

Scientific Method of Elections.

Democracy Science, 2.
Richard Lung.



Scientific method of elections

(Democracy Science, 2.)

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First edition.

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"...a more scientific method of voting than the barbaric devices used for electing representatives to Congress or the British Parliament..."

H G Wells: The Salvaging of Civilization. (1921)

&

The Elements of Reconstruction. (1916):

"From the days of Hare and John Stuart Mill onward there has been a progressive analysis of the character and effects of voting methods, and it may now be taken as demonstrated that, wherever the common and obvious method of giving each voter in any election a single non-transferable vote is adopted, it follows necessarily that there can be no real decision between more than two candidates, and further it follows that the affairs decided by such voting will gravitate continually into the control of two antagonized party organizations..."

"Voting, like any other process, is subject to scientific treatment; there is one right method of voting... and there is a considerable variety of wrong methods amenable to manipulation and fruitful of corruption and enfeebling complications."

"The sane method of voting is known as Proportional Representation with large constituencies and the single transferable vote..."

[To warn against fake or rigged methods of so-called PR, "Proportional Representation by the Single Transferable Vote in large constituencies," was a prescription, that Wells repeated in his writings, and may be called "the H G Wells formula."]

Preface

The following chapters are based on writings from the previous quarter century and stem from earlier work, whose ideas had their origin in my student years, nearly half a century ago. They are edited, augmented and up-dated from pages on my Democracy Science web-site, since the turn of the millennium.

Book one, in the Democracy Science series, was “Peace-making Power-sharing.” This second book has more on electoral research, as well as electoral reform, tho the difference is only one of emphasis. Indeed, book 1 ends with my first surviving scientific paper on voting methods, from 1981 (over a third of a century ago, and in French).

But for the accident of being obliged to study the subject, in my youth, my mind-set confirmed “research, which shows that people think very little about electoral systems.”

This might explain why there is such a confusion of different voting methods in the world.

However, the commission, “changed voting changed politics,” I’ve just quoted from, doesn’t come to this conclusion at all.

They say: To seek a perfect system that will achieve all legitimate objectives at all times and in all circumstances is to chase a rainbow.

You might as well say that theoretical science, which seeks to pick out right from wrong explanations, is just such chasing a rainbow. The search for a universally valid voting method began in the French Enlightenment, followed by the British philosophical radicals. I prefaced this book by quoting a categorical statement that there is a generally applicable voting method, even naming it “the HG Wells formula,” amongst any number of wrong methods, offering ineffective choices.

The pioneering Australian electoral reformer, Catherine Helen Spence called this general method “effective voting,” which shows she saw the essence of the problem and its solution.

Today, a disproportionate number of experts, considering its limited use in political elections, do favour essentially this system. Tho, the majority of academics do not.

Richard Feynman observed that there is a lot of disagreement in sciences that haven’t advanced very far.

Election science is in so primitive a state that it can only agree to disagree. Part of the problem is the novice belief that it is sophisticated to regard the universal standards of science, with respect to voting method, as chasing rainbows.

Thus, academe has legitimised the anarchy of voting methods in the world, as the best of all possible worlds. Dr Pangloss is the election riggers friend.

For a century or more, partisan special interests have resisted the expression of the public interest by effective voting. A small sample of this immense problem is given in the first three chapters. The subordination of the truth about election methods to partisan advantage is rarely far away from any discussion of the subject.

The next two chapters on scientific method of elections are my attempts to put across the basics of the subject, following the widely accepted logic of measurement to establish right voting method. This neglected approach (of mine) I’ve supplemented with philosophy of science, on lessons from successful investigations.

In the following section, the quality of the British reports depended on whether or not they were truly independent, as well as their terms of reference.

The Plant report was an internal Labour Party document that anticipated the above-mentioned point of view of the commission to over-see changed voting, established by an ensuing Labour government.

Also set up by the Labour government, the Jenkins commission allegedly had been given power to recommend a voting reform for the national parliament. It was also supposed to be independent but, behind-the-scenes, there was an effective veto of effective voting. Like some show trial, the verdict had been reached in advance: a system nobody used, nobody asked-for, and nobody really wanted.

The Kerley report and the Sunderland report on local elections in Scotland and Wales were not directly under the national government, and decided for effective voting. As did the Richard report for elections to the Welsh assembly. The latter was over-ruled by Westminster. This probably made the Arbuthnott report more diffident towards effective voting for the Scottish parliament, tho they did recommend it for Scottish Euro-elections, in conformity with its introduction to Scottish local elections, on the recommendation of the Kerley report.

The Power report, chaired by Helena Kennedy, had much to say about the disaffection with politics, and even ventured a remark favorable to effective voting. The House of Lords debate showed that its findings were not sufficient to burst “the Westminster bubble” of complacency towards the public mood about politics.

The final section is in two parts. Firstly, the pioneers: speeches and letters on parliamentary representation by John Stuart Mill. Plus a

bibliography of HG Wells writings on electoral reform and occupational representation. The two human rights charters, he initiated, are also shown.

The second part is a chapter assessing social choice theory and another chapter explaining my own research into refinements of effective voting.

How partisans resist effective democracy.

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"It will be particularly interesting to watch the ingenuities of the politicians in the new Parliament in producing schemes that will look like electoral reform and yet leave the profession still active for mischief. They will fight desperately against large constituencies with numerous members. The one member or two-member constituency is absolutely necessary to their party system. In such constituencies even proportional representation can be reduced to a farce.

And also they will offer cheap but attractive substitutes like the second ballot and the alternative vote. And they will fake extraordinary arrangements by which the voter will vote not for an individual but for a ticket or bunch, and they will call these fakes this or that improved variety of 'proportional representation.'....

The discussion of electoral legislation in ... Parliament throughout the next session, though it may make the angels weep, is certain to afford much entertainment to every mundane observer of human disingenuousness."

H G Wells: A Year of Prophesying. (1924).

Foul! Referee electoral system abuse.

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Introduction

No one questions the need for referees in sport, tho we often have cause to grumble at their decisions, because the ref is human and fallible like the rest of us. We used to call a "sportsman" someone who put fair play before their self-glorification. Opinion polls continually show politicians to be among the least trusted professions.

Just over twenty years after the Royal Commission on standards of conduct in public life, in 1976, another body was set up to investigate sleaze. An academic described the public view of politicians as people who put their party before everyone else but themselves.

He went on to remark that people seemed remarkably tolerant of this.
But there is a saying: What cannot be cured must be endured.

At issue here is not the gross corruption that the courts are empowered to deal with. Nevertheless, it is a kind of cheating, if governing parties keep or make the rules of the game to suit themselves. In particular, the courts may not decide what are fair rules of the electoral contest. Yet does a nation need *some* referee, independent of the government, so the voting procedure is fair?

The evidence is overwhelming that parties, competing for power, need refereeing. Coming to power does not make them fit judges of their own cause. Rather, as Lord Acton said, power corrupts. Trying to give an idea, of how far "gerrymandered voting methods" (as H G Wells called them) prevail, is a bit like attempting a history of sin.
Like pollution, it became a common-place we may not even be aware of.

The British Labour party Plant report argued there was no standard of voting method. The report was noticably slighting of proportional representation pioneer, J S Mill, who wrote a book on methodology, System of Logic, that was a university text for fifty years.

The mathematician and Liberal statesman, Carl Andrae introduced preference voting with proportional or quota counting (the single transferable vote) to his native Denmark.

Much credit must go to generous support from the leading nineteenth century philosopher of science, and independent Liberal, John Stuart Mill. He entered parliament to introduce bills for the legal equality of women, including the suffrage, and "Mr Hare's system" of "Personal Representation."

Andrae became a member of the Proportional Representation Society, founded in 1884, after a failure to implement PR in the Third Reform Bill. This caused another mathematician, Leonard Courtney, from Cambridge university, to resign as minister in the Liberal government.

The Proportional Representation Society of Australia saw some of the earliest progress for the campaign. In 1909, Tasmania was the first state to use STV, known there as the Hare-Clark system.

My case for "Scientific method of elections" concluded that Carl Andrae and Thomas Hare independently invented the essentials of

democratic voting method, as far back as the mid nineteenth century.

The preference vote, in the Andrae and Hare system, was soon dropped by European politicians, who thought people only needed to vote for a party getting its proportion of seats for votes.

Thus, Andrae system of proportionally electing the most preferred individual representatives, to give both greater freedom in the vote and greater equality in the count, was degraded to a corporate count of proportional partisanship. Of course, this was still called "proportional representation," by which misuse of terms, people are misled to this day.

This abridgment soon became the pattern on the continent of Europe. (Enid Lakeman: How Democracies Vote is a standard source.) It is high time that Carl Andrae was remembered by European politicians and they admitted he was right and their preference-expurgating predecessors wrong.

An article originally in Democratic Audit (<http://bit.ly/1aoCoP8>) by Annika Fredén of Lund University, Sweden, a specialist in strategic voting (tactical voting) chronicles evidence from European studies.

Strategic/tactical voting is most marked in a simple majority system like Britain, where preferred small parties have no chance of winning, so voters choose the lesser of two evils. To a lesser extent, it occurs in proportional elections, when voters prefer larger parties as having more chance of forming a government.

Proportional counting also has the reverse effect of preferring a small party in alliance with a more preferred big party for government. This is because the small party partner needs to cross a threshold, or seats-qualifying minimum proportion of the votes, to help its senior partner reach a parliamentary majority.

Pre-election coalition agreements send a strong signal for this kind of strategic voting, known as "threshold insurance voting." Research indicates this has taken place in Germany, Austria, Sweden and other European countries.

The 2010 Swedish National Election Study used a points system to find out respondents degrees of preference. In the 2010 Swedish election, "many supporters of the biggest right-wing party (the Moderates) chose to cast a vote for a smaller coalition member...Controlling for other factors that affect choice,...threshold insurance motivations had a significant impact on votes for the Christian Democrats."

The irony of this study is that it has to use a points system, which is a crude form of preference voting (or ordinal choice first, second, third etc) to reveal what a simple binary either-or X-vote cannot.

How long before Europe catches onto proportional counting preference voting, to give explicitly what at present is merely hinted in sophisticated statistical analysis from specialist studies?

Proportional counting preference voting can prefer majority coalitions for stable governments. Failure to appreciate this is reason, for instance, of Italy careering between electoral reforms designed to more or less entrench proportional or majoritarian results to its elections.

The highly party proportional elections of Italys First Republic "resulted not only in party fragmentation and therefore governmental instability, but also insulation of the parties from the electorate and civil society. This was known in Italian as *partitocrazia*, in contrast to democracy, and resulted in corruption and pork-barrel politics." (Wikipedia.)

An ensuing Additional Member System, with 75% single districts plus closed lists with a 4% threshold and an opaque "scorporo" proportional count, was abandoned.

The "Porcellum" (2005 - 2015) used a series of thresholds to encourage coalitions. This gave way, in 2015, to the "Italicum," a majority bonus system (reminiscent of a Mussolini edict to that effect) which guarantees the largest party, at least a 54% majority of seats, most probably after a second ballot with the next largest party, if it does not achieve a 40% threshold in the first ballot.

The rest of the seats are party proportionally shared, with various other arbitrary conditions to obscure the representation of the people. The new electoral law was widely boycotted by opposing parties, at its inception. As a constitutional reform is meant to secure agreement on the rules of the game, this latest patch-up presumably will go the way of the others. Electoral reform has not shown Italian genius in its best light.

Because (non-preferential) proportional elections denied the voters freedom of individual choice, it also afforded politicians, in English-speaking countries, an excuse against any electoral change.

However, Hare system was not corrupted into a vote merely for sharing out power between parties. And his single transferable vote (STV) gained limited but lasting acceptance, as much in non-political elections as national party conflicts.

The Speakers Conferences on Electoral Reform.

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In Britain, by 1909, the Royal Commission on Electoral Systems recommended the Alternative Vote. It is thought this was the result that the Liberal government wanted. But in 1916, *the first Speakers Conference on Electoral Reform* was to recommend the single transferable vote.

As J F S Ross details, in *Elections And Electors*, the conference was held during the worst slaughter in the worst crisis in British history, when the appeal to put national before party feeling was acute. While it got on with the war, the government agreed to accept the conference proposals as a package deal. A new coalition, under Lloyd-George, gratuitously singled-out STV for a separate vote. Fear of government disapproval most probably was responsible for its subsequent narrow defeat in parliament.

Since Ross gave meticulous account, Martin Pugh, *Electoral Reform In War And Peace*, has used records more recently made public. We know one Tory MP decided to vote against STV when he knew it wouldnt bring down the whole conference agreement.

Sir Frederick Smith pointed out:

"The only argument upon which these recommendations entirely depend is that they were the united representations of the body to whom parliament committed the task of making recommendations. That (proportional representation) was a part of the settlement which many of us regarded as vital,.."

And as Philip Snowden remarked:

"Proportional representation was the unanimous decision of the Speakers Conference, and the government departed from the terms of the conference when they refused to accept proportional representation, though they accept other parts of the Speakers Conference recommendations."

The Speaker paid tribute to "the admirable temper and conciliatory disposition" of the first conference.

He said no such thing about *the second conference* he chaired in 1929.

The chairman stated:

"No agreement had been reached or was likely to be reached. The Conference could only, at the best, submit to you a few resolutions carried on party lines. These would not fulfill the purpose which was in view when the Conference was appointed."

A few remarks by Ross, on *the third Speakers Conference* of 1944, may be picked up.

It had been much put off. The Conservatives had an over-all majority, not helping non-partisan agreement, and major proposals were rejected outright. Nevertheless, the coalition failed to implement almost all its recommendations, in time for the 1945 election. The much more major provisions of the 1918 Representation of the People Act had been in time for the post-war election.

By the 1948 Act, the Labour government reversed much of the war-time agreement. Churchill denounced its "bad faith between party and party..." Churchill proposed proportional representation in his 1950 reply to the King's speech. Labour dismissed this outright, in the ensuing discussion.

Indeed, Churchill could not get the backing of his own party for PR.

He remained the last main party leader, in Britain, to support PR before the third millenium, and after!

The Ross classic, *Elections and Electors*, appeared in 1955. Ten years later, *the fourth Speakers Conference* on Electoral Reform arose from the foto-finish 1964 election of the first Wilson government. This marks PRs lowest ebb, where only the lone Liberal MP, allowed in the conference, voted for the single transferable vote.

In the two election campaigns before their 1979 victory, the Tories promised another Speakers Conference, but broke their promise. This was the last that all-party parliamentary compromise was heard of. By then, there was a national extra-parliamentary campaign for reform, as a result of the Liberals extreme under-representation in the two 1974 elections. And the proportional sharing of power could not have been so easily dismissed by a government bent on "conviction politics."

Indeed, first past the post elections institutionalise a conspiracy of antagonism between the two main parties and beneficiaries of the system.

Royal Commissions.

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Where governments could not exclude referees like a Speakers Conference, they could still nobble them. Thus, *two Royal Commissions*, in response to serious problems, were not allowed to give the (electoral reform) answer the government didnt want to hear. Obviously, it is not the scientific attitude to only tolerate the truth on ones own terms. The truth is not bound by ones petty party interests.

The Royal Commission on the Constitution did not have a brief to consider electoral reform, tho it was essential for power-sharing in divided Ulster, and potentially for all the regions of the UK, with the advent of multi-party politics.

In 1973, the Kilbrandon report pointed out, that in Scotland, for instance, no party has a majority. Such was the seriousness of the constitutional situation in Northern Ireland, and potentially in Scotland and Wales, that the single transferable vote was recommended, for regional and the Keltic national assemblies in the UK, to transcend further possible regional conflicts.

Labour simply ignored this message. Understandably, the Liberals were "incensed," as their leader, David Steel said.

"Ignorance is strength" says the Ministry of Truth in the totalitarian satire, "1984." The Callaghan government simply ignored the Kilbrandon Commission recommendation, one of many frustrations to come, for the Liberals, at the unfairness of the two main parties.

Labours original Devolution Bill went out of its way to secure *dis*proportionate results in a Scottish assembly, with a scheme for Labour, the largest party to sweep the board in two-member constituencies, with first past the post.

John Smith told David Steel that the Scottish Labour executive wouldnt have PR.

And so they got nothing. The Scottish parliament was lost, till 1999. The first ministers opening speech said: We shall make mistakes. He would have done better to say: We have made mistakes, that need correcting.

The shabby treatment of Labour MP Dennis Canavan, the respected veteran devolutionist is well known. The moral is that the caucus or selection panel took advantage of a largely undemocratic voting system. There can be only one official party candidate in single member consituencies. When Canavan wasnt nominated, he had to go Independent, to beat the Labour candidate by over 12,000 votes.

This recourse was only possible, because the seat was so safe, for Labour, that splitting the vote between two Labour candidates wouldnt unduly risk losing the seat to another party candidate. Voters generally dont have the democratic luxury of a choice between two candidates of any one party.

Had the ignored Kilbrandon report been taken-up, on the transferable vote, voters could have preferred or ordered a choice of more than one candidate per party.

Since the Plant report, Labour have been instituting their preferred system of "PR," so-called, the Additional Member System (AMS). "Politicians PR," I call it, from the monotonous regularity with which most politicians, and the media that love them, favor AMS.

The Scottish assembly had a bigger proportion of additional members than the Welsh. Consequently, an artefact of the system makes Welsh Labour less dependent on coalition than Scottish Labour. In fact, the former didnt, and the latter did, coalesce.

Another of the set farces in the Additional Member system was exposed. The Welsh Labour leader might not have had an additional seat available, if Labour took all of its share of seats from single member constituencies.

Here was a man who became first minister of Wales, on the old union bloc vote, then on top of a party list of additional members. It took two kinds of corporatism, unfashionable and fashionable, to foist the first minister of Wales on Wales.

Mark Seddon, of Labour National Executive Committee, said Labour was paying the price for such "control freakery," as imposing the Welsh leader, when it lost key seats for the Scottish and Welsh assemblies. Disillusion among core supporters was spreading and had to be addressed.

Later, the man, who had really been the British Labour PMs choice, resigned before a vote of (no) confidence in his leadership, by the Welsh assembly.

It was an unexpected and fortuitous turn of events, that Rhodri Morgan, the more popular choice, became Welsh first minister, after all. Unlike the starry-eyed, Roy Hattersley said any improvement was at best slight. In this, he was vindicated.

Like the Kilbrandon report, the Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life, the Salmon report was not allowed to consider electoral reform, as a remedy for corrupt one-party local government.

Corruption was to be investigated, as long as it didnt come up with the answer that compromised the governing partys own monopoly power.

George Orwell said that if democracy means anything, it means the right to say what other people dont want to hear.

Hence, the 1976 report merely picked-up, in passing, the then much parroted call for "some form of proportional representation" as a means of providing a strong opposition presence to criticise mismanagement and misappropriation.

The phrase "some form of PR," by the way, was reformers cant of the day. Some reformers considered they had the right to denounce the current simple majority system, without exposing *their* form of PR to criticism. By repeating this phrase on the media, the PR parrots indoctrinated rather than educated the public. Electoral reform, to represent small parties, falsely could excuse further undemocratic voting methods, using the tyrants argument of necessity.

British government has been like a classic Greek tyranny: the government is popularly chosen but has over-riding authority once in office. Quintin Hogg, after the war, in *The Case For Conservatism*, thought this was a rather potent combination. As Lord Hailsham, over thirty years later, in *The Dilemma Of Democracy*, he branded it "elective dictatorship."

Many thought the government he joined, in 1979, a prime example of it.

The new Tory leadership at Westminster hovered like an infuriated hawk over the cockney sparrow leading the Labour-controlled Greater London Council. Ken Livingstone was to write a book after the old saw: *If Voting Ever Changed Anything Theyd Abolish It*.

The 1997 Labour government is restoring this and a campaign has been won for an elected London mayor. Mr Livingstone has said on tv, he was told by someone senior in the government that they didnt want him to have the job.

Simon Jenkins seemed to put this construction on the government rules of procedure. The admitted fix of the Welsh leadership bore out Ken Livingstones claim.

Eventually, he broke his promise not to stand for mayor, if not chosen by the Labour party. As in Wales, there was controversy whether Labours primary was fought on a level playing field. (For one thing, there was a question about privileged access to a register of names.)

The polls consistently (and rightly) showed Livingstone the winner. PM, Tony Blair openly showed his distaste for this old Labour leftie, in an attempt to ward off the inevitable. This revulsion seemed to make Labour HQ oblivious to how a bluff Yorkshire-man, like Frank Dobson, was to beat a cockney sparrow for London supremo.

Extra-parliamentary campaigns.

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The National Campaign for Electoral Reform, founded in 1975, was a sort of *proportional front*, supporting democratic and undemocratic PR, alike. The analogy is with the Popular Front in the 1930s, which said you musnt criticise Stalin, lest it strengthen fascism. The campaign dogma, that any party proportional elections must be more democratic, after a quarter century, was to yield any but the democratic form.

Charter '88 also couldnt be criticised on a method of PR, because they couldnt agree on one, eventually recommending (wrongly) a German-type Additional Member system, which gives power to the parties rather than the voters.

This was the reform system that was winning, adopted (imposed) for Scottish, Welsh and London assemblies. And it was perhaps typical of the charter group to be trendies, as the die-hards might call them. For, their program followed the trends in other democracies, good or bad. The bad is that party oligarchy was strengthened by party list systems.

The name "Charter '88" harked back to "the glorious revolution" of 1688. But that showed real leadership, by breaking away from the continental trend of absolute monarchy, and founding some essential conditions for a democracy.

Charter '88 was also meant to emulate the Czech Charter '77. Here again, the comparison is misleading. Before Glasnost, the state persecuted and prohibited artists and intellectuals, in eastern Europe. However, the idea for Charter '88 came from a deputy editor of *The New Statesman*. That is to say a typical left wing establishment think tank.

Moreover, a list of celebrities, voting for virtue, that Charter '88 signed up, were not marginalised talents seeking freedom of expression. They were more like "the media mob." The die-hards dismissed them as "the chattering classes." Or, as Bernard Shaw put it, those people who spend all their lives chattering, without knowing what theyre talking about.

Not to forget the capitalist medias in-house Marxists, who discovered democracy, after Yeltsin boarded one of the tanks defending the

Russian parliament.

Presumably, the Charter '88 select list of somebodies was meant to be deferred to, by all the nobodies: hardly a democratic idea for a supposedly democratic movement. The absence of politicians from the list, like the very date '88, also misleads, I would suggest.

Perhaps, the real significance of Charter '88 is as the year after '87, when the Tories won their third election victory in a row. And the Left had had enough.

Andrew Marr, *Ruling Britannia*, is a better book than I could have written, researching runaway bureaucracy and plutocracy. His naive belief, that Labour, won over by its charter faction, would rescue British democracy, is wrong. [As events later proved all too easily.] The civil servant, Sir Patrick Nairne called such ambitious but uninspired programs of constitutional reform: "a colossal display of catastrophic cosmetics."

[Post-script, march 2015: Nairne predicted, without exaggeration, New Labour on constitutional reform.

Think: the closed list, new premier Blair dictated for British mainland Euro-elections, when Ulster Euro-elections already used STV.

Think: the ignoring, for AMS, of the Kilbrandon report, unanimous for STV electing devolved parliaments, because the Scottish Labour party wouldn't have STV.

Think: John Prescott appointing en masse regional bodies after low turn-out referendums rejected assemblies for the North-east and Yorkshire, which would have used the cosmetic elections of that doubly safe-seat Additional Members System.

Think: when Blair secretly wouldn't give STV to Jenkins, so his report resorted to an Alternative Vote Top-up kind of Additional Member System, or a cosmetic of a cosmetic.

Think: the collapse of agreement on Lords reform, while re-filling the second chamber with appointees.]

In the 1970s, *Conservative Action for Electoral Reform* couldn't win debates on the proportional principle at their party conferences. Anti-reformer, John Selwyn Gummer asked the floor: had they noticed how you can never pin them down to an actual system of proportional elections?

The problem was, and remains, that the party-proportional reformers want methods that give too much power to the parties. Also, when electoral reform is narrowed to proportional partisanship, support for the issue is degraded from democratic principle to war strategy of which side the third party will take.

Nevertheless, in 1975, the chairman of CAER, Anthony Wigram published an important collection of studies, edited by Professor S E Finer. "Adversary Politics And Electoral Reform."

Against the growth industry of reform publications were a trickle of party pamphlets.

Select Committee.

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A rare chance to know the nature of the official opposition to reform came with *the 1977 Select Committee on Direct Elections to the European Parliament*.

The source was the Liberal Action Group on Electoral Reform:

- (1) The single member constituency is a fundamental and proven part of our electoral process;
- (2) An MP elected under it has special allegiance to a small and distinct electorate;
- (3) Each elector votes for one candidate in the clear knowledge that the candidate will, if elected, be *their* MP;
- (4) The Boundary Commission process has become an essential part of our democratic process.

Re point (1) the number one is indeed fundamental but that doesn't stop two, three, four, etc following from it. English tradition is of a two-member system (or more in some instances). Points (1) and (4) seem to be the illogical statements that "what is right," if they are saying anything at all beyond dogmatic assertion.

To say the single member system is "proven" only asserts that it works, but how well was a question that European elections rendered acute. The biggest Liberal party in Europe was disenfranchised by first past the post, unlike their continental counterparts. Consequently, point (2) about the MPs special allegiance to a small electorate raises the question of *their* allegiance to him. This second point is an instance of the fallacy of putting the local principle above the electoral principle, in an electoral system.

The operative phrase of point (3) is "if elected." The purpose of the single transferable vote is that nearly all the voters *will* be represented by their most preferred candidate who achieves a quota or equitable proportion of the votes in a multi-member constituency.

Being reduced to a semblance of reason for first past the post, the select committee seemingly betrayed a contemptible weakness. For, the Callaghan Labour government unceremoniously dropped its commendation, previously so in keeping with the imperatives of power. Successive by-elections had worn away Labours overall majority in parliament. Liberal support was needed to avoid demoralising defeats.

And projections, of the first British Euro-election results for an unpopular government, had Labour with as few as 5 out of 78 MEPs. By treaty, the first Euro-elections were supposed to be held in 1978. Britain was not ready till 1979. One Tory MP accused the government of "dragging its feet."

Constitutional Courts

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The Lib-Lab pact Regional List system was shown-up in parliament for ineffective individual choice. The government could not guarantee all its party's support. Parliament vote on the British Euro-election system was supposed to be a free vote. To avoid seeming "unfair" to the Liberals, the Tory front bench didnt even recommend a system. But to show Tory MPs they didnt take a relaxed view of the matter, the leadership imposed a three-line whip on this "free" vote.

The Liberals were enraged at losing the Regional List and getting no seats first past the post to the European parliament, in 1979. They even took the British parliament to the European Court for violation of their Human Rights.

As one might expect from a court, they ruled on precedent. Law has to be largely based on accepted custom. First past the post was already ruled legitimate by the German Federal Constitutional Court, as well as the American Supreme Court.

This judgment shows that courts defend rights won, rather than promote rights. An unelected court has to be discreet in its dealings with the elected court of parliament. The judiciary cannot be a proper referee of the political game.

This case also showed the partisan mind in its true colors. Here was a party supposed to be dedicated to individual liberty. Yet the Liberals were only concerned with themselves as a party choice, not the voters individual choice. What about the voters human rights?

The 1940 Sankey Declaration on Human Rights upholds "electoral methods which give effective expression to individual choice." The Regional List or any party list system most certainly does not.

Even the 1948 UN declaration mentions "freely chosen representatives," not corporate appointees on a party list.

In 1997, after their general election victory, Labour made sure of delivering a European party list system for its Liberal partners. They just imposed a system that didnt even pretend to individual choice.

It was noticable, also, that the Green party leader said the new party-proportional system gave voters more choice, meaning you can forget about individual choice; it's only party choice that matters to them.

Leaders, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown blustered about "democracy" and "the people" against the House of Lords defiance. The second chamber is supposed to be a constitutional check - referee. When they try to do their much-needed job, the politicians blackguard them, as not having the democratic authority - a democratic authority denied them by the politicians.

Voltaire wrote, in Candide:

"I should be enamoured of the spirit of the English nation, did it not utterly frustrate the good effects it would produce, by passion and the spirit of party."

Conclusion: Elected vocational second chamber referee.

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The above evidence is only a sample of foul play, in the political game, even from the limited time and place, it draws upon. The referees mentioned in each section have proved ineffective. The politicians themselves have so over-powered their referee, that one scarcely seems legitimate. Yet that is the constitutional role of the second chamber - to blow the whistle on ill-advised legislation, like the closed party list.

The second chamber must have the democratic authority to do its job properly. But not as a rival of the politicians. A referee is not a rival. Therefore, the second chamber franchise must not be political but economic. This is the Lords historic role as care-taker of special interests, brought up to date, from a medieval to a modern society.

The courts only speciality is the law. The second chamber, representing every expertise (the law included), could speak with more

authority, as to the justice, for instance, of the rules of the electoral game.

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War games politics censor knowledge thru free enquiry.

Electoral reform as a case study of war games politics.

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The dogma of ["fair votes"](#) for small parties seats. *(Mainly in context of the Lib-Lab pacts of the late 1970s and late 1990s.)*

War games politics

I've previously discussed fraud or foul play in the game of party politics (in the chapter, Foul! Referee electoral system abuse). That was to show how the game needed refereeing, and the best way to do it.

This and the succeeding web page, Why do we never learn anything from history? (named after an essay by a military historian) are also about electoral fraud. I apologise for some duplication of material. But, here, the emphasis is not on a specific remedy. Rather, I try to explain sharp practise, of politics in general, and elections in particular, as a war games mentality. This consists of force and fraud. When force is inhibited, if only because it threatens human survival, the war mentality may persist, in politics, as fraud.

War is a continuation of politics by other means, said Clausewitz. The idea of war games politics is that: Politics remains a continuation of war by ritual means. Lord Salisbury observed that the nineteenth century British parliament had come to run its affairs like "a bloodless civil war." Thus began our era of regimenting MPs into organised parties, playing the numbers game of victory by majorities.

Salisbury promoted what he presumably deplored, because he believed that the Conservative party should rule in the interests of its class. In such circumstances, what choice did Labour have but to enter parliament as a class party? Regimented in the work place, regimented in opposition to the work-place owners, by trade unions, and finally regimented in parliament, not to be traitors to their class, that was the Labour party class war rhetoric. "Traitors sneer" even in the words of their old anthem, The Red Flag, as if they were a little nation to themselves. And, over the years, such "traitors" there have been in plenty from this pseudo-nation of a party.

Bernard Shaw said, in Everybodys Political What's What, that a majority was given victory, because in a battle the majority usually won. In other words, winning a majority was the ritualised version, that two sides to a quarrel could accept, of winning a battle, but without all that costly bloodshed.

In the British parliament, this war mentality is still upper-most in politicians minds. The party in government with an absolute majority of seats is in the position of a conqueror over the opposition.

As John Locke said, an absolute government is at war with its own people. Lord Hailshams "elective dictatorship" is akin to the ancient Greek tyranny. The tyrant was popularly elected but given a free hand to rule as he liked, whence no doubt the odium of the word "tyrant" comes from.

It is a salutary reminder of the limitations of simple majority rule. John Stuart Mill has been ignored in telling the home truth that rule by the majority is maiorocracy which can be a dictatorship of the majority. He favored proportional representation, proper, as a progression to complete democracy.

Any amendment, to government legislation, is characterised not as what most MPs think is a change for the better, but as a "defeat" to the government. Such is the simple-mindedness of simple majority rule. One would think the government was some ageing warrior chieftain, who has to constantly assert himself, lest the tribe suspect he is losing his grip. Every suggestion of a better way to do things is treated as a challenge, to his authority, that must be beaten off.

Before the John Harrison marine chronometer, a common sailor, in the Royal Navy, expressed his worry the ship was heading for the rocks. He was hung for mutiny and the ship foundered with the loss of all hands. (The captain survived but was murdered, on shore, for his ring.)

This is only an extreme example of how the assertion of ones ego can become more important than knowing how things really stand.

Language hopefully exchanges useful information but can degenerate into a war of words, in which ones self esteem and status are at stake.

The result is a kind of people who learn nothing because they think they have nothing to learn. To believe one is always right is to be dogmatic or doctrinaire. Instead of fitting ones views to reality, ones perception of reality is tailored to fit the beliefs.

Certain Pacific islanders simply could not see a European sailing ship, like that of Captain Cook, because they didnt believe such a large vessel could exist. Aldous Huxley mentions research that showed how people conventionalise or over-simplify information that they have read, so that it has a minimal impact on their set of mind.

It is easier to be mentally lazy by allowing habits of mind to persist against the evidence. It takes a real effort and plenty of practise to think, as in any other activity one has to master.

Some years ago, a local paper was run by a local family who tolerated complete freedom of opinion, even if the editor didnt like what you said. This little oasis of freedom was bought by a regional group, who stripped down the non-commercial content, and called it "your paper."

I realised this and kept my letter short. But it was still edited, moreover, as to defeat its purpose. My usual attempt, to get the message thru, that the single transferable vote is the democratic method of proportional representation, was changed. Instead, my letter read as if I believed in any method of PR.

In the street, a local Liberal brightened at me, no doubt believing I had come round to the national electoral reform campaign support for all PR methods, later called "fair votes."

The editor didnt apologise or correct his misrepresentation of my letter. He just said I could write another letter.

Meanwhile, I wrote to a local "freebie," a paper earning solely by advertising. This letter, also, had to be very brief. (I reckoned it would get in, as we had just placed an advert there.) The freebie editor didnt re-write my scrap of a letter. But he captioned it: "PR is undemocratic." He was on the other side of the British political divide that either said all PR is good or all PR is bad.

Two creative editors made a self-contradictory nonsense of my point of view. Thus, was sabotaged my dissent, even on a humble local level, from the two partial sides of British electoral politics. Their two wrongs would combine to make another wrong, in hybrid additional member systems. These were a reconciliation between two bad systems of single members and party lists.

By 2000, mainland Britain had implemented nothing but various undemocratic voting methods. An undemocratic debate was known by its fruits.

Since then, I have come across the same one-sidedness on the internet. The moderator of an e-mail group for "fair votes" banned discussion of voting methods. He would not permit the question whether all proportional methods were worth supporting.

The list owners seemed happy enough for dissenters to go elsewhere and even pointedly posted an "unsubscribe" notice. Getting rid of dissenters, to the pan-PR prejudice, would make it an unquestioned dogma in their group, which, seemingly, is what they wanted.

Once a bias is put into a discussion, it is like tampering with the evidence. The decisions of that group have not been freely arrived at, but have had to operate under a prejudice, so their conclusions are suspect as being partial to that prejudice or presumption, such as, that all PR systems are good and to be supported.

A researcher may do much good work. But once his preconceptions censor adverse results, the whole of that work is put in doubt. Occasionally, a scientist is suspected of fraudulently altering his data to prove his beliefs. His colleagues dont know which of his labors are genuine, and so may not trust any of it.

The doctrinaire mind may suppress inconvenient evidence that does not fit into its neat dogma (that is nevertheless wrong). That may involve suppressing discussion by others. The doctrinaire turns dictator, who is at war with conflicting points of view.

An American congress-man said that in time of war, the first casualty is truth. Not only force decides a war but fraud. The fact that there is a war at all suggests the forces may be evenly enough matched for both sides to have hopes of winning, when all factors are taken into consideration. Admittedly, this is not always the case. But often enough, fraud, rather than force, may be the decisive factor in victory. In general, fraud is of comparable military importance to force.

The German philosophy of Realpolitik meant that the imperialists believed the realities of politics to be force and fraud. This belief is implicit in Clausewitz saying, quoted above. Bismarck was its foremost practitioner. By sending the Prussian army to disband the Frankfurt parliament, he was using force to create the conditions for fraud. Deception is made difficult by a parliament conducting free and open debate.

(Even the parties whipping system has not quite obscured this function of the parliament of a free people, tho it has regimented supposed representatives into conforming to their official lines. This is the fraudulent suppression of dissenting opinions that dont fit in with party

doctrines and may expose its falsehoods.)

Open diplomacy would have prevented Bismarck deceiving the French in the first of a series of Franco-German wars in 1870, that were to be such a catastrophic feature of the twentieth century. Moreover, Bismarcks deceptions were only directed to baptising in "blood and iron" by 1870, a German unity, whose peaceful achievement he destroyed in 1848.

It was not national unity that mattered so much to Bismarck as the militarist method of force and fraud. The legacy of domination or dictatorship was to continue to triumph over democracy in much of Europe for much of the twentieth century. An attitude of force and fraud appear to be motivated by hatred and fear, an emotional imbalance that seeks to spread its instability to others. It is easier for the unstable to deal with others on their own terms than to learn self-control.

Of course, ones aggressions cannot just be wished away. They have to be re-channeled in harmless directions. The Olympic games, from the ancient Greeks, were just one conscious plan for doing this. In politics, a constitution or set of rules, that require a ritual adherence, are an important step in a countrys self-control. The front benches of the House of Commons are placed at drawn swords length from each other.

Britains elaborate ceremonies on the opening of parliament ritualise historic conflict. Slamming the Commons door on the royal messenger, Black Rod, commemorates the stressful civil war period of parliament with the king. Ritual can get out of hand, however, especially with the Ghormenghastly British. Until 1967, Black Rod interrupted debates every time a Bill received the royal assent.

War itself was conducted with rules. In the first place, war was declared. This was the gentlemanly thing to do. It is the honest admission, to an enemy, that from now on honesty ceases. British prime minister Neville Chamberlain declared war in 1939 against Germany. There has been no cessation of wars in the world but one doesnt seem to hear the declarations. Surprise is too valuable in faster-moving more deadly times.

Only a rule of humanity and not rules of war can inhibit the use of modern weapons of mass destruction. The futility of war is shown by leaders, who are reduced to seeking comfort from counting the number of enemy killed in action, as in the trenches of world war one, or the "body counts" by the Americans in their Vietnam war. These are "necrocratic" counts instead of democratic counts.

Rules of wearing uniforms persist, at least in regular armies. Combatants without uniforms are liable to be shot as spies. It is absolutely forbidden to know the enemy disposition and intentions. Tho, false information is constantly fed the enemy to throw them off-guard.

Consequently, we can admit, that given an adversarial mentality, Clausewitz is right about war and politics. If realpolitik is the politics realistic to a believer in force and fraud as the prime movers of government, then war is merely at one end of a scale in which extreme force is used. Politics would be the use of fraud or deception, at the other end of this scale of measures by which ones wishes were won at other peoples expense.

Abroad, secret diplomacy was the means by which nations hoped to out-manoeuvre one another. At home, it was considered dangerously radical to give the lower classes education. H G Wells said Britains 1870 education act was for the supply of factory workers.

War, as the use of force, has had to be kept in some check or there would have been few or no-one left to fight. But that does not necessarily end the war mentality. War may continue as fraud. The plunder and pollution of the planet has been described as a third world war on nature. It defrauds most of this and future generations of natural wealth. (More democracy thru Constitutional Economics is a means to checking this.)

An information war can defraud the public from knowing its rights. Censorship of electoral knowledge about democratic method is a key factor in the power struggle conducted by politicians, academics, reformers and the media. A struggle, for and against electoral reform, took-off in Britain in the last quarter of the twentieth century (spreading to other countries, mainly English-speaking). A remarkable fact about the campaign is how *both* sides sought to censor debate on voting methods.

Adversary politics and electoral reform.

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In 1975, a collection of essays, called Adversary Politics And Electoral Reform, was edited by Prof. S E Finer, who also provided the title essay. His opening sentence sums it up:

"Briefly, the adversary system is a stand-up fight between two adversaries for the favours of the lookers-on."

Finer goes on to say two parties go about their respective government and opposition business like the defense and prosecution in a common law trial, hoping to win the majority support of a jury that is the British electorate.

Their contention is sharpened by the stakes, which are winner takes all. The party with most seats monopolises the government and all its powers of patronage. Government also monopolised the huge data-gathering resources of the civil service, with the Official Secrets Act. To mitigate this knowledge power monopoly, Freedom of Information legislation was passed -- not before doubts it was genuine -- by Labour administration.

By the final quarter of the twentieth century, the USA was a world leader, as was Sweden, with their Freedom of Information Acts. Ever since then, other democracies have been following suite, and Britain better late than never.

1975 was the year when Britains national campaign for electoral reform was founded. It later called itself "Fair Votes" (a title apparently taken over by electoral reformers starting campaigns in North America). This was an all-party movement that followed the Finer thesis.

The reformers criticised the two-party fight, in which one party knocked the other down, at a general election, and then walked all over it, only to be treated in the same fashion, if it lost the next electoral bout. Britain was not so much governed as unsettled by counter-acting invasions from the left and right of politics.

Fair Votes campaigns have usually held that governments should have a majority of the voters behind them. If one party cannot achieve that, they advocate coalitions. This necessitated proportional elections, so that small parties would win their fair share of seats, and take their rightful place in government, if no one party had a working majority in parliament.

This seems harmless enough. The devil is in the details. And, from the start, your Fair Votes campaigns could not abide the details.

In Britain, from the mid 1970s, one kept hearing on television the phrase "some form of proportional representation." The public were not instructed they were merely indoctrinated by this parrot call. The "fair votes" lobby was making clear that was all that mattered to them.

Later, they could drop the rubric "some form of," when it was understood that proportional representation meant what they wanted it to mean: any voting system that gave small parties a share of seats for votes. This reinforced the popular fallacy that proportional representation merely means proportional partisanship.

The logical fallacy is in the fact that the former implies the latter but the latter does not imply the former.

The fair representation of small parties is only one consequence of democracy, not a substitute for it. Any voting system, accepted alone for fairness to small parties, does not necessarily provide democracy.

So, there you have it, for over a quarter of a century, a relentless (and now international) campaign for "fair votes" based on a *non sequitur*. This illogicality shows these campaigners havent even learned what the ancient Chinese say is the beginning of wisdom: to call things by their proper names.

The dogma of "fair votes" for small parties seats.

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A "fair votes" movement, that included members of all parties, and spoke against the adversarial politics of the two-party system, should itself be non-adversarial. One might think that a movement that embraced supporters of all kinds of proportional elections was being liberal and tolerant.

Unfortunately, all kinds of proportional elections, themselves, are not liberal and tolerant of voters choices. To treat them, as if they were, is false and against the public interest and right to know. Moreover, one didnt have to be a prophet to guess that when the defenders of the existing inequitable system had to make concessions, the public interest would still not be foremost in their minds.

By 2000, many of those concessions had been made in Britain. And they indeed achieved some share of seats for votes to small parties. In Scottish and Welsh parliament elections, in London local elections, party lists of additional members, or straight party lists in the case of European elections, all achieved some so-called "fairness" to small parties, and all with a total disregard for the voters freedom of individual choice of candidates, as if representative democracy had to shrink to make room for party ideologies, or was a completely out-moded concept in Europe.

Electoral reform, for fairness between the parties, betrayed the voters freedom of individual choice. It was simply not an issue for most influential reformers and they didnt want to know about it. It seems strange that a movement that cares so much about fairness should care nothing at all about freedom of the individual. Perhaps, the answer is that the all-party movement was not so much about fairness, either, much less about democracy.

It is easy to spot the origin of the British electoral movement, that has since spread to other English-speaking countries with a grievance against the winner-takes-all system of simple majority elections. In two 1974 general elections, the Liberals won 19 - 18 per cent of the votes and less than two and a half per cent of the seats.

We can admit some sense of injustice here, among other than Liberals. But the 1976 proposals of the Hansard Society on electoral reform, the Blake report, show the severe limitations of that moral sense. The additional member system, they advocated, was merely an attempt to stop a leak in the existing system, by giving seats (in effect) to the Liberals, who were the best losers.

Something like this system was eventually used in Japan and its anomalies widely reported there. In Britain, it was given up as hopeless. (The Wakeham report resorted to this system but only as a no-hope option, for a minor role in the second chamber.)

British reformers started by believing they could ameliorate single member constituency elections, with a proportional count, without having to resort to continental party list systems. The significance of the critical failure of the Blake report was the recognition that this could not be done.

Yet, in Britain, it had always been said that party lists gave too much power to the parties. A further step, in the retreat from principle, came with Britains first European elections. All the other Common Market countries would be using list systems, and the treaty of Rome required a uniform system, so a good many British politicians bowed to the inevitable (as they believed).

By the late 1970s, Labour was losing its narrow parliamentary majority, in a succession of by-election defeats, and had come to a working arrangement with the Liberals, the Lib-Lab pact. Labour didnt want traditional Liberal policy for electoral systems, the single transferable vote, which they introduced in the House of Lords. This bill was a hint the Labour government was delaying too much for the elections to take place. The first Euro-elections were a year late, because of the British government.

Meanwhile, the Liberals obligingly came up with a party list system, as being less offensive to the regimented ranks of the Labour party. The Regional List allowed voters to put an X by the individual candidate on a party list they most preferred. The party member first past the post would be elected first, if indeed their share of the vote, as a party, warranted their winning a seat.

If a party won a proportion of votes in the region that entitled them to two of its seats, then their candidate, second past the post on the list, would be elected. Unfortunately, this system is not fool-proof. The Home secretary had to admit, to questioning in parliament, that it was possible for a list candidate to be elected with *no* personal votes. He can ride on the back of other list candidates, who win more votes than they need to claim a seat.

This absurdity is the result of the Regional List counting party loyalty as superseding representative democracy. This system would later be called an example of an "open list." A closed list gives no individual choice of candidates, only allowing one to vote for a party.

As soon as they came into office, in 1997, the Blair Labour government introduced a closed list for British Euro-elections. A political commentator said this was at the behest of the Liberal Democrats. This is probably true, as the Liberals had been out-raged at the defeat of the Regional List. They even went to the European court of human rights, failing to over-turn the decision.

The new Labour and Liberal alliance didnt make the mistake, this time, of letting parliament criticise their choice of electoral system. The closed list was simply announced by diktat of the Prime Minister. So much for the constitution.

Four Labour MEPs had whipping sanctions against them, for refusing, as one of them said, to sign a "gagging order" on the subject. Two of these left wing MEPs were ultimately expelled from the party

No doubt this was much to the pleasure of the authoritarian right, who had taken over from the authoritarian left, in the Labour party, their legendary loathing for each other, apparently only exceeded by their loathing for democratic voting method.

Meanwhile, the House of Lords rejected the closed list -- five times. There was talk of an open list, as if this were some sort of salvation for individual representation. We have seen, it had already been exposed to ridicule as capable of "electing" candidates without any votes, or derisively few.

Labour and their Liberal Democrat backers knew what they were doing and made their discreditable choice in favor of outright denial of individual representation, the closed list, instead of the open lists bungled individual representation.

This Lords rebellion was their last and futile act before hereditary peers were abolished. Their replacements have defied advertising standards by being called "the peoples peers." In fact, they are not elected by the people. They are merely appointed by a so-called "Independent Appointments Commission."

This is a contradiction in terms, as the appointers are narrowly dependent on who appointed them - largely the parties, depend upon it. And the peers themselves, dependent on the appointers, are actually "the appointers peers," ultimately, "the parties peers."

Here are more Orwellian examples of the political abuse of language, by which the Establishment deceives itself, it can rule legitimately, by denying itself the authority of representation. Here again is the unwisdom of not calling things by their proper names.

Why do we never learn anything from history?

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***Continuing a case study of electoral reform as war games politics.
(Mainly covering the Tory rule of the 1980s.)***

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Labour vows vengeance on [opinion polls](#).

Metropolitan councils [abolition](#).

"Why do we never learn anything [from history?](#)"

[Closing remarks](#).

Tory PR between single member constituencies.

My argument is that the last quarter of the twentieth century saw "fair votes" movements conduct an electoral reform campaign that was essentially the adversarial politics, they criticised. It was just trying to replace one dogma with another.

The old dogma was that the first past the post system produced strong governments, with working majorities, directly chosen by the people from individual representatives, with local links to their constituents, in a single member system. As with the fair votes dogma, this sounds reasonable. Once again, the devil is in the details, which show how crudely inefficient and restrictive a system it is.

When the Conservatives came back to power in 1979, the first thing they did was to equalise single member constituencies, often with disregard to community boundaries. This caused much local protest that their interests were unnaturally fragmented. As a result, the Tory majorities in parliamentary seats massively increased in the succeeding general elections of 1983 and 1987, for little difference in their minority per-centage of the vote (about 44% to 42%).

In other words, proportional representation between single member constituencies was the particular system that maximised the Tories number of seats in parliament. Of course, no one, who could be heard, ever called it that. But that, nevertheless, is what it was. Proportional representation, in any form, was a dirty word, with the Tory leaders. For people to realise that the Tories were grossly exploiting a particular, if restricted, form of it, to their own advantage, might start awkward questions being asked about a less self-defeating use of the PR principle.

Had the Tories ever thought of this, they neednt have worried. To electoral reformers, proportional representation was too holy a concept, to be associated, in however attenuated a form, with the dirty deeds of the Tory party digging itself in, to hold onto power.

Animal Farm was told that "All animals are equal." Going back to make sure of this, they found "but some animals are more equal than others."

So, it is with voting equality, as understood by the Tories. Equal constituencies make the the Tories more equal than others. Similarly, Labour-favored party lists (are supposed to) make parties equal. But party lists are more equal than (denied) voters lists.

We see here, once again, the wisdom of calling things by their proper names, to resolve conflicts that are not based on any real difference of democratic principle, if the truth were known. And here we come to the nub of the problem. For purposes of personal or partisan advantage, it is often inconvenient for the truth to be known, and steps may be taken to suppress it.

Tory suppression of impartial enquiry.

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For instance, before their 1979 victory, the Tories promised, in two campaigns, to hold a Speakers Conference on Electoral Reform. By then, a national campaign had got under way, that might even win the argument.

Without seeking agreement on the rules of the political game, the new Tory government unilaterally rushed in the above-described legislation, to equalise constituencies, whose accurate description is PR between single member constituencies.

The new PM, Margaret Thatcher said: "the lady is not for turning." So, what was the meaning behind this U-turn against a constitutional settlement of reform?

Much of British industry was lavishly and secretly funding the Tories. (By 2001, Labour required parties to disclose large donations and limit spending on elections and referendums.) Fears were voiced that a leftward Labour party was going to nationalise the biggest companies. First past the post might give it a working majority in parliament, to do that, with less than forty per cent support of the voters.

Hence, the Tories, in opposition, sounded much less dismissive of proportional representation. Some of their business funders found PR attractive as a means to put the command economy forever beyond the Labour Left. Thatcherism soon showed itself to be a radical alternative, with its return to laissez-faire economics.

Not all business was happy with the prospect of their planning being set at nought, by even more radical swings between the two extremes of socialism and individualism. (My study of "Constitutional Economics" and an economic parliament, reconciles socialism and capitalism, democratically.)

First past the post promoted these polarities by exaggerating swings in voters support, in terms of the number of seats changing hands between the big two parties. Prof. Finer referred to surveys showing the public less doctrinaire than the official lines.

The Conservative government of the 1980s refused to hold an impartial enquiry into the electoral anomalies, they had so eagerly engineered. This was as much to say, with the arrogance of power, that the government knew best. When the inter-viewer David Dimbleby questioned the prime minister, he put it to her, that she was just saying she didn't like it (PR). He implied this was not justification enough.

Mrs Thatcher gave the impression that the 1983 result for the Lib-SDP Alliance was their own fault for trying to violate the sanctity of the two-party system (which the British constitution does not recognise, as distinct from the right to a "loyal opposition").

That is not all that was at issue. Leading Social Democrats broke with the Labour half of the two-party system, when it rejected "one member one vote" as the way of managing its party affairs.

On that election night (under questioning) one of the most popular and able cabinet ministers, Michael Heseltine was the only senior Tory I heard give any thought, to defending the simple majority system.

His excuses went like this:

The Alliance wouldn't have behaved any better to the Tories, if victory had been theirs.

So, he tacitly admitted, as a fact, that the Tories were behaving badly. Whereas, it was only a guess, to say that the Alliance was as bad. Bertrand Russell said it is a mistake to believe in the superior virtue of the oppressed. There is circumstantial evidence of Tory-like selfishness, in the Liberals and their allies, in their desire to put getting more seats for votes before anything else: The Liberals who would prostitute their historic principles for a few more seats in parliament, as Norman St John Stevas, once put it, at Tory party conference.

Nevertheless, Heseltine's argument of *tu quoque*, or, "you also" (are guilty) is anarchic. It is the selfish belief that every one is selfish and deserves only to be selfishly treated. This would lead, as Thomas Hobbes said, to a state of "war of all against all" in which life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

Michael Heseltine's excuse two, against the inequity of the 1983 election, admitted that the system was unfair. But it could unfairly favor the Alliance, another time.

Here, Heseltine seems to contradict himself. Is he saying, yes the system gives unfair results, but no, it isn't unfair, because the unfairness can happen to others instead? What compensation is one unfairness for another? Both unfairnesses remain unfair.

This second excuse can be reduced to the absurd (*reductio ad absurdum*). It implies there's no need to bother about any-one being unjustly treated, because the wheel of fortune may always turn again in their favor. It was another apology for anarchy.

Another reason, the arch-European, Heseltine gave, was the Continental experience of unstable multi-party governments. This indeed follows from their PR systems, which are based on a vote for a party division.

But transferable voting allows unitary choice. STV allows voters to prefer a particular coalition and therefore make a decisive choice of government composition. With STV, there's no need for post-election wheeling and dealing between the parties, before a government can be formed.

The 1987 British general election repeated 1983: a bloated Tory majority of the Tory party. The tv discussion, on election night, was as if the controversy had gone away. Suppression of debate was not confined to the Tories.

Labour vows vengeance on opinion polls.

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The Liberals found some solace in by-election victories. There were signs that their two big party oppressors would deny them this, too, if they could - essentially by the same tactic of suppressing information to the public. Like the Tory press and the media in general, opinion polls became a scape-goat for Labour failures.

The 1983 election result renewed the complaints, including from a wrathful senior front-bencher.

The argument for banning polls, during an election, was that voters shouldnt be influenced by the apparent trend other voters are following. People have to think for themselves and follow their own convictions in a democracy.

Of course, if MPs did this, they would be expelled from their parties. They would have virtually no chance of re-election, because first past the post elections dont allow voters to prefer between candidates of the same party or general political persuasion. Instead, their split vote would let in their opponent from the other main party.

The hypocrisy, of party politicians telling the public to be independent-minded, is obvious. And their argument is quite the reverse of the truth. Granted that people are influenced by polls, it need not follow they wish to get on a band-wagon. If anything, they may be voting with more, rather than less, conviction. All you can say for sure is that opinion polls allow voters to act in the knowledge of the way the campaign appears to be going.

If people cannot be trusted to use wisely a knowledge of polls, then those against the election-time polls really dont trust the people, at all, to behave in an informed manner. The banners of opinion polls are not democrats.

All, mainly Labour, banners were offering was ignorance of others current choices. It was the impertinence of telling voters to keep their opinions to themselves, during an election. That is in the effective form of the collective voice of a poll.

Anti-poll legislation would be a public gagging law. For, knowledge is power. And the knowledge of the polls helps the voters decide how to use primitive X-votes to most effect. In 1983, the polls showed the Liberals, in their "Alliance" with the new Social Democratic Party, catching up with Labour in their per-cent shares of the national vote.

In such circumstances, the polls give a modest independence to the voters from a straight fight between two parties. The big two parties, who always pressed tactical voting on the voters, because the Liberals were "a wasted vote," were venting their spleen on the polls, for showing to what extent this was true. The polls were a force against ruling the voters by ignorance and fear of splitting their vote to let-in a least prefered party candidate.

The editorial, of a right-wing Tory paper, The Sunday Express, wanted a ban on polls. The excuse was the misleading polls in Labours favor, before the 1985 Brecon and Radnor by-election. The Alliance narrowly won. Tho the polls got the result wrong, they were right in showing that the Alliance were the best chance of keeping Labour out. Without the polls, this would not have been known, and the voters would have been denied the power of exercising their actual preference between the two front runners.

As the pollsters say, statistically, they are bound to get it wrong sometimes, but without them, the voters would only have wild rumors, organised panics and biased hear-say.

A few MPs are allowed a private members bill, by lottery. In 1985, a Labour MPs poll-ban bill was narrowly defeated. So, little attempt was made, by the Tories with their 140 seat majority, to stop the bill. Most private members bills have little chance of being passed, without special dispensation from the government, which has increasingly crowded them out, over the years.

Metropolitan councils abolition.

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The so-called party of the constitution made a more blatant departure from constitutional methods when they abolished the metropolitan councils, mainly controled by Labour. The Tories left the other half of local government, in the shires, which was controled by their own

party. This rural bias was reminiscent of the House of Commons before the Great Reform Bill of 1832.

It was a reactionary measure, in the spirit of an act of war: You cannot come to terms with these people, so destroy their power base, even if you destroy whole urban units of local democracy to do it.

No doubt, this rub-out was a response to scandalous extravagance by so-called lwny left councils. This didnt stop the Toris from the scandalous extravagance of another local government re-organisation. It did not even have the agreement of the Tory party, especially in the Lords. Edward Heath said London was the only capitol in the democratic world not to have self government. Metropolitan government abolition was vigilante politics, instead of practical politics by seeking the long-term agreement of a constitutional settlement.

The remedy to politically-correct waster councils was to strengthen local democracy with the electoral system that allows effective opposition. The Salmon report had not been allowed to consider that. The Tory government prefered to abolish local democracy, in the mainly Labour-controlled metropolitan areas, rather than let it work properly.

"Why do we never learn anything from history?"

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Constitutional history, from the ancient Greek Tyrants to our "elective dictators," may be used for examples of not learning from the past. Old battles are fought in unfamiliar guise. The dogma of the divine right of kings re-emerged as "the leading role of the party." The Kremlin insider, Viktor Kravchenko relates, in "I Chose Freedom," the systematic way in which the Communist party was put above the Soviet state.

These doctrines were both excuses for the exercise of absolute authority. In both cases, civil war England or the Soviet Union, dissenters emphasised adherence to the rule of law. An example, of the latter, is given in Vladimir Bukovsky autobiography, To Build A Castle.

In 1980s England a new argument, about supremacy, came out of the wood-work. Instead of the civil war between the king and parliament, this time party was urged to be supreme. Like a constitutional monarch, parliament would be reduced to a rubber stamp of decisions decided outside by party delegates.

Of course, these werent the terms that the debate was put-in by its advocates. They characterised it as "party democracy" as distinct from "representative democracy." That is to say the activists at Labour party conference would pass resolutions, to be obeyed by Labour MPs in government, supposed to be representing the nation, rather than a conference-floor caucus set-up -- union bloc votes, "electoral college" and all.

An injustice may be more difficult to dislodge when it is merely time-honored and unquestioned. It must have been hard to imagine the House of Lords losing its *veto* over legislation from the British "lower" chamber. The whole dizzy hierarchy of the English class system conspired against the lower orders throwing off this yoke of their "betters." Rhetoric about "the peers versus the people," in blocking welfare benefits, was all very well, but the election to decide the issue was a close-run thing.

The concept of a veto is implicit in the electoral system of first past the post. More or less half the voters never elect anyone. Their vote is vetoed by the simple majority system. In particular, parties, whose support is widespread rather than concentrated, are vetoed, winning few seats. That is, unless they have something more than nearly 26% of the national vote gathered by the SDP-Liberal Alliance in 1983.

One could say with some justice that, this time, the veto was one of "the parties versus the people." You may say that only applies to the parties in the two-party system. At any rate, we know from Richard Crossman Diaries that he wanted to turn elections into a two-party system by forbidding any but Labour and Conservative to have their party labels on the ballot papers. He lamented that his party in government gave way on this duopoly.

A few diary pages on, he is worrying over the Scottish Nationalists taking Labour seats.

People vote for a party, he asserts, dismissing the tradition of representation. The lack of a representative choice in the single (party) member system is made an excuse for its dismissal, by Crossman.

As Leo Amery said, in Thoughts On The Constitution:

"the voter is not in a position to choose either the kind of representative or the kind of government he would like if he had a free choice...his function is the limited and essentially passive one of two alternatives put before him."

For these reasons, Amery promoted the single transferable vote.

Amerys insight was not shared by most electoral reformers, conducting their campaign for "fair votes" against the entrenched two-party system. Rather, they formed a sort of "proportional front," which may be likened to the *Popular Front* of the nineteen thirties. This was a centre-left alliance against fascism. Their doctrinal line was that you must not say anything critical of Comrade Stalin, lest it strengthen the

fascists.

George Orwell fell out of step with this regimented opinion. (This was to make him reviled by the left. He could give as good as he got, when dismissing "the smelly little orthodoxies" that try to capture mens souls.)

"Homage To Catalonia" told his experiences in the Spanish Civil War. In going to fight for the legitimate republican government, he just happened to be drafted to a small dissident group of Anarchist Marxists. Otherwise, he might never have found out how the Communists were fighting a civil war within a civil war, by eliminating all leftist allies but orthodox communists.

The Stalinists were following the same tactics that led to the Soviet Union as a one-party state. In doing so, they were also corrupting and weakening the Spanish republican cause, which was eventually defeated.

The loyalists were not only up against both Franco and Stalin followers. Orwell chaptered British Press lies about the legitimate regime. This is supported by the witness of the philosopher RG Collingwood, in his Autobiography. He happened to be on holiday in Spain, at the time of the allegedly monstrous new regime, whose inauguration he described as like a festival.

The "Proportional Front" is not the Popular Front but the mentality is the same. For a quarter of a century I heard the argument, or rather imposition, against disputing different methods of proportional representation. It was alleged this would only result in endless disagreement and weaken a common cause of supporting the "principle" of PR.

Yet proportional "methods" are as different in principle as dictatorship from democracy. On the one hand, you have the party list by which a boss dictates the order in which party members shall go into parliament, depending on their share of votes for a "party." On the other hand, you have the single transferable vote by which the order of representation (partisan or independent) is ballot listed by all the voters - not just party bosses or activists.

Usually, the campaign talk, of making votes count, means making the party list bosses votes count as the "representative" votes. Representation of the people has become representation of the parties. The voters merely get votes to count in a party proportional fashion.

"PR" supporters are always pointing out the "stability" of all systems that do not exaggerate typical small swings in support, as first past the post does. This is another way of saying that those proportional systems, which deny representative freedom, give a minimal influence to voters, confined to their usually small changes in party allegiance: partisan PR is undemocratic.

The leading reformers may have thought there was nothing to discuss about the application of PR. That is only an assertion that they know best, over-ruling the rights of others to disagree. The excuse was that disagreement would stir up fanaticism and put off new supporters. That was like arresting someone for a crime they might commit.

Even Enid Lakeman was dismissed, after her death, by one reforming news-papers article as "obsessed," not mentioning what she was obsessed about, as if she was unfit to talk about her democratic belief or it was unfit to be talked about.

Lakeman actually had the audacity to consistently name democratic voting method as the single transferable vote, and expose the shortcomings of list or additional (list) systems. Britains leading expert on voting systems, she, at least knew what she was talking about.

If PR was of arbitrary application, then debate should have shown up the fact. It should have become evident that differences of method were not important. That being the case, any differences of opinion that persisted would owe only to the clash of egos. It appears British organisational heads did not trust people, to attempt to reasonably settle the issue.

This left parliament to parley the issue, where in fact there is remarkably little freedom of opinion on electoral reform or on most other issues that the party whips take an interest in -- almost everything.

Different kinds of proportional elections will elect different personnel, tho they all ensure more seats for small parties. Party list systems can slip unpopular candidates into parliament. Moreover, lists dont rest on any agreed basis of how party proportional they should be. That arbitrariness is an invitation to the power politics of bending the electoral rules to get the best result for the ruling group.

So-called PR has brought new opportunities for rule-bending opportunism. This adds to the repertoire of convenient fixes for competing politicians to get or keep themselves in power. And is endorsed by an academic ideology that asserts all systems have their pros and cons. Electoral reform is twisted into a vote-riggers charter.

In grasping at a proportional principle, most influential reformers lost sight of democratic principle and the need to know its true application. Suppressing differences on proportional methods is not the way to find it.

Why do we never learn anything from history?

Well, as I have tried to show in the case of electoral reform, because of a war games politics that tells the public just so much as it needs

to know to serve the interests of factions, and not the public interest. This involves various means of censoring free enquiry into what those factions or parties dont want to know themselves, much less let anyone else know: that their particular cause may not coincide with the common cause, the well-being of society, or indeed, the eco-system, in which the parts really matter to each other.

Closing remarks.

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War games politics of electoral reform has been based only on giving more seats for votes to small parties. This will only succeed in making them part of a divisive and weakening power struggle, with self-serving changes to voting systems.

Instead, a constitutional settlement should be sought, thru free enquiry into democratic voting method, so that the voters may be the decisive arbiters of who governs a free, united and strong country.

Pope John Paul II made Sir Thomas More the patron saint of politicians. Orwell is also "a man for all seasons." George Orwell continues to matter, in politics, because he opposed expedient suppressions of the truth about wrongs, even if they took place, broadly speaking, on ones "own" side. And Orwell did consider himself on "the Left." A literary man, an esthete, he was sceptical of science. He was free of specialists barbarous jargon that no-one reads or understands. He had nothing of safe academics professional neutrality. Yet he had a respect for truth, shared and furthered thru free enquiry.

This, after all, is the scientific ideal. Politics needs to change from a war games mentality of suppressing free enquiry into evidence against party propagandas false pretences and keeping people in ignorance.

The chaotic state of electoral knowledge shows the political class needs to change from ignorant censor to free enquirer.

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Preface on evidence to the Independent Commission on Voting Systems.

This evidence (since edited) was presented, but not recognised, by the Independent Commission of 1998, other than by private letter, as an "extremely interesting submission."

The commission report refers to organisations, politicians and academics, as well as several pages listing "interlocuters" from foreign countries.

The others were held to be too numerous to mention. The number was not even mentioned. I could not find even the name of one ordinary member of the public - a mere voter - acknowledged by the Voting Commission (in the Stationary Office edition of the Jenkins report).

The commission was supposed to be open to the general public. Not so much as one extract from their written submissions was thought worthy of including in their "Key Evidence."

This consisted entirely of the comments or studies from those of power or influence, which evidently was all that weighed in the minds of the commission, despite the repeat protest they gave "most" or "very serious consideration" to the dedicated support for STV. Not that there wasn't more than ample, in the Key Evidence, to point the commission in that direction.

The effect of this commission on ordinary people, for whose benefit it is supposed to be concerned, must be to conclude that taking an interest in official studies is a waste of time and effort.

[P.S.: This conclusion proved to be justified, as was discussed in book 1, especially in the chapter on the Ashdown Diaries.]

Scientific method of elections.

Summary of: How To Do It.

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The four main measurement scales define the single transferable vote as scientific method of elections.

Party-proportional counts generally lack the middle two, the ordinal scale, given by a preference vote, and the interval scale of transferable votes in surplus of a quota. This lack explains why party list systems have no coherent principle of electing individuals.

Likewise, combining simple majorities with lists uses only the first and fourth scales, the classificatory scale (for one person one vote) and ratio scale (for proportion) without the logical progression thru the other two scales.

STV contains four logically possible kinds of PR: 1) with respect to parties, preferring partisanship, primaries, coalitions, referendums.

And likewise: 2) with respect to quotas between, within, across and without constituencies.

As proposed, STV satisfies 6 (and potentially all 8) of these kinds of PR.

The single member system has one kind (PR between constituencies).

(Localised multi-member constituencies offer the most convenient and accurate "geometry" of historic communities.)

List systems have two kinds of PR: between parties (partisanship), and, without constituencies.

So, combined systems average between one and two kinds of PR.

STV offers comprehensive PR proper, as a theory of relative choice that consistently generalises the vote and count, from the simple majority system of one-preference vote for one-member majority count, to many-preference vote (of ordered choice) for many-member majority (Droop quota) count.

JS Mill took democracy beyond the absolutist schisms of "maiorocracy" or proportional partisanship.

A deductive explanation of elections offers a practical conciliation of unity (or fraternity) in liberty, thru the principle of equality in transferable voting, that proportionally represents all group attributes by individual preference.

[There is more on deductive explanation, on my web-page, for intended inclusion, in a further book in this series on Democracy Science: The moral sciences as the ethics of scientific method.]

Summary of: How *Not* To Do It.

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Additional Members System (AMS) originally was an ad hoc attempt, by the Blake report, to save disproportionate first past the post elections as a constituency system. It failed to find acceptance, because of the anomalies from second (or third) past the post MPs, as Additional Members.

So, the German version (with a Double Vote) was fallen-back on for an additional member system. This system is generally what is meant by AMS. In North America, AMS is called Mixed Member Proportional (MMP).

A second X-vote for party list portions of seats reduces the number of single-member monopolies, that become more disproportionate and more polarised. This combined system of inconsistent axioms is inherently unstable (most clearly failing the test of Euro-elections).

This compensated parties system denies the knowledge to be gained from public freedom of choice, in PR of individual representatives, and thereby all groups in society, besides parties (failing, for instance, Independents and independence, most obviously in local elections).

For general elections, AMS has an ad hoc threshold to suppress the consistent application even of its party-privileged proportional count, lest small parties hold coalitions to ransom.

AMS is a particular patch-up not a truly general theory of choice. Separate "personal" and "party" votes deny a proper "control" in the electoral test of personal choice in relation to party choice.

In terms of Britains "safe seat" system, the additional list members are a second safety net for failed candidates and failed parties, tardily and unstably going thru all the (unpreferred) coalition combinations.

Or, just a third party of additional members, perhaps, is squeezed by the two-party system of single members. Yet the main parties cannot govern without this confirmed stooge.

Unless they cut out the middle-man, this vulnerable, because narrowly undemocratic, base for a king-maker chooses which unstable course to take, by way of successive left or right wing coalitions.

The Additional Member System (Mixed Member Proportional) denies basic electoral rights of individual choice and electing a government.

HOW TO DO IT.

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"Science Is Measurement."

In 2010, 53% of UK votes were for losing candidates and a further 18% were surplus to winners requirements, giving First Past The Post only a 29% measure of efficiency.

