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Scots wha hae – a blow against economic liberalism!

What should the left make of the Scottish Referendum? Reactions across the UK have varied. Trade unionists in Northern Ireland have paid particular attention to the events on England's northern border. Trade unions were split in Scotland, perhaps more "Better Together" than "Yes". The referendum has been a major event for the UK and for Europe. It's still too early to comprehend all its ramifications.

Immediate reactions were that it was Gordon Brown "*wot won it*". His intervention to secure a "*devo-max*" "Pledge" from the main UK parties to a breakneck timetable were widely accepted to have turned the "Yes" tide in the last fortnight.

Polling undertaken by Lord Ashcroft immediately after the referendum and published in the Daily Telegraph has revealed a much more complicated picture. It showed that six in ten of those voting for 'No' were motivated more by "fear" about the risks of independence than "hope" for the future. By contrast eight in ten Yes voters were motivated more by hope than fear. So, who was fearful, and why?

The "No" vote was entirely secured by overwhelming support from those aged above 55. Every demographic from aged 16 to 55 voted "Yes"! The "better together" camp failed to win any of the age groups below 55 years of age. For the 65+ demographic it was simply a blowout, with 73% voting "No". In a nutshell, old people filled with fear, blocked independence. Scare stories about the viability of their pensions may well have been a factor in this.

Looking at the "Yes" vote, the largest "Yes" votes came in the more socially deprived areas. Glasgow was "Yes", to Edinburgh's "No". The Labour interventions from Brown, Darling, Murphy and others were touted to have 'won' this election, but Labour appears to have lost its own people in the heartlands of Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and Dundee. In the medium term, this is likely to mean the decline of the Labour Party in Scotland. Already the SNP has gained many new members and looks likely to go from strength to strength.

That the referendum became a close run thing, strangely enough, showed the strength of socialist support in Scotland. Many people said they were voting 'Yes' because they were disgusted at what has been happening to the National Health Service. The intervention of renowned public health academic, Allyson Pollock, was seminal, though little covered in the English press.

Ms. Pollock trained in medicine in Scotland and was formerly director of the Centre for International Public Health Policy at Edinburgh University. Now head of the Public Health Policy Unit at University College London, she indicated that the Health and Social Care Act of 2012 has abolished the NHS in England as a universal service, with the NHS reduced to a funding stream and a logo. Increasingly all the services are going to be contracted in the marketplace. According to Pollock "*It abolished the duty on the Secretary of State for Health to secure and provide comprehensive healthcare; that is a duty that still holds in Scotland, but doesn't hold in England*".... "*In the absence*

POST-REFERENDUM SCOTLAND POLL

18-19 SEPTEMBER 2014

1. How did you vote in the referendum?

%	ALL	Men	Women	AGE						2010 WESTMINSTER VOTE			
				16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Con	Lab	SNP	LD
YES	45	47	44	51	59	53	52	43	27	5	37	86	39
NO	55	53	56	49	41	47	48	57	73	95	63	14	61

of any reversal of neoliberal policies in England, the clearest way to defend and promote the principle of a public NHS is to vote for Scotland to have full powers and responsibilities of an independent country."

Pollock's view resonated widely, with 56% of Scots "Yes" voters indicating in Lord Ashcroft's poll that the NHS was a key issue determining their voting intention.

Equally, Scots look on with horror and bemusement at the Labour "Academy" and Tory "Free School" programmes in England, facilitating the corporate capture of the English public education system.

With Cameron and Miliband competing, post referendum, to offer 'long finger' change beyond the Westminster elections, or to "*Make it about England*", what credibility can Labour have left among Glaswegians, the Labour Party heartland? All other Labour voting areas in Scotland are purely secondary to Glasgow. Watch as Labour slowly melts away like snow on a ditch. And what odds now on the SNP holding the balance of power after the next Westminster election?

It is not all "hope" for Scotland's "Yes" campaign. In the run-in to the referendum there were clear signs of a re-emergence of sectarianism and not all from the unionist side. Old Labour, particularly in Scotland, was an integrating force within the British working class. New Labour ditched that inheritance without a backwards glance. Now, in a situation where the Tories and Labour are incapable of diffusing communal antagonism, where does that leave the old Catholic/Protestant divide? The energised Yes campaign now has a responsibility to address an underlying sectarianism which could become more of a problem in the future.

A range of immediate issues arise, not least of which is settling the West Lothian Question. If the Tories get their way, Scots MPs may not be able to vote on English affairs. This makes it

more likely that the English parties will pursue free market agendas unfettered and vigorously, like privatisation, thus widening the emotional gap between the two nations.

English reaction will be hard to gauge on "devolution all round". There has been little enthusiasm for regional government to date, but this may change in areas near Scotland, like the North East, and perhaps Yorkshire, which has a strong regional identity, as well as in cities such as Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham.

Scots MPs will largely be spectators to the US-UK foreign policy being hatched in Westminster and Scotland's defence and foreign policy interests will start to diverge sharply from those in England. The next imperative from the UK state, having survived the Scotland scare, it seems, is to join a US war in Iraq and quite possibly Syria.

The referendum was fought 'cleanly' on the tired and out-of-touch 'Westminster politics'. It didn't really ignite onto the ground of the 'Deep State'. Democracy in the UK is, historically, a relatively recent phenomenon, grafted onto the 300 year old State. The London-centric nexus of military, political and financial interests that run England, and notably the mendacious dominance of the City of London, didn't receive much air time in Scotland. Our guess is that they will now.

Likewise, continuing English angst over the EU will be a running sore for the Scots. A 'Brexit' from the EU would immediately precipitate a constitutional crisis.

The Welsh will want something more like what the Scots now have. The unionists in Northern Ireland may clamour for majority rule type adjustments to the Stormont arrangements. Republicans meanwhile, diplomatically silent during the Scots poll campaign, may well feel energised by the Scottish situation and press for a fresh border poll.

Don't loaf and invite inspiration; light out after it with a club, and if you don't get it you will nonetheless get something that looks remarkably like it.

Jack London, "Getting Into Print," The Editor magazine, 1903

Dignify and glorify common labor. It is at the bottom of life that we must begin, not at the top.

Booker T. Washington

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Contents

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Scots wha hae – a blow against economic liberalism!	
Editorial	1
The West Lothian Question by David Morrison	3
Parliament and World War One by Dick Barry	5
In Situ A poem by Wilson John Hare	10
Orecchiette	17

Regular Features

Views from across the Channel by Froggy	9
Notes on the News Gwydion M. Williams	11
Parliament Notes Dick Barry	18
It's A Fact	24

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The West Lothian Question

An unavoidable product of asymmetric devolution

by David Morrison

A factor – perhaps the most important factor – in limiting the vote for independence in Scotland in the referendum on 18 September to 45% was the formal pledge by the leaders of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties at Westminster to grant additional powers to the Scottish Parliament.

12 days earlier an opinion poll by YouGov for The Sunday Times had put the YES in the lead for the first time (by 51% to 49%) [1]. This was the culmination of a spectacular rise in YES poll ratings over the previous month from being 22% behind in early August. It produced panic at Westminster and a promise to transfer additional powers from Westminster to the Scottish Parliament in double quick time.

On the morning after the referendum, David Cameron reiterated this promise, saying that the “clear commitments” by the three pro-union parties would be “honoured in full” and announcing that Lord Smith of Kelvin would “oversee the process to take forward the devolution commitments with powers over tax, spending and welfare all agreed by November and draft legislation published by January” [2].

A product of asymmetric devolution

However, Cameron went on to announce that the Government intended to address the so-called “West Lothian question” at the same time.

This is the anomaly whereby Scottish MPs at Westminster can vote on matters that apply to England alone, while English MPs have no say whatsoever on those Scottish matters that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament. The same is true for Welsh and Northern Irish MPs.

Thus today Scottish MPs at Westminster can vote on legislation about, for example, English health and education, but English MPs cannot vote on legislation about these matters for Scotland, since they are devolved matters within the competence of the Scottish Parliament.

The anomaly is a product of the asymmetric devolution that has been established within the UK, where England alone hasn’t got devolution. It has existed in a mild form since the early 1920s when a parliament was forced upon Northern Ireland, but it has become much more significant since Scotland and Wales were granted devolution in the late 1990s.

Out of a total of 650 Westminster MPs today, Scotland has 59 MPs, Wales 40 and Northern Ireland 18, that is, 117 MPs (18% of the total) represent regions of the UK that have devolved legislatures. At present, 66 of these seats (40 in Scotland and 26 in Wales) are held by the Labour Party and only 9 (1 in Scotland and 8 in

Wales) by the Conservative Party.

The present arrangements allow for the possibility that a majority opinion among English MPs about matters affecting England alone could be outvoted by a UK-wide majority of all UK MPs. But it is rare for this to happen. Since 1919, only in the short-lived parliaments of 1964–66 and February–October 1974 has the party or coalition forming the UK government not also enjoyed a majority in England. Of course, a formal majority may be reduced or eliminated by rebellion against government policy in the ranks of its MPs.

Foundation hospitals & tuition fees

On a couple of occasions in recent years, important pieces of English-only legislation would not have been passed in the House of Commons without the support of Scottish Labour MPs [3].

In November 2003, for example, the Blair government introduced a Bill to establish “foundation hospitals” in England. Had voting on the Bill been restricted to English MPs, whose constituents were the only ones likely to be affected by the legislation, the government would have been defeated. However, the legislation was carried because of the support of 44 Scottish Labour MPs.

Shortly afterwards, in January 2004, the Higher Education Bill allowing English and Welsh universities to charge variable tuition fees, scraped through the House of Commons by 316 votes to 311. The only Scottish Tory MP at the time, Peter Duncan, refused on principle to vote, because the issue did not affect Scotland. Almost all the other Scottish MPs (72 in all at that time) voted, dividing 46–21 in favour of the Bill and saving the day for the government.

Note, however, that both of these incidents occurred because of a rebellion against the Blair government’s policy by Labour MPs.

Tam Dalyell asks a question

The West Lothian question became an issue in UK politics (and acquired its name, thanks to Enoch Powell) in the late 1970s when a Labour government proposed a measure of devolution for Scotland and Wales. Tam Dalyell, the Labour MP for the West Lothian constituency, was a leading opponent of devolution on the grounds that it would give rise to the anomalous situation we have been discussing and, as a result, would ultimately lead to the breakup of the UK. Famously, in a debate on devolution in the House of Commons on 14 November 1977, Tam Dalyell asked:

“For how long will English constituencies and English Honourable members tolerate at least 119 Honourable Members from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

exercising an important, and probably often decisive, effect on British politics while they themselves have no say in the same matters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?” [4]

And he continued to ask questions along these lines whenever devolution within the UK was on the agenda.

The devolution proposal in the late 1970s was put to a referendum in Scotland, but, although a majority favoured the proposal, it wasn’t implemented because Parliament had decreed that it must have the support of 40% of the electorate in order to be put into practice.

However, another devolution proposal made by the Blair government in 1997 was supported overwhelmingly by the Scottish people in a referendum and a Scottish parliament was established in May 1999. Over the following decade, its powers have been gradually increased.

For many years, Scotland had been overrepresented in the House of Commons with 72 seats. This was reduced to 59 in the Scotland Act 1998, which established the Scottish Parliament.

At the same time, a devolution proposal for Wales was narrowly endorsed by the Welsh people in a referendum and a Welsh Assembly was established, with considerably less powers than its Scottish equivalent and, initially, no powers to make laws for Wales.

A decisive answer

On the morning after the referendum, David Cameron declared:

“The question of English votes for English laws – the so-called West Lothian question – requires a decisive answer.”

And he insisted that “this must take place in tandem with, and at the same pace as, the settlement for Scotland”.

In fact, the Conservative Party has been promising to “answer” the West Lothian question ever since the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999. A commitment to do so formed part of the Conservative manifesto for the 2001 general election, which promised to “reform Parliament so that only English and Welsh MPs vote on exclusively English and Welsh matters” [5].

A similar commitment was present in the 2005 and 2010 manifestos. The latter said:

“Labour have refused to address the so-called ‘West Lothian Question’: the unfair situation of Scottish MPs voting on matters which are devolved.

“A Conservative government will introduce new rules so that legislation referring specifically to England, or to England and Wales, cannot be enacted without the consent of MPs representing constituencies of those countries.” [6]

However, the programme for government of the Conservative coalition with the Liberal Democrats, published on 20 May 2010, merely undertook to look into the matter, stating:

“We will establish a commission to consider the ‘West Lothian question’.” [7]

And nearly two years elapsed before the commission was established in January 2012 under the chairmanship of a former Clerk of the House of Commons, Sir William McKay. Its terms of reference were:

“To consider how the House of Commons might deal with legislation which affects only part of the United Kingdom, following the devolution of certain legislative powers to the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Assembly for Wales.” [8]

Note that the terms of reference are only concerned with handling legislation that applies to England alone.

The Commission reported just over a year later in March 2013, but eighteen months later the Government has yet to make a formal response to its report, despite promising to do so last autumn [9]. Until David Cameron declared on the morning of 19 September 2014 that “the West Lothian question ... requires a decisive answer”, one could be forgiven for thinking that the Government had decided to kick the issue into the long grass.

McKay Commission proposals

The McKay Commission proposed that the procedures of the House of Commons be modified to enshrine the principle that “decisions at the United Kingdom level with a separate and distinct effect for England ... should normally be taken only with the consent of a majority of MPs for constituencies in England ...” (see Commission Report [10], paragraph 12). In essence, this is the same principle that underlies the devolution arrangements for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, where local representatives take decisions for that area on devolved matters.

However, the Commission insisted on the maintenance of the principle that “MPs from outside England should not be prevented from voting on matters before Parliament” (ibid, paragraph 15). Its report continues:

“This would create different classes of MP and could provoke deadlock between the UK Government and the majority of MPs in England. The concerns of England should be met without provoking an adverse reaction outside England.

“MPs from all parts of the UK need to have the opportunity to participate in the adoption of legislation, whatever the limits of its territorial effect. Instead, MPs from England ... should have new or additional ways to assert their interests. But MPs from outside England would then continue to vote on all legislation but with prior knowledge of what the view from England is.”

As a consequence, it rejected (ibid, paragraph 75):

(a) A requirement for laws applying to England to be passed only if a majority of MPs from England is in favour.

(b) A requirement of a double-majority, or “double-lock”, in which legislation could only be passed if there is both a majority of MPs from England and a majority of the House of Commons as a whole in favour.

The Commission came down in favour of a procedure in which the majority opinion of MPs from England is ascertained, but in which the majority in the House as a whole could overrule the majority from England.

If, as proposed by the Commission, the House of Commons were to adopt the principle that decisions affecting England alone should normally be taken only with the consent of English MPs, then it would be very unlikely that MPs from other parts of the UK would vote to overrule a majority from England. Most likely, it would become the rule that Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland MPs abstain on decisions affecting England alone. The SNP adheres to that rule at the moment (as did Tam Dalyell until he retired from the House of Commons in 2005).

This seems to be a workable system for the House of Commons to take decisions affecting England alone, which doesn’t divide MPs into two classes with different voting rights. Furthermore, it shouldn’t cause resentment in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, since its objective is to give effect to the reasonable principle that decisions affecting England alone should normally be taken only with the consent of English MPs.

However, the arrangements proposed are not ideal. Specifically, they do not allow for circumstances in which English-only legislation has indirect consequences outside England, which raises the question of whether it is reasonable to seek to dissuade MPs from outside England from voting on the legislation.

A prime example of this arises because of the Barnett Formula, which is used to calculate the block grants given by the Treasury in London to the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is based on relative population adjusted annually (not need). Its application means that an increase in expenditure on, for example, health provided for in legislation for England, leads automatically to an increase of around 10% of that amount to the Scottish block grant.

