**British Values are European Values**

British Values as set out by HMG in 2013 include democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and religious tolerance. In this New Year and preceding a May election I offer my take on these “big five”. Plus I give you five of my own. In addition, the value given to environmental protection becomes the eleventh commandment.

It is worth noting that the values published are not necessarily entrenched in British tradition and have not come about through philosophical argument or indeed philanthropically, kindly thought processes. Electoral reform has come about through challenging power bases with more sway and wealth and people wanting their share of the pie, a say in how the pie is divided. The biggest motivators were greed and envy, the negativity felt for those already with the power. Racial Equality and mutual respect for others are at best only relatively recently acquired British tributes, immigrants being singled out on National TV as objects of fun as late as the 1970/80s. No, we didn’t invent slavery, yes we were first to abolish slavery, but we retained prejudice for an awfully long time afterwards. Neither has the rule of law been gained through a common sense of fairness and equality under the law but rather for the purposes of economic order, the support of the status quo and for keeping the rabble at bay; the rule of law is primarily for maintaining the propertied classes and the divisions and privileges this entails. Mutual respect and religious tolerance are not British Values – British tradition burns witches and heretics - they have been borrowed from Northern Europe, particularly the Netherlands and Scandinavia. While it is right we should aspire to adopt them, it is wrong to claim they are intrinsically ours.

There is one “British Value” unpublished by those promoting the ones quoted here, but one that is enshrined in British thinking and potentially undermines all others. It is underlying to the British psyche and allowed Thatcher, her predecessors and her successors, to rule continuously with only slight modification in government composition. This is the idea that “property is power” that the English man’s home is his castle. Thus you can bribe the electorate with under-priced council houses and maintain your position with fear of the mansion tax. If you think Blair was an interruption of this ‘propertyism’ look at his property portfolio. The sooner that this ‘propertyism’ is replaced with a new concept, one where “free thought is power”, the better. The power of free thought can be shared, where an Englishman is ever fraught to share property. One should aspire to a British value of ‘Freedom of Thought’. These below are the “big five” I see quoted as British Values.

# Democracy

Democracy normally means universal suffrage – the ability of all citizens above a certain age to participate equally in the election of officials responsible for the governance of the nation or any local part thereof.

Britain has set an arbitrary age limit (18), refuses suffrage to certain citizens (those in custody or correctional facilities) allows ‘interested parties’ to have undue influence over the selection of candidates, allows a party political systems based on vested interests (banking and business on one side and organised labour on the other), and a first-past the post system which favours the status quo. The UK allows Scots to control aspects of Scots government that Englishmen have no respective control of in English government. The House of Lords is an unelected body that still has significant influence on the execution of statutes by those elected and can unduly influence the results of otherwise ‘democratic’ goals.

Britain needs proportional representation, a written and an enforced constitution, a remapping of electoral boundaries and more local government. The constitution should espouse the values aspired to and select PR, two elected chambers and proper constraints against “big brother” and power misuse issues. The only way to get closer to democracy is through revolutionary upheaval of the old methods not piecemeal replacement of bits that don’t work with bits that work but still suit the status quo.

# The Rule of Law

Laws, either common or passed by statute by duly elected officers, should be complied with in a fair and arbitrary fashion so as to engender community, fair trade and business opportunity, personal and national privacy, health and safety without undue secrecy or discrimination.

Britain is beset by laws designed to protect and foster the interests of property, the status quo and the privileged. Police Forces are arbitrarily distributed across the nation and whilst regulated with a common set of governance and principles are resourced through the generally local policies of employment and selection. Common sets of governance have been left open to compromise by local officers driven by personal and institutionalised prejudices as in the Hillsborough and Stephen Lawrence affairs. The Guildford 4 and the Birmingham 6 debacles only bring into question the means of prosecution and protection of the public from terrorists. The Police treatment of demonstrators executing their democratic rights as with the Miners’ Strike, the kettling of the G20 protesters and the unlawful killing of Ian Tomlinson as well as the Plebgate scandal all point to a nation, not governed by the rule of law but subjected to the arbitrary interpretation by Police forces of their powers and privileges.