(The Electoral Reform Society cited by David Green.)

And to give the game away right away, only one voting system measures up to the four main scales of measurement, known to science. For Sidney Siegal, the usual problem of the behavioral sciences is, like physics, to go beyond the first two scales (which his book on non-parametric statistics is mainly about statistical tests for). And coming to the hundreds of voting methods, that have been invented, all - but one - miss out, typically two of the measurement scales.

The four scales are built-up by logical progression, and the usual omission, of the middle two scales, renders those voting methods unscientific. The practical criticisms justly brought against them, stem from that missing mensural information.

A Measure Of Representation.

1) *The Nominal Scale: The Spot Vote.*

The first scale of measurement is the classificatory or nominal scale. "One person one vote" classifies all adults as voters. Everyone is at least nominally represented. Hence, the chivalrous tradition that a single member will work for all his constituents, including those who did not want to be saddled with him. He is their nominal or named representative but not necessarily who they actually voted for.

X marks the spot gives rise to a two-party system because it can only express a single preference between one of two candidates, in a system of single member constituencies.

Voters have sought more than the simplest two-way choice, which is all this system affords.

Even a mere two-party choice of government suffers already from a fatal defect. Equal electorates are no guarantee against disproportionate results. One party may pile up huge majorities. The other party may slip first past the post to win more seats with fewer wasted votes. (See Enid Lakeman: How Democracies Vote.) That was how the minority won twice in South Africa, resulting in the unconstitutional Apartheid regime.

Malapportionment is routinely practised in the United States and condemned, amongst American Presidents, by Ford and Reagan. State legislature majorities settle the federal election districts.

Large surpluses of their opponents voters are bound in a relatively few districts, whereas they give themselves adequate surpluses in more districts.

Politicians can rig elections but they cannot rig the logic of elections. Inescapably, they are using, or rather misusing, a transferable voting system. In effect, the cheats are transferring their opponents votes to fewer districts, equivalent to their having to win with more votes per district. On average, the governing party candidates will need less votes per district to win a seat. This is equivalent to giving their own party a lower quota or elective hurdle to jump than their opponents.

Malapportionment is as inequitable, or unfairly discriminatory, as if some party candidates in a multi-member constituency were required to win a higher quota than others, to be elected.

But it does show that transferable voting is the necessary logic of elections and that the objectors to proportional representation for disproportional representation are merely riggers of transferable voting system, not supporters of some other justifiable system, in its own right.

2) *The Ordinal Scale: The Alternative Vote.*

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More than two candidates poses the dilemma of giving a single-preference X-vote either to ones first preference or a second preference with a better chance of keeping out a least preferred candidate. It is the familiar poor choice between a wasted vote or a tactical vote (called a strategic vote, in North America and also in Europe).

Elections are a test of public opinion. Scientific method applies to the electoral test as to any other scientific experiment. Experimenters control any chance factors that might obscure the law, which explains the results they are looking for. In the experiment of an election, the law to be observed is the law of a majority count, in terms of which the results of the voting are electively understood.

First Past The Post breaks this scientific law of the majority count. In 2010, two-thirds of UK MPs were elected on a minority vote.

(We will show the concept of a majority count generalises to include proportional counting, and become a general law of the count.)

Experimental control is given the voters, by replacing the one-preference spot vote with a many-preference vote for candidates in number order of choice: 1, 2, 3, etc. This is simply called preference voting. An ordered choice is on an ordinal scale of measurement.

The "control" is of the chance of split voting between two candidates, one of whom might be more preferred than a third candidate, winning more votes than either but less than both. To know the truth of the matter, it is necessary to control such contingencies, which obscure the law of majority election, that doesn't depend on the chance of one of the losing candidates not standing down.

Indeed, the Second Ballot system obliges the candidate, with the fewest spot votes, to stand down, to allow his voters to contribute to another candidate reaching an overall majority. This allowance of an ordered choice is, in democratic terms, a preferential suffrage, and, in scientific terms, a preferential control.

The Alternative Vote effects a Second Ballot, or as many successive re-distributions of the votes from excluded candidates as it takes, to find the overall majority candidate.

Churchill called this process of elimination "the worst votes for the worst candidates."

The short answer is that the same argument applies with more force to the spot vote. A choice between a wasted vote or a tactical vote is between using the spot vote as a first preference or a second preference. Denying the public a preference vote does not abolish the reality of relative choice. It only degrades the public freedom to express it. Thus the X-vote makes some voters use a worse vote for a worse candidate than they need do with a preference vote.

So, Churchills famous phrase applies more to the spot vote than the preference vote. (As a Liberal, he admitted, in 1904, to the Proportional Representation Society that the Single Transferable Vote is "excellent in theory" but meanwhile would support the Second Ballot. Tho, returning to the Tories, he opposed the Alternative Vote.)

Tory anti-reformers, Maude and Szemerey (Why Electoral Change?) note a further objection to preference voting as "circular." Some permutations of preference voting may cancel each other out:

Voter	1st	2nd	3rd
A	Labour	Conservative	Liberal
B	Liberal	Labour	Conservative
C	Conservative	Liberal	Labour

This set of preferences reversed would also cancel each other out, making two self-cancelling sets. These cover all six permutations of preference between three candidates.

But taking each preference from one set, and replacing it by each of the preferences, in turn, from the other set, you get three times three new sets of preferences, in both the original sets (or $3 \times 3 \times 2$) equals eighteen non-cancelling sets of preferences.

Compare that with having only a single-preference spot vote. This merely minimises the amount of preferential information about voters choices. The truth is not improved by suppressing parts of it one doesn't like, to reduce it to a spot vote for a two-party system:

Voter A for 1st: Labour, 2nd: Conservative.

Voter C for 1st: Conservative, 2nd: Labour.

Here there is only one possible set of preference permutations and it is a self-canceling set. So, contrary to objection, the more preferential the voting, the vastly decreased the probabilities of turning up circular or self-canceling sets of preferences.

3(i) *The Interval Scale (Assumed): Borda Method.*

Borda method anticipated critics like Churchill, by giving the least weight in the count to the lowest preferences or "worst votes." Unlike the Alternative Vote, Borda method (1770) makes standard mathematical use of all the preferential information, weighted relative to order of

importance.

Weighting with the harmonic series counts $1/1$, $1/2$, $1/3$ etc for each 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc. preference, respectively. These are assumed values at which the strength of voters feelings for candidates perhaps falls off.

(At any rate, weighting with the arithmetic series perhaps over-emphasises, as the geometric series would under-emphasise, the importance of lesser preferences, as the number of candidates increases.)

Borda method was the first attempt to overcome the "Condorcet paradox" (which has a bearing on the Churchill aphorism). With equally weighted preferences, the least preferred of three candidates, in the first round, might be the most preferred on the second preferences of voters for the leading two candidates. This can produce a contradictory result to the Alternative Vote or Exhaustive Ballot, including its limited version, the Second Ballot, which excludes candidates with the least first preferences.

3 (ii) *The Interval Scale (Real): Gregory Method.*

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In simple statistics, interval weighting means taking into account the number of items, in each class of an ordered table of data, to arrive at a rational average. When it is not known how many items there are in each class, the number may be assumed. This is akin to Borda assumed count. When it is known, we have a real interval scale, as is the case with Gregory method (1880), used as "the Senatorial Rules" in some Commonwealth countries.

This is why Gregory method supersedes Borda.

Unlike Borda method, second or lesser preferences cannot count against the election of first or greater preferences.

In single member constituencies, a winning candidate usually has a margin of redundant votes over those just needed to elect him first past the post. This surplus vote is the interval between his total vote and his elective vote. Gregory method makes surplus votes transferable for the election of second or next preferences in a multi-member constituency.

All a first-elected candidates voters are equally entitled to a preferential say in the re-distribution of his surplus vote. For example, suppose 100 votes is enough to elect candidates but the most popular candidate received 160 first preferences, a surplus of 60 votes. There are 160 voters equally entitled to prefer how the surplus weight of 60 votes should be redistributed. So, all 160 voters second preferences are weighted at $60/160 = 3/8$ of a vote, their "transfer value."

Say 80 out of 160 transferable votes went to the same second preference, giving him votes to the value of $3/8 \times 80 = 30$ votes. If that candidate already had 70 or more votes, he would now have the 100 votes to become the second elected candidate in a multi-member constituency.

The surplus votes from the most preferred candidates, with transferable voting, is the logical opposite of deficit votes from the least preferred candidates, with the Alternative Vote, "the worst votes for the worst candidates." Then, transferable voting must be the best votes for the best candidates, for that Churchillian catch-phrase to have any meaning.

4) *The Ratio Scale: The Droop Quota.*

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Given best votes for best candidates, by transferable voting, Churchills other cleverest of electoral sayings implies its multi-member constituencies: I would rather be one-fifth of the representatives for the whole of Leeds than one representative for a fifth of Leeds. This preference is worthy of the meaning of the House of "Commons" or communities. Whereas the single member system has turned parliament into a House of Monopolies.

Electing one member with half the votes (or just over) is only the first in a rational series of possibilities. Two candidates can be elected on quotas of one-third the votes each, for a proportional representation of two-thirds the voters in a two-member constituency. Three constituency seats are won on quotas of a quarter the votes each, proportionally representing three-quarters the voters. And so on. This rationalisation of representation is known as "the Droop quota" (1869).

Votes in surplus of a quota are transferable by Gregory method. If all surplus votes have been transferred and any seats remain to be filled, then the candidate with least votes stands down for re-distribution of his next preferences.

This standard procedure eliminates all but the most residual kind of tactical voting. For further progress against this, Brian Meek and later

D R Woodall (Representation, Journal of the Electoral Reform Society, Vol. 23 no 90) worked-out an exhaustive computer count for transferable voting.

Roger Penrose (Shadows Of The Mind) warned of computer fraud in elections.

Transferable voting should be least vulnerable, as a national complex of individual preferences. Whereas list totals of "party" votes might only need a nudge one way or the other to falsify the result decisively.

To sum-up, we have related a coherent electoral procedure by following the four main scales of measurement, in: 1) a classification in terms of one person one vote; 2) the one vote is in order of preference; 3) each single vote is transferable in that order, to the interval value of surplus votes over the quota, which is 4) the Droop quota, an elective ratio of votes to seats in a multi-member constituency.

In fact, we have just defined an existing electoral system known as proportional representation by the single transferable vote. Therefore, STV/PR is the scientific method of elections.

Mensurally Deficient Non-Transferable Voting.

The logic of measurement shows-up the deficiencies of non-transferable voting systems. An X-vote for one of two parties in a single member system is the least measured system of elections, offering the least choice.

However, Alternative Vote or Exhaustive Ballot offer a full order of choice compared to the Second Ballot or Supplementary Vote (recommended by the Plant report) only offering a first and second preference (or, rather, a two-preference vote, not necessarily first and second choice).

Borda method, unlike the Alternative Vote, attempts to account for the relative importance of preferences, with an assumed interval scale weighting. It is worth emphasising that, for developing the scientific measurement of elections, multi-member constituencies are essential, as Gregory method of real interval scale weighting measures the way voters later preferences actually do decrease in importance.

Systems of "PR," that are only based on a party-proportional count of the spot vote, generally lack both the ordinal scale of measurement in preference voting and the (real) interval scale in (Gregory method of) transferable voting.

That is why party list systems have no principled means of electing individual candidates. The fault remains when lists are combined, with a single member system, to give Additional Members.

Additional Member Systems, such as the German Double Vote, are unscientific. The first vote classifies one person with one choice for a representatives majority. The second vote counts proportional partisanship in ratios of seats to party votes. The classificatory scale should progress thru the ordinal and interval scales to the ratio scale. Instead, AMS treats its mere two scales as two separate systems. It brings to mind the proverbially blindfolded visitors pronouncing on the oddest menagerie, really the different parts of an elephant.

The Empirical Rationalism Of Scientific Elections.

The German Additional Member System and the (later abandoned) Italian constitutional reforms of the 1990s, also introducing single member constituencies, were misconceived attempts to stabilize Continental rationalism with British empiricism.

The one-sided philosophies of British empiricism and Continental rationalism are reflected in their respective Common Law and Roman Law. This separate tradition of understanding their affairs is also found in their respective voting systems.

Most English-speaking countries stick to the (limited) evidence of an X-vote for an individual candidate first past the post, resulting in rationally "wasted" votes. Whereas, mainland Europe attempts to solve this problem with a dogmatic rationalism of proportional partisanship, disregarding who the voters most preferred individual candidates might be.

Science is a working partnership in empirical rationalism. Rational system and empirical investigation work better together. The single transferable vote (STV) gives greater evidence in a whole order of individual choice, that is a preference vote. And STV is more rational than a partisan count. The STV count preferentially rationalises choice not only between parties but within parties, across parties and outside parties. This system widens the freedom to know public opinion.

The Explanatory Power Of Transferable Voting:

1) With Respect To Parties.

A good scientific theory of choice is judged by the range and power of its explanations. STV analyses the four logically possible ways to consider individual choice in relation to party support: choice between, within, across and without parties.

The four relations correspond to the four scales of measurement.

Choice between parties classifies choice into party choices.

Choice within parties orders choice of party candidates.

Choice across parties is across party intervals on the political spectrum of uniquely individual "colors" of candidates. The "intervals" are the broadly recognised party colors, "Reds," "Greens" etc.

Choice without parties, of Independents (or independent minded nominees) for non-political (aspects of) elections, is possible on a ratio of votes per seats for individual candidates, rather than party lists.

These four relations of party to personal choice may be familiarly named, as:

1) *partisanship*, by preferring several candidates all of the same party.

Example: A divided community will show little cross-party voting, tho even in Northern Ireland it eventually became considerable, and STV is the only system that impartially permits the links as well as the breaks to show.

2) *primaries*, by preferring certain candidates to others of the same party.

Example: For Labour opponents of STV, the Plant report complained of the high turn-over of MPs in each Irish party because of intra-party competition. Tory opponents of STV, Maude and Szemerey say, "There are no safe seats with STV."

STV opens the Labor and Tory partisans closed shop.

3) *coalitions*, by preferring the candidates of the parties most agreeable to each other, ensuring the preferred majority government, by more than one party, if necessary.

The more independent-minded the candidates preferred, the more individualist the parliament, as up to the nineteenth century. The more consensus candidates are preferred, the more national the government, as in emergencies, like war.

Example: Fine Gael and Irish Labour successfully asked their voters to extend their preferences to partner candidates.

4) *referendums*, by preferring candidates of different parties or Independents on some question of individual conscience or national destiny.

This recognises the growth of single-issue campaigns outside the party system. Included are the civil rights movements for the representation of social groups other than party, such as age, sex, race, class, creed, tongue, tribe or jobs etc, in the desired combinations individually preferred by the voters.

Example: In 1922, regardless of the two main pro- and anti- parties pact, the Irish people were able to order a choice of several pact and non-pact candidates, in multi-member constituencies, according to their position on the Anglo-Irish treaty. So, a (large) majority wish passed into government and the civil war could be ended.

Paul Mitchell says (The Single Transferable Vote and Ethnic Conflict: The Evidence from Northern Ireland, 1982-2007):

"In terms of intranationalist transfers, before the peace process Sinn Féin was an isolated party that received very few transfers from any source, including the SDLP; however, in 1998 it received 45 per cent of SDLP transfers when Sinn Fein had an available candidate."

"This evidence suggests that SDLP voters became much more willing to transfer to Sinn Féin, and that the latter party is clearly reaping some rewards from its more moderate stance. The evidence more strongly (and with more confidence) suggests that Sinn Féin voters are more than willing to reciprocate. Sinn Féin terminal transfers to the SDLP, averaged across eight cases, was 68 per cent..."

"Prior to the 1998 Agreement inter-ethnic vote-pooling in Northern Ireland was very close to zero. Afterwards transfers from the moderate unionist UUP to the moderate nationalist SDLP averaged 32 per cent (and 13 per cent in the opposite direction). These transfers are modest (compared with within-bloc transfers), but are nevertheless a very significant change with the past."

"It might reasonably be expected that these inter-ethnic transfers may have been greater if the power-sharing institutions had actually been functioning during most of the period 1998-2007."

For political activists only concerned with the rivalry for power between parties, party lists or list-combined systems of proportional partisanship, deceptively called "PR," were as good, or better for their purposes, than a comprehensive proportional representation, not only across but within, across and without parties, afforded by transferable voting.

The Explanatory Power Of Transferable Voting:

2) With Respect To Constituencies.

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There are four relations of preference voting with respect to parties. Less well appreciated still, for purposes of electoral reform, is that these four relations also hold for the quota count with respect to constituencies.

PR Between Constituencies means the number of seats per constituency are in proportion to the number of electors per constituency. The 1979 Tory government equalisation of electorates was a PR between constituencies (but not within them). But PR can be between multi-member constituencies. In fact, the constituencies don't even have to be a uniform system.

For example, the PR can be between one-member constituencies of, say, 73,000 electors each. (Dividing nearly 44 million British electors by about 600 MPs; these figures are only approximate.) Or, PR can be between two-member constituencies (the historic English system) of $2 \times 73,000 = 146,000$ electors each; or three member constituencies of 219,000 electors each. And so on.

But equally, you could have a mix of one, two, three etc. member constituencies, to match the varying size of communities. And there would still be PR between these constituencies, because the ratio of constituency electorates to constituency seats is the same.

The 1979 Boundary Commission equalisations caused an uproar all over the country. Local interests contested various excisions of wards. The Home Affairs minister, Leon Brittan, responsible for the directive, protested against himself with two other local MPs, for the consequences to his own area.

Robert Blackburn (The Electoral System in Britain) chronicles Labour government delay and Tory government speed-up, of Commission work, to increase their respective parties number of seats at the next election.

Calculating party HQs know what they are doing. The consequent maximising of Tory seats out of all proportion to their popular support in the 1983 and 1987 elections must be considered as gerrymandering on the grand scale, by following the letter of electoral law rather than its spirit.

Richard Crossman diaries confessed to rigging local government elections first past the post.

Marginal changes to simple majority constituencies are only too liable to change the result. The Boundary Commissioners contentious and expensive revisions were stalled by the Labour opposition taking them to the High Court.

The single member system has made the Boundary Commission perversely epitomise all that is blurringly unstable and fragmentorily transient to Britains historic communities. After six years work, in 1983 only 48 out of 635 constituencies were left unchanged. The Tory seats were 19% too many for their share of the vote.

Author of *Inside The Third World*, Paul Harrison (*Inside The Inner City*, 1983) gave evidence against the single member system as socially disruptive, (p.417-18):

"Our system of representation by single member constituencies also militates against reforms that could help the urban or regional poor, and, indeed, against any widespread awareness of their problems. Britain's marked social segregation has created constituencies the bulk of which are either predominantly English middle class and Tory, or predominantly working class, Welsh or Scottish, and Labour. Thus the bulk of Tory MPs, and indeed of Tory voters, have no direct experience of widespread and acute need which could awaken their compassion."

"For the inner-city MP the problem of lack of widespread awareness is even more acute. Inner-city Labour MPs have trouble convincing even other Labour MPs,.. of the extent and gravity of problems in housing in employment ... law and order."

(P. 434): "The British political system cannot be relied on to respond constructively to this challenge. The first-past-the-post system allows governments to be elected with ... as little as one third of the electorate. Voting is largely determined by perceptions of self-interest. The groups most damaged by recent trends -- the poor, the unemployed, council tenants -- still remain geographically concentrated minorities. A sufficient proportion of voters have seen their fortunes improve despite recession to make the continuation of divisive policies possible."

Robert Newland of the Electoral Reform Society and the Liberal/SDP Alliance Commissions first report on Constitutional Reform proposed a normal distribution of one- to eight-member constituencies, about an average of four to five.

This is modest compared to the multi-member constituencies that would be needed today for the larger shires of the Commons from its beginnings over 700 years ago. And most of that time they were without railways or motorways.

(The notion that whole counties would be unmanageable constituencies is laughable by American standards of travel.)

STV electors for a borough or smaller shire wouldn't have to look into one-seat broken-mirror constituencies to see their representation. Each STV MP would know from surgeries and canvassing returns where his main support is clustered (urban Labour, suburban Tory or whatever).

So, each MP has his main districts to cultivate within the multi-member constituency. That is the people to whom the MP is literally accountable for his quota.

The voters are, after all, supposed to be choosy about who represents their interests, four or five MPs giving them their choices.

This constituency system offers communities the most convenient and accurate fit: that is the scientific standard of measurement. In physics, a system of geometry would be chosen for the most convenient and accurate measure of spatial phenomena.

PR within constituencies means each seat in a constituency is won on a quota or elective proportion of its total vote.

For example, we assume (after Devolution) about 60 Scottish MPs for the UK parliament. The Scottish electorate is nearly 4 million. And (nearly 4m)/(about 60) equals perhaps 66,000 electors per Scottish seat.

Suppose sparsely populated Scotland averaged constituencies of about three members, with an electorate of some 200,000. (There'd be 4 to 6 member lots in built-up areas.) With 75% turnout, the total vote would be 150,000. The Droop quota is $(150,000)/(3 + 1) = 37,500$ votes, each of the three MPs had to win.

PR across constituencies means that constituents can also vote for candidates to other constituencies in the region. Some candidates may choose to stand solely on regional issues and not belong to any constituency. All candidates in the region (or nation within the UK) are then electable on a regional quota. In Scotland, this would be the Droop quota, taken of the total Scottish vote. On a 75% turnout this would be about 3 million, divided by $(60 + 1)$, or roughly 50,000 votes.

So, with PR across constituencies, these Scottish (UK) MPs would need to win some 12,500 more votes, than in a (Scottish) average three member constituency. But they could appeal to Scottish voters outside their constituency. Candidates with personal reputations or party organisations across Scotland (or equivalently an English region) would have a better chance of election.

This answers the Plant report question about STV being proportional enough in Wales with three member constituencies. Actually Wales has been projected to average four member constituencies, enough for four major parties.

PR without constituencies would be essentially the original version of transferable voting by Hare system. (The United Kingdom is here not being considered as itself a constituent part of a European parliament.) The without-constituencies quota would be the nearly 44 million British electors, say, on a 75% turnout about 33 million, divided by $(600 + 1)$, or about 55,000 votes.

So, a Scottish candidate with a reputation thru-out the UK might hope to pick up another 5000 votes outside Scotland. Most likely he would have enough Scottish support not to need them, for this small increase in the quota.

John Stuart Mill agreed to stand for the constituency of Westminster but on national issues rather than constituency issues. He introduced the two greatest democratic causes to Parliament, votes for women, and Hare system. Could Mill have drawn on votes outside his constituency, his national reputation would certainly have re-elected him.

Nineteenth century individualists were perhaps less concerned with parties and constituencies than twentieth century collectivists. The lack of communication between these two sides of democracy, the representation of the individual in the community, has sadly impaired it.

In deciding a new constitutional settlement, one has to look to possible futures, as well as the past. This is a question of foresight, not great changes made before people are ready for them.

PR without constituencies could add to the powerful array of in-built electoral functions with STV. A computer count of STV could rank MPs in ascending order of choice up to the popular lead. That might confer a presidency or legitimise Britain's alleged "Prime Ministerial government."

[Maybe not logically fool-proof, this graduated count of the most popular politicians has some merit for electing outer and inner cabinets of an executive. An independent cross-check could take place, by STV multi-member (primary) elections for a premier or president.]

This leadership count, in a series of rounds, could reduce the national Droop quota quotient, one seat at a time, to $(599 + 1)$, $(598 + 1)$ and so on, thus excluding one candidate at a time. This could rank MPs in order of popularity. Those, low down, might be disqualified say, from a Cabinet post, or the Chair of a televised Select Committee. At any rate, until they became better known and proved their worth.

The point is that one voting system can evolve the features of just about any democracy one cares to think of. Because STV is the general theory of elections, it is a multi-purpose democratic tool-kit.

Isaac Asimov said: Don't waste your admiration on warnings, like those of H G Wells (in 1922, on the wasting of fossil fuels) that came true. The surprise is that most people ignore obvious dangers. That is because, as Shirley Williams said, people think politics is not for them. People won't react if they think they have no effect. Hence, the need for an education in electoral empowerment.

Unfulfilled Possibilities Of Non-Transferable "PR."

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A UK quota probably wouldn't be an option till the regions and nations within the UK each had adopted their across-constituency quota. This itself might be done in stages. For instance, Glasgow might rather be one ten-member constituency than two five-member constituencies, north and south of the Clyde. Sparsely populated Scotland would be most likely to adopt a Scottish quota. But that would be for the Scottish people to decide, after the introduction of PR (within constituencies).

Overall STV/PR refutes the stock criticism that STV cannot be made proportional enough in the context of a constituency system. Of the four relations each, of *transferable voting* to parties, and to constituencies, we can take or leave STV across constituencies and without constituencies. This gives 8, or 6, possible ways to relate parties and constituencies to other voting systems.

Party list systems relate to these 8 possibilities in only 2 ways, namely PR between parties and PR without constituencies. In particular, the latter way is true of national lists. A regional list could be said to give PR between constituencies for Euro-elections. But still only 2 of the 8 logical possibilities are catered for.

Party lists impose dogmatic partisanship on the people. They also impose a constituency-sceptical vote, because lists presume no pattern of voting for local constituency candidates.

Additional Member Systems combine these deficiencies of party lists with the limitations of the single member system. All voting systems with any egalitarian pretensions to democracy are to some extent proportional systems.

The single member system, with equal electorates, gives PR between constituencies. But this is only one out of eight logical possibilities for PR. And each half of the combined system only half gives its one or two out of eight kinds of PR, proper.

No rival systems come remotely close to the six- or potentially eightfold way of STV/PR or "the super-vote," as Joe Rogaley called it.

STV As A Theory Of The Electoral Test.

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The Droop quota broadens our notion of a majority. A majority is not simply one members majority of, say, 50 votes out of 100. (If two candidates reached the 50 votes quota, that would be a tie-break.) Using the Droop quota can make two members majorities of 50 votes each out of 150. Three quotas, of 50 votes each out of 200, elect three members majorities.

The single member majority count is generalised by the Droop quota into a multi-member majority count. The vote generalises in a similar way from a one-preference spot vote to a many-preference vote, in order of choice.

First past the post or the simple majority system and STV are the limited and general "relative majority" systems. First past the post elects one candidate on a majority relative only to the runner-up. Therefore, most voters may go unrepresented. STV elects as many candidates as constituency seats, each with the same majority, relative to all the runners-up put together. Then, the overwhelming majority is represented.

A majority means "greater than" and, therefore, must be relative to what it is greater than. Choice is also relative, in that we more or less favor some candidates in relation to others. Indeed, a scale of preference is from greater to lesser choice. So, magnitude of choice is translated, from the vote as preferences, into the count as majorities. The count of the community is the measure of greatness that corresponds to the vote of individuals.

A model from physics shows how the vote and count correspond. Einstein favored Relativity as a "principle theory," which makes logical deductions from a firm empirical base, that motion is relative to a co-ordinate system. Similarly, choice is relative to a co-ordinate system of the vote to the count. An empirical order of preference 1, 2, 3, etc corresponds to a rational order of 1, 2, 3, etc member majorities. This is the view of science as empirical rationalism.

Harré characterised model-building by its gradual adaptation to reality. In this case, the reality is the relativity of choice in general, beyond a basic alternative to a whole range of options. STV has the coherence of a good theory of choice.

The theory of relative choice means in practise that transferable voting experimentally controls the relative influence of candidates on each others election. So, the relatively popular candidates do not take too many votes from those who would be next preferred for election. And relatively less popular candidates voters are not left unrepresented by their next preferences.

STV might become itself a model for experimental measurement, because its ordinal and ratio scales act as controls of its classifying and interval scales, respectively. Ordinal scale preference voting controls wasted voting on failed candidates. Otherwise, it is to no effect for some that everyone is classified as having a vote. The quota counts ratio scale controls the interval, of redundant votes, beyond the votes that just take successful candidates first past the post.

In democratic, rather than scientific, terms, the single transferable vote is both a preferential and proportional suffrage extension.

This general theory of relative choice explains STV as an electoral system. It also explains why STV applies to all elections. And why other voting systems, being less general in their vote or their count, cannot be used for all electoral purposes.

For example, the Irish have used STV at all levels of government, local, regional, national and European.

And the Northern Ireland Euro-elections approach a crucial test, in which all, but the one method used, would probably fail.

A party list system, such as the Seventies Lib-Lab pact Regional List, would have split the Nationalist vote in Ulster, because the SDLP and Sinn Fein would not have submitted a joint party list.

Perhaps, John Hume would have become MEP, anyway, but only because of his exceptional standing as a civil rights veteran, and because he was allowed to be an MEP as well as an MP. Nevertheless, Nationalist voters cross-party preferences ensured a quota for one of their candidates.

In the 1996 Peace forum elections additional to 18 constituencies of 90 members, 2 people were selected from each of the top 10 parties. Judging by this highly contrived arrangement, Ulster/Northern Ireland could do with a provincial STV quota, as explained (above) for Scotland.

(Note: Subsequent elections remedied this aberration with a straight-forward system of STV in six-member constituencies.)

Traditionalists, like Maude and Szemerey, say a proposed electoral reform has to be in every way better than the simple majority system. STV could hardly be otherwise, because it is a consistent generalisation, by vote and count, from that most limited system of choice. STV can do everything it can do, and an immense deal more, as shown of transferable votings explanatory power, for all kinds of electoral requirements.

Deductive Explanation Of Elections.

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Transferable voting puts a principle theory of relative choice to the electoral test as a scientific law. Scientific laws are conditional statements and the conditional principle STV can be said to formulate, is "unanimity only in liberty." Across and within party divisions, the degree and kind of national unity, that transferable voting makes possible, is a condition of individual liberty. Or, proportional counting is a condition of preference voting.

We can call this "the Hare-Andrae law" of scientific elections (after the Danish Liberal Carl Andrae and English barrister Thomas Hare, who independently discovered it). "Proportional Representation" is a condition of "Personal Representation," as Mill recognised when he gave both names to Hare system.

Here is another perspective on why party list systems are unscientific. A scientific law is a conditional statement but the pseudo-law of proportional partisanship is not conditional upon an order of individual choice, so it can only express divisions, not unity in diversity.

Conditional statements are part of the deductive model of science, by which explanations can be deduced, in this case, of democracy. The French republican slogan illustrates a deductive explanation of democracy. A law of fraternity or universal brotherhood is given by the individual human condition of liberty, thru representative equality. Thus equality is conclusively explained by its purpose of serving fraternity in liberty.

Scientific elections exemplify the democratic theory in practise. The deductive explanation of elections is that the universality of the proportional count of a community is conditional upon individual liberty of preference voting, implying an egalitarian transfer of the vote in the count. Hence society in its preferred groupings is proportionally represented.

A party-privileged proportional count is unscientific because it destroys this universal principle of true proportional representation, as distinct from proportional partisanship.

Having to make "parties" of all conceivable groupings would be an arbitrary business and beg the question of the election, in effect, rigging it. (Party list systems are party-rigged elections.)

For example, British or New Zealand health service voters (who are proportionly represented by STV) couldn't effectively order their choices with an X-vote, which can only cover a list representing one attribute, with lists for every attribute deemed necessary: two gender

lists (or more?); lists for every ethnic minority; lists for every medical speciality. And offering no personal choice of individual candidate for any of them.

Whereas, multiple X-votes for multiple attributes, such as "ear, nose and throat," Maori, woman, would count against each other.

New Zealand made compulsory the election of District Health Boards by STV (using the computer-counted Meek method) while allowing local governments to keep the simple majority system, as most did.

Most of the few STV local elections are in the North Island where most of the Maori population resides, and could expect fair minority representation from STV, unlike First Past The Post.

The amusing moral seems to be that health, if not politics, is deemed a matter of life and death, that has to be got right.

With a transferable vote, the most preferred individuals are elected. Taking the trouble to honor individual liberty dignifies the voters with the power to prefer the candidates in order of their having most of the attributes you wish them to have.

Transferable voting is integrative. Party lists are disintegrative, because, to ensure the single most important thing to you is represented, you have to form a breakaway list to party-proportionally count.

Proportionally partisan X-voting is conducive to a miscellaneous collection of monomanias demanding their coalition terms to tolerate a government.

From Maiorocracy To Democracy.

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John Stuart Mill realised that proportional representation is a continuation of democracy in extending the suffrage from majorities to minorities. Majority rule that stopped short of democracy proper, he called "maiorocracy." Yet, the shortcomings of "elective dictatorship" by simple majorities are often wrongly held to be a failure of democracy.

(Even academics have not learned from Mill. The Plant report claims Kenneth Arrow theorem deduces the limitations of democracy. But it is based on a single member majority system, like the Alternative Vote, which is a limited conception of democracy.)

The fragmentation of parts of the world into warring factions is not helped by the fallacy that bare majority rule is "democracy" and, as such, the limit to any obligations that a majority has to minorities.

A clear consequence is that minorities seek to escape majority dictatorships by setting up their own separate states, where they can fulfil the dream of being their own majority dictatorships, from which some other ethnic minority may seek escape, if not mercilessly driven out of their homes as refugees or victims of genocide.

Sovereign statehood confers the arbitrary status of absolute majority on some ethnic group, all of which are really minorities relative to humanity as a whole. "The minorities problem" is ultimately a problem for us all.

Party lists, whether or not combined with majority systems, give minority parties a share of seats. But they impose their own kind of absolutism of party divisions, when people have to vote for "a party." The electoral recognition of relative choice, thru transferable voting, makes unity in liberty a practical possibility, for those who desire it.

Until Mills mature conception of democracy is generally recognised and becomes the accepted convention, there will always be those nominal democrats hoping to get all their own way from maiorocracy.

Mills peace-making power-sharing has much to teach the world for peaceful co-existence.

Northern Ireland is a familiar example. Michael Collins was given Churchills assurance on PR for Northern Ireland. The Irish Free State wrote the single transferable vote into their Constitution. Two referendums failed to remove it. So, the Irish well understand and appreciate their voting system.

This is confirmed by Electoral Reform Society observers.

Before 1929, transferable voting had almost whittled away the Unionists overall majority. This wouldn't have happened but for the Republican border areas included in Ulster. The simple majority system ensured a one-party state that didn't have to compromise. So, the peaceful civil rights marches, of Catholics in the sixties, found loyalists unready to tolerate them.

British governments, from William Whitelaw onward, appreciated the problem and tried to bring in power-sharing, or that unity in diversity the province had looked to be beginning to move towards.

A fatal obstacle, of course, was that no patient ever took the medicine his own physician dreaded and despised.

The 1998 Belfast peace agreement between Unionists and Nationalists formalised power-sharing in the provincial government of Ulster.

Besides the British and Irish factions meeting in a spirit of courtesy, reference was made to observers from the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Naturally, people cannot come together against their will. But give the people the system that lets them unite as well as divide. As one world gradually becomes more of a reality, it is obvious that a world government would never work without power-sharing, as you could never leave-out any of the great continental constituencies or cultural blocs for even one term of office.

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Ad hoc additional members.

The Additional Member System (AMS) is also called Mixed Member Proportional (MMP), and there is some disposition to make this the standard term, perhaps precisely because the earlier term is more revealing of its origin as a system.

In Britain's February 1974 general election, the Liberals won 14 seats first past the post. But the votes for their candidates ran at 19% of the total vote, worth over a hundred extra seats on a party-proportional count.

The seemingly simple and obvious answer to this "injustice" was to conduct that count to give the Liberals additional members. The national campaign for electoral reform was launched in 1975.

Asking "Why Electoral Change?" Maude and Szemerey concluded:

"Least of all do we believe that there is anything 'fair' - let alone useful - about making a major constitutional change only to suit the current interests of one or two minority parties. The national interest transcends these, and ought to be allowed to prevail."

An ad hoc hypothesis is an idea brought in to defend a theory from being faulted; an idea which cannot logically be derived from, and so justified by, that theory. The idea of additional members fits Carl Hempel criterion (in *The Philosophy Of Natural Science*) of an ad hoc hypothesis merely to save some current conception against adverse evidence, without being logically justified by current ideas, and without offering a new and more discriminating test to add to our knowledge.

The single member system, electing a governing party on a majority of seats, is the current conception. Its disproportionate results are the adverse evidence. But proportionally sharing seats for party votes is not logically justified by a governing party majority system of winner takes all. Ad hoc

additional members from "party" votes do not give more discriminating test of voters individual choices, which would add to our knowledge of public opinion.

Instead, the election of additional members merely presumes a partisan count upon the ambiguity of the spot vote, as for a person or the party they belong to. This does not suffer scientific disproof of a supposed impersonal partisanship of the voters.

The partisan presumption on individual choice is supported by the common kinds of wrong reasoning, exposed in any textbook on logic. Typical works on scientific method soon introduce, as guiding principles, the need to avoid the fallacies of "begging the question" and "ambiguous terms."

For, a scientific theory must not presume what one is supposed to be trying to prove. And a scientific experiment must not be conducted in such ambiguous terms that it could be held to mean anything and therefore proves nothing.

In an electoral test of public opinion, the ambiguous terms of the spot vote are such that it can mean a choice, either for an individual or his party or both. It can even mean neither, if the spot vote is merely a tactical vote to keep out some disliked candidate, at all costs. The spot vote, counted as a party vote, begs the whole question of partisanship among the electorate.

Corporate voting for a "party" is unscientific voting for an unobservable. Nor need it follow that voting for a party candidate implies voting for others in his party. This would only be logical if all the candidates of a party on a list were political clones; and, if each party were a different political species that couldn't be crossed with the other.

Party list systems would have us believe that party members are people of the same quality with the same policies, who have nothing in common with people and policies from other parties.

Maude and Szemerey dismissed the "facile argument" that voters would like to vote for one list candidate as much as another. That proportionally counted party votes fairly "reflect the views of the electorate" is "nonsense."

Politicians overwhelming consideration may be for their party careers, as Thucydides decried. Perhaps the people have their own priorities for cannibalising the constitution. Andrew Marr (Ruling Britannia) sees local elections as makeshift referendums against currently unpopular government policies.

Single-member general elections obscure personal with party choice. By voting for the party with the preferred leader, they may sneak back in the most important personal choice - a presidential election, that Britain's party system of government is not supposed to have. Tho, John Mackintosh punch-line, to The British Cabinet, was: Britain now has "Prime Ministerial government."

These are but intimations to the enterprising, beyond party flatland, of hidden dimensions of electoral freedom.

The Additional (Constituency-) Member System.

In 1976, the Blake report, of the Hansard Society, meant to convey by "additional members" that they would still be responsible to constituents like single members. Accordingly, under-represented parties would have the appropriate proportion of their candidates elected, who were the best runners-up in single member constituencies.

In 1977, Robert Newland, of the Electoral Reform Society, delved into the inequitable consequences of having second (or third or fourth) past the post MPs. Vernon Bogdanor followed-up their "anomalies," in *The People And The Party System*, already suggesting by 1981 that the Additional Member System (as such) was no longer a serious contender for reform. This now appears to be the consensus.

However, it is instructive to glance at where this version of AMS goes wrong. In trying to reconcile the simple majority and party proportional principles, AMS corrupts both of them. Additional members can proportionally prevent simple majorities from a one-party government. They also create disproportionate representation in a single member system.

Additional members, like single members, would be lucky nominees in constituencies where their respective parties were relatively popular. Worse still, an MP might become unpopular enough to lose a seat, yet be elected as an additional member.

Additional members would be elected on having a bigger proportion of votes than colleagues in bigger single member constituencies, who won more votes for their party. An additional member has no chance to prove he could win, by voters preferment, a substantial enough proportion of support to warrant his election, which would necessitate being in a multi-member constituency. In other words, (best losers) AMS was a failed attempt to by-pass the single transferable vote.

The Additional (Party List) Member System (AMS).

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British reformers, who wanted to keep the single member system, had hoped additional members could be drawn from constituencies, instead of impersonal party lists. German AMS gives a second spot vote for just such lists. Falling back on this system is a tacit admission of failure to more than half-offer the British people personal representation (of even the most limited or monopolistic single-member kind). The Germans, themselves, who adopted an additional member system, after the war, didn't resort to the second vote, for lists, till 1953.

Ad hoc additional constituency members were meant to be a prop for the functional theory of government by simple majorities. The theory is more important than the ad hoc saving clause, just as a house is more important than a buttress to save it falling down in an emergency.

Once the house seems safe again (such as from revolutionary doctrines) the prop may be taken away. Sir Ian Gilmour (Inside Right) expressed such a hope. Tho, he didn't revert from AMS, with the 1979 Tory victory, as Douglas Hurd did.

List And Additional List Systems checked for government levels.

The progress of science, or dependable knowledge, depends on developing a theory to pass the test of all the conditions it may be subjected to. British, like German, Euro-elections have only party list members, not additional to single members. Thus, proportional partisanship usurps single member representation. On the previous analogy, this end-result of the ad hoc viewpoint is to demolish the house, leaving the voters to shelter under the buttress.

In an otherwise wise reminiscence, The Dilemma Of Democracy, Lord Hailsham suggested that different voting methods be tried for different levels of government.

This only defeats the purpose of scientific investigation. Politicians naturally aren't going to employ voting methods for elections that show-up their obvious drawbacks. That would militate against tolerable government and only show-up the leaders to be people of the poorest judgement.

Therefore, the use of various voting methods implies their allocation to the government levels where their failings are less obtrusive. (The Plant report, advocating particular systems on principle, is an apology for this.) Unfortunately, it has also meant suppression of their unsatisfactory nature.

In 1997, Labour MEPs Ken Coates and Hugh Kerr were denied membership privileges for a year, and effectively driven out of the party, for refusing to sign a "gagging order" on a centralist PR system, for future British Euro-elections, not discussed with the public. Two other Labour MEPS, Alex Falconer and Michael Hindley, were to be penalised for six months for refusing to sign a document banning criticism of government policy.

[I remember the whipping relish, "the appetite for tyranny" (GK Chesterton) of the Labour spokesman, a tv program bothered to question a few seconds. Something to do, perhaps, with Labour Left-Right score settling.]

This is in curious contrast to the Labour government terms of reference to a (supposedly) Independent Commission on Voting Systems, in 1998.

Ken Coates is known as a long-standing left-wing writer for industrial democracy. Possessing partnership with the workers explains why Germanys post-war labour relations were so much better than Britains. This important but neglected topic should be parleyed.

The Labour MEPs forced conformity anticipates the lot of party list MEPS:

"List MPs are prisoners of the system. According to Mr Robert Hendrick, a Belgian MP representing a small middle-class shopkeepers party (as Belgium has no five per cent electoral threshold), they are civil servants of the party leadership and of the interest groups behind the party. They have to keep their noses clean with the party leaders and the interest groups to get the most important jobs in their parties and to be well placed on the list next time. Sincere politicians, who campaign for issues and try to implement ideals says Hendrick, tend to be put low on party lists - or put out to grass entirely. Under this system Sir Winston Churchill would almost certainly not have been in the House of Commons in 1940!"

(Maude and Szemerey p.27-8)

Compare the following quotation:

"I could recount what I have seen and heard in other countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannises; when I have sat among their learned men, for that honour I had, and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom, as they supposed England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought;"

(John Milton: Areopagitica.)

Uncombined, party list systems are never proposed for British general elections. We know they are not appropriate. Yet "good Europeans" and bad democrats foist them on British Euro-elections.

Maude and Szemerey, p. 38:

"The party machines knew approximately what percentage of the national vote their parties could expect to have. They could therefore be sure that, say, the first 15 or 20 on their list would be elected ... The voters had only a marginal influence, deciding the exact dividing line between the parties. In France, therefore, fewer than 100 people actually decided who were to be the 81 members of the European Parliament representing the country's 53 million population."

Britain finds straight party lists unsuitable for general elections. Whereas, a combined system would not work for Euro-elections. Germany doesn't so use its AMS, because there are too few European seats, for the disproportionate results first past the post, to be corrected by enough additional members.

The fewer and larger the single member constituencies, the more likely they are to approximate the national swing of voters support, and so nearly all go to the leading party.

The inconsistency of the two axioms or leading principles, single member party monopolies and partisan shares of seats makes AMS inherently unstable.

This system "correction" may not only be insufficient but inappropriate. AMS would discriminate unfairly against Independents in local elections, because only under-represented parties can be compensated by additional members. Also, the independence of party councillors on local issues could prejudice their standing on their parties lists.

These obvious failures to do the electoral jobs, required at different levels, is a sure sign that AMS is a false theory of elections. Supporters of a combined system countered that no voting method is suitable for all government levels. This is false. They have given-up on the scientific endeavor to find a general system of elections. A whole tradition from John Stuart Mill to Enid Lakeman exists to point this out. Eire uses STV at all government levels.

Basson and O'Connor, in Symbolic Logic, state the axioms of a theory must be true in relation to each other, so they can logically derive more ideas and inter-relate them into a coherent system. The purpose of the exercise is so an idea is not tested in isolation but as lending credence to a whole body of knowledge.

AMS is like an incompatible marriage whose partners have nothing in common and disagree with each other at every turn. Who would want to marry someone - in a failed attempt - to make up for their shortcomings? On the other hand, who'd want to marry a partner supposed to compensate for ones own nature, as if it was something to apologise for? Who would want a corrective partner, especially if the "correction" were a presumption?

Ad Hoc Re-Correction Of The 5% Threshold.

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A formal viewpoint of the Additional Member System is that the lists are equal partners with constituencies. This is why AMS is sometimes called a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. In Germany, they have half the MPs and their own vote. German AMS is still a compensatory system, even if the compensating buttress is held in equal esteem to the house. AMS, as a "compensated parties system," appears to give equal treatment to the inferior function of compensation.

Germanys 5% threshold of the popular vote for party lists to win any seats is to prevent small extremist parties holding up larger parties to coalition ransom.

Scotland was given slightly less list members than single members. There is no basis for this balance of the two kinds of MPs. There is no basis for there being two classes of MPs. In a democratic society, MPs, and therefore their voters, should be clearly equal, not of an ambiguous status towards each other.

Welsh elections with Additional Member System are to have yet a different mix, with only one-third of the members from the lists.

AMS for the Greater London Council has 11 Additional or Mixed Members out of 25, a different addition or mix again.

However, the greater proportionality, of the London mix to the Wales mix, is irrationally contradicted by banning parties with less than five per cent of the votes. The GLC has the same "threshold" as in Germany.

(Welsh and Scottish parliament elections rely on being less than proportional, to do without a formal threshold.)

A large majority (of supposed partisans) proportionally represented effectively dictates to a small minority, by excluding them from the system. The "elective dictatorship" of the simple majority system has not been vanquished. The implication is that AMS is too vulnerable to unstable coalitions otherwise.

The partisan monopoly of the proportional count cannot be carried out consistently for fear of the practical consequences to government-forming with this system of partisan privilege.

Pretending that AMS isn't an ad hoc compensated parties system only leads to another ad hoc "correction," a re-correction by a threshold.

The threshold may have denied militants a "voice" other than that of explosive subversion. But the threshold certainly split the vote, for a natural desire to save the world, between an emerging Green party and their sympathisers, the FDP. In some Land elections, neither achieved any representation with well over 5% of the votes between them. This anomaly could have been avoided with transferable voting.

In the 2013 German election to the Bundestag, the Free Democrats, with 4.8% and Alternative for Germany, with 4.7% of the national votes, had more than the 5% threshold in either 6 or 7 of the 16 states.

4% threshold would have given the Frees and Alternatives more than 30 party list seats. Instead, they went as bonuses to four parties. The CDU (including CSU) were over-represented by nearly 8% of seats to votes (49.4% to 41.5%). The Social Democrats were over-represented by nearly 5% (30.5% to 25.7%).

The lower threshold would have reduced the wasted votes from 16% to 6.2%.
(PRSA Quota Notes.)

If the threshold rule is meant to mitigate "tail wags the dog" government, the operation, of this unprincipled cut-off from representation, is a matter of caprice.

And small party representation may, never the less, give inspirational input into the national conversation, or at least healthily expose to the light any festering prejudices of small extremist parties.

The threshold rule is a capricious or unstable veto of the sharing or proportional principle, by the majoritarian as a monopolising principle, more or less arbitrarily excluding minorities.

The threshold is a symptom of election system, whose disease is the creation of unnecessary conflicts from an imperfect realisation of the concepts of majority and proportion and their relationship. This self-inflicted dilemma between majority decision and proportional inclusion has destabilised Italian electoral law, with no end in sight to its repeated reforms, until Europe discovers (or re-discovers) transferable voting.

How well, or badly, do these two axioms of AMS react upon each other to justify their combination? This is discussed in the next part of: How not to do it.

AMS: 1) Effect On The Legislature.

The Germans believed the British single member system offered personal representation to balance against their vote only for parties. Double Vote AMS offers a spot vote for a personal candidate and a spot vote for a party list of candidates. But two separately counted votes deems them incompatible functions, effecting an arbitrary ban on the knowledge of one with respect to the other.

No scientific experiment would be deemed valid under such inadequately controlled conditions of testing personal as distinct from party choice. Enid Lakeman (Power to Elect) said "its personal element is illusory."

i) *The "Personal" Vote*

In single member constituencies, a personal choice of candidates cannot be made with respect to the party of ones choice, because there is only one person per party standing. Personal votes cannot be split between two candidates of the same party. But the standing-down of a partys candidate, or a new party candidate, could redistribute the voting enough to change which partys candidate came first past the post. In short, there is potential vote-splitting between parties.

David Green (Our voting system's knackered!) recalls Norwich South in 1951, where the Conservative won with 52.5% against Labour. In 2010 the Liberal Democrat won with 29.4% against six other candidates.

An oligarchic trap awaits with regard to the first X-vote, if Britain follows the German model. The number of single member constituencies would be halved. A shire like Worcestershire would have two (instead of four) single members. (Whereas the much-maligned single transferable vote could be local to the shire as a four member constituency.)

Local caucus re-selection of half the single members would be a "musical chairs" scramble for those fewer, safer seats. Democracy becomes a rubber stamp, like the monarchy. (Whereas Vernon Bogdanor says, STV is better than primaries. All the voters would be able to order a choice of several candidates from each party.)

Larger constituencies, being more typical of the national picture, would fall more often to the marginally leading party, with simple majorities of rather less than 50% or 40%. (Compare 80% representation with four STV-elected MPs.)

In 1983, 61% of the seats went to 42% of the votes for one party. Britain could expect more disproportionate representation from its halved number of single members than caused all the fuss about distorting the peoples wishes, in the first place.

In 2009, the Japan Democratic Party (DPJ) won nearly 75% of single-member constituencies on 47% of the votes, and just under half the PR seats for Additional Members with 42% support. (Japan has a parallel system, whereby under-represented parties in the majoritarian part of the system, are not compensated in the party proportional part.) (Quota notes; PRSA.)

Since the second X-vote can be used for the PR of a third party, this might encourage tactical voting for the less disliked of the two main parties, in single member constituencies. Judging by Britains 1997 election, tactical voting is already acute. Larger single member constituencies are less winnable by smaller parties.

In Germany, the third party, with about 10% of the vote, soon never won a single member constituency. This is an even more drastic put-down than aroused a reforming sympathy for British Liberals, who at least got a toe-hold and built-up local power bases in the purely single member system.

What can be said against the single member system can be said with redoubled force against it as half of a combined system. In the 1983 general election, the Liberal-SDP Alliance, with its even distribution of support thru-out the country, could have expected perhaps half its mere 3 1/2% (23) single members for nearly 26% the national vote. AMS would have given the Alliance almost all its quarter of the seats as list members. Just because of their less concentrated support than Labour, on 28% the votes, the Alliance would have looked a lame-dog party that needed helping over the electoral stile.

In the Welsh Assembly, when all the Labour candidates were from single member constituencies, they called themselves "directly elected members" in scornful comparison to the Additional Members chosen by other parties from closed lists.

AMS so-called personal representation would more exactly impose one of two big party nominees mainly with a job for life in safe seats. For the 1979 general election, the national campaign for electoral reform guessed, on party swings, to within four seats, what candidates would be elected.

AMS amplifies the grievance against a single member system to redress it. The patients having to endure more pain is treated as a means of being made better.

ii) *The "Party" Vote.*

The second spot vote of the German system may be a cure worse than the disease, making the "personal" vote electively meaningless. Voters "choose - out" no-one, if the rejected constituency candidates are saved for the lists from the less safe seats. If the third party only put its most popular candidates in single member constituencies for "personal" votes, they would have the least chance of being elected. They have to have places on the list as well. So, the big parties constituency candidates, too, can hardly be denied that safety net.

In the first all-German elections of 1990:

"The same pattern began to emerge all over the Federal Republic. Chancellor Kohl won a constituency seat (Ludwigshafen) for the first time ever but Reimann his defeated Socialist opponent was also returned to Parliament; in Berlin-Neukolln the SPD's president, Hans-Jochen Vogel, was elected despite winning only 31.8% of the vote to the CDU candidate's 25.2%; in Berlin-Hellersdorf two of Dr Gysi's (PDS) "defeated" rivals also secured election to the Bundestag."

(Quoted from Meadowcroft: The politics of electoral reform.)

The typical procedure for a party list vote is: You have a vote on a party list; you may place your vote against an individual candidate on that list; therefore your vote counts towards electing anyone on that list. This is the fallacy of "illicit major" in the syllogism, where a major term is illegitimately distributed in the conclusion.

The alternative to the German caucus-ordered list is to elect the individual candidates with the most X-votes on a party list. If the party is proportionally entitled to, say, three additional members, the first three candidates past the post on the party list are elected. It is possible that the third candidate got *no* personal list votes, yet he would still be "elected" to make-up the party's proportional entitlement.

In the Commons debate on the (uncombined) Regional List for the 1979 Euro-elections, Labours Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, had to admit the possibility of List members without one vote by their name.

Most European countries use caucus-ordered lists with the spot vote exercising some first past the post influence. Maude and Szemerey point out how ineffective this is. In 1979, "22 of Belgium's 24 MEPs came from the top of their respective party lists. Seven of those elected had fewer personal votes than unsuccessful candidates below them."

Just as the AMS constituency vote fails to control for split voting between parties, the list vote fails to control for split voting within parties. In neither case, does the order of election account for the accident or happenstance of who stands. For example, constituency votes might be split between two left wing parties, letting in a rightist party candidate. A list vote might be split between two right wingers, letting in a left winger.

These two kinds of party-monopolised votes are for a single party seat constituency and party-exclusive list of candidates.

Party list systems are in a dilemma of the oligarchic or split-voted election of individuals. Party lists lack a coherent principle of electing representatives. (Transferable voting is such a principle of proportional representation. That is the difference between a scientific and an unscientific electoral procedure.)

AMS: 2) Effect On The Executive.

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Not only does the AMS (Double Vote) undermine the legislative function of personal votes (however limited). These simple majorities also cease to count decisively in their executive function of electing a majority party government.

The party vote is meant to reflect all sections of opinion but lacks the local constituency channels for this legislative function. Instead, the party vote takes over the personal majority votes executive function. Additional members from the lists go mainly to a third party, under-represented by single seats. They usually hold the balance of power, as king-makers of either the first or second parties. The mainly third party additional members are nothing if not executive MPs. The constituency members are pre-eminently legislative MPs.

In short, the two votes and two classes of MPs, put legislative and executive functions at cross-purposes, in self-contradictory additional member systems.

Anti-reformers believe constituency MPs a better class than list MPs. But regional list MPs may have more general duties, like generals outranking MPs detailed to the constituencies. Removed from the public, they owe their allegiance to the party list managers.

AMS is an absurd executive mechanism. The way the German system squeezed the Federal Democrats out of the single member system may have destroyed the credibility of any but two main parties as big players. Yet neither of the big two can move without the confirmed stooge in the system.

It is not certain whether Britain would settle down to the *same* two party system in each region or nation of the UK. (As it is, the Keltic fringe ensures a multi-party system.) So, the classic criticism of Continental "PR" could apply to a British AMS. Several parties could spend months working their way thru various coalition combinations. For this reason, unstable government is inherent in any party-proportional count, despite an attempt at its marginal suppression with a threshold.

(A transferable vote of ordered choice for candidates of different parties confers a majority on a preferred coalition, if necessary. This way voters elect the government.)

Suppose Britain did have just three key parties. Would one (possibly squeezed) Centre party be a force for "moderation" with only an unpalatable choice between two polarised party manifestos, it can have little influence on? Every AMS election yields a Middle-man party the undemocratic choice of one "extreme" after another. This sacrifice of democracy to the Centre is not so much a control of instability as a third party caucuses chosen course of instability.

The centre party could become a prey to left or right wing infiltration, or corruption, not ideological, merely stagnant. Any system with a narrowly undemocratic basis of power is vulnerable to manipulation. Compare the subversion of the purely single member systems local caucuses -- a possibility that remains with these monopolistic constituencies in a combined system.

The Additional Member System falls too short of genuinely democratic arbitration for even politicians to accept and get on with the job of government. Constitutional unsettlement awaits in vacillation between two inadequate and contradictory conceptions of democracy, by simple majority and/or proportional partisanship. This is because there is no logical principle to accommodate them, as transferable voting accommodates preference to proportion.

In West Germany, 1966, the Grand Alliance of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats intended changing to the British system, to cut out the Middle-man parties additional members. In frustration at coalition flux from party lists, Italy tried and then rejected an Additional Member System. Since the war, France has twice reverted from party lists to a single member system (with the Second Ballot).

Indicative of this crisis of indecision is a European Policy Forum study, in July 1997, that stated: Adopting a system of proportionally representative voting may have adverse consequences for good government.

Australia pioneered electoral theory and practise (despite political abuses, such as the compulsory voting of all preferences). But New Zealand has no reform tradition, a society for that purpose only being heard of by 1979. The New Zealand Labour governments electoral commission recommended AMS, which was duly passed in a referendum.

The NZ Labour leader, visiting Britain, early in 1997, complained that proportional representation (meaning the AMS ersatz PR her party made law) is like the bronze medallist, at the Olympic games, deciding which of the two front runners should take the gold and silver.

Labour (NZ) knew the FDP used their power of coup d'etat to switch, without election, from their leftward-moving Social Democratic partner, to put the Christian Democrats in office. Of course, British Labour advocates of AMS don't believe they will be hoist with their own petard.

AMS: 3) Denial Of Basic Electoral Rights.

In a referendum, conservatives could make a powerful case against an additional member system. The single member system, left alone without additional members, may be "unfair" to smaller parties, but at least it lets the people put the party in government they gave most seats (and usually votes) to. Better to let the people have some choice of government, and cut out the Middle-man caucus, who are always in power, whether the voters want them there or not.

Also, a second X-vote for additional members on a party list need not go to an individual they chose on that list.

The voters have two basic rights denied them with the German AMS: individual choice and electing a government.

Anti-reformers could argue that there is no point in the voters having personal accountability and majority decisiveness in government elected by the single member system, just to have it taken away from them, with party-boss appointed non-constituency additional members to give pivotal power to small parties.

There is enough truth in this, as far as it goes, to give pause to voters in an AMS referendum. And the truth couldn't go any further, without STV as the option.

Conclusion.

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AMS is already the system to be used for Scottish and Welsh assemblies. Tho, the Labour government Royal Commission on the Constitution, in 1973, recommended unanimously the single transferable vote for all regions and nations in the UK. (The chairman, Lord Kilbrandon went on to support STV for elections in general.)

Had the Labour government followed the Kilbrandon report advice, it would have had the much respected Scottish Tory, Lord Home support an assembly with PR. Scotland would have had its parliament twenty years sooner, with the democratic PR of STV, instead of the party-privileged PR of AMS (alias MMP).

The other official body to unanimously recommend STV/PR was the first Speakers Conference on Electoral Reform, set up in 1916. (The government was to break its pledge to support this particular recommendation, which proved enough to ensure its defeat.)
In the same year, H G Wells wrote, in *The Elements Of Reconstruction*:

"From the days of Hare and John Stuart Mill onward there has been a progressive analysis of the character and effects of voting methods, and it may now be taken as demonstrated that, wherever the common and obvious method of giving each voter in any election a single non-transferable vote is adopted, it follows necessarily that there can be no real decision between more than two candidates, and further it follows that the affairs decided by such voting will gravitate continually into the control of two antagonized party organizations."

"This is, of course, tame stuff compared with heady shoutings and accusations against plutocrats, rich Jews, privileged families and party funds, but it is the simple essential of this question. Voting, like any other process, is subject to scientific treatment; there is one right method of voting which automatically destroys bilaterality, and there is a considerable variety of wrong methods amenable to manipulation and fruitful of corruption and enfeebling complications."

"The sane method of voting is known as Proportional Representation with large constituencies and the single transferable vote... The advantage of this method is not a matter of opinion, but a matter of demonstration; it needs but an hour or so of inquiry to convince any intelligent person of its merit and desirability and of the fatal and incurable mischiefs of any other method..."

A tradition in English-speaking countries persists that individual liberty is an electoral right embodied in transferably voted proportional representation. Carl Andrae, on the Continent, had no John Stuart Mill to champion his innovation, subsequently called the Hare system after its independent English discoverer.

Continental "PR" soon went corporate, with dogmatic voting for a party, neither liberal nor scientific, an enemy to individual freedom and general knowledge alike: "...and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse."
(John Milton: *Areopagitica*.)

If the Independent Commission on Voting Systems recommends rightly, and is endorsed by the Labour government, this country could make its most significant contribution to the Constitution for over 300 years, in advancing, electorally, knowledge in freedom.
(After-note: This chapter was written in 1998 to the Commission, with slight changes, since.)

Note 1, On "The Case For The Additional Member System."

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(In the final section by Robert Blackburn: *The Electoral System In Britain*, 1995. AMS is called MMP, Mixed Member Proprtional, in North America)

The case is really for the party-proportional principle (p. 407-1) with three subsections (p. 411-24) on three reasons for a more party proportional Commons. Besides a few passing mentions of AMS, about the only attempt to make any sort of case comes at the end of those subsections:

Blackburn states that a "strong reason" for preferring AMS is the "simplicity" of how political parties can put more women and ethnic candidates on the party list of additional members.
This is the simplicity of dictatorship over democracy, or of a few people telling everyone else who will run things.

Yet, Blackburn says (p. 405): "The exact details of the additional member system can be tailor-made to suit the indigenous conditions of the country."
In other words, AMS supporters haven't worked it out. There is no clear way to do so. Instead, they've left the politicians to play about with it. (Compare the Scottish and Welsh assembly elections.)

Not even the AMS count (which is hardly a detail) was simple enough for Blackburn to explain. The German system uses the D'Hont rule. This was also employed for the Lib-Lab pact Regional List. In the Euro-elections debate, MPs decried the rule description. They were not helped by the Home Secretary telling them that all they had to do was apply their minds to it.

Whereas, Blackburn gives a good, if minimal, account (p. 373-5) of how STV works, the system he is concerned to rule out.

Moreover, in the 1997 election, the Labour party stole the thunder of the argument for party list patronage. The local caucuses worked together, nominating half the candidates as women, as well as some ethnic candidates. The election disproved the prejudice that the British people are more prejudiced than "party elites."

Blackburn closely follows (p. 404-5) the criteria of the Plant report. These don't include voters freedom of choice, tho to "elect" only means to choose-out. Lord Plant backed Blackburns book as including the best case for electoral reform. It is evident from his case for AMS, that never was, that there is very little to be said for it.

Blackburn follows (p. 406) an opinion of the Plant report that STV multi-member constituencies are only permissible in a small country, like Ireland, where electorates are approximately those of British single member constituencies.
By this standard of electoral chauvinism, democracy should be impossible in the USA or India, because their single member constituencies are as large or larger than British multi-member constituencies would be.

Blackburn (p. 404) regards as "axiomatic" that electoral systems be particular to the traditions and institutions of countries. The repetition that Britain's single member system is "traditional" (p. 428) doesn't make it any the more true. And indicates the lack of a valid argument.

A truer picture, perhaps, is a European pattern of vacillation between two inadequate and conflicting conceptions of democracy by single members and/or party portions. The Plant report was based on this dilemma, which some "reformers" would condemn Britain to, by introducing list systems and additional (list) member systems.

Blackburn (p. 382) invokes the Treaty of Rome provision for uniform Euro-elections as a "Trojan Horse" for PR in Britain, not appreciating it is a Trojan Horse for the Blackburn thesis of ethnocentric electoral systems (on p. 404).

However, the treaty requirement should not be allowed to level down all countries human rights, electorally, of unity in liberty, denied by systems counting absolute party divisions.

Scientific standards, not arbitrary decisions, should be observed. If there "cannot be a voting system which satisfies all the criteria" and if there really is "no technical answer" only "political judgement," as the second interim Plant report said (on p. 6), then the people are left wide open to a Cheaters Charter to dignify time-serving as tradition.

The Plant report recommended the Supplementary Vote. Whereas, Blackburn, following the reports point of view, recommended the Additional Member System.

The former gives a first and second choice (or rather a preference vote limited to a double order of choice). The latter gives a single member vote and a list vote, for a proportional count limited to parties as corporately privileged groups in society.

If British institutions and traditions can stretch to either of those two systems, they can stretch to a *complete* preference vote for an *impartial* proportional count with transferable voting.

Note 2: Two Anti-Reform References.

Sir Angus Maude and John Szemerey: Why Electoral Change? The case for PR examined.

This does well to expose the "power to the parties" of the lists, and their unstable coalitions. The section heading "STV fiddles" is merely intemperate. It is complained STV breaks up simple majorities (while acknowledging elsewhere "STV breaks up ghettos"). A (failed) Irish government attempt to gerrymander (whittled-down) STV constituencies, referred-to, has since given way to an independent Boundary Commission.

More proportionality is equated with greater instability and being less representative (e.g. p. 50 and 52). This would follow from the usual confounding of proportional representation with proportional partisanship, which afflicts even the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

Peter Hain: Proportional Misrepresentation (1986).

The title would be a good one for the proportional partisanship that passes as "PR." Less factual than the Maude and Szemerey booklet (1982) like which, it is essentially a party pamphlet, tho of "the Left." So much for the claim of this second partisan booklet (padded) to be the first book against PR.

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Criticism of the Plant report.

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And further background revelations.

Themes

The first theme stated that Britains change to proportional elections would not be just a technical change. Later, the interim Plant report (the short second of three reports) contradicted this, by saying (on p.6) there is "no technical answer."

From theme 2):

The committee is

"not convinced that there is a straightforward idea of fairness which on its own could lead us clearly in the direction of choosing proportional over plurality systems or vice versa."

The Oxford dictionary defines fair as "just, unbiased, equitable, legitimate, in accordance with rules."

First past the post has been defended precisely because it is biased or unfair in favor of one party (hardly ever with an overall majority of votes and sometimes having less votes than another party) to give allegedly "strong government," that is power even without a minimum of democratic sanction. Whereas proportional representation is by definition equitable.

The human right of free and fair elections includes a free and fair electoral system. To "elect" means to "choose out," so electoral freedom should be axiomatic. In practise, this is the need to reform the vote from an illiterate cross to a number order of choice, preference voting, as well as the more equitable proportional count.

This unbalanced situation is reversed in economics. There the talk is all of "the free market," which should be "the free and fair market," especially to end the fatally exploited dependence of the Third World, as described by Clive Ponting: A Green History Of The World. [Note, march 2015: The previous paragraph was written before the Fair Trade movement came into prominence.]

Theme 3 and 4):

Different political values underlie different electoral systems. The report distinguishes two main philosophies of representative democracy, the majoritarian and the proportional or "microcosmic." The former is held more appropriate to legislative assemblies and the latter to more deliberative assemblies. As the whole point of deliberation is to arrive at a decision, this seems schizophrenic.

John Stuart Mill denied that majority rule is democracy. He called it "maiorocracy" or dictatorship by the majority. If words are to be given their proper meaning, he is strictly correct: democracy means rule by the people, not rule by the majority of the people. Nor is this a mere nicety of language. The peace of the world depends on a workable solution to the relations between majorities and minorities.

South Africa, after the 1948 and 1953 elections, and Ulster are oft cited cases of the dictatorial effect of the majoritarian system. The United States was stuck with its "one-party south." Multi-ethnic India seems to have tried to set up a Nehru-Gandhi majoritarian dynasty. Majoritarian notions of representation are not helping the former Soviet Unions minority conflicts within the newly independent republics.

A basic defect of the report is its lack of scientific method. To accept each of two "conflicting views of representative government" as "a fundamentally different view" with "no neutral ground" etc (page 19) is to end knowledge. Progress depends on comparing competing theories or views to arrive at a comprehensive theory. This may be done by reconciling apparent differences, finding logical flaws in one or the other argument, and seeing how well or badly each theory works, in as many different circumstances as possible.

This last, the report makes one of its main canons *not* to attempt: "We do not believe that the same electoral system has to be followed for all representative institutions." (p.99)

This is excused because "there is no ideal electoral system." No scientist pretends that he has the ideal theory. To do so would be to give up trying to find anything more.

"There is no philosophers' stone, no algorithm, no Archimedean point from which this decision can be made." (p.19)

Having said that, the report promptly produces its own philosophers stone in Arrow theorem of popular choice, or "social choice theory" as it is called. Like theories of choice generally, it falls into two stages, the vote and the count, or aggregation of individual choices. The kind of vote used is ranked choice or preference voting. And the kind of count is majority counting. (Iain Maclean, *Democracy And New Technology*.)

In this respect, Arrow or his followers have a limited idea of democratic method, akin to the Alternative Vote. Therefore, Arrow theorem does not imply the limitations of democracy, so much as social choice theorists limited idea of it.

Maclean defines democracy in terms of majority rule. It is Arrows followers restricted conception of "a majority" that restricts the usefulness of their deductions about democracy.

Take the Droop quota. (A sixth form college lecturer in government once told me it has an arithmetic proof.) In single member constituencies, candidates compete for a single majority of just over half the votes. In a two member constituency, candidates compete for two majorities of just over one-third the votes each. Next is a three member majority of just over one-quarter the votes each, and so on.

When people, including experts, have talked about a majority, theyve only meant a single-member majority. But the Droop quota rationalises our idea of a majority to multi-member majorities. Properly applied, proportional representation is a rationalisation of the so-called majoritarian view of representation to a multi-majoritarian view.

