
**“Where there is discord, may we
bring harmony”**

critisticuffs

1. The outcome of a successful election is a government. After the polls close and the result emerges a new government is formed by the winners, who promise to rule in the name of the whole nation, and the losers concede their defeat. This last step is often publicly ritualised in the form of a symbolic phone call to the victor or a concession speech. A successful election produces formal unity between the rulers and the ruled: “our government”. That this result is produced is presupposed but not necessarily achieved by an election. Indeed, election campaigns have the opposite immediate effect by declaring, opening up and emphasising disagreements between political parties competing for power. Each party educates the voters about the problems facing the nation and that their respective plan is preferable to the plans of their opponents.¹ Yet, the end result of a successful election is that one side concedes the other side’s rule is tolerable. An election opens up division within the nation to produce unity for the nation.
2. The central challenge facing the nation on which voters are educated and invited to rack their brains in this election is Brexit.² Both sides subscribe to the mantra of modern imperialism, which is to realise global power by respecting sovereign powers elsewhere: creating treaties between states to negotiate their relations. One side considers the national interest better served through individual treaties with different countries (Brexit), the other side considers this interest better served through integration into the EU (Remain).
3. In the past, both of the British parties that have handed power to each other since the Second World War were split on the issue and thus did not make Brexit a part of their platform. Consequently, elections could not resolve this divide among the professional nationalists, i.e. politicians. In an election voters may only choose a candidate not a policy, leaving some voters, when selecting a candidate, to choose, say, between their conviction of the need for more austerity and to leave the EU.
4. The split within the Tory party became untenable for its leadership. The 2016 referendum was meant to resolve this. The way to achieve this was to obtain consent from the population to maintain the status quo where the global might of the British State is realised both within and without the EU. Famously, this plan did not work, formal unity was established neither in the Tory party nor between ruled and rulers. Rather, the divisions produced during the campaign remained: a rift between the ruled (majority leave) and their representatives (majority remain), i.e. a political crisis.
5. A few reshuffles later the Tory Government claimed a mandate from “the people” against their elected representatives, who too held a claim to represent “the people”. To realise the true will of the people, the executive branch suspended Parliament to prevent it from sabotaging

¹ It is no wonder that across the globe elections are the starting point for civil wars. That this is not the effect of elections in successful capitalist countries speaks to the unity despite opposition between political forces in these countries.

² In 2017 Labour in contrast to its main opponent defined the effects of austerity as the central challenge facing the nation. In 2019 Labour agrees with all its opponents that Brexit is a central national challenge.

its Brexit strategy. This amounted to a suspension of democratic disagreement, i.e. debate in Parliament, and the enforcement of unity, i.e. that the nation speaks with one voice, the Government's. The suspension of Parliament is not the opposite to democracy, but rather the pursuit of democracy's own ends – unity between rulers and ruled – with different means for a nation perceived to be in crisis.

6. The legislative and the judicial branch were not amused and pushed back. The Supreme Court ruled the prorogation of Parliament unlawful on the grounds that the Government's reasons were insufficient to justify the frustration of Parliament's ability to scrutinise Government.³ Meanwhile, parliamentarians proposed national unity governments⁴ or a national caretaker government⁵, i.e. they proposed to suspend their disagreements in the interest of national unity, in light of the political crisis facing the nation. What the other side attempted to achieve by force, they aimed to realise by agreement.
7. Both sides claim to represent the “true will of the people”. They both tactically invoke formal arguments (the results of the referendum v the results of the last general election) but consider more to be at stake than formalism. The Government declared opposing MPs as “collaborators”⁶, accusing them of surrendering, and its friendly press called three High Court judges “enemies of the people”⁷. All of this after a remain MP was murdered by a fascist.⁸ Meanwhile, remainers investigated whether Brexit was a foreign plot⁹ or at least illegal¹⁰. Both sides accused the other side of undermining the common good, with a furore fuelled by nationalist indignation.
8. The outcome of this ruckus is that for one of the two main parties the question of Brexit has been resolved. The Tory party slung out its (strong) remain MPs, several of whom found a new home with the Liberal Democrats. Now, with Brexit on hold for a few months, another election is meant to resolve the crisis: reestablishing the unity between ruled and rulers. Most contenders

³ “The next question is whether there is a reasonable justification for taking action which had such an extreme effect upon the fundamentals of our democracy. Of course, the Government must be accorded a great deal of latitude in making decisions of this nature. We are not concerned with the Prime Minister's *motive* in doing what he did. We are concerned with whether there was a reason for him to do it. It will be apparent from the documents quoted earlier that no reason was given for closing down Parliament for five weeks.” – UK Supreme Court, <https://archive.ph/XwNYJ>

⁴ Caroline Lucas. “I'm calling for a cabinet of women to stop a disastrous no-deal Brexit”. 1 Aug 2019.

⁵ The Guardian. “Opposition parties disagree over move to see off no-deal Brexit”. 30 Sep 2019

⁶ The Guardian. “Johnson accuses MPs and EU of ‘terrible collaboration’ over Brexit”. 14 Aug 2019

⁷ Daily Mail. “Enemies of the people: Fury over ‘out of touch’ judges who have ‘declared war on democracy’ by defying 17.4m Brexit voters and who could trigger constitutional crisis”. 3 Nov 2016

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Jo_Cox

⁹ The Observer. “Arron Banks, Brexit and the Russia connection”. 16 Jun 2018.; The Times. “Labour asks about Dominic Cummings' years working in Russia”. 3 Nov 2019.

¹⁰ The Guardian. “Johnson ‘knew about Vote Leave's illegal overspend’, says MP”. 2 Nov 2019.

ying to rule over the UK enter this contest with a strong preference for or against how the UK should structure its relations to other imperialist powers and the rest of the world. The one notable exception being the Labour party which pitches itself as a true representative of the nation as a whole in the form of a pledge for a second referendum.

9. It is questionable whether the election will deliver on what all relevant parties desire from it: the unification of the ruled under “their” government. On the other hand, what is not in question is that the election campaigns educate voters on the pressing question of the day: “What is best for Britain in the world?” Whichever way this is decided, it requires that the Government can rely on its population and is able to utilise it. For workers this means having to give more performance for less pay to help “their” companies and country with the travails of the world market, which is supervised and arranged by the UK, its rivals, and its partners.