In addition, Britain’s cities are infested with gangs, gang warfare and a drug culture supported by the economic demand for drugs by the rich as well as the poor. Whole communities suffer fear. Burglaries are rife with Police seldom responding. Look at Police.uk website to show the amount of crimes committed in districts and the amount of crimes resolved by prosecution or other police action. People own attack dogs (dogs are no longer required by law to be licensed) and paedophiles and sex gangs are reported frequently. For every perpetrator that appears one day in the papers there seems to be 365 left for the other days. And just how many are not discovered at all. We say we have law and order but we have illegal immigrants gaining access almost unchecked – how many prevail compared to those reportedly caught?

The fact that Law and Order is claimed as a “British Value” can only be seen in comparison, a quantitive assessment, with states that are in a worse state of disrepair not with any fundamental qualitive comparison with what our ideal state would be.

To correct this, the Ministry of Justice needs to adopt more nationwide policies and institutions rather than the 43 different Police Forces across England and Wales. Scotland now has one Police Force. Why not England and Wales? Culture needs to be changed and institutionalised prejudice eradicated. These are just sound bites. More discussion needed. What is apparent though is that social justice needs to pervade throughout society with the aspirational values contained in these pages promulgated wide and far and visibly so. Many crimes need to be decriminalised, jobs provided and people brought into the community. Finance should be re-directed into these areas from the big prestige projects such as transport improvements. Privatise Highways management and improvements across the board including policing traffic offences. Introduce tolls on motorways and make those in charge responsible for speed control, reducing congestion and use the market to develop these. All rail projects should be privately financed and transport police be the responsibility of the rail companies. Retain police for other crimes against the person. Put more money into local communities and local policing to protect people from drug abuse, trafficking, gun crime, gangs, abuse of young females etc. etc.

# Individual Liberty

Personal liberty could be interpreted as the freedom of thought, of belief and expression of those thoughts and beliefs, and to dress and act as one wishes, where ever there is no obvious restriction or impediment, such as the health, safety, privacy and freedom and freedom from embarrassment of others. Individual liberty should be the freedom to wander into any space whenever to do so does not impinge on said health, safety, privacy, freedom and sanctity of others. An individual should be able to sell or market skills, ideas, application or effort within decent boundaries of fairness.

In actuality individual liberty is turned against the individual. In the interests of institutional politics, misinterpreted as political correctness, one can often not say what one thinks, even when the balance of individual liberty to do so are abundantly clear. One cannot criticise government and corporate policy to the extent one wants, particularly when such is seen as criticism of an institutionalised status quo, a foreign nation or religion. One cannot go where one wants – there are no go areas due to intimidation by groups with national, political, religious and/or criminal ties that the so called law enforcement agencies seek to turn a blind eye to.

Individual thought is oppressed by advertising, both direct, obvious or subliminal, nevertheless unavoidable. Social media accounts are monitored as are e-mails making it far easier to interfere with personal expression and individual freedom. Granted such intrusive behaviour by the authorities has been brought about through reaction to the increased presence of racists, paedophiles and other perverts as well as terrorists in this environment, but the practice of control becomes insidious.

Furthermore the liberty eschewed by market libertarians, yesteryears Whigs and liberals now meta-toryised into lackeys of the status quo – AKA lib Dems, to ply ones trade fairly, is regulated in favour of the status quo by both British and European regulations, patents and copyright.

The laws of slander and libel need to be rewritten to take Social Media into account. Clear guidelines need to be set out and a court established which espouses freedom of expression as well as protecting privacy and the individual. For instance, a commentator may criticise a belief without mentioning an individual or organisation. Only where a wrongdoing has been proven in court and verdict established would somebody be able to comment on an individual or organisation (or business), or describe in a way that makes identification probable, and under the present ruling for TV and Newspapers. Rules of non-refutation and technical means should be put in place to identify anyone offending against such laws must be established. The difficulties of international borders being compromised must be technically surmounted – there are technical means to identify countries hosting services that allow miscreants to operate and these can be firewalled and retaliatory denial of service attacks made against offenders. An international internet incident response team could be established for this purpose.

By using the established as well as developing internet defences, rules can be made and enforced, thereby allowing the necessary freedom of speech to be enabled and not compromised by those shrinking behind religious or ideological skirt tails.

# Mutual Respect

This is purported to be a British value though no history of it being a common trait of ‘Britishness’ is evidenced. Britain has traditionally been a class-divided community, respect being retained as pretence for envy or subjugation. One never respected one’s betters – more often to be despised for their wealth, the unfairness of the system and envied all in one go. One did not respect the less fortunate, these were to be despised as not good enough and feared as potentially rebellious. Equals in wealth or status were not respected, they were envied, competed with, targeted. Only in friendship could there be any mutuality and this was where comradeship was an alliance to gain or restore privilege and to enjoy, retain and protect privilege once got. There was no mutual respect of other religions, nationalities, only suspicion, mutual distrust and prejudice against anything remotely uncomfortable.

