

The 2017 UK General Election

Introduction

I did not intend to write on this issue at all; the world is full of commentators dealing with it. I am also trying to avoid writing on merely political issues that have no eschatological implications. However, since I am being asked to offer comments, it seems reasonable to give my opinion (since people want it) in a single, developed form rather than multiple emails.

Theresa May's governing style

When I heard May's first speech as PM I was encouraged since she said all the right things; looking out for the '*just about managing*' and so on. I was also impressed that she threw out David Cameron's heartless Bullingdon / Westminster gang,¹ dismissing George Osborne in short shrift.

However, I remembered Thatcher's first speech, namely, '*where there is discord let us bring harmony*' and then setting out to wreck multiple mining communities, crush the unions, instigate privatisation of utilities and widen the gap between the poor and the rich, lying to the public in the process.

Then I remembered that as Home Secretary May had also promised multiple things but had failed to produce any of them and initiated hard cuts to the police force. I also questioned the ability of a Remainer to steer the country through Brexit.

May developed the same administrative structure she had as Home Secretary whilst in Number 10. She had her key advisors Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy who were fiercely defensive of her and chided anyone interfering in policy decided in this small coterie, even causing rifts with civil servants. Policies were determined that affected ministries without the Secretaries of State or Ministers having any say in the matter. This pointed towards her dominating tendencies, wishing to be a presidential type of PM; something she had wanted since childhood.

Now I have no doubt that she was sincere in all this; I believe she (unlike Cameron) has scruples and empathy and thinks she is doing the right thing, but governing in that way is not how the executive is supposed to operate. Having a then weak opposition that was distracted by internal warfare only made her worse.

In her eyes this autocratic governing style was necessary to get us through Brexit.

In fact Brexit dominated her thinking. This was how she would make her mark in history, the female PM that got a good deal for Britain and made it a successful player in the global economy. Everything in her mind centred on Brexit and this led to some confusion and bad management in various ministries. There was a lack of focus on the needs of the country at the moment; and this led to her downfall.

¹ The Bullingdon Club is an exclusive, male, students dining club in Oxford, usually for the super-rich.

Why an election?

This was an example of sheer hubris and opportunism.

Theresa May is dominated by a lifelong desire to be a great Prime Minister; she has harboured this since childhood and was grieved when Margaret Thatcher beat her to the job. This foible has meant that she has treated being presidential with more zeal than actually governing properly.

Faced with threats and mocking from the EU for her slender majority (in fact 17 was workable) and seeing polls give her a 20-point lead over Jeremy Corbin, she decided to initiate a completely unnecessary and unwanted General Election. It was merely to strengthen her domination. 75-year old Brenda Parsons from Bristol summed up the disdain people felt for yet another election process, '*not another one*'.

The mistaken assumptions of Theresa May

Brexit

The overwhelming mistake was to believe that a General Election would centre upon Brexit. This was a massive mistake.

In fact, most people in the country feel that the decision has been made on Brexit and that we must simply get on with the negotiations. Nothing will change for two years in any case. However, here at home there is terrible discontent and suffering as a result of seven years of austerity measures (that were never necessary)² coupled with anger at the tax breaks afforded to bankers and the rich, plus tax loopholes that have never been closed.

The people are angry at many things in public services:³

- Nurses are living off food banks because they are broke.
- Service veterans are attending food banks in droves, many are homeless while others have committed suicide or ended up under mental health care.
- Young people have no future, being saddled with up to £50k of student loan debts, no affordable housing, no chance to get a mortgage for a house and little likelihood of decent jobs. Fewer graduates have jobs in their field than ever before and many work stacking shelves or waiting in MacDonald's.
- The suicide statistics are through the roof, especially for young people. Formal surveys for the EU (such as that led by Dr Carl Walker of Shoreham by Sea) have established that this is largely due to benefit sanctions and bad treatment by the DWP. Austerity measures kill poor people.
- The actual wage value of workers is at 1980s levels. For the first time the children and grandchildren of parents and grandparents are much poorer than they were. The future of low-paid workers is bleak indeed.
- Work Capability Assessments done by private firms for profit have led to multiple horror stories that are finally being published. Deaths and suicides have resulted, even of grandmothers.
- The NHS is now in near terminal decline having been starved of over £30bn since 2010. While many of us have written about this for years, the facts are now hitting

² Austerity measures were pursued by Cameron's government for ideological reasons but they never work. They squeeze wages and spending, reduce tax-receipts and hinder productivity.

³ I have mentioned all these many times and will not source each item here.

people in the face as operations are cancelled, waiting lists increase, treatments refused, failure to find a local GP and so on. Most people know someone working in the NHS and the stories of low morale, staff vacancies, people leaving in droves etc. are manifold.

- Massive cuts to local council budgets have resulted in multiple cancellations of local schemes: libraries closed, meals on wheels terminated, care homes closed, carer numbers reduced and so on.

We could continue in this vein for ages. The infrastructure of Britain is in a terrible state. Meanwhile, deregulation and a lax oversight means that corporations and quangos can get away with terrible crimes, such as the corporate manslaughter in the recent London high-rise fire. This was directly caused by a quango cladding the block (as many others) with insulation material based on climate change principles and ‘sustainability’, but which were a total fire hazard. People died unnecessarily in concrete towers that should not catch fire. Calls from coroners, residents groups, local activists and local MPs to update new ‘Plan B’ fire regulations were completely ignored by the government.

While the whole country suffers, except for the rich, politicians have given themselves massive rises and still get caught in expenses scandals. They also boast that Britain is the 5th largest economy in the world. Despite national riches, Nurses can’t afford to eat.

Everyone knows that ‘*something is rotten in the state of Denmark*’ (Shakespeare).

