

The Progressive Conscience

DANIEL FINKELSTEIN
celebrates the modern
conservatism of Martin
Luther King

LOUISE MENSCH
on what the Tories are
doing wrong and Chris
Christie's doing right

Spotlight on America

Bush adviser David Frum
issues a warning for Cameron
and tells Bright Blue his regrets
“Iraq: it’s on my mind all
the time. Every day.”

Contents



- 03 Editorial
Kate Maltby
BRIGHT BLUE POLITICS
- 05 My greatest regret
Douglas Hurd
- 06 Director's note
Ryan Shorthouse
- 07 Why I'm a Bright Blue MP
Laura Sandys
- 08 What do the English want?
Sunder Katwala
- 09 The dangerous Mr Bloom
Alex Massie
- 11 Centre-right abroad
Oliver Cooper
AMERICA
- 12 Weasel words
Stephen Pollard
- 13 America isn't worried by
Miliband's chicanery
Penny Mordaunt
- 14 The GOP needs to learn
from Cameron
Louise Mensch
- 16 The Fink on The King
Daniel Finkelstein
- 17 Teddy, not FDR, knew how
to solve a recession
Iain Martin
- 18 David Frum: After Bush
Interviewed by Kate Maltby
- 22 Can libertarian populism remake
the American right?
James Poulos
- 23 America's Big Society
Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry
POLICY
- 25 It's the justice economy, stupid
Will Tanner
- 26 Junk science in Washington
Nigel Cameron
- 27 Defence cuts, not caution on Syria,
weaken our alliance
Luke Coffey
- 28 Republicans are wising up
on immigration
Alex Nowrasteh
- 29 Civility has left the Senate
Olympia Snowe
BOOKS AND ARTS
- 31 Lincoln in the lense
Peter Hoskin
- 32 Burke's American Dream
Jesse Norman
- 35 Opening an American mind
Brooks Newmark

Bright Blue
Bright Blue is an independent pressure group campaigning for the Conservative Party to continue modernising and to adopt liberal and progressive policies. Our thinking draws on Conservative traditions of community, entrepreneurialism, responsibility, liberty and fairness. We are passionate about sharing and championing new, original ideas that will improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable, in Britain and beyond.



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Editorial

Justin Timberlake brought sexy back. Sir Thomas Wyatt brought sonnets back. As of the Labour Party conference, Ed Miliband is 'bringing socialism back'. For the third time, perhaps, it's good news for Tories.

But is he? George W Bush's economic advisor, David Frum, argues in his interview with *The Progressive Conscience* that conservatives in the modern political climate can no longer take for granted that parties of the left, whether in the UK or the US, are unacceptable to people of enterprise. Sure, it's a relief for the Conservatives when the separate elements within our party can unite against something we all definitely loathe: socialism. Hence Chris Grayling's intervention during the Labour conference, warning in *The Telegraph* that both Labour and the Lib Dems want to 'penalise the wealth creators'. But as Frum suggests, wealth creators still don't seem frightened enough of Miliband. He quacks like a socialist, but he walks like a man heavily backed by financial sector leaders such as Andrew Rosenfeld, the man who took Minerva plc from £70,200 to £600 million. Or Sir Charles Allen, one of our most influential gay businessmen, who manages to incorporate advising Goldman Sachs and chairing Labour's Executive Board for him. And it's hard to imagine Margaret Hodge sees him as a threat to her family's steel trading fortune. This isn't a story about hypocrites. It's a story about people who are genuinely able to coexist as capitalists and Labour believers. This should worry Conservatives.

Conservatives still stand up for the private sector more than the Labour Party ever will. But we can't fight on that front only and expect to win. Those who vote Labour, even against their economic interests, do so because they still believe Tories are 'the nasty party' – and as Alex Massie notes on p 9, every time we cuddle up to UKIP we look nastier.

Modernisation has never been about abandoning traditional Tory values. It's about making the case for traditional Tory values to people who worry that great Tory institutions like marriage, the army, even the City, exclude more people than they support. Britain has changed irrevocably since the 1950s and we don't think we can turn back the clock. For more on what responding to modernity looks like in practice, and where it went wrong for Republicans, David Frum's interview on p 18 is essential reading – even if it didn't also include his frankest discussion yet on the reasoning behind the invasion of Iraq.

And as all Tories should, Bright Blue believes firmly in the value of Britain's alliance with America. That's why this edition

of *The Progressive Conscience* takes 'America' as its theme. I'm particularly proud that Olympia Snowe has drawn on her long career as a deal-brokering Republican Senator to write for us on cross-party dialogue. Daniel Finkelstein, Stephen Pollard and Iain Martin lend us their expertise on lessons from recent American history, and from the other side of the pond, leading bloggers like James Poulos and Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry give us a taste of the American blogosphere.

And we're proud to stand up for the values we share with America even when those values seem unfashionable. The Tory Party has always believed in universal principles, not the moral relativism that dismisses violence against women as 'cultural' and blinks at the use of chemical weapons against civilians. There's nothing anti-Tory about querying the practical outcome of getting involved in a specific conflict. But it's not just anti-Tory, but anti-British, to turn one's back on the world by default. That's why Bright Blue is calling for the Tory Party to commit again to humanitarian intervention, backed by force if necessary, when states commit crimes against humanity. And we're delighted to have the backing of Liam Fox, the former Defence Secretary, on this stance. As Dr Fox tells Bright Blue,

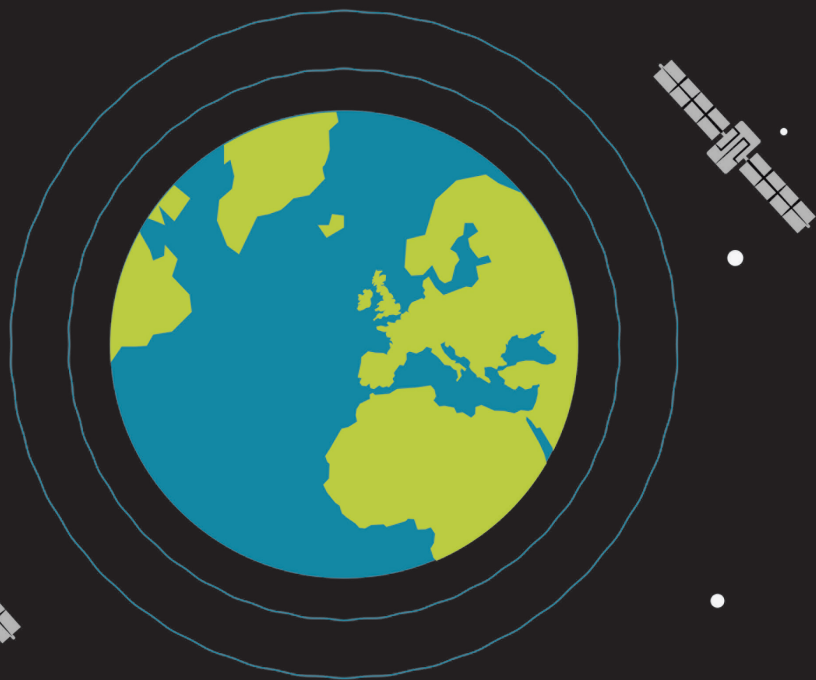
"In a complex and increasingly interconnected world, events in countries far from ours can soon land on our doorstep. This makes it more important than ever to take an active part in the world, and shirking our international responsibilities not only diminishes our standing in the world but also damages our own national security. We must involve ourselves fully lest we be left behind, reacting to the decisions that others have made but unable to influence them ourselves."

Watching Miliband prevaricate over his response to Syria, it's easy to share Dr Fox's disquiet at the thought of a Labour government hobbling Britain on the world stage. Fortunately, public opinion isn't moving Miliband's way – and not just on intervention. As our Director Ryan Shorthouse notes on p 6, the British Social Attitudes Survey shows young British people are growing more economically and socially liberal. The battle over universal benefits has already been lost by the left, and Britain is feeling optimistic about the economy again. And we at Bright Blue are optimistic too – the relaunch of this magazine is just one part of a major development this year into larger, formally structured organisation, with an extension to our paid membership scheme. If you enjoy our magazine, check us out online and get involved in our national movement. We're excited. ●



KATE MALTBY is the Editor of *The Progressive Conscience*.

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COLUMNISTS

Each issue, *The Progressive Conscience* asks a retired politician to confess their greatest political regret. This edition **Douglas Hurd** talks of his failure to save the Royal Yacht

MY
GREATEST
REGRET



BARON HURD OF WESTWELL,
CH CBE PC was Foreign
Secretary from 1989-95

The Royal Yacht Britannia has now come to rest in the harbour at Leith, outside Edinburgh. Tourists are encouraged to visit and I have been to see the suite which my wife and I used to occupy on board. Suite is rather a grand name for two small cabins, one of which was organised as an office, with a third room alongside for a private secretary.

The Britannia has been refurbished since she left the service of the Queen and they have done a good job on her. Nevertheless I felt sad when I looked at her, and remembered the many happy days I had spent on her. There is something melancholy about a ship which has been pensioned off and is no longer in service. As I walked around her I wondered again whether, with a little more effort, we could have provided her with a happier future.

The story has complicated moments but is in essence straight forward. Towards the end of John Major's Conservative Government questions arose about the future of the Royal Yacht. Should she be refurbished, or should a new Royal Yacht be built? The argument wandered to and fro in Whitehall as such arguments do. It was brought to a head by the Prime Minister's need to call a General Election in 1997. The Defence Secretary was Michael Portillo and he at once announced that a new yacht would be built for the Queen at a cost of about 60 million pounds. It was a convention, which has certainly proved its worth, that the Opposition

is consulted on royal matters such as this. Unfortunately, this was not done and the Labour Opposition was taken by surprise. They reacted strongly as people do in such circumstances, and in the General Election campaign when Tony Blair was asked how he would make ends meet if he won, he replied "well, one thing we won't do is spend 60 million on a Royal Yacht". This always earned him a round of applause.

None of the new ministers had experience of Britannia. As a result, they thought of her as a royal plaything rather than a national asset

The Royal Family was going through a difficult time following the disastrous fire at Windsor Castle and what the Queen called her "annus horribilis". Neither she nor any of the Royal Family felt that they could, against this background, make any request for a new Royal Yacht. None of the ideas for prolonging the life of the Britannia found favour. The Royal Navy, which would carry the initial capital cost, was to put it mildly, lukewarm. Labour won the Election, and none of the new ministers had experience of Britannia. As a result, they thought of her as a royal plaything rather than a national asset.

So time passed and although there were schemes afoot for replacing Britannia, no scheme ever found favour with a Government which did not see the point. The years drifted on; Britannia completed her schedule of services and the Queen took a sad

farewell of a Royal Yacht which had given her great pleasure.

None of this was inevitable – or wise. As Foreign Secretary I had spent enough time on Britannia to understand her full worth. I remember the anniversary of D-Day when the Queen, on Britannia, passed in review down a double line of allied ships, each one casting a tribute of flowers into the sea in memory of dead comrades. I stood by the Polish President, Lech Walesa, who could not hold back his tears as the Polish destroyer dropped a wreath of red and white in memory of the gallant dead. A few years later I watched the Prince of Wales take farewell of Hong Kong, when we sailed on Britannia out of that great harbour as it passed into Chinese rule.

60 million pounds is a lot of money even now, though trifling compared to the much bigger sums which Government spends on more trivial projects. Could we have saved Britannia? Could we have devised a way of using a Royal Yacht which would prove beyond doubt her usefulness?

I spent one cheerful day in the harbour outside Bombay watching Indian businessmen come on board Britannia and sign hefty orders for British goods. Could such varied uses have been extended more widely so that Britannia, or her successor, became identified not just with the Queen and the Royal Family, but with the Nation as a whole? I do not know if such efforts could have changed a Government decision; what I do know is that the attempt was not made. And so the Royal Yacht Britannia will eke out her remaining days sadly in the harbour at Leith. ●

The Conservative Party must be optimistic and open-minded. Bright Blue will be the champion of this liberal Conservatism, says **Ryan Shorthouse**



RYAN SHORTHOUSE is the Director of Bright Blue

Conservatism is at a crossroads. Two schools of thought to guide the Conservative Party – to shape our offer to the British public – are open to us. No, not Wets versus Dries. Nor traditionalists versus modernisers. On Europe, the public finances and the need to appeal to aspirational voters, the Tory Party is more united than it ever has been. The real dividing line is between pessimists and optimists.

The first school, pessimism, stems from distress with the modern world and seeks detachment from it. Too many immigrants. Homosexuality and working women are destroying family values. Atrocities in other countries are none of our bloody business. It combines the worst of libertarianism – leaving others alone, coldly, dogmatically – and social conservatism – judgemental and sneering. It is ideological, rigid and close-minded. Sure, arrogant, that it is right – and that others will bend to it, eventually. UKIP tempts its adherents.

The Conservative Party should follow a different school: optimism. It should champion a positive and inspiring story about the future for individuals and our nation, differentiating itself from the doomsayers in UKIP and Labour who think our society and economy are going in the wrong direction. In recent months, after all, several economic indicators have shown that Britain is on the verge of a period of sustained growth.

Tories should welcome new thinking. Respect the wealth of knowledge passed on through the ages,

yes, but acknowledge that there is still much to learn. Different cultures, science and innovation, better policy, are all perpetually improving human understanding, human progress. Accept that, for most, life is getting better, from standards of living to levels of health and education. And the future could even be more promising.

