

An independence manifesto for all parties and none (second edition)

An independent British people will be able to pursue higher ideals than is possible while we remain under the control of EU institutions. What are these ideals? Is there a manifesto for independence that would command wide support? Because opinions on the EU transcend normal party boundaries, it is vital that an any such manifesto is for members of all parties and none.

Guiding Principles

- Independence will allow us to restore our system of government as a trust for the people. There are two ways of viewing power: as an opportunity to exert control over other people's lives; or as a trust for all members of society. The EU is a system of control by a self-chosen elite, whereas the Westminster system compels leaders to serve as trustees for all members of society. It is based on the ideal of leaders who are citizens holding office for the time being and who must govern by consent. EU oligarchs want power to exert control over others. Moreover, they believe they have superior vision and insight compared with the masses, which allows them to tolerate a high level of harm for the 'greater good', as the unemployed of Greece can testify.
- Independence will allow us to pursue an inclusive political and economic policy. The primary aims of government should be to enhance personal freedom of choice and to create the conditions in which all members of society can improve the common welfare in mutual cooperation with other people. Guided by the feeling that we are all in it together, after independence we will be able to pursue policies to ensure wider prosperity and maximum employment, without having to get permission from Brussels.
- Independence will permit us to renew our commitment to outward-looking internationalism instead of the self-serving regionalism of the EU. By common consent the two biggest international challenges are how to secure peace, including the eradication of terrorism, and how to overcome extreme poverty. The EU is not the best solution to either. We will continue to play a full part in the UN, as one of five permanent members of the Security Council; and we will play a full part in the work of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We will take back our separate membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- Independence will allow us to renew our commitment to international relations based on respect for the individual path preferred by each independent nation. Instead of seeking central control under the guise of harmonisation, we will be free to encourage international relations based on mutual learning through trial and error by

independent peoples. Alliances would be based on searching for the common good rather than enforced uniformity.

- Independence will release the long-suppressed true character of the British people. At our best we have combined a sense of belonging with the spirit of independence; a wish to help others, wherever they are in the world, with a determination to be true to ourselves; and the fearless spirit of youth tempered by the realism of hard-won experience. The remain camp is led by the comfortably-off, who see any change as a threat to their easy lifestyle. They lack the spirit of enterprise that looks forward to the new achievements that freedom can bring.

The policies

If these were the guiding principles of an independent Britain, they would leave many questions to be settled by discussion after independence. Here are some policies that could readily command widespread public support.

Government as a trust

What do the years 1327, 1399, 1649, 1660, and 1688 have in common? In those years, the people took back power: Edward II was replaced in 1327; Richard II was removed in 1399; Charles I was executed in 1649. Then, after trying a republic for a few years, the monarchy was restored in 1660. Charles II proved acceptable but his successor, James II, did not and in 1688 he was removed. From that time there has been a constitutional mechanism for removing the government without bloodshed. It took many years to deepen and refine accountability and to extend the franchise, but since 1688 it has been possible to force the government to resign and face an election, merely by passing a vote of no confidence in the House of Commons.

This degree of control was given away by weak political leaders when Parliament passed the 1972 European Communities Act. On many issues today, the effective government of Britain is in Brussels, where it is able to escape both the detailed oversight of Parliament and the possibility of being forced to resign and face the electorate. This is how Edmund Burke interpreted the events of 1688:

‘The people, at that time, re-entered into their original rights; and it was not because a positive Law authorized what was then done, but because the freedom and safety of the Subject, the origin and cause of all Laws, required a proceeding paramount and superior to

them. At that ever memorable and instructive period, the letter of the Law was superseded in favour of the substance of Liberty.’

It is time for another revolutionary moment: 2016 is the year when our original rights as a people should be taken back. Our leaders need reminding that the welfare of the people is a public trust that they must fulfil. And yet, from the very first day of the campaign we have been systematically deceived. It was claimed that the agreement with the EU was binding when the Government knew it was not. The Ministry of Justice said as much, but was then contradicted by the hapless Attorney General who was forced to declare to the press that the European Court of Justice was required to ‘take into account’ the agreement. As a lawyer he knew perfectly well that, in law, to take an agreement into account is not the same as following it: a court that is required to take something into account can think about it, and then take it or leave it.

The leaflet posted to every household at a cost of over £9m is an even greater breach of trust. We are all accustomed to newspapers that voice strong opinions on their comment pages while upholding high standards of accuracy on their news pages. It would have been a simple matter for the Government to adopt the same approach. Instead, it chose to try to manipulate public understanding by portraying opinion as fact – yet another example of how the EU has corrupted our political culture.

