

POLITICS versus PEOPLE

Then, Now.....& Next?

By 80 year old political activist

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**A scathing indictment of Britain's political
establishment**

**This is an abridged, simplified and updated
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01/08/2017

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INTRODUCTION

This short 28 page exposition briefly examines government today and asks a simple question:

Why do we tolerate the confrontational and divisive system which masquerades as democracy in Britain today?

A system in which hypocrisy, dishonesty and incompetence seem to thrive?

It offers an explanation

.....and it offers a solution.

A simple concept to replace the present two party cartel with truly democratic government.

A concept which would change for ever the lives of the citizens of Great Britain.

In NEXT? (2022 – 2042) we take a glimpse into the future to find out just what it might be like to live in a truly democratic Britain

But first a very brief history lesson – THEN.

THEN

Perhaps the earliest example of the devolution of power was the Magna Carta in 1215 signed by King John, which ended the absolute power of the monarchy and gave the barons a say in government.

In 1432 during the reign of the infant King Henry VI the vote was officially granted to men who owned property worth more than forty shillings. This amounted to about 2% of the population.

The subsequent three centuries saw parliament develop and become more influential in government but a growing frustration among the people led to demands for the franchise to be extended.

Resisted by the establishment who saw this and the emergence of women's campaign groups as a threat to their power, democratic progress was not achieved easily and in 1819 on the site of St Peters Square in Manchester, what became known as the Peterloo Massacre took place when the Yeomanry were deployed to break up a peaceful demonstration and sixteen demonstrators, including a woman and a child were reported to have lost their lives.

Similar events were taking place in France where seventeen thousand were officially executed and many more died in prison before *their* revolution, started in 1789, culminated in the guillotining of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and the overthrow of the monarchy in favour of a republic.

This gives us some idea of the lengths the establishment will go to in order to resist democratic progress and keep their stranglehold on power.

No doubt influenced by events across the channel and the growing pressure for reform at home, Lord Grey the British Prime Minister introduced a series of measures designed to pacify the reformers, leading to what was hailed as the "Great Reform Act" in 1832. However since this extended the franchise only to men who owned property worth more than £10 it was hardly a dramatic change in the status quo and still left 85% of the people disenfranchised.

The establishment's grip on power was barely affected by this step since each voter was required to stand on a platform and announce his choice of candidate for all to see - and if his landlord or employer did not approve of his choice, he faced eviction or dismissal.

We shall see later how this expedient is still employed today by those in power.

Sustained pressure by the reformers, notably a group called The Chartists, led to a further Reform Act in 1872, known as the Secret Ballot Act, following which men were able to vote without fear or favour - but only the select few.

A few years later the pressure for further reform led to all men getting the vote and then, in 1918, women over thirty with property rights- and finally, in 1928, to all women. Again this was a lengthy and hard fought campaign costing the life of Emiline Pankhurst a leading suffragette.

Thus was established the right of all citizens, directly through the ballot box, to influence the choice of who should make the laws which they are all required to obey.

An attempt by the EU to erode this fundamental right was rejected in a people's referendum in 2016.

NOW

So what exactly *is* democracy?

There seems to be no definitive definition. All governments claim that the system under which they operate is democratic. But then they would wouldn't they?

But the reality is that we actually have more in common with a dictatorship.

Surely democracy should mean that the majority of the people get the government they want. But under our “winner takes all” system a single political party with an overall majority of seats (not votes) is free to impose its doctrines and ideology on the people – even the thirty six million people who didn't vote for it. Isn't that what dictators do?

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Power corrupts – and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

But in Britain a single political party is able to seize absolute power against the wishes of the vast majority of the people.

The Conservative and Labour Parties are obsessed with single party rule. They have convinced themselves and their followers that this is the only way a country can be governed.

This arrogant dogma results in divisive, confrontational and inefficient government.

The manner in which important matters of government are debated is nothing short of farcical. The debating chamber itself can only seat one third of the members and is divided, like a gladiator's arena, into two “ends” from which the two opposing parties we have entrusted with the welfare of our nation, hurl abuse at each other like overgrown schoolchildren.

