

April 13, 2014

Recently there has been a lot of activity in the investigation of the IRS. Kimberley Strassel starts off our review.

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The average citizen might be dizzied by the torrent of confusing terms—BOLO lists, Tigta, 501(c)(4)—and the array of accusations that have made up this IRS investigation. Mr. Camp's letter takes a step back to remind us why this matters, even as it provides compelling new information that goes to motive and method—and clarifies some of the curious behavior of Democrats during the investigation.

Motive: Republicans began this investigation looking for a direct link between the White House and IRS targeting. The more probable explanation all along was that Ms. Lerner felt emboldened by Democratic attacks against conservative groups to do what came naturally to her. We know from the record that she disdained money in politics. And we know from her prior tenure at the Federal Election Commission that she had a particular animus against conservative organizations.

As the illuminating timeline accompanying the Camp letter shows, Ms. Lerner's focus on shutting down Crossroads GPS came only after Obama adviser David Axelrod listed Crossroads among "front groups for foreign-controlled companies"; only after Senate Democrats Dick Durbin, Carl Levin, Chuck Schumer and others demanded the IRS investigate Crossroads; only after the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee launched a website to "expose donors" of Crossroads; and only after Obama's campaign lawyer, Bob Bauer, filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission about Crossroads. ...

The Editors of National Review have more.

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Now that the Oversight Committee has voted, the contempt proceedings against Ms. Lerner will go to a vote of the full House. If the House votes to proceed, it may either hand the case over to the U.S. attorney or move forward with its own tribunal. If she is found in contempt, Congress can press suit, wait for the DOJ to prosecute, or demand that she comply with a subpoena and have her incarcerated — where she belongs — if she refuses. The criminal case is in the end more important than the contempt proceedings, but we would be astounded if it went anywhere under the leadership of Eric Holder, who evinces very little enthusiasm for doing his job when he could be doing the political bidding of his president.

The Democrats are determined to turn a blind eye to all this — every one of them voted against holding her in contempt. Here is a taste of what they intend to tolerate:

Ms. Lerner, in direct contravention of federal law, specifically directed the IRS to target Crossroads GPS, the conservative activist outfit associated with Karl Rove, and when the IRS did not act with satisfactory alacrity demanded to know why the organization had not been audited and its application for tax-exempt status denied. She specifically directed IRS employees to make sure that all actions regarding Crossroads were coordinated with her office. The targeting of Crossroads by the IRS came directly after Illinois Democratic senator Dick Durbin sent the IRS commission a letter demanding such an investigation. In correspondence, Lerner did not write that the Crossroads application was under review; she wrote that "we are working on a denial of the application." According to the House document, the IRS agent working on the Crossroads case reported that "specific guidance" was given to him by Ms. Lerner's office as to the desired result — i.e., that the application was to be denied. All the while, Democrats maintained that there was no intentional political targeting. ...

And Jennifer Rubin.

President Obama's comment that there's "not even a smidgen of corruption [at the IRS] may prove to be as accurate as "If you like your plan, you can keep it."

Yesterday it was reported: "For the first time since it released President Nixon's tax returns in 1974, a House committee voted Wednesday to release confidential tax documents as part of a request for a criminal investigation into the Internal Revenue Service. This time, the House Ways and Means Committee is seeking criminal charges against former Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner." Of particular concern are Lerner's e-mails appearing to push IRS employees to disallow the GOP group American Crossroads its tax-exempt status while she was angling for a political job with Organizing for America. ("The letter to Holder alleges that Lerner singled out Crossroads GPS, a group co-founded by former George W. Bush political aide Karl Rove, for an audit and a denial of tax-exempt status after meeting with campaign finance reform activists in January 2013. That same month, Lerner spoke of hoping to get a job at Organizing for Action, an Obama-affiliated group that was also seeking tax-exempt status. 'Oh — maybe I can get the DC office job!' she wrote in an e-mail." Holder is unlikely to do anything about Lerner, but the House Republicans made their point: There is a smidgen of something going on at the IRS. ...

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"You should know that we are working on a denial of the application," Ms. Lerner wrote in an email. "Please make sure all moves regarding the org are coordinated up here before we do anything." The Cincinnati agent assigned to the case at the time, Joseph Herr, noted on his timesheet, "[b]ased on conference, begin reviewing case information, tax law and draft/template advocacy denial letter, all to think about how best to compose the denial letter."

