



# THE BETTER WORLD OF JEREMY CORBYN

Is he too  
good to be  
true?

Can he really  
succeed?

Is there any  
cause for  
optimism at  
all?



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"I am not Jesus, though I have the same initials."

# STING

COVER STORY

## KING JEREMY 8

A Socialist? In the Labour Party? *Leading* the Labour Party? In what universe? This one, actually...





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# Editor's Shriek by John Wirstham-Harte



Well, that couple of months was a bit mad, wasn't it? Especially September. The second most depressing election result imaginable (just losing out to a Tory-UKIP coalition for the title of absolute worst-case scenario), turned out to be liberating, as the Labour Party — or at least its grassroots supporters — finally gave up on seeking power by imitating their enemies and decided to turn to a 65-year-old perennial backbencher with the kind of genuine Socialist credentials last seen (ineffectually) in Michael Foot's day. The landslide victory of Jeremy Corbyn and the subsequent remoulding of Labour has horrified the Parliamentary Labour Party. It's horrified the

British Right as well, but only a bit; it's mostly amused them, because they think that genuine left-wing politics are inherently funny and that no-one will ever actually vote for them, even though Corbyn's socialist ideas have actually captured the imaginations of a great many young people who are too young to remember the last time they were being spoken aloud.

Meanwhile, Trump is continuing to dominate the American election purely by bellowing so loud you can't hear anyone else. Jeb! appears to be crashing and burning as we speak, which is nice, although we can't help but be reminded of John McCain in 2008. Tony Abbott was overthrown even sooner than we expected; while Malcolm Turnbull might be just another right-wing fuckknuckle, at least he's basically competent as a human being. The increasingly eerie Stephen Harper, Cylon Prime Minister of Canada, was comprehensively defeated by Trudeau 2.0. John Boehner, exhausted at having to effectively lead an increasingly psychotic GOP, stepped down, and then his deputy and designated successor made matters worse (ie better) by declining to replace him and throwing the party into explicit chaos.

The Coalition's chickens started coming home to roost in the shape of thousands upon thousands of starving, homeless displaced Middle Eastern immigrants whose wretched circumstances were directly attributable to our own actions in the region, unless you were the Mail or Express or any of those other tosser's lifestyle manuals, in which case they were just malingering toads running some kind of extremely oblique get-rich-scheme which involves their children dying face-down in the sand in Turkey. None of this stopped Cameron and Obama and co from advocating further bombing runs on Syria, inevitably generating even more of the poor bastards. Even Putin's joined in, albeit apparently on the other side. No-one can really tell. Oh, also, David Cameron fucked a dead pig. Not lately (probably), but that is a thing that definitely happened.

**Publisher:** M.H.

**Editor:** John Wirstham-Harte

**Contributors:** Konstantin Jesualenko, Willard van Omnomnom Quine, Matthew Miles, Thierry Henry Thoreau, Sampford Courtenay

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**Designer:** Mel Christgold

**Art director:** Ubik

**Adverts by** Guy Debord-Games

**Associate producers:** Peter Beeston, Paul Daniel, Nicolas Higgins, Christopher Lyons, Al Needham

**Executive producers:** Brayden Paice, Stephen Bride, Alexis Carpenter, Maxim Grunewald, Neil Murton, Sarah Sea

**Producer:** Michael Auld

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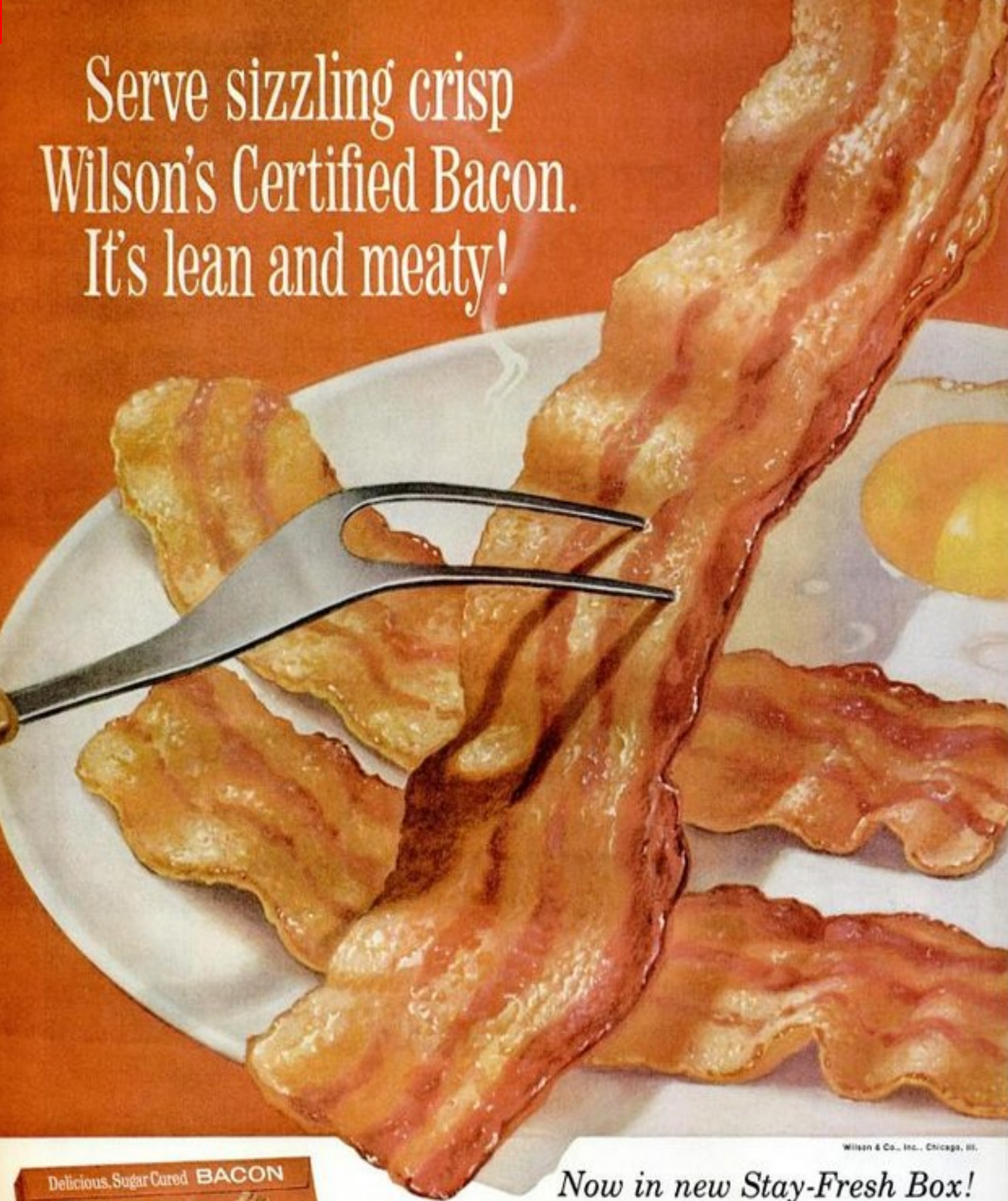
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**NEXT ISSUE: IS IT REALLY COTY TIME ALREADY?**



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The most depressing election in recent memory has resulted in the most astonishing leadership contest in history. The obscure stalking-horse token leftist candidate Jeremy Corbyn has against all logic snatched up the reigns of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Welcome to the new school of old school. The teacher is in.





# JEREMY IN CLASS

Words: Willard Van Omnomnom Quine





**W**e find ourselves seriously asking the question: was the election worth it after all? That horrible, horrible night when hope was punched repeatedly in the kidneys and Cameron's face grew another three sizes out of sheer smugness — was that just the toll we needed to pay to make it to a world where Jeremy Corbyn is Labour leader? Did we need something so catastrophic to happen in order to cause such violent disillusionment with absolutely everything that real left-wing politics is reawakened by the public's howls of agony? Was this rebirth worth the pain?

Well, obviously it's impossible to say at this point. This is still Act Two; we'll have to see how it all ends first. At the moment, it's not certain if Corbyn is the protagonist of a feel-good political take on the Mighty Ducks formula or a bleak Orwellian tragedy about a good man being destroyed by the system. Or even a cruel black comedy about an idealistic failure.

We're all praying for the first option, of course, but one possible bad sign is the narrative parallels with the story of Iain Duncan-Smith. It's still quite dizzying to contemplate, but twelve years ago, the ghoulish Dickensian slave-master was Leader of the Opposition. After a crushing election defeat had seen off his loser predecessor, he rose from relative obscurity on the extreme fringes of his party to win the leadership out from under the nose of a far more experienced rival with years of Cabinet experience, largely on the back of heavy grassroots support.

