

# Repeated Tory U-turns make them look weak and wobbly

Politics is a fast moving world. On Monday night I prepared to head to bed having just put the finishing touches to my speech for Tuesday's planned launch of the SNP manifesto.

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## Greens warn Tory attack on democracy can only be stopped if other parties work together to stop power grab



28 May 2017

**\*Deputy leader Amelia Womack: "Progressive parties have a responsibility to the public to work together to protect democracy"**

Green Party deputy leader, Amelia Womack, will today (May 28) use a high profile panel at Hay Festival to warn Labour and the Lib Dems that they urgently need to come together in an attempt to stop what she will describe as an "attack on democracy" by the Conservative Party.

Womack will point to pledges made in the Conservative manifesto to change the voting rules for mayoral and assembly elections in England and Wales in ways that will favour them [1]. The Conservatives want these elections to be conducted using first past the post, a system which usually favour larger parties.

Womack will appear on a panel with Guardian columnist Zoe Williams, author David Boyle and Andrew Simms of the New Weather Institute to discuss 'The Alternative – Is it time for a new progressive politics to arise in Britain?' [2].

Speaking ahead of the festival, Womack said:

"There's no denying our voting system is broken but the Tories are trying to overhaul it for the worse. Their push to spread the first past the post system to mayoral and assembly elections is an attempt to gain control at all levels and a direct attack on fairness within our democracy.

"Other progressive parties need to wake up to what's happening. In particular Greens, Labour and the Lib Dems have a responsibility to stand up for every

member of the public's right to a vote that counts, to democracy. We should work together to stop this power grab and advocate for proportional representation, which is widely supported [3] and would result in fairer representation in the age of multi-party politics.

"The Labour leadership's refusal to even have a conversation about electoral alliances during the election campaign [4] is dangerously neglectful of the people they claim to represent. The Lib Dems were at least prepared to talk but, sadly, were not able to agree any reciprocal agreements in key constituencies. Despite the obvious challenges around forming electoral alliances during a snap general election campaign, we have seen significant and growing grassroots support for doing politics differently, with widespread recognition that our broken electoral system is denying too many people a voice. It will be deeply disappointing if the other progressive parties continue to be complicit in this after June 8.

"This is the most important election in a generation and the outcome will affect us for years to come – but it is not the end of the road and we must consider how to work together to build a positive future for the next five, 10, 50 years.

"When I've been on the doorstep talking to voters across the country the appetite for grown up politics is there, we just need the political will to make it work. I hope that progressive parties will be able to get round the table, look at the state of the political system and agree that it needs root and branch reform."

Ends

For more information contact: [press@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:press@greenparty.org.uk) / 0203 691 9401

#### **Notes:**

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/june2017/2017/05/are-conservatives-trying-change-rules-politics-so-they-never-lose-again>

<https://www.hayfestival.com/p-12259-zoe-williams-amelia-womack-david-boyle-and-drew-simms.aspx>

<https://www.change.org/p/make-this-the-last-general-election-to-use-our-broken-voting-system>

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/05/09/lucas-labour-and-lib-dems-have-betrayed-the-people-they-represent/>

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# Thousands more frontline police and security staff to make our communities safer

Labour today announces a plan to make Britain's communities safer, by putting thousands more frontline staff into critical public services, including police, fire, prison, intelligence and border agencies.

In the wake of large-scale Tory cuts to police and security resulting in 37,000 fewer staff, Labour will recruit:

- 10,000 more police officers
- 3,000 more firefighters
- 3,000 more prison officers
- 1,000 more security and intelligence agency staff
- 500 more border guards

Labour's plans to reverse staff cuts in these agencies will return staffing levels closer to those when Labour left office.

**Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, said:**

"Ensuring the safety of our communities demands properly resourced action across many fronts. It means upholding and enforcing our individual rights, promoting community relations, supporting our emergency services, tackling and preventing crime and protecting us from danger, including threats of terror and violence.

"Only a Labour government will meet these challenges. As we set out in our manifesto earlier this month, Labour will recruit additional police officers, additional firefighters, additional prison officers and additional border guards.

"We will also legislate to ensure safe staffing levels in the NHS, including for our ambulance services. Today, I am announcing that Labobur will also increase staffing levels at the security and intelligence agencies – GCHQ, SIS and MI5 – in order to better ensure our collective safety.

"As well as full funding for our frontline and first

response services, Labour will properly resource the partner agencies in other frontline public services, including schools and colleges, and local authorities. These agencies are charged with a duty to identify those individuals vulnerable to violent extremism but under the current government they have been held back and barely been able to provide their own core services. Only Labour is serious about properly resourcing our security and frontline services.”

