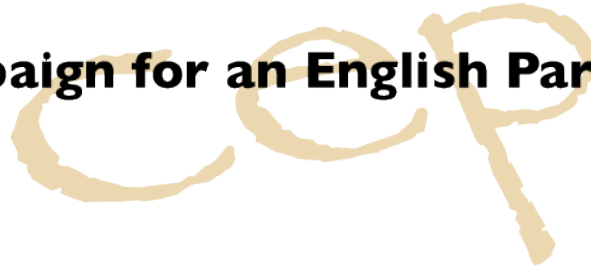


Campaign for an English Parliament



DEVOLUTION TEN YEARS ON

THE VIEW FROM ENGLAND

SUBMISSION TO THE DEVOLUTION COMMISSION

BY

THE CAMPAIGN FOR AN ENGLISH PARLIAMENT

DEVOLUTION TEN YEARS ON-THE VIEW FROM ENGLAND

SUBMISSION TO THE DEVOLUTION COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

The remit of the Calman Commission is to carry out an independent review of the experience of devolution in Scotland. The Devolution Acts have had a profound effect on the constitution of the UK and the experience of government by all UK citizens, 85% of whom live in England. It is for this reason, and that there appears to be no intention by the UK Government to assess the impact of devolution on England, that we in the Campaign for an English Parliament (CEP) have requested and received permission to make a submission to this enquiry.

The 1998 Devolution Acts for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland profoundly changed the nature of the United Kingdom. Britain is now referred to by the UK Government as “the nations and regions of Britain”. Scotland, Wales and the province of Northern Ireland have been recognised as distinct within the UK but England has not.

It is said that the people of England do not care about this incomplete devolution. The reason they appear not to care is because for ten years they have been largely kept in ignorance of the effects it has upon them. The British media and political parties have acted, either deliberately or through ignorance, in such a way as to obscure these issues in England.

The British television media, (unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there are no national television channels devoted to England), still do not entirely explain, when reporting on devolved issues and politics, the difference between the situation in England and that of the devolved territories. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have national newspapers that consistently report on devolution issues. England has none. The British newspapers, by confusing Britain and England, also obscure the differences within the UK that incomplete devolution has caused particularly when referring to the National Health Service of England.

The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative parties issue separate manifestos for Scotland and Wales but do not do so for England. The manifestos available in England address, or refer to Britain or the UK. The man in the street in Surrey can be expected to believe that the manifesto available to him is applicable to the whole of the UK. Neither is he aware that greater benefits are being offered to Scotland and Wales by these Parties than they offer to us in England although we all pay the same taxes.

SUMMARY

The effect of the current devolutionary settlements in the UK is to marginalise England, constitutionally, politically, financially, economically and culturally.

Constitutionally there are two questions to be answered; the West Lothian (WLQ) and the English (EQ).

The first asks: Why should Scottish MPs to the UK Parliament be barred from taking part in, and voting on, matters internal to Scotland that affect their constituents, but still be able to influence internal matters in England? No MP of an English constituency now has reciprocal rights in Scotland.

The second asks: Why should MPs from Scotland, whose constituents are not affected and who are thus non-representative, be able to have ministerial portfolios for internal matters in England, be members of Cabinet, which decides policy for England, and also be a Prime Minister with power over internal English affairs, which account for the majority of UK Parliament business?

These questions are specific to the relationship between Scotland, which has primary legislative powers over its internal affairs, and England, which has none. However this question will become increasingly relevant to UK MPs of Welsh constituencies as the Welsh Assembly acquires increased powers and to UK MPs from Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland each enjoy much higher levels of public spending per head of population than England even though Scotland, in 2006, was the fifth wealthiest region, per capita, of the 12 United Kingdom Regions. (www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/) These subsidies currently cost over £20 billion each year and are projected to rise. The subsidy to Scotland has doubled since Labour came to power.

The benefits that the people of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales enjoy, but are not enjoyed by the people of England, as a result of this spending formula include:

- Free personal care elderly people in Scotland.
- Much cheaper University education fees for Scottish (and EU) students in Scotland and support when studying in England. (English students at English and Scottish universities have to pay up-front fees and top-up fees).
- Much higher spending per pupil for schools in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales than in England. (Leading to the concern for health with 37p per head paid for meals for children in England compared with £1 per head in Scotland)
- Wales, prescriptions charges abolished in 2007, and to be abolished in Scotland in 2011, but continually increased by the UK Government for England.
- Availability of drugs for cancer and Alzheimer's disease among others, denied on the grounds of cost (masquerading as cost effectiveness), to the people of England

In the Preface to the Scotland Devolution Bill, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, wrote, "Scotland is a proud, historic nation". By that statement, he clearly implied that Scotland has a recognisable history, distinct from the rest of Britain & of which it can legitimately be 'proud'. The Wales Devolution White Paper exhorts & instructs the National Assembly for Wales as "the forum for the nation" to "provide leadership to re-invigorate all aspects of Welsh life & culture".

Those affirmations of national identity and support for the national culture by a national Parliament are what we require for England. An English Parliament, if funded equitably, could

spend the money on its own priorities and end the resentment caused by comparisons with the more generous funding of the other devolved territories.

BACKGROUND

Various acts and Acts of the rulers and governments of England, Scotland and Great Britain have resulted in the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland represented by one Government. In the last decade this unity has been weakened by the Devolution Acts, which have given Scotland and Wales and the province of Northern Ireland their own governments with certain autonomy in internal affairs. The power to allow or repeal this autonomy or any expression of it remains with the UK Government but is unlikely ever to be wielded.

From Union to Devolution

Britain is a political construct. The Act of Union in 1707 created the politically powerful and economically successful British State. That Act suspended both the pre-existing English and Scottish Parliaments. Article III states “That the United Kingdom of Great Britain be represented by one and the same Parliament, to be styled the Parliament of Great Britain”.

In 1988 The Scottish Constitutional Convention promoted Scotland’s Claim of Right *“Scotland's Parliament. Scotland's Right: We acknowledge the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of Government best suited to their needs.”* in the context of the sovereign right of self-determination for nations and peoples having been proclaimed in the [United Nations Charter](#) and the commonly accepted principle of "rule by consent".

The Scottish claim was signed by all the Scottish Labour MPs, saving Tam Dalyell. In 1997, with the advent of the Labour Government of the UK, nearly one third of that initial cabinet (7 out of 24) had signed that claim and were thus pivotal in influencing the Labour UK Government, which issued the white paper, the Scotland Devolution Bill 1998.

In the debate on that Bill the then member of the Labour Government and secretary of State for Scotland, Donald Dewar, in answer to a question said:

*The right hon. Gentleman asked an important question about sovereignty and the Claim of Right. Let me make it very clear to him--the right hon. Gentleman has heard me do so on a number of occasions--that this is a scheme of devolved power which has life because I hope that the House will be persuaded that it is right for the governance of the country. Of course, parliamentary sovereignty remains part of that scheme. The Claim of Right, however, is important because it recognises the principle that people in Scotland, **as in any other area**, have the right to decide their own political future.*

The words highlighted indicate how careful he was not to allocate this right to other distinct countries.

Referenda in Scotland and Wales which asked the questions “I agree that there should be a Scottish Parliament/Welsh Assembly” or “I do not agree that there should be a Scottish

Parliament/Welsh Assembly” were used to give credence to the will of these nations for internal self government. However the figures for the populations voting for national government were 44% in Scotland represented as “the settled will of the Scottish people” and 25% in Wales. The Northern Ireland Assembly was established following the signing of the Belfast Agreement (also known as the ‘Good Friday’ Agreement) on 10 April 1998. The electorate of Northern Ireland endorsed the Belfast Agreement in a referendum held on 22 May 1998.

