramila Jayapal of Seattle, co-chair of the national campaign, webelongtogether.org, which advocates for women in immigration. "There has been a discussion around this issue for many years. What this bill tries to do is say family is still important, but adding this other piece which also looks at merit, and the merit piece is very large." Diane Narasaki, executive director of the Asian Counseling and Referral Service in Seattle (ACRS), said she doesn't discount the value of merit and of employment-based immigration, but doesn't believe it should come at the expense of families. "People are able to stabilize and integrate better with their families around them so this shift ... is a real concern to us," she said. "It doesn't have to be either/or."

Family framework

The framework of the system through which more than 1 million legal permanent residents reach the U.S. each year can be traced to the Immigration Naturalization Act of 1965, which abolished quotas restricting immigration largely to Northern and Western Europeans. The change allowed immigrants to come based on their work skills but focused primarily on allowing Americans to bring their families here.

Just the right touch: A celebration of the fountain pen

By Richard Koenig — May 25, 2013

The News Observer (North Carolina)

The digital age is relentless – the succession of laptops and electronic tablets, the torrent of emails and tweets. How then to explain the 10th annual Triangle Pen Show, a celebration of the fountain pen?

“There is a yearning for a mode of communication that slows the pace, that gives time for quiet thought and reflection,” says Scott Franklin, owner of Franklin-Christoph, a luxury-goods company in Raleigh that has put fountain pens at the center of its product line. The show at Cary’s Embassy Suites Hotel is Friday through June 2. If recent shows are any indication, this next one will attract several hundred pen users, collectors, retailers and manufacturers. Franklin will be prominent among them, for he is helping to revive an American tradition: the fountain pen as industrial art form. It may be fair to say that, in gross outline, fountain pens are no more than sticks. Yet they so summon the imagination of their designers that a pen of one style or another may become for its user an object of obsessive delight. Franklin produces fountain pens sufficiently distinctive that the brand name has become adjectival, as in a product review that called one of his creations “100% Franklin-Christoph.” Deb Kinney of Durham will be at the show too. “I tell people I came out of the womb collecting fountain pens,” she says. Her collection, exceeding 500, spawned her sideline business in pen repair. She finds clients as far away as Israel and Australia. Then there is Bernard Glassman, an educator and software developer in Chapel Hill. Not only will he attend the show; he imagines it as the scene for the fiction he writes and records on compact discs. Fountain pens figure in all his tales. He writes with one when not using his other favored archaism, a typewriter.

From near oblivion, a revival

That the fountain pen survives will come as a surprise to many, that it ever existed as a revelation to some. So, a little history: The popular fountain pen was largely an American invention of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Parker, Sheaffer and Waterman, whose names survived them in their companies, all were American entrepreneurs who found ways to avert ink-flow glitches and gave their pens the allure of jewelry. In time, of course, came ballpoints and rollerballs, sending the fountain-pen market into near oblivion. Global conglomerates consumed the namesake companies. Except for artisans, production moved offshore. There things stood until the 1990s. Then pen shows began to proliferate and enthusiasts found one another. At least three manufacturers in addition to Franklin-Christoph now make fountain pens in the U.S.

The interest goes beyond hobby or nostalgia. Devotees say a fountain pen’s liquid lines of ink, drying into a unique script, yield a personal expression beyond anything a keyboard can produce. The glide and singing scratch of a nib provides a tactile connection to the page, to language, that a touchpad will never offer. A blog named Fountain Pen Geeks makes the point flamboyantly: “... using a fountain pen should feel like riding a unicorn through a field of cupcakes during a rainstorm of scotch while eating bacon.”

Is the pen-making business itself so exuberant? Franklin, for his part, is coy about the numbers: “We are bigger than many people realize and smaller than some think.” But he says his fountain-pen sales grew throughout the past recession, and he expects them to feed diversification. A Franklin-Christoph brand of inks just came to market. A fountain-pen-friendly paper is in the works.

The designer-manufacturer

Franklin took a family business in his own direction in 2001 by offering all sorts of pens together with leather goods. It was the demand he found for the fountain pens that then made them the anchor of the product line. The initial pen offering was called the 01 IPO. Like its name, the pen was spare: barrel and cap of black acrylic, clip of sliver, writing point of gold plated with silvery rhodium to complement the clip. It set the tone for what has followed – today, 10 models at prices ranging from \$69.50 to \$340. Adornment is minimal. The palette seldom strays further from black than dark-hued color or touches of creamy white, though a recent model features Carolina blue. Distinctiveness, then, must come from such subtleties as the contour of a barrel or the fit and beveling of a cap.

“One of the hardest things to achieve in design is simplicity with uniqueness,” Franklin says. “The shape is what gives each pen its uniqueness for me, more so than the decoration.”

He notes this paradox: “Digital media make it possible for guys like us to sell something that is antique.” Although he travels far – finding silk in India for pen cases, gift boxes in China – digital media help to coordinate the supply chain, promote the brand and speed direct sales worldwide.

Review: On the front lines with 'War/Photography' at the Annenberg

By Christopher Knight, *Los Angeles Times* Art Critic

May 24, 2013

Los Angeles Times

Including the American Revolution, the United States has participated in 12 major wars since the republic was founded. All but two were photographed. (The Mexican-American War of 1846-48 was the first to be documented with cameras, but just a few pictures survive.) The industrialization of war has logically coincided with the rise of machines that produce images. Because of the camera's 1839 invention, it is a peculiarity of our nation's relatively youthful history that war photography characterizes a substantial subset of the photojournalist's art. At the Annenberg Space for Photography, a large, fascinating and often heartbreaking exhibition is the first major survey of the genre. "War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and Its Aftermath" includes several pictures that have become icons. Eddie Adams' brutal 1968 photograph of Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing prisoner Nguyen Van Lem in the street with a sudden bullet to the brain shocked an American audience, helping to force a confrontation over events in Vietnam.

At the other end of the emotional spectrum, Alfred Eisenstaedt's 1945 "V-J Day, Times Square, New York" shows a sailor spontaneously kissing a nurse in the middle of a crowded street. A warrior and a healer, his clothing printed black and hers bright white, transforms a pose like Gustav Klimt's deliriously erotic painting, "The Kiss," into a compact narrative. Joe Rosenthal's famous 1945 image of a unified group of five Marines and a Navy corpsman raising a huge American flag in one continuous motion atop a peak over the Japanese island of Iwo Jima epitomized the moment when fortunes changed in the Pacific theater during the Second World War. The men, composed as an almost perfect and harmonious isosceles triangle, become a human mountain as sturdy and enduring as Mont Ste. Victoire in a painting by Cezanne. Acquisition of the classic photograph by the Houston Museum of Fine Arts prompted its organization of the exhibition, which travels to Washington, D.C., and Brooklyn after closing at Annenberg on June 2. Icons such as these, however, are just a tiny fraction of the roughly 150 photographs in the show. (The hefty, 606-page catalog offers hundreds more.) The steady flow of images both arresting and conventional is in some ways more revealing, since they conspire to tell stories far larger and more complex than single images might convey.

For coherence, the potentially unwieldy batch of photographs is divided into useful thematic groupings -- troop movements, leisure, refugees, shell shock and many more. (Women's faces, not incidentally, seldom appear.) Midway through, however, a unifying factor begins to emerge among the diversity. Emblematic is "War Paint," a riveting portrait of a Marine at momentary rest during a break in fierce fighting in Najaf, Iraq, shot in 2004 by the gifted Los Angeles Times photographer Carolyn Cole. (Along with Alexandra Avakian, Ashley Gilbertson, Edouard H.R. Gluck, David Hume Kennerly and Joao Silva, Cole is also among six talented photojournalists profiled in an Annenberg documentary added to the show; it screens continuously in the gallery's central space.) The Marine -- shown in close-up and slightly off-center, which adds to the overall feeling of informality -- leans his head against his raised right arm. His wary eyes are cast to one side, but they seem to look at nothing in particular. Casual and mysterious, the close-up portrait is characterized by extreme intimacy. What gives the photograph dramatic resonance is the camouflage face paint, which further obscures an already anonymous soldier's face. Camouflage has one primary function -- to help make the wearer disappear. By contrast, portrait photography seeks to do the opposite -- expose the sitter. Visual tension between concealing and revealing thrums in Cole's exquisite photograph. A military, to function effectively, must subsume the individual into the cohesive and uniform mass. (There's a reason the U.S. Army turns every soldier into a G.I. -- short for government issue.) Photographers, on the other hand, strive for intimacy -- for the closeness and familiarity that cuts through the undifferentiated aggregate.

That tension between disappearance and exposure, the many and the one, emerges as perhaps the most compelling constant throughout the exhibition, whether the photojournalist takes us to battle-weary Nicaragua, Korea, Italy or America. The erotics of war photography may in fact be its most disturbing element, as well as its most profound.

Sky High and Going Up Fast: Luxury Towers Take New York

By CHARLES V. BAGLI

Published: May 18, 2013

The New York Times

Only 10 floors have been completed in what is intended to be the tallest residential building in the Western Hemisphere — a slender, 84-story tower on Park Avenue at 56th Street in Manhattan. But the top penthouse is already under contract for \$95 million. Other buyers have snapped up apartments on lower floors for prices that are almost as breathtaking. While their identities are not known, it is likely that many are the rootless superrich: Russian metals barons, Latin American tycoons, Arab sheiks and Asian billionaires.

Ultraluxury housing and construction is booming across Manhattan, which is now beginning to rival London in popularity with the world's wealthy. The number of condominium buildings in the borough with apartments selling for more than \$15 million has risen to 49, up from 33 in 2009, according to CityRealty. And an additional 20 or so are under construction or in planning.

"There's a great deal of interest in New York, which is seen as relatively cheap compared to other global cities," said Yolande Barnes, director of research for Savills, an international real-estate firm.

The growth in high-end projects in Manhattan comes as housing for the working and middle class is in increasingly short supply in the city. These buildings are proving so profitable that they are warping the local real-estate market, making it more difficult to put up more-affordable housing. Developers have long complained that the prices of land, construction materials and labor are high in New York, even if they are somewhat less expensive than in London or Hong Kong. But builders of ultraluxury apartments have much more latitude on costs because they are securing spectacular prices for their projects. As a result, the luxury building trend is driving up the overall cost of land in the city. Several developers maintained that they could build moderately priced housing only if they could get significant tax breaks.

"There are only two markets, ultraluxury and subsidized housing," said Rafael Viñoly, the architect who designed the tower on Park Avenue at 56th Street, which is called 432 Park. The rush to build these towers underscores the gap between rich and poor in New York City, said James Parrott, chief economist for the Fiscal Policy Institute, a liberal research organization supported by unions. He said that median family income in the city had fallen 8 percent since 2008.

"Manhattan's superluxury condo boom, along with rocketing foreclosures in Queens and record homelessness, present an unobstructed view of accelerating polarization in this recovery," Mr. Parrott said. Still, it is not hard to see why developers are flocking to the high end. Izak Senbahar, the developer of 56 Leonard, a 60-story tower in TriBeCa where penthouses are going for more than \$20 million, signed contracts with buyers for 70 percent of the 140 apartments in just 10 weeks.

"We were all surprised," Mr. Senbahar said. "This was not what we expected. There's a pent-up demand for condos with helicopter views."

A decade or two ago, luxury buildings were largely confined to Park and Fifth Avenues. Today, they are rising all over Manhattan — from One57 and the Baccarat in Midtown Manhattan to 825 First Avenue on the East Side, 150 Charles Street in Greenwich Village and 30 Park Place downtown.

"It's not that location is unimportant," said Nancy Packes of Signature Marketing Services. "But it's now all about bigness, lifestyle and views."

Determining who is buying many of these properties is a challenge. The superrich often go to great lengths to shield their identities, requiring confidentiality agreements with builders and brokers and using anonymous corporate entities for purchases. In an interview, the developer of 432 Park, Harry B. Macklowe, said he and his partner, CIM Group, already had contracts for nearly \$1 billion worth of apartments at the building. Total sales are expected to surpass \$3 billion for a building that will cost about \$1.25 billion to complete, he said. The cheapest apartment in the building, a 351 square-foot studio, costs \$1.59 million, according to the offering prospectus. About half the buyers are foreigners, Mr. Macklowe said. As with many of these buildings, only about a quarter of the units will be occupied at any one time. Mr. Macklowe bought and demolished the former Drake Hotel during the real estate boom of 2006 to make way for the tower, before nearly losing the property during the downturn. Mr. Macklowe said he and his architect, Mr. Viñoly, designed the tower around the "purest geometric form: the square." The tower floors are 93 feet square; each side of the building has six 10-foot-by-10-foot windows. "This is the building of the 21st century, the way the Empire State Building was the building of the 20th century," Mr. Macklowe said.

Young Americans Lead Trend to Less Driving

By JOHN SCHWARTZ

Published: May 13, 2013

The New York Times

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Dan Mauney keeps misplacing his car.

Mr. Mauney, 42, lives in an apartment tower in this city's Uptown neighborhood, a pedestrian-friendly quarter with new office buildings, sparkling museums and ambitious restaurants. He so seldom needs to drive that when he does go to retrieve his car in his building's garage, he said, "I always forget where I parked it."

Charlotte and other American cities have not abandoned their cars or their sprawling growth. But people like Mr. Mauney are part of the reason that American driving patterns have downshifted — perhaps for years to come.

For six decades, Americans have tended to drive more every year. But in the middle of the last decade, the number of miles driven — both over all and per capita — began to drop, notes a report to be published on Tuesday by U.S. Pirg, a nonprofit advocacy organization.

People tend to drive less during recessions, since fewer people are working (and commuting), and most are looking for ways to save money. But Phineas Baxandall, an author of the report and senior analyst for U.S. Pirg, said the changes preceded the recent recession and appeared to be part of a structural shift that is largely rooted in changing demographics, especially the rise of so-called millennials — today's teenagers and twentysomethings. "Millennials aren't driving cars," he said.

In fact, younger people are less likely to drive — or even to have driver's licenses — than past generations for whom driving was a birthright and the open road a symbol of freedom. Research by Michael Sivak of the Transportation Research Institute at the University of Michigan found that young people are getting driver's licenses in smaller numbers than previous generations.

Online life might have something to do with the change, he suggested. "A higher proportion of Internet users was associated with a lower licensure rate," he wrote in a recent study. "This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that access to virtual contact reduces the need for actual contact among young people."

Baby boomers, too, are aging out of the daily work force and need to commute less. If the decline continues, the U.S. Pirg report states, driving could remain below its 2007 peak through 2040, even though the population is expected to grow by 21 percent.

If Jacob Curtis is any indication, the change in driving habits should be with us for some time to come. Mr. Curtis, 29, moved to Charlotte in recent months to take a job as a cameraman at a local television station, and was pleased to find a home close to rail and bus lines, and that he could ride his bike to the office along a no-traffic greenway. He can shower when he gets to work, and drives to assignments in one of the station's vans.

During his off hours, he finds Charlotte easy to navigate thanks to his smartphone, which helps him plot routes that blend biking and mass transit options. "You don't have a lot to figure out," he said. "We all have navigators in our pockets."

Ted Boyd, whose job involves helping develop the city's South End into a Brooklynesque neighborhood — Mr. Mauney is opening two stores there, one to sell women's shoes and another men's underwear — often rides the bus to work. He decided to drive less after a trip to New York, with its extensive options for mass transit, but admits "it's a little trickier in Charlotte." Office wear still stands out on the city buses, and "you get some interesting looks sometimes," he said, that seem to assume an unpleasant reason for why he isn't behind the wheel: "Is this a D.U.I.?"

Charlotte, whose success as a financial center has helped its population grow toward 800,000, takes transit seriously, said David Howard, a member of the City Council and chairman of its transportation and planning committee. The city tries to channel growth into manageable areas, he said, by filling in the urban core with new development and encouraging new construction along major transportation corridors, including an expanding rail line. "It didn't happen by mistake," he said.

The rail line was projected to reach a ridership of 12,000 people within 7 to 10 years; it hit that level in the first month and a half, he said. President Obama has nominated the city's mayor, Anthony R. Foxx, to be the next transportation secretary.

The drop-off in driving is already having wide-reaching effects across the country. It means that gasoline taxes, which help finance transportation investment, are bringing in less revenue. The U.S. Pirg report suggests that the nation's shift in driving trends calls for a change in the things the nation spends that money on.

Marijuana firms form investment network for pot-related startups

Posted: 05/19/2013 12:46:35 AM MDT

Updated: 05/19/2013 12:46:39 PM MDT

By Steve Raabe, The Denver Post

Legal marijuana's sensational evolution is helping crack open a previously closed door: money to start and grow cannabis businesses.

Marijuana entrepreneurs routinely are turned down for bank loans or deposit accounts and have struggled to attract financing from private investors.

But thanks largely to recreational pot's new legal status in Colorado and Washington and more states approving medical marijuana, checkbooks are opening and investment partnerships are being signed.

Colorado business owners are at the hub of a new national network that matches venture capitalists with budding marijuana entrepreneurs.

At a recent investor conference in Seattle, two Colorado firms with money to invest listened to a pitch from a third local business seeking growth capital. The common ingredient: They sell cannabis products or provide services to the industry.

Finding funds to grow has been a struggle, said Dan Williams, president of Denver-based Canna Security America, a firm that installs security systems at marijuana dispensaries and at grow operations.

Williams and his employees never touch cannabis — only electronics — yet until last month, they had been shut out of traditional sources of financing.

Williams didn't even bother applying for a bank loan when he started the business in 2009. Banks typically fear regulatory repercussions because of marijuana's still-illegal status under federal law.

"We were a zero-capital startup," Williams said. "We would do a job so that we could go buy a ladder. Then we would do another job so we could buy business cards."

Earlier this year, Canna Security moved its headquarters from Williams' basement to commercial office space in northwest Denver. The company is preparing to launch operations in Washington and several states with recently enacted medical marijuana laws. Williams projects that his staff of five could grow to more than 30 in the next two years.

Instrumental in the growth plans was a recent equity investment from Denver-based marijuana entrepreneur Tripp Keber. He is the owner of Dixie Elixirs, a wholesaler of pot-infused foods and beverages.

Keber watched earlier this year as Canna Security officials pitched their company at the ArcView Investor Network conference in Seattle. Liking what he saw, Keber invested an undisclosed amount in the firm.

Dixie Elixirs is fast-growing and successful with annual sales of more than \$3 million, but Keber knows the struggles of trying to start and expand a cannabis-related business.

"I couldn't go to Wells Fargo and get a business loan," he said, instead using personal funds from non-marijuana business ventures and not drawing a paycheck for 2½ years.

But Keber sees such strong growth potential in both his own enterprise and other marijuana businesses that he became an investor member of ArcView, a San Francisco-based network that helps link investors with marijuana-related companies seeking funding.

"People are realizing that this is the next great American industry," said Troy Dayton, co-founder and CEO of ArcView.

But even recently, the outlook was not so positive. ArcView was founded in November 2011. Shortly thereafter, federal agents launched a series of raids on California medical marijuana dispensaries. They had a chilling effect on investment in the industry, Dayton said.

ArcView last year decided to schedule a networking meeting in Denver on Nov. 7, the day after Colorado voters were determining the fate of Amendment 64.

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

"Either we were going to commiserate together or celebrate together," Dayton said. "Before (Amendment 64's passage), we looked like an industry contracting. Now the energy is palpable."

ArcView earlier this month announced its first investments, up to \$2 million split among five companies, including Canna Security.

Another Colorado firm, MJ Freeway, has been on both sides of the investment spectrum — first pitching to investors for growth capital, and now as an investor member of ArcView.

The firm provides software to businesses for tracking every gram of marijuana from cultivation facility to retail sale. It also helps companies maintain compliance with state regulations.

"It was not easy at all to get started," said co-founder Jessica Billingsley. "We were bootstrapped, self-funded. There were a number of times when we had to double down on our investment."

Like Canna Security, MJ Freeway has no physical contact with marijuana.

"We thought that as software providers, we wouldn't face this degree of (financing) challenges," said co-founder Amy Poinsett.

But now, after three years of operations, MJ Freeway is profitable and growing, with hundreds of clients in 12 states, Washington, D.C., and Canada. Its 2013 revenue is projected at between \$1 million and \$2 million.

The partners last year had attended ArcView meetings to raise money. This year, they're sitting on the other side of the table as prospective investors. Although they haven't yet invested, they discovered two pitching companies that could be candidates for investment or creation of joint ventures.

Investors say they are pleased that the marijuana industry is moving from niche status to the economic mainstream.

"When you invest in cannabis," Keber said, "you invest in America."

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Judge Edith Jones on Race, Crime, and God's Vengeance

Civil rights group files complaint against 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judge

By Jordan Smith, Fri., June 7, 2013



Judge Edith Jones

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

A complaint filed Tuesday by several civil rights groups, including one funded entirely by the government of Mexico, alleges that federal Judge **Edith Jones** has violated her duty to be impartial and damaged the public's confidence in the judiciary, in statements she made in a public lecture – including that blacks and Hispanics are more violent, and that a death sentence provides a public service by allowing an inmate to "make peace with God."

Jones, who sits on the **5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals** – based in New Orleans, its jurisdiction includes Texas – made numerous offensive and biased comments during a February lecture at the **University of Pennsylvania Law School**, according to the complaint filed pursuant to the federal **Judicial Conduct and Disability Act**. The complaint, filed by the **Texas Civil Rights Project**, **Austin NAACP**, the **League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)**, and the **Mexican Capital Legal Assistance Program** (among others), alleges that during her talk – billed as "Federal Death Penalty Review with Judge Edith Jones (5th Cir.)" – Jones violated a number of canons of the code of conduct for federal judges.

The lecture was apparently not recorded, but various witnesses recalled a number of Jones' controversial statements. The views she expressed included not only that minorities are responsible for more violent crime than are whites, but also that claims by death row inmates that racism or arbitrariness infected their prosecutions, or that they are mentally retarded or actually innocent, are merely "red herrings." She reportedly told the law students and other attendees that she thought the **U.S. Supreme Court's** ruling outlawing the death penalty for the mentally retarded did intellectually disabled individuals a disservice, and that to create such an exemption from execution was a "slippery slope." "In describing ... what Judge Jones said about these cases, I am not able to capture the complete outrage she expressed over the crimes or the disgust she evinced over the defense raised, particularly by the defendants who claimed to be mentally retarded," reads the declaration of veteran Pennsylvania-based death penalty attorney **Marc Bookman**, who attended the lecture.

Furthermore, Jones "denigrated" the system of justice in Mexico and said it was an "insult" when the U.S. considered laws of other countries when looking at the death penalty – presumably including Mexico, where capital punishment was outlawed in 2005. She told the audience that "any Mexican national would rather be on death row in the United States than in a Mexican prison," reads the complaint, and indicated that the U.S. provides Mexican citizens more legal protections than does their own system of justice. Moreover, Jones referred to her personal religious views as justification for the

death penalty. A killer is "only likely to make peace with God and the victim's family in that moment when the killer faces imminent execution," she said.

And she asserted as fact the proposition that blacks and Hispanics are more likely to commit violent crimes. When asked to explain, "she stated that there was 'no arguing' that 'Blacks and Hispanics' outnumber 'Anglos' on death row and 'sadly' it was a 'statistical fact' that people 'from these racial groups get involved in more violent crime,'" reads the complaint.

Jones' comments about race and crime not only demonstrate an "utter disregard for the fundamental judicial standard of impartiality," but also touch directly on an issue pending in the ongoing case of **Duane Buck**, a death row inmate who has been fighting to get a new sentencing hearing based on the fact that racially biased statements were allowed into testimony during his trial. When the comments in those cases came to light in 2000, then-Texas Attorney General **John Cornyn** declared that the state would not stand in the way of new sentencing hearings. The case is ongoing, and, ultimately, will make its way to the 5th Circuit for review.

According to the complaint, Jones also made direct comments on several cases that have not yet made it all the way through the appeals process – cases on which she may judge, or has already sat in judgment, including the Texas death row cases of **Larry Swearingen** and **Elroy Chester**.