Federalism?

Is the Government now going to implement the recommendations of the McKay Commission? That’s not clear. Since the Government hasn’t made a formal response to the Commission’s report, it’s difficult to know its attitude to the report’s recommendations. But the rhetoric coming from the Conservative Party has suggested that the Government intends to exclude Scottish (and Welsh and Northern Irish) MPs from decisions that affect England only, a proposition which was specifically rejected by the McKay

Commission.

Some Conservative MPs, for example, John Redwood, have gone so far as to talk about arranging the business of the House of Commons so that it serves part of the time as an English Parliament with only English MPs present and the rest of the time as the UK Parliament with all MPs present.

There is a certain logic to this since today the House of Commons functions in part an English Parliament and in part a UK Parliament. The ultimate logic is to create a separate English Parliament and transform the UK’s system of government into a federal system, with the House of Commons becoming the lower house of the federal parliament. The McKay Commission considered this option and argued against it as follows (ibid, paragraph 71):

“There are no precedents of federal systems in which one component makes up over five-sixths of the overall population of a state. There is a wide view that such a big unit would destabilise the state as a whole, both in relation to the three much smaller units in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but also in relation to the federal UK parliament and government, to which an English parliament would be likely to be a powerful rival. ...

“We see little merit in considering a federal system based in England on English regions and heard little evidence in support. We are conscious of the swingeing rejection of such an approach in the North East of England in 2004 when four-fifths of the regional electorate voted against establishing an elected regional assembly [which had no law making powers]. ...”

“Any federal system requires a delineation of competences, which are usually arbitrated by a supreme court that would be able to overrule the UK parliament, as well as binding the devolved institutions. This would be a radical departure from UK constitutional practice. In this and in other respects, the massive upheaval in governmental arrangements that would be needed to create a new Parliament for 50 million people would not appear a proportionate response to the current sense of disadvantage in England.

“It seems unlikely in the current climate that citizens would favour having more politicians than now, or the costs associated with establishing a new institution.”

It’s impossible to argue against any of that.

A trap for the Labour Party

The granting of additional powers to the Scottish Parliament increases the scope of the West Lothian anomaly and it was inevitable that English MPs would demand that the anomaly be addressed. However, when David Cameron chose to raise the flag for “English votes for English laws” on the morning after the referendum, his

Continued on Page 5

Parliament And World War One

Unified Administration Of Supply

(Or the efficient use of labour and resources. And how Germany prepared for war.)

by Dick Barry

My Hansard search has taken me to 21 April 1915. With the exception of the debate following the statement by Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey on 3 August 1914, there appears to have been no further detailed discussion of the war itself. Instead, MPs' attention turned to questions concerning the mobilisation of labour and resources at home and other related matters. Workers (labour) were a particular focus, being accused by some Conservative MPs and firms of not pulling their weight. Labour MPs, such as Will Thorne (see July/August issue) came to their defence, but his effort(s) largely fell on deaf ears. On 21 April 1915, there was a major debate on this issue introduced by William Hewins a Conservative back-bencher. The first half of Hewins speech relating to Germany is reproduced. George Barnes replied on behalf of the Labour Party. There is a passage in his speech which reflects accurately the attitude of most politicians and the bulk of the British people towards Germany. Barnes led an interesting life, hence his potted biography below is somewhat longer than that of Will Thorne and other colleagues in previous issues.

William Alfred Samuel Hewins (11 May 1865 – 17 November 1931) was the son of Samuel Hewins, an iron merchant. He was educated at Wolverhampton Grammar School and Pembroke College, Oxford. He graduated with a degree in mathematics and later worked as a university extension lecturer. He was the first Director of the London School of Economics from 1895 to 1903. Hewins resigned from teaching to work for Joseph Chamberlain and his campaign for tariff

reform. He unsuccessfully contested Shipley in 1910 and Middleton in 1912 but was returned to Parliament for Hereford in a 1912 by-election. He served in the coalition government of Lloyd George as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1917 to 1919. In later life Hewins wrote articles for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He also published among other works, *Trade in Balance* (1924), *Empire Restored* (1927), and the *Apologia of an Imperialist* (1929).

George Barnes (2 January 1859 – 21 April 1940) was born at Lochee near Dundee. His father, James Barnes, was a mechanic at a local textile mill but in 1866 the family moved to Liverpool and the following year settled in London. At the age of eleven Barnes began work at a jute mill. In 1872 the family returned to Dundee and Barnes found work at Parker's Foundry. When he completed his apprenticeship he moved to Barrow-in-Furness where he worked in the town's shipyard. In 1879 Barnes moved back to London. After ten weeks unemployment he obtained work constructing the Albert Dock in the Thames. In 1882 he began work at Lucas & Airds in Fulham and joined the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) where he met Tom Mann and John Burns. Barnes attended meetings of the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League, but rejected the idea of socialist revolution and declined to join either organisation.

In 1889 Barnes was elected to the executive of the ASE. He supported the election of John Burns as general secretary in 1890. Two years later Barnes was

appointed as assistant general secretary. He worked closely with other socialist trade unionists and in 1893 joined with Keir Hardie, Robert Smillie, Tom Mann, John Glasier, H. H. Champion and Ben Tillett to form the Independent Labour Party. In the 1895 General Election the ILP put up 28 candidates but won only 44,325 votes. All the candidates were defeated, including George Barnes at Rochdale. In 1896 Barnes was elected General Secretary of the ASE. The ASE was the third largest union. In July 1897 Barnes led the ASE in a long strike in an attempt to win an eight-hour day. The strike ended in January 1898 without this being achieved, but the Employers Federation agreed that in future it would negotiate wages and conditions with the ASE.

Barnes went on a fact-finding tour of Europe in 1898. Although the trip convinced him that British engineers were the best in Europe, he also discovered that Britain was falling behind other nations in wage levels and working conditions. He became convinced that real progress would only be made when more trade unionists were elected to the House of Commons. In 1900 Barnes was involved in the setting up of the Labour Representation Committee, the forerunner to the Labour Party. He argued strongly that not only working class men should be selected as LRC candidates in elections, pointing out that people like Frederic Harrison and Sydney Webb had important qualities to contribute to the labour movement. Barnes motion was passed by 102 votes to 3.

In 1902 Barnes formed the National Committee of Organised Labour for Old Age Pensions. He spent the next three

Continued from Page 4

principle objective was to set a trap for the Labour Party to fall into – and it duly did.

In response to Cameron, Labour spokespersons refused to acknowledge that an anomaly exists that required to be addressed and instead proposed a comprehensive constitutional review beginning in 12 months time to deal with matters which are not obviously of pressing concern, for example, devolution within England.

The overall impression given by the Labour Party is that fairness to England is being given second place to party political advantage, that the Labour Party is seeking to retain unrestricted voting rights in the House of Commons for Scottish and Welsh MPs, because 66 of them are Labour and only 9 Conservative. That could have serious consequences for its support in England in next May's general election, particularly with UKIP also flying the flag for "English votes for English laws".

One might have thought that a wiser course for the Labour Party would have been to acknowledge that a problem exists, to point to the 100-page report of the McKay Commission set up by the Government to consider this serious and difficult issue and to say

that the proper way to proceed is for the Government to make a formal response to Parliament about the report (as it promised to do a year ago) – rather than by the Prime Minister demonstrating contempt for Parliament by making an announcement to the press in Downing Street at 7 o'clock in the morning.

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years travelling the country urging this social welfare reform. The measure was extremely popular and was an important factor in his defeat of Andrew Bonar Law, the Conservative cabinet minister, in the 1906 General Election. David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Liberal government, was also an opponent of the Poor Law in Britain. In 1908 he introduced the Old Age Pensions Act that provided between 1s. and 5s. a week to people over seventy. These pensions were only paid to people on incomes that were not over 12s. Ramsay MacDonald argued that the Labour Party should fully support the budget. Although Barnes welcomed Lloyd George's reforms, he argued that the level of benefits were far too low. He also suggested that the pensions should be universal and disliked what was later to be called the Means Test aspect of the reforms.

The 1910 General Election saw 40 Labour MPs elected to the House of Commons. Two months later, on 6 February 1911, Barnes wrote to the Labour Party announcing that he intended to resign as chairman, a post he was elected to in 1910 following the retirement of Arthur Henderson. In 1914 Barnes strongly supported Britain's involvement in the First World War. He toured industrial districts making recruitment speeches. He also went to Canada where he helped to persuade trained mechanics to work in British industry. Barnes's eldest son, Henry, was killed fighting on the Western Front in September 1915. This did not change his views on the war and in 1916 he was one of the few Labour MPs to support military conscription.

Barnes became disillusioned with the way Asquith was running the country and in 1916 helped Lloyd George gain power. Lloyd George rewarded him by making Barnes head of the recently formed Pensions Ministry. At the end of the war the Labour Party withdrew from Lloyd George's coalition government. Barnes resigned from the party in order to remain as Minister of Pensions. He remained in the post until poor health forced him to resign in January 1920. Unable to gain the support of the Labour Party in the 1922 General Election, Barnes resigned from the House of Commons.

Mr Hewins:

"I beg to move, *'That this House, while welcoming well-considered steps for increasing the mobility and efficiency of labour, is of the opinion that it is urgently necessary that the resources of all firms capable of producing or of co-operating in producing munitions of war should be enlisted under a unified administration in direct touch with such firms.'*

"The policy which I wish to see adopted in regard to munitions of war is set forth in general terms in the Resolution which stands in my name. I want unity of administration by an authority which is in direct touch with the firms, and that the workers to be employed should be employed as far as possible in situ, and that there should be the greatest possible co-ordination of

industry in regard to the position to be effected. I shall have to develop that resolution in some detail, but I may say that my object in putting it forward is not for criticism of the Government. I shall make a certain number of observations which inferentially may be said to be critical of the Government; but what I want especially is an increase in the munitions of war, and I am totally indifferent as to who sits on the Treasury Bench so long as Ministers do the work which the country wants at the present time. Why should anyone care about mere questions of party politics at the present moment?"

"We are contemplating the wreck of the world as we have known it. Every country is affected, every institution will be modified, every treaty we have got at the present time has got to be remodelled; all party questions will be affected, and at the present moment we can only fight as well as we can to secure the preservation of those great Imperial objects for which we stand. If, out of the wreck, we can preserve that great inheritance we have had, that hierarchy of autonomous institutions throughout the British Empire---the principles of justice and the strict interpretation of treaties upon which our power has been built---we shall be exceedingly happy, and those objects are far too great for me or anybody to raise mere party questions upon, and I am only anxious by this Resolution, and what I say upon it, to help, if I can, in solving the great problems with which we are confronted."

"There are certain reflections which are exceedingly germane to the practical question of increasing production. I suppose that scarcely anything has ever been known so well as the general object of German policy during the last generation. It is not question of whether Lord Haldane, or anybody else, has had private conversations with the German Chancellor and picked out reasons for a feeling of uneasiness in the course of those conversations. The object of German policy has been openly avowed; its tendency has been publicly manifest; the object they have in view has been set forth in countless speeches, and I suppose that no subject of modern thought in regard to politics or economics has ever been so carefully worked out, so fully expressed, as the trend and object of German preparations. What is it that has characterised German policy? There is one broad distinction between the aims pursued by Germany and the aims pursued here.

For a very long time the Germans have in all the measures which they have adopted kept in view one great and supreme object, that is, the increase of efficiency, the fighting efficiency of that country, not only in a military and naval sense, but also by the organisation of their civil, industrial, and economic life. There has never been anything in Germany or, at all events, in modern Germany, at all analogous to the way in which we have regarded these questions in this country. The organisation of the industry and the civil life of the community in Germany is

from their point of view, and has been for years past quite as much a war measure as the building up of their Army and Navy. I am quite certain that there are many Members in this House who have followed German policy---and they will appreciate what I say---which has been set forth quite clearly and in book after book, that when you go to war you do not go to war merely with military and naval forces, but you go to war with your civil and your industrial life, and everything is brought together. That Germany has carried out in the most efficient way.

I should like to say that, although I think that country has certainly achieved a very great work in the last thirty or forty years, yet I am not a great admirer of German organising methods, and I do not say in the least that they would have been at all applicable to this country. I sincerely believe that the English genius for organisation is far greater than that of Germany. After all, the British Empire exists, and it is the outcome of the organising genius of its inhabitants. What I complain of is not that we have no organising power in this country---I think that is a perfectly ridiculous libel on the English people---but that in the course we have adopted we have not given full scope to that organising power. The Germans have everywhere inquired into every trade, into all kinds of official movements, and into our social weaknesses.

In every undertaking, in all the Colonies and Dependencies, we have had everywhere those people coming along; and it is not your German waiter who is the dangerous alien: it is your highly educated, suave, and pleasant-faced German that comes to our dining-table, and we are quite pleased to talk over questions between the two countries. And he has got together a vast mass of evidence at the present moment, and the German Government knows a great deal more about our social and economical organisations than we know ourselves. I do not say their knowledge is always in proper perspective, but certainly they have done their best to know all about us and our institutions, and they have done so for the purposes of war. We have not done that. It is not a party question because we have had that Government in office; it is the prevalence of certain ideas and views for a great many years, and those views---I am not going into it in any detail---encouraged a sort of watertight separation between the departments of British life.

To come to the immediate question. While those ideas have been prevalent our soldiers have not been encouraged to know much about our civil and economic life and institutions, and the British people have not been encouraged to study our institutions from the war point of view. I should like to bear witness to the immense and valuable work done by both soldiers and business men in connection with the problem. With soldiers' work I have been somewhat familiar for a great many years, and also with the work of business men, and one of the complaints I have to urge against the Government is, why have they

not brought to bear on the great problems with which we are faced the knowledge, capacity and skill which business men could bring to bear on them?

The result of the prevalence of those views has been that all through the atmosphere of British life there has been discouragement rather than encouragement to study the concrete fighting problems with which we are faced at present. I think myself that if by any ill-chance we, through this war, lost to the sons and daughters of England their great heritage we should be absolutely without excuse. The ignorance that has caused the prevalence of the views I have indicated has been to a large extent deliberate ignorance, and you would have nothing to say to the brothers and sisters of this splendid young generation who are laying down their lives in Belgium and in France if anything went wrong with this war."

Mr Barnes:

"The war in which this country is now engaged has brought about many changes in this House, most of them, I think, for the best. Some of them have been illustrated during the last hour or two while I have been listening to the Debate. I think I am right in saying that now we are thinking more of the human aspect of things than of the party aspect, and the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield, who has just spoken (Mr James Hope), has rightly emphasised the human aspect of the problem now presented to us. With much of what he said, if not with all, I entirely agree. Some people have been disposed to regard workmen as things with arms and legs that can be moved this way and that by scientific gentlemen, whereas we are now coming to understand that workmen are essentially human beings with feelings and opinions like the rest of us. Arising out of that, one comes to the further conclusion that in order to get the best out of workmen in regard to munitions, or any-thing else, you must secure their good will and wholehearted sympathy with what they have to do. If I rightly interpret the sense of the House hon. Members on both sides pretty well accept that conclusion."

"I also agree with what the hon. Gentleman has said upon the drink question, as to which, I believe, far too much has already been said. I propose, however, to add a very words to that discussion. I heard the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer this afternoon in regard to what has been attributed to him, and I believe he was quite within the letter in reading out what he actually said. But he did not read out all that he said, and one sentence he omitted to read out had more effect in the country, and a worse effect on the minds of working men, than anything he read out this afternoon. The employers went to the right hon. Gentleman and made a certain indictment against the workmen. They gave figures as to time lost, or time that might have been made. And with regard to that I have to say that, although figures cannot lie, they may sometimes be used very cleverly. The right hon. Gentleman having had these figures submitted to him

by the employers, said---if he was correctly reported---that 'he accepted all they said as the simple truth' "

Mr Lloyd George:

"The hon. Gentleman is making the same mistake as he attributed to me. That was not all that the employers said. They also said that considerable numbers of the men were doing their work as truly and as gallantly by this country as if they were in the trenches."

