

THE WORD

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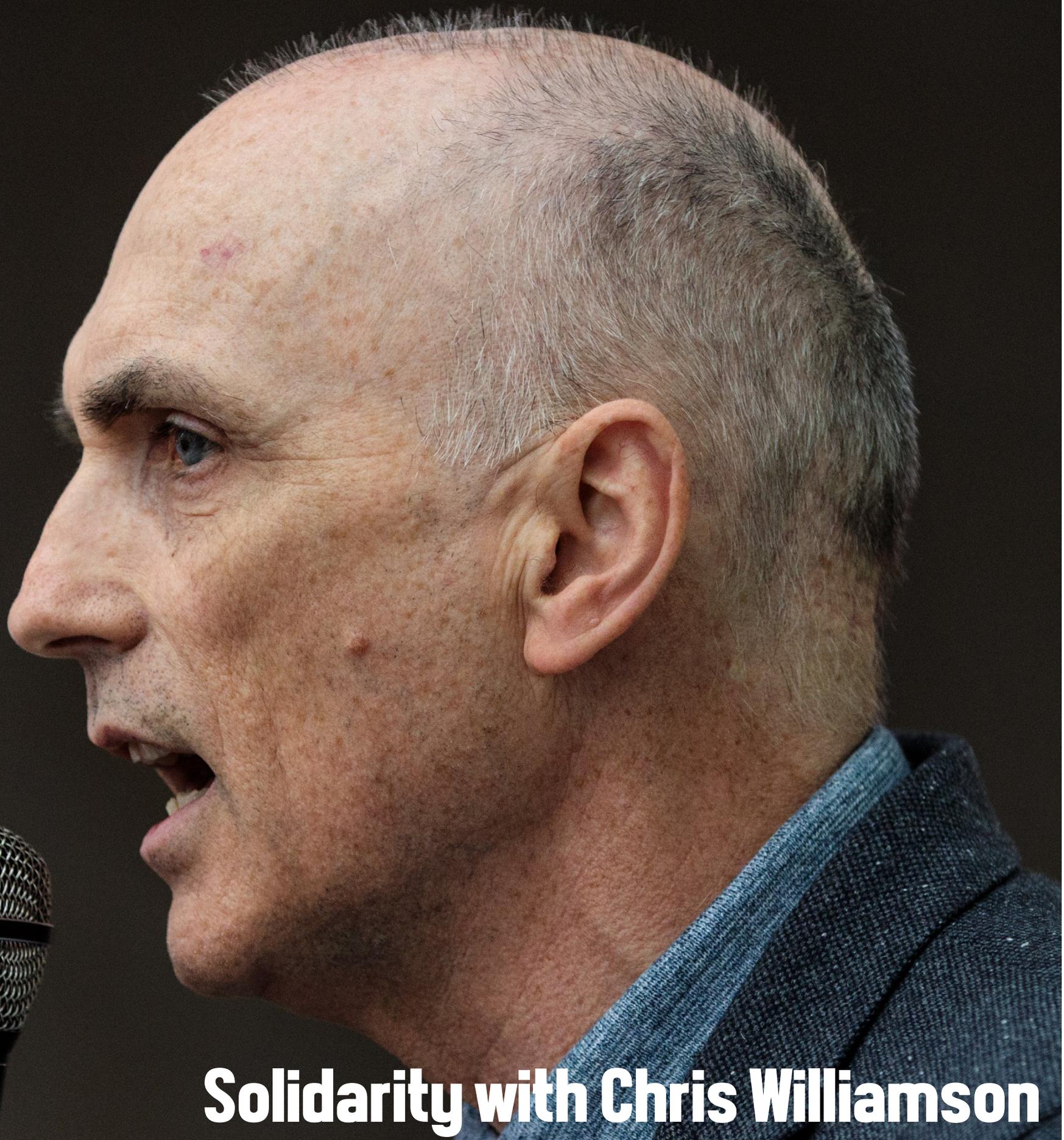
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Equality, Democracy, Truth and Courage www.thewordmedia.co.uk

Vote  Labour



Solidarity with Chris Williamson

Sir Lindsay Hoyle has been elected by MPs as the new House of Commons Speaker



The Chorley MP Sir Lindsay Hoyle wins race to replace John Bercow as Speaker in House of Commons. The Labour MP, who was a deputy speaker, takes over the role immediately.

He beat his nearest rival, Labour MP Chris Bryant, by 112 votes. Other candidates were knocked out in three previous rounds of voting. In his victory speech, he declared: "This house will change, but it will change for the better."

"I hope this house will be once again be a great, respected house not just here but across the world. We've got to make sure that tarnish is polished away."

"I realise this house has become tarnished in the public image. I want to ensure that the public have faith in democracy again and I think that will come by making sure we do the right things by everybody who works here."

"I want to ensure that people want to become an MP again, that they feel safe in being an MP and that's part of the challenge ahead for me." Sir Lindsay will get one day in the chair on Tuesday to oversee valedictory speeches from those not standing in the general election on Thursday 12 December 2019, before parliament is officially shut down for the campaign period.

The new role means Sir Lindsay is in charge of keeping order in the Commons and making crucial decisions about how matters are debated and voted on - but must remain impartial. He becomes the Commons' 158th speaker.

Ed Vaizey to stand down as MP

Ed Vaizey says he will not stand for re-election to focus on his passion for the arts, creative industries and technology, as he wants to specialise in these sectors. The former culture minister said the decision to stand down as an MP was "one of the hardest I have ever taken". Mr Vaizey, represented the constituency of Wantage since 2005.

In his resignation letter to the prime minister, Mr Vaizey said he believed "now is the right time to move on". "After much reflection I have decided not to stand at the next election. I will campaign hard for my successor & look forward to @BorisJohnson and @conservatives winning a great majority. Thanks to all in Wantage & Didcot who supported me over so many years #vexit"

Mr Vaizey previously served as culture minister in David Cameron's government and during the coalition years prior. After he was expelled along with 21 Tory MPs in September, he said would consider standing as an independent against an Tory candidate.

The MPs were thrown out of the parliamentary party for backing legislation designed to stop the UK leaving the EU without a deal - the so-called Benn Act. But he was readmitted to the party with nine other rebels shortly before MPs backed the prime minister's plan to hold an early election on 12 December.

Other Conservative figures who are leaving Parliament include Philip Hammond, Amber Rudd, Nicky Morgan, Rory Stewart and Margot James.

Empty-chair-man of the Conservative Party James Cleverly

Sky News breakfast presenter was fuming this morning as the chairman of the Conservative Party James Cleverly failed to turn up for interview.

In a three minute rant, Burley said: "It was supposed to be filled by "Where is he? He's probably 15 feet from where I am standing at the moment."

"I've been in to see him during the break, he said he wasn't due to come and talk to us today, although they had said they would talk to us."

Burley went on to list the things she wanted to ask him about, as she pointed to the empty chair again.

Sources close to Mr Cleverly said that he had not been booked to appear on Sky, and was actually taking part in an interview on TalkRadio at the time of the empty-chair broadcast. "It is totally false to say he ducked the interview in any way, shape or form," said the source. "He has done a full round of interviews this morning."

Ms Burley said that she had intended to ask Mr Cleverly about a series of mishaps and controversies which have overshadowed the first day of the official Conservative campaign for the 12 December general election, including:

- The Daily Telegraph interview in which Boris Johnson compared Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn to Stalin;
 - Calls for the resignation of Jacob Rees-Mogg for suggesting that Grenfell Tower victims lacked the "common sense" to flee the burning building;
 - Allegations that Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns was aware of an aide's role in collapsing a rape trial;
 - The blocking of Tory plans to use Treasury costings to attack Labour spending plans;
 - The prime minister's refusal to publish a report into Russian interference in the Brexit referendum;
 - Mr Johnson's defence of billionaires against Labour attacks.
- The string of setbacks to the Tory campaign were among questions which Mr Cleverly had to face during the course of seven TV and radio interviews with other broadcasters over the course of the breakfast period.

She continued: "I know Number 10 Downing Street watch our show, I know the spin doctors at Downing Street have absolutely reassured me by text that when politicians were doing the rounds in the morning they would do this programme. And yet we have an empty chair."

"Where on earth is he? He is 15 feet away from me, James Cleverly, who is the chair of the Conservative Party."

"And he says he will not come on this programme to answer all of those allegations".

"I'm fuming, I'm sure if you are watching and you want answers to those questions you will be fizzing as well."

Burley encouraged Cleverly to appear on Sky News in the next show presented by Adam Boulton.

The minister tweeted a link to the TalkRadio interview he was doing at the time of Ms Burley's comments, saying: "This is the radio interview I was booked in to do, and was doing, when Sky News cut to an empty chair. I'm good at multitasking but cannot be in two studios at the same time."

A list of Mr Cleverly's broadcast round distributed in Westminster early on Wednesday showed he was due to appear on ITV's Good Morning Britain, BBC1 Breakfast, LBC's Nick Ferrari show, BBC Radio 4's Today, BBC Radio 5 Live, TalkRadio and ITV News in a series of interviews stretching from 7.10 to 8.50.



Ofcom may investigate Kay Burley's "empty chairing" of James Cleverly.

The media watchdog has received numerous complaints regarding the Sky News presenter's actions.

Burley claimed the Conservative Party chairman missed a planned appearance on her breakfast show, although the Tory MP responded that he was not in fact due to appear.

The empty chair "interview" conducted by Burley, who addressed a vacant seat with planned questions for the Tory politician, has so far promoted 23 official complaints to Ofcom.

Sir Mark Sedwill blocks Conservative plan

The Tories were left fuming when Sir Mark Sedwill, the country's top civil servant, stopped the plan to use tax-payer funded resources on the eve of the election.

Sir Mark Sedwill has blocked a Conservative plan to use civil servants to cost the Labour Party's fiscal plans.

Chancellor Sajid Javid boasted to the Cabinet earlier in the day that the costings of up to a dozen flagship Labour policies were about to be released.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell complained to Treasury Permanent Secretary Tom Scholar in a meeting on Tuesday over the Conservative plan.

The opposition had been infuriated by the government's plan to use the civil service to calculate the cost of Labour's announced policies, and release it as an official document.

Labour argued it was interfering in the upcoming general election.

At the end of that meeting, described as a "courtesy call" by the Treasury's top official, Labour sources had assumed the document would be published.

Labour's legal team had also written to complain about the "ethics and propriety" of the decision to involve the civil service in the costings so close to an election.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill, after a phone call with the Treasury, told the opposition the document would not, after all, be published.

One government insider called it a "Whitehall farce" occurring after the Chancellor had announced the document at Cabinet on Tuesday morning. They said it was an "established process" for a government to cost opposition policies in this way.

And previous Conservative and Labour Governments have indeed done this ahead of general elections and referendums, although there was not time to do this in 2017.

It has not in recent years been done days before the "purdah" period where civil servants are strictly restricted in their actions.

The opposition said it was a "scandal" and that the government had been caught "red handed" using civil servants in this way so close to an election, and at a time when the government has chosen not to do an economic assessment of its own landmark policy - the new Brexit deal.

The MP for barking will be a candidate for Labour at the upcoming General election but The MP for Derby North will not.

Margaret Hodge is a multimillionaire tax avoider who told the leader of the Labour party to F... off. Chris Williamson is a working class ex bricklayer who spends his spare time on democracy road shows.