Jones, 64, was appointed to the 5th Circuit in 1985 by President **Ronald Reagan**. The UT Law graduate is an opponent of abortion rights and a supporter of efforts to streamline appeals in death penalty cases. She was twice mentioned as a potential nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court – first during the presidency of **George H.W. Bush** (who instead chose **David Souter**), and in 2005 as a possible nominee of President **George W. Bush**.

Complaints such as the one against Jones, signed also by a selection of nationally recognized legal ethicists, are filed with the chief judge of the court of appeals in the circuit where the judge at issue sits – in this case, **Carl Stewart**, the current chief judge of the 5th Circuit. In this case, the filers are asking that the complaint be referred to another circuit for consideration.

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES

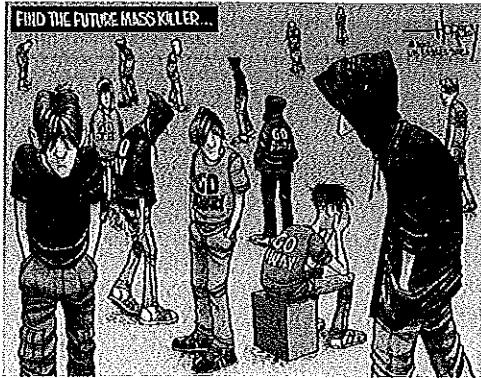
ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Los Angeles Times

Not all Americans mourn; some emulate the Newtown killer



David Horsey / Los Angeles Times (December 17, 2012)
December 18, 2012, 5:00 a.m.

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

While most Americans spent the weekend in shock and mourning following the shooting deaths of 20 first-graders and six teachers and staff at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., at least a few of our fellow citizens were thinking that killing school kids is a cool idea.

On Sunday, Los Angeles police arrested 24-year-old Kyle Bangayan at his parents' house in East Hollywood. Bangayan had posted a Facebook message in which he threatened to shoot children at several elementary schools. Police found nine guns in the home.

Also Sunday, far from the tough streets of L.A. in the rural town of Sedro-Wooley, Wash., police arrested 19-year-old Korry Martinson. After praising the Newtown shooter and blaming the government for incidents of mass slaughter, Martinson wrote on his Facebook page, "If this causes our gun laws to be taken away, to the point as to where I cannot own a gun, I will personally get my sawed off double barreled shotgun and my AK-47 and go shoot up every school within a 100 mile radius of my current location."

Police in Sedro-Wooley did not find any guns in Martinson's possession, but on Friday, the same day as the shooting in Newtown, police in Cedar Lake, Ind., collected 47 guns at the home of a 60-year-old man, Von Meyer, who they say had threatened to kill his wife and shoot up the elementary school located just 1,000 feet from his home.

Also on Friday in Enid, Okla., police investigated threats of a shooting at an upcoming assembly at the local high school. Meanwhile, in Bartlesville, Okla., police arrested 18-year-old Sammy Chavez for trying to enlist his friends in a plot to lure students into the school auditorium and shoot them.

In Birmingham, Ala., on Saturday, a man walked into a hospital and started shooting. A police officer and two hospital workers were wounded before police killed the gunman. Then, on Sunday, 19-year-old Shawn Lenz of Columbia, Tenn., posted this message on Facebook:

"feel like goin on a rampage, kinda like the school shooting were that one guy killed some teachers and a bunch of students :D"

When Maury County police arrested Lenz, they found a shotgun, shotgun shells, a rifle and a machete in his possession. On his Facebook page, 19 people have "liked" his comment and

831 others have left comments of their own, most in the aftermath of his arrest. Lenz's Facebook posts give the sense he is not a likely murderer, just an unthinking kid talking trash. It is a little harder to figure out what Marcos Gurrola, a 42-year-old Garden Grove man, had in mind on Saturday when police say he went to the Fashion Island shopping mall in Newport Beach and shot off more than 50 rounds in the parking lot. Christmas shoppers panicked, stores were locked down and bike patrol officers took Gurrola into custody.

Apart from the ones who actually started shooting, it is anyone's guess which of the men in these weekend incidents were serious about killing people and which are just fools who lack brains and empathy. But this quick sampling of news reports indicates there are way too many oddballs among us with violence on their minds and guns within reach.

Thankfully, they are outnumbered by people who have not numbed their feelings of compassion and humanity. Among that number was Victoria Soto. Vicki was a dark-haired 27-year-old who taught first grade at Sandy Hook Elementary. Friday morning, when the killer broke into the school and started shooting, she quickly hid all her students in the cabinets and closets in her classroom. When the dead-souled young man with an assault rifle walked into her room, Vicki told him the kids were in the gym. He killed her on the spot.

A long string of Facebook pages have been set up in Victoria Soto's honor. It seems an odd thing, this new social media gathering place where, with just a few clicks, anyone can jump from the messages of aspiring killers to memorials for those who have been taken from us by a killer's gun.

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

January 16, 2013

Obama's Gun Plan: Sense or Sensibility?

Posted by Amy Davidson

It takes the National Rifle Association to build a campaign for guns around resentment toward children—specifically, resentment toward two girls named Sasha and Malia. On Tuesday, a month after twenty first graders were shot dead in Newtown, Connecticut, and a day before President Obama was set to announce a set of proposals for curbing gun violence, the N.R.A. released a video that opened with a cartoon image of an arm holding a lunchbox with the Presidential seal on it. “Are the President’s kids more important than yours?” it asks. Obama’s children, the narrator says, have armed guards at their school; why don’t yours? Obama wants rich people’s money—there is a shot of him gloating over a pile of cash—“but he’s just another elitist hypocrite when it comes to a fair share of security.” He gets guns, while ordinary Americans are shunted off into ominous gun-free school zones. Gun laws, apparently, are the new busing.

Perhaps the N.R.A. could have made a more frank play for fear and anger—maybe with an ad showing federal forces breaking into homes and melting down rifles. But it could hardly have been more transparent or, for an organization that works hard for the interests of gun manufacturers, more cynical. [Update: White House spokesman Jay Carney said in a statement that for the N.R.A. “to go so far as to make the safety of the President’s children the subject of an attack ad is repugnant and cowardly.”] The personal animosity toward Obama is striking, but it is no longer entirely surprising; the N.R.A. will throw whatever it can get its hands on, even dirt, even things that are uglier. The White House will need to reckon with that or it will waste a moment in which there is an opening, however narrow, to get something done about gun control. Guns cannot be another area in which Obama underestimates the irrationality of the other side until it’s too late for him to do anything but look like the sane one.

In talking about what he wants to do about guns, Obama has tried, as much as he can, to sound like a practical man. In a press conference earlier this week, he said he would be coming to the American people with “a list of sensible, common-sense steps that can be taken to make sure that the kinds of violence we saw at Newtown doesn’t happen again.” In the few minutes that followed he used variations on the same phrase a half dozen times, talking about what he could do “in a sensible way that comports with the Second Amendment”; “what makes sense”; “common-sense gun control”; and, again, “some sensible steps that we can take.” Responsible gun owners, he said, had nothing to worry about from “some sensible, responsible legislation in this area.”

The proposals he will reportedly introduce on Wednesday do, indeed, sound sensible, addressing the sorts of things that many Americans might be surprised to realize are even legal, like the “gun-show,” or private-dealer loophole, which allows many gun-buyers to circumvent the few background checks that are on the books if they buy their weapons at an exhibition or just from someone who put an ad on the Web. The President is expected to ask Congress to renew the assault-weapons ban and put limits on the sizes of magazines of bullets. According to Politico, there will also be a proposal for a new interstate gun-trafficking law.

Some of these measures “will require legislation,” Obama said, which may be difficult at a time when Congress is one of the few institutions more fevered than the N.R.A. “Some of them I can accomplish through executive action,” he added. According to press reports, there could be as many as a nineteen executive orders. [UPDATE: In the end, there were twenty-three executive orders and actions.] The President will tell the Justice Department to enforce the laws we have. (As it is, no one really expects to be punished for lying on background-check forms, for example.) He’ll put in place some import regulations, and have federal agencies share mental-health records. And he’ll tell the Centers for Disease Control, which is supposed to study the things that kill, sicken, and injure

Americans, to take a hard look at the effects of gun violence. Gun lobbyists had worked to prevent the C.D.C. from doing its job in this area—a bizarre priority, but a characteristic one. Who but the N.R.A. would make obliviousness an agenda item?

These measures, too, sound relatively modest. And yet Steve Stockman, a Republican Congressman from Texas, has already called them grounds for impeachment, saying “I will seek to thwart this action by any means necessary.” Edwin Meese, who was Reagan’s attorney general, asked by Newsmax about the potential use of executive orders, also said that if Obama “tried to override the Second Amendment in any way, I believe it would be an impeachable offense.” The President is presented not as a political opponent, but as a criminal. This weekend, on “Meet the Press,” Colin Powell, a longtime Republican, talked about “a dark vein of intolerance in some parts of the Party.” He saw it in characterizations of the President, and in the G.O.P.’s dismissal of minorities and the poor. We should be prepared to see it invade the gun debate.

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME



Why Doesn't Florida Senator Marco Rubio Know How Old the Earth Is?

By Phil Plait

Posted Monday, Nov. 19, 2012, at 1:47 PM

[...]

In an interview published by GQ magazine, reporter Michael Hainey asks the senator simply, “How old do you think the Earth is?” The answer too should be simple. Rubio’s reply, however is anything but:

I'm not a scientist, man. I can tell you what recorded history says, I can tell you what the Bible says, but I think that's a dispute amongst theologians and I think it has nothing to do with the gross domestic product or economic growth of the United States. I think the age of the universe has zero to do with how our economy is going to grow. I'm not a scientist. I don't think I'm qualified to answer a question like that. At the end of the day, I think there are multiple theories out there on how the universe was created and I think this is a country where people should have the opportunity to teach them all. I think parents should be able to teach their kids what their faith says, what science says. Whether the Earth was created in 7 days, or 7 actual eras, I'm not sure we'll ever be able to answer that. It's one of the great mysteries.

Actually, it's *not* a great mystery. It used to be ... a century ago. I *am* a scientist, and I can tell you that nowadays—thanks to science—we know the age to amazing accuracy. The age of the Earth is 4.54 billion years ... plus or minus 50 million years. That’s a number known to an accuracy of 99 percent, which is pretty dang good.

Sen. Rubio’s answer, however, is so confused and error-riddled its difficult to know where to start.

Right off the bat, he mentions the Bible in terms of the Earth’s age several times, including the “seven days” part. This is not necessarily an indication he’s a young-Earth creationist—that is, he thinks the Earth is ten thousand years old or less—but it does indicate some pretty fuzzy thinking on his part, and it makes me think he supports religious findings over scientific ones (or is trying to not tick off an electorate who does). The fact that he says theologians argue over interpreting the biblical age of the Earth, and doesn’t mention that scientists know the actual number, is distressing to say the least.

When he does mention science, he downplays it. About the age of the Earth, he says, “I’m not sure we’ll ever be able to answer that.” In fact, the age of the Earth and the solar system is one of the unifying concepts of science *specifically* mentioned in the U.S. National Education Standards—an educator-created list of concepts which all students should know upon graduating high school.

Did I mention that Sen. Rubio sits on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee?

Which makes his equivocation all the more tragic. I know that a large fraction of the people in the United States think the Earth is less than 10,000 years old. These people are wrong, and provably so, but of course they have the right to believe anything they want. But when someone believes in something that is provably false, and then they act on this belief ... that’s when it gets very, very dangerous.

I got a chill when I read Rubio’s statements, “I think it has nothing to do with the gross domestic product or economic growth of the United States. I think the age of the universe has zero to do with how our economy is going to grow.”

Perhaps Senator Rubio is unaware that science—and its sisters engineering and technology— are actually the very foundation of our country’s economy? *All* of our industry, *all* of our technology,

everything that keeps our country functioning at all can be traced back to scientific research and a scientific understanding of the Universe.

Cell phones, computers, cars, machinery, medicine, the Internet, manufacturing, communication, agriculture, transportation, on and on ... all of these industries rely on science to work. Without basic research none of these would exist.

And all of science points to the age of the Earth being much, much older than Senator Rubio intimates. Astronomy, biology, relativity, chemistry, physics, anatomy, sociology, linguistics, cosmology, anthropology, evolutionary science, and especially radiometric dating of rocks all indicate the Universe, and our home planet Earth, are far older than any claims of a few thousand years. The overwhelming consensus is that the Earth is billions of years old.* And all of these sciences are the basis of the technology that is our country's life blood.

Senator Rubio is exactly and *precisely* wrong. **Science, and how it tells us the age of the Earth, has everything to do with how our economy will grow.** By teaching our kids actual science, we can guarantee the future of this country and its economic growth. By hiding it from them, by equivocating about it with them, by providing false balance between reality and wishful thinking, what we guarantee is a future workforce that can't distinguish between what's real and what isn't.

That's a formula for failure. And you don't need to be a scientist to see that.

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Superman's America

Fighting Nazis, the KKK, and terrorists, our hero acts as moral compass

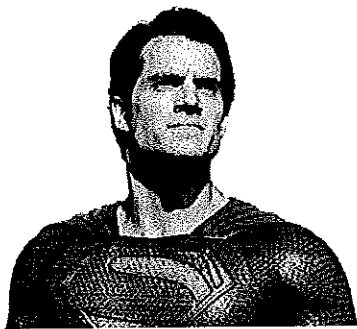
By Larry Tye

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

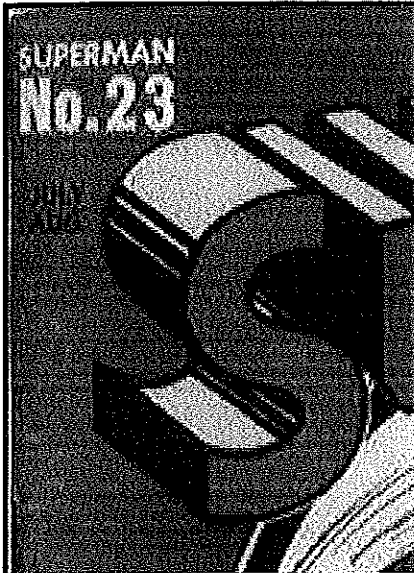


Henry Cavill as Superman in "Man of Steel."

This is the season of Superman in America — a time when the Last Son of Krypton is celebrating his milestone 75th birthday, Warner Bros. is releasing its "Man of Steel" movie that it hopes will be the biggest ever for a superhero, and everyone from comic book aficionados to Ivy League academics are asking what, if anything, our most enduring icon can tell us about not just himself but about us.

Ah, you say, the Metropolis Marvel — I know him! But did you know that Superman stood up to Hitler and Stalin before America did? The comic-book superhero never revealed how he voted, but during the Great Depression he was a New Dealer hellbent on upending slumlords and wife-beaters. A decade later he used his radio broadcast to expose the evils of anti-Semitism along with the savagery of the Ku Klux Klan. And in his first TV appearance the muscle-bound alien stood up to rabble-rousing mobs at the very moment when Senator Joseph McCarthy was whipping those mobs into a Red Scare.

While we generally think of pop-culture heroes — especially old-fashioned ones like Superman — as mere echoes or parodies of the wider society, sometimes they help shape that culture and its mores. That is what Superman has done repeatedly over the last century, nowhere more so than when he took on the KKK in a 1946 series called "Clan of the Fiery Cross." It was a time when professional baseball, public bathrooms, and even the Army and Navy still were divided into white and "colored" realms. Jews, "orientals," and Roman Catholics still saw signs saying they need not apply. The Ku Klux Klan wasn't as powerful as it once had been, but it didn't have to be. It already had planted doubts about anyone who looked or prayed differently; those who didn't heed its warnings could always be reminded with a flaming cross or lynching noose.



Robert Maxwell didn't care. He detested the Klan and had been given the keys to the Superman radio kingdom. The wordsmith-turned-pitchman-turned-radio-producer knew he had to get to the kids before the haters did. He hired one of America's most trusted education experts to tell him how. They gathered all the intelligence they could on the Klan's passwords and rituals, its ways of corrupting politicians, and its means of wrapping itself in the flag. They consulted psychologists, psychiatrists, and propaganda specialists. They even had a name for their bold enterprise: "Operation Intolerance." Their secret weapon — the surest way to win over the children and take down the xenophobes — was to sic on them, at the speed of sound, America's most trusted and ferocious do-gooder.

"America's Secret Weapon" was published in 1943.

It worked well enough that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Veterans Committee awarded Maxwell special citations for leading the battle against bigots. Mutual Broadcasting System said it was "prideful" to be Superman's station. Sharing that glow were the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Newspaper Guild, and the Calvin Newspaper Service, most of whose readers were black. None of his progressive boosters minded that a dining car porter speaking dialect was about the only black face in Superman stories. In New England, radio stations banded together to get permission to start their broadcasts 15 minutes late, ensuring that young fans wouldn't miss their hero while their parents listened to coverage of that summer's pennant run by Ted Williams's Boston Red Sox.

That lesson of how fantasy characters can inspire us hasn't been lost in our times or on today's flesh-and-blood heroes. It is what has driven Warner Bros. to fashion a new Man of Steel for an era that needs an uplift after too long a recession and too many terrorist bombs. It is why Senator Barack Obama posed in front of a Superman statue just before his election as president, joking that he, too, came from Krypton. Surely he understood better than anyone the value of bonding to such a symbol of strength and honor. And it is why the Man of Tomorrow is as popular today as he has been in every era back to his begetting in the 1930s. That is more than we can say for Jim Thorpe or Dwight Eisenhower, the Phantom, the Lone Ranger, or even the pride of Massachusetts (and Superman fan) John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Our choice of heroes, it turns out, says a lot not simply about them but about us. And there's no better way to understand how modern-day heroes can serve as role models than to look at Superman, who has tapped into the American psyche more effectively than any of our champions and, as a result, has lasted longer than all of them.

Larry Tye is author of "Superman: The High-Flying History of America's Most Enduring Hero."

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

THE WASHINGTON POST

Five myths about privacy

By Daniel J. Solove, Friday, June 14, 12:03 AM

Daniel J. Solove is a law professor at George Washington University, the founder of the privacy and data-security training company TeachPrivacy and the author of "Nothing to Hide."

The disclosure of two secret government surveillance programs — one involving phone records and the other personal data from Internet companies — has sparked debate about privacy and national security. Has the government gone too far? Or not far enough? How much privacy should we sacrifice for security? To discuss these issues productively, some myths must be dispelled.

1. The collection of phone numbers and other "metadata" isn't much of a threat to privacy.

Don't worry, argue defenders of these surveillance programs: The government is gathering innocuous data, not intimate secrets. "Nobody is listening to your telephone calls," President Obama declared. Intelligence agencies are "looking at phone numbers and durations of calls; they are not looking at people's names, and they're not looking at content."

But "metadata" about phone calls can be quite revealing. Whom someone is talking to may be just as sensitive as what's being said. Calls to doctors or health-care providers can suggest certain medical conditions. Calls to businesses say something about a person's interests and lifestyle. Calls to friends reveal associations, potentially pointing to someone's political, religious or philosophical beliefs. Even when individual calls are innocuous, a detailed phone record can present a telling portrait of the person associated with a telephone number. Collect millions of those records, and there's the potential to trace the entire country's social and professional connections.

2. Surveillance must be secret to protect us.

The administration and intelligence agencies have been quick to defend the classified status of the phone and Internet surveillance programs. "Disclosing information about the specific methods the government uses to collect communications can obviously give our enemies a 'playbook' of how to avoid detection," said Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. National Security Agency Director Keith Alexander went further: "Grave harm has already been done by opening this up." Presidents Obama and George W. Bush have both perpetuated this myth.

Of course, if the government is trying to gather data about a particular suspect, keeping the specifics of surveillance efforts secret will decrease the likelihood of that suspect altering his or her behavior.

But secrecy at the level of an individual suspect is different from keeping the very existence of massive surveillance programs secret. The public must know about the general outlines of surveillance activities in order to evaluate whether the government is achieving the appropriate balance between privacy and security. What kind of information is gathered? How is it used? How securely is it kept? What kind of oversight is there? Are these activities even legal? These questions can't be answered, and the government can't be held accountable, if surveillance programs are completely classified. With the phone and Internet programs, it isn't clear that sufficient protective measures are in place. The president and security officials assure us there are, but without transparency, we can't really know.

3. Only people with something to hide should be concerned about their privacy.

In the wake of the leaks about government surveillance, writer and privacy supporter Daniel Sieradski started a Twitter account with the handle @_nothingtohide and has been retweeting variations on this myth. A typical tweet: "I don't care if the government knows everything I do. I am fully confident that I will not be arrested."

When privacy is compromised, though, the problems can go far beyond the exposure of illegal activity or embarrassing information. It can provide the government with a tremendous amount of power over its people. It can undermine trust and chill free speech and association. It can make people vulnerable to abuse of their information and further intrusions into their lives.

Even if a person is doing nothing wrong, in a free society, that person shouldn't have to justify every action that government officials might view as suspicious. A key component of freedom is not having to worry about how to explain oneself all the time.

4. National security requires major sacrifices in privacy.

Obama invoked this myth this month when he said, "You can't have 100 percent security and also then have 100 percent privacy and zero inconvenience." The implication is that those upset about surveillance fail to recognize that we must trade some privacy for security.

But usually it's not either-or. As Obama himself said in his 2009 inaugural address: "As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals."

Protecting privacy doesn't need to mean scuttling a security measure. Most people concerned about the privacy implications of government surveillance aren't arguing for no surveillance and absolute privacy. They'd be fine giving up some privacy as long as appropriate controls, limitations, oversight and accountability mechanisms were in place.

This sentiment was evident in the public outcry over the Transportation Security Administration's use of full-body X-ray scanners that displayed what looked like nude images of airline passengers. No one wanted to end airport security checks. They wanted checks that were less intrusive. Congress required the TSA to use less-revealing software, and the agency ended up switching to different machines.

5. Americans aren't especially bothered by government intrusions into their privacy.

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

A red state/blue state chasm

By Fred Hiatt,

Apr 21, 2013 11:53 PM EDT

The Washington Post

In the week since modest gun control died in the Senate, those of us who don't think guns make the country safer have been inclined to blame a few cowardly senators whose votes could have shifted the outcome.

Unfortunately, the problem is bigger than that. Contrary to what then-Sen. Barack Obama told us in his inspiring breakout speech to the Democratic convention of 2004, there *is* a blue America and a red America. And the colors have been deepening over the decade since Obama spoke.

This isn't an original thought. Journalist Bill Bishop coined the phrase "the big sort" in 2004 to describe the increasing political homogeneity of American living patterns. It comes as no surprise that some 60 percent of households in Montana own guns, compared with 13 percent in Rhode Island; or that, with similar populations, Missouri has six abortion providers and Maryland 34.

But the red-state/blue-state fissure seems to be turning into a chasm in the months since President Obama won reelection. After the Newtown massacre, Connecticut and Maryland enacted sweeping bans on assault weapons and other gun-control measures. South Dakota enacted a bill authorizing school employees to carry guns.

North Dakota enacted a bill that, if enforced, seems likely to ban most abortions, while Maryland became one of the nine states (plus the District) that recognize same-sex marriages. Meanwhile, such marriages remain illegal elsewhere and, in 30 states, unconstitutional.

As Ronald Brownstein and Stephanie Czekalinski point out in the *National Journal*, the chasm doesn't run only through social issues. Blue-state governors such as Jerry Brown in California and Martin O'Malley in Maryland have engineered tax and budget increases while red-state governors such as Sam Brownback in Kansas are cutting the income tax, the budget and the state workforce. The Kansas legislature is now so far to the right that conservative Brownback finds himself trying to moderate its enthusiasm for budget-slashing.

There are still a handful of purple states. In a few (such as Virginia), the parties have compromised and made progress; in others (Wisconsin), they have gone to political war. But as *The Post's* Dan Balz pointed out recently, the number of states that are divided evenly enough for presidential candidates to fight over has been steadily dwindling. In 2012, only four (Florida, Ohio, Virginia and North Carolina) were decided by five percentage points or fewer.