So, ordinary people were not voting about Brexit; that is a done deal and is two years away. In any case polls (if accurate) show that 80% of people now support Brexit and, further, both the main parties had a firm Brexit in their manifesto. If everybody were worried about Brexit they would have voted for the LibDems, but their vote-share was reduced.

Corbyn’s bad press

The largely Tory-dominated press had a field day castigating and mocking Jeremy Corbyn for months. Tim Farron called Labour ‘*a shambles*’ that couldn’t govern and May averred that ‘*you wouldn’t want Corbyn to negotiate Brexit for you*’ (sic). Even Tom Watson (Deputy Labour leader) said that Corbyn couldn’t succeed in an election and would be a disaster.

It’s true that the Labour Party seemed intent on committing suicide for several months and many Blairites behaved truly shamefully.

What everybody ignored was that Corbyn had succeeded in motivating young people and increasing party membership by hundreds of thousands. Even Blair couldn’t match this (in fact he lost hundreds of thousands). Loads of people joined in an unusual level of trust in a politician. Sick to death of slick, lying, winsome puppets like Blair and Cameron, that did not trust or care about the British public, people flocked to Corbyn believing that he was honest, true, and genuinely cared about ordinary folk. People actually became motivated in politics because of a leader (just what everyone wanted) and instead the media waged war on him.

What this did was to make people even more fervently opposed to yah-boo politics and ardent in their support of Corbyn. People that had never voted Labour in their lives decided to support Corbyn. Some people stated that they voted for Corbyn because the press hounded him unfairly.

What Theresa May did was to trust what she saw in the press. She failed to think more carefully about the underlying facts about Corbyn’s popularity and simply trusted the

smears. This was a lack of clear thinking and a trust in something ephemeral. The arrogant lack of wisdom in this is shocking.

Trust in the polls

If there is one thing that has been solidly demonstrated in recent elections, it is that the expert pollsters are frauds. All the polls are absolutely useless. They got Brexit wrong, they got Trump wrong, no one predicted that Marine Le Pen would get so far and they got this election wrong – all by large margins.

Now there is no excuse for this. As a comparison (and I say this modestly) I predicted all these things correctly. I did this publicly and my record can be checked. Now if I can correctly predict these things, then the professionals should be able to also. I am nothing in the political world, or the media world, yet I could surmise the important facts and trends. You will learn more talking to taxi drivers on such things than listening to some media poll. My point is that one can find the truth of a situation if you try to gain enough data.

Despite the proven fact that the polls are useless, May decided to trust the claim that she was 20-points ahead of Corbyn in popularity. This would give her the dominating majority that she craved as a history-making presidential PM.

Of course, this proved to be a pipe-dream. Only a fool would place so much stake in a poll and this should cause worry about her capability to govern.

Belief that Labour could not succeed

Most people in general succumbed to this fallacy. It was considered that Labour had to tack to the centre, or even to the right, in order to get into power. Tony Blair proved this being right-wing in his policies, becoming the most successful Labour leader. Thus it became set in stone that a left-winger could only fail like Michael Foot.

All of this failed to observe the national changes that were afoot: the anger at austerity measures, the huge increase in teenage voter registration, the politicisation of young people caused by social media and the internet, the complete distrust of mainstream media and so on; the world has changed. In a new world, new rules apply.

There is a global turn towards the right and this was evidenced in America, The Netherlands and France, and indeed there is a growing right-wing underground movement of protest. However, certain factors override global themes and this election was one of them. The mood is opposed to seven years of right-wing austerity that has doubled the national debt and ruined the social state of the nation.

In this situation, with the right campaign, Labour could indeed do well and this was absolutely predictable. Theresa May utterly failed to comprehend this. Only now, a week after the election, is she realising why she did so badly and is talking about cutting cuts. Too little, too late.

Failure to appreciate the importance of personality

Without any doubt Theresa May came over, in the campaign as, devoid of personality. She appeared robotic, cold, insincere, stilted and sterile. She also appeared rather weak, even nervous, and out of her comfort zone in several interviews. But what really annoyed people was that she constantly refused to answer questions directly and waffled around them in politician-speak instead. The more she appeared, the worse people thought of her.

On the other hand, Corbyn seemed completely in his element. He was relaxed to the point of casual in campaigning and interviews. He was able to stir people up in speeches without

notes and teleprompts, speaking with passion about the ideals he espoused. In general people trusted what he said and saw him as an ordinary person, not like the stereotypical politician.

The simple fact for many voters is that policies count for something but the personality of the party leader counts far more. Would that it were different, but that is the truth of it. It all comes down to whom you can trust to lead the country and represent your position.

In this campaign the public simply did not trust May and many Tory voters supported her with gritted teeth. Note that in several constituencies a long-established Tory electorate voted for Corbyn (such as Westminster or Canterbury).

Corbyn was fighting for his life and put everything into doing what he did best. If he failed to improve the vote above Ed Milliband's performance, he would have been ousted as party leader. He was motivated to excel.

May, on the other hand, was complacent. She felt that a huge majority would be hers without any effort and mounted a lacklustre campaign. One big mistake was failing to appear at the televised leadership debate. By entering it at the last minute Corbyn played a blinder and exposed May as weak.

The campaign

Little needs to be said about this that has not already been stated by commentators.