You can, of course, broadly apply a lot of that narrative to Corbyn's rise. If you zoom in to the details, there are several major differences. Iain Duncan Smith wasn't quite as obscure as Jeremy Corbyn, partly because he'd been groomed by Norman Tebbit — his predecessor in constituency and Cabinet — as his protégé. Also, Duncan Smith is arguably even further to the right than Corbyn is to the left (enough to have impressed literal fascist Tebbit). Most importantly, "grassroots support" doesn't mean exactly the same thing in both cases. Duncan Smith's "grassroots support" was organised by Tebbit from the Lords. He may have been out of the frontline for over a decade by then, but he was still well-respected. Jeremy Corbyn had the backing of almost no-one anyone had heard of; certainly no-one with Tebbit's pedigree. His movement largely created itself out of genuine enthusiasm for the things he was saying.

Most importantly, though they're both situate relatively far out in their respective philosophies, there are significant differences. For a start, Duncan Smith's extreme right views were (and remain) more mainstream in the Parliamentary Conservative Party than Corbyn's (somewhat less extreme) left wing ones are in Labour. For a second, as we said, Corbyn isn't as far left as Duncan Smith is to the right. Those elements exist in the Labour Party, albeit in far smaller numbers than they did in the early eighties — full Trotskyite thinkers advocating the complete dismantling of capitalism in general, in favour of a complete planned economy and the nationalisation of absolutely everything. Corbyn is not advocating this. The other disastrous party leader from history to who he gets compared is, of course, Michael Foot. And even he's still slightly further left than Corbyn. Or maybe it's just that Corbyn is smarter about it. He's already said that the whole monarchy thing is not something he's going to worry about, and that's symptomatic of his entire policy in general: check the public appetite. The public currently have no enthusiasm whatsoever for scrapping the monarchy, but they do have enthusiasm for finding a way out of the endless, grinding austerity cycle, and Corbyn's ideas for doing so are interesting and new and fresh! At least, they are to the current young voting population; most people below the age of 30 or so have had little or no exposure to genuine left-wing thinking, growing up under a near two-decade Tory junta, followed by a pre-defeated Labour who had already accepted Thatcherism as inevitable and inescapable. Now someone comes along with ideas from before Thatcher came along to ruin everything, ideas they've never heard before but which sound like they might just work, and hurt a lot less to boot.

When Cameron said "vote for change" in 2010, he was just trying to be Obama. (And when Obama did it, he was just capitalising on how horrible the status quo of the time was). Corbyn represents genuine change, albeit partially *back* — to the days of the post-war consensus. We'll never have that back entirely, but Corbyn promises to renationalise the energy (to run alongside the current commercial interests) and the trains at the least. Which means extra competition and trickier manoeuvring necessary to turn a profit in those sectors. Which is unacceptable. Hence the fact that Corbyn's been living under a media police state since before he even won the election.

**I**t's hard to say what the most ridiculous smear job has been. One suspects it evens out to a no-score draw. There was the bit a day or two after his election, when he failed — or in the words of the media, "refused", although that assumes an amount of deliberate effort for which no evidence exists — to sing the national anthem at a Battle of Britain memorial, possibly on the grounds that it's shit and awful. Instead, he calmly stood at attention throughout, keeping his mouth shut. What he didn't do, despite what the hysterical reaction of the papers might suggest, was blow a giant raspberry for the duration of the song, jump up and down shouting "FUCK OFF" over and over, or shit into his hand and run around holding it underneath everyone else's face. He just stood there in respectful silence, while a



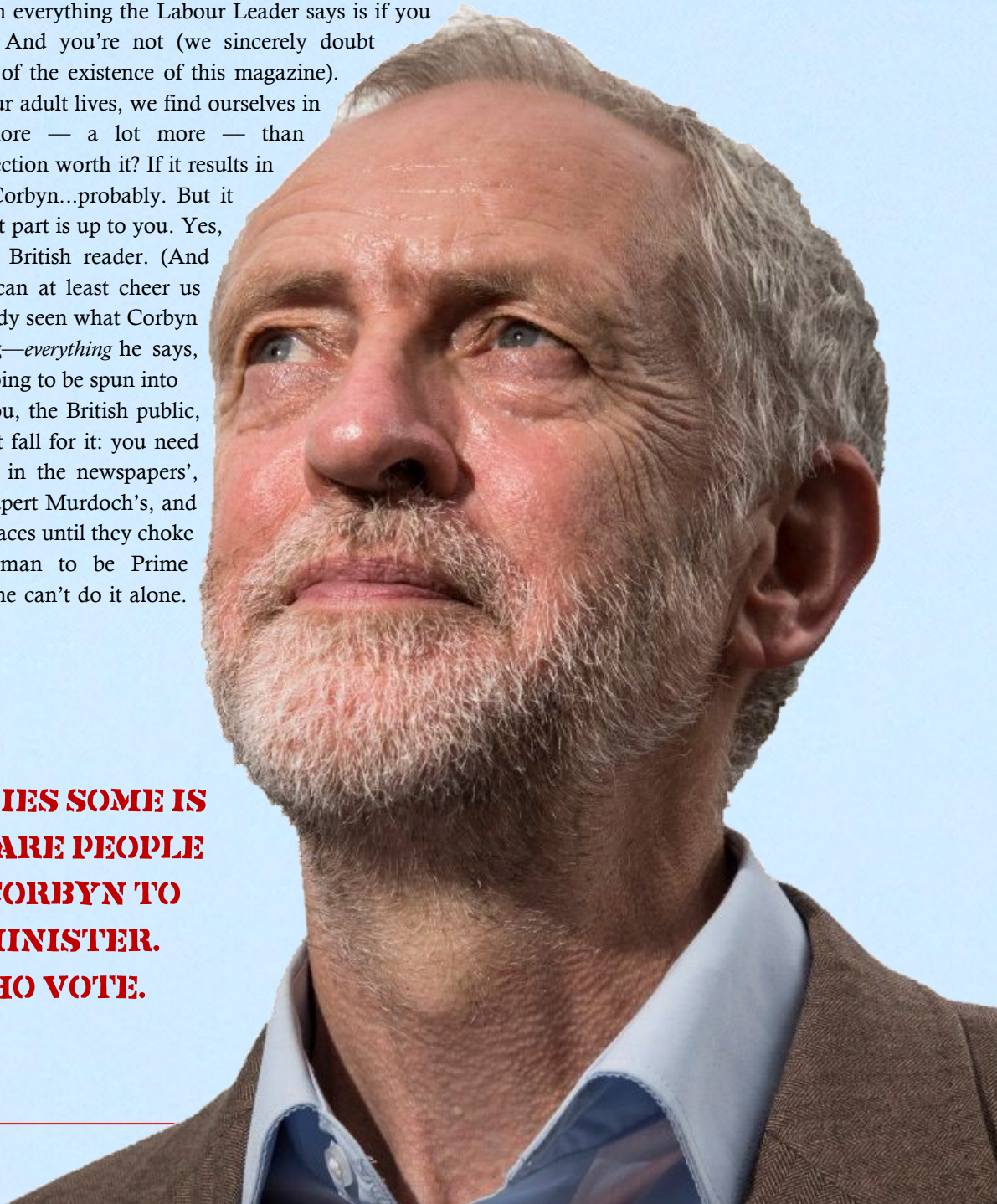
few feet away the Defence Secretary fidgeted about in a desperate attempt to get his best side in front of the cameras.

Then there's the "patently untrue concern-trolling" category of made-up scandal. Like how his Shadow Cabinet proved that he was history's greatest misogynist, despite containing more women than any Cabinet (shadow or full-fat) before. Or the one where he didn't join the Privy Council yet, just like David Cameron at this stage of his Tory Leadership, only completely different. The establishment is actively afraid of Corbyn; that's why they keep saying he's unelectable. That's why he's barely uttered a syllable that hasn't been taken out of context. For the first time since 1992 at least (and that's being quite generous to Kinnock), there's a real chance that a genuine socialist might somehow rise to power in the UK — and possibly not even by *default*. That's what really terrifies people: that there are other people who *want* Corbyn to be Prime Minister. People who vote. So they're banking on enough of those people being sufficiently thick to fall for their transparent smear tactics. Some of them are. Probably not enough. Hopefully not.

**S**o of course, the temptation exists to see Jeremy Corbyn as the Messiah. And of course, it has to be resisted. It's not helpful in the slightest bit. He's not Jesus Christ, he's just Jeremy Corbyn. Not everything he says is brilliant. He believes in homeopathy, for example, and might even put it on the NHS if he gets the chance, wasting millions of Government funds on non-scientific snake-oil bullshit *that doesn't fucking do anything*. Still better than wasting millions on unnecessary foreign wars, of course, but still: that anti-scientific tendency is the bane of the modern left (it's even worse in the Green Party, and has probably contributed at least a little to their failure to gain much ground from the death of the Lib Dems), and it's *really fucking annoying* that Corbyn is subject to it as well.