On the 6th of November The NEC of the Labour party voted by 20 votes to 5 not to allow the suspended MP, Chris Williamson to stand as an MP in his constituency of Derby North. The reason given was that his suspension would have to be settled first.

Already Chris had been reinstated once by the Labour party after their rules were followed. The rules were not good enough for the right wing media and Labour secretary, Jenny Formby suspended him again. Chris raised tens of thousands of pounds for a fighting fund to instigate a legal case against his suspension.

Just before the result of this case, Chris was given a further charge sheet by the party. This related in part to some questions he had answered on video when being interviewed by THE WORD.

Chris had been good enough to appear at an event for democracy at our offices in Oldham. He was also good enough to stay afterwards to give interviews and answer questions of anyone there.

The Labour party hierarchy must have been trolling the internet because very soon afterwards he was given 24 questions to answer about these interviews. He did this promptly. Judge for yourselves what he was supposed to have done wrong.

This resulted in the following court case decision. In his ruling, Mr Justice Pepperall said the Labour Party "acted unfairly in that there was no proper reason for reopening the case against Mr Williamson".

However, he said there was "nothing in the new allegations, the timing of the letter of 3 September or the decision to suspend that entitles me to take the view upon the papers that the Labour party is acting either unfairly or other than in good faith".

"I therefore refuse relief in respect of Mr Williamson's recent re-suspension. The new disciplinary case must run its course."

Mr Justice Pepperall said: "It is important to stress at the outset of this judgement that this case is not about whether Mr Williamson is, or is not, anti-Semitic or even whether he has, or has not, breached the rules of the Labour Party.

"The issue is whether the party has acted lawfully in its investigation and prosecution of such charges against Mr Williamson."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pdufd9eKToA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mF-g3YGvzRs&list=UUgkWh-W4bCXjkmLerPc8vSw&index=17>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-wH703eSkO4&list=UUgkWh-W4bCXjkmLerPc8vSw&index=16>

Chris Williamson told me on, today November 6th, that he will be standing as an Independent candidate in his old seat of Derby North.

He feels that the party has gone over its own red lines and maybe unsalvageable. We at the word do not agree with his decision and hope it will not split the vote and lose the left the seat. We do, however, hope he wins and after the election has the Labour whip restored to him.

The travesty and conundrum of the Labour party today is that 4 years after Jeremy Corbyn was elected by a substantial majority of its members we are still not in control. That a Socialist is not wanted but many closet Tories are shows all we need to know about continuing the fight.

Chris Williamson has been vilified by the establishment. Some of the dirty tricks played by threatening venues that tried to have him speaking meant that he was forced to hold a rally on Brighton beach.

In Manchester the venues that refused to host him included: The Methodist Hall in Oldham Street Manchester, the friends meeting house, the dance house theatre and the Unison building by Victoria station in Manchester. Unison said they were full up with bookings but when we phoned up re booking a non-Chris Williamson event on the same night they became unfurl.

In all 25 venues across Greater Manchester refused to host a sitting Labour MP. The reason given by the Methodists was that the board of deputies had threatened to break contact with them if the Williamson event went ahead.

Chris Williamson



THE WORD

EDITORIAL

There are some big changes happening in politics all around the world with the poor and oppressed rising up.

In Spain, Chile, France, Iraq, and numerous other countries around our planet that have been decimated and defeated by the neo Liberal American Empire, ordinary people are defying the greedy.

Meanwhile in Britain a constipated Parliament can only agree that their expenses claim forms should be in on time. The Libdems, under their intellectually challenged leader, Jo Swinson, are hovering up any and all careerists who apply to join them.

The latter day Joan of Arc that is, Greta Thunberg, preaches to us of her visions. Tony Blair has a new job. The former prime minister will be paid at least £700,000 a year to act as a "strategic adviser" to Khosla Ventures, a venture capitalist firm founded by Indian billionaire Vinod Khosla.

One by one the political opposition in this country are being bribed, beaten and silence into submission by an ever encroaching state. We sit back and watch ourselves being drip fed by the MSM. Hollywood makes the films and America is the star as the policeman of the world.

Already the powers that be know more about each of us than we do ourselves. Google, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft have extensive data on all of us. We have smart televisions, fridges, meters but not people. They know what room of your house you are in, when you turn a kettle on, cook, watch television... ETC. They know what you watch, like, love, hate and hope for.

Margaret Hodge, a tax avoiding multi-millionaire is welcome in the Labour party but, Chris Williamson, a Socialist, working class ex bricklayer, is suspended. Trigger ballots have proven to be rigged and ineffective.

In 1945 we were allowed a welfare state. Maybe that had something to do with there being hundreds of thousands of well trained and armed men returning from the war? Now, there is no real social security, NHS or organised and effectual trade unions. The battle is being fought in the media. We, at THE WORD, are trying to create a cooperative fightback.

Join us

THE WORD MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

Our values

All shares are to be of equal value, not to be sold, bartered or inherited.

Shares to be limited to an upper limit of 500,000.

Our media will be radical and campaign for truth and justice.

This media will never be sold, or used for profit by any of its shareholders.

Any outside media work paid to members of this project will be given back to the project.

We are to be independent of any political party but based on the following principles:

Equality, democracy, truth, courage.

How it works

The word media has been going since we distributed the first printed edition in 2016.

We raised the money to print from a crowdfunded on social media but were naive enough not to realise that the distribution network was a cartel that would not allow competition within their own market.

The concept was always to be a printed, popular, tabloid newspaper that could be read and enjoyed from a non-political perspective but have a radical content not available outside the political bubble.

Those of our readers around at the time will remember the battle we had with the Trinity Mirror group. This meant we were not properly paid for newspapers that we sold. We continued in PDF format and rethought the process.

We are now relaunching as a printed newspaper as from 10th of February 2020. THE WORD will be back in the shops with our own distribution network. Alongside this will be our internet radio station and video channel.

To facilitate this happening we have introduced our own membership scheme. This will be available to all those who subscribe and donate. We will not accept large donations as political parties do as this would

invariably lead to undue pressure on us. What we are asking for is regular monthly donations of very small amounts. If we receive £1 a month on a recurring basis from every member of the word supporters group on Facebook then we will be able to print fortnightly. Ten times that amount would mean us being able to print a daily newspaper.

Everyone who donates or subscribes on a regular basis will receive a membership card. This will give you voting rights on decisions made regarding editorial and content. You will also be given regular updates on breaking stories and discounts on our events.



To donate or subscribe please use one of the following options:

By paypal or card on our website at

www.thewordmedia.co.uk

or by going to your bank and setting up a direct debit to:

The Word
Lloyds bank
Sort Code: 30 95 42
Account Number: 72130968

On paypal please remember to tick the monthly recurring option.



A U.S. Navy “doomsday” aircraft, meant to survive a nuclear attack, recently met its match: a bird.

The bird strike took out one of the plane’s four engines, and the U.S. Navy declared it a “Class A mishap,” meaning the event caused more than \$2 million in damages, death or permanent disability, the Navy Times reported.

On Oct. 2, during a so-called touch-and-go maneuver — when an aircraft lands and then takes off again without coming to a full stop — the E-6B Mercury aircraft struck an as-yet unidentified bird, Tim Boulay, a spokesman for the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, told Military.com. The bird strike happened at the Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland. No injuries were reported, and the plane landed safely on the runway at the air station at 3:12 p.m. ET, Military.com reported.

And now, the plane is back in action. “The engine has been replaced, and the aircraft has been returned to service,” Boulay said, according to Military.com.

The bird strike marks the second Class-A mishap of this type of doomsday aircraft already this year. In February, an E-6B Mercury snagged a hangar while being moved at the Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma, Military.com reported.

The E-6B Mercury is a Boeing 707 that’s souped-up military style to serve as an airborne command and communications platform for the U.S. Navy in the event of a nuclear war. Its systems are crafted to survive electromagnetic pulses from nuclear bombs detonating below it, according to a report by The Center for the National Interest, a public policy think tank based in Washington, D.C.

The craft uses low-frequency communication systems that would allow those in charge to communicate with the U.S. Navy’s nuclear missile force on ballistic missile submarines at sea, according to Military.com.

This doomsday plane is also equipped with the so-called airborne launch control system, meaning it can launch land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, Military.com reported.

Bird strikes by aircraft are not uncommon. According to the government program Department of Defense Partners in Flight (DoD PIF), every year, about 3,000 wild-life-strike incidents are reported for military aircraft and another 2,300-plus for civil craft.

Various prevention programs, including the Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard program, have been put into place in an effort to reduce these bird-strike incidents.

“Habitat modifications and scaring birds away from the runways is an integral part of the answer, but understanding the behavior and movements of birds in relation to the airfield environment and military training routes by pilots and aircrews is also a critical factor in reducing bird strikes,” the DoD PIF said



Bird Strikes Again

VOX POP In this feature we hold up a mirror to society and take the piss, in short it’s satire, parody. Under no circumstance are the views expressed the views of THE WORD writers, except Karl who’s a ‘Classist, piss taking, middle class Bastard apparently.

Alright mate! Full English and a mug of ‘Rosie Lee’, that’s how to start the day. Then catch up on all the news in the SUN. First up is the Football, then the other sport, then the Telly pages, checking up on who’s nobbing who on Strictly, what’s going on in EastEnders and Corrie, Then the Politics.

Brexit really boils my piss. I mean what are all these Politicians and Judges doing scrutinising Boris all the time, ‘JUST GET ON WITH IT!’ See Boris ain’t like them other politicians, he says it like it is, even if it’s in Latin, he’s smart. We need more like him. Like that Sir Alan Sugar off of The Apprentice, an entrepreneur, self made working man just like me. Sure he looks like a leathery old bollock In a suit but he takes no shit off no-one. He’s got that Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott’s number, have you seen his Twitter?

Bloody Labour Party ain’t what it was in the old days with all these Hard Left Momentum Stormtroopers joining in order to harrass Jews.

TERRY THE WORKING CLASS TORY

I almost voted for that Tony Blair once, especially after he went after Saddam Hussein against the will of the people and the United Nations.

I know the Conservatives have had to resort to Austerity because Gordon Bloody Brown caused the global banking crisis and they have doubled the National Debt but they are the party of business men like me. I don’t want to be paying tax so the sick and disabled and refugees can have a free run on benefits. Why should I?

Anyway, got to get back to work, my boss is reviewing my contract I don’t want to piss him off in case he gives my job to a Bulgarian

KARL TREVOR

One in three councils using algorithms to make welfare decisions

One in three councils are using computer algorithms to help make decisions about benefit claims and other welfare issues, despite evidence emerging that some of the systems are unreliable.

Companies including the US credit-rating businesses Experian and TransUnion, as well as the outsourcing specialist Capita and Palantir, a data-mining firm co-founded by the Trump-supporting billionaire Peter Thiel, are selling machine-learning packages to local authorities that are under pressure to save money. The systems are being deployed to provide automated guidance on benefit claims, prevent child abuse and allocate school places. But concerns have been raised about privacy and data security, the ability of council officials to understand how some of the systems work, and the difficulty for citizens in challenging automated decisions.

It has emerged North Tyneside council has dropped TransUnion, whose system it used to check housing and council tax benefit claims. Welfare payments to an unknown number of people were wrongly delayed when the computer’s “predictive analytics” erroneously identified low-risk claims as high risk.