Mr. Herr had not made any indications in 2012 of an intent to deny the application, nor was any denial recommendation contained in the November 2011 analysis of the group by Exempt Organizations lawyer Hillary Goehausen. Crossroads GPS, which was cofounded by Journal contributor Karl Rove, says it applied for tax-exempt status in 2010 but still hasn't received formal IRS approval.

Ways and Means also discloses that in January 2013 Ms. Lerner asked her staff to examine five conservative groups that the website ProPublica had called "controversial dark money groups," including Americans for Responsible Leadership, Freedom Path, Rightchange.com, America is Not Stupid, and A Better America. Four of those five groups ultimately got the IRS deluxe scrutiny treatment and three were audited. ...

John Fund went to London for a few days and saw the future.

London – Americans can't really snigger about political correctness in other countries too much. After all, this week a six-year-old Colorado boy was accused of sexual harassment for kissing a fellow student on the hand. He was suspended and the incident will be entered on his record.

But a three-day trip to Britain has convinced me that the country that gave the world Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill's On Liberty, and free trade has gone far beyond us in kowtowing to political correctness. (Or is the use of "kowtowing" now impermissible?)

The papers here this week were full of the story of Tracey Trigg, a 51-year-old social worker in Lincolnshire, who was twice barred from buying wine at a supermarket because she was accompanied by her children. On the first occasion she was with her 24-year-old son, Josh, and then with both Josh and her 13-year-old daughter, Ella. Both had gone with her to help her carry her Christmas shopping home. Since they had just strolled to the store from home, neither child was carrying full ID.

Priceonomics posts on UPS and its no left turns policy.

... When better tracking systems emerged in 2001, the package delivery service took a closer look at how trucks performed when delivering packages. As a logistics company with some 96,000 trucks and several hundred aircraft, much of UPS's business can be distilled to a series of optimization problems around reducing the amount of fuel used, saving time, and using space more efficiently. (Trucks in UPS facilities park just a few inches apart with their side mirrors overlapping to save space.)

UPS engineers found that left-hand turns were a major drag on efficiency. Turning against traffic resulted in long waits in left-hand turn lanes that wasted time and fuel, and it also led to a disproportionate number of accidents. By mapping out routes that involved "a series of right-hand loops," UPS improved profits and safety while touting their catchy, environmentally friendly policy. As of 2012, the right turn rule combined with other improvements -- for the wow factor, UPS doesn't separate them out -- saved around 10 million gallons of gas and reduced emissions by the equivalent of taking 5,300 cars off the road for a year. ..

Twisted Sifter has cool pics of Queen Mary II's captain standing on the liner's bulbous bow.

Cunard recently captured dramatic photographs of Captain Kevin Oprey, Master of Queen Mary 2, standing on the ship's bulbous bow a mile off the coast of Bali during the ship's World Cruise in her 10th anniversary year.

A bulbous bow is a protruding bulb at the bow (or front) of a ship just below the waterline. The bulb modifies the way the water flows around the hull, reducing drag and thus increasing speed, range, fuel efficiency, and stability. Large ships with bulbous bows generally have 12-15% better fuel efficiency than similar vessels without them. A bulbous bow also increases the buoyancy of the forward part and hence reduces the pitching of the ship to a small degree. ...

WSJ

The IRS Scandal Comes Into Focus

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp lays out damning evidence of Lois Lerner's targeting of conservative groups.

by Kimberley A. Strassel

Nearly a year into the IRS scandal, we still don't know exactly what happened—though we are finally getting an inkling. That's thanks to the letter House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp sent this week to the Justice Department recommending a criminal probe of Lois Lerner.

The average citizen might be dizzied by the torrent of confusing terms—BOLO lists, Tigta, 501(c)(4)—and the array of accusations that have made up this IRS investigation. Mr. Camp's letter takes a step back to remind us why this matters, even as it provides compelling new information that goes to motive and method—and clarifies some of the curious behavior of Democrats during the investigation.

Motive: Republicans began this investigation looking for a direct link between the White House and IRS targeting. The more probable explanation all along was that Ms. Lerner felt emboldened by Democratic attacks against conservative groups to do what came naturally to her. We know from the record that she disdained money in politics. And we know from her prior tenure at the Federal Election Commission that she had a particular animus against conservative organizations.

