

THE WORD

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FOR THE MANY
NOT THE FEW

End the Tory winter



For jobs
For the NHS
Vote Labour

Visiting Britain's Political Prisoner

I set out at dawn. Her Majesty's Prison Belmarsh is in the flat hinterland of south east London, a ribbon of walls and wire with no horizon. At what is called the visitors centre, I surrendered my passport, wallet, credit cards, medical cards, money, phone, keys, comb, pen, paper.

I need two pairs of glasses. I had to choose which pair stayed behind. I left my reading glasses. From here on, I couldn't read, just as Julian couldn't read for the first few weeks of his incarceration. His glasses were sent to him, but inexplicably took months to arrive. There are large TV screens in the visitors centre. The TV is always on, it seems, and the volume turned up. Game shows, commercials for cars and pizzas and funeral packages, even TED talks, they seem perfect for a prison: like visual valium.

I joined a queue of sad, anxious people, mostly poor women and children, and grandmothers. At the first desk, I was fingerprinted, if that is still the word for biometric testing.

"Both hands, press down!" I was told. A file on me appeared on the screen.

I could now cross to the main gate, which is set in the walls of the prison. The last time I was at Belmarsh to see Julian, it was raining hard. My umbrella wasn't allowed beyond the visitors centre. I had the choice of getting drenched, or running like hell. Grandmothers have the same choice.

At the second desk, an official behind the wire, said, "What's that?"

"My watch," I replied guiltily. "Take it back," she said. So I ran back through the rain, returning just in time to be biometrically tested again. This was followed by a full body scan and a full body search. Soles of feet; mouth open. At each stop, our silent, obedient group shuffled into what is known as a sealed space, squeezed behind a yellow line. Pity the claustrophobic; one woman squeezed her eyes shut.

We were then ordered into another holding area, again with iron doors shutting loudly in front of us and behind us. "Stand behind the yellow line!" said a disembodied voice. Another electronic door slid partly open; we hesitated wisely. It shuddered and shut and opened again. Another holding area, another desk, another chorus of, "Show your finger!"



Then we were in a long room with squares on the floor where we were told to stand, one at a time. Two men with sniffer dogs arrived and worked us, front and back. The dogs sniffed our arses and slobbered on my hand. Then more doors opened, with a new order to "hold out your wrist!" A laser branding was our ticket into a large room, where the prisoners sat waiting in silence, opposite empty chairs. On the far side of the room was Julian, wearing a yellow arm band over his prison clothes.

As a remand prisoner he is entitled to wear his own clothes, but when the thugs dragged him out of the Ecuadorean embassy last April, they prevented him bringing a small bag of belongings. His clothes would follow, they said, but like his reading glasses, they were mysteriously lost.

For 22 hours a day, Julian is confined in "healthcare". It's not really a prison hospital, but a place where he can be isolated, medicated and spied on. They spy on him every 30 minutes: eyes through the door. They would call this "suicide watch".

In the adjoining cells are convicted murderers, and further along is a mentally ill man who screams through the night. "This is my One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest," he said. "Therapy" is an occasional game of Monopoly. His one assured social gathering is the weekly service in the chapel. The priest, a kind man, has become a friend. The other day, a prisoner was attacked in the chapel; a fist smashed his head from behind while hymns were being sung. When we greet each other, I can feel his ribs. His arm has no muscle. He has lost perhaps 10 to 15 kilos since April. When I first saw him here in May, what was most shocking was how much older he looked.

"I think I'm going out of my mind," he said then. I said to him, "No you're not. Look how you frighten them, how powerful you are." Julian's intellect, resilience and wicked sense of humor – all unknown to the low life who defame him – are, I believe, protecting him.

He is wounded badly, but he is not going out of his mind.

We chat with his hand over his mouth so as not to be overheard. There are cameras above us. In the Ecuadorean embassy, we used to chat by writing notes to each other and shielding them from the cameras above us. Wherever Big Brother is, he is clearly frightened.

On the walls are happy-clappy slogans exhorting the prisoners to "keep on keeping on" and "be happy, be hopeful and laugh often".

The only exercise he has is on a small bitumen patch, overlooked by high walls with more happy-clappy advice to enjoy 'the blades of grass beneath your feet'. There is no grass.

He is still denied a laptop and software with which to prepare his case against extradition. He still cannot call his American lawyer, or his family in Australia.

The incessant pettiness of Belmarsh sticks to you like sweat. If you lean too close to the prisoner, a guard tells you to sit back. If you take the lid off your coffee cup, a guard orders you to replace it. You are allowed to bring in £10 to spend at a small café run by volunteers. "I'd like something healthy," said Julian, who devoured a sandwich.

Across the room, a prisoner and a woman visiting him were having a row: what might be called a 'domestic'. A guard intervened and the prisoner told him to "fuck off".

This was the signal for a posse of guards, mostly large, overweight men and women eager to pounce on him and hold him to the floor, then frog march him out. A sense of violent satisfaction hung in the stale air. Now the guards shouted at the rest of us that it was time to go. With the women and children and grandmothers, I began the long journey through the maze of sealed areas and yellow lines and biometric stops to the main gate. As I left the visitor's room, I looked back, as I always do. Julian sat alone, his fist clenched and held high.

By John Pilger

A private security firm that allegedly spied on Julian Assange in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London bragged about its nefarious activities and ties to US intelligence, according to German public broadcaster NDR.

The troubling revelations are part of a criminal complaint filed by NDR against Undercover Global, a Spanish security company contracted by the Ecuadorean government to film and review guests at their embassy in London.

The firm is accused of using the commission to carry out a vast spying operation targeting the WikiLeaks co-founder, who sought political asylum in the embassy for seven years before his hosts handed him over to British authorities. The German broadcaster claims to have a huge cache of documents detailing the illegal surveillance operation – which also targeted NDR journalists who visited Assange.

Journalists apparently monitored – NDR reimbursed criminal charges

Documents accessible to German Public Broadcaster NDR and WDR show how systematically WikiLeaks founder Assange and his visitors were spied on at the Ecuadorean embassy in London. Apparently, German...

Former employees of Undercover Global said that the company's CEO, David Morales, didn't try to hide his ties to the US government. Upon returning from a trip to the United States, Morales allegedly told one of his employees: "From now on, we play in the first league... We are now working for the dark side." He is said to have traveled up to twice a month to the States to deliver materials taken from the Ecuadorean Embassy.

When asked by colleagues who his "American friends" were, Morales reportedly replied: "the US Secret Service."

Incredibly, a lawyer from Undercover Global acknowledged to NDR that the company works with US intelligence agencies – but denied any wrongdoing at the Ecuadorean Embassy.

Government agencies in the US and Ecuador declined to comment on the criminal complaint.

On October 8, 1924, Britain's first Labour government lost a vote of confidence in the House of Commons. The next day the Foreign Office was evidently sent a copy of a letter, purportedly originally sent from Grigori Zinoviev, the president of Comintern, addressed to the central committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The letter urged the party to stir up the British proletariat and the military in preparation for class war.

On October 25 the letter appeared in the heavily Conservative-biased Daily Mail just four days before the election. The political and diplomatic repercussions were immense.

The Daily Mail published a series of sensationalist headlines:

- Civil War Plot by Socialists' Masters
- Moscow Order to Our Reds
- Great Plot Disclosed Yesterday
- Paralyse the Army and Navy
- Mr. MacDonald Would Lend Russia Our Money

Here is the entire fake Zinoviev 'letter':

Very secret

Executive Committee, Third Communist International.

To the Central Committee, British Communist Party.

Presidium, September 15, 1924. Moscow.

Dear Comrades,

The time is approaching for the Parliament of England to consider the Treaty concluded between the Governments of Great Britain and the S.S.S.R. for the purpose of ratification. The fierce campaign raised by the British bourgeoisie around the question shows that the majority of the same, together with reactionary circles, are against the Treaty for the purpose of breaking off an agreement consolidating the ties between the proletariats of the two countries leading to the restoration of normal relations between England and the S.S.S.R.

The proletariat of Great Britain, which pronounced its weighty word when danger threatened of a break-off of the past negotiations, and compelled the Government of MacDonald to conclude the treaty, must show the greatest possible energy in the further struggle for ratification and against the endeavours of British capitalists to compel Parliament to annul it.

It is indispensable to stir up the masses of the British proletariat to bring into movement the army of unemployed proletarians whose position can be improved only after a loan has been granted to the S.S.S.R. for the restoration of her economics and when business collaboration between the British and Russian proletariats has been put in order. It is imperative that the group in the Labour Party sympathising with the Treaty should bring increased pressure to bear upon the Government and Parliamentary circles in favour of the ratification of the Treaty.

Keep close observation over the leaders of the Labour Party, because these may easily be found in the leading strings of the bourgeoisie. The foreign policy of the Labour Party as it is, already represents an inferior copy of the policy of the Curzon Government. Organize a campaign of disclosure of the foreign policy of MacDonald.

The I.K.K.I. (Executive Committee, Third [Communist] International) will willingly place at your disposal the wide material in its possession regarding the activities of British Imperialism in the Middle and Far East. In the meanwhile, however, strain every nerve in the struggle for the ratification of the Treaty, in favour of a continuation of negotiations regarding the regulation of relations between the S.S.S.R. and England. A settlement of relations between the two countries will assist in the revolutionising of the international and British proletariat not less than a successful rising in any of the working districts of England, as the establishment of close contact between the British and Russian proletariat, the exchange of delegations and workers, etc., will make it possible for us to extend and develop the propaganda of ideas of Leninism in England and the Colonies. Armed warfare must be preceded by a struggle against the inclinations to compromise which are embedded among the majority of British workmen, against the ideas of evolution and peaceful extermination of capitalism. Only then will it be possible to count upon complete success of an armed insurrection. In Ireland and the Colonies the case is different; there is a national question, and this represents too great a factor for success for us to waste time on a prolonged preparation of the working class.

But even in England, as other countries, where the workers are politically developed, events themselves may more rapidly revolutionise the working masses than propaganda. For instance, a strike movement, repressions by the Government etc.

From your last report it is evident that agitation-propaganda work in the army is weak, in the navy a very little better. Your explanation that the quality of the members attracted justifies the quantity is right in principle, nevertheless it would be desirable to have cells in all the units of the troops, particularly among those quartered in the large centres of the country, and also among factories working on munitions and at military store depots. We request that the most particular attention be paid to these latter.

In the event of danger of war, with the aid of the latter and in contact with the transport workers, it is possible to paralyse all the military preparations of the bourgeoisie, and make a start in turning an imperialist war into a class war. Now more than ever we should be on our guard. Attempts at intervention in China show that world imperialism is still full of vigour and is once more making endeavours to restore its shaken position and cause a new war, which as its final objective is to bring about the break-up of the Russian Proletariat and the suppression of the budding world revolution, and further would lead to the enslavement of the colonial peoples. 'Danger of War', 'The Bourgeoisie seek War', 'Capital fresh Markets' – these are the slogans which you must familiarise the masses with, with which you must go to work into the mass of the proletariat. These slogans will open to you the doors of comprehension of the masses, will help you to capture them and march under the banner of Communism.

The Military Section of the British Communist Party, so far as we are aware, further suffers from a lack of specialists, the future directors of the British Red Army. It is time you thought of forming such a group, which together with the leaders, might be in the event of an outbreak of active strife, the brain of the military organisation of the party.

Go attentively through the lists of the military 'cells' detailing from them the more energetic and capable men, turn attention to the more talented military specialists who have for one reason or another, left the Service and hold Socialist views. Attract them into the ranks of the Communist Party if they desire honestly to serve the proletariat and desire in the future to direct not the blind mechanical forces in the service of the bourgeoisie, but a national army.

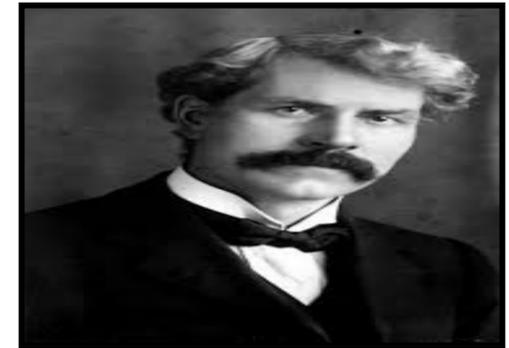
Form a directing operative head of the Military Section.

Do not put this off to a future moment, which may be pregnant with events and catch you unprepared.

Desiring you all success, both in organisation and in your struggle.

With Communist Greetings,

President of the Presidium of the I.K.K.I.



[Ramsay Macdonald]

LABOUR'S BREXIT POLICY

Before the Referendum Labour was a pro Remain party. A high proportion of our Labour Party members and a very high proportion of our MPs were pro Remain. Many of us who had criticisms of the European Union, like Jeremy Corbyn, were still Remain because it is always easier to influence an organization from the inside than from the outside.

Labour was against Brexit and most Labour members voted against Brexit.

The Referendum result was against us.

The Labour Party said it would honour the Referendum result.

In March 2017 Labour came out with its “six tests” for any Brexit deal. This was before the 2017 General Election at which Labour gained a huge swing and the Tories lost their majority.

Labour's six tests for any Brexit deal:

Does it ensure a strong and collaborative future relationship with the EU?

Does it deliver the “exact same benefits” as we currently have as members of the Single Market and Customs Union?

Does it ensure the fair management of migration in the interests of the economy and communities?

Does it defend rights and protections and prevent a race to the bottom?

Does it protect national security and our capacity to tackle cross-border crime?

Does it deliver for all regions and nations of the UK?

One very good way to “test” a political statement is to imagine the opposite: for example, that Labour would support a Brexit deal that does not ensure a strong and collaborative relationship with the EU.

The six tests are really “motherhood and apple pie” statements that no-one can object to. They are all quotes from Tory Brexiteers.

Have Brexit Voters Been Cheated?

The “Leave” campaign promised that everything would be better after Brexit. More money to the NHS, better trade deals with the world, more restrictions on immigration ... The Brexit Referendum was 23 June 2016.

‘Absolutely nobody is talking about threatening our place in the Single Market,’ Daniel Hannan, May 2015

‘I will be advocating Vote Leave because I want a better deal for the people of this country, to save them money and to take control.’ Boris Johnson, Feb 2016

“Everybody is suddenly wrangling about the terrors of the world outside... Actually, there are plenty of people who now think the cost of getting out would be virtually nil and the cost of staying in would be very high.” Boris Johnson 6 March 2016:

“The day after we vote to leave, we hold all the cards and we can choose the path we want.” Michael Gove 6 April 2016

‘If we Vote Leave we will be able to stop handing over so much money to the EU and we would be able to spend our money on priorities here in the UK like abolishing prescription charges’. Gisela Stuart, April 2016

“There is no reason why the UK's only land border should be any less open after Brexit than it is today.” Theresa Villiers, April 2016, on the Irish issue

We have four years more or less between now and the date of next election. We can easily conclude a new settlement with EU in that period. Michael Gove 1 June 2016

The impression given by the Leave campaign was that it would be easy to negotiate a soft Brexit. So why was it so difficult?

Theresa May's “red lines” were the problem. May said that we would leave “the single market”.

Coupled with, “would seek a “new, comprehensive, bold and ambitious free trade agreement” with the EU, and build trading relationships with countries beyond Europe as part of a “global Britain” strategy”;

May signalled that Britain intended to become a cheap labour, low standards island just off Europe.

Johnson's new agreement worsened the wording to allow “the UK to diverge from the rights and standards of the EU”. If a government wishes to increase standards it can do so already under EU law. The reason for “divergence” is to lower and lessen rights and standards.

In May's deal the wording was “The Parties envisage having a trading relationship on goods that is as close as possible, with a view to facilitating the ease of legitimate trade.”

In Johnson's deal the words “as close as possible” have been stripped out. This is not a meaningless change of words.

Under May's deal, if the future relationship was not ready by the end of the transition, the backstop kicked in, this prevented WTO terms. We would stay in the Single Market and the Customs Union, possibly forever. Under Johnson's deal the “backstop” has been taken out. This means that the starting point for the next stage of talks is not the current EU rights. It is a baseline FTA (Free Trade Agreement) with no safety net for workplace rights, consumer rights and environmental standards.

Even worse, should the trade talks taking place in the transition period after Brexit fail, there is an automatic “no deal”. At least one Tory MP said that he was voting for Johnson's deal because it held out that possibility.

