

# British Politics Review

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## Britannia unchained? British Euroscepticism revisited

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Nigel Farage, Party Leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and member of the European Parliament, 19 May 2008.

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## **Editorial**

### **Return of a ghost**

Forty years after its accession to the European Community, Britain continues to be seen as Europe's reluctant partner. And this year have seen the relationship move from bad to worse. Prime Minister David Cameron's long-awaited speech in January was set to grasp the initiative by presenting a coherent strategy for renegotiating Britain's membership terms, followed by a referendum in 2017. However, rather than soothing the debate in Britain, the opposite development has been observed, as indicated by the steep rise in support for the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

The summer edition of *British Politics Review* is devoted entirely to revisiting the European debate in Britain. Much could be said about the "Europragmatism" of the Labour Party or the Liberal Democrats' unfulfilled ambition to see a more "constructive" engagement with Europe. Nevertheless, two parties are devoted disproportional space in the following pages – the Conservative Party and UKIP.

When our emphasis is on the Eurosceptic side of the debate, it is not because this is fully representative (neither among political elites nor in the public) but because this is where the need for a nuanced account is the greatest. In news reports, Euroscepticism in Britain is often crudely portrayed as angry old men with flag, Church and monarchy as their references. Beyond such caricatures, one finds that the new intake of young Conservative MPs, for example, combine Euroscepticism with a liberal view in family and gender policy. And one finds that when immigration has risen on the political agenda, it reflects concerns that partly overlap with the Europe debate (concerning migrant labour) and partly relate to very different matters indeed. Disentangling the complexity of the British debate on Europe has been the key ambition behind the summer edition of the Review.

*Øivind Bratberg and Kristin M. Haugevik (editors)*

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# A British-Norwegian demarche?

By Kristin M. Haugevik and Øivind Bratberg

Britain's relationship to the EU is once again at the forefront of political contention. Among the many alternative models that have been suggested for that future relationship is a shared path with Norway. Norway is formally a non-EU member, but in many areas the country is as deeply integrated in the EU as many member states. Therefore, the "Norwegian model" has been subject to increased interest from those in Britain who wish for a more detached partnership with



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Brussels while at the same time maintaining the benefits of the inner market. Last autumn, a group of British parliamentarians visited Norway to learn more about the Norwegian EU-experience. But is a Norwegian-style "EU alliance" really a viable political option for Britain?

Were Britain and Norway to seek closer cooperation on the issue of Europe, as partners on Europe's northern flank, this could revitalise a once vital, but currently somewhat dormant partnership. In the first half of the 1900s, Britain and Norway were key strategic allies on the international scene. Initially, Norway's approach to European integration was strongly influenced by the British. When the Macmillan and Wilson governments opted for British membership of the Common Market in the 1960s, Norway was expected to follow suit. However, as a result of the popular rejection in Norway's 1972 referendum, the two countries formally parted ways.

In 2013, Britain and Norway have thus passed forty years on opposite sides of the fence regarding EU membership. However, the difference in position could easily be overstated. When the case for closer British-Norwegian cooperation is made today, it can lean upon shared attitudes and policies adopted since then. Both countries have been EU sceptics in outlook, favouring a free trade area over supranational institution building. Yet both have been effective implementers of EU law in practice. Behind the contested politics of EU membership, research finds that in Britain, both the public and private sector have been through a quiet process of Europeanisation, as relationships are forged and contacts and behaviour revised to maximise success in Europe.

As for Norway, the government-commissioned report *Utenfor og innenfor* [Outside and inside] (2012) concluded that Norwegian public administration, civil society and business relate and adapt to Brussels to a greater extent than many EU member states. Thus, while Britain appears in some cases to be on

the inside of the EU looking out, Norway is on the outside looking in. And where Britain has secured numerous opt-outs from EU laws and regulations from the Maastricht Treaty onwards, Norway has during the same period "opted in" to the inner market.

In both Norway and Britain, calls for further and deeper European integration are often met with unease. Domestic debates about their current EU relationships have a demonstrated capacity to create tension within and between parties, and the potential to destroy any governing coalition.

In light of the above, London mayor Boris Johnson's suggestion in January that Britain "should form an 'outer-tier' of the EU with countries like Norway" makes a lot of sense.

But there are also hindrances to a closer British-Norwegian partnership in the context of the EU. Although similarities between Britain and Norway's EU relations abound, it is far from evident what form or function a joint Norwegian-British approach to the EU could take. The British model of selective participation would be difficult to contemplate for Norway, which cannot be expected to get acceptance for similar demands in renewed negotiations today. Conversely, and as David Cameron noted in his much-cited speech on 23 January, EU participation without formal influence in the EU institutions – an essential characteristic of the "Norwegian model" – is hardly an alternative for Britain were its membership terms to be renegotiated. After all, the two countries have very different starting positions when it comes to size, resources and the scale of international commitments.

However, this assessment merely reflects how things stand today. Should a revised Lisbon Treaty become an option to permit closer integration of the Eurozone, the picture of "who is in" and "who is out" and on what terms may need to be redrawn. Then, an EU of "variable geometry" – as fondly envisioned by John Major – could find Britain and Norway on the same side of the table. The two countries would most likely be equally eager to secure the benefits of trade while at the same time reducing the overall scope of EU influence on national politics.

For now, from the vantage point of 2013, assessing and comparing the existing EU relationships in Britain and in Norway may add new nuances to the EU debates in both countries, debates that all too often are replaying arguments from the past. But it could also help chart a revitalised British-Norwegian partnership vis-à-vis the European project.

# The strange anatomy of British Euroscepticism

By John Fitzgibbon

British opposition to European integration today is a complicated field entangled with cross-cutting interests within and beyond the main political parties. To parse out the key issues, there needs, firstly, to be a disaggregation of Euroscepticism amongst the British public and amongst Conservative Party members and officials. Public support for the EU from British voters is among the lowest polled in any member state. But what needs to be understood is the extremely low salience of the EU issue for British voters. Despite the recent high profile political debates on Europe and corresponding media publicity, the IPSOS Mori Issues Facing Britain Index has the issue at 8%, and well outside the top 10 most important issues cited by voters as of greatest concern for them. So while Eurosceptic MPs argue that they are speaking for the majority and though some opinion polls show a slight majority who would vote No in an in/out referendum, the fact remains that the vast majority of the British electorate simply do not care about the EU issue.

Secondly, within the Conservative Party, the issue has become a means which backbencher MPs use to exert power over the party leadership. Tim Bale's *The Conservative Party: From Thatcher to Cameron* (Polity, 2011) has conclusively shown how the party elite has sought to distance itself from the EU issue after the failures of the election campaigns in 2001 and 2005 respectively, which both made Europe a central platform of their campaign – “Seven days to save the pound” was the Tory campaign slogan in 2001 if you can remember. Cameron's new leadership style promised to end this image of the Tories as “always banging on about Europe” because that made them appear too extremist and out of touch with ‘bread and butter’ issues such as the economy, jobs



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and social services. The ordinary party membership, a large majority of backbenchers and a majority of current cabinet members, however, are strongly Eurosceptic and despite the explicit evidence of its failure to win votes have continued to demand action on the European issue. Principally this has taken the form of the holding of a referendum on continued British membership of the EU. A referendum would allow them to bypass Parliament and utilise the significant resources of their financial backers and supporters in the print media to win a straight vote on the issue of EU membership.