As the illuminating timeline accompanying the Camp letter shows, Ms. Lerner's focus on shutting down Crossroads GPS came only after Obama adviser David Axelrod listed Crossroads among "front groups for foreign-controlled companies"; only after Senate Democrats Dick Durbin, Carl Levin, Chuck Schumer and others demanded the IRS investigate Crossroads; only after the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee launched a website to "expose donors" of

Crossroads; and only after Obama's campaign lawyer, Bob Bauer, filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission about Crossroads.

The information in Mr. Camp's letter shows that Ms. Lerner sprang to action following a January 2013 meeting with Democracy 21, a campaign-finance outfit petitioning for a crackdown on Crossroads and the liberal big-dollar Priorities USA. (She never touched Priorities, run by former Obama aides.) The Camp outline suggests cause and effect, and that's new.

Method: The general prohibition on releasing taxpayer information has meant that—up until Ways and Means voted Wednesday to release this info—it was impossible to know what precise actions Ms. Lerner had taken against whom. We now know that she took it upon herself to track down the status of Crossroads, to give grief to an IRS unit for not having audited it, to apparently direct another unit to deny it tax-exempt status, and to try to influence the appeals process.

We know, too, that Ms. Lerner did some of this in contravention of IRS policy, for instance involving herself in an audit decision that was supposed to be left to a special review committee. We have the story of a powerful bureaucrat targeting an organization and circumventing IRS safeguards against political or personal bias. That ought to mortify all members of Congress. That Democrats seem not to care gets to another point.

Aftermath: Democrats quickly dropped any feigned outrage over IRS targeting and circled the wagons around the agency. Why? The targeting was outrageous, the public was fuming, and nobody likes the IRS. Joining with Republicans would have only been right and popular.

That is, unless Democrats are worried. As the Camp timeline and details show, the IRS responded to liberal calls to go after conservative groups. Democrats weren't just sending letters. Little noticed in the immediate aftermath of the IRS scandal was a letter sent May 23, 2013, by Carl Levin and (Republican) [John McCain](#) to the new acting director of the IRS disguised as an expression of outrage over IRS targeting. Artfully hidden within it was Mr. Levin's acknowledgment that his subcommittee on investigations had for a full year been corresponding and meeting with IRS staff (including Ms. Lerner) to ask "why it was not enforcing the 501(c)(4) statute."

What was said in the course of that year? How much specific information was demanded on conservative groups, and how many demands dispensed on how to handle them? Good questions.

In 2012, both the IRS and Democratic Rep. Elijah Cummings were targeting the group True the Vote. We now have email showing contact between a Cummings staffer and the IRS over that organization. How much more contact was there? It's one thing to write a public letter calling on a regulator to act. It's another to haul the regulator in front of your committee, or have your staff correspond with or pressure said regulator, with regard to ongoing actions. That's a no-no.

The final merit of Mr. Camp's letter is that he's called out Justice and Democrats. Mr. Camp was careful in laying out the ways Ms. Lerner may have broken the law, with powerful details. Democrats can't refute the facts, so instead they are howling about all manner of trivia—the release of names, the "secret" vote to release taxpayer information. But it remains that they are putting themselves on record in support of IRS officials who target groups, circumvent rules, and potentially break the law. That ought to go down well with voters.

National Review - Editorial

Contempt and the IRS

The House Oversight Committee has voted to hold former IRS subpotentate Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress, while the House Ways and Means Committee has referred her case to the Justice Department for criminal prosecution. The facts in the case suggest very strongly that Ms. Lerner has earned the contempt of the American people as well as criminal prosecution to the full extent of the law. The question of whether Justice will do justice now rests with the Obama administration, in service to which Ms. Lerner organized and oversaw the repression of nonprofit activists under color of IRS authority. That a not inconsiderable portion of the moral credibility of the United States government now rests in the hands of Eric Holder is not a comforting thought. Mr. Holder holds the title of attorney general, but he is in effect very little more than a political enabler. The president himself denies that there exists a “smidgen” of corruption at the IRS. The evidence says otherwise. What the attorney general will say is anybody’s guess.

Now that the Oversight Committee has voted, the contempt proceedings against Ms. Lerner will go to a vote of the full House. If the House votes to proceed, it may either hand the case over to the U.S. attorney or move forward with its own tribunal. If she is found in contempt, Congress can press suit, wait for the DOJ to prosecute, or demand that she comply with a subpoena and have her incarcerated — where she belongs — if she refuses. The criminal case is in the end more important than the contempt proceedings, but we would be astounded if it went anywhere under the leadership of Eric Holder, who evinces very little enthusiasm for doing his job when he could be doing the political bidding of his president.