But the perfect is only the enemy of the good if you let it be, and if you let it be, let's face it: you're an idiot. The only way you're going to agree with everything the Labour Leader says is if you are the Labour Leader. And you're not (we sincerely doubt Jeremy Corbyn is aware of the existence of this magazine). But for the first time in our adult lives, we find ourselves in agreement with him more — a lot more — than otherwise. So, was the election worth it? If it results in Prime Minister Jeremy Corbyn...probably. But it hasn't done that, yet. That part is up to you. Yes, you. Assuming you're a British reader. (And even if you're not, you can at least cheer us on.) Because you've already seen what Corbyn is up against. Everything—*everything* he says, does, eats or looks at is going to be spun into some kind of scandal. You, the British public, need to do more than not fall for it: you need to throw it straight back in the newspapers', and the bloggers', and Rupert Murdoch's, and the Conservative Party's faces until they choke on it. You want this man to be Prime Minister? So do we. But he can't do it alone. The fight starts now.

**WHAT TERRIFIES SOME IS  
THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE  
WHO WANT CORBYN TO  
BE PRIME MINISTER.  
PEOPLE WHO VOTE.**





# THE OT TEAM

Herewith, the pick of the Corbyn Shadow Cabinet, which according to every news outlet in the land is a massively sexist, ovary-banning sausage party which proves that Jeremy Corbyn is an arch-misogynist, despite being full of women to a historic degree. Get used to that sort of thing. Next week: why that hat Corbyn sometimes wears means he despises hats.

Words: **Gareth Manford**



## **SHADOW HOME SECRETARY** **ANDY BURNHAM**

Something of a no-brainer, really; Corbyn's defeated rival is both mature, smart and savvy enough not to turn his back on his own career, especially since he's one of the slowly decreasing number of people in the PLP with genuine frontbench experience. It also helps that he's one of those politicians whose main political positions are whatever will help his job prospects — everyone's forgotten that in the 2010 leadership race, he was very much representing for the right of the party. Home Secretary is the obvious place for him after nearly a decade with the health brief in Government and Shadow.



## **SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY** **HILARY BENN**

The son of the legendary Tony Benn was already in this job, so Corbyn didn't have to change a thing. Has been a minister under Blair and Brown and was Shadow Communities Secretary under Miliband. His dad would obviously be made up for both him and his party if he was still here, and if Hilary's elected as Foreign Secretary, he'll have surpassed him in terms of cabinet positions (he was Energy Secretary and briefly President of the Board of Trade). Not fond of bombing people for its own sake.



## **SHADOW CHANCELLOR** **JOHN MCDONNELL**

The biggest risk in the Shadow Cabinet. John McDonnell is potentially the Joe Biden of Corbyn's Labour — a smart (he has a Master's degree) and experienced (he's only two years younger than Corbyn) veteran who has a habit of saying and doing stupid things, most of which have been reiterated by the press since his appointment: claiming IRA terrorists should be "honoured" for helping the peace process or fantasizing aloud about going back in time and assassinating Thatcher. Many were expecting Angela Eagles to get this job instead, and that probably would have been the more politically savvy move: Chancellor is the only Great Office that hasn't been occupied by a woman, even in shadow, and as a lesbian Eagle is a diversity twofer. It would also have removed the accusations of cronyism, on account of McDonnell is Corbyn's mate. But against all that cynical tabloid bollocks is the fact that the economic part of the Corbyn vision comes largely from McDonnell's brain, and therefore he's the perfect man to sell it. And it's not as if the media would have been, or ever will be, satisfied with anything Corbyn ever does.



## **SHADOW BUSINESS SECRETARY** **ANGELA EAGLE**

One of the leading female economists in Parliament; even though she didn't get the Shadow Chancellor job this time around, it's odds-on that if this Corbyn thing works out she'll end up in the role eventually, all other things being equal. She's already been Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, which is effectively the Deputy Chancellor position, under Miliband. She was also Pensions Minister for about an hour and a half under Brown. She takes over the role of Shadow Business Lady from Blairite chancer Chuka Umunna, the one with the appearance of a Fabric DJ and the soul of a teak chopping board, on the understanding that unlike him she'll at least try to have different ideas from the Tory version (Sajid Javid, identical to Chuka except paler and balder). Is also some sort of female gay, and one of the first set of twins to sit in parliament simultaneously.



## **SHADOW JUSTICE SECRETARY** **LORD FALCONER**

The only Shadow Cabinet member from the Lords instead of the Commons, former fat bloke and the originator of the role under Blair (albeit only for a month).

Reappointed to Justice in Shadow by Ed Miliband and going nowhere under Corbyn. Played

by John Noble.



## **SHADOW HEALTH SECRETARY** **HEIDI ALEXANDER**

Relative unknown who used to be a Labour Whip and Undersecretary to Mary Creagh when she was Shadow Environment Lady.



## **SHADOW EDUCATION SECRETARY** **LUCY POWELL**

Labour member since the age of 15, also a Co-Op Party member. Once placed on a list of laziest MPs by The Cun for being on maternity leave. Now has to sell Corbyn's National Education Service idea. Will hopefully do better at this than she did as Vice-Chair of the disastrous Election campaign.



## **SHADOW INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY**

## **DIANE ABBOTT**

The Corbyn of the 2010 race, only she never had anything like the same surge due to not quite having the chops to begin with. Hopefully her tendency to speak without thinking won't get in the way while shadowing DfID, whose main duty is deciding where international aid goes. She and Corbyn used to date. Only idiots care.



## **SHADOW PENSIONS SECRETARY**

## **OWEN SMITH**

Mostly Welsh relative newbie elected in 2010 in Pontypridd. Ed made him Shadow Welsh Secretary, now Jeremy has moved him opposite Iain Duncan Smith. He shares a surname with him, but fortunately not a species.



## **SHADOW ENERGY SECRETARY** **LISA NANDY**

Something of a wonderkid on the Labour left, to the extent that she was considered to fill Corbyn's slot as the token actual socialist in the leadership race. She's still tipped to one day lead the party. At the moment, she's the official Shadow Cabinet spokeslady on the subject of energy and climate change, so expect a lot of yelling about fracking.



## **SHADOW DEFENCE SECRETARY** **MARIA EAGLE**

Twin sister of Angela. Sadly they're not quite identical, so there is little potential for uproarious comedy of errors farce in the Houses of Parliament. Unlike a lot of the Corbyn bench (but like her sister) she has some solid cabinet experience, with a year as Minister for Children way back under Blair. Now in charge of not bombing people if at all possible.



## **SHADOW CABINET OFFICE SECRETARY**

## **TOM WATSON**



Also deputy leader, of course. Played by Patton Oswalt. Currently in the news for his over-zealous pursuit of the late Leon Brittan — who he didn't know had already got off any more than the man himself did. His main wrongdoing was, having presupposed Brittan's guilt, calling him "evil", which was a stupid and tactless remark for which he'd apologised even before the Daily Mail started their campaign made him do it again. Would do well to keep his head down for a while and learn how to think before speaking.