Meanwhile, Hackney council in east London has dropped Xantura, another company, from a project to predict child abuse and intervene before it happens, saying it did not deliver the expected benefits. And Sunderland city council has not renewed a £4.5m data analytics contract for an “intelligence hub” provided by Palantir. A spokesperson for the Local Government Association, which represents councils, said: “Good use of data can be hugely beneficial in helping councils make services more targeted and effective ... But it is important to note that data is only ever used to inform decisions and not make decisions for councils.”

But Silkie Carlo, the director of the campaign group Big Brother Watch, said the increasing use of algorithms was leaving vulnerable people at the whim of “automated decisions ... they have no idea about and can’t challenge”.

Gwilym Morris, a management consultant who works with IT providers to the public sector, said the complexity of the systems meant the leadership of local authorities “don’t really understand what is going on” and this raised questions about how citizens’ data was used.

North Tyneside stopped using TransUnion’s system last month. It automatically processed data about claimants for housing and council tax benefit to determine the likelihood it was fraudulent – “risk based verification”. But most of the cases deemed high risk by the software were in fact lower risk, and benefit claims were wrongly delayed.

A council report concluded: “TransUnion provides no reason for a case meeting a high-risk category and it was found that in most cases, the reason for it being high risk could not be established ... There was no reason for the payment to be withheld, but claims had been delayed.”

A spokesperson for TransUnion said the classification of risk groups was “ultimately a matter for the local authorities to decide”.

They added: “Each local authority also determines what extra checks are required for claimants falling into any particular category, and can monitor for accuracy so that they can adapt their criteria if necessary.

Councillor suspended over ‘Jew process’ joke vying for Louise Ellman’s seat



A councillor briefly suspended after making a joke about “Jew process” sparked anger by putting her name forward to succeed Dame Louise Ellman.

Jo Bird, who is Jewish, was suspended in March and reinstated 9 days later after she joked about “Jew process” and adapted Martin Niemoller’s Holocaust poem “First they came” to refer to “anti-Zionists.” Reacting to the news, Jewish MP Ruth Smeeth said it would be “offensive to both Louise and Luciana if someone were to be selected who had referred to ‘jew process’ in reference to

antisemitism in the Labour party...writes the Jewish Chronicle. Totally oblivious to something called, Jewish humour. Jo Bird, yes, the very Jewish Jo Bird made a bad joke. Not bad in the sense of being offensive, racist, threatening...or even pointing out racial or cultural stereotypes. Simply a rather weak and weary pun. This must mean that puns are now anti Semitic in themselves?

Mr. Pun will now need to be reported to the Labour party compliance unit who will come down on Mr. Pun like a ton of Blairites rushing to fill in their expenses forms. No more hot cross puns this Easter by order of the Jewish Chronicle.



The obvious moral of this story is highlighted by the pictures above. However, fearing the inquisition that nobody expects, and in fear of being ccused of racism and sexism, I will leave it there.

With new grants, Gates Foundation takes an early step toward a universal flu vaccine

Scientific teams from inside and outside the world of influenza research have been awarded funding to try to unlock mysteries that could provide the foundation for a future universal flu vaccine, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the philanthropy Flu Lab have announced.

The funds, up to \$12 million, will be awarded to as many as eight teams of researchers, the Gates Foundation and Flu Lab announced Thursday (local time) at Options for the Control of Influenza, the flu world's largest scientific conference, currently underway in Singapore. The maximum grant will be \$2 million and the funding will stretch over two years.

Seven of the grants have been signed and were announced; another remains to be finalized. Grantees include Yoshihiro Kawaoka, a star in the flu world who splits his time between the University of Tokyo and the University of Wisconsin. But other grantees are new to influenza, hoping to leverage work on vaccines for HIV or cytomegaloviruses (CMV)

WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

Tory MP Damian Green who has been so opposed to renationalising the Water Industry - despite it meaning we'd all pay less for water.....

.....turns out that he was a Director at South East Water, who've made a fortune from the Water Privatisation.

He was also caught downloading porn on his laptop

Stephen Kinnock accused of hiding daughter's £29,000 a year private education

In 2014 Mr Kinnock, a Labour MP, told Wales Online that "it is highly misleading to say that our daughter attended a private school" in Denmark.

However it has since emerged that Johanna Kinnock attended Atlantic College in the Vale of Glamorgan, a private sixth form college in south Wales, between 2013 to 2015. Atlantic College is located at the 12th century St Donat's castle, where students enjoy the gothic dining hall, 25,000 book library, surrounding gardens and woodland, tennis courts and boat-building facilities. The son of former Labour leader Neil Kinnock, claimed that he was talking about his daughter's schooling in Denmark.

He insisted he has "always been open" about his daughter's education in Wales and said in a statement on his website that her time at Atlantic College was "partly funded by a standard Danish state scholarship for students studying abroad". He said: "Shortly before the late March 2014 hustings for the Aberavon Constituency Labour Party MP selection I was asked to clarify whether or not Johanna had attended a private school in Copenhagen.

"I explained that she had spent two years at IJS. The author of this blog claims that the facts of the matter were somehow being concealed; they were not. "I was being asked about, and responding to, questions about, the nature of Johanna's education in Denmark, and not about the nature of her education at [Atlantic College]."

A source close to the Aberavon selection contest told BBC Wales Mr Kinnock would not have won the selection if it had been known at the time that Johanna was being privately educated.

He said: "It would have changed people's perception, it would have made the difference. There was only one vote in it.



The Death Of People

Philip Alston, UN rapporteur on extreme poverty, has produced a devastating account of how new digital technologies are revolutionizing the interaction between governments and the most vulnerable in society.

Big tech companies are being allowed to go unregulated in "human rights free-zones", welfare budgets are being decimated and new penalties are being imposed for non-compliance on people who may be digitally illiterate or lack access to the internet. In the UK, he notes, 12 million people, or one in five of the population, do not have essential digital skills needed for modern day-to-day life.

Alston writes that "crucial decisions to go digital have been taken by government ministers without consultation, or even by departmental officials without any significant policy discussions taking place".

As a result of the absence of accountability, "digital technologies are employed in the welfare state to surveil, target, harass and punish beneficiaries, especially the poorest and most vulnerable among them".

A New York-based lawyer, Alston has become a piercing critic of inequality and disdain for basic human rights. In June 2018 he caused major ructions with the Trump administration by reporting that it was cruelly forcing millions of people into deprivation with its tax cuts for the rich. He went on to anger the British government with his damning report on austerity in the UK.

Now he is likely to displease several governments who will find his report uncomfortable reading. He says that the normal state of affairs whereby governments are accountable to their citizens has been turned upside down by the introduction of automated decision-making and the removal of human discretion from welfare systems.

He points to examples from around the globe of companies involved in welfare systems: Net 1's subsidiary Cash Paymaster Services together with MasterCard were initially involved in South Africa's social grant distribution system which raised privacy concerns because of its biometric data collection.

In Australia, Indue and Visa helped introduce cashless debit card trials, and IBM were central to the multimillion-dollar Sams system in Canada, the US & Germany



Cliff Jones column

I shall not be reading Seldon's book about Theresa May. After reading Cameron on Cameron I think I have suffered enough for the moment. My review of Blair's book I called 'From Illusion To Delusion'. Someone asked me why I needed to write anymore than the title.

'Ersatz politics and deviant governance' was the title that I gave to my review of 'The Unfinished Revolution: How New Labour Changed British Politics For Ever' by Philip Gould. Gould was in charge of focus groups for Blair and might be considered the most influential figure behind the replacement of Real Labour by New Labour. It was a well-written depressing book and would have been better titled 'How New Labour Changed British Politics For The Worse'.

I won't list all the books by and about politicians that I have read and reviewed. Facebook would block me for some reason, probably transgressing an algorithm. Brown's book was the most useful to me recently. He probably wins the prize for being the least self-deceiving of today's political authors and I used him as a prism to help me respond to a question that I constantly ask myself: 'Do we do government without politics these days?'

I have long taken the view that most politicians have little idea of the meaning of politics and have persuaded themselves that the word describes what they do. What they mostly do is better described as manipulation.

'Adults in the room' by Yanis Varoufakis, however, I strongly recommend. He was only a politician for a very short time and constantly kept in his pocket a letter of resignation that he often revised. I think that is a good way to do the job.

My definition of politics is 'The inclusive discussion of and consensual arrival at public values.' Manipulation, deception and avoidance of accountability are damaging to politics. But, increasingly, that is what governments do. As Anthony King often pointed out, governments hoard power.

And where has that placed us now?

Quiz

- Quiz.
1. Jean Claude Van Damme
 2. Elvis
 3. Whitney Houston
 4. Putin
 5. Jim Carey
 6. 1987
 7. A
 8. Holland / Netherlands
 9. Lord Snooty
 10. George Michael
- Whats The Year.
- Quiz Who.

PROROGATION, WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

Nowadays the term Prorogation is commonplace. At the time of writing we have undergone the second one in as many weeks, second time for three days of Queens Speech writing, previously anticipated to take six weeks by Mr Johnson's Illegal actions. Technically The Queen did it on the advice of the Haunted Victorian Pencilcase that is Jacob Rees-Mogg, but it is far more fun to call the Prime Minister guilty of lying and breaking the law. But public bemusement at such arcane procedures is not a modern phenomenon as I found, as you do, in an 1877 edition of Punch Magazine in my friendly local Museum Archive.

"PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT,
-OR THE IDEAL AND REAL DRAMA.

Drama 1st The Ideal.

The scene represents the House of Lords. Courtiers in full dress, Knights in armour with banners and bannerets, Barrons carrying younger sons of the younger sons of the eldest daughters of Earls. Cloth of Gold on the floor, damask velvets, with the costliest embroidery covering the seats; while the throne, itself raised on a dais at one extremity of the House, is one blaze of precious stones, whereat even the Indian Princes, who are present in golden fetters, shade their eyes, dazzled.

Without the House the loyal mob are kept in order by the Household Guard, and the Civil Service with Truncheons. A grand procession reaching from Buckingham Palace to the House of Lords is hailed with cheers. The procession resolves itself into several parallel lines, admitting between them THE QUEEN, in regal robes.

ALBERT PRINCE OF WALES and all the Royal Family, in the Royal Family Coach, and other vehicles of silver and gold.

Pursuivants mounted and on foot attend. Fanfares are blown. Trumpets sound. Exons in waiting with gleaming swords.

MR PLANCHET, as Rouge Dragon (or Rouge something-or-other, out of compliment to his dramatic talents) rides forward with a large head on his shoulders made by DYKWYNKIN. Thus is the amusement of the people consulted. Drums are beaten.

The town is illuminated, fountains of rum-punch and whiskey-hot sport from the mouths of the metropolitan statues, and the free fountains flow with brandy-and-water all hot.

So much for the Ideal Ceremony Let us look at the Real, for we are in a material age; goes to the Commons to tell SIR ERSKINE MAY that "The Lords Commissioners desire their (the Commons) immediate attendance to hear the Commission read."

Earl of MALMESBURY (impatiently) When is May coming?
Lord Derby (alluding to the weather) May! You can't expect it in January.
Lord Chancellor Hum! Thinks he'll say this as his own to the BISHOP OF OXFORD next session.

All (to one another) "I wish they'd make haste".
Earl of MALMESBURY (coughing) What a horrid stove this is!
Slingsby Bethel (Clerk to the Court) I know a cure for smokey stoves, it's... (is cut short by the entry of SIR A CLIFFORD and MR E. MAY and four Gentlemen Clerks of the Commons.

