

Sneak peek at Brexit book ‘Will the Tory Party Ever Be the Same?: The Effect of Brexit’

The fourth book in our Bite-Size book series ‘Will the Tory Party Ever Be the Same?: The Effect of Brexit’ has now been published and is available for you to enjoy! We’re celebrating the book’s release by giving you a sneak peek at a selection of writing from many of the book’s contributors.

‘Will the Tory Party Ever Be the Same?: The Effect of Brexit’, edited by John Mair, Paul Davies and Neil Fowler, provides insights and different perspectives on a really important political question. The UK is in turmoil; Parliament in chaos and the Tories left facing several directions at the same time. Will they survive?

The book boasts a wide variety of contributors, including Sir John Redwood, Damian Green and Lord Heseltine, as well as historian Richard Gaunt and distinguished commentators, including Peter Hitchens, Matthew D’Ancona, Eben Black and Liz Gerard.

Your sneak peek...

Damian Green MP

Occupying the common ground — the best future for the Conservative Party

Is this the beginning of the end? I strongly believe that it need not be, and indeed will not be as long as the post-Brexit Conservative Party pours as much energy into its domestic policies and widening its base as it has into European affairs. Those who are apocalyptic about the party’s prospects need to take a step back. In the late 1990s it looked as though Conservatives were destined for extinction in Scotland and Wales. The party now has significant representation in both countries, allowing it once again to become the truly national UK-wide party it has always been.

Also over the last decade the party in Parliament has begun to look much more like modern Britain in all its variety. It seems

overwhelmingly likely that, just as the Conservatives were the first party to elect a woman leader, it will be the first party to elect one from a BAME background. Of course there is much more to do but the party has recognised the problem of looking and sounding too narrow and is taking effective steps to address it.

Before I seem to sink back into the mode of complacency I should acknowledge that real problems exist. The membership of the party is not even representative of Conservative voters, let alone the wider country. It is much smaller than it used to be. It is possible to exaggerate how much older the Conservative Party membership is than Labour's, but it is still true that some 44 per cent of Conservative members are over 65, compared with 30 per cent for other parties.

Sir John Redwood MP

The misery of our long-running row is likely to continue

In 2015 the Conservatives won the election, as I and other Eurosceptics thought given the promise of the Referendum. A rather surprised leadership of the party had been preparing for another coalition government, with the Lib Dems exercising a veto over the Referendum plan.

Mr Cameron rightly understood he had to honour this central eye-catching pledge, and undertook the Referendum legislation in good time near the start of the Parliament.

He realised that he would have more chance of winning the vote if he had carried out a successful renegotiation of the UK position. He toured the capitals of the EU member states to see what they would offer to help the UK. He was told they would offer very little. He made very modest requests for improvement, centred around more control of our own benefits system for payments to migrants. He failed to deliver on the issues he had identified and seemed shocked by the very negative response to his 'deal' among Conservative MPs on his return from Brussels.

He and his Chancellor and political adviser George Osborne still assumed Remain would win despite the reversal they suffered in the negotiations with the EU. They refused to countenance any government planning for a Leave win. The Government decided to be

very partisan in the Referendum, and helped create the tone of the Remain campaign.

Matthew D’Ancona, The Guardian
I believe in Tory values, but the party is becoming repellent

I have never been a Conservative member – on the whole, I don’t think journalists should join parties, though many excellent ones do so. But, as a believer in fiscal discipline, strong defence, robust anti-terrorism measures, the Atlantic alliance and the social liberalism of those who live in the here and now, I ought to be at ease with modern Conservatism. And I really am not. Brexit has tested that broad affinity to destruction – and in this respect I know that I speak for many on the centre-right.

Yes, Jeremy Corbyn’s vacillation has been pathetic. But he is the leader of the Opposition. It was a Conservative government that called the Referendum, and a Conservative prime minister who – having squandered her party’s majority in the 2017 general election – bought the support of the Democratic Unionist party with taxpayers’ money so she could stay in power and finish the job. Brexit is a Tory gig.

And it has brought out the very, very worst in the party. The attack on ‘Teutonic arrogance’ – by Mark Francois MP in response to the warning by Airbus boss Tom Enders of the consequences of a no-deal withdrawal – would be easy to dismiss were it not the tip of a nativist iceberg.