The Northern Ireland arrangements are so comical that it is difficult to explain them with a straight face. Northern Ireland will stay in the single market while the rest of the United Kingdom moves away. Imports to Northern Ireland will pay EU custom duties unless they can be proved to be not for onward sale to Eire and not for manufacturing. Should a company pay the full EU import tariff and finally win the argument then it is entitled to get its money back.

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WHY WE NEED TO VOTE LABOUR

If Jeremy Corbyn has not got a chance of winning then why is the whole rich and powerful establishment against him?

Why do billionaires spent lots of cash attacking him?

What have they got that you haven't? Yes, that's right...money.

They don't want a Labour Government because Labour would start making these people pay their fair share. These are people with gold plated bathrooms and lots of private planes and yachts. If someone was paid a billion a year they would not miss a few quid to help the NHS.

Paul Pogba plays for Manchester United – badly. He wants more money than his current deal of £600,000 a week. The average wage in this country is around £27, 500 a year. If you worked over 20 years on the average wage you still would not have made what Pogba is paid in a week.

I voted out of the EU. I am angry our votes are ignored. They are now talking about a peoples vote. It's like they are saying we were not people who voted in the referendum last time. That is not democratic. But if I voted for Tory party I would be killing the NHS. How do I know they would kill it? Most Tory ministers already have lots of shares in private health companies. Killing the NHS would make them all richer. Richard Branson is worth £4.5 billion. He didn't get that from working did he? He got it from ripping off the NHS and avoiding paying tax.

If I voted for the Brexit party I would be voting for Farage. He has made millions out of politics. He loved Margaret Thatcher and wrote lots about wanting to get rid of the NHS. In the constituency where I live the Brexit party candidate is a guy called Colin Lambert. He used to be in the Labour party, but after the child abuse enquiry had named him regarding the cover up, they didn't really want him. So he joined a party where he was welcomed.

As for the Liberals...they kept the Tories in power. They are just Tories but not quite as posh. If you want fair gas and electric prices, buses that actually work, hospitals, roads without pot holes, schools that actually have teachers in them... your only choice is Labour.

From Page 4.

One silly example relates to scampi (langoustine). If a Northern Ireland fishing boat catches langoustine in the fishing waters off Scotland it can land the catch paying no duty at all. It can send the langoustine to Dublin paying no duty at all. The same scampi caught in the same waters by a Scottish ship will pay EU import tariffs whether landed at Belfast or at Dublin.

Northern Ireland may be able to end the deal with a decision by Stormont, if Stormont can ever sit again. Stormont's first meeting after 2017 took place in October 2019 and lasted 51 minutes before collapsing.

Referendum or General Election?

Labour wants a General Election. We have a Tory Government that has no majority, no integrity, and no plan for the welfare of our people. People are literally dying because of this Tory Government. Since 2010 the number of conceptions has dropped by 69,000 a year as more and more people each year decide not to start a family at the moment. Of those who are born the death rate of new-borns has risen from 3.6 babies per thousand born to 3.9.

For adults we are looking at an increase in the death rate of about 3%. 726 homeless people died in 2018, a 22% increase.

The schools are struggling to keep going. The quality of education is suffering. The NHS is struggling to keep going, Health care is suffering. Every day our vulnerable people are having unsatisfactory education or unsatisfactory health care. These daily losses cannot be made good.

This decline in living standards began in 2010 because of the Tories, long before Brexit was an issue. There is a continuing transfer of wealth to the wealthy, paid for by the rest of us. A Referendum will not do anything to stop this. A General Election would.

Mum forced into debt to visit terminally-ill son, 8, in hospital after benefits are cut

Kerrylee claimed the family became more than £1000 worse off after the cutsA Derbyshire mum says she was forced to take out credit to visit him in hospital after her benefits were cut. Kori Parkin-Stovell is currently in a critical condition due to complications after a heart transplant.The 8-year-old from Ripley, was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, a terminal condition which means he needs three major open heart surgeries to increase his chances of survival. Kori had the first two surgeries but was not considered strong enough to survive the final one so he needed to have the transplant instead Mum Kerrylee Stovell has been at Kori's bedside after being told the devastating news he may not survive. Since having the transplant last year, Kori has suffered rejection issues and medics have fitted a pacemaker to try and regulate his heart rhythm. But his family say his Disability Living Allowance (DLA) was stopped on October 23 because the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) said his heart transplant made him healthy again. Kerrylee claimed the family became £1,100 a month worse off as a result of the cut and their mobility car provided by DWP was reclaimed. This had led to Kerrylee relying on taxis and having to obtain credit to fix up a secondhand car just to be able to visit her son.The DWP confirmed the child's DLA had been cut when he was recovering well from surgery and because they hadn't known of his recent relapse. But the department said it was reinstating the DLA along with benefits that were cut as his health had deteriorated again. Kerrylee described her son's condition as critical as doctors work to stabilise him, before transferring him on to Newcastle for further treatment. Kerrylee said: “He's critical, they said his heart can stop at any point so they need to take the stress from his body. “He won't be moved to Newcastle just yet as hes not stable and they don't have any beds as yet.” Before the DWP's U-turn, a desperate Kerrylee took to a benefits advice Facebook group to appeal for help. On Friday she wrote: “DWP who stopped every penny of my son's DLA, took our Motobility car away and said he was well and a normal healthy little boy.“Maybe they should come along to hospital, where my son has just been admitted due to low kidney function and possibly rejection.

Also, the people who voted for Brexit thought they were voting for a soft Brexit. They did not vote for the cliff edge antics of May and Johnson. They are entitled to feel cheated.

Labour can negotiate what the Brexit voters thought they were getting, which was a soft Brexit. As we intend to stay in the single market, and we envisage “a” customs union where we still have a say there is no need for a backstop agreement. The EU leaders were open to Labour's proposals but Labour was not in Government.

Labour will negotiate a soft Brexit quickly and will hold a Referendum within 6 months.

Many say that we cannot negotiate a deal that is better than the current deal that we have with the EU.

The EU really would like us to cooperate with their struggle against tax avoidance and money laundering. They also wish to avoid Britain becoming a cheap labour site on their doorstep. For that they might agree something that we want, which is the powers to raise and spend money according to the needs of our economy.

Until the deal is agreed, Labour and Jeremy Corbyn cannot say whether they will prefer the new deal or prefer to stay in the EU. If the deal does not meet the Brexit tests Labour will not support it. If the deal meets our Brexit tests it has a chance of winning the Referendum. The decision about which choice Labour supports will be made by a Special Labour Party Conference. Remain will be one of the options in the Referendum.

Whether we Remain or whether we have a soft Brexit, Labour will begin repairing the damage that has been done to Britain since 2010.

PROJECT FEAR

A teacher reports that she explained Brexit by saying to her class to imagine that each day for forty days the children contributed to building a tower. Every child contributed bricks of a different colour. Then one of the children wants all her blue bricks back!

The children could immediately see how difficult disentangling that child's bricks would be.

The European Medicines Agency and the Europe an Banking Authority have had to move from Britain, with UK job losses. Over 900 UK Citizens employed by the European Union will lose their jobs when Brexit happens.

Our economy is so intertwined with Europe that leaving Europe would do us great harm. Manufacturing in Britain depends on foreign components.

We supply components to Europe. Ten thousand lorries a day pass through Dover carrying goods both ways.

If EU tariffs are imposed, they are for example 10% for cars and 12% for some clothing and crockery. For some kinds of beef, the tariff is 12.8% plus 265 euros per 100kg. Vehicles carrying goods not subject to tariff still have to be inspected to ensure that tariff bearing goods are not hidden behind tariff free goods.

The tariff calculations for every lorry have to be checked on the spot to make sure that they have been calculated correctly. The delays on the Norway Sweden border average about 2 hours. Vehicles are inspected once only and there is a high degree of computerization. At the Turkey Bulgaria border delays are about 24 hours.

Dover takes 10,000 lorries a day. The Government Yellow hammer assessment says that delays at Dover could reach two and a half days, - 60 hours! Calais has space for 300 lorries to wait while paperwork is sorted out. Once that is reached Calais may block further incoming lorries until Calais has space to hold them.

The drivers have to be paid for lengthier journeys – who pays for that? With transport delays and more expensive transport costs, and the need to have significant buffer stocks against delays, it becomes wiser to move all manufacturing to the EU, causing job losses here.

The EU has negotiated trade agreements with 72 countries. Those apply to goods manufactured in the EU. The Netherlands Government advised Netherlands companies to move away from British manufactured components so as to avoid tariff issues with Netherlands exports to the 72 countries.

True Freedom?

Tim, a member of Write to Life, shares the impact detention and torture in the Democratic Republic of Congo has had on him in this moving poem. Write to Life is a powerful form of activism supporting survivors of torture to rediscover their voice through poetry and performance. Like Tim, members write about memories of countries they were forced to flee and challenges they face as they adjust to life in the UK.

When I was still confined there,
I was weighed down with hopeless desire
I was a man who had lost both his freedom and
His identity. My life stunted by the space that
boxed me in.

So what did they do? They convinced me I was
finished.

They made me feel inferior, less than myself. Not
as other people are.

But now I am here, where milk and honey flow.
And how does it feel?

I feel inferior, less than myself. Not as other people
are. Here too I am stunted.

I have no space to grow into freedom
No freedom to move forward into life.

By Tim Malmo

Is anyone still standing in the 2019 General Election? Does anyone want to be an MP at all? Lumbricus asks the Big Questions. Who's Left? Who's Right?

One by one, the stars are falling from the firmament to earth. To begin with, they drifted away to clever jobs for the very clever. Why be an MP at Eighty Thousand beer tokens per annum when you can be the Boss Curator of the Victoria and Albert and be paid in Champagne Vouchers?

Why stick around watching Philip May and Theresa Hammond getting everything mixed up when you can mess up at the London Evening Standard, losing money faster than you did in government? Then they walked away from their parties, to set up a Party of Independents which is somewhat oxymoronic / merely moronic. After choosing a new name roughly every four days; they settled on an acronym that reminded them of the man doomed never to lead any Party he belongs to.

CH.UK

Having bottled the Labour Leadership in 2015, Ch.uka was overlooked for the leadership of his eponymous Party and joined the Liberal Democrats, surely and shortly to lose the leader they currently sport – Jo “Gloria” Swanson. Like Uxbridge and South Ruislip Man, this most loyal of Coalition Members 2010-2015 is likely to miss out when her electorate decides to vote for free beer on Fridays and a mini-muffin any time you like. The Umunna situation is hilarious; it is as though French Gaullists decided to overlook General de Gaulle and choose Monsieur le Pom-Pom to be their inaugural leader.

Then days after Nathan Burns, who emails most of the Leftists in the Labour Party, imagining that they belong to Labour First aka Saving Labour, aka Progress, aka New Labour, aka whatever they think of next, crowed and trumpeted simultaneously, both ends going at once, that “We didn’t lose a single one” in relation to the trigger ballots that had affected ‘his’ MPs, the same people began to walk away in “triumph.”

Something like this article, unless it is printed immediately after your loveable wriggly pal presses SEND on the garden laptop, cannot hope to keep pace with who is still in the slow walking race to be an MP on December 12th, which most of you will know is actually the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a small island off the Baja Coast of Mexico, post code 22997, with fewer than 150 permanent residents. In this it beats the Liberal Democratic Party (surely a triple misnomer that one?) regardless of defections and sweeping electoral success in the future. It is not a tax haven, unlike many other islands you may have heard of.

So here is a list of people interested in becoming or staying an MP when we go to poll in about five weeks.

Still here:

1. George Galloway – he intended to stand against Tom Watson. Now that chappie isn’t participating, half the fun has gone and the smart money says Georgeous Gorge might run against Margate Hedge, everyone’s famous seaside fantasist. This could be a laugh.

2. Margate Hedge-fund – survived the trigger by rallying her barking troops, some say by insisting that her CLP Chair ask members coming to vote to bring with them a passport, a European driving licence, a concessionary bus pass, and a share portfolio. This is of course totally untrue, but she won comfortably, and deservedly so. She has been a loyal and true servant of the party and of course the leadership since, well, for ever, and that is not going to change now. No siree. Just as long as the leader isn’t Corbyn. She has no evidence he’s a racist or an anti-Semite but she’s “watching him closely.”

3. Chris Williamson – he wants to stay an MP. He’d just like to, even if he has to stand against the party that intends to make an example of him. He has a lot of people’s sympathy but whether that will translate into votes in Derby is another matter. Life is not fair.

4. Chuka Umunna – doesn’t mind which Party, so long as it isn’t Labour. But watch this space in case things change. What day is it?

5. Alexander Boris de Treiffle de Pfeiffle Eiffel Weiffle-Waffle Johnson. He’s actually under threat in Uxbridge and Ruislip South. If he is as successful as he has been in Parliament recently, then he should romp home in the early hours of December 13th.

Having lost his parliamentary seat.

6. Jo “Gloria” Swanson. Not only does she want to stay an MP but to be PM. I want to be a rock star and play for Accrington Stanley; let’s see if we can work together and help each other make our dreams come true?

7. Nigel “Satchmo” Farage. He says he doesn’t want to be an MP (this view is shared by many) but by examining his track record it seems it’s the thing he wants mostest for Christmas from Santa Claus. Nobody has told him that Santa was Dutch, or Polish, or Spanish, or worst of all from Luxembourg.

8. Jeremy Corbyn. I’m just leaving that there. Some things don’t change, fortunately.

Lumbricus has a few predictions:

Owen Smith will announce that he is stepping down, stepping out, and stepping under, to spend more time being “jest the same as Jeremee” which is a shame. Owen Jones will declare his interest in being a Labour candidate but then change his mind.

There will be an outcry for Jonathan Pie to stand for Parliament. This is quite impossible as Parliament is an imaginary construct.

David Miliband will not risk getting beaten at the polls. Tony Blair will become very quiet, and Gordon Brown will have something important to say about Scotland, losing Labour any chance of increasing its vote share.

“Paul McCartney” will perform his new song, Hey Jude.

I will put on some one-legged trousers, pull out my shirt, and roll round the garden of number ten clutching a glass of red with Dominic Cummings.

Later.

Lumbricus Terrestris

WHY IS THERE A EUROPEAN UNION?

Germany ended World War II having lost 8.23% of its 1939 population killed. Germany was first occupied by America Britain France and Russia, and then divided into two countries, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

France and Belgium had both lost more than 1% of their 1939 population. They had been occupied by the Germans. Luxembourg and The Netherlands had been occupied by the Germans. Italy was fought over by German and Allied troops.

All of the people in these countries were desperate to avoid another war.

The pre-war League of Nations had failed to prevent war. Although the United Nations had been set up there were doubts about how successful the United Nations would be in preventing another European war. Something stronger was needed.

The purpose of the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) sion of the European Union across Europe is because a prosperous Western Europe is a market that everyone wishes to join.

(ECSC) was to integrate the economies of the six participating countries so tightly that neither Germany nor France could start a war. The idea was to make war impractical.

With a common market in coal and steel there was no need for trade disputes and tariff wars.

Britain could have joined when ECSC was formed in 1951 but Britain did not wish to be subject to a supranational authority.

The European Economic Community was founded in 1957. Originally running alongside Euratom (1957) and the ECSC they eventually merged. The EEC was to extend the existing common market to goods beyond coal and steel, and became known as “the Common Market”.

In 1973 the six founding countries were joined by Britain, Ireland, and Denmark. At the time Britain had long running economic and political problems which joining the Common Market would supposedly help. “Pooling sovereignty” meant that Britain was subject to European Union Directives and Regulations.

In 1974 the famous Lord Denning commented on the new treaty then constituting the European Union,

“But when we come to matters with a European element, the treaty is like an incoming tide. It flows into the estuaries and up the rivers. It cannot be held back. Parliament has decreed that the treaty is henceforward to be part of our law. It is equal in force to any statute. The governing provision is s 2(1) of the European Communities Act 1972. The statute...is expressed in forthright terms which are absolute and all-embracing. Any rights or obligations created by the treaty are to be given legal effect in England without more ado. Any remedies or procedures provided by the treaty are to be made available here without being open to question. In future, in transactions which cross the frontiers, we must no longer speak or think of English law as something on its own. We must speak and think of Community law, ...”

The movement of the EU into British daily life was unstoppable.

Anyone who has had to deal with tariffs and customs inspections and visas will appreciate the advantages to commerce and industry of not having to deal with these problems. The Four Pillars of the European Union pronounced in 1993 were for the Single Market Agreement.