The encouraging news, if there is any, is that these patterns aren't as immutable as they were, say, with the division between slave and free states before the Civil War. Populations shift over time, attitudes change, political parties evolve. The migration of foreign-born families into the heartland, for example, may help make immigration reform more achievable than it would be if immigrants were clustered only in traditional coastal cities. And, as Third Way's Matt Bennett pointed out to me, polls show voters often are more moderate than their politicians, even in deep blue or bright red states.

But on many issues the country is sharply divided, as it was between Obama and Mitt Romney (Obama won just 51.1 percent of votes). And while congressional gerrymandering amplifies the effect of the division, even fair redistricting would not bridge the chasm, as Rob Richie explained in a *Post* op-ed last fall. (Richie's solution: Create multi-member House districts, so that the minority party in any given region could elect at least one out of three legislators.)

One result is that purported adherence to states' rights has become more situational than ever. Red-staters want to ignore *Roe v. Wade* while insisting that the most permissive state's concealed-carry law be accepted across the country. Advocates of gay marriage find themselves simultaneously against the federal Defense of Marriage Act because it doesn't recognize Massachusetts's primacy in allowing same-sex marriage and against California's ban on same-sex marriage because it violates the U.S. Constitution.

On some issues, liberal and conservative policies may get a chance to compete. Will the well-funded schools of Maryland help attract business and maintain the state's prosperity despite higher taxes, as O'Malley maintains? Or will Brownback's tax cuts more effectively drive growth? As red states resist Obamacare and blue states embrace it, where will people be healthier?

Unfortunately, across a range of issues state diversity won't work very well. A ban on assault weapons in Maryland is of limited use if you can buy a gun in Virginia. A married gay couple with children could risk custody if they move from Massachusetts to Mississippi.

But with Americans living in two separate worlds, that may be the reality we face for some time to come.

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Charles Ramsey, who rescued Cleveland women held captive, enjoys fame in the District

By Marc Fisher, Published: May 12

Charles Ramsey, the Cleveland dishwasher who heard a scream, kicked in a door and rescued three women from horrific captivity, stepped out of a white Rolls-Royce on U Street NW Friday night and seconds later was on Alex Soto's Facebook page.

"You're kidding me," shouted Soto, who was strolling in front of Ben's Chili Bowl with his girlfriend when Ramsey miraculously emerged from the gleaming Rolls. "You're, like, a lifesaver. I've been watching this on the news all the time and here you are! This is Facebook material!"

Soto got the shot of his friend posing with a smiling hero and bid him farewell with a heartfelt, "Keep America safe!" Ramsey could barely take two steps before he was spun around to pose with a D.C. cop on a Segway.

It was day five of Ramsey's moment, and he had already morphed from hero to celebrity. Here he was in Washington, flown in, along with his instant entourage of three young brothers — his neighbors and friends — and their tough-guy uncle, by boxing promoter and radio talk host Rock Newman, for a 14-hour visit that started with two bites of a chili half-smoke at Ben's and continued with a private tour of the presidential yacht, the Sequoia; dinner at a bordello-red burlesque place; a visit to a club; a couple of hours of shut-eye at a hotel at National Harbor; and an appearance on Newman's Saturday morning radio show.

Then back to the airport and home to Cleveland, where more madness awaits.

As does his dishwashing job at Hodge's Restaurant, where he intends to report at 4 p.m. Monday despite a crazed week in which he told his story over and over to the likes of Anderson Cooper and George Stephanopoulos, a slew of FBI agents and random passersby.

Ramsey was cool with well-wishers on the street, comfortable bantering with executives on the presidential yacht, charming and funny on Newman's show, yet clearly anxious about getting back to dishwashing Monday.

"I work for a living, man, and I will until I'm terminated," he said. "I was suspended from work, so I gotta show. I live up to my obligation."

Ramsey, who is 43, was at work a couple of weeks ago when he leaned over and a couple of rounds of ammo from an AK-47 dropped out of his pocket. He didn't have any weapon; the rounds were souvenirs, gifts from a friend who had just returned from serving in Afghanistan, but his boss didn't want anything like that in his place and sent Ramsey home.

The punishment was painful — losing a \$269 weekly paycheck was a significant setback — but ultimately fortuitous, because, as Ramsey said, "If I hadn't been suspended, I wouldn't have been at home to hear the scream."

Amanda Berry's first shout for help, which Ramsey heard as he ate a Big Mac in his living room next door, "was a scream you never heard before," he said on Newman's show. Ramsey found the woman locked behind a screen door that wouldn't open. He tried to open it with one hand, pulling as she pushed.

"I'm debating to put the Big Mac down or finish my sandwich," he said. "I'm not letting go because I just bought it. I couldn't figure out why she was freaking out." Finally, he put the burger down, pulled with two hands and then kicked out the bottom panel of the door, springing Berry.

She asked him to call 911 and Ramsey told her to do it. "I don't know how," she replied, staring at his smartphone. "I've been gone for a while."

Ramsey, growing tired of the week's accumulation of accolades, made clear that he felt wronged by his neighbor. If he'd gotten his hands on Ariel Castro, the neighbor charged with the three kidnappings, "I'd be in the penitentiary," he said. "I'd be the first person to take a man's head off and kick it down the street like a soccer ball."

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Thanks to that kind of frank talk, the Ramsey phenomenon shows no sign of abating. His original TV interview about the rescue has drawn nearly 7 million views on YouTube, which was then topped by 9 million viewings of a video that turned Ramsey's infectious storytelling style into a catchy tune called "Dead Giveaway."

"I knew something was wrong when a little pretty white girl ran to a black man's arms," Ramsey's autotuned voice croons in the remix. "We eat ribs with this dude, but we didn't have a clue."

Ramsey has been nothing but open about the racial angle of the story — a black man living in a Hispanic neighborhood helps save a white woman from her Puerto Rican captor and then sees his heroism tainted by news accounts of his conviction in a decade-old domestic violence case in which he hit his wife.

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME



How Obama Embraced NSA Spying

by [Daniel Klaidman](#) Jun 7, 2013 5:15 PM EDT

And why some Bush officials objected to the program back in 2004. Daniel Klaidman reports.

The revelation that the Obama administration authorized the collection of vast amounts of telephone records has the media and experts scrambling to understand the true nature of the program's intrusion into the privacy of Americans. Earlier today, in an attempt to calm the "hype," President Obama made his first comments on the surveillance controversy. "Nobody is listening to your calls," he sought to assure the American people, pointing out that the program sweeps up so-called "metadata," the time, numbers, and duration of calls rather than the content of communications. But following news of the Justice Department's spying on reporters to catch leakers, Americans can be forgiven if they are reluctant to simply take the president at his word.

So how to assess what if any real threat the metadata program poses to our civil liberties? One way is to look at precisely why dissidents within the Bush administration opposed the Terrorist Surveillance Program. The Obama initiative appears to be an outgrowth of the TSP—an effort to warehouse massive amounts of communications data to detect patterns and links that might indicate terrorist activity—with at least one significant difference: under the TSP, which began shortly after September 11, the data was collected without any court authorization.

That is until 2004, when, then-Deputy Attorney General James Comey—coincidentally, Obama's expected nominee for FBI director—refused to reauthorize the wiretapping program. Comey and a number of other top officials concluded that the intelligence effort violated the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which requires judicial approval for domestic spying. The standoff led to the famous hospital room scene in which Comey thwarted two top Bush aides from pressuring an ill Attorney General John Ashcroft to reauthorize the program. Comey ultimately told Bush that he and much of the department's top leadership would resign if the program was reauthorized over their objections. The collection initiative was suspended, while the government looked for ways to place it on a firmer legal foundation.

By the time Obama was elected, the program had been brought within the law. It was placed under the supervision of a national security court, and both FISA and the Patriot Act were amended. Moreover, by then Congress had been more fulsomely briefed on the program, and significant numbers of officials within the executive branch had been "read in," all of which increased checks against potential abuses. (The TSP had at one time been held so closely that even Fran Townsend, Bush's chief counterterrorism adviser, was not aware of its existence.)

During the transition, Obama received a detailed briefing on the program—why it was valuable in the fight against terrorism and how it had been reformed to comply with the law. While Obama asked a lot of lawyerly questions, two sources familiar with the session say that when the briefing was over the president seemed ready to embrace it. Sure enough, it became a major weapon in his counterterrorism arsenal. One senior administration official confirmed that the database has been tapped for virtually every investigation relating to international terrorism. And sources tell The Daily Beast that it was the metadata program that led to the identification of Najibullah Zazi, the Afghan coffee vendor who plotted to attack the New York subway system in 2009. (Zazi was thwarted by the FBI and the New York Police Department after traveling from Colorado to New York City.)

But there's more to the story. The fact that the TSP was in violation of FISA was not the only reason Comey and the other dissidents objected to it. Sources familiar with their thinking say many of them were deeply uncomfortable with the vast and indiscriminate scope of the program. And it appears that its sweeping nature has not changed since the Obama administration took over. A source who has been briefed on the current effort describes a system in which the National Security Agency, with the cooperation of most of the country's largest telecommunications companies, is able to vacuum up the records of calls and emails of most Americans. By one estimate, the amount of data the NSA sucks up in close to real time is equivalent to one quarter of the entire Encyclopedia Britannica per second. All this metadata is then sifted by the NSA to detect patterns and links that might indicate terrorist activity. And when law enforcement or intelligence officials obtain the name of a suspected terrorist, they can run it against the database for hits.

It's not clear that such a massive dragnet violates federal statutes or the Constitution, especially now that it is court authorized. But it was President Obama who said at his recent counterterrorism speech at the National Defense University, in the context of drones, that just because a counterterrorism tactic is legal or effective "is not to say it is wise or moral in every instance." The debate on that question has at last begun.

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

WALL STREET JOURNAL

February 12, 2013, 7:13 p.m. ET

The Economic Windfall of Immigration Reform

From 1990-2010, scientists and engineers admitted by the H-1B visa program added \$615 billion to the economy.

After months of acrimony, it now appears that immigration reform, and a comprehensive one at that, is within reach. While most of the debates have been about the immediate consequences of any change in policy, the goal should be to promote economic growth over the next 40 years.

Immigration is a powerful engine for bringing skills, workers and ideas into the United States. Yet if history is any guide, this country gets a chance at substantial immigration reform only every four to five decades. Thus the economic gains from "getting the immigration system right" will be large and long-lasting.

Much of the reform debate has centered around granting legal status to undocumented immigrants, conditional upon payment of fees and back taxes. From an economic point of view, this will likely have only a modest impact, especially in the short run.

Most of the undocumented are already working. Probably with legal status they will be able to obtain somewhat higher wages, 5% to 10% higher, most studies say, and consume and spend more. The fees and back-taxes paid to achieve legal status also will be a welcome source of revenue for the government.

The really significant payoff will be when newly legal immigrants are more willing to invest in training, and to move between employers as they participate fully in the economy and feel more certain about their future. The younger among them will be more likely to pursue an education. These investments will increase their human capital, wages, productivity and taxpaying ability, with positive effects on the economy.

Yet the problem of undocumented immigrants is likely to come back unless we find better ways to legally accommodate new immigrants. Much larger economic gains are achievable if we reorganize the immigration system to do that, following three fundamental principles.

The first is simplification. The current visa system is the accumulation of many disconnected provisions. Some rules, set in the past—such as the 7% limit on permanent permits to any nationality—are arbitrary and produce delays, bottlenecks and inefficiencies. There are many different kinds of temporary visas, each with specific provisions, numeric limits, requirements and fees. The disconnect between temporary and permanent visas implies that people who have worked for years and are well integrated in the U.S. have no guarantee of obtaining permanent residence.

A more rational approach would have the government set overall targets and simple rules for temporary and permanent working permits, deciding the balance between permits in "skilled" and "unskilled" jobs. But the government should not micromanage permits, rules and limits in specific occupations. Employers compete to hire immigrants, and they are best suited at selecting the individuals who will be the most productive in the jobs that are needed.

The second important principle is that the number of temporary work visas should respond to the demand for labor. Currently the limited number of these visas is set with no consideration for economic conditions. Their number is rarely revised. In periods of high demand, the economic incentives to bypass the limits and hire undocumented workers are large.

Temporary work visas that are responsive to labor demand would make enforcement of the immigration laws easier. The government should concentrate on checking that the immigrants admitted are law-abiding citizens and that companies follow the rules. In a study for The Hamilton Project written with Pia Orrenius (of the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank) and Madeline Zavodny (at Agnes Scott College), we propose that temporary permits to hire immigrants should be made tradable

and sold by the government in auctions to employers. Such a "cap and trade" system would ensure efficiency. The auction price of permits would signal the demand for immigrants and guide the upward and downward adjustment of the permit numbers over years.

The third principle governing immigration reform is that scientists, engineers and innovators are the main drivers of productivity and of economic growth. A 2002 study in the American Economic Review by Stanford economist Charles I. Jones found that half of the productivity growth in the U.S. since 1950 was driven by the increase in the number of scientists and engineers doing research and development. Chad Sparber (Colgate University), Kevin Shih (University of California, Davis) and I have found in a study published in January that foreign scientists and engineers brought into this country under the H-1B visa program have contributed to 10%-20% of the yearly productivity growth in the U.S. during the period 1990-2010.

This allowed the GDP per capita to be 4% higher than it would have been without them—that's an aggregate increase of output of \$615 billion as of 2010. Our study also found that these immigrants did not hurt but helped wage and employment perspectives of U.S.-born scientists and engineers. More scientists and more innovation in the U.S. mean more labs, universities and companies doing research and creating jobs for Americans too. There is abundant other research showing that foreign scientists and engineers contribute substantially to science, innovation and productivity growth in the U.S., with benefits spreading well beyond the lab and research facility where they work.

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

The Wall Street Journal

High-Tech Cheaters Pose Test

New Industry Sprouts to Curb Hacking, Wireless Transmission of Exam Questions

By CAMERON MCWHIRTER

10 June 2013

As computer-based testing becomes more common across the country, cheaters and those trying to prevent it are going high-tech.

Fighting test cheating is an age-old battle, as shown by recent major scandals involving pencil-and-paper exams. But worries about hacking and other sophisticated forms of cheating, such as wirelessly transmitting questions outside of an exam room, has testing companies, test-security firms and academics rushing to develop measures to reduce or catch cheating. Companies plan to soon start selling security packages to school districts and licensing boards.

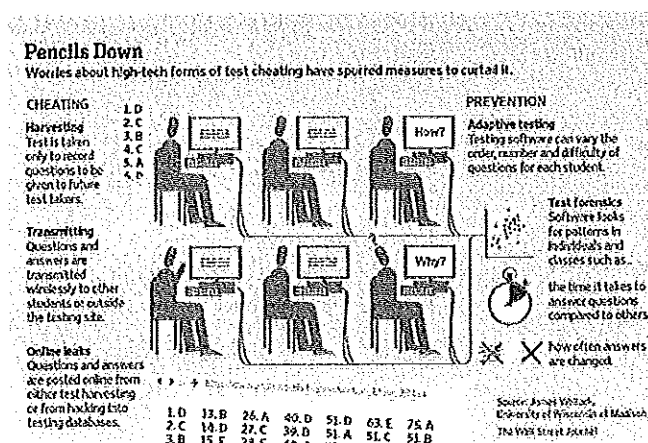
Security "is heavy on our minds," said spokesman Ed Colby for ACT, the nonprofit that administers a national college-placement exam that was taken by about 1.7 million of last year's high-school graduates. Mr. Colby said ACT plans to offer computer-based testing, in which questions are answered on computer terminals, for hundreds of thousands of students beginning in 2015.

Academic research into fighting high-tech test cheating has exploded, with national conferences, a new anticheating handbook and a flood of scholarly papers on the subject. "Even five years ago, almost none of this existed," said James Wollack, a University of Wisconsin educational psychology professor and co-editor of a new handbook on test security. "As a field, it's expanding exponentially."

The new methods are meant to combat acts such as "question harvesting," in which test takers use advanced technology to download questions or capture their images with digital cameras or other devices while taking a test, then transmit them wirelessly outside of a testing room. These questions then can end up for sale on Internet sites.

While stealing tests and answers isn't new, testing companies worry the digital and wireless age have made stealing vast amounts of information quickly much easier.

More high-tech forms of cheating are a far cry from recent scandals, such as one in Atlanta in which the city school district's former superintendent and 34 other educators face state felony charges that they conspired to erase students' wrong answers on paper tests, then cover it up.



"We've had cheating for literally thousands of years," said John Fremer, a co-founder of Caveon Test Security, one of the nation's largest companies specializing in preventing and detecting test cheating. "So to have the notion that now it's going to be different isn't plausible."

Major testing companies like CTB/McGraw-Hill and the Graduate Management Admissions Council are developing security packages to sell to schools and licensing boards. Test-security firms such as Caveon, of Midvale, Utah, are quickly adding products to combat cheating on computer-based tests.

While most big testing firms allow paper-and-pencil exams as an option, computer-based exams are spreading because "it allows us to meet students in the world they live in now," said Mr. Colby of ACT, which is based in Iowa City, Iowa.

Cheat-busting technology being developed includes adaptive testing, where questions are different for each student, so "the test is no longer a fixed form," said Wim van der Linden, chief research scientist for CTB/McGraw-Hill. The Monterey, Calif., firm is planning to launch products to sell to testers by late this year or early next year, Mr. van der Linden said.

The Graduate Management Admissions Council, of Reston, Va., has developed technology that includes ways to analyze test responses for irregularities, such as everyone in a certain class giving the same answer in the same amount of time, according to Lawrence Rudner, who heads up the council's efforts to design tests that are fair, accurate and not susceptible to cheating.

Wireless technology is another threat, Mr. van der Linden said, because it allows cheaters to reach people outside the classroom during a test. Most computer-based tests are conducted on systems that block Internet access during the exam.

Mr. van der Linden said a person recently taking a driver's license test outside the U.S. used a tiny video camera in his glasses to transmit questions wirelessly to a person outside the test room, who then relayed correct answers via a small earpiece.

For now, test givers believe computers give them the advantage. Neal Kingston, director of the University of Kansas' Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, said computer-based testing allows the test-givers to see abnormal patterns in test answers, and in some cases allows them to see problems as the tests are being taken in real-time.

But some educators prefer pencil-and-paper exams. Computers are prone to hacking and other security breaches, making cheating on standardized tests more likely, not less, said Jesse Hagopian, a history teacher at Garfield High School in Seattle, where faculty have generally opposed standardized tests.

"The idea that [computers] would be the solution to cheating doesn't make sense to me on the face of it," he said.

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

The Atlantic.com 27 January 2013

The Most Ridiculous Law of 2013 (So Far): It Is Now a Crime to Unlock Your Smartphone

By Derek Khanna

When did we decide that we wanted a law that could make unlocking your smartphone a criminal offense? The answer is that we never really decided.

This is now the law of the land:

ADVISORY

BY DECREE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

**IT SHALL HENCEFORCE BE ORDERED THAT AMERICANS SHALL NOT UNLOCK
THEIR OWN SMARTPHONES.**

PENALTY: In some situations, first time offenders may be fined up to \$500,000, imprisoned for five years, or both. For repeat offenders, the maximum penalty increases to a fine of \$1,000,000, imprisonment for up to ten years, or both.

That's right, starting this weekend it is illegal to unlock new phones to make them available on other carriers.

I have deep sympathy for any individual who happens to get jail time for this offense. I am sure that other offenders would not take kindly to smartphone un-lockers.

But seriously: It's embarrassing and unacceptable that we are at the mercy of prosecutorial and judicial discretion to avoid the implementation of draconian laws that could implicate average Americans in a crime subject to up to a \$500,000 fine and up to five years in prison.

If people see this and respond, well no one is really going to get those types of penalties, my response is: Why is that acceptable? While people's worst fears may be a bit unfounded, why do we accept a system where we allow such discretionary authority? If you or your child were arrested for this, would it comfort you to know that the prosecutor and judge could technically throw the book at you? Would you relax assuming that they probably wouldn't make an example out of you or your kid? When as a society did we learn to accept the federal government having such Orwellian power? And is this the same country that used jury nullification against laws that it found to be unjust as an additional check upon excessive government power? [The only silver lining is that realistically it's more likely that violators would be subject to civil liability under Section 1203 of the DMCA, instead of the fine and jail penalties, but this is still unacceptable (but anyone who accepts payments to help others unlock their phones would clearly be subject to the fine of up to \$500,000 and up to five years in jail).]

WHO REALLY OWNS YOUR PHONE?

When did we decide that we wanted a law that could make unlocking your smartphone a criminal offense?

The answer is that we never really decided. Instead, Congress passed the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) in 1998 to outlaw technologies that bypass copyright protections. This sounds like a great idea, but in practice it has terrible, and widely acknowledged, negative consequences that affect consumers and new innovation. The DMCA leaves it up to the Librarian of Congress (LOC) to issue exemptions from the law, exceptions that were recognized to be necessary given the broad language of the statute that swept a number of ordinary acts and technologies as potential DMCA circumvention violations.

Every three years groups like the American Foundation for the Blind have to lobby Congress to protect an exception for the blind allowing for books to be read aloud. Can you imagine a more ridiculous regulation than one that requires a lobby group for the blind to come to Capitol Hill every

three years to explain that the blind still can't read books on their own and therefore need this exception?

Until recently it was illegal to jailbreak your own iPhone, and after Saturday it will be illegal to unlock a new smartphone, thereby allowing it to switch carriers. This is a result of the exception to the DMCA lapsing. It was not a mistake, but rather an intentional choice by the Librarian of Congress, that this was no longer fair use and acceptable. The Electronic Frontier Foundation among other groups has detailed the many failings of the DMCA Triennial Rulemaking process, which in this case led to this exception lapsing.

Conservatives should be leading the discussion on fixing this problem. Conservatives are understandably skeptical of agencies and unelected bureaucrats wielding a large amount of power to regulate, and are proponents of solutions like the REINS Act (which has over 121 co-sponsors). However, if Congress truly wants to rein in the power of unelected bureaucrats, then they must first write laws in a narrow manner and avoid the need for intervention by the Librarian of Congress to avoid draconian consequences, such as making iPhone jail-breakers and smartphone un-lockers criminals, or taking away readable books for the blind.

If conservatives are concerned of unelected bureaucrats deciding upon regulations which could have financial consequences for businesses, then they should be more worried about unelected bureaucrats deciding upon what is or isn't a felony punishable by large fines and jail time for our citizens. And really, why should unelected bureaucrats decide what technological choices you can make with your smartphone? These laws serve to protect the interests of a few companies and create and maintain barriers to entry.

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

The Perils of Perfection

By EVGENY MOROZOV

Published: March 2, 2013

“WHEN your heart stops beating, you’ll keep tweeting” is the reassuring slogan greeting visitors at the Web site for LivesOn, a soon-to-launch service that promises to tweet on your behalf even after you die. By analyzing your earlier tweets, the service would learn “about your likes, tastes, syntax” and add a personal touch to all those automatically composed scribbles from the world beyond.

LivesOn may yet prove to be a parody, or it may fizzle for any number of reasons, but as an idea it highlights the dominant ideology of Silicon Valley today: what could be disrupted should be disrupted — even death.

Barriers and constraints — anything that imposes artificial limits on the human condition — are being destroyed with particular gusto. Superhuman, another mysterious start-up that could enliven any comedy show, promises to offer, as its co-founder recently put it, an unspecified service that “helps people be superhuman.” Well, at least they had the decency not to call it The Übermensch.

Recent debates about Twitter revolutions or the Internet’s impact on cognition have mostly glossed over the fact that Silicon Valley’s technophilic gurus and futurists have embarked on a quest to develop the ultimate patch to the nasty bugs of humanity. If they have their way, no individual foibles would go unpunished — ideally, technology would even make such foibles obsolete.

Even boredom seems to be in its last throes: designers in Japan have found a way to make our train trips perpetually fun-filled. With the help of an iPhone, a projector, a GPS module and Microsoft’s Kinect motion sensor, their contrivance allows riders to add new objects to what they see “outside,” thus enlivening the bleak landscape in their train windows. This could be a big hit in North Korea — and not just on trains.

