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English nationalism still a mood not a movement

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Created 2008-07-20 06:00

Tom Griffin (London, The Green Ribbon [1]): In the latest edition of Parliamentary Brief [2], Arthur Aughey looks at how Ken Clarke's Democracy Task Force has attempted to answer the English Question. Although sceptical on the details, he suggests that Clarke's approach reflects distinctive conservative principles that may point the way to a solution.

English nationalism is still a mood, not a movement, if only because the Conservative Party refuses to mobilise it as such. The taskforce's objective is to prevent that mood becoming a movement, confirming the Unionism of the Conservative Party, something David Cameron has taken every opportunity to confirm since becoming leader.

If the report becomes party policy, which seems very likely, then the trajectory of Conservative thinking on the 'English Question' since 1997 is from constitutional maximalism to constitutional minimalism. It has gone from tentative support for an English parliament, through 'English votes on English laws' and Sir Malcolm Rifkind's idea of an English grand committee, to this taskforce's present recommendation of certified English bills being considered and voted on by English MPs only in committee and at the report stage.

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[1] http://tomgriffin.typepad.com/the_green_ribbon/

[2] <http://www.thepolitician.org/articles/new/mag/37/787/a-cloud-no-bigger.html>