Few of them actually take part in the debates. Instead they pair off to cancel out each other's vote. Or they hang around in the members bar until a bell rings to signify the end of the debate. Whether they agree or not, they are then instructed by their party whips to vote for or against the motion. Some may not even have a clue what was being debated.

Failure to toe the party line can have serious consequences for rebellious MPs with minds of their own. The party whips have the power to destroy the political careers of dissenters. Hence our career politicians live in fear of saying something which may displease the party hierarchy. **Often, this can be by simply telling the truth!**

A nation's citizens are entitled to expect that the politicians running their country are of the highest calibre. But the process used for selecting candidates precludes this. Party loyalty all too often takes precedence over competence. Cronies of the Party leader are often given "safe seats" thus guaranteeing them certainty of election. Candidates can also be foisted on the Party by their donors in return for financial support – a particularly disturbing form of blackmail.

It is inevitable under this incestuous selection culture that many of our MPs are "not fit for purpose".

Really bright and gifted individuals – the ones who should really be running the country - have minds of their own. But if you do not swear complete allegiance to one of the two main parties and agree to identify wholeheartedly with all its doctrines, then it is almost impossible to become an MP. Under the present system it is a closed shop.

Candidates from other parties rarely get elected, no matter how talented they may be. Instead we have many second rate, often disreputable, MPs chosen by their parties for the wrong reasons.

To be chosen as a candidate by one of the main parties you don't need practical skills. What you do need is blind loyalty to the party and a talent for deception denial and evasion. In other words you need to be a good politician.

Party puppets are preferred to people with minds of their own.

Surely the people would prefer to hear the honest personal opinions of their MPs instead of being fed a well rehearsed party line. But instead the integrity of these MPs is sacrificed on the altar of a false façade of party solidarity.

Power is preferred to principles.

Socialism was abandoned when, in order to become more electable, Tony Blair renamed the party New Labour and those on the left of the party failed to break away and form their own Socialist Party, sacrificing their principles to enjoy the trappings of power.

The Conservatives are striving to be perceived as a more liberal party, which probably doesn't suit some of the old Tory stalwarts. But they keep a low profile for the sake of party unity.

Again, in 2010, power was preferred to principles. This time by the Liberal Democrats who, having campaigned for many years for proportional representation, finally found themselves in a position to demand it as a condition of their coalition with the Conservatives. This golden opportunity was tamely surrendered in exchange for the deputy leadership and a few seats in the Cabinet.

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Our electoral system is heavily stacked in favour of the Conservatives and Labour.

This is one reason why, over a period of fifty years turnouts at general elections slumped from 83.6% to 59.4%.

Only three other countries in the world have lower turnouts than Britain. Those with the highest turnouts - over 90% - do not operate the same electoral system as we do. This should say something to us.

Why *are* so many of us disillusioned with politics?

The main parties would like to think that we the voters fit neatly into two political categories, **but we don't**. The peoples' choice is being frustrated

by our electoral system and, as we shall see later, by an unfair party funding mechanism. Frustrated too are all those very sincere and capable members of minor parties who, despite having national appeal and support, are denied representation in parliament.

With only two realistic and equally unattractive choices, the excitement has disappeared from politics and many of those who do vote, do so on a “lesser of two evils” basis. Many vote for one of the main parties just because their parents voted for it, or because there is no other viable option.

In around four hundred constituencies the result is already known before the election takes place. So if you live in a “foregone conclusion” constituency what is the point of voting for any other party if it has no chance of being elected? What, indeed, is the point of another party having a candidate there in the first place? Why even bother going through the charade of pretending that a democratic process is taking place?

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By far the biggest electoral bloc is the 40% or so of the electorate who do not bother to vote or who vote tactically.