Freedom of Movement of Goods

Freedom of Movement of Services

Freedom of Movement of Labour

Freedom of Movement of Labour.

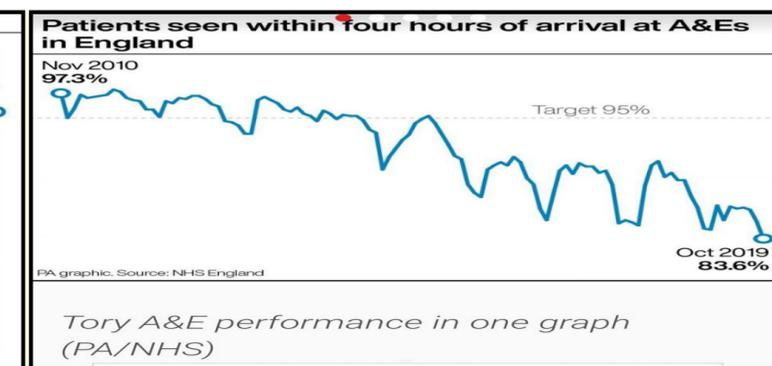
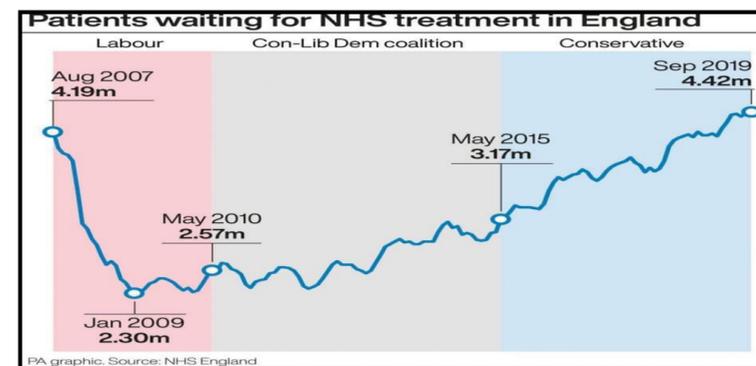
Imagine if the 13 American States had not formed a single currency. People would be watching the daily movements of the Nebraska dollar versus the Florida dollar versus the California dollar. The profits made by the currency dealers would be a loss for everyone else.

The Euro was founded for the same reasons. The European Central Bank is supported by the strength of the German economy.

The European Union has its problems, but in terms of preventing a war in Western Europe it has been successful. The expansion of the European Union across Europe is because a prosperous Western Europe is a market that everyone wishes to join.



War Graves in Normandy



Letter: As economists we believe the Labour party deserves to form the next UK government

A letter to the Financial Times from David G Blanchflower and others, with 163 economists as signatories:

The UK economy needs reform. For too long it has prioritised consumption over investment, short-term financial returns over long-term innovation, rising asset values over rising wages, and deficit reduction over the quality of public services.

The results are now plain. We have had 10 years of near zero productivity growth. Corporate investment has stagnated. Average earnings are still lower than in 2008. A gulf has arisen between London and the South East and the rest of the country. And public services are under intolerable strain — which the economic costs of a hard Brexit would only make worse. We now moreover face the urgent imperative of acting on the climate and environmental crisis.

Given private sector reluctance, what the UK economy needs is a serious injection of public investment, which can in turn leverage private finance attracted by the expectation of higher demand.

Such investment needs to be directed into the large-scale and rapid decarbonisation of energy, transport, housing, industry and farming; the support of innovation- and export-oriented businesses; and public services.

It is clear that this will require an active and green industrial strategy, aimed at improving productivity and spreading investment across the country. Experience elsewhere (not least in Germany) suggests a National Investment Bank would greatly help. With long-term real interest rates now negative, it makes basic economic sense for the government to borrow for this, spreading the cost over the generations who will benefit from the assets. As the IMF has acknowledged, when interest payments are low and investment raises economic growth, public debt is sustainable.

Experience elsewhere (not least in Germany) suggests a National Investment Bank would greatly help. With long-term real interest rates now negative, it makes basic economic sense for the government to borrow for this, spreading the cost over the generations who will benefit from the assets. As the IMF has acknowledged, when interest payments are low and investment raises economic growth, public debt is sustainable.

At the same time, we need a serious attempt to raise wages and productivity. A higher minimum wage can help do this, alongside tighter regulation of the worst practices in the gig economy.

Bringing workers on to company boards and giving them a stake in their companies, as most European countries do in some form, will also help. The UK's outlier rate of corporation tax can clearly be raised, not least for the highly profitable digital companies. As economists, and people who work in various fields of economic policy, we have looked closely at the economic prospectuses of the political parties. It seems clear to us that the Labour party has not only understood the deep problems we face, but has devised serious proposals for dealing with them. We believe it deserves to form the next government. David G Blanchflower, Bruce V Rauner, Professor of Economics, Dartmouth College; Professor of Economics, University of Stirling; former member, Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee. Victoria Chick Emeritus Professor of Economics, University College London. Lord Meghnad Desai Emeritus Professor of Economics, London School of Economics and Political Science. Stephany Griffith-Jones Emeritus Professorial Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex; Financial Markets Director, Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University. Simon Wren-Lewis Emeritus Professor of Economics and Fellow of Merton College, University of Oxford. On behalf of 163 signatories.

GOOD AND BAD ABOUT THE EU

No-one seems to be making arguments for the EU that recognize the EU's positives. There is much more for the EU than "Project Fear", the dangers and problems of leaving.

The EU has done more for British worker's rights than any British Government. The most significant piece of health and safety legislation in the past 30 years is the Management of Health And Safety at Work Regulations 1992, emanating solely from the EU. It enshrined in statute the concept of risk assessment, a simple but spectacularly successful idea that employers should consider the hazards of their undertaking and take steps to eliminate or reduce them prior to being put on notice by an accident.

The terms of the EC directive make it plain that the motivation was to reduce the high level of workplace injury throughout Europe, at the same time as ensuring that no member country obtained an unfair economic and competitive advantage by a race to the bottom. As a result, fatal injuries in the UK workplace have reduced from 425 in 1989 to an average over the last three years of 141 per annum. Non-fatal injuries have reduced by 58% since 1986. These figures are in the public domain on the Health and Safety Executive website. The European Working Time Directive mandates twenty days holiday a year for employees. It also mandates 48 continuous hours off per fortnight, and 11 continuous hours off per day. Night workers may not work more than 8 hours a night and they must be offered free health checks. Equal pay, maternity rights, and prevention of discrimination against pregnant women all come from the EU. So do parental leave and the right to take time off for a sick child. Agency Workers protections and entitlements come from the EU. The Community Charter for the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers 1989 was not acceded to by Thatcher and Major but became law in Britain under the Blair Government 1998. While we are in the EU all British workers have the right to move freely and work anywhere in the EU, without discrimination on grounds of nationality, subject to exceptions to preserve public policy, security and health. When we leave the EU a simple majority vote in the House of Commons can take away all these laws. Jacob Rees-Mogg said to a Treasury Committee that environmental and safety regulations that were "good enough for India" could be good enough for the UK — arguing that the UK could go "a very long way" to rolling back high EU standards.

What else do the Tories have planned for us?

BAD ABOUT THE EU

There are arguments against the EU. The EU is very much a capitalist enterprise. It has a philosophy of trying to have countries denationalize state owned businesses, which could cause difficulty for a Labour Government. All the multinationals have people based in Brussels who lobby for the interests of their employers rather than for the interests of employees and customers. The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) sets two hard limits on EU member states: a state's budget deficit cannot exceed 3% of GDP and national debt cannot surpass 60% of GDP. ... These are called "stability programmes" for eurozone member states and "convergence programs" for non-eurozone member states. Thanks to the Tories the UK National debt is 86% of GDP at the end of 2018. It is already Labour policy not to borrow for normal expenditure. Unless the EU agree to be flexible the Labour Government will have great difficulty in borrowing for investment or for the proposed nationalisations of rail, water etc. Britain badly needs huge investments in our physical, industrial, and educational infrastructure, in basic and applied research, and in the NHS. These will be resisted by the EU if they fear that we are upsetting "the level playing field" by subsidising or protecting the steel industry, shipbuilding, and other industries. There are many Europeans who think that the logic of, "the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen" (Preamble to the 1957 Treaty setting up the European Economic Community), must eventually lead to a common citizenship and a United States of Europe. The EU already has a joint Foreign Policy. The EU has Euratom. The EU has the European Space Agency. There is some logic in having a joint Defense force, "the European Army". Many British people fear that British troops will be put into danger by European commanders. We also fear militarism in Europe.

It is said that the EU is undemocratic because big business influences the process through close relationships with the civil servants of the Commission. Big business does that in Britain, too. The qualified majority voting system in the Council of Ministers sometimes means that Britain loses. It could be argued that the qualified majority voting system is more democratic than anything we have in Britain.

Long post alert! What does a County Councillor actually do?

Well, this week I have held two informal 'surgeries', attended full Council at KCC, responded to media requests and undertaken casework. I've also organised a fundraiser for Kurdistan, assisted others to organise our community and voluntary networking event next week, and held a public screening of 'Sell Off'.

Yesterday I outlined at full Council I believe KCC need to examine more closely the needs of all Kent's residents and focus more on closing the gaps that are growing unchecked, creating more inequality in our community. Before deciding to collect more tax. According to KCCs constitution as a County Councillor my role is to 'ensure the application of Council policies and the delivery of services in their own locality meet the needs of the local community'. And the Local Government Act 2000 states the County Council has 'a duty' to promote and improve the social, economic and the environmental well-being of the area. I pointed out that in my division of Ramsgate, I'm aware of recent research that highlights how coastal workers earn £1,770 per year less than comparable 'inland' workers. The child poverty rate in Newington is a staggering 51%. Unemployment here in Thanet is higher than for the rest of Kent it stands at 5.3% when the national average is 2.7%. The wage rates are lower and there are more zero hour contracts. We have more people living on benefits around 20%, whilst the average is 13.5%. Universal Credit was rolled out early in Thanet, this resulted in some claimants waiting for 13 weeks for money, and a rise in evictions due to failure to pay rent.

I didn't get enough time in my 3 minute statement to full Council to fully explain Labour Green New Deal. It's clear that we need urgent and decisive action to boost our local economy and to create decent well paid jobs, apprenticeships and training. There doesn't appear to be such a plan emanating from Kent County Council. Which is why I am genuinely excited about Labour's latest proposals for a 'People Power Fund'. Our plan is to invest £83b pounds into wind farms. That includes raising profits of between £600m and £1.02bn a year that can be ploughed back into "bricks and mortar" infrastructure in "held-back" coastal communities. That could include Thanet. The fund could lead to the building of new facilities such as improving the harbour, developing leisure centres, youth and community centres and wonderful seaside parks. A boom to locals and tourists alike. Our plan is to build 37 offshore wind farms, to provide electricity for 57 million households, the equivalent to 38 new coal power stations. Greening the economy and creating 67,000 quality jobs in the process. I would hope Thanet could benefit from that. I will continue to fight for that for that to happen.

For the last few years I've been part of the National Labour team putting this plan together. All the way through the process I've put Thanet forward as an area where fresh thinking economic regeneration must work. In fact I called it the Thanet Test! If we can fix the economy and Labour Market here, we can fix it elsewhere in the Country.

In the past year I've spent a lot of time consulting with local residents and organisations. From the DWP, to faith based organisations to the GAP project and hundreds of people have contributed to the idea of having a 'souped up' voluntary sector and much more community provision. Many in our community need support. We need an expansion of youth provision, NHS and social care, more homes and we need to retro fit our existing housing stock to modern insulated standards. All of these would create worthwhile work and reduce the benefit bill.

I hope when the time comes, Thanet residents will look closely at what's on offer, I hope they will judge the County Council on its track record of drastically reducing local library opening times, cutting much needed bus services, scrapping our local Stroke service, and failing to provide much needed environmental information on Ramsgate Port, to name just a few recent failures. I hope they see hope for a greener future, job creation and a real boost for our economy through Labours Green New Deal.

I was also able to comment on the absolute tragedy that is unfolding in Thanet due to knife crime; recent research shows the clear link between decreased investment in youth service and a rise in knife crime. In my meetings with local Ramsgate businesses this has been if great concern.



Low pay, bad housing, no jobs?
Don't blame the Bulgarians
or the Romanians...

**BLAME THE
ETONIANS**

**"Working class men are likely to be drunk, criminal, aimless, feckless and hope-less, and perhaps claiming to suffer from low self-esteem brought on by unemployment."
- Boris Johnson, The Spectator 1995**

ELECTION TRIVIA FAKE NEWS

In the real world, the one where you interact with other human organisms, misunderstandings and miscommunication are commonplace with politeness stopping you from shouting ‘you are talking a load of crap’. Really, it’s no different on social media, fact and fiction sit side by side and rarely does anyone make a distinction between the two. It’s almost like it doesn’t really matter so long as it illustrates the authors’ point of view. Ask James Cleverly about ‘humorous editing’ of Keir Starmer. Ask Jacob Rees-Mogg whether he said ‘Common Sense’ in a post-modernly ironic sense which actually inferred the meaning ‘heart-breakingly tragic’. It’s all too confusing. With that in mind, listed below are some facts to do with the General Election. Some are verifiable. Some are cut and paste jobs off the Interweb. Some are completely made up, what can you do about it, f*** all:

Parliament was originally summoned by Simon de Montfort in 1265 to add weight to his stand against King Henry III. By 1295 it had developed to consist of two burgesses from each town and two knights from each shire and, with some modifications in the Tudor period, this remained the basic structure of representation until 19th century. There were no set rules for how towns and shires should choose their representatives, and there was great variation among them. Some held a relatively open election, while others restricted the choice to wealthy property owners. Others, meanwhile, simply left it to the city council to choose. As a result, by the 18th and 19th centuries the electoral system was chaotic.

Own a pot? You can vote! One voting qualification in the 19th century depended on owning a large cooking pot. Such people were known as potwallopers. The pot was to be taken as proof that they had a hearth big enough to contain it. This, in turn, was considered to be evidence that they were legitimate citizens, owning the freehold of their own homes and making a major contribution to the community. It was thought that this would ensure the right sorts of people were voting on behalf of the community as a whole. Voting was regarded as a sort of reward for civic virtue, and recognition of the voter’s value to society. The notion that it constituted a civil right was generally regarded as dangerously radical – the sort of idea that had led to the French Revolutionary Terror, when the vote had indeed been extended to all adult Frenchmen.

Rotten boroughs we might today take it for granted that an election will be contested, but that was by no means always the case in the 18th century. Many constituencies were so effectively controlled by local landowners that they were known as ‘rotten’ or ‘pocket’ boroughs for example ‘Dunny-on-the-Wold’ in Blackadder. Before 1832, all constituencies returned two MPs, so a landowner controlling a borough (or ‘borough monger’) would simply nominate two of his chums to represent the borough – and, of course, himself – in parliament. If no one else nominated anyone, then there was no need for an election, and the proceedings would be wrapped up at the nomination stage.

The lowest number of contests at an 18th-century election in England and Wales was 47 (in the election of 1761) – In effect, even those relatively few citizens who had the right to vote were disfranchised.

MPs were particularly young in the 18th century Our modern political leaders are noticeably younger than their predecessors, but the record for electing young MPs belongs to the 18th century. William Pitt the Younger was elected MP for the pocket borough of Appleby at the age of 21, and went on, only two years later, to become the country’s youngest prime minister. His great rival, the Whig leader Charles James Fox, was so young when he entered parliament that he wasn’t actually old enough to vote! He was elected at the age of just 19, even though 21 was the voting age. Got a degree? Have a second vote! Graduates in previous centuries enjoyed a second vote in general elections. Until the 1948 Representation of the People Act, universities had their own representation in parliament, voted for by their graduates, on the basis that the most highly educated opinions were deserving of extra weight. Oxford and Cambridge had two MPs each; the Scottish universities shared three between them, and Queen’s University, Belfast and the University of Wales had one MP each.

I’m terribly sorry, prime minister... Winston Churchill is one of the few non-peer prime ministers not to be able to vote in his own general election. In the face of huge movements of population during the Second World War, it became impossible to keep the electoral roll up-to-date. Therefore, when Churchill called the 1945 election, ration cards were used as the basis for electoral registration. Churchill himself was actually missed off the ration-card electoral roll, and so he could not vote in the famous election that saw him turned out of office.