Or, if you tend to forget things, Silicon Valley wants to give you an app to remember everything. If you occasionally prevaricate in order to meet your clashing obligations as a parent, friend or colleague, another app might spot inconsistencies in your behavior and inform your interlocutors if you are telling the truth. If you experience discomfort because you encounter people and things that you do not like, another app or gadget might spare you the pain by rendering them invisible.

Sunny, smooth, clean: with Silicon Valley at the helm, our life will become one long California highway.

LAST month Randi Zuckerberg, Facebook’s former marketing director, enthused about a trendy app to “crowdsource absolutely every decision in your life.” Called Seesaw, the app lets you run instant polls of your friends and ask for advice on anything: what wedding dress to buy, what latte drink to order and soon, perhaps, what political candidate to support.

Seesaw offers an interesting twist on how we think about feedback and failure. It used to be that we bought things to impress our friends, fully aware that they might not like our purchases. Now this logic is inverted: if something impresses our friends, we buy it. The risks of rejection have been minimized; we know well in advance how many Facebook “likes” our every decision would accumulate.

Jean-Paul Sartre, the existentialist philosopher who celebrated the anguish of decision as a hallmark of responsibility, has no place in Silicon Valley. Whatever their contribution to our maturity as human beings, decisions also bring out pain and, faced with a choice between maturity and pain-minimization, Silicon Valley has chosen the latter — perhaps as a result of yet another instant poll.

The only exception to the pain-minimization rule is when pain — or at least discomfort — must be induced to ensure that we behave honestly and consistently.

Take Google Glass, the company’s overhyped “smart glasses,” which can automatically snap photos of everything we see and store them for posterity. To some, this can finally solve the problem of

forgetting, a longtime ambition of many geeks, who have also been developing stamp-size cameras that can be worn on the lapel of a jacket and snap a picture — at set intervals of time — of things around us.

This idea of obliterating forgetting was laid out by the visionary Microsoft computer scientist Gordon Bell in his highly provocative 2009 book, written with Jim Gemmell, “Total Recall: How the E-Memory Revolution Will Change Everything.”

Mr. Bell promised that new recording technologies would provide us with “enhanced self-insight, the ability to relive one’s own life story in Proustian detail, the freedom to memorize less and think creatively more.” (Alas, “Proustian” is an inapt adjective: the writer actually opposed what he called a “simple cinematographic vision,” which he feared treated memory as nothing but the accumulation of facts, rather than a complex interplay of sensory experiences and storytelling.)

For Mr. Bell, these always-on recording devices can make us aware of our own faults, of our inconsistencies, of the many lies we tell ourselves and others. “Successful people don’t shy away from the honest record,” he wrote. “Imagine being confronted with the actual amount of time you spend with your daughter rather than your rosy accounting of it. Or having your eyes opened to how truly abrasive you were in a conversation.” Doctor Freud, meet the iFreud!

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

The New York Times

Perfect 10? Never Mind That. Ask Her for Her Credit Score.

By JESSICA SILVER-GREENBERG

Published: December 25, 2012

As she nibbled on strawberry shortcake, Jessica LaShawn, a flight attendant from Chicago, tried not to get ahead of herself and imagine this first date turning into another and another, and maybe, at some point, a glimmering diamond ring and happily ever after.

She simply couldn't help it, though. After all, he was tall, from a religious family, raised by his grandparents just as she was, worked in finance and even had great teeth.

Her musings were suddenly interrupted when her date asked a decidedly unromantic question: "What's your credit score?"

"It was as if the music stopped," Ms. LaShawn, 31, said, recalling how the date this year went so wrong so quickly after she tried to answer his question honestly. "It was really awkward because he kept telling me that I was the perfect girl for him, but that a low credit score was his deal-breaker."

The credit score, once a little-known metric derived from a complex formula that incorporates outstanding debt and payment histories, has become an increasingly important number used to bestow credit, determine housing and even distinguish between job candidates.

It's so widely used that it has also become a bigger factor in dating decisions, sometimes eclipsing more traditional priorities like a good job, shared interests and physical chemistry. That's according to interviews with more than 50 daters across the country, all under the age of 40.

"Credit scores are like the dating equivalent of a sexually transmitted disease test," said Manisha Thakor, the founder and chief executive of MoneyZen Wealth Management, a financial advisory firm. "It's a shorthand way to get a sense of someone's financial past the same way an S.T.D. test gives some information about a person's sexual past."

It's difficult to quantify how many daters factor credit scores into their romantic calculations, but financial planners, marriage counselors and dating site executives all said that they were hearing far more concerns about credit than in the past. "I'm getting twice as many questions about credit scores as I did prerecession," Ms. Thakor said.

Executives who run online financial advice forums say that topics about credit and dating receive hundreds of responses within minutes of being posted. Alexa von Tobel, founder and chief executive of Learnvest.com, a financial planning firm, said that members are more interested in credit scores than ever before.

"It's the only grade that matters after you graduate," she said.

Josephine La Bella, 25, who works at a payroll company, likes to tackle the delicate subject head on. Ms. La Bella, who has vigilantly monitored her credit score ever since graduating from Rutgers in 2009, has found that broaching the topic of her own credit score causes her suitors to open up, too.

In August, Ms. La Bella recalled, while at dinner in Bayonne, N.J., a date blurted out his credit score on the first outing. Instead of making things more awkward, she said, a really productive discussion followed. Since then, Ms. La Bella tries to bring up the topic soon after meeting someone.

"I take my credit score seriously and so my date can take me seriously," she said. A handful of small, online dating Web sites have sprung up to cater specifically to singles looking for a partner with a tiptop credit score. "Good Credit Is Sexy," says one site, Creditscoredating.com, which allows members to view the credit scores of potential dates who agree to provide the numbers.

On another site, Datemycreditscore.com, a member posted on the Web site's home page that others should to "stop kidding" themselves and realize that credit scores do matter.

Dating someone with poor credit can have real implications. Banks remain wary of making loans to borrowers with tarnished scores, typically 660 and below; the best scores range from 800 to 850, and scores above 750 are considered good. A low score could quash dreams of buying a house, and result in steep interest rates, up to 29 percent, for credit cards, car financing and other unsecured loans.

A middling credit score can also torpedo an application for an apartment and drive up the cost of cellphone plans and auto insurance. And while eight states, including California, Illinois and Maryland, have passed laws limiting employers' ability to use credit checks when assessing job candidates, 13 percent of employers surveyed by the Society of Human Resource Management in July performed credit checks on all job applicants.

Lauren Dollard, a 26-year-old assistant at a nonprofit in Houston, said her low credit score had helped to stall her romantic plans. Her boyfriend is wary of marrying her until she can significantly pay down the more than \$150,000 she owes in student loans and bolster her credit score, she said.

Ms. Dollard's credit score is so low, around 600, that she hasn't been able to qualify for a car loan. She sympathizes with her boyfriend's position because he "doesn't ever want to be accountable for the irresponsible financial decision I made," she said. Her boyfriend declined to be interviewed.

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Essay-Grading Software Offers Professors a Break

4 April, 2013

Gretchen Ertl for *The New York Times*

EdX, a nonprofit enterprise founded by Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will release automated software that uses artificial intelligence to grade student essays and short written answers.

Imagine taking a college exam, and, instead of handing in a blue book and getting a grade from a professor a few weeks later, clicking the "send" button when you are done and receiving a grade back instantly, your essay scored by a software program.

And then, instead of being done with that exam, imagine that the system would immediately let you rewrite the test to try to improve your grade.

EdX, the nonprofit enterprise founded by Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to offer courses on the Internet, has just introduced such a system and will make its automated software available free on the Web to any institution that wants to use it. The software uses artificial intelligence to grade student essays and short written answers, freeing professors for other tasks.

The new service will bring the educational consortium into a growing conflict over the role of automation in education. Although automated grading systems for multiple-choice and true-false tests are now widespread, the use of artificial intelligence technology to grade essay answers has not yet received widespread endorsement by educators and has many critics.

Anant Agarwal, an electrical engineer who is president of EdX, predicted that the instant-grading software would be a useful pedagogical tool, enabling students to take tests and write essays over and over and improve the quality of their answers. He said the technology would offer distinct advantages over the traditional classroom system, where students often wait days or weeks for grades.

"There is a huge value in learning with instant feedback," Dr. Agarwal said. "Students are telling us they learn much better with instant feedback."

But skeptics say the automated system is no match for live teachers. One longtime critic, Les Perelman, has drawn national attention several times for putting together nonsense essays that have fooled software grading programs into giving high marks. He has also been highly critical of studies that purport to show that the software compares well to human graders.

"My first and greatest objection to the research is that they did not have any valid statistical test comparing the software directly to human graders," said Mr. Perelman, a retired director of writing and a current researcher at M.I.T.

He is among a group of educators who last month began circulating a petition opposing automated assessment software. The group, which calls itself Professionals Against Machine Scoring of Student Essays in High-Stakes Assessment, has collected nearly 2,000 signatures, including some from luminaries like Noam Chomsky.

"Let's face the realities of automatic essay scoring," the group's statement reads in part. "Computers cannot 'read.' They cannot measure the essentials of effective written communication: accuracy, reasoning, adequacy of evidence, good sense, ethical stance, convincing argument, meaningful organization, clarity, and veracity, among others."

But EdX expects its software to be adopted widely by schools and universities. EdX offers free online classes from Harvard, M.I.T. and the University of California, Berkeley; this fall, it will add classes from Wellesley, Georgetown and the University of Texas. In all, 12 universities participate in EdX, which offers certificates for course completion and has said that it plans to continue to expand next year, including adding international schools.

The EdX assessment tool requires human teachers, or graders, to first grade 100 essays or essay questions. The system then uses a variety of machine-learning techniques to train itself to be able to grade any number of essays or answers automatically and almost instantaneously.

The software will assign a grade depending on the scoring system created by the teacher, whether it is a letter grade or numerical rank. It will also provide general feedback, like telling a student whether an answer was on topic or not.

Dr. Agarwal said he believed that the software was nearing the capability of human grading.

"This is machine learning and there is a long way to go, but it's good enough and the upside is huge," he said. "We found that the quality of the grading is similar to the variation you find from instructor to instructor."

EdX is not the first to use automated assessment technology, which dates to early mainframe computers in the 1960s. There is now a range of companies offering commercial programs to grade written test answers, and four states — Louisiana, North Dakota, Utah and West Virginia — are using some form of the technology in secondary schools. A fifth, Indiana, has experimented with it. In some cases the software is used as a "second reader," to check the reliability of the human graders.

But the growing influence of the EdX consortium to set standards is likely to give the technology a boost. On Tuesday, Stanford announced that it would work with EdX to develop a joint educational system that will incorporate the automated assessment technology.

[...]

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Secret papers show extent of senior royals' veto over bills

Court order reveals how approval of Queen and Prince Charles is sought on range of bills

Robert Booth, *The Guardian*, Tuesday 15 January 2013

The extent of the Queen and Prince Charles's secretive power of veto over new laws has been exposed after Downing Street lost its battle to keep information about its application secret. Whitehall papers prepared by Cabinet Office lawyers show that overall at least 39 bills have been subject to the most senior royals' little-known power to consent to or block new laws. They also reveal the power has been used to torpedo proposed legislation relating to decisions about the country going to war.

The internal Whitehall pamphlet was only released following a court order and shows ministers and civil servants are obliged to consult the Queen and Prince Charles in greater detail and over more areas of legislation than was previously understood.

The new laws that were required to receive the seal of approval from the Queen or Prince Charles cover issues from higher education and paternity pay to identity cards and child maintenance. In one instance the Queen completely vetoed the Military Actions Against Iraq Bill in 1999, a private member's bill that sought to transfer the power to authorise military strikes against Iraq from the monarch to parliament. She was even asked to consent to the Civil Partnership Act 2004 because it contained a declaration about the validity of a civil partnership that would bind her. In the pamphlet, the Parliamentary Counsel warns civil servants that if consent is not forthcoming there is a risk "a major plank of the bill must be removed".

"This is opening the eyes of those who believe the Queen only has a ceremonial role," said Andrew George, Liberal Democrat MP for St Ives, which includes land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, the Prince of Wales' hereditary estate. "It shows the royals are playing an active role in the democratic process and we need greater transparency in parliament so we can be fully apprised of whether these powers of influence and veto are really appropriate. At any stage this issue could come up and surprise us and we could find parliament is less powerful than we thought it was."

Charles has been asked to consent to 20 pieces of legislation and this power of veto has been described by constitutional lawyers as a royal "nuclear deterrent" that may help explain why ministers appear to pay close attention to the views of senior royals.

The guidance also warns civil servants that obtaining consent can cause delays to legislation and reveals that even amendments may need to be run past the royals for further consent. "There has been an implication that these prerogative powers are quaint and sweet but actually there is real influence and real power, albeit unaccountable," said John Kirkhope, the legal scholar who fought the freedom of information case to access the papers.

The release of the papers comes amid growing concern in parliament at a lack of transparency over the royals' role in lawmaking. George has set down a series of questions to ministers asking for a full list of bills that have been consented to by the Queen and Prince Charles and have been vetoed or amended.

The guidance states that the Queen's consent is likely to be needed for laws affecting hereditary revenues, personal property or personal interests of the Crown, the Duchy of Lancaster or the Duchy of Cornwall. Consent is also needed if it affects the Duchy of Cornwall. These guidelines effectively mean the Queen and Charles both have power over laws affecting their sources of private income. The Queen uses revenues from the Duchy of Lancaster's 19,000 hectares of land and 10 castles to pay for the upkeep of her private homes at Sandringham and Balmoral, while the prince earns £18m-a-year from the Duchy of Cornwall.

A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said: "It is a long established convention that the Queen is asked by parliament to provide consent to those bills which parliament has decided would affect crown interests. The sovereign has not refused to consent to any bill affecting crown interests unless advised to do so by ministers." A spokesman for Prince Charles said: "In modern times, the Prince of Wales has never refused to consent to any bill affecting Duchy of Cornwall interests, unless advised to do so by ministers. Every instance of the prince's consent having been sought and given to legislation is a matter of public record." (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Ed Miliband: every Briton should speak English

Labour leader to unveil English-language strategy as part of initiative to improve social integration in Britain

Guardian, Nicholas Watt, 14 December 2012

Staff in all publicly funded jobs who interact with members of the public will have to show proficiency in the English language under a Labour government, Ed Miliband will announce on Friday. Outlining a major initiative to improve social integration in Britain, the Labour leader will say that every citizen should know how to speak English. Miliband will make proficiency in the English language a key priority for a future Labour government, which would seek to achieve what he calls a "connected nation" rather than a "segregated one".

In a speech in London on Friday morning, Miliband will outline a three-point plan:

- English language teaching for newcomers to Britain will be prioritised ahead of funding for what he regards as non-essential written translation materials.
- A requirement that exists in many professions for employees to have English language proficiency will be extended to all publicly funded jobs in which staff interact with members of the public.
- Schools and parents will be encouraged to share responsibility for helping foreign-born children by including statements on English language learning within Home School Agreements.

Miliband will say: "We can only converse if we can speak the same language. So if we are going to build One Nation, we need to start with everyone in Britain knowing how to speak English. We should expect that of people that come here. We will work together as a nation far more effectively when we can always talk together."

The Labour leader insists that his focus on the promotion of English is not a "dog whistle" message designed to win over traditional party supporters who are tempted to defect to the British National Party. Miliband insists that it is a core element of his central message: that Britain needs to fashion a new integration strategy which rejects two opposing views. He rejects the ideas that immigrants should assimilate totally, by abandoning their culture, and he rejects a traditional view of multiculturalism in which communities can end up leading separate lives.

Miliband, who will be speaking after figures from last year's census showed that people of mixed race were among the fastest-growing groups in Britain, will say: "Some people say that what we should aim for is assimilation whereby people who have come here do so only on the condition that they abandon their culture. People can be proudly, patriotically British without abandoning their cultural roots and distinctiveness. But there is another idea we should also reject: the belief that people can simply live side by side in their own communities, respecting each other but living separate lives, protected from hatreds but never building a common bond – never learning to appreciate one another. We cannot be comfortable with separation. It blocks opportunities, leaving people at the margins. And it breeds ignorance, suspicion and prejudice."

The Labour leader, who will say that Britain is one of the few countries in Europe without a comprehensive strategy for integration, will say that the last government sometimes believed that integration would happen automatically. He will say: "Too often we were overly optimistic, thinking integration would just take care of itself; that as long as the economy was buoyant, that services were well run; that people would learn to get on together and our common life would flourish automatically. The solutions seemed abstract, but the problems were real. We talked about 'shared citizenship'. But we did too little to tackle the realities of segregation in communities that were struggling to cope." Miliband, who will talk of the experience of his parents, who arrived in Britain as Jewish refugees from the Holocaust, will say that Britain should build a home of "richness, variety [and] diversity". He will say that Team GB's success in the Olympics highlighted this cultural richness. "We should celebrate multi-ethnic, diverse Britain. We are stronger for it – and I love Britain for it. It gives us access to new ideas, new perspectives, new energies. Memories of the Olympics and Paralympics are going to last a very long time. But there is a lesson that stands out about our unity as a country and our diversity: people took equal pride in the achievements of all our athletes, from Mo Farah to Jessica Ennis to Zara Philips."

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Miliband will say that their success has proved how "doomsayers", from Oswald Mosley to the BNP, have completely misjudged Britain. He will say: "We've had our fair share of doomsayers in Britain over the years, from Oswald Mosley in the 1930s, to Enoch Powell in the 1960s, to Nick Griffin today, who said it wasn't possible for us to get along. Despite our national troubles – difficult times like the riots in the 1980s and the horrific murder of Stephen Lawrence – we have generally worked together to create a more tolerant, open-minded society. In Britain today, people of all backgrounds marry across racial, ethnic and cultural divides, bring up kids, and make a future for themselves more frequently and more successfully than in many other countries."

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

David Cameron: withdrawal from EU is imaginable

Prime minister says he supports British membership of EU, but UK is 'in charge of our own destiny'

Nicholas Watt, *Guardian*, 18 December 2012

David Cameron broke new ground on Europe when he suggested that has broken new ground on Europe by suggesting British withdrawal from the EU is "imaginable", aligning himself with the fiercely Eurosceptic Boris Johnson. The prime minister stressed that he supported membership of a reformed EU, though he said Britain was "in charge of our own destiny". Cameron, who is expected to set out plans next month for a referendum on British membership of the EU, has received a blow as polling shows that such a move is unlikely to impress former Tory voters who are expressing support for the UK Independence party (Ukip).

The new polling, commissioned by the former Tory deputy chairman Lord Ashcroft, found that only a quarter of those considering voting for Ukip list Europe as one of the top three issues facing Britain. Downing Street hopes that a referendum will go some way to neutralising the threat from Ukip, which recorded 14% in weekend opinion polls. Cameron highlighted the pressure from Ukip when he indicated to MPs that he could imagine life outside the EU. Asked in the Commons by the Labour MP Gavin Shuker whether he could ever imagine Britain leaving the EU, the prime minister said: "That is not a position I support, so I do not spend my time thinking about it." But he added: "Clearly all futures for Britain are imaginable. We are in charge of own destiny, we can make our own choices. I believe the choice we should make is to stay in the European Union, to be members of the single market, to maximise our impact in Europe, but where we are unhappy with parts of the relationship we shouldn't be frightened of standing up and saying so."

The remarks by the prime minister echoed comments at the weekend by Johnson, who has criticised Cameron and George Osborne for supporting moves towards greater political and economic integration in the eurozone. The London mayor told The Andrew Marr Show on BBC1 on Sunday that it would not be the "end of the world" if Britain left the EU, though that was not his preferred option. Johnson said he would like a referendum to be held before the next general election, which is due to take place in 2015, on the "single market and a withdrawal from a lot of the nonsensical policies".

In a statement to MPs on Monday on last week's EU summit, Cameron ruled out "an immediate in/out referendum". He is expected to pledge in the Tory manifesto for the 2015 general election that he would hold a referendum after using the next major EU treaty negotiations, which are likely to endorse moves towards a fiscal union for the eurozone, to repatriate social and employment laws to Britain.

Cameron, who will outline his thinking in a speech next month on Britain's position in the EU, told the Eurosceptic Tory backbencher Edward Leigh: "It is quite a slow process at the moment, but I believe that at some stage it will speed up radically. When we discover that we really do need greater elements of banking union, fiscal union and other co-ordination, a greater treaty change will be proposed within Europe, and I think that that will give us an opportunity to secure the fresh settlement that we want." The prime minister joked with the veteran Eurosceptic Peter Bone that he hoped to please him in his speech. The MP for Wellingborough, who regularly invokes his Eurosceptic wife, said: "I am not sure that I will be able satisfy [you] or, indeed, the other members of [your] household, but I will try my best."

Cameron wants to move at a slow pace because he believes major revisions to the Lisbon treaty are unlikely to take place until after the German elections next year. But he is also constrained because Nick Clegg has voiced scepticism about the merits of trying to use a negotiation that is designed to save the eurozone to demand the repatriation of powers to Britain. The prime minister is expected to acknowledge in his speech next month that he will only be able to hold a referendum on the repatriation of powers if the Tories win a majority at the next general election.

Ashcroft today warns that the promise of a referendum may do little to neutralise the threat posed by Ukip. His research, which involved interviewing 20,066 adults last month, found that immigration was more important to "Ukip considerers" than Britain's relations with the EU. (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Citizenship test has become a bad pub quiz, says academic

US immigrant Dr Thom Brooks says Life in the UK test is inconsistent in what it requires new citizens to know

Guardian, Friday 14 June 2013

A test taken by around 150,000 would-be British citizens each year is just a "bad pub quiz" with too much focus on culture and history at the expense of practical knowledge, an academic has said. The Life in the UK test, which must be passed to qualify for indefinite leave to remain in Britain, does not require practical necessities in everyday life, Durham University's Dr Thom Brooks said. But it is required that new citizens know "trivial" facts such as the year Emperor Claudius invaded Britain, the year that Sake Dean Mahomet launched the first curry house in the country and the age of Big Ben. Brooks, a US immigrant who sat and passed the test in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 2009, becoming a British citizen in 2011, said the test is a key part of immigration policy but is unfit for purpose in its current form. "The Life In The UK test has become a bad pub quiz. It has gone from testing practical trivia to the purely trivial and is a major opportunity lost," he said. "The biggest surprise is the lack of attention successive governments have paid to ensuring the test is fair and not out of date, a surprise even bigger than the sometimes-shocking questions that can be found on the test," said Brooks, a reader in law at Durham Law School. "Many citizens that were born and bred in the UK would struggle to know the answers to many of these questions. Britain will not be more cohesive because more have heard about the Battle of Trafalgar, but rather if future citizens understand better how to participate in daily British life and make a contribution."

The latest edition of the test took effect from 25 March and was based on the third edition of the handbook Life in the United Kingdom.

Brooks argues that the test is inconsistent in what it requires new citizens to know. They are not required to know the number of MPs in Westminster but are required to know the number of representatives in the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly. Lord Roberts of Llandudno, vice-chairman of the all party parliamentary group on migration, welcomed Brooks's report, launched at a lecture at Durham University on Thursday evening. "I am delighted to echo his call that the test, which is both impractical and irrelevant as it stands, be reformed," he said. "Surely future Britons should better understand how to participate in daily life, instead of knowing by rote which emperor invaded Britain in AD 43?"

Brooks stops short of recommending that the test is ditched, but instead said it should be reformed so that it is no longer "impractical, inconsistent, trivial, gender imbalanced, outdated and ineffective".

The test requires new citizens to know the date of birth and death of nearly 30 men in British history but only four women. No women artists, musicians or poets are mentioned.

Much of the information in the accompanying official handbook does not appear to be part of the test, Brooks said. The handbook contains about 3,000 facts including five telephone numbers, 34 websites, 278 historical dates and several brief excerpts of British poetry. Of the 400 official practice questions and answers in one of three official test handbooks, no telephone numbers, no websites, no poetry and only a few dates are mentioned.