The Democrats are determined to turn a blind eye to all this — every one of them voted against holding her in contempt. Here is a taste of what they intend to tolerate:

Ms. Lerner, in direct contravention of federal law, specifically directed the IRS to target Crossroads GPS, the conservative activist outfit associated with Karl Rove, and when the IRS did not act with satisfactory alacrity demanded to know why the organization had not been audited and its application for tax-exempt status denied. She specifically directed IRS employees to make sure that all actions regarding Crossroads were coordinated with her office. The targeting of Crossroads by the IRS came directly after Illinois Democratic senator Dick Durbin sent the IRS commission a letter demanding such an investigation. In correspondence, Lerner did not write that the Crossroads application was under review; she wrote that “we are working on a denial of the application.” According to the House document, the IRS agent working on the Crossroads case reported that “specific guidance” was given to him by Ms. Lerner’s office as to the desired result — i.e., that the application was to be denied. All the while, Democrats maintained that there was no intentional political targeting.

Ms. Lerner, in direct contravention of federal law, e-mailed large collections of confidential taxpayer files from her IRS e-mail account to her personal account and back again. Given that the IRS has been intentionally leaking confidential taxpayer information about conservative activist groups — notably the National Organization for Marriage, which organized the Proposition 8 gay-marriage ballot issue in California — her actions here are suspect: One obvious reason to send files to a personal account is to be able to distribute them without producing evidence of having done so through her official account. In any case, intentionally making confidential records vulnerable to exposure by sending them to her personal account is against the law, leak or no leak.

Ms. Lerner, in direct contravention of federal law, lied to the inspector general during the office's investigation of her agency's shenanigans. Specifically, she lied about when the targeting of conservative organizations began and she lied about an "uptick" in applications, a fiction she used to justify the IRS's categorical targeting of tea-party groups and similar organizations. She knew that there was no "uptick," because she had inquired about it and had been told that there were no agency records to suggest such an assertion. She told the "uptick" story anyway. She told investigators that there was no targeting when there was, that standards hadn't changed when they had, and that the investigations of conservative groups were routine when they weren't.

According to recently released documents, Ms. Lerner was quite aware of how hard she was working on behalf of the political interests of Barack Obama: She joked with her colleagues that she should go to work running the Washington office of Organizing for America, the Obama campaign's standing army. And why shouldn't she have campaigned openly for Barack Obama — a good deal of the rest of the IRS were already doing so: Employees at IRS offices from Texas to Kentucky either already have been sanctioned by the Office of Special Counsel or are under investigation for violations of the Hatch Act, which forbids the use of official resources for campaign purposes. These are not borderline cases: One IRS agent had taxpayers chanting the president's name, another treated taxpayers to a tirade about how Republicans intended to take American women "back 40 years." How much more of this went on is impossible to know.

Lois Lerner should be prosecuted for her misdeeds, and if elected officials or members of the Obama administration suborned those misdeeds, they belong in the prison cell next to her. The IRS is an agency with extraordinary powers, and its agents should be held to the very highest standard. But Ms. Lerner would fail to meet even such modest standards as "Don't abuse your power" and "Don't lie to investigators about it when you get caught abusing your power." If she escapes prison, it will be a national scandal. Using the IRS as a political weapon constitutes more than a "smidgen" of corruption — it is a serious crime and an intolerable assault on the legitimacy of the federal government.

Right Turn

[Democrats bring back culture of corruption](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

President Obama's comment that there's "[not even a smidgen of corruption](#) [at the IRS]" may prove to be as accurate as "If you like your plan, you can keep it."

[Yesterday it was reported:](#) "For the first time since it released President Nixon's tax returns in 1974, a House committee voted Wednesday to release confidential tax documents as part of a request for a criminal investigation into the Internal Revenue Service. This time, the House Ways and Means Committee is seeking criminal charges against former Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner." Of particular concern are Lerner's e-mails appearing to push IRS employees to disallow the GOP group American Crossroads its tax-exempt status while she was angling for a political job with Organizing for America. ("The letter to Holder alleges that Lerner singled out Crossroads GPS, a group co-founded by former George W. Bush political aide Karl Rove, for an audit and a denial of tax-exempt status after meeting with campaign finance reform activists in January 2013. That same month, Lerner spoke of hoping to get a job at Organizing for Action, an Obama-affiliated group that was also seeking tax-exempt status. 'Oh — maybe I can get the DC

office job!' she wrote in an e-mail." Holder is unlikely to do anything about Lerner, but the House Republicans made their point: There is a smidgen of something going on at the IRS.