The majoritarian view does not imply "a fundamentally different view of the nature of a representative assembly." It is simply the most restricted view of one.

The extension of the count, by the Droop quota, corresponds to the extension of the vote, as logically it should. An X-vote is a one-preference vote. A "preference vote" or ranked choice is a many-preference vote. So, a one-preference X-vote elects a one-majority count (for one candidate over another). This is the least possible choice.

In a general theory of choice, a 1, 2, 3, .. etc many-preference vote elects a many-majority count, of 1, 2, 3, .. etc members per constituency.

This preference voting with quota counting defines the single transferable vote, as the general theory in practise. As such, STV alone satisfies all the conceivable conditions under which elections might be held.

Themes 5 and 6):

Representation of Constituents. "This is obviously one of the strongest arguments in favour of plurality and majoritarian systems." (p.57) But it is not said why, in the section on those systems. Single members are local monopolies on representation, both as to their own and other parties. Monopolies generally are regarded as *not* accountable, for lack of competitive service. So, the burden of proof is upon the Working Party why the voters choice should be minimised, and local communities broken-up by the most boundaries possible.

Michael Meadowcroft MP recalled: "I took up an issue with the Conservative MP for Pudsey that manifestly concerned the entire city of

Leeds. Eventually, I was informed on his behalf that he would not act on my representations because I was not his constituent! I pointed out that the issue involved was a whole city matter whereupon I was blithely told that it was not a priority because it had been raised by a non-constituent. Such is the deleterious effect of the single-member seat."

The report raises locality to a principle more important than choice. Logically, the electoral principle must have primacy in the electoral system. The local principle is answered by a whole range of more or less local assemblies. The scale of representation can be adjusted to make multi-member constituencies as local as you like, so there is no case for restricting electoral freedom to a minimum by single member systems (with or without additional members).

Theme 7):

Citizens should understand their electoral system.

If the report has its way, they will have to understand different systems and their use for different institutions. (p.99 quoted above) Before having to study the subject, I thought I knew all about it. But it was a minimal understanding of a minimal choice, which naturally recommended to me the minimal democracy in the first past the post system.

Enid Lakeman (How Democracies Vote) tells us that the idea of proportional representation by transferable voting was first put forward by Thomas Wright Hill in 1821. At his boys school, committees were formed by boys gathering round the most popular children. At first, these groups were unequal in size, till it was seen that some boys could transfer from their favorites (then from someone with too little support) to help a next best candidate.

This is an excellent way of introducing future citizens to democracy in action. The finer points of transferring surplus votes, like the finer points of any important subject, can be taught later. The Electoral Reform Society sends observers to the Republic of Ireland elections. They say the stages of the count, as they are written up, are keenly followed. Two Irish referendums favored STV over first past the post. Australian local government referendums showed a strong preference for STV over the Alternative Vote.

Theme 8):

"...the greater representation of women and minorities which is essential to the health of democracy may be achieved by less than democratic means."

So says the report (on p.85) in noting that the German Additional Members System (AMS) has a better record than first past the post, "due to the role of party lists." This admits that the Additional (Party List) Members System is less than democratic.

Tho allowing Dummett (on p.70) that STV best protects minorities, the report asks, in relation to STV (on p.104) if that might "be better achieved by other constitutional means." This, despite saying representation of minorities is "essential," if not by STV, then presumably by "less than democratic" AMS or pure list systems.

However, we may safely say that more democracy is not achieved by less democracy.

Issues: Why Only STV Works At Different Levels Of Government

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Majority *world governments* would not be tolerable. And that has nothing to do with them being "deliberative" rather than "legislative." There is no doubt of the need for global regulation to ensure sustainable growth with conservation. East vs West, neo-colonial North vs South or whatever two-party system would not work, because half the globe at a time cannot be left out of legislating world affairs. The main racial, religious, linguistic, political and economic blocs, to name but five, must be represented in the executive as well as the legislature. STV is the only voting method flexible enough to do so.

Being made up of different nations, Switzerland is a model of the world, and has PR in both Federal Council and parliament. Like the rest of the Continent, the Swiss lack a transferable vote to electorally transcend the division of society into party list counts. In any part of the world, the democratic transcendence of divisions is a condition for peace, whether the divisions are excessive nationalism or a partisanship as extreme as chauvinism.

Of course, no system can change peoples hearts, but that is no excuse for denying them the chance to escape from tribal loyalties, in so far as they desire to do so.

The European Community was meant to secure peace between nations. But national sovereignty can all too easily be replaced by partisan sovereignty, under the rigid divisions of List Systems, including of Additional Members.

In Ulster, the 1978 Lib-Lab pact Regional List would have split the Catholics vote between the SDLP and Sinn Fein party lists. Only the transferable vote allowed their proportional representation by one of the three MEPs for that province.

This was a crucial test between theories of choice, which STV is the only electoral system to pass.

The European scale of elections also shows up the Additional Members System as at cross-purposes with itself, tho this may be less obvious at other levels of government. There are too few seats for the Additional (List) Members to compensate proportionally for a large enough number of single member constituencies. It wont work. That's why the Germans dont use it for their Euro-elections, as well as their general elections.

In British general elections, Additional Members could come from 12 regional list constituencies. In contrast, PR by STV is an honestly multi-member system, in Robert Newland 1976 draft, of 142 constituencies. On average, that makes STV representatives nearly twelve times closer to their constituents than Additional Members, whose System is thus an imposter.

The Plant committee gratefully endorses the Scottish Labour Party decision for AMS to *the Scottish Parliament*. No mention of the Labour government Royal Commission on the Constitution (four years work) which chose PR by STV for Scottish, Welsh and regional English assemblies.

John Smith told David Steel (A House Divided) the Labour Scottish Executive wouldnt have PR for the Devolution Bill. This lost Tory support from Lord Home, and in view of the regional breakdown of the referendum result, it is quite likely that the Labour government ignoring the Kilbrandon Report from the start, on STV/PR, lost the Scots their parliament in the 1970s.

Another ignoring of the Commission report does the Scottish people a further disservice. In seeking a measure of national independence, the Scots are to be landed with a system of partisan dependence in AMS.

For *local government*, the report cautiously favors a majoritarian system weighted by a proportional system (p.102) i.e. an additional (list) members system again. This would discriminate unfairly against Independents, who cannot benefit from each others votes, because the proportional count is only for party list candidates.

With STV, the candidates are all personally preferred to elective proportions of the vote, and Independents can benefit, too, from the transfer of personal preference votes. This not only helps Independents but the independence of party candidates, who know they are personally preferred by the people and do not owe everything to their party.

The same applies to other assemblies. STV university constituencies gave distinguished Independents to the Commons. But independent Cross-benchers would be obliterated from a party list-elected *Second Chamber* of Parliament.

The Plant report makes an issue of choosing voting methods to suit the functions of institutions. But it overlooks the functional role of the Lords. Of course, scandalous neglect of reform has left the Lords representing a medieval society. A specialised modern economy needs a working model of its functions in proportional representation of the occupations.

With the downfall of the closed shop in EEC legislation, the traditional defensive role of the unions is under-mined. Instead of making the Labour party unpopular, by their old exclusiveness, you could encourage the TUC to take an important organised part in representation for all people, in their work, in an elected economic parliament.

Socialists like the Webbs (A Social Parliament) and the Coles (Guild Socialism) and HG Wells used to believe in such-like ideas. There would also be some cross-party support for this constitutional reform.

Instead of doubling the strength of democracy with effective elections and an economic franchise, the politicians are set to double the strength of party oligarchy, with a second chamber of safe party men on regional lists.

Two party-political chambers are redundant, so the second one has to be nobbled by giving it fewer members or an undemocratic voting system (p 95):

"...it should not be seen as the rival of the House of Commons in terms of its democratic legitimacy. This obviously bears to some degree at least on the nature of the electoral system for both..."

Here the Plant report lets slip that there are (democratic) standards by which to judge different election systems.

Political and economic national parliaments could both be democratically elected by STV. They would match general legislation affecting the Commons or communities to its special effects on occupational constituencies. This is essentially a scientific relation of political theory to economic practise.

Some two million people in Britain already hold professional elections by STV, as well as much of the NHS.

Other Issues (1 and 2):

As the left-right divergence between the two main parties made for unresponsive government, the decline in their spread of support has made for unrepresentative government.

The report lets off first past the post much too easily, merely making its admittedly unrepresentative and unresponsive government a question of whether it may all come right in the end: "the resolution...does depend on how one reads current electoral trends." (p.103)

Questions

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Plurality Systems:

1) The discrimination against parties with a geographical spread of support cannot be justified, as requested, because it is a consequence of confusing the electoral principle with the local principle (as explained above).

2) The claim that first past the post (FPTP) "is essentially... about choosing a government" needs severely qualifying. FPTP gives voters the most limited possible choice of government between one of two parties. Not always the one with the most votes wins. FPTP fails even on its own miserable terms of offering a minimal democracy.

A Second Ballot or Alternative Vote cannot alter the possibility that a larger party may have its support concentrated in fewer single member constituencies, and so "lose" to a smaller party winning more seats. (See Enid Lakeman, *How Democracies Vote*, p.65, Majority members and minority governments.)

3): "It follows from the first part of this section that there is a strong case for using more than one system."

Pointing out an inadequacy of FPTP (as the Plant report does) is no reason for retaining it with some other system. Additional Members from party lists merely adds, ad hoc, one wrong system to another. And two wrongs don't make a right. The report here is not only badly thought-out but badly expressed, e.g.

"Given that we contemplate different systems, it is possible that claims may be made for different degrees of legitimacy."

If it is possible to say some voting methods are more "legitimate" than others, then why not just use the most legitimate one?

Proportional Systems

General Questions:

1)

"Why is it seen as democratic that a party could become pivotal and play a central role in government for a very considerable period of time as the FDP has been in Germany when it gains a relatively small percentage of the vote (?)"

First of all, this is not a general question. It is a criticism of the West German experience of their (Double Vote) Additional Member System. Most Continental countries just use party lists, without a single member system. They tend to have more parties. And STV/PR in English-speaking countries, most notably Eire, has been different again.

The German AMS is as undemocratic in favor of the third party, as the British single member system is undemocratic against it. (No wonder if most British Liberals speak warmly of the German system!) The two main parties became so frustrated with the FDP as a fixture of power that, in 1966, they formed a "Grand Alliance," and resolved to end Additional Members, tho this agreement fell thru. They became alarmed at the rise of extremist parties and split up again. And the FDP have been back in power ever since.

This century, the Labour party has favored first past the post, a system grossly undemocratic, mainly to the Tories advantage - by an average of 95 seats per election during the inter-war years. (JFS Ross, *Parliamentary Representation*.) In favoring AMS, among proportional systems, the Labour party gets ready to do undemocratic favor to the Liberals. The last people Labour seems to favor are the people. Having been the Tories fools, Labor are set to become the Liberals fools.

German AMS permits one X-vote for one candidates party in a single member constituency and one X-vote for the List perhaps of another partys candidates. That may express a desire for coalition. But two X-votes cast in opposing ways, in a partisan system, contradict each other. It is not a question that "this means to an outside observer that the individual is voting irrationally." (p.84) The system itself is irrational.

The AMS (Double Vote) does *not* "allow...preferences as much scope as possible." Because, an X-vote expresses only a single order of preference, for one candidate over another or one party over another. To prefer two candidates over a third requires a double order of preference, first and second choice.

The transferable vote allows a multiple order of preference, proportionally electing candidates in multi-member constituencies. This means you can rank candidates, if you wish, of one party and then another, effecting a coalition preference.

A third party leader ignores this at his peril, as do his colleagues. If the support for that party's candidates does not change much, the order of preference for them may be revised as a result of their actions. This has a direct bearing on the next question.

2)

If all parties are in a minority, after proportional elections, how can their wheeling and dealing, to form a coalition, be democratic?

This is not a question general to all proportional systems but to all non-transferable voting systems. With these, the voters have no say as to which combination of minority parties should form the majority in government. This lack of legitimacy makes party-proportional systems prone to reshuffled coalitions.

Here is the classic criticism of "unstable governments" (e.g. Maude and Szemerey, *Why Electoral Change?* p.34-5. And a standard work, Enid Lakeman: *How Democracies Vote.*)

The greatest transferable voting, from candidates of one party to another, picks out the popular choice of coalition, from all the possible party combinations. General ability of the voters to elect governments is another crucial test in favor of STV over all other electoral systems.

Nor is this mere theory. In Eire, the voters have sanctioned Fine Gael-Irish Labour party coalitions by cross-party preference of candidates, and hence cross-party proportional representation.

STV shows, in the eyes of the electorate, which parties have the strongest links, and so are the most like one majority party. Tho it may not be one, *officially*, in effect, it has been made one, democratically, with real support - and not the make-believe majorities of our make-believe democracy.

Nor is there the Continent's illegitimate pairings in government of rigidly divided, officially registered parties. There the people only elect parties, not governments.

Especially in times of national emergency, the voters might want to extend their preferences to some candidates from all parties, sanctioning a national government. Done from the top, as it always has been, national unity can be a very divisive business, as the Labour party found in 1931.

By preferring candidates only of one party, STV also allows full expression to the divisions in society and any differences in direction they stand for. This is democratic, not manipulating results towards conflict or consensus, but allowing effective expression to both. (This answers the ecological need for an adaptive but stable self-regulating system.)

Single Transferable Vote

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1):

The Plant report continues:

"Given that one of the perceived strengths of STV is the degree of representation it might secure for minorities, the question is: Is representation the best way of protecting the interests of minorities when they will still be minorities or would this be better achieved by other constitutional means such as a Bill of Rights/Charter of Rights, greater devolution of power, a more federal structure etc?"

As this is one of the most serious problems for peace, we should use all these means to secure it. Practically everyone belongs to important minorities. STV is flexible enough to proportionally represent them all, as well as popularly sanction their coalitions, which is what majorities usually are. This makes STV indispensable to democracy.

Talking about "permanent minorities," that "must always lose" (p.70), is to excuse under-classes, including women in public life. Their attributes, like sex, race, creed or language etc are easily discriminated against, to serve the purposes of an inequitable society. Its abolition depends on ending the institutions that perpetrate it, such as the electoral ghettos of the single member system, condemned by Paul Harrison (in *Inside The Inner City*).

Party List systems are exclusive, too, and harden differences, not only into political dogmas, but in any conflict, such as race in Guyana, or with the resort to separate language lists in Belgium.

Devolved power may help reduce the scale of conflict. But the minorities turned into regional majorities may cause more problems for their

own minorities. There is no getting away from Mills mature conception of democracy. This would involve legislative and perhaps executive power-sharing.

Judicial power-sharing would lend substance to a formal Bill of Rights.

2):

"...as STV is proposed for the Commons its defenders have to explain: How there can be five member constituencies in sparsely populated areas and how they would defend the loss of proportionality which would be entailed by a reduction to three members and the impact this might have on significant fourth parties in Scotland and Wales."

Reconciliation is possible between STV constituencies true to the historic Commons or local communities and an even greater PR than STV would achieve within any of them. The reform could be in two stages. The first stage would be the Electoral Reform Society proposals, by Robert Newland: Electing the United Kingdom Parliament. Traditional Shires and Boroughs would average about 5 members, most being 4 to 6.

This (binomial) distribution of seats per constituency is the statistical pattern you would expect demography to follow. There would be a couple of densely urban 8-members. Whereas Orkney and Shetlands, and the Western Isles might prefer to stay singles. Tho, even western Eire rejected reducing threes to singles, in the second Irish referendum that supported STV.

In the 1920s up to 1935, Eire had a 3 to 8 or 9 member system. But the largest party whittled it down, mainly to 3, with a maximum of 5, to over-represent itself. The report (on p.75) manifests a similar desire:

"... three member constituencies would be more likely...STV in its fully proportional form is a highly unlikely runner for electoral reform in Britain."

Boundaries have been drawn and redrawn by remote central government decision, for bureaucratic or party-political ends. During the nineteenth century, single member constituencies arrived as the servant of the two-party game. The thrust of this report, and general Labour and Tory attitudes, is to keep the servant on.

The single member system, as the servant of national party politics, at the expense of local communities, was clearly shown straight after the 1979 election. The Conservatives ordered the Boundary Commission to make constituencies as equal as possible.

In practise, this meant to over-rule local feeling and interests as much as they dare, to that end. At the 1983 election, the result was, that for a slip in the Tory vote from about 44% to 42%, their majority of seats increased by nearly a hundred.

The report claims "there are also strong factors that work against STV." (p.71) On average, UK multi-member constituencies would be 300,000 compared to the Irish 55,000. "...this is likely to have several negative consequences." (The "strong factors" have become "likely.")

But this supposition has no weight by the standard of U.S. single member constituencies of 200,000 to approaching 300,000. Actually, the argument from scale of representation is fatal to the single member system.

The Plant Report goes on:

"The problem then is how far in the UK we see constituencies as embodying some sense of identity, of being in some sense a natural community."

Churchill summed up this identity issue best:

I would rather be one-fifth of the candidates for the whole of Leeds than one candidate for a fifth of Leeds.

(Quoted by Joe Rogalay: Parliament For The People.)

A second stage of reform fully meets Plant criticism that STV, in the historic constituencies called "Commons," would not be proportional enough. Constituents could be allowed to prefer candidates in other constituencies in the region, and ultimately perhaps in the entire nation.

As MPs make laws that affect us all, so it is only democratic that our votes should be allowed to affect all of them. But this arrangement would be more structured than the original Hare system, introduced by Mill, or Leonard Courtney regional version. (The latter could share the same boundaries with regional governments and British Euro-constituencies.)

Just as transferable voting allows proportional preference for candidates within, between and across parties, so it should do, too, with

respect to constituencies. This is not to deny the importance of parties or constituencies. On the contrary, they provide the voters with two frameworks of reference to exercise our choices by. In fact, the greater freedom of individual choice, the more essential these guides to affiliation of the candidates become.

3):

"...we are concerned to elicit from supporters of STV a much clearer account of the relationship of accountability between a member and his or her constituents than we have found in the evidence so far...no single MP will be able to speak on behalf of the constituency as a whole..." (p.105)

Thru-out most of Britains parliamentary history, "no single MP" but two members spoke for much the same rural and urban constituency areas that could now be proportionally represented by STV. That a single member speaks for the constituency as a whole is a fiction of the system. He is supposed to speak gallantly for those who voted against him, maybe a majority. That is the romance of chivalry not the reality of democracy.

Those habituated to the single member system have confused seats with constituencies: a representative is literally ac-countable to the portion or quota of voters who have elected him. Whether in single or multi-member constituencies (seats grouped by local community) that portion is roughly the same. Any elections are bound to be "accountable only to sections," because sections represent quotas or kinds of choices made. The point is that the electoral system represent all the main sections of opinion.

The Plant report sees accountability, with STV in rural Ireland, in the following charming terms:

Candidates "reserve bailiwicks (leading to) friends and neighbours catchment areas. This can have undesirable results in...patron client or parish pump politics ...which may impede a view of the national needs to which politics should devote itself...the logic of STV seems to drive candidates into this sort of activity." (p.71)

"An Anthropological Study" is cited. ("Anthropological" means a study of human beings.) One might not recognise the country, here refered, as one of the world leaders in information technology.

The above quotation tone of prim disapproval need not disguise that Irish MPs give the very personal attention, regarded as laudable, in so far as it exists in single member systems (p 29-30):

"It is also argued by defenders of the present system that what might be called the social work aspect of work for constituents is an important and rewarding part of a back bench MPs life and that they value what they see as an organic link to the constituency."

Whatever "an organic link" is, apart from lending a mystique of legitimacy to the single member system.

That STV elects MPs on a quota, which is only a "section" of the constituency, overlooks the great importance of the surplus votes, which are publically recorded. An MP, notably a party leader may have far and away more first preferences, even than colleagues of his own party. This show of personal popularity enhances his authority, inside the constituency and nationally. The single member, in his partys safe seat, cannot point to any such distinction.

No evidence is given that Irish MPs do "impede...national needs," presumably by serving local needs *too* well. And British local representation is not held to account for this.

However, local and national interests could be reconciled by evolving cross-constituency STV. Candidates would have to achieve a rather larger regional or national quota of 60,000, say, than a three- member constituency quota of about 45,000 (or 50,000 votes each to elect 5 members, etc).

To pick up the extra votes from the millions of regional (or national) constituents, outside his own local constituency base, a candidate would have to campaign on regional (or national) as well as local issues. A broader appeal would be encouraged. This equalising of the quota would be consistent proportional representation right across constituencies, just as STV alone achieves this within, between and across parties.

4):

"We need evidence about how the divisive tendencies of intraparty competition which seem endemic to STV can be mitigated."

Is it necessary to recite for the Working Party the "endemic" schisms of its own party history, and their abiding need of arbitration by the general public? That is the way to more "effective parties," as there is no better way to solve internal dissensions than by authority of all the people.

On Plant reasoning, we should also get rid of *inter*-party competition for *its* "divisive tendencies." For why should a divided party be worse than a divided nation? Which does the Establishment put first, its parties or its country?

Freely transferable voting may not only establish the true balance of support for a party's left and right - PR within a party - but also its degree and kind of unity. Similarly, PR across left and right wing parties, by transferable voting, may define the degree and kind of unity of the nation.

This comprehensive electoral freedom is not a luxury. It is the link by which individual wishes are concerted into community action. Without this, no country can call itself a democracy that is "intellectually and politically respectable." (p.42)

The report jibs at voters using their preferences to "weaken the effectiveness of the party as a vote gathering organisation." (p.75)

Is the objection to a voting system, that allows voters to show they might not be as partisan as politicians want? That is the voters business: to be as partisan or otherwise as they please, and not be obliged to appear to vote in a purely partisan way, by a system that gives them no other choice.

Question four harks back to the high turn-over of Irish MPs defeated by members of their own party (p.75). One electoral reformer was honest enough to tell me that Conservative MPs would never give up their safe seats. Hence, most Tory and Labour reformers have campaigned for AMS (p 89):

"...it would threaten the vested interests of sitting members much less than would any other alternative."

Democracy is not about party job security of politicians.

"There is no point in devising elaborate proposals for reform of electoral systems which might be wholly justifiable in principle but which would fail to command a majority within the existing House of Commons."

This Plant report veto (on p 42) makes a nonsense of writing it, and tells dissenters they are wasting their time criticising it. Such "realism" simply teaches subservience. There would be no democracy in the former Soviet Union today, if reformers had followed that kind of defeatism. Reason may be ignored, under the Orwellian motto "ignorance is strength." But overwhelming state power has its limitations, too.

List Systems

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1)
What is the constituency link with candidates on Lists for legislative bodies?

Answer: Regional and National Lists count constituencies by regions and nations.

2)
The point Plant makes about "power to national and regional party bureaucracies" should be that list candidates are made responsible to them, rather than their constituents. That "party elites might have less traditional attitudes" for "greater equality of gender and ethnic representation" is the promise of an oligarchy so benevolent it will not tolerate the democratic means to achieve it.

C.S. Lewis said he was a democrat because no man is good enough to be given power over others. We have seen enough of that, in the twentieth century and before. Seemingly, some people, especially in power, will never learn.

How far power to the parties can go is exemplified by French Euro-elections from national lists. Tens of millions just had X-votes for parties. A handful of voters, who were top politicians, such as Simone Veil, also each had one preference vote, that decided, for the whole nation, the candidates order of election from a party list.

M. Mitterand had his name on top of the socialists list, to boost the party vote with a little personal popularity. After the election, he promptly stood down.

One might have thought, at least candidates, placed lower on the lists, would be less likely of election, especially if their party vote slumped. However, unsuccessful candidates were "rotated" as MEPs. Everyone on the list got a ride on that roundabout! Nor was this abolition of personal freedom of choice just a French farce. "Rotation" quickly caught-on in Germany. By 1984, it was raising a fever in the Green party: tricks of the trade!

A Romanian Communist spy bribed his way onto the French National Front list and into the European Parliament. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." So said Lord Acton. Or, as the Plant report says: "there is obviously some loss of democratic input in this respect." (p.105)

An X-vote for a party can only give PR between parties. The 1978 Lib-Lab pact Regional List elects candidates first past the post on a party list. But that denies PR within parties, and across parties. In both cases, the system fails from split voting, either for candidates within a list, or, for different lists.

Only transferable voting can give PR in its integrity within, between and across parties.

3)

Why is one of "the different arithmetical procedures used to allocate seats under list systems" to be preferred to another?

Indeed, how can the public be expected to understand what the experts cannot agree on? (For STV, the Droop quota is in standard use, and is the simplest of its kind in use to understand.) The social choice theorists problem is "how can individual preferences be aggregated into some overall function which we can call the people's choice"? (p.20)

A "party vote" begs the question, because individuals votes are *presumed* to count for groups or parties, as communities within the community. (That is, the question is regressed or left unsolved at one remove.) One doesn't solve a problem by pretending it doesn't exist.

Party lists have no place in the context of Arrow theorem. Not only Arrow but Aristotle refutes the party vote - as the syllogistic fallacy of "illicit major."

Additional Member Systems

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"There are a number of issues which need much greater thought here" is the Plant report way of saying that combining single members with additional (list) members demands a whole new range of arbitrary decisions:

- 1) Which method of majority counting to use in the single member system? (Which list counting method? has just been asked on p.106);
- 2) What ratio of the single to the additional members?
- 3) What thresholds against small parties? (This contradicts a count that imposes absolutely proportional partisanship on the public.)
- 4) Of two different classes of MPs, what links to each other and the constituents?

STV doesn't have any of these difficulties. As questions, they are not really thoughtful themselves. Far from asking whether this "less than democratic" system is good enough, all that is wanted are details from the party of how to legislate for AMS. (See e.g. Enid Lakeman, Power To Elect, on how the German electoral system is over-rated.)

The statement about the Hansard Society version of AMS, that "There would be no element of party list involved" is incorrect. The simple truth is that the party lists of all the candidates in the region are unpublished. The parties still share out the seats between them on the basis of a partisan count of the votes for (implicit lists of) candidates in the regions single member constituencies.

Robert Newland gave a devastating exposure of this systems irrationalities. (Representation, journal of the Electoral Reform Society, Jan. 1977.) Even he missed Neil Kinnock observe that an unpopular candidate who lost his place first past the post might still be elected as an additional member, second past the post. The "anomalies" are reviewed by Vernon Bogdanor, The People And The Party System.

There is no need to argue with the claim that AMS combines the best of both single member and list systems, because there is no best to combine.

A note on John Stuart Mill

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J S Mill selflessly championed Andrae and Hare for one of those happy coincidences in making a great scientific discovery. H G Wells, who also had a scientific training, appreciated some real scientific work had been done here.

But how little a change of heart is to be looked for, from the Plant committee in its final report, may be judged from the attempt to discredit STV, even by slighting Mill, in the eyes of the Labour party (p 69 and p 74):

"It is arguable that STV was conceived by Mill to break the hold of parties on representative democracy because he and others were frightened of the control which working class parties might exert in a democratic system."

"As was noted earlier Mill advocated STV partly because he was fearful of the role that major parties would play if the franchise were to be extended."

This "frightened" and "fearful" man was author of *The Subjection Of Women*, which argued for perfect legal equality between the sexes. Even William Lovett (*Life And Struggles Of William Lovett*) regreted he had allowed other Chartists to talk him into believing votes for women was a hopeless cause.

In his *Autobiography*, Mill holds that democracy would not be complete till "proportional representation," which is also "personal representation," was achieved.

Since writing this (edited) criticism of the Plant Report in 1991, I came to believe that Mill was our greatest democrat. This book includes his speeches on Parliamentary Representation. They completely refute the Plant report insinuations.

As an MP, Mill said in the Commons:

"I look upon a liberal enfranchisement of the working classes as incomparably the greatest improvement in our representative institutions which we at present have it in our power to make;.."

Mill financially supported working class candidates, even tho he accepted no payments to himself.

The speeches, included in this book, make clear that Mill is a democrat for universal suffrage. The "representation of minorities... is not intended specially as a check on democracy: it is a check upon whatever portion of the community is strongest; on any abuse of power by the class that may chance to be uppermost. Instead of being opposed to democracy, it is actually a corollary from the democratic principle, for on that principle every one would have a vote, and all votes would be of equal value; but without the representation of minorities all votes have not an equal value, for practically nearly one-half of the constituency is disfranchised, for the benefit, it may happen, not even of the majority, but of another minority."

Mill advocated the proportional representation of minorities precisely to ensure that the majority didnt become a minority, since the majority of a majority in Parliament would likely be a minority. Mill held that majorities should not be given undue consideration and minorities should be given due consideration, in proportion to their support: peace-making power-sharing.

There is the generous-spirited intelligence of Mill, who was essentially right about "Mr Hare's system of Personal Representation," and there is the Plant report of the Labour party, who were wrong, and disgracefully misrepresented Mill, as they would misrepresent the people with any non-transferable voting method whatever, rather than representative elections by STV/PR.

The interim Plant report omission of the case for STV

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Section one

The Plant report made no mention of the Labor government Royal Commission on the Constitution, that urged the single transferable vote for Scottish and Welsh parliaments, as well as English regional assemblies. So, it was little surprise that the second report ignores all other cases made for STV, the PR of the English-speaking peoples.

It is not possible to have a dialog with a Working Party that goes on, as if they had never spoken. Electoral reform societies have campaigned for STV/PR over the last hundred years. So have distinguished specialists, such as JFS Ross and Enid Lakeman, and a great reforming writer, like H.G. Wells.

STV is the only system that the second report makes no attempt to see any merit in, let alone give a balanced presentation of the evidence for and against. That is wrong, from the viewpoint of either legal or scientific procedure. Scientific progress is towards generally applicable knowledge, in this case, of the voting method that applies fairly or equitably to any elections.

That "no voting system is perfect" is the lamest excuse, since no scientific theory claims perfection. The report is not simply "trying to resist the claims of STV" but suppressing information of them. To do so is biased or unfair. That is worth saying, because the Working Party cannot arrive at a working definition of "fairness" (on p.3).

Civilizations, from ancient times, are based on rules of equity, for example the Confucian or Christian "do as you would be done by." Converts to Islam find egalitarian harbor against racial prejudice. Greek democracy was first called "equality before the law."

But the Working Party "central distinction" (in section 1 ii) between *Majoritarian "legislative" and proportional "deliberative" assemblies* is unreal.

Even with the Alternative Vote, single-member majorities of 50%+ are only the most limited kind of majorities. The proportioning of majorities by the Droop quota, leads to two-member majorities with over two-thirds the votes between them, three-member majorities with three-quarters the votes, etc. So, there is no rational justification for different kinds of voting method for different assemblies.

No wonder the report asserts (on p.6): "there cannot be a voting system which satisfies all the criteria ... There is no technical answer. It relies ... on political judgement,..."

Arbitrary decisions are the consequences of arbitrary premises.

The tyrant or "elective dictator" notion that legislative bodies need a monopoly of power thru a single member system is impractical, for peace. The opposition need proportionate power to be properly consulted.

The report (sec.I ii) divorces deliberation from legislation, into different assemblies. But deliberation is over principles and legislation is their application. And this report (sec.1 i) says: "issues of principle cannot easily be divorced from those of practical application," in choosing a voting method. If you cannot easily divorce principled deliberation from legislative application, with regard to electoral law, you cannot do so for any other kind of law. So, sections I i and I ii contradict each other.

Modern science, say, since Galileo, affirms section I i. But the report does not live up to its "view that the Labour Party cannot simply take refuge behind generalities ..." (p.2). For example, the *Additional Members System* has already been chosen for a Scottish parliament. Yet the report has not resolved the many practical problems of AMS; it merely poses them once more and says (three times) they're going off to Germany to see how they do!

"In addition to these points, there is one other key question which will need to be considered further, and that is the method by which the "additional members" might actually be chosen[!!] We do remain convinced, at this stage, however, that AMS deserves serious consideration for legislative bodies, in that it does keep a single member constituency link,..."

In other words, the dogma of single members is settled first and the practical consequences, in section I(b), are left to follow as they may. Foremost among these consequences of AMS is the "pivotal position in Parliament" of small parties. The Working Party still cannot solve this problem. The West German experience points to the Liberal leadership having a job for life, as king-makers of either the Labor or Tory parties. The Liberal leader becomes a sort of life monarch.

Whereas, transferable voting would allow the *voters* to prefer candidates across party lines, effecting either a leftward or rightward or center coalition, if no one party had half the votes. This is heresy to the hacks who live for party before country. As G.K. Chesterton said, actually there is only one party (nowadays called the Establishment). So, the general interest has no leverage against particular interests, even those busily degrading the planet.

Section two

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These Working Party reports are like the "semantic hell" of the Earth Summit. From "even assuming (as we do not) that *fairness* can be given some agreed and unambiguous definition" (on p.3, by p.10) the report gets round to recognizing fairness as a universal standard: "An electoral system needs to be seen to be *fair* not just to political parties but to individuals and groups within society;.."

It fails to admit this is at the heart of the long-standing STV cause, and would lead to it as the choice of system. Transferable voting is election of the most preferred individual candidates, so that all their group attributes, including those of party, are proportionally represented.

Freedom of choice is denied by X-votes for *party lists* (including lists of additional members) to give mere proportional partisanship, miscalled PR. Party List systems are an oligarchic privilege over all other groups in society.

The section on list systems argues whether party elites give fairer representation, than the more democratic selection by local constituency members, for female and ethnic candidates.

The reader is not reminded that the comparison is between multi-member constituencies that require a range of candidates to catch all the main voting groups, and single-member constituencies, which mainly require a candidate from the dominant faction, usually white middle class professional males.

When he supported STV, Lord Shinwell called the single-member system "undemocratic." The holders of this monopoly on representation have a vested interest in the safe seats it gives them.

The desire is expressed (on p.16-17) to achieve *equal representation* of men and women, with AMS in the Scottish parliament. Tho, true to form, the report cannot decide how, without making the system even more anomalous. The parties would have to bind themselves to gender parity but this party report refused to bind parties to selection procedures (on p.3).

Their objection is to state imposition *on* parties, but not *of* parties on the public by corporate voting. From gender, as well as party, being given the exclusive privilege of proportional election, every other human category, age, race, religion, language, class, culture etc, goes a begging. It is not practical or democratic to officially impose lists for them all, and each list X-vote would count against the other.

Section three

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Double standards of criticism are brought to bear against *STV compared to other systems*.

Appendix one is about the meagre sum of new "evidence" (such as it is) in the document. It claims to be a demonstration of the perverse result of an STV count. What should be said, in the first place, is that there is no agreed proportional counting method for party list systems, including lists of additional members.

Tho serving partisan privilege, list systems still cannot agree how to serve partisan privilege. Instead, there is a proliferation of divisor or quota count methods. The parties are still fighting amongst each other for how to share out the votes they've usurped for a dogma of partisanship. There is no honor among partisan thieves! Proportional partisanship is fundamentally irrational from a democratic viewpoint.

Again the report *is* hiding behind generalities. And it rejects, out of hand, STV, which alone has an agreed method of proportional count, by the Droop quota.

In the second place, Riker example against transferable voting does not have a transferred (surplus) vote, the very feature of STV that sets it apart from all other systems.

Dummett tail-wags-the-dog argument against eliminative counting was succinctly put against the Alternative Vote, as "the worst votes for the worst candidates."

(This meant that the next preferences of the voters for the worst candidate are the worst votes to determine who is elected next.) If Churchill's phrase has any meaning, logically there must also be the best votes for the best candidates. STV satisfies this criterion, because in a multi-member constituency, the best or most popular candidates may have more than the proportion of votes they need for election. This surplus of the best votes may be transferred, to their next best preferred candidates. STV is the best votes for the best candidates.

Dummett statement that other systems are to be preferred as "at least weakly monotonic" implying STV is not at all, cannot be taken seriously. To make out that STV is "chaotic," because it takes account of the voters ordered choice - to say that out of STV order comes

disorder is a topsy-turvy argument.

Double standards come in again. X-votes, wrongly, are counted always as first preferences. The two main parties obsessively campaign against "wasted votes" or first preferences for other party candidates. A "tactical vote" is only a second preference or less. The full order of choice, requiring a "preference vote" 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc, is suppressed information. For more than two candidates, the result of an X-vote really is disordered.

The German voting system combines two voting systems, the British single member system, with a second X-vote for a party list. The latter could be like the Regional List proposed, in the Lib-Lab pact for British Euro-elections. Such a British version of AMS would combine two kinds of split voting: between candidates of different parties in single member constituencies, and between candidates of the same party on a regional list - which gives PR between, but not within, parties.

The reduction to absurdity of party lists (whether or not of additional members) is that an X-vote for a party could elect a list candidate that *no-one* individually voted for!

The Euro-Parliament presidency, the Tory and Labor leadership contests don't allow self-defeating split voting from the grossly eliminative first past the post. But the humble public has to put up with that. The politicians use an exhaustive ballot, like the Alternative Votes more measured exclusion, in turn, of each candidate with the least votes, which are a (probable) measure of the least chance of winning.

A still more highly ordered system is the rational measure of popular choice by transferable voting in multi-member constituencies, which is the only method that follows all four main scales of scientific measurement. As such, we may safely say, that of all systems, STV is the least prone to disorder of the voters wishes.

Section four

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"Matters of judgement" (on p.7), as to what *communities* constituencies comprise, can be an excuse for arbitrary decisions without reference to the facts. The Working Party ignores once more that the most fragmentary system, of single members, is a recent break with the historical Commons of Shires and Boroughs which would make fair-sized multi-member constituencies today.

Terms (on p.8,10,15) are repeated like catch-phrases: "clear" or "strong constituency links," "stability" and "accountability." They are undefended assertions in favor of single-member constituencies, and against STV. But the first report disdainfully complained about Irish MPs being too accountable to their local communities.

STV being too accountable was also characterized by the first report as instability, in its "divisive tendencies" to allow voters to prefer individual candidates of the same party, as well as different parties. But this STV freedom to express a degree of national unity, as well as party division, combines stability with adaptability for the nation. The only instability is to job security for complacent politicians.

STV is smeared (on p.7) with

"Margaret Thatcher's notorious statement that there is no such thing as society ... in the sense of community identification through constituencies, there are only individuals and their preference orderings."

The truth is Mrs Thatcher was as opposed to STV as the Working Party is.

The point of democracy is that the unity of the community is conditional upon individual freedom. Failure to realize that is why European unity is going wrong. And STV is so important because it does apply that democratic principle.

It does so in a way consistent with a scientific law. This is a statement of the conditions under which a general rule applies. STV applies to every kind of election at all levels of government.

This is just what the single member system, AMS and Regional List do not do. To promote these choice-impooverished systems, against STV, has put "fairness" as well as "technical answer" at a discount, by saying the essential is impossible.

If a voting system is good enough for one kind of election, it is good enough for them all. The report denial of universal standards, both ethical and scientific, cannot be condemned too strongly for vesting particular interests of party oligarchy in electoral procedure. And it makes a cynical mockery of the new Labor leaders promise "to give power back to the people" thru constitutional reform.

Originally, evidence to the Labour party Plant Committee on electoral reform, 1992.

Introductory Letter by Labour member (Dorothy Cowlin) to the Plant Committee.

(Sept. 28th 1991)

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I am a member of the North Ryedale Labour Party.

In the 45 years I have lived in the area, it has never once been represented by a Labour MP. Knowing that however much work one puts in, will be wasted, is extremely disheartening.

More and more, I feel that proportional representation is vital, here and everywhere. I feel also that of the various methods, STV is the fairest. I was disappointed to gather from your Report that you are not in favour of it, at least for the House of Commons: partly because you think it would weaken the association of MPs with their constituents.

I have never felt in the least that our (inevitable) Conservative MP gives me any influence whatever, however small, on the actions of the Government. Whenever I have written to him I have been palmed off with some slick Party Line.

As for electors not understanding the system: certainly it is less simple than a cross opposite one name. But STV seems less complicated to me than the other systems you examine, as well as more fair. And if the Irish voter can manage it, surely the English voter could!

I am writing this letter partly to express the above opinion, but mainly on behalf of Mr R. Lung. He is far better equipped to argue the matter than I am, having given years of thought and reading to it.

I have read his reply to your Report, and I found it most impressive in its depth and detail. I feel it is very well worth your while to look at it, and do hope that some or all of the committee will give it serious consideration.

And further background revelations.

(Post Script. May 2015)

The Plant report was an internal Labour Party report. I asked my friend Dorothy Cowlin to write an introduction for me. She was a veteran left-wing Labour member. She came from a Labour family. Her grandmother joined the Labour party in its first year, of which she was rather proud.

In her youth, she even knew of a man named Plant in the early Labour party. So, she was not too disposed to take my point of view. Tho, she did help me by recommending the single transferable vote. She had been amenable to the idea of proportional representation. As a writer, she felt bound to agree that the Plant report was ill-written. (Its form was as ill-conceived as its substance.)

I had to reassure Dorothy, who had looked-up to JS Mill as an emancipator of women, that there was no truth in the Plant report slurs on his name, which I complained about, to them, above.

Needless to say, the Plant committee were ill-pleased with my demolition of party career plans, alias elections study. One committee member rather sourly said they thought Dorothys letter better than my submission.

A stropmy letter from the chairman, Margaret Beckett told me not to send a commentary on the final report, as the committee would be disbanded and no-one would be there to read it.

The final report recommended anything but STV for different levels of government, when only STV would work at all levels of government, as I had told them.

Their principal recommendation was the Supplementary Vote for the Commons, as advocated by a Labour MP.

Ironically, Margaret Beckett was also chosen to head the campaign against the 2011 referendum on the Alternative Vote. Whereas, the Supplementary Vote, that had her name to it, is nothing more than a one-alternative vote.

Margaret, like Dorothy, was an old Labour leftie. I would have supported Beckett against nuclear power, unlike the New Labour "nuclear cronies." I even said so, on The Guardian Comment Is Free, before criticising her contribution to the nonsense of the No-to-AV campaign.

A book (called something like: What's Left) by a journalist on The Guardian, a Labour paper (except in the 2010 election) dismissed "Shaw and Wells," in a sentence or two, with a self-congratulatory thank goodness, that the left were not like that now.

Unfortunately, any superiority of the new Left to Shaw and Wells does not extend to their genius.

Dorothy Cowlin came from the generation most influenced by these great radicals. Tho of a considerably later generation, I was as deeply drawn to their writings, Wells thru-out my adult life, and Shaw when I was a young man. I shared a community of interest with Dorothy in that golden age of English literature, in whose golden shadow, she grew up.

Dorothy was very advanced, in her artistic, as well as her political views. She asked at school for the poems of TS Eliot, before the teacher could obtain them. She loved the music of Sibelius, when his fourth symfony was driving audiences out of concert halls. She came from a musical family, as well as a Labour family.

This literary womans influence, on me, was far greater than my influence on her. She turned me into a poet, from the dry-as-dust creature who wrote this Plant critique.

My second verse collection, "Dates and Dorothy" includes a section on our friendship.

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Against the Jenkins report.

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A public debate about voting method requires some knowledge of its basics. Single choice X-votes elect a single member majority. This is Britain's current system, the most limited possible choice. A preference vote is ordered choice (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) of many members' majorities: from one member on over half the votes, to two members on relative majorities of over one-third the votes each (for a proportional representation of two-thirds the votes); to three members on over one quarter the votes each (for a PR of three-quarters the votes) and so on.

This transferable voting system is a generalisation of choice, consistently with regard to both the vote and the count. A single member X-vote for a single member majority is generalised or rationalised to a multi-member preference vote for a multi-member majority. This makes STV the general system of choice. Failure to follow this general purpose system accounts for UK electoral anarchy by 1998.

Only electoral principle can enhance the Independent Commission terms of reference (numbered below 1 to 4) with respect to each other. As the system of general choice, STV (1) "extends voter choice" and is also the means to more (2) "stable government." Because, STV works like a primary to settle internal party disputes, by preferring candidates within a party, and also as a coalition-decider (not only within but) across parties, in extending preferences to different parties' candidates.

Frank Baigel (from Manchester, letter to The Independent, 3 Nov. 1998) said:

"Sir: If the Irish are able to use and understand the single transferable vote (STV) system of proportional representation why can't the British electorate be trusted with it?"

STV does ensure that party representation is proportional to the votes cast and moreover gives the voter a chance in a multi-seat constituency of giving preference to the party candidate of his or her own choice. In this way voters can decide whether to support, for example, either a right- or left-wing candidate instead of allowing the party to choose its own list of centrally appointed apparatchiks.

Voters would then be determining the trend they wish the parties to follow. Is this too much for British politicians to contemplate?"

That was a rhetorical question.

STV multi-member constituencies averaging four or five MPs (for four-fifths or five-sixths PR) would be (3) "broadly proportional." Yet most would be smaller in area than the Commons historic shires.

Andrew Mackay (from London, letter to The Independent, 31 Oct. 1998) said: The "historic" link between the MP and the constituents exists only in the minds of MPs elected under the current system.

As Winston Churchill said best of (4) "MPs' links to constituencies": I would rather be one-fifth of the Members for the whole of Leeds than one Member for a fifth of Leeds.

A few self-contained sparsely populated UK areas (notably Orkney and Shetlands and the Western Isles) might want their own single member constituencies and parts of the Highlands perhaps only double member constituencies. (Tho, an Irish referendum, that kept STV, voted against single members even in their least inhabited areas.)

There was never any need for the Voting Commission to juggle its four terms of reference against each other. They complement each other as guidelines for democratic voting. The letter from Vernon Bogdanor (see vol. II of the Commission report, "Key Evidence." The Stationary Office.) is perhaps the best summary case, but by no means the only important case, that the terms of reference are best fulfilled by STV.

To get the terms of reference at odds, the Commission invented a system that got the basics of voting method at odds.

(2) Consequences of the Jenkins Commission wrecking reform of the logic of choice.

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Like all Additional Member Systems (AMS), the Voting Commission reform is a case of two wrongs don't make a right. The first part of their mixed system, the Alternative Vote (AV) fails, in using a *many*-member (preference) vote for only *one*-member majority constituencies. Conversely, the second part fails by using a *one*-member vote (with an X) for a *many*-member (proportional) count.

The Alternative Vote (indeed single member systems) Waste First Preferences.

AV ensures most first preferences will not count, as voters monopolised by single members cannot be proportionally or equally represented. Whereas, the single transferable vote ensures most first preferences do count. Candidates elected, with more votes than the

quota or required proportion, have that surplus vote preferentially transferred. This will help elect the first preferences of other voters in a multi-member constituency.

These surplus votes, from the most popular candidates, helping to elect other voters first preferences may be called "the best votes for the best candidates." This is in logical contrast to Churchills description of AV as "the worst votes for the worst candidates." Because, in contrast to STV, the result depends on the re-distribution of votes for candidates with least first preferences.

In a single member constituency, there can be only one winner. There may be little more than chance in which candidates have the second or third most first preferences.

As Lord Alexander examples, in his note to the Jenkins report: if a Liberal comes third, his re-distributed votes second preferences could help elect a Conservative. If Labour came third, those voters second preferences could help elect the Liberal.

Alexander wanting first past the post is a counsel of despair. X-voting, split between several candidates for one seat, minimises the number of first preferences elected. Indeed, unlike AV, you don't even know X-votes are first preferences or tactical votings lesser preferences.

The majority attitude of the Commission was:

"There is nothing morally wrong about either informal tactical voting or the formalisation of alternative choices under AV. In many situations of life a decision has to be made in favour of a second or third best choice and there is no inherent reason why what has often to be applied to jobs, houses, even husbands and wives should be regarded as illegitimate when it comes to voting."

(The Guardian, Oct. 30 1998, p.VII, section: Tactical Voting. References to the Jenkins report are from the Guardian edition of vol.I unless otherwise stated.)

One journalist regarded Jenkins notorious claim as hardly flattering to his wife. Analogies apart, it is certainly morally wrong to make many people do with AV chance results from second or third or lesser preferences, when STV could elect most first preferences.

The Top-Up Vote Counts For Party Oligarchy.

Instead of recommending STV, the Commission would lumber Britain with a two-in-one voting system, to try to partly correct the disproportionate AV. An X-vote is given for a choice of party lists, or mini-lists, in this case. The "party votes" are counted for the parties proportional share of seats. Party list systems give the exclusive right, to any proportional representation, to parties. PR becomes a euphemism for proportional partisanship. It is like saying: All voters are equal but party stalwarts are more equal than others.

Whereas, STV gives all groups and personal attributes in society equal rights to representation for a truly "fair" and stable constitution settlement.

Privilege enshrined in a party-proportional count is a source of endless human rights conflict, weakening society, also faced with serious environmental problems of its own making.

"Flexibility," A Polite Term For Manipulation

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Not only does the Voting Commission system needlessly set the parties against the people, it also sets the parties against each other, by failing to settle the rules of the electoral game.

The Jenkins report is pleased to call the use of different proportions of additional members "flexibility" (p.V, Advantages of a mixed system, first two and last paragraphs) to "strike such a balance as best to reconcile the four terms of reference."

The Commission doesn't explain why each elected institution, using or in prospect of using AMS, has to strike a different balance.

The "admirable" Plant report would say that "executive" bodies need more of majority government to push thru decisions. "Legislative" bodies can be more proportional to reflect the composition of their constituents.

The dogmatic partisan believes that effective government is dictatorial, albeit a dictatorship of the largest faction. Allowing more parties into a body causes a greater conflict of wills that makes less able to act.

This need only be true in so far as such a legislature is a conclave of closed minds. Only then can it be treated as a talking shop to advise

but not have much power. That happens when proportional representation is tacitly reduced to the proportional partisanship of party list systems, which rigidly divide or imprison MPs on party lines. In truth, we and our representatives are individuals with policies more or less in common across the national spectrum of opinion.

The different executive-legislative balance of different elected institutions is a bogus argument of dogmatic partisans but it does serve their outlook of dominate or be dominated, to have an alibi of "flexibility" for manipulating the proportion of additional members, as will best suit a given partys or coalitions prospects of power.

The Commission vacillation between 15% and 20% of parliamentary seats to lend proportion between the parties, may not seem like much, but it is crucial enough to cause quite a political scrum. 5% can mean the difference between 33 small-time politicians getting jobs and 33 incumbents being turfed out. A dent of 66 MPs in a parliamentary majority is likely to be of more than academic interest to party leaders.

In a sound-bite from one Commission member, David Lipsey intimated that one thing they didn't want was perpetual coalition. (Never mind what the public wants.) The voters were to be taken in hand by the nanny state.

The Jenkins report talks of reform "without imposing a coalition habit on the country." The British people are to be saved from themselves - but not saved from being imposed on by Commission devices. The publics bad habit of rarely giving one party a majority of votes would be beaten enough by their system to ensure one party will often enough get a majority of seats, anyway.

And the constitution still would face destabilising power politics between the parties to change the electoral rules to their advantage. The larger parties want less party proportion (which was why the 1966 Grand Alliance was formed in West Germany); the smaller parties want more.

The Jenkins report admits the German additional member system entrenched a small third party in government (p.VI, Proportionality and stable government). Such a small minority can serve as a king-maker in its choice of coalition partner. Instead of avoiding the German system of small minority king-maker, the commission compounds it with the British system of largest minority rule.

The Jenkins report proposes not so much a system as a wavering between larger or smaller minority parties excess power.

Cross-Purposes Top-Up Vote For A Party Or Coalition Partner

Additional member systems, like "Alternative Vote top-up," are too at cross-purposes for voters to clearly prefer a given coalition. Party supporters can't give their party vote to another party, if their own party might need it to get additional members. Thus the top-up vote, as a coalition vote, is the privileged choice of those voters whose party already has an unfairly disproportionate share of safe single member seats in the region.

This privilege is accentuated, the less single member constituencies there are. For, they are then more likely to fall to the largest party. So, the party disproportions increase, even as single members make way for more additional or top-up members to "correct" them. In short, AMS is unstable.

Thus coalition choice with AMS is a more or less small minority privilege, not the democratic choice of coalition, which is supposed to be the point of the exercise (and which STV does give).

"Coalition" Top-Up Vote As Tactical Vote Against Least Liked Partys Proportional Entitlement.

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Having vaunted this privilege of split-party voting, the commission is then at pains to play down how it might be abused. (p.VII, Tactical voting). For example, Labour party strongholds, with no hope of additional members, could vote tactically with their top-up X-vote, for a Liberal Democrat to deny Conservatives party-proportional entitlement to an extra seat in the area. Conversely, Conservative strong-holds could vote for a Liberal to deny Labour a top-up seat.

Minority Party Top-Up Vote As A Wasted Vote

Liberal Democrat voters themselves wouldn't be able to elect their man in 30 of the 78 mainland regions designated by the Jenkins report. (Source: John Curtice, Deputy director of the ESRC Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends, The Independent, 30 Oct. 1998.)

For those Lib Dems, the top-up vote would be a wasted vote. To have an effect on the result, those would-be Lib Dems would have to consider voting Conservative or Labour.

Top-Up Votes For Rival Parties Worst List Candidates (After Sabotage Of American Open Primaries).

Where there were two top-up Liberal candidates or more (and the report recommends an extra to cover a parliamentary vacancy) a strong party in the region, Labour or Conservative voters, could deliberately choose the worst Liberal. So, the main rivals could regionally do each other down as parties, while doing down the personnel of the third party.

Party animosity is not to be underestimated. To damage their opponents, party rivals did their worst in American primaries, till they had to be closed to the general public. (STV over-comes this problem.)

The Commission regarded open lists as essential to fulfill the requirement of extending voter choice. (Role of top-up members p.VI, col. 8, 6th para. from end of section.) But the same motives that forced shut American primaries, will work to effectively close the top-up lists.

This charade, this "AV top-up" mix-up is tactical votings reduction to the absurd.

"Freedom" -- In A Prison Regime

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Party list systems deny all voters the right to choose individual candidates, without that choice being usable, regardless of ones wishes, to elect another candidate, merely because in the same party. Far from extending voter choice, list systems hijack votes for the parties.

Moreover, this prevents individual preference expressing a measure of cross-party unity. List systems are a proportional count only of party divisions. This party-privileged count excludes all other social groups or attributes from equal treatment.

For these reasons -- denial of individual choice, denial of social equality, and denial of national unity -- no party list system, additional or otherwise, should be used in a democracy.

Perhaps to counter-act this standard criticism, the section on the role of top-up members, states that it offers "freedom" - three times in the last five paragraphs, so we may be duly impressed.

This "freedom" is explained in terms of "two rights; first to bolt the party ticket completely with his or her second vote" for (fourth mention of *freedom*) "freeing the voter from the prison of having to suffer an unwanted candidate for the constituency in order to get a desired government."

"Second...that the voter should be able to discriminate between the candidates put forward for the list by the party for which he or she wishes to cast the second vote."

The commission would have us believe freedom to be parole and probation from a prison regime:

The second vote for a coalition partner puts voters on *parole* not to tactically outweigh their most disliked partys proportional entitlement to a top-up MP. But a promise of good voting behavior cannot be guaranteed by a badly behaved system that makes "offenders" of the voters.

The commission gives the so-called right to choose between candidates on a party mini-list, so party voters don't have to put up with an MP they don't approve of. But this *probation* system is phoney, because list systems cannot *prove* the vote you give to a party candidate will not go to elect another in the same party.

In fact, the vote for a party ("to bolt the party ticket") assumes your individual choice may be disregarded, imprisoning the voters in party cells. The right to individual freedom does not deny partisan voting. But counting everyone a party voter denies individual freedom.

Expedience Over Principle

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Ian Campbell (of Dyfed, in a 31 Oct. 1998 letter to The Independent) said:

If this report is adopted we face a future of more of the same, but made more confused and chaotic by compromise and cowardice. Lord Jenkins is far too clever and not at all wise.

Another correspondent said, previously:

"It will be particularly interesting to watch the ingenuities of the politicians in the new Parliament in producing schemes that will look like electoral reform and yet leave the profession still active for mischief. They will fight desperately against large constituencies with numerous members. The one member or two-member constituency is absolutely necessary to their party system. In such constituencies even proportional representation can be reduced to a farce.

And also they will offer cheap but attractive substitutes like the second ballot and the alternative vote. And they will fake extraordinary arrangements by which the voter will vote not for an individual but for a ticket or bunch, and they will call these fakes this or that improved variety of "proportional representation."

All the political parties in Britain are at present trying to work out the probable effects of this or that fake or cheap substitute for electoral honesty, upon the party prospects. In this matter the Labour Party is as bad as any other party - or worse.

The discussion of electoral legislation in ... Parliament throughout the next session, though it may make the angels weep, is certain to afford much entertainment to every mundane observer of human disingenuousness."

Is that quote a prophesy in the letters of The Independent about the Jenkins report?

No, The Westminster Gazette, in 1923, from H G Wells (re-printed in "A Year Of Prophesying").

The commission reform is "a dog's breakfast," to quote the contemporary Tory leader.

The report opened on its job: to recommend the best alternative "system or combination of systems." But, at the report launch, the chairman said, he made no bones about it, that the commission was influenced by what system they thought could be passed.

That isn't the role of an independent commission, which was to serve truth not power.

While the report pretends to search for the best reform, it was really working under an enfeebling secret agenda of pre-conceived notions about what was acceptable to the powers that be. This was sanctioned neither by the government terms nor by public opinion.

By not being open or honest in their report about what systems the commission thought parliament (or people) would or would not accept, the report has effectively conspired against principle for expedience.

[These last two paragraphs were truer than I knew, as the post-script discusses.]

Hence, their arguments -- feeble in the extreme -- against the original system of proportional representation, the single transferable vote. These are discussed next.

(3) The Jenkins Commission case against the single transferable vote.

Politician and historian Roy Jenkins 30,000 word report has an introduction one journalist described as "delightful" but "irrelevant."

Not till over half way thru, do we come to the two decisive sections that reject STV. As the document says (in the succeeding section on the case for a mixed system) "If we do not go in an STV direction the alternative must be a variant of the Additional Member System."

So, let us examine the commission arguments to eliminate STV:

Constituencies "too big" for representation in Britain -- but not America!

The Jenkins report repeats the Plant report that British STV multi-member constituencies would be too big at four or five times the size of Irish STV constituencies. (Australia is later dismissed for comparison as being "barely a quarter" of Britains population.) But STV, in Britain, would average four or five member constituencies that were no bigger than American, or Indian, single member constituencies. Therefore, the Plant and Jenkins reports imply representative democracy impossible in countries bigger than Britain.

This foremost argument against STV is clearly irrational prejudice. Indeed, if this nonsense were taken seriously, democracy would be ruled out on any considerable scale. Therefore, it is the Plant and Jenkins reports which must be rejected, instead.

The reports level of argument does not improve.

STV Ballot Paper "Too Long" For Britain -- But Not Ireland!

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The commission goes on that STV constituencies of 350,000 electors would have a very long ballot paper and a degree of choice "that might be deemed oppressive rather than liberating."

In fact, the more choices voters enter, the marginally more proportional the result -- freedom and equality really do go together. Not thinking so, the commissions own system is rather short on both.

The political prudes on the commission reverse STV electoral license with a vengeance. Their systems second vote (with an X) gives one choice for one (or less often two) party seats over a typical eight (up to twelve) member constituency area.

Whereas their combined systems first part confines a preference vote to single member constituencies, where its ordered choice for many members cannot take effect.

These monopolies are oppressive rather than liberating. There are British safe seats held by one party longer than the Communists monopolised their Soviet empire. It's time this electoral wheel was for turning.

Moreover, preference voters do not have to number-order all the candidates, only as many as are preferred. It is for the voters to decide -- not the Jenkins commission to presume -- how many candidates deserve a ranking.

The report adds: "many are interested only in voting for parties, and would not appreciate being forced into choosing between candidates of the same party about each of whom they know little." -- Roy Jenkins and Michael Foot, for instance.

It misrepresents STV that alleged knee-jerk partisans have to choose, where there is such a choice. They need only prefer candidates with their party label, as few or as many as they like.

We don't have to accept the contradiction in terms that people have to be "forced" into freedom of choice, nor does STV do so.

Reducing Spoilt Papers

The report vaguely says the Irish "have a somewhat but not vastly higher proportion of spoilt papers than in Britain."

From this it may be gathered that the figures are not high.

In 1998, the Irish government decided to use photos for candidates, to help voters with literacy problems.

Leo Amery introduced STV to Malta, in 1923, with 90% illiteracy.

The 1998 Human Development report estimated more than 20% of British people functionally illiterate.

The Irish have to learn perhaps the two most irrationally (speech-)spelt languages in the world: English and Gaelic. (A rational English alphabet for shorthand purposes is also a democratic cause.)

Increasing PR And Turn-out

The report self-caricatures its bias in writing of "the Irish tradition of almost excessively high voting." And seizes on recent Irish turn-out being slightly lower than Britains.

(After-note 2002: In 2001, the UK general election turn-out fell from 71% to 59%.)

In Ireland, over the decades, the number of members per constituency has been whittled down, by the largest party to get more than its fair share of seats. This would also tend to shut out voters not in the political mainstream. A new party may do well for a while. But that doesn't address the problem of giving marginal interests a chance of representation, in only three or four seats constituencies. Going back to more proportional representation, with more seats per constituency might encourage the extra votes that would make up very high turnouts.

What They Don't Tell You About "Complicated" Counts

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The Jenkins report makes stock complaint, never justified, that the STV count is "excessively complicated." Not a shred of evidence, only innuendo, follows from the two paragraphs beginning "The counting is incontestably opaque ..."

The single transferable vote is counted by the Droop quota, which simply extends single majorities of over half the votes, to multi-majorities: two members winning over one-third the votes each; three members winning over one-quarter the votes each, and so on.

Compare that explanation with any of the innumerable "divisor" counts used in party list systems -- or worse still, additional list systems -- with their genius for division. (Even the Droop quota becomes "opaque" when used for party list counting.)

Compare the Droop quota count, above, as used for transferable voting, with, for instance, the Jenkins reports truly "opaque" explanation of their party-proportional count. (The Guardian pull-out: Advantages of a mixed system. p.V, col.8.)

Of course, what critics of STV complexity are getting at is that the proportional count is complicated by the ("Senatorial") rules of transferable voting to elect candidates in the popular order. It is so much simpler to leave a few party bosses to order the candidates election, than let forty-odd million voters do it for them.

As soon as you try to make list systems less oligarchic, by allowing the voters an element of individual choice, or move from closed lists to open lists, they produce anomalous results, from their lack of principle (namely, lack of freely transferable voting).

Such are the double standards in counting that unfairly favor oligarchy to democracy.

A Different System Only Becomes A Disadvantage When it's STV

Next, the report claims "STV suffers from the accidental disadvantage that it is a different system" except in Northern Ireland, where used for three levels of government - which is more than the commissions "AV top-up" will ever be used for. Even the inventors of this hybrid system would have to admit it is of limited use.

The Jenkins commission must subscribe to the Plant committee belief in different systems for different institutions.

Then why should it be a disadvantage at all, in the Plant-Jenkins way of thinking, that STV is a different system? Could this be unfair discrimination?

The espousers of anarchy in electoral method make themselves ridiculous by condemning the transferable voting principle as "too big a leap from that to which we have become used, and it would be a leap in a confusingly different direction from the other electoral changes..." (Conclusion on STV, p.V, col.7.)

(Amusingly, a Guardian caption writer gave the game away, by re-writing the Jenkins report as saying: "Why STV is too big a leap *forward.*" My italics.)

With what amounts to self-condemnation for burdening Britain with a new system, the report goes on:

"There is nonetheless an obvious disadvantage to burdening large parts of the voting public with getting used to several new systems within a short time-scale. It is also an odd quirk of STV that it has never been tried in a country which has not within this century been subject to British rule."

All we needed was the Jenkins commission to put right in nine months what it took nearly one and a half centuries of the English-speaking traditions of democratic voting reform to evolve. Quite a put-down for long-term and widespread STV use.

In comparison, how can one dismiss strongly enough the novice AV top-up system?

Now we know what electoral reformers from John Stuart Mill to Enid Lakeman are: "an odd quirk."

So were the likes of John Milton and Daniel Defoe (to name literary figures) "odd quirks" from fashionable absolute monarchies.

The Fashion In Party Absolutism.

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The overwhelming feeling of reform and anti-reform witnesses alike was against more power to party machines. (About the only new evidence to come out of the abstract first of eight pages to the Guardian edition of the report.) The reports air of balanced judgment is belied by the non-sequitur: "it is important not to be carried too far by a fashionable current and to pretend representative democracy can function without parties."

But the commission has followed the fashion of an X-vote absolutely for a party. This may reinforce tribal schisms of class, race, religion or ethnic group, etc, to which outsiders are less than human abstractions, whose individual character counts for nothing.

STV More Popular With Irish Voters Than Politicians

Greater popularity of STV, with Irish voters than politicians, is damned with faint praise, that inflates the Jenkins reports list of "counter-balancing disadvantages." Because, "it is at least possible that the politicians may be better judges of what conduces to effective government."

It is also certainly true that one has the right to reject judgment affected by a conflict of interest. From a prime concern with their careers, "politician" has become a word of abuse.

Democrats don't dispute that the people on top may sometimes know better, which is the irrelevant point the report is making. The question is whether democracy is the best principle, properly applied in the popular system, that really is popular with the people who use it.

STV popularity rather cancels out the criticism that it is too complicated.

Next, come two more self-cancelling arguments, against STV.

Self-Contradictory Criticism Of STV Not As Too Remote But Too Parochial

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The Jenkins report repeats another Plant report complaint. It turns out that STV creates so much competition between MPs within, as well as between, parties that this system "so far from producing remote representatives, produces excessively parochial ones."

The Plant and Jenkins reports try to have it both ways. Jenkins qualifies "The point, for what it is worth," because the self-contradiction obviously refutes the other main complaint that STV multi-member constituencies are too big for MPs to be "linked" to their constituencies (as if they were a sort of ball and chain that must not be too heavy for MPs to drag around).

Irish voters with a grievance apparently have the deplorable trait of trying out all their MPs in turn, "thereby wasting a good deal of the time of ministers, civil servants, TDs, and indeed of the constituents themselves."

On an ITV panel debate, Stuart Bell MP grumbled about multi-member constituents being able to "shop around." He leads Labours first past the post campaign, "implacably opposed" to the commission AV top-up. Yet the single member system is evidently sacred to both groups, and its removal not a referendum option.

Next time you decide to shop around, don't forget you are wasting the time of several stores shop-keepers, as well as their managers and clerical staff, and indeed your own.

But shop-keepers have been known to ask customers, have they tried somewhere else, if they cant give satisfaction. Some other MP might be more of a specialist, in the constituents problem, or more sympathetic. Roy Jenkins later admits half his MP work came from the rest of the city, his constituency was in.

STV Irish MPs, the report leads us to believe, are really only good for council work, rather than the job of statesmen. Strange then that such statesmen never recommend STV for British council elections. Shopping around might just catch on, and then, heaven knows, even British MPs might have to waste their time being severally lobbied by the ordinary man, as well as by organisations paying "consultation fees" or for a job on the board.

Talking of wasted time between rulers and ruled, Circumlocution Office Barnacles and political Steerforths have been stalling, for over eighty years and counting, against democratic voting method, to keep their party career monopolies in single members and now corporate lists. The British ship of state is a constitutional tub against the political, economic and ecological storms that surely must visit all parts of the world.

That monopolies become virtues, when political ones of single members or lists, is special pleading. Electoral reform is like a re-run of Adam Smith economic reform by free competition of self-interest, lifting state monopolies on trade. Complementing The Wealth Of Nations, The Theory Of The Moral Sentiments dealt with sympathy as the well-spring of human motives.

Likewise, the truly democratic voting system represents unity in diversity -- individual preference expressing a proportional measure of common ground by freely transferable voting.

Making a straw man of the First Speakers Conference

When the Voting Commission speaks of "these disadvantages of varying orders of seriousness" to STV, they failed to make a single decent objection. But they made free with irrational prejudice, presumption, misrepresentation, contradiction in terms, innuendo, double standards, unfair discrimination, unconscious self-caricature and self-condemnation, damning with faint praise, irrelevance, trying to have it both ways and special pleading.

The section, STV as part of a hybrid system, makes a straw man of the fact that the 1917 Speakers Conference recommendation, all agreed, for STV, didn't extend to the country and boroughs with less than three seats. Generally, STV use is not so limited, which would have been to the point.

Harking back, to this partial STV system, served as a tactical ruse to side-line the admittedly compelling case witnesses made for natural borough boundaries.

To a lesser extent, this case could have been made for the shires, the other historic Commons constituencies.

For, the country does not starkly divide into rural and urban. Rather, demographic statistics follow a roughly normal (or binomial) distribution. On an average of 4 or 5 seats per constituency, the spread would taper off to the odd 8-member urban constituency, on the one hand, to the odd rural area with one seat.

This is what STV reformers propose, a simple amendment to the great Speakers Conference of 1916, working in the midst of the carnage of world war one.

Most of the smallest constituencies, in rural areas, would have at least three members. Rural Labour minorities should have a good chance of picking up one of these, and so not be discriminated against. This removes the Jenkins reports supposed reason against STV -- meaning STV as proposed in 1917.

The Jenkins Commission objection to STV may be likened to a qualified applicant being sorrowfully rejected on the grounds that his great grandfather was not quite suitable for the job.

Because population distribution is not uniform, the single member system is largely an arbitrary measure, inherently a lack of system. Different boundaries easily change majorities making constituencies subject to destabilizing political pressures.

The report admits the single member system "tendency to develop long periods of systemic bias against one or other of the two main parties."-- to say nothing of others. But it speaks not of removing, only "the need to address this bias." (The defects of FPTP, p.II last col. Also, Number of top up members, P.VII, top of col.7.)

How then is the democratic cause to seek genuine redress, not offered by the biased defenders of a biased system?

Conclusion On The Jenkins Report

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Supporters of Additional Members Systems, like Alternative Vote Top-up, confound principles, when (more or less) sharing between parties is counted to affirm a partisan monopoly on representation. This inconsistency affords no basis for agreement and settlement between all groups of society, or even between parties themselves.