In 1998 the Scottish Parliament, together with recognition of the Scottish nation, its separate history and culture, was restored. Wales also gained that recognition and both are now legal, political and constitutional entities. The Northern Ireland Assembly was also restored having been originally created in 1973. England has received no such recognition. Our Parliament, the mother of Parliaments, remains suspended and our country has no legal, political or constitutional existence. Indeed the Encyclopaedia Britannica describes England thus: *'Outside the British Isles, England is often erroneously considered synonymous with the island of Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) and even with the entire United Kingdom. Despite the political, economic, and cultural legacy that has secured the perpetuation of its name, England no longer officially exists as a governmental or political unit—unlike Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, which all have varying degrees of self-government in domestic affairs. It is rare for institutions to operate for England alone. Notable exceptions are the Church of England (Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, including Northern Ireland, have separate branches of the Anglican Communion) and sports associations for cricket, rugby, and football (soccer). In many ways England has seemingly been absorbed within the larger mass of Great Britain since the Act of Union of 1707.'* Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2004

England has now been reduced within the United Kingdom (UK) to the current status of the county of Middlesex, a name only and politically non-existent. England is the only country & nation in Europe without a national government! Since the Devolution Acts, 12 out of 14 polls (see appendix) have consistently shown that the people of England are dissatisfied with the status quo and wish for their country to be treated as a whole in equality with Scotland and Wales and to have some form of national self government.

These polls have been ignored and it thus appears that the UK government believes in self government for all, but not the people of England. Objections to these polls include the accusation that they are biased. However when like is compared with like and the question the same as that posed by the British Government in the referenda for Scotland and Wales it can be seen that the overwhelming answer is that the people of England do want the same measure of self government offered to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The powers of home rule that were allocated to Scotland and Wales were on the basis of their nationhood. However, England was disregarded, politically marginalised and has subsequently been referred to by the UK Government not by name, as would be fitting for a country united for over 1000 years, but as the “regions” of Britain.

This policy was in line with the Government’s proposal that the existing regional divisions, which were 20th century artefacts devised for administrative reasons only, could be beefed up

into unelected Regional Assemblies and which could, following referenda to legitimise them as elected, then be presented to the public as the equivalent to the devolution granted to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. All polls in the run up to and result of the referendum in the north east of England showed unequivocally that the English public did not accept this policy.

With the national/internal interests of Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland addressed by devolution it has become apparent that these same legitimate interests of England have been ignored. Moreover the disparity in provision constitutionally, economically, financially and culturally is more and more glaringly obvious. It is instructive to note the requirements of the 1707 Act of Union Article IV: *That all the subjects of the United Kingdom of Great Britain shall have full communication of all other rights, privileges, and advantages which do or may belong to the subjects of either kingdom* and Article VI: *That all parts of the United Kingdom shall have the same allowances, encouragements and drawbacks*. One might be forgiven for supposing not only that Article III had been breached but also these provisions.

The matters devolved are as follows:

- the National Health Service;
- schools and teacher training;
- further and higher education;
- local government finance and taxation;
- land-use planning and building control;
- the environment;
- passenger and road transport;
- economic development and financial assistance to industry;
- civil and criminal courts;
- prisons;
- police and fire services;
- food standards;
- certain areas of agriculture and fisheries;
- the arts;
- sport.

In the last decade we have seen therefore increasing differences in the internal governance of the UK. Striking examples are free prescriptions in Wales and soon in Scotland, but increased charges in England; a policy of free personal care for the old in Scotland; life saving drugs available on the NHS in Scotland and Wales, but not in England. This has led to the discriminatory situation where in the same hospital in England English patients are denied these expensive drugs whereas Welsh patients are treated. (Hansard, Daniel Kawczynski, House of Commons debates, Monday, 9 January 2006, Orders of the Day — Government of Wales Bill)

This disparity has been made possible by the funding formula that ensures that in 2008 every single person in England receives £2,254 less support from the UK Government than those in Northern Ireland, £1,644 less than Scots and £1,042 less than the Welsh (Office for National Statistics PESA 2008). Part of this largesse is required to pay for the 297 extra MPs' salaries, pensions, attendant bureaucrats, their salaries and pensions, and the costs of the devolved government buildings. (297= 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament, 60 Welsh Assembly Members and 108 Members of the Legislative Assembly of Northern Ireland)

Meanwhile national taxation in England increases since the UK government has made it possible for local taxes to increase even more with new charges for rubbish collection, congestion charging (turned down in Edinburgh by a referendum), identity cards (in 2005 MSPs voted against them) and increased council taxes. Council taxes are to be abolished in Scotland in favour of local income tax.

The effects of these changes on the people of England were never considered and their opinion was never canvassed. Although now that they are beginning to make their voice heard it is they and our campaign that are accused of trying to destroy the Union!

People are taking notice.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of the devolution settlements on England in more detail, the response of the current Labour UK Government, the other main British political parties and the media and to propose that the only equitable answer is, indeed, to treat England equitably. The paper will also address the alternative “solutions” proposed and the objections that have been raised to the restitution of our ancient English Parliament, the Mother of Parliaments.

EFFECTS OF THE DEVOLUTION SETTLEMENTS ON ENGLAND

Constitutional deficit

Reference

Before the Devolution Acts of 1998 the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland consisted of the United Kingdoms of Scotland and England (Wales having been incorporated into England by the Tudor King, Henry VIII) and the province of Northern Ireland. The UK Government, when elected in 1997, started referring to the nations and regions of Britain. What are we to understand by this? That Britain has nations and regions? In the first place nations are collections of people with the same culture and history and regions are geographical areas. There is no logical comparison between the two. However what we are to understand is that the countries of Scotland and Wales are inhabited by nations. So what is meant by regions in the plural? What we must now understand is that England may no longer be regarded as a distinct country but as a collection of regions. These regions are 20th Century artefacts created for administrative reasons having no relation to England’s cultural heritage. Worse still a cursory interrogation of the internet shows us that such degradation of the status of England is all pervasive.

Representation

Dedicated National Fora:

Citizens of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have the right to elect dedicated representatives to national fora, which exist to promote the interests of those territories. England has no such dedicated representatives. MPs in the UK Parliament returned from English constituencies (often incorrectly and misleadingly called English MPs) have no such remit. Moreover, all follow their party line and put the interests of the Union before the interests of England and some have declared themselves by expressing views that are positively antipathetic to England.

The Scottish Parliament has powers to create Acts, which are primary legislation, without the moderating influence of the House of Lords or any second house, such as a senate, and has tax raising powers. The Welsh Assembly has secondary legislating powers which mean that it can issue its own regulations, appropriate to needs in Wales, under Acts of the UK Government. The Northern Ireland Assembly has legislative powers, although the precise package is different from those of the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Parliament. However, the Assembly

will have full legislative and executive power over finance and personnel, agriculture, education, health and social services, economic development and environment. (www.parliament.com)

The UK House of Lords has no function within Scotland but contains members not only from Scotland but also from across the UK who have no credentials to represent English interests, but can debate, revise and amend legislation that affects only England.

Legislation without Representation:

"The Tweed Regulation Order 2007" was made by the Scottish Executive. Article 11 of that order creates an offence and this offence applies to the River Till, which is entirely within England. The Scottish Executive, therefore, is empowered to make laws binding on the people of England although they have no representatives there. The people affected cannot make representations to their MPs as the MPs of English constituencies that are affected have no say in the Scottish Parliament.

Composition of the UK Parliament:

Not only do MPs from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have unreciprocated powers over England but also those from Scotland and Wales individually represent fewer people than MPs in England because the population of their constituencies are much smaller. Thus Scotland has 8.4% of the UK population but 10% of the British MPs representing them in the UK Parliament and Wales has 5% of the UK population but 7% of UK MPs. So that, in England, we are under represented in the UK Parliament as each MP has to represent more constituents (average 95,960) than an MP of a Scottish constituency (average 86,728) or a Welsh constituency (average 74,150) *(Based on Office of National Statistics data Aug 2007)*

Representation within the UK government:

Discussions as to the disbursement of UK tax revenue take place in the UK Treasury. In these discussions as with many other decision making meetings Scotland, Wales and Northern Irish interests are pursued by representatives from their devolved administrations. There is no one there to represent English interests. If there had been perhaps the last act of Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer in clawing back £2billion from the health service in England would have been prevented. How would his constituents have felt if he had done that to Scotland? Moreover that money had already attracted the working of the funding formula and if it would ever have been returned yet a further donation from UK taxes would have been due to the rest of the UK under the current formula.

While the funding formula may be the unpopular face of asymmetric devolution the true inequality lies in the opacity and unrepresentative nature of decision making – who speaks for England, who has the express authority of the people of England to represent their interest? The constitutional issues are of fairness and democracy.