Mr Barnes:

"I will later on give the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of explaining that particular point, but I can assure him that the passage I have just quoted was the one that stuck in the throats of a great many of the workmen of this country. They said, 'Our employers come and make a one-sided statement to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We know it is not true, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer accepts it holus-bolus!' That is how it appears to their minds. I am sure it was not true. I do not know where the figures were wrong, but I have spent twenty-two years of my life in the workshop. I speak with actual knowledge of workshop conditions, and, when an employer, or an association of employers of labour, comes forward and says, as in this case, that a body of men has had an opportunity of working sixty, seventy, or more hours per week, and has only worked below the normal, I know there has been something dropped out, and that the figures do not represent all the truth. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister yesterday knocked the bottom out of a good many of the figures. He had a statement sent to him last week by the representatives of forty-eight firms at Barrow, Newcastle, Manchester and elsewhere, to the effect that only about 5 per cent of the workmen in the factories in those cities were working above the normal, and that 95 per cent were below. But what did the Prime Minister say yesterday? He said that in the firms that were engaged on armaments the men had been working sixty-seven or sixty-nine hours a week on average."

Mr Lloyd George:

"Those figures did not refer to the same class of workmen. The figures given by the forty-eight firms referred to the shipyards, and are, I am sorry to say, substantially accurate. The figures quoted by the Prime Minister referred to a totally different class of workers."

Mr Barnes:

"With all due deference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer I say they referred to a very large extent to the same class of men. The names were given of the firms. There was Vickers of Barrow, one of the largest firms in the country, engaged not only in shipbuilding, but in engine building, submarine building, and many other phases of engineering activity. There was also Whitworths of Manchester. As a matter of fact, I could give some explanation of the discrepancy. It so happens that the night shifts work only forty-five hours per week, and that is quite enough for night work. That condition applies to a large number of the cases represented by the

forty-eight firms, and when they trot out these figures, and tell us that only 5 per cent of the men are working above fifty-three or fifty-four hours, they are putting the figure eight hours above the normal, for the men on the night shift cannot work more than forty-five hours. That partly explains the figures presented by these forty-eight firms. I speak with some knowledge. I have taken the pains to inquire, and I say that probably, the Prime Minister was absolutely right yesterday when he said the men were working from sixty-seven to sixty-nine hours per week on the average. I put it to the Members of the House that if a man has been working sixty-seven hours per week for six months on end he is likely to be jumpy and ill-natured, and that his ill-nature is not going to be improved by the sort of statements that have been made and the lectures which have been thrown at him during the last few months."

"I speak as a teetotaler practically. I think far too much has been said about the drinking habits of the working people. Nobody deploras more than I do the consequences of them, but I repeat far too much has said about them, and far too little has been said in the way of encouragement to the men to do their very best, and in praise of them so far as they have done so. I want to make a reference to the speech made by the hon. gallant Gentleman opposite (Major Baird). I would congratulate him on having the good fortune to serve his country abroad, and on having so far dodged the German bullets. I hope he will be spared to go back and render still more service. There were several things he said with which I also agree. He said, for instance, he wished the Chancellor of the Exchequer would use his grand oratorical gifts, and go about the country making some of the speeches which he used to make on the Budget. It is a strange commentary that we should have an invitation to the right hon. Gentleman from the other side of the House to go about the country and make these fiery speeches."

Mr Bridgeman:

"Not on that subject."

Mr Barnes:

"I agree with the hon. Member that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be very well employed in making the same sort of speech he made this afternoon. I agree with many who have already spoken that what we want is that our population should realise the big job they are up against, and in order that they should realise it we ought to tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. We have had far too much blinking of the truth. Newspaper editors have been telling us optimistic tales for the last seven months. They have torn the Turk to tatters already; they have annihilated the Austrians about ten times, and have penned all sorts of wonderful things on paper. I believe we are still a long way off the termination of this war. People ought to realise that; they ought to be told the whole truth, and we should cease these vagaries of the Censor, or whoever is responsible for them, of giving us little bits of news---sometimes with not too

much truth in them. I therefore agree with the hon. Member that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should tell us more and go about the country getting up the enthusiasm of the people. I agree with the hon. and gallant Member in another thing. He said he could not understand those people who said they had no ill-will against Germany. I cannot understand them either. I have no ill-will against individual Germans, who are good as I am, probably a good deal better."

Mr James Hope:

"No, no!"

Mr Barnes:

"When I think of Germany I think of a country that sent its army into a poor little inoffensive country like Belgium; I think of that army laying waste the sacred places of the Belgian people, having killed her priests, killed the old women and ravaged the young women; and I think also of a nation or that Government that sent submarines round our own coasts two days ago and sent ten or eleven of our own seamen to the bottom of the sea. After all, we are Britons and men of flesh and blood, and, being so, we think of these poor little Belgium people and of the hundreds of our own now lying at the bottom of the sea who might have been with their families and earning an honest livelihood. We are in this War against our will. War is horrible, brutal, barbarous, against reason and common sense, but it is simply filling one's belly with the east wind to talk like that now. We are in the war, we are up to the neck in it. We are in it against our will, for I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues did all that mortal men could do to keep us out of the War. Germany would have it. This War was made in Germany, and, as far as I am concerned and so far as the resources of this country in men and money can be made to do it, this War is going to end with Germany."

"I agree it is a deplorable fact that, during the last few weeks, we have had strikes in the large areas engaged in making munitions of war. I am not going into the causes of that, because that would raise controversial matter, but I will heartily re-echo everything the hon. and gallant Gentleman has said as to the desirability of the forces of labour being devoted to making the munitions of war in the largest possible quantities. To get that we must have good will and the men must be assured of fair play. With these conditions I believe the men will work their hardest to make the munitions required. What we want is that the men who are unemployed, or partially employed, or employed in civil work should, as far as possible, be shunted off to the making of munitions of war. Talking of the unemployed reminds me of a strange sight I saw this morning. Crossing the Epsom road, I saw hundreds of char-a-bancs, motor cars, and all sorts of vehicles taking able-bodied men---as far as I could see, nine out of ten were able-bodied---going to Epsom to see the races. I do not object to racing, I went to see the Derby myself last year, and I

hope to see it again before I die. I was not interested in the races, but in the crowd. I should not know one horse from another. I have nothing to say against races or going to Epsom, but I think these men could be better employed just now than going to races. I do not know whether anything of a special character has been done to mobilise this type of man. If not, something must be done."

"As to the partially employed men, I suppose that Members of Parliament might be put in that category, because they are working half time and getting full pay, though the work is not so easy as some outsiders imagine, because we have a great deal more correspondence now than we used to have---at any rate, that is so with me, because I should say my correspondence has trebled since the War began, and I have to spend two to three hours every day writing letters. But I say here and now that when this Session of Parliament is over, I shall be quite willing to go back into the workshop and do my bit, if necessary, in making shells. I am glad the scheme of mobilisation of the engineering firms is coming about, because it is very likely that some firm near my home will be making shells---but so far as I can I am willing to do it. Many men are now engaged on civil work who might be engaged on war work. As an illustration of that I have in my mind a factory on the border of my Constituency where some 10,000 people are now operating machines, making sewing machines. Sewing machines might very well be left over for a time, and those people might be better employed, having regard to what is wanted at the present time. We ought to be getting ready for a breakdown. Men cannot work sixty-seven or sixty-nine hours a week indefinitely, and I believe we are reaching the time for breakdown now, therefore it is all the more necessary to be doing something to make provision against it."

"I am glad that these Committees have been set up. While I agree with the Motion now before the House in spirit, I do not agree with it in practice, because it says that the Committees should be under a unified administration. On the contrary, I believe that you ought to have a large degree of local indiscretion, and get the goodwill of the people in the various localities where the work is required, and who best understand their own local conditions. We must also have on all these local committees representatives of the working people as well as the employers of labour. I am afraid that on the central committees there is not sufficient technical ability. I heard only this week of a case of the manager of a certain firm being sent to Kingsway, where he was shown samples and told he was to do a certain class of work. That work involved the putting of all his small machines on it, but if he did that he would have to stop his big machines, because the small machines fed the big ones. There ought to be someone with practical knowledge in order to avoid that sort of thing, and in order that the works may be used to the fullest possible capacity and, at the same

time, in fairness to the employers."

"My last point is a very important one. It is that the piecework prices of the men engaged on the munitions of war ought to be guaranteed. It is said that men are not doing their best. I believe it is perfectly true that, if you take a narrow view of the matter, they are not doing their best. Supposing I were to go in for making shells, I might bundle into it and do as much as I possibly could for the first few months, but if I had knowledge, and if I had to make my living out of it, I should not want to do it so heartily; I should want provision made that while I was at work my interests should be secured in a permanent fashion. That is what is wanted at the present time. The ordinary workman knows, from bitter experience, that the harder he works the sooner his prices are reduced. Therefore, he says to himself, 'Why should I wear myself out; why should I injure my health by working all I possibly can, when I know that, at the end of it, I shall be no better off?' If the Government were now to make an authoritative statement that no matter how much a man earned, his prices would not be reduced, I believe the output of munitions of war would be considerably increased, perhaps not immediately, but as the knowledge soaked into the mind of the man that he would not be injuring himself"

"I agree with last speaker that the output is by no means bad at the present time. I have had a letter on the subject from, perhaps, the largest manufacturer of shells. I do not think there is any objection to giving his name---it is Sir Robert Hadfield. He said there had been a good deal of criticism about the men being "ca' canny". He said that he was delighted to find that the men were working with a will, and that he had nothing to complain about. That is largely true of the factories all over the country. What we have heard to the contrary has been stated by academic people who know nothing about the workshop. Let us encourage the men in so far as they are doing well. Let us cease lecturing them, and in particular telling them of their faults, of the drinking, and taking exaggerated views of all their vices, and in proportion as we do that we shall encourage the men to do their utmost, so that this War may be ended as speedily as possible, and in the only possible way we can end it---that is, by the overthrow of Prussian militarism."

But whenever one meets modern thinkers (as one often does) progressing towards a madhouse, one always finds, on inquiry, that they have just had a splendid escape from another madhouse. Thus, hundreds of people become Socialists, not because they have tried Socialism and found it nice, but because they have tried Individualism and found it nasty.

G. K. Chesterton,
Alarms and Discursions

Froggy

News From Across The Channel



Assorted strikes

Assorted strikes have taken place, not over low pay and for higher wages, but for keeping the status quo in the face of government demands for flexibility.

Taxi drivers were the first, in January. In order to practise, taxi drivers have to purchase a licence. The licence is very expensive in Paris and near stations, cheaper elsewhere. This system limits the number of people who can set themselves up as taxis. The government proposed allowing people without a licence to work as taxis. In response the licenced taxis blocked traffic in January this year. A compromise was reached where those outside this system can work as cabs, but can't pick up fares in the street.

On 30 September the so-called regulated professions went on strike. There is a list of 37 regulated professions. Access to these professions is limited by the necessity to have a diploma, or the necessity to buy a licence or an existing practice; fees are regulated by a national tariff. Architects, doctors, lawyers, solicitors, physiotherapists, doctors, driving instructors, bailiffs, chemists etc fall in this category.

On 27 September the government produced a 685 page report reforming the status of these professions. It had not been negotiated or discussed prior to publication. Needless to say, nobody yet knows what these pages contain. The body representing the professions singled out one reform, which was presented to the public. At the moment these professionals are self financed, or at any rate financed by members of the profession. Now, anyone would be allowed to invest in the business. Professionals fear being taken over and exploited by large financial interests that would have the possibility to close down unprofitable parts of a business, as has been done in industry. The reform would apply to any of the regulated professions capable of making a profit and attracting investment. Big business is kept out of chemist shops at the moment, unlike in England where big business runs most

chemist shops. There is clearly an as yet unexploited source of revenue for big business in France.

87% of chemist shops were closed in France on Tuesday 30 September.

The media presented these strikes as they present all strikes, very unfavourably. How dare anyone strike, and how dare anyone comfortably off strike? The liberal professions, as they are called, defend themselves by saying that they provide a public service accessible to all.

It is not that easy to make the case. You can simply say that the status quo works fine so why change it? To which the public would answer, Well, yes, but it might be cheaper if there were fewer regulations, you never know. There seems to be an irresistible wind of change; in small French towns, the chemist is often the last shop left standing, all the others, except perhaps the baker, have been replaced by the out of town hypermarket. Of course, it's nice to be able to chat with the chemist when you hand over your prescription and your money; this important chat with the chemist is part of the treatment; you and your ailments are treated seriously; you won't be able to do that when the chemist is part of Auchamp or Leclerc or Intermarché. But then, cheap is best, even if you are not actually short of money.

The only argument understood, even by the customer himself, is price; it is the simplest argument, it can be expressed in figures. The customer is encouraged to disregard other aspects of the transaction.

The solicitor has a certain seriousness and self-confidence because he finances his own practice, after having purchased it. The service he gives the public will be better because of it. But that is imponderable. If the customer can get the same piece of legal paper for a bit less money, he will be pleased. Probably less satisfied than when he was served by a solemn personage who believed in himself and his function, because that prestige rebounded on the client, but that can't be weighed and counted.

Clearly these factors are hard to put into words, hence the difficulty in explaining the strike. But then problems at French Telecom were also hard to explain, because it wasn't money that was the main problem, it was how the staff were treated. Whereas before they were assured to have a place in the firm, and to be able to stay there, feeling appreciated and secure, now they have lost control over their position, they can be given other work to do, even moved to a different town. As a result they feel devalued and treated with contempt; they are disillusioned, they believed in the company, but the company did not value their commitment. But it is difficult to complain, because it is the way things are going, and it is your fault if you can't adapt to the modern world. Hence the feelings of despair and the suicides at the place of work at French Telecom.

The Air France strike

This was another example of a strike by the privileged in defence of their privileges. And another unpopular strike.

Low cost airlines are unfair competition forcing all airlines to adopt the same practices or lose their customers. There again, customers know they are badly treated, charged excessively for small things, forced to scramble for seats etc. But they enjoy the low prices and put up with the inconvenience. They trust that pilots are not part of the cheapness of the deal and that security and safety are not economised on.

The recent strike shows that pilots are economised on by low cost airlines; they may be paid the same per month, but not by the hour: low cost pilots work longer hours.

This was the reason for the Air France strike. Air France is losing money on its short and medium haul flights; the answer was to develop Transavia France, the low cost company which is part of Air France/AirFrance KLM.

This meant decreasing the number of planes and pilots deployed in the old expensive firm and increasing

their number correspondingly in the new cheap outfit.

Low cost companies that start as low cost can buy planes and employ pilots as they like, sometimes using self-employed pilots. An established company wanting to downgrade, on the other hand, has the problem of how to move planes and pilots from the high end to the low end. That means, in this case, moving planes from AirFrance to Transavia. Pilots are encouraged to move to Transavia. Of course it would be nice to sack the expensive pilots and employ cheaper ones from other parts of the European Union, perhaps on short term contracts, but flexibility has not reached that level yet.

Air France pilots naturally resisted this downgrading. They wanted all pilots within AirFrance/Transavia to have the same contracts; they wanted their career ladder to remain the same, which meant taking priority over existing Transavia pilots. The strike lasted a fortnight and failed. It was damaging to the airline, and unpopular with the ground staff.