Conservatism is at its most inspiring and inclusive when it places social mobility at the core of its purpose: a dream of a society where anyone, no matter their background or identity, can achieve a better life if they work hard and act responsibly. Macmillan led the Tories to electoral victory by reminding us that Britain's labourers "never had it so good"; Thatcher captured the aspirational classes with policies such as the "Right to Buy".

This is a kinder, more hopeful Conservatism. It should be the future of our party. Young people – energetic, dreamful, and Britain's future – can be attracted to this vision. Alongside this narrative, we should reach out to them with strong policies. Indeed, Bright Blue proposes this autumn three policies to help young people: reducing stamp duty for less expensive properties; raising the minimum wage significantly and sensibly; and taking students out of the immigration cap.

The British Social Attitudes Survey broadly shows more Britons, especially younger people, are becoming economically and socially liberal. They believe in self-sufficiency and are more sceptical of government support for individuals, but are much more tolerant of homosexuality, immigrants and the role of men and women in raising families. The Conservative Party should champion

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

and reflect these trends: become the party for economic and social liberals, not malcontents and the privileged.

As the General Election fast approaches, the Tories will need to articulate their vision and offer to Britain. Bright Blue wants to ensure a liberal, optimistic Conservatism triumphs. Thanks to a talented, passionate executive – and our generous supporters – Bright Blue is now entering a new, mature organisational stage. Watch out for more opportunities to get involved in thinking and campaigning about liberal Conservatism in the months ahead.

This autumn, Bright Blue is launching three new policies which we want the Conservative Party to adopt in the 2015 General Election Manifesto

Raise the national minimum wage significantly and sensibly

Healthier economic times are returning, but households on average have less money to spend because real incomes are still falling. Employers should do more to tackle the growing problem of low pay in the UK, especially as the state is limited in what it can do to help with the cost of living because of ongoing austerity. The Conservatives should soon commit to significant and sensible rises to the minimum wage, which could be varied according to sector or region. There is now a strong academic consensus that a sensible minimum wage does not cause unemployment. Firms adapt well: reducing profits or pay differentials, or boosting productivity. >>

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COLUMNISTS

Each issue, a Conservative MP tells us why they're part of the Bright Blue family. This issue, **Laura Sandys**, MP for South Thanet, tells us why she's a Bright Blue parliamentary supporter

WHY I'M A BRIGHT BLUE MP



LAURA SANDYS is MP for South Thanet

Politics is a reflection of the public. As the public are dynamic and innovative our politics must be too. Bright Blue is a movement that is constantly challenging and contesting our thinking, our actions and our ambitions, ensuring that the shadow of complacency can never darken our doors. I am thrilled to be part of the Bright Blue family, looking optimistically at the future of our party and of our country.

While Bright Blue has no corner that it shies away from, my contribution is best focused on three key themes: the 'low cost economy' – a retake on the low carbon economy; our role internationally, not least in Europe; and what the consumer should expect from the Conservatives. I believe rebooting consumer policy

is imperative. It is an area of policy in which I believe the Conservatives should be leading the debate. It is not an elite or an exclusive agenda – we simply need to be visibly on the side of consumers. That is why I want us to look again at regulators who don't really 'get' the customer. We must also expect 'truth' from retailers and manufacturers – not expensive strawberries or dodgy horsemeat. What we need is redress that is simple and straightforward.

We must also grip the fact that replicating our old economy, cast in the 19th century, as we emerge from our financial problems, is not going to be good enough. We need to look at a range of issues, including how we use resources and how we measure the UK's profitability, putting in place policies that enhance profits without being captured by the obsession with top line sales – i.e. growth. We need to be competitive and efficient. In the coming months a new Commission

I have been working on, The Smarter Consumer Commission, will be publishing a new set of metrics to help frame these economic policies. And I am keen that we are all ambitious for Britain – ambitious in wanting more markets open to us, like the US, while not leaving one of our largest markets: the EU.

We need to reframe arguments and capture the optimism around our foreign engagements, believing again that we can win abroad. This self-belief is already evident in what our party is doing globally and in Europe. Reform is being proposed in terms to build a confident, competitive Europe with the UK at the heart of its economic vision.

Bright Blue offers an optimistic, ambitious, outward looking, conservative platform for us to stress test our new ideas, share views on long term policy and together build a stronger Conservative proposition for the election in 2015. ●

>> Reduce stamp duty for less expensive properties

The huge cost of buying a house in Britain means young families struggle to afford a house that is adequately sized. This is predominantly because there are too few appropriate houses being built. But government exacerbates the problem by charging stamp duty at different rates on the purchase of new homes above £125,000, with more people now being hit with the 3% duty applied at homes above £250,000. This imposes a significant financial penalty on young families wanting to upgrade and discourages older people in

particular from downsizing. Stamp duty should be reduced for less expensive properties and Government should instead look to revalue more expensive properties for Council Tax.

Remove international students from the immigration cap

Britons are deeply concerned about the number of immigrants coming to the UK each year. The immigration cap introduced by the Coalition Government aims to reduce net immigration to below 100,000 a year by 2015, and the overall target includes students. International students bring

significant economic benefits to the UK and enhance the world-class reputation of British universities. Although overseas student numbers have generally been rising in recent years and there is no limit on tier 4 applicants, there is concern that students will be squeezed in the future. This will damage Britain's reputation as a destination for the brightest and the best. The Government should follow comparable countries and remove students from the measurement of and cap on net migration.

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What do the English want?

Sunder Katwala looks ahead to one of the big questions of 2014



SUNDER KATWALA is the Director of *British Future*. He has worked as a journalist and was general secretary of the Fabian Society from 2003 to 2011

Englishness has now overtaken being British as the primary official identity in England. In the 2011 census, 69% of people said they were English, and only 29% chose British. That dramatic statistic exaggerates the shift. Few ticked two boxes on their census form, but most still say both identities matter.

What has changed is the realisation that they are not the same thing. Scotland's historic independence referendum on September 18th 2014 will accelerate this. Few in England outside the political class have yet noticed this

is happening. By next summer, it will be clear that we can't have the next round of debate about Scotland's aspirations, inside or outside the Union, without finally taking the English question out of the 'too difficult to think about' box.

That doesn't mean rushing to declare an answer to the 'West Lothian' question. Issues like English votes for English laws, an English parliament, or a federal Union, should be considered, but it would miss the point to debate constitutional fixes without genuine public engagement in what giving a greater voice to England should mean.

That popular conversation will be as much about culture and identity – about what makes us English, from language and literature, humour and

sport, and voicing the range of ideas of England, rural and urban, north and south.

Englishness remains almost invisible in our public life, beyond the cricket, football and rugby teams, which now express a modern, civic and inclusive English identity. Many cultural institutions, like the National Theatre, see their mission as British, though Scotland and Wales have their own too. Symbolic measures like making as much of St George's Day as St Patrick's Day, and sorting out the muddle over national anthems, with a tune for England than for Team GB, would help to signal that the debate is finally on.

So who will speak for England? It may be time to find out. ●

The dangerous Mr Bloom

Alex Massie explains why flirting with UKIP could cost the Conservatives more than they think



ALEX MASSIE writes a blog for *The Spectator* and a fortnightly column for the Scottish edition of *The Times*. In 2012 he was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize

Like most normal people I had never heard of Godfrey Bloom until recently. I don't suppose many of his notional constituents in Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire could name their Member of the European Parliament either. The wages of political obscurity are paid in public indifference. Even now I fancy even politically-aware voters would be hard pressed to name Mr Bloom. If he is remembered at all he is surely only known as the Bongo Bongo guy. Or, most lately, the slut guy.

Ah yes, your average well-informed voter will say, is he the UKIP fellow who thinks we spend too much money on international development and aid to funny, fuzzy, types in Bongo Bongo Land? After all, everyone knows these dusky thieves will only spend our charity on Ferraris and apartments in Paris. Yes, he's that guy.

Bloom is an ass. But a useful one. Whether or not his recent suspension is permanent, his hijacking of the UKIP conference ensured that after Nigel Farage, his is the face most prominently associated with the party. And his saloon-bar chauvinism comes with a health warning to which Conservatives should pay attention. Too many Conservatives appear to think flirting with UKIP is a cost-free enterprise from which no real harm can come. Bloom is a reminder that this is not the case. UKIP are a threat to Tory fortunes at the next election but not in the way many Conservatives seem to think. Obsessed with shoring up support

on the right, too many Tories seem oblivious to the fact that bargaining with UKIP costs the party support elsewhere.

This is, in part, because some things are more easily measured than others. It is easy to calculate how many seats UKIP might notionally "cost" the Conservatives at the next election but rather more difficult to measure the number of centre-ground votes will be lost by a closer association with UKIPism. But those votes count too and I wager they are more numerous than some Tories think.

As it is too many Conservatives appear to think of UKIP as jovial rascals who may go a little too far sometimes but whose hearts are essentially in the right place. What harm can there be in tacking to the right to reassure UKIP voters – and those tempted by UKIP – that, when all is said and done, the Tories share their concerns and are, broadly speaking, "on the same page"?

Plenty. The Conservatives already have a problem with ethnic minority voters. This is, in part, a question of path-dependency. Many Black and Asian Britons mistrust the Conservatives because of the suspicion that the Tories do not see Black and Asian Britons as full and equal members of the realm. All things being equal, these voters sense that many Tories would like there to be fewer Black or Asian Britons. And these voters continue to believe these things because they have learnt this from their parents. Many of them will continue to believe these things even after they have ceased to be true.

But, of course, flirting with a party that tolerated Godfrey Bloom for so long sends the message that these things

– these prejudices – have not ceased to be true. Cuddling up to UKIP does not just cost the Tories votes at the next election; it costs them votes at the next several elections. Most of all it probably costs them support in London where, should you need reminding, the Tories under-performed in 2010. The party won just 34% of the vote in London (as against nearly 40% in England as a whole). It needs to do better in the capital.

Moreover, hugging UKIP tells the electorate that Tory modernisation is, in the end and at heart, a sham. It counterfeits the entire purpose of David Cameron's leadership. And so it costs the party support from people who might, in ordinary circumstances, be happy to vote Conservative but who have no desire to be associated with a party that is in turn happy to associate itself with people such as Godfrey Bloom.

Fraternising with extremists – and most voters consider UKIP head-banging fruit cakes – sends another message too: one that says the Tories have lost their nerve, their poise and their ability to see what really matters. It reveals a party unfit for government. Allowing the UKIP tail to wag the Conservative dog is a sign of weakness that will not pass unnoticed. And nor should it. Which is why Godfrey Bloom is useful.

UKIP are toxic for the Tories and it was decent – jolly decent – of Bloom to remind everyone why that is, and always will be, the case. If Tories wish to cut their own throats with a UKIP razor that is, I suppose, their business but they cannot say they have not been warned. ●

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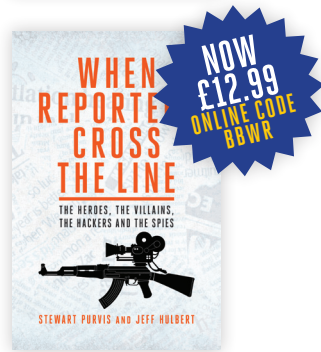


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COLUMNISTS

For this issue’s window on centre-right politics around the world, **Oliver Cooper** takes a look at the youthful centre-right in Europe



OLIVER COOPER
 is the Chairman of
Conservative Future

“Advance Australia, fair!” went the cry from Conservatives at the victory of Tony Abbott’s Liberals in September. For the first time in 33 years, there are centre-right Prime Ministers in Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. But it’s not just in the Anglosphere where the centre-right is on the rise. Across the EU, only 8 countries out of 28 are led by socialist leaders. Even in the Nordic countries – that bastion of the left – only one socialist Prime Minister remains out of five: and even then, she’s polling 10% behind the centre-right.

The global centre-right is winning because of its ideas. The left likes to think of itself as international and open-minded, but Conservatives as Little Englanders, yet nothing could be further from the truth. ‘Swedish-style’ free schools, ‘Wisconsin-style’ welfare reform, ‘German-style’ labour reforms: almost every policy you hear from Conservatives, frontbench or back, has been road-tested elsewhere – and proven not just to work, but to be electorally successful, too.

In countries where it’s been most successful, the centre-right has also done something else: it presents itself as the youthful party. Not in a contrived way or to the exclusion of older voters, but by presenting their policies as vital to the future of their country and their children: as open and forward-thinking, not insular and nostalgic. There’s a reason that 75% of commercial advertising spending is aimed at young

people, who command only 20% of disposable income: optimism and youthfulness sell to everyone.

It’s also a key part of their policies. Estonia’s free-market Reform Party has championed Estonia’s world-leading flat-tax, low regulation, and innovation in public services. But above all, it has presented itself as the anti-debt party: controlling spending to avoid saddling future generations with debt. As a result, it is overwhelmingly supported by young voters.

Meanwhile, in Slovakia, Freedom and Solidarity – led by the father of Slovakia’s flat-tax – was initially launched as a Facebook campaign and is supported almost exclusively by young people.

‘Swedish-style’ free schools, ‘Wisconsin-style’ welfare reform, ‘German-style’ labour reforms: almost every policy you hear from the Conservatives has been roadtested elsewhere

Whilst we don’t have a flat tax or zero public debt, we’ve done a lot to benefit the young here, too: reforming one-size-fits-all schools which robbed a generation of a good education, ending restrictions on housing supply which robbed them of a chance to own their own home, and correcting the failure to hold a referendum in forty years which robbed them of a say on Europe. Above all, we’re tackling the bill that Labour racked up in borrowing and handed to our generation.