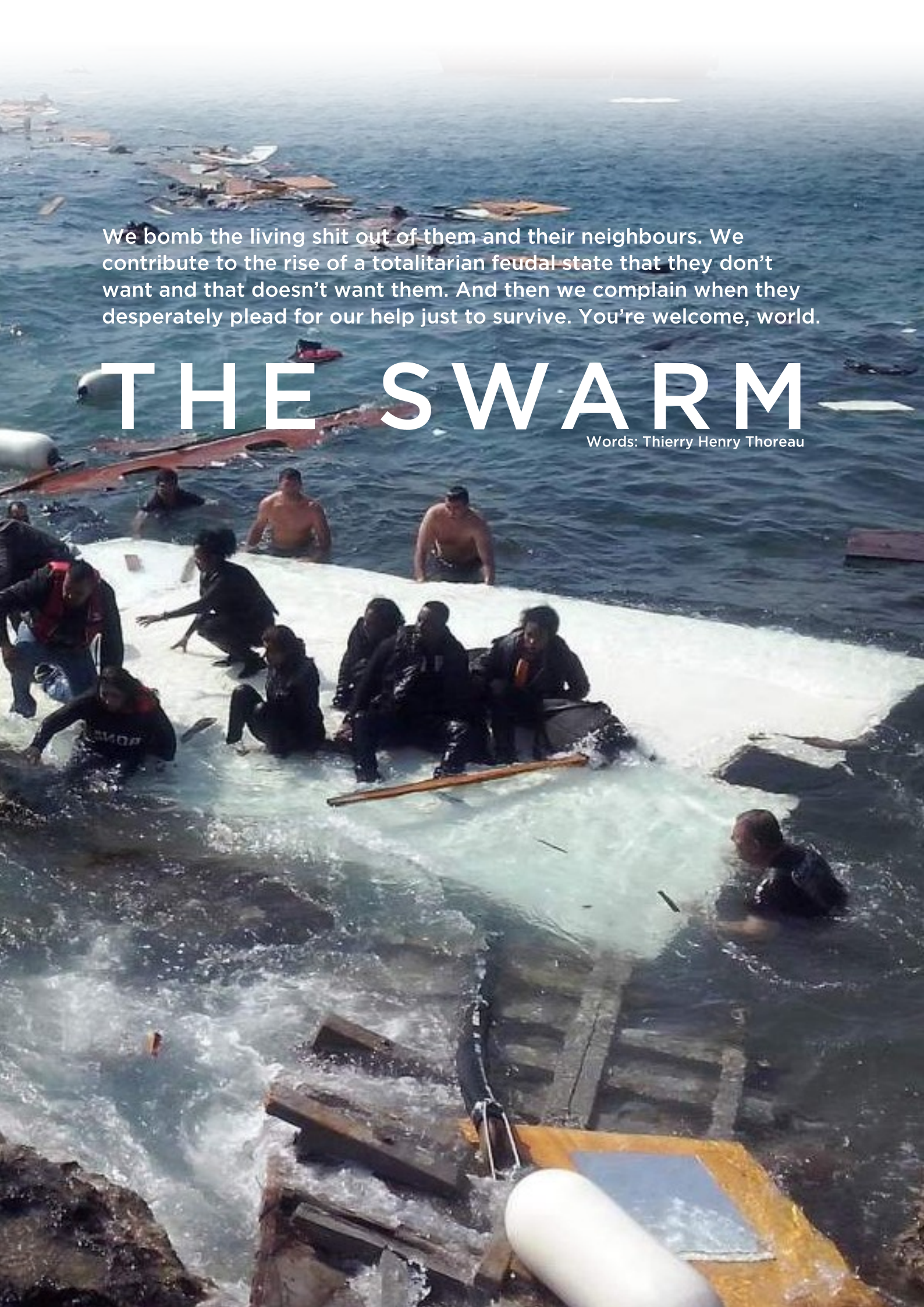
# PINK FLOYD ANIMALS



Out now on Harvest records and tapes.





A group of people are gathered on a makeshift raft made of white foam and wooden planks in the middle of a dark blue ocean. Some people are sitting on the raft, while others are in the water. The scene is chaotic and suggests a desperate situation. The text is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

We bomb the living shit out of them and their neighbours. We contribute to the rise of a totalitarian feudal state that they don't want and that doesn't want them. And then we complain when they desperately plead for our help just to survive. You're welcome, world.

# THE SWARM

Words: Thierry Henry Thoreau



A high frontrunner for news image of the year (assuming the nightmarish sight of David Cameron's penis going in and out of the mouth of a dead sow is disqualified for being a horrible mental picture and not something for which visual evidence exists in the public domain as yet) is the one of that three year old Syrian boy lying face-down on a beach near Bodrum as the tide laps at his cold, dead body and an appalled Turkish policeman looks on. Runner-up goes to the subsequent picture of said policeman carrying the unfeasibly tiny, doll-like corpse away with a face like thunder.

It's an image which should upset, appal and/or enrage just about anyone with a mind. So what are we to think of the likes of UKIP member, and their General Election candidate for Wimbledon, Peter Bucklitsch? We all remember what he said on Twitter, even though he deleted it; and if we didn't, we could just glance to the right, where it's been reproduced so we can vomit anew.

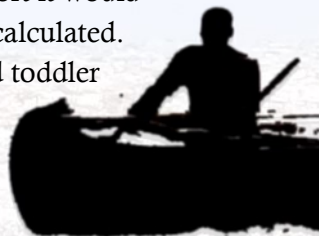


A UKIP man saying horrendous things is nothing new, but this really was above and beyond the call of prickitude. The party (represented by Douglas Carswell, as Farage is still keeping a low profile after that whole psyche-not resigning thing) distanced themselves from his statement with even greater determination than ever before. Even the Daily Mail thought he was being a dick, and they basically exist to create people who think exactly the same way. He got a Twitter kicking from the likes of John O'Farrell and Stan Collymore, of all people. Eventually, Bucklitsch apologised, just: *"The image of the little boy lying with his head in the waves upset me, but to lash out at the parents who were trying to do their best was not, on reflection, the best answer."* No fucking shit, you heartless cunt, especially as one of those parents died in the mud right alongside him and his brother. The father is the sole survivor. Bucklitsch later quasi-deleted his account; it's still there, but he's removed his photo (replacing it with the Twitter egg) and his full name.

And of course professional prole-enrager Katie Hopkins called them "cockroaches" (although she wasn't referring specifically to the drowned three-year old when she said that, just desperate, suffering humans in general), and the Daily Express and the Daily Mail uncovered, or just made up, reasons why Bucklitsch had a point, and the hawk howled and the women screamed and eventually the recently unemployed Tony Abbott showed up to tell Europe to build a wall of barbed-wire around their borders and hire the military to patrol it 24/7, just like he had in Australia. But that's what we expected of all these people; professional rabble-rousers and just plain shits. We'd like to think that we expect better of the Prime Minister himself. We obviously don't, but we're sure we should.

Because Cameron's response was quite possibly worse, more horrible, than any amount of UKIP self-parodists straight-facedly insulting toddler corpses. He wept over the death of the child and then spent a fortnight painstakingly formulating the absolute bare minimum of effort it would take vis-a-vis helping these people that would get the public off his back. And miscalculated. The correct answer was "genuinely care", and that was never on the table. Before the drowned toddler became plastered all over the news, Cameron had described the desperate immigrants as a "swarm". Becoming visibly human via the purposeless death of a blameless child was the ultimate dick move, as far as he was concerned.

Unusually for Cameron, he isn't taking the opportunity to blame Labour for the problem, even though this is one occasion when he legitimately could. These migrants are escaping from Syria's extended clusterfuck of a civil war, and in particular from the reality-ruining totalitarian shitbuckets Islamic State. And at





this point, even Tony Blair can't deny that their rise has something to do with the fact that America and Britain invaded Iraq twelve years ago for no reason at all in particular, beyond resource management and territorial pissing and other stuff they don't like to say aloud in case the public don't actually take to it. Cameron could make hay out of that, and he has made the odd noise on the subject, but ultimately he can't go all the way, for two reasons: number one, he supported the Iraq war all the way until election time. He voted in favour of it, he went on Friday Night with Jonathan Ross of all things to confirm his support of it, and however hard he tuts at the Labour Party, people stubbornly persist in remembering that. Besides, some of them come from Libya, and he can't distance himself from that one however hard he tries. The other reason is that it would lock him into the position of giving a shit about these swarthy foreign poors, which he doesn't and indeed physically can't. He's still having problems killing off the native British underclass without the wretched refuse of other countries' teeming shores coming over and adding to the population. Frankly, if anyone without a degree could just die off, that would pretty much make Britain perfect overnight, as far as Cameron's concerned. (OU degrees don't count, since you don't even need so much as a GCSE to get in).

**E**ventually, most of the nations of the European Union banded together to try and sort out who goes where, with every single one of them grumbling like three year olds over it every single step of the way. And Britain managed to wangle it so we took in almost the least of all, a paltry hundred and ninety-three thousand, compared to a potential half-million per year coming into an almost-as-reluctant Germany, or fifty-six thousand coming into Slovenia, or most instructively at all the two and a half million each who went from Syria to neighbouring Pakistan and Jordan instead — and not only are those countries closer, but they're not even the ones who blew up their original homes and forced them to move in the first place. Neither are Germany or Slovenia, of course, nor indeed Hungary — not that that excuses their actions in this crisis: as we type, they're halfway through building a giant titanium wall covered in razor wire and dogshit, with "FUCK OFF" written on it in 100-foot high neon letters, in Magyar, English, Arabic and French (because the French insisted). This is only a slight exaggeration.

So at least we're not those guys. But as bars to hurdle go, that's barely even above the ground. We should definitely be aiming higher than "racist dystopian horror" over here, especially since, as we must never be allowed to forget, this is to a large extent our fault to begin with. Well, us and America. But they're mostly scared of Mexicans at the moment. For some reason, it hasn't occurred to them that they're partly to blame for their circumstances too. If the mainstream first world really stopped to consider that these things don't actually happen in a void, it would probably die of shame.





Syria is not the new Iraq. It's the new Korea. Just in case this does lead to World War III and you die in an almighty nuclear conflagration, here's why that happened. As near as we can figure out.



## whose war is it anyway?

Words: **Sampford Courtenay**

If you read issue 24, you'll be (very dimly) aware of the origins of World War One: that it started largely out of confusion and laziness. There have been a few occasions in the past few decades when it seems as though World War Three was going to begin the same way. The latest is over Syria, that giant clusterfuck of a civil war in which no-one can agree on who the bad guys are, amidst a growing fear that there are no good guys at all. A three-pronged civil war got even more confusing when Russia of all places poked its nose in and started a bombing campaign whose target varies depending on who you ask. Russia reckon they've only ever bombed ISIS interests. NATO believe they've mostly concentrated on Anyone Who Isn't Assad. Who's right? We'd say there's only one way to find out, but we're desperately hoping there's another.