An inclusive political and economic policy

A widely admired recent book, *Why Nations Fail*, distinguishes between governments that pursue ‘extractive’ and ‘inclusive’ political and economic policies. Many nations are run by oligarchs for their own material benefit and we are fortunate that our political system does not allow small groups to rule purely in their own narrow interest. However, the benefits of freedom are not as widely shared as they could be and independence will allow us to refocus our public debate on how best to make it possible for everyone who works hard to flourish. Economic realities can’t be altered merely by enacting laws, but we should always ask whether our laws make it harder or easier for every member of society to thrive.

Immigration is a classic case. If the government allows large numbers of newcomers to enter the country in a short space of time, it is bound to push down wages and displace existing workers, quite apart from the pressure it inevitably puts on housing, schools and the NHS. Independence will allow us to restore control of the flow of immigrants so that

we can attract skilled workers and reduce the influx of unskilled newcomers, which has driven wages down. There are five tiers under the current points-based system. Tier 1 is for 'high-value migrants' from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and covers entry of entrepreneurs, investors, and people of 'exceptional talent'. Tier 2 is for 'skilled workers' from outside the EEA with a job offer in the UK. Tier 3 was designed for low-skilled workers, but the government has so far not allocated any visas. Tier 4 is for students aged over 16 from outside the EEA. Applicants must have a place at a registered UK educational establishment before they can apply. Tier 5 contains six sub-tiers of temporary worker including the youth mobility scheme, which enables about 55,000 young people (aged 18 to 30) every year to work in the UK on working holidays. After independence, Tier 1, for investors, entrepreneurs and those with exceptional talent, could be extended to cover all EU nationals. Tier 2 could also be expanded to cover EU citizens. The current annual cap for non-EU staff of 20,700 would have to be increased. Tier 3, for non-EU low skilled workers, has not been put into effect and, if the same rule applied to low-skilled migrants from the EU, they would no longer be able to seek work in the UK. The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme was used for many years to bring in about 20,000 workers for a period of up to six months. It was ended in 2013 but a similar scheme could be re-introduced. Under Tier 4 there could continue to be no limits on the numbers of EU citizens admitted for study in the UK. The youth mobility scheme, under Tier 5, could be offered to the citizens of EU countries.

Independence will permit us to declare the whole country an enterprise zone. At present a few localities are enterprise zones, usually after long delays waiting for grudging permission from Brussels. We will be able to adopt an economic policy based on encouraging entrepreneurs. We can view entrepreneurs as people who welcome uncertainty because of the opportunities it offers. Their outlook is opposed to the mindset of corporate bureaucrats who perceive future risk as a threat to their comfortable status.

Inclusivity implies the idea of a nation as a kind of membership association. Earlier writers often spoke of a 'common-wealth' that aimed to create conditions that would allow everyone to succeed by their own ingenuity and effort. Creating conditions for enterprise and personal freedom is not the same thing as creating a command-and-control economy. But a government that upholds the interests of all members of society has a responsibility to perform well the tasks that it alone can carry out: ensuring sound money, upholding just laws, applying fair taxation, and ensuring responsible government spending and investing.

Independence will make us better able to encourage investment that is intended to raise productivity, again without getting permission from Brussels. Such investment is the only sure basis for prosperity. The ultimate aim is a high-wage economy earned by high productivity.

Independence will allow us to use our full rights under World Trade Organisation rules to prevent the dumping of steel by communist China. The underlying philosophy of the WTO is that we will all be better off if companies are allowed to discover in a free contest who can produce high quality products at the best price. The most basic requirement is for member countries to apply tariffs equally to all other WTO members. Three exceptions are allowed in order to discourage nations from taking advantage of the self-restraint of trading rivals: (1) when countries 'dump' products on overseas markets and harm the industries in importing nations (dumping occurs when exports are priced below the cost of production or below domestic prices in exporting countries); (2) when products are subsidised by governments to the disadvantage of firms that compete on productivity alone; and (3) in emergencies when the continued existence of a domestic industry is threatened by imports. Action against China is justified on all three grounds. China's strategy should also be seen in geo-political terms. It is intent on becoming the most powerful military force in the world, and eliminating productive capacity in the West is an important part of its plan. China's steel industry is largely state owned and its banks dominated by the state. Trade unions are not free to bargain.

Inclusivity also means not using the law to give undue advantage either to employers or employees. As a symbol of our national solidarity, all workplace regulations influenced by EU law should be retained.