Thirdly, it is not just the Conservatives that are uncomfortable with the European issue today. Those Labour Party MPs that I have interviewed over the past few years are largely ambivalent. They lean towards a pro-EU sentiment mostly because the Conservatives are so Eurosceptic and hardly subscribe to a principled view of where Europe should go, or of Britain's place in it. This indecisiveness hinders alliance building abroad and it also feeds in to the party stance which is to avoid the issue as much as possible and leave the Conservatives to argue between themselves with the resultant negative publicity. As the Liberal Democrats are the only committed pro-European party of the three main parties they ought to be expected to be vigorously contesting the issue with the Conservatives. Due to their participation in coalition government with the Conservatives they have remained subdued in publically arguing from a pro-EU position. Their tactic at the moment is to not antagonise their coalition partners and wait until after the next election to deal with it. Establishing coalition

government as a credible alternative for British voters is their most important goal, one for which the party leadership is willing to cede ground on the question of Britain's relationship with Europe. Although there is no doubting their genuine pro-European position the Liberal Democrats have calculated that the issue will really not become relevant until after the next election in 2015.



**Keep the pound.** Excessive focus on pound and patriotism rather than ‘bread and butter’ issues allegedly contributed to the Conservatives’ image as out of touch with British voters during the Blair era.

Thus, all the three dominant British political parties have tremendous difficulties with the European issue for their own particular reasons. Because of this it is most likely that the parties will not campaign directly for or against membership in a referendum. As in the 1975 referendum on continued British participation in European integration, party members will be free to advocate for a Yes or a No vote through civil society based campaign organisations. Despite the pledge of a referendum not being until after 2015 there is already a pre-referendum debate between civil society groups over what are likely to be the substantive issues of the campaign. On the pro-membership side a new group, *British Influence*, was launched in early July. It is fronted by Peter Mandelson, one of the most powerful figures in the previous Labour government, Paddy Ashdown the former leader of the Liberal Democrats and Kenneth Clarke a current Conservative Party cabinet minister. Their argument is that Britain needs to start utilising its influence in the EU to get policies that best suit its interests agreed on. On the opposing side are the likes of *Business for Britain*, founded by Tory party activists and businessmen, and *Better Off Out*, founded as a cross-party organisation of politicians, who argue that the substantial monetary and bureaucratic costs of membership cannot be offset by a renegotiation of powers back from Brussels and so withdrawal from the EU is the only solution. What will be interesting to note in a future campaign is who else will line up on either side. Civil society based mobilisation could reveal a latent pro-Europeanism among the British social and economic elite that has been ignored by the media and political class. Or it could display the depth of Eurosceptic feeling among Britons that reaches beyond the political parties.

"All the three dominant British political parties have tremendous difficulties with the European issue for their own particular reasons. Because of this it is most likely that the parties will not campaign directly for or against membership in a referendum."

Before any referendum might be held Prime Minister Cameron is hoping that he can secure some form of renegotiation of British – EU relations with repatriation of some powers and a deepening of the single market. Though Council President Van Rompuy has rejected the possibility of such a renegotiation, there appears to be some support for his reform proposals from the governments of the Netherlands and Sweden, as long as his position remains renegotiation rather than rejection of membership. Here lies the vanguard potential of British Euroscepticism. There are many member states that support British proposals for further market liberalisations and even for the repatriation of some, though not many, powers from Brussels. Cameron's success in building a coalition of 'northern' member states (principally Austria, Denmark, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden) shows that there is wider support for some

British policies in Europe.

Cameron's problem here is that the Eurosceptic language and general anti-European sentiment of many leading British politicians makes it difficult for other member states (or leading parties therein) to publically commit to these goals. Cameron has repeatedly had to give in to the demands of his Eurosceptic backbenchers and the print media. Had he stood up to them early on his tenure as party leader and established Conservative support for membership then a lot of his current problems would be solved. Instead he gave in to them and left the mainstream centre right European People's Party and formed the European Conservatives and Reformists group in the European Parliament. This signalled that he was weak on the European issue and so Eurosceptics have demanded more and more from him – vetoing the Fiscal Compact Treaty, actively seeking withdrawal from European Policing Cooperation and finally promising to hold an in/out referendum after the next election. Had he settled the European issue in the party, as Mogens Lykkesøft did with the Social Democrats in Denmark, then he could have gone on to forge a new British relationship

with Europe largely on pragmatic terms and in dialogue with similar-minded governments abroad.

British Euroscepticism is indeed exceptional. This is so due to the depth of negative sentiment toward the EU held by the elected members of its largest party. Combined with a Eurosceptic print media and a missing pro-European lobby this has greatly constrained the actions of Cameron who, though a genuine Eurosceptic, is also a pragmatist wishing to pursue the course

he perceives as best for Britain. Initially as Prime Minister he attempted to model himself on Frederick Reinfeldt the Swedish Prime Minister but his forced move outside of the European mainstream by his Eurosceptic backbenchers prevented him from developing those links further. Cameron can only hope that he can constrain the Eurosceptic elements in his party enough to build a coalition of like-minded member states to negotiate the EU reforms that he wants. Should he achieve this then continued British membership of the EU will almost certainly be ratified by its citizens. The debate between the in/out civil society groups will play a central role in shifting the political debate to allow Cameron to renegotiate or to make withdrawal inevitable.

# Europe, immigration and the emerging battle-lines for the 2015 general election

Keen observers of the British political scene during the summer of 2013 have begun to see some emerging battle lines that will shape the long campaign before the expected summer 2015 general election. Positioning and policy on both European integration and immigration have been prominent components of Conservative campaign strategy. Both have also been central to UKIP rhetoric while connections between the EU and immigration are high on the agenda for a vocal and emboldened Eurosceptic right-wing of the Conservative Party. This article explores the origins and effects of Europe and immigration in the run-up to the next general election and asks why they have combined to create such a potent brew and what this means both for British politics and for Britain's relations with the EU. It also considers potential effects of a Conservative move to the right on both Europe and immigration that opens clear blue water between the Tories and Labour as well as their Lib Dem coalition partners.



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There can be little doubt that UKIP's twin focus on 'mass immigration' and exit from the EU has had an effect on Conservative strategy. The immigration issue has been very prominent in UKIP campaigning and chimed with high levels of salience for the issue. Historically, Labour has had most to fear for being seen as 'weak' on the issue while the Conservatives have positioned themselves as the 'tough' party. While New Labour tried to get tough during its early years in office on some types of migration such as asylum-seeking there was a much more open approach to both high skilled migration and, probably to its regret, free movement for citizens of the eight central and east European countries that joined the EU in May 2004. Initial Home Office estimates of between 5000-13,000 arrivals were confounded by the arrival of more than 600,000 people, which was the largest net migration inflow to the UK in its history. The fact that much of this migration was actually by EU citizens with a right to move to the UK protected by EU law made little difference to UK public debate. Indeed, a key feature of debate about immigration is the frequent failure to tease out differences between 'immigration' and the various flows – labour migration, family migration, asylum-seeking and student migration – that comprise it. As net inflow rose to more than 300,000 people per year in the last years of the New Labour government, the Conservatives were able to point to an immigration system that was 'out of control'. One of the most famous incidents in the 2010 general election occurred when Gordon Brown was engaged in conversation by a woman in Rochdale who referred to swarms of migrants from eastern Europe. Unaware that a microphone remained open after he had got into his car, Brown referred to the 'bigoted' woman. This incident

*By Andrew Geddes*

didn't seal his fate as the electorate had already made up their mind about Brown, but did indicate the power of the migration issue on the doorstep and Labour's failure to be seen to deal with it effectively. In the summer of 2013, Labour was once again placed on the back foot. Its approach to immigration has been to be tough on the 'causes' of immigration such as exploitation of cheap workers. This backfired disastrously when in August 2013 the shadow immigration minister Chris Bryant trailed a speech in which he planned to denounce the exploitation of workers by major supermarket chains. The supermarkets reacted with anger when they heard of the speeches content and Bryant was forced to rapidly backtrack.