Mutual Respect is therefore an aspiration of the British, a worthy one which is being much promoted and indeed practiced within the circles of nice people and the institutions where people no longer base their aspirations on British values of power and riches and control over others. These are teachers, health workers or civil servants who are trapped into a multi-cultural society, both in the work place and the street. They have little chance of fulfilling aspiration needs for dominance even if they ever had them and find it correct and easy to throw those British values off. They are the new Britain – the now Britain and the future Britain – but they are not the past Britain. They are not the values of the ruling classes, the political or business classes. Let’s not maintain them either as exclusively British values.

One expression of mutual respect is the provision of health care for all irrespective of ability to contribute. Commentary on this is limited here to the observation that most countries, not just Britain, recognise this need for equality of healthcare, the difference being in how best to provide it and what to do to maintain it in the face of increasing demand. The difficulty transposes itself to it becoming the political football as it appears in the USA and to some extent here. The difference here is that we still pretend to espouse equality of healthcare while we have BUPA for some and a queue for the rest. If the political classes truly espoused mutual respect as an intrinsic national value, the NHS would be taken off the political agenda for good and dealt with properly. It is not in the same ballpark as how many miles of motorway are installed or how many potholes are fixed – these do not come close in terms of human mutual respect. More of this later (see item 3 under para 6).

Mutual respect must be introduced into the curriculum in all schools. Bullying, the abuse of others (sex and race and religion), the proliferation and reasons for gangs, the use of drugs, guns knives etc. must be educated out of our youth in all schools. Primary education must make living in the community a purpose of life not just a condition of existence.

# Tolerance for different faiths and beliefs

This again is an aspirational value rather than a British value. Like “mutual respect” it is one willingly accepted by the ‘good British subclass’ of service providers, those in lower government, education and health, even though the result of and consequential of being forced into a mixed race, mixed religious society rather than a fundamental philanthropy or goodness. However good these people are, the instant value of tolerance of others, is the convenience and satisfaction of providing their services for others in such an environment. It is a well-meaning value which has the underlying side effect and benefit of neutralising the inherent belligerence and sense of authority assumed by most if not all religions. This neutralisation is a far superior benefit to the one of making people comfortable, though must still be regarded as a result of such.

Religion belongs to the old values. Its value was to those who would use it as an ally to gaining, maximising and retaining power, personal freedom and wealth at the expense of others, its victims, and found value in its divisiveness, the ease in which the poor were comforted by its promises and went willingly to their death in its name but did so actually for the benefit of the mortals in power. The tolerance of different beliefs must be espoused as it neutralises the more exclusive and violent aspects of religions, particularly the Abrahamic ones. Tolerance brings people together as much as the intolerance of religions tore them apart. It dilutes the message of religious superiority and elitism and replaces it with the common morality of man. It replaces man’s inhumanity to man through the adherence to polarised religious beliefs with the recognition of man’s humanity whatever his colour, his original or his parents birthplace, the clothes he wears, the food he eats (or does not eat), which hand he wipes his backside with. It is important to make this distinction – not to tolerate or promote the differences in religions but to celebrate the similarity; the common denominator is humanness, humankind and humanity. This would be the greatest of British values – to harness the commonality of man for the good of the whole. There were always British prejudices against the Jew, the Catholic, the heretic but bringing them together for the common good was always recognised if not always practiced. It was only tolerated out of necessity, not choice; now religious tolerance must be practiced as it is a way to promote man’s humanity as a force for good, the pleasing alternative to a man-created god.