The Commission sets an amoral (and rather vague) marker for a new status quo to be entrenched in the Constitution as a defense for one bias of power against others - not a clear establishment of (democratic) principle. It prepares for a referendum between two kinds of the same wrong: monopolist exclusion of representation, by the single member system, on its own, or combined with equally oligarchic party lists.

Postscript (dec. 2009): Behind the scenes.

When I wrote this critique of the Jenkins report, a decade ago, I was innocent of what went on behind the scenes. A few hints, I recently picked-up, enable me to make sense of pieces of the puzzle that didnt fit. So, I can give the reader a better idea now of what actually went on behind the scenes to decide the Jenkins report.

I dont claim to have got it just so, but I can make some of the pieces to the puzzle fit better. Eventually, maybe more will be revealed by insiders. (I did not know of The Ashdown Diaries, 1997 -1999, on which revelations Ive written in this books companion volume: Peace-making power-sharing.)

Roy Jenkins had already taken part in a Commission held by the Liberal-SDP Alliance, when Jenkins was its leader. And that Commission recommended the Single Transferable Vote, apparently with his approval.

I must admit, I rather discounted Jenkins claim in his 1998 report that he regreted a version of STV was not used. I thought that he was making excuses, because, his straw man, the specific proposals of the 1916 Speakers Conference are not advocated today.

I have since heard reliable rumors (what British newspapers tactfully call "a source" - actually from the STV-voting email group) that the Jenkins Commission came up with a proposal recognisably like STV/PR. I gather that it is routine for official commissions to sound the government on what they think of their proposals.

The man responsible for setting-up the Independent Commission on Voting Methods was the PM, Tony Blair. And he (a two-party Parliaments closed shop steward) allegedly made it plain that an STV recommendation would go on the top shelf, meaning it would never

be seen again.

There is good reason to believe this rumor. When Blair first came to power, he dictated that the Closed List be used for British Euro-elections, where voters only have a choice of party and not of individual Representatives. Whereas the logical choice would have been to extend STV from Ulster Euro-elections to the rest of the UK. The Closed List would not work in Ulster: it would have split the nationalist vote and deprived them of a proportional representation of one of the three seats. So why not give all the people the benefit of STV "effective voting" (so-called by the pioneer Australian electoral reformer, Catherine Helen Spence)? The new Labour government made an unprincipled decision.

Moreover, a Guardian reader told me just before the Jenkins report came out, that the newspaper reported that Tony Blair said he didn't like the single transferable vote.

There may have been a hint from the first sentence Blair spoke, in his first Labour party conference speech as Prime Minister. I cannot remember the exact words but it was to the effect that all that was needed was a cross on the ballot paper to change the government. I gathered that Blair was hinting to his voting commission that he was not anxious to have a transferable vote.

I am not making a personal case against Blair. He was evidently the creature of a Labour party that was so singularly opposed to STV in its Plant report.

Another straw in the wind, was the curious remark Jenkins made about Blair, after the report was made public. It was the back-handed compliment that Blair was a second-rate intellect but that was better than having a first-rate intellect who was personably deficient, an apparent reference to Gordon Brown.

Those were early days of New Labour, when most people were still impressed by their final electoral triumph and over-rated its leaders accordingly. Jenkins admitted that he should have known better, after all this time, not to make remarks, so easily misconstrued.

If Blair really rejected Jenkins support for STV, one can see why he should judge him as a second-rate intellect - a judgment which would now be regarded as a common-place.

I am not concerned with how well Blair was mentally endowed, only with why Jenkins should be driven to make the remark.

One could understand Jenkins frustration at being made to look a fool, by having to advocate such an inferior substitute, to STV, as AV Plus, all because that "second-rate intellect" Blair gave him little alternative, if he was to have any reform at all.

If we are to apportion blame, Jenkins must take his share of it. Blair hailed Jenkins as a political hero - he wanted SDP voters back to Labour. And they were no doubt chummy. Jenkins went with a will into putting a good construction on his report recommendation - far beyond what could be justified.

Then came the reckoning, the dissatisfaction and antipathy in general and the rejection by the Labour party, in particular. So, all his compromising was for nothing, indeed was worse than useless, as the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a principled case for reform with STV was wasted.

In his last article, Roy Jenkins said that the only politician he ever loved was Hugh Gaitskell. Thus, a parting lovers slap in the face of an unfaithful partner, his political fellows. The slap would have less sting, if Jenkins had been a less genial character.

Gaitskell is best remembered for reversing his party conference resolution of unilateral disarmament, with the cry: I will fight, fight and fight again to save the party I love.

I have never come across any reflection on the oddity of this remark, in which a party leader forgets he is first a patriot. This amnesia now looks like a dementia of the two-party system.

By 2009, the unpopularity of the Labour government revived calls, at Cabinet level, for the Jenkins report to be implemented. But Gordon Brown's Party Conference speech offered, instead, the Alternative Vote (another broken voting system) if they won the 2010 general election.

Few believe that: that they could win. And whether they would do, as they say, is anybody's guess.

This 2009 renewal of the call, for the Alternative Vote Plus, confirmed the disbelief that it could be put to a referendum without undermining confidence in its supporters' competence. The best, they could hope-for, would be to sneak it in, in stages.

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The Kerley report on Scottish local democracy

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Proportion.

Professional status of councillors (and other representatives.)

Scottish ministers appointed a working group of ten, chaired by Richard Kerley, on the renewing of local democracy in Scotland. After one years consultation and study, their report came out in june 2000.

Most of their document is concerned with diversely recruiting, adequately paying, and specially training councillors, and giving professional recognition to the qualifications they may gain.

This is as well as the modern technological and administrative support they need, making representation efficient enough to be part-time, and often allow some continuation of private sector employment.

Thus, a term, or few, of being a councillor can enhance, instead of disrupt ones occupational life.

In this way, the Kerley report would reconcile people, seeking public office, to not being guaranteed a political career, because they occupy positions only for a term at a time, on sufferance of the electorate.

All levels of government should adopt the approach of this report, in promoting representatives professional qualifications, not dependent on a life in politics. Politicians should not need to burn their boats, vocationally, and then hold onto power at all costs.

Political careerism has been made possible by voting systems that render ineffective many voters choices of rival candidates. This may give "the political class" a job for life but it also makes the voters role largely redundant.

The working group was asked what voting system would best re-new democracy. The following comments are concerned with this part of their work.

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The Kerley report recommended the single transferable vote (STV) for elections to Scottish councils. There were three dissenting voices in the working group of ten.

Examining the arguments of the dissenters may show how well founded were their objections.

The MSP supported the arguments of the MP, who said:

"I have reached the conclusion that an effective balance cannot be reached between a requirement for proportionality and at the same time maintaining the councillor-ward link."

The third dissenter dissented with the other two, in believing this "balance" could be achieved. But Cllr Daphne Sleight believed that the Additional Member System (AMS) the best PR system to achieve it.

Both the MP, Sandra Osborne, and Cllr Sleight assumed AMS to be more proportional than STV. The latter says:

"unlike STV, the number of seats won by the parties is decided by the percentage of votes they receive. This is what voters expect to happen to their votes."

As to what people expect of a proportional system, perhaps the most revealing sentence in the Kerley report was given incidentally by report dissenter, Osborne:

"We have all seen the public confusion and duplication resulting from the existence of List MSPs alongside Constituency MSPs."

Whereas, the main body of the Kerley report notes that local multi-member constituencies, that STV would need, were used in Scotland before 1975 and are still used in urban England, without noticable problems.

Research showed that the German people largely don't understand the Additional Member System. AMS came about, there, by accident rather than design, and is not a consistent system.

In this respect, the Kerley report thoughtfully explains why additional members don't really complement the single members roles:

"AMS in effect produces two types of member - ward members and wider-area members - and we have some concerns about the implications of this for the political dynamic of the council. In many councils, it would be likely, under AMS, that the ward members would be members of the ruling political party (this party having attracted most votes), while the wider-area members would generally be drawn from the opposition parties. We consider that this polarisation might have two effects: firstly, that it could lead to competition among ward and wider-area councillors that was motivated by political, rather than community, consideration; and, secondly, that it could lead to an inappropriate distribution of responsibilities across the council whereby members of the ruling group, who would be likely to have more significant organisational responsibilities, might also be expected to have the heaviest constituency caseload. The converse would be that the wider-area members would be less able to represent their constituents because the link with them would be weaker, and because such members would have a less influential role on the council."

Whatever voters, or even councillors like Sleight, expect may not be what they *want* to happen with their votes. In 1997, the Labour government imposed a party list system for British Euro-elections. This is exactly the kind of list system, where people can only vote for a party, that is used to give smaller parties more seats, as additional members, in the Scottish parliament.

On BBC Panorama, a Labour council leader sounded as if she was apologising, when she said: We don't have much power in the Labour party. She didn't want this proportional system that gave the voters no individual choice of representatives.

It follows that nearly half the Scottish parliament, appointed by the parties as additional members have no claim to be there as representatives of the people. As individuals, List MSPs have no democratic legitimacy, under the additional member system.

Moreover, the party proportional principle does not represent a code of practise. Virtually every use of party list systems has its own arbitrary variations. They cannot decide whether to deny all individual choice - "closed lists" - or allow some secondary (crippled) choice of individual candidates - "open lists."

AMS turns the question, of how proportional the system is to be, into how many additional members should there be. On this, there is every sign of disagreement in Britain and the world.

In 1966, the grand alliance of West Germany's two main parties was formed to get rid of all additional members. Likewise, the complete removal of party lists almost happened in Italy, 1999, but for the 50% turn-out threshold being missed by the narrowest of margins (0.4%).

(Not to mention that France went back on party list systems, once more.)

In New Zealand, the National party found widespread support for holding another referendum: 68% according to an opinion poll, less than two years after the first AMS election in 1993.

AMS was likened to a "tail wags the dog" system: as in the German federal republic, a small party decided the coalition.

(See foot-note 1.)

In 2000, Japan has reduced its additional members from 200 to 180, out of 480 instead of 500 seats. The real reason, it is alleged, was to reduce the influence of the communists, who increased from 2 to 24 seats with AMS.

In Britain, the story is the same. Scotland MSPs amount to nearly half. In the Welsh assembly, they are a third. Whereas, the Jenkins commission could not even make-up its own mind between 15% to 20% of additional or "top-up" MPs.

From party proportionality to self-representation.

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Some direct democrats think self-representation is the only true democracy, not needing corruptible mediation by elected representatives. Such purely direct democrats have a kinship with party-proportional reformers, who really don't believe in representative democracy, either. The elections they advocate are actually referendums on manifestos.

The manifesto is a whole program of legislation, a list of reforms, resembling party lists of candidates, that the voters have to take or leave, as a package. The corporatist mentality of the manifesto prepared the way for the corporatism of party list systems.

List candidates are reduced, from representatives, to party bureaucracies, which come to power, to put the winning manifesto into effect. In the 1970s and '80s, the British Labour party had this idea of "party democracy," to reduce Labour representatives to delegates of left-wing party conference manifesto decisions.

Purely direct democracy wouldn't be all that different. In removing representatives, that leaves officials, or the unelected, to implement referendums or initiatives.

Proportional partisanship, carried to its ultimate, is the direct democracy of self-representation, in which everyone is their own partisan. The more dogmatic supporters, of both, would have us believe they make representative democracy redundant.

Mirabeau said that representation was like a map of the whole nation.

The logician Charles Dodgson (children's author Lewis Carroll) pointed out that road maps may be drawn to different scales. All the roads on the map may be one-thousandth the length of the real roads. Or, the scale of the map might be one-hundredth or one-tenth the size of the roadways.

Ultimately, the scale might be one-oneth. In other words, the actual road system is a map of itself. Just like a scaled-down map, the country has its towns and roads named, with measured distances. The nature of the terrain, kinds of bridges, or whatever may also be shown on road signs, just as on maps.

Maps go out of date. They can be badly measured or drawn up. Much the same can be said about legislation. But that is not an argument for abolishing the legislators. A belief, purely in direct democracy, as distinct from representative democracy, is like holding that the map of itself is best, and the country doesn't need (scaled-down) maps.

Actually, self-representation, or direct democracy, and representative democracy complement each other. Whereas, partisan elections, using a list count, exclude representation, representative elections do not exclude partisanship.

Proportional partisanship, ultimately everyone a partisan of oneself, measures, like maps, to different scales. Partisanship is a matter of degree. The partisans of established parties assume there is only one scale of political map, in which the only features of importance are themselves. The country may change or need to be changed but they only see their out-dated and unreliable plan of it.

Proportional partisanship in principle.

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With AMS, the party proportional principle is shown to be arbitrary in practise, as it can also be shown to be, as a principle.

The assumption that you can have some purely proportional system, that perfectly represents the support for each group in society, is an illusion. The more seats there are to share out between parties, the easier it becomes for more and more differentiated groups, or distinct new parties, to take them.

The size of Scottish councils was one of the remits for the Kerley committee. There is no incontrovertible number of parties. Proportional partisanship irrationally assumes an absolute loyalty of the voters to an essentially accidental number of parties, contingent on the number of seats.

Labour's right and left wings have each in turn tried to capture the party for themselves, with this kind of intolerance. (To say nothing of the Tories becoming a right wing ghetto.)

The logic of party proportionality is that ultimately everyone becomes an individual party representing themselves. You might describe *that* as 100% proportionality.

Party proportional systems give "PR" between a given number of parties, depending on how many seats are up for grabs. The share-out of seats between this arbitrary number of parties can be made almost exactly in proportion to votes, made to count for parties, rather than individuals.

But it depends on the dogma of the X-vote as an all-or-nothing choice between party lines. Whereas, the preference vote also allows the expression of degrees of loyalty. After all, in the House of Commons, the government benches are faced by the "*loyal* opposition."

Party list systems, as purely proportional as you want to make them, are an authoritarian presumption. They achieve their result by assigning the public a vote, in which the choice is already made for them, as a vote for a party. This is whether or not they are allowed to place that vote by an individual candidate.

The proportional count in party list systems, including lists of additional members, is achieved by divisor methods, such as the d'Hondt rule. Many other divisor rules are used, or proposed, mainly to affect the election in favor of large parties, or small parties, or neither. But there is no agreement on a single divisor method for all party list systems. Indeed, none of them afford an intuitive understanding of proportional counting.

The single transferable vote, often lumped with list systems as "PR," is completely different. In contrast, STV has an agreed method of proportional count, the Droop quota. And it is an intuitive rationalisation of simple majority counting.

It's been suggested that the Hare quota be used, instead of the Droop quota, for STV, assuming this would give 100% PR. But for true elections, this is not possible. In the first place, the Droop quota requires over half the votes to be won for election to a single seat. (The Droop quota, essentially, is total votes, divided by number of seats plus one.)

The Hare quota requires *all* the votes to be won by some candidate to take a single member constituency. (The Hare quota is simply the total votes divided by the number of seats.) That only happened in the admitted farce of one-party dictatorships.

In a two-member constituency, the Hare quota still makes it very difficult for the voters to choose-out or elect candidates. Because, two candidates would each need half of the votes to take both seats.

With the Droop quota, two candidates only need just over a third the votes each, to be clearly preferred by the voters to any other candidates.

Thus, the Droop quota allows democratic preference that the Hare quota may be too high for.

And this is the key to the democratic objection to divisor methods used by party lists. They are concerned with the delusion of an absolute equality, or ideal proportionality, between a contingent number of parties. They exclude the voters freedom to prefer candidates. Tho, choosing-out must leave out a marginal proportion of voters, for the least preferred candidates, unrepresented.

[In recent years, this author has recommended a compromise of the Hare and Droop quotas, for STV, a harmonic mean quota of those respective maximum and minimum quotas.]

The Kerley report recommends STV with an average of 4 seats per constituency for Scottish councils. This means a PR of 80%, based on popular preference. This is not some proportional partisanship, unscientifically presumed on the whole electorate, that allows a coterie of parties to share out seats between them, accordingly, and still called "PR" because it sounds better.

Democracy is about freedom, as well as equality. And the failure of party proportional methods, to realise this in practise, is the source of the trouble with party list systems and their hybrids.

Parties, as the report points out, are only a small proportion of the population. And an elitist conception of politics is at odds with the report remit to make local government relevant to the widest cross-section of the community.

Representation.

The councillor-ward link.

The Kerley committee terms don't mention the need to reconcile freedom with equality. However, Sandra Osborne MP takes STV to task in terms of an alleged dilemma between the councillor-ward link and proportionality:

"I reach the same conclusion as the other members of the Group on the outcomes of STV i.e. with smaller multi member wards some form of councillor-ward link is maintained but they fail to deliver proportionality while larger multi member wards come closer to achieving proportionality but the councillor-ward link is lost."

This does not do justice to the majority view in the Kerley report, quoting the McIntosh report:

"Nevertheless we think there could also be advantages which could more than compensate, and would be in the interests of constituents themselves. If each ward is represented not by one councillor but by several there is a better chance that the various members will themselves represent the spectrum of opinion within the ward - that after all is the purpose of the system - and a better chance that any constituent will be able to make contact with at least one member with whom they feel sympathy and confidence. From this point of view, the multi-member ward can be considered to be an improvement in representation for individual constituents."

As the Kerley report says:

"The overarching purpose of the group has been to consider the renewal of local democracy. Democracy, by its very definition, is a matter that involves the whole population. We are concerned that a significant proportion of the population appears to take little part in the democratic process. Although voting in local elections is not the only way for people to engage in the democratic process, it is of concern that fewer than 6 in 10 electors voted in the local elections in May 1999. We believe that local government is of real importance to the Scottish people and we believe that there is an important job to be done in building connections between the people and the council, and in informing people about local democracy."

It is not enough that the "councillor-ward link" should represent only the largest faction. The rest, often a majority, have no *representative* link with a councillor, who monopolises their constituency of interests. In 1999, with less than fifty per cent turn-outs, 12 out of 32 councils were dominated by one party.

In 2003, 72 out of 79 Glasgow councillors were Labour.

The first elected Scottish parliament, with constituencies making way for additional members, would outdo, if possible, exclusive British general elections. For instance, all 10 Glasgow, and all 9 West Scotland constituencies went to Labour. 8 out of 9 Central Scotland constituencies went to Labour, instead of all 9, merely because the constituency Labour party, of Dennis Canavan, wasn't the brand in fashion with the Labour hierarchy. Labour also took 8 out of 9 constituencies in both Lothian and South Scotland. These areas Additional Members were made up from the lists of other parties.

The term "link," in which the dissenting MP, and her MSP supporter mean it, is no more than a euphemism for "monopoly." And, in that sense, Sandra Osborne MP is right in her belief (quoted above) that an "effective balance" cannot be reached between this link and proportionality.

This is simply because single member monopolies cannot be reconciled with multi-member proportions of the vote: hogging cannot be reconciled with sharing.

By the way, the illogical attempt to do this is precisely the fallacy of additional member systems. This inconsistency of AMS only leads to further anomalies or injustices in the systems that are worked-out on this basis.

Moreover, the second time that Japanese general elections used an additional member system, the 63% turn-out was the second lowest in their history - scarcely higher than for Scottish *local* government.

Turn-out cannot be encouraged by safe seats, which remain a feature of Japanese AMS elections, as they always have been of the British system. To quote *The Daily Telegraph* (26 June 2000):

"Many LDP constituencies are virtual fiefdoms, where voters repeatedly re-elect the same MP for his ability to bring public works to the region. When the MP retires, the seat is usually passed to a relative or an aide.

Yuko Obuchi, 26, the daughter of the late prime minister, was yesterday returned with more than 70 per cent of the vote in the rural constituency she inherited from him."

To renew democracy, as the Kerley group positively sets out to do, means that hogging must give way to sharing representation. Tho, the sharing must be genuinely representative, which party lists are not.

The alternative vote.

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Having made the right recommendation of STV, the Kerley report is further to be commended for avoiding any single member constituencies. The report says a range of from 3 to 5 member constituencies would be flexible enough to follow the natural boundaries of most Scottish local communities. And a few 2 member constituencies should not be too large for the most sparse populations. These latter would guarantee a PR of two-thirds. In a single member constituency, even the alternative vote would only guarantee half the constituency represented.

Sandra Osborne MP believes this means AV qualifies highly on "making votes count." But plainly AV qualifies equally highly on *not* making votes count.

It is true that an alternative vote prevents minority candidates winning on a split vote in a single member constituency. But the single member system is not proportionally representative. And the absence of split voting may chance to make the general election result even less proportioal, rather than more proportional. (See Enid Lakeman, 'How Democracies Vote', chapter III.)

In 2001, the Alternative Vote allowed 54% of voters to elect a Member of the House of Representatives. Whereas the quota-preferential method (for all its being strait-jacketed with compulsory voting of all preferences if not voting for a party ticket) allowed 88% of voters to elect a senator.

The British PM, Tony Blair or rather his close ministerial ally Peter Mandelson allegedly support the alternative vote. This Australian form of general elections falls back on a system thought by analysts to bind the splits of the left in Labors favor.

The Jenkins commission wanted the alternative vote, plus an imprecise top-up of the small party bosses candidates. Without that caucus complication, AV is still deeply flawed.

As electoral expert, David Butler pointed out to the Jenkins commission, the alternative vote is arbitrary. Even one voter, changing between two losing candidates (neck and neck), can change which candidates second preferences are re-distributed, and give a disproportionately different complexion to the final result, including a different winner.

Even in quite small Irish multi-member constituencies of three or four seats, some two-thirds of the representatives will be elected by first preferences, and nearly all the rest by second or high preferences. So, it's fair to say that something in the order of twice as many voters will have their first preferences elected, using STV compared to AV.

STV is the more impressive as its first preferences are in relation to a much greater choice of candidates, including of the same parties. Usually, with AV, each candidate has a monopoly of his partys candidature.

Independents.

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Independents are discriminated against, by party list systems, because only party candidates on a list can benefit from votes going to other candidates on that list, indeed to the whole list.

It has been observed that Irish STV elections produce more Independents than the rest of Europe combined.

STV is the only PR system that is fair to independents. Independents can benefit from the transfer of votes, equally with party candidates, because the proportional count is of an order of choice for any candidates in the constituency. STV is democratic choice by a preference vote - not oligarchic choice by party bosses order of candidates on party lists.

Surprisingly, the Kerley committee failed to make this important point, for its remit, which included "fair provision for independents." Had they appreciated this, Cllr Sleigh could not have merely asserted, as she did, without being corrected, that AMS "gives a fairer provision for independents."

Tell that to Tsutsui Nobutaka! (See foot-note 2.)

Dennis Canavan was elected to a single district, as an independent, for the Scottish parliament. But that only shows that AMS gives more scope to independents than a purely party list system would.

It gives rather less scope than a purely single member system. That is because, with AMS, the number of single members have to be reduced to make room for the additional list members. With AMS, the fewer and therefore larger single member constituencies are easier for the largest party to win. Even the next largest party will be hard put to show against the typical result. (This was shown most dramatically in former British single member Euro-elections.) The independent has least chance of all.

Single members, even more so, AMS, with fewer single members, are a most independent-unfriendly system. Successful independents are rare and generally have been already elected MPs deselected by the local caucus. They are really would-be party candidates cum forced independents. With enough publicity and a scandalised electorate, in their favor, and if the seat is safe enough to split their party's vote without letting in another party... well, one can see why these party rebels - much less real independents - rarely succeed, and then usually not for long.

The single member constituency lets the caucus monopolise their party's candidature. Long-standing left-wingers, like Dennis Canavan and Ken Livingstone had every right to be Labour candidates. But right-wing New Labour used AMS to officially exclude Canavan as the one Labour candidate for a single seat.

The public learned Canavan had been shabbily treated. But the deeper moral was that a monopolistic electoral system made it possible, despite the claims that an additional member system is a sharing system, of "PR."

STV could have been used as a primary election for all Londoners to prefer a choice of candidates, including those of the same party, for mayor - and deputy mayor.

The university constituencies, of usually two seats (exceptionally three) elected to the Commons by STV, did foster distinguished independents.

(The independent MP, A P Herbert is referred to, in foot-note 3.)

Conclusion.

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The value of the Kerley report is its positive approach to improving democracy in Scottish local government. The historic distinction of the Kerley report is its recognition that in a genuine democracy, representatives cannot expect to have a job for life. So, ways to qualify councillors for their careers outside, as well as inside, politics are considered.

That bargain amounts to a new social contract, between rulers and ruled, to encourage people of all back-grounds to public service, and giving the voters have an electoral system that actually does elect or "choose-out" the most preferred candidates.

Tho, it is not clear that the Kerley report recommends the single transferable vote for that essential reason.

And the report makes a serious error (paragraph 91) in assuming that all proportional elections are framed with a view to parties and are irrelevant to an election all of independents. Millions of people, using STV, are proportionally represented, in all their preferred social characteristics, on professional bodies, and so forth. And they are generally independent of political parties.

Party list systems, including of additional members, give a monopoly of the proportional count to just one social group, political parties, and a monopoly of the preference vote to the party bosses who draw up the lists (whether or not some "openness" of individual choice is left the voter with the ineffective X-vote for the purpose).

Whereas, STV is the proportional count of preference voting, conducted democratically.

Consequently, the Kerley committee belief (para. 95), that there is little to choose between STV and AMS on fairness to independents, is badly wrong.

The Isle of Man sought electoral reform that would not adversely affect independents. For this reason, David Butler commission recommended STV.

Likewise, putting AMS on a par with STV, for natural boundary-drawing (para. 93), does not stand up. AMS single member constituencies are fewer and larger, than for a purely single member system. But the single-member system part of AMS is still the most inflexible type of constituency system. The smallest unit of constituency is required to fit every conceivable shape and size of natural community.

On the reports own limited reasoning by scale, at this point, the Scottish parliament AMS constituencies must be comparably contentious, for boundary drawing, as single member Commons constituencies.

On the whole, the Kerley report (June 2000) is a competent, innovative and progressive piece of work, in so far as I am competent to so judge it. With regard to electoral method, it is a mix of acute and obtuse understanding.

(Chapter 5 para. 81, on AMS, is one of the most insightful passages, as well as the quotation from the McIntosh report on "Councillor and ward.")

It has taken since the 1973 Royal Commission on the Constitution, chaired by Lord Kilbrandon (another Scot), for a further official report to recommend the democratic voting method.

The worst thing that the Scottish parliament could do would be to put aside the electoral recommendations of the Kerley report, the only sign of sanity (as HG Wells would characterise STV vs the rest) amidst the British mainlands complete chaos of bad voting systems.

Foot-note 1: back-lash against AMS in New Zealand.

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In august 1998, the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mrs Jenny Shipley supported another referendum to question the wisdom of the one in 1993 that backed mixed-member proportional representation with 54% of the vote.

As reported by the London Telegraph: "The voting method, introduced in a general election less than two years ago, has not proved popular. A recent opinion poll showed 68 per cent of electors favoured an early vote to change the system..."

"It is a very important issue," (Mrs Shipley) said. "A lot of New Zealanders are asking, Have we got it right?"

"The 1996 election produced no clear winner. Two months of political horse-trading resulted in the minority New Zealand First Party holding the balance of power. In many voters eyes, New Zealand First, which had won only 13 per cent of the vote, became a tail wagging the National Party dog."

But nothing else was on offer other than a return to first-past-the-post or a supplementary member system. So, it is perhaps not surprising that the discussed change, led by the Speaker, appears to have come to nothing.

Not to mention that the incumbents in parliament owe their presence there to the system they are talking about replacing.

Foot-note 2: some AMS anomalies in Japan.

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Quoting from a 1996 article by Takano Hajime, Insider, Editor-in-Chief.

"The new electoral system, a parallel system of single-seat constituencies and proportional representation...employed...dual candidacy (i.e., registering as a candidate in both types of voting). An example...was how Hosaka Nobuto of the Social Democratic Party got only 13,904 votes in Tokyo District No. 22 and forfeited his election deposit--but still managed to limp into office thanks to proportional representation--while Tsutsui Nobutaka, the loser who got the largest number of votes, with a whopping 103,307 endorsements, just 3,000 less than his Liberal Democratic Party opponent--ended up without a seat in parliament because he was running as an independent."

"Granted, it was a different electoral district, but the inconsistency is too great if a hopeless candidate, who wins only one-tenth as many votes as an unsuccessful candidate, is rewarded with a parliamentary seat. As many as 84 of the 200 proportional representation seats were taken by single-seat constituency losers. Additionally, there were seven districts with three representatives, because two of the losers bounced back thanks to proportional representation..."

(In Germany:) "There is no minimum number of votes candidates must obtain in the constituencies,...In fact, Chancellor Helmut Kohl was once saved through proportional representation during his 15-year incumbency, and Free Democratic Party leader Dietrich Genscher, who long served as Germany's foreign minister, has not once been elected in his constituency..."

Foot-note 3: A P Herbert: STV-elected Independent MP.

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As an MP, AP Herbert reformed English divorce law. One of his books is called *Holy Deadlock*. Among his fifty books, not to mention popular comic operas, is *The Point of Parliament*. (Methuen 1946.) This was originally published in *Punch* as "Not So Silly: A Child's Guide to Parliament."

An appendix re-prints his 1945 address to the electors of Oxford university. He begins by explaining his position as an Independent:

"I stand again as an Independent, supporting our great Prime Minister and his programme in the main, but by no means bound to support him in every particular. I claim to have been a true Independent in the last Parliament, voting according to my judgement on either side, but

not conceiving it to be an Independent's duty to be always 'agin the Government.' I have made many friends among the Liberal and Labour Parties and have been grateful for their support, and proud to work with them, on many occasions..."

"I believe that the Party System is necessary and good, and I honour those who accept its discipline; but I still believe that Independence, here and there, can be practical, honest, and useful, especially in a University Member."

In a long and detailed address, unlike the advertising fliers that candidates substitute for such, nowadays, Herbert ends his policy positions, so:

"I have supported, and shall again, in the House, Fair Voting, especially the Single Transferable Vote, inexplicably rejected by the two great parties."

In *The Point of Parliament*, Herbert replies to the stock criticisms of STV as PR, pointing out:

"...no one wants to have in this country some of the queer arrangements they have on the Continent - the Second Ballot, for example, or the 'List System.' They are so bad that I shall not even attempt to explain them: but they are all called 'P.R.' and help to give the poor dog a bad name.

In 1934, *The Liberal Way*, with an introduction by Ramsay Muir, said:

"The only adequate reform would be what is known as Proportional Representation. But we must avoid the Continental form of Proportional Representation which intensifies instead of qualifying the undue power of political parties."

The policy document went on to explain STV and its benefits.

However, the Liberals cum Liberal Democrats changed to promoting "some form of proportional representation." And this was called "Fair Votes" by the all-party National Campaign for Electoral Reform. But it was not what AP Herbert, the originator of the phrase, meant by fair voting.

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The Sunderland report on Welsh local elections

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Among many useful and some important recommendations.

The new national assembly of Wales began solely under Labour party rule. Shortly after, Labour formed a coalition with the Liberal Democrats. This was made possible by party proportional elections, the Additional Member System (AMS) which shared seats with smaller parties. Under the terms of their partnership, a commission was set up to review the electoral arrangements of local government in Wales.

The nine-member committee was chaired by Professor Eric Sunderland OBE. The Sunderland report was published in July 2002. Like the Kerley report of their sister commission for Scottish local government, the Welsh drew on the McIntosh report conception of democracy, which may have influenced these commissions choice of electoral system.

Beyond the question of the voting method, a complete over-haul of Welsh local electoral arrangements was within the commission remit. Thirty three recommendations were made. All but two, about the best voting method, were passed unanimously by the committee nine. Two members dissented on the voting method.

Most recommendations were the dull but essential details that go into the practical work of politics. The big ideas of politics can be all but submerged without such small thoughts. Routine work does turn up useful facts: many youngsters said they would be more likely to vote by the internet, especially text messaging. Postal voting needed simplifying.

Improving understanding of local government and turn-out at elections centred on all available means of publicity, including making government sessions more open to the public, and better access for disabled voters. Councillors surgery times should be advertised, local papers publish more proceedings. There should be annual reports, question and answer sessions, and provision for formal petitions from the public.

One unanimous recommendation was controversial: lowering the voting age to sixteen. It is a classic case of reason being up against custom. In ancient Rome, fourteen was the age a boy became a man. But that is a rather distant precedent for civilisation. The commission was reduced to mere common sense: you can get married and get a job at sixteen, so why not the vote? Reducing the age for councillors from 21 to 18 was also recommended.

Another important commission recommendation was a freepost facility to encourage more local candidates.

The commission wished to reduce the number of nominations for candidature from ten to two.

Such a change might have to be reviewed against possible abuses of too easy an admission for candidature. Nominations are the democratic alternative to the prejudice in general elections that the possession of money confers virtue. The candidate is put on bail, like a suspected offender, about to be judged by the public. Less than five per cent support loses his deposit.

The commission advocated special leave for public sector workers and awards to private and voluntary organisations helpful to aspiring candidates.

Involvement of all parts of the community in the whole democratic process was a feature of the report.

Perhaps enough indication has been given here that the commission realised a thoro effort must be made to reverse the decline in participation in public policy-making.

Seven voting systems to choose from.

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The Sunderland commission terms of reference gave seven voting systems to consider, including the existing first past the post. Other possible systems were not excluded. Neither the commission nor the public made any other suggestions.

Besides the comprehensive attempts to revive local democracy, another merit of the commission work was the sense it gives of a dialog between the committee and the public.

This contrasts to the Jenkins reports blinkered choice of system (AV Plus) which nobody wanted. The Plant report wanted a system, apparantly favoring its particular party, which nobody wanted, either.

Following the Sunderland reports dialog, one sees that the seven candidates, for Welsh local electoral method, were soon reduced.

Party list systems including Additional Member Systems.

No more than two or three very general statements were made in favor of *party list systems*. No proponents had any practical advice, such as whether the lists would be of candidates for a whole authority. They were unable to say how Independents could be elected on equal terms with party candidates benefiting from their colleagues vote in a party proportional count.

Many people were familiar with their general properties, tho most needed reminding the system was used in Britain for the European elections.

Some pressure groups said list systems encouraged parties to include under-represented sections of society as candidates. The commission gave some weight to this but couldnt refrain from commenting that they might not be put high enough on the list to be elected.

Most public comments were against the safe seats for those high on the lists, which could be used to favour party loyalists over more popular candidates.

The additional member system was probably the most widely understood in Wales of the alternative systems, because already used for the Welsh assembly.

"A few people" favored it for council elections.

The commission itself allowed the conventional wisdom that AMS provided local links and an element of proportion against one-party rule, perhaps with under-represented groups among the additional members.

Opponents of AMS claimed:

"there was confusion and irritation that people who had been unsuccessful in FPTP (first past the post) elections might still win a seat by means of their being highly placed on their party's regional list. The National Assembly experience was said to show that AMS generated bickering between constituency and list members in an area and voters were confused as to whom they should call on for advice and support. It was also argued that many people were confused by the requirement... for voters to cast two votes, and... that they did not understand the relation between the two."

Others regarded additional members as second class. The commission asked how would local authorities benefit from councillors with and without constituency responsibilities.

They also asked when seats were uncontested, would additional votes be lost as well?

It was pointed out that the additional members from party lists had the same disadvantages of a straight party list system. The commission endorsed this view.

"There was little interest shown in AV+" (the alternative vote plus partly proportional party lists). The commission viewed this as a "refinement" of AMS. But it is a refinement that involves "two voting processes," X-voting and ranked voting, which the commission believed "unnecessarily confusing." AV+ fared no better than AMS in debate and it is untried any-where in the world.

Review comments on AMS.

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The usual form of the additional member system is sometimes called the double vote. And the system offers a double safety net for unpopular candidates.

Firstly, there is the safe seat system of single member constituencies, where local party predominance guarantees their nominee a place in parliament. This is actually safer than the straight single member system, because there are fewer and larger single member constituencies, which typically fall even more into the hands of the two largest parties.

Secondly, the party can ensure any reject is "elected" by being put high enough on their party list for additional members.

The best known case of this was when the German Christian Democrat leader, Helmut Kohl was defeated in his constituency but still "elected" from the top of his party list for additional members. Kohl may have been the victim of chance demographic changes that moved supporters out and opponents into a formerly safe constituency.

Of course, to make chance, rather than choice, the ruling factor is to defeat the purpose of an election. This is all the more so, when the chances are loaded by gerrymandering to ensure a seat is safe for a given party. By accident or design, the monopolies of the single member system ensure local chance frustrates popular choice.

This failure to provide a proper test of public opinion is an example of bad system design.

Effective elections is the only fair criterion of voting method. The curious thing is that the Plant report judged voting methods by how they were effective as anything but elections. The report talked of effective government, effective parties, effective this and that, but never effective elections.

German economic resilience, thru the most appalling governments, has been conveniently over-looked in the wish to confer credit on the additional member system as contributing to post-war recovery. Taking the Plant report by its own dubious standards, one could just as blithely assume that AMS did not offer sufficient safe-guard against German government bribery and corruption.

British supporters of this system usually have said that Germanys AMS cannot be bracketed with the straight party list system that Italy had, before its Christian Democrats scandals. There is a prima facie case for saying that both systems similarly failed to make government accountable.

It is understandable that Welsh voters, for the National Assembly, would be confused because AMS simply does not do what it says it does. The "personal" vote, for a candidate in a single member constituency, doesnt serve that purpose. The German Federal Democrat leader Herr Genscher was never elected by his "personal" or "direct" vote but appointed from his party list.

Was he a popular figure or a dud candidate? On this, the system, for all its confusing pretensions, remains silent. Yet this gentleman was deputy leader of the Federal Republic, after the manner of the Vicar of Bray, who "will be Vicar of Bray still," whether the Christian or the Social Democrats were in power.

This is of some moment for British local government now that a cabinet system has been introduced, after the national model.

Majoritarian systems, especially First Past The Post.

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The Supplementary Vote, used for the London Mayor election, but otherwise unfamiliar, failed to generate any interest or support. The commission saw no logical reason for this systems restriction to only two ranked choices, unlike *the Alternative Vote*.

The commission didnt believe it would be equitable to use rural single member constituencies (with the alternative vote) with just urban multi-member constituencies (using the single transferable vote). This would give disproportionate representation to rural Tories against urban Labour, as they quoted from the Jenkins report.

It would be hard to justify changing to either of these two systems since they do not over-come the main weaknesses of the existing *First Past The Post* electoral system. All three systems are majoritarian, which means they do not address two of the main requirements, the commission was asked to consider by its terms of reference: diversity of representation and a large enough opposition for effective scrutiny of the powerful cabinet system introduced into local government.

A statistical profile of Welsh councillors revealed 99% white, 81% male, 59% older than average and 48% retired. Besides this distortionate representation, feebleness of opposition was reflected in Wales high proportion of seats that are not even worth contesting: 208 or 16.4% in 1995, and 211 unopposed out of 1270 councillors in 1999.

Disheartened opposition may also be discerned in a low turn-out at 47%, becoming 41% when proportionally taking into account the uncontested seats.

Reasons given in public for First Past The Post (FPTP) followed conventional lines. Their case was similar to that of the 1977 Select Committee on Euro-elections. That rare occasion, of official apologetics for the single member system, was an attempt to preserve it for all elections on the British mainland. The attempt succeeded until the first Blair government.

FPTP was said to be tried and tested. Such a statement unthinkingly hangs onto current electoral usage or rather abuse. The point is that the continually tried test has consistently failed to produce representative results.

This failure is tacitly admitted in the lauded tradition of winning candidates "representing" (that is patronising) constituents, who didn't vote for them.

The remark that FPTP involves consulting over constituency boundaries gives away the fact that this is a system which is always moving the boundaries (like moving the goal-posts). Boundaries, by definition, should offer a stable identity to communities.

The assertion that FPTP produces "strong and stable government" expresses the belief in a system that gives a monopoly of power to the largest factions.

Politics becomes a sporting contest "first past the post," in which the "winner takes all." This spoils system is a mock battle, in which "victors" subjugate "losers."

The cynical assumption is that people are incapable of reconciling interests, so that there is no other option than a ritualised war of "dominate or be dominated."

Lacking is the critical role of giving due weight, and no more than due weight, to the opposition in advising and warning a ruling interest against over-looking other interests, which altogether go to make up the well-being of the whole community.

First-Past-The-Post supporters have become comfortable in its vices, parading them as virtues.

Comments on the brief dissent for FPTP, by two commission members.

Two, of the nine members of the Sunderland commission, favored First Past The Post in single member constituencies. The dissenting two held that multi-member constituencies were less local and therefore less accountable. The single member system gave "a direct link" between councillors and constituents.

Edward VII said to his Liberal ministry that he was glad they decided against the channel tunnel. He said what we need are personal relationships not physical relationships. "The Peacemaker" fostered cordial relations with France, after the likes of "the Fashoda incident." For better or worse, Britain now has the chunnel. But the old king's principle still applies.

The single member system gives the closest physical relation between councillor and constituents, that electorally precludes much, if not most, of the closest personal relationships.

The McIntosh report, as quoted by the Kerley report, appreciated this point.

The single member is only "the most accountable," in the least accountable system, where there is no other that constituents can turn to. The two dissenters condoned safe seats, which make the representative accountable to his nominating party rather than the public.

All the minority two offer is the promise of parties patronising candidates (their protégés) from minority groups. This is at cross-purposes with the single member system, which is to hand over power to the largest factions.

In other words, it's a sop, not a real change of heart, which would support representative elections.

The commission found one of the three main public attitudes was that safe seats made it impossible to influence the out-come of elections. To the two party loyalists, this was not one of the "issues that really matter to communities," though their citizens think otherwise.

The commission, at least the majority seven, wished "both the diversity of people and their diversity of opinion to be properly reflected in council membership."

The appeal of the commission's minority two for FPTP is to "the overwhelming support" of 19 out of 22 councils and the majority of councillors.

Notice how "overwhelming support" reduces to undefined "majority," as a fiction upon fiction of the winner-takes-all system.

The dissenters evidence gives away a party-centred attitude to public elections. One dissenter was a Tory, the other Labor. The commission heard another of three main public attitudes to be that parties and politicians are all the same. The dissenting two offer an example of "party first," whichever party the politician happens to come from.

The minority two cited the fall in turn-out at Welsh Euro-elections, from 36% in 1994 to 28.1% in 1999, with the introduction of "the most proportional system, the party list system." By this, they mean the most extreme imposition of proportional partisanship. The closed list was vehemently opposed, among those who had even heard of it - no thanks to the parties. Nobody wanted it in the country, just as they didnt, at the Sunderland commission hearings. The closed list was a back-room deal between the Labour and Liberal leadership, for co-operation in the 1997 general election.

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To the commission, opponents of STV said that the constituencies, being of multi-members were too large. This was not an impressive complaint, since over half of Welsh councillors are elected from two- to five-member constituencies.

With an x-vote for each seat, the largest faction tends to take all the seats in a multi-member constituency. FPTP in multi-member constituencies is aggravated distortionate representation. STV in multi-member constituencies gives proportional representation.

Opponents made the ridiculous excuse that STV would cause bickering between members of different parties in the same multi-member constituency. Thus, they showed their preference for members of the same party monopolising the multi-member constituencies, which causes "bickering," alright, from majorities or large minorities of constituents with wasted votes.

Opponents then had the gall to say STV would result in minority administrations.

Six months after Hare system came out, in the mid nineteenth century, J S Mill noted how opponents, of this forerunner of STV, threw the faults of FPTP onto its remedy. Indeed, he used this very example, pointing out that this proportional representation precisely ensures majority rule.

If no one party wins a majority, the most preferred coalition to form a majority can be shown by how voters transfer from one partys candidates to another partys candidates.

Opponents of STV claimed it was not democratic because it would give primacy to second, third and fourth choices. This might be true of the alternative vote or supplementary vote, whereby lower orders of preference count for as much as higher orders, if they come into play.

STV primarily depends on electing the candidates with the most first preferences in multi-member constituencies. An Irish election, reviewed by the Electoral Reform Society, showed first preferences accounted for over two-thirds of the elected candidates. Mostly, high preferences accounted for the rest.

With STV, a voters lower choices cannot count against their higher choices.

The arguments against STV are as benighted as ever.

Sunderland commission majority support for STV.

Seven of the nine on the Sunderland commission believed the moderately sized multi-member constituencies, contemplated for using with STV, would give proportional enough representation against a one-party state.

More or less seats per constituency would flexibly fit every size of community, without torturing their boundaries. Tho the constituencies would be larger, the system would be wholly constituency-based.

The parties would be obliged to field slates of candidates, typical of the social diversity of the multi-member constituency, to gather as many votes as possible from all groups. This is especially as the voters can prefer candidates, in order of choice. And individual candidates can be preferred from candidates of the same, as well as different parties (as the hearings STV supporters said).

Apparently, opponents of STV claimed that a first, second, third etc order of choice, for candidates, would not be understood. The commission regarded this as "an insult" to the voters and themselves.

The commission was aware that STV gives Independents benefit of a proportional count, as well as party candidates. Ten per cent of Irish councillors are Independents.

The commission suspected first past the post, more than STV, favored Independents.

This notion can be dispelled. As the commission itself said, STV treats Independents on an equal basis to party candidates, unlike party

lists.

In may 2002, the Irish parliament, the Dail, elected 14 Independents.

As I discussed in my review of the Kerley report, first past the post effectively abolished Independents for the Commons. STV allowed Independents to be returned from the university constituencies.

Politics should be progressive. So little seems to have been achieved since Mill hoped for representative government. In this respect, I would like to congratulate the Sunderland commission for its substantial contribution.

The cabinet system and local government.

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Local authorities already tend to imitate the government of the day. I remember the "passionate intensity" of Thatcher government for hunting down civil service leaks. (The current Blair government shows this attitude has never really changed. Such governmental energy might have been devoted to worthier ends.) It so happened that some unauthorised information also had been disclosed in an English locality. And sure enough, an imitative local administrative task force was mobilised to leave no stone unturned to find and punish the louse responsible.

The cabinet system is a party-controlled system, whose success as a mode of government may be denied. Successful or not, will local government be conformed to it? Or will the model prove just too much at odds with the desires of local people?

The cabinet system is under-pinned by the doctrine of collective responsibility. John Mackintosh, the author of *The British Cabinet*, cited the example of Lord Melbourne ministry. Melbourne is supposed to have said that whatever we decide about the Corn Laws, let's make sure we do it together.

Mackintosh said the doctrine is not based on morality. It is the expedience of "Dont rock the boat." The cabinet discusses its differences in secret, to hide divisions, and then imposes its outward unanimity on its party thru the whipping system, to maintain a majority vote in parliament for control of government.

When Queen Victoria asked Lord Derby, whether he had the support he needed of the Independents, to win a parliamentary vote, he replied: Ma'am, an Independent is someone who cannot be depended on.

This quip shouldnt lead to a partisan prejudice against Independents as some sort of alien life form. No Victorian member was more independent than John Stuart Mill. No-one more openly told his constituents how individual his views and commitments were. Yet he belonged to a group of Independent Liberals.

The Labour party was originally the Independent Labour party, from assimilation by the Tory and Liberal parties. Besides independent interest groups, like the miners MPs, Labour also had rebels like "the Clydesiders" (including Emmanuel Shinwell, who supported STV).

Likewise in 1945, AP Herbert was an Independent MP. By this time, Independents only survived thru single transferable vote elections from the university constituencies. As his election address states, he generally supported the Conservatives, merely reserving the right to vote according to his conscience, rather than always obey the party whips.

The destruction of independence of thought has lowered MPs prestige and demoralised them. It leaves politics to the place-men, who serve manifesto doctrines, that the electorate has to swallow whole, without the free electoral system to discriminate among individual candidates who support this or that particular policies.

The question is whether a local government cabinet system will repeat the history of the Commons and exterminate Independents, as well as independence of thought, thru party whips.

Who knows?

If local communities want to avoid such subjugation, they will do well to choose the single transferable vote, to encourage the right of representatives to exercise their own judgment, rather than be unquestioning partisans.

Suppressing Independents in government, national or local, issues from a general denying that mature right to independence of mind, asserted by Edmund Burke.

What is more, freedom of thought is the main instrument of progress, achieved so spectacularly in science, and resisted so strenuously by the dangerous anachronisms of the partisans top-down politics.

14 august 2002.

The Arbuthnott report: "putting citizens first" for the Scottish parliament?

The Richard Report on the Welsh Assembly.

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Britains half a dozen undemocratic methods where one democratic method would do.

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Preface

"In Scotland we have a variety of voting systems for each of the four main levels of representation: Europe, Westminster, the national Government and local councils. While most of that will be familiar to Members here, it is the relatively new local council system that I want to bring to their attention and commend to them. It is a system of proportional representation by single transferable vote. It has been relatively well understood by the electorate, with very few spoiled papers. It is already used by some trade unions and pensions funds. It combines an emphasis on the individual candidate and on the political party, a balance that no other system is able to achieve. I want to commend the two parties in the previous Scottish coalition for combining to introduce that excellent system in my country. I hope that it can be extended elsewhere."

*from maiden speech by John Mason (Glasgow East, SNP)
(Quoted from STV Action web-site.)*

The Scottish parliament commission on boundary differences and voting systems was the official body, whose report is here criticised. To decide whether this is a cogent report, how well reasoned are its claims and how well supported by evidence? Mere assertions are merely authoritarian. Even an authority loses credibility if he issues conflicting commands, so his obedient servants do not know whether they are coming or going.

An authority must have principles if he hopes to be followed with some consistency and is not just a monopolist of anarchy. Really, we seek to follow right principles, rather than princes, principals and prime ministers, right or wrong. In particular, has the Arbuthnott commission followed its avowed principle of "putting citizens first"? In this respect comparisons were made with the Richard Report for the Welsh Assembly.

Career boundaries not community boundaries from the single member system and list regions.

The terms of reference of the report, putting boundary differences before voting systems, puts the cart before the horse. It puts the locality of the election before the actual election. This fails to get priorities right. The repeated falsehood of single members having the strongest links to constituents has become conventional wisdom.

The McIntosh and Kerley reports challenged it. The most local system, the single member system, gives the least choice, with representation monopolised by one member from one party.

In 2003, the new Scottish parliament was elected with the Additional Members System, which means to say nothing was done to rectify the erratic single member system.

Labour on just over one-third the votes (35.1%) took nearly two-thirds the seats (46 out of 73). Thus, in compensation, 29.3% of list votes gave Labour 4 out of 56 top-up seats.

The Liberal Democrats won 13 constituency seats on 15.6% votes and 4 top-up seats on 11.8% votes.

Out-voted by the Conservatives, also by the Scottish National Party (SNP), the Lib Dems had one more seat than the combined total of both.

(PRSA Quota Notes.)

Putting first the issue of how to accommodate British and Scottish single member constituencies under-cuts a debate on voting methods that offer more choice.

Thus, the main report starts just about boundary differences, discussed for about 25 pages or a third its length (without the annexes). Westminster's reduced number of Scottish single member constituencies are not "co-terminous" with the single member constituencies of Scotland's parliament - which also has to have regional boundaries for the party list MSPs. Then there are the multi-member local constituencies being created for the use of the single transferable vote. STV is also the method recommended by the Arbuthnott commission for a national Euro-constituency.

STV in multi-member constituencies, for the Scottish parliament, would have removed most of the difficulties with boundaries, which don't need changing as single member boundaries are always in need of re-drawing. With STV, some sense of permanent local identity would become possible. Multi-member constituencies can add or lose a seat in proportion to gains or losses in population. But single member boundaries have become a meaningless tangle of most interest to politicians, seeking safe seats in boundaries drawn and re-drawn round their party's natural local majority. This pre-empts most genuine choice for the voters, saddled with a monopolist of the main local party's candidature.

The single member system is the play-thing of career politicians who get jobs for life in safe seats. It not only cheats the voters of genuine choice, it cheats people of a sense of living in stable and recognisable communities. The monopolistic single member system is the least efficient, most contentious, expensive and time-consuming approach to individual representation.

The Arbuthnott commission found most people didn't care about boundaries. They quoted one opinion from a focus group: "It doesn't mean anything to me...I don't think it matters to us." (3.11).

Well, there is little reason why the issue should matter, because boundaries are designed not (as the commission claims) to put citizens first, as members of recognisable communities, but party place-holding members of parliament.

The commissions faulty re-sale with "open lists" to Scotland parliament.

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Partisan imbalance and role conflict of two types of MSPs.

Moreover, the Scottish parliament additional members second set of regional boundaries serve not the general public but the interests of the smaller parties, who mainly benefit from votes for a party list, without unsettling too much the single party member monopolists.

The Arbuthnott report seems to pose this as an accident of the system that some of the confused voters have got it into their head was its real motive. They suggest the main parties holding most of the constituency seats and the minor parties holding most of the regional list seats may go away. It has not done so in over fifty years in Germany.

No doubt it is better than autocracy and dictatorship but that is not much to sell the democratic tradition of the Scottish people. It is one of the irredeemable flaws in the system. Electoral Reform Society evidence, in the Richard Report, suggests Scottish and Welsh smaller party list members fight a guerrilla campaign to capture the most winnable single seat in their region, controlled by a main party.

And why wouldn't they? Parties in British general elections focus on the 800,000 "golden voters" in the marginal constituencies to determine the nation's government. That is the grasping way parties campaign, by manipulating, to the utmost, unfair systems to their own advantage. If Britain had a fair system, politicians would have to turn their competitive energies to policies, to win power.

Arbuthnott reported this list members stalking, in terms of the constituency members complaint of regional members "cherry picking" issues. In section 5.32, the report makes the revealing remark:

"If the mixed member system is to be effective, clear and positive roles need to be developed for regional and constituency MSPs,..."

This quote tells us not only that the mixed member system is ineffective but that it never was devised on "clear and positive roles," in the first place. It is just an ill-thought-out device to give smaller parties a share of power in parliament, an extension to multi-party oligarchy, without any consideration for democratic first principles.

Also, the Richard Commission found that protocols, to define mixed members roles, dont work well.

If a shop sold you two goods, say a car and a motor-bike, one good and the other faulty, you wouldnt be unduly grateful because one of them does the job it is supposed to, tho the other doesnt. Say, the faulty good was the car. Then say, you'd already had to take the car back because it was malfunctioning and all the servicers did was make a minor adjustment, that by no means solved the problem but left you to limp along for another decade before they would look at it again.

That is only an analogy but it conveys the extent of the sub-standard service to democracy done to the Scottish people by the Arbuthnott commission.

The Arbuthnott report title is: putting citizens first. Actually they have put MSP safe seats first. The commission (with one exception) would retain the additional member system or mixed member system, as they would call it, for the Scottish parliament.

Dual candidacys denial of the right not to elect candidates.

At present, the additional member lists are closed lists, meaning the mixed member system is a doubly safe seat system, running in harness with the monopolistic safe seat system. And that's not all. Dual candidates have to be allowed or small parties would only put their leading candidates on the lists. In nearly all but the most marginal cases, the parties not the voters decide who gets into parliament. The votes are mostly rubber stamps.

The commission says:

"We note that in the 2003 elections, 88% of successful regional MSPs had fought and lost a constituency seat."

Note the term "successful." What's successssful about the list MPs? Theyve succeeded in nothing but get themselves appointed without any personal sanction from the voters. The commission is unconcerned. They quote someone who regards it a democratic right to feather the floor in case candidates fall out of their feather beds.

For (4.60), the commission agrees that it would place *"an unnecessary restriction on the democratic rights of potential candidates, parties and local electors to have as unrestricted a choice as possible in an election."*

"Freedom to be unfree" seems to be the commission moral above.

The issues are the totally restricted choice of closed lists to parties violates free choice of individual candidates. And a single seat monopoly on choice is the greatest restriction on individual choice. The two votes for mixed members are anything but "as unrestricted a choice as possible."

The rights, which the commission claims, are rights to double-speak.

The Richard Commission (chapter 12, sec. 22) states the real democratic issue clearly:

"Candidates use the list as an insurance against failing to win a constituency contest. This dual candidacy can also confuse the electorate, who may wish to consciously reject a particular candidate only to find them elected via the list. It should remain a basic democratic right not to elect a particular candidate."

The Richard Report pointed out the extent of the problem. In 2003, 17 out of 20 candidates who lost first past the post were appointed to the Welsh assembly from party lists.

The report goes on to say (sec. 23): "Adjusting the AMS system would not address this issue."

That sums up the futility of the Arbuthnott commission sop of open lists. With the mixed member system, there is no election worth speaking of. There is no effective choosing out of candidates, only an imposed partisanship.

Arbuthnott simply failed to take seriously the complaints about dual candidacy, because the system wont work at all without it. And they would have been obliged to resort to STV for the Scottish parliament, just as the Richard report recognised was necessary for the Welsh assembly.

The Labour Party thinks that it doesnt matter if you make the Welsh assembly a parliament with legislative and tax-raising powers, without making its members correspondingly accountable to the public.

They are living in a fools paradise of power without responsibility. They are set to repeat the bad reputation of their urban party ghettos in local government, that led to enquiries on standards of public conduct.

The Kerley report for Scottish local elections had the vision of effective elections with proper support for losing candidates thru gaining qualifications while still in office, so they would be able to move on, if necessary, from their political job.

This was a philosophy that could be applied to all levels of government. (The Arbuthnott commission considers it.)

Instead, politicians make hay while the sun shines. Cabinet ranking politicians are abundantly provided for, on corporate boards they may have dealt with, as ministers, or with celebrity deals, after leaving office. And MPs are continuously vilified for abnormal self-awards, as in the Press early in 2006.

The Arbuthnott commission have set the alarm clock for Scotland to wake up in two elections time, to review whether the mixed member system beds down better with open lists instead of closed lists of the parties. Presumably they hope the system will have bedded down enough with the Scottish people that they will go to sleep for the rest of their politicians careers.

The commission wants ineffective "Open lists," leaving officials to be criticised for the actual system.

The Arbuthnott commission have had well over a year to avoid finding out the well-known fact that open lists don't work as a means of individual choice. Ultimately, the X-vote for an open list, as for a closed list, counts only for a party. The party must get its proportion of seats, in the party-proportional count of open, as well as closed, lists. In the process, a candidate on the "open" list could get elected with as few as no votes, none. That is merely because more popular candidates on the list may have won enough votes to carry him on their back into parliament.

The Kerley report on STV for local elections was already going into law. Part of the Arbuthnott voting report remit was to consider the confusion of four different voting systems in Scotland. They reduced the problem from four to three by recommending STV for Scottish Euro-elections.

This was the commission's one positive gesture and it is not a negligible one. Equally, it was the least they could do for Scottish democracy without doing nothing at all. Imagine the storm of protest that would have caused. It's as if the commission decided: let the Scottish MEPs know democracy. They're not our bosses.

Ulster has always used STV for Euro-elections and the commission sensibly opted for it. Sensibly, because here was a tried and tested system. Whereas, the commission could not find a presentable open list system for the mixed member system of the Scottish parliament.

"Open lists" are a mirage of democracy. They sound democratic but when you actually get to where they appear to be, democracy is conspicuous for its absence. The commission took good care not to investigate the mirage.

They have thrown that hot potato to the electoral commission. That is to subordinate democracy to bureaucracy. The officials are left to sort out the mess. The only thing the Arbuthnott commission insisted on was that voters should have the right just to vote for a party, vote for a straight party ticket, as at present with the closed lists.

As ever, the rights of the small minority of deferential partisans, say 14% of the public, were to be preferred, if no-one else's rights were to be respected. The rights of closed minds wouldn't be forgotten in the move from closed lists. But open minds would find "open lists" far from open. The electoral commission was left to the impossible task of making an individual choice work properly with a vote for a party, that is irrespective of individual choice.

The term "open lists" disguises an illogical concept. All the Arbuthnott commission has done about the Scottish parliament voting system is take the cue from the Scottish constitutional convention that the closed lists should become open. They, too, dodged recommending an actual open list system, which would make clear their absurdities in practice. That is what happened with the Regional List proposal, an open list, for the first British Euro-elections.

It is no use the Electoral Reform Society asking the commission to ensure that open lists are open enough. They cannot be, because proportional partisanship is the master they serve, and anything by way of individual representation, a secondary consideration. Without a preference vote, the best the open list can do is elect candidates first past the post on each list. That means there is not proportional representation within the party list, only between parties as groups.

That was the rejected Regional List system. And that was why politicians went afterwards for closed lists in Britain, knowing that the ineffective concession of an open list incorporates the corruption of choice by first past the post, which was the reason for moving to proportional representation in the first place.

The open lists only reveal that party lists may have a party proportional count but they don't do the job of representation properly. Arbuthnott report has raised the "open list" mirage, as a last ditch ploy to avoid democratising the Scottish parliament.

There was no lack of examples of open lists in use. To get the electoral commission to try to invent an open list is an admission of their failure, and a desperate attempt to dodge democratic progress. They hadn't the courage of their convictions to back an actual system in use. An open list recommendation would have left the commission open to criticism of its lack of openness. The commission shirked its job of testing open lists, which would be found wanting.

The commission didn't recognise the great democratic experiment of letting a sample of the people decide for themselves the best voting system. British Columbia government set up a randomly chosen Citizens Assembly on electoral reform. Its members were obliged to

construct working models of the alternative systems, which came down to STV and Mixed Member Proportional, as the Additional Member system is called there.

STV proportional count of the preference vote is very involved. But it is based on the simple principle of letting all the voters elect their representatives in order of choice. As listed in the full Citizens Assembly final report, the citizens found that Mixed Members involved all sorts of arbitrary decisions that were not based on, and could not be resolved by, democratic principle.

Whereas with a preference vote for the proportional count, you might as well have freely transferable voting, allowing the voters to prefer candidates of more than one party. This establishes the peoples preference of coalition, if no one party has majority support. In short, STV is the uniquely democratic method of voters preferring representatives and preferring governments.

The Richard Commission could have brought out this crucial point. (Ive discussed it in other chapters.) By and large, their chapter on electoral arrangements was a refreshingly competent assessment. Ive borrowed some of their observations.

If and when the public get effective elections, it seems they only get them for things like local elections in Scotland, with modest powers. Would the long turned-off voters appreciate how to use STV and realise it was, at last, worth bothering to canvas or research the best candidates to make the world a better place?

The Arbuthnott commission on advantages of STV.

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The commission makes four points (4.34). The first two points are really only about the disadvantages of the mixed member system that STV doesnt have. So, the commissions first two points do not state positive advantages of STV and do not generate discussion of its merits.

These two points are to do with the fatal inconsistencies of two kinds of vote for two kinds of members. (I discuss this, below, in context of the commissions alleged second disadvantage of STV compared with the Mixed Member system.)

The third point as much as says that STV is the most democratic system:

"Of all possible voting systems, the single transferable vote gives the maximum power to individual voters over the choice of their local representatives."

The report gives no explanation why STV gives most power to the voters. For instance, the commission noted (4.68) with concern the number of people selecting MSP candidates for both constituencies and regional lists "has in some cases been very small."

The commission fails to appreciate this is not a concern with STV, because all the people may prefer between several candidates of the same party in a multi-member constituency. STV effects primaries of all the parties, within the general election.

STV is even more comprehensively democratic than this, with regard to effective choice of government, about which, in their next section, the commission gets the wrong end of the stick.

Nor is it explained why democracy is not an over-riding consideration with a commission whose guiding principle is allegedly "putting citizens first." Elsewhere, the report shows what its authors really believe.

Section 2.13 recommends STV for Scottish Euro-elections. It is interesting that they regard the choice as only for a few Scottish MEPs. That is probably the way to look at it. You are only preferring a few representatives, tho from among a large number of candidates. It is the ones that stand out for you, the voter, that matters, whether by party or any other consideration, such as ability, distinction, age, gender, class, occupation, race, ethnic group, religion, paramount issues, whatever.

"The Scotland wide constituency and the small number of members elected make it ideal for widening public choice, enhancing the profile and accountability of MEPs and placing citizens, rather than the political parties, in the lead role."

This quotation gives away the real agenda of the Arbuthnott commission, which is only to put citizens first in advisory or less empowered parliaments or assemblies but retain, if possible, the leading role of the parties for a legislative body like the Scottish parliament.

The leading role of the parties becomes a totalitarian motif, if, as G K Chesterton said, there is really only one party. (That is the Establishment or ruling class.)

Section (4.97) substantiates this impression, where it is said of European elections "a party vote makes less sense" because none of "the parties compete for government office." The commissions oligarchic belief is that parties come first for governmental or powerful parliaments.

In section (4.98), the commission states: "We believe that introducing the single transferable vote to elect them (MEPs) would allow

Scottish voters to select the best team of parliamentarians to represent the country."

Presumably the Arbuthnott commission means "parliamentarians" as distinct from government ministers. But since the latter comes from the former, one has to ask oneself, why the Arbuthnott commission wants the "best team" for Scotland in Europe but not for Scotland in Scotland.

History shows that good leaders have been good parliamentarians. If they cannot lead parliament, they can hardly lead the country. Arbuthnott takes its cue from the Plant reports artificial break-up of integral parliamentary functions, in order to justify two sets of job-protecting dysfunctional voting systems for two sets of parliament, executive and advisory.

The Arbuthnott commission puts parties first in the Scottish parliament and citizens first in local and Euro-elections. Two out of three aint bad, as the song wryly says. Three out of three would have been a lot better, especially as the third is the one that matters most, Scotlands national government. And the Kerley report had already pioneered the STV reform for local elections.

This democratic voting system in Scotland parliament would have sent the Establishment a most unwelcome signal to make the Westminster parliament and all Britain democratic. Also, the current one-party government in the Welsh assembly would have looked, as bad as it is, for having rejected the Sunderland and Richard reports for STV in local and assembly elections.

STV is the only system that works at every level of government. In science, that is evidence that STV is the right system and that the other less functional systems are wrong.

The commission on disadvantages of STV.

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The commission claims more disadvantages than advantages.

1) "Complicated."

Any specialist subject is complicated or it would not be a specialty. Gordon Rattray Taylor instanced how easily scientists can make fools of themselves when they stray from their subjects to pronounce on other areas. A celebrated biologist's latest book was recently criticised in the press for doing just that.

Here we have a microbiologist in the chair, who appears to have performed on himself a head transplant. Like Worzel Gummidge, he has taken off his science head and put on his politics head. That is the effect the Arbuthnott commission achieves with a series of key statements as dogmas:

"Casting votes for candidates in order of preference complicates the act of voting."

The commission typicly does not try to justify the assertion. Actually, a preference vote is more straight-forward than the exigencies of tactical voting forced upon the electorate by First Past The Post. This gives an X-vote which the voter is obliged to decide whether he will use it as a first preference or a second or a third etc, against the probabilities of higher preferences being disenfranchised as "wasted votes."

The ruling parties hadnt the courage of their convictions to give the people an honest choice. That two-party system hypocrisy has been a Labor-Tory campaigning cheat since the 1950s and a long term apathiser of the electorally blackmailed British people. This voting blackmail must be removed before politicians can set a civilised example to their people. It may not be easy to undo that long term bad example to citizenship. Remedies would have to include a wider awareness of democratic method.

The X-vote does not properly enfranchise the voters. They were effectively disenfranchised before many gave up pretending otherwise by still voting. The evidence, Arbuthnott quotes in section 6, talks of "a deep distrust amongst many citizens, particularly the younger ones, of established politics and the relevance of voting."

Voting systems that dont work properly can scarcely be anything but irrelevant. An establishment determined to stay established is bound to provoke "distrust," "disengagement," "disinterest" and "dislike." The Labour party establishment has been doing just that, by vetoing every move to effective voting, most recently from Welsh Sunderland and Richard reports. Whereas, the Arbuthnott commission holds out for safe-seat man in the Scottish parliament.

The commission knows the confusion of voters over "the second vote" for additional members as a second preference. But all it can suggest is re-naming it and "educating" the voters in the systems own confusion, as a bad guide might lead one into a morass.

Both natural man and mathematics refute the criticism of the preference vote.

David Attenborough film "Life On Earth" shows some footage of him as a young man meeting a New Guinea tribe, which had no contact

with the outside world or understanding of other languages.

The film shows the first attempt, of the tribe to communicate, thru their number system. The numbers in order were shown by pointing to an order of positions on the fingers and arm. They were natural preference voters before practicing anything else!

Of course, number conveys order, as in the preference vote, besides ratio, as in a proportional count. That STV alone uses both these essential characteristics of number, ordinal numbers and rational numbers, is the arithmetic explanation of why STV is the only voting system that works properly.

The other voting systems, that lack either order in the vote or proportion in the count, are arithmetically incomplete and, in consequence, grossly misleading and inaccurate.

As the dissenting member of the commission, John Lawrie says, the Scots are going to get used to preference voting for local elections. The commission itself has proposed STV for Scottish Euro-elections, which would only make people more used to it. The commission has not ruled out its eventual use in the Scottish parliament, in which case STV would become the norm.

The commission continues against STV by saying:

"The process by which votes are translated into seats would also be made more complex and lack transparency potentially undermining confidence in the voting system."

John Lawrie says there is no evidence for lack of confidence in STV. And the commission gives none. The Jenkins report was miffed because Irish voters like STV more than the politicians do. STV may be complex but it is false to say that it lacks transparency in either the republic of Ireland or Ulster. Every step and stage of the count is put up on a board, which voters are said to keenly follow.

The complexity of the count is unavoidable if it is to be democratic rather than dictatorial. The difficulty of democracy is worth the effort of sharing power between people instead of concentrating too much power over others. That said, STV is more logical than other systems because it seeks to follow the democratic principle.

Other avowedly democratic systems let oligarchy in by the party back door and end up as so many unjustifiable make-shifts, because one cannot serve two masters.

Finally, the commission are just making excuses against the admittedly democratic system of STV. For example, when the commission chooses open lists (section 4.64), complexity is tolerated and lack of transparency from electronic counting is ignored:

"The Commission acknowledges that open lists might increase the complexity of the ballot paper and complicate the act of voting, but then difficulties should be eradicated once electronic voting is introduced."

Whether the ballot is electronic, or not, makes no difference to the voters understanding of their part in the voting procedure. But an electronic count would completely lack transparency, unless, perhaps, it was programmed to appear on an electronic board analogous to the manual count boards at present used with STV.