Theresa May

May's campaign was an exercise in how to fail. Just about every mistake that could be made was made:

- Failing to defend the manifesto in TV debates.
- Appearing overly presidential in interviews.
- Making the election about her and not about policies. (And yet not being able to gain people's trust.)
- Making the choice to be about Brexit and not public services.
- Spending a million pounds on an on-line media campaign using dirty tricks to castigate Labour (which lost her votes).
- Failing to inspire young voters.
- Attacking her own voter base (the elderly) by shooting herself in the foot with care reforms, threatening pensions and elderly benefits.
- Failing to listen to her own backbenchers, cabinet or ministers and instead listening to isolated, unelected advisors.
- Failing to stimulate her natural voter base in the shires.
- Suggesting bringing back fox-hunting.
- Attacking Labour on costs when the Tory record over seven years is a shocking economic failure.⁴

⁴ Growth is well below EU developed nations; the national debt doubled; tax receipts fell due to austerity measures; government investment was minimal; house building is at shocking low levels; personal debt increased; retail spending is slowing down; small business are collapsing left, right and centre etc.

All in all, it was a complete mess. Theresa May's robotic and insensitive demeanour in the few interviews that she did, as well as refusing to properly answer questions, alone put voters off.

Corbyn

Now this is no surprise; everyone that knew anything of Corbyn knew that he was a natural protestor and soapbox orator. We knew that he could whip up crowds and could succeed in motivating young people.

The campaign he pursued was, frankly, rather marvellous (whatever you think of his politics). Wherever he went he got crowds of many thousands; by comparison May's soundbites were sometimes given in speeches to less than 20 people.

Young people often formed the majority in his speech events and hordes of youngsters committed themselves to party activism and vote grabbing.

Corbyn also appeared fully relaxed in campaign mode, unlike May, and seemed to relish difficult interviews, which he handled with aplomb. Even when he foundered over some figures it still did not affect his popularity on the campaign trail.

Corbyn also came over as sincere, again unlike May; he really believes in what his manifesto states (except for Trident, which the party voted for and he is against – but he has made no secret of that).

It was refreshing to see people ardently motivated about politics in his rallies and stimulated to vote.

It was also good to see an avoidance (by strategic decision) not to enter into party bashing and yah-boo politics. Despite being smeared by the Tories, Corbyn tried to maintain a respectful campaign.

All of these things counted in the final vote.

The vote

When I first saw the exit poll at 10pm I was not in the slightest surprised; in fact I thought that Labour would do a little better (I think Diane Abbot's appalling performance cost them votes).

Immediately the Twittersphere went into defence mode with Tories and others saying that this actual on the ground poll (as opposed to opinion) was wrong. This was despite a similar event happening in the Brexit vote.

The real hero of polling day was not a politician but John Curtice who oversaw the exit poll and gave sterling commentary through the night with keen evaluations. In fact, Curtice has become something of an unlikely hero to young people.

Against better judgment I stayed up all night to watch TV that was far more entertaining than any normal evening. Slowly the exit poll was being proved correct over and over again.

As I fully expected, the result was a hung parliament; the very last thing the Theresa May expected or could live with. It was the ruination of all her hopes at once.

The jubilation of Labour MPs as they gained seats was obvious and expressive. The doom amongst Tories was written on many depressed faces. Corbyn achieved more votes than Blair did in 2001 and 2005 and nearly as many as Blair's landslide in 1997.

Sadly some appalling MPs retained their seats (like Anna Soubry) while some decent people lost theirs.

Scotland

There was a shock for the SNP, especially losing two key politicians, but this result was also predictable. Sturgeon made the mistake of gambling on the independence card when Scots are sick of dealing with that issue and most don't want it. What was surprising was how well leader Ruth Davidson did gaining 13 Tory seats. This is going to be an important factor in the future.

Nick Clegg

The loss of Nick Clegg was also unsurprising, even if not quite so predictable. Masses of students in a student town (Sheffield, Hallam) gathered to boot him out, still hurt by his U-turn on student fees after trusting him to deliver what he promised. It is curious that if the election were only a week later, most of those students would have gone back home and Clegg would still be an MP.

UKIP

Finally, Paul Nuttall resigned as leader of UKIP after the party was absolutely trashed in the vote. What shocked some, but was obvious to others, many former UKIP voters voted for Labour. Again the choice of Nuttall as leader (despite being articulate) was a big mistake and his failure was also predictable a long time ago. Apart from his personality, UKIP was seen to be defunct after Brexit had been delivered.

Basic figures				
	Seats	+/-	Vote share	+/-%
Conservatives	318	-13	42.4%	+5.5%
Labour	262	+30	40%	+9.5%

The young vote?

Many have speculated that it was Corbyn's ability to inspire large numbers of young people to vote Labour that facilitated his improved parliamentary position. However, this has been overstated.

Comparison of Labour performance				
2015	9,347,304 votes	30.4% of total vote	Turnout 66.1%	
2017	12,874,985 votes	40% of total vote	Turnout 68.7%	

Voter turnout was increased by only 2.6%, which hardly seems to support the idea of a tidal wave of young voters supporting Labour who did not vote before. However, it does appear that more young people voted than in 2015 and 18-29 year olds tend to vote for left-wing parties anyway. In 2015 Labour also gained more 18-29 voters than the Conservatives.

One should also remember that voter turnout was higher for the referendum (72.2%) and has been higher in the past (between 1992 and 1997 voter turnout was above 70%). Since the recent turnout was lower than the referendum and only slightly higher than the 2015

election, there seems little likelihood of a massive increase in young people voting. It also suggests that the claims that Brexit occurred because lots of young people failed to vote is false. The big increase in the Labour vote was not just young people.

Young voters may have explained Labour's success in student towns like Canterbury, Sheffield Hallam, and Brighton Kemptown, but Labour gained 30 seats more than last time. The fact seems to me that former Tory and UKIP voters voted for Labour.

The myth of Corbyn's success being based upon newly registered young voters is an excuse by the political class to explain away a catastrophe. In fact, young, middle-aged and old people voted for Corbyn who did not vote for Milliband.

