

If you want to win drop the bile

Both Labour and Lib Dems specialise in negative campaigning. They abuse Conservative MPs and Councillors, making false allegations and twisting what we say or ascribing views to us we have never held. Their fellow travellers on this site often do the same. They imply no decent person can vote Conservative and claim an unfounded moral high ground. Indeed they seek to control and use language to rule out some decent Conservative values and questions. The BBC often backs up these ideas.

Yesterday on the Today programme a couple of voters from Hartlepool were put under pressure to explain why they voted Conservative, with the BBC seeking to suggest to them that somehow the culture of the party of Thatcher should have made that morally impossible! No mention that Margaret was our first female Prime Minister who won three huge General election mandates for her popular policies of cutting taxes, promoting wider ownership and recovering the UK from Labour's high inflation and economic crash which led to a trip to the IMF to borrow and to be told to cut spending. I do not recall Labour voters in 1997 or SNP voters more recently being made to explain themselves and being told they were wrong to vote as they did.

In this latest set of elections Labour caricatured their own campaigning technique by spending all their national media time on vilifying Conservatives and making a wild series of unsupported allegations, when people wanted to hear their approach to Cv 19, economic recovery and getting wins from Brexit.

Keir Starmer rightly made Labour dress smartly and show some respect for our flag. You need however to live a brand. In the Commons Labour MPs still queued up to support the EU side in disputes, to back the needs of foreigners and overseas countries over the needs of U.K. voters, and above all to use Commons powers to develop their sleaze campaign instead of pushing a positive agenda.

Given the large number of people who voted Conservative a good starting point for Labour's recovery would be to accept that many people enter Conservative politics to serve the public and make things better. By all means have some good disagreements with us, offer better solutions or different aims, but do not falsely claim Conservatives are in it for wrong motives and want to harm the interests of the very people who helped vote us in. It is not helping Labour, as it is as dishonest as it is negative. A good opposition respects their opponents and presses hard for improvements or changes that the public wants. Running sleaze campaigns and nothing else can boomerang against the party. It means they have nothing to say on how to govern better, and are vulnerable to counter accusations against the people in their own party who make mistakes or undertake criminal activity in public office.

It's the economy stupid

Labour would be well advised to take Bill Clinton's advice. A party's popularity has much to do with the state of the economy and with their own record at economic management. Labour's decision in these latest elections to launch a constant barrage of allegations about Conservative Ministers instead of setting out what they would like to do misjudged the mood and meant their candidates were associated with negative stories and carping attitudes.

The misjudgement probably goes back to Labour's persistent wish to impose a false view of electoral history on the country. Their belief is Tony Blair beat John Major after running a three and a half year campaign about alleged Tory sleaze. Much of it was cases of individuals sleeping in the wrong beds, with Labour claiming this was relevant thanks to a misinterpretation of John Major's Back to Basics speech in October 1993. Once Labour got in to power they decided to prevent any attempt to turn the campaign against them by claiming that in future these were all private lives matters that should not be part of politics.

If you look at the opinion polls you see that Conservative fortunes plunged from September 6 1992 when the UK fell out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and had to acknowledge its economic policies had failed and we were in a nasty recession. Until the ERM disaster the Conservatives had been around 40% and ahead of Labour. On 5 September despite obvious pressures against the policy in currency markets Conservatives still had a 4% lead with a 39% Vote share. By the summer of 1993, before the sleaze campaign began Conservative polls had settled down at around 31% and Labour were well ahead. By 7 May 1994 for example Labour had a 15% lead at 44% to 29%. Between 1993 and the 1997 General election little changed, and the final result was Conservative 31% and Labour 44%, a landslide win. No-one looking at these polls can come to any conclusion other than the destruction of the European Economic policy and the collateral damage it did lost the Conservatives around 10% of support which they never regained. The sleaze campaign did not shift the dial.

Similarly Labour lost in 2010 not because of the expenses scandal but because they presided over the Great recession. They did not stop the excess credit build up they were warned about prior to 2008, and then decided to blame and trash the banking system instead of injecting liquidity and organising a work out of the problems. That is what they have to address in their thinking. People do not think Labour have a vision to back a recovery. All they hear is Labour running the country down and carping that Brexit was a wrong call. Many voters want the wins from Brexit. Why should Brexit UK vote in a Remain party who would then wish to prove their negative view of Brexit by following policies that were damaging instead of making the changes to deliver more freedom and prosperity?