Prime minister in waiting If defeated in a general election, the prime minister has to depart as soon the result is clear – there is no transition period. However, even a victorious prime minister has to wait to be appointed by the monarch, in a ceremony known as Kissing Hands, before moving into No 10. This has to fit in with the monarch’s own schedule. When the Conservatives won the 1970 election, the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson couldn’t resign immediately because the queen wasn’t at Buckingham Palace to receive him. She had gone to the races at Ascot, and the new prime minister had to hang around until she returned.

Rowley Polly Polling Day is always on a Thursday in the UK. The reason for this tradition is not formally set down. One theory was that Thursday was the last day before payday, on the Friday, meaning that voters would be sober and therefore more likely to vote. Beastly Goings-on Dogs are allowed in the Polling Station and even the voting booth. In fact if you have 2 or more dogs, polling officers must be available and can be asked to mind the dogs. Horses however are expressly forbidden from entering the Polling Station and must be secured outside. Boris The Bold Boris Johnson was born in New York and has dual nationality, which means he is entitled to run for President. He is descended from the Hanoverian King George II. As a child Boris spent some time living in Brussels as his father, Stanley actually worked for the European Commission. Later when boarding at Eton, Boris was given the nickname ‘Cheryl’. Career Highlights; Referring to Hilary Clinton as looking like a sadistic nurse in a mental hospital; Accusing Papua New Guinea of practicing orgies of cannibalism; Stating that Barack Obama had an ancestral dislike of the British Empire; Said that Vladimir Putin looked like Dobby the House Elf from Harry Potter; Called the British Commonwealth ‘crowds of flag waving piccaninnies.’ What more can I say, Prime Minister or not, the guy’s a grade A bellend.

HOW MUCH? General Elections are quite expensive. The 2010 election cost an astonishing £114,000,000 of which £29,000,000 was just the cost of distributing candidate leaflets and mailings.

It’s harder than you think to spoil your ballot sheet The returning officer is allowed to apply their judgement on a ‘clear preference’ is indicated on the ballot paper. So if part of the statement ‘Smash the State’ strays into the Conservative box and no other, then bingo, your act of rebellion just counted as +1 to the Tories. Equally writing JC4PM will, depending on their knowledge of ‘#speak’, lead to a vote for the Labour candidate.

Who needs voters? Before the Reform Act of 1832, it could by no means be taken for granted that, even if an election were held, there would necessarily be any voters to vote in it. The pattern of representation still reflected the distribution of towns that existed in Tudor times, and took no account of subsequent changes in population, such as Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool’s growth in the Industrial Revolution. Some places that had declined since then still retained their right to elect two MPs. In the most notorious cases, places that had actually become deserted retained the right to elect two MPs. The most celebrated was Old Sarum in Wiltshire, which was a deserted mound, or the abandoned village of Gatton in Surrey. Both returned two MPs at election times, when a handful of voters hurriedly took up residence. That was harder to achieve at Dunwich in Suffolk, since much of the constituency had fallen into the sea! A lengthy process There were angry scenes at the 2010 election when some people were still queuing outside when the polls closed at 10pm. It would be difficult to imagine that happening in the 18th century, when polling might typically go on for a week or more, to allow voters from outlying areas to travel in to cast their vote. There was no need for elections to take place at the same time, and there was often a staggered start to the voting process across the country. In fact, elections were not all held on the same day until 1918. Votes were declared one by one in public, and before that there was a lengthy process of checking voters’ registration, to make sure they did indeed have the right to vote. Candidates could and did challenge the credentials of voters they thought likely to vote for their opponents. All this meant that a keenly-fought election could last much longer originally intended. In the 1784 election, the contest for the Westminster constituency – where one of the MPs was the Whig leader, Charles James Fox – lasted from 1 April to 17 May!

Treats and tricks Voting in the pre-Reform Act period [pre-1832] was regarded as a public duty undertaken on behalf of the community as a whole, and it was quite normal for candidates to reward their supporters in the form of ‘treating’ – usually by providing plentiful free beer, or issuing other victuals to voters and their supporters on production of a ticket. There were threats of retaliation that might be made against voters who failed to back the landlord’s favoured candidates; they might find their rent increased by a vindictive borough monger, or they might even lose their home. It was hoped that introducing the Secret Ballot in 1870 [which was extended generally in the Ballot Act 1872] might reduce such open corruption, but keeping their own vote secret only encouraged voters to demand treats from both sides, knowing that the chance of reprisals was now much lower. Armed And Dangerous There are purple ribbons attached to the coat hangers in the Houses of Parliament members cloakrooms, which are traditionally for M.P.s to hang their swords from in addition to their coats.

Budge up Sweet cheeks Despite there being 650 ‘sitting’ Members of Parliament there are only 427 seats in the House of Commons meaning on busy days it’s standing room only. In order to guarantee a seat an M.P. must arrive at 8a.m. and place a ‘prayer card’ on the seat they want. They then must attend prayers at the start of the days parliamentary session.

Imagine you are the Conservative agent in a relatively safe Conservative constituency. Even after Labour gains in 2017, the Conservative majority is 5,000. The Conservative Party membership is relatively elderly. You have twenty activists across the constituency and you can pay for your leaflets to be delivered.

The first worry is that three of your activists are devout Remainers who would be happy if Johnson did not have a majority in the House of Commons. They cannot vote Labour, but they are going to sit out this election. Your canvassers report that half the Lib Dem vote is switching to Labour “to stop Brexit”. A lot of the “undecided” from 2017 are now Labour, and some of your core vote are Remainers. Your canvassers are getting much more abuse on the doorsteps than they have ever had before.

Over 5,000 new voters have registered to vote, mainly young and probably Labour. The Labour Party are everywhere. Labour posters are up everywhere. Labour’s WASPI promise is being mentioned on the doorstep.

Labour’s “The NHS is for sale” message is getting through.

You are an employee of the Conservative MP. If s/he loses the seat, you will lose your job.

On a scale of 1-10, how worried are you? If your majority is, 2,000, 3,000, or 4,000 how worried are you?

By Charles James

Everyone needs reminding that after 9 years of a Tory Government:

Child poverty + 50%

Food-bank use + 1,000%

Homelessness + 170%

NHS waiting list + 70%

Police numbers - 20%

Crime + 30%

Local gov funding - 50%

Public sector pay - 15%

Never forget how cruel they are.





Boris Johnston delivered a flimsy election manifesto that earned withering reports from both the Institute for Fiscal Studies' Paul Johnson and the Financial Times. Photo: TV screenshot

Tories unveil a dodgy election manifesto

By Granville Williams

THE FLIMSY Tory manifesto document *Get Brexit Done* hasn't gone down well. Paul Johnson, Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, gave a withering verdict on it: 'As a blueprint for five years in government the lack of significant policy action is remarkable.'

He continues, 'Health and school spending will continue to rise. Give or take pennies, other public services, and working age benefits, will see the cuts to their day-to-day budgets of the last decade baked in.'

Boris Johnson promised to 'fix the crisis in social care once and for all'. But that promise has disappeared into thin air.

On the tax side Paul Johnson points out: 'The biggest, and least welcome, announcement is the triple tax

lock: no increases in rates of income tax, NICs or VAT ... It is also part of a fundamentally damaging narrative – that we can have the public services we want, with more money for health and pensions and schools – without paying for them. We can't.'

The *Financial Times* points out one item about investment 'in the electric vehicle infrastructure including a national plug-in network and gigafactory; and clean energy'.

The FT comments. 'A gigafactory eh? Those are expensive: Tesla and Panasonic's one in Nevada, not even half complete, has cost \$4.5bn to date. The one announced in Germany a fortnight ago is mooted to cost \$4.4bn.'

Chancellor Sajid Javid said in the manifesto document that 'our plans are responsible and fully costed'. As the *FT* points out, not this one.

EDITORIAL

Dangerous narrative

THE WARNING by the Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, that the vast majority of British Jews were 'gripped by anxiety' at the idea of Jeremy Corbyn in No 10 dominated the media on 26 November.

The two most widely read Jewish newspapers in the UK, the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish News*, have been running a campaign against Corbyn since September 2015 when he was elected Labour Party leader.

As this General Election campaign got underway, the *Jewish Chronicle's* editorial stated, "The impact of a Labour victory is almost unimaginable for our community ... The prospect is truly frightening."

This language suggests that a Corbyn government would create a hostile environment against Jews across the country. Such an idea is grotesque.

Branding Corbyn as antisemitic has always been about influencing the wider UK electorate. Conservative-supporting national newspapers have all been enthusiastic amplifiers of the 'Corbyn is antisemitic' narrative. Neither these national newspapers nor the more liberal *Guardian* or the BBC have shown much interest in seriously interrogating, let alone challenging, the allegations.

We are witnessing the weaponisation of anti-semitism for political ends. It's a dangerous and unpredictable game to play but the Tories are unlikely to stop now.

Labour and antisemitism: The questions that didn't get asked

ElectionWatch

By Tim Gopsill

THE MEDIA attack on Labour over its claimed antisemitism got a shot in the arm with the destructive intervention of the Chief Rabbi on the very day the Labour Party launched the declaration of religious tolerance in its 'Race and Faith' manifesto.

Ephraim Mirvis gave the right-wing press an excuse to ratchet up the action, with all of them happy to report the rabbi saying that Jeremy Corbyn was 'unfit for high office'.

None asked why the opinion on the leadership of the Labour Party of a person with such right-wing Zionist politics should be of any interest. None questioned his lurid assertion that 'a new poison – sanctioned from the very top – has taken root in the Labour Party' when all the evidence shows that the incidence of antisemitism is much higher on the right of politics.

In 2016 Mirvis lectured Jews



GOOD FRIENDS: Boris Johnson and the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

and other ethnic minorities that they must comply with the former Tory minister Lord Tebbit's idiotic 'cricket test', in which they are required to support the England cricket team. This is an old favourite of the right wing, who think everybody must follow a cricket team, but is generally regarded as mindless bigotry.

Mirvis then went off to Israel to join the Jerusalem Day march, which according to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* is a 'gender-segregated extreme-right, pro-occupation religious carnival of hatred, marking the anniversary of Israel's capture of Jerusalem by humiliating the city's Palestinian Muslims ... marchers vandalized shops in Jerusalem's Muslim Quarter and chanted "Death to Arabs"'. There is doubt over the extent to which Mirvis – or anybody – can claim to speak for the 'Jewish community' – but the media compounded their disregard for this by reinforcing his message through the mouth of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who can hardly speak

for most of the English either.

Sadly, some Labour MPs, including shadow cabinet members, joined in as well, but that was the intention: not to swing votes against Labour because the issue has little electoral traction, but to destabilise and divide the party.

The 'antisemitism' smear has little if anything to do with race or faith. Labour members know there is hardly any of it about – one reason why the numbers disciplined are so disappointingly low to the party's enemies. All the evidence supplied to the party's processes is from social media; much of it of dubious provenance; the bulk of those posting are found not to be party members.

Members know rather that it is heavily political: that the desultory way in which disciplinary cases were handled for the first couple of years of Corbyn's leadership was engineered by the bureaucrats of the ancien regime to discredit him. Cases were left untouched for months, even years, while Corbyn, lacking control of the apparatus, took the rap.

The new regime of Jennie Formby got rid of those responsible, and these were most of the characters that showed up in John Ware's disgraceful BBC *Panorama* programme in June, complaining of antisemitism!

The irony was sickening. The whole smear campaign is outrageous and indeed anti-semitic in itself: it abuses Jewish people's lives and belief for political ends, and stirs up more Jew-hatred against them on social media.

And it says a lot about the mindset of the media industry that (as predicted in *MediaNorth* in September) the *Panorama* programme has been nominated in two categories in the 2019 British Journalism Awards.



Vote Labour, says anarchist author of *V for Vendetta*

ANARCHISTS REJECT hierarchy, authority, and promote participatory democracy. So they don't vote.

Well that's the idea but there have been exceptions. Civil rights activist and historian Howard Zinn was a socialist/anarchist who endorsed voting for the political party that will do the least damage to citizens. Noam Chomsky has said much the same.

Now in this election anarchist Alan Moore, author of *Watchmen* and *V for Vendetta*, has said that the last time he voted was more than 40 years ago, because he was 'convinced that leaders are mostly of benefit to no one save themselves'. Now he is asking people to vote for the Labour party.

Moore says these are 'unprec-



edented times' and that a victory for the Conservative party in December's general election would leave Britain without 'a culture, a society, or an environment in which we have the luxury of even imagining alternatives'.

In his statement, Moore says: 'Although my vote is principally against the Tories rather than for Labour, I'd observe that Labour's current manifesto is the most encouraging set of proposals that I've ever seen from any major British party ... If my work has meant anything to you over the years, if the way that modern life is going makes you all fear for the things you value, then please get out there on polling day and make your voice heard with a vote against all this heartless trampling of everybody's safety, dignity and dreams.'

Not much common sense in Farage's plan for BBC

IT'S surprising to find that one of Nigel Farage's policies is to phase out the BBC licence fee.

He moans that he and the Brexit Party don't get enough coverage on the BBC, but it's difficult to understand why he is so hostile to it. After all, by 8 May 2019 he'd had a record 33 Question Time appearances.

Or is he sore about the long years in which the Brexit Party received absolutely no coverage at all from the biased BBC on the flimsy grounds that it didn't actually exist yet?

Farage seems to believe it is the



duty of a public broadcaster to turn up to every single one of the £2.50-a-ticket events he holds.

NHS ROUND-UP / Don Mort

Trump Trade Files

THE RELEASE of hundreds of pages of the so-called #TrumpTradeFiles has highlighted the media's role in influencing voters' perceptions of who can be trusted with the NHS.

A scramble to decipher a dossier detailing UK-US trade talks began after Labour shared the documents, claiming they show new corporate access to the health service and the potential for hikes in drug prices.

Details of the meetings were first requested by the action group Global Justice Now, which lodged a Freedom of Information appeal after papers were released with the text redacted.

As rolling news outlets posted updates on Wednesday, it emerged that the full documents were first leaked online weeks earlier.

Had the mainstream press simply missed the story, or did this prove the documents were not as significant as Labour claimed?

Further questions are expected in the run-up to election day, as the 451 jargon-filled pages are further analysed and deciphered.

The Cliff Edge

IT IS known as the 'graph of doom' – a chart showing how councils would struggle to meet the rising cost of social care after budget cuts were imposed back in 2010.

First created by Barnet Council in north London, it plotted rising care costs against stagnant overall spending power, showing councils' entire budgets would eventually be swallowed up.

As the social care cliff edge approached, the Government came under growing pressure to find a solution.

A social care green paper was promised but never published. But now the Conservative election manifesto has been criticised over a commitment to 'urgently seek a cross-party consensus in order to bring forward the necessary proposal and legislation for long-term reform'.

Voice of a muted Tory paper

THE YORKSHIRE POST was an interesting read the day after the Tory election manifesto launch. Absent were the ringing endorsements splashed across the bloc of Tory-supporting national newspapers.

One front-page column headline was 'Yorkshire towns hit by biggest cuts over last decade'. The critical report highlighted that Scarborough and Barnsley councils have seen the biggest drop in government funding in the region over the last decade.

The party manifesto was criticised in another front-page piece as being 'remarkable' for its lack of policies and the editorial headline was 'Johnson still to win the North: Where is money coming from?'

The editorial said, 'Mr Johnson needs to explain to voters, in an election where trust is a central issue, precisely how he intends to pay for his spending plans when the Tories are ruling out increases to tax, National Insurance and VAT for the duration of the next Parliament.'

It concluded that, given Johnson's 'poor response to this month's South Yorkshire floods, he still has much to do to win the trust of voters here.'



The Yorkshire Post criticised Boris Johnson for ignoring the flood damage and not calling a national emergency



Boris Johnson on the *Question Time: Leaders' Special*, 22 November 2019.

BBC admits another editing mistake

THE BBC has said editing footage of Prime Minister Boris Johnson for a news bulletin was 'a mistake on our part'.

The Prime Minister appeared on *Question Time: Leaders Special* on BBC One on Friday 22 November.

The audience laughed when he was asked a question about how important it is for people in power to tell the truth. But the laughter and subsequent applause was absent from a cut-down version of the exchange on a lunchtime news bulletin the following day.

"This clip from the BBC's *Question Time* special, which was played out in full on the News at Ten on Friday evening and on other outlets, was shortened for timing reasons on Saturday's lunchtime bulletin, to edit out a repetitious phrase from Boris Johnson," the BBC said in a statement.