A Home Office spokesman said: "We've stripped out mundane information about water meters, train timetables, and using the internet. The new test rightly focuses on values and principles at the heart of being British. Instead of telling people how to claim benefits it encourages participation in British life. This is just part of our work to help ensure migrants are ready and able to integrate into British society and forms part of our changes which have broken the automatic link between temporary and permanent migration. We have made radical changes to the immigration system and are determined to reduce net migration from the hundred of thousands into the tens of thousands by the end of this parliament. The latest figures show these reforms are working, with net migration falling by more than a third since 2010."

A Conservative party spokesman said: "Dr Brooks is a self-confessed 'active member' of the Labour party, so it's no surprise that he prefers Labour's flawed old test which told people how to claim benefits rather than encourage participation in British life."

Gay marriage debate: Tory MP warns party not to follow the Republican road

Margot James said the Conservatives will lose the next election if on social reform her party stands on the wrong side of history

Nicholas Watt, chief political correspondent, *Guardian*, Tuesday 5 February 2013

The Conservative party risks alienating mainstream voters in the same way as US Republicans have if it fails to properly embrace social reform such as equal marriage, a leading Tory moderniser warned MPs today. In a lengthy Commons debate, which saw impassioned speeches for and against the bill, Margot James warned her parliamentary colleagues of the dangers of standing on the wrong side of history. The MP for Stourbridge, who is gay, told the Commons: "I believe my party should never flinch from the requirement that we must continue this progression, otherwise we may end up like the Republican party who lost an election last year that they could have won were it not for their socially conservative agenda."

James spoke up in favour of David Cameron's plans to introduce equal marriage as a series of Tory traditionalists condemned the measure. Sir Roger Gale, the MP for North Thanet, accused the prime minister of an "Orwellian" attempt to redefine marriage. "It is not possible to redefine marriage," he said. "Marriage is the union between a man and a woman – has been historically, remains so. It is Alice in Wonderland territory, Orwellian almost, for any government of any political persuasion to seek to come along and try to rewrite the political lexicon." Gale said ministers may as well "take away" the bill and legalise marriage between siblings. "If the government is serious about this, take it away, abolish the civil partnerships bill, abolish civil marriage and create a civil union bill that applies to all people irrespective of their sexuality or their relationship. That means brothers and brothers and sisters and sisters and brothers and sisters as well."

In a rare Commons intervention, the chairman of the Conservative backbench 1922 committee Graham Brady raised concerns over the government's claims that faith groups will not be forced to conduct gay marriages. "I have serious misgivings that, in spite of [equalities minister Maria Miller's] commendable efforts, recognised by the Church of England, it is impossible to guarantee that religious freedom will not be compromised." Cheryl Gillan, the former Wales secretary, said: "This legislation was not in our manifesto, it was not in the coalition agreement and it was not in the Queen's speech." But Nick Herbert, the former police minister who is in a civil partnership, mocked opponents of the bill. "Are the marriages of millions of straight people about to be threatened because a few thousand gay people are permitted to join? What will they say: 'Darling our marriage is over, Sir Elton John has just got engaged to David Furnish.' " The Commons heard some moving speeches from MPs who spoke in favour of reform. Mike Freer, the Tory MP for Finchley and Golders Green, said the proudest day of his life was six years ago when he entered into a civil partnership with his partner of 21 years. Freer told MPs: "I say to my colleagues that I sit alongside them in committee, in the bars and in the tea room, and I queue alongside them in the division lobby. "But when it comes to marriage, they are asking me to stand apart and to join a separate queue. I ask my colleagues, if I am equal in this house, to give me every opportunity to be equal."

David Lammy, the former Labour minister, criticised opponents of the bill who said that same-sex couples should be entitled to civil partnerships but not marriage. Invoking the memory of African-Americans in the southern states of the US before civil rights, Lammy said: "Let me speak frankly: separate but equal is a fraud. It is the language that tried to push Rosa Parks to the back of the bus. It is the motif that determined that black and white people could not possibly drink from the same water fountain, eat at the same table or use the same toilets." Toby Perkins, the shadow business minister, recalled his anguish when his mother disclosed that she was gay. He said: "At the end of her life my mother was gay. It was difficult for me as a young man growing up in Sheffield to think that my friends might discover that. People do not deserve to live in that way, so this is fundamentally about mutual respect."

Divisions in the debate cut across party lines. Stephen Timms, the shadow employment minister, was interrupted by his Labour colleague Lyn Brown when he said that the bill would undermine the central

basis for marriage – raising children. Brown, 52, said: "[He] was at my wedding and I was not young when I got married. It was highly unlikely that I was going to be able to, after all that time, procreate. Is he telling me that my marriage is less valid than anybody else's?" Timms said: "No, I certainly am not and I was delighted to attend [her] wedding ... Children are the reason marriage has always been so important. If it was purely about a loving relationship between two people then it would have been much less important than it has actually been." (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

2011 riots inquiry recommendations ignored by government, says Lammy

MP for London flashpoint of 2011 riots says little has changed since unrest, with only 11 of 63 panel's proposals implemented

The Guardian, Vikram Dodd, Friday 29 March 2013

The government has been accused of implementing just a few of the changes demanded by an inquiry it established to stop a repeat of the 2011 riots in England. Research says just 11 of 63 proposals made by the panel into the riots have been implemented a year after the report, published last March.

The cross-party panel established by David Cameron and Nick Clegg was told to come up with measures to lessen the chances of mass disorder erupting again. Among the recommendations rejected or not implemented are measures to improve schools, mentoring for convicted youth offenders to help stop them committing further crimes, and fresh action to stop young people going without education, employment or training.

The research comes from David Lammy, the Labour MP whose constituency of Tottenham, north London, was the flashpoint that triggered the riots after police shot and killed a man they suspected of being armed in August 2011. It is based on responses to freedom of information requests and parliamentary questions about the fate of the panel's 63 recommendations. A year on from the report, a majority, 35, have been rejected or are unimplemented. Four are under review, the fate of 13 is unclear, and 11 have been accepted or implemented by the government.

The riots, communities and victims panel was chaired by Darra Singh. The 2011 riots spread to 66 areas, lasting four days, causing deaths and tens of millions of pounds of damage, and leading to soul-searching about the causes. Two key themes were why some deprived areas saw no trouble while others saw extensive damage, and why some people from similar deprived backgrounds looted while others walked away.

The report explained: "In asking what it was that made young people make the right choice in the heat of the moment, the panel heard of the importance of character." Lammy's research says recommendations not implemented or rejected include schools having to publish their policies for character-building.

The Department for Education says it has no plans to implement other measures the riots panel believed would help boost education. These included fining schools where pupils have poor levels of reading and writing, and ordering schools to publish the numbers of pupils they exclude, suspend or transfer to a pupil referral unit for children with problems.

A call by the inquiry panel for a job guarantee for those aged 25 who have spent two years on the work programme has not been rejected.

Lammy said: "The government made a very clear commitment to the riot communities that they would do everything they could to prevent the riots ever taking place again. Eighteen months later and one year after the publication of the government's own riots report, the impetus for reform has completely evaporated. The riots occurred for a number of reasons but that is precisely why there needs to be a well-thought out programme of reform. The riots panel report outlined the need to provide greater support for families, tackle youth unemployment, lift school attainment, improve police relations and tackle recidivism amongst young offenders. Disappointingly, just a handful of the 63 specific recommendations made in the report are being implemented. We now head into the summer months with none of the fundamentals changed since the riots of August 2011."

Among the 11 recommendations that have been accepted or implemented is greater work to identify potential problem families and measures to help youngsters to cope with the pressures of advertising and materialism.

After the 2011 riots the government resisted calls for a full-scale inquiry, such as that conducted by Lord Scarman after the 1981 Brixton riots. More than 2,000 people were convicted for riot-related offences with more than 1,400 jailed. The inquiry cost under £200,000 and had no powers. Lammy contrasted this with the Leveson inquiry into the media: "It is impossible not to see the stark contrast between the way this inquiry has been kicked into the long grass and how the Leveson inquiry has been allowed to dominate government business." The panel's report warned: "Should disturbances

happen again, victims and communities will ask our leaders why we failed to respond effectively in 2012."

A spokesperson for the government said it was yet to formally respond to the panel's recommendations (...).

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

A nice little job-share? This could be our chance to learn to love Prince Charles

Grace Dent, *The Independent*, Wednesday 8 May 2013

As Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall accompanied Her Majesty to the State Opening of Parliament yesterday, a new era of British life was being discreetly ushered in. The dawn of the new Royal job share. Apparently, Buckingham Palace and Whitehall began conspiring on how to deal with the Queen's advancing years several months ago. They concluded that Prince Charles – the longest-serving heir apparent in British history – should take a more upfront role.

To make Charles official regent – the effective co-monarch – would require an amendment to the Regency Acts. Yet the general feeling is that Charles will do a great deal more. Obviously, this brainwave wasn't actioned before the Jubilee celebrations, during which Her Majesty was worked harder than Harry Styles during a global pre-album sales push. Still, it's comforting that some of the shadowy figures who keep the monarchy afloat noticed that the Queen is an actual mortal, ageing human being.

The Queen is 87 years old and she took 425 face-to-face business meetings in 2012, which was 100 more than in 2011. My father is 10 years younger than her and it takes a six-day pep talk and some bribery to push him into one singular "meeting" in a Toby Carvery and that's with his own children. He's happy indoors with his feet up. And the Queen – it has troubled me for a while, because I do like her a great deal – could do with a bit of feet-up time, too.

She is still as sharp as a tack but, by God, she's done her duty. She's endured more than 15,000 official engagements and 261 official overseas trips. The poor woman has been dispatched to look fondly at Canada 22 times and Australia 16 times. Send Charles on the foreign trips, let Camilla understand the true joy of moist knee-backs, mild sunstroke and being met off a 28-hour flight by a full 32-person Ka Mate haka.

Oh, the obsequious arse-kissers and the hip-hop Shakespeare performances and all those awful children in wards coughing airborne virus and all the worrying what the hell Philip will say next and fretting that Fergie will try and gatecrash every event, and all that gracious smiling at another gifted set of terrible steak knives. Let Charles take the strain. Pass Charles the DVT socks and the mosquito spray. This is one job share I can get behind.

Actually, it's the only job share I can get behind because in everyday life job shares, being frank, are ghastly for everyone other than the two people who want to work part-time. "Don't worry, your house sale is being looked after by two estate agents on job share". That's a remark that calms nobody. "Be not afear'd," the doctor's receptionist might say. "The district nurse will be popping in to see your relative on Wednesday. At least, we think she will – she's on job share!"

Yet, in the case of the royal household, job-share seems to me like the perfect solution. Indeed it's the only solution to changing monarchs quietly and subtly while letting us all grow to love Charles a little more. And this is a prince who has never really looked for our love. In fact, Charles, despite being next in line to the throne, is currently being trumped popularity-wise by his ever-so humble son William and "commoner" wife (the largely mute daughter of a party-hat seller).

The survival of the British monarchy rests on a nationwide, en masse, willing state of belief that we'd be in a terrible pickle without them. The Queen, God bless her, has pulled off this trick for years thanks to her restrained emotion, stalwart marriage, adherence to hard work and duty, sense of sacrifice and the pocketfuls of royal pixie dust sprinkled wherever she treads, which can make the stiffest of republicans a bit sniffly. And next along is Charles, whom I've never truly believed even wants the job, plus I'm even less certain that us Brits have really forgiven him for marrying a young woman as a brood mare while keeping up a relationship with his mistress.

But then Diana was "nuts", wasn't she? Totally paranoid. Except that she wasn't paranoid about Camilla – the Duchess of Cornwall – seen yesterday on her way into Parliament. It's not paranoia, when you're absolutely right about someone's intentions.

It's time for Charles to begin smoothing over all of these bumps and cracks with his part-time job and full-time charm offensive. Because he's stuck with us and we're stuck with him, and we're all going to learn to like it.

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

The battle over Thatcher's legacy is a battle for the future

The Independent, Steve Richards, 10 April 2013

(...) For Cameron, the revival of Thatcher-mania is especially challenging. He has never established a fully developed authentic public voice, a consequence of his unresolved ambiguity in relation to Thatcher. In terms of policy, he is a Thatcherite, the real-terms public spending cuts, revolutionary NHS reforms, free schools, a referendum on Europe, sweeping welfare reforms. Indeed, as I argued on Tuesday, Thatcher would not have gone anywhere near as far as Cameron has done without securing a proper mandate. Her genius was in sensing when she could get away with acting dangerously. But in spite of the right-wing policy agenda Cameron is a Thatcherite with a few nagging doubts. After the Conservatives' three election defeats he concluded – sensibly – that the Conservatives could only win by claiming to be on the centre ground. So he has chosen to sound more like Harold Macmillan and, of course, Tony Blair. His most famous soundbite, “There is such a thing as society – it’s just not the same thing as the state”, is the key text for understanding his confusion. On the surface the words sound like a compassionate rebuttal of Thatcher’s famous argument that there was no such thing as society. But a reading of the speech in which she made the brutal claim shows that she was asserting precisely the same point as Cameron. Both were advocating a smaller state, while calling on charities and voluntary groups to fill the gap.

At first Cameron’s ambiguous voice worked quite well for him, convincing some progressives that he was genuinely moving on from Thatcher and yet keeping his Thatcher-worshipping party more or less on board. But recently he has been in the worst of all worlds. Those on the centre left, even the so-called Blairite wing of this very broad church, have seen through his claims to be a centrist progressive, while ardent Thatcherites regard him as a woolly leftie. In her death Cameron has a pivotal decision to make. Does his public voice develop to reflect his Thatcherite policies more clearly – or will he make a more substantial attempt to develop a genuinely fresh post-Thatcher Tory pitch at the next election?

George Osborne has already decided. Although a sincere social liberal, Osborne has given up making speeches on why he is a progressive and cites Thatcher unequivocally as his model. He did so in his last party conference speech, where he compared her resolution with the U-turns of Heath. On Tuesday, in an elegantly written article for the Times, proof that he would be a terrific columnist, the Chancellor was even more forthright. Writing of the pressure on him from a Tory to produce a Thatcherite Budget, he wrote: “I politely pointed out that the famous 1981 Budget had actually increased taxes substantially, in a determined attempt to bring the deficit down and lower interest rates — and that I was trying to do something similar, principally by cutting spending”. After his attempt to link the ugly Philpott case to a wider debate about welfare reform Osborne is more openly a Thatcherite, both tonally and in his economic approach. Given their closeness, presumably Cameron will do the same, even though in the autumn of 2005, during the leadership contest he told me he would never lapse rightwards, whatever the pressure from his party and the newspapers.

Ironically, in failing to move on from Thatcher in the defining areas of the economy, public services and foreign policy, Cameron and Osborne make an error she would never have committed. She learnt from the past and left it behind, applying fresh ideas or very old ones from the 19th century, to the distinct crisis of the 1970s. Not for one second did she agonise about following the style and policies of Macmillan, let alone Heath. Yet Cameron and Osborne feel compelled to follow her.

The continuing, bewildered confusion of the Conservative leadership about how to deal with the Lady gives space to Ed Miliband, although he too is obsessed by Thatcher. He and his team have scrutinised her 1979 manifesto, the final party conference speech she made as Leader of the Opposition in 1978, the language she deployed in the late 1970s, and the degree to which she linked policy detail with the language. (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Margaret Thatcher - the dogged climber who pulled the ladder up

Baroness Thatcher did little to help less privileged women, believing the battle for women's rights had been won. She was talking about herself

The Independent, Joan Smith, Sunday 14 April 2013

Thanks to Margaret Thatcher, every girl born in the 21st century knows that a woman can be prime minister. It's an achievement, even if the party she led has stuck resolutely to male leaders since forcing her from power. No woman has even attempted to lead the Conservatives since Thatcher challenged Ted Heath in 1975, and this week's ceremonial funeral marks her official transition into history.

Last week her admirers preferred to dwell on what they saw as her achievements rather than the circumstances of her death. But just as the death-beds of saints were a popular subject in Renaissance art, there is something almost painfully expressive about the nature of Thatcher's passing. Many elderly people are lonely, with family and friends dead or scattered to the winds, but few end their days in the sterile luxury of an expensive hotel. The image of this frail woman dying in the Ritz, attended by a professional carer, is undeniably poignant. And it's a curious end for a woman from a strict Methodist household who grew up without an indoor toilet – not because the family was poor, but because her father wouldn't countenance such luxuries. In that sense, her death is a symbol of the contradiction at the heart of her character, which undermined the self-proclaimed simplicity of her politics.

As a girl, Margaret Roberts was clever but not intellectual. Her mother was a nonentity in Margaret's eyes, omitted from her Who's Who entry, while her father, a lay preacher and alderman, meant everything to her. "He taught me that you first sort out what you believe in. You then apply it. You don't compromise on things that matter," she said. This identification with the dominant male is the key to her personality, explaining why many have found it hard to recognise her as a woman.

To be precise, the struggle is to identify her as a modern woman. The name by which she was known – "Mrs" Thatcher – belongs to an earlier age, and her appearance drew on a formality already in decline by the 1960s. Yet at first glance she was a pioneer in many ways. In 1952, when she was looking for a safe seat, she made "trenchant demands" – so says Hugo Young's biography – in a newspaper article about the need for more women in Parliament. Of course, she did so from the standpoint of a graduate with a wealthy husband who bankrolled her ambitions. "The battle for women's rights has largely been won," she said in 1982. "I hate those strident tones we hear from some women's libbers."

She meant her own battle. Not for the first time, Thatcher was conflating her own experience with that of people whose circumstances were a great deal less privileged. Another species of cognitive dissonance surfaced after her election victory in 1979, when she talked about bringing harmony, faith and hope to the country. In no time at all she had plunged into fights to the death over the Falklands and with the miners, and it now seems that the truest thing she said that day was about faith. In an increasingly secular age, she had the single-minded certainty of the believer, expressed in a Manichean formula: "I am in politics because of the conflict between good and evil, and I believe that in the end good will triumph."

In our complex world, it sounds like the blurb from a computer game, but Thatcher's values were Edwardian; while two of the three current party leaders are atheists, it's another measure of how distant the former prime minister appears from contemporary mores. Later, she returned to traditional language about the importance of marriage and motherhood, ignoring the fact that she had a live-in nanny and then sent her children to boarding school.

Like a lot of right-wing women, Thatcher preferred being with men but she appeared to them in different guises. "In her presence you pretty quickly forget that she's a woman," said Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. She may have toned down her version of refined femininity with Americans, but in a political party where maternal deprivation was common, she adopted the persona of the only powerful female figure in a boys' school – matron. It made her not so much a mother as a mother substitute, which is why many of the anecdotes about her have an under-

current of squirming adolescent eroticism. But it was fatal in other respects, setting her apart from other women and confirming her indifference to gender equality.

Almost a quarter of a century after she left office, her legacy to the Conservative Party has been five male leaders in a row. A different kind of politician could have done a great deal for other Tory women, mentoring them and helping them into safe seats, but Thatcher had neither the will nor the imagination. (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Tony Blair's passionate plea: we must stay at heart of EU – or face disaster

Former prime minister joins fight with Eurosceptics and says Brussels must promote 'grand plan' about its purpose

Toby Helm, political editor, *The Observer*, Saturday 24 November 2012

Tony Blair will make an impassioned intervention in the debate over Britain's future in Europe, warning that any disengagement from the European Union's "top table" would be a disaster for the UK's economy and its power on the world stage. With more senior Tories backing moves that could see the UK leaving the EU mainstream, Blair will seek to rally the business community behind a campaign to halt the Eurosceptic bandwagon before it is too late.

At a speech in London on Wednesday, Blair will say that with major economies such as China, India, Brazil and Russia emerging as formidable competitors in the global economic power game, EU membership has never been more important. A source close to the former prime minister said: "Whereas the postwar argument for Europe was about peace versus war, he will make the point that the 21st-century case for Europe is about power versus irrelevance." In Wednesday's speech, to the Business for New Europe coalition of business leaders pushing for reform in Europe, Blair will argue that the EU needs to promote a "grand plan" about its purpose, driving home the message that member states can best take on these huge economic powers as a united bloc. He will highlight statistics showing that 47% of UK exports go to EU member states while 50% of foreign direct investment is from EU countries.

Blair's move, ahead of a keynote speech on Europe by David Cameron expected next month, is likely to be seen as evidence that having failed in 2009 to become the first permanent president of the EU council he still hankers after a prominent role in European politics. Friends of Blair say he believes that the EU still lacks effective leadership and too often fails to promote a "big vision". Instead it too often gives the impression that it is obsessed with arcane, if important, institutional reform. Referring to moves to reform Europe's institutions to end the euro crisis, a source said: "He will say that of course you have to get the politics and economics aligned but this has to be part of a grand plan not a series of incremental changes."

News of his intervention, following the breakdown on Friday of an EU budget summit at which Cameron, with support from Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands, refused to agree a new seven-year budget for the bloc, comes as business leaders expressed growing unease about the Conservatives' anti-EU stance and the growing hostility to Europe among voters.

Last week the CBI president, Sir Roger Carr, said UK membership of the EU was the "launchpad" for much international business. "Whatever the popular appeal may be of withdrawal, businessmen and politicians must keep a bridge to Europe firmly in place," he said.

Senior figures close to Ed Miliband believe that Labour – with Blair potentially playing a key role – can form a powerful alliance with business to argue the pro-EU case both in the runup to the next general election and during any future referendum on Europe.

While European leaders refused to criticise Cameron for his tough line on the budget, some said that Britain's influence would begin to wane in key negotiations if it made clear its aim was to disengage. Guy Verhofstadt, the former Belgian prime minister who now leads the Liberal group in the European parliament, said: "There is a feeling that there is a hidden agenda [for the UK], a feeling that they want second-class membership. It is weakening its position around the negotiating table."

While EU leaders had shown respect for Cameron over his demands for spending cuts, sources said that patience would not last if the UK continued to stand in the way of future reforms of the EU and eurozone. European leaders are now anxiously waiting to see how the UK reacts to proposals for an EU banking union to be considered at the next summit on 13 and 14 December. "People have to realise that the train is not stopping. It is going forward," said Verhofstadt. A senior Brussels official said: "We always hear that the UK has special demands but never that Europe has special needs."

Tory chairman Grant Shapps became the latest high-ranking Tory to entertain the idea of the UK leaving the EU when he said that the prime minister should not be afraid to use a threat to quit as a

way to force other member states to allow repatriation of powers to Britain. Tory Eurosceptics praised Cameron's performance in Brussels but warned that the battle was only just beginning. Bernard Jenkin, chairman of the public administration select committee and a leading Eurosceptic, said that the breakdown of the summit showed "how dysfunctional the EU has become and underlines the fact that there needs to be a new relationship for those who do not want to be part of the federal eurozone". Jenkin said that he and other Eurosceptics would now back calls for there to be a "mandate referendum" before the next general election to find out what sort of relationship the British people wanted to have with the EU. (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Tory party out of control over Europe, says Lord Howe

Former chancellor launches scathing attack on David Cameron and says Euroscepticism is 'infecting party soul'

Daniel Boffey, policy editor, *The Observer*, 18 May 2013

Lord Howe, the former Conservative chancellor who triggered the downfall of Margaret Thatcher, has launched a scathing attack on the prime minister, accusing him of running scared of his backbenchers and endangering Britain's future in Europe. The Tory grandee says David Cameron has opened a Pandora's box by opposing the current terms of the UK's membership of the European Union and now appears to be losing control of his party. The prime minister's actions, Howe writes in the *Observer*, have turned an internal Tory problem into a national one.

In a highly significant intervention over Britain's future, Howe laments the "new, almost farcical" level of debate over Europe in the Tory party, and says that Labour and the Liberal Democrats may need to bear the burden of retrieving the situation. Howe, Thatcher's longest-serving cabinet minister, whose resignation speech in 1990 is widely considered to have precipitated the then prime minister's downfall, writes: "Sadly, by making it clear in January that he opposes the current terms of UK membership of the EU, the prime minister has opened a Pandora's box politically and seems to be losing control of his party in the process. The ratchet-effect of Euroscepticism has now gone so far that the Conservative leadership is in effect running scared of its own backbenchers, let alone Ukip, having allowed deep anti-Europeanism to infect the very soul of the party."