The European Union:

Following devolution the citizens of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have, through their devolved administrations, been given separate voices within the UK Parliament to advise on formulating UK policy with regard to the EU. They also have separate advisers to the UK's representation to the EU, which lobbies the EU on behalf of the UK. Consequently, the governments of those regions are party to the flow of information from the EU, help to shape UK-EU policy, have access to most of the decision making such as ad hoc Whitehall groupings, and, through their respective Secretaries of State, have a further channel by which to affect policy making in the UK government. *(Adapted from the CEP publication "Devolution in the UK – Answering the English Question")*.

In addition, individually, ministers of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies can represent the UK and hence England in the European Commission. No MP from England has such power, nor would anyone representing any regional form of devolution in England.

This has led to the situation whereby EU farm payments have been made in a timely manner in the devolved territories of the UK but not to English farmers. Not only does it appear that the UK Government Ministry, the Department of the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), feels no urgency in making the proper payments to English farmers on time but also that it has no concern to deliver these payments at all since it lobbied the EU to be able to divert these funds from farmers to the environment. Moreover its late payment has attracted penalty fines from the EU which must be paid out of the funding to DEFRA allotted by the UK Treasury, thereby diminishing even more the funds available to support English agriculture. It is thus clear that the interests of the UK government are not determined by the needs of the people of England.

[www.first4farming.com/F4F/news/26th October 2007](http://www.first4farming.com/F4F/news/26th%20October%202007), Yorkshire Post November 2006, Neil Parish MEP; www.guengl.eu/Newsroom » [GUE/NGL in the news](#) Voluntary Modulation Common agricultural Policy 19/2/07)

EU rules give fishing quotas to the UK, not to the individual nations but those rules can be influenced by Ministers from Scotland who can also represent the UK in Brussels. No-one can represent English interests in Brussels. For instance from BBC News Scotland, January 2004 “Talks on EU fish catches deal: Deputy Fisheries’ Minister (in the Scottish Executive) Allan Wilson has said he is *“pulling out all the stops”* to secure a better deal for the Scottish fleet. Negotiations with the European Commission are continuing. The Scottish Executive is seeking quota changes to allow fishermen improved access to haddock stocks”. Since fish quotas are allocated to the UK as a whole, what influence should an MSP have on negotiations over UK fish quotas, particularly if the areas to be fished are in question?

These issues are still ongoing and the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), which represents fishermen in the rest of the UK as Scotland has a separate organisation, response in August 2008 to the Scottish Executive’s Consultation on a Separate Quota System in Scotland states: *“We have made clear that it is completely unacceptable and almost certainly illegal for the Scottish Executive to unilaterally define “Scottish quota.” Clearly this is a matter that will have to be resolved either at a high political level or in the Courts.If, in the face of opposition from significant parts of the Scottish fishing industry, legal challenges and whatever position Defra eventually takes, the Scottish Executive decides to proceed with its proposals, we are in for a torrid time. As there is no question of allowing the Scottish Executive to impose its will unilaterally, we must enter difficult negotiations on the terms of the divorce”.*

British/Irish Council:

The British/Irish Council, otherwise known as the Council of the Isles, has representatives not only from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but even from the Bailiwicks of Jersey Guernsey and the States of the Isle of Man. Not one of the representatives to this forum

represents England. The people of England have no representation either in or through their own Parliament to promote their interests within the UK government and abroad.

Accountability

Devolution has created two classes of MPs in the House of Commons; those who can only debate, influence and vote on their own country's domestic matters and those who cannot but can debate, influence and vote on everyone else's.

This imbalance of power following devolution was anticipated by Tam Dalyell when MP for West Lothian, thus it is now known as the West Lothian question. His view was that Scottish MPs elected to the UK parliament would have no power to affect matters internal to Scotland. However they do have power over matters internal to England and they are assiduous in using that right.

Vernon Bogdanor in his book "Devolution in the United Kingdom" quotes from the Crossman diaries where Crossman records that he had it in mind to attend a debate on the Social Work (Scotland) Bill in 1968 but "Just as we were going in we realised that the Scots would suspect some poisonous English conspiracy so we would have to keep out." More sensitive perhaps than the Labour MP of a Scottish constituency, who was quoted as saying "We are all members of the United Kingdom parliament with full rights **and we intend to exercise them**" when challenged over voting to ban hunting in England.

It was the 41 whipped labour MPs of Scottish constituencies that swung the vote for foundation hospitals in England by a majority of 35. This proposal had already been discarded by the Scottish Parliament.

Moreover the people of England have had a Secretary of State for Health and another for Transport that did not have to answer to their own constituents for what they did in England, as health and transport are matters devolved to the Scottish parliament. This is power without responsibility and an affront to the fundamental test of democracy, which is accountability. Conversely no MP for an English constituency can have power over these matters in Scotland.

While the situation for Wales is currently different as the UK Parliament retains the power of primary legislation in devolved matters, nevertheless the principle of accountability will become more pressing as Wales moves to full devolution. In addition the influence of Northern Irish UK MPs cannot now be ignored since the leader of the Conservative Party now has entered into a formal arrangement with the majority party of Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party.

England has been disregarded and politically marginalised.

Financial deficit

Funding

The funding of those parts of the UK that are not England remained largely obscure until devolution shone a light on to the situation and allowed the greater funding per head of all parts of the UK which are not England to be revealed and exposed. A differential formula was established in 1888.

In 1888, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Goschen MP, announced in his Budget Statement the distribution of a predecessor of revenue support grant to local authorities on the basis of a formula giving 80 per cent to England and Wales, 11 per cent to Scotland, and 9 per cent to Ireland. The use of that formula was formally discontinued in 1959, in parallel with the introduction of the Plowden reforms. From 1959 until 1978, the budget of the Scottish Office was determined in the same way as that of other government departments. During the protracted proceedings on devolution in the 1970s, the then government proposed that the funding of the (proposed) devolved assemblies in Scotland and Wales should be determined by a new formula giving the Assemblies a set proportion of English expenditure (now known as the Barnett formula). That formula was to be determined, in consultation with the Assemblies, on the basis of a needs assessment, and would be reviewed, again taking account of changing relative need, from time to time (perhaps every four years) to coincide with the term of the Assemblies. Abstracted from "the origins and role of the Barnett formula", Aberdeen University

Analysis shows that the Goschen proportion gave Scotland a poor deal until 1901, but an increasingly good deal thereafter. Thus when devolution in the UK reawoke in the 1970s, spending per head in Scotland and Northern Ireland was far ahead of spending per head in England and Wales. From The Fiscal Crisis of the United Kingdom, Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan Nuffield College Working Papers in Politics, 2002 W10

The people of England have been and remain the poorest relation when it comes to apportioning revenue but as a community have no say in how their taxes are spent. Lord Barnett himself has said recently that this formula is outdated.

Differential funding might have been acceptable if based on need as was originally intended for the Barnett formula. However, the reviews envisaged have not been undertaken. It is, nevertheless, acknowledged that even if there was parity in funding, decisions by national governments as to priorities might be different. The problem is that England has neither a national parliament in which such decisions can be made nor any representative to negotiate sufficient funding for England's needs with the UK Treasury. However, the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments do have such representatives. In addition, decisions as to expenditure and distribution of funds in England can be made by UK ministries which may be, and have been, led by those who themselves and their constituents are unaffected by such decisions. The bedrock of democracy is accountability. The people of England have been left with a sense of impotence.

Taxes (costs) imposed on England only.

National taxation in England continues to increase. Prescription charges have increased and the UK government has made it possible for local taxes to increase even more. Some of the possible future impositions were described earlier.

The new tax raising powers allocated by the UK Government have shown how regional government by quangos is being covertly bolstered. The following is extracted from the Conservative Party website. (www.conservatives.com)

The small print of Government documents slipped out on 22nd August 2008 reveals that Labour Ministers are to move ahead with plans to end councils' control over rubbish collections. Under Government proposals, new unelected Joint Waste Authorities will take control of rubbish collections from elected local councils. The regional quangos will have powers to impose new bin taxes, bin fines and fortnightly collections. The quangos will be staffed (by) a new tier of regional officers, spin doctors and bin inspectors, all at taxpayers' expense.

