

Tony Blair is committed to the extinction of Britain

When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean." Humpty Dumpty's rebuke to Alice, who had queried his misuse of language, might well have come straight from Downing Street. The Prime Minister has recently been attempting to "redefine" British patriotism. One would have thought that the concept was simple enough. Patriotism is love of one's country. Full stop.

So why does this cause Tony Blair a problem? After all, he has never been shy of wrapping himself in the flag. For example, in a prominent interview with the *Sun* on the eve of the last general election, he proclaimed: "I am a British patriot."

Yet it is to the rest of that interview that we should look if we want to understand his dilemma, for he also declared: "New Labour will have no truck with a European superstate. We will fight for Britain's interests and to keep our independence every inch of the way."

Whether Mr Blair was sincere four years ago I do not know. But if he was, he rapidly changed his mind. His term as prime minister has seen further erosion of Britain's power to protect her interests in Europe, as our vetoes have been steadily stripped away. He has reversed our long-standing opposition to a European army: indeed, he has foolishly promoted this plan, conceived and driven by the

French as an alternative to Nato. Now, tempted by his lead in the opinion polls, Mr Blair has loudly confirmed his determination to abolish the pound in favour of the European single currency. That policy makes no economic sense. Britain, despite Labour's increases in tax and regulation, is doing rather well outside EMU. The pound is a healthier currency than the euro, which looks sicker by the day.

But above all, without its own currency, Britain would lose the power to determine its own economic policy in favour of what Lionel Jospin, the French prime minister, has just described with refreshing frankness as a European "economic government".

There is nothing very complicated about what is at stake. With a single currency, there would be a single interest rate, set not to take account of Britain's needs, but those of a range of very different countries — a recipe for "boom and bust" indeed.

And there would be immense and, in the end, irresistible pressure to allow our budgets to be made by Europe as well. Indeed, with the so-called "Stability Pact", which limits budget deficits, and with progressive harmonisation of taxes, the direction is already evident.

Add to that the social regulation that will come from Brussels under whatever provision the Commission thinks it can abuse, and the result is clear. The main issues relating to Britain's economic well-



Margaret Thatcher warns of the perils ahead if Labour is returned with a large majority: nothing less than democracy hangs in the balance



being would be removed from Britain's control. And yet it is about these very issues that every British election in modern times has been fought.

Hence the Prime Minister's problem. He is committed to policies that will lead to the progressive extinction of Britain as an independent nation state, and indeed to British democracy as it has developed over the centuries. If this is Mr Blair's idea of patriotism, then only he and Humpty Dumpty are

likely to be found sharing it. And we know what eventually happened to Humpty Dumpty.

Mr Blair has accused the Conservative Party at this election of being "obsessed" with the euro. There must, though, surely be something profoundly wrong with a prime minister who is simply *not concerned at all* about his country's freedom and independence.

But then, the more you think about it, there is something profoundly wrong with today's Labour Party. Presumably, most of them went into politics with some beliefs. But their over-riding claim to be electable now is that they have abandoned enough of their principles to make them safe and that they can be relied on to remain traitors to their convictions. We live in a world where cynicism about politics is fashionable. But even the most hardened cynic would find something unnerving about New Labour politicians.

They are not quite socialists, but they would like to be. They do not openly argue for higher taxes, but they put them up. They do not openly stop people from buying their homes, saving for pensions, or insuring their health — but they remove the encouragement for doing so. They do not openly attack the police, but they undermine their morale.

For a party that still resents the compromises that it has had to make in economics, and that still viscerally dislikes our traditional institutions, the opportunity to

abolish Britain within a federal Europe is a more congenial policy than most. Given the chance, they will go to it with a vengeance.

I have nothing in principle against large Commons majorities: in fact, I rather enjoyed them. But, in my time and that of my successor, John Major, the prime minister was always held to account. Twice a week, there was rigorous cross-questioning in the House, which was treated — and expected to be treated — with respect. There was a more independent-minded House of Lords. There was a large in-built opposition from the broadcasters and much of the press.

Above all, because politics had substance, there was open, vigorous debate about issues and policies: anyone who had tried to suppress that debate by intimidating the media or glossing and shading the truth would have received short shrift, and rightly so.

I applaud strong government, but not overweening government sustained by cronies, ciphers and a personality cult. I very much fear that, if Mr Blair is returned with a large majority, these already detectable tendencies will grow unchecked. At a time when our country's future as an independent nation lies in the balance, that is a risk too far.

A quarter of a century ago, the great Lord Hailsham — a "force of conservatism" if ever there was one — warned of what he termed an "elective dictatorship". It is not too late to vote to prevent that.

Thatcher, Margaret. "Tony Blair Is Committed to the Extinction of Britain." Daily Telegraph, 1 June 2001, p. 26. The Telegraph Historical Archive, link.gale.com/apps/doc/HFVQIT527040047/TGRH?u=lonlib&sid=bookmark-TGRH. Accessed 3 June 2026.