This might all seem like manna from heaven for the Conservatives as they are the likely beneficiaries at a general election of public opposition to both European integration and immigration. A key component of Cameron's successful 2005 campaign for the party leadership was his pledge to leave the European Peoples' Party in the European Parliament. In power, the Conservatives secured a 'referendum lock' on future extensions of power to the EU while also pledging a referendum on membership based on renegotiated terms to be held in 2017, thus depending on the result of the 2015 general election and, obviously, on whether the British government could extract any meaningful concessions from other member states during this renegotiation. The Conservatives have tried to be equally tough on immigration. Most notably, they pledged to reduce to the tens of thousands rather than the hundreds of thousands the levels of net migration to the UK. This is easier said than done (which is thus in line with most immigration policy) because a substantial proportion of 'immigration' to the UK is by nationals from other EU member states enjoying free movement rights protected by EU law. This is not immigration but a right to free movement that is also enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of British people who can move freely within the EU. The dilemma for a government pledging to be tough on immigration is that much of it cannot be controlled. This has led to efforts to curtail those bits of it that can be reduced such as student migration, which has led to cries of pain from the foreign-student dependent university sector. Immigration has certainly fallen albeit not yet to the tens of thousands, but the key driver of immigration is economic performance so it is highly likely that the recession has played at least as big a part in this fall in numbers of immigrants as government policy.

Such implementation issues are not necessarily bad news for the Conservatives. Tough talk on European integration and immigration puts them in tune with public opinion on both these issues, albeit with calls for an even tougher stance from the right of the Conservative Party who fear the potentially corrosive effects of support for UKIP on the Conservative vote.

It is here that we see a key strategic dilemma for the Conservatives. They could trim to the right on European integration and immigration, but this would run counter to the entire rationale of Cameron's party leadership that has seen him seek to modernise the Party in a move to shed its image as the 'nasty party, as Theresa May put it during her time as Party 'Chairman'.

For much of the 2012-13 political year, Cameron was under pressure from the right of his party who were fearful of the effects on the Conservative vote of UKIP's surge in the polls. It is very likely that UKIP will perform very well at the 2014 European Parliament elections given very low turnout and the perfect opportunity presented by these 'second order' elections for a protest vote. UKIP's rise did lead to a panic reaction amongst some Conservatives with calls even for an electoral pact. The chances of David Cameron agreeing to such a pact with a party he described as composed of 'fruitcakes and closet racists mostly' are small to vanishing. Does this mean that Cameron would be susceptible to a Eurosceptic onslaught that could undermine his leadership? This also seems unlikely. Fears that civil war could break out within the Conservative Party similar to that which nearly destroyed it during the 1990s seem unfounded. This does not mean that a small group of Euro-obsessives will cease to devote relentless attention to the issue, but many of their colleagues are realistic enough to know that an obsession with the EU is not a likely election-winning strategy while internecine conflict about arcane EU issues does not enrapture the public who are more concerned with that issues matter far more in their daily lives such as the economy, health and education.

Another reason that conflict within the Conservative Party is unlikely is that the Tories are now root and branch a Eurosceptic party. The key debate within the Conservative Party is not between pro- and anti-EU wings, but between different strands of Euroscepticism. The relatively moderate wing seeks a renegotiation to strip back the UK's commitment to something akin to what they imagine - or like to pretend - were the original intentions of the Common Market when Britain joined in the 1970s, which means some kind of glorified free trade area. This would mean moving back from the drive to polity-building that has defined European integration, particularly since the end of the Cold War and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The fact that this view of European integration is detached from the intentions of the founding member states going even as far back as the Paris and Rome treaties of the 1950s makes little difference. In effect, the Eurosceptic Conservative Party wants to re-create the EU as some kind of European Free Trade Area, which was precisely the division between Britain and the EU's founding six members back in the in the 1950s. It was rejected then by the core EU states and seems almost certain to carry little weight at EU level as a vision of the EU's future. The more hard-line wing advocates exit from the EU.

These kinds of nuances matter little in the heat of British political debate. Summer 2013 saw the emergence of key fault lines ahead of the next general election as the

Conservatives, on particular, made important moves to define their position. From being placed on the back foot by UKIP, the Conservatives undertook a media offensive that learnt from Tony Blair's New Labour playbook by seizing the media agenda. The Conservative's summer media blitz was highly effective in playing to key public concerns in a populist way targeting 'welfare scroungers' and 'illegal immigrants'. Most notably, the Home Office launched a campaign targeted at illegal immigrants that offered them help to 'go home'. A van with the 'go home' message toured areas with high ethnic minority populations and was seen as redolent of the 'racial' campaigning undertaken by the Conservatives back in the 1960s. The campaign was deeply controversial and elicited anger in some sections of the media and general public as well as denunciations from prominent Lib Dems such as Business Secretary Vince Cable. The policy is entirely consistent with the campaigning approach of the Conservative's campaign strategist Lynton Crosby who previously worked for the Party during Michael Howard's leadership at the 2005 general election.

An unintended effect of the Conservative campaign was its effect on Ed Miliband's leadership. Conservative strategists could only have dreamed of Labour's ineffectiveness and leadership vacuum. Miliband approaches the crucial long campaign on the back foot with a narrowing and slim opinion poll advantage, but with questions being asked by senior party figures about his leadership. On top of this, signs of economic recovery in summer 2013 have strengthened the Conservative lead on the key 'economic competence' issue while Cameron is more popular than Miliband.

Neither Europe nor immigration will decide the result of the likely 2015 general election, but the Conservative stance on both these issues reveals an attempt to disengage from the coalition during a long campaign that will see attempts to establish clear blue water between the Conservatives and their opponents. This will include on Europe and immigration, but also on other issues such as welfare. The key concerns at the next general election will of course be the economy and public perceptions of the respective leaders. On these counts and others, Labour has much to fear.

What does this mean for Britain's relations with the EU? Stripping away the heat and noise of contemporary debate, there is now a clearly Eurosceptic Conservative Party committed to renegotiation of British EU membership with a subsequent referendum. On the populist right, UKIP will snipe at the Tories and will very probably enjoy success at the 2014 European elections. The main prize is the 2015 general election and this is clearly the one that matters most to the Conservatives, Labour and the Lib Dems. The shifting social and geographical base of British electoral politics makes it very difficult for the Conservatives to secure a majority, but they are doing all they can to ensure that at the very least they remain the largest party and, if the signs from summer 2013 are read correctly, they seem to be on course.