CENTRE RIGHT ABROAD



Helle Thorning-Schmidt of Denmark is polling 10% behind the centre-right

These ideas are shared through organisations such as the European Young Conservatives, which bring together a vibrant centre-right from across the continent and the world. Conservative Future hosted their annual Freedom Summit in September, with over 120 delegates representing 23 countries: allowing our young leaders to learn from best practice and best policy from around the world.

That’s key to exchanging our different ideas about how we each advance our shared values. There’s no trade-off between championing the values and policies we’ve always stood for and winning over new generations. We just have to be open-minded, learn from the best policies from our sister parties, and always believe that our country’s best days are ahead of us. Around the world, if the centre-right is winning, it’s the young what won it. ●

COLUMNISTS

Each issue of *The Progressive Conscience*, a Fleet Street editor looks at the uses and abuses of political terminology. **Stephen Pollard** explores the meaning of the word ‘neocon’



STEPHEN POLLARD is Editor of the Jewish Chronicle

It’s time once again for that oh-so-fun game. It’s the perennial favourite that requires not a moment’s thought. Yes, it’s time for Neocon Bingo. And this time the focus is Syria.

You win a point for each mention of the word ‘neocon’. As for a prize: well, there isn’t one really. Perhaps a dose of depression at the inability of so many people to engage any part of their brain before opening their mouth.

The game started in 2003, when the US and co. decided to liberate Iraq from Saddam. My mistake. It started in 2001, when the US and co. decided to liberate Afghanistan from the Taliban. Oops. Wrong again. It actually started in...

Do you see what I’m doing here? For every tendentiously incorrect use of the word neocon, I can come back with some equally stupid suggestion. Because yes, I know that the US didn’t invade Iraq just to remove Saddam. That was a welcome by-product, just as liberation from the Taliban was a by-product of the invasion of Afghanistan. But you know what? If you’re going to throw around idiotic simplicities then why can’t I join in?

The word neocon has a specific and clear meaning and it’s not what’s meant when ‘the neocons’ are accused of being behind every foreign policy move of the past two decades. Although just about the only thing the origin of the word has in common with current parlance is that it was coined as an insult.

In 1973, Michael Harrington, the US socialist, labelled renegade lefties such

as Daniel Bell, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Irving Kristol as ‘Neo-Conservatives’. From his perspective, he was right. They were certainly no longer part of the new Democrats, exemplified by George McGovern’s 1972 presidential nomination. Having spent their youth and early adulthood on the mainstream and sometimes Trotskyite left, in the 1960s they rejected the blind alley of New Left thinking taken by much of the Democrat Party. And they saw the counterculture activists who demonstrated against involvement in the Vietnam War as being, in their own way, as anti-American as the Soviet fellow travellers who were anathema to them.

Although most were originally supporters of LBJ’s Great Society, by the 1970s they had started to see its unintended consequences. Welfare was all well and good, for instance, but welfare dependency seemed to be an inevitable and dangerous consequence.

And after Nixon’s détente, which accepted the outrages of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact as inevitable, was followed by Carter’s disastrous foreign policy, it was equally clear that the Democrats had lost the ability or even the wish to stand up for US interests abroad. But they weren’t – yet – conservative, either. They still maintained that the left had left them, rather than vice versa, and worked to bring it back to the electoral mainstream.

They coalesced around the 1972 and 1976 campaigns for the Democratic Presidential nomination of the Washington Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson, among whose former employees were the likes of Paul Wolfowitz, Doug Feith, and Richard Perle. The Henry Jackson Society is named in his honour.

But the battle within the Democratic party was lost. Indeed, it was only with Clinton’s nomination in 1992, as an avowedly New Democrat, that the party genuinely returned to the mainstream.

The most pithy explanation of neoconservatism – by the late 1970s the insult had been claimed as a label by its victims – is Irving Kristol’s phrase that a neoconservative is “a liberal who has mugged by reality”.

Those last two words matter. It’s often misquoted as simply a liberal who has been mugged, as if it’s somehow atavistic and simply about base human nature. But the key point is that neo-conservatism distances itself from pure ideology – of left or right – precisely because it is a temperament rather than a set of beliefs, that is based on the real world rather than theory and dogma.

That helps to explain the relative ease with which the neocons became allies, if not yet an integral part, of the right. Ronald Reagan’s 1980 campaign worked for them on both levels. It confronted Soviet expansionism and it promised to reverse the domestic decline of the 1970s.

Which, skipping a few decades, brings us to now. There’s a word I haven’t used yet in explaining the origins of the neocons. The J word.

Many – not all – emerged from the New York Jewish milieu. That is significant and deserves an essay to itself (it’s had many). But the real significance today is that it has led to the abuse of the word neocon so far from any meaning based on its history and the thinking of the neocons.

This generation’s neocon bingo is not about neoconservatism. It’s based on using the word as shorthand for Imperialist Jew. In today’s world, >>

WEASEL WORDS

America isn’t worried by Miliband’s chicanery

Penny Mordaunt MP draws on her American experience to ask if the Special Relationship has been damaged by the vote on Syria



PENNY MORDAUNT is MP for Portsmouth North. In 2000 she was Head of Foreign Press on George W Bush’s presidential election campaign and is Chairman of Conservative Friends of America

The short and obvious answer is ‘no’. The relationship enjoyed by Britain and America is not between a president and a prime minister, or a congress and a parliament, but between two peoples. Certainly the course of that relationship is eased when there is personal and political accord between the nations’ leaders, but it is not contingent on the avoidance of any divergence in policy. Ed Miliband was right about that, but I suspect that I am right to think that the President, members of Congress and any of the presidential aspirants will be as able to recognise political chicanery when they see it as we are here.

The Leader of the Opposition was afforded every courtesy to allow Parliament to come to a consensus on Syria; the Prime Minister was happy to accede to his request for an explicit clause on the necessity of a second vote on military action and yet still Miliband decided to table an amendment. One can only conclude that he desperately wanted to create a division, to appear to be the voice of reason and caution – to provide what he has been wont to call a

>> such clarity of expression isn’t permitted, because it reveals a latent antisemitism which is no longer thought advisable to reveal. So instead, ‘neocon war’ (and its variations) is used as an acceptable way of saying ‘war fought for Jews’ or ‘war fought for Israel’.

‘calm and measured response’. Unfortunately, Mr Miliband’s public utterances since the vote could only be considered as ‘calm and measured’ in so far as he has spoken very slowly. One might imagine that his private remarks have been rather more fraught with anxiety, for his own ‘sequential roadmap’ is in tatters. Miliband and a majority of his MPs wanted a second vote, but because they failed to support the Government’s motion there will not be one. Some MPs’ votes against the Government were influenced by conscience; Miliband’s was moved by calculation. The only cross-Atlantic damage which has been inflicted is on the Labour leader’s own prime ministerial credentials, such as they are. There have always been people who thought Ed Miliband not up to the job of Prime Minister, it was just not apparent until recently that Ed Miliband was one of them.

The Prime Minister’s decision to put his case to the House of Commons has had a positive influence in Washington, President Obama feeling obliged to follow suit. Just as I found when I worked on the first Bush campaign, notice is being taken of the arguments made in our Parliament and the opinions of the British people, both by Congress and the American people. Yet had the motion been passed our influence would have been all the greater. Instead of a vote

So this autumn, the idea of military action against a dictator who gasses 1400 of his own citizens is dismissed as being a ‘neocon war’ because it’s the Jews behind it, but you can’t actually say that or the Jews will get you. The fact that President Obama

besmirched by low political cunning, we would have sent a cautious but resolute message of our preparedness to act, but not precipitately and only after the UN report and a second vote. At the time of writing, the votes in Congress are yet to come and there is great uncertainty about their outcomes, especially as they have been postponed in light of discussions on international supervision of Syrian chemical weapons, discussions which have been prompted by the possibility of military action. Yet whatever the final outcome, there is no uncertainty that Britain and the US will work closely together to tackle that which follows.

Beyond the immediate circumstances of our position on Syria, the future alliance of Great Britain and the United States is assured. We should not fear the so-called ‘reorientation’ of US focus to the Pacific, for we look to the four corners of the world ourselves, and while we will exploit our Commonwealth and other unique relationships, we never think that this turns us away from America. Indeed, Britain and America are committed to work together on nuclear deterrence and our carrier strike regeneration will be facilitated by training our pilots with the US forces. Most importantly, there is no appetite to devalue or undermine a relationship which is so emphatically in our mutual best interests. ●

isn’t that obviously a Jew is irrelevant. He’s fallen under their (sorry, the neocons’) influence.

And there you have it. The catch-all explanation, based on ignorance and prejudice, and couched in the language of insight. ●

The GOP needs to learn from Cameron

Louise Mensch writes from New York on what she's heard about Hillary and why Cameron should keep faith with Chris Christie



LOUISE MENSCH is the former MP for Corby

It's strange watching the parallels develop. After the disaster of the McCain-Palin campaign (think Hague as leader), the GOP at least was respectable under Romney (think Michael Howard). But they are now where Howard was – no hope of victory, with no light in sight down a long, dark tunnel and the need for major reform.

The GOP needs to learn the lessons of Nate Silver and actually read the polls. The Romney campaign was not bullshitting us – they just had horrible numbers. The true numbers would have told Mitt he never stood a chance.

And the numbers would also tell GOP believers that they need to understand that the ground has decisively shifted away from them. Hispanics are no longer voting for them. Women are not voting for them. Terrifyingly, young people actually *are* voting. The last election saw a surge in the youth vote, and that almost never happens. The GOP cannot win if it becomes the party of Todd Aiken, of white males. There are not enough of those to get anywhere near the White House.

“Ah,” cries the blogosphere, “but we nominated liberals in McCain and Romney and look what happened!” Yes, well, the terminally dull Romney got the nod because no other candidate worth anything wanted to chance his arm against the guy who got Bin Laden. And McCain, despite his unique status as a legendary American war hero and political maverick, cannot speak well; and this is the television age. Without a TelePrompTer, as we saw at the G20, Mr. Obama tends to fumble the ball. But with one, he is unstoppable; he has brilliant speechwriters and can deliver lines superbly. No amount of “town hall meetings” can stop a talented demagogue. So the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* error is to assume that in tacking to the right, America will elect the GOP again. It is becoming more British; it is becoming more centrist. Ted Cruz may get the firebrands going, but immigration reform is hugely popular in America. The GOP needs to make a list: “popular things” – and ask itself why it is against them.

It needs to follow the model of the red governors who win blue states – because the USA today is itself a blue state. And failing to recognize that shift means obsolescence.

Schwarzenegger won in California because he was ready to detoxify the Republican brand: with magnetism, humour and fame, yes, but also with initiatives for after-school programmes and green energy. He was a Tory they could vote for.

The GOP needs to follow the model of red governors who win blue states – because the USA today is itself a blue state

Hillary Clinton is definitely running. I know this because she said so to somebody I know in the Hamptons this summer. I am honestly not sure she is beatable. But the best chance the GOP has of beating her is a candidate who will fight the General Election, not the primary. That candidate is Governor Christie, of New Jersey – the big man who's socially liberal, for civil unions, who took on the teaching unions and won, who co-operated with Obama and ripped the hell out of a Republican Congress on behalf of his state. Like Schwarzenegger, he pitches himself as post-partisan. Socially liberal enough that centrists can vote for him. Blue collar enough to win in Ohio (neither McCain nor Romney had that). He likely brings New Jersey, which changes the electoral map.

He will need a woman as running mate. And I know exactly whom he should pick. Governor Susana Martinez of New Mexico. A former Dem who joined the GOP over economics, Martinez is pro-choice, pro-gun (Christie is mostly pro-life, anti-gun), a Republican from a small blue swing state (5 electoral votes), a competent woman, as witness her speech at Romney's convention, and most importantly, a non-Cuban Hispanic. Non-Cuban matters to the majority of Hispanic voters outside of Florida. Women will demand a woman on that ticket and Martinez covers a ton of ground.

In these days of Osborne's economic triumph it is hard to recall that there is also a story about plummeting Tory membership. Of course; because Cameron has reached out to a far, far larger constituency, Tory voters. I know that in

fighting to win my own marginal seat I was supremely grateful to our activists and members, but aiming to appeal to a wider, greater group. The party should rethink membership, with its fees and off-putting structure. If I were CCHQ, membership prices would be slashed to the bone and free for members of the Armed Forces. Activists and supporters would be digitally targeted. I would look to leverage the kind of data that tech companies use. And I would campaign virally.

Every Conservative PPC and MP must remember that it is not the seventy people in their Conservative Clubs who elected them, but seventy-five thousand voters in their seats

Furthermore, I would allow national membership as well as by constituency. Many people are put off by a local party geared to quizzes and bridge nights; students and twenty-somethings are debating on Twitter, reading Guido Fawkes and staying away from the formal Ya-hoo nature of Conservative Future and Young Conservatives (a perennial party embarrassment).

Registering, involving and staking out a new generation of Conservatives cannot be done the old fashioned stubs and dinners way. It is not that we should abandon traditional supporters, we should thank and embrace them. But every Conservative PPC and MP must remember that it is not the seventy people in their Conservative Clubs who elected them, but seventy-five thousand voters in their seats.