This Civil War has actually now been going on for longer than World War One. There are currently no fewer than four fully-fledged belligerents, none of whom really like any of the others. On one hand, there's the National Progressive Front, the current Syrian Government — at least they were the Government before the War made such a thing impossible — as led by Bashar al-Assad, who is a cunt. On the other, the Syrian Revolutionary Command Council, an alliance made up when the original rebel group, the Free Syrian Army, hopelessly Balkanised into 500 different factions. Some of those factions now make up the SRCC. Some of them are now part of the third prong in the fork of war: those wacky medieval funsters who genuinely deserve to die, the "Islamic State", whose activities of course spread beyond Syria into the wider Arab world, becoming a separate but linked war of its own. Finally, there's the tiny state of Rojava, a small chunk of Northern Syria who took the opportunity to declare independence and currently might well



wish they hadn't bothered. They largely represent the Kurdish interests, if only because none of the other three could give a flying fuck about the Kurds. They all bomb each other with increasing frustration while the world looks on, wishing it wasn't involved. But sadly, it is. The world at large is inextricably involved in Syria's civil war, and not just because the Iraq War destabilised the whole region and effectively caused this mess in the first place. Syria has become Korea with sand, as major powers poke around manipulating their conflict into an indirect pissing contest. The Korean War, in the event, didn't lead to World War III, largely because Eisenhower wasn't an idiot. These days, everyone is.

America and  
Russia are at  
war, albeit  
at one remove.  
In the *other*  
war, they're  
close allies.

Here's how it breaks down. Kind of. ISIS aren't supported by anyone except their own selves, of course. The SRCC enjoy the support of their neighbours Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. They're also backed by NATO—or in practical terms, America, France and Britain. That doesn't just mean cheerleading the resistance, but giving them food rations, spare trucks, and eventually guns, armour, intelligence and +10 Scrolls of Enchantment. The US has also been nonchalantly bombing what they're absolutely definitely certain are definitely ISIS targets for over a year. This has clearly helped immensely. David Cameron wanted us to join in, but Ed Miliband — in one of about three displays of actual balls during his leadership — told him to fuck off. Rojava's efforts are also supported by the same people, plus Canada and Australia, and minus Turkey, because fuck the Kurds — they've actually helped out the SRCC by bombing some Kurdish targets.

That leaves Assad and his NPF, and this is where it gets Cold War-ish. Because they are supported by Russia and Iran — the two current Big Bads in the most recent propaganda bulletins. Iran are steadfastly denying any involvement whatsoever beyond feeding the NPF the occasional scrap of intelligence; they are blatantly lying. Everyone knows it, but no-one can be certain of the extent of the lies. They definitely have troops on the ground, but the precise extent is in question and could be anything from “significant aid” to “effective Iranian control of the Government troops”.

Meanwhile, Russia claim to have only bombed ISIS targets, scout's honour. Not a one Russian bomb has landed on an SRCC installation, honest and for true. This is quite probably also a lie, but hasn't yet proved to be definitively verifiable either way — so many people are hurling bombs in so many directions, it's all but impossible to figure out which ones came from whom in which direction. While Russia can deny the identities of their targets, they can't deny the side they're on. Assad is a personal friend of Putin who made a great public spectacle of officially requesting Russia's involvement; whoever they're bombing, whether mutual enemies or allies of NATO, they're doing it on his behalf. And since he's officially The Other Side of the conflict, this means that effectively, just as in Korea, America and Russia are at war, albeit at one remove. The mitigating factor here is that in the *other* war, the war against ISIS in general, they're close allies. Even in Syria, they're (ostensibly) fighting the same enemy, just on behalf of different causes. In theory, they shouldn't come up against each other at all, and that's why this isn't World War III yet, or at least not the World War III some people are looking for. ISIS are actually the cork in the bottle. As long as they're around to focus our attention — by which we mean the public, because the military are going to do what they like regardless — there is, theoretically, no conflict, of interests or otherwise, over Syria. Of course, if they're ever fully defeated — or if some black ops from one side or the other gets fucked up, or if someone just gets bored with the pretence...well, that will be an interesting day.







# SHATTERED

Tony Abbott's tenure as Prime Minister went just about as well as expected, and after less than two years he's out on his arse — without even a pension. This is undoubtedly a net gain for Australia and the world at large, but in the long term, could it end up saving the Liberals?

Words: **Konstantin Jesualenko**



To the surprise of no-one except his own dumb self, Tony Abbott proved to be a horrendous Prime Minister and his Premiership basically a disaster. His entire time as Opposition Leader was a gradual, increasingly ominous buildup to a catastrophic administration, like the 2000 US election in slow motion. What *did* come as a very slight surprise is how long he lasted as PM—or rather didn't. He was so transparently incompetent and terrible that you always would have got long odds on him fighting the next election, but even we expected him to be Prime Minister for longer than two years. In fact, he didn't even make it that far, being effectively stabbed in the front four days short of the second anniversary of his election — making him the shortest-serving PM since Harold Holt, although sadly he didn't drown. This also renders him ineligible for the Prime Ministerial Pension scheme, so basically he leaves with nothing, the least successful Prime Minister in recent Australian history. Even Julia Gillard clung on long enough to get the pension. He never even got to move into The Lodge — they only just completed the interminable renovations, right in time for Abbott to vacate Kirribilli House—and move in somewhere else.

The extent to which Abbott's premiership has disintegrated is illustrated by his successor—the man who was also his predecessor: Malcolm Turnbull, Australian Professor Yaffle Impersonator of the Year four years running and leader of the Liberals from 2008 to 2009, when his deputy—Abbott—seized upon a moment of weakness and snatched the leadership from him by a single vote, hauling the Liberal Party (and by domino-effect, their Coalition partners the Nationals) toward the bloodthirsty hard-right. In Abbott, the venal, neoliberal Costello/Ruddock wing of the Party thought they had the perfect proxy PM. They didn't count on his world-class incompetence—so thorough and pronounced that they've had to turn straight back to the hated Turnbull just to ensure the party's continued relevancy past the next decade.

Turnbull, you see, tends toward the moderate wing of the Liberal Party. He believes in Climate Change and that things should be done to combat it (which is what got him ousted the first time: daring to agree with Kevin Rudd on the subject was bad enough in itself, but the alternative may have triggered a double dissolution). He supports gay marriage, in which Australia now lags behind even America. Of course, he's still basically a standard-issue Tory bastard, but simply by having the ability to complete a coherent sentence on the first try, he's better than Abbott was. And in a strange way, that's the one downside to all this.

Abbott's rise was a slow-motion car crash, as everyone expected it to be, but even as Australia steadily fell apart, the single mitigating factor to all the carnage was the fact that Abbott was so incompetent, that his premiership was such a disaster—even more so than almost anyone had imagined—that at least it would arrest any possible resurgence for the Coalition, and in particular its head, the Liberals.

They'd last been in power for eleven years from 1996 to 2007, under John Howard—basically an Antipodean Iain Duncan Smith, only slightly to the left and with even less personality. Despite being a miserable bastard who no-one really liked, he kept winning elections, either by default or by exploiting the Australian public's unfortunate propensity for cheery racism—which is also how Abbott got elected, of course. It was an increasingly bleak and depressing period for anyone vaguely progressive in Australia. During our Thatcher years, they smugly looked on as Bob Hawke and then Paul Keating led successive Labor Governments. Now as we finally junked the Tories, they got their own Thatcher. (Not that we did that much better with our replacements in the long-term, but we digress). Finally, in 2007, Australia's patience ran out—largely because of the Iraq War. Ever since getting suckered into Vietnam, the Aussie public has had little enthusiasm



for going off to fight other people's wars. The outrage resulted in Howard not only losing the election, but his own seat in Parliament. The long national nightmare was over.

And was swiftly replaced with a new national nightmare, as the Labor Party, having waited eleven years to return to power, didn't know what to do with it now they had it, and started turning on itself, until the line between Kevin Rudd's paranoia and reality had been completely shattered and he was overthrown in favour of Julia Gillard. They managed to win the next election (by the narrowest margin mathematically possible), but the infighting didn't go away. They had been lucky in their first term, in that while they were pointlessly civil-warring, the Liberals were doing the same, going through three leaders in two years before the hard-right grabbed the controls and placed Tony in charge — thinking that he didn't have the baggage of a Costello or a Ruddock, while possessing more basic charisma (ie any) than anyone to lead the Liberals since John Hewer at the very least.

That "charisma" turned out to be incompetence in disguise, and Abbott soon became known for his tendency to pause for whole eons between words, and still manage to choose all the wrong ones. That is, when he wasn't simply freezing up altogether, as in that terrifying video where he responds to a request for clarification by silently nodding for five minutes, until even the reporter is thoroughly freaked out. Australia saw that happen and *still elected this man Prime Minister*; it seems they have to learn things the hard way. The extremely hard way, in fact. Abbott will probably go down in history as one of, if not the, worst Prime Ministers in Australia's history — which even we didn't expect. He's certainly thrown Julia Gillard into sharp relief. She wasn't very good at the job herself, but after just two years of Abbott, her three look like the golden age. The sight of Abbott turfed out of Kirribilli must have brought a smile to her face at least. But beyond the schadenfreude there's one concern: that the Liberals might be electable again.