Perhaps there is an innocent explanation, but the facts don't look good for Lerner. [The Wall Street Journal editorial board recounts](#):

The most troubling new evidence are documents showing that Ms. Lerner actively corresponded with liberal campaign-finance groups Democracy 21 and the Campaign Legal Center, which had asked the IRS to investigate if conservative groups including Crossroads GPS were violating their tax-exempt status. After personally meeting with the two liberal outfits, Ms. Lerner contacted the director of the Exempt Organizations Examinations Unit in Dallas to ask why Crossroads had not been audited.

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The incident comes at a time the White House is being skewered by the mainstream media for its misleading stats on the purported wage gap and when Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid (Nev.) is getting slammed by the MSM for the Senate Majority Fund ads tying Republicans to the Koch brothers. ["They're lying,"](#) says National Journal's Ron Fournier. Others think Reid "has no self-editing mechanism," says [Nevada political guru Jon Ralston](#).

Whether you think he lacks self-editing or honesty or both, Reid is becoming an inviting target for campaign ads and for negative media coverage. When you come across as the sort of politician who makes ordinary voters hate politics, you're in trouble. (In fact, for some time now [Reid's approval](#) ratings have been [at or near the bottom](#) of all the top congressional leaders.)

If the Democrats set out to systematically diminish faith in government and destroy their own credibility, they couldn't have done a better job. But given that they rely on voters' willingness to entrust their tax dollars, privacy, retirement, health care, safety and a lot more to the federal government, it's harmful to liberals' cause to be seen as duplicitous. And instead of drawing fire away from his members, Reid may simply reinforce the perception that the party in power — as can happen with either side — gets cocky, overreaches and, well, makes stuff up.

Republicans should be wary, however. It's not clear that Republicans — as the Dems did with Newt Gingrich — can use Reid to vilify the opposition party on the November ballot (although all of them elected Reid as their leader). Neither should Republicans count on making 2014 *only* about Obamacare, scandal and corruption, although it is tempting to do so. In fact, the public doesn't like either party very much.

Republicans should therefore resist the temptation to overreach on the scandals and the prevarication. Sometimes it is better to watch the media finally sink their teeth into one's opponents. As for Republicans, they can advance their own reasonable, modest agenda — making the point that giving too much power to the feds is proving unwise these days. Then voters might trust them to run things — until they, too, disappoint and overreach.

WSJ - Editorial

IRS at the Crossroads

New evidence that Lois Lerner targeted conservative groups.

Congress's investigation into IRS political targeting accelerated Wednesday, with a referral for the criminal prosecution of a former Treasury official and new evidence to back it up. In a letter to Attorney General [Eric Holder](#), House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp recommends the Justice Department proceed on three probable criminal actions taken by former director of Exempt Organizations Lois Lerner.

The letter, which was endorsed in a party-line Ways and Means vote Wednesday morning, discloses new evidence suggesting that Ms. Lerner used her position to single out conservative groups for scrutiny not applied to left-leaning groups. Investigators also charge that she misled investigators in her original conversations with the Treasury Inspector General and potentially disclosed confidential taxpayer information by using her personal email address for IRS business.

The most troubling new evidence are documents showing that Ms. Lerner actively corresponded with liberal campaign-finance groups Democracy 21 and the Campaign Legal Center, which had asked the IRS to investigate if conservative groups including Crossroads GPS were violating their tax-exempt status. After personally meeting with the two liberal outfits, Ms. Lerner contacted the director of the Exempt Organizations Examinations Unit in Dallas to ask why Crossroads had not been audited.

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Mr. Herr had not made any indications in 2012 of an intent to deny the application, nor was any denial recommendation contained in the November 2011 analysis of the group by Exempt Organizations lawyer Hillary Goehausen. Crossroads GPS, which was cofounded by Journal contributor Karl Rove, says it applied for tax-exempt status in 2010 but still hasn't received formal IRS approval.

Ways and Means also discloses that in January 2013 Ms. Lerner asked her staff to examine five conservative groups that the website ProPublica had called "controversial dark money groups," including Americans for Responsible Leadership, Freedom Path, Rightchange.com, America is Not Stupid, and A Better America. Four of those five groups ultimately got the IRS deluxe scrutiny treatment and three were audited.