Labour’s pledge to increase the resources of state security and emergency services is matched by a renewed commitment to uphold the individual rights and civil liberties of the people in communities served.

**Diane Abbott, Shadow Home Secretary said:**

“One of the great myths of British politics is that the Tories are the party of law and order. The reality is very different. Serious crime is up since the Tories came to office in 2010, and they have cut police numbers by over 20,000 in that time. Theresa May broke her pledge to protect the police budgets.

“Labour will protect our communities. We will focus on rebuilding community policing, and the ties between communities and the forces that serve them for good reason. It works. Unlike many other countries where the police have long been a quasi-military force standing outside the community, we have a history of policing by consent. We need to rebuild the trust between communities and the police which has been eroded by a combination of police cuts and rising crime.

“Part of rebuilding trust will a review of the Prevent strategy and the Channel programme. Nobody disputes the need to engage communities in the fight against violent extremism but we must be mindful of the warning issued by David Anderson QC, the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, who said: “There is a strong feeling in Muslim communities that I visit that Prevent is, if not a spying programme, then is at least a programme that is targeted on them.”

**Richard Burgon, Shadow Justice Secretary, said**

“Labour will uphold the rights which make our communities safer, including a pledge to maintain the Human Rights Act and to strengthen judicial oversight over the powers of intelligence services. We will back up our legal protections with adequate resourcing across our security and

justice systems.

“In stark contrast, the Tories have cut the staffing levels at the security and intelligence services, they have cut fire and rescue budgets by more than 30%, they have taken 20,000 police officers and 6,000 Police and Community Support Officers out of service, they have dangerously reduced the number of staff in our increasingly overcrowded prisons and they have weakened our Border Force.”

#### **Editor's Notes:**

##### **SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES**

1. Staffing levels at GCHQ, SIS and MI5 were cut by 5% in 2010 and despite planned increases have not yet returned to the levels inherited from the last Labour government.

2. The Conservatives have cut more than 37,000 roles to public service agencies since 2010:

- 20,000 fewer police officers
- 10,000 fewer firefighters
- 6,000 fewer prison officers
- 31 fewer staff in the security and intelligence agencies
- 1,000 fewer border guards

##### **POLICE AND CRIME**

3. Since 2010, police officer numbers have been reduced by 20,000 and police community support officer numbers have been reduced by 6,000.

4. Police budgets have been cut by £2.3bn and the government has already broken its promise to protect police funding over this last Parliament. cutting budgets by £330 million in real terms in the last two years alone.

5. Latest figures show rises in some of the most serious criminal offences, including homicide, gun and knife crime.

##### **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

6. Since 2010, firefighter numbers have been reduced by 10,000.

7. Since 2010, more than 40 fire stations have been closed and more than 130 fire engines lost, including 10 stations and 13 engines in London alone.

8. Fire and rescue service budgets were cut by 30% from 2010-2015, with a further 20% cut planned from 2015-2020.

9. The average response time to the most critical incidents has increased by more than 30 seconds since 2010.

### **AMBULANCE SERVICES**

10. The 8 minute target for Red Call 1 ambulance response times have not been since May 2015: Red Call 1 is the category of calls representing the most critical life-threatening emergencies.

### **BORDER FORCE**

11. Since 2010 more than 1,000 border guard jobs were lost

12. Since 2011 Border Force budgets were cut by 12%

13. Since 2011 there has been an 11% increase in the people entering the UK

14. Since 2011 there has been a cut of more than 25% to the amount on money spent for every person who crosses passport control into Britain, from £5.80 spent in 2011 to £4.43 spent in 2015

15. The cuts to Border Force have contributed to low staff morale at UK Border Force, with one in three staff planning to leave within 12 months

### **PRISONS**

16. Prison officer numbers have reduced by more than 6,000 since 2010

17. There were 5,423 assaults on prison staff in the year to March 2017 – a rise of 40% on the previous year

18. 68 per cent of all prisons are overcrowded, holding more inmates than their usable 'certified normal accommodation' (CNA), with some holding more than 50 per cent over the recommended levels

19. Self-inflicted

prisoner deaths rose by 28% in the year to June 2016.

20. 65 prisoners were released in error in 2015-16 – the highest total for six years.

#### **DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS**

21. Devolved administrations would receive consequential financial settlements for those services which are devolved.

22. The Welsh Government would determine policies and priorities for devolved services as well as those services to be devolved following the election of a UK Labour Government.