It would be interesting to contrast this experience with the German one. The situation was similar, in that the old established national airline was put in a position where it had to develop a low cost alternative within itself, using its planes and pilots differently, the pilots having to agree to this downgrading. Lufthansa now exists alongside its new low cost Germanwings subsidiary. Where did the savings come from, and how were they agreed by the personnel? How does the customer experience compare?

One imaginative way they have found of filling empty seats in planes is the system known as 'blind booking'; if you just want to go on holiday, just choose a category of place (beach, shopping, culture, gay friendly, etc) and the airline chooses the destination for you. You can rule out particular places, for a small fee. This appeal to risk and imagination raises the morale: cheap is not the only value.

Anyone would want to be operated on by a competent and experienced surgeon; you certainly want the profession accessed strictly by diploma. You are also pleased that the surgeon is well rewarded, and also that he or she is well regarded, respected, and is surrounded by some prestige, that reflects on you as well.

If he or she is also paid for at least in part by the tax you pay, that feels good too. That they should be part of the hospital where you go; that they should be able to have a career and grow old on the job is also satisfying. You don't want them so overworked that they can only work when they are young.

In the same way, you want the pilot on your plane to be well paid, as a guarantee that they are qualified. You want them to have conditions of service such that they are not washed out at a young age. It is also in your interest that the pilot feels generally secure in his personal position in terms of career and employment, he can grow old in the job, subject to medical checks as they are already, and not afraid

of unemployment because he is supposedly self employed, or on lease from a pretend airline.

The media attacked the strikers without restraint; a Europe 1 announcer, speaking for himself but in the name of obvious common sense as he saw it, told listeners that the strikers belonged to the previous century; their action was ridiculous and absurd, just look at the way the pilots demonstrated in front of the Houses of Parliament, as if the state could do anything! They seem to forget that Air France is 100% private!

As a matter of fact, the state owns 16% of Air France shares, and is the largest shareholder. The prime minister Manuel Valls appeared on television to support Air France management against the strikers.

These media attacks on these strikes are in the same vein as the media attack on train drivers, accused of being too well paid, or on any profession—other than finance, pop music or sport—who enjoy any privilege, however puny compared with the above three categories. The media exclaimed in surprise that l'Humanité, the ex communist

newspaper, supported the pilots strike. But l'Humanité is being consistent in protesting against all manifestations of excessive liberalism.

L'Humanité does not propose a solution. Yet something has to be done, other than saying you don't like it or just going on strike, with no hope of success. Since low cost airlines are a threat to all airline employees, as well as to traditional airline companies and their shareholders, there is a common interest to be defended by all connected with the threatened airline. After all, the AirFrance pilots and the Transavia France pilots belong to the same union. It may be the case that Air France won't recover from the cost of the strike, and all employees will suffer as a result. Proper negotiations should have taken place well before the crisis came. L'Humanité would not have approved of that. It would not recognise a common interest between management and employees. Yet it seems the only attitude that could preserve good conditions of employment.

IN SITU

Someone acts strangely
in having the right to hit you
dangerously.

In Tornados they flew
to that crowded city of human shields
where they bombed to woo
those who wouldn't yield.

In hitting they don't want hit
back.

They would be outraged if you did,
it's their irreversible right
to give you a hundred thousand whacks.

Didn't you learn that in the crib:
you don't hit back at the light,
lie back and take it in the ribs.

The planes sing in war lust,
the land below must die,
its development isn't considered just,
this birth-of-a-nation is a lie.

Much like when the hangman
held up the head and heart,
and Elizabeth was a fan,
then England was considered an upstart.

Did medievalism disappear
with the modern weapons of war,
is death now more gentle, without a tear,
when heads not cut explode in gore.

Wilson John Haire.

Notes on the News

By Gwydion M. Williams

Humanitarian Bombing

As a method of breaking a whole society, bombing tends to fail. As a method of liberating “the people” from an oppressive regime, it is quite ridiculous.

When people are bombed, they tend to identify more strongly with the regime controlling the territory being bombed. Resistance hardens and attitudes get more extreme. This applies particularly in Iraq, where Sunni Arabs have found that the Western promise of Western-style government has meant permanent domination by Shia politicians still resentful of the former rule of the mostly-Sunni Baath Party.

The promise of targeted bombing has been made before and proved unreal. People up close know this:

“The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Friday that U.S.-led air strikes on Islamist insurgents in Iraq and Syria had worsened a dire humanitarian crisis on the ground.

“All warring parties in the widening conflicts in the two countries should spare civilians and allow delivery of aid, the Geneva-based ICRC said in a statement.

“‘Years of fighting in Syria and Iraq, the proliferation of armed groups and the recent international air strikes in Iraq and Syria have compounded the humanitarian consequences of the conflicts in both countries,’ it said.”¹

US policy and the liberal use of bombing has failed before. In 1970, the USA organised the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia, believing that his policy of neutrality was stopping them winning the war in Vietnam. When this naturally led to civil war, their policy was to bomb, bomb and bomb again. This turned the Khmer Rouge from a marginal movement with its leaders in exile into a force strong enough to take power when the USA stopped bombing and pulled out. (Dumping most of its allies and showing no shame for this: even today US citizens only ever whine about how tough it was for *them*, not for the allies they let down or the people caught in the middle.)

Since then, bombing has had few successes. They did manage

in 2000 to impose the separation of Kosovo from Serbia, already defeated militarily in the minority-Serb areas in Croatia and badly demoralised. This was the end-game, after the USA and European Union had needlessly destabilised Yugoslavia, still prosperous and peaceful in 1991 when the Soviet collapse gave NATO global dominance.

Remarkably, this is classed as a success. Thus Rory Stewart, Chair of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee, said in a *Prospect* interview:

“‘We are going to have to rediscover our confidence by looking at places like Bosnia and Kosovo where we got it right,’ he says ‘and try and understand how we got those things right if we are ever to intervene successfully again.’”²

Serbia was in a weak position, because it wanted to be part of the European Union rather than to reject it and make its own destiny. The whole thing could have been handled much better, maybe by admitting Yugoslavia as a whole but on the condition that it must allow referenda for separation once it was a member. What was actually done was an incredible mess, which could be called a victory only because it was hard for Serbs to be whole-heartedly hostile to the USA or the European Union.

Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are basically alien. The West took great pride in destroying the only functional Westernising forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Saddam had tried and failed to defeat the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and invaded Kuwait when he found they were stealing shared oil and pressing him on debts accumulated during the war. The Communist government in Kabul would have readily switched to the West after the Soviet pull-out, as many other ex-Leninists have done. But the geniuses of the New Right let them be destroyed. Stood back when warlord chaos followed, which was the reason many Afghans welcomed the brutal but effective discipline imposed by the Taliban.

Something similar to Iraq applies in Syria. A weak bunch of Westernised exiles were encouraged to refuse

Assad’s offer of open elections, which he might have won. Instead they made the impossible demand that he step down, and then let things escalate to Civil War. Except it turned out that the “moderates” are also moderate about fighting a long and bitter war with no chance of an early victory.

“Anyone who has studied Syria from afar, let alone those who go there, know that the fictional ‘moderate opposition’ – supposedly deserters from the Syrian government army – does not exist. Corrupted, disillusioned, murdered or simply re-defected towards ISIS or some other al-Qaeda outfit, the old ‘Free Syrian Army’ is now a myth as ridiculous – and as potent for the Kerrys of this world – as Mussolini’s boast that the Italian army could defeat the British in North Africa. Any Syrian soldier will tell you that they are happy to fight the FSA because these warriors of the ‘moderate opposition’ always run away. It is the al-Qaeda-Nusra-ISIS ‘terrorists’ who fight to the death.”³

War favours people with hard inflexible views.

Bombing mostly makes them worse.

Call of Duty: Islamic Jihad

Huge numbers of young people in the West favour video games that glorify and glamorise war. But for Sunni Muslims living here, it’s quite easy to move on to the real thing.

A society will always include an adventurous minority who want to find something worth dying for. The brief popularity of “permanently incompetent” Trotskyism blighted this for socialism, as did the increasing ineffectiveness of the Soviet Union after Stalin and China’s retreat from Maoism. But for Muslims, the whole thing is in full flow and winning victories. For its enthusiasts, it must seem like Sublime Violence.⁴ (Which I’d regard as a stupid combination, but it was the West rather than the Islamists who popularised the notion.)

Joining the regular armed forces is not much of a temptation. Even if you’re white, what’s on offer is a long period of being bullied by social dross, followed by the prospect of a war that is foolish or mismanaged, and

maybe left unfinished. But for a lot of Muslims, many of them from families comfortably settled in the West, Islam's global war against Western values seems like a great adventure.⁵

Note that it's not just young people. One recent casualty in Syria was a 33 year old who was once an aspiring rapper and basketball fan in California.⁶ From rap music to jihad is a logical progression for anyone who isn't just bullshitting.

Those willing to talk have kept their enthusiasm. Logically there must have been others who got disillusioned, or else found that war is not such fun when you can die, or permanently lose some part of your body that you hadn't viewed as optional. An intelligent response to doubters would have been to offer such people an easy way back. Demand nothing, and count on human nature to ensure that at least some of them will bad-mouth their former comrades for the British media. Instead, the British government has concluded that the right response is to strip the jihadis of their British passports. For serious fighters, that would be about as alarming as threatening to pelt them with custard pies. While it is likely to solidify weaker spirits, persuading them that there is no safe way back.

Of course the basis for ISIS is a wide swathe of Arab Sunni territories across the lands of the ancient Fertile Crescent. Religious Sunni have long been kept away from power in Syria. In Iraq, power moved from Saddam's secular but mostly-Sunni regime to a gaggle of squabbling religious-Shia parties. And it seems that there is a population of Sunni Arabs with some sort of common identity extending through parts of the artificially-drawn entities of Iraq, Syria, a small part of Lebanon, most of Jordan and the territories of the Palestinians.⁷ Dispossessed almost everywhere – the Jordanian monarchy is an import from Medina – and turning to an extremist movement that they can identify with. And which can actually win.

A Way Out?

The only efficient force against ISIS would be Assad's Syria. It was attacked because Israel and the West got spooked by a "Shia Axis" from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. It was not actually much of a threat to Israel, given that Palestinians are mostly Sunni. But it was a reason to encourage civil war in Syria, a long-term foe.

In Syria, the policy is still to oppose the only functional secular government and back some weak and mostly dishonest pro-Western elements. People who had ambitions to make their own country like the West find it is too tough and are tempted to get out with enough cash to secure a Western lifestyle for themselves personally. Some have been loyal to the

original aims, but not enough.

In Iraq, the carefully designed system imposed by the USA makes it easy for the majority Shia to dominate, and gives the rival parties a strong incentive to be seen as the best upholders of Shia interests. A system of imposed power-sharing of the sort that Northern Ireland has would have been worth a try, or perhaps a strong federal system with a weak central government. But US "think tanks" seem typically to think like tanks: every problem is solvable by money and brute force. Subtlety is mostly beyond them. In any case it is too late now, but a sensible partition of Iraq into its different functional groups might work. But is very unlikely to be tried.

Meantime Turkey seems to be adjusting to the new reality:

"Turkey has welcomed home 46 hostages freed by Islamic State (Isis) in mysterious circumstances, hours after opening its borders to tens of thousands of Syrian Kurds fleeing another advance by the extremist group.

"The captives were seized at Turkey's consulate in Mosul in early June, when the city fell during a lightning Isis advance across the area. They included diplomats and their children, special forces soldiers and the consul general, as well as three Iraqis who stayed in their country after their release.

"Concerns about their safety were one of the main reasons cited by Ankara for staying out of a US-led coalition against Isis. Turkey has also refused to let American drones and fighter planes use Turkish airbases for bombing raids on the group...

"The celebrations in Ankara contrasted with desperation at the border with Syria, where up to 45,000 Kurds streamed through eight crossings along a 20-mile stretch of border, opened to allow them to flee an Isis advance. Extremist fighters have seized control of up to 60 Kurdish villages in the area during a two-day campaign, targeting the city of Kobane or Ain al-Arab. If they succeed in taking control, tens of thousands more Kurds could flee into Turkey."⁸

This suggests to me that Turkey is willing to co-exist with ISIS.⁹ It is religious-Sunni, like the current Turkish government. It makes problems for Kurds, who are therefore less likely to make problems for the Turkish state. If Turkey was once friendly to Israel, this is more or less ended now. And while Turkey is the one power that could plausibly invade and try to restructure Syria, they are very unlikely to try it. The West has failed to properly accept Turkey, still shut out of the European Union. They might think that Western decline and a massive re-alignment of global forces wouldn't hurt them any.

Never Mind the Innocent

"By concentrating so much on civilian casualties, and assuming that the civilian costs of war are the most important aspects of war, we actually diminish our understanding of the phenomenon of war. We

strip it of its most important aspects: why it is being fought, how it is being fought, why one side is winning and the other is losing, or why there is a stalemate.

"Perhaps the most fundamental falsehood about civilian casualties is the belief that because civilians are not active combatants, they are merely onlookers who do not contribute to the war effort of a country, internal faction, or transnational movement. This is not the case. Civilians are almost never just bystanders. This is especially true in modern states with tightly integrated economies and participatory (whether democratic or authoritarian) political cultures, structures, and wartime mobilization efforts. Civilians work in war industries. They keep the civilian economy of a nation at war going."¹⁰

That's the view of one former US Congressional researcher. Not a person of great influence, but what he says would make sense of a lot of what the USA has been doing, if he has blurted out what a lot of other people are thinking.

The defect with such thinking – as with the famously cynical works of Machiavelli – is that it thinks about politics without thinking about the long-term results. (And admiration of Machiavelli is widespread among the New Right.) The government of Florence in which Machiavelli served soon failed and was replaced by the Medici dynasty. Cesare Borgia's power faded rapidly after the death of his father the pope. Machiavelli's dreams of a unified Italy got nowhere at the time. It happened eventually because both France and the British Empire favoured it. The idealism of Garibaldi got sidelined and the result was a weak state that was replaced by the first Fascism under Mussolini.

I assume that those who either say or think we "pay far too much attention to civilian casualties" would not also say that 9/11 was entirely legitimate, or apply it to the current beheadings of Western journalists and aid workers by ISIS in Syria. Maybe they really don't see the connection: I'd not accuse them of knowing what they are doing. But if you actually listen to what the Islamists are saying, they make a strong connection and use it to justify themselves.

Hong Kong:

The next Unexpected Tragedy

As of 30th September, demonstrations over the 2017 elections have escalated to a general protest. No one seems to see that it is utterly unlikely that Beijing will back down.

The issue is over the election of the next Chief Executive. Everyone will have a vote, but Beijing is insisting that candidates be vetted, allowing them to veto any candidates who might demand more than Beijing was ready to concede. Really, what else would you expect? There have been enough cases over the last quarter-century of regimes trying a small relaxation in response to protest, and then losing control.

In many of those cases, the outcome was something utterly different from what

the original protestors were hoping for. The two big successes were South Africa and the various Soviet-dependent states of what was once *Mitteleuropa*, Middle Europe.

South Africa owes its stability to the existing and continuing power of the African National Congress, and to the presence for the most critical years of Nelson Mandela as a leader of enormous prestige. And the fact that he made a commitment to respect a lot of white privileges in exchange for a peaceful transition. The biggest danger is splits between the various African peoples, most likely Zulus against the rest. But the ANC has so far contained this.

The Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles and the three Baltic republics are within *Mitteleuropa* as normally defined.¹¹ All of them moved on smoothly once Moscow stopped trying to rule them, though Czechs and Slovaks rapidly split and some people worry about what's now happening in Hungary. Romania – half in and half out of *Mitteleuropa* – is doing OK. Bulgaria, wholly outside, was doing OK but currently faces a little-reported crisis that may get resolved by new elections in October. Croatia, counted as part of *Mitteleuropa*, never the less elected an extremist government that fought a wholly avoidable war rather than compromise on the borders that Tito had drawn, which were unfair to Serbs.

