

DESERTED BY HISTORY: IN MEMORY OF THE RED PAPER ON SCOTLAND, 1975

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PROPHECY OR ELEGY?

I think one can profitably begin by reflecting on the timing of the **Red Paper** on Scotland. It came out in 1975, after the period of nationalist break-through in Scotland, the same year as Wilson's referendum on taking Britain into the European Economic Community, and following on some notable working-class agitation (displayed on the front cover – the Upper Clyde shipyard occupation). It burst upon us after all these exciting indicators of change and new times. But also, it is salutary to recall that this took place only four years before the Winter of Discontent, the failure of the first Home Rule referenda in 1979, and Mrs Thatcher's ascent to power. Gordon Brown's **Red Paper** was a stirring prophetic fanfare. However, almost from the outset it was something else as well: an unintended funeral oration, the interment of impossible dreams.

Like some others here, I well remember the air of excitement and forward-looking optimism accompanying the book's appearance. However, in longer perspective these were excitements of the moment – a belated reverberation from the 1960s, as much as new history bestirring itself. Practically by the time people had finished reading through the extremely small print the **Red Paper** was set in, the overall climate had brutally altered. History seemed to move away from this document almost at once. Many of the ideas so exuberantly proclaimed in it were to be left behind – or at the very least, postponed – by a contrary inclination of the historical mainstream. And of course, so was the book's Editor and inspirer. That Gordon Brown is in No.11 Downing Street today, as Chancellor of the United Kingdom Exchequer, underlines rather than disproves this verdict. He went with the mainstream.

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Or rather, with what seemed to be the mainstream from the 1980s up to the year 2000 (I will come back to this point later on).

Nowhere is this incipient tragedy better conveyed than in 1975's Editorial 'Introduction'. Brown's essential aim was a kind of noble synthesis between Socialism and Nationalism. He appeared there as a synthesizer of ideas rather than an originator. But, it must be recognised, a synthesizer of a very imaginative and generous sort. There was a potential for leadership even then implicit in his willingness to seek and stress positive elements. However, it was leadership of a very special kind. He appears there as an authoritarian 'moderator', in fact, a strong-minded reconciler of ideas and initiatives – in a sense perhaps more old-Presbyterian than New-Left.

The synthesis between nationalism and socialism had of course a strong emphasis upon the latter, and upon the 'democratic-popular' transformation of socialism. I use this Gramscian phrase deliberately, for Gramsci was clearly the dominating background influence in the performance. The transformation was envisaged mainly as 'workers' control', and a Scottish Assembly was required (he wrote) partly 'to allow the framing of distinctly Scottish policies to meet social needs and requirements' but – much more importantly – 'to force the pace towards socialism in Britain as a whole and to reinvigorate the Labour Movement in Scotland from the work place and community outwards.' (p.19). It would also 'give Scottish socialists a chance to lead and influence other regions and other countries' – presumably by showing them how nationalism could be in this way subsumed or transformed into social or communitarian terms. But none the less his collection was noticeably, if somewhat chaotically, open to nationalist and even 'fringe' opinion. It was in the best sense eclectic, and informed by a positive spirit of inquiry rather than just by hopes of compromise or deal-making among the different encampments of the Left. These are of course the things which did keep it alive, at a deeper level.

BROWNISM AND SOCIALISM

By 1979 'Socialism' had fallen into total disarray at the British level. The defeat of the Devolution legislation was only a small part of the collapse which ensued, and brought Michael Foot and then Neil Kinnock and John Smith to the leadership of the Labour Party. And that breakdown itself proved part of a grander avalanche, which soon carried away not only Communism in

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the East but a good deal of State Socialism in the West, and ushered in the phase of Neo-liberal hegemony and 'marketolatry' in which we still languish today. The other side of the **Red Paper** equation, Nationalism, also retreated in Scotland into a period of numb hibernation – even if it was eventually (in the 90s) to re-emerge in much better shape than the socialist Left has done.