- Many because their vote is meaningless unless they live in one of the few marginal seats which are the only ones that matter.
- Many because they are fed up with the existing discredited political establishment.
- Many because there isn't a candidate or a party which appeals to them – or if there is, it doesn't stand a chance of being elected.
- Many because MPs are allowed to stay in their jobs and keep their fat pensions when they fiddle expenses. When they accept bribes. When they are suspected of using their important positions to cover up unlawful sexual activities with children and other immoral or criminal acts.

Little wonder we distrust political parties who condone such behaviour by

refusing to introduce a system which would enable these rogue politicians to be sacked.

How can government expect the people to behave honestly when they themselves set such an appalling example?

Should anyone be surprised that people have little respect for politicians and have disengaged from politics?

There are of course some honest hard working politicians. But, to quote Henry Kissinger:

90% of politicians get the other 10% a bad name.”

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Honest, impartial and ethical government, given the fragility of human nature, is not possible when a single political party can achieve absolute power against the wishes of most people and is funded by external interests who will expect something in return.

He who pays the piper calls the tune!

These outside interests include the EU which has devised a back door mechanism by which they are able to use taxpayers' money to fund the main parties (but not minor parties) to the tune of millions of pounds.

In 2013 the EU funded three political organizations – the Tory AECR (£1.4 million), the Lib Dem ALDE (£2.23 million) and Labour's European Socialists (£4.99 million).

How was it possible to have a fair and impartial debate – and a meaningful referendum on Europe – when the establishment was being paid to make sure we didn't have one?

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The party with the biggest election budget is more likely to win. Pre election time is an opportunity for selfish party donors to screw the parties for their own benefit and to the detriment of the people.

Not only must a party make promises to its donors, it must also make more promises to the voters than its rival does. Once elected on the strength of these often irresponsible and unrealistic promises the party must borrow more. This means more debt for future generations.

Does the party care about this? No. It has achieved its priority which is to win the election at all costs. Its MPs and supporters can then look forward to five years on the gravy train.

This will always be the case when government is a two horse race between two parties.

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As long as our political parties have an opportunity to cling on to power under an outdated electoral system, the people cannot be expected to find the government of Britain acceptable. Yet our political establishment stubbornly defends this unfair system because it fears that a fairer system may be a threat to its power - just as the establishment *has* done for thousands of years.

Why should either party want to change a system, even if it is unfair, which has enabled them to take turns in government - six times each since 1924?

How can you expect to have a happy family when, every five years, their estranged and bitter parents take turns at having custody of the children?

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Even the two main parties who benefit from the electoral system which bestows upon them absolute power of government, occasionally find it difficult to justify and from time to time will offer us some token gestures – just like Lord Derby did a hundred years earlier.

..... like a referendum, not on proportional representation, but on a watered down AV version which few of us could be bothered to

understand and even fewer of us saw as a solution.

.....and like Labour's vote catching promise in its 1997 election manifesto which it obviously had no intention of keeping; ***“An independent Commission on voting will.....recommend a proportional alternative to the first past the post system”***

.....and like the Conservatives' intention to change constituency boundaries – not just because they are unfair (which they are) but because it will benefit their Party at the polls.

Surely these weren't Lord Derby style attempts to placate those who were urging reform - were they?

Of course they were.

2015 & 2017

The turnouts at these general elections actually increased, largely due to the popularity of new emerging parties, tactical voting and vote rigging.

2015 came within a whisker of creating a constitutional crisis. This should act as a warning. Governments should take heed, be aware of the fragility of our electoral system, and change it.

Realising that falling turnouts were a threat to its credibility, certain desperate steps were taken by the establishment before the elections.

Large amounts of taxpayers' money were spent trying to persuade people to vote.

Oblivious to the clear message being sent out by the millions of disillusioned voters and abstainers, and arrogantly assuming that the problem was simply voter apathy and not its own failings, the establishment introduced voter registration days which were largely ignored.

In another desperate attempt to “reinvigorate our democracy” on demand postal voting was introduced. This ill-conceived idea was slammed by a top judge as “being open to fraud on an industrial scale” and sure enough vote rigging was rampant in certain areas.

Do we really want to be governed by people who have to rely on vote rigging to become MPs?