# UKIP – A very British insurgency?

By John Todd

The United Kingdom's strained relationship with the EU has bedevilled the premierships of successive Conservative Prime Ministers. Margaret Thatcher was famously brought down by Geoffrey Howe over the issue, whilst the mild mannered John Major was provoked into describing three members of his cabinet as "bastards" following their disloyalty over Europe. The Labour party too has had its rows over Britain's relations with the EU.

This article, however, looks at the party described by David Cameron as "fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists", namely the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). Led by the colourful Nigel Farage, the party has increased dramatically in profile and polling strength in recent years, with Professor John Curtice asserting that UKIP present the "most serious fourth party incursion" into English politics since the Second World War. The Eurozone crisis has precipitated the rise of populist insurgencies across the continent, including Bepe Grillo's Five Star movement in Italy and the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn in Greece. Many commentators have wryly observed that the leader of the British brand of insurgency is a former public schoolboy and ex-stockbroker called Nigel.

Created in 1993 in the wake of the Maastricht Treaty, UKIP's prime objective is to achieve a 'Brexit' – a British exit from Europe. The party's other policies have proved to be somewhat of a moveable feast over the years, to the extent that their general election manifesto from 2010 now comes stamped with a large warning that it is "not current UKIP policy". Indeed, Nigel Farage has since described the manifesto as a "complete Horlicks". Nonetheless, it is accurate to describe UKIP's broad outlook as populist libertarian, with a focus on



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"the minimum necessary government", a freeze on immigration and a doubling of prison places.

UKIP had a major breakthrough in the 2009 European elections, where it secured 16.5 per cent of the vote and second place overall despite having no representation in the House of Commons. The formation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 has also assisted UKIP, with the party attracting protest votes from those disillusioned with the three main parties. The local elections earlier this year were also a major success for UKIP: the party increased its representation from only eight seats to 147. Most of these seats came at the expense of the Conservatives, causing significant unrest within the party.

A good deal of UKIP's success is down to the profile of party leader Nigel Farage. Farage has a flamboyant and occasionally controversial turn of phrase (his description of the EU response to the Eurozone crisis as a "sado-monetarist package" is but one example) and a deliberately down to earth image. This image is in contrast to those of the leaders of the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats. Often pictured with a pint of ale in hand, Farage uses his seat in the European Parliament to make attacks on the EU's institutions and officials. He has labelled Herman van Rumpuy as "the quiet assassin of European democracy" and alleged that José Manuel Barroso is "planning world domination". At home Farage expounds an exasperatedly cheerful brand of doom-mongering that connects well with disillusioned voters from left and, to a greater extent, right.



**For flag and country.** Liberating Britain from the stranglehold of the EU is recurrent theme in the rising popularity of UKIP.

A UKIP source quoted in *The Observer* asserted that "The aim is to get as many votes as possible so UKIP is a threat and manipulate the agenda." With David Cameron – after sustained pressure from within his own party – making a commitment to hold an in/out referendum on Europe should the Conservatives win the next general election, it would appear that the UKIP are proving successful in this regard.

Cameron's attempt to defuse to issue of Europe by committing to a referendum has largely failed, with his backbenchers and even members of his cabinet expressing strongly Eurosceptic views with ever increasing volume.

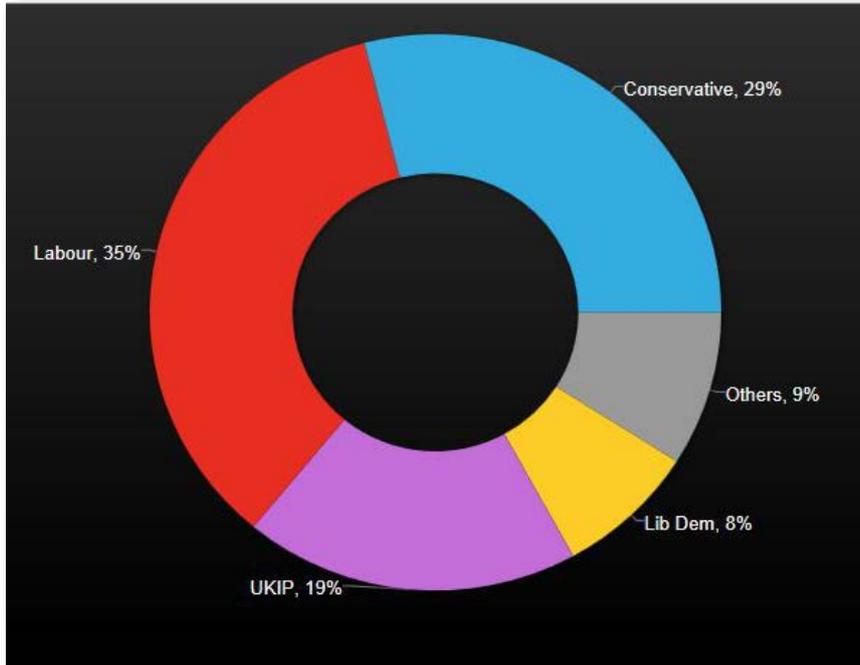
UKIP is doing well in the opinion polls, with the party now neck and neck with the Liberal Democrats. Party members also have the European election to look forward

to next year, with Nigel Farage proclaiming that the party intends to finish first overall. Combine these factors with the reoccurrence of internecine warfare within the Conservative party over Europe and it might appear that UKIP's future is as rosy as a Kentish garden in summer. However, there are also significant risks and challenges ahead.

Greater success will breed greater scrutiny of both policies and people. As already mentioned, beyond immigration and Europe, the party's policy positions have lacked consistency and coherence. For example, UKIP's plans for taxation and spending have consistently failed to tally, with The Times identifying a £120 billion "black hole" in the 2010 general election manifesto. The party is now investigating buying policies 'off-the-shelf' from right-of-centre think tanks, which is certainly a novel approach.

In terms of scrutiny of people, there are in my view two central issues for UKIP – that of the type of party they want to be and that of how to reconcile

the two versions of party leader Nigel Farage. On the identity issue, UKIP ran into trouble during the local election campaign when several candidates were suspended for holding far-right views. Former UKIP members have also reported bullying and harassment within the party. One former Member of the European Parliament (MEP) has accused



**Where do we go from here?** Poll from mid-May 2013 indicating a UKIP surge to 19%. While adding an element of chaos, calculations suggested UKIP would be left without a single MP under the first-past-the post electoral system; Labour would win by a majority of 74 seats. Diagram kindly reproduced from ComRes poll for the Sunday Mirror and Independent on Sunday, 18 May 2013.

Farage of being "a Stalinist", following her defection to the Conservatives. Godfrey Bloom, a senior UKIP MEP, has also been heavily criticised for the highly unfortunate use of the phrase "bongo bongo land" when criticising overseas aid recipients. Whilst the party can claim to have instituted more rigorous screening of potential candidates, concerns will remain while their slate of MEPs remains all-male,

all-white and prone to such distasteful remarks.