They do not say which taxpayers will be paying but the TaxPayers' Alliance August 2008 report on the economics of the effectiveness of this covert regional governance is illustrative. Their research indicated that, using detailed analysis of regional economic statistics showed, on almost every measure in almost every area, the regions did better in the seven years before Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were introduced than in the first seven years of their existence.

In addition UK tax now funds 943 representative politicians. 85% of those taxpayers were never consulted as to whether they wished to finance the extra 297 national representatives, who do not represent them, their current and future expense and the concomitant layers of bureaucracy.

Economic consequences

Education:

In primary and secondary education not only are class sizes smaller in Scotland than England (The Guardian 21 June 2007 and 22 March 2008) but the amount spent on children's meals is greater (school meals, Scotland Bill, 2001, The Guardian 15 February 2005). Thus the Scottish Executive has made sure that Scottish children are much better provided for in education than the UK Government has for England.

In tertiary education the amount Scottish students have to pay is minimal compared with the fees and top-up fees levied on other UK students. To add insult to injury EU students in Scottish further education institutions have the same advantages as Scottish students, which are denied other students from the UK. Similar discrimination is operational in Wales. One of our members has said "My son at Aberystwyth University does not receive the same funding as his Welsh friends and Scottish students receive an even better deal. He feels like a second class citizen of the UK and will start his career with bigger debts than similar Welsh and Scottish students". Since all UK citizens pay the same taxes this cannot be fair. English students leave university with the highest debts in the UK and will be more proportionately as contributions from students who live in Scotland were abolished in February 2008 (news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education). There is no English democratic representative body to fight for equal treatment.

Welfare:

In England and Wales personal care is not provided free by local authorities even when a patient has a debilitating illness such as Alzheimer's disease, and must be paid for by the patient to the extent of all their assets having to be sold. The Daily Telegraph reported in October 2007 that in Scotland, where both personal and nursing care are paid for, homes receive up to £210 funding per person a week, whereas in England, where only nursing care is paid for, the maximum is £101. In Scotland if the elderly live at home it is free. A notice given by a State Benefits Consultant to the pensioners of a major UK Company states that the position for elderly Scots who move south to be nearer their families having had their care costs subsidised in Scotland was not made clear but it is definite that people moving north from England will not be entitled to the subsidy!

Personal care in one's own home must be paid for in England and Wales but not in Scotland and Northern Ireland, although the age eligibility is different.

Health:

If you are a UK resident, you are entitled to free NHS eye and dental examinations in Scotland (Scottish government guide 2007). However, those UK taxpayers who wish to partake of the benefits of other areas of the UK are insultingly called health tourists. (BBC news April 2005 "Tighter rules are to be introduced to stop "health tourists" taking advantage of cheaper prescriptions in Wales, First Minister Rhodri Morgan has said".) The cost of prescriptions in England has increased to £7.10. Although prepayment reduces the cost to some extent and there is help for some families on very low income and little capital, this can represent a crippling cost to many families that have members with most chronic conditions or long term illness.

Transport:

Nationwide free bus travel for pensioners has been available in Scotland since 2006. It is still not as widely available in England as there are restrictions as to time of use and crossing administrative boundaries.

The important Leeds supertram scheme was scrapped by the then Transport Minister, Alistair Darling, the MP for Edinburgh South West. At the same time his constituents benefited from the go ahead for a tram network there. The expensive Crossrail link for London ensures, under the funding system, that the other territories of the UK get an extra subsidy but the rest of England gets nothing. The last bridge tolls in Scotland were scrapped in August 2008 meanwhile bridge tolls in England are set to increase. (BBC News August 2008)

Economic development:

Rates for businesses have been set by Scottish Ministers as a uniform poundage rate to be levied throughout Scotland for each financial year (i.e. 1 April to 31 March). The poundage rate for Scotland in 2008-09 is 45.8 pence. Larger businesses in 2008-09 (rateable value in excess of £29,000) pay a poundage supplement of 0.4 pence. (www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government)

In addition the small business rate reduction for Scotland in 2008 is on a scale of 80% for rateable values below £8000 to 20% at £15000 (£300) and projected for 2009 to be on a scale of 100% and 25% respectively. (THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (LEVYING) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 SSI/2008/85)

In England the poundage rate is higher at 46.2p and the small business rate reduction is on a scale of 50% up to £5,000 rateable value and a sliding scale up to £9,999. Properties with a Rateable Value from £10,000 up to £14,999 (outside Greater London) will not receive a percentage reduction but their rate bill will be calculated on the Small Business Non-Domestic Rating Multiplier which is 45.8p. (£6,780) (www.voa.gov.uk/Business_rates). It is clear that there is a considerable difference in business rate due at a rateable value of £15,000 between each country.

Apart from funding from UK taxes, important funds are received from the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), which are allocated according to objective and regions. Objective 1 funds support development in the less prosperous regions and aims particularly to "narrow the gap between the development levels of the various regions". Objective 2 of the Structural Funds aims to revitalise all areas facing structural difficulties, whether industrial, rural, urban or dependent on fisheries. It is difficult to make a direct comparison between the UK EU regions as to allocation of funds compared with their needs and income.

However from the year 2000 until the year 2006 Scotland consistently had the fourth highest income per capita in the UK after London, the south east and east of England (www.statistics.gov.uk/)

[StatBase/Product](#)). However in those years Scotland, as well as the much higher income per capita from the UK funding formula, received the fourth highest funding from ERDF in Great Britain. Justifiably the north west of England, Wales and the Yorkshire and Humberside regions received more. By contrast, in England regions with a lower income per capita, the east and west Midlands and the south west received fewer EU funds. Notably the northeast of England, designated an EU region, had the lowest income per head (11th in the UK EU regional set up) bar Wales but was sixth in allocation of EU resources behind Scotland.

It is therefore illustrative to consider the strength of the teams that support and pursue EU funds.

In Europe, the Welsh Assembly maintains close links with the [European Parliament](#) and the other EU institutions. The Assembly is represented in UK delegations to the [Committee of the Regions](#), and also in the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe](#). It is also an active member of the [Conference \(of Presidents\) of European Regional Legislative Assemblies](#). (www.assemblywales.org)

The Scottish Parliament also has a European and External Relations Committee. The remit of the committee is to consider and report on proposals for European Communities legislation; the implementation of European Communities legislation; any European Communities or European Union issue; the development and implementation of the Scottish Administration's links with countries and territories outside Scotland, the European Communities (and their institutions) and other international organisations; and co-ordination of the international activities of the Scottish Administration. (www.scottish.parliament.uk)

By contrast, the regional office of the north east of England website has no results for any representation in UK delegations to the [Committee of the Regions](#), the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe](#), the [Committee of the Regions](#), the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe](#), the [Conference \(of Presidents\) of European Regional Legislative Assemblies](#). Indeed it apparently only took over a regional office in Brussels in October 2007. (<http://www.onenortheast.co.uk>)

This region is the poorest in England and the second poorest in the UK but clearly has no clout when it comes to the allocation of EU funds for economic development. (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>)

These are some examples of benefits introduced into Scotland and Wales by the Labour Party in power in those countries but denied to England by the same Labour Party in power in the UK Government. Scotland still has had no need to initiate the extra tax raising powers conferred at devolution. Indeed the incoming Scottish Nationalist government was able to recoup previous years' unspent funds from the UK treasury.

The people of England, as a community, have no say over how taxes shall be apportioned between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Cultural deficit

In the Preface to the Scotland Devolution Bill, the then Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair, wrote, "Scotland is a proud, historic nation". That sentence implies that Scotland has a recognisable history, distinct to itself and distinct from England and Wales, one that sets it apart, as much now as in the past. It states that Scotland has a history of which it can be 'proud', which its citizens can take pride in; and that that pride is a legitimate pride. That affirmation is what we legitimately demand for England. Thus all people, for whom England is their chosen or inherited homeland, should take pride in England's history and make the same distinction between Britain and England as in Mr. Blair's statement about Scotland. If that UK PM, born and educated in Scotland, can encourage pride in Scotland, which he expressly did, in that white paper, but did not do so for England, then who has the authority to do it for England except an English First Minister in our own parliament?