All centre left and left parties want large and continuous expansion of government

The third law of government is its expansion is built into all the policy programmes of centre left and left parties. It is easier being a left Minister as you are going with the flow of continuous government expansion set out in the first law.

The left welcome the idea of higher taxes to pay for more government. They see higher taxes as a good in themselves. They enjoy inventing new ways of taxing success and attacking independence and enterprise.

The left seek to monopolise the votes of public sector workers by being a kind of extended Trade Union for the state sector. They constantly seek better conditions of employment for public bodies, and more staff to carry out tasks, at the expense of the private sector.

The left believe public delivery of goods and services is morally better than free enterprise doing the job.

The left believe that people and families allowed to make their own choices and allowed to keep more of their own money to spend will make bad ones. Government is necessary to restrain and tax the successful whilst making the less well off dependent on the all providing state who can then control and direct their lives. They hope for gratitude for state hand outs they conjure, but rely more on making false claims about the threats to people they allege the right represents. They seek to create a myth that right of centre parties enter politics to harm others.

Treasuries are weak at spending control but get blamed for meanness

The second law of government is the Treasury is usually weak at spending control but gets blamed for underfunding.

The Treasury is hopelessly outnumbered by spending departments in government. It can only hope to exert effective control if the Finance Minister and PM or President work together, and if spending decisions are mainly taken in bilateral meetings between the Treasury and the relevant spending department

rather than in a wider forum .

Government departments can get more money by running things badly and demanding bail outs near the end of the year. They can get more cash by claiming it for crises or issues which come up in year. They can work with lobby groups outside government to create pressure for increases. Some are good at securing money for their next year's budget under headings where they know they are unlikely to spend it all. They then vire this approved spending to another purpose later during the year, securing cash for something which might not have been approved if asked for originally.

It is commonly believed in government circles that a Treasury has too much control over spending and that a Treasury makes spending judgements that prevent other departments doing a good job. This is usually a dangerous myth. It comes from the proposition that new initiatives or demands need new money to pay for them. In practice there are often falling demands or waning initiatives elsewhere in each spending department. There should be a more active pursuit of the things the department no longer needs to do at the same time as finding new things it is desirable to do. Old government initiatives rarely die. They rest in some distant corner of an administrative office, and keep their budget line.

The impact of President Biden

When Donald Trump first was elected to office the interviewers on the BBC, Channel 4 and the other leading channels were keen to interview UK government politicians to try to get them to denounce Mr Trump and all his possible future works. I do not recall them pressing hard to see if the UK would learn from the Trump tax cuts, to put more money into the wallets and purses of working people in the way Mr Trump planned. Nor do I recall them criticising European walls and fences to keep migrants out whilst roundly criticising Trump's plans to extend the US/Mexican wall. I did not hear interviewers asking UK Ministers if they might copy more of the Made in America programme Trump set out with a Made in UK version.

When Joe Biden was elected the direction of attack shifted to the opposite approach. The early interviews were all to make UK Ministers feel uncomfortable that they might not be close enough to the new President. Now we have seen his proposals UK politicians are often invited to express approval of the huge stimulus programmes President Biden proposes, and asked whether they will match them. There is obvious joy at his wish to green US policy, and favourable mentions of his company tax rises. There is no interest in what higher world corporate taxes recommended by Mr Biden might mean for the Republic of Ireland. There is little criticism of the new President and his plans.

Those parts of the media that are financed by taxes or adverts and have a

Charter that requires them to be impartial should seek to be impartial between Republican and Democrat as well as between the different parties in the UK. The journalists should also dig beneath the spin. Biden's national resilience policies look very like Trump's Made in America policies. Biden's much lauded tax rises say they will not impose any tax rise on anyone under \$400,000 a year, thereby validating the Trump tax cuts for most people. Biden's announced withdrawal from Afghanistan is the Trump plan delayed by few months.