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None of our business [1]

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Liberal-Democrat leader Nick Clegg has declared that he and his party will NOT support a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, the one declared by many to be almost identical with the EU constitution voted down in France and the Netherlands. This is hardly surprising since I remember him on television at the time saying the "no" votes didn't count "because polls have shown that the French and Dutch voters didn't know what they were voting about."

So fundamental a shift in power clearly requires the consent of the British people. The continental tradition has long been one in which the political class is left to the business of government, while ordinary people get on with their lives, occasionally rioting to draw their grievances to the attention of their ruling élites.

Britain, by contrast, has enjoyed a more vigorous democracy, aided perhaps by a voting system that makes it easy for people to turf out governments, but mostly because of cultural and historical differences. It is a pity that Nick Clegg has chosen to ally himself with the continental style of 'ruler knows best.' Some had hoped he might head his party back toward liberalism and away from the statism it has embraced in recent decades. Alas, it is not to be, and marks a lost opportunity. There's something about European political union that makes otherwise sane politicians lose their reason. And their values.

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