Instead of just making an assertion that STV is too complicated, the Richard Commission looked at the evidence. Their statement in chapter 12, section 41, may be taken as definitive:

"One of our members joined a group of observers of the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 26 November 2003. This confirmed that voters have no difficulty in understanding the voting system and the requirement to specify preferences. The system was universally felt to be fair and the counting system enjoyed the confidence of all the parties."

2) Electing a government.

The Arbuthnott report second point against STV is:

"Although it enhances voter choice over the election of individual candidates, the link between an individual's vote and the election of a government is less clear than in a mixed member system."

Again the commission leaves us with a bare assertion. I won't do the commissions work of speculating why they think this is so. I shall just explain why the truth could hardly be more otherwise. It is transferable voting which ensures the voters may choose the preferred majority for a government. It is non-transferable voting which prevents their doing so.

The admitted fact that STV elects the individual candidates in order of choice is precisely what enables voters to elect a government of the preferred candidates from the preferred party or parties.

In Ireland two parties have asked the voters to prefer their candidates on a coalition program, to all intents and purposes the manifesto of one party for government. The respective voters for these two parties may or may not transfer their preferences as asked. The decision, whatever it may be, is the voters. No other system offers the voters individual freedom of choice and their choice of national unity,

according to how they transfer votes beyond party lines, if they wish.

The Eire elections of 2011, felled the coalition of Fianna Fail, with first preferences down from 41.6%, in 2007, to 17.4%, dropping from 71 seats to 20, and the Greens, with first preferences down from 4.7% to 1.8%, losing all 6 seats, as a result of the banking and debt crisis.

The new coalition government was formed by long-standing partners, Fine Gael and Irish Labour, who ask their supporters to transfer later preferences to their partners. They have been estimated, on occasion, to gain as many as six seats by that procedure. As the new Irish premier said, during the Middle East insurgencies, "We have had our revolution."

Other systems offer an X-vote for party divisions. They put party first. Choice of individual representation and choice of government are largely left to the parties. Take *the mixed member system, as a government-forming instrument*, since the commission commends its clarity in this respect.

The mixed system is firstly one X-vote for one of two parties that first past the post obliges non-supporters to tactically vote for. As the Richard Commission points out, this does not suit a country with four main parties. This also disproves the commission claim to be "putting citizens first" because tactical voters are denied their first choices.

Secondly, there is an X-vote for a party. If your party is one of the two big parties and it is the weaker in your region, then your regional vote probably goes to the same party to help them get extra seats in the region. Only if a bigger party of choice has more than its share of single members in the region, so that a regional vote won't help them win more seats, is it worth that voter giving the regional vote to another party. And you cannot be sure that is the case, till the results come in, when it is too late.

A small party supporter, voting for his party regionally, might vote tactically for the preferred of two bigger parties in the single member constituencies. It is not possible to distinguish that kind of vote from a kind of vote, such as the one previously mentioned. That is to say, two X-votes cannot distinguish whether the voter is primarily a supporter of the party given his regional vote or the party given his constituency vote, if they are different.

Logically, the voters have a preference for one candidature to another, so it would be logical for a voting system to allow them to express that. It is not the fault of confused voters, who assumed that a second vote meant a second choice, because that would correspond to the reality of people having first and second choices.

The blame for the confusion is with government that has landed them with a system that doesn't allow ordered choices, though the Additional/Mixed Member System misleadingly appears like the Supplementary Vote, which is a second choice.

(Londoners had to use both systems, one day in 2004, respectively for the Greater London Council and the Mayor, as well as a Euro-elections closed list system. Complication and confusion may go unchecked so long as the voters don't get STV for any or all official elections.)

The mixed member system doesn't allow the definitive expression of first and second choice either of individuals in parliament or parties in government.

And if both votes go to mixed members of the same party, it is also not possible to distinguish whether the voters only voted for one party because they didn't want any coalition or because they couldn't risk voting for a second party, lest it help lose a seat and office to the less liked of the two bigger parties. Yet coalition has proved almost inevitable in a proportional mixed system.

If the mixed member system were giving people what they want, then they would be expressing a desire for coalition in their vote. But the vast majority of them are not, either because the system scarcely allows them to express the coalition they want, or it is giving them coalitions when they don't want them. Either way, the ambiguously mixed member system almost completely fails to translate individual votes to choice of government. The Arbuthnott commission claim is demonstrably false.

The commission preference of the name Mixed Member Proportional, rather than Additional Member System has been justified: it really is a Mixed-up Member system.

The German and New Zealand 2005 general elections:

While it was sitting, the commission only had to look at the evidence before it in the news-papers. The 2005 German elections showed how hopelessly irrelevant, for choosing a government, is the mixed member system of choosing party monopolies and party lists. The government was chosen by the parties themselves. It took a month to decide who would be the new Chancellor and almost three months to form a government.

The mixed member system could give no indication that the public wanted a coalition of the two main parties. Practically no one uses their two votes to vote for both of them. That is about zero support for the supposedly democratic coalition of Germany.

Only a transferable vote could show how much cross-party support there was for the grand alliance by how many voters chose to prefer candidates of both parties.

The Electoral Reform Society web-site, which should know better, defended the German system by accusing those who criticised the 2005 German election result as really criticising the wishes of the people.

Nonsense!

They cannot make the mixed member system immune from criticism by wrapping it up in the flag of democracy. That is after the manner of patriotism being the last refuge of a scoundrel.

The criticism of the mixed system is that it is undemocratic because it lacks a transferable vote to prefer the political spectrum of parliament and of the government.

Also in 2005, New Zealand had a similarly close result between the two main parties. The National party held out a fortnight for all the results, in case they got an extra seat to swing the formation of a government. Tho there was practiclly no change in the NZ multi-party government, it still took a month for it to resume office.

New Zealand adopted the German feature of "overhang." Dont ask. I believe it's to do with small parties getting an extra seat or so on the basis of strong support in the constituencies, despite poor showing on the party lists. (So, an extra seat in parliament was created for the Maori party, to their three single seats.)

That means the system redundantly takes two counts to do the same job, a job of making the public into party hacks, which cannot be justified, anyway, on democratic or scientific grounds. The two totals cannot both be a correct party vote, and beg the question just how partisan the voters are.

Overhang is what statisticians call "spurious accuracy," because the system has already countenanced the inaccuracy that excludes parties below an arbitrary threshold of the votes, that differs from country to country. The "system" is riddled with such futilities.

The East Timor Constituent Assembly has a three per cent threshold. There was no statisticly significant difference between a party that received 3.1% votes and the three disenfranchised parties that received two to three per cent of the votes. 21 parties in all on national lists, 20% the votes wasted.

The two main parties in a proportional system, using the d'Hondt highest average count, were over-represented by nearly 10% and 8.5%.

Scottish and Welsh electoral evidence:

The commission quoted 2003 evidence (4.19) in a crude bar diagram that showed about 46% disagreed or strongly disagreed that parties not voters should decide which of their list candidates should get into the Scottish parliament. About 14% agreed or agreed strongly. About 17% neither agreed or disagreed. Some 23% were unaccounted for.

Even on this less than exemplary statistical research, there's only 14% could be counted as partisans or strong partisans. Yet party lists treat everyone so.

Then you have to take this evidence in conjunction with other sources. If people dont know what the dickens regional lists are all about, that might give a clue to the missing and ambiguous responses. (5.13):

"There was almost no spontaneous mention of regional MSPs and many appeared not to be aware of their existence. Even when prompted, most were unable to describe their role, only one or two interviewees knew that regional MSPs were there to provide proportionality in the Parliament."

This was also evident from Welsh public meetings held by the Richard Commission:

"In preparation for this meeting I held a consultative meeting with 160 senior citizens and I found they had not the slightest idea of what the list member was. I think this is one of the reasons why we have got a low voting turnout. People simply do not understand, it does not work clearly and obviously so that they can understand what their vote does."

Speaker

Public meeting, Merthyr Tydfil.

"PR in its present form is undemocratic, when 20 AMs are elected to the Welsh Assembly without anyone personally voting for them. They get rejected by voters in the constituency then get elected by the back door by the regional top-up list."

Written opinion

Public meeting, Merthyr Tydfil.

"The allocation of regional seats is disproportionate to the votes cast. We see a party who receives the most in the regional vote is left empty-handed, whilst a party that is rejected under the First Past the Post system is rewarded with the greatest number of the regional allocation. This system cannot be a fair and equitable system."

Written opinion

Public meeting, Merthyr Tydfil.

All these public comments came from Merthyr Tydfil because that was where the commission held its meeting after the subject of the electoral system had been covered by the media. It is an apt illustration of the fact that people don't notice things unless they are drawn to their attention. (The Arbuthnott commission has no such excuse for not noticing, because its job was to attend to voting method.)

It also explains public ambiguity towards PR, because most people think that the ambiguity of the Additional Member system is real PR. If they knew about STV, they would be able to judge it on its own merits, as the Citizens Assembly of British Columbia proved.

At meetings, STV was most favored alternative to AMS. As one such speaker from Haverfordwest said: "any list system keeps power within the political parties." The reaction in favor of single member constituencies owes much to the reaction against unaccountable lists, as "PR."

Welsh Liberal Democrat Assembly leader, Mike German accepted the Richard Commission, set up during their partnership in government, by saying:

"Wales needs a Welsh Parliament with primary law-making and tax-varying powers, elected by a fair voting system which allows people, not political parties, to choose their representatives."

The Arbuthnott commission has called for educating voters out of their confusion but the mixed member system is itself an irreparable mass of contradictions. The incompetent Establishment needs educate itself in democracy before it can educate its misled citizens.

The quoted Scots woman who thought regional MSPs were reserves to replace the dead is not more laughable or more wrong than this commission that says it's "putting citizens first" when it's putting place-holders first, since the mixed member system reserves MSP safe seats, so that only death can unseat them. And then indeed some list member might get appointed to a party's safe constituency seat. Just as the good woman said.

The Richard Commission was more positive to the Welsh people than the Arbuthnott Commission was to the Scottish people. A whole chapter, fairly edited, of the Richard report was written by the Welsh people. It covered varying views and was impressive and instructive.

Whereas the Arbuthnott report was on the people, not by the people.

I cannot blame the report for picking-out an irresistible "school-boy howler" type remark. But the howl is really on them. The picture of a confused and clueless public, they portray, is a mirror they are holding up to themselves.

Let us hope the establishment has the sense of humor to see and remedy its own folly.

3) Not local enough and too local.

The Arbuthnott commission follows lemming-like the Plant and Jenkins reports into the same logical trap of trying to have one's cake and eat it. They claim STV does not give a strong enough local link in large sparsely populated constituencies. That's their third unnumbered point. While their fifth point claims the opposite, that STV gives too strong local links.

STV cannot both be too remote and too local at the same time. The Kerley report followed the standard plan of varying the number of seats per constituency in proportion to local population sizes. This variation recognises there is a trade-off between preserving the independence of a few of the remotest and smallest local communities, like the Highlands and Islands, and how proportionally represented are all the main opinion groups within those communities.

But that is true of any system. It is just that critics like to blame this fact of life on STV, as they might as well blame the weather or a bad harvest on STV, to avoid democratic choice.

A trade-off also exists with the mixed member system. And it leaves the Highlands and Islands worse off. The single member constituencies of the mixed member system are up to twice as large, because up to half the MSPs come instead from regional lists. The regional MSPs by definition offer no local representation.

STV could provide two members in a constituency about the same size as a single member constituency in the mixed member system. STV in a Highlands two-member constituency would give at least two-thirds proportional representation.

Whereas the mixed member constituency MP would come in on a split vote between four strong parties and several smaller ones. Not much more than a third of the voters (if that) could elect such a representative, who also monopolises some two-thirds of the people who voted for others.

Russell Johnston MP said of his election to the Highlands constituency that four parties each got a quarter of the vote but his was the largest quarter.

The truth is directly contrary to the commission third point: in the remotest areas, STV can be just as local as the mixed system and give twice as much representation, at the same time.

As to the commission fifth point (contradictory to the third), that STV is too local, it is a denial of the historic Commons tradition of

independent local democracy.

The commission fails to appreciate that a transferable vote is the only way voters can ever transfer their loyalties beyond their most immediate interests. It is the means by which the voters can transcend the factions of party and every other social division thru preferring candidates in their own and other groups, who most respect the interests of us all.

4) Appointment vs representation of women and minorities.

The commission fourth point, sandwiched between the above-discussed self-contradiction, is that STV impedes parties from promoting gender and minority representation. By representation, they mean appointment on party lists. With STV, women and ethnic minorities have the power to prefer their own candidates.

The commission fourth objection is to democratic representation instead of oligarchic appointment. This point shows where the commission is coming from, in its Establishment prejudices, but it doesn't contribute anything but confusion to the establishment of what constitutes a true democracy.

Britains half a dozen undemocratic methods where one democratic method would do.

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The commission follows and quotes (4.36) as authority, but doesn't attempt to justify, the Plant report belief in having different voting systems for different institutions. To follow this Plant report advice is to be lost in moral and intellectual darkness. (I criticised the Plant report in another chapter.)

This means that voting rules are not to make elections effective, whatever the institutions or political bodies. Instead elections are for bodies to affect as they see fit. Elections no longer serve election first, they serve the incumbents incumbency first. The Plant report invented an apology for oligarchy over democracy, in terms of political bodies determining elections instead of elections determining political bodies.

The Plant report "Ministry of Truth" notion, that there is a different truth, to the electing of different bodies, denies scientific progress. And in this, I must admit they have some academic backing. For, they referred to the social choice theorists scepticism of a definitive democratic method.

Those ethnocentric academics base their electoral deductions on voting methods that use preference voting with only majority counting. (This is explicit from Iain McLean: Democracy and New Technology.)

Most of the so-called democratic world by now uses proportional counting. What kind of an arithmetic is it that shuns on principle the use of rational counting?

Well, an ethnocentric one, because social choice theory comes from countries whose electoral systems traditionally used majority counting.

Social choice theory had to adopt some semblance of rigor, so they brought in preference voting into their calculations. But preference voting doesn't make sense without proportional counting, as the two independent inventors of PR as STV, realised a century and a half ago. To prefer many candidates corresponds to electing several representatives in the count. To use a preference vote, only for single vacancies, like the Supplementary Vote or Second Ballot or more exhaustive ballot, is to confuse an election count with an exclusion count.

Had the social choice theorists done their job of criticising democratic principle properly, they would have had to follow arithmetic, like everyone else, and admit that proportion, as well as order, is a feature of properly conducted elections.

That would be tantamount to admitting that STV is the definitive electoral system we should be using. And their criticisms would be confined to improving democracy, instead of denying it.

This evidently didn't suit them. It would not have suited the powers that be.

A few years ago, American political scientists met to celebrate fifty years of social choice theory. The political and academic idol of tenure has been duly worshipped.

The benighted Plant report plan was that powerful decision-making bodies, such as the national parliament, should hold onto the monopolistic single member system, so that executive action by one party could not seriously be challenged.

Further to that, they wanted advisory assemblies, like the House of Lords, to have only weak voting systems.

Out of power so long, Labour allowed small parties gain some seats with a proportional count. But that count had to be only of party lists, which give no representative legitimacy, that would challenge the main parliament with its crude first past the post elections.

The Labour party Plant report had it all worked out, that whatever the different voting methods used for different parliaments, they had a reason why they shouldn't be democratic voting method.

So, Britain has half a dozen undemocratic voting methods, where one democratic method would do.

That was the idea.

In fairness, Tory attitudes have been no better.

And Liberal Democrats have failed to take this democratic cause to the people.

It is a remarkable testimony to British rulers aversion to democracy, apart from the likes of the Sunderland and the Richard commissions. So far, only the forthcoming implementation of the Kerley report, for STV in Scottish local government, offers the slightest modification of that situation.

The Plant commission would have quaked in their safe seats at the Arbuthnott commissions creeping democracy. But Arbuthnott compliance with Plant still sends the wrong signal. By leaving the Scottish parliament with a mixed member system, it implies that the executive parliament can have power with less responsibility than advisory bodies.

If this default were to become the conventional wisdom, then every elected body would want executive power with diminished responsibility. Such bodies would even have a ready-made defense in court against their excesses.

It's a boost to delusions of political grandeur. That needs no encouragement from a correctness politics that lacks a sense of the ridiculous.

The implicit assumption behind Plant report misconceptions is that government must be a campaign of ritual conquests in lobby voting divisions. The Arbuthnott commission seems to share something of this anachronistic outlook, of dominate or be dominated, in its second prefatory quote to chapter 4 on voting:

"electoral systems are rarely designed, they are born kicking and screaming into the world out of a messy, incremental compromise between contending factions battling for survival, determined by power politics"

Certainly, the Arbuthnott commission forebore to design an electoral system. Instead, it left the electoral commission to design "a messy, incremental compromise" in the form of open lists for the Scottish parliament regional members.

As for factions, battling with power politics, the problem is that the generals lack armies from the general public. The commission and other research evidence shows the public are sick and tired of politicians - war-weary, one might say. (Section 6.2 to 6.5).

Turn-out for the Scottish parliament fell from just under 60% in 1999 to 50% in 2003. The commission regards it as "ironic" that devolution of the franchise to Scotland should see this fall-off in participation after two elections.

It could be a perfectly natural and rational response to the fact that the single member system and the closed list are two combined systems that effectively disenfranchise voter representation. No wonder if people are increasingly reluctant to participate. (section 6.8). The mixed member system makes people stooges. The first vote is up against seat monopolies. The second vote is up against voting for the oligarchy of lists.

This additional/mixed member system is not, by the way, a system "in its own right" (chapter 4, recommendations) as the commission asserts. The commission wants it called the mixed member system. It is a mixture of two systems that agree on putting party first but conflict on government by party monopoly or government by party sharing.

Putting party first, the mixed member system is undemocratic. Contradicting itself, over monopolising or sharing government, makes mixed members illogical or inconsequential and thereby unscientific.

Moral.

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Politics doesn't work because it hasn't joined "the free state of science" (HG Wells) where decisions are based on free enquiry that may upset authority's cherished assumptions. Instead, the party system is designed to suppress free votes in parliament for all but the exceptions that prove the rule. MPs are whipped into orthodoxy and dressed down, by the prime minister, who seems more like the prime fixer for the powerful and wealthy: MPs are not to have opinions of their own but to follow the manifesto, the back-doors agenda of interests supporting the party oligarchy.

Out-siders, the general public are effectively kept out, in Britain, by half a dozen undemocratic voting methods, where the democratic method would do.

The political class have waged a hundred years war for party orthodoxy against democratic freedom, blocking dissent, even in their own ranks. Greenland glaciers are moving faster than the political class.

Wales subsequent one-party government ran the Sunderland and Richard Reports into the glass doors of their pretend democracy. The Arbuthnott commission, like the characters in the Monty Python sketch with plasters on their noses, have adopted a creeping democracy.

I was pleased that the Richard report remembered the Kilbrandon report of thirty years previously. I hope that these reports and the Sunderland report, which has also had shelved its daring to recommend democratic method, won't be forgotten, and that sooner, rather

than later, these recommendations will prevail.

The Arbuthnott report must be regarded as a barometer of the political times, which still lack much insight into the reasons for, or much will to avert, the serious decline of democracy. Rather than having an inner light, it is a reflection of the "power politics" it refers to.

The Arbuthnott report is in the manner of an authority that doesnt realise how questionable are its assertions on voting systems. Progress requires free enquiry. And it is essential that this is effectively backed, for all official elections, by the free transferable voting, not a party-deferential pretence of democracy in "open lists" or any other non-transferable voting. The Arbuthnott report delays at a crucial time for democratic progress in Britain as a whole. And that may not be accidental.

Appendix: Strayed evidence to the Arbuthnott commission.

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I sent the following e-mail to the Arbuthnott commission. They say all senders are included on the list in their report. But there is no mention of me there!

[The secretarys reply was that they didnt receive the e-mail.]

On Friday 04 Feb 2005 18:21, you wrote:

To the Arbuthnott Commission.

Dear Commission members,

I have just written a web page on "Citizens Assemblies of Canada choose a Voting System."

<http://www.voting.ukscientists.com/canuk.html>

[An edited version appears in my previous book on voting methods.]

When coming to the question of the simple majority system, I paid particular attention to the problem of drawing boundaries, because I thought this has been neglected in a balanced comparison with a voting system using multi-member constituencies.

The Canadian web page (also about British and other countries experience) is an up-to-date review of my thoughts on the subject, referring to many of my web page discussions and reviews of previous official reports.

It may be worthwhile to review how Scotland has arrived at its present multiplicity of voting systems, and what this tells us.

In 1973, the Royal Commission on the Constitution, the Kilbrandon Report was published after four years work. This included the unanimous recommendation of the single transferable vote (STV) for a Scottish parliament, as well as for a Welsh assembly and any English regional assemblies. The report took very seriously the need for the rest of the UK not to be destabilised by Ulster-style one party rule under a simple majority system.

However, the Labour government did not heed its own commission advice. Subsequent commissions or conventions looked to proportional representation by other means.

In 1976, the Hansard Society commission Additional Member System (AMS) tried a Best Losers system of proportionly electing minor party MPs from single member constituencies.

Criticism showed this was no substitute for allowing the voters to make their own order of choice, for a proportional count, instead of having the order left to the vagaries of best losers in a single member system.

In the early 90s, the Plant report confirmed political aversion to STV by contemplating only other contenders as options. So, when Labour returned to power in 1997, there was a closed list for European elections, a supplementary vote for mayoral elections, different versions of AMS for Scottish and Welsh elections (as well as for London).

These AMS versions differed from the Hansard Society Best Losers version, which was exposed as too anomalous to be credible. So, the German systems closed party lists were used. But the Best Losers AMS had been meant to avoid giving too much power to party managers listing the order of candidates election.

Hopefully, we can get back from this abandoning of democratic standards.

Set-up by the 1997 Labour government, the Independent Commission on Voting Systems recommended yet another version of additional member system, called Alternative Vote Top-Up.

It is significant that the chairman introduced his report at the press conference by saying that they decided on a system that had a realistic chance of being adopted by the government. This, in effect, meant that, as the report put it, if they didnt go the STV way, they had to go the mixed system way of PR.

The irony is that none of these reports with an eye to "practical politics" have the slightest chance of ever being adopted. The Best Losers AMS was exploded by its own anomalies. The Plant report Supplementary Vote is wanted nowhere outside the Labour party, which is no basis for a constitutional settlement. And as Mr Bell MP, the leader of a 100 opposing Labour MPs, said: AV top-up would "sink without a trace."

The Kerley Report for Scottish local government was helped by terms of reference that explicitly said the elections should be democratic, a consideration too often forgotten. The especial importance of this report was that it envisioned a New Deal between voters and representatives.

Kerley recognised that politicians are only human. They dont want to lose their jobs any more than the next person. They should be given the opportunity for vocational qualifications and support. If they lose their seats, then they have learned skills that will stand them in good stead for other employment. In any case, job turn-over is much greater in an increasingly changing world.

The condition for such advantages must be that voters are given a voting system that will allow them to effectively choose their representatives, so that it is worth their voting at all. This opened the way for STV, in which there are no safe seats, because the voters proportionally or equitably elect candidates in order of preference - the representatives they most want, rather than the ones they are landed with.

In the Kerley report, there was already a hint of adverse experience with AMS for the Scottish parliament. The Sunderland report on Welsh local elections was perhaps a stronger endorsement of STV. And that was followed by the Richard Commission recommending STV for the Welsh assembly.

In 2004, British Columbia Citizens Assembly recommended STV, which was the studied choice of 160 people randomly taken from all walks of life in the Canadian province, an impressive testimony that STV can be the people's favorite (as Ireland has shown) and not just that of leading authorities.

I would particularly commend the Citizens Assembly Final Report to the Arbuthnott Commission, because "ordinary" people in an explicitly Westminster-style democracy express just the kind of concerns found in your consultation document and consider how best to meet them.

Former Irish premier Bruton recently documented a recommendation that STV be generally used for the European elections. That speaks volumes for Irish confidence in the value of their system, that they think all of Europe would benefit by its adoption.

It is of special relevance to Scotland's present situation, that Eire distinctively uses the same electoral system for all levels of government. STV is the general-purpose system, whereas the weaknesses of other systems are thrown into relief, at different levels.

Furthermore, people are using STV for their professional elections, for instance in health and education and many other areas. This trend can be expected to continue.

Using the same voting system, at different levels of government, allows the more local levels to be nested in the boundaries of the more remote levels - more easily certainly with a multi-member system. An obvious point rarely made is that levels of government primarily regulate locality of representation, whereas number of seats per constituency primarily regulate choice, which is what an "election" means.

The four different voting systems, that Scotland faces, are partly a legacy of the Labour party endorsing the Plant report, recommending different voting systems for different levels of government. (Its constraining influence lingers in the consultation document section 3.6.).

I criticised the Plant Commission for this during its deliberations and, since then, on my web site. My motto has been that Britain has half a dozen undemocratic voting methods where one democratic method would do.

Please recommend the single transferable vote for Scottish MSPs and MEPs, as well as for Scottish local elections. Like the Kerley report, I believe single member constituencies should be avoided, as being too unrepresentative, while allowing for fewer seats per constituency in rural areas.

The Scottish Parliament is bound to be more party political than local government. And to do justice to Scottish diversity of opinion, I would recommend constituencies generally with as many seats as the Irish Republic originally had, rather than a mainly three or four member system that only caters for mainstream opinion and may turn off other voters.

That is to say an STV system as proportional as the Citizens Assembly has recommended for British Columbia - tho it is a province with the population of Eire and a land area comfortably larger than Austria and all of Germany, east and west.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Lung.

Web-site:
<http://www.voting.ukscientists.com/>

3 March 2006.

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The Power commission: "Power to the People" or the parties?

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The commission electoral reforms are introduced by way of a parody, called "Three Ships."

Three Ships.

As in the traditional carol, three ships came sailing in. One was the Transferry that let passengers get on and off where they wanted in the numbers they wanted. In short, it served the convenience of the passengers rather than the crew time-table. Another ship was The Conqueror, really called that, jokers alleged, because it conked out before the voyage was half way thru. Of late, it had been conking out before they were hardly a third the way there.

No matter what went wrong, the captain continued to declaim another successful voyage that vindicated the continuance of his license. He and his officers continued to sneer at change. But they had sanctioned a third ship, called The Springer, for lesser routes, helping to make it fashionable. This ship let off parties of passengers, if not where they wanted to be as individuals, where their officers wanted to be.

We were reluctantly sailing on The Conqueror, those of us who hadn't yet jumped ship. Apparently one of the crew was an Inspector of sea-worthiness, as she was compiling a volume on every aspect of ship running. The first part of the report was an honest-to-goodness coverage of the sinking morale of the souls on board this top-down commanded tub.

The second part was an exhaustive list of remedies from the top down to the top-down command. There was to be a concordat between captain and officers, another concordat between officers and crew, and so on. Some of these reforms seemed to the point and some didn't. One wondered, as she warmed to her work, why she wanted no one at the captain's table, in future, to be under forty, and why those, once ensconced, should be allowed to stay there for so long, to the exclusion of others.

Another proposal was to set up another committee to find out all the committees that the captain and officers had proliferated, including co-options from the passengers. This was to determine how the ship managed, or rather mis-managed things such as the missing stores, rations, and so forth. This proposal was happily called a mapping committee, as ships map had also gone missing, and no-one seemed to have any idea of where the ship was, or where it was going. Every-one had long since ceased to listen to the captain and officers windy pronouncements on the subject of "The Free World."

Round about page 189 of the report, I kid you not, the passengers were given the message: "Abandon ship!" Tho, it was evidently beset by heated debate, among the Inspectors assistants, held in private, just as the officers met.

The crew hastened to tell us it was all non-sense. They had been working on the pumps and the hull, they assured us, had risen back a few inches. There were no imminent storms. Only the lower berths had their feet in the bilge. A task force monitored when it slopped into their bunks. This had been personally appointed by the captain himself in joint consultations with the first officer, who was rumored to be taking over some of the tasks of command. The first officer had even indicated his assent for the first time to the possible abandonment of The Conqueror.

Some prescient passengers actually asked the Inspector what other ship was to pick them up. They were a bit taken aback by this emergency-raiser when she just shrugged and said: "we have no firm views on this." She added, perhaps noticing their surprise, "Current thinking seems to suggest The Transferry."

This less than whole-hearted commendation was not lost on the passengers. However, they opted to board The Transferry. It was then that the captain and most of his company intervened in a passion of dissent from the despised Transferry.

They were to have us removed to The Springer. This dynamic-sounding ship was already in limited use. Symptoms of aggravated sea-sickness of it were already evident from other reports than the Inspectors. (These reports had been thrown over-board.)

The name, Springer, seemed to have more to do with the fact that every time, one leak was sealed, it sprang another. Sometimes the engines would only work in reverse to the direction most people wanted to go: the tail wags the dog effect. Sometimes the vessel would unaccountably list left or right from unsecurable cargo. The rudder would jam the vessel into doing rightward or leftward rings but essentially going no-where.

The recent design of The Springer was based on the philosophy that no radical departure should be made from The Conqueror. If the Conqueror could travel no more than half or third the way, that should be good enough for some of the passengers. The advance made by The Springer would be to let the rest travel on by auxiliaries, sort of glorified life-boats. The remaining passengers could choose their life-boat, if they could tell the difference.

The sneaking suspicion arose that the unseaworthy Conqueror was re-commissioned with life-boats and passed off under the name of The Springer. The suspicion was enhanced when the auxiliaries turned out, in large part, to be the old crew, the passengers were not allowed to change from. The Springer conked out like The Conqueror.

The auxiliaries were trying to establish prerogatives in the joint running of the ship, which led to the kinds of confusing and erratic performance, the occult phenomena, in the bowels of the vessel, such as already mentioned.

The auxiliaries hated being called auxiliaries and resented any suggestion that they were inferior to the original company more or less reduced to a skeleton crew to make room for them. The auxiliaries had themselves called the regional members, because they took passengers to within a region of where they wanted to go.

This was admittedly a bit vague but that was why the ship retained a generous skeleton crew of local members: If passengers happened to want to share the local crews homes, their journeys were in luck. Most of them didnt, but then you had the regional members.

This passenger asked the Inspector why hadnt her report spoken up, at decision time, for The Transferry, that gives the people what they want, rather than what the commanders want. Well, she replied: Almost anything was better than The Conqueror and people were already leaving, if we didnt provide some alternative.

To which, the proper reply would have been: You mean almost any lame duck alternative, the captain and officers would tolerate, but the ferry that actually ferried.

Moral.

Things must change, so that things can stay the same.

The Power commission fumbles electoral reform.

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In March 2006, the Power Commission brought out a 300 page report called "Power to the People." We have seen so many of these independent enquiries. The first part is a careful enquiry, and essential reading, into the state of the relations between rulers and ruled.

I was surprised by how much my own vehement views were shared by members of the public. This remained largely true of public opinion quoted thru-out the report. We're used to hearing about public "apathy," instead of such focused passion from those who consider themselves powerless, especially against an ineffective voting system, first past the post, and against all-or-nothing party manifestos.

The commission, chaired by Helena Kennedy QC, accuses the parties of "killing" politics, meaning popular participation in politics. Some thirty recommendations are made to reverse that decline, in the second and third parts. The third part rambles and the report is rather too long.

"Three Ships," the parody, above, is at the expense of so detailed a report that knows, for instance, no-one under forty should be allowed in the House of Lords. The commissions self-styled democrats suddenly get a fad for gerontocracy. And they hold that incumbents should be allowed to stop there for 12 to 15 years.

Yet, about two-thirds the way thru, the report decides, amongst other details, that the first past the post voting system must go. While, it is admitted some commissioners said it must not. And while, it was admitted the whole commission didnt know what to replace it with.

The voting systems, referred to in the parody, the three "ships" are The Conqueror as first past the post, and The Springer as the additional / mixed member system. The Transferry stands for the transferable vote. I dont want to spell out the parody. It is only an analogy, which gives an inaccurate but not really exaggerated feel for the hopeless state of British "democracy." The Power report states the problem but does not engender much confidence that things will change.

The Power commission admitted the single transferable vote was currently thought to be the best replacement. Some criteria for this are noted. Criteria, in the Jenkins commission terms of reference, didnt prevent their report from coming up with a non-starter of an electoral system.

The Power report does discuss some reasons why STV may be best, but said "we have no firm views on this." If you are to give power to the people, you have to find what you are looking for, or you wont get it. British government record is of choosing any other voting method but STV. (The Scottish parliament approval of the Kerley report on local government is the only exception so far.) The Power commission noted with approval all the different methods, from first past the post, adopted by government.

And the Power commission omitted to mention that the current one-party executive in the Welsh Assembly has turned down the two reports, the Sunderland and Richard reports both in favor of STV. Given that the Power commission is all about the over-weening power of government, doesnt all that ring some alarm bells in their heads? The only naff system, the Power commission draws the line at, besides first past the post, is the closed list.

A little logic would have led the commission a long way. These two naff systems combined, the Additional Member System, therefore must also be inadmissible. Two wrongs don't make a right.

But no, that was too much for the commission to contemplate. Plainly, the goddess of reason has been banished, with the rest of the pantheon, from the stumbling mind of modern man.

"Open" lists are still based on votes for parties and so can, in principle, elect individuals with as few as no personal votes. Open lists are at best first past the post between candidates on a party list. Yet, a central tenet of this report is that first past the post has failed in the single member system. So, why let this failure back by way of open lists?

Also counter-productive, for instance, is recommendation 22, to speed up the eight to ten year delays in boundary re-alignments. This Catch 22 of equal constituencies, or proportional representation, within a disproportionate system, of single member constituencies, deliberately produces a circus Hall of Mirrors Parliament, rather than a true mirror of the nation.

A commission that claims to give power to the people, rather than the parties, fails to recommend democratic voting system rather than systems of party oligarchy, which is what they admit has come into the deepest disrepute. The Commission merely goes which way the wind blows "currently" on electoral reform, without an opinion of their own on the matter, when it seems they have reform views on every-thing else under the political sun. This is more cause for cynicism and alienation between rulers and ruled.

The report says: "the argument for change is now as much about what is expedient for the future of democracy in Britain as it is a matter of principle." I take this to mean that first past the post has to go, and that is more important than which system replaces it. Since the only motive behind every change to the electoral system, that the British government has made, is power to the parties rather than the people, the Power commission attitude is bound to defeat its own avowed aim of power to the people.

Talking to one-self.

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The 2005 general election gave government to the party with least support since the beginnings of British democracy, over the past couple of centuries. But the result was treated as business as usual. The Lord Chancellor made out there was little demand for electoral reform. (But the Power commission realised new depths of discontent with political parties.) The premier said that PR was unfair as well, as if that settled the matter. The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw poured scorn on PR.

In 2005, I e-mailed some responses, which got no replies, needless to say. They are included here, with abridgments of repetitions:

To the Lord Chancellors department enquiry on voting methods.

Since the call by MPs to reform the Westminster voting system, it seems Lord Falconers department is involved in an enquiry. I agree with "Make Votes Count" that it must be open and transparent.

It is true as Tony Blair and Jack Straw say that the German system has given disproportionate power to small parties. The tail wags the dog effect was also seen in New Zealand with the NZ First partys about-turn. But this is the system those self-same people have already imposed (or tried to impose) on this country....

Mr Straw supports anything but the democratic voting system.

Writing in the Guardian and elsewhere, Jack Straw recalls his support for the Euro-elections closed list, by which you no longer vote for human beings but corporate entities called parties.

Likewise, he supported Additional lists to the present system for national and regional assemblies within the UK, tho they do, as he says, give disproportionate power to small parties....

He also supports the Alternative Vote for Westminster,..

The only system he doesnt support is the single transferable vote which suffers from none of the well-known faults of the above systems.

Firstly, STV is the voters personal preference for individual candidates, who are held responsible to the public rather than the party bosses autocratic preference vote for his party list.

Secondly, the vote being transferable means that candidates can be preferred, according to which coalition the majority of voters prefer, if no one party wins more than half the votes: No disproportionate power to either the larger or the smaller minorities but genuine and decisive democratic majority government.

Thirdly, STV multi-member constituencies mean that many more first preference votes count than with the alternative vote: something like 70% with STV, and often considerably less than half with AV....

Sirs or Madams at The Independent, Chris Huhne,

We shouldnt forget that many of the world problems, of deprivation and violence, that take the headlines owe much to lack of democracy. Why should any one look to a British government that wont put its own House in order?

Writing in The Independent, Jack Straw criticised the German electoral system for giving disproportionate power to small parties. That was also true of the first past the post system, when the Callaghan government began to run out of a majority of seats and went running with promises (bribes) to the small parties.

It would also be true of the Jenkins commission Alternative vote top-up, which Straw respondent, Chris Huhne put forward. This grotesque system is used no-where and wanted by no-one.

The transferable vote allows the voters to prefer the candidates of more than one party and therefore which coalition should govern, if no one party has a majority of votes. Transferability of the vote, and not the watered-down proportionality of STV in Ireland, is its commendation. Irish constituencies were reduced by the biggest party merely to give itself disproportionate power....

The Independent campaign should recognise that STV is the democratic system, learn its advantages and communicate its excellence to the public.

Citizens Assembly private members bill.

Some British MPs intend to introduce a private members bill for a British Columbia-style Citizens Assembly this autumn (2005). They also intend a local government bill.

Private members bills are rarely tolerated by governments. [The Power commission recommends that the Floor of the House should be allowed time by the Executive to pass its own legislation.]

What fun to see the Tory opposition control freaks looking on the idea with equal horror to the Labour government control freaks.... In short, there is no prospect of the British Citizens Assembly being passed. Never mind, politicians will have to say why they are against it and their phoney responses, they will try to avoid having to make, will only show them up all the more.

It is encouraging to see Charter 88 and a new organisation, ACT or Active Citizens Transform both advocating a British Citizens Assembly. This is a big improvement on the earlier British electoral reform campaign that supported "some form" of proportional representation, which effectively meant never mind democratic form. (The Liberal Democrat leadership has stuck in this rut for time-servers.) This would almost certainly have let down the British people. Indeed, British government levels have been given the party-controlled forms of so-called PR....

At least with a Citizens Assembly, the random representatives of the citizens have only themselves to blame if they get it wrong. And a referendum needn't endorse their decision. Britain, as well as Canada, has much to thank British Columbia for the Citizens Assembly. Let's hope BC will derive the benefit of its decision, backed by a statistically highly significant majority with over-whelmingly significant consistency from the general public.

Yours sincerely,...

Re that last letter:

The Power Commission somewhat distinguished its position from that of Charter 88, as going beyond its constitutional reforms. They would have done better to endorse Charter 88 and ACT on a British Citizens Assembly for electoral reform, because none of the Power reports many distinct new proposals compare as a means of promoting the democracy, we are supposed to be so keen on. It has the advantage that the issue is taken out of the hands of dead-locked vested interests, politicians and reformers and given to a sample of the general public, for whom elections are supposed to be meant.

One-dimensional democrats ignore 2nd chamber economic election.

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Fumbling the electoral reform issue is not the only means by which the Power commission recommendations would give the parties more power. A document called "Power to the parties" could not have done worse than to lift some of their proposals. State funding of political parties is like protection money for gang bosses. It's a blood money transfusion from democracy to oligarchy.

The Commission proposed ballot papers that would include a parties begging letter for £3 of state funds to a party of choice. Some people will not believe that public funds should be plundered for partisan ends. So, those with a public conscience will be discriminated against for those with more limited sympathies.

If people want to donate to political parties there is nothing to stop them, without commission special pleading. The Power commission is so anxious for the welfare of these undeserving causes, that they would stick their begging bowls under our noses while we vote, if we still do.

This accessorising the voters has all the finger-prints on it of New Labours dependency politics. It is just their sort of unfair discrimination against people who would rather forego spending on themselves than take from the community. Labour leaders demoralising obsession with unjust and inefficient means tests is an example of their unreasonable and unrepresentative self-will, which this report is wide open to. Means tests were practised by the Tories and loathed by proud working people in the Great Depression.

Of course, the rich funnel riches into the two main parties, because they hold the power thru the two-party system of voting first past the post. A modified simple plurality system with additional members from party lists won't address the problem. You have to have a genuinely democratic voting system to best challenge plutocracy and you have to have democracy in political and economic representation. Then it becomes possible to work more on democratic than plutocratic influences.

The commission wants 70% of House of Lords members to be elected. They mean elected politicians. It doesn't occur to these one-dimensional democrats, that there is a second dimension of economic representation. Flat-landers are multi-dimensional gods in comparison to the political class of line-landers. The latter fail to recognise that political democracy depends on economic democracy, which seems to be in a higher dimension than its senses can

apprehend.
And why 70% elections? Other percentages have been suggested. Why one or the other? Such figures are completely arbitrary or without justification.

The Power commission admits replacing Lords with elected politicians will reduce room for the number of experts in the House, so it would have them "co-opted." In other words, more appointments by connections, New Labour "love of bureaucracy." The best way to get experts is to have them elected by their colleagues who are qualified to know who will best represent their professions. Democracy is best in politics and economics.

Then you have to consider that the appointed Lords are likely to continue being the likes of retired cabinet ministers. Or, if they are voted for, it would be on party lists that automatically get them in "the other place." The Power report is explicit about former leaders and ministers being appointed for their experience, as they might be unlikely to stand. They might also be unlikely to be voted in, if the public were tired of them.

The report identifies a main problem being with these people having too much of their own way. So, it seems strange that the report should be so solicitous that the path continue to be made smooth for them into a politically active retirement. However, there is a certain "reciprocity" or returned favor in that the commission chairman Helena Kennedy was made a New Labour peer. Not that she hasn't rebelliously followed her conscience as a human rights lawyer. She needs now to rebel against the failures of her own report.

Bruce Anderson in The Independent, 27 february 2006, wanted the Lords returned to the landed gentry, essentially I suppose, the thousand year-old war settlement of William the Conqueror. Other occupations, like lawyers and politicians, also seem to think they have the right to monopolise the second chamber of national interests.

Countries like Britain have become litigation tyrannies. People go in fear of so much as touching someone. A famous person has just under-gone an eighteen-month ordeal for this before the case was dismissed. (He was speaking on Channel 4 program "Richard and Judy".) A touch is enough to get the courts to throw one in jail.

Sheltering someone is enough to get one thrown out of house and home onto the streets. At this rate, no-one will dare do anything for anyone lest they get a court order. School-children are not allowed to play snow-balls or a "rough" game like British bull-dog, lest a lawyer bull-dogs the supervisor into the court-room. etc etc.

The root cause of this is that government is a lawyers playground. It is unproductive, uninventive, time-wasting, traumatic, exhausting, hugely expensive for the public, and lucrative for the lawyers. They see nothing wrong with it. Helena Kennedy QC betrays no suspicion of lawyers, one of the main powers behind the undoubtedly unscrupulous parties of her report. (The occupations of the Power commission, as a whole, belong to what more trying times might have called "non-essential personnel.")

Lawyering is the only trick lawyers know to solving problems. The lawyers cancerous contribution must be reduced from its present pathologically unhealthy level for society. All the other occupations should get their proportional share of representation in solving the nations problems. They each have their own expertly useful point of view, for which the nations second chamber is the historical place.
Tho, lack of room, at the Palace of Westminster, should probably re-locate the vocational or economic second chamber to the north of England, with teleconference links to the Commons.

A House of Callings, in the tradition of the Lords membership of the nations vested interests, could bring it in line with representative democracy of the economic dimension. Expert evidence from representatives of every walk of life is a practical counter-weight to legal principles.

The fault lies with the lawyer politicians. The police want to be allowed to get on with their job of applying suitable laws that keep the peace. They have said they don't want the job of visiting people for something uncomplimentary they said about some group.

Generally, groups don't need defending against individuals. It is the other way around. The main effect of politicians turning the police into "thought police" is "self-censorship." Both terms were invented by George Orwell in his writings against totalitarianism. This is the enemy of spontaneity, creativity and progress.

In a free society, free criticism and, if need be, ridicule, is the proper regulator of prejudice. Running down some group is easily countered by the achievements of its members. This usually makes the belittler look the one who is little. That way teaches against rash judgments.

Litigation tyranny.

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There are many examples of political correctness that have been high-lighted and ridiculed by the Press. One example, I've not happened to see in the Press, was the government demand to the deaf that they stop using allegedly racist and homophobic sign language. What does this mean? you may well ask. Well, the sign for Jewish is a curved finger to represent a Semitic nose. The sign for Gay is a limp wrist.

The deaf community were up in arms at the implied slur, that they were prejudiced and must stop using the signs. Rupert Murdoch recently said, as others have previously, the Blair government has become too much of a Nanny State. This litigious government ban is typical of their superficial approach. This is not solving problems, it is merely making problems for the deaf community.

Oliver Sacks, in the aptly named "Seeing Voices," found out that image language is the most directly effective form of communication. Deaf people with no speech-based sign-language in common could still understand each other in hours using iconic gestures. This fact has profound implications for ready communication between the hearing population divided across the world by many different phonic languages. The deaf could be the trail blazers for world communication (or even communication between worlds).

We recognise the truth of this already in the Highway Code. In life or death situations of possible vehicle accidents, instant recognition is afforded by visual road-signs. For a long time, educators of the deaf have insisted on their using speech-based sign language, which is much more difficult for them and far less successful. Having been thru this hard-learned lesson, what the deaf dont need is the ignorant blunderings of politicians telling them not to use innocent visual signs, with no moral connotations, only ready reference to meanings.

You might multiply that example hundreds of times over, to show the need for representatives in a House of Callings to defend the special interests of every-one in society.

Labour was never properly represented in the Lords. Hence, the mischief of the Commons, or house of communities, being degraded into a war of party interests to the detriment of all but the strong, the wealthy and powerful. Indeed, the commission shows awareness of this by its recommendation:

"Meetings of ministers with business, including lobbyists, to be listed every month."

Every-one has special considerations to be taken into account. Every-one has the right to lobby. It is the essential condition of ensuring that political laws work in practise. It is the routine of science itself, which requires freely representative evidence to arrive at the most comprehensive understanding. Lobbying is not wrong. Unrepresentative lobbying is wrong.

That could be alleviated by (transferably voted) proportional representation of all the vocations in the second chamber, instead of the biggest pushers subverting the first chamber. The second chamber elections could be combined with normal professional or union elections etc, to avoid a turn-out problem. The first chamber should lay down laws, based on agreed principles, that apply to all. The second chamber should consider their special effects on each properly represented occupation and amend where necessary.

This is the science of a political economy that relates political principles to economic practise. Scientific progress is missing from our politics of studious ignorance in the service of place-holding reaction.

Not addressing what Churchill, in 1930, called "the economic problem" is at the root of the ineptness of the Power commission campaign finance reforms. It means theyve failed to promote economic democracy in the national second chamber. Theyve left the second chamber to double the parties power of patronage, when the commission admits they are already destroying political democracy.

To help save political democracy you have to promote second chamber economic elections. This is the democratic way to address what James Burnham called in 1944, "The Managerial Revolution." That is the uncontrolled plunder of the economy by executives or "fat cats." In a democracy, there cannot be privileged laws for corporations over individuals any more than there can be one law for the rich and another for the poor.

Once youve settled the legitimate and ethical use of peoples investments in trust, once youve prevented speculating with other peoples savings without their knowledge or consent, people also may be protected by a comprehensive body of expert representatives effectively elected in the second chamber. Then, you are some way at least to preventing big business bribes, of party organisations, away from their public service.

There should be statutory limits on campaign spending. Instead, a democratic communications infrastructure should make representative campaigning possible.

Likewise, the wasteful advertising conditioning, of the public to be wasteful consumers at the expense of the environment, needs income source transparency, so people can stop their investments being hi-jacked in this irresponsible way.

Michael Moore has done much to bring back rational debate into the media, while keeping it entertaining. That was always a difficult art. Those who dont agree with him should try to do as well with their own points of view.

Exorbitant campaign spending is indefensible. If it is not unfair, then why indulge it, when the money could be spent on good causes? Why not let enough money be spent just for people to hear the reasons and evidence for which competing policies work best? Then let the publics better judgment decide their fate.

The Power commission wants to move away from the rich-biased financial deposit for candidates to a collection of enough signatures to be taken seriously as a candidate. (150 - 200 in general elections.)

They also make the good point that a 16 year old may have to wait up to six years, before being eligible to vote in a general election, with the 18 year threshold. And they found no evidence of their own or others that immaturity was a reason against lowering the age of enfranchisement.

Registration could take place at school, along with civics education, and National Insurance numbers could be used for voter identification. These are practical proposals for making elections more efficient.

The commission found the standard of civics less than satisfactory. Education is potentially a third dimension, in which democracy has yet to be recognised. The underlying problem with education is, as a scientist said in a letter to The Guardian "Life," that schools refuse to teach children how to think. (I didnt think much of this epistlists support for nuclear power.)

Likewise, in politics, the parties prevent representatives from thinking. And economics is a set of dogmas disasterously out of touch with ecological reality. School science should not be an indigestible fact-cramming. Science should be the model for society of progress by free enquiry.

I broadly agreed with the public views of the media, quoted by the Power commission. Tho, I think the media in general have covered fairly well the dangers to life on earth. The media guard the right to freedom of speech and civil liberties with some passion but they do less than nothing to promote democratic improvement of the system.

The Independent is the only paper to campaign for proportional representation after the 2005 general election. Even in that papers response to the Power Commission, the chief political commentator captioned his article: "Voting reform won't bring a different result."

Britain has half a dozen different voting systems, all of which, if you changed them round, would bring different results to the political bodies in question. He (a Blair biographer) was particularly sarcastic about the single transferable vote, the system carefully excluded from the half-dozen dud systems

Britain has used, precisely because it would give a freer result from party control than the rest.

The Initiative.

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The commission recommends:

"Citizens to initiate legislative processes, public inquiries and hearings into public bodies."

The Initiative could be an idea whose time has come in the UK. The possibility of a free and dedicated digital television channel, like the Parliament channel, means that Initiatives can have their own full time forum. The main objection to the referendum was that it took an issue out of the debating chamber and exposed it to the prejudices of the majority of the people, who never had their convictions challenged in public debate, before an audience, who can judge which side was more or less in the right.

That need no longer be the case. It doesn't matter whether Parliament or individual citizens hold a referendum. The latter case is called the citizens Initiative. In your digitally broadcast Initiative forum, you could have a legislative procedure as considered and detailed as that in Parliament itself.

Forget the whipping system, which is just a gagging of free opinion from getting in the way of party doctrine and favors. (The commission rightly wants "Limits on power of the whips.") The Initiative forum would be no challenge to Parliament because it would help to elect issues not persons.

However, in or out of parliament, you do need a people who have learned to listen to others.

The Power commissions document "Beyond the Ballot" (p. 107, sec. 7.4) shows that I have been anticipated in this idea, in the form of a "Civic commons in cyberspace." This proposal doesn't actually envisage it as an Initiatives forum, but it is essentially the same idea that could be adapted to that purpose as well. It would be an informal discussion of public business that the authorities would have to listen to. It would be free from the sort of "barriers" to popular participation (mentioned on p. 112) such as incorporating citizens into official ways of working and professional resistance to inclusion.

The Commission study points out that its fairness would depend on over-coming the digital divide. Others have pointed out that this mainly remains because of the British Telecom monopoly. Their standing charge for a low user of the land-line can be more than five times the cost of the phone calls. That should be enough to provide a broad-band service, which, however, they charge for, all over again.

The Power commission might address such typical complacencies of the government with the general populations high cost of living, as from the standing charge rip-offs of banks and utilities. The government is eager to do the bidding of big business to doom all foreseeable generations to the poison waste from more nuclear power stations. Energy-independence of houses and buildings should be promoted for the freedom, health and wealth of the nation.

The Power commission made the point that it was a dubious sort of enquiry in which the government had already made up its mind in favor of more nuclear power stations. (p. 110). I believe this is one of the most serious examples of the fatal deficiencies of party propagandist government that prevents the kind of progress achieved in science from free enquiry.

Calamity comes from the mis-application of scientific achievement by its big government and big business pay-masters. The best remedy for this is the democratically open debate, that occurs within science, occurring thru-out the whole community, without let or hindrance from partisan vested interests.

Would there be limits on what citizens could initiate?

Certainly, just as there are, or should be, on what parliaments can legislate. It is a common misconception that democracy is the tyranny of the majority. This is fortified by a simple majority voting system. This isn't even an over-all majority system, and wouldn't be, with any single member system.

The Power Commission mentioned the proposal from the Borda Institute of Northern Ireland that referendums should have a range of options, rather than a crude Yes/No. This would allow the voters to express their views more particularly to show more clearly what they really want, rather than be manipulated into a dilemma.

(Borda method of giving points for order of choice is more arbitrary than adaptation of transferable voting, whereby weight is given to preference order in proportion to the number of surplus votes over each preferred option that can achieve a quota of the total vote.)

A news Independent commentator raised the old spectre of Initiatives for hanging, which jumps in popularity with the public distress at certain murders high-lighted by the media in this wicked world.

The commission has surely got it right on "Text voting or e-mail voting only after other reforms." In contrast to Initiatives, this is an idea whose time has not come. It may not properly come till the invention of quantum encryption makes internet transactions, as vital as voting, as secure as they need to be against hacking.

Concluding remarks.

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For all its list of recommendations, for participation on the side-lines of government, this report knows no other than a democracy that is the monopoly of politicians. The historic role of the Lords as representing special interests is a cue for the second chamber to become a second dimension, with economic democracy.

Instead, the report wants to virtually double the power of party patronage over representation. It won't grasp the nettle of removing safe seats by firmly

recommending the transferable vote, as an essential means to that democratic end.
It wants to financially entrench the parties into the constitution.

Like the Jenkins report, the Power report gives a little lecture about the necessity of parties in the system. I have news for the commission. As Vilfredo Pareto said, history is the graveyard of elites. Dominant groups come and go, only the people endure. If you want progress, you dont worry about entrenching the current powers. They are only too good at entrenching themselves. The Labour and Tory parties have no divine right to rule. The lawyer-politicians and corporate-above-the-laws will have their day.

7 March 2006.

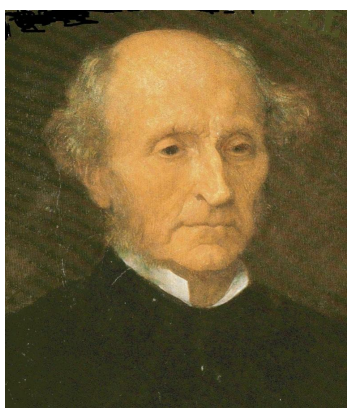
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From John Stuart Mill letters: proportional representation, and other issues.

Extracts from *The Letters of John Stuart Mill*

edited by Hugh S R Elliot. Published by Longmans, Green and Co. 1910.

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John Stuart Mill by George Frederick Watts.
National Portrait Gallery.

Subjects:

Hare system: proportional representation as personal representation.

[Economy](#), environment and womens suffrage.

English aristocratic and [reactionary sentiment](#).

Hare system: proportional representation as personal representation.

To Thomas Hare, 3 march 1859:

You appear to me to have exactly, and for the first time, solved the difficulty of popular representation - and by doing so, to have raised up the cloud of gloom and uncertainty which hung over the future of representative government and therefore of civilization.

To James Lorimer, 7 april 1859:

You do not at all exaggerate the English dislike of theory, and of any particular suggestion which is at all out of the common way. ...when, as in the case of Hare's plan, there is really no obstacle to its adoption but the novelty of the idea, we should always, I think, talk and write about it as if that were no obstacle at all.

To Thomas Hare, 17 june 1859:

I suppose you will give brief and pungent answers to the popular objections against this plan, which are only expressions in varied phrase

of the popular inability to understand it. When there is anything definite in the objections the truth is generally the reverse of what is asserted. For instance, it is supposed the plan would enable minorities to govern, when the fact is that *now* a minority very often governs (by being the majority of a majority), while under your plan a minority never could by any possibility do so. It is the only plan that ensures government by the majority.

All parties seem to have joined in working the vices and weak points of popular representation for their miserably low selfish ends, instead of uniting to free representative institutions from the mischief and discredit of them.

To C A Cummings (Boston U.S.) 23 feb. 1863:

But I attach far more importance to Mr Hare's system of election, which it gives me the greatest pleasure to see you appreciate as I do. It would be worthy of America to inaugurate an improvement which is at once a more complete application than has ever been made of the democratic principle, and at the same time its greatest safeguard. With the system of representation of all instead of majorities only, and of the whole people instead of only the male sex, America would afford to the world the first example in history of true democratic equality.

To Earl Grey, 13 may 1864:

Mr Hare's plan...has been several times discussed in the legislatures of the two principal Australian colonies; and, though not yet adopted, I have been struck by the proof given in the debates how perfectly the great majority of speakers, both Conservative and Radical, understood it, and how generally the best of them on both sides supported it. I feel confident that it would require nothing for success but a real desire in the public to make it succeed. This does not yet exist in England, but in a colony there is far less prejudice against novelties. In Australia, Conservatives favour the plan as a check to the absolute power of numerical majorities, and Democrats because it is a direct and obvious corollary from the democratic principle.

To Max Kyllman, 15 feb. 1865:

(After refering to "the progress of Mr Hare's system among the working classes of Manchester.") When any portion or body of the working classes chooses as its programme a reading and writing (or rather writing and ciphering) qualification, *adult* instead of manhood suffrage, and Hare's system, I will gladly give to such a noble scheme all the help I possibly can.

To Max Kyllman, 30 may 1865:

Numbers of country papers are sent to me in which Hare's system, representation of minorities, in all its shapes, and women's suffrage are mooted - sometimes with approbation, and often (especially as to women's suffrage) with much less hostility than was to be expected. You have probably seen Mr Hughes' declaration in favour of Hare's system, and Francis Newman's commendation of me for adhering to it.

To Henry Fawcett, 1 jan. 1866:

I have just seen that Lord Hobart has come out decidedly...for Hare's system.

To G K Holden, Member of Legislative Council of New South Wales, 5 july 1868:

I well remember your exertions for the adoption of Mr Hare's system in the election of the Legislative Council, and the very valuable report in which you discussed the subject. The debates in the British Parliament which have since occurred may well have struck you with the amount of ignorance they disclosed; but great and daily progress is making in the correction of that ignorance, and many political men, including some of the most active and intelligent leaders of the working classes are now converted to Mr Hare's system in principle at least, and frequently even in its detail. The doctrine of personal representation is making the same rapid progress among thinking minds on the Continent and in America.

(*Note:* Baden minister, Prof. Mohl of Heidelberg advocated Hare plan in the Zeit of Frankfort.

It was also publically supported in France by Louis Blanc and Laboulaye. These three are among those meant, in the footnote at the end of

chapter VII to *Representative Government*. But Mill did not give their names there.)

To General Secretary of Chelsea Working Mens Parliamentary Electoral Association, 7 dec. 1868, replying to their condolences on his defeat:

Public opinion will in time demand the only complete remedy, the adoption of Personal Representation, by which the electors would be enabled to group themselves as they pleased, and any electors who chose to combine could be represented in exact proportion to their number by men of their own personal choice... The real cause of the failure of working-class candidates and of so many of the advanced Liberals in the late contests is the inordinate expense of elections.

Economy, environment and womens suffrage.

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In a letter of jan. 1850,

Mill said: "...when productive employment can be claimed by everyone from the public as a right, it can only be rendered undesirable by being made virtually slave labour." Mill was against such a right being enforced, until society makes "the production and distribution of wealth a public concern."

To W T Thornton, 23 oct. 1863:

You are aware that I would, if I could exempt savings from income tax, and make the tax on income virtually a tax on expenditure. By this rule any portion of income should be only taxed if spent on private uses, but should be free from taxation (at least at its origin) when devoted to public ends.

To Secretary of the Co-operative Plate-Lock Manufactory, Wolverhampton, 22 march 1865:

Sir, - I beg to enclose a subscription of £10 to aid, as far as such a sum can do it, in the struggle which the Co-operative Plate-Lock Makers of Wolverhampton are maintaining against unfair competition on the part of the masters in the trade...To carry on business at a loss in order to ruin competitors is not fair competition... Having the strongest sympathy with your vigorous attempt to make head against what in such a case may justly be called the tyranny of capital, I beg you to send me a dozen copies of your printed appeal, to assist me in making the case known to such persons as it may interest in your favour.

Note: My work on Constitutional Economics quotes Mill letter on industrial partnership.

To the secretary, 22 jan. 1866, to support the founding of the Commons Preservation Society:

I have all my life been strongly impressed with the importance of preserving as much as possible of such free space for healthful exercise and for the enjoyment of natural beauty as the growth of population and cultivation has still left to us. The desire to engross the whole surface of the earth in the mere production of the greatest possible quantity of food and the materials of manufacture, I consider to be founded on a mischievously narrow conception of the requirements of human nature.

(In a letter on his visit to William Wordsworth, Mill observed the views from the poet's pavilion form an abridgement of the whole Westmoreland side of the mountains; every spot visible from it has been immortalised in his poems.)

To Judge Chapman, 7 jan. 1866:

Your account of the Middle Island and its impassable range of high Alps is very attractive to me, and if New Zealand were an island in the

Northern Atlantic would speedily send me on a visit there... There is now almost no place left on our own planet that is mysterious to us and we are brought within sight of the practical questions which will have to be faced when the multiplied human race shall have taken full possession of the earth (and exhausted its principal fuel).

To J K H Willcox, of New York, 20 jan. 1871:

I have long been of the opinion expressed by you "that the cause of over-population," or at all events a necessary condition of it, "is woman's subjugation, and that the cure is her enfranchisement."

Letter on womens aspirations, 14 july 1869:

The most important thing women have to do is to stir up the zeal of women themselves. We have to stimulate their aspirations - to bid them not despair of anything, nor think anything beyond their reach, but try their faculties against all difficulties. In no other way can the verdict of experience be fairly collected, and in no other way can we excite the enthusiasm in women which is necessary to break down the old barriers.

English aristocratic and reactionary sentiment.

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To John Austin, 13 april 1847:

England has never had any general break-up of old associations, and hence the extreme difficulty of getting any ideas into its stupid head.

To F Lucas, 28 march 1851. Reply to invitation from the Council of the Tenant League, to stand for an Irish constituency of parliament.

If it were in my power to go into Parliament at present, I should be highly gratified by being returned for a purpose so congenial to my principles and convictions as the reform of the pernicious system of land tenure which, more than any other cause, keeps the great body of the agricultural population of Ireland always on the verge of starvation.

To Giuseppi Mazzini on an International Society for political objects, april 1858:

The English, of all ranks and classes, are at bottom, in all their feelings, aristocrats. They have the conception of liberty, and set some value on it, but the very idea of equality is strange and offensive to them. They do not dislike to have many people above them as long as they have some below them, and therefore they have never sympathised and in their present state of mind never will sympathise with any really democratic or republican party in other countries. They keep what sympathy they have to those whom they look upon as imitators of English institutions - Continental Whigs who desire to introduce constitutional forms and some securities against personal oppression - leaving in other aspects the old order of things with all its inequalities and social injustices; and any people, who are not willing to content themselves with this, are thought unfit for liberty.

To J F D Maurice, 11 may 1865:

I sympathise with the feeling of (if I may so call it) mental loneliness, which shows itself in your letter and sometimes in your published writings. In our age and country every person with any mental power at all, who both thinks for himself and has a conscience, must feel himself, to a very great degree, alone.

To Parke Godwin, 15 may 1865, in a letter of tribute to the assassinated President Lincoln:

(Lincoln was) the great citizen who had afforded so noble an example of the qualities befitting the first magistrate of a free people, and

who in the most trying circumstances had gradually won not only the admiration, but almost the personal affection of all who love freedom and appreciate simplicity and uprightness.

...though there is a portion of the higher and middle classes of Great Britain who so dread and hate democracy that they cannot wish prosperity or power to a democratic people, I firmly believe that this feeling is not general even in our privileged classes.

To David Urquhart, the diplomat, 4 oct. 1866:

You approve of my speech because you say I am not on this occasion standing up for the negroes, or for liberty, deeply as both are interested in the subject - but for the first necessity of human society, law. One would have thought that when this was the matter in question, all political parties might be expected to be unanimous. But my eyes were first opened to the moral condition of the English nation (I except in these matters the working classes) by the atrocities perpetrated in the Indian Mutiny, and the feelings which supported them at home. Then came the sympathy with the lawless rebellion of the Southern Americans in defence of an institution which is the sum of all lawlessness, as Wesley said it was of all villainy - and finally came this Jamaica business, the authors of which, from the first day I knew of it, I determined that I would do all in my power to bring to justice if there was not another man in Parliament to stand by me. You rightly judge that there is no danger of my sacrificing such a purpose to any personal advancement...

To the Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 26 july, 1868:

I do not feel it consistent... to identify myself to any greater extent with the management, while it is thought necessary or advisable to limit the Society's operations to the offences committed by the uninfluential classes of society. So long as such scenes as the pigeon- shooting exhibitions lately commented upon in the newspapers take place under the patronage and in the presence of the supposed elite of the higher classes, male and female, without attracting the notice of your Society, this respect of persons, though it may be prudent, is too foreign to my opinions and feelings to allow of my sharing in any, even indirect, responsibility for it.

To Edwin Chadwick, 2 may 1869:

Lord Russell's Bill, and its favourable reception by the Lords, was no otherwise of importance than of showing the need which the Lords feel of strengthening their position. So small a number of life members would do little good even if they were always honestly selected, which they will not be. A few good names may be put in at first, but as a rule the life peerage will be a refuge for the mediocrities of past administrations. If now and then a thoughtful and vigorous man gets in, he will no doubt have the means of publicly speaking his thoughts, but to an inattentive audience; for the peers are too stupid and too conservative to be moved except by a party leader who they think will carry obstructiveness to the utmost limits of practicability; and the public pay little attention to speeches in the House of Lords.

I doubt if a second chamber can ever again carry weight in English politics unless popularly elected...

These are my opinions, but I do not wish to throw cold water on anything which acknowledges an evil and points in the direction of an improvement.

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John Stuart Mill MP moves personal representation/proportional representation.

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Suspicion of its perfection. Its early progress.

30 May 1867. Commons Sitting. PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL [BILL 79.]

Note: This page is edited from an original page on-line at the Hansard site:

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/>

Provisions of Mill amendment for personal representation.

JOHN STUART MILL , who had given Notice of an Amendment in line 27, to leave out all after "From and after the" and insert:

1. Passing of the present Bill, every local constituency shall, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, return one Member for every quota of its registered electors actually voting at that election, such quota being a number equal to the quotient obtained by dividing by six hundred and fifty-eight the total number of votes polled throughout the kingdom at the same Election, and if such quotient be fractional, the integral number next less: Provided always, That where the number of votes given by the constituency shall not be equal to such quota, the quota may be completed by means of votes given by persons duly qualified as electors in any other part of the United Kingdom; and the candidate who shall have obtained such quota may notwithstanding be returned as Member for the said constituency if he shall have obtained a majority of the votes given therein as hereinafter mentioned.

(Elector to vote orally or by voting paper. Voting paper may state a succession of names in case those named in priority have obtained the quota.)

2. Every elector shall vote at his appointed polling place, either orally as heretofore or by a voting paper, and may on such voting paper state in numerical order the names of any of the candidates at such general Election at one of whom, taken in regular succession, the vote shall be given in case those named first or in priority on such voting paper shall, before it comes to be appropriated, have obtained the quota; but no vote given orally shall be taken for more than one candidate, and no vote given on a voting paper shall be counted for more than one candidate: Provided, that nothing herein contained shall prevent the transmission of voting papers under the Act of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth years of Victoria, chapter fifty-three. (What candidates are to be returned as Members.)

3. The candidates returned as Members shall be all those respectively for whom a quota of votes shall have been polled, whether in one or more than one constituency; and if less than six hundred and fifty-eight candidates have such quota, then those for whom the next greater number of votes have been polled, until the number of six hundred and fifty-eight shall be completed; and such of the six hundred and fifty-eight candidates chosen as aforesaid as have the majority or greater number of votes in any local constituency shall be returned as Members for such constituency. (Vacated seats to be filled up by the voters who returned the last Member.)

4. Any seat vacated by the acceptance of office, promotion to the peerage, or death of a Member, shall be filled by election by the body or majority of the body of voters by whose actual votes he was returned. (Speaker to lay before Parliament rules for ascertaining the number of votes polled of the quota, and for regulating form of voting papers and declaring the names of the Members.)

5. The Speaker of the House of Commons shall cause to be framed and shall lay before Parliament such rules as may be necessary for ascertaining and for certifying to the returning officers the total number of votes polled, and the number of the quota, for regulating the form of the voting papers, and the record, collection, and disposition thereof, and the appropriation of the same in the order of the names on each paper, the method to be observed in determining and declaring the six hundred and fifty-eight members who have respectively obtained the quota or number of votes nearest to the quota; and for carrying the provisions of this Act into effect in any matter not otherwise provided for; and such rules shall, if the House shall so resolve, be entered on the Journals, and the same, when so entered, with any amendment or amendments thereof, at any time adopted by the Resolution of the House, shall be observed and performed at all future Elections by all officers and persons to whose duties respectively the same relate.

The need for complete and direct representation.

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[MILL] said: Sir, the proposal to which I am about to call the attention of the House, and which I move as an Amendment to the redistribution clauses, because if it were adopted it would itself constitute a complete system of re-distribution, has been framed for the purpose of embodying a principle which has not yet been introduced into our discussions; a principle which is overlooked in the practical machinery of our constitution, and disregarded in most of the projects of constitutional reformers, but which I hold, nevertheless, to be most important to the beneficial working of representative government; and if while we are making great changes in our system of representation we omit to engraft this principle upon it, the advantages we obtain by our changes will be very much lessened, and whatever dangers they may be thought to threaten us with, will be far greater and more real than they otherwise would be. And this I think I can establish by reasons so clear and conclusive, that, though I cannot expect to obtain at once the assent of the House, I do confidently hope to induce many Members of it to take the subject into serious consideration.