UKIP's greatest asset, their party leader, is also a vulnerability. Farage's blokeish charm and man of the people aura is undeniably appealing, but it is somewhat in contrast to his public school upbringing and time working in the City of London. As recently as July this year, Farage was forced to apologise for having created an offshore trust to avoid tax: particularly awkward given his trenchant public criticism of such schemes. This lack of consistency between political speech and personal practice is something political opponents are certain to exploit in both the European and general election campaigns ahead.

"The UKIP insurgency is likely to continue at next year's European elections, where their anti-EU and anti-immigration stances have a good chance of resonating during the election campaign."

The UKIP insurgency is likely to continue at next year's European elections, where their anti-EU and anti-immigration stances have a good chance of resonating during the election campaign. However, UKIP's lack of a consistent and coherent political programme, combined with the first-past-the-post voting system means that the general election in 2015 will provide a sterner test. It will be interesting to observe if the party is able to move from being clear about what it stands against to having a recognisable policy platform that stands for something. This, I believe, is vital if the party wants to achieve its ambition of becoming a fourth pillar in the architecture of British politics.

# Eurosceptic rhetoric: imperial nostalgia, free trade and common sense?

By Andrew Scott Crines

British Euroscepticism, despite its diverse ideological roots, has in recent years been increasingly sustained by the Right. In terms of inspiration, it represents a romantic throwback and emotive longing for the days of British imperial autonomy. The loss of Empire is equated by some with a loss of influence. Such a narrative of decline highlights Britain's weakened economic position and increased dependence on forces beyond its shores. It is nurtured by a belief that British exceptionalism has been curtailed by foreign powers jealous of Britain's greatness.



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Economic pragmatism led to Britain's repeated attempts to join the Common Market in the 1960s, which was finally achieved in 1973. But the Right never let go of its yearning for that golden imperial age which was lost after the war. The 1950s is romanticised as the ideal in anti-EU rhetoric. As the decade before mass-decolonisation and the cultural transitions of the 1960s it represents both the power and ideas of the Britain that was. As an advocate of this position, Peter Hitchens argues that "Britain is a country of the mind as well as an actual place" for which "the history of England and Britain was the founding myth for much of the civilised world". He defends the value of this myth by arguing it rallied the United States and Canada to Britain's defence against Nazi Germany. And he goes on to lament the post-1950s generations "to whom the past was not just a foreign country, but a place of mystery which was easier to mock than understand". It is this disregard for Britain's history which Hitchens argues underscores pro-EU positions.

Although Britain could still pretend that losing India and Palestine in the previous decade were blows the Empire could absorb, the Suez crisis of 1956 ended that delusion. Put simply, the United States demonstrated it could pull back the old British lion. Moreover, a degree of pressure from the United States turned Britain towards the EEC, equating a sense of humiliation and resentment about losing the Empire with British membership of the Common Market. As a result "the UK has been suffering a prolonged national identity crisis since the 1950s, in which resistance to European integration became a crucial unifying factor", still according to Hitchens.

Fast forward to today, and it is this romantic image which leader of UKIP Nigel Farage and others draws upon to rhetorically demonstrate why the British

nation (singular) should not be part of the European Union. From the perspective of those arguing for British withdrawal, the EU is holding Britain back not only from sustaining its democracy but also from engaging with the last remnants of British imperialism, such as the Commonwealth and the global markets. Indeed, Farage argues that "Britain's membership in the Commonwealth, the G8, the G20 and NATO would be completely unaffected by leaving the EU". UKIP and anti-EU Conservatives argue Britain's liberation from the EU will be a spur to growth because it will be able to freely tap into those markets and subscribe to global free trade as the quintessential guideline of British foreign policy.

Farage argues that "Our policies will, I believe, become even more relevant over the next few years. UKIP is the hope of England for those who believe in self-government and nation-state democracy". It is a message that is designed to appeal towards a romantic construction of British identity as a global power that once ruled the waves, and through autonomy may do so again. But "the success of Farage and UKIP is inseparable from national desperation. Its roots lie in an endemic sense that Britain has fallen victim to alien forces and that once liberated from them will rediscover the dynamism that built the British Empire." Indeed, Linda Colley has rightly emphasised how the "Empire's complex and long-drawn out impact on identities here – on the sense of who we are – helps to explain why adjustment to the EU has proved so hard. At some level, varieties of Britons still kick against being confined to Europe only, to a single continent. Consciously or not, many of them still yearn to be a global people, to be actors on a bigger stage."

Rhetorically speaking, Farage's message is constructed to appeal to a section of the electorate that Colley identifies as engaging in national 'ego protection'. This is a psychological defence mechanism drawn from Freud that is designed to deny persistent realities which are incompatible with an artificially constructed idea. For example, in reality losing the Empire did not diminish Britain's influence globally, it merely transformed it. The United Nations, Europe, the Commonwealth, and NATO provide institutions of global governance that enable Britain to exert influence. Yet because the narrative of Britain's decline has been tied to the end of Empire in the mind-set of opponents the realities of Britain's global role do not resonate. The monarchy also creates a sense of patriotic continuity that can be conflated with an isolated Great Britain. This makes it possible to deploy romantic rhetoric that emphasises Britain's greatness over other nations.

Moreover, because the United Kingdom is challenged by devolution and calls for an independent Scotland defenders of this romantic view are increasingly unable to view Britain as the single entity upon which the delusion depends. This leads to UKIP deploying rhetoric that equates Britishness with England, leading to Scotland and Europe being increasingly viewed as 'the other'. Put simply, Farage strives to demonstrate a difference in character between England and Scotland which leads to England standing up to Europe whilst Scotland embraces it. Farage attacked those calling for an independent Scotland by saying "If this is the face of Scottish nationalism, it's a pretty ugly nation". This is significant because it demonstrates the defensive nature of the 'ego protection' and helps to grow the idea of a distinctive incompatibility between the two nationalisms.

"The EU is constructed as a dangerous 'other' that is incompatible with the romantic arguments that construct an idealised Great Britain of liberal democracy and free trade."

To account for the increasing appeal of this message, it is worth remembering that for Farage the financial crisis presented an excellent opportunity to sell his brand of British exceptionalism to a worried electorate. With the financial crisis turning into a Eurozone crisis, creating a great deal of uncertainty about jobs and economic stability, voters began looking for alternatives to Britain's entanglement with Europe. Farage could accommodate this search for a new settlement by arguing that Britain's liberal democracy is under threat because the EU overrides its democratic mandate in preference of maintaining fiscal stability. This undermining of democracy "is taking place inside Europe. This is taking place inside a once great nation. The nation that invented democracy. We are on the edge of total social breakdown." He has equally been aided by the sense that the chosen path of European integration is seen as diverging from the political will of Britain. For Farage, the EU financial plans are undermining the fiscal sovereignty of member-states. He also catastrophises the prospects for EU survival saying "The euro Titanic has now hit the iceberg - and there simply aren't enough lifeboats to go round." This constructs a

narrative of decline which threatens to take Britain with it. This kind of argument is used to portray the EU as a dangerous 'other' that is incompatible with the romantic arguments that construct an idealised Great Britain of liberal democracy and free trade. As a result Farage argues that UKIP are campaigning for "1) to leave the EU, 2) negotiate free trade deals globally, 3) flatten taxes, 4) de-regulate the labour market." He concludes adding "I am quite a fan of Milton Friedman," which underlines his economic philosophy.