But during the hibernation, astonishing things happened. A die was cast from which the world has not yet found a way out. Thor's hammer flattened out not just 'British Socialism' but all conceptions of an alternative to the new, America-centred realm of free trade and de-regulated capitalism. Held in partial check since the end of the post World-War-II boom, the sorcerer of capitalist modernity returned with an angry vengeance sharpened by long frustration. The Keynesian shackles of the 20th century were hurled into his forge, alongside Marx's 'patriarchal, idyllic relations and motley feudal ties'. A newly pitiless radicalism took over from the gentility of social democracy. Though now trailing far behind in manufacture and trade, Great Britain to some degree compensated for the change by ideological salience. From 1979 onwards, it was the brass neck of Thatcherism that gave a lead to the revolution. In her wake, British Socialism in turn was quickest and most eager to 'learn its lesson'. Blair (and Brown) polished up the brasses even more vigorously, employing Third Way concoctions and aggressive public relations to do so. After 1997, a wholly different set of conditions prevailed from those of 1975.

When the **Red Paper** came out, Brown thought in terms of contributing to a rejuvenated yet stable United Kingdom – one of the homelands of social democracy. But by the time he reached office, Britain had already turned into a mere sorcerer's apprentice. It claimed, indeed, to be his first lieutenant. Brown found leadership power at last: but as the standard-bearer of deregulation and privatisation, within a parade of pro-American rhetoric. His first important step was to abandon control of interest rates to the Bank of England – that is, to the City of London, formerly the deadly foe of all Labour governments. The aim was to make London more fit and competitive, in the new world of (supposedly) 'globalised' capital and commerce. Such was the British Socialism that emerged from Thor's new forge – the worthy side-kick of a Neo-liberal economism inevitably captained by the United States.

Such captaincy brought with it novel forms of allegiance and subjection. The Blair-Brown government stepped into a train already formed in this sense – the willing 'subjects' of Clinton, then of George W. Bush. Earlier empires had

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rested on invasion, colonisation, and crude forms of punishment and coercion. By contrast, the US post-1989 imperium relies on self-colonisation. This rests upon a calculation of national interests normally aimed at 'fitting in', by the provision of credentials of commercial openness, entrepreneurial liberty and possible profitability. In the *huis clos* of globalisation, no servitude is more utter than that of former masters.¹

But I think we should resist any temptation to single out Brown in this context, as if he was particularly important or influential in that great change of climate. His present-day eminence sometimes provokes this kind of accusation, expressed in sententious moral judgements about how he and Blair have 'betrayed' the principles of 1975, or even those of Keir Hardie and other founding fathers. Well perhaps he did. But then, so have most us, for good reasons as well as bad. Did he, and we, give up on Socialism; or did Socialism betray us, because of certain inherent defects, or at least limitations? Both versions have some plausibility, but neither (it seems to me) serves to condemn Gordon Brown particularly.

No, there was a tragedy unfolding in this turn of events (and still unfolding today), but it seems to me both much deeper and more intimate than anything related to the vicissitudes of Socialism alone. In the most convincing general panorama of post-'89 so far produced, Yergin and Stanislaw's **Commanding Heights** (1998), it is shown how extensive and immediately irresistible was the shift which carried away the **Red Paper** world.² Both in the **Red Paper** and in the mind-set of its presiding spirit there was a crucial weakness, or limitation. And this was much more serious than correct political attitudes towards Clause 4, or the general retreat from Keynesianism. Neal Ascherson

¹ *In a broader sense, self-colonisation was no stranger to earlier versions of imperialism. All sorts of hegemony have counted to a degree on collusion and self-interested prostration. But what is new here is closure, and an accompanying fatalism: the deep conviction of powerlessness as inevitable, and of 'independence' as a dangerous cul-de-sac. An awe-struck belief that 'the nation-state' is démodé was part of the new secular faith.*

² *Yergin, D. and Stanislaw, J. (1998), **Commanding Heights**, New York: Simon and Schuster. Gordon Brown figures rather unjustly as a passing reference in the Yergin-Stanislaw perspective: 'By the end of the 1980s, working with Gordon Brown – now the chancellor of the Exchequer – Blair emerged as one of the Labour Party's most aggressive modernizers' (p.372)*

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put his finger neatly on it in an article in **The Observer** (Nov. 5th 2000), and expands on it in his article elsewhere in this issue of **Scottish Affairs**:

There were gaps in the **Red Paper**. There is almost nothing about Britain as such. This is striking, given the Labour Government's effort to package devolution as part of some wider programme to democratise British institutions.