I cannot, indeed, hold out as an inducement that the principle I contend for is fitted to be a weapon of attack or defence for any political party. It is neither democratic nor aristocratic; neither Tory, Whig, nor Radical; or, let me rather say, it is all these at once; it is a principle of fair play to all parties and opinions without distinction; it helps no one party or section to bear down others, but is for the benefit of whoever is in danger of being borne down. It is therefore a principle in which all parties may concur, if they prefer permanent justice to a temporary victory; and I believe that what chiefly hinders them is that, as the principle has not yet found its way into the commonplaces of political controversy, many have never heard of it, and many others have heard just enough about it to misunderstand it.

In bringing this subject before the House, I am bound to prove two things: first, that there is a serious practical evil requiring remedy; and then, that the remedy I propose is practicable, and would be efficacious. I will first speak of the evil. It is a great evil; it is one which exists not only in our own, but in every other representative constitution; we are all aware of it; we all feel and acknowledge it in particular cases; it enters into all our calculations, and bears with a heavy weight upon us all. But as we have always been used to think of it as incurable, we think of it as little as we can; and are hardly aware how greatly it affects the whole course of our affairs, and how prodigious would be the gain to our policy, to our morality, to our civilization itself, if the evil were susceptible of a remedy.

This House and the country are now anxiously engaged, and certainly not a day too soon, in considering what can be done for the unrepresented. We are all discussing how many non-electors deserve to be represented, and in what mode to give them representation. But my complaint is that the electors are not represented. The representation which they seem to have, and which we have been quarrelling about the extension of, is a most imperfect and insufficient representation, and this imperfect and insufficient representation is what we are offering to the new classes of voters whom we are creating.

Just consider. In every Parliament there is an enormous fraction of the whole body of electors who are without any direct representation; consisting of the aggregate of the minorities in all the contested elections, together with we know not what minorities in those which, from the hopelessness of success, have not even been contested. All these electors are as completely blotted out from the constituency, for the duration of that Parliament, as if they were legally disqualified; most of them, indeed, are blotted out indefinitely, for in the majority of cases those who are defeated once are likely to be defeated again.

Here therefore is a large portion of those whom the Constitution intends to be represented, a portion which cannot average less than a third, and may approximate to a half, who are virtually in the position of non-electors. But the local majorities, are they truly represented? In a certain rough way they are. They have a Member or Members who are on the same side with themselves in party politics; if they are Conservatives, they have a professed Conservative; if Liberals, a professed Liberal. This is something; it is a great deal, even; but is it everything? Is it of no consequence to an elector who it is that sits in Parliament as his representative, if only he does not sit on the wrong side of the House?

Sir, we need more than this. We all desire not only that there should be a sufficient number of Conservatives or of Liberals in the House, but that these should, as far as possible, be the best men of their respective parties; and the elector, for himself, desires to be represented by the man who has most of his confidence in all things, and not merely on the single point of fidelity to a party. Now, this is so entirely unattainable under the present system, that it seems like a dream even to think of it. As a rule, the only choice offered to the elector is between the two great parties.

There are only as many candidates of each party as there are seats to be filled; to start any others would divide the party, and in most

cases ensure its defeat. And what determines who these candidates are to be? Sometimes the mere accident of being first in the field. Sometimes the fact of having stood and been defeated on some previous occasion, when the sensible men of the party did not engage in the contest, because they knew it to be hopeless. In general, half-a-dozen local leaders, who may be honest politicians, but who may be jobbing intriguers, select the candidate; and whether they are of the one kind or the other, their conduct is much the same: they select the gentleman who will spend most money; or, when this indispensable qualification is equally balanced, it answers best to propose somebody who has no opinions but the party ones; for every opinion which he has of his own, and is not willing to abnegate, will probably lose him some votes, and give the opposite party a chance.

How many electors are there, I wonder, in the United Kingdom who are represented by the person, whom, if they had a free choice, they would have themselves selected to represent them? In many constituencies, probably not one. I am inclined to think that almost the only electors who are represented exactly as they would wish to be are those who were bribed, for they really have got for their Member the gentleman who bribed highest. Sometimes, perhaps, the successful candidate's own tenants would have voted for him in preference to anyone else, however wide a choice had been open to them. But in most cases the selection is the result of a compromise; even the leaders not proposing the man they would have liked best, but being obliged to concede something to the prejudices of other members of the party.

Local votes with recourse to national candidates.

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Having thus, as I think, made out a sufficient case of evil requiring remedy, let me at once state the remedy I propose. My proposal, then, is this: That votes should be received in every locality, for others than the local candidates. An elector who declines to vote for any of the three or four persons who offer themselves for his own locality, should be allowed to bestow his vote on any one who is a candidate anywhere, whether put up by himself or by others. If the elector avails himself of this privilege, he will naturally vote for the person he most prefers: the one person among all that are willing to serve, who would represent him best; and if there are found in the whole kingdom other electors, in the proper number, who fix their choice on the same person, that person should be declared duly elected.

Some number of electors there must be who may be considered entitled to one representative. What that number is, depends on the numbers of the House, compared with the total number of electors in the country. Suppose that there is one Member for every 5,000 registered electors, or one for every 3,000 actual voters: then every candidate who receives 3,000 votes would be returned to this House, in whatever parts of the country his voters might happen to live. This is the whole of my proposal, as far as its substance is concerned. To give it effect, some subsidiary arrangements are necessary, which I shall immediately state.

But I must first notice an objection which presents itself on the thresh-hold, and has so formidable an appearance that it prevents many persons from giving any further consideration to the subject. It is objected that the plan destroys the local character of the representation. Every constituency, it is said, is a group having certain interests and feelings in common, and if you disperse these groups by allowing the electors to group themselves in other combinations, those interests and feelings will be deprived of their representation.

Now I fully admit that the interests and feelings of localities ought to be represented: and I add that they always will be represented; because those interests and feelings exist in the minds of the electors; and as the plan I propose has no effect but to give the freest and fullest play to the individual elector's own preferences, his local preferences are certain to exercise their proper amount of influence. I do not know what better guardian of a feeling can be wanted than the man who feels it, or how it is possible for a man to have a vote, and not carry his interests and feelings, local as well as general, with him to the polling-booth. Indeed, it may be set down as certain that the majority of voters in every locality will generally prefer to be represented by one of themselves, or one connected with the place by some special tie.

It is chiefly those who know themselves to be locally in a minority, and unable to elect a local representative of their opinions, who would avail themselves of the liberty of voting on the new principle. As far as the majority were concerned, the only effect would be that their local leaders would have a greatly increased motive to find out and bring forward the best local candidate that could be had; because the electors, having the power of transferring their votes elsewhere, would demand a candidate whom they would feel it a credit to vote for. The average quality of the local representation would consequently be improved; but local interests and feelings would still be represented, as they cannot possibly fail to be, as long as every elector resides in a locality.

If, however, the House attaches any weight to this chimerical danger, I would most gladly accept by way of experiment a limited application of the new principle. Let every elector have the option of registering himself either as a local or as a general voter. Let the elections for every county or borough take place on the local registry, as they do at present. But let those who choose to register themselves as members of a national constituency have representatives allowed to them in proportion to their number; and let these representatives and no others be voted for on the new principle.

Preference voting for citizens representatives rather than just party flags. Imaginary difficulties.

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I will now state the additional but very simple arrangements required to enable the plan to work. Supposing 3,000 voters to be the number fixed upon as giving a claim to a representative, it is necessary that no more than this minimum number should be counted for any candidate; for otherwise a few very eminent or very popular names might engross nearly all the votes, and no other person might obtain the required number, or any number that would justify his return. No more votes, then, being counted for any candidate than the number necessary for his election, the remainder of those who voted for him would lose their vote, unless they were allowed to put on their voting paper a second name, for whom the vote could be used if it was not wanted by the candidate who stood first. In case this second candidate also should not need the vote, the voter might add a third, or any greater number, in the order of his preference.

This is absolutely all that the elector would have to do, more than he does at present; and I think it must be admitted that this is not a difficult idea to master, and not beyond the comprehension of the simplest elector. The only persons on whom anything more troublesome would devolve are the scrutineers, who would have to sort the voting papers, and see for which of the names written in it each of them ought to be counted. A few simple rules would be necessary to guide the scrutineers in this process. My Amendment intrusts the duty of drawing up those rules to the judgment and experience of, the right hon. Gentleman who presides over our deliberations, subject to the approbation of the House.

Let me now ask hon. Members, Is there anything in all this, either incomprehensible, or insuperably difficult of execution? I can assure the House that I have not concealed any difficulty. I have given a complete, though a brief, account of what most hon. Members must have heard of, but few, I am afraid, know much about: the system of personal representation proposed by my eminent friend, Mr. Hare, a man distinguished by that union of large and enlightened general principles with an organizing intellect and a rare fertility of practical contrivance, which together constitute a genius for legislation.

People who have merely heard of Mr. Hare's plan have taken it into their heads that it is particularly hard to understand and difficult to execute. But the difficulty is altogether imaginary. To the elector there is no difficulty at all; to the scrutineers, only that of performing correctly an almost mechanical operation. Mr. Hare, anxious to leave nothing vague or uncertain, has taken the trouble to discuss in his book the whole detail of the mode of sorting the voting papers. People glance at this, and because they cannot take it all in at a glance, it seems to them very mysterious. But when was there any Act of Parliament that could be understood at a glance? and how can gentlemen expect to understand the details of a plan, unless they first possess themselves of its principle?

If we were to read a description, for example, of the mode in which letters are sorted at the Post Office, would it not seem to us very complicated? Yet, among so vast a number of letters, how seldom is any mistake made. Is it beyond the compass of human ability to ascertain that the first and second names on a voting paper have been already voted for by the necessary quota, and that the vote must be counted for the third? And does it transcend the capacity of the agents of the candidates, the chief registrar, or a Committee of this House, to find out whether this simple operation has been honestly and correctly performed? If these are not insuperable difficulties, I can assure the House that they will find there are no others.

Many will think that I greatly over-estimate the importance of securing to every elector a direct representation; because those who are not represented directly are represented indirectly. If Conservatives are not represented in the Tower Hamlets, or Liberals in West Kent, there are plenty of Conservatives and Liberals returned elsewhere; and those who are defeated may console themselves by the knowledge that their party is victorious in many other places. Their party, yes; but is that all we have to look to? Is representation of parties all we have a right to demand from our representative system?

If that were so, we might as well put up three flags inscribed with the words, Tory, Whig, and Radical, and let the electors make their choice among the flags: and when they have voted, let the leaders of the winning party select the particular persons who are to represent it. In this way we should have, I venture to say, an admirable representation of the three parties; all the seats which fell to the lot of each party would be filled by its steadiest and ablest adherents, by those who would not only serve the party best in the House, but do it most credit with the country. All political parties, merely as such, would be far better represented than they are now, when accidents of personal position have so great a share in determining who shall be the Liberal or who the Conservative Member for each place.

Why is it, then, that such a system of representation would be intolerable to us?

Sir, it is because we look beyond parties; because we care for something besides parties; because we know that the constitution does not exist for the benefit of parties, but of citizens; and we do not choose that all the opinions, feelings, and interests of all the members of the community should be merged in the single consideration of which party shall predominate. We require a House of Commons which shall be a fitting representative of all the feelings of the people, and not merely of their party feelings. We want all the sincere opinions and public purposes which are shared by a reasonable number of electors to be fairly represented here; and not only their opinions, but that they should be able to give effect by their vote to their confidence in particular men.

Then why, because it is a novelty, refuse to entertain the only mode in which it is possible to obtain this complete reflection in the House of the convictions and preferences existing in the constituent body? By the plan I propose every elector would have the option of voting for the one British subject who best represented his opinions, and to whom he was most willing to intrust the power of judging for him on subjects on which his opinions were not yet formed.

Representation of variety and minorities moreover guarantees majority decisions.

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Sir, I have already made the remark, that this proposal is not specially Liberal, nor specially Conservative, but is, in the highest degree, both Liberal and Conservative; and I will substantiate this by showing that it is a legitimate corollary from the distinctive doctrines of both parties.

Let me first address myself to Conservatives. What is it that persons of Conservative feelings specially deprecate in a plan of Parliamentary reform? It is the danger that some classes in the nation may be swamped by other classes. What is it that we are warned against as the chief among the dangers of democracy? not untruly as democracy is vulgarly conceived and practised. It is that the single class of manual labourers would, by dint of numbers, outvote all other classes, and monopolise the whole of the Legislature.

But by the plan I propose no such thing could happen; no considerable minority could possibly be swamped; no interest, no feeling, no opinion, which numbered in the whole country a few thousand adherents, need be without a representation in due proportion to its numbers. It is true that by this plan a minority would not be equivalent to a majority; a third of the electors could not outvote two-thirds, and obtain a majority of seats; but a third of the electors could always obtain a third of the seats; and these would probably be filled by men above the average in the influence which depends on personal qualities: for the voters who were outnumbered locally, would range the whole country for the best candidate, and would elect him without reference to anything but their personal confidence in him. The representatives of the minorities would, therefore, include many men whose opinion would carry weight even with the opposite party.

Then, again, it is always urged by Conservatives, and is one of the best parts of their creed, that the legislators of a nation should not all be men of the same stamp. A variety of feelings, interests, and prepossessions, should be found in this House; and it should contain persons capable of giving information and guidance on every topic of importance that is likely to arise. This advantage, we are often assured, has really been enjoyed under our present institutions, by which almost every separate class or interest which exists in the country is somehow represented, with one great exception, which we are now occupied in removing, that of manual labour. And this advantage many Conservatives think that we are now in danger of losing.

But the plan I propose ensures this variegated character of the representation in a degree never yet obtained, and guarantees its preservation under any possible extension of the franchise. Even universal suffrage, even the handing over of political predominance to the numerical majority of the whole people, would not then extinguish minorities. Every dissentient opinion would have the opportunity of making itself heard, and heard through the very best and most effective organs it was able to procure. We should not find the rich or the cultivated classes retiring from politics, as we are so often told they do in America, because they cannot present themselves to any body of electors with a chance of being returned.

Such of them as were known and respected out of their immediate neighbourhood would be elected in considerable numbers, if not by a local majority, yet by a union of local minorities; and instead of being deterred from offering themselves, it would be the pride and glory of such men to serve in Parliament; for what more inspiring position can there be for any man, than to be selected to fight the up-hill battle of unpopular opinions, in a public arena, against superior numbers? All, therefore, which the best Conservatives chiefly dread in the complete ascendancy of democracy, would be, if not wholly removed, at least diminished in a very great degree.

These are the recommendations of the plan when looked at on its Conservative side.

Let us now look at it in its democratic aspect. I claim for it the support of all democrats as being the only true realization of their political principles. What is the principle of democracy? Is it not that everybody should be represented, and that everybody should be represented equally? Am I represented by a Member against whom I have voted, and am ready to vote again? Have all the voters an equal voice, when nearly half of them have had their representative chosen for them by the larger half? In the present mode of taking the suffrages nobody is represented but the majority. But that is not the meaning of democracy.

Honest democracy does not mean the displacement of one privileged class, and the instalment of another in a similar privilege because it is a more numerous or a poorer class. That would be a mere pretence of democratic equality. That is not what the working classes want. The working classes demand to be represented, not because they are poor, but because they are human. No working man whom I have conversed with desires that the richer classes should be unrepresented, but only that their representation should not exceed what is due to their numbers: that all classes should have, man for man, an equal amount of representation. He does not desire that the majority should be alone represented. He desires that the majority should be represented by a majority, and the minority by a minority; and they only need to have it shown to them how this can be done.

But I will go further. It is not only justice to the minorities that is here concerned. Unless minorities are counted, the majority which prevails may be but a sham majority. Suppose that on taking a division in this House, you compelled a large minority to step aside, and counted no votes but those of the majority; whatever vote you then took would be decided by the majority of that majority. Does not every one see that this would often be deciding it by a minority? The mere majority of a majority may be a minority of the whole.

Now, what I have been hypothetically supposing to be done in this House, the present system actually does in the nation. It first excludes the minorities at all the elections. Not a man of them has any voice at all in determining the proceedings of Parliament. Well, now: if the Members whom the majorities returned were always unanimous, we should be certain that the majority in the nation had its way. But if the

majorities, and the Members representing them, are ever divided, the power that decides is but the majority of a majority.

Two-fifths of the electors, let us suppose, have failed to obtain any representation. The representatives of the other three-fifths are returned to Parliament, and decide an important question by two to one. Supposing the representatives to express the mind of their constituents, the question has been decided by a bare two-fifths of the nation, instead of a majority of it. Thus the present system is no more just to majorities than to minorities. It gives no guarantee that it is really the majority that preponderates. A minority of the nation, if it is a majority in the prevailing party, may outnumber and prevail over a real majority in the nation.

Majorities are never sure of outnumbering minorities unless every elector is counted: unless every man's vote is as effective as any other man's in returning a representative. No system but that which I am submitting to the House effects this, because it is the only system under which every vote tells, and every constituency is unanimous. This system, therefore, is equally required by the Conservative and by the Radical creeds. In practice, its chief operation would be in favour of the weakest; of those who were most liable to be outnumbered and oppressed.

Under the present suffrage it would operate in favour of the working classes. Those classes form the majority in very few of the constituencies, but they are a large minority in many, and if they amount, say to a third of the whole electoral body, this system would enable them to obtain a third of the representation. Under any suffrage approaching to universal, it would operate in favour of the propertied and of the most educated classes; and though it would not enable them to outvote the others, it would secure to them, and to the interests they represent, a hearing, and a just share in the representation.

True vs false democracy of reconciling vs conquering elections. Suspicion of its perfection. Its early progress.

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I am firmly persuaded, Sir, that all parties in this House and in the country, if they could but be induced to give their minds to the consideration of this proposal, would end by being convinced, not only that it is entirely consistent with their distinctive principles, but that it affords the only means by which all that is best in those principles can be practically carried out. It would be a healing, a reconciling measure: softening all political transitions, securing that every opinion, instead of conquering or being conquered by starts and shocks, and passing suddenly from having no power at all in Parliament to having too much, on the contrary, should wax or wane in political power in exact proportion to its growth or decline in the general mind of the country.

So perfectly does this system realize the idea of what a representative Government ought to be, that its perfection stands in its way, and is the great obstacle to its success. There is a natural prejudice against everything which professes much. Men are unwilling to think that any plan which promises a great improvement in human affairs, has not something quackish about it. I cannot much wonder at this prejudice, when I remember that no single number of a daily paper is published whose advertising columns do not contain a score of panaceas for all human ills; when, in addition to all the pamphlets which load our tables, every Member of this House, I suppose, daily receives private communications of plans by which the whole of mankind may at one stroke be made rich and prosperous, generally, I believe, by means of paper money.

But if this age is fertile in new nonsense, and in new forms of old nonsense, it is an age in which many great improvements in human affairs have really been made. It is also an age in which, whether we will or not, we are entering on new paths; we are surrounded by circumstances wholly without example in history; and the wonder would be if exigencies so new could be dealt with in a completely satisfactory manner by the old means. We should therefore ill-discharge our duty if we obstinately refused to look into new proposals.

This, Sir, is not the mere crotchet of an individual. It has been very few years before the world, but already, by the mere force of reason, it has made important converts among the foremost public writers and public men in Germany, in France, in Switzerland, in Italy, in our Australian colonies, and in the United States. In one illustrious though small commonwealth, that of Geneva, a powerful association has been organized and is at work, under the presidency of one of the most eminent men in the Swiss federation, agitating for the reform of the constitution on this basis.

And what in our own country? Why, Sir, almost every thinking person I know who has studied this plan, or to whom it has been sufficiently explained, is for giving it at least a trial. Various modes have been suggested of trying it on a limited scale. With regard to the practical machinery proposed, neither I nor the distinguished author of the plan are wedded to its details, if any better can be devised. If the principle of the plan were admitted, a Committee or a Royal Commission could be appointed to consider and report on the best means of providing for the direct representation of every qualified voter; and we should have a chance of knowing if the end we have in view could be attained by any better means than those which we suggest. But without some plan of the kind it is impossible to have a representative system really adequate to the exigencies of modern society.

In all states of civilization, and in all representative systems, personal representation would be a great improvement; but at present, political power is passing, or is supposed to be in danger of passing, to the side of the most numerous and poorest class. Against this class predominance, as against all other class predominance, the personal representation of every voter, and therefore the full

representation of every minority, is the most valuable of all protections. Those who are anxious for safeguards against the evils they expect from democracy should not neglect the safeguard which is to be found in the principles of democracy itself. It is not only the best safeguard, but the surest and most lasting: because it combats the evils and dangers of false democracy by means of the true, and because every democrat who understands his own principles must see and feel its strict and impartial justice.

§ Amendment proposed, at page 4, line 27, after the word "the," to insert the words: Passing of the present Bill, every local constituency shall, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, return one Member for every quota of its registered electors, actually voting at that election." (Mr. J. Stuart Mill.)

§ Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR JOHN STUART MILL said, he would obey what appeared to be the general wish of the House, and would not press his Amendment to a division; but there were many things which he might have said in reply if the temper of the House had permitted. He must, however, follow his hon. Friend behind him in thanking the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Viscount Cranborne) for his able speech, and for the conviction he had expressed that statesmen must make up their minds to think upon this subject as the only way of getting over a difficulty that must be got over. He must also express his warm acknowledgments to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the manner in which he had dealt with the question.

§ Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

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John Stuart Mill MP speeches on Parliamentary Reform.

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Note: These parliamentary speeches by Mill are edited from original Hansard reports on-line:
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Mill speech for greater enfranchisement of the working classes.

HC Deb 13 April 1866 vol 182 cc1227-321 1227

§ Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [12th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and which Amendment was:

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, while ready to consider, with a view to its settlement, the question of Parliamentary Reform, is of opinion that it is inexpedient to discuss a Bill for the reduction of the Franchise in England and Wales, until the House has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government, for the amendment of the Representation of the People," (Earl Grosvenor,) instead thereof.

§ Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

§ Debate resumed...

J. STUART MILL Although the question which will be put from the Chair relates ostensibly to the mere order of proceeding, it will hardly be denied, and least of all after the speech of the right hon. Baronet, that the question we are really discussing is, whether the Bill ought to pass. Indeed, the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn is the only speaker on the Opposition side who has argued the nominal issue as if he thought that it was the real one, or has even laid any great stress upon it. That noble Lord, in a speech marked by all the fairness and candour which were known to be his characteristics, and by even more than the ability - at least, by more varied and sustained ability - has said, I think, the very most and the very best that can be said in favour of the Amendment, considered as a substantive Motion.

He has brought forward considerations well calculated to make an impression, but only on one part of his audience - on those who, though they may be willing to consent to some Reform, look with extreme jealousy on the most important part of it, the enfranchisement of a portion of the working classes - who regard this less as a good to be desired, than as a doubtful, perhaps a dangerous, experiment, and, tremble lest they should eventually find themselves committed to giving those classes a trifle more representation than they were duly warned of beforehand.

What is the very worst extremity of evil with which the noble Lord threatens the House in case it should be so unguarded as to pass this Bill without the other measures of Parliamentary Reform by which it is to be succeeded?

Why, it is this: that if something happens which it requires the most improbable concurrence of chances to bring about, something against which neither the personal honour of the Government, nor the inexorable dates fixed by the Registration Acts, nor even the expressed will of Parliament, if Parliament should think fit to express its will, can guarantee us; in this all but impossible case there may happen - what? That the redistribution of seats may, in spite of all that can be done, possibly devolve upon a House of Commons elected under the enlarged franchise.

Now, I put it to the noble Lord's clear intellect - and impartial because clear - is this an argument which can have any weight with anybody who thinks the enlarged franchise an improvement - who thinks it calculated to give us a better Legislature? If the Legislature it gives us is

a better one for all other purposes, will it not be a better one for this purpose? If it can be trusted to govern us, if it can be trusted to tax us, if it can be trusted to legislate for us, can it not be trusted to revise its own Constitution? Does experience teach us to expect that this of all things is a work in which legislative bodies in general, and British Parliaments in particular, are likely to be rash, headstrong, precipitate, subversive, revolutionary?

I think, Sir, that a Parliament which was cautious in nothing else might be depended on for caution in meddling with the conditions of its own power. Sir, this formidable one chance in a thousand with which the noble Lord threatens us, is only terrific to those in whose eyes the Bill is a rash and portentous transfer of power to the working classes. To those who think that the enfranchising provisions are good in themselves, even if there were no redistribution of seats, and still better if there is, this phantom of evil has no terrors.

And that I believe to be the opinion of the great body of Reformers, both in and out of the House. We are, I dare say, as sincerely desirous as the noble Mover of the Amendment, that family and pocket boroughs should be extinguished, and the inordinate political influence of a few noble and opulent families abridged. We are, I believe, as anxious to curtail the power which wealth possesses, of buying its way into the House of Commons, and shutting the door upon other people, as the wealthiest gentleman present. But though we are quite orthodox on these great points of Conservative Parliamentary Reform - and look forward with delight to our expected co-operation with gentlemen on the opposite benches in the congenial occupation of converting them from theories into facts - we yet think that a measure of enfranchisement like this Bill - moderate, indeed, far more moderate than is desired by the majority of Reformers, but which does make the working classes a substantial power in this House - is not only a valuable part of a scheme of Parliamentary Reform, but highly valuable even if nothing else were to follow.

And as this is the only question among those raised on the present occasion which seems to me in the smallest degree worth discussing, I shall make no further apology for confining myself to it.

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Sir, measures may be recommended either by their principle, or by their practical consequences; and if they have either of these recommendations, they usually have both. As far as regards the principle of this measure, there is but little to disagree about; for a measure which goes no farther than this, does not raise any of the questions of principle on which the House is divided; and I cannot but think that the right hon. Baronet, in introducing those questions, has caused the debate to deviate somewhat from its proper course.

If it were necessary to take into consideration even all the reasonable things which can be said pro and con about democracy, the House would have a very different task before it. But this is not a democratic measure. It neither deserves that praise, nor, if hon. Members will have it so, that reproach. It is not a corollary from what may be called the numerical theory of representation. It is required by the class theory, which we all know is the Conservative view of the Constitution - the favourite doctrine, not only of what are called Conservative Reformers, but of Conservative non-Reformers as well. The opponents of Reform are accustomed to say that the Constitution knows nothing of individuals, but only of classes. Individuals, they tell us, cannot complain of not being represented, so long as the class they belong to is represented. But if any class is unrepresented, or has not its proper share of representation relatively to others, that is a grievance.

Now, all that need be asked at present is that this theory be applied to practice. There is a class which has not yet had the benefit of the theory. While so many classes, comparatively insignificant in numbers, and not supposed to be freer from class partialities or interests than their neighbours, are represented, some of them, I venture to say, greatly over-represented in this House, there is a class, more numerous than all the others, and therefore, as a mere matter of human feeling, entitled to more consideration - weak as yet, and therefore needing representation the more, but daily becoming stronger, and more capable of making its claims good - and this class is not represented. We claim, then, a large and liberal representation of the working classes, on the Conservative theory of the Constitution. We demand that they be represented as a class, if represented they cannot be as human beings; and we call on hon. Gentlemen to prove the sincerity of their convictions by extending the benefit of them to the great majority of their countrymen.

But hon. Gentlemen say, the working classes are already represented. It has just come to light, to the astonishment of everybody, that these classes actually form 26 per cent of the borough constituencies. They kept the secret so well - it required so much research to detect their presence on the register, their votes were so devoid of any traceable consequences; they had all this power of shaking the foundations of our institutions, and so obstinately persisted in not doing it - that hon. Gentlemen are quite alarmed, and recoil in terror from the abyss into which they have not fallen.

Well, Sir, it certainly seems that this amount of enfranchisement of the working classes has done no harm. But if it has not done harm, perhaps it has not done much good either; at least, not the kind of good which we are talking about. A class may have a great number of votes in every constituency in the kingdom, and not obtain a single representative in this House. Their right of voting may be only the right of being everywhere outvoted. If, indeed, the mechanism of our electoral system admitted representation of minorities; if those who are outvoted in one place could join their votes with those who are outvoted in another; then, indeed, a fourth part, even if only of the borough electors, would be a substantial power, for it would mean a fourth of the borough representatives. 26 per cent concentrated would be a

considerable representation; but 26 per cent diffused may be almost the same as none at all.

The right hon. Baronet has said that a class, though but a minority, may, by cleverly managing its votes, be master of the situation, and that the tenant-farmers in Hertfordshire can carry an election. They may be able to decide whether a Tory or a Whig shall be elected; they may be masters of so small a situation as that. But what you are afraid of is, lest they should carry points on which their interest as a class is opposed to that of all other classes, on which if they were only a third of the constituency, the other two-thirds would be against them. Do you think they would be masters of such a situation as that?

Sir, there is no known contrivance by which in the long run a minority can outnumber a majority; by which one-third of the electors can out-vote the other two-thirds. The real share of the working classes in the representation is measured by the number of Members they can return - in other words, the number of constituencies in which they are the majority: and even that only marks the extreme limit of the influence which they can exercise, but by no means that which they will.

Why, Sir, among the recent discoveries, one is, that there are some half-dozen constituencies in which working men are even now a majority; and I put it to hon. Gentlemen, would anybody ever have suspected it? At the head of these constituencies is Coventry. Are the Members for Coventry generally great sticklers for working-class notions? It has, I believe, been observed that these Gentlemen usually vote quite correctly on the subject of French ribbons; and as that kind of virtue comes most natural to Conservatives, the Members for Coventry often are Conservative.

But probably that would happen much the same if the master manufacturers had all the votes. If, indeed, a tax on power-looms were proposed, and the Members for Coventry voted for it, that might be some indication of working class influences; though I believe that the working men, even at Coventry, have far outgrown that kind of absurdities. Even if the franchise were so much enlarged that the working men, by polling their whole strength, could return by small majorities 200 of the 658 Members of this House, there would not be fifty of that number who would represent the distinctive feelings and opinions of working men, or would be, in any class sense, their representatives.

And what if they had the whole 200? Even then, on any subject in which they were concerned as a class, there would be more than two to one against them when they were in the wrong. They could not succeed in anything, even when unanimous, unless they carried with them nearly a third of the representatives of the other classes; and if they did that, there would be, I think, a very strong presumption of their being in the right.

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As a matter of principle, then, and not only on liberal principles, but on those of the Conservative party, the case in favour of the Bill seems irresistible. But it is asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, what practical good do we expect? What particular measures do we hope to see carried in a reformed House which cannot be carried in the present? If I understand my right hon. Friend correctly, he thinks we ought to come to the House with a Bill of indictment against itself - an inventory of wrong things which the House does, and right things which it cannot be induced to do - and when, convinced by our arguments, the House pleads guilty, and cries "Peccavi," we have his permission to bring in a Reform Bill.

Sir, my right hon. Friend says we should not proceed on a priori reasoning, but should be practical. I want to know whether this is his idea of being practical. For my part, I am only sorry it is not possible that in the discussion of this question special applications should be kept entirely out of view: for if we descend to particulars, and point out this and that in the conduct of the House which we should like to see altered, but which the House, by the very fact that it does not alter them, does not think require alteration, how can we expect the House to take this as a proof that its Constitution needs Reform?

We should not at all advance our cause, while we should stir up all the most irritating topics in the domain of politics. Suppose, now - and I purposely choose a small instance to give the less offence - suppose we were to say that if the working classes had been represented it would not have been found so easy for hon. Gentlemen whose cattle were slaughtered by Act of Parliament, to get compensated twice over: once by a rate, and again by a rise of price. I use the case only for illustration; I lay no stress on it; but I ask, ought the debate on a Reform Bill to consist of a series of discussions on points similar to this, and a hundred times more irritating than this? Is it desirable to drag into this discussion all the points in which any one may think that the rights or interests of labour are not sufficiently regarded by the House?

I will ask another question. If the authors of the Reform Bill of 1832 had foretold (which they scarcely could have done, since they did not themselves know it), if they had predicted that through it we should abolish the Corn Laws; that we should abolish the Navigation Laws; that we should grant free trade to all foreigners without reciprocity; that we should reduce inland postage to a penny; that we should renounce the exercise of any authority over our colonies - all which things have really happened - does the House think that these announcements would have greatly inclined the Parliament of that day towards passing the Bill?

Whether the practical improvements that will follow a further Parliamentary Reform will be equal to these, the future must disclose; but whatever they may be, it is already certain that they are not at the present time regarded as improvements by the House, for if the House

thought so, there is nothing to hinder it from adopting them.

Sir, there is a better way of persuading possessors of power to give up a part of it; not by telling them that they make a bad use of their power - which, if it were true, they could not be expected to be aware of - but by reminding them of what they are aware of: their own fallibility.

Sir, we all of us know that we hold many erroneous opinions, but we do not know which of our opinions these are, for if we did they would not be our opinions. Therefore, reflecting men take precautions beforehand against their own errors, without waiting till they and all other people are agreed about the particular instances; and if there are things which, from their mental habits or their position in life, are in danger of escaping their notice, they are glad to associate themselves with others of different habits and positions, which very fact peculiarly qualifies them to see the precise things which they themselves do not see.

Believing the House to be composed of reasonable men, this is what we ask them to do.

Every class knows some things not so well known to other people, and every class, has interests which are more or less special to itself, and for which no protection is so effectual as its own. These may be à priori doctrines - but so is the doctrine that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; they are as much truths of common sense and common observation as that is, and persons of common sense act upon them with the same perfect confidence. I claim the benefit of these principles for the working classes. They require it more than any other class.

The class of lawyers, or the class of merchants, is amply represented, though there are no constituencies in which lawyers or merchants form the majority. But a successful lawyer or merchant easily gets into Parliament by his wealth or social position, and once there, is as good a representative of lawyers or merchants as if he had been elected on purpose; but no constituency elects a working man, or a man who looks at questions with working men's eyes. Is there, I wonder, a single Member of this House who thoroughly knows the working men's view of trades unions, or of strikes, and could bring it before the House in a manner satisfactory to working men? My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, if any one; perhaps not even he.

Are there many of us who so perfectly understand the subject of apprenticeships, let us say, or of the hours of labour, as to have nothing to learn on the subject from intelligent operatives? I grant that, along with many just ideas and much valuable knowledge, you would sometimes find pressed upon you erroneous opinions, mistaken views of what is for the interest of labour; and I am not prepared to say that if the labouring classes were predominant in the House, attempts might not be made to carry some of these wrong notions into practice.

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But there is no question at present about making the working classes predominant. What is asked is a sufficient representation to ensure that their opinions are fairly placed before the House, and are met by real arguments, addressed to their own reason, by people who can enter into their way of looking at the subjects in which they are concerned. In general, those who attempt to correct the errors of the working classes do it as if they were talking to babies. They think any trivialities sufficient; if they condescend to argue, it is from premises which hardly any working man would admit; they expect that the things which appear self-evident to them will appear self-evident to the working classes: their arguments never reach the mark, never come near what a working man has in his mind, because they do not know what is in his mind. Consequently, when the questions which are near the hearts of the working men are talked about in this House, there is no want of good will to them, that I cheerfully admit; but everything which is most necessary to prove to them is taken for granted.

Do not suppose that working men would always be unconvincible by such arguments as ought to satisfy them. It is not one of the faults of democracy to be obstinate in error. An Englishman who had lived some years in the United States lately summed up his opinion of the Americans by saying, "they are the most teachable people on the face of the earth," Old countries are not as teachable as young countries, but I believe it will be found that the educated artizans, those especially who take interest in politics, are the most teachable of all our classes. They have much to make them so; they are, as a rule, more in earnest than any other class; their opinions are more genuine, less influenced by what so greatly influences some of the other classes. The desire of getting on, and their social position is not such as to breed self conceit. Above all, there is one thing to which, I believe, almost every one will testify who has had much to do with them, and of which even my own limited experience supplies striking examples, there is no class which so well bears to be told of its faults; to be told of them even in harsh terms, if they believe that the person so speaking to them says what he thinks, and has no ends of his own to serve by saying it.

I can hardly conceive a nobler course of national education than the debates of this House would become, if the notions, right and wrong, which are fermenting in the minds of the working classes, many of which go down very deep into the foundations of society and government, were fairly stated and genuinely discussed within these walls. It has often been noticed how readily in a free country people resign themselves even to the refusal of what they ask, when everything which they could have said for themselves has been said by somebody in the course of the discussion.

The working classes have never yet had this tranquillising assurance. They have always felt that not they themselves, perhaps, but their opinions, were prejudged; were condemned without being listened to. But let them have the same equal opportunities which others have of pleading their own cause; let them feel that the contest is one of reason and not of power. and if they do not obtain what they desire, they

will as readily acquiesce in defeat, or trust to the mere progress of reason for reversing the verdict, as any other portion of the community. And they will, much often than at present, obtain what they desire.

Let me refer hon. Gentlemen to Tocqueville, who is so continually quoted when he says anything uncomplimentary to democracy, that those who have not read him might mistake him for an enemy of it, instead of its discriminating but sincere friend, Tocqueville says that, though the various American Legislatures are perpetually making mistakes, they are perpetually correcting them too; and that the evil, such as it is, is far outweighed by the salutary effects of the general tendency of their legislation, which is maintained, in a degree unknown elsewhere, in the direction of the interest of the people. Not that vague abstraction, the good of the country, but the actual, positive well-being of the living human creatures who compose the population.

But we are told that our own legislation has made great progress in this direction; that the House has repealed the Corn Laws, removed religious disabilities, and got rid of I know not how many more abominations.

Sir, it has; and I am far from disparaging these great reforms, which have probably saved the country from a violent convulsion. As little would I undervalue the good sense and good feeling which have made the governing classes of this country capable of thus far advancing with the times. But they have their recompense: *habes pretium, cruet noa figeris*. Their reward is that they are not hated, as other privileged classes have been. And that is the fitting reward for ceasing to do harm; for merely repealing bad laws which Parliament itself had made.

But is this all that the Legislature of a country like ours can offer to its people? Is there nothing for us to do, but only to undo the mischief that we or our predecessors have done? Are there not all the miseries of an old and crowded society waiting to be dealt with? the curse of ignorance, the curse of pauperism, the curse of disease, the curse of a whole population born and nurtured in crime? All these things we are just beginning to look at; just touching with the tips of our fingers: and by the time two or three more generations are dead and gone, we may perhaps have discovered how to keep them alive, and how to make their lives worth having.

I must needs think that we should get on much faster with all this, the most important part of the business of Government in our days, if those who are the chief sufferers by the great chronic evils of our civilization had representatives among us to stimulate our zeal, as well as to inform us by their experience. Of all great public objects, the one which would be most forwarded by the presence of working people's representatives in this House is the one in which we flatter ourselves we have done most: popular education.

And let me here offer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, who demands practical arguments, a practical argument which I think ought to come home to him.

If those whose children we vote money to instruct had been properly represented in this House, he would not have lost office on the Revised Code. The working classes would have seen in him an administrator of a public fund, honestly determined that the work for which the public paid should be good, honest work. They are not the people to prefer a greater quantity of sham teaching to a smaller quantity of real teaching at a less expense. Real education is the thing they want, and as it is what he wanted, they would have understood him and upheld him.

I have myself seen these services remembered to his honour, even at this moment of exasperation, by one of the leaders of the working classes. And, unless I am mistaken - it is not my opinion alone - very few years of a real working class representation would have passed over our heads before there would be in every parish a school rate, and the school doors freely open to all the world; and in one generation from that time England would be an educated nation.

Will it ever become so by your present plan, which gives to him that hath, and only to him that hath? Never.

If there were no reason for extending the franchise to the working classes except the stimulus it would give to this one alone of the Imperial works which the present state of society urgently demands from Parliament, the reason would be more than sufficient. These, Sir, are a few of the benefits which I expect from a further Parliamentary Reform; and as they depend altogether upon one feature of it, the effective representation of the working classes, their whole weight is in favour of passing the present Bill, without regard to any Bills that may follow. I look upon a liberal enfranchisement of the working classes as incomparably the greatest improvement in our representative institutions which we at present have it in our power to make; and as I should be glad to receive this greatest improvement along with others, so I am perfectly willing to accept it by itself.

Such others as we need, we shall, no doubt, end by obtaining, and a person must be very simple who imagines that we should have obtained them a day sooner if Ministers had incumbered the subject by binding up any of them with the present Bill.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL:

EXPENSES.

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J. STUART MILL The right hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the House appears to me to have raised a difficulty which is, in fact, no difficulty at all, and which he himself pointed out the means of removing. The obvious remedy against relieving the sham candidate, who might have the show of hands, at the cost of the bonâ fide candidate, with a chance of election, was to require deposits from all. But I cannot help thinking that a great deal too much is said of the danger of sham candidates. The expense of the hustings, or the returning officer's expenses, are not only a very small part of the expense of elections as they now are; but I am afraid bear a very small proportion to the expense which it is impossible to prevent. Though a great amount of expense, which, though not corrupt, is very noxious, ought to be, and can be, prevented, it is impossible to prevent, or defray out of a public fund, such expenses as those of advertisements, printing, public meetings to address the electors.

The candidates of whom all seem so much afraid, and who have no chance of being elected, cannot present themselves to the electors without incurring a certain amount of these expenses, and if they cannot pay these it is obvious nobody need care for their candidature. The hon. and learned Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Ayrton) has said that if this sham candidature is kept up, the counties or the other candidates may be put to expense. But I have no doubt the general opinion would so strongly condemn this, that it would be hardly possible for anyone who cares for the opinion of the constituency, and wishes to make himself favourably known to them, to present himself in this capacity.

It may happen, perhaps, or the public may be led to think, that under this horror of sham candidates there is concealed a greater fear of real candidates. This is, as was well observed by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Beresford Hope), part of a much greater question, that of election expenses generally, with which, in all its parts, this House must necessarily have to deal; and I hope it will see the necessity of dealing with it soon. But this particular expense, though, a small part of the total cost of elections, is a part which it is really in the power of the House to control. It is a necessary part of the expenditure of the country, like any other portion of the public charges.

If a foreigner asked how this country provided for that part of its expenditure which attends the election of its representatives, would he not be astonished to hear that it was done by a tax on candidates? Of all sorts of taxation, was there ever such a partial and unjust specimen as that would be? But it is really a great deal worse. I can compare it to nothing short of requiring a Judge to pay large sums towards the cost of the administration of justice. It is true that you make men pay for commissions in the army, but you do not apply the price of these commissions towards defraying the expense of the army. Does this House, in any other case, arrange to defray any part of the necessary expenses of the country by a special tax on the individuals who carry on its service?

The hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent (Mr. Beresford Hope), though he has fears of the consequences of the constitutional change we are making, which I by no means share, has expressed an anxiety in which, I think, we must all participate: a sense of the duty under which this House and the country now lie, to provide for educating, in the morality of politics, that large class who are now for the first time to be admitted to the electoral suffrage. What sort of a lesson are we giving them; what sort of instructions do we offer, when we lead them to believe that the great trust of legislating for this country is a thing to be paid for, that it is worth while paying for it, and that men can be made to pay for it? What more natural than that they should think it might as well be paid for directly to those who confer it?

The noble Lord who spoke earlier in the debate (Lord Hotham) seems to consider that the law of demand and supply should be left to regulate these matters, so that, in fact, those who are willing to pay money should have a clear field, and that the representation should be knocked down to the highest bidder. That is, perhaps, to a certain extent, done already; but the House ought not to extend and perpetuate the practice.

There is in this country a large and growing class of persons who have suddenly and rapidly acquired wealth, and to whom it is worth any sacrifice of money to obtain social position. The less they have to recommend them in any other respect, the less chance they have of obtaining a place in what is called good society, esteem, either by qualities useful and ornamental, the more sure they are to resort, if they can, to the only infallible and ready means of gaining their end, the obtaining a seat in this House. This is a growing evil which ought to be guarded against.

I hope the Government will deal with this subject in all its parts, as it is certainly highly needful to do; but we have now an opportunity of dealing with one part which is entirely in our control, and which forms an element of the question we are now discussing. We can deal with that small part of election expenses which is an unavoidable part of the expense of governing the country, and which, though the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) said it would be extremely shabby to throw on the constituencies, I think it would be a monstrous deal more shabby to throw on the candidates.

When a man has no personal object of his own to gain by obtaining a seat in this House, it is not for the House to require that he should pay the expense which the country and the electors incur by his election: if he has any such object, we ought to do everything in our power, and to throw every obstacle in his way, to prevent him from obtaining it by money. Above all, it is our duty to show to the new electors, and that large portion of the old who, I am sorry to say, still need the lesson, that the business of election is a thing far removed from aught of buying and selling; that the business of a Member of this House is a laborious and onerous task, and when not sought from personal motives, one which it requires a high sense of public duty to undertake, and that the burthen, therefore, ought not to be increased by throwing any part of the expense on the candidate. We ought, above all things, to show the electors that they are doing what we and the world consider disgraceful, if they put the candidate to any expense, and thus tempt him to use his seat for his personal advantage.

Proportional Representation of minorities ensures majorities prevail but not unduly.

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5 July 1867. Commons Sitting. PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL. [BILL 79.] COMMITTEE.

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committee-progress-july-4HC Deb 05 July 1867 vol 188 cc1068-124 1068

§ Bill considered in Committee. § (In the Committee.) § New Clause (Power to distribute votes.) At any contested Election for a County or Borough represented by more than two Members, and having more than one seat vacant, every voter shall be entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of vacant seats, and may give all such votes to one candidate, or may distribute them among the candidates as he think fit.(Mr. Lowe.)

§ Question again proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

§ MR. J. STUART MILL I hope my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham will forgive me if the highly Conservative speech which he has delivered, almost the first which I ever heard him deliver with which I could not sympathize, has not converted me from the eminently democratic opinions which I have held for a great number of years. I am very glad that my hon. Friend stated so candidly the extremely Conservative vein of thought and tone of feeling which is the foundation of his political feelings. It is true that it is almost as opposite a frame of mind from my own as it is possible to conceive; but, fortunately, in the case of most of the practical questions that we have to decide we draw nearly the same conclusions from our so different premises.

Nevertheless, I am extremely glad that my hon. Friend has shown that it is upon the principle of standing by old things, and resisting newfangled notions, that his antipathy to the proposal of my right hon. Friend the Member for Calne, which I most strongly support, has been derived. It is the less necessary that I should address the House at any length upon this question, because on a previous occasion I expressed myself strongly in favour of the principles upon some of which this Motion rests, and expressed my strong sense of the necessity for a change in our mode of election, directed in some degree to the same ends as those pointed out by this almost insignificant makeshift - a makeshift not, however, without considerable real efficacy, and resting in part upon the same principles upon which Mr. Hare's system of personal representation is founded.

There are two principles which we must mainly regard. In the first place, it appears to me that any body of persons who are united by any ties, either of interest or of opinion, should have, or should be able to have, if they desire it, influence and power in this House proportionate to that which they exercise out of it. This, of course, excludes the idea of applying such a system as this to constituencies having only two Members, because in that case its application would render a minority of one-third equal to a majority.

The other principle upon which I support the representation of minorities is because I wish - although this may surprise some hon. Members - that the majority should govern. We heard a great deal formerly about the tyranny of the majority, but it appears to me that many hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House are now reconciled to that tyranny, and are disposed to defend and maintain it against us democrats. My own opinion is, that any plan for the representation of minorities must operate in a very great degree to diminish and counteract the tyranny of majorities. I wish to maintain the just ascendancy of majorities, but this cannot be done unless minorities are represented.

The majority in this House is got at by the elimination of two minorities. You first eliminate at the election the minority out of the House, and then upon a division you eliminate the minority in the House. Now, it may very well happen that those combined minorities would greatly outnumber the majority which prevails in this House, and consequently that the majority does not now govern. The true majority can only be maintained if all minorities are counted; if they are counted there is only one process of elimination, and only one minority left out.

Perhaps I may be allowed to answer one or two objections which have been made to the proposal of my right hon. Friend, The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies urged that, according to our constitution, representation should be by communities, and upon that subject he said several things with which it is impossible not to agree. But it seems to me that this is one of many remarkable proofs now offering themselves, that hon. Gentlemen opposite, not content with coming to our opinions, are now adopting our arguments.

For instance, the right hon. Gentleman insisted upon the greatness of the mistake of supposing that the country was divided into a majority and a minority, instead of into majorities and minorities. I have said that myself I should think at least 500 times. The right hon. Gentleman said one thing that perfectly amazed me. He said, as we all admit, that it was wrong that the representative of any community should represent it only in a single aspect, should represent only one interest, only its Tory or its Liberal opinions; and he added that, at present, this was not the case, but that such a state of things would be produced by the adoption of this proposal.

I apprehend that then, even more than now, each party would desire to be represented, and would feel the importance of getting itself represented by those men who would be most acceptable to the general body of the constituency; and therefore on all other points, except that of being Liberals or Tories, those Members would represent the constituencies fully as much, if not more, than they do now.

The right hon. Gentleman thinks that the local communities ought to be represented as units, but that is not my opinion. For example, the

right hon. Gentleman would contend that if a Member were elected by two-thirds of a constituency he ought to sit in that House as representing the whole. If that were the case they would evidently pass for what they are not. I have no idea of Members sitting in this House as the representatives of mere names of places, or bricks and mortar, or some particular part of the terrestrial globe, in different localities. What we want is the representation of the inhabitants of those places. If there should be a place in which two-thirds of the constituency are Conservative, and one-third Liberal, it is a falsehood to contend that the Conservative Member represents the Liberals of that place.

On the other hand, if there were three Members for such a place, two of whom represented the majority, and the third the minority, there would be a full representation of the constituency, and certainly a far more accurate representation than if a man returned by a simple majority assumed to represent the whole constituency.

Another objection made and insisted upon by my hon. Friend below me, in one of the most eloquent parts of his speech, and in the spirit of which I quite agree, is that the effect of this system will be to put an end to contests at elections, and to all the instruction they afford, and all the public spirit and interest in public affairs which they excite. This appears to me to be an opinion, which only the extreme dislike that my hon. Friend professes for everything new in politics prevents him from seeing to be an entire mistake.

The fault which my hon. Friend and others find with the proposed mode of election is one that is in an eminent degree attributable to the existing system; because under that system wherever it is known from the state of the registration that one side is able to return all the Members, the other side now take little or no interest in the election, and therefore it will be evident that if those persons who cannot be represented in their own locality cannot obtain a representation elsewhere, representation, so far as they are concerned, will be a perfectly effete institution.

What is it that induces people when they are once beaten at an election to try again? Is it not the belief that possibly a change has taken place in the opinions of at least some of the electors, or that, at all events, there has been such a change in the general feeling of the constituency that there is some chance of their being returned, and therefore there is a sufficient motive to induce them to try again? But that motive never can exist under the present system where there is so great a discrepancy between the parties as two-thirds and one-third, because in no case can one-third of the constituency ever hope to convert itself into a majority. What motive, then, is there for trying?

But under the new system, suppose the minority obtains one Member out of three, the minority can always try for the second seat, and precisely the same motive will exist if the parties should be nearly equal. Indeed, in such a case, the motive would be all the stronger, because then the majority will try to get all the members. What will be the case where there are three Members to be returned? The majority of two-thirds will only have two of the Members, and if any change in opinion takes place favourable to the minority they will always be in a position to bid for the third seat; so that I apprehend the healthy excitement of contest in an election, which follows from the existence of the motives which will induce persons to embark in the struggle, will be more certainly guaranteed by the more perfect representation of the constituency.

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It has been argued by my hon. Friend below me, and it has been several times insisted on by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Executive will be rendered very weak by the adoption of this principle, and I must own that there is some truth and justice in that argument. But the House cannot fail to perceive that so long as you give to the minority the same power as is possessed by the majority, it is perfectly clear that there may be a large majority of the constituency in favour of the Government, while there may be no majority in the House. At the present moment we do not care what majority the Government may have in the country; all that we want is to prevent it having a large majority in the House.

No one is more opposed to such a state of things than I am; but the practical application is, that we wish to prevent the Government having a large majority in the House, with a small majority in the country. That is the case in Australia, as was very strongly exemplified on the question of Free Trade and protection, and also in the United States, where there is a moderate difference in the constituencies between one party, and the other, but a very much greater difference in the House of Representatives.

When the right hon. Gentleman says that this system will make a weak Government, my answer is that it is not desirable that a Government should be a strong one, if it rests on a small majority of the constituencies; nor is it desirable that a Government should be lured on and deceived by a great majority in the House; because a very small change in the constituencies would be sufficient to deprive them of that majority, and it is not desirable that the policy of the Government should be tumbled about from one extreme to the other when the opinion of the constituency is almost equally divided between the two parties.

I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, that in revolutionary times it is necessary that a party should be as strong as possible while the fight lasts, since the sooner the fighting is over the better. But although in such a case there should be a decisive predominance, such times are exceptional, and circumstances do not apply which apply in ordinary and peaceful times. They are times for which we cannot legislate or adapt our ordinary institutions. Under such circumstances men may be obliged to dispense with all law, and, if necessary, to have a dictatorship in the hands of one man, but that is altogether an exceptional case,

I am extremely anxious that the feeling should not get abroad, from the circumstance of the right hon. Member for Calne having brought forward this proposal, and from its being so largely supported by Gentlemen on the other side of the House, that this is essentially a Conservative "move," and is intended solely for the purpose of doing away, as far as possible with the effect of the Reform Bill now before us. I have always entertained these opinions, long before the introduction of this Reform Bill, and although I never supposed that I should see such a Reform as this adopted in my life, I have protested and reprobated oppression of this kind, on whichever side it has been practised.

The only reason why it can be said that it is brought forward as a Conservative measure, and in aid of Conservatives, is that it really operates in favour of those who are likely to be weakest; it is those who are in danger of being outnumbered and subjected to the tyranny of a majority who are protected. I have always been afraid that the Conservative party would not see the necessity of these things until they actually saw that it is their interest, and that they would not see it until the power has passed away to the other side. Had they taken up the question four or five years ago they might by this time have made it the general opinion of the country, and have led the masses of the people to be more just when their time came than they have been to them. Their eyes are not so soon opened to those things which appear to be against them as they are to those that are in their favour; but there are minds on the other side of the House quite capable of seeing the value and importance of the principle, and of representing it with such effect that ultimately the principle of the representation of minorities will be generally adopted.

Mill answers questions about his views on Representative Government.

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HC Deb 28 May 1868 vol 192 cc956-1010 956

MR. J. STUART MILL Hon. Gentlemen opposite in considerable numbers have shown a very great desire to inform the House, not so much as to their views on the question before us, as with regard to what I have said or written upon the subject, and they have also shown a great desire to know the reasons I have for the course which they suppose I am going to take upon the question.

I should be sorry to refuse any hon. Gentleman so very small a request, but I must first of all correct a mistake made by the right hon. Baronet (Sir John Pakington) who has just sat down. I did not allow myself to be persuaded not to speak upon the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Hull (Mr. Clay). I had various reasons for the silence which I observed on that occasion. One of these I have the less hesitation in stating, because I think it is one with which the House will fully sympathize: a decided disinclination for being made a catspaw of. What other reasons I had may possibly appear in the very few observations that I am now about to make, for the gratification of those hon. Gentlemen who show so much friendly concern for my consistency.

No doubt it is a very flattering thing to find one's writings so much referred to and quoted; but any vanity I might have felt in consequence has been considerably dashed, by observing that hon. Gentlemen's knowledge of my writings is strictly limited to the particular passages which they quote. I suppose they found the books too dull to read any further. But if they had done me the honour to read on, they would have learnt a little more about my opinions than they seem to know. It may be that I have suggested plurality of votes and various other checks as proper parts of a general system of representation; but I should very much like to know where any Gentleman finds I have stated that checks and safeguards are required against a £7 franchise?

The proposals I made had reference to universal suffrage, of which I am a strenuous advocate. It appeared to me that certain things were necessary in order to prevent universal suffrage from degenerating into the mere ascendancy of a particular class. Is there any danger that the working class will acquire a numerical ascendancy by the reduction of the franchise qualification to £7? It is ridiculous to suppose such a thing.

The effect of the present Bill will not be to create the ascendancy of a class, but to weaken and mitigate the ascendancy of a class; and there is no need for the particular checks which I suggested. I must, however, except one of them, which is equally desirable in any representative constitution: the representation of minorities; and I heartily congratulate the right hon. Baronet on the qualified adhesion which he has given to that principle.

It is not intended specially as a check on democracy: it is a check upon whatever portion of the community is strongest; on any abuse of power by the class that may chance to be uppermost. Instead of being opposed to democracy, it is actually a corollary from the democratic principle, for on that principle every one would have a vote, and all votes would be of equal value; but without the representation of minorities all votes have not an equal value, for practically nearly one-half of the constituency is disfranchised, for the benefit, it may happen, not even of the majority, but of another minority.

Suppose that a House of Commons is elected by a bare majority of the people, and that it afterwards passes laws by a bare majority of itself. The outvoted minority out of doors, and the outvoted minority of the Members of this House who were elected by the majority out of doors, might possibly agree; and thus a little more than one-fourth of the community would actually have defeated the remaining three-fourths.

On the principle of justice, therefore, and on the principle of democracy above all, the representation of minorities appears to me an absolutely necessary part of any representative constitution which it is intended should permanently work well.

If the right hon. Gentleman who has declared in favour of the representation of minorities (Sir John Pakington) will bring forward a Motion,

in any form which can possibly pass, with a view to engraft that principle upon any Bill, I shall have the greatest pleasure in seconding him.

I desire to make a brief explanation in reference to a passage which the right hon. Gentleman has quoted from a portion of my writings, and which has some appearance of being less polite than I should wish always to be in speaking of a great party. What I stated was, that the Conservative party was, by the law of its constitution, necessarily the stupidest party. Now, I do not retract this assertion; but I did not mean that Conservatives are generally stupid; I meant, that stupid persons are generally Conservative. I believe that to be so obvious and undeniable a fact that I hardly think any hon. Gentleman will question it. Now, if any party, in addition to whatever share it may possess of the ability of the community, has nearly the whole of its stupidity, that party, I apprehend, must by the law of its constitution be the stupidest party.

And I do not see why hon. Gentlemen should feel that position at all offensive to them; for it ensures their being always an extremely powerful party. I know I am liable to a retort, an obvious one enough, and as I do not intend any hon. Gentleman to have the credit of making it, I make it myself. It may be said that if stupidity has a tendency to Conservatism, sciolism and half-knowledge have a tendency to Liberalism.

Well, Sir, something might be said for that, but it is not at all so clear as the other. There is an uncertainty about half-informed people. You cannot count upon them. You cannot tell what their way of thinking may be. It varies from day to day, perhaps with the last book they have read. They are a less numerous class, and also an uncertain class. But there is a dense solid force in sheer stupidity - such, that a few able men, with that force pressing behind them, are assured of victory in many a struggle; and many a victory the Conservative party have owed to that force.

I only rose for the purpose of making this personal explanation, and I do not intend to enter into the merits of the Amendment, especially as I concur in all that has been said in the admirable speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for London (Mr. Goschen).

J. STUART MILL said, the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Osborne) had called on Gentlemen on that side to support the Motion of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Graham), holding out to them the inducement of getting rid of the principle of the representation of minorities. That was the strongest possible reason why those who were in favour of the representation of minorities - not as being a Conservative measure, but as a measure of justice - should vote against the present Motion. Nothing could be more unfair than to speak of the representation of those persons who happen to be in a minority, whatever might be their political opinions, in any constituency, as being in any exclusive sense a Conservative principle. On the contrary, it was not only the most democratic of all principles, but it was the only true democratic principle of representation, and they could not have a complete system of representation without it, Man for man, those who happened to be in a minority had just as much claim to be represented as the majority.

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World peace thru democracy:

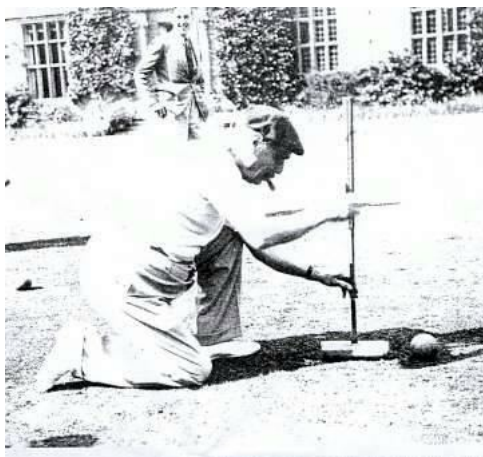
HG Wells neglected third phase.

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"New ideas do not come suddenly. Wars do."

"British political life resists cleansing with all the vigour of a dirty little boy."

H G Wells.



Wells aims.

First published on my Democracy Science web-site, with kind permission of the copyright owners of this 1930s snap of HG Wells playing croquet.

Stanway, Gloucestershire.

Three Wells phases.

The aim to [end war](#).

The [elitism](#) of Wells.

HG Wells on [voting method](#).

References to HG Wells on electoral reform.

References to HG Wells on occupational representation.

[Conclusion](#) and notes.

Three Wells phases.

For all the limitations of any one man, Wells writings still speak for the public interest perhaps with a more refreshing honesty than anyone since. His quotable words are much better than I can convey or try to imitate.

I heard on the radio someone say this age lacks original thought for liberty and democracy. (Oh, so someone was actually aware of the fact.) He suggested the best man from history to make amends would be Tom Paine.

HG Wells may be the nearest remedy for that deficiency since the first half of the twentieth century.

It is hard to pick up a book by Wells, open it at random, and not find something to hold my interest in the print. This is true also of the non-fiction, Wells wrote in later life, more so, perhaps, than the later novels. Since the turn of the millenium, nearly all of the novels have been reprinted. Not so, a considerable body of political and educational writing. A book like *The Science Of Life* (1937) was bound to date with the progress of biological research. There, he said that economics would have been "a better and brighter science" if it had been based on ecology. Sad to say, politics and economics remain out-of-date. There, Wells remains, to this day, way ahead of his time and this.

Social rigidity is the problem Wells identified as early as 1908 in a work of fiction *The War In The Air*. This is perhaps the most typical example of Wells' genius, the most Wellsian book. To me, it was the most enjoyable and the most re-read - tho not the best in any given genre. True, most of the poetry in his late Victorian SF has receded, but the imaginative power of description remains. Moreover, one of his best comic characterisations, of the little man, is caught up in a prophetic world war. And if that wasnt enough, the novel incorporates a beautiful little essay on the causes of the dashing of civilisation, that explains how moral progress has not kept up with mechanical progress.

This was an abiding theme in the later non-fiction studies. They are the third main phase, of three over-lapping phases, in the writers career. First there were the science fiction and fantasy years of writing. Then there were the novels of lowly Cockney origins. These were followed by what might be called the novels of expanded horizons or men of the world, which corresponded to the changed situation of a famous writer. Literary critics considered these to be less successful.

The New Machiavelli (1911) was a transition between these two types of novel. The beginning, about suddenly changing social surroundings, is wonderful. The public school education, of the narrator, may be described as competant story-telling. It is unenlivened by the personal observations of such an education by the author. His Fabian friends, the Webbs, put up with this novel's satire.

One of Henry James letters to Wells noted a falling off in his fiction with *The Passionate Friends*, in 1913. Most of Wells biographers, especially the earlier ones after his death, would concur. Typically, they concentrate on the late Victorian SF and the Edwardian lower middle class comedies.

A representative assessment of Wells novels was that he was at his best writing about his own origins as a drapers assistant and a struggling student. When he moved up in the world and started to write about the upper classes, well, they just werent as much fun, the characters not as sympathetic.

I agree with the critic who deplored Wells cutting short that scamp of a novel, *Bealby* (1915) to get on with *The Research Magnificent*. What a groan when *Bealby* ends with a promise to try at being a below-stairs boy for the current commercial lord of the manor. Tho, Wells was being realistic and responsible about a poor boys options.

Moreover, the author didnt seem to sympathise with his later lower class characters, such as in *The Bulpington of Blup* (1932) and *You Can't Be Too Careful* (1941). When an author ceases to like his own characters, neither does the reader, however sharp the authors perception remains. This partly explains why *Bealby* may be his last novel of genius. (My later opinion is that this distinction may go to *The Dream* (1924). Later still, I much appreciated re-reading *Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* (1928).) He has a deep sympathy and perception of his creations, whether comicly or poeticly expressed.

As someone who tried to write a few good poems, I find this novelist portray all the effects of nature move the very soul of his leading character, just coming into his own with existence. He effortlessly combines this with all the other attributes of his novel, knowledge of the world, and relations between the sexes, etc.

As Arthur C Clarke said, Wells was really a poet, tho he pretended not to be.

Many critics have followed George Orwell in saying that Wells wasted his literary talents in his later years on becoming a propagandist. But, ah, it is something to have talent, Orwell concluded.

Let's be realistic. Granted that *Bealby* was Wells at the height of his literary powers, he was 49 years by then. One cannot always go on doing the same thing.

Brian Aldiss also decried Wells late political writings as a sort of literary desert. Really, would he have been any better-off plugging away at his early SF genre, as Aldiss continued to do so strenuously? Even "a Wellsian imagination" must have its limits. The literary biographer Ingvald Racknem, who researched many sources of Wells plot ideas, said that phrase was once common parlance.

The First World War was a challenge to Wells imagination in a new way. How could a world without war be brought about by the application of human intelligence, instead of succumbing to human folly.

In non-fiction, Wells had already set up as a prophet or futurist and as a publicist for Socialism. When the 1914 war came, he believed it necessary to defeat dynastic military imperialism, once and for all: The war that will end war. He also believed the future was with such national strength, as obtained by the German organisation of science and industry.

He compared unfavorably, for example, Britains private railway companies that were in such chaotic disregard of one another with duplication of resources and lack of connections to each other.

Such inefficiencies told heavily on a nation straining at a world-wide war effort. (My grandad, who fought on the French Front, used to say

of the Germans, that they always did every-thing better than we did. They were also brave.) On similar lines, in *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, Thorstein Veblen gave an impressive low-down of the American private rail-roads. Even that inveterate anti-socialist Winston Churchill, at the end of his radical phase, stood on a (political) platform for the nationalisation of the railways after the Great war.

Essentially, the socialist case for nationalisation was a case for a rationalisation into national organisation. But socialism was either revolutionary and dictatorial or evolutionary and social democratic. (It will be convenient to discuss this further in the section on Wells contribution to occupational representation or economic democracy.)

Even social democrats, like the Fabians, were officials of the unelected sort, bureaucrats in their mentality. *The Faults of the Fabians* was a report Wells made of his colleagues. He found out how "averse" they were to conducting a popular campaign. They preferred back-stairs methods. This remains true, also, of the elected officials, the politicians to this day. They are still not elected democratically enough to make them publicly accountable.

Well before the Great War, Wells took-up the cause of proportional representation. While it remained on the political agenda, in the ensuing decade, Wells writings include a remarkable campaign for the unadulterated version of PR.

Wells campaigned for PR in The Westminster Gazette, started by John Stuart Mill. Mill stood for parliament, as an Independent Liberal, to promote votes for women and PR.

Wells failed both in 1922 and 1923, as a Labour candidate, to get into parliament in the London University two-member constituency with a transferable vote. There was an Independent Labour Party in those days. And a very Independent Labour MP, Wells would have been, like Mill, no doubt, introducing a Bill for Proportional Representation.

There was a 2005 program on BBC 4 entitled *HG Wells and me*. The presenters had got wind of the fact that Steven Spielberg was bringing out a film called *War of the Worlds*, since at a cinema near you. The tv film was mainly about Wells early SF novels.

Two retired Labour party men appeared, one in a clip made in 1966. There-in a Left-wingers sole purpose was to characterise Wells writings as recruiting for the Labour Party against the Tories.

This left-winger, Michael Foot, wrote a book, *The History Of Mr Wells*, that made no mention of Wells support and many writings and mentions for PR by STV, tho the biography was largely political.

It must be admitted, I have never read more than one Wells biography that does mention PR -- only David C Smith, *H G Wells: Desperately Mortal*. He says Wells pressed "more and more" for proportional representation. And that is hardly enlightening. Then again, Wells biographers usually were not political and were mostly writing when electoral reform was way below the political horizon.

This page remedies that omission, with reference to its awful frequency in Wells writings.

(A reviewer of Smiths biography said a better title would have been "Triumphantly Vital.")

The other Labour man on the BBC 4 program, a right-winger, once caused Jonathan Dimbleby to sink his head at the peremptory response to the question of electoral reform. I remember that leading Labour politicians rough put-down of a mild-mannered Labour party candidate, who said he favored the transferable vote, a rare enough admission. The Labour boss forgot the party contest to anathemise his junior colleague.

Tho they knew perfectly well otherwise, the old war horses pretended on tv that Wells was a good party man like themselves.

The Labour right-winger was Roy Hattersley, who later came out in favor of PR when the Brown government was in terminal crisis. Afterwards, things were looking-up for the party under Ed Miliband leadership. Whether Hattersley found principles, or remained a party weather-vane, was a secret between Hattersley and his political conscience, if he had one.

Hattersley said his party approved of Wells as a candidate because he was a scientist. If that is so, there are precious few scientists who approve of party politics. Scientists are singularly lacking among MPs.

In general, partisan politics is prejudicial against the honest spirit of free enquiry into a wider knowledge that would serve the general interest. Science would not work, any more than politics, if it were run on party dogmas and the whipping dictatorship to quell parliaments function of free debate.

When PR became a lost cause, Wells never quite gave up his allegiance, on occasion flaring up, like a bonfire the politicians hadnt quite succeeded in stamping out.

The aim to end War.

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Wells tells us that the onset of the first world war turned him away from imaginative literature to thinking about the problem of world peace. This is never far away from most of his subsequent non-fiction. (To pick out the most obvious references would be an under-statement of its centrality to his concerns.) Wells was confirmed in his opinion that the mechanical scale of warfare was becoming intolerable. Nothing

short of world federation would be needed to secure peace. He emphasised that many others shared this view and encouraged the public to seek out their views, if his opinions were not congenial to them.

At the same time, these were the years of struggle in the British parliament for democratic reform by proportional representation. And Wells sometimes devoted chapters to both subjects in the same book, such as *In The Fourth Year* (1918). The connection was more than accidental to him and culminated in his 1940 war-aim initiative for a new Declaration of Human Rights.