Howe, who was also a former foreign secretary and deputy prime minister under the late Baroness Thatcher, adds that the events of recent days, in which the prime minister has been forced to offer more and more to satisfy his Eurosceptic MPs, were "more like the politics of the French Fourth Republic than the serious practice of government". Citing the intervention of President Obama, who last week championed reform of the EU over Britain's exit, Howe laments: "The Conservative party now needs a US president to tell it what it once had the confidence to proclaim as common sense itself."

Howe's savage attack on the prime minister's leadership and the actions of his party follows the successful attempt by Eurosceptic backbenchers to bounce the prime minister into the publication last week of a draft referendum bill on EU membership. Cameron had already been forced in January, against his stated will, to promise an in-out referendum before 2017, but the prime minister's backbenchers have since been demanding further assurances in the form of legislation. Eurosceptic Tory backbenchers have been energised by Ukip's success in the recent local elections, and a huge rise in national polls.

A new *Opinium/Observer* poll has Ukip attracting 20% of the vote, with Labour on 37%, the Conservatives on 27% and the Liberal Democrats down to 7%.

Howe states that the risk for the Conservative party, as Europe rises ever further up its internal agenda, is that it loses the next general election and moves to a position of "simply opposing Britain's continued membership, with or without a referendum". In stark contrast to the view of his friend and former cabinet colleague Lord Lawson, who wrote recently that Britain should leave the EU, Howe believes that the UK is unlikely to hold anything like the position

of power to which it aspires without the vehicle of the EU, unless the country was to join the United States. "Leaving the union would, by contrast in my view, be a tragic expression of our shrinking influence and role in the world – and the humbling of our ambitions, already sorely tested by the current crisis, to remain a serious political or economic player on the global stage." Describing a withdrawal from the European Union as a "very dangerous choice indeed", the peer says Britons have hugely benefited from greater competition, lower prices and wider choice, due to membership of the EU. Howe adds that much of the UK's inward investment depends on easy access to the £11 trillion EU economy. He writes: "Does anyone think that the UK's revival as a motor car manufacturing nation is based on the appeal of the British market alone to foreign investors?"

In a withering assessment of his party's long-standing preoccupation with Brussels, he adds: "This week has shown that the Conservative party's long nervous breakdown over Europe continues, and what is essentially a Tory problem is now, once again, becoming a national problem, too." (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

A new dawn for Parliament?

As a spate of sleaze allegations prompt tough talk from the Government about reform, Douglas Carswell and Daniel Hannan say we shouldn't hold our breath

Daily Telegraph, 2 June 2013, by Douglas Carswell and Daniel Hannan

Douglas Carswell MP and Daniel Hannan MEP are authors of 'The Plan: Twelve Months to Renew Britain'

It wasn't supposed to be like this. The Coalition was supposed to change the way we did politics. Yet, somehow, we are back to the bad old days of sleazy lobbyists and cash for influence. What has gone wrong?

In our book *The Plan*, published, coincidentally, just before the bath-plug and duck-house scandals exposed by this newspaper in 2009, we proposed ways to rescue Parliament's reputation. Quite apart from an overhaul of the expenses system — we suggested scrapping all MPs' expenses except those related to maintaining a constituency office and travelling to and from the House of Commons — we put forwards three reforms that might have had a bearing on the recent revelations.

First, a right of recall that would allow a certain number of voters to trigger an automatic by-election if their MP behaved badly. Second, open primaries, which would have the effect of abolishing safe seats, and the complacency they can encourage. Third, reform of the House of Lords which, for all the virtues of its individual members, is currently comprised as a chamber of placemen and quangocrats. We can't say for sure that such changes would have made a difference to the corruption allegations that now touch both Houses. They are, after all, allegations, and the full facts are not yet known. What we think we can fairly say is that they would make misbehaviour by politicians rarer. Not unknown: man is fallen and, under any system, some individuals will give into temptation. But at least there would be mechanisms in place to deal with lapses.

The right of recall should be seen, not simply as a defence against corruption, but as a means to deal with any MPs who abused their position, whether through indolence, incompetence or a readiness to vote against the interests of their constituencies. It would be a two-stage process. First, a certain number of signatures would need to be gathered to trigger a vote (we suggested 10 per cent of registered voters: high enough to deter frivolous or partisan challenges, but not so high as to be unachievable). Then the MP would be required to win a yes/no recall ballot on whether they remain the MP. If over half of local people voted them out, there would be an immediate by-election.

Our idea found its way into the Conservative Party manifesto and, later, into the Coalition agreement. Then the rats got at it. What is now proposed is that, instead of being triggered by local demand, a recall vote might take place only following a ruling against an MP by the Standards and Privileges Committee of the House of Commons. The fear seemed to be that our proposal might make MPs vulnerable, not because they had been sleazy, but simply because they had made themselves unpopular locally.

Well, yes; that was the whole idea. Under a proper recall system, voters get to decide when an MP has fallen short of what they expect. Under the Government's proposal that Nick Clegg looks set to revive, as he tells this newspaper today, a committee of fellow MPs will, in effect, be able to remove someone they don't like from the Commons — for it is hard to imagine an MP being re-elected having been condemned by the Standards and Privileges Committee. Instead of diffusing power to the electorate, it concentrates power in the hands of the whips.

It's a similar story when it comes to primaries. An under-reported aspect of the expenses revelations is that they disproportionately affected MPs in safe seats. Regularly having to convince local people to re-elect them evidently concentrates politicians' minds. As things stand, 70 per cent of seats in the House of Commons are safe. Their MPs know that the only way they will be out of a job is if they lose the right to wear an appropriately coloured rosette on polling day. Forced to choose between doing what their constituents want and doing what their whips want, they can hardly be blamed for inclining to the latter.

Primaries would mean that anyone could challenge an incumbent for the Conservative, Labour or Lib Dem nomination. If an MP wanted to keep the job, he or she would have to start representing the views of their constituents to his or her party leaders, rather than the other way around. Once again, our idea found its way into the Conservative manifesto and, once again, into the Coalition agreement. But, as with the right of recall, nothing has happened since. (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Cameron threat to veto Leveson

David Cameron threatened to veto the central recommendation of the Leveson Inquiry, warning that new press laws would "cross the Rubicon" and undermine the centuries-old principle of free speech.

Gordon Rayner and Robert Winnett, *Daily Telegraph*, 29 November 2012

The Prime Minister divided the Coalition by announcing that he was opposed to the state intervening in a free press and urged the House of Commons, a "bulwark of democracy", to think "very, very carefully" about such a move.

His threat came less than two hours after Lord Justice Leveson announced that a new independent press regulator, backed by legislation, was necessary in the wake of media scandals. Lord Leveson, who has spent more than a year investigating media ethics, criticised decades of "outrageous" behaviour by newspapers which had "wreaked havoc with the lives of innocent people".

The findings of the official inquiry were backed by Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband who are now expected to join forces in an attempt to push through new press laws. The issue could present the biggest crisis yet faced by the Coalition. All three party leaders said that the current system of media regulation was not "fit for purpose". However, the Prime Minister stated that newspapers could be forced to pay substantial fines and offer swift redress to victims of wrongdoing without the need for statute. He said that it was up to the media industry to bring forward tough proposals to prevent abuses. In a statement to the Commons, Mr Cameron expressed doubt over the central recommendation of the Leveson Inquiry. "I have some serious concerns and misgivings about this recommendation," he said. "For the first time we would have crossed the Rubicon, writing elements of press regulation into the law of the land. We should, I believe, be wary of any legislation which has the potential to infringe free speech and a free press. In this House, which has been a bulwark of democracy for centuries, we should think very, very carefully before crossing this line." He added: "The danger is that this would create a vehicle for politicians, whether today or some time in the future, to impose regulation and obligations on the press, something Lord Justice Leveson himself wishes to avoid." Mr Cameron also said that he was sceptical about Data Protection laws being tightened to allow the prosecution of more journalists.

Maria Miller, the Culture Secretary, said last night that the Government had "grave concerns" about how to implement the Leveson recommendations. However, in a move unprecedented in recent times, Mr Clegg also made a statement in Parliament expressing his opposition to Mr Cameron's view. The Deputy Prime Minister said that "we need to get on with this without delay" to ensure that press laws protected victims. He added: "He [Lord Leveson] has found that changing the law is the only way to guarantee a system of self-regulation which seeks to cover all of the press. Changing the law is the only way to give us all the assurance that the new regulator isn't just independent for a few months or years, but is independent for good."

Cross-party talks attended by the three party leaders began on Thursday night in an attempt to resolve the issue. However, well-placed sources said the prospect of a deal was "not good". The Prime Minister is expected to attempt to thwart any attempts by the Liberal Democrats and Labour to introduce legislation against his will. Officials have started drafting legal clauses which Conservative sources hope will demonstrate how a press law would be unworkable. Senior Labour sources said they were also confident about forcing any necessary laws through Parliament with the support of Mr Clegg. There may be a non-binding vote in the Commons as soon as next month, with dozens of Conservatives already publicly backing new laws to rein in the press.

The political stand-off came after Lord Leveson published a report running to almost 2,000 pages — the result of a lengthy inquiry which has seen dozens of witnesses questioned under oath. Lord Leveson said: "There have been too many times when, chasing the story, parts of the press have acted as if its own code, which it wrote, simply did not exist. This has caused real hardship, and on occasion, wreaked havoc with the lives of innocent people whose rights and liberties have been disdained. This is not just the famous but ordinary members of the public, caught up in events, many of them truly tragic, far larger than they could cope with, but made much, much worse by press behaviour that, at times, can only be described as outrageous."

Emotions will rule on independence

The case either for or against independence will be won not by economic reason but by matching people's passions, writes Matt Qvortrup

The Scotsman, by Matt Qvortrup, 22/05/2013

Dr Matt Qvortrup's book, Nationalism, Referendums and Democracy: Voting on Ethnic Issues and Independence, is published by Routledge

The First Minister was his own, confident self when he presented the economic case for Scottish independence yesterday at a factory in Falkirk. But for all the endless statistical predictions and the occasional snipes at consecutive London governments for squandering the revenue from the North Sea oil, this tactic will not win the referendum. To be sure, the former oil economist has a claim to fame and knows what he is talking about – but that is not enough.

His arguments are credible. Scotland certainly has a flourishing tourist industry and most of the whisky connoisseurs do prefer Scottish single malt to many other beverages. Even the argument that Scotland has generated more tax revenue than any other part of the UK can be supported by statistical evidence. But that is not how referendums are won. Referendums are won by emotions, not by economics.

It may well be the case that Scotland, to quote Alex Salmond, “has got what it takes to be a successful independent nation”. After all, small countries such as Denmark and Finland – both with populations roughly equivalent to Scotland – have been “successful”. But, the problem with Salmond's line of attack is that economic arguments rarely convince the voters in referendums.

US president Bill Clinton's campaign staff famously said “it's the economy, stupid”. That may well be the case for general elections. Candidate elections are almost always about bread-and-butter-issues. But referendums about independence are birds of another feather and require a different tactic. The issue of independence is an emotive issue, not a rational one. In an age of globalisation, the case for independence must be based on deeper and possibly irrational passions. We have plenty of evidence for this from other countries.

Of course, experiences from other nations are never repeated exactly, but recurrent patterns often occur. A couple of examples may be useful to explain why the economic argument may prove fatal to the Yes side of the debate. In Quebec in Canada, the francophone independence party got nowhere when it used economic arguments in the first referendum held there in 1980. It lost by 20 per cent. But in the second referendum – in 1995 – the charismatic leader of the Québécois independence movement, Lucien Bouchard, came within a whisker of securing independence when he campaigned on a theme that stressed the cultural differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Similarly, when Montenegro seceded from Yugoslavia, after a referendum in 2006, prime minister Milo Dukanovic did not resort to claims about the economic or even the social benefits of leaving Serbia. Rather, Dukanovic made references to such matters as the historic destiny of his country, ancient battles and other issues that plucked the national, romantic heart-strings of his compatriots. He won the campaign.

Why don't economic arguments convince voters? Basically, because they are easy to refute. There are as many opinions as there are economists. But it is hard to refute emotions. “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions,” observed David Hume – perhaps the greatest Scotsman in history. To win the referendum in 2014, the Yes side needs to appeal to the “passions”. Rational arguments are of secondary importance when dealing with an essentially emotive issue such as independence.

So, far from questioning the tactics of the perhaps most skilled – and cunning – politician on these isles, I would advise Salmond and supporters of independence to follow a different approach if they are to convince a majority of the Scottish voters to vote for independence in the autumn of 2014. The SNP – and the other parties campaigning for independence – will lose if they base arguments on hypothetical economic benefits.

“In doubt, vote no”, runs an old adage, which is often used by those who study referendums. You know what you have got, but you don't know what you will get. The same is often true in

independence referendums. The problem with the economic arguments for independence is that, by their very nature, they are technical. And voters do not trust technical and technocratic arguments. There are several examples of politicians who have lost by using economic arguments. In 2000, when Denmark voted on joining the euro, the then prime minister – and former economist – Poul Nyrup Rasmussen made the technical arguments for membership available to the public. Faced with hundreds of pages of econometric equations and undecipherable mathematical formulae, a large number of voters grew even more sceptical than they had been before. Needless to say, Rasmussen lost his referendum.

By focusing on the economic argument, Salmond has unwittingly handed the initiative to the opponents who can ask him to elaborate on ever finer technical points. Such a strategy will only help those who oppose independence. (...)

SERIE S. HUMAINES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Opponents of gay marriage won't call it a day yet

London Evening Standard, Matthew d'Ancona, 5 June 2013

(...) For the Prime Minister, the fortunes of the [Marriage (Same Sex Couples)] Bill have been unexpectedly turbulent. George Osborne, a more liberal and metropolitan figure than the PM, has championed the Bill with explicit reference to social change and the need for political parties to "reflect the modern societies they aspire to lead". Cameron's enthusiasm for the measure has naturally delighted the Tory modernisers. But it is his deeply conservative belief in the institution of marriage that has underpinned his support. He regards this Bill not as a liberal reform but a conservative measure, strengthening marriage by enabling gay couples to share in its benefits and assume its responsibilities.

Initially, the PM believed that what traditionalists would fear was the foisting of gay marriage on their churches: this is why the legislation boasts a so-called "quadruple lock", protecting religious organisations from any such pressure and marking a clear division between church and state. Yet the opposition to the Bill remains powerful and — awkwardly for Cameron — heavily concentrated in the ranks of his own party.

There are still days when he finds himself signing a dozen letters to Tory activists and constituents, explaining to them that he has not taken leave of his senses and that he has not turned his back on the party's grass roots. The disobliging remarks about Conservative associations ascribed last month to Lord Feldman, the party's co-chairman, have reinforced these anxieties. In the debate, Lord Mawhinney, a former Tory chairman himself, referred directly to this alleged outburst. "For 40 years," he said, "my life has been driven by Christian and Conservative convictions, and now I am led to believe that because I continue to hold those values and principles I am a swivel-eyed loon."

The antagonism between leadership and Tory tribe has been profoundly exacerbated by an under-explored disagreement over what, exactly, constitutes "religious freedom". Those who support the Bill apply JS Mill's "harm test": gay couples will cause no harm to anybody by getting married. They will infringe nobody's freedom to worship. As Baroness Stowell (once William Hague's deputy chief of staff, now deputy chief whip in the Lords) made clear in her admirably poised summing-up: "No teacher will be forced to promote or endorse same-sex marriage. Any teacher will continue to be able to state their own belief or that of their faith about same-sex marriage."

Yet in conversation with some of the Bill's opponents I have been struck by the sheer scope of what they mean by "religious freedom". In their eyes, it encompasses a lot more than the right to worship freely, or the right to opt out of practices that conflict with their convictions. They mean the right not to be offended — as many of them clearly are by the prospect of gay marriage and what they see as the damage that will be caused to this sacred institution.

On Monday, Lord Jenkin of Roding posed a very sensible question. "Last year, my wife and I celebrated our diamond wedding, and I have to say that it has been a marriage with mutual comfort and support. Is this Bill going to redefine that marriage? I cannot see how that could possibly happen." Yet this is exactly what the religious opponents of the Bill believe: that Lord Jenkin's marriage, and millions like it, will be devalued by the freedom of gay couples to join the ranks of the wed. They are offended by the prospect. They wish to wreck the whole thing.

This is not "religious freedom" but theocracy-by-stealth — and a firm distinction must be drawn between the two. In a pluralist society there is no right not to be offended. There is no right to impose your doctrines on the lives of others; no right to withhold equal access to an institution from a particular group because such access transgresses your private morality.

Yet this is precisely what the opponents of gay marriage demand — and it would be foolishly complacent to imagine they will throw in the towel. What started life as a straightforward incremental reform has become the civil rights issue for which the Cameron generation will be remembered. For that very reason, the saboteurs are determined not to give up without a fight, preparing, even now, their last stand with the cold zeal of those who have nothing left to lose.

Citizenship test has become a bad pub quiz, says academic

US immigrant Dr Thom Brooks says Life in the UK test is inconsistent in what it requires new citizens to know

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

The Guardian, Friday 14 June 2013 01.30 BST

Emperor Claudius on a bronze sestertius. The man who invaded Britain in AD 43 features in the *Life in the UK* test.

Photograph:
Alamy



A test taken by around 150,000 would-be British citizens each year is just a "bad pub quiz" with too much focus on culture and history at the expense of practical knowledge, an academic has said.

The Life in the UK test, which must be passed to qualify for indefinite leave to remain in Britain, does not require practical necessities in everyday life, Durham University's Dr Thom Brooks said.

But it is required that new citizens know "trivial" facts such as the year Emperor Claudius invaded Britain, the year that Sake Dean Mahomet launched the first curry house in the country and the age of Big Ben.

Brooks, a US immigrant who sat and passed the test in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 2009, becoming a British citizen in 2011, said the test is a key part of immigration policy but is unfit for purpose in its current form.

"The Life In The UK test has become a bad pub quiz. It has gone from testing practical trivia to the purely trivial and is a major opportunity lost," he said.

"The biggest surprise is the lack of attention successive governments have paid to ensuring the test is fair and not out of date, a surprise even bigger than the sometimes-shocking questions that can be found on the test," said Brooks, a reader in law at Durham Law School.

"Many citizens that were born and bred in the UK would struggle to know the answers to many of these questions.

"Britain will not be more cohesive because more have heard about the Battle of Trafalgar, but rather if future citizens understand better how to participate in daily British life and make a contribution."

The latest edition of the test took effect from 25 March and was based on the third edition of the handbook *Life in the United Kingdom*.

Brooks argues that the test is inconsistent in what it requires new citizens to know. They are not required to know the number of MPs in Westminster but are required to know the number of representatives in the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno, vice-chairman of the all party parliamentary group on migration, welcomed Brooks's report, launched at a lecture at Durham University on Thursday evening.

"I am delighted to echo his call that the test, which is both impractical and irrelevant as it stands, be reformed," he said.

"Surely future Britons should better understand how to participate in daily life, instead of knowing by rote which emperor invaded Britain in AD 43?"

Brooks stops short of recommending that the test is ditched, but instead said it should be reformed so that it is no longer "impractical, inconsistent, trivial, gender imbalanced, outdated and ineffective".

The test requires new citizens to know the date of birth and death of nearly 30 men in British history but only four women. No women artists, musicians or poets are mentioned.

Much of the information in the accompanying official handbook does not appear to be part of the test, Brooks said.

The handbook contains about 3,000 facts including five telephone numbers, 34 websites, 278 historical dates and several brief excerpts of British poetry.

Of the 400 official practice questions and answers in one of three official test handbooks, no telephone numbers, no websites, no poetry and only a few dates are mentioned.

A Home Office spokesman said: "We've stripped out mundane information about water meters, train timetables, and using the internet. The new test rightly focuses on values and principles at the heart of being British. Instead of telling people how to claim benefits it encourages participation in British life.

"This is just part of our work to help ensure migrants are ready and able to integrate into British society and forms part of our changes which have broken the automatic link between temporary and permanent migration.

~~"We have made radical changes to the immigration system and are determined to reduce net migration from the hundred of thousands into the tens of thousands by the end of this parliament. The latest figures show these reforms are working, with net migration falling by more than a third since 2010."~~

A Conservative party spokesman said: "Dr Brooks is a self-confessed 'active member' of the Labour party, so it's no surprise that he prefers Labour's flawed old test which told people how to claim benefits rather than encourage participation in British life."

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

2/2

Little England folly at the heart of history

February 7, 2013

Opinion : By Richard Evans, *Financial Times*

Government's plans will swap broad approach for rote learning, says Richard Evans

Is this now really the end of history? No, not history in terms of the never-ending passage of events, but "history" as an academic discipline, the subject that is taught in our schools. Reading the government's plans for the new national curriculum it is hard not to conclude otherwise.

The proposals, published on Thursday, look set to replace the existing breadth and ambition of coverage, critical method and historical debate with rote learning of the patriotic stocking fillers so beloved of traditionalists in both main parties. Out goes the drive to cover a broader canvas, taking in European history and other civilisations. In comes a narrow-minded focus on British history alone – to the exclusion of everything else.

What is wrong with this, you may ask; shouldn't our children grow up knowing the history of their own country? Well, yes, but they need to know about other parts of the world as well, and not just in the ways that they have interacted with Britain. Understanding the history and culture of other countries, as the present curriculum says, is an important way of learning tolerance and the appreciation of other people's values. History should, among other things, be about fostering an inclusive, outward-looking sense of national identity, not what looks here like a Little England version of our national past, linked to an isolationist view of our national future.

Children taught by this curriculum will reach the age of 14 without knowing anything about the history of other parts of the world; they will not even realise how closely British history has been intertwined with it. "Britain's relations with Europe" are bracketed with "the Commonwealth and the wider world", as if Britain was not actually part of Europe, or as if our membership of the EU was as unimportant as our membership of the Commonwealth.

Worse still, there is no room in the new curriculum for a critical approach to the British past. The curriculum tells schoolchildren to celebrate "great innovators" such as Brunel, heroes of empire such as General James Wolfe, "the Enlightenment in England" (no room here for French thinkers, except insofar as they had an impact on British thought) and "the Glorious Revolution" of 1688, though without an inkling of the Dutch invasion. Nelson, Wellington and Pitt are all there; Tom Paine and John Wilkes are not.

The proposals coincide with the government's new test for aspiring British citizens. This will include questions on our "long and illustrious history", a celebration of the achievements of Margaret Thatcher (don't mention the miners' strike) and the contestable claim that the transition from empire to Commonwealth was orderly and peaceful.

In the preamble, the new curriculum claims that a knowledge of the British past "helps us understand the challenges of our own time". But as soon as you think about what these challenges are, you will realise this is blinkered nonsense. The challenges we face are global: climate change, the threat of war in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, financial crises, mass migration and terrorism, to name just a few. How can any child begin to understand why Britain would decide to deploy troops to Iraq, Afghanistan or Mali without knowing the history of these nations?

Worst of all, the document gives no sense at all of the fact that history is an academic discipline, like chemistry or physics. The preamble says, correctly enough, that "a high-quality history education equips pupils to think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective

and judgment". But this is then completely forgotten in the rest of the document, like the similar lip-service given in the preamble to the need to "know and understand the broad outlines of European and world history".

Far more central to the curriculum's purpose is the programmatic statement that "pupils should be taught about key dates and events, and significant individuals". This is the 1066 and All That school. *The modern discipline of history, accurately reflected in the existing national curriculum, is being chucked out to make way for a mindless regression to the patriotic myths of the Edwardian era. This is dumbing-down indeed.*

The writer is regius professor of history at Cambridge university

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Cameron to express remorse for Amritsar

Financial Times, February 20, 2013

By George Parker and Amy Kazmin

David Cameron will lay a wreath at the site of the 1919 Amritsar massacre, in a highly symbolic visit on Wednesday to the scene of what he regards as one of the most shameful episodes of the British empire.