Since returning to opposition in 2013, the Labor part has been led by the almost completely anonymous Bill Shorten, a man whose main point of interest has been watching his hair slowly retreat down his head over the last couple of years. Despite being basically uninspiring, in much the same way as Ed Miliband, he had profited from Abbott's spectacular incompetence simply by virtue of being the opposition leader. Shortly before Abbott's ousting, he reached a high in the "preferred Prime Minister" polling of 57%. Against Turnbull he's rarely polled above 20%. And it is early days, but suddenly, from a position of near-death, the Liberals are back on top. After two years of sitting back and letting the sheer incompetence of the Government speak for itself, Labor have to wake up and actually oppose, because now they're up against someone who knows what he's doing.

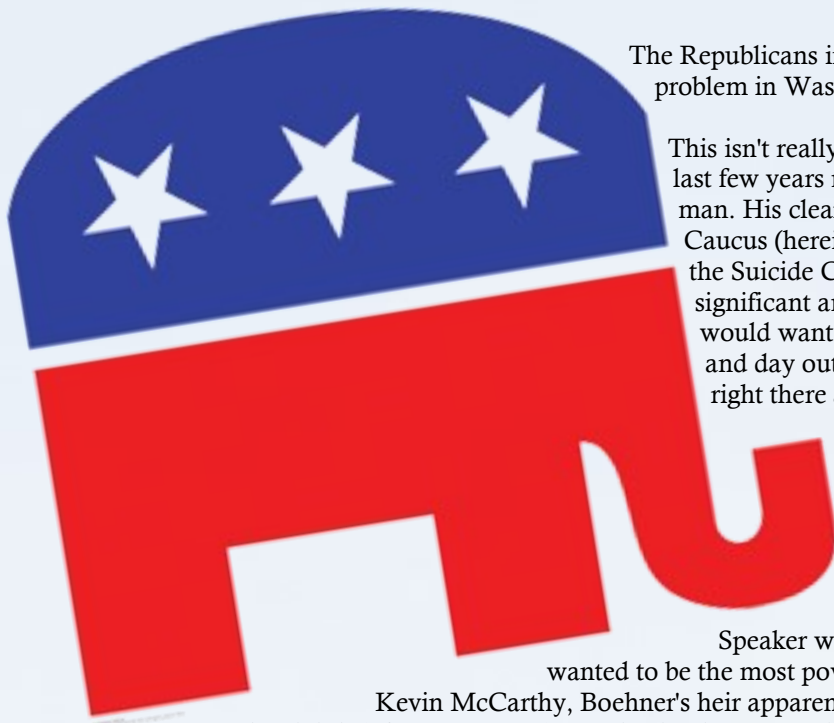




# TUSK

Chaos in the GOP: first Boehner finally tires of the Tea Party's (sorry, "Freedom Caucus") shit, then his intended successor fucks up his chance, so Paul Ryan steps in — and the TPer who made him Romney's running mate are against him. An entire political party has a breakdown, and 2SUNS is there.

Words: **Matthew Miles**



The Republicans in Congress have, to put it mildly, a bit of a leadership problem in Washington.

This isn't really news, to be fair. Anyone watching Boehner over the last few years might be forgiven for actually feeling sorry for the man. His clear disgust with the current state of the House Freedom Caucus (hereinafter referred to by the far more accurate name of the Suicide Caucus), has won him a drinking problem and a significant amount of sympathy from Democrats. After all, who would want to have to deal with those Tea Party loons day in and day out? It's almost enough to make one forget that he was right there at the start, fanning the flames of the nascent Tea Party to deliver unto him a wave of new freshman Republican representatives. And now that he's had enough, he's jumping ship and resigning at the end of October.

But for a while there, it sure didn't look like he'd get off that easy. He said he'd wait to leave until a new

Speaker was chosen to replace him, but apparently, few people wanted to be the most powerful Republican in the country. Especially not after

Kevin McCarthy, Boehner's heir apparent and House Majority Leader, publicly shit the bed on the eighth (of 10000000000) Benghazi Select Committee by saying out loud that the whole point of the exercise was actually to lower Hillary Clinton's poll numbers. While this fact was patently obvious to anyone with half a brain, you don't go and admit that millions of dollars and hundreds of days have been wasted on a Republican smear campaign. Combined with the animus the Suicide Caucus already had for him, there was no way he was going to martial the votes to be elected. But, that left the race open. And since no one remotely sane seemed to be gunning for the job, the speculation got a little... out there. For crying out loud, they were talking about bringing out Cheney to be the Speaker. Cheney!

Enter Paul Ryan, the golden child of the Third Way, bringer of broken budgets, and (apparently) the establishment's sacrificial lamb to the crazies. For a brief, glimmering instant, he appeared to live up to the reputation of intelligence that he somehow kept after getting publicly humiliated by Vice President Biden back in the 2012 debates. He said that he wasn't just going to take the job that had broken Boehner without some conditions. He wanted to get everyone to publicly endorse him (reasonable enough, especially if he knew he had the votes), cut down on the massive amount of fundraising that the speaker normally does for his caucus (understandable, but would make it harder to buy his caucus' loyalty), keep committees locked out of writing most legislation (very unpopular, but not really a change from the status quo), and change the House's rules to prevent the Suicide Caucus from trying to oust him in the middle of a session (never going to happen).

At the time, no one could decide if his list of demands was brilliant or insane. It seemed like he really didn't want to be



# TUSK

Speaker. He tried saying that he didn't want to be away from his family so much, but so many people were out-and-out begging him to take over. He couldn't just ignore them without losing face, so he just went and handed down an impossible condition for his speakership. If they rejected him, he'd just shrug and say that he tried. If they were actually going to accept all that, he might as well take the job, since he wouldn't have to worry about rebellions nearly as much as Boehner. But, no one has gone broke underestimating Paul Ryan's political savvy, so it turned out his demands weren't all that wise. The Suicide Caucus refused his conditions, and he just shrugged and said, "Ok, I guess I'll be Speaker anyway."

Way to really lay down the law, there, Ryan. They're sure to take your threats seriously next time.

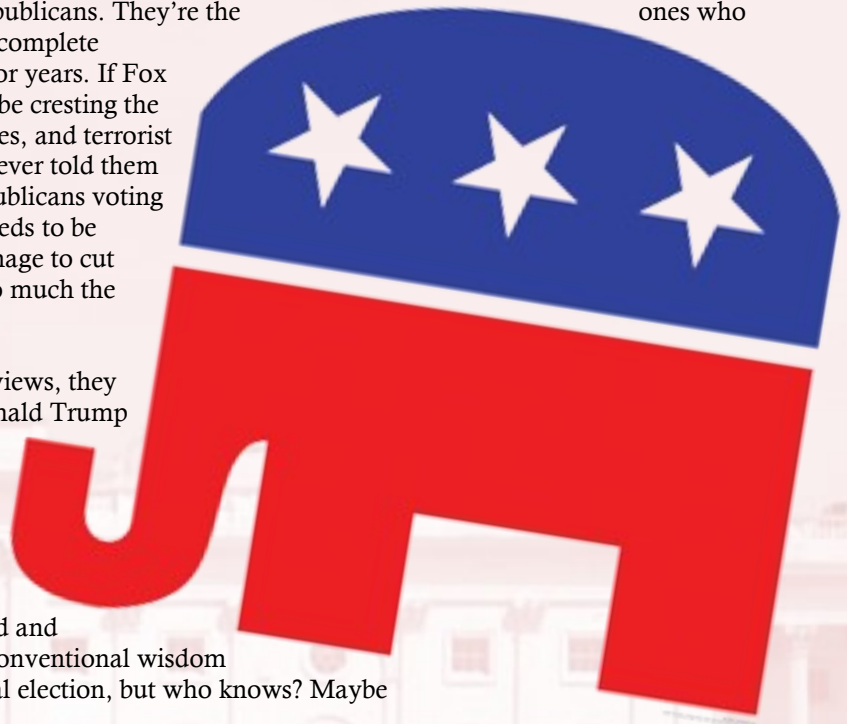
All of this is a symptom, though, of the larger problem. The Republicans just aren't one party anymore. They're a right wing party in a coalition with the Suicide Caucus, a hyper right wing party. And if they both just acknowledged that, it could work. Well, "work" might be generous. But it wouldn't regularly risk the Global Financial Meltdown 2.0 that is the result of the United States defaulting on its debts. But, no. Both think they are the REAL Republican Party, and the other are dangerous traitors looking to stab them in the back.

And... they're both at least half-right! Both parties really, REALLY don't like each other. Between Boehner's frequent removal of Suicide Caucus members from powerful committees and the Suicide Caucus forcing Boehner to beg for Democratic votes to avoid default, both have taken every reasonable option to stab the other in the back. But how could both parties be so confused over to their very identity?

To start, it certainly doesn't help that the Suicide Caucus is so absurdly paranoid that they meet in the basement of a shitty Tex-Mex restaurant so they can avoid having their full membership publicly known. But, honestly? The Suicide Caucus has a point when they say they're the real Republicans. They're the ones who are acting like the country is teetering on the brink of complete destruction like Fox and company have been saying for years. If Fox was actually correct, then the Mexican hordes would be cresting the hills, China would be shoving a huge check in our faces, and terrorist attacks would be happening every day. But... no one ever told them that Fox was only there to keep the rank and file Republicans voting lockstep. The real politicians know that the money needs to be borrowed, the bills need to be paid, and if we can manage to cut food stamps so we can give tax cuts to our buddies, so much the better.