Lord Derby. Now Then! (To MR SLINGSBY BETHELL, who forthwith reads the Writ of Prorogation. The LORD CHANCELLOR declares PARLIAMENT PROROGUED. Exeunt quickly, omness, PROROGUED.
First Clerk of the Commons (to a brother Clerk) What a nuisance this is, it's brought me all the way from Scotland in this weather.
Second Clerk of the Commons. Yes confound it, it cuts into ones leave. I've come from Paris and missed one of the jolliest parties. Goodbye I'm off (leaves)

Third Clerk to the fourth Clerk. What a farce this is, ABSURD
Fourth Clerk Yes! Why can't it be done by proclamation and advertisement.

Both Ah why not? (exeunt separately saying "Bosh!")
Opinions of the Sergeant-at-Arms (who overhears these last remarks) If they advertising, why, hang it, in time they'll do away with me

Auntie Maggie Answers from a hot place

"My mate Tommy Cook was supposed to go on holiday with me. I gave him all my money but now he says he's bankrupt but he has now gone on a luxury holiday without me. Is this fraud?"

(Skint from Bradford)

Dear Mr Skint, you've got yourself into a bit of trouble there, this Thomas Cook sounds like a total rotter. I'm afraid that taking Mr Cook to court for breach of contract may be Beyond your means as means as Legal Aid doesn't really exist anymore for civil cases. It's worse than that in Corporate Law, if Mr Cook were a private company that goes into bankruptcy all the Officers with their bonuses and shareholders are protected by law. That's modern Capitalism I'm afraid Mr Skint.

My mate, Dick Brain has been caught thieving data. Should I stop being mates with him anymore?

(Nigel from Surrey)

Well Nigel, As the recent Cambridge Analytica case showed, the law is very loose where thievery of personal details are concerned. I would certainly distance myself from Mr Brain as any bad publicity could damage your reputation and that of your financial backers. Maybe consider associating yourself with some new friends, with diverse backgrounds, that way your integrity and public profile will be left alone by the press. Maybe consider going on a topical news regarding show to sell your over-simplistic brand.

I got invited to a very posh party a few years ago and it was great fun but then when I told the organisers I wanted to invite a few friends who were not that posh. The organisers told me not to come anymore. Should I make a fuss about it as I really loved a lot of things about that party?

(Chris from Derby)

Well Chris that sounds very unfair, was it something you said?

I'm sure that, as with most organisations, the folk at this party should have some kind of conflict resolution process ensuring both sides are treated fairly. I'm sure the party would be rather stale and 'samey' without you and your vibrant young friends. Of course other parties are possible, my son Stephen's friends Chukka and Luciana found themselves at a party they were uncomfortable with, lots of riff-raff with coarse habits showed up. They took a couple of bottles of White Lightning and went down to the park. Eventually they gate-crashed a posh barbecue at a neighbour Jo's house, a much smaller, posh affair where they had a much more intimate atmosphere and felt more at home.

My best advice is , get it all out in the open, hang with the cool kids in the kitchen, roll a fatty and party on dude.

I was having a kick about with my mates when a few skinheads on the other side started calling me names. Me and me mates took the piss back by not letting them touch the ball. Should I have just smashed their faces in? (Raheem from England)

This happens more often than you know and violence is not always the answer. One typically British response is to just carry on playing stoically and show the rotters you are superior. Another strategy would be to take the ball and simply walk ,but then the bullies have disrupted your game and drawn themselves the attention that they crave. You could change the game into a game of lovely Welsh Rugby where all the violence is channelled on the pitch and everyone respects the referee and everyone gets riotously drunk afterwards, black and white, rich or affluent.

I started a private company a few years ago and it grew quite quickly. The problem is people in it keep wanting to vote on everything rather than do as they are all told. I am really afraid this will make it lose momentum.

(Jon from London)

Dear Jon your situation is not an uncommon one among the Entrepreneurial Classes. With most cases the answer lies with how the company was registered at Companies House when you set it up. Are there shareholder or a board of Directors or even Trustees, is it run as a members Co-operative. In those cases decisions can be made by members, or their representatives. If, however you did none of the above, then it's your company and you can dictate everything from your high alter. This kind of de-regulated business model has long been championed by the Conservatives and is commonplace with the Far Right, both in the UK and abroad. It's also useful for tax avoidance.

I am going to work in Israel soon and a lot of people have said that I shouldn't because of the appalling human rights record there. I know it's wrong but after what happened to my best mate I am too afraid not to go. Am I being a coward?

(Paul from Liverpool...la)

Dear Paul, I'm sure you will be made to feel right at home in Israel. As a young student I spent a very, pleasant summer working on a Kibbutz and it was lovely. There was always a well armed army presence everywhere we went, I didn't meet a single solitary Palestinian the whole time. I'm sure you will fit right in and to suspend your trip might be interpreted as anti-Semitism. I'm sure you wouldn't want to tarnish your reputation with. I salute to sir.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS TO AUNTIE
MAGGIE FOR THE NEXT EDITION.

A Worm's Eye View of the Labour Party

There have been changes in the Labour Party at last, writes Lumbricus, expressing his/her Worm's Eye View of what is going on at ground level. Defections are not themselves a bad thing, and are far healthier than expulsions.

The tide of new members that swept in during 2016 has been stemmed and branches of the Party have seen membership reducing by five to ten percent. It would be a mistake to worry about the trend, as money coming to Labour through subscriptions and donations is higher than it has been for many years.

Defections at PLP level mirror the phenomenon. Certain viewpoints are taking their leave and joining either the illiberal undemocrats, or skulking about as independent as the newspaper of that name, which is not independent at all, but who and what are these people?

Firstly, the defections are not about Jews and Jewishness. Although many defectors seem to support Labour Friends of Israel and/or the Jewish Labour Movement, there are just as many Jews who have remained enthusiastically within Labour. Significantly, the JLM was revived only recently when the newer membership selected Jeremy Corbyn as Leader.

Corbyn is not Jewish, but has a long history of being pro-Jewish and anti-Racism. The main objections to him arise from his support for the Palestinian cause and for victims (on both sides of the divide) of miscarriage of justice in Northern Ireland. In this he is seen as a Labour Dissident now installed in a powerful position within the Party. There are as many photographs of the Queen, Tony Blair, the Prince of Wales, Margaret Thatcher, and so on, shaking hands with members of Sinn Fein as there are of Corbyn doing so, but there are no pictures of Corbyn with Jimmy Savile. Notably, I cannot find a photo of Gordon Brown, Ed Balls, or Tom Watson embracing Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, Hassan Nasrallah, or Khaled Mashal, or even Martin McGuinness or Gerry Adams.

The whole Brownite wing of the Party was and is single minded on most political issues except it seems Brexit, on which it is ambivalent. Brown himself saved us from the Euro, which would have destroyed the UK's ability to operate a sovereign currency using fiat money, something the rest of the EU must be green with envy about. It was the Blair people, never actually over-fond of Tony, who drifted to the Political Right, happy to win elections though, whoever they needed to woo: Campbell/ McDonnell!

Watson took on the Murdoch Media, told Blair it was time to step down, and even now is not really of the Labour Right. Kicking, screaming, spitting and in particular, swearing, the Brownites were dragged only a little way from what they like to call the Centre-Left, or Soft-Left, though there is nothing 'soft' about them. In some respects, they are very much "like Jereme," as their appallingly inept candidate for the leadership said in 2016; they and Corbyn are really of what we'd call Labour's Centre-Left. The difference is that they're not really democrats.

If some of the Left who abandoned Labour in the Blair years have returned, there are many times their numbers who have not engaged with politics before, and it shows! Typically they don't turn up to meetings, and have to be prised away from their busy lives even to attend council candidate shortlisting and selection, which is hard work.

The Real Left were chased away, expelled, and demonised in the Kinnock Years, and that Man of Ermine, his wife and naughty child, are still with us, harder to get rid of than shingles. Lord Kinnock together with the Sainted John Brown were the original New Labour: Brown the Social and Economic Reformer to Kinnock's Political Moderniser. Gordon Brown was the Reformer to Blair's Moderniser. The two wings, both of them Centre-Left/Centre-Right in Labour terms, made flying difficult, and the Party waddled to its eventual decline once Watson had installed Gordon as Chief Dodo.

There are no (Tony) Bennites or Corbynistas; it is the members who adopted first Benn and then Corbyn rather than the other way round. Democracy and Policy are their passion. For Academic Leftism look to Michael Foot, Paul Foot, and all the other Feet springing from the Liberal nest of Isaac and Eva. This noble traditionalist, scorned by the Labour Right as "lovely man, terrible leader," is unfair and unjustly maligned. His Labour Party was electorally scuppered by a cynical and unnecessary Tory War in the Falklands and the desertion of the thwarted Gang of Four in advance of the 1983 General Election.

Labour's challenge is now to get the membership to become more active within the Party and on the doorstep if we are to win arguments and elections in the rapidly approaching future.

Tom Watson quits as Labour deputy leader and steps down as MP

Tom Watson

Deputy Leader of the Labour Party
Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0AA
020 7219 8123 | www.tom-watson.com

6th November 2019

Jeremy Corbyn
Houses of Parliament
London, SW1A 0AA

Dear Jeremy,

I have taken the very difficult decision to stand down as a Member of Parliament and Labour Deputy Leader at the forthcoming election.

Serving the Labour Party has been the privilege of a lifetime. I joined in 1982 and never imagined that one day a kid from Kidderminster would be the party's Deputy Leader.

Most importantly for me, for the last 18 years it's been my immense honour to represent people from Sandwell. It's hard to find words to express my deep gratitude to the people who trusted me to fight their corner.

The Black Country is the very best of Britain. Communities who look out for their neighbours, who want to get on but not at the expense of others. And the people who make up this area are the most honest and decent you'll find anywhere in the world.

But now is the right time for me to stand down from the House of Commons and start a different kind of life. The decision is personal, not political.

The last few years have been among the most transformational of my personal life, second only to becoming a proud father of two beautiful children. I've become healthy for the first time, and I intend to continue with this work in the years to come.

I want to thank you for the decency and courtesy you have shown me over the last four years, even in difficult times.

Our many shared interests are less well known than our political differences, but I will continue to devote myself to the things we often talk about: gambling reform, music and arts, stopping press intrusion, obesity and public health and of course horticulture and cycling.

In the years to come I will be focusing even more on those policy interests. I will devote myself to writing about the public health challenge facing our country, taking on the sugar companies, campaigning for policy change, and setting up a 'remission for all' movement for type 2 diabetics. I have a book on 'downsizing' coming out in the new year. I will announce further plans in the coming months, but I am excited about working with people I've met and many I've not.

I might be standing down as an MP but I won't be leaving politics altogether.

This election is a turning point for our country and I know that Labour goes into it united in our determination to remove the Conservative government that has done so much damage to the communities Labour was founded to represent.

I will be taking an active part in this election campaign. I will continue as Deputy Leader until 12 December and will do everything I can to return a team of Labour MPs who will transform our country.