Beyond *Mitteleuropa*, there has been general chaos and decline, with Ukraine suffering continuous economic decline and now fragmenting. Something similar is entirely possible if the current regime lost its grip.

Beijing seems to have drawn the lesson that any compromise with major protests is a mistake. Elsewhere, it has led to escalating demands and mostly the collapse of the compromising government. The elected government of Ukraine had been riding out the crisis, but when in February they tried a compromise, this was followed quickly by a coup by the opposition.

If Hong Kong defied Beijing and got away with it, this would be an example for the rest of China. Where protests in China have succeeded, they succeed because they go after local leaders, who maybe deserved it in the eyes of Beijing and can certainly be sacrificed as needed.

Anyone who thinks that Hong Kong's economic importance makes a crack-down unthinkable is not thinking very clearly. Hong Kong was much less important than Shanghai before 1949, and has returned to

that position. Hong Kong prospered because Mao chose to leave it as the main link between China and the capitalist world. Had he simply closed the border, the place would have collapsed very quickly. That's also why Thatcher handed it over – it was and remains utterly dependent on the rest of China.

What's happened since Deng's opening-up is the increasing growth or restoration of other links, especially in Shanghai. Hong Kong no longer has the same importance. It is being integrated back into the Chinese norm.

Hong Kong is now following a common politico-economic pattern – an area in relative economic decline opts for political radicalism. This is equivalent to bluffing on a weak hand while playing cards. It seldom succeeds. And it seems that most mainland Chinese either don't know or don't care.¹² Some are hostile to Hong Kong, seeing it as privileged people asking for more.¹³

It's also significant that Taiwan has refused to be lured by any promises of 'One Country, Two Systems'. They keep their own army and police and Beijing has to rely on their goodwill. It is also unlikely that anything much would change if Beijing did crack down hard on Hong Kong. Taiwan isn't that Western in its outlook: one of its former elected Presidents who flirted with separatism is now in jail on a corruption charge. Former top leaders in Europe and the USA never go to jail, no matter what they have done.

Hong Kong citizens should also note that the West has repeatedly backed protests that backfired on the protestors. The Arab Spring led to civil wars, the decay of government, and a rise of Islamism rather than the liberalism that the initial protestors were after. Whether this is viewed as sabotage or a simple lack of realism is hard to say – probably a mix of both. The key point is that Western advice has repeatedly proved lousy.

Democracy and Justice.

'Let justice be done, even if millions of innocents suffer'.

To the best of my knowledge, no one at all has ever said this. Liberals will on occasion say 'Let justice be done, though the heavens fall'. (Sometimes in Latin, though it seems to date just from the 17th century.)¹⁴ But I think they say that because they're confident that the heavens won't actually fall on them. They show a broad inability to learn that even the most excellent cause must be advanced with due thought

about the likely side-effects, reactions and problems.

'Civil Rights' in the USA were utterly bungled. Rather than integrating Afro-Americans into the wider society, it has left them still functionally segregated, and often in favour of continuing separation. The fact that they now vote means that some Afro-Americans join the elite and there can even be a black President. But it's significant that the entire mainstream Afro-American population, descendants of the former slaves, has wholly failed to produce anyone who could be seriously considered as President. Obama's origins are wholly different: his mother was a radical white woman who married a Luo from Kenya. It needed an utterly untypical background to produce an Afro-American who was plausibly Presidential. And he's looking to be a fairly ineffective President whose main achievement will be the long-overdue Health Care scheme (assuming it survives).

Even the best sort of cause will fail if people pursue it without regard for the likely results of their own actions. 1960s radicalism was highly successful in liberating the sort of people it first flourished among: the mostly-white Anglo majority and people who could aspire to a middle-class life-style even when their parents had been part of the industrial working class. For people outside of this rather broad category, the results were much more mixed and sometimes quite disastrous. In Britain, trade union militancy was pursued without regard for the likely results, and the actual result was Thatcherism. A very real possibility of Industrial Democracy had an excellent chance of overcoming the normal conservative resistance to anything new. But it was either ignored or actively opposed by most radicals, who had an unrealistic notion that if they sabotaged the most feasible reforms, something much more to their tastes would result. In the same spirit they opposed and finally defeated Incomes Policy, which was an imperfect system but which would certainly have prevented the gross expansion in the incomes of the elite that has actually happened.

'Democracy' has become a word used vehemently but inconsistently by the Western news media. It has been narrowed down to apply just to competitive electoral politics based on a general adult franchise. Older concepts such as Direct Democracy or Participatory Democracy don't get mentioned.

Being able to criticise your government and maybe replace it is

very different from being able to actually control it. On the whole, reassuring lies sell better than unpleasant truths.¹⁵ And the media have a consistent right-wing bias, meaning they can influence which lies are believed and which truths get ignored.

In real politics, the order of evolution is mostly Custom, Order, Law, Broad Citizenship, Popular Elections, Open-ended politics, Participation. (Custom is something very different from law. It is not consistent and not open to be reasoned about. And is not supposed to change, though in practice it does.)

And note that 'democratic' need not mean "nice", particularly from the viewpoint of foreign countries or later generations. For instance the legalisation of homosexuality in Britain was done by the elite in parliament and would probably have been rejected if put to a referendum. Switzerland was and is very democratic, but very slow to extend voting rights to women. Likewise France, where it only happened in 1944.

The democratisation of politics in the 1830s in the USA led to slavery being enshrined as a positive value in the US South, where all the voters were white. The extension of the vote to one-seventh of adult males in Britain in 1832 led to a strong assertion of Puritan values. In both cases, these were values resisted by the old elite. And something similar happened in Iran in 1979: the Shah's regime was Westernising and in favour of female rights, while elections showed that hard-line Islamists had the support of the majority.

Broadly, be careful and think about what you are doing.

How Thatcher lost Scotland for Toryism

The recent referendum was used in England as a good opportunity to remind people that Scotland used to be a Tory stronghold:

"Little more than a generation ago, in the 1950s and early 60s, the union could not have been more secure. The Scottish Unionist party (only becoming the Conservative party in Scotland in 1965) had won a famous and overwhelming victory in the general election of 1955. The SNP at the time was but an irrelevant and eccentric sect rather than a mainstream political party. Indeed, despite the mythology of Red Clydeside, Scotland had voted mainly for the Tories in the 1920s and 1930s. The Labour landslide victory of 1945 can be seen as an aberration in that context.

"The memory of the collective British sacrifice of the second world war lived on for the postwar generation in comics, books and films. The empire, in which the Scots were so fundamentally involved, started to dissolve with the independence of India in 1947. Yet, contemporaneously, the welfare state was established and soon became the new sheet anchor of the Anglo-Scottish union. Nationalisation of key industries further strengthened the idea of a British-wide collective economic enterprise."¹⁶

Thatcher smashed all that and turned the Conservative into a mostly-English party, with a small survival in Wales. But even before Thatcher, there was some momentum for devolution.

There was also no solid obligation to let it be voted on. The USA had used referenda to push settlements of freed Afro-Americans in Africa into independence, but it was not considered relevant for the Confederate secession. In fact even the seceding Confederate states mostly did not have a popular vote on the matter: they had Constitutional Conventions in which a majority of delegates were originally elected to avoid secession, but were persuaded to switch.

The first substantial case of voting for independence was Norway separating from Sweden in 1905, breaking an incomplete union that had existed since 1814.¹⁷ And it happened because Norway was ready to fight and Sweden decided it was not worth it. The next big case was 1933, when Western Australia tried to secede from the Australian Federation but was ignored.¹⁸

The period after World War Two saw a much greater number of referenda, with colonial empires being wound up and some small island populations deciding to remain linked to the colonial power. But no general right of a vote on secession has ever been established. Catalonia is due to have a vote on 9th November this year, but Spain has no intention of conceding independence if Catalonia demands it.

In the UK, there were devolution referenda for Wales and Scotland in 1979, following a Labour Party promise when they needed Nationalist support for a parliamentary majority. Both failed. Wales panicked and voted 4 to 1 against. The Scottish vote was lost because the 'Yes' vote was less than 40% of the electorate, even though it was 51.62% of the vote. This was a special additional requirement, widely criticised at the time, and not repeated since.

By 1997, things had changed. Wales voted for devolution by a small majority. In Scotland, it was won three-to-one.

The latest vote was decided by the votes of the over-55s – each age-group below that had a majority for independence. And it was still only 55 to 45, not safe at all. Another vote in 5 or 10 years time is almost certain. Or sooner if the UK votes to leave the European Union but Scotland has a majority for staying.

The next time round, the Scottish Nationalists should make an absolute pledge that old people in Scotland would never be worse off than those in England. (Or at least no more worse off, assuming there is currently a gap based on greater English personal wealth.) Fears over pensions were the biggest issue for No voters.¹⁹ But even without this, feelings of a common UK identity must be fading.

Leaders must be judged by the actual results of their rule, not just what they set out to do. Sometimes disagreements over their aims obscures just how bad they were at achieving those aims. Hitler's main

contributions to history were to cause the death of some 9 to 11 million non-Jewish Germans, lose East Prussia and massively discredit White Racism. (Someone should point this out to the current crop of neo-Nazis.) The outcomes were all very much contrary to his intentions, of course, but that's what can happen if you push your luck.

For Thatcher, perhaps the most long-lasting result of her rule will be to have shattered Great Britain. It already seems that the settlement she was persuaded to impose on Northern Ireland will bring long-term victory to the IRA / Sinn Fein. Not at all her intention, of course. But in politics, you are supposed to be able to figure out that sort of thing. And it wasn't as if she didn't get a lot of warnings.

The Decline and Fall of the American Dream

"American respondents didn't have fantastically high 'ideal' or 'estimated' CEO pay ratios compared to their international peers, yet top US CEOs are paid far more than those in other countries. In the US, people think a CEO would 'ideally' earn 6.7 times what an unskilled worker would make, but they think those CEOs do earn around 30 times than worker's pay... and the average CEO actually earns more than 350 times that pay."²⁰

Which doesn't stop them voting Republican. The Midterm Elections this November are likely to see the Republican Party strengthen its position and maybe get control of the Senate: it already controls the House of Representatives. Like I said earlier, being able to criticise your government and maybe replace it is very different from being able to actually control it. Even most Democrats would no longer dare to call for a return to the highly successful New Deal policies that won the Cold War and which brought the American Dream closest to reality in the 1950s. That's the bad side of 1960s radicalism: even people on the left see government as threatening and hostile whatever it tries to do.

The current recovery has helped only the richest 10% of US citizens, especially the richest 1%. They've been getting the lion's share of any increased income since the 1980s: for 2009-2012 they have gained faster than ever, while the rest of the population have lost.²¹ Lots of people dislike this, but most of those who protest would regard a re-expansion of state control of the economy as something too terrible to be contemplated. So they will continue to lose.

It's also not that great an idea to campaign for the "99%" against the "1%", because far more people think they belong in the elite than actually do. A mere million dollars would only put you in the top 4% in the USA. More than 2.3 million is entry-level for the 1%.²²

Ordinary US citizens are despondent, yet remain incoherent. "According to polling... the bottom has fallen out of the American dream for a whole lot of people. Only 42 percent of Americans still believe in it today and it's not getting better."²³

Yet how many of them would join a Trade Union? Or even accept that Trade Unions could serve as a good balance against the power of the rich?

The relationships are subtle, of course. A lot of people could have said that they got a good income without needing a union. But unions kept wages high for large blocks of workers, which meant that employers who didn't face a powerful union still had to pay good wages to get good workers. When the unions weakened, this weakened the position of all wage earners.

That's the USA. Not much better in the UK, sad to say.

Swarthy Blues

"The modern European gene pool was formed when three ancient populations mixed within the last 7,000 years, Nature journal reports.

"Blue-eyed, swarthy hunters mingled with brown-eyed, pale skinned farmers as the latter swept into Europe from the Near East.

"But another, mysterious population with Siberian affinities also contributed to the genetic landscape of the continent...

"This additional 'tribe' is the most enigmatic and, surprisingly, is related to Native Americans...

"Pigmentation genes carried by the hunters and farmers showed that, while the dark hair, brown eyes and pale skin of the early farmer would look familiar to us, the hunter-gatherers would stand out if we saw them on a street today.

"It really does look like the indigenous West European hunter gatherers had this striking combination of dark skin and blue eyes that doesn't exist any more," Prof Reich told BBC News...

"Hunters and gatherers get vitamin D through their food - because animals have a lot of it. But once you're farming, you don't get a lot of it, and once you switch to agriculture, there's strong natural selection to lighten your skin so that when it's hit by sunlight you can synthesise vitamin D."'²⁴

So the classical racist idea of blond blue-eyed 'Aryans' never actually existed. What we have is a result of race mixing and skin lightening due to farming.

Snippets

The party of the new President of Ukraine is likely to win the Parliamentary Elections due on 26th October. Polls also suggest that the neo-Nazi Svoboda have lost a lot of support and will fail to reach the 5% threshold for seats. Still, people are often reluctant to admit support for extreme parties, so it may turn out otherwise.

The neo-Nazi militias failed to distinguish themselves in the actual fighting. This would be typical of neo-Nazis: dangerous as street thugs but not in a real war. The original Nazis were no different: they had to slaughter their own street-thugs and co-opt the regular armed forces in order to become formidable. In Ukraine, the Azov Brigade with its swastika-like symbol of the "wolfsangel" got badly defeated in the last days of the fighting.²⁵ They say it was

regular Russian forces, of course.

Neo-Nazi elements may have done some mass killings of unarmed people in hostile areas: Russian media are reporting this.²⁶ Western media have mostly ignored the entire neo-Nazi connection. They speak vaguely of 'Russian propaganda', but don't present any hard facts to counter the supposed propaganda. Only occasionally is the neo-Nazi connection admitted.²⁷

There is also a "deafening silence" regarding the tragic shooting-down of the Malaysian airliner over Ukraine. At the start there was much publicity and attempts to blame Russia, at least indirectly. Now things have gone rather quiet, apart from one interim report that says little. Probably the main conclusions will not happen for months, by which time public attention may have shifted.

From early on, I thought and said that the claim that the internet could not be controlled by state power was nonsense. If the USA had been able to get solid control, they might have been able to use it to encourage those rebel movements they approved of, while undermining the rest. But internets depend mostly on fast connections that governments can control when on their territory, or even passing through to a server under foreign control.

It's also a remarkably useful way of spotting networks of dissidents. I've no hard information, obviously, but it is now generally agreed it has been done where the government is strong and determined. And I can speculate as to how:

Police get the communication records of some known dissidents, by tapping their communications or by using some cooperative burglar to break in and steal the data. Or by including a spy function in some attractive free download. They could then find:

Known dissident A communicates with B, C, D, E, F, G and H.

Known dissident K communicates with D, G, L, M, N, O and P.

Known dissident Q communicates with E, G, N, R, S, T, U and V.

So G is a prime suspect, in touch with all three known dissidents, who otherwise have little in common. D, E and N are also good candidates. The rest can be filed as mere friends of dissidents, but can be matched if they also communicate with some other known dissident.

Stage two would be to find out who G, D, E and N communicate with. If G and E communicate, that raises E's profile. If E also communicated with H and P, that makes them worth investigating. There would also be new names, people not in touch with A, K or Q but in touch with at least two out of G, D, E and N.

(Real links and friendships would be much more numerous and complex, of course. But computers are wonderfully good at 'data mining', extracting interesting facts from a mass of dull facts in a way humans can not. Governments have their own experts, and can also hire people

who'd do anything for money.)