However, Corbyn managed to get many young people active in pushing Labour's campaign forward and young people (especially students) are more likely to campaign than old people who vote Tory. Also social media became very important in this election and this is done by the young and not the old.

The demise of polling experts and media pundits

Yet again the supposed experts on opinion polls have been proved to be utterly useless. Why is anyone even still paying for their services? In addition, the mainstream media was also filled with pundits that completely failed to report on the truth or have any prescience at all.

For example we saw things like this:

- Jeremy Corbyn was leading Labour off a cliff.
- Labour faced political Armageddon.
- The Labour Party under Corbyn would dip below 20% of the vote share.
- Corbyn was called an extremist and an enemy of Britain.
- The New Statesman editor said that Labour could lose 100 seats.
- The political editor of the New Statesman said that Corbyn knew that he could not do the job.
- A New Statesman cover in April stated that the '*Labour Party has collapsed*'.
- Nick Cohen said that Corbyn was going to bury the Labour Party.
- Pundits and pollsters Tweeted their predictions of how big the Tory majority would be.
- The Labour manifesto was called the '*most expensive suicide note in history*'.

None of the establishment experts had any understanding of a change occurring in the electorate and the anger at austerity measures that don't work economically and cause ruin socially.

When two opinion polls showed Labour closing in on the Tories, these polls were dismissed as being badly flawed and methodologically tarnished.

Repercussions of the vote

Another election?

Despite people being sick of elections, another one is almost certain to occur within a few months.

May is going to have trouble even getting the Queen's Speech through and it was put off today. If she fails to get this voted in there will be an immediate election since it will effectively be a vote of no confidence in the government.

If she succeeds in getting a Queen's Speech through she is still in trouble and her tenuous position, if it becomes untenable through failing to get acts passed, will require another election.

If she is ousted and a questionable figure (such as Boris Johnson) becomes leader then an election would be almost certainly required to satisfy the public regarding the leading character in the most important factor of Brexit negotiations.

The DUP deal

May can only survive by doing a deal with the Northern Ireland DUP which will give her the 10 votes she needs to gain an absolute majority.

The DUP has gone from obscurity in England to becoming kingmakers in British politics.

This is extremely dangerous for a variety of reasons.

The NI peace process

The peace process in N Ireland is already in stasis because the administration is suspended and bitter exchanges are taking place. It is a very dangerous time. Whatever you think about Martin McGuinness, his death has been a big blow to negotiations. Despite his terrorist history, even chief opponent Ian Paisley admired his abilities in government.

The job of the British government is to be the neutral arbitrator between the opposing sides. This cannot be done if the DUP is actually part of the government. This ruins all proper negotiations.

Furthermore, it is clear that the DUP will want something from the bargain to prop up the Tories. Sinn Fein will be very worried about what the DUP may force the Tories to offer.

A good PM would not countenance ruining the peace process and possibly causing a reversion to violence, by making some pact with the DUP.

There is a growing momentum for a unified Ireland and a referendum on this may ensue out of all this chaos. This would also ruin the UK because Irish politicians of many stripes want Northern Ireland to stay in the EU under some special accommodation.

While the DUP are unionists, if they provoke national sentiments by allying with the Tories, there could be a return to violence due to frustration caused by politics.

The DUP's social conservatism

While Christians may support the social conservatism of the DUP (against abortion on demand, against Gay marriage, against LGBT rights etc.) the fact is that the country as a whole hates this with a passion. The idea that the minority DUP was influencing the government against the social liberal agenda would create havoc. Should the Tories actually change some policies on these liberal issues there would be riots in the streets.

But there is also the constitutional question of a Northern Ireland party having such political influence over the government of Britain. Since any agreement is obviously going to include millions of pounds of additional funding to Northern Ireland, how angry will

people feel in England and Wales where social and health infrastructures are already at breaking point but the Tories say there is no extra money to reverse this?

There is potential here for a massive backlash against the Tories.

The Scottish Tories

Whatever you think of Ruth Davidson, she has done an amazing job for the Conservatives in Scotland, a party that was only recently completely written off north of the border by the media and political commentators. Quite rightly George Osborne observed that she was the real hero of this election for the Tories.

Being a Gay Protestant woman about to marry her Catholic partner, Davidson has stated that there are some factors that she places above party loyalty; the first is her country and the second is LGBT rights.

Thus Davidson has already insisted that if either of these are threatened by May's alliance with the DUP, she will remove these 13 MPs from the Conservative Party and start a new faction. This is a powerful threat. If this happened, not only May would be in trouble but the whole Conservative Party.

Davidson has gone in a few short years from being a new MSP⁵ to becoming the one holding the balance of Tory power in her hands. What is constitutionally galling is that Davidson is not a Westminster MP but part of the Scottish devolved government. Despite this, she is acting as the kingmaker to support Theresa May in power. This is hardly democratic.

This also raises the potential of another backlash against the Tories. If Davidson blackmails the Tories into a 'soft' Brexit (or an 'open' Brexit as she likes to call it) then English voters who only a year ago voted for a real Brexit are going to be very angry indeed.

Labour's triumph

Despite the triumphalism and victory-type speeches, one must remember that Labour has lost the election and this is the third loss in a row.

Despite this, Labour has every reason to be happy. Len McCluskey (Unite leader) stated only weeks ago that if Corbyn retained 200 seats it would be a success because everyone was expecting Labour to completely collapse. In fact Corbyn gained 262 seats and outsmarted everybody, even gaining Kensington/Chelsea in a shock result and getting Canterbury for the first time since 1918.

Corbyn's success in the vote share was the biggest swing (9.6%) since Clement Attlee in 1945. He performed way better than Ed Milliband (whom I predicted, when he was elected party leader, would be an utter failure) and gained a bigger surge in support than Blair did in his 1997 landslide. Only a couple of thousand votes in marginals prevented Corbyn from being PM.