"However, in doing so we also edited out laughter from the audience. Although there was absolutely no intention to mislead, we accept this was a mistake on our part, as it didn't reflect the full reaction

to Boris Johnson's answer.

"We did not alter the soundtrack or image in any way apart from this edit, contrary to some claims on social media."

The BBC's statement follows an error on BBC Breakfast last month when out-of-date footage of Mr Johnson laying a wreath was broadcast due to 'a production mistake'.

The BBC has apologised for mistakenly running an out-of-date clip of Boris Johnson laying a wreath.

It said a production error that led to BBC Breakfast showing images purporting to be the prime minister attending this year's Remembrance Day service, when in fact the clip was from 2016.

Some members of the public questioned the BBC's impartiality on social media. The BBC was accused of using the older footage because Johnson had looked more dishevelled this year, in a blue suit instead of a black one and with both his coat and jacket undone.

He was also accused of setting off to lay his wreath too early, and then of placing it upside down.

The Queens of Mean show no sisterly love for Jo Swinson

By Nicholas Jones

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS have grown accustomed over the years to press coverage that usually ignores their policies or belittles their party leader. The traditional tabloid path – unless there is an incident that can be whipped up into a scandal – is to treat the Lib Dems as a footnote, meriting no more than a few sentences at the bottom of the page.

Jo Swinson has at least benefited from the recent moderation in language being used to challenge women in politics. Nor has she been subjected to the full panoply of cruel jibes and crude headlines that were regularly deployed to ridicule her predecessors, Nick Clegg and the late Paddy Ashdown.

But whereas headline writers and her political opponents are on their guard to avoid sexist attacks, women diarists and columnists writing for the Tory press – sometimes known as the queens of mean – had no intention of expressing sisterly solidarity.

As Ms Swinson has moved centre stage with campaign speeches and appearances in televised debates, the snide bitchiness of earlier coverage has been amplified by sketch writers and cartoonists.



Art: Tony Jenkins / www.jenkinsdraws.com

From the start of the campaign, Sarah Vine, wife of Michael Gove, was irritated by Ms Swinson's 'bossy, holier-than-thou election style' which was too 'head-girly' (*Daily Mail*, 20.11.2019).

'Up her own bottom, but not far enough so we can still hear her', was an anonymous quote used by Allison Pearson (*Daily Telegraph*, 20.11.2019) in justifying the headline, 'The more we see her, the less we like her. ...'

Ms Swinson's credibility was on the line when she spoke at the CBI conference, and then launched the Lib Dems' manifesto, two high-profile engagements that were an open invitation to the Tory commentariat to patronise her performance.

'Smiley Swinson gave the City fat cats the cheery nurse treatment', was Henry Deedes' account (*Daily Mail*, 19.11.2019) of how 'Auntie Jo' tried to woo the CBI.



Deedes was equally withering in his sketch on the Lib Dems' 'limp manifesto launch' (*Daily Mail*, 21.11.2019). The thrust of the headline over the paper's main report – 'The Lib Dem priorities? Legalise cannabis and tax frequent flyers' – was shared by the *Daily Telegraph*, 'Swinson to raise £1.5bn by legalising cannabis' (21.11.2019).

A manifesto pledge to decriminalise cannabis was a gift for Tory-supporting newspapers which used it to divert attention from the party's key commitments to the electorate: 'Remain bonus will help fund £60bn spending, say Lib Dems' (*The Guardian*, 21.11.2019); 'The Lib Dem offer: Europe, green taxes and a pot of money' (*The Times*, 21.11.2019).

Both *The Sun* and *Daily Express* followed their usual practice for indicating the irrelevance of the manifesto launch: five sentences near the bottom of page 8 sufficed for *The Sun* ('Jo "lurch left" spree') and the *Daily Express* managed three sentences ('Swinson's labour deal') at the bottom of page 9.

But not to be outdone, the *Daily Express* wheeled out its regular columnist Leo McKinstry to deliver the inevitable hatchet job, and without hesitation he answered the question posed by the headline, 'What exactly is the point of Lib Dems leader Jo Swinson?' (21.11.2019).

His conclusion was that the Lib Dems had 'sunk to new depths' under 'her hectoring manner and her poor judgement.'

She came across as 'a prim, inadequate, over-promoted deputy head-teacher of a primary school ... Her



Ways in which the *Daily Mail* newspaper used its pages to demean the Liberal Democrats' policies and Jo Swinson, the party leader.



immaturity is reflected in a host of poor decisions.'

Ms Swinson has faced the strongest attacks in the *Daily Telegraph*, anxious to warn off Conservative Remainers from being tempted to vote Liberal Democrat.

Full-page coverage of her first appearance up against Johnson and Corbyn in BBC *Question Time* had the headline, 'Swinson savaged by both sides over vow to halt Brexit', and was described as 'a torrid time ... as she struggled to get her message across' (23.11.2019).

Like the other leaders, she has become the target of fake news. She insisted a bizarre tweet from a Brexit Party supporter claiming she had tortured squirrels was totally false.

This invented story succeeded in provoking a mini Twitter storm and attracted the interest of *The Times's* cartoonist, Peter Brookes (21.11.2019).

The closing stages of the cam-

paign will pose a challenge to the Tory tabloids in deciding how to respond should the prospect of tactical voting gather pace and indicate an acceleration in a swing to the Lib Dems.

Except for sure-fire targets like legalising cannabis or highlighting her 'shrill hectoring tone' in televised debates, the Brexit press has largely been following the path of side-lining the Lib Dems in the belief that a two-horse race between Conservative and Labour is far better for Johnson.

The critical time will be the final run-up to polling day and there might well come a moment when tabloids decide to resurrect some of the skeletons in the chequered history of previous Lib Dem leaders.

Nicholas Jones was a BBC industrial and political correspondent for 30 years until retiring in 2002. His books include, *The Lost Tribe: Whatever Happened to Fleet Street's Industrial*

TV debate: An 'oven ready' demolition job on Corbyn

By Nicholas Jones

WHEN REPORTING the head-to-head televised debates that have made such a welcome re-appearance in the 2019 general election, Conservative-supporting newspapers have – to quote Boris Johnson – an 'oven ready' recipe for delivering yet another demolition job on Jeremy Corbyn.

Whatever the reality of the confrontation that has taken place, the tricks of the trade of tabloid reporting can be manipulated to achieve the desired outcome: Corbyn trashed and humiliated, out-punched and outclassed by Johnson.

Even before a debate has taken place, an anti-Corbyn agenda is trailed in advance: readers have been forewarned of the lies and evasions they can expect as Johnson puts the Labour leader on the spot.

Snap opinion polls of viewers are another device for strengthening the pre-determined narrative and headlines. Unfavourable results can be over-looked, or the surveys twisted to suit the story line.

Hostile questioning, jeering or

hollow laughter can either be ignored or blamed on the broadcasters for having selected an audience weighted against the Conservatives.

'Corbyn TV Brexit showdown' was the headline on the *Daily Mail's* preview of the first debate (19.11.2019) declaring that Johnson would be urging the Labour leader to 'come clean with voters' and end his 'Brexit dithering'.

The Sun followed suit, predicting a 'Corbynquisition' as the Prime

Minister pursued his pre-briefed demand for answers to Labour's 'dither, delay and uncertainty' on Brexit.

Headlines next morning followed the pre-prepared script: 'Dither v Deliver' trumpeted *The Sun* (20.11.2019), which claimed Corbyn had refused 'nine times to say if he'd back Brexit'.

A YouGov snap opinion poll of viewers, which suggested the Prime Minister had just edged it with 51 per cent saying he did better than Corbyn, was used to back up *The Sun's* report that Johnson had 'humiliated' the Labour leader.

In a show of unity, the front pages of the Brexit press hammered home the same message that Labour had no answer to Johnson's 'oven ready' deal to exit the European Union.

'Laughable, Mr Corbyn' was the *Daily Mail's* banner headline (20.11.2019) over its report that Corbyn had refused 'nine times to say if he'd back a Brexit deal – to mocking derision of studio audience'.

When the BBC *Question Time* debate (22.11.2019) provoked jeers and hollow laughter for both Johnson and Corbyn the tabloids could call on another 'oven ready' routine for lambasting Labour while lauding the Conservatives.

The main news line was that Corbyn revealed that if he became Prime Minister, he would personally remain neutral in a second referendum while the country voted on a future EU trade deal to be negotiated by an incoming Labour government.

'Jeers as Corbyn vows to dodge Brexit question' (*Daily Express*, 23.11.2019) was the top line for the Brexit press ridiculing him for an 'abject failure of leadership' (*Daily Telegraph*).

'Tragic Grandpa' was *The Sun's* Cont Page 19.

The Brexit debate

From Page 18

verdict on a 'shell shocked' Corbyn 'ripped apart by an angry tv audience'.

By contrast 'Firm PM weathers BBC bias' was *The Sun's* headline over its report alongside about how Johnson kept his cool and fended off a 'lefty crowd ... an audience packed full of students and public sector workers'.

Readers might have been puzzled by the fact that this same audience jeered both Corbyn and Johnson, but the paper said the blame lay with the BBC as host Fiona Bruce and the Prime Minister were 'heckled by watching Labour supporters'.

On this occasion, *The Sun* ignored snap surveys of viewers and



relied instead on a poll of *Sun* readers which indicated 52 per cent support for Johnson.

Determined as ever to pursue its campaign to try to erode the BBC's credibility, the *Sun on Sunday* (24.11.2019) claimed to have identified an audience member who spoke up in support of Corbyn. He was a

'red Jez activist' – further proof of BBC bias in audience selection.

Turning any set-back in a tv appearance by a Tory party leader into an attack on the BBC is a tried and tested formula and has again been brought into sharp focus given the extensive coverage for the election debates.

Tory manifesto – shape of things to come?

By Barry White

THE CONSERVATIVE manifesto for the general election, page 48, reads: "After Brexit we also need to look at the broader aspects of our constitution: the relationship between the government, parliament and the courts; the functioning of the Royal prerogative; the role of the House of Lords; and access to justice for ordinary people. The ability of our security services to defend us against terrorism and organised crime is critical. We will update the Human Rights Act and administrative law to ensure that there is a proper balance between the rights of individuals,

our vital national security and effective government."

Fair-enough? Not according to Sean O'Grady writing in the *On-line Independent* on 25 November. He warns: "I think they're going to scrap the remaining practical rights and prerogatives of the House of Commons in an act of spite."

Referring to the parliamentary procedures used by the Commons to take back control over the order of business of the house and making ministers accountable for their actions he warns that ... "a Johnson administration, if elected, is going to stop all that malarkey. They will also – it is more or less explicit – inter-

fere in the judiciary and restrict the powers of the Supreme Court to rule on issues such as the prorogation of parliament.

"There has been talk – not in this manifesto admittedly – of making the judges politically accountable, by being ratified via hearings by parliament, in the way they are in the United States. They have not forgiven Lady Hale and her colleagues for their ruling that the suspension of parliament in the autumn was unlawful, null and void. Neither would I be surprised if they pack the Lords with new and obedient Tory peers."

We know Johnson's record and now we have been warned!



There is a scene in *The Great Race* in which they are all on an ice floe. The Great Leslie is measuring the temperature of the water. He tells Professor Fate how long they have got before the ice melts. The professor begins to scream. Leslie tells him to be quiet in case the others should hear. Fate replies that he will be quiet until the water reaches his lips and then he is going to tell somebody. I look at the state of so many countries and of the planet in general and think to myself that I should be with Fate and not Leslie. We need to scream! It is the same with this damned election. Keeping quiet is akin to staying out of the polling booth. In 2010 the Lib Dems totally expunged from the party Gladstone, Lloyd George, Keynes, Beveridge and many others who built the foundations of the Welfare State.

The Tories are no longer nice Conservatives offering nutritious scraps to the poor. They are Thatcherites. Meanwhile, Labour is close to expunging Thatcher's favourite son, Tony Blair, known to his mates as TB. The moral compass of the Labour Party is back to where it was in 1945 when we were skint but built a society from which we have all benefitted. Today Labour is merely proposing that we catch up with our European neighbours. The very thought of living in a relatively humane society is causing apoplexy among those that have for years rationalised greed. If our Bullingdonian prime minister retains power in any way, shape or form what passes for our democracy shall be severely diminished and all notions of living in a fair society banished. We must put our screams onto the ballot paper in the form of a cross against a representative of a party that has, post Blair, come to its senses.

Over the years I must have written quite a bit about the misuse of words and phrases by politicians and by journalists that fail to at least aspire to the values of journalism.

Banned in Jamaica and assassinated in his home country of Guyana, here's why Walter Rodney was so fearsome.

An intellectual and scholar regarded as one of the Caribbean's most brilliant minds, Walter Anthony Rodney, born to Edward and Pauline Rodney in Georgetown, Guyana on March 23, 1942 left a mark with his fight against racism and capitalism. He was also against the oppression of the poor. Rodney didn't have to go far to see how the system in his home region exploited people, being a product of the Guyanese labouring classes. His mother, Pauline Rodney, was a seamstress and carried out full-time unpaid domestic work in the Rodney household. His father – an active member of the Marxist, People's Progressive Party (PPP) – was a tailor, but as an independent operator was forced by economic necessity, on occasions, to engage in wage labour with a big capitalist tailoring firm.

His book, 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa' will mark him out as one who acutely diagnosed Europe's development and domination of the international trading system, Africa's contribution to the development of Europe, capitalism's distortion of Africa's developmental trajectory, the source of development and underdevelopment, the participation and role of the privileged classes in Europe's exploitation of Africa and education as a cultural instrument of underdevelopment. He held that Africa and the Caribbean are still entrapped in unfavourable economic and political relations with Western capitalism and imperialism, which facilitate its continued underdevelopment demanding that the victims get rid of capitalism and embrace socialism. It's curious that Rodney persecuted in Guyana and Jamaica found refuge in Tanzania, leaving the country in 1974 with hopes of returning but never materialised. He had taken to heart Julius Nyerere regime's Arusha Declaration and had become Senior Lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1969. He worked to advance revolutionary developments in Tanzania.

He noted: "That was the situation in Tanzania. Briefly, it meant that we were able to teach and develop scientific socialist ideas, bearing in mind when I say "we," I mean comrades like myself, people of like mind, because we were part of a community and that was very important. It's extremely difficult to develop any ideas in isolation and the kind of work coming out of Dar es Salaam had a certain collective quality about it. There were perhaps only a few individuals, but nevertheless it was a community that was operating. We had a degree of freedom which was greater than that which is accorded academics in most parts of the Third World. That allowed us to pursue scientific socialist ideas within a political framework that was not necessarily supportive of those ideas, but was not repressive in any overt sense."

There were, however, challenges with language and custom as he observed. "... It's virtually a lifetime task to master that language and then to master the higher level perception which normally goes into a culture." Having made contact with the Rastafari, unemployed and urban youth in Jamaica enlightening them as well as other marginalized in the society on the need to demand better from the government, the fear of the downtrodden collaborating and becoming a formidable force so riled the reactionary regime of Prime Minister Hugh Shearer of the Jamaica Labour Party that he made his move against Rodney on his return from the Congress of Black Writers in Montreal on October 15, 1968, by declaring him persona non grata and preventing him from leaving the plane. On 16 October 1968, the Student Guild organized a protest march against Rodney's expulsion from Jamaica. In what became known as the Rodney Rebellion (aka the Rodney Riots or Rodney Affair), unemployed youth, workers and the working poor joined the students in a spontaneous protest.

They expressed their displeasure with the failure of supposedly independent Jamaica to deliver material benefits to them. It marked the first time since the labour rebellions of 1938 that the African-Jamaican masses bonded to demand what was due them. In his home country of Guyana, he was a victim of political victimization when Rodney on his return to Guyana from Tanzania in August 1974 to take up post as Professor of History at the University of Guyana was denied by the Burnham regime through the university's Board of Governors which rejected the academic appointment committee's decision to hire him. In response Rodney noted: "It is now well-known that my appointment was approved through the regular academic channels and it was disallowed for supposedly political reasons." Strangling him economically wasn't enough for the reactionary forces as Rodney did not have a stable or reliable source of income from the time of his return in August 1974 till his assassination on June 13, 1980. Rodney was killed in Georgetown, at the age of thirty-eight, by a bomb in his car, a month after returning from celebrations during the independence in Zimbabwe in a time of intense political activism. He was survived by his wife, Patricia, and three children.