Do we really want to be governed by political parties so desperate for power that they turn a blind eye to this crime?

How much longer will we allow the political establishment to get away with this scandalous state of affairs?

It denounces the practice of vote rigging, but, by opposing reform, it is itself blatantly culpable of this practice.

Prior to the 2015 election the pundits were convinced that we would have a hung parliament and maybe a constitutional crisis, the cause of which could be laid squarely at the door of single constituency first past the post voting.

Calls for electoral reform gathered momentum.

Alas the hopes of the reformists were dashed when a Conservative government was returned to office with an overall majority and again in 2017 when the Conservatives and Labour consolidated their cartel on power. Democratic evolution was the loser in these elections.

There is, of course, nothing new in this, since for centuries people who didn't vote for the winning party have, in effect, been denied a say in the affairs of their country.

The difference however in 2015 and to a lesser extent in 2017, was the support demonstrated for the alternative parties UKIP, the SNP and the Greens. It is interesting to examine the facts and figures for 2015.

The SNP captured 4.7% of the UK vote and managed to elect 8.6% of the total MPs in parliament – 56 of them.

The Greens and UKIP captured 16.6% of the vote but less than half of one percent of the total seats - a grand total of two MPs to be precise – one each.

So SNP, with 3.6 million fewer votes, ended up with 54 more MPs than the Greens and UKIP. Yet we are told that we live in a democracy!

The SNP factor was potentially a time bomb since they could quite easily have found themselves holding the balance of power, thus creating a situation which enabled an exclusively regional party, whose desire was to break up the UK, dictating policy affecting nearly 40 million people who didn't vote for it.

If this alarming prospect could have become a reality in 2015, what's to stop it happening in the future?

The emphatic – indeed the ONLY answer – is proportional voting.

Had this been in place in 2015 the SNP would still have 30 seats in parliament, but not enough for them to wield such dangerous power. This is because other so called minor parties would have won 168 seats too.

The result would have been a fair, balanced and much more representative British government similar to that which exists in other countries. The Netherlands, whilst not perfect, is a fine example of modern consensus democracy.

Proportional voting would also eliminate two other factors inherent in the present system – tactical voting (estimated at 9%) and vote rigging.

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The make up of future governments democratically elected by proportional voting would be quite different in the future – particularly with the emergence of new parties as we shall see later.

If non establishment parties stood any chance of winning seats in parliament, more people would turn out to vote – and many voters may defect from the two main parties.

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The result of these elections was not all bad news for those of us who campaign for reform.

In an unprecedented move by UKIP, the SNP, the Greens, Lib Dems and the Welsh Nationalists, these parties put their differences aside and joined forces with some of the reformers, to protest outside 10 Downing Street against the inequity of first past the post.

Was this be the first sign that those who are thus unfairly discriminated against (and this includes most of the electorate) may be prepared to unite in a common cause and fight together for the sake of democracy?

So where do we go from here?

NEXT?

So, in 2015, it took nearly 4 million votes to elect one single UKIP MP. It took well over a million votes to elect one single Green MP. But it took less than 35,000 votes to elect a Conservative MP and less than 26,000 votes to elect a Scottish Nationalist.

So from these figures it is abundantly clear that our voting system is a shambles.

Political Britain is not enjoying the best of health. It is suffering from a particularly nasty virus – a first past the post electoral system.

It serves only one purpose - which is to keep the two main parties in power. It must be scrapped and replaced by proportional voting under which the anomalies and inequity of first past the post are eliminated and **political parties are allocated seats in parliament in proportion to the number of votes they actually receive at the polls.**

The two fairest alternative systems are thought to be STV (the Single Transferrable Vote) and National or Regional PR (Proportional Representation).

I won't go into all the pros and cons of STV and PR. These and the existing system are examined in the unabridged copy of the booklet.

STV and PR both have merit. The important thing is that the main obstacle to democratic government – individual single seat constituencies – is removed, and both systems aim to do this.

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Because reform will threaten its grip on power, the establishment has tried to condition us into believing that this will be bad for us. They have created a number of myths which are explored - and exploded - in the booklet.