Doing such a procedure a few dozen times would reveal the links and also eliminate the non-dissident friends of dissidents. Avoid bothering the sort of people who are sometimes turned from neutrals into foes by heavy-handed police methods, if classical methods are used.

Police can then arrest those who look like weak links. And reveal enough knowledge to falsely suggest an informer. They might tell K "we know that D, N and P are also dissidents, while L, M and O are just friends". That might help make K a real informer and pass on extra details, and so on.

"Biology has long struggled with the concept of altruism. There is now reasonable agreement that its purpose is partly to be nice to relatives (with whom one shares genes) and partly to permit the exchanging of favours. But how the brain goes about being altruistic is unknown. Dr Marsh therefore wondered if the brains of extreme altruists might have observable differences from other brains—and, in particular, whether such differences might be the obverse of those seen in psychopaths...

"Their conclusion is that extreme altruists are at one end of a "caring continuum" which exists in human populations—a continuum that has psychopaths at the other end...

"Some biologists regard psychopathy as adaptive... Dr Marsh's work suggests that what is going on is more like the way human height varies. Being tall is not a specific adaptation (though lots of research suggests tall people do better, in many ways, than short people do). Rather, tall people (and also short people) are outliers caused by unusual combinations of the many genes that govern height. If Dr Marsh is correct, psychopaths and extreme altruists may be the result of similar, rare combinations of genes underpinning the more normal human propensity to be moderately altruistic."²⁸

It may indeed be random variation. But you also have to explain why 'bad genes' do not get eliminated. Another unconnected piece of research gives a clue:

"They were looking for evidence that linked trolling with the Dark Tetrad of personality: narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadistic personality."²⁹ And found it, naturally enough. But what I found more interesting was that "debaters" – people who make serious contributions – scored slightly above average for all of these qualities except narcissism, where they were marginally below average. People who favoured chatting were average except for narcissism, where they averaged above average, naturally. "Non-Commentators" were below average on all counts.

This suggests to me that bad qualities may be overdoses of things that can be positive in small amounts. Maybe we'd be better off if we could curb the extremes, but we can't entirely do without those things. And if there were multiple genes

involved – as there are for height – then the random sorting of genes would produce unwanted extremes.

Say there were ten independent genes each tending towards psychopathy: getting just three or four might make a strong and confident character who was still moral and considerate. Ten genes for narcissism might mean three or four make for someone chatty who usefully passes on news, but is not unduly self-obsessed.

Other studies have shown that psychopathic types are found disproportionately in business and finance.³⁰ A good reason to regulate them – and in practice, only state regulation will actually curb such characters.

Is Israel about to lose a lot of its friends in the USA?

“A decade ago, Brog reports, ‘As if out of nowhere, a block of fifty to one hundred million friends of Israel were poised to enter the national debate and safeguard the U.S.-Israel relationship for generations to come.’

“Today, however, Brog describes a significant reversal. As more and more evangelicals learn the facts on Israel-Palestine (Brog calls such information an ‘anti-Israel narrative’) they are dropping their unconditional support for Israel.

“While evangelical support for Israel has often been attributed to their theology, Brog’s article indicates that the significant factor in the shift is learning the true situation in Israel-Palestine.”³¹

Which means that Israel would be wise to get a final settlement before US support becomes lukewarm, and before they find that most Palestinians have joined ISIS and are no longer interested in anything except war.

Sadly, I expect current foolishness to continue to the bitter end.

(E n d n o t e s)

- 1 [http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/26/us-mideast-crisis-redcross-idUSKCN0HL1V920140926]
- 2 [http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/opinions/rory-stewart-interview-britains-strategic-gap]
- 3 [http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article39750.htm]
- 4 [http://www.alternet.org/why-so-many-westerners-are-drawn-fight-mideast-wars]
- 5 [http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21614226-why-and-how-westerners-go-fight-syria-and-iraq-it-aint-half-hot-here-mum]
- 6 [http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/us-man-fighting-group-dies-syria-20148276140566253.html]
- 7 [http://www.vox.com/2014/9/25/6843611/14-maps-that-explain-isis]
- 8 [http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/20/turkey-hostages-syria-kurds-isis]
- 9 [http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article39763.htm]

- 10 [http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article39705.htm]
- 11 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitteuropa] and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grossgliederung_Europas-en.svg]
- 12 [http://www.quora.com/What-do-Mainland-Chinese-people-think-about-Occupy-Central-protests-in-HK]
- 13 [http://www.quora.com/Why-do-mainlanders-complain-about-Hong-Kongs-democracy-movement-when-the-gains-from-it-will-most-likely-benefit-the-whole-of-China-in-the-future]
- 14 Fiat justitia ruat caelum. If it was a genuine Classical Roman saying, it had a very different meaning for them. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiat_justitia_ruat_caelum] as at 30th September.
- 15 There’s a nice cartoon about this at [https://www.facebook.com/AlterNetNews/photos/a.206928327506.133239.17108852506/10152351127577507/?type=1]
- 16 [http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/14/history-turned-on-tory-voting-scotland-thatcher-1980s]
- 17 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_referendum]
- 18 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secessionism_in_Western_Australia]
- 19 [http://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Lord-Ashcroft-Polls-Referendum-day-poll-summary-1409191.pdf]
- 20 [http://www.vox.com/2014/9/24/6837959/ceo-pay-ratio-us-vs-global]
- 21 [http://www.vox.com/xpress/2014/9/25/6843509/income-distribution-recoveries-pavlina-tcherneva]
- 22 [http://www.vox.com/2014/9/18/6453661/do-you-have-2385036-no-then-you-re-not-in-the-wealthiest-1]
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- 25 [http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/sep/05/ukraine-catastrophic-defeat/]
- 26 [http://en.ria.ru/world/20140926/193331644/Russia-to-Demand-Open-Investigation-of-Mass-Murders-in-East-Ukraine.html]
- 27 [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/08/30/preparing_for_war_with_ukraine_s_fascist_defenders_of_freedom] and [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11025137/Ukraine-crisis-the-neo-Nazi-brigade-fighting-pro-Russian-separatists.html]
- 28 [http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21618676-self-sacrifice-it-seems-biological-opposite-psychopathy-right]
- 29 [http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/your-online-secrets/201409/internet-trolls-are-narcissists-psychopaths-and-sadists]
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By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life. Thus defined, religion consists of two elements, a theoretical and a practical, namely, a belief in powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate or please them. Of the two, belief clearly comes first, since we must believe in the existence of a divine being before we can attempt to please him. But unless the belief leads to a corresponding practice, it is not a religion but merely a theology.

James Frazer, The Golden Bough

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.

Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist

An unjust law is itself a species of violence.

Mahatma Gandhi, Non-Violence in Peace and War

Americans are so enamored of equality that they would rather be equal in slavery than unequal in freedom.... The subjection of individuals will increase amongst democratic nations, not only in the same proportion as their equality, but in the same proportion as their ignorance.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

LISTENING TO ITALY

by Orecchiette

BRAVEHEART ALMOST WON

A SCOTTISH “NO”, THE BORSE IS EUPHORIC AND STERLING FLIES, said a *La Repubblica* headline the day after the Scottish referendum. The Italian press reported the huge sighs of relief not only in the European Commission but also in countries discomfited by strong separatist groups of their own.

La Repubblica of the 19 September ran a longer article analysing the referendum. A sad-looking photo of Alex Salmond headed it. It listed the whoops of joy of everyone from Barak Obama to Beppe Grillo's M5S movement (our own Nigel Farage's EU Group colleagues). But in spite of the Scottish NO vote, M5S believe that, “the result will not close the wave of separatism in Europe”. They see that Belgium, Spain, Holland and even Italy are being pressed by the demands of groups looking for anything from special treatment to complete independence.

La Repubblica gave the Italian President Matteo Renzi's views. They quoted from a letter that he had written to David Cameron. Renzi had done this not only from his standpoint as Italy's leader but also from Italy's current position as rotating President of the EU. His remarks were aimed very pointedly at the English. Renzi said that he valued the richness and diversity of the EU, not its fragmentation. He then went on to say that, “the response of the Scottish people, justifiably proud of their history and tradition, is given to us all. The Italian Government want to restate their strong wish to forge an even closer relationship with your Government in both Europe and Internationally”. “With friendship”, he concluded.

The same *La Repubblica* article gave substantial space to the Spanish and their separatist problems. Mariano Rajoy the Prime Minister was particularly anxious about the referendum because of his ongoing “domestic secessionist struggle” in Catalonia. Rajoy congratulated “the Scottish citizens who have decided to continue to be part of the United Kingdom and the EU in a clear and unequivocal way”. Then, as a warning to his troublesome Catalonians at home, he continued, the Scots: “have avoided the grave economic, social, institutional and political consequences that could have followed separation”. *La Repubblica* also focussed on the opinions of the President and Vice President of the Generalitat de Catalunya, Artur Mas and Joana Ortega. The close Scottish vote was clearly a great encouragement to do better themselves.

To digress slightly, Rajoy should have referred to Scottish *subjects* rather than Scottish *citizens*. UK nationals lack the personal democratic status given to citizens of republics. It is sobering to hear that when Italians want to be

sarcastic about the English (perhaps about incomprehensible things such as foxhunting or euroscepticism) they refer to them - to us - as “i sudditi di Sua Maestà”, the subjects of Her Majesty.

Corriere della Sera published a long article on 17 September based on the European Free Alliance's map which showed around 40 movements with autonomous, separatist and nationalist aspirations. This includes the Cornish Mebyon Kernow. The UK, with its four distinctly separate countries, even with separate football teams, is seen as the most vulnerable to a split. Canada and the Québécois, Ukraine and Moldova were also mentioned in the same article.

The Italian press see the Scots not only as different to the English, but this difference highlights particularly unflattering aspects of the English character. Italian Sciltian Gastaldi blogs in the paper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. He is a writer and playwright who got his PhD in Italian Studies at Toronto University. For him, *Edimburgo* or Edinburgh, represents Scotland and the Scottish character, personifying majesty and class with its history and monuments. He makes no reference to the city's rivalry with Glasgow and the two conflicting referendum results. However, his take on Scottishness is that, notwithstanding the effects of the dark and gloomy winters, the Scots have some of the southern Neapolitan joyfulness coupled with the organisational skills of the northern Emilia Romana. They are, he says, more socialist and European than the English, even having some Scandinavian characteristics, meaning a sense of openness. He sees the English as being conservative, “dividing themselves between Tory-blue and Tory-red, both of whom are Eurosceptic.”

Enrico Franceschini, *La Repubblica*'s London correspondent writes polemical articles on political issues as well as football; he is after all Italian. He discussed the aftermath of the referendum in an article published on 23 September. For him, the Scots come from the land of Braveheart. He doesn't labour the point, avoiding a simplistic comparison with what the Times of 4 August 2009 said was one of the ten most historically inaccurate films ever. However, he quoted Alex Salmond as saying that his mission will be passed to his successor who will “continue the dream and arrive at the top of the mountain.”

Sciltian Gastaldi analyses the referendum results in his *Il Fatto* article. He said that he might be wrong but he considers that the victory will be a pyrrhic one. He thinks that “London” misjudged their tactics and that this will rebound on them to cause a profound break in British society. The tactics of the NO camp, what he and others call the “unionists”,

thought that they would win by scaring the electorate. In contrast, he said, the YES camp “had invited the electorate to dream, to be optimistic and to have hope”. Unsophisticated analyses perhaps, but the recognition of English arrogance has not escaped him.

What didn't escape several writers, including that of an article of 19 September in *Corriere della Sera*, was that clear promises were made to the Scots during the campaign. The article had another crestfallen picture of Salmond with the headline: *Alex Salmond announces his resignation: Cameron doesn't keep promises*. The article said that Salmond justified his resignation saying that “Today David Cameron has refused to commit himself to a second reading at Westminster of a law to grant majority power to Scotland before 27 March 2015”. The article said that this underlined the fact that the promise had been made by Gordon Brown during the referendum campaign. Franceschini quotes Salmond saying of “London”, that “they have won the referendum with a deceit, I doubt that the promises will be kept” Isn't this part of the English national character? Perfidious Albion. And this is how others see us.

Franchescini has also noticed something interesting about the possible future of Scotland. They might have three female political leaders. He mentioned Johann Lamont (female), lawyer and Labour leader and Ruth Davidson, the Conservative leader. He talked at more length about Nicola (a female name in English, unlike Italian, he says) Sturgeon. He credited her (and Davidson) with being able to run a family and succeed at a taxing job - “the grit of Braveheart”. Franchescini quoted Hugh McLachlan, a philosophy Professor at Glasgow Caledonian University saying that Sturgeon had “reached the heights” entirely on her own abilities.

Finally, said Franchescini, “Not for nothing have the Scots descended in good measure from the Vikings. They would be proud to find that the parliament of their descendants is in the hands of women.”

America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.

Abraham Lincoln

Affection is responsible for nine-tenths of whatever solid and durable happiness there is in our lives.

C. S. Lewis

Parliament Notes



Dick Barry

Bombing Iraq: Here We Go Again.

Parliament was recalled on 26 September, following an absence of two weeks, to debate a Government motion calling for the UK to support the so-called international coalition against the Islamic State (IS). The motion reads as follows:

That this House condemns the barbaric acts of ISIL against the people of Iraq including the Sunni, Shia, Kurds, Christians and Yazidi and the humanitarian crisis this is causing; recognises the clear threat ISIS poses to the territorial integrity of Iraq and the request from the Government of Iraq for military support from the international community and the specific request to the UK Government for such support; further recognises the threat ISIL poses to wider international security and the UK directly through its sponsorship of terrorist attacks and its murder of a British hostage; acknowledges the broad coalition contributing to military support of the Government of Iraq including countries throughout the Middle East; further acknowledges the request of the Government of Iraq for international support to defend itself against the threat ISIL poses to Iraq and its citizens and the clear legal basis that this provides for action in Iraq; notes that this motion does not endorse UK air strikes in Syria as part of this campaign and any proposals to do so would be subject to a separate vote in Parliament; accordingly supports Her Majesty's Government, working with allies, in supporting the Government of Iraq in protecting civilians and restoring its territorial integrity, including the use of UK air strikes to support Iraqi, including Kurdish, security forces' efforts against ISIL in Iraq; notes that Her Majesty's Government will not deploy UK troops in ground combat operations; and offers its wholehearted support to the men and women of Her Majesty's armed forces.

The request from the Government of Iraq for military support in the fight against ISIL is, in reality, a request for others to fight their war for them. The Iraqi military are a useless force in spite of earlier boasts from Cameron and Obama that western training had turned them into a fighting machine. Only a few weeks ago 1,300 ISIL jihadists killed thousands of Iraqi troops which led to senior Iraqi officers fleeing the scene of action.

It has been said by many commentators, including British ex-military senior personnel, that air bombing alone will not defeat ISIL. ISIL have a greater capacity to fight than their opponents. Their will is stronger and they believe the fruits of victory are worth dying for. There is no comparable initiative or incentive on the other side, including, one suggests, among British or American military.

In his opening remarks, Cameron said, "There is no more serious an issue than asking our armed forces to put themselves in harm's way to protect our country..." But bombing from 30,000 feet, or from whatever height, will not put the armed forces directly in harm's way. ISIL have surface-to-air missiles, but as they are said to be not very effective, there is minimum risk to aircraft. Deploying troops at ground level would be a much greater risk, but the motion rules that out. Beheading hostages is condemned as a barbaric act. But so is bombing from relative safety, particularly when it results in the deaths of innocent civilians as it has done on many occasions, and will do in the current operation.

Interestingly, ISIL have been beheading people from the beginning of their mission, but it was only when western hostages, notably American, were beheaded that the US and Britain cried foul.