British Euroscepticism has traditionally reflected a wide set of grievances faced with European integration. The strengthening of Euroscepticism in recent years has meant that different strands have converged. As such the anti-European rhetoric in British politics today is harking back to a romantic past that, arguably, is an artificially constructed shared history of British imperial greatness. Its romanticism is summed up by Mary Riddell of the Telegraph who argues a UKIP-led Britain "would be a quaint place – an old curiosity shop of matrons and smoking rooms." There is moreover an interesting territorial dimension to these developments in Britain. As the UK itself is challenged internally by devolution, Britishness is increasingly equated with Englishness by Eurosceptics. This will release the other nations in the United Kingdom to forge their own narratives towards, or indeed away from Europe. As demonstrated by Alan Trench's article elsewhere on these pages, the emerging diversity between England, Scotland and Wales in their relationship(s) with Europe is a development that could create new challenges for all three.

Looking forward, Farage is uncertain about what the future holds for UKIP or British politics. Was the increase in support in 2013 a blip, or was it a genuine emergence onto the political centre stage? Certainly UKIP's rise has



Nigel Farage, Leader of UKIP and Member of the European Parliament.

highlighted the issue of Britain's relationship with the EU and has brought it onto the political mainstream. But the question remains of whether UKIP can maintain this pressure? Farage concludes saying "having established that good ideas do indeed come in from the cold, start on the fringes and become mainstream, can we make any predictions about what the next move will be?" Farage declines to do so.

# Euroscepticism in British literature: a Tory genre

By Steven Powell

The year is 2045. The United Kingdom has ceased to exist, and Britain has been split into territories belonging to the United States of Europe. The monarchy has been exiled and Parliament abolished. King William of New Zealand is pretender to the British throne, and a symbolic return visit to his home country threatens to stir up nationalistic feeling against the European authorities.



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This surreal vision of the future is the setting of the conservative historian Andrew Roberts only novel *The Aachen Memorandum* (1995), which attempts to express Euroscepticism at a time when a resurgent Labour Party under Tony Blair, then in opposition, was planning a much more pro-European foreign policy. Roberts envisaged a Federal Europe to be not so much a dictatorship but more of an autocratic, burgeoning bureaucracy: citizens have gone through 'Depatriation' to deprive them of any sense of Britishness. Nelson has been removed from his column and been replaced with a statue of former President of the European Commission Jacques Delors. Waterloo Station has been renamed Maastricht Terminal. Thousands of directives govern every aspect of an individual's life. Even a Sexual Equality directive stipulates women have to be on top of the man for at least fifty per cent of the sex act. The novel has dated slightly, as Roberts' predictions, such as Britain joining the European Single Currency in 2006, did not come to pass, but in other ways, Roberts has proved quite prescient as ongoing fears of Europe gaining too much ground persisted.

"Nelson has been removed from his column and been replaced with a statue of former President of the European Commission Jacques Delors. Waterloo Station has been renamed Maastricht Terminal."

By painting such a bleak picture of Britain's future in the European Union, Roberts, as a conservative, ironically questions the long-held Establishment view of Britain's role in Europe, and a number of conservative novelists have followed his lead back to national shores. Things look different on the left. Despite increasing debate about Britain's future role, even membership, in the EU from Labour politicians, there has so far been no significant criticism of the EU in the works of novelists with leftist leanings. In 2003, the proposed European Constitution caused uproar in the Eurosceptic press. The Blair government tried to underplay the significance of the proposals, but it also found itself under attack from

within its own party. Labour MP Frank Field described the plans as "horrendous" and said "it would spell the end of Britain's sovereignty" Yet the Eurosceptic genre remains almost entirely Tory. For although the British Left historically and naturally has stronger anti-Establishment credentials than the Tories, the prospect of the United States of Europe that Andrew Roberts foresees has not provoked a Leftist fictional rendering even within the genre of the political novel, where anti-establishment and anti-government views abound. One notable author who has remained silent is John le Carré. His recent novels have included scathing critiques of the War on Terror and the humbling 'Special Relationship' with the United States, but he has largely ignored Britain's relationship with the European Union.

The literary Left's reluctance to criticise the EU is rather ironic considering the Labour Party's rich history of Euroscepticism. Although Labour appear pro-European in comparison to the Tories today, this has certainly not always been the case. Clement Attlee's post-war government was opposed to membership of the European Coal and Steel Community on the grounds that it undermined Labour's nationalisation programme. The first Harold Wilson government had its application to join the European Economic Community vetoed by President Charles De Gaulle in 1967. Later, as leader of the opposition, Wilson voted against Britain joining the Common Market claiming that Edward Heath's Conservative government had not secured good enough terms. This prompted a sizeable rebellion in the Parliamentary Labour Party and Wilson's return to government in 1974 left him with an unenviable foreign policy dilemma. The 1975 referendum on Britain's membership of the EEC suspended collective cabinet responsibility and allowed Labour's arch-Eurosceptics to campaign for leaving. When Labour found itself back in opposition in the 1980s, led by the Eurosceptic Michael Foot, the party advocated leaving the EEC in its disastrous 1983 general election campaign.

By the late 1980s, Labour's enthusiasm for Europe, and its perceived social democratic ideals, was returning, right at the point when many Tories were beginning to distrust the European project for the same reason. However, there was still internal division as to how far this enthusiasm should go. The Labour Against the Euro group was formed in 2002 by a relatively small number of backbenchers, but the real Eurosceptic battle was won at the Cabinet level as Blair's ambition of taking Britain into the European Single Currency was thwarted by Chancellor Gordon Brown's 'five economic tests' for British entry.

At present, Labour has a rump of staunchly Eurosceptic MPs, but the party is not yet, to quote David Cameron, 'banging on about Europe'. However, commentators such as the Independent columnist Owen Jones have urged Ed Miliband to match Cameron's promise of an in/out referendum at the next election. Polls show that the British public are overwhelmingly the most Eurosceptic nation of any member state, and Jones argues Cameron will hold an advantage on Miliband if he can turn the election into a debate about the EU. Such a move would have been unthinkable under Tony Blair, but attitudes towards the EU are rapidly changing. Even Blair's former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in a lecture at University College London in 2011 argued that the EU needs to devolve power back to the member states. At one time this would have been considered Eurosceptic, but now it is part of mainstream opinion. In fact, given the ongoing Eurozone crisis, it is surprising that there has not been a bigger cultural Eurosceptic movement on the Left. The Left has been silent while conservative novelists have been expressing the prevailing anti-EU mood in their fiction.