The Welsh White Paper explicitly calls upon their Assembly to "re-invigorate all aspects of their life and culture". Similarly England must have a forum in which these sentiments can be expressed. Equally England, both in its schools and in all other institutions and agencies, should be encouraged to promote its culture and its history precisely as the UK government has acted to encourage that of Wales. Para 1.15 of the Wales Devolution White Paper exhorts the Assembly as "the forum for the nation" and instructs it in 5.4 to "provide leadership to re-invigorate all aspects of Welsh life and culture". That sentiment transferred to the English context must apply to the foundational culture of the English people developed over 1500 years.

English culture is not given to ostentation. Quiet enjoyment of home, garden and community are its hallmarks. However, there is now a widely acknowledged loss of cultural identity in England. Such a lack of cohesion in the national community can be said to have led to the disaffection not only of the young but also of a majority of that community.

The culture of a country, as propounded for Wales, relates to its memory bank, its sense of self, its written records, and its roots. Ignorance of these matters leads to cultural sterility. The Scottish Executive states "Scotland's culture sits at the heart of the nation's life" (www.scotland.gov.uk).

UK Government support for English Culture

A search on the site of the UK Government's Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), which controls support for culture in England, for "English Culture" elicits no result. There are, however, hits for Scottish and Welsh culture and a search for "British culture" yields ten pages of hits. An even more eloquent demonstration of the esteem for English culture that the UK Government has was the total expenditure of a derisory £120 by that government in celebrating England's national saint in 2008! The then mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, thought nothing of spending tens of thousands of pounds to celebrate Ireland's St Patrick's Day but only grudgingly offered any funds to celebrate St George's Day after several years of a celebration in Covent Garden being funded privately. The Scottish Government is promoting St Andrew's Day

as a national holiday and the celebration of this national day. In England only a private campaign exists for the same purpose.

Many May Day celebrations in England are very ancient as are celebrations at other times of the year. Mummers' plays at Christmas have their origins in mediaeval times and more recently Guy Fawkes, who was executed in 1603, is remembered for trying to blow up the Parliament in England of James VI of Scotland. However British government diktats and establishment attitudes make it much more difficult to celebrate these in the traditional way. Innocent celebrations of Guy Fawke's night have been attacked as anti-Catholic and the time slot allowed for fireworks made less than for other non-indigenous celebrations with fireworks. Patron Saints Days and other celebrations marking the national days of other nations are encouraged but the celebration of the English national patron Saint has been hedged about with hurdles to overcome. We have been told that it is not a national celebration! The British newspapers have abounded with instances where traditional events such as the Boy Scouts parade on St George's Day have had to be cancelled for these reasons.

Public celebrations such as these are now subject to new licensing laws promulgated by the UK Government for England and Wales, but not Scotland or Northern Ireland. However the Welsh Assembly Government could make statutory instruments that allowed national celebrations to be exempt. These regulations affect celebration of traditional entertainment, such as the innocent production of village plays. Live music and pub entertainment by English folk dancers and singers must now be licensed at crippling cost to the community. The internet fora of jobbing folk musicians show that there is great confusion within the profession and inconsistency among local licensing authorities. The licence is required by the owner of the premises where the entertainment takes place and many have not wanted to pay the fees required and many long standing gigs have been cancelled. It seems to remain unclear whether licences are required for carol singing and mummers' plays. Travelling circuses seem to have to apply at every local authority they may stop at. A number of articles have been written on this confusion, which can be found at Timesonline, January 13, 2006, "Is the Licensing Act killing live music?"

And from the (Mudcat Café Forum), "DCMS is up to its usual tricks, reportedly claiming that the new law is 'fairer'. Fairer to recorded and broadcast entertainment, yes. Jukeboxes and other sound systems already in situ were waved through on the nod, and big screen sport (or music) is exempt. But the unlicensed provision of one or two live musicians in a restaurant, even unamplified, is criminalised. DCMS also claim in a statement that 'a significant number of pubs have applied for the new entertainment licences'. What they didn't tell the BBC is: 1) Live music applications are not granted licences; 2) many such applications will fail, and many will be granted subject to expensive conditions (installing CCTV for example); 3) even where they are granted, only when the licence conditions are implemented will it be legal to have live music; 4) a very significant number of pubs have lost the automatic right to solo or duo gigs and will not have any live music permission on their new premises licence."

The art of change ringing of church bells, which is quintessentially an English tradition of 500 years standing, is under threat from those who wish to silence them under environmental laws. Such cultural traditions must be supported by a Department of Culture dedicated to England.

Teaching English history

It is fitting for the Prime Minister of Great Britain to extol the virtues of Britishness but not to the exclusion of English values or to the involvement of all the nations of Britain. However the fact is that the appreciation of Britishness, to the exclusion and denial of Englishness, can and will be enjoined on schools only in England. The achievements by the English of Magna Carta, the Bill of rights and Habeas corpus must be acknowledged as such otherwise the inescapable conclusion is that there is a deliberate act of cultural destruction.

The teaching of Scottish history is promoted in schools in Scotland. “Children and young people in Scotland should gain from formal education an overview of Scotland's past which allows them to set their own society in context”. **Scotland's National Cultural Heritage Strategy from the website of Learning and Teaching Scotland**

“**In Wales** Learners aged 7–14 should be given opportunities to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales”. (National curriculum for Wales)

English history for the 1200 years prior to 1707 stands on its own and is distinct from British history. Britain politically and constitutionally did not exist until 300 years ago. Many of the foundations of our legal system, society and government were laid down before the Norman French conquered England in 1066. The foundations of our parliamentary democracy, literature, language, the common law & the jury system were subsequently laid down in England before 1707.

The people of England and their children in schools, universities and other institutions must be encouraged to learn and celebrate what Englishmen and women achieve and have achieved, individually and collectively in almost every sphere of human endeavour and derive from that knowledge a legitimate pride in this country and therefore themselves as inheritors.

None must be referred to as British, when a clear distinction as to nationality is made for Scottish and Welsh achievers.

Whilst Scotland and Wales have been encouraged to make sure that their children are educated in Scottish and Welsh culture, history and traditions. The British Government does no such thing for children in England. For them English history, where it is taught, is called British history, even when it relates to events before 1707. Worse still **in England the teaching of English history is to be downgraded. The BBC reported an Ofsted report thus** “The watchdog said the curriculum was too England-focused”

Submersion

English Cultural Institutions.

Unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, there are no dedicated English Cultural institutions. There is no national English Library, Museum of England and so on. Indeed the UK Government has emasculated such institutions that did represent England alone.

Back in 1999 Derek Wyatt MP (Lab, Kent) made the following observation in Parliament: *The British library is one of the six legal deposit libraries in the United Kingdom and Ireland, dating back to an Act of 1911. The others are Oxford, Cambridge and the national libraries of Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The Irish national library is in Dublin, but there is no national library of Northern Ireland, which is surely an oversight.* He went on to say that: *The British library needs to be redefined for the 21st century.* When Mr Wyatt was contacted to point out that there is no national library for England, Mr Wyatt responded: *"I think this would be undue nationalism to have an English National Library"*. One has to wonder why an MP of an English constituency finds it perfectly acceptable to have a British national library, a Scottish national library, and a Welsh national library - and who believes that the lack of a Northern Irish national library is an 'oversight' - can describe an English national library as 'undue nationalism'

This does not stop James Purnell, Secretary of State in the UK Government's DCMS in 2007, referring to "England's national museums and galleries" even though their titles are not English but British.

The support of the Arts and Sport has been specifically encouraged as responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. The Scottish Cultural Review, 2006, states that Scotland's culture sits at the heart of the nation's life and identity. The Arts Council of Wales' remit letter 2006 details "policies on strengthening Wales' cultural identity".

The purpose of the former English Tourism Council was to promote tourism in England. It was abolished in 2003 and submerged into "Visit Britain", which was set up in close consultation with the First Minister in Scotland and the First Secretary in Wales. The Chair is appointed by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly Government. (<http://www.culture.gov.uk/>)

So there is no dedicated English organisation to promote tourism in England. The organization that exists is British with input from Scotland and Wales that additionally have their own separate tourism organizations. Visit Scotland is also funded by the Scottish Parliament and similarly Visit Wales.

The UK Government sets the total budget for tourism in Britain. The English element now has to compete for funds with the other parts of the United Kingdom. Tourism is a major industry within England. It provides many jobs and whole areas can be revitalised by a successful tourism industry. The same fate has befallen "Sport England", which is now subsumed into the UK Sport.