It is uniquely dispiriting to see intelligent Conservatives cheerleading or appeasing this drive towards disaster.

Peter Hitchens, Mail on Sunday
The case against the Conservative Party

I give myself a great deal of trouble by attacking the Tories, the party most of my readers want to support. Why do I do this, condemning myself to many angry and often personally rude messages from affronted people? I could easily make everyone happy by quietly dropping this campaign. It would save me hours spent writing letters

and e-mails to Tory loyalists who absurdly accuse me, of all people, of wanting to keep Labour in power.

The destruction of the Tory Party, which is now both possible and desirable, is the essential first step to this. In our two-party system, new parties arise out of the collapse and splitting of those they seek to replace. They cannot be created until that collapse, and that split, have begun. A serious, undoubted and decisive defeat for the Tory Party at the next election would make this possible and likely. Such a defeat is possible, despite the events of the past few weeks, and can be aided by voters simply refusing to waste their votes on a party that is both likely to lose, and certain to betray them if it wins.

This view is based on careful study of British voting patterns, constituency boundaries, polls and the age distribution of voters. It is influenced by the experienced pollster Peter Kellner's observation that no opposition party has ever reached power unless at some stage it touched 51 per cent in the opinion polls, during its period out of office. The Tories are still a long way from this figure. In 1979, the Tories were far ahead of Labour in the polls. In 1997, Labour, likewise was far ahead of the Tories. 'Leads' of four per cent, of the kind being achieved now, mean little at general election time.

John McLellan, former editor The Scotsman
Brexit chaos, separation and economic meltdown: what keeps Scottish Tories awake at night

Seven years ago the Scottish Conservative Party faced a stark choice, but the constitutional wrangling was nothing to do with Europe but everything to do with the party's ability to argue for the maintenance of the United Kingdom.

For the Scottish party the argument about Europe has not so much played second fiddle to the debate about Scotland's place in the United Kingdom, but placed it firmly as first reserve for the third violins. The battle with Scottish Nationalism comes first because its threat is the most pressing, and while differences of opinion within the ranks about Brexit are as real as they are in the South, they do not create the same tensions. Vocal dissension from Ruth Davidson's support for the Prime Minister was largely limited to outbursts from

Aberdeen South MP Ross Thomson but even he came onside by the time of the third vote on the Draft Withdrawal Agreement.

The visceral hatred for Scottish Conservatism within the SNP, Green and Corbyn Labour parties has created a sense of unity and purpose that makes the Party all the more determined not to let differences of opinion on the future relationship with Europe get in the way of the duty to give a strong voice to those who do not buy into the emerging statist, high-tax, politically-correct consensus which is hardening much nearer to the centre than ever before.

Liz Gerard, SubScribe **History will not look kindly on Mrs May**

Everyone knows that Mrs May is an incompetent leader who will be junked at the earliest opportunity, but could anyone rescue the party? If almost anyone but Jeremy Corbyn were leader of the Labour party, the Tories would surely be out for a generation – possibly forever.

So where do they go from here? There is much talk of a new party and there are certainly millions in the centre who feel they have no political voice.

Could Tory and Labour Remainers come together to provide one? The omens are not promising. The SDP looked a shoo-in last time voters faced this void in the Thatcher-Foot era, but the revolution fizzled out, the party merged with the Liberals and still made no progress.

The Liberal Democrats should have been the obvious vote for Remainers in the 2017 election, but they got nowhere. The Tiggers – or Change UK – stirred up a brief storm, but have so far failed to secure the further defections they might have hoped for. It's hard to see the likes of Ken Clarke and Yvette Cooper abandoning their lifetime political homes to gamble on a brave new world in cahoots with either set. Not least because the independents and the LibDems have yet to get together.

If a new party is to emerge, maybe it's more likely to crystallise from the Right. With Ukip turning more rightwards, there is space at that end of the spectrum.

Could Rees-Mogg team up with Farage and steal the populist Tory vote? Would Boris Johnson see such a hybrid as his opportunity at last to seize the big prize, leaving the 'wet' one-nation Tories to nurse what's left of their party?

[Will the Tory Party Ever Be the Same?: The Effect of Brexit is available NOW in Paperback and Digitally on Amazon here.](#)

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