A number of MPs made the point that we are involving ourselves in a conflict that could go on for years without any idea of the end result.

Cameron himself told Denis Skinner that it will take "not just months, but years". It could take years because the Iraqi troops lined up against ISIL are obviously, in Cameron's eyes, not up to the job. The Kurdish PKK are fierce fighters, but it is listed as a terrorist group by the west. It is difficult therefore to imagine that British and American troops will not be involved at ground level at some time in the near future.

This is not our fight and getting involved in it will surely make Britain's civilian population a target for attack by jihadists. It is simply disingenuous of Cameron and co. to argue that our involvement will make Britain's streets safer. But perhaps Britain's love of war overrides all else.

One final point. Cameron said that Obama described ISIL as a "network of death". Well, Obama ought to know. Over the last 60 years, the US military and secret services have been responsible for the deaths of more civilians throughout the world, and used chemical weapons to do so, than ISIL, however barbaric they are, will ever do.

The following sets out the bulk of Cameron's speech. Plus speeches from George Galloway and Tory backbencher Richard Bacon. The contributions from most Labour backbenchers were saturated with emotion, lacking logic and reason.

Mr David Cameron:

The question before the House today is how we keep the British people safe from the threat posed by ISIL and, in particular, what role our armed forces should play in the international coalition to dismantle and ultimately destroy what President Obama has rightly called "this network of death".

There is no more serious an issue than asking our armed forces to put themselves in harm's way to protect our country, and I want to set out today why I believe it is necessary. If we are to do this a series of questions must

be answered.

Is this in our national interest? In particular, is there a direct threat to the British people? Is there a comprehensive plan for dealing with this threat? Is the military element necessary? Is it necessary for us to take part in military action? Is it legal for us to take part? Will we be doing so with the support of local partners, and will doing this add up to a moral justification for putting the lives of British servicemen and women on the line? And above all, do we have a clear idea of what a successful outcome will look like, and are we convinced that our strategy can take us there?

I want to address each of those questions head on---first, our national interest. Is there a threat to the British people? The answer is yes. ISIL has already murdered one British hostage and is threatening the lives of two more. The first ISIL-inspired terrorist acts in Europe have already taken place, with, for instance, the attack on the Jewish museum in Brussels. Security services have disrupted six other known plots in Europe, as well as foiling a terrorist attack in Australia aimed at civilians, including British and American tourists.

ISIL is a terrorist organisation unlike those we have dealt with before. The brutality is staggering: beheadings, crucifixions, the gouging out of eyes, the use of rape as a weapon and the slaughter of children. All these things belong in the dark ages, but it is not just brutality; it is backed by billions of dollars and has captured an arsenal of the most modern weapons.

In the space of a few months, ISIL has taken control of territory that is greater than the size of Britain and is making millions selling oil to the Assad regime. It has already attacked Lebanon and boasts of its designs right up to the Turkish border. This is not a threat on the far side of the world; left unchecked, we will face a terrorist caliphate on the shores of the Mediterranean and bordering a NATO member, with a declared and proven determination to attack our country and our people. This is not the stuff of fantasy; it is happening in front of us; and we need to face up to it.

Next, is there a clear, comprehensive plan? Yes. It starts at home with tough, uncompromising action to prevent attacks and hunt down those

who are planning them. As the House knows, we are introducing new powers. These include strengthening our ability to seize passports and to stop suspects travelling, stripping British nationality from dual nationals and ensuring airlines comply with our no-fly lists. And in all this, we are being clear about the cause of the terrorist threat we face. As I have said before, that means defeating the poisonous ideology of Islamist extremism, by tackling all forms of extremism, not just the violent extremists. So we are banning preachers of hate, proscribing organisations that incite terrorism and stopping people inciting hatred in our schools, universities and prisons.

Of course, some will say that any action we take will further radicalise young people. I have to say that that is a counsel of despair. The threat of radicalisation is already here. Young people have left our country to go and fight with these extremists. We must take action at home, but we must also have a comprehensive strategy to defeat these extremists abroad.

Mr Denis Skinner:

On a comprehensive strategy, there are two questions the Prime Minister has not put to himself: how long will this war last and when will mission creep start?

Mr David Cameron:

Let me answer that very directly: this mission will take not just months, but years, and I believe we have to be prepared for that commitment. The reason for that is that America, Britain and others are not---I think quite rightly---contemplating putting combat troops on the ground. There will be troops on the ground, but they will be Iraqi and Kurdish troops, and we should be supporting them in all the ways that I will describe.

My second point is that Britain's involvement must be in training, arming and giving strategic support and planning. Many have already suggested that links with the Free Syrian Army, the Kurds and the Iraqi army need to be enhanced, but this is an area in which the British military excel. We need to ensure that we do everything that we can to help train, arm and provide strategic support and planning. Those are issues at which Britain is undoubtedly one of the best in the world.

George Galloway:

Mr Speaker, time does not permit me to tell you how many million of times "I told you so" is currently being said in the country---or will be once people read of this debate. Millions of ordinary people knew what the expensive talent governing our country did not know, namely that there was no al-Qaeda in Iraq and that there was no Islamist fundamentalism in Iraq before Mr Blair---and his mouthpieces who are still here---and Mr Bush invaded and occupied the country. What a tangled web we have woven is abundantly clear to everyone watching this debate. The mission creep has not even waited for the end of the debate. The words on the motion are about bombing Iraq, but there is a consensus here that there will be boots on the ground, the only question being whose boots they will be.

The debate has been characterised by Members of Parliament moving around imaginary armies. The Free Syrian Army is a fiction that has been in the receipt of hundreds of millions of dollars and hundreds of tonnes of weapons, virtually all of which were taken away from them by al-Qaeda, which has now mutated into ISIL. The Iraqi army is the most expensively trained and most modernly equipped army in history. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent on the Iraqi army, which ran away leaving its equipment behind. ISIL itself is an imaginary army. A former Defence Secretary no less said that we must bomb its bases. It does not have any bases. The territory that its personnel control is the size of Britain and yet there are only between 10,000 and 20,000 of them. Do the maths. They do not concentrate as an army. They do not live in bases. The only way that a force of that size could successfully hold the territory it holds is if the population acts as the water in which it swims. The population is quiescent because of western policies and western invasion and occupation. That is the truth of the matter. ISIL could not survive for five minutes if the tribes in the west of Iraq rose up against it.

Ian Austin (Lab.):

Does the hon. Gentleman understand how appalled people will be to hear him say that women who have been buried alive or enslaved have been quiescent in their persecution by these people. What a total disgrace.

George Galloway:

They don't like it up them, Mr Speaker. They would rather have an imaginary debate, moving around imaginary armies. ISIL is a death cult. It is a gang of terrorist murderers. It is not an army and is certainly not an army that will be destroyed by aerial bombardment. ISIL is able to rule the parts of Iraq that it does because nobody in those parts has any confidence in the Government in Baghdad, a sectarian Government helped into power by Bremer and the deliberate sectarianism of Iraqi politics by the occupation authorities. The Government know that. That was why they pushed al-Maliki out---even though he won the election, by the way, if we are talking about democracy. They pushed him out because they knew that far too many people in ISIL-occupied Iraq had no confidence in the Baghdad Government. Nobody has any confidence in the army emanating out of Baghdad. This will not be solved by bombing. We have been bombing Iraqis for 100 years. We dropped the world's first chemical bombs on them in the 1920s. We attacked them and helped to kill their King in the 1930s. We helped in the murder of their President in 1963, helping the Ba'ath party into power. We bombed them again through the 1990s.

Emma Reynolds (Lab.):

I am sure we are all ever so grateful for the lecture, but what is the hon. Gentleman's solution to this problem?

George Galloway:

Now that I have an extra minute, thanks to the hon. Lady, I will be able to tell her. This will not be solved by bombing; every matter will be made worse. Extremism will spread further and deeper around the world, just as happened as a result of the Iraq war. The people outside can see it, but the fools in here, who draw a big salary and big expenses, cannot or will not see it, like the hon. Lady with her asinine intervention.

Rory Stewart (Con.):

I thank the hon. Gentleman very much for giving way, but will he please bring us towards his solution to the problem?

George Galloway:

In five minutes it is difficult, but we have to strengthen those who are already fighting ISIL. We have to give them all the weapons they need---

the Baghdad Government have paid for weapons that have still not been delivered. We have to strengthen the Kurdish fighters, who are doing a good job of fighting ISIL. The Saudi, Emir-ate and Qatari armies are all imaginary armies. They have not even told their own people that they are on the mast-head. Has anyone seen a picture of them fighting in Syria? Anyone seen a picture of a Saudi jet bombing in Syria? Saudi Arabia is the nest from which ISIL and these vipers have come, and by the way, it does a fine line in head chopping itself. Saudi Arabia has 700 warplanes---get them to bomb. Turkey is a NATO member---get Turkey to bomb. The last people who should be returning to the scene of their former crimes are Britain, France and the United States of America.

Richard Bacon (Con.):

For two thirds of my adult lifetime, we have been dropping bombs on Iraq, as the hon. Member for Bradford West (George Galloway) said, actually, we have been doing so for 100 years. Each time we do it, we think it is going to make things better. The evidence suggests that each time we do it, it makes things worse. I voted against the Iraq war in 2003 because I thought it would make things worse. The Deputy Prime Minister was not a Member of Parliament at the time, but many Liberal Democrats did vote against it and they were right; it did make things worse.

The Leader of the Opposition countered the argument that if we do anything, we will make things worse by saying that if we pass by, we will make it harder to persuade Arab countries to play their part. I find that quite a difficult argument to understand. The House of Commons Library tells me that in the top 18 Muslim countries in the world, of which 13 are Arab---the other five are Muslim countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia---there are 2.8 million men under arms. It seems to me that if fellow Muslims---co-religionists---are being threatened in this part of Iraq and Syria, the first response would be from Muslim countries. Those top 18 Muslim countries---perhaps many others as well---would be the first to put their soldiers' lives on the line, although not necessarily all of them. Of course, not all of them would be available, but out of 2.8 million soldiers enough

could probably be found to do the job, especially if other countries, including those in the west and in the gulf, could be found to pay for them. They would not excite the natural suspicion and antagonism that will be aroused by any involvement by the west. However, that has not happened yet.

Perhaps the single most important contribution I have heard today was from the right hon. Member for Oldham West and Royton (Mr Meacher), who said that there are big questions to ask about the regional powers that have been supporting ISIL. That issue has hardly been touched on in the debate. We have heard that Turkey has yet to make up its mind, and there are big concerns that some of the gulf states---and Saudi Arabia itself---are partly supporting ISIL. The truth is that Islam faces its own version of the thirty years war. The idea that we can solve the problem by supporting one side in this war is absolutely delusional. It is only Muslims who can decide locally for themselves whether they wish to live together or die together. There is a role for the United Nations and the five permanent members---including Russia and China---and we quite possibly could get a resolution through, including all five permanent members, if we but tried.

The Motion was carried by 524 votes to 43. The 43 MPs who voted NO were:

LABOUR: Diane Abbott, Rushanara Ali, Graham Allen*, Anne Begg, Ronnie Campbell, Martin Caton, Katy Clark, Ian Davidson, Paul Flynn, Stephen Hepburn, Kate Hoey, Kelvin Hopkins, Sian James, Mark Lazraowicz, John McDonnell, Iain McKenzie, Austin Mitchell, Grahame Morris, George Mudie, Linda Riordan, Barry Sheerman, Denis Skinner, Graham Stringer, Mike Wood, Jeremy Corbyn (teller). * Voted in both lobbies.

CONSERVATIVE: Richard Bacon, John Baron, Gordon Henderson, Adam Holloway, Nigel Mills, Mark Reckless.

LIB DEMS: Julian Huppert.

SNP: Stewart Hosie, Angus Robertson, Mike Weir, Eilidh Whiteford, Angus Brendan McNeill, Mike Wishart (teller).

SDLP: Mark Durkan, Alasdair McDonnell, Margaret Ritchie.

PLAID CYMRU: Jonathan Edwards, Hywel Williams.

RESPECT: George Galloway.
GREEN: Caroline Lucas.

Brit Terrorists Abroad

On 1 September, Foreign Office Under Secretary **Tobias Ellwood** expressed concern about the involvement of UK nationals in terrorist activity in Syria. He told Labour's **Jim Shannon**:

'We remain concerned about the significant number of UK nationals becoming involved in terrorist groups. Since the conflict in Syria began, over 500 individuals have travelled to fight from the UK. Our priority is to dissuade people from travelling to areas of conflict in the first place, and to identify and dissuade individuals at risk of radicalisation.'

We are working closely with allies, partners in the region and through the UN and EU on counter-terrorism priorities. We have had extensive discussions with the opposition Syrian National Coalition on the threat of extremism, including the role of UK nationals. We welcome their rejection of terrorism and their consistent condemnation of terrorist acts, as well as their commitment to upholding international human rights and humanitarian law. **We are supporting the moderate opposition in Syria who are leading the fight against both the regime and wider extremism, including ISIL**'. (my emphasis).

Could this be the same 'moderate' opposition in Syria who, allegedly, handed over an American hostage to ISIL/IS in return for money? If so, why has no MP asked this question?

Wise Words From The Father Of The House

Also on 1 September, **Sir Peter Tapsell**, Conservative member for Louth and Horncastle, asked, 'Does the Prime Minister recognise that one of the reasons why there are misguided British jihadists fighting in Arabia is the folly of those in the Gulf and in the west who first encouraged and then supported a Sunni rebellion against the Syrian Alawites? We must avoid, under the banner of democracy, intervening in a religious civil war that has already lasted 1,300 years.' Cameron, of course, had a different view.

The Prime Minister:

'I always listen very carefully to the Father of the House but on this occasion I am not sure I agree with him.'

I would argue that the rise of the Islamic State---of ISIS--- has had two principal causes: one is the brutality that Assad has shown to his own people, and the second is the failure of the Government in Iraq to represent all of its people. We need to recognise that it is those two issues that have been the principal cause of this problem, together with, as I have said, the real problem, which is the Islamist extremist narrative that finds any broken state, any source of conflict, any sign of weakness, and exploits it.'

And just who is responsible for the broken state of Iraq? Who installed the Shia Muslim Nouri al-Maliki as President, who Cameron accepts has been a hopeless failure? No doubt, Sir Peter would have asked those questions had he been allowed a supplementary.

Saudi Arabia: Terrorism, Torture And Public Beheading

On 8 September, **Tobias Ellwood** replied to a series of questions about Saudi Arabia. Naturally, he expressed concern, again, about accusations of support for terrorism, torture and public beheadings.

Labour's **Katy Clark** asked Ellwood: 'what representations he has made to the Saudi government about the funding of ISIS by Saudi citizens since 2012'

Tobias Ellwood:

'We maintain a close dialogue on a broad range of counter-terrorism issues with Saudi Arabia, including terrorist financing. The Saudi government is acutely aware of the threat from terrorist groups such as ISIL to their own and global security and they have been at the forefront of efforts to combat the threat facing us all. Saudi Arabia has a comprehensive set of laws in place to prevent terrorist financing, which they vigorously enforce.'

Katy Clark:

'what assessment he has made of the effects on the UK's security of the Saudi government's promotion of intolerant religious teachings internationally.'

Tobias Ellwood:

'We enjoy close co-operation with Saudi Arabia in countering the shared terrorist threat against both our countries. The Saudi Arabian government has condemned acts of terrorism and extremism around the world. In his Eid speech to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan,

King Abdullah was unequivocal in his language warning of the threat of extremism and sectarianism. The Saudi Arabian Government operates one of the most advanced deradicalisation programmes anywhere and is working to reduce the threat that religious extremists pose including through the establishment of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue, opened in 2012 to enable, empower and encourage dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures around the world. We hope it will deliver practical initiatives to further that aim.'