I have discussed elsewhere the dependence of peace on democracy (on my page about the ethics of scientific method). The out-standing work of Wells, phase three, *The Outline Of History* (1920) breaks away from education in national conceit and the partisan spirit of my country right or wrong. History is treated as the human story from its origins in natural history to the emergence of mankind as one. Thus, history is the history of democracy, whose achievement is an achievement of the conditions for world peace.

Wells famous phrase, "The war that will end war" has often been used against him, as a false prophet. This over-looks the war aim: to end war. It remained such a common cause, after the first world war, that a BBC radio director objected to Wells adding to the current "peace propaganda." So, his talk began by mentioning what he hadnt been allowed to talk about.

During the Great War, Wells was discussing in print what were the conditions for peace. How was war to be stopped?

When I started to read his Great War discussions on how to end war, it felt as if I was entering the modern world from a gateway opened ninety years ago. The International Court at the Hague, still with us, was then something of a dead letter, while it gave power out of all proportion to sovereign states, no matter how small and insignificant compared to the great powers, who naturally took no notice.

He also pointed out that a world judiciary needed to be permanent to anticipate disputes, not merely react to them after they have broken out. In recent years, one such international law court was made permanent. Law globalisation remains a slow process.

Since the Great War, and in his 1932 essay collection, *After Democracy*, Wells argued that the peaceful settlement of international disputes didnt need the participation of every little nation to start with. He said half a dozen of the big powers could get a world federation going. The rest would have to accomodate themselves to the changed situation. He went further and said four of the biggest powers would be enough for no other nations to dare military defiance.

He also pointed out that highly civilised nations like the Scandinavian countries, tho not powerful, would give positive support to such a world peace initiative. In despair almost, he even suggested The United States and the British Empire might begin the world federation - tho he knew his own country better. This notion of the big powers coming together to arbitrate a global peace is the germ of the idea of the United Nations Security Council.

Before the Second War, Wells reckoned that the peace of Europe depended on a future alliance of Germany and France. After the war, Churchill made this the message of his visit to the ruined continent. Churchills immense prestige must have influenced them. In any event, the French and Germans have taken their alliance to heart ever since.

Was Wells an originating impulse for this historic change? Quite likely. In a 1930 interview, Churchill admitted he had read and re-read everything that Wells ever wrote. He could pass an exam on him -- which is saying something of the boy who left his school exam entry page blank. Churchill spoke of the tips on war and peace to be found from Wells. They were friends, to some extent, and Wells dedicated a book to Churchill.

It may be no coincidence that Churchill, knowing Wells out-spoken views, was the last main British political leader, to date, to advocate proportional representation for the House of Commons. If this was only a party-political manoeuvre, it is more than any of his successors have dared by way of leadership.

We know that Churchill got his idea of the tank from Wells short story, *The Land Ironclads* (1903). I had to read this story to the end before I could feel quite sure it was not a later documentary of a real tank offensive against the trench warfare.

Unfortunately, the British army, just as backward as Wells said they were, werent interested. Churchill had to test the invention thru his office of the Admiralty. Then his plans were followed only in the most niggardly fashion and the great strategic advantage was thrown away. Nazi Germanys blitzkrieg learned that military lesson - the only kind of lesson they did learn.

Churchill stayed on in politics, after the Second World War. This was not just addiction to the drug of power that leaders display. He had won the war but wanted to win the peace. Thru the world influence of his writings, Wells had visited American and Soviet leaders. Churchill did so, as a leader in his own right. Instead of war summits, he wanted to hold peace summits. Old age and illness defeated his aim, not to mention the intractability of other leaders and his own colleagues. His despondency in retirement reflects the passion of that desire for world peace, a passion to be found in the third phase of his favorite writer.

If Churchill did take Wells advice on a Franco-German alliance for European peace, he was going against a time-honored tenet of English or British foreign policy. As Churchills own *A History of the English-speaking Peoples* says, this country would ally with the second power

in Europe to restrain the great power of the day, whether it be Spain, France or Germany, all absolute monarchies. The Wellsian policy was like getting the first and second power in Europe to ally to keep the peace.

European nations might say we are all democracies now but this is more sentiment than reality, which is showing thin to the continents people, who have no reason to like the undemocratic European constitution. The German leader, Schroeder wanted other governments to carry on regardless of the French and Dutch referendum No votes. The French establishment and media insisted that "No" was not an option for the future of Europe. French president Chirac responded to the No-result by saying he would take "note" of it - hardly a ringing endorsement of a democratic decision.

The moral is that the democratic voting system and other essential conditions of freedom cannot be skimmed from the European or any other constitution, if human rights are not to be endangered.

One of the disillusiones of my life-time was to see the United Nations with its Security Council in place but paralysed by internal dissension from ever intervening to put an end to out-breaks of violence all over the world. The end of the Cold War seemed to galvanise the security councils peace-keeping role. After a lifetime on ice, it was remarkable to see this body come to life. However, in more recent years, the lack of consensus between the big powers has come to the fore again.

One may suspect the reasons, such as national ambitions at any cost to the environment and the future of the viability of the planets ecology; trading advantages with corrupt and cruel regimes over impoverished peoples. Bad human rights records of some of the security council members themselves is bound to make them condone the same else-where. Some so-called democracies are fatally disposed to condemn others without putting their own democratic house in order.

This is fatal because a democratic world is best achieved by example, rather than by imposing standards upon others. People have to see the merits of a democratic way of life and want to take it up themselves. Countries like my own, despite its supposedly "moral foreign policy," are simply not democratic enough to show all that obvious a benefit, worth learning from. In some ways, Britain is seen as suffering from a moral sickness to be avoided.

Wells envisioned a politics and economics practised with the disinterest brought to natural science. It is one of the great under-lying themes of his life's work that often surfaces:

"And it is natural that I should exalt science. In the scientific world I find just that disinterested devotion to great ends that I hope will spread at last through the entire range of human activity. I find just that co-operation of men of every race and colour to increase Man's knowledge. We can all be citizens of the free state of science. But our political, our economic, our social lives have still to become illuminated and directed by the scientific spirit - are still sick and feeble with congenital traditionalism."

It is true that George Orwell decried Wells' belief in progress, by science, as naive. In this, he was speaking from an especially English insistence on educational split personalities between "the arts" and "sciences." It isn't surprising that a literary critic, Patrick Parrinder endorsed Orwell's attack.

Orwell says in the essay, "Wells, Hitler and the World State," that we see "science in the service of barbarism." This is no more a case against science than the intellectuals, that Orwell claimed were anti-intellectual, are a case against the intellect.

(I read just such provocative journalism, the other day, that could be construed as an intellectual doing the dirty on intellect, as Orwell put it. She maintained, with allusions to human ape ancestry, that leaders were chosen by whether they were worth going to bed with or not. Whether she actually knows anything of the ethology of the matter may be doubted.)

Orwell seems to think science has somehow failed to be the answer, that Wells hoped it would be, to human problems.

The notion that democracy can be used to vote out democracy, strictly speaking, is also wrong, when democracy is the effectively democratic proportional representation of minorities as well as majorities. Prohibitors and censors believe people must not be given freedom because they will abuse it. Science is essentially free enquiry and that free enquiry might be used to evil ends.

That much is true. Aldous Huxley remarked on the scientific organisation of the Nazi concentration camps. Underlying those crimes were beliefs justified by racial pseudo-science. Airey Neave confided to Michael Bentine that the prosecution at the Nuremberg trials dare not use all the evidence against the Nazi war criminals or they might have escaped the death penalty as certified lunatics. Social hatred may be traced back to historical and personal causes. On these grounds, a study of Hitler was published.

It is also true that acts of terror are committed by apparently normal people, subject to small-group dynamics, as in Milgram obedience experiment, from social psychology. (I remember being suborned for the conformity experiment long ago.) Both trials were featured in the informative *Horizon* program on suicide bombers (BBC 2, 27 november 2005).

When all that has been said, knowledge itself, however good, is admittedly not enough to determine for sure the choices we make. We are, after all, free to choose, whatever we will. That does not mean science has no more say in the matter. Science is method as well as

theory. And scientific method is not merely a technique for amoral ends. It is in itself an ethic or morality - "the free state of science." Freedom of thought is required to learn the truth, whoever discovers it. All researchers are brothers and sisters in a shared endeavor.

Politics still fails, because the truth does not follow party lines but must be followed on its own terms, not our own supposed convenience or interest. This is an essential part of the answer to mans growing problems, that HG Wells foresaw. Politicians, and their literary media, are as ignorant as ever of the scientific liberation of mankind, that Wells promoted. They only seem to see science, not to mention themselves, in the service of the corporation.

The elitism of Wells.

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The elitist image of Wells was substantially fostered by himself. It is an inadequate representation of the man. I must have read a dozen or more biographies or literary studies of Wells. And on the whole they gave a picture of Wells the elitist, and by implication a man of aristocratic presuppositions. Was he not brought up, or rather brought down-stairs, to an aristocratic mansion?

However, Wells objected to his views being summed up by his fiction onwards from the artillery-man in *The War Of The Worlds*. *The World Of William Clissold* (1926) is a novel of ideas but not necessarily his ideas, as the prefatory note explains. Wells says if he had wanted to write a mental autobiography, instead, he would have done so.

The frank exposition of Wells own ideas is to be found in his many works of non-fiction. Wells elitism is clearly expressed in the lecture he gave to the Sorbonne in Paris, 1927. Called "Democracy Under Revision," it is re-printed in *The Way The World Is Going* (1928). In the preface, he ends by saying that "the revision of democracy is not its repudiation." His ten year campaign for (genuine) proportional representation had been to no avail. The Second Speakers Conference on Electoral Reform, of 1929 - 30, was dominated by the meanest partisanship without a trace of national spirit (as refered in my book 1 chapter: Foul! Referee electoral system abuse).

"Democracy Under Revision" finds the resourceful author looking for cause and remedy of the stalling of democracy and the wide-spread dissatisfaction and indifference towards politicians. He recognised that something more was needed than a news-paper campaign to involve public opinion. And he saw the religious involvement of the party workers for Communism and Fascism.

He carefully explained that he didnt support these movements. (He was to comment, that, of course, the Press still misreported him as if he did.) Wells hope was that people could find the devotion of the Communists and the Fascists put to less narrow creeds. He pointed out that the idea of people who are called to be public-spirited was behind his idea of the Samurai in *A Modern Utopia*. He concludes:

"What is there to prevent a great politico-religious drive for social and world unity taking hold everywhere of the active and adventurous minority of mankind -- that is to say, of all mankind that matters -- even quite soon?..."

"That is what I mean when I say that the phase of Democracy as release has come to its end, and that we are already in the beginning of the phase of Democratic Synthesis, a great religious-spirited phase. If you choose to link it to Christianity or Islam or Buddhism or any existing democratic religion; or to Communism, that religious substitute; or call it in itself the Religion of Progress, nothing that I am saying here to-night will stand in your way. And if this diagnosis is correct, then necessarily the changing spirit of Democracy, the change from fragmentation and irrelevance to synthesis and reference to directive general ideas on a universal scale, will become apparent in all forms of human expression."

Three remarks may be made about the above quotation. Firstly, the Sankey Declaration as the fore-runner of the UN Charter provided that "reference to directive general ideas on a universal scale," which most of the world professes to respect. So, world hopes for world peace and freedom owe something to Wells efforts.

Secondly, Wells asked whether world-wide problems were being discussed more "in all forms of human expression." My feeling, at least of the modern English novel, is that they are not. The monolithic publishing of big business seems to turn out little writers, recommended for committee prizes.

Thirdly, Wells phrase "of all mankind that matters" becomes self-referential. People come to regard public spirit as conferring an elite status. Party privilege and moral degeneration follow.

Wells admits this in *The Open Conspiracy*, also published 1928. This titles contradiction in terms hints at its meaning as a sort of party that is not a party, an anti-party.

"With the dreadful examples of Christianity and Communism before us, we must insist that the idea of the Open Conspiracy ever becoming a single organization must be dismissed from the mind. It is a movement, yes, a system of purposes, but its end is a free and living, if

unified, world."

Until I appreciated Wells motive, the open conspiracy sounded to me like revolutionary hubris. Wells himself seemed to think the title melodramatic and hi' falutin' when he re-titled the book: "What Are We To Do With Our Lives?" He also admitted his Samurai had been "rather absurdly" named.

In 1932, *After Democracy* was another of Wells periodic collections of essays into book form. Actually, it contains no essay of that title. Tho, he does happen to use that phrase in his earlier essay "Democracy Under Revision," which portends a realists changing way of thinking.

Only the most fleeting mention is given to changing the voting system, of which there was no further prospect in his lifetime or, indeed, for long after his death. The world has scarcely got truly democratic voting method yet. He did not lessen his attempts, by other means, to change politics and avert the likelihood of war.

After Democracy urged people to form study groups for mutual self-education. He already admitted The Open Conspiracy was ineffective. Later, he substituted less political, more educational and scientific notions such as the world brain or world mind. An academic criticised Wells "World Brain" for possible "social repression" rather than liberation. The previous quotation anticipates the critics apprehension. When the academics liberate us, such warnings will seem more helpful.

Wells educated millions with his encyclopedias, and attempted to improve the organisation and availability of knowledge. He admitted, tho, that, with regard to his famous aphorism, civilisation is a race between education and catastrophe, there had not even been a race. Catastrophe was winning hands down.

H G Wells on voting method.

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British political parties idea of electoral reform remains the combination of rules that will give them most seats for votes. (Scotland and Wales may move more to democratic standards.) In 2005, the Tory party idea of electoral reform is tweaking First Past The Post to swing the balance of power back from Labour to Tory.

Both parties have justifications for their favored rules but the rules they favor just happen to swing the out-come of the voting system in their own favor. So, Labour kept postal voting despite a judges remark, after a ballot rigging case, that it was wide open to abuse. The Tories give this reason for ending postal voting. Labour justifies postal voting to off-set falling turn-out. It also off-sets the fact that Labour supporters are less likely to vote.

Labour and Tory have been pleased for the monopolistic single member system to be their monopoly. This means that the partisan Press have been muted in their criticism of the failings of First past the post. It may be working to Labours advantage at present but the Tory Press dont want to turn their readers against it altogether.

A crucial test of a democrat is support for the democratic electoral system. John Stuart Mill certainly set that standard in democratic commitment by selflessly supporting Hare system of "Proportional Representation" that is also "Personal Representation". Mill, as a philosopher of international repute, fairly set PR on its way. And the personal factor in PR persisted in English-speaking countries.

Wells never lost sight of this personal condition of elections. Mill may have been taken more seriously as a thinker. But Wells was an endlessly interesting observer of human affairs. Writing on electoral reform over a longer period, he left substantial discussions of electoral reform, as well as innumerable tokens of support thru-out his writings. Some readers may know of other references to PR I have not discovered.

References by H G Wells to electoral reform.

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1912, May, "The Labour Unrest" (reprinted in *An Englishman Looks At The World*):

"This diminishing actuality of our political life is a matter of almost universal comment nowadays. But it is extraordinary how much of that comment is made in a tone of hopeless dissatisfaction, how rarely it is associated with any will to change a state of affairs that so largely stultifies our national purpose. And yet the causes of our present political ineptitude are fairly manifest, and a radical and effective reconstruction is well within the wit of man."

"All causes and all effects in our complex modern State are complex, but in this particular matter there can be little doubt that the key to the difficulty lies in the crudity and simplicity of our method of election, a method which reduces our apparent free choice of rulers to a ridiculous selection between undesirable alternatives, and hands our whole public life over to the specialised manipulator... Election of representatives in one-member local constituencies by a single vote gives a citizen practically no choice beyond the candidates appointed by the two great party organisations in the State. It is an electoral system that forbids absolutely any vote splitting or any indication of shades of opinion. The presence of more than two candidates introduces an altogether unmanageable complication, and the voter is at once reduced to voting not to secure the return of the perhaps less hopeful candidate he likes, but to ensure the rejection of the candidate he most dislikes. So the nimble wire-puller slips in. In Great Britain we do not have Elections any more; we have Rejections..."

"Now such a system of representation is surely a system to be destroyed at any cost, because it stifles our national discussion and thwarts our national will... It is not rational that a great people should be baffled by the mere mechanical degeneration of an electoral method too crudely conceived."

"I will not dwell on the particulars of the proportional representation system here... Suffice it...a voter may vote with confidence for the particular man he prefers, with no fear whatever that his vote will be wasted in the event of that man's chance being hopeless. There is a method by which the order of the voter's subsequent preference is effectively indicated. That is all, but see how completely it modifies the nature of an election. Instead of a hampered choice between two, you have a free choice between many. Such a change means a complete alteration in the quality of public life."

1912: The narrative character, in the novel *Marriage*, neutrally lists a number of possible causes to support, including proportional representation.

1913: Letter in *The New Witness*, 13 September.

PR for the "well-known politically-trusted man who is neither Liberal nor Conservative [nor] the undistinguished party nominee."

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1914: "The Disease of Parliaments."

"The party-supported Cabinet, which is now the real government of the so-called democratic countries, would cease to be so, and government would revert more and more to the legislative assembly. And... it would also necessarily take into itself all those large and growing exponents of extra-parliamentary discontent that now darken the social future... all...identical in this, that they declare Parliament a fraud, that justice lies outside it and hopelessly outside it, and that to seek redress through Parliament is a waste of time and energy. Sane Voting would deprive all these destructive movements of the excuse and necessity for violence."

"There is, I know, a disposition in some quarters to minimise the importance of Proportional Representation, as though it were a mere readjustment of voting methods. It is nothing of the sort; it is a prospective revolution. It will revolutionise government far more than a mere change from kingdom to republic or vice versa could possibly do..."

This long essay, just quoted from *An Englishman Looks At The World*, is Wells most considered case for proportional representation. This may be down-loaded from:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/11502>

It includes a detailed explanation of the single transferable vote (STV), the later name for Hare system.

Note: The Hare quota has not yet been abandoned for the Droop quota in the proportional count. There is not much difference between the two quotas when very large constituencies are used.

(This reviewer invented a simple harmonic mean quota of the Hare and Droop quotas, which I hold to be more representative than either. A simple explanation is provided near the end of this book.)

Reformers were no longer advocating Hare system in the whole country as one constituency of over six hundred seats. Instead they were suggesting regional constituencies, which would have still averaged about twelve to thirty seats per region. That is still very proportional. A twenty-seat constituency could give a PR of up to 19/20, in theory, depending on how fully the voters stated preferences for enough of the candidates.

Some Edwardian reformers were still highly ambitious for representative democracy.

My main claim to fame in the revived British electoral reform movement in the mid 1970s was to send them copies of Wells essay. One

broad-sheet quoted Wells support for proportional representation, without mentioning the single transferable vote, keeping to the most rhetorical and least informative extracts.

Wells himself seems to have had similar experience. In most of his future electoral reform writings, he expresses his support in, what may be called, "the HG Wells formula": proportional representation by the single transferable vote in large constituencies. That is to say he won't be misrepresented as supporting party list systems of so-called PR, or single member systems (or double or very few member systems).

1914: *The World Set Free*.

This is one of Wells' later SF novels. Dipping again even in the less successful works, any passage is liable to interest. It is one of Wells' uneasy compromises between adventure story and intelligent forecast of the consequences of political failure to keep up with technological advance. This is the work that prophesied "atomic bombs" and also "the sun snarers" that is energy producers from nuclear fusion as in the sun.

Wells, writing the novel in 1913, before the great war, ends with a post-war utopia. A 1921 preface makes clear the work is in the realm of warnings and guesses with some wishful thinking, perhaps, but not a manifesto.

Chapter 4, section 9, "The new phase" says:

"The method of proportional representation with one transferable vote was adopted, and the voter might also write upon his voting paper in a specially marked space the name of any of his representatives that he wished to recall."

The novel provision for a recall doesn't sound particularly felicitous but it is of historical interest that Wells anticipated by ninety years the California recall of a state governor.

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1916: *The Elements of Reconstruction*.

This little book was based on some long articles for The Times. As will be mentioned later, it is of interest for advocating an economic franchise, as well as electoral reform. 1916 was the year of the first Speakers Conference on Electoral Reform, which Wells may have been trying to influence to recommend STV, which they in fact did. The book has a preface by the Tory Lord Milner, who sought to assure Wells as much as his readers that PR was coming.

A quotation from this book is given in my chapter: Scientific method of elections. How NOT to do it.

(The fates of the Speakers Conferences are related briefly in my first book, in the Democracy Science series, in the first chapter: Foul! Referee electoral system abuse.

1916: *What Is Coming?*

In the chapter, "Lawyer and Press," Wells claimed that the Press were the real opposition to the largely lawyer-controlled politics of parliament. A foot-note to that chapter says:

"In 'An Englishman Looks At The World,' ... the reader will find a full discussion of the probable benefit of proportional representation in eliminating the party hack from political life. Proportional representation would probably break up party organisations altogether, and it would considerably enhance the importance and responsibility of the Press. It would do much to accelerate the development of the state of affairs here foreshadowed, in which the role of government and opposition under the party system will be played by elected representatives and Press respectively."

While seeming to contradict Wells, I believe you'll always get partisanship. A fellow has to start off with a passionate point of view or not start at all. But I do think that transferable voting is a means to transcend and indeed grow out of partisan views, if appropriate. To some extent, I do think the Press would have a more important and responsible role, simply because an end, to the whips censorship, could break the undemocratic bounds of enquiry that Press, as well as politicians, keep to.

1916 (July 26) Letter to *Daily News* (editor, Cecil Chesterton).

"...Mr Chesterton knows perfectly well that I have been a consistent and strenuous critic of political institutions, ready even to call in Mr Chesterton himself to learn what he had to say about them, and that I have written abundantly upon proportional representation, which I believe will cure most of the admitted evils of the party system and political professionalism, upon the influence of electoral areas, upon political quality, upon the electoral influence of lawyers, and so on. I concede the present inefficiency of the Democratic and do my utmost

to make it an efficient method."

1917: Letter to *The Times*, appeared 30 March; reprinted in his 1924 pamphlet.

"Sir - There seems to be a very general failure to grasp the importance of what is called -- so unhappily -- Proportional Representation in the recommendations of the Speakers Conference. It is the only rational, honest and efficient electoral method. It is, however, in danger of being thrust on one side as a mere fad of the intellectuals. It is regarded by many ill-informed people as something difficult, "high-browed", troublesome, and of no practical value, much as science and mathematics were so regarded by the "practical" rule-of-thumb industrialists of the past. There are all too many mean interests in machine politics threatened by this reform, which are eager to seize upon this ignorant mistrust and use it to delay or burke the political cleaning-up that Proportional Representation would involve..."

With Proportional Representation with a single transferable vote (this specification is necessary because there are also the inferior imitations of various election-riggers figuring as proportional representation) *it is impossible to prevent the fictive candidature of independent men of the party beside the official candidate...*"

1917: In a letter that appeared in *Daily News*, on 27 April, Wells corrects a claim he has become a recent convert to PR:

"I have worked steadily for 'P.R.' for the last ten years and more. No intelligent man who looks into the question can fail to see the enormous advantage of this method of election."

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1917: Letter to an unknown correspondent, who sent it to the Manchester Guardian, where it was reprinted on the 22nd of June, as Mr H. G. Wells Labour programme:

1. The ultimate abolition of all hereditary privilege and the establishment of Democratic Republicanism throughout the Empire.
2. The conversion of the Empire into a League of Free Nations.

The concentration of foreign policy upon the establishment of a world alliance of all free nations to prevent wars and armament for wars, to control world shipping and transit, to prevent vexatious tariffs and other trading hostilities, and to protect uncivilised and politically confused countries from conquest and exploitation.

4. The nationalisation of land and natural resources, of all transit services, of the staple food trade and of the drink trade.
5. The nationalisation of banking.
6. Universal suffrage for all over 21, with, of course, proportional representation upon the lines laid down by the P.R. society.
7. Penalisation of deliberate falsehood in advertisement and the press. (This is absolutely essential to the health of democracy.)
8. Liberation of religion from state control (and subvention.)
9. Free education up to 16 for all and further education for everyone with the necessary capacity.
10. Minimum wage.
11. Motherhood and old-age pensions on a computable scale.

1918: letter to *The Times*, published 30th of November, as: Who Killed PR?

"...As your columns have testified again and again, the only sane, logical and practicable method of democracy is the method of election known as P.R..."

"This coming election is only a particularly bad instance of a long-standing evil. Now it is Mr Lloyd George alone dictating to the ordinary elector; hitherto it has been a dictation of alternatives. Parliament has always been a joke at the expense of the democracy, and now the

joke has become extravagant..."

1918: *In The Fourth Year. Anticipations of a World Peace.*

The bulk of this short book is about "The League of Free Nations", as Wells pointedly called what was to become the inter-war League of Nations. He ends with three chapters on democracy, on this pretext:

"Not only is justice to prevail between race and race and nation and nation, but also between man and man; there is to be a universal respect for human life throughout the earth; the world, in the words of President Wilson, is to be made 'safe for democracy'."

Wells goes on to ask what is democracy and "whether we have got it now anywhere in the world in its fulness and completion."
All forty pages or so of Wells on democracy, as part of *In The Fourth Year*, can be down-loaded from Project Gutenberg.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/10291>

I content myself with quoting the following opening of a chapter, on the British parliament. Its powers of resistance now as then should not be under-estimated:

"British political life resists cleansing with all the vigour of a dirty little boy. It is nothing to your politician that the economic and social organization of all the world is strained almost to the pitch of collapse, and that it is vitally important to mankind that everywhere the whole will and intelligence of the race should be enlisted in the great tasks of making a permanent peace and reconstructing the shattered framework of society. These are remote, unreal considerations to the politician. What is the world to him? He has scarcely heard of it. He has been far too busy as a politician... His one supreme purpose is to keep affairs in the hands of his own specialized set, to keep the old obscure party game going, to rig his little tricks behind a vast silly camouflage of sham issues, to keep out able men and disinterested men, the public mind, and the general intelligence, from any effective interference with his disastrous manipulations of the common weal."

"I do not see how any intelligent and informed man can have followed the recent debates in the House of Commons upon Proportional Representation without some gusts of angry contempt. They were the most pitiful and alarming demonstration of the intellectual and moral quality of British public life at the present time."

"From the wire-pullers of the Fabian Society and from the party organizers of both Liberal and Tory party alike, and from the knowing cards, the pothouse shepherds, and jobbing lawyers who "work" the constituencies, comes the chief opposition to this straightening out of our electoral system so urgently necessary and so long overdue. They have fought it with a zeal and efficiency that is rarely displayed in the nation's interest."

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1918: *Joan and Peter.*

H G Wells shortest and most memorable reference on electoral reform, when the eponymous Peter says: "PR is the best method."

In 1955, J F S Ross made clear that proportional representation is a principle not a method. But in 1918, when Parliament was voting on the Speakers Conference on electoral reform, there was no question of any other PR than the original invention by Thomas Hare (independently of similar slightly earlier proposals by Carl Andrae). So, there was then less need to make the distinction between the principle and its proper application.

Wells has often been criticised as spoiling his later novels with debate. But "Joan and Peter" and several later novels show that Wells remained capable of artistic restraint from the discussion novel like *The World Set Free*.
When PR by STV was re-introduced to Ulster in the 1970s, the system was explained in a leaflet by "PR Pete."

1920: *The Outline Of History.*

Wells does not fail to mention that the new American republic fell into the natural trap of the simple majority method without realising the need for a transferable vote.

1921: *The Salvaging of Civilization.*

"I do not think it is necessary to assume that the council of the World State will be an assembly of party politicians. I believe it will be

possible to have it a real gathering of representatives, a fair sample of the thought and will of mankind at large, and to avoid a party development by a more scientific method of voting than the barbaric devices used for electing representatives to Congress or the British Parliament, devices that play directly into the hands of the party organiser who trades upon the defects of political method."

"Would this council be directly elected? That, I think, may be found to be essential. And upon a very broad franchise. Because, firstly, it is before all things important that every adult in the world should feel a direct and personal contact between himself and the World State, and that he is an assenting and participating citizen of the world; and secondly, because if your council is appointed by any intermediate body, all sorts of local and national considerations, essential in the business of the subordinate body, will get in the way of a simple and direct regard for the world commonweal."

1923: November address to the London University constituency:

"...Let me add that I am a firm believer in Proportional Representation, which I think is a far more urgent and important reform than is generally recognized."

1924: *A Year of Prophesying*.

Based on a series of articles for The Westminster Gazette written in 1923. They are indeed prophetic of a range of world problems come home to roost, and clearly still ahead of present counsels. My quote, in "Against the Jenkins Report," sounds like an unusually out-spoken contemporary. In 1923, Britain had a three party balance of power, in which the Labour party needed the support of Liberals to take power. Amounting to a campaign, Wells articles kept coming back to the case for PR by STV.

1924: "The PR Parliament" was a pamphlet published for The Proportional Representation Society.

1924: *The Dream*.

"This was the Parliament House, and in its chambers, a formal King, an ignoble nobility and a fraudulently elected gathering of lawyers, financiers, and adventurers took upon themselves, amidst the general mental obscurity of those days, a semblance of wisdom and empire."

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1928: *The Way The World Is Going*.

Two essays approve of PR by STV but say such reforms dont go to "the root of the trouble with Modern Democracy, which is the indifference, ignorance and incapacity of the common man towards public affairs."

And from the essay, "The absurdity of British politics:"

"Both the Liberals and the Labour Party tricksters have in turn cheated the country out of proportional representation,.. It is too late to go into that issue now."

1932: *The Work, Wealth & Happiness of Mankind*.

Chapter 12, section 5 on assent - which, Wells says, is at present "plainly, *humbugged* assent." Brief explanation and discussion of proportional representation and its 300 list corruptions "to keep power in the hands of party politicians." A continual sense is given of how hopeless politicians are, as well as how hopeless it is to remove them.

1934: *Experiment In Autobiography*.

Wells quotes from his 1912 article on "The Labour Unrest" and adds in parentheses:

"(But all this was complicated with an advocacy of 'proportional representation' and one or two other minor reforms which I now find myself less willing to revive. Not so much because I have lost faith in them as because I realize that they are of such secondary importance that any insistence on them distorts the proportion of the general proposition. If ever they are mentioned people say: 'So *that's* your panacea!' and everything else is ignored.)"

Wells has given PR a rest and it is (as far as I know) several years before he rebels against his own "bashfulness" on the subject, that

people have induced in him. If anything, the below quote goes to the other extreme in setting too much store by its world-changing effect.

1942: *The Outlook for Homo Sapiens*.

"Let us begin then with the problem of sanity in face of the political methods of our time. What are we to do as voting citizens? There I think the history of the so-called democracies in the past half-century is fairly conclusive. Our present electoral methods, which give no choice but a bilateral choice to the citizen and so force a two-party system upon him, are a mere caricature of representative government. They have produced upon both sides of the Atlantic, big, stupid and corrupt party machines. That was bound to happen, and yet to this day there is a sort of shyness in the minds of young men interested in politics when it comes to discussing Proportional Representation. They think it is a 'bit faddy'. At best it is a side issue. Party politicians strive to maintain that bashfulness, because they know quite clearly that what is called Proportional Representation with the single transferable vote in large constituencies, returning a dozen members or more, is extinction for the mere party hack and destruction for party organisations."

The above extract is still imbued with a sense of party abuses, that it again fails to qualify what Wells on reflection must know perfectly well, namely, that party is as essential to politics as classification of ideas is essential to the simplifying power of thought in general. Nevertheless, we must hope that PR proper would do much to mitigate partisan exclusiveness.

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1944: '42 - '44. *A Contemporary Memoir*.

"Both the great English-speaking democracies are still politician-ridden systems, employing a vast burthen of non-productive people; every newspaper is coloured by political bias; Big Business keeps close contact with the politician..."

The above quote sums-up how democracy has been stalled indefinitely. The book also gives an insight into the controversial section eleven of the Sankey Declaration on Human Rights. The version in this book is somewhat feeble than the standard version (quoted in the next chapter). But it is to the standard version that Wells refers when he says:

"The Sankey Declaration of Rights betrayed a certain uneasiness in what was evidently a very amended and re-amended Article Eleven, but it could still be read as if it enforced this strange idea that we must ultimately submit ourselves to a body of persons elected by the votes of the entire adult community."

'It hedged a little by stipulating that the consent of the governed shall be either "active or tacit," and by indicating "electoral methods which give effective expression to individual choice". That was a concession to "Proportional Representation".'

Wells admitted the clause gave

"no absolute protection from the nightmare of a World General Election, in which the professional electioneers will guide the confused multitudes into the polling booths, ... the politicians... will then legislate for and between the socialized banks, the great corporations, the syndicated shops, the vaguely resentful common man and everything else that matters in life."

Old Wells was not afraid to put political intrusiveness, in the guise of representative democracy, in its place. Yet, in his great 1914 essay, he was surely right in believing it an essential civilising medium between rulers and ruled. We don't want to do what so many countries did in Wells' time and since. They threw the baby of representation out with the bath-water of politicians. But one cannot deny his forebodings have every precedent.

It is not clear whether he thought proportional representation might prevent undue manipulation of a world parliament. It is clear that Wells still supported PR, because he has explicitly linked it to the relevant phrase in article eleven. This is the Wells that said in 1916 that there is one right method and any number of wrong methods of voting. By PR, Wells always meant its unadulterated form. As above quotes show, he meant the transferable voting system, indeed the only system that does "give effective expression to individual choice."

Likewise, when we say "bread," we don't mean bread adulterated with chalk for flour. It is just that politicians commonly adulterate democracy, and bring discredit on the very idea, to keep themselves in office. A person who has never tasted anything but adulterated bread cannot be expected to have much good to say about bread. By the end of his life, Wells himself was plainly so tired of the bad taste in his mouth, given by pseudo-representative democracy, as to shun the prospect of such an unwholesome "loaf" for the world, at least without proportional representation proper.

References by H G Wells to Occupational representation.

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Wells was vehemently opposed, as he put it, in his essay *The Great State* (1912) to socialism by bureaucracy. But the paternalistic socialism of Bismarck served as the model that such as the Fabians and Lloyd-George introduced into Britain. The very title of the above essay is misleading: great need not mean gross. And Wells approving use of the term "Socialist" is itself misleading. It is something much nearer to the sense in which John Stuart Mill became a socialist.

By the mid-twentieth century, socialism had become synonymous with state control. Even the so-called democratic socialism of the revisionists of Marxism had much the same end. The revisionists sought a degree of nationalisation thru parliamentary rather than revolutionary means.

And it must be admitted that Wells socialism often enough sounds like that of the command economy. At other times, he is the best defender of individual freedom from the increasing national and global organisation, he nevertheless approves and advocates to prevent the strife and waste from military and commercial competition.

Wells was receptive to economic democracy, as below references show. But he lived in an era when the prevailing mind-set identified socialism with top-down government. He only partly freed himself from world-organising fury to consider how individual freedom was to be given haven from it. This is true even of his last years, during his best reconciliation of the conflict between community and individual, the 1940 Declaration of Rights.

For instance, Wells contradicts the view that government powers are best kept as local as possible. He has no sympathy with Chesterton ideal of a free peasantry, as in France. I agree with Chesterton against Wells. Countries, like Britain, need a free peasantry. A country needs to be able to better feed itself in a starving over-populated world of deforestation and desertification.

It is ironic that this should be championed by the son of an estate agent. Whereas, Wells, the son of a green-fingered gardener, has no time for peasants. A passage in *The New Machiavelli* may help to explain this. The narrative character describes with disgust and believable detail how he just couldnt make anything grow.

Wells bias towards the big scale betrayed him in his judgments on the best agriculture. He believed better the future agribusiness practise of knocking down the hedge-rows to allow in the machines to farm bigger fields. Ecologists, such as Michael Allaby, have been eloquent in demonstrating that this encourages soil erosion and destroys niches for wild-life. Machinery and chemicals have ultimate efficiency drawbacks and there is no substitute, in the end, for personal farming care. This implies limited small-holdings, within a few peoples capacity to tend properly, and without the vexed question of who is doing the most work on a collective farm.

Wells thought Russian collective farms superior to peasant small-holdings. But right to the end of the soviet era, the latters tiny plots were productive out of all proportion in comparison to the state holdings. Robert Ardrey could scarcely believe a similar admission, in the United States, from a big owner (again backed by the statistics) about the greater efficiency of the small free-holdings.

1916: *The Elements of Reconstruction*.

Before the Great War, a book gave some vogue to the idea of replacing the Commons geographical constituencies with occupational constituencies. Wells takes this up. The preface by Lord Milner seeks to dissuade him from this. And Wells did not persist in it.

1920: *The Outline of History*.

Wells considers the historic case for the House of Lords to progress to the proportional representation of vocations. (Such an elected economic second chamber is the view held by this writer.)

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1928: *The Way The World is Going*.

From "Doubts Of Democracy:"

"A number of us do imagine that democracy might be preserved, as a vastly different and more efficient form of government, if election by proportional representation with the single transferable vote in large constituencies returning many representatives could be substituted for the present bilateral system...However,... there is not the slightest chance of its ever becoming, except perhaps in name and with essential mutilations, the electoral method of any modern state. It can be left out of this present discussion, therefore, and so also can projects for a

special Economic Parliament of trade unionists and employers and such-like collateral developments, or for elections by suddenly and fortuitously appointed jurymen instead of by entire constituencies."

Wells did revive the last idea, in his last full-length book, '42 - '44. Instead of world elections, he favored some sort of sample assemblies. He anticipated British Columbia Citizens Assembly on electoral systems, sixty years later. The subverting its decision for STV, would have confirmed Wells antipathy for politicians.

From "Democracy Under Revision," Wells says most forms of Socialism are:

"an attempt to take the general economic life out of whatever hands control it at present and hand it over to the direction either of representatives elected by the workers, or of politicians elected by the voters of the entire community. Socialism is the attempt to democratise economic life as political life has already been democratised. And the final practical objection to Socialism, partial or general - the objection that has usually carried the argument - has always been this: that politicians and elected people are not good enough for the job."

Nowadays, nine-tenths of the nation are no longer poorly educated manual workers. Society becomes increasingly specialised and it becomes essential for society to represent all its specialised functions for its co-ordinated working. The argument for economic democracy is more powerful than ever. The greedy destruction of the globe, mis-called capitalism, proceeds as if there were no alternative to the tyrannous legacy of socialism as state control of the economy. Wells had already warned of the state socialist concentration of power, in 1908, *New Worlds For Old*. And he decried its effect, many times.

1932: *The Work, Wealth & Happiness of Mankind*.

Wells cites two proposals to solve "the economic problem," involving a new "economic parliament," as Winston Churchill put it, or "national assembly" as Mrs Beatrice Webb termed it. Churchill didnt propose an elected body but a miscellany of economic interests. Wells commented it was "not particularly drastic" and concluded:

"What is necessary is not that Trade Unionists and business men and members of the House of Lords shall have still another opportunity of stating their opinions, but that governments themselves shall consider their economic measures from a world point of view."

Wells also considers a nation, at the mercy of an international system of finance, is not secured by a national assembly. (The 2008 credit crunch has proved this is indeed critical.) He is otherwise more positive:

"She [Mrs Webb] would have the range of questions which are generally called social removed from Parliament altogether and handed over to an elected National Assembly together with the government departments concerning their administration. This would have great advantages. It would relieve the pressure on parliamentary time. It would mean there was a far greater chance of bills being voted upon by people with some interest in their contents..."

1936: *The Anatomy Of Frustration*.

Wells describes the fictional author of this work:

"He was...very progressive in his attitude towards the labour he employed. He not only interested himself in a very generously conceived profit-sharing scheme, but he encouraged the criticism of his operations and management by his workers. That was in the opening decade of the century. His business associates regarded him, not always too tolerantly, as an 'innovating radical'."

Conclusion.

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The course of a human life is like the fate of a man swept along in a crowd. The greatest among them, more or less, display the same unintelligent mass behavior as the rest. HG Wells was among those who dissociated themselves sufficiently to show a better way. It is the better way that we should be most interested in, rather than the fact that in some ways the most able of human beings may be more foolish than ourselves. "Elitist" has become too misleading a word for those who take a better way. Nowadays, "elitists" means just about

the opposite to what Wells intended: entrenched conservatives.

As the alternative to a state at war with its own people, the middle-aged Wells saw that representative government was the only civilised way of rulers dealing with the ruled. It wasn't working but he realised that a better system of election had been worked out. Like Mill before him, he believed it could save democracy. For over a decade, his writings campaigned for STV/PR while it was a real possibility because of the three-way split in party support.

This has become again the scenario in Britain.

The parties have kept control thru the simple majority system restriction on voter choice. Wells still worked for a unified world by some other means. He tried to reconcile unsuccessfully the dog-in-manger Liberal and Labour parties, so their vote would not be split by the Tories, he thought too backward-looking to old imperialist antagonisms.

He wondered if people, with the zeal of the Fascist and Communist party supporters, could be found for less narrow causes. He tried a sort of anti-party "open conspiracy" but soon realised that wasn't working. Since Wells time, we've learned that intensely dogmatic movements degenerate and finally collapse under the insufficiency of their leading ideas, put to the prolonged test of reality. There is no substitute for the scientific attitude in solving natural or social problems.

Wells proposal of a public-spirited movement was becoming less political-sounding (open conspiracy) and more educational (world mind) in emphasis. His ideal remained one of scientific disinterest applied to society as well as to nature. Wells popular writings did much to promote scientific education. And Wells had a rare honesty in exposing injustice and in putting forward remedies. Time and again, I've come across passages, which I've not been able to include here, and thought "that's worth quoting."

C P Snow, on the two cultures, drew attention to the lack of scientific application to the affairs of government.

Voting method is the kind of limited precise question that science can well answer. It is not a substitute for sciences democratic spirit of free enquiry. But it is a crucial test of whether that spirit exists in politics and national life. Til the present time, that free spirit has been blocked by an exclusive few, using the monopolies of single member system and/or bosses party lists.

The parties offer not so much a choice as a dilemma of manifestos full of unwanted and irrelevant policies, that the public are powerless to escape by parliamentary means. The parties control of parliament has made parliamentary democracy irrelevant to the people it was supposed to represent.

The party whipping system censors free debate and decision in parliament - at whatever level of government it operates. The second chamber should proportionly represent the whole nations interests but also remains dominated by career politicians, in particular from the legal profession, out of all the occupations that make up the social body. Corporate institutions crush the people for want of effective elections of economic, as well as, political representatives to stand up for individuals.

Notes.

For thirty five years, I didnt know that my copy of *Bealby* was abridged, because this was not mentioned. When, at last, I saw an older edition, I thought I must be imagining its greater length. Eventually, a check showed some eighty pages cut from an already modest length novel. Even the infamous Bowdler, of Shakespear, let you know he edited the poet, at least if a Wordsworth edition of his, I once saw, is anything to go by.

Unacknowledged cutting of an author should be illegal, even if authorised by his Literary Estate. *Bealby*, as Ive hinted, is something of a forgotten master-piece - only inferior in length to Wells most famous works.

Bealby was a favorite work of Wellsian, Major Frank S Britton MBE (Military). In recent years, I was approached by some-one who wanted to know about this member of her family tree. I refered her to the Electoral Reform Society, where he was the secretary. He had been a Fabian, in the early days, and met its leaders, including Herbert George Wells.

STV/PR is in the charter of the ERS, previously called the Proportional Representation Society. I asked Frank if he knew Wells supported STV. Not many people knew that. But of course he did.

The above foto of H G Wells, as an old man playing croquet, was taken at Stanway, Gloucestershire. It was obviously a bright day and the pictures of Wells didnt come out too well. One or two others present included J M Barrie.

These pictures are currently on my web-sites.

One each are also in books four and five of my e-book series of collected verse.

I was thrilled to be allowed to publish these pictorial insights into the recreation of Wells and friends and am grateful to the owners, who, of course, retain the copyright

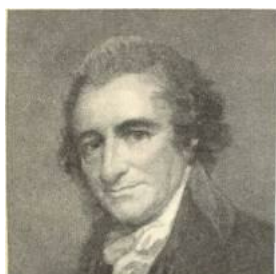
3; 15 November 2005.

More references put-up on 12 & 13 March 2011, 21 June 2013, mainly from: *Correspondence of HG Wells*, edited by David C Smith.

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A Declaration of the Rights of Man.

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Tom Paine.

A charter prepared in 1940, under the Chairmanship of Lord Sankey, and drafted for discussion by H. G. Wells.

Introduction.

Within the space of little more than a hundred years there has been a complete revolution in the material conditions of human life. Invention and discovery have so changed the pace and nature of communications round and about the earth that the distances which formerly kept the states and nations of mankind apart have now been practically abolished. At the same time there has been so gigantic an increase of mechanical power, and such a release of human energy, that men's ability either to co-operate with, or to injure and oppress one another, and to consume, develop or waste the bounty of nature, has been exaggerated beyond all comparison with former times. This process of change has mounted swiftly and steadily in the past third of a century, and is now approaching a climax.

It becomes imperative to adjust man's life and institutions to the increasing dangers and opportunities of these new circumstances. He is being forced to organise co-operation among the medley of separate sovereign states which has hitherto served his political ends. At the same time he finds it necessary to rescue his economic life from devastation by the immensely enhanced growth of profit-seeking business and finance. Political, economic and social collectivisation is being forced upon him. He responds to these conditions blindly and with a great wastage of happiness and well-being.

Governments are either becoming state collectivism or passing under the sway of monopolistic productive and financial organisations. Religious organisations, education and the press are subordinated to the will of dictatorial groups and individuals, while scientific and literary work and a multitude of social activities, which have hitherto been independent and spontaneous, fall under the influence of these modern concentrations of power. Neither governments nor great economic and financial combinations were devised to exercise such powers; they grew up in response to the requirements of an earlier age.

Under the stress of the new conditions, insecurity, abuses and tyrannies increase; and liberty, particularly liberty of thought and speech, decays. Phase by phase these ill-adapted governments and controls are restricting that free play of the individual mind which is the preservative of human efficiency and happiness. The temporary advantage of swift and secret action which these monopolisations of power display is gained at the price of profound and progressive social demoralisation. Bereft of liberty and sense of responsibility, the peoples are manifestly doomed to lapse, after a phase of servile discipline, into disorder and violence. Confidence and deliberation give place to hysteria, apathy and inefficiency. Everywhere war and monstrous exploitation are intensified, so that those very same increments of power which have brought mankind within sight of an age of limitless plenty, seem likely to be lost again, and, it may be, lost for ever, in a chaotic and irremediable social collapse.

It becomes clear that a unified political, economic and social order can alone put an end to these national and private appropriations that now waste the mighty possibilities of our time.

The history of the western peoples has a lesson for all mankind. It has been the practice of what are called the democratic or parliamentary countries to meet every enhancement and centralisation of power in the past by a definite and vigorous reassertion of the

individual rights of man. Never before has the demand to revive that precedent been so urgent as it is now. We of the parliamentary democracies recognise the inevitability of world reconstruction upon collectivist lines, but, after our tradition, we couple with that recognition a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, so that the profound changes now in progress shall produce not an attempted reconstruction of human affairs in the dark, but a rational reconstruction conceived and arrived at in the full light of day. To that time-honoured instrument of a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS we therefore return, but now upon a world scale.

1. THE RIGHT TO LIVE

Every man is a joint inheritor of all the natural resources and of the powers, inventions and possibilities accumulated by our forerunners. He is entitled, within the measure of these resources and without distinction of race, colour or professed beliefs or opinions, to the nourishment, covering and medical care needed to realise his full possibilities of physical and mental development from birth to death. Notwithstanding the various and unequal qualities of individuals, all men shall be deemed absolutely equal in the eyes of the law, equally important in social life and equally entitled to the respect of their fellow-men.

2. PROTECTION OF MINORS

The natural and rightful guardians of those who are not of an age to protect themselves are their parents. In default of such parental protection in whole or in part, the community, having due regard to the family traditions of the child, shall accept or provide alternative guardians.

3. DUTY TO THE COMMUNITY

It is the duty of every man not only to respect but to uphold and to advance the rights of all other men throughout the world. Furthermore, it is his duty to contribute such service to the community as will ensure the performance of those necessary tasks for which the incentives which will operate in a free society do not provide. It is only by doing his quota of service that a man can justify his partnership in the community. No man shall be conscripted for military or other service to which he has a conscientious objection, but to perform no social duty whatsoever is to remain unenfranchised and under guardianship.

4. RIGHT TO KNOWLEDGE

It is the duty of the community to equip every man with sufficient education to enable him to be as useful and interested a citizen as his capacity allows. Furthermore, it is the duty of the community to render all knowledge available to him and such special education as will give him equality of opportunity for the development of his distinctive gifts in the service of mankind. He shall have easy and prompt access to all information necessary for him to form a judgement upon current events and issues.

5. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND WORSHIP

Every man has a right to the utmost freedom of expression, discussion, association and worship.

6. RIGHT TO WORK

A man may engage freely in any lawful occupation, earning such pay as the contribution that his work makes to the welfare of the community may justify or that the desire of any private individual or individuals for his products, his performances or the continuation of his activities may produce for him. He is entitled to paid employment by the community and to make suggestions as to the kind of employment which he considers himself able to perform. He is entitled to profit fully by the desirableness of his products and activities. And he is entitled to payment for calling attention to a product or conveying it to consumers to whom it would otherwise be unattainable. By doing so, he does a service for which he may legitimately profit. He is a useful agent. But buying and holding and selling again simply in order to make a profit is not lawful. It is speculation; it does no service; it makes profit out of want. It tempts men directly to the interception of legitimate profits, to forestalling, appropriation, hoarding and a complex of anti-social activities, and it is equally unlawful for private individuals and public administrative bodies.

7. RIGHT IN PERSONAL PROPERTY

In the enjoyment of his personal property, lawfully possessed, a man is entitled to protection from public or private violence, deprivation, compulsion and intimidation.

8. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

A man may move freely about the world at his own expense. His private dwelling, however, and any reasonably limited enclosure of which he is the occupant, may be entered only with his consent or by a legally qualified person empowered with a warrant as the law may direct. So long as by his movement he does not intrude upon the private domain of any other citizen, harm, or disfigure or encumber what is not his, interfere with or endanger its proper use, or seriously impair the happiness of others, he shall have the right to come and go wherever

he chooses, by land, air, or water, over any kind of country, mountain, moorland, river, lake, sea or ocean, and all the ample spaces of this his world.

9. PERSONAL LIBERTY

Unless a man is declared by a competent authority to be a danger to himself or others through mental abnormality, a declaration which must be confirmed within seven days and thereafter reviewed at least annually, he shall not be restrained for more than twenty-four hours without being charged with a definite offence, nor shall he be remanded for a longer period than eight days without his consent, nor imprisoned for more than three months without a trial. At a reasonable time before his trial, he shall be furnished with a copy of the evidence which it is proposed to use against him. At the end of the three months period, if he has not been tried and sentenced by due process of the law, he shall be acquitted and released. No man shall be charged more than once for the same offence. Although he is open to the free criticism of his fellows, a man shall have adequate protection from any misrepresentation that may distress or injure him. Secret evidence is not permissible. Statements recorded in administrative dossiers shall not be used to justify the slightest infringement of personal liberty. A dossier is merely a memorandum for administrative use; it shall not be used as evidence without proper confirmation in open court.

10. FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

No man shall be subject to any sort of mutilation except with his own deliberate consent, freely given, nor to forcible handling, except in restraint of his own violence, nor to torture, beating or any other physical ill-treatment. He shall not be subjected to mental distress, or to imprisonment in infected, verminous or otherwise insanitary quarters, or be put into the company of verminous or infected people. But if he is himself infectious or a danger to the health of others, he may be cleansed, disinfected, put in quarantine or otherwise restrained so far as may be necessary to prevent harm to his fellows. No-one shall be punished vicariously by the selection, arrest or ill-treatment of hostages.

11. RIGHT OF LAW-MAKING

The rights embodied in this Declaration are fundamental and inalienable. In conventional and in administrative matters, but in no others, it is an obvious practical necessity for men to limit the free play of certain of these fundamental rights. (In, for example, such conventional matters as the rule of the road or the protection of money from forgery, and in such administrative matters as town and country planning, or public hygiene). No law, conventional or administrative, shall be binding on any man or any section of the community unless it has been made openly with the active or tacit acquiescence of every adult citizen concerned, given either by direct majority vote of the community affected or by a majority vote of his representatives publicly elected. These representatives shall be ultimately responsible for all by-laws and for detailed interpretations made in the execution of the law. In matters of convention and collective action, man must abide by the majority decisions ascertained by electoral methods which give effective expression to individual choice. All legislation must be subject to public discussion, revision or appeal. No treaties or contracts shall be made secretly in the name of the community.

The fount of legislation in a free world is the whole people, and since life flows on constantly to new citizens, no generation can, in whole or in part, surrender or delegate this legislative power, inalienably inherent in mankind.

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Old working man of the nineteen thirties.

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*First-time shown zoom on over-exposed box-camera snap of H G Wells, waiting his turn at croquet, Stanway, Gloucestershire.
By kind permission of the copyright holders.*

A Charter of Scientific Fellowship

initiated in 1942 by H G Wells

1. Man depends for his maintenance and growth upon knowledge of the properties of things in the world around him and the liberty to increase and use it.
 2. People of all races and classes of society have contributed to the development of natural forces and resources and the understanding of the universe and mankind's relationships to it.
 3. Every generation inherits the world's store of ascertained knowledge, and men of science are the trustees of this heritage with the duty of increasing it by faithful guardianship and devoted service.
 4. The obligation to pursue scientific inquiry entails the right of intellectual freedom and international exchange of learning by unrestricted association in the common cause of the advancement of natural knowledge.
 5. All natural or national groups of scientific workers are autonomous in their own domains but united in the fellowship of the Commonwealth of Science, with the whole world as its outlook and service to mankind its highest aim.
 6. As freedom to teach, opportunity to learn, and desire to understand, are essential for the extension of knowledge, the democracy of science accepts these principles of progressive civilization and resolutely maintains them as basic elements in its constitution, which cannot be abrogated without detriment to human development.
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Liberating democracy from Impossibility Theorem.

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Arrow theorem of “no best voting method.”

Researching voting methods on the web, I was a little surprised to be frequently assured that there is no best electoral system. It soon became apparent that the bedrock of this assurance was a theorem by Kenneth Arrow. A school, known as social choice theory, adapted this so-called Impossibility theorem, as a rock upon which foundered every ship, considered as all the different kinds of voting methods.

This alleged anarchy of voting methods is not as rock-solid, as appears at first sight. A typical assertion of this law of anarchy is: “There is no perfect voting system.” This seems a safe position to hold but it actually is an empty claim, as far as implying “there is no best voting system.”

A more slippery or ambiguous version reads: “There is no single ideal voting system.”

That could be interpreted to mean either no “perfect” or no “best” system.

Well, we will have to see for ourselves.

A theorem is a mathematical device to prove certain propositions. The classic model is Euclid geometry. This consists of a few basic assertions, originally regarded as self-evidently true, the consequences of whose inter-relation derive further propositions. Their logic may be regarded as proof. Moreover, their truth may be independently tested by checking with evidence, designed to disprove them, if possible, as general rules.

Arrow theorem follows this model (tho it follows in the foot-steps of Godel incompleteness theorem). The theorem states a few basic rules, believed must apply for any voting method to be comprehensively logical. A proof was forthcoming that no voting method that did or could exist satisfied all these principles.

Well, you can't argue with logic. And it seems that many people accept this state of affairs as unshakeably as believers in the catechism. This academic insistence, that there is no best election system, has been particularly helpful to politicians thriving on broken voting methods.

It hasn't done democracy any favors tho. “No best voting method” has become an apology for the world anarchy of largely ineffective voting methods, not to mention a correlation of world apathy towards ineffective politics.

The non-monotonicity condition.

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Before looking at all the Arrow theorem first principles or axioms, let us just look at how one of these basic rules has been applied to discredit the best voting method. Many experts, political scientists and reformers, regard the single transferable vote (STV) as the best system. But Arrow theorem finds that it is not “monotonic.” This claim was eagerly seized on by the Plant report, which recommended the Supplementary Vote.

'While the Plant Report rejected STV on the grounds of monotonicity failure, it was “particularly galling” that the Report recommended “the very inferior SV, that contains the very same fault as that for which they rejected” STV (Hill, 1994). (This point seems unanswerable.)' [Nicholas R Miller 2002.]

Non-monotonicity is a mote-in-your-eye criticism of STV, to excuse a chronic failure to implement democratic voting system.

In this context of elections, “monotonic” is fancy mathematical jargon for a certain kind of tactical voting, or strategic voting, as it is known in North America. It happens in exhaustive ballots, excluding the candidate with the least votes in a round, so that their votes may be re-distributed to his voters next choices.

“Non-monotonic” tactical voting may occur when a leading candidate does not want to be in the final round with a candidate, of wider appeal, who is currently runner-up. So the leaders supporters transfer just enuf of his votes to give a trailing candidate, of narrow appeal, more votes than the runner-up. This way, the runner-up is pushed into third place and excluded for the final round.

In real life, this kind of tactical voting may happen when a center candidate comes second, and has a left wing and a right wing candidate on either side of him. The wing candidate, in the lead, knows that if the opposite wing candidate, in third place, is excluded, then most of those excluded candidates next preferences will go to the center candidate, thus given the final lead and victory.

In 2013, Michael Gallagher gave a paper on “monotonicity and non-monotonicity at PR-STV elections.” He reckoned non-monotonicity could have taken place in 20 of 1326 Irish elections or 1.5%. These actually included the alternative vote (AV) as well as STV. The incidence for size of constituencies was not given.

These are only theoretical potentials for non-monotonicity. In fact, the voting information simply isn't available till after the election count itself. (And then, not the ballot papers of voters preferences.) Indeed, on this, Gallagher based his research.

The potential was there but the realisation was not. This crucial distinction was rather over-looked, in glibly speaking about non-monotonic elections, which are nothing of the sort.

The Northern Ireland returning officer said as much. He knows a thing or two about STV elections, and was probably right.

Gallagher only gives one real example, and that is only of a nearly possible non-monotonicity. And this was no more than a rumor showing the game was understood. It was not put into practice and it did not need to be put into practice to make any difference.

This example was in the penultimate round of the 2005 exhaustive ballot for the Tory leadership. David Cameron was on 90 votes. David Davis on 57 votes. Liam Fox on 51 votes.

Respectively, this was a Tory left, center, right line-up. In practise, this is the typical scenario for non-monotonicity. It was rumored that some Cameron supporters might shift enuf of their votes to Fox, so that Davis was excluded with the least votes. Some Davis voters next preferences would go to Cameron but most Fox voters next preferences would go to Davis.

For some Cameron voters to shift to Fox would have been insincere or tactical voting, to game the system. Such would be false voting.

Look at this from the point of view that the system is non-monotonic. The complaint is that the leading candidate gains votes from a runner-up, who thus falls into last place and is excluded, instead of another rival.

The next preferences of the newly excluded candidate are less favorable and only serve to make the leading candidate lose his lead, instead of win in the final round.

Gallagher quotes some of the critics going into hysterics against STV, as the agent of sin and chaos, for supposedly depriving a candidate of election by his getting more votes.

Now look again at this situation, in the real life context of that Tory leadership contest. A Cameron, on the left, is not likely to gain votes from a Fox, on the right. People don't vote like that. The scandal of the “non-monotonic” eventuality is unreal. It does not resemble how people follow their perceived interests.

The greater likelihood is that the apparently unjustly deprived leader is a party to depriving the more widely acceptable rival. The supposed victim is more likely the villain. So much for the hysterical critics of “non-monotonic” STV.

Mistaking an improbable contingency for a logical fallacy.

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The critics for monotonicity, so-called, have mistaken a wobble in the system for a logical fallacy, when it is merely a contingency. Judging by the few times Gallagher found it and judging by the political alignment it requires to operate, like an alignment of the planets, perhaps it is not a very realistic contingency, at that.

A non-monotonic alignment is treated by critics in superstitious awe of this herald of electoral catastrophe. Far from being a precursor of chaos, voting patterns are structured. Winning votes to lose, instead of win, merely may mean the difference of not competing or competing with a more generally accepted candidate or Condorcet winner.

The real issue is whether the leading candidate does or does not have the Condorcet winner for a straight fight. Whether or not he gains votes, in the process, is irrelevant to this over-riding factor.

OB Gordon suggests a probable means of improving the chances of the Condorcet winner not being excluded early in an STV election. Instead of starting the count with the usual Droop quota to elect to a certain number of seats, he adjusts the quota, so that it elects all but one of the candidates with the least votes, in successive rounds. He calls this modification Exhaustive STV (ESTV).

I've suggested it myself, tho not for this reason, which I think is rather good, working on probabilities, as it does, which is what election results are.

Non-monotonicity, as conceived in terms of election systems, is not the strictly logical necessity it is in mathematics. Rather, it is a contingency or happenstance, that does not preclude a saving logical reason for it happening.

Elections are not axiomatic systems, which can only treat fluctuations in the preference data, as errors of deduction. Instead, counts, more or less, aggregate the individual voters preferences to an approximate community preference.

The only example, Gallagher gives, is only of a near potential for non-monotonic voting, not actual non-monotonic voting. Moreover, the voting system is not STV, nor even AV. It is the exhaustive ballot. And the peculiarity of exhaustive ballots for the party leaders is that the voters are given time to look at the results of each stage of the count, before deciding how they will vote next.

That was how it was possible for Tory MPs to even consider gaming the system in a non-monotonic fashion. That is the point. They had the time and information and organisation to effectively rig the result, with no possible electoral counter-measures available to their opponent.

This particular voting system of a staggered exhaustive ballot offered some Tory MPs an ideal opportunity for non-monotonic gaming. Yet thru honesty and prudence and whatever other reasons, they chose not to do so. Perhaps they'd divined the final outcome that there was no need for tactical voting.

None of these ideal conditions are available for preferential voting systems and decreasingly so for STV in increasingly multi-member constituencies, with their complexity of possible preferences between all the candidates. Put yourself in the candidates position and you can see that non-monotonic gaming would be a pointless gamble.

One research paper cast doubt on previous researchers finding for the complexity security of STV against non-monotonicity. The fact that the doubters had recourse, to NASA STV elections for a consensus on best trajectories, is eloquent of the substance behind doubts that STV is vulnerable to this (or any other) form of tactical voting in political elections.

We cannot say for certain that successful (non-monotonic) tactical voting with STV never happens. We can be reasonably sure that if any candidate was tricked out of a seat in this manner, his campaign would sense that something was going on, and be sufficiently aggrieved to speak out.

You only have to look at a comparable instance of an Irish government gerrymandering the boundaries of three or four member constituencies. The press commented that the minister responsible nearly gerrymandered himself out of the Dail. Subsequently, an independent boundaries commission was established.

Tactical total war: 2015 UK general election as exclusion campaign.

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Non-monotonicity is claimed to be a failing of systems with preference voting and exclusion counts. But these properties are implicit in first past the post (FPTP). The admonition to vote tactically or strategically means that a voter is expected to vote for a candidate, who is less than his first preference. That means most voters have, in their minds, an order of preference for various candidates. It is just that the x-vote only establishes a single preference, not necessarily the first choice of candidate.

The admonition, blackmail or arm-twisting, against wasted votes, effectively tells (bullies) voters to exclude candidates, they most prefer, because they have the least support.

Thus, FPTP implicitly contains a preference exclusion count. FPTP inequitably blackmails some voters into being their own returning officer by re-distributing their higher preference to a lower preference and excluding the higher preference from the count.

This preferential deprivation applies more or less to all. Perhaps we can take the salient case of the Tory peer Norman Tebbit to make the point. He urged people to vote UKIP (his first preference?) in the British Euro elections.

In the 2015 general elections, Tebbit observed that a Tory vote (his second preference?) for Labour (his third preference?) in Scotland would help keep out the SNP (his no doubt less than fourth preference.)

The 2015 British general election was a seething mass or snake-pit of tactical vote campaigning.

The base-line was set by the manoeuvring over the line-up of party leaders in television debates.

Premier Cameron refused to accept a one-to-one debate with the Labour opposition leader, which would define him as the alternative premier.

Yet, going round the country, he characterised the campaign as a presidential election between himself and the less popular Ed Miliband. He was reducing the general election to an electoral college for his own primacy. That's quite a constitutional down-grade, of the complex problems of government, to one simplistic binary choice.

The only tv debate Cameron would tolerate was a seven-way line-up with the leaders of Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP, Plaid Cymru, The Greens and the UK Independence party.

Leaving out the Democratic Unionist Party from Ulster/Northern Ireland was telling. (The courts turned down their challenge of the exclusion.) The DUP showing wouldnt affect the Tory party fortunes. Giving an unprecedented showing to three left parties, which were a drain on the Labour vote, suited Tory tactics well.

Ed Miliband even complained to the SNP leader that she was urging an alliance to keep out the Tories, yet urging Welsh voters to support Plaid Cymru and English voters to support the Greens.

Ranked choice or order of preference plainly matters, yet the voting system was left without a preference vote.

Tory premier Cameron urged Liberal Democrats and UKIP supporters to switch to the Conservatives, to keep out Labour, allegedly in thrall to the SNP.

Naturally, for Cameron, tactical voting was only alright to suit the Tory party. The will to win becomes total commitment to manipulating the voting system.

26 April 2015, The Mail came out with the headline, "May: SNP/Lab Pact 'Worst crisis since abdication'

Subtitles, "English voters would 'not accept legitimacy' of an alliance

Poll: Four in 10 Ukip backers will switch to Tories to stop deal"

The May in question was not the month of the election but terrorists-under-the-bed Tory Home secretary Teresa May, who was being quoted (not the English people).

Not meaning to be disrespectful, it might be fair to say I struggled to make out what were the Tory lwnys talking about?

The Mail helped my understanding, with the famous dominatrix poster of Scotlands first minister, holding a whip, while in black lace suspenders. (This homely woman reminds me rather of pastors daughter, Angela Merkel.)

Imagine the incredulity of my suspicion that May and The Mail were insinuating that Ms Sturgeon was another Mrs Simpson, the American divorcee, a king gave up his throne for!

Ex-colonials, I suppose.

Well, the ancient Romans had their Saturnale every year, when the slaves were made the masters and the masters made to look ridiculous. With fixed-term parliaments, the ancient Britons of the Tory party have made sure that they only will make themselves look ridiculous once every five years, in that democratic saturnale, a general election.

This Tory silliness was a serious attempt to push the English to sacrifice their first preferences for Ukip, or who-ever, and donate their X-

vote as a second or third preference for the Tories.

On the Sunday before polling day, Cameron came out with his UKIP-stopping "red-line" that he would not go into coalition without a commitment to a referendum on leaving the European Union.

The UKIP leader Nigel Farage emphatically agreed to a reporter's question that voters should vote tactically.

The Liberal Democrats, suffering badly from their broken promises after the last election, campaigned to position themselves as a center party, in effect the Condorcet winner. That is to say a party that might hope to win in seats where they approach a straight fight between either a Labour or Tory candidate. Because, both right and left wing voters might prefer, and vote tactically for, a center candidate to each other, as their opposites.

In the 2010 election campaign, the Lib Dems posed before a billboard promise of no tuition fees for students. (They broke other promises of no less import.)

In 2015, Labour exhibited a monolith of six promises signed by Ed Miliband. While announcing this parody of the Lib Dems promise, he denounced Lib Dem leader Clegg for his betrayal.

The "Ed-stone" was conspicuous by what it didn't promise, rather than its vague generalities.

Stuck at a fall from 23% in 2010 to a steadily projected 8% (which came true) the Lib Dem vote was already squeezed dry by defections to Labour. So, it is doubtful there was much more to be gained by Labour targeting the Lib Dems.

The 2015 general election was marked by the unwillingness of the two main party leaders to contemplate anything other than an over-all majority of seats, while they languished in the polls at more or less one-third of the votes each.

The opinion polls prediction of about 34% for the Tories and Labour was about 3% out. Labour won about 31%, an increase of one and a half per cent. The Tories increased their vote from 36.1% in 2010 to 36.9% in 2015, only an increase of 0.8%. The two main parties enjoyed a more or less insignificant increase in support.

Almost all the polls predicted a hung parliament and almost everyone believed them. The Tories got a majority of 12 seats, almost 14% over-represented in seats for votes.

This miscalculation helped to disguise an out-standing fact. Not even the collapse of the Liberal Democrat vote was enough to more than shore-up the declining trend in support for the two-party system.

The Liberal and Social Democratic Alliance were the new party who set out "to break the mould of British politics," not to mend the mould, as they did after the 2010 election, abandoning their radical policies. The voters broke the Lib Dem mould-menders, instead. It remains to be seen whether this annoyance with the Lib Dems has diverted the trend against two-party politics.

The erratic simple majority system (First Past the Post) added to its history of audacious misrepresentations. There are signs that the distracted British public finally may run out of patience with its distortional representation.

UKIP with nearly four million voters and the Greens with over a million made five million voters represented by a seat each for these two parties. They may share a joint electoral reform campaign platform.

In 2015, the Tories incited tactical voting for themselves but boosted the profiles of Labour support-draining parties. They had also been the prime financiers and propagandists (with much Labour help, though not from their leader) in defeating the Alternative Vote.

It may be surmised that the Tory and Labour unwillingness to discuss coalition and power-sharing will be the real coalition against real reform of the voting system for power-sharing, not just between the parties, but between the whole community with democratic election method.

Early in the campaign, the SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon called for a fair voting system.

The quota-preferential voting method would be the sane response to the tactical total war of 2015.

Amoral amnesia

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Academics met at European Union premises in London, to discuss the 2015 election. From what I was able, or could bring myself, to watch, they confined themselves to the mechanics of the First Past The Post result. They happily traced untoward effects of the X-voter being "a man with a fork in a soup world." (This image is from one of the Gallaghers, about his brother member of Oasis, not a quote from the academics.)

This academic freedom from responsibility towards the ineffective simple plurality election did betray a certain spurious value neutrality on the "myths" of election victories. They cited the myth, of Labours premature celebrations in Sheffield, as a loser of the 1992 election. They coupled this myth with a 2015 myth of the Tories successfully using Nicola Sturgeon support for Labour, as another election loser for Labour.

