

Physiognomy is an inexact science; suffice it to say that Nicola Sturgeon does not have a kindly face.

by Theodore Dalrymple

Her concept of democracy is distinctly odd, too. To call it self-serving would be a very mild way of putting it. When the referendum, to which she had not objected and whose legitimacy she had therefore accepted, produced a result that she did not like (though it is surely very peculiar and highly suspect that a person so dedicated to national sovereignty should wish to join an organisation whose ultimate aim is obviously the extinction of national sovereignty), she said that it was 'democratically unacceptable' that the majority of votes overall should commit Scotland to leaving the European Union. In other words, you can have a referendum so long as it produces the result that I want. Then, and only then, is its result legitimate. In this, it appears, she is at one with the *bien pensant* signatories of the petition to have another referendum – and, presumably, another, until the population gets it right.

Two days later she said that Scotland could block Britain's exit from the Union. In other words, for her it is perfectly acceptable, democratically-speaking, for something like 4-5 per cent of the votes cast to weigh 52 per cent of the votes cast. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; but a Scottish vote is worth ten or more English votes.

When in the last general election the Scots nationalists obtained every single Scottish seat in Westminster bar one, leaving more than half of the Scottish voters completely

unrepresented, not a peep about democratic unacceptability was heard from Nicola Sturgeon: she accepted the system, so long as it worked in her favour. But one can well imagine what she might have said, in her inimitably sour and grating way, if the nationalists had polled 40 per cent of the votes and had not obtained a single seat.

Like fascists, she knows all about plebiscitary democracy: she has an instinct for it. When the Scots vote again for independence, you may be sure that the million Scots living in England will not be allowed to vote because the majority of them would probably vote against independence, and in the circumstances a million votes is more than enough to turn the result. A plebiscite is an instrument for giving legitimacy to what the leader has already decided.

The exclusion of Scots living elsewhere than Scotland implies, of course, that a Scot who has the temerity to live somewhere other than Scotland, even temporarily, thereby loses his Scottishness. One is reminded of the Brahmins who were thought to lose caste if ever they ventured overseas. What is extraordinary, however, is that Scottish nationalists who want to leave the United Kingdom but remain in the European Union have the gall to accuse people who want to leave of xenophobia! We live in a looking-glass world.

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