As a techie, I always encourage sites to have “low entry barriers”. We need to go for Registered Conservatives and count them as our members. We need to reform selection and the tiny clique that controls the candidates' list. We need a central, national party, and a huge database of phone numbers and emails. We need single-click Twitter ads that capture an email upon tapping. But most of all we need to remember that for all those who loathed equal marriage and want out of the EU yesterday (and I myself want total reform à la Norway) – that to win we must appeal to ex Labour, ex Lib Dem, ex Green voters. We must be Schwarzenegger, Cameron and Christie, Martinez and Rubio. We must fight in the centre. Because that is where America is heading – and where Britain has already arrived. Cameron's huskies bought Osborne's chance for true fiscal conservatism. Even James Delingpole should recognise that. ●

SAVE THE CHILDREN CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE 2013

Save the Children and ConservativeHome Evening Reception

Tuesday | October, 9.30 – 11pm
The Petersfield Suite, The Midland Hotel

Refreshments will be provided

RSVP to governmentrelations@savethechildren.org.uk
savethechildren.org.uk/conference2013

Speakers will include:

The Rt Hon William Hague MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

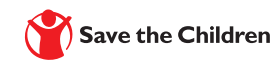
Tim Montgomerie
ConservativeHome

Richard Taylor
Morrisons

Justin Forsyth
Save the Children



in
association
with



Registered charity England and Wales (213890) Scotland (SC039570)

The Fink on The King

Daniel Finkelstein, now Lord Fink to the likes of us, tells Bright Blue why Martin Luther King is a model for modernising Conservatives on both sides of the Atlantic



DANIEL FINKELSTEIN is a weekly columnist, leader writer and Associate Editor of *The Times*. He is also the Chairman of Policy Exchange

The crowd was tired, a little restless, maybe even a tiny bit bored and Martin Luther King Jr did something he hadn't planned to. He used his familiar riff about having a dream. His aides sighed, fed up to hear all that old stuff again, unaware until later that they were hearing one of the greatest political speeches of the last century.

They were also present at a seminal moment in American politics. Fifty years ago in Britain, Harold Wilson delivered his famous speech about forging a new Britain in the white heat of technology. Modernity in this country meant an assault on class privilege, and an emphasis on opportunity. In America it meant an assault on racial prejudice. This difference still distinguishes British and American debates.

When – after the water cannons in Birmingham Alabama, after King's speech, after the murder of John Kennedy – Lyndon Johnson passed and signed the civil rights act, the new President remarked as he put pen to paper that he was signing over the South to the Republicans for a generation. And he was right. Indeed it was more than a generation before a Northern liberal Democrat regained the White House.

Race didn't only change the terms of party politics, it is part of the context of all American social policy discussions. Welfare reform, crime policy, urban flight, all these US debates are shot

through with racial politics. It is easy for a British observer to miss the nuances. What happened in the New Orleans floods was about race as much as water damage. What is happening in Detroit is about race as much as the declining car industry.

So is there anything that can be learnt from Martin Luther King? Besides the obvious stuff, I mean. It's in English and iconic but, in truth, is it all too American to be relevant?

Modernity in this country meant an assault on class privilege, and an emphasis on opportunity. In America it meant an assault on racial prejudice. This difference still distinguishes British and American debates

Well, first, let's not dismiss the obvious stuff too quickly. The great liberal case for racial equality is clearly relevant here, even if the situation is different and the politics less fraught. King still inspires.

And then there is his courage. Watch the footage. See how young he is. When he made his speech King was only 34 years old and he must have known he would never see 40. Which he did not. King is a man for the ages, and for the world, because of his moral and physical courage above all other things.

So there's the obvious stuff. But hidden in his story I think there are less obvious things to learn

from, other things that educate. The first is about the nature of non-violence. The discipline of the civil rights movement was really quite extraordinary. The training that went in to being a successful activist was impressive. It was forbidden even to bring a pencil on a march, lest it be viewed as a possible weapon.

Yet in the end, non-violence was only able to prevail because the federal state protected it, at least to some extent. Left entirely defenceless against violent authorities, King's strategy would surely have failed. Non-violence was uplifting but only a partial strategy. Nelson Mandela reached the same conclusion, as he lucidly explains in his memoirs.

I have also always been fascinated by the contrast between King and Malcolm X. The rage of Malcolm X against American racial injustice was understandable, so too his rejection of integration. Yet understandable though it was, it was also wrong and a failure. Despite his status, Malcolm X contributed little that endured to the civil rights struggle. He didn't die King's martyr's death. He died as part of a sordid internal row with his former allies.

King, by contrast, showed the power of moderation. He worked patiently to achieve change, keeping the federal authorities with him, showing restraint, breaking state laws only when they were at variance with the most basic human rights. He achieved solid, real, enduring change. He wasn't a saint. Very far from it. He was very human. He was a politician in the end. But a very great one, >>

Teddy, not FDR, knew how to solve a recession

Iain Martin on why economists should look to Teddy Roosevelt's attack on crony capitalism rather than FDR's spending impetus



IAIN MARTIN is a journalist. His latest book *Making it Happen: Fred Goodwin, RBS and the Men Who Blew Up the British Economy* is out now

When the financial crisis hit and the economy went into a tail-spin, there was briefly a renewed interest in several giants of the 20th century whose reputations were forged in the aftermath of the economic disaster of the early 1930s. After our own financial crisis and sustained slump, some on the centre-left argued that Keynes had all the answers. Others pointed to FDR, citing him as the President who had shown how to deliver a stimulus, in the form of public works and the rest. This rather overlooked the fact that many of the President's efforts on the stimulus front were a failure. Of more value was his effort to stabilise the collapsing banking system and restore some calm.

But the other Roosevelt, a much earlier President and distant cousin of FDR, was barely mentioned in the post-crash search for answers. Although he is still celebrated in American popular culture, as the rough-riding warrior and early conservationist, his

wider record is usually overlooked.

In the current climate – of big finance getting even bigger, and technology companies accumulating extraordinary power – the Roosevelt approach has much to commend it, especially to those of us who want a reformed capitalism to flourish. Conservatives and Republicans should look to Teddy.

Roosevelt was a trust-buster as President, someone who used the available legislation to challenge and break-up some of the great monopolies that dominated American industry and commerce. It was done in the name of defending the consumer from cartels and protecting the public realm.

The original J.P. Morgan was targeted in 1902. Along with James Hill and Edward Harriman the plutocrat had formed the Northern Securities Company, a vehicle for combining secretly their railroad interests into a giant holding trust. Roosevelt sued. Morgan was so shocked by this assault that he hurried to the White House to see the President. "If we have done anything wrong," said Morgan, "send your man to my man and they can fix it up." Roosevelt was unmoved by Morgan's corporatist special pleading.

>> who showed what politicians can achieve.

And then there is religion. The civil rights movement arose out of the church. It is notable that great Conservative reformers in this country – those who ended the slave trade, those who supported the factory acts – came from the evangelical tradition too. It shows the power of the moral teaching

of the church and is to its great credit. As well as being a constant reminder of what moral teaching should be about.

More broadly, King's religious affiliation confirms the conservative instinct about there being a link between moral thought, great deeds and the institutions that sustain them. But I am afraid there is one other thing to learn. It is about all the intelligent

As President he was prepared to take on powerful vested interests.

The parallels with today are not exact. Some of the latest large concentrations of interests are not old-fashioned monopolies, although they are very large indeed and they face only limited competition. But Google is so dominant in search and Amazon in retail that surely, eventually, someone will start asking proper questions. Huge amounts of information are collected, traded and exploited by the tech giants. The level of control and power they have in the marketplace and in our daily lives should, by now, be troubling conservatives who believe in competition and liberty. Instead, too often politicians have crawled to the new giants of the information age, hoping that some of their Silicon Valley cool will rub off.

Not everything Roosevelt did worked or would be appropriate now. His critics say he vested too much power in government and regulation. But his world-view, his attitude to concentrations of power, his understanding that capitalism requires consent if it is to function at its best, all that is worth rediscovering. ●

American Southerners who persuaded themselves that there was an intellectual justification for their oppression. It is impossible to read about King's life and his death without being inspired. But equally impossible to do so without realising that people can persuade themselves of anything. And that while they can, the battle for human dignity and civil rights will never be over. ●

David Frum: After Bush

The man behind the phrase ‘Axis of Evil’ talks to **Kate Maltby** about his regrets over Iraq and his warnings for David Cameron



This is an edited transcript of a two-hour conversation

KM: *How does modernisation differ from centrism?*

Every modern democracy has a party that speaks enthusiastically for the public sector. And every democracy needs a party that speaks enthusiastically for the private sector. In Britain that party is the Conservatives. In the United States that party is the Republicans. Conservative modernisers are clearly on the right of that dividing line.

To champion enterprise effectively we have to understand that the terms of debate have changed in the last 30 years. If one talks about the challenges enterprise faced 30 years ago one isn’t going to do a very good job of speaking for enterprise today. And modernisation means taking on board some of the genuine concerns that arise in the 21st century because of enterprise. The environmental problems that we face in the 21st century are very different from those we saw in the 1970s and 1980s. Then, the environmental problem was a series of separate problems: clean water, clean air, preservation of endangered species. It was not a systematic problem about the impact of human activity on the climate. So we have to think differently. Not necessarily endorse a specific remedy but at least be aware that’s where the debate is happening.

I think about Iraq literally every day. I believe Bush does too. He does a very good imitation of a man with no inner life. But it’s not true

In the 1970s and the 1980s, especially in Europe, we were opposing people for whom central planning remained not quite a dead idea. One of the things that has changed compared to the 1980s is parties of the left in the English-speaking world are less unacceptable to business people today than they were 30 years ago. Whereas we on the right are championing free enterprise in an environment where it’s clear that the modern economy concentrates its rewards on people with very specific kind of skills and has dealt harshly with many people, especially boys and men, who lack those skills. The prospects of those millions of boys and men are highly relevant to the party of enterprise’s very traditional concern for strong families as a way to provide people with support without depending on the state.

So modernisation recognises that your principles don’t change but the question to which your principles are the answer keep changing.

KM: *When did you personally decide that ‘modernisation’ had to happen? Your 2000 book ‘How We Got Here: The 70s’, seems to preach that the rot set in with modernity in the 70s.*

I was driven to it by three forces. My job at the White House was to write about the administration’s economic policy. By the election of 2004, the peak of the Bush economic expansion, it was undeniable that this expansion, although real, was not benefiting the great majority of the American population. The great majority were getting into deeper trouble because they were sustaining their standard of living by taking on increased debt. This had been a problem in the 1980s and 1990s and it became a visibly acute problem in 2005–2006.

American conservatives needed a new approach to economic policy to make sure the benefits of growth were broadly shared the way they had been in the 1950s and 1960s. This isn’t about egalitarianism: if all the benefits are going to a very few people then the great achievement of the postwar democracies stops being true: the creation of free-market societies which are not egalitarian but in which the outcomes are broadly accepted because they’re good for everybody. If that stops being true you have real questions about the stability of the social order.

The second thing that drove me was the experience of my children growing up into teenagers. I always think that one’s children are ambassadors from the future and you should listen to them. So if they ask you a question and you muster all your best arguments and they’re still unconvinced, then if you respect them you have to think: ‘maybe it’s possible that they’re not convinced because my arguments aren’t convincing’. And maybe these aren’t arguments, they’re just prejudices.

Then the last thing is the aftermath of Iraq. It’s difficult for me to talk about... but it is a subject I think about every day. People often ask of me, “Do you have any regrets?” it would be egomaniacal for me to have regrets because it would imply that I was somebody who was important, which I wasn’t, but I was there and I played my part and it didn’t go very well. And, that’s putting it mildly, and it’s a subject I think about literally every day.

And I believe George W Bush does too. I think George W. does a very good imitation of a man with no inner life. But it’s not true.

I don’t have an abrupt 180 degree turn on it. It is frightening to think what Saddam Hussein would have done with a high oil price. The price of oil was low when Saddam was overthrown: it then proceeded to rise, not because of the Iraq war. The price of oil was driven by Chinese and Indian economic growth. So it was on the cards that the price of oil would rise. And then you have to ask well what would Saddam Hussein be like with \$50, \$80, even \$100 a barrel oil? Extremely dangerous.

But it’s on my mind all the time. Every day.

KM: *Many UK Conservatives look to the merger that created the Conservative Party in Canada as a model for reuniting with UKIP. Was this a shift of the moderates to the right, or as Alex Massie has argued, an absorption of the right by the moderates?*

I was very close to what happened in Canada with the crack-up of the Conservatives. It is more of a warning to Britain than it is an example. What shattered the unity of the old Conservative Party in 1993 was a neglect of regional interests. The old conservatives had governed, as Canada had historically been governed, as an Ontario-Québec coalition with not a lot of respect for the interests of Western Canada, which has the fastest population of the country. That part of the country would always vote conservative. It saw a relatively few rewards.

The issues that destroyed the Conservative Party were issues of the regional balance. They were not ideological issues as people in Britain would understand. So the breakaway party, Reform, made tremendous gains in the West. It never made much in the way of gains in Ontario.

These were people who were not ideologically different but who maintained an inherited blood feud for more than a decade, allowing the Liberal Party to win majority governments with 37–38% of the vote, three in a row.

And when the merger came it changed both parties. The Steve Harper government is much more sensitive and attuned to Western concerns. He is from Calgary, whereas Brian Mulroney [Prime Minister from 1984–1993] was from Québec. But it has also governed in ways that look a lot like ways provincial conservative governments in Ontario governed.