Corbyn has affirmed that he is ready to form a minority government, but this is just bluster, however, he stands on a manifesto that people voted for in large numbers (40%) while May presides over a manifesto that has been torn up, despite getting 42.4% of the vote.

⁵ She gained the MSP seat of Glasgow region in September 2011 and then was elected party leader in November. She is not a Westminster MP.

The Tory knives

May is in deep trouble and cannot continue. Osborne couldn't wait, as editor of the Evening Standard, to affirm that '*she is a dead woman walking*'. I mentioned to a friend in an email the other day that she was '*holed below the waterline*'.

May has managed to offend just about everybody and also put Britain on the back foot in negotiations with the EU. Within hours she was forced to sack her two trusted advisors and agree to make changes in her style of government, being more inclusive in seeking advice from cabinet ministers.

The backbenchers are furious at losing ground in an unnecessary hubristic call for an election and the knives are out. It is clear, despite denials, that a leadership contest is brewing behind the scenes and the most likely contenders are Boris Johnson and David Davies; however, these things always throw up surprises (remember Andrea Leadsom?).

The LibDems

As I was checking this paper Tim Farron announced that he is standing down as leader of the LibDems due to the conflict between his faith as a Christian and his political leadership.

This is a bit late since he has ruined his testimony by affirming that homosexuality is not a sin when he knows that God's word condemns it. He was railroaded into this by unscrupulous TV interviewers who tried to provoke him to get a story, where he could not (for the sake of his party) admit that homosexuality is a sin.

This shows what I have long said that Christians should not be in politics because this kind of compromise is the life and soul of parliamentary cut and thrust. It may be possible to be a Christian and an MP, but it is exceptionally difficult to do so and not be corrupted.

Although Farron worked hard in campaigning (though wrong on many issues), the LibDems position did not change much. They gained a couple of seats but their overall vote share was lower than in 2015.

Since they are not even an effective third party in Westminster, the day of the Lib Dems is pretty much finished, as I said in 2010.

The Green Party

Again, pretty much stalemate here. Caroline Lucas did well to increase her majority in Brighton Pavilion but she is still the only Green MP.

The popularity of the Greens worldwide is diminishing and realities of life have meant that they are less popular in the UK than in previous years. Lucas survives because there are tens of thousands of students in Brighton and the city has a majority of young people. Most of the older Brightonians, of all classes (except the young), hate what the Greens have done to Brighton by introducing bad schemes in the name of sustainability, which are actually counter-productive (such as reducing lanes on arterial roads).⁶

The motivated teenagers

Two things have motivated young people to not only vote but to get passionately engaged in politics. The first is seven years of Tory austerity, which has ruined the prospects of young people and caused unbelievable suffering. The second is the integrity of Corbyn

⁶ Introduced because the Greens hate cars but this scheme means that there are now long traffic jams every day which increase the levels of CP2 pollution. Many older Brightonians (like me) have relocated westwards.

whom youngsters feel that they can trust. Corbyn has become an unlikely hero whose name is chanted like some pop-star in marches and rallies.

In fact, kids have been draping themselves with the Red Communist flag and making posters of stars and sickles without any clue about the destructive, genocidal history of Communism which has killed around 100 million people at least and proved to be an economic failure in every case.

Labour received more than half of all young people votes according to a recent analytical survey; Tories got around 33%. This will become a factor in the future.

But the kids are not just turning out to vote, they are becoming very active. The Tories spent a million pounds on Facebook campaigns, much of which were negative, and they failed to get any traction. Labour spent £2000 and got millions of 'Likes'; their message spread organically via teenage support.

Energised young people, especially students on vacation, are far more able to engage in political activism than the elderly, who are the mainstay of Conservatives. This is also going to be major factor in the future.

Globalism vs. nationalism and populism

The Tories have been the recent principal agents of the globalists, implementing elite strategies (such as austerity) to cripple the poor and advantage the rich. Blair was also a globalist so the problem is not isolated to the right. However, the intensity of globalist policies implemented under Cameron and Osborne is very high.

Theresa May is tarnished by this, having served under Cameron from 2010; there is no reason to doubt that she is as much as globalist as he is. Indeed, after a year in power she has done nothing to alleviate elite-driven policies that harm the poor and the working class.

Internationally there is a surge away from all forms of globalism as the fruits begin to be seen in every area of social life; whether it is the mass suicides of Indian farmers ruined by GM crops; the rise in autism caused by Big Pharma vaccines, anger at corrupt bankers, a crooked financial system verging on collapse, support for Muslim jihadi terrorists, bombing Christians in Syria and Iraq, and so on.

One of the reasons that people supported Corbyn is that he is not tied to the globalists; in fact he is opposed to many elite policies, such as austerity and privatisation of national interests. Furthermore, Corbyn campaigned on a strongly populist ticket, such as intending to scrap tuition fees. Anti-globalists and populists are receiving increasing support around the world.

The moral majority has normally been associated with conservatism and right-wing politics; however, this election changed that with an extreme left-winger gaining a massive surge in public moral support.

Scare-mongering and fear politics

The Tories continued their normal practices, inspired by Lynton Crosby and other experts, to smear the opposition with a barrage of expensive dirty tricks. I have mentioned elsewhere the failed Facebook campaign but there were many other avenues where Corbyn and others were vehemently attacked in the most vile and insulting manner.

Corbyn brilliantly refused to get upset by this and respond in kind and this was a strategic decision planned beforehand with John McDonnell. Labour did not pursue the same kind of smears and insults and refused to enter into combative, derogatory campaigning.