It certainly was. But I think the point can be taken even farther. What was being taken for granted was not simply 'Britain', or institutions, but the British Constitution and State. It was assumed, notably by the Editor, that these would go on providing a perfectly reliable (and indeed most suitable) wider framework for the new Scottish democracy to function within.

CONSTITUTIONAL COMPLACENCY

This mistaken assumption had another in tow, which has proved (and is still proving) deadly for the Left. The other basic meme of Britishness is the idea that constitutional politics and ideas are essentially secondary or 'superstructural' for socialists, or even for democrats. That is, they may be 'a good thing' (etc), which wise reform will eventually find time to take care of (etc). But they are never urgent enough to tackle now. They are not necessary conditions of successful social, economic and cultural or other policies – the things deemed the 'real stuff' of politics. In other words, there is no tradition of popular or radical constitutional agitation active here at all – no conception of the existing constitutional order as a standing offence or a humiliation, a form of repression or obfuscation intolerable in any new or improved social order. After the defeat of Chartism in the 1840s, a general acceptance of the endlessly liberal and adaptable nature of the United Kingdom state came to inform left-wing parties and most other movements, except in Ireland. The Women's Suffrage Movement was another important exception, but one which proved containable.

In 1975 there was in the **Red Paper** very little indication that the new Scottish restlessness was going to be different in this sense. The only real opposition on that score was coming from the Nationalists. But their claims were conventional in another way: a demand for national recognition as such, regardless of the nature of Anglo-British hegemony. The various Red contingents also clung to the conventional idea of socio-cultural change as

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not just coming first, but being a sufficient condition of all farther changes. The Editor's sole critical allusion to matters constitutional was the admission that British identity was a bit 'demoralised'. The implication was plainly that morale would be boosted by the book's various suggestions (once a properly revitalised, new Labour government got itself elected). So the fate of **Red Paper's** ideological venture was not determined solely by the misfortunes of Socialism after 1979, alarming as these were, but by what one can call the 'medium', or perhaps the vehicle, through which the Brownian synthesis was to come about. That is, the United Kingdom polity itself.

PARODIC BRITISHISM

As a matter of fact, the United Kingdom state was at that time already launched upon an ever steeper downward slide into the present, where something far worse than 'demoralisation' is now disclosed to British subjects practically every day that passes. In this sense 1979 was to mark a decisive turn of the screw in that process. It was not just about defeating the Left, or the post-war welfarist consensus. The world of the **Red Paper** on Scotland was indeed carried away by the rapids from that date onwards. But what the mushroom-growth of Thatcherism was also about was the final confirmation of what I think one can call 'redemption politics' – that is, the rooted, unshakeable idea that the vital goal is to redeem or save the United Kingdom inheritance. Britain must be kept going, and kept Great, as the prerequisite – and in a sense the meaning – of all other social, economic or cultural aspirations.

British nationalism was by now subordinate, trusting pathetically in a 'special relationship' with the new hegemon of world order. But since everyone else was becoming subordinate as well, did this matter? This new network of *dependencia* at once evolved its own hierarchy: Capo, sub-capi and simple soldiers of the line. Greatness entitled Britain at least to a priority of place among the sub-lieutenants: the country of unswerving entrepreneurialism and competitiveness, loudly (and where required, militarily) devoted to the new order. There appeared no alternative. And if there was no escape-route for British nationalism, there could be none for Scottish. The Scots were profoundly inured to self-colonisation. They had had three centuries of it, and knew every nuance of creep, crawl and slither: the 'proud' assertion of a national identity devoted to the Greater Good of somebody else, in the supposed eventual interests of all.