23. This is as outlined in Welsh Labour's 2017 manifesto, "Standing Up For Wales" and the UK Labour manifesto.

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## **News story: UK terror threat reduced to 'Severe'**

The UK terror threat level has now been reduced to severe – [SEVERE means an attack is highly likely](#)

We advise the public to be Alert not Alarmed and to report suspicious behaviour – [Action Counters Terrorism](#)

Armed police supported by the military will still be visible over the weekend but this will reduce from Monday.

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## **Gordon Brown speech in Greenock**

- Manchester 'a global symbol of courage, defiance and unity' following terrorist atrocity, says Gordon Brown during speech
- As General Election campaigning restarts, he warns Conservative plans would leave more than 20million Briton hit with £1,000-a-year fall in household incomes by 2020
- Tory Britain a 'stagnation nation' as wages lag behind prices and

benefit and tax credit cuts bite, says former PM

- Brown identifies families £1,000, £2,000 or £4,000 worse off by 2020
- Only top third will see living standards rise. When Tories say they are 'about the many and not the few', they mean hurting the many and helping the few
- North England, Scotland and Wales to suffer biggest hits with one quarter of population officially living in poverty – 5 million of them children

Gordon Brown today said that Manchester has become 'a global symbol of courage, defiance and unity' following Monday's terrorist atrocity which killed 22 people.

**During a speech in Greenock, Inverclyde, the former Prime Minister said:**

"Today and in the days and weeks ahead we will shed tears at the loss of so many children and young people.

"Too many lives have been taken but I say: They cannot take our unity, our solidarity, our support for each other.

"Hearts have been broken but our resolve remains unbreakable.

"Lives have been destroyed but our spirit is indestructible.

"They may think we are vulnerable but our strength of shared purpose makes us invulnerable.

"In the hours and days following the attack Manchester has become a worldwide symbol of courage, defiance and unity.

"To those who are doubters and who believe that terrorism will make us weak through fear, divide our communities and shatter our spirit...let them go to Manchester."

As campaigning restarted, Mr Brown also unveiled astonishing evidence showing that by 2020 more than 20million Britons will see a £20-a-week fall in living standards.

Almost 45 per cent of the British population – 23million people – will be poorer, and on average their households £1,000-a-year worse off, by the start of the next decade, according to the alarming new figures.

And he warned that the Tories, if triumphant on June 8, will continue hurting families completing a 'decade of decline' with no end in sight to their slashing of the value of tax credits and child benefits.

Officially, the cuts and a raft of other shameful Tory policies are set to leave 15.7million British people – one quarter of the entire population – living in poverty by the end of the next parliament, according to the IFS.



Five million of them will be children, the former Prime Minister said in his speech today.

As hardship bites and a rise in family income comes to a juddering halt, grim new projections by the Resolution Foundation forecast the poorest third of working-age households, covering around 18 million adults and children, will see their average incomes fall by 10 per cent over the next few years.

And the Conservatives, according to the former Prime Minister, are not being honest about the fall in incomes.

**During a speech in support of Labour candidate for Inverclyde, Martin McCluskey, at Greenock's Beacon Arts Centre, Mr Brown said:**

"In every election the central economic issue is: What is going to happen to living standards?

"Between now and 2020/2021, 45 per cent of the population – 23million people – will take a financial hit and on average their households will be £1,000 a year or £20 a week worse off

"Why? Because wages will be rising more slowly than prices – especially for nurses, teachers, carers and others among five million public sector workers, who will see only a one per cent rise in wages while prices rise much faster.

"Areas facing job losses such as Wales, the North and Scotland will feel it even more acutely.

"We are a nation where the Tories are creating living standards stagnation.

"The value of children's benefits and tax credits are now falling even faster than predicted as inflation bites even harder than previously thought due to the unexpectedly fast pace at which prices are rising."

There is little escape from hardship for middle and lower income families according to the Resolution Foundation study.

Statistics show:

- A couple with two children and a full-time single earner on National Minimum Wage with a household income of £21,000 will be £1,000 worse off by 2020.
- A single earner with one child working part-time with a household income of £14,400 will be almost £2,000 (£1,900) worse off
- A working couple, one full time, one part time with three children and a household income of £32,100 – will be £3,000 worse off

**Mr Brown added:**

"The Tories talk about uniting the nation but rising poverty and worsening inequality will leave us more economically polarised and socially divided

under Theresa May than at any time in living memory.

"The claim that her government is about helping mainstream Britain is undermined by the stark future of declining living standards ahead for the majority of people.

"The mainstream is being marginalised as the majority see their living standards fail to rise, or for millions, fall significantly.

"Conservatives talk about the many and the few but they are actually harming the many while helping the few.

"That's why it's essential to elect Labour MPs who get up in the morning to fight for social justice and will be voices for the mainstream – the middle and lower income Britain that is being hardest hit."