The public really warmed to this, being sick and tired of the increasingly American type nasty politics. I think that they had also been fed up with seeing lots of this in recent months in the referendum and the US and French elections.

So, amazingly, the more that Corbyn was castigated and attacked, the more the public warmed to him. Perhaps for the first time dirty-tricks campaigning failed to work and, in fact, advantaged the victim.

Change

Politicians, experts and pollsters should have learned by now that the real mood of the public is for change. Brexit, Trump, the rise of Le Pen and the near victory of Geert Wilders show this clearly.

In Britain the nation is sick and tired of the status quo and wants change. It no longer trusts the establishment, which is hand in hand with bankers, financial institutions and the rich. In particular it wants a change from austerity, something that is also being evidenced world-wide.

The success of Corbyn is more down to a desire for change than anything else.

Conclusions, concerns and postulations

Two party politics

The collapse of UKIP, the lacklustre performance of the LibDems and the poor performance of the SDP has meant that the country has returned to a two party system once more.

This reflects a growing polarisation in the country.

A plague on both your houses

The problem for me in the election, as usual, was that neither main party fulfilled my concerns for the future.

The Tory Party appeared to be the one that will push and deliver a hard Brexit (which is the only possible Brexit, all the other forms are nonsense that will not be tolerated by the EU; they will not let us have our cake and eat it). Yet if they were in power they would continue to pursue austerity measures that will ruin the country even further, destroy the NHS and damage the quality of life for everyone except the rich.

On the other hand, the Labour Party promised to reverse austerity measures, invest in national infrastructure, re-nationalise utilities and the trains, reverse student fees, invest in housing and much more. All these are commendable but Labour has a history of national investment that results in crippling national debt.

Furthermore, Corbyn has a worrying association with terrorists and would be weak on immigration and the Islamic jihad problem, two of the main worries of the nation. In

addition, though he has a history of Euroscepticism,⁷ his party is pro EU and Keir Starmer (the Labour Brexit spokesman) wants a very close relationship with it.

Both parties spell problems for Britain, perhaps a hung parliament is a good thing.

Theresa May's failure

May has secured a temporary respite by going to the 1922 Committee⁸ of Tory MPs and eating humble pie, while promising to fix things (which she can't).

What she cannot do is change the obvious fact that she is not the stable PM that she claims to be. She has shown hubris and took a gamble (against her character) that has caused devastation. She has revealed that her style of governance was autocratic and flawed and completely unsuited to British parliamentary politics. She failed to understand the mood of the public and was pursuing further austerity measures. She has done nothing to deal with the growing gap between the rich and the poor and did not live up to her opening speech about looking after the struggling workers.

May also led the government in a statist, illiberal direction with heavier regulations on business and stricter limits on immigration. This annoyed Thatcherites in the party, who will now be looking for vengeance.

All in all she is a busted flush. She has had nearly a year to actually achieve something worthwhile and failed; in fact she has made things much worse. By creating constitutional chaos she has actually made the country weaker in many respects, not least in the pound dropping and the markets becoming unstable due to a lack of confidence about the future.

She has also put the country into a much weaker negotiating position with the EU. It is like a prize-fighter heading for his biggest championship bout and deliberately breaking one of his arms before the fight.

All in all she could not have made a bigger mess and this means that she is not going to survive as PM. She may hang on for some months and she may declare that she will stay on, but it is highly unlikely that she will be allowed to.

Corbyn's potential for failure

Corbyn campaigns with passion and integrity, which is winsome, but his period of running the Labour Party has demonstrated that he is a useless manager. He can protest, he can be a charismatic speaker, but he cannot administrate. If it were not for the ability of John McDonnell he would not be where he is today.

Now the role of PM is, above all, centred in good managerial capacities. A PM that has few qualifications and average abilities can still be a great PM if they are a good manager with good ministers, ruling by cabinet consensus. On the other hand, a brilliantly qualified PM can be absolutely useless if they cannot manage and lead. Thatcher's skills lay in her firm leadership and managerial gifts. William Hague was more academically qualified but was a useless leader.

There is every chance that Corbyn would be a useless PM. If he cannot manage his own party then how can he manage the country? On top of that the idea of some of his shadow ministers being in power, like Diane Abbot as Home Secretary, is terrifying.

⁷ He voted against Maastricht and the Lisbon Treaty.

⁸ The Conservative private members committee is the parliamentary group of Tory MPs in the House of Commons.

Corbyn's Marxism

Also of great concern is the Marxism of both Corbyn and McDonnell. They have been open about this.

For a modern liberal politician to hold to Marxism, which has been proved by history to be a complete failure, and also lead to totalitarianism, is a great worry. If they cannot see this failure then there is something wrong.

This is why most left-wingers in Europe became Social Democrats but Labour is now led by two Marxists seeking to turn the clock back.

Now I agree with nationalising the utilities and the trains; that is sound policy and makes economic sense.

Reversing student fees is also attractive if it can be financed. What needs to happen is that Universities need purging and the huge numbers of courses much reduced to core subjects instead of nonsense (Oxford University just appointed a professor of 'Play'). Taking the number of graduates back to historic levels, say about 20% of school leavers,⁹ and teaching them important subjects properly (not in the current indoctrination methods) would lessen the financial burden.

Investing in house building is also a vital need and would inject capital into job creation. Investing in the NHS (which is actively being destroyed by the Tories according to plans laid years ago)¹⁰ is also a necessity, as is improving the care situation.

But all of these things cost money and it is money that we do not have due to Tory policies. GDP is already falling, business is diminishing and we are lagging behind other major countries. My concern is that Labour will increase borrowing and bankrupt the country.

Added to this is the problem of immigration in general and immigration of Muslim fanatics in particular. Corbyn is very soft on both these issues and this is contrary to the will of the people expressed in the Brexit referendum.