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This was, alas, the real content of 'preserving the Union', as the **Red Paper** at length took office. It is – one need hardly say – the real substance of 'Devolution', conceived as a mild endorsement of the old subordinate identity and 'partnership'. In the space available here, I can't of course attempt to portray this late-Britishism in any comprehensive or detailed way. But let me just summarize what its main traits now appear to be. My own preferred label for it would be 'the parodic phase' of British identity – in the sense that over the past generation (more or less from the **Red Paper** to the present, via first Thatcherism and then more obviously in Blairism) the U.K. has turned into a kind of parody of its previous self. We are no longer living in Britain but (so to speak) in 'Britain' : a changeling land still pretending to be the country of yore. What we now endure is therefore less an 'ancien régime' than a helpless posthumous regime that has evolved into something quite different – and very often something quite contrary – to the fabled tradition and the stable and continuous grandeur that is supposedly being preserved, rebuilt, rejuvenated (and so on).

In the past, an important delusion has obstructed our view of this process: the conception of 'decline', as the fate menacing what was left of the former British imperium. 'Decline' is like 'demoralisation', a gloomy yet quite comfortable idea that leaves open the possibility of things being 'turned round', or rendered more tolerable by appropriate policies. Declining from grandeur implies there must be some of the stuff left, which suitable measures – meaning strong, firmly and of course centrally-managed, measures – can still relieve and even rebuild. I plead guilty (incidentally) to having helped popularise this dumb notion, from around the moment of the **Red Paper** onwards.

But one did not then know what form the break-up of Britain would take. It was not understood that 'decline' and disintegration – or the 'collapse' of an historic state form – primarily manifests itself as desperate, convulsive and in the end hysterical efforts to put things right. This empire was not defeated by arms or occupation, and is not going quietly into the good night. Politically speaking, the main symptom of its terminal malaise is not falling graph-lines and relative economic figures, debility and melancholic withdrawal. All these may be present too. But the centre stage is occupied by a bright-eyed relentlessness: that is, an increasingly ruthless, loquacious and regimented determination to make things right – to resolve problems by ingenious new formulae or crafty devices, imposed by irresistible fiat (huge majority in

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Parliament, best Civil Service in the world). As for people, the subjects or citizens of a society in decline, they can never be allowed to slumber or feel pleasantly sorry for their fate. They must be got to see that *redressement* makes sense, preferably with help from the tabloids, but also by regular brow-beatings, colourful annual Government Reports, and interactive web-sites.

With rueful retrospective wisdom, the origins of all this can be traced back to long before 1975. Like so many other phenomena of the fin-de-siècle it returns us to the 1960s, and to what were in effect rehearsals of today's end-games. Here the trajectory from Harold Wilson's redeeming 'white heat of new technology' in 1964 up to the disappearance of motor manufacturing and the collapse of British Railtrack is fairly obvious. But equally, on the Right, an analogous pattern was established from Edward Heath's 'Selsdon Man' in 1969 up to the excesses of Thatcherism, the wonders of deregulation and the Poll Tax. Blairism (and 'Brownism') are only the latest such episode, expressed in the wildest radical rhetoric so far, the fiercest public-relations Sergeant-Majorism, and the most blatant departures from reality. Among the latter must be counted things like the Greenwich Dome, the replacement of the old House of Lords with a new House of Lords, or pleading with Prince Charles to try and modernize the Monarchy.