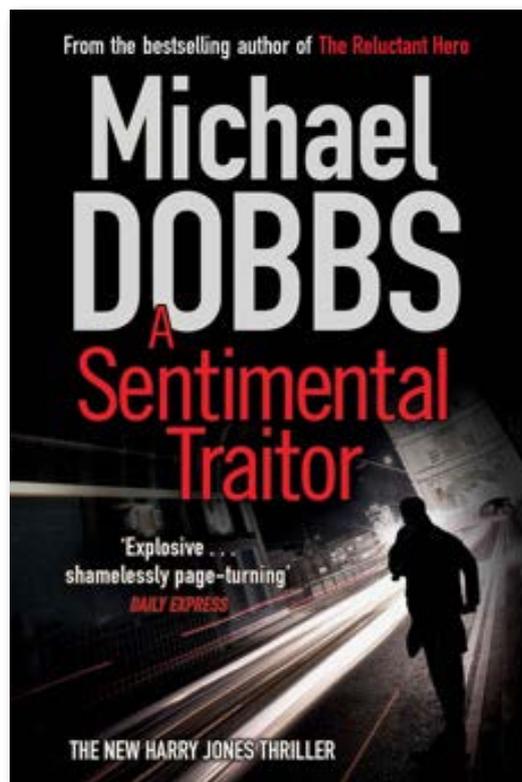
In *A Sentimental Traitor* (2011) by Tory Peer Michael Dobbs, a deadly terrorist attack in London is quickly blamed on Islamic terrorists. Harry Jones MP suspects a cover-up, and when he begins a private investigation, his life suddenly starts to fall apart. He is set up on a sexual assault charge, finds his personal wealth suddenly wrenched away, and loses his parliamentary seat. Jones has been targeted by the sinister 'Eurocrat' Patricia Vaine, head of the European Anti-Terrorist Agency (EATA). Vaine is 'English by birth, European by employment' (p.31). She strongly believes in a federal Europe and hates the 'Little Englanders' who stand in her way. And yet, as the title suggest, there is still a faint patriotic streak in her. Gazing out at the English countryside in the finale she remarks 'I do love it so. All this.' (p.361) Dobbs is not subtle, as the clunky symbolism in the arrogant Vaine's name suggests, but the novel is entertaining and elements of it certainly plausible. It won praise from Daniel Hannan, Member of the European Parliament and one of the leading voices of Euroscepticism in the UK, who claimed Vaine's campaign to destroy Jones was plausible as it echoed cases such as Hans Martin-Tillack, the German journalist arrested by Belgian police after exposing corruption amongst EU officials. There are other close parallels with the reality of

modern day EU politics, Dobbs's EATA is based on the EU Intelligence Agency SitCen, the Joint Situation Centre.

Another Eurosceptic novel where the fiction echoes reality is Alan Judd's *Uncommon Enemy* (2012), a spy thriller dedicated to former conservative cabinet minister William Waldegrave. The genesis of the plot is taken from Peter Schweizer's *Friendly Spies* (1993), which alleges that an unnamed junior aide in the Foreign Office European Community negotiating team passed information to the French between 1985 and 1987. In the novel, the patriotic, quintessentially English values of retired MI6 officer Charles Thoroughgood are contrasted against the pro-European ideals of the arrogant new head of British Intelligence Nigel Measures. Measures is the CEO of the Single Intelligence Agency, a soulless bureaucratic institution formed through the merger of the Intelligence branches, MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, all stripped of their pride and identity. Thoroughgood suspects Measures of passing information to the French. He recognises that Measures' Europhile views are feeding his treachery and almost irrational hatred of Margaret Thatcher due to her Euroscepticism:

*The way he said her name had lost none of its venom. Charles sometimes wondered whether it was partly a function of the word itself, particular movements of tongue and jaw being conducive to the energy of hate. In Nigel's mouth it was if a terrier had learned to say 'rat' and, like a terrier, once started he would not let go, conscripting everything into an anti-Thatcher tirade. (pp. 209-10)*

Perhaps the literary Left's silence on the EU stems not so much from a belief in the European project but more that they would feel uneasy sharing the views of so many conservatives. But as there is the possibility that Labour returns to its Eurosceptic roots a figure on the Left should emerge who has the courage to write an Orwellian critique of the EU's increasing centralisation of power. After all, the level of unemployment the Mediterranean countries of the Eurozone are currently suffering is far higher than what Britain experienced during the Thatcherite reforms of the 1980s. Conservative authors have begun a potentially rich anti-EU genre which is here to stay. The history of the Labour Party suggest there is certainly room for the left-wing figures in literature and film to park their tanks on the Eurosceptics' lawn, but as yet they have not found the will.



*A Sentimental Traitor*, fiction thriller by Michael Dobbs, author and Conservative peer in the House of Lords.

# Scotland and Europe: a tale of two referendums

By Alan Trench

You wait for ages, and then suddenly two come along at once. What's true of London buses also applies to constitutional referendums in the UK. Despite its apparent enthusiasm, the Labour UK government in office between 1997 and 2010 made only limited use of the referendum – in Scotland and Wales for devolution in 1997, in the North East of England for regional government in 2004, and in various localities for having elected mayors. Since 2010, there has been a mad flurry of referendum activity. The first was in Wales in March 2011, which approved increased law-making powers for the National Assembly for Wales by nearly two to one. That was followed by one on the Alternative Vote (AV) system for UK Parliamentary elections in May 2011, rejected by more than two to one. Two more are looming – that on Scottish independence in September 2014, and another about the European Union is proposed by Conservatives and under consideration in Parliament, for 2017. There are some odd parallels between the two, and some important interactions between them too.



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The Welsh powers and AV referendums were both slightly awkward exercises in constitutional deliberation. The Welsh referendum was legislated for by Labour, in the Government of Wales Act 2006, which created two systems for defining the law-making powers of the National Assembly. The differences between them were real and significant, but not easy to explain to the general public – one was a system of conferring legislative power on the Assembly incrementally, the other a grant of wide legislative powers affecting the same 20 subject areas. The real reason for holding the referendum was the impact of the Westminster Coalition, and the poll was held at the first practicable date. While advocates of a Yes vote include politicians from all parties, the biggest problem was the lack of an official No campaign – and with that, the lack of access to referendum broadcasts on radio and TV.

The AV referendum was a commitment in the Coalition's Programme for Government, and so key

to the deal that enable the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government to take office. It was more successfully managed but again the issue failed to engage the public – or indeed many supporters of electoral reform – and the clear defeat for the proposed system embittered relations between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties.

Both those referendums were about rather technical issues. That is not true of either the Scottish independence or EU referendums. Both of these raise first-order constitutional questions, and the outcome is likely to have profound long-term effects no matter which way it goes. A UK without Scotland – or an EU without the UK – will both be very different entities. Either change will trigger extensive alterations in relations between close geographical neighbours, of considerable complexity. And both are triggering 'debates' which are largely based on conjecture about what the outcome might be, rather than realistic understandings of what can happen given legal, institutional and economic constraints and the interests of other actors, rather than just parties' wish-lists.

There are some curious similarities between the two sets of debates. While some (in the Conservatives and UKIP) have sought an 'in or out' referendum on the EU, the Conservatives' official position is to seek to renegotiate a looser relationship with the EU while remaining an EU member. What this might mean is unclear. For many on the right, it seems to mean a major loosening of UK-EU relations to turn the relationship into a free-trade one, with the UK keeping out of any schemes for political or economic union (let alone a single currency or banking union). However, some leaks and the first publications from the UK Government's 'audit' of the benefits and costs of EU membership both suggest a fairly limited renegotiation of detailed matters such as the application of the Working

"A UK without Scotland – or an EU without the UK – will both be very different entities. Either change will trigger extensive alterations in relations between close geographical neighbours, of considerable complexity."