KM: *How can the Conservative Party make peace with its base?*

Here’s the real warning to those who think a UKIP merger has the answer. So long as a conservative party is in power, whether it’s Republicans or British Conservatives, it deals with the realities of government. But when defeated it can be very tempting to lean to your base. It happened to the Republicans after 2008, it happened to the Canadian Conservatives in 1993. When you do that you can produce a tremendous burst of activist support. More people show up to your meetings than ever before, especially against the context of the larger

demobilised issue of participation in democratic societies. But this is not, this is not the activity of health, this is the activity of fever. And they push it in ways that make you ever less electable and you mistake the signs of intensifying illness for the signs of gathering health. And that has been the story of the Republican Party since 2008. And that was the story of the Reform Party in the 1990s.

Sure, you can bleed from the right, that’s what destroyed the elder George Bush in 1992. 4/5 of people who turned to Perot had voted for George Bush in 1988. But you can also sink the ship by overcorrecting. The danger the Conservatives now face is they’re so mesmerised by the fear of losing 3–4% of votes to the right that they end up overbalancing and losing 8, 10, 12 points to the left. This is the story of the Republican Party since 2008. The party now thinks impulsively. It has conceded so much power to its most militant believers. I think this will go on for a generation. And I think the Republican Party has now moved farther away from centre ground than Labour was in the early 1980s in Britain.

When you lean to your base you produce a burst of activist support, but this is not the activity of health, this is the activity of fever

No political party should win every re-election. But there does seem to be a tendency where parties lose, they recoil upon their base vote. It happened to Labour after 1979, it happened to the Democrats after 1968. It happened to the German Social Democrats after Helmut Schmidt lost power.

The longer I spend around politics the more I realise you can get away with disagreeing with people, provided you’ve convinced them that you have listened to them respectfully enough. A big part of the Conservative approach to UKIP should be sitting down and showing respect. And this is true of all kinds of groups in society. You can say “no” to people. People will accept “no” if it’s a “no” after a hearing, a fair hearing. What they won’t accept is outright dismissal. People who were right about the Euro feel they never got enough credit. That doesn’t mean Europe has to be the key issue now.

One of the great insights of the modernisers back in 2005 and 2006 in the UK was you get these polls that showed people agreed with Conservatives on many of the issues that were most important to the party hard-line. They agreed on immigration, they agreed on Europe, they agreed on crime.

They didn’t like the Conservative label, but even more they didn’t like the Conservative list of priorities. This is what most polls were not picking up. The voter agrees with the party on crime. But the party thinks it’s issue number one and the voter thinks it’s issue number four or five. The voter agrees about Europe. But thinks it’s issue number ten.

Cameron's great insight was that people need to believe that your priorities are the same as theirs. It's not enough to have the same answers. You must have the same priorities. And if you have the same priorities you can have different, or even unpopular answers so long as people believe you have the same priorities.

A big part of the Conservative approach to UKIP should be showing respect

The danger will be that if the Conservatives lose and you turn to the right you will go back to the days where your priorities are not those of the British nation as a whole.

KM: Will the GOP pick a Tea Party candidate?

There's a saying of Benjamin Franklin: "Experience is a hard master, but fools will have no other." I can't tell you how often I had the following conversation in 2011–2012: They'd say, "We lost in 2008 to moderate John McCain. And we won in 2010 with the hard Tea Party message." And I said, "Could we please pay attention to the turnout in those two years?" It's true if you have an electorate of 40% of the country heavily filtered to the old, the white and the affluent that message will work [because it's not a Presidential election]. But you're not going to have that electorate in 2012. The same electorate that showed up in 2008 to vote for President is going to show up in 2012.

And people would not absorb that fact. They insisted on pretending that what had changed between 2008 and 2010 was not the electorate but the country. Then when the big electorate showed up in 2012, guess what, history repeated itself. The Republicans will probably have a reasonably good year in 2014, not as good as 2010, that's not possible. But hard-line conservatives could do well in 2014 because it will be a small electorate and they'll say, "See it works." And then the big, moderate electorate will show up in 2016 – surprise!

Ideologically committed people do not believe that mere failure, even repeated failure disproves their idea. I call this the ham and eggs theory of politics. If people refuse ham and eggs it's because they wanted double ham and double eggs.

KM: You've called Hispanic Americans 'natural Democrats', arguing that they are less socially conservative than the GOP hopes. So, how can the GOP win them?

The first lesson from 2012 is: insult fewer people next time. Recognise that everyone has the right to vote because of their own economic interest, as well as social identity. One of the things that was obnoxious about the Romney campaign in 2012 was that he continually implied there's something illegitimate about poorer people voting with their pocketbook while it was completely reasonable for richer people to do so. I don't complain when people who have low levels of education and

are probably not going to earn much money in the modern economy vote for what's good for them. Why shouldn't they?

The Republican goal must be to achieve a reasonable portion of a Hispanic vote. The question is not why does a Guatemalan immigrant gardener making \$27,000 a year with a grade school education, why does he vote Democrat? The hard question is why does an Indian American who owns twelve motels, why does he vote Democrat? Why does a Japanese-American psychiatrist who's married to a professional woman, who earns a substantial income and has two kids in college, why does he vote Democrat?

The modernization project is not to persuade people to vote against their economic interests, it's to remove cultural impediments that prevent people who ought to vote for the party of enterprise and private initiative. There are some groups in society that will oppose the Conservative party. But you don't have to make them fear and revile you.

KM: How do we find more ethnic minority and female MPs?

I am a huge believer in very intense affirmative action by political parties. There are some institutions in society where meritocracy as judged by numerical test scores must prevail. If you want to be accepted into the Caltech physics program, they simply take the top physics test scorers in the country. And if they turn out to be all of one certain group or one certain gender so be it. But if we are recruiting a police force to patrol a troubled, a troubled and recently riot torn neighbourhood, having an affinity with the people you're policing is a bona fide job qualification. It means you're less likely to face a riot next time. And there's no test scores proving you're a good police officer.

Politics is not a subject where your aptitude can be measured on a test score. And what do we call the people we elect? We call them representatives. In the 1950s, in the United States when a president put together a cabinet he made sure that there was representation from North and South, made sure there was representation from employers and labour, made sure there were Catholics, Protestants and a Jew. He made the cabinet representative within the kind of political definition of that time. Of course you do the same thing today. That's part of the job.

KM: Which cabinet ministers could make it in America?

They just would have to learn to play a different game. A British cabinet minister is a politician first and foremost whereas an American cabinet secretary is an administrator first and foremost. But Michael Gove is a great administrator, George Osborne is a great administrator.

KM: And you swear that your new novel, *Patriot*, isn't about you?

Not at all. But bear in mind that the more improbable an anecdote about Washington is, the more historically accurate it is. And the more preposterous any of the dialogue is the more likely it is to be taken verbatim from a transcript somewhere. ●

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Can libertarian populism remake the American right?

One of America's leading bloggers, and founder of the Culture 11 website, **James Poulos** argues that the GOP needs to take a class in anthropology to find its guiding spirit



JAMES PUOLOS is a writer and musician living in Los Angeles. A contributor to VICE and Forbes and has recently hosted and produced video for HuffPost Live

Although Barack Obama has finally begun to learn for himself just how disappointing a second term can be, Republicans have little reason to celebrate. They have not recovered from the trauma of the Bush years. The party's shell-shocked effort to reboot, rebrand, and reform its way out from under W's legacy ranks as one of the great bores of American politics. The prevailing fear is the GOP suffers from a wonk gap, or a data gap, or a diversity gap, or some supremely disheartening combo of all three. Meanwhile, the animating fears of grassroots "rubies," though frequently borne out in jawdropping style by both parties in Washington, are deemed by the establishment too coarse, too divisive, and too impractical to work a positive change in Republican fortunes.

There is, however, one new strain of thought on the right that has livened up this grim procedural. Coming, predictably, from the relative margins of the establishment, a boomlet of "libertarian populists" threatens to remake the GOP landscape by reorienting policy in an explicit way against corporatism, the corruptive alliance between big business and big government so patently to blame for so many of the power elite's sweeping bipartisan during the long decade since 9/11. "LibPop" advocates and sympathisers now range from movement influentials (like *The Federalist's* Ben Domenech) to muck-raking journalists (like *The Washington Examiner's* Timothy Carney) to

prominent newspaper columnists (like *The New York Times's* Ross Douthat).

But however welcome their conceptual shift may be, it isn't radical enough to offer a new birth of Republican freedom from the post-Bush years. Republicans must really be "born again" – not merely changing, but transforming – to move majorities to the polls. And much as a person who strikes themselves as "broken" can never make themselves feel "fixed," friends of liberty must abandon the whole framework of "improvement" and "repair" – just those categories of thought that "public policy" and "political science" propose to let dominate our mind.

This is easier said than done. Fortunately, there's a clear path to accessing a political transformation that can get results. Rather than policy, those on the right should take anthropology as their point of departure. An anthropological attitude toward democracy submits that no degree of wonkish virtuosity or policy chops can save a political movement. Rather, participants win the language game of politics when they connect with fellow humans in the realm of what being human is all about. The American left operates fairly well today on this level. That's why, even though president Obama has disillusioned many, the Democrats' base is growing while the Republicans' is shrinking.

The interminable lament that Americans can't come together echoes from Capitol Hill to Main Street. Many blame this on the ongoing "culture war." Few consider that beneath any culture war is a seemingly insuperable divide among groups of Americans over anthropological matters – over human

being, experienced. Even fewer suggest that the anthropological divides in America at large are strangely mirrored on the political right itself, where you will get at least five different answers – sometimes incommensurable ones – to the question of what being human is all about.

Yet, while the right squabbles, the left has little trouble connecting with Americans on an anthropological level. The case for liberty is easily recast as a case for selfishness. In 2012, Democrats successfully portrayed both moderate Republicans like Mitt Romney and the Tea Party libertarians who kicked off the GOP's convention floor as acolytes of the same politics of greed.

The key to their success, ironically, is that they, too, take the self too seriously. Anthropological theorists like Rousseau, Tocqueville, Wittgenstein, Hayek, and (perhaps surprisingly) Werner Erhard and Helen Keller help us consider that, in democratic times, we experience "selfhood" in a disempowering way that Hobbes would recognise. We feel enclosed within fate but always, to the core of our identity, insecure. To be sure, our animal brains naturally fabricate a sense of the self by interpreting experience in accordance with its deeply flawed patterns of imitation and memory. But in a democratic regime, denied both the pride-civilising order of aristocracy and the pride-erasing totality of Leviathan, we are ruled by envy and fear so deep that no egotism can master it.

Yet amidst this disarray, we can notice our folly in action by describing it to others. And we can choose, through mutual declaration, to break >>

America's Big Society

Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry on why addressing inequality with family policy is the biggest problem for the American Right and the best Cameroon idea that Cameron dropped



PASCAL-EMMANUEL GOBRY is a Forbes contributor and writes regularly for *The American Scene*, *The Atlantic*, *The Daily Beast* and *Business Insider*

The central challenge of political economy in the rich world since the Industrial Revolution has been to make free-market capitalism politically sustainable.

Free markets create wealth and prosperity. But they also create churn and disruption, big winners yet also big losers, and thus undermine their own political sustainability, as populations see their way of life disrupted and rebel against the whole idea.

The best way we've found so far to thread the needle has been the welfare state. But the welfare state has a few problems. The first and obvious one is that by increasing levels of government spending, and consequent taxation and centralised control of our activities, it threatens to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. This is what happened to Britain in the 1970s, and it took all the energy of Margaret Thatcher's government to reverse the trend.

But there is a second problem, more subtle, less recognised, but perhaps

more important over the long term. This problem is that, by performing various social welfare functions, the welfare state inevitably comes into competition with other social institutions for our allegiance. The welfare state comes to replace institutions such as churches, community groups, and even the family as a body from which we draw sustenance and meaning. Think of all the ways that extended kinship ties served as a safety net for individuals, in a way that is no longer true for most people in modern countries. Regardless of whether this development is, on balance, good or not, it is certainly underappreciated.

Within this context – sketched with necessarily broad strokes – it is easy to understand why the vision of a "Big Society" that the Conservative Party promoted with its 2010 election platform has been so appealing to those of us who seek a response to the welfare state that is not just about cutting.

It shows an understanding that, while some sort of safety net is indeed necessary, the problem of the welfare state isn't just that it's expensive but also that, along with capitalism, it undermines the other social institutions

that hold up society – and that by strengthening these institutions, we can find a healthier balance between statism and totalising capitalism.

As David Frum notes in interview in this magazine, the chief way that free markets make themselves politically unsustainable is by creating inequality. People have strongly held notions of fairness, and they cannot long abide a society where the rich "pull away" from the rest and start to look like a plutocratic class of their own.

The United States has been Ground Zero for this phenomenon, which for the past decades has affected all wealthy nations, and there is a growing consensus among the smartest thinkers on the American Right that the most underrated factor causing this increase in inequality has been the collapse of the traditional two-parent family. Now almost half of first births in the US occur outside of wedlock, with these numbers much higher in the working class. And for all the cries that marriage 'is just a piece of paper', parents in America who are married are much more likely to stay together. If you doubt it, go read Rachel M. Shattuck and Rose M. Kreider's >>

>> those patterns, freeing ourselves from the big corrupt bureaucracies in our minds that have constructed the "self." Radically freed from fear in this way, we may recognise the courage involved in regarding how free we always already are – free to the point of being free from the self, free to live life as a site where transfiguring relationships and choices unpredictably

but inevitably will occur.

