

Cameron's Bill of Rights Proposal 2

You say that introducing Cameron's entrenched bill of rights would be "on a par with the defeat of the divine right of kings in the 17th century" (Leader, June 27). Only this time it would be the defeat of the people's secular right of democracy in the 21st century.

You observe that the Cameron bill of rights would be "entrenched against amendment or repeal by the elected House of Commons". So a drafting error in the bill could not be put right. A policy mistake could not be corrected. A change in conditions requiring the bill's updating could not be dealt with. Above all, an unwanted judicial interpretation could not be overridden.

There's the rub. As a constitutional and legislative draftsman (and Conservative party member) I can say that any bill of rights has to consist of very short, general paragraphs. The full legal meaning of these is spelt out over time by unelected judges, who have a very free hand. They would do the same to Cameron's bill as they have with similar productions.

Cameron has spotted that an entrenched bill of rights is popular with many on the left. He aims to spread confusion, and he is succeeding.