The challenge for religious tolerance is that it needs to supplant the institutionalised religious intolerance within the British. This one fact further emphasises that it is not a British value as such. Catholic Schools are for Catholics, Protestant Schools are for Protestants. They tolerate each other that but that is not religious tolerance that is religious division, just recognition that they can’t burn each other’s houses down, like they used to. So what about Hindu Schools for Hindus and Moslem Schools for Moslems or maybe even Sunni Schools for Sunni’s and Shiite Schools for Shiites. That’s the basis for Gove’s faith schools. Surely that won’t work and will lead to Ghettos if taken to the extreme. It is British to accommodate and assimilate, not to create Ghettos. So why not accommodate them all in state schools unattached to churches, Temples or Mosques? The majority should be and this should be encouraged but not forced. To force out the church from education would be divisive and unnecessary and create resistance. Moving towards that separation of church and school as an eventual goal is highly desirable though not actually necessary for peaceful coexistence. Let parents take their children to Sunday mass, Sunday School or the equivalent for other religions. School Mass at Catholic Schools, should not be compulsory for those of other faiths allowing all pupils time off to visit their own place of worship and give homework or additional tuition to accommodate. If religion is strong then the pupils will retain their belief, let it be a test of their God, their faith and their parents commitment. Obviously for one that believes that any form of religion is by definition is intolerant of other religions (Commandment number 1 – Thou shall believe in one God, No other….) religious tolerance is merely a device for the eventual collapse of irrational belief. History shows that intolerance of all religions doesn’t work. Casting aside the churches, temples and mosques cannot be done straight away; that abruptness failed in early Rome, failed in the USSR and Communist China. Tolerance of Religion avoids the need for martyrs whilst exposing the victims of religion to the truth of humanity.

In this gradual approach we should make compulsory, under Ofsted authority, the introduction of a course in other faiths at each “faith school”. A C of E “faith school” would have a weekly class or classes so all would attend teaching them in turn about the humanity, logic behind other religions and the common factors shared by people of other religions. This might take the form of a rotation with Islam being taught one week Judaism the next, Hinduism and Buddhism taking their turns also. And likewise for all schools – attendance and quality of content would be monitored by Ofsted and offenders sanctioned accordingly. No school should be free to exclude other religions and no governing or advisory body be formed of apartheid nature (i.e. with exclusive grace or favour to one race or creed). Where faith schools exist favouring one religion over another, they must not be allowed to exclude or demonstrate any criticism of alternatives, restricted only to the promotion of benefits.

# Other Values

I would include for the sake of an election manifesto some other principle British values that I think are apt; they fit but we are not quite there yet, by some long haul.

## A Charter for Animal Rights

British values include a particular respect for animals. The exception of course is the minority support of the “pursuit of the inedible by the unspeakable few” aka fox hunting. Bull fighting in Spain and all the various inhumane practices of the French in their cuisine, make (bar the minority cock and dog fighters) the British unique. We should campaign for a Charter of Rights for Animals that would include the worldwide condemnation and criminal pursuit of any that impinge of Animals rights to be free of:

* Any cruelty in the killing for food;
* Any cruelty in the feeding, keeping, transporting or farming of food stock;
* Any indirect killing, harm to the environment detrimental to the freedom, health and safety of animals (incl. fish etc.) in the pursuit of food stock;
* Any pursuit or mistreatment for sport;
* Any pursuit or hunting of protected species whether for sport or commercial gain.

Protected species status should be conferred by an international court. Prosecution of individuals might be on a national or international level depending upon degree. Prosecution of nations accused of dereliction of duty to prosecute offenders should be at an International Court.

## Commonality with Europe

While it is indeed British to go to war with fellow members of Europe it is also British to accommodate Europeans either refugees, visitors, entrepreneurs and workers. It is just as important to accommodate ourselves within the European family as it is for us to accommodate those nationals, religious followers and other qualified individuals that come to our shores. To fully embrace our destiny as Europeans we must adopt fully the values, albeit maintaining the richest of cultural differences. A confederate United States of Europe with one currency, trading block and integrated tax system will best prosper in a World that will soon encompass China, Brazil, India and Australia and Canada as rivals to the USA. It is within Europe we share the largest common set of those values above that we call British and it is within Europe that we can best preserve them. To try to do otherwise, to try to go it alone would be a betrayal of British heritage, British values and ultimately a betrayal of British generations to come.

## Equal Health for All

It is wrongfully claimed that the NHS is enshrined in British values. It is not. Nor do we have an equal health system – the NHS co-existing with private health care is the antipathy of mutual respect. We have a fantastic private health service, medical and dental providing higher qualities of health care for those who can afford it. We have our publicly funded health care service overloaded and abused, non-emergency services misusing A&E, non-accident, non-priorities clogging up queues with real accidents and emergencies waiting behind. We have empty private beds and sick people left outside overfull publicly underfunded wards in NHS hospitals. We have exhausted NHS trained surgeons moonlighting in higher paid private hospitals. We have interns covering for them. We have underpaid nurses willing to strike for fair pay whilst everyone knows their commitment and hearts are broken by their mere need to feed their own families. The NHS is not working. It denies even the most basic values we aspire to.