The neo-colonial regime in Jamaica and Guyana may have snuffed the life out of the African-Guyanese, but his light shines on in the hearts and minds of freedom fighters and those for the Pan-African cause. Rodney even as a preteen was a firm supporter of Black Power in the Caribbean. He attended Queen's College where he developed an interest in the study of history. Rodney further went to the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona campus, on an open scholarship in 1960 and graduated with a first class honours degree in history in 1963. By June 1961, his activism and articles had drew the attention of Jamaica's secret police or the Special Branch who opened a file on him claiming they had a radical leftist outlook.

Rodney started his doctoral studies in African history in 1963 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and successfully completed and received his Ph.D. in 1966 at the age of 24. He published *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* through the Oxford University Press. This book was the result of his dissertation work and it launched his career and public profile as a professional historian. Rodney's book highlights the class interests of the African rulers that informed their participation in the Atlantic slave trade, the nature of political rule with the governed and the negative impact of the alliance between African rulers and European capitalists-cum-slavers on the region's development.

Perhaps the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO General History of Africa best sums up the life and times of the intellectual and revolutionary when they note: "In evaluating Walter Rodney one characteristic stands out. He was a scholar who recognised no distinction between academic concerns and service to society, between science and social commitment. He was concerned about people as well as archives, about the workplace as well as the classroom. He found time to be both a historian and a sensitive social reformer.

Words such as 'modernisation', 'progress', 'aspiration', 'reform' and 'semitic' are too often slapped on unthinkingly as labels to shape opinion. Just now Face book decided to give me a red wavy line under 'semitic' almost certainly because it thinks that the word applies to a people and so deserves a capital letter. It actually refers to a family of languages. Wilhelm Marr in 1879 and, as you would expect, Hitler wished to visit racism upon, originally, German Jews and so chose to misuse the word. Why should we? Now many people think of Jews in racial terms but they should not. A religion is not a race and neither is a language.

Today's popular word is 'populism'. Blair has discovered it. What does it mean? How is it being used? Blair thinks it is a handy insult. It can mean that governments adopt policies that they think will appeal to the people. What appeals is not always clear. 'Populism' can be used to accuse a government of wishing to be popular as though that is wrong. It is, I suggest, wrong when a government falsely and cynically adopts what it believes are popular policies that it discards once it has power.

This general election seems to be beset by a sloganeering disease. Maybe that has always been the case but this time I have noticed that many of the attacks upon Corbyn derive from a belief that he is not Blair; his language contains fewer of the soundbites that Blair's apparatchiks would have cleverly threaded into a narrative that mainstream media was only too happy to adopt. The short phrases that he does use represent, I believe, succinct expressions of values that can form the basis for discussion.

Politicians, mind your language!

By Cliff Jones

Israel's Next Move: The Real Danger in US Decision

It is hardly shocking that the United States government has finally decreed that illegal Jewish settlements which have been built in defiance of international law, are, somehow, "consistent" with international law. US foreign policy has been edging closer towards this conclusion for some time. Since his advent to the White House in January 2017, President Donald Trump has unleashed a total and complete reversal of his country's foreign policy regarding Palestine and Israel.

Let us not have any illusion regarding the American approach to the so-called 'Israeli-Palestinian conflict' prior to Trump's Presidency. The US has never, not even once, stood up for Palestinians or Arabs since the establishment of the State of Israel over the ruins of historic Palestine in 1948. Moreover, Washington has bankrolled the Israeli occupation of Palestine in every possible way, including the subsidizing of the illegal Jewish settlements. However, Pompeo's statement at a State Department press conference on November 18 that, "the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements is not, per se, inconsistent with international law," is still very dangerous and it does, in fact, constitute a political departure from previous US policies. How?

Historically, the US has struggled in its understanding of international law, not because of its lack of legal savvy but because, quite often, US interests clashed with the will of the international community. A recurring case in point is the Israeli occupation of Palestine, where the US has vetoed or voted against numerous United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions that either criticized Israel or supported the rights of the Palestinians. Only in 1978, did an American Administration dare describe Israeli settlements as "inconsistent with international law".

That declaration took place during Jimmy Carter's Presidency, when Washington began earnestly fiddling with the "peace process" political model, which eventually led to the signing of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, signed at Camp David in 1979.

"Since then," Joseph Hincks wrote in *Time Magazine* online, "Republican and Democratic Presidents have referred to settlements as 'illegitimate' but declined to call them illegal—a designation that would make them subject to international sanctions."

That said, it was Reagan himself – although objecting to the principle of illegality of the settlements – who deemed them to be an "obstacle to peace", demanding a freeze on all settlement construction.

Pompeo's statement is, in fact, compatible with Washington's self-contradictions regarding the construction of Israel's illegal settlement in occupied Palestine.

In December 2016, the Barack Obama administration declined to veto a UN Security Council resolution that described the settlements as a "flagrant violation" of international law, adding that they have "no legal validity".

Although Obama chose to abstain from the vote, that very decision was, itself, seen as a historical departure from traditional US foreign policy-making, further highlighting the US unconditional and, often, blind support for Israel.

While, in some way, the Trump administration's support for Israel is a continuation of the dismal trajectory of American bias, it is also particularly unique and disturbing.

Previous US administrations attempted to maintain a degree of balance between their own interests and those of Israel. Trump, on the other hand, seems to have aligned his country's foreign policy regarding Palestine and Israel entirely with that of Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his right-wing camp.

Indeed, for over two years, the State Department has been giving Israel political carte blanche, agreeing to all of Israel's demands and expectations and asking for nothing in return. As a result, Washington has accepted Israel's designation of Jerusalem, including occupied East Jerusalem, as Israel's "eternal and undivided capital"; agreed to Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights; and actively plotted to dismiss the issue of Palestinian refugee's altogether. The latest announcement by Pompeo was but one of many such steps.

One theory regarding the ongoing surrender of US foreign policy to Israel is that Washington is slowly, but permanently, withdrawing from the Middle East, a process that began in the later years of George W. Bush's presidency and continued unabated throughout the two terms of Obama administration as well. The current succumbing to Israel's wishes is like America's departing gift to its most faithful ally in the Middle East.

Another explanation is concerned with the apparently defunct "deal of the century", a vaguely defined political doctrine that seeks to normalize Israel, regionally and internationally, while keeping the status quo of occupation and Apartheid untouched.

For that deal to be resurrected after months of inertia, Washington is keen to prolong Netanyahu's premiership, especially as the long-serving Israeli Prime Minister is facing his greatest political challenge and even a possible jail time for various corruption charges.

Currently, Israel is undergoing a political crisis – two general elections within six months, with the possibility of a third election, coupled with a historic socio-economic and political polarization among the people. To keep Netanyahu politically alive, his allies in Washington have thrown him some major lifelines, all in the hope of winning him more support among Israel's dominant right-wing political camp.

By rendering the illegal settlements "consistent" with international law, Washington is paving the road for Israel to annex all major settlement blocs in the occupied West Bank. Israel, which was never truly concerned with international law in the first place, urgently required this American nod to move forward with annexing at least 60% of the West Bank.

With the haemorrhaging of US concessions to Israel, Netanyahu is eager for more. Desperate to strengthen his faltering grip on power, the Israeli leader agreed on November 20 to advance a bill that calls for the annexation of the Jordan Valley.

The bill was drafted by a member of the Israeli Likud – Netanyahu's party – Sharren Haskel, who tweeted following Netanyahu's decision, that the US announcement was "an opportunity to promote my law for sovereignty in the [Jordan] Valley."

The US decision to defy international law on settlements is not dangerous because it violates international law, for the latter has hardly been a concern for Washington. The danger lies in the fact that the US foreign policy regarding the Israeli occupation has become a mere rubber stamp, that allows Israel's extreme right-wing government to single-handedly determine the fate of the Palestinian people and sow the seed of instability and war in the Middle East for many years to come.

’Twas the night before Christmas

“’Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the nation, There was misery, poverty and great deprivation Some stockings were empty, some fridges were bare, The heating turned off, little money to spare.

Boris Johnson was cosy, a quaffing champagne, Cognac and Port so he's feeling no pain, Stuffing his chops on goose flesh and gammon, Caviar, Stilton and the finest smoked salmon.

The homeless are shivering in cardboard containers Ex-Servicemen, youngsters, both Leave and Remainers The nurses and doctors all still searching for beds With a shortage of staff, of money and meds

The Mogg's singing carols with moguls and bankers, Hedge funders, financiers and various w'nkers Admiring his baubles and pulling his crackers, Rejoicing that he's got us all by the knackers.

Your Gran's in the corridor, still on the trolley While the Chancellor's counting the last of his lolly And Grandad's in pieces, stemming his tears Though they've paid their dues these past sixty years

But hey, Gove's on the sherry and is quite off his tits While his missus is battered and doing the splits And Drunken Smith is a singing along with the Pogues With the rest of the mob and a few Russian rogues

And the kids who are dreaming of gifts in the morning Won't get their benefits were stopped without warning While those who doosh is in off-shore accounts Will be rubbing their hands as the total mounts

And the Waspi woman alone in her kitchen Has long given up on Dancer and Blitzen She was robbed of her pension, they don't give a shite That she's freezing and hungry on Christmas Eve night

And now, here's the end of my last festive story

Don't forget to vote-

unless you're a Tory"

Jacqueline Hodgkiss

**FOR THE MANY
NOT THE FEW**

Question TIMES

Ryan Jacobsz: To win the next election, the Conservatives must make better use of their activists



Ryan Jacobsz is a Hull West & Hessle representative to the Conservative Area Council and campaigns in marginal seats throughout the country.

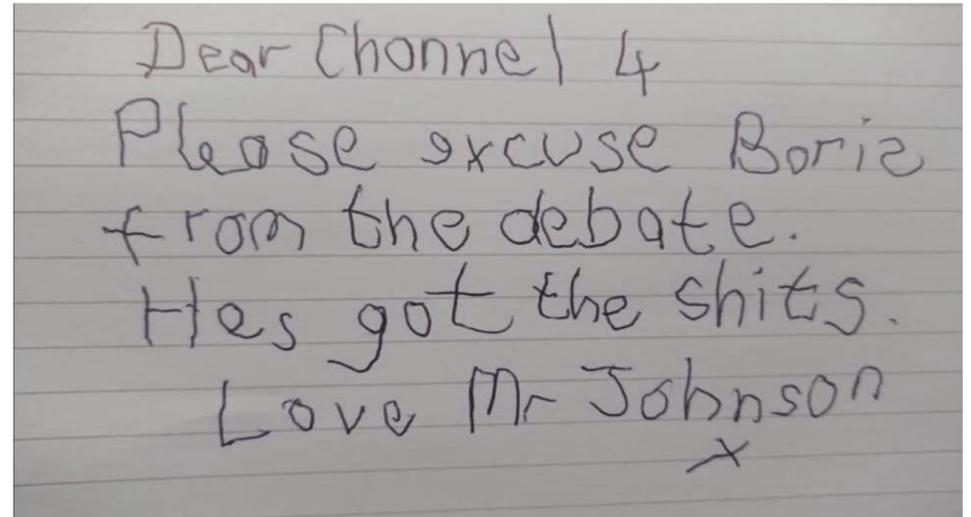
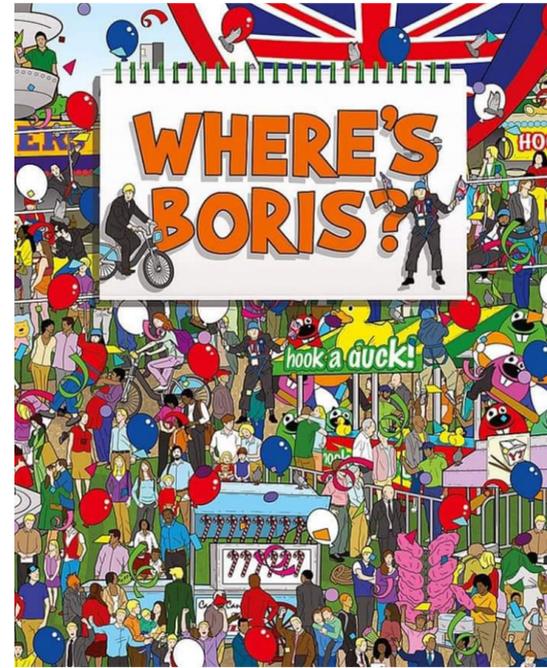
With another general election looking increasingly likely, I've been campaigning on 'the frontline' in marginal constituencies which, critically, also have council elections in 2019.

From Northampton to Mansfield, Calder Valley to Stockton-On-Tees, I've chosen these seats because, as others have previously said, we can run a brilliant short campaign in marginal seats at a general election and still lose because of a poor preceding local council campaign.

First, a note of optimism from my travels. The 'Pickles' Review in 2017 called for more campaign managers in marginal seats, and I have been very impressed by the level of organisation they have delivered. They're co-ordinating campaigning



26 Jensen Mews Hull HU4 6AX	Conservative Party Candidate	Ryan Jacobsz Christie Mackay	Amanda Green Ane Bradley Cain Broadley May Green Fiona Jacobsz Richard Green Liane Hudson Elizabeth Singleton
37 Eastgate Hessle	Liberal Democrats	David Nolan Philip Dawson	S V Padden P Tasker J A Mason J Shepherdson A Snow J Snow P Wiseman C Wiseman
29 Barrow Lane Hessle	Liberal Democrats	S V Padden Cain Wilson	David Nolan Ane Smith Chris Dawson Lizbeth Headford Lanley Broaddale Ane Chalmers Ane Marshall Ian Marshall
40 Marlborough Avenue Hessle HU13 0PN	Labour Party	John Henry Answorth Jane Answorth	Richard C Weather Janet R Worrall Carol Weather Jay E Toppard Paul Toppard Ian Billinger Clare Johnson Harold A Spurr
52 Beverley Road Hessle HU13 9	Conservative Party Candidate	Christie Mackay Liane Hudson	Amanda Green Ane Bradley Cain Broadley May Green Fiona Jacobsz Richard Green Elizabeth Singleton David Singleton
76 Beverley Road Hessle HU13 9AJ	Conservative Party Candidate	Ryan Jacobsz Liane Hudson	Amanda Green Ane Bradley Cain Broadley May Green Fiona Jacobsz Richard Green Elizabeth Singleton David Singleton
73 Ferriby Rd Hessle	Liberal Democrats	Philip Dawson David A Foster	S V Padden G Moore M Cobby-Brenkley Cain Wilson Kerry Davies Elizabeth Dawson Pam Foster Clare Bond
58 Saint Marys Close Hessle East Yorks HU13 0HJ	Independent	Brenda Gunn L O'Keefe	Simon Cook Liane Cook Paul Chapman Rob Crill Neil Crill Kevin Balfour Danson Washburn Terry Hoobart
12 Station Road Hessle HU13 0BB	Labour Party	Christina J Gregory Stuart W Gregory	Howard V Worrall Janet M Worrall Kathy Best Carol Weather Richard C Weather Liane Hudson Lanley Carline Harold A Spurr



INTRODUCING THE NEW CONSERVATIVE LOGO



Top tip: If you ever find yourself forgetting how to spell 'Pinocchio', just look at this picture and you'll remember it's got two Cs



2. Letter from Mr Ryan Jacobsz to the Commissioner, 14 August 2018

My letter refers to a foreign trip undertaken by Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn in 2014. I refer to chapter 1, category 4 and sections 31 and 33 respectively below. I reference the applicability of each relevant section to the issues around this possible breach - my notes in bullet points and red text. There is a realistic possibility that Mr Corbyn breached parliamentary rules but it is only the Commissioner who can determine this through further probing on this matter.

Chapter 1: Registration of Members' Financial Interests

20 Category 4: Visits outside the UK

Threshold for registration

31. Members must register, subject to the paragraphs below, any visits to destinations outside the UK where the cost is over £300 if that cost is not wholly borne by the Member or by UK public funds. They must also register multiple visits funded by the same source if taken together these visits have a value of more than £300 in a calendar year.

- Corbyn's own account, noted in his article for The Morning Star newspaper, of his trip to Tunisia states that he was in the country on 1 October 2014 when "wreaths were laid at the graves of those who died on that day and on the graves of others killed by Mossad agents in Paris in 1991". He is also reported to have attended a conference on 30 September 2014 as part of the same trip.