The new documents also suggest that Ms. Lerner was evasive in her answers when Treasury's Inspector General (Tigta) began investigating complaints of conservative targeting. She told Tigta she didn't learn about the use of tea-party keywords to choose groups for extra review until June 2011, but emails show Ms. Lerner was told about the tea-party cases under review in April and May 2010, only weeks after the process started.



House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Dave Camp (R., Mich.)

The documents also report that Democracy 21 and the Campaign Legal Center suggested that the IRS consider a rule-making to change the requirements for 501(c)(4) groups. That's exactly what the IRS proposed this year, claiming that it merely wanted to "clarify" the rule to prevent selective scrutiny. The new evidence suggests that the rule-making is instead a continuation of the same project to crack down on the political speech of Administration opponents.

Democrats are objecting that the Ways and Means referral itself improperly discloses confidential taxpayer information. But Section f(4)(a) of Section 6103 of the U.S. Code provides that Ways and Means "shall have the authority . . . to inspect [tax] returns and return information. . . . Any return or return information obtained by or on behalf of such committee pursuant to the provisions of this subsection may be submitted by the committee to the Senate or the House of Representatives, or to both."

The Ways and Means referral perhaps makes too much of Ms. Lerner's personal computer use, but Wednesday's disclosures were closely tailored to disclose only information that illuminates her actions related to the tax-exempt applications. The disclosures are unusual, but Mr. Camp has only taken this step after Ms. Lerner twice refused to testify before Congress, IRS general counsel William Wilkins claimed 80 times that he couldn't recall events, Justice has leaked to the press that it will charge no one, and House Democrats have become obstructionist.

Mr. Holder put Obama donor Barbara Bosserman in charge of the investigation, and in June last year, mere weeks after the targeting came to light, Ranking Ways and Means Democrat Elijah Cummings declared that the "case is solved." President Obama in February upstaged his own Justice Department by announcing that there was not a "smidgen" of corruption, even as the investigation supposedly continues.

Ms. Lerner says she did nothing wrong, and this week we met with her attorney, who told us she declined to testify only because the proceedings were bound to be unfair. But as a senior official in a public agency that wields the power to destroy, she had an obligation to explain what happened and why. We'd still like to hear her defense, but when Congress confronts a stonewalling Administration it has little choice but to tell the public what it has learned so voters can reach their own conclusions.

National Review

The Rule of Petty Bureaucrats

What will political correctness come up with next? Look to Britain.

by John Fund

London – Americans can't really snigger about political correctness in other countries too much. After all, this week a six-year-old Colorado boy was accused of sexual harassment for kissing a fellow student on the hand. He was suspended and the incident will be entered on his record.

But a three-day trip to Britain has convinced me that the country that gave the world Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, and free trade has gone far beyond us in kowtowing to political correctness. (Or is the use of "kowtowing" now impermissible?)

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Trigg was furious at the nanny-state behavior. "There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that I am old enough to buy wine and beer. These are legal products. It is not like I was trying to buy a caged wild animal," she told the *Daily Mail*. "Why does a supermarket or the state feel they can tell me whether or not I can buy products that are legal?"

Asda, the supermarket chain that barred her purchase, defended its policy of giving cashiers discretion to refuse to sell alcohol to anyone accompanied by a minor, saying that while it may appear "heavy-handed" it is necessary because the company's cashiers are "personally responsible" under British law if they sell alcohol of any kind to anyone who passes it on to someone under the age of 18. They could be handed an on-the-spot \$130 fine and prosecuted.

Trigg's case is far from the only one. Three months ago, Charles Brown, age 50, was blocked from buying whisky because he couldn't prove he was an adult. The month before a mother with a broken hand was told she couldn't buy alcohol because her 17-year-old daughter was helping her pack her groceries.

Britain is about to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, an event that began a catastrophic slide downwards in British liberties, both civil and economic. It's hard to remember just how free the world was 100 years ago. The late historian A. J. P. Taylor wrote in his *English History 1914–45* that:

Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state, beyond the post office and the policeman. He could live where he liked and as he liked. He had no official number or identity card. He could travel abroad or leave his country for ever without a passport or any sort of official permission . . . The Englishman paid taxes on a modest scale: nearly £200 million in 1913–14, or rather less than 8 per cent of the national income. The state intervened to prevent the citizens from eating adulterated foods or contracting certain infectious diseases.