One argument used against reform is that the personal contact between MPs and voters will be lost. In fact it will be improved under regional PR.

Another is that it may give extremist or “unacceptable” parties a say in government. Unacceptable to whom? Certainly not the supporters of such

parties. Those who would use this argument against PR are saying, in effect, that their own views are allowed to be represented but not those of some of their fellow citizens. Do these bigots *really* want democracy?

If you truly believe in democracy you must accept it for what it is. If you want it on your terms then it’s not democracy.

The establishment parties will argue that PR will lead to weak government. This is utter rubbish. They are the ones who are weak. Read the book to find out why.

Explained later is a different model for modern governance. You will then realize how irrelevant these arguments are.

The only thing which *will* be weaker after PR is the absolute power bestowed upon a single party and the power of the party whips who force MPs to always toe the party line – often against their better judgement or their consciences. Just as the common men were intimidated by *their* masters in the 19th Century.

Have we really made such little progress?

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Why does the appointment of our government have to be an “either/or” choice? Why should popular minor parties (and therefore their supporters) be excluded from having their say in government?

It is unacceptable that we can be ruled by a single political party which nearly four out of five of us don’t want and don’t vote for.

How can a political party claim to have a mandate to rule us when only one out of five of us have voted for it?

This is a mockery of democracy – and it's even more blatant in local government.

In the name of democratic evolution we must aim to achieve a system of government which is not dominated by two parties.

The people must be given a meaningful choice.

In the age of parties before people and with the political establishment firmly entrenched and determined to keep it that way, it is hard to see them introducing a fairer system which jeopardizes their stranglehold on power. They pay lip service to reform but in reality will resist it to the death.

The discontent of the people and the pressure for change from bodies like the Electoral Reform Society is ineffective in the face of the might of the main parties. Maybe those millions of people who boycott the polling booths are doing democracy a favour.

Voting actually condones and perpetuates the system. Not voting is an effective way of protest. Voting is a waste of time anyway if your preferred party has no chance of winning.

Perhaps if turnouts fell below 50% some half hearted changes may be made - but don't hold your breath.

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There is another possibility.

The Electoral Reform Society has been campaigning for electoral reform for more than a century – **but we are no further forward.** The Society's brief is limited to campaigning and lobbying for reform, not for direct action. Perhaps it is time for a more radical approach to the problem.

Repairs to our broken electoral system can only be achieved with the approval of parliament. This is not going to happen whilst it is dominated by two political parties who don't want it to happen. No amount of campaigning is likely to change this.

The establishment only acts when its power is threatened.

But nobody has ever taken the issue forcefully into the political arena. Nobody has seriously given the people the direct opportunity to clean up politics, despite the rhetoric.

Perhaps the time is right for a new party to enter the political arena to promote political reform. It would not need a lengthy manifesto containing unachievable promises that cannot realistically be kept. It would simply need to emphasize the inadequacies of the present system and the advantages of government after PR.

Such a radical step will be fiercely resisted by the establishment, so today's reformers will need to have plenty of resolve to survive a 21st Century equivalent of the Peterloo Massacre!

NEXT? (2017 – 2022)

Earlier I described the unique spectacle of five political parties, who only a few days earlier had been locked in battle against each other, joining forces to protest against their common enemy – first past the post.

Let us now contemplate a fanciful version of what happened next. Call it wishful thinking if you like.

Although we were spared a constitutional nightmare on this occasion, 2015 had exposed dangerous flaws in our electoral system. This attracted much speculation and comment in the media which raised awareness among the people.

To take advantage of this awareness let us suppose that a politically neutral, movement has emerged to contest the 2022 general election with a single issue manifesto – to scrap first past the post and to introduce proportional voting on a national or regional basis.

Let us suppose that this movement was sponsored by one or more of the existing electoral reform organizations who acted as catalysts to unite those parties whose energies had been largely wasted in contesting previous elections and who had joined forces with the reformists in their protest at 10 Downing Street after the 2015 election.