I still believe with my whole heart what I believed when I joined on my 15th birthday in 1982: that the Labour Party is the most powerful vehicle for social change this country has ever produced. I will never stop fighting for it.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Watson

Labour
labour.org.uk



We are used to seeing protests and marches in this country, sometimes it even makes it on to the TV news. With the exception of the odd Tommy Robinson, bonehead posturing demo, things very rarely involve violence or destruction from the protesters. The police have of course 'maintained the peace' with batons and teargas during strikes within living memory. But there seems something distinctly un-British about a good old riot, it's just not 'Cricket'! Johnny Foreigner loves a bit of window smashing, spray painting etc. and seemingly accepts the inevitable beating and arrest as part of the democratic process.

So what is it about us Brits, are we happy and content? Do we secretly crave the good old days of feudalism where our Landlords do all the important decision making and we just labour away unencumbered with Liberty? Was this always the case? I took a trip to my local, privately funded Museum in Faversham Kent and had a dig and discovered that rioting was all the rage in the 1830s.

In the early 19th Century the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were known among the population from the French and American Revolutions. It also hadn't been missed by the ruling classes that Johnny Foreigner had risen up and removed their whole Class and established Republics. The first of my local riots were the 'Swing' Riots of 1830/31. Agricultural workers were unhappy about their wages and the introduction of new mechanised Threshing machines which meant poverty during the winter months. The action taken by the workers included burning crops and the smashing of the new-fangled Threshing machinery. The first Threshing machine was destroyed near Hadres in August of 1830 and the practice quickly spread all over the South of England. Letters to the Landowners were always signed from 'Captain Swing' as a moniker for the growing movement.

Of course there was an Establishment backlash. At a local level the Magistrates were unable to control Captain Swings cohorts so a Government Commission was established in 1831. Of the 2000 found guilty of rioting 250 were sentenced to death, 500 transported to Australia and 650 were imprisoned. Only 19 of those sentenced to death were actually hanged the rest were also transported.

Next up was the 'Anti-Poor Law Riots' of 1835. In 1834 a new Poor Law was passed, replacing the one passed in Elizabethan times. This new law centralised powers of control away from the local parish to allot Dole money to the poor as they were perceived to be too lenient. Sounds a bit like the DWP fitness to work assessments but with Top hats and Workhouses doesn't it. Part of the Dole was given as bread vouchers and the conditions of the Workhouses was harsh, but it was the bread vouchers that set it off in Faversham in March 1835.

When two recipients protested. These protests were copied and spread beyond the Parish. On 7th May at Rodmersham an angry mob barricaded the Church officials in the Church. The authorities had anticipated trouble and sworn in 200 constables, two of which arrived at the church and arrested one of the protestors which resulted in a riot breaking out.

The mob chased the two officers but it was a trap and the ran into an ambush of he 200 Force and violence ensued. This time the Magistrates punishments were more lenient than the Swing Riots with fines and/or imprisonment.

Finally was the strange affair of the Courtenay Riots in 1838. Sir William Percy Honeywood Courtenay, the instigator, was in fact a delusional, possibly Bipolar, middle class Cornishman called John Tom. In 1832 'Courtenay' arrived in Canterbury with the insurance money from his Corn business that had burnt down.

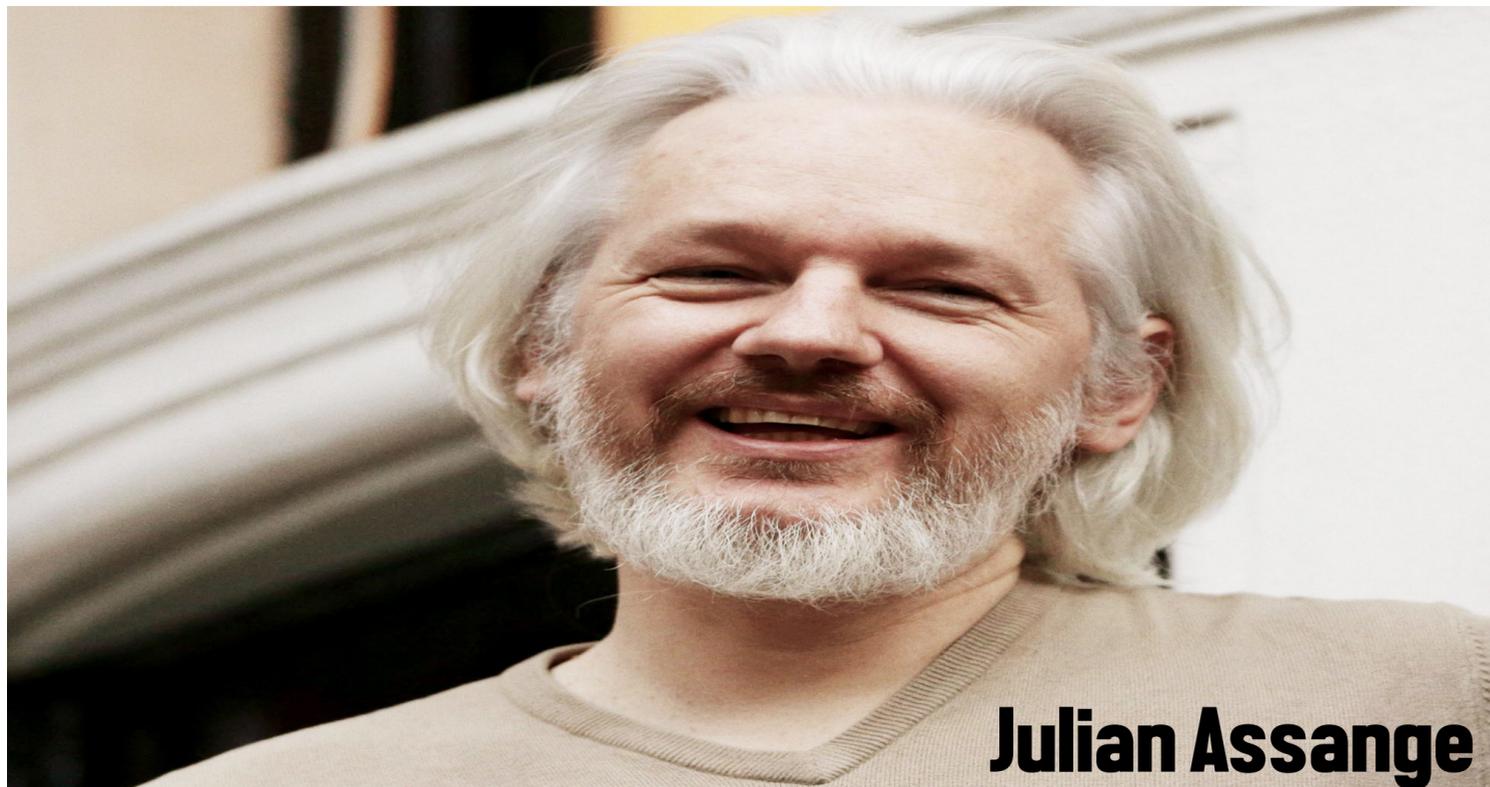
He stood as MP for Canterbury and was known as a charismatic orator. He was convicted of perjury after bearing false witness for a band of smugglers and when his real persona was revealed he was committed to the lunatic asylum.

In 1837, in her first year Queen Victoria granted 'Courtenay' a pardon. He then adopted the role of Hero of the Republic and occasionally The Messiah, his followers included the workers involved in the Captain Swing and Poor Law Riots.

In May 1938 he decided to declare the Revolution was on and his followers downed tools.

Three Officers of the Militia were sent to arrest 'Courtenay' and one of them was shot and then hacked to death, the other two fled to Faversham. 150 Soldiers arrived from Canterbury and surrounded the rioters. 'Courtenay' shot the Lieutenant dead and was almost immediately shot dead himself and a bloody battle ensued with the survivors transported to Australia or imprisoned. The main result of this incident was improvements to the education system as the workers ignorance was blamed for their naivety in following a 'Madman'.

So why do we seem reticent to object with disobedience to our governments misrule. We are unlikely to be shot or deported to Australia. There are no shortages of delusional Madmen claiming to be our Saviour, it's just they wear suits and ties not flowerpots on their head and are called 'Populist'. Imagine discovering Nigel Farage was really a mentally ill Artisan Baker from Plymouth all along. Imagine Tommy (Yaxley-Lennon) Robinson's followers being re-educated after trashing a Wetherspoons because The Messiah told them to. The height of disobedience seems to be throwing a milkshake or egg and the press seem to decry that as an act of ultimate anarchy. Have we gone soft?



Julian Assange is an Australian journalist who founded WikiLeaks in 2006. Julian was the editor of WikiLeaks until September 2018: six months of his effective incommunicado detention in the Ecuadorian embassy in London then prompted Julian to appoint Kristin Hrafnsson as WikiLeaks editor-in-chief. Julian remains WikiLeaks' publisher. Wikileaks' publications have had enormous impact.

They have changed many peoples' views of governments, enabling them to see their secrets. They have changed journalism as a practice, as debates have raged over the ethics of secrecy, transparency and reporting on stolen documents. WikiLeaks has gained the admiration of people and organisations all over the world, as evidenced in the numerous awards it has won.

For these contributions to public accountability and the historical record, Assange has been arrested in the United Kingdom and indicted in the United States. The US requests Assange's extradition and has charged him with 17 counts under the Espionage Act of 1917 for the publication of truthful material in the public interest. Assange is the first journalist in history the US has charged with Espionage for publishing. He also faces one count of conspiracy to commit computer crime based on his alleged reporter-source communications with whistleblower Chelsea Manning. This charge would criminalise basic journalistic activity, as the indictment details alleged attempts to help Manning protect her anonymity as a journalistic source.

An extradition hearing has been scheduled for February 2020. If extradited, Assange faces the prospect of life imprisonment in the United States. He is currently imprisoned in HMP Belmarsh, in London "An indictment centering on the publication of information of public interest — even if it was obtained from Russian government hackers — would create a precedent with profound implications for press freedoms."

Ben Wizner, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU): "Any prosecution of Mr Assange for WikiLeaks' publishing operations would be unprecedented and unconstitutional and would open the door to criminal investigations of other news organisations." Bruce Shapiro, contributing editor to The Nation: "The notion of sealed charges against a publisher of leaked documents ought to have warning sirens screaming in every news organization, think tank, research service, university, and civil-liberties lobby.... The still-secret Assange charges, if unchallenged, could burn down the scaffolding of American investigative reporting."

In April, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Shadow Home Secretary Dianne Abbot spoke publicly against Assange's threatened extradition to the US,

but after the pair faced a backlash from the Blairite warmongers who dominate the Parliamentary Labour Party, public mea culpas followed.

Corbyn insisted that Assange was "not above the law" and should face extradition to Sweden—even though no extradition request had been received! Since then, the pair have maintained silence, even after the US unveiled Espionage Act charges against Assange that carry a 175-year prison term. Corbyn's supporters, including John McDonnell, Rebecca Long Bailey and Laura Pidcock have also refused to come to Assange's defence.

The charges, contained in an 18-count indictment announced on Thursday, go far beyond an initial indictment against Assange made public last month that accused him of conspiring with Manning to gain access to a government computer, as part of a 2010 leak by WikiLeaks of hundreds of thousands of US military reports about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The new indictment, which accuses Assange of violating the espionage act, says his actions "risked serious harm" to the US.



Activists combine to offer PIP assessment recording kits

By John Pring

Disabled activists have responded to the government's continuing failure to deal with the dishonesty and inaccuracy of the disability benefit assessment process by launching schemes to ensure that claimants can record their own assessments.