Equal Health for All is really a culmination of several of the aspirational values, particularly “mutual respect”. The National Health Service was really born of the politics of envy and the “why them and not us?” mentality and brought into play due to the growing power of the working classes referred to as the labour movement, which was really the annexation of that growing power by certain liberal minded intelligentsia to gain their power. It has been allowed to exist as a political football between the ruling political powers as it suits both to do so. There is the obvious recognition of the unfairness of health based on the ability to pay. But there are lot more unfair situations in the lottery of life that rely on charity rather than institutionalised healthcare. Other countries survive equally well with health care based on insurance and as long as there are safety nets and parachutes that prevent a poverty trap in health care there is no reason why Health for All cannot be added to the list of British Values we aspire for. The logistics of delivering on this value are perhaps complicated but the principles are simple. Merge the current National Health with Private Health suppliers. The Private Health suppliers administer their services for a profit and can be trusted not to make the losses of the NHS. Make sure everybody pays a progressive national insurance rate (based on pay) but allow all to have a choice of the same facilities of a privately owned, publicly funded through national insurance (no extra tax is needed if NI is set right and can be adjusted with some sort of regulatory ombudsman with right of appeal but mission of minimal interference).

Given the correct operation of market forces to cut out waste, abuse and over administration in the NHS, public funds can properly be pushed towards some of the causes of ill-health. Real care in the community, publicly funded free screening, vaccination and health education in hygiene and diet and life style. Making communities, even housing estates and old people’s homes and tower blocks less lonely places, less scary places. Tackling the homeless and ignorance on the streets. The NHS was for the 1940s and 1950’s we should develop British Values anew to tackle British problems that exist now, not those that existed then.

## The right to defend our values

The right to defend one’s rights is a fundamental right where so many of the above are not. Defence is one of the original concepts for government and really the only legitimate purpose of central government. A king defended the realm through the organisation of feudal rights and through the economies of scale this afforded extended protection to all within the realm. Then came ‘propertyism’ and the extension of the “divine right” of a king to defend his realm came the right of an Englishman to defend his ‘castle’, his home.

If we want to include this right to defend our values as a value itself then we should temper it to the other values, those which it would defend. Therefore it must succumb to the need for democracy, the rule of law, individual freedom, mutual respect and toleration of other beliefs. The traditional British value of the right to defence often meant the preference to use the attack as the best form of defence, the subjugation of foreign reason to British imperial need. To swaddle this with ideas of mutual respect and tolerance would be the confuse it, to clad it in law and democracy would disarm it. Defence has to be ruthless. There is little capacity for individual freedom let alone, freedom of thought. All must be the servant to its execution. So where now in our liberated, somewhat Scandinavian espoused values, is the justification for nuclear deterrents, nuclear proliferation or regime change?

It is right that we have some armed forces to allow the defence of our borders against a hostile world that does not yet share the values we want but only yet still barely aspire to be adopting. We need to establish a calm and allow only those into the National boundary that have a legitimate right. How else can we maintain the rule of law and develop our new found values. By maintaining the integrity of our borders we maintain our commitment to our trading and political partners in Europe of free labour movement. With forces properly maintaining the borders we can maintain our commitment to mutual respect and give time and resource to respectfully aid those that seek shelter and hear their case without intolerance. Our defence of our values must enshrine those values in their execution.

Defence of our values must be resolute against terrorists from all sources. Our values are not those of extreme religions and extremism, like bigotry must be publicly renounced and defended against. Extremism denies tolerance and mutual respect. It acts undemocratically and outside the rule of law. It assaults personal freedom of thought and movement. Resources must be set aside for constant vigilance to protect and maintain our values.

Our defence of our values can extend outside our borders to the defence of those with similar values but not at the expense of mutual respect to those who do not, or intolerance of those with other values. We must provide resource to help police the world outside our borders as we must continue to fund charities to help those in less fortunate economic environments. But we must maintain this within a democratic fashion, that any or all actions imparted by or on behalf of the British state, can pass scrutiny of the British public eye, the judiciary, the press and the electorate. It must be demonstrably through the rule of law.