And despite that vast chasm in their respective worldviews, they both insist they are the same party. Which is why Donald Trump is currently giving Rubio and Bush wedgies on nationally televised debates. Donald Trump isn't a Republican. Sure, he's got the racism, the sexism, and the massive handouts to the rich all down pat, but Trump just isn't using the same playbook as the rest of them. He's telling the rank and file that he's going to take the drastic action that Fox says is needed and lambasts other candidates for taking half measures. Conventional wisdom says that this won't really serve him well in the general election, but who knows? Maybe we will end up with President Trump.

If that happens, frankly, we'll have proven that we deserve him.





In the heart of the city,  
a pig with heart.



# BABE

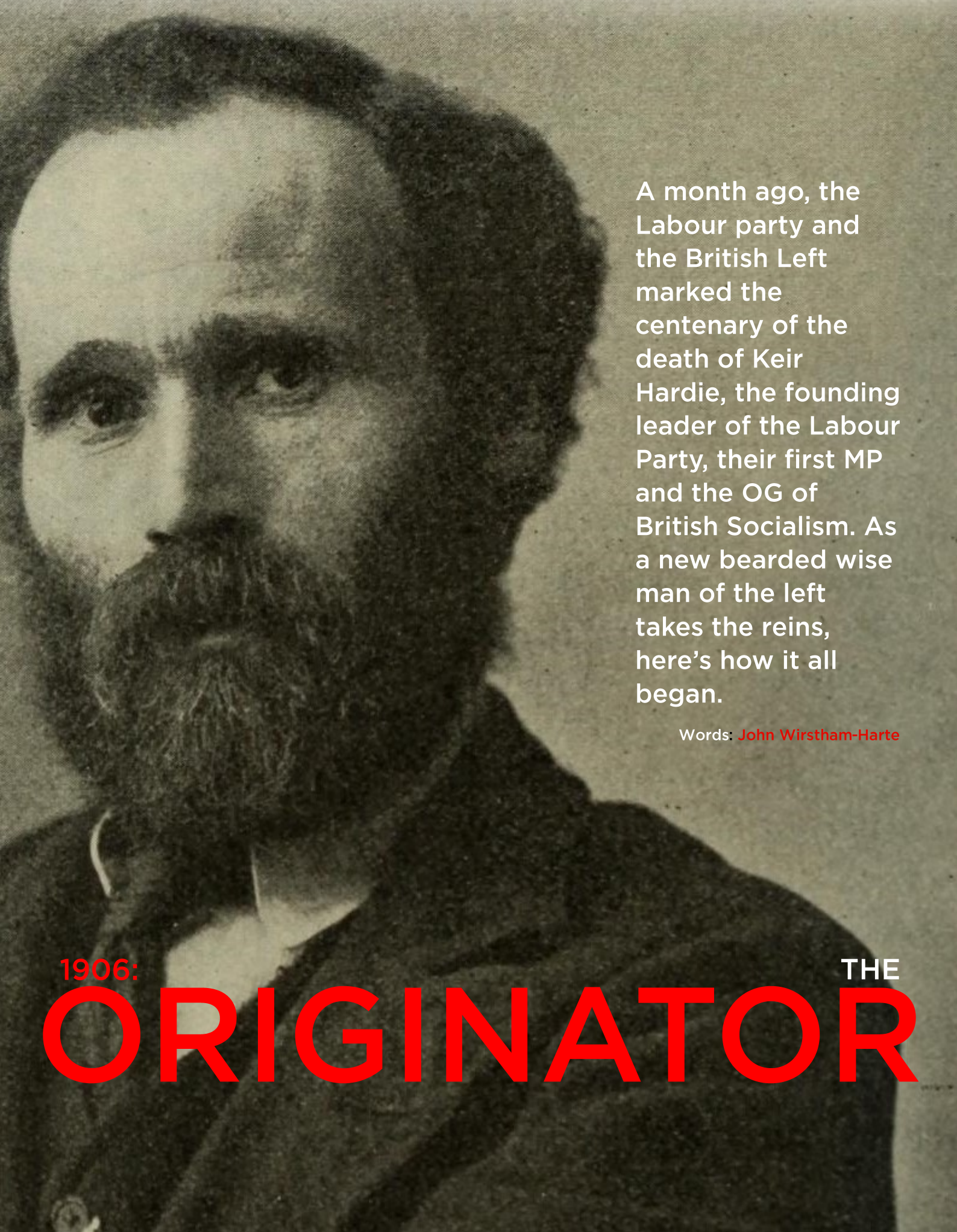
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# 25 YEARS TIMEWATCH



A month ago, the Labour party and the British Left marked the centenary of the death of Keir Hardie, the founding leader of the Labour Party, their first MP and the OG of British Socialism. As a new bearded wise man of the left takes the reins, here's how it all began.

Words: **John Wirstham-Harte**

1906: **THE ORIGINATOR**



**J**ames Keir Hardie was born on the 15th of August, 1856 in Lanarkshire, where he also died 59 years later in the midst of World War One. In between he practically invented the Labour Party as we know it today and broke up the old 19th Century two-party system in the process (to make way for a new two-party system, but hey).

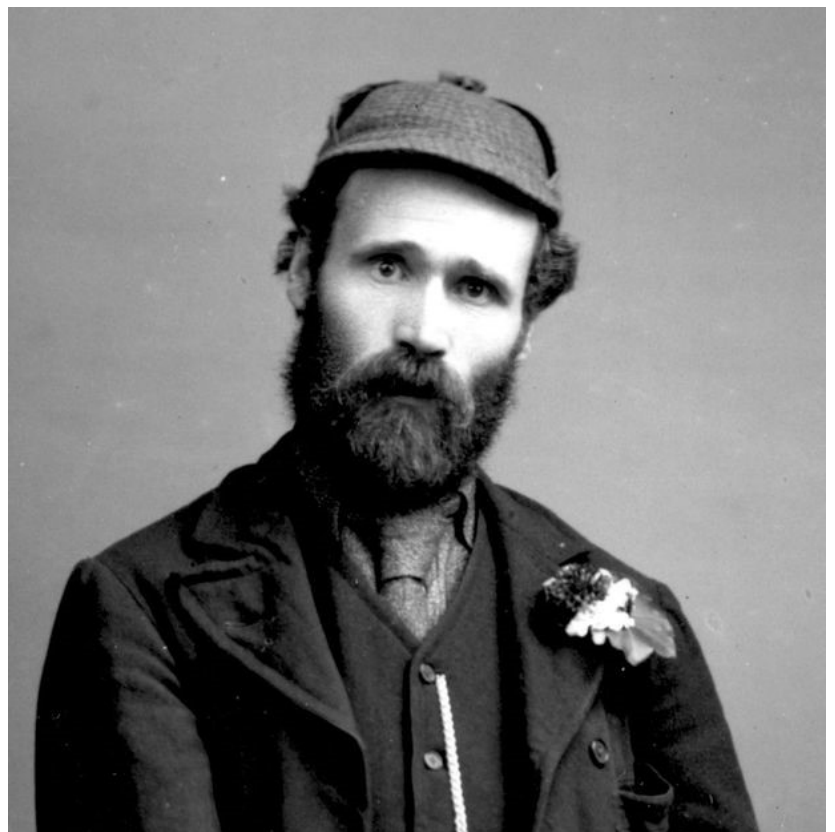
He got his first job at the age of seven, as society dictated at the time; he was a messenger boy for a Glaswegian steamship company. He spent the next few years bouncing around various entry-level jobs, including for a lithographer, as an apprentice at a brass-fitters, and most dramatically of all, hauling rivets in and out of a massive furnace back at the shipyards, where his father (technically stepfather; Hardie barely knew his natural father) and brothers also worked.

Disaster struck the family when the Clydeside shipyards responded to the unionisation of their workers by locking the doors and effectively firing them all for six months. With Hardie's mother now also out of her usual work (as a Downton Abbey serf) due to being pregnant, this left the young James as the family's sole earner. Forced to try and provide for a growing family at about 4/6d a week, the Hardies eventually sold almost literally everything they owned in order to buy food. When James was fired from his latest job (for coming in late a couple of times, probably on account of malnutrition), the family was forced apart: Mrs Hardie went to live with her mother, and her husband, a skilled ship's carpenter, took a job at sea.

At ten, James ended up where he'd spend most of his professional career: down the mines, pulling ten-hour shifts methodically opening and closing a door to keep the air flowing down the pit. In the evenings, he attended night school—his formal education having been effectively murdered by the necessity of getting a job at the age of seven. The family finally reunited when Hardie's stepfather had returned from the sea and taken a job building the railway from Edinburgh to Glasgow, which got them back on their feet (relatively speaking). Over the years, he worked his way up through the mines, from pony-minder to quarryman, until by the age of 20 — by which time he'd dropped the "James" and started going by "Keir" — he was a laudably skilled practical miner. He was also sick and tired of coal, and to that end had taught himself shorthand on top of basic literacy. He also joined the Evangelical Union Church and threw himself into the role of a fiery preacher of temperance. All this made him the obvious choice to chair the meetings of the miners' prototype trade union and act as their spokesman to management. He was so good at this that he was almost immediately branded an agitator and blacklisted, alongside his brothers, from ever setting foot down the pit again.