Grassroots groups of disabled activists launched two separate campaigns this week that aim to help disabled people preparing for a face-to-face assessment for personal independence payment (PIP).

Disabled People Against Cuts Sheffield (DPAC Sheffield) launched its campaign to Put PIP Assessments #OnTheRecord with the support of Disability Sheffield.

The campaign will allow disabled people from Sheffield to borrow the specialised equipment needed to record their PIP assessment*.

John (pictured, left), the first person to use the new equipment, says in a video released to publicise the new scheme, which was funded by a JustGiving fundraising campaign: "I am much happier knowing that there will be an accurate record of what has been said in the meeting, knowing that it cannot be changed in any way.

"I feel so much safer having the recording kit with me. I encourage anybody going for an assessment in Sheffield to get in touch with DPAC Sheffield to loan a recording kit."

Disability News Service (DNS) spent months investigating allegations of dishonesty by PIP assessors in late 2016 and throughout 2017, hearing eventually from more than 250 disabled people in less than a year about how they had been unfairly deprived of their benefits.

And last month, DNS revealed that PIP claimants are now almost twice as likely to win their tribunal appeal than claimants of disability living allowance – which is being replaced by PIP for working-age claimants – were almost a decade ago.

Jennifer Jones, of DPAC Sheffield, said she and her colleagues hoped the scheme would save time and money and the stress of having to undergo the Department for Work and Pensions' mandatory reconsideration process and tribunal appeals after unfair assessments, and that it would protect claimants from assessors "who deny people medical attention during assessments or from those who bully, browbeat, or threaten claimants".

DPAC Sheffield is now fundraising to buy more recording kits, and hopes eventually to roll out the scheme nationally if ministers refuse to introduce recording of PIP assessments as standard practice.

The grassroots groups Recovery In The Bin and national DPAC have also combined to provide advice to people who want to record their PIP assessment, which briefs them on the equipment they need and how to use it.

They are also offering details of grassroots groups that will loan the equipment without charge, although there are currently only a small number of such kits.

They are building a map of locations where equipment is available, including the kit being loaned out by DPAC Sheffield. As well as Sheffield, there are currently kits in Cardiff, London and Manchester.

A spokesperson for RITB said: "We are doing this because there is overwhelming evidence that when assessments are not recorded and there are no witnesses, the assessment reports are persistently and fraudulently inaccurate, and are then used to deny people the support they need.

"Recording the assessment is a solid step in ensuring more transparency in assessments and they also give you good grounds should you need to appeal a decision, although by recording, you reduce the likelihood of getting a bad decision in the first place."

Stormzy has labelled Jacob Rees-Mogg an "actual piece of shit" and called for him to resign after the Conservative minister appeared to blame Grenfell victims for their deaths.

Speaking to LBC, the MP suggested people who perished in the 2017 disaster should have used "common sense" and fled the building, despite being told to stay in their flats by the fire brigade.

"If you just ignore what you're told and leave you are so much safer," he said.

"And I think if either of us were in a fire, whatever the fire brigade said, we would leave the burning building. It just seems the common sense thing to do."

Responding on Twitter, grime star Stormzy urged his followers to watch a clip of the interview.

"I can't believe the cheek f***** hell these politicians are actual aliens," he said.

"This man is the scummiest. You can't even make this stuff up... let's bare in mind for 2 secs how horrifying and terrifying the situation would have been for the victims.

"Bare of you politicians are evil and wicked and that's why we hate you."





The UK's 'bonfire capital' has put more political figures to the flames as effigies of Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg were paraded through the streets as part of Bonfire Night festivities.

A runaway Brexit rollercoaster sculpture featuring a frantic-looking Johnson and Rees-Mogg has been carried through the streets of Lewes as the town celebrated November 5.

The East Sussex town is famous for burning effigies of controversial politicians and celebrities every year on Bonfire Night. They are paraded along the narrow streets of Lewes before being burned in front of thousands of onlookers.

Among the centrepieces of the annual festival are the controversial effigies, which often take the form of well-known politicians and celebrities.

Last year, a giant portrayal of Johnson holding an axe and Theresa May's severed head was set on fire, to the delight of the chanting crowds.

The town's seven bonfire societies are known for producing controversial tableaux of public figures which are paraded by torchlight before being set on fire.

The event not only marks the tale of Guy Fawkes and the uncovering of the Gunpowder Plot on November 5 1605, but also commemorates the burning of 17 Protestant martyrs in the town's High Street in the 16th century.

To mark their demise, 17 burning crosses are traditionally carried through the town, and a wreath-laying ceremony takes place at the war memorial.

A flaming tar barrel is also thrown into the nearby River Ouse, said to symbolise the throwing of magistrates into the water after they read the riot act to bonfire boys in 1847.



Last week, New York Times columnist Timothy Egan had a piece headlined "Why Doesn't Mark Zuckerberg Get It?" The piece then goes on to document how Facebook has become a medium for spreading lies and nonsense all over the world, that many ill-informed users have come to believe.

This is what Egan wants Zuckerberg to "get." While it would be nice if Zuckerberg understood the problems created by Facebook, and took effective measures to address them, the problem with Egan's piece is that there is no reason to expect that Zuckerberg would get this point.

Zuckerberg is not a political philosopher concerned about the public good. There is a zero evidence he is a deep thinker of any sort. He is a Harvard boy who stumbled into a good idea and had the necessary connections to get very rich from it: end of story.

It is bizarre that so many people look to the country's billionaires to tell us how the world should be constructed or think that these people have any great insight into such matters. Being a billionaire means that you were successful at getting very rich. There is no reason to believe that billionaires have any more insight into major policy issues than anyone else. Imagine if we turned to LeBron James, a truly great basketball player, to get advice on how best to deal with global warming. LeBron is a smart guy, but no one would expect him to have special insights into dealing with global warming, in spite of his incredible skills on the basketball court.

In the same vein, why would anyone think that Zuckerberg would know or care about how Facebook should be run in a way that protects democracy? Zuckerberg runs Facebook to make money (lots of it), not to promote democracy. The way to fix the problems of Facebook is not to convince Zuckerberg of its harms, the way to fix Facebook is to change the law.

Ending Facebook's Exemption from Libel Law
The best way to address the immediate issue of concern with Facebook, that it will run political ads with lies, is simply to remove Facebook's exemption from libel law. In the early days of the Internet, Congress passed the Communications Decency Act, which established rules for Internet. The law included a provision, Section 230, which exempted intermediaries like Facebook from libel.

This provision means that Facebook, unlike the New York Times or CNN, cannot be sued if it transmits false and damaging claims about individuals, companies, or other entities.

It is difficult to see why Facebook, or any Internet intermediary, should enjoy this sort of special treatment. Zuckerberg has said that he doesn't want to be in the business of determining what is true. It may be the case that his Facebook team is not terribly competent, but the fact is that his competitors in traditional media have been in this business for decades.

I cannot buy an ad in the New York Times or on CNN attacking Donald Trump, Joe Biden, or any other political figure unless I can demonstrate to them that the claims in the ad are true. This is partly because these companies are worried about their reputations, and don't want to be associated with passing along lies, but also because they could be subject to a libel suit if they helped me pass along libelous claims.

Zuckerberg might argue that Facebook's operations are highly automated, people can buy ads on Facebook without any human intervention. This means that it doesn't have staff available to review all the ads that it runs. That is undoubtedly true, but that is Mark Zuckerberg's problem. Just as the New York Times and CNN pay people to review the ads they run, Facebook can pay to review the ads it runs. That will cost lots of money and reduce Facebook's profits, but so what?

It is worth noting the contrast in the treatment of copyrights and libelous material by Facebook. In accordance with the law, Facebook polices its site for copyright violations. If someone has posted material that has been identified to Facebook as infringing on a copyright, Facebook will remove it from any sites where it has been posted. By contrast, Mark Zuckerberg says Facebook doesn't care if posted material can be shown to be false and libelous.

It is hard to see an argument as to why we should not be at least as concerned about protecting democracy as protecting copyright holders' ability to make money from their copyrights. It may be too much to demand that Facebook preemptively review posts for libelous material, but as with copyright infringement, they can be required to remove material that has been demonstrated to be false and damaging.

The law can also require that Facebook take steps to correct the damage from any false and libelous posts. This could mean that it would post a correction to the material that would appear on any Facebook pages where the libelous material appeared.

Allowing for such corrections could be one of the items that Facebook includes in those "terms of service" that no one ever reads. If people object to the idea that they may have a correction to their libelous posting appear on their Facebook page, then they can opt not to use Facebook. (Consumer choice is great.)

Facebook and other Internet intermediaries often try to portray themselves as passive actors, like a bulletin board on the web. There are in fact many such passive bulletin board type sites on the web. The difference between these sites and Facebook, is that these sites don't make money from advertising or their participants' personal information. If Facebook wanted to go that route, then it could be exempted from responsibility for libelous material, just as a neighborhood bulletin board would not be held responsible for libelous material.

However, if Facebook wants to compete with print and broadcast outlets for advertising dollars, it should be held to the same rules as these outlets. There is no justification for special treatment for rich jerks from Harvard. There is no reason to waste any effort trying to convince Mark Zuckerberg what is good for democracy. We just have to tell him, and make him a pay a very big price if he is too lazy or dumb to "get" it.

Keith Vaz



Seen lurking in the shadows at Lime street station at 10pm last year in the middle of the Labour party conference, Keith Vaz.

He looked mortified to be recognised but said he had missed his last train. Minutes later he and a young man walked to the taxi rank. I hope his lack of ability to read a railway timetable does not mean he claims expenses on a taxi back to London... and why leave before conference ends?

We took a quick snap on a mobile phone to prove the, Vaz presence. You may think, "Live like you want to liv" and we would agree. Accept Keith Vaz is a Member of Parliament that not only cheated on his family but changed his mind over a very important issue indeed. Vaz was on the original NCC panel of the Labour party that cleared Chris Williamson of any wrong doing.

His was the deciding vote. After a right wing media storm Jenny Formby, General Secretary of the Labour party, gave in to pressure and re-suspended Williamson. Conveniently, and giving the decision a scintilla of credibility, Vaz changed his decision on the matter.

We wonder why?

The Conservative Party has pushed out a fake news video edited to make it appear Labour's Sir Keir Starmer is unclear on the party's Brexit policy. In a doctored video, tweeted on the Tories' official account and already viewed more than 200,000 times on Twitter, the party inserted several seconds of Sir Keir's face in silence after a question during a TV news interview.

The original GMB interview saw host Piers Morgan ask Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary why he thought the EU would give Labour a good deal if there was a risk they'd campaign against it in a second referendum.

In reality, Sir Keir immediately replied: "Well, Piers, I have been talking to the EU, to political leaders across the EU 27 countries for the last three years, and I know very well what the parameters are of any deal they would do with a Labour government.

"We actually explored some of it in the cross-party talks that we were in with the government six months or so ago.

"So I know that a customs union and single market alignment, and protection of workers' rights and environmental rights and consumer rights is something that can be negotiated."

But in the fake video, footage of Sir Keir was inserted after the question, with the slogan "Labour has no plan for Brexit".

After it was pointed out on Twitter that Sir Keir had in fact answered the question, Mr Morgan replied: "Correct, he did, albeit not very convincingly - but the way this has been edited is misleading & unfair to Keir Starmer."