TARGET AREA – MARGINAL BATTLEGROUND

We all love a bit of analysis where General Elections are concerned. It fills that painful period between the excitement of the Ballot box and the final results being declared on TV where the obsessed consume all-night coffee, forgetting it's a school night. National Treasures are dusted off and wheeled out to stand in front of 'Swing-o-meters' and University based Professors attempt to explain statistics to the innumerate. But what do we need to know, which seats are the significant ones to watch out for, who's electoral demise can we expect, where are the big threats. One problem this time is the number of new Independents and 'Floor Crossers' since the 2017 Election, you can only really compare now with 2017's Party Vs Party result. Below are the defending constituencies ordered from the smallest to the largest swing, to be defeated by the largest opposition party.

Another change since 2017 is the appearance of the Brexit Party who may well take votes away from Conservative and Labour or might well cut a deal with the Tories so as to contest Labour seats.

For the purposes of simplicity, listed below are the Tory seats requiring the least percentage swing to unseat them based on 2017;

Conservative Defences.

1. Southampton Itchen (South East) Majority 31 from Labour.
2. Richmond Park (London) Majority 45 from Liberal Democrats. *Zac Goldsmiths seat*
3. Stirling (Scotland) Majority 148 from SNP.
4. St Ives (South West) Majority 312 from Liberal Democrats.
5. Pudsey (Yorkshire and The Number) Majority 331 from Labour.
6. Hastings and Rye (South East) Majority 346 from Labour.*Amber Rudd's Seat*
7. Chipping Barnet (London) Majority 353 from Labour.*Theresa Villiers seat*
8. Thurrock (East of England) Majority 345 from Labour.
9. Preseli Pembrokeshire (Wales) Majority 314 from Labour.*Stephen 'Dickpic' Crabbe's seat*
10. Calder Valley (Yorkshire and The Number) Majority 609 from Labour
11. Norwich North (East of England) Majority 507 from Labour.
12. Broxtowe (East Midlands) Majority 836 from Labour. *Anna Soubry's seat*
13. Stoke on Trent South (West Midlands) Majority 663 from Labour.
14. Telford (West Midlands) Majority 720 from Labour.
15. Bolton West (North West) Majority 936 from Labour.
16. Aberconwy (Wales) Majority 635 from Labour.*Guto Bebb's seat*
17. Northampton North (East Midlands) Majority 807 from Labour.
18. Hendon (London) Majority 1072 from Labour.
19. Mansfield (East Midlands) Majority 1057 from Labour.*Ben Bradley's seat*
20. Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East (North East) Majority 1020 from Labour.
21. Milton Keynes South (South East) Majority 1725 from Labour.
22. Pendle (North West) Majority 1279 from Labour.
23. Milton Keynes North (South East) Majority 1915 from Labour.
24. Morecambe and Lunesdale (North West) Majority 1399 from Labour.
25. Finchley and Golders Green (London) Majority 1657 from Labour.
26. Camborne and Redruth (South West) Majority 1577 from Labour.
27. Putney (London) Majority 1554 from Labour. *Justine Greening's seat*
28. Harrow East (London) Majority 1757 from Labour.
29. Watford (East of England) Majority 2092 from Labour.
30. Copeland (North West) Majority 1695 from Labour
31. Morley and Outwood (Yorkshire and the Number) Majority 2104 from Labour
32. Vale of Glamorgan (Wales) Majority 2190 from Labour.
33. Corby (East Midlands) Majority 2690 from Labour.
34. Cheltenham (South West) Majority 2569 to Liberal Democrats.
35. Swindon South (South West) Majority 2464 to Labour.
36. Worcester (West Midlands) Majority 2490 to Labour.
37. Gordon (Scotland) Majority 2607 to SNP
38. Crawley (South East) Majority 2457 to Labour.
39. Blackpool North and Cleveleys (North West) Majority 2023 to Labour.
40. Chingford and Woodford Green (London) Majority 2438 to Labour.*The Bastard lian Duncan Smith's seat*
41. Reading West (South East) Majority 2876 to Labour.
42. Derbyshire North East (East Midlands) Majority 2862 to Labour.
43. Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock (Scotland) Majority 2774 to SNP .
44. Carlisle (North West) Majority 2599 to Labour.
45. Southport (North West) Majority 2914 to Labour.
46. Ochil and South Perthshire (Scotland) Majority 3359 to SNP.
47. Rossendale and Darwen (North West) Majority 3216 to Labour.
48. Angus (Scotland) Majority 2645 to SNP.
49. Truro and Falmouth (South West) Majority 3792 to Labour.
50. Scarborough and Whitby (Yorkshire and the Number) Majority 3435 to Labour.

Next up are the Scottish Nationalist Party defences from Labour, it's a bit of a huge task to expect Labour to gain many of these as the polls are suggesting the SNP are likely to win more seats, mostly from the Tories. Nevertheless there are a few close run things from 2017 and who would bet on anything. Below are the swings required from Labour

SNP Defence from Labour

1. Rutherglen and Hamilton West (Scotland) Majority 265 (0.26%)
2. Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath (Scotland) Majority 259 (0.28%)
3. Glasgow North East (Scotland) Majority 242 (0.38%)
4. Midlothian (Scotland) Majority 885 (0.98%)
5. Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Scotland) Majority 1,586 (1.76%)
6. East Lothian (Scotland) Majority 3,083 (2.76%)

There are no Liberal Democrats marginals that Labour can challenge

Plaid Cymru Defences from Labour

Arfon (Wales) Majority 92 from Labour

Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (Wales) Majority 3,908

Ceredigion (Wales) Majority 3,606

So there are the opportunities for Labour victories, it falls to the CLP's in those areas to swing the jolly old 'Swingometer' to the red segment. But that isn't the only battlefield on which the countries fate depends, oh no, Labour must also defend their own narrow majorities and therefore below are the narrowest defences based on 2017 results, again in increasing order of percentage swing;

LABOUR DEFENCES;-

1. Kensington (London) Majority 20 from Conservative
2. Dudley North (West Midlands) Majority 22 from Conservative
3. Newcastle-under-Lyme (West Midlands) Majority 30 from Conservative
4. Crewe and Nantwich (North West) Majority 48 from Conservative
5. Canterbury (South East) Majority 187 from Conservative
6. Barrow and Furness (North West) Majority 209 from Conservative
7. Keighley (Yorkshire and the Humber) Majority 249 from Conservative
8. Rutherglen and Hamilton West (Scotland) Majority 265 from SNP
9. Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath (Scotland) Majority 259 from SNP
10. Glasgow North East (Scotland) Majority 242 from SNP
11. Ashfield (East Midlands) Majority 441 from Conservative
12. Stroud (South West) Majority 687 from Conservative
13. Bishop Auckland (North East) 502 from Conservative
14. Peterborough (East of England) Majority 607 from Conservative
15. Colne Valley (Yorkshire and the Humber) Majority 915 from Conservative
16. Ipswich (East of England) Majority 831 from Conservative
17. Bedford (East of England) Majority 789 from Conservative
18. Stockton South (North East) Majority 888 from Conservative
19. Midlothian (Scotland) Majority 885 from SNP
20. Warwick and Leamington (West Midlands) Majority 1,206 from Conservative
21. Penistone and Stocksbridge (Yorkshire and the Humber) Majority 1,322 from Conservative
22. Lincoln (East Midlands) Majority 1,538 from Conservatives
23. Portsmouth South (South East) Majority 1,554 from Conservative
24. Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill (Scotland) Majority 1,586 from SNP
25. Sheffield Hallam (Yorkshire and the Humber) Majority 2,125 from Liberal Democrats
26. Warrington South (North West) Majority 2,549 from Conservative
27. Derby North (East Midlands) Majority 2,015 from Conservative
28. High Peak (East Midlands) Majority 2,322 from Conservative
29. Battersea (London) Majority 2,416 from Conservative
30. Wakefield (Yorkshire and the Humber) Majority 2,176 from Conservative
31. Wolverhampton South West (West Midlands) Majority 2,185 from Conservative
32. Wrexham (Wales) Majority 1,832 from Conservative
33. East Lothian (Scotland) Majority 3,083 from SNP
34. Stoke-on-Trent North (West Midlands) Majority 2,359 from Conservative
35. Dewsbury (Yorkshire and the Humber) Majority 3,321 from Conservative
36. Vale of Clwyd (Wales) Majority 2,379 from Conservative
37. Reading East (South East) Majority 3,749 from Conservative
38. Gower (Wales) Majority 3,269 from Conservative
39. Blackpool South (North West) Majority 2,523 from Conservative
40. Great Grimsby (Yorkshire and the Humber) 2,565 from Conservative

So there you have it, your very own cut out and keep guide to the runners and riders for the next election. If recent opinion polls (Yes I know!) can be believed the Brexit party are trading votes with the Conservatives and Labour are trading votes with the Liberal Democrats (God only knows what is happening to Independent / TIG's / Whigs). But we don't have proportional representation in UK(remember the referendum before THE Referendum) so it comes down to the individual battles highlighted above. How many of these seats will prove crucial in the Great War to come.



BEST OF THE LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO

This is Jeremy Corbyn's foreword to the Labour Manifesto:

Some people say this is the Brexit election. But it's also the climate election, the investment election, the NHS election, the living standards election, the education election, the poverty election, the fair taxes election. Above all, it's the change election.

It's time to take on the vested interests holding people back. The last decade has seen a wealth grab by a privileged few, supported by the Conservatives, at the expense of the majority. The big polluters, financial speculators and corporate tax-dodgers have had a free ride for too long.

Labour will build a fairer Britain that cares for all, where wealth and power are shared.

I am not prepared to continue to see more families without a proper home and more people queuing at food banks or sleeping rough on the streets.

I am not prepared to put up with communities blighted by lack of investment, endless cuts to vital services and millions struggling to make ends meet, while tax cuts are handed to the richest. We can do better than this. How can it be right that in the fifth richest country in the world, people's living standards are going backwards and life expectancy is stalling? The Conservative Government is failing. It has failed on the economy, on the climate crisis, on investment for the future, on public services and on Brexit. It is simply not working for most people. not working for most people.

A Labour government will unlock the potential of all those held back for too long. Labour will be on your side.

Labour will rewrite the rules of the economy, so that it works for everyone. We will rebuild our public services, by taxing those at the top to properly fund the services we all rely on. We will launch the largest-scale investment programme in modern times to fund the jobs and industries of the future, so that no economy and transform our country. We will kick-start a Green Industrial Revolution to tackle the climate emergency by shifting to renewable energy, investing in rail and electric cars, and making housing energy efficient, to reduce fuel poverty and excess winter deaths.

We will create a million climate jobs in every region and nation of the UK – good, skilled jobs that will bring one is held back and no community left behind. This is a fully costed programme to upgrade our prosperity back to parts of our country neglected for too long.

We will bring rail, mail, water and energy into public ownership to end the great privatisation rip-off and save you money on your fares and bills.

We will deliver full-fibre broadband free to everybody in every home in our country by creating a new public service, boosting the economy, connecting communities and putting money back in your pocket.

We will end food bank Britain, and lift children and pensioners out of poverty.

We will bring in a Real Living Wage of at least £10 per hour for all workers – with equal rights at work from day one on the job. We will end insecurity and exploitation by ending zero-hours contracts and strengthening trade union rights.

Labour will create a National Education Service to provide support and opportunity throughout your life: from Sure Start centres to top-quality early years education; well-funded schools with lower class sizes to free university tuition with no fees; and free lifelong learning, giving you the chance to reskill throughout your life. Labour will give the NHS the funding it needs, end privatisation, and never let our health service be up for grabs in any trade negotiation.

We'll expand our NHS to offer free prescriptions for all and free basic dentistry, building on its founding principles. We will end the social care crisis that has left 1.5 million elderly people without the care they need. Labour will fund free personal care for older people and extra care packages.

I'm really worried by the rise in crime – and the fact that the most serious violent crime has risen even further. We will reverse a decade of cuts to police and vital public services that have shown you simply can't keep people safe on the cheap.

Labour will protect our security at home and abroad. After years of failed foreign interventions and wars, we will end the 'bomb first, talk later' approach and instead have a foreign policy based on peace, justice and human rights.

And we will get Brexit sorted in six months by giving people the final say – with a choice between a sensible leave deal or remain. We will implement whatever the British people decide.

The choice could not be clearer at this election. Labour will put wealth and power in the hands of the many. Boris Johnson's Conservatives will look after the privileged few. This manifesto offers the chance of real change for every generation and every community. When Labour wins, the nurse wins, the pensioner wins, the student wins, the office worker wins, the engineer wins. We all win.

We can and we must do better as a country.

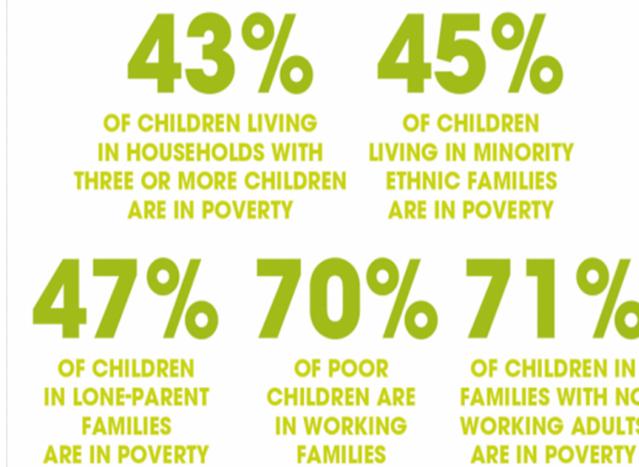
This is our last chance to tackle the climate emergency.

The future is ours to make. It's time for real change – for the many, not the few. Together, we can deliver it.

Jeremy Corbyn Leader of the Labour Party

CHILD POVERTY FACTS AND FIGURES

The facts and figures show the reality of child poverty in the UK.



- There were 4.1 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2017-18. That's 30 per cent of children, or nine in a classroom of 30.
- There are expected to be 5.2 million children living in poverty in the UK by 2022.
- 47% of children living in lone-parent families are in poverty. Lone parents face a higher risk of poverty due to the lack of an additional earner, low rates of maintenance payments, gender inequality in employment and pay, and childcare costs.
- Children from Black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to be in poverty: 45 per cent are now in poverty, compared with 26 per cent of children in White British families.
- London has the highest rate of child poverty in the country. You can see local child poverty rates on the End Child Poverty website.
- Child poverty reduced dramatically between 1998 and 2012 when 800,000 children were lifted out of poverty.
- Work does not provide a guaranteed route out of poverty in the UK. 70 per cent of children growing up in poverty live in a household where at least one person works.
- Children in large families are at a far greater risk of living in poverty – 43 per cent of children living in families with 3 or more children live in poverty.
- Childcare and housing are two of the costs that take the biggest toll on families' budgets. When you account for childcare costs, an extra 130,000 children are pushed into poverty.

(Updated March 2019. All poverty figures are after housing costs)

In a desperate attempt to try to smear an anti-racist man, Lipman blurts out an antisemitic trope.

Maureen Lipman shares....

An antisemitic trope...

One of the IHRA examples of antisemitism is:
 Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective.
 This is a gross stereotypical trope that lumps all Jewish people together to make a cheap political point. It uses stereotypes and assumptions, and it's simply not true.

Why the f*ck would she pull this stunt in one of the most RACIST papers in the UK; how could anyone who holds genuinely anti-fascist beliefs even entertain this rag...?

WHO WILL WIN?



You! Your family. Your friends – even those who did not vote Labour.

In 2017, Teresa May gained 42.4% of the vote, 13,636,684 votes. Jeremy Corbyn gained 40%, 12,878,460.

In 2017 Teresa May had not yet negotiated a Brexit agreement. She said that she would obtain a good Brexit deal. The Brexit deal that Boris Johnson negotiated is so bad that if it becomes law both Northern Ireland and Scotland are likely to leave the United Kingdom and rejoin the EU. It also begins another round of negotiations about the future trade relationship with the EU with one of the options being that we crash out. One Brexiteer MP actually said that the possibility of a “no deal” Brexit was why he was voting for Johnson’s deal!

Now the shape of the Brexit deal is known many Remainer Tories like Philip Hammond, David Gauke, Dominic Grieve, John Major, and Michael Heseltine cannot support it. They may not vote Labour, but many of them will not vote Conservative either.

So why did the opinion polls over November say that the Conservatives were doing so well?