The political mechanisms of terminal Britishry demand enhanced reliance upon elective dictatorship, and hence on 'first-past-the post'. This is simply because all regimes of redemption cannot but be aware of the huge task confronting them – changes inconceivable without the vast power bestowed (or apparently bestowed) through the old disproportional electoral system. Hence the real point of the 'revolutions' promised by the Blairites in 1998-99 (including devolution) was to prevent a political – that is, a constitutional – revolution on this deeper level. The fairly mild reforms suggested by Roy Jenkins's Commission and long demanded by the Liberal-Democrats will not now be enacted, because they might threaten the very possibility of 'strong government' in Britain. Hence they would menace worthy redemption and the saving of the British day, in the sense of 'clout', exceptionality, or non-ordinariness among the nations. They would replace dream-life with comparatively modest, realisable goals and social engineering. What Brownism calls for by contrast is 'realism': that is, gritty loyalty unto death and decomposition. The alliance of U.K. putrefaction and global Free Trade

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has become the last ditch of British nationalism. And bits of the old **Red Paper** are in there, battling for the past rather than joining the grave-digger.³

THE DEPARTED SPIRIT

I mentioned earlier some features of the **Red Paper**, like its generosity and appetite for dialogue, its real openness to ideas, and the fertilising effect of Gramscian ideas upon the Editor, as well as so many of the contributors. In spite of the descending winter of the later 70s, it managed to convey an inchoate and yet unforgettable sense of a possible new Scotland. That is what remains living about it. There was an abiding impulse and spirit about the enterprise, which has not been left behind by history, however grievous the disappointments in other directions. It staked out a claim, and somehow convinced many people that nationalism in Scotland could be more left-wing inclined – even if the Editorial blueprint for synthesis didn't work, and many of the particular formulae brought into play were mistaken. It sketched out the design of a Scotland (even an independent Scotland) that would be red, or reddish, in hue, and so quite distinct from older rural and conservative styles of nationalism.

I don't have the knowledge to try and trace out just how this vein of partly underground thinking worked its way into people in the 1980s and '90s, but presumably it did. And presumably it's one of things that helped the SNP move so decidedly to the Left in the last decade, and also to the formation of still influential groups like Scottish Labour Action, inside the Labour Party. It has brought the Scottish Socialist Party to birth as well, an accusing finger of reproach constantly pointed at No. 11 Downing Street.

No guesswork is needed on this point, as the Chancellor himself has told us what the position is. In 1999, he published a brochure entitled **New Scotland, New Britain**, arguing that it was up to Scots to now accept the Scotland Act Parliament, and – as ever, more important – to support the New Britain which was even then being commanded to arise, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of Thatcherism. This booklet consists largely of one morose cliché after another: 'better off together, weaker and worse off apart'; 'jobs at risk from separatism';

³ *In a new book I have presented these arguments at greater length, and also attempted to place them within the framework of globalisation. See **Pariah: Misfortunes of the British Kingdom** (Verso Books, London & New York, July 2002).*

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'social justice versus separatism' ... and so on, and on. It reads like a glossy election pamphlet, because that is actually what it was. It accompanied the first parliamentary election in Scotland, where the Labour case was made primarily by daily TV and newspaper images of a nice, framed picture of Great Britain being smashed to pieces by a maniac with a sledge-hammer.

It was quite a step from Antonio Gramsci to this style of venomous alarmism and brutal denigration. The combination of the Kosovo war and tabloid hysteria is credited with some effects upon the election results, no doubt correctly. But from our point of view today it's surely the sheer contrast between it and the world of the **Red Paper** which counts. **New Scotland, New Britain** also contains an obligatory summary of the history of Scottish Home Rule, from Keir Hardie up to Donald Dewar. But their version of this tale skips straight from 1929 on to the 1980s and Thatcherism. It manages therefore to mention neither the ardent Home-Rule Socialist Ramsay Macdonald nor – disappointingly – the **Red Paper on Scotland**. There is a hard-edged, heedless, brazenly party-centred tone to all this, a kind of closure at the farthest possible remove from the creative inquiring spirit of 1975.