National and cultural identity

Not only does England not have its own national institutions such as a national library as illustrated by the Encyclopaedia Britannica 2004 but we are now experiencing a denial of cultural and national identity.

Because England is the largest country in the United Kingdom it suffers from having its identity submerged into a “British” identity. Where that is intentional it could be called cultural destruction or cleansing. This was a policy of the Ancient Egyptians, Romans and Soviets who destroyed memorials and airbrushed out of history those, the memory of whom, they wished to eliminate. In Latin this destruction was called *damnatio memoriae*. Indeed conflation of England and Britain is common not only abroad but here. So much so that the BBC has issued guidance to presenters that they should be sensitive to the difference. (*PRODUCERS GUIDELINES. STYLE & LANGUAGE. Be careful when using the word British and English. They are not interchangeable. Say British when you mean British and English when you mean English*). However that “sensitivity” does not appear to be respected when it comes to conflating English and British and ensured for instance that Dr. David Starkey’s series based on his book the Monarchs of England was billed as a series on British monarchs! When were the monarchs, Macbeth, Malcolm and the James of Scotland ever called British?

This bias is all pervasive. Reporting the Beijing Olympics, the media, and in particular the BBC, continued to announce medal winners as Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish and British, but not English. In its CEEFAX August 19th 2008 bulletin the BBC described Chris Hoy the triple gold medallist as 'the Scot'. However, it described Victoria Pendleton the triumphant women's sprint cyclist Olympic champion from Bedfordshire as 'British', not once as English. In the first week of the Games both BBC reporters and BBC CEEFAX described Nicole Cook who took the first gold medal for the British team as Welsh, but Rebecca Adlington who achieved two gold medals in swimming only as 'British', never English.' What is the agenda for denying the identity of England and English achievers?

The presenter of a recent BBC programme called Thomas Tallis and other mediaeval English composers British when they were unequivocally English.

A further example is that supermarkets routinely use the national flags of Scotland and Wales but not England to mark their wares. English produce is marked with the British flag.

The deliberate or ignorant conflation of England and Britain and English and British is as insulting to England as it is to Scotland, Wales or any other part of the UK.

There are numerous other examples of the suppression of England and the conditioning of people either to confuse or conflate England and Britain, or to use the terms interchangeably so as to submerge and or merge the two identities.

In addition there is the false and insulting accusation that the English flag is racist. This has led to gross infringements by those in authority, such as the policeman who required a motorist in Wiltshire to remove the flag from his parcel shelf on pain of a £30 fine, the binman in Lancashire who was told to remove it from his bandana and the English Democrats, a registered political

party, who were told to remove the flag from their display when canvassing in the Henley by-election. It is of note that the avowedly racist BNP logo uses the British flag and they have offices in all the countries of Britain. These are just a few of the examples of intimidation and harassment experienced when the English flag is displayed. There are no reports of such harassment when flags of other nations are raised.

This leaves an undeniable impression in England that there is a covert and unspoken agenda to merge or submerge England into Britain thereby to suppress or deny the unique and ancient culture and achievement of generations and the current population. While this might have been acceptable when all the people of the UK were assimilated into a British culture and identity now that distinct national cultures and identities are encouraged, not least by dedicated fora in which they can be expressed, to deny the people of England the same right implies cultural prejudice.

THE CONSEQUENCES

The inevitable consequences of this unequal treatment has been “a rising English national consciousness” (D Blunkett, March 2005), which the British political parties, with a perversity second to none, represent as a threat to the Union. Scottish and Welsh nationalism can be expressed in their national institutions and especially in their national governments. There is no collective political representation for England that allows for an expression of political will and many or most of our civic and cultural institutions have been appropriated for Britain, such as the British Museum and the British Library.

English nationalism, as valid as any other nationalism, has no outlet but in sporting tribalism. This is wrong. The English flag should fly above the English National Library, the English national Museum the English Portrait Gallery and the English Parliament. The National flags of Scotland and Wales fly above their respective National Libraries and Museums and all other edifices devoted to their history and culture. Where does the English flag fly to denote English culture?

Moreover to liken English nationalism to racism, as many well known commentators have done, is to fan the flames of simmering resentment. However instead of listening and addressing the problem the British Government and Establishment is determined to ignore it. At a Fabian Society conference on the “Values of Britishness” in November 2005 speakers for Scotland and Wales were well in Evidence. No-one spoke on behalf of England, the country that constitutes 85% of the UK!

Lord Neil Kinnock, who sits in the UK House of Lords which has the power to revise and amend legislation for England, made a notable quote at that conference. It was “I am totally for Britain”, he announced from the platform, “I support the British Lions every time they take to the field. I support Wales in every sport and I support any and every team that plays against England.” Unfortunately he is not alone among public figures in feeling free to express such insensitive and negative sentiments. This includes Jack McConnell, Scotland’s first Minister in 2006, who declined to support the only British team, England’s, left in the football World Cup. No one should be surprised if such negativity is being returned.

SOLUTIONS AND OBJECTIONS

Regionalisation (Labour and Liberal Democrat Policy)

English society has always been based on the local community. Self help has characterised the close knit farming and village communities and the industrially based mutual societies. Local government is understood to mean Parish and local Councils responsible to the Shire and County Councils. The Shires, created in Anglo Saxon times, and the Counties from the French *Comte* are the natural regional divisions of national government. These ancient communities are threatened by an unsympathetic and insensitive drive to divide England into unnatural divisions that will destroy England's ancient unity without an overall national Parliament to decide the most appropriate form of local government.

The Campaign for an English Parliament (CEP), being a single issue organisation, has no opinion on the European Union. However it is a false comparison when the unnatural regions of England are compared with the historic and traditional ones of France, Germany and Spain. Not only are the regions of these countries rooted in their history but they still have their own national governments unlike the proposal for England.

Attempts by the UK Government to pass off these regional divisions and their Regional Development Agencies, morphing into Regional Assemblies, as devolution for England failed spectacularly in 2004 when the people of the North East overwhelmingly - by 78% to 22% - dismissed the UK Government's plans for that regional assembly and threw into disarray the UK Government's plans for elected regional assemblies in England.

Although the people of London had voted for a London mayor with an assembly, which they later discovered was to be designated as a Regional Assembly, the people of the north east of England were not fooled into believing that such assemblies would or could have the primary or even secondary legislative powers of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments. Moreover, such regional administrative areas (see Donald Dewar's comment in the debate on the Scotland Bill) have no basis in England's culture or traditions as they are 20th Century artefacts created for the convenience of administrators. Indeed in 1973 the Kilbrandon Commission concluded that "*there is no public demand for English regional assemblies with legislative powers, whether under a federal system or otherwise*".

Nevertheless regionalisation in England persists in UK Government thinking. UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's 63 page white paper on the governance of Britain contained but 1½ sides devoted to England. These referred to the imposed regional quangos and appointed regional Ministers, but outlined in the vaguest terms the duties and responsibilities of those Ministers. Indeed they were somewhat contradictory in that these Ministers are both expected to represent regional interests and government. The assumption being that the interests of both are the same. However experience has shown that their actual function is to pursue the UK Government agenda and over-rule local decision making. The analysis to the responses to the UK

Government's South East Plan (September/October 2005) reported that some objected to the whole process or the housing growth being imposed by Government. (www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/)

There is, apparently, a Committee of the Regions which has not met since 2004. It would seem that this organisation is deliberately impotent since its composition seems to be in doubt and its accountability is debatable.

Such committees either as a committee of the regions or as an English Grand Committee cannot be compared with a national forum of representatives chosen by the people in dedicated elections. Detailed objections to those proposed assemblies, which also apply to any other form of local government presented as devolution for England, can be found in the CEP publication "The Constitutional Case for an English Parliament" (supplied).

English Votes on English Matters

Constitutionally there are two questions to be answered; the West Lothian and the English. The first asks: Why should Scottish MPs in the British Parliament at Westminster be barred from voting on matters internal to Scotland that affect their constituents, but still be able to influence internal matters in England? No English MP has reciprocal rights in Scotland. The second asks: Why should MPs from Scotland, whose constituents are not affected and who are thus non-representative, have ministerial portfolios for internal matters in England, be cabinet ministers or Prime Minister when the majority of government business deals with English matters?