But the party's press office doubled down, refusing to address the doctoring of the footage, and saying: "There have been some enquiries about the veracity of Keir Starmer's interview this morning where he was unable to explain Labour's plan to delay Brexit.

"Believe it or not, this car crash interview did really take place."

Speaking earlier on the Today Programme, Sir Keir said he is confident Labour can negotiate a new Brexit deal with the EU within three months if they win power at the General Election on December 12.

In a speech in Harlow, Jeremy Corbyn will reaffirm Labour's commitment to get a new agreement and put it to the public in a new referendum within six months of taking office.



Fake Views

The super-rich are preparing to leave the UK

The super-rich are preparing to immediately leave the UK if Jeremy Corbyn becomes prime minister, fearing they will lose billions of pounds if the Labour leader does "go after" the wealthy elite with new taxes, possible capital controls and a clampdown on private schools.

Lawyers and accountants for the UK's richest families said they had been deluged with calls from millionaire and billionaire clients asking for help and advice on moving countries, shifting their fortunes offshore and making early gifts to their children to avoid the Labour leader's threat to tax all inheritances above £125,000.

The advisers said a Corbyn-led government was viewed as a far greater threat to the wealth and quality of life of the richest 1% than a hard Brexit.

Geoffrey Todd, a partner at the law firm Boodle Hatfield, said many of his clients had already put plans in place to transfer their wealth out of the country within minutes if Corbyn is elected.

"Lots of high-net worth individuals are worried about having to pay much higher taxes on their wealth and have already prepared for the possibility of a Corbyn government," he said. "Transfers of wealth are already arranged - in many cases, all that is missing is a signature on the contract.

"There will be plenty of people on the phone to their lawyers in the early hours of 13 December if Labour wins. Movements of capital to new owners and different locations are already prepared, and they are just awaiting final approval."

Dominic Samuelson, the chief executive of Campden Wealth, which advises more than 3,500 rich families, said: "From the ultra-high net worth perspective, a Labour government under Corbyn is a much greater threat to them and their businesses and their wealth than Brexit."

On Thursday, Corbyn singled out five members of "the elite" that a Labour government would go after in order to rebalance the country.

He claimed Mike Ashley, the billionaire owner of Sports Direct and Newcastle United, was a "bad boss" who exploited his workers through zero-hours contracts. Ashley hit back, telling the Financial Times: "Corbyn's not only a liar but clueless."

The Labour leader also named the "greedy banker" Crispin Odey, the hedge fund manager who made £220m betting against the pound in the run-up to the EU referendum.

The U.S long history of attempting to influence presidential elections in other countries

The U.S. has a long history of attempting to influence presidential elections in other countries - it's done so as many as 81 times between 1946 and 2000, according to a database amassed by political scientist Dov Levin of Carnegie Mellon University.

That number doesn't include military coups and regime change efforts following the election of candidates the U.S. didn't like, notably those in Iran, Guatemala and Chile. Nor does it include general assistance with the electoral process, such as election monitoring.

Levin defines intervention as "a costly act which is designed to determine the election results [in favor of] one of the two sides."

These acts, carried out in secret two-thirds of the time, include funding the election campaigns of specific parties, disseminating misinformation or propaganda, training locals of only one side in various campaigning or get-out-the-vote techniques, helping one side design their campaign materials, making public pronouncements or threats in favor of or against a candidate, and providing or withdrawing foreign aid.

In 59% of these cases, the side that received assistance came to power, although Levin estimates the average effect of "partisan electoral interventions" to be only about a 3% increase in vote share.

The U.S. hasn't been the only one trying to interfere in other countries' elections, according to Levin's data.

Russia attempted to sway 36 foreign elections from the end of World War II to the turn of the century - meaning that, in total, at least one of the two great powers of the 20th century intervened in about 1 of every 9 competitive, national-level executive elections in that time period.

Italy's 1948 general election is an early example of a race where U.S. actions probably influenced the outcome.

"We threw everything, including the kitchen sink" at helping the Christian Democrats beat the Communists in Italy, said Levin, including covertly delivering "bags of money" to cover campaign expenses, sending experts to help run the campaign, subsidizing "pork" projects like land reclamation, and threatening publicly to end U.S. aid to Italy if the Communists were elected.



Levin said that U.S. intervention probably played an important role in preventing a Communist Party victory, not just in 1948, but in seven subsequent Italian elections.

Throughout the Cold War, U.S. involvement in foreign elections was mainly motivated by the goal of containing communism, said Thomas Carothers, a foreign policy expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"The U.S. didn't want to see left-wing governments elected, and so it did engage fairly often in trying to influence elections in other countries," Carothers said.

This approach carried over into the immediate post-Soviet period.

In the 1990 Nicaragua elections, the CIA leaked damaging information on alleged corruption by the Marxist Sandinistas to German newspapers, according to Levin. The opposition used those reports against the Sandinista candidate, Daniel Ortega. He lost to opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro.

In Czechoslovakia that same year, the U.S. provided training and campaign funding to Vaclav Havel's party and its Slovak affiliate as they planned for the country's first democratic election after its transition away from communism.

"The thinking was that we wanted to make sure communism was dead and buried," said Levin.

Even after that, the U.S. continued trying to influence elections in its favor.

In Haiti after the 1986 overthrow of dictator and U.S. ally Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, the CIA sought to support particular candidates and undermine Jean-Bertrande Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest and proponent of liberation theology.

The New York Times reported in the 1990s that the CIA had on its payroll members of the military junta that would ultimately unseat Aristide after he was democratically elected in a landslide over Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official and finance minister favored by the U.S.

The U.S. also attempted to sway Russian elections. In 1996, with the presidency of Boris Yeltsin and the Russian economy flailing, President Clinton endorsed a \$10.2-billion loan from the International Monetary Fund linked to privatization, trade liberalization and other measures that would move Russia toward a capitalist economy.

Yeltsin used the loan to bolster his popular support, telling voters that only he had the reformist credentials to secure such loans, according to media reports at the time.

He used the money, in part, for social spending before the election, including payment of back wages and pensions.

In the Middle East, the U.S. has aimed to bolster candidates who could further the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

In 1996, seeking to fulfill the legacy of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the peace accords the U.S. brokered, Clinton openly supported Shimon Peres, convening a peace summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el Sheik to boost his popular support and inviting him to a meeting at the White House a month before the election.

"We were persuaded that if [Likud candidate Benjamin] Netanyahu were elected, the peace process would be closed for the season," said Aaron David Miller, who worked at the State Department at the time.

In 1999, in a more subtle effort to sway the election, top Clinton strategists, including James Carville, were sent to advise Labor candidate Ehud Barak in the election against Netanyahu.

In Yugoslavia, the U.S. and NATO had long sought to cut off Serbian nationalist and Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic from the international system through economic sanctions and military action.

In 2000, the U.S. spent millions of dollars in aid for political parties, campaign costs and independent media. Funding and broadcast equipment provided to the media arms of the opposition were a decisive factor in electing opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica as Yugoslav president, according to Levin.

"If it wouldn't have been for overt intervention... Milosevic would have been very likely to have won another term," he said.

What are they afraid of?

Downing Street is under fire for delaying a report by Parliament's intelligence and security committee into alleged acts of espionage, interference and sabotage by the Russian government in elections - including the 2016 EU referendum and the 2017 election. Unlike most of Parliament's scrutiny committees, its members are appointed, not elected by MPs, and undergo security clearance in order to do their work - which remains classified until it is given the all clear by the security services.

This report has received the all-clear but has yet to receive Downing Street's, with Boris Johnson expected to sit on the report until after the election is resolved. Dominic Grieve, the departing chair of the committee, has released a strongly-worded statement criticising the government's inaction, and several former members of the security services have called on the report to be published.

What can possibly be in it to justify the delay? Several well-placed sources are of the view that the report cannot be particularly explosive, as the security services have signed it off with relative speed, and I'm told by several familiar with its contents that the actual report is not politically transformative. Bloomberg's Kitty Donaldson reports that neither Johnson nor his chief strategist Dominic Cummings are named in the report.

The reality, too, is that a detailed report is seldom, if ever, as damaging as a running story about a cover-up, which dominates the headlines at the expense of the Conservatives' preferred election messages.

So why hasn't it been published? MPs, civil servants, and Foreign Office officials think that it is a result of a personal animus towards Dominic Grieve, held particularly strongly by Cummings but a view that is shared by several others in Downing Street.

One reason why some Conservative MPs were pleased that Cummings would not be running the campaign, but that Isaac Levido would be doing so is that they thought it meant that the election battle would be less likely to be blown off course by Cummings' tendency to cross the street to pick a fight. But just because Downing Street's militant tendency isn't in control of the election campaign doesn't mean they can't complicate its path back to office.

Another Tory Cock UP

A Conservative MP has blamed "a young person" on the party's campaign team for doctoring a video of Labour's shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer.

Mansfield MP Ben Bradley and former Tory vice-chair for youth admitted the video was one of a series of "cock-ups" which marred the first day of the official Tory campaign for the 12th December general election.

Tories suffered a storm of criticism over a the social media clip released by the party showing Keir Starmer appearing to falter for several seconds during an interview when in fact he had provided an immediate answer.

Tory chairman James Cleverly who himself has been in the headlines for not attending a planned interview on Kay Burleys show on Sky News, defended the clip, while admitting it had been "edited". But Tory minister Johnny Mercer issued an apology for retweeting the footage, which he said had been "inexplicably doctored".

Asked about the issue on BBC Radio 5 Live, Mr Bradley - said: "A lot of the time people just cock things up. And yesterday wasn't a great day because people cocked things up."

Asked if the video should now be removed, he said: "It's probably quite a young person in the digital department that's done something that they thought was good.

"I don't buy into this idea there's a cynical campaign of lies. These things just tend to be mistakes ... I think it's a cock-up."



Angela Smith Terrified of missing out on £22,000 taxpayer-funded golden goodbye



A former Labour MP who defected to the Liberal Democrats has complained of the "terrifying" prospect of missing out on a £22,000 taxpayer-funded golden goodbye if she loses at next month's general election.

Angela Smith, who was a Labour MP for 14 years until she quit the party earlier this year, claimed she is being "discriminated against" by Parliament's expenses authorities.

She is currently the MP for the Penistone and Stocksbridge constituency but is vacating the seat to instead stand for the Liberal Democrats in Altrincham and Sale West in the up and coming election on December 12th.

In a letter to the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority — the watchdog for MPs' expenses — Smith expressed her "horror" at realising that her decision to stand as a Lib Dem in a different constituency means she is no longer eligible for the winding-up payment received by MPs who lose their seats in an election. IPSA rules state that an MP who loses their seat is entitled to a taxpayer-funded parachute payment worth two months' salary, net of tax and National Insurance contributions.

But, Smith said in her letter to IPSA last week, her decision to stand in a different constituency — a move known in Westminster as a "chicken run" — meant she would now not receive the money if she loses. She said this amounted to her being "discriminated against".