The polarisation in the country

What this election showed is a growing disparity between polar opposites. We can summarise these as:

- The young vs. the old.
- Pro 'hard' Brexit vs. pro 'soft' Brexit.
- Pro Brexit vs. pro Remain.
- The North vs. the South.
- Metropolitan London vs. everybody else.
- The rich vs. the poor.
- Irish Unionists vs. Irish nationalists.
- Scottish unionists vs. Scottish nationalists.
- The hard right vs. the hard left.
- Outward-looking voters vs. inward-looking voters.

⁹ UCAS data shows record numbers of 18-19 year olds going to university in England. In 2015 there were 235,000 18-year olds accepted into a full-time place at university (31%). This is the most ever recorded.

¹⁰ Note for example that the head of the NHS (which is no longer the Secretary of State by the way after 2012) is a man that spent years in the American health insurance business instead of a medical clinician.

This is very dangerous.

Looming crises

A coalition of chaos

First there is the appalling instability in British politics that will depress the markets even further at a time when we least need this. Added to this current instability will be further instability when the EU negotiations begin.

What is a constitutional travesty is that two minority sects are holding the British people to ransom. Davidson, who is not an MP, is demanding a 'soft' Brexit or she will pull the 13 Scots MPs away from the Conservatives. The DUP also want a 'soft' Brexit. Thus a British referendum result is being thwarted by a Scottish MSP and by the Irish DUP. Both are being courted by a remain PM with no majority. Despite this both the Tory and Labour position in the election was removal from the single-market and customs union. When this is properly understood there could be national anger.

Financial problems

Second the economy is heading for disaster and possibly another recession. In the first quarter of 2017 the economy was the slowest growing of all G7 countries. Inflation is at a three-year high and real wages are falling. Tax revenues will be reduced even further and people will feel much poorer than even now. Harder times are coming, whatever the implications of Brexit.

Indeed, there are already signs of a financial crisis beginning in Europe. The sixth largest bank in Spain (Banco Popular) has just collapsed, and this is being compared to the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. To avoid a full-scale panic, EU regulators hastily arranged a sale of the bank to Santander for one Euro, which will divert 7bn Euros to prop up the failing bank. The problem is – which Spanish banks will be next? Liberbank shares dropped 20% and then another 19% on 9 June 2017.

The EU is the second largest economy in the world and any potential crash in the EU is going to have global consequences. It would not take much to push the dollar and Wall Street (already hanging off a cliff by their fingernails) into debt oblivion. Deutsche Bank is also teetering on the brink of a real crisis caused by holding trillions of debt.

Currently, Italian government bonds amounting to a trillion dollars have negative yields. This isn't possible in a free market and it shows the corrupt nature of global central bankers and fiat money. The European Central Bank prints money to buy Italian bonds, having bought 88% of Italian government debt since 2008. If (when) the ECB stops buying Italian bonds (which is what Germany is demanding) Italy's financial system will crash.

So Italy, Spain and Greece are facing financial meltdown – which will collapse the Euro. Furthermore, multiple economic experts, especially independent ones, are predicting a massive economic crash very soon. Certainly the deceleration of global credit growth is nearly at levels during the 2008 crash.

Brexit negotiations

The Brexit negotiations begin next week and EU bureaucrats are cock-a-hoop that they are now in a much stronger bargaining position, thanks to May's bungled election. This involves dismantling economic and political arrangements that have been built over 40+ years. The complexity of this would be significant even if Britain was in a strong position. Divorces are always notoriously messy and this will be no different. If there is less trade and fewer migrants (foreign applications to the NHS have already dropped by 96%) there will be higher taxes and lower public spending.

Brexit

The likelihood of a ‘soft’ Brexit is now inevitable. As I have already explained, Davidson has threatened to pull Scottish Tories out of the party unless there is an ‘open’ Brexit (i.e. in the single market); she voted remain. Labour’s Brexit negotiator wants a ‘soft’ Brexit. The DUP want a soft Brexit.

Theresa May sacked her two chief advisors and made some changes. She placed Damian Greene as First Secretary of State (head of the Cabinet and effective deputy PM) – he voted remain. She kept Hammond as Chancellor (despite wanting to sack him earlier), he voted remain. She then made Gavin Barwell the new Chief of Staff, who was a vociferous remainder that castigated Brexiteers. Of course May herself voted remain. We can see how the land is lying.

However, the public wants a clear Brexit. Remember that over 80% of voters voted for a party that affirmed a Brexit position in their manifesto that implied it would take us out of the single-market. As Jacob Rees Mogg put it, ‘soft’ Brexit and ‘hard’ Brexit are just terms implying in or out of the EU.

Also remember that both leavers and remainers in the referendum campaign made it clear that exiting the EU would mean leaving the single-market, the customs union and the European Court of Justice. It was only the sophistry of the remainers after the referendum that tried to spin the lie that the country did not vote for a ‘hard’ Brexit. (The terms ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ Brexit were never mentioned during the referendum campaign.) Also John McDonnell recently made it clear, and Corbyn also said this in interviews, that the referendum meant leaving the single-market. Thus the official position of Labour is now more ‘hard’ Brexit than the Tories (though, confusingly, Starmer is opposed to this).¹¹

Now we have unelected meddlers like Alastair Campbell doing the media rounds saying that the election was a vote for a ‘soft’ Brexit, demanding that a ‘hard’ Brexit or ‘no deal’ be removed from the options. EU spokesmen and politicians are also rejoicing that the election result is a pro-EU vote.

It will lead to national fury if Brexit-lite means that nothing much changes. Corbyn wants us still subservient to the Court of Human Justice, for example.