The new movement suggests to these parties that their ideological aspirations should be postponed and instead of contesting the next election as opponents, which plays right into the hands of the establishment parties, some form of alliance should be considered.

Talks between the parties took place and progressed well since they recognized only too well that successful reform would enable them to have a greater say in future government.

An Alliance for Reform was proposed.

The Lib Dems who had long advocated reform, were invited to lend their

support and so too were other minor parties.

The movement gained momentum and it became clear that the Alliance may enjoy some success at the polls.

Whilst Labour in the past had refused to countenance a change in the voting system there were signs that their attitude may be changing. There was a vague hint of this in the party's 2015 manifesto which included a promise of "*A people led Constitutional Convention to debate the future of UK governance*"

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After three election defeats, the likelihood of continuing support for the SNP in Scotland and the likelihood that the Conservatives would redraw constituency boundaries in their favour, many in the Labour Party began to fear the prospect of lengthy political wilderness in opposition.

It had not been lost on the party that on a proportionate vote in 2015 they would have secured only 24 seats fewer than they did and in 2017 only 2 fewer. Nor had it gone unnoticed that in 2015 the Conservatives would have fared much worse with 89 fewer seats.

What would Labour have to lose by throwing their weight behind a reform movement which was rapidly gaining popular support? Like those other parties, they may have something to gain from such an alliance and whilst it may not give them the possibility of overall control in the future, it would almost certainly result in this being denied to the Conservatives too.

Was the writing on the wall for the demise of single party rule? Was this an opportune time for the Labour Party to make history and support the campaign for reform?

Talks with the other alliance partners were initiated and a temporary agreement was reached that the 2022 election should be contested in cooperation with each other. A strategy was worked out and a tactical deployment of each party's resources and candidates was agreed, its objective being to oust the Conservatives and form a coalition until electoral reform was achieved, after which, each party would be able to

contest future elections with the advantage of proportional voting.

This would mean a seismic shift in traditional politics, but the reformers had been encouraged by events across the Channel where, in 2017, the French people had also overwhelmingly rejected the two mainstream parties who, as in Britain, had previously dominated politics for decades.

The polls suggested that there was an appetite for reform among voters. Finding themselves increasingly isolated, the Conservatives eventually capitulated.

Thus the Electoral Reform Act was introduced a couple of years into the 2022 parliament. It was an historic moment in British politics and a triumph for democracy.

NEXT? (2022 - 2042)

Shall we now take a glimpse of Britain twenty years after the reformers had succeeded in replacing first past the post with proportional voting and a totally different kind of candidate selection system.

Parliament is no longer based in Westminster and the building is now a museum and tourist attraction.

It has been dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st Century and a new state of the art purpose built assembly has been constructed outside the capital which can actually accommodate *all* members. This was essential because they must now turn up and take part in debates before they are allowed to vote. Their constituency roles have now been devolved to Regional Assemblies so they no longer have an excuse to play truant.

The new National Assembly complex includes accommodation, restaurants and other facilities for the use of members, their families and visitors. No more expensive flats in London, taxpayer funded second homes and massive expenses claims. Being an MP is now a serious and well paid job but without the glamour of previous eras.

Members are subjected to a strict code of conduct, any breach of which results in immediate loss of office. This simple reform has eliminated the rascals.

If such a code had existed 30 years earlier during the expenses scandal there would have been a bye election every fortnight – something which is unnecessary under the new model for modern governance which has been introduced.

This is described later and also in greater detail in the booklet.

Individual single seat constituencies have been scrapped. The number of seats in the National Assembly will fluctuate according to population. One seat is allocated per 50,000 people on the electoral register, thus ensuring that the inconsistencies of the old constituency imbalances will not recur and that the size of the Assembly is flexible.

Also under debate will be the suggestion that on certain issues, members' votes in the Assembly should be by secret ballot – decisions involving the deployment of our armed forces for example.