Today, of course, government in Britain and elsewhere never tires of trying to shape our lives from above, telling us what we should think, and seeking ever-greater powers to regulate our behavior.

But when it comes to immigration policy, it appears Britain can't summon the will to regulate who it allows to live in the country. The same week Tracey Trigg was denied the right to buy wine, a court tribunal reversed the government's decision to deport Trenton Oldfield back to Australia. Last year, he had brazenly disrupted the 158-year-old University Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge. Oldfield, a 37-year-old graduate of one of Australia's poshest private high schools who is now a resident alien in Britain, said he swam in front of the boats in order to protest elitism and inequality in British society.

The police were not amused, and Oldfield was jailed for seven weeks. They then moved to have him deported back to Australia as "undesirable." But Oldfield appealed to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal on the grounds that if he left he couldn't possibly take his Indian wife, Deepa, or his daughter back to Australia because his compatriots there were "passive aggressive" racists. "Australia to Deepa . . . is a particularly racist country," he told the tribunal. "I don't think I could put either Deepa or my child through that." He then cried as he told the court he could not bear to be separated from his wife.

The court received a petition signed by 265 staff and students at Oxford supporting Oldfield's position. This prompted Judge Kevin Moore to deny the government permission to deport Oldfield, saying, "There is no doubt in my view as to your character and the value you are to U.K. society." Oldfield runs a small nonprofit group that helps people exchange ideas on ways to improve city living.

A country is in deep trouble when it bullies its own citizens over personal behavior in a way that goes beyond anything New York mayor Michael Bloomberg has ever attempted, and at the same time can't bring itself to remove a resident alien for disrupting a public event attended by thousands of people. The rule of law, which once sunk its deepest roots in Great Britain, has increasingly become the rule of petty bureaucrats, who seem unable to exercise common sense. Americans need to look carefully at Britain for warning signs about what insanity governments will dream up next.

Priceonics

[Why UPS Trucks Don't Turn Left](#)

by Alex Mayyasi



In 2004, UPS announced a new policy for its drivers: the right way to get to any destination was to avoid left-hand turns. Even if that means following this route that a UPS driver [described](#) to an incredulous press member:

"We're gonna make a right turn onto 135th to Western. We'll make another right on Western down to 139th. Right turn on 139th and go down to the end of the block and we'll make another right turn."

When better tracking systems emerged in 2001, the package delivery service took a closer look at how trucks performed when delivering packages. As a logistics company with some 96,000 trucks and several hundred aircraft, much of UPS's business can be distilled to a series of optimization problems around reducing the amount of fuel used, saving time, and using space more efficiently. (Trucks in UPS facilities park just a few inches apart with their [side mirrors overlapping](#) to save space.)

UPS engineers found that left-hand turns were a major drag on efficiency. Turning against traffic resulted in long waits in left-hand turn lanes that wasted time and fuel, and it also led to a disproportionate number of accidents. By mapping out routes that involved ["a series of right-hand loops."](#) UPS improved profits and safety while touting their catchy, environmentally friendly policy. As of 2012, the right turn rule combined with other improvements -- for the wow factor, UPS doesn't separate them out -- [saved](#) around 10 million gallons of gas and reduced emissions by the equivalent of taking 5,300 cars off the road for a year.

Describing the policy in a speech, the CEO of UPS [told his audience](#), "I can see a few of you smiling out there, and I know what you may be thinking. But it really works."

If you don't believe it, well, that's why Mythbusters exists. The program sent a truck out to deliver packages following a normal route and a left turn hating UPS route. They found the UPS approach saved gas but took a bit longer:

Mythbusters likely failed to save time on the route by following the rule even more stringently than UPS. While the no left turn rule has an appealingly simple and algorithmic quality to it, you will see UPS drivers take left turns on occasion, especially in residential neighborhoods without much incoming traffic. Asked how often UPS drivers turn right, a driver [told](#) ABC:

"A guesstimate, I would probably say 90%. I mean we really, really hate left turns at UPS."

Since UPS uses software to map out routes, it can send drivers on right turn heavy routes while making exceptions when a left turn is easier and faster. As an amicable senior VP of the company said in [an interview about the rule](#), "That's why I love the engineers, they just love to continue to figure out how to make it better."

Twisted Sifter

Standing on the Bulbous Bow of the World's Largest Ocean Liner



[Cunard](#) recently captured dramatic photographs of Captain Kevin Oprey, Master of [Queen Mary 2](#), standing on the ship's [bulbous bow](#) a mile off the coast of Bali during the ship's World Cruise in her 10th anniversary year.