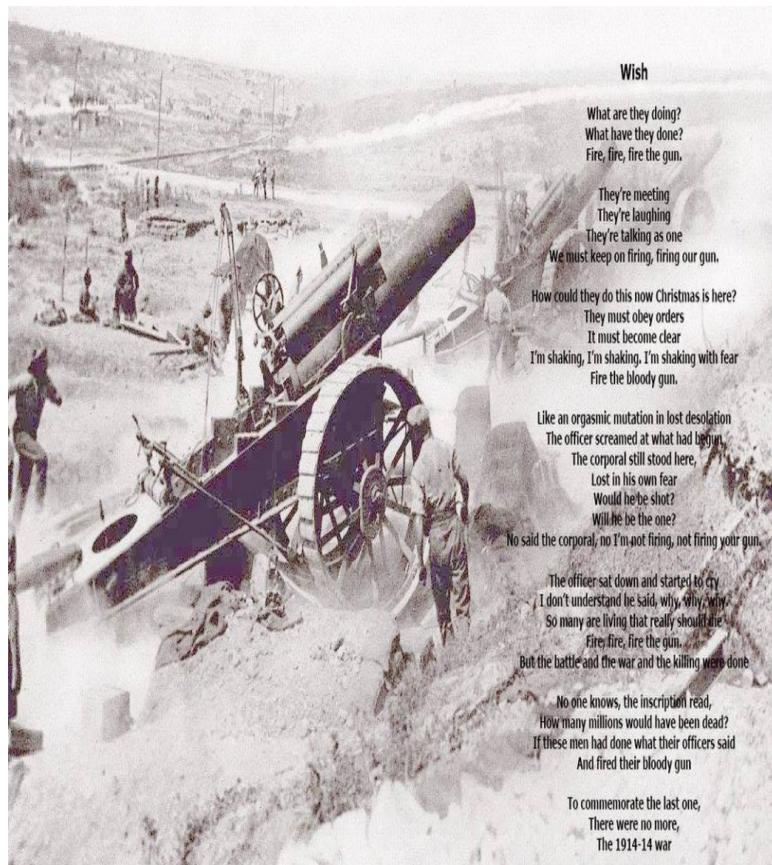
"I cannot underestimate my horror in finding in the latest guidance these payments are only available if you stand in the same 'seat,'" Smith wrote, adding: "The implications of this are terrifying."

She went on: "As you can imagine being an MP for a considerable amount of time these payments provided some comfort in the event of losing on election day." "Given I had no option but to move to another party and then no option but to move to a vacant candidacy, I honestly consider I am being discriminated against," Smith claimed, arguing that she had no choice but to run in a different seat because the Liberal Democrats had already selected a candidate in Penistone. Smith's decision to leave Labour and join the Lib Dems was her own.

She continued: "To be honest it is terrifying me and cannot say loud enough that I feel aggrieved that after serving our country for last 14 1/2 years I could lose everything because of this rule that if implemented would cost me around £22,000 in loss of Office Payment and 2 months net pay."

Smith hit the headlines back in February when she was forced to apologise for describing people from black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds as having a "funny tinge".

She was also embroiled in the expenses scandal back in 2009, when it was revealed she had charged the taxpayer for four beds in her one-bedroom London flat.



Wish
 What are they doing?
 What have they done?
 Fire, fire, fire the gun.
 They're meeting
 They're laughing
 They're talking as one
 We must keep on firing, firing our gun.
 How could they do this now Christmas is here?
 They must obey orders
 It must become clear
 I'm shaking, I'm shaking, I'm shaking with fear
 Fire the bloody gun.
 Like an organic mutation in lost desolation
 The officer screamed at what had begun
 The corporal still stood here,
 Lost in his own fear
 Would he be shot?
 Will he be the one?
 No said the corporal, no I'm not firing, not firing your gun.
 The officer sat down and started to cry
 I don't understand he said, why, why, why?
 So many are living that really should die
 Fire, fire, fire the gun.
 But the battle and the war and the killing were done
 No one knows, the inscription read,
 How many millions would have been dead?
 If these men had done what their officers said
 And fired their bloody gun
 To commemorate the last one,
 There were no more,
 The 1914-14 war

I wear the white poppy rather than the red for the following reasons.

The red poppy has, over the years, turned into a symbol of militarism and nationalism. It celebrates the lack of democracy inherent in it by having close association with the inbred and unelected Battenburg family. Remember, WW1 was caused by a family feud amongst these parasites.

My Grandfather fought, and was gassed, in WW1. He died shortly afterwards.

My father fought and was wounded in WW2. All wars accept and institutionalise murder. We fight wars for Empires and the greed of a few who profit from genocide. It is the Tory gene run rampant.

Only by standing up to these people, like the brave soldiers on both sides did in the WW1 Xmas truce, can we stop the greedy profiting from the needy. Let us remember in peace ALL those who died in ALL wars because, with very, very few exceptions, they were victims.

Red poppies help to perpetuate and glorify war. White poppies are for peace and solidarity.



Watching England can be a roller coaster ride but against Bulgaria they excelled in all departments. The behaviour of some of the crowd overshadowed their achievement of winning an international 6-0 away from home.

The manner of their win was a tribute to both their mental fortitude and togetherness as a team. As it was a complete team performance and tribute to their collective mindset to overcome the racial abuse with dignity I will limit myself to commenting on a few individuals.

The England captain, Harry Kane, epitomised the work ethic of the team. Renowned as a goalscorer he turned provider for three goals before getting one himself. Tyrone Mings appears to have experienced the racist chants in the warm up but he did not let it affect his debut appearance in an England shirt. Keiron Trippier shone as a peacemaker on the pitch as well as a full-back. He calmed people down at flashpoints in the match, including the Bulgarian manager after the second warning about fans racial abuse.

It is a pity that the Bulgarian manager did not cover himself with glory with his comments immediately after the game, although he has since apologised for the behaviour of a section of the fans. However their captain, Ivelin Popov, did a good job of talking to fans and calming them down at half time. In an interview later he left no doubt he was standing up against a blight on the game that "needs to be eradicated". His efforts were recognised by England's scorer of the first goal, Marcus Rashford, who tweeted "To stand alone and do the right thing takes courage and acts like that shouldn't go unnoticed".

**"THIS WAS A
 VICTORY FOR
 HUMANITY NOT MERELY A WIN FOR THE
 ENGLAND TEAM."**

Many of the crowd had come with the mindset to be confrontational as a large number who left the stadium after the second warning were dressed in dark clothes and hoods.

As well as the players, manager Gareth Southgate and the background staff take credit in how they had prepared the team, who were so bonded that they coped with the hostile environment and still performed at the highest level. The manager's calm, dignified manner certainly helped matters.

It is important, as Greg Clark, FA chairman stated for us "not to take the moral high ground", but he went on to say how much work the FA had done to address racism in the England, even in the amateur game. England fans can still do better as their chanting during the playing of the Bulgarian National Anthem was certainly not acceptable. Although a friend pointed out to me that during the game they countered the abuse of the main target, Raheem Sterling, by chanting "he is one of our own" to show their support.

One can only hope that this is a watershed moment for soccer in its efforts to clean up racism. In summary this was victory for humanity not merely a win for the England team.

Postscript: Often soccer players are not good role models as seen with a report recently of two Derby County players being involved in a high speed crash and leaving an injured colleague behind as they fled the scene. However two of the black England players featured in the Manchester Evening News this week for the right reasons.

Marcus Rashford has launched his 'In the Box' campaign to fill shoeboxes with basic living essentials for the homeless this Christmas. He has expanded it with the support of Selfridges this year having done it alone last year with just family support.

Raheem Sterling has been awarded a Gold Blue Peter badge for inspiring youngsters off and on the pitch. He joked at the presentation that he does not now need to worry about winning the Champions League after winning this accolade.



Deaths door

"Mum," he screamed, "mum."

Looking at the pumping bleeding morass of what once had been a bright grinning soldier I stuttered on ending him.

"Mum" now plaintive almost kitten like genuflection. "Mum."

His lower parts were gone. Not broken, gone. Hot, blackened metal shards jagged his chest.

"Mum, mum." Then the power of speech deserted him, replaced by a visceral, elevated moan.

"Mummy." A last loud hope. I caught my own atavistic breathing of fear.

Too painful to listen.
 Too terrifying to hear.

The boy ended broken in dust.

With no job and no hope not long before he had walked into the recruiting office and through deaths door.



JOKES

Sexually aware.

1. Always thought I was attractive to women since one said to me 'Hi handsome. Can you tell me where the opticians is?'
2. Went to doctors for advice on sexual matters. He asked me if I knew how to have safe sex. I replied 'Put a handrail round the bed?'
3. He asked me about my libido. I told him I was due to change it for a Sierra.
4. The doctor asked me what I knew about erogenous zones. I replied 'Well I know you can't park there'

Two women called at my door and asked what bread I ate, when I said white they gave me a lecture on the benefits of brown bread for 30minutes.

I think they were those Hovis Witnesses.

An elderly couple is attending Mass. About halfway through, the wife leans over and says to her husband, 'I just let out a silent fart; what do you think I should do?' He replies, 'Put a new battery in your hearing aid.'

At the Scottish wedding reception the D.J. yelled "Would all married men please stand next to the one person who has made your life worth living." The bartender was almost crushed to death.

Little Billy asks his dad for a telly in his room. Dad reluctantly agrees. Next day Billy comes downstairs and asks, 'Dad, what's love juice?' Dad looks horrified and tells Billy all about sex. Billy just sat there with his mouth open in amazement. Dad says, 'So what were you watching?' Billy says, ' Wimbledon .

I've been charged with murder for killing a man with sandpaper. To be honest I only intended to rough him up a bit.

A mummy covered in chocolate and nuts has been discovered in Egypt . Archaeologists believe it may be Pharaoh Roche...

A boy asks his granny, 'Have you seen my pills, they were labelled LSD?' Granny replies, bugger the pills, have you seen the dragons in the kitchen?

Did you hear about the fat, alcoholic transvestite - All he wanted to do was eat, drink and be Mary.

I've just seen that there's a nudist convention on in town next week... I might go if I've got nothing on.

QUIZ TIME

Whats The Year!

1. In what year did John McClane save the hostages employed at the Nakatomi Corporation. ?
2. In what year was Shergar stolen. ?
3. In what years was the failed Gunpowder Plot. ?
4. In what year did the Sex Pistols Sid Vicious Die. ?
5. In what year did Starsky & Hutch first appear on TV. ?
6. In what year did Joe Pasquale come second in the final of New Faces. ?
7. In what year did Blackpool Tower opened for the first time. ?
8. In what year was wearing seat belts compulsory become UK law?
9. In what year did Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing reached the summit of Mount Everest. ?
10. I what year was Walt Disney Company founded. ?

QUIZ!

1. Which Mexican dish comes from the Spanish meaning "Little Donkey"?
2. In which decade did France perform its last execution by guillotine?
3. What was the colour of the milk served to Luke Skywalker at his home in 'Star Wars: A New Hope'?
4. Which leather bag was named after a four times British Prime Minister?
5. Pink Fairy is this smallest breed of which animal?
6. In what year was the Chip and Pin system of payments introduced into the UK ?
7. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic work "The Scarlett Letter", which letter is lead character Hester forced to wear as a sign she has been unfaithful?
8. In 2001, which European Country became the first in the world to allow same sex marriages, as oppose to civil unions?
9. In the world of comics and cartoons, how is Lord Marmaduke Bunker-ton better known?
10. In 1984, which singer became the first to have a number 1 both as a duo and as a solo artist in the same year?

Quess Who. (When They Were Young)





If it wasn't for my personality disorder, lack of morals, promiscuity, alcohol problem and criminal record I'd be a pretty good catch



I never wanted to believe that my Dad was stealing from his job as a road worker. But when I got home, all the signs were there.





Vote  Labour