That's the powerful, selfless vision that Republicans must invite Americans to consider in order to reverse their fortunes. As conservatives' love of Christianity has long underscored, the right's imagination is often captured by cultures of transfiguration. Conservatives are instinctively suspicious of transferring this energy to politics, of

course, because in that realm the power of transformation reliably tempts us to tyranny. But the political applications of a "free radical" anthropology can hold a deep and salutary appeal on the right – not incidentally because Republicans will never rack up legitimate victories unless they can pledge their fidelity to a shared articulation of our shared ontology. ●

>> comprehensive study of unwed mothers, at the US Census Bureau.

It seems hard to overstate what damage has been wrought on the family in American society, particularly in the non-college-educated segments of society, and in turn the damage that this fraying has caused on society at large. The evidence is overwhelming that children who do not grow up in two-parent families face much longer odds in life, and that people who find a way to get married and stay married have much better chances of building a good life.

The family is indeed the incubator of society – where, to use unromantic economic terms, we acquire the human and social capital which actually matters more to our collective well-being than learning multiplication tables or computer programming.

This insight that the breakdown of the family is the most damaging trend

to equality is a hard sell in the American political sphere. The Left refuses to criticise any lifestyle choice, even when the least among us bear the brunt. And the Right refuses to acknowledge that inequality can ever be a problem, even when it threatens to destroy the things we want to protect.

The American Right has talked a good game about “the family” for the past few decades, but only recently have the smartest voices – writers such as Ross Douthat, Reihan Salam and Ramesh Ponnuru – recognised that the breakdown of the family is an economic and not just a moral problem, requiring therefore an economic response.

In the pre-modern world, the incentives to get married and have a family were obvious, not only because pre-marital sex was widely discouraged, but moreover because the family was the main social safety net that existed.

We don’t want to go back to those times. But we need to recognise people didn’t get married more because they were more virtuous, or more religious, or more in love, but because they had more incentive.

France’s tax sliding scale which gives you a deduction for getting married and further deductions for having children; in the US Ramesh Ponnuru has proposed expanding the child tax credit. The economic policy of the future, therefore, is the one that recognises the key importance of the family to economic life, to social mobility, to well-being and to human welfare. One that recognises that it is our most ancient and most useful bulwark against the overexpansion of both the market and the state. One, therefore, that recognises that sound economic policy starts with rewarding citizens for starting families, keeping them together, and raising children. ●

It’s the justice economy, stupid

Will Tanner takes a look at the Republicans who are applying fiscal responsibility to America’s unsustainable prison population – and calls on Tories to copy them



WILL TANNER is a justice policy expert and writes in a personal capacity

America has long been the poster child for lock ‘em up justice. The US imprisons more people in both proportionate and absolute terms than any country on Earth. The Land of the Free holds 5% of the world’s population and 25% of its prisoners. Decades of prison-happy policies at both state and federal level made jail the default rather than the last resort: between 1990 and 2005 the prison population doubled even as crime fell by nearly a third. The Republican heartlands, from Texas to Oklahoma, were the worst offenders.

Yet as austerity has bitten, it is not reformist Democrats but the Red States of the right which have broken the cycle of imprisonment.

In 2007, the Texas State Legislature was faced with a \$523 million bill to build and operate the 17,000 new prison places needed to meet rising demand – on top of the existing \$2 billion budget. In an unprecedented move, tough fiscal reality beat tough on crime ideology. Lawmakers voted down the proposals and instead introduced radical reforms: drug-related offenders were diverted into healthcare treatment, alternatives to custody were introduced for non-violent prisoners and the future savings reinvested in specialist courts and mentoring programmes. Similar reforms, trumpeted by the high profile campaign, Right on Crime, have flourished in Republican states elsewhere.

The results have confounded critics. Between 2006 and 2011, the Texas prison population fell by 7%, a far cry from the 9% increase projected previously. Juvenile incarceration has fallen 52% in the last 5 years. Contrary to expectations, crime has not skyrocketed. In 2011 violent crime fell by more than double the national average and property crime more than ten times the national rate.

After decades of heightened rhetoric on crime, and in particular drugs policy, the once unthinkable prospect of bilateral reform is fast becoming a reality

Blindsided on penal reform, Democrats are now playing catch up. Last month, Attorney General Eric Holder relaxed sentencing guidance to curb the use of federal prison for non-violent offenders, declaring that “too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long and for no truly good law enforcement reason” and branding America’s levels of imprisonment “ineffective and unsustainable”. After decades of heightened rhetoric on crime, and in particular drugs policy, the once unthinkable prospect of bilateral reform is fast becoming a reality.

This seismic shift has profound lessons for Conservatives this side of the pond. This Government, particularly through the former Justice Secretary, Ken Clarke, has made great strides in championing rehabilitation in response

to shamefully high reoffending rates. Ministers have successfully cut crime in a time of fiscal restraint. Yet Michael Howard’s 1993 “prison works” speech still resonates for many on the right and the biggest justice reforms of this Parliament have eschewed alternatives to custody in favour of payment by results and harder prison regimes.

Further, the US experience shows that smart on crime policies can also be smart politics: in 2010, a poll by the Pew Centre found that 87% of Americans supported reducing the use of prison for non-violent offenders in favour of less expensive alternatives. Cheerleaders are already agitating for a similar strategy in the UK. The Conservative MP for Ipswich, Ben Gummer called for a British Right on Crime campaign in *The Telegraph* last year, praising “the Right in America that has been questioning the wisdom of imprisoning a huge numbers of people at enormous cost and negligible return”. Cross-party consensus might even emerge. The Shadow Justice Secretary, Sadiq Khan, last year called the shifts in the US criminal justice debate “a watershed” moment and hailed the Youth Justice Board’s work to reduce the juvenile prison population in the UK. The groundwork has already been laid.

America may seem an unlikely case study in effective justice reform. But modern Republicans have shown that fiscal pressure can prompt smarter policies that cut prison places, crime and budgets at the same time. If Conservatives this side of the Atlantic are serious about modernising the justice system, they should follow suit. ●

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Bright Blue has been building relationships with thinktanks across the pond. Over these pages, four experts tell us what Tory policy can learn from their research

Junk science in Washington



NIGEL CAMERON is President and CEO of the Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies

Once upon a time, before George W. Bush, before George H.W. Bush, there was Vannevar Bush. Roosevelt's wartime science advisor, Bush, V., helped shape not just American but global approaches to the public funding of science. His 1945 report *Science, The Endless Frontier*, remains relevant and readable. Read it antiphonally with his somewhat unnerving prophecy in Atlantic of the World Wide Web – as a technology evolved from microfiche.

As Americans are too fond of saying, that was then, and this is now. For tech observers, emerging from Washington is either a storm system in a teacup, or, just perhaps, a perfect storm actually worthy of name. First we have the “sequester,” which is Washington-speak for a brutal cut in federal budgets, mandated by a committee set up to resolve budget issues which in turn decided to design cuts so nasty that both sides would presumably have to agree on a compromise. But they didn't, so we have the cuts. Then there's a broader discontent with science funding, which comes and goes with each media exposé of what seem (and sometimes are) foolish projects. Research on the effect of Farmville on relationships, and how quickly parents respond to trendy baby names. Senator Tom Coburn, indefatigable and independent-minded Republican maverick, highlighted some in a scathing report on the National

Science Foundation. The House of Representatives' science committee is taking fresh interest in the kind of projects on which money is being spent, and there are reports that this has led to the National Science Foundation ceasing to fund political science.

Not that anyone is arguing we should stop funding basic science. But the bipartisan consensus built in Vannevar Bush's vision – that federal dollars get pumped in and are then doled out by peer review, by scientists themselves, – is developing cracks.

Neither left nor right, they sit on no-one's list of hot issues

That's not all, of course. We have climate, which is now a highly political question. It's one of those subjects on which it is hard to say anything without adding a string of footnotes. Let this suffice: we face discrete though not un-related issues, on each of which reasonable people can disagree with varying degrees of consensus/certainty. (Is climate changing? Did we cause it? Can we do anything about it? If we can, what?) But these have become one coagulate mass – and up for merely binary decision. Because Washington does love binary.

And then we have a deep-seated unease, driven by data as well as sentiment, that the historic American dominance of global science and technology is in jeopardy. This case was powerfully made a few years back by the National Academies in a document with the foreboding title *Rising above*

the Gathering Storm. In practical terms the discussion is centered around the significance of innovation (a term much-discussed in Washington though hardly evidenced in its political culture), and the core place of STEM education. That is, science, technology, engineering, mathematics. As in the UK, the US has for a generation been breast-beating as public education keeps failing to deliver either competitive global scores or an end to the underclass.

Put all these pieces together, and we do have quite a tizzy.

If this looks more like a laundry-list than facets of a single entity, we should not be surprised. There's little coherence in Washington's grasp of the science and technology question in 2013.

Why so? One taproot, ironically, is the failure of science and technology to find lodgment anywhere in particular on the political spectrum. Neither left nor right, they sit on no-one's list of hot issues. Another lies in the short-term focus – of pols and corporate lobbyists alike, for whom the next election defines the horizon. Solution? Whether the recent foray into DC by Amazon's Jeff Bezos, perhaps our most successful new economy tech entrepreneur, to buy the Washington Post will lead to a healthier framing of the science question remains to be seen. But some of us press the longer term as key to both company success and political strategy; and technology as tomorrow's question. If you notice the Land of the Free disappearing down a sinkhole, that will be your clue that we have failed. ●

Defence cuts, not caution on Syria, weaken our alliance



LUKE COFFEY is the Margaret Thatcher Fellow at The Heritage Foundation and former SPAD to Liam Fox at the Ministry of Defence

The day after the House of Commons voted against military involvement in Syria, *The Sun* front cover splashed with a “death notice” for the Special Relationship. “The funeral will be held at the French Embassy... no flowers please.”

Depending on one's view, the recent Commons vote was either a victory for common sense or a tragedy for Britain's role in the world. Either way it is not the end, or even the beginning of the end, of the Special Relationship.

But the reaction to the vote did demonstrate one key point – that the British people are instinctively supportive of the Special Relationship and care about its wellbeing. There was no discussion about the vote's impact on the 2010 UK-France Defence Treaty or London's relations with the EU. The focus was almost exclusively on Britain's relationship with America.

The logic is simple. The U.S. and the UK are liberal democracies which value human rights at a time when many regimes around the world reject those values. Each shares a common history and culture. Both advocate the free-market and promote economic freedom. Both face the same global security challenges: continued international terrorism, increasing cyber-attacks, nuclear proliferation in Iran and growing instability in the Middle East. Britain's deadliest single terrorist attack was also America's: 67 Britons died on 9/11.

Britain faces a peculiar challenge that makes the Special Relationship just as important as it ever was. During the days of Empire, Britain had global interests and was able to conserve them because it had global reach. Even

without an Empire, Britain maintains its global interests. Comparatively, it lacks the resources to safeguard those interests. So the Special Relationship should be a top priority for British politicians: it is an enabler and defender of British influence and interests around the world. It allows the UK to have an otherwise impossible global role. After all, the U.S. – not Russia or China – is the only major power which shares Britain's vision of the world. America's superpower status, Britain's global interests, and their shared view of the world make the Anglo-American relationship a very natural one.

Like all relationships, the Anglo-American relationship needs nurturing by both parties. It should not be taken for granted by either London or Washington DC. As the core of the relationship is first and foremost about defence cooperation, declining British defence spending presents the biggest immediate threat to the relationship. Without capabilities like top tier Special Forces, a nuclear deterrent, or expeditionary warfare capability the UK will be seen by many Americans as no better than other European countries. To be America's top partner Britain must bring real military capability to the table.

Britain also needs to ensure that NATO maintains its primacy over the EU on all things regarding transatlantic security. The ideas that NATO stood for during the Cold War need to be reinvigorated today. Younger politicians in Britain, with no recollection of the Cold War, seem to appreciate institutions like NATO less than their older colleagues. David Cameron, George Osborne, and Philip Hammond – key members of the National Security Council – all entered Parliament after the end of the Cold War. William Hague entered Parliament only months before the Berlin Wall fell. Their formative years in politics have

not been shaped by the Cold War and the closeness to the U.S. which that era brought. The government today is the first true post-Cold War government. There is a risk that the importance of NATO or the Special Relationship is eroding with each new generation of politician.

This is, however, a two way street. As the Margaret Thatcher Center at the Heritage Foundation regularly points out, Obama has hardly been a close friend of the UK and his administration rarely considers Europe in its foreign policy formulation. The so-called ‘pivot’ to Asia has left many in Europe scratching their heads. The ‘reset’ with Russia – which has been an unmitigated foreign policy failure – has led many of America's Eastern European partners to question U.S. commitment to the region. Many in the UK must be disappointed by the Obama Administration's insistence on negotiations with Argentina over the future of the Falklands. Eurosceptics in Britain can only be puzzled by the Administration's insistence on the UK staying in the EU.

The Special Relationship has survived its fair share of trials in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The Suez crisis, Vietnam, and the U.S. invasion of Grenada were supposed to doom the Special Relationship but never did. The real threats to the Special Relationship do not come from votes in Parliament on issues like Syria. The end of the Special Relationship will come from a Britain that slashes its defence capabilities and looks toward Europe for its global interests. This might work well for Labour or the Liberal Democrats, but it goes against everything Conservatives believe in. Tories should stand up for the Special Relationship and implement policies that will strengthen – not weaken – the Anglo-American alliance. It is in the national interest to do so. ●

Republicans are wising up on immigration



ALEX NOWRASTEH is the immigration policy analyst at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity

American conservatives have always been of two minds about immigration. The first instinct extols the virtues and benefits of immigration – a process that makes America wealthier and more culturally prosperous, as well as being consistent with our old historical roots. The second is concerned that immigrants make America less American – less prosperous, less free, and less culturally familiar.