That was fine by him, however; he'd seen enough coal for one lifetime. He'd found his calling, and it was the Union.

**H**e may have been barred from going down the pit, but they couldn't stop him organising the workers. In fact, now he had more time to devote to organising the workers. Blacklisting him was a major miscalculation on the pit bosses' part.



Another was banding together to force a reduction of the already minuscule-wages across the Scottish mining industry. For some reason, this made their workers all but homicidally angry. After several colossal meetings of enraged Scotsmen, Hardie emerged as the undisputed representative of Scottish mineworkers from Berwick to John O'Groats. In October 1879, he was officially named National Secretary, despite the fact that they hadn't got round to forming an actual organisation to go with the title (and technically wouldn't for several years). Undeterred, the nascent union started work, gathering food for the starved and taking part in a handful of (initially unsuccessful) strike actions over the next year or two.



Among their biggest achievements was a soup kitchen run and manned by Hardie's new wife, Lillie.

Before long, the Hardies were in demand elsewhere, specifically Ayrshire. Over the course of a year, Keir and Lillie organised a similar union there, culminating in an official demand for a pay rise of 10% pa. The bosses, of course, told them they could whistle for it. The response from the miners, inspired by Hardie, was to walk away for ten weeks, shutting down every pit in Ayrshire for almost three months. Inevitably, they couldn't keep it up, eventually drifting back to work before their demands had been met, but just by daring to strike at all they scared the shit out of the bosses. So much so that they did eventually grant their workers a pay rise, just to stop them doing it again.

By now, Hardie was supplementing his income as a writer on the Cumnock News, a paper effectively sponsored by the closest thing to a left-wing party in the country: the Liberals. They'd had just returned to Opposition under William Ewart Gladstone; they'd spent, and would continue to spend, the last few decades of the century essentially playing musical chairs with parliament, trading with the Conservatives (then under the Marquess of Salisbury) whenever the music stopped, but rarely doing anything terribly different. The main difference is that the Liberals were broadly pro-worker, or at least they said they were; but Hardie figured out fairly quickly that they were actually pro-the workers' votes, and would actually follow through with the kind of reforms he knew were necessary on the day the sun turned blue. If you want something done, he reasoned, you have to do it yourself. So he did.

In April 1888, there was a by-election in Lanarkshire. Hardie stood as an "independent labour candidate", with a small "I". He finished last, but it didn't matter: he was in it for the experience. That August he gathered together some other bearded Scots socialist and formed the original "Scottish Labour Party" (a precursor to, but not the same thing as, the current party of that name). Hardie, naturally, was First Secretary.

He got his big break four years later, in Essex, of all places. At the General Election of 1892, Hardie was invited to stand for parliament in West Ham South (which at the time was in Essex). Unusually, the Liberals agreed to help him out by not fielding a candidate of their own, leading to a straight fight between Hardie and the Conservative incumbent, George Edward Banes. To the surprise of everyone bar Hardie himself, he won by over 1200 votes. Labour had its first MP

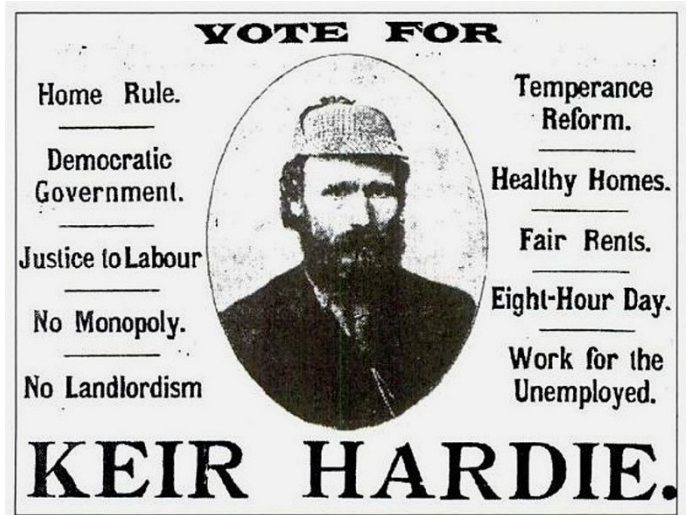
He irritated the rest of Parliament instantaneously by refusing to wear the standard costume of frock coat, top hat and wing collar shirt starched until you could bend a fork on it. Instead he wore his usual tweed suit and deerstalker ensemble. While perfectly correct in itself, this Simply

Wasn't Done, and (prefiguring the endless molehill mountaineering around every tiny aspect of Jeremy Corbyn's existence) caused a bonafide and explicitly manufactured scandal, with commentators wilfully mistaking the deerstalker for a flat cap. Hardie didn't notice or care. Over his three-year tenure as MP for West Ham South, he made a continual nuisance of himself, standing up in his tweeds to argue for the abolition of the House of Lords, free schools, social security, women's suffrage, a graduated income tax and various other notions that simply horrified the usual members of parliament — perhaps none more than the Liberals, whose understanding with Hardie came under increased strain with every proclamation he made. When, a year into his tenure, Hardie announced the formation of the Independent Labour Party, which seemed custom-designed to snatch away the working-class votes the Liberals had hitherto taken for granted, and was.

Hardie's notoriety peaked in 1894, when the future (if momentary) Edward VIII was born on the same day a mine exploded near Pontypridd, killing 251 people. When Hardie's request than an official note of condolence to the families of the deceased be added to Parliament's address of congratulations was turned down flat, he composed and delivered an enraged anti-monarchy speech in which he largely vented his frustrations on the baby Prince himself.

*"From his childhood onward this boy will be surrounded by sycophants and flatterers by the score and will be taught to believe himself as of a superior creation. A line will be drawn between him and the people whom he is to be called upon some day to reign over. In due course, following the precedent which has already been set, he will be sent on a tour round the world, and probably rumours of a morganatic alliance will follow, and the end of it all will be that the country will be called upon to pay the bill."*

He wasn't wrong — in fact, the bit about the "morganatic alliance" was eerily prescient — but such a speech would





go down like a frozen piss sorbet even if delivered today. In 1894, it basically killed his career, at least as MP for West Ham South. When they next went to the polls the following year, Edward Bane was re-elected handily.

Hardie was philosophical about it. He shrugged and went to work building up the Labour movement up and down the country, eventually forming yet another Labour Party, this time known as the Labour Representational Committee — which eventually became the Labour Party we know and sometimes vote for today. It was under their name that Hardie stood for election in 1900 in Merthyr Tydfil, and much to the irritation of everyone who'd been in Parliament with him the last time, won.

**W**ith him at the helm, and back in Parliament, Labour began to become a genuine force in British politics. By the next general election, in 1906, they were taken seriously enough, if only as dark horses, for the wily Liberal leader Henry Campbell-Bannerman to strike a deal with Hardie and his party: under the principle that the Conservatives were the *real* enemy, thirty constituencies would be set aside just as West Ham South had been all those years ago: no Liberal challenger, a straight Labour-Conservative fight, so as not to split the vote. This was a potentially high-risk strategy that paid off handsomely for Campbell-Bannerman and the Liberals, as the Conservatives were all but annihilated in one of the biggest landslides in British electoral history, even with the 30-seat trade-off. And of course, in the long-term, this was even more useful for Labour. They'd never had that many seats before. Now they had a platform to build on.

But Keir Hardie wouldn't be doing much of the building himself. Now in his fifties, he stepped down as leader (although he remained as MP for Merthyr and Aberdare until his death), and spent the rest of his life concentrating on grass-roots social activism, including Indian self-rule and votes for women. He lived to see (and protest) the beginning of World War One, but he didn't live to see the Labour Party finally come to power ten years later. Which is probably just as well, considering what Ramsay MacDonald ended up doing with it. He died in September 1915, back home in Glasgow. There's a memorial stone at Cumnock cemetery and a bust of him in Aberdare; but the greatest tribute to him would be for the Labour Party to return to the ways of socialism. And fortunately, that looks like it might just be possible.

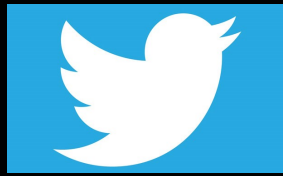




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# DAVID CAMERON TALKS ABOUT HIS WKD SIDE.



INTERVIEWER:

*But your mother?  
Isn't that a bit  
odd?*

CAMERON: I  
don't think so.  
Looks don't mean  
that much to me in  
a woman.

CAMERON: Sure...lots of  
times, but not in the lavatory.  
Between Mother and the shit,  
the flies were too much to  
bear.

INTERVIEWER: *We meant the  
vodka.*

INTERVIEWER:

CAMERON: Yeah, yeah.

CANCELLED  
DUE TO  
DEATH OF  
SATIRE