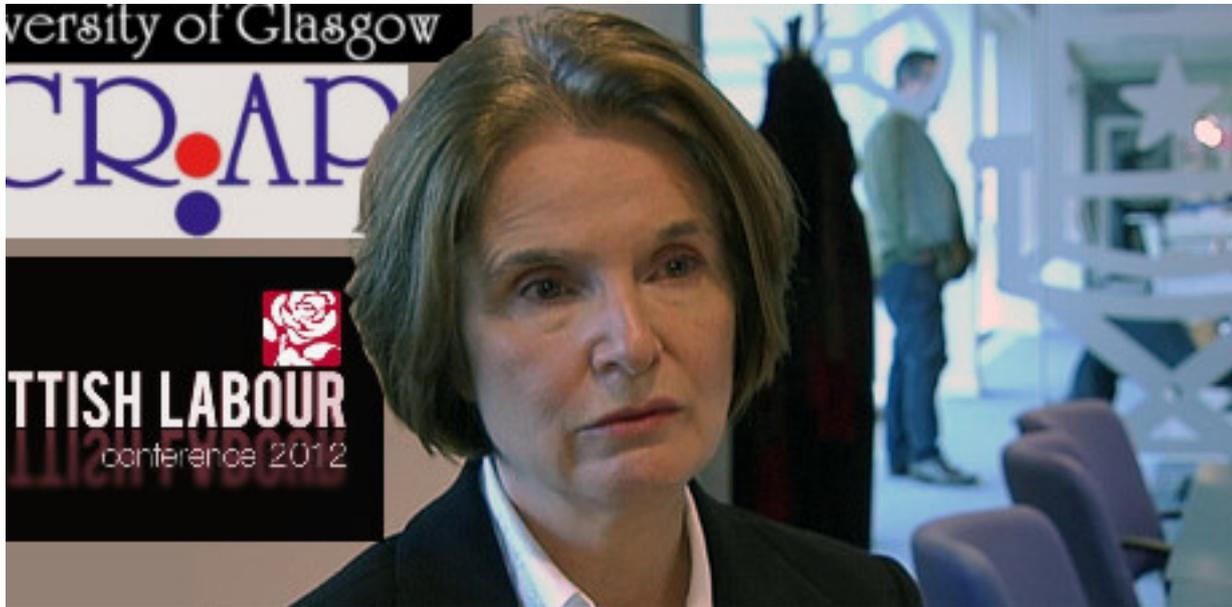


By **Betty d'Gither**, our constitutional expert.



An entirely and unarguably independent think tank has revealed that billions of pounds could be wasted in Great Britain and around the world if Scotland were to be granted Separation in 2014.

The highly respected and well-endowed panel of experts, the *Centre for Regional Analysis and Policy*, which has absolutely no links to the Labour Party, made the shocking claim in a paper it released yesterday.

The publication, which leans heavily on research published by the *Institute for Fiscal Research* (IFS) and the UK Treasury's own *Outlandishly Biased Reviewers* (OBR), is entitled, "*Some more reasons why Scottish Separation is a really, really bad thing*".

The paper's authors, Prof. Eck Spektina-Peerage, and Prof. Jo Armstrong-Lamont MSP, make the observation that the terms Great Britain, United Kingdom and England have been synonymous for centuries, particularly among people of the foreign persuasion.

They argue that this situation has been perfectly acceptable until now as the UK government has opined that Scotland has not existed in any real sense since being extinguished in 1707 to become part of an expanded or renamed England. From this point on, the ex-nation has been more properly referred to as the Northern county of Scotlandshire.

However, claim the academics, separation and the pointless breaking up of the United Kingdom could lead to confusion about what to call the different bits of the British Isles. This could lead to thousands of millions of our British pounds being wasted as people are continually corrected when using an imprecise term to describe the new countries and their people. They argue further that this situation could continue to cost money for the next 50 years.

The newly separated bit may be known as the People's Republic of North Britain, or iScotland for short (as it sounds a bit sexy and modern), but what of what remains of the UK?



The recommendation in the paper is that the term former United Kingdom (fUK) be formally adopted, with the new country's inhabitant's being known around the world as fUKers.

However, as nearly all of the fUKers would be English, it is predicted that the two terms would soon become synonymous, or perhaps become concatenated into English fUKers, leaving the Welsh and Irish fUKed as usual.

Another recommendation is to use the term Greater England, as Wales and NI were also extinguished long before the Act of Union. Other academics have pointed out, however, that the term Little Britain might be more appropriate, as the former UK will be much smaller than the current entity of the same name unless, of course, you are guided by the BBC weather map.

There is also the problem of the flag. The Union Jack sounds a bit too Scottish (Union Jock anyone?) and has a lot of blue in it. The CRAP academics recommend changing the blue to green in honour of the Welsh, who never made it into the original flag, but this suggestion has already been met with mild disquiet by Ulster Unionists and members of the Orange Lodge.

The CRAP also suggest changing the name of the flag to the Union John, but accept that this may be easily mistaken for somewhere Unite's Len McLuskey slopes off to read the Sun.

In addition, as the Union in question will no longer exist, the name would need to be shortened to 'John', which may be a little familiar as a name for the Royal fleg.

Prof Armstrong-Lamont, speaking at the launch of the new paper in the Bearsden Conservative and Unionist club, said, "Speaking as a mother, I feel that we need a full debate on the matter.

"The SNP's so-called white paper makes no mention of what the UK will be called once it is no longer the UK, and there is nothing in my script either. That is simply not good enough.

"Granted this is entirely a matter for the fUK to determine, but it is still unacceptable for the First Minister to leave us with such uncertainty.

"Why can't he use the existing powers of the parliament to decide on these matters now?"

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