In my view, this drastic shift in tone and attitude arises basically from fear. That is, the fear (but it's actually the knowledge) that the existing framework of British authority, belief and prestige is now falling apart so alarmingly that nothing whatever can be allowed which might aggravate this. Hence it seemed quite intolerable that Wales should elect a leader who effectively voiced Welsh opinion; or that a popular rebel-figure like Ken Livingstone should become Mayor of London; or (of course) that the new Scottish Parliament should be allowed to chafe openly at the limitations of the Scotland Act 1998, and seek more power. The shakier Britishness becomes, the more fiercely it has to be defended – at least, by those who have in this way over-committed themselves to its management and survival.

The matter can be put in another way, still with reference to 1975. When the very elements of a grand, projected synthesis cease to be viable (in this case, Socialism and the traditional State), synthesis can turn into mere compromise. But once compromise assumes charge – as strategy rather than tactic – no limit can be set to its operation. It can carry one into perdition and beyond (as Winston Churchill understood in 1940). The imaginative fusion of ideas then turns into bottom-lining, or cutting a deal. If the State now depends utterly on a Party, then the Party can hardly help assuming the ruthless and commandist features of the State. But the defence of a State sanctions saying and doing

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practically anything to attain its end – all the more so when the State in question is conceived as 'pivotal' to the whole world of marketolatry and the War Against Terrorism. We saw all these things evolving within 'Thatcherism', and Blair and Brown have merely carried them farther.

THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

Brown quite probably goes on inwardly hoping that his 1975 dream may yet be realised, through British triumphs yet to come. But this has become the subjectivity of perdition. The spearhead of the salvation movement is what one might call (adapting a phrase from recent art criticism) the 'ScotBrit pack' at Westminster. Some of the **Red Paper's** progeny are lodged in the command-apparatus of metropolitan authority, and deeply resentful of their loss of profile and influence since the creation of the Edinburgh parliament. They seem likely to be the worst die-hards in the ditch, and to go on being led by everyone's old friend, Gordon Brown.

We saw under Thatcher how the aristocracy was usually the worst. She largely destroyed the former ruling class of Tory Britain; but those of them who switched allegiance and signed up in her crusade did so, like Nicholas Ridley and William Whitelaw, with a kind of exaggerated zeal and resolve. It was as if, having cast their lot, they felt compelled to stop at nothing, and thus demonstrate total liberation from all 'wet' and Whiggish notions of the past. I suspect Labour aristocrats will not be so different, and notably these from the great traditional emplacements of Glasgow, Lanarkshire and the Central Belt. Having been so profoundly configured by the old bureaucratic mentality of the (capital 'M') Movement and the self-colonised outlook of pre-1998 Scotland, they are liable to feel that everything held dear would be lost if the United Kingdom went under – or even if proportional representation were introduced to the House of Commons, or to Lanarkshire local government.

The matter of Britain seems to me to be menaced above all by such obdurate and vengeful attitudes. The increasingly toxic and rancorous tone of such arguments derives less from peripheral nationalism than from the defensive hysteria of Unionists themselves. They feel trapped, and somehow hemmed in – and they are, in the sense that it now looks extremely unlikely that any serious reform of the central Constitution will now be undertaken. 1688-plus-1707 is to persist into the new century, and nothing remotely comparable to (e.g.) the post-Franco régime in Spain, or to German or Belgian Federalism,

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is on the agenda of either main party. A scheme of this kind is on the agenda of the Liberal-Democrats, it's true – all-British federalism – but the existing structures I mentioned earlier look like continuing to marginalize or subordinate this group. Alternating (or oscillating) Redemption-politics remains the only game in Britain's town – her contribution to the global casino of Free Trade. Capital-'S' Sovereignty, control-freakery, the mentality of Redemption, and the two-party machinery mean that the U.K. has turned into something like The Herald of Free Enterprise, the vehicle ferry that capsized in Zeebrugge harbour when water got into its hold. It lurches crazily from one side to the other every few years, as a substitute for democratic navigation. In this terminal phase 'Stability' has vanished from the system (except in the speeches of apologists), while 'continuity' – the other fabular virtue – was replaced by effective discontinuity after 1979.