Time Directive to doctors, The aspiration of the British right still appears to a much looser relationship has been rejected by numerous EU politicians, including French President Hollande and Commission President Barroso, in such forthright terms that even pragmatic Eurosceptics like Foreign Secretary William Hague seem reluctant to pursue it.

The SNP's proposals for independence will remain unclear until the Scottish Government publishes its 'independence prospectus' in the autumn (probably November). However, the clear indications are that independence for Scotland will be 'independence lite'. An independent Scotland would be party to a range of ongoing alliances with the remainder of UK (rUK) and the wider world. It would be (or remain) a member of the EU and NATO. It would continue to use the pound sterling through a monetary union. It would also participate in a 'social union' with rUK (regarding personal movement and reciprocal use of health and social security systems), an 'energy union' (as energy



This blessed plot. Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland, has met numerous intellectual and political challenges on the first steps towards the 2014 referendum on independence.

supply networks pay no regard to the Scotland-England border), and a number of other relationships. A cynic might ask how such a Scotland would be different to its present relationship with UK – the main differences being fiscal but not monetary autonomy, control of North Sea oil and gas, and the removal of nuclear weapons. In effect, having been denied a 'renegotiate a looser union' option in the referendum debate – the 'devo max' option that the SNP sought to have included in the referendum campaign, but resisted by the UK Government – the Scottish Government has redefined 'independence' as that sort of looser union.

The big question in each case is whether the other party to the negotiations might agree to it. In the case of the UK and the EU, there have been clear indications from a variety of figures that a large-scale renegotiation would not be acceptable. Whatever the UK Government may say to its domestic audience, it will get relatively limited concessions from its partners or the EU institutions. In the Scottish case, the UK Government has said it will not 'pre-negotiate' the terms of independence. However, it has embarked on a referendum-related 'Scotland Analysis' programme which has led to a number of papers already published (and more to come) examining aspects of independence like international law or currency issues, and indicating the problems arising from independence. SNP ministers have dubbed this 'Project Fear', which may indicate how effective it is being.

There are connections between the two debates

as well as parallels between them. One of the strongest cards in the SNP's hand has been to point to differences between Scotland and England (or the UK). The distinctive character of 'Scottish values' has been key to this. Such values embrace supposed support for the EU, as well as for the welfare state – so contrast with supposed English hostility to both. In reality, there appear to be only slight differences in public attitudes to such matters. This framing of the debate is about political rhetoric much more than substance. The commitment to ongoing membership of the EU is therefore a way for the SNP both to differentiate

their vision from that of the Conservatives (if not other UK-wide parties), and also to use uncertainties about the EU referendum as a way of persuading uncommitted voters to support independence. The pitch becomes 'to stay in Europe, vote to leave the UK'. This line of argument has parallels in other aspects of the Yes campaign's position – for example, to urge people to vote for independence to preserve the welfare state from the depredations of the UK Coalition's welfare reform programme.

While EU issues are prominent in the Scottish referendum, Scottish ones have been missing from the EU one. Indeed, Conservative proposals for an EU referendum have been remarkably constitutionally ill-informed. The bill proposed by James Wharton MP with support from the Conservative Party leadership rides roughshod over the principle that one Parliament cannot bind another (as it provides for holding a referendum in 2017, after the next UK election), and delegates a vast swathe of powers to ministers to administer the holding of the poll, contrary to the principle of non-delegation. It also disregards the role of the Electoral Commission in regulating the poll or advising on the wording and 'intelligibility' question, though it gives the Commission a role in advising the ministers about the referendum. The role of the Electoral Commission in regulating the poll, and advising on the question, were both UK requirements for agreeing to confer powers on the Scottish Parliament to hold an independence referendum – so double standards have been applied here.

At a deeper level, the idea of a UK leaving the EU is based on the UK in its essentials remaining what the UK presently is. But even with a vote against independence, the UK is likely to look very different in 2020 than it does today – with much greater fiscal autonomy for Scotland and perhaps Wales and Northern Ireland, some extension of devolved powers, increased focus on city and city-

region government within England, and a reconfiguring at the centre to make England's voice more pronounced. (These are all processes that are underway, or to which there are political commitments in the event of a Scottish No vote.) That will require a different, more reflective form of statecraft to manage – inside or outside the EU.

Scottish independence has some attractions for the Conservatives. It would strengthen the chances of the Conservatives holding power at Westminster, in particular. However, the risk would be that rUK would count for much less on the wider world stage. A UK outside the EU without Scotland would be much less impressive than one with it – for example, it would probably not be able to maintain the



**"Scottish legislation is suitable for membership equal to that of the United Kingdom. When it comes to NATO and the EU, if Scotland wants it, it would not be in anyone's interest to not let them in. If Croatia can be part of the EU of course Scotland can be. I find questions over membership to be a non-issue"**

**Prof. Mikkel Rasmussen**

## NATIONAL COLLECTIVE

ARTISTS AND CREATIVES FOR SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

'Stay in Europe, vote to leave the UK'. Could Scotland find its home within a family of European nations - and does that imply EU membership? Photo: Yes Scotland campaign

"A UK outside the EU without Scotland would be much less impressive than one with it... [I]ts population would make it a peer of Poland and Spain rather than France or Italy, and sooner or later its permanent membership of the UN Security Council would probably come into question."

but not in Scotland in 2017 would reopen a range of questions about Scotland's relations with the UK. Any belief that these were finally settled in 2014 would

be wrong. The commitment to an EU referendum opens up a wide range of questions about the future of the UK, and so introduces a 'second round' to the Scottish independence debate if there is a No vote. It is far from clear whether the advocates of an EU referendum have thought about such potential ramifications.

As the UK moves toward a procession of first-order referendums, the problems and effects of each on the other multiply. All these uncertainties are likely themselves to have an effect. The question is: are British politicians good enough at statecraft to preserve their state?

Trident nuclear deterrent without the Clyde bases, its population would make it a peer of Poland and Spain rather than France or Italy, and sooner or later its permanent membership of the UN Security Council would probably come into question.

Even if there is a No vote in 2014, 2017 could change the landscape again. A majority vote against the EU in England

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## Forthcoming edition of British Politics Review

Among Britain's many relationships on the international arena, Europe and the United States are frequently at the centre of attention. In the forthcoming edition of *British Politics Review* we wish to direct the reader's attention to **British involvements in Asia.**

Today, Asia represents first and foremost an enormous venue of trade, wherein Britain has sought to gain an upper hand over other European states. Historically, ventures into Asia

were pivotal to what some scholars refer to as the second British empire. After the loss of the American colonies - the first British empire - British merchants and missionaries made Asia the chief arena of British imperialism, and in this, India played the central role. Spearheaded by the East India Company, the gradual establishment of British control over the whole of the Indian subcontinent gave the British a central role in the European trade with much sought-after Asian commodities such as tea

and spices. Imperialism in Asia displayed some of the essential contradictions in British imperialism, between trade and exploitation, between progress and reaction and between commercial, Church and military interests. The forthcoming issue will address how a broad range of prominent Britons have engaged with Asia, historically and today.

*The autumn edition of British Politics Review is due to arrive in November 2013.*