In line with the second instinct, Republicans are typically more opposed to immigration than Democrats are, but this is a recent phenomenon. In the 1980s, Republican President Ronald Reagan supported amnesty for unlawful immigrants and went further, famously stating in his farewell address that America was a city on a hill, “and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and heart to get here.”

In the 1960s, it was the Democrats and their labour union allies who killed the last large scale guest worker visa program, to protect organized labour. In the early 20th century, labour unions, eugenicists and their left-wing supporters pushed for virtually ending immigration while the free-marketeers of the day wanted to keep the doors wide open. Beginning in the 1990s, something began to change in the conservative movement.

Anti-immigration organizations such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), and NumbersUSA infiltrated the conservative movement and convinced many that opposing immigration was the conservative American position.

Even odder, FAIR, CIS, and NumbersUSA were founded, funded, and mostly staffed by pro-population control environmentalists. They opposed immigration on the grounds it damages the natural environment to pull immigrants out of poverty and thus increase their environmental impact. Mario Lopez's exposé, “Hijacking Immigration?” in the *Human Life Review* reveals how pro-population control environmentalists “whose work is ultimately diametrically opposed to the right to life”, a right so important to the conservative movement, gained so much influence.

Immigration might be the only way to sustain the welfare state just a little longer

Many conservatives resisted the anti-immigration campaign. Many, like Representatives Paul Ryan (R-WI), Raul Labrador (R-ID), and Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), support increasing legal immigration and legalising some current unauthorized immigrants. With those and other exceptions, conservatives are generally more skeptical of the benefits of immigration and frequently voice their concerns.

One concern is that immigrants will use and abuse the welfare state – hurting American taxpayers. Immigration critic Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) said this April, “once granted green cards and ultimately citizenship, illegal immigrants will be able to access all public benefit programs at a great cost to taxpayers.” Concern about immigrant use of benefits is rational, but it is easier to alter welfare policy than centrally plan the population in the hope of decreasing welfare dependency.

The welfare state is not an

immutable characteristic of modern nation-states. Welfare benefits granted by the government can be withdrawn or altered by the government, especially to non-citizens.

The United States limited welfare access to immigrants in its 1996 Welfare Reform law. Unlawful immigrants can never access public benefits and legal non-citizens cannot access public benefits for their first five years of residency. The only exception is emergency medical care in hospitals. Since 1996, some of the bill's welfare restrictions have been repealed but most still stand.

Still, immigrants in the U.S. underuse welfare compared to similarly poor native born Americans. Immigrants are less likely to consume cash assistance, food-stamps, and Medicaid than poor Americans. When they do receive benefits, they are often for a lower cash value than the U.S.-born receive. If the U.S.-born poor used Medicaid as little as poor immigrants do, that pricey welfare program would cost 42% less.

Paradoxically, immigration might be the only way to sustain the welfare state just a little longer. *The Journal of Health Affairs* found that immigrants paid \$13.8 billion more into Medicare Part A than they received in benefits in 2009. By contrast, U.S.-born Americans withdrew \$30.9 billion more from the system than they contributed. If this rate continues as expected, Medicare Part A will be bankrupt in 2024.

Increasing legal immigration will not save America's bankrupt entitlement programs, but it can give policy makers a few more years of financial breathing space to reform them.

Related to welfare is a concern about immigration's impact on the budget deficit. Most immigrants are poorer and less skilled than most Americans, so many assume they will be a burden >>

Civility has left the Senate



OLYMPIA SNOWE was a United States Senator from 1995–2013. She now heads Olympia's List, a consensus-building thinktank

Several months ago, I was grateful for the opportunity to deliver a major address in Stamford, Connecticut, just outside New York City, on the enormous consequence of the current lack of civility in politics and its impact on consensus-building and problem-solving. My remarks were part of a speaker series exploring the importance of civility in multiple spheres of American life. It was 5:30 in the afternoon, at a public library, and close to 300 people showed up – which speaks volumes about the dimension of despair Americans feel about the direction of their government.

In my remarks, I asked the question, what exactly is significant with respect to the concept of “civility” in politics – and why is it indispensable in restoring our political institutions? To begin with, unequivocally and absolutely, our use of words can be powerful and critically important in setting the tone for our national discourse. I can't tell you how many people who approached me from all over America have expressed their

disappointment with my decision not to run for a fourth term in the Senate, and how fed up and angry they are about the harsh rhetoric and the partisan bickering that's fueling legislative deadlock in Washington, D.C.. These individuals I've encountered are fearful that the current dysfunction that's preventing Washington from solving America's most challenging problems will continue as a permanent culture. They ask me, why is it so bad in Washington? How did it get this way? And can it be fixed?

Regrettably, we've reached a point where it seems the campaigning never stops, and the governing never begins. And that reality is not lost on the American people, who have assigned Congress an all-time, record low approval rating – begging the question, as one of my former colleagues asked, who exactly is the roughly 10% who believe Congress is actually doing a good job?

So indisputably, words are a critical component of civility. Indeed, every day in the United States Senate, we address each other as “my good friend”... or “my esteemed colleague” – and that's a worthy practice. And yet, for all of these apparent niceties, Congress has still proceeded to become

the least productive since 1947!

Clearly, then, we are missing what is the second key component to civility in politics – and that is a willingness to listen to and work with those with whom we disagree, and to respect differing views; to acknowledge you don't have a monopoly on all of the good ideas; and to accept that you won't typically get 100% of what you seek, and therefore attempt to work through the differences.

As I've told people, I didn't leave the Senate because I know longer love it, but precisely because I do. I want to bring my insiders experience and knowledge to bear as a megaphone for those on the outside who are thirsting for a voice to coalesce their frustration, and a plan on how to change the system so it can achieve the extraordinary potential the American Founding Fathers envisioned.

Civility, above all, is the one, essential mechanism for distilling the vast diversity of ideologies and opinions in modern America, Britain and around the world, so that we might arrive at solutions to the challenges we face. And that is the standard to which we must hold elected officials accountable if they are to produce the kind of results we expect, and deserve. ●

>> on the public purse. In May of this year, the conservative Heritage Foundation produced a report arguing that immigration reform would cost the U.S. taxpayers \$6.3 trillion over 50 years.

That report was criticized by scholars at virtually every other libertarian, free-market, and conservative think-tank in Washington D.C. for, among other things, assuming that the economy would not change in response to increased lawful immigration. In essence, that report violated a central precept of American free-market thought: Thou

shall not use a static economic model to predict changes in dynamic economy. Due to immigrant productivity and the spill-over effects of having more workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs complementary to current Americans, the economy is likely to grow faster as a result of immigration reform, thus boosting tax revenue over time.

Conservative skepticism of immigration reform is vaguely related to reasonable concerns about fiscal and economic effects, but the actual impact of immigration is very different from

how it is portrayed.

The United States had a virtually open-borders immigration policy from the Founding until 1880, then shifted gradually toward closed borders by 1930. Centuries of mass-immigration has produced one of the most ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse societies in the world. The sooner American conservatives shed the influence of anti-immigration groups wielding faux-conservative arguments, the sooner they'll realize that immigration is a traditional source of prosperity. ●

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Speakers:

Peter Wilding (Chair)
 Robert Buckland MP
 Tom Spencer
 Matthew Elliott
 Nick Tyrone

Tuesday 1st October
19.30 - 21.00

Electoral Reform Society and Bright Blue

Can England ever love coalitions?

Midland Hotel – Derby Suite

Speakers:

Ryan Shorthouse (Chair)
 Peter Osborne
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 Prof Tim Bale

BOOKS & ARTS

Lincoln in the lense

Peter Hoskin on his favourite political film



PETER HOSKIN is Associate Editor of ConservativeHome and former Online Editor of The Spectator

Sorry to spoil it for you, but at the end of this year's *White House Down* Jamie Foxx's President Sawyer isn't actually shot dead – you're just made to think he is. What saves his life is an old pocket-watch inscribed to Abraham Lincoln from his wife Mary Todd, which stops the bullet. "Abe took a second bullet for me," deadpans Sawyer as he raises himself from the ground. For that line, and even worse infractions against taste, you wish Abe hadn't bothered.

Thankfully, cinema hasn't always treated Lincoln so cheaply. Directors from D.W. Griffith to Steven Spielberg have had their turns at commemorating the great man, but my own favourite is John Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939). In fact, along with *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), it's probably my favourite American political film.

Which is strange, in a way, because there's actually not much politics in *Young Mr. Lincoln* – at least not of the conventional, Grand Old Party sort. This is, as the title suggests, a film about Lincoln before he became ... well, Lincoln. It conflates his early to mid-twenties, when he moved from being a store owner to a junior lawyer, then embellishes them with the case of two men wrongly accused of murder that featured later in his life. There is one brief scene in which Abe, running for the legislature as a Whig,

outlines his political principles, but he comes across stilted and awkward: "I'm in favour of a national bank, of the internal improvement system and high protective tariff." The Gettysburg Address is a long way off.

Young Mr. Lincoln himself is played by Henry Fonda, in the first of seven pictures he made with Ford. It was a fortunate bit of casting for both men. Fonda would later say that this was the film he most enjoyed making in his entire career, whilst Ford had struck on one of the few actors, with the right alchemical blend of gentleness, strength, intelligence and aw-shucks likeability for this version of Lincoln. The script sees Fonda not just grappling with Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* – "By jing, that's all there is to it! Right and wrong." – but also placating a baying mob and judging a pie-cooking contest. He's mediator, mediator and masticator, and much else besides.

In fact, the whole film is multifaceted – not just our hero's character. It contains some of the most delicate scenes in Ford's entire body of work, as when Lincoln visits the grave of his first love, Ann Rutledge, down by a snow-banked river. And it also contains some of the busiest, including a town carnival in which the pie-cooking contest features alongside a tug o' war and an immense bonfire. What keeps it all together, apart from Fonda's performance, is the calmness of the direction. Much like its central character, *Young Mr. Lincoln* has an

unhurried thoughtfulness about it. It isn't the first Ford film that could be called "great" – *Stagecoach* (1939) preceded it, for one – but it could be the first that is as poetic as it is entertaining.

And do you know what? There's something of America itself in that poetry. As much as this is a film about one individual, it's also about the individuals who come across Lincoln's path: some drunken and dissolute, some noble and good-natured, some who are a mix of those things and more. Which is why, when I said that there's not much conventional politics in *Young Mr. Lincoln*, I didn't mean that there is no politics at all. What this film shows us is the birth pool of American democracy: the townships and the homesteads, with all the messy bits attached. It's what folk as varied as Alexis de Tocqueville, Laura Ingalls Wilder and Walt Whitman wrote about. It's where Lincoln, in both a literal and a figurative sense, came from.

Of all Ford's films, it's surely *The Searchers* that has the most famous final shot: John Wayne's Ethan Edwards, the eternal outsider, framed by a doorway, walking off into the desert. But the one that closes *Young Mr. Lincoln* is just as satisfying. His case completed, Lincoln strides to the top of a hill as a storm sets in. The wind buffets him, lightning flashes up ahead, but instead of turning back towards town, he pauses, looks into the distance, and then keeps on going. This is American iconography, plain and simple – an art form that has had few better practitioners than Mr Ford. ●

Burke's American Dream

Jesse Norman MP tells Bright Blue why his hero Edmund Burke would have been cautious about Lords Reform and the modernising temper



JESSE NORMAN is MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire. He is the author of *Edmund Burke: Philosopher, Politician, Prophet*

As last year's fiscal cliff crisis reminded us, American politics has rarely been more polarised than it is today. Many Democrats rage with disappointment at a President for whom they had cherished wildly unrealistic hopes; while the Republican party is pulled ever further apart by a toxic combination of personal rivalry and ideological zeal. The result is rancour, legislative gridlock and fragmentation.

And temporarily at least, American conservatism seems to have all but lost its way. Just as the failure of communism removed a great enemy which served to unite the political parties, so it has allowed American conservatism to collapse inwards under the competing pressures and ideologies of neocons and theocons, palaeos and Tea-Partiers.

A modern Rip van Winkle might awaken after a sleep of several decades, with dim memories of what it meant to be a conservative: to believe in limited government, in respect for states' rights, in a strong nation, in fiscal discipline, in free trade and individual liberty.

As the American experience of Tea Party radicalism shows, the need for constitutional mechanisms like the Lords is stronger now than ever

He would be astounded to see present day American conservatives defending federal intervention in local schools, the massive ramp-up in federal spending after 2000, the use of the military not to fight wars but for nation-building, the imposition of tariffs on trade, and – as the Edward Snowden case highlights – numerous intrusions small and large on the freedom of the citizen.

Moderate positions have been abandoned, and common-sense ones spurned. Hostility to illegal immigrants, to gay couples, to contraception. A constitutional amendment against abortion. After brutal massacres of children, a proposal to put yet more guns in schools, while refusing modest controls on assault weapons, or even background checks.