The real issue about leaving the EU was national sovereignty and taking back power. Yes it was also about immigration levels but this is dependent upon taking back power. The nation voted to take back power. If we stay in the single-market and under the Court of Justice based in Luxembourg then we will have no sovereign power at all and will not be able to control immigration.

Nigel Farage has pledged to return to front-line politics in the light of this threat and he is a force to be reckoned with. He has been the most successful politician in post-war history without even being a British MP. People will vote for Farage, who is a powerful presenter. If this happens, and if UKIP get a properly reformed leadership, then British politics could change again into a three-horse race. Or it could split either the Labour or Tory vote.

¹¹ The Labour position is confused. The Labour Party officially campaigned to remain in the referendum and castigated Corbyn for not mounting a strong enough campaign. Keir Starmer is a remainder who wants to rip up the Great Repeal Bill and yet listen to the voice of the 52% people, but negotiate to stay in the single-market and the customs union, and yet also take control of our borders. In other words a contradictory position that is untenable to the EU. Despite all this both Corbyn and McDonnell have recently said that the referendum vote means withdrawing from the single-market. Blairites want to stay in the EU, the left are more Eurosceptic.

Conspiracy theories

There are some claiming that the Tory failure was a planned strategy by the global elite to get rid of the option of a 'hard' Brexit.

This theory claims that an illegitimate media interpretation of the election is that it was a national rejection of a 'hard' Brexit. I have already shown that that is false since over 80% of people voted for a party espousing leaving the single-market. The greatest champion of staying in the EU (Nick Clegg) actually lost his seat.

By claiming that the public rejected May's position of a 'hard' Brexit or 'no deal' these have now been pulled from the table. The theorists claim that the Tories deliberately led a terrible campaign and that May was a sacrificial lamb to facilitate a 'soft' Brexit or even staying in the EU. Note Macron's immediate offer that Britain can come back into full membership.

Thus the theory is that May obeyed the globalist's demands, called a stupid election, failed to campaign properly and enabled the media narrative of the failure being a public denial of a 'hard' Brexit.

Whether any of that is true or not, what seems certain is that a 'hard' Brexit is now not on the cards and no one is explaining why. In fact the public trust is being betrayed by the ones holding the political pressure points – Ruth Davidson and the DUP. This treasonous position is bolstered by the fact the Labour, and especially Keir Starmer, has no stomach for defending a 'hard' Brexit (which was voted for by the public) either.

Uncertainty

Whichever way you cut the mustard, Britain is in for a period of deep uncertainty and possibly turbulence. This is going to affect the markets significantly. The EU is also threatening to take away key financial centres that currently reside in London, such as the clearinghouse for banks. Were this to happen Britain's GDP would effectively collapse since it is largely based (due to Tory policies) on the service sector.

Brexit-lite would almost certainly mean severe restrictions on our ability to make trade deals with nations outside the EU and the Commonwealth. It would be the worst of all outcomes.

I think it safe to say that Britain has never faced a more dangerous set of circumstances in peacetime.

Implications for Christians

The current government

Needless to say, Christians are obligated to submit to the government in power, no matter how corrupt and venal they are. As good citizens we can raise concerns and complaints through the usual channels, but anything seditious or destabilising is forbidden.

As citizens of the heavenly kingdom we see no purpose in protests and political activism; God's will is supreme, even if that will is for our country to be governed badly. However, as good citizens of both heaven and earth, we will do all we can to do good to our neighbours, that is, whomever we have contact with. So, as we are able, we will seek to alleviate the suffering of those who have been damaged by government policies, such as the poor or the sick.

If you are able you can write to your MP, as I have done, warning them of their need to represent all the people under God and not pursue policies that do harm by following some ideology blindly.

Unconditional loyalty to some fleshly political party is very unwise.

Similarly, rejoicing when a political party founders is inappropriate if it means that the country is weakened and destabilised.

In all the vicissitudes of political events, the Christian must focus continually upon the Lord and not be moved by the affairs of men.

Eschatology

The eschatological process is that there is a growing turmoil through all the nations and political systems of the world towards the end (Matt 24:6-8, 12). There are crises on all fronts and no national leader is able to properly deal with the level of the problems faced. One could postulate a global financial crisis combined with a world war in this scenario – two things that are entirely possible soon.

However, out of all this turmoil there emerges a hegemony,¹² perhaps dominated by a single person, that promises to fix all these problems and is given authority over the world (2 Thess 2:3-4, 9-10; Rev 13:4). This hegemony then does fix the problems and initiates a period of peace (1 Thess 5:3), security and unparalleled hedonism (Matt 24:38). Trade booms and the rich have all sorts of luxuries while ruling over serfs (Rev 18:3, 9, 11-15); man's sin abounds in fulness (2 Thess 2:3; 2 Pt 3:3; Rev 17:1-2, 4).

However, in the course of this, the antichristian world government identifies Christians as the cause of the world's ills and initiates a global persecution intended to kill all Christians and destroy all churches (Matt 24:9; Rev 13:7).

This persecution is so successful that the world thinks that there are no Christians left (Rev 11:7-10) but large numbers continue to meet in secret (Rev 11:11). As the church begins to face extinction (Matt 24:22), it is then that the Lord Jesus returns in power and glory and winds this world up for judgment (Matt 24:30).

Are we looking at this beginning phase of global turmoil? It is possible but uncertain. Whatever the case, I believe that 2017 is going to be a very difficult year for everyone. Our only hope is not to set our minds upon this world and its futile pleasures at all but to centre upon Christ who never fails his people. Those who trust in the world's pleasures and securities will be frustrated and face futility. Those who trust in God will have hope during their course in this world and glory in the future.

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¹² Hegemony: leadership or dominance, especially by one state or social group over others. The EU Commission is an example of a hegemony.