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The whole ethos of government is changed. Democratising the voting system has enabled the voice of the people to play an important part in the process of government, which is no longer dominated by one or two parties. Other parties need to secure only a small percentage of the vote in order to win seats on the National and Regional Assemblies. No single party has been able to grab absolute control of government.

Parties have had to learn how to debate issues sensibly and to accept that a majority vote represents the wishes of the people and not the doctrine of one party.

Debate is not always confined to the elected national and regional members. Experts on particular issues and others with vested interests in the issues, are invited to openly address the assembly. No more furtive lobbying behind closed doors.

The demise of single party autocracy has spelled the end of the “PM's cronies and cash for peerages” era. Meritocracy is now the criteria for selecting members of the Second Chamber (previously the House of Lords).

Multi party government is gradually removing the obstacles which for many years delayed the reform of the House of Lords, which had become little more than a political battleground and a farcical “numbers game” with successive parties determined to ensure that their sympathizers outnumbered those of their political opponents, so that that their own legislation would be enacted without too much opposition, thus negating what surely should be the *raison d'être* of a second chamber.

To make it a truly effective and credible form of governance the second chamber is being purged of its political dominance, since no single party now has the power to bulldoze its own preferences into ermine gowns.

Calls for appointed Peers to be replaced by elected ones were sensibly

resisted. Instead an independent selection model is being developed, the aim being to ensure that the second chamber is made up of citizens who have proved themselves not as political allies, but as universally respected men and women with no political allegiances to cloud their judgement.

Legislation can then be scrutinized objectively rather than politically.

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But perhaps the most important change - and the one welcomed most by the people - is the quality and integrity of our politicians. Most are now individuals who are selected on merit rather than cronies being given safe seats on the whims of party leaders, or who are foisted on the parties by those who bribe them with financial support.

To ensure that we have a high quality of people in government a List system of candidate selection has been adopted. This is crucial and its function is described later.

Under this system the selection of useless hangers on is a thing of the past. The quality of the candidates on offer and not vague promises, is what the electorate will judge each party on.

As a result of this, the profile of our MPs has changed. There are now fewer career politicians. Candidates are generally individuals whose achievements in life, in public service, the professions and commerce look good on a party's list of candidates. Most have chosen to enter politics, not as a career or for personal prestige, having already achieved this in their pre-political lives, but because they have a desire to offer the public the benefit of their wealth of experience and skills. They have brought a maturity to parliament with their willingness to work together for the benefit of people not party, in a more practical and less ideological manner.

Much debate is taking place to find a suitable wording for a proposed British Constitution of the sort that exists in a republic.

Party funding has been severely curtailed and regulated. Each party is now paid a sum of money for each vote it receives. This was considered a

small price for the exchequer to pay in return for independent politics. In effect the traditional donors to party funds have been replaced by the people. The tax paying voters are now the pipers who call the tunes!

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Before recommending the type of proportional system to be adopted, the various models of the world's civilized nations had been studied and the one considered the most likely to result in ethical politics was the PR List System.

All parties, prior to a general election, are required to submit for scrutiny a list of candidates in order of preference, with full details of their qualities, experience, personal circumstances, achievements and their misdeeds, including criminal convictions. They must provide, in effect, a CV for each candidate, setting out his or her suitability to represent the voters and to run a successful nation.

The system works like this. If a party receives a percentage of the national vote (say 10%) this would give it a similar percentage of the seats available (say sixty five). The first sixty five candidates on its list would be elected.

This system is designed to ensure that only candidates with a degree of integrity and suitability acceptable to the electorate are included in the list. To do otherwise would be electoral suicide since it would attract unwelcome scrutiny and criticism by the media, the opposing parties and the voters.

How many of our current crop of MPs we wonder, would be “clean” enough to include in such a list?

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As well as the curtailment of lobbying and bribes, the inclusion by some of the parties in their candidate lists, and therefore in government, of people with practical experience of business and commerce has resulted in naïve and gullible government departments no longer being “soft touches” when it comes to awarding government contracts. It has led to much tighter controls in government spending and tougher negotiations

on government contracts.