Pollsters make assumptions about whether the people they poll will actually vote. Historically, a high percentage of pensioners vote. Historically (until 2017), a high proportion of young people did not vote. It was reasonable to adjust the “result” of polling by counting pensioners at say 72% likely to vote and under 25s at say 23% likely to vote.

Given that older people tend to be more Conservative than young people, and more pro Brexit than young people, the poll “weighting” for likelihood to vote had a significant effect.

The seven polls released on November 28,29, and 30 had sample sizes between 1075 and 2018, so between 1 and 3 people per constituency. “Weighting” these small samples introduces “margins of error” so the true figures may be different.

In the seven polls the Conservative vote veered between 39% and 46% (on the same day!) and 33% and 34% for Labour. The Conservatives might have truly been 13% ahead or 5% ahead. This makes the difference between a Tory majority and a hung Parliament.

With opinion polls one is better to look at the direction of travel rather than the exact figures. The direction of travel in November was towards Labour, by about 3% per week!

Over November it has become clear that roughly half the Lib Dem vote, generally Remainer, will be loaned to Labour to stop Brexit.

During the official Election campaign 3.1 million people registered to vote. Over a slightly longer period, once it was clear that there would be a General Election, 4.1 million people registered to vote. Over 650 constituencies this works out at an average of 6,307 voters per constituency. Given that so many new voters are young, and young voters tend to vote Labour, this is new information for the pollsters to take in.

One has to believe that 4.1 million people, having gone to the trouble of registering to vote then will not vote, or you have to adjust your perceptions of what percentage of younger, mainly Labour, voters will vote. The number of new registrations was 38% higher than in the 2017 General Election.

As the pollsters adjust their “weightings” Labour will rise in the opinion polls. More important, Labour’s vote is going to be up by approaching 6,000 votes per constituency. We are quite seriously looking at a Labour majority Government.

WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) are the group representing the 2.6 million women who will be affected by changes in the retirement age for women. Having spent their lives paying into the system and expecting to retire at 60, some are finding that they cannot retire until they are 68. There are on average 4,000 WASPI women in each constituency. Some are already Labour voters, but very possibly between one thousand and two thousand additional voters per constituency will be attracted by Labour’s WASPI pledge. If it is only 500 WASPI voters per constituency that will make a difference to some results.

Where will the money come from to pay restitution to the WASPI women? The Iraq and Afghanistan military adventures cost more than £29 billion pounds. No-one asked where the money would come from. CND has calculated that Trident replacement will cost \$205 billion. The money is there to do justice to the WASPI women. It is morally right.

Will the Brexit Party affect things? Pollsters tell us that in the North of England Brexit Party is taking two Conservative voters for every Labour voter. There will also be a tsunami of support for Labour that will swamp the Brexit Party.

This article does not attempt to put an electoral value on Labour’s evidence that the Tories have been negotiating with the Americans about the NHS for two years. Nor on what people think about the integrity of Boris Johnson.

In terms of anti-Semitism anyone seriously interested in anti-Semitism or anti-racism knows that Jeremy Corbyn has been tireless in these battles over the last 40 years. Without being unkind, can one point to even one Corbyn opponent who has a comparable track record of actually opposing anti-Semitism? The reality here is that Labour is committed to recognizing a Palestinian State and that is what has turbocharged the anti-Semitism row. The Tories tolerate anti-Semitism and anti-Islamist prejudice and are responsible for the Windrush disaster.

Do not sit back. Get out there and vote. And take a friend or family member please.

**FOR THE MANY
NOT THE FEW**

Labour

QUIZ TIME

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

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?

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

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.

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

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 ?

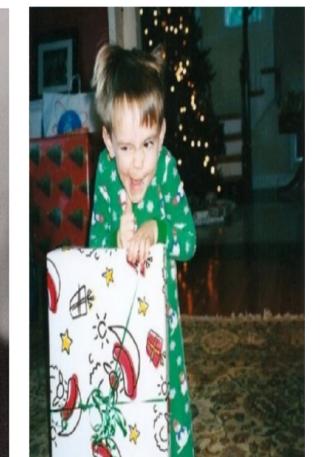
7. In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s classic work “The Scarlett Letter”, which letter
is lead character Hester forced to wear as a sign she has been unfaithful?

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)



Go to www.thewordmedia.co.uk
for the answers.

What we hope to achieve

To give even a small bit of balance to the bias against the left wing from main stream media. To achieve this we are launching a series of road shows to help inform and recruit people to help us. We believe with modern technology we rival the corporate news outlets by lots of people doing a small amount of work. As much as we admire the ability of the MorningStar to still keep going we feel there is a need for a tabloid daily newspaper that is entertaining to read with a great insight on sport and entertainment promoting all that is cooperative rather than simply money making.

Help us achieve our goal by joining us. If you are from the democratic left wing you will fit in. We debate and vote on our differences without a careerist in sight.

IT'S TIME FOR REAL CHANGE THE LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO 2019

"Parts (percentage?) of this publication must feature input from people who are not identified as 'professional journalists.'" If there's a story on education/schooling, I'd rather like to hear the views of a teachers in a whole article, not little clippings of those teachers' views via interview. I think there should be a way to ensure it isn't entirely written by those only interested in the journalism, but also those in 'real life' affected by the issues. **Mike Kelly**

Truth and Accuracy

Journalists cannot always guarantee 'truth', but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism. We should always strive for accuracy, give all the relevant facts we have and ensure that they have been checked. When we cannot corroborate information we should say so.

Independence

Journalists must be independent voices; we should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. We should declare to our editors - or the audience - any of our political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.

Fairness and Impartiality Most stories have at least two sides. While there is no obligation to present every side in every piece, stories should be balanced and add context. Objectivity is not always possible, and may not always be desirable (in the face for example of brutality or inhumanity), but impartial reporting builds trust and confidence.

Humanity

Journalists should do no harm. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others.

Accountability

A sure sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to hold ourselves accountable. When we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical. We listen to the concerns of our audience. We may not change what readers write or say but we will always provide remedies when we are unfair. **Tony Bolger**

The project we have in mind is to create our own socialist media to help fight back. The media (especially the newspapers) are controlled by an exclusive elite. We feel the only way to break this is to form our own, socialist, collective enterprise that is owned by all of us participating **Alan Davies**

THE WORD IDEALS

EQUALITY, DEMOCRACY, TRUTH AND COURAGE

These four principles are what lead us as Socialists. A pioneering philosopher once said that we are supposed to live in a democracy - one person one vote, equal to each other. And yet what we live in is a Capitalist Democracy which states that you are what you own. These two systems completely contradict each other and this major contradiction is something we live within in the United Kingdom. I think our jobs within this new publication are about trying to alter people's perceptions. I see it every day in the street, on the bus, in the shop, etc. The human race is bombarded and fed corporate consumerism through every channel to the point they no longer can see that they have been completely and utterly brainwashed into their lives being nothing but a corporate playground where they are manipulated, sold and tested all manner of goods. We are all some extent guilty of this. I believe it is our jobs as Socialists to bring light to the dark, to try and get people to see everybody and not just themselves. I am a Spiritualist, I try and see the goodness and love in most things, particularly my fellow human brothers and sisters. As children we are brought up to share, to think of others, to be compassionate and to treat greed, selfishness and want as the vices of the soul. The forces that run the material world are led by greed, by selfishness and want - multi-national businesses, Western Governments and Establishments. The movement that upholds our earliest human ideals is Socialism. I do not see it in Liberalism and I most certainly do not see it in the low energy that is Conservatism.

Pretty much all of the mainstream media in Britain is ignorant, dogmatic poison and it bothers me that it is being fed to the public. We need to offer an alternative, a socialist newspaper that inspires people and doesn't spit venom. Of course we need to oppose the Tories and everything they stand for. We need to expose them for their cruelty, their heartlessness and their prejudices but this has to be done in a manner which is intelligent, insightful and truthful. This is how Jeremy Corbyn leads - we attack the politics, not the people, otherwise we might as well all go and try and get jobs at The Sun. We have to be the example, the difference and the inspiration. We have to systematically prove that Conservatism is

a flawed ideology. We shouldn't just focus on the politics; we should focus on other aspects of life, areas the Tories do not champion. We should look at charity work across the communities, the arts and communal activities that help people among so much more. Remember we are the human beings, our politics and outlook of life is based on humanity. Ours is not about fiscal aspiration, preserving an outdated monarchy and demonising minorities. We welcome all people of all faiths, colours and sex and we should promote this in our newspaper. Socialism has no borders and no flags; we are the free, the loving and the harmonious. We shine a light on all injustices not just in the UK but everywhere.

Of course if we are running this outlet democratically then it is important that we open up channels to other political leanings as well. What I mean by this is having an email address or contact details for people of any political background to get in touch if they have a query, need help or want to discuss a topic with us. We should be able to talk with anybody, no matter what their political background. This would be practicing true democracy and is one of the ideals upheld by Jeremy Corbyn. Most importantly - what we need to give people is the truth. Ask yourselves - do we see truthful news and journalism in The Sun, The Daily Mail or Sky News? I don't think so. We have to be a beacon for truthful, honest and insightful news. I would look at the British political dilemma in a manner of philosophy and try and get people to look at our problems with intelligence and intellect while challenging the political ignorance and propaganda which befalls many areas of our country today. If we can achieve any of the above then maybe we can say we tried to make a difference in our society, we saw how our society was broken and tried to guide it with truth, love and humanity, the core values of true Socialism! **Jack Cornes**

An organization where all workers are paid the same wage. Where all profits are to be put back into the collective running of the organization rather than into private hands. We are to be financed through crowd funding to begin with then by sales, advertising and shares. (Advertising will be voted for or against online). 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 left wing, 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. **Peter Leo**

The ethics are bang on - amongst the policies that will be legally ratified are stipulations that ALL workers will be paid the same, all profit is to be fed back in, & no private company will be allowed to own even 1%. Personally, the thing that has me sold is the following. They don't want to produce the Morning Star - that's preaching to the choir. The aim is to produce a varied and interesting read on anything & everything - but always slipping politics into the mix. Ethics are socialist & this is likely to appeal to Corbyn

to anyone, something that just tells me the truth & is a good read" - That kind of thing... obviously you give your own angle. If camera shy, a few short sentences would be great as they can also be flashed across the screen to allow enough variety to guarantee successful crowd sourcing/funding.

REMEMBER - The aim is for a true socialist publication - but not a political newspaper a la Morning Star - As much as I like it it's not reaching out to White Van Man atm - This is a real issue in Kent where I live as many of you will know. I know awareness is growing but there are populations across the UK that need reaching & socialism needs the grassroots support at the moment. This is why we want an INTERESTING paper.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ABOUT POLITICS - INTERESTING WILL HIT THE SPOT - IF IT IS POLITICAL ALL WELL & GOOD.

FERGY

Ok, first stab: To gloriously illuminate the savage anti-Corbyn bias of the British press you really need to look no further than the dismal headlines of December 1st 2015. The Telegraph reads "Airstrikes in days as Corbyn retreats", "Corbyn's 'free vote' puts UK on brink of war" blares the Metro, its inverted commas over 'free vote' openly sneering at the principles of fairness and democracy that Corbyn not only advocates but champions. The Times similarly reports "Airstrikes in days after Corbyn concedes defeat" perhaps obscuring the reader from the fact that the only way airstrikes in Raqqa could have ever come to fruition, is by a policymaker putting the campaign on the table to begin with. That policymaker was David Cameron (or whichever lackey in his think tank) not Jeremy Corbyn, yet the tabloids have still managed to lay the blame for it squarely on his shoulders. This extends beyond bias into a gross inversion of truth with the sole intention of smearing the leader of the opposition over any reporting of the facts. Newspapers today are more akin to physical clickbait than informative resources - best advice is to not even eat your fish and chips out them. **Roxanne Checkley**

A socialist should not be secretive, furtive or conformist. A socialist should always criticise injustice, no matter, were it comes from. A socialist should be democratic but not manipulative. A socialist should always be unafraid of speaking their mind. A socialist should never seek power for themselves but only for the common good. A socialist should always go that extra distance for a comrade who is trying to do the right thing. A socialist will abandon the pursuit of riches for the pursuit of justice. If a socialist does this they will always have my support and loyalty. **Peter Leo**

As regards editorial policies and guidelines for the proposed new socialist newspaper (I hope I'm in the right forum). Personally, I would very much like to see some of the key attitudes put forth by JC in his first leadership speech

as reported here to be embraced as guiding principles. I believe it is these which have captured the imagination of many of the multitude of new Labour members and supporters that he has brought forth and that by espousing them as fundamental principles there is huge additional potential to drive that tsunami of momentum on to ever greater heights. And thus the paper can gain a broad, growing enthusiastic and supportive readership tapping into new sectors of the population, the apathetic, the disillusioned, the apolitical, the couch potatoes etc etc.

By that, I mean, more specifically, to promote his revolutionary concept of the politics of kindness; socialism with a kind face, a human face; the positive and socially beneficial side always to be brought out and accentuated. This is what caught my own attention after a lifetime of total cynicism, apathy and disillusion with politics, and turned me, and the rest of my family, and friends, into enthusiastic labour supporters and campaigners. And I think millions of others are just like us in that.

Of course, we have to vigorously attack Tory policies and expose them to the maximum effect, but always attacking the policies themselves, and their rationales, and their effects; rather than making personal attacks on the politicians who promote them. Remember they are people like us struggling with lives and families who may be deluded, arrogant, cruel or whatever but sometimes these can be changed through giving a good example while we can never win anyone over by personal attacks. In addition, the organisation should obviously positively embrace the principles of full transparency, accountability and best practice, that should go without saying. I am no expert but this is my personal experience that I would like to share and propose for adoption, since we are all invited to contribute ideas. Some details from the speech that exemplify my above thoughts can be found in this report. All comments welcome. **Sean Jones**

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The Word newspaper, radio and television

The word newspaper was started in September of 2015 after seeing the biased media coverage of Jeremy Corbyn's election to leader of the Labour party. Only 4 people attended the first meeting in October of that year but after setting up a group on facebook it quickly grew to several hundreds. The Newspaper title "THE WORD" was voted on in the facebook group "Together against the Tories" (now called, the word debating group) The name was suggested by Sean Jones. Our first edition was launched at the Tolpuddle festival on 14th of July. The word is produced by a loose cooperative of people who contribute their time and effort free of charge because they believe in Socialism and that cooperation is better than that cooperation is better than the capitalist system of dog eat dog. We are set up to be non profit making. We can never be bought, sold or traded. "The Word" is available in shops and by mail order as a physical newspaper or PDF.

At the end of last year we started the second phase of our media fight back which was to set up a radio and TV station. We felt that with the network of contacts in place from the newspaper this would not be as difficult to accomplish. There are already plenty of leftwing podcasts and video out there so the task was really one of bringing them together into a group- ing. We have so far brought together three video production companies as well as a cooper-

ative radio station and several news sites. The idea is to work as the catalyst to connect rather than to take over.

We are currently commissioning several different talk show formats, interviews and news shows as well as being a platform for up and coming talent for musicians, singers and comedians. As with the newspaper we will tell the stories that the main stream media do not allow to be made public. We will go against the present main stream media way of only allowing posh accents and middle class presenters a say. What will make us different is instead of simply being a youtube channel and a podcast we are applying for radio and television broadcast licenses.

As we vote on as many things as possible there is no one person telling others what can and cannot be done. We try it and see if it works. We welcome input from everyone no matter what their background but we will obviously give a say to those who are being stopped at the moment from having a choice. If you have any ideas for radio or television shows or articles for the newspaper please come and join us. If you are prepared to work at it then it will happen. If you want to take part in the voting for it or be part of it in any other way then join "The Word supporters" group on facebook to take part in producing the newspaper. Or for broadcast join "The Word radio and television."



How to get involved

Register on our website www.thewordmedia.co.uk
Join us on twitter <https://twitter.com/wordnewspaper>
Or on the word supporters group on FB <https://www.facebook.com/groups/770925089714393/about/>
We need writers, proof readers, researchers, cartoonists and help with social media. We have regular meet ups and social events across the country. All people from the left of centre are welcome to join in. **We hope by many of us working together to achieve a daily tabloid left wing newspaper and combined media outlet that is run by its readers and can never be bought or sold.**

WE REBUILT BRITAIN
IN 1945

WE CAN DO IT AGAIN
NOW

VOTE LABOUR
DECEMBER 12th 2019

FOR THE MANY
NOT THE FEW