Mr Cameron is the first serving British prime minister to visit Amritsar, where hundreds of civilians were killed and wounded when troops under the command of a British general opened fire on a public gathering.

The visit will be made with one eye on Britain's 800,000-strong Sikh community. Mr Cameron said last week that Indians shared many Tory values such as a belief in enterprise, family and community. Hendon, Leicester and Harrow are among the marginal parliamentary seats where Sikh votes could be decisive.

After much deliberation, Mr Cameron has decided not to apologise formally for the massacre; instead, he will sign a book of condolence and express remorse and a determination that the event should never be forgotten.

His choice of words will be heavily scrutinised. Some will wonder why the prime minister is not apologising for the Amritsar massacre when he has said sorry for Bloody Sunday and the Hillsborough football stadium disaster.

But Mr Cameron's aides say those apologies covered incidents where the British state had never previously admitted wrongdoing. Winston Churchill, then a member of the cabinet, acknowledged in 1920 after an official inquiry that events in Amritsar were "monstrous".

The prime minister also fears that if he formally apologises for the massacre, ordered by General Reginald Dyer, he might be expected to say sorry for other events in Britain's imperial history whenever he ventures abroad.

In 2009, before he became prime minister, Mr Cameron chided Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, his Labour predecessors, for their apparent willingness to distance themselves from the colonial past.

"We must never forget that Britain is a great country with a history we can be truly proud of," he said. "Our culture, language and inventiveness has shaped the modern world."

In 1997 Mr Blair apologised to the Irish people for the famine the country suffered in the mid-19th century. And in 2006 he spoke of his "deep sorrow" at Britain's historical role in the African slave trade.

In 2009 Mr Brown issued a formal government apology to tens of thousands of British children shipped to Australia and other Commonwealth countries between the 1920s and 1960s.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, which took place in a small urban park, is one of the most traumatic events in India's shared colonial history with the UK.

The massacre occurred when Gen Dyer led a squad of 50 soldiers to fire – for more than 10 minutes, until they had exhausted their ammunition – on a huge crowd of unarmed protesters, including many women and children. The exits to the garden were narrow and there were stampedes of those trying to escape.

Colonial authorities estimated the toll at 379 killed and 1,100 wounded, while the Indian National Congress, estimated the toll at more than 1,000 dead and many more wounded.

Dealing with that history, including the disputed casualty count, has proved a tricky business for Britain. In the 50th year of India's independence, the Queen visited the massacre site bearing flowers and stood in silent homage at the memorial, without any spoken or written apology.

Her gesture was intended to be conciliatory but caused a storm of protest in India, where it was deemed insufficient as an act of contrition.

Matters were not helped by Prince Philip, who openly objected to the memorial plaque honouring about 2,000 who fell at the site. The Duke of Edinburgh was overheard saying by Indian police that the toll was "a bit exaggerated".

Meanwhile, Aamir Khan, one of India's most popular actors, said on Tuesday after meeting Mr Cameron: "Speaking for myself, I feel that what happened in the past happened in the past.

"I don't think that they owe us an apology for what happened a century ago."

Amritsar marks the final leg of a three-day tour of India that took Mr Cameron through Mumbai and New Delhi at the head of the biggest British trade delegation assembled.

David Cameron hopes that India will shortly announce plans to buy a new wave of Hawk aircraft – built by BAE systems – to upgrade the Indian air force's equivalent of the Red Arrows.

Mr Cameron has even offered the assistance of the Royal Air Force to instal "smoke pods" on the jets, to enable them to paint the sky in the colours of the Indian flag during aerobatic displays.

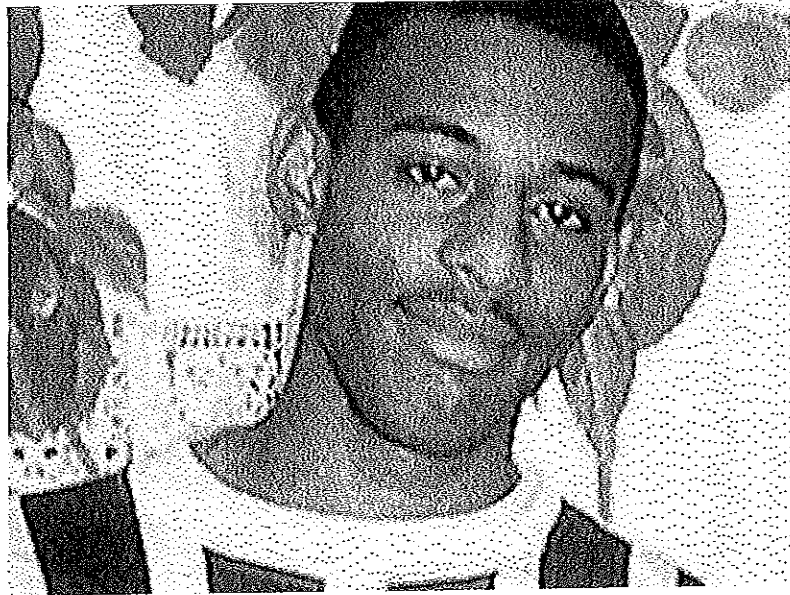
India has previously bought more than 100 Hawk aircraft in two waves since 2004; New Delhi would need to buy roughly a dozen of the planes to modernise its Surya Kiran air display team.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Metropolitan Police still institutionally racist 20 years after Stephen Lawrence murder, black police leaders say

PAUL PEACHEY, *The Independent*, MONDAY 22 APRIL 2013

Talented black people should be allowed to enter the police at senior levels to tackle the lack of ethnic recruits, a group has demanded as Britain marks the 20th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The National Black Police Association said the policy, at the heart of controversial government police reforms, is needed to tackle the chronic shortage of black officers in England and Wales. However Dr Richard Stone, a member of the Macpherson Inquiry panel which changed the nature of policing with its 1999 report into the murder, warned that positive discrimination would be "dangerous".



Marking the anniversary today, the Prime Minister will say that the "institutional racism" finding – first made in the 1999 Macpherson report into the Lawrence killing and the police response – was part of a process of "monumental change" in society and posed profound questions both of government and the police. However, the Metropolitan Police's Black Police Association (MBPA) used the occasion to claim that Britain's largest force was still "institutionally racist". A statement cited by *The Guardian* pointed to the disproportionate use of stop and search powers against the black community and the lack of advancement by senior ethnic minority officers as structural problems that remain.

The national BPA said it was unacceptable that less than 5 per cent of officers in England and Wales were from ethnic minority backgrounds. And the Met branch called for more to be done by the leadership of the force to get rid of the problem. Dr Richard Stone said: "It really does need some leadership to get rid of this problem. It always keeps exploding in their faces. Every year there's something about racism going from Scarman (the report into the 1981 Brixton riots) onwards."

The MPBA has made the claim about institutional racism on a number of occasions including in 2010 after the jailing of its former national head, ex-Met commander Ali Dizaei, for corruption. However, the latest complaint is likely to disappoint senior officers at the force who point to advances in recruitment and attitude to support their claims. The Met now has four black or ethnic minority officers among the 34 at commander rank or above – well below the city's average, but there were none at the conclusion of the trial of two of his killers last year. One in ten officers of all ranks are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

1/2

The Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe said there had been improvements in the force and said he hoped it was not institutionally racist. "I don't think it's for me to judge. It seems to me that the judgement of the public is the strongest judgement. If they think we are, then we are. I think there is lots of evidence to say it isn't true and that we're actually doing a pretty good job and we are improving all the time."

A poster about the Lawrence case will be put up at Scotland Yard today on the 20 anniversary of his death with a message from Sir Bernard. It reads: "Twenty years ago the Lawrence family lost their loved son, Stephen. We let them down by not catching his murderers. Then last year we finally brought two of his killers to justice. The Met won't forget Stephen Lawrence." Two of his killers, Gary Dobson and David Norris, were found guilty last year following a forensic breakthrough in the case. They were part of a group of men who racially abused and then stabbed the 18-year-old student as he walked home with a friend in Eltham, southeast London. However, other members of the gang remain free and senior officers said it remained a "live" inquiry, though the dead man's campaigning mother, Doreen Lawrence, has cast doubt on any chance anybody else would be prosecuted for the killing.

A memorial service will be held in central London tomorrow, expected to be attended by senior police and politicians. Stephen Lawrence's father, Neville, will take flowers to a secluded plot in Jamaica where his son is buried. The case continues to raise controversy with a review ordered by Home Secretary Theresa May of allegations of police corruption during the original inquiry due to report in July. The murder and the inquiry had a major impact throughout society and forced state bodies and institutions to examine their own attitudes and policies to racist behaviour. Despite the changes, Mrs Lawrence said that she doubted Britain could have a black Prime Minister in her lifetime.

David Cameron will today praise the impact that Mrs Lawrence had and the change that has taken place "Much has been achieved, but we know that more still needs to be done. We owe this to the memory of Stephen," he said.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Britain's monarchy is an invocation of a reactionary past

As more royal pageantry looms, it's time to ask: does the Queen do the country more harm than good?

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Tanya Gold, *The Guardian*, Sunday 26 May 2013



The jubilee flotilla ...
'the most popular
apology for monarchy
these days is that it
"sells Britain" – yes it
does, and as what?'
Photograph: John
Stillwell/AP

It is the 60th anniversary of Elizabeth II's coronation on Sunday, which was preceded by the news that Mount Everest had been "conquered" by a British team. In fact, Tenzing Norgay was a Nepalese Indian Sherpa and Edmund Hillary was a New Zealander, but this was close enough. It was a serendipity I like, because both coronation and ascent of the impossible mountain were, in their ways, Freudian daydreams that imagined an ecstatic national unity that was entirely false and utterly pointless. Laurence Olivier narrated the film of the coronation, and nothing could have felt more impressive, or more staged.

These are bad times for republicans. The last three years have been full of royal pageantry – an invocation of a reactionary past where a pretty duchess who has done nothing but marry and conceive is called the face of modern femininity. Elites harden and grow more wealthy and remote, watching the jubilee flotilla from their private perches, either bought or lobbied for. The alienation of elected politicians from voters makes the very air seem dangerous. That Maxima, the new queen of Holland, was crowned last month wearing what looked like the Miss World crown is the only amusing thing about this monarchical resurgence. But aristocrats know they have to endure being laughed at, and I do not think they mind. The benefits are obvious to them.

The royal wedding and the diamond jubilee were, respectively, a drunken "fairytale", and a thank-you so overwrought it gave Elizabeth II's husband cystitis – ladies and gentleman of the press, prepare your headlines. The anniversary of the coronation is more fascinating than either, because it exposes the most ancient roots of monarchy, a childlike need for gods and intercession, when I hoped we had done with both.

The film of the coronation service was re-released in cinemas last year. I sat in the darkness and

watched it. I was riveted neither by the peers and their ladies, shouting allegiance in furs, nor by the young Princess Margaret's almost pornographic beauty and obvious unhappiness. It was the monarch's status as holy intercessor between God and commoner; as sacrificial victim; as human font. (As jewellery model?) On Coronation Day the *Times* wrote: "The Queen stands for the soul as well as the body of the Commonwealth. In her is incarnate ... the whole of society ... she represents the life of her people." Does she? Does she really? And can we not do better?

Perhaps because the answer is so obviously yes, or because the palace PR professionals think a third year of pomp in a recession would be vulgar, this particular anniversary is fairly downbeat. There will be a service at Westminster Abbey, and a Coronation festival in the grounds of Buckingham Palace to advertise the wares of royal warrant holders, because the most popular apology for monarchy these days is that it "sells Britain" – yes it does, and as what?

It is the BBC which will make the most fuss, and this is interesting for those who call the BBC progressive, and not as a compliment. On Monday it screens the documentary *The Queen: A Passion for Horses*; one excited newspaper announced it with the headline "Queen Rides to Feel Human" which, if true, entirely supports my point. Perhaps we should reinstitute the ancient royal custom of washing feet? She would do it, I think, if they were hooves.

This will be nothing to the anniversary coverage of the Tory press, which, as the death of Margaret Thatcher demonstrated, loves nothing better than a demi-god – except perhaps two demi-gods. Last Thursday the *Telegraph* noted that the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall tried to fly to Hay-on-Wye to open the literary festival, but their helicopter broke. So they drove there in a car, and this, according to the *Telegraph*, was miraculous.

It is not so much what monarchy does that offends me, but what it does not do. It does not tell us that we are free and equal, and that any child born can do anything; in this, it is far more reactionary than Christianity. Instead it tells us, as it always has, that our places in society are ordained by an invisible God, and we should know them. If she is above, we can only be below – is this why conservatives adore it, it being so like a profitable business? And, to distract us, there is old patriotic nonsense: reach for the stars, children, and ignore the mud, even as it chokes you. All this will be remembered on Sunday.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

What history should be in the UK citizenship test?

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

By Melissa Hogenboom, *BBC News Magazine*, 29 January 2013

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21234254>



A new version of the UK citizenship test, with a greater focus on history, has been announced by the Home Office. Which events should immigrants be quizzed on?

Most British children learn about Henry VIII and his six wives, the Industrial Revolution and the two world wars.

But there's rarely agreement about what particular events are essential to a well-rounded knowledge of history.

The Home Office has now announced that a new version of the UK citizenship test will have more questions on British culture, history and traditions. The handbook *Life in the United Kingdom* has been updated.

While some historical information was included in the old handbook, there was less focus on history, the Home Office argues.

"Migrants did not have to show they had an understanding of how modern Britain has evolved. The new book and test will focus on events and people who have contributed to making Britain great," says a spokesman.

But how does learning about key historical moments tie into citizenship?

"History tells us who we are, where we came from and where we are going. It is the adhesive that knits our society together," says Christopher McGovern, director of the History Curriculum Association.

Comparing sample questions from the old and new citizenship tests, McGovern says the old test was too focused on access to welfare provision, such as free prescriptions, free legal advice, free healthcare and free training opportunities.

The new focus on the identity, history and culture of Britain will help migrants to integrate more successfully, he believes.

"Knowledge of the landmarks of British history is fundamental to securing and maintaining an

integrated society based on shared values."

McGovern says that landmark historical events such as the location of Stonehenge, or who fought in the Battle of Trafalgar will give those new to the UK a starting point to learn about important periods of history.

"They are the signposts that guide us to a fuller understanding of Britain," he argues.

Some however, argue that multiple choice questions do not give enough context.

Historian and author Neil Storey says the questions are too simplistic and need to include the history of freedom, democracy and mutual respect "that we have prided ourselves on in Britain".

"We cannot have citizenship based upon what I would describe as a trivia test. It is essential to have a basic understanding of our history - good and bad - and the experiences of our nation at peace and war, because it defines who British people are."

The test, Storey adds, is a good start but it is equally important to learn how Britain has got to where it is, and what it has cost men and women to get there.

For example, people should learn about those who lost their lives during WWI and WWII, or the suffragettes who fought for women's rights to vote.

But will questions on a test - be it a school exam or a citizenship test - really encourage those taking it to learn more about the subject matter?

Historian Andrew Roberts believes it will help people appreciate "the long and splendid history of Britain".

"Anyone attempting to walk down a street in the UK without having any concept of this country's past is going to have a poorer understanding of life in Britain. These historical questions will help enrich migrants' lives."

But Iain Aitch, author of *We're British, Innit*, says while learning about history may be useful, it would be more relevant to learn what rhubarb or mushy peas are, as well as pub etiquette - like the custom of ordering a round of drinks in a bar.

"With any test people will learn what they need to. There may only be a small percentage who become interested in history.

"Britishness is something that comes with time. You learn to queue, not complain about your poor lunch and to be able to talk about the weather at length without saying much at all. Some things are nuanced and not really testable," adds Aitch.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

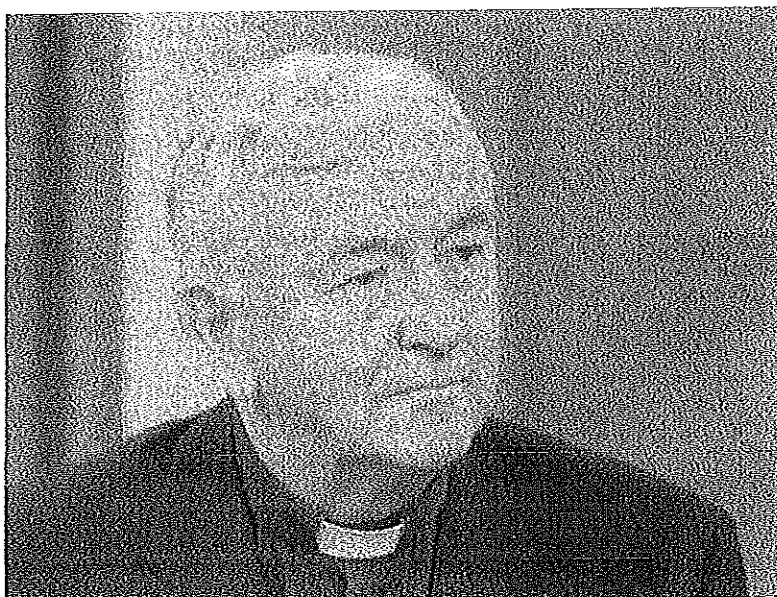
HORS PROGRAMME

Gay marriage: public say Church is wrong

'Independent' poll shows rift as Archbishop attacks Government's plans

ANDREW GRICE, *The Independent*, WEDNESDAY 26 DECEMBER 2012

The public want the Government to go further on gay marriage by allowing Church of England vicars to conduct same-sex weddings, a poll for *The Independent* reveals today. As some religious leaders used their Christmas sermons to attack David Cameron's plans, the ComRes survey suggests that the Church of England is out of touch with the public by opposing gay marriage. It defines marriage "as being between a man and a woman".



Archbishop of Westminster Vincent Nichols called the plan a 'shambles'

By a margin of 2-1, people oppose the Government's proposal to make it illegal for the Church of England to conduct gay marriages. Asked whether its vicars should be allowed to perform such ceremonies if they wanted to, 62 per cent of people said they should and 31 per cent disagreed, with seven per cent replying "don't know".

Vincent Nichols, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, warned that the Government's plans would create a "sham" version of marriage. Urging all Catholics to join the political struggle against gay marriage, the Archbishop of Westminster used a midnight Mass to criticise governments which "mistakenly promote such patterns of sexual intimacy [outside marriage] as objectively to be approved and even encouraged among the young".

In his strongest attack on the proposal, Archbishop Nichols told the BBC yesterday: "There was no announcement in any party manifesto, no Green Paper, no statement in the Queen's Speech. And yet here we are on the verge of primary legislation. From a democratic point of view, it's a shambles."

Accusing the Government of ignoring the result of its consultation exercise, he said: "George Orwell would be proud of that manoeuvre. I think the process is shambolic." He claimed that those who responded were "7-1 against same-sex marriage".

The Rt Rev Mark Davies, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Shrewsbury, also told a midnight Mass at Shrewsbury Cathedral: "This Christmas we are also conscious of new shadows cast by a Government that pledged at its election to support the institution of marriage ... the Prime Minister has decided without mandate, without any serious consultation to redefine the identity of marriage itself, the foundation of the family for all generations to come. This is again done in the name of progress ... The British people have reason to ask on this night: 'Where is such progress leading?'"

The incoming Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, also highlighted the issue of gay marriage in

his Christmas Day sermon at Durham Cathedral. Saying that some felt the Church was in a period of "division" and "betrayal", he continued: "There are profound differences of opinion about the nature of Christian truth and its place in society, about the right of an ancient tradition to dictate or even to advocate ethical values around the end of life, around marriage, around the nature of human relationships, inequality, our duty to each other."

According to the ComRes survey of 1,000 people, women are more likely than men to oppose the plan to outlaw gay marriage by the Church of England. By a margin of 64 to 27 per cent, women think that its vicars should be allowed to perform them. Among men, 60 per cent agree that gay weddings should be held when vicars want to conduct them, but 35 per cent oppose this.

There is much stronger support for the Church to conduct gay marriages among younger than older people. Almost three in four people between the ages of 18 and 44 support the move, compared to 55 per cent of 55- to 64-year-olds. Those aged 65 and over are the only age group opposed to the idea, by a margin of 50 to 38 per cent.

Under proposals announced by the Government earlier this month, the Church of England would be the only religious organisation specifically banned from conducting gay marriages. The aim was to reassure its critics by bolstering the Coalition's pledge that Churches would not be bounced into holding such ceremonies against their will. It was also intended to balance the decision to allow other churches to "opt in" to same-sex marriage if they wish.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Politics and the EU : Take me to your leader

If only David Cameron had Nigel Farage's sway over the Conservative Party.

The Economist, May 18th 2013



TWO months before the 2005 election the then-leader of the Conservative Party, Michael Howard, made waves by allowing candidates who wanted Britain to leave the European Union (EU) to say so in their campaigns. Today that news would not cause a ripple. On May 12th Michael Gove, the education secretary, and Philip Hammond, the defence secretary, declared that they would opt to quit the union in any immediate referendum. That two loyal and cerebral ministers voiced views once considered outlandish in mere parliamentary candidates shows how much more Eurosceptic the party has become—and that the latest of its perennial debates over Europe strays into uncharted political territory.

The drama dates back to January, when, in a long-promised speech, Mr Cameron pledged that, if granted a full majority at the 2015 general election, he would renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership and offer voters an in-out referendum. The gambit followed months of bellyaching by Tory backbenchers. The prime minister hoped that the speech would halt the rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which wants Britain to leave the EU as soon as possible, and curb the pressures on his leadership from malcontents. For a short while, it did. Daniel Hannan, an MEP hostile to the EU and all its works cheerily declared it "the most Eurosceptic speech ever by a British prime minister."

But the honeymoon was brief. Within weeks, MPs were demanding legislation in the current parliament to guarantee the referendum in the next (a measure opposed by Mr Cameron's pro-European coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats.) Under Nigel Farage, its beerily charismatic leader, UKIP exceeded expectations by pipping the Tories to second place in the Eastleigh by-election in February and securing a record 23% of the vote in local elections on May 2nd. Then Nigel Lawson, an influential former chancellor of the exchequer, further inflamed the debate by calling for Britain to leave the EU.

Thus emboldened, on May 9th two inveterate Tory troublemakers tabled an amendment regretting that the government's agenda for the upcoming year did not contain a bill legislating for a referendum. In a tacit admission of weakness, the prime minister declared himself "relaxed" about

MPs and even junior ministers supporting a move critical of his approach. Comments by Mr Gove and Mr Hammond, whose willingness to contemplate leaving the EU (though neither ruled out a successful renegotiation) were also distinctly unhelpful.

As support for the amendment grew, Mr Cameron's authority over his party looked shaky indeed. To defang the risk, Downing Street published a draft bill guaranteeing an in-out referendum and invited Tory MPs to initiate it from the floor of the House of Commons (circumventing Lib Dem resistance). Although the parliamentary arithmetic means the bill is highly unlikely to become law, the attempt appeared to please the party. Douglas Carswell, a hardened Brussels-basher, proclaimed that: "We [Eurosceptics] are winning." Such boasts should however concern Mr Cameron. His speech in January was a gamble that he could marginalise the implacables who simply want to leave the EU by rallying the majority of the party around a referendum acceptable to most members. That manoeuvre has presented two problems.

The first is that the implacables are more than a fringe group—Tim Montgomerie, a Conservative commentator, reckons they now constitute about a third of the party—and they are becoming more combative, not less. Some even want Mr Cameron to dissolve the coalition if the Lib Dems do not agree to formal referendum legislation.

Second, in his attempt to unite disparate views, Mr Cameron left big questions unanswered. Speculation and false expectations have filled the vacuum; on the matter of legislation, for example. Before the local elections the prime minister hinted that he was "prepared to consider" the enabling bill that many of his backbenchers craved. That they redoubled their efforts to obtain one in the following weeks was no coincidence.