These are no longer awarded irresponsibly by people with little or no business background. They are no longer awarded in return for party funding or other favours.

Before being awarded a contract, a company is required to provide performance guarantees, both by its directors personally and by its parent company. In some cases bank guarantees are called for. Where it is thought prudent, a member of the government is placed on the board of directors in a watchdog capacity. Sometimes a share stake by the government is insisted upon.

These simple accountability measures ensure that companies and their directors are no longer tempted to use our money, hide behind their limited liability status then run away with impunity - and then at a later date discretely reward personally the MPs who assisted them in ripping us off.

Some on the right of politics complained that this amounted to back door nationalization and those on the left thought that it did not go far enough. But these sensibly negotiated arrangements have created profitable partnerships and added to the prosperity of UK plc.

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The people have benefited in many ways from multi party government. Crime is reduced and the nation's health is improved for example.

With the big prize of single party autocracy gone, so has the fear of a backlash from big business and the media to the imposition of regulation upon them. Government can no longer be persuaded to turn a blind eye in exchange for promises of party funding.

Prime time TV slots have been commandeered by the government for public service announcements. These include, much to the dismay of some TV channels, questioning spurious and inaccurate claims by advertisers. They include CCTV footage of criminal activities, details and warnings of the latest scams, health and general wellbeing advice.

The food and drink industry has been forced to replace its unhealthy products with less harmful ones.

Under proportional government the old ruling parties are less fearful of acknowledging errors of the past which might tarnish their image. In a move to improve multicultural harmony the British government offered an unreserved apology to the Muslim community for its illegal violation of Muslim lands, thus removing some tension within the community.

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After some initial and inevitable teething problems and sabotage tactics by the old parties, the British government is now the envy of the world with its balance of national self interest and concern for others. Prudent management, without political influence, has produced budget surpluses which are used to provide better services for its citizens and aid for poorer countries. This is done out of earned wealth – not false borrowed wealth.

We now have a government with a hard head and a soft heart.

But most importantly, with the demise of career politicians and their replacement by competent candidates, selected for their ability to run a country and not their willingness to be political party puppets, the people's respect for politics is restored.

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With the absolute power of one political party removed and the opportunity created for new parties to enter the political arena, let's now take a brief look at what a future PR government might look like

With only 50,000 votes nationwide needed to elect a candidate, PR had paved the way for some minor parties to flourish and for new ones to emerge.

One of the new entrants into the political arena, an exclusively women's party, is perhaps destined to become the country's largest and most powerful political force. Could this be the final stage in the emancipation

of women?

An opportunity has also been created for minority and even extremist groups to be recognized.

True democracy is about, or should be about, voices being heard. Far better for extreme groups to have a democratic way to promote their aims instead of taking part in violent demonstrations or terrorism. As Voltaire the French Philosopher so rightly said:

“I may disagree strongly with what you say – but I will fight to the death for your right to say it.”

How can anyone who believes in free speech and equal rights possibly disagree with that?

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Is this fairyland?

Can it be achieved?

Many will have their doubts. But had the same question been asked of the common man centuries ago, or of the pre suffragette women in the 19th Century, or of the barons before Magna Carta, many would have had doubts too.

The establishment may have been able to procrastinate and postpone reform - but it has never been able to stop it. Future and more enlightened generations will make sure of that.

Now some questions for you to answer.

LET'S PARTY

Do you think that an Alliance of pro reform parties and organizations is a good idea?

Do you think a new party or reform movement should contest a future general election?

Might you vote for it?

Might you join such a protest group or Party?

Might you consider being a supporter, donor, activist or candidate?

Might you be a suitable leader for the Party?

If your answer is YES to any of these questions or you think you could be involved in any other way, please simply e mail YES and your nearest town or city, to prparty@gmx.co.uk – that's prparty@gmx.co.uk. Or go to www.derrickarnott.co.uk

If there is sufficient interest you will be contacted and invited to an inaugural meeting prior to setting up the Party so that you can have your say in its formation.

Please be patient. It may not be possible to respond to your email until the extent of the response has been assessed.