The Conservative party recognise and attempt to answer only the first question. However there are glaring constitutional faults in their approach, which can be summarised as follows: English votes for English measures (EVoEM) is a procedural device, without the force of legislation, which can be reversed at any time. English laws will still be proposed by a UK government and scrutinised by a House of Lords, containing members from across the UK, including Neil Kinnock. There is no administration devoted to English affairs and UK MPs will still vote on UK party lines. It does not provide a workable solution for the eventuality of a Government being in power with an overall majority but without a majority of English seats.

UK MPs of English constituencies all belong to unionist parties and are not there to promote or further English interests, despite assertions to the contrary, indeed their remit is both that of the Union and that of the furtherance of their party's policy. Moreover, all follow their party line and put the interests of the Union before the interests of England. Some have declared themselves by expressing views that are positively antipathetic to England.

Detailed objections to these proposals can be found in the CEP publication Devolution for England, A Critique of the Conservative Party Policy "English Votes on English Matters". (supplied)

English Parliament

The Campaign for an English Parliament (CEP) seeks to redress the balance of the UK by lobbying for an English Parliament, which includes an English Executive (government). However, opponents accuse us of trying to break up or unbalance the Union. The Union was always unbalanced and made more so by asymmetrical devolution, which, in itself, is fracturing the Union further. The people of England were not consulted in the devolution referenda and must not be held responsible for its consequences.

An English Parliament will:-

strengthen democratic control and make government more accountable to the people of England;
enable the people of England to express their own priorities and direct spending where it is most needed;

better enable the people of England to pursue policies which help preserve England's identity and improve its environment;

for the first time give England a voice in the European Union;

provide a partial realisation of the right to self government to which the people of all countries aspire.

An English Parliament would therefore guarantee to the People of England:

A strong voice in UK affairs and its Future

Protection of freedom, liberty and rights

Protection of the Country's Heritage & Culture

Preservation of the shires, counties and local traditions

Separate control for national and local issues

A voice in the allocation of UK funding

Responsibility for deprived areas

A voice in fishing, farming and energy

Liability for education, transport and health

Support for leisure, sport and tourism

An English Parliament would decide the most appropriate form of local government for England and there is scope within each of the devolved policy areas to make government more accountable to the wishes of the people. For example, if control over planning and land development becomes an entirely devolved matter, it will be possible to completely transform the present system and halt the uglification of English towns and the desecration of the countryside.

An example of a benefit to be had from control over education is that it would be possible to teach the history of England and the English language to children in English schools. A knowledge of those things would provide a thread of continuity from the past to the present and help pupils appreciate that what we do today affects tomorrow. It would also help free the English from the burden of a British identity and better enable them to explore their own roots and culture.

By having tourism under the control of an English Parliament policy, and funding, will become straightforward, clear and focussed. The same is true for the other matters that have lost their English focus.

An English Parliament could, in addition, create new bodies should it believe that there is a strong need to achieve a specific social or economic objective.

Support of the Arts and Sport has been specifically encouraged as responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. An English Parliament, likewise, would ensure that the Arts, Sport and Heritage would be supported in England.

A Detailed discussion can be found in the CEP publication “Devolution in the United Kingdom- Answering the English Question”. (supplied)

Objections to an English Parliament Answered

Some objections to an English Parliament suggest that it would be almost as big as the UK Parliament. That demonstrates a fundamental and unnecessary assumption that the UK Parliament would need to be of the same size as it is now. That assumption ignores or denies that the work of the UK Parliament would be very substantially reduced and thus a much smaller Parliament would be capable of representing the constituent parts of the Union. We already have the anomaly of the number of UK MPs from areas outside England, who cannot initiate, debate or vote on domestic matters that affect them and their constituents, yet they are being paid the same salary as UK MPs from English constituencies. Indeed the Scots, themselves, are asking why they, as UK tax payers, are paying for UK Government MPs who have no responsibility in the matters that most concern them as voters.

The Conservative Party claim that we do not want another layer of politicians and bureaucrats and we cannot afford them but, of course, with a much reduced UK Parliament that would no longer be the case. The Conservative line would, nevertheless, engender more respect if they intended to abolish the 297 extra politicians 85% of the electorate have been, without their consent or even consultation, expected to support since 1998.

These costs were clearly not a reason considered very important when granting devolution to the rest of the UK. Why then should the argument that we must not have more MPs be used selectively against English aspirations?

Others say that there is no demand. Clearly, until a proper referendum, based on those of Scotland and Wales, takes place that assertion cannot be demonstrated. However, 12 of 14 polls of every description since 2001 indicate that the majority of the people of England might vote for an English Parliament if asked the same referendum question as that for Scotland and Wales.

THE FUTURE

It is sometimes said that there is no need to campaign for an English Parliament because with the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly, the UK Parliament is in effect an English Parliament. That is a mistaken view. The Westminster Parliament will continue to be the Parliament of the United Kingdom and it will continue to contain MPs from throughout the UK and be charged with pursuing the internal and external interests of the whole UK. It will be under no obligation to pursue specific interests relating to the whole of England and there will be no body through which those interests can be voiced.

As there is no English Parliament, the people of England are being governed by a UK Parliament that is designed to serve UK interests. The people of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have their interests focused and represented but the people of England are not able to speak with one voice. An English Parliament will enable England to deal with other parts of the UK on equal terms.

Devolution can be seen as a process and it is clear that the Scottish government wishes to continue that process by claiming further rights and powers from the UK government and, in particular, to redraw the maritime border.

The history of the maritime border between England and Scotland is a complex one. Suffice it to say that there is considerable debate about its appropriate alignment. Such considerations are now important as further powers are likely to include access to North Sea revenues, fisheries and other assets located in UK waters.

Another case in point might be the ownership of Ministry of Defence (MOD) land and facilities as have been given to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The MOD facilities have been developed with UK taxes to which the major contributor is England with 85% of the taxpayers. Clearly giving up these assets impacts on England but who is to represent England's interests in any such negotiations?

A current case is the opportunity to purchase the two Titian paintings owned by the Duke of Sutherland and displayed in Edinburgh. The proposal is that both Scottish and UK funds are used. Will those paintings be appropriated for Scotland even though taxpayers from across the UK have funded the purchase?

How will responsibility for the British national debt be apportioned?

What will be the verdict of history on the independence in any negotiations of a PM who has an interest in maintaining the goodwill of those that elected him in his Scottish constituency or David Cameron who has expressly and explicitly stated that he does not want to be first minister of England?

CONCLUSION

The CEP makes the same assertion of the rights of the people of England as were accepted for Scotland not only enshrined in the UN charter but for the general principle of representative equality that all democracies claim. Equality of treatment was also a fundamental part of the 1707 Act of Union. We look to a future of equal nations in equality of relationship to each other

and to the UK government. Only in that way can the Union be maintained. The alternative is an increasing clamour for independence from countries that already have some measure of self government and a runaway devolution process as the UK Government endeavours to appease nationalistic sentiments.

The 1988 Claim of Right for Scotland, which was formulated by the Scottish Constitutional Convention, is as relevant to England as it was to Scotland. England has the same right to its own Parliament and to determine the form of government best suited to its needs. However, when we in England make such a claim we are variously accused of being fascist English nationalists or worse or at the very least as “little Englanders” or that our arguments are “sterile” and “negative”

Why is it that the Scottish and Welsh nationalism that engenders, within the UK, their own fora in which to support their national aspirations is accepted but those who seek to speak on behalf of England are mocked and vilified? Indeed, any expression of similar English nationalism is treated with great opprobrium to the extent that the British Establishment often identify English nationalism with racism. This is abhorrent and grossly unfair, especially as Scottish and Welsh nationalism has ensured, within the UK, their own fora in which to support their national aspirations.

It is not “anti” Scottish or anyone else to raise these issues of disparity within the UK as some have claimed. It is not the CEP’s purpose to deny Scotland, or the other country or province of the UK, their right to the devolutionary process but rather to claim the same right for the “proud and ancient” people of England and to have a forum for the people to “invigorate the national culture”.