THE FALL OF BRITAIN

Hence what must be anticipated is another almighty convulsion about the middle of this decade, in the course of which the shards and tatters of Blairism will in turn be swept away on a tidal wave of revulsion, and New Labourism – which has already lost its glamour – will take the place of William Hague's Toryism as the discredited rabble of the day. 'Out with the rascals!' has become the recurring Leitmotiv of U.K. politics in its parodic phase. This is inevitable, in the sense that the archaic Constitution turns everyone into rascals – who are then encouraged to feel quite at home in a globalised universe of scoundrels and chancers. No better can be expected of Neo-liberal human nature. This is an arrangement offering ever-fewer possibilities of reconversion. Citizen-status shrivels away before our eyes.

'Dumbing down' is the tabloid result, and it doesn't all emanate from mad proprietors and rodent hacks. No, it is the Greatness-Projects and renovation-fantasies that bring populism in their wake. Populism leads to a recurrent impulse of mutiny rather than to 'national debates' and policy-clashes. Very few had any rational 'interest' in supporting the protests of the Fuel Crisis, for example; but almost everyone had some bile stored up, and ready to switch on – an urge to show them 'they can't go on like this'. Elections turn into spasms of loathing, while most of the political élite goes on believing that the majority electorate – or as they prefer to say, 'Middle England' – wants no more of that constitutional reform nonsense.

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Of course we don't yet know quite what the New Conservative redemption platform for 2005 will be. But we can be sure of one thing about it. It will be noticeably more England-inclined than any other Westminster administration in modern times. In the 2001 Annual Report on British Social Attitudes, the question of self-consciously English identity is addressed, and their survey detects that 'a still modest English backlash may be taking place. Though dual identities may still be common, more people express an adherence to Englishness now than two years ago'. Peter Riddell commented on this in **The Times** (28 November 2001), under the heading 'The Unanswered English Question cannot be ignored', and this is surely right. Whatever is causing the shift, he points out, it isn't apprehension about Scotland becoming more independent, or even a separate state: 'More than half the English say they would be 'neither pleased nor sorry if Scotland were to become independent'. The mildest form of extrapolation would suggest that by 2005 or so these trends will be more pronounced – that English regionalism will be much more salient (especially in the North-East), and that some sort of Westminsterian fudge around the West Lothian Question will figure in the manifestos of both main parties – no doubt to the disgruntlement of the Scot-Brits.

I will try to conclude with a constructive recommendation. Pleasing as it would be to publish a **Red Paper No.2 on Scotland**, and annoy the Chancellor and the Secretary of State, I don't believe this is any longer possible, or necessary. The Parliament and its committee system, and a growing number of think-tanks and institutes, all already produce more Reports, Inquires and Blueprints than anyone can keep up with. What the new politics needs is more power, and above all power to bring about constitutional change. It needs the authority to undertake what the British system has so consistently failed to do: set up a 21st century democracy. For this, it will need its own constitution – which it is hardly likely to obtain without independence. The choice here is between a renewed tail-endism, the pursuit of one self-colonisation inside another, and a deliberate resumption of statehood – the small-nation statehood characteristic of Baltic and North Sea Europe. The Scots have to choose between being dragged farther along as part of the British chariot, and resuming real responsibility for their own affairs.

No doubt many other conferences will be held to persuade them to stay aboard – I long ago lost count of how many of these there have already been, devoted to the ineffable merits of regionalism, one-worldism, stronger-

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togetherism, cosmocratic localism, post-everythingism and many other intensely thoughtful variations upon the New Dawn. But as dawn peters out into untimely eventide, let me risk another alternative. The real age of nationalism lies ahead, not behind. To make globalisation liveable, as distinct from profitable, people and peoples will have to stand up for themselves – on a smaller scale than before, but with greater civic courage and determination. The Editor of the old **Red Paper** wants Scots to remain curled up in the womb of moribund Britannia, because anything else is too risky. But fortunately, the way of the world is changing about him. And in successor times, I think the prospects of a Scottish Republic could be far more favourable than seemed possible in 1975, or in 1997.