In all, and to a measured extent, the commitment to the defence of our values must be tempered by the need for the resources for the promotion and development of those values. This argument does not extend to a balanced budget, which is not necessary and deviations from which can be managed, but which over the long term requires prioritisation. Just as we need to make the NHS stand on its own two feet to allow resources to be used to purge inner cities of their ills and rejuvenate communities, and just as we need to privatise transport and traffic management to resource effective policing, so too do we have to avoid overspending on defence for defence for defence’s sake. That is we should not be shrouded in defence traditions and open our eyes to change.

## The value of Vision

The traditional value of the British Isles to see when the world has changed about her does in probability rest on its insular status in the world. We could see that the Empire was over and better than every other empire before her, Britain was able to regroup and reform its worldwide influence into the Commonwealth. Albeit latterly, Britain foresaw the dangers of National Socialism. It should not them be unfocused, following lamely behind the weapon sights of the USA seeking weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism behind every rock. By diplomacy and strategic deployment of resources, and by being seen to be transparent and unequivocal in its adoption of the values described above, Britain can lead the world and fear the reprisals of no hostile nation. Britain, with these values, should not need or be forced into a foreign war. Resources might be deflected to pay and underpin the additional national insurance necessary to make the new British Health Service (my acronym) work.

In particular our vision should show us that trade agreements can be used to gain allies and embargo’s should not be used as blunt edged cajolements as they have been used in 2014 against Russia. They only serve to make the victim turn to other partners and to do so in a fit of pique. It should be noted that Russia did not seek to aim missiles at the UK or the rest of Europe. Russia is no longer, if it ever was, expansionist to the extent of threatening Western Europe. So, what good ever was the so-called deterrent of Polaris other than helping to shake and rattle the USA sabre? I see no logic in continuing with Nuclear Ballistics and in pursuit of our British values it undermines the freedoms, tolerances and respect we want. These values can be developed and promoted worldwide by the diversion of the billions currently a so-called but redundant deterrent. Why can’t we see?

## Valuing The Environment

This final section is included for completeness. It is a continuation of all the others. If Britain is to value the rights for the Animal Kingdom to live free from pursuit or cruelty as a goal for profit or sport, it must recognise the catastrophic effect on the animal kingdom caused by the destruction of the environment through climate change as a result of the burning of fossil fuels. It must recognise the harm inflicted by the pollution of the oceans by plastics and oil, whether crude or its derivatives. If Britain is to fulfil its obligation to mutual respect to fellow human beings, past, present and particularly the future, the unborn, it must curtail its destruction of the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels.

Again this is a far from traditional British value. Britain invented the burning of fossil fuels for steam propulsion and the industrial revolution, and gave these. in turn, to emerging industrial and economic giants like the USA, China and India. It must not only curtail its own use of fossils it must pressure international bodies to curtail such wanton and criminal emissions elsewhere. Britain has littered the planet with its dross, its flotsam and jetsam of international trade and old ships. It should divert resources (such as those currently used for so-called deterrents) to cleaning up the planet. Exploring new technologies. It must invest in carbon free power production and new technology to exploit this. There is no conflict with British values expounded above with nuclear fuelled power stations as long as the science and commitment to minimise future dangers from waste are paramount. There is a big conflict between British values given above and fracking. Short term exploitation of fossil fuels, gas from fracking, will have a major detrimental effect on the atmosphere showing no mutual respect to our children of whatever race, creed or religion and should be outlawed immediately. International pressure, particularly on the United States and Australia, through argument, mutually respecting their right to believe they have (as presumed by themselves) conflicting needs, against the wanton exploitation of fossil fuels for short term gain must be accelerated if the new British Values are to be maintained. These safeguards need to be enshrined in law, our constitution, and robustly defended.

Scottish Independence and a United Ireland

Neither of these issues are affected by our adherence to the values of mutual respect, personal freedom, religious toleration, democracy or the rule of law. The primary consideration is perhaps that of democracy and the right of self-determination should these nations wish it. It is therefore right that both these nations periodically vote to declare their independence or otherwise. The difficulty is where a democratic decision for a united would appear to threaten the personal freedom and religious toleration of the protestant minority in the North. I believe that a united Ireland need not be prescriptively negative on these issues and a negotiated solution could be found. A balance is necessary between the personal freedom of the South to be part of a united nation (similar to East & West Germany being divided by an alien authority and celebrated in re-unification) and the wishes of those “loyal” to their “British” history.