An English Parliament will solve the West Lothian question. It will end the injustice whereby UK Parliament MPs who represent constituencies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, are able to debate and vote on issues that affect only the people of England, while MPs elected to English constituencies are unable to debate or vote on similar matters affecting the people of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. An English Parliament will bring greater fairness, equality and balance to a devolved United Kingdom.

Devolved power to England in the same relationship to the UK Parliament as Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would have no more power over reserved matters than MPs of English constituencies currently have. Indeed reducing the size of the UK Parliament, which would be dealing only with reserved matters, would be the opportunity to reduce such disparity.

The affirmations of national identity that the devolved administrations of the other countries of Britain support are what we require for England. Equally England must have a forum in which to express such sentiments and to promote in its schools and other institutions, its culture and history precisely as the British Government has acted to encourage that of Wales and Scotland. Thus all people, for whom England is their chosen or inherited homeland, should be encouraged to take pride in England's history and culture and make the same distinction between England and Britain as in Tony Blair's statement about Scotland. English history for nearly 1000 years prior to union with the rest of the UK to form the British State in 1707, stands on its own and is

no more British history or its monarchs British monarchs than the history and monarchs of Scotland.

The people of England have an identity separate from a British identity and they need a parliament and constitutional arrangement which recognises that identity and serves their special interests.

The UK government has power over the people of England without a specific mandate from them and it has set their interests aside. They have been given no opportunity to choose what form of devolutionary government is appropriate to their needs. They are ruled by a government that has not been elected to address their specific needs and they must pay it whatever it demands.

The objections to an English Parliament are facile and it seems that antipathy to an English Parliament is not based on logic and reason but sentiment and self interest. Where there might have been a British nation before 1998 there are now de facto if not yet de jure individual nations in Britain.

Let a UK Parliament deal with UK matters and the national governments with national matters!

Scilla Cullen
Chairman of the Campaign for an English Parliament
August 2008

APPENDIX

Polling on the Question of an English Parliament.

Except where indicated these polls were undertaken throughout the UK. A fairer contrast with the questions asked in the devolution referenda would be to poll in England only and pose the alternatives “I agree that there should be an English Parliament” or “I do not agree that there should be an English Parliament”

*NB 44% of Scots voted for the Scottish Parliament (“the settled will of the Scottish people”)
25% of the Welsh voted for a Welsh Assembly*

ICM for the Telegraph | December 2007

By telephone: Base adults over 18: 1010 UK 867 England

WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER FOR ENGLAND? UK England

Laws made by the Commons with all MPs voting 32% 32%

Laws made by the Commons but only English MPs voting 24% 25%

English Parliament within the Union 21% 20%

Independence from Scotland and Wales 16% 15%

Comment: 60% of UK and English citizens polled are dissatisfied with the current situation

Sky News online poll | December 2007

Base: 4,316 GB respondents (self selecting)

Should Scottish MPs get a vote on English matters?

Yes 15%

No 85%

ICM for the Campaign for an English Parliament | April 2007

Base: 1006 GB adults

You may have seen or heard that a separate Scottish parliament, a Welsh assembly and a Northern Ireland Assembly have been established.

Do you think that England should or should not have its own parliament or assembly?

For an English Parliament 67%

Against an English Parliament 25%

Don't Know 7%

YouGov for the Sunday Times | April 2007

Base: 2218 GB adults

Thinking about the way England is governed in the light of devolution to Scotland and Wales, which of the following would be your preferred option:

A separate English parliament with similar powers to the Scottish Parliament 21%

Stopping MPs from Scottish and Welsh seats from voting on matters that affect

Only England 51%
Keeping the current arrangements as they are 12%
None of the above 4%
Don't know 12%

Comment: 72-74% of UK citizens polled dissatisfied with the current situation

Newsnight Poll | January 2007

Base: 883 in England

SHOULD ENGLAND HAVE ITS OWN PARLIAMENT?

In 1998 the creation of a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly gave these countries certain powers that were previously held by the UK parliament in Westminster. Do you think that an English Parliament should now be established?

	yes	no	undecided/neutral
England	61%	32%	7%
Scotland	51%	35%	13%
Wales	48%	40%	11%

Daily Mail / ICM Poll | January 2007

Base: 883 polled in England

Q5. There is now a Scottish Parliament and a devolved Assembly in Wales and Northern Ireland. Do you think there should or shouldn't be a parliament for England only?

England 51%should 41%should not 7% don't know
Scotland 58%should 30%should not 12% don't know

ICM for the Sunday Telegraph | November 2006

Base 869 in England

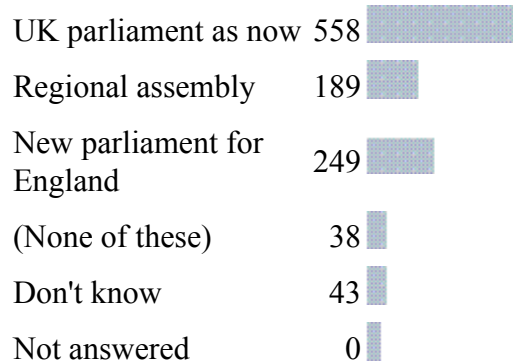
Q. Would you be in favour or against the establishment of an English Parliament within the UK, with similar powers to those currently enjoyed by the Scottish Parliament?

For an English Parliament 68%
Against an English Parliament 25%
Don't Know 6%

British Social Attitudes Survey, 2006 (<http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk>)

Base: 1077 in GB

With all the changes going on in the way the different parts of Great Britain are run, which of the following do you think would be best for England... for England to be governed as it is now, with laws made by the UK parliament, for each region of England to have its own elected assembly that makes decisions about the region's economy, planning and housing, or, for England as a whole to have its own new parliament with lawmaking powers?



23% in the UK voted for an English Parliament (figures for England not found) more than for regional devolution

NB National devolution was granted to Wales on the basis of 25% of the electorate voting for a Welsh national assembly

IPSOS MORI for the English Constitutional Convention | June 2006

Base: not found

With all the constitutional changes going on in the way different parts of the UK are run, which are creating national Parliaments for Scotland and Wales, which of the following do you think would be best for England for England?

To be governed as it is now, with laws made by the UK Parliament even though this means that Scottish and Welsh MPs can vote on English-only issues 32%

For England to be divided into Regions with each having its own Assembly 14%

For England as a whole to have its own national Parliament with similar law-making powers to the Scottish Parliament 41%

Don't know 13%

BBC Online Vote | March 2006

3401 UK (self selecting)

Should there be an English Parliament

Yes 76.51%

No 23.49%

YouGov for the English Democrats | Feb 2004

Base: 2364 GB adults

Which of the following options do you prefer?

The division of England into nine Regions, each having their own elected assemblies, which will have power to take some decisions but not to create new laws 11 %

A Parliament for England with the power to allow it to develop and implement policies which reflect the particular needs of the people of England 24 %

Scottish and Welsh members of the UK Parliament having their voting rights restricted to prevent them from voting on England-only issues 47 %

Continue with the status quo 12 %

Don't know 7 %

Comment: 71% want a national solution. Fewer want regional assemblies than the status quo

NOP for the Campaign for an English Parliament, April 2002

Base: UK 999 adults aged 15+

Q. At the moment, as well as the Parliament at Westminster, Scotland has its own Parliament, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own Assemblies. England, however, does not have either. It has been suggested that England should have either its own Parliament, along with the Westminster Parliament, or have nine English Regional Assemblies. Which of these statements, if any, best sums up your opinion about this?

England should have its own English Parliament 47%

England should be made up of nine Regional Assemblies 28%





Don't know 25%



2002 The Jimmy Young show (St George's day) telephone poll of 14,556 people showed **94%** in favour

2001 - UK Government MORI (<http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk>)

Base: 1761 correspondents in UK

With all the changes going on in the way the different parts of Great Britain are run, which of the following do you think would be best for England... for England to be governed as it is now, with laws made by the UK parliament, for each region of England to have its own assembly that runs services like health, or, for England as a whole to have its own new parliament with law-making powers?

as it is now	1569	
regional assemblies	611	
England its own parliament	443	
(None of these)	35	

Don't know	103	
Not Answered	0	

23% in England voted for an English Parliament (16% in UK)

NB National devolution was granted to Wales on the basis of 25% of the electorate voting for a Welsh national assembly

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