How has this happened? The US constitution is often lauded as the greatest expression of popular democracy. But in

fact it also contains vital measures to restrain the direct expression of the popular will and inhibit partisanship. The genius of the American founders, and above all of James Madison, was to engineer a constitution that deliberately constrained and fragmented the power of government between state and federal levels; between executive, legislature and judiciary; and between House of Representatives and Senate. Each was thereby placed as a check and balance to another, forcing all into debate both as to the issues of the day, and as to the proper scope and limits of government itself.

These measures preceded the creation of party politics in America, led in the 1790s by Thomas Jefferson with Madison alongside him, and extended in the age of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. But political parties developed in the US over the following two hundred years as the only mass institutions founded on the idea of citizenship itself.

The two main parties were historically broad and weak; and this was their strength. Through them different interests could be brought forward to political debate, and a broad consensus could be maintained. While never contemplated within the US constitution, parties are now essential to its effective operation. They are not purely private institutions; all Americans have a stake in their success, and a two-party system needs both parties fully at the table in order to flourish.

Yet ironically, if American parties have their origins in Jefferson's thought, so too does modern Tea-Partyism. For Jefferson was an Enlightenment radical, who believed that political parties should be the direct expression of the popular will.

For him elected politicians are delegates receiving instructions from the people, instructions which are ratified and authorised through elections. Parties are the instruments of majority rule, working strictly through the rules and procedures laid down in the constitution. It is then but a short step to the beliefs that the constitution should be read entirely literally; that the electorate issues authoritative instructions; that a congressman who does not obey the electorate's instructions should be deselected; and that certain positions are to be taken as litmus tests of ideological soundness and solidarity. The result is extremism, division and factional conflict – and a deep tension with the consensus-building incentives contained within the US constitution itself.

As so often, the thought of Edmund Burke offers a salutary contrast. Burke never visited the American colonies, but he was for a period the London agent of the state of New York, co-authored a widely circulated history of the European colonies in America, and cut his political teeth as a young MP in the debate over the Stamp Act in 1765. As a result, he was an exceptionally acute analyst of colonial discontents – and, as far as domestic politics allowed, an admirer of the Americans themselves.

Most vital of all, genuine party politics demands that those who are elected act as representatives, not as delegates acting under instructions from their constituents

Burke's great Speech on Conciliation gives some flavour of his feelings. The time is March 1775, and the American colonies are in uproar over the hated tea tax and the high-handedness of Lord North's administration. Burke makes one last despairing attempt to bring Parliament to its senses.

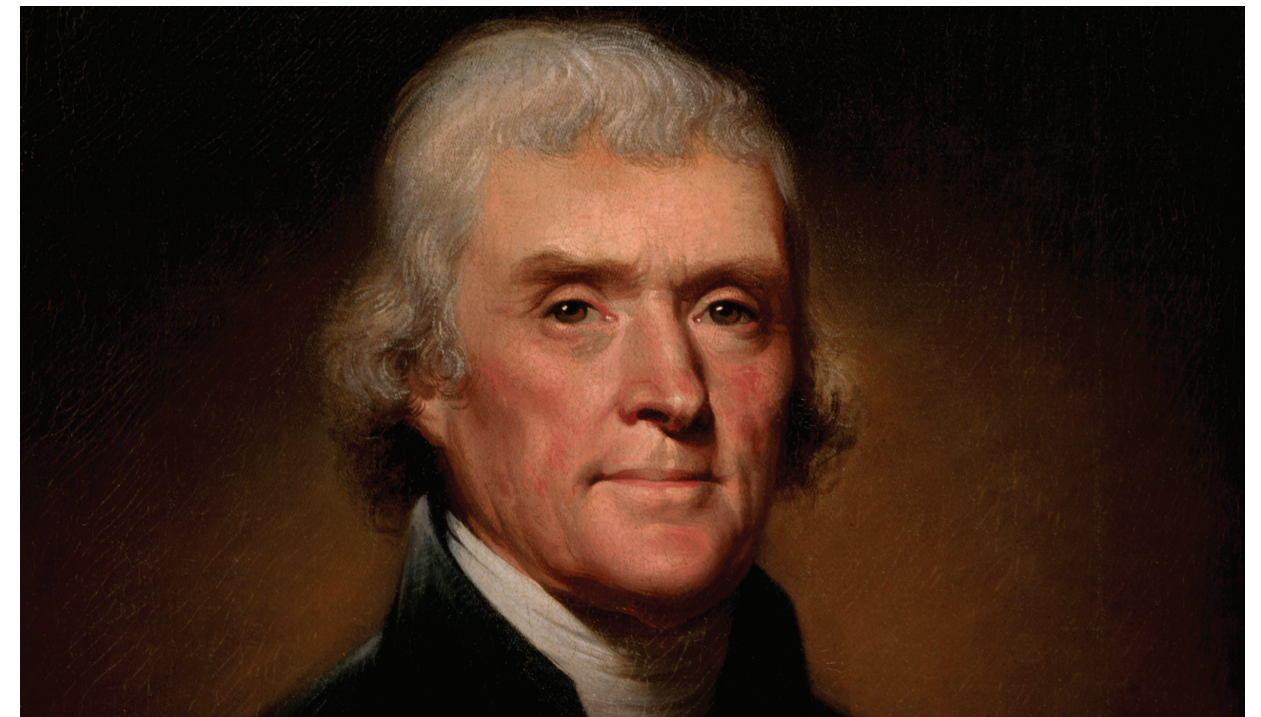
His message is plain and bold: "The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord... [or] to depend on the

juridical determination of perplexing questions... It is simple peace, sought in its natural course and in its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace."

Why conciliation? Because of America's rapidly expanding population, because of its growing commercial strength, but most of all because of the American spirit itself. "In this character of the Americans a love of freedom is the predominating feature... This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies, probably, than in any other people of the earth... We cannot falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates... your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery."

The Speech on Conciliation retains its power to this day. Part poem, part sermon, part homily, it is a stylistic hybrid. Again and again Burke shows his extraordinary ability to swoop from specific detail to timeless Olympian generalization: "A nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered" is one such. Or this: "Genuine simplicity of heart is an healing and cementing principle... Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together."

Yet Burke was not merely an admirer of the Americans, and an advocate of greater mutual understanding and trust



Thomas Jefferson, the 1790s' answer to Douglas Carswell

between Britain and the thirteen colonies. Writing two decades before Jefferson, he was also the first framer of the modern conceptions of a political party and of political representation, as well as being a principal architect of the Rockingham Whigs, the first proto-political party. So – to return to our main theme – it is no surprise that for Burke the answer to factionalism lies within political parties themselves.

For Burke, a party is “a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed”. Unlike political factions, parties do not disintegrate when they lose power. They remain true to a core of principles, and continue to make the case for those principles even when out of office. They are an institutional corrective to personal, arbitrary or capricious government.

It is only when modernisation means conservative reform that we can be sure it reflects the thought and spirit of Burke himself

Properly functioning parties are thus the antidote to factional politics. They foster stability, allowing an orderly and peaceful transfer of political power after general elections. Because they must debate and publicly defend collective principles and policy, they bring a degree of openness and a focus on the national interest. They remove the need for political superheroes, allowing people of normal decency and ability to play a role in politics, and act as valuable recruiting and training grounds for new talent.

Most vital of all, genuine party politics demands that those who are elected act as representatives, not as delegates acting under instructions from their constituents. As Burke memorably proclaimed in his Speech to the Electors of Bristol in 1774, a representative’s “unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience” he should not sacrifice to his constituents.

Burke thus avoids the political traps created by Jeffersonian radicalism. But his views also suit the British constitutional tradition. For, as in America, there are two vital countervailing principles within the British constitution too. The first is what we would now call a democratic principle: that political control ultimately derives from the consent of the governed, as renewed at general elections. The second is a constitutional principle: that the popular will should be moderated through longer-term institutions which are not tied to the electoral cycle, but which reflect other perspectives, other interests and other values, and which permit and encourage collective vision.

As Burke put it, “No legislator, at any period of the world, has willingly placed the seat of active power in the hands of the multitude. The people are the natural control on authority; but

to exercise and to control together is contradictory and impossible.” Sovereignty in Britain thus resides not in the people, but in that great composite authority, the Queen-in-Parliament.

And Parliament includes the House of Lords. The Lords is a far from perfect institution, and thoughtful recent measures to reform it by reducing the numbers and removing those with criminal records are highly welcome. But as the American experience of Tea Party radicalism shows, the need for constitutional mechanisms like the Lords – able to bring expertise, reflection, diverse opinions and a long-term perspective to politics – is stronger now than ever.

Burke’s anti-radicalism is thus an expression of his conservatism; it springs from his desire to preserve the social order as a trust, and to prevent society from being the creature of any individual, any sect or section, or any particular generation.

In his view, perfection is not given to man, and so politics is an intrinsically messy business, in which any large decision risks doing damage to the innumerable private arrangements and understandings that make up the social fabric. People naturally aspire to support themselves and their families, to exercise their personal freedoms and capacities, and to acquire property and status. The function of politics, then, is one of reconciliation and enablement: to provide a forum and a framework of law and practice within which individual differences and grievances can be redressed, individual freedom can be reconciled with the demands of the social order, and public deliberation extended via man’s inherent capacity for self-government.

The corollary of this emphasis on custom and practice is a highly distinctive conception of political leadership. For Burke government is not merely about passing laws or aggressive law enforcement, for “nations are not primarily ruled by laws: less by violence... Nations are governed by the same methods... by which an individual without authority is often able to govern... his equals and his superiors; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it.” Again and again, Burke returns in his writings and speeches to the idea of governing “with the temper of the people”, insisting that “The temper of the people amongst whom he presides ought... to be the first study of a statesman”.

Arguably, one measure of the American and British constitutions is that in their different ways they encourage political leaders to consult and govern with “the temper of the people”. But temper is not opinion, and Burke’s thought also raises a question about the very idea of “modernisation” itself. Burke is sometimes claimed as an ally of political modernisation. But if modernisation is conceived as an attempt to impose a certain idea of modernity onto a society, or to align current policy directly with current popular opinion, or to amend political principle to suit present circumstance, then there can be little doubt that Burke would have rejected it. It is only when modernisation means conservative reform that we can be sure it reflects the thought and the spirit of Burke himself. ●

Opening an American mind

Brooks Newmark, the American-born MP and Vice-President of the Harvard Alumni Association, tells British students to head to the Ivy League



BROOKS NEWMARK *has served as a Government Whip, Lord Commissioner HM Treasury, and was a Member of the Treasury Select Committee*

I was lucky enough to have had the opportunity to attend both Harvard and Oxford, so I feel well placed to compare and understand the best of America and Britain’s respective education systems.

Whilst many tertiary level academic institutions in both countries offer exceptionally high standards of education, American universities offer that little bit more at undergraduate level by encouraging students to study a wide range of subjects, and offering the flexibility to change the core subject of your degree throughout your time there.

Most American undergraduate courses take place over a four year period with each year being split into two semesters. During each semester you will take four courses, half of which will reflect your Major, or core subject, while the other half are in other subjects. At Harvard, I majored in History for 50% of my time, but in addition to History I studied everything from Italian, which fulfilled a foreign language requirement, to Astrophysics and Socio Biology, to fulfill science requirements. There was even a required course in Expository Writing, and the chance to study an introductory course in Economics with JK Galbraith, to fulfill my social science requirements.

The British education system, on the other hand, tends to be focused on one subject with almost no flexibility to change your degree once you are accepted. An undergraduate degree

course in Britain is generally broken down into three terms over a three year period – although Scottish courses tend to involve a four year degree. It was the breadth of education that led me to go to the US to study and that is why I encouraged my two eldest children to do likewise.

American universities offer that little bit more at undergraduate level by encouraging students to study a wide range of subjects

The admissions process between the two countries is also very different. Most US universities look at much more than your academic achievements – in part, because the system depends on rounded individuals, who can adapt to a broad range of thought. As a Harvard Admissions officer once told me, “we can fill Harvard eight times over with kids who are straight As and Valedictorian – we look for more than that.” At Harvard you are assessed on a combination of your academic performance over four years at High School, your performance on the standardized Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), your extracurricular activities (sport, music, volunteer work etc), two teachers and a headteacher’s recommendations – as well as your interview.

The data points you are assessed on are far broader than in the UK, where ultimately you are assessed on purely academic performance over a relatively small exam period, with sometimes an interview.

This ultimately leads to a very different undergraduate experience. I found the student bodies at both Harvard and Oxford to be very bright and talented but at Harvard I found there to be a much broader and more diverse range of individuals from a variety of backgrounds who had done much more with their lives than just succeed in the classroom. Harvard did not need to compromise standards to get students from disadvantaged backgrounds, but nor did they compare like for like between students from the finest private schools and those who went to poor state schools.

Until recently, the disparity in price between a British education and an American one, meant that many British students were put off the idea of studying overseas. However, the rise in UK tuition fees, in addition to the lure of generous scholarships in America has made studying there more viable than in previous years. According to the US-UK Fulbright Commission, Harvard saw a 45% increase in applications from British students between 2009/10 to 2011/12. Harvard Admissions is need blind so your financial aid is 100% if your parents earn under \$60,000 and there is a sliding scale of financial support for parents earning up to \$180,000 (taking into account how many children your parents have, their income and their assets).

I loved my time at both the institutions I studied at and made many friends at both but if I had a choice again I would still choose Harvard over Oxford for both its flexible and broad educational experience and the rich variety of students I met there. ●



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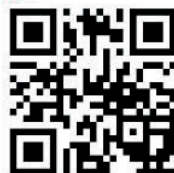
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