A [bulbous bow](#) is a protruding bulb at the bow (or front) of a ship just below the waterline. The bulb modifies the way the water flows around the hull, reducing drag and thus increasing speed, range, fuel efficiency, and stability. Large ships with bulbous bows generally have 12-15% better fuel efficiency than similar vessels without them. A bulbous bow also increases the buoyancy of the forward part and hence reduces the pitching of the ship to a small degree.

Photographer [James Morgan](#) came up with the concept and said it took five hours of patient waiting on the day of the photo shoot until conditions allowed the Captain to get onto the bulbous bow.

At 151,200 tons, [Queen Mary 2](#) is the largest and most expensive ocean liner ever built, accommodating 2,620 passengers and 1,253 crew. In her first 10 years of service *Queen Mary 2* has undertaken more than 420 voyages, including over 200 Transatlantic Crossings, and has called at 182 ports in 60 countries. She remains the longest, tallest, widest ocean liner ever built.



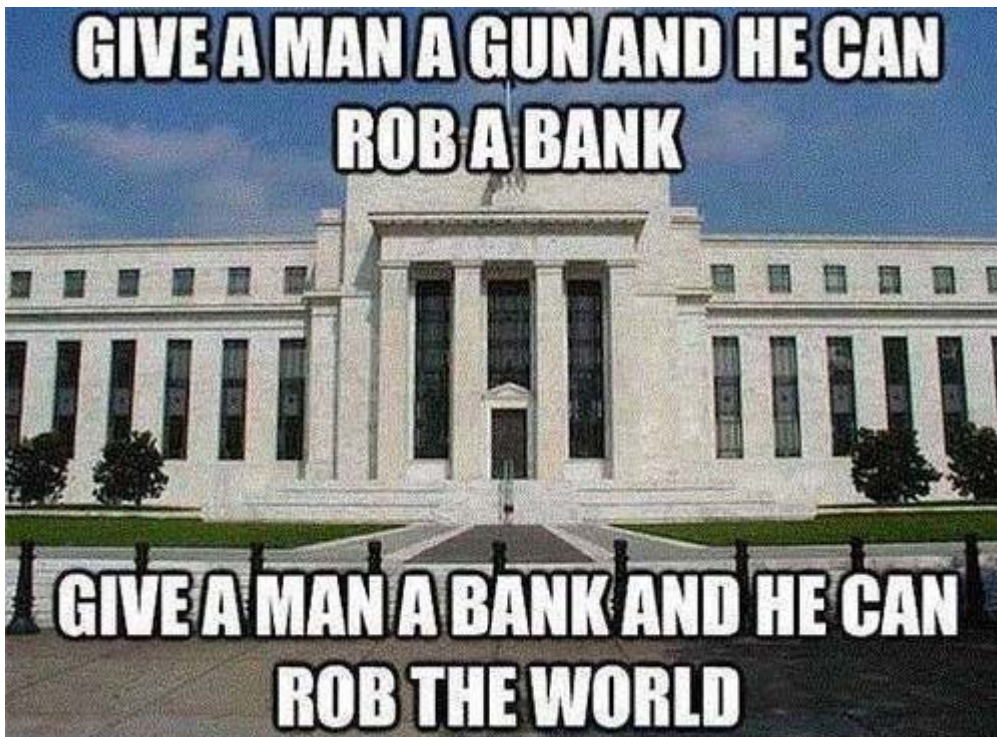


What's the Difference Between an Ocean Liner and a Cruise Ship?

A *cruise ship* or *cruise liner* is a passenger ship used for pleasure voyages, where the voyage itself and the ship's amenities are a part of the experience, as well as the different destinations along the way. Transportation is not the prime purpose, as cruise ships operate mostly on routes that return passengers to their originating port. By contrast, dedicated transport oriented ocean liners do "line voyages" and typically transport passengers from one point to another, rather than on round trips.

Traditionally, an ocean liner for the transoceanic trade will be built to a higher standard than a typical cruise ship, including high freeboard and stronger plating to withstand rough seas and adverse conditions encountered in the open ocean. Ocean liners also usually have larger capacities for fuel, victuals, and other stores for consumption on long voyages, compared to dedicated cruise ships. [\[source\]](#)





Do you ever get drunk?

Yes

No

X