The academics talked-down and laughed-off the propaganda against Sturgeon as business as usual. That the English were not averse to Sturgeon, after all, is not the issue. The issue is negative campaigning. Noticing the power of irrational campaign onslaughts goes back to before Graham Wallas, on Human Nature In Politics.

This was a spectacle of intellectuals skating over anti-intellectualism and confining themselves to being mechanics of a malfunctioning election mechanism.

This was the nature of the discussion, tho the presence of Vernon Bogdanor, in the audience, showed that, at least, one of these academics wanted to replace a worst of voting methods with the best.

In the last of his lectures on elections, following the 2015 election, Bogdanor, in my opinion, created a myth of his own. The Liberal Democrats were back to their fringe party status of half a century ago. He thought their position was even worse and doubted they would even recover as a parliamentary party.

He chronicled their decline from two previous coalitions with the Tories, which reduced them from governing party, and then from opposition party.

The myth, as I see it, fostered here is: Tory coalitions are toxic to the Liberals. In my opinion, this formula glosses over the real issue and so fosters a self-fulfilling prophecy that the Lib Dems cannot recover. It would be hard enough, if the truth were admitted, but well nigh impossible, if it is not.

The underlying factor of all three coalitions was not the joining with the Tories but a sense of betrayal. The Lloyd-George coalition and the Ramsay Macdonald national government were coups d'etat. They did not have the consent of all the major players. Indeed, there were real betrayals that went far deeper than was generally recognised at the time.

Lloyd-George may have helped me get into college. After an admissions questionnaire, the department head told me I hadn't answered the question about personal heroes. In my naive youth, Lloyd-George answered to this.

In my old age, I'm inclined to believe this man of the people did more harm than good. His coalition illegally broke the terms of the 1916 Speakers Conference for Parliament to accept all their recommendations. In singling out the single transferable vote, "the Peoples David" began that revolt of the elites against democratic voting method that still reigns a century later. All other provisions, including the plutocratic lost deposit, were retained. The plutocracy was compounded by Lloyd-Georges corrupt sale of honors for his party fund. Not to forget the broken promise of "homes fit for heroes," after the war.

In 1917, the Lloyd-George coalition rejected Germany's request for a negotiated peace, thus ensuring future international relations would be determined by war rather than diplomacy. "The man who won the war" lost the peace, abroad, as well as at home, thru spurning peace-making power-sharing PR.

The political class could say "We are all Lloyd-Georgists now."

Ramsay Macdonald government sanctioned the bankers drawing on Bank of England gold reserves, in an unsuccessful attempt to save their failed speculations. In 1931, a so-called national government, including the Liberals, but not most of the Labour party, made the miners take a pay-cut to cover the bankers losses. (Catherine Bailey: Black Diamonds.)

The political class could say "We are all Ramsay Macdonaldites now."

In 2015, the Lib Dems were satisfied to take office on terms that abandoned their most popular policies. The sense of betrayal was overwhelming and extended seriously beyond the one usually mentioned: cast-iron promise of no student tuition fees.

The Lib Dems dropped democracy in voting method for ineffective substitutes, which they were as ineffective in getting adopted.

Their petition "No to nuclear power" disappeared as policy. No to Trident renewal was reduced to a haggle over whether to build three rather than four submarines.

(Meanwhile, 19 nuclear submarines from the 1980s and 1990s expensively rot [at over £16 million in the past five years]. All still have their radioactive reactors and some are still nuclear fuelled.)

The Lib Dems sacrificed principle for power and power for pride. When they lost another deposit, they would thumb their nose at the electorate by saying they were voting tactically.

Perhaps the Lib Dems refused to admit how annoyed their previous supporters were, because they had likewise given-up on them, and were only interested in latching onto a deference vote from the non-political majority. The Lib Dem leaders were themselves really non-political politicians.

On 2015 election night, Paddy Ashdown said he would eat his hat, if the exit poll estimate of 10 Lib Dem MPs, left out of 57, was correct. They got 8.

Non-monotonic gaming with first past the post.

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Even such arcane gaming, as non-monotonicity, took over a news-paper headline, indeed gained main-mast prominence. Right on the top of their front page, The Mail pictured the SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon, with the caption: the most dangerous woman in Britain.

Sturgeon responded that was the nicest thing The Mail had said about her. After that, television reported a further surge in SNP support.

Labour leaders, like Alistair Darling, complained that the Conservatives were making too big a thing of the SNP. They were rousing English nationalism against Scottish nationalism and threatening the union.

This objection was more credible, in that Lord Forsyth complained that his party was risking the union by demonising the SNP.

38 degrees e-mail, "SNP: behind the media spin," reported some news-papers launching daily attacks on the party, "the right wing media's worst nightmare."

The leading party, in parliamentary seats, the Conservatives high-light the probable third party in Westminster seats, inspiring extra votes for them, thru the oxygen of sensational publicity, to ensure they well over-take Labour in number of Scottish seats.

The Mail on Sunday had Sturgeon and Labour leader, Miliband super-imposed on a pose from The Phantom of the Opera. This wasn't too far from the principle: All publicity is good publicity.

The Tory campaign poster was a big picture of Nicola Sturgeon with Labour leader Ed Miliband as a puppet on a string. That is because they would rather make the general election a campaign against the Scottish independence party, the SNP, less liked by the English, than fellow unionist party, Labour.

The Tories generally try to characterise the election as opposing the Left, rather than the center-left, belittled as a puppet. The SNP just happened to be a convenient campaign substitute for the Tories usual left-wing bogey. And that is the non-monotonic gaming principle. The Tories are a non-monotonic party!

In 2015, the usual tactical voting campaigns, under first past the post, included this potentially government-changing kind of tactical campaign.

In any case, this is surely a classic vicious circle, of a dishonest voting system addicting to dishonest campaigning and vice versa.

Maybe the clearest example of the potential for vicious or "non-monotonic" gaming is to be found in AMS. In 2003, A Welsh Conservative candidate on the party list privately encouraged voters not to vote for his colleague in the single member constituency, to maximise his chances as an Additional Member. (Changed Voting Changed Politics.)

Other Arrow theorem conditions.

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We move on from non-monotonicity to other Arrow theorem conditions. There are different versions of this theorem, of which I am not a specialist, and only propose to comment on certain aspects, with respect to voting method.

We may remark in passing, that the condition of non-dictatorship precludes party list systems, which are more or less dictatorial, because the order, in which the party candidates enter parliament, according to the party share of total votes, is decided by a party boss or caucus or activists.

William James observed a certain blindness in human nature, shown by the widespread use of these exclusive list systems.

Take condition, Individual Sovereignty: Each individual should be allowed to order the choices in any way and to indicate ties.

I couldn't help but feel that the deviser of this theoretical condition didn't know much about practical elections. "To indicate ties" sounds harmless enough requirement. Actually, it is not so much a ballot box as a Pandora box.

The total number of possible ordered choices for any given number of candidates is the factorial of that number. This is an astronomical number, which soon becomes impractical to calculate without a computer.

Factorials pale into insignificance, if you take into account all the possible permutations of tied preferences as well. In mathematical fact, the factorial of the number of candidates, indicating all possible preferences between them, is only a small sub-set of all the possibilities including ties, calculated by the multinomial theorem.

Never mind! our supposed grand system building theorist might say.

He should have to mind also the dubious logic of including ties, which are non-elective, in elections. We are not designing predominantly non-elective elections.

If a voter is indifferent towards two candidates, it should not matter in which order he places them. He only has to toss a coin to decide. And if everyone else, in the same position, also makes a random choice, that honest indifference will be reflected in the resulting count.

Human choice has an element of indeterminacy, so that a completely deterministic theorem cannot represent real elections or draw definitive conclusions about them.

A statistically trained student may not be impressed by the theorem notion that a random resolution to a tie is somehow undesirable or reprehensible, because repeating the random tie-breaker could produce a different result.

Elections do produce different results. That is the point of holding them periodically. The point of theorems is to produce the same result, that is always true. Elections cease to be true even as they are held. They are snapshots of shifting popular opinion. It is neither here nor there, whether a different coin toss result changes the result. That is what happens, by the minute, with popular opinion anyway.

Objecting to an indeterminate tie break is what statisticians would characterise as "spurious accuracy."

I must admit I hadn't thought of the fact that a tie between two trailing candidates for exclusion is awkward, because subsequent elections of candidates could depend on a merely random choice of which candidate is excluded.

However, even this random effect can be redeemed to some extent. It would be possible to take three alternatives. Exclude either candidate or both. This leaves the chance of a majority decision as to subsequent possibilities.

Statistically speaking, for a large number of candidates, a tie-break between candidates for exclusion is highly improbable. How often has it ever happened? Nobody knows, probably because it is that rare and insignificant an occurrence.

For the sake of argument, let us admit the principle, that a tie for exclusion could randomly affect the outcome of elections to remaining seats. Let us even grant that it might conceivably change a seat between two evenly matched parties poised to implement diametrically different policies.

Here I am actually loading the argument against myself, because I am piling a coincidence on a coincidence. But that has nothing to do with the efficiency of the election system itself.

Never mind, what I am getting at is that "things fall apart."

The fundamental unreasonableness of the theorem critique is to apply deterministic standards to a statistical procedure. It is on the way to arguing that there is a logical possibility that the spilt milk could return to a re-assembled jug and the milk-maid uncry herself. This may be true in principle but in reality it is so improbable as to be no argument.

Saying STV breaches the condition, Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives, is like complaining that STV is subject to the second law of thermodynamics.

STV is held to breach IIA thru Strategic Nomination (where "strategic," in British speech, is "tactical"). This criticism lacks a sense of proportion. The objection should be to the spoiler effect in First Past The Post elections. In so far as STV retains an element of simple plurality counting, in last past the post exclusions, then, in principle, it has a residue this fault. That is all. The moral is obviously to improve matters by replacing FPTP with STV.

Just how hard it really is to manipulate an STV election was exemplified in Northern Ireland, which uses a six-member system. In 2003, Sinn Féin in West Belfast hoped to gain an extra seat by a vote equalisation strategy getting their supporters to vote for their candidates in

equal numbers, so their nationalist rivals, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, might be excluded first. And they would hope to gain transfers of next preferences from SDLP voters.

Instead, this vote management strategy led to the election of a Democratic Unionist Party candidate, the worst possible result for the strategists.

I might mention that the condition, Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives is akin to experimental use of a “control” of masking factors from a true result.

STV controls, for voters unequal preferences for candidates, with votes transferred in proportion to a winners surplus. Whereas the spot vote counts unequal preferences equally.

STV also controls for unequal majorities, with a quota count. Whereas simple majority counts treat unequal majorities as equally representative.

It seems that the various attempts to game STV are kinds of tactical voting designed to influence the exclusion of candidates.

A method, Binomial STV, that I developed, does away with the exclusion count, to remove premature exclusion. This must also go a long way to remove theoreticly possible gaming strategies. Tho, they are unrealistic, anyway, mainly because the required preferential information is not available before the election to make their frauds possible.

Binomial STV brings out, more than ever, the nature of elections as statistical approximations, rather than deductive systems. Sometimes, election results can be determined without doubt. In general, election method is a continuous search of the preferential information for the balance of evidence for the relatively successful candidates.

In principle, Binomial STV allows a systematic mining of the preferential data to go on indefinitely. Normally, the balance will settle fairly decisively in relatively early stages of counting or recounting.

III-chosen rules for judging election methods.

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A deterministic model of physics had to be modified by statistical interpretations. Likewise, a deductive model of elections is long over-due for an appreciation of the statistical realities of voting. In this respect, I referred, in passing, at necessary modifications to the conditions of Arrow theorem. Besides criticism in detail of this particular theorem, the whole approach of setting conditions or criteria for election systems has been counter-productive.

It made no sense to judge effective elections, only in terms of effective executives, effective legislatures, effective parties, whatever. You wouldn't judge Euclid geometry a failure, because measuring the Earth, with territorial accuracy, did nothing to stop wars and deforestation in ancient Greece.

Other sets of criteria were closer to home, indeed tautological in the case of judging elections by the choice they give.

In promoting the Additional member System, the Institute for Public Policy Research even missed the criterion that elections are for electing. (It didnt get as far as The Goon Show finding that heat is hot: By gad, it's hot here. - It must be the heat!)

From failing the logical, even the tauto-logical, the first ippr criterion, of requiring a constituency link of voters to their representatives, illogically requires elections to be locations. Constituency sizes may be adjusted by the levels of government that suit communities. Locations are no substitute for elections, as place-holders would have you believe.

The second criterion is "the system must establish a clearer relationship between the number of votes cast for a particular party and the number of seats it secures."

The article claims this statement will "ensure that principles of representation and proportion are embedded in a reformed electoral system."

Actually criterion two ensures not proportional representation but rather proportional partisanship.

Voting is for voters not for parties. The rule-makers keep forgetting this.

As the ippr say, the reformed system must stop simply favoring the larger parties. They fail to add that it must also stop simply favoring parties at the expense of the rest of society to be proportionally represented.

Criterion three demands "all votes have a value" and the electoral battle should not be confined to a small number of marginal constituencies.

Criterion three is a consequence of criterion one, insisting on small constituencies. Merely adding Additional Members, leading to a reduced number of single members, does not stop parties concentrating their campaigns on the marginals. The reduced number of single members

will create relatively more safe seats and yet fewer marginals to concentrate on.

"It is far from clear that the introduction of AMS has reduced the tendency for parties to concentrate in marginal seats. In part this may be because thanks to the relative paucity of list seats, parties can win a disproportionate share of seats by doing well in marginal constituencies."

(Changed Voting Changed Politics.)

Criterion four of "stable but not glacial government" echoes the Jenkins commission desire for a system that was not proportional enough to always produce coalitions without periodic "decisive" one party governments.

This requirement confuses representation with social engineering. A truly representative election system will give the people what they want, whenever they want, not decide for them what it would be best for them to have.

The ippr report flies a kite for the minority dissent of Lord Alexander from the Jenkins report. It ignores the case for STV. Like the Jenkins report, it is prone to empty assertions, which are eminently contradictable. And sets a value on "continuity" (things must change so that things can stay the same).

Inconsistent rules make illogical election method.

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Besides the ippr report and other cases of the classical method of deduction with irrelevant or ineffective axioms, in relation to election systems, there has been a failure to analyse voting methods themselves as axiomatic deductions. For the deductions to be logically true, the axioms of the deductive system must themselves be consistent.

For example, suppose the ballot paper of a referendum requiring a yes or no answer. If the voter answered both yes and no, the ballot paper would be disqualified, because it makes no sense. The voters truthful answer is either yes or no. He supports the issue or he does not support the issue. He cannot both support and reject the issue. Scotland cannot both leave and remain in the United Kingdom.

Yet the Mixed Member Proportional, alias the Additional Member System, commits to precisely that kind of inconsistency. One vote is for parties monopolising single-member constituencies. The other vote is for parties sharing multi-member constituencies.

Faced with a question, should we share or should we not share, if one answered, yes we should share and no we should not share, that would be a self-contradiction that tells you nothing, a paralysed decision.

That axiomatic self-contradiction, of AMS, proceeds to deduce a whole sequence of further self-contradictions in the construction of the system or rather anti-system. (I've discussed this, many times, and, in contrast, the consistency of STV as a theoretical system.)

Thus, the classical science of axiomatic deduction, applied to election methods, has widely resulted in irrelevant, poorly defined, illogical frame-works for the discomfiture of democracy.

A weakness of the axiomatic method is that it harks back to an "a priori" or before-the-fact conception of scientific procedure. Its first principles may seem inevitable. An experience of voting method suggests otherwise.

A widely accepted conception of the nature of measurement in the sciences, may offer a better basis for an assessment of election systems. (My earliest extant version is a paper in French for Unesco, in 1981, placed at the end of my first elections book, Peace-making Power-sharing. A later version, in English, is in the title chapter of this book: Scientific Method of Elections.)

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Binomial STV and the Harmonic Mean quota.

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Preface to this survey of STV research by the author.

At this time, e-books don't support tables, by which the research section of my web-site, Democracy Science, shows the counts of my invention of Binomial STV, or more fully, Abstentions-inclusive Keep-value Averaged Binomial STV: (KAB) STV. In any case, fotos of the counts are too large for small reading devices.

Hence, this birds-eye view of Binomial STV. My research pages indeed merit the term web "site" because they were work in progress. This makes it hard for readers to follow, because they are following my own uncertain development of a new election system.

I was criticised for this failing in clarity, with regard to my page on the Harmonic Mean Quota, where I initially developed harmonic mean quotas in a constituency-system context, unlike that described here, which may be called in full, the simple harmonic mean quota, but which I usually just refer to as the harmonic mean quota (HM quota).

Binomial STV in practise.

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The single transferable vote transfers surplus votes, over an elective quota, to next preferred candidates, to help them also make the elective quota. When there are no more surplus votes, the count resorts to excluding the candidate with the least preferences, so that his next preferences may go towards electing the required number of representatives in a multi-member constituency.

Critics of this exclusion procedure have pointed out that it is arbitrary, because which candidate happens to have the least preferences, when the surplus votes run out, is a matter of chance. This objection is to "premature exclusion."

This author developed an STV count that avoids premature exclusion of candidates. I called it Binomial STV because it is a binary count of preference votes and un-preference votes. The only difference between the two counts is that, for the un-preference count, the voters preferences are counted in reverse, to determine the most un-preferred candidates.

The count of preferences is an election count, whereas the count of un-preferences is an exclusion count.

Both the strength of preference for candidates and the strength of un-preference for those candidates is determined in terms of each candidates "keep value." (Keep values come from Brian Meek method of computer counting STV.)

In my new STV system, each candidate has both an election keep value and an exclusion keep value. Inverting all the candidates exclusion keep values turns this order of the most unpreferred candidates into an order of the least unpreferred candidates, thus approximating another set of election keep values. It is then possible to more broadly base an election on the average of the election keep values and the inverted exclusion keep values, for the candidates over-all keep values, to determine which candidates pass the elective quota.

In an STV election, every voter has one vote and each vote is of an equal value of one unit. With transferable voting, typically each vote will go partly towards electing a preferred candidate, with the rest of that unit vote being transferable, as a fractional surplus to a next preferred candidate, and so on.

Consequently, a candidate who has just enough votes to achieve an elective quota, with no surplus votes transferable to next preferences, has a keep value of one, and a transfer value of zero, making a total of one. For, the keep value plus the surplus value always equals one. This ensures one person, one vote.

Candidates, with more votes than they need to be elected, have a keep value of less than one and a transfer value that makes up the difference from one.

One of my innovations was to allow the use, in my newly invented count, of keep values of more than unity, meaning that the surplus values are negative, which means that the candidate is not in surplus, but in deficit, of a quota and has not yet been elected, at some given stage in the count.

The use of deficit transfer values, as well as surplus transfer values, enables the relative strengths of support for the candidates to be measured through-out every count. There is no premature exclusion of candidates. This invention has the advantage of making more use of preferential information than traditional STV count systems.

Inverting all the keep values in the exclusion count effectively makes that count another measure of the voters elective preference. It is possible to get an average measure of voters preference, by taking the appropriate average, of the election count and the inverted exclusion count, which is the geometric mean.

Thus, multiply each candidates election keep value by their inverted exclusion keep value, and take its square root.

(If you try to use the arithmetic mean, instead of the geometric mean, to arrive at an average keep value for each candidate, you will soon find that it does not add-up properly.)

In small scale elections, with just a few voters, a candidate might not get any votes. Using Binomial STV, it would be necessary to count each candidate as having at least his own one vote.

A simple example illustrates this. Suppose the quota is 100 votes. A candidate gets 150 votes, and is elected with a transferable surplus of 50 votes. His keep value is $100/150 = 2/3$. Therefore the transfer value is the difference from each voters entitlement to one vote, which comes to $1 - 2/3 = 1/3$ of a vote.

Now consider my innovation that the keep values, of candidates in deficit of a quota, are also counted. Suppose, at any given stage in the count, that another candidate only has 50 votes. His keep value is: $100/50 = 2$. That implies a negative transfer value of $1 - 2 = -1$.

Especially in small-scale elections, it is advisable that a candidate has at least his own vote. Because, with zero votes, his keep value becomes, in the above example: $100/0 = \text{infinity}$.

Also, if the count is an exclusion count, where the keep value is inverted, then the keep value is zero.

The returning officer, averaging each candidates election and exclusion keep values, cannot give a meaningful result for a candidates over-all keep value, in such cases where he is left with zero votes, because the geometric mean does not work, for multiplying by zero or infinity.

Further-more, such small scale elections may yield way-out keep values, for candidates with just the odd vote, which are not really meaningful.

My examples for Binomial STV were necessarily very small, because of the complexity of the count, which normally would require a computer program. A very small number of votes renders doubtful the value of way-out keep-values.

Even for more numerous voters, say over a hundred, levels of statistical significance may have to be agreed by contestants, before the election, as to when the more dispersed keep values, from the norm, be ruled-out as useful information in deciding, among remaining candidates, for election. This is a quandary but, as far as I know, it usually will be confined to the tail end of an election, to the last seat, or so, on a multi-member committee.

Traditional STV might be called uninomial STV because the counts are only of preferences. My system of Binomial STV also makes use of

the counts of un-preference. The averaging of an election count and an inverted exclusion count, which I described above, might be called a first order STV count.

Traditional or uninomial STV is a zero order STV count.

A second order STV count is determined by employing the binomial theorem, with p for preference and u for un-preference, as the two terms in the theorem. Symbolically this may be written as: $(p+u)$. And this factor symbolises the first order count.

The factor is actually taken to the power of one but the index number one is usually not written, because the expansion of the theorem is the same as the factor itself.

Thus the second order count of my binomial STV is symbolised by the familiar quadratic equation: $(p+u)^2 = p^2 + up + pu + u^2$.

In this form of the equation, pu does not equal up, so they cannot be written as $2up = 2pu$. To use the maths jargon, the two terms, pu and up, do not commute. They are a non-commutative algebra.

In symbolic logic, this expansion could be written as a four row truth table: pp, up, pu, uu.

This stands for a second order table of four logical possibilities: preferred preference; un-preferred preference; preferred un-preference; un-preferred un-preference.

These four terms systematically determine the four different counts to be averaged for a second order STV count. The first order count has already provided a preference count, p, and an un-preference count, u. The second order count consists of two qualified preference counts, pp and up, and two qualified un-preference counts, uu and pu.

The preferred preference count (pp) is obtained by excluding the most preferred candidate and re-distributing his votes among next preferred candidates, in a so-qualified preference count.

The other qualified preference count, the un-preferred preference count excludes the most unpreferred candidate, to redistribute or transfer to next preferred candidates.

Similarly, the unpreferred unpreference count (uu) re-transfers the most unpreferred candidates votes in an exclusion count of the most unpreferred candidates. The preferred unpreference count (pu) operates by excluding the most preferred candidate for the re-transfer of his votes in reverse order of preference, in a further exclusion count of the most unpreferred candidates.

(Thus, “pu” and “up” do not commute [as $2up$ or $2pu$] because they are different operations symbolising different modes of count.)

Multiplying each candidates two keep values, from the two preference counts, (pp) and (up), and taking their square roots derives their geometric mean keep values. That is the average election count, which may be symbolised as:

$$P = \{(pp)(up)\}^{1/2}.$$

The average exclusion count, U, is similarly derived from (pu) and (uu).

$$\text{Or: } U = \{(pu)(uu)\}^{1/2}.$$

Multiply the average election count, P, by the inverse of the average exclusion count, $1/U$, and take their square root to derive the over-all second-order STV count (which might be symbolised as B).

$$\text{In symbols: } B = (P/U)^{1/2}.$$

Both these examples of first-order and second order STV have used the power of rational measurement to determine the degree of exclusion of candidates, without “premature exclusion” of candidates found in traditional STV.

No candidates are deprived from a chance of winning a seat, at all, before all the stages of the count have been completed for the over-all result, and the relative standing of all the candidates is available, to decide which are the most representative to take the seats.

As the term, Binomial STV, implies, the qualifying of election and exclusion counts can be continued indefinitely in principle. A third order STV count would involve two to the power of three, which equals eight logical possibilities, in systematic recounts to determine the most probably preferred candidates.

These third order recounts would build on the second order recounts, just as the second order re-counts built on the first-order re-counts.

Higher orders of Binomial STV mine deeper and deeper into the preferential data. The more candidates there are, the more data to be mined. This possibility for thoro analysis suggests that Binomial STV is an information-rich procedure, offering some guarantee of its theoretical validity.

However, for most practical purposes, the mining will not have to be deep.

At present, traditional (zero-order) STV is incomparably better than all the unsatisfactory non-transferable voting systems that plague

politics.

The foregoing discussion assumes that the voters expressed equally preferences and un-preferences. Suppose, however, that voters were twice as inclined to put their more preferred candidates, on the ballot paper, than their relatively un-preferred candidates.

This might be expressed symbolically by: $(2p + u)$.

And so, in theory, election counts might be given twice as much weight as exclusion counts, where the balance of former to latter preferences justified it.

In preparing this explanation of Binomial STV, or (KAB) STV, I had to face further problems not adequately tackled, by the above possibility of weighting the importance of preference votes compared to un-preference votes. I thought that if there were twice as many votes just preferring half the candidates, rather than extending preferences to all the candidates, one might simply give twice the weight to the preference counts compared to the un-preference counts.

But I gave up trying to come up with a weighting procedure that was not arbitrary or assumed. The next section tries a new tack.

Abstentions-inclusive count.

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I decided that somehow the contours of the voters preferences had to be followed exactly. By this I mean, an accurate taking into account the fact that some voters preferences stop sooner than others. The structure of the count should reflect or represent typical imbalances, by which most voters only express a few higher preferences, with quite a small proportion of voters filling in all or nearly all preferences.

This putting in context of the count, the degree of imbalance between high and low preferences, would require every preference position to be counted, whether or not any given voters had expressed a preference in them.

This would even include a voter who expressed no preferences at all. If some voter folded a blank ballot paper and put it into the ballot box, that would count as a voter who preferred none of the candidates.

Blank balloting is equivalent to the “none of the above” option.

It would be wrong to allow this explicit option on a ballot paper, because it is giving a privileged position to just one possible voting permutation. Indeed, there are astronomical numbers of possible permutations for more than a few candidates.

This consideration also explains why group voting, or party lists options on the ballot paper, should be unconstitutional, because, like “none of the above,” giving privileged positions to just one ranked choice, for each party, of a huge number of possible permutations of preference for candidates.

So, a preference abstentions-inclusive count, the counting of all preference positions, whether or not filled by a voters choice of candidate, already clarifies two out-standing issues in election procedure. Altho this is a departure from existing STV counting practice, it would appear to be a principled one with useful implications.

How would the abstentions-inclusive count or all-preference positions count work? This could be done most simply by numbering every blank preference position according to its rank. Suppose an election of 12 candidates. And someone balloted a blank paper, equivalent to “none of the above.” This blank paper could be registered in the count by numbering blank preference positions a1 to a12 (meaning a for abstention one to abstention twelve) not for candidates, rather for 12 non-candidates.

This amounts to a twelve-fold expression of preference for non-candidates, or candidates who are not there. As they are absent and unknown, so we cannot say anything about them or their respective order, which is immaterial. That order merely is the instruction to transfer the preference for abstention, towards a quota for a mandatory vacancy or non-candidate. (Abstractly speaking, any unfilled seat goes to the most preferred non-candidate.)

If a voter only expresses one preference, leaving the rest of the ballot paper blank, the remaining 11 blank spaces may be registered for preference position abstentions a2 to a12.

This is not to be confused with the theoretical possibility, however improbable, that a voter might only wish to express dislike for one or more of the candidates. To merely vote against a candidate, the disliking voter could put the number 12 against that most disliked of candidates, because binomial STV includes independent counts of un-preference.

The 12 abstentions are un-differentiated and united expression of voters disinclination to prefer the 12 actual candidates. Therefore, the vote abstentions, considered as “ghosts” or non-candidates, are transferable, as a communal expression of the extent that the voters want none of the existing candidates. Nothing more definite can be asserted about the problem of an election that systematically leaves one or

more of its seats empty.

If the non-candidate preferences achieve a quota of abstention, then the voters have expressed sufficient objection to the candidates, that one of the seats, on the committee or in the multi-member constituency, is barred to the contenders in the current election. This would appear to be an effective expression of voters (frequently expressed) dissatisfaction with candidates.

This is a satisfactory conclusion for me, because a KAB STV introduction of an all-preference position count or preference abstentions-inclusive count has enabled an election quality control of candidature.

The abstentions-inclusive principle displays some theoretical consistency. It is not just an ad hoc device to save the use of my Binomial STV for elections in which voters typically leave some of their preferences blank.

Besides candidature quality control, counting abstentions helps clear away the privileged status of the "none of the above" preference and party list preference orders or any other would-be privileged ranking.

Thus a fuller descriptive title for Binomial STV might be: Abstentions-inclusive Keep-value Averaged Binomial STV.

Best number of seats for intelligent choice?

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This new abstentions-inclusive procedure does raise the question of how best to obtain the maximum expression of preferences by voters.

The Irish constitutional convention voted to increase their constitutional minimum of 3 member constituencies to 5 member constituencies.

The Irish have had a century's experience of STV, so this is as good an endorsement of minimum choice, as we are likely to find. Northern Ireland has a six-member STV system to include the various political points of view.

This leaves the question of any desirable maximum number of seats, that the voters are likely to use all their preferences for.

Some relevant research was cited by Robert Ardrey, in his popular series on ethology. What size of group did people work best in? It was believed that mankind probably foraged in groups of an optimum size for the bounty of the terrain. Such ecological limits for survival might establish evolutionary precedent for how well people got on, say, in committees of a certain size.

Anyway, the studies found that some groups were too large and some too small for most productive effect. The number, the researchers settled on, was 11.

I remember this, because Ardrey quoted some wag as saying that Jesus had one too many disciples.

Therefore, I tentatively suggest that elections to, say, the Australian Federal Parliament, might be limited to 11 member constituencies. This is bearing in mind the overwhelming number of voters who simply take the easy way out by voting for a party ticket. What ordinary members of the public can get to know all those stranger candidates? Human beings have chameleon personalities. Yet you have to figure some way of grading their qualities, or at least their policy commitments.

I'm not suggesting that 11 should always be the maximum. At least in certain circumstances, many more seats, in a constituency, might work splendidly. For many years, Cork elected all 21 councillors from one city constituency, on STV with optional preference voting.

It is a pity that trial and error in elections has been usually for partisan advantage, instead of disinterested democratic tests to optimise voter expression of choice.

Fundamental, to maximising choice, is the need to integrate democracy into community life. (This is briefly discussed, in the chapter on Scotland's electoral future, in companion book: Peace-making Power-sharing.)

Binomial STV in theory.

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Meek method is a more systematic computer count of transferable surpluses, than was possible with hand-counted STV. The hand count transfers an elected candidate's surplus votes to next preferences, but, at later stages of the count, simply passes over any more preferences for an already elected candidate.

A computer can re-calculate the already elected candidate's keep value, thru adding the value of those further preferences to his total vote (keep value equals quota divided by candidate's total vote) and hence the changed weight of his transfer value (which is: one minus the

keep value) for next preferred candidates.

Like Meek method of computer-counted STV, Binomial STV is based on counting keep values, and would also have to be computer counted. Binomial STV is compatible with either hand or computer counts. Its election count can be that of any standard STV count, or any such standard count conducted in reverse, as an exclusion count.

Binomial STV can build on any standard STV count by progressing from a first order count (of a straight-forward election count and this count reversed for un-preference counting) to a second order count, that introduces such preference and unpreference counts, preferentially or unpreferentially qualified by transferring votes from the most preferred or unpreferred candidate in a previous lower-order count.

Never the less, any official implementation of Binomial STV, as a computer-counted system, only would make sense in combination with the most accurate existing computer counted STV, namely Meek method, because maximising preferential information is the purpose of both methods and they complement each other to that end.

It should be emphasised that hand-count or Meek STV (tho both are just preferential, that is “uninominal,” and not also un-preferential) are incomparably better than any other election system in use, and generally fit for purpose. But Binomial STV combats certain mote-in-your-eye critics of STV.

Unlike both traditional hand-counted STV and Meek STV, Binomial STV avoids the criticism of “premature exclusion,” employing a rational exclusion count of the preference votes in reverse, as well as the usual election count of preferences.

I was not the first person to think of a preference and reversed preference count. The Electoral Reform Society offered an article to one of its members, who thought of the idea, but he declined. I contacted him but he showed no desire to resume the idea.

As far as I know, I was the first person to publish the idea of counting reversed preferences and give practical examples. However, this required further new ideas.

Like Meek method, Binomial STV is based on keep values (which is where the concept comes from) but unlike Meek, I calculate keep values with deficit transfer values, as well as surplus transfer values. This means that all the candidates remain in the count til its completion, when, novelly, they are all given a final relative popularity, according to their average keep values, of a series of systematic (keep-value) re-counts, based on a statistical logic of the binomial theorem.

An extravagant claim, associated with social choice theory, can easily be refuted. This is that voting methods have their advantages and disadvantages and generally one is not better than another. This was the Ontario government pretension that choice of voting methods is a sort of fashion statement.

John Allen Paulos (Beyond Numeracy) cited a ranked choice election, for a single vacancy, which contrived to derive five different results for five different voting methods. He claimed that social choice theory thus showed there was no clear choice of democratic voting method.

I examined this example and found that the difference in results was a function merely of the different extents to which the preferential information was used by each system.

The systems were first past the post, supplementary vote, alternative vote, Borda method and Condorcet pairing.

I modified the Condorcet pairing count by weighting the results to show the extent the possible pairs of candidates fared against each other. (This is a standard statistical technique. I didn't know that such a method of weighted Condorcet pairing had been applied already by J G Kemeny.) This extra information was sufficient to make the Condorcet method result, once weighted, agree with Borda method, the two most information-gleaning methods used.

(The example is on my Democracy Science web-site page: Keep-value Averaged STV.)

Condorcet pairing, weighted or not, still has its limitations because each pairing is confined to the relative preferences between any two candidates. Each dual neglects the context of relative preference between all the candidates, which Borda method estimates (but only estimates) by weighting the count more, the higher the preference or rank. Weighting the count with the harmonic series, a first choice would get one vote; a second choice gets half a vote; a third choice gets one-third of a vote, and so on.

Making most use of the preferential information is why, for example, STV is better than Borda method (as explained in my chapter on Scientific method of elections: How to do it). It is also justification for theoretical progress to Binomial STV.

It may be safely said that the anarchy of voting methods, in actual use, is not, as many politicians and academics would have us believe, any indication that there is no right and wrong in voting methods, and nothing need change. Information-poor voting methods are merely an

all too extensive form of censorship of popular opinion and the common interest.

Social choice theory used Arrow Impossibility theorem, to demonstrate supposed limitations to the possibility of a democratic system. (For further discussion, see my: Liberating democracy from Impossibility theorem.)

Arrow theorem was primarily demonstrated on the Alternative Vote, which is a rather undemocratic system to demonstrate the undemocratic nature of elections. The real elections paradox of social choice theory is that it has to acknowledge the most democratic system to show how undemocratic is democracy.

However, social choice theory has contented itself with the legend that STV is paradoxical or “non-monotonic,” in the maths jargon, by contriving a mini-election, in which a candidate loses by gaining votes. These are actually very marginal considerations, that have not been shown to affect electoral practise.

I have to mention this mote-in-your-eye criticism, because I've seen it featured as a “disadvantage” of STV. A hypothetical case, never demonstrated in actual political elections, should not weigh against most of the votes wasted in First Past The Post. Nor should it warrant leaving the preference vote to one person, a dictator deciding the candidates order of election on a party list, and denying universal suffrage of preference voting.

Riker, quoted triumphantly in Labour party Plant report contrives a small scale example of STV in which no candidate achieves a surplus over the quota in the first or succeeding rounds. He considers a situation in which improving candidate Xs preferences at the expense of candidate Y, perversely loses X the seat.

But Binomial STV faithfully reflects the change. (The working is on my Democracy Science web-page: Keep-value averaging Binomial and Condorcet counts of Transferable Voting. [You don't need to consider the subsequent Condorcet counts.])

The rationale of Binomial STV is just to maximise the preferential information. Any juggling the preferences, as Riker does, is reflected in the changed keep values, surplus or deficit, for every candidate.

I seem to remember, on an e-mail group, that someone, primed in social choice theory, asserted that STV was caught in the “later no-harm” trap. The latter means that later preferences must not harm former preferences. (He may have been refering to my version of Binomial STV also. If he was, he gave no explanation.)

In Borda method, which is for one seat, later preferences harm former preferences. How much harm depends on the mathematical series (arithmetic, harmonic or geometric series) used to weight a voters successive preferences. As long as the single transferable vote in multi-member constituencies is transferring surplus votes to next preferences, from candidates already elected on a quota, then the next preferences cannot harm the former preferences.

Transferring surpluses may be expressed in terms of (surplus) transfer values, which do no later harm. On the same logical basis, Binomial STV extends this practise to calculating deficit transfer values, so that the weight of preference for all candidates is consistently measured in the count. Calculating keep values for candidates, whether from surplus or deficit transfer values, does not confer any harm from the candidates voters later preferences.

As soon as it is seen that a once-and-for-all (uninominal) election count is only a special case of election system, and Binomial STV introduces systematic re-counts, then it becomes apparent that elections cannot be regarded as axiomatic deductions of incontrovertible winners.

Therefore, elections, as determinist counts, are explicitly replaced by elections as statistical approximations to the most likely preferences of the voters, derived by mining the preferential information on the ballot papers, with the required degree of thoroness.

Binomial STV as a data mining election.

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After I wrote the last sentence in the previous section, I found out, there was a computer specialty in "data mining" or "knowledge discovery." The usual specialist jargon made their exact procedure hard to follow. A problem is to classify masses of data in a searchable fashion. There is too much information to do this manually, so automatic methods using computer algorithms are necessary.

Transferable voting method has under-gone a comparable process. The hand count of STV, even with the help of a calculator, is less than completely thoro.

The computer algorithm of Meek STV does not pass over further surplus votes for an already elected candidate, without readjusting his keep value for a corresponding change in the transfer value, which will alter the weighting given to subsequent preferences.

This usually should make little or no difference to elections. It is a purist attitude of theoretical consistency, that if you are going to use a computer count, you might as well do it properly.

Yet, Meek method also incorporates the practise of reducing the Droop quota, or elective proportion of the votes, with every reduction in the number of voting papers that show no more preferences.

Woodall, the mathematician responsible, just asserted it was right, while noting the unanimous opposition of the Electoral Reform Society Council.

From the point of view of the returning officer, it is no doubt expedient to keep lowering the stile, to help-over the last few runners, in the marathon STV count, to fill all available seats.

For theoretical consistency, the council are right to uphold strict proportionality by not dropping the quota. Failure to do so, means that transfer values are not being calculated on an equal basis.

This can only be justified, if the existing Meek method is designed primarily to elect the most preferred candidates up to the number of seats, regardless of strictly equitable rules for their election.

The root of the problem is that Meek method, like manual STV, still excludes trailing candidates, when the transferable surplus votes have run out.

Binomial STV doesn't exclude candidates. It runs an exclusion count, as well as the election count. Abstentions are also counted, in order to preserve the structure of the preferential information, with regard to the balance of greater and lesser preferences.

So, in Binomial STV there is no question of lowering the quota in step with the number of votes with no more available preferences. Instead, all the abstentions or unavailable preferences are taken into account, in each election or exclusion count.

The consequence is that Binomial STV may count enough abstentions to reach a quota, leaving a seat in the multi-member constituency vacant.

(Further research can be done into maximising voters expression of preferences, to reduce the likelihood of unfilled seats.)

Of course, unfilled seats is what the preferences-terminating quota reduction rule, in Meek method, is meant to avoid.

Never the less, for theoretical consistency, as a data-mining algorithm, I would recommend my invention of Binomial STV to be used on Meek method but without quota reduction.

Binomial STV didn't seem a good name for my new form of STV, because higher orders of binomially qualified re-counts would hardly ever be needed for elections, in practise.

For purposes of data mining, the name "Binomial STV" is apposite, because higher orders, of Binomial STV, offer indefinitely greater extractions of preferential information.

(I would recommend, for theoretical reasons, the use, in large constituencies of my innovation of the Harmonic Mean quota, as average of the Hare and Droop quotas.)

Inter-active STV.

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Another of my web pages, on Real-time STV, considers the invention, in 1821, of the transferable voting principle, by Thomas Wright Hill. His school boys elected a committee by queueing behind the candidates. Boys transferred to other queues, for their second or next preferences, when their first choice either had more supporters, than he needed, or too few to hope to gather enough supporters, to win one of several seats at the committee table.

TW Hill STV is inter-active STV where the voters are changing their choices in response to each others decisions, in real time. This is much more flexible than the secret ballot, which has to be maintained to free voters from fear of retaliation, for who they support or from dictation of who to support.

In freedom from fear, inter-active STV could be magnified to the scale of public elections, by displaying real time computations of voters choices, which they could amend in response to a display of the progress of the count for the various candidates.

An inter-active STV election resembles a settling down of oscillations or swings of support between surpluses and deficits of votes about an equilibrium level of support in the elective quota. In maths, this pattern is described as a damped vibration.

The point is that study of inter-active STV patterns could be expected to reveal new patterns of voter behavior. Such new patterns might be formulated and introduced as new rules into the standard rule book for a (non-interactive) STV election.

An inter-active STV reveals the prospect of voters trying to get the better of each other, as they watch each others voting behavior in real

time. Gaming would become a natural pastime, both co-operative and competitive, which merely is to describe evolution.

There would be nothing wrong with such gaming, because it would be done on equal terms of universal instant access to both preferential voting and quota counting information. This would be a legitimate state-of-the art computer inter-active STV gaming. It would be essentially a large-scale version of Thomas Wright Hill transferable voting between school boys lining up behind their favored candidates.

The real objection of Arrow Impossibility theorem, is not that all elections may be gamed in various ways but that they may be gamed inequitably information-wise and organisation-wise.

STV is the evolving voting method that best frees the voters from inequitable gaming. STV is the best voting method.

My characterisation of an inter-active STV election, as patterned like a damped vibration, is mathematical justification that inter-active STV should be introduced so that voters are free to express a pattern of behavior, of recognised scientific interest, denied to them by a formal (non-interactive) STV count.

More-over, this example is common sense explanation for Godel incompleteness theorem, with regard to scientific theories. A deductive theory starts from a few key first principles, suitably chosen to derive many consequences, testable as to how widely and well they fit observations.

But reality cannot be so rigidly pinned down. Theories are incomplete because reality is incomplete. The Creation is still being created and we can accept the same of theories, which not only relate reality but may partake of creating it.

The same reasoning applies to the social choice counterpart, of Godel theorem, in Arrow theorem. Election methods are not an undecidable contest between various systems as rigid sets of rules, with their good and bad points.

The reality was that an election started with a one-stage majority or simple plurality count. Then came a multi-stage count to guarantee a majority. But the exhaustive count or alternative vote was still regarded as one election, tho previously the one stage was the election.

So, election method is not merely a chaos of conflicting systems but has evolved and certainly has potential for further evolution, as this chapter shows. Tho, it is easy to disguise this evolution under a chaos of opportunist aberrations in election rules.

Theories themselves evolve but theorems, like Godel and Arrow, find incompleteness in theory, that is bound to be incomplete, because it is no more than a snapshot in time of how thinking evolves or develops in accord with consequences derived from its recognised limitations as a theory.

Incompleteness theorems will have to develop their own conceptions of incompleteness, beyond considering theory in terms of axiomatic determinism.

Theorem makers may be handicapped by a classical conception of maths as made up of once and for all proofs, the science of certainty. Yet mathematicians also evolve their theorems, just as Arrow theorem has evolved, and needs to do so, considerably more, if it is to be relevant to the reality of a residue of indeterminacy in elections in general.

Elections may not be social choice theorists presumption of what goes to make right and wrong results. Arrow axioms may pre-determine some impossible election system.

But the point of the electoral exercise is to approach objectively, the subjective determinations of the voters as a whole, with reasonable degrees of confidence.

The few worked examples, on my Democracy Science web-site, gave stable results, even for the very small number of voters, inimical to decisive out-comes. Of course, many trials in Binomial STV would be needed to shake out the bugs.

After well over a century, the bugs are still being combed out of traditional STV, such as the need to replace the “inclusive Gregory method” with the “weighted inclusive Gregory method.” (Anthony Green: Elections Blog. Transfer Values in Northern Victoria Region.)

Nothing could be further from the truth, that you can just design your own electoral system, as the Jenkins Commission tried to do, with Alternative Vote Top-up. The Commission even ignored their in-house experts who picked out some design flaws in their sad recommendation.

No recorded commission submission prepared a case for AV+ or its practical details. (And I would be surprised if any of the much greater mass of unrecorded submissions did either.) There was no more than the odd favorable mention buried in the mass of advice.

The report cited organisations and dignitaries but the great mass of members of the public were dismissed as too many to mention. That virtually no-one wanted AV Top-up would have been high-lighted had the Commission even bothered to add up the numbers of people who

supported various systems. The unhidden public view would have told the world that the Commission wilfully ignored everybody.

(Except, that is, the Prime Minister, who privately wouldn't give STV to Jenkins, as account of the Ashdown diaries, relates in book one in this series.)

Likewise, the Ontario government, suitably cueing their hired academics, put the "leading question" (as the lawyers say for a misleading question) to their Citizens Assembly, that their business was to design an electoral system to suit Ontario. They even showed a picture of a choice of models of car.

Democracy was abolished in the alleged impossibility of right and wrong elections.

The Harmonic Mean quota.

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D R Woodall looked into Meek method, testing for whether the system was well-behaved, producing convergent results, and other maths I didn't understand. But which should give pause to innuendo (as from Riker) that STV is "chaotic."

As mentioned above, Meek method, used in New Zealand for District Health Boards and some local elections, re-calculates the (Droop) elective quota downwards, every time voters drop out of the count by not expressing any more preferences on their ballot papers.

The Electoral Reform Society disagreed with quota reduction.
Who then was right, Woodall or the council?

Well, both are right according to their respective priorities. The priority of an election system designer is to ensure that a decisive result is achieved every election. There is no doubt that reducing the quota in step with reduced preferences at each count stage is an effective expedient for ensuring that all the seats are taken.

If you want half a dozen qualifiers for the high jump, you may have to lower the hurdle, more than once, before you get the six best high-jumpers.

The council also have a point. How can a system be fair that lowers the hurdle for some candidates, after others have had to scale a higher hurdle, leaving a relatively smaller surplus value of transferable votes for their voters next preferences?

As stated above, an abstentions-inclusive count with Binomial STV means there is no point in reducing the quota, because it is accepted that the voters may not express sufficient preferences to fill all the seats.

However, Droop quota reduction, during the STV count, is a convenient introduction to a more basic problem with the Droop quota, itself as an elective quota, even if you maintain it as a level hurdle for all candidates.

The Droop quota (votes divided by one more than the number of seats) itself is too low a hurdle, by which it takes only half the voters to elect a candidate in a single-member constituency. If two candidates both get half the votes, they have to draw lots for the winner. If one of the candidates gets slightly more than half the votes, this counts as a decisive win by the Droop quota. But statisticly, the winer may not be significantly more popular than the loser, in elections of any size.

Originally, STV or the Hare system used the Hare quota (votes divided by seats). In a national constituency or even a regional constituency, there were so many seats that there is not much difference in the size of the Hare quota from the Droop quota. But when you get down to a single seat constituency, the Hare quota requires a candidate to be elected with all the votes. Plainly, that is too high a hurdle, as Droop is too low a hurdle. In fact, they are the maximum and minimum quotas respectively.

The Hare quota could normally only elect a candidate, if all the voters defer to some authority, who chooses a candidate for them. That does not go beyond the herd instinct of follow my leader. List systems, that only allow voters to follow the party line, are institutionalised suppression of the diversity of popular choice. That is not democratic.

It should be apparent that the Droop quota is also less than democratic in its way. This quota count always leaves unrepresented a fraction of the voters, potentially large enough to take a seat, but for slight differences (or even no differences) in support attributable solely to chance.

What quota then will navigate between this Scilla and Charbydis of less than democratic quotas?

As the Hare and Droop quotas form a range between maximum and minimum limits, their average may be taken. As both limits form harmonic series, the suitable average, to take, is the harmonic mean.

To find their harmonic mean, invert both quotas, and add the inversions, dividing by two, then re-invert for the result.

Thus, Hare quota, V/S becomes S/V . Droop quota, $V/(S+1)$ becomes $(S+1)/V$.

Adding and dividing by two gives: $(S+S+1)/2V$.

Re-inverting for the harmonic mean gives: $2V/(2S+1) = V/(S + \frac{1}{2})$.

The harmonic mean quota is the votes divided by one-half more than the number of seats.

How can you have half a seat? The same way a nation can have a birth rate of about two and a half children. It's an average.

The HM quota does have a direct bearing on the progress of democratic electoral reform by STV elections. I believe a major stumbling block is the complaint of some election reformers, in the European Union and in Canada, that STV, using the Droop quota, isn't proportional enuf.

The low hurdle of the Droop quota also facilitates elections in smaller multi-member constituencies than are desirable, from a democratic point of view. Only main-stream opinion can be represented, in three or four member constituencies. And this may discourage alternate voices from participating.

Larger constituencies would make the HM quota more achievable. The Droop quota could still be used as back-up, analogous to a tie-break when two candidates tie for a vacancy. Two candidates, having a statistically insignificant difference in votes between them, are in the position of requiring a statistical tie-break, which might be rendered by resorting to the Droop quota, after finding the HM quota hurdle too high.

Some reformers ask, then why resort to a higher quota than Droop, if it more usually provides a decisive result, anyway?

Because, an election is also an exercise in providing the best level of democracy, not allowing chance to determine the out-come but as fully or proportionly representative as possible, consistent with the voters freedom of choice.

Further reference:

Choosing Electoral Systems in Local Government in New Zealand by the STV task force, convened by the Department of Internal Affairs, describes Meek method.

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Guide to five volume collected verse by Richard Lung

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Dorothy the maker made a maker of me.

I described (some of) the comedy of errors that got me onto a social science degree course. My state of mind was too backward and unimaginative to make good use of this youthful opportunity. Nearly 20 years later, still somewhat inept, I had another stroke of luck. This also came about in a comical way. A day or two before the 1987 general election, I went to attend a Liberal candidate speech. In the Liberal club, I blundered into the wrong meeting. This turned out to be a writers group.

In the interval, I was approached by an elderly woman. I remember her asking what my politics were. I said I was independent. She seemed heartened by this. It was the beginning of a wonderful friendship that was to last over 22 years. I suppose that I met her for no longer than the time taken by a full-time three-year course. But it's much less pleasant to have ones education crammed in to one for an examination.

Dorothy was like having a personal tutor for a friend. She was a tireless critic of my writings. In the early 1990s, the Labour Party produced a report on electoral systems. Dorothy came from a Labour family and she provided me with an introduction, as well as a time-consuming commentary on my submission.

She made the biggest impression as a poet. There is an aloneness about Dorothys poems that puts me right in her place. Her poems of the Keltic wildernesses are the most obvious examples. When my time is done, these poems might speak for me.

In the sixth form, I had a good English literature course, the bulk of which was classical poetry: Chaucer, Shakespeare, Webster, Milton, John Donne, Herbert and other metaphysical poets, Wordsworth, and Hopkins, that precursor of the moderns. It was not the sort of literature that I had wanted to read in my late teens. It did not occur to me that poetry was something that I might write. It was just exam fodder, or I was just exam fodder, and wasted on me, who knew nothing of life, stuck in school-rooms all day.

After leaving college, I tried write some traditional poetry, without any knowledge of the 20th-century poetry, which I hadn't studied. I gave-up trying to write poetry at 30. A decade later, it was a revelation to read Dorothys poems and, what is more, hear how she read them to an audience. Dorothy wrote traditional nature poetry in modern free verse. Knowing Dorothy, I could see that these poems were an expression of her personality. They were relaxed and reflective and usually had some point to them. They were Dorothy.

Dorothy also went to a poetry group and had taken me, one evening. I provoked laughter, by reading one of Dorothys poems. I suppose the laughter was to rub-in that Dorothy was not famous enough to be so distinguished.

After that, I stopped going. And it would be a year or two before Dorothy told me to go again. She also crossly said not to read her poems; they all laughed and she didn't like it!

Shall I compare Dorothy to a summers day? There were occasional thunderstorms. They were impressive, while they lasted, but you knew they would soon blow over.

This contrasts sharply with those temperaments, on which anger seems to have settled like an ice age.

I soon realised that I was only conscripted to the poetry group because of falling membership. The irony was that my belief in Dorothys work gradually infected everyone else, until they came to share my conviction that Dorothy was one of the best poets in the country. The fact that she nearly always won our little groups poetry competition trophy also helped.

And Dorothy won Yorkshire tv competition for poet laureate of the north.

I am pleased to say that, later still, I was also the means to getting a poem by Dorothy noticed nationally.

Dorothy didn't just teach me poetry by example. She was a rambler and knew all the out-of-the-way places in our district. We must have gone for one or two hundred outings together. They inspired our poems. She brought me back to the countryside of my childhood. I re-worked my earliest memories.

She paraded, before me, all the sights that imagination needs to be able to work on. Poetry, like science, needs experience and imagination. It is well known that poetry is debased because people don't realise that, like every other activity, it is a skill that requires practice.

Science is about learning to think. People may think that they think but in fact it also depends on much practice. Scientists are imagined to be laboratory technicians in white coats. It is true that the bulk of science is remotely specialist from anything that most of us could hope to do. But essentially a scientist is only someone who has learned how to think, tho the thinking tends to become specialised.

In my 40s, Dorothy inspired me to want to write many beautiful poems. Few of them really come-off and one never seems to have written enough. Till then, science and ethics or the true and the good had preoccupied me. As a thinker, I was something of a two-dimensional card-board cut-out, until Dorothy showed me the third dimension of beauty.

The evening I first met Dorothy, I heard her mention in conversation the influence of Thomas Hardy. There is the same country remoteness, and a secular pessimism combined with a dour kindness. Dorothy's poems give the impression of as lonely a person as myself. That and my own farm-land infancy explain their attraction to me.

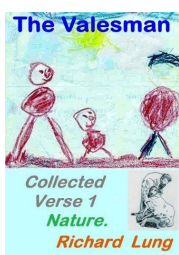
That, in itself, wouldn't be enough without Dorothy's unique qualities. Thomas Hardy was a reticent man but he did once say that his life story was in his poems. I don't think I could say that about Dorothy because she was a more sociable and popular person than her poems would lead you to believe. Perhaps companionship is too prosy to make much good poetry.

It is profoundly true, especially of my earliest years, that my life is in my poems. Before Hardy, Wordsworth made natural a poetry of rural toil, rather than the professionals' holidays or court affairs of state.

Otherwise, I drew on further experiences, as one must, tho too literal an interpretation would be misleading. I respect the kitchen sink dramas. My sixth form literature syllabus included contemporary plays. A teacher took us thru Arnold Wesker and something of the Angry Young Men. Most - not all - of the worst things would get left out of my poems, and much else put in!

The Valesman.

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The first volume is mainly traditional nature poetry.
(160 poems, including longer narrative verse in section three.)

The nature poet Dorothy Cowlin reconnected me with my rural origins. Many of the poems, about animals and birds and the environs, could never have been written without her companionship.

The unity of themes, especially across the first two sections, as well as within the third section, makes this volume my most strongly constructed collection. I guess most people would think it my best. Moreover, there is something for all ages here.

1. How we lived for thousands of years.

Dorothy thought my best poems were those of the farming grand-father, the Valesman.

2. Flash-backs from the early train.

More memories of early childhood on the farm and first year at the village school.

3. Trickster.

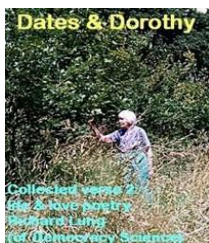
Narrative verse about boyish pranks and prat-falls.

4. Oyh! Old Yorkshire Holidays.

Features playtime aspects of old rural and sea-side Yorkshire.

Dates and Dorothy

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Book two begins with eight-chapter review of works, plus list of publications & prizes by Dorothy Cowlin. (Seven of these chapters are currently freely available as web pages.)

This second volume continues with the second instalment of my own poems, classed as life and love poetry. The Dates are historical and romantic plus the friendship of Dorothy and the romance of religion. 169 poems plus two short essays.

Prelude: review of Dorothy Cowlin.

Dates, historical and romantic, and Dorothy:

1. dates.
2. the Dorothy poems.
3. loves loneliness loves company.
4. the romance of religion.

The hidden influence of Dorothy, in the first volume, shows in this second volume. The first two sections were written mostly after she died. Thus, the first section, Dates, reads like a count-down before meeting her, in the second section, as prentice poet.

She was warmly responsive to the romantic lyrics of the third section. This was reassuring because some originated in my twenties. (I gave-up writing formal poetry during my thirties, to all practical purposes. There were only about three exceptions.) These surviving early poems, like most of my out-put, under-went intensive revision.

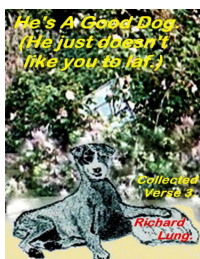
The fourth section probably stems from the importance attached to religion at primary school. Here humanitarian Dorothys influence only slightly made itself felt by her liking to visit churches.

The prelude review of Dorothy as a professional writer is freely available, at present, on my website: Poetry and novels of Dorothy Cowlin. Nearly all the text is there, except a preface and last section, which I didnt upload before losing access to the site in 2007. The fotos, I took of Dorothy, are published for the first time.

The continued availability of my Dorothy Cowlin website is not guaranteed, so I welcome this opportunity to publish my literary review of her work, as an extra to volume 2.

He's a good dog. (He just doesnt like you to laf.)

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The third volume is a miscellaneous collection of 163 poems/pieces, making-up sections, one, three and four, with the arts and politics the strongest themes, as well as themes found in other volumes. There is also a story in section one, and a final short essay.

1. with children
2. or animals
3. never act
4. the political malaise
5. the lost
6. short essay:
Proportional Representation for peace-making power-sharing.

The first section includes a sort of verse novela and dramatic poem with an eye on the centenary of the First World War. The idea stemmed from an incident related by Dorothy Cowlin (yet again). Her uncle was stopped flying a kite on the beach, because he might be signaling to the enemy battle fleet. No kidding!

In this miscellany, previous themes appear, such as children, animals and birds. Verse on the arts comes in. I organised these poems on the WC Fields principle: Never act with children or animals.

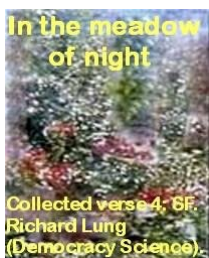
The fourth section collects political satires from over the years. The fifth section reflects on loneliness.

This volume is classed as of "presentatives" because largely about politics and the arts, with politicians acting like performing artists or representatives degenerating into presentatives on behalf of the few rather than the many.

However, the title poem, He's a good dog..., hints how eccentric and resistant to classification is this third volume. This title poem is based on a true war-time air incident. The good dog is also derived from a true dog, whose own story is told in the poem, the bleat dog (in volume 1).

In the meadow of night

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The fourth volume is of 160 poems and three short stories on the theme of progress or lack of it.

part one: allure.

The allure of astronomy and the glamor of the stars.

part two: endeavor.

The romance and the terror of the onset of the space age and the cold war.

part three: fate.

An uncertain future of technologies and possible dystopias. Ultimate questions of reality.

This fourth volume is of SF poetry. SF stands for science fiction, or, more recently, speculative fiction. The verse ranges from hard science to fantasy. This literary tradition of HG Wells and other futurists exert a strong influence.

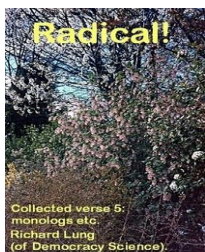
Otherwise, I have followed my own star, neither of my nature poet friends, Dorothy and Nikki, having a regard for SF poetry.

Yet science fiction poetry is a continuation of nature poetry by other means.

This may be my most imaginative collection. Its very diversity discourages summary.

Radical!

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Volume 5 opens with a play about the most radical of us all, Mother Teresa: If the poor are on the moon...

This is freely available, for the time being, on my website: Poetry and novels of Dorothy Cowlin. (Performers are asked to give author royalties to the Mother Teresa Mission of Charity.)

The previously unpublished content consists largely of fairly long verse monologs, starting with artistic radicals, in "The dream flights of Berlioz and Sibelius," which is a sequence of The Impresario Berlioz, and The Senses of Sibelius.

Next, the intellectual radical, Sigmund Freud, followed by short poems on a sprinkling of more great names, who no doubt deserved longer. (Art is long, life is short.)

The title sequence, Radical! is made-up of verse about John Stuart Mill, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, HG Wells, George Orwell and JB Priestley.

Volume five ends with an environmental collection, some drafts of it, currently available on my websites (mainly: Poetry and novels of Dorothy Cowlin). Should that website close down, I hope the green verses and the Mother Teresa play can still be obtained in this volume five.

If you read and enjoy any of these books, please post on-line a review of why you liked the work.

*My website: Democracy Science.
has current URL or web address:*

<http://www.voting.ukscientists.com>

While preparing this series, I have made minor changes to arrangement and content of the material, so the descriptions of companion volumes, at the end of each book, might not always quite tally.

1. **The Valesman**

Published on 3rd august 2014.

[Free from Smashwords.](#)

2. **Dates and Dorothy.**

Published on 2nd september 2014.

["Reader-sets-the-price" at Smashwords.](#)

3. **He's a good dog. (He just doesnt like you to laf.)**

Published on 14 november 2014.

[From Smashwords.](#)

4. **In the meadow of night.**

Published on 26 january 2015.

[From Smashwords](#)

5. **Radical!**

Published on 3 march 2015.

available from Smashwords [here](#).

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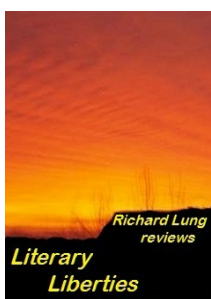
Guide to two more book series.

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The Commentaries series

Commentaries book one:

Literary Liberties



Literary Liberties with reality allow us to do the impossible of being other people, from all over the world. Our imagined other lives make the many worlds theory a fact thru fiction.

This book of books or illustrated reviews span fiction, faction and non-fiction.
It goes some way to substantiate the belief of Benedetto Croce that history is the history of liberty.

I only wrote of books that I appreciated, so that I could pass on that appreciation to others. It must be admitted that I went with novels that looked over horizons confined to family values. (Family is, of course, a basic trial of liberty, compromised by obligations to partner and children.)

Likewise, these reviews themselves need not be bounded by the horizons of literary criticism but reach out to solutions for the problem novel or the non-fiction book with a cause.

In promoting others writings, I hoped to promote my own, any-way, the liberal values that inform my writings. It took a lot more preparation than I had anticipated. This is usually the case with my books.

Literary Liberties is the first of a short series of Commentaries. This author also has a Democracy Science series. The series of Collected Verse was the first to be completed.

Commentaries book two:

Science and Democracy reviews



As they separately pursue their shared ethic of progress, scientific research and democratic reform conduct themselves as two different journeys, both here followed, as the evidence mounts that they depend on each other to meet the stresses that survival poses.

Works reviewed and studied here include the following.

The physicist, John Davidson under-took an epic investigation into the mystic meaning of Jesuses teachings, as for our other-worldly salvation, supplemented by a revelation in non-canonic texts of the gnostics.

The Life and Struggles of William Lovett, 1876 autobiography of the "moral force" Chartist and author of the famous six points for equal representation. Organiser who anticipated the peace and cultural initiatives of the UN, such as UNESCO.

Jill Liddington: Rebel Girls. Largely new historical evidence for the role especially of working women in Yorkshire campaigning for the suffrage.

"How the banks robbed the world" is an abridged description of the BBC2 program explanation of the fraud in corporate finance, that destroys public investments.

David Craig and Matthew Elliott: Fleeced!
How we've been betrayed by the politicians, bureaucrats and bankers and how much they've cost us.

The political system fails the eco-system.
Green warnings, over the years, by campaigners and the media, and the hope for grass roots reforms.
From Paul Harrison, how expensively professionalised services deprive the poor of even their most essential needs. And the developed countries are over-strained, on this account, drawing-in trained people from deprived countries.
Why society should deprofessionalise basic skills important for peoples most essential needs, whether in the third world or the "over-developed" countries.

The sixth extinction
Richard Leakey and other experts on how mankind is the agent of destruction for countless life forms including possibly itself, in the sixth mass extinction, that planet earth has endured in its history. Why world politicians must work together to counter the effects of global warming.

On a topic where science and democracy have not harmonised, a few essays from 2006 to 2010, after "nuclear croneyism" infested New Labour and before Japans tsunami-induced chronic nuclear pollution. There's a 2015 after-word.

Some women scientists who *should* have won nobel prizes.
Lise Meitner, Madame Wu, Rosalind Franklin and Jocelyn Bell, Alice Stewart, to name some. Reading of their work in popular science accounts led me, by chance, to think they deserved nobel prizes; no feminist program at work here.

Julian Barbour: *The End Of Time*.
Applying the Mach principle, to an external frame-work of Newtonian absolute space and time, both in classical physics and to Schrödinger wave equation of quantum mechanics, by which the universe is made properly self-referential, as a timeless "relative configuration space" or Platonia.

Murray Gell-Mann: *The Quark and the Jaguar*.
Themes, including complex systems analysis, which the reviewer illustrates by voting methods.

Brian Greene: The Elegant Universe.
Beyond point particle physics to a theory of "strings" that may under-lie the four known forces of nature, and its material constituents, thru super-symmetry, given that the "super-strings," as such, are allowed to vibrate, their characteristic particle patterns, in extra hidden dimensions of space.

Brian Greene: The Hidden Reality.
A survey of the more extravagant physics theories that have invoked many worlds or a multiverse..

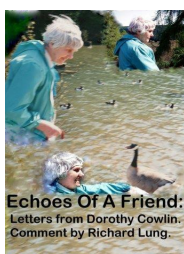
Lee Smolin: Three roads to quantum gravity.
Reviewing the other two roads (besides string theory) namely black hole cosmology and loop quantum gravity. All three approaches are converging on a discrete view of space and time, in basic units, on the Planck scale. General relativitys space-time continuum is being quantised, rather as nineteenth century thermo-dynamics of continuous radiation was quantised.

Lee Smolin: the trouble with physics.
Impatience with the remoteness of string theory and hope for progress from theories with more experimental predictions. How to make research more effective. Smolin on a scientific ethic. Reviewer criticises the artificial divide academics make between science and ethics.

Commentaries book three.

Echoes Of A Friend: Letters from Dorothy Cowlin.

Comment by Richard Lung.



Dates And Dorothy was a literary appreciation of the professional writer, traveler, nature walker, and poet, combined with my second book of verse, that includes the story of our friendship. My second book, about Dorothy, is a memorial, she graces. by speaking thru letters to me, as well as assessments of this writer, she made into a maker and aided as a reformer. In widowhood, she yet became companionable and widely liked. Her quiet and sunny disposition held in reserve a deeply serious nature.

Commentaries book four?

If and when time allows, I may gather a final note-book, consisting largely of tables, graphs and diagrams, too large to conveniently include for e-book readers...

Available free from Smashwords:

[Literary Liberties.](#)

Free from Smashwords: [Science and democracy reviews.](#)

Echoes Of A Friend: Letters from Dorothy Cowlin. Comment by Richard Lung. [free from Smashwords here.](#)

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The Democracy Science series.

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The Democracy Science series of books, by Richard Lung, also is edited and renovated from this authors material on the Democracy Science web-site.

Book 1: Peace-making Power-sharing.



The first, of two books on voting method, has more to do with electoral reform. (The second is more about electoral research.)

"Peace-making Power-sharing" features new approaches to electoral reform, like the Canadian Citizens Assemblies and referendums. I followed and took part in the Canadian debate from before the assemblies were set-up, right thru the referendums. This was a democratic tragedy and an epic in the dashing of idealistic hopes.

Some developments in America are reviewed.

The anarchy of voting methods, from the power struggle in Britain, is investigated over a century of ruling class resistance to electoral reform.

A penultimate chapter gives the simplest way to explain transferable voting, on to the more formal treatment of a small club election.

The last chapter is the earliest extant version of my work on scientific measurement of elections (in French).

Book 2: Scientific Method of Elections.



The previous book had a last chapter in French, which is the earliest surviving version of the foundation of this sequel, Scientific Method of Elections. I base voting method on a widely accepted logic of measurement, to be found in the sciences. This is supported by reflections on the philosophy of science.

The more familiar approach, of judging voting methods by (questionable) selections of basic rules or criteria, is critically examined.

This author is a researcher, as well as a reformer, and my innovations of Binomial STV and the Harmonic Mean quota are explained. This second book has more emphasis on electoral research, to progress freedom thru knowledge.

Two great pioneers of electoral reform are represented here, in speeches (also letters) of John Stuart Mill on parliamentary reform (obtained from Hansard on-line). And there is commentary and bibliography of HG Wells on proportional representation (mainly).

Official reports of British commissions on election systems are assessed. These reports are of Plant, Jenkins, Kerley, Sunderland, Arbuthnott, Richard, and (Helena Kennedy) Power report.

The work begins with a short history on the sheer difficulty of genuine electoral reform. The defeat of democracy is also a defeat for science. Freedom and knowledge depend on each other. Therein is the remedy.

Book 3: Science is Ethics as Electics.



Political elections, that absorbed the first two books in this series, are only the tip of the iceberg, where choice is concerned. Book three takes an electoral perspective on the social sciences and natural sciences, from physics to metaphysics of a free universe within limits of determinism and chance.

"Peace-making Power-sharing"

from Smashwords in epub format: [here](#) free.

"Scientific Method of Elections"

free from Smashwords [here](#).

"Science is Ethics as Electics" *free from Smashwords [here](#).*

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