Mr Cameron's plans for renegotiation remain similarly unclear. Lord Lawson judged that any changes would be "inconsequential". Now MPs want evidence to the contrary. Tim Bale, an expert on the Tory party, says this agitation and Mr Cameron's attempts to keep his options open invite comparisons to John Major. During his premiership in the 1990s, the Tories descended into bitter infighting. Now, as then, the party is more obsessed about this matter than voters, who are focused on the economy and living standards. And now, as then, the dent to the prime minister's authority could be lasting (despite the publication of the draft bill, 116 Tory MPs backed the amendment in a vote on May 15th, implying a lack of trust in Mr Cameron's ability to deliver a referendum). Doubt extends far beyond the issue of Europe. In the same week a group of MPs announced that they would also seek a referendum on gay marriage, currently making its way through the legislature. The sole comfort for Mr Cameron is that the Labour Party looks divided, too. Ed Miliband, its leader, opposes a referendum on the EU but faces internal pressure to show that he trusts the electorate to make a choice. The Lib Dems are in a similar quandary. So Mr Farage, who appears to be setting the agenda, is the only one with much to laugh about. He has no MPs in the House of Commons, but Mr Cameron's unruly backbenchers are proving useful enough as it is.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Lord Falconer's 'assisted dying' bill takes cue from Abortion Act

Terminally ill patients will be able to obtain a fatal dose of drugs to kill themselves if they can persuade two doctors that they have made up their mind to end their lives, under plans being put before Parliament today.

By John Bingham, Social Affairs Editor, *Daily Telegraph*, 15 May 2013



A long-awaited bill being published by the former Lord Chancellor Lord Falconer has parallels with the 1967 Abortion Act by placing responsibility for authorising the action in the hands of two doctors.

They will be required to sign statements saying that they believe that the patient is likely to have less than six months to live and that they have reached a "clear and settled intention" to end their life.

The patient would then be prescribed a fatal dose of drugs which they would "self administer", under a system similar to that operating in the US state of Oregon.

But it is understood the proposed British system would allow doctors, or specially nominated nurses, to assist patients who cannot take the drugs unaided.

And they would be required to deliver the fatal prescription in person to the patient's home and must stay there – although not necessarily in the same room – either while they take it or decide against doing so.

The bill is also expected to include a "cooling off period" for patients, requiring them to have several appointments with doctors before being given the fatal prescription and doctors who object on grounds of conscience would be able to opt out.

Without Government backing, the bill is unlikely to become law. But Lord Falconer's supporters are growing in confidence that they could secure enough votes to win in the House of Lords.

It has been carefully timed to ensure that any strong show of support in the Lords within the next year would put pressure on all three parties to include a pledge in their election manifesto to allow the issue to be considered in the next parliament.

A new poll commissioned by the campaign group Dignity in Dying, which is promoting the bill, suggests that more than three quarters of the public support a change in the law on assisted suicide. But the group acknowledged that separate surveys have shown that two thirds of doctors are opposed.

Opponents claimed that, like the Abortion Act, authorisation would be given behind closed doors on questionable basis and supporters would be tempted to "push the boundaries".

Opponents of abortion claim that provisions allowing terminations because of a perceived risk to a mother's mental health is routinely used to provide abortion on demand.

Lord Falconer said: "The public are currently ahead of politicians on this issue.

"The current law which forces some terminally ill people to travel abroad to die or attempt suicide

behind closed doors is not fit for purpose.

"This new law will safeguard patients, protect family members and ensure that the medical profession can be involved.

"Furthermore, strictly limited to terminally ill, mentally competent adults, the Bill will not result in more people dying, but in fewer people suffering."

Dr Peter Saunders of the Care Not Killing alliance, which will resist the bill, said: "If the Abortion Act is anything to go by the decisions will be very subjective and the boundaries will be pushed.

"You will find doctors who will tick the box and push the boundaries. What we see in Oregon is so called 'doctor shopping' where people just go around looking at which doctors are going to be easier about signing the forms.

"We will be looking at the bill with great interest to see just where the loopholes are."

He said that although it is possible to predict with some confidence how long someone has to live if it is a matter of days, when the timescale is in months any estimate can be months or even years out. Being confident that someone has a settled desire to end their life would also be very difficult for doctors, he said.

He said: "How does someone make that decision without knowing the patient extremely well and without knowing the family dynamic that might be operating: whether there is coercion, whether there is just a sense of duty?

"It is an incredibly difficult one for skilled psychologists and psychiatrists who know patients intimately let alone a GP ticking a box in the middle of a busy surgery.

"Any system like that would be subject to huge abuse and it will be very difficult to detect when the key witness is dead."

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

This cosy Surrey-Oxbridge link exposes Britain's geographical apartheid

University data confounds the post-Thatcher myth of progress – in fact the UK's social and economic divisions are growing wider

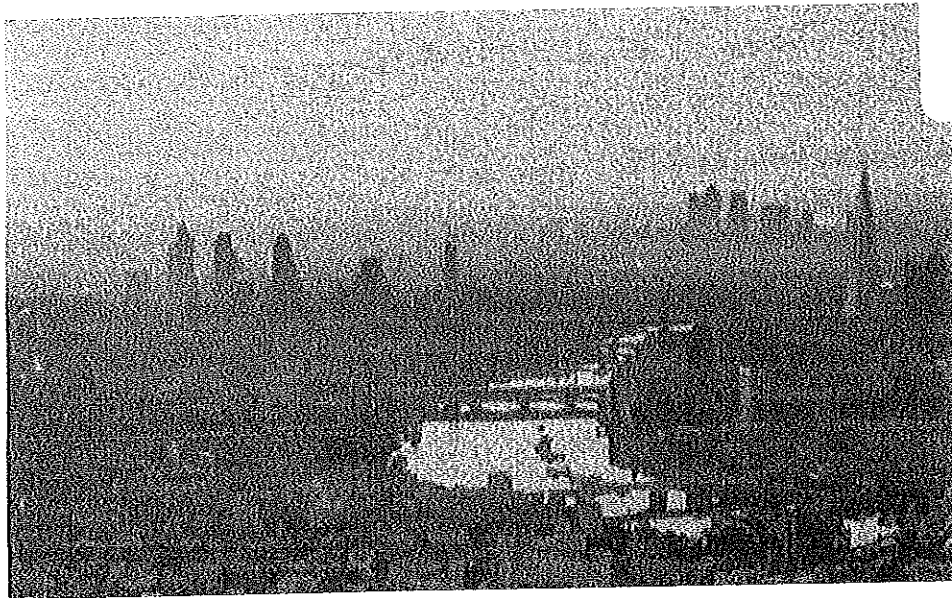
Alex Niven, *The Guardian*, Monday 10 June 2013

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME



On one hand is the flourishing city-state of London and its commuter belt. On the other hand, increasingly, is everywhere else. Photograph: High Level Photography/Rex

The news that Surrey contained almost as many successful Oxbridge applicants last year as Wales and the north-east of England combined is as predictable as it is saddening. Those of us who don't subscribe to the post-Thatcher myth of progress – the idea that the UK has been somehow "rescued" by Margaret Thatcher and her successors over the last three decades – can only sigh at this new instance of staggering inequality in the pro-money, anti-poor nightmare that is modern Britain.

But these education statistics offer a new twist to the inequality narrative. They make plain a truth that millions of people all over the country have known for some time: in economic, social, and political terms, Britain is partitioning. On the one hand is the flourishing city-state of London and its pastoral commuter belt – places like Surrey and its fellow home counties. On the other hand, increasingly, is everywhere else.

Outside the London megalopolis, in Britain's marginal regions, the recession is a deepening reality, funding cuts are decimating resources and unemployment remains worryingly high. While London has a fair claim to being the world's most prosperous city, many other parts of the country have been abandoned and ignored in the rush to accommodate global capitalism. One young entrepreneur hit the nail on the head when he commented that "a 23- or 24-year-old Londoner is more likely to be concerned about Mumbai than Newcastle".

Was it ever thus? Yes and no. For well over a thousand years, of course, London has been the centrifugal hub of English culture, money and power, while Britain's peripheries have suffered from varying degrees of contempt, indifference and outright violence at the hands of the London-based political establishment. Like France – but unlike, say, Germany and Italy – England was for centuries effectively a one-city nation.

However, a major reversal of Britain's skewed geography occurred at the onset of the Industrial Revolution, when northern cities like Manchester and Scottish powerhouses like Glasgow became central to the global economy. By the 20th century, the growth of Britain's industrial heartlands led to the empowerment of a unionised working-class and the mainstream breakthrough of its political embodiment, the Labour party, a party that derived, and still derives, the greater part of its strength from Wales, Scotland, the Midlands, and the north (as well as, we shouldn't forget, the working-class fringes of London itself). Historically, the more Britain's regions have flourished, the more leftwing and the more egalitarian the country as a whole has become.

But since Thatcher we have seen the flipside to this. As the country has drifted to the right, areas outside of the south-east of England have been progressively sidelined. In the neoliberal period, our former industrial regions have continued to decline. Meanwhile London has become something like a new imperial capital, a place where the world's financial elite congregates to make safe-bet property investments and enjoy the support of a political establishment that has for 30 years now been supremely relaxed about people getting filthy rich. Labour, a party that has consistently directed its policies at the swing voters of the south-east since the 1990s, must share the blame for this geographical apartheid with the Conservatives.

Back in the 1960s, one of the symptoms of the very tentative form of socialism then being implemented in Britain was a noticeable increase in regional voices in the dominant institutions of cultural life. On the radio, in parliament and in the hallowed quads of Oxford and Cambridge, one of the most obvious signs that power had been spread more equally across the country was the fact that you could expect to hear working-class, regional accents resounding amid the braying of the old boys and the Etonians. In recent times, after the egalitarian reforms of the postwar period have been largely rolled back, our central institutions have become places where the regional voices have been purged to make way for a new south-eastern elite.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME

Scotland Faces More Hurdles if It Approves Independence

By STEPHEN CASTLE, *International Herald Tribune*, February 10, 2013

LONDON — Scotland would have to renegotiate membership in the European Union and other international organizations if it votes for independence in a referendum next year, according to legal advice expected to be published Monday by the British government.

The unusual decision to make public an official legal opinion could intensify the debate over the terms under which Scotland might achieve a divorce from the rest of Britain — a discussion being watched closely in other parts of Europe where separatism is on the rise.

The authors of the legal brief reached conclusions that are in line with arguments already made by the British government. Still, the document is likely to discomfort advocates of Scottish independence, who have treated the question of European Union membership for an independent Scotland as essentially a technical issue.

The European Commission president, José Manuel Barroso, said last year that an independent Scotland would have to apply for membership. That raised the possibility that Scotland would, like other newly admitted members, be obliged to adopt the euro currency, an unpopular prospect in Scotland. Britain, which was a member of the union before the euro was created, has no such obligation and has formally opted out.

The legal advice suggests that if Scotland becomes independent, it will be a “new state,” while the “remainder of the United Kingdom” would be considered a “continuing state,” according to a summary of the 57-page document that was released ahead of the full publication. The continuing state would automatically keep the rights, obligations, memberships, treaty relationships and powers under international law that the United Kingdom currently has, while the new state would have to start from scratch.

The debate on how Scotland might achieve independence has implications throughout Europe, particularly in Spain, where separatist sentiment is strong in Catalonia.

Spain's Basques have a high degree of autonomy, as do the Flemish, Walloon and much smaller German-speaking communities in Belgium. Activists in those and other regions across the Continent are closely watching the constitutional debate in Britain, which comes at a time when pressure on public finances, following the debt crisis in the euro zone, has tended to inflame old grievances.

The British government's legal opinion was written by two experts on international law, Prof. James Crawford of the University of Cambridge and Prof. Alan Boyle of the University of Edinburgh.

According to the summary released ahead of the opinion's publication, the only way that both Scotland and the rest of Britain would become “new states” in the legal sense would be if the rest of Britain agreed to adopt such a status — something that the British government has ruled out.

The opinion rejects the idea that an independence vote would create two such new states, and also rejects suggestions that an independent Scotland would revert to its status before the 1707 Acts of Union, which united Scotland and England. Before those acts, the two were separate states with separate parliaments under the same monarch.

Last week, Scotland's first minister, Alex Salmond, who is campaigning for independence, outlined

transitional arrangements if Scotland voted “yes” next year. Under this blueprint, Independence Day would probably be in March 2016, with the first elections to a parliament for a fully independent Scotland taking place two months later.

In a newspaper article published Sunday, Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain urged Scots not to choose independence.

“Our nations share a proud and emotional history,” Mr. Cameron wrote. “Over three centuries we have built world-renowned institutions like the N.H.S. and BBC, fought for freedom and democracy in two World Wars, and pioneered and traded around the world. Our ancestors explored the world together, and our grandfathers went into battle together, as do our kith and kin today — and this leaves deep, unbreakable bonds between the peoples of these islands.”

But Scotland’s deputy first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said that Mr. Cameron’s intervention had simply reminded Scots that he led a government that they did not vote into power. In the 2010 general election, Mr. Cameron’s Conservative Party won only one of Scotland’s 59 seats in Parliament, and his coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats, only 11.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES
ANALYSE LV
TEXTE
HORS PROGRAMME

Our parties must respond to the rise of Englishness

One of the lost stories of the census is the growth of an English identity. Mainstream politicians need to find ways of embracing this trend.

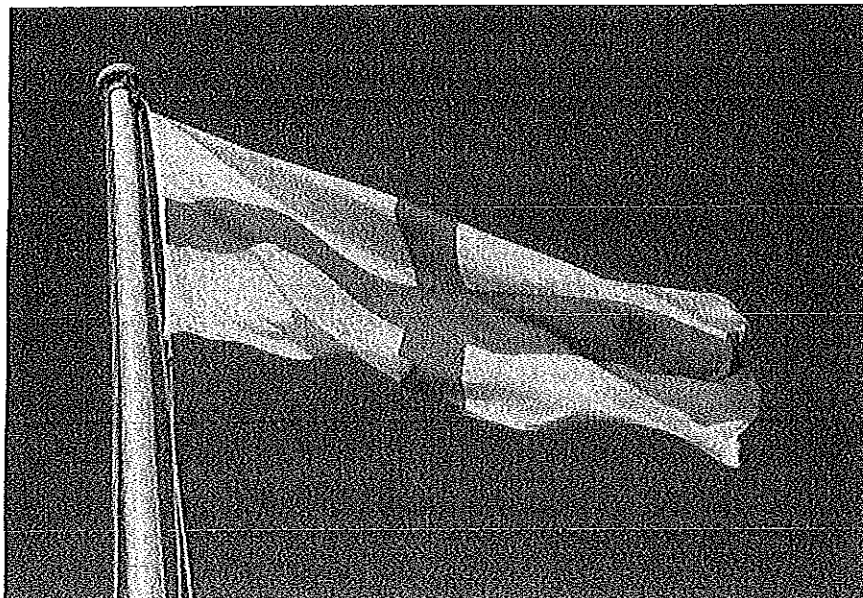
BY MICHAEL KENNY, *New Statesman*, 15 DECEMBER 2012

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME



Seventy per cent of residents in England regard themselves as English, not British. Photograph: Getty Images.

The main news stories that have been derived from the release of the census data have been about diversity, immigration and religion. But one other revealing and significant trend contained within it has not as yet been given its due.

For the first time in its history, the census allowed the inhabitants of England to indicate whether they considered themselves to be English as well as, or instead of, British.

And, the result? Some 70 per cent reported that they regard themselves as English, a finding that confirms IPPR polling earlier this year. Even more strikingly, only 29 per cent of English respondents indicated that they see themselves as British a figure that suggests a significant drop in affiliation for what was very recently the primary national preference of the English.

It would appear that the London-centric chatter sparked by the census about Britain's cultural patchwork has missed a striking counter-trend -the increasingly widely shared desire to associate with Englishness, with the notable exception of London.

These census figures are in fact the latest of a growing number of indications that something very significant has been happening in terms of the national self-understanding of the English in the last two decades.

In recent years, this trend has been wished away by the mainstream political parties. But this can go on no longer. Instead, as I argue in the latest edition IPPR's journal *Juncture*, they need to develop a

more compelling, contemporary case for the Union which takes into account proper consideration of the nature and implications of developing forms of English identity.

While the main parties at Westminster still cling to the orthodoxies of British government forged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the new forms of English identity which are starting to loom into view bring with them major challenges to the core assumptions of this national story, not least the supposed disinclination of the English to develop their own sense of national identity.

This does not mean accepting the dramatic claim that we are living in a 'moment' of English nationalism.. A wide range of research finds very little evidence of a collective English desire to reclaim national sovereignty from the British state. But there are signs that the idea of a new, more 'delineated' relationship between England and the UK is becoming increasingly attractive.

This suggests, in policy terms, the state providing greater recognition of the distinctive forms of nationhood that the English are developing. It also implies that a more concerted effort to reform the centralised and top-down model of state-led governance which is fraying the bonds between governors and governed in England, is overdue. The current system represents a major brake upon the prospect of renewing England's cities as engines for economic growth and civic pride, as Lord Heseltine has most recently pointed out.

At the same time as Englishness has been kept at the margins of political debate and policy development, it is also the case that, thanks to devolution, British politics is becoming much more Anglicised in character. As soon as key areas of domestic legislation were devolved, the UK parliament began gradually to turn into a parliament for England, which reflects the priorities of English political culture above all.

But, important as it has been, devolution has not been the only, or even primary, factor altering existing patterns of national identification among the English. We need to appreciate the impact of a cocktail of deepening cultural anxiety, rising economic insecurity and growing disillusion with the political system that have made the organic and resonant language and symbols of Albion more appealing. Different strands of English identity re-emerged out of an extended bout of national soul-searching in the early and middle years of the 1990s, prior to devolution and prompted by the realisation that the pillars upon which familiar stories of the glory of Britain were fading fast.

This is not to suggest that the English have simply abandoned the institutions and emblems of the British state, giving up the Union Jack for the Cross of St George. As was clear during the summer, many of us are still responsive to the inclusive and progressive account of the Anglo-British story which Danny Boyle assembled during the opening ceremony of the Olympics.

Yet, we should not be fooled by this kind of one-off, orchestrated 'ecstatic' nationalism into ignoring the deeper-lying, slow-burning growth of a strengthening set of English identities. If these sentiments continue to remain unspoken within the mainstream party system, there is a greater chance that they will mutate into a harder-edged nationalism.. The dearth of meaningful forms of cultural and institutional recognition for English identity is bottling up emotions and ideas that need to be engaged and aired.

Letting England breathe a little, bringing decision-making and governance closer to its cities and towns, and re-engaging its people with the case for the Union, now offer the best available way of reinvigorating the United Kingdom as a whole.

Don't mess

David Cameron thinks that tough talk on immigration will boost the Conservative Party's fortunes. He is probably wrong.

The Economist, May 11th 2013

ON MAY 8th a descendant of German immigrants sat in Parliament and announced a series of measures intended to make life harder for future arrivals on Britain's shores. The queen was reading out the government's legislative agenda for the coming year. If the proposals become law, landlords and employers will have a new duty to check the residency status of tenants and employees, on pain of fines. Ministers will gain powers to deport criminals. A broad immigration bill will restrict access to health care, civil legal aid, driving licences and unemployment benefit. Britain's two biggest tabloid newspapers, the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, led their coverage of the speech with "PM to slash migrants' rights" and "Immigration crackdown".

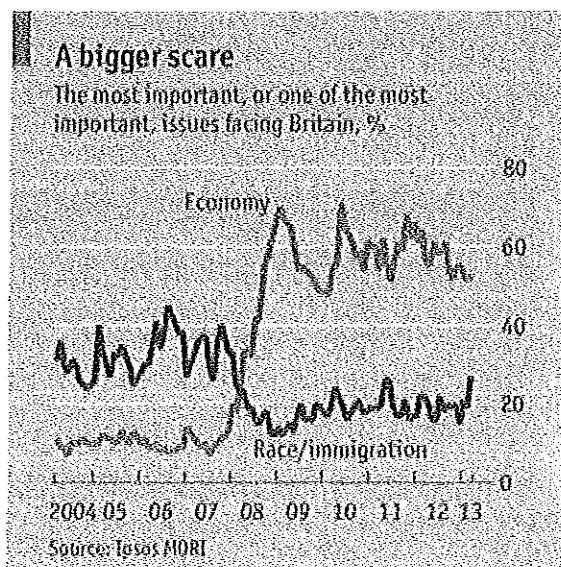
Although the economy comes top of voters' list of concerns, immigration is prominent, too (see chart). Britons loathe it. A poll last month by Lord Ashcroft, a former Conservative Party treasurer, finds that 54% believe it has been bad for the country, and nearly all think there is too much of it. Politicians say constituents raise few other topics as passionately on the doorstep. One tells a story about a man who insisted that his Hungarian immigrant grandfather ought to have been shipped home.

If polls and rants were not enough to concentrate minds, on May 2nd the UK Independence Party (UKIP) won a quarter of the vote in local elections, in part by stoking fear and resentment of immigrants. Not surprisingly, Tory strategists have concluded that robust talk on the issue can win back voters from UKIP and confound the opposition Labour Party.

That conclusion is foolishly simplistic. Immigration is not the vote-winner that it appears to be—at least, not for a mainstream party like the Conservatives, not at general elections, and especially not in the swing seats that it needs to win a majority.

"We shouldn't try to out-UKIP UKIP" says Gavin Barwell, the Conservative MP for Croydon Central in south London—voicing a disquiet that other Tory MPs express privately. If politicians talk too much about immigration, he says, voters will conclude that they are obsessed with the issue, to the exclusion of more pressing things like jobs and the cost of living. They may also question the politicians' motives.

That seems an odd view, given the prominence of immigration as a doorstep issue. But other politicians, both Tory and Labour, point to a discrepancy between what people say to pollsters and politicians and how they vote. Britons appear to suffer from reverse political correctness. They espouse fiercely anti-immigrant views on the doorstep, and swear that the issue will sway their vote. But in the privacy of the polling booth other issues crowd it out. It is "a sort of schizophrenia", says one politician with long experience of northern working-class voters.



This has wrong-footed politicians before. The Conservatives lost the previously safe seat of Romsey, on England's south coast, in a 2000 by-election in which they campaigned heavily on immigration. William Hague, then the party's leader, proceeded to lose the 2001 general election after warning of a "flood" of asylum-seekers. Two years later Liam Fox, a stalwart of the Tory right, called for a renewed emphasis on the issue: "William had many of the right issues—it was just the wrong election," he argued, adding that politics "has now shifted". By 2005 polls suggested that the Conservatives had a colossal structural lead over Labour on immigration, and that people cared about it much more than any other issue. Michael Howard duly led an election campaign that emphasised it—and fared little better than Mr Hague.

Peter Kellner, a pollster, says views on immigration are often fiercely held but not particularly salient. His latest poll shows that 57% of people think it is one of the three most important issues facing the country; yet only 17% say it is one of the three most important issues facing them personally. Employment and hospitals, by contrast, are immediate. And voters care less about politicians' specific views than about their character. Though David Cameron has worked to "detoxify" the Conservative Party since becoming its leader in 2005, the public still doubts that it wants the right kind of society or is compassionate. Tough talk on immigration, though popular in itself, plays dangerously into that suspicion.

This was the insight that guided some in the party a decade ago. "If we seem not to like Britain today, the feeling will surely be reciprocated" ran a favourite modernisers' mantra. And if too much talk of immigration leaves white Britons cool, it positively repels others. In 2010 just 16% of non-whites voted Tory, according to Lord Ashcroft. Blacks and Asians are increasingly moving from the solidly Labour inner cities to more marginal suburbs, where they rub shoulders with the centrist voters, cautious but not xenophobic, who decide British elections. Banging on about immigrants abusing Britons' good nature will not help the Tories win over either group.

But perhaps the greatest danger is the perception of pandering, say some Tory sages. Britons already doubt the integrity of their elected representatives; the prospect of MPs chasing after opinion polls does little to repel charges of cynicism and disingenuousness. They might be better off not bothering—at least they would get marks for being honest.

SERIE S. ECO ET SOCIALES

ANALYSE LV

TEXTE

HORS PROGRAMME