Katy Clark:

'what reports he has received of the alleged torture of Waleed Abu al-Khair while imprisoned in Saudi Arabia.'

Tobias Ellwood:

'We are aware of the allegations of torture of Waleed Abu al-Khair from media reporting of the allegations made by Samar Badawi, Waleed Abu al-Khair's wife. We are concerned about the sentencing of Waleed Abu al-Khair and the British embassy has supported the efforts of international partners in his case. We will continue to follow his case closely. We regularly raise human rights issues with the Saudi authorities and the UK condemns all forms of torture and ill treatment wherever they occur.'

Labour's Paul Flynn asked Ellwood:

'what representations he has made to the Government of Saudi Arabia on each of the executions by public beheading carried out in that country in August 2014.'

Tobias Ellwood:

'The abolition of the death penalty is a human rights priority for the UK. Ministers and our ambassador and embassy team in Riyadh frequently raise the issue of the death penalty with the Saudi Arabian authorities, bilaterally and through the European Union. We must recognise that total abolition of the death penalty is unlikely in Saudi Arabia in the near future. For now, our focus is on the introduction of EU minimum standards for the death penalty as a first step, and supporting access to justice and the rule of law.'

It seems that the UK's efforts to dissuade Saudi Arabia from a range of activities have so far been an abysmal failure, just like its pleas to Israel.

Perhaps the halting of military exports to both countries and the adoption of a range of sanctions as per Russia would help to concentrate their minds.

Halt Military Exports to Saudi: No Way!

On 11 September **Greg Mulholland** asked **Tobias Ellwood** 'if he will bring forward proposals to make military exports to Saudi Arabia contingent on human rights reform in that country.'

Tobias Ellwood:

'The Government of Saudi Arabia faces a number of security challenges, with concerns arising from the fractious regional situation and external sources, and so have a legitimate requirement for types of equipment in the performance of its sovereign defensive responsibilities. The Government remains confident that the UK has a thorough and robust export control and licensing system, which distinguishes between exports for legitimate defence and security purposes and exports that breach the criterion 2 threshold: a clear risk that they might be used for internal repression, violation of human rights or gender-based violence. These considerations are specifically identified in the Government's Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, criteria against which all applications for strategic export control licences for military goods, including arms and dual-use goods are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Government is satisfied that the currently extant licences for Saudi Arabia are compliant with the UK's export licensing criteria.'

TweedleCam And TweedleMil

On 3 September **David Cameron** reported briefly on the executions of Western citizens carried out by IS. Labour leader **Ed Miliband** offered him uncritical support. The following are excerpts from their comments.

David Cameron:

'I am sure that the whole House and the whole country will join me in condemning the sickening and brutal murder of another American hostage, and share our shock and anger that it again appears to have been carried out by a British citizen.....But let me be very clear: this country will never give in to terrorism. Our opposition to ISIL will continue at home and

abroad. It is important that we are clear about the nature of the threat we face. It makes no distinction between cultures, countries and religions; there is no way to appease it. The only way to defeat it is to stand firm and to send a very straightforward message: a country like ours will not be cowed by these barbaric killers. If they think that we will weaken in the face of their threats, they are wrong---it will have the opposite effect. We will be more forthright in the defence of the values that we hold dear---liberty under the rule of law, freedom and democracy---and I am sure a united message to that effect will go forward from this House today.'

Ed Miliband:

'I join the Prime Minister in expressing the universal sense of revulsion at the barbaric murder of Stephen Sotloff, and deep concern about the British hostage being held, for whose family this will be a terrible time, and people across the country will be thinking of them. This is a pattern of murderous behaviour by ISIL towards the innocent: Christians; Yazidis; Muslims---anyone who does not agree with their vile ideology. And I agree with the Prime Minister: events like this must strengthen, not weaken, our resolve to defeat them and he can be assured of our full support in standing firm against them.'

Turning to the threat we face in Britain, people will have been shocked and disgusted that there are British voices on the video and that British citizens are part of ISIL. On Monday, the Prime Minister announced that he would reintroduce relocation powers for suspected terrorists. He has our full support for this change.

We need swift action to build alliances across the world against ISIL and strong and considered action here at home. It is what the world needs; it is what the British people expect; and in pursuing this course the Prime Minister will have our full support.'

David Cameron:

'I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his support.....What we need to be absolutely clear about, however, is that it is not enough to target those who preach violent extremism. We need to go after those who promote the extremist narrative and life view that gives the terrorists and the men of violence support for what they do. It

is not unlike the cold war, where we pursued not just those who wanted to do us such harm; we also had to challenge all those who gave them succour. That is what we need to do in this struggle, which, as I have said, I think will last for decades, and we need to show resilience and, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, unity in pursuing it.' (my emphasis).

The cold war lasted for over forty years, so the UK can continue for decades to come to do what it has done for practically the whole of its existence: wage war on those who threaten its interests. Of course, its military activities are not justified on those grounds, but on the more publicly palatable grounds of national security and safety of its citizens. Interestingly, neither Cameron nor Miliband explained how and why ISIL came into existence. It seems that it is driven purely by a "vile ideology." Cameron's and Miliband's tone suggests that the assault on ISIL will not be confined to air strikes, and that at some stage there will be British boots on the ground. So the working class can expect more of its sons to die in an unwinnable war in a far away country.

Hammond On Gaza And Israel

On 10 September, Foreign Secretary **Philip Hammond** presented his first statement on events in Ukraine, the Middle East and North Africa. His comments on Gaza and Israel are particularly revealing. Key aspects of these are published below.

Philip Hammond:

'Finally, I want to turn to the perennial problem of Israel, Gaza and the middle east peace process. Ending the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians and seeing a responsible, viable and independent Palestinian state that respects the rights and security concerns of Israel taking its place among the family of nations would be a major step towards restoring stability throughout the region.'

Throughout the summer, in my meetings and phone calls with President Netanyahu, President Abbas, President al-Sisi and others, I have supported the Egyptian-led talks in Cairo as being the best way to bring a rapid end to the violence, and we warmly welcome the agreement that was reached in Cairo on 26 August, which has, at last, led to a ceasefire that

has held. It is now vital that negotiations resume and rapidly agree some practical, deliverable and confidence-building first steps to improve the situation for ordinary citizens in Gaza at the same time as reassuring Israel that there will be no further rocket fire against Israeli civilians and no rebuilding of military infrastructure inside Gaza.'

'Both the Prime Minister and I have expressed our grave concern at the level of civilian casualties and the scale of human suffering in Gaza during the recent violence, but we have also been clear that the **indiscriminate** firing of thousands of rockets from Gaza into civilian areas of Israel by Hamas was a clear breach of international humanitarian law, **and that by launching attacks from densely populated civilian areas---in some cases, from sensitive buildings, such as mosques and schools---Hamas bears a direct responsibility for the appalling loss of civilian lives.** We have been equally clear that Israel has a right to defend itself against attack, but that in doing so it, too, must act in accordance with international law with regard to proportionality and the avoidance of unnecessary civilian casualties.' (my emphasis).

Jeremy Corbyn:

'In the light of what the Foreign Secretary has just said, will he please explain why the British Government abstained at the United Nations Human Rights Council on its official call for an investigation into war crimes that have occurred there? Could he not express some regret about Britain's close military relationship with Israel, which has indeed helped to kill more than 2,000 people in Gaza during the recent siege?'

Philip Hammond:

'The hon. Gentleman's last allegation is regrettable and completely inaccurate. We have looked very carefully at the nature of the material and equipment supplied to the Israelis, and we are confident that **very little of what we supplied could in any way have been used in equipment deployed during this operation in Gaza.** On the hon. Gentleman's first point, we chose to abstain on the resolution, along with all our European partners, because it was not worded in an even-handed and open way. It was not aimed at getting to the truth of what happened in Gaza, and it was not targeted at possible wrongdoing by both sides. It was heavily lopsided, and made a political point, rather than seeking to get to the bottom of what took place. I would, however, say to him that we are clear that, in due course, there must be a proper inquiry into what went on.'

'In due course, a resolution of the immediately pressing issues in Gaza and a resumption of Palestinian Authority control in the strip must be steps towards

the wider middle east peace process leading to a two-state solution. However, for the negotiations to have the best possible chance of success, both sides need to resist domestic pressure to take actions that could jeopardise the prospects of long-term peace. That is why we deplore the Israeli Government's provocative decision to expropriate 988 acres of land near Bethlehem. We have unequivocally condemned that move, and we will continue to press the Government of Israel to reverse that decision. The UK's position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law; they present an obstacle to peace; and they take us further away from a viable two-state solution.'

Carline Lucas:

'I am very pleased to hear that the Foreign Secretary condemns the Israeli action, but does he still not see that from the outside it looks as if the British Government are guilty of double standards. When Israel makes a land grab of this type, yes we have some harsh words, but nothing else follows; if Putin does something in Ukraine, things follow much more dramatically. I do not want to see such things, but I do want to see an end to double standards.'

Philip Hammond: 'I think that the hon. Lady is being a little harsh. The reality is that in the Israeli-Palestine conflict, we have a deeply entrenched and largely intractable challenge, which has defeated many people who have tried to solve it over many years. We have to make progress on this issue, but we are not going to make it wagging fingers; we have to make it by engagement. **The situation in Ukraine is different, with a clear violation of the hitherto well-observed principle of international law that we do not resolve border disputes in Europe by force of arms. The fact that Russia has breached that principle has put at risk the whole edifice of European security that has served us so well for many years.**' (my emphasis).

'The stability of the international order is at risk. Our values and principles---freedom, democracy and the rule of law---are coming under sustained attack, and

our homeland security is under threat. Our resolve to meet these multiple challenges is being put to the test. The Government are clear that we cannot shirk our responsibilities in the world. If violations of international norms are to go unchallenged and the spread of terrorist organisations with violent and extremist ideologies is allowed to go unchecked, the future prospects for our own national security and that of the friends and partners who share our values will only get worse.'

Friends and partners such as Saudi Arabia, no doubt. But not Russia, who are next up in Hammond's sights.

Philip Hammond:

'In standing up to Russian aggression, we must continue to send the clear message to President Putin that his behaviour will not be tolerated, and that the end result will be a weaker, not a stronger Russia. In tackling the terrorist threat from ISIL and in supporting the newly formed Government of Iraq, we must be prepared to use all means at our disposal to reverse ISIL's advance, to deny its objectives and to defend ourselves at home. In supporting the resolution of the conflict between Israel and Hamas and ultimately the advance of the middle east peace process, we must be clear with both sides that only a negotiated political settlement can deliver security guarantees that Israel needs and the viable state that the Palestinian people deserve. In the face of these multiple threats to our security and our interests, I have no doubt that the British people will rise to the challenge and show the resolve, the courage and the determination that have defined our nation for hundreds of years.'

So for hundreds of years, Britain has been on the receiving end of external aggression, against which its people have shown resolve, courage and determination. What other possible interpretation could one put on Hammond's words? Another, more plausible, interpretation, is that Britain has been the aggressor nation, invading and waging war against other countries to defend and protect, not the security of its people, but the interests of those who run Britain.

All the illusions in regard to the monetary system are due to the fact that money is not regarded as something representing a social relation of production, but as a product of nature endowed with certain properties. The modern economists who sneer at the illusions of the monetary system, betray the same illusion as soon as they have to deal with higher economic forms, as, e.g., capital. It breaks forth in their confession of naive surprise, when what they have just thought to have defined with great difficulty as a thing suddenly appears as a social relation and then reappears to tease them again as a thing, before they have barely managed to define it as a social relation.

Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy

It's A Fact

The number of pedal cyclists killed in Great Britain who were male, female or a child (aged 0 to 15) in the years 2004 to 2013 is:

Male,

Year 2004—107;
Year 2005—131;
Year 2006—122;
Year 2007—112;
Year 2008—97;
Year 2009—83;
Year 2010—85;
Year 2011—85;
Year 2012—109;
Year 2013—90.

Female,

Year 2004—27;
Year 2005—17;
Year 2006—24;
Year 2007—24;
Year 2008—18;
Year 2009—21;
Year 2010—26;
Year 2011—22;
Year 2012—9;
Year 2013—19.

Child 0-15,

Year 2004—25;
Year 2005—20;
Year 2006—31;
Year 2007—13;
Year 2008—12;
Year 2009—14;
Year 2010—7;
Year 2011—6;
Year 2012—13;
Year 2013—6.

Parliamentary Written Answer
8/9/14.

The number of pedestrians killed who were male, female, child 0-15 or aged over 65 in the years 2004 to 2013 is:

Male,

Year 2004—450;
Year 2005—421;
Year 2006—452;
Year 2007—422;
Year 2008—362;
Year 2009—324;
Year 2010—275;
Year 2011—308;
Year 2012—290;
Year 2013—270.

Female,

Year 2004—221;
Year 2005—250;
Year 2006—223;
Year 2007—224;
Year 2008—210;
Year 2009—176;
Year 2010—130;
Year 2011—145;
Year 2012—130;
Year 2013—128.

Child 0-15,

Year 2004—77;
Year 2005—63;
Year 2006—71;
Year 2007—57;
Year 2008—57;
Year 2009—37;
Year 2010—26;
Year 2011—33;
Year 2012—20;
Year 2013—26.

Aged over 65,

Year 2004—221;
Year 2005—234;
Year 2006—240;
Year 2007—251;
Year 2008—211;
Year 2009—176;
Year 2010—130;
Year 2011—151;
Year 2012—161;
Year 2013—131.

PWA 9/9/14.

The number of civilian and military staff based in the UK and in Saudi Arabia working on both the Saudi Arabian National Guard Communications (SANGCOM) project and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Saudi Armed Forces Projects (MODSAP) on 1 April 2014 was:

UK-based civilian staff on SANGCOM project—1 (one);
on MODSAP—69 (sixty nine).

UK-based military staff on SANGCOM project—0 (zero);
On MODSAP—42 (forty two).

Saudi Arabia-based civilian staff on SANGCOM project—28 (twenty eight);

on MODSAP—32 (thirty two).

Saudi Arabia-based military staff on SANGCOM project—20 (twenty);
on MODSAP—50 (fifty).

The function of the SANGCOM Project is to support the UK's commitment to the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia by acquiring and supporting modern communications capabilities for the Saudi Arabian National Guard. The function of the Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Project is to support the UK's commitment to the defence of Saudi Arabia through the supply of modern military aircraft, naval vessels, weapons and associated support services to the Saudi armed forces.

PWA 9/9/14.

In non-European arrest warrant cases, the following EU member states have an absolute bar on extraditing their own nationals: Austria; Belgium; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Latvia; Luxembourg; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain. In addition, Finland and Sweden have an absolute bar to extraditing their own nationals to countries other than Norway and Iceland.

PWA 9/9/14.

The number of UK regular forces at 1 July 2014 was:

Total number—157,490.

Of which,

Army—89,480.

Royal Navy/Royal Marines—33,080.

RAF—34,940.

UK-born of total—149,590.

Of which,

Army—82,460.

Royal Navy/Royal Marines—32,360.

RAF—34,770.

Non-UK of total—7,840.

Of which,

Army—7,000.

Royal Navy/Royal Marines—720.

RAF—120.

PWA 10/9/14.

The number of penalties issued and penalties amount (£) for non-payment of National Minimum Wage from 2009/10 to 2013/14 was:

Year 2009/10—381 (£111,183);

Year 2010/11—934 (£520,568);

Year 2011/12—906 (£766,807);

Year 2012/13—708 (£776,517);

Year 2013/14—652 (£815,269).

PWA 12/9/14.