Independence will create transitional problems, but we will have the flexibility to respond as we believe best. If some businesses delay investments until the results of independence are more certain, we should also immediately cut corporation tax to 10% to allay their fears. Independence will also allow us to respond inclusively to groups who might be disadvantaged during the transition to independence. We pay far more to the EU than we receive and so it will be easy to guarantee current levels of support for beneficiaries, such as farmers and research scientists.

The freedom to be ourselves

Independence will set free the distinctive character of the British people. Historically we have been known as a people not much in need of leaders. Especially in a crisis, the majority will step forward and do the right thing without anyone giving orders. Once free we can expect a renewal of civil society in all walks of life, from the advancement of science and learning to the provision of assistance for anyone who suffers misfortune.

An outward-looking internationalism

Independence will allow us to reject the EU's self-serving regional protectionism. Most notably, high tariffs on foods prevent small farmers in poor countries from exporting their way out of poverty. Outside the EU we could put new energy into programmes aimed at ending hunger through a more effective blend of aid, economic development, and trade.

As an independent people we will be better able to contribute more effectively to maintaining peace, which in today's conditions includes defeating terrorism. David Owen argued in his recent book, *Europe Restructured: Vote to Leave*, that the Eurozone must not be allowed to dominate EU foreign and security policy, in order to avoid blunders such as the Ukraine conflict or competition with NATO:

'To remain in the EU is in my judgement a more dangerous option for British security in its deepest sense – economic, political, military and social – than is being admitted or even discussed in the wake of Cameron's failed negotiations.'

Militarily, he argues, 'the EU persists in trying to create a "common defence" organisation not just within the EU but in a wider definition of Europe, involving for example Ukraine. In the process it is damaging NATO while most EU countries are still failing to meet their two year-old pledge to spend two per cent of GDP on defence. The wording of the EU association agreement with Ukraine was ill thought out and damaging and in itself it triggered the dangerous conflict in eastern Ukraine.'

International relations based on mutual respect among free peoples

Independence will allow us to pursue new international alliances based on mutual respect for the different priorities of each independent people.

Member states of the EU each have their own priorities, but these differences are distorted by the longstanding division between recipient and donor nations. The net recipients are

rather keen to keep receiving money from the net contributors. And countries with many migrants in the UK want to go on receiving the remittances that are sent back. In other cases, the industries of EU member states are the main rivals to ours. They may well, for example, prefer our steel plants to close.

Whenever there is a case for international cooperation, the inclination of EU oligarchs is to use it as an excuse to demand more power for themselves. Instead, we should aim for alliances that seek the common good, such as the Commonwealth, or the economic commissions of the UN. Within Europe there is already a working example of how the mutually respectful cooperation of independent nations can be made to work, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The Government's 'Review of the balances of competences between the EU and the UK' recognised the value of the UNECE in its look at transport regulation of February 2014:

'In many instances, EU action needs to be seen in the context of international arrangements at the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). For example, a 1958 UNECE agreement has been effective as the main international framework for the harmonisation of vehicle technical standards at the international level and recent regulatory developments at the EU level have seen Directives replaced with a number of UNECE Regulations.'

The UNECE is one of five UN regional commissions. It was established in 1947, is based in Geneva, and reports to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is responsible for most of the technical regulation of transport, including ports, railways and roads. It also has a role in producing guidelines on pollution and in developing a global system for the classification and labelling of chemicals. Because of its close ties with the other regional commissions, it is a far better forum for approving shared regulations than the EU. Above all, it has managed to produce many worthwhile sets of regulations without insisting that the UN must be able to exert control over the national policies of each member state.

Conclusions

So far the referendum campaign has been dominated by the remain camp's efforts to stoke up fears about the consequences of leaving, focusing mostly on the economy and security. We have now reached stalemate on both issues. Some prominent business leaders have said things would get worse; but other equally prominent business leaders have voiced

strong confidence in our future outside the EU. So it is on security. Some prominent voices have said that the terrorist threat would be greater if we leave and other equally reputable voices have said the exact opposite, arguing convincingly that the EU's institutions undermine security for all Europeans.

The fearmongering phase has outlived its usefulness to the remain camp, which means the debate can become more positive. The biggest weakness of the campaign for independence so far has been the absence of a clear statement of how our new-found independence could be used. And not just for our own sakes but for all Europeans who have the misfortune to be locked into the dysfunctional institutions of the EU.

David G. Green, 11 April 2016

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